

The Beginner's Page - 3

This week we consider what responder must do when partner opens and you cannot support his suit. As I said last week, a bid of a new suit is forcing and could be any strength (6+ points). However, if the new suit is at the two level you need considerably more (11+).

The Jump Shift

But what if you have a very strong hand and a good suit? You can show this by jumping. This is game forcing and always promises a very good suit (5+ cards). If a major suit, then it strongly suggests that that suit be trumps. If a minor suit, then it is often angling for 3NT (or a slam).

Let's have a few examples, partner has opened 1♥, what do you respond?

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4	Hand 5	Hand 6
♠ A864	♠ A8764	♠ AKJ962	♠ 864	♠ 762	♠ A7
♥ K8	♥ K8	♥ K8	♥ K8	♥ K84	♥ J8
♦ 986	♦ K86	♦ AJ7	♦ AJ864	♦ AQ86	♦ AKQ987
♣ J752	♣ KJ2	♣ 87	♣ J75	♣ Q84	♣ Q74

Hand 1: 1♠. You have the correct point count for 1NT, but do not deny a 4 card major. If partner also has 4♠'s then a♠ contract will play better. If partner does not have 4♠'s then he will bid 1NT with a balanced hand (12-14) and that is fine.

Hand 2: 1♠. You have sufficient points to insist upon game but do not jump to 2♠ with a suit that is this poor.

Hand 3: 2♠. This suit is good enough for a jump shift response.

Hand 4: 1NT. The hand is not strong enough for a 2 level response.

Hand 5: 2♦. Enough for a 2 level response.

Hand 6: 3♦. Game forcing. Tell partner about your excellent suit.

Note. What I have said about jump shifts is basic Standard American. Some more advanced players may choose the jump shift to mean something different – they prefer to take it slowly with strong hands.

The 2♥ bid when partner opens 1♠

Hand 7	Hand 8	
♠ 86	♠ 86	We see from the above (Hand 5) that a new suit only promises 4 cards. There is, however, one exception. When partner opens 1♠ then a response of 2♥ by us takes up a lot of bidding space. For that reason one needs a 5 card suit (in addition to the mandatory 11+ pts) to respond 2♥. With Hands 7 & 8 partner has opened 1♠. With Hand 7 we respond 2♥ but with hand 8 we bid 2♣. A♥ fit is never lost, as if opener has a 4 card♥ suit in addition to his 5 card♠ opener, then he will rebid 2♥.
♥ KQJ86	♥ KQJ8	
♦ Q62	♦ Q62	
♣ KJ5	♣ KJ52	