

Learning Points – Minor Suit Raises

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Bidding Level: Basic

Unlike Majors, minor suits require 11 tricks for game, and score only 20 points per trick. Most bidding approaches emphasize NT and major suit fits before heading toward game in a minor. Better to play in a 7-card major suit fit (4-3 or 5-2) than a game in a minor. Why? The extra tricks for game are a big barrier and the lower trick score means we lose or tie pairs finding game in NT or Majors. Game in NT usually requires 25 HCP, Game in a major 26, and game in a minor 28. As a result responder strains to bid their pattern, often emphasizing major suits even when holding a great fit for partner's minor. (Responder avoids bidding a new suit past 1NT with 9 or fewer HCP).

Raising partner's minor suit opening bid:

- Denies a four card or longer major
- Implies inability to bid NT,
- And suggests an unbalanced hand.

Since the bidding goals are different when partner opens a minor suit, the minor suit raises are different than major suit raises. Here we look at responder's choices when holding no 4-card or longer major.

Responder's Strength	# Cards opener's minor	Standard	Inverted Minor Raises	Jump Shift in the Other Minor Forcing Raise
0-4 HCP Poor	0 to 3 4 5+	Pass Pass Pass	Pass Pass Jump Raise (Preempt)	Pass Pass Pass
5-9 HCP Weak	3 4 5+	1N 1N/Single Raise 1N/Single Raise	1N 1N Jump Raise (Preempt)	1N 1N/Single Raise 1N/Single Raise
10-12 HCP Invitational	3 4 5+	1 or 2 Bid in other minor then 2N or raise. Temporize then support or 2N Temporize then support	2N 2♦ if ♦ (1♦ or 2N if ♣s) Single Raise	2N Jump Raise Jump Raise
12+ HCP Force to Game+	2-3 4 5+	2N (Balanced) Jump raise /2N Jump Raise	2-bid or 3N (Balanced) 2♦ if ♦ (1♦/2N/2♣ if ♣s) Single Raise / Splinter	3N (Balanced) 3♣ if 1♦; 1♦ or 3N if 1♣ 3♣ if 1♦; 2♦ if 1♣ Splinter Raises

Trends in Minor Suit bidding:

- Stay low with strong hands and bid as high as safely possible with weak hands.
- Goren Standard requires temporizing often on 3 or 4-card minors when inviting. This can be misleading.
- Inverted minors were popularized as part of the Kaplan Sheinwold system and continue as part of 2/1 Game Force. They work well with standard approaches.
- J/S in Other Minor as Game Forcing Raise assumes 4th suit forcing and is natural, allowing the simple raise on weak hands and the invitational jump raise.
- When raising ♦s, 4 cards are sufficient as partner usually has 4 or more ♦s. Raising ♣s requires 5-card support. Holding only 4 cards in ♣s, prefer to temporize with 1♦ or an appropriate number of NT.
- 2NT is an invitational bid suggesting values in the unbid suits, and denies a 4-card major.
- An immediate double jump to a new suit by responder may be played as a splinter raise of opener's minor. This denies a 4-card major and implies at least 2nd round control in the unbid suits). Standard alternative is a weak hand (4-7 HCP) with a very long suit (7+ Cards)

The auction is 1♦ – Pass to you:

Your Hand	Standard	Inverted Minors	J/S in Other Minor
♠ 862 ♥94 ♦ A873 ♣9732	Pass	Pass	Pass
♠ 82 ♥4 ♦ A987632 ♣973	2♦	3♦	2♦
♠87 ♥942 ♦AQ63 ♣9732	2♦	1N	1N
♠87 ♥9 ♦AQ6432 ♣9732	2♦	3♦	2♦
♠87 ♥942 ♦AQ3 ♣97632	1N	1N	1N
♠ A96 ♥K42 ♦873 ♣K732	2♣ then 2N	2N	2N
♠ 96 ♥K42 ♦73 ♣ AK8732	2♣ then 3♣	2♣ then 3♣ -or- 3♣	2♣ then 3♣
♠ AK6 ♥942 ♦KJ3 ♣K732	2N then 3N	3N	3N
♠ AK6 ♥9 ♦KJ432 ♣K732	3♦	3♥	3♥
♠ A6 ♥K92 ♦KJ43 ♣K732	2N	2♦/3N	3♣/3N
♠ 62 ♥4 ♦ AK9873 ♣9732	2♣ then 3♦	4♦	4♦

Both Inverted minors and J/S in the Other Minor fit well with Standard American bidding.