

Inverted Minors

Theory

The Inverted Minor treatment is a virtually integral part of the Two-Over-One Game Force system, but it can be employed in many systems. The underlying principle, as in 2/1, is that the bidding should be escalated quickly with weaker, pre-emptive hands, and that the bidding be kept low on strong hands in order to properly investigate the proper game or slam contract.

General Treatment

A jump raise of partner's opening 1-level minor suit opening (suit of 3+ cards) is a pre-emptive bid and promises 5+ card support and a limited hand (less than 9 support points). It strongly discourages further exploration of game contracts (except by a very strong opener).

A single raise of partner's opening 1-level minor suit opening is a strong bid; it is forcing to (at least) three of that minor and is strongly suggestive of a game in either NoTrump or in the suit. It is an unlimited bid.

If the partnership agrees, a jump shift into the other minor suit may be used as a limit raise of the suit opened ("criss-cross"). A sequence of 1♣ - 2♦, or a sequence of 1♦ - 3♣ would then promise 5+ card support for the suit opened and 9-12 support points. It says nothing about the suit bid. In this case, the single raise is reserved for hands that contain a full opening hand. This permits a better distinction of the ultimate contract.

Inverted minor raises are not used when the opponents overcall (or double) the opening bid. Single raises indicate 6-9 points and moderate support; all jump raises are pre-emptive, indicating progressively more trump support, more outside distribution, and less honor strength.

When playing inverted minors it is important to establish the exact meaning of subsequent sequences.

There are two kinds of hands with which the single minor suit raise is employed, but the meaning of the responses and rebids are identical in the initial phases.

The primary requirements for a forcing single raise of a minor (3+) suit opener are:

- sufficient HCP to investigate game (partnership agreement on HCP needed; usually 11+)
- absence of a 4-card major suit
- a minimum of 4-card trump support
- either a balanced hand (search for NT contract) or distributional hand (search for minor suit game or slam)

The Search for NoTrump

The first, and most common, type of hand using the single minor raise involves a search for the viability of a 3NT contract, and consists of an exchange of information regarding stoppers. This is in contrast to auctions that begin 1♣/♦ - 3NT (discussed later). By using the inverted minor raise, there is the implication that the responder lacks stoppers in one or more of the other suits. In order to avoid problem contracts, it is important that the opener immediately reveals what stoppers are held.

(Clubs will be used in all examples, but the same sequences are assumed for diamond raises; opponents are assumed to be passing in all cases).

The search for stoppers is centered around major suit stoppers; this is because the responder has already denied a four-card major and there is an increased likelihood that the opponents will initially attack major suits in a NT contract.

- 1♣ - 2♣ - 2♥ promises a full stopper in hearts, but **denies a full stopper in spades**
- 1♣ - 2♣ - 2♠ promises a full stopper in spades, but **denies a full stopper in hearts**
- 1♣ - 2♣ - 2NT promises a full stopper in both majors
- 1♣ - 2♣ - 2♦ promises a full stopper in diamonds, but **denies a full stopper in either major**
- (1♦ - 2♦ - 3♣ promises a full stopper in clubs, but **denies a full stopper in either major**)
- 1♣ - 2♣ - 3♣ suggests a minimal hand with 5+ clubs, and very little interest in playing NT
- 1♣ - 2♣ - 3NT promises a full stopper in both majors and a hand with slam possibilities (18+ HCP)

If opener's rebid suggests to the responder that 3NT is the optimal contract, responder should bid it immediately. If opener's rebid warns responder that 3NT is unlikely, responder signs off in three of the agreed minor suit. If opener's rebid does not contain enough information to make the decision (this occurs when the opener responds by promising a stopper in one major, but denying the other), responder bids 2NT. With the other minor stopped, opener carries on to 3NT. If not, opener can either pass or correct to three of the original suit.

What if responder holds an opening hand and stoppers in **all three** of the other suits when partner opens 1 of a minor? This is the time for the 3NT response (13-15 HCP). There is no need to investigate stoppers, so the bid should be made right away. On stronger hands, however, where there is a possibility of a slam, the sequence should be started with the single raise.

Looking for Minor Suit Game or Slam

All of the following sequences establish the opened suit as trump and initiate an investigation of slam. Following a single raise by responder, opener may initiate a minor-suit game/slap try.

Jump raise of trump suit:

- 1♣ - 2♣ - 4♣ (or)
- 1♦ - 2♦ - 4♦ shows a strong hand (16+ HCP), and a disinterest in NT; **it is usually used as Minor Suit Blackwood (Minorwood)**. Responses conform to the partnership agreement on Blackwood or RKC.

Jump in new suit:

- 1♣ - 2♣ - 3♦/♥/♠ (or)
- 1♦ - 2♦ - 3♥/♠/4♣ can be played in several ways, but the most common is as a **splinter bid**.

Following a single raise and opener's rebid, responder may initiate a minor-suit game/slam try.

New suit at cheapest level:

- 1♣ - 2♣ - 3♣ - (new suit) should initiate a cue-bidding sequence of (first-round) controls.

Another Important Consideration ("Short" Club)

It is extremely unwise to combine Inverted Minors with the use of a "short" club opening treatment. There are several significant problems that can arise.

The first problem is that partner is unable to make pre-emptive raises with confidence, because the opener's hand may be totally inappropriate for such action.

The second problem is that partner is unable to make forcing raises with less than five clubs, because if 3NT is not playable, the best contract is not determinable.

The third, and most difficult problem can occur when responder holds a hand that would make either type of raise in diamonds. All of the opportunities that the Inverted Minors present are lost when opener holds three diamonds (4-4-3-2) and is forced to open 1♣.