

## SPLINTER BIDS

Splinter bids help you to pinpoint slam hands, by finding good fits even when your point count is below the traditional level for slams (32-33 HCP for small slams; 36-37 HCP for grand slams). A splinter bid consists of a **double jump**, e.g., 1S-P-4C.

A splinter bid conveys a lot of information quickly to your partner.

- 1) I agree to your suit and promise 4-card trump support.
- 2) We are committed to playing game (or higher) in your major suit.
- 3) I have a singleton (or void) in this specific suit.

There are two basic auctions in which splinter bids can be used:

- 1) Opener bids one of a major-P-splinter bid by responder.
- 2) Opener bids one of a minor-P-Responder bids one of a major-P-Opener makes a splinter bid.

Note that the opponents must have passed in both auctions. If there is any competition (bidding by the opponents), splinter bids are completely off—except in the case where responder or opener is showing a splinter in the opponents' suit.

A splinter bid by responder promises 12+ HCP (enough to go to game), 4-card trump support (as declarer will be expected to ruff several times in dummy), and a singleton or void in the suit bid. The short suit (singleton or void) is shown at the 3 or 4 level by making a double jump:

- 1H-P-4C Shows game-forcing hand with 4 hearts and singleton or void in clubs.
- 1H-P-4D Shows game-forcing hand with 4 hearts and singleton or void in diamonds.
- 1H-P-3S Shows game-forcing hand with 4 hearts and singleton or void in spades.
- 1S-P-4C Shows game-forcing hand with 4 spades and singleton or void in clubs.
- 1S-P-4D Shows game-forcing hand with 4 spades and singleton or void in diamonds.
- 1S-P-4H Shows game-forcing hand with 4 spades and singleton or void in hearts.

Note that two-level bids by responder (e.g., 1H-P-2C) are forcing and show a new suit. Three-level bids (e.g., 1H-P-3C) are also forcing. They constitute jump shifts, showing a very big hand, and usually showing a suit. Occasionally responder has to jump-shift into a short suit to keep the bidding open.

If the opponents compete, splinter bids are off, except in the single case of showing the opponents' suit as a splinter. Thus, 1H-1S-3S would be a splinter bid (showing a singleton or void in spades, 4 hearts, and a game-forcing hand).

In a minor/major sequence, the opener can splinter with a very big hand. A splinter bid by opener promises 19-20 HCP, 4-card support for the major (bid by responder), and a singleton or void in the splinter suit.

- 1D-P-1H-P-4C Shows 19-20 HCP, 4 hearts, singleton/void in clubs
- 1C-P-1S-P-4D Shows 19-20 HCP, 4 spades, singleton/void in diamonds
- 1D-P-1H-P-3S Shows 19-20 HCP, 4 hearts, singleton/void in spades.
- 1C-P-1H-P-3S Shows 19-20 HCP, 4 hearts, singleton/void in spades.

In competition, we can only use sequences such as:

- 1D-1H-1S-P-4H Shows 19-20 HCP, 4 card spade support, singleton/void in hearts
- 1C-1H-1S-P-4H Shows 19-20 HCP, 4 card spades support, singleton/void in hearts
- 1C-1S-ND-P-3S Shows 19-20 HCP, 4 card heart support, singleton/void in spades (ND=neg double)