# Mathe Asking Bid

by

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References

1. **Symmetric Major Suit Raises**. Norman Pestaina.
   http://users.cis.fiu.edu/~pestaina/SymmetricMajor.pdf

2. **The Universal Splinter**. Norman Pestaina.
   http://users.cis.fiu.edu/~pestaina/UniversalSplinter.pdf

## Preconditions

The Mathe ask is employed by opener directly following a limit raise of a major suit opening at the 1 level. It is a slam-try.  Typically, opener

1. has better than a 1**N** opening, and
2. inquires whether the raise is based on shortness or high card points.

In the former case (shortness), opener may have a side suit with 2 or more losers and expects to benefit from responder's hoped for ruffing values:

| | |
|---|---|
| ♠ A 7 6 3 | ♠ 8 |
| ♥ A K J T 8 | ♥ Q 9 7 5 |
| ♦ 6 | ♦ A 9 4 3 |
| ♣ A K 2 | ♣ Q J 7 4 |

In the latter case (HCP), opener can expect to find fillers for her side suits

| | |
|---|---|
| ♠ A 7 6 3 | ♠ K 6 |
| ♥ A K J T 8 | ♥ Q 9 7 5 |
| ♦ 6 | ♦ A 9 4 3 |
| ♣ A K 2 | ♣ Q 7 4 |

**N.B.,** We assume a *Reverse-Bergen* style limit raise in a *Symmetric Majors* system.

## The Agreement

1. The 1$^{st}$ step continuation following the limit raise is a Mathe asking bid. It asks responder to indicate whether the limit raise is based on shortness (singleton or void) or high-card points:

| **Spades** | | | **Hearts** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | 3♣ | Limit Raise | 1♥ | 2N | Limit Raise |
| 3♦ | | Mathe Asking Bid | 3♣ | | Mathe Asking Bid |

2. A response of the next higher bid is positive and confirms a splinter-based raise:

| **Spades** | | | **Hearts** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | 3♣ | Limit Raise | 1♥ | 2N | Limit Raise |
| 3♦ | 3♥ | Anonymous Splinter | 3♣ | 3♦ | Anonymous Splinter |

3. A response of the  2$^{nd}$ step after the asking bid denies a splinter-based raise:

| **Spades** | | | **Hearts** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | 3♣ | Limit Raise | 1♥ | 2N | Limit Raise |
| 3♦ | 3♠ | No splinter | 3♣ | 3♥ | No splinter |

A convenient way to think of the responses to a Mathe Asking Bid is
- Show a splinter via the Universal Splinter bid (3♥ or 3♦)
- Deny a splinter by returning to the trump suit (3♠ or 3♥)

## Continuations

- ### When responder shows a splinter-based raise

It is highly convenient that responder's positive response is identical to the direct splinter bid. This means that the entire universal splinter response structure will be available, and should be employed here as well.

- ### When responder denies a splinter

Responder's limit-raise values are likely to be in high cards. It is again convenient that responder denies a splinter by bidding 3 of the trump suit. An entire bidding level below game is available, so a partnership may safely explore for slam.

## Examples

| ♠ A 7 6 3<br>♥ A K J T 8<br>♦ 6<br>♣ A K 2 | ♠ 8<br>♥ Q 9 7 5<br>♦ A 9 4 3<br>♣ Q J 7 4 | 1♥<br>3♣<br>3♥<br>3N<br>4♠<br>5♦ | 2N<br>3♦<br>3♠<br>4♣<br>5♣<br>6♥ | (Symmetric Majors) Limit Raise<br>Mathe ask; Splinter Response<br>Relay to ask; Some Singleton<br>Relay to ask; ♠-singleton shown<br>Keycard ask; 1 or 4 Keycards<br>Queen-ask; Yes Q♥, no side King |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Example 1**: *Mathe Asking Bid with a Splinter-showing Response* | | | | |

| ♠ A 7 6 3<br>♥ A K J T 8<br>♦ 6<br>♣ A K 2 | ♠ K 6<br>♥ Q 9 7 5<br>♦ A 9 4 3<br>♣ Q 7 4 | 1♥<br>3♣<br>3N<br>4♠<br>5♦<br>6♦ | 2N<br>3♥<br>4♦<br>5♣<br>5N<br>6♥ | (Symmetric Majors) Limit Raise<br>Mathe ask; No splinter<br>Serious slam-try; ♦ cue-bid<br>Keycard ask; 1 or 4 Keycards<br>Queen-ask; Yes Q♥, and K♠<br>K♦-ask; No |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Example 2**: *Mathe Asking Bid with a Splinter-denial Response* | | | | |

In fact, a grand slam is possible in both examples. In Example 1, the solidity of the trump suit permits three ♠-ruffs in the dummy with careful timing. In Example 2, perhaps a more aggressive game-forcing raise, and a serious slam-try by opener will allow the grand to be reached.