

Major Suit Responses to 1 of a Minor

by

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Reference

[1] **The Useful-Space Principle, I.** Jeff Rubens. *The Bridge World* Vol. 52 No. 2, November 1980.

The Convention

1♣	1♠	1♦	1♠	1♣	1♥	1♦	1♥
2♠	2N	2♠	2N	2♥	2N	2♥	2N

In each sequence, a minor-suit opening is followed by opener's single raise of responder's 1 of a major. A common agreement is that responder's 2N promises at least a game-invitation, and asks opener to clarify the number of trumps held, and strength.

By imposing modest agreements on the requirements for opener's 2♠/2♥ raise, it is possible to define a simple response structure that allows opener to clarify distribution as well.

In order to maximize the available space, responder's asking bid is re-defined as *the next available bid*. This is consistent with the Useful Space Principle [1]. Thus:

1♣	1♠	1♦	1♠	1♣	1♥	1♦	1♥
2♠	2N	2♠	2N	2♥	2♠	2♥	2♠

Prerequisites

Opener's raise of responder's major normally promises at least 4 trumps. The decision to raise with only 3 trumps may be taken as the "lesser of evils". Opener will have a holding unsuitable for a non-jump re-bid or a bid in a new suit or no-trump; opener will also be too weak for a strength-showing reverse or jump rebid. There are three relevant distributions:

- 1) **5-3-3-2** with 5 in opener's minor, 3 in responder's major and a "worthless" doubleton (Jx or worse); with honor-doubleton, opener should prefer to rebid in No-trump.
- 2) **5-4-3-1** with 5 in opener's minor, 3 in responder's major and a 4-card suit that either is too weak to bid naturally, or that cannot be shown because opener's hand does not qualify for a reverse.
- 3) **4-4-3-2** with 4 in opener's minor, 3 in responder's major, 4 in a lower suit, and a "worthless" doubleton.

In this treatment, the reservation about the worthless doubleton in case 3) is ignored. Opener should bid 1N. When responder has at least an invitational hand, a check-back sequence will uncover a 4-4 fit in the other major, or the 4-3 fit in responder's initially bid major.

When a 3-card raise is made only with one of the distributions in 1) or 2) above, opener's third bid will uncover his exact distribution.

- 1) Opener's strength will be less than the minimum for a 1N opening, typically 11 – 14 hcp.
- 2) Opener's strength will be less than that required for a reverse into the 4-card suit: 11 – 16 hcp. Responder will assume the lower range 11 – 13; then, with 14 – 16 opposite a game try, opener will accept the game-try by making another bid.

The Agreement

- Opener will make a 3-card raise of responder's major only with one of the holdings described above:
 - 1) 5-3-3-2, 11 – 14 hcp
 - 2) 5-4-3-1, 11 – 16 hcp
- Following the 2N or 2♠ ask, an opener with only 3-card support must re-bid below 3 of responder's major:
 - 1) With 5-3-3-2, opener re-bids the 5-card minor
 - 2) With 5-4-3-1, opener bids the 4-card suit (following a 2♠ ask, 2N will be a surrogate bid for ♠)
- Following the 2N or 2♠ ask, an opener with 4-card support must re-bid at or above 3 of responder's major:
 - ✓ Bid 3 of responder's major with a minimum, no shortness
 - ✓ Bid 3N with a non-minimum, no shortness, and stoppers in both un-bid suits
 - ✓ Re-bid 4 of opener's minor with a 6-card suit
 - ✓ Splinter in the one of the two un-bid suits with 4-4-4-1
 - ✓ Bid 4 of responder's major with either 5-card support or with a non-minimum, no shortness, unsuitable for 3N.

Suit-specific definitions

- Following a 1♣ opening bid and a raise of responder's 1♠ to 2♠:

1♣	1♠	
2♠	2N	
3♣		3-3-2-5 or 3-2-3-5, 11 - 13 hcp
3♦		3-1-4-5, 11 - 16 hcp
3♥		3-4-1-5, 11 - 16 hcp
3♠		4 ♠'s, any minimum 11 - 13 hcp with no singleton
3N		4 ♠'s, non-minimum, stoppers in ♥ and ♦
4♣		4 ♠'s, 6 ♣'s
4♦		splinter, usually 4-4-1-4
4♥		splinter, usually 4-1-4-4
4♠		5 ♠'s, or 4 ♠'s non-minimum, unsuited to 3N
- Following a 1♦ opening bid and a raise of responder's 1♠ to 2♠:

1♦	1♠	
2♠	2N	
3♣		3-1-5-4, 11 - 16 hcp
3♦		3-3-5-2 or 3-2-5-3, 11 - 13 hcp
3♥		3-4-5-1, 11 - 16 hcp
3♠		4 ♠'s, any minimum 11 - 13 hcp with no singleton
3N		4 ♠'s, non-minimum, stoppers in ♥ and ♣
4♣		splinter, usually 4-4-4-1
4♦		4 ♠'s, 6 ♦'s
4♥		splinter, usually 4-1-4-4
4♠		5 ♠'s, or 4 ♠'s non-minimum, unsuited to 3N

- Following a 1♣ opening bid and a raise of responder's 1♥ to 2♥:

1♣	1♥	
2♥	2♠	
2N		4-3-1-5, 11 - 16 hcp, presumably very weak ♠'s
3♣		3-3-2-5 or 3-2-3-5, 11 - 13 hcp
3♦		1-3-4-5, 11 - 16 hcp
3♥		4 ♥'s, any minimum 11 - 13 hcp with no singleton
3♠		splinter, usually 1-4-4-4
3N		4 ♥'s, non-minimum, stoppers in ♠ and ♦
4♣		4 ♥'s, 6 ♣'s
4♦		splinter, usually 4-4-1-4
4♥		5 ♥'s, or 4 ♥'s non-minimum, unsuited to 3N

- Following a 1♦ opening bid and a raise of responder's 1♥ to 2♥:

1♦	1♥	
2♥	2♠	
2N		4-3-5-1, 11 - 16 hcp, presumably very weak ♠'s
3♣		1-3-5-4, 11 - 16 hcp, presumably weak ♣'s
3♦		3-3-5-2 or 3-2-5-3, 11 - 13 hcp
3♥		4 ♥'s, any minimum 11 - 13 hcp with no singleton
3♠		splinter, usually 1-4-4-4
N		4 ♥'s, non-minimum, stoppers in ♠ and ♣
4♣		splinter, usually 4-4-4-1
4♦		4 ♥'s, 6 ♦'s
4♥		5 ♥'s, or 4 ♥'s non-minimum, unsuited to 3N