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*Bridge Bidding: The Next Step · Standard American edition*



CHAPTER 6

# Splinters and Strong Raises

*Showing a big fit for partner's major, and where your short suit is*

**Mike Smith**

bridgescorer.com

## 1. Big fits need more detail

In Book 1, a hand with four-card support for partner's major and 13 or more points bid a new suit first and raised later, or used **Jacoby 2NT**. This chapter explains Jacoby 2NT properly and adds the **splinter**, a way to show a fit and a short suit in one bid.

## 2. The splinter bid

A **double jump in a new suit** after partner opens 1♥ or 1♠ is a **splinter**: **four or more trumps**, about **13–15 points**, and a **singleton or void** in the suit you bid.
Over 1♥: 3♠, 4♣ or 4♦. Over 1♠: 4♣, 4♦ or 4♥.

Why is the short suit worth showing? Because it tells opener which of their cards are working. Opposite a singleton club, opener's ♣K-Q are probably wasted, but small clubs can be ruffed. Aces and kings in the **other** suits are what make slam.

| | |
|---|---|
| ♠ A 7 3<br>♥ K J 8 5<br>♦ K Q 6 4 2<br>♣ 5 | Partner opens 1♥. Four hearts, **13 points**, a singleton club: **4♣** (splinter). |

| Opener | Responder |
|---|---|
| ♠ K Q 5 | ♠ A 7 3 |
| ♥ A Q 10 7 4 | ♥ K J 8 5 |
| ♦ A 8 5 | ♦ K Q 6 4 2 |
| ♣ 7 6 | ♣ 5 |

1♥ – 4♣: opener has no wasted club honours and good controls: slam is likely. Opener uses Blackwood (or Roman Key Card Blackwood, Chapter 7) and bids **6♥**. Only 28 points between the hands, but the club losers are ruffed.

| Opener | Responder |
|---|---|
| ♠ Q 5 | ♠ A 7 3 |
| ♥ A Q 10 7 4 | ♥ K J 8 5 |
| ♦ J 8 5 | ♦ K Q 6 4 2 |
| ♣ K Q 6 | ♣ 5 |

1♥ – 4♣: now opener's ♣K-Q are opposite a singleton and worth little. Opener signs off in **4♥**.

## 3. Strong raises without a short suit

**Jacoby 2NT:** after partner opens 1♥ or 1♠, a response of **2NT** shows **four or more trumps** and **13 or more** points, and is **forcing to game**.

| Opener's reply | Meaning |
|---|---|
| A new suit at the three level | a singleton or void in that suit |
| 4 of the major | a minimum (12–14), no short suit |
| 3 of the major | extra values (15+), no short suit |

| Opener | Responder |
|---|---|
| ♠ A J 10 6 3 | ♠ K Q 8 4 |
| ♥ K 4 | ♥ A 7 3 |
| ♦ A Q 5 | ♦ K 6 2 |
| ♣ 9 7 3 | ♣ Q 10 5 |

1♠ – 2NT (Jacoby) – **4♠**: a minimum with no short suit. Responder has nothing extra either, and passes.

## 4. Summary

| Your hand (partner opened 1♥ or 1♠) | Bid |
|---|---|
| Four trumps, 13–15, singleton or void | Splinter: double jump in the short suit |
| Four trumps, 13+, no short suit | Jacoby 2NT |
| Opener after Jacoby 2NT | new suit = short; 4M = minimum; 3M = extras |
| Opener after a splinter, honours wasted in the short suit | Sign off in game |
| Opener after a splinter, good controls elsewhere | Look for slam |

## 5. Test yourself

**1.** ♠ K 10 8 4
♥ A 6 2
♦ K Q J 5 3
♣ 4

Partner opens 1♠. What do you bid?

**2.** ♠ 5
♥ Q J 9 3
♦ A K 8 4
♣ K 10 6 3

Partner opens 1♥. What do you bid?

**3.** ♠ Q 9 6 2
♥ K 8 3
♦ A 7 4
♣ K J 5

Partner opens 1♠. What do you bid?

**4.** ♠ A Q 5
♥ K J 10 7 3
♦ A 8 4
♣ 9 3

You opened 1♥. Partner bids 4♣ (splinter). What now?

**5.** ♠ Q 5
♥ A K J 7 3
♦ J 8 4
♣ K Q 6

You opened 1♥. Partner bids 4♣ (splinter). What now?

**6.** ♠ A Q 10 6 4
♥ K 8 3
♦ 7
♣ Q J 6 2

You opened 1♠. Partner bids 2NT (Jacoby). What do you bid?

## Answers

**1. 4♣.** A splinter: four spades, 13 points, a singleton club.

**2. 3♠.** A splinter over 1♥: four hearts and a singleton spade.

**3. 2NT.** Jacoby: four trumps, 13 points, balanced.

**4. Look for slam (4NT).** No wasted club honours, and aces in both the other side suits.

**5. 4♥.** 16 points is more than a minimum, but ♣K-Q are opposite a singleton and will take few tricks. Without them you have only 11 useful points: sign off.

**6. 3♦.** A singleton diamond: show it.

Next: Chapter 7, Roman Key Card Blackwood. Free lessons and challenge hands to play: **bridgescorer.com/learn**

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