

Inverted Minors

A treatment for raises in the minor suits

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♠A974 ♥743 ♦A1095 ♣AQ

Suppose you pick up this hand and partner opens 1♦, what do you do?

You could gamble with 3NT, and that will often be the best contract. BUT, partner may NOT have Hearts stopped, 5♦ may be the best spot, or there may be a Diamond slam. Should you raise partner?

A simple bid of 1♠ is the correct bid.

♠A97 ♥743 ♦J1095 ♣Q82

Suppose you pick up this hand and partner opens 1♦; what do you do?

You could raise partner, but you have only 4 Diamonds. You do not have a 4 Card Major.

A simple bid of 1NT is the correct bid. This shows 6-10 High Card points, denies 5 Diamonds, and denies a 4 Card Major.

♠AK7 ♥743 ♦A1095 ♣Q82

Suppose you pick up this hand, and partner opens 1♦; what do you do?

You could raise partner but you have only 4 Diamonds. You do not have a 4 Card Major. A bid of 3NT might succeed, but! What if partner has no stopper in Hearts?

♠A97 ♥72 ♦A10975 ♣Q82

Suppose you pick up this hand, and partner opens 1♦; what do you do?

You could raise partner since you have 5 Diamonds. A bid of 2♦ is weak and to play. You do not have a 4 Card Major. A bid of 3♦ is hard to manage. 3♦ is a “Limit Raise” but no one knows what that really means or how to manage it.

♠A74 ♥74 ♦A10952 ♣AQ2

Suppose you pick up this hand, and partner opens 1♦; what do you do?

You could gamble with 3NT, and that will often be the best contract. BUT, partner may NOT have Hearts stopped, 5♦ may be the best spot, or there may be a diamond slam. Should you raise partner? Neither 2♦, nor 3♦ are forcing in standard bidding. That is the problem.

♠987 ♥AQ ♦AJ952 ♣AK2

Suppose you pick up this hand and partner opens 1♦, what do you do?

You could gamble with 3NT, and that will often be the best contract. BUT, partner may NOT have Spades stopped, 5♦ may be the best spot, or there may be a Diamond slam. Should you raise partner? Neither 2♦, nor 3♦ are forcing in standard bidding. Partner may have opened with ♠5 ♥KJ9 ♦KQ874 ♣QJ93 The 3NT gamble is bad. That is the problem.

The problem of responding accurately to partner's opening bid of one of a Minor is a challenge that has been around for many years. The pattern that I prefer is called Inverted Minors and is in widespread use around the world with different modifications of course. The concept of Inverted Minors was created by Edgar Kaplan and Alfred Sheinwold and is part of the Kaplan-Sheinwold system of bidding. In order for this convention to be in effect, partner must open the bidding with 1 of a Minor suit and may not be a passed hand.

Solution: Play Inverted Minors

Over partner's 1♣ opening

2♣ = 10+ points, 5+ card Club support, no 4-card major.

3♣ = usually a pre-emptive raise, non-forcing, no 4-card major.

Over partner's 1♦ opening

2♦ = 10+ points, 5+ card Diamond support, no 4-card major.

3♦ = usually a pre-emptive raise, non-forcing, no 4-card major.

What then? Basically, after an inverted raise to 2♣/♦, opener and responder bid stoppers up the line, usually in the hope of reaching 3NT. The emphasis is on major suit stoppers - as opener has generally denied a 5-card major and responder has denied a 4-card major, the other minor is usually stopped.

As opener has promised 12-21 High Card Points, and responder has promised no less than 10 HCP, the onus is on the player with more than minimum values to bid beyond 3-of-the-minor or beyond 2NT (if he thinks that there is a game contract somewhere) and not to make these bids himself as 3 of opener's minor and 2NT are non-forcing.

Typical set of opener's rebids, assuming you play a strong NoTrump are:

After 1♣ - 2♣

2♦ = ♦ stopper, ♥s and ♠s are unknown.

2♥ = ♥ stopper and ♠s unstopped.

- 2♠ = ♠ stopper and ♥s unstopped.
- 2NT = balanced minimum, 12-13 with both majors stopped.
- 3NT = balanced 14-15 with both majors stopped.
- 3♣ = minimum and no desire to compete further.
- 4♣ = Slam interest showing 1st or 2nd round control of ♣.

After 1♦ - 2♦

- 2♥ = ♥ stopper and ♠s unstopped; ♣s unknown
- 2♠ = ♠ stopper and ♥s unstopped; ♣s unknown
- 2NT = balanced minimum, 12-13 with both majors stopped.
- 3NT = balanced 14-15 with both majors stopped.
- 3♣ = second suit (either no major stopped or a hand unsuitable for NoTrump).
- 3♦ = minimum and no desire to compete further.

The above is pretty standard. Splinter bids are not universally accepted with minor fits. I greatly prefer Italian Cuebidding.

Also, the opener (or responder), with a strong hand, must manufacture a forcing sequence to cater to game or slam going hands without resorting to the over-used 4NT. One moderate solution is for opener to use 4♣ over any inverted raise as Gerber, and 4NT as a 18-19 balanced hand. This fits with the above.

Bid stoppers up the line to ensure that you do not make a non-forcing bid if you have extras.

Please note that using 4♣ as Gerber for Ace asking does not address the issue of having 2 losers in an unbid suit. I still prefer Italian Cuebidding.

Opener - Responder

(the partnership has agreed on Italian control bidding)

- 1♦ - 2♦ Inverted Minor raise. 10+ points, 5+ card ♦ support, no 4-card major.
- 2♥ - 3NT Opener denies a Spade Stop. Responder confirms extra values and a Spade stop.
- 4♣ - 4♠ Opener confirms 1st or 2nd round control of Clubs; responder confirms 2 losers in Hearts (Responder has skipped over Hearts, this confirms at least 2 losing Hearts.)
- 5♦ - Pass Opener signs off in 5 Diamonds.

Opener - Responder

- 1♦ - 2♦ Inverted Minor raise. 10+ points, 5+ card ♦ support, no 4-card major
- 2♥ - 3NT Opener denies a Spade Stop. Responder confirms opening+ values and a Spade stop
- 4♣ - 4♠ Opener confirms 1st or 2nd round control of Clubs, responder confirms 2 losers in Hearts
- 6♦ - Pass Opener denies 2 Heart losers and chooses Slam in Diamonds

Opener - Responder

- 1♦ - 2♦ Inverted Minor raise. 10+ points, 5+ card ♦ support, no 4-card major.
- 2♥ - 2NT Opener denies a Spade Stop. Responder confirms 10-12 HCP and a Spade stop

- 4♥ - 4♠ Opener confirms 1st or 2nd round control of Hearts, shows 2 losing ♣, responder denies 2 losing Clubs and confirms slam interest and Spade control
- 6♦ Opener chooses Slam in Diamonds

Opener - Responder

- 1♦ - 2♦ Inverted Minor raise. 10+ points, 5+ card ♦ support, no 4-card major.
- 2♥ - 3NT Opener denies a Spade Stop. Responder confirms opening+ values and a Spade stop
- Pass Opener shows no interest in Slam

Opener - Responder

- 1♦ - 2♦ Inverted Minor raise. 10+ points, 5+ card ♦ support, no 4-card major.
- 2♥ - 3NT Opener denies a Spade Stop. Responder confirms opening+ values and a Spade stop
- 4♣ - 4♠ Opener confirms 1st or 2nd round control of Clubs, responder confirms 2 losers in Hearts
- 6♦ - Pass Opener denies 2 Heart losers and chooses Slam in Diamonds

Opener - Responder

- 1♣ - 2♣ Inverted Minor raise. 10+ points, 5+ card ♣ support, no 4-card major.
- 3NT - P Opener confirms 14-15 HCP and stops in both Majors. Responder passes with minimum.
- 1♣ - 2♣ Inverted Minor raise. 10+ points, 5+ card ♣ support, no 4-card major.
- 4♣ - 4♥ Opener confirms Slam interest and shows Club control. Responder shows 2 losing Diamonds but confirms 1st or 2nd round control of Hearts.
- 6♣ - Pass Opener chooses 6 Clubs.

Set A: Your Partner opens 1♦, what is your bid?

- ♠KT4 ♥AQ87 ♦87652 ♣5 1♥
- ♠984 ♥753 ♦K9875 ♣A5 3♦
- ♠8 ♥AQ9742 ♦JT983 ♣9 1♥
- ♥86 ♠KQ7 ♦K8752 ♣K64 2♦
- ♥K92 ♠83 ♦A5 ♣AK9842 2♣

Set B: Your Partner opens 1♦, what is your bid?

- ♠KT4 ♥AJ7 ♦Q87652 ♣5 2♦
- ♠QJ4 ♥A53 ♦KQJ75 ♣A5 2♦
- ♠83 ♥AQ42 ♦AT98 ♣963 1♥
- ♠KQ7 ♥A6 ♦K8752 ♣K64 2♦
- ♠A983 ♥K92 ♦A52 ♣A42 1♠

Set C: Your Partner opens 1♣, what is your bid?

♠KT4 ♥AJ7 ♦Q8 ♣K9786 2♣

♠KJ4 ♥AJ3 ♦KQJ75 ♣A5 1♦

♠83 ♥AQ4 ♦AJ9 ♣Q9863 2♣

♠KQ7 ♥A6 ♦A82 ♣K6542 2♣

♠9 ♥K92 ♦A765 ♣AQJ42 2♣

Set D: Your Partner opens 1♣, you bid 2♣, partner bids 3NT, what is your bid?

♠KT4 ♥AJ7 ♦Q2 ♣A9852 Pass

♠KJ4 ♥AJ3 ♦K5 ♣AK985 4♣

♠A ♥AQ4 ♦AT96 ♣KQ863 4♣

♠AQ7 ♥A6 ♦982 ♣K9764 4♣

♠♥KJ2 ♦AJ752 ♣AQJ42 4♣