

# Spiral Raises

## A Twist on Major Suit Raises

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While there are many variations of this pattern, they all revolve around raising responder's bid of 1 of a Major suit, following an opening bid of 1 of a Minor. Using Spiral, opener may raise responder's major **without** having 4 pieces. Assume for these examples that the opponents are passing.

### Example 1:

1♣/♦ by Opener, 1♥ by responder, 2♥ by Opener. The stage is now set for a **Spiral** bid if responder has interest in game. Responder now bids 2NT, as an invocation of the Spiral bid knowing that Opener may have only 3♥.

### Example 2:

1♣/♦ by Opener, 1♠ by responder, 2♠ by Opener. The stage is now set for a **Spiral** bid if responder has interest in game. Responder now bids 2NT, as an invocation of the Spiral bid knowing that Opener may have only 3♠.

The foremost consideration revolves around the decision to support with 3 pieces in the first place. Normally you raise partner's Major when you have 4 pieces. There must be strident reasons why you choose to raise with 3 card support instead of 4. These considerations should appeal to your sense of logic, reason and common sense. If not, you should not implement this bidding pattern.

Reasons you might raise partner's response of 1 of a Major suit with only 3 pieces:

Opener might have an **unbalanced** hand that is unsuitable for a 1NT rebid

Opener might have **worthless cards in the opposite Major**

Opener has **quality** in the 3 cards they hold in responder's Major. Usually 2 Honors

Opener will NEVER raise responder's Major with 3 small cards. Find another bid

Opener will NEVER jump raise with only 3 cards in responder's major

Hands types that you would most likely raise partner's major suit bid having only 3 pieces. Consider the following opening hands. North opens 1♦ in both scenarios.

The bidding has gone 1♦ by Opener, 1♥ by responder. Assume that the opponents are passing for purposes of illustration.

**Hand 1:** North holds:

♠86 ♥AK10 ♦A752 ♣Q832

Rebidding 1NT suggests a balanced hand with a stopper in Spades. Bid 2♥.

**Hand 2:** North holds:

♠K86 ♥AJ10 ♦AJ7532 ♣2

Rebidding 2♦ makes no sense. Bid 2♥.

Raising Hearts to the 2 level is a good bid if you wish to implement the Spiral Convention.

The bidding would look like this: Remember that for purposes of illustration, the opponents are passing.

**North (Opener)    South (Responder)**

1♦/♣

1♥

2♥

2NT (Spiral)

The Spiral bid is made by a responder who is interested in game. It is also an **inquiry** which asks:  
How many cards do you have in my Major? 3 or 4?

How big is your hand?

Min 12-13; Max 14-16

Note! There are many variations of the Spiral Convention. I play much more complicated versions with my regular players. I propose this version for a novice/intermediate audience. It is easy to remember.

Responses to Spiral are specific and alertable. Following the pattern above, responder might be interested in game and needs to know more about opener's hand. Assume the following:

**North (Opener)    South (Responder)**

1♦/♣

1♥

2♥

2NT (Spiral)

3♣ = Min 12-13 with 3 Trump (♥)

3♦ = Max 14-16 with 3 Trump (♥)

3♥ = Min 12-13 with 4 Trump (♥)

3♠ = Max 14-16 with 4 Trump (♥)

**North (Opener)    South (Responder)**

1♦/♣

1♠

2♠

2NT (Spiral)

3♣ = Min 12-13 with 3 Trump (♠)

3♦ = Max 14-16 with 3 Trump (♠)

3♥ = Min 12-13 with 4 Trump (♠)

3♠ = Max 14-16 with 4 Trump (♠)

Armed with information provided by opener's response to the Spiral bid, the partnership has a good chance to find an ideal spot to land. As in all bidding sequences, good judgement is essential.

What about Kokish game tries? Use them only when opening five card majors with partner supporting. Solves a lot of problems. ♣