

INVERTED MINOR RAISES

The treatment termed Inverted Minor Raises refers to the practice of reversing the normal meaning of raises after partner's has opened the bidding with one of a minor suit. This treatment uses jump raises (3♣ over 1♣ and 3♦ over 1♦) to describe a hand that has no four card major and about 4-8 HCP's (high card points) with a fit for partner's minor suit. On the other hand single raises in the minor suits (2♣ over 1♣ and 2♦ over 1♦) show good hands with support and are forcing to at least three of the minor suit opened. The primary advantage of this reversal is to keep the bidding on good hands at a lower level in order to facilitate game and slam bidding while allowing the responder to preempt the bidding with a weak hand that has a good fit.

Since the jump raise in the minors is intended to be preemptive, at least five-card support is required. Trump length is important since the high card strength will be very limited. In fact, a good rule to follow is that the longer the trump support the fewer the HCP's required. To continue bidding after this preemptive raise the opener needs a very good hand.

There are at least two schools of thought on the values promised by the single raise. Using the first method a single raise is forcing on the opener for one round; it is not necessarily game forcing. The requirements are (1) at least a good 10 or more HCP's (can be enough for game), (2) good four-card or longer support (usually five+), and (3) no four-card major suit. In other words, although it can be an extraordinarily good hand, it must be at least a limit raise in the minor suit opened. It should not be a balanced hand as such hands are better described by bidding notrump. Using this method responder's second bid will further describe his hand with three of the minor showing the limit raise and all other bids the game forcing raise.

The second way to play single raises requires a much better hand; in fact, the single raise becomes the equivalent of an old fashioned forcing raise. The requirements for this single or forcing raise are: (1) a good 12 or more HCP's, (2) good four-card or longer support for the minor opened (usually longer), and (3) no four-card major suit. Again, the hand should not be balanced. If this method is employed it is necessary to find some other way to make a limit raise in the opening minor.

Regardless of the single raise method chosen, interference by the opponents causes

it to change again. When the opponents double, a jump raise is still preemptive but a limit raise (or better) is shown by bidding 2NT. This is the known as a Jordan-type raise. Single raises become simply competitive.

When the opponents overcall, the recommended treatment is that single raises are just competitive but that double raises remain preemptive since cue-bids are now available to show good hands with support.

I prefer the first method described above and the following examples show Inverted Minor Raises at work. In all cases partner has opened the bidding with 1♣:

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
♠ x	♠ x	♠ Qxx	♠ x
♥ A10x	♥ xxx	♥ Kx	♥ Axx
♦ A10xx	♦ xxx	♦ Axx	♦ Axxx
♣ KQxxx	♣ KJxxxx	♣ J10xxx	♣ J10xxx
Bid 2♣, then force to game	Bid 3♣	Bid 1NT	Bid 2♣, then 3♣ next

Regardless of the method used, after a single raise by partner (2♣/1♣ or 2♦/1♦), new suit rebids by opener are forcing and tend to show side suit strength and unbalanced hands promising four or more cards in suit opened. NT bids show balanced hands in the appropriate range. A rebid of the suit opened shows a minimum unbalanced hand.

It should be pointed out that it is often impractical to use 4NT as regular Blackwood or Roman Keycard Blackwood as the bidding may get too high with no possible recovery. I would suggest using cuebidding below game to show slam interest.

Inverted Minor Raises are not for everyone, but it is important to understand them in order to be prepared for opponents who use them.

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