Forcing Bids

Goals

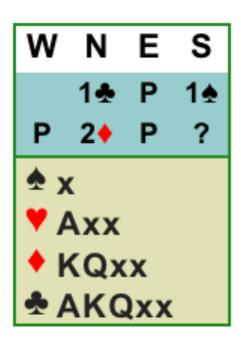
- Understand which bids are forcing/non-forcing
- Understand when to make a forcing bid
- Learn some rules to guide your bidding when you're not sure

Before you spend time learning new conventions, it's essential to know which bids in standard bidding are forcing or not

Basic assumptions

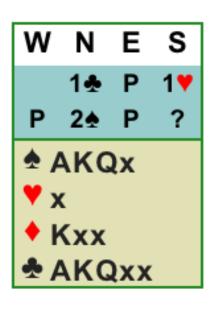
- Bidding system: 2-over-1 game force
- We'll assume only the most basic convention
 - Forcing NT (as part of two-over-one)
 - Stayman and transfers over 1NT openings
 - Jacoby 2NT
 - New-minor forcing
 - Drury

Terminology overview: reverses



- Hand strength is 17+
- First suit bid is longer than the second

Terminology overview: jump shifts



- Hand strength is 19+
- First suit bid is longer than second
- Second bid is a jump

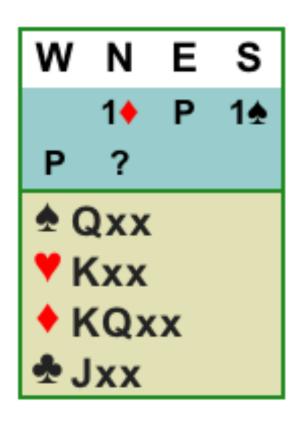
What's forcing in an uncontested auction?

- General rules:
 - a new suit by an unpassed responder is forcing
 - once a game force is established, keep bidding until you reach game
- What specific types of bids are forcing?
 - A reverse by opener is a one-round force
 - A new suit after a suit has been agreed upon is forcing one round
 - Any bid after opener has jumped is forcing to game
 - A strong 2C opener is forcing to 2NT or 3M after double negative
 - A jump shift by opener is game forcing
 - Any bid after a game force has been established is game forcing
 - Conventional bids are forcing, and some also establish a game force

Why is it important to know which bids are forcing?

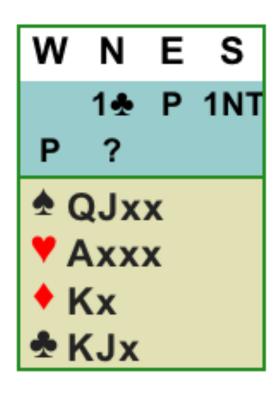
- Bridge is a partnership game.
 - When you or your partner make a bid, it's important that you both have the same understanding of whether it's forcing or not
 - Passing a forcing bid can damage partnership trust and confidence in bidding
 - It's equally important to remember to make a forcing bid when you don't want to be passed

Let's look at some examples

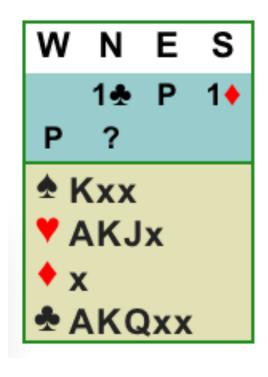


Forcing. Bid 1NT. You cannot pass; partner (responder) is unlimited.

Consider your rebid before you open – if you would be tempted to pass partner's response, then you probably shouldn't open



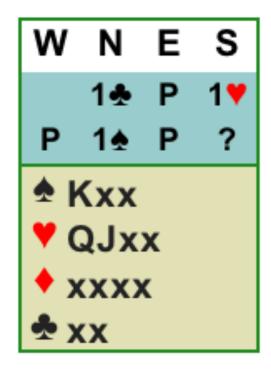
Not forcing. Partner has limited his hand to less than 10 points, depending on your ranges. You aren't going to miss game. Pass.



Bid 2H. You need to establish a game force, and partner can pass a 1H rebid. So you need to jump shift.

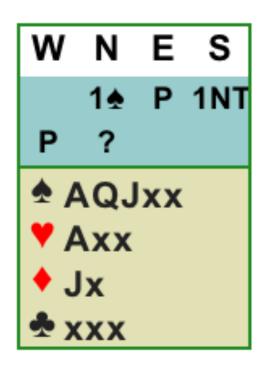
Your bid?

1-level rebids by responder



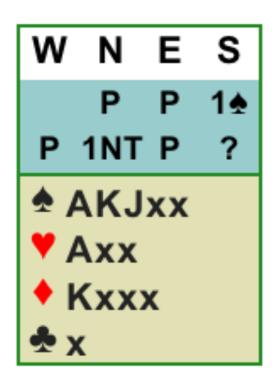
Not forcing. Partner has limited his hand by not jump shifting, and this is the best spot. You should pass.

With a strong hand (19+ points), opener should bid 2S as his second bid.



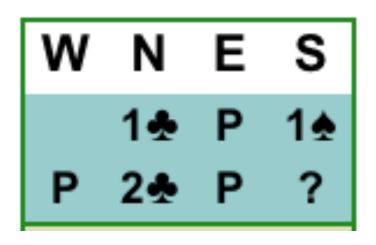
Depends on system.

- 2-over-1, Forcing NT: This is 100% **forcing**. Your partner might have as much as an opening hand with three trump, and is counting on you to bid again.
- Standard American: Pass.



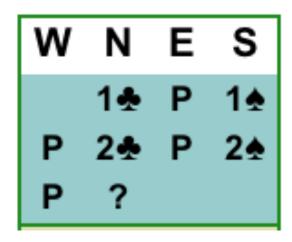
Not forcing. Partner is a passed hand, so you can pass. But.. You should take another bid. Your hand is great, and partner could have as much as 11 HCP if playing 2-over-1.

2-level rebids by opener



Not forcing. Partner has limited his hand to about 15 HCP by not jumping.

2-level rebids by responder



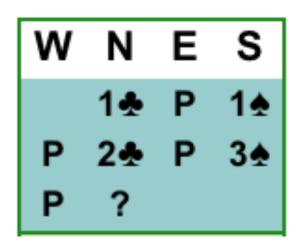
Forcing or not?

Not forcing.

This bid shows 6 spades, and less than invitational values.

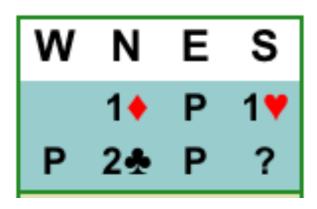
To force (as responder), bid a new suit instead of repeating your suit

3-level rebids by responder



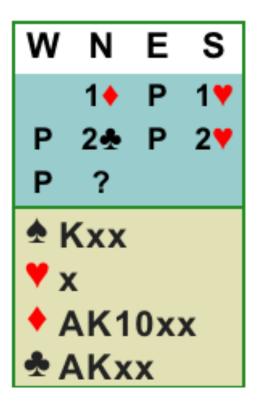
Not forcing. This shows an invitational hand with six or more spades.

2-level rebids by opener



Not forcing. Opener has limited his hand to about 17-18 HCP by not jumping.

2-level rebids by responder

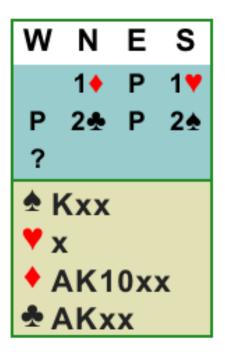


Not forcing. Responder has limited his hand to less than invitational values.

It's tempting to venture one more bid because you have extras, but given the misfit, it might be better to pass.

Forcing or not?

2-level rebids by responder

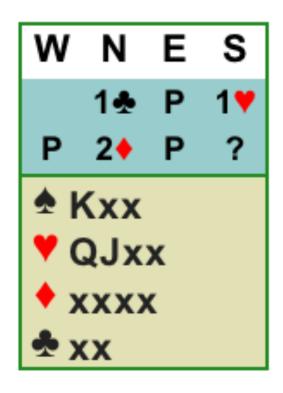


Forcing or not?

Forcing. Responder has bid a new suit (which he might not have) and is still unlimited, so you should take another bid. What that bid should be is another question!

Some people play a convention called *Fourth Suit Forcing* to game, which creates a game force by bidding the fourth suit.

2-level rebids by opener



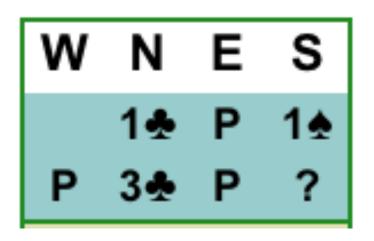
Forcing or not?

Forcing One Round.

Opener has reversed, showing a hand of 17+ points. Despite how drecky your hand is, you owe partner one more bid.

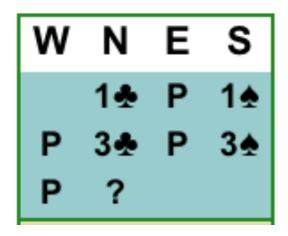
There are different ways to respond to reverses, so how you respond depends on your methods.

3-level jumps by opener



Not forcing, but highly invitational. Partner has limited his hand to 16-17 HCP by not jump-shifting.

3-level responses by responder

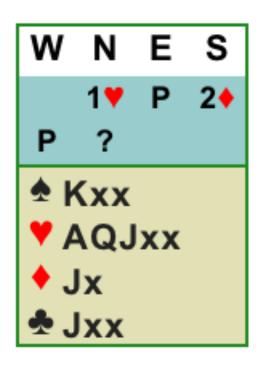


Forcing or not?

Forcing. Responder, by bidding after the jump, has forced you to game. Any bid by responder after opener jumps is forcing to game.

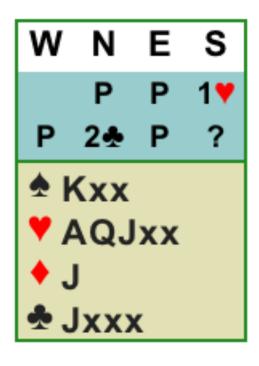
(Conversely, the only call responder can make to not create a game force after the jump is PASS.)

2-over-1 auctions

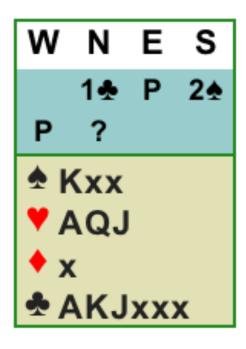


Game Forcing. Your partner established a game force. You don't like your hand, but partner is unlimited. Bid 2NT to show a balanced minimum.

2-over-1 auctions: passed hand Depends!



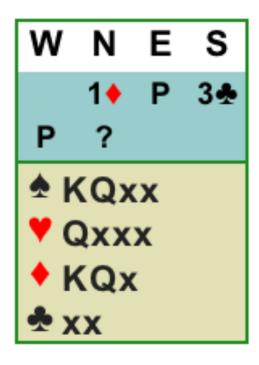
- If you play Drury, then 2 Clubs is a conventional bid and is **FORCING**, showing support for opener's suit + limit-raise values. You cannot pass. Bid 2H, denying interest in game.
- If you don't play Drury, then the bid is natural, so **PASS**! You have a good club fit and no interest in game.
- As opener or responder: remember whether you're playing Drury



Forcing or not?

Most likely *non*-forcing.

- Playing weak jump-shifts, responder is showing ~5 points or less, and a six-card suit. You still may decide to invite or jump to game given your hand, but you don't have to bid.
- Playing strong jump-shifts, the bid would be 100% forcing, and in this case, you'd drive to slam

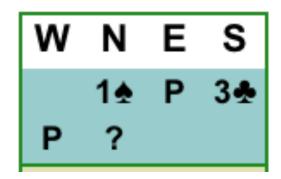


Forcing or not?

Depends on partnership agreement.

Many people play this as **nonforcing,** showing an invitational hand with long clubs, probably looking for 3NT. With this minimum, you'll pass

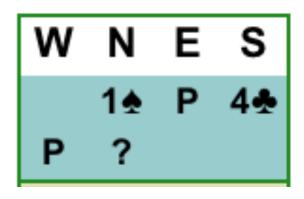
Some may play this as a weak jump shift, but I like the above treatment better



Forcing or not?

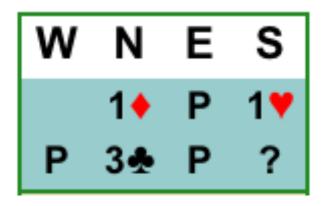
Depends on partnership agreement.

- It could show a weak jump shift, in which case, non-forcing.
- It could show an invitational hand with long clubs and fewer than 3 spades, looking for 3NT, in which case, non-forcing.
- For those playing Bergen raises, 3C is a conventional bid showing 4 spades and 7-9 HCP. This bid is **forcing to the level of 3S.**



- This is a conventional splinter bid, showing shortness in clubs, with 4+ spades
- Game forcing. If your hand is nice, cue bid a control along the way

Jumps by opener



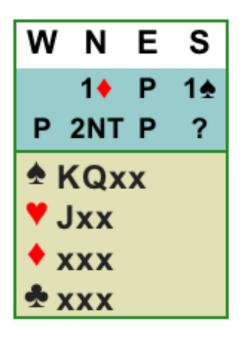
Forcing or not?

Game Forcing. Partner's hand promises 19+ points, and is forcing to game.

Since partner needs to establish a game force, he may not have a real club suit. For example:

xx Ax AKJxx AKx

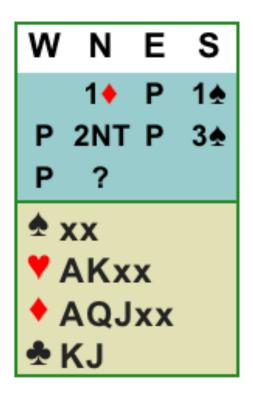
Jumps by opener



Non-forcing: Opener is limited to 18-19 HCP. Your hand is flat and minimum, and you may decide to pass.

Remember, if you bid again, you're forcing your side to game.

Response to jump by opener

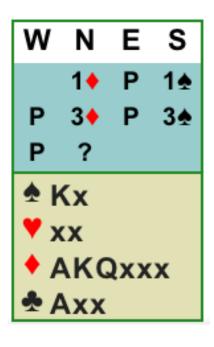


Forcing or not?

Forcing: Any bid by responder after opener jumps is forcing.* (The only non-forcing bid is pass.) In this auction, responder should have six spades.

*There are other conventional treatments that allow you to get out below game in this auction

Response to jump by opener

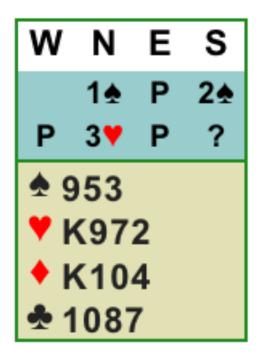


Forcing: Any response after opener jumps is forcing to game, even though the jump itself wasn't.

Responder is showing six spades, and a game force.

With this hand, you bid 4S.

New suit after suit agreement

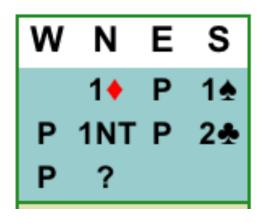


- Forcing: Opener has extras and is asking for help to get to game.
 Your choices are:
 - 3S, sign off
 - 4H, choice of games
 - 4S, game
- But, you cannot pass.
 Opener may not have a real heart suit

Bids can change with conventions

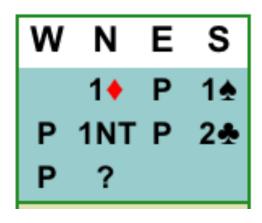
- A conventional bid is an artificial bid which differs from its natural meaning.
- Conventional bids are forcing
- The existence of conventional bids can change whether some bids are forcing or not.
- Let's look at bidding after 1NT response by opener in three cases:
 - Natural
 - Use New Minor Forcing
 - Use XYZ

Bidding after 1NT response by opener



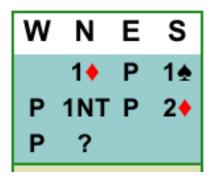
- If you don't play any conventional treatments over 1NT
- Then, new lower-ranking suit bids over 1NT are nonforcing; responder must jump or reverse to create a force
- Pass or correct

Bidding after 1NT response by opener New Minor Forcing



- How can you establish a force In this situation? New Minor Forcing, or one of its variants is very useful.
- Responder's rebid of 2C is artificial and forcing, asking opener to further describe major suits:
 - Bid 2D or 2NT lacking a four-card heart suit or a 3-card spade support
 - Bid 2H with a four-card heart suit
 - Bid 2S with 3-card spade support

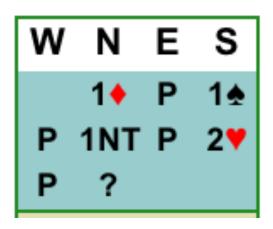
Bidding after 1NT response by opener



Forcing or not?

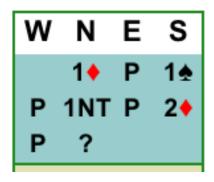
Non-forcing. Responder
has failed to make a
forcing bid of a new suit,
and has limited his hand,
so you can pass.

Bidding after 1NT response by opener



- Non-forcing. Pass or correct.
- Another way to think of it: responder could have bid 2C to use New-Minor Forcing to force you to bid again.
- Negative inferences are important: what partner didn't bid is as important as what he did bid

XYZ



Forcing or not?

 Game forcing. Pass at your peril! The 2D bid has established a game force, and you should continue to describe your hand further.

Establishing a game force

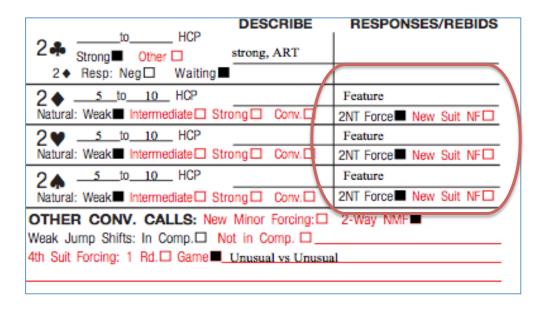
- Some times you would like to establish a game force. Conventions exist to allow you to do that in a variety of situations.
 - 2-over-1
 - 4th-suit forcing
 - XYZ and Two-Way New Minor Forcing
 - Splinters
- Once a game force is established, you cannot pass below the level of game

Bidding after preempts



Forcing or not?

Depends:

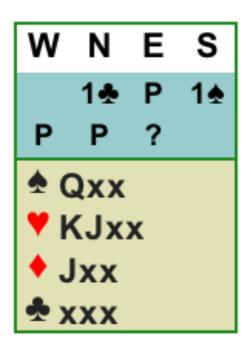


- Recommend FORCING
 - Pass if no fit
 - More important to be able to bid constructively

Balancing in competition

• Sometimes it's right to balance, other times it's not. Let's take a look.

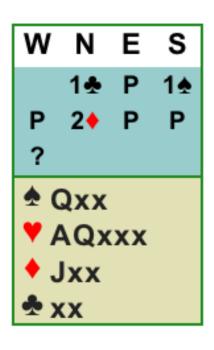
What would you do?



 PASS. Opener has passed a forcing bid.
 Responder (S) is unlimited. Don't balance them into game!

Matchpoints, your bid

What would you do?



 PASS. Responder has passed a forcing bid.
 Opener has reversed, and responder has passed. Don't balance them into game!

Your bid?

General principle

 In pass-out seat, if your left-hand opponent made a forcing bid and your right-hand opponent passed, then:

PASS!

Summary of forcing bids

- General rules:
 - a new suit by an unpassed responder is forcing
 - once a game force is established, keep bidding until you reach game
- What specific types of bids are forcing?
 - A reverse by opener is forcing one round
 - A new suit after a suit has been agreed upon is forcing one round
 - Any bid after opener has jumped is game forcing
 - A strong 2C opener is forcing to 2NT or 3M after double negative
 - A jump shift by opener is game forcing
 - Any bid after a game force has been established is forcing
 - Conventional bids are forcing, and may also establish a game force