



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(104) New Minor Forcing

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Level: 2, 3

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General

Level: 2

New Minor Forcing (NMF) is one of responder's tools for extending the auction and exploring Opener's hand (asking for more information). It is used on the second round of the auction and is an artificial call (like Stayman) of "the unbid minor" used to ask Opener for further description of their hand (especially their Major suit holdings.)

*Note: It is common in bridge for us to use a minor as a conventional call when we need to find out more information. This comes from the concept of "When you aren't sure what do bid and you need to lie, lie in a minor!" However, as it is a conventional call, it is alertable (noted with * in the examples.)*

NMF is a constructive bidding tool and requires Responder to have invitational or better values (10+ points if Opener shows a minimum opener by rebidding 1NT). The basics of NMF are relatively simple "Tell me more about your hand partner!" Our goal here is to examine NMF in more complex situations and see how we use it to help us reach a good final contact.

When Can NMF Be Used

Level: 3

New Minor Forcing or a variation of it can be used over many auctions (rebids):

- 1NT Rebid – NMF shows the normal 10+ points
- 2NT Rebid – NMF is GF, but only about 7+ points needed here.
(Many use 3♣ as Wolff Signoff or play other transfer methods in auctions like this.)
- 1♣ - 1M - 2♣ - 2♦* - NMF, 10+ points
- 1♦ - 1M - 2♦ - 3♣* - NMF, 12+ points, GF
- 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♥ - 3♣* - NMF, 12+ points, GF



Let's look at one of these auctions in detail!

Example

- | | | |
|----------|------|--|
| 1♣ | 1♠ | |
| 2♣ | ___? | |
| • 2♦* | | NMF, 10+ points, 1F |
| • 2♥ | | 5+♠, 4+♥, 8-9 points, NF (with a minimum hand, 6-7 points, just pass 2♣) |
| • 2♠ | | 6+♠, 6-9 points, corrective |
| • 2NT/3♣ | | Natural and Invitational, 10-11 points |
| • 3♦ | | 5+♠, 5+♦, Invitational, 10-11 points |
| • 3♥ | | 5+♠, 5+♥, Invitational, 10-11 points |
| • 3♠ | | 6+♠, Invitational, 10-11 points |

Note: Jumps by Responder on the second round of the bidding are not usually forcing – the modern style is to play them as invitational.

Competition

Level: 2

Competitive auctions cause more complications than unobstructed ones. An important time to make sure you and partner are on the same page is when you are going to use a convention in competition, and New Minor Forcing is no exception. Let's look at some competitive auctions and see when our traditional NMF agreements still apply and when we treat the auction differently.

Vs. Overcalls

When we open the bidding, the opponent makes a direct seat overcall, partner bids a suit, and we rebid 1NT, then we are *not* in a traditional NMF auction.

Examples

1♣	1♦	1M	P		1m	1♥	1♠	P
1NT					1NT			

If Responder wants to find out more about Opener's hand and force the auction, then they have a clear action to do this – cuebid the opponent's suit. Thus, bidding a new suit (even the new minor) is natural and non-forcing (generally to play) – it is not New Minor Forcing.

Example

1♣	1♥	1♠	P	
1NT	P	2♦		Not NMF.

Responder could also reverse. This should be forcing for one round (though this is rare.)

1♣	1♦	1♥	P
1NT	P	2♠	



Vs. Takeout Doubles

When the opponents make a takeout double below our 1NT rebid (or 2NT rebid),

Example

1♣ X 1♠ P
1NT P 2♦ NMF.

Responder does not have a clearly forcing bid (no cuebid available) and in this case we “ignore the double” and play as if the opponent had not interfered -- 2♦ would be NMF.

Note: In other competitive auctions (2NT rebids, suit rebids, etc...) we will use a similar set of agreements.

Slams

Level: 2

When Responder has a strong hand (one strong enough to be interested in slam opposite a normal Opener – 1NT or 2-suit Rebid) then Responder will need a tool for exploring slam. This is an important additional use of NMF – it’s not used just to probe for Major suit fits, but to probe for more information for a potential slam.

Example

1♦ 1♥
1NT 2♣*
2NT 3♥ 6+♥, GF, Slam Try (would just bid 4♥ with only game interest)

1♦ 1♥
1NT 2♣*
2♥ 3♦ 4+♦, G, Slam Try (usually only 4♥)

Note: If Responder were only inviting with 4♦-4♥ they would have bid 3♦ directly over 1NT.

Conclusion

New Minor Forcing is a valuable tool for Responder on the second round of the auction. They use it with their good hands in many different auctions. It is important for Responder and Opener to be on the same page about how to continue the auction -- what bids are NMF or what do the follow up bids mean. If you and partner are on the same page, then explore using these tools as much as you can!