

Inverted Minors, Criss Cross, and Flip-Flop

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The Inverted Minor Raise, Criss Cross, and Flip-Flop are used by partnerships that play 2/1 Game Force System with the goal of playing the contract in 3NT. In this Timm bit, we review minor suit raises used in Standard American, Inverted Minor Raises used in 2/1, and the “blended” convention that include Inverted Minor Raises with Criss Cross and Flip-Flop.

Standard American (OVERVIEW)

In Standard American, a single minor raise usually shows 5-9 HCP, no 4-card major and generally 5+ card support for the minor suit bid. With only four-card support, the bid of 1NT is used and does not show stoppers in the unbid suits, even though the bid usually shows 6-10 HCP.

Any rebid by opener, other than a single raise in the minor suit bid, is a one round force showing extra values with interest in game (usually 3NT); to create a game force, opener makes a jump shift bid.

A jump raise by responder usually shows 10-12 HCP and 5+ card support in the minor suit bid with no 4-card major. Without 5-card support and both minors, one usually bids the other minor and then makes a jump preference for the original bid minor. To reach a NT game contract, cue bids are used to show stoppers by opener and responder.

In summary, single raises are weak and double raises are strong.

Inverted Minor Raises (10+) in Standard American

Standard American meaning of a single raise and a double raise are “inverted”. Jump raises are weak (and alerted) and preemptive (5-9 HCP) with no 4-card major and 5+ card support for the minor bid suit, and single raises show 10+ HCP (with no upper limit), with no 4-card major. The bid is forcing for one round (and alerted), if made by an unpassed responder.

The main advantage of inverted minor raises is that they bid provides extra room for game and slam exploration.

Most play that inverted minor raises is OFF over competition. Then, a single raise shows 6-9 HCP, a double raise is preemptive, and a double show 10+ HCP, with or without support.

Weak Jump Shifts, 1♣ followed by 2♦ or 1♦ followed by 3♣, are usually weak showing a 6+ card suit. However, some play these as mini splinters showing 10-11 HCP. Discuss this with your partner.

Rebids by Opener after a single raise

A rebid of 2NT by opener shows a balanced hand in the 12-14 point range with both majors stopped.

A jump rebid of 3NT by opener shows a balanced hand and 18-19 HCP with stoppers in both majors.

Opener's rebid of a **new** suit at the 3-level (a mini-splinter over a single raise in all auctions but one) shows more than a minimum, at least 14 HCP, usually distributional and forcing.

After an inverted minor raise, opener rebids show "stoppers up the line". Opener should not by pass any suit containing a stopper.

Responder rebids

Using the 10+ inverted minor raise, only the responder knows whether the response show invitational values (10-12 HCP) or game forcing values (13+ HCP). When opener shows minimal values he bids 2NT or stoppers, the responder is responsible for ensuring that the auction continues. With invitational values, bids should not be made that take the contract beyond the 3-level in the minor. With game forcing values, no bid should be made below the 3-level by responder that the opener may pass (e.g. 2NT or 3-level bid in support of the minor). **Note:** A bid of 2NT or three of the original minor by either opener or responder is nonforcing.

Slam bidding in the agreed upon minor with Standard American inverted minors

There is no single agreed upon approach here, it depends on your partnership agreement.

Some use 4NT Blackwood as an ace asking bid.

Some use 4 of the agreed minor as the Minorwood 1430 asking bid.

Some use 4 of the suit above the agreed minor as the RCK (1430/3014) with kickback as the asking bid. For example, with RKCB 1430 (kickback) and an agreed upon minor (also included are bids with a major), the are:

Trump Suit		Clubs	Diamonds	Hearts	Spades
Kickback	Bid	4♦	4♥	4♠	4NT
Step 1	1-4	4♥	4♠	4NT	5♣
Step 2	0-3	4♠	4NT	5♣	5♦
Step 3	2 w/o Q	4NT	5♣	5♦	5♥
Step 4	2 w Q	5♣	5♦	5♥	5♠

After 3NT, many use Gerber as the ace-asking bid.

2/1 Game Force System (OVERVIEW)

Inverted Minor Raises (13+) in 2/1, with Criss Cross and Flip-Flop

Inverted minor raises in 2/1 are game-forcing bids; this is not the case in Standard American. Playing Inverted in 2/1 with Criss Cross, a bid of 1♣-2♣* or 1♦-2♦*, denies a 4-card major and shows a hand with 13+ points and at least 4 card support for the bid minor. The bids are forcing to game (and alerted); there is no upper limit for the inverted minor raise. Using criss cross, the bids of 2♦* after 1♣, and 3♣* after 1♦, Jump Shifts (J/S) in the other minor (an alert – in Red on the Convention Card), show a limit raise (10-12 HCP) and at least 4-card support for the bid minor, and denies a 4-card major. These bids are invitational to game.

Note: Using this convention, one gives up the Weak Jump shift bid in the other minor or the mini-splinter bid which may be played with the 10+ inverted minor raise approach. With either approach (inverted minors or inverted minor raises with criss cross), a weak hand (9 or less points) is shown by preemptive double raise in the minor (alerted), again denying a four card major. Because the hand is weak, one again usually has 5+ card support for the bid minor.

Rebids by Opener [(following a single raise (13+) or a J/S response)].

A rebid of 2NT by opener shows a hand in the 12-14 point range with both majors stopped. This bid may not be used after the 3♣ bids; instead one must bid 3NT!

A jump rebid of 3NT by opener shows 18-19 HCP with stoppers in both majors, only after a 2-level bid. This is not used with criss cross after the 3♣ bids; it is given up.

Opener's rebid of a new suit (after a single raise) at the 3-level (a mini-splinter over a single raise) shows more than a minimum, at least 14 HCP usually distributional and forcing; as noted below, an exception again occurs with the bid of 3♣ after a 1♦ opener.

After an inverted minor raise, opener rebids show “stoppers up the line”. Opener must not by pass any suit containing a stopper, for single raises this is identical to the 10+ inverted minor raise bids.

Note: With criss cross (a J/S response), a 3-level minor suit bid (3C♣ after 2♦) shows a minor two suiter (5-4+) and a minimum hand (12-13 HCP). The bids 2♥, 2♠, and 3♦ (after 1♣ -2♦) show stoppers. A clear disadvantage of criss cross J/S limit raises is that

they take up bidding room, especially when one bids 3♣ after 1♦. Now it is more difficult to show stoppers since one must use 3-level bids. For this reason, some play criss cross only after a 1♣ bid, and **do not use it over the 1D bid**. This is sometimes referred to as partial Criss Cross bids. Other plays “Reverse” Criss Cross; then the inverted bid and weak Jump Shift bids are reversed.

Rebids by responder

With game forcing values, the responder may also bid stoppers to try to get to NT after a single forcing raise. With a J/S limit raise, no call should again be made that takes the auction beyond the 3 level.

What is Flip-Flop?

Playing inverted minor raises at the 13+ level, inverted minor raises are off in competition. However, there is an exception. The exception is over a double when playing Flip-Flop.

Over a double and playing **flip-flop** inverted minor raises are on. Then, a bid of 2NT (an alert) shows a preemptive raise of the opener’s minor suit bid and the 3♣/3♦ bids are reversed (Flip-flopped) showing a minor suit limit (10-12 HCP) raise (an alert). To show a hand with 13+, one uses a redouble (an alert).

What about slam bidding when playing Inverted Minor Raises (13+) in 2/1, with Criss Cross and Flip-Flop?

These bids are identical to those summarized using inverted minor raises and the 10+ approach; they again depend on partnership agreements.

With the explanation provided, we hope that club members who are still playing the Standard American convention may consider 2/1 and incorporate some form of inverted minor raises, with or without, criss cross (full or partial) or Reverse Criss Cross and flip-flop into their partnerships.