



Adventures in Bridge

Leaders in Bridge Entertainment and Education

www.advinbridge.com

(32) Constructive Bidding: The Trouble with Minors (Inverted Minors)

Date: March 2012 © AiB

Level: Intermediate/Advanced

Robert S. Todd

robert@advinbridge.com

General

The standard minor suit raise structure has some major flaws. Our goal for this document is to understand these flaws and see how this led to the development a better bidding system for minor suit oriented hands - *Inverted Minors*.

Standard Minor Suit Raises

1m 2m 6-9 points

1m 3m 10-11 points

Note: We need 5c♣ in order to raise ♣ and we need 4c♦ in order to raise ♦.

Issues to Consider in Constructing a New Minor Suit Raise Structure

We would like to build a new minor suit raise structure that helps us be better bidders. We will call this new structure *Inverted Minors*. Let's discuss what elements are important to have as part of this new set of bidding agreements.

Forcing Raise

When you compare *Standard Minor Suit Raises* to our major suit raise structure you notice the most glaring flaw - that we have no forcing raise.

1M 2NT* *Jacoby 2NT*, 4+cM, 12+ points, GF

This forcing raise is an effective tool for getting us to good slams or for keeping us out of bad slams. So we would like to have a forcing raise in our new minor suit structure to help accomplish the same good slam bidding.



Note: 1m-2NT is too valuable of a natural bid to give up, so we will need to find another bid to use as our forcing raise. When we have a nine-card major suit fit, we are willing to give up on playing in NT – not so when our suit is a minor.

Preempting the Auction

Another issue to consider in building our new inverted minors bidding structure is that when we have only a minor suit fit, the opponents can often outbid us if they have a major suit fit. So it is important for us to be able to lock the opponents out of the auction if we can, or at least force them to make difficult high-level decisions. In order to do this, we would like to have a preemptive raise available to us as early in the auction as possible.

Our New Inverted Minor Bidding Structure

Here is what was invented to help overcome the issues of standard minor suit raises.

When partner opens the bidding with 1m and the opponents pass, this will be our new set of agreements for raising partner:

(Remember that we never raise partner's minor when we have a four-card or longer major.)

<i>Weak Hand</i>	<i>0-5 HCP</i>	<i>3m*</i>
<i>Minimum Hand</i>	<i>6-9 HCP</i>	<i>1NT</i>
<i>Invitational Hand</i>	<i>10-11 HCP</i>	<i>2m*</i>
<i>Game Forcing Hand</i>	<i>12+ HCP</i>	<i>2m*</i>

Understanding Inverted Minors

We start by defining our 1m-3m as a weak bid. This leaves us to define our 1m-2m bid as our strong bid. We then realize that we need to be able to show 10-11 point (Invitational) hands as well, so we tweak our 1m-2m to only show 10+ points and we will sort out the 10-11 point hands from the 12+ point hands on the next round of the bidding.

This leaves us with the 6-9 point hands. With these hands we just bid 1NT (showing any 6-9 point hand without a 4-card Major). This works well because when we have minor suit fits we generally want to play in notrump anyway because NT scores better than playing in a minor, and if we have a game, taking nine tricks is much easier than taking eleven.



Example

The following is a common auction when playing inverted minors.

1♦ (P) 1NT (2♥)
P (P) 3♦

We show our 6-9 point hand and try to buy the contract in 1NT, but when the opponents compete in the bidding we now show our fit and compete with a 3♦ call. This is a very effective bidding method and we have turned what looked like one of the weaknesses of our new system into one of its strengths.

1♣-2♣* and 1♦-2♦* Follow-up Bids

After 1m-2m* if either player bids 2NT or 3m, that is non-forcing and limits their hand,

- Opener showing 12 to a bad 13 points, declining any invite,
- Responder showing only 10-11 points, invitational.

Any other call is 1-round force and is unlimited.

Examples

1♣ 2♣*

2NT

2NT shows stoppers in both majors and a minimum opener (12 to 13- points.)

1♣ 2♣*

3NT

3NT shows stoppers in both majors and 13+ to 14 points.

Note: In both of these auctions we ignore the other minor suit.

1♣ 2♣

3♣

12-13 points - generally this is a shapely hand with no interest in game opposite an invitational hand (this is the weakest auction.)

If Opener bids 2M then Opener has a stopper in the Major (not necessarily 4 cards) and we can infer that they have a problem (no stopper) in the other Major, since they did not bid notrump. Opener would like us to bid NT if we have a stopper in the other Major. Opener is searching for the right level (part score vs. game) and for the right strain (notrump vs. minor suit.)



Conclusion

It will take some time and many hands to get a good feel for inverted minors, but this bidding structure has many advantages over standard bidding and is worth the investment.

Final Note: Inverted Minors are off in competition and we revert to normal competitive bidding processes – weak jump raise, simple raises, and strong cuebids.

