

Bridge Lesson

Jacoby 2NT with

Direct, Concealed/Ambiguous, and Auto/Self-Splinter Bids

The Villages and Ocala Bridge Clubs

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In our last lesson on Hand Evaluation, we learned how to determine Starting, Dummy, and Bergen Points using the Marty Bergen Adjust-3 Method.

However

Two basic bidding conventions for major suit contracts are the Jacoby 2NT bid and Splinter bids.

For slams in major suit contracts one uses 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) for spades with kickback for hearts or Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKC-3014), minorwood/redwood for the minors (called bothwood), cue bidding and perhaps other gadgets like the Grand Slam Force, Pick a Slam Bids, and Keycard Gerber.

For notrump contracts one often uses Gerber, and Quantitative bids.

Today the primary focus of our lesson will be on the Jacoby 2NT bid and Splinter bids.

Jacoby 2NT

The Jacoby 2NT* **Convention** is employed when

- (1) Partner opens one of a major in the first or second seat
- (2) Your right hand opponent (RHO) has passed.

You respond by JUMPING to 2NT* when you have

- (1) 4+ trumps (not 3)**
- (2) 13+ dummy points, with no upper limit**

The Jacoby 2NT* bid **MUST BE ALERTED**, hence the asterisk!

Let's Look at an Example

Opener's Hand 1: ♠ AKQ105 ♥ J10982 ♦6 ♣ 67

Responder's Hand D: ♠ 9876 ♥ AK ♦ 75 ♣QJ984

With a 5-card major and 12 Starting Points (10HCP + 2 Length Points + 1 Quality suit = 13), opener bids 1♠.

Partner (Hand D) has 13 Dummy Points (10HCP + 1 Length Point + 2 Shortness) and four cards in the major, bids 2NT*. The two hands have 26 points between them; hence, game in the major is certain. However, is it close to slam?

Opener now re-evaluates his hand and adds 1 point for the 4+card heart side suit + 2 points for the singleton = 16 Bergen Points and PASSES.

Playing the 2/1 Game Force System, a common question asked with 13+ dummy points is whether or not you should show a long second suit first or bid Jacoby 2NT.

Should you show your strong side suit (a 2/1 bid) instead of using Jacoby 2NT*?

NO!

IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO SHOW YOUR TRUMP FIT FIRST with 4+card support with 13+ Dummy points and no singleton.

***Some players only require 11/12+ dummy points while others use 16+. You must discuss the Jacoby 2NT* bid with your partner. And if asked, please explain your agreement exactly -- DO NOT JUST SAY JACOBY.**

After Jacoby 2NT* - Opener's Responses

Rebids by Opener	Suit Length	Opener's Bergen Points
3 (new suit)*	Singleton/Void	12+
3 (major suit opened)	5/6+ in major bid	18+
3NT*	(5-3-3-2) balanced	15-17
4 (new suit)	4+ card suit	12 to 17
4 (major suit opened)	major	12 to 14

*= Alert

Examples of Opener's Responses to Jacoby 2NT*

The bidding goes 1♠ - 2NT*. What do you bid?

(1) ♠AKJ84 ♥7 ♦K10987 ♣A2

Show your heart shortness, bid 3♥*. You have 19 Bergen points.

(2) ♠AKJ84 ♥107 ♦54 ♣AQ108

You have a nice four-card suit, bid 4♣* with 17 Bergen points. You are too unbalanced to bid 3NT.

(3) ♠AKJ84 ♥K107 ♦KJ4 ♣76

You have a balanced hand (5332), bid 3NT* with 16 Bergen points.

(4) ♠AKJ84 ♥J107 ♦QJ4 ♣76

You have a weak hand, using Fast Arrival, bid 4♠.

(5) ♠AKQ842 ♥void ♦AQ42 ♣J76

You have a great hand, bid 3♥* to show shortness. SLAM IS POSSIBLE!

19 Starting Points +1(Length)+1(4-card)+6(void) = 26 Bergen Points. Some may bid 3♠* to show 18+ or use a convention called Exclusion Roman Keycard Blackwood (ERKCB) by bidding 5♥ setting Spades as trump – A future Lesson.

Following is a summary of descriptive bids by Opener following Jacoby 2NT* - Bergen Points by Opener

After 1♥ - 2NT* - ??

3♣*	=	♣ shortage (singleton/void – 12+)
3♦*	=	♦ shortage
3♥*	=	great hand with no shortage (18+)
3♠*	=	♠ shortage
3NT*	=	good hand with no shortage (15-17)
4♣**	=	a 4+card ♣ suit (no alert – 12-17)
4♦**	=	a 4+-card ♦ suit (no alert)
4♥	=	poor hand & no shortage (Fast arrival 12-14)

**Some require a 5-card suit and others use the bid to show a void

***=ALERT**

After 1♠ - 2NT*- ??

3♣*	=	♣ shortage (singleton/void – 12+)
3♦*	=	♦ shortage
3♥*	=	♥ shortage
3♠*	=	great hand with no shortage (18+)
3NT*	=	good hand with no shortage (15-17)
4♣**	=	a 4+card ♣ suit (no alert 12-17)
4♦**	=	a 4+card ♦ suit (no alert)
4♥**	=	a 4+card heart suit (no alert)
4♠	=	poor hand & no shortage (Fast Arrival 12-14)

** Some require a 5-card suit and others use it to show a void.

*=**ALERT**

Responses by the 2NT bidder

The Jacoby 2NT bidder must assess how the hands fit, and generally will have the following options.

(1) The Jacoby 2NT bidder may sign off in four of the opener's major (or pass, if the opener has already bid four of the opening major).

(2) Responder may also use cue bids, Modified 4-level Scroll bids, and slam bidding conventions to find the best contract if the bidding suggests a slam (e.g. opener has 18+ Bergen points since $18+13=31$).

Slam bidding will be discussed in the next lesson: Introduction to Slam Bidding Techniques.

Cue bidding techniques and slam bidding topics like Exclusion Roman Keycard Blackwood (ERKCB) will be reviewed in a future lesson: Intermediate Slam Bidding Techniques.

Jacoby Example (1)

West	East
♠KQ965	♠A8742
♥K	♥1076
♦KQ1043	♦AJ6
♣84	♣AK

West has 14 starting points and east has 17 starting points.

West opens 1♠ and with 18 Dummy points, east bids 2NT*.

West can show his singleton heart or his 5+ diamond suit.

Let's suppose west bids 4♦. Now your partner east has a problem.

With no heart control east cannot bid Blackwood; hence, he must bid 5♣ to show a club control. Not sure of a heart control, west bids 5♠.

To keep the bidding at a lower level, it is always better to show shortness, bid 3♥* to show the heart singleton.

Using the Blackwood Convention, missing one ace east would bid 6♠ (more on this in the lesson on slam bidding techniques).

Jacoby Example (2)

West	East
♠Q83	♠J742
♥J9732	♥AKQ4
♦KQ10	♦6
♣AJ	♣KQ64

West has 12 starting points and east has 16 starting points.

West opens 1♥ and with 19 dummy points east bids 2NT* (15HCP +1 Quality suit + 3 singleton =19). Without a short suit, west bids 4♥; showing no slam interest.

Because east has a singleton diamond and four card support and 13+ Dummy points, a better bid for east is to splinter as we shall see shortly!

Is the Jacoby 2NT bid OFF by a passed hand?

MANY PARTNERSHIPS PLAY THAT THE BID IS OFF.

But should it be? Remember the bid is defined by Dummy Points NOT Starting Points. Let's suppose you are a passed hand and partner opens 1♠ in the fourth seat – has a full opener. And you hold

♠KJ84 ♥A2 ♦98 ♣Q8762

You have 11 Starting Points (10 HCP + 1 for length) and did not open, having only 1.5 quick tricks, but you now have 13 Dummy points with 4-card support. Bid Jacoby 2NT* (**Partnership agreement**). Do not miss game.

Your partner holds ♠A10562 ♥7 ♦AJ ♣A10954

Jacoby is Always Off in the third seat. Most use some form of Drury.

Is the Jacoby 2NT bid OFF over a double?

MANY PARTNERSHIPS PLAY THAT THE BID IS OFF.

But some play the Truscott-Jordon 2NT* bid which is:

1M – X – XX = 10+ with/without a fit (**defined by agreement**)

2NT* = Truscott-Jordon 10-12 Dummy Pts with 4 cards
(some only require 3 card support)

Playing Reverse BROMAD then 1M – X

2♣* = 10-12 Dummy 3-card and next bid of 2♦ = asks do you have 12?

2♦* = 7-9 Dummy 3-card support

2M* = 0-6 Dummy with 3-card support

2NT* = 13+ Dummy Points and 4-card support

3♣* = 10-12 Dummy 4-card and next bid of 3♦ = asks do you have 12?

3♦* = 7-9 Dummy 4-card support

3M* = 0-6 Dummy 4-card support

* = Alert

Is the Jacoby 2NT bid OFF over a suit interference bid?

MOST PLAY THAT IT IS OFF!

However, some use the principle that even if the opponents interfere with a suit bid that their Systems are ON ---- they ignore the bid and bid as if the opponents did not bid. So playing, for example, Reverse Bergen all 3-level and the Jacoby 2NT* bids are ON, provided the bids can be made (**Partnership agreement**).

Many play that a 2-level cue bid of their opponents suit bid shows 10-12 Dummy points and 3+ card support. And that a 3-level cue bid shows 13+ Dummy points and 3/4+ card support.

What if they bid 1NT (15-17)? With 10/11+HCP double for Penalty
With 6-10 Dummy Points bid 2M with a fit
Without a fit and 6-10 HCP and 6-card suit or good 5-card suit. Bid it.

Some use a Fit-Showing Jump (FSJ) bid with “Bergen” -- **OFF**.

A Fit-Showing Jump (FSJ), also called a Flower/Mixed Raise, bid is a contract bridge convention usually played where both sides are bidding and must be alerted.

After a player has opened a major/minor or overcalled and the opponents are also bidding, his partner's jump in a new suit shows length in the suit bid **plus** 3/4 cards in partner's major suit or 5-cards for partner's bid minor. **(Discuss with partner).**

The bid normally shows 10-12 dummy points for which you would otherwise have jumped to the next higher bid in your partners suit.

1♥ - 1♠ - 3♣* (FSJ bid) = 10-12 Dummy points and 3 hearts + 5 clubs
3♠ (Cue bid) = 13+ with 3/4-card support

The basic FSJ bid is a fairly simple concept. When your partner bids a suit and your RHO takes an action, a new-suit jump by you shows invitational values, length and strength in the bid suit, and a fit for partner. For example, let's say you hold: ♠742 ♥A76 ♦KQ1093 ♣94

And your partner opens 1♥, and your RHO bids 1♠.

Many may bid 2♠, showing a limit raise (10-12). Playing FSJs, one bids 3♦*. Let's give the opening bidder two sample hands, and see what he would do with them. *=alert

(A) ♠A53 ♥KQJ84 ♦A87 ♣52

(B) ♠A53 ♥KQJ84 ♦52 ♣A87

With either hand, over 1♥ (1♠) 2♠ (P), partner may pass, but over a FSJ bid of 3♦*, partner can confidently bid game with hand (A) and sign off with hand (B).

What happens if they BID at the 3-level after partner responds 2NT* –
Now what? Here are the bids --- **Partnership agreement.**

Opener DOUBLES = PENALTY, Shortness in opponent's bid suit
Partner may pass, bid 3NT with a stopper or bid 3M/4M

Opener bids new suit = natural/control in another suit bid
Forcing with slam interest

3NT = Balanced Maximum (A/K in opponent's bid suit)

Opener Passes = Flat hand, could be 5-3-3-2 awful and denies a A/K
control after which, if partner now X's--- it is for penalty

Opener bids 3M = shows a control with slam interest

Opener jumps to 4M = minimum, but 6-3-2-2 --- No slam interest

Returning to Example (2) with Interference Over 2NT*

West	East
♠Q83	♠J742
♥J9732	♥AKQ4
♦KQ10	♦6
♣AJ	♣KQ64

West	North	East	South	
1♥	Pass	2NT*	3♦	
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	Here 3NT is to Play

West	North	East	South	
1♥	Pass	2NT*	3♠	
Pass	Pass	X	All Pass	X by East is for Penalty

West	North	East	South	
1♥	Pass	2NT*	3♣	X by Opener shows shortness
X	Pass	?		East will pass NV vs Vul

When opener shows shortness after the bid of 2NT*, how does partner determine whether the shortness is a singleton/void?

Recall that the bidding responses to show shortness were:

(A) 1♠-2NT*-3♣*/3♦*/3♥*

(B) 1♥-2NT*-3♣*/3♦*/3♠*

To determine whether opener has a singleton or a void, one uses a convention I developed called **Modified 4-level Scroll asking bids**.

For sequence (A), one bids **4♣/4♦/4♥** and for sequence (B) one bids **4♣/4♦/4♠** over each response. **In sequence (B), 4♠ is not kickback for hearts after 2NT***. Note that the 4-level bids need not be alerted!

However, if asked you must explain the bids and the responses when asked.

The next cheapest bid shows a singleton and steps 2,3,4,5 are 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) responses with voids (there are 5 keycards - 4 aces and the king of trump).

(Step 1) Shows a singleton

(Step 2) 1/4 keycards with a void

(Step 3) 0/3 keycards with a void

(Step 4) 2/5 keycards w/o the Queen and a void

(Step 5) 2/5 keycards with the Queen and a void

Example: **1♠-2NT*-3♥*-4♥=Scroll asking bid**

Responses are:

4♠ heart singleton (next cheapest step)

4NT heart void 1/4 keycards (Step 2)

5♣ heart void 0/3 keycards (Step 3)

5♦ heart void 2/5 keycards w/o Queen (Step 4)

5♥ heart void 2/5 keycards with Queen (Step 5)

Because the primary focus of this lesson is on the Jacoby 2NT* bid and Splinter bids, we will not go into slam bidding techniques, but save this for some future lesson.

However, this hand came up last week and my partner bid 2NT* and I used the Modified Scroll 4-level Scroll Method after Jacoby!

Dealer (Me)	North	♠Q972	♥AK98753	♦K4	♣void
Partner	South	♠AKJ6	♥QJ62	♦void	♣QJ642

Me

1♥

3♣* (singleton/void)

4NT (2/5 w/o Q & void) – 4th Step

6♦ Cue bid

7♥

Partner

2NT*

4♣ = Ask (What is it?)

5♦ Cue bid

6♠ Cue bid

Pass

Discuss this hand with your partner and see how you would bid it!

Returning to our example

Opener's Hand 1: ♠ AKQ105 ♥ J10982 ♦ 6 ♣ 67

Responder's Hand D: ♠ 9876 ♥ AK ♦ 75 ♣ QJ984

Let's replace responder's hand D with the following hand.

Hand D*: ♠ 98762 ♥ AK ♦ 7 ♣ QJ984

Hand D*: 10HCP + [Undervalued Honors = 1(Ace's&10's – Overvalued Honors Q's and J's) = 2] = -1; no adjustment + 2 length points + 0 for dubious doubletons (note that the AK does not qualify). Total starting points = 12.

Hand (D*) has a singleton with 5 trumps, add 3 points. The total Dummy Points = 15. What do you bid? Not Jacoby 2NT! Why?

IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO SHOW shortness with TRUMP SUPPORT with a Splinter bid – DO NOT USE JACOBY 2NT!

What if the singleton is an Ace? It does not matter.

With singletons and voids do not use the Jacoby 2NT bid. My partner did not take this lesson on that last unusual hand!

I recommend that responder again has 3/4 trumps and 13+ dummy points with a fit (some always require 4 and some only require 11/12+ dummy points) – again discuss splinters with your partner. Some also put a limit of 13-16 points on a splinter bid.

Direct Splinter Bids

Direct Splinter bids are shown by a **DOUBLE JUMP** in a shortness suit other than partner's major. It is a game forcing raise in the major suit bid and shows shortness (singleton/void).

Direct Splinter bids are defined:

1♥ - double jumps to 3♠*/4♣*/4♦* shows SHORTNESS in spades, clubs, and diamonds, respectively.

The corresponding jump bids for the opening one spade are:

1♠ - double jumps to 4♥*/4♣*/4♦* shows SHORTNESS in hearts, clubs, and diamonds, respectively.

While shortness is important, it only has value when the information conveyed to the opener allows the opener to evaluate how well the two hands fit. An example will help to clarify this point.

***=ALERT**

Some often call Splinter bids “Fit” bids.

Consider the following two hands:

Opener	♠ AKJ83	♥ KQ104	♦ 567	♣ 7
Partner	♠ Q762	♥ 7	♦ AJ42	♣ A567

With spades as trump, opener must lose one heart and one or two diamonds, depending on the lie of the cards. But, suppose we switch the red suits **NOW OBSERVE THE DIFFERENCE.**

Switched	♠ Q762	♥ AJ42	♦ 7	♣ A567
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In the first case, opener's heart honors are duplicated by responder's singleton; both hands prevent two heart losers. In the second case, the defenders hold the diamond honors, AKQ of diamonds, but only the ace is useful to the opponents. What can one conclude from this example?

(1) If a singleton or void is opposite partner's high card concentrations, it has less value.

(2) If a singleton or void is opposite partner's low, losing cards, with high values more usefully placed, it has effective value.

Rule: An effective holding is an asset while duplicated holdings are a liability.

Or, more importantly, you want your losers opposite shortness to allow losers to be trumped.

We now consider two examples.

Hand (1)

Opener	♠ QJ1053	♥ AQ95	♦ KQ	♣ A8
Partner	♠ AK9	♥ KJ10	♦ 4	♣ 1076532

Opener	Partner
1♠	4♦*
4♠	Pass

With diamond honors opposite shortness and with a club lead, slam is not possible. Slam not likely.

Note: If you require 4-card support for a splinter bid, you must make a 2/1 bid and then bid 4♦* as a delayed 3-card splinter bid.

Hand (2)

Opener	♠ QJ1053	♥ AQ95	♦ AK	♣ 87
Partner	♥ AK9	♥ KJ10	♦ 876532	♣ 4

Opener	Partner
1♠	4♣* (3/4 card support)
4♥	4♠
?	

In this example, club shortness is good news, opener keeps the bidding open by showing hearts, partner next shows support.

Even though the hands have only 26 HCP, slam is possible. More on shortness rules after splinters using the Rule of 26, LTC and the Short Suit Total (SST) Rule.

While shortness knowledge may help you to reach slam (when of value), your opponents know exactly where your weakness resides.

Sophisticated defenders love splinters!

They will lead the suit or trump and try to off set your tempo for making the hand.

However, many times it is not shortness, **but the degree of fit, that is most important.**

Let's look at two examples where opener again opens 1♠.

(1) ♠ Q9874 ♥ 2 ♦ K106 ♣ AKJ6

(2) ♠ KQ1062 ♥ AK54 ♦ AK53 ♣ void

With either hand, opener has no weakness, and if partner splinters, it has little value; a direct splinter bid by his partner will only help the opponents.

Is there a better approach to the direct splinter bid?

Yes, and it is called the concealed/ambiguous splinter bids, part of the System of "Bergen" Raises; they work as follows.

Concealed/Ambiguous splinter bids

1♠ - pass - 3♥* is a single jump and 1♥ - pass - 3♠* a double jump in the other major!

The bid must be alerted; it indicates a singleton or void “somewhere” with 13+ Dummy Points and four-card trumps support.

The advantage of the bid is clear; the opponents only know that shortness exists, but not where. Depending on the nature of opener’s hand, opener may not need the shortness information to proceed to game or slam.

How does one find out whether it is a singleton or void after making an ambiguous splinter bid?

When the opener has a need to know about shortness, one uses the next step bid: 3NT* after the bid of 3♠*, and after 3♥* the next step bid of 3♠*. **The sequential asking bids I have called Scroll Asking Bids.**

The scroll asking bid and responses follow. If the bidding goes:

1♥ - 3♠*, 3NT is the scroll ask (by opener)

1♠ - 3♥*, 3♠ is the scroll ask (by opener).

The responses to the 3NT Scroll Asking bid are: 4♣*, 4♦*, 4♠* which shows singletons/void in clubs, diamonds, and spades, respectively; and the corresponding responses after the 3♠ Scroll Asking bid are: 3NT*=♣, 4♣*=♦, and 4♦*=♥, **the suit below the singleton (submarine-like bids).**

Some of my partners have suggested other sequences since the submarine-like bids have caused memory problems.

Variations of Scroll Bids by Partnership Agreement

(1) If you do not like the submarine-like bids (when spades is the agreed suit), one may employ bids that are similar to the heart opening. Then after $1\spadesuit - 3\heartsuit^*$, $3\spadesuit$ (ask) the responses are $4\clubsuit^* = \clubsuit$, and $4\diamondsuit^* = \diamondsuit$, and $4\heartsuit^* = \heartsuit$, or one may use 3NT to show singleton/void in hearts.

Partnership agreement.

(2) In addition, one may substitute the bid of $4\heartsuit^*$ to show a spade singleton/void (with opening $1\heartsuit$ instead of bidding $4\spadesuit^*$) after the 3NT asking bid when one has no slam interest. This allows opener to pass or use $4\spadesuit$ as the 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) with kickback.

We have shown how one may use the Jacoby 2NT* bid and Splinter bids to move toward game in a major. These conventional bids are tools to help reach a slam in a major suit, since game is almost certain.

After showing shortness with a splinter bid, one may use the next step bid as a 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) ask, to determine the nature of the shortage and keycards. For example,

1♥ - 3♠*, 3NT is the scroll ask and 4♣*(club singleton/void)
Now the next sequential bid asks about the nature of the shortage and keycards: 4♦= 1430 “like” ask.

Or 1♠ - 4♣*(club singleton/void - direct splinter)-4♦=ask

Responses are:

4♥ club singleton (next cheapest step)

4♠ club void 1/4 keycards (Step 2)

4♣ club void 0/3 keycards (Step 3)

4NT club void 2/5 keycards w/o Queen (Step 4)

5♣ club void 2/5 keycards with Queen (Step 5)

More on this when slam bidding techniques are reviewed.

Let's relook at that unusual hand using **Concealed/Ambiguous splinter bids**. Partner took the lesson!

Dealer (Me)	North	♠Q972	♥AK98753	♦K4	♣void
New Partner	South	♠AKJ6	♥QJ62	♦void	♣QJ642

This gets complicated, but here we go!

Me	New Partner
1♥	3♠* (Singleton/Void Somewhere)
3NT* = Where is it?	4♦* (diamond shortness)
4♥* = what kind (Next step)?	4NT* = (2 nd Step) 1 Keycard with void
5NT King ask	7♥ = Spade King
Pass	Pass

We will look at more examples, but first I want to define Auto/Self splinters also called Spiral Splinters, pose some questions about splinters, and evaluate their importance!

Auto/Self-Splinter Bids

Auto/Self-Splinter is a name for a splinter bid when the splinter bidder is setting not his partner's suit, but his own. Again the bid must be alerted.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♥ (transfer)
2♠	4♣*(singleton/void - Direct Self-Splinter)

Responder is setting spades as trump.

Opener	Responder
1♣ (may be short)	1♥
1NT	3♠*(singleton/void - Direct Self-Splinter)

Responder is setting hearts as trump.

Opener	Responder
1♦	1NT
3♥* (Self-Splinter)	?

Opener is setting diamonds as trumps. Responder can bid 3NT, 4♦/5♦, or show a long club suit.

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♥
3♠* (Self-Splinter)	4♥

Note that a 2♠ bid by opener would be a reverse so the jump reverse is a Auto/Self-Splinter. Opener is setting hearts as trump.

NOTE: Some only play Auto/Self-Splinters by the Opener when opener's bid is NOT natural (e.g. clubs may be short). And others only play them if responder has agreed to opener's natural bid suit by showing a fit. So again you must discuss the auto/self splinter bids with your partner.

Questions about Splinters

(1) If you require 4-card support for a splinter bid, can you use splinters with 3-card support?

Yes - they are called delayed Splinter bids; for example, 1♥-2♦; 2♥-4♣*. You have 13+ dummy points and 3-card support. With delayed splinters, one usually uses a double jump in the suit so that they are not ambiguous, but direct!

(2) Can opener splinter if the suit is a singleton honor; say an ace or a king? **Yes!** Some may not agree, but knowing shortness is very important to slam bidding!

(3) When the opponents Splinter, what is the best lead?

Lead a trump!

(4) How do you show a void after a Direct Splinter?

You can use control bids (bid the void twice) or Scroll bids. In addition, a void may be shown when responding to Blackwood! If your ask with a void, special bidding conventions are available (e.g. Exclusion Roman Keycard Blackwood -ERKCB).

(5) Can the opener splinter? Yes -1♣ - 1♥; then 3♦* is a Mini-Splinter or jump reverse showing 4 hearts inviting game with 16+ Bergen Points (some play it forcing to game).

Note that the 2♦ bid by opener is a reverse (17+ Starting Points) and the 2♠ bid is a strong jump (19+ Starting Points).

(6) Splinter bids for partner's suit always takes precedence over auto/self-splinters.

(7) Can Direct Splinter bids be used over a minor suit opening? **Yes!**

However, you need 5+ card support and 13+ Dummy Points

1♣ - 3♦*/3♥*/3♠* Support in clubs with singleton/void in bid suits

1♦ - 3♥*/3♠*/4♣* Support in diamonds with singleton/void in bid suits

This is by partnership agreement since many do not play Splinter Bids over a minor suit opening!

(8) Splinter bids are partnership agreements. The bids were introduced by Dorothy Hayden-Truscott and David Cliff, in 1963.

(9) Can splinter bids be made by a passed hand or the 3rd seat? **Yes!**

You must have 13+ Dummy points

You are a passed hand and hold

♠KQ1098 ♥A872 ♦7 ♣546

You have only 9 HCP + 1 length point = 10 starting points.

When partner opens 1♠ you have 13 Dummy points; singleton is now worth 3 points with 4+ trumps so make your splinter bid!

Splinter bids are a means of reaching slam contracts by sharing information about the distribution of your holdings.

Definitions

Direct Splinter Bid - A method of using an artificial jump in a side suit to show a 3/4+ major trump support and a singleton/void in the bid suit. The splinter bidder promises game going values, typically 13+ dummy points for responder (some always require 4 cards and some limit the bid to a maximum to be 16 Dummy Points).

Delayed Splinter by Responder – A 4-level jump rebid showing 13+ Dummy Points and 3 card support opener's bid major.

Auto/Self-Splinter Bid – A name for a splinter bid when the splinter bidder is setting not his partner's suit, but his own.

Mini-Splinter - 3 level jump rebids by opener showing 4+ trump support in responder's suit, shortage (singleton/void) in the bid suit, and 16+ Bergen Points. Opener's Mini Splinter suit is usually *beneath* responder's suit, allowing responder to signoff in 3♥/3♠ with only 6-8 starting points (e.g. 1♦ - 1♠ - 3♥*). If it is above, it is a game force bid.

Reverse - A reverse bid is an unforced rebid at the level of two or more in a higher ranking suit than that suit bid originally. A reverse bid shows a 5-card suit in the first bid lower-ranking suit and at least a 4-card suit in the second high-ranking suit bid and 17+ Starting points.

Opener's Strong Jump Shift – Opener's jump bid is in a rank higher than both responder's suit as well as opener's initial suit rank showing 19+ Starting Points

When is one near a Slam when hearing a Splinter?

(1) Use the Rule of 26

(2) Use LTC Rule also called the Rule of 24

(3) Use Short Suit Total (SST) Rule

Many bridge players know about the Rule of 26 and 24; however, the SST Rule may be new to many players.

It was developed by Mike Lawrence and Anders Wirgren (2004) in their book I FOUGHT THE LAW of Total Tricks.

Rule of 26

When opening one of a major, a splinter bid shows 3/4 card support for the major suit bid and 13+ Dummy Points.

When should the opening bidder consider slam?

One may apply the Rule of 26.

Opener merely adds his Starting Points to 13 (min for splinter) in his suits outside the known splinter suit and if the total is 26+, you should consider slam in the major suit bid.

This rule works because once the partnership can ignore an entire suit, you can expect to make a small slam with only 26+ total points; you do not need 33+ points.

NOTE: For that hand with the 2 voids we had a grand slam with a total of 26HCP.

LTC Rule or Rule of 24

When opening one of a major, a splinter bid shows four card support for the major suit bid and 13+ Dummy Points. When should you opener consider slam? One may apply the Rule of 24 or the LTC Rule.

Opener merely assumes 6/7 loses for partner and adds his known losers to 6/7. With **6** losers (about 13 points).

24-**6**-6=12 (tricks) and 24-**6**-7=11 (tricks).

IN THE SLAM ZONE

If Opener has 5 losers (about 16 points) -- slam is definitely possible! Since 24-5 (opener)-6 (partner)=13 (tricks)

Short Suit Total (SST) Rule

When opening one of a major, a splinter bid shows 3/4 card support for the major suit bid and usually 13+ Working HCP and a SST=0-3 for both partners. One applies the SST Rule

Opener adds his HCP to 13.

With 19-21 HCP then $13 - \text{SST} = \#$ of tricks possible.

If the SST in both hands = 2, then we have 11 tricks with a singleton in both hands, with a **void and singleton** $13 - (\text{SST}=1) = 12$. **A SLAM**

If the total HCP= 22-24 in both hands, you gain a trick. So, with singletons in both hands $13 - (\text{SST}=2) + 1 = 12!$ And with 25-27 you gain 2 tricks.

NOTE: For that unusual hand with 2 voids, $13 - 0 = 13$, A grand Slam!

Splinter Example with Direct Splinter Bid

South	North
♠KQ83	♠J975
♥97432	♥AKQ4
♦A	♦6
♣AJ2	♣KQ64

South has 15 starting points and north has 16 starting points.

South opens 1♥ and with 19 dummy points (add 3 with 4 trumps) North bids 4♦* to show 13+ dummy points and a singleton/void in diamonds. Opener next bids 4NT (RKCB 1430) and partner responds 5♣ showing 1/4 keycards. Opener next bids 6♥.

Splinter Example Using Ambiguous Method

South	North
♠KQ83	♠J975
♥97432	♥AKQ4
♦A	♦6
♣AJ2	♣KQ64

South opens 1♥ and with 19 dummy points North bids 3♠* to show 13+ points and four-card support with shortness somewhere.

South next bids 3NT (where is it). North bids 4♣* to show a diamond singleton (using the submarine-like bid), opener next bids 4NT (RKCB 1430). After hearing the bid of 5♣ (1/4 keycards), opener (South) next bids 6♥.

Splinter Example with Mini-Splinter

South	North
♠4	♠AKQ10
♥AQ74	♥10932
♦AK97	♦Q32
♣QJ102	♣A5

South opens 1♦ with 16 points and North bids 1♥ to show 6+ points.

South next bids 3♠* - **splinter** to show heart fit (do not bid 4♥ partner may pass since fast arrival). A game force bid.

With a heart fit, North bids 4NT and the heart slam is reached.

Example of Auto/Self-Splinter Bid

South

♠A64

♥7

♦AKJ854

♣AQ9

North

♠K87

♥986

♦3

♣KJ10642

South

1♦

3♥* (Auto-Splinter)

6♣

North

1NT

5♣

Pass

The Jump reverse is an Auto/Self-Splinter bid which shows a heart singleton/void and says to partner that he has great diamonds. However, after the bid of 5♣ South bids the club slam.

Because splinter bids usually **show slam interest with shortness**, they allow the partnership to reach slam with fewer HCP; because of this, a useful “Splinter Convention” follows.

A Modern Splinter Bidding Convention

1♠ - pass - 3♥* (singleton somewhere) – to ask bid next step

1♥ - pass - 3♠* (singleton somewhere) – to ask bid next step

1♠ - pass - 4♣*/4♦*(void in suit bid) and 3NT* = heart void.

1♥ - pass - 4♣*/4♦* (voids in suit bid) and 3NT* = spade void.

However, if you play some version of Bergen Raises then 3NT* cannot be used to show 3-card support with 13-15 Dummy points over a major suit bid. And, you must give up the 4♣* and 4♦* Swiss bids.

It is almost always best to show a void ASAP you may use the void bid as Exclusion Roman Keycard Blackwood (ERKCB) for the bid major. A future Lesson!

You open 1♥ and Partner bids 2NT* what is your rebid?

1. ♠A ♥ KJ985 ♦ 964 ♣ A1032

2. ♠982 ♥ AK9865 ♦ void ♣ AK74

3. ♠A3 ♥ KJ852 ♦ A9764 ♣ 3

(1) Bid 3♠* singleton/void

(2) Bid 3♦* shows diamond singleton/void

(3) Bid 4♣ shows singleton/void, do not show diamonds by bidding 4♦

You open 1♥ and Partner bids 2NT* what is your rebid?

4. ♠J4 ♥ K9865 ♦ 9 ♣ AK1094

5. ♠Q3 ♥ KJ1053 ♦ 4 ♣ AKQJ6

6. ♠A98 ♥ AJ965 ♦ A109 ♣ 62

**(4) Bid 3♦ – some may bid 4♣ - takes up bidding space!
And if partner bids 4♦ --- Now what?**

(5) Bid 3♦, if you bid 4♣ and responder bids 4♥--- Now what?

(6) Bid 3NT* with 15 Bergen Points

You open 1♥ and Partner bids 2NT* what is your rebid?

7. ♠J83 ♥ KQJ85 ♦ QJ4 ♣ K10

8. ♠K742 ♥ J9762 ♦ KJ ♣ KQ

9. ♠KQ106 ♥ J9842 ♦ AK ♣ 53

10. ♠KJ ♥ AQ10743 ♦ 964 ♣ Q8

11. ♠63 ♥ AQ65432 ♦ A4 ♣ A109

(7) Bid 4♥, minimum hand.

(8) Bid 4♥, minimum hand.

(9) Bid 3NT*, with 16 Bergen Points

(10) Bid 4♥, minimal hand.

(11) Bid 3♥*, 18 Bergen Points good hand

Partner opens 1♥ what is your bid as responder?

12. ♠10 ♥ KJ76 ♦ KQ6 ♣ K8752

13. ♠AQJ3 ♥ Q876 ♦ Q8632 ♣ void

14. ♠KJ98 ♥ 109864 ♦ A ♣ K92

Bid 3♠* for all Concealed/Ambiguous Splinters (Singleton/void somewhere) or Playing Direct Splinters, bid 3♠*, 4♣*, and 4♦*, respectively.

End of lesson on JACOBY 2NT and SPLINTER bids

Time Permitting

I next present the Swedish 2NT* Convention

and

Responses to the forcing 2♣ bid, when playing the

2/1 Game Force System

Now that we have discussed the Jacoby 2NT* bid, can we upon improve upon it? Yes, a simple modification is called the Swedish 2NT* bidding convention. The convention allow the opener to *show minimums or maximums with singletons* which is not the case with the Jacoby 2NT*.

After a major suit bid, suppose 2NT* is now the Swedish 2NT* bid. The responses are as follows.

1♥/1♠ - 2NT* (3+ card support with a limit raise (10-12) or better Dummy Points) - ??

3♣* = Minimum opening 11/12-14 Bergen Points

3♦* = no singleton/void and 15+ points

3♥* = singleton in clubs 15+ points

3♠* = singleton in diamonds 15+ points

3NT* = singleton/void other major 15+ points

Responder can request clarification by bidding 4♣*

Open responds 4♦* = singleton & 4♥* = void

4♣*/4♦* = void in bid minor, 15+ points

4oM = Void in other major and 15+ points

Responder's follow-up bids after opener's 3♣* minimum bid.

3M	=	This shows 10-12 Dummy Points. Opener will usually pass and only bid game with 14 Bergen Pts
3♦*	=	asks Opener to bid any singleton**
3♥	=	cue bid if spades are trump
3♥	=	cue bid if hearts are trump
4♣/4♦	=	control cue bids
4♥/4♥	=	game in Major with NO SLAM INTEREST
4NT	=	1430 RKCB

*=ALERT

**Opener's responses follow

After 1♥/1♠-2NT*-3♣*-3♦* (Singleton Ask).

Rebids by opener are:

3♥*	=	singleton Club
3♠*	=	singleton Diamond
3NT*	=	singleton/void in the un-bid Major suit
		Responder can request clarification by bidding 4♣*
		Open bid 4♦*= singleton and 4♥*= void
4♣*/4♦*	=	void in bid minor, 15+ points
4♥/4♠	=	bid the agreed major – No singleton/void
4NT	=	1430 RKCB

*= ALERT

Advantages

(1) One no longer bids 1NT as forcing and then bid 3M to show a limit raise with 3-card support, playing “Bergen”; instead you may now use the Swedish 2NT* bid.

(2) One can now pass 1NT as natural – it is semi-forcing as it is in Combined Bergen raises.

(3) Playing Swedish 2NT* and Reverse Bergen: 3♣* = limit w 4, then the asking bid of 3♦* = bid game with 12 or bid singleton/void.

3♥ = singleton Club

3♠ = singleton Diamond

3NT = singleton/void in the un-bid Major suit

Responder can request clarification by bidding 4♣*

Open bids 4♦* = singleton and 4♥* = void

4♣*/4♦* = void in bid minor, 15+ points

4♥/4♠ = 12 Dummy points and no singleton/void

4NT = 1430 RKCB

I have discussed how one may seek information from the opening bidder following the bid of Jacoby 2NT* (game certain) and introduced the Swedish 2NT* (game invitational) bid. Another Option is to use Larry Cohen's Modified 2NT* System of bids. They are similar to the Swedish System.

Because the bid of Jacoby 2NT* infers slam interest. Another option is to use the 2NT* bid as 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB). This practice also requires an alert since any bid at the level of 3NT* (Baby Blackwood) or below that is a keycard/ace asking bid must be alerted!

The advantage of this approach is that most do not ask, since they ASSUME it is a Jacoby bid. If asked you must explain the bid as 1430 RKCB.

I will now discuss the 2♣ bid playing the 2/1 Game Force System

Opening 2♣

Playing the 2/1 Game Force System, the opening bid of 2♣ shows a hand with 22+ starting points or 8 ½ - 9 playing tricks; it is artificial and forcing. To count playing tricks, you only look at the first three cards in each suit where an ace, king, or queen is a winner and all other cards among the first three are losers. With less than three cards, there are these loser honor combinations: AQ=½, Kx= ½, KQ=1, K=1, Q=1, Qx=2, QJ=2.

Independent of points, also open a hand 2♣ with a 5+ major and at least 4+ quick tricks (A=1, K=½, KQ=1) and no more than four losers.

RULE of 44 and then bid the major not notrump.

Partner may not pass the bid of two clubs, even with zero points.

With a balanced hand (4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2, 5-4-2-2), opener may jump into notrump. The notrump bidding schedule follows.

2NT	shows 22-24 starting points
3NT	shows 25-27 starting points
4NT	shows 28-30 starting points
5NT	shows 31-33 starting points

When partner opens two clubs, responder's first responsibility is to communicate something about the values in his hand.

Based on a survey conducted by bridge expert and teacher Karen Walker, when asked what general structure respondents used for responses to a strong 2♣ in their favorite partnership, they offered the following answers (with the percentage of "votes" for each):

- 36% 2♦ semi-positive (A/K), 2♥* immediate negative
- 25% Control-showing responses
- 21% 2♦ waiting, cheapest minor second negative
- 10% 2♦ negative, 2♥ balanced positive
- 4% Point-count step responses (e.g. steps)
- 4% Other artificial systems

While the 2♥* bid must be alerted – the 2♦ bid is not alerted.

Controls showing responses

This approach is popular because it allows responder to show his most important cards (aces and kings where K=1 and A=2) immediately, in one bid. Counting each king as one control and each ace as two, responder makes one of the following step responses:

- 2♦ 0 or 1 control (K=1)
- 2♥* 2 controls (A or KK, A=2)
- 2♠* 1 ace and 1 king (3 controls - AK in different suits)
- 2NT* 3 kings (3 controls - KKK or AK in same suit)
- 3♣* 4+ controls

*= alert required for all bids

Two diamonds waiting (No announcement or alert required)

This approach is widely used among longtime players. The bid of 2♦ is automatic and provides an opportunity for the opener to describe his hand by bidding notrump or a suit. It is not alerted or announced but a waiting bid.

With a very weak hand, less than four Dummy points, responder may pass after a notrump bid. If a suit is named and responder is weak, there is a second negative bid. The second negative bid is either the cheapest minor or the cheapest bid available, known as the Herbert Convention.

The primary advantage of the two diamond bid is that it does not consume space. The major disadvantage is that specific suit strength/controls are not immediately communicated and it may take time for responder to describe his hand.

Two hearts negative and two diamonds semi-positive

Using this approach, the bid of 2♦ is a game force bid promising at least an king/ace. The bid of two hearts is non-forcing, **but it does not deny points**. For example, you may have two queens and a jack or three queens. The bids for this approach follow.

- 2♦ promises at least an king/ace and is game forcing (some also include 2 Queens) **NO ALERT REQUIRED**
- 2♥* denies an ace/king **ALERT** (does not deny values)
- 2♠ shows at least a 6+ card suit (NOT 5) with 2 of the top 3 honors (6/7+ points)
- 2NT* shows at least a 6+ card **HEART** suit with 2 of the top 3 hearts (6/7+ points)
- 3♣/3♦ shows 2 of the top 3 honors but with 6+ cards in the minor suit bid (6/7+ points)

*=ALERT

After the bid of two hearts, the only bid responder may pass is Opener's bid of 2NT. Otherwise, responder must provide a second negative bid. This is usually the cheapest minor. However playing the Herbert Convention, it is the cheapest bid (e.g. over 2♥, it may be 2♠ and not 3♣).

Let's consider a some example hands.

Opener ♠AQ54 ♥ KQ10 ♦ K52 ♣ AKQ

You have 23 HCP. Open the hand 2♣; you have stoppers in all suits and then bid 2NT= (22-24 HCP). With 25HCP you would bid 3NT.

Opener ♠KQ754 ♥KQ10872 ♦ void ♣ AK

This hand contains 17 HCP + 3 length points = 20 starting points. Some may open this 1♥ and then bid spades. What if partner passes?

Using the rule of 44, you must open the hand 2♣, forcing partner to bid. Or you have $13-2=11$ playing tricks.

Using LTC, $13-2=11$ playing tricks.

Or you have 4 quick tricks and less than 4 losers.

You have this hand!

Opener ♠Q42 ♥AKQJ10542 ♦ 6 ♣ A6

You have 16 HCP + 4 length points + 1 Quality suit = 21 starting points.

Looking at playing tricks, you have $13 - (2-0-1-1) = 9.0$ playing tricks or 4 quick tricks and 4 losers.

Open the hand 2♣ and then show your great heart suit.

If you open 1♥, partner may pass.

You have this hand as South and partner opens 2♣.

Responder ♠A1093 ♥Q1076 ♦ void ♣ Q10762

You have 8HCP.

The bidding goes:

North	East	South	West
2♣	Pass	2♦ (Positive)	Pass
2NT (22-24)	Pass	3♣ (Stayman)	Pass
3♥	Pass	???	

Now what is your bid?

You now have 12 Dummy Points (8 HCP + 4 trumps = 12).

Bid 5♦ = ERKCB with a void in support of Hearts. Do not bid 4♥, unless you play picture bids; another Lesson.

What if the opponents interfere by bidding over opener's 2♣ bid?

They bid at the 2-level or 3-level.

Most play DOP1 where $X^* = 0$ (no Ace/King) and $\text{Pass}^* = 1(\text{A/K})$

Both bids must be alerted (mark this on your convention card)

Or partner may bid which also denies A/K and shows a 5-card suit.

What do you bid with the following hand?

♠9 ♥AKQJ5 ♦AKQJ106 ♣A

Some may open this hand 2♣.

If partner next bids 2♦, you may bid 3♦, your long suit. Now partner bids 3♠. What is your next bid?

If you bid 4♥, is that forcing? If it is partner may next bid 5♦ and you have gone by the 4NT ask and will never know if partner has the spade ace!

If you next bid 4NT over 3♠, I hope you do not play the last last bid suit! Partner may show one control and you cannot tell whether it is the Ace/King! **Never Use the Last bid suit with Roman Keycard Ask!**

If you play controls over 2♣, that may work but how do you distinguish TWO Kings from ONE ace?

SIMPLE MAY BE BEST – Open 4NT;

However, is it Blackwood or 28-30 HCP or ACOL 4NT?

Partnership Agreement, but most play Blackwood.

Open the hand 4NT (Blackwood) - Partner bids 5♣ (no ace) - 6NT.

Partner holds ♠KQJ7 ♥62 ♦83 ♣10852

You have these hands!

North	♠J	♥AKQ5432	♦KQ3	♣K2
South	♠Q1073	♥109	♦A107	♣AQ7

Do you open it 1♥ or 2♣? If you open it 1♥

And the bidding goes:

North	East	South	West
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♥	All Pass

You may miss your slam! Open it 2♣.

Next Lesson – Introduction to Slam Bidding

In the lesson you will learn several slam bidding techniques which many club and tournament duplicate bridge players use to investigate slam in a suit and notrump contracts.

- (1) The Blackwood and Gerber Conventions
- (2) 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB)
- (3) Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKC) - 3014
- (4) 1430 RKCB with Kickback
- (5) 1430 RKCB Minorwood
- (6) 1430 RKCB Over Preempts (Weak RKCB)

Slam bidding techniques like Exclusion Keycard Blackwood, Cue Bidding, and other methods like 1430 Keycard Gerber will not be discussed.