



Fit-showing Jumps

WHEN I started out on the tournament scene (nearly thirty years ago!) I remember playing an early tournament with a university friend of mine who had cut his teeth almost exclusively at the rubber bridge table. On an early board he passed, then over my 1♦ opener he jumped to 2♠ to show 'a maximum pass'. I remember thinking at the time what a total waste of time – not to mention bidding space – this was.

I quickly realised that a much better use of the bid was to play it as a *fit-showing jump* ('fit-jump' for short!).

The requirements for such a bid, i.e. *jumping in a new suit as a passed hand*, are to hold at least five-cards in the suit jumped into *plus* four-card support for partner's opened suit (9-11 HCPs approx.)

Thus holding:

♠	9 2
♥	A J 8 5
♦	K Q 10 7 2
♣	5 4

After you have passed initially, if partner opens 1♥ you can jump to 3♦, a fit-jump, beautifully describing this hand.

Reasons for Using the Bid

1. A jump shift needs 16+ HCPs – clearly impossible as a passed hand.
2. The fit-showing jump describes a decent suit in the suit jumped into. This allows for greater definition for game- or slam-making decisions.
3. It follows from point 2 above that a reasonable suit is required to enable partner to be able to appreciate key fitting honour cards. E.g. K-Q-10-x-x, A-J-10-x-x, K-J-10-x-x are good holdings, whereas Q-x-x-x-x or A-x-x-x-x are not.

Fit-jumps after an Opposing Take-out Double

Clearly if partner opens the bidding and RHO makes a take-out double (usually

based on opening values, remember), then the odds of having a nice 16+ HCPs hand are remote indeed. Therefore the need for a *strong* jump shift after an opposing take-out double is almost negligible.

The possible uses for a jump in a new suit after a take-out double can be:

- a) Strong – 16+ HCP with a very good suit (very rare, as stated above).
- b) Weak – classically a six-card suit, similar to a weak two opening; 5-9 HCPs approx.
- c) A fit-showing jump (my recommendation!) – four-card support, decent five cards at least in suit shown with 9+ HCPs approx. It is *very* important to note that these bids have no upper limit, i.e. they show a raise to *at least* the level committed to by the jump.

I urge you to add these fit-showing jumps to your armoury. They are even more important than using them as a passed hand.

Reasons for Fit-jumps after a Take-out Double

1. In any competitive auction they help partner to judge whether to bid or defend. Knowledge of a 'double-fit' will lead partner to bid higher later, whereas otherwise he may defend.

With our example hand from earlier, after this start to the auction:

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1♥	Dble	3♦	

If the opponents now get together in spades, it is much easier to make an informed decision whether to bid on or not if opener knows more about responder's hand.

2. They aid partner if you end up defending. In particular, they may guide him in his choice of opening lead as well as finding a key switch if required.

3. They allow opener to defend higher level contracts if he has no fit with the second suit, i.e. the lack of a 'double-fit' often leads to defending in high-level decision making.

Extending the method: Fit-jumps in Competition

Hopefully my readers (both of you!) will be understanding both the need and the reasons for describing the hand more fully once a fit for your side has been found. You gain a huge amount while losing very, very little by adopting these methods in my view.

I believe the principle of fit-jumps can be extended to encompass all 'in competition' scenarios.

Here are the most common:

- a) We open and the opponents overcall:

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1♦	1♠	?	

3♣/3♥ from you are both fit-showing bids.

- b) We open and the opponents double:

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1♦	Dble	?	

2♥/2♠/3♣ are all fit-showing bids.

- c) The opponents open and we overcall:

Oppo 1	Partner	Oppo 2	You
1♠	1♥	Pass	3♦

The 3♦ bid is fit-showing (promising four hearts and at least five diamonds).

Similarly in the following auction with both opponents bidding:

Oppo 1	Partner	Oppo 2	You
1♠	1♥	1♠	3♦

This is still an 'in competition' situation, hence the 3♦ bid is a fit-jump.

Fit-jumps vs Splinter Debate

There will be occasions when you need to decide whether a bid is a fit-jump or a splinter. For example:

Oppo 1	Partner	Oppo 2	You
1♥	2♦	2♥	4♣

I recommend that you should *always* have a fit-jump available so here 4♣ would indeed be a fit-jump and *not* a splinter. Contrast this with the following auctions:

Oppo 1	Partner	Oppo 2	You
1♣	1♥	Pass	3♦

Oppo 1	Partner	Oppo 2	You
1♣	1♥	Pass	4♦

3♦ in the first auction is a fit-jump, whereas in the second 4♦ is a splinter. So a jump to the four level is only a splinter if a fit-jump was available at a lower level.

In summary the use of fit-jumps in competition will improve your partnership bidding and judgment immensely. They allow real discussion between two partners rather than just blithely guessing then often being forced to 're-guess' later.

One example hand from real life:

Love All. Dealer North.			
♠ 8			
♥ K Q 7 4			
♦ A J 8 6 5			
♣ A 7 2			
♠ K 10 6 3	<div>♠ N ♥ W ♦ E ♣ S</div>	♠ A Q 7 5 4	
♥ 9 6		♥ 3	
♦ Q 4		♦ K 9 7 2	
♣ K J 10 8 3		♣ Q 9 5	
♠ J 9 2			
♥ A J 10 8 5 2			
♦ 10 3			
♣ 6 4			

West	North	East	South
	1♦	1♠	Dble
3♣ ¹	4♥	4♠	All Pass

Despite holding only 11 HCPs East has an easy (and successful) 4♠ bid. This is partly helped by the singleton heart but also the key fitting club honour, allowing 4♠ to be bid over the making 4♥ contract. □

Top Table

Ben Green

BEN GREEN was extremely successful as a junior player, and repeatedly represented England in international events. His most recent success on the national scene was winning the 2013 Premier Grand Masters Pairs with John Holland. Ben was the Coach of the England Open Team that came fourth at the 2012 European Championships, and will fulfil that role again at this year's Bermuda Bowl.



When did you start playing bridge?

Grandma taught me on a family holiday when I was 12, but it wasn't until three years later that I first went to a bridge club; I played with anybody and everybody, week in week out, and gradually improved.

How often / where do you play?

A couple of times a week at the Acol Bridge Club in London; I also practise on BBO twice a week with my regular partner, John Holland.

Do you always play with the same partners / team-mates? What do you expect of them?

I play with a variety of partners and team-mates. I expect them to try their best – that's all that one can ask for.

What do you do for a living?

Management consultant and bridge professional.

What are your favourite bridge books?

The Expert Game (Terence Reese), *Why You Lose at Bridge* (S.J. Simon), *Bridge with the Blue Team* (Pietro Forquet) – all classics.

What are your hobbies?

Cooking, playing badminton, exploring London (I have only recently moved there), swimming, going out with friends.

What do you like and what would you change in bridge?

I love bridge, I wouldn't change the game at all. I enjoy the pressure, especially in World and European Championships.

What's the bridge success (so far) closest to your heart?

Winning the 2012 Spring Foursomes, coming back from a long way down to win on extra boards. Before that, reaching the Gold Cup final in 2007.

NGS NEWS



Photo: Peter Hasenson

TOP OF the Juniors in the National Grading Scheme, currently an 'Ace of Spades' with a grade of 68.61, is Shivam Shah. He has played remarkably few boards in rated events, approximately 1100, so his grade is only just 'mature'. Most of these events are EBU ones and Shivam has played in them with various partners, consistently achieving good results.

For the latest developments in the NGS, see Barry Capal's Blog on the website. Type <http://goo.gl/WTKpv> into your browser.