

## Contested Auctions: Fit Jumps and Fit Non-Jumps

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This material is taken liberally from Partnership Bidding at Bridge by Andrew Robson and Oliver Segal, 1993. This book is available for free download on-line at

<http://www.bridgewithdan.com/systems/PartnershipBiddingAtBridge.ZIP>

It is one of the finest books I've read covering competitive bidding, and I highly recommend it to improving players and partnerships. It is not a beginners book- definitely at the intermediate to advanced level. Today's lesson covers just one part of this great book- how to bid hands where you have support for partner in a competitive auction.

The central theme here is to help your partner make the right bid in competitive situations. Take the following hand:

♠ K J 6 5  
♥ 10 5 2  
♦ A Q 10 9 2  
♣ 4

You are vulnerable and opponents are not. Partner opens 1S, and your RHO bids 3♣ (weak). What do you bid? You should consider what happens if, after your bid, your LHO jumps to 5♣. Your partner will be left with a guess on whether to compete to 5♠, or he will pass, and YOU will be left with the same guess. The idea here is to avoid having your side take the last guess, and instead make your opponents take the last guess. If you bid 3♠ and your LHO bids 5♣, and it goes P, P back to you, what will you do? It's a guess. Your partner also faces a guess after the 5C bid. Consider these two hands for your partner:

♠ A Q 7 4 3	♠ A Q 7 4 3
♥ Q	♥ K J 7 4
♦ K J 7 4	♦ 7
♣ J 6 3	♣ Q 6 3

In the first hand, you will easily make 5♠, and your opponents might well make 5♣. In the second case, you are probably better off defending. But it's a guess if you just bid 3♠ or even 4♠.

Suppose you bid 3♦ over the weak jump overcall instead. Now, your LHO again bids 5♣. It's back to a guess because your partner doesn't know about your support yet, and will likely pass. This will shift the guess back to you at the 5-level.

The proposed solution to this is called a Fit-Jump. After 1♠-(3♣), a jump to 4♦ is used to show: a) good trump support- typically 4+ cards, b) good side suit- 2 of top 3 honors typically, and most importantly, c) willingness to play at that level in our agreed upon suit. So, after your bid of 4♦, say your LHO bids 5♣. Now, with the first hand, it's easy for partner to see that diamonds will be good, and that 5♠ is the right bid. With the

second hand, it is clear again that your values in diamonds are wasted opposite a singleton, and defense is the right action. So, the simple idea is that a fit-jump is a jump in a new suit after partner has opened (or overcalled) in a competitive auction. It can be played over a minor or a major by agreement, or you can play it only over a major.

A corollary to this is the notion of fit non-jump. This requires partnership agreement, but in an auction such as 1♠-(3♣)-3♦, what is the meaning of 3♦? In standard bidding, you are introducing a new suit at the 3-level, and the bid should be forcing and says nothing about support for spades. But, recognizing the importance of competitive bidding, some (including me) play fit-non-jumps. In this kind of situation, the 3♦ bid shows good diamonds, good spade support, and a willingness to compete up to 3♠. Your partner, with a good fit, can choose to compete higher. You need careful agreements with your partner on when a new suit bid is a fit-non-jump vs just a new suit bid. Here are the agreements I have with my partner on fit-non-jumps:

1. Partner opens 1 of a major and opponents make a Michaels cue bid. New suit bid by me is a fit-non-jump.
2. I am a passed hand, partner opens 1 of a major, and I make a non-jump new suit bid at the 3-level. That is a fit-non-jump.
3. Partner overcalls 1 or 2 of a major, and opponents make a jump raise. New suit bid by me at the 4-level is a fit-non-jump. Similarly, partner overcalls 1 or 2 of a major, and opponents make a single raise. New suit by me at the 3-level is a fit-non-jump.
4. Partner overcalls 1 or 2 of a major, and opponent makes a negative x. New non-jump suit bid by me at the 2 or 3 level is a fit-non-jump.

For lots more on this, as well as preemptive bidding and competitive bidding, please check out Robson and Segal's book on-line. It's simply one of the finest bridge books I have read recently.