

RESPONSES BY A PASSED HAND

A two-over-one response should seldom be made in a four-card suit, since opener may pass with a doubleton and no good rebid. A 2♣ or 2♦ response should be avoided when the hand is suitable for notrump play.

A one-over-one response in a major can also be passed, but opener usually bids again if he is short in that suit. Nevertheless, a major suit response is undesirable with a weak four-card suit.

A 1♦ response to 1♣ is forcing. The force is often handy when holding a weak major suit. Respond 1♦ to 1♣ with ♠J963 ♥96 ♦AQJ10 ♣K103. If 1♦ were not forcing, you would have to make a bad bid like 1♠ or 2NT.

Two-For-One conventional responses to a minor opening are also handy (see below). Those made in competition are discussed in section 3-15, Two-For-One Responses

Temporizing bids (bid in a new suit, holding support for opener) over a major opening are dangerous, since partner may pass. It is usually better to raise immediately. This policy will lead to some pretty strong single raises when responder has only three-card support, especially in a matchpoint game.

Jump raises are the same as by an unpassed hand, except that major suit jumps do not always include four trumps. With three-card support a singleton or void is desirable.

The jump raise to game is as usual preemptive. If too strong for a limit raise, respond with a splinter (you must be short) or jump in a new suit. A splinter bid may be in order with a two-suited hand that has strength in three suits. Bid 4♦ over a 1♠ opening with ♠A10432 ♥K2 ♦3 ♣A9873. Jump takeouts of a major opening (see below) are unwise with an ace-high suit, because opener will devalue his hand with a singleton in that suit.

A 2NT response shows 11-12 HCP, or a bad 13. Do not stretch for this bid, which often goes down one. Spotlight, section 4-12, applies to this response.

There is no such thing as a 3NT response to a major, as a balanced passed hand can't be strong enough for the artificial strong raise. A 3NT response to a minor is natural. Partner opens 1♦ and you bid 3NT (maybe once in your life) with ♠K2 ♥A3 ♦K106542 ♣J108.

Cue bid responses are discussed in section 10-2, Cue Bids by Responder.

Jump Takeout of a Major Opening

A jump takeout of a major opening is forcing, implying four cards (maybe a strong three) in opener's suit, and showing a side suit where a fit might be useful. It does not apply in competition, when jumps have other meanings. The jump is forcing for one round only. Responder is quite likely to pass a simple rebid of the "agreed" suit, which is a weak signoff. Opener must therefore bid something else if he thinks game is likely, either because of good overall strength or a good fit with responder's suit.

Suppose you have ♠KJ54 ♥63 ♦AQ763 ♣95. After you pass in first or second seat, partner opens 1♠. You bid 3♦, forcing, showing good spades and a diamond suit. If partner can only bid 3♠, you pass. If she has ♠AQ92 ♥A8 ♦K105 ♣10742 she will bid 4♠, because of the diamond fit. With ♠AQ1098 ♥KQ7 ♦952 ♣Q3 she signs off in 3♠, knowing the hands don't fit well. With ♠A10962 ♥AK ♦985 ♣K76 she bids 4♠ despite the poor diamond fit, because of the extra strength.

Opener will sometimes have a chance to make a trial bid of his own, either to investigate game chances or to find out if slam might be in the cards:

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
♠1074	♠9
♥AJ873	♥10952
♦KJ3	♦A74
♣Q5	♣KJ842
Opener	Responder
--	Pass
1♥	3♣
3♦	4♥

Opener's 3♦ call is a trial bid that hits responder well. With diamonds and spades reversed, responder would sign off in 3♥, which will probably go off one.

Responder can make a jump takeout even when he wants to bid game for sure. Suppose you have ♠K10942 ♥6 ♦AQ432 ♣J9 opposite a fourth seat 1♠ opening. You respond 3♦ (better than a 4♥ splinter bid), intending to bid 4♠ if partner rebids 3♠. If he jumps to 4♠ by himself you make another move, probably a 5♥ control-showing bid. Then opener can bid 6♠ with ♠AJ765 ♥852 ♦KJ6 ♣A4.

Suppose you open 1♥ in third seat with ♠A42 ♥KJ876 ♦AK4 ♣K5 and partner responds 3♣. Since you could have tried for slam opposite a mere jump raise to 3♥, you certainly have too much to bid 4♥. You should bid 3♦, which partner will think is just a trial bid. If she bids 4♥ over 3♦, you can bid 6♥ with confidence. If she signs off in 3♥, you continue with 4♣ (or 3♠, followed by 5♣). If the king of clubs were the queen, you would just jump to 4♥ over 3♣ and leave any further move to partner.

Since a new suit bid by opener is forcing, his jump rebid in a new suit is a splinter bid (1♠=3♣=4♥). This type of jump does not apply in competition:

South	West	North	
1♥	1♠	3♣	- weak jump takeout response (section 3-16)
1♦	1♥	2♠	- Two-Four-One response (section 3-15)

Three-Level Jump Takeout Responses

All three-level single-jump takeout responses are preemptive in competition, and jump takeouts over a takeout double have different requirements (see section 3-16, Weak Jump Takeout Response, and section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double). Jump takeouts at the two level are conventional, see below.

Two-For-One Two Diamond Response to One Club

A 2♦ jump takeout of 1♣ is artificial, showing a 2NT response with (probably) four cards in one or both majors. A light opener can rebid 2NT or sign off with 3♣. He can also show a major (hearts with both), which responder passes with four-card support. With less support responder bids 2NT (or 2♠ spades over 2♥). A stronger opener can employ the usual methods for rebidding after a non-forcing jump to 2NT, as described in section 4-12, Stoplight.

I said "probably" four cards in a major, but that is not mandatory. Having passed conservatively with ♠A32 ♥A76 ♦A87 ♣9865, 2♦ is a better response to 1♣ club than 2NT. If opener now bids a major (or asks for a major) you will have to bid notrump, but maybe he will rebid in notrump and get the play on his side.

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
1♣	2♦ - equivalent to 2NT, probably one or both majors
2♥/2♠	- minimum, four or more cards in the suit, not forcing
2NT	- probably no major, would have passed a 2NT response
3♣	- signoff
3♦/3♥/3♠	- artificial bids (see section 4-12, Stoplight)

By the way, the 2♦ response is always optional. With a weak major, tenaces, and a good hand for notrump, e.g., ♠J965 ♥KJ9 ♦AJ9 ♣Q102, just respond 2NT. You won't be worse off than those making the same bid, and you ensure that a notrump lead comes up to your hand. Opener in like fashion may rebid 2NT with such a hand (or 3NT with a stronger hand), ignoring the major. Others will be in the same contract, probably from the wrong side.

Example deal:

West	East
♠AJ	♠Q872
♥9532	♥Q876
♦Q62	♦K5
♣KQ104	♣AJ3
Pass	1♣
2♦ *	2♥ **
Pass	

* Values for 2NT, with (probably) one or both majors

** Light opening, could have spades too

If West's major suit holdings were reversed, the bidding would go:

West	East
Pass	1♣
2♦	2♥

2♠ Pass

If the 2♦ bid gets doubled, opener's redouble says that the contract may be playable. He probably has at least four diamonds with a high honor. A pass (forcing) denies a four-card major but does not deny a good hand. A 2NT bid is a signoff, as usual, with strength in diamonds, and a 3♦ rebid is a transfer to 3NT, letting the lead come up to partner's hand (Stoplight does not apply in this situation).

Two-Four-One Two Club Response to One Diamond

A 2♣ takeout of 1♦ is artificial, showing a 2NT response with (probably) four cards in one or both majors. A light opener can rebid 2♦ (which asks responder to bid 2NT), 2NT, or sign off with 3♣ (Stoplight) or 3♦ if not playing Stoplight. He can also show a major (hearts with both), which responder passes with four-card support. With less support responder bids 2NT (or 2♠ spades over 2♥). A stronger opener can employ the usual methods for rebidding after a non-forcing jump to 2NT, as described in section 4-12, Stoplight, starting with 3♣.

As with the 2♦ response to 1♣, the 2♣ response is always optional with a weak major and a hand that looks good for notrump.

Two-Four-One Limit Raise in Clubs

After a 1♣ opening a limit raise can be made with either or both four-card majors.

Opener Responder (a passed hand)

1♣ 2♠ - four spades with a club limit raise, denies four hearts

Pass - minimum, four spades, maybe a strong three if unbalanced

2NT - good diamonds/hearts, minimum hand

3♦/3♥ - natural, forcing

3♣ - signoff

3♠ - non-forcing raise

4♠ - stronger raise

4♦/4♥ - splinter bid, good spades (or long strong clubs)

Opener Responder (A passed hand)

1♣ 2♥ - four hearts with a club limit raise, could have spades

A 2♠ rebid by opener has to be forcing, even though his hand could be light.

Two-Four-One Limit Raise in Diamonds

After a 1♦ opening a jump to two of a major shows a limit raise in diamonds and four cards in the major. It is not forcing.

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
 1♦ 2♠ - four spades with a diamond limit raise, denies four hearts
 Pass - minimum, four spades
 2NT - good clubs/hearts, minimum hand
 3♣/3♥ - natural, forcing
 3♦ - signoff
 3♠ - non-forcing raise
 4♠ - stronger raise
 4♣/4♥ - splinter bid, good spades (or long strong diamonds)

The 2-4-1 2♠ jump response can also be made in competition over a 1♥ overcall, as described in section 3-15, Two-Four-One Responses.

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
 1♦ 2♥ - four hearts with a diamond limit raise, could have spades
 Pass - minimum, four spades
 2NT - good clubs/hearts, minimum hand
 2♠/3♣ - natural, forcing
 3♦ - signoff
 3♥ - non-forcing raise
 4♥ - stronger raise
 4♣ - splinter bid, good hearts (or long strong diamonds)

Two-For-One Summary

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
 1♣ 2♦ - 2NT hand with one or both majors (probably)

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
 1♦ 2♣ - 2NT hand with one or both majors (probably)

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
 1♣ 2♥ - limit raise in clubs, four hearts, maybe four spades
 2♠ - limit raise in clubs, four spades, denies four hearts

Opener Responder (a passed hand)
 1♦ 2♥ - limit raise in diamonds, four hearts, maybe four spades
 2♠ - limit raise in diamonds, four spades, denies four hearts

Two-Four-One responses may also be used over a takeout double. See section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double. Two-Four-One limit raises apply as usual in competition, as described in section 3-15, Two-Four-One Responses. The artificial notrump bids are of course not applicable in competition.

Do not use 2-4-1 if you have a good major and can pass or raise a 1NT rebid. If partner opens 1♣, just bid 1♠ with ♠KJ92 ♥Q4 ♦876 ♣A976, since you are not too strong to pass a 1NT rebid. Why take a chance on getting too high? Similarly, with a strong major and weak four-card support for opener's minor, just bid one of the major even if you won't pass a 1NT rebid. Respond 1♥ to 1♣ with ♠J73 ♥AKJ2 ♦Q4 ♣10842. You don't mind playing hearts opposite three-card support. If opener rebids 1NT you will bid 2NT, suppressing the club support, since this is a good notrump hand.