

# Mathe Asking Bid

## Preconditions

The Mathe ask is a slam-try, employed after a limit raise of a 1♥ or 1♠ opening. Typically, opener has better than a strong 1N opening, and inquires whether the limit raise includes shortness or is based on high card points only. In the former case (shortness), opener may have a side suit with 2 or more losers and hopes to benefit from responder's ruffing potential:

♠ A 7 6 3	♠ 8
♥ A K J T 8	♥ Q 9 7 5
♦ 6	♦ A 9 4 3
♣ A K 2	♣ Q J 7 4

In the latter case (HCP only), opener can expect to find fillers for side suits:

♠ A 7 6 3	♠ K 6
♥ A K J T 8	♥ Q 9 7 5
♦ 6	♦ A 9 4 3
♣ A K 2	♣ Q 7 4

## The Agreement

1. The 1<sup>st</sup> step continuation following a limit raise is a Mathe asking bid:

<u>Spades</u>			<u>Hearts</u>		
1♠	3♣	Limit Raise	1♥	2N	Limit Raise
3♦		Mathe Asking Bid	3♣		Mathe Asking Bid

2. A 1<sup>st</sup> step response is positive and **confirms** a splinter-based raise:

<u>Spades</u>			<u>Hearts</u>		
1♠	3♣	Limit Raise	1♥	2N	Limit Raise
3♦	3♥	Anonymous Splinter	3♣	3♦	Anonymous Splinter

3. A 2<sup>nd</sup> step response is negative and **denies** a splinter-based raise:

<u>Spades</u>			<u>Hearts</u>		
1♠	3♣	Limit Raise	1♥	2N	Limit Raise
3♦	3♠	No splinter	3♣	3♥	No splinter

A convenient way to think of the responses to a Mathe Asking Bid is

- Show a splinter via the Anonymous Splinter bid (3♥ or 3♦)
- Deny a splinter by returning to the trump suit (3♠ or 3♥)

## Continuations

- When responder shows a splinter-based raise

It is highly convenient that responder's positive response is identical to the direct splinter bid. This means that the entire universal splinter response structure will be available, and should be employed here as well.

- When responder denies a splinter

Responder's raise values are likely to be in high cards. Again, it is convenient that responder denies a splinter at the 3-level. An entire bidding level below game is available for cue-bidding, so a partnership may safely explore for slam.

## Examples

♠ A 7 6 3	♠ 8	1♥	2N	(Symmetric Majors) Limit Raise
♥ A K J T 8	♥ Q 9 7 5	3♣	3♦	Mathe ask; Splinter Response
♦ 6	♦ A 9 4 3	3♥	3♠	Relay to ask; Some Singleton
♣ A K 2	♣ Q J 7 4	3N	4♣	Relay to ask; ♠-singleton shown
		4♠	5♣	Keycard ask; 1 or 4 Keycards
		5♦	6♥	Queen-ask; Yes Q♥, no side King
<b>Example 1: Mathe Asking Bid with a Splinter-showing Response</b>				

♠ A 7 6 3	♠ K 6	1♥	2N	(Symmetric Majors) Limit Raise
♥ A K J T 8	♥ Q 9 7 5	3♣	3♥	Mathe ask; No splinter
♦ 6	♦ A 9 4 3	3N	4♦	Serious slam-try; ♦ cue-bid
♣ A K 2	♣ Q 7 4	4♠	5♣	Keycard ask; 1 or 4 Keycards
		5♦	5N	Queen-ask; Yes Q♥, and K♠
		6♦	6♥	K♦-ask; No
<b>Example 2: Mathe Asking Bid with a Splinter-denial Response</b>				

In fact, a grand slam is possible in both examples. In Example 1, the solidity of the trump suit permits three ♠-ruffs in the dummy with careful timing. In Example 2, perhaps a more aggressive game-forcing raise, and a serious slam-try by opener will allow the grand to be reached.