



The forcing fourth suit

The 4th suit forcing

is used by the responder in the second round of auction after the opener has bid two suits. Bidding a 4th suit forcing is asking the opener for more information to find the best contract (game, slam or part contract).

Be careful!

Like all artificial bids, the 4th suit forcing is only used when no natural bid is possible. It means that if you can use a forcing support bid, do it !

Bidding a 4th suit forcing doesn't mean anything about what you hold in this suit.

In order to ease your bidding system, you can use the 4th suit forcing as a game forcing bid (not level 1)

S	W	N	E
		1 ♦	Pass
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣			



Problem E1355 The game-forcing fourth suit guarantees neither length nor honors, but only a hand with 10HCP or more.

S	W	N	E
		1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 ♦			



Problem E1591 4th Forcing fourth suit to find the right contract to play: NT or in a suit?



The forcing fourth suit

When to use a 4th suit forcing bid ?

When your hand is strong enough to think of a game,

- Therefore, you need to have at least 10 HCP
- This bid doesn't promise any strength or honor in the named suit
- It's a way to ask the opener more informations about his hand.

4th suit forcing is self-forcing. It can be game forcing or not.

- When the responder's 3rd bid is lower than 2NT, a 4th suit forcing bid is not a game forcing bid : the forcing bid has been used to find a major suit fit with a minimum hand
 - Without any major suit fit, the responder slows down and
 - the opener doesn't go to game
- In any other situation, a 4th suit forcing bid is game forcing

S	W	N	E
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass		

A	Q	J	8	2	9	K	10	6	10	7	4	2
♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♥	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦	♦	♦

Problem E20519 2♠ No ♠ fit, a minimum hand (minimum for a 4th suit forcing bid) the responder has no better option than repeating his 5 carder. The responder's 3rd bid is lower than 2NT (2♠). Therefore, the opener may stop bidding before reaching a game contract.

S	W	N	E
		1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦			

4	2	K	10	9	A	J	9	7	4	A	10	9
♠	♠	♥	♥	♥	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦	♦

Problem E1591 3♦ is the forcing fourth suit to find the best contract to play: NT or a suit?



The forcing fourth suit

The following bids:

The opener's rebid after a forcing fourth suit.

- The first priority is to announce a three-card support for the responder's major.
- If he has stoppers in the fourth suit, he can bid 2NT or 3NT.
- If he has five cards in his second suit, he repeats it.
- With no other available bid, he repeats his opening suit.
- To rebid a minor with jump he needs at least six cards.

S	W	N	E
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♥			



Problem E5653 3 ♥ Support for the responder's first suit is the priority in response to a 4th suit forcing bid.

S	W	N	E
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♥			



Problem E9401 A 2♥ support is better than 2NT (even with a ♣ stopper). You show 3 cards in the partner's suit. A 4th suit forcing bid is self forcing : your partner has to bid again !



The forcing fourth suit

NT bids

The opener's rebid after a 4th suit forcing. With less than 3 cards in the responder's major suit, and a stopper in the 4th suit, the opener bids 2NT. That's an ambiguous bid, though. It may mean :

- A 1st zone hand (12-14 HCP)
- A 3rd zone hand (18-19 HCP)
- In any case, it denies 3 cards in the responder's major suit
- Remember : holding a 2nd zone hand, the opener would have bid 1NT in the first place...

After a 2NT bid : when the responder bids 3NT, the opener may continue with a 3rd zone hand (4NT). Else, he passes.

S	W	N	E
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 NT			



Problem E5650 2NT A 1st zone hand, a ♣ stopper (weak in this case ...), and less than 3 cards in the partner's major suit.

S	W	N	E
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 NT			



Problem E5651 2NT A ♣ stopper, less than 3 cards in the partner's major suit, a 3rd zone hand... If your partner continues and bids 3NT...you may show your strength : 4NT.