

New Minor Forcing

Consider the following hand after Partner Opens 1♦: ♠AK852 ♥K62 ♦82 ♣A82. You respond 1♠ and Partner rebids 1NT. You clearly have Game (26 HCP and looking at your hand 27/28 PP). Should you Rebid Spades to show an extra and chance that Partner might Pass? Jump to 4♠ Partner might only have 2♠'s? Should you Jump to 3NT? ♦'s might be a problem!! Maybe Partner has 3♠'s and then you should be in 4♠.

There is a Convention that solves problems of this sort; specifically you have a 5-Card Major and at least an invitational+ hand; Partner opens in a lower suit and show no support for your response. The Convention is called New Minor Forcing (NMF) because introducing a Minor after a sequence such as this is Forcing for 1-round and suggests that there is a Game Contract in this hand. NMF requires a 5-Card Major and 11+ HCP.

Another example: Partner Open 1♣ and you hold: ♠AK852 ♥962 ♦82 ♣A82. Again you respond with 1♠ and again Partner Rebids 1NT. This time you are not sure there is Game. If Partner in on the upper end of what the 1NT rebid promises (13-14) there still might be a chance (with distribution points you have about 12 PP).

To invoke NMF in the 1st example Bid 2♣, and in the 2nd Bid 2♦. In both cases you have introduced a new Minor after Partner bids 1NT in response. A **Forcing bid**. A Conventional bid that requires an **Alert**.

Responding to Forcing NMF Bid

The NMF indicates the extra Card in the Major suit bid. Armed with this knowledge and your 11+ HCP Opener can bid 3♠, 4♠, 2NT or 3NT or possibly rebid the original Minor. Your Minor bid is artificial and says nothing about your holding in that suit.

A side benefit of using NMF is seen in this example: Partner Open 1♣ and you hold: ♠AK852 ♥962 ♦82 ♣982. Again you respond with 1♠ and again Partner Rebids 1NT. This time you do not have the points and can not bid NMF, so after the 1NT Bid you can Bid 2♣. In this case you are promising an extra ♠ but you are saying that you think that 2♣ is the better Bid and suggesting strongly that Partner **Pass**.

Another Situation Addressed by NMF

Same starting scenario. Partner Opens 1♣ and you hold: ♠AK852 ♥KJ62 ♦82 ♣A2. Again you respond with 1♠ and again Partner Rebids 1NT. Without NMF you would rebid 2♥. This, as does NMF, tells Opening Partner that you have 5♠'s. But she doesn't know whether you have 4 or 5♥'s. Also she knows nothing about the strength of your hand. Solution: Bid 2♦ – NMF. If the Opener has 4 of the other Major, bidding that Major is the first obligation of the Partner of the NMF bidder; even if she holds 3 of the 1st Major. Here's a sequence 1♣ – P – 1♠ – P; 1NT – P – 2♦^{NMF} – P; 2♥ – P – 4♥ – P; If the Opener also holds a 3-Card ♠ suit he could Bid 4♠, but generally it is preferable to play in a 4-4 fit versus a 5-3 fit.

Note: If over your NMF Partner doesn't bid ♥'s there is no need, with 4, for you to mention them. You can jump to 3♥ to show 5♥'s and Game going points. Then Partner know you are 5-5. If, on the other hand you have <11 HCP, you can Bid 2♥. Partner now knows you are either 5-5 or 5-4 and less than 11 HCP and can make the appropriate choice between ♥ and ♠.

It may seem complicated, it really isn't very complicated when you consider the bidding options that the Convention opens up for you.

Let's Summarize

A sequence of a Minor responded to by a Major and followed by a rebid of 1NT sets the stage for

NMF. A bid of the other Minor kicks off NMF. Opener now has these choices (in priority order)

1) Show unbid 4-Card Major

2) Support Partners 5-Card Major if you can

3) Unable to do (1) and (2) Show point range by bidding level of NoTrump if you hold stopper
in suit used for NMF (remember the bid in that suit was artificial).