

## Splinter Bids

We include this Conventional bid at this point because it might be considered a corollary to the Strong Jacoby Trump Raise. The Splinter bid, like the Strong Jacoby shows 4+card support, (usually<sup>1</sup>) invitational points and possible interest in SLAM.

The Splinter shows a Singleton or Void in the bid suit, 4+card (major suit) Trump support and invitational (10-12) playing points – if you had 13+ you'd bid Jacoby 2NT<sup>5</sup>. Most commonly it is a response bid to partners opening in a Major but can also be a rebid by either the opener or responder.

To employ a Splinter bid, the bid must be an **unusual** jump bid. We emphasize **unusual** because you may, for example, also employ Bergen raises and in that case a response of 3♣ or 3♦ is indeed a double jump, but in your system it is not unusual if Partner opens either Major. A jump to 4♣ or 4♦ would be unusual. What, if you open 1♥ and, following a pass, Partner bids 3♠. Is that unusual? It certainly is in my bidding repertoire (I can't think of another convention that utilizes this jump) therefore the 3♠ bid is a Splinter; in fact it is the only 3-level splinter over 1♥. Control bidding is an acceptable follow-up to a Splinter bid, if there is room. (If you check our pages on Bergen Raises this bid has a slightly different meaning and is referred to as an anonymous splinter); otherwise it is a Splinter indicating a singleton or void in ♠'s (if you don't play Bergen raises) and 10+ HCP, thus 12/13 PP.

An immediate Splinter bid by responder follows the following form:

- 1♣ – P – 3♦/3♥/3♠ Shows support in ♣ (5+Card), a singleton/void in the bid suit, and slam interest.
- 1♦ – P – 3♥/3♠/4♣ Shows support in ♦ (5+Card), a singleton/void in the bid suit, and slam interest.
- 1♥ – P – 3♠/4♣/4♦ Shows (4+Card) support in ♥, a singleton/void in the bid suit<sup>2</sup>
- 1♠ – P – 4♣/4♦/4♥ Shows (4+Card) support in ♠, a singleton/void in the bid suit

But Splinter bids are not restricted to Responder's first bid; it could be responder's rebid such as

1♣ – P – 1♥ – P

1♠ – P – 4♣/4♦ either of these is a Splinter here showing 4+♠'s and 10+ HCP.

or

1♥ – P – 1♠ – P

2♥ – P – 4♣/4♦ either 4♣/4♦ is a Splinter bid. And an unusual Splinter by Responder on rebid.

Note that only 3-Card support is being shown since opener is showing a Card suit.

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or

2♣ – P – 2♦ – P

2♦ is the standard waiting bid

2♥ – P – 3♠

2♥ by opener shows a good 5-card suit the jump to 3♠ contrasted to bidding 2♠ is a Splinter showing 3-Card Support and a void/singleton in ♠.

Similarly

for a rebid of 4♣ or 4♦.

The Opener can also Splinter:

1♦ – P – 1♠ – P

4♥

2♥ is a Reverse showing 16-18 HCP; 3♥ is a Jump-shift showing 18-19 neither suggest support for ♠, Thus the only unusual jump is 4♥ showing a void/singleton in ♥ and 4-Card support in ♠

or

1♦ – P – 1♥ – P

3♠

Card

A Jump-shift would be a rebid of 2♠, 3♠ is an unusual jump showing at least 4-support in Hearts and a void/singleton in ♠.

1 We say usually because some suggest not using Jacoby 2NT when the singleton is an Ace. Thus, one might Splinter with more than invitational points when those Invitational points include a singleton Ace.

2 Note: A splinter after a Minor suggests Slam Interest. The Opposite is true of a Splinter after a Major. Over a Major there are different methods, so a splinter after a Major is game force but only suggests slam interest.

## Responding to a Splinter Bid

The ideal hand, if slam is in the offing is to have Axxx(x) or 3 quick losers in the Splinter suit, in that way you either have 0 or 1 loser in the suit. The splinter combined with the 4-card support means Responder will have length and some honors in the 2 unbid suits. Consider the other optional bids that the Responder could give : 1M – P – 2NT (Jacoby 2NT); 1M – P – 3M (Limit Raise); or 1M – P – 4M (Game Bid, possibly showing no interest in slam – just a 10 card fit). In each of these cases the Opener would be faced with a guess as to whether to stop in game or explore for slam, if for example the Opener held either

♠Ax	or	♠A5
♥KQ863		♥KQ862
♦752		♦AK8
♣AK5		♣743

In both cases the Opener is faced with 3 quick losers in the Minor Suits, and a potential loser to the Trump A. It is this that makes going beyond game dangerous.

Now suppose the bidding had gone 1♥K – P – 4♦ in the first hand or 1♥ – P – 4♣ with the 2<sup>nd</sup> hand. Here the 3 quick minor suit losers have been reduced to 0 or 1, the risk in going beyond game level to ask for Key cards has been drastically reduced.

It was stated earlier that a Splinter after a Major opening may or may not show slam interest but that a Splinter after a Minor suit open definitely indicates slam interest.

Lets look at several Opening hands when Responder has splintered after a Minor suit open: 1♦ – P – 3♠

♠A63	or	♠KQT5	or	♠9643
♥KQ86		♥K86		♥KQ8
♦J754		♦A753		♦AJ94
♣Q5		♣74		♣A4

Look at the 1st Hand with 1 ♠ stopper opposite Responder shortage a NT game is not well advised. Opposite a good ♦ raise (the splinter) and the red suits well under control with your minimum hand 5♦ looks like a good bet since slam is not likely with your 12 HCP.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> hand your once great ♠ suit looks anemic opposite the shortage there. The expected ♠ lead however gives you a great chance to reap 2 ♠ tricks in in a NT contract. Partner should not worry about his shortage when you make the NT bid!

**In hand 3, despite only 14 HCP this hand has slam written all over it. Visualize partners holding with even as little as 10 HCP opposite your 14 the rule of 30 says slam is possible. The rule of 30 says when there is a fit and one hand has a void then there are only 30 HCP in play and that means a slam is possible with as little as 24 HCP. The only question remaining is: 'does the splinter represent a singleton or a void'? Back to the visualization, Outside of ♠'s there are only the ♥AJ, the ♦KQ, and the ♣KJ missing 16 HCP and Partner has 10 of them. That means either the ♥A and ♦K or the 2 K's are in the opposition hands and Keycard asking will reveal which of those two allowing you to stop at the 5 level is either of those is the case.**