

SPLINTER REBIDS BY OPENER

A double jump rebid in a new suit, and certain "unnecessary" single jumps in a new suit, are splinter bids. Splinter bids can only be made at the three or four level. Similar bids at the five level are asking bids, as are bids one level higher than a splinter bid. See section 6-5 for a discussion of asking bids and responses.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
3♥/3♠	- splinter bid
4♥/4♠	- asking bid

After a New Suit Response

If the response to an opening bid was in a new suit, the requirements for a splinter bid are:

- Strong trump support for partner's suit, usually Qxxx or better
- More than just game-going strength--a little extra
- A singleton in the splinter suit, preferably not an ace, not a void
- Strength in the unbid suit, at least a queen

Lacking any of these requirements, it is usually better to avoid splintering.

Since reverses are forcing on a two-over-one responder, a jump reverse is "unnecessary" and is therefore a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♣
3♠	- splinter

A new suit at the three level is also forcing on a two-over-one bidder, so a jump to the four level is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
4♥	- splinter, not a two-suited hand

Although the remaining unbid suit is usually three cards long in a 5-4-3-1 hand, it could be a doubleton in a 6-4-2-1 hand. A 4-4-4-1 shape is generally inadvisable, because there could be a good contract in the unbid four-card suit. It may be better to make a forcing bid in that suit, then raise

partner. By including a jump somewhere along the line, you promise a singleton or void in the fourth suit:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
3♣	3♦
4♠ - four spades, short hearts	

A splinter bid is a mild slam try at least, not just a game-going hand. With barely enough for game, or weak trumps, don't make a splinter bid. The alternative will usually be a normal forcing new suit bid followed by a jump to game. The same is true if the short suit is a void. Splinter bids based on voids are undesirable because partner will regard an ace in that suit as an asset when it is practically worthless. You can splinter with a void, however, if the hand is strong enough to follow with a 4NT bid (Exclusion Blackwood--see section 6-6)

Splinter bids are used in competition, but then do not require more than mere game-going strength. With the opponents bidding, it is important to get the hand described before a preemptive raise shuts out communication. A lower bid in the splinter suit must be forcing if the higher bid is to be recognized as a splinter bid:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♥	1♠	2♥
4♣ - natural, because 3♣ is not forcing			

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♦
3♥ - normal jump shift (2♥ not forcing)			
4♦/4♥ - splinter			

A splinter bid in an opposing suit must be a single jump; a non-jump is just a cue bid and a double jump is an asking bid. Splintering in the remaining unbid suit (4♥, in the last sequence) tends to deny first or second round control of the opposing suit.

When responder is known to have at least a good five-card suit, it is possible to make the splinter bid with only three-card support. Opener's hand should be very powerful, and this splinter is usually made only because the opponents are crowding the bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	2♠	Pass
4♥ - splinter			

South has ♠KJ3 ♥A ♦AKJ763 ♣52. This splinter warns partner of at least two club losers, so North won't try for slam with ♠A109876 ♥K32 ♦Q4 ♣64, but would do so (via Roman Key Card Blackwood) with one less club.

Instead of playing 4♣ and 4♦ rebids after a 2♥ response to a 1♠ opening as splinter bids, the Valentine convention is preferable:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♥
3♥	- minimum hand
4♥	- extra king or queen
4♦	- heart raise, extra ace
4♣	- heart raise, extra ace and king

With 3♥ not forcing, Valentine is necessary to avoid too wide a range for a 4♥ jump raise.

After a 1NT Response

If the response to the opening bid 1NT, a double jump to four in a new suit is a splinter bid showing a super hand. Gerber is not used after a 1NT response (or rebid).

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
4♣/4♦/4♥	- splinter, slam try

Opener has a hand like: ♠AQJ8742 ♥6 ♦AQ8 ♣A3. This splinter must be a double jump (or a single jump cue bid):

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1NT	2♦
4♣	- natural (3♣ not forcing here)		
4♦/4♥	- splinter, slam try		

The 4♥ splinter bid denies first or second round control of diamonds: ♠AKQ10876 ♥9 ♦76 ♣AQ3
With five controls, this hand is too good for a NAMYATS 4♦ opening (see section 7-4).

After a 2NT Response

A jump to 4♦ is the only splinter bid used after an Omnibus 2NT Response. See section 3-10, Omnibus.

After a 2NT response by a passed hand (which is not Omnibus), a jump to the four level in a new suit is a splinter bid, except for a Gerber ask:

Opener	Responder
--	Pass
1♠	2NT
4♣	- Gerber
4♦/4♥	- splinter bid, long/strong spades

See section 4-12, Stoplight, for other rebids following a non-forcing jump to 2NT.

After a Single Raise

A new suit by opener is forcing after a single raise, so an "unnecessary" jump is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	2♣
3♥ - splinter	(2♥ forcing)

Opener has ♠AQ6 ♥5 ♦KJ7 ♣AK8743. If responder has something like ♠6 ♥J93 ♦AQ652 ♣9652, a slam is almost a laydown.

This splinter bid is used in competition, but only when the situation is quite clear. A new suit rebid over RHO's overcall is a forcing game try, so an "unnecessary" jump is a splinter bid:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	2♣	2♦
2♥/2♠	- forcing		
3♥/3♠/4♦	- splinter bids		

The 3♥ and 3♠ splinter bids tend to deny first or second round control of diamonds.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	2♥	2♠
3♣/3♦	- forcing, game try		
4♣/4♦	- splinter bids		

After A Limit Raise

A jump to the four level over partner's limit raise is a splinter bid, which means that the following is the only splinter possibility after a limit raise of a major:

Opener	Responder
1♥	3♥
4♠	- splinter, strong slam try
5♣/5♦	- asking bid (see section 6-5)

More splinters are available after a minor suit limit raise:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
4♦/4♥/4♠	- splinter bids

Opener	Responder
1♦	3♦
4♥/4♠ - splinter bids	

Other Splinter Bids

Splinter bids apply after a forcing club raise, but must be a jump to the four level:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦ - forcing club raise
4♥/4♠ - splinter	
4♦ - natural bid (non-jump)	

When opener's third bid is a jump in a new suit, the splinter is obvious:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
3♣	3♦
4♥ - splinter	

Opener has ♠A3 ♥5 ♦AKJ876 ♣AQ83. In this case it is opener's suit that is agreed. Opener cannot bid 3♠ to promise a singleton heart, because that would show three-card spade support.

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2♥	3♣
4♦ - splinter	

In this case opener has limited his hand with the 2♥ bid, so is free to splinter with ♠J3 ♥AK8654 ♦5 ♣KQ52.