

## CONVENTIONS COURSE

### *Lesson Six: Splinter Bids*

When was the last time partner opened with 1♥ and you jumped to 4♣? I hope that the answer is “Never!” as responder should never pre-empt partner. So from now on a double jump by Responder in a NEW suit is a “Splinter” bid! (ie 1♠ - Pass – 4♣). The Splinter shows:

- 1 A raise to game level in partner’s suit, showing 7 Losing Tricks or less
- 2 A singleton (or void) in the Splinter suit and looking for slam

Splinter bids are an excellent tool to help bid to Slams more accurately as one can identify a shortage in a suit and then partner can decide whether this will be useful to her in a quest for Slam. For example, partner has opened 1♠, what do you respond with:

(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)
♠ AK765	♠ Q1092	♠ K876	♠ J862	♠ J8652
♥ 853	♥ 9	♥ AJ1074	♥ KJ985	♥ AQ75
♦ K742	♦ AQ874	♦ 95	♦ 4	♦ -
♣ 4	♣ K73	♣ K8	♣ A74	♣ AJ85

- (i) 4♣ A Splinter bid (double jump in a new suit) showing a singleton club and at least a raise to 4♠ (7 Losing Tricks)
- (ii) 4♥ Another Splinter Bid showing a singleton (or void) heart and at least a raise to 4♠
- (iii) 4♠ 7 Losing Tricks but no singleton, so just raise to game
- (iv) 3♠ Only 8 Losing Tricks this time so not strong enough to Splinter with 4♦
- (v) 4♦ Showing a void (or singleton) in ♦s and a raise to 4♠ (7 Losing Tricks or less)

### Responding to a Splinter Bid

Once Responder has made a Splinter bid, Opener either has a Good, Average or Bad holding in the Splinter suit:

Good News	Length in the Splinter suit with no wasted Kings or Queens, such as xxxx, Axxx, xxx, Jxxx, as the losers can be trumped
Bad News	Wasted Honours or shortage opposite the Splinter bid, such as KQJ, AQJ, KQxx, x etc

Thus, if you have wasted values opposite the Splinter bid, sign off in 4 of the Trump suit but if you have a good holding in the Splinter suit either “Cue Bid” an Ace or use 4NT RKC. Eg:

Opener	Responder	O.	R.	
♠ AQ7	♠ K93	1♥	4♦*	* Splinter Bid
♥ AQ952	♥ K763	4NT	5♦**	** 1 or 4 of Five Key Cards
♦ 873	♦ 4	6♥	Pass	
♣ A9	♣ KJ864			Opener loves the Splinter with xxx opposite a singleton – no waste.
Opener	Responder	O.	R.	
♠ KQ1082	♠ A964	1♠	4♥*	* Splinter Bid
♥ KQ	♥ 2	4♠	Pass	
♦ A42	♦ Q76			Opener hates the Splinter with such wasted honours, KQ♥, so signs off.
♣ K92	♣ AJ853			

## Opener can Splinter too!

A Splinter bid should also be used by Opener if she has a raise to the 4 Level opposite Responder's one level response. For example:

Opener	Responder	O.	R.	
♠ KQ83	♠ A9542	1♣	1♠	* Splinter Bid
♥ AJ9	♥ K8	4♦*	4NT	** 0 or 3 of the five Key Cards
♦ 7	♦ 8642	5♣***	6♠	
♣ AQ874	♣ K3			

Here Responder promises 9 Losing Tricks for their 1♠ response. Opener's 4♦ (a double jump) is a Splinter showing a raise to 4♠ (5 Losing Tricks or less) and a singleton (or void) diamond. Responder's xxxx in diamonds is great news as there are no wasted values in diamonds and the length can be trumped in dummy.

## Splinters with a Single Jump

There are times when Opener or Responder can use a Splinter Bid as a Single Jump too. The thing to remember is that ANY unusual jump bid to the 4 level by opener or responder will be a Splinter bid. Let's look at some examples:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♥	2♦	1NT	2♥ (Transfer to ♠s)	1♠	2♣
2♥	4♣*	2♠	4♦*	4♦*	

\*Splinter bid, agreeing partner's suit and showing a singleton or void in the Splinter suit.

## Splinters with Minor Suits

Splinters work in exactly the same way with minor suits but be careful if the Splinter bid takes you over the 3NT barrier and also one would ALWAYS show a 4+ card major suit before supporting a minor.

Opener	Responder	O.	R.	
♠ A874	♠ 5	1♣	3♠*	* Splinter Bid
♥ A9	♥ K83	4NT	5♥**	** 2 Key Cards and no Q♣
♦ K4	♦ AQ75	5NT	6♦***	*** one King
♣ KQ1063	♣ AJ984	7♣	Pass	

Here the 3♠ Double Jump is a Splinter bid agreeing clubs and showing at least a raise to game (ie 6 Losing Tricks or less). Opener has the perfect holding opposite a singleton so cruises into 7♣.

## Appendix

- 1 Any bid of a new suit after a Splinter bid is an "Ace Showing Cue Bid" saying that the Splinter is good news and looking for Slam
- 2 Splinters work after Opposition bidding too, ie 1♥ - 2♦ (overcall) - 4♦ (Splinter)
- 3 Fine to Splinter with a singleton Ace, but NOT with a singleton King
- 4 The bid of a NEW suit without a jump will be a "Trial Bid" ie 1♠ 3♣  
4♦