

Jacoby and Bergen Raises

When we talk about having a fit, we are thinking of the 8-card fit, 4-4 or 5-3 commonly, but a 9-card fit is safer and also more powerful, and Jacoby and Bergen raises are based on 4-card support for the opening bid of 1H or 1S. There are a few versions of both of these conventions, but a simple adaptation of each is as follows:

Bergen Raises

1. After 1S by Partner:

2S shows 5-9 and 3-card support;

2NT (Jacoby) shows 4-card support and is forcing to game;

3C shows 7-9 and 4-card support;

3D shows 10-12 and 4-card support;

3S shows 2-6 and 4-card support;

3NT shows 12-15 and 3-card support and balanced, opener may pass or cue-bid or bid 4S;

4C, 4D and 4H shows 10-12 and 4-card support, with a singleton in the suit bid;

4S shows 5-card support and less than 10 HCPs.

2. After 1H by Partner:

2H shows 5-9 and 3-card support;

2NT (Jacoby) shows 4-card support and is forcing to game;

3C shows 7-9 and 4-card support;

3D shows 10-12 and 4-card support;

3H shows 2-6 and 4-card support;

3NT shows 12-15 and 3-card support and balanced, opener may pass or cue-bid or bid 4H;

3S, 4C and 4D shows 10-12 and 4-card support, with a singleton in the suit bid;

4H shows 5-card support and less than 10 HCPs.

3. What if you have 10-12 and 3-card support?

If you are playing a forcing 1NT response, then simply bid 1NT and jump in opener's major on the next round.

If 1NT would not be forcing, bid a new suit, showing at least 4, and jump in opener's major on the next round.

If you have already passed, be careful as a new suit is no longer forcing, so take your pick, but this is when a forcing 1NT response, even as a passed hand, comes in very handy.

4. Do I count points for distribution?

This is by agreement, but I would suggest not, except when you are at the top of the range for a bid with an outside singleton (ignore any outside doubleton).

If you have 6HCPs and a singleton, then treat it as 7-9 and bid 3C, likewise with 9HCPs and a singleton, bid 3D.

Jacoby

There are many ways to rebid after partner responds a Jacoby 2NT to your major suit opening bid, but simple is often best to minimise confusion. I suggest the following:

1. After partner opens 1S and you respond 2NT:

3C/3D/3H shows a singleton in the suit bid (strength 12+);

3S shows a good hand for spades without a singleton (not 15-17);

3NT shows 15-17 without a singleton, and of course is forcing;

4C/4D/4H shows a good second suit;

4S shows 12 -14 without a singleton.

2. After partner opens 1H and you respond 2NT:

3C/3D/3S shows a singleton in the suit bid (strength 12+);

3H shows a good hand for hearts without a singleton (not 15-17);

3NT shows 15-17 without a singleton, and of course is forcing;

4C/4D/4S shows a good second suit;

4H shows 12 -14 without a singleton.

After your response, if partner bids game in the major that is a sign-off, but having thus far just shown your singleton, if you have a good hand you may move on, but bear in mind that your singleton may not suit partner's hand at all.

After you show your singleton if partner bids a new suit, that is their cheapest cue-bid (first or maybe second-round control as per your agreement), and you are expected to cue-bid in return, by-passing a suit shows no Ace of King in that suit.

After you show your singleton, if partner bids the major at the 3-level, that is inviting you to cue-bid the cheapest cue-bid (first or maybe second-round control as per your agreement), by-passing a suit shows no Ace of King in that suit. Partner will return the cue-bid, or sign off in game in the major if your cue-bid does not suit, or bid 4NT to check up on Key Cards.

Bidding in Competition

If you overcall a major suit, Jacoby and Bergen do not apply, and a jump in a new suit is generally taken as a splinter with support for the major, and a cue-bid as at least a Limit Raise in support of the major.

If your partner opens 1H/1S and next player overcalls or doubles, generally if you can still make your Bergen response, then it will have the same meaning. Thus after a double, system is on, or 1S over 1H, but over a 2D overcall, system is off as 3C is no longer a jump bid, but 3H/3S would still apply. If the overcall is 2C then 3D by responder could still be 10-12 with 4-card support. Instead of Jacoby, a cue-bid could be at least a Limit Raise with 3-card support and 2NT 4-card support.