

Major Suit Raises _____

In Volume I major suit raises were discussed in their simplest form. Now we need to look at several facets of the major suit raise spectrum and determine what the best possible methods might be.

Constructive Major Raises _____

Those who play **constructive major raises** require that single raise of an opening major show 7+ to 10 HCP. An advantage does accrue when opener

has more than minimum values and can try for game knowing that responder has sound values.

1. The use of this agreement requires responder with a three card or longer fit and a good five to a bad seven HCP to start by using the **forcing notrump**, then return to opener's major at the two level. This opens the door to disaster for several reasons. When opener has a good hand and needs only to find a fit in the trump suit to bid game, it's a guess whether to try or not. When responder returns to opener's suit at the two level, does that show or deny a fit? Opener cannot tell. If opener assumes a probable fit and bids on, with no fit opener will get too high. When opener decides to be conservative and assume no fit, the game bonus available because of the fit will not accrue.
2. When responder conceals a fit to use the **forcing notrump**, the opponents are given free access to the two level. A great many opponents will be able to overcall at the two level, thank you, but would be shut out of the auction if a single raise required entry into the auction at the three level. When responder conceals a fit for opener's major and allows an opponent to enter at the two level, if the other opponent raises the overcall should responder now show the concealed fit at the three level? No! If responder first bids a **forcing notrump** and then shows a fit at the three level, that hand must include game invitational values (9+ to 12-HCP).
3. Knowledge of a fit often will enable opener to compete when the opponents enter the auction. When responder conceals a fit **for any reason**, opener is rendered helpless.

Example 68)

a) ♠ J87542
 ♥ 6
 ♦ AK
 ♣ AKJ5

Example 68a) opens one spade. Responder uses the forcing notrump. Opener rebids two clubs and responder bids two spades. What does opener do next?

b) ♠ 93
 ♥ KJ85
 ♦ 9872
 ♣ Q4

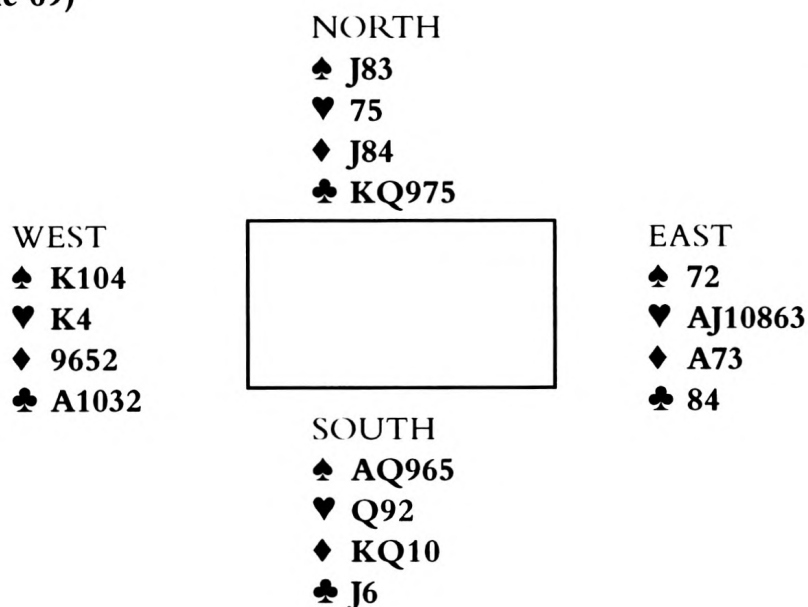
c) ♠ KQ3
 ♥ 8543
 ♦ 8764
 ♣ 104

Example 68b) is a classic hand for the auction. Responder takes a preference to opener's major suit with a doubleton.

If Constructive major raises have been agreed, responder 68c) would produce the same auction. The fact that responder has a true fit for opener's major makes all the difference. If responder raises to two spades opener can try for game by asking for good trumps, and responder will bid four spades.

The plus side of the use of **Constructive major raises** is the facilitation of game tries on marginal hands. But opener can still make game tries with knowledge that the single raise might have been made with very minimum values. The minus side, however, is so devastating that this bidding method should be set aside entirely. Concealing fits from partner will usually create the worst possible result. When you can raise partner because you have a fit, DO IT. And in competition don't be afraid to stretch a bit to show that important fit.

Example 69)



When this hand was dealt in actual play South opened one spade and West passed. North should have raised to two spades, which would have been followed by three passes. South would have made two spades easily.

North, however, made the error of bidding one notrump. This allowed East to overcall two hearts. South passed and West had no better call than to raise to three hearts. North now bid three spades. Expecting a game invitational hand, South continued to four spades. West was quick to double and lead the heart king. The difference to North-South was minus 500 rather than plus 110.

Enough on this topic. Avoid disaster. Do not agree to play **constructive major raises**.