

**MATAMATA BRIDGE CLUB**  
TIPS FOR BETTER BRIDGE  
Thursday 23 February 2017

***You need to agree with your partner that you are playing Fourth Suit Forcing before you use it***

**Definition of Fourth Suit Forcing**

A partnership bids all four suits in the first two rounds of bidding.

A bid by responder of the only un-bid suit at their second turn is artificial and game forcing.

The bid is often made when responder is unsure about the final level ie game or slam and whether it should be in a suit or NT.

Suppose you hold:

♠K 2    ♥A K J 4 2    ♦Q 10 3    ♣8 5 3.

You are South and this is the bidding:

North South

1♦        1♥

1♠        2♣        You have enough values for game, yet no bid is suitable. You cannot bid 3NT with three low clubs. Here 2♣ is an artificial game forcing bid

Partner's first obligation is to raise hearts with three-card support. Their second obligation is to bid 2NT.

You don't promise clubs to bid 2♣ - it is an artificial bid. Your partner needs a club stopper to bid NT.

If partner has neither heart support nor a club stopper, they should rebid their first suit – (2♦).

**Practice hands**

Here are some examples to clarify how fourth-suit forcing works.

What do you call holding?

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♠K 10 7    ♥A K 8 7 4    ♦J 10 4    ♣A 2?

North South

1♦        1♥

2♣        ?

Answer: Bid 2♠. You want to see if your partner has three-card heart support. If not, bid 3NT.

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♠K 10 7 2    ♥A K 7 4    ♦J 10 4    ♣A 2?

North South

1♣        1♥

1♠        ?

Answer: Bid 4♠. Do not bid 2♦, Fourth Suit Forcing. You have four card ♠ support and values for game - bid it.

Note that partner could have bid 2♠ (reverse) showing a stronger hand, so you are assured that you will not miss a good slam.

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♠K 10 7 2    ♥A K 8 7    ♦J 10 4    ♣A 2?

North South

1♦        1♥

2♣        ?

Answer: Bid 3NT. Partner does not have four of either major. You have values for game and stoppers in the un-bid suit. You don't need to bid fourth-suit forcing. It is used when you aren't sure where to play the contract.

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### Other matters to discuss

These are related issues to discuss with your partner:

1. Fourth-suit forcing is not used if one partner is previously a passed hand.
2. Fourth-suit forcing is not used when opponents intervene in the bidding. You can use the cue-bid instead as a forcing enquiry.
3. A jump in the fourth suit shows a 5–5 hand and is forcing

Consider this auction:

North South

1♦      1♥

1♠      3♣

You might hold:

♠5 2    ♥K Q J 4 3    ♦5    ♣A J 10 4 3    Partner is best placed to decide the final contract

### One auction merits special discussion:

North South

1♣      1♦

1♥      1♠

In this auction, treat 1♠ as natural and forcing. A jump to 2♠ would be Fourth suit forcing