

RAISING PARTNER'S SUIT OPENINGS

When responding to partner's opening bid we first investigate a fit in a major suit. Failing this, we look towards playing the hand in no trumps, with minor suit contracts a lower priority. Consequently, we show major suits even if we have a fit in a minor.

			♠ A K J 5
			♥ 6 4
			♦ K J 8 6 3
			♣ 9 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	Pass	?	

Bid 1 spade. Looking for a major suit fit takes precedence over showing support for partner's minor suit.

Raising Partner's Suit

Once a fit has been established we can add points for shortages in outside suits. In general, we add

- One point for a doubleton
- Three points for a singleton
- Five points for a void

When adding points for distribution be careful not to overvalue the hand by double-counting short honour holdings. For example, a singleton queen should not be valued at five points (two in high card points and an extra three as a singleton). A workable approach is to count the higher of the high-card value or the distributional value (so count a singleton queen as three points and a doubleton king as three points).

Raising partner's suit clarifies the auction because it announces that we have a fit and also tells partner about the strength of your hand. If you have support for partner's major then show it. *Support with support.*

Raising Structure

A **single raise** shows support and 6-9 total points.

A **double raise** is a limit bid showing an invitational hand of 10-12 total points. (though some partnerships play a double raise as pre-emptive)

A **direct raise to game** when partner opens a major is most often used to show a hand with five-card support, distributional values, and a weak hand. Exactly how weak depends on partnership agreement but 0-7 is standard. The immediate raise to game is designed to make life difficult for the opponents. The good trump fit and outside shortages protect against a heavy penalty and may enable the game to make with minimal values.

	♠ Q 9 5 3 2
	♥ 6
	♦ K 8 6 3
	♣ 9 6 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	?	

Bid 4 spades. This may make, and if the contract fails the opponents most likely had a making spot, perhaps even a game contract, that you prevented them from bidding.

If an immediate raise to game over partner's major suit opening shows a weak hand, we must have a different method of showing hands with genuine game-going values. Various conventional approaches are used, including Jacoby 2NT and Splinters.