

Responder's 2nd Bid
but mainly
4th Suit Forcing to Game
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4th Suit Forcing to Game

Once upon a time people played 4th Suit Forcing two different ways viz.

- Some played it as forcing for one round and its effect was to raise the forcingness of the next bid so
 - now a NF (Non-Forcing) 3rd bid now became invitational
 - an invitational 3rd bid now became forcing to game.
- Some played it as making the auction unambiguously game forcing and auctions without 4th suit forcing all became invitational at best.

Nowadays playing the first method is very rare and 4th suit is now uniformly forcing to game. This what we will discuss today and we will abbreviate it to 4sfg.

It doesn't interact well with XYZ but I will note those cases specifically.

4sfg at the 1 level

This is simple - 4sfg doesn't occur because the only possible auction is after 1♣-1♦-1♥ and

- 1♠ should be treated as showing 4 cards and be F1 (forcing for 1 round)
- 2♠ should be 4sfg and should suggest a flattish hand with worries about spades in a 3NT contract.

After 1♣-1♦-1♥-2♠, opener might

- bid 2NT with a spade stopper (Ax(x), Kx(x), Qx(x) or better)
- 3 of own suit with no help in spades and some unshown length
- 3 of responder's suit with no help in spades and 3 card support for partner's suit
- there is no need to jump to 3NT unless you are sure that is the best contract

Without 4sfg at the 2 level

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This is where 4sfg occurs most usually after auctions like $1\heartsuit-1\spadesuit-2\clubsuit$ and now $2\diamondsuit$ is 4sfg.

Notice that bids other than the 4sfg, $2\diamondsuit$ bid are not forcing so after $1\heartsuit-1\spadesuit-2\clubsuit$, responder's bids are

- $2\heartsuit$ preference with 3 cards and 5–9(10)
- $3\heartsuit$ invitational with 3 cards and 11–12)
- $2\spadesuit$ weak (5–9(10)) with 5+ cards expects to play there
- $3\spadesuit$ invitational with 6+ cards (happy to play there)
- PASS is weak with preference for clubs
- $3\clubsuit$ invitational (11–12) with 4+ cards
- $2NT$ with diamond stopper, no other attractive bid, invitational (11–12)

After 4sfg at the 2 level

Auctions after 4sfg is used are typically like $1\heartsuit-1\spadesuit-2\clubsuit-2\diamondsuit$ and opener's rebid is

- 2 NT with diamond stopper, no other attractive bid
- 3 NT with diamond stoppers, need to be sure this is right so 1.5 to 2 stoppers
- 3♣ confirms a 5th club, tends to deny diamond stoppers
- 3♦ no good bid, wants assurance about diamonds (sometimes called 5th suit forcing)
- 3♥ should show 6 hearts and tends to deny a diamond stopper
- 3♠ delayed spade support, likely 3514 shape
- 4♣ unlikely bid since can bid 3♣ and then 4♣
- 4♥ should show x7x4 and not really interested in anything other than playing 4♥

4sfg at the 3 level

There are some auctions where the 4th suit bid is at the 3 level like 1♠-2♦-2♥.

The main meaning is denying any fit and asking for help for 3NT (help is Hx(x) as before).

So, if you have 1.5 or more stoppers just bid 3NT yourself without asking for help

Other uses of 4sfg

To improve your slam bidding, you must get beyond guessing to use RKC (or not) to check that there are not 2 aces off the top!

Slam investigation should take place between 3M and 4M to decide if 12 tricks are there.

The problem is to agree a major suit at 3M and not higher. This is one place where playing 2/1GF makes the auction easy (in contrast to auctions starting 1M-1N).

It can be less easy when playing Standard as 1♠-2♥-3♥ is not forcing.