

FORCING BIDS IN BRIDGE

By Baloney Bill, June 2025

Well, there are several forcing bids in bridge. Let's start with one that many of you heard about a month or two ago at one of these Chat sessions: **Help Suit Game Try**. Your partner opens 1H and you respond 2H, which in the constructive bidding systems means _____. Partner now says 3 clubs, which has nothing to do with her interest in a club contract instead of hearts. Partner wants to know if you have help in clubs, which will help her decide whether or not to bid game. If you have a ___ to ___ LTC in clubs, you bid game; if your club LTC is ___ or higher, you bid 3H, and partner will pass. If an opponent doubles your 3C bid, that an example of a _____ double.

Not everyone plays Help Suit Game Try. That 3C bid might mean something entirely different, which also might be forcing, but in a different way.

Another forcing bid is when someone opens the bidding by slapping down her 2C card. The harder the slap, the happier she is with her hand. If an opponent slaps her after she employ an especially hard 2C slap, yell at somebody. Yes, when playing bridge, HAVE FUN!!

OK, so an opening bid of 2C is forcing, but not necessarily to game. You and partner will have some kind of response agreement. I'll describe one. In response to a 2C opening bid, you will select one of two "waiting" bids, either 2D, which simply means a hand with fewer than 10 points, or 2NT which tells opener that you have a hand with 10+ points. Partner, who opened 2C, will not pass your response.

If you respond 2D, and partner bids her best suit, that bid is forcing for one round. If you have a relatively good suit that might provide a trick or two, bid that suit. If not, raise partner's suit. If you hand is a bust (e.g. 0-3 points and poor support for partner's suit, bid 3C. If partner bids 2NT after your 2D waiting response, that is NOT forcing; you may leave her in a 2NT contract.

So, **a new suit by responder is always forcing**. *This isn't necessarily the case when opener bids a new suit.* E.g. partner opens 1D, you respond 1H, and opener bids 1S. If you bid 1H with a weak hand, e.g. 5-6 pts, and you have moderate spade support (3-4 cards), you may pass partner's 1S bid. If partner had a "FORCING" hand, e.g. 18-19 pts, she would have jump shifted or made another strong bid.

Stayman, Jacoby transfer and Texas transfer responses to no trump opening bids are forcing (for one round). Most conventional bids are forcing (Gerber, Blackwood, 1430, Chat Queen Boogie, etc.).

Bergen responses are forcing for one round.

2NT responses to partner **after** she opens a **weak two bid** are forcing for one round. The 2NT bid asks pre-empter if she has an entry to her hand in another suit (e.g. an Ace, or a King/Queen combo), just in case partner wants to try for game in NT or her own suit.

Lastly, are takeout doubles forcing? _____

Let's play some hands and have _____!