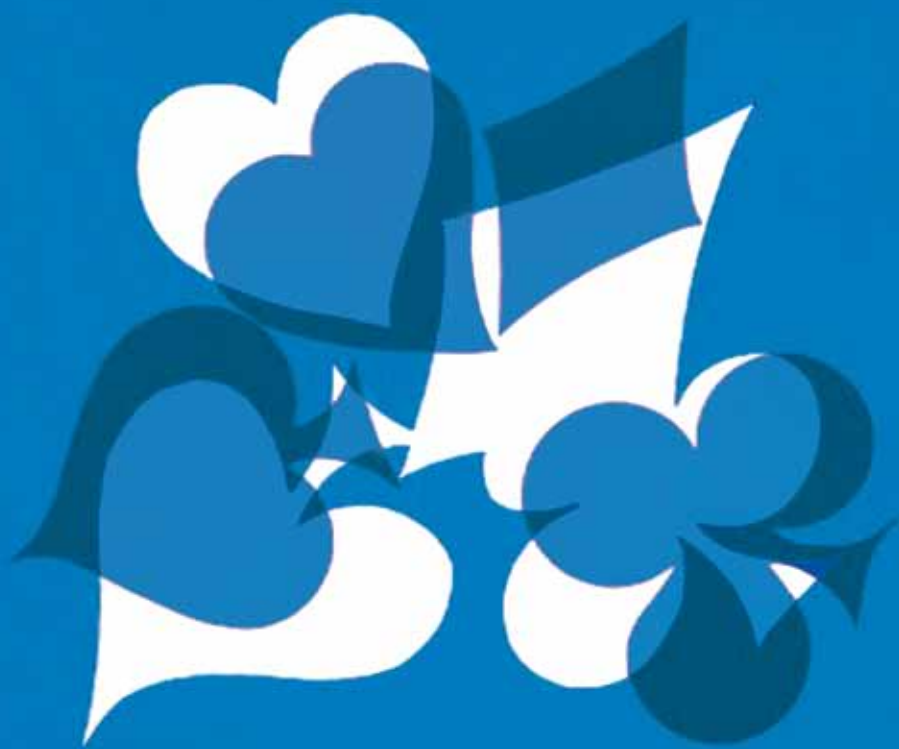


WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

SPLINTER BIDS

Patty Tucker



An Honors eBooklet from Master Point Press

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331 Douglas Ave.

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M5M 1H2 (416) 781-0351

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Splinter Bids

Splinter Bids

Splinter Bids are used when you know you and your partner have the values to play game, you have a fit and you have shortness in some other suit. They are designed to tell your partner in what suit your shortness (a singleton or void) is.

The premise of the Splinter Bid is that if partner has length and weakness in the suit you are short in, your high card points will be located in partner's long suits and your trumps will be of use in trumping partner's losers in their weak suit.

An Example:

North ♠K7 ♥KQJ432 ♦A2 ♣432

South ♠A432 ♥A1092 ♦K432 ♣2

North has 13 HCPs and South has 11 HCPs. With only 24 HCPs between their two hands North/South can make 6♥. The reason is because since South has only one club, South can trump North's losing clubs. This allows North to take two spades, six hearts in his hand, two hearts in the South hand (by trumping clubs) and two diamonds for a total of twelve tricks. I call this the "thirty point deck theory". Basically, you

“lose” or forget about the ten high card points contained in the club suit because they are now irrelevant since South can trump all the club losers except one.

Although the most common Splinter Bid is made by Responder to Opener, a Splinter Bid can be made by Responder or Opener, Overcaller or Responder to Overcaller (sometimes called Advancer). Splinter Bids can be made in support of major or minor suits, though in support of a major suit is much more common and I suggest only make a Splinter Bid in support of major suits until you become comfortable with the bid.

Regardless of when and by whom the Splinter Bid is made, the following conditions always hold true (with the exception of Mini-Splinters which are discussed at the end of this section).

- A Splinter Bid is always a double jump in another suit from the one level of your trump suit and shows:
 - The values for game in either high card points or tricks;
 - Four or more trumps; and
 - A singleton or void in the suit you jump in (it will not be an Ace or King).
- Splinter Bids can be made by a passed hand,

- A Splinter Bid is a game forcing bid which invites partner to consider slam **if** your hands are matching well.
- You can make a Splinter Bid in the suit partner or Overcaller has bid.

What do I do AFTER partner makes a Splinter Bid?

Splinter Bids are all about how well your hands fit...not how many high card points you have between your hands. As a general answer to “What do I do?”:

- If you think your hands fit well, bid a new suit (a cuebid) showing interest in slam and first round control (an Ace) in the suit you bid, or ask for Aces by bidding Blackwood; or
- If you think your hands do not fit well, “sign-off” by bidding game in your major suit.

How do I decide if our hands are fitting well?

The most telling point will be if you have any “wasted values” in the suit in which partner has shown shortness. Wasted values are high cards (Kings, Queens and Jacks) which have now lost their trick-taking value. Holding a Jack is not an immediate signal to beware of going higher as that is only one point of your opening bid. However, if you opened

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Splinter Bids

Bridge students quickly discover that ‘basic’ bidding’ will only get them so far. If they really want to improve, it is necessary to master a certain number of bidding conventions, and be prepared both to play them and play against them. This ebooklet covers Splinter Bids.



PATTY TUCKER (Dunwoody, Georgia) is an ABTA Master Bridge Teacher and cofounder of Whirlwind Bridge and Atlanta Junior Bridge. Her success at the bridge table culminated in her victory in the 2000 Baldwin Flight A North American Open Pairs with long-time bridge partner Kevin Collins. Patty and Kevin were married in 2006.