

HELP SUIT GAME TRY

ABOUT THE DEALS

You may be either Opener or Responder, but you will always be in the South position.

The first page or two of each Deal shows only your hand. The initial bidding (if any) is given and you are asked to decide what you would bid, then click **BID**. The subsequent page will then appear telling you what you should have bid and continuing the auction. On the final page of each Deal partner's hand will be shown.

Although it is not a part of the Deals you might wish to examine your and dummy's hand and make a Plan of how you would play the contract.

HELP SUIT GAME TRY SUMMARY

This is a wonderful convention. It is used only under very specific conditions so you never get mixed up about whether partner is using it or not. It often helps you but never hurts you. And it is so simple I wish I had thought of it.

Look at this common bidding sequence using only Natural bidding:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♥
3♥	?

Now put some point counts for those bids.

Opener's 1♥ shows 13 - 21 initially.

Of course Opener knows exactly what he has, but Responder doesn't.

Responder's 2♥ shows 6 - 10 initially.

Of course Responder knows exactly what she has but Opener doesn't.

Opener's 3♥ narrows his range to 16 - 19.

With fewer than 16 he would pass 2♥, with more than 19 he would bid 4♥.

Responder's next bid will pin-point her point count.

With 6 or 7 points she declines the invitation by passing.

With 8 points she either passes or bids 4♥, as she thinks best.

With 9 or 10 points she bids 4♥.

That is the way beginning players are taught to think when they bid and it is a very logical and straightforward approach. It goes right along with this basic principle, which hopefully beginning players are also taught:

ONCE YOU FIND AN 8-CARD MAJOR SUIT FIT, THAT SUIT REMAINS TRUMP

Now look at that bidding sequence again.

The suit has been changed to make it clear that this convention applies to both Majors.

Opener Responder

1♠ 2♠
3♣ ?

If Opener had said 3♠ it would be the same Natural bidding as before.

But suppose he decided to bid 3♣ instead?

Could Responder possibly think that Opener has now decided to try to find a ♣ fit, even though he already KNOWS there is a ♠ fit?

Or might Responder be showing ♣ stoppers so Opener can bid Notrump?

Of course not, nothing will change the fact that the trump suit is agreed to be ♠s.

The 3♣ bid is a Help Suit Game Try, meaning this:

Partner, I have invitational strength, 16 - 19 points.
If you have 9 or 10 points of course I want you to bid the game.
If you have 7 or 8 points I want you to use your best judgement.
To help you with your judgement call I just wanted to let you
know the suit that I could really use some Help in.

Time for some examples.

Remember I said this was a simple convention?

It is. There are only five examples to look at.

Opener: ♠ A K 10 ♥ A K Q 7 4 ♦ J 9 7 3 ♣ 3

Responder: ♠ 8 7 5 ♥ J 8 5 ♦ 8 6 2 ♣ K Q 6 5

Opener Responder

1♥ 2♥
3♦ ? 3♥
pass

Opener invites with a 3♦ bid.

Responder has a bare minimum so he would decline no matter what.

He declines by returning to the trump suit at the 3♥ level.

Notice that there is absolutely no play for 10 tricks.

Opener: ♠ A K 10 ♥ A K Q 7 4 ♦ J 9 7 3 ♣ 3

Responder: ♠ 7 5 ♥ J 8 5 ♦ 8 6 2 ♣ K Q 6 5 4

Opener Responder

1♥ 2♥
3♦ ? 3♥
pass

Opener invites with a 3♦ bid.

Responder has a little extra, 7/8 points, but no help for Opener in ♦s.

So again Responder just returns to the trump suit by bidding 3♥.

The problem is that Responder's ♣ strength is largely wasted against Opener's singleton.

Opener: ♠ A K 10 ♥ A K Q 7 4 ♦ J 9 7 3 ♣ 3

Responder: ♠ J 7 5 ♥ J 8 5 ♦ K Q 6 5 ♣ 8 6 2

Opener Responder

1♥ 2♥

3♦ ? 4♥

pass

Opener invites with a 3♦ bid.

Responder's hand is worse than the last one, but he has 7 points and great help in ♦s.

So he takes a chance and bids 4♥.

As you can see, the good fit makes 10 tricks almost certain.

Opener: ♠ A K 10 ♥ A K Q 7 4 ♦ J 9 7 3 ♣ 3

Responder: ♠ Q 7 ♥ J 8 5 2 ♦ 6 5 2 ♣ A J 10 5

Opener Responder

1♥ 2♥

3♦ ? 4♥

pass

Opener invites with a 3♦ bid.

Responder has zero help for ♦s.

But why should he care, he has 9 points, so he bids 4♥.

They will make 10 tricks easily, possibly 11.

There you go. These four possibilities wrap up Help Suit Game Try.

After Responder raises a Major suit to the 2 level . . .

. . . if Opener wants to Invite to game she does not bid 3 of the Major; instead she bids 2 or 3 of a suit she could use some help in.

Then Responder has 4 options:

1. With a stinking hand return to 3 of the Major whether you can Help or not.
2. With a mediocre hand return to 3 of the Major if you can't Help Opener's suit.
3. With a mediocre hand bid game if you can Help Opener's suit.
4. With a maximum hand bid game whether you can Help or not.

The Fifth Example:

If you were paying attention earlier you are aware that there should be one more example coming. It isn't really an addition to the four, just a variation.

All the hands above showed Responder either Helping Opener by having some strength, or Not Helping him by having several small cards. Of course there is another way to Help in a suit - by being able to ruff.

Opener: ♠ A K 10 ♥ A K Q 7 4 ♦ J 9 7 3 ♣ 3
Responder: ♠ J 9 7 5 ♥ 10 8 5 2 ♦ 5 ♣ A 10 8 2

Opener Responder

1♥ 2♥

3♦ ? 4♥

pass

Opener invites with a 3♦ bid.

Responder has just 7 points but can offer a big Help in ♦s.

He can ruff them.

You might even make 12 tricks with these two hands.

10 practice Deals will be worth more than another 1000 words.

Deal 1