

FOURTH SUIT FORCING

ABOUT THE DEALS

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

The first few pages of each Deal show only your hand. The initial bidding (if any) is given and you are asked to decide what you would bid, then click **BID**. The next 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.

FOURTH SUIT FORCING SUMMARY

This is a bad name for a good convention. It's bad because probably every Bridge player in the world plays that a bid of the fourth suit by their partner is already forcing. As a matter of history, the convention was originally called "Fourth Suit Artificial", but the name didn't stick. So we will call it Fourth Suit Forcing (FSF) but in reality it is **FOURTH SUIT FORCING AND ARTIFICIAL**.

A bid by Responder, at his second turn, of the fourth suit is artificial and is made when no other reasonable bid is available. It is forcing and Opener is asked to further describe his hand.

While everybody plays the bid as forcing, there is not a universal agreement of what it is forcing to! Many partnerships play the bid as forcing to game, many others play it as forcing for one round, but merely invitational to game. Of course you will do as you like, but for the purposes of these practice Deals we will play it as a one-round-force which is invitational to game, about 12 points or more.

In many ways FSF is similar to the New Minor Forcing convention, and we suggest that you play the two conventions with the same forcing principle, just for consistency.

Pard	You
1♣	1♥
1♠	2♦

Your 2♦ bid is forcing and definitely does not show a ♦ suit. After your side has bid three suits the chances of finding an 8-card fit in the fourth suit is practically zero. If you really had a ♦ suit you would surely just bid notrump at your second turn.

So this is FSF and your hand might be:

♠ Q 9 5 ♥ A K J 7 4 ♦ 10 7 3 ♣ A 2

You cannot support either of partner's suits, you cannot rebid your ♥s, and you cannot bid notrump with no ♦ stopper. But you have 15 points and partner has opened, so you have to find some bid! Aha! Bid FSF and await partner's next bid.

Requirements for FSF: As we have said, Responder needs a minimum of 12 points; a hand that is at least invitational. More often than not Responder will have enough strength to insist on game, but not know which game to bid. There are two types of hand that benefit most from FSF.

When Responder has a notrump type hand but doesn't have a stopper in the fourth suit he can use FSF.

Pard	You
1♦	1♠
2♣	??

♠ K Q J 4 ♥ 10 8 4 ♦ K 7 ♣ A J 9 6

With 14 points you know you want to reach game. You could just bid 3NT and hope partner has a ♥ stopper but that might turn out very embarrassing. You can't bid 3♣ because partner would probably pass. And if you jump to 4♣ you have bypassed 3NT, which might well be your best game. So you bid 2♥ and force partner to bid again.

When Responder's first suit is a 5-card Major he can use FSF to get partner show 3-card support.

Pard	You
1♣	1♥
1♠	??

♠ K 6 4 ♥ A K 10 8 4 ♦ 8 7 ♣ K 10 6

With 14 points you know you want to reach game. You cannot support either of partner's suits, you can't rebid a 5-card ♥ suit, and you certainly can't bid notrump. So you bid 2♦ (FSF) and see what partner has to say. If he has 3 ♥s he will return to that suit and you can bid the game. Or, he might bid notrump himself.

Besides these two main purposes you can use FSF whenever you want to make a forcing bid but don't like your other choices.

Opener's rebid after FSF:

Here are Opener's recommended rebids, listed in order of priority:

1. Rebid his own second suit if 5-5 or better.
2. Support partner's first suit with 3 cards.
3. Bid 2NT with a stopper in the fourth suit and a minimum.
4. Bid 3NT with a stopper in the fourth suit and a maximum.
5. Raise the fourth suit with 4-cards, but don't bypass 3NT (rare).
6. Rebid a 5-card suit if no other bid can be made.

You	Pard	
1♥	1♠	♠ 7 ♥ A Q 10 8 4 ♦ 8 5 ♣ A K 7 5 3
2♣	2♦	Bid 3♣ to show a 2-suiter.
??		

You	Pard	
1♣	1♥	♠ A 10 6 4 ♥ K 8 4 ♦ 8 5 ♣ A Q 10 6
1♠	2♦	Bid 2♥ to show 3-card support.
??		

You	Pard	
1♣	1♥	♠ A 10 6 4 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ K J 10 6
1♠	2♦	Bid 3NT to show maximum with a ♦ stopper.
??		

You	Pard	
1♦	1♥	♠ A J 6 4 ♥ 4 ♦ A Q 8 3 ♣ Q J 7 5
1♠	2♣	Bid 3♣ with 4 of the suit.
??		

You	Pard	
1♦	1♠	♠ A 4 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A Q 8 4 3 ♣ Q J 7 5
2♣	2♥	Bid 3♦ because you have no other bid.
??		

Odds and ends:

If either partner is a passed hand, FSF does not apply.

If the opponents interfere you should play that FSF is off.

There is one special case where a bid of the fourth suit is not FSF.

Pard	You	
1♣	1♦	Only in this bidding sequence is the fourth suit not FSF.
1♥	1♠	The bid is forcing, but shows a real ♠ suit.

14 examples will be worth more than another 14000 words.

Deal 1