

Two Over One

Inverted Minors

Making the simple raise strong

Inverted Minors is a fancy name for a simple concept. Consider the following two auctions:

① partner opp you opp
1♣ P 2♣

Playing standard agreements, this is 6 to 9.
Playing Inverted Minors, it shows 9+ and up.

② partner opp you opp
1♣ P 3♣

Playing standard agreements, this is 10 to 12.
Playing Inverted minors, it is 5+ to 9-, and possibly even a bit weaker.

In plain terms, Inverted Minors basically reverse the standard meanings of minor suit raises.

The notion of Inverted Minors existed prior to the building of the Two Over One system, but they have been adopted by the system. They reflect the principal of engaging in an immediate preempt when you are weak, while you go slow and create extra bidding space when you are stronger.

Remember that a direct raise of a minor by responder denies a 4-card major. Therefore, when a minor suit is raised, both partners will be questioning whether notrump is possible or desirable and at what level. With stronger hands, the correct answer to this question is more urgent because the possibilities of game and slam have arisen.

When this questioning begins at the two level, where plenty of bidding space remains, the questions can be answered more accurately. Indeed, Standard Bidders, who leap immediately to 3 of the minor, bypass altogether the option

of playing 2NT. Besides that, they have left themselves but little time to decide if 3NT is the right contract.

So we may say that the chief benefit of Inverted Minors is our increased ability to bid games and slams accurately when we possess better cards. But gaining preemptive effects with the weaker hands should also be viewed as an advantage as well. When the auction has reached the 3 level, and the opponents have not even started, they may miss a chance to acquire a major suit contract at all, or they may be stampeded into a contract that is not the best. Altogether, the reversal of standard bidding by the use of inverted minors brings multiple enhancements to our partnership's capabilities.

Jump Raise of a Minor

When you jump raise your partner's opening bid to 3 of a minor, you show a hand that:

- has less than a good 9 points (9-)
- lacks a 4-card major
- has some length in the minor suit

How long should your minor suit be for the jump raise? If partner's suit was clubs, you need a minimum of 5 clubs for your jump raise. After all, partner may have opened a 3-card suit. If partner's suit was diamonds, he more likely started with 4 or more diamonds, so your length requirement is reduced to just 4. You would prefer to have 5 diamonds, of course, but this may not be possible:

984 5 A1096 Q10863

When you have only 4 diamonds, you often have 5 clubs to go along with it. If you have a hand like this, make the jump raise to 3 diamonds.

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Ordinarily your jump raise will express the point count of 5+ to 9-. But the longer your trump support, the weaker you may be:

9 42 K98543 J742

If partner has opened 1 diamond, go ahead and make your jump raise to 3 diamonds. Your additional length and reduced strength, if anything, makes your jump raise even more desirable.

Notice then that opener should regard a jump raise as a warning not to proceed further. Of course, if opener has the right hand he can still act in the face of your warning, but he is doing so only after you have indicated that your hand seems to have no future beyond 3 of the minor.

Finally, consider a hand like this one:

This is not a hand for a jump raise to 3 diamonds. This is a notrump hand. It is balanced. It has an honor in each major. The diamonds will probably provide a source of tricks. You do not need to warn partner that 3 of the major is the only good spot. You need to tell him that 1NT is probably the best spot.

Single Raise of a Minor

When you make a single raise of a minor, raising one of a minor to two of the minor, you show a hand that:

- has a good 9 points or more.
Note that this is not simply a limit raise. You have not shown any upper range.
- does not have a 4-card major
- has at least 4 cards in the minor suit.
- creates a one-round force

Because your single raise has no upper limit to the point count range, partner cannot pass you, but must rebid, even when his hand is only minimal. Determining how high the partnership can go, then, will depend on cooperation between the partners. If opener has 15 points or more (perhaps even 14+), he will strive to reach 3NT if he can locate all the stoppers necessary. Likewise, you must take care on your subsequent bids to clarify whether you have only invitational values of 9+ to 12-, or whether you have the 12+ needed to bid game when facing a minimal opener. Here is responder's guideline for the limit of his subsequent actions:

- With values of 9+ to 12-
don't bid beyond 3 of the minor unless partner shows extra.
- * With 12+ and more
don't let yourself get passed until you have bid beyond 3 of the minor

So 3 of the minor becomes a key as to the limit of your point count.

Progress after the Single Raise

Part one: Toward notrump

After a single raise, the partnership will usually investigate its potential for notrump. The partners will need to clarify their point count and check to see if they have all the needed stoppers. The basic agreement following the single raise is:

Bid stoppers up the line

Opener will be the first to act. Let's say the opening bids have been made in the club suit. If opener bids 2 diamonds over 2 clubs, he

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shows a diamond stopper and asks responder to bid stoppers up the line. If, over 2 clubs, opener skips over 2 diamonds and bids 2 hearts instead, then he is showing a heart stopper and denying a diamond stopper. The same principal applies to the stopper-showing bids made by responder: since the stoppers are bid up the line, any suit that is skipped cannot be stopped by the partner who has skipped over it.

So, look at these auctions:

partner	opp	you	opp
1 ♣	P	2 ♣	P
2♥	P	2NT	

Opener denies a diamond stopper, but responder shows all suits are stopped. Responder's failure to bid 3NT shows 9+ to 12-.

partner	opp	you	opp
1 ♣	P	2 ♣	P
2♦	P	2 ♠	

Responder has a spade stopper, but no heart stopper. Responder's point count is still unknown

partner	opp	you	opp
1 ♣	P	2 ♣	P
2♦	P	2 ♠	P
2NT			

Opener has the missing heart stopper, but opener lacks the point count to bid 3NT if responder has only 9+ to 12-. If responder has the minimal range, he will pass and they will play 2NT. If responder has 12+ or more, he will raise to 3NT and try for game.

partner	opp	you	opp
1♦	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3NT	

Responder accounts for all the stoppers and also has sufficient point count for game.

partner	opp	you	opp
1♦	P	2♦	P
2NT	P	3NT	

Opener's 2NT shows major suit stoppers and minimal values. Opener does not affirm nor deny a club stopper.
Responder's raise shows 12+ points.
Responder should be able to stop clubs.

partner	opp	you	opp
1♦	P	2♦	P
3NT			

Opener's 3NT shows major suit stoppers and 18 or 19 points. Opener does not affirm nor deny a club stopper

partner	opp	you	opp
1♦	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3♦	

If opener had both major suit stoppers he would have rebid NT. So when opener shows the heart stopper, it denies the spade stopper. Responder would bid NT if he held a spade stopper, so the 3 diamond bid denies the spade stopper as well as any interest in trying for a 5 diamond game.

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partner	opp	you	opp
1♦	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3♦	P
3NT			

Initially opener denies a spade stopper, and then responder denies one also. So why does opener continue to 3NT? Opener does in fact have a spade stopper, and he also has 14+ to 17 points. Holding both major suit stoppers, the bid of 2NT would show 12+ to 14-, and the bid of 3NT would show 18 or 19. So to show 14+ to 17, you first bid your heart stopper, and then you follow with your bid of 3NT.

Mini-summary

Opener's point count with both major suits stopped after 1♦ - 2♦

- 12 to 14+ bid 2NT
- 18 or 19 bid 3NT
- 14+ to 17 first bid a major stopper, then bid 3NT

Part two: Toward slam or minor suit game

Minorwood

Using 4NT to ask for keycards using a minor suit does not work very well. By the time you find out that you don't have enough keycards for slam, you may already have passed 5 of your minor. Or, foreseeing the possibility of going past 5 of the minor, you may simply decide you can't afford to ask for keycards at all. Here comes Minorwood to the rescue.

Minorwood uses 4 of the agreed on minor as the bid that asks for keycards. Consider the following auction:

partner	opp	you	opp
1♦	P	2♦	P
4♦			

Using Minorwood, this peculiar jump to 4 diamonds asks for keycards. Four hearts says zero or 3, 4 spades is 1 or 4, 4NT is 2 without the queen, and 5 clubs is 2 with the queen.

Let's say that after a 4 diamond Minorwood call, partner responds 4 hearts, showing 0 or 3. If you want to ask for the queen, you bid 4 spades, the cheapest bid possible. But now let's imagine that you hold the queen, and that you want to ask for kings. How can you do that?

You cannot use 5 of your agreed suit to ask for kings because 5 of your agreed suit has to mean STOP.

You cannot use 4NT to ask for anything because 4NT by the questioner means "we don't have a slam, so let's play in notrump, contracting at 4NT."

So let's say your suit is diamonds, you make the jump to 4 diamonds, which is Minorwood, and partner answer 4 spades, showing 1 or 4 keycards.

case 1. You want to ask for the queen. Use the cheapest bid possible that is not 4NT. Therefore, 5 clubs is the queen ask.

case 2. You want to ask for kings. Use the 2nd cheapest bid possible that is not 4NT and that is not 5 of your minor. So, 5 hearts is the king ask.

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Because Minorwood doesn't allow you to use certain bids as questions, it is a little more complicated than ordinary RKC. But these obstacles are not that obscure. Of course you cannot use 5 of the minor as an asking bid: it has to be used as the stopping bid. And neither can 4NT be used as a question: it, too, is a stopping bid, used for stopping in notrump instead of in a suit. But, otherwise, the queen ask is always the cheapest bid available, and the king ask is always the 2nd cheapest bid available.

What sort of hand might use Minorwood? Perhaps it would look something like this:

KQ8 A3 AQJ853 K4

Your combined partnership points total at least 29, and the 6-card suit can probably make up for a few missing points. If partner has 2 keycards, the slam is a good try.

Minorwood could also arise in some other auctions, for instance:

partner	opp	you	opp
1 ♣	P	2 ♣	P
2NT	P	4 ♣	

Here 4 clubs is Minorwood.
It can be clearly understood.

But how about this auction?

partner	opp	you	opp
1 ♣	P	2 ♣	P
2 ♥	P	3 ♣	P
4 ♣			

Responder's 3 club call shows that a stopper is missing and that responder doesn't want to try for a minor suit game. Responder may be limited to 9+ to 12-. Opener could have passed 3 clubs, so the bid of 4 clubs shows extra points. But should this bid be Minorwood? Yes. Any jump

to 4 of the minor or any voluntary noncompetitive bid of 4 of the minor is Minorwood.

But note that the following auction is NOT Minorwood:

partner	opp	you	opp
1 ♣	P	4 ♣	P

Responder has indeed jumped to 4 clubs, but it is his first bid. Minorwood does not occur on the first bid by one of the partners. This jump to 4 clubs is highly preemptive. If responder had wanted to ask for keycards, he would first have bid 2 clubs, expressing values, and thereafter he would jump to 4 clubs.

Splinters

Instead of using Minorwood to try for a minor suit slam, opener may make a splinter bid. When responder raises the opening minor suit to the 2 level, he is expecting opener to rebid at the 2 level, showing stoppers up the line. When, instead, opener responds at the 3 level, it is a splinter, expressing a singleton or void in the suit bid. So if the auction begins:

partner	opp	you	opp
1 ♣	P	2 ♣	P

then jumps to 3 diamonds, 3 hearts, or 3 spades are all splinter bids. On the other hand, if the auction begins:

partner	opp	you	opp
1 ♦	P	2 ♦	P

then jumps to 3 hearts and 3 spades are both splinter bids. Opener's rebid of 3 clubs would not be a jump, but it is a splinter in clubs. It is not the jump that signifies the splinter. It is the direct 3 level response that signifies. Of course all three level responses are also jumps, except for the response of 3 clubs over 2 diamonds.

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What does responder do after opener's splinter bid? First, he reevaluates his hand in light of this new information. There are three basic cases:

Case 1: Very often responder holds values in the suit of opener's splinter. In this case, slam is not likely, and responder should sign off in 3 notrump.

Case 2: Responder may lack values not only in opener's short suit, but in his entire hand. With only minimal point count and no stopper in the named suit, responder may elect to rebid 3 of the minor if possible, or 4 of the minor if not. (A jump to 4 of the minor would qualify as Minorwood.)

Case 3: Responder has no wasted values in the short suit and more than bare minimum values. Now the agreement becomes to cuebid controls up the line until the final destination can be determined.

Off in Competition

If an opponent enters the auction before responder can raise at all, then all of the inverted minor agreements are off. But you should abide by the following agreements.

If the opponents overcall, then:

- the single raise is 5+ to 9- points
- a jump raise to the to 3 of the minor is preemptive
- a cue bid of the opponent's suit is a limit raise or better in support of opener's minor suit.
- notrump bids are natural and show at least one stopper in the overcaller's suit.

Note the parallel between these raises and major suit raises after an overcall. They are exactly the same, and therefore easy to remember.

If the opponents double, then:

- the single raise is 5+ to 9- with 4 trump.
- the jump raise is 5+ to 9- with a 5 or more trump.
- 2NT is artificial. It's a preemptive raise of partner's minor.
- with a limit raise, show your hand in two parts. Begin with a redouble, and then raise the minor.

Of course you can bid new suits over the double just as you would over any takeout double. The four bids above are simply the 4 ways you have to raise the minor suit. Use the 2NT preempt liberally with 5 or more cards in partner's minor. Points are of little consideration. More important is the preemptive interference created which may prevent the opponents from judging the proper level of their major suit contract.