

SPLINTER BIDS

Barbara Seagram & Linda Lee



PRACTICE YOUR BIDDING

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The PRACTICE YOUR BIDDING Series

Jacoby 2NT
Roman Keycard Blackwood
Splinter Bids
Stayman Auctions
Jacoby Transfers
Four-Suit Transfers
Practice Your Slam Bidding (CD-ROM)
Practice Your NT Bidding (CD-ROM)

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section 1

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The purpose of this book is to help you and your partner practice Splinter Bids and better understand how they are used. The book has been designed so it can be used either on your own or working with a partner. But while you will certainly get a lot out of it if you use it alone, it is especially good to use this book with your favorite partner to make sure that you are both on the same wavelength.

The first section of the book provides a refresher for the Splinter Bid convention. It provides examples but no exercises. Since cuebids are such an essential part of slam bidding we have also included a refresher on cuebidding. These parts of the book provide lots of examples but no exercises. Don't worry; you will get plenty of chance to practice in the rest of the book. You will also need to ask partner about aces and kings, from time to time. In our sample auctions for demonstration purposes we will use Roman Keycard Blackwood (which is explained in detail in another book in this series). But when you bid the hand, just use your own favorite form of Blackwood. For more explanations, and as a source of many other helpful conventions, you can also refer to [25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know](#), by Barbara Seagram and Marc Smith. Check the sections on Cuebids, Blackwood, Roman Keycard Blackwood and Splinter Bids to get the full story.

The last section of the book, 'Practice Hands', contains a set of forty pairs of North and South hands. You can print them out and use them with a partner to practice bidding (don't try to do more than about ten at one sitting — that's more than enough to think and talk about at one time). We have provided space beside each hand to write down your auction; we suggest that you do this so you can refer to it when you are looking at the answers. You can also do this

solo if you like: look at each hand in turn and write down the bid you would make at each step of the auction. Getting to the right spot is not the only goal; bidding the hand in the best way is another goal so, even if you see both hands, you will still need to work out the correct auction. When you have finished bidding the hands, look at the sample auctions and final contracts provided in the answer section. This book uses Standard American bidding in the sample auctions. There may be more than one way to bid the hand, so don't worry if you don't duplicate our sequence exactly. Focus in particular on your use of Splinter Bids and make sure that you get that right.

There is an earlier section of the book, entitled 'Working Alone' which contains the same practice deals. In this section, we show you just one of the hands and ask you a series of questions about how to bid it as the auction develops. Working through these exercises will teach you a lot more about the convention, so even if you go through the practice deals with a partner, we suggest you go through the questions and try to answer them. This will help you to make sure that you understand the convention thoroughly.

A final warning: don't expect to be perfect. Some of these hands are hard. So if you are doing better at the end of the book than at the beginning, you are doing very well indeed.

section

HOW SPLINTER BIDS WORK



What are splinters?

Splinter bids are special raises of partner's suit. They are a way of supporting partner and also providing a very specific message about your hand. The message is that you have the following:

- 1) at least 4-card trump support for partner;
- 2) a singleton or void in a side suit (this is the 'splinter suit');
- 3) you have a hand with enough support points to make game – so if you are splintering over partner's major-suit opening bid you have 13-15 dummy points – never more than 15.

We make the meaning of a splinter bid so specific because, as you will see, a splinter takes up a lot of bidding space. When you make this bid you need to tell partner a lot because partner will not have much bidding room to ask more questions afterwards.

When you splinter it is clear that you plan to play the hand in game in partner's suit since your side has enough points for game. So splinters are a way of looking for slam. It's possible you'll be able to make a slam on high-card power when your partner has a very strong hand, but most of the time you are looking for a slam based on fit. You are hoping that this time there will be some magic which will allow you to make a slam on fewer than the normal 33 points.

How do you splinter?

A splinter bid is a double jump in a new suit.

Here are two examples of splinter bids:

Partner
1♠

You
4♦

Partner
1♥

You
3♠

In the first auction, your 4♦ bid shows a singleton or void in diamonds, four-card support for partner's spades and 13-15 points in support of spades. In the second auction, your 3♠ bid shows a singleton or void in spades and a game raise in hearts.

Your bids in these two auctions are not splinters:

Partner	You	Partner	You
1♠	3♦	1♥	2♣

The first bid is a jump shift showing a very strong hand with a diamond suit. The second bid is a normal response in clubs, showing clubs and forcing for one round. Notice that neither of these bids promises support for partner's suit.

There are two common types of splinter bids and we will review each of these types separately. The first type is made by responder after an opening bid. The second occurs when opener makes a splinter bid in support of responder's suit. Let's look at each of these.

Splinters by responder

The most common splinter bids by responder occur over a major-suit opening bid.

Let's look at some examples of hands and decide if they are suitable for a splinter bid over a major-suit opening. In all cases partner has opened with 1♠:

- a) ♠ K 9 8 3 ♥ A K 9 3 2 ♦ 4 ♣ Q 10 3
- b) ♠ K Q 8 3 ♥ A Q 5 4 ♦ A K 3 2 ♣ 7
- c) ♠ A K 3 ♥ 7 ♦ K 7 5 4 3 ♣ K 9 8 2
- d) ♠ J 10 5 4 ♥ K 7 6 2 ♦ 5 ♣ Q 7 6 3
- e) ♠ A J 6 2 ♥ — ♦ K Q 10 7 2 ♣ 7 6 3 2

With hand (a) you would bid 4♦ (splinter) since you meet all of the qualifications. With hand (b) you are too strong for a splinter bid. You should use Jacoby 2NT if you are playing that convention. With hand (c) you do not have four-card trump support and you should therefore bid 2♦ for now; you will raise spades later in the auction. With hand (d) you are too weak to splinter and you should simply bid 2♠. Hand (e) is another excellent one for a splinter bid and you should bid 4♥. Notice that a splinter bid can show either a singleton or a void.

It is very rare to use a splinter bid over opener's minor-suit opening bid. Why is that? If partner opens one of a major and you

discover a nine-card fit, you will almost always want to play in that suit. However, when partner opens one of a minor you are often not yet sure where you want to play the hand, even if you have a fit for partner's minor. If you have a four-card major you may still end up playing in that suit, since partner could still have a four-card fit for you; similarly, you may want to play in 3NT instead of five of a minor if you have stoppers in the side suits. In addition, partner may only have three or four cards in his minor suit so you need to have at least a five-card fit to make a splinter bid a good choice. If you are going to splinter over a minor you will need 16-18 points since you are showing values for game; remember, game in the minor is at the five-level, and you will require about 29 points between your two hands.

Splinters by opener

When responder bids a new suit, opener can also make a splinter bid with a singleton or void in a side suit and enough points to commit the partnership to game. If responder bids at the one level opener needs 19-21 dummy points to splinter since responder has only promised 6 points.

A splinter by opener shows:

- 1) four-card (or more) support;
- 2) a singleton or void in the splinter suit;
- 3) enough points to make game.

Here are two examples of splinters by opener:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥	1♥	1♠
4♣		4♣	

In both examples opener is showing a singleton or void in clubs and 19 to 21 dummy points. In the first example opener is showing a four-card or better heart raise and in the second example a four-card or better spade raise.

There is one other case and it is a little more complicated. It comes up when responder's first bid was at the two-level. For example, opener holds

♠ K 9 8 5 2 ♥ A K 9 3 2 ♦ 3 ♣ A 10

and the auction has proceeded:

SOUTH HANDS

Hand 36 - Dealer South

♠ A	⋮	YOUR AUCTION	
♥ K J 10 9 8	⋮	NORTH	SOUTH
♦ A K 10 9 8	⋮		
♣ 5 4	⋮		

Hand 37 - Dealer North

♠ K 2	⋮	YOUR AUCTION	
♥ K Q 8 5 4	⋮	NORTH	SOUTH
♦ 6	⋮		
♣ A K J 5 4	⋮		

Hand 38 - Dealer North

♠ K J 7 6	⋮	YOUR AUCTION	
♥ 3	⋮	NORTH	SOUTH
♦ A Q 6 5 4	⋮		
♣ Q 10 3	⋮		

Hand 39 - Dealer South

♠ A Q 8 4 3	⋮	YOUR AUCTION	
♥ K Q J 2	⋮	NORTH	SOUTH
♦ 9	⋮		
♣ K 7 6	⋮		

Hand 40 - Dealer North

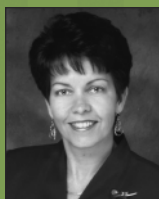
♠ A 6	⋮	YOUR AUCTION	
♥ K Q J 5 4	⋮	NORTH	SOUTH
♦ K Q 7 6	⋮		
♣ Q 6	⋮		



PRACTICE YOUR BIDDING SPLINTER BIDS

With this handy little book, you can

- Learn a new convention, or extend your knowledge of it
- Learn and practice by yourself using the unique quiz format
- Practice with your partner using the specially selected example hands, and compare your results with the recommended auctions



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