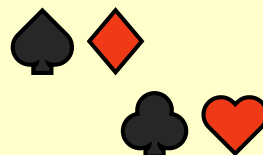


Bridge on Sundays



Fourth Suit Forcing

For more advanced players, the bid of the fourth suit is a request for a stop in that suit.

If partner has bid two of the suits and you have bid one suit then, if you wish to play in no trumps with guards in the fourth, you should bid accordingly. However you may believe that 3NT is the contract but need partner to bid it holding a guard in the un-bid suit (with you not holding a guard).

The suit can of course be natural and, at the 1 level, is always considered to be so. The bid of the 4th suit is forcing for one round and, at the 3 level, should be forcing to game.

You may bid the 4th suit having a stop but needing a better guard (with possibly a slam in mind). Except at the 1 level, the bid of the 4th suit should be alerted. The 4th suit can be bid either by opener or by his partner.

A bid of the 4th suit above 3NT is likely to be a cue bid, not a request for a guard, but is not alerted.

What are the responses to a fourth suit bid at the 2/3 level

- If the responder holds a guard, then NT is bid at the appropriate level
- The 4th suit may be raised to the 3 level showing a 4-card suit and holding a 5-4-4-0 or 4-4-4-1 hand. Do not raise to 4 level because partner may not hold a biddable suit
- If responder does not hold a guard in the 4th suit then, in order, re-bid your suit, especially a major, or give support (3 card) to partner's first suit