

Ask Jerry



Well-known teacher and player **Jerry Helms** answers your bridge questions. Send your questions to "Ask Jerry," c/o Jerry Helms, 5000 Montclair Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28211.

Dear Jerry: We held these hands:

OPENER	RESPONDER
♠ Q 9 8 6 3	♠ K J 4 2
♥ A 9 3	♥ K 8 7 6 4
♦ K Q 7 4	♦ —
♣ Q	♣ K J 9 3

My partner opened 1♠. What would you respond with my hand and how should the auction continue?

—U. Candella
Vancouver, BC

Dear U.C.: The auction will depend on your partnership methods. Here are my thoughts. After partner opens 1♠, I want to be in at least game and spades will be a suitable trump suit. If I jump to 4♠, we'll get there but too much bidding space

is used and too little information is exchanged. There may be a slam and we want to give ourselves the best chance of finding it.

Instead, I'm going to start with a forcing response. This is how the auction might go in standard methods:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♥
3♥	4♠

The 2♥ response is forcing and shows 11 or more points and five or more hearts. Opener's raise shows at least three-card support and a minimum. Responder's jump to 4♠ shows the spade support and an opening bid. With this clear picture, opener isn't interested in going beyond game.

Here's how the auction might go playing two-over-one game forcing:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♥
3♥	3♠
4♠	Pass

Responder's 2♥ is forcing to game, showing 13 or more points and five or more hearts. After opener raises, responder doesn't need to jump when showing the spade support because the partnership is already committed to game. With nothing extra to show, opener simply bids game.

Using splinter bids, the auction would go like this:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	4♦
4♠	Pass

Responder's 4♦ shows four-card spade support, 13 or more points, and a singleton or void in diamonds. Opener's diamonds are wasted opposite responder's shortness, so opener stops in game.

All roads lead to Rome. —JH ♠