

INVERTED MINORS

One trouble with match-pointed pairs is the emphasis on No Trump contracts. When a partnership has a minor-suit fit, it is often difficult both to confirm the fit and explore a No Trump contract simultaneously. If partner opens **1D** and you hold no 4-card major but a diamond fit and about 11 hcp say, then you may or may not have enough combined strength for 3NT, but if you respond “naturally” with **3D**, how will you find out. Many years ago the concept of inverting the hcp requirements for minor-suit raises was developed to solve this problem. The style can go as follows:

Assuming that, playing a weak NT, partner opens **1C**, then the "inverted-minor" responses are [over **1D** openings, similar responses apply]:

3NT: Standard. A flat hand of 14 - 15 hcp

3D/H/S: 7-card suit, equivalent to an opening pre-empt at that level.

3C: 5 - 7 hcp, 9 losers, 4+ clubs. This may at first sight seem strange. You may well not make the contract, but if so the opponents may well have made theirs, if they had been able to bid over your usual **2C** response. This is an application of “the law of total tricks”.

2NT: 16+ hcp, no 5-card suit [except perhaps partners], may only have one Club, eg: 4,4,4,1.

Such hands as:

S K Q x	S A J x x	S A Q x
H A x x x	H K J x x	H K x
D Q x	D A K x x	D K x x
C A J x x	C x	C K J x x x

Are all suitable. This a old-fashioned Baron response asking opener for 4-card suits, bid upwards.

2D/H/S: 16+ hcp, 5-card suit, standard jump shift forcing to game.

2C: 10 - 15 hcp, no 4-card major, at least 4 clubs.

Using the extra space over **2C**, opener now may rebid:

2NT: 17+ hcp balanced hand, forcing.

3NT: 15 - 16 hcp balanced hand, not forcing.

Note the inversion here too, also creating more space. 4C by responder over these NT rebids would be Gerber, also to save space.

With a very poor hand, opener may rebid 3C, most likely with a 6-card suit.

Otherwise, with any unbalanced hand, openers rebid their lowest stopped suit, initially angling for a NT contract. Note that with a balanced hand the opening bid would have 1NT, or the rebid 2NT or 3NT. The rule of thumb in this situation is: opener tells, responder asks.

If responder is encouraged by opener's stop, a NT contract may be attempted, 2NT or 3NT depending on responder's hcp holding. If responder still has a suit unstopped, that may be bid, seeking opener's holding. At any time a bid of 3C, by either partner, will show a missing stop and a wish to play in the suit, at some level

1NT: 8 - 9 hcp, no higher 4-card suit. This is useful bid, otherwise it is difficult to find a suitable way of describing the hand so precisely. It will most likely be 3-3-3-4. Over partners opening 1D, the shape could be the same, or perhaps 3-3-4-3.

Try it, you'll like it!