

Jacoby 2NT and splinter bids

The Jacoby and splinter responses to one of a major suit opening are important conventions. Well-respected bridge writers recommend that the following principles be applied:

With 13+ points (HCP) and four or more trumps (usually 7 loser or better) – bid 2NT

Opener responds:

- ≤ 14 , bid 4 of the major
- 15-16, bid 3NT (points only – partner will then decide whether to sign off in 4 of the major or explore slam)
- 17+, bid 3S – slow arrival (responder takes over – almost certainly will look for slam)
- if void or singleton in another suit (**not A or K**) – bid three of that suit – partner decides on further action – game bid or slam try

With 10-12 HCP and 13-15 TP (including distributional points) and four card trump support bid 3S/4C/4D/4H as a splinter bid..... guarantees game and is investigating slam (especially if opener has losers in the splinter suit). Don't splinter with A or K as the singleton. Bergen suggests the following points for shortage - doubleton – one point; singleton – two points but three points with four trumps; void – points equal to the number of trumps held.

Opener's response now depends on what they hold, especially in the splinter suit (don't want wasted values – although AXXX is OK):

- 16-18 (total points) if your hand has improved is worth a slam try;
- 19+ points demands a slam try regardless of wasted values.

Use splinter bid

Dlr: North	♠ AK6		
	♥ AJ9875		
Vul: EW	♦ 3		
♠ 9872	♣ J96	♠ 4	
♥ T4		♥ Q	
♦ KQT		♦ J9762	
♣ KT73	♠ QJT53	♣ AQ8542	
	♥ K632		
	♦ A854		
	♣ Void		

North opens 1H (13 points; 7-loser); South has 10 HCP and 4 distributional points i.e. 14 TP and a void in clubs and bids 4C. Now north's hand is much, much stronger as the three losers in clubs have disappeared – north now has a 5-loser hand if south has a singleton or a 4-loser hand if south has a void. Slam is worth investigating. North bids 4NT; South bids 5H (two keycards without the QH). So, one keycard is missing – has to be the AC because the splinter bid denies the AC - and the partnership has 10 trumps and should drop the QH. Being cautious north now bids 6H.

Use Jacoby 2NT bid

Dlr: North ♠ AK6
 ♥ A9764
Vul: Nil ♦ AK42

♠ 32	♣ 6	♠ JT9854
♥ 5		♥ 82
♦ T9853		♦ Q76
♣ JT943	♠ Q7	♣ 75
	♥ KQJT3	
	♦ J	
	♣ AKQ82	

North opens 1H (18 points and a 5-loser). South has a singleton diamond BUT MUST NOT do a splinter bid – the hand is far too strong. South bids 2NT (13+ HCP). North has two options – 3H to show 17+ points or 3C to show the singleton club. I prefer to show the strength here and bid 3H. Now south is super-excited (combined total of 35+ points and a beautiful hand) and south should take over and bid 4NT. North responds 5D (has to be three keycards) so we have all the keycards and the QH. Is 7H a possibility? South bids 5NT (king ask) and north responds 5H (showing two outside kings). South now thinks – we have all the kings – so five tricks in hearts, three tricks in spades (and no losers), two tricks in diamonds (and no losers) and three tricks in clubs (and no losers) and bids 7NT.

If south had splintered north has no idea how strong south is and will either chicken out in 4H or, following a slam try, end up in 6H and a bottom board!