

Game Trys

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Game Trys

Major Topics for this Course:
No Trump Auctions
Major Suit Auctions
Minor Suit Auctions

Overview

The expert bridge community have included game try's into their bidding system to cover situations where more information is needed to confirm if game is a reasonable proposition or not. These methods are also useful on some hands when trying to determine if the partnership should move toward slam or not.

These methods are most useful when trying to decide to bid game in a major suit as the mere presence of honors may not be adequate if these honors do not fit well with partner's hand. Game try's are also useful when contemplating game in no trump although in that case with two balanced hands it is usually adequate to assess the overall strength of the two hands and the specific location of high cards is less important.

No Trump Auctions

When 1NT is opened, game try's are more straight forward due to the necessity that major suit fits are not established until the three level leaving no room for game try's. When major suit fits are not possible it is only a matter of responder inviting game in NT based strictly on the high card strength. Thus the following would apply assuming relatively balanced hands:

- Responder invites with 8-9 HCP either using Stayman if a major suit contract is feasible or size ask 2♠ bid if no major suit contract is possible.
- Responder insists on game with 10 or more HCP either using Stayman, transfers or possibly puppet Stayman
- High cards become less relevant when responder has more distribution

No Trump Auctions (cntd)

Presented below are examples of invitational sequences:

1NT	2♣	This confirms fit with 8-9 HCP
2♥	3♥	
1NT	2♦	
2♥	3♥	This also confirms 8+ card fit with invitational values.
1NT	2♣	This denies ♥ fit with 8-9 HCP. A ♠ fit is still possible.
2♥	2NT	

No Trump Auctions (cntd)

Your partner opens 1NT. What now?

A)

♠72
♥AQJ9
♦KJ102
♣Q98

Bid 3♣. This is puppet S Stayman. You are going to game but no point is disclosing partner's ♠ holding if there is no ♥ fit.

B)

♠AK73
♥J10853
♦J74
♣4

Bid 2♣. If partner bids a major raise to the 3 level. If they bid 2♦ you will bid 2♥ showing 5-4 in majors with invitational values.

C)

♠A97
♥AJ52
♦987
♣1085

Bid 2♠. This is size ask. You have 9 HCP but poor distribution and are only worth an invite.

D)

♠Q32
♥AK854
♦63
♣1086

Bid 2♦. You will bid 2NT if partner only bids 2♥ which shows a five card suit and invitational values.

E)

♠K97
♥J765
♦QJ5
♣A104

Bid 3NT. You have cards everywhere but poor distribution. Even with a 4-4 fit you may only have 9 tricks and notrump is probably best.

F)

♠1098
♥Q4
♦KQ9876
♣109

Bid 2NT. If partner shows honor 3rd of ♦ by bidding 3♦ you will have to decide to be aggressive or not.

Major Suit Auctions

A majority of ACBL members including most experts use two over one as game forcing after a major suit opening.

This system is based on 5 card major openings, forcing NT and new suit bids at the two level over one of a major being game forcing. Game try's are more important with this system as there are very wide variations in both the strength of the opening bid (11-21 hcp) and the responses. There is no universal agreement about which sort of game try is the most useful. We will present the two most popular.

Perhaps the most popular is the use of help suit game try's. Using this method the following would apply after a simple raise by responder of opener's major suit from the one level to the two level:

- New suits ask for strength or shortness in order to accept the game try
- 2NT shows a balanced hand and asks for general strength and implies that help in only one suit is not needed for an acceptance
- 3 of the major asks for help in trumps. Opener might have a good hand but very weak trumps

Major Suit Auctions (cntd)

You open 1♥. Partner bids 2♥. What now?

A)

♠7

♥AQJ98

♦KJ102

♣A98

Bid 3♣. ♣ cards from partner would be useful. They also might bid 3♦ if they have ♦ cards which would also be good.

D)

♠K3

♥AK8543

♦AQ103

♣9

Bid 4♥. You are too strong to just invite. You only need the ace of ♠ and the Jack of ♦ to have a reasonable play.

B)

♠AK73

♥J8653

♦AK4

♣4

Bid 3♥. If partner has good trumps game should have some play.

E)

♠K7

♥AK108743

♦5

♣AQ10

Bid 4♦. You need to splinter with this powerful hand. You don't need much for slam.

C)

♠AKJ7

♥AJ1052

♦A7

♣54

Bid 2NT. You don't need help in a specific suit but a non-minimum from partner.

F)

♠1087

♥AKJ54

♦A

♣K852

Bid 2♠. You need help in that suit. Partner should bid 3♣ with ♣ cards and no ♠ help.

Major Suit Auctions (cntd)

Your partner opens 1♥. You bid 2♥. Partner bids 3♣. What now?

A)

♠7632

♥A98

♦9872

♣A2

Bid 4♣. You have a great hand for partner. Slam might be possible if partner has a strong two suiter.

B)

♠A732

♥653

♦QJ

♣9832

Bid 3♥. You have little help for partner.

C)

♠A873

♥AJ10

♦7632

♣54

Bid 4♥. You have aces, good trumps and shortness in ♣'s.

D)

♠J73

♥Q85

♦AQ103

♣943

Bid 3♦. You don't have good shape but you have a maximum with good ♦'s. See what partner does.

E)

♠A7

♥8743

♦5432

♣KJ10

Bid 3♠. Your hand looks better and better.

F)

♠10873

♥AK10

♦7654

♣J2

Bid 4♥. You have very good trumps and shortness in ♣'s.

Major Suit Auctions (cntd)

As can be seen, responder is allowed to indicate where they have promising holdings between the suit partner is asking for help and the 3 level of the agreed trump suit. This information might be enough to allow partner to bid game.

Major Suit Auctions (cntd)

Another alternative is to play Nagy Game Try's named after Peter Nagy from Canada. This includes the following:

- Suit bids are short suit game try's
- Opener bids 2NT which asks partner where they would accept a help suit game try.
- Bids of 3 of the major asks for good trumps.

This system has the advantage of allowing opener to identify shortness which gives a better picture to partner of where help is needed than traditional methods. This system also gives defenders better information and on some hands allows them to defend more effectively.

Major Suit Auctions (cntd)

You open 1♥. Partner bids 2♥. What now when playing Nagy game try's?

A)

♠2
♥AK985
♦A872
♣KJ3

Bid 2♠. You have a promising hand and any minor suit cards from partner would be useful.

B)

♠QJ10
♥AKQ653
♦K102
♣2

Bid 3♣. Partner will bid game with strength in the pointed suits.

C)

♠A
♥J9653
♦AK32
♣KQ2

Bid 3♥. You need good trumps from partner.

D)

♠Q7
♥AQ7852
♦K103
♣A3

Bid 2NT. You need to know where they would accept a game try. They will bid their cheapest suit they would accept in.

E)

♠7
♥AKQ743
♦AK32
♣A10

Bid 3♠. You are certainly going to game and need to splinter. Partner should cue bid a ♣ control if they have one.

F)

♠10873
♥AK1043
♦76
♣A2

Pass. There is not game in every hand.

Major Suit Auctions (cntd)

Your partner opens 1♥. You bid 2♥. What now when playing Nagy game try's if Partner bids 3♣?

A)

♠762

♥KJ8

♦A872

♣953

Bid 4♥. You have a great hand if Partner is short in ♣'s.

B)

♠Q95

♥653

♦Q102

♣KJ65

Bid 3♥. You have potentially wasted ♣ cards opposite shortness from Partner and very bad trumps.

C)

♠654

♥J109

♦AQ32

♣Q82

Bid 3♦. Your distribution is poor but you have good trump spots and good ♦ cards. Partner will know you have something like this.

Major Suit Auctions (cntd)

Your partner opens 1♥. You bid 2♥. What now when playing Nagy game try's if Partner bids 2NT?

A)

♠76
♥KJ8
♦A8742
♣953

Bid 3♦. You have a promising hand if Partner needs help in ♦.

B)

♠K95
♥653
♦K102
♣KJ65

Bid 3♣. You are going to game as you have help everywhere but temporize for now with 3♣.

C)

♠K5
♥1097
♦AQ32
♣9872

Bid 3♦. You have very good help in either pointed suit.

Major Suit Auctions (cntd)

Auctions where the opponents are also bidding also have game try's available. In these auctions, new suit bids below the 3 level of the agreed suit are game try's. If the opponents bid the suit immediately below the agreed suit, double is a game try (i.e. maximal) and 3 of the suit is just competing for the part score.

If partner is a passed hand and uses Drury, 2♦ by opener shows a real opener. If partner then bids 2 of the suit partner opened than new suits are help suit game try's.

Minor Suit Auctions

Game try's are also useful if opener opens a minor suit and responder bids one of a major. If opener rebids 1NT showing 12-14 HCP with 2-3 in responder's major two way new minor is recommended. Using this system a bid of 2♣ forces 2♦ by opener. After this start responder can bid 2NT to show invitational values with only 4 in the major suit or rebid their major to show 5-6 in the major with invitational values. If responder initially bid 1♠ a rebid of 2♥ after the forced 2♦ shows 5-4 in the majors with invitational values.

If opener raises the major rather than bidding 1NT it is recommended to play "Minimax" where a rebid of 2NT by responder requests clarification with responses as follows:

- 3♣ shows 3 with a minimum
- 3♦ shows 3 with a maximum
- 3♥ shows 4 with a minimum
- 3♠ shows 4 with a maximum
- 3NT shows 4-3-3-3 with maximum and 4 of the major
- Splinters are also available if opener has 4 trumps and a singleton

Minor Suit Auctions (cntd)

Your partner opens 1♣, you bid 1♥ and partner bids 1NT. What now?

A)

♠763
♥A10982
♦AK7
♣A2

Bid 2♦. This is game forcing. Partner will bid 2♥ if they have 3 whereupon you can bid game in the major.

D)

♠J73
♥QJ952
♦AK
♣943

Bid 2♣. Partner will have to bid 2♦ whereupon you will bid 2♥ showing invitational values and 5♥'s.

B)

♠A7
♥AK6532
♦QJ
♣832

Bid 4♥. You have enough for game and a guaranteed 8 card fit.

E)

♠A10
♥10743
♦K1032
♣KJ10

Bid 2♣. Partner will have to bid 2♦ whereupon you will bid 2NT showing invitational values and 4♥'s.

C)

♠A8
♥AJ1098
♦AK632
♣4

Bid 3♦. This shows 5-5 in the red suits game forcing. Partner will bid 3♥ with 3 and leaves open the possibility to play slam.

F)

♠108
♥AQ102
♦7
♣J98752

Bid 2NT. Partner will bid 3♣ knowing that you have a weak hand with 6♣'s.

Minor Suit Auctions (cntd)

Your partner opens 1♣, you bid 1♥ and partner bids 2♥. What now?

A)

♠7632
♥AJ98
♦AK7
♣A2

Bid 2NT. You of course are going to game but need to know if partner has 4♥'s or not.

B)

♠A7
♥AK653
♦QJ
♣8432

Bid 4♥. You have at least an 8 card fit. No reason to do anything else.

C)

♠Q8
♥AJ1098
♦A106
♣942

Bid 3♣. This is a help suit game try implying 5 trumps. You don't need to bid 2NT as you have a guaranteed 8 card fit.

D)

♠J73
♥QJ852
♦AJ
♣943

Pass. Game might be a decent proposition but 3♥ might be too high.

E)

♠A10
♥10743
♦1087632
♣J10

Pass. You suspect that 3♦ might be a better contract but you have no way to stop there.

F)

♠QJ8
♥AJ52
♦KQJ
♣J52

Bid 3NT. Partner should realize that you probably have 4-3-3-3 with robust stoppers in the unbid suits.

Bidding Over Interference

You open 1♠ and your LHO overcalls 2♥. Partner bids 2♠ and your RHO bids 3♥. What now?

A)

♠AJ8762

♥105

♦AK7

♣K2

Double. This is your only available game try.

B)

♠AQ10872

♥J9

♦A62

♣87

Bid 3♠. Game might make but it is more likely that the 3 level is too high. You fight for the part score.

C)

♠AQJ872

♥9

♦QJ109

♣K8

Bid 4♠. You don't know who can make what. It is possible that both contracts make.

Game Trys when we overcall

Game try's are also available after we overcall.

As when one of a major is opened it is suggested that help suit game try's and maximal doubles be used when there is not enough room to make a help suit try.