

Cardiff Bridge Tutors

How to use Fourth Suit Forcing

What is Fourth Suit Forcing?

Sometimes during the auction you and your partner may bid three of the suits and you feel that game in No Trumps might be available but you don't have a stopper in the fourth suit.

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	??	

You would like to be able to ask your partner if they can stop the suit and bidding the fourth suit does just that.

Won't my partner think that I am bidding that suit?

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	

As a partnership you have agreed to adopt the Fourth Suit Forcing convention and so bidding that suit will tell you partner:-

- I am weak in this suit (♠ in the example above)
- If you can cover this suit then bid No Trumps

If partner can cover that suit what level of NT should they bid?

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	

In the above example we know from the bidding that :-

1. West has 12-15 points (bid below their barrier)
2. East has 10+ points

So if West had the maximum they would bid 3NT and with less they would bid 2Nt and allow East to decide if they should bid on.

What if partner can't cover the fourth suit?

They should try to describe their hand a little more. Perhaps you can rebid a suit to show extra length or else show a preference for a suit bid by partner.

Some Examples.

Example – Fourth Suit covered, minimum points.

♠ A J 6 5 4 ♥ A J 2 ♦ Q 10 3 2 ♣ 8	N W E S	♠ K 7 ♥ 10 9 6 ♦ J 6 4 ♣ A K J 10 9
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West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	
2NT			

With 12 points West bids 2NT

Example – Fourth suit covered, maximum points.

♠ A 10 6 5 4 ♥ A Q ♦ K Q 3 2 ♣ 8 4	N W E S	♠ K 7 ♥ 10 9 6 ♦ J 6 4 ♣ A K J 10 9
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West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	
3NT			

With 15 points West bids 3NT

Example – Fourth suit not covered must show more information.

♠ A Q 6 5 4	N W E S	♠ K 7
♥ 5 2		♥ 10 9 6
♦ A K 3 2		♦ J 6 4
♣ Q 8		♣ A K J 10 9

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣			

No ♥ stopper.
Some support for ♣s
East should pass

Example – Fourth suit not covered must show more information.

♠ A Q 6 5 4	N W E S	♠ K 7
♥ 5 2		♥ 10 9 6
♦ K Q 7 3 2		♦ J 6 4
♣ 2		♣ A K J 10 9

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦			

No ♥ stopper.
East knows that you have 5♠
So show that you have 5♦
let East decide

Example – Fourth suit not covered must show more information.

♠ A Q 6 5 4	N	♠ K 7
♥ 5	W	♥ 10 9 6
♦ A K 3 2	E	♦ J 6 4
♣ Q 8 7	S	♣ A K J 10 9

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♣			

No ♥ stopper.
 No support for ♣s
 Minimum points with 5♠s and 4♦s.
 East should Pass.

Example – Fourth suit not covered must show more information.

♠ A Q 6 5 4	N	♠ K 7
♥ 5 2	W	♥ 10 9 6
♦ K Q 3 2	E	♦ J 6 4
♣ 8 2	S	♣ A K J 10 9

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠			

No ♥ stopper.
 3♦
 East knows that you have 5♠
 So show that you have 5♦
 let East decide