

NEW MINOR FORCING

This convention, used by responder, enables partnerships to locate major suit fits after opener has rebid 1NT.

You	Partner
1C	1H/1S
1NT	2D (new minor) is artificial and asks partner to further describe his hand.

What does responder need to use New Minor Forcing?

Responder needs to have at least invitational values – e.g. 10+ HCP.

By far the most common reason for using NMF is that you have a 5 card major and would like to know if partner has 3 card support. Let's say you have:

♠AK853

♥K64

♦84

♣A83

and partner opens 1C – you bid 1S. Clearly you must be in game, but which one? Playing NMF you bid the unbid minor (2D) and partner will tell you whether he has support for your major.

RESPONSES TO NMF

The responses you have available will give very accurate information about SHAPE and STRENGTH. These are listed in order of priority.

Priority 1 – Show an unbid 4 card major.

This can only be hearts – if you had 4 spades you would have rebid 1S rather than 1NT. Note that you will often have 4 hearts when you open a minor and rebid 1NT after partner's 1S response. You have neither the shape nor the strength to reverse so you had to settle for 1NT. Now partner asks for more information:

You hold:	You	Partner
♠K3 ♥KJ85 ♦AJ84 ♣Q84	1D	1S
	1NT	2C (NMF)

How many hearts do you bid? As is the case in all of the replies to NMF, you make the minimum bid with a minimum hand and jump with a maximum. The hand above has 14 HCP so you would jump to 3H. (We are calling this hand a maximum because your 1NT rebid shows 12-14 HCP). Remember when partner uses NMF he only promises values to invite game (11 HCP). He also knows that you may have only 12 HCP. 11+12 does not sound like enough points for game, so you must jump to show your full-strength opening bid when you are a little better than minimum. If you had a minimum opening bid with 4 hearts you would rebid 2H only.

Priority 2: Support partner's suit if you can.

You hold	You	Partner
♠K75 ♥A62 ♦KJ85 ♣K85	1D	1S
	1NT	2C (NMF)

You do not have 4 hearts so you can ignore Priority 1. Priority 2 is to show support for partner's suit which you have here.

As before, you are maximum for your 12-14 1NT rebid, so you must jump to show this too – bid 3S. With the same shape and a minimum hand you would simply bid 2S.

Priority 3: Show your range.

If you do not have an unbid heart suit and cannot support partner's major, the only thing left is to show your range – maximum or minimum. When you have a minimum hand, you have two options:

You hold	You	Partner
♠86 ♥AQ7 ♦K1095 ♣K1063	1D	1S
	1NT	2C (NMF)

You don't have 4 hearts and you cannot support spades. You are minimum with stoppers in two unbid suits (remember partner's 2C bid was artificial so only diamonds and spades have been bid naturally). Bid 2NT. If partner only has invitational values, he will pass. If he bids again then you are now in a game-forcing situation.

You hold	You	Partner
♠86 ♥AQ7 ♦K10975 ♣1086	1D	1S
	1NT	2C (NMF)

As before you don't have 4 hearts and cannot support spades. You again have a minimum opening but this time you have no stopper in one of the unbid suits, clubs. Rebid your first suit – bid 2D. If partner has only invitational values he will either pass or convert to 2NT. Any other continuation creates a game-forcing situation. Given the chance, you can bid the suit in which you have a stopper. When you have a maximum you must force to game since you know partner has at least an invitational hand. Essentially, you can make any bid that we have not so far mentioned, but you have two basic choices:

- ♠Q6
- ♥AQ7
- ♦K10975
- ♣K106

This is the same hand as before but with the QS added to make a maximum 1NT rebid. You still do not have 4 hearts, and still can't support spades. However, with stoppers in the unbid suits and a maximum you can bid 3NT.

♠K6
♥1086
♦KQ975
♣AQ7

This time you have a maximum with a stopper in only one of the unbid suits. How you show this will depend on which suits have previously been bid. On the auction above, you can simply show your stopper by bidding the suit you have stopped – 3C. This cannot be a natural bid since you did not bid 2C at your second turn.

♠K6
♥AQ7
♦KQ975
♣1086

Now you cannot bid the suit in which you have a stopper – hearts – as that would show the suit. The answer is to jump in your first suit – 3D – to show extra values but a hand that cannot bid 3NT or 3C. Partner will work out why.

This is an excellent tool to add to your arsenal and will greatly improve your accuracy in bidding.

Good luck!