

Bergen Raises

Bergen Raises specify a conventional treatment of raising a Major suit opening in the 5-card Major, American Standard system. Bergen raises are designed to incorporate and, thus, take advantage of “**THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**”, which states that with nine trumps one should compete at the 3-level regardless of high-card strength. Bergen Raises are artificial and therefore, alertable. Bergen Raises are generally used only in direct competition, but, by Partnership agreement, can be played even over an Opponent’s Take-Out Double!

The Series Of Artificial Responses Employed By The Bergen Raise Convention Are As Follows:

“**3C**” = 8-10 high-card points --- 9-Losers and 4-piece support

A Constructive Raise

Alternatively, a “1-NT Forcing” and a re-bid of 2H or 2S is used to evidence 2-piece or 3-piece support, or a 6-7 HCP (10-Loser) strength holding.

“**3D**” = 11-12 high-card points --- 8-Losers and 4-piece support

A Limit-Raise

3H/3S = preemptive, 2-6 high-card points with 4-card support.

4H/4S = preemptive, 2-6 high-card points and 5-card support, utilizing “**Jacoby 2-NT**” or “**I-NT Forcing**” responses with Game-going (opening) values.

3-NT = 12-15 high-card points with 3-card support
(Implies a balanced distribution; i.e., **4-3-3-3**, or **3-4-3-3**, and is non-forcing)

4 of the Alternate Major = Natural, weak, and Pre-emptive

Advantages of the Use of Bergen Raises

Bergen Raises have three main advantages. They are as follows:

1. When supporting Partner's opening bid of **1H** or **1S**, Responder gives immediate and specific information as to his/her HCP's strength (trick-taking capacity), as well as the length of his/her holding in the Major suit bid by Opener.
2. The artificial jumps have pre-emptive value, and are designed specifically to obstruct the Opponents from entering the auction.
3. In keeping with “**THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**”, you are letting Partner know that you have 4-card trump support and with a 9-card fit, are typically safe to bid to the level of your combined trump fit -- the 3-level.

Re-Bids by Opener Following A Bergen Raise by Responder

Following any Bergen raise by Opener's responding Partner, the Opener takes control by either “Passing,” competing short of Game for a part-score, if necessary, or bidding a game-level **4H** or **4S**.