

Is It Forcing? – Reverses, Jump responses and rebids etc

I have been asked to clarify this area, which you need to be clear about with your partner. Lets have a look at some common sequences, there is no intervention. The following is a very brief summary for Standard American, it's mostly the same in Acol but * indicates where Acol players play the sequence differently. This is a rough guide and not everybody will agree with everything here.

Opener bids a new suit: -

Non-jump bids are non forcing
Jump bids are forcing
A reverse is strong, some (most) say forcing
A reverse after a 2 level response is game forcing
A new suit at the three level is game forcing

Examples: -

1♣ - 1♥ - 1♠ or 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♣
1♣ - 1♥ - 2♠ or 1♥ - 1♠ - 3♣
1♣ - 1♥ - 2♦
1♥ - 2♦ - 2♠
1♥ - 2♦ - 3♣

Opener repeats his suit: -

Non-jump rebids are weakish
Non-jump rebids are weakish
Jump rebids are stronger but non forcing
A jump after a two level response is forcing

1♦ - 1♠ - 2♦
1♦ - 2♠ - 2♦ *1
1♦ - 1♠ - 3♦
1♥ - 2♠ - 3♥ *2

Opener supports partner: -

Non-jump support is weakish (about 12-14)
Jump support is invitational (about 15-17)
Jumping to 4♥/♠ shows 4 card support & 18-19 pts

1♣ - 1♠ - 2♠
1♣ - 1♠ - 3♠
1♦ - 1♠ - 4♠ or 1♦ - 1♥ - 4♥

Responder's Bids: -

Raising opener is non-forcing (about 6-9)
A jump raise of opener is invitational (about 11-12)
Raising 1♥/♠ to 4♥/♠ is pre-emptive (5 cards)
A new suit is forcing, 6+ points
A new suit at the 2 level is forcing, 10+ points
A jump shift shows a good suit and is game forcing
A repeated suit is weakish ...
... but after opener repeats it is mildly encouraging
... and after a jump by opener it's forcing
A repeated suit jump is highly invitational
A reverse by responder is forcing
Any new suit is not strictly forcing (it's rarely passed).
... but a jump is forcing
... and a new suit at the 3 level is forcing
Minimal support for opener is weak (6-9)
Jump support is invitational (+- 11)
Jump to game on the 2nd round is strong
A bid after responding 1NT is weak
... 2♦ is a long suit in a weak hand – to play.

1♠ - 2♠
1♠ - 3♠
1♠ - 4♠
1♦ - 1♥
1♥ - 2♦ *3
1♦ - 2♥
1♦ - 1♥ - 2♣ - 2♥
1♦ - 1♥ - 2♦ - 2♥
1♦ - 1♥ - 3♦ - 3♥
1♦ - 1♥ - 2♣ - 3♥ or 1♦ - 1♥ - 2♦ - 3♥
1♦ - 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♠
1♦ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♥
1♦ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 3♥
1♥ - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♣
1♥ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♥
1♥ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 3♥
1♥ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 4♥
1♥ - 1NT - 2♣ - 2♦

Opener's rebid is No Trump

The 1NT rebid is 12-14	1♥ - 1♠ - 1NT	*4
... and so a simple rebid by responder is weak	1♥ - 1♠ - 1NT - 3♠	
... and a jump rebid by responder is invitational	1♥ - 1♠ - 1NT - 3♠	*5
A new suit by responder is weak, pass or correct	1♦ - 1♠ - 1NT - 2♥	*6
Anything is forcing after a 2NT rebid	1♦ - 1♠ - 2NT - 3♦	

This last one is up to you, but I play that any bid after the strong 2NT rebid is game forcing, the only weak bid being pass.

Some differences when playing a weak No Trump: -

Non-jump rebids are weakish and can be passed 1♦ - 2♣ - 2♦ *1

Playing a Strong NoTrump, most players play that responder promises another bid.

A new suit at the 2 level is forcing, 8+ points 1♥ - 2♣ *3

This is an important difference when playing a weak No Trump, the response is just 8+

A jump after a two level response 1♥ - 2♣ - 3♥ *2

This is forcing in Standard American but in Acrol the 2♣ response promises only 8 points and some players play the sequence as non-forcing.

The 1NT rebid is 15-16 1♥ - 1♠ - 1NT *4

... and so a jump rebid by responder is forcing 1♥ - 1♠ - 1NT - 3♠ *5

A new suit by responder is weakish, but... 1♦ - 1♠ - 1NT - 2♥ *6

... as the NoTrump rebid is 15-16 opener may press on with good ♥ support.

This is a very brief summary. You can often use the 4th suit (4th suit forcing) to establish a forcing situations and there are many conventional bids (such as Jacoby 2NT, Inverted Minors etc.) that are not covered.

Note that some of the above is not applicable if you play 2/1.