

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 *off* in direct competition, but, by Partnership agreement, can be played 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) (A **Constructive Raise**), utilizing “**1-NT Forcing**” and a re-bid of **2H** or **2S** to evidence 2-piece support or a 6-7 HCP (10-Loser) strength holding

“**3D**” – 11-12 high-card points (8-Losers) (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 “**1-NT Forcing**” responses with Game-going (opening) values

3-NT – 12-15 high-card points and 3-card Spade support (Implies a balanced distribution of usually 4-3-3-3, 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, which are recognized by experienced bridge players. 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 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 Rise 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**.

