



## Lesson 60 Teacher's Notes

### 4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing

#### Aims

- To introduce the *4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing* convention.
- For the sake of simplicity we make it *game forcing* but point out to the students that other bridge players may treat it slightly differently.

#### Content

##### 1. *What is 4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing?*

A bid of the 4<sup>th</sup> suit when the other 3 have already been bid naturally by your side.

*Artificial* and *Conventional* – partner cannot pass it

Allows us to investigate the best game (or slam) without fear that partner will pass below game.

##### 2. *What situations can it be used in?*

When the other 3 suits have been bid naturally by your side but none has yet been agreed as the final trump suit (exception: when a minor suit has been bid & supported we can still use 4thSF to investigate an alternative spot (3NT usually)).

Look at Opener's four possible rebids and discuss if/when 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing can occur in each:  
(note: mention that we are assuming auction starts with 1suit & a non-jump new suit response)

- Opener raises responder's suit: no 4thSF
- Opener rebids in NT: rare but 4thSF can occur
- Opener rebids 1<sup>st</sup> suit at 2-level: 4thSF can occur later in auction  
(after jump to 3-level in 1<sup>st</sup> suit, no 4<sup>th</sup>SF)
- Opener bids a new suit: with 3 suits already bid naturally, this is the commonest auction where 4thSF occurs

##### 3. *How forcing is 4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing?*

To game, even if it happens at the 1-level.

Some players have different agreements about this; you may find pairs who play 4thSF at the 1-level differently or who only play 4thSF at the 2-level as showing 11+ hcp and not game forcing.

##### For more advanced students

You may wish to discuss traditional 4thSF in more detail (in case they play with people using this).  
Give an 11 hcp hand where final denomination is in doubt – we cannot use 4<sup>th</sup>SF on these (sadly).

##### 4. *Responding to 4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing (& subsequent auction)*

You describe your hand – usually in the first place showing a stopper in the 4<sup>th</sup> suit by bidding NT.

***Don't repeat information that you have already given partner***

For example, if partner already knows you are 5-4 in two suits, only bid the 5-card suit again if you have no other feature of your hand worth mentioning.

***Remember: the auction is now game-forcing***

So we can take time to investigate alternative contracts (perhaps even 5-2, 6-1 or 4-3 trump fits).

When an earlier bid suit is supported after 4thSF, that is merely a suggestion to play there – it doesn't set trumps and lock us into that suit.