

WHAT ARE TRIAL BIDS?

Objective:

Make a game contract in Major or in NT, when you have >16 HCP and when your partner responds with your bid suit.

Consider an auction that starts 1H - 2H - 3C. What could 3C possibly Mean?

Well, it must show an interest in playing in game, otherwise partner would have passed. Also, it can't show an interest in playing in clubs; who would be interested in playing in clubs when you've found a four-four heart fit. Therefore, it must be a way of inviting a bid of 4 hearts.

Such bids are known as trial bids (or long suit trial bids). They allow more subtle methods of inviting game than simply using 1H - 2H - 3H. They are considered to be a part of Acol, as well as other bidding systems.

When is a bid a trial bid?

A trial bid may only occur when a suit has been bid and supported, and is a bid in a different suit.

Furthermore, a trial bid must leave space for partner to sign off below game. If a bid meets these criteria it is usually a trial bid, although there are some exceptions.

Examples:

1H - 2H - 3C	A trial bid
1H - 2H - 2S	Although this is a bid in a major suit, you've found a good fit already, therefore, this is also a trial bid
1H - 3H - 4D	Partner cannot stop before 4 so this cannot be a trial bid. This is most likely a cue bid
1D - 1H - 2H - 3C	A trial bid
1D - 1H - 2H - 3D	Rather unusual, but I would treat this as a trial bid. I'd still much prefer to play in hearts than in diamonds

Asking or showing?

Players that use trial bids tend to fall into two groups:

- (a) those that request help in the trial suit; and
- (b) those that show help in the trial suit.

Clearly this is an area where you and your partner should agree.

Replying to Long Suit Trial Bid:

No losers in the trial suit:	Bid game in the agreed major suit.
1 loser in the trial suit:	Bid game in the agreed major suit.
2 losers in the trial suit:	Bid game if maximum, but sign off in 3-of-your-major if minimum
3 losers in the trail suit:	Sign off in 3-of-your-major

Trial Bids over a Minor

Trial bids over a minor differ from those over a major, in that they are used to determine whether 3NT is a good contract. Therefore, trial bids over minor suits are requests for stoppers.

Exercises:

After 1H-2H, what's Opener's rebid:

JT3 AQJ94 AKJ2 5	JT3 AJ984 AKJ2 5	JT3 AKQ98 AKJ2 5
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What's Responder's bid after 1H-2H-2S:

Q8 K862 943 A864	A8 T862 843 J984	8 K862 9843 Q864	986 K862 Q842 Q4
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After 1D-2D, what's Opener's rebid?

85 AK4 AJ982 KJ3	53 AJ9 AJ942 K103	53 AK9 AJ982 AQ3
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How to respond to Opener's rebid:

A84 862 K743 864	AQ4 862 K743 984	94 QJ2 KQ43 J983	94 J862 KQ73 942
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