

FOURTH SUIT FORCING IS ONLY EVER USED BY RESPONDER TO THE OPENING BID & MUST BE AT THE TWO LEVEL (OR IT COULD BE HIGHER).

Back to that hand:

1 ♦ by Opening Bidder (West)
(Hand not shown)

and Responder has this hand

EAST

♠ KQ10xx
♥ xx
♦ AQx
♣ QJx

Responder bids 1♠

WEST	EAST
1D	1S
2C	2H

The opening bidder must now describe his hand: We will now continue to illustrate how this all works, using other hands.

OPENING BIDDER'S OBLIGATIONS AFTER FOURTH SUIT FORCING

First obligation:

- With 3 of partner's major, opener must now raise partner's suit (NO JUMPING)
(If you have extra values, now you may jump)

WEST

♠ AKxx
♥ Qxx
♦ xx
♣ QJxx

You open this hand with 1♣. Responder bids 1♥. You now rebid 1♠ and responder now bids 2♦.
Now you show your 3 card support for ♥ and bid 2♥

West	East
1C	1H
1S	2D*
2H	

Second obligation:

- If opener has a stopper in the "fourth suit" just named by responder, he must now bid No Trumps.

♠AKxx
♥xx
♦QTx
♣KJxx

You open with 1♣. responder bids 1♥. You now bid 1♠. Responder next bids 2♦ (FSF) You should now bid 2NT. This denies 3 card support for ♥ and shows a stopper in ♦.

West	East
1C	1H
1S	2D*
2NT	

Third obligation:

- If opener has 4 cards in the "fourth suit" then he can now bid that suit. (If this suit is a major, you should bid this suit before choice # 2 above i.e. instead of bidding NT)

♠ AQxx
♥ ----
♦ QJxx
♣ KJTxx

1♣ is your opening bid with this hand. Partner bids 1♥ (of course!!) You now bid 1♠. Partner bids 2♦ (FSF) You must now bid 3♦ as you have no better bid with which to describe your hand. Actually, that is neat as you have promised exactly 4♠, 4♦ and 5♣...

West	East
1C	1H
1S	2D*
3D	

If you had 4D and 4C, you would have opened 1D. So you must have more Clubs than Diamonds. You have now bid Diamonds on your 3rd bid so you must have four Diamonds and ergo: You have 5C and 4 Diamonds AND you promised to have four Spades. Thus, your shape is now transparent.

West	East
1C	1H
1S	2D*
3D	

Fourth obligation:

- If opener has none of the above, then he should bid naturally.

♠AJxx
♥Kx
♦xx
♣KJTxx

You have opened this hand with 1♣. Responder bid 1♥. You bid 1♠. Responder bids 2♦ (FSF). You now bid 3♣ which is the best description of the hand. This says you have not got 3 card support for ♥, you have no ♦ stopper and you have at least 5♣ in your hand.

West	East
1C	1H
1S	2D*
3C	

Another example:

West		East
1D	-	1S
2C		

♠ KQ10xx
♥ Ax
♦ QJx
♣ Qxx

Now what should East do next? ? Yes he could really bid 3 NT now as he does have a ♥ stopper but what if opponents lead a ♥, knocking out your only ♥ stopper and what if opener had 3 card ♠ support all along?

So you bid 2♥ now. Fourth Sui Forcing. If partner has 3 ♠'s with you, your side will now get to 4♠ and if not, you will get to 3 NT. You are trying to find the best spot.

**FOUR OF A MAJOR IS ALWAYS A SAFER SPOT TO PLAY THAN
3 NT (IF YOU HAVE AN 8 CARD TRUMP FIT)**

You have to get that above concept into your head. NOW!

When responder bids FSF, he is essentially saying to partner: "I HAVE ENOUGH POINTS FOR GAME BUT I'M NOT SURE WHERE WE SHOULD PLAY THIS."

Another example:

West		East				
1H	-	1S				
2C		<table border="1"><tr><td>♠ KJxx</td></tr><tr><td>♥ AJ</td></tr><tr><td>♦ xxx</td></tr><tr><td>♣ Axxx</td></tr></table>	♠ KJxx	♥ AJ	♦ xxx	♣ Axxx
♠ KJxx						
♥ AJ						
♦ xxx						
♣ Axxx						

Now what should East do next? If she bids 3♣, it is non-forcing.

You cannot raise partner to game in ♥ with a doubleton ♥

You cannot rebid your 4 card ♠ suit

It is most likely that 3 NT is the right spot, but you ought not to bid 3 NT with 3 small ♦'s...therefore, bid FSF (2♦) and if partner has a ♦ stopper, he will bid 3 NT.

(or if he has 3 card support for ♠, he will raise ♠ to 2 ♠) If he does the latter, you will now have a problem. On this particular hand, if opener raises your ♠ after FSF, then opener has 5 ♥, 4♣ (at least) 3♠ ...therefore a void or singleton ♦. You cannot afford to be in 3 NT as a result and will now have to decide what to do next. You do have to be in game with 26 points in the combined hands. Don't forget to pray! Either bid 3 ♣ now (supporting opener's second bid suit) or bid 4♠ and play on a 4-3 fit, hoping for the best.

Another example:

West		East (hand not shown)				
1C	-	1H				
2S	<table border="1"><tr><td>♠ Axxx</td></tr><tr><td>♥ Qxx</td></tr><tr><td>♦ AQ</td></tr><tr><td>♣ Qxxx</td></tr></table>	♠ Axxx	♥ Qxx	♦ AQ	♣ Qxxx	
♠ Axxx						
♥ Qxx						
♦ AQ						
♣ Qxxx						

West opens 1♣ and partner responds 1♥.

West now bid 1♠ and partner bids 2♦ (Fourth suit forcing)

West now bids 2♥ showing his 3 card support.

Responder now bids 3♣. What does this mean?

Responder does NOT have five hearts or she would have just gone to game in hearts now.

Now Opener bids 3NT showing a ♦ stopper in addition to 3 card support for partner's ♥ suit.

Another example:

West

1C
1S

-

-

East

1D
2H

♠ KJ10x
♥ xx
♦ AQxx
♣ AQx

How about this?

Your partner opens with 1 ♣

You respond 1 ♦ with the above hand

Opening bidder now bids 1 ♠...you are really too good to bid 4 ♠, you may miss 6!

SO, bid 2 ♥ and hear more information from partner.

Depending on what partner does next, you will then be supporting ♠ and deciding how high to go.

NOTE:

- Fourth Suit Forcing does NOT apply by a passed hand.

IMPORTANT EXCEPTION TO THIS LESSON ON FSF:

1♣ - 1♦
1♥ - 1♠

The 1 ♠ bid is natural (shows ♠'s and while it is forcing is not the FSF you have learned above.

If you wish to bid FSF, you would have to jump to 2 ♠ here and not bid 1 ♠.

2♠ would be fake and would be FSF. **FSF ONLY applies when responder has bid the fourth suit at the 2 or 3 level.**

PRACTICE TIME

♠ 43
♥ KQJ93
♦ A42
♣ KJ7

Partner opened 1♦ and you bid 1♥. Partner bids 1♠. Your turn.

If you are not playing FSF, you have a very real problem knowing what to bid next.

Bid 2♣ (FSF) If partner has 3 card support for your ♥ suit, she will now bid it and you will play in 4♥. If she does not have 3 ♥'s, then you can then decide to play the hand in 3NT. Remember that if your side has an 8 card fit in a major, it is always safer to play the hand in a trump suit than in No Trumps.

♠ 7
♥ 532
♦ A65
♣ AKQJ95

Partner opened 1♠, you bid 2♣, partner bid 2♦. Now what? Not playing FSF, perhaps you take a chance and bid 3NT. What if partner also has no ♥ stopper? Playing FSF, the solution is to bid 2♥ finding out more information about partner's hand. Partner will bid NT with a heart stopper and if he does not have a ♥ stopper, then he may support your ♣'s or rebid one of his own suits.

♠ AQ86
♥ AK54
♦ A53
♣ 87

Partner opens 1♦, you bid 1♥, partner now bids 1♠. Now what? You could just jump to 4♠ but you may be missing 6♠. Bid 2♣ (FSF) and raise ♠'s on your next bid. Partner will now know that you had a big hand with 4 card support as RESPONDER will **never raise opener's second bid suit with only 3 card support.**

FOURTH SUIT FORCING TO GAME: THE CONVENTION QUIZ

PART ONE

Partner opens 1 ♦ and rebids 2 ♣ over your 1 ♥ response. What do you bid next?

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
| KJ4
K7543
Q8
Q65 | 765
AK97
K8
J876 | 765
AKJ5
K7
K987 | K65
KQ765
AQ
543 | 72
AJ98
KQ64
J76 | 72
AK98
KQ76
K72 |

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 7. | 8. | 9. |
| 72
AQJ765
84
543 | J7
AQJ642
K9
987 | 76
AQ9876
A2
A98 |

W	N	E	S
You		1D	P
1H	P	2C	P
?			

PART TWO: Bid these two hands: West is the dealer

A	
West	East
AQ76	K84
K2	543
65	AQ743
KQ854	A7

B	
West	East
AK76	54
654	AQJ98
76	J54
AQ97	KJ2

C	
West	East
---	AJ1096
AJ87	104
KQ876	A93
KJ76	A42

ANSWERS: PART ONE

1. 2NT 2. 3C 3. 2S 4. 2S 5. 3D 6. 2S 7. 2H 8. 3H
9. 2S

ANSWERS: PART TWO

A
West East

1C 1D
1S 2H
2NT 3NT

B
West East

1C 1H
1S 2D
2H 4H

C
West East

1D 1S
2C 2H
3H 3NT