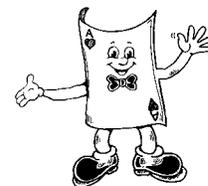


## BIDDING A "WEAK FREAK"



Partner opens 1♥. What do you want to say with the hand shown below?  
 ♠2  
 ♥K 10 9 7 6  
 ♦Q 9 8 7 5  
 ♣9 3

*This hand is known as a "weak freak". The characteristics of a "weak freak" are: five or more cards in support of opener's major, few high cards (usually no more than 7 HCP), and other distribution such as a singleton or void.*

The best bid with a "weak freak" is a raise directly to game. With the above hand, bid 4♥. This raise serves two purposes. With good-fitting distributional hands, game could make on fewer than the required 26 points. Partner might actually make 4♥. If not, going down won't be so bad because it's very likely that the opponents can make something --- maybe even a game. The jump raise to 4♥ is a preempt, which makes communication difficult for your opponents. The weak freak raise is part of standard bidding, but many players are not aware of it. Discuss this bid with your partner.

A "weak freak" jump raise to game in opener's major shows:

- No more than 7 HCP
- At least 5-card support for opener's major
- Usually a singleton or void.

You can make a "weak freak" raise after:

- Partner opens 1♥ or 1♠ or after partner overcalls in any suit
- Your RHO (right-hand opponent) passes, overcalls, or doubles.

You should not make a "weak freak" raise if:

- Your hand has more than 7 HCP
- You do not have at least 10 trumps between you
- Your hand is balanced
- Your opponents have preempted. Usually only one partnership preempts on a given deal.

### IF A RAISE TO GAME IS WEAK, HOW DO WE SHOW A STRONG RAISE?

A raise from 1♥ directly to 4♥ is virtually a closeout bid. Opener is not expected to look for slam even with a maximum 19-21 points (except on the rare occasion where opener is maximum with spectacular distribution). This means that you should NOT raise directly to game with a hand where slam is possible opposite a maximum opening hand. **With a fit and a game-going hand of 13 or more points, responder makes a two-step raise:**

- Make a forcing bid first (new suit or 2NT)
- On your next bid, get to game (or look for slam if you or opener has extra strength).

#### SAMPLE AUCTIONS:

AUCTION #1				
W	N	E	S	<i>East has a weak freak hand. Opener should forget about slam unless he has a control-rich super-maximum.</i>
1♥	P	4♥		

AUCTION #2				
W	N	E	S	<i>East has an opening hand with three or more hearts. This is the two-step raise to let West know East's strength in case there is a slam. A new suit by responder is forcing so East is certain to get a chance to raise hearts next.</i>
1♥	P	2♣	P	
2♦	P	4♥		

AUCTION #3				
W	N	E	S	
1♥	1♠	4♥		<i>East is still showing a "weak freak" raise. We also use the "weak freak" after an opponent overcalls or makes a takeout double.</i>

AUCTION #4				
W	N	E	S	
1♥	1♠	2♥	4♠	<i>Overcaller's partner can also make a "weak freak" raise. South has less than 7 HCP and 5 spades in a distributional hand.</i>

### SACRIFICES

We sometimes bid over a game bid by our opponents even though we expect to go down. The intent is to steal the bid away from our opponents. This kind of bid is called a *sacrifice*. If a sacrifice bid wins the auction, it will usually be doubled for penalty. Sacrifice bids are only smart bids when the penalty paid is less than the score the opponents can get for making game. To be fairly certain that will happen, you want to have a lot of trumps when you sacrifice. In sacrifice situations, you generally should not bid for more tricks than your side has trump cards. While a "weak freak" raise could put us in a game that makes, it can also be a good sacrifice bid. A "weak freak" raise to 4♥ or 4♠ is a bid for 10 tricks. We make the "weak freak" raise when we know we have 10 trumps between us.

There is a saying "the five level belongs to the opponents." When a sacrifice bid pushes the opponents one level higher than game, it is usually right for the side that sacrificed to pass. You hope that you have pushed your opponents too high. Bidding again could end up being a *phantom sacrifice*, a sacrifice bid that goes down when your opponents were destined to go down in their contract. Phantom sacrifices turn your plus score into a minus score.

**TEST YOURSELF:** Which hands would raise partner's 1♥ opening directly to 4♥?

HAND 1	HAND 2	HAND 3	HAND 4
♠5	♠3	♠87	♠6
♥Q10943	♥KJ986	♥QJ765	♥J97652
♦Q8765	♦AQ762	♦Q97	♦Q9543
♣92	♣93	♣982	♣9

#### ANSWERS TO TEST YOURSELF:

- Definitely raise to 4♥ with Hands 1 and 4.
- Hand 3 is balanced where a "weak freak" tends to be unbalanced. Some might still raise to 4♥ if not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents.
- Counting the short suits, Hand 2 values to 14 total points. Bid 2♦ first and then raise hearts to game (or higher if opener shows a maximum).