

## FORCING PASS

A pass is deemed to be forcing when the opponents come into your auction (usually as a sacrifice). The forcing pass allows partner to decide between bidding one more in your suit, doubling the opponents in their suit or perhaps redoubling (to make) in your contract.

A Forcing Pass should guarantee at least 2<sup>nd</sup>-round control of opponents' suit (could be 1<sup>st</sup>-round control). It shows a willingness to bid on (and perhaps slam interest). If our side has opened and responder has bid at the 2 level, when the opponents bid 3NT or above, a pass by either partner is **forcing!**

Gene Simpson lists the following points about Forcing Pass:

Applies when your side bids game or higher and the other side sacrifices.

- a) You bid a vulnerable game
- b) You bid a non-vulnerable game voluntarily
- c) The opponents have preempted.

If the opponents are bidding at the 5 level, you have 5 options:

- 1) Cue-bid is a slam try—strongest action available
- 2) Passing and then pulling partner's double is also a slam try!
- 3) Bidding at the 5 level shows extra values but no slam interest.
- 4) Pass shows willingness to play at 5 level if partner desires; denies more than one quick loser in opponents' suit
- 5) Double is penalty oriented and shows weakest possible hand for previous bidding. Generally you will also have two quick losers in opponents' suit.

**Remember, a cue-bid shows a fabulous hand, first round-control and slam interest.**

**Passing and then pulling your partner's double is also a slam try.** If you don't have that good of a hand, you must double immediately!

After a 3 or 4 level opening preempt by Left Hand Opponent in first or second seat, double by partner, game raise by Right Hand Opponent, our pass is forcing except when opponents are vulnerable (assuming a sane RHO has values)

When your side has established a suit agreement, and is exploring for game or slam, but has not yet reached that threshold, and opponents intercede in the auction, a pass is forcing.

A pass over opponents' high level obstructive bid typically shows a first round control (Ace or void). The threshold for "high level" may be the 5 or 6 level, depending on partnership agreements

When opponents have doubled a cue-bid on your side, a pass is forcing.

When opponents are retreating by bidding multiple suits (usually up the line), where your partnership has repeatedly doubled (e.g., after a redouble), all passes are forcing. Must double them off or bid on.

**Any time you “pass and pull” partner’s penalty double, you are inviting slam!!**

Here are several common situations:

2C – (any bid) – P – (any bid); P by 2C Opener

When opener has near-game values with a strong 2 Club opener (usually showing 22+ points), many play a subsequent pass is a **Forcing Bid**. If Responder has no better (or more descriptive) bid, can double to keep the auction alive. However, when opener begins with a 2 Notrump bid showing 20-21 point, subsequent passes are **not** forcing.

1S – (P) – 2N – (3D) P (by Opener)

Responder’s (Jacoby) Two Notrump bid is game-forcing so opener’s pass is **forcing**. (Many people play specific agreements regarding inference over Jacoby 2NT).

1D – (1H) – 1S – (P);

3D – (3H) – 3S – (4H); P (by Opener)

Assuming you recognize responder’s 3S rebid as establishing a game force (opener jumps, responder rebids own suit), opener is making a **Forcing Pass**: inviting responder to double or bid 4S with great Spades.

1D – (1S) – 2D – (2S);

1H – (2D) – 2H – (3D);

Here, opener can make a forcing bid by cue-bidding opponents’ suit or calling a new suit. When opener (the stronger hand) bids a new suit at the 3 level, the call is invitational. Jumping in a new suit at the 4 level subsequently establishes a Forcing Pass if necessary. Opener’s jump to game has the same effect. If opener takes another path, such as re-bidding at the 3 level, belated opener passes are **not forcing**. Note: many also play Maximal Doubles at the 3 level—when they are bidding the suit just below your suit, bidding at three level is purely competitive and the double is your game try.

The *Bridge World* Standard says this about the Forcing Pass:

1. If a two-club opening is overcalled, responder’s pass is forcing at every level - responder’s double shows double-negative strength

2. When a forcing bid is doubled and there is no contrary explicit system agreement or logic from the auction, a pass is forcing and a redouble is to play (suggests a contract)

3. After a negative response to two clubs and an overcall, opener’s pass is forcing

4. After 1-any - double - redouble - (bid); opener’s (or responder’s) pass is forcing everywhere. Remember, all doubles after a redouble are **penalty**.