



Bergen Raises

If you choose to incorporate the Law of Total Tricks-based conventions to your repertoire, here is a summary of a very useful convention.

The three advantages of Bergen raises are:

- a) you give partner specific information regarding your HCP;
- b) partner knows you have four-card trump support;
- c) there is pre-emptive value to such raises.

For those of you new to Bergen, what is this convention?

In essence over a major suit opening note the following: 1H-3C* or 1S-3C* shows 7-9 HCP and FOUR+ trump support (3C* is artificial)

1H-3D* or 1S-3D* shows 10-12 HCP and FOUR+ trump support (3D* is artificial)

NOTE: Now when playing 1H/3H or 1S/3S such a jump no longer shows a limit raise; rather, this is a pre-emptive bid, typically showing 4-6 HCP (depending on vulnerability) and four+ card trump support.

How does one show a limit raise with three trump? First bid another suit, then jump to 3H or 3S.

W: 1H E: 1S

W: 2D E: 3H

or W: 1H E: 1NT

W: 2D E: 3H

Without 4 trumps 1NT is forcing, and bidding either 2C or 2D (either 3 or more cards in the suit) and 2H (promises 5 card suit).

Bergen Raises are very welcome over an opponent's takeout double as the pre-emptive value is indeed that much stronger over an intervening double. Most folks play that BERGEN raises are ON over opponents takeout doubles, but OFF over competitive bids.

Please note that some play what may be called "Reverse Bergen" with 3C* showing a limit raise and 3D* 7-9 HCP, both with 4+ trump. Again, that major issue of partnership agreement will determine which way you play it and with full disclosure at all times, your opponents will know what you are playing by your self alert (when playing online, self-alerts are the norm) and explanation if asked.

One final thought, it is suggested that you use Reverse Drury rather than a Bergen raise, if you are a passed hand, and partner opens 1 of a major in 3rd or 4th seat.

Summary: M = Major suit m = minor suit

1 M - 1 NT

2 m - 2 M : Weak 3 card raise. Note that in any sequence, responder promises exactly the number of trumps mentioned in this list.

- 3 M : 3 card limit raise.

1 M - 2 M : Constructive raise. (7-10, 3 trumps).

1 M - 2 NT : Jacoby forcing raise.

1 M - 3 C : 7-10, 4 trumps. (A traditional 1S-2S with 4 trumps).

1 M - 3 D : Limit raise with 4 trumps.

1 M - 3 M : 0-6, 4 card support.

1 M - 4 M : 0-6, 5 card support.

1 H - 2 S and

1 S - 3 H : Preemptive, 6 card H suit. (Or whatever else you agree).

The method is based on the Losing Trick Count. More details can be found in Volume 1 of Marty Bergen's book on bidding and in Larry Cohen's book on the Losing Trick count.