

## Splergen by Mike Pemberton

As the name suggests, Splergen is a combination of Splinter and Bergen. However, it is more than just this since it also incorporates Jacoby!

So how does Splergen work? Firstly, it only operates when opener bids a major and responder has exactly 4-card support.

### I. Opening bid of 1S

Let's start with an opening bid of 1S. Here's what responder does:

- With 0-6 HCP, she responds 3S
- With 7-8 or 9-10 HCP, she responds 2NT
- With 11+ she responds 3C

If opener hears a 2NT response, he relays 3C. Responder now replies as follows: 3D = C splinter, 3H = 7-8 HCP, 3S = 9-10 HCP.

Opener can now generally place the contract correctly, e.g. 3S or 4S. However, if he wishes to know more, he asks for KC (key cards) via the cheapest bid available. So if the response were 3D, then 3H from opener would ask for the number of KCs held, key cards being A = 2, K = 1. The response would of course be up the line: step 1 = 0 or 1, step 2 = 2 etc. If opener required further information, he would ask via the next cheapest non-trump bid for the Q of trumps. If he held this himself, he would skip this level and go to the next cheapest bid to request further information.

If opener hears a 3C response after 1S, his pulse quickens as this is the game or game+ response. He answers as follows:

- 3D = 17+ HCP and a shortage
- 3H = 17+ HCP and no shortage
- 3S = 11-13 HCP
- 4S = 14-16 HCP

If responder hears the most exciting answer from opener (3D), she relays with the next available bid to ask for the suit in which the shortage is held, the replies to this being low, medium, high e.g. 1S - 3C - 3D 17+ and a shortage - 3H where is your shortage? - 3S in clubs, 3NT in diamonds, 4C in hearts.

Let's return now to the beginning and see what happens if responder doesn't have a singleton C but instead has a singleton in another suit! In this case, she simply bids the singleton e.g. 1S - 3D or 3H.

### II. Opening bid of 1H

Now it's time to look at an opening bid of 1H. The responses are the same as for 1S, with the great exception that 2NT shows the 11+ game force hand whilst 2S shows either a spade splinter, a 7-8 count or a 9-10 count. The cheapest bids available are used as inquiries. Again, splinters in suits other than spades, in this case, clubs and diamonds, are indicated simply via 1H-3C or 1H-3D.

Also worth noting is that the system applies over an opposition double or if responder has previously passed e.g. p - (p) - 1S - (p or X) - 2NT or 3C. Furthermore, if opener asks, he is seeking a KC response whilst if responder asks, she is requesting a RCKB response.

### III. Examples

#### Hand 1

S AQJxxx	S Kxxx
H x	H xxx
D AKx	D QJx
C Axx	C KQx
1S	3C good Bergen or Jacoby 11+ HCP
3D 17+ with shortage	3H where is your shortage?
4C it's in hearts	4D RKC ask
4S 3 key cards if playing 1430	4NT do you have the trump Q?
6D yes + DK	6S

#### Hand 2

S Kxx	S Axxx
H AKQxx	H xxxx
D Qxx	D KJ
C xx	C Jxx
1H	2S spade splinter or 7-8 or 9-10
2NT what do you have?	3D 7-8 points
3H final contract	pass

#### Hand 3

S Axx	S KQxx
H AKJ109x	H Qxxx
D AKx	D QJ
C x	C Axx
1H	2NT good Bergen or Jacoby 11+ HCP
3C 17+ with shortage	3D where is your shortage?
3H it's in clubs	3S RCKB (responder hand asks RCKB)
3NT 4 key cards if playing 1430	4D further info ask, leaving out 4C as hold Q yourself
5D KD	7H yippee! We hold every important card in the pack!