THE FORCING CLUB RAISE

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦

The 3♦ response to a 1♣ opening is a forcing raise in clubs, an artificial bid showing five or more clubs and a game-going hand. It crowds the bidding so much that it should be avoided, but with a hand like ♠AK3 ♥765 ♦82 ♣AQ983, there is no alternative.

The forcing club raise tends to deny a biddable major. A subsequent raise of a major will probably be based on three cards.

After a forcing club raise, opener will often probe for a 3NT contract in the same way as he might over an invitational jump raise in diamonds. See the previous section. With both majors stopped, opener can bid 3NT with three small diamonds or even Qx Responder will usually have something in diamonds, since he has no major.

There is no analogous forcing raise for the diamond suit. If partner opens 1♦ you can bid 2♣ with a hand such as ♠AK3 ♥765 ♦AQ983 ♣82. No matter how high partner raises clubs, you can always go back to diamonds without increasing the bidding level.

There is only one situation when the forcing club raise can be made in competition, and that is when 3♦ is a splinter bid:

	South	West	North
	1♣	1♦	3♦ - splinter, no major suit
But:	1♣	1♥	3♦ - weak jump takeout
	1♣	Dbl	3♦ - normal preemptive bid

The forcing club raise cannot be made by a passed hand:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass

3♦ - normal preemptive bid in diamonds

South has ♠3 ♥85 ♦QJ109732 ♣Q76. North passes with a big 4-4-1-4 hand.

If opener makes a jump rebid in a new suit, that is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦

4♥ - splinter

Opener has ♠AJ10 ♥3 ♦KQ42 ♣AQ765, too much for a 3♠ notrump probe. Responder can now bid 6♣ with ♠KQ4 ♥862 ♦A3 ♣KJ1092. If the major suits were reversed, she would sign off in 4NT (4NT over a splinter bid in support of a minor is always a signoff).

Blackwood is not used by either partner after a forcing club raise:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦
4NT	

Opener has too much (18-19 HCP) for a 3NT bid, so invites slam by bidding 4NT.

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦
4♦	4NT - natural, majors stopped