SPLINTER RESPONSES TO A MAJOR OPENING

A double jump response to an opening of 1♥ or 1♠ is a splinter bid:

	Opener	Responder
	1♥	3♠/4♣/4♦
or:	1♠	4♣/4♦/4♥

The requirements are:

-- A singleton in the splinter suit--not a void
-- Four trumps to the queen, or better
-- Game-going strength, high cards in three suits
-- First or second-round control in the other two suits

A splinter response has a range of 13-15 points or so, counting distribution. That is just a rough guide, because some hands in this range do not qualify. Examples of a 4♦ response to a 1♠ opening:

♠KJ62 ♥Q107 ♦8 ♣AQ863 (a maximum)

♠Q1074 ♥K83 ♦4 ♣AJ762 (a minimum)

But with ♠AKJ3 ♥Q83 ♦6 ♣108762, start with a 2♣ (or 2♥!) response. Too much of the total strength is in the trump suit, and there is no second-round control of hearts.

The splinter bid tends to deny a biddable suit in the other major, but responder may violate this rule if she is quite sure that opener's suit is the right trump suit.

When responder's strength outside of the trump suit is concentrated in one suit, it is necessary to bid that suit rather than make a splinter bid. With ♠AQ75 ♥983 ♦AQ872 ♣4, a 2♦ response is right. Splinter responses imply strength in three suits. If opener rebids 2♠, *then* you can splinter with 4♣, which does not promise control of hearts. Only an immediate splinter would do that.

Splinter Bids in Competition

Splinter bids are used over a takeout double or overcall, with no change in meaning. After an overcall, single jump cue bids are splinter bids, as are any jumps to 4♣ or 4♦:

South	West	North
1♥	2♦	4♣/4♦ - splinter bid
		3♠ - natural, weak, preemptive (see section 3-16)

Note that the jump to 3♠ is a single jump in a major, so it is not a splinter bid. A double jump to 4♥ in response to 1♠ is a splinter, as if the overcall had not occurred, but a single jump to 4♥ is natural.