

### Point Count for Opening Hands

12 – 13 HCP	Open 1 of a suit
15 – 17 HCP or 16-18 HCP 19 HCP	Open 1 No Trump with balanced hand and only one doubleton With even distribution, open 1 of a minor then jump to 2 No Trump on 2 <sup>nd</sup> bid. With good major suit, open 1 then jump-shift on 2 <sup>nd</sup> bid.
20-22 HCP	With even distribution, bid 2 No Trump (responder can pass with 0 points)
23+ HCP 25 HCP	Open 2 Clubs Open 2 Club, then bid 3 No Trump with balanced hand on 2 <sup>nd</sup> bid

### Rule of Twenty

The Rule of Twenty is a method of determining whether a hand containing less than the standard 12+ HCP is worthy of an opening bid at the one level.

1. Count your high cards
2. Count the number of cards in your two longest suits
3. Add the results

If the total is 20 or greater, open the hand at the one level. With less than 20 do not open.

Remember to consider your vulnerability when opening a weak hand.

### Opening Hand Categories

13 – 15 HCP	Minimum
16 – 18 HCP	Good
19+ HCP	Maximum

## Opening Hands in Different Positions

1 <sup>st</sup>	12+ HCP or Rule of Twenty
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Same as above
3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 – 11 HCP and 5 card suit
4 <sup>th</sup>	Rule of 15 (10 HCP and 5 or more Spades)

## Forcing Bids by Opener

1. Jump Shift
2. Reverse Bid
  - a. 2<sup>nd</sup> suit must be higher ranked than 1<sup>st</sup> bid and forces partner to bid at the 3 level to take opener back to his 1<sup>st</sup> bid suit.

Ant new suit bid by responder is forcing with the exception of Weak Jump Shift.

A new suit by opener is not forcing.

## **Minor Suit Openings – Responses - Rebids**

A 1 Club opening bid simply means that you have an opening hand.

Your partner bids 1 Club or 1 Diamond (1 Club with 3 cards; 1 Diamond with at least 4 cards in Diamond suit)

You respond “up the ladder” with your 4 or more cards suits. When you respond with any suit, you promise at least 4. When you respond 1 Diamond, you are not denying a 4-card Major suit.

Important: If you do not have a 4 card Major suit, you should bid No Trump to show point count:

- 1 No Trump = 6-10 HCP or 11 Weak
- 2 No Trump = 11 HCP or 12 Weak
- 3 No Trump = 13 HCP or 12 Strong

When you bid “up the ladder” in Diamonds, it gives your partner a chance to bid his 4-card Major. This lets the strong hand play the contract. If your partner does not have a 4-card Major, he will bid No Trump. It should be quite easy to find your 8 card Major fit if you have one.

## **Major Suit Openings and Responses**

## Elon Rec DBC Bridge Lessons

Opening the bidding with 1 Heart or 1 Spade promises at least 5 cards in that suit and an opening hand. A rebid of that suit by opener shows a 6-card suit or a great 5-card suit such as AKQJ10.

A new suit by opener is not forcing.

Responses:

1. 2 Hearts or 2 Spades = 6-9 HCP and 3 or 4 pieces in the suit
2. 3 Hearts or 3 Spades = 10-11 HCP and prefer 4 pieces in the suit. This is known as a Limit Raise.
3. With opening hand, bid another suit and then, with 3 or 4 pieces take it to 4 Hearts or 4 Spades.
4. Jump to 4 Hearts or 4 Spades with a weak hand and 5-card trump support. (Law of Total Tricks)

Remember:

1. You can only revalue your hand if (a) you know you are going to be the dummy and (b) your side has found an 8-card fit in Hearts or Spades.
2. Any new suit by Responder is forcing for one round.
3. You are looking for a 8-card fit in a Major suit and your cards in that suit don't have to be pretty.
4. The Law of Total Tricks.

**The Law of Total Tricks:** Described here is a simplified version of a guideline you can use to decide if you should pass and let the opponents play in their partscore, or if you should bid one level higher in your suit. It operates on the principle that "trumps are (almost) everything" and high-card strength is not critical. In its simplest form, the rule is:

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***On partscore deals* (where each partnership has a combined total of about 17-23 high-card points): the number of tricks you can take on offense is equal to the combined number of trumps you hold.**

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In practice, this means that if you and partner have only an 8-card fit, you should usually stop at the 2-level. If you have a 9-card fit, you can safely bid 3 of your suit if the opponents try to force you one level higher.

## Handling Interference Over Your Suit Bid

Point of consideration for the responder:

1. If your partner opens the bidding and you have at least 6 HCP and Trump support, the Law of Total Tricks applies, so use it to determine your response and remember, when this situation occurs, you, as Dummy, can count your distribution points.

	Partner	Opponent
Example:	1 Heart	1 Spade

(you have) 43  
K10986  
KJ94  
102

You know your partner has at least 5 Hearts. You have 5 Hearts so using the Law of Total Tricks, you can safely bid 4 Hearts and most of the time you will take 10 tricks.

2. If you have at least 6 HCP and your partner has bid 1 of a Major suit, you must bid. You partner could have 20 HCP and if you pass, your side could miss Game. If you do not have 3 cards in your partner's Major suit, bid 1 No Trump. If your partner rebids his suit, and you have 2 of his suit Trumps, you know you have a 6/2 fit. If you only have 2 of his Trumps, PASS.

	Partner	Opponent
Example:	1 Spade	Pass

(you have) 102  
A432  
K652  
987

Bid 1 No Trump

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The next opponent bids 2 Hearts and your partners bids 2 Spades. Now PASS.

3. If your partner opens, the opponent bids and you do not have Trump support (at least 3 cards), but you do have at least 2 stoppers in the opponents suit, bid No Trump. If you have at least 12 HCP in this situation, bid 3 No Trump.

	Partner	Opponent
Example:	1 Spade	2 Hearts

(you have) 42  
AQ4  
KJ32  
Q1097

Bid 3 No Trump

8-10 points and 2 stoppers in opponent's suit, bid 2 No Trump  
12 points and 2 stoppers in opponent's suit, bid 3 No Trump

4. If your partner opens and the next opponent bids, a direct Cue Bid by you shows a Limit Raise in your partner's suit.

	Partner	Opponent
Example:	1 Heart	1 Spade

(you have)65  
QJ96  
KJ4  
K983

Cue Bid 2 Spades. This is a Limit Raise in Hearts.

## Elon Rec DBC Bridge Lessons

### REMEMBER:

1. If your partner opens and you have at least 8 HCP, the hand belongs to your side. Don't give up without a fight!
2. If you and your partner have at least 18 HCP between you, the Law of Total Tricks kicks in.
3. Count distribution points ONLY when you have found a fit in a Major suit and you are the Dummy.
4. Any time you come in at the 2 Level, you must have 10 HCP.
5. Try to picture where your partner's points might be.
6. If you don't understand your opponent's bid, you can ask his partner to explain. He must give you the meaning as he understands it.

## Elon Rec DBC Bridge Lessons

# No Trump Opening Hands

You can agree with your partner about how many points you need to open 1 No Trump. In old days it required 16-18 HCP. The new method opens with 15-17 HCP, but this is a personal decision. When you open with a 1 No Trump bid you also promise to have no voids, no singletons and no more than one doubleton.

## No Trump Opening Bid and a Stayman Response

**Example:** Partner    Opponent                      You  
                  1 NT                      Pass                      2 ♣s (Stayman)

1. You must have at least 8 HCP – note: There is Garbage Stayman
2. If you have 4 ♥s and/or 4 ♠s, bid 2 ♣s asking partner if they have a 4-card Major
  - a. With no 4-card Major, opener bids 2 ♦s
3. Your response to 2 ♦s:
  - a. With 8-9 points, bid 2 NT
  - b. With 10+ points, bid 3 NT
4. If opener has 4 ♥s and/or 4 ♠s, opener bids the Major
  - a. With one 4-card Major, opener bids that Major
  - b. With 4 cards in both Majors, opener bids “up the ladder” starting with 2 ♥s
5. If opener bids ♥s and your 4-card Major is ♠s, you will respond with 2 or 3 NT and opener will either leave it or correct to ♠s.

**Example:** Partner    Opponent                      You  
                  1NT                      Pass                      2 ♣s  
                  2 ♥s                      Pass                      2 NT  
                  3 ♠s

This 2 NT bid means, my 4-card Major is Spades and I only have 8-9 HCP. With 10 or 11 HCP I would bid 3 NT. If partner has 4 ♠s he will correct to 4 ♠s.

If opener bids 1 NT and you have 9-10 HCP and a good 5-card Minor suit, just bid 3NT.

With no 4-card or more Major suit

Partner	Opponent	You
1NT	Pass	0-7 HCP = Pass
		8-9 HCP = 2 NT
		10-15 HCP = 3NT
		16+ HCP = Explore for Slam



## Responses to 1 No Trump Opener Using Transfers

### 5 Card Major Transfer:

If your partner bids 1 No Trump and you have a 5-card Major suit, your hand will fit one of these categories:

With a 5-card Major suit:

0-7 HCP	First Transfer and then pass
8-9 HCP	First Transfer and then bid 2NT
10+ HCP	First Transfer and then bid 3NT

With an Interfering bid: If possible, Transfer:

Example:	Partner	Opponent	You
	1NT	2 ♣s	2 ♦s or ♥s (Transfer)

If they bid what you were going to bid, Double saying they took my bid.

Examples:	Partner	Opponent	You
	1NT	2 ♦s	Double (Xfer – meaning I have ♥s)
	1NT	2 ♥s	Double (Xfer – meaning I have ♠s)

When you transfer and then raise, you now promise 6+ in the suit.

1. Your partner bids 1NT
2. You have 6 ♥s or ♠s

You have 3 choices:

0-7 HCP	Transfer and Pass
8-9 HCP	Transfer & raise your Major suit one level (Opener should pass if at bottom raise to game if at top)
10+ HCP	Transfer and bid game in your 6 card Major

## Elon Rec DBC Bridge Lessons

### CUE BIDS:

Partner	Opponent	You
1NT	2 ♥s	3 ♥ (I have 4♠s & game pts)
1NT	2 ♦s	3 ♦s (I have both Majors & game points)

## How to Handle No Trump Interference

Your Partner has opened 1NT and the next opponent bids. What can you do?

If possible, Transfer are still on:

Example:	Partner	Opponent
	1NT	2 ♣s

You can still bid 2 ♦s to Transfer to ♥s OR 2 ♥s to Transfer to ♠s or 2 ♠ to Transfer to ♣s/♦s

**What can you do if the opponent bids what you had planned to bid?**

### DOUBLE

This Double says I was going to bid that same bid. That person stole my bid.

Examples:	Partner	Opponent	You
	1NT	2 ♦s	DBL (Xfer to ♥s)
	1NT	2 ♥s	DBL (Xfer to ♠s)
	1NT	2 ♠s	DBL (Xfer to ♣s)
	1NT	2 ♣s	DBL (Stayman asking for Major)

## Elon Rec DBC Bridge Lessons

Other Stayman bids with interference. When you bid the opponent's suit, this is Stayman asking for a 4-card Major. These are Cue Bids and you must have a minimum of 10 HCP.

Examples:	Partner	Opponent	You
	1NT	2♦s	3♦s (Do you have a 4-card Major)
	1NT	2♥s	3♥s (asking for 4♠s)
	1NT	2♠s	3♠s (asking for 4♥s)

If your partner opens 1 NT and you have 10 HCPs and 6 cards in a Major suit, bid game in that suit if there is interference by the opponents and Transfers are no longer possible.

## No Trump Contracts – 7 Card Suits & 2 Suits of Equal Length

Never underestimate the strength of 7-card suits especially when you factor in the power of honors! Consider the following 7-card suit when playing 3 NT.

**Example:**                      ♦AJ104  
  —————  
  ♦932

With this holding, you are missing 2 honors, but you have 3 of the others. In this case, you must finesse the suit twice. You should play this holding early while you still have entries.

If you double finesse this holding, and your opponents have a 3/3 split, you have a 75% chance of taking two tricks.

**Example:**

<u>Left Hand Opponent</u>	<u>Lose</u>	<u>Right Hand Opponent</u>
KQx	1 trick	xxx
Xxx	2 tricks	KQx
Kxx	1 trick	Qxx
Qxx	2 trick	Kxx

***When missing two honors, finesse twice.***

When holding AJ9, hope that your Left Hand Opponent has KQ10, K10 or Q10 and finesse twice.

Another 7-card combination and how to play it. The principle here is to lead low cards up to high cards.

♣A432  
  —————  
  ♣Q87

First play the Ace and lead small to your Queen.

## Elon Rec DBC Bridge Lessons

There may be times playing NT, that you will have 2 suits of equal length. Which one do you play? The answer is to play the one which will give you the most tricks. (The ultimate object when playing Bridge).

Examples: Hand	♦QJ98
	♣QJ743
	_____
Dummy	♦K1076
	♣K108

Trick taking ability with 4/4 and missing the Ace is 3 tricks. Trick taking ability and 5/3 and missing the Ace is 4 tricks. Once you knock out the Ace of ♦s, you can take 3 ♦ tricks. Once you knock out the Ace of ♣s, you can take 4 ♣ tricks – so attach the ♣ suit!