



Cambridge University Bridge Club

Beginners' Lessons 2011

Lesson 4. 1 of a Suit openings continued

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Introduction

Last week you learnt about opening 1 of a suit and making limit responses. Today we will extend this to cover all other simple responses to 1 of a suit openings. There is quite a lot to cover, so I will not be able to discuss each sequence in full. However, after the first few bids, there will often be an invites/accepts scenario as covered before. After this lesson, you will be able to bid the majority of hands that you are dealt.

Reminders

Open 1 of a suit with:

- 12 to 22 HCP (11 HCP with good 5 card suit or 10 HCP with good 6 card suit is OK)
- at least 4 cards in the suit opened
- can promise a **rebid** if responder bids a different suit
- is **not** 12 to 14 balanced (open 1NT) or 18 to 20 balanced (open 2NT)

Responding to 1 level bids with a new suit

Responding at the lowest level

Suppose partner opens 1♥, and you have 6+ HCP, so you want to respond. Here, ♠ is a “higher ranking suit” and ♣/♦ are the “lower ranking suits”. We will focus on this example, but the same principles apply for other suits. To respond in a new suit at the **lowest level** possible (i.e. not making a **jump bid**) depends on whether you can bid it at the 1 or 2 level.

- **1 level (1♥-1♠):** Need **6+ HCP and 4+ cards**
- **2 level (1♥-2♣/2♦):** Need **10+ HCP** and usually **5+ cards** - sometimes you may have to bid this with a strong hand with only 4 cards).

Bidding a 4 card **major suit at the 1 level** should be done in preference to a NT response and may be preferable to a limit raise of a minor suit in an uncontested auction.

Both these bids are **unlimited**, so the auction continues as an exchange of information. Changing the suit in this way is **forcing for 1 round**. This means that opener **must** rebid. (remember that responder could still have an outrageously strong hand!)

Examples:

- ♠Kxxx ♥Ax ♦xxx ♣Jxxx - In response to 1♥, bid 1♠. (Don't bid the 1NT "garbage bid". Showing the 4-card major takes preference.)
- With ♠Kxx ♥x ♦xxxx ♣QJTxx - In response to 1♥, you **cannot** bid 2♣ since you only hold 6 HCP. You must respond 1NT - the "garbage bid" - even though unbalanced.
- With ♠Kxxx ♥x ♦xxx ♣QJTxx, you can, and should, bid 1♠, even though your longest suit is clubs. If your hand was a bit stronger, you would bid 2♣.

With a choice of 2 **biddable** suits (if you hold fewer than 10 HCP then any suit that you have to bid at the 2 level isn't biddable):

1. Bid your longest suit
2. With two 4 card suits, make the **cheapest possible bid**.
3. With two 5 card suits, bid the **highest ranking**.

Jump-shifting

A **jump-shift** is a bid at a higher level than necessary in that suit (e.g., 1♥-2♠, 1♥-3♦). This shows **16+ HCP**, a **5+-card suit** and is **Game forcing**. Be careful when you use it because it consumes a lot of bidding space. You should only use it if you are reasonably certain which denomination you ultimately want to play in. Therefore you should either hold:

- a **long suit** (6+ cards)
- **support** for opener's suit (since then you can play there – remember that limit raises only go up to 15HCP)
- a **strong balanced hand** so you want to play in NT.

When you hold a strong hand without one of these options, it is safer to bid the suit at the cheapest level and force to game later. Remember that a change of suit response is forcing for one round.

As a jump-shift shows at least 5 cards, opener can raise this with 3 cards. Responder will rebid opener's first suit with a fit.

Opener's Rebids after 1♥-1♠

Recap: Partner has shown a **4 card suit** and **6+ HCP** with the 1♠ bid.

Raising responders suit

With **4 card** support for responder's suit - spades - you can raise it to show that a fit has been found. This should be a priority. Based on 25HCP for Game (and adjusting for **distributional values** since you know you hold an 8 card fit). If responder promises a 5 card suit (e.g., 1♣-2♥) the raising on 3 card support is OK.

- **12-15 HCP:** Raise to 2♠. Responder passes (6-10), invites (3♠, 11-12) or bids Game (4♠, 13+)
- **16-18 HCP:** Raise to 3♠. Responder passes or bids Game (8+)
- **19+ HCP:** Raise to 4♠. Game is on, so bid it!

Rebidding NT

Without support for partner and a balanced hand, you can rebid in NT. This should never be done in preference to raising responder's major suit, but may be preferable to raising a minor:

- 15-17 1NT
- 18-19 2NT

These are **limit bids**. Partner responds as if over a 1NT opening, but adjusting the point ranges since opener has promised extra values.

In other words: When you hold a 15-19 balanced hand, open 1 of a suit and rebid NT at the appropriate level (unless an 8 card major fit is found).

Rebidding your own suit

This should usually be used as a last resort. You should only rebid a **good 5 card** or longer suit (KJxxx is about the minimum).

- Rebids 2♥ with **12-15 HCP** and **5+ cards** (responder can pass or invite in this suit or NT as appropriate). Responder should pass without Game going values. 3♥ by responder is invitation (11-12 HCP) and any other bid is forcing for one round.
- Rebids 3♥ with **16-18** and **6+ cards**. Strongly Game inviting.
- Rebids 4♥ with a strong, single suited hand with no slam ambition

With 16-19 and only a 5-card suit, you have to find another bid in NT or a second suit (see below).

Bidding a new suit

Opening 1 of a suit sets up a **barrier** at 2 of that suit. When bidding a new suit, whether you bid above or below the **barrier** depends on the strength of your hand.

So, for example, after 1♥-1♠: If you bid 2♦, which is below the 2♥ barrier, then with a weak hand, partner can bail out by returning to your original suit at the 2 level (2♥). This

option is not available if you bid above the barrier (e.g. with a jump to 3♣) - partner must now go to the 3-level (3♥) to return to your original suit.

So, bearing this in mind: with

- 12-15 HCP bid a suit below the barrier
- 16+ HCP bid a suit above the barrier (a **reverse** if the suit could not be bid at a lower level or **jump shift** if it could be)

Below the barrier example: in the sequence 1♥-1♠-2♣, opener promises an unbalanced hand with 4+ clubs and 4+ hearts. Because the 2♥ barrier is not broken, it shows 12-15 HCP. Responder is asked to give **preference** between playing ♥, ♣ or NT by passing or bidding as appropriate. **Note that 2♣ can be passed - this is one of the few situations where a new suit is not forcing for one round!**

After opener rebids below the barrier, responder rebids:

- 6-9: give 2-level preference or bid 1NT (if available) as a signoff
- 10-12: give 3-level preference or bid 2NT (invitational)
- 13-15: give 4-level preference or bid 3NT

To take another example: After 1♦-1♥-1♠ (or other sequence where the new suit is bid at the 1 level) still give preference at the 2 level or bid 1NT. It is rarely a good idea to give 3 or 4 level preference with a short trump suit – bidding NT is usually better. After this preference is given, opener will pass or bid game as appropriate. As last week, opener may bid 3NT instead of 5♣/♦ if this is likely to play better. Responder can **pass or correct**.

Above the barrier example: the sequence 1♦-1♠-2♥ shows an unbalanced hand with 5+ diamonds, 4+ hearts, and an unbalanced hand. The 2♦ barrier has been broken, so this is a **reverse** showing 16+ HCP which is **forcing for one round**.

After a rebid above the barrier, there are a number of options:

- raise either of opener's suits to the 3 level to show preference for that suit and a minimum hand (6-8)
- bid 2NT to show a minimum hand (6-8), but denying a fit with either suit.
- Any other bid is **Game Forcing**

Opener's Rebids after 1♥-2♣

Recap: Partner has shown a (usually) **5+ card suit** and **10+ HCP** with the **2♣ bid**.

After a **2-over-1** response such as this, the rebids are very similar to those after a 1-over-1, except that they are adjusted to take account of responder's 10+ HCP. Because of this, game is very likely to be on (since opener has 12+ HCP). The differences are pointed out below:

Raising responders suit

Same principle (adjusting for distribution and 25HCP for Game), raise to 3 level on 12-14 HCP (invitational) or bid Game (15+, suit or NT).

Rebidding NT

Same principle but now bid 2NT with 15-17 (**Game forcing**) and 3NT with 18-19 (slam encouraging).

Rebidding your first suit

Again, after 1♥-2♣/♦, 2♥ shows 12-15 with a good 5 card suit. Responder should only pass if minimum and has no fit, otherwise 2NT and 3H are invitational, 3NT and 4H are to play. Responder bidding a second suit is GF, probably showing a stopper for NT.

Bidding a second suit

Again, the **barrier** principle exists. Note that after 1♥-2♣-2♦ (12-14, 4+ cards), responder can only pass if minimum (10HCP) and the hands are a **mis-fit** since otherwise game is still possible. Therefore the principles of giving 3 and 4 level preference (and bidding NT) apply.

Other continuations

It is not possible to discuss all the possible bidding sequences here so you'll have to work them out based on looking for 25HCP and 8 card fits. Once an auction is **Game forced** then all bids are to communicate suit length to partner or to investigate Slam. Rebidding any suit at the lowest level is the weakest action you can take (usually denying Slam interest), and usually shows one extra card each time you rebid it. Remember that once either of you have made a limit bid, the other controls the auction.

OPTIONAL: Implications for opening

Remember that a 1 of a suit opening promises a rebid if responder changes suit. This is why the higher of equal length suits is opened. Other implications for opening can be highlighted by the problems faced with opening a 12-15 HCP hand that is 2-2-4-5 shape (given in suit order). If opened 1♣, and responder bids 1♥/♠, rebids become a problem since 2♦ would be a reverse and 2♣ should only be done on a good 5 card suit. Consider:

- xx, xx, KQxx, AKJxx: 1♣ opening OK since suit is good enough to justify a 2♣ rebid over a 1♥/S response
- Ax, Ax, Kxxx, Jxxxx: 1♣ should be avoided since suit cannot be rebid. Opening 1NT is probably the least of all evils
- Qx, Qx, AQxx, Qxxxx: 1♣ should be avoided, and 1NT looks bad with two unstopped doubletons. With two doubleton queens, this hand will not play like a normal 12-count, so pass is probably best.
- AK, Ax, KQxx, Jxxxx: opening 1♣ is OK since the hand is strong enough (17HCP) to justify a reverse into 2♦.

Note that with Qx, Qx, Qxxxx, AQxx a 1♦ opening is safe since the 2♣ rebid is always going to be available. The key point is that when you hold marginal opening hands (12HCP) then you should only open the auction if your hand can justify a rebid over any of responders actions.

Key Points from Lesson 4

You have now learnt how to respond to all 1 level openings and should be able to cope with the vast majority of hands dealt at the Bridge table and I encourage you to go and play away from the lessons. You will still have problems with very strong hands and any hand where both sides want to bid (I suggest that you treat **overcalling** like opening the auction for now). The key points to remember are:

- Opening 1 of a suit promises a rebid if partner changes suit.
- 2-over-1 responses promise 10 HCP. Respond 1NT if you cannot find a suitable bid.
- Reverses.
- Hand re-evaluation with known fits and misfits.
- Preference bidding.

Next week we will look at opening the bidding with very strong hands, or opening based on long suits only.

Bidding Summary

There are too many possible sequences from this week to describe them all. There are also occasions where the best of a range of choices of bids (or even the least bad bid) should be made. The full sequences are not put here. Again, they are illustrated for a 1♥ opening so ♥ responses are raises, ♣ shows lower ranking suits, S shows higher ranking suits. At the end, there are a few examples given for a 1♦ opening since those sequences

cannot exist over 1♥. Remember that the more bidding space consumed by a bid, the stronger the suit that is should be made on.

—written by Rob Richardson, 2004; updated by Jonathan Cairns, 2011

Point values should be adjusted for distribution when a fit is found. Abbreviations: cs = card suit, F = forcing, G = Game, bal = balanced, M = major, m = minor, sup = card support, Sl = slam, inv = invitation to, dep = depending on, F1 = forcing for one round, gd = good

Opener	Responder	Opener rebid	Responder rebid
1H 12-22, 4+cs (11-22 with good 5cs) (10-22 with good 6cs)	1S 6+, 4+cs, F1	1NT 15-17, bal	pass, signoff, invite as over 1NT opening with adjusted HCP values
		2NT 18-19, bal	Pass/3H/3S takeout Any other nat. FG
		2C/D 12-15 4+cs will be equal length or hold longer hearts	2 level pref. 6-9 3 level pref. or 2NT 10-12 4 level pref. or 3NT 13-15 Bid of forth suit, nat., FG
		2H 12-15 gd 5+cs, no 4cm	2NT/3H invite 2S 6-10, 6cs 3C/D , nat. GF
		3H 16-18 gd 6+ cs, no 4cm	3NT/4H to play others nat. slam try
		2S 12-16, 4cs 3S 17-18, 4cs 4S 19+, 4cs 3C/D , reverse, 4+cs 3C 12-14, invG 2NT 15-16 bal, FG 3NT 17+, bal 5C 15+, to play 2H 12-15, 5cs	Pass/invite/bid game Pass/3NT/4S 18+ or dist. equiv., FG
	2C/D 10-15, 4+(5+)cs (more bidding space used means longer suit)	2D 12-15	Slam try?
1D , as above	2S/3C/3D , 16+, FG (jump shift)	2S , reverse, 16+, FG 2H , single raise, nat; 2N 15-16; others slam suggesting	Pass very min, no fit 2NT/3H invG Second suit = nat, FG Pass only on min. misfit 2H/3D minimum, pref. 3C nat, FG
	1H 6-15, 4+cs	1S 12+ 4+cs, unlimited, F1	Pref or NT as above 2C , nat F1 3C , 2 suited, FG.
	1S 6-15, 4cs	2H reverse, 16+, F1	3H/D or 2N min, pref. Other bids FG