

Bridge 101 – Lesson 5

Rebids by the Opener

I could not mark where I ended the lesson because I reorganized the summary. It is the most difficult of all the lesson because there are too many scenarios to memorize. Try to absorb the principles and think about them so they make sense.

Opener's Rebid:

We have studied how to respond when our partner opens one a suit.

Now we “change seats” and we are the opener once more.

Suppose you have opened the bidding and your partner has responded to your opening bid.

It is now your turn, as opener, to bid again. This is your second bid, a rebid by the opener or “**openers rebid**”.

Through bidding you and your partner exchange information about the points and distribution of your hands.

Your objectives are to find the best trump fit and the correct level (so the “correct contract”), as well as to make it difficult for the opponents to bid.

The time has come when you have to “think your way through”.

Our lessons so far have been along the lines of “in this situation do this”.

But now there are too many situations, and you have to THINK.

Easy Examples:

You hold: ♠AK543 ♥J42 ♦A753 ♣8

With 12 hcp's plus one point for length (13 total points), you open 1♠.

Suppose partner, as responder, bids 2♠.

Partner has just made a simple raise of your major suit so you know partner has 6-9 points and 3+ card support for your spades.

Partner was counting hcp's plus shortages.

You know you have a trump fit – the Golden Fit.

Now you re-evaluate your hand, adding for shortages because you have found a trump fit.

Your hand is now worth 14 total points with 12 hcp's plus 2 for the singleton.

If partner has the maximum 9 points for her response the maximum you can have between you is 23.

You should not be in game and your bid is PASS.

You hold: ♠AK752 ♥T3 ♦A763 ♣AK

With 18 hcp's with one length point for a total of 19 points, you open 1♠.

Suppose partner, as responder, bids 2♠.

Partner has just made a simple raise of your major suit so you know partner has 6-9 points and 3+ card support for your spades.

Partner was counting hcp's plus shortages.

You know you have a trump fit – the Golden Fit.

Now you re-evaluate your hand, adding for shortages because you have found a trump fit.

Your hand is now worth 20 total points with 18 hcp's plus one for each doubleton.

If your partner has the minimum 6 points for her response the minimum you can have between you is 26.

You should be in game (no slam as maximum you can have between you is 29) and your bid is 4♠.

Partner will take this for a “sign-off bid” (a bid that denies extra values and should result in a pass by partner).

You hold: ♠85 ♥AK853 ♦A3 ♣A763

You have 15 hcp's but with two doubletons you are unbalanced.

You have one length point for a total of 16 points, you open 1♥.

Suppose partner, as responder, bids 2♥.

Partner has just made a simple raise of your major suit so you know partner has 6-9 points and 3+ card support for your hearts.

Partner was counting hcp's plus shortages.

You know you have a trump fit – the Golden Fit.

Now you re-evaluate your hand, adding for shortages because you have found a trump fit.

Your hand is now worth 17 total points with 15 hcp's plus one for each doubleton.

The minimum number of points your partnership holds is 23.

The maximum number of points your partnership holds is 26.

You do not have enough information as to whether you should be in game.

Your bid is 3♥.

With 6-7 total points, partner should pass. With 8-9, partner should go to game.

The bid of 3♥ gives information back to partner and makes her “Captain”, leaving the decision up to her as to whether to go to game.

You hold: ♠AKJ54 ♥Q2 ♦A43 ♣AJ4.

You have 20 total points and open 1♠.

Partner responds 1 NT, denying spade support. You re-evaluate your hand as 19 hcp's.

You bid 3NT as partner has shown 6-9 hcp's so you know you have the necessary 25 to give the 3NT game a try but not enough for slam.

This does not mean we will be successful but more times than not we will be if we “land” in the correct contract.

We need to discuss what to do if partner hasn't told you enough with his response to enable you to place the final contract by passing, raising to game or inviting game. But first:

Exceptions in counting:

We've talked about high card points, points for length and points for shortages.

But, sometimes our high card points and points for shortages are in the same suit.

So, we might have:

K, Q, or J as a singleton.

Or KQ, KJ, QJ, QT, JT, Qx or Jx as doubletons ((x here means not an honor)

When this happens you can count either hcp's or shortage but not both (wiggle room here).

Goal and Hand Strength:

Our goal is to find the right contract quickly and correctly.

In order to do this we need to do three things:

Discover if we should be in part score, game or slam.

Figure out who has the information necessary to act as Captain to make the final decision on what our contract should be.

Re-evaluate our points each time our partner bids so we can provide partner with an updated assessment of our hand's value when we bid.

As a responder our hand fit into one of three categories:

Minimum Hand (6-9 points)

Invitational Hand (10-11 points)

Game Forcing Hand (12+ points)

But now we have changed seats and we are the opener again.

As opener we re-evaluate our points depending on partners's response and put our opening hand into one of three categories:

Minimum (13-15 points)

Strong (16-18 points)

Maximum (19-21 points)

With a minimum hand we will make a minimum rebid.

With a strong hand we will invite a game.

With a maximum hand and partner bidding, we know we have game.

"If your hands look like they add up to AT LEAST 25 points bid game, if your hands add to NOT MORE than 25 points do not bid game."

Easy examples restated:

Remember our first example: ♠AK543 ♥J42 ♦A753 ♣8

We opened 1♠, partner responded 2♠.

We re-evaluated our hand to have 14 total points which is a minimum hand as opener.

Minimum opening hand, minimum response by partner and we passed.

The third example was: ♠85 ♥AK853 ♦A3 ♣A763

We opened 1♥, partner responded 2♥.

We re-evaluated our hand to have 17 total points which is a strong hand as opener.

Strong hand so we give an invitational response.

Our rebid was 3♥ passing the Captaincy back to partner.

You are asking partner if they are at the maximum of their range which should give the partnership 25 points.

The second example we looked at was we opened 1♠, partner responded 2♠, we held a maximum hand as opener and bid game.

These are the “easy” cases as partner with a simple raise has limited the responder's point value.

New situation – 1 NT response:

The other response which limits responders hand to minimum point values is the 1NT response.

So if bidding goes: you as opener 1♥, partner as responder 1NT (no support for your hearts, no four card spade suit but partner has 6-9 hcp's).

If you have a minimum hand as opener (13 – 15) and are balanced. You pass.

If you have a minimum hand as opener and are not balanced:

with a 6+ heart suit bid 2♥.

without 6+ hearts bid 2 of a lower ranking suit 5+ card suit (for instance 1♥, 1 NT, 2♦)

Now suppose you hold a strong hand (16-18 points) and have gotten a 1 NT response, (say 1♥, 1 NT)

Your rebid is any new 5+ card suit at the two level or jump to 3 with 6+ in your major.

With 18 hcp's and balanced, you can bid 2NT (if you were balanced with 16-17 you would have opened 1NT).

Suppose you hold a maximum hand (19-21 points) and have gotten a 1 NT response, (say 1♥, 1 NT).

Your rebid is to jump shift to 3 in a new 5+ suit, (for instance 1♥, 1NT, 3♦)

or with 6+ in your opening major suit bid four, (for instance 1♥, 1 NT, 4♥).

THINK “What is the most useful thing I can tell my partner to better describe my hand so we can land in the best contract?”

1-level response which does not limit responder's point value:

Suppose you as opener bid 1♥ and partner responds 1♠.

Partner is promising 6+ points and four spades. Not much information to go on. (Please look at the last page of Lesson Summary 3 to see that in all cases it says:

“and no 3+ support bid a four-card or longer major at the one level if you are able to do so. (partner 1♥ – you 1♠)” This is where we got confused near the end of the lesson.

You hold: ♠AT65 ♥KJ984 ♦8 ♣A63

With 12 hcp's plus one for length you open 1♥.

Suppose partner responds with a bid of 1♠.

You re-evaluate your hand because your partner has shown four spades so you have a golden fit!

But you are still holding a minimum hand as opener with 12 hcp's and 2 points for the singleton.

Minimum hand means a minimum rebid so your opener rebid is 2♠.

Partner is now captain and will pass or further describe her hand.

Possibilities for when you open 1 of a suit, partner responds with 1 of a suit and you have a minimum hand (13-15 points).

After you bid 1♥, partner 1♠, the number one choice is to raise responder's suit if you have

4+ ♠ (1♥, 1♠, 2♠).

If you do not have 4+ support for partner's major suit.

Bid a new suit at 1 level if you can with 4+ cards (1♦, 1♥, 1♠).

Rebid your first suit if you have at least six cards in it (1♥, 1♠, 2♥).

Bid 1 NT with a balanced hand (1♥, 1♠, 1 NT).

I warned you – too many different situations to “remember” so instead we have THINK.

with a minimum hand when we need to rebid as opener we give a minimum rebid.

Possibilities for when you open 1 of a suit, partner responds with 1 of a suit and you have a strong hand (16-18 points).

After you bid 1♥, partner 1♠. Partner has shown 6+ points so we just don't know if we have game.

Let's see if we have game. Strong hand I'll invite to game.

With 4+ cards in responder's suit – jump raise (1♥, 1♠, 3♠)

Bid a new suit at the one or two level (1♥, 1♠, 2♦)

Jump to three in your original suit with 6+ cards in your suit (1♥, 1♠, 3♥)

Jump to 2NT with a balanced hand and 18 hcp's (1♥, 1♠, 2NT). If you were balanced with 16 or 17 we would have opened 1NT.

Possibilities for when you open 1 of a suit, partner responds with 1 of a suit and you have a maximum hand (19-21 points).

Partner has shown 6+ points so we should have game. Let's see if we can find out which one!

(Although maybe not if we are bidding minors).

With 4+ card support jump to game in responder's suit (1♥, 1♠, 4♣) since we have found a fit in the major.

With no 4+ card support bid 3NT with a balanced hand (1♥, 1♠, 3NT – I like to have stoppers in suits not bid by p).

With no 4 + card support jump shift with an unbalanced hand (1♥, 1♠, 3♦)

Jump shift to game in your original suit with a very strong 6+ card suit (1♥, 1♠, 4♥)

Other responses to your opening bid which are stronger, promising 10+ points.

If partner has jump raised in response ($1\heartsuit$, $3\heartsuit$), then you know partner has 3+ card support and 10-11 points.

If you hold a minimum hand as opener (12-15 points), pass unless you have 15 points, with 15 points bid game.

With a strong opening hand (16-18) bid game, ($1\heartsuit$, $3\heartsuit$, $4\heartsuit$)

With a maximum hand (19-21) explore the possibility of a slam (more on that in a later course).

The possibilities:

As opener when you are to rebid, you are minimum (13-15), strong (16-18), or maximum (19-21).

The responder is minimum (6-9), invitational (10-11) or game forcing (12+).

There are NINE minimum (as opener) – minimum (as responder), minimum (as opener) -invitational (as responder), minimum (as opener) – game forcing (as responder) ... strong (as opener) – minimum (as responder), and so on ...

Do you see there are nine?

If you are minimum for opener and partner is minimum for response do not think about game!