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THE OPENER'S REBID

Suppose the bidding starts $1\spadesuit$ - $1\clubsuit$. The opener and responder have shown one suit each but little is known about the strength of their hands. The opener might have 12 points or possibly 19 points. The responder holds at least 6 points but might also have closer to 18 points. Neither of them has made a limited bid — a bid that defines their strength within a narrow range.

Suppose instead that the auction starts: $1\clubsuit$ - 1NT . Now responder has made a limited bid, showing about 6-9 points. As soon as someone makes a limited bid, his partner can take charge of the auction. He will add his strength to partner's and announce the result: partscore, game or game try. Mind you, he can only do that if a satisfactory trump suit has been found or he is happy to play in notrump.

Opener's rebid is a limited bid

The opener has many possible rebids after a start such as $1\spadesuit$ - $1\clubsuit$. The following rebids are all limited: 1NT , $2\spadesuit$, $2\clubsuit$, 2NT , $3\spadesuit$, $3\clubsuit$, 3NT , $4\clubsuit$. A rebid of 1NT will show 12-14 points since you would have opened 1NT with 15-17. A jump rebid of 2NT shows 18-19 points. A rebid of 3NT shows a powerful hand with long diamonds and sufficient stoppers outside to wish to play in 3NT .

When opener rebids his own suit, $2\spadesuit$ shows a minimum hand of 12-14 points; $3\spadesuit$ shows at least six diamonds and 16-18 points. When opener raises partner's spade suit, a rebid of $2\clubsuit$ shows a minimum hand, and at least three spades to an honor (you can add 'support points' when deciding how high to raise). A raise to $3\clubsuit$ shows game-try strength (16-18 points); $4\clubsuit$ shows a powerful hand, enough for game (19-20 points). Raises to the three-level or higher show four-card support.

Opener rebids in a new suit

Another option for the opener is to rebid in a new suit at the cheapest level. Suppose the bidding starts $1\heartsuit$ - $1\clubsuit$; $2\clubsuit$. The opener has shown at least five hearts and four clubs. His strength is still relatively unknown. He might hold 12 points; he might hold 18 points. It will then be the responder's responsibility to look for a limited bid, allowing the opener to judge how high the bidding should go.

A jump rebid in a new suit ($1\heartsuit$ - $1\clubsuit$; $3\clubsuit$) is *forcing to game* and therefore shows a very strong hand indeed (19 or more points).

When the first response was at the two-level (promising 10+ points), a new suit bid by the opener ($1\heartsuit$ - $2\clubsuit$; $2\spadesuit$) is *forcing for one round*. Consequently, there is no need for the opener to jump to $3\spadesuit$ to show a strong hand.

Opener ‘reverses’ in a new suit

Suppose the auction starts $1\spadesuit$ - $1\spadesuit$; $2\heartsuit$. What do you make of the $2\heartsuit$ rebid? The opener has carried the bidding beyond the safety level of $2\spadesuit$ (two of the suit in which he opened). This implies that he must hold extra strength, at least 17 points. Such a rebid is known as a **reverse**, and it also promises more cards in the first-bid suit than the second. It is forcing for one round when the response was at the one-level. Opposite a two-level response ($1\spadesuit$ - $2\clubsuit$; $2\spadesuit$) a reverse is *forcing to game*. The same is true of a sequence such as $1\heartsuit$ - $2\spadesuit$; $3\clubsuit$, known as a **high reverse**.

When the opener jumps in a new suit opposite a one-level response ($1\spadesuit$ - $1\spadesuit$; $3\clubsuit$), this is sometimes called a jump shift. This too is *forcing to game*.

Opener shows strength opposite partner’s limited response

When the responder has already made a limited bid, it is the opener’s job to announce whether the partnership should stop in a partscore or perhaps bid (or consider) a game contract somewhere.

After a start of $1\spadesuit$ - 1NT , the opener may ‘sign off’ (show no game ambition) by passing or rebidding $2\spadesuit$. He may make a **game try** by bidding 2NT or $3\spadesuit$. Occasionally he may even bid a game (3NT or $4\spadesuit$) or offer a choice of games ($4\heartsuit$).

The final option for the opener is to bid a second suit. A minimum rebid in a new suit ($2\clubsuit$, $2\spadesuit$ or $2\heartsuit$) is non-forcing. A jump rebid in a new suit is forcing.

Next, suppose the bidding had started $1\spadesuit$ - $2\spadesuit$. The responder has shown around 6-9 points and spade support. The opener may hold one of these hands:

(1)	\spadesuit A Q 8 6 5 \heartsuit 10 9 3 \diamond A K 6 3 \clubsuit 6	(2)	\spadesuit A Q J 8 7 2 \heartsuit A 7 6 \diamond 8 \clubsuit A K 5	(3)	\spadesuit A K J 6 5 \heartsuit 10 6 \diamond K 4 \clubsuit A J 8 4
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On hand (1) you would pass. Game is not very likely and you would often go down if you strayed above $2\spadesuit$ on such a hand. With hand (2) you are happy to leap to $4\spadesuit$; you need very little opposition to have a good chance of ten tricks. Hand (3) is of medium strength and you should make a game try. The best way to help your partner to judge whether to bid $4\spadesuit$, is to bid your second-longest suit ($3\clubsuit$ here). If partner happens to hold (say) a doubleton club, he will know that you can ruff a club or two in his hand. Ten tricks may then be possible.

The Opener's Rebid — Problems A

1. ♠ A J 6 ♥ 8 ♦ A J 8 7 3 ♣ K 10 7 6

You open 1♦ and partner responds 1♥. What will you rebid?

- (a) 1NT (b) 2♣ (c) 2♦

2. ♠ 9 2 ♥ A Q J 7 6 ♦ K J ♣ A K 9 4

You open 1♥ and partner responds 1♠. What will you rebid?

- (a) 2♣ (b) 2NT (c) 3♣

3. ♠ A J 4 2 ♥ Q 9 7 3 ♦ K 7 ♣ Q J 5

You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♥. What will you rebid?

- (a) 1♠ (b) 1NT (c) 2♥

4. ♠ Q 3 ♥ A Q 5 4 ♦ A Q 9 8 6 ♣ 8 5

You open 1♦ and partner responds 1♠. What will you rebid?

- (a) 1NT (b) 2♦ (c) 2♥

5. ♠ A 10 7 2 ♥ 6 ♦ A K J 8 5 3 ♣ A 4

You open 1♦ and partner responds 1♥. What will you rebid?

- (a) 1♠ (b) 2♦ (c) 3♦

(The answers are overleaf.)

The Opener's Rebid — Solutions A

1. ♠ A J 6 ♥ 8 ♦ A J 8 7 3 ♣ K 10 7 6

The bidding starts 1♦ - 1♥. A 1NT rebid would show 12-14 points, yes, but it would also tell partner that you held a balanced hand. Here you should rebid 2♣, showing your second suit. It would be a mistake to rebid 2♦, just because you wanted to let partner know that you had a minimum opening bid. **Answer:** (b) 2♣.

2. ♠ 9 2 ♥ A Q J 7 6 ♦ K J ♣ A K 9 4

The bidding starts 1♥ - 1♠. A jump to 2NT would show your 18 points, but showing your second suit with the simple (wide range) rebid of 2♣ describes your hand better. You are not strong enough to rebid 3♣, a ‘jump shift’. This would be forcing to game and you cannot justify such an action. Suppose partner holds ♠AQ85 and little else. Game is then very unlikely. **Answer:** (a) 2♣.

3. ♠ A J 4 2 ♥ Q 9 7 3 ♦ K 7 ♣ Q J 5

You have a balanced hand but not enough points to open a 15-17 point 1NT. You open 1♣, intending to rebid 1NT if partner responds 1♦. When partner responds 1♥ instead, you have found an eight-card fit in a major suit and should raise to 2♥. This single raise shows that you are close to a minimum opening bid (around 12-14 points). There would be no purpose in bidding spades when you have already found a satisfactory trump fit. **Answer:** (c) 2♥.

4. ♠ Q 3 ♥ A Q 5 4 ♦ A Q 9 8 6 ♣ 8 5

You open 1♦, partner responding 1♠. It would not be a mistake to rebid 1NT, showing a balanced hand in the 12-14 range. The low doubleton in clubs is a bit worrying, however, and it is better to rebid 2♦. You are not strong enough to rebid 2♥ because this would be a reverse, promising 17 points or more. **Answer:** (b) 2♦.

5. ♠ A 10 7 2 ♥ 6 ♦ A K J 8 5 3 ♣ A 4

You open 1♦, partner responding 1♥. If you were going to rebid in diamonds, you would be worth 3♦ rather than 2♦. However, there is still a chance of finding a spade fit and you should therefore rebid 1♠. You are not nearly strong enough to rebid 2♣, which would be forcing to game. 1♠ is a ‘wide-range rebid’: you might have 12 points; you might have 18. **Answer:** (a) 1♠.

The Opener's Rebid — Problems B

6. ♠ A K J 7 6 ♥ A Q 10 4 ♦ J 8 ♣ K 6

You open 1♠ and partner responds 2♦. What will you rebid?

- (a) 2♥ (b) 3♥ (c) 3NT

7. ♠ A Q J 7 6 2 ♥ A Q 2 ♦ 10 3 ♣ A 4

You open 1♠ and partner responds 2♦. What will you rebid?

- (a) 2♠ (b) 3♠ (c) 3NT

8. ♠ A 10 4 ♥ K Q 4 ♦ A K 10 9 5 4 ♣ Q

You open 1♦ and partner responds 1NT. What will you rebid?

- (a) 2NT (b) 3♦ (c) 3NT

9. ♠ 6 3 ♥ A K 9 8 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ A Q 10 7

You open 1♥ and partner responds 2♣. What will you rebid?

- (a) 3♣ (b) 3♥ (c) 4♣

10. ♠ A J 7 6 2 ♥ K 10 3 ♦ A 5 ♣ 10 9 3

You open 1♠ and partner responds 2♣. What will you rebid?

- (a) 2♠ (b) 2NT (c) 3♣

(The answers are overleaf.)

The Opener's Rebid — Solutions B

6. ♠ A K J 7 6 ♥ A Q 10 4 ♦ J 8 ♣ K 6

The bidding starts 1♠ - 2♦. You should rebid 2♥. Rebidding in a new suit is forcing for one round when partner has responded at the two-level. (This makes good sense. If you had to rebid 3♥ to make sure that partner did not pass, the bidding would be quite high and he would not know whether you held four hearts or five.) You do not yet know whether it will be best to play in spades, hearts, diamonds or notrump. Nor do you know whether a slam is possible. Rebidding 3NT, consuming so much bidding space, would therefore be very unwise. **Answer:** (a) 2♥.

7. ♠ A Q J 7 6 2 ♥ A Q 2 ♦ 10 3 ♣ A 4

The bidding starts 1♠ - 2♦. Since you have a good six-card spade suit, you should rebid 3♠. This tells partner of the good suit and the extra high-card strength. **Answer:** (b) 3♠.

8. ♠ A 10 4 ♥ K Q 4 ♦ A K 10 9 5 4 ♣ Q

The bidding starts 1♦ - 1NT. With 18 HCP and a strong six-card diamond suit, you should be able to make 3NT even if partner holds a minimum 6 points. So... bid 3NT! A rebid of either 2NT or 3♦ would be a non-forcing game try and would risk missing an excellent game. **Answer:** (c) 3NT.

9. ♠ 6 3 ♥ A K 9 8 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ A Q 10 7

The bidding starts 1♥ - 2♣. You have excellent support for clubs and therefore should agree that suit as trumps. A simple rebid of 3♣ would suggest a hand in the minimum 12-14 point range. Here you should jump to 4♣, to let your partner know that you have a strong hand and want the bidding to go to the game-level (at least). **Answer:** (c) 4♣.

10. ♠ A J 7 6 2 ♥ K 10 3 ♦ A 5 ♣ 10 9 3

The bidding starts 1♠ - 2♣. You have already shown a spade suit of five cards or more, so it would not be right to bid that suit again. Partner may hold only four clubs, so it is not attractive to raise to 3♣. The best rebid is 2NT. This is not a jump, so it shows a balanced hand of 12-14 points. Since this is a limited bid, partner will be able to work out whether your side has enough for a game contract. **Answer:** (b) 2NT.

The Opener's Rebid — Problems C

11. ♠ Q 10 4 ♥ A K 10 3 ♦ 8 ♣ A K J 7 2

You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♠. What will you rebid?

- (a) 2♣ (b) 2♥ (c) 2♠

12. ♠ K Q J 7 2 ♥ K 3 ♦ A 10 7 3 ♣ 9 8

You open 1♠ and partner responds 2♠. What will you rebid?

- (a) Pass (b) 3♦ (c) 3♠

13. ♠ K 10 4 ♥ A J 9 7 6 4 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ 2

You open 1♥ and partner raises to 3♥. What will you rebid?

- (a) Pass (b) 4♥

14. ♠ K 6 ♥ A J 9 2 ♦ 8 ♣ A K 9 8 5 3

You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♥. What will you rebid?

- (a) 2♥ (b) 3♥ (c) 4♥

15. ♠ A K J 3 ♥ 5 ♦ Q 5 ♣ A K Q 8 7 2

You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♦. What will you rebid?

- (a) 1♠ (b) 2♠ (c) 3♠

(The answers are overleaf.)

The Opener's Rebid — Solutions C

11. ♠ Q 10 4 ♥ A K 10 3 ♦ 8 ♣ A K J 7 2

The bidding starts 1♣ - 1♠. With 17 points, you're strong enough for a reverse to 2♥. This is forcing for one round facing a one-level response. If partner bids spades again, showing five or more cards in the suit, you will have found a satisfactory trump suit and can raise to 4♣. A 2♣ rebid would show a fairly minimum hand and might result in a missed game. Raising spades immediately on three to an honor can be a good idea on a minimum opening bid. You do not have to do it here because you're strong enough for a forcing 2♥. **Answer:** (b) 2♥.

12. ♠ K Q J 7 2 ♥ K 3 ♦ A 10 7 3 ♣ 9 8

The bidding starts 1♣ - 2♣. Partner has shown a fairly minimum response with at least three spades. Since your hand is close to a minimum, you should pass. **Answer:** (a) Pass.

13. ♠ K 10 4 ♥ A J 9 7 6 4 ♦ A 7 3 ♣ 2

The bidding starts 1♥ - 3♥. Partner has shown four-card heart support and around 10-12 points, including support points. You should raise to game without thinking twice about it! Although you have only 12 points in high cards, you are entitled to count extra when partner has supported your suit. **Answer:** (b) 4♥.

14. ♠ K 6 ♥ A J 9 2 ♦ 8 ♣ A K 9 8 5 3

You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♥. You have a splendid hand in support of hearts. Although you have only 15 HCP, you can add one support point for the doubleton spade and three more for the singleton diamond. Your hand is therefore worth 19 points and you should raise to 4♥. **Answer:** (c) 4♥.

15. ♠ A K J 3 ♥ 5 ♦ Q 5 ♣ A K Q 8 7 2

The bidding starts 1♣ - 1♦. With 19 HCP and fabulous clubs, this is one of those rare hands that justify a forcing-to-game jump rebid in a new suit. Give partner the good news by rebidding 2♣. Although 1♣ would be a wide-range rebid, it would not do justice to your hand. A rebid of 3♣ suffers from two faults: it is non-forcing and does not show your second suit. **Answer:** (b) 2♣.