



# Bidding Basics

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## Responder's rebid after opener rebids 1NT or 2NT

This month we look at responder's second bid when opener has rebid 1NT or 2NT.

Let's start after opener's 1NT rebid, so the auction has gone one of a suit – one of a suit – 1NT. Opener has shown 12–14 balanced.

### After 1♣–1♦; 1NT

In this case, opener could have one (or both) four-card major(s). In modern bidding, he wouldn't show a major unless he had a shapely hand. It is up to responder to show a four-card major. When the response is 1♦ (natural), it means that either responder has no four-card major, or he was strong enough (opening-bid values) to show it on the second round. So with:

♠A 6 5 4 ♥2 ♦A K J 10 3 ♠J 8 7, the response to 1♣ is 1♦, but after the 1NT rebid, responder would bid 2♠.

If the 1♦ bidder has no four-card major (usually the case), he has the following choices:

**Pass:** With a flattish hand and no game interest. For example:

♠K 2 ♥7 6 5 ♦K J 8 7 6 ♣Q 3 2.

**2♣:** A desire to play in 2♣, something like:

♠4 ♥8 7 6 ♦K 10 8 7 2 ♣A 7 6 4.

**2♦:** A signoff with six-plus diamonds, something like:

♠4 3 ♥A 2 ♦Q J 10 8 7 6 ♣J 3 2.

**2♥/2♠:** As mentioned above, this shows four cards, good diamonds and opening bid strength, so it's game forcing.

**2NT:** Invitational, usually balanced, roughly:

♠K J ♥6 5 4 ♦K Q J 8 7 ♣J 10 7.

**3♣/3♦:** A little more than 2♣ or 2♦ (invitational). Examples, respectively:

♠— ♥A 3 2 ♦K Q 10 3 2 ♣J 10 7 6 2

♠2 ♥A 3 2 ♦A J 9 8 7 3 2 ♣4 3.

**3♥/3♠:** Don't make such a bid.

**3NT:** To play. This is a 100% closeout bid. Example:

♠5 3 2 ♥4 3 2 ♦A K Q 10 2 ♣A 3.

### After 1 of a minor–1 of a major; 1NT

Warning: This could take some study and memorizing. It can't just be read once and understood. Sigh.

The number of cards responder has in the major is crucial. With only four, responder can abandon any thoughts of playing in that major; opener would have raised with four, or showed spades after a 1♥ response. With six or more cards, responder will want to insist on playing in his major; opener has at least two, so there is at least an eight-card fit. It is with five cards that responder's life is difficult. Opener could have three, and there could be a 5–3 fit. Unfortunately, though, repeating the major typically shows six cards. Without a convention (called new-minor forcing), there are problems. A one-sentence summary of the convention is that if responder bids the minor that wasn't opened, it is like Stayman, but looking for three-card support. For example, 1♦–1♠; 1NT–2♣ says nothing

about clubs but is looking for three-card support of the major. Without that convention, responder's second bid would have to be something like this:

**2 of opener's minor:** Natural, weak, to play. For example, 1♦–1♥;

1NT–2♦ with:

♠2 ♥K J 3 2 ♦Q 10 7 6 2 ♣J 3 2.

**2 of the other minor:** Natural and forcing. For example, 1♣–1♠;

1NT–2♦ with:

♠A Q 10 3 2 ♥4 ♦A Q 7 6 ♣8 3 2.

**2 of responder's major:** To play (a signoff). For example, 1♣–1♥;

1NT–2♥ with:

♠6 ♥Q J 10 9 7 2 ♦A J 8 7 ♣4 3,

or 1♦–1♠; 1NT–2♠ with:

♠K Q 10 9 8 ♥3 ♦Q 4 3 ♣10 8 7 6.

True, there are only five spades and maybe a 5–2 fit, but 2♠ is probably better than 1NT.

**2 of the other major:** If hearts followed by spades, then natural and forcing. If spades followed by hearts, then natural and not forcing.

**2NT/3NT:** As above after 1♣–1♦; 1NT. For example, 1♦–1♥; 1NT–2NT with:

♠7 6 ♥A Q 8 7 ♦Q J 8 ♣K 5 4 3,

or 1♦–1♠; 1NT–3NT with:

♠Q 8 7 6 ♥Q 6 5 ♦A K 4 2 ♣Q 3.

**Jump to three of an already bid suit:** Invitational, six-plus cards. For example, 1♦–1♠; 1NT–3♠ with:

♠K J 9 7 6 2 ♥A 6 5 ♦Q 10 2 ♣2,

or 1♣-1♥; 1NT-3♥ with:  
 ♠A 3 2 ♥K Q 10 8 7 6 ♦J 3 2 ♣2.

### Opener's 2NT rebid

Opener has shown 18-19 balanced. With a terrible hand (like 5 or a bad 6 points), responder can pass. Other possibilities:

**3♣/3♦**: Natural and forcing. If using the aforementioned new-minor forcing, then three of the minor that wasn't opened would be artificial and Stayman-like, typically looking for three-card support in responder's major. For example 1♣-1♥; 2NT-3♦ would be artificial and looking for three-card heart support.

**Repeating a major**: Natural and forcing, typically six-plus cards.

**3NT**: To play, an absolute signoff.

**4♣**: Gerber. This should be used only if responder is specifically interested in the exact number of aces opener holds. This is unlikely to ever come up.

**4♦**: Don't make this bid.

**4♥/4♠**: To play. When responder jumps to the four level in the major he initially bid, it shows at least six cards in the suit, no slam interest.

**4NT**: Quantitative/invitational to slam. For example, 1♣-1♦; 2NT-4NT with:

♠A Q 5 ♥K Q 4 ♦Q J 9 2 ♣10 7 6.

## BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

What is responder's rebid after 1♣-1♦; 1NT with:

1. ♠A K Q 2 ♥2 ♦A K Q 10 3 ♣J 3 2

2. ♠A 2 ♥A Q 2 ♦10 8 7 6 5 ♣4 3 2

What is responder's rebid after 1♦-1M; 1NT with:

3. ♠A Q 7 6 ♥A J 2 ♦J 5 ♣9 5 3 2

4. ♠7 ♥K Q 8 7 6 ♦3 2 ♣Q 8 7 6 5

5. ♠Q 10 8 7 6 ♥A J 5 4 2 ♦3 ♣3 2

6. ♠J 10 8 7 5 ♥A Q 2 ♦A 2 ♣A J 2

What is responder's rebid after 1♣-1M; 2NT with:

7. ♠K J 8 7 6 ♥2 ♦A Q 3 2 ♣4 3 2

8. ♠5 4 ♥J 8 7 6 5 ♦K J 2 ♣4 3 2

1. 2♠. Natural and forcing.
2. Pass. High enough. Opposite 12-14 HCP, where are we going?
3. 2NT. Invitational. No need to insist on game because opener could have a flat 12.
4. 2♥. It might be a 5-2 fit, but still preferable to 1NT.
5. 2♥. 1♦-1♠; 1NT-2♥ is natural and not forcing.
6. 3NT. Even opposite a maximum (14), slam is unlikely. If using new-minor forcing, you could look for a 5-3 spade fit.
7. 3♦. Natural and game forcing. Opener will show three-card spade support if he has it. If playing new-minor forcing, this wouldn't promise diamonds.
8. Pass. High enough. Yes, you might miss a 5-3 heart fit.

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