



Bidding Basics

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Responding by a passed hand

This is the final article in the series on responding. This month, we look at a special responding situation, namely, the one where the responder has already passed. For example, say the auction has been something like:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass
?			

or

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	?		

Don't get worried – there is nothing earth-shattering here, but let's state some of the obvious things. The person responding already failed to open the bidding. We call this a PH for “passed hand.” So in these cases, responder will be limited to at most 12 HCP (and most hands with 12 HCP would have opened the bidding), so usually 11 HCP.

Accordingly, no responses (unless artificial – see below) are forcing. Opener can (and often will) pass the response.

Because responder wouldn't bid at all with 0–5 HCP, the range for all one-of-a-suit responses by a passed hand is 6 to a bad 12. A two-level response would be 10 to a bad 12.

Each responding bid below, therefore, means what it would mean by an UPH (unpassed hand), but the range is different.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
		1♥	

shows at least four hearts and 6 to 12 HCP.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
		1♠	

shows at least four spades and 6 to 12 HCP.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
		2♦	

shows at least five diamonds and 10 to 12 HCP. With only 9 points, the response would be 1NT.

Note that 2/1 game forcing is not used by a passed hand. This is logical, because the responder has already passed and can't have enough for a game force.

A response of 1NT by a passed hand shows 6–10 HCP. A response of 2NT would be unlikely, but to keep things simple, just assume it shows 11–12 balanced (with no four-card major that could have been shown on the one level).

Jumps in a new suit

Some players erroneously think they can jump as a passed hand to show a maximum non-opener. They want to jump from 1♣ to 2♥ with:

♠ A 2 ♥ A J 9 8 7 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ 6 5 4

to say, “Partner, I am at the top of my range.” No. This is not what a jump shows. For now, I recommend you don't jump in a new suit as a passed hand. (Down the road, you might wish to discuss with your partner what it *would* mean – possibly “fit-showing” promising at least five cards in the jump suit and at least four in opener's suit.)

Raises

Raises mean what they would have meant by an UPH. Raising partner's one-level suit opening to the two level shows 6–10 HCP. Raising to the three level is invitational (11–12 HCP), but ...

Drury

This series is meant to KISS (keep it simple, stupid), but I will mention that Drury (an artificial 2♣ response to 1♥ or 1♠) is a popular convention used by a passed hand. If I went into more detail, I'd be doing a disservice. It is the world's most forgotten convention, especially by newer players. Unless you want to have lots of accidents, I suggest doing without this for now. If you are adventurous, you can do a web search from a reliable source and have some fun.

See next page for quiz and answers

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

On each hand below, what is your response after Pass–Pass–1♠–Pass;?

1. ♠K J 2 ♥2 ♦Q 7 6 5 4 3 ♣J 4 3
2. ♠Q 2 ♥K Q J 9 5 ♦Q 10 7 6 ♣3 2
3. ♠6 ♥A 10 8 7 ♦K J 7 6 ♣J 10 7 6
4. ♠K Q 2 ♥3 ♦J 10 8 7 6 ♣A 6 5 4

On each hand below, what is your response after Pass–Pass–Pass–1♦; Pass–?

5. ♠K Q 3 ♥K J 10 ♦7 6 5 ♣Q 10 9 8
6. ♠K J 7 6 5 ♥A Q 2 ♦2 ♣10 6 5 3
7. ♠5 4 ♥K 2 ♦K J 10 8 7 ♣Q 10 8 7
8. ♠J 10 8 7 ♥2 ♦A Q 7 6 5 ♣K 10 6

ANSWERS

1. 2♠: 6–10 HCP and support.
2. 2♥: 10–12 HCP, at least a decent five-card suit, not forcing.
3. 1NT: 6–10 HCP, not necessarily balanced.
4. 3♠: invitational (but 2♣ if using Drury).
5. 2NT: 11–12 HCP, natural, invitational.
6. 1♠: 6–12 HCP. Don't jump to show a maximum passed hand.
7. 3♦: limit raise.
8. 1♠: 6–12 HCP, four or more spades.