



Bidding Basics

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Opener's rebid after 1♣-1♥

This month, we examine opener's rebid after this start:

| Opener | Responder |
|--------|-----------|
| 1♣ | 1♥ |
| ? | |

Opener can't pass because the 1♥ response is unlimited. Responder could have ~~1NT~~ 17 points! (But see below for the case when responder is a passed hand.)

With his second bid, opener tries to show two things: strength (minimum, medium, maximum) and shape (balanced, one-suited, multi-suited).

Here is a run-through of what opener's rebids mean:

1♠: Four spades and up to about 17 or 18 HCP, counting useful distribution. Opener can be balanced or unbalanced. He could be 4=3=3=3 or 4=2=0=7! Opener shouldn't suppress a four-card spade suit here, because the responder could easily be 4-4 in the majors. (Responder would bid 1♥ with something like:

♠Q 10 3 2 ♥K J 3 2 ♦Q 3 2 ♣3 2.

If opener bypasses spades and rebids 1NT, a 4-4 spade fit is missed.) However, some judgment is allowed. With a really flat, notrump-looking hand such as:

♠J 5 4 2 ♥Q 5 4 ♦K Q 9 ♣K Q 10,

it is OK to ignore the spades and rebid 1NT. And with exactly 18-19 balanced, don't mention a four-card spade suit; bid 2NT as explained below.

1NT: Any balanced 12-14 HCP hand,

usually no four-card major. Stoppers are not promised. Examples:

♠Q 4 2 ♥5 4 ♦K J 2 ♣A Q 5 4 2

♠10 6 5 ♥A 3 2 ♦K Q J ♣K 9 7 6.

Again, opener could occasionally suppress/bypass a poor four-card spade suit with a notrump-looking hand.

2♣: Six or more clubs and a minimum hand (roughly 11-15 counting useful distribution). No four-card major. Rebid 2♣ with:

♠K 9 6 ♥4 ♦Q 8 5 ♣A Q J 7 5 2

or

♠A J 2 ♥K 3 ♦Q 3 ♣K 10 9 7 6 5.

Do not make the common error of repeating a five-card club suit.

2♦: A reverse. This is a tough topic for newer players, but there is no way to avoid the subject. You can't say, "I don't play reverses." There will be many of them in this series – not because I like writing about them, but because they just come up.

When, after a one-level response, opener next bids two of a suit higher-ranking than the suit he opened, he has *reversed*. That previous sentence needs to be studied intensely! And then studied 10 more times. A reverse is a natural bid, so in the auction 1♣-1♥; 2♦, it shows at least four diamonds. It also promises five or more clubs (the suit opened) and an unbalanced hand. With a balanced hand, the opening or rebid would be in notrump. A reverse is forcing one round (but not to game). It

shows approximately 17-plus, counting useful distribution. Examples for 1♣-1♥; 2♦:

♠A 3 2 ♥— ♦A Q J 2 ♣A Q 10 7 6 4

♠2 ♥A 3 2 ♦A K J 2 ♣A Q J 7 6.

2♥: Typically four-card support (occasionally three) with minimum opening values (up to about 15, counting useful distribution). Raise on 3 only if all other rebids feel horrible. Example of a three-card raise:

♠5 ♥K Q 10 ♦A K 3 2 ♣J 7 6 5 4.

The alternatives of either 2♣ or 2♦ are less appealing. Opener will normally expect four-card support, a hand such as:

♠K 4 ♥K J 7 6 ♦A 3 2 ♣Q 10 3 2

or

♠K Q 5 4 ♥K J 7 6 ♦3 ♣K 8 6 5.

2♠: A jump shift. When opener skips a level (he could have said 1♠) and changes suit, it is a natural, game-forcing bid. It is the 800-pound gorilla of rebids. It denies a balanced hand because opener didn't mention notrump at any point. Here, the 2♠ bidder would typically have four spades and longer clubs, something like:

♠A Q 8 6 ♥K 2 ♦3 2 ♣A K Q J 5

or

♠K Q J 5 ♥A K J ♦2 ♣A J 10 8 7.

2NT: 18-19 balanced. 2NT says nothing about stoppers and could have four spades. Don't make this bid with four-card heart support. This rebid

means you would have opened 1NT if you had 15–17, but you have 18–19. It is not forcing: Responder can pass with a dead minimum. Examples:

♠A J 2 ♥K Q 4 ♦A K J ♣8 6 5 4
♠K J 4 2 ♥K 2 ♦K 8 6 ♣A K Q 2.

3♣: Six or more clubs and a medium hand (roughly 16–18, counting useful distribution). No four-card major. Rebid 3♣ with:

♠A 7 6 ♥3 ♦A 7 6 ♣A Q J 10 5 4
or

♠A 7 5 ♥A J ♦2 ♣A Q 9 7 6 4 3.

3♦: This is a jump and a reverse. Don't make this bid unless you enjoy torturing your partner.

3♥: Four-card heart support and roughly 16–18 points in support. Examples:

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

This bid is invitational: Responder can pass.

3NT: Because a 2NT rebid shows 18–19 and a 2NT opener shows 20–21, this bid isn't needed for a balanced hand. Therefore, it is defined as a very

good trick-taking hand, i.e., long clubs and stoppers in the unbid suits, something like:

♠A J ♥5 4 ♦K 2 ♣A K Q 10 8 6 2.

3♠, 4♦: Don't make these bids. (Although, if you must know, 3♠ and 4♦ would be "splinter bids" showing game-forcing hands with four-card support and shortness in the suit jumped into – but would your newbie partner know this?)

4♣: Don't make this bid. (If you must know, it shows six clubs, four hearts and a game-forcing hand.)

4♥: Four-card heart support and roughly 19-plus in support. Examples:

♠A K 2 ♥K Q J 7 ♦A 2 ♣Q 10 8 6
♠– ♥A Q 10 6 ♦A J 3 ♣A J 10 6 3 2.

Don't think of this as a weak "close-out" bid. It shows a very strong hand!

Responder was a passed hand:

If the responder was a passed hand (therefore limited), opener is allowed to pass 1♥ with certain, minimum openers. For example:

♠7 4 2 ♥A K 4 ♦8 7 5 ♣K Q 6 4.

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

In each case, what is opener's rebid after 1♣–1♥?

- ♠A 7 6 5 ♥3 2 ♦A 7 ♣A 7 6 5 4
- ♠K 7 6 ♥K J 2 ♦7 6 5 ♣A Q 10 2
- ♠K Q 3 2 ♥A Q 7 6 ♦2 ♣A J 10 7
- ♠3 ♥A Q 2 ♦J 7 6 5 ♣A J 6 5 4
- ♠J 10 7 6 ♥A K ♦J 5 4 ♣A K Q 2
- ♠A 2 ♥A Q 7 6 ♦3 2 ♣A K Q 7 6
- ♠A 3 2 ♥2 ♦A Q 7 6 ♣A K J 7 6
- ♠A K Q 6 ♥2 ♦2 ♣A K Q 7 6 5 2

Quiz Answers

- 1♠. Don't suppress a four-card spade suit because responder could easily have four spades, too.
- 1NT. 12–14 balanced, no four-card major. Stoppers not required.
- 3♥. Four-card invitational raise. No need to show the spades.
- 2♥. The rare situation where raising on three is the best description.
- 2NT. 18–19 balanced. Skip the spades with this hand type.
- 4♥. Stronger than 3♥. This is not a closeout bid.
- 2♦. The dreaded reverse showing extra values. No need to jump to 3♦.
- 2♠. Natural, game-forcing jump shift.