



Bidding Basics

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Opener's rebid after 1♥-1♠

This month, we will examine opener's rebid after the auction begins 1♥-1♠.

With his rebid, opener tries to show two things: strength (minimum, medium, maximum) and shape (balanced, long hearts, or hearts and another suit).

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

Pass: Not allowed, unless the 1♠ responder was a passed hand. Otherwise, opener must take a second call because the 1♠ bidder is unlimited.

1NT: Any balanced 12-14 HCP hand, no four-card spade support (could have three-card spade support). Stoppers are not promised. Because the opening showed a five-card major, the shape will be 5-3-3-2. Examples:

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

Don't repeat a five-card heart suit, and don't rebid 1NT if you are 5-4 or have a singleton.

2♣: Five or more hearts and four or more clubs. This has a wide-range, but it's not forcing. Could be a dead minimum, but also could be quite a decent hand – up to about 17 or 18 points counting useful distribution. Can opener bid 2♣ with six hearts and four clubs? Yes, but usually with a minimum hand and six decent hearts, it is best to ignore the clubs and repeat the six-card heart suit. Rebid 2♥, not 2♣ with, say:

♠3 ♥A Q 10 8 7 6 ♦A 2 ♣J 6 5 2.

Examples of 2♣ rebids:

♠10 ♥A Q 6 5 4 ♦K Q 2 ♣Q 10 7 6
♠A 2 ♥A K 7 6 5 ♦2 ♣10 8 7 6 5

2♦: Same as 2♣, but with diamonds as the second suit.

2♥: Six or more hearts and a minimum hand. Occasionally could have a four-card minor not worth mentioning, particularly with a minimum opening bid.

2♠: Typically, four-card support (rarely three) with a minimum (up to about 15 points counting useful distribution). This is not a "reverse"; it is a simple raise. Examples:

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

When would opener raise to 2♠ with only three spades? With three reasonable spades and a hand that didn't look suitable for a 1NT rebid (a very weak holding in one of the minors). Examples:

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

2NT: 18-19 balanced (says nothing about stoppers). Don't make this bid with four-card spade support. It is not forcing: Responder can pass with a dead minimum. Examples:

♠A 8 2 ♥K Q 8 7 4 ♦K J 3 ♣A J
♠K 2 ♥K Q J 4 2 ♦9 8 2 ♣A K Q

3♣: A "jump shift": strong, game-forcing and natural. Opener will be unbalanced with five or more hearts and at least four clubs. Examples:

♠A 3 2 ♥A K J 6 5 ♦— ♣A Q 10 6 3

♠2 ♥A K J 6 5 4 ♦K 2 ♣A K J 6
3♦: Same as 3♣, but with diamonds as the second suit.

3♥: Six or more hearts and a medium/invitational hand, 16-18 points. No four-card spade support. Examples:

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

3♠: Four-card spade support and roughly 16-18 in support. Examples:

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

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 (long hearts and stoppers in the unbid suits), something like:

♠5 ♥A K Q 10 8 6 2 ♦A J 3 ♣K 2.

4♣: Unless your partner will know this is a splinter bid (very strong hand with four spades and a singleton or void in clubs), don't make this bid.

4♦: Same as 4♣, but with short diamonds.

4♥: Lots of hearts and a very good trick-taking hand, something like:

♠K J 2 ♥A K Q 6 5 4 3 2 ♦3 2 ♣—.

4♠: Very strong raise with four-card spade support (enough for game opposite a 6-count). This is not a "closeout bid." It shows a strong hand such as:

♠A K 8 2 ♥A K Q 4 3 ♦K 2 ♣3 2.

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

What is opener's rebid on this auction:

Opener

1♥

?

Responder

1♠

1. ♠542 ♥KQ762 ♦QJ2 ♣KQ
2. ♠KQ2 ♥A7652 ♦42 ♣A102
3. ♠5 ♥KQ876 ♦K1076 ♣AKJ
4. ♠AQ109 ♥J10854 ♦AK92 ♣—
5. ♠KQ3 ♥Q10765 ♦KQ9 ♣AQ
6. ♠AQ87 ♥AKQJ10 ♦K8 ♣32
7. ♠4 ♥Q87654 ♦A2 ♣AKQ10
8. ♠K2 ♥AJ109876 ♦A2 ♣K2

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1. 1NT. Balanced 12–14.
 2. 2♠. 1NT is acceptable, but with a low doubleton and good three-card support, this is more descriptive.
 3. 2♦. Five or more hearts, four or more diamonds, approximately 12–18 (not enough for a jump shift).
 4. 3♠. Four-card spade support and approximately 16–18 in support.
 5. 2NT. Balanced 18–19.
 6. 4♠. Four-card spade support and approximately 19–20 in support.
 7. 2♣. It looks better to show at least nine of your cards, rather than rebidding 2♥ to show only six of your cards.
 8. 3♥. Six-plus hearts, invitational/medium.