



# Bidding Basics

BY LARRY COHEN larryco.com

## Opener's rebid after 1♥-1NT

This month, we examine opener's rebid after the start 1♥-1NT.

Note: If playing "standard" (the 20th-century way), the 1NT response would show 6-10 HCP. In this series, we are assuming the more modern "2/1 game forcing" approach. This means that the 1NT response range is 6-12. It denies a four-card spade suit.

Is the 1NT response with 6-12 points forcing? Some 2/1 players insist so. For simplicity (and this series), we are going to treat it as semi-forcing, which really means not forcing. Opener can pass with a balanced minimum. This makes for a simple, natural approach by opener as shown below. ("Semi-forcing" is probably the most confusing term in bridge lexicon, but that is what this approach is called. Go figure.)

Opener's choices after the "semi-forcing" 1NT (6-12) response:

**Pass:** Shows a balanced minimum. 1NT will become the final contract unless the opponents balance. Examples:

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

Note: If your partnership insists on 1NT being forcing, then, of course, you cannot pass. With the above hands, you would have to bid a three-card minor.

**2♣:** Five or more hearts and four or more clubs. This has a wide range, but it's not forcing. It could be a dead minimum, but also could be quite a decent hand, up to 17 or 18 points counting useful distribution. Can opener have six hearts and four clubs? Yes, but with a minimum hand and six decent hearts,

it is probably better to ignore the clubs and repeat the six-card heart suit instead. Examples:

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

Note: If your partnership insists on 1NT being forcing, then 2♣ wouldn't promise four cards in the suit.

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

**2♥:** Six or more hearts and a minimum hand. Occasionally, opener could have a four-card minor not worth mentioning.

**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 are many of them in this series, because they just come up. By perpetrating this reverse, you are forcing your partner to the three level (or 2NT); he won't have four-card spade support. When, after a one-level response, opener's rebid (not a jump) is two of a higher-ranking suit than the suit he opened, he has reversed. That previous sentence needs to be studied intensely! A reverse is a natural bid, so in the auction 1♥-1NT; 2♠, opener shows four cards in spades. The reverse is forcing one round (but not necessarily to game) and promises approximately 17 or more points counting useful distribution. Examples:

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

**2NT:** 18-19 balanced (says nothing about stoppers). 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). Don't make the common mistake of bidding 2NT with a nice 14. Examples:

♠A J 2 ♥K Q 8 7 4 ♦K J 3 ♣A 4  
♠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 at least five 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. Examples:

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

**3♠:** A jump shift and a reverse – a bid you shouldn't make.

**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 with long hearts, something like:

♠Q 5 ♥A K Q 10 8 6 2 ♦A J ♣K 2.

**4♣/4♦:** Don't make such a bid. 3♣ and 3♦ are available for strong, game-forcing hands.

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

♠— ♥A K Q 6 5 4 3 2 ♦K 3 ♣Q J 2.

## BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

What is your rebid as opener after 1♥-1NT with each of the following hands. Assume 1NT is not forcing, but can have up to 12 points.

1. ♠3 ♥1087652 ♦KQ2 ♣AQ2
2. ♠K876 ♥KQ765 ♦Q2 ♣K2
3. ♠543 ♥AKJ76 ♦432 ♣KJ
4. ♠AQ108 ♥KQ1076 ♦AK2 ♣2
5. ♠K3 ♥AKQJ8 ♦KQ5 ♣765
6. ♠AQ10 ♥QJ109872 ♦A2 ♣2
7. ♠KQJ ♥KQJ10876 ♦KQ2 ♣—
8. ♠432 ♥AK765 ♦AKQ2 ♣7

### QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 2♥. Six or more hearts, minimum.
2. Pass. If 1NT is 100% forcing, you'd have to bid 2♣ (ugh). Not enough to reverse into 2♠.
3. Pass. If 1NT is 100% forcing, you'd have to bid 2♣ or 2♦ (ugh, again).
4. 2♠. A reverse. 4+ spades, 5+ hearts, 17+ HCP, forcing one round, but not to game.
5. 2NT. 18–19 balanced.
6. 3♥. 6+ hearts, invitational. This hand is too strong for a 2♥ rebid.
7. 4♥. Great playing strength with long, good hearts. This hand is too strong for a 3♥ rebid.
8. 2♦. 5+ hearts, 4+ diamonds, 12–17 HCP. A maximum here, but not strong enough to jump shift.