



Larry Teaches Modern Bidding  
(Volume 3 of 3)

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Responder's Rebid and Competitive Auctions

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## Introduction

I have a confession to make. Bidding is my least favorite topic to teach. That frequently puts me at odds with students who rush up to ask bidding questions. I rarely finish giving a lecture before hearing the shouts of “You hold KQx...” or “What does it mean when partner bids...”

There are three big problems with teaching bidding. 1) Much of bidding relies on judgment and style. There are thousands of books and articles dedicated to bidding problems and each problem has multiple possible choices – none of them are right or wrong.

2) The most common answer to a bidding question is, “discuss it with partner.” Partnership understandings don’t just govern what conventions you play, but also how you interpret the choices partner has made in an auction. If something comes up and you thought your bid meant one thing and your partner thought it meant another the correct answer is “discuss it, and don’t get it wrong next time.”

3) People want to learn conventions. Conventions are like candy – they are fun to learn and play, but they aren’t good for you. I’ve seen players talk about DOPI/ROPI and Snapdragon without knowing whether (1♣)--1♥--(Pass)--1♠ was forcing for them or not. Conventions *can* be useful ways of showing particular hands, but the mental energy spent learning and remembering new conventions would be better spent mastering the basics.

In this book, we’ll take a look at fundamental bidding. The previous volumes covered the first three bids of the auction. We now look at the fourth bid as well as competitive auctions. Whether you are a new player or have been playing for years, you should make sure that you fully grasp how to approach an auction from the ground up.

# PART 1

## Responder's Rebid

## Responder's Rebid after Opener's One-of-a-Suit Rebid

For now, there is no competition (no bidding by the opponents). The opponents will come out of their passing stupor midway through this book.

This section, we will focus on the auction where the first three bids were all one of a suit. So, our auction is:

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1 of a suit	1 of a suit
1 of a suit	??

Unfortunately, there is an underlying issue here of “old way” versus “modern way.” It involves a principle called “Walsh Style.” This can be confusing. Actually, let me fess up: It is confusing!

I'll try to explain the gist of it. In the old days, we were taught to “bid up the line.” This meant that if partner opened 1♣, and responder had four diamonds and four hearts, he would respond 1♦. Opener would also bid “up the line.” This meant that if you opened 1♣ and partner responded 1♦, opener would next show a four-card major if he had one.

In modern style (“Walsh”) if you will, it is different. That is the style I prefer to play and to teach. This style “disrespects” diamonds after a 1♣ opening bid. The focus is on reaching majors or notrump. Volumes 1 and 2 explained this in more detail. Bottom line: After 1♣--1♦, opener rebids 1NT with any balanced 12-14. If opener's second bid is a major, he is not balanced.

### After 1♣--1♦--1♥

Opener has shown an unbalanced hand (usually with five-plus clubs and four hearts – if he had a flat/balanced hand, he would have rebid 1NT). Responder bids as follows:

- 1♠ – Will be discussed at the very end of this section (it can be confusing).
- 1NT – A notrump hand, typically with spades stopped and about 8-10 (example: ♠KJ9 ♥762 ♦Q10762 ♣K2).
- 2♣ – A preference to clubs (at least three-card support) and up to about 10 points (example: ♠762 ♥63 ♦KQ762 ♣K74).
- 2♦ – Natural, six-plus diamonds, up to about 10 points (example: ♠762 ♥A9 ♦KJ10874 ♣J4).
- 2♥ – Not a likely call (such a hand would have responded 1♥).

2♠ – Discussed at the end of this section (related to 1♠ and also a bit confusing).  
2NT – Same as 1NT but with a little more (11-12, invitational) (example:  
♠KJ9 ♥A107 ♦Q10762 ♣J9).  
3♣ – Four-plus clubs, invitational. Example: ♠762 ♥9 ♦AQ762 ♣A1074.  
3♦ – Six-plus diamonds, invitational. Example: ♠63 ♥74 ♦AKJ1063 ♣Q74.  
3♥/3♠ – Unlikely (such a hand would have responded in the major).  
3NT – To play. 13-15, spades stopped. (example: ♠AQ9 ♥74 ♦AQ1063 ♣J74).  
Don't make the common mistake of bidding 2NT non-forcing (NF) with this hand.

After 1♣--1♦--1♠

Mostly as above:

1NT – A notrump hand, typically with hearts stopped, less than invitational.  
Example: ♠762 ♥KJ9 ♦K10762 ♣Q9.  
2♣ – A preference to clubs (at least three-card support) and up to about 10  
points (example: ♠74 ♥762 ♦KJ762 ♣A74).  
2♦ – Natural, six-plus diamonds, up to about 10 points (example:  
♠63 ♥K74 ♦AJ10762 ♣74).  
2♥ – Fourth suit forcing. Responder's bid in the fourth suit (A-B-C-D) is artificial  
and game forcing. It says nothing about hearts. It could be the prelude to many  
things (including slam tries in any of the first three bid suits). It may or may not  
contain a heart stopper. Examples (♠AQ63 ♥74 ♦AKQ63 ♣74 or  
♠A9 ♥A5 ♦KQJ1074 ♣Q74).  
2♠ – Not a likely call (such a hand would have responded 1♠).  
2NT – Same as 1NT but with a little more (11-12, invitational) (example:  
♠K2 ♥AJ9 ♦1087642 ♣K2).  
3♣ – Four-plus clubs, invitational. Example: ♠9 ♥762 ♦AK762 ♣K1074.  
3♦ – Six-plus diamonds, invitational. Example: ♠63 ♥74 ♦AQJ1063 ♣A74.  
3♥ – Don't try such a bid (a jump in the 4<sup>th</sup> suit).  
3♠ – Unlikely (such a hand would have responded 1♠).  
3NT – To play. 13-15, hearts stopped. (example: ♠74 ♥KQ9 ♦AQJ63 ♣J74).  
Don't make the common mistake of bidding 2NT (NF) with this hand.

After 1♣--1♥--1♠

Opener has four spades and a wide range (and could be balanced or  
unbalanced). This is a little different than a 1♣--1♦ start. Nothing fancy here –  
natural bids mostly as above. Responder shows shape and strength as follows:

1NT – A notrump hand, typically with diamonds stopped and about 8-10 (example: ♠762 ♥KJ74 ♦K1063 ♣Q9).

2♣ – A preference to clubs (at least four-card support, since opener could be, say 4=3=3=3) and up to about 10 points (example: ♠9 ♥Q762 ♦J74 ♣A8642).

2♦ – Fourth suit forcing. Responder’s bid in the fourth suit (A-B-C-D) is artificial and game forcing. It says nothing about diamonds. It could be the prelude to many things (including slam tries in any of the first three bid suits). It may or may not contain a diamond stopper. Examples (♠A ♥AKQJ106 ♦74 ♣A762, ♠8642 ♥AK74 ♦AQJ ♣A9 or ♠A74 ♥A8642 ♦762 ♣AJ).

2♥ – Six-plus hearts, weak. Example: ♠74 ♥KQJ762 ♦Q74 ♣74.

2♠ – Four spades, about 7-10 (you could pass 1♠ with less). Example: ♠A762 ♥K762 ♦J9 ♣J62.

2NT – Same as 1NT but with a little more (11-12, invitational) (example: ♠K2 ♥AJ762 ♦Q1074 ♣J9).

3♣ – Four-plus clubs, invitational. Example: ♠9 ♥A762 ♦Q74 ♣A10762.

3♦ – Don’t make such a bid (a jump in the 4<sup>th</sup> suit).

3♥ – Six-plus hearts, invitational. Example: ♠Q9 ♥KQJ10762 ♦9 ♣Q74.

3♠ – More than a 2♠ bid (invitational). Example: ♠AQ74 ♥KJ74 ♦J4 ♣1074.

3NT – To play. 13-15, diamonds stopped. (example: ♠Q9 ♥KQ93 ♦AQ9 ♣J762).

4♣/4♦ – Don’t make such bids (although they should be splinter raises).

4♥ – To play – lots of hearts. Example: ♠74 ♥AKQJ762 ♦9 ♣Q74.

4♠ – Enough for game and four spades (but usually such a hand would start with fourth suit forcing).

After 1♦--1♥--1♠

Pretty much as above – all the same principles apply.

1♣--1♦--1♥--1♠ or 2♠

After 1♣--1♦--1♥, there is a bit of a problem. A spade bid would be the “fourth suit.” In all of the fourth-suit auctions above, the fourth suit was an artificial game force. But, when it starts 1♣--1♦--1♥, the opener could easily have four spades (the fourth suit). Responder might want to play in the fourth suit! Opener might have been dealt: ♠A762 ♥A1062 ♦9 ♣A762. So, should 1♣--1♦--1♥--1♠ show spades (there is potentially a 4-4 fit) – or should it be fourth-suit forcing? This is something a partnership has to decide and hope to remember if it occurs. It rarely comes up, so it isn’t a big deal. 1♣--1♦--1♥--1♠ can be natural and 1♣--1♦--1♥--2♠ can be “fourth suit forcing.” Or vice versa. I hate to bring any of this up in this book. I can live just fine if you ignore this issue.



## QUIZ

What is your call after: 1♣--1♦--1♥ with:

- 1) ♠KQ2 ♥KJ2 ♦106542 ♣86
- 2) ♠AQJ ♥J2 ♦KQ1076 ♣J82

What is your call after: 1♣--1♦--1♠ with:

- 3) ♠A2 ♥975 ♦KQJ10876 ♣3
- 4) ♠AQ32 ♥A ♦AK8765 ♣32
- 5) ♠2 ♥A32 ♦K10876 ♣QJ43

What is your call after 1♣--1♥--1♠ with:

- 6) ♠AQ42 ♥KQ32 ♦Q2 ♣A32
- 7) ♠A ♥KQ1076 ♦A832 ♣Q75
- 8) ♠J765 ♥Q765 ♦Q32 ♣J2

What is your call after 1♦--1♥--1♠ with:

- 9) ♠Q6 ♥KJ76 ♦Q105 ♣K1098
- 10) ♠54 ♥AQJ765 ♦A2 ♣K32
- 11) ♠K1076 ♥AK54 ♦AQ2 ♣Q6
- 12) ♠K1076 ♥AK54 ♦J102 ♣86

## ANSWERS

- 1) 1NT. Spades stopped, balanced, about 8-10.
- 2) 3NT. Same as #1 but 13-15, enough for game.
- 3) 3♦. Six-plus diamonds, invitational.
- 4) 2♥. Fourth suit forcing to game, followed by a spade raise.
- 5) 3♣. Natural limit (invitational) club raise.
- 6) 2♦. Fourth suit forcing to game, followed by a spade raise.
- 7) 2♦. Fourth suit forcing to game – not clear what will be next.
- 8) Pass. This is allowed (1♠ is wide-ranging, but NF), and if ever there were a hand for it, you have it.
- 9) 2NT. Invitational (clubs stopped).
- 10) 2♣. Artificial and game forcing (you will likely bid hearts next).
- 11) 2♣. Another use of fourth-suit forcing; this time you will raise spades next.
- 12) 3♠. Invitational.

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