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Problem Opening Bids

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Opening Bids Basics (1st and 2nd Seat)

1♠/1♥	Usually a 5-card Suit
1♦	Usually a 4-card Suit
1♣	Usually a 3-card Suit

Problem Hand – 4-4-3-2 Shape

- With 15-17 or 19+ to 21 pts open 1NT or 2NT, respectively.
- With 12-14 or 18-19 pts decide if ♣ looks like a 3-card suit OR ♦ looks more like a 4-card suit.

Examples

♦ xxx	♦ KQx	♦ Jxx
♣ AQ	♣ xx	♣ Jx
Open 1♣.	Open 1♦.	Open 1♦ as default.

Try to make a lead directing bid when given a choice.

Hand Type

Balanced Hands usually bid NT at some point in the auction – either open or rebid (unless fit).

Unbalanced Hands usually either bid one suit twice, or one suit followed by another suit.

Try to Avoid Rebid Problems

Modern style is with 15-17 pts and balanced hand, open 1NT with all balanced shapes.

- This includes with a 5-card Major. Avoids rebid problems and sides hand correctly.

Open 2NT with a balanced 19+ to 21 pts, even with a 5-card major (for the same reasons).

Ask yourself what you plan to rebid next if partner bids your shortest suit. If a problem, consider another opening.

Certain hands shapes and strengths are not easily described using “standard” bidding system and these hands often create problem auctions. Many of these bidding problems are Opener’s rebids. Often, we make a small “lie” when opening to avoid rebid problems as Opener and simplify the rest of the auction. Many of these bidding efforts are made to avoid reversing on our rebid.



Minimum Opening Hands (12-14 points)

Hands with 4 ♦ and 5 ♣

- Distort Shape - Open 1♦ so we can rebid 2♣ - show both suits and avoid reverse.
- Rebid a 5-card suit – With a strong 5-card ♣ suit open 1♣ and rebid 2♣ (e.g. KQT9x).
 - “Frequently bypass 4+♦” makes finding ♦ fit difficult.

1-4-3-5 OR 1-4-5-3 Hands

- Open and rebid 5-card suit to avoid reverse if Responder bids our shortness, 1♠.
- (Extreme) Bid both minors. Open 1♦ and rebid 2♣?
- (Extreme) Rebid 1NT with stiff A or K?

4-5-2-2 Hands

- Open 1♥ and if partner responds 1NT we must “lie” by rebidding a 2♣ suit, avoid reverse.
 - If playing 1NT Semi-Forcing we can pass 1NT with 12-13 points.

Extra Value Hands (15-17 points)

5-Card Majors – 1M vs. 1NT

- Balanced hand with 5-card Major – modern style 1NT.
- Semi-balanced with 5-card Major (5422) – usually open 1M and rebid second suit, no reverse.
- 4-5-2-2 difficult hand with 15 to 16- points -- choose between 1NT and 1M, avoid reverse.

Hands with 4 ♦ and 5 ♣

- With 15 to 16- points, same problem as with 12-14 points. Reverse with 17 points.
- With 2-2-4-5, consider opening 1NT to solve rebid problem - stopper in one Major enough.

1-4-3-5 OR 1-4-5-3 Hands

- With 15 points, downgrade and open our 5-card minor and rebid it (same as 12-14 issues).
- With 17 points, reverse.
- With a stiff A or K (or maybe Q), open 1NT – more reasonable with this strength than 12-14.

Semi-Balanced Hands - 6322 with 6-card minor

- Open 1m and rebid 3m.
- With 14-15 HCP, consider opening 1NT – or open 1m and rebid 2m. 1NT usually best.

Semi-Balanced Hands – 2/4-2/5

- With 2-4-2/5, avoid reverse by opening 1NT.
- With 4-2-2/5, often rebid 1♠, so opening 1m reasonable. 1NT opening when best description.



Strong Hands (18-19 points)

Balanced Hands

- Open our primary suit and rebid 2NT.

Unbalanced Hands

- Open primary suit and reverse or jump shift into secondary suit when unbalanced 2-suited hand.
- 1-suited hand bid suit twice.

Semi-Balanced Hands

- Semi-balanced 5/4 - Choose between showing two-suits or rebidding NT based on hand.
- Semi-balanced 6-card minor – Choose between rebidding suit or 2NT.
- Semi-balanced 6-card Major – bid Major twice.

Other 6-card Suit Hands

6-card Minors Hands – 1-Suited

- 12-14 points - Open 1m and rebid 2m if unbalanced. Semi-Balanced could rebid 1NT.
- 15-17 points - Open 1m and rebid 3m if unbalanced. Semi-Balanced could open 1NT.
- 18-19 points - Open 1m and jump shift into 3-card suit if unbalanced. Semi-Balanced rebid 2NT.
- 20-21 points – Open 1m and jump shift into 3-card suit if unbalanced. Semi-Balanced open 2NT.
- Stronger – Open 2♣.

6-card Major Hands – 1-Suited

- 12-14 points - Open 1M and rebid 2M if unbalanced.
- 15-17 points - Open 1M and rebid 3M if unbalanced.
- 18-19 points - Open 1M and jump shift into 3-card suit if unbalanced.
- 20-21 points – Open 1M and jump shift into 3-card suit if unbalanced.
- Stronger – Open 2♣.

So what does 1M-1NT-4M show?

- 18-19 pt hands are already shown with a reverse or jump shift.
- With only a 6-card Major, 3NT might still be the right contract, so we don't want to bid 4M.
- Thus, 1M-1NT-4M shows a hand with 7+card Major and 11-15 HCP. It looks like a 4M opening bid that had a few too many HCP to open 4M. This is an example of a "Picture Bid."

