

A Basic Modern Acol Bidding System

LESSON 1: BIDDING AS OPENER with BALANCED HANDS

Key points:

- Opener always has his first 2 bids planned
- With **ALL** BALANCED hands (4432, 4333, 5332) and 12-14 points you **MUST** open 1NT
- With 15-19 points you plan to open a suit and REBID NT at the appropriate level
- With an UNBALANCED hand you NORMALLY open your longest or highest ranked suit and NORMALLY
 - a) Bid a second suit
 - b) Repeat a 6-card suit

BALANCED HANDS: your 2 bid strategy:

Points	First Bid	Second Bid
12-14	1NT	PASS
15-19	One-of-suit	NT
20-22	2NT	PASS
23+	2♣	NT

BUT saying that ALL 12-14 balanced hands MUST open 1NT is not the same as saying that other hands MUST NOT open 1NT:

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
♠K10	♠QJ109	♠QJ1092	♠A65	♠A65	♠K5
♥Q962	♥KJ109	♥A73	♥K32	♥KJ2	♥Q43
♦K9742	♦A73	♦K104	♦QJ8	♦Q832	♦AK9865
♣AJ	♣109	♣J2	♣AJ72	♣AJ7	♣J7

(a) This off-shape 5422, with hearts outranking diamonds, gives a rebid problem. Should you rebid a poor diamond suit or risk a REVERSE problem by bidding hearts? This may force your partner to show preference for diamonds at level 3. You have just 13 points, honours in both doubletons, so open 1NT.

(b) and (c) There are 11 points in both these hands but are they worth 12? In (b) you have 2 trick sources from the two 4 card suits and in (c) 1 trick source, a 5-card suit. In both cases open 1NT.

(d) and (e) These hands have a poor 15 points, their lack of 10's and 9's means it can be downgraded to 14. Consider bidding 1NT.

(f) We are going to treat minors-differently from majors. With a six card minor suit you MIGHT open 1NT rather than bidding and repeating diamonds. You have a probable, great trick source!

OPENING 1NT

If partner RESPONDS you *may* have to make a rebid but, having described your hand, you plan to let partner choose the final contract.

OPENING one-of-suit

Opener with 15-19 has to delay his NT bid by a round as their hand is between 1NT and 2NT in strength.

15-17 points	Open one of Longest Suit* and plan to rebid NT at lowest level over partner's new suit response**
18-19 points	Open one of Longest Suit* and plan to rebid NT with a jump. BUT if partner's response is at level 2, your 2NT bid is 15-19 and is forcing to game
1♣-1♦/♥/♠...a 1/1 response	A 3NT REBID is best used as a 'semi-gamble' based on good clubs. It is not used to show 19 points.

**Higher of two 4-card suits EXCEPT with both majors open 1♥*

***You can always upgrade a good 17 to 18*

OPENING 2NT – this is usually 20-22 points

BUT you might agree to open with a very good 19.

You may also include 4441 hands where the singleton is an ace.

Having opened, it is your partner who now wears the captain's hat; they know far more about your hand than you know about theirs.

2NT is not forcing. Unless partner's response bid is 3NT, your system will require a REBID (more to follow on this). A 3NT response is the end of the auction.

OPENING 2♣ with a BALANCED HAND - 23+ points (very strong) is ARTIFICIAL and normally forcing to game

Your planned rebid is:

2NT with 23-24 points

3NT with 25-26 points

Because 2♣ is game-forcing, partner has to respond, but because your 2♣ opener has 2 meanings it is your REBID that describes your hand as BALANCED.