

Opening with 4-4-4-1 shaped hands using 4 card majors

With a 5 Card Major system, the 4441 hand shape need not be too problematic. You simply bid your better minor (even if using a 'short club' approach).

With 4CM, you are likely to have to misrepresent your hand, especially if partner bids your singleton. Goal is to lie as little as possible. Optimal position is to overcall rather than open, by using a double.

Possible strategies for opening

1. Suit below the Singleton
2. Taps (Hot and Cold) (Andrew Robson)
3. Red Below, Black Middle (EBU Acol)
4. 1 minor (Jeremy Child)

Other possibilities include:
Muiderberg opening 2 bids, used with Multi 2♦

1. Suit below the Singleton

Open the suit below the singleton, and if singleton ♣, then open 1♥. Hope partner bids a suit you can support, but **more likely** she will bid your singleton suit. If so:

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2. Taps (Andrew Robson)

Open 1♥ with a black suited singleton and 1♣ with a red suited singleton. [RB: this doesn't work well if playing 5 card majors]

Heart = Hot and Club=Cold, hence TAPS.

Point Count Strategy

12	Pass – don't open the bidding at all – then you won't have to worry about your rebid.
13-14	Rebid your cheapest four-card suit. Lying about your (lack of) 5 th card in your first suit is the lesser of evils.
15+	Rebid NT at the appropriate level (15-16: at lowest level; 17-18: with a jump; 19: 3NT)

3. Red Below, Black Middle (RBBM - EBU Acol file preference)

Singleton ♠ 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♣	Singleton ♥ 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠
Singleton ♦ 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥	Singleton ♣ 1♥ - 2♣ - 2♦

Only one different opening bid to method 1 (suit below). Still a potential issue for 5 card major players with a Singleton ♣, but otherwise works well for 5cm players.

The system can allow partner to work out that you have a 4441 hand, and not a 54 hand, since rebids of a different suit cannot always otherwise make sense.

e.g. 1♠, then a rebid of 2 of any suit guarantees 5 Spades, since no 4441 hand can open with Spades.

e.g. 1♥, then a rebid of 2♣ guarantees a 5-card Heart suit after a Spade reply since a 4441 hand would support spades on the rebid after a 1♥ opening.

4. 1♦ or 1♣ (Jeremy Child)

Open 1♦ unless you have a singleton ♦, in which case open 1♣. This is effectively the approach used by 5CM players.

For 4 card major players: You open a major, and partner does not raise you, any suit rebid should show 5 in the major. Using 1♦ for a 4441 hand does not break this rule.

If you open a minor, and partner does not raise you, any suit rebid should show 5 in the minor, but could also show a 4441 hand. But you should not miss a major suit it.

Examples – opening hand shown; partner inevitably bids your singleton (weak NT)

<p>Hand 1 (16 HCP)</p> <p>♠ 4 ♥ K J 4 3 ♦ A K J 3 ♣ K J 9 6</p> <p>1: Suit Below 1♥ - 1♠ - 1NT</p> <p>2: TAPS 1♥ - 1♠ - 1NT showing 15-16 “balanced”. Partner will think you have 2/3 spades. (Robson)</p> <p>3: RBBM 1♦ - 1♠ - 1NT If partner has 4 hearts, he can rebid them, so you don’t miss the fit.</p> <p>4: 1 Minor 1♦ - 1♠ - 1NT</p>	<p>Hand 2 (12 HCP)</p> <p>♠ J 9 4 2 ♥ Q ♦ A Q 8 3 ♣ K 7 5 2</p> <p>1: Suit Below 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠ indicating 5 diamonds</p> <p>2: TAPS Pass Yucky 12-count with two dubious points in hearts. Hope an opponent will open 1♥ and you can make a take-out double.</p> <p>3: RBBM 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠</p> <p>4: 1 Minor 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠</p>
<p>Hand 3 (14 HCP)</p> <p>♠ Q 8 5 2 ♥ A Q 7 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A Q 5 2</p> <p>1: Suit Below 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥</p> <p>2: TAPS 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥ Hope that your lack of the advertised fifth club will not prove serious</p> <p>3: RBBM 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥</p> <p>4: 1 Minor 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥</p>	<p>Hand 4 (14 HCP)</p> <p>♠ 3 ♥ K Q 9 2 ♦ K 7 5 4 ♣ A Q 8 2</p> <p>1: Suit Below 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♣</p> <p>2: TAPS 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♣ lying about the (lack of a) fifth heart. RB: is this OK?</p> <p>3: RBBM 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♣ you still don’t miss a potential heart fit.</p> <p>4: 1 Minor 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♣</p>