

OPEN 1 CLUB WITH 5-5 CLUBS AND SPADES (11 – 14 pts)
(but 1 SPADE with 15+ pts.)

Controversial – but my preferred style. The sensible but less exciting choice. You’ve much more opportunity to show both suits at a reasonably low level, and much easier to reach a club slam.

Pros:

- a) Much better chance of showing both suits.

♠ AK752 ♥ 7 ♦ 93 ♣ KQ852

1♣ - 1(red-suit) – 1♠ - subsequently repeat spades to show five.

- b) but if you open a spade –

1♠ - 2(red-suit) – 2♣. Never showing your club suit (and thankfully your spade suit is of some quality, but what if it were Q9852!!)

- c) If by opening 1♠ you’ve had to conceal the 5-card club suit, how can you expect partner to defend optimally if you don’t declare the contract.

Cons:

- d) ♠ AK752 ♥ 7 ♦ 93 ♣ KQ852

1♣ - opposition 4♥. If partner has a weak hand and passes you can’t reasonably bid 4♠ nor 5♣, but if you’d opened 1♠, partner may combat the opponents pre-empt with a reasonable hand and some spades. With a better hand with four spades, responder can of course double.

- e) There is more pre-emptive value in opening 1♠ rather than 1♣, but this should not impede any reasonable overcaller.

Notes:

1. If the bidding goes 1♣ - 1NT responder’s distribution is normally 3-3-3-4. Opener’s rebid of 2♠ would now show 5 spades (11-14 pts. – not a reverse), and there is almost an assured 5-3 fit (if responder didn’t have three spades he could bid 3 clubs – to play)
2. Suppose the auction goes (opposition bids bracketed) 1♣ - (1♥) – 2♦ - (2♥) - ??
With only four spades you should double (obviously not penalty), whereas with five spades just bid 2♠.
3. With a good 15+ hand and 5-5 (♣/♠), it is now preferable to open 1♠ (you are happy to subsequently bid the club suit at the 3-level).

AFH