



# **Bidding with a Balanced Hand**



## Opening the bidding with a Balanced Hand

What is a balanced hand?	No voids, i.e. all suits present in hand No singletons No more than one doubleton
Three types of balanced distribution:	5, 3, 3, 2 4, 4, 3, 2 4, 3, 3, 3

Points:	Less than 12	12 - 14	15 - 19	20 - 22	23 +
Opening bid:	Pass	1 NT *	Bid longest suit at the 1 level	2 NT	2 ♣

\* Some players bid a 5 card major suit rather than 1 NT. I do not recommend this.



Henley Bridge Club

## Responding to 1 NT and 2 NT opening bids (assuming no intervention)

Opening bid:		1 NT		2 NT	
Responder hand's contents		Responder hand's HCPs	Responder's bid	Responder hand's HCPs	Responder's bid
P r i o r i t y  o r d e r	5+ cards in one or both majors	Any strength	2♦ transfer for ♥s 2♥ transfer for ♠s	Any strength	3♦ transfer for ♥s 3♥ transfer for ♠s
	Exactly 4 cards in one or both majors	See note on next chart	2♣ "Stayman"	See note on next chart	3♣ "Stayman"
	Any other	19+	4 NT (Slam invitation)	11+	4 NT (Slam invitation)
		13 - 18	3 NT	5 - 10	3 NT
		11 or 12	2 NT (Invitational)	< 5	Pass
		7 - 10	Pass		
	6+ cards in a minor	< 7	2♠		
	4♥s and 5♠s			3+	3♠



## Is Stayman dependent on point count?

- ◆ Beginners are usually taught that they need 11 points to bid 2 ♣ Stayman
- ◆ There is safety for beginners in using this guideline, but it need not always apply
- ◆ Experienced players use Stayman to ask whether partner has 4 or more cards in one of the major suits, without implying any point count in their own hand
- ◆ **When you might use Stayman with < 11 points:**
  - ❖ You have a 6+ minor and a 4 card major.
  - ❖ You have 5+ cards in one major and 4+ in the other.
- ◆ **When you might not use Stayman with 12+ points:**
  - ❖ With 4,3,3,3 distribution and 4 cards in a major suit – bid NT directly



## Continued play after Transfers

		Transfer					
Opening bid:		1 NT			2 NT		
Responder's bid:		2 ♦ or 2 ♥			3 ♦ or 3 ♥		
Opener's rebid		2 ♥ or 2 ♠ automatic			3 ♥ or 3 ♠ automatic		
Responder's next bid		HCPs	Cards in longest major	Bid	HCPs	Cards in longest major	Bid
		< 11		Pass			
		11 - 12	5	2 NT	< 5		Pass
			6+	3 ♥ or 3 ♠			
		13+	5	3 NT	5+	5	3 NT
			6+	4 ♥ or 4 ♠		6+	4 ♥ or 4 ♠
Opener's next bid		Opener may raise 2 NT to 3 ♥ or 3 ♠			Opener may raise 3 NT to 4 ♥ or 4 ♠		
		Opener may raise 3 NT to 4 ♥ or 4 ♠					



## Continued play after Stayman

Stayman						
Opening bid:	1 NT			2 NT		
Responder's bid:	2 ♣			3 ♣		
Opener's rebid:	With 4+ ♥ s (may also have 4+ ♠ s)	With 4+ ♠ s (may also have 4+ ♥ s)	With neither	With 4+ ♥ s (may also have 4+ ♠ s)	With 4+ ♠ s (may also have 4+ ♥ s)	With neither
	2 ♥	2 ♠	2 ♦	3 ♥	3 ♠	3 ♦
Responder's next bid:	Responder's HCPs	With a major match	Without a major match	Responder's HCPs	With a major match	Without a major match
	< 11	Pass or switch to longer suit		3 - 4	Pass or switch to longer suit	
	11 - 12	3 ♥ or 3 ♠	2 NT			
	13 - 18	4 ♥ or 4 ♠	3 NT	5 - 10	4 ♥ or 4 ♠	3 NT
	19+	Explore a Slam		11+	Explore a Slam	
Opener's next bid:	Usually, Opener does not bid again. If Opener has 4+ cards in both majors and Responder bids 2 NT (or 3 NT), Opener may rebid the other major suit at the 3 level (4 level).					



## Opening with a Balanced Hand of 15 – 19 points

<b>Opening bid:</b>	Bid longest suit at the 1 level. If exactly 4 ♥ s & 4 ♠ s, bid 1 ♥		
<b>Responder's bid:</b>	Responder does not yet know you have a balanced hand. She will only know you have an opening hand and what is your longest highest suit. She will respond to an opening suit bid by partner in the normal way.		
<b>Opener's second bid:</b>	Opener will plan her second bid as shown below (assumes no interventions):		
	<b>15 – 16 HCPs</b>	<b>17 -18 HCPs</b>	<b>19 HCPs</b>
	Plan to bid <b>NT</b> at the lowest level you can over partner's new suit response.	Plan to bid <b>NT</b> with a jump over partner's new suit response.	Plan to bid <b>3 NT</b> over partner's new suit response.
	If partner has supported your major bid,	If partner has supported your major bid,	Bid game if partner has supported your suit
	without jumping   bid 2 NT (or <b>Pass</b> with flat hand)	without jumping   bid 3 of major suit	
	with jumping   bid game in suit	with jumping   bid game in suit	
	If partner bid 1 <b>NT</b> , pass	If partner bid 1 <b>NT</b> , raise to 2 <b>NT</b>	



## 2 ♣ opening with a balanced hand

<b>Opening bid:</b>	2 ♣					
<b>Responder's bid:</b>	Responder does not yet know you have a balanced hand. She will only know you have a very strong hand with 9 winning tricks (minimum HCP 16) or 23+ points.					
	<b>&lt; 8 HCPs</b>			<b>8+ HCPs</b>		
	2 ♦ ("Negative response")			2 ♠, 2 ♥, 3 ♦, or 3 ♣ (longest 5+ suit), or 2 NT (no 5+ suit)		
Some partnerships automatically bid 2 ♦ regardless of strength (called a relay).						
<b>Opener's rebid</b>	<b>23 – 24 HCPs</b>				<b>25+ HCPs</b>	
	If Responder bid 2 ♦		If Responder bid 2 ♠, 2 ♥, 3 ♦, 3 ♣, or 2 NT		If Responder bid 2 ♦	If Responder bid 2 ♠, 2 ♥, 3 ♦, 3 ♣, or 2 NT
	2 NT		3 NT		3 NT	6 NT
<b>Responder's rebid:</b>	0 -2	3+	8 -9	10+	(0 -7)	(8+)
	Pass	3 NT	Pass	6 NT	Pass	Pass