

**LIMIT BIDS – FORCING BIDS**

Improving Level

BEGINNING LEVEL	IMPROVING LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL	EXPERT LEVEL
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This topic can be quite tricky. Vale Dr. Emile Pereira, an eloquent and patient Bridge mentor, who put it very simply - *“Do Not Break Your Barrier.”*

During the auction each person tries to find the best place to be. It is also important to show your strength and if you want partner to bid again. Sometimes this is not possible until your second or third bid.

LIMIT BIDS - As well as a denomination, these show strength immediately

Limit Bids have known lower and upper values within a reasonably narrow range. For example a 1NT Opening, 2NT Opening, 1NT by Responder and a Weak Two opening are all LIMIT BIDS.

UNLIMITED BIDS – no upper value within a reasonable range is known

Unlimited Bids could have an upper value of just about anything, therefore it is important to show your strength with your rebid - by your second bid if possible. Opening one of a suit or responding with a new suit at the next level is unlimited.

FORCING, NON-FORCING, GAME-FORCING

As well as showing strength, your rebid will either be Non-Forcing (NF), Forcing (F) or Game-Forcing (GF).

OPENING ONE OF A SUIT – how to show strength on your rebid

Opener’s rebid needs to show partner if their hand is Basic, Medium or Maximum and if partner is forced to bid again.

OPENER**BASIC OPENING**

~12-15

MEDIUM OPENING

~16-19

MAXIMUM OPENING¹

~20-22 unbalanced

BASIC OPENING HAND

Let partner know this on your rebid.

♦ 1NT

♦ Raise partner’s suit to the correct level

♦ Repeat own suit, no jump

♦ New suit ***of a lower ranking*** than your original suit (2-level, non-jump)

These rebids are all Non-Forcing. Partner can PASS.

¹ As opposed to a Strong Opening which most open as 2C or 2NT. Opening 2NT is around 20-22 Balanced and a 2C opening is either 23+ Balanced or a very strong distributional hand, about 8.5-9 Playing Tricks.

MEDIUM OPENING HAND

Let partner know this on your rebid.

- ◆ 2NT
- ◆ Raise partner's suit to the correct level
- ◆ Repeat own suit at a jump level
- ◆ New suit ***of a higher ranking*** than your original suit (2-level, non-jump)

This last choice is called a REVERSE.

Openers REVERSE is Forcing (F). Responder's REVERSE is Game-Forcing (GF).

The other rebids above are all Non-Forcing (NF).

Some NF bids can still be highly compelling though, for example partner's jump rebid of their own suit is strongly requesting support, even though it is NF.

MAXIMUM OPENING HANDS

Let partner know this on your rebid.

- ◆ 3NT
- ◆ Raise partner's suit to the correct level
- ◆ Repeat own suit at a jump level (NF though)
- ◆ New suit ***of a higher ranking*** than your original suit (2-level, non-jump)
- ◆ New suit at one level higher than is necessary (below 3S)

This last choice is called a JUMP-SHIFT.

A JUMP-SHIFT is Game-Forcing (GF). Partners must keep bidding for Game.

BARRIER PRINCIPLE

With a BASIC opening hand, *do not* BREAK YOUR BARRIER

With a MEDIUM+ opening hand, *do* BREAK YOUR BARRIER

This will help you not to accidentally REVERSE with a basic hand.

When you open one of a suit, you create a Barrier of two of that suit.

1C – Barrier is 2C

1D – Barrier is 2D

1H – Barrier is 2H

1S – Barrier is 2S

You should *not* go past your barrier unless you have a better than Basic hand (unless forced). Sometimes it can be difficult to find a rebid that does not break your barrier but it is important to find something.

Breaking your Barrier generally forces partner to bid again.

F OR GF Generally, partner is forced to bid again after your bid is
 Reverse or Jump-Shift
 Artificial or Take-Out Double that could be passed out
 Change of suit by Responder (and sometimes by Opener)
 Conventional Forcing Bids agreed on in your partnership, example 2C Stayman

NF Generally, partner is not forced to bid again if partner has
 Passed at any stage or Bid NO TRUMPS at any stage
 Repeated any suit already bid by your side during the auction
 Made a natural raise of your suit

The most important things to take from this lesson are
BARRIER PRINCIPLE and REVERSE.

A REVERSE is when you rebid a new suit of higher ranking than your own first suit (at the two-level, non-jump)

REVERSE

Opener	Responder
1C	1S
2H	

Hearts is higher-ranking than Clubs
 = REVERSE.
 Barrier Broken.
 Responder is forced to bid again.
 The **2H** is F.

NOT A REVERSE

Opener	Responder
1H	1NT
2C	

Clubs is not higher-ranking than Hearts
 = NO REVERSE
 Barrier NOT Broken.
 Responder can PASS if prefers Clubs or bid 2H if that is better = SIMPLE PREFERENCE.
 The **2C** is NF.

REVERSE

Opener	Responder
1D	2C
2S	

Spades is higher-ranking than Diamonds
 = REVERSE.
 Barrier Broken.
 Responder is forced to bid again.
 The **2S** is F.

NOT A REVERSE

Opener	Responder
1D	1S
2D	

No rebid of a higher ranking suit
 = NO REVERSE
 Barrier NOT Broken.
 Responder is not forced to bid again.
 The **2D** is NF.

REVERSE BY RESPONDER

Opener Responder

1C 1H
2C **2S**

Spades is higher-ranking than Hearts
= REVERSE by Responder (GF).
Opener is forced to keep bidding
towards Game.
The **2S** is GF.

NOT A REVERSE BY RESPONDER

Opener Responder

1S 2D
2H **2S**

Responder has merely agreed on one of
Opener's suits (probably reluctantly)
= NO REVERSE
Opener will probably not bid again.
The **2S** is NF. (Assume not playing 2/1).

JUMP SHIFT

Opener Responder

1H 1S
3D

Jump-Shift (GF)

New suit of a level higher than necessary.

NOT A JUMP SHIFT

Opener Responder

1H 1NT
2D

Responder can PASS if prefers D's

This **2D** is NF.

JUMP REPEAT

Opener Responder

1H 1S
3H

NF but highly compelling

Responder should consider carefully before passing too quickly.

JUMP RESPONSE – IMMEDIATE

Opener Responder

1C **2S**

This is a Weak Bid. Popular a century ago, partnerships still playing this as strong should make the opposition aware of this.

Wasting bidding space is to disrupt the opposition, not yourself. The better you are, the slower you go. With a good hand, force your partner to keep bidding. Do not waste precious bidding space unless you have to.

2NT REBID BY OPENER – This shows 18-19 balanced (NF)

Opener Responder

1C 1H
2NT

This bid makes sense. If Opener had 15-17 balanced, then would have opened 1NT in the first place. With 20-22 balanced would have opened 2NT.

PARTNER'S CHANGE OF SUIT IS FORCING

So long as Opener has not passed at any stage or has not bid NT's at any stage, a change of suit by Responder is always forcing. Change of suit by Opener can depend on the circumstances.

Opener	Responder
1H	1NT
2C	2H

SIMPLE PREFERENCE

Opener's change of suit is NF. It is asking Responder to choose between Hearts and Clubs. Responder has chosen the Hearts (probably reluctantly) and limited their hand.

Opener	Responder
1H	1NT
2C	PASS

SIMPLE PREFERENCE

Opener is asking Responder to choose between Hearts and Clubs. Responder has chosen Clubs automatically by Passing.

Opener	Responder
1D	1S
2C	2H

Responder's change of suit is F

Even though no Reverse, Responder's change of suit is F

REMEMBER

To show a good 16+ hand, you Jump Repeat or Jump-Shift on your *second* bid, not your first. If you bid higher than you had to on your *first* bid, that shows a weak hand.

Example

Opener	Responder
1C	2S

2S is weak. This is a Jump Response, not a Jump Shift.²

² In the good old days this jump was used to show a strong hand by Responder. It was soon realised that using up space unnecessarily should be to disrupt the opposition not yourselves. If the opposition is not bidding there is not too much to disrupt. Modern Bridge takes things slowly – the better you are the slower you go. The Jump bids are only to Force (or beg) when there is no other choice.

Opener	Responder
1H	1S
1NT	3S

NOW the jump in Spades is strong. An opening hand NF.

EXAMPLES

Partner below opens 1C. What is their rebid after Responder says 1S?

1	2	3
♠ KJ6	♠	♠
♥ A1032	♥ J32	♥ AKQJ
♦ K54	♦ KQ98	♦ 532
♣ Q43	♣ AQ843	♣ QJ8542
1NT (NF) Shows a Basic hand	2C Cannot bid 2D as that would be a REVERSE = 16+ F	2C Cannot bid 2H as that would be a REVERSE = 16+ F
4	5	6
♠ Q	♠ 62	♠ 32
♥ AQJ8	♥ KQJ3	♥ KQJ10
♦ 853	♦ KQJ	♦ KQ
♣ AKJ52	♣ AK85	♣ AKJ85
2H (F) REVERSE is fine with 16+	2NT 18-19 Balanced	2H 19 HCP - a REVERSE is good (F)

Bidding is 1D – 1H – 1S. What does Responder bid next with the following hands?

1	2	3
♠ 64	♠ 64	♠ 643
♥ AK64	♥ J632	♥ 5432
♦ AK	♦ KJ98	♦ KQ
♣ KJ32	♣ AQ84	♣ J432
2C (F). Responder has changed suit and opener has not passed or bid NT's so F.	2NT Bal 10-12 HCP (NF)	1NT 6-9 (NF)

Bidding is 1C – 1H – 1NT. What does Responder bid next with the following hands?

4

♠ Q10
♥ AQJ85
♦ 853
♣ AKJ52

3C (GF)

JUMP-SHIFT

Responder needs a means
of forcing partner to keep
going to Game.

5

♠ 62
♥ 6543
♦ 654
♣ AKJ10

PASS

6-9 HCP

6

♠ KQJ
♥ J1098
♦ KQ
♣ J1085

3NT

Enough for Game

Other Conventions you might like to look at that

4th suit F or GF

2NT Jacoby GF

Two-Over-One GF

New Minor F or GF

Two-way Checkback

REFERENCES

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