

Limit bids

with Chris Turner

Limit bids describe the strength of a hand within a narrow range and say something about the shape eg it is balanced or has a fit with partner.

Bidding no trumps, raising partner's suit and rebidding your own suit tend to be limit bids. Shifting to a new suit tends to be a vague or unlimited bid.

There is often a big difference in responding to a NT opening (narrow range) vs a suit opening which is vague and covers a wide range of points and suits.

After a suit opening there is often the need to explore whereas after a NT opening responder may be able to launch into the final contract.

Deciding Level

- Aim to reach small slam in a major with 33 TP, or grand slam with 37.
- In NT you need HCP but add length points. Each card after 4 in a suit is 1 extra point.
- Game in a minor requires 28 TP.
- Game in a major requires 25 TP.
- Game in NT requires 25 HCP but add length points as above.
- Lacking the values for game, stop as low as possible.
- Keep in mind the **Law of Total Tricks** when in competition. The basic premise is that you are safe at the level of your combined number of trumps eg if you have 9 trumps you are safe at the 3 level. Consider pre-emptive raises based on the Law. (Vulnerability is a factor and there are other factors to consider as well).

Deciding fit

- Try to find a trump fit especially in a major.
- With no major fit try for NT. This is especially the case at game level where 3NT is far more enticing than game in a minor.
- Often you should insist on playing in your six card suit if ptnr has opened NT

Opener's rebids after responder shifts

	Minimum 12-15	Medium 16-18	Maximum 18+
1. With fit (esp major)	Simple raise eg 1D: 1H, 2H	Jump raise eg 1D: 1H, 3H	Game raise 19+ eg 1D, 1H, 4H
2. Balanced	Simple NT 12-14 Eg 1D: 2C, 2NT	Open 1NT with 15-17	Jump in NT 18-19 eg 1D: 1H, 2NT
3. New suit	Simple shift 12-18 eg 1D: 1H, 2C		Jump shift 19+ eg 1D: 1H, 3S
4. Rebid suit (usually 6)	Simple rebid eg 1H: 1S, 2H	Jump rebid Eg 1H: 1S, 3H	Game rebid 19+

Useful conventions to consider using with your partner

- **Jakoby 2NT:** When partner has opened a major and you have **4 card support** and **an opening hand yourself**, bid 2NT(alerted) to show this. Partner may raise to game immediately which shows no interest in slam (principle of fast arrival). If ptnr bids another suit it is showing length there and possible slam interest. Partner may also show control bids starting at the 4 level, or may use RKCB.
- **Bergin raises:** In addition to the 2NT response (above), Bergin raises use a 3C response as 4+ card support and 6-8 TP. 3D is 9-11 TP. (all should be alerted)
- **Cue raises:** If the opponents have overcalled a suit, if you then bid the enemy suit it is showing support for partner and 10+TP. (This is self alerting)
- **Inverted minors:** With support for ptnr's minor (and no four card major) bid 3 of the minor with 6-9 TP and 2 of the minor with 10-12. (should be alerted).
- **Drury:** If your ptnr is dealer and passes, followed by pass and you bid a major in 3rd seat, ptnr shows 3 card support and 10-11 TP by bidding 2C. With 4card support the bid is 2D. As opener, if you have a weak/moderate hand you rebid 2 of the major. Anything else shows strength. This enables aggressive 3rd hand bidders to enter the auction with lesser values than usual. (Alert the 2C/2D bids)
- **Weak jumps:** Here, the partnership agrees that a jump in the opener's suit is weak and pre-emptive (alert). With a stronger hand responder would use other methods or change suit and then jump to game in opener's suit.
- **Over 2C opening: (alerted).** Partnerships need to agree on whether 2C is **game force** (except for a 2NT rebid which shows 22 HCP and may be passed) – or something else. The usual approach is for a 2D response to be waiting (alerted) whereas a bid of a suit would show 5+ HCP and a good 5card suit. There are many options out there which implies there is no perfect solution!