

## Pass-out & the HCP criteria for an opening bid

HCP value	Hand shape	Opening Bid
12-14 HCP	Balanced	1NT
12-19 HCP	Not balanced	1 of a suit
5-9 HCP non-vul	} 6-card suit with Honour(s)	*Weak 2s (♠♥♦)
6-10 HCP vul		
5-9 HCP	7+card suit with Honour(s)	3/4 pre-empt
20-22 HCP	Balanced	2NT
(16)20+ HCP	8 Playing tricks and quality suit	*Strong 2s (♠♥♦)
23+ hcp	Strong Hands	2♣ (artificial)

*\*Partnership agreement on playing either weak or strong 2s*

### Remember

When you are counting your basic High Card Points (HCP), you **half** the value of a singleton honour unless it is the ACE.

### Rule of 20

On marginal suit opening hands, you can open the bidding at the one level when the number of HCP in your hand added to the number of cards in your two longest suits adds up to 20. **But**, before you bid, think of your **re-bid!**

**Examples**

♠ K J 10 7  
 ♥ 10 2  
 ♦ 6 4 3  
 ♣ A Q J 7

(11)

Your HCP is too weak for 1NT.  
 The 'Rule of 20' ( $11+4+4 = 19$ ) does not apply.  
 This hand is not suitable to open - NB.

♠ K J 7 4  
 ♥ K J 10 9 8 5 3  
 ♦ void  
 ♣ 8 3

(8)

7- card suit. Open with a pre-empt?  
 The 'Rule of 20' ( $8+7+4 = 19$ ) does not apply.  
 Open this hand with a  $3♥$  pre-emptive bid.

♠ Q J  
 ♥ J 9 4 3  
 ♦ K 8 7 4 3  
 ♣ K J

(11)

Your HCP and the hand shape is incorrect for 1NT.  
 The 'Rule of 20' ( $11+5+4 = 20$ ) appears to apply!  
 But, an opening bid of  $1♦$ , has no suitable re-bid!  
 Thus - NB.

♠ A 5 3 2  
 ♥ K  
 ♦ A 7 4 2  
 ♣ Q 7 8 3

(13)

(11½)

4-4-4-1 Shape!!  
 Devalue HCP for singleton  $K♥$ .  
 No intermediary 'pip' cards (10,9,8s).  
*Better to NB than risk an invalid re-bid (1NT or 5-4 shape)*

## Sample Deal

Dealer; North	♠ K 7 6 5			
N/S vul.	♥ J 8 7 6 2 (11)	(HCP)		
	♦ A 10 4 (9½)			
	♣ K			
♠ A 9 2		N	♠ Q J 8 4	
♥ Q 10 9	(7)	W	♥ A 5 (11)	
♦ K 7 6 5		E	♦ Q 8 3	
♣ 10 6 3		S	♣ Q 9 8 4	
	♠ 10 3			
	♥ K 4 3 (11)			
	♦ J 9 2			
	♣ A J 7 5 2			

  

	♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N	7	7	7	7	7
S	7	6	7	7	7
E	5	6	4	6	6
W	6	6	5	6	6

On this deal, no hand meets the criteria for an opening bid and the deal should be 'passed out'.

For those North players who open 1♥ (?), there is no makeable contract once responder enters the auction. In a duplicate session this will be a likely 'bottom' result for North/South!

At this club we have a local rule at Friday's (friendly) meetings, that if a board, **when played for the 1st time at the session**, does not meet the above criteria, and is 'passed out', then it is re-shuffled and re-dealt.