

Opening the bidding with full strength opening hands

Somethings to remember

1. Look at the good and bad features of the hand and upgrade or downgrade your hand accordingly

When you have a hand with full opening values (not a 2C strong opening) remember that HCP are not everything.

Positive hand features: Add 1 point	Negative hand features: Subtract 1 point
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 2 ½ 'quick tricks'• Intermediate cards – lots of 9s and 10s• Suits with multiple honours – AKJ, KQJx, AQTx, QJT• A long 7 card suit headed by AKQ• A two suited hand – 6 card suit and a 4 card suit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Singleton KQ or J• Doubleton KQ, KJ, QJ, Qx, Jx• No aces• Q and J making up half your HCP• No long suits.

2. Bid your suits in the right order

- When you have two long suits of equal length – bid the higher suit first.
- When you have two four card suits - bid the lower suit first.
- When you don't have a five card major suit – bid your longest minor first.
- When you have two three card minors – bid 1C.

KQT54
5
7
AQ9652

Open 1C not 1S. Open your longest suit first, even with 5 spades.

Some things to avoid

3. Avoid awkward rebid problems – think about your rebid

J2
T3
AKQT
K7432

Prefer 1D to 1C, even though the club suit is longer. If partner bids a major you are stuck for a rebid if you open 1C. 1NT is unappealing with a short suit, 2D would be a reverse, and you don't want to rebid a weak 5 card club suit. Plus your diamonds are quite nice even though you only have 4. A hand like this is the exception to the bid your longest suit first rule!

4. Avoid opening with a pre-empt when holding a long strong major and opening values

QT93	Open 1H, not 3H	AK7652	Open 1S not 2S
AKJ9842	or 4H. Too good	K97	– meets rule of
6	for a pre-empt	T952	20 and has a 2S
T	and has a 4 card	9654	rebid. Could
	spade suit		open 2S in 3 rd
			seat as game is
			unlikely

5. Avoid opening at the 1-level with a hand with 16-21HCP and 9/10 playing tricks – open 2C

A87	Open 2C – great heart suit, 4 quick tricks
AKQJ942	and 4 losers. Won't need much from
7	partner to make game
A8	

6. Avoid opening 2C with a balanced 19-20HCP hand

KQ9	Open this hand 1D and plan to rebid 2NT.
AJT	Although it has 20HCP it has lots of losers
K863	and a balanced shape. If you open it 2C
AK9	and plan to rebid 2NT, if partner is weak
	you are likely to not make for a poor
	score. If partner passes your 1D well
	that's life!

7. When with a balanced or semi balanced 15-17HCP hand prefer to open 1NT than one of a suit

AQ	Prefer to open 1NT,	KJ	Open 2NT, shows a
K5	even with two	A3	balanced/semi-balanced
KJT6	doubletons (they	AQT63	20/1-22HCP hand. Don't be
KT973	are good ones!)	AK32	tempted to open it 2C!

Prefer to open NT with a semi-balanced hand (even with a 6-card suit!) and values for a NT opening, even if you have two strong doubletons. Whether you do it with a 5 card major is a matter for partnership agreement. If you are going to open NT with a 5 card major you may need a way to find a 5-3 major suit fit, like extended stayman or puppet stayman.