**Opener & Responder Strength Scales**

Bidding by opener and responder is informed by their respective strength scales.

**The Opener Strength Scale**

With ***balanced hands*** the opener strength scale looks like this.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Minimum** | **Intermediate** | **Strong** | **Very Strong** |
| **Points** | 12 - 14 | 15 - 16 | 17 - 18 | 19+ |

All minimum balanced hands are opened with a bid of 1NT.

Opening stronger balanced hands will be dealt with in later lessons.

***Unbalanced hands*** are more difficult to deal with because fewer bids are available.

The problem rests with unbalanced hands of 15-16 hcp.

You must decide whether they belong in the “minimum” range or the “strong” range.

Until our bidding skills develop further a simpler approach with unbalanced hands is as follows where the decision has been made for you.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Minimum** |  | **Strong** | **Very Strong** |
| **Points** | 12 - 15 |  | 16 - 18 | 19+ |

**The Responder Strength Scale**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sub Minimum** | **Minimum** | **Intermediate** | **Strong** |
| **Points** | 0 - 5 | 6 - 9 | 10 - 12 | 13+ |

Note the important points on this scale for responder.

6 Points if partner opens one of a suit you must respond in case partner has opened with 19 points

10 points if partner opens one of a suit you need 10 (equivalent) points to show a new suit at the 2-level

If partner opens 1NT with up to 10 points game is not on

13 points if partner opens one of a suit you will end up in game (12 + 13 = 25)

Use of the ***Responder Strength Scale*** to show your 4-card support for partner

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sub Minimum** | **Minimum** | **Intermediate** | **Strong** |
| **Points** | 0 - 5 | 6 - 9 | 10 - 12 | 13 - 15 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 1♥ - pass | 1♥ - 2♥ | 1♥ - 3♥ | 1♥ - 4♥ |