

## OPENING BIDS AT THE ONE LEVEL (ACOL – 4-CARD MAJORS)

A hand which you should consider opening at the one level, usually contains 12–20 high-card points.

Adjustments should be made to the hand evaluation as follows:

- a) Points should be added for additional suit lengths – add 1 point for each additional card over five in any suit.
- b) An additional point can also be added for a second suit of five or more cards.
- c) Beware of ‘hanging jacks’ – i.e. jacks in a suit which doesn’t have any other honours. With too many of these in a particular hand you should down-value it (see exercise).
- d) Also as you become more experienced, consider opening ‘third in hand’ with a point less.

Some opening bids within this point range should be opened at a higher level, but these will be identified later.

We shall consider the one level opening bids in the context of a **four-card major system**, with a weak no-trump.

### 1NT

A ‘balanced’ hand in the **12–14 point** range. A balanced hand normally has a 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 distribution, but certain hands with a 5-3-3-2 distribution should also be considered if the five card suit is weak (i.e. you don’t really want to rebid the suit – particularly if it is a minor).

- |    |                                   |    |                                   |    |                                   |
|----|-----------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| a) | ♠ A97<br>♥ K942<br>♦ A86<br>♣ K87 | b) | ♠ A972<br>♥ K94<br>♦ A862<br>♣ Q8 | c) | ♠ Q7<br>♥ K87<br>♦ KJ3<br>♣ K9532 |
|----|-----------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|

- a) 3-4-3-3 shape, 14 points – ideal 1NT.
- b) 4-3-4-2 shape, 13 points – ideal 1NT.
- c) 12 points, not the ideal shape for 1NT, but with the poor five card club suit, best to open 1NT.

### Suit Bids

The **guidelines** summarising these are (in order):

Always open the longest suit.

With two four-card suits, standard procedure is always open the higher ranking, but...

- Exceptions - with hearts and spades open 1♥.  
- with clubs and diamonds open 1♣.

With three four-card suits initially adopt the style of opening the suit below the singleton, except that with a singleton club, open 1♥ (again you may change this approach with more experience)

With two five card suits, open the higher ranking one, except when clubs and spades, in which case open 1♣.

## Exercises:

- a) ♠ KJ752    b) ♠ KQ753    c) ♠ Q6432    d) ♠ AK75    e) ♠ AK82  
♥ 7            ♥ Q4            ♥ 6            ♥ AJ9        ♥ AJ95  
♦ AQ9632    ♦ AQJ84        ♦ K7           ♦ AJ63       ♦ Q8  
♣ 4            ♣ 7            ♣ AKJ97       ♣ 97         ♣ Q74
- f) ♠ KJ72    g) ♠ 4            h) ♠ 4            i) ♠ 98763    j) ♠ KQ73  
♥ 653        ♥ A8632        ♥ AJ743       ♥ AKQ76     ♥ 7  
♦ AK8        ♦ KQ752        ♦ 8            ♦ AK9        ♦ A952  
♣ Q85        ♣ K6            ♣ AK7432     ♣ -           ♣ KJ94
- k) ♠ KQ7    l) ♠ AQ742    m) ♠ 7            n) ♠ KQ74    o) ♠ J8742  
♥ AQ752    ♥ J4            ♥ 73            ♥ AQ63       ♥ J7  
♦ AJ6        ♦ 9            ♦ AK98763    ♦ K874       ♦ AKQ  
♣ K3        ♣ K8532       ♣ A86           ♣ 8           ♣ J63

- a) 1♦ - diamonds are the longest suit. Only 10 high-card points, but add points for suit(s) length.
- b) 1♠ - two equal length five card suits: spades are higher ranking.
- c) 1♣ - two equal length five card suits. Spades and clubs.
- d) 1♠ - no five card suit, outside the no-trump range (17 points whereas 1NT is 12–14 points), open 1♠ (the higher ranking)..
- e) 1♥ - no five card major, outside the no-trump range (16 points whereas 1NT is 12–14 points), with hearts and spades open 1♥.
- f) 1NT - 4-3-3-3, 13 points.
- g) 1♥ - diamonds and hearts, but hearts higher ranking.
- h) 1♣ - even though you have five hearts, the six card club suit takes preference.
- i) 1♠ - five hearts and five spades. Even though the hearts are much better, you must open the higher ranking.
- j) 1♦ - not the shape for 1NT. Open the suit below the singleton.
- k) 1♥ - 19 points, but still open at the one level.
- l) **PASS** - only 10 points, but add one for the extra length. Still out of the prescribed opening range so (for now) PASS. (However, many players would still open 1♣ particularly in third position.)
- m) 1♦ - 11 points, but add for the extra length..
- n) 1♥ - not the shape for 1NT. With 4-4-4-1 with a singleton club, open 1♥.
- o) **PASS** - 12 points but three ‘hanging jacks’. I would certainly devalue the hand by at least one point.