

Lesson Summary for U3ABDa09: Opening One of a Suit with a Balanced Hand - Responses and Rebids

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Welcome!

To help clarify some points in this week's lesson, we're giving you this Lesson Summary. It describes the same topics from a slightly different angle and is more portable than videos. We've also included some additional detail where it seems needed.

I hope it helps!

-Ed

Bidding Principles

Weekly summary

A VERY brief overview of each week so far:

1. Open a 12-14 point balanced hand with 1NT. Respond according to your points if you don't have a long (5+) major
2. Respond to partner's 1NT opening bid if you have a long major by using a Red Suit Transfer, then rebid according to your length and strength
3. Open a 12-19 point unbalanced hand with one of your longest suit: 1C, 1D, 1H or 1S. Respond to partner's bid according to your points and shape: support a major if you have 4+, bid your own suit or 1NT or pass
4. You open a 15-19 point balanced hand with one of a suit, planning to rebid 1NT (15-16 points), 2NT (17-18 points) or 3NT (19 points). But if partner raises your suit or bids a suit of their own and there's a suit fit you may change your plan – especially if it's a major suit

Points mean tricks (table)

The number of tricks you will typically make depends on your total points and denomination (NT or a suit):

Points	Tricks in NT	Tricks in a suit
21-22	7	8
23-24	8	9
25+	9+	10+

This week's lessons

Lesson 1: Hand Shape and Strength

In your first lesson this week, you learned there are three main **shapes** of hand:

- Balanced: 0 voids, 0 singletons, 0 or 1 doubletons
- One-suited: 6+ cards in one suit and no other suit with 4+ cards
- Two-suited: 5+ cards in one suit and a second suit with 4+ cards

(For now, we will treat the fourth, awkward 4441 shape, as a two-suited hand by ignoring the weakest suit.)

Combine your shape with your points, and there are 6 types of hand to open with a one-level bid:

Strength	Balanced	One-suited	Two-suited
Weaker	12-14	12-15	12-15
Stronger	15-19	16-19	16-19

This week we're focussing on that yellow bit! The aim of your first two bids is to quickly tell your partner (the responder to your opener) which of these six categories your hand is in.

Lesson 2: Opening and Rebidding with a Balanced Hand

With a weaker balanced hand (12-14 points) you open 1NT and plan not to bid again unless partner encourages you with their response. Lesson 2 is about those stronger balanced hands (15-19) that you open with one of your longest suit and plan to rebid in NT.

The key word here is **plan**. When partner responds, you may need to change your plan; for example: partner might support your suit. Partner's response and your second bid (your rebid) are all about sharing information on shape and points, to decide if you're strong enough to bid game, and whether to choose NT or a suit contract.

When you open one of a suit, partner does not know whether you're balanced or unbalanced, whether you have a measly 12 point or a mighty 19 points, whether you have 4 trumps or 5 or 6 or more. It's the **start** of a conversation; an opening salvo (to mix a metaphor).

Partner responds...

Let's assume for now you open 1D, because your longest suit is Diamonds. Partner responds thus:

- With 0-5 points, partner must PASS. They know that, even if you have the maximum 19 points (for a 1-level bid), $19+5 = 24$, which is not enough for game.
- With 6+ points, partner MUST BID:
- With 6+ points and a 4+ suit that they can bid at the one level, they bid their suit
- With 6-9 points, but no 4+ suit that they can bid at the one level, they bid 1NT. They are not strong enough to bid at the two-level
- With 6-9 points and 4-card support for your major, they raise it to 2 (ignoring their own suits) but you have opened a minor
- With 6-9 points and 4-card support for your minor, and no other suit they can bid, they reluctantly raise 1D to 2D
- With 10+ points and a 4+ suit that they can't bid at the one level, they can bid it at the two-level

Your rebid...

How do you choose your second bid, when partner responds? You must assume they have the minimum points they have promised and make a helpful but **safe** response:

- If partner responds 1NT, this shows 6-9 points and is not forcing
- If partner raises your suit to the two level, this shows 6-9 points and is not forcing
- If partner changes suit at the one level, this shows 6+ points and is forcing; you must bid
- If partner changes suit at the two level, this shows 10+ points and is forcing, you must bid

So with 15-16 points, be cautious:

- After a 1NT response (1D 1NT): pass because your $15/16 + \text{their } 6 = 21/22$
- After a simple raise (1D 2D): pass because your $15/16 + \text{their } 6 = 21/22$
- After a one level change of suit (1D 1H): bid 1NT because your $15/16 + \text{their } 6 = 21/22$ (but see *Your rebid with a major fit*)
- After a two-level change of suit (1D 2C): bid 2NT because your $15/16 + \text{their } 10 = 25/26$ (but see *Your rebid with a major fit*)

That last bit of advice may seem odd. You have enough points for 3NT, so why not bid it? Because partner also knows you have enough points for 3NT, so they won't (shouldn't) pass. They will probably bid 3NT, but bidding 2NT allows them to tell you they have a 5-card major by bidding it again, so you can choose between 3NT (with 2-card support) or 4H/S (with 3-card support).

If partner has more than the minimum points for their forcing change-of-suit response, they can show them with their second bid.

With 17-18 points, be brave:

- After a 1NT response: bid 2NT because $17+6=23$
- After a simple raise (1D 2D): bid 2NT because $17+6=23$
- After a one level change of suit: bid 2NT because $17+6=23$
- After a two-level change of suit (1D 2C): bid 3NT because $17+10=27$

With 19 points, be bold:

- Rebid 3NT because **any** response promises 6 points and $19+6=25$

Your rebid with a major fit

If you open a major (intending to rebid NT) and partner raises it, or if partner responds with a major and you have 4-card support, you have a **fit** and should change your plan to play in that major, not NT.

Again, base your bidding on your points plus the **minimum** points that your partner has promised:

- If partner's bid promises a total of less than 23 points, bid to the 2-level
- If partner's bid promises a total of 23-24 points, bid to the 3-level
- If partner's bid promises a total of 25+ points, bid to the 4-level i.e. game

However, remember that if you open 1S and partner bids 2H, they have promised five Hearts, so you only need three Hearts for a 5-3 fit.

The only time you would prefer 3NT to 4H/S is if you have a very balanced hand, 4333. With no short suits, you have little chance of ruffing, and nine tricks in NT will be easier than ten tricks in your major.

Your rebid without a major fit (table)

If you open one of a suit with a balanced hand (intending to rebid NT) and partner's response does not show a major fit, your rebid should be:

Your points	Partner's Response		
	New suit at 1-level	1NT or raise to 2-level	New suit at 2-level
15-16	1NT	Pass	2NT
17-18	2NT	2NT	3NT
19	3NT	3NT	3NT

You usually ignore a fit in a minor, as minor contracts score poorly compared to NT and major contracts.

Not only but also... The Rule of 14

Listen very carefully, I shall say this only once: The basic rule for responding is that partner can only bid a new suit at the two-level (e.g. 1H 2C) if they have 10+ points and 4+ trumps. **I like this basic rule.**

However, partner CAN bid their suit at the two-level with fewer points according to the **The Rule Of 14**, if their points plus their number of trumps is 14 or more. For example:

Points	Suit length	Total	Bid at two-level?
10+	4	14+	Yes
9	5+	14+	Yes
8	6+	14+	Yes

This means that partner may have fewer points than you're expecting; hopefully the length of their suit will make up for this!