

Lesson Summary for U3ABD11: Responding when Opener bids a second suit

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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.

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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. 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
5. Open a 12-19 point unbalanced hand with one of your longest suit:
With a 6-card suit, plan to bid it again (twice).
With a 5-card suit, plan to bid your second (4+) suit next **if you can**.
With 12-15 points, your second bid should not be a jump or reverse.
With 16-19 points, your second bid should be a jump or reverse.
I say **plan** because partner might pass, or raise your first suit, or bid your second suit, or bid NT giving a point count, or change suit with a jump showing length and strength.
6. When partner opens one of a suit and rebids a second suit without jumping or reversing (showing 12-15 points), you have 4 main options:
 - ONE: With an 8-card fit in either suit: raise that suit
 - TWO: With no fit, but stops in the unbid suits: bid NT
 - THREE: With no fit or stops, but your own 6-card suit: bid your suit again
 - FOUR: With no fit or stops or 6-card suit, make a preference bid: choose the suit with the better fit
 - Choose the level of your response (pass, single raise, jump raise or game) by adding up your total points, assuming partner has the minimum 12

This Week's Lessons

In previous lessons, you learned how to open balanced and unbalanced hands with 12-19 points, how Partner (Responder) should respond, and how Opener should make their second bid; Opener's Rebid. We have also given guidelines on Responder's second bid.

In this week's lessons you were given more detailed guidance on Responder's second bid in the most complex situation: when Opener has shown a weaker (12-15 point) hand with two suits, by bidding two suits without jumping or reversing. You have four main options, which are, in order of preference (best first)...

OPTION 1 (best)

If you have an 8-card fit with either of partner's suits, choose that by bidding it or passing. You can assume that partner has five cards in their first suit, and four cards in their second suit. If you have a choice between a major and a minor, choose the major:

- With 6-9 points and a fit: raise to the two-level or pass (if already in the right suit)
- With 10-12 points and a fit: raise to the three-level
- With 13+ points and a fit: raise to the four-level

In each case, you are showing the same points as a direct raise. For example: 1H 1S 2D 3H promises 10-12 points and four Hearts, just like 1H 3H – but it conveys a bit more information.

OPTION 2 (better)

If you don't have a fit, but do have a stopper in the unbid suits, bid NT:

- With 6-10 points and a stopper: bid 1NT
- With 11-12 points and a stopper: bid 2NT
- With 13+ points and a stopper: bid 3NT

In each case, you are showing the same points as the direct bid. For example: 1D 1H 1S 1NT promises 6-9 points, just like 1D 1NT.

OPTION 3 (good)

If you don't have a fit or stoppers, but do have a 6-card suit, rebid your suit. You need 6+ because partner has shown 9 cards in two other suits, not many left for a fit:

- With 6-9 points and a 6-card suit: bid 2x
- With 11-12 points and a good 6-card suit: bid 3x – a SINGLE JUMP
- With 13+ points and a good 6-card suit (ideally 7): bid 4x – A DOUBLE JUMP

A good suit has at least two of the top three honours (AK, AQ, or KQ). If you have less (e.g. KJ) then you should consider bidding one level lower.

OPTION 4 (worst)

If you don't have a fit, or stoppers, or a 6-card suit, you must make a Preference Bid, by choosing one of your partner's suits. Choose their first suit unless you have TWO MORE cards in their second suit, because they are probably 5-4; they bid their longer suit first:

- With 6-9 points: bid 2x (to choose the first suit) or pass (to choose the second suit)
- With 11-12 points: bid 3x – a SINGLE JUMP
- With 13+ points: bid 4x – A DOUBLE JUMP

By the time Responder makes their second bid, they usually have a very good idea of Opener's hand, and can often decide the final contract by passing or bidding game. If they are just short of game points, they can use bids like 3S and 2NT (jumping), which are Game Invitations that ask partner to bid game if they have the maximum points for their bidding so far.

A Cautionary Tale

When the bidding goes something like this: 1S 2C 2S, Opener has shown you a one-suited hand, so they must have 6+ trumps, yes? Not exactly.

If Opener has a 5-card suit but no second 5-card or 4-card suit, their hand is balanced and they will bid it as balanced (e.g. 1H... 2NT). It's true! The only hand shape they can have is 5332, and that's balanced. They can't have a singleton or two doubletons because they must have 13 cards:

5332 = balanced, but 5331 = 12 cards, 5330 = 11 cards, 5321 = 11 cards. And so on.

Opener can have 5422, 5431 and many other combinations, but those are two-suited (5-4) hands and should be bid as two-suited hands i.e. open with one of a suit and then rebid the second suit.

So, if partner rebids their first suit (doesn't bid a second suit), are you SURE that they are one-suited, and therefore must have 6+ trumps? Sadly, no. They may have a two-suited hand but can't bid their second suit because that would take them **above the barrier**, showing more (16-19) points when they only have 12-15 points.

For example: with 12 points, five Spades and four Clubs, I open 1S intending to rebid 2C, but that's only possible if partner responds 1NT; if partner responds 2D or 2H I would have to rebid 3C – above the barrier. What do I do? I can't pass (partner has changed suit, forcing). I MIGHT be able to raise their suit or bid NT, but probably not. So my only option is to rebid my first suit, telling partner I am one-suited. It's less misleading than lying about your points.

So, when partner rebids their first suit, you should assume they have SIX because most of the time they will. But they may on occasion have FIVE, in a two-suited hand that they had to bid like a one-suited hand.