

# Responding to a Major Suit Bid

By Neil H. Timm

Playing 2/1 with 5-card majors, the most frequent bids are 1♣ and then 1♦ with 11-20 points. While many use this same range when opening with a major one often finds themselves in 4M with a poor result. Why?

One should have 13+HCP when opening 1M not 10-21HCP.

## Responding with 0-2 of partner's bid suit.

Your response depends upon your point range:

- With 0-5 points: Pass.
- With 6-9 points: Bid 1NT; however, if you have 4+spades over 1♥ opening, bid 1♠).
- With 10-11 points and a balanced hand: bid 2NT.
- With 12-13 points and a balanced hand: bid 3NT.
- With 10-16 points and a 5-card suit, bid it.
- With 17+ points and a 5+ card suit, make a jump bid in the suit

The **Pass** is since opener is limited to 20 HCP, so if you have 0-5, you have less than the necessary points for game. PASS.

With 6-9 HCP, you must bid **1NT**, unless you have a 4+card spade suit after a 1♥ opening, **you need 5 of a major to open it, but only 4 to respond in it.** You must bid 1NT because of a fundamental rule: **Responding at the two level to a 1-of-a-suit opener shows at least 10 points. never 6+.**

The **2NT** and **3NT** bids are **Limited** bids, and you will probably play in 3NT (a) partner will pass 2NT with a minimum or (b) partner has a 6-card suit or (c) partner has a very distributional hand. You have a balanced hand, but not enough trumps to support partner, 2/3 NT shows exactly 2 card supports for partner. (1NT was catch-all response).

If you have a 5-card suit and 10+ points, you can bid it at the two level or 1♠ over 1♥. If you have two suits of equal length one bids the **lowest** suit first. Remember **Open the higher of two equal suits, respond with the lower.** Never bid a 4-card suit at the two level.

If you have an exceptional hand with 17+ HCP, **Jump-Shift**, that is, bid your suit at a higher level than necessary. Your suit must be at least 5 cards or longer. Once you Jump-Shift, the bidding must go to game, and slam is a distinct possibility.

## Responding with a fit in opener's suit

If you have a fit with partner (3+ cards in his suit) then you will probably be bidding partner's suit. But, once you have a fit with partner, you are **MUST** to re-evaluate your hand as DESCRIBED IN MY BRIDGE BIT "HAND EVALUATION WITH A MAJOR SUIT FIT".

Why should one adopt this approach?

**You may bid 1M-3M with 10-12HCP, bid game with 13/14HCP and bid 2NT\* with 15+HCP and a fit (3/4cards in the major). One no longer needs Bergen type bids!**

In competition the bids are still on if the opponent interferes at the 2-level. However, over when it goes 1M-3x the Scanian Swiss convention is employed:

- 4♣\* 4 trumps no control in the opponents' suit
- 4♦\* 4 trumps with a control
- 4♥\* void showing over 3♥, natural otherwise
- 4M to play 10-14HCP

The bid of 4NT is 1430 or Blackwood by agreement.