



Bidding Basics

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Opener's rebid after 1♣-1NT

This month, we examine opener's rebid after this start:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1NT
?	

The 1NT response shows roughly 6–10 high-card points, no four-card major, and a balanced hand.

With his second bid, opener tries to show two things: strength (minimum, medium, maximum) and shape (balanced, long clubs, or clubs and another suit).

Here is a run-through of what opener's rebids mean:

Pass: Most minimum hands (certainly balanced ones) will pass. Without significant shape and extras, opener cannot show a four-card major on the two level (see “reverses” below). With each of the following hands, opener would pass the 1NT response:

♠Q J 6 ♥K J 3 ♦Q 7 6 ♣K Q 7 6
 ♠A 10 7 6 ♥K Q 6 5 ♦3 ♣A 5 4 3
 ♠J 4 3 ♥Q 5 4 ♦3 2 ♣A K Q 4 3

It would be unusual to rebid a five-card club suit.

2♣: Six or more clubs and a minimum hand (roughly 11–15 points counting useful distribution). Could have a four-card major and not enough to reverse (see below). Rebid 2♣ with these types of hands:

♠A J ♥K 3 2 ♦Q 3 ♣K 10 9 7 6 5
 ♠4 ♥K 9 6 2 ♦Q 8 ♣A Q J 7 5 2

Do not make the common error of repeating a five-card club suit or “reversing” with a minimum hand.

2♦, 2♥ or 2♠: A “reverse.” This is a tough topic for newer players, but there is no way to avoid the subject. You can't say, “I don't play reverses.” There are many of them in this series because they just come up. By choosing one of these rebids, you are forcing your partner to the three level if he wants to go back to clubs. Accordingly, you need extra values to bid this way. When, after a one-level response, opener rebids two of a higher-ranking suit than the suit he opened, he has reversed. That previous sentence needs to be studied intensely! A reverse is a natural bid, so in these auctions 1♣-1NT; 2♦ (or 2♥ or 2♠), opener shows at least four cards in the suit he is reversing into. A reverse implies five or more cards in the first-bid suit (in this case, clubs) and an unbalanced hand. With a balanced hand, the opening or rebid would be in notrump. A reverse is forcing one round (but not to game). It shows approximately 17-plus points, counting useful distribution. Examples:

♠A 3 2 ♥— ♦A Q J 2 ♣A Q 10 7 6 4
 1♣-1NT; 2♦
 ♠2 ♥A Q J 2 ♦A K 2 ♣A 7 6 5 4
 1♣-1NT; 2♥

♠K J 10 8 ♥2 ♦A J 2 ♣A K Q 7 6
 1♣-1NT; 2♠

2NT: 18–19 balanced. 2NT says nothing about stoppers and could have a four-card major. Don't make this bid with a nice 14-count; just pass 1NT. (With 15–17, the opening bid would have been 1NT.) Examples:

♠A Q 2 ♥K Q 4 ♦A K 4 ♣8 6 5 4
 ♠Q J 2 ♥K Q 5 2 ♦Q 6 ♣A K Q 2

3♣: Six or more clubs and a medium hand (roughly 16–18 counting useful distribution). No four-card major. (Because 3♣ and a reverse show good hands, opener can show a four-card major on the two level if he has one). Rebid 3♣ with hands like these:

♠A 7 3 ♥3 ♦A 7 6 ♣A Q J 10 5 4
 ♠A 7 5 ♥A 10 ♦2 ♣A Q 10 9 7 6 3.

3♦, 3♥, 3♠: These are jumps and reverses. Unless you enjoy torturing your partner, don't make these bids.

3NT: This bid is strange because with 18–19 balanced, you would rebid 2NT, and with 20–21, you would open 2NT. It really should be a trick-taking maximum (a running suit), something like:

♠K ♥Q 10 2 ♦K 8 ♣A K Q 7 6 5 2

This is too strong for only an invitational 3♣ rebid.

4♣ or higher: Don't make such a bid.

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

What is opener's rebid on this auction:

<i>Opener</i>	<i>Responder</i>
1♣	1NT
?	

1. ♠K ♥Q765 ♦K32 ♣KQ654
2. ♠K32 ♥KQ2 ♦54 ♣AJ654
3. ♠KQ43 ♥54 ♦4 ♣AQ6543
4. ♠KJ ♥KQ2 ♦A43 ♣AJ432
5. ♠A2 ♥AQ32 ♦5 ♣AQJ765
6. ♠A2 ♥AQ2 ♦2 ♣KQ107654
7. ♠A32 ♥— ♦AQ32 ♣AQJ1076
8. ♠— ♥AJ10 ♦A32 ♣Q1087653

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1. **Pass.** Don't repeat a five-card suit, and don't reverse with a minimum.
 2. **Pass.** The normal action with 12-14 balanced.
 3. **2♣.** Not strong enough for 2♠ or 3♣.
 4. **2NT.** 18-19 balanced.
 5. **2♥.** A natural reverse (forcing one round).
 6. **3♣.** Six or more clubs and extra strength (non-forcing).
 7. **2♦.** Another reverse (see No. 5).
 8. **2♣.** Not worth any more. (I wonder where the spades are!)