

Balanced Opener's rebids

We learnt last week that when responder bids a **new suit**, it is **forcing**. A new suit response is an **unlimited** bid and can have a wide range of HCP from 6 up to the maximum possible.

As Opener is forced to rebid when partner responds in a new suit, you will learn it is good strategy to think of your rebid options before making your opening bid.

Remember that a **Major suit fit is a priority** – if you find one, agree the suit immediately. Do not rebid NT if you have a Major suit fit! Reaching the best Major suit fit is more important than who plays the hand.

For example, when you have a balanced hand, you can plan ahead using the following table:

Opener's bidding strategy with balanced hands:

- 12-14 HCP BAL: Open 1NT. **DO NOT open 1 suit** – you often won't have any valid rebid.
- 15-17 HCP BAL: Open 1-suit, plan to rebid a non-jump NT, unless a Major suit fit is found
- 18-19 HCP BAL: Open 1-suit, plan to rebid a jump in NT unless there's a Major suit fit.
- *20-22 HCP BAL: Open 2NT – lucky you to have this much! More on this later.*

Stronger (15-19 HCP) balanced hands with a 5-card suit (including Majors)

When you have a balanced hand with 15-19 HCP, this is too strong to open 1NT, so according to the above table you open 1 of a suit. Your general plan to make a rebid in NT, unless a Major suit fit shows up.

Note that, as well as the 15-19 HCP 4333 and 4432 shapes, this strategy also includes **all balanced hands of 5332 shape, including those with a 5-card Major suit**.

In other words, while you shouldn't open 1NT with a 5-card Major, it is best to **rebid NT** to show your stronger range when you have 15-19 HCPs **with any 5332-shaped hand**.

Responder's rebids after Opener rebids NT

When opener rebids NT, they will be showing a **stronger** balanced hand – either 15-17 HCP, if they didn't jump, or 18-19 HCP, if their rebid was a jump in NT.

After an auction where Opener rebids 1NT, showing 15-17 HCP and a balanced hand, Responding is similar to responding to a 1NT opening, noting the increased HCP range.

As **Opener's NT rebid is a limit bid**, Responder can now take charge of the auction, they become "the BOSS", either to decide the final contract – or to ask further questions – in a similar way as responding to a 1NT opening.

For example, after: 1♦ – 1♠ –
1NT – ? → if Responder has:

- A balanced hand with 10+ HCP → **raise to 3NT**. (The arithmetic is 10 + 15 or more from partner = 25+ HCP and enough for game).
- 10+ points and a 6+ card ♥ or ♠ suit → **bid 4♥ or ♠4 game**, knowing that there are at least 25 points and at least an 8-card suit fit in the Major.
- Less than 8 HCP & an unbalanced 5+ card ♠ suit → sign off in 2♠.
- 8-9 HCP and a balanced hand → **invite** to 3NT by **bidding 2NT**.
- 10+ points and a 5 card Major → **bid your Major at the 3-level** asking Opener to bid game in the Major with 3-card support or bid 3NT with only 2-card support.





Remember, just like when responding to 1NT, if there is a NT rebid, Responder is the BOSS! Their goal is to reach the best contract – this is more important than which side becomes declarer.

See some examples below:

Opener		Responder
♠ QJ95		♠ 108
♥ AQ8		♥ KJ52
♦ A954		♦ K102
♣ K8		♣ QJ97
1♦	–	1♥
1NT	–	3NT

Opener		Responder
♠ Q83		♠ AK7654
♥ AK85		♥ 96
♦ KJ5		♦ Q32
♣ Q87		♣ J4
1♥	–	1♠
1NT	–	4♠

Opener		Responder
♠ K987		♠ A1043
♥ AQ		♥ 986
♦ KJ5		♦ A8
♣ K875		♣ Q932
1♣	–	1♠
3♠	–	4♠

Remember to raise when a Major suit fit is found.

Opener		Responder
♠ A52		♠ KQJ3
♥ KQ54		♥ J32
♦ A95		♦ 108
♣ K54		♣ 9832
1♥	–	1♠
1NT	–	all pass

Opener		Responder
♠ Q10		♠ J97654
♥ AK542		♥ 76
♦ KJ5		♦ Q3
♣ Q87		♣ K42
1♥	–	1♠
1NT	–	2♠
all pass		

As opposite 1NT opening, 2♠ here is a sign-off.

Opener		Responder
♠ A5		♠ KQ103
♥ K85		♥ 10972
♦ AQ1054		♦ J9
♣ A92		♣ Q106
1♦	–	1♥
1NT	–	2NT
3NT	–	all pass

Responder's 2NT is an invitational bid. Opener with max. in the range they've shown accepts the invite.

Opener		Responder
♠ A5		♠ KQJ93
♥ KQ54		♥ J32
♦ A975		♦ 108
♣ K52		♣ A83
1♥	–	1♠
1NT	–	3♠
3NT	–	all pass

Responder is looking for 3-card ♠ support.

Opener		Responder
♠ K98		♠ QJ6
♥ K105		♥ AQJ54
♦ KQ842		♦ J95
♣ A8		♣ 96
1♦	–	1♥
1NT	–	3♥
4♥	–	all pass

Responder is looking for 3-card ♥ support.

Opener		Responder
♠ A5		♠ KQJ3
♥ AQ1054		♥ J92
♦ A95		♦ 3
♣ A5		♣ 98432
1♥	–	1♠
2NT	–	3♥
4♥	–	all pass

Responder is looking for 3-card ♥ support.