

Unbalanced Openings and Rebids

Opener's bidding strategy with unbalanced hands

Unbalanced hands are mostly single-suited or two-suited. Your unbalanced hand type should guide your subsequent bidding, as outlined below.

Single-suited opening hands

- With a single-suited hand with a good 6+ card suit, you may open with 11 HCP.
- 12-15 HCP with a 5+ long suit, open your suit and rebid it at the minimum 2-level
- 16-17 HCP with a 6+ long suit, open your suit and rebid it with a jump to the 3-level
- 18-19 HCP with a good 6+ long suit, open your suit and rebid it with a jump to game
- With a 5332 hand and 15-19 HCP, you have a NT rebid (refer previous lesson).

Two-suited opening hands

- As we learnt earlier in the course in Module 4, when you have an unbalanced hand with two suits of unequal length, you should open the longest suit first.
- If you have **two long suits of equal length**, i.e. 5-5 or 6-6 distribution – then **open the higher-ranking suit** first.
- With a good 2-suited hand having two 5+ card suits, you may open on 11 HCP.
- On your rebid, your **first priority** is to **raise** partner's suit, **if you have a suit fit**. Otherwise, the strategy is as follows:

Opener's rebids with minimum (11-15 HCP) two-suited hands

When you have a minimum hand, it is important to keep bidding low until you have found a suit fit. You should consider this before you rebid a new suit.

If your 2nd suit can be bid below the 2-level of your 1st-bid suit, then you should rebid it.

Tip: The 2-level of your 1st bid suit is called "the barrier" – see explanation below.

With a minimum hand, if bidding your 2nd suit is above the 2-level of your 1st-bid suit, you should rebid your long suit instead.

The barrier applies to the Opener and it is the level of their original suit at the 2-level. E.g. if the Opener bids 1♣ the barrier is 2♣. If Opener bids 1♥, the barrier is 2♥ etc.



*When you have a minimum hand, bidding a **new** suit above the barrier risks pushing the bidding up "an extra floor" – too high for safety in the Bridge House. With a minimum hand, you don't have enough points to support the extra tricks required at a higher level and your contract may come crashing down, like a house with insufficient foundations!*

Opener's rebids with stronger (16-19 HCP) two-suited hands

With no immediate fit for Responder's suit, you should rebid your 2nd suit freely. With 16-17 point hands you have enough to invite Game (2nd floor of the Bridge House) and can rebid a non-jump new suit, and with 18-19 you plan to go onto Game via bidding a **new suit at a higher level** (*either above the barrier or at the 3-level*), which is **forcing**.

*Note: Opener bidding a **new suit above the barrier** shows **16+ HCP** and is **forcing**.*

Three-suited opening hands

The 3-suited hands (i.e. ones that have a 4441-shape with any singleton) are a rare hand type. Advancing students may choose to improve what you learnt in Module 4 with the following rule to handle bidding nicely with these hand types:

- 4144 or 4414 shaped hands (with a **red** singleton), **open the suit below the singleton.**
- With 4441 or 1444 shaped hands (with a **black** singleton), **open the middle suit.**

Continuing Responder's auction after Opener's new suit rebid

Responder's rebids is the topic for the next module. Below are a few early tips for Responder to conclude the auction for this section's practice hands, and help with the quiz:

- When Opener starts with 1-of-a-suit and rebids a new suit, this normally implies Opener has at least 5-cards in their 1st bid suit.
- So, if Responder has 3+ support for Opener's 1st suit, they expect an 8-card fit.
- If Responder also has 13+ HCP, they have Game values opposite the opening bid. With a known 8-card suit fit in a Major they can then bid Game in that suit.
- When Opener shows two suits and can have a minimum hand, Responder with minimum values (6-9) should try to sign off as low as possible in any playable spot.
- Often a minimum responder will show preference going back to Opener's 1st bid suit meant as a "sign-off". This does not show any extra values, and sometimes it may only have 2-card support.

Examples:

Opener		Responder
♠ KJ95		♠ Q864
♥ A8		♥ KJ52
♦ A9		♦ 87
♣ KJ876		♣ J97
1♣	–	1♥
1♠	–	2♠

Opener		Responder
♠ K4		♠ A765
♥ KQJ10874		♥ 96
♦ K6		♦ Q9432
♣ AK		♣ J4
1♥	–	1♠
4♥	–	all pass

Opener		Responder
♠ KQJ87		♠ A9
♥ A82		♥ K86
♦ J95		♦ 842
♣ Q5		♣ K9632
1♠	–	2♣
2♠	–	all pass

Opener		Responder
♠ A5		♠ J8
♥ KQ542		♥ J103
♦ A1075		♦ QJ9
♣ J5		♣ AQ1094
1♥	–	2♣
2♦	–	3♥
4♥	–	all pass

Opener		Responder
♠ Q9		♠ K852
♥ KQJ105		♥ 94
♦ KQ84		♦ A5
♣ 84		♣ 97652
1♥	–	1♠
2♦	–	2♥
all pass		

Opener		Responder
♠ A5		♠ K973
♥ AQ10954		♥ K2
♦ A95		♦ 432
♣ K5		♣ QJ32
1♥	–	1♠
3♥	–	4♥
all pass		

Module 7 Quiz - Questions

Unbalanced Opening and Rebids

What is your rebid on each hand after the following auctions?

(a) 1♥ - 1♠
?

(b) 1♥ - 2♣
?

(c) 1♥ - 2♦
?

Hand 1

♠ Q9
♥ AKJ962
♦ 53
♣ AK5

Hand 2

♠ K5
♥ KQ943
♦ 952
♣ A108

Hand 3

♠ K852
♥ AJ982
♦ A6
♣ 54

Hand 4

♠ AJ95
♥ KQJ64
♦ Q5
♣ A8

Hand 5

♠ A5
♥ KQ743
♦ 95
♣ A1085

Hand 1

(a)

(b)

(c)

Hand 2

Hand 3

Hand 4

Hand 5

What is your rebid on each hand after the following auctions?

(a) 1♦ - 1♥
?

(b) 1♦ - 1♠
?

(c) 1♦ - 2♣
?

Hand 6

♠ K952
♥ K8
♦ KJ942
♣ K6

Hand 7

♠ K5
♥ K8
♦ K10943
♣ A1085

Hand 8

♠ 52
♥ A986
♦ AKJ65
♣ 97

Hand 9

♠ A3
♥ K9
♦ AQ9854
♣ A82

Hand 10

♠ A9
♥ K10
♦ KQ865
♣ AQ98

Hand 6

(a)

(b)

(c)

Hand 7

Hand 8

Hand 9

Hand 10