

Openings

	0-5	6-8	9-12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23+
balanced							1NT				2NT			
openable suit														
6 card suit			2♦♥♠					1♣♦♥♠						2♣ ^{af}
7 card suit		≥3♣♦♥♠												
solid minor, 2 outside stoppers								Acol 3NT ^a						

1 Suit openings

The basic suit openings are 1♣, 1♦, 1♥, and 1♠. All four openings have the same strength requirements: between 13 and 22 points, including distribution. With very long suits, the upper limit is lower.

Five-card majors

In order to more easily find a 5-3 fit, we require a 5-card major suit to open a major (1♥ or 1♠).

Better minor

Always open a major if possible. With no 5-card major, open the longest minor suit (this may be as short as 3 cards). It is conventional to open 1♣ with 3-3 and 1♦ with 4-4 in the minors.

Strong 2♣ opening

With a balanced hand and 23 points, open 2♣. With very long suits, you may open 2♣ with a few less points.

Acol 3NT opening

Open a gambling 3NT with a solid 6-7 card minor suit, 16-21 points, and at least two outside stoppers.

2 Notrump openings

With a balanced hand (5332, 4432, or 4333) and opening strength, you should think about opening notrump. The point ranges are narrow (3 points each) and only count high card points. With 15-17 points, open 1NT, and with 20-22 points, open 2NT. Note that 3NT is a conventional opening (Acol) and is described later.

3 Preemptive openings

With a weak hand (definitely less than opening strength) and a long suit (6 or more), you should make a preemptive opening.

Weak two-bids

A bid at the 2-level (other than 2♣, which is reserved for strong hands) shows a 6-card suit and roughly 5-9 high card points. With any more high card points, the distribution should be enough to open, so a preempt should be avoided.

Higher preempts

With more than 6 cards in a suit, increase the level of the bid by one for each extra card. This can be done with any strength, but with stronger hands, a 1- or 2-level opening may be preferred.

3rd seat: Rule of twenty

In third seat, open light if (high card points + length of two longest suits) ≥ 20.

4th seat: Rule of fifteen

In fourth seat, open light if (high card points + length of spades) ≥ 15.

Basics

Suit order

♣ → ♦ → ♥ → ♠ → NT

Point count

A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1

void=3, singleton=2, doubleton=1

Unprotected honors

K, Qx, Jxx are unprotected. Count *either* high card points or distribution but not both.

Game bids

3NT } 26 points
4♥, 4♠ }
5♣, 5♦: 29 points

Slam bids

6-level: 33 points
7-level: 37 points

Law of total tricks

In competition, bid to take as many tricks as there are trump between the partners.

Scoring

100 below = game

♣, ♦ contract: 20/trick

♥, ♠ contract: 30/trick

NT contract: 10 + 30/trick

undertricks: 50 (100 if vulnerable)

dbl'd: 1/2/2/300 (2/300 vuln)

doubled contract made: +50

small slam: 500 (750 vuln)

grand slam: 1000 (1500 vuln)

rubber: 700 (in 2), 500 (in 3)

unfinished: game=300, part=100

Responses to a suit opening

1 Point Ranges

As responder, these are the important point ranges:

0–6: don't respond (20+)

6–10: minimal (17-20)

10–12: invitational (15-16)

13+: game-forcing

Parentheses indicate partner's minimum strength to reach game

2 Priorities over 1♥, 1♠

1. Confirm a 3-card fit (raise, splinter, or 2NT)
2. Show 4 spades (1♥-1♠) or 5 hearts (1♠-2♥)
3. Show a 4-card minor suit (and 11+ points)
4. Show 6–10 points (1NT)

3 Priorities over 1♣, 1♦

1. Show a 4-card major suit
2. Show strength (2NT or 3NT)
- 3a. Show a 4-card minor suit
- 3b. Confirm a strong 4-card fit (single raise) or weak 5-card fit (jump raise)
3. Show 6–10 points (1NT)

	6–10	11–12
3-cd major suit fit	single raise (2)	limit raise (3)
4-cd minor suit fit	jump raise (3)	single raise (2)
new suit	1NT	2/1 ^f
	1/1 ^f	

4 Response detail

1. New suit at 1-level ("1/1"): 6 points, 4 cards
2. New suit at 2-level ("2/1"): 10 points, 4 cards
note: 2♥ promises 5♥s if no interference
3. 1NT: 6–10 points, no fit or allowed 4-cd suit
4. Single major raise: 6–10 points, 3-card fit
5. Jump major raise: 11–12 points, 3-card fit
6. Single minor raise: 11+ points, 4-card fit
7. Jump minor raise: 6-10 points, 5-card fit
8. 2NT: after minor: 13–15 points, balanced
2NT: after major: Jacoby 2NT
9. 3NT: after minor: 16–18 points, balanced

5 Game-forcing major raises

Splinter bid

Splinter bid is a double jump and shows 4-card support and a singleton in the bid suit. Requires 12–14 high card points *outside* the singleton. Never splinter with a singleton ace. Opener will continue with 16+ points and no wasted strength; otherwise sign off.

Jacoby 2NT

Jacoby 2NT is an artificial major-suit raise by an unpassed hand, asking opener to clarify with one of

- 4 of new suit: second (good) 5-card suit
- 3 of new suit: singleton in bid suit
- 3NT: 15–18(+) points, balanced
- 3 of same suit: 15–18(+) points, 6+ trump
- 4 of same suit: sign off w/ 12–14 points

Strong jump shift

Outside of competition, a jump shift is slam-invitational, promising 16+ points and either a one-suited hand, good trump support, or a strong balanced hand (and always at least 5-cards and 2 top honors in the bid suit). Point requirement may be shaded with an absolutely solid suit (AKQJxxx). This bid is forcing.

The nature of the jump shift will be clarified on the rebid (either rebidding the new suit at (weaker) or below (stronger) game, rebidding 3NT, or rebidding the opener's suit with support).

Opener's rebid

Opener's rebid is prioritized as follows

raise responder's suit A, K, or Q and ≥2-card support

rebid own suit extra length and honors in that suit

bid a new suit good honors (not showing length)

bid notrump minimim, balanced, both unbid stoppers

Responses to a notrump opening

The notrump opening is a limit bid. Responder is the captain and ultimately decides where to end up.

1 Point Ranges

Responding to 1NT (partner has 15–17), these are the important ranges:

0–7 sign off

8–9 invitational

10–15 game-forcing

16–17 slam-invitational

18+ slam-forcing

	0–7	8–9	10–15	16–17	18+
(semi)balanced		2NT	3NT	4NT	6NT
five-card major		Jacoby transfer 2♦/2♥ ^{af}			
four-card major	2♣-PASS		Stayman 2♣ ^{af}		

4 Jacoby Transfers

Jacoby 2♦/2♥ asks opener to bid ♥/♠ (requires 5-card major).

Opener's Rebids

Opener must bid transferred suit (some allow 2NT with 2-card misfit) but may *bypass* transfer by bidding at 3-level with 17 points and a 4-card fit.

	8–9	10–15
Responder's Rebids		
5-card major	2NT	3NT
6-card major	raise 3	Texas
5-5 majors	2♦-2♥-2♠	2♥-2♠-3♥

Texas Transfers

With game-going strength and a 6-card major, bid directly below the obvious major-suit game.

2 Bids

2♣ Stayman

2♦/2♥ Jacoby transfer

2NT Invite 3NT

3♣-3♠ Unspecified

3NT Sign off

4♣ Gerber

4♦/4♥ Texas transfer

3 Stayman

Stayman asks opener to show a 4-card major suit. It can be bid with any strength and any shape, but suggests a 4-card major. Opener responds 2♦ with no 4-card majors, 2♥ with 4 hearts (and maybe 4 spades), and 2♠ with 4 spades (and not 4 hearts).

Responder's Rebids

PASS/2♥ Sign off w/ nothing

2♠/2NT Invite 4♠ and/or 4NT

raise to 3 Invite suit game

3NT Sign off, denying fit

5 2NT openings

Adjust ranges down 5 points each. Stayman (3♣), Jacoby transfers (3♦/3♥), Gerber (4♣), and Texas (4♦/4♥) are all on, subject to obvious adjustments.

6 Alternate treatments

4-way transfers

Requires 5-cd game-force or 6-cd bust

2♠ Transfer to 3♣

2NT Transfer to 3♦

Competition

	5–8	9–12	13–17	18+
balanced			Takeout double	
5 card suit				Takeout double
6+ card suit	Jump overcall	Direct overcall		
Two-suited		Michael's/Unusual		Michael's/Unusual

1 Direct Overcalls

Direct suit overcalls are nonforcing, showing 10–17 points and a 5-card suit.

2 Takeout Doubles

A double over a below-game suit bid (through 4♦) when partner has never made a non-passing bid is for takeout. Partner *must respond* unless opponent intervenes*.

0–5 pass if opp intervenes

0–9 bid longest suit

10–12 jump in longest suit

13+ cue-bid

With a stopper and no unbid 4-card major:

6–10 1NT with stopper

10–12 2NT with stopper

13–16 3NT with stopper

10–15 game-forcing

16–17 slam-invitational

18+ slam-forcing

3 Two-suited bids

With a two-suited hand and either strong or weak strength (9–12 or 17+), bid Michael's cuebid or Unusual 2NT. Partner should assume the weak range until the overcaller shows otherwise with a voluntary bid. Both bids are forcing.

Michael's cuebid

Over a minor opening, cuebidding the opener's suit shows 5–5 in the majors. Over a major opening, cuebidding the opener's suit shows 5 in the other major and 5 in an undisclosed minor. Partner may bid NT to ask which minor.

Unusual 2NT

Unusual 2NT shows a 5–5 hand in the two lower unbid suits.

	0–5	6–9	10–12	13–16	17+
4 card	PASS*	bid suit	jump suit	cue-bid	
balanced		1NT	2NT	3NT	

(With 0–9 points, responder may double-jump with a 6-card major.)