

Openings

	0-5	6-8	9-12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23+
balanced							1NT				2NT			
openable suit														2♣ ^a
6 card suit			2♦♥♠					1♣♦♥♠						
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 if (high card points + length of two longest suits) ≥ 20.

4th seat: Rule of fifteen

In third seat, open 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

♣, ♦ contract: 20/trick

♥, ♠ contract: 30/trick

NT contract: 40/first, 30/after 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)

at end: 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 bids. 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

Decrease numbers by 5 points when responding to 2NT (20–22).

2 Bids

2♣ Stayman

2♦/2♥ Jacoby transfer

2♠/2NT Minor suit transfer

3♣–3♠ ?

3NT Sign off

4♣ Gerber

4♦/4♥ Texas transfer

Stayman, Jacoby, Gerber, and Texas are all on after 2NT as well, only shifted appropriately.

3 Stayman

Stayman asks opener to show a 4-card major suit. It can be bid with any strength and any shape. 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 are as follows:

PASS/2♥ Sign off with nothing

2♠/2NT Invite game in ♠ and/or NT

3 same major Invite game in the major

3NT Sign off, denying fit