

Opener Rebids

This document summarizes the conventional meanings of the most common types of rebids by opener after an opening bid of one in a suit. The systemic context is traditional Standard American. We start by defining some terms that are used in the document.

A *rebid* denotes a bid made by a player after his/her first non-pass bid. In most cases it refers to the player's second bid.

Responder is opener's partner. A *response* is a bid by responder.

A *simple* bid/raise/rebid means a non-jump (that is, a minimum-level) bid/raise/rebid. A *new suit* denotes a suit that has not been bid previously by any player in the auction.

Balanced hands are those with 4333, 4432 or 5332 distributions; a *semi-balanced* hand has a 5422 distribution.

REBIDS BY OPENER

The paragraphs that follow specify the conventions that govern the most common types of rebids by opener. It is assumed throughout that the auction is uncontested, that is, that the opponents always pass. It is also assumed that the responses to opening bids are simple, that is, that responder makes non-jump, minimum-level bids in response to opening bids. Opener's rebids are also assumed to be non-jump unless otherwise indicated.

Before getting into the details about each individual rebid, it is useful to keep in mind certain general rules that apply whenever opener rebids a new suit. In such case:

- The second suit is at least 4-cards long (except in some rare and exceptional circumstances in which opener may choose to rebid a 3-card *minor* suit).
- The second suit is never longer than (but it can be of equal length as) the first suit bid by opener.
- Opener's first suit is at least 5-cards long except in the case of a 4441 distribution.
- The most common lengths of opener's first and second suits are 54, 64 and 55, respectively.

Opener rebids 1NT

This shows a minimum opening (12–14 HCP) and a balanced hand. Occasionally opener may rebid 1NT with a 5422 or a 5431 distribution, in which case the possible point range is 12–15 HCP. After a 1♥ opening and a 1♠ response, a 1NT rebid shows 12–15 HCP and a 5332 distribution. After a 1♥/♠ response, a 1NT rebid denies 4+ cards in responder's major suit.

After a 1♣/♦ opening bid, it is permissible for opener to rebid 1NT with a singleton in responder's suit [2017 BWS IV.H].

After a 1♣/♦ opening bid and a 1♥ response, a 1NT rebid by opener *does not deny* four ♠ (Walsh-style responses).

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♣ – 1♥ – 1NT	♠ KJ84 ♥ AQ2 ♦ J10 ♣ Q1087
1♦ – 1♠ – 1NT	♠ 4 ♥ KQJ3 ♦ KQ742 ♣ A86
1♥ – 1♠ – 1NT	♠ 84 ♥ AJ876 ♦ AJ5 ♣ K96

Opener rebids the same suit at the two level

This shows a minimum opening (12–15 HCP) and 6+ cards in the suit. After a 1♣/♦ opening bid, opener may *occasionally* choose to rebid the same suit with just five cards in it, but responder should base his subsequent bidding on the assumption that opener's suit is 6+ cards long. After a 1♥/♠ opening bid, a same-suit rebid by opener *always* shows 6+ cards in the suit.

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♣ – 1♠ – 2♣	♠ Q84 ♥ A7 ♦ J10 ♣ AQ10874
1♥ – 1NT – 2♥	♠ 5 ♥ KJ10965 ♦ AJ8 ♣ KQ6

Opener jump-rebids the same suit at the three-level

This shows an intermediate opening (16–18 HCP) and *guarantees* 6+ cards in the suit.

Note: This applies only when opener's rebid is a *jump* to the three-level. In particular, it does not apply when responder makes a simple raise of opener's suit, e.g.: 1♥ – 2♥ – 3♥.

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♦ – 2♣ – 3♦	♠ 2 ♥ Q109 ♦ AKJ975 ♣ AK5
1♠ – 1NT – 3♠	♠ AKQ1075 ♥ K10 ♦ QJ7 ♣ Q6

Opener makes a simple raise of responder's new suit

This shows a minimum hand (12–15 pts, including shortness points) and 4+ cards in responder's suit (or 3+ cards when the response shows a 5-card or longer suit, e.g.: 1♠ – 2♥ – 3♥).

Note: This applies only if the response is in a *new* suit, that is, a suit other than opener's. If responder makes a simple raise of opener's suit (i.e. raises it to the two-level, e.g.: 1♥ – 2♥), then a re-raise by opener (1♥ – 2♥ – 3♥) shows an intermediate opening (16–18 HCP) and, in the case of a major-suit, it is invitational to game.

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♥ – 1♠ – 2♠	♠ K1072 ♥ AQ1094 ♦ 85 ♣ A5
1♠ – 2♣ – 3♣	♠ AQ1075 ♥ 7 ♦ QJ7 ♣ QJ96

Opener jump-raises responder's new suit to the three-level

This shows an intermediate hand (16–18 pts, including shortness points) and 4+ cards in responder's suit (or 3+ cards when the response shows a 5-card or longer suit).

Note: This applies only if the response is in a *new* suit, that is, a suit other than opener's, and opener's rebid is a *jump* raise to the three-level (this implies that the new-suit response was made at the one-level). In particular, the foregoing does not apply if opener's rebid is a *simple* raise to the three-level, e.g.: 1♠ – 2♥ – 3♥. As indicated above, a simple raise shows a *minimum* hand.

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♦ – 1♥ – 3♥	♠ 10 ♥ KJ94 ♦ AQ85 ♣ A65
1♣ – 1♠ – 3♠	♠ KJ75 ♥ KQJ7 ♦ 7 ♣ AJ96

Opener rebids a new lower-ranking suit at the two-level

This shows a wide opening range (12–18 HCP) and two 4-card or longer suits; the first suit is always of *equal length or longer* than the second. Normally the first suit is at least 5-cards long, except if opener's distribution is 4441 with the singleton in a major suit (in which case opener opens 1♦ and rebids 2♣). Occasionally opener may choose to rebid a 3-card *minor* suit but responder should continue bidding on the assumption that the length of opener's second suit is 4+ cards.

Note: The above applies only if *all* the following conditions are satisfied:

- Opener's first *and* second bids are in a *suit*, that is, not in NT.
- Opener's second suit is different from and *lower* in rank than opener's first suit.
- If responder's bid was in a suit (i.e. not 1NT), then responder's suit must be *different* from *both* opener's suits.

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♥ – 1♠ – 2♣	♠ 9 ♥ AQJ85 ♦ Q85 ♣ KJ65
1♠ – 1NT – 2♥	♠ AKJ75 ♥ KQJ8 ♦ 74 ♣ K6
1♥ – 2♣ – 2♦	♠ 76 ♥ KJ1085 ♦ KQJ65 ♣ A
1♦ – 1♠ – 2♣	♠ 8 ♥ K1085 ♦ AJ105 ♣ AQ98

Opener rebids a new higher-ranking suit at the two-level after a one-level response

This is referred to as a **reverse** by opener and shows an intermediate to strong opening (17–21 HCP). Both suits are at least 4-cards long and the first suit is always *strictly longer* than the second, except if opener's distribution is 4441 (the singleton can be in any suit). Occasionally opener may choose to reverse into a 3-card ♦ suit (this can happen only if opener opens 1♣ and rebids 2♦ and if the ♣ suit is at least 6-cards long).

Note: The above applies only if *all* the following conditions are satisfied:

- Opener's first *and* second bids are in a *suit*, that is, not in NT.
- Opener's second suit is different from and *higher* in rank than opener's first suit.
- If responder's bid was in a suit (i.e. not 1NT), then responder's suit must be *different* from *both* opener's suits.

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♣ – 1♠ – 2♦	♠ 43 ♥ A4 ♦ AQJ5 ♣ KQJ52
1♦ – 1NT – 2♠	♠ AJ75 ♥ KQ9 ♦ AKQJ4 ♣ 6
1♦ – 1♠ – 2♥	♠ 8 ♥ AK85 ♦ AJ105 ♣ KQJ8

Opener rebids a new higher-ranking suit at the two-level after a two-level response

As in the case of a reverse by opener that follows a one-level response, these sequences show a distribution in which opener's first suit is always *strictly longer* than the second, except if opener's distribution is 4441. There are only four sequences of this type:

- 1♦ – 2♣ – 2♥/♠
- 1♥ – 2♣/♦ – 2♠

There is no universal agreement about the strength shown by opener in these sequences. The 2017 Bridge World Standard, which is based on the 2/1 Game Forcing variant of Standard American, specifies that "Opener's reverse of the form one diamond — two clubs — two of a major does not promise extra values" [2017 BWS IV.H]. On the other hand, the same 2017 Bridge World Standard also states that "After [a major-suit opening and] a two-over-one response, a two-level reverse ... shows extra strength" [2017 BWS IV.G].

In the context of traditional Standard American there does not appear to be a particularly compelling reason to treat the two cases differently. A reasonable agreement could be that these sequences do not necessarily show extra values by opener but are *forcing for one round*.

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♦ – 2♣ – 2♥	♠ Q1084 ♥ AQ73 ♦ AJ109 ♣ 6
1♥ – 2♦ – 2♠	♠ KQ75 ♥ KQJ84 ♦ J8 ♣ Q6

Opener rebids a new lower-ranking suit at the three-level

This sequence is sometimes referred to as a *high-level* (or *three-level*) reverse. There are only four sequences of this type:

- 1♥/♠ – 2♦ – 3♣
- 1♠ – 2♥ – 3♣/♦

As in the previous case, there is no universal agreement about opener's strength. The 2017 Bridge World Standard specifies that "After [a major suit opening and] a two-over-one response, ... a non-jump three-level new-suit bid shows extra strength" [2017 BWS IV.G]. In the context of traditional Standard

American it seems reasonable to adopt the convention that these rebids by opener show enough extra strength and/or shape to *force to game*.

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♥ – 2♦ – 3♣	♠ J84 ♥ AKJ73 ♦ A ♣ K986
1♠ – 2♥ – 3♦	♠ KQ765 ♥ A4 ♦ KQJ8 ♣ 62

Opener jump-rebids 2NT or rebids 2NT after a 1NT response

This generally shows a strong opening and a balanced hand. The specific details depend on whether the opening bid was in a minor or major suit.

After a 1♣/♦ opening bid, a 2NT jump-rebid (or a 2NT rebid after a 1NT response) shows a *balanced* hand with 18–19 HCP. Occasionally opener may choose this rebid with 19 HCP and a quasi-balanced hand containing a six-card or, rarely, a seven-card minor suit (e.g. 6322 or 7222). After a 1♥/♠ response, a 2NT rebid by opener denies 4 cards in responder's major suit but does *not* deny 4 cards in the *other* major.

After a 1♥/♠ opening bid, a 2NT jump-rebid (or a 2NT rebid after a 1NT response) generally shows a 5332 distribution with 17–19 HCP.

Note: The above does not apply if the 2NT rebid follows a two-level response (e.g.: 1♥ – 2♣ – 2NT).

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♣ – 1♠ – 2NT	♠ K43 ♥ A64 ♦ AJ10 ♣ KQJ2
1♦ – 1♥ – 2NT	♠ AK75 ♥ KQ9 ♦ AQ74 ♣ J6
1♥ – 1NT – 2NT	♠ A8 ♥ AK985 ♦ Q105 ♣ KJ8

Opener rebids 2NT after a two-level response

This shows a minimum opening (12–15 HCP), generally with a balanced hand.

Opener jump-rebids a new lower-ranking suit

This shows a strong opening (19–21 HCP) and is *forcing to game*. The first suit is always *at least 5-cards long* and of *equal length or longer* than the second. Occasionally opener may choose to jump-rebid a 3-card *minor* suit for the purpose of creating a game-forcing auction.

Note: The above applies only if *all* the following conditions are satisfied:

- Opener's first *and* second bids are in a *suit*, that is, not in NT.
- Opener's second suit is different from and *lower* in rank than opener's first suit.
- Opener's rebid is a *jump*.
- If responder's bid was in a suit (i.e. not 1NT), then responder's suit must be *different* from *both* opener's suits.

Examples

Auction	Opener's hand
1♥ - 1♠ - 3♣	♠ 2♥ AKQJ85 ♦ AQ ♣ KJ65
1♠ - 1NT - 3♥	♠ AKQ75 ♥ KQ85 ♦ A4 ♣ K6
1♥ - 2♣ - 3♦	♠ A6 ♥ AJ1085 ♦ KQJ65 ♣ A