

We respond to an opening bid with as few as 6-9 points, but when we do we want to get out of the auction as soon as possible without leaving our side in a stupid contract.

### When responder is weak

♠ K J 10 5
♥ 7 5
♦ Q 10 3
♣ J 9 3 2

Partner opens 1♥, you say 1♠, partner rebids 2♣, what do you bid now?  
With only seven points, you are not strong enough for 2NT. You don't like hearts and do prefer clubs. Partner could make a stronger rebid with a good hand, so your side can't have game. Pass and keep your side out of trouble.  
With ten points, say ♣A instead of ♣J, you would raise to 3♣.

♠ K J 10 5
♥ 7 5
♦ Q 10 4 3 2
♣ J 9

Partner opens 1♥. You are not strong enough to respond 2♦, so bid 1♠. Partner bids 2♣. Partner must have at least five hearts, since with only four, partner would either open or rebid in no trumps. So you should give preference to hearts by bidding 2♥. Partner must be aware that this preference is not the same as real support and only bid again if very strong.

♠ 10 8 5
♥ A K 9 8 7 5
♦ 3 2
♣ J 9

Partner opens 1♦, you say 1♥ and partner rebids 1♠. You can repeat your own suit by bidding 2♥ showing at least six hearts. Change the hx A 5 to cx A 5 and you can rebid 1NT still showing 6-9 points.

When responder is a bit better, say 10-12 points, responder makes a try for game on the second round but then leaves the final decision to opener.

### When responder is intermediate

♠ A K J 10 5
♥ Q 7 5
♦ 10 3 2
♣ J 9

The bidding starts 1♥ 1♠ 2♣, but now you are happy to support hearts with three cards. With nearly an opening bid you want to let partner know that game is possible. Bid 3♥, which is a limit bid so partner can pass. With 14 points, say the ♣A instead of the ♣J, you would jump to 4♥. An opening bid facing an opening bid expects to land in game.

♠ K J 10 5
♥ Q 5
♦ Q 10 4 3 2
♣ K 9

Same auction but now, with only have two hearts, supporting hearts is less attractive. With 11 points and the diamonds well stopped you have the values to bid 2NT. 2NT shows a good 10 to 12 points. It's not forcing but partner will raise to 3NT with a bit extra.

♠ A K J 5 4 3
♥ 4 2
♦ 8 6 3
♣ K 9 4

Same auction but now you can repeat your own suit with a jump to 3♠ showing at least a strong 6-card suit. Change the ♠J to the ♣J and you can raise opener's second suit.

When partner opens and responder has a hand that would have opened too, the partnership should go for game. But as opener cannot see through the back of the cards, it has to be responder who drives the bidding to the best game

### When responder is stronger

♠ K J 10 5
♥ Q 5
♦ A J 10 4 2
♣ K 9

When the bidding starts 1♥ 1♠ 2♣ and responder has better hand, say 13-15 points, responder could respond 2♦. But it is simpler to respond 1♠ and check on spades first, since you can jump to 3NT on the next round and not give too much of the hand away.

♠ K J 10 5
♥ 5
♦ A Q J 10 7 2
♣ K 9

Respond 2♦ to a 1♥ opening and if opener rebids 2♥ bid 2♠ to show four spades and make sure the spades are not lost. This bid is called a 'Responders Reverse' and it is forcing. Partner will raise with four spades or bid 2NT with club stoppers. If partner rebids 3♥ you can try 3NT.

♠ K J 10 5
♥ Q 5
♦ A Q J 10 7 2
♣ 9

With this hand you are still worth a responder's reverse. If over 2♠ partner bids 3♣ or 3♦ bid 3♥. When you bid again after opener makes a minimum response, this is forcing to game.

♠ K Q 10 5 4
♥ Q 2
♦ J 10 4
♣ A Q 10

This 14 point hand should expect to drive the partnership to game. Respond 1♠ to 1♥ and if partner rebids 2♦, jump to 3NT. But suppose partner rebids 2♣, which game are we going to bid? Should it be 4♥, 3NT or 4♠? It's not easy to guess what the best contract will be.

I will discuss the solution to this and similar problems in my next article, but here is how two students bid the hand in last week's duplicate.

♠ A 2	♠ K Q 10 5 4
♥ K J 10 6 4	♥ Q 2
♦ A 3	♦ J 10 4
♣ J 8 6 4	♣ A Q 10

<b>Sheila</b>	<b>John</b>
1♥	1♠
2♣	4♥

North led ♦2, which went ♦10, ♦K and ♦A. Sheila played a heart to the ♥Q and a heart to the ♥10 and ♥A. North played ♦Q and another diamond, so Sheila could throw a club away. She drew the remaining trumps and played out the spades. When the ♠J dropped she could throw two more clubs away and make eleven tricks. So John did well to raise partner to 4♥ with only a doubleton on this deal.