

Major Suit Openings

1 Diamond and 1 Heart Openings

The opening bids of 1 and 1 each promise 18-22OP (20-24OP in third or fourth position subject to judgment). The former is opened on every hand with four or more Hearts, the latter is opened on any hand with four or more Spades that has at most three Hearts. The limited nature of these hands often makes it very easy for responder to determine that the opening side has little (or no) play for game, and responder will take an action that is a suggestion of a final contract.

On most hands that may offer play for game, and almost all of those that will force to game, responder bids the next higher step (1 and 1 respectively) which is a relay, asking for further description of opener's hand. After subsequent bids by opener, responder continues to bid Step 1 for relay (with one exception). Opener's replies are structured so that the hands with lower playing strength make low-level responses so that responder may break relays with a natural invitational bid at the two- or three-level. Once broken, relays are never resumed, and natural bidding proceeds in the context of the previous auction. A passed hand may never relay, however one is expected to use the "relay" bid artificially to show a maximum passed hand without implying any fit.

Responder with minimum game-force holdings that are only interested in offering a choice of one or both Major suits or 3NT. When opener indicates a balanced or three-suited hand, relay breaks are available to show such choice-of-game hands and get the required information without divulging unnecessary information to the defenders.

Responder may also utilise fit-showing jumps or mini-splinters as invitational actions.

The response structures for the two openings are very similar:

Responding to 1 and 1

		Meaning
No	No	No desire to bid; does not promise any holding in the bid suit, however negative inferences exist from the failure to make a non-forcing bid.
1	1	Relay , showing a hand with at least game interest. If unable to force to game, such a hand should be able to offer play for 2NT, three of opener's Major or in its own suit if opener is minimum. In particular it needs to be prepared for a response at the three-level showing six or more cards in the suit opened.
1	-	Any balanced or semi-balanced hand with 3-4 and no interest in game or Hearts (pass next), OR 4 5+m with no interest in game or Hearts (rebid 2m where possible), OR 6+ with low game interest (rebid 2), OR 3-4 0-1 3-6m with game interest (rebid 2H where possible), OR a strong 6+card Minor and interest in 3NT (rebid 2NT or 3m).
1NT	-	Normally exactly five Spades, non-forcing. Opener may revert to 2 with support, or correct to an unbid suit of at least five cards, or to any six card suit, subject to his judgment.
	1NT	Natural, non-forcing. Opener may correct to an unbid suit of at least five cards, or to any six card suit, subject to his judgment.
2	2	Natural, non-forcing, showing a suit of at least five cards. Opener is expected to

2	2	pass without a good reason to bid, normally a concealed suit of at least five cards, or a good six card opening suit, or a good fit and playing strength. When opener rebids without showing fit, there is a fair tendency to deny tolerance. Opener may conceal tolerance any time his holding suggests an advantage in doing so.
2	2	Natural, non-forcing, 3-4 card support. This is a wide-ranging response, which strongly discourages further action from opener. Responder is simply trying to pre-balance the opponents to the three-level in a way that makes it difficult for the opponents to judge the assets of the partnership. Opener may re-raise to the three- or four-level with six or seven trumps in a non-constructive sense. New suit bids show a side suit of at least five cards, and 2NT shows at least five trumps, and both kinds of action show super maximum unbalanced opening hands. Subsequent doubles by either hand are penalty-oriented, however responder has control of the auction.
2	2NT	Unspecified mini-splinter showing at least four-card support for opener's suit, 0-1 in some side suit and values that suggest game is possible opposite a suitable hand. Opener bids Step 1 to find the shortage if this information may help find a game. Responder then bids his shortage naturally, bidding trumps when a natural bid is unavailable.
2NT	3□	Fit-showing jumps, showing 6+ in the suit bid (Spades in the case of 2NT), 3+ support for opener's suit and interest in playing game.
3□	3	
3	3	
3	3	
3NT	3NT	To play.
3	4	To play, could be pre-emptive.

Relay structures

The relay structures are essentially identical to those after a 1□ opening for **one-suited** (See: **Relay Structure**) and **two-suited** (See: **Relay Structure**) hands. **Three-suited** (See: **Relay Structure**) and balanced hands are also accommodated via the steps below the "symmetric" ones.

After 1 -1 and 1 -1

1	1	Meaning
1	1NT	Balanced, 4-5 cards in the suit opened, or a three-suited hand short in the other Major suit.
1NT	-	4+ , unbalanced, with continuations identical to those for 1□-1 -1 -1NT (See: Relay Structure).
2□	2□	4+ , unbalanced, symmetric continuations (See: Relay Structure).
2	2	5+□, 4+M, unbalanced, symmetric continuations 1NT (See: Relay Structure).
2	2	4□, 5+M, unbalanced, symmetric continuations (See: Relay Structure).
2	2	6+M, 0-2C, unbalanced, symmetric continuations (See: Relay Structure).
		etc.

After 1 -1 -1

After this sequence the single exception to the Step-1-for-relay principle occurs. Here 1NT is natural and invitational, and 2□ is the relay. The available bids, of which only 2□ and 2NT are

forcing, are:

- 1NT Natural, invitational, normally 1-2 .
- 2 \square Game-force Relay, artificial.
- 2 Natural, invitational (5)6+ .
- 2 Invitational, normally 3 or a bad balanced 4 .
- 2 Natural, invitational (5)6+ .
- 2NT Major suit choice-of-games relay.
- 3 \square Natural, invitational 6+ \square .
- 3 Natural, highly invitational, long Diamonds.
- 3 Invitational, 4-5 .
- 3 Natural, highly invitational, long independent Spades.
- 3NT To play.

After 1 -1 -1 -2 \square

The continuations after the game-force relay 2 \square are:

- 2 Three-suited with short Spades, with continuations as for three-suited hands (See: **Relay Structure**) after a 1 \square opening.
- 2 5 , balanced, continuations 2NT=3532, 3 \square =3523, 3 =2533 (with zoom).
- 2 4 , 4 , balanced, continuations 3 =4432, 3 =4423 (with zoom).
- 2NT 4 , 4 , balanced, continuations 3 =3442, 3 =2443 (with zoom).
- 3 \square 3424
- 3 2434
- 3 3433 (with zoom).

The details are easily reconstructed from the principle of bidding cheaply when holding cards in high-ranking suits.

After 1 -1 -1 -2NT

The continuations after the Major-suit choice-of-games relay are largely natural:

- 3 \square 3 4 , the choice of suit bid is random.
- 3 3 4 , the choice of suit bid is random.
- 3 5 0 or 2-3 (now 3 shows 5+ and asks for 3-card support)
- 3 4 4
- 3NT 0-2 4

This structure allows the unrevealed relay hand to declare most of the time, has fairly low frequency and consequences of lead-directing doubles, and transmits as little information as possible about the hand that is most likely to declare. A structure where 3 \square / and 3 are swapped is sounder from the view of avoiding lead-directing doubles, but isn't as natural to remember.

After 1 -1 -1NT

The 2 \square bid is now available for relay in the normal manner, as well as a 3 Major-suit choice-of-

games relay:

- 2 \square Game-force Relay, artificial.
- 2 Natural, invitational (5)6+ .
- 2 Natural, invitational (5)6+ .
- 2 Invitational, either 3 or a balanced 4 .
- 2NT Natural, invitational, 1-3 .
- 3 \square Natural, invitational 6+ \square .
- 3 Major suit choice-of-games relay.
- 3 Natural, highly invitational, long independent Hearts.
- 3 Invitational, 4-5 .
- Games To play.

After 1 -1 -1NT-3

The continuations after the Major-suit choice-of-games relay are fairly natural:

- 3 4-5 3 (now 3 shows 3 and asks for 5-card support)
- 3 5 0 or 2
- 3NT 4 0-2

The bids preceding 3 make known the declarer for the three possible contracts, so only conservation of information and avoidance of lead-directional doubles are concerns. There's no way of escaping 3 as an artificial ask which could well be doubled and lead to an effective lead to a Heart or notrump contract. It is unlikely that a useful double of the responses will occur.

After 1 -1 -1NT-2 \square

The continuations to the game-force relay are:

- 2 Three-suited with short Hearts, with continuations as for three-suited hands (See: **Relay Structure**) after a 1 \square opening.
- 2 5 , balanced, continuations 2NT=5332, 3 \square =5323, 3 =5233 (with zoom).
- 2 4 , 4 , balanced, continuations 3 =4342, 3 =4243 (with zoom).
- 2NT 4324
- 3 \square 4234
- 3 4333 (with zoom).

The details are easily reconstructed from the principle of bidding cheaply when holding cards in high-ranking suits.

After 1 -1

Opener may only raise with at least 4-card Spade support, or bid naturally:

- 1NT Balanced or semibalanced, 1-3 , no good 5-card suit to bid.
- 2 \square Natural, 5+suit, 0-3 , non-forcing.
- 2 Natural, 5+suit, 0-3 , non-forcing.
- 2 Natural, (5)6+suit, non-forcing.

- 2 Natural 4-5 .
- 2NT 64xx good hand.
- 3□ 4405, with game interest.
- 3 4450, with game interest.
- 3 4 6 game interest.
- 3 5+ game interest.

After 1 -1 -1NT

- 2□ Natural, 5+suit, non-forcing.
- 2 Natural, 5+suit, non-forcing.
- 2 Three-suited short Hearts, game interest.
- 2 Natural 6+ , non-forcing.
- 2NT Strong Minor suit with game interest & Spade stopper.
- 3□ Natural, strong suit with game interest & no Spade stopper.
- 3 Natural, strong suit with game interest & no Spade stopper.

After 1 -1 -1NT-2

- 2 Forward-going, 3 4+ no Heart wastage.
- 2NT Heart wastage, suggestion of contract.
- 3□ Forward-going, 1-2 4+□ 2-3 no Heart wastage.
- 3 Forward-going, 1-2 4+ 2-3□ no Heart wastage.
- 3 Forward-going, 1444.

After 1 -1 -2□/2

- 2 Natural, 5+suit, non-forcing.
- 2 3-4 0-1 3-6m game interest (natural continuations).
- 2 Natural 6+ , non-forcing.
- 2NT Strong Minor suit with game interest & Spade stopper.
- 3□ Natural, strong suit with game interest & no Spade stopper.
- 3 Natural, strong suit with game interest & no Spade stopper.

After 1 -1 -2

- 2 Natural 6+ , non-forcing.
- 2NT Strong Minor suit with game interest, no stoppers implied.
- 3□ Natural, 0-1 game interest.
- 3 Natural, 0-1 game interest.

After 1 -1NT

- 2□ Natural 5+suit, non-forcing.
- 2 Natural 5+suit, non-forcing.
- 2 Natural, 6+ , non-forcing.
- 2 2-3 non-forcing.
- 2NT 5+ some interest.
- 3□ 3406, fit-showing jump, invitational, non-forcing.

- 3 3460, fit-showing jump, invitational, non-forcing.
- 3 37xx (or 36xx) fit-showing jump, invitational, non-forcing.
- 3 4

Competitive Bidding

General

When the opponents compete before a relay auction has begun, then if the relay bid or the double of it is available, then that call is for relay. A redouble of the 1 or 1 opening tends to deny invitational values and denies tolerance for Diamonds or Hearts respectively. Otherwise, their double of our opening or their overcall of our suit is ignored.

After a raise to the two level, doubles of suit bids by both hands are for penalties, however opener needs to have superb values as responder may be very weak. After a raise to the three level or higher, doubles of suit bids by responder are for penalties, but by opener (See: **Other Alternative Agreements**) they show desire to bid more.

Otherwise, if a relay auction has not begun, doubles of suit bids are negative/takeout until either hand is defined, then penalty. Doubles of notrump bids show values and some degree of penalty interest depending on the meaning of the bid doubled. Jump bids in new suits remain fit-showing, non-jump suit and natural notrump bids remain non-forcing. Raises tend to be not constructive. Opener may continue over raises to 2 / as in the absence of competition. Cuebids and double-then-raise auctions are constructive. Opener's second action (including pass) will normally "define" his hand for purposes of interpreting doubles. In various esoteric auctions where fit is known and further competition possible, jumps (and non-jumps that can't be natural) are fit-showing to empower partner's further actions in competition.

Some 2NT bids in competition show two places to play, particularly in smoldering 2-level auctions when double would be for penalties. 2NT is never natural in competition.

4NT in a competitive auction is RKCB whenever that is possible, and suggesting two possible strains at the five level whenever RKCB is not a possible interpretation. An unnecessary jump to five of opener's suit asks for control of their suit.

When the opponents compete after a relay auction has begun, then the agreements used are identical to those used after interference during a 1 relay auction. In particular all doubles by relayer (and opener if relays have been broken) are for penalties.

Specific Auctions

Abbreviations: M = Major suit shown by opening bid, oM = Major suit unshown by opening bid, R = Red suit, m = minor suit.

Auction	Continuation	Meaning
1 -X	P	Shows at least 3+ tolerance for Diamonds.
	XX	Shows intolerance for Diamonds, and denies a clearly superior descriptive action.
	1 +	Normal system on, including 1 invitational or better relay.
1 -X	P	Shows at least 4+ tolerance for Hearts.

	XX	Shows intolerance for Hearts, and denies a clearly superior descriptive action.
1R-1NT	1 + X	Normal system on, including 1 invitational or better relay. Shows penalty interest, normally about 13+HCP, and activates penalty/action doubles, but does not create a force.
(strong, natural)	Suit	Good suit, prepared for raise in competition.
	2M	Good 4-card raise, prepared for opener to compete when appropriate.
	Jumps	Fit-showing, good 6-card suit with 3-card support and at least invitational values, non-forcing.
1R-overcall (non-jump)	X	Negative style, notionally with about a 4432 with a doubleton in their suit and at most 3-card support. Could include hands worth an invitation with only 3-card support, or game-forcing hands unsuited to any other action.
	Suit	Non-forcing.
	2M	Non-constructive raise, normally not balanced with only 3-card support.
	2NT	At least invitational with 4-card or longer support.
	Cue	Game-forcing with 3-card support.
	3M	Competitive raise with at least four-card support.
	Jumps	Fit-showing, good 6-card suit with 3-card support and at least invitational values, non-forcing.
	Jump cue	Strong raise to 4M.
1R-2M	4M X	To play, normally denying suitability for other actions. Penalty interest for at least one of their possible suits, with at least 2 cards in the other Major suit. Activates penalty/action doubles for both hands.
(2-suiter with oM)	Cue of oM	Stronger general raise to at least 3M.
	2NT	Balanced-ish raise to 3M, unsuited for 3m or 3M bid.
	3m	Fit-showing raise to 3M.
	3M	Competitive, denying suitability for alternate actions.
	Jump cue	Good raise to 4M with shortage in oM.
	4m	Fit-showing offensive raise to 4M (later double shows the defensive strength for 4M as well and allows opener to make the final decision).
1R-2NT	4M X	To play, normally denying suitability for other actions. Penalty interest for at least one of their suits. Activates penalty/action doubles for both hands.
(minors)	3m	shows an invitational or better hand with the corresponding Major (□ -> , ->) in the context of the opening bid. Continuations natural. If showing oM with only invitational values then quality of fit is not a significant concern for opener's valuation.
	3M	Non-invitational raise.
	3oM	Non-forcing natural suit, a good fitting hand may raise.
1R-jumps	X	Negative style, normally including possible 3-card support, or game-forcing hands lacking direction.
	Suits	Non-forcing, constructive.

3M	Normally at least 4-card support.
Cue	Good raise to 4M.
4M	To play, normally denying a suitable alternative action.