

Opening Bidding – Initial Hand Assessment

So you think you have an opening bid. What should you open and what is the proper rebid to get to the best part score, game or slam? Your initial hand assessment can really help you get to the best contract:

Opening Bid Requirements – 12-21 HCPs or 11 HCP with a rebidable 5 card suit and 2.5 or more quick tricks (A = 1, AK suited = 2, AQ suited = 1.5, KQ = 1, K = 0.5). For bigger hands, open a strong 2C (see seminar on Strong 2C Openings for more info)

Strength Assessment for Suits

12-15 HCP – Minimum Opener: looking to stop in part score unless partner shows extra values.

16-18 HCP – Intermediate Opener: looking to make an invite to game once the best strain (suit or NT) is found.

19-21 HCP – Strong Opener: if partner can respond we need to find game somewhere.

21+ HCP – Open 2C (Strong and Artificial)

Major Suit Openings

If you have 5+ cards in a major, then it is usually best to open a major suit. If you have two 5 card majors, bid spades first and look to rebid hearts later. If you have 6 hearts and 5 spades bid hearts first and then spades (Reverse bidding) with Intermediate and Strong Openers. Open 1 spade and rebid hearts with a minimum opener.

Balanced Hands – typically 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 5-3-3-2 shape. If you have a 5 card major then your HCP are mostly outside of the major suit. Otherwise opening the major is often preferred.

12-14 HCP – Open longest minor and look to rebid 1NT unless to find a 4-4 major suit fit. With 4-4 minors open diamonds. With 3-3 minors open clubs.

15-17 HCP – Open 1 NT if you have stoppers in at least 3 of the 4 suits.

18-19 HCP – Open best minor and rebid 2NT with known stoppers in all suits between you and your partner.

20-21 HCP – Open 2NT with stoppers in all suits.

22–24 HCP – Open 2C and rebid 2NT

25–26 HCP – Open 2C and rebid 3NT

Minor Suit Openings

Minor suits are last because they are worth the least amount of points. If you have a long minor without a 5 card major AND you cannot open 1NT or 2NT, then you can open your longest minor. With 4-4 in the minors, open diamonds and look to rebid 1NT unless you find a 4-4 major suit fit. With 5-5 in the minors, open diamonds and look to rebid clubs. With 6 clubs and 5 diamonds, open clubs and look to rebid diamonds with intermediate and strong opening hands. Open diamonds and rebid clubs with minimum hands.