

Rebids by responder in 1-over-1 auctions

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October 21, 2014

A common bidding situation:

♠Ax ♥Axxxx ♦xxx ♣AJx

Partner	You
1♣	1♥
1♠	?

What bid do you make to find the best contract?

In this lecture we'll look at auctions where:

- Opener bids a suit at the 1-level
- You (responder) bid a new suit at the 1-level
- Opener doesn't raise your suit but bids either:
 - 1NT or 2NT
 - A suit bid which is NOT a jump or reverse. (A reverse is something like 1C-1S-2H; it shows a strong hand and is forcing.)

A *one-over-one* bid has a *very* wide range (6+ points and 4+ hearts). Therefore, it is *forcing*.

After opener's rebid, you need to narrow things down.

- Do we belong in a partscore, game or slam?
- Do we have an 8+card major suit fit? If so, we usually want to play there.
- If not, can we play NT?

We will discuss how responder rebids in these common situations. We'll describe two useful conventions: New Minor Forcing and Fourth Suit Forcing.

Partner rebids 1NT

Say the auction goes 1♣-1♠-1NT. 1NT is a *very descriptive* rebid. Partner has

- 12-14 points
- A (relatively) balanced hand, with 2-5 cards in each suit.

You know more about partner's hand than partner knows about yours. You are now the *captain* and are in control of the auction.

Add your points to partner's to determine whether you are in partscore, game or slam range. If you know what the final contract should be, bid it! Otherwise, ask partner for more information.

Suppose you have 4 spades. We don't have an 8-card major fit, so most likely will play NT.

Assume 3NT requires 25+ points; 6NT 33+

♠Axxx ♥Kx ♦Qxxx ♣xxx	Pass
♠AQxx ♥Kx ♦Qxxx ♣xxx	2NT (partner bids 3NT with a maximum)
♠AQxx ♥Kx ♦Qxxx ♣Kxx	3NT
♠AQxx ♥Kx ♦AQxx ♣KJx	4NT (invites 6NT)
♠AQxx ♥KQ ♦AQxx ♣KJx	6NT

What if you don't like NT?

♠Axxx x ♦Qxx ♣Kxxxx	2♣, natural (be prepared to compete to 3♣)
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1♣-1♠-1NT. When you have 6 spades, partner has at least 2, so we belong in spades.

♠AQ10xxx ♥xx ♦Jxx ♣xx	2♠	signoff
♠AQ10xxx ♥xx ♦Kxx ♣xx	3♠	invitational
♠AQ10xxx ♥xx ♦AQx ♣xx	4♠	signoff

General rule: a *jump rebid* in a suit that has previously been bid (by you or partner) is *invitational*. A bid of 3♣ here would also be invitational.

However, a jump in an *unbid suit* is usually played as strong and forcing (except for certain conventions). For example, 1♣-1♠-1NT-3♦ shows at least 5-5 in spades and diamonds, with possible slam interest.

New Minor Forcing (NMF)

Suppose you have 5 spades: ♠AQxxx ♥xx ♦AQx ♣xxx. Ideally you want to play in spades when partner has 3 spades, and in NT (or other contract) when he has 2. How can you find out?

There's no "natural" bid that does the trick. We need a *convention* that asks partner to describe his hand further. The most common one is *New Minor Forcing* (there are others).

NMF means you bid the *other* minor (the one partner didn't bid) at the 2 level. Example: 1♣-1♠-1NT-2♦. To use it, your hand must be *at least* game-invitational. Partner must remember your bid is artificial: you are *not* showing diamonds.

Also, partner must *alert*. He should say the bid is artificial and forcing, showing an invitational or better hand and is requesting more information.

What should opener rebid? Unfortunately, there are different ideas on this and no one standard way! This is what I recommend as the priorities:

- With 3-card support for spades and a minimum hand, bid 2♠; with a maximum (14 HCP or a good 13), bid 3♠.
- With 4 hearts, bid 2♥ or 3♥ depending on strength.
- With support for neither major, usually bid 2NT with a minimum or 3NT with a maximum.

Note: If you have a 5-card minor, you may also bid 2♦ with a minimum if possible, or 3♣ or 3♦ with a maximum.

♠KQJ10x ♥xx ♦AJx ♣xxx

The classic NMF hand: a 5-card suit with an invitational hand. If partner bids 2♠, bidding 4♠ is a good bet. If he bids 2♥, bid 2NT. If he bids 2NT (showing a minimum), pass.

♠KQJ10x ♥xxx ♦xx ♣xxx

You are too weak to use NMF! With no game interest, you must make the decision yourself. Here, bid 2♠. If partner has only 2 spades, this hand won't play well in NT. If the opponents have the spade A, they'll hold up one round, and your hand will only take 1 trick! But if you have a hand like

♠J10xxx ♥Axx ♦Ax ♣xxx: pass 1NT. With two outside entries, partner may be able to set up spades; and if not he should be able to find tricks elsewhere.

♠KJxxx ♥Axxx ♦Kx ♣xx

Bid 2♦. You hope to hear *either* major from partner, in which case game should be a good bet.

♠KQJxx ♥Qxxx ♦xx ♣xx

Same distribution, but you aren't strong enough to try for game. Bid 2♥, which shows 5+ spades, 4+ hearts and a *weak* hand. Partner must either pass or bid 2♠. This auction (1m-1♠-1NT-2♥) is an *exception* to the rule that a new suit by responder is forcing.

♠KQJxx ♥AQxx ♦x ♣Kxx

Now game is certain, possibly even slam! We might even belong in 6♣ if partner doesn't like either major. **Note:** There's no limit to how strong you can be for a NMF bid. Hands with slam interest often start with NMF.

♠KJ10xx ♥x ♦Qxxxx ♣xx

You might like to bid 2♦ *natural*, but you can't, because that would be NMF. It's better to just sign off in 2♠.

♠KQJxxx ♥xx ♦AQx ♣xx

Bid 4♠. No need to bid NMF, because you know where you want to be. Don't bid 3♠! That bid is invitational and partner is allowed to pass.

♠KQJxxx ♥xx ♦Kxx ♣xx

This is worth a 3♠ invite.

♠KQJxxx ♥Ax ♦Axx ♣Kx.

Now, 4♠ is an underbid: slam is a definite possibility. Don't bid 4NT! That bid is a quantitative raise of

NT. Start with 2♦ NMF. If partner bids spades, then 4NT is keycard. If he bids something else, bid 3♠, which is *game forcing* and promises 6 spades, implying slam interest.

Suppose the auction starts 1♣-1♠-**2NT**. Now partner is showing 18-19 points. You can still use NMF:

♠KQxxx ♥xx ♦Qxx ♣xxx

You are strong enough to be in game, but find out whether partner has 3 spades by bidding 3♦. Partner will rebid 3♠, 3H or 3NT.

♠AKxxx ♥AJxx ♦x ♣xxx

Slam should be a good bet if partner can support either major.

Opener rebids a suit at the 1 level

Say the auction goes 1♣-1♥-1♠. Unlike partner's 1NT rebid, 1♠ is not limited to 14 points, so responding can be trickier. But you know he has 4 spades and *not* 4 hearts. So you can raise spades with 4.

♠Axxx ♥Kxxx ♦xx ♣xxx	2♠
♠AKxx ♥Kxxx ♦xx ♣xxx	3♠
♠AKxx ♥Kxxx ♦Ax ♣xxx	4♠

With 4 hearts and a diamond stopper, bid NT

♠xx ♥Axxx ♦Kxxx ♣xxx	1NT
♠Ax ♥Axxx ♦Kxxx ♣xxx	2NT
♠Ax ♥AQxx ♦Kxxx ♣xxx	3NT

♠Kxx ♥Kxxx ♦xxxx ♣xx	Pass!
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With 5 hearts, you want to find out if partner has 3.

♠Ax ♥Axxxx ♦xxx ♣AJx (from page 2)

You're strong enough to bid game, but which one?
To get more information about partner's hand, bid 2♦, which is artificial and forcing. (1♣-1♥-1♠-2♦)

Isn't this the same as NMF we used over partner's 1NT? It's similar, but there are some differences:

- When 3 suits have been bid, the convention is called **Fourth Suit Forcing** (4SF).
- It's usually played as *game forcing* (rather than just invitational).
- In some auctions, the fourth suit is a major (e.g. 1♦-1♠-2♣-2♥).

This convention is *alertable*, and partner must remember that your bid does *not* promise anything in the fourth suit. Partner's rebid priorities are:

- Raise your major with 3.
- Bid NT with a stopper in the fourth suit.
- Otherwise, make the most descriptive bid, such as rebidding a long minor.

Since 4SF is game forcing, opener needn't jump with extra values. It's better to keep the bidding low, to give more room to find a fit. With extra strength, opener can bid more later.

After 1♣-1♥-1♠-2♦, partner should rebid as follows:

♠Kxxx ♥Kxx ♦xx ♣AQ10x	2♥
♠KJxx ♥xx ♦Ax ♣KQxxx	2NT
♠KQxx ♥A ♦xx ♣KQxxxx	3♣

Some other examples after 1♣-1♥-1♠:

♠xx ♥KQJxxx ♦xx ♣xxx	2♥
♠xx ♥KQJxxx ♦Ax ♣xxx	3♥ (invitational)
♠xx ♥KQJxxx ♦Ax ♣Axx	4♥

♠x ♥Kxxxxx ♦Ax ♣AQxx

You have 6 so-so hearts. Since partner may have 0 or 1 heart, it's better to start with 2♦ 4SF. We may belong in NT or ♣.

♠Ax ♥Q10xxx ♦AJx ♣xxx

You aren't strong enough to use 4SF here, so invite game with 2NT. If partner is going to accept, he can bid 3♥ to show 3 hearts along the way.

♠AKxx ♥KQxx ♦Ax ♣Qxx

Sometimes you have a hand that is *too strong* to just jump to game. You know you want to be in spades, but 4♠ would be an underbid, and 6♠ would be a gamble. Here, bid 4SF (2♦) first, then raise spades to tell partner you have this kind of hand.

♠Ax ♥KQxx ♦AJx ♣Kxxx

You have 17 points. If partner had rebid 1NT, you would sign off in 3NT because you don't have enough for slam. But partner's 1S is unlimited in strength, so rebidding 3NT should show at most 15 pts. Bid 2♦.

Opener rebids at the 2 level

Suppose the auction starts 1♦-1♠-2♣

♠KQxxx ♥Kxx ♦Ax ♣xxx

You have enough for game, so bid 2♥, 4SF. If partner shows 3 spades, bid 4♠, otherwise 3NT.

♠KQxxx ♥Qxx ♦Ax ♣xxx

Unfortunately, you're not strong enough to force to game. Bid 2NT, invitational. If partner has enough for game, he can bid 3♠ to show 3.

♠KQxxx ♥Qx ♦xxx ♣xxx

You have no game interest. 2♠ is tempting but too dangerous. Bid 2♦, taking a preference to opener's first suit.

♠Axxxx ♥x ♦Axx ♣AKxx.

This hand has slam potential in spades, diamonds, or clubs. So start with 2♥!

♠KQxxx ♥Kxxx ♦xx ♣xx

This is tough. 2♥ is game forcing, 2NT is an overbid, and 2♠ is too dangerous. Bid 2♦, preferring opener's first suit. You are probably in a 5-2 fit.

Tip: As you can see, bidding after 1♦-1♠-2♣ is more difficult than bidding over 1♦-1♠-1NT, because you don't know whether partner has even a doubleton spade. When in doubt, with a hand like ♠Kx ♥Qx ♦Axxxx ♣Kxxx, it's better to rebid 1NT than 2♣ because subsequent bidding will be easier.

A few other examples

♠AQxxx ♥xx ♦AJx ♣Qxx 1♥-1♠-1NT - ?

Partner didn't open a minor so there are *two* unbid minors. Pick your best one as NMF.

♠AQxxx ♥xx ♦AJx ♣Qxx 1♣-1♠-2♣- ?

You can still bid 2♦, forcing, to see if partner has 3 spades, with a game-going hand.

♠AQxxx ♥xx ♦Kxx ♣Qxx 1♣-1♠-2♣- ?

With an invitational hand it's probably best to bid 3♣, invitational. Partner can still raise spades with extras.

QUIZ

You are responder:

1. ♠KJxxx ♥AQxx ♦Ax ♣xx

1♦-1♠-1NT- ?

2. ♠Qxxx ♥xx ♦AJxxx ♣xx

1♣-1♠-1NT- ?

3. ♠xx ♥AQxxxx ♦xx ♣Qxx

1♦-1♥-2NT- ?

4. ♠AQ10xx ♥xxx ♦Axx ♣xx

1♥-1♠-1NT- ?

6. ♠AQ10xxx ♥Ax ♦AQx ♣Qx

1♣-1♠-1NT- ?

7. ♠AQx ♥KQxx ♦xxx ♣AKJ

1♦-1♥-1NT- ?

8. ♠AQJxx ♥xx ♦xx ♣xxx

1♦-1♠-1NT- ?

9. ♠Axxxx ♥Kxxx ♦x ♣xxx

1♦-1♠-1NT- ?

You are opener:

10. ♠Axx ♥KQx ♦KQxxx ♣xx

1♦-1♠-1NT-2♣ -?

11. ♠Axxx ♥Qxx ♦KQxxx ♣A

1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣ -?

12. ♠Ax ♥Qxxx ♦KJxx ♣Axx

1♦-1♠-1NT-2♥ -?

13. ♠Axxx ♥Kx ♦KQxxx ♣xx

1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣ -?

ANSWERS

1. Bid 2♣, NMF. You will go to game in spades, hearts, or NT depending on what partner says.
2. Pass. Don't forget that 2♦ would be NMF and is artificial.
3. Bid 4♥, since that's where you want to be.
4. Bid 3♥, invitational. You know you have a heart fit, so don't bother with NMF.
6. You are *too strong* to bid 4♠, so if you don't want to just guess, start with 2♦ NMF. Using NMF or 4SF makes slam bidding more accurate, but it can be tricky. If partner rebids 2NT, bid 3♠ to set trumps and show slam interest. Partner should realize 3♠ is forcing because you didn't bid spades directly.

7. With 19 points, you are *not* strong enough to force slam opposite a possible 12. Bid 4NT, invitational.
8. Bid 2♠. You aren't strong enough to use NMF.
9. Bid 2♥, giving partner a choice of majors. Partner must pass or bid 2♠.
10. Bid 3♠, showing 3-card support and a maximum.
11. Bid 2♥. Partner used 4SF, so you are in a game force; there's no need to jump to show extra values. If partner shows slam interest, you can cue bid.
12. Pass. You have a good hand for hearts, but partner is showing no game interest.
13. Bid 2♦. Partner is *not* showing a club stopper with his 4SF bid, and you can't support hearts, so make the most descriptive bid. Partner can bid NT with clubs stopped.