

BALANCING

BALANCING POSITION = LHO (left hand opponent) has made a bid and there have been two passes. If you pass the auction will be over.

DIRECT POSITION = RHO (right hand opponent) has just bid.

GENERAL RULE = Bids show about a King less than “normal”

COMMON BALANCING BIDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

1 Suit, p, p, Double: 10+ points

1 Suit, p, p, 1NT: 11-14 points (with 15-18, double first, than bid NT at minimum possible level)

1 Suit, p, p, Jump to 2 Suit: 11-14 and 6 card suit

1 Suit, p, p, 2NT: 19-20

1 Suit, p, p, 1 Suit: 6-13 points, could be a 4 card suit

1 Suit, p, p, 2 Suit (non-jump): 10- 13 pts, almost any type of 5 card suit

1 H/S, p, 2 H/S, p, p, 2NT: takeout for minors (could be 5/4)

1 Suit, p, p, 2 Same Suit: Michael’s cue bid (could be 5/4)

1NT, p, p, 2 Suit: lighter than direct seat; could be 5 card suit

1NT, p, p, Dbl: equivalent hand – NOT lighter than a direct seat double!

PARTNER OF BALANCER: BEWARE! BALANCER COULD BE LIGHT. THEY HAVE ALREADY COUNTED ONE OF YOUR KINGS!

Balancing Bidding Quiz

1. 1♥ pass pass ? ♠KJ43 ♥AJ6 ♦Q843 ♣Q3
2. 1♥ pass pass ? ♠KJ5 ♥76 ♦Q108432 ♣Q3
3. 1♥ pass pass ? ♠KQ5 ♥76 ♦AQJ1084 ♣A6
4. 1♠ pass pass ? ♠7 ♥A852 ♦KQ85 ♣J743
5. 1♦ pass pass ? ♠QJ754 ♥A9532 ♦ void ♣Q108
6. 1♦ pass pass ? ♠AJ1089 ♥932 ♦K8 ♣AKQ6
7. 1♠ pass pass ? ♠KQ64 ♥87 ♦Q9643 ♣AJ
8. 1♥ pass 2♥ pass pass ? ♠J9642 ♥765 ♦A109 ♣K6
9. 1♥ pass 1NT pass; 2♦ pass pass ? ♠Q1084 ♥K43 ♦94 ♣AQJ6
10. 1♦ pass pass 1♥ (balancer); pass ? ♠A64 ♥8543 ♦K42 ♣873
11. 1♥ pass pass 1♠ (balancer); pass ? ♠62 ♥KJ1083 ♦AK6 ♣Q96
12. 1♥ pass pass 1NT (balancer); pass ? ♠J106542 ♥64 ♦KQ7 ♣84

Balancing Bidding Quiz - Answers

1. 13 hcp, reasonable heart stop, bid 1NT, systems on
2. 8 hcp, pass (your diamonds are not strong enough to bid)
3. 16 hcp, jump to 3♦, inviting game
4. 10 hcp, takeout double; partner may pass with 5-6 good spades
5. 9 hcp, 2♦ Michaels cue bid
6. 17 hcp, double, then bid spades to show a strong hand
7. 12 hcp, pass, long suit too weak to bid; better to defend
8. 8 hcp, 2♠; partner knows your spades were too weak to overcall on the first round
9. 12 hcp, double for takeout (couldn't double 1st round w/o ♦ support)
10. 7 hcp, pass, but bid 2♥ if LHO bids anything
11. 13 hcp, 2NT inviting game
12. 6 hcp, 2♥ (transfer to spades)



Balancing Seat Bidding

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Today's agenda

- What is balancing seat and why is bidding in balancing seat unique?
- What do bids mean in the balancing seat?
- Four hands to practice



What is balancing seat bidding?

“Balancing” is when you bid or double:

1. When your pass would have ended the auction

- AND -

2. Your partner has said nothing other than pass



Balancing bidding – what's unique?

- Points are somewhat divided
- You know the opponents don't have more than 24 points combined – and they could have as few as 13!
- You know your RHO doesn't have more than 5 points
- As balancer, even though your partner hasn't bid, she may have a decent hand and nothing to say!



“Stretch to Bid” in Balancing Seat

Bids in balancing seat are lighter than direct by approximately 3 points

- In other words -

You may “borrow” 3 points from partner’s hand when deciding your bid



What do bids mean in the balancing position? (Common Auctions)

1. **A new suit at lowest available level:** 6-12 HCP, 5+ card suit

- Examples – (a) 1 Heart, p, p, 1 Spade; (b) 1 Spade, p, p, 2 Clubs

2. **Jump in a new suit:** 11-14 HCP (opening hand) and 6+ card suit

- Example - 1 Diamond, p, p, 2 Hearts

3. **Double:** Takeout with 10+ HCP or Strong Hand

- Examples - (a) 1 Heart, p, p, *; (b) 1 Heart, p, 2 Hearts, p, p, *

4. **1NT:** 11-14 HCP balanced (and a stopper in suit opened)

- Example - 1 Club, p, p, 1NT
- Note: Discuss with partner - are systems on?



Let's practice

West open 1 Heart, P, P – it's South's call holding:

a) ♠ AQJ4
 ♥ 654
 ♦ 43
 ♣ K543

a) 1 Spade



Let's practice

West open 1 Heart, P, P – it's South's call holding:

a) ♠ AQJ4
 ♥ 654
 ♦ 43
 ♣ K543

b) ♠ 65
 ♥ 87
 ♦ AJT765
 ♣ K65

a) 1 Spade



Let's practice

West open 1 Heart, P, P – it's South's call holding:

a) ♠ AQJ4
♥ 654
♦ 43
♣ K543

b) ♠ 65
♥ 87
♦ AJT765
♣ K65

a) 1 Spade

b) 2 Diamonds



Responding to Partner's Balancing Bid

“Don't Punish Partner”!!

Remember – they've already counted 3 of your points!



Let's practice

West open 1 Heart, P, P – it's South's call holding:

a) ♠ AQJ4
♥ 654
♦ 43
♣ K543

b) ♠ 65
♥ 87
♦ AJT765
♣ K65

c) ♠ KQJ876
♥ A5
♦ K65
♣ 98

a) 1 Spade

b) 2 Diamonds



Let's practice

West open 1 Heart, P, P – it's South's call holding:

a) ♠ AQJ4
♥ 654
♦ 43
♣ K543

b) ♠ 65
♥ 87
♦ AJT765
♣ K65

c) ♠ KQJ876
♥ A5
♦ K65
♣ 98

a) 1 Spade

b) 2 Diamonds

c) 2 Spades



Why stretch to bid?

Good things may happen:

- You might make your contract
- You might go down less than if they make their contract
- If you end up defending, your bid may help partner with defense
- You might push the opponents to a level where you can set them



What do bids mean in the balancing position? (Less Common Auctions)

- 1. Double followed by NT at lowest possible level:** 15-18 Bal. with Stopper
 - Examples - (a) 1 Heart, p, p, *, p, 2c, p, 2NT; (b) 1Heart, p, p, *, p, 1 spade, p, 1NT
- 2. A jump to 2NT:** 19-20 Balanced with Stopper
 - Examples – (a) 1 Heart, p, p, 2NT; (b) 1 Club, p, p, 2 No Trump
- 3. After NT Openers:** Systems (DON'T, Hamilton, etc.) are on; suit bids may be lighter than direct seat and may be only 5 card suit. Doubles are NOT lighter than direct seat!
 - 1NT, p, p, *- good hand
 - 1NT, p, p, 2NT – unusual
 - 1NT, p, p, 2c – single suit? Clubs and higher? Depends on system
- 4. Non-jump to 2NT:** Unusual No Trump
 - Example – 1 Spade, p, 2 Spades, p, p, 2NT
- 5. Cue Bid:** Michael's Cue Bid
 - 1 Club, p, p, 2 Clubs (balancing)



Let's practice:

1 Heart, Pass, 2 Hearts, Pass, Pass, ???

a) ♠ KQ93
 ♥ 4
 ♦ J763
 ♣ K874

a) Double



Let's practice:

1 Heart, Pass, 2 Hearts, Pass, Pass, ???

a) ♠KQ93
 ♡4
 ♦J763
 ♣K874

b) ♠AKJ4
 ♡753
 ♦43
 ♣Q743

a) Double



Let's practice:

1 Heart, Pass, 2 Hearts, Pass, Pass, ???

a) ♠KQ93
 ♡4
 ♦J763
 ♣K874

b) ♠AKJ4
 ♡753
 ♦43
 ♣Q743

a) Double

b) 2 Spades



Let's practice:

1 Heart, Pass, 2 Hearts, Pass, Pass, ???

a) ♠KQ93
 ♡4
 ♦J763
 ♣K874

b) ♠AKJ4
 ♡753
 ♦43
 ♣Q743

c) ♠72
 ♡Q3
 ♦QJ984
 ♣KQT9

a) Double

b) 2 Spades



Let's practice:

1 Heart, Pass, 2 Hearts, Pass, Pass, ???

a) ♠KQ93
 ♡4
 ♦J763
 ♣K874

b) ♠AKJ4
 ♡753
 ♦43
 ♣Q743

c) ♠72
 ♡Q3
 ♦QJ984
 ♣KQT9

a) Double

b) 2 Spades

c) 2NT





Let's Play Some Hands

Hand 1 – West Dealer; Equal Vulnerability

Auction: 1H, P, P, 1NT, all pass

Final Contract: 1NT by South

	1087	
	A83	
	Q762	
	K53	
AK96		542
QJ1092		54
A8		J109
109		QJ842
	QJ3	
	K76	
	K543	
	A76	



Hand 2 – N Dealer, E/W Vulnerable

1d, p, p, dbl

p, 2c, p, 2NT

P 3nt, all pass

Final Contract: 3NT by West

	AKQ2	
	J8	
	QJ1098	
	92	
10864		J53
AKQ3		765
K76		A4
KQ		A10865
	97	
	10942	
	532	
	J743	



Hand #3 – Equal Vulnerability, West Dealer

1H, p, p, Dbl

p, 2NT, p, 3NT – all pass

Final Contract: 3NT by North

	AKQ	
	QJ74	
	8432	
	98	
1087		642
A10865		93
KJ10		9765
A6		J1054
	J953	
	K2	
	AQ	
	KQ732	



Hand #4 – Equal Vulnerability, South Dealer

1c, p, p, 2H

P, 3h, all pass

Final Contract: 3 Hearts by East

9543

652

A763

87

AK86

103

QJ102

1042

Q2

AKJ987

K5

953

J107

Q4

984

AKQJ6





Appendix

When should you balance?

Consider the following auctions – which are the situations where you should balance?

1. 1H, p, p, ?
2. 1C, p, p, ?
3. 1H, p, 1S, p, 1NT, p, p, ?
4. 1H, p, 2H, p, p, ?
5. 1NT, p, p, ?
6. 1C, p, 1H, p, 1NT, p, p. ?
7. 1S, p, 3S, p, p, ?



1c, p, p, ? (a/b = *; c = 1NT)

Note: Have them construct these hands on the tables

a) ♠ K654
 ♥ J762
 ♦ AJ87
 ♣ 5

b) ♠ AQJ98
 ♥ K6
 ♦ AKJ5
 ♣ 97

c) ♠ K3
 ♥ J54
 ♦ KJ65
 ♣ A975



1NT, p, p, ? (a: 2s, b: 2h, c: pass)

Construct hands on table

a) ♠ KQJ85
 ♥ 75
 ♦ AQ5
 ♣ J76

b) ♠ 6
 ♥ JT7543
 ♦ KQ65
 ♣ 43

c) ♠ K32
 ♥ J54
 ♦ KJ6
 ♣ A975



What kind of hand should you have to balance?

It's best to bid when you have:

- Shortness in their suit
- Tolerance for unbid suit(s) - or -
- Very good suit of your own - or -
- Inference that partner holds cards in your mediocre suit

