

The Precision Club Bidding System

Opener's Rebids and Responder's Next Bids When the Opponents Pass

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In our prior two articles in the series on the Precision Club Bidding System we have covered opening bids and responses to the opening 1♣ when the opponents pass. In this article, we will focus on what the opener rebids after partner has responded to the 1♣ opening bid. Your job as the opener is to now further describe your hand; so far, your partner only knows that you have at least 16 HCP.

Responding to partner's negative 1♦ bid

When your partner has responded to your opening 1♣ with 1♦, she is normally¹ promising no more than 7 HCP. The bids that you make in response must give her more information about your hand.

Responding to partner's negative 1♦ bid with balanced opening hands

1. With a balanced 16-18 HCP, you would respond 1NT.
2. With a balanced 19-21 HCP, bid 2NT.
3. With a balanced 24-26 HCP, bid 3NT.
4. With a balanced hand and more than 26 HCP, your rebid will depend more upon the overall strength and quality of your hand. In this case, you should use judgment and experience to determine your optimum bid. Naturally, if you hold more than 30 HCP, you need to give serious consideration to bidding a slam. We will return to this type of hand in a future article.

Quiz 1: What would you rebid with the following hands after partner bids 1♦ to your 1♣ opening bid?

1) ♠ AK2 ♥ K85 ♦ A93 ♣ QJ107

2) ♠ AK98 ♥ 9874 ♦ A92 ♣ AK

3) ♠ AQ4 ♥ QJ32 ♦ A10 ♣ AQJ5

4) ♠ AQ86 ♥ AQ5 ♦ K753 ♣ J8

5) ♠ AQJ8 ♥ AQJ10 ♦ A10 ♣ AK4

Note: see suggested quiz answers at the end of the article.

¹ The 1♦ bid could also be the "Impossible Negative" bid that was discussed in Article 2. We will spend more time on the Impossible Negative in a future article. Note: in that article, it was referred to as the "Unusual Negative" a term that my partner and I use. However, the original name is the "Impossible Negative."

Responder's rebids after the Opening 1♣ bidder bids 1NT to show a balanced hand and 16-18 HCP

Once you have defined your balanced 16-18 HCP opening bid, it is your partner's turn to give you more information about her hand and to inquire further about the distribution of your hand. Here are some possible responses and their meaning:

1. Pass – suggests a balanced hand with less than 6 HCP.
2. 2♣ is Stayman and requests partner to bid a four card major. The usual requirement for making this bid is 4-7 HCP and at least one four card major of your own (while not required, it is always nice if you have four cards in both majors). You should have a partnership agreement about how the 1♣ opener will respond when she has four cards in both major suits (we normally bid hearts first). The opener will rebid 2♦ if she does not have a four card major (this makes it the responder's responsibility to place the final contract).
3. 2♦ is a transfer bid and asks partner to bid 2♥. This bid requires you to have at least five hearts. [Note that the bid could be made with as few as zero HCP points if you are trying to escape a disaster in NT.] It is usually best to pass opener's 2♥ bid if you have less than 5 HCP. After partner bids 2♥ and when you have 5-7 HCP, you could invite or bid game. With 5-7 HCP and only five hearts and no voids or singletons, bid 2NT to invite partner to bid game in either 3NT or 4♥ (partner would normally bid the heart game with at least 3 hearts and a good 17-18 HCP – but, she could bid the NT game with only two hearts and a good 17-18 HCP). With six or more hearts and 5-7 HCP, you could either bid 3♥ inviting partner to bid 4♥; or, alternatively, bid 4♥ when you have one or more singletons or voids in addition to the long heart suit.
4. 2♥ is a transfer bid and asks partner to bid 2♠. This bid requires you to have at least five spades. [Note that this bid could also be made with as few as zero HCP points if you are trying to escape a disaster in NT.] It is usually best to pass opener's 2♠ bid if you have less than 5 HCP. After partner bids 2♠ and when you have 5-7 HCP, you could invite or bid game. With 5-7 HCP and only five spades, bid 2NT to invite partner to bid game in either 3NT or 4♠ (partner would normally bid the spade game with at least 3 spades and a good 17-18 HCP – but, she could bid the NT game with only two spades and a good 17-18 HCP). With six or more spades and 5-7 HCP, either bid 3♠ inviting partner to bid 4♠; or, alternatively, bid 4♠ when you have one or more singletons or voids in addition to the long spade suit.
5. 2♠ is a transfer bid and asks partner to bid 3♣. This bid is frequently made when you (a) have five or more clubs with very few HCP and are attempting to escape a potential disaster in 1NT or (b) have a very distributional hand with a long club suit and are considering a 5♣ game. There are also times when you are thinking about bidding 3NT after partner bids 3♣ and thereby giving your partner an option of leaving it in 3NT or bidding a game in clubs. (Usually in matchpoint scoring, you want to try to play in the 3NT game as it requires you to take fewer tricks and if you are lucky enough to make more than your game, you will always outscore those who bid and make the club game. Oftentimes, in rubber bridge or in a team game, the club game is safer than the NT game and the premium for overtricks is not that important.)

6. 2NT shows 5-7 HCP, denies a 4-card major and invites the 1♣ opener to bid 3NT with maximum (or near maximum) opening values. [Alternatively, you could use 2NT for minor suit stayman asking opener to bid a 4-card minor suit.]
7. 3♣ is a transfer bid and asks partner to bid 3♦. This bid is frequently made when you (a) have five or more diamonds with very few HCP and are attempting to escape a potential disaster in 1NT or (b) have a very distributional hand with a long diamond suit and are considering inviting partner to bid a 5♦ game.

Quiz 2: What would you rebid with the following hands after opener bids 1NT following your 1♦ response to the opening 1♣ bid?

- 1) ♠ AK2 ♥ 9 8 5 ♦ 10 9 3 ♣ 10 9 8 7
- 2) ♠ A 9 8 7 ♥ Q 8 7 4 ♦ 9 7 2 ♣ 8 6
- 3) ♠ A Q 9 6 4 ♥ 8 7 2 ♦ 10 6 ♣ J 7 5
- 4) ♠ 8 6 ♥ A K 10 6 5 ♦ 7 5 3 2 ♣ 8 5
- 5) ♠ 8 ♥ 7 3 2 ♦ 9 4 3 ♣ 9 8 7 5 3 2

Note: see suggested quiz answers at the end of the article.

Responder's rebids after the Opening 1♣ bidder bids 2NT to show a balanced hand and 19-21 HCP

Once you have defined your balanced 19-21 HCP opening bid, it is your partner's turn to give you more information about her 1♦ hand and to inquire further about the distribution of your hand. Here are some possible responses and their meaning:

1. Pass – suggests a balanced hand with less than 4 HCP.
2. 3♣ is Stayman and requests partner to bid a four card major. The usual requirement for making this bid is 4-7 HCP and at least one four card major of your own (while not required, it is always nice if you have four cards in both majors). You should have a partnership agreement about how the 1♣ opener will respond when she has four cards in both major suits (we normally bid hearts first). The opener will rebid 3♦ if she does not have a four card major (this makes it the responder's responsibility to place the final contract).
3. 3♦ is a transfer bid and asks partner to bid 3♥. This bid requires you to have at least five hearts. [Note that the bid could be made with as few as zero HCP points if you are trying to escape a disaster in NT.] It is usually best to pass opener's 3♥ bid if you have less than 4 HCP. After partner bids 3♥ and when you have 5-7 HCP and only five hearts and no voids or singletons, bid 3NT to invite partner to play that contract or to bid 4♥ (partner would normally bid the heart game with at least 3 hearts and weakness in one or more side suits). With six or more hearts and 5-7 HCP, bid 4♥ over opener's 3♥ bid
4. 3♥ is a transfer bid and asks partner to bid 3♠. This bid requires you to have at least five spades. [Note that this bid could also be made with as few as zero HCP points if

you are trying to escape a disaster in NT.] It is usually best to pass opener's 3♠ bid if you have less than 4 HCP. After partner bids 3♠, when you have 5-7 HCP and only five spades, bid 3NT to invite partner to play that contract or to bid 4♠ (partner would normally bid the spade game with at least 3 spades and weakness in one or more side suits). With six or more spades and 5-7 HCP, bid 4♠ over opener's 3♠ bid.

5. 3NT shows 5-7 HCP, denies a 4-card major and is to play.

Quiz 3: What would you rebid with the following hands after opener bids 2NT following your 1♦ response to the opening 1♣ bid?

- 1) ♠ 2 ♥ 9 8 5 4 3 2 ♦ 9 7 5 4 3 ♣ 4
- 2) ♠ K 9 8 2 ♥ 9 8 7 4 ♦ A 9 2 ♣ 7 6
- 3) ♠ A 10 8 7 4 ♥ Q 2 ♦ 7 6 ♣ 8 7 6 5
- 4) ♠ Q 8 6 ♥ A J 10 7 5 ♦ 7 5 3 ♣ 9 8
- 5) ♠ J 8 ♥ Q J 10 ♦ 10 9 6 ♣ K 10 7 4

Note: see suggested quiz answers at the end of the article.

Responding to partner's negative 1♦ bid with unbalanced opening hands

1. When you have an unbalanced 16-19 HCP, make a responding bid in your long suit (e.g., bid 1♥ to show you have at least five hearts and 16-19 HCP). If you have two suits of equal length with at least five cards in both suits, bid the higher ranking suit first. This will allow you to more easily show your partner the second suit on your next bid if the bidding remains open when it is your turn to bid again. [Note: in Ron Andersen & C. C. Wei's original approach to Matchpoint Precision, they advocated bidding a 4-card major at the one level over the 1♦ response instead of bidding a longer minor at the two level. Their objective was to find a 4-4 major fit. My partner and I have elected to not use this approach and to always bid the longer suit first in order to keep our bidding system somewhat simplified.]
2. When you have opened with an unbalanced 20+ HCP, make a jump bid in your long suit (e.g., instead of bidding 1♥, bid 2♥ when you have at least five hearts and 20+ HCP). This bid is forcing to the responder much like a strong opening bid at the two-level that is played in many bridge bidding systems.

Quiz 4: What would you rebid with the following hands after partner bids a 1♦ response to your opening 1♣ bid?

- 1) ♠ A K 9 8 2 ♥ Q 9 7 8 5 ♦ A ♣ Q J
- 2) ♠ 9 8 ♥ A K 8 7 4 2 ♦ A K 5 ♣ K Q
- 3) ♠ A Q ♥ K J ♦ A Q J 10 9 8 4 ♣ A 5

Quiz 4: What would you rebid with the following hands after partner bids a 1♦ response to your opening 1♣ bid?

4) ♠ A 9 8 7 6 ♥ A ♦ K Q J 7 5 ♣ K 8

5) ♠ A J 8 ♥ A K J 10 6 ♦ A K 7 ♣ A 4

Note: see suggested quiz answers at the end of the article.

Responder's rebids after the opener bids 1♥, 1♠, 2♣, or 2♦ over 1♦ to show an unbalanced hand and 16-19 HCP

Once you have defined your unbalanced 16-19 HCP opening bid, it is your partner's turn to give you more information about her 1♦ hand. Here are some possible responses and their meaning:

1. Pass – this bid suggests that you have less than 4 HCP. It does not tell partner that you have support for her bid suit.
2. Single Raise of Opener's bid suit – the raise promises at least 3 cards in opener's bid suit and 4-7 HCP.
3. Bid your own suit – the cheapest bid of your own suit promises at least five cards in that suit and 4-7 HCP (it also usually denies 3-card support for opener's bid suit).
4. Cheapest NT bid – this bid promises a balanced hand (at least 2 cards in each suit), only 2 cards in opener's bid suit, no five-card suit of your own (this is normally the case; although, you could have a very weak five card suit), and 4-7 HCP. Usually, your points will be in the suits other than opener's bid suit.
5. Jump bid in Opener's bid suit – this bid usually promises at least four-card support for opener's bid suit, 6-7 HCP, and at least one void or singleton. Caution should be exercised here if you pass 3NT by bidding 4 of a minor as you are committing the partnership to a minor suit game (or slam). Oftentimes over your partner's minor suit two bid, it is preferable to bid 3 NT if your hand is semi-balanced or to bid a 4-card major at the three level. You should have a partnership understanding that bidding three of a major could be a four-card suit with the idea that you would prefer to play in a major suit game instead of a minor suit game if possible – this also gives opener the option of bidding 3NT. (Note: some players prefer to use a splinter bid – making a jump bid in a singleton or void – this alerts partner to the distributional features in your hand and the slight possibility that there is a slam to be made. E.g., bidding 3♥ over 1♠ to show spade support, 6-7 HCP, and a singleton or void in hearts. However, because we have chosen to use the “Impossible Negative,” in a future article you will see that a jump bid has a different meaning the way we play it.)

Quiz 5: What would you rebid with the following hands after opener bids 1♥ following your 1♦ response to the opening 1♣ bid?

- 1) ♠ 2 ♥ 9 8 5 4 3 2 ♦ 9 7 5 4 3 ♣ 4
- 2) ♠ K 2 ♥ 9 8 7 4 ♦ A 9 2 ♣ 9 8 7 6
- 3) ♠ A 10 9 7 4 ♥ 9 2 ♦ 7 6 ♣ 8 7 6 5
- 4) ♠ J 8 6 ♥ A J ♦ 9 7 5 3 ♣ 9 8 6 4
- 1) ♠ J 8 ♥ Q J 10 ♦ 10 9 6 ♣ K 10 7 4

Note: see suggested quiz answers at the end of the article.

Responder's rebids after the opener 1♣ bids 2♥, 2♠, 3♣, or 3♦ over 1♦ to show an unbalanced hand and 20+ HCP

Once you have defined your unbalanced 20+ HCP opening bid, it is your partner's turn to give you more information about her 1♦ hand. Note that the opener's bid is forcing and you must bid. Here are some possible responses and their meaning:

1. Single Raise of Opener's bid suit – the raise promises at least 3 cards in opener's bid suit and 0-3 HCP.
2. Bid your own suit – the cheapest bid of your own suit promises at least five cards in that suit and 0-7 HCP (it also usually denies 3-card support for opener's bid suit).
3. Cheapest NT bid – this bid promises a balanced hand (at least 2 cards in each suit), only 2 cards in opener's bid suit, no five-card suit of your own (this is normally the case; although, you could have a very weak five card suit), and 4-7 HCP. Usually, your points will be in the suits other than opener's bid suit.
4. Jump bid in Opener's bid suit – this bid usually promises at least three-card support for opener's bid suit and 4-7 HCP.

Quiz 6: What would you rebid with the following hands after opener bids 2♥ following your 1♦ response to the opening 1♣ bid?

- 1) ♠ 2 ♥ 9 8 5 4 3 2 ♦ 9 7 5 4 3 ♣ 4
- 2) ♠ K 2 ♥ 9 8 7 4 ♦ A 9 2 ♣ 9 8 7 6
- 3) ♠ 9 7 4 ♥ 9 2 ♦ 7 6 ♣ A 9 8 7 6 5
- 4) ♠ J 8 6 ♥ A J ♦ 9 7 5 3 ♣ 9 8 6 4
- 5) ♠ Q J 10 8 ♥ 7 ♦ J 10 9 6 ♣ K 10 7 4

Note: see suggested quiz answers at the end of the article.

Future Articles in this Series

Future articles in our Precision Club series will:

- ✓ Look at the responder's rebids with the Impossible Negative;
- ✓ Discuss how opponent's bids after our 1♣ opening bid influence the responses and rebids that Precision Club players make, and
- ✓ Examine the bidding after our other opening bids.

Quiz Answers

Quiz #1

Hand #1: respond 1NT with this balanced 17 HCP hand.

Hand #2: respond 1NT, this hand falls within the 16-18 HCP range for a 1NT rebid.

Hand #3: respond 2NT with your balanced 20 HCP hand.

Hand #4: respond 1NT, once again, this hand falls within the 16-18 HCP range.

Hand #5: respond 3NT with this balanced 25 HCP hand.

Quiz #2

Hand #1: Bid 2NT with this balanced 7HCP hand. Your bid is invitational to game in NT.

Hand #2: Bid 2♣ asking partner to bid a 4-card major if she has one.

Hand #3: Bid 2♥ asking partner to bid 2♠, after that you would bid 2NT inviting partner, if she is near the top of her bid, to bid either 3NT or 4♠ (if she has 3-spades in her hand).

Hand #4: Bid 2♦ asking partner to bid 2♥. When she bids that, bid 3♥ to invite game in hearts.

Hand #5: Consider bidding 2♠ asking partner to bid 3♣ (unless your intuition tells you that your partner will be safe playing 1NT and good luck to her if she does). Realize that the opponents have the majority of the points on this hand and there is a good chance they will double and set your partner if she plays in 1NT.

Quiz #3

Hand #1: Consider bidding 3♦ asking partner to bid 3♥. Then, you need to make the real decision – whether to raise to 4♥ with your zero HCP hand. Arguably, there is a play for the major suit game contract considering that you have two singletons and good ruffing values. However, if you happen to catch partner with only 2 poor hearts, partner may not appreciate your optimism.

Hand #2: Bid 3♣ asking partner to bid a 4-card major if she has one. Then, if partner bids a major, raise to game. However, if partner bids 3♦ denying a 4-card major, raise to 3NT.

Hand #3: Bid 3♥ asking partner to bid 3♠, after that you would bid 3NT inviting partner to make the decision whether to play in the NT or spade game. With 3 spades, partner may choose to bid the spade game.

Hand #4: Bid 3♦ asking partner to bid 3♥, after that you would bid 3NT inviting partner to make the decision

whether to play in the NT or heart game. With 3 spades, partner may choose to bid the heart game.

Hand #5: Bid 3NT – with your balanced 7HCP, and barring unusual distributional values in the opponent's hands, it should be a makable contract.

Quiz #4

Hand #1: Bid 1♠ - If partner bids a NT or minor suit over your bid, you have an easy 2♥ rebid.

Hand #2: Bid 1♥ - you are very close to the type of hand where you could make a forcing 2♥ bid. However, depending upon partner's hand, you could have 5-6 losers if the hearts do not break for you. If partner bids NT or a minor suit over your bid, you should rebid your heart suit to let partner know that you have at least six cards in the suit.

Hand #3: Here you have a tough choice. Partner's 1♦ response to your opening 1♣ is most likely showing you that she has less than 8 HCP (unless she has the Impossible Negative type of hand). Consider bidding a forcing 3♦; but, realize that if you wind-up in a diamond contract, the weak hand will be the declarer and your hand will be the dummy. Alternatively, you could bid 2NT showing a balanced 19-21 HCP. Obviously, your diamond suit could be very helpful in NT and you will be the declarer. Of course, you only have one stopper in your heart and club suits. A lead of either suit against a NT contract may spell doom unless you are lucky enough to find partner with either stoppers in the suit that is lead or with the diamond king.

Hand #4: Bid 1♠ - If partner bids a NT, clubs or hearts over your bid, you have an easy ♦ rebid with slight slam possibilities. Also, the hand has potential for a NT contract depending upon partner's rebid.

Hand #5: Make a forcing 2♥ bid. You have a very solid hand that requires little from partner to make a game in either NT or hearts. Also, depending upon partner's distribution and HCP count, there is a slight chance for a slam contract.

Quiz #5

Hand #1: Bid 2♥ - potentially, you are overbidding your hand; but, the ruffing values with the two singletons and 6-card heart support offset the lack of points with this hand. In addition, you make it harder for the opponents to come into the auction like they might if you pass the 1♥ bid.

Hand #2: Bid 2♥ - you have good support and maximum HCP for your original 1♦ response.

Hand #3: Bid 1♠ - your hand is not real pretty; but, if partner has 3 or more spades, it could play well. If partner rebids hearts, showing you six or more hearts, you should pass.

Hand #4: This hand could cause you some problems. You have enough points to bid again. With the partial stopper in spades and two 4-card minor suits, you might make a 1NT call. However, some people would raise to 2♥ with the doubleton honors (my opinion is that you are misleading partner as the heart raise would normally show 3-card support).

Hand #5: Bid 2♥ - once again, you have good support and maximum HCP for your original 1♦ response.

Quiz #6

Hand #1: Bid 3♥ - partner has made a forcing bid and you need to show her you excellent support.

Hand #2: Bid 4♥ - you have good support and maximum HCP for your original 1♦ response. Your jump response may lead to a slam try by the opener.

Hand #3: Bid 3♣ to show partner your long suit.

Hand #4: Bid 3NT – this bid will tell partner about the shape of your hand (promising two hearts and a balanced hand). Partner can then take control of the hand if she prefers hearts or wants to investigate slam possibilities.

Hand #5: Bid 2♠ - this is tough hand to bid as partner now thinks that you have at least five spades. You do not have enough points to communicate the Impossible Negative to partner (remember, it shows three 4-card suits and a singleton and at least 8 HCP). And, while you have sufficient points for a solid rebid, the lack of a 5-card suit means you initially need to lie to partner about the shape of your hand. If partner raises your spades, you may be playing in a 4-3 fit (personally, I find the so called “Moysian” fit challenging to play while my regular partner hates to play a contract with this distribution). One additional thought, any other suit rebid by the opener could open the door for you to bid NT.