

## Finding a Fit

### *Which Suit to Open*

When opening one of a suit, you may have more than one suit to pick from. In order of priority:

<b>Do I have...</b>	<b>Bid</b>	
1 Two equal length suits of five or more cards	The higher suit	If not...
2 A longest suit of five or more cards	That suit	If not...
3 Four diamonds	1♦	If not...
4 Otherwise	1♣	May be only two clubs

This method is known as **short club**. Some people use a different system called **better minor**. With this system, step 4 is replaced by:

<b>Do I have...</b>	<b>Bid</b>	
4 Three or four clubs	1♣	If not...
5 Otherwise	1♦	May be three diamonds

The advantage of short club is that a 1♦ opening guarantees four cards in the suit. It is rare that the 1♣ opening has only two clubs.

The advantage of better minor is that all minor suit openings guarantee three cards in the suit bid. It is rare that the 1♦ opening has less than four diamonds.

You should discuss with your partner which system you want to use. This document will assume short club.

### *Rules for Responder*

If partner opens one of a major and you have three or more cards in that suit, supporting the suit takes priority over everything else – even if you have a good suit of your own. Supporting partner's major was discussed in an earlier session.

Otherwise, the hunt is on to find the best contract. Some rules for responder:

- To make any response, at least six HCP are required.
- To bid at the two level, a five card or longer suit and at least ten HCP are required. With a six card suit, reduce the HCP requirement to nine.
- Bid the longest suit first
- Bid four card suits up the line
- The 1♦ opening promises four diamonds. Four or more diamonds are required to support the suit.
- At least five clubs are required to support that suit. An opening 1♣ promises only two cards but the vast majority of the time, it will be at least three.
- Prefer bidding a major to supporting a minor
- Prefer a NT bid to minimum support for a minor

## Some Examples

The following examples should help make things clear.

### Partner opens 1♦

Partner is promising four diamonds.

♠ A Q 7 2 ♥ 7 6 4 2 ♦ Q T 3 ♣ 5 2	Respond 1♥ even with such a poor suit. Bid four card suits up the line.  Opener will rebid spades with a four card suit so there is no chance of missing a spade fit.
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♠ K 7 ♥ Q J 6 ♦ J 8 5 3 ♣ Q 6 5 2	With nine HCP, respond 1NT despite the diamond support.  This is a balanced hand with scattered values. If partner has better than a minimum hand, there is a good chance of making 3NT.
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♠ K 7 ♥ A J 6 ♦ J 8 5 3 ♣ Q 6 5 2	With 11 HCP, respond 2NT.
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♠ 8 7 ♥ J 6 2 ♦ A Q T 3 ♣ 7 6 5 2	This time, nearly all the HCP are in the diamond suit. Bid 2♦.  This bid denies a four card major and promises 6 to 9 fit points.
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♠ 8 ♥ J 6 2 ♦ A J T 7 3 ♣ A 6 5 2	Only ten HCP but the hand has spade shortage and an extra trump. It is worth at least 14 points in support of diamonds. Bid 4♦.  If partner is better than average, there may even be a slam.
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### Partner opens 1♣

Partner is promising two clubs but it will usually be at least three.

♠ A T 7 2 ♥ J T 6 4 ♦ K 3 ♣ 7 5 2	Bid 1♥. Four card suits up the line.
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♠ A T 7 2 ♥ K 6 4 ♦ K 3 ♣ A 9 5 2	Bid 1♠. This bid shows at least four spades and denies four hearts. The hand contains at least six HCP.  Do not be tempted to bid 3NT. Look for the major fit first. Your change of suit is forcing. Next round, you can show your strength.
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♠ A 5 2  
♥ T 6 4  
♦ J 9 3  
♣ K 7 5 2

Bid 1NT. Do not support clubs with only four cards.  
Partner will know you do not have a four card major.

### Partner opens 1♥

Partner is promising five hearts.

♠ A K 9 7 2  
♥ T 6 4  
♦ A 3  
♣ 7 5 2

Bid 3♥. This shows ten to twelve fit points in hearts.  
Do not be tempted to bid 1♠. Partner would much sooner hear about the heart support.

♠ A K 9 7 5 2  
♥ T 4  
♦ A 6  
♣ 7 5 2

Without support for hearts, bid 1♠.  
There is no need to jump to show extra length or strength. The change of suit is forcing.

♠ A 8 5 2  
♥ T 4  
♦ A Q 9 8 3  
♣ 7 2

Bid 2♦, the longest suit. This shows at least five diamonds and at least ten HCP. It does not deny four hearts or four spades.  
The bid is forcing. Show the spades on the next round.

With this last hand, some people prefer to bid 1♠ if there are barely enough points for a two level bid. After 2♦, there is a problem when opener rebids 2NT. Now, a bid of 3♠ may take the auction too high.

♠ A 8 5 2  
♥ T 4  
♦ A Q 9 8 3  
♣ A 2

When the hand contains game forcing values, it is safe to bid the diamonds first.

## Opener's Rebid

If responder has bid a major and you have four or more cards in that suit, supporting the suit takes priority. Supporting partner's major was discussed in an earlier session.

Some rules for opener's second bid:

- Responder's bid of a new suit is forcing. You should not pass.
- Responder's no trump bid is not forcing. You may pass with a minimum hand.
- Bid the longest suit first
- Bid four card suits up the line
- Prefer bidding a major to supporting a minor
- Prefer a NT bid to minimum support for a minor

## Some Examples

You open 1♦ and Partner bids 1♥

♠ K J 9 2  
♥ 5 4  
♦ A Q 8 3  
♣ K 6 2

Bid 1♠. This shows four spades and denies four hearts. The hand may have as many as nineteen points. Since the change of suit is forcing, there will be another opportunity to show extra strength.

♠ K J 9 2  
♥ K 6 5 4  
♦ A Q 8 3  
♣ 2

Support partner's major. You have found a fit so there is no need to show your spades.

With thirteen high card points plus three for the singleton, invite to game. Jump to 3♥.

♠ K Q 2  
♥ 5 4  
♦ A Q 8 3 2  
♣ A K 2

Without support for partner's major, jump to 2NT. This promises 18-19 HCP. This is much better than repeating the diamonds.

No trump bids are not forcing. Partner can pass 2NT with a rock bottom hand.

♠ 5 4 2  
♥ 6  
♦ A Q J 3 2  
♣ A K 7 2

Bid 2♣. You are showing at least five diamonds, at least four clubs and not an absolute minimum. With 12 or 13 HCP, it is usually better to bid 1NT or repeat the diamonds.

You have denied four hearts.

You open 1♥ and Partner bids 1♠

♠ K 9 2  
♥ A Q T 7 5 4  
♦ A 3  
♣ 6 2

You cannot support partner's spades. Repeat the hearts with 2♥. This shows six hearts, three or less spades and up to about 15 HCP.

♠ K 2  
 ♥ A Q T 5 4  
 ♦ A J 6 3  
 ♣ 6 2

Bid 2♦, to show partner five hearts and four diamonds.

With 6 hearts and 4 diamonds, it would still be better to bid the second suit. By bidding two suits, partner knows nine of your cards rather than six if you repeat the hearts.

♠ K 9 2  
 ♥ A Q T 5 4  
 ♦ A 3  
 ♣ T 6 2

A balanced hand. Bid 1NT to show 12 to 14 HCP.

## Deal 1

	North	
	♠ A 6 3 ♥ Q T 9 4 ♦ K J 6 3 ♣ A 5	
West		East
♠ 5 4 ♥ A 6 ♦ T 9 8 4 2 ♣ Q J T 8		♠ J T 8 7 ♥ K 8 2 ♦ A 7 ♣ 9 7 6 3
	South	
	♠ K Q 9 2 ♥ J 7 5 3 ♦ Q 5 ♣ K 4 2	

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥ <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♥ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	3♥ <sup>(3)</sup>
Pass	4♥ <sup>(4)</sup>	All Pass	

1. Bid four card suits up the line.
2. 15 fit points. Not quite enough for a jump.
3. 12 fit points. Invite to game.
4. Invitation accepted.

Declarer should first work on trumps to get rid of the ace and king. Having done that, knock out the ace of diamonds to set up two diamond tricks.

There will be three spade tricks, two hearts plus a ruff, two diamonds and two clubs.

## Deal 2

	North	
	♠ Q 9 8 ♥ 7 5 ♦ 8 7 4 3 ♣ K Q T 9	
West		East
♠ J 7 5 4 ♥ K Q 9 4 2 ♦ A 6 ♣ 3 2		♠ A K T 6 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K 5 2 ♣ A 8 6 5
	South	
	♠ 3 2 ♥ A J T 6 ♦ Q J T 9 ♣ J 7 4	

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♥ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	1♠ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass
3♠ <sup>(3)</sup>	Pass	4♠ <sup>(4)</sup>	All Pass

1. Longest suit first.
2. Four spades and less than four hearts.
3. Support partner rather than repeat hearts. Ten to twelve fit points are needed to invite to game.
4. Fifteen fit points are enough to accept the invitation.

There are five top tricks with one or two more depending on how the spade finesse works out. More are needed. One way is to try and set up the heart suit but the easier way is to cross-ruff.

Cash the two top diamonds and the ace of clubs. Force out the ace of hearts and then cross-ruff. There should be at least ten tricks.

## Deal 3

	North	
	♠ A T 9 6 2 ♥ Q 7 3 ♦ 7 ♣ 8 6 4 2	
West		East
♠ 8 5 ♥ K 8 5 ♦ J 8 6 5 ♣ K J 9 3		♠ Q J 7 4 ♥ 9 4 ♦ K T 9 2 ♣ Q T 7
	South	
	♠ K 3 ♥ A J T 6 2 ♦ A Q 4 3 ♣ A 5	

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	2♥ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	4♥ <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Do not bid spades. Partner wants to know about the heart fit.
2. With twenty fit points, jump straight to game.

Ruff diamonds in dummy before drawing trumps. At least ten and possibly eleven tricks.

## Deal 4

	North	
	♠ 9 8 6 3 ♥ A 8 7 ♦ 8 6 ♣ Q 9 8 4	
West		East
♠ A 2 ♥ T 4 ♦ K Q J 5 3 ♣ A J 6 2		♠ K T 7 5 ♥ K Q 9 3 ♦ T 2 ♣ K T 7
	South	
	♠ Q J 4 ♥ J 6 5 2 ♦ A 9 7 4 ♣ 5 3	

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass
2♣ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	3NT <sup>(3)</sup>	All Pass

1. Bid four card suits up the line.
2. No support for spades. Show a second suit. With a minimum opening hand, 1NT or 2♦ would be better.
3. Enough for game opposite partner's better-than-minimum hand.

Once diamonds are established, the contract should roll home.

## Deal 5

	North	
	♠ 9 ♥ A Q T 6 4 3 ♦ K Q 8 3 ♣ A 2	
West		East
♠ J T 7 5 4 ♥ K 7 2 ♦ A ♣ J T 6 5		♠ Q 2 ♥ J 8 ♦ J T 9 5 2 ♣ Q 8 7 4
	South	
	♠ A K 8 6 3 ♥ 9 5 ♦ 7 6 4 ♣ K 9 3	

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1♠ <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♦ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	2♠ <sup>(3)</sup>
Pass	3♥ <sup>(4)</sup>	Pass	4♥ <sup>(5)</sup>
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. Four or more spades. Two or less hearts.
2. Four diamonds, not a minimum
3. Five spades.
4. Six hearts and four diamonds.
5. OK. Game in hearts

The double finesse in hearts keeps the trump losers to one. Make five hearts, two spades, two clubs and one or two diamonds.