

## Opening the Bidding

### The Auction

In our previous lessons we have played Mini-Bridge, a form of bridge where the auction phase is greatly simplified to enable beginners to get into playing the hands and winning tricks without having to learn all the rules for bidding. Now it's time to start learning the Acol bidding system.

Each suit has a ranking order. When you make a bid during the auction, you must ensure that it is higher than the previous bid, just as you would in any auction. You are now trying to reach a contract at the best level for your side. The first person to make a bid (not pass) becomes the **OPENER**. Opener's partner is called the **RESPONDER**.

### Ranking of Suits

Notrumps	NT		
Spades	♠	}	Spades and Hearts are also called the <b>MAJOR</b> suits
Hearts	♥		
Diamonds	♦	}	Diamonds and Clubs are also called the <b>MINOR</b> suits
Clubs	♣		

### The Levels of Bidding

1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 1♠ 1NT 2♣ 2♦ 2♥ 2♠ 2NT ..... 7NT

You must make 6 tricks before you start to score in bridge – therefore:

1- level contracts must make 1+6 tricks = 7 tricks

2- level contracts must make 2+6 tricks = 8 tricks ... and so on

The lowest bid you can make is 1♣ = 7 tricks

The highest bid you can make is 7NT = 13 tricks

### What is the Partnership looking for in a Contract?

Their aim is to find the best contract at the correct level. There are 3 levels to bid to:

<b>Partscore</b>	combined points less than 25
<b>Game</b>	combined points 25-32
<b>Slam</b>	combined points 33+

### What is Game?

You get a large bonus when you make a Game, but you must make a certain number of tricks to succeed. The number of tricks varies according to the trump suit or NT.

Game is:            3NT – 9 tricks    4♥/♠ – 10 tricks    5♣/♦ – 11 tricks

# 1-level Opening Bids – Suit or No Trumps?

## Opening in a Suit

1♣	12-19	4+ clubs
1♦	12-19	4+ diamonds
1♥	12-19	4+ hearts
1♠	12-19	4+ spades

You always open in your longest suit, regardless of how good the suit is. When you have two equal length suits there are rules to follow regarding which suit to open. We will cover these in Lesson 3.

## Rule of 20

Sometimes hands may not have 12 High Card Points (HCPs) but have good 'shape' and therefore worth opening. The 'Rule of Twenty' can be applied to determine whether a hand is worth an opening bid: Add the number of HCPs to the number of cards in your two longest suits. If the total comes to at least twenty you can open the bidding, **provided you have a sensible rebid if partner responds in your short suit. (Lesson 5 – Opener's Rebid in a New Suit).**

♠ 6 5  
♥ A Q 7 4 2  
♦ A 10 8 6 3  
♣ 3

This hand is very unbalanced and has only 10 HCPs. Using the 'Rule of Twenty', add your 10 HCP's, 5 hearts and 5 diamonds: 10+5+5=20. This means that you may open 1♥. Now ask yourself whether you can cope with any response from partner

If partner responds 1♠, 1NT or 2♣ you can bid 2♦, giving partner a choice of rebidding either of your suits at the 2-level, so do open 1♥.

## Opening 1NT

There is one hand type where we do not open in a suit when we have 12-19 points. When we have **12-14 points** and what is known as a **BALANCED HAND**, we open 1NT.

### A balanced hand contains:

- no void or singleton
- one doubleton at most

♠ AQ6542	♠ AJ52	♠ K2	♠ K987	♠ 97642
♥ 72	♥ KJ	♥ J762	♥ A87	♥ AKQ2
♦ A2	♦ A75	♦ KQ875	♦ KJ3	♦ J3
♣ A92	♣ 9865	♣ K7	♣ A52	♣ 96
1♠	1NT	1NT	1♠	Pass