

Limit Bids & Forcing Bids



First Round Bidding

Responder's first bid is either:

- Limited - all NT bids, all raises of opener's suit (the bid has an UPPER HCP limit)
- Forcing - all new suits (at the 1-level showing 6+ HCP, at the 2-level showing 10+ HCP)

Non-Forcing Bids (limited bids):

Bids that are non-forcing have a specific point range. Since the point range is known, the bid may be passed:

- All raises of partner's suit are non-forcing (all have a specific HCP range)
- All responses of NT are non-forcing (all have a specific HCP range)

Examples:

Opener	Responder	
1♥	1NT	1NT shows 6-9 HCP (so Opener usually knows if there is game or not)
1♠	2♠	2♠ shows 6-9 Total Points (so Opener can work out if there is game or not)
1♦ 2♠	1♠	2♠ shows 12-15 TP (so Responder is in control of whether there is game or not)
1♦ 1NT	1♠	A rebid of 1NT shows 12-14 HCP (so Responder knows about your hand)

Forcing Bids (unlimited bids)

Bids that are forcing make your partner bid again. Some may be game forcing (see below) and some may just make partner bid at least one more time (forcing for one round). They have a minimum range but no upper limit to the bid.

Examples:

Opener	Responder	
1♥	1♠	A response of a new suit is forcing, showing 6+ HCP (at the 1-level)
1♥	2♣	A response of a new suit is forcing, showing 10+ HCP at the 2-level (but only if you cannot bid the suit at the 1-level)
1♥	2♠	A jump to a new suit is game forcing, showing 19+ HCP.

Second Round Bidding

The second round of the bidding is about trying to define your hand more accurately (whether you are Opener or Responder). You are trying to let them know:

- If you have a fit for their Major
- If you have another suit (at least 5-4 shape)
- If you have a balanced hand
- If you belong in game (i.e. your HCP range)

You try to define your hand into "Minimum", "Medium/intermediate/invitational" or "Maximum" hands if you can.

Hand Strength	Opener's Range	Responder's Range
Minimum hand	12-15 HCP	6-9 HCP
Medium hand	16-18 HCP	10-12 HCP
Maximum hand (game hand)	19+ HCP	13+ HCP

Opener's Rebids that are Forcing

Bid	Meaning	Example
New suit at 3-level	Natural, 5+ cards 1st suit, 4+ cards new suit, forcing to game	1♥ - 2♦; 3♣
Jump bids in new suit	Natural, 5+ cards 1 st suit, 4+ cards new suit, forcing to game (19+ HCP if responder has bid at the 1-level, 16+ HCP if responder has bid at the 2-level)	1♥ - 1♠/1NT; 3♣
Jump in first suit	Natural, 6+ card suit (16+ HCP)	1♥ - 1♠; 2♥ (non-forcing) 1♥ - 2♣; 3♥ (game force)
Reverse (bidding beyond your barrier)	Natural, 5+ cards 1st suit, 4+ cards new suit, forcing for one round (16+ HCP)	1♣ - 1♠; 2♥ 1♥ - 1NT; 2♠

Non-Forcing Rebids by Opener

- 1NT rebid is non-forcing (it has a specific HCP range).
- Rebids of your own suit are non-forcing: 2-level = minimum, 3-level is invitational (3-level is game forcing if responder has bid new suit at 2-level [10+ HCP])
- Raises of your partner's suit are non-forcing (all have a specific HCP range).

Responses to Opener's Non-Forcing Rebids

- If opener has made a non-forcing bid of 1NT, then new suits at the 2-level are non-forcing.
- If opener has raised responder's suit, rebid their own suit or bid a new suit (below their first suit) - all non-forcing bids, then if responder bids their own suit again or if they bid NT, those bids are non-forcing.

Forcing Rebids by Responder

Bid	Meaning	Example
New suit at the 2-level, (provided No Trumps has not been bid by either partner)	Natural, 4+ cards 1 st suit, 4+ cards new suit, forcing for one round.	1♦ - 1♠; 2♦ - 2♥ 1♦ - 1♥; 1♠ - 2♣ (FSF) 1♣ - 1♥; 2♥ - 2♠
New suit at 3-level	Natural, 5+ cards 1 st suit, 4+ cards new suit, forcing to game (13+ HCP)	1♥ - 1♠; 2♥ - 3♦ 1♦ - 1♠; 1NT - 3♥
Reverse (bidding beyond your barrier)	Natural, 5+ cards 1 st suit, 4+ cards new suit, forcing to game (12+ HCP)	1♣ - 1♥; 1NT - 2♠

- If opener has made a non-forcing bid of INT, then new suits at the 3-level are game forcing.
- If opener has raised responder's suit, rebid their own suit or bid a new suit (below their first suit) - all non-forcing bids, then if responder bids a new suit it is forcing.
- If opener has made a game forcing bid, the auction cannot end below game so all subsequent bids are forcing until game is bid.
- If opener has made a reverse bid, then responder must bid again, even after interference; minimum bids show minimal hands, jump bids show game forcing hands.