

Showing your Shape



Note: To access No Fear via the links you will need to be a current No Fear subscriber. Also note that occasionally the No Fear gremlin denies access on your first attempt but usually lets you through next time.

Opening in a suit and rebidding a second suit

This almost always guarantees at least five cards in the first suit and at least four cards in the second suit. The only exception is the notorious 4-4-4-1 shape, which I will come to later.

If you open in a suit and jump in your second suit, this is 100% game forcing and shows 19-20 points, so a non-jump rebid, say 1♦-1♠-2♣, shows anything from 11 points to 18 points.

No Fear tip: <https://tinyurl.com/y4re275w>

Robson: <https://tinyurl.com/nhfdm3ym>

Opening 5-5 Hands

Always open the higher ranking suit, regardless of relative strength. It's more economical. A weak partner will always be able to make a weak preference bid at the 2-level. If you open in your lower ranking suit and partner prefers your higher ranking suit then she will usually have to show preference at the 3-level.

Here is another good No Fear tip: <https://tinyurl.com/3r2u8y52>

Traditionally some teachers recommended opening 1♣ with five clubs and five spades, arguing that you could show your 5-5 at the 2 level (1♣ - 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♠). Repeating your second suit promises a fifth card in the suit. However, what if the opponents get into the action? Suppose you open 1♣ and the player on your left makes a Weak Jump Overcall to 2♥, partner passes and the opponent on your right bids extends the pre-empt by bidding 3♥ or even 4♥, you may well never get to show your spades.

A common error is to open the lower ranked of two five card suits when you have 16+ points and your lower ranked suit is the stronger of the two. The flaky logic is that by reversing with her rebid opener is alerting partner to her strength. In fact responder is distorting her shape and misleading opener. Suppose the auction goes 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥ - 2NT - 3♠. The auction shows five spades, but by inference opener must surely have six diamonds - with 5-5 opener would have opened 1♠ (higher ranked of two 5-card suits). If responder has two good diamonds she might well bid 5♦, mistakenly thinking that there is an 8 card fit in diamonds! Bid the higher ranked suit and once partner has responded you can usually show your extra strength with your second or third bid.

Opening 6-4 hands

Here you have two choices for your rebid, you can either rebid your first suit (showing partner the location of six of your cards,) or bid your second suit, showing the location of nine of your cards. The default advice is to bid your second suit provided it is a cheaper bid. For example with six clubs and four hearts, suppose you open 1♣- P- 1♠- P and you then rebid 3♣, this promises 16-18 points and six clubs and can be passed, whereas 2♥ is not only a reverse, promising at least 16 points, but is forcing. Partner has to bid even if very weak.

Robson: <https://tinyurl.com/dfmh3954>

Repeating your suit

This normally shows six cards in the suit, whether bidding as opener or as responder. The only exception is opening at the 1 level and repeating at the 2-level, which can very occasionally be made with a 5-card suit in a cramped auction. 1♠ -2♣ -2♠ guarantees six spades, because with 5-3-3-2 you would open 1NT or open in a suit and rebid 1NT, and with four cards in clubs or diamonds, you would have rebid your second suit. This auction is not 'cramped'. However, after 1♠ - 2♦, if opener has five spades and four clubs he won't be able to show his clubs at the 2-level and may well be too weak to jump to 3♣ which would be game forcing (19-20 points), so will have to hold his nose and repeat his 5- card suit. Responder should assume that partner has six cards in the suit if he repeats it at the 2 level. Of course, if opener jump repeats (e.g. 1♠ - 2♦ - 3♠) he is guaranteeing six cards in the suit (and 16-18 points)

If **responder** repeats her first suit she is guaranteeing six cards in the suit. Opener is very likely to be short in responder's suit. 1♥ -1♠ -2♦ - 2♠ (showing 6-10 points). If responder has only five cards in her suit and is weak (6-10 points) then she must show preference for one of partner's two suits.

4-4-4-1 hands

These can be notoriously difficult for Acrol players. Fortunately they occur in less than 5% of deals. There is no ideal solution but EBED and most Acrol teachers including ourselves adopt the method recommended by No Fear. Click this link to view it: <https://tinyurl.com/yw22zd3s>. Do check out our video and handout, and memorise the handy aide memoire (**H**orrible **C**ards **D**on't **D**eliver) which is based on the same

Video: <https://tinyurl.com/3fdd9u9f>

Handout: <https://tinyurl.com/4rc39n5h>