

## Modern Acol for Beginners:

# Lesson 5: Opener Bids a New Suit & Responder's Limit Rebid

Opener's rebid in a new suit almost always\* shows at least 5 cards in their first suit and at least 4 cards in their second suit. (\*The exceptions are the notorious 4441 hands).

The point count range shown by opener's rebid is as follows:

1. The new suit rebid is at the 1-Level

1♣ – 1♥  
1♠            12-18 points

2. The new suit rebid is at the 2-Level and the second suit is **lower ranking** than the first suit

1♥ – 1♠  
2♣            12-18 points

1♥ – 2♣  
2♦            12-18 points

3. The rebid is at the 2-Level and the second suit is **higher ranking** than the first suit (known as a 'reverse' bid – see 'Barrier Principle below')

1♣ – 1♠  
2♥            16+ points

1♦ – 2♣  
2♥            16+points

4. The rebid is at the 3 Level

1♥-1♠  
3♦            19+ HCP

Note: A new suit rebid at the 3-Level is game forcing. If partner has responded at the 1-level opener should hold 19+ HCP to make such a strong rebid (a "jump" bid), as partner may have as few as 6 HCP.

# Responder's Rebids – the 4th bid of the Auction

## Choice of Suit or NT:

- Give preference for one of partner's suits – major suit if possible
- Bid NT with no fit and strength in the unbid suits
- Rebid own 6+ card suit

## Choice of Level:

6-9 HCP: Support one of partner's suits at the 2-level, or rebid 1NT (if available)

10-12 HCP: Support one of partner's suits at the 3-Level or rebid 2NT

13+ HCP: Bid game. *(Note that there will occasionally be situations where responder will not have found a fit in a major and will have a hand that is unsuitable for 3NT. There are methods for further investigation that are beyond the scope of this course).*

## Weak Hands (6-9 HCP): Simple Suit Preference.

If opener shows two suits and does not make a reverse bid, responder must decide which of partner's two suits is best. If responder passes, they are effectively choosing opener's second suit ('preference pass')

Opener will have at least five cards in their first suit and may only have four cards in their second suit, so unless responder's support for opener's second suit is much better than the first suit, responder should show 'reluctant preference' for opener's first suit by bidding it.

Responder may well have only two cards in the suit, opposite opener's probable 5 card suit, in which case there will not be an 8 card fit.

♠ 10 8 6 5 3
♥ 9 7
♦ Q 9
♣ K Q 7 4

Partner	You
1♥	1♠
2♦	2♥

Partner's 2♦ rebid offers a second suit and if you pass you choose diamonds (known as a 'preference pass'). Partner's bids show 5+ hearts and 4+ diamonds so with two cards in each you should bid 2♥. This is known as 'reluctant preference'. Partner should pass.

Alternatively, responder can bid a good 6+ card major suit of their own but should appreciate that opener may be very short in responder's suit. Opener should recognise this as a weak sign off bid.

♠ A K 10 9 7 3
♥ 9
♦ 10 4
♣ Q 8 7 4

Partner	You
1♥	1♠
2♦	2♠

Your spades are good enough to bid again over partner's two suits. With just one more point you would bid a game invitational 3♠.

## Stronger hands

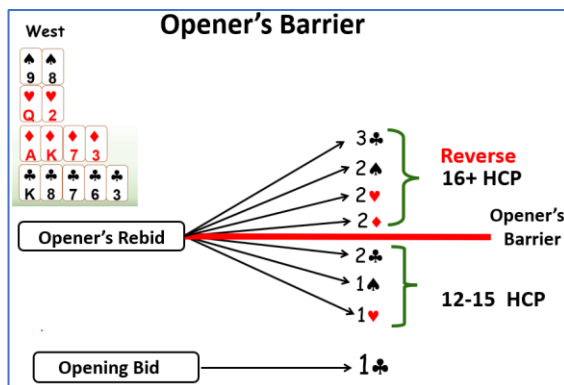
With 10-12 HCP, responder will make a game invitational bid in one of partner's suits or bid 2NT. If partner has shown a 5-card suit then responder can support with 3 cards by bidding at the 3-level. With 13+HCP responder will look for game in a suit or in No Trumps

♠ A K J 5 2
♥ K 8 7
♦ A 6
♣ 9 7 4

Partner	You
1♥	1♠
2♦	4♥

After partner's second bid you now know that partner is unbalanced so has at least 5 hearts. That means you have an 8+ card heart fit, and with 16 points including shortage opposite partner's opening hand you have no hesitation in jumping to game.

## The Barrier Principle



West	East
♠ 9	♠ J 7 5 4 3
♥ ♥ ♥	♥ ♥ ♥ ♥
♦ A 7 2	♦ K Q 5 3
♣ K J 8 6 3	♣ 9 4
12 HCP	6 HCP

West	East
1♣	1♠
2♦	?

Opener's first bid sets an imaginary 'barrier' exactly one level higher. Here the opening bid is 1♣, creating a barrier at the 2♣ rebid point. To cross this barrier (say by bidding 2♦) opener should have at least 16 points. Here is why:

Here West's opening 1♣ bid has set an imaginary barrier of 2♣ for their rebid. West has misguidedly broken the barrier with her 2♦ rebid, and now East, with only a minimum 6 points, is well and truly stuck! East has a choice between two awful preference bids:

- Passing and playing in 2♦ with only six combined diamonds, or ....
- Bidding 3♣, with just 7 combined clubs and a combined 18 points.

West would need 16+ HCP to have any chance of making 3♣ if partner has a minimum opening hand. Here West should have rebid her ropey clubs rather than bid 2♦. Even better, West should not have opened at all, anticipating the likelihood of a rebid problem. West's hand satisfied the Rule of 20, but it's not really a rule – more a guideline.