

NT rebids after 2 over 1 in standard bidding. ♠♥♦♣ George Cuppaidge Dec 2014

When opener holds a balanced hand and gets a two over one reply, he will wish to rebid in NT, to show that shape. The point range of a one-bid is very wide. How can he delimit it?

The popular means is to open 1NT with a wide variety of shapes when in the 15-17 point range and use a minimum, 2NT, rebid to show 12-14 points and a jump to 3NT to show 18-20 points. This solution is satisfactory when the combined point count is all that matters but is seriously inadequate when finding a fit is important. For it to work at all you must open 1NT on most shapes with no singleton or void when in the 15-17 point range. At part-score level, following a 1NT opening, the partnership cannot, with any certainty, find a 5-3, 4-4 or even 5-4 or 5-5 fit in any suit. Low-level competition is constantly misjudged. Too often your opponents find their fit, but you cannot. At the game level, minor suit games are routinely missed and the decision whether or not to play in an eight-card major fit is often based on little or no information. You cannot even contemplate a Moysian. Many slams must be played in a suit, and not necessarily the first suit fit found. Opening 1NT is a necessary evil in standard bidding, and these popular methods make it necessary too often. This scheme will permit you to bid the hand you hold.

It is the antithesis of good bidding to have to leap to 3NT just to show a strong hand. There is a better use for this bid, see below. It is important to be allowed to rebid 2NT on all the balanced or near balanced hands to permit an investigation of game or slam to begin below the level of 3NT. This scheme will not only permit this, but allow you to restrict your 1NT opening to the classic shapes, 5332 when the five-card suit is a minor, 4432 and 4333. Point count ranges can be shown within closer limits as well. A 2NT rebid following a 2C response will always show a balanced hand. It shows exact shape, 5332 with a doubleton club, so responder's 3C is free to use as a range-ask.* More and more players, however, use the 2C reply as a range-ask. This is the recommended way but it is not dealt with here. The trend is towards lighter opening bids. The article assumes the range of an opening bid of one-of-a-suit to show a hand in the 10-19 point range. It is readily adapted, whatever your own system decrees.

*See below.

Preliminary Assumptions.

Adopting these propositions will remove the ambiguity and uncertainty from that very grey area of standard bidding, rebids following a two over one response:

- A two over one response creates a game force. Playing it otherwise creates its own set of problems which cannot be addressed here (or anywhere?).
- A two-over-one 2D or 2H bid promises 5+cards in the suit. With game values but without, bid 2C. Let partner show four cards in a second suit, if he has one.
- A 2NT rebid denies three-card or better support. It shows a 5332 shape or a hand with five cards in the suit opened and no four-card suit which can be bid at the two-level. It is unlimited within your system's range for a one-bid.
- An opening bid in any suit denies 5+ cards in a higher-ranking suit.
- Opener's suit-rebid promises 6+ cards. It is forcing and unlimited. It denies five, but not four, cards in a suit lower-ranking than partner's suit.

- A jump suit-rebid promises 6+cards and 3+card support for partner.
- When opener holds 5+5+ in two suits, he rebids the second suit at the three-level whether or not as a jump.
- A new major at the two-level, either higher or lower-ranking, shows a four-card suit. Not to bid one denies one. Opener shows 5+4 or 5-5 in the majors before showing diamond support.
- Opener's 3NT rebid promises a very good 6+card suit, no fit for partner and an opening bid in the minimum point range with at least half-stops in the unbid suits.

Finding the range of partner's 2NT rebid.

The bid of 3C over 2NT is used for this purpose. When responder began with 2C, opener's rebids show his strength in steps. That scheme could lead to a 4-4 fit in a clubs being missed when responder began with 2D or 2H and holds 4+cards in clubs. That problem is solved by inserting a first step to show four cards in clubs. Responder, with 5+hearts and four cards in diamonds, can introduce the diamond suit himself over 2NT. Over responder's 3C, opener bids

- 3D Four cards in clubs (but only when this is possible)
- 3H 10-12 points, balanced
- 3S 13-14 points, balanced
- 3NT 15-17 points, balanced
- 4C 18-19 points, balanced

As well, the partnership may agree that following any rebid other than 2NT by opener, the cheapest bid asks opener to further describe, with his first step reserved to show all hands in the lower, 10-14 point, range. Space has become cramped, it must be used frugally. See Part II

Examples.

♠AJ654	♠K2
♥82	♥AK764
♦54	♦A6
♣AK52	♣QJ98
1S	2H
2NT	3C
3D (1)	4C (2)
4S	6C (3)

1. Four-card club suit.
2. Agreeing clubs, but 3H asking for further description is an option. Partner would reply 3S, all 10-14.
3. East might consider 5NT here, but to bid marginal grand slams when the field plays in game is bad odds. East should appreciate that he already has an edge over most standard players and keep it.

♠A9764	♠Q
♥KQJ	♥A76

♦85	♦AKQ64
♣Q103	♣KJ92
1S	2D
2NT	3C
3S (1)	3NT (2)

1. 13-14 points, balanced counting one point for the fifth spade. Responder will appreciate this fact.
2. Maximum 33 points combined, unless opener holds an unlikely ♦Jx this is will be a poor slam. Opener does not hold four clubs so there is no eight-card fit. East can be sure he is facing a 5323 shape. With four clubs opposite, 6C would be the spot. You might even try it here!

♠AQ654	♠K7
♥--	♥QJ876
♦KQ74	♦AJ65
♣AJ64	♣KQ
1S	2H
2NT (1)	3D (2)
5H (3)	7D (4)

1. With the understandings above, no other rebid is available on this hand.
2. Natural, 4+cards.
3. If East is looking for game in diamonds he must be cold for 6D opposite these cards, so West takes that rarest of opportunities, to show a void in partner's first suit.
4. The proviso in the first example notwithstanding, this is an invitation which cannot be refused. East knows he is facing 5044 and these are perfect cards.

After the auction beginning 1S-2H; 2NT-3C; 3H and up, opener's possible shapes are 5143, 5242 and 5233. A 4-4 diamond fit will not be missed even when responder is precisely 0544. See Part II.

Part II

Continuations when opener's rebid is in a suit.

This Part is directed to bidding the hands where opener makes a suit rebid, or where he rebids 2NT and then gives a first step reply to the 3C range-ask, showing four clubs. Responder's cheapest bid is a relay.

Opener's first step shows all 10-14 point hands. The next five bids, one in each of the denominations, are used to give partner the most useful information in the light of what has already passed. Length in responder's suit is paramount. Here are suggestions for each of the possible cases.

For opener to bid responder's suit shows maximum support. To rebid his first-bid major shows support. To rebid the other major shows the most extreme shapes, short in partner's suit and the

unbid suit. To bid NT shows no shortage where possible, 1-1 when not. A bid in an unbid suit shows two- to four-card length.

1. After 1H or 1S, a 2D reply and opener bids the other major which shows four cards. After 2S over 2H, or 2NT over 2S

- First step All 10-14 points
- 3D Three-card support. This and higher bids show 15-19 points.
- Min NT 5422
- The long major. Two-card diamond support , 0-1 cards in clubs
- The short major. 0-1 cards in diamonds 0-1 cards in clubs.
- 3C 0-1 cards in diamonds, 2-4 cards in clubs

2. Opener shows 5+5+ in his two suits by rebidding the second suit at the three-level. Relay

- First step All 10-14 points
- Responder's suit. Three-card support so 5530.
- Minimum NT 1-1 in the other suits, 6511 or 5611
- Suit opened Two-card support, 0-1 cards in the unbid suit.
- Unbid suit. 2 or 3 cards in the unbid suit, 0-1 cards in partner's suit.
- Second suit. 0-1 cards in partner's suit and the unbid suit, not 1-1.

3. Opener jump rebids his suit showing 3+card support. Opener's suit and responder's suit now show 4+card support.

- First step All 10-14 points
- Responder's suit 4+card support, low shortage or equal shortage, 6421, 7411 etc.
- Own suit rebid 4+card support, high shortage, likely 6412 or 5512
- Min NT 6322
- An unbid suit 3 card support, 2-4 cards, 0-1 cards in the fourth suit, likely 6331 (8311 etc must be bid here too, bid the better singleton.)

4. Opener raises responder's suit, denying 6+cards in his own suit.

- First step All 10-14 points
- Responder's suit 4+card support, low shortage or 11
- Own suit rebid 4+card support, high shortage, likely 5413
- Min NT 5332 or 5422
- An unbid suit 3 card support, 2-4 cards, 0-1 cards in the fourth suit

5. Opener rebids his suit at the two-level. This denies three-card support. Opener may hold four cards, but not 5+cards, in a suit lower-ranking than responder's suit. The hand is described by showing length features up the line, an unbid suit containing two to four cards, two cards when responder's suit.

- First step All 10-14 points
- Min NT Length in all suits, 6322 or 7222
- 3C Club length. Over responder's 3D; three of opener's major-no length in the other major, three of the other major-length, 3NT-diamond length. (Iota. Minimum NT is a bid in the relay suit).
- 3D Diamond length. Over responder's 3H, 3S when opener's suit-no heart length, when the other major-length. 3NT-heart length when opener's suit is spades, when it is hearts-no spade length.
- Unbid major The only length, 8311 etc.
- Bid major No length, 10111 or more extreme. Impossible but you must have a bid for it. See example.

6. Opener bids 3D over 3C range ask, showing four clubs. Over responder's 3H relay, opener bids

- 3S All 10-14 points
- 3NT 5224
- 4C 5134 or 5314 with the singleton in responder's suit.
- 4D 5044

Examples

♠AJ765	♠K2
♥KQ5	♥AJ7642
♦63	♦AK4
♣Q87	♣64
1S	2H
3H	3S (1)
3NT (2)	4H(3)

1. Relay
2. All minimums
3. Great cards but not enough to press on opposite a minimum.

♠K6	♠8
♥AJ7653	♥K4
♦6	♦AKQ832
♣AK87	♣6532
1H	2D
2H	2S (1)
3C (2)	3D (1)
3S (3)	4H (4)

1. Relay
2. Length with 15-19 points, West did not bid 2NT, all 10-14 points. He has at least one shortage since he did not bid 3NT.
3. Length. East knows that West is 3613 or similar. 3NT, iota, here would show two diamonds. A diamond loser is probable. Opposite even two small diamonds, the diamond slam would be worth bidding. East did not even contemplate introducing his club "suit." This is not a hand for the 4-4 fit
4. Plenty

♠AQ86532	♠K7
♥6	♥AK8753
♦4	♦762
♣AQ74	♣K8
1S	2H
2S (1)	2NT (2)
4C(3)	4NT (4)
5S (5)	6S

1. To bid 3C here shows 5+5+
2. Relay
3. 3C here shows all minimums. The 4C bid denies diamond and heart length, likely 7114. (3D and 3H show length, 3S shows no length, 3NT shows no shortage.) This hand is a maximum, counting three extra points for length in a seven-card suit headed by an A or K.
4. The eternal question, what does this mean? No suit has been agreed. It cannot be sign-off, and opposite this shape it could not possibly be quantitative. It could be played as a general slam try. Simpler is to play it as RKCB treating honours in both partnership suits as key cards. The partnership must be allowed to sign-off in either suit.
5. Two key cards plus ♠Q. Missing the ♠Q the slam is better not bid.

Will this style work in every auction beginning with one-of-a-major and two over one in diamonds or hearts? It will work better than standard "methods" on every hand. On some you will be too high to get the very specific information you need for that perfect small slam or grand slam. As always in bridge, there will be times when you get to the best contract and fail, while your opposite numbers languish in an inferior, lower-level, contract and go plus. You will always be ahead of your competitors, so use great caution before bidding a grand-slam. You gain only 3 i.m.p's over bidding the small slam when they play in game. Contemplate your relative position.

♠QJ764	♠K
♥--	♥J10764
♦AKJ6	♦Q95
♣KJ73	♣AQ54
1S	2H
2NT	3C (1)
3D (2)	3H (3)
4D (4)	6C (5)

1. Range-ask.
2. Four cards in clubs.
3. Relay.
4. 15-19 points 5044 shape.
5. A perfect fit. When you know a void is working you are playing with a 30 point pack. The bashers will play this in 3NT. Only 27 points combined, all suits stopped, no fit in a major and no big minor-suit fit. In standard methods you cannot find the crucial heart void. You do not show a void in partner's suit, to cue-bid there shows an ace (or by agreement a king).