

Bridge 101 – Lesson 4

How to Respond to Partner's Opening Bid of One of a Minor

Hand evaluation as Responder:

Counting points in our hand when we are the responder:

Whether your partner has opened one of a major or of a minor you evaluate your hand by counting points in one of three ways just as we discussed last time.

If you are planning on bidding a new suit, you count hcp's plus length points.

If you are planning on bidding NT, you count just high card points

If you are supporting your partners suit you count hcp's plus shortages.

Void is 3 points. Singleton is 2 points. Doubleton is 1 point.

Types of Hands:

Points required to respond to a major opening or a minor opening are the same.

Minimum Hand is 6 – 9 points

Invitational Hand is 10 – 11 points

Game Forcing Hand is 12+ points

What we mean by points here depends on whether we are introducing a new suit, bidding NT or supporting our partners suit.

Opening bids:

If your partner opens 1NT, you know your partner has 15 -17 points and a balanced hand (a hand with no singleton or void and at most one doubleton).

If your partner opens 1♥ or 1♠, you know your partner has 13-21 total points and at least five cards in the major suit that is bid.

If your partner opens 1♣ or 1♦ you know three things about your partners's hand:

Partner has 13-21 total points.

Partner (probably) does not have a 5-card major.

Partner has at least 3 cards in the minor that was opened.

When your partner opens one of a minor it possible she has a four card major but not a five card major.

When your partner opens one of a minor she is saying:

“Hey, partner!, I've got opening points but (probably) no 5-card major!”

But she might have a four card major that you also have four cards in. In which case you have the GOLDEN FIT (when a partnership has at least eight cards in one suit).

When partner opens one of a minor we begin the hunt for a golden fit in a major if possible.

Responses to a minor opening:

With 0 – 5 points, pass. Really. No matter how sad it makes you.

Without an intervening bid from your opponent and with 6 or more total points,
YOU OWE YOUR PARTNER A BID.

Responder's most important objective is to determine whether or not the partnership has a major suit fit.

If your partner opens one of a minor and you have 5+ cards in that minor you do not respond to your partner's minor if you have a 4-card major.

When responding, the majors (even with only 4 cards in the major) are bid before a 5-card minor because we'd much rather be in a game contract of a major and only have to take 10 tricks than be in a game contract of a minor and have to take 11 tricks.

Also, a game in a major is worth more points than a game in a minor.

Responses to minor opening when you have at least a four card major:

If you as responder have 6+ points and a four card major, it should be bid.

Partner opens 1♣, you hold: ♠K5 ♥J432 ♦Q985 ♣963
You have 6 hcp's, no points for length and a four card ♥ suit
Your response is 1♥.

Partner opens 1♣, you hold: ♠K5 ♥J432 ♦QT985 ♣96
You have 6 hcp's, 1 point for length and a four card ♥ suit.
Your response is 1♥.

We skip over our diamond suit because responder's most important objective is to determine whether or not the partnership has a major suit fit.

If you have four or more cards in each of ♥'s and ♠'s bid the longer suit first.

If you have four ♥'s and four ♠'s you bid 1♥. Four card suits up the line.

If you are 5-5 or 6-6 (highly unlikely) in the majors bid ♠'s (five or six card suits down the line).

Partner opens 1♦, you hold: ♠K542 ♥J54 ♦K7 ♣T642
You have 7 hcp's, no points for length and have four spades
Your response is 1♠.

Partner opens 1♦, you hold: ♠K743 ♥J872 ♦K3 ♣842
You have 7 hcp's, no points for length and are 4-4 in the majors
Your response is 1♥.

Partner opens 1♣, you hold: ♠A754 ♥J872 ♦K4 ♣952
You bid 1♥.

Partner opens 1♦, you hold: ♠KJT63 ♥A9843 ♦98 ♣J
You bid 1♠.

Partner opens 1♣, you hold: ♠K5 ♥QJ94 ♦A754 ♣93
You bid 1♥.

Partner opens 1♣, you hold: ♠Q843 ♥T5 ♦AK975 ♣T8
You bid 1♠.

Partner opens 1♦, you hold: ♠Q843 ♥T5 ♦AK975 ♣T8
You bid 1♠.

If your partner opens a minor (1♣ or 1♦) and you have five cards in that minor, do not respond to your partner's minor if you have a 4+ card major!

Responder's most important objective is to determine whether or not the partnership has a major suit fit. I am repeating myself to make the point 😊

Responses when you do not have a four card major:

Just as with a major suit opening, as responder with a minimum hand you must stay at the one level.

Partner opens 1♦, you hold: ♠K92 ♥QJ4 ♦983 ♣J862
You have 7 hcp's.
You bid 1NT

If partner opens one of a suit, with 6-9 points and no interference by the opps, you owe your partner a bid at the 1 level.

With no 4+ card major, responder should usually make a NT response **if balanced**:

Bid 1NT with a minimum hand (6-9 hcp's)
Bid 2NT with an invitational hand (10-11 hcp's)
Bid 3NT with a game forcing hand (12+ hcp's)

Responses when you do not have a four card major but do have five cards in your partner's minor:

Now suppose you do not have a four card major, you are not balanced and you do have five cards in your partner's minor. Then you can respond by bidding partner's minor.

Partner might only have three cards in the minor that they opened.

With an minimum hand (6-9 total points) raise to the two level.

With an invitational hand (10-11 total points) raise to the three level.

With a game forcing hand (12+ points) do something else. Find a forcing bid.

RONF – we play that a raise is the only non forcing bid. Your partner can't pass you if you bid a new suit (assuming no interference by the opps).

Partner opens 1♦, you hold: ♠K2 ♥543 ♦AT632 ♣62

With 7 hcp's plus 1 point each for the doubletons so 9 total points (minimum hand) and hand is not balanced.

Your bid is: 2♦.

Partner opens 1♦, you hold: ♠K2 ♥543 ♦AJ632 ♣62

With 8 hcp's plus 1 point each for the doubletons so 10 total points (invitational hand) and hand is not balanced.

Your bid is: 3♦.

Summary:

Your partner opens one of a minor. This makes you the responder.

Evaluate your hand in one of three ways:

If you are planning on bidding a new suit, you count hcp's plus length points.

If you are planning on bidding NT, you count just high card points

If you are supporting your partners suit (with 5+ cards) you count hcp's plus shortages.

Void is 3 points. Singleton is 2 points. Doubleton is 1 point.

With 0-5 points, **pass**. No matter how sad it makes you. ☹️

With a minimum hand (6-9 points)

If you have a 4+ card major, bid it. If you have two 4+ card majors, bid the longer one.

If you are 4-4 in the majors bid 1♥. If you are 5-5 or 6-6 bid 1♠.

If you do not have a 4+ card major but you do have 5+ card support for your partners's minor bid two of partners's minor (partner 1♣ - you 2♣ or partner 1♦ - you 2♦).

If you do not have a 5+card support for partners minor, bid 1NT

With an invitational hand (10-11 points).

If you have a 4+ card major, bid it. If you have two 4+ card majors, bid the longer one.

If you are 4-4 in the majors bid 1♥. If you are 5-5 or 6-6 bid 1♠.

If balanced, bid 2NT.

If you do not have a 4+ card major and are unbalanced but you do have 5+ card support for your partners's minor bid three of partners's minor (partner 1♣ - you 3♣ or partner 1♦ - you 3♦).

With a game forcing hand of (12+ points).

If you have a 4+ card major, bid it at the one level.

If balanced bid 3NT.

If you do not have a 4+ card major and are unbalanced, bid your longest side suit (not partners's) at the lowest level. (It is unlikely you will be in this case).