

1: To bid or not to bid - Answers

High card points (HCP): A = 4, K = 3, Q = 2, J = 1 Total = 10

Better HCP: A = 4½, K = 3, Q = 1½, J = ¾, 10 = ¼ Total = 10

Length points? Yes, 1 for each card beyond 4 in long suit Shortness points? Not yet

What do you need, to open the bidding 1♠, 1♥, 1♦, or 1♣? 13-21 points (HCP + length)

To open the bidding 2♠, 2♥, or 2♦ (weak two)? 5-10 HCP, less than 1-level opening pts

To open the bidding 3♠, 3♥, 3♦, or 3♣? ~4-9 HCP

To open the bidding or 2♣? minimum 22 pts (HCP + length pts)

To open the bidding 1NT? 15-17 pts 2NT? 20-21 pts

Let's work some examples. What is your opening bid with the hands below?

♠ KQ642

♥ 98

♦ KJ84

♣ A5

1 spade

♠ AKQT94

♥ 73

♦ A4

♣ AQ5

1 spade

♠ 98765

♥ AKQJ8

♦ 4

♣ K2

1 spade

♠ KQ92

♥ AKQ75

♦ 65

♣ 82

1 heart

♠ K94

♥ J

♦ KQJ84

♣ AQ75

1 diamond

♠ KT94

♥ J

♦ QJ84

♣ AKQ5

1 diamond

♠ 9

♥ T83

♦ KQJ5

♣ AQT73

1 diamond

♠ J53

♥ 83

♦ AQ9642

♣ 65

2 diamonds

♠ AK9432

♥ 9

♦ 984

♣ A75

1 spade

♠ KQ9432

♥ K962

♦ 4

♣ 75

pass

♠ KQ94

♥ Q32

♦ QJ5

♣ QJ2

pass

♠ KQJ5

♥ 832

♦ KJ9

♣ KT5

1 club

♠ AKQ943

♥ 9

♦ AK3

♣ A75

2 clubs

♠ KJ9

♥ AQ9

♦ 86

♣ KQ962

1 NT

♠ KQ94

♥ AQ32

♦ AQ5

♣ K2

2 NT

♠ KQJ8542

♥ 6

♦ J9

♣ T85

3 spades

If you are sitting in **first or second seat**, partner has not yet had a chance to pass. Some hands do not have 13 points, but should still be opened at the one level. What do you bid with the hands shown below?

♠ A942	♠ KQ5	♠ AQJ94	♠ 73
♥ KQ94	♥ A962	♥ 3	♥ Q96
♦ 9	♦ K64	♦ 982	♦ 4
♣ KT75	♣ T75	♣ KT75	♣ AKQ9875
12+8=20	12+7=19	10+9=19	11+3=14 or 11+10=21
1 club	pass	pass	1 club either way

Rule of 20: In **first or second seat**, add your HCP to the number of cards in your two longest suits. If the total is 20 or more, open!

Opening in 4th seat: It can be very frustrating when you have a borderline opening hand, you decide to open in 4th seat, the opponents get into the bidding and you get a bad result. Now you wish you had quietly passed! To reduce the chances of this happening, there is another rule. **Rule of 15:** Add your HCP to the number of spades you have – if the total is 15 or more, open! (This rule applies only to borderline hands in 4th seat. If you have a genuine opening hand just go ahead and open it, don't apply this rule.) So, there are three passes to you, what do you bid with the following?

♠ J4	♠ AQ875	♠ 94	♠ Q
♥ AQ942	♥ A96	♥ A953	♥ KJ3
♦ A96	♦ 64	♦ 2	♦ Q9642
♣ T75	♣ T75	♣ AKJT75	♣ A875
11+2=13	10+5=15	not borderline	12+1=13
Pass	1 spade	1 club	pass

Why are spades important in the rule of 15? If you can bid spades, the opponents will have to go one level higher to compete. If you have control of spades, the opponents can't steal an easy low level contract in spades.

Summary: Getting in the first bid really does make a difference, so we look for extra ways to open. In 1st and 2nd seat, with borderline hands, use the rule of 20 to decide. In 4th seat, use the rule of 15.

And in 3rd seat? Don't apply either the rule of 20 or the rule of 15.