

Better Minor Openings

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<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaBidding/BetterMinor.pdf>

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Openings:

One Notrump

- 15-17 balanced.
- No singleton or voids (singleton aces are so much better in a suit contract).
- In general, one bids any level of notrump with no singleton or voids even in partner's suit.
- Not 5-4 in the majors.
- With four spades, the short suits should all be stopped (if two of them) .

Five Card Majors

1♥ 1♠

An opening of a major shows five cards or longer.

Better Minor

1♣ 1♦

Without a five-card major or longer, open the better minor. This means open your longer minor and if they are both three-three, always open 1♣, and if they are both four-four, usually open 1♦.

The only time, one opens 1♦ with three of them is when one is four-four in the majors. If partner does not raise your major, he has four ♦'s.

Example:

♠1093 ♥A543 ♦AKQ ♣432

Open 1♣

Rule of 22

You need 22 HCP's to make or set 1NT, in other words, you need around 22 points to take seven tricks with no five-card or longer suit in general.

Example:

Partner, East, opens 1♦ and you, West, have:

♠A765 ♥54 ♦Q432 ♣654

E	W
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♦
All Pass	

Note: 12-14 + 6 HCP < 22 so you must play the contract in a suit.
East does not have four ♠'s so he must have 4+ ♦'s

Short Club

Short club is passé. Without a five-card major or longer, open the longer minor and if diamonds are not four in length, open 1♣. A 1♣ opening must be announced as "could be short." It is not worth making a club opening done with two ♣'s.

Convenient Club (of Historical interest only)

From Goren's Bridge Complete-c1971. p 8

Using four-card majors, a short club or convenient club is opened with a rebid problem or when the four-card majors are not biddable (a biddable 4-card suit has at least four high card points).

Partner is welcome to raise clubs with four good ♣'s.

♠AKJx ♥J10x ♦xxx ♣AJx	open 1♣, open 1♠ in 3rd or 4th seat and pass whatever partner bids.
♠Q10xx ♥Kxxx ♦10x ♣AKx	open 1♣

Examples

1. ♠A43 ♥KJ32 ♦AQ6 ♣654 Open 1♣
Lesson Learned: 1♣ opening is **not lead directive**. 1♦ is slightly better and 1♥/1♠ is better still.
2. ♠A4 ♥KJ3 ♦AQ63 ♣10654 Open 1♦ rebid 1NT.
3. ♠A4 ♥KJ3 ♦10654 ♣AQ63 Open 1♣ rebid 1NT.
4. ♠A843 ♥KJ32 ♦AQ6 ♣54 Open 1♦ The only diamond opening with three cards.
5. ♠4 ♥AKJ3 ♦10654 ♣AQ63 Open 1♦ and do not rebid 1NT. If partner bids 1♠ then rebid 2♣.

Problem Hand: 5 clubs and 4 diamonds with 12 to 15 HCP's.

6. ♠4 ♥K93 ♦A654 ♣AQ653 Open 1♦ and rebid 2♣.
7. ♠4 ♥AK3 ♦7654 ♣AQ653 Open 1♣ and rebid 2♣. One of the rare cases when clubs are not six in length. It is also the only time one may raise hearts without four of them.

1♣ 1♥
2♥ usually shows 4 hearts except in example 7

1♣ 1♠
2♣ usually shows 6 clubs except in 7 and 8

8. West: ♠64 ♥AK3 ♦765 ♣AQ653

W	N	E	S	
1♣	1♦	1♥	P	The only time when 1♥ or 1♠ in competition is not five cards.
2♣				1NT shows a diamond stopper so rebid your 5 card club suit.

Lesson Learned: Always think of your rebid ahead of time. For example, what would you bid if either your partner or an opponent bids your shortest suit?

Reverses

Opening in a suit and rebidding a higher ranking suit at the two-level shows an ace above a good opening (17 points or 16 with good distribution)

9. ♠4 ♥AK9 ♦A654 ♣AQ653

1♣	1♥	
2♦		shows 17 HCP's and clubs must be longer

Rule of 22

If the total points between you and your partner total 22 or more, then you have enough to either make 1NT played by you or your partner or to set 1NT played by an opponent.

22 points is usually enough for 7 tricks $\{7 * (40 \text{ HCP in the deck} / 13 \text{ tricks in the deck}) = 22\}$.

Further note: you and your partner need around 22 points and at least 3-5 trump tricks to beat a one-level suit contract.

Further Examples:

10.

You: ♠AQ32 ♥1087 ♦9872 ♣32

The bidding goes: P You

1♦ 1♠

1NT 2♦

Your partner is showing 12-14 HCPS and less than 4 spades. The only time partner has three diamonds is when he is four-four in the majors. Therefore he has four or more diamonds and you have less than 22 points. Do not play 1NT. Instead 2♦ will probably be a very good board.

11.

You: ♠543 ♥2 ♦654 ♣J109872

The bidding goes: LHO P RHO You

1♣ Dbl P 1♠

1NT All Pass

Your partner most likely does not have a five card major but is likely 4-4 in the majors and 1♣ won't be set unless partner has a very big hand (21+ points). In this case, LHO has 18+ points (he is bidding when his partner passes).