

U3ABC08 Practice Session: Opening One of a Suit and Raising Opener's Major

Welcome!

Here is a list of all the hands that you could play in today's Practice Session. It tells you useful stuff about them, like the cards in each hand, the High Card Points, the "correct" bidding and lead. **Don't feel bad** if you bid the hands a bit differently, or ended up in a slightly different contract. Each week there's something new, it will take you a while to get the hang of all of it.

We're here to help it all make sense, you will make mistakes, but we're always happy to explain or answer questions. Remember, you're playing with other people who are just starting out, too. Let's have fun together!

-Ed

The week that was

In previous weeks you learnt how to open a balanced hand and how to respond with a balanced hand or a 5- or 6- major suit.

This week was about opening the bidding with an **unbalanced** hand – and how to respond. An unbalanced has a void, or a singleton, or two doubletons; it has shape! An unbalanced hand will usually have one or more long suits (5 cards or more); the only exception is the rather awkward 4441 hand, which has its own rules.

An unbalanced hand is usually better played in a suit contract, not NT. Remember that you need 25 points for 3NT, 4H or 4S, but a few more (around 27) for a 5C or 5D. So with an unbalanced hand you're usually aiming for a major suit game, which needs 8+ trumps and 25+ points.

There are lots of numbers this week, but they're all derived from these few magic numbers. For example: when you open one of a suit, your point range is very wide (12-19), unlike a 1NT opening (12-14); you clarify with your second bid. That's why partner must respond with as little as 6 points, to give you a chance to bid again. You MIGHT have as much as 19; even if partner has as little as 6 then $19+6 = 25$, you have enough for game.

A change of suit response like 1H 1S is forcing for the same reason; that 1S bid shows 6-15, so partner needs the chance to bid again in case they're hiding a powerhouse.

Opening one of a suit

You should remember from previous lessons that with a balanced hand and 12-14 HCP, you open 1NT; with a balanced hand and 15-19 HCP you open one of your longest suit intending to rebid 1NT, 2NT or 3NT.

With an unbalanced hand and 12-19 points, you open one of your longest suit, intending to rebid a suit. Notice that at this stage, partner does not know if you've got a balanced hand and intend to rebid NT.

With an unbalanced hand and two suits of equal length, open the higher ranked suit, intending to rebid the other suit. For example, if you have five Clubs and five Hearts, open 1H planning to rebid 2C. There's one important exception: if you have four Hearts and four Spades, you open 1H rather than 1S to make it easier to find a fit if partner has four Spades.

Opening a 4441 hand

If you have 12-19 points and three 4-card suits, which suit should you open? It depends on the singleton:

- If the singleton is RED (Diamonds or Hearts), open the suit below the singleton (Clubs or Diamonds)
- If the singleton is BLACK (Clubs or Spades), open the suit in the middle of the other three suits (Hearts or Diamonds)

Rule of 20

If you have a long suit but less than 12 points, you can still open your suit if it passes the **Rule of 20**: add the length of your two longest suits to your points. If the total is 20 or more, you can open your longest suit. For example:

- With 11 points, five Hearts and four Spades, you can open 1H
- With 10 points, five Spades and five Diamonds, you can open 1S

Responding to one of a suit

If partner opens one of a suit:

- With 0-5 points, pass
- With 6+ points, respond as follows

Responding with a major fit

If partner opens a major and you have 4-card support:

- With 6-9 points, raise e.g. 1H 2H
- With 10-12 points, jump raise e.g. 1S 3S This is a Game Invitation
- With 13+ points, raise to game e.g. 1H 4H

With 4-card support for partner's major, raise partner's suit rather than bidding your own.

Shortage Points

When responding to partner's suit bid, you can add Shortage Points (SPs) to your HCP if:

- You expect to play in partner's suit
- You have established a fit with partner's suit
- You expect to be Dummy
- You have at least 3 trumps

You can add:

- 3 Shortage Points for a void
- 2 Shortage Points for a singleton
- 1 Shortage Point for a doubleton

(Some people value shortages more than this, but for now, please use these values.)

Responding without a major fit

If partner opened a minor or you can't support their major (don't have 4):

- With 6-15 points and a 4-card suit: bid your new suit at the 1-level
- With 6-9 points and a suit you cannot bid at the 1-level: bid 1NT
- With 10-15 points and a 4-card suit, bid your new suit at the 2-level, but bid it at the 1-level if you can. Also see **Rule of 14**
- If partner opened 1S, you need five Hearts to bid 2H

If you have a 4-card major, bid it in preference to a longer minor.

Rule of 14

You can bid your new suit at the 2-level with less than 10 points, if your points plus your suit length = 14 or more.

Supporting a minor

If partner opened a minor and you don't have another suit you can raise it:

- With 6-9 points and 4-card support: raise the minor to 2x
- With 10-12 points and 4-card support: jump raise the minor to 3x

- With 13+ points and 4-card support and stops in the other 3 suits: bid 3NT
- With 13+ points and 4-card support and without stops in the other 3 suits: raise to game 5x

Responding in NT

If you can't support partner's suit or bid a new suit, you can bid NT:

- With 6-9 points, bid 1NT, the Dustbin Bid
- With 11-12 points you could bid 2NT but it's better to bid your 4-card suit (forcing)
- With 13+ points you could bid 3NT but it's better to bid your 4-card suit (forcing)

After a forcing change of suit, opener has another bid to describe their hand – and you will be much better placed to choose your next bid.

Responding with a strong hand

If you're lucky enough to have 16+ points and a 6-card suit (or a good 5-card suit, say AKJxx), you JUMP SHIFT i.e. you bid your new suit one level higher than necessary. For example: 1H 2S. A jump shift is FORCING TO GAME: you and partner must keep bidding until game is reached.

However, if you have a decent second suit (say, 6 Clubs and 5 Hearts) then you should bid your first suit without jumping. The change of suit is forcing for one round, and leaves you space to bid that second suit, if appropriate.

Responding when you have a choice of suit

If you have two suits to choose between:

- With two 5-card suits: bid the higher-ranked suit first e.g. with Hearts and Spades, 1D 1S... 2H
- With two 4-card suits: bid the "cheapest" suit first e.g. with Hearts and Spades, 1D 1H... 2S
- If partner opened a minor, bid your 4-card major in preference to raising partner or bidding a longer minor
- If partner opened a minor, bid your 4-card minor in preference to raising partner
- If you have less than 12 points, you're not strong enough to bid twice, so bid your major at the 1-level rather than a longer minor
- If you have 12+ points, you're strong enough to bid twice, so bid your longer minor first, you can bid your shorter major later

Bear in mind that without a fit in a major, your main chance of game is 3NT. If you (or partner) can show stops (or at least length) in two suits by bidding them, that may allow you to bid 3NT with confidence.

Boards 1 – 20: Opening One of a Suit

North East South West

1♥ Pass 2♥ Pass
4♥ Pass Pass Pass

♠ 743
♥ AKQJT
♦ A
♣ A432

♠ T95
♥ 653
♦ KJ96
♣ Q97

♠ AKQ2
♥ 7
♦ T832
♣ J865

♠ J86
♥ 9842
♦ Q754
♣ KT

Board: 1 Dealer: North #14

North has 18 HCP, an unbalanced hand, and a 5-card Heart suit, so they open 1H.

The 1H opening bid shows 12-19 HCP and 4 Hearts (but see the [Discussion](#) below). Your hand may be balanced or unbalanced. (An unbalanced hand has a Void or a Singleton or two Doubletons. You must not open with a NT bid if you have an unbalanced hand!)

South has just 6 HCP but does have 4 of their partner's suit, Hearts. If you have 6-9 HCP and 4 of partner's major suit, you must raise it – so South bids 2H. This simple raise is not forcing. (South can add an extra point for their Doubleton Clubs if they're playing in Hearts.)

South's 2H response shows 6-9 HCP and 4 Hearts.

North knows from South's bid that they have at least 9 Hearts and 24 HCP. That's just a little short of the 25 points you need for game in a Major, but North can add 2 more points for their Singleton Diamond, making at least 26 points – so they bid game, 4H.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

You shouldn't open 1H with just 4 Hearts and minimal points, because you wouldn't have a legal rebid if partner responds. You need just a bit more to make a legal rebid; if you can't rebid, you can't open 1 of a suit. Pass!

So to open 1H, you really need:

- 12+ HCP and a 5-card Heart suit (and rebid 2H) or...
- 15-19 HCP, a 4-card Heart suit, and a balanced hand (and rebid NT) or...
- 12+ HCP, a 4-card Heart suit and a second 4-card suit (rebid the second suit) or...
- A 4441 hand (see the Board 3 discussion)

But for now, let's keep it simple and say opener's 1-of-a-suit bid shows 12-19 HCP and 4 trumps; you'll know more when they rebid.

East South West North

1♠ Pass 4♠ Pass
Pass Pass

♠
♥ KJT6
♦ QJ83
♣ 87652

♠ AK84
♥ Q74
♦ A2
♣ T943

♠ QJ953
♥ 82
♦ 97
♣ AKQJ

♠ T762
♥ A953
♦ KT654
♣

Board: 2 Dealer: East #17

East has 13 HCP, an unbalanced hand, and a 5-card Spade suit – so they bid 1S.

The 1S opening bid shows 12-19 HCP and 4 Spades (but see the [Discussion](#) for Hand 1). The hand may be balanced or unbalanced.

West has 13 HCP and 4-card support for partner's Spades. They can add another point for their Doubleton Diamond, if playing in Spades.

West can see a total of 26 points and 8 Spades, so bids 4S; game is almost certain.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

What's the difference between High Card Points and Points?

High Card Points indicate the Honours you hold. An Ace is worth 4, a King is worth 3, a Queen is worth 2 and a Jack is worth 1. A Ten is (maybe) worth ½. Add up your HCP to evaluate your hand in a NT contract.

Points are calculated by adding your HCP and your shortage points, **but only if you're playing in a suit contract and have at least 3 trumps (preferably 4) and you are going to be Dummy, not Declarer.** Shortage points are 3 for a Void, 2 for a Singleton, and 1 for a Doubleton. (Although experienced players might upgrade that to 5, 3 and 1.)

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ 5432		
	♥ A765		
	♦ K652		
	♣ 5		
♠ J8		♠ KQT	
♥ KJ83		♥ QT92	
♦ QJ8		♦ T9	
♣ J976		♣ KQT8	
	♠ A976		
	♥ 4		
	♦ A743		
	♣ A432		

Board: 3 Dealer: South #24

South has 12 HCP and three 4-card suits. This is a special type of unbalanced hand called a **4441 hand**; it's a bit awkward to bid, there are extra rules to remember that will seem pretty arbitrary...

To open bidding with a 4441 hand, you open one of the 4-card suits. Which one?

- If the Singleton is red (Diamonds or Hearts), open the suit below the Singleton e.g. if you have a Singleton Heart, open 1D
- If the Singleton is black (Clubs or Spades), open the middle 4-card suit e.g. if you have a Singleton Club, open 1H

So South bids 1D. This opening bid shows 12-19 HCP and 4 Diamonds (but see the discussion for Hand 1). Their rebid will reveal more!

North has 7 HCP and 4-card support for partner's Diamonds. They could raise Diamonds, but they have 4 Hearts and 4 Spades; if partner has a fit with either of these suits, a major suit contract scores better than a minor suit contract.

So North bids the lower of their two major suits, Hearts. (Bidding the lower suit makes it easier for partner to rebid Spades if they can't support your Hearts.) This 1H change of suit response shows 4 Hearts and 6+ HCP. It is forcing.

South has to bid again. They can't raise partner's Hearts with just one (!) but they can bid their 4-card Spade suit very economically, at the 1 level. This 1S rebid shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP.

North has 4 Spades, so should raise partner's 1S bid. But how far? They have 7 HCP and 2 points for their Singleton Club. They also have a fit with partner's Diamonds, so decide to be optimistic and jump to 3S. This shows 4-card support and 10-12 points; hmm.

South can see 22-23 HCP + 2 points for their Heart Doubleton, game might be possible. But with such a weak Spade suit and so many low cards, they decide to pass 3S. Phew.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

Many people won't open a 4441 hand with just 12 HCP. With 13+, open and rebid as follows:

- If partner supports your suit, raise or pass as appropriate to your point count
- If partner bids one of your other 4-card suits, raise it
- If partner bids your singleton, bid the next suit above it if you have 13-14 HCP, or NT if you have 15+

North has a 4441 hand, just like South, but they're responding, not opening; the 4441 rules don't apply to responding.

If North were stronger, they could bid 1S rather than 1H on the first round, and bid Hearts on the second round.

If South didn't have a 4441 hand, they would open their 4-card Spade suit first, and bid the 4-card Diamond suit on the second round. So this sequence of bids (1D..1S) suggest they are 4441, but they could also bid this way with 5 Diamonds and 4 Spades, so North doesn't know which type of hand South has got.

I'd say that North's 3S jump raise exaggerates their strength, they have lots of small cards and should have bid 2S – which South would then pass.

And finally... some experts recommend a simple opening rule called TAPS; with a black Singleton open 1H, with a red Singleton open 1C.

West North East South

1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
5♣	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ QT53		
	♥ AJ86		
	♦ JT97		
	♣ 5		
♠ AK		♠ J82	
♥ 32		♥ 975	
♦ AK43		♦ 85	
♣ QT943		♣ AKJ62	
	♠ 9764		
	♥ KQT4		
	♦ Q62		
	♣ 87		

Board: 4 Dealer: West #330

West has 16 HCP, unbalanced, and a 5-card Club suit. Their 1C bid shows 4 Clubs and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

East has 9 HCP plus one point for the Doubleton Diamonds (playing in Clubs), making 10. With 4-card support for Clubs and 10 points, they're too strong for a simple raise (2C would show 6-9 points) so they jump raise to 3C.

The 3C response shows 10-12 points and 4 card support for Clubs.

West can now add two points for their Doubletons, as Clubs have been agreed as trumps, making 18. Adding the 10 points shown by East, they reach 28, which should be enough for game in a Minor. So they bid 5C.

North East South West

1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ A95		
	♥ AKJT2		
	♦ A76		
	♣ K3		
♠ 432		♠ QJT7	
♥ 73		♥ 94	
♦ 532		♦ KQJT8	
♣ AT982		♣ J4	
	♠ K86		
	♥ Q865		
	♦ 94		
	♣ Q765		

Board: 5 Dealer: North #346

North has 19 HCP, unbalanced, and a 5-card Heart suit.

Their 1H opening bid shows 4 Hearts and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

South has 7 HCP and 4-card support for partner's Hearts, and can add another point for their Doubleton. They bid 2H, a simple raise that shows 6-9 HCP and 4 Hearts.

North now knows they have more than enough Hearts (9+) to play in a Heart contract. They can add one point for their Doubleton Club, making at least 26 points – more than enough to bid 4H.

East South West North

1♠	2♦	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 9		
	♥ T432		
	♦ T763		
	♣ J987		
♠ KT83		♠ AQJ765	
♥ 765		♥ AQ8	
♦ 98		♦ A2	
♣ AQ54		♣ 32	
	♠ 42		
	♥ KJ9		
	♦ KQJ54		
	♣ KT6		

Board: 6 Dealer: East #347

East has 17 HCP and a 6-card Spade suit, so they open 1S.

The 1S opening bid shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

South overcalls with 2D. This 2-level shows at least 5 Diamonds and 10 HCP. **We haven't taught you about overcalls yet, so hopefully YOUR South didn't.**

West has 9 HCP and 4-card support for partner's Spades. They can add a point for their Doubleton Diamond, making 10 points – enough for a jump raise. They would have made the same bid without South's overcall; that might even prove helpful when they play contract, showing where the points are!

West's 3S jump raise shows 10-12 points and 4 Spades.

East can now add 2 points for their Doubletons, playing in Spades, making a total point count of 29-31. That's more than enough for game, but not quite enough to consider a slam – so they bid 4S.

South West North East

1♥	1♠	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 875		
	♥ QT96		
	♦ KQ9		
	♣ A94		
♠ AKJT2		♠ 943	
♥ 874		♥	
♦ 73		♦ T8652	
♣ KJ7		♣ QT862	
	♠ Q6		
	♥ AKJ532		
	♦ AJ4		
	♣ 53		

Board: 7 Dealer: South #376

South has 15 HCP and a good 6-card Heart suit, so they open 1H. The 1H opening bid shows 4 Hearts and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

West overcalls with 1S. This one-level overcall shows at least 5 Spades and 8 HCP. **We haven't taught you about overcalls yet, so hopefully YOUR West didn't.**

North has 11 HCP and 4-card support for partner's Hearts, so jump raises to 3H. This shows 10-12 points and 4 Hearts.

South can now add 2 points for their Doubletons, playing in Hearts, making a total point count of 27-29. That's more than enough for game, but not enough to consider a slam – so they bid 4H.

West North East South

1♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ QT87		
	♥ 75		
	♦ QT5		
	♣ KQJ5		
♠ A5		♠ 2	
♥ AQJ62		♥ KT983	
♦ A63		♦ K842	
♣ 963		♣ A84	
	♠ KJ9643		
	♥ 4		
	♦ J97		
	♣ T72		

Board: 8 Dealer: West #389

West has 15 HCP and a good 5-card Heart suit, so opens 1H.

The 1H opening bid shows 4 Hearts and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

East has 10 HCP, 5-card support for Hearts, and can add 2 points for their Singleton Spade, making 12 points.

With 12 points, East knows that their partnership has at least 24 points, nearly enough for game in a Major. They could bid 3H, asking partner to bid 4H with 15+ points. But really, partner only needs 13 points - so East decides to take the small risk of bidding straight to game, 4H. Their 5-card Heart suit is – perhaps – justification enough!

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If East wanted to be more cautious, they could respond 2D on the first round, showing 4 Diamonds, 10+ points, and forcing partner to bid again. Partner's second bid should clarify whether they are weak, intermediate, or strong. But most people would just bid 4H!

North East South West

1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ J8		
	♥ AKQJT		
	♦ A985		
	♣ 98		
♠ A93		♠ KQT72	
♥ 73		♥ 82	
♦ T742		♦ 3	
♣ KJT5		♣ Q7632	
	♠ 654		
	♥ 9654		
	♦ KQJ6		
	♣ A4		

Board: 9 Dealer: North #390

North has 15 HCP and a good 5-card Heart suit, so opens 1H.

The 1H opening bid shows 4 Hearts and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

South has 10 HCP, a 4-card fit with partner's Hearts and a Doubleton (making 11 points), so bids 3H.

The 3H bid is a jump raise, showing 4-card support and 10-12 points. This bid is not forcing, but partner will usually respond by bidding game unless they are weak (less than 15 points) – or pessimistic.

North adds their points (15 + 2) to partner's 10-12, making 27-29; more than enough for game, but not enough for slam to be likely, so just bids 4H.

East South West North

1♠ Pass 1NT Pass
 2♠ Pass Pass Pass

♠ KQ
 ♥ AT63
 ♦ J5
 ♣ 98654

♠ AT98652
 ♥ 7
 ♦ AK98
 ♣ J

♠ J743
 ♥ KQJ2
 ♦ 732
 ♣ AT

Board: 10 Dealer: East #1540

East has 12 HCP and a 7-card Spade suit, so they open 1S, intending to rebid 2S.

The 1S opening bid shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

West has 7 HCP and no Spades, so certainly can't support partner's suit. They're not strong enough to bid any of their suits at the 2 level (that shows 10+ HCP), so they respond 1NT. This bid is not forcing.

This 1NT response shows 6-9 points and denies 4-card support for Spades.

East can see that game is rather unlikely with just 18-21 HCP, despite their very shapely hand, so bids 2S. This shows 5 Spades and a minimal hand (12-14).

West isn't happy with the Spade bid, but there's nothing else they can do, and passes.

South West North East

1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ K842
 ♥ A954
 ♦ 96
 ♣ T32

♠ T9
 ♥ K
 ♦ T8732
 ♣ A8654

♠ AQ653
 ♥ T87
 ♦ KJ5
 ♣ KQ

Board: 11 Dealer: South #2565

South has 15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit, so they open 1S, intending to rebid 2S.

The 1S opening bid shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

North has 7 HCP, 4-card support for partner's Spades, and a Doubleton. With a total of 8 points, they're not strong enough to bid 2H (a 2-level change of suit shows 10+ points), so they respond 2S.

2S, a single raise of partner's suit, promises 6-9 and 4 trumps. This bid is not forcing.

North adds partner's 6-9 points to their 15 + 1 (for the Doubleton) and can see that game is unlikely, so they pass.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

With the same points but slightly better shape (say xx in Hearts and KQx in Clubs) and slightly better Spades (say AQT98 rather than AQ653), South might bid 3S rather than pass, asking partner to bid 4S with 8-9 points.

South West North East

1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ K842
 ♥ A954
 ♦ 96
 ♣ T32

♠ T9
 ♥ K
 ♦ T8732
 ♣ A8654

♠ AQ653
 ♥ T87
 ♦ KJ5
 ♣ KQ

Board: 11 Dealer: South #2565

South has 15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit, so they open 1S, intending to rebid 2S.

The 1S opening bid shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

North has 7 HCP, 4-card support for partner's Spades, and a Doubleton. With a total of 8 points, they're not strong enough to bid 2H (a 2-level change of suit shows 10+ points), so they respond 2S.

2S, a single raise of partner's suit, promises 6-9 and 4 trumps. This bid is not forcing.

North adds partner's 6-9 points to their 15 + 1 (for the Doubleton) and can see that game is unlikely, so they pass.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

With the same points but slightly better shape (say xx in Hearts and KQx in Clubs) and slightly better Spades (say AQT98 rather than AQ653), South might bid 3S rather than pass, asking partner to bid 4S with 8-9 points.

West North East South

1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ 84		
	♥ AKJ2		
	♦ 73		
	♣ J8762		
♠ KJT752		♠ Q963	
♥ Q6		♥ 875	
♦ AJ4		♦ KQ9	
♣ 53		♣ A94	
	♠ A		
	♥ T943		
	♦ T8652		
	♣ KQT		

North East South West

1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ AJT42		
	♥ A7		
	♦ K5		
	♣ A972		
♠ 96		♠ K3	
♥ T986		♥ KQJ2	
♦ 632		♦ JT984	
♣ KQJT		♣ 65	
	♠ Q875		
	♥ 543		
	♦ AQ7		
	♣ 843		

East South West North

1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
5♦	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ K532		
	♥ A862		
	♦ 3		
	♣ QJT6		
♠ 8		♠ A76	
♥ QJT9		♥ 753	
♦ JT875		♦ AKQ94	
♣ A84		♣ K7	
	♠ QJT94		
	♥ K4		
	♦ 62		
	♣ 9532		

Board: 12 Dealer: West #2708

West has 11 HCP, a 6-card Spade suit, and two Doubletons. While this is 1 HCP short of the 12-19 usually required to open, applying the Rule of 20, they're just strong enough to open 1S.

(The Rule of 20 says: add your HCP and to the number of cards in your two longest suit. If you've got 20 or more, you can open.)

East has 11 HCP and 4 Spades, so can support partner's suit – but at what level? They're too strong for a single raise (2S shows 6-9 points). 3S (a double raise) shows 10-12 HCP and an Ace, while 4S (a double raise) shows 10-12 points and no Ace. So East bids 3S to show their Ace. This bid isn't forcing, but partner will usually raise to 4S.

West is as weak as they can be for their 1S opening. They can add 2 points for their Doubletons now that Spades have been agreed as trumps, but can still only see a total of 23-25 points, so they pass.

Board: 13 Dealer: North Lead: ♥K #340

North has 16 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit, so they open 1S, intending to rebid 2S.

The 1S opening bid shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

South has 4 HCP, 4-card support for partner's Spades, and a balanced hand (so no Shortage Points). With a total of 8 points, they could bid 1NT or 2S, but both bids show the same point range (6-9) and the 2S bid is better as it provides the additional, encouraging information that they have 4 Spades.

2S, a single raise of partner's suit, promises 6-9 and 4 trumps. This bid is not forcing.

North adds partner's 6-9 points to their 16 (Declarer can't add Shortage Points) and can see that game is possible but only if partner has the maximum 9 points, so they bid 3S, a Game Invitation.

South has 8 points, so should refuse the invitation and pass, but they decide to be optimistic and bid 4S. Did you? Did you make it?

Board: 14 Dealer: East Lead: ♠Q #339

East has 16 HCP and a nice 5-card diamond suit, in a balanced hand – so they open one of their longest suit, intending to rebid 1NT, to show their 15-16 HCP.

West has 8 HCP so needs to bid. They have good 5-card support for partner's suit, so they could respond 2D (showing 4 trumps and 6-9 points) but you should only support a minor with your first bid if you don't have a better bid, and they do. You should always show a major in preference to raising a minor, and they have a 4-card Heart suit that they can bid at the one level, so they bid 1H.

West's 1H bid shows 6+ points and a 4-card suit. It does not deny support for partner's minor.

East doesn't have 4-card support for Hearts, so continues with their plan and rebids 1NT, showing 15-16 HCP and a balanced hand, and denying 4 Hearts.

West can count at least 23 HCP (15+8). Adding 2 Shortage Points for their singleton Spade if they play in Diamonds, they have 25-26 points, maybe enough to encourage partner by jumping to 3D.

East takes a bit of a gamble and bids 5D. Does it make? Just!

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

West's 3D bid is a bit optimistic, misleading; you need around 28 points to make 5D! So if you didn't bid 5D, I'm with you.

With East's hand I would be tempted to bid 3NT rather than 5D, even though as the cards lie, 5D makes on a Spade lead and 3NT doesn't. After the inevitable Spade lead, the Defence should make 4 Spades and 2 Hearts in 3NT, but 0 Spades and 2 Hearts in 5D.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ KJT96
♥ A52
♦ K52
♣ 62

♠ 532
♥ K843
♦ Q874
♣ K5

♠ 4
♥ JT976
♦ JT6
♣ AQ98

♠ AQ87
♥ Q
♦ A93
♣ JT743

Board: 15 Dealer: South Lead: ♥J #597

South has 13 HCP, so bids their longest suit, Clubs. This shows 4 Clubs and 12-19 points. They intend to show their Spades on the next bid if they can.

North has 11 HCP and 5 Spades, so bids 1S. This shows 4 Spades and 6-15 points. You might think North is strong enough to jump, but there's no need as their bid of 1S (a change of suit) is forcing for one round; bidding 1S rather than 2S leaves more room for bidding.

South has 4-card support for partner's suit, so can raise it – but how high? Partner might only have 6 points, making a total of 21 (even with the extra 2 points for their Heart singleton). South raises partner to 2S, showing 4-card support and a 12-15 point hand.

North can see game is possible in Spades, but it's close. Partner has shown 12-15 points and 4 Spades, so they have at least 9 Spades and 23-26 points. North bids 3S as a game invitation, rather than bidding game direct.

South has a few more points than the minimum for their bidding, so raises to game, 4S.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

The singleton Heart is worth two points if you're playing in a suit, but most players would reduce the value of the Q from 2 to 1, as it's unlikely to make a trick itself and may not help make a trick.

Even if you had 4 Clubs and 4 Spades, you usually open 1C and bid Spades if you get the chance.

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ T82
♥ 9
♦ QJT3
♣ J9753

♠ Q73
♥ AKJT8
♦ 54
♣ AKQ

♠ A64
♥ Q754
♦ K86
♣ 862

♠ KJ95
♥ 632
♦ A972
♣ T4

Board: 16 Dealer: West Lead: ♦Q #2698

West has 19 HCP and a 5-card Heart suit in a balanced hand. They open 1H planning to rebid 3NT to show their points.

This 1H opening bid shows 4 Hearts and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

East has 9 HCP and 4-card support for partner's Hearts, in a balanced hand. They bid 2H, a simple raise that shows 6-9 HCP and 4 Hearts.

West now knows they have more than enough Hearts (9+) to play in a Heart contract and enough points (at least 25), so they're happy to bid 4H.

North	East	South	West
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠A5		
	♥QT8653		
	♦Q3		
	♣A86		
♠K832		♠JT97	
♥742		♥A	
♦J94		♦8762	
♣Q92		♣KJT4	
	♠Q64		
	♥KJ9		
	♦AKT5		
	♣753		

Board: 17 Dealer: North Lead: ♠J #2707

North has 12 HCP and a 6-card major, so opens 1H. This shows 12-19 HCP and 4 Hearts. They intend to rebid Hearts.

South has 13 HCP so expects to bid to game, but can't support partner's major (yet) with just 3 Hearts. Better to bid their longest suit – Diamonds – and get partner to describe their hand further. Bidding a new suit at the 2 level shows 9-15 HCP and 4 cards, and is forcing for one round.

North now knows they have a total of at least 21-27 HCP, so game is possible but by no means certain! They bid 2H, to show 5 Hearts and a minimal (12-15 point) hand.

South now knows that partner has at least 5 Hearts, so they have an 8-card fit. Even if partner has a 12 point hand, they have a total of 25 HCP, just enough to bid 4H.

East	South	West	North
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠92		
	♥KJ98		
	♦QT762		
	♣J9		
♠Q654		♠KJ3	
♥AT762		♥53	
♦J85		♦93	
♣4		♣AKQ752	
	♠AT87		
	♥Q4		
	♦AK4		
	♣T863		

Board: 18 Dealer: East Lead: ♦A #2792

East has 13 HCP and a nice 6-card Club suit, so they open 1C. This shows 12-19 HCP and 4 Clubs. They intend to rebid Clubs.

West has 7 HCP and a reasonable 5-card Heart suit, so bids 1H. This shows 6+ HCP and a 4-card Heart suit. It's a change of suit, so it's forcing for one round.

East can't support partner's Hearts, doesn't have another suit to bid, and can't rebid 1NT (as that would promise a balanced hand and 15-16 HCP), so rebids 2C. This bid shows 12-15 HCP and 5 Clubs, and denies 4 Hearts and denies 4 Spades.

West can see a maximum of 22 HCP, so knows there is no chance of game, so they pass rather than risk bidding on. Their singleton Club is a worry, but 2H or 2S might be an even worse contract.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠KJ873		
	♥Q52		
	♦T43		
	♣Q9		
♠4		♠A52	
♥9763		♥84	
♦K62		♦Q987	
♣A8765		♣T432	
	♠QT96		
	♥AKJT		
	♦AJ5		
	♣KJ		

Board: 19 Dealer: South Lead: ♦7 #2970

South has 19 HCP and two 4-card majors. With two majors of equal length, you open 1H, to make it easy for partner to show a 4-card Spade suit at the 1-level.

This bid shows 12-19 HCP and 4 Hearts.

North has 8 HCP but only 3 Hearts, so can't raise partner's suit. Their 1S bid shows 4 Spades and 6-15 HCP. This bid is forcing for one round. It doesn't deny support for Hearts.

South now knows they have at least 25 HCP and 8 Spades between them, so bids game (4S) with confidence.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

The doubleton KJ is difficult to value. You could value it as 5 points (3 for the K, 1 for the J and 1 for the doubleton), but most players would take at least one point off.

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠9853		
	♥2		
	♦976		
	♣KJ865		
♠AKQT7		♠J6	
♥A953		♥QJT86	
♦3		♦AK842	
♣Q73		♣2	
	♠42		
	♥K74		
	♦QJT5		
	♣AT94		

Board: 20 Dealer: West Lead: ♦Q #3375

West has 14 HCP and a nice 5-card Spade suit, so opens 1S. This shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP. Note that, with a 4-card Heart suit and a longer Spade suit, you bid Spades first. (You bid Hearts first if you have 4 Hearts and 4 Spades.)

East has 11 HCP, and two 5-card suits, Hearts and Diamonds. They're strong enough to bid a new suit at the 2 level, but which one? They choose Hearts for two good reasons: it's a lot easier to make game in a Major, and if they get a chance, they can show their Diamond suit on the next round fairly economically. (To show controls and maybe progress to 3NT.)

So East bids 2H, showing a 5-card Heart suit and 9-15 points. This bid is forcing for one round. (Bidding 2H over 1S promises 5 Hearts because by opening 1S, partner has denied having 4 Hearts, unless they have a longer Spade suit – so you must have 5 Hearts to bid 2H over 1S. Phew!)

West can rely on East for 5 Hearts and 9 HCP, adding their own 4 Hearts, 14 HCP and 2 Shortage Points for the singleton Diamond (in a Heart contract) they have enough for game, so bid 4H.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If you don't find a fit with partner (say the bidding goes 1S-2H-2S-3D), your partner's bidding of two suits shows they probably have stops in those suits, which might be all you need to bid 2NT or 3NT. That's why it's sometimes better to bid a second suit rather than rebidding your first suit – it isn't always about finding a fit, sometimes it's about showing stops.

Synopsis

Commentary Synopsis					
		Opening One of a Suit	Hand #	Declarer / Defender	
		Bidding Sequence			
1	N	1H, 2H, 4H	14	Declarer	
2	E	1S, 4S	17	Declarer	
3	S	1D, 1H, 1S, 3S	24	Declarer	
4	W	1C, 3C, 5C	330	Declarer	
5	N	1H, 2H, 4H	346	Declarer	
6	E	1S, 2D, 3S, 4S	347	Declarer	
7	S	1H, 1S, 3H, 4H	376	Declarer	
8	W	1H, 4H	389	Declarer	
9	N	1H, 3H, 4H	390	Declarer	
10	E	1S, 1NT, 2S	1540	Declarer	
11	S	1S, 2S	2565	Declarer	
12	W	1S, 3S	2708	Declarer	
13	N	1S, 2S, 3S, 4S	340	Declarer	
14	E	1D, 1H, 1NT, 3D, 5D	339	Declarer	
15	S	1C, 1S, 2S, 3S, 4S	597	Declarer	
16	W	1H, 2H, 4H	2698	Declarer	
17	N	1H, 2D, 2H, 4H	2707	Declarer	
18	E	1C, 1H, 2C	2792	Declarer	
19	S	1H, 1S, 4S	2970	Declarer	
20	W	1S, 2H, 4H	3375	Declarer	
		u3aBC08 Rev 1.0			