

U3ABC09 Practice Session: Opening One of a Suit with a Balanced Hand - Responses and Rebids

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

This week's lessons

Revision

In previous lessons, you learned how to open balanced hands, depending on your point count:

- With 12-14 points, open 1NT and plan to pass
- With 15-16 points, open 1 of your longest suit and plan to rebid 1NT
- With 17-18 points, open 1 of your longest suit and plan to rebid 2NT
- With 19 points, open 1 of your longest suit and plan to rebid 3NT

Opening one of a suit just shows you have 12-19 points and 4+ trumps; your second bid shows your shape (balanced) and narrows your point range right down, giving partner a lot more information.

You also learned how many tricks you will typically make, depending on your total points and the chosen denomination (NT or a suit):

Points	Tricks in NT	Tricks in a suit
21-22	7	8
23-24	8	9
25+	9+	10+

Lesson 1: Hand Shape

In your first lesson this week, you learned that there are three main types of opening hand, based on their shape:

- Balanced: 0 voids, 0 singletons, 0 or 1 doubletons
- One-suited: 6+ cards in one suit and no other suit with 4+ cards
- Two-suited: 5+ cards in one suit and a second suit with 4+ cards

(For now, we will treat that awkward 4441 shape as a two-suited hand, by ignoring the weakest suit.)

When you consider your point range, you end up with six types of hand that you can open with a bid at the one level:

Strength	Balanced	One-suited	Two-suited
Weaker	12-14	12-15	12-15
Stronger	15-19	16-19	16-19

The aim of your first two bids is to quickly tell your partner (the responder to your opener) which of these six categories your hand is in.

Lesson 2: Opening and Rebidding with a Balanced Hand

With a weaker balanced hand (12-14 points) you already know you open 1NT and plan not to bid again unless partner encourages you with their response. Lesson 2 is about those stronger balanced hands (15-19) that you open with one of a suit and plan to rebid in NT. How does partner respond and what do you bid next?

The key word here is **plan**. When partner responds, you may need to change your plan. Partner's response and your second bid (your rebid) are all about sharing information on shape and points, to decide if you're strong enough to bid game, and which denomination you should choose: NT or a suit.

When you open one of a suit, partner does not know whether you're balanced or unbalanced, whether you have a measly 12 point or a mighty 19 points, whether you have 4 trumps or 5 or 6 or even more. It's the start of a conversation.

Let's assume for now you open 1D, because your long suit is Diamonds. Partner responds thus:

- With 0-5 points, partner must PASS. They know that, even if you have the maximum 19 points (for a 1-level bid), $19+5 = 24$, which is not enough for game.
- With 6+ points, partner MUST BID...
- With 6+ points and a 4+ suit that they can bid at the one level, they bid their suit
- With 6-9 points, but no 4+ suit that they can bid at the one level, they bid 1NT. They are not strong enough to bid at the two-level
- With 6-9 points and 4-card support for your major, they raise it to 2 (ignoring their own suits)
- With 6-9 points and 4-card support for your minor, and no other suit they can bid, they can reluctantly raise 1D to 2D
- With 10+ points and a 4+ suit that they can't bid at the one level, they can bid it at the two-level

How do you choose your second bid, when partner responds? You must assume they have the minimum points they have promised and make a helpful but **safe** response:

- If partner responds 1NT, this shows 6-9 points and is not forcing
- If partner raises your suit to the two level, this shows 6-9 points and is not forcing
- If partner changes suit at the one level, this shows 6+ points and is forcing; you must bid
- If partner changes suit at the two level, this shows 10+ points and is forcing, you must bid

If you have 15-16 points you must be fairly cautious with your rebid:

- After a 1NT response (1D 1NT): pass because $15/16+6=21/22$
- After a simple raise (1D 2D): pass because $15/16+6=21/22$
- After a one level change of suit (1D 1H): bid 1NT because $15/16+6=21/22$ (but see *Rebidding with a major fit*)
- After a two-level change of suit (1D 2C): bid 2NT because $15/16+10=25/26$ (but see *Rebidding with a major fit*)

That last advice may seem odd, as you have enough points for 3NT, so why not bid it? Because partner knows you have enough points for 3NT too, so won't pass. They will probably bid 3NT, but this leaves them room to rebid a 5-card major, asking you to choose between 3NT (with 2-card support) or 4H/S (with 3-card support).

If partner has more than the minimum points for their forcing change-of-suit response, they can show that with their second bid.

If you have 17-18 points, you can be brave:

- After a 1NT response: bid 2NT because $17+6=23$
- After a simple raise (1D 2D): bid 2NT because $17+6=23$
- After a one level change of suit: bid 2NT because $17+6=23$
- After a two-level change of suit (1D 2C): bid 3NT because $17+10=25$

If you have 19 points, you can be bold:

- Rebid 3NT because **any** response promises 6 points and $19+6=25$

Lesson 2: Rebidding with a major fit

If you open a major and partner raises it, or if partner responds with a major and you have 4-card support, you have a **fit** and should change your plan to play in that major, not NT.

Again, base your bidding on your points plus the **minimum** points that your partner has promised:

- If partner's bid promises a total of less than 23 points, bid to the 2-level
- If partner's bid promises a total of 23-24 points, bid to the 3-level
- If partner's bid promises a total of 25+ points, bid to the 4-level i.e. game

However, remember that if you open 1S and partner bids 2H, they have promised five Hearts, so you only need three Hearts for a 5-3 fit.

The only time you would prefer 3NT to 4H/S is if you have a very balanced hand, 4333. With no short suits, you have little chance of ruffing, and nine tricks in NT will be easier than ten tricks in your major.

Lesson 2: Rebidding without a major fit

If you open one of a suit with a balanced hand and partner's response does not show a major fit, your rebid should be:

Your points	Partner's Response		
	New suit at 1-level	1NT or raise to 2-level	New suit at 2-level
15-16	1NT	Pass	2NT
17-18	2NT	2NT	3NT
19	3NT	3NT	3NT

Not only but also... The Rule of 14

Listen carefully, I shall say this only once: The basic rule for responder is that they can only bid a new suit at the two-level (e.g. 1H 2C) if they have 10+ points and 4+ trumps. **I like this basic rule.**

However, you **CAN** bid with fewer points if you comply with **The Rule Of 14**: add your points to the number of trumps, and if that makes 14 or more, you can bid your suit (rather than 1NT) at the two-level. For example:

Points	Suit length	Total	Bid at two-level?
10+	4	14+	Yes
9	5+	14+	Yes
8	6+	14+	Yes

Only saying this once: I'm not going to mention the Rule of 14 again, every time responder bids a new suit at the two-level. (Look, I'm one quarter French so I am allowed to quote from *Allo Allo*.)

Hands 1 – 20: Opening one of a suit, responses and rebids

North	East	South	West
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠AQ		
	♥972		
	♦J984		
	♣AKQT		
♠T9865		♠32	
♥K86		♥QJT543	
♦AK		♦Q65	
♣864		♣75	
	♠KJ74		
	♥A		
	♦T732		
	♣J932		

Board: 1 Dealer: North Lead: ♥Q #27

North has 16 points and a balanced hand, so they open their longest suit (1D), intending to rebid 1NT to show their points.

South has 9 points, an unbalanced hand, and a major that they can bid at the one-level, so they bid 1S.

South's 1S bid shows 6+ points, 4+ Spades, and less than 4 Hearts. It is forcing for one round; partner must bid.

North hasn't got four Spades, so can't support partner's suit. They rebid 1NT as planned.

North's 1NT rebid shows a balanced hand with 15-16 points, and denies 4 Spades.

South can see 24-25 points, maybe enough for game in NT, so they respond with 2NT, a game invitation asking partner to bid 3NT if they have the maximum for their bid i.e. 16 points. This isn't forcing, it's an **invitation**.

North has the maximum 16 points, so they bid 3NT as requested.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

South's second bid of 2NT is a little dodgy, as they have a singleton Heart, suggesting that the opponents might have quite a lot of them. North's 1NT bid promises a balanced hand, but not a stop in every unbid suit. Indeed it only promises 2 Hearts, so the opponents might have ten Hearts.

Still, South's singleton Heart is an Ace, a stop. Not great, but 3NT is the only likely game contract – worth a try.

East	South	West	North
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠8753		
	♥654		
	♦A7		
	♣5432		
♠T62		♠AKQJ	
♥T7		♥A32	
♦K653		♦T942	
♣AQJ6		♣K9	
	♠94		
	♥KQJ98		
	♦QJ8		
	♣T87		

Board: 2 Dealer: East Lead: ♥K #30

East has 17 points and a balanced hand, so they open their longest suit (1S), intending to rebid 2NT to show their points.

West has 10 points, a balanced hand, and two 4-card minors. They don't have four Spades so can't support partner's major. They are just strong enough to bid a new suit at the two level, so they can bid 2C or 2D, but which?

They're probably only going to bid one suit, so they bid the cheapest (lowest ranking) suit, 2C.

East now knows that West has 10+ points (*unless they've invoked the Rule of 14*), making a total of at least 27. So, instead of rebidding 2NT, East can rebid 3NT.

South West North East

1♥ Pass 2♥ Pass
4♥ Pass Pass Pass

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

Board: 3 Dealer: South Lead: ♦K #346

South has 18 HCP and a nice 5 card major, so opens 1H – showing 12-19 HCP and at least 4 Hearts.

North doesn't have much, 7 HCP and 4 Hearts, but that's enough for the limit raise to 2H (showing 4 Hearts and 6-9 HCP).

South now knows that, as a minimum, they have 24 HCP and 9 Hearts; they can't add an extra Shortage Point for the doubleton Club as they're going to be Declarer. Just enough to have a reasonable chance of game, so bids 4H.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

North can add an extra point for their Diamond doubleton, but that makes no difference to their bid.

South's ♣Kx is hard to value, as it might not make a trick. Some people might take one point off because Kx is a bit risky!

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: 4 Dealer: West Lead: ♣K #389

West has 15 HCP and a nice 5 card major suit, so opens 1H (showing 12-19 HCP and 4 Hearts).

East has just 10 HCP, but good Heart support (5 cards) so can add 2 Shortage Points for their Spade singleton, making 12. This means E-W have a minimum of 24 HCP and 9 Hearts, maybe 1 point short of game, but most people would cross their fingers and bid 4H.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

West's hand is balanced, with 15 HCP they are strong enough to rebid NT if partner doesn't support their Hearts. For example: 1H-1S-1NT or 1H-2C-2NT; bidding NT (without a jump) after opening one of a suit shows 15-16 points. Or you could rebid the Hearts, showing you have 5 (so partner can support with 3).

The direct jump to 4H is a slight overbid by East, showing 13-15 points. A more cautious and accurate bid would be 3H (showing 10-12 points and 4 Hearts). West can then pass with a minimum hand, or raise to 4H with a bit extra.

North East South West

1♥ Pass 1NT Pass
3NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ AQJ
♥ KQJT9
♦ Q54
♣ A8

♠ T65
♥ 5
♦ AJT97
♣ J975

♠ 9432
♥ A8432
♦ K6
♣ T2

♠ K87
♥ 76
♦ 832
♣ KQ643

Board: 5 Dealer: North Lead: ♦J #1353

North has a strong, balanced hand with 19 HCP. The best way to show that is to bid 1 of a suit, then on the second round jump to 3NT. So North starts by bidding their longest suit, 1H. However, as this is a major with five cards, a game in Hearts is also possible. Let's see...

North's bid shows 12-19 HCP and 4 Hearts – they're much stronger than this, but can show that with their second bid; if partner has less than 6 points they pass and North doesn't get to bid again, but they didn't have enough points for game anyway.

Note that until you've agreed a trump suit, you don't add Shortage Points for voids, singletons and doubletons – and then only Dummy can add them!

South has 8 HCP, so is not strong enough to bid their long suit (2C requires 10+ points), doesn't have 4 Hearts, so can't bid 2H, so their only sensible bid is 1NT (showing 6-9 HCP). This bid denies 4-card support for Hearts, and denies 4 cards in Spades. A lot of information for partner to use.

North now knows they have enough points (25+) for game in Hearts or NT, but which? They chose 3NT, as partner might have 0 Hearts!

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

Some partnerships take a different approach to a 3NT hand with a 5-card major, rebidding 3H/S, not 3NT. This is (by agreement) forcing, partner must bid 3NT if they have 2 or fewer cards in the suit, 4H/S if they have 3.

Once again, the strongest hand is going to be dummy. Rats

North really does have a maximum hand for a 1H opening, should be very keen to bid game, but isn't quite strong enough for a strong opening like 2H or 2NT. Resist the temptation to lie to your partner!

South's 1NT bid does NOT promise a balanced hand.

East South West North

1♥ Pass 2♦ Pass
2NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ T8
♥ A95
♦ 986432
♣ A2

♠ Q75
♥ 87
♦ AKJT5
♣ J65

♠ K62
♥ KQJT
♦ Q7
♣ KQT9

♠ AJ943
♥ 6432
♦
♣ 8743

Board: 6 Dealer: East Lead: ♠4 #104

East has 16 points and a balanced hand, with two 4-card suits, so they open the major (1H) intending to rebid 1NT to show their points. With a choice between a major and a minor, you will usually open the major; partner might have four or more, giving you a fit.

West has 11 points, a unbalanced hand, and a nice 5-card minor suit. They don't have 4-card support for partner's Spades, so they bid 2D.

West's 2D bid over 1H shows 10+ points, less than four Hearts, less than four Spades, and a 4+ Diamond suit. That's a lot of information!

East adds partner's promised 10+ points to their 16, making 26 – more than enough for 3NT. However, they rebid 2NT to show partner their balanced shape and point range (15-16) to allow partner the chance to show another feature; West won't pass, because they can add up too!

West is happy to raise to 3NT as they can't see any other prospect for game and have the minimum points for their bid.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

East's bid of 2NT (rather than 3NT) allows partner another bid without going past 3NT. On this occasion West's next bid was 3NT, but they might have a hand that would play really badly in NT (such as a long Diamond suit with gaps and no entries) or a very powerful hand with potential for a slam.

We'll cover bidding to the slam level later in this course, but for now just remember to give partner that extra bidding space in this situation by bidding 2NT rather than 3NT when you **both** know that you have enough points for 3NT. Phew.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ K76		
	♥ A76		
	♦ 94		
	♣ KJT76		
♠ T82		♠ J943	
♥ QJ32		♥ T95	
♦ KJ632		♦ QT7	
♣ 2		♣ A98	
	♠ AQ5		
	♥ K84		
	♦ A85		
	♣ Q543		

Board: 7 Dealer: South Lead: ♦3 #113
 South has 15 points and a balanced hand, with one 4-card suit, so they open that suit (1C) intending to rebid 1NT to show their points and shape.

North has 11 points, a balanced hand, and excellent 5-card support for partner's minor suit. They don't have stops in the other three suits, so can't respond in NT, and don't have another 4-card suit so can't make a forcing change of suit. They're too strong for a simple raise to 2C (which shows 6-9 points and four Clubs). So they jump raise to 3C, showing 10-12 points and 4+ Clubs. (Adding their 11 points to partner's minimum of 12 points makes 23 points, which should be enough to make 9 tricks in a suit with a fit.)

While in general you don't raise partner's opening bid if it's a minor, sometimes that's the only sensible bid.

South adds the minimum points shown by partner's to their own (15+10=25) and that's enough for 3NT.

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ KT85		
	♥ K9863		
	♦ 87		
	♣ Q2		
♠ 632		♠ AQ74	
♥ QJT		♥ 742	
♦ AKQ5		♦ 43	
♣ A54		♣ 9763	
	♠ J9		
	♥ A5		
	♦ JT962		
	♣ KJT8		

Board: 8 Dealer: West Lead: ♥6 #132
 West has 16 points and a balanced hand, with one 4-card suit, so they open that suit (1D) intending to rebid 1NT to show their points and shape.

East has 6 points, a balanced hand, and a decent 5-card major that they can bid at the one-level, so they bid 1S.

This change of suit at the one-level promises 6+ points and 4+ Spades, and is forcing. It doesn't deny 4+ Hearts, as there are some situations when you would bid Spades first (e.g. if you have five Spades and four Hearts).

West hasn't got 4-card support for partner's Spades, so they rebid 1NT as planned, showing 15-16 points and less than 2-3 Spades.

North	East	South	West
1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ AQ6		
	♥ AKJ		
	♦ AJ76		
	♣ 873		
♠ J9732		♠ T8	
♥ 972		♥ QT83	
♦ Q8		♦ K9532	
♣ AK4		♣ 62	
	♠ K54		
	♥ 654		
	♦ T4		
	♣ QJT95		

Board: 9 Dealer: North Lead: ♠3 #2976

North has a strong, balanced hand with 19 HCP. The best way to show that is to bid 1 of a suit, then on the second round you can jump to 3NT. So North starts by bidding their longest suit, 1D.

South has a bare 6 HCP, so is not strong enough to bid their long suit (2C requires 9+ points), doesn't have 4 Diamonds, so can't bid 2D, so their only sensible bid is 1NT (6-9 HCP).

North adds up the HCP, reaching the magic 25 – just enough for 3NT. Fingers crossed – those Clubs look bad...

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

One unfortunate thing about this hand is that South bid NT first so they're Declarer and North's hand is Dummy, revealing where all those points are to Defense. Can't be helped.

East	South	West	North
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠QJT		
	♥KQT9		
	♦73		
	♣JT73		
♠973			♠AK5
♥J3			♥A852
♦A4			♦K952
♣KQ9854			♣A2
	♠8642		
	♥764		
	♦QJT86		
	♣6		

Board: 10 Dealer: East Lead: ♦Q #223
 East has 18 points and a balanced hand, with two 4-card suits, Diamonds and Hearts. They plan to open one of a suit and rebid 2NT to show their shape and points, but which suit? With a major and a minor you will usually choose the major – not least because there’s a chance that partner has four and you’ll find a fit right away. So they open 1H.

West has 10 points, an unbalanced hand, and a good 6-card minor. They don’t have four Hearts so can’t support partner’s major. They are just strong enough to bid a new suit at the two level, so they bid 2C. Bidding a new suit at the two-level shows 10+ points and 4 cards, and is forcing.

East now knows that West has 10+ points, making a total of at least 28. So, instead of rebidding 2NT, East can rebid 3NT.

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠K842		
	♥A954		
	♦96		
	♣T32		
♠J7			♠T9
♥QJ632			♥K
♦AQ4			♦T8732
♣J97			♣A8654
	♠AQ653		
	♥T87		
	♦KJ5		
	♣KQ		

Board: 11 Dealer: South Lead: ♥Q #2565
 South has 15 points and a balanced hand, with a good 5-card Spade suit. They open 1S and plan to rebid 1NT to show their shape and points.

North has just 7 points, a balanced hand, and four Spades. They’re strong enough to raise partner to 2S, but not strong enough to bid 2H; a new suit at the two-level promises 10+ points. And anyway, you shouldn’t bid a new suit when they have 4-card support for partner’s major. So they bid 2S.

This single raise promises 4 Spades and 6-9 points.

South can see a combined point count of 21-24, so despite partner’s support there’s no need to bid further; not enough for game. They might be tempted to bid 2NT, but a suit contract usually makes one more trick than a NT contract – and is usually a bit safer.

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠5		
	♥QJT83		
	♦QT4		
	♣KJT8		
♠KQJ64			♠AT98
♥954			♥A762
♦AJ			♦7653
♣A96			♣5
	♠732		
	♥K		
	♦K982		
	♣Q7432		

Board: 12 Dealer: West Lead: ♥Q #1341
 West has 15 HCP and a nice 5-card major in a balanced hand, so opens 1S intending to rebid 1NT to show their points and shape. East has just 8 HCP, but good 4-card support plus two Shortage Points for the singleton Club – making 10 points. Just enough to raise to 3S.

Remember that a jump raise of a suit promises 10-12 points and 4+ trumps.

West can see a total of 25+ points, so raises to 4S for game.

North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
		♠KQJ94	
		♥A42	
		♦A87	
		♣J6	
♠8			♠A75
♥975			♥QJT6
♦T542			♦93
♣A9852			♣KT43
		♠T632	
		♥K83	
		♦KQJ6	
		♣Q7	

Board: 13 Dealer: North Lead: ♥Q #539

North has 15 HCP and a nice 5-card major in a balanced hand, so opens 1S intending to rebid 1NT to show their points and shape.

South has 11 HCP and good 4-card support plus one Shortage Point for the doubleton Club – making 12 points. More than enough to raise to 3S, not quite enough to jump to 4S.

Remember that a jump raise of a suit promises 10-12 points and 4+ trumps.

North can see a total of 25+ points, so raises to 4S for game.

East	South	West	North
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
		♠KJ95	
		♥632	
		♦A972	
		♣T4	
♠A64			♠Q73
♥Q754			♥AKJT8
♦K86			♦54
♣862			♣AKQ
		♠T82	
		♥9	
		♦QJT3	
		♣J9753	

Board: 14 Dealer: East Lead: ♦Q #2698

With 19 high card points (HCP) and a 5 card major, East’s first bid is easy, 1H. They intend to show their strength on the second round with a jump or maybe game.

With a balanced 9-point hand and four Hearts, West raises partner to 2H. They might be tempted to bid 1NT with a balanced hand, but with 4-card support for their partner’s major, raising it is a MUCH better bid; 2H shows 6-9 points and 4+ Hearts.

After West’s 2H bid, East knows that between them they have at least 25 HCP and 9 trumps, so 4H should be easy and is the obvious bid.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
		♠53	
		♥KT84	
		♦A65	
		♣QJ72	
♠QT42			♠KJ97
♥963			♥2
♦KQJ8			♦T742
♣84			♣KT95
		♠A86	
		♥AQJ75	
		♦93	
		♣A63	

Board: 15 Dealer: South Lead: ♦K #526

South has 15 HCP and a nice 5-card major in a balanced hand, so opens 1H intending to rebid 1NT to show their points and shape.

North has 10 HCP and good 4-card support plus one Shortage Point for the doubleton Spade – making 11 points. Enough to raise to 3H.

Remember that a jump raise of a suit promises 10-12 points and 4+ trumps.

South can see a total of 25+ points, so raises to 4S for game

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: 16 Dealer: West Lead: ♣K #389

West has 15 HCP and a nice 5-card major suit, so opens 1H, planning to rebid 1NT to show their points and shape.

East has just 10 HCP, but five Hearts and 2 Shortage Points for their Spade singleton, making 12. They can see at least 24 points and nine Hearts; despite possibly being 1 point short of game, they bid 4H.

In truth, most people would cross their fingers and bid 4H in that situation – even though the correct bid is 3H.

Which did you bid?

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

Board: 17 Dealer: North Lead: ♦7 #2970

North has 19 HCP, four Hearts, four Spades in a balanced hand. They are far too strong to open 1NT, so they open hand so they open 1H. This shows a 4-card suit and 12-19 points in an unbalanced hand or 15-19 points in a balanced hand (intending to rebid NT).

They plan to rebid 3NT (showing 19 HCP) unless they find a fit in a major first.

Remember that with exactly 4 Hearts and 4 Spades, you must bid Hearts first, not Spades. (This makes it easier to find a 4-4 fit in Spades.)

South has 8 HCP and a 4-card Spade suit, in a balanced hand. They could bid 1NT to show their 6-9 points and shape, but 1S is a better bid, as partner might have a fit. This bid shows 6+ points, four Spades and less than four Hearts. A change of suit by responder is forcing for one round.

North recognizes that they have a 4-4 fit in Spades and at least 25 HCP, so bids 4S.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

South's change of suit response has a very wide point range, 6-15. North's jump to 4S is a bit negative, telling partner that they have no slam ambitions. It's sometimes called a "shut out" bid because it shuts out the opposition but sadly also makes it much harder to bid a slam, if South has the points for it.

But we haven't got to slams yet, so let's not worry about that!

East	South	West	North
1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ J943		
	♥ T95		
	♦ QT7		
	♣ A98		
♠ K76			♠ AQ5
♥ A76			♥ K84
♦ 94			♦ A85
♣ KJT76			♣ Q543
	♠ T82		
	♥ QJ32		
	♦ KJ632		
	♣ 2		

Board: 18 Dealer: East Lead: ♦3 #113
 East has 15 points and a balanced hand, with one 4-card suit, so they open that suit (1C) intending to rebid 1NT to show their points and shape.

West has 11 points, a balanced hand, and excellent 5-card support for partner's minor suit. They don't have stops in the other three suits, so can't respond in NT, and don't have another 4-card suit so can't make a forcing change of suit. They're too strong for a simple raise to 2C (which shows 6-9 points and four Clubs). So they jump raise to 3C, showing 10-12 points and 4+ Clubs.

While in general you don't raise partner's opening bid if it's a minor, sometimes that's the only sensible bid.

South adds the minimum points shown by partner's to their own (15+10=25) and that's enough for 3NT.

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ A8		
	♥ A9742		
	♦ KJ4		
	♣ K87		
♠ 9643			♠ 52
♥ QT5			♥ J3
♦ 73			♦ QT9865
♣ QJ92			♣ AT4
	♠ KQJT7		
	♥ K86		
	♦ A2		
	♣ 653		

Board: 19 Dealer: South Lead: ♠5 #3442
 South has 13 HCP, a good 5-card Spade suit and a balanced hand. They bid their long suit, 1S. This shows a 4-card suit and 12-19 points in an unbalanced hand or 15-19 points in a balanced hand (intending to rebid NT).

They plan to rebid Spades on the second round, showing 5+ Spades and a 12-15 point hand.

North has 15 HCP and a decent 5-card Heart suit, in an unbalanced hand. They can't support partner's Spades, but with five Hearts and 10+ points they can respond 2H. This bidding sequence (2H over 1S) promises at least five Hearts, and 10+ points. (See the discussion for Board 18.)

South has three Hearts so they know they have a 5-3 fit and raise Hearts in preference to rebidding their own suit which MIGHT have a 5-3 fit. They can only see 13 + 10 HCP so far, plus one Shortage Point for their Doubleton; game is likely but not certain, so they bid 3H, not 4H.

North can see at least 15 + 12 HCP, with a 5-3 fit, they're happy to raise to 4H.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

South 3H bid is incredibly pessimistic and risks missing game as it asks partner to bid 4H if they have a maximum point count (15) when they just need 11 or so, I think South should raise straight to 4H.

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ QJ86		
	♥ QJ72		
	♦ KT6		
	♣ 87		
♠ A73		♠ K542	
♥ 953		♥ T864	
♦ A743		♦ Q8	
♣ AK6		♣ Q54	
	♠ T9		
	♥ AK		
	♦ J952		
	♣ JT932		

Board: 20 Dealer: West Lead: ♠6 #133

West has 15 points and a balanced hand, with one 4-card suit, so they open that suit (1D) intending to rebid 1NT to show their points and shape.

East has just 7 points, a balanced hand, and a modest 4-card major. While they might be tempted to bid 1NT to show their points and shape, that runs the risk of missing a fit in Hearts or Spades, so they bid 1H instead. Always bid a 4+ card major suit if you can, rather than NT. If you have four Hearts and four Spades, bid Hearts – to allow partner to raise to 2H or bid 1S and find a 4-4 fit.

The 1H bid shows 6+ points and 4+ Hearts. It's a change of suit, so it's forcing for one round.

West can't support partner's Major with just 3 Hearts, so they rebid 1NT as planned. This gives East a chance to bid again, to describe their hand more fully, if appropriate.

East is too weak to bid again, so passes. They know that they have just 22-23 points between them, not enough for game. While it might be enough for 2NT, there's no point bidding it; 1NT+1 scores the same as 2NT, while 1NT scores a lot better than 2NT-1!

Synopsis

u3a Commentary Synopsis				
	Subject	Suit Opener	Hand #	Declarer / Defender
		Bidding Sequence		
1	N	1D, 1S, 1NT, 2NT, 3NT	27	Declarer
2	E	1S, 2C, 3NT	30	Declarer
3	S	1H, 2H, 4H	346	Declarer
4	W	1H, 4H	389	Declarer
5	N	1H, 1NT, 3NT	1353	Declarer
6	E	1H, 2D, 2NT, 3NT	104	Declarer
7	S	1C, 3C, 3NT	113	Declarer
8	W	1D, 1S, 1NT	132	Declarer
9	N	1D, 1NT, 3NT	2976	Declarer
10	E	1H, 2C, 3NT	223	Declarer
11	S	1S, 2S	2565	Declarer
12	W	1S, 3S, 4S	1341	Declarer
13	N	1S, 3S, 4S	539	Declarer
14	E	1H, 2H, 4H	2698	Declarer
15	S	1H, 3H, 4H	526	Declarer
16	W	1H, 4H	389	Declarer
17	N	1H, 1S, 4S	2970	Declarer
18	E	1C, 3C, 3NT	113	Declarer
19	S	1S, 2H, 3H, 4H	3442	Declarer
20	W	1D, 1H, 1NT	133	Declarer