Rebids by Opener & Responder

Partners who are bidding seek to answer two key questions:
1. What should our trump suit be?, and
2. How high should we bid?
   - partscore
   - game (26 points or more)
   - slam (33 points or more)
   - grand slam (37 points & up).

Sometimes the answer to both questions can be answered right away. Here are some examples:

A.) you hold AQ42   KQ8   QJ76   K6

you	responder
1NT	3NT

Your bid limited your points to 15 to 17 with no 5 card major. Partner has 10 to 15 points with no four or five card major suit, so she knows game should be bid in notrump.

B.) you hold   K4   AJ986   K75   QJ5

you	responder
1♡	1NT
P	

Partner denied 3 hearts and limited her point count to the range of 6 to 9. No game is possible, and no major suit fit exists. All questions are already answered.

C.) you hold K4   AJ986   K75   QJ5

you	responder
1♡	2♡
P	

Partner shows a heart fit, so the trump suit is decided, and partner's points are limited to a maximum of 9, so stopping in partscore is already determilned.

We could devise even more examples of auctions and hands wherein the issues of "what suit?" and "how high?" are determined in just one or two bids. Notice that our three examples all involved circumstances where one partner or the other limited their point count with their single bid. In Example A, opener showed a narrow range of 15 to 17, so responder could determine how high to bid. In Examples B and C, responder limited their points to the range of 6 to 9, so opener knew that partscore was the limit of the combined resources. Auctions that end early, with no more than one bid apiece, always include information that limits at least one of the two hands, allowing the partner to recognize the correctness of passing.

But knowing the exact limits of the partnership's resources is not always possible.

D.) you hold K4   AJ986   K75   QJ5

you	responder
1♡	1♠
?	

Partner's response of 1♠ shows a lower limit of 6 points, but no upper limit. Moreover, we don't know for sure how many hearts or spades partner has, nor if her hand is balanced or unbalanced. You will have to bid again in order to find out more.

E.) you hold AQ   AJ986   K75   QJ5

you	responder
1♡	2♡
?	

In this case, the trump suit has been established and partner has also limited her hand to 6 to 9 points. But you have extra values. If partner has 6 points, you want to play in a partscore. But if partner has 9 points, you want to bid game. You will need to make a rebid to know how high to go.

Rebids give information regarding length of suits.

When circumstances require a rebid, you make a 2nd and further description of your hand. Your 2nd description will offer new information about the shape of your hand and the strength of your hand.

Rebidding your initial suit promises an additional card in that suit.

So if you open 1 Heart and rebid 2 Hearts, you tell partner you have a 6 card suit. Or, if responder rebids the same suit twice, she promises at least 5 cards in that suit; the first bid of responder's suit shows 4 cards, the rebid shows 5 cards.

Rebidding a new suit shows that your 2nd suit is at least 4 cards in length.

If you open 1 Heart and rebid 2 Clubs, you tell partner that you have 4 clubs in addition to your 5 hearts.

Rebids give information regarding strength of the hand.

Opener's point count ranges:
- 12 to 15   minimum
- 16 to 18   invitational
- 19 and up   game forcing

Responder's point count ranges:
- 6 to 9   minimum
- 10 to 12   invitational
- 13 and up   game forcing

In addition to information about the length of our suits, our rebid should convey information about the strength of our hand. Once the partners have exchanged rebid information, the ability to make a final decision will often become possible.

The following information will show you how to convey information about your shape and strength, both as opener and as responder.

How opener shows a minimum

Opener's rebid can be passed.

opener	responder
1◇	1♠

1NT   (12 to 14, no void or singleton)
Opener offers NT as the suit.

- -

opener	responder
1◇	1♠
2◇	

(12 to 15, unbalanced, 5- or 6-card suit)
Opener offers diamonds as the suit.

- -

1◇	1♠
2♠	

(12 to 15, PROMISES four spades)
Opener sets the trump suit.

- -

1◇	1♠
2♣	

(12 to 18, diamonds are longer or equal)
Opener offers a choice of 2 suits.

How opener invites

To invite, opener needs 16 to 18 points

opener	responder
1◇	1♠
3◇	

(16 to 18, and a 6-card suit)
Opener hopes that responder can head for 3NT or perhaps 4♠ , but diamonds is always possible, either 5◇ or 3◇ .

- -

1◇	1♠
3♠	

(16 to 18, PROMISES four spades)
Opener sets the trump suit, responder will choose how high.

- -

1◇	1♠

2NT (18 or 19HCP)
Invitational because responder CAN pass, but passing is usually wrong. Responder bids to game unless his first bid was a lie.

How opener forces to game

opener	responder
1◇	1♠

3♣ (19+ points, JUMP SHIFT)
Responder cannot pass until game has been reached.

- -

1◇	1♠

4♠ (19+ points, PROMISES four spades)
Forceful enough for you? If responder has more than 10 points, he can consider slam.

Responder's minimum rebids

1. With a minimum, responder can pass any of opener's rebids except for the jump shift, and probably not opener's jump to 2NT.

2. With a minimum, responder can take a suit preference:

opener	responder
1 ♢	1 ♠
2 ♣	2 ♢

Responder prefers diamonds.

3. Rebidding his own suit shows a minimum

1 ♢	1 ♠
1NT	2 ♠

Responder prefers his 5-card spade suit.

1 ♢	1 ♠
2 ♣	2 ♠

A misfit hand. Responder should have chosen between the minors, so he shows no tolerance for them, but 6 spades.

How responder invites

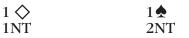To invite, responder needs 10 to 12 points

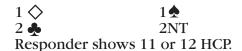| opener	responder
1 ♢	1 ♠
2 ♣	3 ♠

Jump rebid promises 6+ spades.

1 ♢	1 ♠
1NT	3 ♠

Jump rebid promises 6+ spades.

1 ♢	1 ♠
1NT	2NT

Responder shows 11 or 12 HCP, just as if he had never bid spades.

1 ♢	1 ♠
2 ♣	2NT

Responder shows 11 or 12 HCP.

1 ♢	1 ♠
2 ♣	2 ♡

New suits by responder are forcing for 1 round. Responder's point count has not been yet been limited. It may be 10 to 12, or it may be 13+. Another round will be needed for responder to clarify.