

OLLI Bridge Club Bidding System

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1. Evaluating the hand:

Opener: 13-15 pts is a minimum hand, 16-18 a medium hand, 19-21 a maximum hand, 22+ is a blockbuster.
Responder: 0-5 is a bust, 6-9 is minimum, 10-11 is medium, 12-17 is maximum, 18+ is blockbuster.
Good suit: At least 5 cards containing 6 high card points (HCP), 2 of the top 3, or 3 of the top 5 cards.
Game points: 25 total pts for game in major, 25 HCP in NT; 29 pts in minor. Best to find a fit in NT or a major.
Slam points: 33 for small slam, 37 for grand slam
Good Fit: A total of 8 or more cards in a suit in the combined hands.
Distribution: Initially count 1 pt for every card in a suit above four (length points), but do not count pts for short suits.

2. Reevaluating the hand:

If you are going to be dummy, count 5 pts for a void, 3 for a singleton, and 1 for a doubleton, instead of counting length points. [Note: If you bid a takeout double or are raising responder's suit, you will be dummy, so count dummy distribution points].

If responder supports your trump suit, then add 1 pt for a doubleton, 2 for a singleton, 3 for a void.

Both opener and responder should revalue their hands after hearing partner's bid each time with the goal of determining if there are enough pts between the two for game or slam and if there is a good fit. Do the math. If it is evident that neither is the case, the partnership should end the bidding at the cheapest level possible. With a fit in a minor suit, but only 25-28 pts, try playing in 3NT.

3. Opening a balanced hand (no void or singleton, <2 doubletons, need not have stopper in all suits):

13-14 HCP = bid suit, then rebid 1NT

20-21 HCP = 2 NT

15-17 HCP = 1 NT

22-24 HCP = bid 2 ♣, then bid NT

18-19 HCP = bid suit, then jump in NT

25-27 HCP = 3NT

4. Opening an unbalanced hand:

13-21 total pts: with a 5-card or longer suit: bid your longest suit at the one-level. Bid higher ranking of two 5-card or 6-card suits. With no 5-card or longer suit, bid longest minor. With two 4-card minors, bid 1 ♦. With two 3-card minors, bid 1 ♣

22+ pts: Bid 2 ♣

5. Responses to 1NT opener (Note – we do not use transfer bids):

With 0-7 pts and a 5-card or longer suit (not clubs), bid 2 of that suit, otherwise pass (“**drop-dead**” response)

With a balanced hand and no 4-card major:

8-9 pts bid 2NT, even with a long minor suit

10-15 pts bid 3NT, even with a long minor suit

16-17 pts, bid 4NT with balanced hand, inviting small slam

18-19 pts, bid 6NT

20-21 pts, bid 5NT, inviting grand slam

22+ pts, bid 7NT

With an unbalanced hand:

8-15 pts and a 4-card or longer major, bid Stayman

8-9 pts and a 5-card major, bid Stayman, then your suit

10-15 pts and a 5-card major, jump to 3♥ or 3♠, asking opener to choose either game in NT or in your suit.

10-15 pts and a 6-card major, jump to game in it

Stayman Convention: Opener bids 2♦ without a 4-card major, bids 2♥ or 2♠ to show a 4-card major, or bids 2♥ if he has both 4-card majors. Responder bids 2NT, raises opener's major, or bids the other 5-card major with 8-9 pts, inviting game. With 10-15 pts, responder bids game in either NT or opener's major.

[Note: responding to a 2NT or 3NT opener is similar, but requires fewer pts – do the math.]

6. Responses to a 1-level suit bid opener (Note: Remember to use dummy pts if you have a fit):

0-5 pts: pass

6-9 pts: raise partner's major with 3-card support, bid new suit at one-level, or bid 1NT (which does not imply a balanced hand). If opener bid a minor suit, bid your longest suit, higher-ranking of two 5-card suits, lower-ranking of two 4-card suits at the one-level, 1 NT, or raise with 5-card support.

10-11 pts: raise a major to the three-level with 3-card support. If partner opened a minor suit, raise to the three-level with 5+ card support (“**Limit Raise**”)

10-18 pts: bid a new suit, or with balanced hand and 13-15 HCP, bid 2NT, with 16-18 HCP, bid 3NT

19+ pts: jump shift

7. Responses to an opening bid of 2♣ (22+ points):

0-7 pts: 2♦ [Note: a rebid by opener in a suit is forcing. Raise with support and an A, K, singleton or void; jump to game with good trump support, but no extra strength. Bid cheaper minor with 0-4 pts. Bid a new suit or NT to show 5-7 pts.

8+ pts and a good 5+card suit, bid your suit, otherwise bid 2NT (forcing to game) or 2♦ □□□□□□□□□□ (waiting)

8. Rebids by Opener:

Minimum: raise responder's suit with 3-card support, rebid your suit (implies 6 cards), bid new suit of lower rank than the initial bid, or bid 1 NT

Medium: jump raise in your or responder's suit, or bid new suit at the next level that is higher in rank than the first suit (reverse)

Maximum: jump shift into a suit lower ranking than the original suit

9. Forcing Bids:

New suit by responder that has not previously passed, except after opener rebids 1NT; jump to 2NT by responder or opener; jump shift; takeout double (unless there is an intervening bid)

[Note: not forcing are a single or double raise of opener's suit by responder, a NT bid at the lowest level by either partner, a rebid by opener of a suit lower in rank than first suit and at the lowest possible level, and a jump to game].

10. Checking for Aces before Bidding Slam:

Blackwood: 4NT bid used to ask for aces after you have decided on a trump suit. Response: 5♣ = 0 or 4□□□□□.

[Note: we do not use Gerber (used when bidding NT, so remember that a raise to 4NT is a quantitative invitation to a small slam) or cue bids to explore slam (after trump suit has been found, a bid of another suit indicates first round control -ace or void). Experts use cue bids when it is more important to know which aces you have, rather than how many, e.g., when you have a void.]

11. Preempts:

With 6-10 HCP and a good long suit, open at the two-level with a 6-card suit (except clubs), 3 with a 7-card suit, 4 with an 8-card suit.

12. Responding to preempts:

With 3.5 Quick Tricks (QT) and trump support in a major (2 cards), bid game

With 4 QT, 2 cards in partner's suit, stoppers in the other 3 suits, bid 3NT

With a strong, long suit of your own, use caution: partner's hand may be worthless and your bid is forcing.

With 3 or more trumps and 3 or fewer QT, raise partner (preemptive).

Otherwise pass.

13. Overcalls: 10-17 pts and a good 5-card suit or any 6-card suit at the one-level. At the two-level you should have at least 13 pts. A 1NT overcall promises 15-17 HCP and a stopper in the opener's suit. **A jump shift overcall is preemptive, indicating 6-10 HCP and a good 6-card suit;** a double-jump indicates a 7-card suit. [Note: If your hand doesn't fit an overcall, pass unless you have 18+ pts].

14. Advancing partner's overcall:

8-9 pts: raise with 3-card support or bid new suit at one-level. If partner's overcall was at the two-level, you may bid with only 6 pts, otherwise pass.

10-11 pts: bid your own good 5-card suit.

12+ pts: if overcall was at the one-level, jump raise or jump shift; if at two-level, bid game or jump shift.

With stoppers in opponent's suit, no fit for partner or a suit of your own, bid 1NT with 8-10 HCP, 2NT with 11-12 HCP, and 3NT with 13+HCP. You may also respond preemptively: With 4-card trump support and 0-9 pts, jump raise; with 5-card trump support, jump to game.

15. Takeout Double: 13-17 pts, shortness in opener's suit and 3+card support for all unbid suits, or 18+ pts (too strong to overcall).

Opener's partner (responder) bids a new suit at the one-level, raises opener, or bids 1NT with 6-9 pts. With 10+ pts, responder redoubles.

The doubler's partner passes with less than 6 pts if responder has bid, but if responder passes, the doubler's partner makes a minimum bid with 0-8 pts, jumps with 9-11 pts, and bids game with 12+ pts. With stoppers in opener's suit and no suit of your own, bid 1NT with 8-10 HCP, 2NT with 11-12, 3NT with 13+.