

## OPENER'S REBID IN A THIRD SUIT

This handout follows on from the [Opener's Rebids Beginners Summary](#) and provides a fuller description of opener's rebid in a third suit. In particular it looks more closely at how the **level** of the change of suit response affects opener's rebid.

The handout provides guidance on how opener should rebid when he has a two-suited hand and his partner has responded in one of the other suits. Opener's strength may vary between about 11 and 21 points (can be up to 21 if playing Weak Two openings).

Opener will frequently rebid in his second suit, although this will depend on the response to the opening bid and the positioning of opener's suits.

We will look in turn at opener's actions after

- responder bids a new suit at the one level;
- responder bids a new suit at the two level.

In general opener assesses the strength of his hand as follows:

Minimum hand:	11-15 points.	Opener rebids as cheaply as possible.
Intermediate hand:	16-18 points.	Enough to make a stronger bid
Strong hand:	19-21 points.	Enough for game over any response.

### WHEN OPENER SHOWS HIS SECOND SUIT – THE BARRIER

Before describing opener's approach to rebidding in more detail, let's have a look at two auctions:

Auction 1

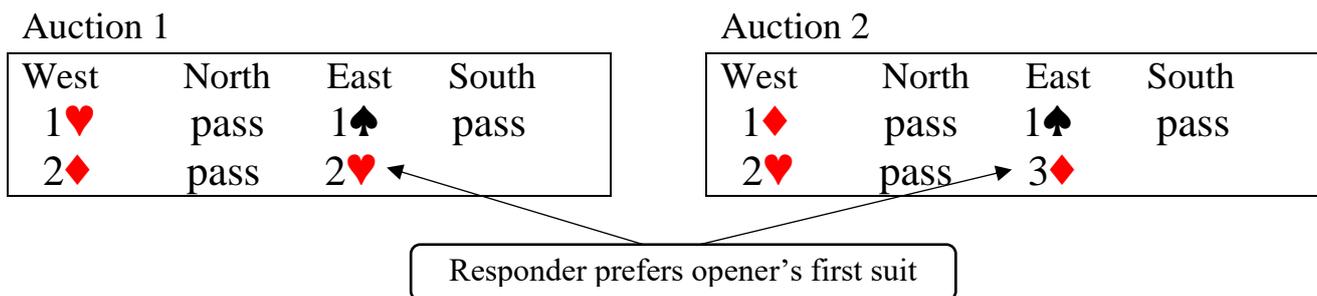
West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	1♠	pass
2♦			

Auction 2

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	1♠	pass
2♥			

In both cases West opens the bidding, receives a new-suit response of 1♠ and bids a third suit on the second round. These auctions look very similar, but they are in fact subtly different.

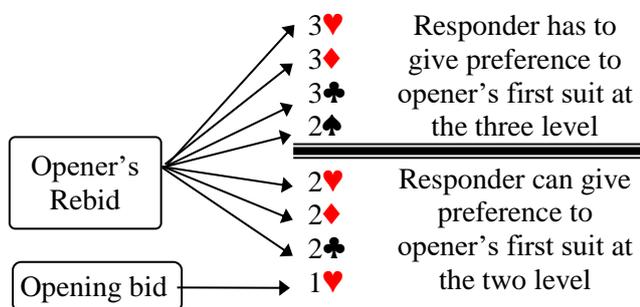
In general, when opener bids two suits, he is suggesting that responder choose between them. In these auctions, let's suppose that responder prefers opener's first suit:



In auction 1 responder can give preference at the 2 level by bidding 2♥, keeping the auction reasonably low. In auction 2 however, he has to bid 3♦, increasing the level of the auction.

The distinction between the two sequences is best explained in terms of the “barrier”.

Imagine a barrier just above opener's first suit at the next level up. Any **new suit** rebid that is above the barrier will mean that responder can't give preference to opener's first suit below the 3 level.



In the first sequence the opening bid is 1♥ so the barrier is between the 2♥ and 2♠ rebids. Opener's rebid of 2♦ is below the barrier, so responder can give preference to opener's first suit at the 2 level.

In the second sequence the opening bid is 1♦ so the barrier is between the 2♦ and 2♥ rebids. Opener's rebid of 2♥ is above the barrier, so responder can only give preference to opener's first suit at the 3 level.

A new rebid above the barrier means that responder has to go to the three level to give preference to opener's first suit, therefore opener never makes a rebid above the barrier with a hand of minimum strength (11-15). If opener has a minimum hand (11-15) and can't show his second suit below the barrier he has to rebid his first suit instead.

Another feature of bids above the barrier is that they are always **forcing**: responder is not allowed to pass, even with a minimum hand.

Other requirements associated with opener's new suit rebid vary according to the actual level of the bids and are covered in the remaining two sections of this handout.

Going back to the example auctions, opener has bid his two suits in descending order in auction 1, but in ascending order in auction 2. In general, however, it is **not** the order of bidding the two suits that indicates whether or not opener's rebid is above the barrier. Let's look at the following two auctions:

Auction 3

West	North	East	South
1♣	pass	1♥	pass
1♠			

Auction 4

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	2♥	pass
3♣			

In auction 3 opener's 1♠ rebid is below the barrier because responder can give preference to clubs at the 2 level. In auction 4 opener's 3♣ rebid is above the barrier because responder can't give preference to spades below the 3 level.

Why does the opener need extra values to bid above the barrier? Consider the following hands:

West		East
♠ 7		♠ A Q 6 3
♥ K 8 6 5	12	♥ 10 4
♦ Q J 10 4 2		♦ 9 7 5
♣ A Q 5		♣ 8 4 3 2

West has a 2 suited hand and is hoping to be able to show both his suits.

	West	North	East	South	<p>If West rebids 2♥ after East's 1♠ response then East will have to go to the 3 level to show preference for West's first suit, diamonds.</p> <p>With only 18 points between the two hands the level is now too high and we won't make 9 tricks.</p>
	1♦	pass	1♠	pass	
	West	North	East	South	<p>With only 12 points West must <b>not</b> bid his second suit "above the barrier". He should simply rebid his first suit.</p>
	1♦	pass	1♠	pass	
	→ 2♥	pass	3♦		
	→ 2♦	pass	pass		

## OPENER'S REBID AFTER A RESPONSE AT THE 1 LEVEL

A new suit response is an unlimited bid and is forcing for one round. The minimum for a response at the 1 level is just 6 points, so opener must be careful not to force the bidding too high when he has only a minimum hand. Let's look at what opener can do depending on the strength of his hand.

### Minimum hand (11-15 points)

Opener may bid his second suit at minimum level, but only if this would be below the barrier. If not (as in the example above) opener must rebid his first suit.

### Intermediate hand (16-18 points)

Opener always bids his second suit at minimum level, regardless of the barrier. After a 1 level response, opener's rebid above the barrier is forcing for one round. Opener's rebid below the barrier isn't forcing, but responder will normally find some sort of rebid with 8+ points. This will typically be a 'preference bid' or rebid of own suit with 6+ cards, see '[Responder's 2nd Bid When Opener Bids Two Suits](#)'.

### Strong hand (19-21 points)

Opener has enough for game even opposite a minimum, so always bids his second suit above the barrier. If a simple rebid would be below the barrier, opener must jump in his second suit, which is forcing to game. Opener doesn't jump the bidding if a simple rebid would be above the barrier, since this rebid is still forcing.

### Examples

S W N E 1♦ pass 1♥ pass 2♣	South (minimum) ♠ A 7 ♥ 9 ♦ Q 10 8 6 5 4 ♣ A J 9 5	South has 11 points. South's hand is in the minimum range, but he can show his second suit by rebidding 2♣, since this rebid is below the barrier.
S W N E 1♦ pass 1♥ pass 2♣	South (intermediate) ♠ A 7 ♥ 9 ♦ A J 8 6 5 3 ♣ A Q J 9	South has 16 points. Although South's hand is in the intermediate range, South should still show his second suit at minimum level by rebidding 2♣. Game is unlikely if North can't bid again.
S W N E 1♣ pass 1♥ pass 1♠	South (minimum) ♠ Q J 8 4 ♥ A ♦ 9 5 2 ♣ A Q 6 5 2	South rebids 1♠ with his 13 points because this isn't above the barrier. North can still give preference to 2♣ (or bid 1NT) with a weak hand.
S W N E 1♣ pass 1♥ pass 1♠	South (intermediate) ♠ Q J 8 4 ♥ A ♦ A 5 2 ♣ A Q 6 5 2	Adding an ace to the above hand gives South 17 points, but he still rebids 1♠.

<p>S W N E  1♣ pass 1♥ pass  2♠</p>	<p>South (strong)  ♠ Q J 8 4  ♥ A  ♦ A K 2  ♣ A Q 6 5 2</p>	<p>Adding a king to the above hand gives South 20 points, which is too strong for a rebid below the barrier. South therefore jumps to 2♠, which is forcing to game.</p>
<p>S W N E  1♣ pass 1♠ pass  2♣</p>	<p>South (minimum)  ♠ 8  ♥ A J 9 4  ♦ Q 8 6  ♣ A Q 10 5 4</p>	<p>South would like to show his second suit, but a 2♥ rebid would be above the barrier. With only 13 points South must therefore repeat his clubs by rebidding 2♣.</p>
<p>S W N E  1♣ pass 1♠ pass  2♥</p>	<p>South (intermediate)  ♠ A  ♥ A J 9 4  ♦ Q 8 6  ♣ A Q 10 5 4</p>	<p>Adding an ace to the above hand means that South is now strong enough to bid above the barrier. He can therefore show his second suit by rebidding 2♥.</p>
<p>S W N E  1♣ pass 1♠ pass  2♥</p>	<p>South (strong)  ♠ A  ♥ A K J 9  ♦ Q 8 6  ♣ A Q 10 5 4</p>	<p>Adding a king to the above hand means that South is now strong enough to force to game. He doesn't jump to 3♥ because his rebid of s 2♥ is above the barrier and therefore forcing for one round.</p>

## OPENER'S REBID AFTER A RESPONSE AT THE 2 LEVEL

A new suit response is an unlimited bid and is forcing for one round. The minimum for a response at the 2 level is about 9 points, but as after a 1 level response opener must still be careful not to force the bidding too high with a minimum hand.

### Minimum hand (11-15 points)

Opener may bid his second suit at minimum level, but only if this would be below the barrier. If not, opener must rebid his first suit. This situation is the same as after a 1 level response.

### Intermediate hand (16-18 points) or strong hand (19-21 points)

Opener has enough for game even opposite a minimum, so always bids his second suit above the barrier. Any rebid above the barrier is forcing to game after responder has bid at the 2 level. If a simple rebid would be below the barrier, opener must jump in his second suit.

### Examples

S W N E 1♠ pass 2♣ pass 2♥	South (minimum) ♠ A Q J 9 8 ♥ K 7 4 2 ♦ 2 ♣ K 5 2	With 13 points South shows his second suit because a 2♥ rebid is below the barrier. This rebid is not forcing.
S W N E 1♠ pass 2♣ pass 3♥	South (intermediate) ♠ A Q J 9 8 ♥ K 7 4 2 ♦ A ♣ K 5 2	Adding an ace to the above hand puts South's hand in the intermediate range, but this is enough for game after a 2 level response. South therefore makes a jump rebid of 3♥, which is forcing to game.
S W N E 1♦ pass 2♣ pass 2♦	South (minimum) ♠ K 8 4 ♥ Q 9 4 2 ♦ A Q J 8 6 ♣ 4	South would like to show his second suit, but a 2♥ rebid would be above the barrier. With only 12 points South must therefore repeat his diamonds by rebidding 2♦.
S W N E 1♦ pass 2♣ pass 2♥	South (intermediate) ♠ K 8 4 ♥ A Q 9 4 ♦ A Q J 8 6 ♣ 4	Adding an ace to the above hand means that South is now strong enough to bid above the barrier. South therefore rebids 2♥, which is forcing to game after a 2 level response.
S W N E 1♠ pass 2♦ pass 3♣	South (intermediate) ♠ A 10 5 4 2 ♥ Q 7 ♦ K 5 ♣ A K 9 2	South's 16 points are just enough to bid above the barrier, so he shows his second suit by rebidding 3♣. With fewer points South would be too weak and would just rebid 2♠.

## SUMMARY OF OPENER'S REBIDS WITH A 2 SUITED HAND

Opener's choice of rebid with a two suited hand is governed by the strength of his hand and also the "barrier", which is just above opener's first suit at the next level up. Any **new suit** rebid that is above the barrier will mean that responder can't give preference to opener's first suit below the 3 level.

Opener's rebid in a new suit above the barrier is a **forcing** bid. Responder is not allowed to pass.

With a minimum hand (11-15 points) opener **always** rebids **below** the barrier. If he can't show his second suit below the barrier he has to rebid his first suit.

With an intermediate hand (16-18 points) opener **often** rebids **above** the barrier, but he won't make a jump rebid after a 1 level response.

With a strong hand (19-21 points) opener **always** rebids **above** the barrier, making a jump rebid if necessary.

## SUMMARY OF WHICH REBIDS ARE FORCING

When opener rebids in a third suit responder needs to know what point range he expects opener to hold and whether the rebid is forcing for one round, forcing to game, or not forcing.

The following table assumes that opener rebids a third suit after partner made a change of suit response.

Nature of rebid	Level of first response	Opener's Expected Range	Forcing?
Below the barrier	1 level (6+)	11-18	Not forcing
	2 level (9+)	11-15	Not forcing
Above the barrier (not a jump)	1 level (6+)	16+	Forcing for 1 round
	2 level (9+)	16+	Forcing to game
Jump rebid	1 level (6+)	19+	Forcing to game
	2 level (9+)	16+	Forcing to game

Note: When opener rebids below the barrier after a 1 level response, he may have a minimum OR intermediate hand (up to 18 points). With 8+ points responder should try find a further bid to keep the auction alive.