

THE RULE OF 14

We are responding to partner's opening bid and don't have any suit that we can bid at the one level. How do we decide whether we're strong enough to respond with a change of suit at the 2 level? Typically we need 10 or more high card points but we can sometimes change suit at the 2 level with less than 10 high card points if our hand satisfies the 'Rule of 14' test.

The Rule of 14 is used by Responder. We count our high card points and add the number of cards in our longest suit. If the total is 14 or more, we're strong enough to respond at the 2 level. If not, we should bid 1NT.

In practice this means we can make a (non-jump) change of suit at the 2 level with:

- Any hand of 10+ HCP
- 9 HCP and a 5 card suit
- 8 HCP and a 6 card suit
- 7 HCP and a 7 card suit.

Here are some examples (assuming pass from opponents):

Opener's Bid	Responder's Hand	Responder's Bid	
1♠	♠ 4 3 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ K J 3 ♣ A J 9 4 3	2♣	9 HCP and a 5 card suit so passes the Rule of 14.
1♠	♠ 4 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ K 8 3 ♣ A J 9 5 4 3	2♣	8 HCP and a 6 card suit so passes the Rule of 14.
1♠	♠ 4 ♥ 9 5 ♦ Q 8 3 ♣ A J 9 8 7 4 3	2♣	7 HCP and a 7 card suit so passes the Rule of 14.
1♠	♠ 4 3 ♥ K 5 2 ♦ J 8 3 2 ♣ A J 9 4	1NT	9 HCP but no 5 card suit so we must bid 1NT showing 6-9 points.
1♠	♠ 4 3 ♥ K 5 2 ♦ Q 8 3 2 ♣ A J 9 4	2♣	Any hand with at least 10 card points can make a change of suit bid at the 2 level.