

TIPS FOR RESPONDER

At mother's knee, we all learn that our goal in bridge bidding is to find an eightcard fit in a major. Why? Because it is always safer to have a trump suit. When we have a trump suit, we can control the hand best. In No Trumps, when our stopper(s) is gone or was non-existent, you are at the mercy of your opponents, who can cheerfully take the first five tricks. And you all know why we fuss about major suits...because game in a minor doesn't score very well and to achieve this, you have to take eleven tricks to make 5C or 5D.

When you are in an auction that starts off with 1C or 1D, it may take a few rounds of bidding before you work out if you have a major suit fit.

As responder with 4-card suits, you should strive to bid these UP THE LADDER, the cheapest one first.

S J987
H AK62
D AQ54
C 7

If partner opens with 1C, do respond 1D. This allows you to gradually uncover your 4-4 fits as they are gradually bid.

1C - 1D
1H Now with the above hand, you can bid 4H.

If instead, you had bid
1C - 1H
2H Opener may have raised with only 3 card support (YES, she can do that if she is unable to bid 1NT).

If you have trouble with that, read this article, please click on this link:.
<https://www.barbaraseagram.com/pdf/Raising-partner-with-3-cd-support-revised-2019.pdf>

The ONLY time that you would bypass bidding the minor suit and choose to bid the major is if you are responder with only 6-9 points. In that category, some serious restrictions are placed on your bidding capacity. Most of the time, you are only allowed to bid once so even if you have

S Q764
H Q764
D K8432
C ---

If partner opens 1C, you must respond 1H. Bidding the cheaper of the two four card suits. BUT if you have that hand and 10 or more points, do bid 1D as you are allowed to bid more later.

So let's say these are two hands

WEST

S K4

H KQ85

D J43

C KQ106

EAST

S AQ53

H J1062

D 52

C 873

Let's say West opens the bidding with 1C and East decides that his Spades are prettier than his Hearts.

1C - 1S

1NT because what else can West bid?

EW now have missed their 4-4 Hearts fit. And 1NT will not fare well on a Diamond start or even a Diamond shift when opponents get in with the Heart Ace or Club Ace.

A better auction would be

1C - 1H

2H - Pass

So, because East did not follow the rule of bidding up-the-ladder as responder, West will assume that East does not own 4 cards in the Heart suit.

And if West had not owned 4 Hearts but had 4 Spades instead, then his next bid would have been 1S

1C - 1H

1S - 2S

Now, if you should happen to hold

S QJ62

H K10763

D 7

C Q82

If partner opens 1C, you bid 1H and if opener now bids 1NT, then it is not worth the bother to now show your Spades as you know that partner did not own 4 cards in the Spade suit as she bypassed Spades to bid 1NT.

All of you know that a new suit by Responder is forcing. There is, however, one exception to this rule.

If partner opens 1D and you have

S QJ954

H KJ865

D 76

C 5

You, as Responder now bids 1S. If opener now bids 1NT, you now can bid 2H. This shows at least five Spades and at least 4 Hearts and only 6-9 points. It warns Opener off NT in case Opener also has a 4-card Heart suit. This bid is NON-FORCING and opener can now pass.

SO, if you are Responder and have this hand

S AQ954

H KQ965

D 76

C 5

1D - 1S

1NT - 3H

Your second bid will have to be 3H, not 2H, in order to force Opener to now bid again and to show 10 or more points.

WHO'S THE CAPTAIN?

by **RANDY BARON**

ALMOST THE ONLY BRIDGE BOOK YOU'LL EVER NEED



This is an important concept, and you should be aware that the captain (the person who decides how high to bid) is not always the player with the stronger hand. The key to remember is that if you have limited your hand to a narrow range, your partner is the captain for the rest of the auction. Strength really has no bearing on who is the captain. It all depends on who limits their hand first.

Ed. note:

You bid 1H. Partner responds 1S

You bid 2H. You have now LIMITED your point range and shown an exact point range of 12-15 points including distribution. Your partner is now the captain of the bidding. Partner will decide how high to go. YOU have told your story. Whenever one person rebids their own suit or raises partners suit or bids NT, they have LIMITED their hand and shown an exact point range. New suits are unlimited; old suits are limited.

Sometimes both partners continue to describe their hand during the auction (if neither hand has limited their hand by the first few bids). In this situation, both players can use their judgement and eventually the partnership decides how high to bid.

When you open the bidding with 2NT, you have the stronger hand, but your partner knows your point count, so your partner is the captain. When you open 1S and your partner limits his hand with 2S, you are the captain because your partner has limited his hand.

Let's try some examples: Decide who is the captain on each of these.

1. North opens 1NT and South bids 2H as a transfer.
2. North opens 1S and South responds 3S, intending this as a Limit Raise.
3. North passes. South opens the bidding 1H and North now bids 2D.
4. North opens the bidding 2S (weak) and South responds 2NT (asking for a feature).
5. North opens the bidding 3H.
6. North opens the bidding 1NT. South bids 2D (Transfer). North obediently bids 2H and South bids 3NT.

ANSWERS:

1. South is the captain, because North's hand is limited by his 1NT opening bid.
2. North is the captain. He will pass with a minimum and with a decent hand bid game or occasionally look for slam.
3. South is the captain, because North's hand is limited by original pass. South can pass or make another appropriate bid. *(Note that a passed hand cannot force.)*
4. South is the captain. After North describes his hand, South will decide where to play.
5. South is the captain because South's bid has limited his hand (6-10 HCP)
6. South is the captain. South knows the two hands should be in game so he bids 3NT. North can pass or bid 4H if he owns three or more Hearts.

Ed note: Think of limited bids as being exact bids. These are always same suit that has been bid before (i.e. an OLD suit) or NT.

A new suit is always unlimited so you can think of that as an "at least bid". 1H - 1S: 1H shows at least 13 points.. 1S shows at least 6 points. No-one knows exactly how many points anyone has YET.