

LESSON 5

Rebids by Opener



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

The Bidding

Opener's rebid

Opener's second bid gives responder a clearer picture of the strength and distribution of the hand. Opener categorizes the strength as follows:

Minimum 13 to 15 total points

Medium 16 to 18 total points

Maximum 19 to 21 total points

Minimum hand

With 13 to 15 total points, opener rebids as cheaply as possible. If responder makes an invitational bid by raising opener's suit or bidding 1NT, opener may pass.

Medium hand

With 16 to 18 total points, opener rebids at the three level or bids a new suit, even when the new suit is higher-ranking than the original suit and could push the bidding to the three level.

Maximum hand

With 19 to 21 total points, opener moves even further up the Bidding Scale.

Bidding messages

With a minimum hand, opener sends a minimum-sounding message; with a medium hand, opener sends a medium-sounding message; with a maximum hand, opener sends a maximum-sounding message.

The Play

The finesse

The finesse, leading toward the card you hope will take a trick, is a third way of getting the extra trick(s) you need to make the contract. You're trying to win a trick with one of your high cards when the opponents have a higher-ranking card.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“As we saw in the previous lesson, when opener starts the auction by bidding a suit at the one level, responder is unable to determine the level and strain of the contract immediately. The range of opener’s hand is too great, so responder makes an invitational or forcing bid. Responder needs to hear more from opener.

“Opener’s second bid is called the rebid. With this rebid, opener tries to clarify both the strength and the shape of the hand. To help choose the rebid, opener puts the hand in one of three categories according to its strength:

Minimum 13 to 15 total points

Medium 16 to 18 total points

Maximum 19 to 21 total points

“Opener tries to make a rebid that tells responder in which category the hand lies. Given the limited amount of bidding room, this isn’t always possible, although responder will always be able to distinguish between the minimum and maximum hands.

“In addition to trying to describe strength, opener wants to describe shape. Is there support for responder’s suit? Is the hand balanced or unbalanced? Is there a second suit to show? Opener’s rebid will also be affected by the bid that responder made. Let’s see how opener goes about making an appropriate choice.”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE: Responder Raises Your Major Suit

Introduction

“If responder has raised your major suit, a Golden Fit has been found and there’s no need to search further for the strain. The only unanswered question is — what should the level of the contract be?”

“The strength of opener’s hand is categorized into one of three categories — minimum, medium or maximum — and opener bids accordingly.”

Instructions

“With each of the following hands, you open the bidding 1♥ and partner responds 2♥, an invitational bid. Add the high-card points and the distributional points. Put each hand in a range of minimum, medium or maximum. What is your rebid?”

1) ♠ 9 7 6
♥ K Q J 9 8 3
♦ A 5
♣ A J

2) ♠ Q 7
♥ A Q 7 6 3 2
♦ K J
♣ J 7 2

3) ♠ 10 7
♥ A Q J 6 5
♦ A K Q 2
♣ A 2

HCPs 15

HCPs 13

HCPs 20

Distr. points 2

Distr. points 2

Distr. points 1

Total points 17

Total points 15

Total points 21

Range Medium

Range Minimum

Range Maximum

Rebid 3♥

Rebid Pass

Rebid 4♥

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise.

Conclusion

“The more strength opener has for the original opening bid, the higher the level of opener’s rebid. After responder raises a major-suit opening bid to the two level, opener passes with a minimum hand, raises to the three level with a medium hand and jumps to the four level (game) with a maximum hand.”

EXERCISE TWO: Responder Raises Your Minor Suit

Introduction

“Exercise One was straightforward, especially since the strain was settled when partner raised your hearts. When responder raises your minor suit, the strain is settled if the contract is to be a partscore, but if it’s to be game, the strain would most likely be notrump.”

Instructions

“With each of the following hands, you open the bidding 1♣ and partner responds 2♣, an invitational bid. Add up the high-card points and the distributional points. Put each hand in a range of minimum, medium or maximum. What’s your rebid?”

1) ♠ Q 8 2
♥ K J 5 2
♦ A 6 3
♣ K J 4

2) ♠ 7 3
♥ K 4
♦ A 4 2
♣ A K J 6 3 2

3) ♠ A 10 8
♥ K Q 4
♦ A J
♣ K Q 10 8 4

HCPs 14

HCPs 15

HCPs 19

Distr. points 0

Distr. points 2

Distr. points 1

Total points 14

Total points 17

Total points 20

Range Minimum

Range Medium

Range Maximum

Rebid Pass

Rebid 3♣

Rebid 3NT

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise. On the final hand, opener jumps to 3NT, not 5♣. Mention that there are times when opener is extremely unbalanced and will choose to play in the minor suit rather than in notrump.

Conclusion

“The more strength opener has for the opening bid, the higher the level of opener’s rebid. If responder raises a minor suit to the two level, opener passes with a minimum hand, bids three of the minor with a medium hand and usually bids 3NT with a maximum hand.”

EXERCISE THREE: Responder Bids 1NT**Introduction**

“If your partner responds 1NT to your opening bid, the strain is not settled. Before rebidding, you must consider your range (minimum, medium, maximum) and also what you would like to tell your partner about your distribution.”

Instructions

“With each of the following hands, you open the bidding 1♠ and your partner responds 1NT. This is an invitational bid, and opener can pass or bid again. The strain hasn’t been decided yet, so opener must consider not only the strength of the hand but also the shape. Add the high-card points and the distributional points. Put each hand in a range of minimum, medium or maximum. What’s your rebid?”

1) ♠ K J 8 7 3
♥ 10 4 2
♦ A 9 6
♣ A J

HCPs 13

Distr. points 1

Total points 14

Range Minimum

Rebid Pass

2) ♠ A K 9 5 3
♥ 6
♦ K Q J 5
♣ J 4 2

HCPs 14

Distr. points 1

Total points 15

Range Minimum

Rebid 2♦

3) ♠ A J 9 8 4 2
♥ 7 4 3
♦ A Q 8
♣ 4

HCPs 11

Distr. points 2

Total points 13

Range Minimum

Rebid 2♠

4) ♠ A Q J 6 4 3
♥ A 7 2
♦ 9
♣ K J 10

HCPs 15

Distr. points 2

Total points 17

Range Medium

Rebid 3♠

5) ♠ A K J 4 2
♥ K 9
♦ A Q 4
♣ Q 9 5

HCPs 19

Distr. points 1

Total points 20

Range Maximum

Rebid 3NT

6) ♠ K Q J 8 3
♥ 9 4
♦ A
♣ A K 7 6 3

HCPs 17

Distr. points 2

Total points 19

Range Maximum

Rebid 3♣

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise. The implications of the reverse are not discussed here — they are brought up in Exercise Five. The teacher will need to explain both the jump to 3NT and the jump shift.

Conclusion

“After responder has bid 1NT, opener puts the hand into one of the three categories and makes a rebid that reflects the value and the shape of the opening bidder’s hand. With a minimum opening bid of 13 to 15 total points, opener keeps the bidding as low as possible, passing with a balanced hand and bidding a second suit or rebidding the original suit with an unbalanced hand.

“With a medium hand of 16 to 18 total points, opener will always be unbalanced, (unless opener has specifically 18 HCP), since opener didn’t open 1NT originally. Opener can bid a second suit if there is one or jump to the three level in opener’s original suit.

“With a maximum hand of 19 to 21 total points, opener bids a game or jump shifts to a new suit.”

EXERCISE FOUR: Raising Responder's Suit

Introduction

“When you can support responder’s major suit, the strain can be settled by raising responder’s suit. Since you are the describer, show responder how much strength you have by the level to which you bid.”

Instructions

“With each of the following hands, you open the bidding 1♣ and your partner responds 1♠. This is a forcing bid and opener must bid again. If you can support responder’s major, you need to revalue your hand using dummy points before deciding on your rebid. Remember a void is 5 points, a singleton is 3 points and a doubleton is 1 point. Add the high-card points and the distributional points. Put each hand in a range of minimum, medium or maximum. What is your rebid?”

1) ♠ J 8 7 6
♥ 8
♦ A 9 3
♣ A K Q 7 6

2) ♠ Q 7 4 2
♥ 10 9
♦ A K
♣ K 8 7 4 2

3) ♠ A J 3 2
♥ —
♦ Q J 9 6
♣ A K J 7 2

HCPs 14

HCPs 12

HCPs 16

Dummy points 3

Dummy points 2

Dummy points 5

Total points 17

Total points 14

Total points 21

Range Medium

Range Minimum

Range Maximum

Rebid 3♠

Rebid 2♠

Rebid 4♠

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise.

Conclusion

“When you can support responder’s major, you raise to the cheapest level with a minimum hand, jump a level with a medium hand and jump to game with a maximum hand.

“The same guideline applies if you are supporting partner’s minor suit. Remember, however, that 3NT is the Golden Game when you have a minor-suit Golden Fit.”

EXERCISE FIVE: Opener Bids a Second Suit at the Two Level

Introduction

“When planning to bid a second suit, there is one situation in which opener must exercise caution. When opener’s second suit is higher-ranking than the original suit and can’t be bid at the one level, opener must carefully consider whether or not to show the second suit at the two level.”

Instructions

“Let’s examine the following auctions:

| | | | | | | |
|----|--------|-----------|--|----|--------|-----------|
| 1) | OPENER | RESPONDER | | 2) | OPENER | RESPONDER |
| | 1♥ | 1NT | | | 1♥ | 1NT |
| | 2♦ | | | | 2♠ | |

“In both cases, opener is showing an unbalanced hand with two suits. Responder must often choose between opener’s suits. In which of these two auctions can responder always choose at the two level? (First.) In which auction might responder have to go to the three level to show a preference? (Second.)

“Which suit is higher ranking on the Bidding Scale, hearts or diamonds? (Hearts.) Which is higher ranking on the Bidding Scale, hearts or spades? (Spades.) What’s the difference between the two auctions in terms of the rank of opener’s second suit? (Lower ranking than the original suit in the first auction, higher ranking in the second auction.)

“If opener’s second suit is higher ranking than the original suit, opener can’t afford to mention it at the two level unless the hand is at least in the category for a medium hand. Why? (The partnership may get too high.)”

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise. The concept of the reverse is difficult for the student to understand. Unfortunately, it is a cornerstone in the bidding framework. Try to keep the discussion brief and refer the students to the text where necessary.

Conclusion

“With a minimum hand, opener shouldn’t bid at the two level in a second suit that is higher ranking than the first suit opener bid. Instead, with an unbalanced hand, opener should just rebid the original suit.”

EXERCISE SIX: More Rebids after Responder Bids a New Suit

Introduction

“When responder supports your suit, or when you support responder’s suit, the strain has been decided. You then describe the strength of your hand so responder can decide on the level of the contract. When responder doesn’t support your suit, and when you can’t support responder’s suit, the search is still on — not only for the level of the contract but also for the strain.

“Opener follows familiar guidelines. The more points opener has, the more opener bids. If the hand is balanced, opener rebids notrump at the cheapest level with a minimum hand (provided a second suit can’t be shown at the one level) or jumps one level with a maximum hand. With an unbalanced hand, opener tries to give responder a picture of both the distribution and the strength through the second bid.”

This area is left a little vague since there are many variations depending on responder’s exact response. Refer the student to the text for more complete coverage and many examples. There isn’t time to go through every case during the lesson, and trying to do so quite likely would be confusing. The aim is for the students to get the general idea.

Instructions

“With each of the following hands, you open the bidding 1♦ and partner responds 1♠. This is a forcing bid and you must bid again, further describing your hand. Add up the high-card points and distributional points. Put each hand in a range of minimum, medium or maximum. What’s your rebid?”

1) ♠ 9 8
♥ K 10 4
♦ A J 8 6
♣ K Q 5 4

HCPs 13

Distr. points 0

Total points 13

Range Minimum

Rebid 1NT

2) ♠ 3
♥ K 8 4
♦ K Q 9 6 2
♣ A J 10 6

HCPs 13

Distr. points 1

Total points 14

Range Minimum

Rebid 2♣

3) ♠ K 5
♥ A 8 2
♦ A K J 8 4 2
♣ 9 4

HCPs 15

Distr. points 2

Total points 17

Range Medium

Rebid 3♦

4) ♠ A J
♥ A J 10 9
♦ A K 7 5 3
♣ 10 2

5) ♠ K 6 2
♥ 4
♦ A K Q 8 3
♣ A Q J 2

6) ♠ J 3
♥ A Q J
♦ A Q 9 6
♣ K Q 6 3

HCPs 17

Distr. points 1

Total points 18

Range Medium

Rebid 2♥

HCPs 19

Distr. points 1

Total points 20

Range Maximum

Rebid 3♣

HCPs 19

Distr. points 0

Total points 19

Range Maximum

Rebid 2NT

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise. It might be easier to discuss this exercise with the entire class rather than with individual groups. At any rate, don't leave the students on their own too long.

Conclusion

“Opener's rebid paints a clearer picture of the hand for the responder, so the partnership can move closer to the best contract.”

EXERCISE SEVEN: Responder Jumps

Introduction

“When responder bids a new suit, opener must bid again. There’s another way responder can force opener to bid again, even if opener must bid to the game level with a minimum hand. Let’s see how this works.”

Instructions

Examine the following auctions:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>1) OPENER RESPONDER</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1 ♥ 3 ♥</p> | | <p>2) OPENER RESPONDER</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1 ♥ 2NT</p> |
|--|--|--|

“How many points is responder showing in each auction? (10 or 11 total points in the first auction and 13 to 15 HCP in the second auction.) What message does responder’s bid give? (Invitational in the first auction and forcing in the second auction.)

“Suppose you have the following hand:

♠ 10 6
♥ A J 8 4 2
♦ K 9 5
♣ A 4 2

“What would you rebid in the first auction? (Pass.) What would you rebid in the second auction? (3NT.)”

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise.

Conclusion

“When responder makes a forcing bid, opener must bid again even if opener has to bid game with a minimum hand.”

EXERCISE EIGHT: The Finesse

Introduction

“In the previous lessons, we’ve looked at two ways of getting extra tricks — through the promotion of high cards and by establishing long suits. Now we can look at another way of getting an extra trick — through the finesse. A finesse is an attempt to win a trick with a card which is lower-ranking than one held by the opponents.

“The general principle of the finesse is to lead toward the card you hope will win the trick, and play it after one opponent has already played. Let’s see how this works.”

Instructions

“Take one suit and arrange the cards as I call them. How many tricks can be developed with each of the following suit combinations if the opponents’ cards are divided as favorably as possible. How would you plan to play each combination? In each case, lead toward the card you hope will take the trick.”

| | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| DUMMY: | 1) K 7 2 | 2) 5 2 | 3) K Q 3 | 4) A 6 3 |
| DECLARER: | 9 4 3 | A Q 3 | 7 4 2 | Q 8 2 |
| | One trick. | Two tricks. | Two tricks. | Two Tricks. |

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise. For the third example, the teacher should probably mention the idea of an entry back to declarer’s hand.

Conclusion

“By leading toward it, you give yourself a chance of winning a trick with a card that is lower ranking than one held by the opponents. If you don’t lead toward the card you hope will take a trick, you give up on taking an extra trick. The finesse has little to lose and lots to gain.”

Each of the pre-dealt deals shows the possibility of getting an extra trick by using the finesse. Remind the students that they still begin by determining their goal, the number of tricks they need to make the contract. They have three ways (so far) to get extra tricks — through promotion, through the establishment of long suits and through the finesse. Entries are important when trying a finesse. Remind the students that they need to be in the right hand to lead toward the card they hope will take a trick.

SAMPLE DEALS

EXERCISE NINE: A Finesse against the Ace

(E-Z Deal Cards: #5, Deal 1)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|----------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|------------|
| Dealer: North | ♠ A 7 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ A 6 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ A Q 7 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ 5 4 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ 9 5 4 | <table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ K Q J 10 |
| | N | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ K Q J 10 | | ♥ 8 7 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ 9 8 2 | | ♦ 10 6 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ Q 10 8 | | ♣ A J 9 | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♠ 8 6 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ 9 4 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ K J 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ K 7 6 2 | | | | | | | | | | |

The Bidding

“North is the dealer. Which player would open the bidding? (North.) What would the opening bid be? (1♦.)

“Look at responder’s hand. Can responder support opener’s suit? (No.) Can responder bid a new suit? (No.) What would responder bid? (1NT.) What bidding message is given by responder’s bid? (Invitational.) Does opener have to bid again? (No.) What would opener rebid? (Pass.)

“What would the contract be? (1NT.) Who would be the declarer? (South.)”

The Play

“Which player would make the opening lead? (West.) What would the opening lead be? (♥K.)

“How many tricks must declarer take to fulfill the contract? (Seven.) How many sure tricks does declarer have? (Six.) Which suit provides declarer with the opportunity to develop the additional tricks needed to make the contract? (Clubs.) Which suit should declarer play after winning the first trick? (Clubs.) Why? (To try to set up the king.) What has to happen in order for declarer to make the contract? (East has to hold the ♣A or the clubs have to break 3–3.)

“Pick up your hands and bid and play the deal. Did declarer make the contract? (Declarer should.)”

The contract is 1NT. South needs seven tricks and has six sure tricks. The seventh trick can be developed in clubs by leading toward the king. More advanced students might note the possibility of clubs breaking 3–3. That’s a good idea, but declarer probably won’t have the time to try this in addition to the finesse.

