The “Preferred” (“Better”) Minor System of Opening Bids

The purpose of the “Preferred” (“Better”) Minor System of opening bids is to give the Opener a convenient way to begin the auction with a hand containing at least opening values or more, but one (in Standard American) that does not hold a 5-card major suit, or, (in ACOL) one that contains only a very weak one or two 4-card Major suit(s).

The opening bid of 1C or 1D promises three or more cards in the suit. When holding only three, they will be accompanied by:

1) A balanced hand with one or two 4-card Majors
2) A (4-4-3-2), (4-4-2-3), (4-3-3-3), or (3-4-3-3) distribution (S-H-D-C)
3) 12-14 or 18-21 HCP’s in Standard American (Open 1-NT with 15-17 HCP’)
   15-21 HCP’s in ACOL (Open 1-NT with 12-14 HCP’s)
4) Ideally, but not mandatory, a high honor (Q or better) in the Minor suit bid

It is a non-forcing, descriptive bid which facilitates the exchange of information and helps to clarify the length of the Major suit(s) one holds.

On the downside, opening 1C or 1D creates some ambiguity about the length of the particular Minor suit chosen for opening and make it easier for the Opponents to enter the auction.

Guidelines for Using the Bid:

1) With four diamonds and three clubs never open 1C, open 1D, regardless of the quality of the suits.
2) Never open 1C with only 2-cards in the suit (Exception: If playing “Short Club.”)
3) With three diamonds and three clubs prefer to open 1C.
4) With three diamonds and two clubs (and thus 4-4 in the Majors) open ID not 1C.
5) Following a 1C (or 1D) opening bid, make your re-bids in the normal fashion.
6) Do not repeat the suit, unless you hold six or more cards.
7) Do not say “a Club” or change the tone or tempo of your call to suggest that a 1C opening might not be real.
8) A 1C or a 1D opening bid does not ask Partner to show a 4-card Major suit. It is nothing more than the beginning of a descriptive bid

Responding to a “Preferred” (“Better”) Minor Opening

1) With 0-5 high-card points the only call is to pass. Do not respond 1D over Partner’s opening 1C just to protect Partner, who may or may not have long Clubs.
2) Major suits do not take priority in the description. With 4-Diamonds and 4-Hearts or 4-Spades, respond 1D, “Up-the-Line.”
3) An immediate raise, by Responder, of a 1C opening typically promises five or more support pieces, and a raise of a 1D opening typically promises 4-support pieces, both without a 4-card Major.
4) Assume the 1C or 1D opening bid describes a legitimate Minor suit. If it does not then it is the Opener’s concern to correct any problems that might arise.