

BRIDGE – INTERMEDIATE LESSONS I – 21

The “Preferred” (“Better”) Minor Suit Opening

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*) that contains only a very weak one or two 4-card Major suit(s).

The opening bid of **1C** or **1D**, in this system of bidding, 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 of **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 that is 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) that one holds.

On the downside, opening **1C** or **1D** creates some ambiguity about the length of the particular Minor suit chosen for opening and makes it easier for the Opponents to enter the auction, as opposed to a Major suit opening bid.

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 **1D** 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,*” unless he hand is very weak.
- 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 Minor suit of reasonable quality. If it does not then it is the Opener’s responsibility to correct any problems that might arise.