

TIPS FOR TOPS - 1

1. With a hand strong enough to open 1-NT (15-17 HCP's in S.A. or 12-14 HCP's in ACOL) and two of the suits are without stoppers, open one of the other suits, not 1-NT.

Ex: (a) AKJX XX XXX AKJX (Open 1C in S.A.)
(b) XX AJXX XXX AKJX (Open 1H in ACOL)

2. Normally, Responder needs 6 HCP's to respond to Partner's opening of one-of-a-Minor. With a 5-card Major suit and 5 HCP's, or a 6-card Major suit with 4 HCP's, or any hand containing either an Ace or an Ace-Jack, do not pass a Minor suit opening bid by Partner if your right-hand Opponent in the 2nd seat (RHO) passes.

Ex: (a) QXXXX KXX XXX XX (Partner opens 1C, Respond 1S (audibly!!))
(b) JXX KXXXXX XX XX (Partner opens 1D, Respond 1H)
(c) AXXX XXX (J)XXX XX (Partner opens 1C, Respond 1S)

3. A direct natural response by a Responder of either 2-NT or 3-NT denies a singleton or a void. A direct 1-NT response, however, may contain a singleton - yes, even a void.

Ex: (a) X AKX KJX AXXXXX (Partner opens 1S, Respond 2C) Do not even think about bidding 2-NT, you can always bid NT later, if necessary.
(b) AXX AJX XXX QXXX (Partner opens 1D, Respond 2-NT)
(c) AKX AXX KXX XXXX (Partner opens 1C, Respond 3-NT)
(d) - KXXX QXXXXX QXX (Partner opens 1S, Respond 1-NT)

4. In competition, any response by Opener's Partner promises at least a 5-card suit due to the presence of an overcall by Responder's RHO. In addition, in order to respond with a new suit at the 2-level, Responder must have at least 11 HCP's. With only a 4-card suit and/or fewer than 11 HCP's, Responder must use the "**Negative Double**" in lieu of an inadequate response with either a 4-card suit, or fewer than 11 HCP's, or both. In the following examples, Partner has opened 1S and your RHO has overcalled 2D:

Ex: (a) XX AQXXX XX KQXX (Respond 2H, You have both a 5-card suit and the requisite 11 or more HCP's.)
(b) XXX KQXX XX AKXX ("Double" (negative) - You have the requisite 11 or more HCP's but only a 4-card Heart suit.)
(b) XX QXXXX XXX AKX ("Double" (negative) - You have the requisite 5-card suit but not the required 11 or more HCP's.)

5. After Partner raises Opener's first bid suit, any new suit bid by Opener is forcing. Bidding on in a secondary suit after Partner raises you does not mean you are running from the agreed-upon suit, but rather that you are either seeking a no trump contract with a holding of 16 or more HCP's, else are cue-bidding Aces exploring for Slam.

Ex: XX AQX AX AKXXXX (You open 1C. Partner raises to 2C. Bid 2H (forcing) If Partner bids 2S evidencing a Spade stopper, you can bid 3-NT. If Partner alternatively rebids 3C, you can "Pass.")

6. Bidding twice opposite a silent Partner shows extra values (15-17 HCP minimum). Bidding three times opposite a silent Partner shows a hand in the 18-20 HCP range. Bidding four times opposite a silent Partner hints strongly of a death wish.

7. The normal procedure for bidding a 6-4 distribution is 6, 4, 6. The procedure for bidding a 6-5 distribution is 6, 5, 5.

Ex: (a) KQXX AX X KQXXXX - (Open 1C, over Partner's probable 1D or 1H, Rebid 1S with intent to bid Clubs once more at the next opportunity, unless, of course, Partner supports your Spades.)

(b) KQXXX AX - KQXXXX - (Open 1C, over Partner's probable 1D or 1H, Rebid 1S with intent to bid Spades once more at the next opportunity, unless, again, of course, Partner supports your Spades.)

8. After a one-level response, holding game-going values, rebid game if a major suit fit has been uncovered, game in an independent Major suit, or 3NT. Do not bid 2-NT or the 3-Level of the Major, as either bid would be invitational and not forcing.

Ex:

	<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>North (You)</u>
	1D	1H
	1S	????
(a)	XX AKJXXXX KX XX	(Rebid 4H; 3H is invitational)
(b)	AQXX AQXXX XX XX	(Rebid 4S; 3S is invitational)
(c)	XXX AKXX XX AQJX	(rebid 3-NT; 2-NT is invitational)

9. A direct response of 2-NT or 3-NT following a Minor suit opening by Partner evidences 11-12 HCP's in the first instance, and 13-15 HCP's in the second instance. Both instances tend to deny either the presence of either a 4-card Heart suit or a 4-card Spade suit.

Ex: (a) QXX QXX KQX QXXX North (Partner) South (You)
1C 2-NT
(11-12 HCP'S, denying a singleton and 4-cards in either Major)

(b) QXX KQX KQX QXXX North (Partner) South (You)
1D 3-NT
(13-15 HCP'S, denying a singleton and 4-cards in either Major)

10. As Responder, do not rebid a new suit at the 2-level with fewer than 11 HCP's.

Ex: (a) XX AJXXX QXXX XX North (South(You))
1C 1H
1S ?? (Rebid 1-NT, 2D would show 11+)

(b) AX AJXXX QXXX XX North (South(You))
1C 1H
1S ?? (Rebid 2D, at least 11 HCP's, and is forcing as a new suit by Responder.)

11. After Opener rebids 1-NT following his/her opening bid of one-of-a-Minor, a new lower ranking suit bid by Responder is not forcing.

Ex: AJXXX QXXX XX XX North (South(You))
1C 1S
1-NT ?? Rebid 2H, (6-10 HCP's, and the only sequence wherein a new suit by Responder is not-forcing)

12. Unless, by Partnership agreement, you play weak jump-responses, think of a Jump-Shift by Responder as a Slam invitation. Having 19 or more HCP's opposite an opening bid, Slam is probable, and it is up to the Responder to indicate that goal by a jump-shift.