

## 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 suits are without stoppers, open one of the other suits, not 1-NT.

**Ex:** (a) **AKJX XX XXX AKJX** (Open **1C** in **Standard American.**)  
(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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 No-Trump 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**, Re-bid **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**, Re-bid **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, re-bid Game if a Major suit fit has been uncovered, Game in an independent Major suit, or **3-NT**. Do not bid **2-NT** or the 3-Level of the Major, as either bid would be invitational and is not forcing.

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

<b>Ex:</b>	(a) <b>QXX QXX KQX QXXX</b>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
		<b>1C</b>	<b>2-NT</b>
	(11-12 HCP'S, denying a singleton and 4-cards in either Major)		
	(b) <b>QXX KQX KQX QXXX</b>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
		<b>1D</b>	<b>3-NT</b>
	(13-15 HCP'S, denying a singleton and 4-cards in either Major)		

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

<b>Ex:</b>	(a) <b>XX AJXXX QXXX XX</b>	<u>North</u>	<u>(South(You))</u>
		<b>1C</b>	<b>1H</b>
		<b>1S</b>	<b>??</b> (Re-bid <b>1-NT</b> , <b>2D</b> would show 11+)
	(b) <b>AX AJXXX QXXX XX</b>	<u>North</u>	<u>(South(You))</u>
		<b>1C</b>	<b>1H</b>
		<b>1S</b>	<b>??</b> (Rebid <b>2D</b> , at least 11 HCP's, and is forcing as a new suit by Responder.)

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

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

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.