

The Convention Card: Major Suit Openings

MAJOR OPENING	
Expected Min. Length	4 5
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES	
Double Raise: Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall: Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
Conv. Raise: 2NT	<input type="checkbox"/> 3NT <input type="checkbox"/> Splitter <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____
1NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/> Semi-forcing <input type="checkbox"/>
2NT: Forcing	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> _____ to _____
3NT:	_____ to _____
Drury <input type="checkbox"/>	: Reverse <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Way <input type="checkbox"/> Fit <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	_____

Expected Minimum Length

Here is where you check the minimum number of the suit you would have to open that suit. A minimum of 4 cards in the major was the norm 30 years ago, but today a major opening generally promises at least 5. Many play that in 3rd seat, a 4-card major may be bid to show partner which suit to lead.

Example hand:

♠Jxx ♥AKQx ♦Kxx ♣xxx

Many players would open 1C in first or second seat, but in 3rd seat, an opening of 1H lets your partner know what to lead if you don't get the contract. Since your partner has not opened, there is little likelihood of getting to game. Instead, you may be competing for a partial.

In 4th seat, many would choose to open that hand 1 heart, also. If this is your style, you would check the box under 5 for 1st and 2nd seat openings. For 3rd and 4th suit openings, most would check the box under 5 and draw an arrow toward the 4 to show that occasionally (although rarely) you may bid a 4-card major in that seat.

Responses

Double Raise

Force: This means in the auction 1S-P-3S, the 3S bidder is showing an opening hand with at least 3 spades. It is **forcing** and requires that the opener bid again. This is an old style, used primarily by social bridge players. It is standard and not alertable.

Inv: This means in the auction 1S-P-3S, the 3S bidder is showing a hand with 9-11 high card points with at least 3 spades. With 3 spades, partner will have closer to 11 points or a singleton. This bid is **invitational** to game. The opener is not required to bid again and may pass with a minimum-type opening. This bid is used by most duplicate players. It is standard and not alertable.

Note: Partnerships that use this sequence as invitational, must use a forcing bid to show a hand that must go to game.

Example hand:

♠KJxx ♥AKxx ♦Kxx ♣xxx

If you are using invitational jumps, when your partner opens 1S, most would choose to bid 2D, a forcing bid. A bid of 2H would not be terrible, but generally major suit bids in that sequence should show a 5+ card suit. You can safely bid your 3-card suit because you have no intention of playing diamonds. If your partner rebids 2H, you can choose to bid 4H instead of 4S because 4-4 fits generally play better, giving you an opportunity for a pitch on the 5th spade. If your partner rebids anything else, you would jump to 4S. You might be tempted to simply bid 4S over the 1S, but that bid is better used to show a hand with no interest in slam. It shows a hand that has 5 spades and a singleton with few high card points (5-8). Bidding slowly gives you a chance to explore for slam. This hand has 14 high card points. Your partner may have opened a very good hand (18-20 points) but not good enough to open 2C.

Weak: This means in the auction 1S-P-3S, the 3S bidder is showing a hand that has exactly 4 spades and 0-6 high card points. This is part of the **Bergen*** convention. It is alertable.

After Overcall

Force: This means in the auction 1S-2C-3S, the 3S bidder is showing exactly the same hand (opening hand with 3+ spades) as if there had been no overcall. This bid is rarely used by duplicate players, but it is not alertable.

Inv: This means in the auction 1S-2C-3S, the 3S bidder is showing exactly the same hand (invitational hand with 3+ spades) as if there had been no overcall. This bid is rarely used by duplicate players, but it is not alertable.

*Note: To show a good hand (invitational or better), most duplicate players use a **cuebid**.*

Example hand:

♠KJxx ♥AKxx ♦Kxx ♣xxx

If the auction goes 1S-2C, this hand should say 3C if you are using the 3S bid to mean anything except a weak hand.

Weak: This means in the auction 1S-2C-3S, the 3S bid shows a hand with 0-6 points and 4 spades. This is not conventional and not alertable. Most duplicate players use this.

***Bergen 4-Card Major Suit Raises in a Nutshell**

1S-P-3S	0-6 HCP
1S-P-3C	7-9 HCP
1S-P-3D	10-12 HCP
1S-P-2NT	13+ HCP (Also called Jacoby 2NT)