The Beginner's Page - 2

Last week I covered the opening bids of 1 of a suit and 1NT. This week we'll look at responding to opener's 1 level opening bid.

First of all let's lay down the points requirements. Generally speaking you need 6 or more points to respond to partner's opening. A new suit is always forcing and opener must rebid something. So a new suit is 6-27 points (unlimited).

Limit Bids

But there are two ways in which you can tell partner how many points you have (these are called limit bids – because you show how many points you hold within a limited range). When partner opens with one of a suit there are two types of limit bids and they are not forcing. Partner may pass if there are insufficient points to look for game - generally around 25 in total.

These two limited responses are supporting partner and bidding NT.

Suppose that partner opens 1♥, then the ranges of the limit bids are: -

1NT	=	6-10	pts	2♥	=	6-10	pts
2NT	=	11-12	pts	3♥	=	11-12	pts *
3NT	=	13-15	pts	4♥	=	13-15	pts *

Since we play 5 card major suit openings, you may raise partner with just 3 cards.
* Note, there are better, more sophisticated, ways of showing a raise of partner's suit to the 3 and 4 level, but I'm keeping it simple here.

Let's have a few examples, partner has opened 1♥, what do you respond?

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4	Hand 5	Hand 6
♠ 764	♠ 764	♠ K76	♠ Q76	♠ Q76	♠ Q76
♥ K98	♥ KJ8	♥ KJ98	♥ J8	♥ J8	♥ J8
♦ 986	♦ K86	♦ A987	♦ AJ97	♦ AJ97	♦ AQ97
♣ J752	♣ 8762	♣ 87	♣ 8754	♣ A874	♣ AQ74

Hand 1:   Pass. You generally need 6 points to respond.
Hand 2:   2♥. Sufficient points and support for a raise.
Hand 3:   3♥. Good support and 11 points, invite 4♥ by raising to 3♥.
Hand 4:   1NT. Jx is not good enough support to raise partner and 1NT is best
Hand 5:   2NT. 11-12 points and poor support for partner's suit.
Hand 6:   3NT. 13-15 points and poor support for partner's suit.

Next week I'll cover responder bidding a new suit.