

The 3 main bridge rules are:

1. Discipline!
2. Discipline!
3. Discipline!

1. Discipline in bidding is taking the action you know is best when a tiny voice in your head is urging you to take a flyer.
2. Discipline is having a reason to bid and being willing to pass when pass is just right.
3. Discipline is acknowledging that you have a partner and letting them use their judgement.

One of the hardest things in Bridge is to remember to PASS or to limit your hand ! Too many times I see players end up at too high a level because they have given their partner the wrong impression of their hand.

The single most important tip for playing good Bridge is to adhere strictly to a set of rules and discipline, whether it be the absolute rules, or something you and your partner has agreed to. Be rational and don't take chances. A bridge game is won after many hands, not one board, so taking a chance may work occasionally, but not over a period of time. The goal is to get the highest overall score, therefore, taking chance in a single hand by trying to beat the odds of probability, or deceiving your partner, will create more damage in following hands and the trust of one's partnership. The other lesson from the game of bridge is that, the more hands you are playing, the more important it is for you to adhere to consistent discipline!

The areas I often see lack of discipline are:

- Opening a with a suit and not having a rebid
- Responding to partner's opener at too high a level for the point count (it is called falling in love with your hand !)
- Bidding a hand twice, when the hand was clearly described in the first bid (it is called falling in love with your hand !)
- Reverse bidding with insufficient points

What is a rebid?

When you have 5 or more of a suit and can either bid it again or another 4+ card suit, OR you have a flat hand and can rebid NT (so long as it is part of your system giving the correct point count).

The only time you do not need a rebid is when you open 1 NT. You have said it all in one bid. Therefore whenever you open a suit, you MUST always have a rebid. If you do not have a rebid, ask yourself "should I be opening at all, is this a 1 NT opener, or do I have a NTs rebid as per our system ?". Be true to your agreement, which in turn is being true to your partner!

What would you open with these hands and what are your rebids (assuming partner bids at the one level) ?

1. ♠AKx ♥QJxx ♦Kxxx ♣xxx
2. ♠AKx ♥QJxx ♦Kxxxx ♣Ax
3. ♠Kx ♥QJxxx ♦AKxx ♣xx
4. ♠AK ♥QJx ♦Kxxxx ♣xxx

Responding to partner's opener

Stick to the rules!

Unless you have 10+ points, DO NOT bid at the 2 level in a new suit! OK a nice 9 count and secondary support for partner's suit may be allowed (just). Don't forget to read up on the takeout double guidelines, as this maybe helpful to you if the opposition overcall. A double is often underutilized.

Your partner opens 1♠, what would you bid with these hands?

5. ♠x ♥Qxxxxx ♦Jxx ♣AJxx
6. ♠Ax ♥QJxx ♦Kxxx ♣Axx
7. ♠xx ♥Jxxxx ♦Qxx ♣A

Bidding your hand twice, when once will do ! This is a common error by players when making pre-emptive type bid. Remember the purpose of these bids is to be disruptive to the opposition, not necessarily to find a contract of your own. Get in and out, is a good motto. The opposition often struggle to find their fit and bidding your hand again may help them find it. Of course, if your partner invited or forced you to bid after a pre-empt, you are allowed to bid again 😊

Another common error is for partner to bid something over your pre-empt, just because they have none of your suit! If partner bids a new suit over your pre-empt, this should be treated as forcing, so must be a very good hand. You must either bid their suit, bid your pre-empt again or bid 3NT (another lesson in it's own right!)

Reverse bids

These are rebids of a higher ranking suit than the original bid.

eg 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥. The only time it does not apply is when you are still at the one level, eg 1♣ - 1♥ - 1♠.

The hand that is reversing is promising 16+ high-card points and is forcing for at least 1 round. Therefore, within 2 bids, opener can get across their point count and now responder decides where to go from there.

Which of these are reverse bids?

8. 1♣ - 1♥ - 2♦
9. 1♦ - 1♥ - 2♣
10. 1♥ - 2♣ - 2♠
11. 1♥ - 1NT - 2♦
12. You hold ♠ J107 ♥ 3 ♦ AQJ7 ♣ AKQ102 and opens 1♣. Partner Opens 1♠, what is your bid?

Summary

- Always maintain partnership discipline
- Try to be sensible, not brilliant
- Take your time, ask yourself: What could go wrong?
- Have a quiet word to yourself from time to time!

Answers

1. ACOL: 1 NT no rebid. Standard: 1♦ then 1 NT is the rebid
2. ACOL: 1♦ and rebid 2NT. Standard: 1 NT no rebid
3. 1♥ and rebid is 2♦
4. ACOL: 1 NT. Ok you may think you can open 1♦ and rebid them again, but are you really wanting to play in a minor? It is still a flat hand.
5. 1 NT (Discipline !)
6. 2♦
7. 1 NT. You may think it scary in 1 NT, but where are all the clubs?
Distributed amongst the other 3 hands, so partner must have some.
- 8 & 10 are a Reverse bids 9 & 11 are not a reverse bids
12. 2♦

