

Polish Club 1 Diamond, 1 Heart and 1 Spade Treatments

The Polish Club is amenable to many styles after the natural 1, 1 and 1 openings, and continuations after 1-1M, 1NT and 1-1, 1. This discussion presents one approach. It is the companion to my discussion of the Polish 1 (See: **The Polish Club: Summary and 1 Club Auctions**), 2 (See: **Polish 2 Clubs Auctions**) and 1NT, 2NT and 1-1-xNT (See: **Fiskforsk No Trump Structure**) auctions.

Tempo Style

Here is an overview of our particular tempo establishment approach. You will find a few modifications to typical 2/1 practice which are designed to accommodate a slightly wider range 1NT rebid range (12-15) and make the structure more uniform and easier (for me anyway) to remember.

Responses

The general responding style is 2/1 game forcing (except 1-2.)

The **2/1 response** to a Major suit opening (by an unpassed hand) is forcing to game. Following the 2/1, the opener's first rebid is used to describe his shape; reverses and new suits bid at the three level promise no extra strength. The opener's 3NT rebid after a 2/1 response suggests a minimum 5-3-3-2 hand (doubleton in the partner's suit) with stoppers in the unbid suits. 4NT suggests either more strength (14+) or different shape, or possibly three card support for the responder's Minor.

The **2 response to 1** is *not* game forcing. It shows 11+ points and *denies* a four card Major, thus disambiguating subsequent Major suit bids which always show stoppers. The responder may pass the opener's 2 rebid, otherwise the auction is forcing to 2NT.

The **3 response to 1** shows a strong Club hand with no other suit (except possibly Diamond support.)

The **1NT response** to a Major suit opening by an unpassed hand is semi-forcing and is used on all hands which have insufficient strength to show a new suit at the two level and cannot respond 1 or raise the opener's suit. 11-12 point hands with three card support that are willing to play in 1NT opposite a minimum may also start with 1NT; a three card limit raise is available for other supporting hands in this range. The opener's problem hand after 1-1NT is the 4-5-2-2 hand. If the opener is minimum 1NT can be passed. With 14+ points opener rebids 2. (See the 1NT Response discussion below.)

Opener's Rebids

Opener's jump rebid in his (red) suit after a Major suit response shows the usual 16-18 and a six card suit, but also promises three card support for the responder's Major. With that hand but 0-2 card support opener rebids **2NT**.

Opener's reverses after 1 and 1 openings, while strong, are limited to a quite narrow range, about 16-18 points, and therefore can be reasonably played as non-forcing when the responder is weak and prefers the second suit. With more than seven points, or lacking a fit for the opener's second suit, the responder rebids:

A 5+ card suit with less than 10 points. This is forcing for one round, but the responder is free to pass any rebid opener makes.

2NT, again forcing, but with less than 10 points and often with support for the opener's first suit. Note that the responder does not go directly to the opener's first suit because that shows a better hand.

Any other rebid, including preference for the opener's first suit, suggests a stronger (11+ point) hand and is forcing to game.

An alternative structure for rebidding after the opener reverses is discussed later in this paper.

Responder's Rebids

If the opener rebids at the one level (1 or 1NT) then the responder follows these guidelines for selecting his rebid:

A **checkback 2** rebid is used by the responder after **1x-1Major, 1NT and 1minor-1, 1** with *all* invitational strength hands, plus those game going hands that want clarification of the opener's support or have an unstopped suit.

Responder's **weak rebids**, when checkback is available, include 2 (even 1-1, 1-2), 2, 2 (if not a reverse), and 2NT, which is a puppet to 3.

Responder's natural **strong rebids** in these auctions are 2 (only if a reverse), 3, 3, 3 and 3, *even when these bids support one of opener's suits*, e.g. 1-1, 1-3 or 3. To raise *invitationally*, the responder *must* start with checkback. When these jumps are in a new suit they show equal or greater length in the first suit, usually five but possibly four if 4-1-4-4, singleton in the opener's suit.

Responder's 2NT rebid, again *only* when checkback is available, is used to show long weak Clubs, or a strong hands with a longer Clubs or (only after a 1 opening) Diamonds. See the Checkback discussion below for details.

On the other hand, if the opener rebids at the two level (without reversing) the responder is more constrained. In these cases our auctions proceed along fairly traditional (see below) 2/1 lines:

A bid in the **fourth suit** is an artificial game force.

Simple suit rebids (including the raise of opener's second suit) show no more than 10 points.

Jump rebids below game are invitational.

The 1 No Trump Response Auctions

The 1NT response to a major by an unpassed hand is semi-forcing and shows 5-12 points. It can be the first move on a balanced 11-12 point three card balanced raise when 1NT may be preferred to three of a Major. The opener may pass a balanced 12-13 point opening, and rebids naturally otherwise, avoiding a rebid in his original suit with fewer than six cards. The opener may have to rebid a three card minor, or rarely 2♣ after 1 - 1NT when holding exactly 4-5-2-2. After the opener's rebid, the responder can finish describing his hand:

Pass, happy with opener's rebid.

Return to the opener's first suit, usually shows two card support but may be three and a very weak hand, 5-6 points.

A new suit below the opener's Major (e.g. 1 - 1NT, 2♣-2) shows a long suit and no more than 10 points.

2NT is natural showing 11-12 points.

A jump in a new suit or a new suit at the three level after the opener has rebid his Major is invitational (11-12) and shows a long suit.

A new suit at the three level after the opener has rebid a new suit (e.g. 1 - 1NT, 2 - 3♣) is a long suit and 6-10; with more strength prefer 2NT.

Three of the opener's Major is a balanced three card limit raise.

2 after 1 - 1NT, 2 (cannot possibly be natural) shows 11-12 points and two card support for Hearts. Similarly after 1 - 1NT, 3 3 shows two card support and 3NT shows a singleton or void.

2 after 1 - 1NT, 2minor shows 11-12 points and good support for the opener's Minor, giving him a choice of contracts. Likewise after 1 - 1NT, 3minor.

Checkback 2 Clubs

Although the Polish Club can accommodate a variety of methods after 1x-1y, 1NT (except 1♣-1 , 1NT) and 1minor-1 , 1 , the system does suggest some unusual methods to assist with the relatively wide (12-15) 1NT rebid range, allowing many

marginal invitational hands to stay below 2NT. In these auctions a checkback 2 \heartsuit rebid is the first move on all invitational hands, even after a 1 \heartsuit opening. The 2NT rebid is freed up for a transfer to Clubs. Here is the schedule of the responder's rebids which applies after 1x-1major, 1NT and 1minor-1 \heartsuit , 1 \spadesuit :

2 \heartsuit , 2 \spadesuit and 2 \clubsuit (not a reverse) are weak.

1NT (after 1m-1 \heartsuit , 1 \spadesuit) to play.

3 \heartsuit , 3 \spadesuit , 3 \clubsuit and 3 \diamonds are forcing and natural (as is 2 \heartsuit when a reverse, specifically 1m-1 \heartsuit , 1NT-2 \heartsuit , showing 4-5-x-x). These bids are used on a variety of unbalanced game going and slammy hands. Note that many auctions that would sound invitational by standard practice are in fact forcing, e.g.: 1 \heartsuit -1 \spadesuit , 1NT-3 \heartsuit and 1 \heartsuit -1 \spadesuit , 1 \spadesuit -3 \heartsuit and 1 \spadesuit -1 \heartsuit , 1NT-3 \spadesuit . These forcing bids pave the way for low level slam investigations. (The invitational equivalents of these auctions start with the 2 \heartsuit checkback) In these auctions the second suit tends to be shorter than the first suit.

2NT shows either a weak hand with six Clubs (and the four card Major), or (only after a Minor suit opening) a strong hand with longer Clubs, or (only after a 1 \heartsuit opening) a strong hand with longer Diamonds. The opener must rebid 3 \heartsuit (except 3 \spadesuit when strong after 1m-1 \heartsuit , 1 \spadesuit) and the responder passes this with a weak hand. With the strong hands, the responder makes another move after the opener's forced 3 \heartsuit rebid. Here are the possibilities:

After a 1 \heartsuit opening responder needs this sequence for both Club and Diamond hands when a four card Major is shown first. (With a five card Major just jump to three of the Minor after the opener's rebid.) After the forced 3 \heartsuit the responder rebids:

- 3 \diamonds** with long Diamonds.
- 3 \clubsuit** with long Clubs.

After a 1 \spadesuit opening 2NT *always* shows long Clubs. After the opener's forced 3 \heartsuit rebid, the responder bids 3 \clubsuit to show the big Club hand.

After a 1 \spadesuit opening (necessarily 1 \heartsuit -1 \spadesuit , 1NT-2NT, 3 \heartsuit) the responder will start with a 2/1 with a longer Minor so 2NT is only really needed for the weak Club case (but *could* be pushed into service for the big 4-1-4-4 hand.)

3NT to play.

2 \heartsuit shows some invitational (or occasionally better) hand. This could be one of the following:

Invitational (10-12) balanced hands (responder then rebids 2NT, e.g.: 1 \heartsuit -1 \spadesuit , 1NT-2NT, 3 \heartsuit).

1NT-2♣, 2 -2NT.)

Invitational hands seeking a fit for the responder's 5+ card Major.

Invitational hands with support for the opener's suit.

Invitational hands with a second suit, a typical auction: 1 -1 , 1NT-2♣, 2 -3♣
with: x QJxx xx AQxxxx.

Game going hands that intend to play in 3NT (or higher) unless the opener has three card support.

Some flawed No Trump hands.

After the 2♣ checkback, the opener clarifies his support for the responder's Major, bidding 2 with two cards (possibly fewer after 1minor-1 , 1) or returning to the responder's Major with three. Except when the auction begins 1♣-1 , 1 we extend this rebid schedule to allow the opener to further limit the strength of his non-supporting hands. In all of these auctions the Major that the responder did not bid is largely meaningless and therefore available. (After 1 -1 , 1NT, 2♣ the meaningless rebid is 2 , the opener cannot have six.) If the opener rebids *that* suit in response to the checkback, 2♣ (e.g. 1 -1 , 1NT-2♣, 2 or 1 -1 , 1NT, 2♣-2) he is showing 14-15 points without support.

The advantage of this scheme is that it often allows responder to sign off at the two level when holding 10-12 points and no fit. Consider this auction: 1 -1 , 1NT-2♣, 2 . The opener has shown 12-13 points and two Hearts. Holding 10-11 points, the responder can pass 2 or rebid 2 with five (or six) or 2 asking the opener to rebid 2NT; with 12 points the responder can invite with 2NT or jump to 3 with a six card suit. If the opener had rebid 2 instead of 2 , the responder would rebid 2NT or 3 with 10-11 and a game with 12. After a 2 reply, all of the responder's suit rebids at the two level are discouraging while 2NT and (most, see below) three of a suit bids are invitational. After a 2 reply (14-15) all the responder's rebids are invitational. Note that this technique operates fine after 1 -1 , 1 -2♣ because the opener will unlikely want to rebid 2 naturally, but is not used after 1♣-1 , 1 -2♣ because, in this case, the opener may have a biggish hand with five Spades and needs the 2 rebid to show that. There are some additional rebids after 2♣ if the opening was 1♣. Here is the complete schedule of the opener's possible rebids after 1♣-1 , 1 -2♣:

- 2 shows minimum (12-15) values, only two cards in partner's suit.
- 2 shows minimum with three Hearts.
- 2 shows a 19+ point hand with exactly five Spades. (With six Spades and 19+ points the auction would have proceeded 1♣-1 , 2 .)
- 2NT shows some sort of 19+ hand that did not want to rebid 2NT after the partner's 1 response, something like 4-1-4-4, 4-2-2-5, or 4-2-5-2.

3♣ shows some 16-18 hand with four Spades, five or more Clubs and fewer than three Hearts. Forcing, since the responder is promising 11+ by bidding 2♣.

3♥ shows a 19+ hand with four Spades and five Diamonds and fewer than three Hearts. Obviously forcing.

3♠ shows 16-18, three Hearts, four Spades and five card Minor. (With a four card Minor the hand would be balanced and would therefore open 1NT. With a stronger hand and three Hearts the opener should have rebid 2♥ instead of 1♠.)

The 2♣ checkback can be used on a few game going hand types, specifically balanced and semi-balanced hands with a five card Major, and balanced hands with a vulnerable Minor suit. The first case simply uses 2♣ to check for a fit, then bids the appropriate game. The second case is dependent on how the auction proceeds. Here are some examples of these types of responding hands:

With: KQxx Axxx KJx xx one might bid: 1♠-1♥, 1NT-2♣, 2♥-3♥ or 1♠-1♥, 1NT-2♣, 2♥-3♥, suggesting that the Clubs are vulnerable and only four Hearts are held. With five Hearts, jump to 3♥ immediately after opener's 1NT.

With: KQxx Axxx xx KJx the auction could go: 1♠-1♥, 1NT-2♣, 2♥-3♥ or 1♠-1♥, 1NT-2♣, 2♥-3♥, again, suggesting that the Clubs are vulnerable and only four Hearts are held.

A final note, after 1♠-1♥, 1♠ opener could be quite strong with long Diamonds. In this case, after the responder's checkback 2♣, the opener may show this by rebidding 3♦. A typical hand might be: AJxx x AQJxxx Kx.

Opener Rebids Above 1NT

Checkback style auctions are not available when opener rebids above 1NT, e.g. 1♠-1♥, 2♣. In these (non-2/1) cases a fourth suit forcing to game approach is recommended, thus, after 1♠-1♥, 2♣:

2♣ is artificial and forcing to game.

2♦ is to play.

2♥ is to play (nominally 6-10 and a six card suit).

2NT is invitational.

3♣ is mildly invitational (about 8-11), protecting opener whose 2♣ rebid could be quite strong, up to a bad 18.

3♦ is to play, a six card suit and a weak hand.

3♥ is invitational, three Hearts and probably six Spades.

3♠ is invitational, a six card or longer suit.

3NT is to play.

After a 1 Diamond Opening

Any structure can be adopted after the Polish 12-18 four card 1 opening. The following sections discuss raises, dealing with Minor two-suiters, and the often confusing auctions that begin with 1 -2.

Diamond Raises

Here is our raise structure after the 1 opening. Note that only four card support is sufficient. (Five for the preemptive 3 .)

- 2 shows 6-10 and four card support.
- 2 is an 11-12 point limit raise.
- 2 is a 12-15 point forcing raise.
- 2NT is natural and non-forcing, showing an 11-12 point hand.
- 3 is a 16+ point forcing raise.
- 3 is preemptive.

Hands with Clubs and Diamonds

The 1 opening promises four Diamonds and possibly longer Clubs. Here is the opener's rebid schedule, some of which allow the opener to disambiguate some of these holdings:

- 2 shows x-x-5-4 and 12-18 (pretty much like standard practice) or x-x-4-5 and 12-15, or even 1-4-4-4 after 1 -1 .
- 3 shows 16-18 and five Clubs, possibly only four Diamonds.
- 2NT shows 16-18, 6+ Diamonds and fewer than three cards in the responder's Major.
- 3 shows 16-18, 6+ Diamonds and exactly three cards in the partner's Major.
- 3NT shows a running Diamond suit and stoppers in the unbid suits.
- 4 shows a near solid six card Diamond suit and four card support for partner's suit.

1 Diamond – 2 Clubs Auctions

The 2/1 game force philosophy does not reasonably extend to the 1 -2 auction. We require 11+ points and, in the MAFIA style, no four card Major. The 2 response also tends to deny four Diamonds, except for hands with slam interest. Holding four Diamonds and less than slam interest one of the immediate Diamond raises is preferred. As we do not have to worry about the 19-21 point balanced hand or sorting out a possible 4-4 Major suit fit the main task becomes clarifying just what is and is not forcing, allowing the responder to adequately develop strong hands.

The opener often moves toward No Trump after 1 -2 by rebidding 2NT or 3NT, or a Major suit stopper with only one Major stopped. These Major suit rebids can also be the first move on some strong hands. If the responder next rebids 3 (1 -2, 2Major-3) he is promising extra values (which can be inferred by the responder's failure to raise Diamonds immediately instead of bidding 2). Here is an outline of the opener's rebids and the development of the auction:

1 Diamond – 2 Clubs, 2 Diamonds

This shows a minimum hand with a five card or longer suit, or a (necessarily) strong four card suit without a stopper in either Major, 3-3-4-3, rarely x-x-4-4. It is not forcing. With x-x-4-4 the opener generally prefers to raise Clubs (which is forcing to 3NT or 4♣) unless the hand is really pathetic. For example, it is probably better to rebid 2♣ with: Jx Jxx AKQx Jxxx than commit this hand to 3NT or 4♣.

After the opener's 2♣ rebid, the responder, with only invitational strength, passes with Diamond tolerance, rebids 2NT with Major suit values, or rebids 3♣ with a long suit. With a bit more strength responder can try 3NT.

The responder can also rebid a Major suit stopper after 1♦-2♣, 2♦ hoping to find opener with values in the other Major. Then, after the opener rebids 2♠ (showing a partial Spade stopper), or 2NT, 3♣ or 3♠ (all natural), the responder can show a slammy Club hand by rebidding either Major as an advance cuebid, e.g. : 1♦-2♣, 2♦-2♠, 2NT-3♠, which the opener declines by rebidding 3NT.

With a strong hand and Diamond support the responder can raise to three Diamonds, forcing, e.g.: 1♦-2♣, 2♦-3♦, on something like: AQ xx KQxx AQJxx. This bid denies a Major suit singleton or void, because 3♠ and 3♣ are available as splinters for this type of hand.

1 Diamond – 2 Clubs, 2M

This nominally shows a stopper in a minimum hand with exactly four Diamonds, but if the opener rebids 3♣, e.g. : 1♦-2♣, 2♦-3♣, 3♣, the opener is showing reversing values with a good four card Major and suggesting it as a possible denomination.

After the opener's 2♣ or 2♦ rebid, the responder rebids 2NT, 3♣ or 3NT to play, 3♦ shows four Diamonds and at least game going strength, and 3♠ and 3♣ are advance cuebids showing the strong Club hand – the opener rebids 3NT with fewer than two Clubs or soft values.

1 Diamond – 2 Clubs, 2NT

The opener's 2NT rebid shows a balanced minimum with the Majors stopped, or possibly 4-4-4-1, or even 4-4-5-0! The responder can raise this to 3NT to play, or rebid a natural (and forcing) 3♣ or 3♠. The responder advance cuebids a Major suit with strong Clubs, and the opener continues with 3NT declining interest.

1 Diamond – 2 Clubs, 3 Clubs

The opener's raise of responder's Clubs is forcing, the auction must get to 3NT or 4♣, but does not promise much extra except four or more Clubs. The responder rebids 3NT to

play, or 3 or 3, nominally a No Trump try but also with a slammy hand, which is shown by bidding again. (An exception being 1-2, 3-3, 3-4 is to play, the 3 bid showing only a partial stopper.) The responder's 3 rebid is always a slam try, and his 4 can reasonably be RKG.

Other 1 Diamond – 2 Clubs Auctions

1-2, 3 is forcing to game, and shows a long Diamond suit and 16-18 points. The responder can rebid a Major suit stopper or 3NT, just as after 1-2, 3. After 1-2, 3-3M, the opener should rebid 4 with three card support if bypassing 3NT.

1 Diamond – 2 Clubs, 3M is a splinter bid in support of Clubs, forcing to game so must have a bit extra in high cards, or a void.

1 Diamond – 2 Clubs, 3NT is to play with a singleton or void in Clubs. With a more balanced hand opener should rebid a stopper first so that responder can better assess the Club fit.

The Extended Lebensohl Option after the 1 Diamond – 1 Spades, 2 Hearts Reverse

Little has been written about the responder's continuations after the opener has reversed. Extended Lebensohl allows the responder to express three strength ranges by giving some bids double duty. After 1-1, 2 responder rebids:

2, forcing with at least five Spades.

2NT to show either a weak hand with Diamonds or Hearts and game forcing strength. The responder clarifies after the opener rebids a forced 3.

3 to show either a weak hand with Hearts or a game force in Diamonds. The opener must rebid 3.

3 and 3 are natural and invitational.

After the 1 Heart and 1 Spade Openings

A slightly modified Bergen/Cohen style raise structure is used in response to the Major suit openings. The following list describes these raises in order of increasing strength. Note that the 1NT response is a semi-force – the opener can pass with a balanced 12 or poor 13 count.

Double raise is preemptive with four, sometimes five, card support.

Triple raise shows a poor preemptive raise.

1NT (semi-forcing) then preference at the two level shows 7-10 and two card support. Avoid 1NT with less than 7 points, particularly after a 1 opening, so that the opener does not get caught playing 2NT with 16 opposite 6.

Single raise shows 7-10 and three card support, possibly four at unfavorable vulnerability or after 1.

2 (after 1) shows 7-10 and four card support. (No corresponding raise is

available after 1 .)

4 shows a good preemptive raise, about 7-10 hcp with five trump.

1NT (semi-forcing) followed by a raise to the three level shows a balanced hand with three card support and 11-12 points; willing to be passed in 1NT if the opener is weak and balanced.

3 shows a three card 11-12 point raise that is unwilling to risk being passed out in 1NT.

3 shows a four card 11-12 point raise.

3 of the other major is an 'unspecified splinter' raise with a relay asking where the short suit is. After 1 -3 , 3NT, 4 shows a singleton Spade.

3NT is a balanced, three card 13-15 point raise. Not forcing.

2/1 then game is a balanced, 13-15 point four card raise.

2NT shows a 16+ point four or more card raise.

4 is a balanced three card 16+ point raise.

1M-1NT, 2NT shows a good hand with a six card suit and scattered strength. **1 -1** , **2NT** denies three Spades and **1 -1** , **3** promises three Spades. This is just like after 1 -1M, 2NT.