

MAJOR OPENINGS -- Part 1

Date of publish: 4/1/2012 Level: All Levels

MAJOR OPENING	
Expected Min. Length	4 5
1st/2nd	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3rd/4th	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSES	
Double Raise: Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/>
After Overcall: Force	<input type="checkbox"/> Inv. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conv. Raise: 2NT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3NT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Splinter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	3-of-a-lower suit = Invitational
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:	_____

In this article, we will cover the items in the upper half of Convention card of ACBL (as shown) of MAJOR OPENING.

Of course, **LC Standard** uses 5-card majors. In 3rd- or 4th- seat, however, I recommend occasionally ("rarely" is probably a better word) opening with a good 4-card major. For example, after two passes, I like 1♠ (not 1♣), holding: ♠K Q J 9 ♥J 5 2 ♦A 3 2 ♣J 3 2. The hand could easily belong to the opponents (since partner already passed) and I want a spade lead. Opening 1♠ has more preemptive value than opening 1♣. I'm not in too much danger of partner burying me by getting me too high in a 4-3 fit (again protected by his passed-hand status). As to the exact parameters for opening a 4-card major, that's up to the individual (and vulnerability-dependent)--but always it has to be a good suit (lots of honors). I would never open a 4-card major as the dealer or in 2nd seat.

Major-Suit raises While Bergen raises are popular, they are not part of **LC Standard**. For one, they are hard to memorize in and out of competition. Also, there are many variations out there. Most importantly, I prefer to use the 3-level for something else, to be discussed at the end of this article.

A raise from 1M (1-of-a-Major) to 3M (3-of-a-Major) is shown as plain-old Invitational. "Invitational" means approximately 11-12 points counting distribution. Typically this immediate raise promises 4 (or more) trump. With a 3-card limit raise, we respond 1NT (more on this next month). A raise to 2M is a decent 7 to 10 (with 6 to a bad 7, start with 1NT).

In Competition: In the modern style (and **LC Standard** style) the double raise in competition is weak. This means that if the opponents Overcall or Double, that a jump-raise is 4+ trump and less than 7 points in support.

Examples:

1♠ (X) 3♠: ♠K J 3 2 ♥4 2 ♦J 10 8 7 ♣5 4 3

1♥ (2♣) 3♥: ♠6 5 4 ♥Q J 9 8 ♦10 9 8 3 ♣3 2

Of course, vulnerability and valuation (honors in the trump suit are more attractive than in the opponent's suit) are key factors. For more, read [Introduction to the LAW](#) or [To Bid or Not to Bid, the LAW of Total Tricks](#).

Conventional Raises:

Jacoby 2NT is very popular and certainly part of **LC Standard**. Make sure you and partner choose whether or not you are playing the standard version (opener's 3-level bid shows shortness in that suit). [Example: After 1♠-2NT; opener bids 3♦ with ♠A K J 6 5 ♥A Q 3 ♦2 ♣J 7 6 5] Also be aware that this convention is not played by a passed hand, nor in competition. After the opponents overcall, 2NT is natural. [Example: 1♥ (1♠) 2NT] After a double [1♠ (X)], 2NT is Jordan (more on this next month).

A 3NT response shows a 4-3-3-3 hand and 13-15 HCP. The four-card suit is usually a minor. The 3NT bidder shouldn't be all prime (not aces and spaces). Opener can pass 3NT with a flat hand, or go back to four-of-his major. With slam interest he can control-bid or use **RKC**.

Splinter bids are part of **LC Standard**. They are a jump to above 3-of-opener's major. So, 1♥-3♠ is a **splinter** as is 1♠-4♥. **Splinter** bids should be limited to at most 15 points in support. I prefer not to have a singleton ace or king, but sometimes the **Splinter** Bid is better than an alternative. I prefer a **Splinter** Bid (if in range) to **Jacoby 2NT**.

Other 3-level responses One of the best parts of **LC Standard** is the jump to 3-of-a-lower suit. I've had great success using these responses for the otherwise-hard-to-show invitational hands. Such jumps show a 6+ card suit and not quite enough for a **2/1 GF**.

Examples:

West northeast example hand
 1♥ Pass 3♣♠K2 ♥43 ♦52 ♣AQ109873
 1♠ Pass 3♦♠-- ♥532 ♦AKJ1054 ♣Q765

These jumps are alertable (in red). They are not used in competition. If the opponents Double or overcall the 1M opening, then jump-shifts are weak (not invitational). They will be discussed in another section of the Convention Card.

Extra Reading: [What Should we Play?](#) and [Larry's 64-page 2/1 GF workbook](#)