

WASHINGTON BRIDGE LEAGUE

We offer our thanks to Washington Bridge league as we present a copy from their 2013 July -August bulletin on 1 Minor - 1 Major - Now what? by columnists > Ron Zucker and Shawn Stringer. Read original - [Here](#)

Minor suit Bidding 5:1 Minor - 1 Major - Now What? by I/N Columnists: Ron Zucker, ron@motherzucker.com and Shawn Stringer, <mailto:ShStringer@aol.com>

When we open 1♣ or 1♦ and partner bids 1♥ or 1♠, partner is only promising four in the suit she bids. We look for eight or more card fits. If we have fewer than eight, the opponents have almost as many trumps as we do (we have 7 between our two hands, and they have 6), and it's pretty easy to lose control of a hand. So when we open one of a minor, partner responds one of a major, and we bid two of partner's major, everyone expects us to have four card support for partner's major.

But sometimes, the alternative, bidding 1NT, seems wrong, even when we only have three card support. For that reason, you will sometimes see expert players raising partner's 1 of a major with three. For example, holding ♠83 ♥AJ8 ♦KQT5 ♣K943, we would open 1♦ (we open hands with 4 cards in both minors 1♦ and hands with 3 cards in both minors 1♠). If partner now bids 1♥, what should we do? 1 Minor - 1 Major.

There are a few different ideas about how to handle a hand like this. Some people think that 2♥ is the right bid. Others strongly disagree. Because this is a difficult hand, we will present a few options. The most important thing is for you and partner to agree.

WBL expert Steve Robinson is a many time national and international champion, a member of the bridge Hall of Fame, and mentor to both of the authors of this column. He firmly believes that only experts should raise with only three card support, and then only with additional tools to diagnose the degree of fit. His wording, when asked, was that if you never raise partner's one of a major bid on three card support, you'll overall come out ahead of those who sometimes do and sometimes don't.

The authors of this column are split on doing it, but agree that Shawn's approach is best for newer players.

Shawn teaches that one should only raise with three card support if you have a side singleton. For example, holding ♠9 ♥KQ4 ♦AJT8 ♣K9653, she would open 1♣ or 1♦ depending upon partnership agreement (see last issue for more on that topic), and would raise a 1♥ response to 2♥. Two of Steve Robinson's frequent teammates, Kit Woolsey and Fred Stewart, who also have multiple national and world titles have that agreement.

Ron, on the other hand, is much more likely to raise on three card support. He hates rebidding 1NT with a small doubleton and watching helplessly when his opponents lead that suit and take the first four or five tricks. Of course, he has to balance that against getting too high with too few trumps. It's a risk he is willing to take, but it's a large risk. Nobody enjoys playing in a 4-3 fit, and his hand might be a disappointment to partner.

But even if you're going to do it, what are the criteria for raising on only three card support? Steve Weinstein is a 14 time national champion. He outlined his criteria with his favorite partner, Bobby Levin, at the online site bridgewinners.com.

Their rules are: • If any side suit is two cards long, both lower than the ten, they prefer to raise to two of the major with three card support instead of bidding 1NT.

• Raise with three card support even holding six cards in the minor with a bad minor suit. The reason is that partner will raise a minor suit rebid aggressively with Kx or Qx, looking for 3NT based in part on your running minor suit. Their rule is to raise the major unless the minor suit rebid alternative is at worst AJ9xxx.

Finally, a hand about which there is significant expert disagreement. Say that you have ♠KJ83 ♥AT7 ♦KQ98 ♣72. You open 1♦ and partner responds 1♥. There are three reasonable approaches to this hand:

Option 1: I have less than T doubleton in a suit. I should raise to 2♥ with three pieces

Option 2: I have four spades. I should rebid 1♠. Perhaps partner is 4-4 in the majors.

Option 3: I have a flat hand. I should rebid 1NT. If partner has an invitational hand, we can use New Minor Forcing, which we'll discuss in our next column, to discover my spades.

All of these approaches have their adherents. Levin-Weinstein prefer option 1 or option 3, based on their judgment. Steve Robinson strongly prefers option 2. Next, he plans to correct partner's 1NT rebid to 2♥, and therefore, may as well try to find a spade fit along the way.

Let's see these ideas in action. In all of these examples, you open 1♦ and partner responds 1♥. You hold:

♠83 ♥KQ8 ♦AJT54 ♣K64	<i>We recommend rebidding 1NT.</i> Some, like Levin-Weinstein, would prefer 2♥, while others, like Steve Robinson, would prefer 1NT. However, almost nobody would rebid 2♦. Rebidding your minor should show a 6-card suit.
♠8 ♥KT5 ♦AJT854 ♣K63	<i>We will rebid 2♦.</i> Yes, hearts may play well, we have excellent diamonds. Supporting partner is good, but sometimes it's right to bid your own suit!
♠K83 ♥KT5 ♦AJ842 ♣Q3	<i>Rebid 1NT.</i> Partner expects four card support when you raise her 1♥ bid to 2♥. While we lack a true club stopper, we do have on Qx of clubs; that is still an honor in our doubleton.
♠KJ83 ♥AT7 ♦KQ98 ♣72	<i>We recommend rebidding 1♠</i> — just as Steve Robinson would do!

Bridge is a tough game, and many hands have difficult rebids. Just make sure to discuss what you'll do with your favorite partners! If you're on the same page, many different styles can work.