

## ALEX'S BRIDGE TIP

This is your hand when your RHO opens the bidding with 1D.

S AQ6  
H AK6  
D 9852  
C QJ8

What will you bid? Typically, we do not make a takeout double on a flat hand such as this: 4-3-3-3. Normally, you would be short in opponent's suit and also, with 13-17 points, including distribution, you would have at least 7 cards in the majors.

And yet, you do not want to pass. So, overcall 1NT. You do not have a real stopper in Diamonds, which your bid will promise that you have, but you do own what we call "length protection." i.e. you have four Diamonds so your RHO is less likely to own a five-card Diamond suit headed by AKQJx.

And, quite often, if you become declarer, your LHO will not lead that suit, knowing that you have a stopper in Diamonds.

This rule does NOT apply to majors. If RHO opens 1H or 1S, you know for sure that they have a five-card suit, whereas, when they open 1C or 1D, they could have as few as three in the suit.

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This time your RHO has opened with 1C. This is your hand:

S AKJ8  
H 76  
D KQ87  
C 852

You want to Double to show 13 or more points but with 13-17 points (including distribution), you must have support for all unbid suits. e.g. at least Jxx. Your Heart suit in hand above is defective.

And yet, you do not really want to pass. If you pass, your LHO can enter the auction with ONE heart. The opponents may buy the contract in Hearts and your partner might not find a Spade lead, which you badly want.

So, just overcall 1S if you have a fine quality four-card suit. It has the additional advantage of forcing your LHO to the 2 level if she wishes to bid Hearts. She may not have enough points to do so. (Of course, there is always the negative double but you have driven the auction higher and shown partner what to lead.)

Note that your partner will still always expect you, the overcaller, to have a five-card suit but he/she will never raise you with a doubleton. Along the way, you will learn how to manage play of the hand on a 4-3 fit, preferably below game.

## BARBARA'S BRIDGE TIP:

With no 5 card suit, you open your longest minor.

With two 4 card minors, open 1D

With two 3 card minors, open 1C

The **only time** you will ever have to open with 1D holding only three diamonds is if you have for example

S A876

H AK94

D Q62

C 74

FOUR SPADES

FOUR HEARTS

THREE DIAMONDS &

ONE CLUB

It comes up less than 4% of the time. Therefore, it is not a good idea to have an agreement with partner that you will only ever open 1D if you have four or more Diamonds. That will mean that you will have to open 1C if you have the hand above. This is NOT a good idea. Just open 1D.