

Esther Discusses "Communicating with Partner Through Your 'Rebids' as Opener"

Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen¹

To return to the "Esther Bridge Lessons," CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/index.html>

To return to the "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quizzes", CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz.html>

Bruce: Today, we are honored to have with us Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, Quintuple Gold Emerald Life Master (20 Million+ ACBL MasterPoints), who will talk us through "**Communicating with Partner Through Your 'Rebids' as Opener**". Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, thanks for taking the time to be with us today!

Esther: D**n it, Bruce! How many times do I have to tell you to **NEVER, ever** call me Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen! Always, **ALWAYS, ALWAYS** instead call me, Esther, because I am such a "warm and caring" person!

Bruce: Errr, well, in any case, Esther, would you begin today by first explaining from where today's concepts and examples originate?

Esther: Well, my *inquisitive interlocutor*, I will certainly try to help you. Today's concepts and examples originate from Karen Walker's bridge column, "Bidding Matters: Relearning Bridge", published in the August, 2026 issue of the ACBL Bridge Bulletin (p. 58). ACBL members can read articles from previous editions of the ACBL Bridge Bulletin by logging on to "ACBL.org" website. Karen Walker is a widely recognized bridge author and teacher. I *highly recommend* her bridge website on my own "Esther Recommended Books and Websites" posting. Karen's website can be found at:
<https://kwbridge.com/>

© Copyright, Bruce Thompson, 2026. All rights reserved.

¹ As noted in an article in the Winter/Spring, 2024 article in The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Journal, https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf, Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So this article was really, really written by **Bruce Thompson**.

Bruce: Errr, well, Esther... Are you actually being *nice* to me?

Esther: Well, my *studious salamander*, of course I am being "nice" to you! Why wouldn't I be "nice" to you?

Bruce: Errr, well, Esther... In any case would you please lay out the bidding sequences you are covering here?

Esther: Well, my *loquacious linkster*, of course! All the examples discussed here presume that (1) Opponents PASSED at every turn within the auction, (2) you as Dealer opened 1**D** "showing" (a) ~13 HCPs and (b) 4+ Diamonds, and (3) Partner as *Responder* bid 1**H**. Our focus here is "correctly" making "**rebids**" or "**2nd bids**" as *Opener*.

Bruce: Well, Esther, let's say as *Opener* you held:

S A K Q **H** A **D** J 8 7 5 4 3 **C** A 3 2 (18)

Esther, having opened with a 1**D** 1st bid as *Opener* what would you bid at your **2nd** turn to bid within the auction?

Esther: Well, Bruce, this exact situation recently generated extensive internet discussion on a bridge forum website. The various bridge players suggested *seven different* rebids by *Opener* in every strain except Hearts!

A small but vocal group of players were quite adamant that the best rebid by the *Opener* would be 1**S**. These players argued that a 1**S** rebid (1) saved "bidding space" and (2) had the advantage that the 1**S** rebid "forces" Partner to bid again since "Every beginner knows that bids of a new Suit are '*forcing*' for **1** Round."

Bruce: Hmmm, well, Esther... Is that true? Is it really true that "bids of a new Suit by the *Opener* are '*forcing*' for 1 Round"? That's not what I remember!!!

Esther: Well, Bruce, you are indeed *correct*! Bids of "new" Suits by the **Responder** are indeed "forcing" for **1** Round. But bids of "new" Suits by the **Opener** are not "forcing" for **1** Round and indeed can be PASSED by the *Responder*!!! As Walker explains:

"When beginners are introduced to a new bidding concept, they don't always retain all the details, especially if they hear it only once. 'New suits are forcing by the responder' may be remembered as just 'new suits are forcing'." (p. 58)

Bruce: Oh, my, Esther. Well, as *Opener* what are your various rebid options at your 2nd turn to bid within the auction?

Esther: Well, Bruce, that depends on whether you hold a fairly common Hand with only roughly **13** HCPs *versus* you hold a "big" Hand with a lot of HCPs. Let's start with rebid choices when you hold ~13 HCPs:

1. A rebid by *Opener* of 1NT says, "Partner, (a) I deny holding **4** Hearts and (b) I hold only **4** and not **5+** Diamonds. My Hand is 'flat' or 'rectangular' and I think we can make at least a 1NT contract."
2. A rebid by *Opener* of 2H says, "Partner, I hold at least **4** of your initially bid Hearts. Please use the 'Rule of 5'² to help you decide whether to bid onto Game."
3. A rebid by *Opener* of 2D says, "Partner, I (a) deny holding your bid Hearts although I may hold 1, 2, or 3 Hearts but (b) I hold at least **5** of my initially bid Diamonds."
4. A rebid by *Opener* of 2C says, "Partner, I (a) deny holding your bid Hearts although I may hold 1, 2, or 3 Hearts but (b) I hold at least **5** Clubs and my Hand is 2-Suited."
5. A rebid by *Opener* of 1S says, "Partner, I (a) deny holding your bid Hearts although I may hold 1, 2, or 3 Hearts but (b) I hold at least **4** Spades and my Hand is 2-Suited." A rebid by *Opener* of 1S can indeed be PASSED by the *Responder*.

Bruce: Hmmm, well, Esther... Your discussion of rebids/2nd bids by *Opener* when the *Opener* holds a "modest" Hand with only roughly **13** HCPs was *very clear*. Would you now talk us through rebids by *Opener* when *Opener* instead holds a "big" Hand?

Esther: Well, my *studly salamander*, I will certainly try to help you. There are basically **2** ways that you as *Opener* with your rebid can "show" Partner that you hold a "big" Hand:

1. A "**reverse**" is a 2-level bid of a "new" Suit that is higher in "rank" than the Suit that you as *Opener* initially bid (e.g., 1C by you, 1S by Partner, 2D or

² Within the "Esther Bridge Lessons" see "**Some of the 40 or So Bridge Bidding/Play 'Rules'**":
<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/rules.pdf>

2**H** by you). You can learn more about "reverses" by going to my "Esther Bridge Dialogue Lesson #30" at: <https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/reverse.pdf>

A "**reverse**" shows (a) **16+** HCPs and (b) at least **9** cards in your 2 Suits. A "**reverse**" bid by the Opener is "Forcing for 1 Round" but is not "Game Forcing".

2. A "**jumpshift**" is a "jump" by Opener in a "new" Suit (e.g., 1**D** by you, 1**H** by Partner, 2**S** or 3**C** by you). A "**jumpshift**" is "stronger" than a "reverse" and "shows" **18+** HCPs and, unlike a "**reverse**", a "**jumpshift**" is "Game Forcing".

Bruce: Hmmm, well, Esther... Let's return to the bridge Hand that you initially introduced:

S A K Q **H** A **D** J 8 7 5 4 3 **C** A 3 2 (15)

Remember that as Opener **1st** bid 1**D**, Partner bid 1**H**. What would you **rebid** as your **2nd** bid within the auction?

Esther: Well, Bruce, many players would bid 2**NT** to "show" a "balanced" Hand with no "strong" 5-card Suit. But of course, you do not hold a "balanced" Hand, given your Heart singleton, so you may prefer to *mislead* Partner a different way. You could rebid 1**S** even though you hold only **3** Spades. Some players "add a card" for holding the "touching" A,K,Q sequence. Or you could bid a "non-Game-forcing" 2**C** even though again you hold only **3** Clubs. Or you could make a "Game Forcing" bid of either 2**S** or 3**C**. I believe I would rebid 1**S**.



Esther says...

"Well, Bruce, sometimes you have *no choice* except to mislead your Partner. But it is important to never mislead your Partner unless you absolutely *must* do so. And try to mislead your Partner *as little as possible*."