

Balancing in 4th Seat

When your left-hand opponent opens the bidding in a suit at the 1-level, and the next two hands pass, it is up to you as to whether the bidding stops just there! It is important for you to have an agreement as to whether you are competing because you have a good hand, or whether you are just “balancing”, and trying to get your side to play the hand.

The one type of hand that you will not generally have is a strong hand in the suit opened, as with that you pass and leave the opener to flounder.

If you make a non-jump bid in a new suit, you are generally showing a 5-card suit and 9-11 HCPs. If you jump in a new suit, you are generally showing a reasonable 5-card suit and an opening hand.

If you have the type of hand that you would have doubled with in 2nd seat, double now and see what partner can say. Partner responds in much the same fashion as they would have done over a take-out double in 2nd seat.

If you have a strong (15-17) 1NT overcall of the suit opened, double first and bid NT next, as an immediate bid of 1NT is generally played as 10-14, and not necessarily with a stopper. If you have 18-20 and a stopper, double first then jump in NT.

A jump to 3NT will generally show a solid side suit, a stopper in the suit opened and a few other values. A jump to game in a new suit will show a good hand, a good suit and at most 1 tricks short of your contract.