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Bridge Bidding: The Next Step · Acol edition



CHAPTER 2

Checkback

Finding a major-suit fit after opener rebids no-trumps

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1. The problem

In Acol, when opener rebids 1NT after a one-level response, they show a balanced **15–16** points (Book 1, Chapter 6). That is useful, but it leaves a question open. Responder has bid a major, perhaps with five cards. Does opener have three-card support?

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1NT	?

♠ K 5
♥ A Q 10 6 3
♦ J 4
♣ 9 7 6 2

10 points opposite 15–16: enough for game. If opener has three hearts, 4♥ is the best contract. If not, 3NT. Bidding 3♥ would only invite; bidding 3NT or 4♥ is a guess.

2. Checkback 2♣

After opener's **1NT rebid**, responder's **2♣** is **artificial**: it asks opener to say whether they have **three-card support** for responder's major. Responder promises about **9 or more** points (enough to invite game).

Opener's reply	Meaning
2 of responder's major (2♥ here)	three-card support
2♦	no three-card support

Opener does not need to show strength: responder already knows opener has 15–16. Responder now places the contract:

Responder's hand	After a fit is found	With no fit
9 points (invitational)	3 of the major	2NT
10 or more	4 of the major	3NT

Opener	Responder
♠ A J 6	♠ K 5
♥ K 8 2	♥ A Q 10 6 3
♦ K Q 7 4	♦ J 4
♣ Q 9 3	♣ 9 7 6 2

1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT – 2♣ – **2♥** (three hearts) – **4♥**. The 5-3 heart fit plays well, and the ruffing value of responder's short diamonds helps.

Opener	Responder
♠ K Q 7	♠ K 5
♥ J 6	♥ A Q 10 6 3
♦ A Q 8 5 3	♦ J 4
♣ K 10 4	♣ 9 7 6 2

1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT – 2♣ – **2♦** (no three hearts) – **3NT**. Opener's stoppers in spades and clubs make 3NT the right game.

3. When you don't need it

- **Weak hands.** With a long major and a weak hand, just rebid it: 1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT – 2♥ asks opener to pass.
- **Only four cards in your major.** A 4-3 fit is no better than 3NT. Bid 2NT or 3NT directly.

- **Six cards in your major.** Opener has at least two, so you know there is a fit: jump to 3 (invitational) or 4 (game) yourself.

> Checkback 2♣ is used whatever suit opener started with, even after 1♣ – 1♥ – 1NT. Some partnerships also use it after a 2NT rebid, and some add more replies (for example showing four spades). Agree the details with your partner.

4. Summary

After 1x – 1M – 1NT (15–16)	Bid
Weak, long major	2 of your major (to play)
9+, five-card major	2♣ Checkback
Opener replies 2 of your major	three-card support: raise to 3 (9) or 4 (10+)
Opener replies 2♦	no fit: 2NT (9) or 3NT (10+)
Only four cards in your major	2NT or 3NT directly
Six-card major, 9+	jump to 3 or 4 of it

5. Test yourself

1. ♠ K 5
♥ A Q 10 6 3
♦ J 4
♣ 9 7 6 2

1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT – ? What do you bid?

2. ♠ Q 5 2
♥ K J 7 4
♦ K 8 3
♣ Q 9 5

1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT – ? What do you bid?

3. ♠ 8 4
♥ Q 9 7 5 4 2
♦ 6 3
♣ J 8 2

1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT – ? What do you bid?

4. ♠ A J 6
♥ K 8 2
♦ K Q 7 4
♣ Q 9 3

You opened 1♦. 1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT – 2♣. What do you bid?

5. ♠ K Q 7
♥ J 6
♦ A Q 8 5 3
♣ K 10 4

You opened 1♦. 1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT – 2♣. What do you bid?

6. ♠ A 6 4
♥ K J 9 5 3
♦ 8
♣ Q 10 7 2

1♦ – 1♥ – 1NT – 2♣ – 2♥ – ? What do you bid?

Answers

1. 2♣. Checkback: game values and five hearts. Find out about three-card support.

2. 3NT. Only four hearts, 11 points and a balanced hand. No need to look for a 4-3 fit.

3. 2♥. A weak hand with six hearts: opener will pass.

4. 2♥. Three-card heart support.

5. 2♦. Only two hearts.

6. 4♥. Partner has three hearts and 15–16 points; you have 10 and a singleton. Game in hearts.

Next: Chapter 3, Negative Doubles. Free lessons and challenge hands to play: **bridgescorer.com/learn**

About this guide. There are many versions of Acol, and clubs, teachers and books do not all agree on every detail. This chapter describes one common, straightforward version for learners. We do not claim it is the only or the best way: if your teacher or club plays something different, follow them. What matters most is that you and your partner agree.

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