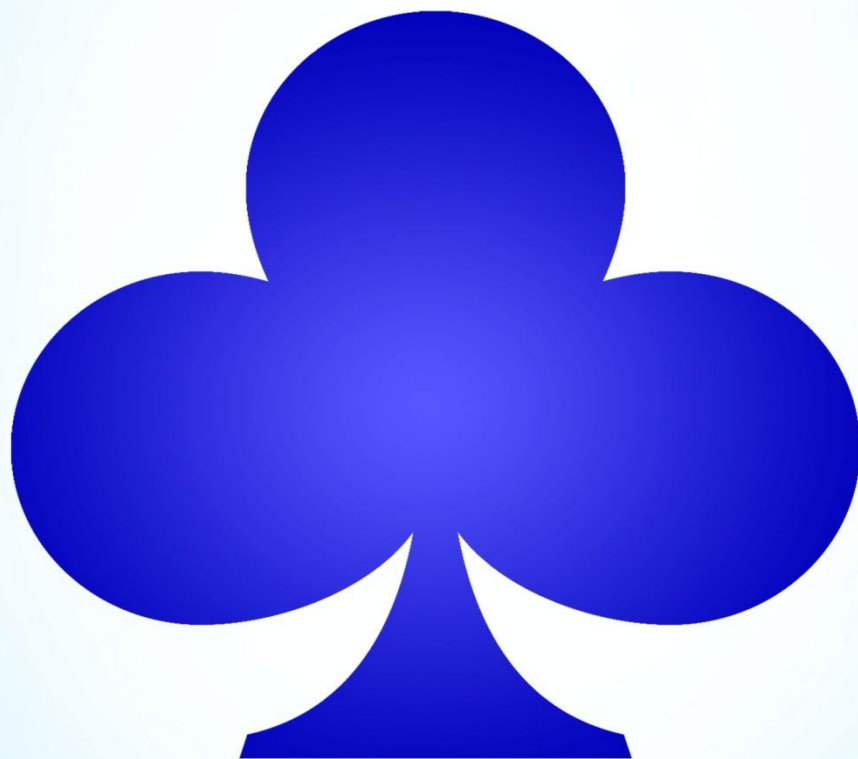


BRIDGE - THE MIND GAME

A SIMPLER  
**BLUE CLUB**

SYSTEM  
Mississauga Style



D A N B E R K L E Y

# Dan Berkley

*A Simpler*

**BLUE CLUB**

*System*

## The Mississauga Style

A Simpler BLUE CLUB System  
by Dan Berkley  
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*This book is dedicated to the world's best bridge team of all times, the original Italian Blue Team, for its contribution to the development and world-wide promotion of the bridge game*

*"You should never stop studying,  
no matter how many times you win"*

*Benito Garozzo*

# A Simpler Blue Club System

## *The Mississauga Style*

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## Chapter 2 – One-suit Weak Hands Opening and Rebids

### 2.1. Principles and Approaches

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Blue Club style presented in this book accounts for the hand distribution and it uses both high-card points (HCp) and distribution points (Dp).

Based on this postulate, here there are a few principles and approaches applicable to the opening and rebids of one-suit weak hands:

- Strength of weak opening hands 12 - 14 HCp (or unbalanced 13 - 15 Tp)
- Opener's 2nd time bid of the same opening suit after a 2/1 response does not necessarily show a weak hand. The responder promised to bid once more and the opener can show the strength subsequently.
- Opener's rebid in notrump does not necessarily show a balanced hand. It can have a singleton in partner's suit.
- Opener's rebid of 2NT without jump is not a limited bid except after 2/1 response.
- Some hands of 15 HCp (16 Tp) are shifted to the weak category depending on the hand structure and high cards distribution.
- Continuously reevaluate the strength of the hand, depending mainly on the partner's bid, but not only. This is common to all the bidding systems.

One-suit weak hands can be balanced or unbalanced, with or without long club suit. All of these four cases are analyzed in the following sections.

These principles do not apply to the 1♣ opening, which is a strong, artificial opening.

The meaning of the respective responses is presented in Chapter 7.

### 2.2. Balanced Hands (4 - 3 - 3 - 3) without 4-card Club Suit

The opening of such hands is with the 4-card suit except for the club suit. The opener's rebid in the 2nd round is either pass or in NT at minimum level to show a balanced hand and weakness.

The 15 HCp hands without stoppers in at least 3 suits are also included in this category because they cannot be used for the standard 1NT opening due to the lack of stoppers.

The discussion here is based only on high card points because a 4 - 3 - 3 - 3 hand has no distribution points.

- Opening:
  - one of the 4-card suit (except for clubs), even if not biddable. Also, open with one of the 4-card suit with 15 HCp but without stoppers in at least 3 suits, hands that are not opened with 1NT.

- Opener's rebids in the 2nd round:

The general approach is to rebid in notrump or pass to show the balanced and weak hand. There is one exception: after a response of 2/1 in a suit, the opener can make a stronger bid in the 2nd round with a 14 - 15 HCp.

- o over simple raise: - pass
- o over 1NT response: - pass
- o over 2NT response: - pass, or  
- 3NT with maximum strength (14 HCp) and stoppers
- o over 1/1 response: - 1NT, or  
- simple raise of responder's major with good support and strength (14 - 15 HCp). Invitation to game.
- o over 2/1 response: - 2NT with 12 - 13 HCp, or  
- 3NT with strength (14 HCp) and stoppers (with 15 HCp and stoppers he would open 1NT), or  
- simple raise of responder's major with good support and strength (14 - 15 HCp). Invitation to game.

Simple raise of the responder's suit over 1/1 or 2/1 response is done only if the responder's suit was a major. The response in a minor could be with only 3 cards, in preparation for a reverse bid by the responder, as indicated in Chapter 1 and Chapter 7.

The 2/1 response promises +11 HCp (or +12 Tp). Thus the opener can invite to game with 14 HCp or even bid 3NT if he has stoppers in the other unbid suits and high spot cards.

**Summary:** one-suit weak (12 - 14 HCp, 13 - 15 Tp) balanced hand (4 - 3 - 3 - 3) w/o long club suit

Opening	Response	Opener's Rebid	
1 of the 4-card suit even if not biddable	simple raise	pass	
	1NT	pass	
	2NT	pass	
		3NT	14 HCp and stoppers
	1/1	1NT	
		simple raise of a major	good support and maximum strength (14 - 15 HCp). Invitation to game.
	2/1	2NT	12 - 13 HCp
		3NT	14 HCp, stoppers on other 3 suits
		simple raise of a major	good support and maximum strength (14 - 15 HCp). Invitation to game.



Examples:

Example 2-1

♠ Q J x x  
♥ A J x  
♦ K Q x  
♣ x x x

Example 2-2

♠ J x x  
♥ A J x  
♦ Q x x x  
♣ A x x

Example 2-3

♠ A J x  
♥ Q J x x  
♦ Q J x  
♣ K x x

Example 2-1: hand of 13 HCp with 4-card spade suit. Open 1♠ and then, depending on the response:

<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>
1♠ - 1NT	-	pass
1♠ - 2NT	-	pass
1♠ - 2♣/2♦	-	2NT
1♠ - 2♥	-	2NT
1♠ - 2♠	-	pass

Example 2-2: hand of 12 HCp with 4-card weak diamond suit. Open 1♦ and then, depending on the response:

<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>
1♦ - 1NT	-	pass
1♦ - 2NT	-	pass
1♦ - 1♥/1♠	-	1NT
1♦ - 2♣	-	2NT
1♦ - 2♦	-	pass

Example 2-3: hand of 14 HCp with 4-card heart suit. Open 1♥ and then, depending on the response:

<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>
1♥ - 1NT	-	pass
1♥ - 2NT	-	3NT
1♥ - 1♠	-	1NT or 2♠; ♠A K or ♠A Q would be better for 2♠
1♥ - 2♣/2♦	-	3NT
1♥ - 2♥	-	pass

The response of 2NT promises 11 - 12 HCp exactly, balanced hand and stoppers in the unbid suits. Thus, the pair is in the 3NT game range (25 - 26 HCp) and the opener rebids 3NT with his 14 HCp.

The response of 2♣/2♦ promises +11 HCp, +12 Tp and the pair is in the game range. Consequently, the opener's rebid is 3NT over the 2♣/2♦ response, showing 14 HCp, a balanced hand and stoppers. If the responder's 2♣/2♦ was a preparation for a reverse bidding of a major, he can correct subsequently to 4 of that major knowing that he will find support in opener's balanced hand.

The other rebids of the opener are straightforward.

## 2.3. Balanced Hands (4 - 3 - 3 - 3) with 4-card Club Suit

The original Blue Club system uses the wide-range 1NT opening for this type of weak hands, depending on stoppers and vulnerability. However, the Mississauga style presented in this book uses the standard 15 - 17 HCP 1NT opening, not the wide range 13 - 17 HCP. Consequently, the 1NT opening is not used anymore for this type of hands, simplifying the system.

These hands are usually opened with 1♦ because the 1♣ opening is artificial and the 2♣ opening requires a long and strong club suit.

Consequently:

- Opening:
  - 1♦ with: 12 HCP and 3-card diamond suit c/w 1 HC
  - 1♦ with: 13 - 14 HCP and 3-card diamond suit w/o 1 HC or 15 HCP w/o stoppers in three suits
  - pass with: 12 HCP and 3-card diamond suit w/o 1 HC
- Opener's rebids in the 2nd round:

The opener's rebids are the same as for weak balanced hands, Section 2.2.

Examples:

### Example 2-4

♠ Q x x  
♥ A Q x  
♦ Q x x  
♣ Q x x x

### Example 2-5

♠ K Q x  
♥ A J x  
♦ x x x  
♣ A x x x

### Example 2-6

♠ A x x  
♥ A J x  
♦ x x x  
♣ K x x x

Example 2-4: hand of 12 HCP with 4-card club suit and 3 diamonds c/w 1 HC. Open 1♦ and then, depending on the response, rebid as it follows:

<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>
1♦ -	1NT	- pass
1♦ -	2NT	- pass
1♦ -	2♣	- 2NT
1♦ -	1♥/1♠	- 1NT
1♦ -	2♦	- pass

The simple raise response of 2♦ was made with a 5-card biddable diamond suit or a very strong 4-card diamond suit because the responder knows that the opening of 1♦ could have been made with only three cards in diamonds (and a long club suit). Consequently, the opener can pass the response of 2♦, knowing that he will find a fit in diamonds at the responder.

Example 2-5: hand of 14 HCP with 4-card club suit and 3 diamonds w/o 1 HC. Open 1♦ and then, depending on the response, rebid as it follows:

<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>
1♦	- 1NT	- pass
1♦	- 2NT	- 3NT
1♦	- 2♣	- 3NT
1♦	- 1♥/1♠	- 1NT
1♦	- 2♦	- pass

Regarding the sequence 1♦ - 2♣ - 3NT, the opener's rebid of 3NT is justified because the response of 2♣ promises + 11 HCp or +12 Tp and:

- ❖ if it is a preparation for a strong reverse in a major, then the responder can correct the 3NT to 4 of that major, knowing that the opener's hand is balanced and he will find support in that major, or
- ❖ if it is a true +5-card club suit, then the responder should still have a stopper in the diamond suit among the points he promised. Also, the long club suit will bring many tricks in a notrump play, compensating for the pair's combined strength possibly at the lower limit of the 3 NT game range (the responder may have only 9 - 10 HCp but +12 Tp with a long club suit to justify his 2/1 response).

Example 2-6: hand of 12 HCp with 4-card club suit and 3 diamonds w/o 1 HC. This hand has minimum strength and does not have a high card in the diamond suit. Thus, it is "passed".

## 2.4. Unbalanced Hands (5-card or 6-card suit) without Long Club Suit

This type of hands are fairly common and the bidding is natural..

Being unbalanced, the hands have distribution points that need to be taken into account.

- Opening
  - one of the long suit
- Opener's rebids with a 5-card suit in the 2nd round:
  - over simple raise - pass
  - over 1NT response: - pass with 12 - 14 HCp (13 - 15 Tp), or  
- rebid the long suit with 14 HCp (15 Tp) and strong suit (3 HCs).
  - over 2NT response: - pass or rebid the long suit or jump to game, depending on hand distribution, HCp distribution, suit strength.
  - over 1/1 response: - rebid the long suit if it is strong, or  
- support responder's suit with very good support or  
- 1NT if no void and the doubleton is in the partner's suit
  - over 2/1 response: - rebid the long suit (compulsory)

With a 6-card suit and weak hand, the opener always rebids that suit (except for a simple raise response, when he passes). The responder's suit can be supported in the 3rd round.

**Summary:** one-suit weak (12 - 14 HCp, 13 - 15 Tp), unbalanced hands (5-card or 6-card suit) without long club suit

Opening	Response	Opener's Rebid	
1 of the long suit	simple raise	pass	
	1NT	pass	
		rebid the long suit	14 HCp (15 Tp) and strong suit
	2NT	pass	
		rebid the long suit	
		jump to game	
	1/1	rebid the long suit	long suit
		support responder's suit	very good support
		1 NT	no void and the doubleton is in responder's suit
2/1	rebid the long suit	compulsory	

Examples:

Example 2-7

♠ K Q x x x  
♥ Q J x  
♦ Q 10 x  
♣ A x

Example 2-8

♠ A K J x x  
♥ A J x  
♦ x x x  
♣ x x

Example 2-9

♠ x  
♥ K J x  
♦ A Q J x x x  
♣ K 10 x

Example 2-10

♠ K Q 10  
♥ K x  
♦ Q J x x x  
♣ K x x

Example 2-7: hand of 14 HCp (15 Tp) with 5-card rebiddable spade suit and stoppers in all the suits. Open 1♠ and then, depending on the response:

S    N    S  
 1♠ - 1NT - pass  
 1♠ - 2NT - 3NT  
 1♠ - 2♣/2♦ - 2♠  
 1♠ - 2♥ - 4♥  
 1♠ - 2♠ - pass

The response of 2NT shows a balanced hand with 11 - 12 HCp and stoppers (refer to Chapter 7). Hence, with a total of 25 - 26 HCp, balanced and stoppers, the opener bids the game in 3NT.

The response of 2♣/2♦ over the 1♠ opening promises +11 HCp or +12 Tp and a 2nd bid from the responder. The response could also have been made with only 3 cards in clubs or diamonds, in preparation for a reverse. Thus, even if the pair has enough points for a game, it is compulsory for the opener to rebid his spade suit and wait for the responder to make his promised 2nd bid describing more precisely his hand.

The response of 2♥ (2/1) promises +5-card biddable heart suit and +12 Tp (refer to Chapter 7). Thus, the opener bids the game in hearts showing a +3-card c/w +1HC fit. If the responder is very strong, he may continue the bidding exploring the slam.

Example 2-8: hand of 13 HCp (14 Tp) with a 5-card rebiddable strong spade suit and without stoppers in two suits. Open 1♠ and then, depending on the response:

<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>
1♠ - 1NT	-	pass
1♠ - 2NT	-	3♠
1♠ - 2♣/2♦	-	2♠
1♠ - 2♥	-	4♥
1♠ - 2♠	-	pass

The response of 2NT promises a balanced hand with 11 - 12 HCp and stoppers. Consequently, the pair has 24 - 25 HCp, not quite yet in the game range. The opener's hand does not have stoppers in two suits, thus a contract in notrump is not favorable. However, if he finds a 3-card fit for his spades in partner's hand, he can take into consideration the 1 Dp in the club suit and now the pair would have 25 - 26 Tp, which is in the game range. Hence, he rebids the spade suit at 3-level showing his 5-card rebiddable spade suit and inviting to game in spades.

Example 2-9: hand of 14 HCp (16 Tp) with 6-card strong diamond suit, stoppers in three suits and a singleton in spades. Open 1♦ and then, depending on the response:

<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>
1♦ - 1NT	-	2♦
1♦ - 2NT	-	5♦
1♦ - 2♣	-	3♦
1♦ - 1♥/1♠	-	2♦
1♦ - 2♦	-	pass

This hand illustrates well the importance of accounting for distribution points. The response of 2NT promises 11 - 12 HCp exactly and stoppers in the other three unbid suits. If only the HCp would be taken into account, the combined strength of the pair is 25 - 26 HCp which is in the game range for a notrump contract. However, a notrump contract may not be good due to the singleton small spade. If the distribution points are taken into account, the pair's combined strength is 28 - 29 Tp which is in the range of a game contract in a minor. Hence, the opener's rebid is 5♦.

It should be noted that the hand could also be included in the strong category when accounting for the distribution points (16 Tp), although it would be at the lower limit of the respective point-range.

Example 2-10: hand of 13 HCp (14 Tp), accounting for the downgrade of the un-guarded ♥K. It has a 5-card rebiddable diamond suit and stoppers in three suits. Open 1♦ and then, depending on the response:

<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>
1♦	- 1NT	- pass
1♦	- 2NT	- 3NT
1♦	- 2♣	- 2♦
1♦	- 1♥	- 1NT
1♦	- 1♠	- 2♠
1♦	- 2♦	- pass

The response of 2NT promises a balanced hand with 11 - 12 HCp and stoppers in the unbid suits. The ♥K is fully counted now because it is guarded by the partner's balanced hand with stopper in it. Thus, the pair is now in the 25 - 26 HCp game range and the opener rebid is 3NT.

The response of 1♥ is in the opener's doubleton. With stoppers in the other unbid suits he prefers to bid in notrump (1NT) rather than rebidding the diamonds, although the diamond suit is rebiddable. Without knowing how strong is the responder's hand, the opener prefers to leave open the possibility of a contract in notrump and for going to game if the responder has +11 HCp.

The response of 1♠ promises a +4-card biddable suit. The opener prefers to support responder's suit with a very strong 3-card spade suit rather than make a very weak rebid in diamonds. Although the fit may have only 7 cards, the support is very strong (3 HCs). This opens the possibility of a contract in a major rather than in a minor, and perhaps even for a game. The 2♣ opener's rebid also preempts a possible 2♥ intervention of the opponents.

## 2.5. Unbalanced Hands (5-card or 6-card suit) with Long Club Suit

This becomes a special case because the opening of 1♣ is ruled out, being an artificial strong bid that has nothing to do with a long club suit. Consequently, a different bidding approach is being used, as it follows:

- Opening:
  - 1♦ - 12 - 14 HCp (13 - 15 Tp), 5-card clubs, 3 diamonds
  - pass - 12 HCp (13 Tp), 5-card club suit, only 2 diamonds, no 4-card biddable major

The original Blue Club system would open the hands of 13 - 14 HCp (14 - 15 Tp), 5-card club suit and 2 diamonds with 1NT. Because of the elimination of the wide range 1NT opening, this becomes a "gray" bidding area that would need to be tuned up by the players themselves, depending on various factors.

Suggestions:

- ❖ 1♦ - 13 HCp (14 Tp) and Ax or Kx of diamonds
- ❖ 1NT (standard) - 14 HCp, the doubleton is Ax or Kx, stoppers
- ❖ 2♣ - 13 - 14 HCp (14 - 15 Tp) and strong 5-card clubs

- Opener's rebids in the 2nd round:
  - after 1♦ opening and response of 1/1 or 1NT: - always 2♣

- after 1♦ opening and response of 2/1 or 2NT: - always 3♣
- after 1NT opening: - standard
- after 2♣ opening: - refer to Chapter 9

**Summary:** one-suit weak (12 - 14 HCp, 13 - 15 Tp), unbalanced hands (5-card or 6-card suit) with long club suit

Opening	Response	Opener's Rebid
<b>pass</b> (12 HCp, 13 Tp) +5-card clubs, -2 diamonds	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>1♦</b> (12 - 14 HCP, 13 - 15 Tp) +5-card clubs, 3 diamonds	<b>1/1</b>	<b>2♣</b>
	<b>1NT</b>	
	<b>2/1</b>	<b>3♣</b>
	<b>2NT</b>	
<b>1NT</b> (14 HCp) stoppers, Ax or Kx	<b>standard</b>	<b>standard</b>
<b>2♣</b> (13 - 14 HCp, 14 - 15 Tp) +5-card strong clubs	<b>refer to Chapter 9</b>	<b>refer to Chapter 9</b>

Examples:

Example 2-11

♠ K Q x  
♥ J x  
♦ Q 10 x  
♣ A x x x x

Example 2-12

♠ K Q x  
♥ J x  
♦ Q x x  
♣ A Q x x x

Example 2-13

♠ Q x x  
♥ K Q x  
♦ Q x  
♣ A Q J x x

Example 2-14

♠ Ax  
♥ K J x  
♦ K Q x  
♣ Q 10 x x x

Example 2-11: hand of 11 HCp and 12 Tp (♥J not accounted for) with 5-card weak club. The hand is too weak to open even if the 1 Dp is taken into consideration. Thus, pass.

Example 2-12: hand of 13 HCp (14 Tp) with 5-card rebiddable club suit and 3 diamonds with 1 HC Open 1♦ and then, depending on the response:

S    N    S  
 1♦ - 1NT - 2♣  
 1♦ - 2NT - 3♣  
 1♦ - 2♣ - 3♣  
 1♦ - 1♥/1♠ - 2♣  
 1♦ - 2♦ - 3♣

Example 2-13: hand of 14 HCp and 15 Tp (♦Q not accounted for) with 5-card strong club suit and no stopper in the spade suit. Open 2♣ (refer to Chapter 9 for responses and rebids).

Example 2-14: hand of 15 HCp (16 Tp) with 5-card weak club suit and Ax stopper in the doubleton spade suit. Open 1NT. The responses and opener's rebid are standard following the standard 1NT opening approach.

## Quiz

- 2.1 What is the point range of weak hand openings?
- 2.2 Does opener's rebid in notrump promise a balanced hand or not?
- 2.3 What do you open and rebid over simple raise, 1/1, 2/1, 1NT and 2NT response with the following hands:

### Q - 2.3a

♠ Q x x x  
♥ A x x  
♦ Q J x  
♣ K x x

### Q - 2.3b

♠ K Q x x  
♥ K J x  
♦ Q x x  
♣ K x x

### Q - 2.3c

♠ J x x  
♥ K J x  
♦ K J x  
♣ Q J x x

### Q - 2.3d

♠ J x x  
♥ A Q x  
♦ K Q x  
♣ Q J x x

### Q - 2.3e

♠ A Q x  
♥ A x  
♦ x x x  
♣ K x x x x

### Q - 2.3f

♠ J x x  
♥ K J x  
♦ Q x  
♣ A J x x x

### Q - 2.3g

♠ J x x  
♥ K J x  
♦ A x  
♣ K J x x x

### Q - 2.3h

♠ Ax  
♥ x x x  
♦ K Q x x x  
♣ Q J 10

Interesting facts: *Benito Garozzo was elected to the European Bridge League Hall of Fame in 2017 at the age of 90*