

DEFENSE AGAINST BIG CLUB OPENINGS

The following defense applies against artificial 1♣ openings that promise 16 HCP or more:

Immediate actions over 1♣ tend to deny a good hand, but calls that show two suits may be based on either a weak hand or a strong hand. With an in-between hand, pass with a two-suiter and hope to show your suits later. If the two suits include a major, you can overcall 1♥ or 1♠ and perhaps bid the other suit on the next round. Two-suiters are shown immediately by a variation of the "CRASH" (Color-RANk-SHape) convention:

-- A double shows both black suits or both red suits ("Color"). Advancer bids his better red suit, preferring hearts with equal length. If overcaller then bids spades, showing the black suits (or if the bidding makes it obvious that he has the black suits), advancer prefers spades with equal length.

-- A 1♦ overcall shows both majors or both minors, 5-5 or better ("RANk"). Advancer bids his better major, preferring hearts with equal length. If overcaller then bids clubs, showing the minors (or if the bidding makes it obvious that he has the minors), advancer prefers clubs with equal length. Knowing that advancer will prefer hearts to spades, the overcaller might have only 4-5 in the majors, but not 5-4. Against a strong 1♣, two minor suits had better be at least 5-5. With 6-5 or 5-4 in the majors it is better to just overcall 1♠ and hope to bid the hearts later. Then advancer will prefer spades when holding equal length.

-- A 1NT overcall shows both round suits or both pointed suits ("SHape": hearts-clubs or spades-diamonds). Advancer bids clubs when preferring clubs to hearts, otherwise bids diamonds when preferring diamonds to spades, otherwise bids hearts.

-- A major suit overcall is natural, and may be rather speculative.

-- A 2♣ overcall is natural, and also may be speculative.

-- Jump overcalls are preemptive.

-- A 2NT overcall is natural, based on a long solid minor plus stoppers. Partner can raise with one quick trick.

With most good hands, including really sound one-suited hands, you can afford to pass and act on the next round:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	2♠/3♣/3♦	- strong jump overcall	
	2NT	- solid minor, heart stopper	
	Dbl	- normal takeout double	
	1NT	- normal 1NT overcall	
	1♠/2♣/2♦	- natural, good hand	
	2♥	- normal cue bid overcall	

When Opener Rebids 1NT

The strong notrump defense (section 12-2) applies after a 1NT rebid by opener, provided that the defenders have not bid or doubled prior to the 1NT bid. This is a good opportunity to show the "in-between" strength two-suiter (neither strong nor weak) that is not eligible for CRaSh.

If the response to 1♣ was a negative 1♦, a double of the 1NT rebid is a penalty double, not conventional.

If the 1♣ opening received a positive response, or the doubler is a passed hand, or the double is a balancing action, then a double of the 1NT rebid has the alternative meaning (clubs, diamonds, hearts; diamonds, hearts; or hearts only). Actually a one-suited or two-suited hand would probably have acted earlier, so the conventional double tends to be based on three suits.

Actions by Fourth Seat

The meaning of a cue bid over a suit response to 1♣ depends on whether the response is artificial or natural. If artificial, it is a natural overcall and a double just shows the suit (a weaker action than bidding the suit). A notrump overcall shows the minors:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥*	Dbl - shows hearts
			2♥ - better hearts
			1NT/2NT - minors

* artificial response

If the response to 1♣ is natural, all defensive actions are standard. Whether the response is artificial or natural, all jump overcalls are preemptive. With a good hand, pass and hope to act on the next round.

For defense against the Precision 1♦ opening, see section 12-10, Defense Against Five-Card Majors.

Over a Two Club Opening

CRaSh may also be used against a strong artificial 2♣ opening, but the strength distinction between immediate or delayed action does not apply.