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### Responding to Partner's Balancing Bid

The first thing to remember is that balancer is counting on you having something like 8-10 points. Unless you have substantially more than that, don't get excited!

#### CASE I: Opening bidder passes

##### A. Partner balances with a double

If you have a decent 5 card minor suit, or even a decent four card major that you can bid at the one level, do so. If you have good controls in opener's suit, you can bid 1NT if you have a little extra. Unless you have a monster trump suit (probably a minor such as QJ10xxxx) you may not pass.

Examples:

Opener bids 1D – P – P - X by partner, and opener passes.

1. S-Ax H- KQxx D- Qxx C-xxxx, bid 1H
2. S-xxx H-Kxx D-xx C-AKxxx, bid 2C. Not completely safe, but you don't have any other options.
3. S- xx H-Kxx D-AQxx C-Axx, bid 1NT. You couldn't take a bid on your first shot because you are not good enough for a direct 1NT overcall, but now you can!
3. S-xx H-Kxx D-AQJ9xx C-xx, this is what a penalty pass looks like. Even better if opponents are vul and you are not. Same rules for a pass as if partner had made a direct takeout double.

##### B. Partner balances with a suit bid

This is pretty simple – if you have a fit and the expected 8-10 points, raise to the two level. This will help prevent the opponents from competing. If you don't have a fit, pass. If you have a super fit and some extra values, cue bid the opponents suit.

Examples:

Opener bids 1D – P – P - 1H by partner, and opener passes

1. S-Ax H-KQxx D-xxx C-xxxx, bid 2H. This will help prevent LHO from backing in with 1S, allowing opponents to discover their spade fit. Partner should pass unless they are on a big hand.

2. S- Qxxx H- xx D-xx C-AKxxx, pass is probably best. You have no extra values, and if partner cared about spades they would probably have balanced with a double. You have no particular reason to expect a club fit.

3. S-AQx H- Kxx D- xxx C-Axxx, bid 2D. If partner just rebids 2H, pass. Game is possible if partner has an opening hand. You could have made a takeout double your first opportunity, but you didn't.

### C. Partner Balances with 1NT

Remember that this shows 11-14, and that your bids are natural and non-forcing. If you have a decent 5 card major suit, you can bid it. With a 5-card minor suit, better to play NT. If you have 12 or more, you can invite game.

Opener bids 1D – P – P - 1NT by partner, and opener passes.

1. S-Ax H-KQxxx D-xx C-xxxx, bid 2H. Partner should have at least 2, and maybe 3, hearts.

2. S-Qxxx H-xx D-xx C-AKxxx, Pass 1NT should be an excellent contract.

3. S-AQx H-Kxx D-xxx C-Axxx, Bid 2NT! Partner should bid 3NT with a maximum.

### CASE II: Opening Bidder Takes another bid

Unfortunately, the opponents do not always go easily. Often the opening bidder will either rebid their suit (showing 6), or bid a second suit at the 2 level (probably 5-5 in their suits). In either case the same general principles apply, but you need a lot more stuff to bid at the 2 level! If you have a random eight count best to pass. Remember that partner will now get another chance.

### CASE III: Opener Passes after a Single Raise and Partner Doubles.

As with CASE I, you must bid unless you have a spectacular trump holding. Bid your best suit. Partner should have some support for it.

### CASE IV: RHO opens a Weak two bid, and Partner Doubles

Unless you have a spectacular holding in the opponent's suit, you will bid your best suit, giving preference to a major suit. With a great holding in opponent's suit, you can pass for penalty.