

Tucker over One Heart

Pete Matthews Jr - <https://3nt.xyz> - © January 10, 2024

Tucker over One Heart

Tucker is designed to address these problems after a 1 ♠ response:

- Opener's *major nightmare hand*, three spades and six hearts with extra values.
- Playing in a dismal 4-3 spade fit, or missing a good one.
- Improved bidding to a minor partscore on a major-suit misfit.
- Game-forcing hands with at least five spades, after a 1 ♥ opening bid.

The Tucker 1 ♠ Response

Over the 1 ♥ opening bid, responder bids 1 ♠ on any hand with *less than game-forcing strength*, four or more spades, and one of these:

- fewer than three hearts,
- decent spades (especially with secondary values), three hearts, and invitational strength, or
- five spades, three weak hearts, and fewer than two sure cover cards. This is a slow-down raise of hearts with spades. [With four spades, bid 1 NT instead.]

Responder has no tools to investigate slam after the 1 ♠ response: there is no fourth suit forcing or new minor forcing. 2 NT and jumps are invitational.

Exception: In case slam is in the offing, we try to avoid a 2/1 response in a suit headed by the queen or less. We might respond 1 ♠ with four spades, a balanced hand and 13-14 HCP. We plan a jump to 3 NT or 4 ♥ next. However, with 15+ HCP and 4=3=3=3, we manufacture a two-over-one in a minor.

Opener's Tucker 1 NT Rebid

The 1 ♥ opener's 1 NT rebid shows exactly three spades and is *forcing*. Opener may have a minimum opening, values to force to game, or anything in between. Responder's priorities are:

1. With five spades, responder has an easy 2 ♠, invitational 3 ♠ rebid, or possibly a jump to game with a double fit.
2. With four spades, take a preference to 2 ♥ on a doubleton (or a slow-down raise); jump to 3 ♥ with a 3-card limit raise.

3. With an invitational hand, but no known major-suit fit, bid 2 NT or three of a long minor.

Now the bad cases – a singleton or void in hearts and only four spades:

4. With a minor suit of at least five cards, bid it. Opener should usually pass this bid with any doubleton.
5. If spades are decent, rebid 2 ♠.
6. With four bad spades, hope our 2 ♠ rebid does not draw action by opener and/or doubles by the opponents. 4=1=4=4 is the problem hand of the system. We could also prefer hearts on a singleton honor. Keep in mind that standard bidders may not have a picnic on this deal.

Faced with the prospect of this last hand and minimum values, responder should consider passing the opening bid or responding 1 NT, but don't pass opener's 1 NT rebid.

Opener is not required to bid 1 NT, on the rare hand with three spades and something more important to describe.

Opener Has Fewer Than Three Spades

Over the 1 ♠ response, opener rebids as over a 1 NT forcing response, when holding fewer than three spades. With 2=5=3=3 shape, this will mean bidding a 3-card minor suit; we do this all the time over the forcing 1 NT.

2 NT and jumps by responder are invitational. Again, fourth-suit forcing and new minor forcing do not apply.

The Tucker 2 ♠ Response

The jump shift to 2 ♠ shows a game-forcing hand with five or more spades, and *denies a minor suit of equal or greater length*. Because opener does not have a 2 ♡ rebid available, we need highly structured continuations. Here are opener's priorities:

1. Opener's rare bids above 3 NT are splinters and picture bids. Raise to 3 ♠ with three or more spades. Spades are now trump, and serious 3 NT applies.
2. With a singleton or void in spades, opener always rebids 2 NT. This is key information, and using 2 NT to express it is more likely to right-side a 3 NT contract, compared with 2 NT showing two. Responder's major-suit bid now sets trump;

otherwise, responder bids a minor-suit stopper, ostensibly angling for 3 NT – but it might be a 4-card side suit.

3. With six or more hearts and two spades, opener rebids 3 ♡. Responder sets spades trump with 3 ♠. 4 NT [4 ♠ playing kickback!] over 3 ♡ asks for keycards in *hearts*, since responder has no forcing heart raise. Responder’s minor suit is ostensibly four cards, but could be a cue-bid in support of hearts. [See “Wrap-up” below.]
4. With exactly 2=5=3=3 shape and at least 5 HCP in each minor, opener rebids 3 NT.
5. With five hearts and two spades, opener rebids a minor-suit stopper, ostensibly angling for 3 NT – but it might be a 4-card side suit.

With a minor suit of length at least equal to the spades, make a two-over-one in the minor. Don’t respond 2 ♠.

Interference

After an overcall or double of either 1 ♡ or 1 ♠, Tucker is *off*.

After 1 ♠, over non-jump interference, double or redouble shows exactly 3-card spade support. However, opener is not required to use this *support double*, when another action is appropriate.

R1	O2	R2	Tucker over 1 ♡
1 ♠			Four or more spades, seldom game values, no NMF or 4SF. 2NT, 3 ♡ & 3 ♠ are the prominent game tries.
	1NT		<i>Forcing</i> : shows exactly three spades.
		2 ♣, 2 ♢	Natural, weak, 5+ card suit, four bad spades, singleton or void in hearts.
		2 ♡	Natural, weak, four spades, two or three hearts.
		2 ♠	Natural, weak, four good spades or longer (or any 4=1=4=4).
		2NT	Natural, invitational, only four spades
		3 ♣, 3 ♢	Natural, forcing one round, does not promise another bid.
		3 ♡, 3 ♠	Natural, invitational.
		3 NT	Natural, 13–14 HCP, balanced, lacking a 4-card minor headed by the ace or king.

R1	O2	R2	Tucker over 1 ♥
	2 ♣, 2 ♦		Natural, may be only three cards (as over a 1 NT forcing response).
	2 ♥		Natural, 6+ hearts.
	2, 3, 4 ♠		Natural, 4-card support.
	3 ♣, 3 ♦		Natural, forcing to game.
	3 ♥		Natural, 6+ hearts, invitational.
	4 ♣, 4 ♦		Splinter: singleton or void, 4-card support.
1NT			Forcing: usually lacking values to drive to game.
	Pass		Rarely, only with 4=5=2=2 and 11-12 HCP.
2 ♣, 2 ♦			Natural, agreed 2/1 style. May be 4=3=3=3, 15+ HCP.
	2 ♠		Every hand with four spades, does not show extra values.
2♠			Forcing to game with five or more spades and no minor of equal or greater length. [Fit-showing BPH.]
	2 NT		0-1 spades, tell me more:
		3 ♣, 3 ♦	Natural, 3+ cards, ostensibly aiming for notrump.
		3 ♥	Hearts are trump.
		3 ♠	Spades are trump, 0-1 loser suit.
	3 ♣, 3 ♦		Natural, 3+ cards, exactly 2 spades. Responder's 3 ♦ is ambiguous, 3 ♥ or 3 ♠ sets trump.
	3♥		Natural, 6+ hearts, exactly 2 spades. 3 ♠ sets trump; otherwise, <i>hearts are trump for RKB</i> .
	3 ♠		Natural, 3+ cards, sets trump.
	3 NT		Natural, balanced, exactly 2 spades, 18+ HCP. Responder's 4 ♥ or 4 ♠ is forcing, sets trump.
	4 ♣, 4 ♦		Splinter (0-1 cards, 4+ spades).
	4 ♥		Picture bid: fine heart suit, doubleton ♠ A/K/Q, no minor-suit control.
	4 ♠		Picture bid: great spade support, no minor-suit control.

Backstory

Andrew Hanes and I have been playing the Tucker system since I solidified it; he contributed the 2=6 shape of opener's 3 ♥ rebid over 2 ♠.

Richard Lee introduced to me this idea: *After a one heart opening and one spade response, opener's rebid of 1 NT shows exactly three spades and is forcing. Otherwise, opener rebids as over a forcing 1 NT response.* Many years ago, he got this deceptively simple description from Alan Tucker, a Long Island professional, whose name I applied to our complete structure. This

original description has these major defects, which Gary and I discovered in our first practice session for it:

1. After opener's 1 NT rebid, responder has no way to force, to explore for a spade slam. We could play 2 ♣ as New Minor Forcing, but then responder would have nothing sensible to do over 1 NT with:

♠ 10 8 6 4 ♥ 8 ♦ K 5 4 ♣ K J 8 4 2

2. After opener's 2 ♣ rebid, the system does not have an obvious way for responder to bid these kinds of hands:

♠ K J 8 6 4 ♥ J 8 ♦ J 5 4 ♣ A K 8

♠ 10 8 6 4 3 ♥ 8 ♦ K J 7 5 4 ♣ K 8

♠ 10 8 6 4 ♥ 8 ♦ K J 7 5 4 3 ♣ K 8

We could play 2 ♦ weak, as after a forcing 1 NT response, and play 3 ♦ as an artificial force, but that jump chews up a lot of space.

3. After a 2 ♦ rebid, the system does not have an obvious way for responder to bid these kinds of hands:

♠ J 9 6 5 ♥ 10 ♦ A K 10 4 ♣ K J 6 4

♠ 10 8 6 4 ♥ 8 ♦ K 4 ♣ K J 7 5 4 3

Unlike the preceding problem, there is only the one club bid available below 3 NT, leaving an unsolvable problem.

These problems are mostly solved by restricting the 1 ♠ response to less than an opening bid, but possibly including minimum, game-going balanced hands. The 2 ♠ response (natural, game-forcing, and at least 5 cards) rounds out the system.

Once again, it is not sufficient to simply play that the 2 ♠ response is a 2/1 in spades. Opener has no rebid at 2 ♥, so this 2 ♠ response requires significant agreements.

Beware simple descriptions of new bridge methods!

Precision Tucker. Tucker is a fine fit for the Precision system, where the 1 ♥ opening is limited to 15 or maybe 16 HCP. With 4=1=4=4 distribution, there is no need to strain to respond. Passing 1 ♥ may work out best. If the hand is too good to pass, then passing opener's 1 NT is permitted with bad spades, since opener won't have a huge hand. However, that pass is more of a gamble, as opener may have a very good heart suit. Bypassing spades for 1 NT can make sense.

Wrap-up. Originally, opener's 2 ♥ rebid set hearts as trump. Having it show six hearts and two spades is more practical, but raises kickback issues. Marcus acceptances (3 ♠ = ♥, other = ♠) might help. Andrew and I continue to play Tucker, but I am no longer interested in playing it with others, and I have removed these pages from the Appendix of *EZ-Expert Bidding Tools*.