Opening 4-4-4-1 hands

Traditional Guidelines
(but, in my opinion, not the best)
were:-

open the middle of 3 touching suits;
and otherwise, open the suit below the singleton.

These rules ensure that you will always have an honest rebid whenever partner responds in a new suit, including your short suit.

By all means agree with your partner to play these agreements, if you wish.

They have served many partnerships well for many years.

Modern style

Better, in my opinion and that of many experts, is:-

always open a minor.

Thus:-

with a singleton spade open 1♦. If partner responds in spades then rebid 2♣;
with a singleton heart open 1♦ (or 1♣ if you prefer). If partner responds in hearts you will rebid in spades;
with a singleton diamond open 1♣. If partner responds in diamonds you will rebid 1♥ (see below);
with a singleton club open 1♦. If partner responds in clubs you will have to rebid 2♦.

Singleton diamond

It should be noted that following the sequence 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ responder can still introduce the spade suit with a simple natural forcing bid of 1♠, and so a major suit fit will not be lost.

Singleton club

The only significant difference between the two methods occurs when the singleton is a club.

Traditionally this would have been opened 1♥ with a rebid of 2♦ promising at least 4-4 in the red suits.

In the newer approach, this hand will be opened 1♦ with the risk of finishing in 2♦ on a minimal fit when facing a 2♣ response. Usually partner will have some support for diamonds as he will not in general hold 4 cards in either major.

The advantage is that whenever you open one of a major and rebid in a new suit you will be guaranteeing at least 5 cards in the major.