6 – Opening balanced hands – summary

Balanced hands

Will not have 5-4 shape nor will they contain a 6-card suit.
A hand with 4-4-4-1 shape is not balanced and belongs in a category of its own.

Any other hand is balanced. This includes 4-4-3-2, 4-3-3-3, and 5-3-3-2 shapes.

With no shortages to create extra tricks by ruffing (trumping in) such hands are frequently best played in no trumps. In general, the total point-count provides the best means to assess the trick-taking potential of the two hands.
The bidding will concentrate on showing the balanced nature of the hand and the point-count.

Opening 1NT

Sometimes you will be able to tell partner all about your hand in one bid.

This will be when your hand is balanced and you hold between 12 and 14 points (inc).

Balanced hands in other ranges

With 11 points or less you pass – a balanced hand with no more than its fair share of points will probably be at least as effective in defence as in declaring.
With 15-19 points you open one of a suit and rebid in no trumps.
With 20-22 points you open 2NT.
With 23+ points you open 2♣ (more about this another time).

Which suit (when holding 15-19)?

With a 5-card suit that's the one you open.

With just one 4-card suit that's the one you open.

With two 4-card suits open:-

1♥ with both majors;
one of the major with one major and one minor;
the better suit with both minors.

How many no trumps

Partner responded one of a suit:-

Old style	Modern style
15-16 rebid 1NT	15-17 rebid 1NT
17-18 rebid 2NT	18-19 rebid 2NT
19 rebid 3NT	

(Note that the 15-16 rebid is the old standard as played by most in Stone and the surrounding area.)

Partner responded two of a suit

15-19 rebid 2NT (forcing to game (15+10))

Partner responded 1NT

15-16 pass
17-18 rebid 2NT
19 rebid 3NT

The auction continues

All of the bidding sequences above are strictly limited – partner knows exactly what you have got, therefore partner will now take charge of the auction – he/she is in charge and he/she will choose the final contract – all you will do is give any further information which he/she might ask for. The target for 3NT (game bonus) is a total of 25 points.