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# Chapter 1

## SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF THE MARTENS SYSTEM

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A modern bidding system should be as big as a tree, with its roots deeply established until the seventh layer with the limbs flying out to the sky. It should be organic so its all juices go from the earth to the crown, with the leaves grabbing the light and passing the energy of the sun to the trunk and roots.

Each new bidding system must be learned in stages, even by an experienced pair. First, it has to be trunk and main limbs, then the smaller branches and finally the leaves. The simplified version will allow you to become familiar with the system on your way to a tournament. If you like the general idea of the system, then more improvements can be taken on board. New agreements are presented and described in the book.

## 1.1. 1♣ OPENING

When West opens 1♣, showing either 15+ points and a balanced hand or 17+ points and an unbalanced hand, East has the following options in response:

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♣	?
1♦	– 0-8 HCPs;
1♥	– 7 + HCPs, 4+ hearts;
1♠	– 7 + HCPs, 4+ spades;
1NT	– 9 -12 HCPs, without a four-card major;
2♣	– 10+ HCPs, 5+ clubs, without a four-card major;
2♦	– 10+ HCPs, 5+ diamonds, without a four-card major;
2♥	– 12+ HCPs, 5+ hearts;
2♠	– 12+ HCPs, 5+ spades;
2NT	– 13+ HCPs, without a four-card major;
3♣/3♦	– 7-card suit – weak one-suited hand;
3♥/3♠	– 7-card suit – weak one-suited hand.

## 4. Training materials – solutions

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### Sequence 1

After a negative 1♦, the opener with 15-17 HCPs (1NT opening – strong) bids a four card major or a three card major (if he has not got any four card major).

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♣	1♦
?	

There are the opener's options:

- 1♥ – 3+ hearts;
- 1♠ – 3+ spades, NF;
- 1NT – 18-21 HCPs;
- 2♣ – natural, NF;
- 2♦ – artificial, GF;
- 2♥ – 20-22 HCPs, 5+ hearts;
- 2♠ – 20-22 HCPs, 5+ spades;
- 2NT – 21-23 HCPs;
- 3♣/3♦ – almost GF, one-suited hand;
- 3♥/3♠ – almost GF, one-suited hand
- 3NT – gambling

### Sequence 2

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♣	1♦
2♦	?

- 2♥ – waiting, nothing special to show;
- 2♠ – 5+ spades, with at least one top honour (ace, king or queen);
- 2NT – 6-8 HCPs, I want to play a no-trump contract from my hand;
- 3♣/♦ – 6+ cards, 6-8 HCPs;
- 3♥ – +6 hearts, with at least one major honour.

Further bidding is natural.

Undoubtedly 1♣ meaning strong in a full version is difficult and requires hard work from a pair so that the profits coming from the modern approach to bidding are not lesser than losses derived from mistakes.

A simplification can be made by eliminating the waiting bids in these sequences:

- 1) the weak 1NT (12-14 HCPs) should also include a bad 15 HCPs;
- 2) the negative 1♦ (after 1♣ opening) should also include 7-8 HCPs (bad eight) with a four card major.

This will allow us to use a simplified scheme.

### Sequence 3

W	E
1♣	1♥
?	

- 1NT – 15+ HCPs, balanced hand, game forcing;
- 2NT – 15-17 HCPs, bad flat hand (low honours).

All other bids are natural and game forcing.

Why is such a strange meaning attributed to the 2NT call?

A bad hand within the 15-17 HCPs power range does not look too promising with hardly any chance for a slam, therefore it does not require much bidding space for the exchange of information. Please note, that the modern bidding is more of a painting the hand then saying things. A hand description provides information, which can never be overestimated

How the bidding develops in the sequence:

W	E
1♣	1♥
1NT	?

will depend on your habits and preferences to make your life easier.



## 4. Training materials – solutions

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However, we should remember that the situation differs from that after 1NT opening. The responder has already been in the auction and conveyed vital information

### Sequence 4

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
----------	----------

1♣	1♥
----	----

1NT	?
-----	---

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 2♣         | – waiting 12+ HCPs;                    |
| 2NT        | – balanced shape 10-12 HCPs;           |
| 3NT        | – balanced shape 8-9 HCPs;             |
| Other bids | – natural, within the 8-11 HCPs range. |

### Sequence 5

The bidding in the sequence below is analogical to 1♣-1♥-1NT sequence.

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
----------	----------

1♣	1♠
----	----

1NT	
-----	--

In this simplified version 1NT takes over the role of a waiting bid, which carries the important information that you have a balanced hand

## 1.2. 1♦ OPENING

The meaning of a 1♦ opening is dictated by the strong club-based system and the 1NT opening of 12-14 HCPs . It shows one of these hands:

- 1) 12-17 HCPs, 5+ diamonds, balanced distribution;
- 2) 12-17 HCPs, three-suited hand with 4 diamonds and any shortage;
- 3) 12-17 HCPs, 4 diamonds and 5 clubs.

With five diamonds, 5-3-3-2 shape and 12-14 HCPs we open 1NT. With 15-17 HCPs we open 1♣. This implies that a 1♦ opening at white always promises an unbalanced hand.

Non-standard sequences arise when the opener bids 1NT after a one-over-one response. He shows in this way an unbalanced hand that is not fit for a no-trump contract.

### Sequence 1

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♦	1♥
?	

1NT – 12-14 HCPs, shape 3-1-5-4, 3-1-4-5, 2-2-5-4, 2-2-4-5 – flattish hand.

Examples of hands:

♠ Q J 7     ♥ J     ♦ K Q 8 7 3     ♣ K J 9 6

or

♠ A Q 10     ♥ 10     ♦ Q J 9 6     ♣ K 5 4 3 2

## 4. Training materials – solutions

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### Sequence 2

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
----------	----------

1♦	1♠
?	

1NT – 12-14 HCPs – a no-trump oriented hand – 1-4-4-4, 5 diamonds – 4 clubs, 4 diamonds – 5 clubs or 5 diamonds – 4 hearts are permissible. When the responder is strong enough to advance, he can ask for more information about the opener's hand.

### Sequence 3

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
----------	----------

1♦	1♥
1NT	?

2♣	– waiting;
2♦	– to play;
2♥	– to play;
2♠	– waiting bid, showing the location of honours, it often shows concern about clubs suggesting club shortage;
2NT	– invitational;
3♣	– to play;
3♦	– invitational.

### Sequence 4

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
----------	----------

1♦	1♥
1NT	2♣
?	

2♦	– 5 diamonds -4 clubs;
2♠	– 3-1-4-5 shape;
2NT	– 2-2-4-5 shape.

### Sequence 5

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♦	1♥
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠*
?	

\* – waiting;

2NT – 2-2-5-4 shape;

3♣ – 3-1-5-4 shape – strong club suit;

3♦ – 3-1-5-4 shape – strong diamond suit.

### Sequence 6

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♦	1♠
1NT	?

2♣ – waiting;

2♦ – to play;

2♥ – to play;

2♠ – to play;

2NT – invitational;

3♣ – to play;

3♦ – invitational;

3♥ – 5 spades – 5 hearts, invitational.

## 4. Training materials – solutions

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### Sequence 7

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣
?	

- 2♦ – 5 diamonds;
- 2♥ – 1-4-4-4 shape;
- 2NT – 2-2-4-5 shape;
- 3♣ – 1-3-4-5 shape.

All other agreements can be easily transferred from your own system. You have to remember, however, the peculiar character of a 1♦ opening at Love All. It promises an unbalanced hand.

## 1.3. 1♥ OPENING

### IF NON-VULNERABLE – 9-16 HCPs, 5+ hearts

Many pairs reduce the opening strength for 1♥ and 1♠, being more aggressive and more active in their bidding. Undoubtedly at favourable vulnerability this is very effective and produces substantial profits. In a situation when both sides are non-vulnerable, good judgement requires a lot of common sense. You do not have to open the bidding with every major five-carder and 9-11 HCPs. You also need a mechanism that will allow you to stop in a part score when responder has 13-14 HCPs and the opener 9-11 HCPs.

#### Sequence 1

W	E
1♥	1♠
?	

- 1NT – 9-11 HCPs (with 12-14 HCPs and 5-3-3-2 shape we open 1NT);
- 2♣ – 9-16 HCPs;
- 2♦ – 9-16 HCPs;
- 2♥ – 9-13 HCPs;
- 2♠ – 9-13 HCPs;
- 2NT – 15-16 HCPs;
- 3♣ – 14-16 HCPs, 5+ hearts – 5+ clubs;
- 3♦ – 14-16 HCPs, 5+ hearts - 5+ diamonds;
- 3♥ – 14-16 HCPs, 6+ hearts;
- 3♠ – 14-16 HCPs, 5 hearts - 4 spades.

There is a lot of confusion after a 1♠ response. After some of the rebids there is still a problem with establishing the opener's strength. How can we solve our problems?

## 4. Training materials – solutions

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### Sequence 2

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>	
1♥	1♠	
2♣	2♦	– waiting
?		

2♥ – 9-11 HCPs;  
other bids – 12+ HCPs.

A 2♦ waiting bid allows you to discover the opener's strength more precisely and stop in 2♥ contract.

### Sequence 3

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♥	1♠
2♦	?

2♥ – has to be treated as non-forcing if the opener's range is 9-13 HCPs.

With 14-16 HCPs the opener will bid again.

### Sequence 4

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♥	2♣
?	

2♦ – 9-12 HCPs.

2♣ call is a classical waiting bid, which allows us to check the opening power.

### Sequence 5

<b>W</b>	<b>E</b>
1♥	2♣
2♦	?

- 2♥ – NF;
- 2♠ – waiting GF;
- 2NT – non-forcing;
- 3♣ – natural, non-forcing;
- 3♥ – slam bid.

When the opener has shown 9-11 HCPs, we may stop in 2♥, 2NT or 3♣. We also have a mechanism that allows us to force partner to game, such as a 2♠ waiting bid.

### Sequence 6

<b>W</b>	<b>E</b>
1♥	2♦
?	

- 2♥ – 9-12 HCPs;
- Other bids – 13-16 HCPs.

All other agreements can be adopted from the system in use before, remembering the peculiarity of 1♥ opening at favourable vulnerability. Splinters and other responder's bids should be stronger than usual.



## 1.4. 1♠ OPENING

### NON VULNERABLE – 9-16 HCPs, 5+ SPADES

#### Sequence 1

W	E
1♠	2♣
?	

2♦ – 9-12 HCPs, without 4+ hearts;

2♥ – 9-16 HCPs, natural;

2♠ – 12-14 HCPs.

Other rebids by the opener are natural and show 14-16 HCPs.

#### Sequence 2

W	E
1♠	2♣
2♦	?

2♥ – artificial GF;

2♠ – NF;

2NT – NF;

3♣ – NF;

3♠ – slam invitational if partner has an exceptional hand (containing a void).

### Sequence 3

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♠	2♣
2♥	?

- 2♠ – NF;
- 2NT – waiting GF;
- 3♣ – natural NF;
- 3♦ – fourth suit GF;
- 3♥ – NF;
- 3♠ – GF.

In this sequence 2♥ is natural and does not specify the strength within the 9-16 HCPs range.

In this situation agreeing hearts or spades is not forcing but invitational.

### Sequence 4

<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>
1♠	2♥
?	

- 2♠ – 9-12 HCPs;
- Other bids – 13-16 HCPs.

### 1.5. 1NT OPENING

In a strong club-based system it is recommended to adopt the agreement that 1NT opening promises a balanced hand (including 5-3-3-2 with any five-carder) and 12-14 (15) HCPs.

In the course of further bidding you can use your previous conventions over a 1NT opening within the 15-17 HCPs range.

## 1.6. 2♣ PRECISION OPENING

The 2♣ opening with 12-16 HCPs, 5+ clubs and a major four-carder or with 6+ clubs has probably more shortcomings than benefits. In the part score zone it does not work too well. We start the auction at too high a level, which creates problems in reaching the right contract at the right level. Its preemptive value can be considered as an advantage. In a strong club-based system it is definitely needed and we must do our best to reduce these shortcomings to a minimum.

I recommend a 1NT opening with 12-14 HCPs and 5♣ with 4 in a major - 2 -2 distribution if the hand character is suit oriented. Many authors have described further bidding after a natural 2♣ opening. I have nothing innovative to offer.

### 1.7. 2♦ OPENING - NON VULNERABLE

The opening has a destructive character and indicates 4-8 HCPs with at least 4-4 in the major suits. With the minimum distribution of 4-4, we tend not to open within the 4-5 HCPs range.

You will find a detailed description of further bidding in chapter 3 “Martens System – Full Version” on page **Błąd! Nie zdefiniowano zakładki.**

## 1.8. 2♥ OPENING - NON VULNERABLE

In the Martens strong club-based system we open 1♥/♠ on 9 HCPs. The 2♦ opening bid indicates both majors.

2♥ opening, non vulnerable, shows 4-8 HCPs, 5 hearts – 4 in a minor.

I reduced the requirements for the shape to increase the frequency of the opening.

You will find a detailed description of further bidding in chapter 3 “Martens System – Full Version” on page **Błąd! Nie zdefiniowano zakładki.**

### 1.9. 2♠ OPENING AT WHITE

A non-vulnerable 2♠ opening promises 4-8 HCPs, five spades and four in a minor suit.

You will find a detailed description of further bidding in chapter 3 “Martens System – Full Version” on page **Błąd! Nie zdefiniowano zakładki.**

## 1.10. OTHER OPENINGS

OTHER OPENINGS ARE THE SAME AS THOSE YOU WILL USE AT RED. An interesting concept of preemptive opening is in chapter 3 “Martens System – Full Version” on page **Błąd! Nie zdefiniowano zakładki.** (a destructive opening with a minor suit or a constructive with a major one).



## 1.11. SYSTEM UPGRADING CONVENTIONS

We have already learned the trunk and main tree limbs. The question arises, which conventions we should add to our simplified version. I suggest here the sequence in which additional branches should appear on the limbs.

### 1♣ OPENING

#### Sequence 1

W	E
1♣	1♦
?	

1♥ – waiting, 3+ hearts or any GF is very useful. Introducing such a bid will considerably improve the bidding quality.

### 1♥/♠ OPENING

Remember that after 2♣ waiting, 2♦ response indicates 9-11 HCPs. This complicates further bidding and the development of these sequences is strongly recommended. Further branches or even leaves will contribute to the precision of your bidding.

### 1NT OPENING

The most important task is to prepare a pair to land safely if the opponents double. Below follows the simplest scheme to serve such purpose.

### Sequence 1

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1NT	dbler	?	

- 2♣ – natural or a two-suited hand without clubs;
- 2♦/♥/♠ – natural;
- rdble – strong;
- pass – does not promise anything.

### Sequence 2

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1NT	dbler	pass	pass
?			

- rdble – two-suited hand with clubs;
- 2♣ – natural or a two-suited hand without clubs;
- 2♦/♥/♠ – natural.

### Sequence 3

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1NT	dbler	2♣	dbler
pass	pass	?	

- rdble – two-suited hand without clubs, the higher suit is longer;
- 2♦ – diamonds are longer or equal + a major suit;
- 2♥ – hearts are longer than (or equal to) the spades.

The next stage should be introducing to the system a “Stayman + transfer” convention.