

Swedish Club

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1 The Swedish Club opening

A 1♣ opening is two-way and shows either:

1. A weak balanced hand. Known as “mini-club”
2. A strong hand. Known as “maxi-club”

In the most common version of Swedish Club the weak variant has 11–13 hcp. It usually denies a five card major, and in this document opener has no way of showing an 11–13 NT with a 5 card major after opening 1♣ (these are usually opened 1♥ or 1♠ instead). The weak version can, however, include 5332 with a 5 card minor, but the opening structure allows for 5332 with 5 diamonds to be opened 1♦ if you prefer that. Some semi-balanced hand can also be included, for instance 5422 with a five card minor. As with many forcing club systems the specific 4-4-1-4 pattern is problematic. You may include these in your 1♣ (and/or 1NT) opening or have a separate opening bid for these (like the Precision 2♦ opening).

The strong hand in Swedish Club is usually 17+, excluding some strong NT range that opens 2NT.

2 Responses

1♣—	
Pass	Not an option, 1♣ is forcing!
1♦	Negative. a) Most 0–7 hcp b) Flat hand with 8–11 hcp and no 4 card major
1♥♠	4+ suit, 8+ hcp. May have a longer minor if less than GF.
1NT	(4)5+ clubs, 8+ hcp (if 4 clubs then GF and longer diamonds)
2♣	5+ diamonds, 8+ hcp
2♦	Multi. Weak major or 16+ NT
2♥	12–15 NT, no major
2♠	INV with both minors, does not want to play 2NT
2NT	12–13 NT, INV, wants to declare
3X	Weak, 7-card suit

This response structure is a bit different from “standard” Swedish Club (see the Swan system). Usually 1NT and 2♣♦ are used as natural, but here 1NT and 2♣ are used as transfers.

3 The negative response

1♣–1♦;	
Pass	Mini-club, usually 4+ diamonds
1♥	Forcing multi-way rebid. a) Mini-club with (3)4 hearts b) GF with 5+ hearts c) Balanced GF d) Unbalanced extras, but not GF (ca 19–22)
1♠	Natural NF

	a) Mini-club with (3)4 spades
	b) 17–19 with 4+ spades, unbalanced, may be canapé
1NT	17–19
2♣♦♥	Natural, 17–19, not 4 spades
2♠	Natural GF
2NT	22–24
3♣	Natural GF
3♦	Natural GF, no major
3♥♠	4 card suit and longer diamonds, GF
4♣♦	5+ suit and 5+ spades, GF

3.1 Multi-way heart rebid

1♣–1♦; 1♥—	
1♠	4+ spades, 0–7
	Pass Mini-club
1NT	3 spades, forcing
	2♣ 0–4, 4 spades
	2♦ 5–7, 4 spades
	2♠ 0–4, 5 spades
	Other Natural GF with 5+ spades
2♣♦♥	Natural NF, ca 19–22
2♠	4 spades, ca 19–22
2NT	Natural GF
3♣♦	4+ suit and 5+ hearts, GF
3♥	6+ hearts, GF
3♠	GF with 4+ spades
3NT	NF with 5 hearts
4♣♦	GF with 5+ suit and 5+ hearts
1NT	No major, 0–11
	Pass Mini-club
2♣♦♥♠	Natural NF
2NT	Natural GF
3♣♦♥♠	GF with hearts
3NT	NF with 5 hearts, GF strength
4♣♦	GF with 5+ suit and 5+ hearts
2♣	4+ hearts, 0–7
	2♦ Natural NF
	2♥ Mini-club
	2♠ Natural NF
2NT	Natural GF
3♣	Natural NF
3♦	GF cue bid with 4+ hearts
3♥	INV
3♠	GF cue bid with 4+ hearts
4♣	GF cue bid with 4+ hearts
4♥	To play
2♦♥	5+ suit, 5–7 (GF vs maxi-club alternatives)
2♠	6+ clubs, 5–7

3.1.1 Second negative

After opener shows a hand with unbalanced extras (but non-forcing), responder may ofcourse pass but also have other options:

- The closest bid is a second negative. It is usually a weak hand, but may be invitational and support for opener's suit. Opener usually relays if he tolerates playing in the suit bid (otherwise bids natural).
- After 1♣-1♦; 1♥-1NT; 2X responder may bid an "impossible major" in order to show 8-11 hcp with a balanced hand.
- Other bids are natural and GF (ca 5-7 hcp).

3.2 One spade rebid

1♣-1♦; 1♠-

Pass	Possible with a weak hand, usually 3+♠
1NT	Relay, does not promise any strength
2♣	Any hand with 5+ spades
2♦	Relay, at least INV
	2♥ 4 hearts, NF
	2♠ 6+♠, NF
	2NT Natural NF
	3♣♦ Natural NF
	3♥♠ Natural GF
	3NT To play
	2♠ 2+ spades, weak
	2NT Natural INV, not interested in other suit
	3♠ INV with 3 spades
	2♦ 4 spades, 5+ diamonds
	2♥ 4 spades, 5+ hearts
	2♠ 4 spades, 5+ clubs
2♣♦♥	5+ suit, 5-7 hcp. Weak hand must pass.
2♠	4+ support, 4-7 hcp

3.3 1NT rebid

Normal 1NT system is on.

3.4 2m rebid

The closest bid is a relay. Now opener bids the closest step with 4 hearts, rebids the minor with 6+ suit and min, 2NT with 6+ minor and max and the bid that's left shows the other minor.

1♣-1♦; 2♣-

2♦	Relay, 5-7 hcp
2♥	Four hearts
2♠	Four diamonds
2NT	6+ clubs and extras

	3♣	6+ clubs and minimum
2♥♠		Natural, 5–7 hcp
2NT		Transfer raise, 8–11 bal
3♣		3+ support, 5–7 hcp
3♦♥♠		Max with 6+ suit

1♣–1♦; 2♦—		
2♥		Relay, 5–7 hcp
	2♠	Four hearts
	2NT	6+ diamonds and max
	3♣	Four clubs
	3♦	6+ diamonds and min
2♠		Natural, 5–7 hcp
2NT		5+ hearts, 5–7 hcp
3♣		Transfer raise, 8–11 bal
3♦		3+ support, 5–7 hcp
3♥♠		Max with 6+ suit

3.5 Game forcing rebids

If opener makes a game forcing rebid the continuation is (most often) natural, similar to a 2♣–2♦ waiting approach and a rebid from the strong opening hand, playing a natural system where 2♣ is strong. After a 3♣ rebid responder may ask for a four card major with 3♦:

1♣–1♦; 3♣–3♦;		
3♥♠		4 card major
3NT		No four card major
4♣		Good club suit, no four card major

4 Major responses

A strong hand with 3+ support for responder's major will almost always make a 2♦ rebid (the exception is supporting the major at the 3-level), thus other strong rebids denies 3+ support.

1♣–1♥;		
1♠		Natural forcing, mini- or maxi-club
1NT		Mini-club, no major
2♣		Lakebeach; maxi-club, unbal with a 5+ minor
2♦		Odwrotka; maxi-club with 3+ support
2♥		Mini-club with 4 hearts
2♠		Maxi-club, good suit
2NT		Maxi-club, natural
3♥		Maxi-club, 17–18 bal with 4 hearts

1♣–1♠;		
1NT		Mini-club
2♣		Lakebeach
2♦		Odwrotka

2♥	Natural maxi-club
2♠	Mini-club with 4 spades
2NT	Maxi-club, natural
3♠	Maxi-club, 17–18 bal with 4 spades

4.1 Two-way checkback

When opener rebids 1♠ or 1NT he can have the mini-club hand. Two-way checkback comes into good use here. The structure below is just an example of a basic two-way checkback structure.

1♣–1♥; 1♠—	
1NT	To play vs mini-club
2♣	Puppet to 2♦
2♦	Mini-club
	Other Natural, maxi-club
2♦	Artificial GF
2♥	3 hearts, mini-club
2♠	5+ spades, maxi-club
2NT	2 hearts, mini-club
3♣♦	5+ suit, maxi-club
2♥	To play vs mini-club
2♠	4 card support, to play vs mini-club
2NT	INV
3♣♦	(5)6+ suit, INV
3♥♠	Natural INV
1♣–1M; 1NT—	
2♣	Puppet to 2♦
2♦	Artificial GF
2♥♠	Natural NF
2NT	INV
3♣♦	(5)6+ suit, INV
3M	Natural INV

After the puppet to 2♦ responder may pass (long diamonds), bid 2M (natural INV) or bid 3m (5-5, INV). After the GF 2♦ bid the bidding is natural.

4.2 Lakebeach 2♣

1♣–1M; 2♣—	
2♦	Ask
2M	Natural, 6+ suit
2oM	5-5 majors
2NT	3+ support in both minors, at least mild slam interest
3♣♦	5-5 major + minor
3M	Good 7+ suit, sets trump
1♣–1M; 2♣–2♦;	
2M	ART. Extras (ca 20+) with 5-4 minors
2NT	Asks for longer minor

	3♣♦	4 card support
	Other	Natural without 3 card minor
2oM		4 card suit, longer minor, 17+
	2NT	Ask
	3♣♦	Natural, ca 17–19
	3♥	Longer clubs, extras
	3♠	Longer diamonds, extras
	4♣♦	6-4 and some extras
	Raise	4-card support, minimum
	Jump	Splinter
	Other	Cue with 4-card support and extras
2NT		5-5 minors, ca 17–19
	3♣♦	Preference, now opener shows SPL with 3M
3♣♦		5-4 minors, longer suit, ca 17–19
3♥♠		SPL with 5-5 minors, extras

4.3 Odwrotka 2♦

Based on Jassem's Odwrotka Strong Heart in his book Polish Club International.

	1♣–1M; 2♦—	
2♥		Extras, ca 12+. Others below show minimum.
2♠		Balanced, 4 card major
	2NT	Ask
	3♣♦	Natural
	3M	4-4 minors
	3NT	4333
2NT		5+ major and 4+ side suit
	3♣	Ask
	3M	4+ clubs
	3NT	5440 with void in other major
	4♣♦	5440 with void in suit bid
	Other	Natural
3♣♦		5+ minor, 4 card major
3♥		6+ major
	3♠	Asks about SPL
	3NT	No SPL
	4♣♦	SPL
	4♥	SPL in other major
3♠		5332
3NT		Sorry partner, I only had a 3 card major!
4♣♦♥		5-5

After the strong rebid opener can ask with 2♠. The responses are a bit different depending on whether responder has bid hearts or spades (since 1♥ may be 4-4 majors).

	1♣–1♥; 2♦–2♥; 2♠—	
2NT		5+ hearts
	3♣	Ask
	3♦	Natural

	3♥	4+ clubs
	3♠	Natural
	3NT	5333 (with 0-5-4-4 show your better minor)
	4♣	4-5-4-0
	4♦	4-5-0-4
3♣♦	4-4	
3♥	6+ hearts, as above	
3♠	4-4	
3NT	4333, ca 12–14	
4♣♦	5-5	
4NT	4333, ca 15–17	
1♣–1♠; 2♦–2♥; 2♠—		
2NT	5+ spades and 4 card side suit	
3♣♦	4-4	
3♥	6+ spades	
3♠	5332	
3NT	4333, ca 12–14	
4♣♦♥	5-5	
4NT	4333, ca 15–17	

5 Minor suit transfers

With a five card minor and 8+ hcp a minor suit transfer can be used. If holding a 4 card major we should have game forcing values. If holding 5332 we might treat the hand as balanced instead, which is wise if the suit is weak. If holding both minors and game forcing values you transfer to clubs first. This may seem strange, but there's more bidding space available after this transfer.

The mini-club usually accepts the transfer, while the maxi-club has the option to make a relay bid, a splinter or to show his own suit. You may choose if a transfer accept at the three-level should show the mini-club (some kind of super-accept) or the maxi-club (perhaps 17–19 balanced with 3 card support).

1♣–1NT;	
2♣	Mini-club
2♦	GF relay
2♥♠	Natural GF
2NT	5+ diamonds, GF
3♣	See above
3♦♥♠	Splinter

1♣–2♣;	
2♦	Mini-club
2♥	GF relay
2♠	Natural GF
2NT	5+ hearts, GF
3♣	Natural GF
3♦	See above
3♥♠	Splinter
4♣	Splinter

5.1 Opener takes the transfer

If opener takes the transfer (showing the mini-club), responder passes if holding less than invitational values. Bidding 2♥ is GF with a four card major and bidding 2♠ is GF with a single-suited hand. Rebidding the minor or 2NT is invitational, new suits at the 3-level shows 6-4 and they're GF. Ofcourse responder may just place the contract too, bidding 3NT or 5m. After a transfer to clubs 2♦ is available by responder; it shows GF values with both minors.

1♣–1NT; 2♣—

Pass	To play, usually 8–11 hcp
2♦	GF, both minors (at least 5-4)
	2♥♠ Weak doubleton
	2NT Natural
	3♣♦ At least 4 card suit, no weak doubleton
2♥	GF, 5+ clubs and one 4 card major
	2♠ 4 spades
	2NT 4 hearts
	3♣ 3+ clubs, no major
	3♦ 5 diamonds
2♠	GF, usually 6+ clubs and no side suit
	2NT Positive relay
	3♣ No SPL or no slam interest
	3X Shows stopper
	3♦♥♠ SPL
	3NT To play
	4♦♥♠ Void
	3♣ Negative
2NT	INV
3♣	INV
3♦♥♠	6-4, GF

Aside from what's written above, the continuations should be natural or according to general agreements. You may use other gadgets too; auto-splinters and minorwood (or Optional RKC) could be good choices.

The continuations after the transfer to diamonds follows the same principle:

1♣–2♣; 2♦—

Pass	To play, usually 8–11 hcp
2♥	GF, 5+ diamonds and one 4 card major
2♠	GF, usually 6+ diamonds and no side suit
2NT	INV
3♣	6-4, GF
3♦	INV
3♥♠	6-4, GF

5.2 Opener relays

When holding the maxi-club, opener has the option to relay in order to find out more about responder's hand. The relay bid is the bid above the minor. Below the word

“extras” is used; extras means a hand of about 12/13+ hcp, that would at least invite vs the mini-club. In some cases it would even force game vs the mini-club.

The continuation is coded in the following way:

1♣–1NT; 2♦—	
2♥	Both minors (at least 5-4), extras
2♠	Ask
	2NT 5-5
	3m 3m Sets trump, asks responder to show SPL
	3♣♦ Longer suit and an SPL (relay asks)
	3♥ 2-2-4-5
	3♠ 2-2-5-4
2♠	5+ clubs and a four card major, extras
	2NT Ask
	3♣ 4 hearts and an SPL (relay asks)
	3♦ 4 spades and an SPL (relay asks)
	3♥♠ Natural 5422
2NT	Extras with 6+ clubs
	3♣ Ask
	3♦ No SPL
	3♥♠ SPL
	3NT Diamond SPL
3♣	Minimum, 6+ clubs and an SPL
	3♦ Ask, same responses as above
3♦	Less than invite vs mini-club, 5+ clubs and 4 diamonds
3♥	Minimum with 5332
3♠	Extras with 5332
3NT	Minimum with 6322 or 7222

The same structure is used when responder transfers to diamonds:

1♣–2♣; 2♥—	
2♠	5+ diamonds and a four card major, extras
2NT	Extras with 6+ diamonds
	3♣ Ask
	3♦ No SPL
	3♥♠ SPL
	3NT Club SPL
3♣	Minimum, 6+ diamonds and an SPL
3♦	Less than invite vs mini-club, 5+ diamonds and 4 clubs
3♥	Minimum with 5332
3♠	Extras with 5332
3NT	Minimum with 6322 or 7222

6 The multi

The multi response shows a very weak hand (about 0–4 hcp) with a 6+ major or a strong balanced hand (16+ hcp) and no major.

1♣–2♦;

2♥♠	Pass or correct, may be maxi-club May also be invitational with 6+ cards in the suit bid (rebids major)
2NT	Artificial. Maxi-club, forcing
3♣	Weak hand, minimum
3♦	Weak hand, max with hearts
3♥	Weak hand, max with spades
3NT	16+ bal
3♣♦♥♠	Natural, forcing
3NT	Suggestion to play
4♣	Transfer to your major
4♦	Bid your major
4♥♠	To play
1♣-2♦; 2M—	
Pass	Weak with the major
2♠	Weak with spades
2NT	Forcing
3♣	Minimum
3♦	Maximum
2NT	16+ balanced
3♣♦	5+ minor, mini-club
3♥♠	5+ major, maxi-club
3NT	Mini-club, no five card suit
4♣♦	5+ suit, maxi-club
4♥♠	Maxi club, 4 cards in corresponding minor
4NT	Maxi-club, min
3♣	(after 2♠) Min with hearts
3♦	(after 2♠) Max with hearts

7 The transfer to NT

1♣-2♥;	
2♠	Maxi-club, relay
2NT	4m333, 3♣ asks
3♣♦	Weak 5 card suit
3♥♠	3 card suit, 4-4 minors
2NT	Mini-club, minimum NF
3X	Natural GF, maxi-club
3NT	To play, mini- or maxi-club

8 Invitational with both minors

1♣-2♠;	
2NT	Asks longer suit (mini- or maxi-club)
3♣♦	Mini-club, 4+ suit NF
3♥♠	Natural GF, maxi-club
3NT	To play, mini- or maxi-club
4♣♦	Maxi-club, 4+ suit, slam interest

9 The Swedish Club in competition

If the opponents interfere a mini-club opener can not take action unless responder has shown some strength. The maxi-club, on the other hand, must act. Examples:

- 1♣–(1♥)–P–(P). Mini-club must pass, maxi-club must act.
- 1♣–(P)–1♦–(1♥). Mini-club must pass, maxi-club must act.
- 1♣–(P)–1♠–(2♦). Mini-club can act with spade support, maxi-club must act.

If third hand bids, and responder has shown a major, opener uses support doubles (mini- or maxi-club), direct raises (mini-club) or jump raises (maxi-club) to show support. Other bids are natural with the maxi-club (the cue bid is a general forcing bid).

9.1 Transfers by responder

If 2nd hand interfere with 1♥ or lower, it is possible for responder to use transfers. Transferring at a low level shows 8+ hcp, while jumping in a suit (which can not be transferred to) shows 5–7 hcp.

1♣–(D)—

Pass	May be a strong hand, wishing to double for penalties later
Rdbl	4+ diamonds, 8+ hcp
1♦	4+ hearts, 8+ hcp
1♥	4+ spades, 8+ hcp
1♠	Balanced, no major, 8+ hcp
1NT	5+ clubs, 8+ hcp
2♣♦♥♠	5+ suit, 5–7 hcp

1♣–(1♦)—

Dbl	4+ hearts, 8+ hcp
1♥	4+ spades, 8+ hcp
1♠	Balanced, no major, 8+ hcp
1NT	5+ clubs, 8+ hcp
2♣	5+ clubs, 5–7 hcp
2♦	Asking for stopper, GF
2♥♠	5+ suit, 5–7 hcp

1♣–(1♥)—

Dbl	4+ spades, 8+ hcp
1♠	Balanced, 8+ hcp
1NT	5+ clubs, 8+ hcp
2♣	5+ diamonds, 8+ hcp
2♦	5+ diamonds, 5–7 hcp
2♥	Asking for stopper, GF
2♠	5+ spades, 5–7 hcp

If fourth hand passes, a mini-club opener accepts the transfer to a major with 2–3 card support and raises to the two-level with 4 card support. The maxi-club bids as if no interference has been made, but the cue bid asks for stopper and 1NT is strong. If the cue bid would be 2♦, then 2NT shows 4 card support and the maxi-club hand.

9.2 They interfere with 1♠

1♣–(1♠)–

Dbl	Take-out, 8+ hcp
1NT	Natural, 8–11 hcp
2♣♦♥	Natural, 8–12 hcp
2♠	Game forcing, asks for stopper
2NT	INV
3♣♦♥	Natural GF, 6+ suit

After a take-out double, if the third hand bids, opener may bid with the mini-club holding a 5 card minor or 4 hearts. Example:

1♣–(1♠)–D–(2♠);

Pass	Mini-club
Dbl	Maxi-club, no good bid
2NT	Maxi-club, natural
3♣♦	Mini-club, 5 card suit
3♥	Mini-club, 4 hearts
3♠	Maxi club, asking for stopper
4♣♦♥	Maxi-club, 6+ suit and min

9.3 They interfere with 1NT

I recommend that you use your normal 1NT defense, but double should show strength.

9.4 They interfere at the 2-level

I recommend that you treat opener as a hand that has opened a weak NT. Use Lebensohl or whatever method you use after they interfere over your 1NT opening.

9.5 They interfere with 2NT or higher

Double is for take-out, suits are forcing.