

THE MILLER CONVENTION

Opener	Responder
1NT	5♣

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♥
3NT	5♣

These and other "out-of-the-blue" jumps to 5♣ over a notrump bid are the Miller Convention, forcing to slam and inquiring about strength. It promises a 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 hand. The Miller Convention does not apply if clubs have been bid naturally by anyone, partner or opponents.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
2NT	5♣ is natural, not Miller

Miller must be a jump bid:

Opener	Responder
1NT	4NT
5♣	is part of the Boland convention (q.v.)

After a Miller 5♣ bid, partner shows his exact strength:

Opener	Responder
1NT	5♣
5♦	- minimum hand
5♥	- middling hand
5♠	- maximum hand

Responder may be able to place the contract on the basis of the response. Perhaps a 5♠ response gives a total of 35 HCP for the two hands, so responder bids 6NT instead of searching for a suit contract. If responder bids 5NT or any suit, she is looking for a suit contract. Opener bids his cheapest ranking biddable suit (Q10xx or better). Until a fit is found, each player shows biddable suits in "up-the-line" fashion. If no fit is uncovered, the partnership will play in 6NT.

The Miller bidder may also be looking for a grand slam. If she finds enough strength for seven, she must not make a non-forcing bid below that level:

Opener	Responder
2NT	5♣
5♠	5NT
6♣	7♦

Responder sees enough points for 7NT after the 5♠ reply (showing a maximum), but is willing to play in a safer suit contract if a good fit is available. The 5NT bid was forcing, but over 6♣ she must bid seven of something because a six-level bid could be passed. Opener can pass 7♦ with good four-card diamond support, without which he shows a biddable major suit if he has one. Otherwise, he bids 7NT. Remember, Miller denies a five-card or longer suit.

If a player bypasses a suit that was bid prior to the Miller bid, he shows that the suit was "unbiddable":

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
2NT	5♣ - Miller
5♦	5NT
6♠	

The 5♦ bid shows a minimum hand. Opener has a biddable spade suit, but his diamonds were weaker than Q10xx, or he would have bid 6♦ over 5NT. Opener's hand: ♠AQ32 ♥Q3 ♦Q762 ♣AKQ

If the Miller bidder names a suit previously bid by partner, she must have a biddable holding in the suit:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
2NT	5♣
5♥	6♦ shows biddable diamonds

With only Qxxx or less in diamonds, responder would bid 5NT over 5♥, giving opener a chance to show that diamonds are biddable.

The reason for requiring biddable suits in these auctions is to reduce the likelihood of playing a trump suit such as A432 opposite Q765 when notrump is likely to produce more tricks.