

# IMprecision

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# 1 Openings

- 1♣ strong, 16+ points or 17+ if balanced
- 1♦ 11-15 hcp, no 5-card major, no 6-card minor (except 6-5 minors)
- 1♥ ♠ natural 5+ cards, 8-15 hcp but 12-13 if balanced
- 1NT 13<sup>+</sup>-16 balanced may include a major; 14<sup>+</sup>-17 3rd/4th seat
- 2♣ ♦ 6+ cards, 10-15 hcp intermediate
- 2♥ ♠ weak two bids
- 2NT 5-10 hcp, both minors

3NT 8.5+ tricks in ♠/♥

## 2 1♣ Opening

Our 1♣ structure is based on a mix of relay and natural bidding. The design goal is to better cater for intermediate (semi-positive and weak-positive) hands opposite 1♣. We will initially break responder's hand into four categories, which are defined as follows:

1. Super-positive hands containing 7+R (A=3, K=2, Q=1)
2. Weak-positive hands with game forcing values and 2-6R
3. Semi-positive hands with 2-6R and less than game values
4. Negative hands which don't fit this requirement

All hands in the negative or super-positive category will always respond 1♦. Balanced positive and hands that responder would prefer to ask rather than tell also starts with 1♦. The other responses are shape-showing. The initial responses to the 1♣ opening are as follows:

1♣	16+H, 17+H if Bal
1♦	Negative or Super-positive, any shape; or Balanced positive; or hands prefer to ask
1♥	4+♠ (may have longer side suit), balanced semi-positive or unbalanced
1♠	5+♦ or balanced semi-positive without 4♠
1NT	5+♥; denies 4♠ or 5+♣
2♣	5+♣, not balanced, no 4-card major
2♦	5+♣ and 4+♥
2♥	3-suited, short in ♠
2♠	3-suited, short in ♣
2NT	Game force with 6♣ and no singleton, 3-6R
3♣	Game force with a 7-card minor and no singleton, 3-6R
3♦	Game force with 2263 shape, 3-6R
3♥	Game force with 2362 shape, 3-6R
3♠	Game force with 3262 shape, 3-4R
3NT	Game force with 3262 shape, 5-6R

### 2.1 Relay Structure

Our relay structure is based in parts on symmetric relay. The shape resolution depends on whether responder's hand type:

1. One-suited (5+ in one suit and no side 4-card suit)
2. Two-suited (4+ in two suits, and 9+ together)
3. Three-suited (4+ in three suits)
4. Balanced (4333, 4432, or 5m332)

For each of the hand types, there is a default "entry point," i.e., where the relay responses start. When we refer to a relay sequence being "on track," "up a step," etc. These are relative to these defaults.

The basic idea in symmetric relay is to use the same bids to show the same *relative* shape. For example, 3♦ will always show some 5431 shape in two-suited sequences. Generally, cheaper bids show high short-ages or low length, and the shapes are resolved according to decreasing frequency. The precise details are as follows.

### 2.1.1 One-suited Structure

The default entry point is 2♠. The responses are as follows:

- 2♠ high shortage, or 6223 shape with doubleton in high suit
- 2NT middle shortage
- 3♣ equal shortage, if reached directly 7222 or 6322 (3 in high suit)
- 3♦ 5332, if reached directly then low shortage
- 3♥ 6331
- 3♠ 7321
- 3NT 7330, 2-3 RP
- 4♣+ 7330, 4 RP, etc.

Note that if responder has single-suited minor, then 5332 is ruled out, so 3♦ will show 6331, etc.

### 2.1.2 Two-suited Structure

The default entry point is 2♥. However, when we know the primary suit (5+ cards) in an uneven two-suiter (5+ in one and exactly 4 in the other), the entry point is 2NT. The entry point for a 55 two-suiter is 2♠.

- 2♥ reverser, 4 cards in the higher suit and 5+ in the lower
- 2♠ 5-5 or longer two suiter
- 2NT high shortage
- 3♣ 5422
- 3♦ 5431
- 3♥ 6421
- 3♠ 6430
- 3NT+ 7420, 2-3 RP, etc.

Note that 7411 is missing. To show 7411, responder first show high shortage, then 3NT. 7420 is then shifted up one step.

After 2♠ showing 5-5, 2NT is the next relay, over which

- 3♣ high shortage
- 3♦ 5611 or 6511 (resolved in that order)
- 3♥ 5521
- 3♠ 5530
- 3NT 5620
- 4♣+ 6520, 2-3 RP, etc.

### 2.1.3 Three-suited Structure

Three-suited hands are shown by first showing the shortness, then in order of 4441, then 5440 with the five-card suit from the lowest to the highest. Responder shows shape as follows:

- ♣ 2♠, then 3♦+ (3♣ is the relay)
- ♦ 1♥, then 1NT, then 2♦, then 2NT, then 3♦+
- ♥ 1♥, then 1NT, then 2♦, then 2♠, then 3♦+
- ♠ 2♥, then 2NT+

Opener shows shortness as follows:

- ♣ 1♥, then 2♥, then 2NT, then 3♦+
- ♦ 1♠, then 2♣, then 2♥, then 3♣, then 3♥+
- ♥ 1♠, then 2♣, then 2♥, then 2NT, then 3♥+
- ♠ 1♥, then 2♦, then 2♠, then 3♣+

## 2.2 Sequences after responses 1♠ through 2♠

The relay is always the minimum *suit bid*; over 1♠ and 2♠ we will use the lowest notrump bid as natural and not forcing. The relay will establish a game-force, and continuations are symmetric style on the usual track. In general after the first relay we will show suits in the order *diamonds-clubs-hearts*. Most relay breaks are natural. The details are as follows:

### 1♣-1♠ 5+♦ or balanced without 4♠

---

- 1NT Natural, 17-19, systems are on
- 2♣ Game forcing relay
  - 2♦ balanced hand, no 4♠
    - 2♥ relay
      - 2♠ doubleton ♠, symmetric with below
      - 2NT 4333 without 4♠, resolve numerically
      - 3♣ five clubs with three spades; relay for shortness
      - 3♦ five diamonds with three spades; relay for shortness
      - 3♥ three spades and high shortage (so 3244)
      - 3♠ three spades and mid shortage (so 3424)
      - 3NT three spades and low shortage (so 3442)
    - 2NT Right-siding notrump; Keri continuations
    - 3♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ three-suited short in other suit of same rank; Keri-style splinter
  - 2♥ 4♥ and 5+♦
  - 2♠ 4♣ and 5+♦, losing one step from two-suited table
  - 2NT+ 6+♦ single-suited; losing a step but skipping 5332
- 2♦ 16-19, 6+ in either M, or 4♥+ longer suit or 1444
  - Pass Very min (5-6), 6+♦, can't stand the majors
  - 2♥ min, ≤ 3♥
  - 2♠ min, 3+♥, ≤ 3♠
    - Pass 6+M
    - 2♠ (over 2♥) 6+♠
    - 2NT 1444
    - 3m 4♥+ 5+m
    - 3♥ (over 2♠) min, 6♥
  - 2NT max, asking
    - 3m 4♥+ 5+m
    - 3M 6+M
    - 3NT 1444
  - 3m Natural and forcing (3♣ promises ♦ as well)
  - 3M P/C, not max but with good fit for majors
- 2M 16-19, 5+M + 4+ side suit
  - Pass min, 2-3M (very min if 3M)

2M+1 asking for second suit (natural responses, 2NT = ♠)  
 2NT max, 2♥  
 3M min, 3M  
 New suit natural, GF  
 2NT 16-19, 5+ minors  
 3m 16-19, 6+m

1♣-1NT 5+♥, denies 4♠ or 5+♣

---

2♣ GF relay  
 2♦ 4+♦, not a reverser, then into two-suited table  
 2♥ 5+♥ and 4♣, then into two-suited table  
 2♠+ 5+♥ single suited, high shortage (etc one-suited table)  
 2♦ 5+♠ and less than GF  
 2♥ 0-1♠ and minimum values (NF)  
 2♠ 2♠ and minimum values (NF)  
 2NT 2♠ and game force values  
 3♣ 0-1♠, 4♣, game force values  
 3♦ 0-1♠, 4+♦, game force values  
 3♥ 0-1♠, 6+♥, game force values  
 3♠ 3♠, minimum values (NF)  
 3NT 36xx, choice of game, game forcing  
 4♣♦ splinter with 3♠, game forcing  
 2♥ minimum hand, usually 2♥ exactly  
 Pass Non-game force, not extra hearts  
 2♠ 5♥ and 5♦ invitational values (choice of contract)  
 3♥ Re-invite with 6+♥  
 Else Natural and game force  
 2♠ at least 5-5 in the minors  
 2NT GF relay; symmetric  
 3♣♦♥ non-forcing suggesting a contract  
 3♠ ask for spade help for 3NT  
 2NT 3-suited short ♥, not forcing  
 3♣ 6+♣ and 0-1♥, not forcing  
 3♦ 6+♦ and 0-1♥, not forcing  
 3♥ 3♥ but very minimum hand

1♣-2♣ 5+♣ unbalanced, no 4cM

---

2♦ Relay; GF  
 2♥ 4♦ (reverser)  
 2♠ 5+♣ and 5+♦  
 2NT+ 6+♣ one-suited, lose a step but skip 5332s  
 2♥ 5+♥, but not eager to play hearts opposite shortage  
 Pass 2♥ and minimum values  
 2♠ Maximum with 2♥  
 2NT both minors short in ♥, minimum, not forcing

- 3♣ 6+♣ and minimum, 0-1♥, not forcing
- 3♦ Short/weak diamonds, 6+♣, 0-1♥, game force
- 3♥ 3♥ and a minimum, not forcing
- 3♠ Short/weak spades, 5+♣, 0-1♥, game force
- 3NT Suggests a contract, 0-1♥
- 4♣ 3♥ and very good clubs, game force
- 4♦ 3♥ and singleton or void diamonds, game force
- 4♥ 3♥ and a maximum
- 2♠ 5+♠, but not eager to play spades opposite shortage
- Pass 2♠ and minimum
- 2NT both minors short in ♠, minimum, not forcing
- 3♣ 6+♣ and minimum, usually 0-1♠
- 3♦ Short/weak diamonds, 6+♣, 0-2♠, game force
- 3♥ Short/weak hearts, 5+♣, 0-2♠, game force
- 3♠ 3♠ and minimum, not forcing
- 3NT Suggests a contract, less than 3♠
- 4♣ 3♠ and very good clubs, GF
- 4♦ 3♠ and short diamonds, GF
- 4♥ 3♠ and short hearts, GF
- 2NT No 5-card major, 1-2♣, not forcing
- 3♣ 3-4♣, not forcing
- 3♦♥♠ Very good six-plus card suit, not forcing but very invitational

1♣-2♦ 5+♣ and 4+♥

---

- 2♥ GF relay; two-suited table
- 2♠ 5+♠, but not eager to play spades opposite shortage
- Pass 2♠ and minimum
- 2NT typically 1435 or 1525 minimum
- 3♣ 6+♣ and minimum, usually 0-1♠
- 3♦ Short/weak diamonds, 5+♣, 4♥, 0-2♠, game force
- 3♥ 5+♥, 0-2♠, game force
- 3♠ 3♠ and minimum, not forcing
- 3NT Suggests a contract, less than 3♠, only 4♥
- 4♣ 3♠ and very good clubs, GF
- 4♦ 3♠ and void diamonds, GF
- 4♥ 3♠ and very good hearts, GF
- 2NT No major fit, 1-2♣, not forcing
- 3♣ 3-4♣, not forcing
- 3♦♠ Very good six-plus card suit, not forcing but very invitational
- 3♥ Four hearts but very minimum, often slow cards in ♠+♦

1♣-2♥ 3-suited, short in ♠

---

- 2♠ GF relay
- 2NT 1444
- 3♣ 0445

3♦ 0454  
 3♥ 0544  
 2NT Natural NF, often 5+♠  
 Else Natural and NF

**1♣-2♠ 3-suited, short in ♣**

---

2NT Natural and NF  
 3♣ GF relay  
   3♦ 4441  
   3♥ 4450  
   3♠ 4540  
   3NT 5440  
 Else Natural and NF

**1♣-2NT game force with 6♣, no singleton, 3-6R**

---

3♣ Relay  
   3♦ 2236 shape  
   3♥ 2326 shape  
   3♠ 3226 and 3-4R  
   3NT 3226 and 5-6R  
 3♦ Relay with short clubs

**1♣-3♣ game force with a 7-card minor, no singleton, 3-6R**

---

3♦ Relay  
   3♥ 2227  
   3♠ 2272 and 3-4R  
   3NT 2272 and 5-6R

### 2.3 Continuations after 1♣-1♥

Here we can make use of a 1♠ relay which is not necessarily game forcing. This bid normally shows either game force values, or a 5-card or longer major; if 6+♥ then spade tolerance is implied as well. Non-relay bids are natural and tend to deny the hands described.

**1♣-1♥ 4+♠**

---

1♠ Relay; if not GF will be any hand with a 5cM  
 1NT either balanced, or ♠+♦ two-suiter, or three-suited short in a red suit  
   2♣ GF relay  
     2♦ balanced or three-suited  
     2♥ 4♠+5+♦ (reverser)  
     2♠ 5+♠ and 5+♦  
     2NT+ 5+♠ and 4♦ (two-suited)  
   Else Natural non-GF  
 2♣ ♠+♣ two-suiter  
   2♦ GF relay normal two-suited track  
   2♥ 5+♥, natural and not forcing  
   2♠ very minimum hand with 4♠



- 2♦ 5+♠ single suited
- 2♥ GF relay (one-suiter table)
- 2♠ NF, tends to imply 5♥ or more, 2+♠
- 2NT NF, typically 5♥ and a singleton spade
- 3♣♦♥ Shortness, agreeing spades
- 3♠ GF in spades, ask for cue
- 2♥ both majors; reverser
- 2♠ 5+♠ and 5+♥
- 2NT+ 5+♠ and 4♥ (regular track)
- 1NT 17-19 natural; systems on
- 2♣ Natural, systems on as if 2♣ opened, **except** with 2♥ and 2♠ flipped
- 2♦ Natural, systems on as if 2♦ opened, **except** with 2♥ and 2♠ flipped
- 2♥ One-suited with 6+♥, tend not to be interested in spades
- 2♠ GF relay, now one-suiter table (lose a step, but skip 5332)
- 2NT invitational, not a good heart fit
- 3♣♦ natural, 5+ card suit, may have 5 spades or not, no heart fit
- 3♥ invitational, often doubleton
- 2♠ both minors (any strength)
- 2NT GF relay
- Else NF natural
- 2NT not-quite GF, long minor and wanting to declare NT
- Else Natural, single suited, close to game values

The balanced and three-suited hands resolve relays as follows:

**1♣-1♥-1♠-1nt-2♦ balanced or three-suited**

---

- 2♥ relay
- 2♠ high (♥) shortage; 0-2♥ (now 3♣ shows 42(34) and 3♦+ 3-suited)
- 2NT mid (♦) shortage and three-suited; 0-1♦ (4414 first, then numeric)
- 3♣ mid (♦) shortage and balanced; 4324 or 4423 (numeric)
- 3♦ 4333 exactly
- 3♥ 4342
- 3♠ 4432

## 2.4 Continuations after 1♣-1♦

Most of the time opener will rebid at the one level. The 1NT rebid is natural, showing about 17-20 balanced (not enough for game opposite a flat 0-4). The 1♠ rebid is also natural, showing 4+♠ with potentially a longer minor (but not longer hearts except 4504 exactly). Rebidding 1♠ is wide-ranging and forcing one round; if bid *on a balanced hand* it guarantees a hand too strong for the 1NT rebid (so 21+). The 1♥ rebid is two-way, either natural or a balanced 21+ *without four spades*. Rebidding 1♥ may be hearts and a longer diamond suit, but will not be hearts and a longer black suit. Three-suited hands bid the major *of the opposite color as the shortage*. Opener's other rebids include natural 2m bids on a minimum strong club (these deny four spades, but the 2♣ call could include four hearts with longer clubs) and other specialized rebids. The main idea is that *responder* will relay when holding a game-forcing hand, and otherwise will scramble (or pass if opener's rebid is not forcing).

The relay continuations after 1♣-1♦-1M-1NT are designed to be similar to the sequences 1♣-1♥-1♠, except that one-suiters have been swapped with major two-suiters (so one-suiters resolve directly) and that we lose a step on all non-one-suited sequences.

1♣-1♦ Negative or Super-positive; any shape

---

- 1♥ Either of:
1. 4+♥ unbalanced; may have longer ♦ but rarely longer black suit
  2. 21+ hcp in a balanced hand without 4♠ (with or without 4♥)
- 1♠ Double negative
- 1NT 21-23 balanced without 4♠; systems on
  - 2♣ 5+♥; still wide range of values; forcing
  - 2♦ Either 4-5♠, or 3♠ with only 1♥
    - 2♥ 16-20, 5+♥ and a 4+card minor
    - 2♠ 16-20, 4♠ and 5+♥
    - 2NT 5+♥ and 4+♣, 21+ hcp (only 3♣ or 3♥ is NF now)
    - 3♣ 5+♥ and 4+♦, 21+ hcp (only 3♦ or 3♥ is NF now)
    - 3♦ 6+♥, 21+ hcp (only 3♥ is NF now)
    - 3♥ 4♠ and 5+♥, 21+ hcp (only 3♠ is NF now)
  - 2♥ 2-3♥, not worth single raise, not 2♥ and 4+♠
    - Pass Minimum hand
    - New Suit Natural, 21+, forcing one round
    - 2NT or 3♥ Game try, natural, not forcing (21-23ish)
  - 2♠ 6+♠, suggest playing here
  - 2NT 3♥, values and a side singleton (decent single raise)
  - 3♣ ♦ Six card suit, usually 0-1♥
  - 3♥ Four+ hearts, but very weak hand
  - 2♦ 4♥ and 5+♦, 16-20, not forcing
  - 2♥ 6♥, 16-20, not forcing
  - 2♠ 4♥ and 5+ diamonds, 21+ hcp but less than GF
  - 2NT balanced game force; systems on
  - 3♣ 5♥, 5+♣, game force
  - 3♦ 4♥, 5+♦, game force
  - 3♥ 6+♥ and game force, setting trumps
- 1NT GF relay
- 2♣ Hearts and diamonds, or balanced without 4♠
    - 2♦-2♥ balanced; continuations like 1♣-1♠-2♣-2♦ but up one step
    - 2♦-2♠+ Two-suited, up one step
  - 2♦ ♥+♣; rebid 2♠ is 3-suited, else up one step no reversers
  - 2♥ ♥+♠; rebid 2NT is 3-suited, else up one step no reverser/long 2-suiter
  - 2♠+ one-suited ♥, regular track
- 2♣ Negative with 5+♣ and 5+♦
- 2♦ Negative with 5+♦ and 5+♠
- 2♥ Negative with 4+♥ and decent values
- 2♠ Asking location of values (game try in ♥)
  - 2NT 21+ balanced, no 4♥, systems on
  - 3♣ ♦ Short suit game tries for ♥
  - 3♥ General game try for ♥
- 2♠ Negative with 5+♠ and 5+♣

- 1♠ 4+♠ unbalanced; may have longer minor (but not longer ♥)  
 1NT GF relay  
 2♣ Spades and diamonds, or balanced, or 3-suited short in a red suit  
 2♦-2♥ Balanced or 3-suited, same as 1♣-1♥-1♠-1n-2♣-2♦, but lose a step  
 2♦-2♠+ ♠+♦, losing a step  
 2♦ ♠+♣ (2♥ relay and lose a step)  
 2♥ 5+♠ and 4+♥ (2♠ relay, lose a step, no reversers)  
 2♠+ One-suited spades, regular track  
 2♣ Negative, 0-2♠, 3+♣ (2443 is okay)  
 2♦ Negative, 0-2♠, 5+♦  
 2♥ Negative, 0-2♠, 5+♥  
 2♠ 3-4♠  
 2NT Splinter spade raise, non-GF (3♣ asks and high/mid/low); 9 losers typical  
 3♣ ♦ ♥ 6-card suit with 3♠ also, something like 9 losers  
 3♠ 4+♠, 9 losers, no singleton (i.e. Kxxx xx Jxxxx xx)  
 1NT 17-20 balanced or nearly so; systems on  
 2♣ Natural, 16-20 and either 6+♣ or 5+♣ and 4♦ or 4♥  
 2♦ GF relay  
 2♥ 5+♣ and 4♥  
 2♠ 5+♣ and 4♦ (lose a step)  
 2NT+ 6+♣, one-suited table but skip 5332  
 2♦ Natural, 16-20, no 4cM, either 6+♦ or 5♦ and 4♣  
 2♥ GF relay  
 2♠ 5+♦ and 4♣ (lose a step)  
 2NT+ 6+♦, one-suited table lose a step, skip 5332  
 2♥ 4♥ and 5+♣, 21+ hcp, forcing one round  
 2♠ relay, GF, regular track  
 Else Natural with 0-4 hcp  
 2♠ Both minors at least 5-5, unlimited  
 2NT GF relay (regular track)  
 3♣ ♦ to play (negative hand)  
 2NT 6+ in a minor, no 4cM, 21+hcp. If unbal, less than a GF.  
 3♣ Pass or correct (3♥+ semi-natural and announces a GF)  
 3♦ Asks the minor (3♥ shows clubs, 3♠ shows diamonds)  
 3♥ ♠ Natural, forcing, at least a good five card suit  
 3♣ ♦ GF, short in om  
 3♥ ♠ GF, short in OM, one or both minors

## 2.5 After Shape Resolves

Once describer has shown complete shape, the lowest relay asks for number of RPs (Ace = 3, King = 2, Queen = 1). Of course 3NT is never a relay. The steps are:

Step	Responder	Strong Opener	Strong Balanced Opener
Step 1	2-3	9-10	12-13
Step 2	4	11	14
Step 3	5	12	15
Step 4	6 and zoom	13 and on	16 and on

When we play relays after our own 1♦ opener, and opener is describing, the range for RP is:

- Opener has 5-11 RP in general. After 11 we zoom to locations.
- If opener has shown a non-minimum (e.g. 1♦-1M-jump raise) then opener has 7-11 RP.

As a general rule, we try not to zoom directly past 3NT without a specific RP ask (i.e. we don't just zoom from shape past 3NT). We make an exception when strong ♣ opener is describing, because we have already lost a step and because these are very slammish auctions. In some cases when 3♠ is the last "pattern" bid we will use 3♠ to show the lowest RP step and 3NT for all others (so as not to zoom past 3NT).

### 2.5.1 Follow-ups to RP ask

Once RPs are shown we show parity of top three honors in each suit by halting if even parity and skipping onwards if odd parity. All suits will be scanned (excluding voids but including singletons) in order of length in describer's hand with higher suits first in case of ties. In the case where RPs are shown with the first step (which has two possibilities), we stop with the minimum, and zoom into answering parity.

After showing all parities, we next shows the number of RP in the first suit with only one honor, if such suit exist, and stop if odd (A or Q) or skip a step if even (K). We may zoom into answering this, but we never zoom beyond this ask.

After answering the parity question, we next ask for jacks.

### 2.5.2 4♦ end-signal

When the relay is below 4♦, then 4♦ will be used as an all-purpose signoff. This bid puppets to 4♥, after which opener can sign off in any suit. Bidding 3NT is always a signoff as well. These signoffs should usually be respected, but there are a few exceptions.

Pulling a signoff is allowed with substantial extras. For a semi-positive hand type, a pull shows a full 6 RPs and at least 12 hcp (this is *very* rare). For opener, a pull shows at least 12 RPs. If shape is fully resolved, then continue relaying as if partner had asked (so for a semi-positive pull, move on to parity, for opener pulling show controls via steps with the first step being 12). If shape is not fully resolved, then pulls are essentially natural bids (but see the above guarantees).

### 2.5.3 RKC asks

If 4♦ is available to be the end-signal for signoff, then other non-relay bids above 3NT will be Roman key-card asks (1430 responses). The trump suit is determined by the longest-to-shortest suit in describer's hand, with ties broken by game order. This sets the trumps and frees up the non-trump bids as asking bids. Thus, in the follow-ups, if asker skips a step, it skips the next honor to be asked. The honor to be asked are determined by: trump Q, then kings (longest-then-highest), then queens (longest-then-highest). These asks are useful to ask for very specific cards.

## 2.6 Relay Breaks

Failing to relay has a number of possible meanings depending on the auction. We have the following situations, presented in order of how early in the auction they tend to occur:

### 2.6.1 Less-than-game-force Relay Break

These occur immediately after the initial response to 1♣, or after 1♣-1♥-1♠ and responder's rebid below 2♥. Most breaks of this sort are natural and non-forcing, although there are a few exceptions (most particularly after 1♣-1NT). After such a break, responder can pass, bid notrump at the lowest level, raise opener's suit one level, or bid his already-shown suit at the lowest available level as non-forcing calls. Other bids are

generally forcing. In some cases we have more specific agreements which are summarized in the appropriate sections.

## 2.6.2 Keri-style Relay Break

Relay breaks after responder shows a balanced (or 3-suited) hand via 2♦. In this case we play relay breaks which mirror our structure over 1NT. Bidding 2NT is natural and game forcing, mostly to right-side NT. Continuations are:

3♣ not 4333  
 3♦ ask, promises at least one four-card major  
     3M 4M  
     3NT deny 4M  
     3M 5M  
 3♦ any 4333  
     3M ask partner to raise with 4M  
 3♥ 5♥ (then 3♠ shows 5♠)  
 3♠ 5♠, 3♥  
 3NT 5♠, 2♥

Three-level relay breaks show three-suited hands with splinters in the suit of the same rank (just as we play directly over our 1NT opening).

## 2.6.3 Shortness-showing Relay Break

These occur when we are *already in a game forcing* relay sequence (and responder hasn't just bid 2♦ to show a balanced hand). The lowest relay break shows shortage in opener's longest (or first-shown) suit, the next break in the next suit, and so forth. After this relay break, we continue normal description of shape (losing a step or two). However, certain signoff bids will change meaning. An attempt to sign off in 3NT is conditional on strength opposite the short suit, and a "control asking" bid excludes the king and the queen of the short suit. The number of RP promised for each step is *subtracted by two*. A subsequent RKC ask is exclusion blackwood.

## 2.6.4 Stopper asks

These must be below 3NT, and apply only when either shape is fully resolved, or when relayer has bypassed a previous opportunity to use a relay break to show shortness. Stopper asks are only about three-card or two-card fragments. In response to the stopper ask, the responses are:

3NT min (2- bad 5/9-11RP), suit stopped (Qxx or Kx or better); Cheapest step asks for number of RPs, whereas 4NT invites 6NT.  
 Step 1 min, suit not-stopped; Cheapest step asks for number of RPs outside of the unstopped suit, new suits are natural NF  
 Step 2 max, suit not-stopped; Cheapest step asks for number of RPs outside of the unstopped suit, new suits are natural NF  
 Step 3+ good 5 / 12RP, suit stopped, zooming to RP then parity

## 2.6.5 Signing off and RKC asks

These have been described in the previous section. If the auction is sufficiently high such that the relay would be 4♦ or above, then *any relay break* is a signoff in the suit bid.

## 2.7 Interference with 1♣

If the opponents bid 1♥, then we basically play systems on. A double shows a 1♥ response (so 4+♠ or a balanced semi-positive) and higher bids have the same meaning as if the opponents had passed. A pass of 1♥ is forcing and shows either a very weak or very strong hand, after which opener's balancing double shows 4+♥ (this double is sometimes passed, but otherwise our normal methods apply). If the opponents bid 1♦, then double shows the *strong* 1♦ response (game forcing) and pass shows either a very weak response or a penalty pass (but only penalty pass if 1♦ was natural). This pass is *not forcing* but opener will normally balance anyway. Higher bids after the 1♦ overcall are the same as if opponents had passed. After a double:

Redouble game forcing values with some club length; often this is desire to penalize

Pass 0-4 hcp, natural bidding

1♦ the game forcing 1♦ bid (7+ relay points) with systems on

1♥+ normal responses as if opponents had passed

If the opponents bid 1♠ or above, relays are off. We play transfers at the two level, where the cheapest two-level bid transfers to the next suit and so on, but there is never a transfer to a suit which would not be naturally biddable at the two-level. A double by responder is takeout and not necessarily game forcing, guaranteeing at least 5 points. Jumps by responder are transfers to the next higher suit, showing about 4-7 with a decent long suit. For example after 1♣-1♠:

Pass at most a bad 8 hcp, if 5-8 normally length in spades

X takeout double, 5+ points

1NT balanced hand, game forcing

2♣ Transfer to diamonds

2♦ Transfer to hearts

2♥ Transfer to spades

2♠ Transfer to clubs

2NT transfer to club, something like a club preempt

3♣ ♦ ♥ transfers, something like a preempt in the suit indicated

Transfer jump followed by a new suit bid shows a very distributional two-suiter willing to play in game in one of the suits, but with no desire to defend and without the strength for a pure values game force. Non-jump transfers guarantee constructive values but are not necessarily game forcing.

## 2.8 Interference After the Response

### 2.8.1 After 1♣-1♦

- Over Dbl: systems on, except we pass with minimum balanced hands.
- Over 1♥: systems on, double shows 4+♥ or 21+ balanced.
- Higher interference: systems are off, revert to natural bidding. Doubles are takeout oriented and lebensohl-type methods apply to distinguish responder's weak hands from the game force hands.

### 2.8.2 After 1♣-higher response

- Over Dbl: Pass = relay, Rdbl = business, Bids = natural.
- Over overcalls up to two-level: see below.

- Higher interference: natural, Dbl is for takeout and pass is non-forcing.

For overcalls at the two-level or below, then we play basically natural methods with a few caveats.

Pass Either wants to penalize, or non-GF hand not-suited for double, or stopper ask  
 Dbl Almost always, unless GF, and have the suit stopped  
     Cheapest NT weak t/o  
     Cue strong t/o  
 Cheapest NT GF, suit stopped  
 New suit 10+ cards in two suits  
 Dbl Cooperative, usually Hxx (or xxx or Hx if the suit is promised by responder)  
 Cheapest NT Raise + stopper, forcing one round. With a min, responder rebids his suit  
 Cue GF, void in overcalled suit  
 Others Natural, GF

### 2.8.3 During relays

If opponents interfere later in a relay sequence, then doubles and redoubles by the person doing the asking are for business. The general rule is that relays are still on as long as we have not lost more than two steps. An alternative view of this rule is that relays are on as long as opponent's bids have not taken an entire level. Of course, these are cumulative.

If opponents interfere in front of the relayer, pass takes the step of the relay, and in "response" to this, double is first step by responder. If opponents interfere in front of the responder, pass is the first step and double is the second step, and so on; after the pass, relayer can double to cash in, or bid the next step to continue relaying.

## 3 1♦ Opening

The 1♦ opening shows either 11-13 balanced or 11-15 points with any three suited hand (no 5-card major) or 11-15 points with both minors. In any case it denies a five-card major and denies a six-card minor unless holding 6-5 or better in the minor suits. Responses to 1♦ are basically natural:

1♥♠ 4+ cards in the suit, may have longer minor  
 1NT about 6-11 hcp, no 4-card major, no game opposite balanced max  
 2♣ 4+♣, 12+ points, no 4-card major, may have longer ♦ suit  
 2♦ 4+♦, usually single-suited, 12+ points  
 2♥♠ natural and weak, deny game interest unless a big major suit fit  
 2NT 13-16 hcp, balanced GF; **OR** weak jump shift in either minor  
 3m 7-card suit headed by two of top three honors or (A|K)JT, no side A or K

### 3.1 1♦-1M Continuations

After a one-of-a-major response, most of opener's rebids are natural. The bid just below partner's major good raise of the major, the step just above shows a min raise with a side void, the next three shows a maximum hand with 4-card support and a side 5-card minor, in numeric order, and the next four a max raise with a side void in numeric order. So after 1♦-1♥:

1♠ 4♠, no 4♥, could be a balanced hand  
 1NT 11-13 balanced; usually no 4M; maybe 31(45) or 22(45) majors

- 2♣ 4+♣ and 4+♦, denies 3+♥ or 4♠, may have longer clubs
- 2♦ good raise of hearts, not 3♥ and small doubleton; Rdbl by opener after dbl shows 4♥
- 2♥ normal heart raise, not 4♥ and 5431 shape; Rdbl by opener after dbl shows 4♥
- 2♠ 4-card heart raise with a side void
- 2NT 14-15 hcp, 4♥ and singleton ♠ (1444|1435|1453)
- 3♣ 14-15 hcp with 5+♣ and 5+♦
- 3♦ 14-15 hcp, 4♥ and singleton ♦ (4414|3415)
- 3♥ 14-15 hcp, 4♥ and singleton ♣ (4441|3451)

After 1♦-1♠ opener's rebids are similar:

- 1NT 11-13 balanced; 1435 or 24(25); or maybe 13(45) or 1444; NOT 22(45)
- 2♣ 4+♣ and 4+♦, denies 3+♠
- 2♦ 1453 exactly
- 2♥ good raise of spades, not 3♠ and small doubleton; Rdbl by opener after dbl shows 4♠
- 2♠ normal spade raise, not 4♠ and 5431 shape; Rdbl by opener after dbl shows 4♠
- 2NT 4-card spade raise with a side void
- 3♣ 14-15 hcp, 5+♣ and 5+♦
- 3♦ 14-15 hcp, 4♠ and singleton ♥ (4144|4135|4153)
- 3♥ 14-15 hcp, 4♠ and singleton ♦ (4414|4315)
- 3♠ 14-15 hcp, 4♠ and singleton ♣ (4441|4351)

If opponents interfere after 1♦-1M, we play double as takeout (usually implies 3M support), not just 3-card support for M.

### 3.1.1 1♦-1M-2M

Depending on strength and length in M, responder's options are:

- 2NT 4M and inv, non-forcing
- 3M 5+M and inv, non-forcing
- 3NT 4M and choice-of-game
- New suit 4+M, values in new suit, game-forcing
- Jumps 5+M, splinters, slam try

Over 2NT, opener passes with 3M and a min, bids a new suit with 3M and a max, bids 3M with 4M and a min, or bids 4M with 4M and max.

Over a new suit, opener bids 3M with 4M and a fitting hand, bids a new suit with 3M and suggesting weakness in the 4th suit, 3NT with shortage opposite responder's suits and usually with only 3M (discouraging), or jump in a new suit to splinter.

### 3.2 Checkback after 1♦-1M-1NT

After opener's 1NT rebid, we use 2♦ as a game forcing relay. The other bids are used to describe various signoffs, invites, and splinters. Note that we frequently raise on three-card support for the major (except for 4333 hands). Here are responder's followups after 1♦-1♠-1NT:

- 2♣ either ♦ signoff, or any invite
- 2♦ GF relay



2♥ 4+♥ and 5+♠, less than invite  
 2♠ 6+♠ (rarely 5♠), less than invite  
 2NT balanced invite, 4♠ only, no 5-minor  
 3♣ signoff in clubs  
 3♦ ♥(high) splinter  
 3♥ ♦(middle) splinter  
 3♠ ♣(low) splinter  
 3NT to play

After the 2♣ puppet, opener will normally bid 2♦. This guarantees holding at least three clubs (note that doubleton club is rare anyway since we often raise spades with 3442 shape). Opener can “super-accept” the puppet by bidding 2♥ (2452) or 2♠ (3442/3352). Each of these denies three clubs and shows a really good fit for diamonds in case responder has the signoff. After 1♦-1♠-1NT-2♣-2♦:

2♥ 4+♥ and 5+♠, invitational  
 2♠ 5+♠ invitational  
 2NT 4♠ and either 5♦ or 4144, invitational  
 3♣ 4♠ and 5+♣, invitational  
 3♦ 4♠ and 6♦, invitational  
 3♥ 5+♥ and 5+♠, invitational  
 3♠ 6+♠ with a good suit, invitational

After 1♦-1♥-1NT the continuations are similar:

2♣ either ♦ signoff, or any invite  
 2♦ GF relay  
 2♥ 6+♥ (rarely 5♥), less than invite  
 2♠ exactly invitational with 4441 shape (don't bid 2♣ with this)  
 2NT balanced invite, 4♥ only, no 5-minor  
 3♣ signoff in clubs  
 3♦ ♠(high) splinter  
 3♥ ♦(middle) splinter  
 3♠ ♣(low) splinter  
 3NT to play

When the auction goes 1♦-1♥-1NT, there's usually no reason to super-accept the puppet. This is because the notrump rebid pretty much denies holding four spades or four hearts, and therefore usually guarantees three in each minor. A 2♥ super-accept is possible though, and shows 3352 shape. After 1♦-1♥-1NT-2♣-2♦:

2♥ 5+♥ invitational  
 2♠ 4414 invitational  
 2NT 1444 invitational  
 3♣ 4♥ and 5+♣ invitational  
 3♦ 4♥ and 5+♦ invitational  
 3♥ 6+♥ with a good suit, invitational

### 3.2.1 Relays after 1♦-1M-1NT-2♦

There are no direct relays after the 1♦ opening. However, we do play relay continuations after a major suit response to 1♦ and opener's natural rebid. If the auction begins 1♦-1X-1Y, then we play the "XYZ" convention (also known as 2-way new minor force). Responder's 2♣ bid requests 2♦ from opener, either a diamond signoff or the start of an invitational sequence. Responder's 2♦ is game force relay. Opener bids as follows:

- 2♥ three card support for partner's major
- 2♠ honor-doubleton in partner's major
- 2NT singleton in partner's major; if reached via 2♥ then some 4333 shape. Over 3♣ relay, the shapes are spread out completely.
- 3♣ five clubs
- 3♦ five diamonds
- 3♥ (4432) with high shortage
- 3♠ (4432) with middle shortage
- 3NT (4432) with low shortage

In general make the lowest descriptive bid. Note that some of the inferences from these calls are different based on the auction. For example, after 1♦-1♥-1NT-2♦, then a 3♣ bid will be either 3235 shape or 2245 shape (these are the only possibilities with doubleton heart, five clubs, and no four spades). On the other hand, after 1♦-1♥-1♠-2♦, a 3♣ bid will be either 4225 shape or 4045 shape (not 1 or 3 hearts, four spades, and five clubs). After 1♦-1♠-1nt-2♦, a 3♣ bid shows 2335 or 2425 (since 22 majors hands bid 2♣ after 1♦-1♠). After a relay, shapes generally distinguish in order of frequency (most nearly balanced is first), or in numeric order where frequency is unclear.

### 3.2.2 Ordering the 3-suited hands

One common situation in relays after 1♦ is that opener shows a specific 4-card suit and a side shortness. In these situations, we will always show the shape by the order 4144, 4135, 4153, (4045, 4054), the latter two pairs are broken by numeric order.

On the other hand, if only a specific shortness is known, then we will order it first by the 3-card fragment, i.e., 31(45), then the remaining ones, ordered as above.

### 3.2.3 Continuations after relays

We continue with AKQ point asks much like in our relays over 1♣. The first step by opener shows 5-6 controls, with subsequent steps being one control each up to a maximum of 11 controls. Relay breaks are available as well.

## 3.3 Other relay-like sequences after 1♦-1M

### 3.3.1 Fourth-suit forcing relay

There are also relays after 1♦-1M-2♣. The fourth suit (forcing to game) will act as the relay. At this point opener's bids are:

- 2♠ shows four hearts (1444 or 1435 or 04(45))
- 2NT four-five in the minors, ((13)(45) or 22(45), 4 possible shapes)
- 3♣ five-five minors, high shortage
- 3♦ 11(56)

3♥ 2155  
 3♠ 3055  
 3NT 2056  
 4♣ 2065

Notice that the bids 3♣ and above are symmetric with the two suited table in our normal relays. After opener bids 2♠ or 2NT and a relay, we show singleton first and otherwise separate numerically (singleton is more likely than void, and while 22(45) is more balanced these hands also have an alternative rebid of 1NT in some auctions).

### 3.3.2 Jump raises

All of opener's jumps after 1♦-1M promises 4+ support and shapely hands. Responder can bid the next step other than the trump suit to find out opener's precise shape; three of the agreed major is always to play. The resolution is in numeric. For example, after 1♦-1♥:

1♦-1♥-2NT-3♣ :

3♦ 1444  
 3♥ 1435  
 3♠ 1453

1♦-1♥-3♦-3♠ :

3NT 4414  
 4♣ 3415

1♦-1♥-3♥-3♠ :

3NT 4441  
 4♣ 3451

If the auction starts with 1♦-1M and opener showing a void, then there are many steps available below three of the major. The lowest bid is a general relay and this is game forcing opposite a maximum with a void (but not necessarily min with void). The other bids exist primarily to reduce information to the opponents:

1♦-1♥-2♠ :

2NT relay for shape; GF opposite max with void  
 3♣ high (♠) void; 0445 or 0454 (3♦ asks)  
 3♦ mid (♦) void; 4405 (3♥ NF)  
 3♥ low (♣) void; 4450; minimum values and not forcing  
 3♠ low (♣) void; 4450; maximum values and game forcing  
 3♣ ask for shape only if max  
 3♦ high (♠) void; 0445 or 0454 (3♥ asks) and max  
 3♥ mid (♦) void; 4405 and max  
 3♠ low (♣) void; 4450 and max  
 4♥ minimum values with any void  
 3♦ asks for game bid only if max  
 3♥ to play

### 3.4 The good raise

After  $1\heartsuit-1M$ , bidding one below  $2M$  serves as a good raise. This is a hand not good enough to make one of the aforementioned jump raises, but better than a normal 11-13 balanced. The possibilities are a shapely three-card raise with max values (like 14-15 high), a shapely four-card raise lacking a void or the strength to jump (around 11-13 high), and a super-maximum balanced hand with four card support. Opposite these hands we will virtually never want to play in 2NT (the only hand with three trumps is very maximum in high cards). So we will use  $2M+1$  as an artificial inquiry, starting game-forcing relays. Continuations look as follows:

#### $1\heartsuit-1\heartsuit-2\heartsuit$ Good raise of hearts

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- $2\heartsuit$  Signoff, virtually never remove this
- $2\spadesuit$  Game-forcing relay
  - 2NT High ( $\spadesuit$ ) shortness, four-card raise, symmetric with  $1\heartsuit-1\heartsuit-2NT$
  - $3\clubsuit$  Three-card raise, implicitly  $\spadesuit$  shortness, resolve as 1345, 1354, 0355
  - $3\heartsuit$  Mid ( $\heartsuit$ ) shortness, four-card raise, symmetric with  $1\heartsuit-1\heartsuit-3\heartsuit$
  - $3\heartsuit$  Low ( $\clubsuit$ ) shortness, four-card raise, symmetric with  $1\heartsuit-1\heartsuit-3\heartsuit$
  - $3\spadesuit$  Balanced super-max hand, four-card support
- 2NT Shortness ask; game try
  - $3\clubsuit$  High ( $\spadesuit$ ) shortness, could be doubleton
  - $3\heartsuit$  Medium ( $\heartsuit$ ) shortness, could be doubleton
  - $3\heartsuit$  Low ( $\clubsuit$ ) shortness, could be doubleton
- $3\clubsuit\heartsuit$  Natural and game forcing; minor perhaps longer than  $\heartsuit$
- $3\heartsuit$  General game try
- $3\spadesuit$  Splinter
- 3NT Choice of games; usually pass this with balanced hand or 3-card raise
- $4\clubsuit\heartsuit$  Splinter
- $4\heartsuit$  To play

#### $1\heartsuit-1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit$ Good raise of spades

---

- $2\spadesuit$  Signoff, virtually never remove this
- 2NT Game-forcing relay
  - $3\clubsuit$  Three-card raise;  $3\heartsuit$  asks shortness (hi/med/low) normally don't resolve shape
  - $3\heartsuit$  High ( $\heartsuit$ ) shortness, four-card raise
  - $3\heartsuit$  Med ( $\heartsuit$ ) shortness, four-card raise
  - $3\spadesuit$  Low ( $\clubsuit$ ) shortness, four-card raise
  - 3NT Balanced hand
- $3\clubsuit$  Shortness ask; game try (hi/med/low, could be doubleton)
- $3\heartsuit\heartsuit$  Natural and game forcing
- $3\spadesuit$  General game try
- 3NT Choice of games; usually pass with balanced hand or 3-card raise
- $4\clubsuit\heartsuit\heartsuit$  splinter
- $4\spadesuit$  To play

### 3.5 $1\heartsuit-1NT$ and $1\heartsuit-1\heartsuit-1\spadesuit-1NT$

If opener rebids a minor, it shows five cards there. This is not specific about strength and does not promise length in the other minor. Responder should strive to bid on if game is possible opposite 14-15 hcp from

opener. If opener bids a major in which he could have four cards, it shows a maximum 4441 hand short in the other major. If opener raises to 2NT, it shows a maximum hand (14-15) short in a minor. If opener bids 3♣ it shows both minors.

1♦-1NT Responder denies 4M, about 6-11 hcp

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- Pass most hands with no game interest
- 2♣♦ natural, 5-card suit, need not have length in other minor
- 2♥♠ maximum, 1444 and 4144 respectively (bidding the long major)
- 2NT either 4441 or 4414 and 14-15 hcp (with a 5cm, bid 2m)
- 3♣ 4+ in each minor and major suit shortage, mostly preemptive

After 1♦-1♥-1♠-1NT Responder has about 6-11 hcp, 4-5♥

---

- Pass most hands with no game interest
- 2♣♦ natural, 5-card suit, 41(35) or 42(25) type
- 2♥ shows 3♥, does not particularly promise extras
- 2♠ a 4144 or 40(45) hand with 14-15 hcp
- 2NT 43(15) with 14-15 over which 3♣ is pass/correct, 3♦ asks, 3♥ to play

### 3.6 1♦-2m Continuations

After 1♦-2♣, opener's continuations:

- 2♦ minimum hand, if unbalanced will not have 4+♣
- 2♥ 4+♣ and three-suited hand
- 2♠ maximum, 0-1♣
- 2NT maximum, balanced 2-3♣
- 3♣ maximum, balanced 4+♣
- 3♦ maximum hand with 5-5 or better minors
- 3♥ **1453 exactly** (short other major/high shortage), maximum
- 3♠ **4153 exactly** (short other major/low shortage), maximum

If opener rebids 2♦, showing a minimum, responder's options include:

- 2♥ game force relay, symmetric with the above
- 2♠ minor suit stayman, usually signing of with 4-4 or better minors
- 2NT to play, but opener should correct to 3♣ holding 4+♣
- 3♣ to play, conceivably opener can bid on with a good fit for clubs
- 3♦♥♠ game forcing splinter

If opener rebids 2♥, showing a good fit, responder's options include:

- 2♠ GF relay. Opener shows shortness hi-mid-lo. Trumps are agreed, and further bidding are natural.
- 2NT asking max or min, not always GF (opener's 3♣ = min, else shortage)
- 3♣ nonforcing invite, starts stopper showing if opener has 13+ points

Over these rebids, we have relays available to determine opener's shapes. These are described below. The auctions after 1♦-2♦ are similar; opener's rebids are:

- 2♥ minimum values; if diamond fit will not be three-suited
- 2♠ 4+♦ and a three-suited hand

- 2NT maximum, 0-2♦
- 3♣ balanced maximum, 3+♦
- 3♦ maximum hand with both minors, at least 5-5
- 3♥ **1435 exactly** (short other major/high shortage), maximum
- 3♠ **4135 exactly** (short other major/low shortage), maximum

Over the 2♥ bid, we have 2♠ as symmetric game force and other bids as natural and not forcing. Over the 2♠ bid, 2NT is game force relay for shortage and 3♣ is firstly a range ask. In other auctions, most bids are stopper showing and 3♦ sets trumps in diamonds and starts cuebidding.

After opener shows a max, the only non-forcing sequences are: 1♦-2♣-2♠-3♣ and 1♦-2♦-2NT-3♦. These are usually reserves for hands that are too good for a direct 3m bid because of side values.

### 3.7 1♦-2NT Continuations

First, note that this is a mid-chart convention (GCC version at the end of the subsection). In response to this, opener bids 3♣ with a balanced hand or shortness in ♣, or bid any other shortness in the 3-level otherwise. After 1♦-2NT-3♣,

- Pass weak jump shift in ♣
- 3♦ weak jump shift in ♦
- 3♥ asking opener's hand type (3♠ short ♣, 3NT no shortness)
- 3NT doesn't care

Over other shortness bids (3X),

- Pass (only after 1♦-2NT-3♦) weak jump shift in ♦
- 4m weak jump shift in m, not excited by shortness
- 3NT 13-16 bal with the appropriate hand
- 4X ask for better minor, 13-16 bal
- 5m the weak jump shift comes alive!

In GCC event, we will play 1♦-2NT as simply 13-16 bal. Opener bids shortness at the 3-level, or raise 2NT to 3NT with a balanced hand.

### 3.8 1♦-3m Continuations

The sequence 1♦-3m is aimed at finding thin 3NT games (or 5m when appropriate). The idea is that responder's hand is narrowly defined, so that opener can judge when 3NT will be a good contract. Generally, opener should bid 3NT with a balanced hand and one of top three honors in responder's suit, and passes with other balanced hand or an unbalanced hand with shortness in responder's suit. If opener bids a new suit, he is showing shortness in the suit, and suggests playing 5m.

### 3.9 Interference over 1♦

#### 3.9.1 vs doubles

We play transfer responses starting from the redouble. In other words,

1♦ (Dbl) Takeout double

---

- Rdbl 4+♥.
- 1♥ 4+♠.

- 1♠ Transfer to NT, usually 8-11 hcp. With more, first transfer to a suit. Subsequent doubles by opener is takeout.
  - 1NT Transfer to ♣.
  - 2♣ Transfer to ♠.
- Higher Preemptive. Notrumps other than 3NT are unusual.

If opener accepts the major suit transfer at the one-level (opponents passing), this shows 1-3 cards in the major. We play our usual two-way new minor force methods if the auction continues without interference. Also note that the various raises are still on, so for example 1♦-X-XX-P-2♦ is a good heart raise.

### 3.9.2 vs simple overcalls

We play transfer responses whenever is sensible. The basic premise is that we would like to both be able to introduce suits cheaply (a la negative free bids) while not compromising our constructive bidding by too much.

**In general, when the opponents make a non-jump natural suit overcall we will use our two-level suit bids as transfers.** The basic rule is that the biddable (non-jump, non-cue) suits at the two-level are always shuffled. The lowest (non-jump and non-cue) bid will show the second-lowest suit and so forth. Suits which *could not be naturally introduced at the two-level* are not part of the transfer scheme; bidding such a suit at the three-level is natural. Note that accepting the transfer will place us at the two-level in each case *except the highest transfer bid*. This highest transfer must show “serious” values (normally enough for game opposite a balanced max). Other transfers are not normally “garbage” but could easily be the equivalent of a weak two bid.

Bidding notrump is normally natural if not a jump, a cuebid is a stopper ask, and jumps in suits are preemptive (but not total junk usually). Here are the specific sequences:

#### 1♦ (1♥) Natural overcall

---

- Dbl 4+♠.
  - 1♠ *Either* a takeout of ♥ lacking 4♠, *or* NFB with ♣.
  - 1NT 8-11 hcp, natural.
  - 2♣ NFB+ with ♠.
  - 2♦ 10+, 5+♣ unless GF
  - 2♥ weak or GF, 6+♠.
  - 2♠ Stopper ask for ♥.
- Jumps Preemptive. Notrumps other than 3NT are unusual.

#### 1♦ (1♠) Natural overcall

---

- Dbl 4+♥.
  - 1NT 8-11 hcp, natural.
  - 2♣ NFB+ with ♠.
  - 2♦ NFB+ with ♥.
  - 2♥ inv+, 5+♣ unless GF
  - 2♠ Stopper ask.
  - 3♣ Semi-constructive (like a good 3♣ preempt)
- Jumps Preemptive. Notrumps other than 3NT are unusual.

#### 1♦ (2♣) Natural overcall

---

- Dbl Both majors.
- 2♦ NFB+ with ♥.

- 2♥ NFB+ with ♠.
- 2♠ inv+, 5+♦ unless GF
- 2NT 11-12, natural inv
- 3♣ Stopper ask.
- 3♦ Semi-constructive.
- Jumps Preemptive.

1♦ (2♦) Natural overcall (if Michaels, unusual vs unusual defence)

---

- Dbl Both majors.
- 2♥ NFB+ with ♠
- 2♠ inv+, 5+♥
- 2NT 11-12, natural inv
- 3♣ GF with ♣.
- 3♦ Stopper ask.
- 3♥ Semi-constructive (good NFB)

### 3.9.3 vs 1NT overcalls

1♦ (1NT) Natural strong NT overcall

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- Dbl Penalty
- 2♣ Both majors
- 2X, 3♣ Semi-constructive
- 2NT Unusual

## 3.10 followups after transfer bids

Generally, after responder make a transfer bids, systems are *off*. With a balanced hand, opener generally accepts the transfer. Bidding a new suit at the lowest level shows a distributional hand short in the suit transferred to (usually this is the three-suiter, but a club bid could be both minors). After a *major suit* transfer that doesn't guarantee values, bidding notrump at the lowest level shows an inconvenient three-suiter (for example 1♦-(X)-1♥-(P)-1NT or 1♦-(2♣)-2♥-(P)-2NT). At times (especially at the two-level) it will be better to accept the transfer with a minimum three-suiter. In response to a *minor suit* transfer, the lowest notrump call shows a "super-accept" (it's easy enough to bid a cheap major suit with the three-suiter short in partner's suit). This is a balanced hand that would accept a suited invite. In any case, jumps in response to a transfer show good fitting hands (new suit jumps are fit-showing). In response to the transfer where responder's suit is at the three-level (the special transfer that guarantees values), opener's non-forcing options are 2NT (min with a stopper) and three of the suit transferred to. Other continuations are basically natural and game-going.

After an *accepted* transfer, responder can pass. Other non-forcing options include raising the suit transferred to one level (six-plus invite) or bidding notrump. Other bids are forcing (and natural, except cuebid is a stopper-ask). After a transfer which opener has *rejected*, showing a misfitting hand, non-jump continuations other than cuebid are *not forcing*. This lets us get out in a variety of auctions.

### 3.10.1 vs higher overcalls

After higher interference, most bidding is natural including negative doubles (up to 4♦), weak jump shifts (fit showing makes no sense since the 1♦ opening doesn't show a suit), and new suits natural and forcing to game. After a takeout double of 2M overcall, opener may bid 2NT to ask responder to pick a minor.



## 4 Major Openings

Major suit openings show five cards. If balanced the range will be 12-13 (although some good 13s may open 1NT). Balanced hands in the notrump range will always open 1NT. If unbalanced, light openings are possible and the range becomes 8-15 (although 8-counts must have ten cards in two suits). Use judgement when opening hands with values outside the main suits. Hands with a good six-card major and less than 11 hcp normally open with a weak two bid. Two-over-one responses show at least a good 12 points, but are not forcing to game unless opener has a full “standard american” opening bid.

### 4.1 First Response

Responses to 1♥ are as follows:

- 1♠ natural, forcing one round
- 1NT up to 11 hcp, *not forcing* will not include 3+♥
- 2♣ ♦ natural and 12+ hcp, forcing but not always to game
- 2♥ normal single raise, could be up to 11 hcp if 4333 and many losers
- 2♠ limit+ raise, with shortage if limit values, GF opposite 12+
- 2NT balanced limit raise
- 3♥ preemptive
- 3,4♠ preemptive
- 3NT, 4m fit-jumps (3NT=OM)

Responses to 1♠ are similar, except that 2♠ is the single raise, 2NT is the limit+ raise, 3♣ is the balanced limit raise, and 4♥ is natural and preemptive.

### 4.2 1♥-1♠ Continuations

After 1♥-1♠, we play some artificial continuations. Opener’s rebids are:

- 1NT 2533 or 4+♦, wide range of shapes and values, essentially forcing
- 2♣ 4+♣, tends to deny 3♠
- 2♦ good raise of spades, 3+♠
- 2♥ natural, guarantees 11+ hcp
- 2♠ 3+♠ and a bad hand
- 2NT five hearts and longer clubs, max values
- 3♣ ♦ 6-5 or better, max values
- 3♥ 7+♥ and a good hand

When opener rebids 1NT or 2♣, the lowest bid is artificial and asks opener’s strength. This bid is usually made on invitational hands. Opener makes the lowest step with a minimum (8-12), the next step with a max (12-15), and any higher bid to show a super-max (i.e. 14-15 hcp and extra shape). Responder’s minimum continuations tend to show “bad” invites whereas 2NT and any maximum continuation tend to show “good” invites. Rebidding the “fourth suit” in these auctions serves as a stopper ask.

Responder’s *direct* 2NT or jumps to the three level after opener’s 1NT or 2♣ rebid are forcing and natural. The auction 1♥-1♠-2♣-3♣ (not a jump) shows specifically a good invite with clubs (bad invite goes through 2♦ and rebids 3♣).

1♥-1♠-1NT ♦ or 2533

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2♣ asking; any invite or a GF stopper ask in clubs

- 2♦ 8-12 hcp, now 2-suit to play, 3♣ stopper ask, others show “good invite”
- 2♥ 12-15 hcp, now 3♣ stopper ask or GF ♦ raise, 3♠ choice of games, others “bad invite”
- 2♠+ good distributional maximum, all bids now natural and GF (3♣ stopper-ask)
- 2♦ to play
- 2♥ to play
- 2♠ to play
- 2NT GF, club stopper, ask for (natural) further description
- 3♣ natural, 5-5 or better blacks, game forcing
- 3♦ game forcing, sets diamonds (although 3NT still possible)
- 3♥ game forcing heart raise with a side spade suit
- 3♠ game forcing, sets spades as trump

#### 1♥-1♠-2♣ .

---

- 2♦ asking; any invite or a GF stopper ask in diams
- 2♥ ♠ to play
- 2NT GF, diam stopper, ask for further (natural) description
- 3♣ “good” invite; about 13-14 hcp
- 3♦ GF club raise
- 3♥ ♠ game forcing, setting the suit

### 4.3 Semi-forcing NT

In the auction 1♥-1NT, opener’s rebids are:

- Pass to play, at most 13 hcp, balanced or 45 in the majors
- 2♣ ♦ natural, 4+ cards in the suit, 8-15 hcp
- 2♥ natural, implies 11-15 hcp, 6+♥ unless 45 majors and 14-15 hcp
- 2♠ 5♠ and 6+♥, not necessarily extras but forcing one round
- 2NT 5♥ and a 6+ card minor, 12+ points, forcing
- 3♣ ♦ 6+♥, 5+ cards in the suit bid, 12+ points, strongly invitational
- 3♥ 7+♥ and 14-15 hcp
- 4♥ to play

Continuations are generally natural. Responder’s 2NT rebid shows 11-12 balanced. If opener bids 2NT, then responder’s 3♣ ♦ bids are pass or correct, and 3♥ is artificial demanding the minor (3♠ shows clubs, 3NT shows diamonds). Responder can use a 2♠ bid (which must be artificial as 1♠ was not bid) to show a very good raise of opener’s second suit. This is particularly useful when opener rebids 2♥, to show a “two-card limit raise” and allow opener to bid notrump or a three-card minor if holding 45 in the majors and a max.

### 4.4 Two-over-one

All of our new-suit two-over-ones promise twelve or more points and four cards or more in the bid suit. The tendency is to bid 1NT with very flat 12-counts though. These bids are forcing to game if a major suit fit is found, because both responder and opener have seven or fewer losers. However, we can stop in various contracts when opener has a minimum and no major suit fit is present. The following rules govern opener’s rebid:

1. Opener's rebid of 2NT always shows 6+ in the original major, twelve or more points (a good eleven is okay) and is game forcing. Weaker one-suited hands normally open with a weak two bid.
2. Opener's rebid of two of the original major is not forcing. This shows 8-11 points where bidding the second suit would be a reverse. The specific auction  $1\spadesuit-2\clubsuit-2\spadesuit$  shows a club fit, since both red suits are available at the two-level. Otherwise, rebidding the major denies four cards in responder's minor. In some cases opener's second suit will be ambiguous: for example  $1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit-2\spadesuit$  opener could hold either minor.
3. Opener's direct raise of responder's minor normally shows a minimum and is not forcing. The exception is  $1\spadesuit-2\clubsuit-3\clubsuit$ , which is forcing because of the  $2\spadesuit$  rebid. Of course,  $1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit-3\heartsuit$  is forcing because a major suit fit is found.
4. Opener's jump shift shows specifically four cards in the suit bid and three cards in responder's minor, with game values. Thus  $1\spadesuit-2\clubsuit-3\heartsuit$  shows 5-1-4-3 shape and  $1\heartsuit-2\heartsuit-3\spadesuit$  shows 4-5-3-1. This sequence is also reasonable with six cards in the major (6-0-4-3 or 4-6-3-0 shape); however true three suiters (5-0-4-4) normally show the second suit at the two level.
5. Opener's minimum suit rebid (other than two of the major) is possibly artificial in sequences where a direct raise of responder's suit would be nonforcing. This bid shows *either* of its natural meaning, or a game-forcing raise of responder's suit. So for example  $1\heartsuit-2\clubsuit-2\diamondsuit$  is either diamonds or a forcing club raise;  $1\heartsuit-2\diamondsuit-2\spadesuit$  is either a game force with spades, or a forcing diamond raise;  $1\spadesuit-2\diamondsuit-2\heartsuit$  is either hearts or a forcing diamond raise. With these hands opener should normally bid responder's minor at the next turn if holding the raise, and bid anything else with a natural call.

Responder's rebids are mostly natural, with the fourth suit available as an artificial bid with no clear direction. Some rules regarding which of responder's bids are forcing to game:

1. Bidding opener's major at the three level is a game-forcing raise.
2. Raising opener's secondary *major* to the three level is game-forcing. This applies even in the auction  $1\spadesuit-2\diamondsuit-2\heartsuit-3\heartsuit$  where the  $2\heartsuit$  bid might not be natural.
3. The fourth suit is artificial and game forcing. This is primarily a stopper ask, showing either a hand that really needs to know about 3NT, or a hand with slam interest but no major suit fit. This applies even when the third suit may have been artificial ( $1\spadesuit-2\diamondsuit-2\heartsuit-3\clubsuit$ ) and also applies if the third suit was bid only by inference ( $1\spadesuit-2\diamondsuit-2\spadesuit-3\heartsuit$ ). It also applies in game forcing auctions ( $1\heartsuit-2\diamondsuit-3\clubsuit-3\spadesuit$ ) although in these situations the "stopper ask" meaning is more prominent because of the negative inferences from failure to choose another call.
4. Bidding the major other than opener's major at the two level is always forcing to game. This includes  $1\heartsuit-2\clubsuit-2\heartsuit-2\spadesuit$ . This bid is artificial and simply creates a force.
5. Raising opener's *known* minor suit to the three level is not forcing. This includes situations where opener's minor was bid but might be artificial ( $1\heartsuit-2\clubsuit-2\diamondsuit-3\diamondsuit$ ) and also where opener's minor was bid only by inference ( $1\spadesuit-2\diamondsuit-2\spadesuit-3\clubsuit$ ); however it *does not* include situations where opener has shown a minimum with *either of two suits* ( $1\spadesuit-2\heartsuit-2\spadesuit-3\clubsuit$  is natural and forcing to game).

Here are some example auctions:

#### $1\heartsuit-2\clubsuit$ Natural

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| $2\diamondsuit$ | 8-15, 4+ $\diamondsuit$ ; or 12-15, 3+ $\clubsuit$ (3 $\clubsuit$ only if 5332 shape) |
| $2\heartsuit$   | Non-forcing preference  |
| $3\clubsuit$    | Game-forcing club raise (12-15 4+ $\clubsuit$ )                                       |
| Else            | Natural with 12-15 and 4+ $\diamondsuit$  |

- 2♠ Artificial and game forcing
- 3♣ Club raise with 12-15 4+♣
- Else Natural with 8-15 and 4+♦
- 2NT Natural and not forcing; often singleton heart
- 3♣ Natural and not forcing; 6+♣
- 3♦ Natural and not forcing; 4♦ and 4+♣
- 3♥ Game forcing and sets hearts
- 2♥ 8-11, 5+♥ and 4♠ (not forcing)
- 2♠ Artificial and game forcing; asks opener to pattern out
- 2NT Natural and not forcing; often singleton heart
- 3♣ Natural and not forcing; 6+♣
- 3♦ Artificial and game forcing; mostly a stopper ask
- 3♥ Natural and game forcing
- 3♠ Natural and game forcing
- 3NT To play
- 2♠ 12-15, 5+♥ and 4♠ (game forcing)
- 2NT 12-15, 6+♥
- 3♣ 8-11, 4+♣
- 3♦ 12-15, 5+♥ and 4+♦ and 3♣
- 3♥ 7+ semi-solid or better ♥, set trumps
- 3♠ 12-15, 5+♥ and 4♠ and 3♣
- 3NT 12-13, 5332♣

1♥-2♦ Natural

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- 2♥ 8-11, 5+♥ and a black suit
- 2♠ 12-15, 5+♥ and 3+♦ (3♦ only if 5332 shape) or 4♠
- 2NT relay
  - 3♣ 4513 pattern
  - 3♦ 4+♦ or 5332 with 3♦
  - 3♥ 46xx
  - 3♠ 56xx
  - 3NT 4522
- 2NT 12-15, 6+♥
- 3♣ 12-15, 4+♣
- 3♦ 8-11, 4+♦
- 3♥ 7+ semi-solid or better ♥, set trumps
- 3♠ 12-15, 4♠, 5+♥, 3♦
- 3NT 12-13, 5332♦

1♠-2♣ Natural (or possibly 3433)

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- 2♦ ♥ 8-15, Natural
- 2♠ 8-11, Natural with 4+♣
- 2NT forcing, usually interest in ♣ slam
- 3♦ ♥ stopper-showing, NT probe
- 2NT 12-15, 6+♠

- 3♣ 12-15, Natural with 4+♣ (could be 3♣ with 5332)
- 3♦♥ Splinters, 4+♣
- 3♠ 7+ semi-solid or better ♠, set trumps
- 3NT 12-13, 5332♣

1♠-2♦ Natural

---

- 2♥ 8-15, 4+♥ or 12-15 with 3+♦ (3♦ only if 5332)
- 2♠ Nonforcing preference
  - 3♦ 12-15 with 3+♦ (3♦ only if 5332)
  - Else 12-15; natural with 4+♥
- 2NT Nonforcing invite (often singleton ♠)
  - 3♦ 12-15 with 3+♦ (3♦ only if 5332)
  - Else 12-15; natural with 4+♥
- 3♣ Artificial game force; denies 4♥ or 3♠
  - 3♦ 12-15 with 3+♦
  - 3♥ 5+♥
  - 3♠ 4♥ and 5+♠; tends to deny club stopper
  - 3NT 4♥ and 5♠; club stopper
- 3♦ Nonforcing invite; 6+♦
- 3♥ 4♥, game forcing but does not guarantee extra values
  - 3♠ Denies 4♥; thus 3+♦ and 12-15; denies good stopper in ♣ unless very max
  - 3NT Denies 4♥; thus 3+♦ and 12-15; shows a ♣ stopper
  - 4♣+ Agrees ♥ are trump; cuebids etc.
- 3♠ Game forcing, agrees ♠
- 2♠ 8-11, 4+♣
- 2NT 12-15, 6+♠
- 3♣ 12-15, 4+♣
- 3♦ 8-11, 4+♦
- 3♥ 12-15, 5+♠, 4+♥, 3♦
- 3♠ 7+ semi-solid or better ♠, set trumps
- 3NT 12-13, 5332♦

1♠-2♥ Natural, 5+♥

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- 2♠ 8-11, 5♠ and 4+m
- 2NT Nonforcing invite; often singleton ♠; opener can rebid a 5-card minor
- 3♣♦ Natural and game force; could be three cards if stuck for a bid
- 3♥ Natural and not forcing; 6+♥
- 3♠ Natural and game force, agreeing ♠
- 2NT 12-15, 6+♠
- 3m 12-15, 4+m, may have 3♥ (opener is patterning out)
- 3♥ 8-15, 3+♥; if only 3♥ will be 8-11 or 12-13 with 5332
  - 3♠ 3+♠, set ♠ as trumps
  - 3NT Asking for shortness
    - 4m shortness
    - 4♥ to play

3♠ 7+ semi-solid or better ♠, set trumps  
 3NT 12-13, 5332♥  
 4m splinters, 4+♥  
 4♥ 5422

## 4.5 Bidding after raises

### 4.5.1 Simple Raise

We play 3-way (kokish) game tries after the single raise (i.e., next step to ask for help, next three to show shortness, and 3M to preempt or ask for good trumps). In competition, i.e., after 1M (any) 2M (dbl/bid), we play natural game tries and 3M is only competitive. If there is no free bid below 3M, then dbl is invitational to game (i.e., maximal doubles).

### 4.5.2 Strong Raise

Distributional limit raises and game forces make the minimum jump bid. This is 2NT over 1♠ opening and 2♠ over 1♥ opening. Opener then shows his range via steps. The minimum step shows about 9-11 hcp; all other steps are forcing to game. The second step denies slam interest opposite the limit raise (responder can still look with a suitable hand) and the third step is very slammish. Opener's fourth step forces a cue, fifth step is keycard, and higher bids are void-showing slam tries. Assuming opener makes one of the first three step responses, partner can sign off in game or show shortness (note that signing off in a partscore is not an option). **Shortness is shown in the usual high/middle/low order.** This shortness showing bid is a game try opposite the minimum step and is otherwise a slam try. If opener makes a non-minimum step response, then the minimum bid (1♠-2NT-3♦-3♥) is artificial and shows an unspecified void (opener relays to ask and high/middle/low). Responder also has the option to bid keycard opposite the first or second step by bidding the suit above trumps (1♠-2NT-3♣ ♦-3NT). The distributional limit raise typically has 7 losers. In summary, as an example, for the sequence 1♥-2♠,

2NT sub-minimum opening  
 3♣-3♥ shortness (**high/mid/low**), game-try or better  
 3♠ rkc  
 3NT-4♦ cue-bids, strong slam interest  
 3♣ gf, but denies slam interest opposite limit raise  
 3♦ void somewhere (then 3♥ asks hi-mid-lo)  
 3♥ ask for cue-bids  
 3♠ rkc  
 3NT-4♦ singleton (**high/mid/low**)  
 3♦ strong slam interest  
 3♥ void somewhere (then 3♠ asks hi-mid-lo)  
 3♠ no shortness, set up for cue-bids  
 3NT-4♦ singletons (**high/mid/low**)  
 3♥ ask for cue-bids  
 3♠ rkc  
 3NT-4♦ voids (**high/mid/low**)

It is also possible to make a game forcing raise by making a two-over-one bid first and raising opener's suit (to the *three level*) at the second turn.

### 4.5.3 Balanced Limit Raise

In addition, we play  $1\heartsuit$ -2NT and  $1\spadesuit$ -3♣ as a balanced limit raise. While we could express such a raise using a forcing notrump, this tends to have poor results if the opponents enter the auction. The responses to  $1\heartsuit$ -2NT, for example, are as follows:

- 3♣ second suit in other major
- 3♦ normal opening, but rejects a normal balanced limit raise
- 3♥ sub-minimum, *not forcing*
- 3♠ keycard in heart
- 3NT-4♦ void-showing (**high/mid/low**).
- 4♥ to play

### 4.6 Major openers after interference

We play fairly standard methods after overcalls. Cuebid is a limit raise or better, double is negative, suit bids are natural and forcing by unpassed hand. Jumps are fit-showing. After a double, we play transfers starting from 1NT. The lowest jump remains a good raise (systems on) but the next jump and onwards are fit-showing. Thus:

$1\heartsuit$  (dbl) .

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- Rdbl strong, 10+ hcp; initial doubles after opponents natural bids are for takeout
- 1♠ natural, forcing one round
- 1NT transfer to ♣
- 2♣ transfer to ♦
- 2♦ transfer to ♥; ♥ raise with 8+ points, if 4 trumps normally balanced
- 2♥ weak raise, typically 4-7 hcp with 3♥
- 2♠ limit raise, 4+♥ and side shortness (systems on)
- 2nt both ♠ and ♥ (fit jump in spades)
- 3m fit-showing
- 3♥ weak (NV) or mixed raise (V)

Raises can be aggressive in competition.

## 5 Notrump Opening

After many years playing Keri variants, we are back to playing stayman. We continue to use follow-ups to transfers developed by Charlie Garrod. Our structure after 1NT openings (or  $1\clubsuit$ ...1NT):

- 2♣ stayman, any of:
  - weak three-suiter short in clubs
  - weak with both majors
  - invite-plus including one or two four-card majors
  - invite with 5♠
  - game force short in diamonds (with or without 4-card major)
  - game forcing balanced or semi-balanced relay
- 2♦ transfer to ♥; might be only 4♥ if GF and holding a 6-card minor

- 2♥ transfers to ♠; never exactly invitational; maybe 4♠ if GF and a 6-card minor
- 2♠ balanced inv, no 4M, or any one-suited invite
- 2NT transfer to 3♣, weak or GF
- 3♣ transfer to 3♦, weak or GF
- 3♦ shows 4+♦, 0-1♣, 3-4 cards in each major, GF
- 3♥ shows 4♥, 0-1♠, 3+ cards in each minor, GF
- 3♠ shows 4♠, 0-1♥, 3+ cards in each minor, GF
- 3NT to play
- 4♣ ♦ transfer to hearts and to spades
- 4♥ ♠ signoff, no slam interest

The structure is geared towards identifying major suit length when responder has an invitational or better hands. An important departure from standard treatment is that we transfer into a four-card major on shapely game-going hands.

## 5.1 Bidding after 1NT-2♣

The 2♣ bid asks opener for a four-card major. We will sometimes rebid 2♠ rather than 2♥ when holding 4-4 in the majors, as this occasionally makes follow-ups easier; however otherwise this is the same as standard stayman responses. Our continuations after opener's 2♦ rebid:

### 1NT-2♣-2♦ Opener denies a major

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- Pass weak three-suiter with 4+♦
- 2♥ weak with both majors, normally ♥ at least as long as ♠
- 2♠ exactly invitational with 5♠; not forcing
- 2NT invitational with at least one 4M
- 3♣ game forcing relay
- 3♦ game force short in ♦
- 3♥ ♠ *smolen* showing five cards in the other major
- 3NT balanced game force with at least one 4M
- 4♣ ♦ south-african transfers to ♥ and ♠ respectively (normally 6-4 hands)
- 4M is to play (normally 6-4 hand)
- 4NT is quantitative (rare, usually bid 3♣ relay first)

Over opener's 2M rebid we play the following, where "OM" refers to the *other major*.

### 1NT-2♣-2M Opener shows 4-5M

---

- Pass weak hand willing to play there
- 2♠ exactly invitational with 5♠; not forcing
- 2NT invitational with 4OM
- 3♣ game forcing relay; normally no 4-4 fit for M
- 3♦ game force short in ♦; normally 3 cards in M
- 3M invite with 4(+)M
- 3OM game force (semi)-balanced with 4-5M ask cuebid
- 3NT balanced game force with 4OM
- 4♣ ♦ splinters with 4(+)M
- 4M is to play



4NT is quantitative (rare, usually bid 3♣ relay first)

Most of the continuations are pretty straightforward. Over responder's 3♦ rebid, the first priority is to look for a fit, the second to determine level by using 4♦ to indicate or deny "no wastage." The main sequence which requires some more explanation is the 3♣ relay. The idea is that opener's 3♦ rebid shows one four-card minor, opener's 3NT rebid denies a five-card suit and shows an even number of four-card minors, and 3M is natural if possible or otherwise showing five cards in the related minor. This works as follows:

1NT-2♣-2♦-3♣ Relay

---

3♦ One four-card minor, so 3343/3334  
3♥ 4+♣, slam interest opposite clubs  
3♠ 4+♦, slam interest opposite diams  
3♥ 5♣  
3♠ 5♦  
3N (23)44

1NT-2♣-2♥-3♣ Relay

---

3♦ One four-card minor  
3♥ 4+♣  
3♠ 4+♦  
3♥ Shows 5♥  
3♠ Slam try in ♥  
3NT To play  
4m Natural 5m slam try  
3♠ Shows 4-4 majors  
4m Natural 5m slam try  
4♥ Slam try in *spades*  
3NT 3433

1NT-2♣-2♠-3♣ Relay

---

3♦ One four-card minor  
3♥ 4+♣  
3♠ 4+♦  
3♥ Shows 4-4 majors  
3♠ Slam try in *hearts*  
3NT To play  
4m Natural 5m slam try  
3♠ Shows 5♠  
4m Natural 5m slam try  
4♥ Slam try in *spades*  
3NT 4333

## 5.2 Bidding after 1NT-2♦

This is like a standard transfer except it could also be made with GF hands with only 4♥. With 4+ support and maximum, opener may super-accept similar to 3-way game try, i.e.

- 2♠ max, 4+♥, good side suit (next step ask, natural responses, 3♥ = ♠)
- 2NT, 3m max, 4+♥, weak doubleton (NT = ♠)
- 3♥ not necessarily a max, but optional, usually 5♥

If a transfer break occurs, then ♥ is established as trumps for game and slam purposes. The cheapest diamond bid is a re-transfer, and if followed by new suits, these are cue-bids. Over 3♦, 3♥ is a sign-off, new suits other than 4♦ are cue-bids.

1NT-2♦-2♥ can contain 4♥ if non-max

---

- 2♠ inv, 5♥
- 2NT min, no ♥ fit (pass or 3m NF)
- 3♣ max, no ♥ fit (pass or 3♦ NF)
- 3♥ min, ♥ fit
- 2NT GF, 4+♥ and 4+♣, not balanced, over opener's 3♣, go into short/long-minor modules
- 3♣ GF, 5+♥ and 4♦, short-minor module
- 3♦ GF, 4+♥ and 5+♦, long-minor module
- 3♥ Invite 5+♠ and 5+♥
- 3♠ GF, 6+♥ and asks for cuebids
- 3NT choice-of-game
- 4♣♦ splinter with 6+♥
- 4♥ mild slam try with 6+♥

### 5.2.1 Long-minor module

This applies whenever responder transfers to a major (M) and then show a game-forcing hand with a 5+ card minor (m). This is always shown via a bid of 3♦. Opener continues as follows:

1NT-??-??-3♦ GF, 4+M and 5+m

---

- 3♥ exactly 3M, checkback for a fit
- 3♠ 5+M, sets M as trumps
- 3NT only 4M, no SI
- 4m SI, 5+m
- 3♠ sets M as trumps
- 3NT strength in the unbid suits, suggests a contract
- 4m sets m as trumps, but usually weak in an unbid suit
- 4 unbid sets m as trumps, cue-bids
- 4M 4M, bad hand for slam (not possible after 1NT-2♦)

### 5.2.2 Short-minor module

This applies whenever responder transfers to a major (M) and then show a game-forcing hand with exactly 4m (m). When this is clubs, opener may not get a chance to bid anything before responder shows his shape, as follows:

1NT-??-??-3♥+ GF, 5+M and 4m, shape resolution as follows:

---

- 3♥ hi shortage, (15)(34)
- 3♠ lo shortage, (35)(14)
- 3NT wastage

- 4m sets m as trumps
- 4om SI, sets M as trumps
- 4M to play
- 3NT no shortage, (25)(24)
- 4♣ hi shortage, (16)(24)
- 4◇ lo shortage, (26)(14)
- 4M to play
- 4OM SI, sets M as trumps
- 4NT SI, sets m as trumps
- 4M SI, (25)(24)

[\*\*\* Should discuss continuations over interference \*\*\*]

### 5.3 Bidding after 1NT-2♥

Most of the time, opener will accept the transfer. With 4+ support and maximum, opener may super-accept similar to 3-way game try, i.e.

- 2NT max, 4+ support and good side suit (next step ask, natural responses, 3♠ shows good ♣)
- 3X max, 4+ support, doubleton X
- 3♠ not necessarily a max, but optional, usually 5♠

Responder retransfer with 3♥ if possible; if not, 4♥ would be a retransfer. New suits are now cue-bids.

Continuations after transfers are based on more transfers. After 1NT-2♥-2♠, responder's continuations are as follows:

1NT-2♥-2♠ may be 4♠ if min

---

- Pass spade signoff
- 2NT GF, 4+♠ and 4+♣, not balanced, over opener's 3♣, go into short/long-minor modules
- 3♣ GF, 5+♠ and 4◇, short-minor module
- 3◇ GF, 4+♠ and 5+◇, long-minor module
- 3♥ GF, 5+♠ and 5+♥
- 3♠ sets ♠ as trumps, asks for cue-bids
- 3NT choice-of-game
- 4♣ ◇ ♥ splinter with 6+♠
- 4♠ mild slam try with 6+♠

### 5.4 Bidding after 1NT-2♠

The 2♠ bid serves as a range ask as well as any one-suited invite. With a maximum, opener **rejects** the lowest undesirable game try.

1NT-2♠ inv, balanced, or inv any one-suited

---

- 2NT min
- 3♣ max, reject one-suited ♣ game-try
- 3◇ Diamond invite, weakness in clubs, can be 3352 inv
- 3M Major suit invite
- 4♣ Balanced invite with weak clubs (3343)

	4♦ ♥	Transfer to a major
3♦		max, accept ♣ but reject ♦
	3M	Major suit invite
	4♣	Weak diamonds; generally 3325 or club invite
	4♦ ♥	Transfer to a major
3♥		max, accept ♣ and ♦ but reject ♥
	3♠	Spade invite
	4♣	Balanced hand weak in ♥
	4♦	Minor suit invite with ♠ tolerance, weak ♥
	4♥	Transfer to spades
3♠		max, accept any game try but ♠
	4♣	Balanced hand weak in ♠
	4♦	Transfer to ♥
	4♥	Minor invite with ♥ tolerance, weak ♠
3NT		max, accept all game tries
	4♦ ♥	Transfer to major

## 5.5 Bidding after 1NT-2NT and 1NT-3♣

The 2NT bid transfers to clubs and 3♣ transfers to diamonds. Opener always accepts this transfer absent interference. The continuations after the transfer to clubs:

### 1NT-2NT-3♣ forced

---

Pass	club signoff
3♦	GF, 5+♦ and 5+♣
3♥	GF, 3♥, 0-1♠, and 5+♣
3♠	GF, 3♠, 0-1♥, and 5+♣
3NT	sets ♣ as trumps, asks for cue-bids
4♣	SI, 6+♣ and 4♦

Further continuations are basically natural and follow the general rules about bidding over splinters. Continuations over a transfer to diamonds are in the same style:

### 1NT-3♣-3♦ forced

---

Pass	diamond signoff
3♥	GF, 3♥, 0-1♠, and 5+♦
3♠	GF, 3♠, 0-1♥, and 5+♦
3NT	sets ♦ as trumps, asks for cue-bids
4♣	SI, 6+♦ and 4♣

## 5.6 Bidding after Splinters

There are many different splinter sequences in our methods. The most straightforward are the direct splinter bids, which always show three-suited hands. There are also indirect splinter sequences after minor suit transfers (typically showing major suit shortage without four cards in the other major). After such a splinter bid, we have the following general rules:

- If opener bids the short suit, it denies wastage

- If opener bypasses the short suit, it shows wasted values
- If opener bids 3NT (and has not bid the short suit) it suggests a contract
- If responder bids 3NT, opener can only pass with stoppers in short suit
- If responder bids the short suit, it agrees opener's last suit and asks about wastage
- If responder bids the short suit *after* opener has shown or denied wastage, it shows void
- If opener bids the short suit *at the 4-level* he knows the best fit
- New suit bids at the 3-level do not deny stoppers in the splinter suit
- If opener bypasses 3NT without a known fit, it denies strength in short suit
- New suit bids below game are forcing, looking for a fit
- In general opener describes suits and wastage; responder picks the level

## 5.7 Doubling our 1NT for penalty

Most doubles of our weak notrump opening are penalty oriented. We play suction-style runouts, with the goal of finding the best contract and putting the strong hand on lead. Responder's calls after 1NT-X are:

1NT (X) If double is for penalty

---

Pass	balanced or semi-balanced weak hand, or ♣ signoff
XX	values; desire to play 1NTXX; subsequent first double is for takeout, pass is forcing
2♣	signoff in ♠, or weak hand with both majors
2♦	signoff in ♣, or 5-5 in the black suits
2♥	signoff in ♠, or 5-5 in the minors
2♠	preempt in ♣, or weak 5-5 in the red suits
2NT	preempt with 5-5 in two suits of the same shape
3♣	preempt in diamonds or with 5-5 majors

In general opener accepts the transfer to the next higher suit, after which responder can correct to show the two-suited options.

After the redouble, if the opponents run to a suit, the first double by our side is takeout. Subsequent doubles by our side are penalty. Pass suggests penalties, as we are in a forcing auction.

After a pass, opener normally bids 2♣ if he has three or more clubs. Otherwise he redoubles. Opener may optionally bid a good five-card suit if he has one. So opener's calls are:

1NT (X) P (P) shows ♣ or weak bal/semi-bal

---

XX	only 2♣, implies 3+♦
2♣	3+♣
2X	good 5X

After 2♣ by opener, responder can pass or bid 2♦ to show diamonds and a major (typically 4-4). After XX, responder can bid 2♣ to sign off in clubs, or bid any other suit to play. Redoubles in these sorts of runout auctions are always for rescue.

## 5.8 Interference over 1NT

If the opponents bid 2♣ or make an artificial double of the 1NT, we play systems on (ignoring the opposing bidding).

If the opponents bid 2♦ or higher, we play rubensohl transfers and a negative double. Double (assuming the opposing bid is natural) is for takeout. Two-level suit bids are natural signoff. Bids of 2NT and above are transfers to the next higher suit. These can be any strength and must be accepted. The exception is a transfer into a suit which could have been bid at the two level; such a transfer shows at least invitational values and opener should bid the full value of his hand.

A transfer into the opponents' suit is a stopper ask. Accepting the transfer shows specifically half a stopper (Qx or Jxx or Qxx). Bidding 3NT shows a full stopper. Other bids are natural and deny as much as a half stopper.

Responder can also transfer and then cue as a stopper ask, or takeout double and then cue.

A voluntary bid of 3NT by responder always guarantees a stopper.

## 5.9 Systems over natural 2NT

In some sequences, we will make a natural bid of 2NT showing a balanced hand in some range. Our 2NT opening is artificial, but natural 2NT bids can occur as overcalls (of opposing preempts for example) or in some sequences after a 1♣ opening. We play relatively standard methods in these sequences including:

- 3♣ modified puppet Stayman
  - 3♦ some four-card major but no five-card major
    - 3♥ 4♠, may have 4♥
    - 3♠ min, fit
    - 3NT no fit (imply 4+♥)
    - 4m max, fit and cue-bids
  - 3♠ 4+♥, deny 4♠
- 3♥ deny four- or five-card major
  - 3♠ 5+♠, checkback
- 3♠ 5♠
- 3NT 5♥
  - 4♣ natural
  - 4♦ transfers to ♥, promises ♥ support
  - 4♥ shows 5+♦, no ♥ fit
- 3♦ ♥ transfers to the majors
- 3♠ asks for partner's four-card minor (3NT denies)
- 3NT to play
- 4♣ ♦ are natural slam tries (forcing to at least 4NT)
- 4♥ ♠ are to play (transfer then raise would show slam interest)

## 6 2♣ Opening

We currently play a fairly simple system over 2♣. We use 2♦ as an artificial relay, which guarantees invitational or better values. Major suit bids are natural and forcing, usually invitational or better, but could be less with a club fit.

2♣ 10-15H, 6+♣

---

- 2♦    invitational or better relay
- 2♥    5+♥, forcing one round
- 2♠    5+♠, forcing one round
- 2NT   constructive or game-forcing club raise
- 3,4,5♣ Preemptive raise
- 3X    Natural, single-suited GF
- 4♦    RKC for ♣

## 6.1 Bidding after 2♣-2♦

The structure is fairly similar to our normal relays. First priority for opener is to confirm or deny holding a four-card side suit. The main difference is that relay *breaks* normally set trumps and ask opener to cuebid (order is opener's suits from longest to shortest). If we get to asking for AKQ points, the range will be 5-10. Note that an immediate 3♣ by responder after opener's first response to the 2♦ relay is *never a relay* and is always a non-forcing invite.

2♣-2♦ invitational or better relay

---

- 2♥    No four-card side suit; clubs only
- 2♠    game-force relay; symmetric structure (but lose a step and no 5332)
- 2NT   invitational values, want to declare notrump
- 3♣    invitational values, don't want to declare notrump
- 2♠    4♦
- 2NT   game-force relay
- 3♣    invitational values (not forcing)
- 2NT   4♥
- 3♣    invitational values (not forcing)
- 3♦    game-force relay
- 3♣    4♠ *and minimum values*; this is not forcing
- 3♦    game-force relay
- 3♥    sets clubs, asks cuebid
- 3♠    sets spades, asks cuebid
- 3♦    4♠, maximum values, and high (♥) shortness
- 3♥    4♠, maximum values, and low (♦) shortness
- 3♠    4♠, maximum values, 1-1 in the red suits

If we relay onward after opener shows a 4-card side suit, the first rebid shows shortness (high/low/both). Then after a follow-up relay, the first step shows a *void* in the short suit. Otherwise with 6412-ish shape we move on to AKQ points (5-11 if min, 7-11 if max). In any case, 4♦ is puppet for signoff and other relay breaks (besides 3nt of course) set trumps (length order of opener's suits).

## 6.2 Bidding after 2♣-2M

## 6.3 Bidding after 2♣-2NT

Opener's 3♣ is most common and declines the constructive raise. Other bids accept the constructive raise and are stopper-showing. If opener declines the constructive raise, responder bids on with a game force.

## 6.4 Miscellaneous

After 2♣-3♦, opener bids naturally, 3M are probes for 3NT, by if follow-up by 4♦, then they become cue-bids in support of ♦.

After 2♣-3M, opener bids naturally, but may often be forced to raise 3M to 4M with no suitable bids, so it does not promise a fit. With a fit, opener can bid a new suit as cue-bid. 3NT by opener is a suggestion to play.

## 6.5 Interference

We ignore opponents double. If they bid a suit then double is takeout. Cuebid is a strong raise of the minor.

## 7 2♦ Opening

- 2♥ natural, forcing, 4+♥
- 2♠ 4♠
- 2NT Minimum, 0-2♥
  - 3♣ GF Relay, symmetric with 3♦ and above direct over 2♥
  - 3♦ Non-forcing (invite)
  - 3♥ Non-forcing (6+♥)
- 3♣ Exactly 3♥; artificial
  - 3♦ Non-forcing (invite, 4♥ only)
  - 3♥ Non-forcing (invite, 5+♥)
  - 3♠ Cuebid for ♥
  - 3NT To play
  - 4♣ Cuebid for ♥
  - 4♦ Sets diamonds, slam try
  - 4♥ To play
- 3♦ Maximum, ♣ stopper, 0-2♥
  - 3♥ Shows 6♥, ask about doubleton (3♠ asks spade stop, 3N shows, else agree ♥)
  - 3♠ Ask for spade stopper
  - 3NT To play
- 3♥ Maximum, typically Hx in ♥, no ♣ stopper
- 3NT Maximum, ♠ stopper, no ♣ stopper, no 0-2♥ not Hx
- 3♣, 4♣ Maximum with 4♥, high/low shortage
- 4♦, 4♥ Minimum with 4♥, high/low shortage
- 2♠ natural, forcing, 4+♠
- 2NT Minimum, 0-2♠
- 3♣ Exactly 3♠, artificial
- 3♦ Maximum, ♣ stopper, 0-2♠
- 3♥ Natural, 4♥ and a maximum
- 3♠ Maximum, typically Hx in ♠, no ♣ stopper
- 3NT Maximum, ♥ stopper, no ♣ stopper, 0-2♠ not Hx
- 4♣, 4♦ Maximum, 4♠, high/low shortage
- 4♥, 4♠ Maximum, 4♠, high/low shortage



- 2NT constructive or better raise in  $\diamond$
- 3 $\clubsuit$  sub-min, no game opposite even a limit raise. New suit stopper showing
- 3 $\diamond$  min, no game opposite a constructive raise. New suit stopper showing
- Higher interested in game opposite a constructive raise, stoppers showing
- 3/4/5 $\diamond$  preemptive
- 3x gf, 6+x

## 7.1 Interference

Similar to other natural openings, we continue to ignore doubles. If they bid a suit then double is takeout. Cuebid is a strong raise of the minor.

## 8 Preempts

Our openings of 2 $\heartsuit$  and above are preemptive. The suit bids are basically standard preempts, though 3 $\clubsuit$  and 3 $\diamond$  are frequently good six-card suits. In first or second seat opener normally has little to nothing outside the suit. In third or fourth seat, opener has scattered values (partner should not pull the third or fourth seat 3NT). Our responses to preempts are natural. In response to weak two bids in the majors we play 2NT Ogust, where:

- 3 $\clubsuit$  shows a bad hand with a bad suit
- 3 $\diamond$  shows a bad hand with a good suit
- 3 $\heartsuit$  shows a good hand with a bad suit
- 3 $\spadesuit$  shows a good hand with a good suit

In general, a good suit can potentially be played for one loser opposite a small doubleton (at worst something like KJTxxx). A good hand is at the top of the point range. We play new suit bids as forcing.

After a 3 $\clubsuit$  response to Ogust, we use 3 $\diamond$  as a secondary "embarrassment ask." Opener bids 3 $\heartsuit$  if his hand is so atrocious that he is ashamed to have opened (for example a bad five card suit and out); else 3 $\spadesuit$ .

Over three-level preempts, new suits are natural and forcing.

Over 3NT showing 8.5+ tricks in either  $\heartsuit$  or  $\spadesuit$ , responder replies as follows:

- 4 $\clubsuit$  Transfer to your major and promises (at least) mild slam interest. Opener can bid on after transfer is completed.
- 4 $\diamond$  Bid your major. Responder can then key card over it.

## 9 2NT Opening

This opening shows a weak hand with both minors. Responses are:

- any m to play
- 3 $\heartsuit$  asks for shortness
- 3 $\spadesuit$ /NT  $\spadesuit$ / $\heartsuit$  singleton
- 4 $\clubsuit$ / $\diamond$   $\spadesuit$ / $\heartsuit$  void
- Over these, 4 $\heartsuit$  asks for key cards in  $\clubsuit$ , and 4 $\spadesuit$  in  $\diamond$ .
- 3 $\spadesuit$  simple ace asking
- 3NT to play
- 4M to play

## 10 Slam Bidding

We have a number of different tools available for slam bidding. We prefer to set the suit and use cuebids where possible, and tend to use keycard only when one of the bidders has guaranteed a balanced hand, or when the much stronger hand is asking a weaker, limited hand. Certain sequences make use of relays and denial cuebids, but this is not our most frequent way of looking for slam.

### 10.1 Serious and Nonserious Slam Try

When a major suit is agreed at the three-level, the lowest bid shows minimal interest in slam but simply trying not to preempt partner from his plan. Partner should only start cue-bidding with serious slam interest. Bypassing this bid is a cuebid, and shows strong slam interest, and partner should strive to cooperate by cue-bidding. We do not generally bid four of the major directly (fast arrival) unless we have no outside ace to cuebid or partner's hand is limited and slam is out of the question.

These sequences typically occur after two-over-one calls (1♠-2♣-2♥-3♥). In this case, 3♠ is a non-serious slam try and higher bids are serious cuebids (3NT is a spade cue).

### 10.2 Splinters and Point Count

On occasion we can bid a slam based simply on points. With 33 points we will bid a small slam in notrump and with 37 we will bid a grand. Our tendency is to avoid ace-asking sequences in such auctions (we don't even *play* Gerber over 1NT), and to use various quantitative invites if uncertain about the total strength.

After a splinter bid, if opener shows no wastage we can often bid a slam based on this alone. The rule is, for a small slam we must have all but 7 of the "meaningful" points and for a grand slam all but 3. With a singleton, there are 34 meaningful points (KQJ of the short suit don't matter) and with a void there are 30. Of course we need to make sure partner did not count any of these meaningless points for his opening, and this is what the no wastage "anti-cuebid" accomplishes for us.

### 10.3 Cuebidding Style and 5NT Inquiry

We mostly follow the "american" cuebidding style of showing first round controls at the first round. On occasion we will cuebid a king; this is allowed if the king is in a suit partner has shown, or if we have no first-round controls to show but really want to express interest in slam. We will never cuebid singletons on the first round.

At times a cuebidding auction will bypass keycard. If we determine that a grand slam is a possibility, it becomes important to determine partner's trump quality. We use 5NT as an inquiry in such auctions, asking for top trump honors. The responses are in steps with the first step being the worst trump suit and so forth. In general this will be by count (first step shows no trump honors, second step one of top three, and so forth) but on occasion there are inferences about the trump holding and, especially if the suit is clubs, we will modify the responses (i.e. 6♣ shows a disappointing trump suit for previous actions, and so forth).

### 10.4 Kickback 1430 Keycard

The bid directly above four of the trump suit is used for keycard. This is very handy when the agreed suit is a minor, but we need to have good rules to determine when keycard is on. The basic rules are:

If the suit is clearly agreed, then the bid just above four of the suit is keycard. If the suit was the last one partner bid and there is a natural, forcing call available in the suit just above, then a jump to four of the suit above is keycard. However, if *both* sides have previously made nonforcing bids, then there is no keycard.

For example, 2♣-4♦ is keycard, 1♥-2♥-4♠ is keycard.

There are also some unusual keycard sequences in our methods. After a major suit opening and a limit raise (or limit-plus) response, we often have keycard available at the three-level (1♠-2NT-3NT is keycard).

After a bid which shows both minors, jumping to the four level is keycard in the other minor (2NT-4♣ is keycard for diamonds).

In all cases we play 1430 style responses by steps. The steps are:

1. One or Four keycards
2. Zero or Three keycards
3. Two or Five keycards, no trump queen
4. Two or Five keycards, with trump queen
5. One or Four keycards *with a void*
6. Zero or Three keycards *with a void*
7. Two keycards, no trump queen *and a void*
8. Two keycards, the trump queen *and a void*

In general we try to avoid keycard in sequences where a void-showing response is likely, and we will not always show our voids if holding a disappointing number of keycards or void in partner's bid suit.

After the keycard response, we can continue keycard. If the location of the trump queen is unclear, then the lowest call asks for the trump queen. Partner should bid the trump suit at the lowest level with no trump queen, cuebid an outside king when holding the trump queen (again NT replaces the highest bid), or jump in the trump suit to show the trump queen but no outside king. After partner denies the trump queen, bidding the keycard suit (the next bid above the trump suit) asks for specific kings.

If the location of the trump queen is clear, then rebidding the keycard suit (one above the trump suit) asks for specific kings. If the location of the trump queen is not clear, then rebidding the keycard suit asks for number of kings (to ask for specific kings, first ask for the queen).

In any case, bidding a new suit (including notrump) which is neither the agreed suit *nor* the queen ask *nor* the kickback suit (which is one above the agreed suit) is a specific suit ask. A notrump bid which is a specific suit ask asks about the suit which would be most awkward to bid naturally. In response to such a control asking bid, the first step shows nothing useful, second step shows the queen or doubleton, third step shows the king or singleton, and fourth step shows king and queen.

#### 10.4.1 6 Keycard Auctions

In situations where we have bid and raised two suits, we are in a 6-key card auction. Generally, the corresponding keycard ask is assuming the higher trump suit. In these situations, the third step shows 0/2 queens (cheapest non-trump to clarify), the fourth step shows lower Q, and the fifth shows higher Q. The cheapest non-Q ask is a choice-of-slam, whereas the next free step is an invitation to grand.

### 10.5 Competitive Bidding

If we are in a forcing pass situation in a competitive auction, then we play the following meta-agreements:

1. Freely bidding a suit where partner has shown or implied a fit shows shortness in the enemy suit. This includes competing in a known fit for our side, or competing after partner's takeout double and a raise by the opposition.
2. If we have a known fit, or if partner has already made a takeout double, then double implies an honor control in the enemy suit. This is not a penalty double. Generally partner should pull this double if short in the opposing suit.

3. A forcing pass strongly suggests partner double. This shows either a true “penalty double” or a hand with no control of the opposing suit.

In general we tend *not* to play forcing passes when in doubt. Some of the rules:

1. A game force based on values creates a forcing pass. Typically this happens after 1♣ and a game-forcing response (or 1♣, competition, and a GF response), or in a GF relay sequence, or after a cuebid raise to game level.
2. A fit jump does not create a forcing pass. If fit jumper doubles it shows defensive values and asks partner to select defending or competing based on fit for the side suit.
3. A "limit+" raise of a major creates a force to the level of three of our major. It does not create a forcing pass if opponents bid above three of our major.
4. In most forcing pass situations below game level, we play doubles as takeout. This reduces confusion if we're not clear on whether a situation is forcing, and also creates more sequences in some auctions.

## 11 Defensive Bidding

### 11.1 Defense to Natural One-Suit bids

We play natural overcalls, normally in the range of 8-16 hcp. Occasionally we will make an overcall with a weaker hand and a good suit, or with a stronger hand and an awkward continuation problem. An overcall tends to deny holding four or more cards in an unbid major suit, except for a spade overcall when holding hearts. So for example, overcalling 1♥ after a natural minor opening usually denies holding four or more spades. Our two-level overcalls require stronger hands, usually 12+ hcp if a five card suit or 10+ if a six card suit. We will overcall on good four card suits at the one level. Our notrump overcalls are 15-18 hcp with a stopper in direct seat, and 11-14 hcp in balancing seat.

We play Max Hardy's system for showing two suited hands. Our cuebids are top and bottom (five cards in the bottom suit, four in the top as a minimum) and show at least ten points. Typically the lower suit is longer or better. We play a jump to 2NT as showing the two lowest unbid suits, usually at least 5-5, either weak or very strong. Jumping in an unbid minor over a minor suit opening (1♣-2♦ or 1♦-3♣) shows a two suiter with five cards in the bid minor and four hearts (or more distributional). The range for these bids is around 10-16 hcp. We also play equal level correction after one-level openings, so our takeout double will be one of:

- Support (3+ cards) for all unbid suits
- Good support (4+ cards) for the higher two unbid suits
- A very strong hand (16+ points)

Correcting to the lower of the two highest unbid suits shows the second hand type (this is called a type four double) and does not show extra values. Note that a takeout double *always* promises some strength, at least ten points in direct seat (usually more). We do not make takeout doubles with the very weak five-five majors hands (these hands tend to pass or occasionally bid 1♠).

We play aggressive weak jump shifts (except the previously mentioned minor over minor jumps) and will sometimes bid to the three level on a six card suit or the two level on five. We play 2NT as asking for shortness after weak 2M jump overcalls, whereas a cue-bid is an artificial invite to 4M.

We play a jump cuebid of opener's suit with 4 or fewer cards as natural, a good six card suit and around 9-13 hcp (intermediate). If the bid promises 5 or more cards, then it asks for stopper for playing 3NT.

If both opponents have bid naturally, we do not overcall a strong notrump. Instead, the notrump bid is sandwich (weak takeout for the unbid suits, usually the lower suit being longer). A double is strong

takeout for the unbid suits (possibly only 4-4 at the one level but guarantees an opening hand). If both opponents have bid naturally, then bidding one of their suits is natural and a normal two-level overcall. So if the opponents open 1♣ and respond 1♥, then a bid of either 2♣ or 2♥ by us is natural and sound (at least five good cards, often six).

When we bid 2NT it is rarely suggesting a contract. In many cases 2NT offers a choice of the two lower unbid suits. When the values for 3NT cannot be present, we will use 2NT to show a raise of partner's suit without a top honor; for example 1♦-2♣-2♠-2NT. Given the opponents bidding, one would assume they have more than half the points. 2NT here is a raise to 3♣ without a top club honor (3♣ would guarantee an honor). We also use lebensohl over weak two bids.

We play responsive doubles at low-levels, but not at the three level and above. So 1♣-X-2♣-X is asking for partner's better major, but 1♣-X-3♣-X is penalty. Similarly, weak 2-X-raise-X is also for penalty. Doubles of suits which partner has implicitly shown via a takeout double are also penalty; for example 1♣-X-1♠-X is penalty; with both unbid suits we'd tend to bid the major (hearts). If partner overcalls and the opponents raise their original suit, then double is for takeout. If partner overcalls and opponents bid a new suit, then we play *reverse snapdragon* doubles (through 2♥) — double shows a single-suited hand in the fourth suit (and partner can pass this), whereas bidding the fourth suit is both natural and promises tolerance for the overcalled suit. We also play lead directional doubles of cuebids (double usually shows honor-doubleton for partner's suit) and anti-lead directional doubles of cuebids (if I overcall then double a cuebid of my suit, it says "do not lead my suit").

We balance aggressively in one level auctions and where our opponents have found a fit. Point ranges for various bids tend to be lighter in balancing seat. We also play *weak jumps* in balancing seat. These jumps tend to be relatively sound (we are hoping to make the contract) but still show less than a good opening hand. Bidding 2NT in balancing seat is *still unusual* not a strong balanced hand. The idea here is to prevent opener from re-entering the auction when balancer holds a weak shapely hand (typically opener has a big hand in this sequence). We frequently balance with four card suits at the two level when the opponents have shown a fit.

In general, if game seems likely opposite less than 8 hcp, we will strive to bid in direct seat. We will not pass on 19 hcp hands and depend upon partner to balance on a five-count.

## 11.2 Advances of Overcalls

When the opponents open a natural bid and partner makes a natural overcall, we play transfer advances starting with a cuebid and ending with a raise. This method is still on by a passed hand. Bids below the cuebid are natural and generally forcing. The lowest suit bid (whether natural or a transfer) could be a general good hand with no clear direction; in any case it always promises three cards (usually four) in the suit bid or transferred to. Notrumps are excluded from the transfers. For example:

(1♣)-1♥-(Pass) :

- 
- 1♠ Natural, forcing, but could be 4♠ if a decent hand
  - 1NT Natural, around 8-11 hcp
  - 2♣ Transfer to ♦; 5+♦ or a heart raise with good ♦
  - 2♦ Transfer to ♥; limit raise or better values
  - 2♥ Normal raise, not particularly strong
  - 2♠ Fit-showing jump
  - 2NT Invitational; usually 12-14 or so hcp

(2♥)-3♣-(Pass) :

- 
- 3♦ Natural, but could easily be only 4♦ in a decent hand
  - 3♥ Transfer to spades; 5+♠; at least mildly invitational
  - 3♠ Shows a club fit, but primarily this is a stopper-ask

3NT To play

(3♣)-3♠-(Pass) :

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3NT Natural  
4♣ Transfer to diamonds, but could be 4♦ in a good hand  
4♦ Transfer to ♥, 5+♥  
4♥ Good spade raise, at least mild slam interest  
4♠ To play, less than an opening hand

Transfer advances are still if RHO doubles. Transfers begin with Rdbl. Transfer raise shows a better hand than a direct raise. Transferring into opener's suit shows an anti-positional NT holding and promises values for the next higher NT bid.

### 11.3 Defense to Opponents Notrump

If our opponents open a strong notrump (min  $\geq$  14) or if we are a passed hand, we play the following structure:

Dbl shows a major-minor two suiter  
2♣ shows both majors (normally 5-4)  
2♦ ♥ ♠ are natural, usually six card suits  
2NT unusual for the minors  
3♣ natural, fairly wide range of values

After the 2♣ call, partner can sign off in a major or bid 2♦ (asking for longer major). If the 2♣ call is doubled, then redouble is rescue (pick a major) and 2♦ becomes natural.

After the double, advancer's 2♣ asks for a five-card suit. Doubler should pass with five clubs and a shorter major. Advancer's 2♦ asks for the major. Major suit bids by advancer are natural (suit of his own). After opener corrects, if responder bids again, the lowest suit of the other rank is pass/correct, and a 2NT call asks for the second suit and strength (low min/high min/low max/high max).

If the opponents bid on over the double, then a subsequent double of a natural suit is takeout, and a double of a transfer bid shows four cards in the bid suit (not the suit transferred to).

If a single suited hand is shown, a subsequent double by partner is penalty (much as if a weak two had been opened).

#### 11.3.1 Vs Weak NT

If our opponents open a weak notrump and we are UPH, we play the following methods (Landy + some artificialities):

Dbl penalty, 15+ hcp in direct seat, or lighter with a runnable minor  
2♣ around 10-15 hcp, both majors  
2♦ around 10-15 hcp, 5+♦+ 4M, non-forcing  
2♥ ♠ natural, normally 10-15 hcp  
2NT around 10-15 hcp, 5+♣+ 4M or huge two-suiter, forcing  
3♣ ♦ around 10-15 and 6+ cards  
3♥ ♠ preemptive  
3NT (quite) unusual

A balancing double of 1NT could be as light as 12 hcp, and is just “values” asking partner to act if possible.

If partner pulls a double of weak notrump, this normally shows a weak hand unsuited to defense. A jump-pull shows shape and invites game. If we are in a sequence where 1NT doubled or redoubled may be passed out, then partner of the doubler can bid 2♣ “fix-it” for rescue. This is an artificial bid asking partner to take action.

If the opponents run after a double of their weak notrump, the first subsequent double of a suit contract by our side is *takeout*. Later doubles as the scramble continues are penalty oriented.

After the Landy 2♣,

2♦ asks for better major, over which 3M invite

2M to play

2NT invite or better, asking

3♣/♦ min, ♥ ≥ ♠/♠ > ♥.

3♥/♠ max, ♥ ≥ ♠/♠ > ♥.

3m to play

3M mixed raise

If Landy 2♣ gets doubled, then pass shows tolerance for playing 2♣ double, 2♦ natural, rdbl asks opener to pick better major.

Over 2♦, 2♥/♠ are pass or correct, whereas 2NT is invitational or better, asking (min ♥, min ♠, max ♥, max ♠)

Over 2NT, 3♣ is to play (partner bids on with big two-suiter unsuited to double, 3♦ shows both major, 3M shows M-m, and 3NT shows minors). 3♦ is game try in a major, partner bids 3M with min and that major, 3NT/4♣ with max and ♥/♠, or 4♦-4NT as above.

## 11.4 Defense to Natural Preempts

We bid naturally over preempts. Double is for takeout through 4♥ and for penalty at higher levels. A 4NT bid over 4♠ is for takeout. Our notrump overcalls at the two level show about 16-19 hcp with a stopper. Cuebid remains top and bottom.

Jump shifts over preempts are strong (not necessarily forcing though) as we do not preempt over opposing preempts. However, jump shifts over intermediate bids (like our 2♣ and 2♦ openings) remain weak.

### 11.4.1 Over 2X Preempts

If opponents preempt with a natural two-level bid (including bids which show five in the bid suit and an unknown second suit):

- 2NT is natural, showing a balanced hand with a good 15 to 18 high, and a stopper.
- Three-level cuebid asks for a stopper. This is frequently a strong hand with a minor. Lacking a stopper, partner should bid minor suits as “pass or correct” or otherwise make a natural bid.
- Jumps are natural and *strong* if in a major. Minor suit jumps to the four-level show that minor and a side major, at least five in each suit.
- Double is for takeout and ELC does not apply. It may still be off-shape, but always guarantees support for each unbid *major* suit. Double followed by bidding a suit or notrump shows more than one place to play.
- 3NT is to play, and could be either a running suit plus a stopper, or a strong balanced hand. In any case it tends to deny holding 3 cards in each unbid major.

After a takeout double by partner of a two-level preempt, we play a lebensohl 2NT response. The 2NT bid shows a bad hand (at most 8 hcp) and relays to 3♣. If doubler's hand is very good, he may bid an artificial 3♦. Advancer replies by bidding

3OM 4OM  
3M asks for stopper  
3NT promises stopper

If advancer bids at the three level (bypassing 2NT) this shows about 8-11 hcp. This is *not forcing* but suggests that doubler may wish to bid on if he has more than a minimum takeout double.

If there are two ways to bid at the three level, going through lebensohl shows an invitational hand with only 4 cards in the bid suit and stopper in X, whereas a direct jump shows an invitational hand with no interest in NT.

### 11.5 After (3X) 3NT

The 3NT overcall over a three-level preempt could be wide-ranging, and sometimes based on a running suit with stopper in X. Over this overcall:

4♣ Clarification ask.  
4♦ bal, 16-18  
4♥ bal, 19-21  
4♠ bal, 22-24  
4NT running suit + stopper  
4♦ 55+ two-suiter; suit bids by overcaller are pass-or-correct.

### 11.6 Defense to Artificial Strong Bids

At vulnerable, we play *Mathe*. This means double shows both majors, notrump bids show both minors, and other calls are natural.

At nonvulnerable, we play psycho-suction. Bidding any suit shows *either* the suit bid or the two suits above (so for example a 1♠ overcall of a strong club is either ♠ or both minors). Most followups are pass or correct. Notrump calls show two non-touching suits.

### 11.7 Defense to Artificial Two-Bids with a Known Suit

If the bid promises length in the bid suit (for example 2♥ opening showing hearts and a minor) then we treat it as natural. In some cases it is important to note that a double is takeout of the bid suit, *not* takeout for the two unbid suits. For example after a 3♣ opening showing clubs and hearts, we would double with 4441 shape but *not* with 4144 shape unless extremely strong. This allows partner to judge when the opponents have a misfit and penalize when appropriate.

If the bid promises length (five or more) in one known suit, then cuebidding the known suit is a takeout double of that suit. For example, after 2♦ flannery (five hearts and four spades), a 2♥ bid is takeout of hearts. Other bids are natural (including 2♠ here since only four spades were indicated). Doubling the artificial bid shows a good hand with the suit bid (so 2♦-X would show diamonds). Bidding the suit bid or above (for example 2♦-3♦) is preemptive and natural. Bids over 2♦ as a transfer preempt to hearts would be identical.

Bids which have both a strong and weak meaning (where the weak meaning is much more frequent) will be treated as if having the weak meaning. For example, 2♣ showing a strong hand or weak two in diamonds is treated as a transfer preempt in diamonds (one known suit) so 2♦ is diamond takeout and other bids are natural.



If the bid promises length (five or more) in two known suits, then the lower cuebid shows interest in our lower suit and the higher cuebid shows interest in the higher suit (for example after 2NT minors, 3♣ cue shows hearts and 3♦ cue shows spades). These cuebids generally show better hands than bidding the suit directly (which indicates about 11-14 points, a minimum opener). Doubling an artificial bid which shows two known suits indicates an interest in penalizing.

## 11.8 Defense to Multi 2♦

In direct seat after the multi 2♦ opening, we act as if a weak two in spades has been opened. Our bids are:

double takeout of spades

2♥ natural, five or more hearts

2♠ a cuebid, clubs and hearts (top and bottom)

2NT balanced, about 16-19 hcp, stoppers in the majors

3♣♦ natural, sound overcalls

A direct seat pass followed by a subsequent double of hearts is takeout. A direct seat pass followed by a double of spades is penalty (we could have doubled 2♦ for spade takeout).

After 2♦-pass-2♥, we play as if two hearts was the opening bid (since it is nonforcing). In general, if the opponents make an artificial bid which is nonforcing and frequently passed, we will treat it as natural. A pass here followed by a subsequent double of spades is for takeout.

## 12 Leads and Carding Agreements

### 12.1 Leads vs NT

- 4th best from length
- Xxx (if highest spot is affordable, o/w second highest)
- K is power lead, asking for unblock of Q/J or count
- Q from KQ or QJ, asking for attitude
- Coded T/9

### 12.2 Leads vs Suit

- 3rd from even, low from odd
- A from AKx(+)
- Coded T/9 (rare lead)
- xxX
- Vs 5+ level contracts or declarer who has made a preempt, K asks for count

### 12.3 Leads in the middle of the hand

- Spot cards are usually attitude, though if from Hxxx or longer holding, 4th vs NT and 3rd/low vs suit
- Honor leads are K from either AK or KQ, and coded T/9

## 12.4 Signals

We play upside-down attitude (low encourages). However, at trick one there is an additional inference about one of the other suits, which is designated as the “obvious shift.”

There’s a book about obvious shift carding by the Granovetters. For now, here are the rules for determining which suit is the obvious shift:

1. Obvious shift cannot be the suit lead
2. Obvious shift cannot be the trump suit
3. Obvious shift is not a suit where dummy has AKQ or 4 of top 5
4. Obvious shift in a suit contract is not dummy’s singleton or void
5. Obvious shift cannot be a suit declarer bid naturally
6. Opening leader’s bid suit is the obvious shift
7. Opening leader’s partner’s bid suit is the obvious shift
8. Against a suit contract, dummy’s 3-card suit to at most 1 honor is the obvious shift
9. Dummy’s shortest suit is the obvious shift
10. The suit with fewest honors (AKQJT) is the obvious shift
11. The lower-ranking suit is the obvious shift

We consider these rules in order until only one suit remains eligible to be the obvious shift. A discouraging signal at trick one says “please shift to the obvious shift suit.” An encouraging signal denies interest in a switch to the obvious suit. At times this means we will encourage with nothing in the suit lead, simply to avoid a switch to the obvious suit. An unnecessary honor card asks for a switch to a suit *other* than the obvious suit.

After trick one, we play upside-down attitude. Most of the time, we give suit preference when following suit to declarer and dummy’s plays. At times, when it is obvious to do so, we will give upside-down count, but in general our signals are suit preference. This includes lavinthal (suit preference) discards.