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Cena 15 zł
ISBN 83-914291-1-3

SYSTEM LICYTACYJNY

wspólny język 2000

GRATIS

KARTY KONWENCYJNE W JĘZYKU POLSKIM I ANGIELSKIM

Polish Standard 2000
('WJ 2000')

by Krzysztof Jassem
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Translated into English by Daniel J. Neill, June 2003.
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Publisher:
Jarek Zalewski
Semata Sp. z o.o.
53-659 Wroclaw
ul. Sikorskiego 28/32
tel. (071) 373 55 80, 373 58 81
fax (071) 3735 55 79

Technical editor: Maciek Wreczycki

Cover concept: Ula Gardy

Reproduction and preparation for press:
Semata Sp. z o.o.
53-659 Wroclaw
ul. Sikorskiego 28/32
tel. (071) 373 55 80, 373 58 81
fax (071) 3735 55 79

Press: Drukarnia i Oficyna Wydawnicza FORUM
52-016 Wroclaw
ul. Rybnicka 2

ISBN 83-914291-1-3

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains the description of the most popular bidding system in Poland, the Polish Club. This system arose 60 years ago and is played today in Poland, and recently also abroad (Polish Club is bid in the Czech Republic, Russia, Lithuania, Germany, and beyond, e.g. several leading pairs in Indonesia) it is increasingly more popular. One of the reasons for the success of the Polish system is that it is constantly evolving, "taking under its wing" new conventions and bidding tendencies invented in Poland and elsewhere.

Continual improvement of the system means that the Polish Club begins to "have several identities". Different players disagree over the meanings of even the opening bids (e.g. the 2♣ opening). The task at hand is to work out one variant of Polish Club in the hope that it can be standard and fill a leading role, selecting which of various ideas will be used. This was the idea behind the "Bridge" magazine poll, in which it asks what the meanings of bids in several unclear bidding situations should be. The readers of "Bridge" as well as 20 Polish experts were invited to answer. The responses that received the highest approval (approval was calculated by the total percentage support of experts and readers), were made standard and are employed in this write-up.

At first a similar poll was conducted 5 years ago. On the results from that poll was based "Polish Standard 95". It appears that since then, new concepts have crept into the system. "Polish Standard 2000" differs in several important details from its predecessor.

The reader of this booklet should know the principles of the game of bridge - how to play and natural bidding. Competitive bridge players - participating in tournaments or matches - should not have difficulty in understanding the whole system. "Home bridge" players should at first concentrate on the beginning portions of the description ("System Basics") ignoring references to individual conventions and other sections, but short explanations are found in "Terminology". To start with, and to aid "digestion" of the basics, "home bridge" players should not be in any special hurry to try to master several conventions.

DEFINITIONS OF SEVERAL BRIDGE TERMS

Words marked in *italics* can be found elsewhere in the terminology.

ace-ask - see *Blackwood*

Acol - 1) English bidding system, 2) 2♣ opening derived from the "Acol" system showing a very strong hand with any distribution, 3) common definition for very strong hands

balanced distribution – initial distribution of the 13 cards, with no *shortness* in any suit, nor a six-card suit or longer. One such distribution: 5-4-2-2 is considered *unbalanced*.

balancing double - this double is made by the player in the *balancing seat*, to discover a suit to play or to double the enemy contract, if partner holds a *stack* in the doubled suit.

both vulnerable - situation: both sides have game (vulnerable)

contested auction - auction in which both pairs take part (both pairs don't pass)

control/stoppers - having stoppers in a suit, which prevents the enemy from taking the first several tricks in this suit. The definition of control/stopper depends on the situations 1) in NT - then by stopper we mean ace, king, or queen-jack (occasionally queen third without the jack). 2) in a slam auction - then this stopper is: ace/void - **first-round control** or king/singleton - **second-round control**.

controlled psyche - a *psyche*, but with the agreement that the utilizing pair can discover it in further bidding and escape the consequences. A controlled psyche may be used only on the condition that the opponents are informed (alerted) of this strategy.

cue-bid - a *slam-seeking* bid, indicating *first-round control* (ace or void) or *second-round control* in the bid suit (king or singleton). A common English treatment is that a cue-bid has a broader meaning - indicating a general unnatural bid.

defensive auction - auction in which the enemy has opened.

Drury - artificial bid of 2♣ that checks on the strength of partner *overcalling* or in *third-seat*.

end-signal - 4♦ bid over which partner is required to bid 4♥, and then pass over the contract his partner chooses.

explanatory double - double over the initial bid of the auction that shows a hand too strong to *overcall* another way. The strength of the explanatory double amounts to 17 HCP *unbalanced* or 19 HCP *balanced*.

extras - additional strength, unshown in the preceding auction. If we have more points than we are required to have on the bidding, we say **extra HCP**. If we have better distribution (e.g. more cards in a bid suit) than shown in the preceding auction, we say **extra distribution**.

favorable vulnerability - situation: us without game (not vul), them with game (vulnerable)

final contract - where the auction has ended

fit - support or raise of suit bid by partner. A fit promises enough length to guarantee at least 8 cards between the two hands in the suit.

five-carder - a five-card suit

forcing - a bid over which one can't pass

forcing for one round (F1) - a bid, over which partner must bid at least once more

forcing 2NT - a rebid by *responder* of 2NT over *opener's rebid* at the 2-level. Partner cannot pass this bid.

four-card major (five-card, six-card) - four (five, six) cards in a *major suit*.

four-card minor (five-card, six-card) - four (five, six) cards in a *minor suit*

fourth-seat opening - *opening* of the auction after three passes. Note that a fourth-seat opening can be somewhat weaker than in other situations (10 HCP).

game - contract at a level that secures an additional bonus, either 3NT, 4♥, 4♠, 5♣, or 5♦.

game-forcing - bid, after which partner cannot pass before reaching *game*.

game-forcing auction - situation in which a pair cannot allow themselves to stop until bidding *game*.

game-invite - bid, over which partner must bid *game*, if he holds any unshown *extras*.

HCP - see 'points'

Hoyt - asking for kings. A bid with the cheapest step over a response to *Blackwood* or *Keycard Blackwood*, (i.e. 5♦ over 5♣ or 5♥ over 5♦) used to verify how many kings partner has. Partner bids the next suit (e.g. 5♥ over 5♦) if he doesn't have any kings, the second step (e.g. 5♠ over 5♦) if he holds one king, etc.

inconvenient splinter - *splinter* in the suit immediately below our agreed suit (e.g. showing shortness in diamonds when hearts are agreed).

interference auction - auction in which our pair has *opened* and at least one of the opponents overcalls.

keycard-ask - see *Keycard Blackwood*

Keycard Blackwood - asks for number of the five keycards: 4 aces and the king of trumps. The suit in question is either the agreed trump suit, or, if no suit has been agreed, the last bid suit. Partner bids: 5♣, 0 or 3 of the above-mentioned five keycards, 5♦ - 1 or 4 keycards, 5♥ - 2 or 5 keycards, 5♠ - 2 keycards and a king, 5NT - 2 keycards and 2 kings. In the classic version of the convention, **Blackwood**, it follows an analogous scheme, except it asks just for the number of aces.

king-ask - see *Hoyt*

major suit - hearts or spades

Michaels cue-bid - bid in the enemy suit showing *at least 5-5* in suits not bid by the opponent with at least one *five-card major*.

minor suit - clubs or diamonds

negative double - double over an enemy overcall (in Polish Standard 2000 up to the level of 3♠), to suggest play in both unbid suits or showing 4-cards in any previously unbid *major suit*.

none vulnerable - situation: both sides do not have game (not vulnerable)

non-forcing bid - bid over which one can pass.

to occupy a suit - to bid a suit that the enemy has, thus rendering it more difficult for the enemy to reach a contract in this suit.

to occupy NT - to bid NT for the first time in the auction - thus showing the desire to play NT

one-over-one - *response* at the 1-level to an *opening* at the 1-level.

to open the bidding - to make the first bid in the auction besides a pass.

opener - player who begins the auction (first player that doesn't pass).

opening - first call of the auction that isn't a pass.

optional double - double similar in meaning to the *penalty double*. The difference is that the optional double is not made only on one's own cards, but the hand partner has shown in the auction. Partner might therefore not pass, if he believes that his hand is not appropriate enough for penalty given the preceding auction.

overcall - bid other than pass when the auction was opened by one of the opponents.

to overcall in the auction - to make a bid other than pass, when one of the opponents has opened.

partial - contract at a level lower than *game*.

"pass-or-correct" double - double, over which partner must pass if he holds length (4-5 cards) in the suit bid by the enemy. The length-double pertains to the 2♦ *Wilkosz* and 2♣ *Precision* openings.

penalty double - double that doubles the stakes, when the opponents play, which expresses that the contract will not make. Partner must pass no matter what.

power auction - auction based on the sum of our HCP resulting from the preceding auction. Sometimes the power auction is deduced from the opponents' auction!

Precision - 1) bidding system based on a strong club (in which opening 1♣ shows a hand with at least 16 HCP), 2) in Poland a popular definition for the 2♣ opening derived from the Precision system, showing 11-15 HCP with at least 5 clubs - in the case of having just five clubs it requires having a *four-card major*.

premium contract - small slam or grand slam

psyche (or bluff) - a bid which causes the enemy to make a mistake (e.g. to bid a suit in which we have few cards)

rebid - further bid. With no other indications, it refers to a further bid by *opener*.

reopen - to bid after the enemy bid on the left followed by two passes.

reopening double - see *balancing double*

reopening position - situation in which the most recent enemy bid was on the left, and this was followed by two passes.

responder - partner of *opener*

response - 1) first bid by partner of opener, 2) in a conventional auction - a response to a convention asking partner, e.g. "response to an ace-asking bid".

responsive double - this double is made by the defense over a *takeout double* by partner and an action by RHO, which suggests playing in at least two yet-unbid suits.

reverse - bidding a second suit higher than the first one (e.g. showing hearts after diamonds), when it is possible to repeat the first suit cheaply (e.g. in a uncontested auction: 1♦-1♠-2♥). In most bidding situations the reverse auction shows *extra HCP*.

second-seat - when RHO *opens* the bidding

second-seat interference - opponent on the left bids, when we open the bidding

seminatural (quasinatural) auction - auction in which partner shows a good holding in a suit, but not necessarily 4+ cards (but showing no stopper in unbid suits).

seminatural bid - bid that tells about honor(s) in the bid suit - but not necessarily 4+ cards.

strongly setting the suit - bidding partner's suit to establish that suit as trumps. Partner is required to continue bidding and introduce his view on the possibility of *slam*.

shortness - *singleton* or *void* in a particular suit.

shortness cue-bid - a *slam-seeking* bid showing shortness in a suit bid. Shortness cue-bids are similar to *splinters*, or over *strongly setting a major-suit* at the 3-level.

sign-off - in the auction it means the same as *to play*.

singleton - just one card in a suit.

six of a splinter - bid at the six-level in a suit in which partner has shown shortness with a prior splinter, which asks for a void. With a void, partner must bid grand slam in the agreed trump suit.

six-carder - six-card suit

slam-invite - bid, over which partner must bid slam, if he holds any unshown *extras*.

slammish - conventions, thanks that partner verifies the possibility of making slam.

splinter - *slammish* bid showing shortness in the bid suit via an artificial jump.

stack - as in **hold a stack** - to hold a good and long suit, which the enemy chooses (or has the intention of choosing) as trumps.

supplement - favorable collection of cards in a suit bid by partner. If partner makes a *supplement-asking* bid, when a **very good supplement** is held in the suit bid by partner two cards with a *top honor*, or three or more cards and two honors. By a **bad supplement** (or **no supplement**) we mean that in the interested suit we have for example three small.

supplement ask - showing a new suit in spite of the agreed trump suit to see whether partner has sure values in this suit (see *supplement*).

support double - double over second-hand opening?, which is informing partner of having 3-cards in partner's suit and promises *extras*.

takeout double - double as an initial bid of the auction, to discover the best suit to play in. Takeout doubler must have at least 3 cards in all *major suits* not bid by the opponents and at least 2 cards in each *minor suit* not bid by the opponents.

third-seat opening - *opening* of the auction after two passes. Pay attention, as the third-seat opening can be weaker than the requirements for other situations (with a good suit third hand can open even with just 8 HCP).

to play - bid over which partner is required to pass.

top honor - queen, king, or ace.

total - sum of HCP of one pair

transfer - artificial bid showing the suit just higher than the bid one (e.g. bidding hearts, showing spades).

trap pass - a pass in a situation in which double would have had a meaning other than *penalty*. With hands that want to make a penalty double of the opponent, we pass and rely on partner to make a *balancing double*, over which we will pass.

trump-asking - asking for number of *top honors* in the trump suit. Responses are as follows: 6♣ - no top honors, 6♦ - 1 top honor, 6♥ - 2 top honors, grand slam in the agreed suit - 3 top honors

trump-invite - jump bid to the 5-level in the agreed *major suit* (or raising the major from the 4-level to the 5-level), which means slam depends on partner having a good trump holding (at least two *top honors*).

two-over-one - *response* at the 2-level over an *opening* at the 1-level.

unbalanced distribution - hand distribution, that isn't **balanced**.

uncontested auction - auction in which only one pair takes part.

unfavorable vulnerability - situation: us with game (vulnerable), them without game (not vul)

void - no cards in a given suit.

vulnerability - settle in each distribution situation tactical, which governs the definition of different of written down result distribution.

Wilkosz - artificial 2♦ opening, showing at least 5-5 distribution with at least one *five-card major*.

2NT opening for the minors - opening with 6-10 HCP showing both *minor suits* at least 5-cards each.

2NT overcall for the minors - 2NT overcall of an *opening* bid by the opponents at the 1-level showing the two lowest unbid suits yet with at least 5-5, i.e. clubs and diamonds over a 1♥, 1♠ or artificial 1♣ opening (like in Polish standard), diamonds and hearts over a natural 1♣ opening, and clubs and hearts over a 1♦ opening. The strength of a 2NT overcall depends on the *vulnerability* and contrary to the *opening 2NT* hasn't an upper limit of 10 HCP.

4-3-2-2 strategy (5-3-2-1, too) - chosen strategy for the level of preempts. The strategy calls for how many certain tricks we have in our hand (without any help from partner) in case our preemptive bid buys the contract. The 4-3-2-2 strategy says that at favorable vulnerability one should be able to take four tricks fewer than contracted (e.g. six tricks for a 4♥ preempt), when neither vulnerable we should be able to take 3 tricks less than contracted, and at both vulnerable or unfavorable vulnerability we should be within 2 tricks of our bid.

5-3-3-2 distribution (e.g.) - the distribution of the 13 cards in a hand, the suit lengths enumerated. The numbers from left to right refer to spades-hearts-diamonds-clubs - showing the exact distribution. A partial listing: **5-5 distribution, 5-4 distribution**, refers to all hands in which two long suits are bid: both 5-cards, one 5-card and the other 4-card.

CHAPTER 1 - "Polish Standard 2000" Basics

The Uncontested Auction

1♣ Opening

Requirements
a) 12-14 HCP, denies a 5-card major, 6 clubs, or 5 clubs and a side 4-card suit,
b) 15-17 HCP, unbalanced with clubs
c) 18+ HCP, any distribution.

Variant (a)
In this variant, the 1♣ opening is 12-14 HCP balanced or 4-4-4-1♦. We possibly could have 5 clubs only if 5-3-3-2. With 5 clubs and 4 diamonds we open 1♦, but with 6 clubs, or 5 clubs and a 4-card major, we bid 2♣.

The above principles don't have to be followed like the Bible. With a very weak 6-card club suit we could open 1♣ (and later show the 6-card suit as 5 cards). Also it would be better to open 1♣ with 5-4 distribution when we have honor strength in the short suits, or when the clubs suit is very weak (here on later rounds we treat the 5-card club suit as a 4-carder). With 5 good clubs and a weak 4-card diamond suit we can open 1♣ instead of 1♦.

Examples of hands for the 1♣ opening in variant (a):
-classic openings:
(1) ♠ Axx ♥ KJxx ♦ QJx ♣ Qxx
(2) ♠ xxxx ♥ Kxx ♦ AKQx ♣ xx
(3) ♠ Ax ♥ xxx ♦ Qxx ♣ KQJxx
- offbeat openings:
(4) ♠ Kx ♥ QJx ♦ AQ ♣ Jxxxxx
(5) ♠ Kx ♥ Kx ♦ xxxx ♣ AQJxx
(6) ♠ QJTx ♥ AQ ♦ Kx ♣ Jxxxx

In response at the 1-level partner should remember opener does not have to have clubs in the weak variant of the opening, until he shows a hand with 15 HCP - variant (b) of the 1♣ opening. Over the response of 1♥ with hands (3), (4), and (5) we rebid 1NT, and with hand (6) 1♠. However, this principle does not hold over a response at the 2-level. The auction 1♣-2♦-3♣ promises 5 clubs, but does not guarantee 15 HCP (opener can still clear this up over a response at the 1-level by showing clubs on the next round, but after a response at the 2-level this possibility does not exist).

Variant (b)
Opening 1♣ with 15-17 HCP shows a hand with clubs, but is not suited for an opening 1NT. We include in variant (b) all such distributions with 5+ clubs except 5-3-3-2 with clubs. Here are example hands which we open 1♣ with 15-17 HCP:
♠ Ax ♥ QJTx ♦ xx ♣ AKJxx
♠ x ♥ Axx ♦ KQJx ♣ KQJxx
♠ Ax ♥ Ax ♦ Axx ♣ KQTxxx

With the hands below one may opt to open 1NT:
♠ AQ ♥ Kx ♦ QJxx ♣ QJxxx
♠ Qxxx ♥ AQ ♦ AJ ♣ Qxxxx
♠ Qxx ♥ AQ ♦ AQ ♣ Jxxxxx

Distributions which normally open 1♣, but whose stuff in the short suits convinces us to open 1NT and have it declared by the strong side.

Let's take a hand:
♠ xxx ♥xx ♦AKQ ♣ AKJTx
We recommend opening 1♣. On the next round we show our clubs, informing partner of our 15+ HCP. By giving up opening 1NT we increase the chance of NT being played from partner's hand, for which our small cards in the majors appear favorable.

Variant (c)
The basic criteria qualifying a hand for opening a strong club is 18 HCP. In reality choosing to open a strong club should be governed by very complicated algorithm of understanding. The very general rule can be summarized as:

Assume that partner has a balanced hand. Then if we choose an opening different from 1♣, and partner passes, is it possible we will have missed game?

If the answer to the question is affirmative, you must open 1♣.

Let's formulate more particular rules, which take into account that in the Polish Standard system, jumps to new suits show 5-5 distribution, e.g. in the sequence:
1♠-1NT-3♦
by opener shows (besides 5 spades) 5 diamonds.

This implies that: *With 5-4 or 6-4 distribution, if we choose an opening other than 1♣, partner bids 1NT, I bid a new suit without jumping, and partner passes, could we be missing game?*

If the answer to this question is affirmative, you must open 1♣. Be especially careful with the 5-4 hands with the majors, when the chance is highest of making game.

From the above two rules we can draw the following inference: in hands based on a long suit or on 5-4/6-4 you must open 1♣ with fewer HCP.

5-5 (and greater) distributions offer a bit of difficulty. On one hand it gives one the highest chance of reaching game on the fewest number of points (therefore interest in a "shaded" strong opening club), but on the other hand, with the 1♣ opening it proves difficult to sort out the distribution in later bidding. 5-5 distributions are also not worth shading to a 1♣ openings. On such distributions, if we open one of a suit, the auction will not die after a jump-shift rebid.

Some example hands of opening the strong club:

a) ♠ AKQJ ♥ AQJT ♦ AKQ ♣ AK
b) ♠ AJxx ♥ AKJ ♦ QJxx ♣ Qx
c) ♠ AKJxx ♥ QJx ♦ Kxx ♣ Ax
d) ♠ xx ♥ AKQxxx ♦ AQJx ♣ x
e) ♠ AKJTx ♥ AQJx ♦ Qxx ♣ x
f) ♠ AKxxxxx ♥ Axx ♦ Axx ♣ --

With hand (a) we open 1♣, since in our system we don't have any other power-opening. Hand (b) with 18 HCP is too strong for an opening 1NT (15-17). Hand (c) is suited for a "strong club with spades" (18 HCP). In example (d) we have only 16 HCP, however the 1♥ opening alternative leaves us a problem in later rounds of the auction: jump rebid hearts, or make a simple diamond rebid? So we open 1♣, that in further bidding we can show club-opening strength with hearts and 4 diamonds. With hand (e) a 1♣ opening is recommended. Over the alternative opening 1♠ often occurs a 1NT response, and then what do we bid? 2♥? Partner can possibly hold just: ♠ xx ♥ Kxxx ♦ Kxxx ♣ Jxx and we can make 5♥, but we are stuck in 2 hearts. With hand (f), having only 15 HCP should not hinder us from opening 1♣. One king with partner gives a chance of making game, and if partner pushes for slam, there is also no harm in not having enough HCP. We have both aces and a source of tricks.

However with this hand

♠ KQJxx ♥ Kx ♦ KJxxx ♣ A

we open 1♠ and trust that, even if partner passes with the diamond ace and five spades, the opponents might keep the bidding alive (this type of problem is a downside of systems without a strong artificial opening).

How do we reveal the strong club variant?

The straight method of revealing the strong club variant is to jump in a new suit, e.g. 1♣-1♥-2♠ (strong club with at least 5 spades) or jump to 2NT, e.g. 1♣-1♥-2NT (strong club with balanced distribution without three hearts).

Try to remember, however, that jumping in a new suit is not necessary. The auction: 1♣-1♥-1♠ is forcing in Polish Standard. It shows, initially, the basic variant of 4 spades and 12-14 HCP; however responder cannot pass over this, since it may include other variants of the opening, as these also show the strong club:

(a) 1♣-1♥-1♠-1N-3N
(b) 1♣-1♥-1♠-1N-2♠

In auction (a) opener has a strong club (18-21 HCP) and balanced distribution with 4 spades. In example (b) opener rebids spades showing he has five. Not just five spades, but by opening 1♣ (not 1♠), it means he has club strength (18 HCP). Hence the auction 1♣-1♥-2♠ shows something more than a strong club and five spades: opener has a strong club and very good (at least six) spades.

Responder may not pass over 1♣-1♥-2♣. Opener shows a hand with 15+ HCP (see *How do we show the "middle" club variant?*) Therefore, if opener chooses the sequence 1♣-1♥-3♣, it means that he wants to signal strong club strength (18+ HCP) with six very good clubs.

We may also reveal the strong club by showing the major suit in an "uneconomical" way, e.g. 1♣-1N-2♥/♠. Responder's bid of 1N denies a 4-card major, hence opener showing a major should indicate five cards (on the first round of bidding don't offer a suit in which we have no chance of having a combined 8 cards), and so the strong club variant. As in this sequence: 1♣-1♠-2♥ responder's 1♠ bid bypasses (and thus initially denies holding) four hearts. The 2♥ by opener thus shows the strong club with five hearts.

Another method for showing the strong variant is applying the *fit-reverse* convention (see 1♣ *Opening, Responses)*. This convention by opener shows an 18+ HCP hand and a 3+card fit with responder's suit.

How do we show the "middle" club variant (15-17)?

The "middle" club variant of opener is shown by repeating clubs without jumping, e.g. 1♣-1♥/♠/N-2♣. Opener's bid shows 15+ HCP and is forcing! Opener could still have a good hand with 18+ HCP.

The 15+ HCP variant with 5 clubs and 4 spades over a response of 1♥ (or 1♦) is revealed by starting with spades: 1♣-1♥-1♠-1N-2♣ or 1♣-1♥-1♠-2♥-3♣. With both of the mentioned cases opener shows a hand with 4 spades and at least 5 clubs and 15+ HCP. Responder cannot pass.

How do we show the "weak" club variant (12-14)?

If opener does not even have enough strength for the "middle" club variant, he has a balanced (or 4414) hand with 12-14 HCP.

1♦ Response

The 1♦ response in Polish standard has three variants:

(a) 0-6 HCP, any shape
(b) 7-11 HCP, unbalanced without a 4-card major
(c) 17+ HCP NT, without a 4-card major

Variant (a)

The 1♦ response includes all "negative" hands. The maximum for a "negative" response is 7 HCP with a 4-card major and 8 HCP without a 4-card major. On the next round, as a rule, responder passes over partner's bid at the 1-level with 0-4 HCP and continues on with 5+ HCP.

Variant (b)

This "semipositive" variant of the 1♦ response shows an unbalanced hand with a minor that could stretch for game opposite a "weak club" opening variant. The 2♣ and 2♦ responses force to game, so even with 11 HCP we are forced to show a "semipositive" variant of the 1♦ response (if we happen to hold 9-11 HCP with a good 6-card minor, then we instead respond in the suit at the 3-level). In later bidding responder has the following ways to reveal the semipositive variant of the 1♦ response:

(1) bidding the minor suit with a jump, e.g. 1♣-1♦-1♠-3♣. Responder's auction shows 9-11 HCP and a not-great 6 clubs (with a good 6-carder responder bids 3♣ on the first round of the auction).

(2) bidding 2♠ over a 1♥ rebid
1♣-1♦-1♥-2♠.
With this **artificial** sequence responder shows 5-4 minors with 9-11 HCP.

(3) bidding a minor suit without jumping, e.g.
1♣-1♦-1♠-2♣.
Responder shows 5-11 HCP and 5 clubs. This broad strength-range does not produce any special problem. Frankly, opener with the weak variant of the 1♣ opening passes, and with a stronger hand bids further.

Variant (c)

This variant of the 1♦ response deals with balanced hands without a 4-card major, that offer hope for slam even opposite the weak (preparatory) opening 1♣ variant. It is difficult to imagine such a hand with less than 17 HCP. In following rounds responder shows this strong variant by jumping in NT, e.g. 1♣-1♦-1♥/♠-2N. Responder's sequence shows (18)19 HCP. A player agrees a 4-card minor according to the principles that bidding NT denies a 4-card fit for partner's suit, but bidding a major shows a fit for partner and values in the bid suit:

1♣-1♦-1♥-2N-3♣-?

3♦ by responder now searches for a fit in diamonds, 3♥ and 3♠ show a 4-card fit in clubs, and 3NT is the response without 4 clubs and "no interest".

1♣-1♦-1♥-2N-3♣-3♦-?

Bidding a major suit shows 4 diamonds, and 2N shows no diamond fit.

With 17-18 HCP responder bids 3NT on the second round:

1♣-1♦-1♥/♠-3N

Further bidding resembles that after when responder rebids 2N, but differs in that responder is limited (maximum 18 HCP) and opener only "moves" with an interesting hand.

Developments after a 1♦ response

<u>1N, 2N rebids</u>

The 1N and 2N rebids by opener show a balanced hand and 18-20(21), 21-23(24) respectively. Responder follows analogous methods to over the 1N opening (see *Uncontested auctions. 1N opening.*):

1♣-1♦-1N-?

2♣ is Stayman, 2♦/♥ are transfers to a major, and higher bids hold the same meanings as over an opening 1N, but with strengths stipulated by the first 1♦ response.

1♣-1♦-2N-?

3♣ = stayman, 3♦/♥ = transfers, 3♠ = 5-4 minors, 4♣/♦ = natural (not transfers!) 6-carders

<u>1♥/♠ rebids</u>

With 12-14 HCP opener **may not** rebid 1N (since this bid shows the "strong NT"). Opener bids a cheap 4-card major, and if he doesn't have one, the cheapest 3-card major. Responder takes into account that the bid suit could be a "contrived" 3-card suit and does not jump-raise partner.

Opener also starts with the 4-card major with 5 clubs with 15-17 HCP. With 18 or better he bids 2♣.

It is possible to rebid a major at the 1-level with the 18+ HCP variant. But only with hands with which, if partner has 5 HCP and passes, you can't miss game.

2♦ rebid

Opener's 2♦ is an artificial bid guaranteeing game (the auction cannot die before reaching game). Later bidding is natural with the exception of responder's 2♥, which means: "I don't have a suit to show and am too weak to bid NT", or: "I have hearts, but not enough for a jump to 3♥". With ♠QTxxx (the rest small cards) or ♠JTxxxx he must bid his suit instead of the 2♥ negative. With a six-card major with 2 honors he must bid his suit at the 3-level.

Assume the initial sequence of the auction is the following:
1♣-1♦-2♦

What should be bid with each of these hands?

(a) ♠ QTxxx ♥ xxx ♦ xx ♣ xxx
(b) ♠ xxx ♥ xx ♦ xxx ♣ QJxxx
(c) ♠ xx ♥ QTxxx ♦ xxx ♣ xxx
(d) ♠ Jxx ♥ Jx ♦ xxxx ♣ xxxx
(e) ♠ Jxx ♥ xx ♦ JTxx ♣ Qxxx
(f) ♠ x ♥ KJTxxx ♦ xxx ♣ xxx

With hand (a) we bid 2♠, with hand (b) 3♣, with hand (c) we bid 2♥ and rebid hearts on the next round, with hand (d) too we bid 2♥ but it is "negative", hand (e) is sufficient to bid 2N, and with hand (f) we bid 3♥.

After the following bidding:

1♣-1♦-2♦-2♥

opener shows his suit, or with a balanced hand bids 2N. This bid promises at least 24 HCP and is game-forcing ("if partner has zero he cannot pass").

1♣-1♦-2♦-2♥-2N-?

Responder shows his (weak) major with a transfer, and 3♣ asks for a 4-card major. With two 4-card majors opener bids 3♥, and without major, 3♦. Over this last bid responder can bid 3 of a major to show 5-4 with the major.

Other rebids at the 2- and 3-level

All rebids at the 2- and 3-level are natural and show a strong club with at least 5 cards in the bid suit. 1♣-1♦-3♥/♠ *"Partner, if you have any aces or kings, show them at the four-level"*. 1♣-1♦-3N This tries to take nine tricks with the help of a "solid" minor (at least six cards).

1♥, 1♠ Responses

The responses of 1♥ and 1♠ show 7 HCP (no upper limit) and least 4 cards in the bid suit. With both 4-card majors we respond 1♥ (following the general principle that with 4-card'ers we bid the lowest first), with 5 spades and 4 hearts we bid 1♠, and with two 5-card majors we respond 1♠ (following the principle that with two 5-card suits we bid the higher one first).

Holding a 4-card major and a 5-card minor we first bid the 4-card major if not game-forcing (up to 11 HCP), but with 12 HCP we bid the minor at the 2-level first.

Developments after the 1 ♥/♠ responses

1♣-1♥-1♠

The 1♠ by opener is forcing. He bids this with the preparatory variant (12-14 HCP), with the strong club with 4 spades, with the strong club and five good spades (following up with repeating the spades), and also hands with 5 clubs 4 spades and 15 HCP (following up with a club bid).

"Magister" Checkback

In the chapter *Conventions. The uncontested auction* is discussed the *Magister* convention. This convention is required for sequences like: 1♣-1♥-1♠-2♣ since opener could still have the strong club. Strong-club responses (2♦, 2♥, 2♠, 2N are described in the main discussion of the convention) are:

3♣ = 5 clubs, 4 spades, 15+ HCP
3♦ = 5 diamonds, 4 spades, 18+ HCP
3♥ = 5 spades, 3 hearts, 18+ HCP
3♠ = 5 spades, less than 3 hearts, 18+ HCP
3N = 4 spades, 18+ HCP (denies 3 hearts, since opener did not make an artificial reverse [below])

Fit-Reverse (a.k.a. 'Odwrotka')

1♣-1♥/♠-2♦-?

The 2♦ bid by opener (*fit-reverse*) shows the strong club variant with at least a 3-card fit for responder's major. The chief advantage of this bid is revealing at a low level that the combined strength is enough for game and at the same time there is a minimal fit in the major. Another plus that results from this is the negative inference: if partner has the strong club in a balanced hand, and does *not* bid the *fit-reverse*, he doesn't hold 3-card support for responder's suit.

We respond to the *fit- reverse* according to the **4-4, 5-5, 6-6** scheme:

2♥ = weak (less than 10 HCP) with **4-cards** in the bid suit
2♠ = strong (11+ HCP) with **4-cards**
2N = weak with **5-cards**
3♣ = strong with **5-cards**
3♦ = weak with **6-cards**
3♥ = strong with **6-cards**

The 3♠ response as well as the 4-level are *splinters* (see *Conventions. Slam-seeking).*

Further bidding over the *fit-reverse* is natural (try to cue-bid immediately; at the 4-level or 3♠, when hearts is agreed, see *Conventions. Slam-seeking.*) Opener showing spades is a 4-card suit. Bidding the fit-reverse does not necessarily set that suit as trumps.

1♣-1♠-2♦-2♠ (strong with 4 spades)-2N-3♦ (4 diamonds)-4♦... In this example the trumps are diamonds.
1♣-1♥-2♦-2N (weak with 5 hearts)-3♣-4♣: Clubs are agreed in spite of the 8-card heart fit.
1♣-1♠-2♦-2♥-3♣-3♦-3♠-4♠: Agreeing spades with 7 trumps, since hearts are not stopped.
1♣-1♥-2♦-2N-3♠-4♠: 3♠ by opener shows 4 spades (with 5 spades and 3 hearts it is better not to fit-reverse but show the spades).

Raising the major response

1♣-1♥/♠-2♥/♠: Raising the major suit shows 4 cards in this suit. Later bidding is analogous to opening with a major and raising (see *1♥ Opening*). Responder can use the convention *2N over a major-suit raise* (see *Conventions. The uncontested auction*).

Other sequences over 1♥/♠ responses

1♣-1♥/♠-1♠/N-2♦: The 2♦ bid by responder shows 7-10 HCP, at least 5 diamonds, and a hand not suited for play in NT. Opener could pass, or choose perhaps try 2N.

1♣-1♥/♠-2♣: The 2♣ rebid shows 15+ HCP. It isn't forcing to game, but forces for one round. Responder has 3 possible non-forcing bids: repeating his suit, 2N, and 3♣.

1♣-1♥/♠-2♣-2♦: Responder's 2♦ is an artificial game-force. Responder can bid this with a good hand, to find the best contract. Further bidding is natural.

1♣-1♥/♠-2N: Opener shows 18-23 HCP without 3-card support for responder. Allowed is a singleton in responder's suit (e.g. with 5 diamonds and 4 hearts over a 1♠ response). Further bidding is natural. Responder repeats his suit only with 6 cards or a very good 5.

1♣-1♥/♠-3♣/♦: This bid practically guarantees a six-card suit and 18+ HCP.

1♣-1♥/♠-3N: Opener tries for the 9-trick game based on a club suit. We bid this way e.g. with: ♠ Kxx ♥ xx ♦ Kx ♣ AKQxxx, or ♠ Ax ♥ x ♦ Qxx ♣ AKQxxxx.

1N Response

The 1N response shows 8-11 HCP with no 4-card major or shortness. Allowed is a 5-card minor (even 5-4 minors). In principle the response promises 8 HCP, in tournaments we can cheat with 7 HCP. Partner with the weak variant does not even hold 15 HCP (he would have opened 1N), therefore even with a somewhat-good 11 HCP we bid 1N.

Developments after a 1N response
1♣-1N-2♣: This sequence is natural, forcing, showing 15+ HCP, but is not forcing to game. Continuations are considered natural. Of course responder's major bid has a seminatural meaning - showing an honor (honors) in the suit, and not a 4-card suit, since responder denied holding one with the 1N response. Over this initial auction one can still stop in 2N or 3♣.

1♣-1N-2♦: Opener has a strong club and at least 4 diamonds. Nobody can pass below game. Continuations are natural or seminatural (as in 1♣-1N-2♣ above). Responder with a 4-card diamond fit can bid a strong major or raise diamonds to the 3-level, if both majors are equal-strength.

1♣-1N-2♥/♠: Opener has at least 5 cards in the major, a strong club, and the auction is game-forcing.

1♣-1N-3♣/♦: A good 6-card suit, strong club, forcing to game.

1♣-1N-3♥/♠: Sets the bid major as trumps. Requires partner to cue-bid any ace or king.

2♣ and 2♦ Responses

The 2♣ and 2♦ responses show at least five cards in the bid suit and are game-forcing. The minimum strength is 12 HCP.

Having a 5-card minor does not mean we are required to bid this suit. ♠ Kxx ♥ QJx ♦ AJ ♣ Jxxxx makes bidding NT attractive, since the club suit is weak, and the other suits are stopped. A sharp player contracts 3N, the cautious player - 2N. With ♠ QJxx ♥ KJ ♦ KQ ♣ Jxxxx we bid 1♠. The chance of game appears to be in spades or NT. For 5 clubs we need too much.

Developments over the 2♣ and 2♦ responses
Opener shows his 4-card major (hearts, if both). With a strong club, opener doesn't have to jump, since the auction is already forcing to game (in fact a jump-shift is a *splinter*). Raising responder's suit shows a 4-card fit and no major - it does not promise extras. Responder rebidding the minor is forcing, eg. 1♣-2♦-2♥-3♦: opener cannot pass.

Very particular agreements pertaining to responder bidding at the 2-level can be discovered in the chapter *Conventions. The uncontested auction* and also in *Third-suit forcing* and *Forcing 2N*.

2♥ and 2♠ Responses

See *Conventions. The uncontested auction. Jump-responses.*

2N Response

The 2N response shows 11-12(13) HCP and a balanced hand with no 4-card major.

2N we respond with hands where, if partner passes, we probably won't go down. "Empty" 11 HCP hands, e.g. ♠ Axx ♥ QJx ♦ Axx ♣ xxxx don't qualify for this response (1N is enough). Do we ever respond 2N as a passed hand? Partner having opened in third (fourth) seat light would not be pleased with us. But if we hold a 5-card minor, then we may "add a point".

Continuations are natural. Opener's 3♣ rebid is forcing and shows 15+ HCP. Rebidding the suit (above 3N) shows the strong club.

3♣ and 3♦ Responses

These are non-forcing bids showing a good 6-card suit. By a good suit we mean a major honor with partner would provide a good chance of running the suit. The suit can include two major honors (AK, AQ, KQ) or any two of the honors and the ten (AJT, KJT).

Continuations
In Polish Standard 95 any bid of a suit by opener showed the strong club and a 5-card suit. In Polish Standard 2000 we have introduced changes in this sequence. The chief one concerns 3N. Now opener's first rebid at the 3-level is treated as *en passant* (see *Conventions. The uncontested auction.*)

Opener shows the strong club variant by bidding his suit at the 3-level. These bids are double-meaning in the following way: continuations show stoppers (described with the *en passant* convention), but responder is required to raise a suit bid by partner to the 4-level when he holds at least 3 cards (if the response is natural with 5 cards, it succeeds in setting the suit, but if it is *en passant*, we will play in 5 of a minor or 4 of the major with a 7-card fit).

3♥ and 3♠ Responses
These bids show 7-card suits to two top honors, and nothing on the side. Partner with three "bare" aces (one in our suit) can try to make 3N with 17 points.

3N Response

The 3N response shows 12-16 HCP balanced with no 4-card major.

Examining the system reveals we have no other bids to show this hand-type; still though, consider this contract should be played by partner's hand sometimes. A dangerous trick, when 2N is inconvenient, is bidding at the 1-level a 3-card major. Safer is to show a 4-card minor. Examples:

(a) ♠ xxx ♥ xx ♦ KQJx ♣ AQJx
(b) ♠ xxx ♥ xx ♦ AKQT ♣ Axxx

With hand (a) it is recommended to bid 2♣, and with (b), 2♦.

Developments after a 3N response
Responder bids only with the strong club variant (but with the "middle" variant, clubs). Note: 1♣-3N-4♣ shows the strong (or "middle") club with 5 clubs. 4♦ by responder is a cue-bid agreeing clubs. These agreements differ from "Polish Standard 95".

Opener's 4♥/♠ rebids show the strong club with 5+ cards and are **forcing**. Responder bids 4N without a 3-crd fit or continues bidding (cue-bid) with a fit for partner's suit.

4N is invitational to slam.

1♦ Opening

Description:

(a) 12-17 HCP with at least 5 diamonds, or any 4-4-4-1 with 4 diamonds
(b) 12-14 HCP, 4 diamonds and 5 clubs

Variant (a)
Opening 1♦ can have a balanced hand and 5 diamonds (5-3-3-2) but only if 12-14 HCP, since we need 15-17 HCP to open 1N. The unbalanced hands with 5 diamonds as well as 3-suiters (4-4-4-1) we open 1♦ with wider-strength: 12-17 HCP.

Variant (b)
With 4 diamonds and 5 clubs we open 1♦ with at most 14 HCP. With stronger we open 1♣ and follow by rebidding clubs, showing 15 HCP and 5 clubs, and partner can try to inquire for a 4-card diamond suit.

Developments after a 1♦ opening

1♥/♠ Responses

The responses of 1♥ and 1♠ are natural. The show 6+ HCP and at least 4 cards in the suit. Of course this is the theoretical HCP requirement (we don't recommend doing so over a 1♣ opening), so kosher is a 1♠ response on ♠ KJTxxxx and nothing else (planning a non-forcing 2♠ rebid) or "lighter" with a diamond fit (we can hinder the enemy bidding, and still arrive at a diamond contract). Yet I don't recommend responding light without a diamond fit - better to pass and in the worst case play in a bad suit than later to be hit with a double, when we finally stop bidding.

A special agreement is to fabricate a major suit response with a diamond fit. It is necessary to remember that if partner agrees to play this style, we must inform our opponents about this (alerting the 1♥/♠ responses). If we don't play this style, partner would not want to pass in this type of auction: 1♦-1♥-2♥-3♦ since according to classical bidding that last bid is forcing.

Developments after a major-suit response
1♦-1♥/♠-1N-2♣: This sequence is *Magister* (see *Conventions. The uncontested auction.*)
1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣: Not *Magister* but 4th suit forcing (see *Conventions. The uncontested auction.*)

1♦-1♥/♠-2♣: This sequence shows 5 diamonds and 4 clubs 12-17 HCP, or the reverse with 12-14 HCP. To get more information about the distribution of the minors, responder can bid the fourth suit. Opener shows now 4 diamonds and 5 clubs via 3♣. Repeating responder's suit shows 5 diamonds. If responder isn't strong enough for 4th suit, he can place the contract, e.g.: 1♦-1♥-2♣-2♦-Pass. This can happen to produce a 6-card trump-suit. Thus responder with 3 clubs and 2 diamonds and a weak hand does not want to correct 2♣ to 2♦ (although in the analogous sequence 1♥-1♠-2♣-? it is better to correct to 2♥ with 3 clubs and 2 hearts). Note: With a 3-suiter and a singleton spade, over a 1♠ response, we rebid 1N!

1♦-1♥/♠-2♦: This bid shows 12-14 HCP and at least six diamonds after a 1♥ response. Over a 1♠ response opener can bid this way with 5 diamonds and 4 hearts, if he decides not to bid NT with an improper hand. Responder's rebid of the other major (e.g. 1♦-1♠-2♦-2♥) is forcing and does not promise 5-4 in the majors - (see *Conventions. The uncontested auction. Third-suit.*)

Reverse rebid

With a reverse rebid we have bid one of the following two sequences: 1♦-1♥-2♠ or 1♦-1♠-2♥. This bid shows at least 15 HCP, and in the first sequence practically 6 diamonds. The reverse rebid is not forcing to game. Responder has two non-forcing bids: 3♦ and repeating the major. Both show that the first response was on a bad hand. Raising the major suit to the 3-level is forcing (conventionally slam-seeking), and 2N is forcing too:

1♦-1♠-2♥-2N.

Opener shows his third suit (3-carder) if he has one, repeats diamonds if he has six, or bids NT.

With a fit for partner

Showing a major suit promises 4 cards in the suit. With extra HCP or distribution we jump-raise partner. Jumping to the 4-level shows minimum strength, but very distributional. With game and a four-card fit, but without shortness we bid 4♦. For example:

1♦-1♠-?

(a) ♠ Jxxx ♥ KQ ♦ QJxxx ♣ AQ
(b) ♠ Kxxx ♥ xx ♦ AKxxx ♣ Ax
(c) ♠ KQxx ♥ Axx ♦ AT9xx ♣ x
(d) ♠ KJxx ♥ Axx ♦ AJTxxx ♣ --
(e) ♠ KQxx ♥ Axx ♦ AJxxxx ♣ --
(f) ♠ Axxx ♥ xx ♦ AKQxx ♣ Kx

With hand (a) despite the 15 HCP we don't bid more than 2♠. With (b) and (c) we jump to 3♠ - even a minimum hand with partner (Ace fifth of spades) gives chance of game. With hand (d) it is sufficient to bid 4♠, but with hand (e) we proceed to game via a 4♣ splinter (see *Conventions. Slam-seeking.*) With hand (f) we bid 4♦.

Other sequences

1♦-1♥/♠-2N: This sequence promises 15-17 HCP and a hand that can't open 1N. Opener probably has 6 diamonds. Responder only has one non-forcing rebid: 3♦. Repeating the major in this sequence is forcing.

1♦-1♥/♠-3♣: This sequence shows 15-17 HCP and (as in other jump-shift sequences) promises 5-5 distribution. The only non-forcing bid responder has is 3♦.

1♦-1♥/♠-3♦: This sequence shows 15-17 HCP and promises as well a good 6+ card suit (with a weak suit it is better to rebid 2N). Continuations by responder are forcing.

1♦-1♥/♠-3N: A "gambling" bid. It shows a solid diamond suit and one certain stopper outside of hearts (spades). A typical hand: ♠ xx ♥ Ax ♦ AKQxxxx ♣ Qx.

1N Response

As over the 1♣ opener this response shows 8-11 HCP without a 4-card major. Unlike in response to the 1♣ opener, over the 1♦ opening certain hand-types (not suited for "grabbing" NT) have alternatives such as 2♦ and 3♦ (see below).

Developments over the 1N response

Later bidding over the 1N response is natural. Opener rebids 3♣ forcing for one round, but it can stop at 3♦. The 3♦ rebid is invitational to 3N, but nonforcing (with 17 HCP and 6 diamonds we must bid something else).

2♣ Response

The 2♣ response is absolutely natural and shows at least 5 clubs and game-forcing strength (12+ HCP) or 6+ clubs and invitational to game (9-11 HCP). With the second variant responder repeats clubs at the next round.

Developments over the 2♣ response
There are significant differences from Polish Standard 95.

2N rebid
The 2N rebid shows 3-suited distribution (4-4-4-1) with short clubs and 12-17 HCP. Later bidding is natural. 3♣ by responder is nonforcing. Every other bid forces to game, and opener can show a minimum by bidding game (e.g. 3N over 3♦, 4♥ over 3♥) or cue-bid with a maximum opener.

3♣ rebid
This rebid shows a 4-card club fit and some extra HCP (14+). Holding 5 clubs, however, opener should bid partner's suit even without extra HCP. Sometimes with these holdings bid partner's suit with just a 3-card fit. For example:

(a) ♠ Qx ♥ KJ ♦ ATxxx ♣ QJxx
(b) ♠ x ♥ Kx ♦ ATxxx ♣ KJxxx
(c) ♠ Ax ♥ Ax ♦ Axxxx ♣ KQxx
(d) ♠ x ♥ AQx ♦ Axxxxx ♣ KJx

With hand (a) we bid 2♦, and with (b), (c), (d)... 3♣.

Remaining rebids
The above agreements have very significant consequences: all other bids by opener show 5 diamonds! 2♥ and 2♠ are **reverses** (second suit is higher than the first suit) and show extra cards: 15-17 HCP. The 2♦ rebid says nothing about distribution (besides 5 diamonds) and shows 12-14 strength. 1♦-2♣-2♦-3♦ is forcing. With invitational hands with clubs and diamonds responder should bid 1♦-2♦.

2♦ Response

The 2♦ response is forcing for one round. It shows at least 4 diamonds, no major, and 10+ HCP.

Developments after the 2♦ response

Bidding over the 2♦ response is natural by opener (showing stoppers) and responder. This agreement results from the fact that responder with 2♦ has already shown much of his hand (no 4-card major, no more than 5 clubs), yet opener can have still many possibly distributions. The rebids should be geared so that opener can show his distribution and decide the contract and the level. Let's see some example auctions:

1♦-2♦-2♥-3♥-4♥-Pass: Opener shows 4 hearts. Responder raises with 3 hearts (!), also indicating his hand cannot stop the black suits (bidding a suit shows a stopper in the suit). Opener proposes the moysian trump-fit.

1♦-2♦-2♠-3♥-3N-Pass: Opener shows 4 spades. Responder shows the heart stop and denies a club stop (by not bidding NT). With a club stop opener therefore bids 3N.

1♦-2♦-2N-3♦-Pass: Opener bids 2N to show a minimum hand with balanced distribution. Responder also doesn't hold much, and therefore bids the partial.

1♦-2♦-3♦-3♥-3♠-3N: Opener bids 3♦ showing a weak opener not suitable for NT. Responder decides to try for game. He shows a stopper with 3♥. Opener shows the spade stopper, and so 3N becomes the final contract.

2♥, 2♠, 3♣ Responses

See *Conventions. The uncontested auction. Jump responses.*

2N, 3N Responses

Like over 1♣, 2N (11-12 HCP) and 3N (13-15 HCP) show balanced hands without a major. Responder should feel required to have stops in both major (for those will be led). Without those responder can bid 2♦ (or 2♣). Later bidding (if any) is natural.

1♦-2N-3♣ is in PS 2000 non-forcing (but in PS 95 it was forcing).

3♦ Response

The 3♦ response is preemptive and shows 5+ to 9 HCP and at least 4 diamonds. Opener continues bidding (naturally) only with the exceptionally interesting hands.

3♥, 3♠, 4♣ Responses

Splinters (see *Conventions. Slam-seeking).* It is still possible to play 3N.

4♦ Response

A preemptive/tactical bid. Opener passes with all hands.

1♥ Opening

Description

The opening shows 12-17 HCP and at least 5 hearts. With a six-card minor and a 5-card major it is better to open the major. I don't recommend opening 1N with 5 hearts and 15-17 HCP. One would only do so with a weak heart suit and soft (jacks, queens) honors and only if 5-3-3-2.

Developments over the 1♥ opening

Further bidding over the 1♥ opening is analogous to over a 1♦ opening. Detailed below are only the remaining sequences that differ in their description from the 1♦ opening.

1♠ Response

The key problem presented in this area is as follows: with a 3-card heart fit and a 4(5)-card spade suit do we bid 1♠ or 2♥?

We propose this answer (it is popular in America): *Respond 1♠ when you have enough to bid 3♥ on the next round.* For example:

1♥-1♠-2♣-3♥: Responder shows an invitational hand (9-11 HCP) with at least 4 spades and 3 hearts.

1♥-1♠-2♣-2♥: Responder completes a negative choosing the suit with a doubleton (!) heart. With 3 hearts and 7-9 HCP responder should not be bidding spades the first time around, but raising hearts.

In comparison to the bidding over a 1♦ opening there is still one key difference:

1♥-1♠-3♣-3♥: This auction is forcing, showing a definite heart fit. It is still possible to play 3N or 4♠.

1N Response

This response has a higher maximum than over a 1♦ opening (7-11 HCP). The 1N bid denies 4+ spades or a heart fit. It can possibly indicate some unbalanced distributions:

(a) ♠ KJx ♥ x ♦ Axxxx ♣ Kxxx
(b) ♠ xx ♥ x ♦ KJTxx ♣ KQxxx
(c) ♠ xxxx ♥ x ♦ x ♣ KQJTxxx

With hand (a) we must bid 1N. The alternative response of 2♦ would force us too high since an eventual 2♥ rebid by partner does not leave us any good bids - 2N and 3♣ would be forcing. With hand (b) the 1N response is as desirable as slitting our throat, but we just don't have other possibilities. Even the 2♦ response, just as 2♣ would be shooting at a small target - if we hit partner with a good hand and a 4-card fit, well done, if not, see example (a). With hand (c), manuals teach bidding 1♠. What we propose here is 1N. The suit which you want to play in (and which is possible) is clubs. We will reach them only if we now bid 1N. Probably we won't be passed out (when we have interesting distribution, the others will also) and soon we will bid 3♣, and partner will be able to pass, if he wants.

Two-over-one Response (2♣ and 2♦)

With the two-over-one bids responder shows a new suit at the two-level without jumping. It is accepted that the 2♦ response as well as 2♥ (over 1♠) show a 5-card suit. Resulting from this is:

(a) the 2♣ response over 1♥ shows at least 4 cards
(b) the 2♣ response over 1♠ shows at least 2 cards (only with 3-4-4-2 distribution, when we could have only 8 spades we want to try for a heart fit).

The strength of these bids is that of the 2♣ response to 1♦ (12+ HCP, or 10 with a six-card suit).

Continuations
Raising clubs by opener shows 4 clubs. He can raise diamonds with a tripleton honor in the suit. Raising responder's suit shows extras and is forcing to game.

Repeating the opening suit (1♥-2♣-2♥) shows a minimum opener (12-14) and says nothing about the number of hearts.

Jump-shifting to a new suit below the opening suit (1♥-2♣-3♦, e.g.) shows 5-5 and a maximum opener. Jumping to a new suit higher than the opening suit (1♥-2♣-3♠, e.g.) is a *splinter* (see *Conventions. Slam-seeking).*

With 6-4 distribution in the opening suit and a side suit at a cheap level (e.g. over a 1♥ opening and 2♣ response: holding 6 hearts and 4 diamonds), opener rebids his suit with a weak hand (first putting a limit on the strength) and then shows the 4-card suit.

1♥-2♣/♦-2♥-3♥: forcing! Slam interest as well as showing that the response was a 5-card suit. Opener continues as in *Conventions. Slam-seeking.*

2♥ Response

This shows 6-10 HCP and at least 3 hearts.

The key problem is the difference between responding Pass and 2♥, as well as between 2♥ and 2N (invitational+ with a fit). For example:

(a) ♠ QJx ♥xxx ♦ Qxx ♣ Qxxx
(b) ♠ x ♥ Kxxx ♦ Qxxxx ♣ xxx
(c) ♠ Qxx ♥ KQJ ♦ Qxx ♣ Jxxx
(d) ♠ xx ♥ KJxx ♦ KQTxx ♣ xx

With hand (a) we should pass despite the 7 HCP. What kind of "monster" does partner have that we could make game? With hand (b) despite only 5 HCP there is a good chance for a possible game (even opposite ♠ xxx ♥ Axxxx ♦ KJxx ♣ A). Not vulnerable we bid 2♥, and vulnerable we bid a preemptive 3♥.

Hand (c) has 11 HCP, yet despite this it is not good enough to invite with 2N - this is only 2♥; and with hand (d) we bid 2N (we can't show diamonds, since following with 3♥ would be forcing).

Developments over the 2♥ response

Opener's sign-offs are pass or 4♥. If opener still wants to invite game he has several ways:

(a) straightforward: 1♥-2♥-3♥

This is a power invite. Partner bids game with a maximum for the 2♥response (many think the 3♥ should serve a preemptive function - we don't recommend it).

(b) semi-artificial: help-suit game try

A supplemental suit of at least 3 cards. It can be KJxx, but also Axx. For certain this suit is not KQJx, since it is already "helped". What should partner have in the help-suit? Best support is a doubleton honor, worst three small, and in the middle are a worthless doubleton or tripleton honor.

(c) very complex: (see *Conventions. 2N over a major-suit raise).*

2♠, 3♣, 3♦ Responses

See *Conventions. The uncontested auction. Jump-shift responses.*

2N Response

Since PS 95 has come a very important modification to this bid. It shows at least game-invitational values and a fit for partner's suit. With an invitation to game it can be any distribution. With slam interest the bid shows no good side suit to bid.

This bid is used not only to decide between partial and game, but also between game and slam. To unravel these two meanings we have certain agreements:

(1) The only way to stop in a partial is 1♥-2N-3♥. All other sequences are game-forcing.

(2) After 1♥-2N we can't play 3N except after 1♥-2N-3♥-3N.

After 1♥-2N-?

3♥ = minimum, any distribution, "I want to play 3♥ opposite the invitational variant."

3♣/♦/♠ = 4-card suit, forcing to game

3N = good hand, no shortness

4♣/♦/♠ = *splinters* (showing shortness, with no side 4-card suit)

4♥ = 12-13 HCP, 6 hearts

Continuations by responder over a non-3♥ rebid by opener, e.g. 1♥-2N-3♣, are:

4♥ = "I have the weak variant for the 2N bid - game invitational"

3♥ = "I have a good hand, show your shortness" (see *Conventions. Slam-seeking)*

3N = "I have the strong variant for the 2N, but not a great hand. Show your shortness if you have a good hand" - otherwise sign off in 4♥

3♥ Response

Contrary to the PS 95 the bid in PS 2000 is preemptive. The strength depends on the vulnerability. Here are some example hands:

Favorable: ♠ x ♥ Jxxx ♦ xxxx ♣ xxxx, ♠ xx ♥ QJxx ♦ Jxxx ♣ xxx

Equal: ♠ x ♥Kxxx ♦ xxxx ♣ xxxx, ♠ xx ♥ Kxxx ♦ Qxx ♣ xxxx

Unfavorable: ♠ x ♥ Qxxx ♦ Kxxxx ♣ xxx, ♠ xx ♥ Qxxx ♦ Axxx ♣ xxx

If over the preempt opener sees chances of slam, he bids the next step asking for shortness.

3N Response

The artificial meaning of the 3N response is new in PS 2000. This response shows the "inconvenient splinter": 1♥-3N shows a diamond splinter and a 4-card heart fit. 1♠-3N shows a heart splinter.

The motive for the artificiality is: over that particular splinter (e.g. 4♦ over 1♥) opener cannot make a mild slam try (see *Conventions. Slam-seeking. Splinters*) below game.

4♦ Response (or 4♥ over 1♠ opening)
The "released" splinter bid receives the meaning of a balanced raise to game (9-13 HCP with a 4-card fit for opener).

4♥ Response (or 4♠ over 1♠ opening)
Raising partner's major to game in PS 2000 is just preemptive (0-8 HCP depending on vulnerability).

Third-seat Responses

By a passed hand 2♣ is *Drury* (see *Conventions. The uncontested auction)*. The 2♦ response can be weaker by a passed hand (8 HCP, but with a good suit and no fit). The 3♣ and 3♦ responses show 9-11 HCP with a good 6-card suit and no fit for opener. *Magister* is not used by a passed hand.

1♠ Opening

Requirements:
This opening and continuations are analogous to the 1 ♥ opening. With two 5-card majors we open 1 ♠.

The key sequences to discuss concern 1♠-2♥.

2♥ Response

Meaning: 8+ HCP with 6 hearts or 10+ HCP with 5 hearts.

The 2♥ response is allowed with a bit weaker hands than a two-over-one response in a minor. It results first from the fact that game in hearts requires fewer HCP than game in a minor, and second from the better score that we obtain in a heart partial than NT at matchpoints. But in choosing a 2♥ response we must consider the following dangers:

(a) if we have few HCP (e.g. 8), we need a good heart suit, for over a 2♠ will we be able to rebid hearts at the 3-level?
(b) if we bid 3♥ with 5 hearts and a minimum (e.g. 10) will we be prepared for a 2♠ rebid?

Developments over a 2 ♥ response
1♠-2♥-3♥: minimum opener, 3 hearts.
1♠-2♥-4♥: better opener, 3- or 4-card heart fit.

With strong hands and a heart fit opener has available the following bids:

(a) *splinter* with a 4-card heart fit
(b) bid 2N with balanced distribution (and later rebid 4♥)
(c) bid a minor and then 4♥ with 5 spades, 3 hearts, and a 4-card minor

1N Opening

Description:
1N shows 15-17 HCP balanced. Allowed distributions are: 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, or 5-3-3-2. If we have a 5-card minor and 5-3-3-2, we have no other alternative than to open 1N. If we have a 5-card major, then in

Polish Standard we tend to open the major, and only rarely an off-beat 1N, which requires a weak suit and "soft" values (in later bidding we have no way to inform partner of having the 5-card major).

Example NT openers:
-Classic:

(a) ♠ QJ98 ♥ QT6 ♦ AJ97 ♣ KQT
(b) ♠ Axx ♥ 42 ♦ K73 ♣ AKQ53

- and off-shape:

(c) ♠ KJ7 ♥ J9754 ♦ KJ3 ♣ AQ
(d) ♠ AQ ♥ KT ♦ QJ73 ♣ KJ653
(e) ♠ AJ ♥ Q874 ♦ AJ854 ♣ KJ
(f) ♠ AQ ♥ QT ♦ J98754 ♣ AKJ

Holding a worthless doubleton in hearts as in example (b) doesn't preclude a 1N opener. With hand (c) we can bid 1N because of the weak hearts and well-stopped side suits. Examples (d) and (e) demonstrate it is ok to be 5-4 (even if the 4-carder is a major), if honors are in the short suits, and it should be declared from that hand. Opening 1N with a 6-card minor is only allowed when the suit is very weak.

Developments over the 1N opening

2♣ Response
Meanings:
(a) 0+ HCP with one or both 4-card majors unbalanced
(b) 8+ HCP with a 4-card major balanced
(c) any GF distribution

With variant (a) we pass any response by partner or we bid 2♠ over 2♥ to show a weak unbalanced hand with 4 spades.

With variant (b) we raise partner's suit, or we bid NT otherwise.

With variant (c) we follow *Relay Stayman*.

Developments after the 2♣ response

2♦ = no major, over which responder can bid:

2N/3N = natural
2♥ = weak hand with 4 hearts (as well as 4-cards in the other major, or a 5-card minor)
2♠ = Relay Stayman
3♣/♦ = natural (with a 4-card major), invitational to 3N (7-9 HCP)
3♥/♠ = 5431 convention (see *1N Opening. 3♥, 3♠ Responses*)

2♥ = 4 hearts, possibly 4 spades. Over this response 2N and 3N by responder are natural, but promise a 4-card spade suit (opener, with spades, must remove the NT contract to spades). With other variants, bid as:

2♠ = weak hand, 4 spades unbalanced
3♣ = Relay Stayman
3♦ = 5 diamonds, 4 hearts, invitational to game (7-9 HCP)
3♥ = invitational to 4♥

2♠ = 4 spades, denies 4 hearts. Notable continuations are:

3♣ = Relay Stayman
3♦ = 5 diamonds, 4 hearts, invitational to game (7-9 HCP)

Relay Stayman

Abusing this convention can bring unpleasant consequences, if partner likes to open 1N with atypical distributions. Let's assume that opener has one of the typical distributions for the opening 1N and if he doesn't he is forced to "lie" about his distribution.

1N-2♣-2♦
2♠ = asks for distribution
- 2N = no 5-card minor
  - 3♣ = relay
    - 3♦ = 3343 with 4 diamonds
    - 3♥ = 2344 (3 hearts, both 4-card minors)
    - 3♠ = 3244
    - 3N = 3334 with 4 clubs
- 3♣ = 5 clubs (now 3♦ asks for the doubleton)
- 3♦ = 5 diamonds, 2 clubs
- 3♥/♠ = 5 diamonds, doubleton in the bid suit

1N-2♣-2♥
3♣ = asks for distribution
- 3♦ = 4 diamonds (3♥ here asks for the tripleton)
- 3♥ = no side suit
- 3♠ = 4 spades
- 3N = 4 clubs

1N-2♣-2♠
3♣ = asks for distribution
- 3♦ = 4 diamonds (3♥ asks for the tripleton)
- 3♥ = 4 spades, 4 clubs, 3 hearts
- 3♠ = 4 spades, 4333
- 3N = 4 spades, 4 clubs, 3 diamonds

After asking for distribution responder (now in control) can bid **4♦ - end signal**. This bid forces partner to bid 4♥, over which the "asker" signs off in a contract (even passing 4♥).

Other bids besides 3N and 4♦ are: **Key-card asking in the bid suit**, e.g. 4♣ asks for keycards agreeing clubs, 4♥ asks for keycards agreeing hearts. Responses are in steps (see *Slam-seeking - Keycard Blackwood)*

2♦, 2♥ Responses

Transfers - at least 5 cards in the next higher suit (2♦ shows 5+ hearts, 2♥ shows 5+ spades), any strength.

Continuations

Developments follow these examples:
1N-2♥: With all hands opener bids 2♠. Over this bid a new suit by partner is game-forcing! This is different from PS 95. Hence in the auction 1N-2♥-2♠-3♣-3♠ opener shows slam interest (4♠ would be a weaker sequence).
1N-2♥-2N: Opener has a very good hand and a good spade fit, but cards suited for NT. Over this bid 3♥ by responder says, "bid 3♠". Responder can over 3♠ pass (3♥ then said nothing about hearts) or rebid the hearts - in this case it shows that 3♥ was really hearts.
1N-2♥-3♠: This bid sets spades as trumps. Further bids by responder (except for 4♠) are slam-seeking: 3N = balanced slamtry, 4♣/♦/♥ = shortness slamtry

2♠ Response
(a) invitational to 3N

(b) transfer to clubs

Developments over the 2♠ response
Opener bids 2N with a minimum opener. Then responder bids:
Pass = variant (a)
3♣ = weak hand with clubs
3N = strong hand with clubs (slam invite)
3♦/♥/♠ = shortness with a long club suit
Over 3♣ by opener all bids are the same except for 3N, which is variant (a).

2N Response
Transfer to diamonds

Developments over the 2N response

Opener bids 3♣ with a good diamond fit and a pretty good opener (generally we bid 3♣ with cards that if partner has a 6-cards diamond suit to two top honors and nothing else, we can make 3N). With other hands opener bids 3♦. Further bidding is analogous to bidding over the 2♠ transfer.

3♣/♦/♥/♠ Responses

These responses show shortness in the bid suit and a 5-card minor. This convention is a template for others that show 5431 distributions. Allowed are some other distributions (5521, 5530 but without a 5-crd major, even 6430, 6421). The strength of these bids must guarantee game (if one doesn't stop at game, then it's a slam try).

Here are what the individual bids show, then:
3♣ = short clubs, at least 5 diamonds and exactly one 4-card major
3♦ = short diamonds, at least 5 clubs and exactly one 4-card major
3♥ = short hearts, at least 5-4 in the minors
3♠ = short spades, at least 5-4 in the minors

The 5431 convention we can also apply with shortness in a major and 4 cards in the other major. To do this we must proceed by first asking for a 4-card major:
1N-2♣-2♦-3♥: This bidding shows short hearts and 4 spades. We observe that in all other responses than 2♦ (2♥ or 2♠) our plan to show shortness must go through other means - provided that partner "hits" our 4-card major, and we have the strength to *splinter*.

Developments over the 5431 convention

Examples:
1N-3♣ [short clubs, 5 diamonds] - ?
3♦ = agrees diamonds
3♥ = 4 hearts
3♠ = 4 spades not 4 hearts
3N = "I want to play NT - I have 'solid' club stoppers"

1N-3♥ [short hearts without 4 spades] - ?
3♠ = 4 (5) good spades - suggests a moysian
3N = "I want to play in NT - I have 'solid' heart stoppers"
4♣ = agrees clubs
4♦ = agrees diamonds
4♥ = 4-card fits in both minors, maximum, no heart stopper
4N = 4-card fits in both minors, not suited for 3N, not as strong as 4♥.

1N-2♣-2♦-3♠ [short spades, 4 hearts] - ?

3N = "I want to play in NT - I have 'solid' spade stoppers"
4♣ = 4 clubs
4♦ = 4 diamonds
4♥ = suggests a moysian heart game
4♠ = 4-card fits for both minors, maximum, no spade stopper
4N = 4-card fits for both minors, not suited for NT, not as good as 4♠

2♣ Opening (Precision)

Description:
We open 2♣ with 11-14 HCP, and 5 clubs with a 4-card major, or 6 clubs. The number of clubs can be greater in both variants, but opening with a 5-card major is not allowed. Consider, reader, returning to the 1♣ opening description to recollect what hands fulfill some of the above criteria for opening 2♣, yet must choose however the 1♣ opening.

Continuations over the 2♣ opening

All bids (except 2♦) are natural:

2♥/♠ = non-forcing with at least a good 5 cards (7-11 HCP)
3♣/4♣ = preemptive
3♦/♥/♠ = forcing with 6 cards in the bid suit - convention: *Jump-shift*

2♦ Response
Meaning: asks for distribution

Over this response we can still stop in a partial (2N, 3♣), but generally this functions to find the best game.

Continuations over the 2♦ response

Opener shows his distribution as follows:

2♥ = 4 hearts
2♠ = 4 spades
2N = 6 clubs, good hand for NT
3♣ = 6 clubs, not suited for NT, minimum
3♦ = 6 clubs, 4 diamonds
3♥/♠ = 6 clubs, shortness in the bid suit (!), maximum
3N = solid clubs

The "asker" has the possibility at the next rounds to ask a further question with a cheap bid in the next highest suit artificially (e.g. 2♠ over 2♥, 2N over 2♠, etc.), and over this opener is required:

- to show his 3-card suit, if has shown 5-4 distribution
- to repeat clubs, when he has 6 (3♦ is then asking for shortness)
- to show shortness if he has previously shown 6-4 distribution

Other bids by "asker" besides the cheap artificial bid are natural and - if introducing a new suit - forcing.

2♦ Opening (Wilkosz)

Description:
At least 5-5 distribution with at least one 5-card major, sub-opening strength (6-10 HCP)

Continuations

2♥ Response

This bid means the following: "*partner pass if you have 5 hearts*". The 2♥ response we make often. Example hands, with which we bid 2♥:

(a) ♠ x ♥ Kxx ♦ Qxxxx ♣ KJxx
(b) ♠ xx ♥ xx ♦ AKxx ♣ KQxx
(c) ♠ Qxxx ♥ xx ♦ AKQxx ♣ Qx
(d) ♠ Qxx ♥ Kxx ♦ KJxx ♣ QJx

With hand (a) if we hear partner bid 2♠ - then we bid 2N: "partner show your 5-card minor". With hand (b) we bid 2♥, although playing in a minor might be better, when partner has hearts and a minor. With such a decision there is no harm - if partner passes 2♥ with a minor, then certainly the opponents are missing game in spades. With the 2♥ bid we insure against the worst situation (partner has the wrong suits), by assuming that partner has both major suits. With hand (c) we bid 2♥, but if partner continues with 2♠, then we will invite him to game in spades. With hand (d) we can consider bidding 3♥ (preemptive with a fit for both major suits), but if the opponents appear to be sleeping we can content ourselves with 2♥.

2♠ Response

The meaning of this bid is the following: "*partner pass if you have 5 spades*". Despite appearances this bid by no means must show that responder has better spades than hearts. Some examples of this 2♠ bid:

(a) ♠ xxx ♥ x ♦ KQxx ♣ KJxxx
(b) ♠ xx ♥ Kxx ♦ AQxx ♣ KJxx
(c) ♠ xx ♥ AQxx ♦ x ♣ KQJxxx

With hand (a) either partner passes 2♠, or corrects to his minor suit, and here we pass. With hand (b) we bid 2♠ risking a good partial when partner has hearts and spades. We have the intention of giving ourselves a chance to get to game in hearts (over 3♣ or 3♦ by partner we bid 3♥, which shows an invitation to 4♥, since with a weak hand we would have bid 2♥ at the first round). When we have hand (c), we suspect that partner has our short suits, spades and diamonds. We bid therefore 2♠, for if partner corrects to a minor, we can quickly bid 4♥.

2N Response

This is the strong response to the opening 2♦. We have voted (in order to simplify later bidding) that this bid forces to game (in PS 95 over 2N we had the chance to stop in 3 of a major).

With this response we must arrange therefore the continuations so as, over an "evil" bid by partner, not to get too high.

Developments over the 2N response

Opener shows his suits as following:

3♣ = 5 clubs, over which 3♦ asks for the major
3♦ = diamonds-hearts
3♥ = hearts-spades
3♠ = spades-diamonds

Later bidding is natural, and over this "asking bid" three of partner's major or 4 of his minor is forcing - with interest in slam (see *Conventions. Slam-seeking. Cue-bids*).

3♦ Response

Meaning: invitational to game with a fit for both majors. Opener bids 3 or 4 of his (better) 5-card major according to his strength.

3♥ Response

Meaning: preemptive bid with fits for both majors. Partner passes with hearts or corrects to spades with 5 spades. Opener cannot bid on to 4 despite a maximum opening.

4♣ Response

Meaning: "Partner, I have fits with both majors, show your (better) major suit via a transfer (so 4♦ in order to play in hearts, or 4♥ in order to play in spades)". These are uncommonly suitable (and strongly recommended) agreements, since the best rule is to arrange the contract that the 5-5 distribution is in the dummy (so as not to endanger holdings like Kxx, AQx and keep them undisclosed, secret from the defense).

4♦ Response

Meaning: "Partner, I have a fit for both majors, bid your (better) major suit naturally. Today you better try it rather than me."

2♥, 2♠ Openings

Description:
These openings show a 6-card suit and less strength than opening at the 1-level, 6-10 HCP. I don't recommend opening this bid with a weak suit. We don't open in this way (we pass), when we have a side 4-card major (since it threatens to lose a 4-4 fit).

Developments over the 2♥, 2♠ openings

Later bidding is according to natural principles. Bidding a new suit by responder forces for one round. Raising opener's suit to the three level is tactical (either preemptive, or to entrap the enemy), over which opener is required to pass.

Responder's artificial response is the cheapest step: 2♠ over 2♥ and 2N over 2♠. They are asking for shortness. Opener over these bids shows any shortness naturally, e.g. 3♣ with club shortness (2N is short spades over a 2♠ ask), and without shortness he returns to his suit, or with a very good opening bids 3N. After indicating shortness, "asker" can return to the opening suit at the 3-level, saying that the shortness was not the winner. Opener can push to game with a very good opener.

If the opponents overcall a suit over the shortness-ask:
double = penalty (at least 3 cards in the doubled suit - probably to an honor)
pass = no shortness in the overcalled suit (partner can double)
returning to his own suit = shortness in the overcalled suit

The 2N bid over 2♥ is artificial and shows at least 5 spades (because 2♠ was asking for a singleton).

2N Opening

Description:
6-10 HCP with at least 5-5 in the minors.

Developments

Later bidding is natural. Responder can bid his better minor at the "proper" level. Bids at the 4-level in minors are preemptive non-vulnerable, and preemptive-invitational vulnerable (when vulnerable with better than 5-5 distribution it is possible to bid game).

The artificial response is 3♥ - asking for distribution. Over this response opener bids his longer major (3♠ shows doubleton spades, 3N shows doubleton hearts, 4♥ shows 3 hearts, 4♠ shows 3 spades) or bids naturally a 6-card suit (4♣, 4♦).

3-level Openings

Description:
These openings are natural and show at least a 7-card suit vulnerable (although personally opposite a passed partner I open 3♥ and 3♠ with a 6-carder even vulnerable) and at least 6-cards not vulnerable. The opening strength depends on a player's style and partnership agreements. In the case of none, we propose the 4-3-2-2 method. This means the bidder bids the level according to the number of tricks less than the contract he can take "in hand": 4 tricks, if we are favorable vulnerable, three tricks neither vulnerable, and two tricks if we are vulnerable (no matter what the opponents' vulnerability).

Developments over the 3-level openings

Later bidding is natural at the 3-level, but artificial - cue-bid for the opened suit - at the 4-level.

Opening 3NT

Description:
Solid 7-card minor with nothing else.

Developments

4♣ and 5♣ responses are to play in opener's suit - partner passes with clubs, and bids ♦ with diamonds. 4♥ and 4♠ responses are natural.

The 4♦ response is artificial: it asks for shortness. Opener bids a short suit in a major, however with a minor shortness he bids 4N. 5♣ and 5♦ show no shortness.

Over a double of 3N, pass by responder accepts playing 3N-X !

Opening 4♣, 4♦

Description:
About 9 tricks in a solid major - 4♣ with hearts, 4♦ with spades.

Developments over 4♣, 4♦ openings:

The suit is already set. Partner can bid 4N - asking for side aces (besides the trump suit) - or bid a "side" suit as a cue-bid.

Opening 4♥, 4♠

Description:
The strength of the opening and the length of the trump suit depends on a player's style and partnership agreements. Without such we recommend the 4-3-2-2 method.

Continuations:

All bids by responder are cue-bids (even 4♠ over a 4♥ opening). This principle is followed even in the situations where the opponents enter the bidding.

The Contested Auction

The discussion of the contested auction we divide into two parts. The first deals with situations where our side has opened the bidding - this we will call *bidding over interference*. Auctions which are begun by the opponents, we will call *defensive bidding*, and we discuss them in the second part.

Bidding over interference

Auctions over a takeout double

We discuss here sequences pertaining to the situations when partner has opened the bidding and the intervening opponent doubles for take-out.

General principles

PS 2000 differs from PS 95. Let's review the general principles (resulting from the poll):

(1) Over an intervening enemy double of our opening 1♣ pass shows at least 3 clubs, and 1♦ is a negative without 3 clubs.
(2) Over an intervening enemy double of our openings, responses at the 1-level are forcing, and at the 2-level are non-forcing.
(3) Over an intervening enemy double over our openings jump-shifting to a new suit shows that suit and a fit.
(4) Over an intervening enemy double over our opening 1N we bid suits naturally.

The first principle covers sequences where the enemy tries to "catch" us:
1♣-(X)-P-(P); ? Pass by third-hand says he has at least 3 clubs. It can help opener to decide whether to pass or look for safety.

The second principle does not require a long explanation. Let's look at some sequences:

(a) 1♥-(X)-2♣
(b) 1♥-(X)-1♠
(c) 1♣-(X)-2♣

In sequence (a) 2♣ is non-forcing (6-10 HCP and at least 5 good clubs). In sequence (b) 1♠ is forcing. Both bids deny (in principle) a heart fit. In sequence (c) 2♣ is natural non-forcing (with forcing hands which don't want to redouble we show a major suit at the 1-level).

The third principle finds application in sequences like:

1♥-(X)-3♣

The 3♣ bid promises a heart fit and a good club suit. Primarily this bid helps partner to appraise whether to go for game or just a partial. It can also aid in deciding whether to bid higher when the enemy outbids us.

Note the double-jump is a *splinter*.

1♥-(X)-4♣

4♣ shows short clubs.

Note that the "fit-jump" convention can be used over a 1♦ opening too (and equally with 2♠ over a 1♥ opening). Since we have the problem of whether to bid our suit (to risk submerging a fit can in the contested auction cause unsolvable problems later), or to show just the fit (risking the same), we can in one bid show the bid suit and a fit with partner's suit:

1♦-(X)-2♥

The 2♥ bid shows 5 hearts, a diamond fit, and is forcing for one round.

It remains to choose the meaning of the jump bid over the 1♣ opening. We voted to keep the PS 95 version, which is 9-11 HCP and a 5+ card suit.

Note the poll-preference that over an enemy double of a 1N opening we bid suits naturally (a situation somewhat different from our 1N *overcall* - see *defensive bidding*).

Redouble

The redouble indicates 10+ HCP. The redouble is both an attempt to catch the opponents doubled in a contract and says something about our minimum final contract.

With the redouble we can have a fit or no fit for the opening suit. In the first case we should quickly let partner know about the fit. 1♠-(X)-XX-(2♥); P-(P)-? 2♠ would show about 10 HCP and a doubleton spade (without the ability to double 2♥), and 3♠ would show about 10 HCP and exactly 3 spades.

Bidding after a redouble

Over partner's redouble the auction is forcing (over the enemy we are required to bid one more time). It is agreed that bidding immediately over the enemy shows a minimum opener:

(a) 1♠-(X)-XX-(2♥); 3♣-(P)-?

(b) 1♠-(X)-XX-(2♥); P-(P)-X-(P); 3♣

In both the above sequences opener shows he is not happy to defend 2♥ doubled - but showing either good distribution (5-5) or shortness in hearts. In sequence (b) opener shows more(!) strength.

We add that a new suit by responder over the XX is forcing for one round:

1♠-(X)-XX-2♥; P-(P)-3♣

The 3♣ bid is forcing (with a weak hand he must on the preceding round bid 2♣).

Fit auctions over 1♥, 1♠ openings

Over the auction 1♥-(X)-?, there are several possible bids to show a fit for partner. Several we have mentioned above. Let's lay out the rest:

(a) simple raise (2♥) = weak bid (4-7 HCP depending on the vulnerability)
(b) jump-raise (3♥, 4♥) = preemptive with 4 trumps
(c) 1N = 7-10 HCP with a 3+ card fit
(d) 2N = 9-11 HCP with a 4-card fit
(e) XX = 10+ HCP with a 3-card fit
(f) single-jump in a new suit (2♠, 3♣, 3♦) = fit-showing
g) double-jump in a new suit (3♠, 4♣, 4♦) = *splinter*

After a suit overcall

General principles

(1) A new suit at the 1-level and 3-level is forcing. A new suit at the 2-level is non-forcing. Examples:

(a) 1♦-(1♥)-1♠
(b) 1♠-(2♥)-3♣
(c) 1♦-(1♠)-2♥
(d) 1♥-(1♠)-3♣

1♠ in sequence (a) promises at least 4 spades and is forcing. 3♣ in sequence (b) indicates at least 5 clubs and is forcing. In sequence (c) 2♥ promises 5 hearts (with 4 hearts we would offer a double) and is non-forcing (6-10 HCP). In sequence (d) it is not the "fit-showing" convention that we play only over an enemy double. Here we don't have the possibility to reveal a strong hand cheaply with a redouble, hence we jump so that partner cannot pass.

(2) A jump-raise to the 3-level is preemptive. Examples:

(a) 1♦-(1♠)-3♦
(b) 1♠-(2♥)-3♠

In both the above sequences the bid at the 3-level is preemptive and shows not much strength and a 4-card fit for partner's suit.

(3) 2N over a 2-level enemy overcall is "general Lebensohl". It shows a non-forcing hand in any lower suit or is invitational to game with a fit for partner.

1♠-(2♥)-2N-(P); 3♣-(P)-?
Pass = clubs, weak
3♦ = diamonds, weak
3♠ = invitational to game in spades

If the enemy preempts, the invitational hand is shown with a double:

1♠-(2♥)-2N-(4♥); P-(P)-**double**

This double shows that 2N was the invitation to 4♠. Partner has to decide whether to bid 4♠ or pass 4♥.

(4) The simple cue-bid of the enemy suit shows a game-forcing raise:

(a) 1♥-(1♠)-2♠
(b) 1♠-(2♥)-3♥

(5) A bid in the **reopening** position over the enemy overcall we treat as following:

(a) A balancing double indicates shortness (at most a doubleton in the doubled suit). It does not show extras, if the enemy suit does not exceed 2 of the opened suit. Let's look at some sequences:

(i) 1♥-(2♣)-P-(P); X
(ii) 1♥-(2♠)-P-(P); X

In sequence (i) the double does not say extra HCP (2♥ is still available). In sequence (ii) the double promises extras (since the enemy suit is above 2♥) - thus the reopening double is not obligatory.

Before deciding to *trap-pass* (see *Conventions. The contested auction.*) we must take this principle into account.

(b) Bidding NT shows extra HCP:

(i) 1♥-(1♠)-P-(P); 1N
(ii) 1♣-(1♠)-P-(P); 1N

In sequence (i) opener shows 15-17 HCP and in sequence (ii) describes the strong club (18-21 HCP) - balanced distribution each time.

(6) Bidding over the interference we play the following conventions discussed in the section *Conventions. The contested auction.*

- negative doubles
- Lebensohl

- trap-pass
- 2NT inquiry
- splinters

We underline that over the enemy overcall double jump-shifts to new suits are *splinters* (and not *fit-jumps*).

After a 1N opening and an enemy suit overcall

Increasingly more popular is having the agreement that over an enemy overcall double has take-out (negative) character. However the poll was not able to ask for the meaning of the double - we are left therefore with the "antique" penalty meaning.

Over natural 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ overcalls we play the *Lebensohl* convention.

After a 2♣ opening

Over the enemy double bids of new suits are non-forcing, and club raises are preemptive.

Over an enemy overcall doubles are negative, and partner with 4 cards in the opponent's suit passes. Examples:

(a) 2♣-(2♥)-X
(b) 2♣-(3♦)-X

In example (a) double is negative (showing 4 spades) and shouldn't include shortness in hearts, since opener with 4 hearts must pass. In example (b) double is trying to find a major suit.

After a 2♦ opening

Over an enemy double of our 2♦ opening pass accepts 2♦ as a contract, if partner has diamonds. Redouble is strong and should "ensure" diamonds - to try to penalize the enemy with a misfit. Remaining bids have much the same meanings as without the double (e.g. 2♥ = "*pass if you have hearts*").

Over an overcall at the 2-level doubles are "pass-or-correct", so opener must pass if he has 5 cards in the enemy suit, eg.

2♦-(2♥)-X: "*Pass if you have hearts, bid if you have spades.*"

Doubles at the 3-level are penalty.

Bidding a suit over the Wilkosz and an enemy overcall is "pass-or-correct". Opener passes if he has 5 cards in the bid suit. Examples:

(a) 2♦-(2♥)-2♠
(b) 2♦-(3♣)-3♦

In example (a) opener must pass with spades or bid his minor without spades (responder feared doubling as "pass-or-correct"). In example (b) opener without 5 diamonds corrects to his cheapest suit.

After a natural 2♦ opening and an enemy overcall (when Wilkosz not allowed)

Doubles of enemy overcalls are penalty and other bids are natural.

After 4th-seat interference

Here we discuss the situations where we have opened the bidding, the first opponent passes, and over a positive response the second opponent enters the bidding.

After an intervening double

In general we bid as if the double had not occurred, except:

(a) pass shows bad shortness in the doubled suit

(b) jump-raise of partner's suit is weaker and with good distribution - with a strong hand we redouble

(c) redouble shows we want to double the opponents, or a strong hand with a 4-card fit for partner. If the opening was 1♣, this redouble does not yet guarantee the strong club.

After a suit overcall

In "ancient" bridge the opener's position over an enemy overcall was called the "free" position, since without extra HCP he is "free" to pass. These days it's played differently. Opener is forbidden to bid lacking extra *distribution*. For example:

1♥-(P)-1♠-(2♣); ?

Opener with 5-5 in the fourth suit bids 2♦ independent of strength, and 2♥ also does not require extras HCP, but a good 6-card heart suit, yet 2♠ shows 4-card spade support and is obligatory even with a completely wretched opener and a 4-card spade fit.

We add that in the discussed sequences we also play *support-doubles* (see *Conventions. The contested auction.*)

Also 1♣-(P)-1♠-(2♣); 2♦ is *fit-reverse* just as if the overcall had not happened.

Reopenings after 4th seat interference

This refers to the following type of situation: 1♣-(P)-1♥-(2♣); P-(P)-? Here we have the following agreements:

(1) Double is "balancing" - it shows extra strength without shortness in the enemy suit. Partner passes with hands which are willing to double (but that couldn't, since we play "support-doubles").

(2) Cue-bidding the enemy suit shows shortness.

(3) All remaining bids are non-forcing (with strong hands we must choose to double or cue-bid).

Note: Over second-seat or fourth-seat interference we don't play the "Magister" convention.
Examples:

(a) 1♣-(1♥)-1♠-(P); 1N-(P)-2♣

(b) 1♣-(P)-1♥-(1♠); P-(P)-2♣

(c) 1♣-(P)-1♥-(1♠); 1N-(P)-2♣

In the above sequences the 2♣ bid is natural, non-forcing. With hands that would have without intervention bid the "Magister" convention, it depends on the above case:

(a) 2♥

(b) double or 2♠

(c) 2♠

Defensive bidding

General principles

1) A suit overcall at the 1-level shows at least a 5-card suit and 8-16 HCP.
2) A suit overcall at the 2-level shows at least a good 5-card suit and 11-16 HCP.
3) 1N, and 2N over an opening at the 2-level, are classic with 16-18 HCP (so a little stronger than the opening) with a stopper in the enemy suit.
4) Jump-overcalls are always preemptive (in PS 95 such overcalls vulnerable were constructive).

5) Double is *take-out* - 12+ HCP and support for the unbid suit(s) or *explanatory* - hand with good distribution and 17+ HCP.
6) A simple cue-bid is *Michaels cue-bid* (see *Conventions. The contested auction*).
7) A jump cue-bid is *NT-asking* or game-forcing in one's own suit.

1-level overcalls

We agree that a 1-level overcall promises at least 8 HCP and a 5-card suit. Opposite a passed partner not vulnerable it is possible to overcall even weaker. If we decide on this aggressive style of overcall, we must weigh the points and counterpoints of weaker bids.

Advantages:
- to direct partner to a good lead
- to find a suit to play (which sometimes be lead-directing)
- to render more difficult the enemy auction

Disadvantages:
- possibly getting doubled
- revealing distribution to the opponents

In deciding whether to overcall or not to overcall we should take into account the above points.

Over partner's overcall we bid according to the following principles

(1) A simple new suit is non-forcing whether at the 1- or 2-level. Overcaller can pass with a weak overcall.
(2) If we don't want partner to pass we jump-shift to a new suit.
(3) If we have a very strong hand, but we don't have a good suit in which to jump, we cue-bid.
(4) 1N shows 9-12 HCP and 2N 13-15, without a fit
(5) After a major-suit overcall, with a fit in partner's suit we bid with 10+ HCP 2♣, to use in this way *Drury-fit* (see *Conventions. The contested auction*). Jump-raising partner is preemptive.

2-level overcalls, non-jump

The 2-level overcall should be as solid as 11-12 HCP and promise a good suit, six cards vulnerable.

Over this overcall a new suit is forcing for one round, and a cue-bid asks for a stopper.

1N Overcall

We agree that the 1N overcall is classic: 16-18 HCP somewhat balanced and a stopper in the opponent's suit.

There are many differences between the opening 1N and the 1N overcall:

(a) the strength of the overcall is a point higher than that of the opening
(b) for an overcall the requirements are a stopper in the opponent's suit
(c) with a 1N overcall as the vulnerability allows we can have atypical NT distribution - possible are 5-4 distributions or a 6-card minor. Because of this, over a NT overcall we don't play relay Stayman.
(d) With hands that fulfill the criteria for an opening 1N we must open 1N. But in the case of the 1N overcall we have some alternatives: pass or double.

Reflecting on the 1N overcall we must consider the quality of the stopper in the enemy suit. It is enough to have "slow stoppers" like QTxx, QJxx, KT9x, where a small number of HCP in the enemy suit practically ensures two stoppers. The worst stopper for a NT overcall is an ace without any intermediates. Here it is better to desist from overcalling 1N, since it would play better in a suit, and an eventual NT contract would be better played from partner's side.

Let's assume that the enemy opens not vulnerable with a 1♥ bid, and we are vulnerable. What do we bid with these hands?:

(a) ♠ Q8 ♥ KJ9 ♦ KQJ4 ♣ AT52
(b) ♠ KJ32 ♥ A5 ♦ A32 ♣ A853
(c) ♠ Q94 ♥ K5 ♦ AKJ753 ♣ Q3
(d) ♠ K32 ♥ KJT4 ♦ K ♣ AQJ63
(e) ♠ AK85 ♥ K5 ♦ Q2 ♣ KJ873
(f) ♠ QJ84 ♥ K85 ♦ KJ6 ♣ AQ65

With hand (a) we overcall 1N. We have hearts stopped, a source of tricks in diamonds, and want the lead to come to us in spades. But we don't have to overcall 1N with hand (b). We could go for 1100 when the opponents don't even have game. The hand is better-suited for play in a suit, and the heart stopper is the worst possible. Better to double, and be able to stop in 1♠. With hand (c) we overcall 1N despite the 6 diamonds. If we are doubled, we have to like it (provided that we like risk). Hand (d) has a singleton. Despite this we overcall 1N. Our hearts suggest that it would play better in NT and penalizing the enemy at this vulnerability does not compensate for game. Hands (e) and (f) are flawed. With the first we can even double or bid 2♣. We could bring ourselves to bid 1N which does show our balanced distribution. Hand (f) we should reflect on the 1N overcall. Scary disaster possible. Perhaps a "cowardly" double.

Further bidding after a 1N overcall is the same as over an opening 1N. The exception is the enemy double. Over an enemy double partner across from the overcalling NT partner retreats to his own suit naturally or redoubles as SOS, showing a weak hand and at least two playable suits.

(1♥)-1N-(X)-? 2♣, 2♦, 2♠ are weak one-suiters, and redouble shows the possibility of playing in 2 suits:
(1♥)-1N-(X)-XX; (P)-2♣-(X)-2♦ = "*I have 5 diamonds and 4 spades*".
(1♥)-1N-(X)-XX; (P)-2♣-(X)-XX = "*I have diamonds and spades with equal length*".

The above agreements also pertain to overcalling **2N over a 2-level opening**. Further bidding after this overcall is analogous to the auction after a 1N overcall (3♣ is stayman, 3♦ and 3♥ are transfers).

Jump-overcalls

Jump-overcalls are more or less the same as the openings (e.g. overcalling 2♠ after a 1♥ opening shows a hand that would have opened 2♠). Here we bid as over our openings (cheap bid asks for a singleton).

Double

The double of an opponent's opening has one of two possible meanings: it is *take-out*, showing a hand with opening strength without a good suit to bid, or *explanatory*, showing a hand that would overcall, but has 17+ HCP.

Take-out double

The take-out double is looking to play in one of its suits, not an attempt to penalize the opponents. So a hand is best suited for a take-out double, if we hold few cards in the doubled suit (hence we have more cards in the remaining suits, increasing the chance of finding a fit in which to play). The better distribution

we have in the side suits the less strength we need for our double. If for example the opponents open one heart, with 4144 distribution (singleton heart) we can double with 12 (11) HCP, but with 4333 distribution we should think twice before doubling, even with 13 HCP.

In deciding to take-out double, according to the classic definition, we should have at least 3 cards in all the side suits (the ones not bid by the enemy). In reality this condition is difficult to fulfill, so we are forced to make the following compromise: a take-out double should promise at least 3 cards in any unbid major(s) and at least 2 cards in any unbid minor. (Pressure on the major suits requirements is because after an enemy opening as a rule our side has to have the majority of the HCP to make game in NT, but there is at least some chance of game playing in a major with less HCP, but good distribution) Doubling for takeout over an artificial (e.g. Polish) 1♣ opening, we should have at least 3 cards each in hearts and spades, and at least 2 cards in diamonds and clubs. A double of an opening 1♦ promises a 3-card fit for each major and a doubleton in clubs. In order to double a 1♥ we should have at least 3 spades and no shortness in a minor. Similarly, to double 1♠ we require at least 3 hearts and no shortness in clubs or diamonds.

Explanatory double

The explanatory double handles the following hand types:

(1) 19+ HCP balanced. In this variant of the explanatory double we cheaply rebid on the following round NT, e.g. (1♥)-X-(P)-2♣; (P)-2N, or (1♦)-X-(P)-1♠; (P)-1N. In both these sequences doubler indicates 19-21 HCP. With 16-18 he bids instead NT on the previous round, while with 13-15 HCP it is required to pass (partner's suit may be contrived if he can't pass the double... 3 clubs in the first example above and 4 spades in the second example).
Note: The above principles don't pertain to the double over 1♣.

(2) 17+ HCP unbalanced. With this variant of the double we rebid a new suit or raise partner's suit:

(a) (1♦)-X-(P)-1♠; (P)-2♥
(b) (1♥)-X-(P)-1♠; (P)-2♣
(c) (1♥)-X-(P)-1♠; (P)-2♠
(d) (1♥)-X-(P)-1♠; (P)-3♠

In sequence (a) and (b) doubler shows the explanatory double with 5 hearts (a) or clubs (b). In example (c) the doubler has about 16(17)-18(19) HCP with 4 spades. In example (d) doubler has 19-20 HCP and 4 spades.
Note: The above rules do not pertain to the double over 1♣.

(3) Some GF hand. With this type of hand on the following round we cue-bid the enemy suit
(1♥)-X-(P)-1♠; (P)-2♥
This shows a very strong hand. With a weak hand responder repeats his suit (2♠ in this case), which says nothing about the spade length - it could be in the extreme case 3 cards still. If doubler does not pass over this bid - but bids his own suit or raises partner, this shows that he has too much strength for a minimum explanatory double variant and counts on partner not passing.

We should add at this point that game-forcing 1-suited hands may be bid another way (see *Jump cue-bidding the enemy suit*).

Responding to a double

If our partner doubles, we must first read it pessimistically, which is that partner has a take-out double and about 13-14 HCP. Adding the assumed points of partner to ours, we sum our combined holdings and bid to the appropriate level that this supposed strength of the combined hands allows us. Of course, sometimes we will be holding a completely hopeless hand - here we are forced to bid our best suit at the lowest possible level - and it can possibly be a level higher than our combined strength makes safe. In this situation there is no solution, as after partner's double we rarely want to pass - unless we have a good "stack" in the opponent's suit.

Example: Let's assume that the opponents open 1♥ and partner doubles. Here are our possible bids:

(a) Pass - undefined strength, at least 5 hearts in a "sequence" (like KQJTx, QJT98)
(b) 1♠ - at least 4 spades (see the previous discussion) - 0-7 HCP
(c) 1N - 6-9 HCP with a heart stopper
(d) 2♣, 2♦ - at least 4 clubs (diamonds), 0-9 HCP
(e) 2♠ - at least 4 spades, 7-10 HCP
(f) 2N - 10-11 HCP with a heart stopper
(g) 3♣, 3♦ - 9-11 HCP, at least 5 clubs (diamonds)
(h) 3♠ - 8-10 HCP, at least 5 spades

Note: With several distributions partner of the doubler may have 4 cards in the doubled suit and too few points to bid NT (0-5). Here one bids the cheapest 3-card suit. E.g. (1♥)-X-(P)-1♠ can have only 3 spades.

Over this HCP-based response to the double, doubler with the take-out variant normally passes.

Besides the HCP-based bids responder has at his disposal the cue-bid (2♥ in this example). This bids shows a 10+ HCP hand that is not suited for any of the preceding HCP-based responses.

Responding to the double of 1♣

Different rules apply over an enemy 1♣ opening and double. Our responses are the same as over our opening 1♣: 1♦ is negative (0-6 HCP), and others are forcing with 7+ HCP.

(1♣)-X-(P)-1♥

Responder shows at least 4 hearts and 7 HCP. Doubler's continuations are the same as if he had opened 1♣.

(1♣)-X-(P)-1♥; (P)-?

1♠ = 13+ HCP, 4 spades
1N = 13-15, no major
2♦ = ... fit-reverse!

Responding to a double over third-hand interference

If opener bids 1♣, partner doubles, we bid as over a 1♣ opening:

(a) (1♣)-X-(1♥)-X
(b) (1♣)-X-(1♠)-X

In example (a) double is negative (without 4 spades) and in example (b) the double is negative with 4 hearts.

After other openers the double of a new suit is penalty:

(a) (1♥)-X-(1♠)-X
(b) (1♠)-X-(2♣)-X

In both examples the doubles are penalty (we avoid in this way being psyched by the opponents).

The exception to the preceding rules is the double of the suit agreed by the opponents - *responsive double* - which shows the ability to play in at least two of the unbid suits. This double requires partner to bid his next 4-card suit. Examples:

(a) (1♥)-X-(2♥)-X
(b) (1♠)-X-(3♠)-X

In both sequences the double tries to find the best trump suit and requires appropriate strength.

Doubles of 2-level openings

The double of an opening at the 2-level has much the same meaning as one over a 1-level opening. Below are explained certain additional aspects.

1) The double of an artificial 2♦ (Wilkosz or Multi) has the same meaning as the double of a natural 2♠ opening. It shows a general take-out but not a spade fit (could be short in spades), instead requiring at least 3 hearts. If we don't have at least 3 hearts, with less than 15 HCP we pass and come in on the next round. If the opponents remove to 2♥ (or 3♥), now we can double for take-out, showing at most a doubleton heart. If the opponents have spades we must then keep silent or bid NT.

2) After 2♥ and 2♠ openings and a double we play Lebensohl (see *Conventions. The contested auction*).

Michaels Cue-bid

Michaels cue-bid we call bidding the suit the opponents' opened at the lowest possible level, e.g. (1♥)-2♥, which shows 5-5 distribution with a major suit. Michaels cue-bid is also played over a 2-level opening, e.g. in the sequence (2♥)-3♥. More exact details are given in the chapter *Conventions. The contested auction.*

Jump cue-bid

This bid can occur in the following setup: (1♥)-3♥. The jump cue-bid has the following meaning:

(1) asks for a stopper with a solid minor
(2) forcing to game with any self-sufficient suit

Assume over the enemy 1♥ opening we overcall 3♥ with the following hands:

(a) ♠ J43 ♥ 8 ♦ A2 ♣ AKQ9865
(b) ♠ AKJT653 ♥ - ♦ AQ3 ♣ AJT
(c) ♠ AJ ♥ 2 ♦ KQJT98765 ♣ AK

Partner always initially assumes variant (1), and tells whether he holds a stopper in the enemy suit: with a stopper he bids 3N, and without a stopper something else (4♣ would indicate weakness). With hand (a) we pass over 3N or 4♣, and over 3♠ from partner ("I have something") we bid 4♣. With hand (b) over any bid by partner we bid 4♠ showing self-sufficient spades. With hand (c) over each bid by partner we rebid 5♦ (not 4♦!) to say that the heart stopper didn't matter, but that we want to possibly try for slam.

Overcalling an enemy 1N opening (*Jassem* convention)

Some changes have followed since PS 95. The recommended convention (a.k.a. *Jassem*) allows us to show any 2-suiter:

double = 5-card minor (at least) and a 4-card major (but not 5-cards). Over this, 2♣, 2♦, and 2♥ are "pass-or-correct" and say that doubler must pass if he holds 5 or 4 cards in the bid suit.
2♣ = any one-suited hand with at least 6 cards (2♦ asks for the suit)
2♦ = 2-suited with the majors (at least 4-4, 2N asks for distribution)
2♥ = 5 hearts and a 4+ card minor
2♠ = 5 spades and a 4+ card minor

Overcalling a 1N opener is not based on strength, but distribution. This follows the rule of straining to show shape, since rarely over a 1N opening (strong) do we have game. Because of this partner tries to get to a playable contract at the lowest possible level.

Over higher openings

Double at the 3-level is pure take-out. Double at the 4-level is very "card-showing".

To help in "contested auctions" we agree on the following principle: carrying back a double of a 5-level contract has constructive character: bid knowing that we have chance of making the announced contract (not bid by the defense). Other principles are not given, since "preempts work".

In the reopening seat

Here, we discuss the situation where the enemy has opened the bidding, there have been two passes, and it is our turn to speak. We bid according to the following principles:

1) A take-out double can be weak, even 9 HCP, but if weak the hand promises shortness in the doubled suit. Partner of the doubler makes a HCP-based response assuming a weak take-out double.
2) 1N in the reopening seat shows 11-15 HCP balanced. Further bidding is natural (no transfers!)
3) 2N shows 19-21 HCP balanced
4) 16-18 HCP balanced hands double, and then rebid NT over the response.
5) Jump-shifting (even not vulnerable) has constructive character, and requires a good 6-card suit and 11-15 HCP.

Chapter 2 - Conventions

This chapter deals with the remaining bidding sequences, called conventions. Generally these sequences exactly express the hand (such as in the case of *jump-shift responses*) or have other meanings than natural (e.g. *fourth-suit*).

This chapter is divided into 3 sections. The first is devoted to slam-seeking conventions. In the second is described other conventions enlisted in the uncontested auction. The third section pertains to the contested auction.

Slam-seeking conventions

Solutions in this chapter are partially a result of the poll, partially from our experience and creation, but chiefly from discussion over slam-bidding problems. This discussion was influential - even in this modest outline. Thanks therefore to all the experts and readers who took part in the discussion. Separate thanks to Krzysztof Martens who, in a personal conversation, divulged a few of his thoughts on slam-seeking, particularly *splinters*.

4NT - Keycard Blackwood

Description:
Keycard Blackwood is asking for the number of keycards: 4 aces and the king of trumps. This trump suit refers to either the agreed suit, or if none is agreed, the last-bid suit.
Examples:

(a) 1♦-1♥-3♥-4N
(b) 1♠-4N
(c) 1♥-1♠-3♦-4N

In example (a) trumps are hearts, the agreed suit. In example (b) trumps are spades (the only bid suit). And in example (c) trumps are diamonds (the last bid suit).

How do you determine if 4N is Blackwood?

Bidding 4N is **not** Blackwood if:

(1) Raising a NT bid - now 4N is invitational to slam
  (a) 1N-4N
  (b) 1♣-2N-4N
  (c) 1♠-2♥-3♣-3♦-3N-4N

(2) Partner A bids 3N, partner B makes a slam try in a minor, partner A rejects it with 4N
   (a) 1♣-3N-4♦-4N
   (b) 1♠-2♥-3♣-3N-4♣-4N
(3) The sequences 1♣-3N-4♥/♠-4N

The sequence 1♣-3N-4♥/♠ is forcing (strong club opposite 13-16). 4N breaks the bad news of no 3-card fit with the major suit (and gives partner the chance to show a side suit).

In all other cases 4N **is** Blackwood.

Responses to the Blackwood ask

5♣ = 0 or 3 keycards
5♦ = 1 or 4 keycards
5♥ = 2 or 5 keycards with no kings
5♠ = 2 keycards and 1 king
5N = 2 keycards and 2 kings

Responses at the 6-level depend on partnership agreement.

If responding 5♣ or 5♦ with 3(4) keycards, and partner bids 5 of the agreed suit, responder is required to raise to the 6-level.

Hoyt (king-ask)

Description:

Asking for kings after obtaining one of two responses to Blackwood: 5♣ or 5♦ (over remaining responses the number of kings is known). The king-ask is the next cheapest suit bid over Blackwood other than in trumps.

Responses

In steps: 1-step = 0 kings, 2-step = 1 king, 3-step = 2 kings, 4-step = 3 kings.

5N-Trump-asking

Description:

5N is asking for the number of top honors (queen, king, ace) in the trump suit.

When is 5N trump-asking?

5N is **not** trump-asking when making a bid at the 5-level and not being a bid for aces or kings. In this case 5N is asking for aces.

(a) 1♣-(4♠)-5♥-(P); 5N
(b) 1♣-3N-4♠-5♦-5N

In example (a) 5N is asking for aces agreeing hearts, since the enemy has made it impossible to ask for aces normally.

In example (b) 5♦ is a cue-bid agreeing spades (note that 4N would have shown no spade fit, see: Keycard Blackwood), so 5N is asking for aces in spades, since the lower version was not available.

In every other case 5N **is** trump-asking.

Responses

6♣ = 0 top honors in the trump suit
6♦ = 1 honor

6♥ = 2 honors
7 of agreed trumps = 3 top honors in trumps

Trump-invite

How are trump-asking and trump-invite different?
Trump-asking is a convention that depends on the trump suit to play grand slam. If we fancy playing just small slam when partner has good trumps, it's the *trump-invite*.

Description:
The trump-invite is a jump-bid in the major suit at the 5-level. This bid means the following: "Partner, pass with weak trumps, and bid on with good trumps". It remains to explain the idea of "good" trumps.

It is agreed that good trumps means two top honors (ace, king, or queen). From this principle we recommend having two exceptions:

(a) One of the partners has shown a good 6-card suit. Here good trumps means having at least 3 honors (including the jack). For example:

1♠-2♦-3♠-5♠

Opener bids 3♠ showing 6 good spades (with a weak 6-carder he should bid something else, e.g. 2N). Responder bids 5♠ indicating that he hasn't any spade honors, nor a 3-card fit. In order to show interest opener must have at least 3 trump honors - otherwise small slam would be very bad.

(b) A player invites opposite a negative hand (0-6 HCP). Here the trump-invite requires showing the possession of just one trump honor.

1♣-1♦-2♥-2♠-5♠

Responder has shown a negative. Opener now asks him to bid slam with one trump honor. Probably opener has one of the following trump holdings: ATxx, AJx, KJxx, QJxx.

Cue-bids

Description:
The cue-bid is a slam-seeking bid in an attempt to tell partner of the desire to bid slam as well as showing a first-round control (ace or void) or second-round control (king or singleton).

How can we tell whether a bid is a cue-bid?

A cue-bid is a bid at the 4-level or higher - or 3♠ in the case that hearts are trumps - if a trump suit has been agreed or if this bid cannot have any apparent logical natural meaning. In this second case the cue-bid agrees the last-bid suit. Some examples:

(a) 1♠-2♦-2♥-3♠-4♣
(b) 1♣-1N-2♥-3♥-3♠
(c) 1♠-2♣-3♠-4♦
(d) 1♠-2♦-3♠-4♣

In example (a) spades are agreed and the 4♣ by opener is a cue-bid for spades (we will see in the section *shortness cue-bid*, it has a special meaning). In sequence (b) hearts are agreed, so 3♠ is a cue-bid. In example (c) responder makes a cue-bid with 4♦ which agrees spades. From where is it known that 4♦ isn't a natural bid? Opener bid 3♠ denying 4 diamonds, therefore trying to set diamonds as trumps makes no sense. Example (d) is complex. Theoretically the 4♣ bid could be natural - responder could still have a 2-suiter (5-5+) in the minors. The other possible meaning contained within this bid however is showing a spade fit and slam aspirations. How do we resolve this ambiguity? Opener does not "bypass" the level of 4♠ following the cue-bid. If responder at the next round rebids clubs (5♣ or 6♣), this means that he has huge distribution in the minors, and if he bids anything else, e.g. 4♥ (cue-bid), 4♠, or 4N, it means he is agreeing spades.

What is not a cue-bid?

A cue bid is **not** (like 3♠, as a hearts-agreeing splinter, see below) a bid at the 3-level. If the major was agreed at the 2-level, this bid in a side-suit at the 3-level is either natural, when the auction is game-forcing, or shows support for the suit, in non GF'ing situations. Examples:

(a) 1♣-1♠-2♦-2N-3♦
(b) 1♠-2♠-3♦
(c) 1♣-1♠-2♠-3♦

In example (a) opener uses the "fit-reverse" convention and finds out that partner has a minimum response with 5 spades. This therefore sets the suit (opener with the fit-reverse is required to have at least 3 spades), and game is guaranteed with the 2♦ fit-reverse. In bidding 3♦ opener shows his side suit, and checks whether to bid slam, which could be cold (e.g. 5 spades, 5 diamonds and 2 aces). In example (b) the 3♦ bid is a typical case of asking for help in diamonds for reaching game in spades. In example (c) the 3♦ bid is similar to the meaning of example (b). The difference, that responder's strength is not limited and could be trying to plumb the possibility of making slam, investigating partner's reaction to the ask for support.

If the agreed suit is a minor, bids at the 3-level also are **not** cue-bids. These bids are natural or seminatural - showing stoppers. The priority is checking on the possibility of playing 3N. Let's look at the following sequences:

(a) 1♣-1N-2♦-3♦-3N
(b) 1♣-1N-2♦-3♦-3♥-3N
(c) 1♣-1N-2♦-3♦-3♥-3N-4♣-4♥-4♠

In the above examples opener bids 2♦ showing a strong club with at least 4 diamonds, and responder bids 3♦ showing a 4-card diamond fit. In example (a) opener shows that he has no problem with stoppers in remaining suits (with the 3N over 3♦). Why bid 2♦ at all? He wants to orient himself to the possibility of slam. With a maximum 1N response responder should bid over 3N. In sequence (b) opener bids a (semi)natural heart suit. Responder with a club and spade stopper bids therefore 3N. So what's happening in sequence (c), which starts out the same, but in which opener continues bidding over 3N? This was a slam-investigation in disguise. Opener reveals cue-bids in clubs and spades (4♣ and 4♠) and responder in hearts (4♥). Despite this opener is not convinced of slam. We return therefore to the 3♥ bid. As soon as it has not shown a stopper for NT, that means that it is natural. Opener is afraid of not having a heart trick source. He has therefore 4 hearts and something like Axxx, Kxxx, or Qxxx.

When are cue-bids used?

We use cue-bids when checking on the possibility of playing slam. Cue-bids have many uses:

(a) checking on controls in all suits
(b) checking for extras not shown by the preceding auction
(c) agreeing trumps

Some examples will illustrate these features of the cue-bid. Assume for simplicity's sake that, below, the 2N bid agrees the major suit with at least game-forcing strength (in reality in the PS system 2N is only at least invitational to game).

a) When checking on controls we follow the principle of **showing the cheapest cue-bid**. This means that one shows the next control possessed, of either type (first, or second), e.g. in the sequence

1♠-2N-3♠-4♣-4♥-4♠

Responder sets spades, opener shows the sixth spade, responder shows a club control, and opener a heart control. Unfortunately diamonds are not controlled, and higher play is not possible.

1♠-2N-3♠-4♣-4♦-4♠

Opener controls diamonds, responder controls clubs, but nobody controls hearts. If opener controls hearts he should bid further.

b) 1♠-2N-3♦-3♠-4♣

Opener has already shown he has 5 spades and 4 diamonds, yet has not completely expressed his strength - he has a wide range of 12-17 HCP. Responder with interest in slam bids 3♠. Opener can now show a

minimum opener by bidding 4♠, or a maximum opener with a cue-bid (see also the section *shortness cue-bid*).

1♠-2N-3♠-4♠

It is unlikely responder cannot control any other suit. 4♠ (as opposed to bidding 4♣ with more HCP) just shows no extras for the 2N response.

c) 1♠-2♦-3♥-4♣

Opener is showing 5-5 distribution in spades and hearts. Responder could agree spades with a 3♠ bid. 4♣ cannot be natural (by the same principle that 4th-suit is not natural). With this bid responder shows a club control as well as agrees on partner's hearts.

1♠-2N-3♥-4♣

After the first round of bidding it appears to us that trumps will be spades. Responder however infers that hearts - 4 and 4 - would play better. To inform partner of this he cue-bids 4♣. If responder wants to set spades, he should be bidding not 4♣ but 3♠.

When are cue-bids obligatory?

Showing first or second round control is required **below game in response to a cue-bid from partner**.

1♠-2N-3♠-4♣

If we have a diamond cue-bid we must show it, independent of what else we have in our hand. Then if partner wants to ask for any unshown extras, he bids 4♥ ("we control all the suits, but I am not sure whether to take charge").

1♠-2♦-3♥-4♣

Partner agrees hearts with the cue-bid. If we have a control in diamonds we should show it, no matter what strength (despite the wide HCP-range). If partner has interest in our extra HCP, he bids 4♥ and we should bid on with extras (partner must have some reason to have invited slam with 4♣).

Note: An exception to this principle of obligatory "cue-bid responses" is bidding after *splinters* (see the *Splinters* section).

When slam-seeking it is also required to show honors in partner's suit:

1♠-2♦-2♥-3♠

Partner didn't set spades all at once, nor did he try to investigate our hand with a forcing 2N. In this way he shows a hand that has slam interest with a specific source of tricks. If we only have an ace or king in diamonds we must show our aid by cue-bidding an honor.

1♠-2♣-2♠-3♠

This situation is very different. At first glance opener is not certain whether the 2♣ bid was for sure natural (responder could bid this way with a tripleton, if e.g. he wants to find a 4-crd fit for diamonds or hearts), so now the 3♠ bid "naturalizes" the clubs. We know this because responder has paused to bid 3♠ and wants to play in slam. Why therefore should he bid 2♣, and not 2N? He wants to show his side suit. If opener has a king or ace in clubs, he should hurry to show it.

Must a cue-bid of partner's suit show an honor?

A cue-bid must show an honor - and not shortness - if it is bid in partner's 5+ card suit. For contrast let's look at the sequence:

1♣-1♥-1♠-3♠-4♣-4♦-4♥

In this sequence 3♠ by responder is invitational to game, and opener has the strong club or a very shapely club-spade hand. The 4♥ cue-bid may not be an honor, since the 1♥ bid didn't show 5 hearts.

Splinters

A *splinter* is an unnatural jump to the 3 or 4-level (sometimes 5-level). It shows shortness in the bid suit - singleton or void at the 3- and 4-level, and just a void at the 5-level - and agrees the last-shown suit.

An explanation is required for the idea of an "unnatural jump". With a jump-bid we define as non-natural, when showing the suit without a jump would be forcing. For example:

(a) 1♥-3♠
(b) 1♦-1♠-4♣

In sequence (a) responder could have shown a good hand with spades by bidding 2♠, and in sequence (b) opener could have shown a diamond-club two-suiter with 3♣. Whenever one chooses to bid one level higher, the auction must be interpreted as unnatural - showing shortness and a 4-card fit for partner's suit. Let's look at some more sequences:

(a) 1♦-1♠-1N-3♥
(b) (1♦)-1♠-(P)-3♥

In example (a) responder's 2♥ bid would have been non-forcing, so 3♥ is natural and shows a 2-suited heart-club hand at least 5-5. In example (b) 2♥ by advancer would have been 75% forcing - overcaller with a weak hand could have passed. So advancer may jump - naturally - to 3♥, to show a good hand with hearts.

A *splinter* at the 3-level may fool you.

(a) 1♠-2♣-3♦
(b) 1♦-1♠-2♦-3♥

Here the bids at the 3-level are not splinters, but show 5-5 distribution, despite that the bid at the cheaper level (2♦ and 2♥, respectively) would have been forcing. The following principle can be formulated to differentiate the 3-level splinter:

> **A jump-bid to a new suit at the 3-level is a splinter, if the suit bid is higher than the denomination the bidder showed on the previous round.**

In sequences (a) and (b) offered above, the condition is not fulfilled. It is however fulfilled in these example sequences:

(a) 1♥-2♣-3♠
(b) 1♦-1♠-3♥
(c) 1♣-2♦-3♥
(d) 1♣-1♠-3♥

In all the above sequences opener's bid is a splinter. We note that in sequences (c) and (d) opener with the strong club in hearts must bid a quiet 2♥.

With what distributions can one show shortness via a splinter?

Theory says that a splinter requires a 4-card fit for partner's suit. To this rule we can specify the following exceptions, in which the splinter can also be given with just 3-card support:

(a) partner shows a 6-card suit, e.g.

1♣-2♠-4♦

Responder's 2♠ bid shows a good 6-card suit. Opener with diamond shortness splinters even with a 3-card fit.

(b) Partner reveals a self-sufficient suit and game-force

1♣-1♦-2♦-2♥-2♠-4♣

Opener shows an "Acol" spade hand, and responder shows a double-negative or a negative with hearts. 4♣ is a splinter for spades and a 3+ card fit.

(c) A delayed splinter

1♠-2♣-2♠-4♦

Responder could have made an immediate splinter. He does not, since he hasn't a 4-card fit for spades (just a 3-card fit).

Continuations over a splinter

Assume the initial auction

1♠-4♣

Over a splinter by partner, one has to categorize hands, adjusting for partner's shortness. We can discern 5 hand-types:

(a) **Hopeless**. Minimum opener, weak trumps, bad honors (kings, queens and jacks) in the short suit, few cards in the short suit to ruff. It could be a hand such as the following: ♠ Jxxxx ♥ Qxxx ♦ AJ ♣ KJ. With such hands we bid a negative 4♠, even when 4♣ is doubled.

(b) **Weak.** Bad honors in the short suit, but a hand in which one of the hopeless conditions (weak opening, bad trumps, few cards to ruff) is not fulfilled. Examples:

♠ QJxxx ♥ QJxx ♦ AJ ♣ KJ (15 HCP)
♠ KJxxx ♥ Qxxx ♦ Kx ♣ Kx (good trumps)
♠ Jxxxx ♥ Qx ♦ AJ ♣ KJxx (lots of clubs to ruff)

All of the hands that hold just a wisp of a chance of slam, in order not to tempt fate, should bid a negative 4♠. If one sympathetic opponent gives us the chance to distinguish between the weak and hopeless hand with a cheap thoughtless double of partner's splinter, then we can profit somewhat. With a 4♠ bid over a double we reveal the hopeless hand, and to pass shows at least a weak hand. Bidding 4♠ at the next round confirms our classification as a weak hand.

(c) **Semipositive.** A hand that offers a chance of slam if partner has a strong splinter and controls in all suits. With the semipositive variant we cue-bid below game level. With ♠KJxxx ♥ Jx ♦ Kxx ♣ Axx we bid 4♦. If partner has: ♠ Qxxx ♥ AKxx ♦ AQxx ♣ x, we have slam; if he has something less, he hasn't reason to go further. With ♠ KJxxx ♥ Kxx ♦ Jx ♣ Axx we bid 4♥ and consent to any verdict.

(d) **Positive.** A hand that offers the chance for slam, if we have controls in all suits, even when partner has a minimum splinter. With a positive hand we cue-bid beyond the game level. We have several possible auctions:

(1) If we have a cue-bid below game, we bid it, and afterwards continue beyond game. With ♠ KJxxx ♥ AKx ♦ Kxx ♣ xx we bid 4♦, and 5♥ over partner's 4♠ - "partner no matter whether you have little interest in your splinter - the queen of hearts, possibly AQJx diamonds, or even a doubleton in a suit, would all be of interest". With ♠ AKJxx ♥ KJx ♦ xx ♣ xxx over showing the heart cue-bid and the expected 4♠ bid we make one further attempt: 5♠, telling partner of extra strength, since we have good trumps, but do not control diamonds and we have not further heart cue-bid, nor the ace of clubs. With ♠ AQxxx ♥ AKxx ♦ Jx ♣ xx we bid 4♥, and over 4♠, 5♥ - to show in principle no diamond control (although something extra in hearts). With ♠ AQxxx ♥ KQx ♦ xxx ♣ Ax we first bid our heart control, and over the expected 4♠ we show the ace of clubs (we don't show the king or a singleton in a splinter) with 5♣. Partner knows that we have a hole in diamonds.

(2) We can cue-bid above game. Let's assume for variety that the preceding auction has gone: 1♠-4♦. With ♠ AQxxx ♥ Jx ♦ xxx ♣ AKx we bid 5♣, showing a positive hand, club control, and no heart control.

(3) We can raise the splinter suit, if we have the ace and we cannot give a cue-bid below game. In our original sequence 1♠-4♣ we would bid this way with e.g. ♠ KJxxx ♥ Qx ♦ Qx ♣ Axxx.

(4) We can bid 5 of the opened suit with very good trumps, if we don't have a control in a side suit, nor the ace of the splinter suit. We might bid this with ♠ AKQxx ♥ QJx ♦ Qx ♣ xxx.

(5) We can check on number of aces. This is the basic way of bidding over a splinter and in our thinking we should always consider it in the first place. It is made for such a hand: ♠ QJxxx ♥ KQx ♦ Kx ♣ Axx. For slam we need 3 keycards and immediately we ask for them. With ♠ Axxxxx ♥ KJx ♦ x ♣ Axx, 2 keycards would satisfy us. With positive hands we avoid asking for aces with the ace of clubs, then when slam can be bid with a void in the splinter. We can however freely ask for aces with the ace of clubs, if our hand guarantees slam (see below).

(e) **Slam-guaranteed hand.** This is a hand with which we can guarantee slam. It does not require controls in all suits. With: ♠ AQxxx ♥ AKQx ♦ Qx ♣ xx we can guarantee slam in spite of the lack of diamond control - partner must have something for the splinter. With a slam-guaranteed hand we can bid an immediate 6 of the agreed suit (not very recommended) or better a quiet conscientious Blackwood inquiry. If lacking exactly one keycard (and this would be the worst case), and we don't have the ace in the short suit, we can apply the *six of a splinter* convention.

"Six of a splinter" convention

This convention is asking for a void in the splinter suit. This is done by bidding 6 of the splinter suit. There are only two responses: grand slam in the agreed trump suit = I have a void, and small slam = I don't have a void.

How strong do we have to be to splinter?

The strength for splintering depends exactly on the strength for slam governed by the limits of partner's strength. In doubt, try this algorithm: If the suit is agreed and one of the partners has shortness, slam is certain when the partnership has 29-30 HCP outside the short suit, and extra side-suit length decreases this figure to 25-26 HCP. Here we single out the strengths required for splinters in various situations:

(a) over opening 1 of a suit: 11-16 HCP
(b) over an opening 1N: 11-14 HCP
(c) over our 2-level opening and partner's response at the 1-level: 15-17 HCP
(d) over our opening at the 1-level and partner's new-suit response at the 2-level: 12-15 HCP

Thus when partner of the splinter adds the points to his, he can calculate the chances of slam.

Autosplinter

The autosplinter is a form of splinter, in which the bidder makes an unnatural jump setting not his partner's suit as trumps, but his own. We start with examples where partner has shown no suits:

(a) 1N-2♥-2♠-4♣
(b) 1♣-1♥-1N-3♠

In example (a) responder sets the trump suit - spades. In the second example partner has bid a suit with 1♣, but in Polish Standard he doesn't necessarily have clubs, so 3♠ is a splinter for hearts.

We note that the rules governing the autosplinter are exactly the same as those for the splinter. In the example:

1♦-1♠-1N-3♥

it is not an autosplinter but showing 5-5 distribution in spades and hearts, for 3♥ is *under* the suit first shown by responder (here, spades).

The rules for developments over an autosplinter are exactly the same as over the usual splinter.

Inconvenient splinter

Description:

This convention arises from the observation that the 4♥ splinter over the 1♠ opening as well as the 4♦ over a 1♥ opening is inconvenient for use when partner does not have the ability to make a slam try with semipositive hands or verify controls below Blackwood in remaining suits. This inconvenient splinter bid we show with 3N, which over the 1♥ opening shows short diamonds, and over the 1♠ opening shows short hearts. In later bidding we follow the normal splinter rules.

Consequences of the Inconvenient Splinter - raising to game

The 4♦ and 4♥ bids are used to distinguish two types of hands: strong and preemptive raises to game. 4 of partner's suit is preemptive, while 4♦ over 1♥ or 4♥ over 1♠ show a power raise (10-13 HCP) to game in partner's suit.

Shortness cue-bid

Description:

The splinter is not the only way to show shortness and slam interest. Over an opening major suit at the 1-level, and responder agrees that suit, new suits are shortness cue-bids:

(a) 1♠-2♦-2♥-3♠-4♣

(b) 1♠-2♣-2♠-3♠-4♦

In example (a) opener shows club shortness, and in example (b) opener shows diamond shortness. We note that it's true up to now it has not been required, if holding a cue-bid, to show it - in this case shortness. In practice however each hand with a side singleton - not in partner's suit - qualifies as extras and merit a cue-bid (one can put aside this bid and bid 4 of the agreed suit, when opener has, say, 12 HCP including the singleton, e.g. a singleton king).

Cue-bidding shortness does not deny a cue-bid in other suits. If we want to begin cue-bidding over the agreed major suit at the 3-level, and we don't have shortness, then we bid **3N**. This bid is artificial, confirming extras (not always HCP, perhaps only location of honors) without shortness.

With bad hands we bid a negative 4♠.

Let's assume the preceding auction has been:

1♠-2♣-2♦-3♠

Here partner shows besides a spade fit he has a real 5+ card club suit. Without the suit he should instead bid an immediate 2N, or over the 2♦ bid continue to wait with the aid of a forcing 2N.

(a) ♠ KJxxx ♥ x ♦ AQxx ♣ Qxx

Bid 4♥ despite holding a diamond cue-bid. In the shortness cue-bid conventions we don't have to show cheap controls.

(b) ♠ Kxxxx ♥ Ax ♦ Kxxx ♣ Qx

Bid 3N. Despite the minimum HCP this hand is very useful. The queen of partner's suit and good honors (king and ace) qualify the hand.

(c) ♠ Axxxx ♥ QJ ♦ QJxx ♣ Qx

Despite the queen of clubs bid 4♠. 6 HCP in diamonds and hearts can be practically discounted.

(d) ♠ AJxxx ♥ Q ♦ QJxxx ♣ Jx

It seems to be a singleton heart cue-bid, but the fact we hold hardly 9 HCP outside of hearts could be misleading partner. Bid 4♠.

(e) ♠ AJxxx ♥ x ♦ KJxxx ♣ Qx

Bid 4♥. The singleton heart, 5 diamonds, queen of partner's suit. Together they imply that, despite the 11 HCP, the hand is worth a lie.

(f) ♠ AQxxx ♥ Qx ♦ KJxxx ♣ x

Bid 4♦. Do not show a singleton in partner's suit. Partner can guess that, since as soon as you show a fifth diamond (since 4♦ cannot be a usual cue-bid of an honor - for this we use 3N), but don't show shortness in hearts, we must have short clubs!

How to do we reconcile the principles of the shortness cue-bid with the principles of the honor cue-bid in partner's suit?

The principles of the honor cue-bid in partner's suit have priority. For this reason in sequence (f) above we don't want to be bidding 4♣. This sequence, therefore:

1♠-2♣-2♦-3♠-4♣

shows the king or ace of clubs, and not a singleton club. If partner is interested in shortness in his suit, then either he doesn't immediately respond 2♣ (choosing 2N), or over the 2♦ response bids a forcing 2N.

However, in the sequence

1♠-2♣-2♥-3♥

the 2♣ response of partner may not be natural - partner could have been seeking a 4-card heart suit (or diamonds) and bid 2♣ holding in this suit at least 3 cards. Now 4♣ would be a shortness cue-bid.

The opponents interfere with our slam bidding

Over Blackwood

If over our Blackwood the opponents dare to interfere with the auction, continuations are as follows:

(a) Pass = 0 keycards
(b) Double = 1 keycard
(c) next suit = 2 keycards
(d) further suit = 3 cards, etc.

If therefore over Blackwood the opponents bid 5♦, then 5♥ shows 2 keycards and 5♠ 3 keycards, and 5N 4 keycards.

Enemy double of a cue-bid

If the enemy doubles our cue-bidding auction:

(a) redouble shows an ace in the suit
(b) continuing to cue-bid shows we have help in the suit and the enemy can't run 2 tricks (singleton or queen)
(c) pass asks about the safety of the cue-bid holding. Over this response partner:
* redoubles with the ace (but not if a splinter) or void (especially with a splinter)
* bids another cue-bid, if the cue-bid is not in danger (singleton or supported honor)
* returns to trumps if the cue-bid is in danger (king without the queen)

Enemy double of a Blackwood response

All bids are the same as if there were no double - except pass, which is asking if we have 2 quick losers in the doubled suit. Partner reacts to this as over the double of a cue-bid.

Conventions in the uncontested auction

Jump-responses in a new suit

Description:

An immediate jump in a new suit shows a game-forcing hand with a very good suit, indicating the possibility of slam. A very good suit is a 6-card suit with at least two or three top honors. This convention may be a 5-card suit if holding a fit for partner's suit.

The jump response in principle shows a one-suited hand (a side 4-card suit is allowed when the jump suit is significantly better than the 4-card suit).

Examples:

1♦-2♥, 1♥-2♠, 1♠-3♣, 2♣-3♠, 1♣-2♥

Note: The 2♦, 3♣, and 3♦ responses to an opening 1♣ are conventional and have different meanings.

What do we bid over the jump-shift?

Why does it make sense to jump in a suit, if a simple new suit response is forcing? The following may be able to shine a light on this subject:

(1) Setting the trump suit

We can utilize this convention, when we want, in order to set our trump suit with slam interest. Holding ♠ x ♥ Kx ♦ AKQJTxx ♣ KQx over partner's opening 1♠, we reach for the 4N card. Unfortunately, we must master this urge, since partner would take the keycard ask as agreeing spades, and the fact that partner holds the king of spades is useless to us. It is necessary therefore to bid 3♦ before asking for aces.

With ♠ Kx ♥ x ♦ AQJxxxx ♣ AQx over partner's opening 1♠ also we bid 3♦, before we ask 4N. This time it doesn't matter that partner might show the king of spades, but that partner bids keycards taking into account the king of diamonds, which is for us especially important.

To simplify the bidding over a jump it is suggested to adopt the following two principles:

Asking for aces agrees the jump suit.

Over the sequence:

1♠-3♦-3♥-?

4N is asking for aces agreeing diamonds. To do so for another suit as trumps responder must set spades with 3♠, or hearts (in the singular case with six near-solid diamonds and a weak 4 hearts) with 4♥ or 4♣ - cue-bid.

Repeating the jump suit sets the suit.

Over the initial bidding

1♦-2♠-3♣-3♠

spades are set. At this moment 4♣ by opener is a cue-bid for spades and not confirming 6-5 distribution. For if responder were interested in possibly playing in a minor suit of partner, he would bid at the second round a "waiting" 3♥, and not 3♠.

(2) Bidding slam needing specific honors

Let's assume partner opens the bidding with 1♥, and we have: ♠ AQJxx ♥ KQx ♦ Ax ♣ xxx. If partner has the king of spades and two aces, 12 tricks are in view. If besides this partner has 6 hearts, it isn't difficult to count to 13. One could very easily check on this possibility. It is sufficient to bid 2♠, and then 4♥. Partner with the king of spades and two keycards cannot directly pass, and it will be very easy to count the tricks that can be taken.

(3) Revealing a strong hand without having to go past the level of game

Partner opens 1♥, and we have: ♠ AQ ♥ x ♦ Axx ♣ AQ965432.

The hand appears powerful, but if partner has a misfit for clubs, they might not run. Thanks to our convention we don't have to particularly stress. We bid 3♣, and then over any bid by partner we

bid 3N. Partner with a club honor (king or jack) and pretty good values should account for this, and 3N must not end the auction.

(4) Finding a suit fit
Sometimes with a good 6-card suit we are dealt a side 4-card suit - so weak that it isn't suited for trumps. It can be shown whether partner has support for this suit.

Partner opens 1♥, and we have: ♠ AKJTxx ♥ x ♦ A643 ♣ A3.

We bid 2♠, and partner 2N. With a 3♦ bid we show now a weak side suit. Partner with ♠ xx ♥ AKxxx ♦ KQx ♣ Jxx bids an encouraging 3♠, and with ♠ xx ♥ AKxxx ♦ Jxx ♣ KQx a discouraging 3N.

Continuations

Further bidding follows natural principles. Opener rebidding NT is a weak bid - saying no fit with the jump suit and cards not suited for slam. Rebidding the opening suit should show a good 6-carder. Showing a side suit has seminatural meaning. It is both trying to show a new suit, or showing "values", or honor concentration.

Partner opens 1♥, and we hold:
(a) ♠ xx ♥ Ax ♦ Qxx ♣ AKQJxx
(b) ♠ Ax ♥ Ax ♦ Qxx ♣ AKQJxx
(c) ♠ xx ♥ Axx ♦ Qx ♣ AKQJxx
(d) ♠ x ♥ Ax ♦ Qxxx ♣ AKQJxx
With all of the above hands we respond 3♣. Let's assume partner rebids 3♦. Now what?

With hand (a) we bid 3♥, showing at least a doubleton honor in hearts. If partner signs off in 3N, it would mean he has a pretty good hand (not saying 3N the first time). Unfortunately our hand is minimum (!), which partner would expect, therefore we pass. This is the case where partner has: ♠ Kx ♥ KJxxx ♦ AJxx ♣ xx.

With hand (b) over this same starting auction (over 3N) we bid 4♣, and to follow we verify the possibility of grand slam.

With hand (c) over the 3♦ rebid we don't bid 3♥, but 4♥. This very faithfully describes our hand.

With hand (d) over the 3♦ rebid, we utilize the splinter convention, bidding 4♠. We show in this way a diamond fit and short spades, advising partner of our distribution.

Fourth-suit forcing

Description:
Fourth-suit forcing we call the second bid by responder in the one suit unbid by the partnership, at the lowest level.

Examples:
(a) 1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣
(b) 1♥-1♠-2♣-2♦
(c) 1♠-2♦-2♥-3♣
It assumes that in showing the fourth suit, no suit has yet been agreed as trumps.

Why bid fourth-suit forcing?

Consider the uses in deciding on this convention.

(1) Communicating the message of no stopper (or weak stopper) in the unbid suit.
The classic case is sequence (c). Having a club stopper, instead of 3♣ responder can bid 2N. This bid would be forcing (see: *Forcing 2N*) and would still allow checking on another contract besides 3N. Bidding 2N would require a club stopper. The 3♣ bid by responder shows no stopper in this suit.

We call attention to the fact that in PS 2000, 2N is forcing also after responder's first bid at the 1-level, e.g. in the sequences 1♥-1♠-2♦-? Bidding 3♣ in this sequence can only mean that responder lacks a club stopper (in PS 95 2N in this sequence was non-forcing, and 3♣ had to assume the role as "general force".

(2) Balanced distribution with "just below game" strength

In sequences (a) and (b) offering the above 4th suit is not forcing to game. Responder is able to bid this with 10-12 HCP with the intention of passing a negative bid by partner.

In sequence (a) we bid 2♣ with hands like ♠ Qxxx ♥ KJxx ♦ KJ ♣ xxx, in order to pass practically any of partner's rebids. We can bid this also with ♠ Qxxx ♥ KJxx ♦ JT ♣ Axx, in order to try to play NT from partner's hand. If however partner bids 2♦ (minimum without a 3-crd heart fit), then the chance of game appears to have paled. In this sequence 2♣ can also be an attempt to find a heart fit, e.g. one can bid this with: ♠ Qxx ♥ KJxxx ♦ JT ♣ Axx, in order to, over a heart fit, "speed up", and over the 2♦ response "put down the reins".

In sequence (b) we bid 2♦ with hands like ♠ AQxxx ♥ Qx ♦ Qxx ♣ Jxx. If partner bids 2♥, then we pass, but over 2♠ we bid game in spades. Using *fourth-suit forcing* we can bid with ♠ AQxx ♥ Qx ♦ Qxxx ♣ Jxxx, but then we pass even 2♥, as well as 2♠.

Of course, *fourth-suit forcing* applied in sequences (a) and (b) can also be asking with a strong hand - here responder doesn't pass any rebid by opener.

One can formulate the following rule:

> **Fourth-suit forcing is not game-forcing only when it is bid below two of the opened suit.**

(3) Forcing the auction with a fit for partner

Over the response at the one-level with a fit for opener's suit the jump is invitational to game, e.g. in the sequences:

(a) 1♦-1♠-2♣-3♦
(b) 1♥-1♠-2♣-3♥
(c) 1♦-1♥-1♠-3♠

In all the above sequences the last bid by responder is invitational to game.

Agreeing partner's suit in a forcing way is one of the advantages of *fourth-suit forcing*. In example (a) bidding 2♥, and then agreeing diamonds on the next round (at the cheapest level possible) would be indicating a game-force, and showing a raise agreeing hearts (spades) in sequences (b) and (c) with fourth-suit (2♦ and 2♣).

(4) Forcing the auction in one's own suit

In the sequences:

(a) 1♥-1♠-2♣-3♠
(b) 1♦-1♥-1♠-3♥

(c) 1♠-2♦-2♥-3♦

the last bid by responder is invitational to game. In order to show one's own suit without fear of partner passing, he has to precede rebidding his suit with *fourth-suit forcing* (or *forcing 2N*).

Note! Tricky sequences

More agreements are necessary over the initial sequence:

1♦-1♠-2♣-2♥

The 2♥ bid must be treated as *fourth suit forcing*, but rebidding hearts at the 3-level shows that the hearts are natural, i.e.

1♦-1♠-2♣-2♥-2N-3♥

shows 5-5 distribution in the majors, non-forcing. With this same distribution in a strong hand responder bids 3♥ immediately over the 2♣ rebid.

Continuations over fourth-suit forcing

We can formulate the following simple rules for responding to *fourth-suit forcing*.

Jump-bidding shows more strength.

Opener shows a 3-card fit for partner's suit if he has one.

With 5-5 distribution opener repeats his second suit.

With 5-4 distribution without a fit for partner's suit, opener bids:

* 2N = minimum opener with at least a "semi-stopper" (Qx) in the fourth suit
* rebidding the opened suit = minimum opener without a semistopper in the fourth suit
* 3N = maximum opener and a stopper in the fourth suit
* 3 of the fourth suit = maximum opener without a stopper in the fourth suit

From the above agreements spring the following implications:

One can't at first distinguish 5-4 distribution from 6-4 (it is necessary to try to sort this out on the next round).

With 1-4-4-4 distribution, over the 1♦ opening and 1♠ response it is necessary to rebid 1N, since a 2♣ rebid would make it extremely hard to find hearts as trumps (e.g. partner bids 2♥, and we don't have the ability to reveal four hearts, as 3♥ would be showing extras with a heart stopper).

Third-suit forcing

Description:

By third suit we mean the bid by responder in a new suit - other than NT - in auctions where the partnership has shown 2 suits.

Examples:

(a) 1♥-1♠-2♥-3♣

(b) 1♥-2♦-2♥-2♠

(c) 1♦-1♠-2♦-2♥

(d) 1♣-2♦-2♥-2♠

This last sequence is also an example of applying *third-suit forcing*, since we don't treat the 1♣ bid as showing a suit.

The bid of a third suit has one of two meanings:

(1) natural - shows a 4-card suit
(2) seminatural - shows a stopper in the bid suit and worry about the unbid suit

When do we use the third-suit forcing convention?

In all cases we have not yet discovered an agreed suit to play. The third suit can thus turn out to be the best trump suit (meaning (a)). Additionally we use *third-suit forcing* to verify a stopper for NT. In addition it can also be showing values to check on the possibility of slam.

Continuations

Third suit is forcing, and opener fits himself below all variant (a), whether he assumes that the bid is natural.

If the third suit is bid at the 2-level, opener is required to always raise it to the 3-level, when he has 4 cards in that suit.

Note: We never jump-raise the third suit. In examples (b) and (d) if opener has 4 spades, then he bids 3♠ (never 4♠), independent of whether he has a maximum or minimum opening. In this way, he is insured against accident, when partner's bid had seminatural meaning.

Over the raise of the third suit, responder can bid 3N:
1♥-2♣-2♥-2♠-3♠-3N
This sequence shows that 2♠ was a seminatural bid (not 4 cards), and responder hasn't a diamond stopper. If opener also doesn't have a diamond stopper, he should correct the contract.

If *third-suit forcing* was bid at the 3-level, opener raises to the 4-level when:
(a) he has 4-cards in the suit **and**
(b) he doesn't have the unbid suit stopped.
Here if partner's bid was seminatural, then 3N would not be playable anyway since neither player can stop the unbid suit.

Other bids over *third suit forcing* are as natural as possible. Opener rebids his own suit, if it is long and strong, raises partner's first suit with a tripleton if he has it, or claims NT with a pretty good stopper in the unbid suit.

An example of bidding after the third suit:
1♥-2♦-2♥-3♣-?
We hold:
(a) ♠ xx ♥ AKxxx ♦ Qx ♣ Kxxx
(b) ♠ ATx ♥ KQxxx ♦ Q ♣ Qxxx
(c) ♠ Jxx ♥ AJxxx ♦ Qx ♣ KQx
With hand (a) we bid 4♣, and with hand (b) - 3♠ to show that 3N is still an attractive possibility. We note however that when opener bids 3♠ it asks for a stopper, as in hand (c).

Hence in showing the unbid suit one can surmise that we don't have a 3-card fit for the responder's first suit, our suit is not good enough to rebid, and we are not convinced that we can play NT.

Forcing 2N

Description:
We define the forcing 2N as the second bid by responder over opener's rebid at the 2-level.

Note: Since PS 95 the application of the convention has been widened. 2N is forcing also then, when the first bid by responder occurs at the 1-level. For example:

(a) 1♦-1♥-2♦-2N
(b) 1♥-1♠-2♥-2N
(c) 1♥-1♠-2♦-2N
(d) 1♥-2♣-2♦-2N
(e) 1♠-2♣-2♦-2N
(f) 1♠-2♥-2♠-2N

In all the above sequences 2N is forcing. We note that sequences (a) through (c) in PS 95's agreements - 2N was non-forcing.

2N is **not** forcing, when it is a NT raise, or when it is bid as follows:

(a) 1♣-1♠-1N-2N
(b) 1♦-1♥-1♠-2N

In the above sequences 2N is the normal invitation to 3N.

Why do we use the forcing 2N?

This convention is used primarily to find the best strain for game. However we also use Forcing 2N when we have slam aspirations. By bidding 2N we must take into account that the final contract could be 3N. Thus, deciding to make this bid (and not *third-suit* or *fourth-suit forcing*) we should - in this case, when 3N is one of the possible options - have a stopper in the unbid suit(s). But if we know that we will be playing in a suit (as in the case where we have a fit for partner, or we have a self-sufficient suit), then we can also bid 2N without the said stopper(s). Often this is a very effective way to obtain for ourselves information of interest from partner.

For example, after the initial auction:

1♥-2♣-2♥

with the following hands it is worth bidding a *forcing 2N*:

(a) ♠ Kxx ♥ Qx ♦ Axx ♣ AJxxx
(b) ♠ AQx ♥ Jx ♦ KJx ♣ AKJxx
(c) ♠ xx ♥ KQx ♦ AQx ♣ AQxxx

In example (a) we do so in order to check on whether 4♥ is a better contract than 3N. With hand (b) we are seeking the best strain, and at the same time we investigate slam possibilities. With hand (c) we can alternatively bid 3♥ to give control to partner, or 2N in order to explore whether partner has a club fit.

If the bidding begins:

1♥-1♠-2♥-?

we bid 2N with the following hands:

(a) ♠ AJ965 ♥ J ♦ A964 ♣ A65
(b) ♠ KJT6 ♥ Qx ♦ AJx ♣ Qxxx
(c) ♠ J653 ♥ J ♦ AKxx ♣ AJ87
(d) ♠ AJTxx ♥ KJx ♦ Ax ♣ KJx

In case (a) we bid 2N in order to verify whether it is better to play in hearts or spades. If partner shows a spade fit, then we will play game in spades, and in the other case we will decide to play in hearts. With hand (b) we don't know whether to play in hearts, or to play in NT. NT only when partner shows shortness in spades. With hand (c) we are leaning towards NT. If however it is shown that partner has spade shortness, then it is better to select 4♥. In case (d) we want to play in hearts, but to bid 3♥ would be simply an invite to game. We bid 2N, and raise hearts on the next round (possibly with a cue-bid).

You can't have the rose without the thorn. You give up the natural - non-forcing - meaning of 2N. Is it worth it? Opinion on this subject is divided, still after five years.

Developments after the forcing 2N

We play that continuations are natural. We follow with analysis of three types of auctions.

(1) Opener rebids his suit over the 1-level response to show in this way (in principle) a 6-card suit.

1♥-1♠-2♥-2N

The individual bids by opener have the following meanings:

3♣, 3♦ = natural showing a 4-card suit

3♥ (same suit rebid) = shortness in responder's suit (in this case spades) - **artificial!**

3♠ = natural, showing 3 spades without side shortness

3N = natural without spade shortness

4♣, 4♦ = shows shortness with 3-card spade support. Over this 4♥ by responder is choosing the contract, and not a cue-bid (responder might not have 5 spades)

Bids after a 1♦ opener are analogous, with one difference. The auction:

1♦-1♠-2♦-2N-3♥

shows just 5-4 distribution.

(2) Opener rebids his suit over a 2-level response to show a minimum hand

Let's look at the continuations over the following sequence:

1♥-2♣-2♥-2N

Opener's bids are as follows:

3♣ = fit (probably 4 cards) in clubs, too weak for an immediate raise the previous round

3♦ = 6 hearts, 4 diamonds, minimum

3♥ = 6 hearts

3♠ = 5 hearts, 4 spades, too weak for 2♠ on the previous round

3N = 5-3-3-2 distribution

Over a 2♦ response (in principle requiring 5 diamonds) and a forcing 2N, opener bids 3♦ with a 3-card diamond fit.

These individual decisions pose a dilemma, whether to show 6 cards in one's own suit or a fit for partner's suit (use the suit-quality as a guide in deciding).

(3) Opener rebids a second suit.

Opener repeats his second suit with 5-5 distribution, his first suit with 6-4 distribution, his tripleton with 5-4-3-1, or NT with 5-4-2-2. Opener can additionally highlight more strength by jump-rebidding. The sequence:

1♥-2♣-2♦-2N-3♥

shows extras with 6-4 distribution. With a minimum hand (11-13) we bid 2♥ first (non-forcing) and then on the following round we should (if we can) the diamonds.

Note 1: Over

1♦-1♥-2♣-?

where we want to find out which suit is partner's 5-carder, we bid *fourth-suit forcing* (and not 2N).

Note 2: *Forcing 2N* should not be confused with *2N over a major-suit raise* (below).

2N over a major-suit raise

Description:

By this convention we are talking about when one player bids a major, which is then raised to the 2-level, and the next bid is 2N.

Examples:

(a) 1♥-2♥-2N

(b) 1♣-1♥-2♥-2N

(c) 1♦-1♠-2♠-2N

2N is in the above sequences a forcing bid. The partnership has already confirmed that it has 8+ cards in the major suit, which makes playing 2N undesirable.

What hands bid 2N over an agreed major suit?

2N we bid in order to find out whether we have enough strength for game - and if so, which game to play: this suit or NT - or to check on slam chances.

The principle difference between the 2N bid and the invitations by showing a suit over a raise is that with the help of 2N we try to extract information from partner, with no intention of revealing our hand.

Developments

Further bidding is as natural as possible, keeping in mind that the weak bid by either side is returning to the trump suit.

If a 5-4 distribution has been shown, as in example (c), opener is required to show his tripleton or rebid his first suit with 6-4. With 5422 he returns to trumps with a negative hand, or bids 3N with a better hand.

In the other cases, (a) and (b), the continuations over the forcing 2N are:

3 of trumps = minimum
3N = maximum, balanced
4 of trumps = maximum, unbalanced - this bid we make however only when the preceding auction has excluded any slam possibilities.

Besides these bids "responder to 2N" has also at his disposal showing a side suit. If game is the maximum possible goal (example (a)), this bids - showing a suit with honors - is to find out whether the better contract is 3N or 4 of the major (and it is necessary not withstanding all to stop in a partial?). If the goal is not known (could be slam, as in example (b)), then this bid could also be the beginning of a slam investigation.

With the *2N over a major-suit raise* convention it is necessary to look at two situations:

(1) The auction is limited to game at most.
This situation takes place over a major-suit opening or when one of the partners has passed, e.g.

(a) 1♠-2♠-2N
(b) P-1♣-1♥-2♥-2N

It is assumed that slam isn't an option and bidding 3 of the agreed suit at any moment is non-forcing, e.g.

(a) 1♠-2♠-2N-3♣-3♠-P
(b) P-1♣-1♥-2♥-2N-3♦-3♥-P

In both sequences "responder" (opener) isn't sure whether to play in game and shows his side values with a club bid (a) and diamond bid (b). The result is a sign-off.

(2) The auction is not limited to game.
This situation takes place when responder is an unpassed hand. Here each bid other than 3 of the trump suit is forcing to game. Remember sequence (c):

1♦(1♣)-1♠-2♠-2N

Opener can verify a minimum opener with a 3♠ bid and responder can then pass. If however opener bids something other than 3♠, then the auction is game-forcing, e.g.

1♣(1♦)-1♠-2♠-2N-3♣-3♠

In the above sequence 3♠ is forcing, calling for cue-bids.

"Magister" (a.k.a. PRO)

Description:

Magister (sometimes called PRO) is an artificial 2♣ relay by responder asking a question about opener's holding in the major responder bid on the first round.

Examples:

(a) 1♣-1♥-1N-2♣
(b) 1♣-1♥-1♠-2♣
(c) 1♥-1♠-1N-2♣

Attention: The sequence

1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣

is not *Magister* but *fourth-suit forcing* - which is important for finding a club stopper.

Why do we use *Magister*?

(1) In order to play a club partial

Rebidding clubs on the next round is a sign-off ("partner, pass"), e.g.

1♣-1♠-1N-2♣-2♠-3♣

Responder has minimum HCP (7-10) and 5 (and sometimes six) clubs. He wants to play 3♣.

(2) In order to check on the possibility of game.

We bid this convention with 10-12 HCP and 5 cards in the major. Here it's to verify whether we have chance of game and, if so, then whether to play in a suit or NT.

(3) In order to force to game

With any hand that can guarantee game we use *Magister*. The convention facilitates discovering the best game, and also allows judging slam chances.

Continuations

In principle opener has 4 possible bids after the 2♣ ask:

2♦ = minimum (12-13) without 3-card support for responder's initial major
2 of partner's major = minimum opener (12-13) with a fit for partner's suit
2 of the other major = maximum opener (13-14) and a 3-card fit
2N = maximum opener (13-14) without a fit

The criteria by which we qualify our hand as a minimum or maximum is whether opposite a semipositive variant of *Magister* (10-12 and a 5-card major) we would go to game.

Returning to the original major, e.g.

1♣-1♥-1♠-2♣-2♦-2♥

shows the 10-12 HCP variant and (at least) a 5-card suit. Opener can carry on to 2N with shortness in responder's suit or as a conservative tactic (at matchpoints).

2N after *Magister*, as in :

1♦-1♠-1N-2♣-2♥-2N

is **forcing!** (with 10-12 we would bid 2♠).

Other bids are natural, forcing.

Some *Magister* auctions:

1♦-1♠-1N-2♣-2♦-2♠-P

2♠ has been reached with 7 spades and 22-24 HCP. Opener is not inclined to play 2N.

1♣-1♥-1♠-2♣-2♠-2N-3N-P
3N is reached despite having 8 hearts. Responder sees that partner has 4333 distribution with 4 spades (a side 4-card suit would have had had to be shown) and decides on the better contract.

1♣-1♠-1N-2♣-2N-3♥-4♦...
This is not confirming spades as trumps. Responder is trying to find a heart fit, and opener is letting him know of the fit, showing a diamond cue along the way. So partner besides the information of the heart fit knows already about the doubleton spade, maximum opening, no club control and diamond control. It should help facilitate the decision on slam.

1♣-1♠-1N-2♣-2♥-3♦-4♦...
Responder after receiving the info that partner has 3 spades shows a side diamond suit. One could mistake this for an invite to 4♠, but you have to also consider that a fit hasn't been discovered: 4♦ shows 4 cards. Opener guarantees game while suggesting a game in diamonds. Over 4♠ however he passes.

Note 1: A consequence of playing *Magister* is the very important agreement that a jump in a new suit by responder shows at least 5-5 distribution, e.g. in the sequence

1♣-1♠-1N-3♦

responder guarantees a game-forcing hand with at least 5-5 in spades and diamonds. With a strong hand and 4 diamonds it is necessary to first bid *Magister* 2♣, and only later show the diamonds.

Note 2: *Magister* requires more responses after a wide-range 1♣ opening, and these are discussed in the section on the 1♣ opening.

En passant

Description:
The en passant bid is showing a suit, which shows a stopper in order to verify whether the contract must be played in NT, or a suit.

An example application:

1♣-1N-2♦-2♥-2♠-2N-3N-P

Opener shows the strong club with at least 4 diamonds. 2♥ by responder is an *en passant* bid. The preceding 1N bid denied 4 hearts, so 2♥ is showing a stopper for NT. 2♠ by opener is a spade stopper and shows worry about clubs (the one suit which still has not been guaranteed stopped). Responder has a club stopper, so plays NT.

1♠-2♠-2N-3♣-3♥-3N-P

In the above sequence 2N is forcing (see *2N over an agreed major*). 3♣ shows club values. Opener shows a heart stopper to say that 3N requires help in diamonds. Responder declares that he has this help and in this case reaches 3N despite the 8-crd fit (will it work out?).

We propose in this place (discussed in the slam-seeking section) that the bid "appearing to be *en passant*", could have a natural meaning:

1♣-1N-2♦-3♦-3♥-3N-4♣...

When succeeds in finding a diamond fit, it seems that 3♥ is *en passant*, looking for stoppers for NT. However when opener rejects 3N, responder must verify his interpretation of the 3♥ bid - he is naturally showing a side suit (4-card) in order to look for help for slam.

Note: The *en passant* convention is not used when the enemy have bid. Here bidding the enemy suit (or one of them) is not showing a stopper, but asking for a stopper in the suit.

Drury

Description:

Drury we call the artificial 2♣ by a passed player over partner's 1♥ or 1♠ opening. This bid shows at least a 3-card fit and a good 9 HCP. We use Drury with those hands which over a first- or second-seat opener we would bid at least 2N - invitational to game with a fit. With the aid of this convention we can safely open weaker-than-standard openings in third- or fourth-seat.

Continuations

The major-suit opener has at his disposal the following responses:

2♦ = not enough strength for a first- or second-seat opening (less than 11 HCP)
2 of the major = minimum normal opener (11-13 HCP)
4 of the major = practical, to play
new suit = invitational to game - help-suit

Note: Playing Drury requires that with 9-11 HCP hands and a 6-card club suit by a passed hand and partner's 1♥ (1♠) opening we bid 3♣.

The Contested Auction

Negative double

Description:

We use the negative double over partner's opening at the 1-level and an enemy overcall up to 3♠ (in PS 95 negative doubles were played up to 4♦). Negative doubles find a trump suit besides the enemy suit and partner's suit. A negative double denies a fit with partner's suit.

Why a negative double?

(1) To verify the ability to play among the two yet-unbid suits.

The original (already outdated) version of the negative double limited its application. Making a negative double we needed to have at least 4 cards in the unbid suits. That version of the negative double is played at present in the following sequence:

1♣-(1♦)-X

The double requires holding both 4-card majors. Also allowed is 5 hearts and 4 spades (with 5 spades and 4 hearts we have to bid 1♠ and then hearts at the next round).

In the sequence:

1♥-(1♠)-X

the negative double in principle guarantees both minors. The double has similar meaning when partner has opened a major, an the enemy overcalls in the other major at the 2-level.

(2) To show 4 cards in the unbid major

If in the preceding auction one of the majors remains to be bid, then the double shows at least 4 cards in the other major - it isn't required to have 4 cards in the other suit. A classic case is the Sputnik double:

1♦-(1♠)-X

This double shows 4 hearts, but perhaps not clubs.

Let's review some sequences:

(a) 1♣-(2♠)-X
(b) 1♣-(2♥)-X
(c) 1♠-(2♣)-X
(d) 1♥-(2♣)-X

In examples (a) and (c) the double requires 4 hearts, and in examples (b) and (d) 4 spades.

Exception: To the rules we have offered above in the system there is one exception:

1♣/♦-(1♥)-X

The double in this sequence denies 4 spades or a heart stopper. With 4 spades we show naturally by bidding 1♠.

(3) To force with a 5-card suit

In Polish Standard bidding a new suit at the two-level without jumping over an enemy overcall is non-forcing, e.g.:

(a) 1♣/♦-(1♠)-2♥
(b) 1♥-(2♣)-2♠

In both the above examples responder's bid shows at least 5 cards as well as a non-forcing hand (7-10 HCP). To reveal a 5-card suit we can:

- jump in the suit (3♥ in sequence (a) or 3♠ in sequence (b)). This bid should however show a 6-card suit or a 5-carder good enough to play opposite a doubleton.
- negative double. Bidding a major suit after first negative doubling shows a 5-card suit not good enough to immediately jump-shift, 11+ HCP.

Examples:

(a) 1♣/♦-(1♠)-X-(P); 1N-(P)-2♥
(b) 1♥-(2♣)-X-(P); 2♥-(P)-2♠

Both times the major-suit bid after first doubling is forcing for at least one round and is a 5-card suit. Partner knows that we hardly have 4 cards since our sequence denied 4 cards in the unbid major - in sequence (a) with 4 hearts partner would have had to bid hearts, just as in sequence (b) opener with 4 cards should bid spades - independent of the opening strength.

Pass-or-correct double

Description:

The pass-or-correct double is an artificial type of negative double which is used at the 2-level over partner's 2♣ or 2♦ opening. It has similar meaning to a negative double (as far as looking to play in an unbid suit), but not larger risk of stopping in the suit doubled. Partner of the doubler is for required to pass if he has the suit (4 cards or 5 cards) bid by the opponents.

Examples:

(a) 2♣-(2♥)-X
(b) 2♦-(2♠)-X

In example (a) partner is required to pass if the Precision-type opening was based on 4 cards in hearts, and in example (b) partner passes when he has the Wilkosz with spades. For this reason it is not recommended to use this convention with shortness in the doubled suit.

Note: Pass-or-correct doubles are not used at the 3-level:

2♦-(3♣)-X

This double is penalty.

Support double

Description:

The support double we play over our opening at the level, partner's response in a major, and the opponent's overcall below two of partner's suit. This double shows a 3-card fit exactly with partner's suit and guarantees extras (HCP or distribution).

Example applications:

(a) 1♦-(P)-1♥-(1♠); X
(b) 1♦-(P)-1♠-(2♥); X
(c) 1♥-(P)-1♠-(2♦); X

In all the above examples the double shows extras and a 3-card fit for partner's suit. By extras we mean here 14 HCP or having some shortness (optimally in the enemy suit).

Note 1: Playing support doubles it is more difficult to punish the opponents' frivolous overcall. However it is not impossible. With a hand suitable for penalty we pass, counting on a reopening double from partner.

Note 2: Over our opening 1♣ it is necessary to add more meanings to the double in the same position. Double shows either extras with a fit, or a strong club without a fit.

Trap pass

Description:
The trap pass is a consequence of playing take-out doubles and negative doubles. With hands that would like to reprehend the opponents we are forced to pass. Partner takes into account that our pass has at least two meanings: showing either a weak hand or the desire to penalize (sometimes we are also forced to pass when we have points but no suitable bid) and suitably knows this in further bidding.

When do we use the trap pass?

We can discuss two fundamental situations:

(1) Over an enemy opening
We use the trap pass over an enemy opening with up to 16 HCP. With more strength we should double or overcall 1N (2N over a 2-level opening). Resulting from this is that partner over our pass reopens the bidding now with 9+ HCP, because passing with too much strength can cause the enemy to play undoubled when we can make a game.

In later bidding over a revealed trap pass we follow the vulnerability, e.g. over an opening 1♥:

(1♥)-P-(P)-X; (P)-?
Pass = "I have a trap pass" - strength undefined
2♥ = I have 13-16 HCP, but I don't have a stack in the doubled suit. A takeout double wasn't made since I don't have 3 spades.

(1♥)-P-(P)-X; (XX)-?
Pass = wants to play the redoubled contract ("I have a trap pass")

(1♥)-P-(P)-X; (1♠)-?
Pass = weak
Double = trap pass for hearts and can play spades doubled
2♥ = 13-16 HCP, unsuitable for takeout since less than 3 spades
2♠ = trap pass for hearts, but cannot play spades doubled

(1♥)-P-(P)-1♠; (P)-?
2♥ = 13-16 HCP, unsuitable for takeout, bad or no stopper in hearts
2N, 3N = 13-16 HCP, good heart stopper

(2) Over our opening and an enemy overcall

The trap pass over an enemy overcall we play up to 2 of the opening suit. Examples:

(a) 1♠-(2♥)-P

(b) 1♦-(2♣)-P

In the above examples pass has two meanings - weak or trap pass. But in the sequences:

(c) 1♥-(2♠)-P

(d) 1♣-(2♥)-P

pass is systemically one-meaning: weak. People with strong nerves could pass with a stack in the enemy suit and a strong hand also in sequences (c) and (d). We should however pay attention to the following:

How do we proceed over partner's trap pass?

Unfortunately we can't blink, nor even cough to tell partner that we have the trap pass. Partner must try to take into account we could have this type of hand. So in reopening position we reopen with a double when we are short in the doubled suit (at most a doubleton). If the enemy overcall does not exceed the 2-level of our suit (sequences (a) and (b)), then in reopening double does not say much (it is obligatory). Reopening the bidding at a higher level promises extra strength (it is not obligatory) and hence trap passing in this sequence is dangerous.

Further bidding over a trap pass over our opening is analogous to bidding over an enemy opening, e.g. pass over a reopening double and redoubling is penalty (trap pass). In sequences like:

1♣-(1♥)-P-(P); X-(1♠)-?

double shows the trap pass for hearts, and we aren't sure whether to play spades doubled, and 2♠ shows a trap pass for hearts when we don't want to play spades doubled.

Western cue

Description:

The Western cue is a bid in a suit bid by the enemy to verify whether partner has a stopper in the suit. In response to this bid partner bids NT if he has a stopper in the suit, and retreats to another suit otherwise. Let's remember that in the uncontested auction we show the stopper - and not ask for one - see the en passant *convention.*

Examples:

1♣-(P)-1♥-(1♠); 2♣-(P)-3♣-(P); 3♠

If the opponents had not entered the bidding 3♠ would have shown a spade stopper (supposedly without a diamond stopper). After the overcall in spades 3♠ is asking for a spade stopper.

For this intention is the solution to the situations when the opponents bid 2 suits, e.g.

1N-2♥-?

Let's assume that the opponent's bid shows both majors. We must confirm the possibility of playing 3N (for example, with two good minors) and we don't stop one or both of the enemy suits. This is similar to *en passant* (but we don't show stoppers in enemy suits) -

(a) 2♠ (cheapest cue-bid) = "*partner can you stop spades? I can't stop them, but it says nothing about hearts".*

(b) 3♥ (higher cue-bid) = "*partner can you stop hearts, I can stop spades".*

In case (a), if opener stops both suits he bids NT, if just spades and not hearts then he asks a similar question: 3♥ = "*partner, I can stop spades, can you stop hearts?"*

After Western cue and an enemy double

If the opponents double our Western cue then there is the possibility of accurately describing the quality of the stopper:

- bidding NT = stopper other than just the ace
- redouble = ace, with interest in our suit
- our agreed trump suit = shortness in the enemy suit
- pass = at least 2 cards in the opponents' suit

Pass can show a doubleton "half-stopper" (by half-stopper we mean a doubleton queen or tripleton jack). Holding a half-stopper we pass over the double (we have at least 2 cards), and partner with a half-stopper redoubles. If we have a half-stopper too, we bid 3N, and without it we return to our trump suit.

Drury

Description:
Drury in the contested auction is used over an overcall in a major suit at the 1-level even at the time when partner is a passed hand. The bidding principles are the same as the case when we use the convention in an uncontested auction (see Conventions. The uncontested auction).

We must indicate that in the example sequence:

(1♦)-1♠-(P)-?

2♣ is Drury, showing a spade fit, however the enemy suit (in this case 2♦) is a general force without a fit.

Michaels cue-bid

Description:
Michaels cue-bid we call the bid in a suit shown by the enemy at the lowest possible level, in order to show a 2-suiter with at least 5-5 in suits other than the opponent's.
Accompanying this convention is the 2-suited 2N. The 2-suited 2N shows the 2 lowest unbid suits, while Michaels cue-bid shows any other 2-suited distribution.

Examples:

(a) (1♦)-2N
(b) (1♦)-2♦
(c) (1♥)-2N
(d) (1♥)-2♥
(e) (1♠)-2N
(f) (1♠)-2♠
(g) (2♥)-3♥
(h) (2♠)-3♠

In example (a) the 2N bid shows at least 5-5 with clubs and diamonds (the lowest two unbid suits). In example (b) we show the remaining 5-5'ers, spades-clubs or spades-hearts. Analogously, in example (c) and (e) we show clubs and diamonds, while in (d) 2-suited with spades and (f) 2-suited with hearts. In case (g) the bid shows a 2-suiter with spades, and in example (h) 2-suited with hearts. We note that over the 2♥ and 2♠ openings the only way to show the minors is with a 4N bid (since 2N and 3N are natural).

The strength of the 2N overcall is that of the Michaels cue-bid, which depends on the vulnerability (see below) and not the same as the 2N opening, which in our system shows 6-10 HCP.

What hands bid the Michaels cue-bid?

One treatment (either weak, or strong) creates a bit of a problem. Ask the adherents of this agreement what a weak 2♠ cue of the opponent's 1♠ opening at unfavorable vulnerability is (we are vulnerable, and are forced to play at the 3-level).

In our opinion the minimum strength for this bid depends on the vulnerability - in other words it is decided relative to the safety. This hand is very suited for a Michaels cue-bid if there is honor concentration in the 2 long suits, or they contain good intermediates.

Let's look at some hands:

♠ Axxxx ♥ x ♦ xx ♣ KJxxx

The opponents open 1♥. At favorable vulnerability we bid 2♥ - there is a good chance of discovering a good fit in spades or clubs. At other vulnerabilities bidding 2♥ is dangerous - we suggest 1♠.

The opponents open 1♠, and we have:

♠ x ♥ KQxxx ♦ xx ♣ AQxxx

You can bid 2♠ at any vulnerability except unfavorable.

Let's assume we get this "Acol" hand over an enemy opening 1♥:

♠ AKJxx ♥ x ♦ AKQxx ♣ xx

We bid 2♥ with equal vulnerability and directly shoot for game. If there is bidding by the enemy, we will double. Double after a Michaels cue-bid does not show a stack in the enemy suit, but a very good hand.

We have:

♠ AKJTx ♥ Ax ♦ x ♣ Jxxxx

and the enemy opens 1♥. At any vulnerability we choose 1♠, so as not to provoke partner to bid needlessly high in clubs.

We hold:

♠ A7652 ♥ KJx ♦ Qxxxx ♣ --

and the enemy opens 1♥. We don't make a Michaels cue-bid since partner would never guess that we have such defensive cards (and tells the enemy how to play their game).

Continuations over the Michaels cue-bid

No big rules are necessary for further good bidding. However certain basic agreements can be given.

Let's analyze the continuations over the following sequence:

(1♥)-2♥-(P)-?

2♠ = weak, can be a doubleton spade

2N = asks for the minor suit, which promises positive strength. Over this bid one can bid one's minor suit as a jump to show good distribution or bid 3♥ with the strong hand.

3♣ = pass-or-correct ("partner pass with clubs"), weak

3♦ = natural with own suit, to play

3♥ = spade fit, invitation to 4♠

3♠ = 4-card spade fit, weak

Lebensohl

Description:

Lebensohl is when our side bids 2N, over an enemy bid of 2 of a major suit, to: (a) show a one-suited hand too weak to bid at the 3-level, or (b) to find a 4-card major.

When do we use Lebensohl?

There is a high danger of misunderstanding with this convention: one of the partners thinks that the position requires using the convention, and the other doesn't. Because of this both must have the same definitions of when Lebensohl applies. We propose this inflexible rule:

Lebensohl applies only and exclusively over an enemy opening or overcall of 2♥ or 2♠.

This principle pertains also to the situations where the enemy opening (or overcall) shows another suit in addition to the one bid, e.g. a 2♥ opening as a 2-suiter with hearts.

(1) Over a 2♥ or 2♠ opening
The convention applies to the situations where one of the opponents has opened 2♥ or 2♠, and one of us has doubled (either in the 2nd position or reopening position).

Let's assume the following sequences:

(2♠)-X-(P)-?

3♣, 3♦, 3♥ = natural showing a long suit with 8-11 HCP. If partner has the classic take-out double (13-15 HCP), then he bids for us the contract we should play and make.

3♠ = asks for a stopper in spades without 4 hearts, suitable hand for game

2N = weak hand: 0-7 HCP or forcing to game with 4 hearts. Partner over this bid in principle must bid 3♣

(2♠)-X-(P)-2N; (P)-3♣-(P)-?

Pass = negative (0-7 HCP) with length in clubs

3♦, 3♥ = negative with diamonds (hearts)

3♠ = 4 hearts, game-forcing, no spade stopper

3N = 4 hearts, forcing to game, spade stopper

We note that over the 2N bid - Lebensohl - partner may disobey our command and not bid 3♣, but naturally show a suit (or 3N, or cue-bid). This should imply a powerful hand for which even our negative hand gives chance of making game.

(2) Over a 2♥ or 2♠ overcall
We must distinguish three situations:

(2a) The opponents interfere over our opening 1N
Here Lebensohl has the exact same meaning as over an opening 2♥, 2♠

1N-(2♠)-?

3♣, 3♦ = natural showing length in the suit and 7-9 HCP. Partner with a good fit and spade stopper can risk 3N

3♠ = asks for a stopper without 4 hearts

2N = sign-off (weak hand) in clubs or diamonds or hearts, or game-forcing with 4 hearts. Later bidding is as after a 2♠ opening.

We should consider the bidding the other major (5 cards, in this case hearts) at the 3-level is forcing, and not invitational. Therefore in analyzing the situation 3♥ is forcing with 5 hearts, and preceding hearts with Lebensohl 2N is at most invitational.

(2b) The opponents enter over an opening other than 1N
In this case applying the convention is limited to distinguishing weak and strong hands, e.g.

1♣-(2♠)-?

3♣, 3♦, 3♥ = forcing with clubs, diamonds, or hearts

2N = nonforcing promising a suit other than spades

(2c) General Lebensohl

This convention is discussed in the section on opening 1♥, 1♠. I remind you here: If partner opens 1♥ or 1♠, then over any enemy overcall (whether 1♠, 2♣, 2♦) 2N has two alternative meanings: weak with some suit (over 1♠ or 2♣ this variant makes no sense) or invitational to game with a fit for partner's suit. This means that raising partner with a jump is preemptive.

Appendix 1: The "Polish Standard 2000" Poll

The poll below appeared in "Bridge" magazine. The responses of the readers and of invited experts were the basis for the present description of the system.

Openings

1. The 1♦ opening is
   (a) always 5+ cards
   (b) always 4+ cards
   (c) 4 cards if 3-suited
   (d) 4 cards if 3-suited or with 5 clubs

2. With a 1N opening
   (a) we don't allow a 5-card major
   (b) we allow a 5-card major, but we show it as a 4-card major
   (c) systemically we allow 5 hearts
   (d) systemically we allow any 5-card major

3. With a 1N opening
   (a) we allow only "classic distribution" (4333, 4432, 5332)
   (b) we allow a 6-card minor and 5-4 in the minors
   (c) we allow distributions in (b) as well as 5-4 with a 5-card minor and 4-card major
   (d) we allow the off-shape (b) and (c) distributions, but only opposite a passed partner

4. The 2♣ opening is
   (a) Acol
   (b) Precision

5. The 3N opening is
   (a) solid minor with nothing else
   (b) solid minor with a side ace or king
   (c) solid minor with a side ace

6. The 4♣ and 4♦ openings are
   (a) natural
   (b) about 9 tricks in hearts (spades)

Responses

7. With a 5-card minor and a 4-card major, e.g. with 5 diamonds and 4 spades, over partner's 1♣ opening, we bid:
   (a) always 1♠
   (b) 1♠ with up to 10 HCP, 2♦ with more than 10 HCP
   (c) 2♦ with a game-forcing hand (12-13+ HCP), 1♠ with a weaker hand

8. Raising diamonds over a 1♦ opening
   (a) 2♦ is forcing (10+ HCP), and 3♦ is preemptive
   (b) 2♦ is weak, 3♦ is invitational

9. Raising a major suit of partner with a single jump (e.g. 1♥-3♥) is
   (a) invitational
   (b) preemptive

10. The 1N response to an opening major bid is
   (a) non-forcing - further bidding is natural
   (b) semiforcing without a fit - (opener with 5332 and a bit extra bids 2♣)
   (c) semiforcing - without a fit, or with a fit and up to 7 HCP - (opener with 5332 and extras bids 2♣)
   (d) forcing

11. Over a 1♣ opening the 2♣/♦ response shows
   (a) 10+ HCP and a 5+ card suit (can stop in 2N)
   (b) 12+ HCP and a 5+ card suit or 10+ HCP and a 6-card suit (can stop in 3♣/♦)
   (c) game-forcing

12. Over 1♦, 1♥, 1♠ openings responses at the 2-level without a jump (two over one)
   (a) force to the 2-level in the opening suit (e.g. one can pass in sequences like 1♥-2♦-2♥-P)
   (b) force to 2N (e.g. one can pass in sequences like 1♥-2♦-2♥-2N)
   (c) forcing until responder rebids the suit (e.g. 1♥-2♦-2♥-3♦-P)

13. A jump-shift response over an opening 1♣ (e.g. 1♣-2♥) shows
   (a) any game-forcing hand (13+ HCP) with 5-cards in the suit
   (b) a slam-encouraging hand with a very good suit

14. Jump-shift responses over an opening 1♦/♥/♠ (e.g. 1♥-3♣) show
   (a) a slam-encouraging hand with a very good suit
   (b) a fit-showing jump
   (c) a conventional 3-(4-)card limit raise in partner's suit

15. The 2N response to an opening 1♥/♠
   (a) is natural balanced (10-12 HCP without a fit)
   (b) is a game-invitational raise of the opened suit
   (c) is a game-forcing raise of the opened suit
   (d) shows a fit and a side singleton

16. The 3N response to an opening 1♥/♠
   (a) is natural (to play)
   (b) shows the "inefficient" splinter (short diamonds over 1♥, short hearts over 1♠)
   (c) shows a balanced 10-13 HCP raise to 4♥/♠

17. Over the 1♣ opening and 3♣/♦ response (9-11 6-carder) a new suit bid at the 3-level
   (a) shows the strong club with the bid suit
   (b) shows a stopper for NT
   (c) is 2-way: variant (a) or (b)

Bidding in later rounds

18. After fourth-suit forcing, bidding the initial suit of responder (e.g. [1] 1♦-1♠-2♣-2♥-2♠ or [2] 1♥-1♠-2♣-2♦-2♠):
    (a) shows always 3-cards in this suit
    (b) shows at least a doubleton honor in this suit
    (c) shows at least a doubleton in this suit
    (d) shows at least 2 cards in sequence [1] and at least 3 cards in sequence [2]

19. Raising the fourth suit (e.g. [1] 1♦-1♠-2♣-2♥-3♥ or [2] 1♥-1♠-2♣-2♦-3♦)
    (a) shows no stopper in the fourth suit and a maximum opener
    (b) shows any 3 cards in the fourth suit
    (c) shows 3 cards and a stopper in the fourth suit
    (d) shows 3 cards without a stopper in the fourth suit

20. Responses to the "Magister" convention (e.g. 1♣-1♠-1N-2♣) should be the following:
    (a) 2♦ = weak no fit, 2♥ = weak fit, 2♠ = strong fit, 2N = weak no fit
    (b) 2♦ = weak no fit, 2♥ (other major) = strong fit, 2♠ = weak fit, 2N = strong no fit
    (c) 2♦ = weak no fit, 2♥ = 4 hearts, 2♠ = weak fit, 2N = strong fit or no fit

21. 2N after a rebid at the 2-level (e.g. [1] 1♥-1♠-2♦-2N, [2] 1♥-2♣-2♦-2N)
    (a) is non-forcing
    (b) is nonforcing in [1], forcing in [2] (only over a two-over-one)
    (c) is forcing in both [1] and [2]

22. Over an opening 1♣ or 1♦ and a 2N response, the 3♣ rebid is
    (a) non-forcing
    (b) forcing
    (c) forcing over a 1♣ opening, not over a 1♦ opening
    (d) forcing over a 1♦ opening, not over a 1♣ opening

23. The auction 1♦-2♣-2N shows
    (a) 3-suiter with singleton club
    (b) 12-14 HCP with 4 diamonds
    (c) 15-17 HCP with 6 diamonds

24. The auction 1♣-3N-4♣ shows
    (a) strong club with at least 5 clubs - 4♦ by partner is a cue-bid agreeing clubs
    (b) strong club and probe for a minor suit - 4♦ by partner shows 4 diamonds

25. A new suit after a transfer (e.g. 1N-2♥-2♠-3♣)
    (a) forces to the bid suit (here: 3♠)
    (b) forces to game

26. Over Stayman 2♣ with both 4-card majors we bid:
    (a) 2♥
    (b) 2N
    (c) 2N with a minimum opener, 3♣ with a maximum opener

Slam-seeking

27. In response to Blackwood
    (a) we show 4 aces
    (b) we show 5 keycards (4 aces and the king of trumps)
    (c) we show 5 keycards, and if clubs are trumps 5♣ = 1 ace, 5♦ = 0 aces

(d) we show 5 keycards always with the convention of 102 (5♣ = 1 ace, 5♦ = 0 aces)

28. After asking for aces is asking for
    (a) kings
    (b) the queen of trumps

29. After strongly setting the trump suit in a major (e.g. [1] 1♠-2♦-2♠-3♠, [2] 1♠-2♣-2♦-3♠)
    (a) opener bids his cheapest cue-bid
    (b) opener shows shortness or bids 3N with a good hand without shortness
    (c) opener bids shortness only in sequence [2] (when 9 cards have been shown in 2 suits)

Over enemy interference

30. After an enemy double of our 1♣ opening
    (a) pass guarantees at least 3 clubs and 1♦ is negative without 3 clubs
    (b) pass says nothing about clubs, and 1♦ is natural

31. After an enemy double over our opening
    (a) 1-level responses are forcing
    (b) 1-level responses are non-forcing

32. After an enemy double over our opening, a jump-shift in a new suit
    (a) is preemptive
    (b) is forcing
    (c) shows an invitational hand (9-11 HCP)
    (d) is fit-showing

33. After an enemy double of our 1N opening
    (a) we bid as if the double hadn't happened (Stayman, transfers)
    (b) we bid natural suits

34. We play negative doubles up to the level of
    (a) 3♥
    (b) 3♠
    (c) 4♦
    (d) 4♥

35. After an enemy suit overcall of our opening 1♥ or 1♠, e.g. 1♥-(2♣)
    (a) 3♥ is invitational, and 3♣ is forcing to game with a fit
    (b) 3♥ is preemptive, and 3♣ is at least invitational with a fit
    (c) 3♥ is preemptive, 2N is invitational with a fit, and 3♣ is game-forcing with a fit
    (d) 3♥ is preemptive, 3♣ is forcing to game, and with an invite we must negative double first

36. Jump-shifts to a new suit, e.g. 1♥-(1♠)-4♣ is
    (a) splinter (showing shortness and a fit for partner's suit)
    (b) fit-showing

37. Lebensohl over an enemy overcall
    (a) we don't play in general
    (b) we play only over our 1N opening and an enemy 2-level overcall
    (c) we play over the above opening and over a reopening double (e.g. 1♦-(2♠)-P-(P); X-(P)-2N Lebensohl)

(d) we play over the above openings - and in the immediate position (e.g. 1♦-(2♠)-2N Lebensohl)

Defensive bidding

38. The 1N overcall
    (a) is classic
    (b) is the 5-4 convention (5-card minor, 4-card major)

39. Drury (e.g. (1♦)-1♠-(P)-2♣)
    (a) promises a fit in partner's suit
    (b) promises a fit except when the opponent opened 1♣

40. Jump overcalls (e.g. (1♦)-2♠) are
    (a) always preemptive
    (b) preemptive not vulnerable, constructive (12-15 HCP) vulnerable

41. After an enemy 1N opening
    (a) we bid naturally and double with a 2-suiter
    (b) we play some convention to show 2-suiters

42. After an enemy Wilkosz or Multi 2♦ opening
    (a) double is take-out in nature
    (b) double is like a take-out of spades (can be short spades, must have a heart fit)

43. Lebensohl on defense
    (a) we don't play
    (b) we play over the enemy 2♥ and 2♠ openings
    (c) we play over the enemy 2♦, 2♥, and 2♠ openings

Poll Results

Taking part in the poll are some 85 readers - of them 37 by means of the Internet, thanks to good wishes and labor of Pawla Postupalskiego, who set up the poll on her webpage.

The experts represented are 20 prominent Polish bridge-players, listed here in alphabetical order: Bartosz Chmurski, Grzegorz Gardynik, Tomasz Gotard, Ewa Harasimowicz, Aleksander Jesioro, Julian Klukowski, Apolinary Kowalski, Jolanta Krogulska, Michal Kwiecien, Krzysztof Martens, Jacek Poletylo, Jacek Pszczola, Mariusz Puczynski, Jacek Romanski, Ewa Sobolewska, Wlodzimierz Starkowski, Piotr Tuszynski, Tomasz Winciorek, Slawomir Zawislak, Adam Zmudzinski. Privately taking part in the poll are Marcin Lesniewski and Krzysztof Moszczynski, who were consulted respectively by Ewa Harasimowicz and Julian Klukowski. To all the experts, many thanks for participating in the poll.

For each option was calculated the percent support among the readers and experts. These results were scaled relative to the most popular option, as in the bidding competitions in "Bridge", i.e. very popular concepts get 100 points, and the remaining get their proper proportion (rounding to the nearest 10 points).

The results for each response to each question are listed in the table below:

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
a	10	90	100	40	100	50	20	100	40	100

b	20	100	90	100	10	100	20	30	100	40
c	40	50	80	0	10	0	100	0	0	40
d	100	70	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	20

	11	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**
a	40	50	30	100	30	90	40	100	100	40
b	30	40	100	50	90	100	20	50	80	100
c	100	100	0	60	100	70	100	30	50	20
d	0	30	0	0	40	0	0	60	90	10

	21	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**28**	**29**	**30**
a	50	90	100	100	70	100	20	100	70	100
b	80	90	40	50	100	10	100	80	100	90
c	100	100	30	0	0	30	60	0	50	0
d	10	40	0	0	0	0	70	0	0	0

	31	**32**	**33**	**34**	**35**	**36**	**37**	**38**	**39**	**40**
a	100	30	90	10	50	100	30	100	100	100
b	50	10	100	100	80	50	70	70	50	20
c	0	20	0	70	100	0	30	0	0	0
d	0	100	0	70	30	0	100	0	0	0

	41	**42**	**43**
a	70	60	20
b	100	100	100
c	0	0	50
d	0	0	0

Below are reported the results obtained on the poll from the readers and experts (maximum possible total result is 4300 points). A high result shows a good feeling for the current bidding trends. The 10 readers who got the highest scores receive an author's copy of the booklet. They are:

Name and Surname	**Total**
Jacek Marciniak	3820
Krzysztof Daszczuk	3810
Mikotaj Taczewski	3760
Roman Szalaty	3750
Malgorzata Kupiecka	3730
Lukasz Legowski	3720
Szymon Chojnacki	3650
Stanislaw Gilon	3650
Jaroslaw Lakomy	3600
Robert Rozak	3600

The experts received the following scores:

Name and Surname	**Total**
Ewa Sobolewska	3940
Adam Zmudzinski	3860
Krzysztof Martens	3850
Jacek Romanski	3830
Mariusz Puczynski	3760

Jolanta Krogulska	3750
Michal Kwiecien	3750
Jacek Poletylo	3710
Jacek Pszczola	3670
Apolinary Kowalski	3640
Ewa Harasimowicz	3560
Stawomir Zawislak	3540
Tomasz Gotard	3490
Aleksander Jesioro	3490
Wlodzimierz Starkowski	3490
Bartosz Chmurski	3450
Grzegorz Gardynik	3450
Tomasz Winciorek	3450
Piotr Tuszynski	3210
Julian Klukowski	3110

Below are the highest-scoring responses to the poll questions:

Openings

1. The 1♦ opening is 4-cards in a 3-suiter or with 5 clubs, otherwise it is 5 cards.
2. With the 1N opening we allow a 5-card major, but we show it as a 4-carder.
3. With the 1N opening we allow only "classic distributions" (4333, 4432, 5332).
4. The 2♣ opening is Precision.
5. The 3N opening is a solid minor with nothing else.
6. The 4♣ and 4♦ openings are about 9 tricks in hearts (spades).

Responses

7. With a 5-card minor and a 4-card major, e.g. 5 diamonds and 4 spades over partner's 1♣ opening, we bid 2♦ with a game-forcing hand (12, 13+ HCP), and 1♠ with weaker hands.
8. Over a 1♦ opening, 2♦ is forcing (10+ HCP), and 3♦ is preemptive.
9. Raising partner's major suit with a jump (e.g. 1♥-3♥) is preemptive.
10. The 1N response to an opening major suit is non-forcing - continuations are natural.
11. Over a 1♣ opening the 2♣/♦ responses are forcing to game.
12. Over the 1♦, 1♥, and 1♠ openings, responses at the 2-level without a jump (i.e. a two-over-one) are forcing until responder rebids the suit (e.g. 1♥-2♦-2♥-3♦-P).
13. A jump-shift response in a new suit over an opening 1♣ (e.g. 1♣-1♥) shows slam interest with a good suit.
14. A jump-shift response in a new suit over an opening 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠ (e.g. 1♥-3♣) shows slam interest with a good suit.
15. *The 2N response to an opening 1♥/♠ is forcing to game with a fit for the opened suit*.
16. The 3N response to a 1♥/♠ opening shows the "inconvenient" splinter (short diamonds over a 1♥ opening, and short hearts over a 1♠ opening).
17. Over a 1♣ opening and 3♣/♦ response (9-11 HCP, 6-carder), opener's bids of a new suit have two meanings: showing either a strong club, or stopper for 3N.

Bidding in later rounds

18. Over fourth-suit forcing, bidding responder's first suit always show 3 cards in the suit.

19. Raising the fourth suit (e.g. [1] 1♦-1♠-2♣-2♥-3♥ or [2] 1♥-1♠-2♣-2♦-3♦) shows no stopper in the fourth suit and a maximum opener.
20. Responses to the "Magister" convention (e.g. 1♣-1♠-1N-2♣) should be the following: 2♦ = weak no fit, 2♥ (other major) = strong with fit, 2♠ = weak with fit, 2N = strong no fit.
21. Bidding 2N over a rebid at the 2-level (e.g. [1] 1♥-1♠-2♦-2N, [2] 1♥-2♣-2♦-2N) is forcing in both sequences [1] and [2].
22. Over a 1♣ or 1♦ opening and 2N response, the 3♣ rebid is forcing over a 1♣ opening, not-forcing over a 1♦ opening.
23. Bidding 1♦-2♣-2N shows a 3-suiter with a singleton club.
24. Bidding 1♣-3N-4♣ shows the strong club with at least 5 clubs - 4♦ by partner is a cue-bid for clubs.
25. A new suit after a transfer (e.g. 1N-2♥-2♠-3♣) is forcing to game.
26. Over Stayman 2♣, with both majors we bid 2♥.

Slam-seeking

27. Responses to Blackwood are for keycards (4 aces and the king of trumps).
28. After the ace-ask is the king-ask.
29. Over strongly setting a major suit as trumps (e.g. [1] 1♠-2♦-2♠-3♠, [2] 1♠-2♣-2♦-3♠) opener shows shortness or bids 3N with a good hand and no shortness.

Over enemy interference

30. Over an enemy double of our 1♣ opening pass promises at least 3 clubs, and 1♦ is negative without 3 clubs.
31. Over an enemy double of our opening, responses at the 1-level are forcing.
32. Over an enemy double of our opening a jump-shift into a new suit is fit-showing.
33. Over an enemy double of our 1N opening we bid suits naturally.
34. We use the negative double up to 3♠.
35. Over an enemy overcall of our 1♥ or 1♠ opening, e.g. 1♥-(2♣), 3♥ is preemptive, 2N is an invitational raise, and 3♣ is a game-forcing raise.
36. A double jump in a new suit (e.g. 1♥-(1♠)-4♣) is a splinter (showing shortness and a fit for partner's suit).
37. Lebensohl over an enemy overcall we use also in the immediate position (e.g. 1♦-(2♠)-2N = Leb).

Defensive bidding

38. A 1N overcall is classic.
39. Drury (e.g. (1♦)-1♠-(P)-2♣) promises a fit for partner even over an opening 1♣.
40. Jump overcalls are always preemptive.
41. Over the enemy 1N opening we play some convention that shows 2-suiters.
42. Over the enemy Wilkosz or Multi 2♦ openers the double is just like over an opening 2♠ (it can be short spades, but requires heart support).
43. We play Lebensohl on defense over the enemy 2♥ and 2♠ openers.

We chose to mark response 15 in cursive. The reason is that the popular choice did not take into account the rest of the system, since if it were agreed, it would be impossible to invite game: 1N is non-forcing, 3 of the suit is preemptive, and 3 of a minor is natural, strong. We agree therefore that the 2N response is at least invitational to game with a fit (this meaning was second in the poll).

Appendix 2: "Polish Standard 2000" System Outline

The system outline summarizes the most current poll - it can be treated as a short reference for the system.

Openings

1♦ = 4 cards in a 3-suiter or with 5 clubs - otherwise 5+ cards
2♣ = Precision
2♦ = Wilkosz
3N = solid minor, nothing else
4♣/♦ = about 9 tricks in hearts (spades)

Responses

Major suits are always shown first only when the strength doesn't guarantee game.
Over the 1♦ opening, 2♦ is forcing (10+ HCP), and 3♦ is preemptive.
1♥-3♥ (1♠-3♠) = preemptive.
The 1N response is non-forcing.
Over a 1♣ opening the 2♣/♦ responses are forcing to game. Over other openings the two-over-one responses force to 3 of the two-over-one suit.
A jump response in a new suit is a very good suit, invitational to slam.
A 2N response to a 1♥/♠ opener is at least invitational to game, with a fit.
A 3N response to a 1♥/♠ opener shows the "inconvenient" splinter.

Developments

Over fourth-suit forcing, bidding responder's first suit shows 4 cards, raising the fourth suit shows no stopper in that suit and a maximum opener.
Magister: 2♦ = weak no fit, partner's major = weak fit, other major = strong fit, 2N = strong no fit
Forcing 2N.
The auction 1♦-2♣-2N(3N) shows a strong (15-17) or weak (12-14) 3-suiter with a singleton club.
Over the 1N opening: a new suit by responder over a transfer is forcing to game, over stayman with both majors we bid 2♥.

Slam-seeking

Keycard Blackwood. King-ask (Hoyt). Cue-bids, splinter, trump-invite.
Over a strong setting of a major suit, opener shows shortness or bids 3N with a good hand without shortness.

Over enemy interference

Over an enemy double: 1-level bids are forcing, jump-shifts are fit-showing, double jump-shifts are splinters.
We play negative doubles up to 3♠.
Over a suit overcall of our 1♥ or 1♠ opening, the jump-raise is preemptive, 2N (Lebensohl) can show an invitation with a fit, 3 of the enemy suit is game-forcing, a double-jump shift is a splinter.
Lebensohl applies in the direct seat and over partner's reopening double.

Defensive bidding

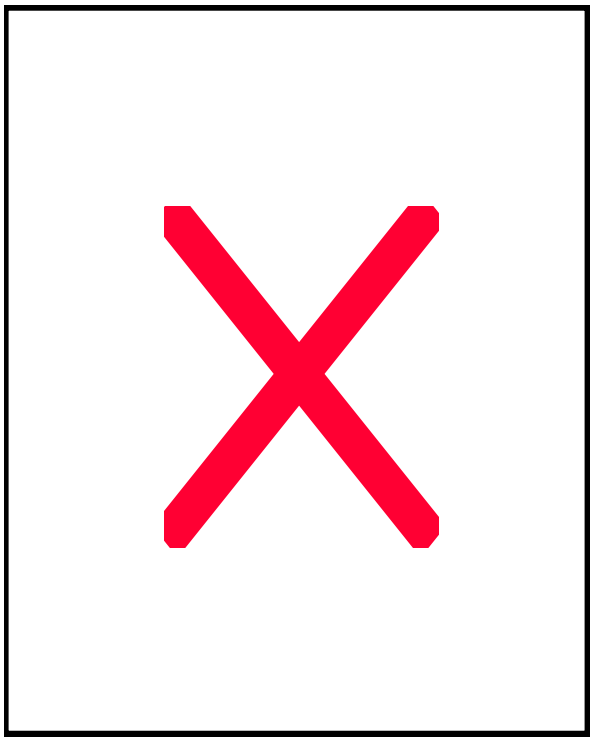
1N = classic
Drury = always with a fit
Jump-overcalls are always preemptive.
Over a 2♦ opening (Wilkosz or Multi) double is the same as over a 2♠ opening.
Lebensohl applies over the enemy 2♥, 2♠ openings.

Appendix 3: Convention Card

[Details on filling out a WBF convention card]

[Actual WBF convention cards (Polish and English versions) included in a sheath in the back cover]

About the Author



Krzysztof Jassem

Represented Poland in 1999 European Team Championships (6th place) and 2000 Bermuda Bowl (quarterfinal)

Cap Gemini 2000 (3rd place) (invitational tournament for the 16 top pairs in the world)

MS Teams, Tunisia 1997 (7th place)

6-time (at this printing) Polish teams champion