The Tangerine Club

Jan Eric Larsson

To Anu

Palo Alto, California, April 24th, 1995

Preface

Which of all opening bids is the least efficient and causes most trouble in the subsequent bidding? A strong 1♣? A Roman 2♢? A 0–7 points 1♢?

My opinion is clear: the opening bid one of a suit in the standard system is the worst of all bids. Opening one of a suit, I tell my partner that I have somewhere between 11 reasonable points and almost a game on my own hand. In one fell swoop, I have managed to half the total span of possibilities! With partner holding around 12 points, we may have trouble making a part score, or a grand slam may be easy.

Strong 1♣ systems remedy the main disadvantage with the "standard" systems, the wide point range of the one level openings. The opening 1♣ is used to show stronger hands, usually from around 16 points and upwards. This allows the rest of the opening bids to be limited and the subsequent bidding becomes both easier and more precise.

It is my opinion that strong 1♣ systems are superior to standard systems, especially if the opponents let the partnership bid without interference after 1♣, which they shouldn't but usually do. Even the good Goren has the following to say about Precision and other strong 1♣ systems:

> "Except for 1 Club opening, which is conventional, similar to 2 Clubs in standard methods, almost all other Precision bids are also played as part of Standard American. Therefore, it is easy to learn. But the player who adopts the Precision System enjoys the enormous advantage of knowning, often from the very first bid, whether the partnership is in part score, game or slam territory."
>
> Goren, C. H., "Goren's New Bridge Complete," Doubleday, Garden City, New York, p. 287, 1985.

In addition, the 1♣ bidding may use asking bids and other special slam methods. The potential weakness of strong 1♣ systems is the 1♣ opening itself. There are two slightly different reasons for this. First, opponents using systematic weak overcalls will decrease the bidding precision. Secondly, many opponents use "psychic" overcalls. The latter may not be a particularly good idea, but it will take away lots of reliability in the bidding.

The idea of weak/strong 1♣ systems is to remove the reason for destructive and psychic overcalls of the 1♣ opening. This opening now shows either the strong variant, or a weak hand, typically a balanced or semi-balanced hand around 10 points. If an opponent interferes with a psychic bid, he risks to sabotage the subsequent bidding for his own side.

Tangerine was born out of my distrust for the "standard" system. I had some inspiration from other systems, the Neapolitan Club, the Blue Team Club, Precision, and the Swedish system Hjortron, (Cloudberry). Tangerine was invented at the same time as Cloudberry, and precedes the weak/strong Carrot Club with more than five years. All in all, Tangerine is nothing new, though, only a simple, systematic version of a weak/strong 1♣ and light 4 card suit openings.

I have had great times playing it, though. Together with Sören Romare, (who hereby is acknowledged as a coauthor of the system), we ended up in 6 hearts doubled and vulnerable, resulting in −11 tricks and 3200 points out, in a pairs competition in Lund, Sweden, but over the years we found literally hundreds of slams that no one else even suspected to be there. In short, Tangerine can improve your bidding a lot, in both pairs and teams competitions, because it is simple, aggressive, and good at finding games and slams.

So read and be inspired. Maybe you can find some idea to borrow and improve, or maybe you will even want to play Tangerine. Now it has been presented in English, and you may do with it whatever you want. Hopefully you find it interesting and inspiring, or at least a nice piece of history. "And that was the main reason why we wrote this book, aside from wanting to become so wealthy that we shall routinely leave motor yachts as tips," to quote Dave Barry from his book about American history, "Dave Barry Slept Here."

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to Anu Uus, my life companion, wife, and best friend.

Palo Alto, April 24th, 1995
Jan Eric Larsson

About the Author

I was born in Sweden in 1959, and I'm currently working as a Postdoctoral Fellow, (i.e., a researcher), in Artificial Intelligence at Stanford University in California. During my student and Ph. D. years in Lund, Sweden, I played Bridge in local clubs. For a while, I belonged to the junior elite of southern Sweden, and later I played on an average club level.

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1 Tangerine Opening Bids

The Tangerine Club is a Bridge bidding system based on a weak/strong 1♣ opening, followed by simple but efficient asking bids, light opening bids of one of a suit showing 10–14 points and at least 4 cards in the suit, a 1N opening of 12–14 hcp and a balanced hand without five card majors, a natural 2♣ opening showing 10–14 points and at least 5 clubs, and weak two openings of 5–9 points and at least 5 cards in the suit. Tangerine is based on the following principles:

- It is a tactical advantage to open as often as possible. In Tangerine, the one-level opening bids, (except 1♣), show 10–14 points and a 4+ card suit. The 10 points limit for opening comes from the fact that at 10 points, you have a hand of at least average strength. In addition, the weak two openings are very aggressive. All these "light" opening bids gives a tactical advantage on almost every board played. Few systems in the world are as aggressive as Tangerine.
- Tangerine uses hcp *and* distributional points. Of course, you may your own favorite point count method to evaluate your hands.
- The use of a strong 1♣ opening combines two advantages. It enables the rest of the opening bids to contain a narrower point-range, making most auctions easy to control, and it allows for "Italian-style" asking bids, which are easy to use but quite efficient in finding, (and avoiding!), slams.
- A strong 1♣ opening may be a tactical weakness, at least when it is only moderately strong, as in Tangerine. Opponents are often eager to use "psychics," which tend to make the bidding more random than usual. In order to avoid this, Tangerine has an ambiguous 1♣ opening, showing either 8–9 points and a balanced or semi-balanced hand, or 15+ with any shape. If the opponents try any psychics, they risk fooling themselves.
- Tangerine adheres to standard, natural bidding principles as often as possible. Thus, you can play most of Tangerine using your knowledge and experience from other systems. The bidding after 1♢, 1♡, 1♠, and 1N may follow most standard methods.
- Tangerine never acknowledges the 4441 distribution. Instead, such a hand is treated either as a 4432 or 5440, (usually with the "5" card suit in a minor).

The Tangerine opening bids are:

Tangerine Opening Bids		
1♣	8–9	balanced
	15+	any shape
1♢	10–14	4+ diamonds
	10–11	exactly 3334 distribution
1♡	10–14	4+ hearts
1♠	10–14	4+ spades
1N	12–14	balanced, no 5 card major
2♣	10–14	5+ clubs
2♢	5–9	5+ diamonds
2♡	5–9	5+ hearts
2♠	5–9	5+ spades
2N	0–9	7+ card suit
3x		preemptive
3N		solid 7+ card minor
4x		preemptive
4N		preemptive with both minors

In third seat, the opening bid range is 8–14, in fourth seat it is 11–14, and the 1♣ opening is unambiguously strong, (15+). Since a hand that has passed does not have strength enough to try for a game against an 8–14 opening bid, the third seat openings may be psychic, and if the local Bridge laws allow it, this is part of the Tangerine system.

2 The Opening 1♣

The responses to 1♣ are either negative, semi-positive, or positive. A positive response is game-forcing against a strong opener, and the response 2N is forcing against the weak variant.

Responses to 1♣		
1♢	0–9	any shape
1♡	10–16	5+ hearts
1♠	10–16	5+ spades
1N	10–16	balanced
2♣	10–16	5+ clubs
2♢	10–16	5+ diamonds
2♡	6–9	exactly 6 hearts
2♠	6–9	exactly 6 spades
2NT	17+	any shape

2.1 1♣ and Negative Response

After 1♣–1♢, the bidding is natural, but the opener's jump in a suit is a *support asking bid.* Note that the bids 1♡ and 1♠ do not clearify whether opener is weak or strong. They can be made with both variants.

Bidding after 1♣–1♢		
1N	15–17	balanced
2N	20–21	balanced
1♡/♠	8–9	natural, non-forcing
	15–19	natural, non-forcing
2♣/♢	15–19	natural, non-forcing
2♡/♠	20+	5+ cards, support asking bid
3♣/♢	20+	5+ cards, support asking bid

After a sequence like 1♣–1♢; 1♠, the bidding is similar to that which follows the openings 1♢/♡/♠, but with different point limits. Responder's weak limit and 1N shows 5–7, 1-over-1 shows 5–9, and strong limit and 2-over-1 shows 8–9.

2.2 1♣ and Positive Responses

After 1♣ and a positive response, the opener shows the strong hand with the relay bid, (the closest bid in suit or notrump), which is also a *top control asking bid,* (asks for aces and kings). He may also jump in a suit, showing an independent suit, (which does not need any support), and asking for top controls. Other bids show the weak hand, with natural continuations.

Bidding after 1♣ and a Positive Response		
relay	15+	top control asking bid
notrump		8–9, 15–17, 20–21, etc.
raises	8–9	natural
suit	8–9	natural
suit jump	15+	top control asking bid independent suit

The relay is a *top control asking bid.* Responder answers by showing the number of top controls, (ace 2, king 1), by bidding a certain number of steps, (the first step shows 0–2 top controls, the second 3, etc.). After this answer, a bid in a new suit is a *support asking bid* with a five card suit, a jump in a new suit is a *support asking bid* with a six card suit, and a bid in responder's suit a *trump asking bid.* After a negative response to a *support asking bid,* a new suit is a *support asking bid* with a four card suit. After a positive response to a *support asking bid* or a *trump asking bid,* a new suit is a *control asking bid.*

Here are a couple of examples of Tangerine slam bidding after a 1♣ opening. The following hands have only 26 points between them, but with asking bids it is easy to find the small slam:

North	South
♠ Axx	♠ Kxx
♡ Axxxx	♡ Kxx
♢ KQxxx	♢ Axxx
♣ –	♣ xxx

In Tangerine, the bidding might go as follows:

North	South
1♣	1N
2♣	2♠
3♡	4♣
4♢	4N
5♣	5♢
6♡	pass

South's 1N shows 10–16 and a balanced hand. North's 2♣ asks for top controls, and 2♠, (3 steps), shows 4. North sees that the partnership holds 9 of 12 top controls, which may be enough for a small slam. His 3♡ asks for heart support and 4♣, (3 steps), shows Txx+ in hearts, (see Section 15.6). North's 4♢ asks for diamond control and South's 4N shows a first control, (see Section 15.7). North's 5♣ asks for club control, and when South shows none with 5♢, North knows that South has the ace in diamonds and kings in the majors, and bids 6♡.

The next example shows a grand slam on 34 points:

North	South
♠ KQxx	♠ Axxxx
♡ Kxx	♡ Ax
♢ AKQ	♢ xxxx
♣ AKx	♣ xx

Here, the bidding might go:

North	South
1♣	1♠
1N	2♡
2♠	3♣
3♡	4♣
4♡	4N
5♣	5♢
6♣	6♡
7♠	pass

South's 1♠ shows 10–16 and 5+ spades, and North's 1N is the relay, after which South's 2♡ shows 4 top controls. Thus, North can see that the partnership holds all 12 top controls. His 2♠ is a trump asking bid, and South's 3♣, (2 steps), shows Txxxx. North can now see 12 tricks, and a queen in either clubs or hearts or doubletons in both would give a 13th. North first asks for heart control with 3♡, well aware that South will show his ace with 4♣. North's 4♡ is a repeated control asking bid, and South shows a third control with 4N. North now asks for club control with 5♣, and South denies a first or second control. After the repeated asking bid 6♣, South shows a third control, and North can bid the grand slam. Also note that North can keep asking for controls on a very high level. Only bids in spades and notrump would be final contracts.

2.3 1♣ and Semi-Positive Responses

After 1♣ and the responses 2♡ and 2♠, the bidding proceeds as after a weak two opening.

Bidding after Weak 2♡ and 2♠	
raises	final contract
suit	5+ cards, forcing
jump in suit	6+ cards, invitation
2N	trump support, forcing

After 1♣–2♡/♠; 2N, responder bids three of his major with minimum, and anything else with maximum. He may show *features,* i.e., three card suits with a couple of high cards, or bid 3N with an almost solid 6+ card suit. After this, opener's bid in a new suit is a *control asking bid.*

2.4 1♣–2N Forcing to Game or Slam

When responder is very strong, he responds to 1♣ with 2N, which is forcing to game against the weak hand, and (almost) forcing to slam against the strong hand.

Bidding after 1♣–2N		
3♣	8–9	followed by natural bidding
3♢	15+	no strong suit
3♡/♠	15+	5+ cards, support asking bid
3N	8–9	completely balanced
4♣/♢	15+	5+ cards, support asking bid

After 1♣–2N; 3♢, responder's suit is a *support asking bid* with a five card suit. The sequence 1♣–2N; 3N shows a completely balanced hand, i.e., a hand with no five card suits and no four card majors. After this, 4♣ is a *distribution asking bid.*

2.5 1♣ and Preemptive Responses

With preemptive hands, responder bids according to the opening bids after 1♣. After this, a new suit from opener is a *control asking bid,* assuming slam interest with responder's long suit as trump.

2.6 Interference over 1♣

The ambiguous 1♣ opening usually means that the opponents have sound hands and suits when they interfere. However, it is possible that an opponent will try a psychic overcall. For this reason, Tangerine always allows a partner to show the suit bid by an opponent, in order to "reveal psychics." The general rule is that a double is a negative double, while a double followed by a cuebid reveal psychics. The system does *not* demand the partners to know whether the interference was natural or psychic.

After interfering bids up to and including 1N, both partners simply "ignore" the bid. A double means that responder would have made the opponent's bid, while lower suits are shown a level higher.

Responder's Bid after Interference up to 1N		
pass	0–9	any shape
X	10–16	should have bid opponent's bid
suit	10–16	5+ card suit
1N	10–16	balanced
2N	17–19	completely balanced
cuebid	17+	any shape

For example, after 1♣ (1♠), the bidding goes as follows:

Bidding after 1♣ (1♠)		
pass	0–9	
X	10–16	5+ spades
1N	10–16	balanced
2♣/♢/♡	10–16	5+ card suit
2♠	17+	any shape
2N	17–19	completely balanced

Thus, after interference up to 1N, the two level is used for showing 10–16 and 5+ card suits.

If the intervening bid is higher than 1N, the difference is that the double shows interest for unbid suits or a balanced hand without a stopper. The lower of 2N and cuebid shows 17+, and the other 17–19 completely balanced.

Responder's Bid after Interference 2♣–2♠		
pass	0–9	any shape
	10–16	with opponent's suit
X	10–16	interest for unbid suits
X + cuebid	10–16	"revealing psychics"
suit	10–16	5+ card suit
cuebid	17–19	completely balanced
2N	17+	any shape

After an overcall of 2N or higher, the responses are:

Responder's Bid after Interference over 2♠		
pass	0–9	any shape
	10–16	with opponent's suit
X	10–16	interest for unbid suits
X + cuebid	10–16	"revealing psychics"
suit	10–16	5+ card suit
cuebid	17+	any shape

Opener uses doubles and cuebids in the following way:

Opener's Rebid after Interference		
pass, XX	8–9	any shape
X	15–19	interest for unbid suits
X + cuebid	15–19	"revealing psychics"
suit	15–19	support asking bid
	20+	if responder passed
cuebid	15+	top control asking bid

In all forcing situations, opener's relay shows 8–9, the next bid 15+ and no good suit, and lowest notrump, (if not one of the previous bids), 8–9 completely balanced. Other suit bids are *support asking bids* with a 5+ card suit.

2.7 1♣ in Third and Fourth Seat

The 1♣ opening is unambiguously strong in third and fourth seat, which makes the auction more sensitive to psychics, and responder has passed, which limits him to 0–7 points.

Responses to 1♣ in 3rd and 4th Seat		
1♢	0–4	any shape
1♡	5–7	5+ hearts
1♠	5–7	5+ spades
1N	5–7	balanced
2♣	5–7	5+ clubs
2♢	5–7	5+ diamonds
2♡	2–4	exactly 6 hearts
2♠	2–4	exactly 6 spades

After these responses, opener's suit is natural and nonforcing, a jump in suit is a *support asking bid* with a five card suit, a raise is invitational, and a double raise is a *trump asking bid.*

3 A Relay Slam System

Tangerine's asking bids are good enough to find most slams, but some type of hands can cause troubles. Here is an example:

North	South
♠ AQxxx	♠ Kxx
♡ KQxx	♡ Axxx
♢ x	♢ Axx
♣ AJx	♣ xxx

With asking bids, the bidding might go:

North	South
1♣	1N
2♣	2N
3♠	4♢
4♡	5♣
5♢	5N
6♠	pass

South has shown 10–16, balanced, with 5 top controls, and a Txx+ support, (which obviously must be Kxx+), for North's spades. After control asking bids in hearts and diamonds, the bidding ends in a doubtful 6♠, which may go down one, while 7♡ is fine with normal breaks. In cases like this, it is often better to play with the more evenly distributed suit as trump, and use the other suit for discarding loosers. However, with asking bids, there is no way of finding out about the heart suit above. In order to solve this kind of problem, Tangerine provides a relay system that you may want to use after 1♣.

3.1 Relays after 1♣

After the opening 1♣, a positive response, relay, and top control step response, a new relay asks responder to show his exact distribution, using the following relay principles:

- Show 4+ card suits and extra lengths in ascending bid order.
- Show 3 card fragments in descending bid order.
- The *shape relays* end when responder's shape is known, and above 4♣.
- Opener's next relay sets responder's longest suit as trump, (the higher of equal length suits), while the bid above the relay sets the next longest suit, etc. These bids also ask for *control relays.*
- Responder denies control of a suit by bidding it, while passing a suit shows control in it, so called *denial cuebids.*
- Responder's notrump always replaces the highest suit bid, both during shape and control relays.

The use of this relay system is best explained by an example. Here are the previous trouble hands again:

North	South
♠ AQxxx	♠ Kxx
♡ KQxx	♡ Axxx
♢ x	♢ Axx
♣ AJx	♣ xxx

With the relay system, the bidding might go:

North	South
1♣	1N
2♣	2N
3♣	3♡
3♠	4♢
4♡	5♣
7♡	pass

The first four bids are the same as before. North's 3♣ is the first shape relay, and South's 3♡ shows a 4+ card suit, and denies 4 diamonds, (since South passed 3♢). Thus, North now knows that South's distribution is [4–4 3– 4–], (1N showed a balanced or 4441 hand). The 3♠ bid is a second shape relay, and South's 4♢ must be a 3 card fragment, (South denied 4 spades by passing 3N, and 4 clubs by passing 4♣, and has already denied 4 diamonds). Thus, South's distribution must be exactly 3433, and the shape relays have ended. North's 4♡, (the lowest bid after 4♢), sets South longest suit, (hearts), as trump and asks for denial cuebids, (4♠ would have set spades as trump). South bids 5♣ to show spade and heart control, but no club controls, (the controls concerned are the same aces and kings as where shown in the top control step response). North now knows South's exact hand and can bid the 7♡ grand slam.

A couple of extra points about relays:

- A relay auction may not stop below the 5 level. Thus, when there is a possible ambiguity, 4♡/♠ is a relay and not a final contract, (unless the major is already set as trump, of course).
- If the relayer breaks out early, i.e., does not bid the relay bid, this other bid is either a final contract, (if game), or a control asking bid. Thus, as soon as the relayer knows enough about responder's distribution, he may end the relay sequence and use control asking bids instead.
- When using relays, the first shape relay will often replace a trump or support asking bid in the relay suit. The lowest notrump bid should be used as an asking bid in the relay suit.
- The relay system will improve over asking bids only seldom, will sometimes fail where asking bids work, and is more complicated and difficult to use. Thus, it may be skipped in favor of the simpler asking bids system.

4 The Strong 1♣

It is possible to skip the weak variant of the 1♣ opening. The reason may be that the ambiguous version is

not allowed where you play, that the opponents seldom interfere destructively, or that you just don't like the ambiguous version. When 1♣ is unambiguously strong, the system is called the *Cranberry Club.*

4.1 Responses to Strong 1♣

The changes needed to use a strong 1♣ are few and simple. Experience has shown that it is probably best to let the positive responses be unlimited, rather than trying to use higher bids to limit responder. The asking bids will usually discover responder's extra strength anyway. Thus, the 17+ variants are omitted. Of course, if opener makes a few asking bids and then settles in game, while responder holds 17+ points, he should continue the bidding and show the extra values.

Responses to Strong 1♣		
1♢	0–9	any shape
1♡	10+	5+ hearts
1♠	10+	5+ spades
1N	10+	balanced
2♣	10+	5+ clubs
2♢	10+	5+ diamonds
2♡	6–9	exactly 6 hearts
2♠	6–9	exactly 6 spades

The bidding after a positive response changes very little with the strong 1♣. The main difference is that opener's suit on lowest level, (except for the relay bid), now is a *support asking bid* instead of the weak hand. However, it is often better to start the slam investigations with the relay bid anyway.

Bidding after Strong 1♣ and a Positive Response	
relay	top control asking bid
notrump	15–17, 20–21, 22–23
suit	support asking bid with 5 card suit
raise	trump asking bid
suit jump	top control asking bid
	independent suit

When using the unambiguously strong 1♣, a passed hand may contain up to 9 points, and the responses to a 1♣ opening in third or fourth seat uses the limits 0–6 for 1♢ and 7–9 for the positive responses.

4.2 Interference over a Strong 1♣

After the unambiguously strong 1♣, opponents may use psychic overcalls, but Tangerine's system of responses are designed to handle this. The direct cuebid is the only bid that has a different meaning:

Responder's Bid after Interference up to 1N		
pass	0–9	any shape
X	10+	should have bid opponent's bid
suit	10+	5+ card suit
1N	10+	balanced, stopper
cuebid	10+	balanced, no stopper

After overcalls higher than 1N, X shows interest for unbid suits. Opener's rebids are almost unchanged, except that a pass shows a 15–17 balanced hand instead of the 8–9 variant:

Opener's Rebid after Interference		
pass	15–17	balanced
X	15–19	interest for unbid suits
X + cuebid	15–19	"revealing psychics"
suit	15–19	support asking bid
	20+	if responder passed
cuebid	15+	top control asking bid

5 The Openings 1♢/♡/♠

The bidding after the opening of one of a suit follows natural principles, based mainly on the style of the Swedish Modern Standard system. Since the opening bids are limited to a smaller range, a Tangerine auction is often easier to control. With a strong hand, responder may use asking bids. With 55, opener bids the higher suit, with 44 the order of preference is ♡, ♠, ♢. These "light" opening bids is the most important tactical weapon of Tangerine, and you should always open on 10 points. For example,

♠ Kxxx
♡ Qxx
♢ Axxx
♣ xx

is an ideal hand for opening 1♠. The bid is both constructive and preemptive.

Responses to 1♢, 1♡, and 1♠		
single raise	9–12	trump support
double raise	13–14	trump support
1-over-1	9–14	4+ cards, forcing
2-over-1	13–14	4+ cards, forcing
1N	9–12	balanced or lower suit
2N	15+	trump asking bid
3N	15–17	balanced, 3 card support
jump shift	15+	support asking bid

Higher responses are final contracts. The diamond limit raises are reversed in all auctions, which means that 2♢ shows 13–14 while 3♢ shows 9–12. A third seat opening may be psychic. In this case, responder shows good trump support with 1N.

Single raises of majors can and should be made with 9–12 points and Jxx or better in trump. In this way, Tangerine will have almost the same constructive advantage as a system using 5+ card major openings, while being more aggressive. The probabilities are for that opener has a 5+ card suit:

Suit Length Probabilities			
	3	4	5+
1♢	6%	18%	76%
1♡	–	37%	63%
1♠	–	28%	72%

As can be seen, 1♢ and 1♠ shows a 5+ card suit almost three out of four times, while 1♡ shows 5+ cards two times out of three. Thus, it makes sense to raise with Jxx or better, unless there is another good, descriptive bid for responder's hand.

5.1 Opener's Second Bid

When opener rebids, he shows minimum, (10–11), with bids on the lowest level, and maximum, (12–14), with jumping bids or reverse. Repeating a suit shows 6+ cards, while bidding a new suit shows 54+. After 1♡ and 1♠, a jump in notrump shows 12–14, balanced with a 5 card major, while after 1♢ it shows 12–14 and 55+ in the minors.

The subsequent auction is natural, with responder's fourth suit as a conventional forcing bid. It asks for additional values, additional length, or a stopper in the fourth suit. A jump in the fourth suit shows a twosuiter, 55+, in the bid suits.

5.2 2N Trump Asking Bid

After the opening bids of one of a suit, 2N shows trump support and forces to game. It is also a *trump asking bid.* After opener's response, 3N is a final contract, the relay bid is a *top control asking bid,* and new suits are *control asking bids.* Here is an example:

North	South
♠ Axx	♠ x
♡ AKxx	♡ QJxx
♢ xxxxx	♢ AKJxx
♣ x	♣ Axx

In Tangerine, the bidding might go as follows:

North	South
1♢	2N
3♣	3♢
4♣	4♡
5♢	6♣
6♡	7♢
pass	

South shows trump support with 2N, and North shows xxxx+ in the trump suit with 3♣. The 3♢ bid asks for top controls, and North's 4♣, (4 steps), show 5. South's 4♡ asks for heart controls and 5♢ shows AK or AQ, (South knows that it must be AK). Since North has five controls and AK in hearts, South can deduce that he also holds the ace of spades. His 6♣ asks for a club control, and 6♡ shows a second control, (which must be a singleton). South can now bid the grand slam.

5.3 Jump Shift Support Asking Bid

After the opening bids of one of a suit, a jump in a new suit forces to game and is a *support asking bid* with a five card suit. After opener's negative response, a new suit is a *support asking bid* with a four card suit, and a delayed raise of diamonds a *trump asking bid.* After a positive response, 3N is a final contract, the relay is a *top control asking bid,* and a new suit a *control asking bid.*

North	South
♠ Kxx	♠ Axx
♡ Kxx	♡ Axxxx
♢ Axxx	♢ KQxxx
♣ xxx	♣ –

The bidding might go as follows:

North	South
1♢	2♡
3♣	3♢
3N	4♣
4♢	6♡
pass	

South asks for support with 2♡ and North shows Txx+ with 3♣, (3 steps). From now on, hearts is the agreed trump suit. The relay 3♢ asks for top controls, and 3N shows 4. South now checks the clubs suit with 4♣, and Norths denies first and second control with 4♢. South now knows that North has the ace of diamonds and kings in the majors and bid 6♡.

5.4 Interference over 1♢, 1♡, and 1♠

Tangerine uses negative doubles after interference, if the overcall is a natural suit bid up to 4♢.

After Opponent's Interference	
X	interest for unbid suits
X + cuebid	natural, "reveals psychics"
X + suit	natural and forcing
suit	natural and non-forcing
suit jump	preemptive
2N	balanced invitation with stopper
cuebid	trump support or asks for stopper

Thus, a double plus suit is stronger than a direct bid in the suit. After a takeout double, Tangerine tries to act as preemptively as possible:

After One of a Suit and a Takeout Double	
pass	weak, (or strong balanced)
XX	15+
2N	trump support, invitational
suit	invitational
suit jump	final contract
raises	final contract

After an overcall showing a twosuiter, (unusual 2N, colorful cuebid, etc.), Tangerine uses the lowest cuebid to show trump support and invitational strength, the next lowest to show support and game-forcing strength, and jumping cuebids to show support, slam interest and a singleton. For example, after 1♠ (2N), (where 2N shows 55+ in the minors), responder bids:

After 1♠ (2N)	
X	interest for unbid suits
3♣	invitation with spade support
3♢	game-forcing with spade support
4♣/♢	slam interest with singleton
other	natural

6 The Opening 1N

The 1N opening bid shows 12–14 hcp and a balanced hand without a 5 card major. Tangerine's system is based on double Stayman, which matches well with a weak notrump.

Responses to the Opening 1N	
2♣	non-forcing Stayman
2♢	game-forcing Stayman
2N	invitational
2♡/♠	final contract
3x	final contract
4♣/♢	transfer to ♡/♠
4♡/♠	final contract

The response 2N is used as an invitation when responder has no interest in majors. The bids 4♣/♢ are used to transfer the contract to the balanced hand. If opener has a very good fit, he bids 4♢/♡. The transfers may be used to start slam investigations; for example, 1N–4♣; 4♡–4N is Blackwood.

Responses to 1N–2♣	
2♢	no 4 card major
2♡	4 hearts
2♠	4 spades, but not 4 hearts

Responder uses the non-forcing Stayman with either a weak hand, when he knows that opener's rebid will be a better contract than 1N, or when he wants to make invitations to game. He may or may not have an actual interest in opener's major holdings.

Responder's Bidding after 1N–2♣	
2♡/♠	5 card suit, invitational
2N	4 cards in the other major, invitational
3♣/♢	5+ card suit, invitational
3♡/♠	6+ card suit, invitational

The sequence 1N–2♢ is game-forcing Stayman. Here responder is in command, and the bidding may not stop below game.

Responses to 1N–2♢	
2♡	4 hearts
2♠	4 spades, but not 4 hearts
2N	completely balanced
3♣/♢	5 card suit

After 2♡ and 2♠, responder's 2N asks for 4 card minors, and after 2N, 3♣ is a *distribution asking bid.* Opener does not have any 4 card major or 5 card minor, so he can describe his exact distribution.

Distribution Responses	
3♢	3343 distribution
3♡	2344 distribution
3♠	3244 distribution
3N	3334 distribution

6.1 Interference over 1N

Since the Tangerine 1N is weak, good opponent's will often interfere. If so, the following methods are used:

Bidding after Interference over 1N	
cuebid	asks for 3+ card major
2N	13+, asks for 4 card suits and stoppers
suit	final contract
suit jump	invitational

6.2 When the Opponents Double 1N

Tangerine's 1N opening is weak, and sometimes the opponent's will double for penalties. In these cases, Tangerine uses a system based on SOS redoubles to find a 7+ card trump.

Bidding after the Opponent's Double 1N	
suit	final contract
2N	strong unbalanced hand
XX	2 spades
pass	transfers to XX

After the transfer to XX, responder can pass on a strong hand. Otherwise, both partners pass on 4 card suits, bid 3 card suits, and use XX to force partner to continue. If the opponent's fail to double, both partners will pass.

North	East	South	West
(3442)		(4423)	
1N	X	pass	pass
XX	pass	2♣	X
XX	pass	2♢	X
pass	pass	XX	pass
2♡	X	pass	pass
pass			

Here, responder passes and opener must bid XX. When opener redoubles 2♣, responder knows that he should play in opener's best major. Thus, he bids 2♢ and then redoubles, forcing opener to escape to his best major.

6.3 Bidding after 2N

The sequence 1♣–1♢; 2N shows a balanced hand, which may contain a 5 card major. Here, the following responses are used:

Bidding after 2N	
3♣	asks for majors
3♢	transfer to hearts
3♡	transfer to spades
3♠	transfer to minors

After the transfer bids, responder can either bid game, (final contract), or continue towards a slam with Blackwood and cuebids. After 2N–3♠, opener bids 4♣ and responder may correct to 4♢. These sequences are weak. With slam interest and *both* minors, responder uses 3♠ to transfer to 4♣ and then cuebids a major. With a single minor, he begins with 3♣ and then bids his suit on the 4 level.

Responses after 2N–3♣	
3♢	5 card major
3♡	4 hearts
3♠	4 spades, not 4 hearts
3N	no 4 card major

After these responses, all bids from responder are natural and invites to slam.

7 The Opening 2♣

The opening bid 2♣ shows 10–14 points and 5+ clubs. Responder may use the relay bid 2♢ when he has at least invitational strength.

Bidding after 2♣	
2♢	relay
2♡/♠	5+ card suit, weak invitation
2N	weak invitation
3x	5+ card suit, strong invitation
Raises	final contract

When responder is strong or needs to know more about opener's hand, he uses the 2♢ relay.

Responses after 2♣–2♢	
2♡/♠	4 card suit, minimum
2N	balanced, minimum
3♣	unbalanced, minimum
3x	4 card suit, maximum
3N	unbalanced, clubs, maximum

The maximum responses are forcing to game, while after the minimum responses, opener may pass on responder's bid. The subsequent bidding is natural.

8 The Openings 2♢/♡/♠

The bidding after the weak two openings proceeds as after the semi-positive responses to 1♣.

Bidding after a Weak Two Opening	
raises	final contract
suit	5+ cards, forcing
jump in suit	6+ cards, invitation
2N	trump support, forcing

After 2♡/♠–2N, opener bids three of his major with minimum, and anything else with maximum. He may show *features,* i.e., three card suits with a couple of high cards, or bid 3N with an almost solid 6+ card suit. After this, responder's bid in a new suit is a *control asking bid.*

9 The Opening 2N

The 2N opening shows a long suit not good enough for a preemptive bid on a higher level. The following responses are used:

Bidding after 2N	
3♣	signoff
3♢	55+ in ♡+♠
3♡/♠	6+ suit, invitational
3N	natural signoff
4♣	preemptive
4♢	game forcing

10 An Alternative 2N

If the destructive 2N opening above is not allowed where you play, or if you simply don't like it, you can use the following variant instead, where the opening shows 5–9 and 55+ in the minors.

Bidding after 2N Minors	
3♣/♢	signoff
3♡/♠	6+ suit, invitational
3N	natural signoff
5♡	asks for void
5♠	asks for TT in trump
others	final contract

For responses to 5♡/♠, see Section 13, bidding after the opening 4N.

11 Preemptive Openings

Tangerine's preemptive opening bids are sound, calculated after the number of tricks a hand will probably make, plus 1, 2, or 3 tricks depending on vulnerability. The bidding after preempts is natural. Raises and games are final contracts, a new suit is natural and forcing on the three level, and a cuebid if higher.

12 The Opening 3N

The 3N opening bid shows a solid 7+ card minor with no or few values outside the suit. If responder has some values, he may pass and hope that opener will make 3N. If he is strong, he has some asking bids at his disposal.

Bidding after 3N	
4♣	weak, opener passes or bids 4♢
4♢	asks for singleton
4N	asks for length

After 3N–4♢, opener bids a singleton suit, or 4♡ with a void, after which 4♠ from responder asks for the void suit. After 3N–4N, 5♣ shows a 7 card suit, 5♢ 8 cards, etc.

13 The Opening 4N

The opening bid 4N shows a preemptive hand with both minors.

Bidding after 4N	
5♡	asks for void
5♠	asks for TT in trump, invites to grand slam

After 4N–5♠, opener bids 5N and responder shows the intended trump suit by 6♣ or 6♢. If opener holds two of AKQ in trump, he bids grand slam. After 4N–5♡, opener shows voids.

Responses to 4N–5♡	
5♠	void in ♡
5N	void in ♠
6♣	no void

14 Romex Invitations

After the sequences 1♡–2♡ and 1♠–2♠, Tangerine uses a simple version of the Romex system's invitation bids.

Romex Invitations			
relay	relay	suit	negative invitation
		trump	negative in passed suit
suit			positive invitation
raise			final contract

After 1♡–2♡, 2N is a positive invitation in spades. A positive invitation is ideally made with a 4+ card suit and split honors such as KJxx, and the best fit is a similar suit. A negative invitation should be made with x, –, or xx, and the best "fit" is something like xxx, Axx, xxxx, or Axxx.

15 Slam Conventions

Tangerine has a number of slam bidding tools, both "classical" ones that are used in the natural bidding after the limited opening bids, and special asking bids, mostly occurring after 1♣.

The basic assumption is that asking bids are easy to use and efficient, often better than classical methods like Blackwood and cuebids. In some systems most of the forcing bidding is natural, and specific asking bids are deferred until the last moment. This is not the case in Tangerine. As soon as there is enough points for game, a slam investigation can be started using the asking bid machinery. This may seem simple-minded, but experience has shown that it works very well. Playing Tangerine will give you an advantage on most slam boards.

If you want, you may also add the relay system described in Section 3 to the slam convention arsenal.

15.1 Blackwood

In a natural auction, 4N is used as Blackwood and asks for 5 aces, including the trump king.

Blackwood 5 Aces	
5♣	0 or 4 aces
5♢	1 or 5 aces
5♡	2 aces
5♠	3 aces

After the responses, a relay in a non-trump suit means that the asking partner wants to play 6N.

15.2 Cuebids

Tangerine uses Italian cuebids, i.e., second controls may be shown before first controls. A new suit is natural on the 3 level and a cuebid if higher. Direct jumps after opening bids are preemptive, however.

15.3 Free 5 of a Major

In a natural auction, a raise to 5 of a major trump suit invites to small slam and asks for either control of the suit bid by the opponents, control in the only remaining unchecked suit, or the quality of the trump suit, whichever is possible.

When a suit has been bid by the opponents, or exactly one suit remains unchecked, partner should bid small slam if he has second round control of the suit in question, 5N is he has a guarded king, and a cuebid to show a first round control.

If no or several suits remain unchecked, the free five bid asks for trump quality. Partner should bid small slam if he holds two of AKQ. If holding AKxxx+, he bids 5N. With a solid trump suit, he should consider a grand slam.

15.4 Free 5N

In a natural auction, a bid of 5N invites to a grand slam and asks for the quality of the trump suit. Partner should bid the grand slam if he holds two of AKQ. If he has all true controls, (aces and kings, as opposed to voids and singletons), he bids 6N.

15.5 Trump Asking Bids

The *trump support asking bid* occurs after the opening 1♣ and a positive response showing a 5+ card suit. After a relay, opener makes the trump asking bid by bidding responder's suit. For example, 1♣–1♡; 1♠–2♢; 2♡ is a trump asking bid. Also, 1♢/♡/♠–2N is a trump asking bid. Partner now describes his trump suit by step responses, (where T means A, K, or Q). Pass and X/XX are used in the step scale if the opponent's interfere.

Responses to a Trump Asking Bid	
1st step	–
2nd step	T
3th step	TT
4th step	TTT

After this, a new suit is a *control asking bid,* while a rebid below game is a *repeated trump asking bid.*

Responses to a Repeated Trump Asking Bid			
	after –/TTT	after T	after TT
1st step	–	Q	KQ
2nd step	1 extra card	K	AQ
3rd step	2 extra cards	A	AK

15.6 Support Asking Bids

Support asking bids occur after the 1♣ opening, when opener bids new suits before a trump suit has been found, and as jumps in a suit after the openings 1♢, 1♡, and 1♠.

Responses to a Support Asking Bid	
1st step	–
2nd step	support
3rd step	support, T
4th step	support, TT
5th step	support, TTT

In most cases, the first *support asking bid* is made with a 5+ card suit, and xxx+ is a valid support. If the first asking bid is answered negatively, (1 step), a new suit is a *support asking bid* in that suit, now assuming a 4+ card suit. If the response is positive, a new suit is a *control asking bid* and a rebid below game is a *repeated support asking bid,* answered according to the same principles as the *repeated trump asking bid.*

15.7 Control Asking Bids

New suits after a positive response to a trump or support asking bid are *control asking bids.*

Responses to a Control asking Bid	
1st step	–
2nd step	second control, (king or singleton)
3rd step	first control, (ace or void)
4th step	AK or AQ

After a *control asking bid,* a new suit is a *control asking bid* in that suit, while a rebid, (immediate or later), is a *repeated control asking bid.*

Responses to a Repeated Control Asking Bid	
1st step	–
2nd step	third control
3rd step	also a second control
4th step	single ace

15.8 Top Control Asking Bids

After the opening 1♣ and a positive response, the relay shows the strong hand and asks for the number of top controls, (ace 2, king 1). Also, after opening one of a suit and either a *trump asking bid* or a positively answered *support asking bid,* the relay is a *top control asking bid.*

Responses to a Top Control asking Bid	
1st step	0–2 top controls
2nd step	3 top controls
3rd step	4 top controls, etc.

15.9 Distribution Asking Bids

After some bidding sequences it is known that one hand is completely balanced, i.e., it has no 4 card major nor 5 card minor. In this case the next bid, (the closest ♣ bid), is a *distribution asking bid.* For example, after 1N–2♢; 2N–3♣ asks for the exact distribution of the balanced hand; the other case is 1♣–2N; 3N–4♣.

Distribution Responses	
3♢	3343 distribution
3♡	2344 distribution
3♠	3244 distribution
3N	3334 distribution

16 Defensive Bidding

Bridge systems devote much effort to undisturbed bidding, while in practical play, more often than not, both sides compete for the final contract. Several conventions go out the window as soon as the opponent's enter the auction, and should they use anything but natural methods, most systems offer no help. As a remedy, Tangerine contains a well-specified defensive bidding system, as well as special defenses against most kinds of artificial bids.

16.1 General Defense Principles

In Tangerine a double is for penalty in the following cases:

- If higher than 4♢
- Under game force, (pass is forcing)
- After two takeout doubles
- When three suits have been shown
- If our side has made a notrump bid showing a balanced hand
- When we have doubled a natural notrump bid

In all other cases, a double is for takeout, and shows interest for unbid suits.

If a suit shown by the opponents may commonly be shorter than 4 cards, X plus cuebid shows a natural suit, while X plus a jumping cuebid shows a strong hand.

This defense is used against possibly short openings, for example, Precision's 1♢.

Only bid defensively if you have real hopes of competing for a contract or cause serious trouble by preempting. Weak overcalls often serve no purpose but will tell the opponents about the distribution.

16.2 Defense against One of a Suit

Here a general rule is that is is important to be as aggressive as possible. If you have a weak hand, don't bid just because you can. You will only help the declarer opponent. On the other hand, if you have 10+ points or a good distribution, to what you can to compete or preempt.

Defensive Bids after One of a Suit		
1N	15–17	balanced with stopper
	5–9	6+ card suit
suit	10–14	5+ card suit
suit jump		based on trick count
2N	10+	55+ in two lowest unbid
cuebid	10+	55+ in highest + another
jump cuebid	17+	one- or threesuiter
X	10–14	443+ in unbid suits
	15+	any shape

After a suit overcall, a cuebid from responder shows trump support or asks for a stopper, while other bids are natural and non-forcing. After the 2N overcall, a cuebid from responder is forcing, and after a cuebid, 2N is forcing.

The Comic 1N shows either a 15–17 balanced hand or a long suit too weak for a normal or jumping overcall. Partner bids as follows:

Responses to Comic 1N	
XX	final contract against strong variant
2♣	invitation against strong variant
cuebid	forcing against weak variant

After 2♣, the 1N overcaller passes or corrects with the weak variant, and cuebids with the strong.

The jumping cuebid shows a strong one- or threesuiter with at least 8 playing tricks. Partner bids 3N with a stopper, lowest minor with minimum, the other minor with 3+ top controls, or a 6+ card major, (forcing to game).

16.3 The Takeout Double

Tangerine uses takeout doubles showing either 10–14 points and at least 443 in the unbid suits, or 15+ and any shape.

Bidding after (1x) X		
suit	0–7	natural
suit jump	8–12	natural
1N	8–12	balanced, stopper
2N	13–14	balanced, stopper
3N	15–16	balanced, stopper
cuebid	13+	forcing
jump cuebid	13+	4441

After a takeout double, partner bids his best suit on the lowest level with minimum. After this, the doubler bids as follows:

Bidding after (1x) X suit	
cuebid	natural, forcing
jump cuebid	top control asking bid
suit	15–19, invitational

On the *top control asking bid,* responder's first step shows 0 top controls, the second step 1 top control, etc. After a jumping cuebid answer, (showing 4441 with shortness in opponent's suit), a cuebid from the doubler asks for the densest suit, (most T's).

Doubler's suit is a sign-off after a notrump bid. A responsive double shows interest for unbid suits but denies 4+ card majors. After strong responses to a double, the doubler's cuebid is a *top control asking bid* and starts an artificial bidding sequence.

If an opening bid may commonly be made on a suit shorter than 4 cards, X plus cuebid shows a natural suit, while X plus a jumping cuebid is forcing. In order to pass for penalty on a takeout double, you need a 5+ card trump and 3+ tricks.

16.4 Delayed Takeout Doubles

In Tangerine, most doubles are negative, meaning that they show interest for unbid suits and asks partner to bid again. For example, here is a *delayed takeout double:*

North	East	South	West
1♡	pass	2♡	pass
pass	X		

The East was not strong enough to double at the first opportunity, but now it seems like the bidding is going to end. Therefore he uses a delayed takeout double.

The following is a *repeated takeout double:*

North	East	South	West
1♡	X	2♣	pass
3♣	X		

Here, East is strong and still interested in the unbid suits, so he repeats his takeout double.

The following is an example of a *takeout double after own suit:*

North	East	South	West
1♣	1♡	2♣	pass
pass	X		

Here, East has some interest for unbid suits, and thus makes a takeout double after his own overcall.

Here we see a *responsive double:*

North	East	South	West
1♡	X	2♡	X
3♣	X		

West has a positive and fairly balanced hand.

Finally, here is an example of a *competitive double:*

North	East	South	West
1♠	2♡	2♠	3♡
X			

Here, North's competitive double shows an invitation to 4♠, while 3♠ would be just for competition.

16.5 Defense against 1N

Tangerine's defensive methods after the opening 1N is borrowed from SMP, the Swedish system Super Mixed Precision. It allows you to show all one- and two-suiters.

Bidding after (1x) X	
X	♢ or ♣+♡
2♣	♡ or ♢+♡
2♢	♠ or ♡+♠
2♡	♣ or ♠+♣
2♠	♠+♢
2N	major + minor, game-forcing
3♣	♣+♢
3x	preemptive
3N	♡+♠, game-forcing

The response 2N is forcing. After a weak 1N, (max 13–15), X is for penalties, while 2♠ shows ♢ or ♠+♢, and 3♣ shows ♣+♡. To double a weak 1N, you need 12+ points and a good suit, or 15+ and mixed strength. Partner bids as follows:

Bidding after (1N) X (pass)	
pass	any balanced hand
2x	weak with 6+ suit
2N	invitation with twosuiter
3x	invitation with onesuiter

If partner doubles and you have a balanced hand, it is better to pass than to try and escape, no matter how weak your hand is.

16.6 Against Weak Two Openings

Weak two openings are among the most difficult and important bids to defend against. Tangerine uses reversed meanings of X and 2N against weak 2♡/♠, (but not against 2♣/♢, where X is a takeout double).

Defense against Weak 2♡/♠		
X	15–18	balanced
suit	11–16	5+ card suit
2N	11–16	takeout
	17+	any shape

16.7 Against Weak Two Transfers

These are weak two openings where opener bids a suit lower than the one he has based the preempt on, for example, 2♢ showing a weak hand with 6 hearts. This helps the defenders, since they can now use the cuebid, (a bid in the shown, not the bid suit), to show a twosuited hand, and they may wait one round and then double with interest for unbid suits.

Defense against Weak Two Transfers		
X	15–18	balanced
suit	11–16	5+ card suit
cuebid	11–16	any twosuiter
pass + X	11–16	takeout
2N	17+	any shape

16.8 Against Multi 2♢

This convention means that the opener has either a weak hand with hearts or spades, or some strong version, (20+ balanced, forcing hand with diamonds, etc.). The defense is similar to that against weak two transfers.

Defense against Multi 2♢		
X	15–18	balanced
suit	11–16	5+ card suit
pass + X	11–16	takeout
2N	17+	any shape

17 Against High Openings

Here are Tangerine's recommended defenses against different higher level opening bids.

17.1 Against Strong 2♣

After a strong 2♣ opening, it is highly unlikely that we can play any constructive contract. Thus, all bids aim at showing a lead or a sacrifice.

Defense against Strong 2♣	
X	clubs
suit	based on trick count
2N	55+ in minors

A similar defense can be used against other strong two openings, for example, Acol two openings. If the strong opening shows a natural suit, a double shows a "takeout" distribution. Against a strong 2N, use the 1N defense.

17.2 Against Threesuited Openings

Some systems use one or two opening bids to show threesuited hands, for example, the Roman 2♣, Roman 2♢, and Precision 2♢. The defense is similar to that against Multi 2♢.

Defense against Threesuiters		
X	15–18	balanced
suit	11–16	5+ card suit
pass + X	11–16	takeout
2N	17+	any shape

17.3 Defense against Flannery

The Flannery 2♢ shows 11–15 with 5 hearts and 4 spades. The Tangerine defense is as follows:

Defense against Flannery 2♢		
X	15–18	balanced
2♡	11–16	threesuited takeout
2♠	11–16	minor takeout
2N	17+	any shape

Some systems use 2♡ to show the Flannery hand:

Defense against Flannery 2♡		
X	15–18	balanced
2♠	11–16	minor takeout
2N	11–16	threesuited takeout
	17+	any shape

17.4 Against Unusual 2N

The "unusual 2N" opening shows a weak or intermediate hand with 55+ in the minors. Tangerine's defense is as follows:

Defense against Unusual 2N		
X	15–18	balanced
suit	11–16	5+ card suit
3♣	11–16	major twosuiter
3♢	17+	any shape

17.5 Against Alternative Twosuiters

Some systems use weak two bids which show alternative twosuiters, for example, 2♡ roundeds or pointeds, 2♠ blacks or reds, and 2N majors or minors. Tangerine's defense is simple:

Defense against Alternative Twosuiters		
X	15–18	balanced
suit	11–16	5+ card suit
low cuebid	11–16	takeout
high cuebid	17+	takeout
2N	17+	any shape

Usually, it is possible to guess which two suits opener holds. Based on this, one or two cuebids may be available, and if so, they are used as a weak and strong takeout. If the opener's partner *must* bid, you may pass and then double for takeout. A direct doubling shows a strong, balanced hand, and 2N shows 17+ if it is available.

17.6 Against Gambling 3N

The Gambling 3N shows a solid 7+ card suit. The defense is:

Defense against Gambling 3N	
X	15–18, balanced
4♣	heart twosuiter
4♢	spade twosuiter
suit	based on trick count

17.7 Against Preempts

Here, Tangerine has no new ideas. A double is for takeout up to 4♢ and just shows strength above that, (which usually means that the doubler has a strong balanced hand).

Defense against Preempts	
X	takeout or optional
suit	based on trick count

17.8 Against Transfer Preempts

The idea is of course to let the other hand play, but transfer preempts give the defenders a good opportunity to use the cuebid in the shown suit, (not the bid suit), to show a strong hand.

Defense against Transfer Preempts		
X	15–18	balanced
suit		based on trick count
pass + X	11–16	takeout
cuebid	17+	any shape

18 Artificial Openings

In order not to give users of artificial systems any unnecessary advantages, Tangerine provides systematic defenses to most artificial bids. With knowledge of these defenses, it is usually simple to select the appropriate methods against any artificial system or convention.

18.1 Against Strong 1♣

A good defense against a strong 1♣ is very valuable. Tangerine's methods are on the limit of being destructive, but have proven to be effective. They will take away much of the precision from a strong 1♣ exchange.

When playing in the (sadly conservative) USA, you are not allowed to use conventions where the primary purpose is to be destructive. You *may* not be allowed to use the Tangerine defense. If so, you may use the forcing pass defense instead.

Defense against Strong 1♣		
pass	0–10	weak hand
	11+	any shape
X	0–10	blacks or reds
1x	0–10	max 2 or 5+ cards
1N	0–10	roundeds or pointeds
2x	0–10	natural
2N	0–10	majors or minors

With a strong hand, pass and bid again on the next round. Otherwise try to bid something, at least at the one level. After the ambiguous bids, partner guesses what hand it is and tries to bid as high as he dares. In this way, the opponent's will regularly have to start their constructive bidding on the two level or higher. Note that there is no reason for responder to try and be extra preemptive. The system shown will cause regular trouble anyway. It is intended for use against an ambiguous 1♣ opening too, (like Tangerine's), but there are no practical experiences of this idea.

18.2 Against Forcing Pass

A forcing pass usually shows 13+, any shape, or something similar. Here, the "opener's" side is at a potential disadvantage, since most other pairs will have given the same strength information but also mentioned a suit.

Defense against Forcing Pass		
pass	0–7	any shape
	13+	any shape
1x	8–12	natural
1N	0–9	44+ in majors
2x	5–9	5+ cards
2N	0–9	55+ in minors

If the passers responder may pass, 1♣ shows 13+ while the other bids are unchanged. This defense can be used against strong 1♣ too. In this case, a double shows 0–9 and 54+ in a major and a minor.

18.3 Against Weak 1♣, 0–7

Some artificial systems use 1♣ as the weakest opening bid, showing 0–7 points. This is probably a bad idea, since it does not preempt the opponents at all, while giving them a chance to double for penalties.

Defense against Weak 1♣	
X	15+
others	not changed

As can be seen, the 1♣ opening does not disturb at all. However, after (1♣) X (pass) it may be a good idea to pass with a strong balanced hand and some clubs, if the vulnerability is right.

18.4 Against Weak 1♢/♡/♠, 0–7

The opening bid 1♢ with 0–7 points and any shape is often used together with a forcing pass of 13+. Here it is important not to be "preempted" away from good contracts, while keeping the chance of doubling for penalties. Some systems instead use 1♡ or 1♠ as the weak bid.

Defense against Weak 1♢/♡/♠		
X	12+	balanced or 4+ in opening suit
1♡/♠	10–14	4+
1N	10+	5+ clubs
2♣	10+	5+ diamonds or hearts
2♢	10+	5+ hearts or spades
2♡	10–14	4441/5440, short opening suit
2♠	15+	4441/5440, short opening suit

After (1♢) X, partner assumes that the doubler holds a balanced 12–14 hand and uses the standard notrump bidding. He may pass for penalties with 8+ points and 4+ trumps, (the doubler always has at least 2), or, if the opponents are vulnerable, with 3 trumps and good defensive values. New suits and notrump are weak, while *jumps* to 2♡/♠ are positive. The responses 2♣/♢ are Stayman as usual. If partner escapes to 1♡/♠/N, the doubler can use 2♣ as a general force, with 2♢ as negative response.

After the transfer bids, partner's new suit is forcing for a round and 2N a general game-force, while simply accepting the transfer shows a weak hand. Transfer to a suit that could be bid naturally on the one level shows 15+ points. After the threesuited bids, a bid in the short suit is used as a general forcing bid.

18.5 Against Transfer Openings

Some artificial systems have transfer openings. An example is Aron-Rosa's 1♣, which shows 8–12 points and 5+ hearts. Here 1♡ is a takeout, 2♡ is a cuebid and shows a twosuited hand, and X is 15–18 balanced, while 2♣ is a natural suit.

Defense against Transfer Openings	
X	15–18 balanced
cuebid	10+, takeout
jumping cuebid	twosuiter
other	not changed

18.6 Against Short Openings

Some systems use opening bids where the suit can be shorter than 4 cards. The most common example is Precision's 1♢. In these cases, Tangerine treats the opening bid as natural, while X + cuebid is used to show an interest to play in the opponent's suit.

18.7 Against Artificial Openings

Some systems use shortness openings, (Delta and other Polish forcing pass systems), where the shortness is usually a singleton or void. Other systems use ambiguous

opening bids, (in the Polish system Lambda, 1♡ shows 8–12 points and 54+ in either ♣+♡ or ♢+♠). It is also possible that openings like 1♡ or 1♠ show a balanced hand or minors.

In Tangerine, all these bids are treated like very weak notrump bids. Overcalls on the one level are natural, a double shows a strong balanced hand, (see the defense against weak 1♢/♡/♠ for responses), and 1N shows a 4441 with short opening suit. All other bids are according to the SMP defense against 1N.

Defense against Artificial Openings		
X	15–18	balanced
1x	10–14	4+ card suit
1N	10–14	"takeout" distribution
other	10+	according to SMP

19 Psychics

In Tangerine, there are some obvious situations where "psychics" can be useful. If allowed, these are a part of the system. In addition, some situation allows for psychics but are not special to the Tangerine system.

19.1 System Specific Psychics

After passing, the opener does not have strength enough to try for a game against a limited opening bid. Limited openings and overcalls may thus be psychic in third seat. Since sacrifices are often possible in these situation, the opener should not be afraid to respond. The partner knows that he is limited. Good trump support is shown with 1N, (so that the opener who happens to be without the opening suit can pass in a reasonable contract).

With a bad support and an long suit, you may raise a third seat opening. Thus, the bidding may go

North	East	South	West
pass	pass	1♠	pass
2♠			

while neither hand has a proper spade suit.

With a very weak hand in third seat, a good psych is to start with 1♣, in the hope of finding something reasonable before the fourth hand realizes that he has most of the board's strength. Note that it is forbidden to psych with artificial bids in many places, though.

19.2 General Psychics

There are some good situations for psychics that are not specific to Tangerine. For example, assume that you hold

♠ xx
♡ xx
♢ AQJxxxxx
♣ A

Here, you are most probably going to end up in 5♢ doubled, as a sacrifice against 4♡ or 4♠. Instead of opening high with diamonds, you may try to fool the opponents away from a possibly good suit by opening 1♠. The worst that can happen is that partner starts bidding spades. If so, you will have to repeat diamonds over and over again, until you end up in 5♢ doubled...

Tangerine's preemptive bids are based on trick count and quite sound. For example,

♠ xx
♡ KQJxxxx
♢ xxx
♣ x

is a good 3♡ bid at favorable vulnerability. However, you should sometimes make a preemptive bid on, say,

♠ xx
♡ Qxxxxxx
♢ xxx
♣ x

Normally, you should pass or maybe open 2N. Opening this as a normal preempt may fool the opponents away from game or slam, and it will also keep them aware that your preemptive openings cannot always be trusted. Of course, you may fool partner too, so do it seldom.

Assume that the bidding goes

North	East	South	West
2♠	2N	pass	?

The 2♠ is weak and as East you hold

♠ x
♡ x
♢ AQx
♣ AKQJxxxx

Since partner showed a strong takeout with 2N, you can almost certainly make 6♣ but there is probably a loser in spades, so 7♣ may not work. What is your best bid?

Bid 7♣! If you bid the correct 6♣, the opponent's will almost certainly sacrifice in 6♠, while now, they will sacrifice in 7♠.

Instead assume that the bidding goes

North	East	South	West
1♣	4♢	pass	5♢
5♡	6♢	?	

and as South you hold

♠ Qxxxx
♡ Jxxxx
♢ –
♣ Qxx

Your partner opened 1♣ and could bid 5♡ on his own. You have an excellent support for him, so 6♡ is almost certain and 7♡ may be there. What should you bid?

Pass! Your partner has a very strong hand and will double the opponents. Then you bid 6♡. In this way you may avoid that the opponents sacrifice in 7♢, which they otherwise certainly would do.

Now for a competitive game example. Assume that the bidding goes

North	East	South	West
1♡	1♠	2♡	2♠
?			

and as North you hold

♠ x
♡ AQJxxx
♢ xx
♣ Axxx

Your obvious bid is 4♡, and the opponents will certainly sacrifice themselves in 4♠, (and they may even make it). You can confuse the situation a little by bidding 3♢. In this way, when you later bid 4♡, you seem more reluctant to do it, as if you had a weaker hand. Maybe the opponents will not sacrifice themselves, if they think that 4♡ is doubtful. Also, by bidding ♢, you may avoid a lead in that suit.

In short, whenever you suspect that the opponents have a good sacrifice against your sound bid, look for possibilities to bid less solidly, like if you had a weaker hand and were more hesitant. And vice versa, if you think you should make a doubtful sacrifice, bid it at once and confidently, and do not be forced upwards in steps.

Remember, psychic bids are only effective if they really manage to fool the opponents. Therefore, use them seldom, and only in situations where the system will make them harmless for your side.

20 Variants of the System

Tangerine has been played in several versions, and the one presented here is just one of them. Some comments:

In an older variant, 2♢ was multi with weak ♡ or 20–21 balanced, 2♡ was weak ♠ or 22–23 balanced, and 2♠ was weak minors or 24–25 balanced.

In another variant, (actually the one most played), 2♢ was weak ♡ or ♠, or 20–21 balanced, and 2♡ and 2♠ were weak 55+ in the bid suit and a lower one.

The opening 1N according to Carrot fits excellently into the system. If used, 1♢ will always show 4+ cards. The Carrot notrump is good because it is frequent and thus has a preemptive effect. Note that the subsequent bidding is troublesome, and that the Carrot 1N has lost popularity in recent years, (the Carroters themselves have stopped using it).

Another convention that has been part of Tangerine is strong pass after 1N. If used, pass show 7–10 points and a fairly balanced hand. With less, responder must bid after after 1N. Responses on the two level after the non-forcing Stayman are weak instead of inviting. The advantage is that responder may immediately be active if the opponent's interfere, (which they often do).

There is also a version with relays after one of a suit. The relay shows either 9–15 *or* stronger hands. After this, some bids from responder are trump and support asking bids.

Of course, it is possible to use the opening 2♢ for 4441 and 5440 hands, like in Precision. This is, however, not in line with Tangerine's standard approach of ignoring 4441 distributions, and it is the author's experience that these 2♢ bids are not very good anyway.

Two artificial versions of the system also exist. In one, called the Mandarine Club, the meanings of the opening bids pass and 1♢ are exchanged. Thus, pass shows 10–14 and 4+ diamonds, while 1♢ is weak, 0–7, with any shape. In the other version, the Diamond Heart, this idea is taken even further. Here pass shows 10–14 with 4+ diamonds, 1♢ 10–14 with 4+ hearts, and 1♡ shows the 0–7 hand. The advantage of these versions is that the weak bid is difficult to defend against. The 0–7 1♡ can be dangerous to use, though, and one possibility is to use the Diamond Heart when non-vulnerable and Mandarine when vulnerable.

Finally, when 1♣ is unambiguously strong and 2N shows 55+ in the minors, the system is called the *Cranberry Club.*

20.1 Choices to Make

If you want to play Tangerine according to these notes, you must agree on a few choices with your partner. The ambiguous places in the report are:

- The opening 1♣ may be 8–9/15+ or just 15+.
- You may use or skip shape and control relays in the 1♣ bidding.
- The opening 2N may be a destructive preempt or 55+ in minors.
- You may want to use X + cuebid as a natural suit bid against "convenient minors," i.e., 3+ card minor openings in a 5+ card major system.

21 Some Statistics

A system's bidding aggressivity can be measured by its *mean opening,* i.e., how high on average the opening bid is, (counting pass as 0.0, 1♣ as 1.0, 1♢ as 2.0, etc.). The mean openings for some different systems are:

Mean Openings	
Culbertson	1.10
Precision Club	1.24
Swedish Standard	1.69
Standard American	1.70
Acol	1.72
Cranberry	2.96
Tangerine	3.07
Diamond Heart	3.12
Mandarine	3.13

The general idea is that the higher the average opening, the better, since the opponents have to start their competitive bidding on a higher level. This is far from the only way to rank systems, of course.

As can be seen, Culbertsson has the lowest mean opening, (a bit above 1♣). Standard American gains from its weak two openings and Acol from the 12–14 notrump and 4+ card majors. Tangerine is clearly more aggressive, the average opening being above 1♡. In fact, there are only a few systems in the world more aggressive than Cranberry and Tangerine.

Of course, partner will be as "preempted" as the opponents, so if the high mean opening makes the system less precise, it does not reflect the overall strength of the system. However, Tangerine is as precise as or better than the other systems, so the high mean opening reflects a definitive advantage.

Here are the opening bid frequencies for Tangerine, (with destructive 2N):

Tangerine Opening Bids			
pass	11.28		
1♣	30.95	2♣	6.11
1♢	8.37	2♢	3.92
1♡	12.08	2♡	4.05
1♠	10.11	2♠	4.18
1N	8.22	2N	0.73

In a standard system, you pass on almost 50% of all hands, while in Tangerine, you pass only 11.28% of the times in first or second seat.

The 1♣ opening consists for two intervals, and the following table shows how often you have the weak or the strong variant.

Tangerine 1♣		
8–9	8.09	26%
15+	22.86	74%
total	30.95	

Thus, the 1♣ opener has the strong hand almost exactly three times out of four, which may be useful to know sometimes. Of course, if the opponents have bid, you must take this information into account to. Of course, you don't have to tell your opponents about these probabilities if you don't want to...

Finally, here are the opening bid frequencies for Cranberry, (with 2N as 55+ in the minors):

Cranberry Opening Bids			
pass	19.57		
1♣	22.86	2♣	6.11
1♢	8.37	2♢	3.94
1♡	12.08	2♡	4.22
1♠	10.11	2♠	4.36
1N	8.22	2N	0.17

In a standard system, you pass on almost 50% of all hands, while in Cranberry, you pass only one in five of the times in first or second seat.

21.1 Short Openings

Many systems demand 5+ card suits to open one of a major. Here are the length frequencies for Standard American's 1♣/♢ and Precision's 1♢:

Suit Length Probabilities				
	2	3	4	5+
SA 1♣	–	15%	26%	59%
SA 1♢	–	4%	39%	57%
Precision 1♢	10%	19%	29%	42%

As can be seen, in Standard American, (and most other standard systems with 5+ major suit openings), the minor openings usually show a 5+ card suit, and only in 15% and 4% of the cases, the opened suit is shorter than 4 cards, (assuming that a minor 44 is opened 1♢ and a 33 1♣). Thus, a special defense is not needed.

This is not the case with Precision's 1♢. This opening contains fewer than 4 diamonds in 29% of all cases; almost a third of the time. In Match Point Precision, Super Precision, and other modern variants, 1♢ covers even more shapes, and thus it will contain less than 4 diamonds even more often. Tangerine's defense, where X plus cuebid shows a natural suit, is clearly useful here.

♣ ♢ ♡ ♠