

(restored from archive.org's copy of  
http://www.ecosoft.hu/csabi/bridge/SYMRELAY.TXT, also available in Rigal's Precision  
in the 90's book)

Subject: Alan Truscott's Symmetrical Relay Notes

---

Page 1. 10.21.91  
SYMMETRIC RELAYS IN THE PRECISION SYSTEM

## I INTRODUCTION

(Note: The relay beginner is advised to master one section at a time,  
starting with one club and then adding other relay structures.)

1. Assumed are a Precision style with the following elements:
  - (a) One club 16+ points any distribution.
  - (b) One diamond, 11-15 points, 3 or more diamonds, not balanced.
  - (c) One heart or one spade, 11-15 points, 5-card or longer suit.
  - (d) One notrump, 12-15 points, balanced. (Must be bid with any 4333, or 4432, or 5332 with a minor, also, for special reasons, with 4225 and 2425; may be bid with 5332 with a major, or with 2245 or 2254.)
  - (e) Higher openings (except 2H and 2NT) are all like Precision.
2. In relay bidding, a minimum bid by the controlling hand asks for more information. That is a relay. Exceptions: 3NT, 6NT and any 7-bid, which are natural. (So if the bidding reaches 3S, 4C is the relay.) If the controlling hand does not relay the bidding ends, with very rare exceptions.
3. POSITIVE RELAYS occur after either: a one-club opening and a response of one heart or higher; or 1D/1H/1S opening with a 1NT response. The 1NT response is always strong, and nearly always 13+ points. The describing hand does so in similar ways, with a few exceptions noted in each group. Positive hands after one club have 10+ points. All positive hands are assumed to have at least 2 controls. (ace = two, king = one).
4. NEGATIVE RELAYS (see page 9). After one club - one diamond, opener with 19+ can relay with one heart, artificial. Responder then bids one spade as a double negative. His other bids show 6-9 and are two steps higher than a normal positive response. So 1C 1D 1H 1N shows hearts, unbalanced.
5. DOUBLE NEGATIVE RELAYS (See page 10). After 1C 1D 1H 1S, opener's relay is 2C, showing something like a standard 2C opening.
6. RELAYS AFTER ONE NOTRUMP OPENING. (see Page 11). Two diamond response is forcing Stayman with relays.
7. RELAY AFTER TWO CLUB OPENING (see page 12). Two diamonds starts relays.
8. RELAY AFTER TWO DIAMOND OPENING (see page 13); or special TWO HEART OPENING (see page 5); or TWO SPADE OPENING (weak, see page 14). Two notrump starts relays. Relay after TWO NOTRUMP OPENING see page 13.
9. BREAKING RELAYS. Quite rare. (see page 15-16). This section also covers non-relay responses to 1D, 1H and 1S.
10. INTERFERENCE BY OPPONENTS. See pages 17-18.

THE STAGES

4. STAGE ONE. In the first stage of the bidding the describer does one of the following:
  - (i) shows (see page 4) a short two-suiter (one of the suits has exactly four cards).
  - (ii) shows (see page 5) a long two-suiter (both suits five cards or more).
  - (iii) shows (see page 6) a one-suiter (at least a five-card suit, no other suit).
  - (iv) shows (see page 7) a three-suiter (4441 or 5440); hands that open one diamond with three cards ( 4-1-3-5 and 1-4-3-5) are special cases.
  - (v) shows (see page 8) balanced hands, no 5-suit, after one-club openings.
  
5. STAGE TWO. In the second stage of bidding, usually with bids of 2S, 2N or 3C, the describer shows his short suits. This is done numerically, with the smallest number first. Thus 13 (high shortage) comes before 22 (equal shortage), and 31 (low shortage) comes last. 223 comes before 232, which is before 322.  
In some auctions where two suits are known to be short, we use H.E.L.L.: 1st step, high shortage; 2nd step, equal shortage (always 1-1); 3rd step, low singleton; 4th step, low void with a run on to controls. After first step, relay separates singleton (one step) from void (two steps with run on to controls.) See 2C and 2NT openings.  
  
Important: If the describer skips this stage altogether, he is assumed to have LOW shortage.
  
6. STAGE THREE. In the third stage of bidding, usually with a bid between 3D and 3N, show your exact distributional pattern according to the tables on pages 4-8. The commonest distribution always comes first and the rarest comes last. If you reach the end of the line, go directly to Stage 4. If you reach the end of the line and stop, you are assumed to have exactly two controls.
  
7. STAGE FOUR. In the fourth stage of bidding, show controls starting with two. Singleton kings do not count as controls. It is assumed that an opening bid will always have two controls, and that a hand with 14+ will always have at least four controls. In borderline situations lack of these requirements (very rare) may dictate a cautious position. Therefore pass a borderline opening lacking two controls, and a 10-point hand lacking two controls should give a negative response to one club.
  
8. STAGE FIVE. In the fifth stage of bidding, use DENIAL CUE-BIDS to show where your high cards are located. For details, see page 3.

Summarizing the stages. We show: general structure of hand; short suits; exact pattern; controls; location of high cards.

Note: We do not provide for very freakish distribution, such as 12 cards in two suits. And suits of more than seven cards are treated as if they were seven. In practice in such cases our experience is that the opponents always interrupt the auction.

## DENIAL CUE-BIDS

Once the exact pattern and number of controls has been established, the relay asks the describer to show the location of his high honors. He looks at his suits in turn, starting with the longest and ending with the shortest, and acts as follows:

One step shows either weakness in the first suit or, rarely, great strength, AKQanylength or AK doubleton. (In semi-positive, three of top four honors is considered equivalent to AKQ and bids one step). Two steps shows some strength in the first suit, and either weakness or great strength in the second suit. And so on. Here are two examples:

S A Q 4 2        The earlier bidding has reached 3NT, by a route  
 H K 9 7 3 2     (1C 1H 1S 1N 2C 2H 2S 3D 3H 3N) in which you have  
 D Q 6 5        shown positive values, 4531, and 3 controls. Next,  
 C 2            after 4C relay, bid 4N to show a top card in hearts,  
                  spades and diamonds, denying a second useful honor in  
                  hearts. If partner relays with 5C, bid 5H, showing  
                  another useful honor in spades but nothing more in  
                  diamonds. The scan was: hearts, spades, diamonds,  
                  hearts, spades, diamonds, and could have continued  
                  with hearts and spades.

In scanning through the suits to show honors, singletons are neglected and doubletons are scanned just once. If two or three suits are of equal length, the high-ranking is examined first and the low-ranking last.

S Q 5 4 3 2        The earlier bidding has reached 4C by a route (1C  
 H A K Q 3 2     1H 1S 1N 2C 2S 2N 3H 3S 4C) in which you have shown  
 D 3 2            positive values, 5521, and three controls. Then:  
 C 2

4D (relay)        4H spades weak ( no A or K ) or very  
                  strong (AKQ)

4S (relay)        4NT hearts weak (no A,K,Q) or very  
                  strong (AKQ)

5C (relay)        5D diamonds weak (no A,K,Q)

5H (relay)        5N spade queen, no heart jack.

The scan through the suits continues until the controlling hand breaks the relay or the bidding reaches 6N. There is one tricky point: When does a queen become a useful honor? The number of aces and kings you have decides. If you have one control card (not control) count a queen at once in your first suit. If you have two control cards, count a queen in your second suit, and so on. In the example just given, the spade queen did not count the first time around. But if the spades and hearts were reversed the queen would be in the second suit and would count because there are two control cards. The jack is a positive card when the queen has been denied. Tens are never considered. The number of steps you skip is the number of cards you show. So raising the relay skips four steps and shows four cards.



These are hands with at least 5-5 in two suits.  
 Show two suits as for short two-suiters and then bid TWO SPADES.  
 EXCEPTION: With 11-15 and 5-5 or longer in the majors, open two hearts. Then 2S is a sign-off and 2N is a relay with the normal structure, as below.

To show the short suit, bid:

three clubs            high shortage  
 three diamonds    equal shortage (6511 or 5611; then separate  
                          numerically, 56 before 65)  
 go to pattern       low shortage

To show the pattern, bid:

three hearts            5521  
 three spades            5530  
 three notrump         5620  
 four clubs             6520 (the only common situation in which  
                                  the pattern bid goes past 3N)

Example: West	East	West	East
S -	S A K Q J 10 9	1C	1H
H A J 9 7 3	H 10 8 6 5 2	1S	1N (1)
D A K 10 4	D 8 2	2C	2S (2)
C A Q J 10	C -	2N	4D (3)
		4H	4S (4)
		6H	Pass

- (1) Spades.
- (2) 5-5 or longer.
- (3) Exactly 6520 with three controls.
- (4) Either no ace or king of spades, or AKQ.
- (5) West knows that it is AKQ, and that the HK must be missing.

Note: With East as dealer, the bidding is 2H 2N 4D etc.

Do not look at jacks until your partner knows about the queen of the suit.

Example:

West	East	West	East
S K J 10 6 3	S A Q		1C
H A Q 9 6 3 2	H K 10	1H	1S
D 3	D A K 10 6 5	1N(1)	2C
C 3	C A J 4 3	2S(2)	2N
	3D(3)	3H	

- (1) Spades.
- (2) 5-5 or longer.
- (3) Equal shortage, so 56 or 65.
- (4) 5-6.
- (5) Three controls, which must be ace of hearts and king of spades.
- (6) Shows ace or king of hearts, A, K or Q of spades, and a second top heart. Denies a second top spade.

(7) The grand slam seems to have good play. We could find out about the jacks. 5S would get 5N, denying the HJ. Then 6C would get 6H, promising SJ. In this case the scan is a shuttle between hearts and spades.

Note: With West as dealer, the bidding would start 2H, then 2N 3D etc.

These are hands with one suit of five cards or more. (We are not concerned as opener with minor 5332 because that hand must open 1N). Show the suit, either as opener or in response to 1C, and then:

Bid 2S with high shortage  
 Bid 2N with middle shortage  
 Bid 3C with equal shortage.  
 Go to pattern with low shortage

To show the pattern, bid:

3D with 5332  
 3H with 6331  
 3S with 7+ suit and singleton.  
 3N with 7+ suit and void. (2 controls; run on with more).

However, equal shortage is tricky.

Bid 2S and 3C with 6223 or 6232, then separate numerically.

Bid 3C directly with 7222 or 6322, then separate numerically in that order.  
 (222 is smaller number than 322)

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S 5 2	S A K Q 9		
H 5 4 2	H K 7	2C(1)	2D
D K 8	D A Q 10 6 2	2S(2)	2N
C A K 8 7 5 3	C Q 10	3C(3)	3D
		4C(4)	4D

- (1) Usually a club one-suiter, but might have shorter diamonds planning to bid 2H, reverser.
- (2) High shortage.
- (3) Equal shortage, therefore either 2236 or 2326.
- (4) 2326 is the end of the line, so the run to 4C shows four controls.
- (5) Ace or king of clubs, but no ace or king of hearts. With three control cards, queens wait until the third suit is inspected.
- (6) West's hand is known. We must play from the East side, and 6N is better than 6C because 12 tricks may be there with a bad club split.

A long example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S A Q J	S 4	1C	2C
H J 8 3	H A 9 2	2D	2H(1)
D A K Q 8 3	D 10 9 7 2	2S	2N(2)
C K 4	C A Q J 10 8	3C	3D(3)
	3H	4C(4)	

- (1) Reverser, long C, 4D
- (2) High shortage
- (3) 1-3-4-5
- (4) 4 controls
- (5) CA or CK no DA, DK, DQ
- (6) A, K, or Q of hearts (in context, the ace), another top C, no DJ.
- (7) No second top heart.
- (8) Club jack, no heart jack.
- (9) Every card is known except the minor tens. If East does not have the club jack he will bid six diamonds and West will pass. (However, 7D is a reasonable spot even if the club jack is missing.)

All positive hands with 4333 or 4432 bid 1N, which is expected to be 10+ points and 2+ controls. A 10-point hand with just one control, which occurs about one deal in 20, should be devalued to 9 and give a negative. 4432 hands use CRASH (color, rank, shape) and then show the actual doubleton starting with 2N to show spades:

2D then: 2N = 2443; 3C = 3442; 3D = 4324; 3H = 4234 (2 controls)  
 2H then 2N = 2344; 3C = 4432; 3D = 4423; 3H = 3244 (2 controls)  
 direct 2N = 2434; 3C = 4342; 3D = 3424; 3H = 4243 (2 controls)

At the end of the line, run to 3S with three controls etc.

4333 hands bid 2S directly with a minor

bid 2S indirectly ( 2D & 2S ) with a major

(memory aid: this makes strong hand declarer opposite 3433)

Then separate numerically, with run on to controls.

(The control relay may be slightly different. See Page 15).

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S A K Q J 7 4	S 10 9 8 3	1C	1N
H A 7 6 3	H J 9 4	2C	2D
D A 9	D Q J	2H	3D (1)
C 6	C A K 9 4	3H	3N (2)

4C 4D (3)  
 4H 4N (4)  
 5S (or pass)

- (1) 4-3-2-4
- (2) 3 controls
- (3) No SA, SK obviously
- (4) CA or CK, or both; no HA, HK, HQ.
- (5) H weakness rules out slam. Pass produces a match-point top with D lead or winning finesse. But pass is wrong when East has DK, not CK.

Example: WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S A	S J 6 4 2	1C	1N
H A 10 8 7 6 4	H K J	2C	2D
D A K	D Q 10 2	2H	3H (1)
C Q J 3 2	C K 10 7 4	3S	3N (2)

4C 4N (3)

- (1) 4-2-3-4, 2 controls
- (2) No SA, SK
- (3) Top C ( A,K,orQ), top D, top H, no SQ.
- (4) Knowing that East has club king, diamond queen and heart king.

page 8 THREE-SUITERS

This includes pure three-suiters and two oddments. To describe these hands we employ some auctions that are otherwise meaningless. The treatments vary with the opening bid.

After ONE CLUB

With both majors ( 5440 or 4441 ) show both majors, then bid 2D:

1C 1H  
 1S 1N  
 2C 2D

With both minors bid 2H directly.

In each case, the next relay asks for the short suit: high short;

middle short; low short with run on to pattern. The next stage starts with 4441, because it is commoner, and is then numeric: 445; 454; 544 with run on to controls.

#### After ONE DIAMOND - ONE NOTRUMP

With 5440 show the shortage normally: 2S = high; 2N = middle; direct to pattered with low. Then bid 3D. In a one-club auction that would show 5332, but that is impossible here because 5332 with diamonds bids 1N originally. ( For this reason, alert the sequence 1D 1N 2D. If asked, explain: Nearly always four spades, but 0454 and 0445 are possible.) Low shortage is always 4450. But high or middle shortage can be 4-5 or 5-4 in the minors, which must be separated numerically. With a singleton, bid two diamonds and then two spades, which is meaningless. Then show the shortage:

1D 1N  
2D 2H  
2S 2N then 3C = 1444 or 1435 and separate numerically  
3D = 4144 or 4135 and separate numerically  
3H = 4441 and two controls, run on.

#### After ONE HEART or ONE SPADE - ONE NOTRUMP

Two clubs followed by two hearts shows 5440. The next stage shows high void, middle void, low void with a run-on. Therefore 1H/1S 1N 2C must be alerted. If asked, explain: almost always clubs, but it can be void club with a 544 hand.

#### SUMMARY OF POSITIVE RESPONSES TO ONE CLUB

One heart = four or more hearts, unbalanced  
One spade = denies hearts, four plus spades, unbalanced  
One notrump = balanced 4333 or 4432  
Two clubs = no major, clubs  
Two diamonds = diamond one-suiter  
Two hearts = three-suiter, short major  
Two spades = 5-5 or more minors  
Two notrump = four clubs, longer diamonds, high shortage  
Three clubs = 2254 (rarely 1174)  
Three diamonds = 3154  
Three hearts = 2164  
Three spades = 3064  
Three notrump = 2074 with run to controls

#### Page 9 NEGATIVE RELAYS - SEMI-POSITIVE TRACK

If the one-club bidder has extra strength (usually 19+), he can relay with one heart, artificial, after a one-diamond negative response. If responder is very weak ( 0-5 ) then he makes a second negative response of one spade. ( See page 10 ). If responder has 6-9 points his next move is semi-positive on a TWO UP track. Responder bids two steps more than he would have done on a positive track. Therefore:

One no-trump = at least four hearts, unbalanced  
Two clubs = denies hearts, at least four spades, unbalanced  
Two diamonds = balanced 4432 or 4333; branch ends at 3N.  
Two hearts = clubs, no major  
Two spades = diamonds  
Two notrump = three-suiter, short major  
Three clubs = 5-5 or more in minors

Three diamonds = four clubs, longer diamonds, high shortage  
 Three hearts = four clubs, five (or 7) diamonds, equal short  
 Three spades = 3154  
 Three notrump = 2164  
 Four clubs = 3064  
 Four diamonds = 2074 with run on to controls

The subsequent auctions continue to be TWO-UP. Think what would have happened in a positive auction and add two steps.

But remember the following:

- (1) Controls start at zero, not two as in positive auctions.
- (2) When scanning for high cards, queens count immediately.

Exceptions to two-up:

- (3) 7411 bids 4H (still two-up) following equal shortage.
- (4) With balanced hands, actual doubletons are bid to show pattern.

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S A K J 3	S Q 6 5	1C	1D
H A J 6 4	H 5	1H	2S(1)
D A K 3 2	D 10 8 7 6 3 2	2N	3D(2)
C 8	C A Q 3	3H	3N(3)
	4C	4S(4)	

- (1) Two-up: diamond one-suiter
- (2) Two-up: middle shortage
- (3) Two-up: 3163
- (4) Two controls, obviously CA since singleton HK would not count
- (5) No DA, DK, DQ. Good news
- (6) SQ, crucial, and CQ, which does not matter
- (7) One club ruff will produce 13 tricks if diamonds are 2-1

Other rebids after one diamond:

- (a) One spade. 16-18, unbalanced, could be four-card suit. Then 1NT by responder is one-round force with moderate values. Suit bids suggest a final contract.
- (b) One notrump. 16-18 balanced. Stayman, transfers (2S=minors).
- (c) Two-level suit bids 16-18 natural, usually 6-suit.
- (d) Two notrump for minors.

Note: Unbalanced hands with a 4-card or 5-card heart suit can present a rebid problem, so such hands sometimes avoid 1C with 16-17 points.

#### Page 10 DOUBLE NEGATIVE RELAYS - ONE LEVEL UP

After a second negative, 1C 1D 1H 1S, the opener may show a balanced 19-22 by bidding one notrump. Then Stayman and transfers. He can bid 2N with 23-24, Stayman and transfers. Or he can bid 2D or higher in a suit, natural with 19-22. With stronger hands, 23+, he bids:

TWO CLUBS (1C 1D 1H 1S 2C). This is equivalent to a standard two-club opening, with 25+ balanced or 23+ unbalanced. But we start with the advantage of knowing that responder is very weak, 0-5, and a negative is not needed. In responding to two clubs, two diamonds shows balanced hands and two no-trump shows minors. Other responses are somewhat similar to positive responses to one club.

- (a) Two diamonds. 0-5 4333 or 4432. Then follow the two-up semipositive track as after 1C 1D 1H 2D. Branch ends at 3N.
- (b) Two hearts. 0-5 5+ hearts, or 4 hearts unbalanced. Longer suit possible.
- (c) Two spades. 0-5 5+ spades, or 4 spades unbalanced. Denies hearts, Longer minor possible.
- (d) Two notrump. 0-5 both minors.
- (e) Three clubs. One-suiter.
- (d) Three diamonds. One-suiter.
- (e) Three hearts, three spades. Splinter, 4441 or 5440.

Branches (no run-ons):

- (1) Two-suiters. Show two suits, with or without a three-heart reverser. Three hearts after showing a major implies four-card major and long diamonds. Next, three spades shows 5-5 or more. Three no-trump shows 5-4 or 4-5. Four clubs shows 4-6 or 6-4 etc. Next stage asks for short suit: high short, equal short, low singleton, low void. (H.E.L.L.).
- (2) One-suiters. Show suit, then bid three spades with 5-suit, 3NT with 6-suit etc. Next relay asks for short suit, high, middle, low.
- (3) Three-suiters. Short minor: 2H 2S 2N 3C 3D, then separate. Short major: direct 3H or 3S splinter. When short suit is known with specificity, relay asks for scan for any top honor, ace, king or queen.

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S A K Q J	S 10 8 7 2	1C	1D
H A K 9 5 3	H Q 10 8 7 4	1H	1S
D _	D 9 6 5 2	2C	2H(1)
C A 9 6 3	C _	2S	2N(2)
	3C		3D(3)

- (1) 4+ hearts, unbalanced
- (2) both majors
- (3) three-suiter, short minor
- (4) low shortage
- (5) 4540, as in a positive auction
- (6) The next relay would locate the HQ, but it is not needed

Remember that in double negative auctions there is no control ask. The weak hand almost always has 0-1 control, and it is not worth wasting space to ask that question.

Page 11 RELAYS AFTER ONE NOTRUMP OPENING

One notrump opening is 12-15. It is compulsory with 4333, 4432, minor 5332, 4225 and 2425. It is optional with major 5332, 2245 and 2254. TWO DIAMONDS response is two-way Stayman with a relay structure. The pattern is shown, and then controls and high cards in the usual way. (But see Weak Relay, page 15)

- (a) Two hearts is bid with any hand with four or five hearts. After 2S relay:
  - (i) 2N shows four spades, and separate numerically.
  - (ii) 3C shows four or five clubs. Then separate numerically: 22; 23; 32.
  - (iii) 3D shows four diamonds and separate numerically.
  - (iv) 3H shows 3433.
  - (v) 3S shows 2533.
  - (vi) 3N shows 3523.
  - (vii) 4C shows 3532, no run on.
- (b) Two spades shows four or five spades, denies hearts. After 2N relay:
  - (i) 3C shows four or five clubs. Then separate numerically: 22; 23; 32.
  - (ii) 3D shows four diamonds and separate numerically.
  - (iv) 3H shows 4333.
  - (v) 3S shows 5233.
  - (vi) 3N shows 5323.
  - (vii) 4C shows 5332, no run on.
- (c) Two notrump is a catch-all for hands lacking a major, not 4-4 in the minors, not minor 5332. After 3C relay, bid numerically:
  - (i) 3D shows 2245

- (ii) 3H 2254
- (iii) 3S 3334
- (iv) 3N 3343
- (d) Three clubs shows five clubs, and separate numerically.
- (e) Three diamonds shows minor 4-4 and separate numerically.
- (f) Three hearts shows 2353
- (g) Three spades shows 3253
- (h) Three notrump shows 3352

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S 4 3 2	S A K 7 6	1N	2D
H A 8 6	H K 9 2	2N	3C
D A 8 4 3	D K Q J 10	3N(1)	4N(2)
C A 10 3	C K 7	Pass (3)	

- (1) 3343
- (2) Natural invitation. No relay, because 4N is enough opposite min.
- (3) Continue with maximum and four plus controls. 5C would show four controls.

Other responses to one notrump:

- (1) 2C to be followed by:
  - (a) 2H/2S weak unbalanced, opener moves with a doubleton;
  - (b) 2N, 3C, 3D, 3H, 3S invites;
  - (c) 3N guarantees a major.
- (2) 2N invites.
- (3) 2H/2S/3C/3D weak, to play.
- (4) 3H/3S strong suit, slam interest, void somewhere; opener's automatic relay asks for void. Similar in minor, bid 2C and 4C/4D.

Page 12 RELAYS AFTER TWO CLUBS OPENING

Two clubs is bid with any six plus club suit 11-15. May have side 4-card suit but not 5-suit.

Two diamonds is relay response, with invitational or better. Then:

- (1) Two hearts or two spades is 4-suit. Relay asks for high short, equal short, low singleton, low void with run on to controls. If high short, next relay asks for singleton, void, run on to controls. (H.E.L.L.) Non-relay is natural invitation. (For next relay, see page 15)
- (2) Two notrump is any balanced, 6322 or 7222. Then:
  - (a) three clubs invites; opener shows a stopper with a max., 3N shows both major stopped;
  - (b) three diamonds is relay, ask for stoppers similarly;
  - (c) 3H/3S is natural, forcing, looking for 5-3 fit.
- (3) Three clubs is minimum unbalanced. Responder may pass. His 3D is relay, asking for 3H high singleton, 3S middle singleton, 3N low singleton, 4C high void etc.
- (4) Three diamonds is solid clubs, AKQxxx, no void. 3H relay asks shortage: 3S high singleton; 3N balanced; 4C middle singleton; 4D low singleton. Next relay asks for controls outside clubs, starting at zero. Next relay asks for a scan, starting with club jack.
- (5) Three hearts, three spades, three notrump are maximum unbalanced with high singleton, middle singleton and low singleton.
- (6) Four clubs, four diamonds, four hearts are maximum with high void, middle void, low void with run on.

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S A	S K	2C	2D
H Q 7	H A J 9 8	3H(1)	3S

D J 5 4                      D A Q 2                      4C(2)                      6C(3)  
 C A K 8 7 6 5 2    C Q J 9 4 3

- (1) Maximum with high singleton, i.e. spades.
- (2) Since a maximum is assumed to have four controls, this shows five.
- (3) A jump to six clubs is OK. There is a faint chance that opener has two black aces and king-queen of hearts, but there might still be a problem with the club king. Suppose East did relay again. The red suits have not been separated, so the scan would go clubs, hearts, diamonds, clubs, hearts, diamonds. Since there are three control cards, queens are shown at the third look.

Other responses to two clubs:

- (a) 2H/2S/3D natural invitational, 6+ suit.
- (b) 2N 5-5 in majors, invitational or better.
- (c) 3C very mild invitation.
- (d) 3N to play.
- (e) 4C and 5C preemptive.

Page 13 RELAYS AFTER TWO DIAMOND OPENING

Two diamonds is standard Precision: three-suiter, short diamonds, at least four clubs. Two notrump is a relay with these responses:

- (1) 3C = 3415
- (2) 3D = 4315
- (3) 3H = 4414
- (4) 3S = 4405 with two controls, run on with more.

Other responses to two diamonds:

- (a) Two hearts, two spades, three clubs to play. Opener must pass.
- (b) Three diamonds. Solid diamonds (6+) but little else. Invites opener to bid 3N if he has a maximum with a singleton diamond.

The next relay, for controls, is slightly different. See Page 15.

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S K 8 7 2	S A 6	2D	2N
H A 6 5 3	H K 2	4D(1)	4H(2)
D -	D 9 7 5 3	5H(3)	7C(4)
C A Q 10 4 3	C K J 9 6 5		

- (1) West runs on from 3S (4405 with 2 controls) to 4D (5 controls).
- (2) Magic. West is now known to have SK, HA and CA so a majestic leap to 7C is reasonable. Even if the clubs are 2-1 we may run into an overruff, so a cautious East will relay again.
- (3) Showing CA or CK, SA or SK, HA or HK or HQ (the queen counts on the third look with three control cards) and a second top club, obviously the queen.
- (4) Enough.

RELAYS AFTER TWO NOTRUMP OPENING

Two notrump opening is 10-13, at least 5-5 in the minors, cannot be 5530. Since three clubs and three diamonds are to play, the relay is three hearts. Opener bids: 3S with high shortage; 3N with equal shortage; 4C with low singleton; 4D low void with run on to controls. (H.E.L.L.). After 3S, the 4C relay asks for clarification: low singleton, low void with run on.

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S K 3	S A 7 4	2N	3H

H -	H J 7 5 2	4S(1)	6C(2)
D K J 6 5 3 2	D 7		
C A 8 7 4 2	C K 10 9 5 3		

(1) 4D would be low void with two controls, so 4S is four. Six clubs is now a good gamble. The worst case is that West might have five bad clubs, and even then there will be a play. As it is, East can expect to make use of the diamonds provided the clubs are 2-1.

Page 14 RELAYS AFTER WEAK TWO-SPADE OPENING

The two-spade opening is a standard weak two-bid, with 6-11 assumed, and a six-card suit headed by at least a queen. The following relays can be used equally well by those who use weak two-heart bids. (We do not.)

TWO NOTRUMP is the relay. Responses are:

- (1) Three clubs is a minimum, normally 6-8. (But might be more lacking two controls, which are needed to show a maximum).
- (2) Three diamonds is a maximum, with a singleton in a minor. Relay asks for singleton, high short, low short, no run-on.
- (3) Three hearts is a maximum, balanced. 3S relay ask for 3N with two top honors in anchor suit, 4C with one.
- (4) Three spades is a maximum, singleton in other major.
- (5) Three notrump is solid suit, AKQxxx.
- (6) 4C, 4D, 4H are high, middle, low voids. After 4H, 4S is sign-off and 4N is relay.

Sequels:

- (a) After three clubs, minimum, 3H, 3S and 4-level bids mean what they would have done as direct bids. 3N shows singleton in a minor and 4C asks for separation, high short, low short. 4S by relayer is to play, not a relay.
- (b) After 3D, separate the minors, high short, low short, no run on.
- (c) After 3N 4C relay: 4D is negative; 4H, 4S, 5C, high, middle, low singleton; 4N shows jack of anchor suit. (With a singleton and anchor jack, open one not two.)

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S A Q 10 6 5 3	S K J	2S	2N
H J 4 3	H A 7 2	3D(1)	3H
D Q 7 4	D A K J 10 3	3N(2)	4C
C 6	C 8 7 2	4D(3)	4H
	4N(4)	5C	

- (1) Maximum, singleton minor. 5S(5) 6S(6)
- (2) Singleton club.
- (3) 2 controls, the minimum for a maximum.
- (4) Top spade, A, K or Q. No top heart.
- (5) Top diamond, A, K or Q, and another top spade.
- (6) East expected this. Since West has a maximum with nothing in hearts, the two crucial queens are probable. If West unexpectedly bids five hearts, showing that he has diamond queen but no spade queen, East can try six diamonds and hope that dummy is not forced to ruff a club.

If the one-club bidder is a minimum, he will often be inclined to rest in game after his partner has described his pattern. A normal relay for controls will often take the partnership out of its depth. Then we use the WEAK RELAY: One meaningless step beyond the normal relay for controls, provided it is not a game bid, is a weak relay. It announces that the relay bidder has a minimum or near minimum and is prepared to give up on slam. Partner usually bids one step to say that he also lacks slam interest, and the relay bidder picks a game contract.

For a positive response to a weak relay, the describer needs extra values (14+ points) and extra controls (4+). In that case he bid two steps to show four controls, three to show five etc. The level reached is the same as after a normal relay, but the describer is known to have extra high-card strength.

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
S A 8 6 3	S K Q 2		1C
H 4	H A K 9 3	1S	1N
D K 8 6	D A 5	2C	2D
C A K 5 4 3	C J 8 7 2	2H(1)	2S

2N(2) 3C

- |  |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|
| (1) Reverser, four spades, long clubs  | 3D(3) | 3S(4) |
| (2) High shortage  | 4H(5) | 4S(6) |
| (3) 4135   | 5S(7) | 6C    |
| (4) Weak relay, expecting to play 5C   |       |       |
| (5) Extra values (14+) and six controls. The same bid West would have made after a normal 3H relay.  |       |       |
| (6) East knows that West has a magic hand and that the partnership has all the controls. He could bid six clubs, but one more relay is worth the effort. If West has AKQ of clubs he will bid 4N and we can bid 7C. Since East has SK and SQ, he knows that an inconvenient response above 5S cannot happen. |       |       |

Instead of using a weak relay, the relayer may bid THREE NOTRUMP, expressing a preference for that contract. Describer normally passes, but bids as over a weak relay with extra values and extra controls. Four clubs (except in a 5422 or 7411 branch) shows four controls and 14+.

The weak relay is an option in auctions that begin with 1C, or 1D/1H/1S. It is automatic, replacing the normal control ask, in auctions that begin 1N, 2C or 2D when the control ask comes below 3N and max-min is unknown. In the following situations the last bid works as a weak relay, although the strong hand may intend to continue to slam:

- |             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| (a) 1N 2D   | (b) 2C 2D   | (c) 2D 2N   |
| 3H(1) 3S(2) | 2H 2S       | 3C(5) 3D(6) |
|             | 3D(3) 3H(4) |             |

- 2353
- Weak relay. 4C response shows max with four controls etc. After a 3N response, 4C asks for controls starting at two, knowing opener is min.
- Low singleton, therefore 2416.
- Weak relay. 3N response shows max with four controls etc. After a 3S response, 4C ask for controls starting at two opposite known min.
- 3415.
- Weak relay. If the response is 3H, negative, then 3S asks for controls starting at two.

After ONE CLUB opening

If the response is one heart, one spade or one notrump, the opener can transfer the captiancy, and become the describer, when he has a minimum balanced hand, 16-17 points. He uses the structure ( See Page 11 above ) that applies after 1C 1N 2C.

This gives another way to bid the previous example hand on Page 15:

WEST	EAST	
	1C	(1) 3424, 16-17 points
1S	3D(1)	(2) six controls, since a one-club bidder is
3H	4C(2)	assumed to have four.
6C(3)		(3) All the controls are present, but there must be a hole in

a black suit. East cannot have both black queens, for that would give him 18 points.

After ONE DIAMOND opening

Relay breaks are very rare here. But if responder has relayed with a borderline hand, say 12 points, he might break if the hand seems to be a misfit. 1D 1N 2C 2N would be appropriate with both majors and 12 points, leaving the decision to opener. But with such a hand a major-suit response would have been acceptable. This is a one-round force, but limited. Two-level responses to one diamond are non-forcing. Some special invitational responses to one diamond: (a) 2H = majors; 2S = black suits; 3C = club one-suiter, 6+, stronger than 2C but not enough to drive to game.

After ONE HEART or ONE SPADE opening

Relay breaks are quite common here, particularly after one spade, because a natural one no-trump response is not available. With 10-12 points responder may be able to make a limit raise (sometimes three cards) or bid 2N, natural and invitational. These are the responses to major openings:

After ONE HEART

After ONE SPADE

One spade natural, 1-round force	
One notrump relay	relay
Two clubs natural non-forcing	natural non-forcing
Two diamonds natural non-forcing weak	natural non-forcing
Two hearts normal raise	natural non-forcing weak
Two spades invitational black suits	normal raise
Two notrump natural invitational	natural invitational
(These often have singleton in opener's suit)	
Three clubs invitational minors	invitational clubs and hearts
Three diamonds strong weak-two bid	invitational red suits
Three hearts limit (often 3 cards)	strong weak two-bid
Three spades void splinter	limit (often 3 cards)

However, none of these may be available, particularly after one spade. So it is often right to pass with 6-9 and no fit. Passing one spade is unlikely to miss a 9-card heart fit because opener cannot have 5-5 in the majors. If a one-bid is passed, alert and explain the possibility of a stronger-than-normal pass.

With 10-12 and none of the above possible, bid one notrump, relay, and plan to break out of the relays on the next round. Anything except a relay shows invitational values.

NOTE An undefined relay break is natural, suggesting a final contract. Suppose the pattern is described with a bid of 3D. Then 3H is a normal relay, 3S is a weak relay, and 4C and 4D are natural, invitational,

After ONE CLUB

Bids of one notrump and higher break relays whenever responder could have a

yarborough. After other interference below one no-trump, bids are positive, pass is semi-positive, and double (ARCHIMEDES) is negative, 0-5, and ends relays. Specifically:

- (1) After double, one heart and above is a normal positive; redouble shows 7-9, pass shows 4-6, opener can relay with one diamond. One diamond is 0-3 and ends relays.
- (2) After one diamond, one heart and above is a normal positive; pass is semi-positive 6-9; double is Archimedes 0-5 and ends relays. After semi-positive pass opener can reopen with a double, which is a relay putting partner on a positive track with semi-positive values.
- (3) After one heart: double is Archimedes 0-5; one spade is weak, natural, 0-5; 1NT is hearts, positive on a semi-positive Two-Up track; Pass is semi-positive 6-9. If passed around to opener he can either double, asking for a pass or a positive track, or bid one spade, relay on a semi-positive track.
- (4) After one spade: double is Archimedes 0-5; one notrump is heart positive on a semipositive track, two clubs is spades etc; pass is semipositive 6-9, and opener's double is relay on a semipositive track.  
After one club - pass - one diamond:
- (5) Double: pass is a relay, allowing partner to redouble as double negative and bid on a positive track with semipositive values.
- (6) After one heart, double is take-out; pass is relay, then responder doubles for penalties, bids one spade double negative, bids on a semi-positive track with 6-9.
- (7) After one spade, double is take-out, pass is relay. Responder uses Archimedes double 0-5 or bids on a semi-positive track. If LHO acts ( e.g. 1C P 1D 1S P(R) 2S relays are broken because responder can have a yarborough.

It helps to remember that we always end up on a semi-positive track or a positive track, but never in between. (But it may happen when the relays are in progress. See below.) This is slightly complicated, but we do not choose to permit the opponents to ruin the relays by bidding at the one-level.

Example:

WEST	EAST	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
S A K 9 8	S 7 4	1C	Pass	1D	1S
H A Q	H J 10 9 7	Pass(1)	Pass	2D(2)	Pass
D A K Q 5 3	D J 10 9 8	2H	Pass	2S(3)	Pass
C 8 5	C A Q 4	2N	Pass	3S(4)	Pass
	4C	Pass	4S(5)	Pass	

- (1) Relay (2) balanced 6-9 6D(6) Pass Pass Pass
- (3) 4-4 color, or major 4333
- (4) 2443 (5) two controls
- (6) East has either club ace, or the two missing kings. The slam is at least 50-50, and happens to be much better - especially from the East side.

Opener can start a relay auction if both opponents act, partner shows modest values by passing, and the bidding is still at the one-level:

1C 1D P 1S Pass is a relay. (Double would be for take-out. But it would be for penalties if partner has bid a suit naturally.)

Once relays have started, the opponents may be able to break them. Three notrump or higher break relays in front of the relay bidder: 1C P 1H 4C. 1C P 1H 3S Pass is a relay, but opener does not have to use it.

Relays are broken following a relay if the opponents use up a full level of the auction and go to 2N or higher: 1C P 2C P 2D 3D.

Low-level interference may have little impact:

South	West	North	East
1C	Pass	1H	2C
Pass (1)	Pass	2D (2)	

- (1) Relay.
- (2) The first step would be a double, showing that the planned rebid was one notrump. Two diamonds is the next step, and therefore shows clubs. We are one step above a normal track, and that continues for the remainder of the auction. (Unless modified by further interference.)

If the interference follows the relay but does not break, pass is the first step and double is the second step:

South	West	North	East
1H	Pass	1N	2C
2D(1)			

- (1) Pass would be the first step, showing an intended two-club bid. Double would be the second step, showing diamonds. So the two diamond bid saves a step, and shows a four-card heart suit. Now we are one step below a normal track.

If the interference is the double of a relay, pass is the first step and redouble is the second step:

South	West	North	East
1C	Pass	1H	Pass
1S	Dbl.	1N (1)	

- (1) Pass would be the first step and redouble the second step, so one notrump is the third step, showing diamonds (not a reverser). We have gained two steps, and that continues for the rest of the auction.

If the describer is doubled and his partner passes as a relay:

South	West	North	East
1C	Pass	1H	Dbl.
Pass	Pass	1N(1)	

Redouble would have been the first step, showing spades. One spade would have shown club. This shows diamonds and we have gained two steps.

This ends the Symmetric relay notes.