**A Bridge System**

♣ ♦

♥ ♠

**Peter Foster**

**Updated 22nd November 2016**

This system now incorporates 2/1 responses as always game forcing and introduces Lucas 2s.

**Updated 26th August 2018**

Incorporated latest agreements, including improvements to 1♣ transfer system sequences.

**Acknowledgements**

Most of my Bridge systemic agreements and conventions have come from others’ efforts. I can take little credit for the content of this document and would like to thank a few people who have freely given their time and advice.

Boris Ewart has played at a level of Bridge that I can only look in on and admire. He has had many exceptionally good partners, and at international level with the likes of Michelle Brunner, John Holland and John Armstrong. When I met Boris at Barclays Bank where we worked, he shared much of his and their system theory ideas and as a good friend he continues to share his knowledge with me, often over a pint of Abbot’s Ale for which I am thankful.

I recently read system notes given to me by Raymond Semp. Raymond has produced an incredibly comprehensive set of system notes that could easily be the basis of a book and if he ever publishes them, I would recommend getting a copy. It was Raymond who introduced me to transfers over 1♣ openings which is something that many partnerships will be adopting as ‘standard’ in the next few years I’m convinced.

I have also been very fortunate to have had a number of very good and patient partners and I’d like to name a few of the longer standing ones (my apologies to anyone I have missed, my only excuse is a failing memory) : Mike Amos, David Berrisford, Dave Bluck, Phil Callow, Peter Jones, Mike Lees, John Liebeschuetz, Phil McDermott, John Roberts, Neil Thomas.

Each of these have contributed to my understanding and love of the game, but each cannot be blamed for any lack of understanding – I’m afraid that’s all me.

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# INTRODUCTION

There are many systems employed around the world by very accomplished pairs, but all suffer in one way or another from some deficiency that means the system doesn’t cope with a particular hand in a particular situation.

All we can hope to achieve is a system that copes with the vast majority of situations using the frequency of hands as a guide and in a ‘language’ that is easy to learn and so easily adopted and agreed with a variety of partners. Such a system is the closest we can get to ‘perfect’.

The system in these notes is fairly intuitive – there are things to learn, but once they are committed to memory, similar situations and associated auctions are often treated the same (e.g. 2NT-3**♣** and 2**♣**-2NT-3**♣** have similar responses).

This system is not a perfect system because it can’t be. What it is though is a comprehensive documentation of ‘a system’ and the file may be freely copied and adapted for your own use to document your own partnership agreements. If anyone learns anything from it or finds it of any use, then its purpose will have been fulfilled. It won’t help your card play improve – which I believe plays a much greater role in whether your game improves or not, but keeping this kind of record of your systemic agreements will prevent a number of post mortems and may even save a partnership or two.

Having played a weak NT for most of my bridge playing, I’m about to disappoint the weak NT supporters. This system is based on a strong NT. I’ve played a lot of escapes from 1NT doubled and 50% of the time the opponents believe us and decide to bid letting us off the hook; the other 50% they continue to aim for the jugular and invariably strike the mark, sometimes with partner having forgotten the escape system to rub our noses in it a little more. There are arguments for both, but my belief is those for the strong NT outweigh the weak NT; two simple examples being:-

1. You don’t get murdered in a strong 1NT doubled
2. When you have a 4 card major fit and open 1NT (weak) with partner unable to invite, then you often struggle in 1NT when the strong NT pairs are in 2 of the major. If you have a major fit and open 1NT (strong) and partner is unable to invite, then you will have a better chance of making the contract due to the extra power and may even make 2NT and beat the pairs making 2 of a major at Pairs for a better score.

So, this system is based on a Strong NT 15-17 HCP (High Card Points = Milton work Count A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1). With 5 card majors, a natural 1♦ and a prepared 1♣ opening that will either be natural or some NT outside the opening 1NT strain.

The sections of these notes contain details of conventions when they are introduced and an index at the end to allow their easy location from other sections.

It is undeniable that there have been some very useful conventions invented over the years and many that have stood the test of time are included here, along with some newer ones that are simply too good not to survive as well. Stayman is here (adapted into a 5 card form), as are transfers; along with Lebensohl and Jacoby 2NT opposite major suit openings.

All the conventions incorporated into the system ‘add something to it’, they are not there because I like the sound of their name. They provide a service and are worth adopting regardless of what is lost by doing so – and there is always a cost to taking on a convention. There are many benefits to be gained however and it is a case of analysing the balance sheet to decide which are worth the effort.

I have adopted a system notation such that 1m is 1 of a minor and 1M is 1 of a Major when it doesn’t matter which of the suits is being discussed.

*For those who find this document tedious with many mistakes and inconsistencies, I apologise. It was my intention that the content may inspire players to improve their system or at least discuss and document their agreements so that both they and their partner can gravitate to the same wavelength. I did not write it to annoy anyone – so please forgive me if it has the latter effect.*

# OPENING BID SUMMARY

We open a Prepared 1**♣** when holding one of 3 hands: natural 4+ clubs or a 12-14 or 18-19 NT. The 1♦ opening will either be 5+ diamonds or a balanced hand with 4 diamonds and without 4 clubs. See the subsequent section for specific minor suit auctions.

We open 5 card majors – see the subsequent section for specifics relating to major suit auctions.

1NT is 15-17 and may contain a 5 card major or 6 card minor, see relevant section for responses.

2**♣** is the only strong opening, showing a game forcing hand unless the auction is 2**♣**-2♦-2NT showing 23-24 which may be passed. Refer to the relevant section for the subsequent auction.

2♦ is a ‘Weak only Multi’, usually 6 cards. See the relevant section for the subsequent auction.

2♥/2♠ are both ‘Lucas’-style, promising 5+ cards in the bid major and 4+ cards in any other suit. See the relevant section for the subsequent auction.

2NT is 20-22 and may contain a 5 card major or 6 card minor, see relevant section for responses.

3 bids are weak, over which new suits by responder are forcing in uncontested and contested auctions. Openings at the 3 level may be on 6 cards, but the suit should be a good one to allow partner to judge when holding a good hand. Jump overcalls can be weaker and in 3rd position 3 level openings may hide opening values for tactical purposes.

3NT is gambling, over which responder bids:-

 4♣ = Pass or correct to 4♦

 4♦ = Asks Opener to cue bid a singleton or bid:-

4NT=7222, 5♣/5♦= singleton in **other** minor

4 bids are weak, at least 7 cards.

NB In 4th, 2♦-2♠ are intermediate 11-16 and 6+ card suits.

# OPENING 1 MINOR

## Opening 1♣

The 1♣ opening is commonly either natural or a balanced hand outside the 1NT opening range. The opening might only be 2 cards in length (e.g. 4432 shape without 4 diamonds).

There are few conventions that do not lose something, but playing ‘transfer’ responses to 1♣ openings are such a thing. In traditional systems where 1♦, 1♥ and 1♠ are all natural and forcing, when opener raises responder’s suit it may be on 3 cards, e.g.

1♣-1♥-? holding 85 QJ7 K1042 AQ103 would we not rebid 2♥ rather than 1NT ?

Playing transfer responses, you can tell whether opener has raised with 3 cards or not. After an opening of 1♣, the response structure is as follows:-

1♦ = shows 4+ hearts

1♥ = shows 4+ spades

1♠ = shows 4+ diamonds

1NT = balanced 6-9, usually 4 clubs unless you have decided not to show a weak suit (perhaps 9742)

2♣ = inverted, 10+ and 4+ card club suit (see the section on inverted minors for more information)

2♦/♥/♠ = weak, 6+ card suit 4-8 HCP and to play (should opener have a big hand, he can enquire with

 2NT exactly the same as over an opening weak 2).

2NT = 10-12, standard balanced limit bid

3♣ = inverted, 6-9 and 5+ card suit (see the opening 1♦ section for more information)

3♦/♥/♠ = Splinter, 5+ card support and shortage in the bid suit

3NT = To play, 13-15, standard balanced limit bid. With more values use the inverted minor response.

4♣ = Roman Key Card Blackwood

4♦/♥/♠ = Exclusion Key Card Blackwood

After the 1♦/♥ response, opener will rebid:-

1♥/♠ (i.e. ‘complete’ transfer) = shows a weak NT (and denies 4 card support)

1NT = balanced, 18-19 (the responses to this being ‘2♣/♦ NF/GF Checkback’ – see below)

2♥/♠ (i.e. ‘raise’ transfer suit) = shows 4+ card support, <16

2NT = 4 card support, 18+ with Jacoby style responses.

3♥/♠ (i.e. ‘double jump raise’ transfer suit) = shows 4+ card support, 16-17.

Opposite the transfer ‘completion’ showing a weak NT, responder can use ‘2♣/♦ Non-Forcing/Game Forcing Checkback’ – refer to the relevant section for more information, e.g.

1♣-1♥-1♠-2♦ = artificial GF Checkback, the auction continues naturally.

If opener does not have a weak NT, they will make their natural rebid, e.g.

1♣-1♥-2♦ = natural reverse

After 1♣-1♠, opener will rebid:-

1NT = balanced, 12-14 and responder can use Checkback similar to the other 2 transfer sequences.

Other bids are natural and a jump rebid of 2NT shows 18-19 balanced.

## Contrast these sequences :

## 1♣-2♥ = 4-8 HCP and 6+ cards

## 1♣-1♦-1♥-2♥ = 9-11 HCP and 6+ cards (NB - Responder can pass 1♥, so raising is invitational).

## 1♣-1♦-1♥-Pass = <10 HCP and 5 cards

## 1♣-1♦-1♥-2♣-2♦-2♥ = 9-11 HCP and 5 cards

## 1♣-1♦-1♥-2♦ = any GF and so rebidding hearts later is natural and GF

## Opening 1♦

Opening 1♦ promises 4+ cards. Unlike when opening 1♣, there is little benefit and less room to use transfer responses to 1♦ and the tried and trusted response structure suffices. Inverted minor suit raises are worth incorporating which allow a more controlled auction in comparison to the cumbersome traditional 1m-3m limit bids.

The system makes use of jumps shift responses to be weak and splinters at the 2 and 3 level respectively. Higher jumps can then be Exclusion Key Card Blackwood. The system also uses 4 of a minor as Roman Key Card Blackwood. Refer to the relevant section in the ‘other conventions’ section for Key Card Blackwood.

Response structure over an opening 1♦:-

1♥/♠ = Natural, 4+ cards and 6+ HCP

1NT = 6-9 HCP, denies a biddable 4 card major and typically has a club suit

2♣ = Natural, 4+ cards and GF

2♦ = Inverted, 4+ card support and 10+ HCP

2♥/♠ = Weak, 4-8 HCP and 6+ cards.

2NT = 10-12, standard balanced limit bid.

3♣ = Splinter, 4+ card support and shortage in clubs

3♦ = Inverted, 5-9 and 4+ card support

3♥/♠ = Splinter, 4+ card support and shortage in the bid suit

3NT = To play, 13-15, standard balanced limit bid. With more values start with a suit bid.

4♣/♥/♠ = Exclusion Key Card Blackwood

4♦ = Roman Key Card Blackwood

### Principle of Fast Arrival and 2/1 Responses

Throughout the system, when we are in a GF situation the faster we get to game, the weaker we are.

A 2/1 response is GF so simple rebids are forcing after 1♠-2♣ and jumps are splinters agreeing responders suit : 1♠-2♣-3♥ is therefore club support and a shortage in hearts.

Opener rebids naturally after a 2/1 and 2NT can be either 12-14 or 18-19 since the 2/1 is GF and opener can ‘catch up’ later.

Bidding quickly to game shows a weaker hand, so 1♠-2♣-2♥-4♠ is weaker than 1♠-2♣-2♥-2♠.

Until you are confident that partner will not miss such subtleties, you might play this as natural :

1♠-2♣-2♥-3♠, but there is an argument to play 2♠ as agreeing the spade suit (you will be going to game regardless) and the unnecessary jump therefore shows ‘something else’. In this example, the 3♠ bid could be shortage in opener’s first suit spades and good 4 card heart support and a slam try. Using the PFA if responder was weaker, he could rebid 1♠-2♣-2♥-4♥ as a sign off.

## Inverted Minor Suit Raises

Minor suit raises are ‘inverted’, 2 level raises being 10+ HCP and 3 level raises 5-9. In the case of 1♣-3♣, responder will usually have 6+ clubs to cater for the opening possibly being short.

1m-2m = 10+ with 4+ card support (forcing to at least 2NT or 3m)

1m-3m = 5-9 with 4+ card support (likely 5+ as with 4 card support we may prefer to respond 1NT)

After the 2 level inverted response, opener needs some way to show a weak NT. We use the next suit up as ‘either a natural reverse or weak NT’, e.g. 1♦-2♦-2♥. Responder will ‘relay’ in the next suit and opener describe their hand :

1♦-2♦-2♥-2♠-? : 2N = weak NT, other rebids are natural and show the reverse GF.

It is also useful to be able to show a weak NT ***with*** and ***without*** clubs when we open 1♣, e.g.

1♣-2♣-2♦-2♥-? Here we can show a weak NT with and without clubs :

2♠ = weak NT ***with*** clubs (responder can bid 2N invitationally, opener accepting with 13-14).

2N = weak NT ***without*** clubs (12-13 HCP).

3N = weak NT ***without*** clubs (13-14 HCP).

If opener rebids something other than the relay, they are natural :

1m-2m-2NT = balanced 18-19 NT.

1m-2m-3NT = a hand that would have made a jump rebid, e.g. 1♣-1♦-3♣.

Other ‘reverse’ rebids are natural and strong, e.g. 1♣-2♣-2♥ = natural with reversing values.

In all circumstances when a minor suit has been agreed or implied, 4m is Roman Key Card Blackwood, e.g. 1♣-2♣-2N-4♣ = Roman Key Card Blackwood – refer to the section later.

## In Competition

Transfers over 1♣ still apply over a RHO takeout double, but are OFF as are inverted minor suit raises in all other competition.

Sputnik doubles ***often*** deny a biddable suit at the 1 level (refer to the ‘Sputnik doubles’ and ‘Non-forcing free bids’ sections for more information on sequences in this area), e.g.:-

1♣-(1♥)-X = ***usually*** denies 4 spades otherwise you could just respond 1♠, but :-

1♣-(1♦)-X = promises both majors, so 1♣-(1♦)-1♥ = denies 4 spades

The double in the auction 1♣-(1♥)-X doesn’t deny 4 spades because with 5+ diamonds and 4 spades with GF values, we double. This is to allow ‘non-forcing free bids’ in competitive auctions. ‘Non-forcing free bids’ mean ‘displaced’ bids are NF, e.g. 1♣-(1♥)-2♦ shows 5+ diamonds and may be passed but ‘non-displaced’ bids retain their forcing for 1 round nature, e.g. 1♣-(1♥)-1♠ = natural and forcing.

The Unassuming Cue Bid is used opposite our overcall or an overcall of partner’s minor suit opening by RHO to initially ask for a stop but if followed by support showed a good raise in partner’s suit.

2NT opposite our overcall or an opponents’ overcall of partner’s minor suit is natural showing stop(s) in the opponents’ suit(s). However, 2NT opposite partner’s minor suit opening and RHO takeout double shows a good raise to 3+ with natural responses.

We play Fit-Jumps, showing support and a good side suit headed KJxx or better.

Higher jumps will be splinters and even higher Exclusion Key Card Blackwood.

4 of our minor suit is still RKCB in competition.

# OPENING 1 MAJOR

Opening 1M shows 5+ cards. With a 5332 distribution and 15-17 we open 1NT. So, opening 1M will either be unbalanced with 6+ cards, 5-4 or more in 2 suits or 5332 in the NT ranges 12-14 or 18-19.

2 level responses are game forcing.

Unlike a lot of 2/1 systems where a 1NT response is forcing, in this system opener is able to pass with a weak NT, otherwise they rebid naturally, e.g. 1♥-1NT-2♣ shows 5+ hearts and 4+ clubs. If responder has a weak hand with a club fit they can pass this or convert it to 2♦ which may be passed.

A major suit raise to the 2 level is constructive, but raises to the 3 or 4 level are pre-emptive based on the number of trumps. Invitational raises are made using a Bergen style 3♣/♦.

## Responses To 1 Major:-

1♠ = Natural, 4+ cards and 6+ HCP

1NT = Balanced 6-9 or unbalanced but without the values to 2/1.

New suit at the 2 level = natural and GF.

Raises of opener’s major : 1M-2M is ‘constructive’ showing 3-4 cards 6-9 HCP, 1M-3M shows 4 card support 0-5 HCP and 1M-4M is also weak with 5+ card support.

2NT = Jacoby, 4+ card support and GF – see below for continuations.

3♣/♦ = Bergen style 3/4 card support invitational (9-11 HC) raises – see below for continuations.

3NT = Balanced and to play, but promising 3 card support, so opener may correct to 4M.

New suits at the 4 level = Splinters, 4+ card support 7-11 HCP (with more values use Jacoby 2NT)

4NT = Roman Key Card Blackwood

## 2/1 Response To 1 Major - Game Forcing

A 2/1 response to 1M is game forcing. If opener ‘reverses’ after a 2/1 response, it promises extra values, e.g. 1♥-2♣-2♠ shows 5+ hearts and 4+ spades and 17+ HCP.

Without reversing values, opener makes their natural rebid and the ‘principle of fast arrival’ applies, so:-

1♥-2♣-2♥-? : 3♥ is better than 4♥.

NB 1♥-2♣-2NT=12-14 or 18-19 since 2♣ is GF, opener will ‘catch up’ with 18-19, e.g.

1♥-2♣-2NT-3NT-4♣ = 18-19 and RKCB since 4m is RKCB in GF auctions.

If opener has 5 hearts and 4 spades and doesn’t have the values to reverse, they may rebid 2♥. Some systems employ the use of a ‘Flannery 2♦’ opening bid to cater for this hand, but due to its extremely low frequency the 2♦ bid is best employed as something else. Refer to the relevant section for this opening bid.

## Jacoby 2NT Response To 1 Major

1M-2NT is Jacoby Game Forcing with 4 card support (except in competition when it is a raise to 3+).

Opener rebids:-

3 new suit = shortage (over which : new suits at the 3 level are shortages, 3NT is a balanced slam try and new suits at the 4 level are cue bids)

3 opener’s major = good opening and 6+ cards, no shortage.

3NT = balanced, ‘serious slam try’, no shortage.

4 opener’s major = minimum opening, no shortage.

4 new suit = natural 5-5 or more with a good side suit.

After Opener’s rebid, a new suit by responder shows a shortage otherwise he rebids the major or 3NT. Suits at the 4 level if 3NT is not available are cue bids. Note that 3M is a stronger response than 4M using the ‘Principle of Fast Arrival’ in a GF situation as mentioned before – however in competition these rebids are switched 4M shows a good opening and 3M a weak one and all stronger hands without a shortage are handled with a 3NT rebid.

## Bergen Raise Responses To 1 Major

Playing a 2/1 GF system there is no need to have 1M-3m as a GF and so it is quite useful to use them as something else. This system uses them to show a raise with 9-11 HCP, relieving 1M-3M/4M to be pre-emptive. Bergen Raises were designed for this purpose and serve their purpose well.

The system adapts them slightly from their original form to allow 1M-3♣ to show a 9-11 HCP 3 card raise and have 1M-1NT as non-forcing. In the original Bergen system, 3♣ showed a 4 card raise in the 6-9 HCP range and was employed in a forcing 1M-1NT system where responder would initially respond 1NT forcing intending to bid 3M over opener’s rebid to show the 9-11 HCP 3 card raise. However, I think opener should be allowed to pass 1M-1NT with a weak NT, so:-

1M-3♣ = 9-11 and 3 card support.

1M-3♦ = 9-11 and 4 card support.

Opener will rebid naturally over them, 3M to play and other bids natural and GF.

## In Competition

Bergen raises are OFF after 1M-(overcall), but stay ON after 1M-(X). After an overcall they are replaced with ‘Fit-Jumps’ showing support and a good side suit headed by at least KJxx.

2NT is still Jacoby in competition, but as mentioned above the 3M/4M responses are switched 3M being the weaker option and all other bids show extra values.

Opposite 1M-(overcall), a cue bid of the opponents suit shows a ‘good’ raise (9-11) but only 3 card support since Jacoby 2NT is still used with 4 card support.

Opposite (1x)-major suit overcall, a cue bid of the opponents suit shows a ‘good’ raise (9-11) with 3+ card support since (1x)-1M-(P)-2NT is needed to show a ‘good’ balanced hand.

After intervention, a 2/1 is natural and non-forcing if ‘displaced’. Refer to the section on ‘Non-Forcing Free Bids’ for more information. e.g.

1♥-(1♠)-2♣ = forcing (but not GF) since the bid has not been displaced by the overcall

1♥-(2♣)-2♠ = non-forcing since the bid was displaced by the overcall, we would have responded 1♠

1♥-(2♣)-X-(P)

2♦-(P)-2♠ = natural 5+ cards and forcing to game

# OTHER OPENER AND RESPONDER BIDS

A jump shift rebid by Opener is natural and forcing unless opposite a 2/1 GF response in which case it is a splinter in support of responders suit. This is again a general principle – whenever the suit bid 1 level lower is natural and forcing, a jump in that suit is typically a splinter in support of partner’s suit.

Opener reverses are forcing for one round with Lebensohl rebids by responder. If Opener is too strong to risk Responder passing 3♣ he must find another bid rather than complete the puppet to 3♣. Refer to the section on Lebensohl for the difference between immediate bids and bids via the 2NT-3♣ puppet.

Opposite all opening suit bids, Jump shift responses at the 2 level are weak and Opener can use a 2NT enquiry with the responses the same as the 2NT enquiry to a weak 2 or weak jump overcall.

Since the jump shifts are weak, responding at the 1 level and rebidding the suit show constructive hands, 5+ cards and 9-11 HCP, e.g. 1♦-1♠-2♣-2♠.

As mentioned above, when a bid at a level is natural and forcing, a jump is a splinter. Higher jumps are Exclusion Key Card Blackwood, e.g.

1♠-2♦-3♥ (since 2♦ is game forcing, 2♥ is forcing and so 3♥ is a splinter with 4 card diamond support)

1♠-2♦-4♥ (as above, so 4♥ is Exclusion Key Card Blackwood with diamonds as trumps)

1♠-2♦-4♦ (as mentioned elsewhere in these notes, 4 of our minor is Roman Key Card Blackwood)

When partner shows a single suiter, new suits will be 2-way, either a cue bid or natural, to be clarified on the next round.

e.g. 1♠ 2♦

2♠ 3♣ is either natural with ♣s or ♠ support and a cue bid

any 3/4♠ or 4NT shows 3♣ was a cue bid and ♠ support

4♣ shows a minor 2 suiter

After a 1 level response and raise, returns to openers suit are forcing in a minor, but invitational in a major, i.e.:-

1♦-1♥-2♥-3♦ = Forcing, but

1♥-1♠-2♠-3♥ = Invitational, 3 card support

We play ***both*** “Long” and “Short” suit “Trial Bids” after opening 1 of a major by using the ‘next suit’ as a relay after 1M-2M for a “Short” suit trial and bids above the relay are “Long” suit trials.

## Long Suit Trial Bids

1♥-2♥-? : 3♣/♦ = Long suit trial, 2N = Long suit trial in spades.

1♠-2♠-? : 3♣/♦/♥ = Long suit trial.

## Short Suit Trial Bids

1♥-2♥-2♠ = relay, opener must bid 2N then : 3♣/♦ = Short suit trial, 3♥ = Short suit trial in spades.

1♠-2♠-2N = relay, opener must bid 3♣ then : 3♦/♥ = Short suit trial, 3♠ = Short suit trial in clubs.

## 4th Suit is forcing to game.

1♦-1♥-2♣-2♠–any-3♦ = Forcing through 4th suit

1♦-1♥-2♣-3♦ = Invitational

# RESPONDING TO 1NT

## 5 Card Stayman

Undoubtedly Stayman will be one of the first conventions most partnerships write down on their convention cards. There are alternatives these days, but Stayman remains a key part of most pairs responses to 1NT. This system employs ‘5 Card Stayman’ and the responses below lose the system known as ‘Garbage Stayman’ where responder intends to pass openers rebid as it promises at least invitational values, but the advantages outweigh the disadvantages in my opinion. As an aside, I would guess many pairs have not agreed the difference between 1NT-2♣-2♦-3♥ and 1NT-2♦-2♥-2♠, where both appear to suggest 5 hearts and 4 spades…. it’s time to put that right.

The following section will appear complicated at first and may need a number of reads before the logic appears. However, once the meaning becomes clear, it is very easy to commit to memory.

2♣ = Asks for 5 card major but could be a slam try with any 5 card suit, opener has 3 responses :-

2M = shows 5 card major

2N = neither 4 or 5 card major AND shows a doubleton spade with a minimum 15-16 HCP.

 leaving the 2♦ response to cover all other possible hands, i.e. :-

2♦ = EITHER shows 4 card major OR a 3 card spade suit OR any maximum 16-17 HCP.

The 2N and complex meaning to the 2♦ responses are designed to handle the hand where responder has 5 spades and 4 hearts with an invitational hand, so after a 2N response responder can pass knowing there is no major suit fit. A similar system is played after an opening 2NT and 3♣ enquiry, where 2NT-3♣-3♦ either shows a 4 card major or 3 spades and 2NT-3♣-3N denies 4/5 card major and shows a doubleton spade – here too with 5 spades and 4 hearts, responder knows there is a fit after a 3♦ response. So committing this ‘wrinkle’ to memory serves both auctions.

2♣-2♦-2♥ = Shows 4 hearts and is forcing to at least 2NT.

This is the action to take with 5 spades and 4 hearts since opener will either raise

hearts with 4 card support or bid 2♠ with 4 cards or 2NT to deny a 4 card major but

must therefore have a minimum hand with 3 spades (remember with a min, no 4 card

major and 2 spades, they would bid 1NT-2♣-2N).

This releases 1NT-2♥-2♠-3♥ to show a 5-5 major suit hand.

Without a 4 card major but with a maximum, opener rebids 3♠ or 3NT over 2♥ to

show or deny a 3 card spade suit.

Compare these sequences :

1NT-2♣-2NT and 1NT-2♣-2♦-2♥-3NT are equivalent to 2NT-3♣-3NT

denying 4/5 card major with 15-poor 16/good 16-17 respectively AND only 2 spades

1NT-2♣-2♦-2♥-2NT and 1NT-2♣-2♦-2♥-3♠ are equivalent to 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♥-3NT

denying 4/5 card major with 15-poor 16/good 16-17 respectively WITH 3 spades

2♣-2♦-2♠ = Shows 4 spades and denies 4 hearts and is forcing to at least 2NT.

2♣-2♦-2NT = Invitational without a 4 card major, opener passes or accepts with 3NT.

2♣-any-3any = Natural 5 card suit, slam try. New suits are natural.

## Jacoby Transfers

Like Stayman, Jacoby transfers are also pretty standard for many pairs. One issue to discuss is whether you can ‘break’ the transfer and if so what does breaking it mean. Breaking to new suits in this system show 4 card support and a good side suit (e.g. KQ10x) – responder should value a high card in this suit when deciding how high to go.

2♦/2♥ are transfers to 2♥/♠ respectively, showing a 5+ card suit. With 4 card support, opener can break the transfer to:-

3♥/♠ = Mininum (protected by the ‘Law of Total Tricks’ which suggests that you can safely

 bid to the level of the number of trumps between the two hands)

New suit = Maximum & good holding in suit bid,

2NT = Maximum, no side suit feature.

Over breaks, 3♦/3♥are “re-transfers” if available allowing responder to insist opener play it

and can pass the retransfer with a weak hand, e.g. 1N-2♦-2♠-3♦-3♥-Pass

After a transfer, responder rebids:-

New suit = Natural and game forcing EXCEPT :-

1N-2♦-2♥-2♠ = Forcing 1 round, 5+ hearts and 4+ spades.

1N-2♥-2♠-3♥ = Invitational 5-5.

With 5-5 GF bid 1N-2♦-2♥-2♠-any-3♠

Jump new suit = Splinter

Raise of the transfer suit = 6+ cards and is GF+, note 1NT-3x is invitational.

2NT = invitational (then 3M by opener is to play)

3NT = to play

4NT = quantitative.

## Other Responses To 1NT

2♠ = EITHER transfer to clubs OR balanced forcing to slam, opener rebids 2N to deny Hx in clubs or 3♣ to show Hx. Then Pass/3♣ are to play otherwise new suits show a shortage with clubs and a jump to 4NT shows a balanced forcing to slam hand, opener rebids at the 5 level showing 4 card suits and 5 level to show 5 card suits. After the 2♠ response, 4♣ is self agreeing RKCB.

2NT = EITHER transfer to diamonds OR a minor 2 suiter, opener rebids 3♣ to show better clubs than diamonds (otherwise 3♦) allowing responder to pass with a weak hand and both minors. After opener’s rebid, 3♦ is to play otherwise new suits show a shortage with diamonds and a jump to 4NT shows 5-5 minors asking opener to choose. After the 2N response, 4♦ is self agreeing RKCB.

3 any = 6+ cards, invitational. Opener can accept with a fitting honour and bid 3NT or 4M. Using this method thin games can be found with good fitting cards : respond 3♥ with xx KQ10xxx Qxx xx

4♣/4♦ = Transfers to 4♥/4♠ respectively, then 4NT = RKCB.

4♥/4♠ = To play.

## Quantitative Auctions

4NT is quantitative in the following instances:-

Stayman then 4NT over 2♦ or 2NT, but RKCB over 2M, e.g. 1NT-2♣-2♥-4NT = RKCB.

Transfer then 4NT immediately, e.g. 1NT-2♦-2♥-4NT

## RKCB Auctions

4NT is Roman Key Card Blackwood in the following instances:-

Stayman followed by a splinter then 4NT.

Transfer then 4NT over a transfer break.

4 level transfer then 4NT.

##

## Action Over Intervention To 1NT

1NT – (2♣) - ? : ‘System on’, with X=5 card Stayman, 2♦=Transfer etc.

1NT – (2 other) - ?

 X = Value raise to 2NT (may not have stop) OR takeout. Opener may pass for penalties.

New suits by opener are natural 4+ cards and 2NT by Opener shows a minimum NT.

 New suits = To play at the 2 level. Forcing at the 3 level.

 Cue Bid = If the overcall is natural, 3 of the suit is Staymanic with the values for 3NT and show a

 stop(s) in the overcalled suit, e.g. 1NT-(2♥)-3♥, and a cue bid via a Lebensohl 2NT

 denies a stop e.g. 1NT-(2♥)-2NT-(P)-3♣-(P)-3♥

 2NT = Lebensohl transfer to 3♣ - refer to the section on Lebensohl for continuations.

 3NT = To play, showing a stop(s) in the overcalled suit.

## After 1NT-(X)

In the event that the double is penalties, then:-

Pass = To play.

Redouble = transfer to 2 minor, opener must rebid 2♣ and responder passes or corrects to 2♦.

Other bids = System on.

If the double is conventional, then redouble is to play or penalty seeking and cue bids of opponents suits are takeout.

## Other 1NT Sequences

Typically opponents double conventional bids as ‘lead directing’. On the basis that if we don’t have a fit, we need to know whether we can stop ‘their’ suit, the system adopts a simple approach that :-

Pass/Redouble = denies/shows a stop in ‘their’ suit

Other bids = typically ‘system on’.

Doubles when they bid show values and are typically takeout (passes may be forcing)

e.g.

1NT-(Pass)-2♣-(2♥/♠)-Pass = forcing since 2♣ is forcing to 2N and double here is takeout.

1NT-(Pass)-2♣-(2♥/♠)-Pass-(Pass)-X = general values.

1NT-(Pass)-2♣-(X=lead directing)-? : XX = shows a club stop, pass = denies club stop,

2♦/♥/♠ = natural 5 cards.

1NT-(Pass)-2♦/♥-(X=lead directing)-? : Complete transfer = 3 card support, Breaks = 4 card support,

Pass/XX = deny 3 card support and denies/shows a stop in

the bid suit respectively.

## 1NT Rebid And Checkback 2♣/2♦

Opening 1 of a suit and rebidding 1NT generally show a balanced hand in the 12-14 range. Often when the opening bid is 1♣, responder will ‘transfer’ with 1♦/♥ to show a 4 card major or bid 1♠ to show 4+ diamonds. After 1♣-1♦/♥, opener will ‘complete the transfer’ by bidding 1♥/1♠ or rebid 1♣-1♠-1NT to show a weak 12-14 NT.

After any rebid effectively showing a 12-14 1NT or the auction 1♣-1♦/♥-1NT (showing 18-19 balanced), 2♣ and 2♦ are NF and GF Checkback respectively.

After Checkback 2♣, Opener must rebid 2♦, then Pass and suits at the 2 level = NF, e.g.

1♣-1♦-1♥-2♣-2♦-Pass = shows 4 hearts but longer diamonds.

1♣-1♦-1♥-2♣-2♦-2♥ and

1♦-1♥-1NT-2♣-2♦-2♥ = constructive with 5 cards, 9-11.

After Checkback 2♦, Opener rebids naturally, e.g.

1♦-1♥-1NT-2♦-2♥ = 3 card heart support

Non-checkback sequences after 1NT are Invitational and will be 6+ cards if responder ‘rebids’ their suit. e.g.

1♦-1♠-1NT-2♥ shows 5-4 and is invitational (1♦-1♠-1NT-2♣-2♦-2♥ shows 5-4 NF)

 1♦-1♥-1NT-2♠ is invitational 5-5 in the majors (1♦-1♥-1NT-2♣-2♦-2♠ shows 5-5 NF)

 1♦-1♥-1NT-2♥ is invitational with 6+ hearts

1♦/♥/♠-1any-2NT = 18-19 (passable if responder is sub-minimum, other responder rebids = natural).

After a 2/1 response, opener’s 2NT rebid shows either 12-14 or 18-19 and responder rebids naturally, e.g.

1♥-2♣-2NT-3♣ = 6+ cards GF.

1♥-2♣-2NT-3♥ = 3 card support and GF.

1♣/1♦-any-3NT = running suit.

# OPENING 2♣

This is the only big opening bid of the system. Precision system pairs have copious notes following their opening 1♣ bid, proud of the tools they have available to perfectly describe their hands. Exponents of the 2♣ systems spend little or no time at all discussing what they will do opposite 2♣. It’s slightly different as opening 2♣ tends to be much bigger than Precision 1♣ openings and so the frequency is less and the 2♣ pairs get away with it most of the time. However, serious partnerships should adopt a good system which will help them deal with these hands when they are fortunate to be dealt such a big hand.

*If things so far have appeared hard to understand, I would recommend skipping this section until the end as it is probably the most complicated area of the system. You can of course just play your own methods over 2♣ in the same way as ignoring many of the recommended methods in this document and retaining your own. I simply would like to propose a comprehensive system over 2♣ that I believe will improve results when these hands come along.*

This system adopts a ‘3 tier’ scale of responses : 0-3, 4-6 and 7+ HCP.

Like the 1NT responses, this section may appear complicated at first, but I have tried to incorporate ‘patterns’ and logic into the system to make it easier to remember and this section too will benefit from a number of reads to understand the logic behind the suggested meanings.

## Responses To 2♣

2♦ = EITHER 0-3 HCP any shape OR 7+ HCP with a 5-4+ shape that includes a 5 card major.

2♥ = All other 7+ HCP hands.

Other responses show 4-6 HCP :

2♠ = 5-4+ shape that includes a 5 card major.

2N = balanced/semi-balanced (4333, 4432, 5332, 4441, 5-4 minors or 5 diamonds+4M)

3♣ = 5+ clubs with a 4 card major OR 6+ clubs

3♦ = 6+ diamonds

3M = 6+ cards

3NT = 5-5 minors

**General Agreements**

**2**♣**-2**♦**-2**♥**-2**♠ and **2**♣**-2**♠ show the same hand with 7+ and 4-6 HCP respectively

**2**♣**-2**♥**-2**♠**-2N/3**♣**/**♦**/**♥**/**♠**/3N/4**♣**/**♦ and **2**♣**-2N/3**♣**/**♦**/**♥**/**♠**/3N/4**♣**/**♦ ditto

Then all the subsequent auctions follow the same lines.

Depending on Opener’s hand, he may take one of 2 courses of action following the initial response :

1. Relay asking responder to describe his hand further
2. Ask in his own suit

The action will depend on what opener needs to know. If he has a self supporting suit or a semi-solid suit that he wants to play in, he may ask in his own suit to see if responder can provide 3 card support or an honour in the suit which will often set the suit as trumps – ***HOWEVER*** if opener bids a game or slam in another denomination responder can assume this is to play; allowing opener to ask in a side suit e.g. KJx where either the Q or A may suffice. So care needs to be taken when the asker bids either a game or slam that this is passable. Refer to the section on ‘Suit Asking Bids’ for the responses.

If he is unsure which suit to play in, then he will tend to relay to find out more about responder’s distribution. After a relay and response, opener may still be able to ask in his own suit, refer to the relevant auctions to see this.

Bids of NTs by either player are quantitative when no suit has been agreed.

e.g. 2♣-2N-4N and 2♣-2♥-2♠-2N-4N

 2♣-2♥-2♠-2NT-3♣-3/4/5NT = 7-9/9-11/11-13

But are RKCB opposite natural suit bids or after inferential suit agreement:-

e.g. 2♣-2N-3♣-3♦-3♥-4N = this is RKCB and 3NT is forcing as it shows an unlimited bal hand.

 2♣-2N-3♣-3♥-4♣-4N = since opener has cue bid agreeing hearts, this is also RKCB.

4m RKCB for the minors is also available when a suit hasn’t been agreed:-

e.g. 2♣-2N-3♣-3♦-4♣ = since 3♦ isn’t natural, 4♣ can only be RKCB, but

 2♣-2N-3♣-3♥-4♣ = now 4♣ sounds like a cue bid for hearts and should be taken as such.

**Over 2nd Hand Intervention**

2♣-(overcall)-? 2♣-(X)-? Essentially ‘System On’ except Pass/XX :-

Pass = 0-3 HCP, any shape Pass = 0-3 HCP, any shape

X = 7+ HCP, any shape 2♦ = 7+ HCP, 5M+4 any other (2♥ relay)

Others = 4-6 HCP, natural 5+ cards XX = 7+ HCP and 5♦+4M (i.e. shows unbiddable hand)

2NT=bal (doesn’t promise a stop) Other bids = System On.

System On whenever possible with new suits asking and next suit relaying if responder’s hand is undefined, e.g.

2♣-(2♥)-3♣-(P) 2♣-(2♥)-2NT-(P)

? : ? :

3♦ = asking for 4 card major 3♣ = asking for distribution

3♥ = asking for a heart stop 3♦ = asking in diamonds

3♠ = asking in spades 3♥ = asking for a heart stop

4♣ = RKCB for clubs 3♠ = asking in spades

2♣-(X)-2♦-(P)

2♥-(P)-? :

2♠ = shows 5♠ + 4 another

3m = 4 suit + 5 hearts

3♥ = 5 hearts + 4 spades

If the intervention is conventional and shows a suit that can be cue bid, then the cue bid is for takeout of the suit and double shows the suit, both also showing 7+ HCP, e.g.

2♣-(X = diamonds)-? :

2♦ = 7+ points, takeout

XX = 7+ points, showing diamonds

**Over Intervention from 4th hand**

2♣-(P)-2♦-(X/suit)

?

Pass = Balanced 23-24 without a stop (in ♦s if X showed ♦s or the oppos bid suit otherwise)

XX/X = ditto with a stop (NB akin to 1NT-(P)-2♦-(X)-P/XX auction)

Others = System On – so 2♥ by opener above is still the relay.

2NT = 25+ balanced (normal responses to 2NT)

**‘Rule of Thumb’**

Bids will retain their normal meaning with asking bids opposite and the additional bids of Pass and X/XX and cue bidding their suits showing:-

Pass = Weakest hand, typically 0-3 HCP

X/XX = Any strong 7+ HCP

Cue bids = Takeout and 7+ HCP

So Pass is always weak and other ‘additional’ bids made available by the intervention always show 7+ HCP.

If the relay bid has been lost, then new suits will be simple asking in the suit.

**2**♣**-2**♦**-?**

2♥ = relay, asking for more information

2♠ = natural, asking for support

2NT = 23-24 balanced, **this is the only sequence that is passable**. Responses as per 2NT opening.

3♣/♦/♥ = natural, asking for support

**2**♣**-2**♦**-2**♥ **(relay)-? then:-**

2♠ = As per 2♣-2♠, showing 5M+4 any other, but 7+ HCP rather than the immediate 4-6 HCP range.

2N = 0-3 denies a biddable 6 card suit then : 3♣ asks for distribution and 3♦/♥/♠/4♣ ask in the suit.

3any = 6 card biddable suit

**2**♣**-2**♦**-2**♥ **(relay)-2**♠**-2N (asking for distribution)-? then:-**

3♣ = ♣+Major, then : 3♦=asks for Major; 3M=asks in the suit; 3/4N=quantitative; 4♣=RKCB for clubs.

3♦ = ♦+♥, then : 3♥ = agrees hearts; 3/4N = quantitative; 4♦ = RKCB for diamonds.

3♥ = 5♥+4♠, then : 3♠ = agrees ♠; 3N = to play; 4 minor = cue bid for hearts; 4N = RKCB for hearts.

3♠ = 5♠+4♥, then : 3N = to play; 4m=cue bid for spades; 4♥ = agrees hearts; 4N = RKCB for spades.

3N = ♠+♦, then : 4♦ = RKCB for diamonds; Other suits = cue bid for spades, 4N = RKCB for spades.

**2**♣**-2**♦**-2**♥ **(relay)-2**♠**-3**♣**/**♦**/**♥**/**♠ **(asking for support)-? then:-**

Step responses as per 2♣-2♦-2♠/3♣/♦/♥.

**2**♣**-2**♦**-2**♥ **(relay)-2N-? then:-**

3♣ = asks with responses similar to opening 2NT-3♣, i.e.:-

 3♦ = shows 4 card major or 3♠ e.g. 2♣-2♦-2♥-2N-3♣-3♦-3♥-3N = denies 4M but shows 3♠

 3M = shows 5 card major

 3N = denies both and shows at most a doubleton spade

3♦/♥/♠/4♣ = natural GF and asking with step responses as per 2♣-2♦-2♠/3♣/♦/♥.

Over the response to 3♣, a new suit by opener may be natural or a cue bid. Responder assumes it is a cue bid and also cue bids. If opener returns to the cue bid suit it was natural. Game bids are passable.

e.g. 2♣-2♦-2♥-2N-3♣-3♥-4♣-4♦-? : 4♠ = cue bid, 4NT = RKCB for hearts, 5♣ = natural & NF.

 2♣-2♦-2♥-2N-3♣-3♥-3♠-4♣-? : 4♥ = shows 3♠ was a cue bid, 4♠ = Nat & NF, 4NT = RKCB for hearts.

**2**♣**-2**♦**-2**♥ **(relay)-3 any-? then:-**

3♦/♥/♠/4♣ = natural GF and asking with step responses as per 2♣-2♦-2♠/3♣/♦/♥.

Other bids = natural GF and passable if game contract.

**2**♣**-2**♦**-2**♠**/3**♣**/**♦**/**♥ **(non-relay bid, asking for support in bid suit)-? then:-**

See ‘Suit Asking Bid’ section for responses.**SUIT ASKING BID**

When we bid a suit to ask in it e.g. 2♣-2♦-3♣ (i.e. make a non-relay bid)-? the responses are as follows:-

Step 1 = denies any support, i.e. < 3 cards and not Hx (where H = A,K or Q)

Step 2 = 3+ card support

Step 3 = Hx

Step 4 = Hxx

Step 5 = Hxxx or better

After a support showing bid (i.e. Step 2 and above), 4 agreed minor or 4NT = RKCB, other bids are cue bids -

***HOWEVER -*** Care needs to be taken if opener bids a game or slam ***as this is passable*** allowing them to ask in a side suit before setting the contract.

After a Step 1 response, new suits are natural and asking again in that suit and NT bids are to play or quantitative.

**In Competition**

If opponents interfere either by doubling or bidding, we use Pass and Dbl/Rdbl as the first 2 steps and the other steps retain their normal ‘system on’ meaning.**2**♣**-2**♥**-?**

2♠ = relay, asking for more information

2NT = 23+ balanced. Responses as per 2NT opening.

3 suit = natural GF and asking with step responses as per 2♣-2♦-2♠/3♣/♦/♥.

**2**♣**-2**♥**-2**♠ **= asks, then:-**

Responder rebids as per 2♣-? immediate responses, i.e. 2♣-2N/3♣/♦/♥/♠/4♣/♦ but showing 7+ HCP rather than 4-6 HCP for the immediate responses. The subsequent auction then follows similar lines to the immediate one.

**2**♣**-2**♠**-2N = asks, then:-**

Responses as per 2♣-2♦-2♥ (relay)-2♠-2N (asking for distribution) auction above.

**2**♣**-2NT-?**

3♣ = asks with responses similar to opening 2NT-3♣ see 2♣-2♦-2♥-2N-3♣ above.

3♦/♥/♠/4♣ = natural GF and asking with step responses as per 2♣-2♦-2♠/3♣/♦/♥.

**2**♣**-3**♣**-?**

3♦ = asks for major (then 3N denies 4M and shows 6+ clubs)

3M/4♦ = natural 5+ cards, asking as per 2♣-2♦-2♠/3♣/♦/♥ above

4♣ = RKCB for clubs

**2**♣**-3**♣**-3**♦**-?**

3M = natural 4 cards

3NT = denies a major (then 4♣ = RKCB for clubs)

**2**♣**-3**♦**-?**

3M = natural GF and asking with step responses as per 2♣-2♦-2♠/3♣/♦/♥.

Game bids = to play

4♦ = RKCB for diamonds

**2**♣**-3M-?**

New suit = natural GF and asking with step responses as per 2♣-2♦-2♠/3♣/♦/♥

Game bids = to play

4N = RKCB for the bid suit

**2**♣**-3N-?**

4m = RKCB for bid suit

Pass/4M/5m = to play

# OPENING MULTI 2♦

Opening 2♦ shows a 5+ card major (usually 6+ cards), 5-10 HCP.

NB in 4th position, opening 2♦ is natural and intermediate+.

Responses:

Pass = to play, long diamonds.

Major suits = Pass or correct, e.g. 2♦-2♠ and 2♦-3♠ = pass or correct with hearts.

3m = Constructive, NF

3NT = To play.

4M = To play.

2NT = Asks for more information, then : 3♣/♦ or 3♥/♠ = ‘upper’ or ’lower’ range with ♥/♠ respectively.

After Intervention

Any double of the opponents intervention is for penalties.

After opponents double (typically showing a weak NT):-

2♦-(X)-?

XX = asks for opener’s major

2M = natural and to play.

3♣ = natural and to play.

# LUCAS 2M OPENING

Opening 2♥/♠ show a 5 card suit and another 4+ card suit with 5-10 HCP.

Responses :-

2NT = Enquiry, opener rebids:-

3m = Natural, 4+ cards and ‘lower’ range, e.g. 2♥-2N-3♦ = 5♥ & 4+♦ with 5-7 HCP.

3♥ = Both majors and ‘lower’ range, e.g. 2♥-2N-3♥ = 5♥ & 4+♠ with 5-7 HCP.

3♠ = Both majors and ‘upper’ range, e.g. 2♥-2N-3♠ = 5♥ & 4+♠ with 8-10 HCP.

3N = M+m and ‘upper’ range, then : 4m natural RKCB.

 e.g. 2♥-2N-3N-4♣-? : Suits = RKCB response for ♣; 4N = ♥ + ♦

Raises = Barrage.

Next suit = Pass or correct.

Other suits = natural NF.

4 minor = splinter.

4 major = to play.

# OPENING 2NT AND RESPONSES

## General

The system of responses below applies over any natural 2NT ‘opening’:-

1. 2NT-?
2. 2♣-2♦-2NT-?
3. (1x)-P-(P)-2NT-(P)-?
4. (2x)-2NT-(Pass)-?

## 3♣ – 5 Card Stayman

3♣ = asks for a 5 card major, opener bidding it otherwise rebids as follows:-

 3♦ = denies 5 card major, but either shows a 4 card major or 3 card spade suit

 3NT = denies both a 4 and 5 card major and shows a doubleton spade.

After 3♣-3♦, 4 of either minor is natural 5+ cards slam invitational, but after 3♣-3M, 4m is a cue bid.

Over the 3♦ response, 3 of either major shows 4 cards and 3NT is to play.

After 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♥-?

3♠ = shows 4 spades and denies 4 hearts, then new suits are cue bids for spades and 4NT = RKCB.

3N = denies 4 cards in either major and so promises a 3 card spade suit.

4 new suit = cue bid in support of hearts and a subsequent 4NT is RKCB.

After 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♠-?

3N = either shows 4 hearts or 3 spades.

4x = is a cue bid for spades.

The purpose of the spade length showing 2NT-3♣-3♦/3NT is to cope with responder holding 5♠+4♥

and releases the traditional 2NT-3♠ showing this hand to be used to show something else instead.

e.g.

 2NT-3♣-3♦ = since responder knows opener either has a 4 card major or 3 spades they can

rebid 3♥ showing a 4 card heart suit and if opener rebids 3NT denying a heart fit, responder can bid 4♠ in the knowledge there is at least a 5-3 spade fit.

This is a slower route than 2NT-3♣-3♦-4♥ which shows the same hand and over which opener would pass with 4 hearts or convert to 4♠ with 3-4 spades. Since we play the ‘Principle of fast arrival’, the latter is simply to play in 4M and the former is slam going.

Once a suit is agreed, 4NT is RKCB. If there is no agreed suit it is quantitative. See also section 14 ‘Slam Bidding and RKCB 4NT’.

e.g. 2NT-3♣-3♠-4NT = RKCB for spades

 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♠-4♣-4NT = RKCB for spades

 2NT-3♣-3♠-4♣-4♦-4NT = RKCB for spades

 2NT-3♣-3♦-4♦ = Natural with diamonds, GF+.

 2NT-3♣-3♦-4NT = quantitative.

 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♠-3NT-4NT = quantitative.

## Jacoby and Texas Transfers

3♦ and 3♥ are both transfers to 3♥ and 3♠ respectively. If opener breaks to 4 suit, it shows a source of tricks and 4 card support and a maximum, breaking to 3NT would also show a maximum and 4 card support but scattered values.

Over a break, responder can repeat the transfer with 4♦/4♥ if available, new suits are cue bids and 4NT RKCB. Responder bids the trump suit to cue bid the retransfer suit, e.g. 2NT-3♦-4♣-4♥=♦ cue bid.

New suits after transfers are natural and 4NT quantitative:-

e.g. 2NT-3♦-3♥-4♣/4♦ = 5-5 hearts + minor

1. 2NT-3♥-3♠-4♣/4♦ = 5-5 spades + minor
2. 2NT-3♥-3♠-4NT = quantitative

4♣ and 4♦ responses are Texas transfers to 4♥ and 4♠ respectively and 4♥ and 4♠ are to play. Responder can pass to play there or bid 4NT after the transfer as RKCB.

## 3♠ Transfer to 3NT

Many partnerships are playing 3♠ to show both minors, but with a little adjustment this could be improved upon. If we play 2NT-3♠ as a transfer to 3NT, responder can pass to play there or pull it to show another kind of hand.

After 2NT-3♠-3NT responder passes to play in 3NT or bids again as follows:-

2NT-3♠-3NT-4♣/4♦ = RKCB for the bid suit

2NT-3♠-3NT-4NT = 5-5 minors, pick a minor.

We can then use 2NT-3NT as something else and with hands that would bid 2NT-3NT, we use 2NT-3♣ to locate a 5-3 major suit fit if one exists or 2NT-3♠-3N-Pass with a 2245 or similar shape without slam interest.

In this system the sequence 2NT-3NT shows BOTH minors and is forcing. Over this opener bids 4m natural (with RKCB responses by responder) or 4M with 5 cards (then 4N is natural NF) or 4NT with neither (then 5/6♣ = pass or correct).

## Quantitative Auctions

Transfer then 4NT immediately or when no suit has been explicitly agreed or shown.

## RKCB Auctions

4NT in the following auctions is RKCB:-

Texas transfer then 4NT.

Red suit transfer then 4NT over a break.

3♣ then 4NT after suit agreement :-

e.g. 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♠-4♣-4NT.

# OPENING 3NT AND RESPONSES

**3NT-?**

4♣ = Pass or correct.

4♦ = Asks for a shortage, then 4M=short in suit, 4N=no shortage, 5m=short in other minor.

**(3x)-3NT-(Pass)-?**

4♣ = Asks for the range, then step responses show : 4♦=15-16, 4♥=17-18, etc.

4♦ = Flint – asks opener to bid 4♥ which responder passes or corrects to 4♠ to play.

4M = Natural slam try.

# BIDDING AFTER AN OVERCALL

## General

The following notes apply both over an opponent’s overcall of our opening bid and opposite partner’s overcall of an opponent’s opening bid.

Bergen Raises DO NOT apply after an overcall, being replaced by fit jumps – see below.

Inverted minor suit raises DO NOT apply in competition.

## Fit Showing Jumps

Jumps into new suits are “Fit-Showing” (at least KJxx, invitational +) with 4+ card support.

## Cue Bidding the Opponents Suit

Cue bidding the opposition suit shows a value raise if partner’s suit is a Major (typically 10+ points and 3 card support) or is an Unassuming Cue Bid if partner’s suit is a minor. Opposite partner’s overcall, the cue bid is 3+ card support and 2NT natural.

A jump cue bid is a splinter.

## Bidding NT

Refer to the section on ‘2NT in Competition’ for more detail, but in summary:-

2NT is a value raise 10+ points with 4 card support if partner opened 1M and is natural, balanced and invitational opposite partner’s overcall of 1M.

2NT is 10-12 and natural opposite a minor suit, except in the auction 1m-(X) when it is a ‘good raise’.

3NT whether partner opened a major or minor are both natural with a stop in the overcalled suit.

## Double

Doubling an overcall is takeout. It ***usually*** denies a biddable suit at the 1 level and can be a strong one suited hand if the suit was displaced by the overcall (also see section on ‘Non-Forcing Free’ bids):-

e.g. 1♥-(2♣)-2♠ = NF something like KQxxxx xx xxx xx

and 1♥-(2♣)-X-(P)

2♦-(P)-2♠ = game forcing, single suited hand

Doubling a 1NT overcall shows extra values, simple suit bid responses are NF:-

e.g. 1♣-(1NT)-X = values, penalty seeking

 1♣-(1NT)-2 anything = NF

1M-(1NT)-2NT = raise to 3+ with Jacoby responses.

## Non-Forcing Free Bids

1♥-(2♣)-?

In a typical partnership, both 2♦ and 2♠ would be forcing here and to double and then bid a new suit would be weak or perhaps cause partner to shuffle around in their seat a little wondering what you’re playing at depending on who is opposite you. Playing ‘Non-forcing Free Bids’, we just switch the meanings around a little such that a new suit is non-forcing if it has been ‘displaced’.

It is a useful agreement to have, especially at Pairs when you want to compete but don’t want to stray too high. So, in the auction above:-

2♠ = is ‘displaced’, we would have responded 1♠ but for the overcall, as such it is non-forcing.

2♦ = is not displaced, we would have had to bid 2♦ even without the overcall, it is therefore forcing.

If we have a game forcing hand, e.g. in the first case a hand wanting to GF with spades, we double and then bid spades:-

1♥-(2♣)-X-(P)

2♦-(P)-2♠ = natural and game forcing.

The system allows us to compete with a weaker hand immediately and not risk getting bounced too high when we don’t have the values. The non-forcing bids show <12 HCP or equivalent.

See also the section on the ‘Good One Suited Hand’ (GOSH) and ‘Equal Length Conversion’ (ELC) for similar sequences and theory in situations involving takeout doubles.

## 4th Hand Overcalls or Raises an Overcall – Support Double/Redouble

In recent times more and more pairs have adopted the Support Double and Redouble allowing a differentiation between 3 and 4 card support when opener wants to show support for responder’s suit.

1♥-(P)-1♠-(2♣)-?

Pass = minimum opening.

2♦ = natural (forcing to suit agreement), may be based on extra values or shape.

 X = Traditionally, this would show extra values and balanced, however since we play a

 strong NT, the best use of the double here is to show 3 card support for spades and then

 2♠ shows 4 card support.

1♦-(P)-1♥-(2♣)-2♠ = natural reverse.

Rebids if 4th seat raise will promise extra values or distribution.

e.g. 1♦-(1♠)-X-(2♠)

 3♣ natural, may be based on extra values or shape.

X 16+, without a ♠ stop

2NT 16-17 with ♠ stop

3NT 18-19 with ♠ stop

1♦-(1♠)-Pass-(2♠)

As above, although 2NT will now be the upper range 18-19.

A double of a 1NT overcall shows extra values, whether responder bid or not:-

e.g. 1♣-(P)-anything-(1NT)-X = strong, 18-19.

## MICHAELS, NON AND LEAPING MICHAELS AND UNUSUAL 2NT

### Opponents Open a Natural 1 Suit

After the opponents open 1m:-

Cue bid = Michaels showing both majors at least 5-4, e.g. (1♦)-2♦

2NT = Unusual NT, showing the lower unbid suits at least 5-5, e.g. (1♦)-2NT showing clubs and hearts

After the opponents open 1M:-

Cue bid = Michaels showing at least 5-5 in the unbid major and an undisclosed minor, e.g. (1♥)-2♥

2NT = Unusual NT, showing at least 5-5 in the minor suits, e.g. (1♥)-2NT

In the case where a suit is unknown, 2NT asks for the suit. 2NT and then a new suit is GF+.

New suits opposite the overcall are natural and NF.

A re-cue bid asks for ½ a stop, e.g. (1♥)-2♥-(Pass)-3♥

### Opponents Open a Natural 2 Suit

After the opponents open 2m:-

3 Level Cue bid = Asks for a stop, e.g. (Precision 2♣)-3♣

4 Level Cue Bid = Michaels showing both majors, e.g. (2♦)-4♦

After the opponents open 2M:-

Cue bid = Asks for a stop, e.g. (2♥)-3♥

4 minor = Leaping Michaels, natural with the unbid major, e.g. (2♥)-4♣ showing clubs and spades

### Opponents Open a Natural 3 Suit

After the opponents open 3m:-

Cue bid = Michaels showing both majors, e.g. (3♦)-4♦

4 Other minor = Michaels, natural with an undisclosed major, e.g. (3♦)-4♣ and (3♣)-4♦

After the opponents open 3M:-

Cue bid = Shows both minors, e.g. (3♥)-4♥

4 minor = Non-Leaping Michaels, natural with the unbid major, e.g. (3♥)-4♣ showing clubs and spades

Leaping and Non-Leaping Michaels are both GF.

In the case where a suit is undisclosed and 2NT is not available to ask for it, a cue bid of the opponents suit asks and where that is also not available, then bids are ‘pass or correct’, e.g.

(3♦)-4♣-4♦ = Asks for the major suit.

(3♣)-4♦-4♥/♠ = Pass or Correct.

## DEFENCE TO 2 SUITED OPENINGS/OVERCALLS

### Opponents open showing a 2 suiter

e.g. 2NT showing the minors :

X = penalty seeking (pass then double is takeout).

3♣/♦ = 16+ HCP with 5+ hearts/spades.

3♥/♠ = <16 HCP with 5+ hearts/spades.

Our defence to an Ekren style 2♦ showing the majors is ‘natural’ with 2M being 5+ cards.

If the opening is a Lucas/Tartan style 2M showing the major and an undisclosed minor, we treat it as a weak 2 and bid accordingly.

### Opponents use Michaels or Unusual NT

X = penalty seeking.

2NT = Jacoby 4+ card raise opposite a major, otherwise natural.

3NT = Natural with good holdings in the shown suits.

Direct raises = weak.

If 2 suits are known: Lower Cue = Good raise to 3+ with 4 card support (3 if we open Major).

 Higher cue bid = Forcing in 4th suit (so 4th suit directly is NF)

If 1 suit is known : Cue bid = Good raise to 3+ with 4 card support (3 if we open Major).

 New suits = Forcing

e.g. 1♠-(2♠ = ♥ + minor)-? : 2NT & 3♥ = Raise to 3+ level with 4/3 card support respectively.

### Over 1NT intervention

After 1NT-(2♣ regardless of meaning)-? : X = 5 card Stayman and ‘System on’.

Cue bid and X of natural suits = takeout.

X of artificial suits = values and penalty orientated.

e.g. 1NT-(2♦=♠+another)-? : 2♠ = takeout of spades, X is penalty orientated.

 (1NT)-P-(2♦)-2♥ = takeout of hearts, X = penalty X of 1NT (or lead directing).

Lebensohl 2NT applies.

### Two suited Action in 4th Seat

(1♣)-P-(1♥)-X and 2NT Show 2 suiters in the unbid suits (NB 2♣/2♥ are therefore natural)

(1♠)-P-(2♠)-2NT Any 2 suits.

(1♠)-P-(P)-2♠ Any 2 suits (NB 2NT in 4th seat when oppos don’t raise is natural –

 e.g. (1♠)-P-(P)-2NT)

## RESPONDING TO AN OVERCALL

1NT = 8-11 balanced.

2NT = 12-14 balanced.

 If partner made a Weak or Intermediate Jump Overcall, 2NT = Ogust enquiry.

3NT = 15+ balanced.

Simple suits = Forcing.

Jump suits = Fit showing.

Cue bid = Good raise to 3+ with 3+ card support if overcall was a Major or

 Unassuming Cue Bid if overcall was a Minor initially asking for a stop

Raises = Pre-emptive.

Jump Cue bid = Splinter (higher jumps = Exclusion Key Card Blackwood)

## OTHER COMPETITIVE SEQUENCES

(1x)-P-(1y)-2x or 2y=Natural, at least 5 cards but more probably 6+

 e.g. (1♣)-P-(1♦)-2♣/2♦

(1x)-P-(Any)-X, 2NT = 2 suited in the unbid suits, except if X is followed by NT bid when it is 20+ balanced.

 e.g. (1♣)-P-(1♦)-X/2NT = 2 suiters, 2NT showing extra shape

 but (1♣)-P-(1♦)-X

 (P)-any-(P)-2NT = 20+ balanced

(1x)-P-(Any)-1NT = Natural, strong 17-19.

e.g. (1♣)-P-(1♥)-1NT

(1x)-1y-(1z)-2x/2z = Raise in y + values in bid suit.

e.g. (1♣)-1♦-(1♥)-2♣/2♥

 (1x)-P-(1NT) - X = Takeout of x or 15+ bal.

 - 2x = Michaels

 - 2NT = Unusual

e.g. (1♣)-P-(1NT)-X

 (1♣)-P-(1NT)-2♣

 (1♣)-P-(1NT)-2NT

(1x)-X-(2x)-2NT = Natural if x=minor, Lebensohl if Major.

e.g. (1♣)-X-(2♣)-2NT = Natural 10-12 balanced.

 (1♥)-X-(2♥)-2NT = Lebensohl

(1x)-1 or 2y-(any)-2NT = 12-14 and balanced.

(1x)-X-(1y)- X = 4 cards in y

 - 2x = Forcing to suit agreement

 - 2y = 5 cards in y

e.g. (1♣)-X-(1♥)-2♣ = Forcing to suit agreement

 (1♣)-X-(1♥)-2♥ = 5 cards in ♥

 (1♣)-X-(1♥)-X = 4 cards in ♥

# 2NT IN COMPETITION

2NT may be a number of things in competition. It will be :-

1. A ‘good raise’ in partners suit (typically good 10+ points with 4 card support) when partner’s suit is a Major. Responses are as per Jacoby, with relevant adjustments to the point ranges.

e.g. 1♥-(X)-2NT and 1♥-(2♣)-2NT but not (1♣)-1♥-(any)-2NT = balanced natural invitational

1. A ‘good raise’ in partners suit (typically 10+ points with 4+ card support) when partner opened a minor and the opponents doubled or a good balanced hand opposite an overcall of a minor.

e.g. 1♣-(X)-2NT = 10+ and 5+ card support (4+ needed if opening was 1♦);

 1♣-(1♥)-2NT and (1♥)-2♣-(any)-2NT = balanced 10-12/12-14.

1. Lebensohl (refer to the section on Lebensohl for specifics relating to the convention)

 defending :-

 Weak 2s e.g. (2♥)-X-(P)-2NT or (2♥)-P-(P)-X-(P)-2NT

 Weak jump overcall e.g. 1♣-(2♥)-2NT

 Multi e.g. (2♦)-X-(any)-2NT or (2♦)-P-(any)-X-(P)-2NT

 Opponents raise their major e.g. (1♥)-X-(2♥)-2NT or (1♥)-P-(2♥)-X-(P)-2NT

 or we have :-

 Bid or doubled 1NT e.g. 1NT-(2 suit)-2NT or (1♥)-1NT-(any)-2NT or

 (1NT)-X-(any)-2NT

 Made a reverse bid e.g. 1♣-1♠-2♥-2NT

 d) 2 places to play e.g. (1♠)-X-(2♠)-P-(P)-X-(P)-2NT

 1♥-(P)-P-(2♠)-X-(P)-2NT

e) Natural in response to a takeout double e.g. (1♣)-X-(P)-2NT

NB In Lebensohl situations:-

1. Via 2NT = weakest route = to play
2. Immediate suits = strongest route = Forcing
3. With intermediate invitational values you have to up or downgrade unless a suit is available at the 2 level in which case via Lebensohl 2NT is invitational and bids at the 2 level are NF

e.g. i) (2♥)-X-(P)-2NT

1. (P)-3♣-(P)-P typically Kxx x xxx QJxxxx

 (1♥)-X-(2♥)-2NT or 1N-(2♥)-2N-(P)

 (P)-3♣-(P)-3♦ 3♣-(P)-3♦ typically xxx x KQJxxx xxx

1.
2. ii) (1♥)-X-(2♥)-3♦ or 1N-(2♥)-3♦ or
3. (2♥)-X-(P)-3♦ typically Kxx x KQxxxx Axx
4. iii) 1NT-(2♥)-2♠ typically KQxxxx xx xxx xx
5. -2NT then 3♠ typically KQxxxx xx Kxx xx
6. -3♠ typically KQxxxx xx AJx xx

# FIT NON-JUMPS (FNJ)

When partner advertises a single suiter in a competitive auction, new suits at the 3

level will often have tolerance for partners suit.

 e.g. 2♥-(2♠)-3♦ = 5+ diamonds and possible ♥ tolerance.

 (1♥)-2♦-(any)-3♣ 5+ clubs and possible ♦ tolerance.

And as a passed hand will promise support.

e.g. P-(P)-1♠-(2♥)-3♣

# DOUBLES INCLUDING GOSH AND ELC

## Responding to a takeout double

Simple suits are 0-7, jumps 8-11 and a cue bid is 12+.

## Sputnik Double sequences

The takeout double these days tends to be ‘flexible’, usually meaning they show what we have and partner is expected to work them out. Overcalls are getting weaker too – typically down to the ‘youth of today’ with their carefree cavalier attitude to bridge and life in general.

Many years ago, ‘Negative Free Bids’ were created and weren’t adopted for a reason I’m not sure of as they are very useful to employ and don’t lose anything. Basically after an overcall, if responder bids a suit that was displaced by the overcall ‘it is not forcing’, otherwise it retains its natural and forcing meaning, e.g.

1♣-(1♥)-?

1♠ = not displaced, so natural and forcing

2♦ = displaced, so natural and non-forcing (less than an opening hand <12 HCP).

With the ‘opposite’ hand, you have to make the ‘flexible’ double and wait to hear what partner has to say. This isn’t a burden as with the hand that wanted to force naturally, you can bid the suit next time, e.g.

1♣-(1♥)-X-(P)

1♠-(P)-2♦ = natural and game forcing since 2♦ last time would have been NF

The use of the double has also been adapted such that by agreement, it can ‘deny’ a biddable suit e.g.

1♣-(1♥)-X = denies a 4 card spade suit, otherwise you could just bid 1♠.

This has an advantage for prepared 1♣ systems where opener can deduce that responder either has a forcing hand with a diamond suit or club support and of course opener also knows that responder doesn’t hold 4 spades. Traditionally 1♣-(1♥)-1♠ would show 5 cards and we’d double with 4, so we lose the ability to promise 4 or 5 cards with this agreement – however if we are playing ‘Support doubles/redoubles’ then we do have the possibility of showing 3 or 4 card support for responder’s suit in auctions like:-

1♣-(1♥)-1♠-(2♥) 1♣-(P)-1♠-(2♥/X)

X X/XX

Other examples:-

1m-(1M)-X Takeout, but doesn’t guarantee both suits:-

1M-(2m)-X e.g. 1♦-(1♠)-X xxx Jxx Kxx Axxx

 but does deny a ‘forcing’ biddable suit, so

1♣-(1♥)-X denies a ‘forcing hand’ with 4 spades and a weak NF hand with diamonds,

 Note also that:-

1♣-(1♥)-X-(P)

1♠-(P)-2♦ shows a GF hand with diamonds e.g. AQx x KQxxxx Qxx

However, if you employ ‘NF free bids’, the X could be a GF hand with diamonds and if you ALSO hold 4 spades, you should X rather than bid 1♠ since bidding spades then diamonds would show longer spades. So the X in last auction above cannot deny 4 spades but is ***usually not 4 spades***, since with spades and without diamonds, you would actually have responded 1♠. Opener can therefore respond 1♠ to the X if they hold 4 spades and no fit is lost.

A reverse or NT rebid after Sputnik do not promise extra values.

e.g. 1♣-(1♥)-X-(P)

 1NT/2♦

and 1♦-(1♥)-X-(2♥)

 2♠

Sputnik doubles do not promise another bid, Opener must show extra strength by cue

bidding or jumping:-

e.g. 1♣-(1♥)-X-(P)

1♠/1NT/2♣/2♦ = non-forcing.

## GOSH and Equal Level Conversion

John and I don’t use this at present, but the notes are here as we may consider introducing it at a later date. Using this method, a takeout double, then a bid of a new suit is either a GOSH (Good One Suited Hand) or scramble-style “Equal Level Conversion”.

i.e. if the new suit is at the same level as partner’s bid it is an ELC otherwise it is a GOSH.

e.g. (1♥)-X-(P)-2♣

 (P)-2♦ shows 5♦+4♠

 but (1♥)-X-(P)-2♦

 (P)-3♣ is a GOSH with 2♠ showing the 5♣+4♠ ELC hand

However, care must be taken if openers suit is raised:-

 (1♥)-X-(2♥)-? Responder needs to be careful bidding 3♦ since partners X

could be 5♣+4♠. With spade tolerance, responder may be better

to make a competitive X and pull 3♣ to 3♦. Note also that

2NT here is Lebensohl, so 3♦ shows an invitational hand.

## Responsive double

 (1♥)-X-(2♥)-X = Responsive, probably 2 suits to choose from.

## Game Try Double

1♥-(P)-2♥-(3♦)-X = Game try, 3♥ is simply to play.

 NB The Game Try double only applies if the intervening suit is immediately below our

suit, otherwise a “Trial Bid” can be made, e.g.

1♥-(P)-2♥-(3♣)-X = Penalties, 3♦ is available as a Game Try.

## Redouble in 1Suit-(X)-XX auction

The redouble shows 9+ HCPs and a willingness to double at least one of their possible contracts.

If opener bids in front of the re-doubler, it shows a weak hand – unless opener reverses or jumps.

Doubles from either opener or responder are penalty orientated and bids are simply balancing.

e.g. 1♣-(X)-XX-(1♥)

 2♠/3♣ are natural and show a strong hand

1♣-(X)-XX-(1♥)

1♠/2♣ are natural and show a weak opening bid

1♣-(X)-XX-(1♥)

P-(P)-1♠ balancing, no ability to penalise hearts

1♣-(X)-XX-(1♥)

X 4+ hearts or extra values, penalty orientated

3 level and reverse rebids by opener are strong but forced bids when the opposition have raised do not promise extra values.

e.g. 1♣-(X)-XX-(2♥)

 Anything except Pass shows extra values.

1♣-(X)-XX-(1♥)

P-(2♥)-P-(P)

Suits = do not show extra values.

## Doubles and Redoubles of Cue Bids

 After a stopper enquiry is doubled, redouble shows a full stop, NTs show ½ stop to

right-side the NT contract.

 e.g. 1♥-(P)-2♣-(P) or (2♥)-3♥-(X)-?

 2♦-(P)-2♠-(X)

 ?

 Pass denies a stop

 XX shows J10xx, KQx, A

 NT shows J10x, Qxx, Kx

 After a control cue-bid has been doubled, a redouble shows the next or “other” control

in the suit, a pass is encouraging and a return to the trump suit discouraging.

 e.g. 1♥-(P)-2NT-(P)

 3♦-(P)-3♠-(X)

 XX shows either 1st or 2nd round control in spades since 3♠ showed this too.

 NB - Also refer to section 10 ‘Bidding over and Doubles of artificial bids’.

## Other doubles in competition

In general, most doubles are for takeout when opponents have agreed a suit. This also applies after our side has overcalled and a cue bid is available below a direct raise

e.g.:

(1♣)-1♥-(1♠)-X.

(1♣)-1♥-(2♣)-X.

 (1♣)-1♥-(2♦)-X.

## Other Redoubles in competition

Unless we have a specific agreement, redoubles will be SOS when no suit has been agreed.

When XX is SOS, Pass will show length in the suit and a willingness to play there.

If we have agreed a suit, the redouble will typically show a control in the suit and Pass will deny one.

e.g.

1♥-(P)-3♣-(X)

XX = Hearts are agreed, therefore not SOS (shows Club control 1st or 2nd)

1N-(P)-2♣-(X)

We already have an agreement in this sequence – see ‘Other 1NT Sequences’ section.

1♥-(P)-2N-(P)

3♥-(P)-4♣-(X)

XX = Hearts are agreed, therefore not SOS (shows Club control 1st or 2nd)

1♥-(P)-2N-(P)

3♣-(X)-XX = Again Hearts are agreed, therefore not SOS (showing 1st round Club control since partner has already shown shortage in the suit)

(1N)-2♣-(X)-?

XX = No suit agreed, therefore SOS showing short Club suit

Pass = willing to play there, 4+ Club suit

1N-(P)-2♥-(X)

We already have an agreement in this sequence – see ‘Other 1NT Sequences’ section.

## Support Double

We also play “Support doubles and re-doubles” when 4th hand overcalls or raises an overcall showing 3 card support for responder’s suit (only up to 2 level in responder’s suit).

e.g. 1♣-(P)-1♦-(1♠)-X (NB this shows 3 card heart support as 1♦ showed 4+ hearts)

 1♦-(P)-1♠-(2♣)-X

 1♦-(P)-1♠-(X)-XX

 1♠-(2♦)-2♥-(3♦)-X (NB extra values NOT support as they only apply up to the 2 level)

## Lightner Double

Doubling a freely bid slam is “Lightner” calling for an unusual lead or dummy’s first bid suit.

 (1♣)-1♠-(2♠)-P

 (2N)-P-(3♣)-P

 (3♠)-P-(4NT)-P

 (5♥)-P-(6♣)-X is Lightner for a non-spade lead

 3♣-(P)-P-(X)

P-(3♥)-P-(3NT)

P-(P)-X is Lightner and asks for a ♥ lead.

## Lead Discouraging Double

A double is “lead discouraging” if made over a cue bid of our overcall above 2 level.

# FORCING PASS

 Where the auction involves a “Forcing Pass” situation, a double is penalties. The

forcing pass applies when partner has promised another bid. This section will be

expanded to include such auctions as they are discovered.

 e.g. 1♦-(X)-XX-(2♣)-X

 1♣-(1♥)-X-(1♠)-X

are both penalties since a pass would be forcing.

 If you make a forcing pass and partner doubles, their double will be “protective” and

may be takeout or for business, it will be up to you to decide what to do. Typically you

should bid unless you hold a trump stack.

e.g. 1♦-(X)-XX-(2♣)

 P-(P)-X = may be takeout or business

If the forcing pass is available, simple bids show weakness and pass and then bid is

balancing. Jumps and reverses retain their strong meaning.

e.g. 1♣-(X)-XX-(1♥)-1♠/2♣ = weak, but 2♠/3♣ = strong.

 1♣-(X)-XX-(1♥)-P = Forcing, after which new suits will just be balancing unable to

 penalise the opponents contract.

# LEBENSOHL

Lebensohl applies in competitive auctions concerning:-

1. Intervention over our 1NT Opening or Overcall
2. Responding to a double of Opponents 1NT if RHO bids
3. Responding to a double of a Weak Two
4. Responding to a double of a Multi Two Diamonds
5. Opposition major suit raises after a takeout double
6. Opener makes a reverse bid
7. Opener makes a jump shift after a 1 level response

Examples:-

1. 1NT-(2x)-? or (1♥)-1NT-(2x)-?
2. (1NT)-X-(2x)-?
3. (2♥)-X-(P)-? and (2♥)-P-(P)-X-(P)-?
4. (2♦)-X-(any)-? and (2♦)-P-(any)-X-(P)-?
5. (1♥)-X-(2♥)-? and (1♥)-P-(2♥)-X-(P)-?
6. 1♣-1♠-2♥-?
7. 1♣-1♦-2♠-?

In all the above cases:-

X = Values.

2 level bids = To play.

2NT = Transfer to 3♣, then responder:-

 Passes or bids new suit = to play.

 Cue bids Opponents suit = Staymanic, without stop, F to 3NT.

3 level bids = Forcing.

Q bid = Staymanic, asks for and shows stop.

3NT = to play, with stop.

3NT via 2NT Lebensohl = denies stop.

We play “Fast Arrival Shows” i.e. cue bid or 3NT via Lebensohl deny a stop in the opposition suit, an immediate cue bid or 3NT show a stop.

## Lower of 4th Suit OR 2NT is Lebensohl

If opener reverses or makes a jump shift rebid, the ‘lower of 4th suit’ and 2NT are the Lebensohl convention, e.g. 1♣-1♥-2♦-2♥ = since 1♥ showed spades, 2♥ is 4th suit and is ‘lower’ than 2NT, so this is Lebensohl asking partner to bid the next suit up; after which responder bids according to the rules above – so any suits are NF, e.g. 1♣-1♥-2♦-2♥-2♠-Pass to play. In example g) above, Lebensohl would be 2NT as 3♣ is the 4th suit and is higher than 2NT.

# BIDDING OVER AND DOUBLES OF ARTIFICIAL BIDS

## We double an opponent’s artificial bid

In general, doubles of opponent’s artificial bids show the suit and/or values, doubles of real suits are for takeout.

e.g. 1NT-(2♦)-X = takeout if 2♦ is natural, otherwise a value raise to 2NT

 (1NT)-X-(any)-X = Once we have doubled 1NT, all subsequent Xs are penalty orientated.

## An opponent doubles our artificial bid

When the opponents double our artificial enquiry, the meaning of Pass and XX are dependent on the context of the enquiry and the meaning of the opponent’s X.

### If the enquiry was asking for a stop:

XX shows a stop in the bid suit (a NT response may show ½ stop in order to right side a NT contract) and Pass denies a stop in the suit.

 e.g. (2♥)-3♥-(X)-XX = shows a stop, 3NT = ½ stop, Pass = denies either

### If the enquiry was asking for information (e.g. a long suit trial bid or Stayman):

If the opponent’s X is takeout of the bid suit, then XX shows 4 cards in the suit

and Pass is neutral.

If the opponent’s X is lead directing or penalties, then XX shows a stop in the bid suit and Pass denies a stop, Other bids retain their normal meaning or are natural.

If the opponents have no agreement, then it is treated as lead directing/penalties

and the latter responses apply.

e.g. 1N-(P)-2♣-(X)

In order of priority: 2M = 5 cards, 2♦ = 5 cards, XX = ♣ stop, Pass = no ♣ stop

1N-(P)-2♦-(X)

 In order of priority: Breaks = 4♥s, 2♥ = 3♥s, XX = ♦ stop, Pass = no ♦ stop

2N-(P)-3♣-(X)

In order of priority: 3M = 5 cards, 3♦ = 5 cards, XX = ♣ stop, Pass = no ♣ stop

(1N)-2♣-(X penalties/values)-?

In order of priority: 2M = 4 cards, XX = ♣ shortage, Pass = 4♣, others = as normal

 1♥-(P)-2♥-(P)

3♣-(X lead directing)-?

In order of priority: Normal responses, XX = ♣ stop, 3NT = ½ ♣ stop, Pass=denies.

### If the bid made was a cue bid:

 XX = shows a useful control in the bid suit, Pass = denies a control

e.g. 1♥-(P)-4♣-(X) 1♥-(P)-2N-(P)

XX = A♣ 3♥-(P)-4♣-(X)

XX = A or K♣

## The Opponents have the majority of values

Doubles and redoubles of artificial bids when the opponents have the majority values are supportive of partner.

 e.g. (1♣)-1♥-(2♥)-X

 (1NT)-2♥-(3♥)-X

(1♠)-2♥-(X competitive)-XX

all show ♥ tolerance but unable to bid 3♥, therefore happy for a ♥ lead,

perhaps Jxxx Qx xxx QJxx

If the opponents double our bid for penalties, then XX will be SOS style along with 2NT as a scramble and suit bids are to play.

 e.g. (1NT)-2♥-(X penalties)-?

2NT = ‘scramble’ to a minor and XX shows Spades + minor.

# PROTECTIVE BIDDING

(1♣)-P-(P)-1♠ 9-16, 5+ cards

(1♣)-P-(P)-2♠ 16+, 6+ cards

(1♣)-P-(P)-X

(P)-1♦-(P)-1♠ 16+, 5+ cards

Cue-bidding in 4th shows any 2 suiter, e.g. (1♣)-P-(P)-2♣ = at least 5-5 in any 2 of the unbid suits.

1NT in 4th shows 10-14 and 2NT shows 20-22 with responses as per NT openings

Double then 1NT or 2NT show 15-17 and 18-19 respectively with responses as per NT openings.

# carding

## Leads

**In order of preference:-**

Partner’s suit – Standard EXCEPT low from honours with length e.g. Kx(x) and count from weak suits if partner pre-empted and we didn’t support, e.g. xx(x), x(x)xx and (x)x.

Ace, King or Queen from AK and KQ combinations for Attitude (AQ) or Count (K)

Top of a sequence.

3rd or 4th from an honour (AKQJ10), preferably not empty suits.

2nd from rubbish, continuing : xx = 12, xxxx = x(1)(2)x

MUD (Middle up down) from xxx = 213

Top of rubbish if 2nd highest may be ambiguous, e.g. 9 from 932

## Following Suit

If partner leads either an Ace or a Queen, we signal ‘attitude’ - encouraging with a high card or discouraging with a low card. Encouraging shows a ‘significant’ honour (i.e. on Ace - it shows the King or Queen, on Queen – it shows Ace, King or Jack). With a doubleton, we will unblock. We DO NOT ‘peter’ to show a doubleton on either an Ace or Queen lead.

Otherwise, we signal with ‘standard count’ (following high then low shows an even number of cards, or low then high = odd number of cards).

If dummy indicates the suit lead is dead, then suit preference signals will apply (e.g. singleton in dummy against a suit contract) or we will signal what we think partner needs to know (e.g. when the King appears in dummy against a NT contract, we would signal count on AQ leads).

Against an opposition NT contract, when Declarer gains the lead and plays a suit - our first card will be ‘Smith-Peters’ – following suit with a high card indicates we like the opening lead suit; and this applies by both the opening leader and his partner.

If it is clear from the dummy that signalling as above will not be helpful, then ‘suit preference’ applies.

Suit preference also applies in the trump suit when declarer is drawing trumps.

## Discarding

Our first discard will be ‘suit preference’ – a high card indicating an interest in a higher ranking suit and a low card either interest in a low ranking suit (or no preference).

Subsequent discards in all suits show ‘standard remaining count’ in the suit discarded (i.e. high-low = even number of cards).

# SLAM BIDDING AND RKCB 4NT and 4 minor

4NT is Roman Key Card Blackwood for the agreed suit or last bid suit if natural. However, if 4NT is bid opposite a NT opening or rebid showing a point ‘range’ and no suit has been agreed, it will be quantitative. In game forcing auctions, 4m is RKCB for the bid minor.

e.g. a) 1♣-1♥-2♠-4NT = RKCB for ♠

 b) 1♣-1♥-1NT-4NT = Quantitative

 c) 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♠-4♣-4NT = RKCB for ♠ since the responder is not a limited NT range

 d) 2NT-3♣-3♠-4NT = RKCB for ♠ since 3♠ was natural

 e) 2NT-3♣-3♦-4NT = Quantitative

 f) 1NT-2♣-2♦-4NT = Quantitative

 g) 1♣-1♠-3♣-4♣ = RKCB for ♣ (NB 4 of our minor is RKCB to preserve space)

 h) 1♣-1♥-2NT-4NT = RKCB for ♠ since 2NT showed 18-19 with 4 card ♠ support

Over RKCB, responses at the 6 level show an ‘odd number of key cards’ + void in the bid suit (or suit above trumps if we bid 6 of the trump suit) and a 5NT response shows an ‘even number of key cards’ + an undisclosed void.

Otherwise the standard responses are:-

5♣=1/4, 5♦=3/0, 5♥=2 without the Queen trumps, 5♠=2 with the Queen trumps

NB after 4m RKCB, the responses above are identical shown in steps 1, 2, 3 and 4 – HOWEVER a 4NT response is a ‘get out’ and 5m is the 4th step. If responder bids 4m-4NT, this indicates no wish to play in slam and the asker will either pass or convert to 5m depending on the auction. If the response is not 4NT, a subsequent 4NT (if available) or 5NT asks for ‘specific’ kings – see below.

Over Intervention, we play DOPI/ROPI and DOPE/ROPE above 5 trump suit:-

DOPE/ROPE is simply : Double/Redouble=Odd number of ‘aces’, Pass=Even number of ‘aces’

Since we play RKCB 1430, the DOPI/ROPI responses are as follows:-

 Double/Redouble=0 (or 3), Pass=1 (or 4),

 Bids in steps=2 without Q trumps then 2 with Q trumps

After the initial response to RKCB, the next suit asks for the Queen trumps if it hasn’t already been shown, with responses:

* New suit shows Queen trumps + King of the bid suit or 2 Kings without the bid suit,
* Trump suit denies Q,
* 6 of our suit shows Q trumps but denies a K to show.

After the initial response to 4NT RKCB, 5NT asking for “specific Kings” :-

New suit = King of the bid suit or 2 Kings without the King of the bid suit,

6 trump suit = 0 Kings

And finally, 5NT is a “Grand Slam Force” asking for trumps honours (AKQ) if we’ve agreed a suit or ‘pick a slam’ if we haven’t. 5NT is quantitative forcing to at least 6NT opposite a NT bid showing a range, e.g. 2NT-5NT or 2♣-2NT-5NT.

If it asks for trump honours, the responses depend on which suit is trumps. In all cases, with 2 bid 7 and with 0 sign off in 6 of the trump suit, otherwise :

♣ : 6♣ = 0/1

♦ : 6♣ = 1, 6♦ = 0

♥ : 6♣ = extra length or Q, 6♦ = K/A, 6♥ = 0

♠ : 6♣ = extra length, 6♦ = Q, 6♥ = K/A, 6♠ = 0

# DEFENCE TO 1NT – ‘MULTI LANDY’.

There are probably more defences to 1NT than any other opening bid and with just cause. 1NT is pre-emptive in nature, preventing the opposition from entering the auction at the 1 level and as such it is a good idea to have a defence that allows you to get in the auction and show as many common distributions as possible. Multi-Landy is a combination of the Multi-Coloured 2♦ and Landy conventions. Pairs often also incorporate 2M as a ‘Lucas-style’ bid showing the major + minor.

Double = Penalties, either 16+ HCP or a running suit (of any 1NT with a lower range <14, e.g. 13-15)

After we have doubled, all subsequent doubles are values.

Many pairs vary the defence depending on the strength of the opponents 1NT opening. This system uses Double of a strong NT to show 5+ cards in a minor and it could also hold another 4+ card side suit.

Also, if we are a passed hand, then Double regardless of the 1NT strength shows 5+ cards in a minor and may have a 4+ card side suit, but all the other bids below are the same.

2♣ = Both majors

2♦ = Single suited major.

2M = Lucas-style, natural 5 card suit with a 4+ card minor (2NT asks for the minor)

2NT = Any strong 2 suiter OR both minors (opener bids their better minor and the auction proceeds naturally).

(1NT)-2♣-(Pass)-2♦= asks for the better major, then :-

2NT = balanced invitational and 3m = single suited minor NF

(1NT)-2♣-(Pass)-Majors = to play.

(1NT)-2♣-(Pass)-2NT = invitational with both minors.

(1NT)-2♣-(Pass)-3m = Natural and forcing.

(1NT)-2♦-(Pass)-? : 2NT = enquiry, then:- 3♣/♦ = max hand with ♥/♠, 3♥/♠ = min hand with ♥/♠.

(1NT)-2♦-(Pass)-others = natural NF.

(1NT)-X-(P)-2any = Rubbish and to play. If doubled, XX is SOS.

(1NT)-X-(any)-? : X=Values, 2NT=Lebensohl

(1NT)-P-(2any)-X = Penalty X of 1NT or lead directing, opposite which 2NT = scramble.

(1NT)-P-(2♦)-X-(2♥)-X = Takeout. 2NT= Lebensohl.

(1NT)-P-(2♦)-2♥ = takeout and strong 16+.

(1NT)-P-(2♦)-P-(2♥)-P-(P)-X = takeout and is weaker than an immediate 2♥.

# DEFENCE TO MULTI

 **2nd Position**

 (2♦) - X = 12-15 Balanced or 19+ any shape

2♥/2♠ = Natural 5+ cards NF

 2NT = 16-18, balanced with responses as per 2NT opening bid

 3 suit = Natural 6+ card suit NF if minor, 16-18 if major

 3NT = To play

 4♥/4♠ = To play

 5♣/5♦ = To play

 Opposite X, if RHO passes, responder places the contract as if partner showed a weak NT.

 e.g. (2♦)-X-(P)-3♣ = to play opposite a weak NT.

 After (2♦)-P-(2♥)-P-(P)-?

 X = Takeout

 2NT = Minors

 3♣/3♦ = Bid minor + spades 2 suiter

 3♥ = asking for H stop for 3NT

 After (2♦)-P-(2♥)-P-(2♠)-? Or (2♦)-P-(2♠)-P-(P)-?

 X = Takeout

 2NT = Minors

 3♣/3♦ = Bid minor + hearts 2 suiter

 3♠ = asking for S stop for 3NT

 3NT = To play

 (2♦)-X-(2♥)-X = Takeout

 -2♠ = To play

 -2NT = Lebensohl

 -3 bids = Natural and forcing

 **4th Position**

 Effectively treat it as a weak 2, i.e.

 (2♦)-P-(2♥) - X = Takeout

 Others = as per defence to weak twos.

 (2♦)-P-(2♠) - As above.

 (2♦)-P-(2♥)-P-(2♠)-P-(P)- As above.

# DEFENCE TO PRE-EMPTS

Pairs are putting more and more pressure on opponents these days with pre-empts becoming lighter and fewer cards required to do it. It’s important to have something at your disposal to reduce their impact on you when it happens at your table. Leaping (and non-leaping) Michaels is something to help in this respect.

Essentially, defend as normal and the only change is that bids at the 4 level become 2 suited : 4 their minor showing both majors, 4 of their major showing both minors, 4 of a new minor showing that suit and a major and 4 of the other major natural.

**Weak Twos**

X = Takeout with Lebensohl responses – refer to Lebensohl section.

2NT = 16-18 Balanced (responses as per 2NT opening).

Suits = 5+ cards, opening hand strength.

Jump suits = Strong.

(2♦)-3♦ = Asking for a stop for 3NT.

(2♦)-4♣ = “Leaping Michaels” showing a 2 suiter clubs + a major, GF.

(2♦)-4♦ = “Leaping Michaels” showing both majors, GF.

(2♦)-4M = To play.

(2M)-3M (cue bid) = Asking for a stop for 3NT.

(2M)-4m = “Leaping Michaels” showing a 2 suiter in bid minor + either major, GF.

(2M)-4M (cue bid) = Both minors.

(2M)-4 other M = To play.

**Weak Threes**

Similarly to the defence to Weak Twos:-

X = Takeout

3NT = To play.

(3m)-4m (cue bid) = Both Majors

(3m)-4 other minor = Other minor + Major

(3M)-4m = ‘Non-Leaping’ Michaels - 2 suited in Other Major + bid minor

(3M)-4M (cue bid) = Both minors

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