

System Notes 7G19

Pavlicek System

by Richard Pavlicek

Last Revision Date: October 5, 2005
Copyright © 1980-2005 Richard Pavlicek

Contents

Overview	Introduction	4
	Basic Approach.	4
Balanced Notrump Openings	Notrump Structure	5
	Puppet Stayman	6
	Jacoby Transfer.	9
	Minor Suit Stayman	11
	Minor Suit Transfers.	12
	Splinter Responses	12
	Three Diamonds 5-5 in Majors.	13
	Texas Transfer	13
	Enemy Interference.	14
One-Level Suit Openings	One-Over-One Structure.	15
	Rebids by Responder	16
	Opener's Third Bid.	17
	Responder's Third Bid	18
	Rebids after a 1 NT Rebid.	19
	Rebids after a 2 NT Jump Rebid.	21
	Notrump Responses to Minor.	22
	One Notrump Forcing.	23
	Two-over-One Response to Major	25
	Two Clubs over One Diamond.	26
	Inverted Minor Raises.	26
	Direct Major Raises	27
	Weak Jump Shift Responses.	27
	Two Notrump Response	28
	Major Suit Game Tries	29
	Opener's Reverse Bid.	30
	Fourth Suit Bids in General	31
	Passed Hand Modifications	32
	Reverse Drury.	33
Competitive after One of a Suit	After a Takeout Double	34
	After a Suit Overcall.	35
	Negative Doubles	36
	After a Two-Suited Overcall	37
	Competitive Rebids	38
	Cue-Bids as Rebids.	39
	Competitive Doubles	40
	Cooperative Doubles	41
	After a One Notrump Overcall	42
	Actions when Responder Passes.	42
Two-Level and Higher Openings	Two Club Opening	43
	Weak Two Bids	46
	Preemptive Openings	47
	Three Notrump Opening.	48

Contents (cont.)

Defense to One of a Suit	Takeout Doubles 49 Suit Overcalls 51 Weak Jump Overcalls 52 Good Jump Overcalls 52 Notrump Overcalls 52 Unusual Notrump Overcall 53 Michaels Cue-Bid 54 Three-Level Cue-Bid Overcall 55 Balancing Actions 55 After Two Enemy Bids 56 Additional Agreements 57
Miscellaneous Defensive Bidding	Defense to One Notrump 58 Runout Defense 59 Astro Structure 60 Standard Defense 61 Defense to Two and Three Notrump . . . 62 Defense to Weak Openings 63 Defense to Four of a Major 64 Defense to Strong Artificial Openings . . 65 Defense to Transfer Bids 66 Junkyard Defense 67 Lead-Directing Doubles 68
Slam Bidding Methods	General Approach 69 Control-Bids 70 Blackwood 71 Gerber 72 Key-Card Responses 73 Key-Card Continuations 74 Void-Showing over Blackwood 75 Voluntary Bid of Five 76 Trump Asking Bids 77 Four Notrump Response for Takeout . . 78 Five Notrump Bids 78 Splinter Raises 79 Non-Raise Splinter Bids 79 Splinter Asking Bid 80 Control Asking Bid 80
Defensive Carding	Opening Leads at Notrump 81 Opening Leads at Suits 82 Leads After Trick One 82 Count Signals 83 Suit Preference Signals 84 The Wakeup Signal 84 Second Plays in the Same Suit 85 Miscellaneous Agreements 86

Overview

Introduction

This is the bridge system created by Richard Pavlicek. It is played in its entirety with his son Rich Pavlicek and with Bill Root, and in part with other experts.

Warning! This system is beyond the scope of the teaching program of Richard Pavlicek and inappropriate for the great majority of bridge players. It is intended for serious tournament players only, or as a reference for other system writers. If you are a casual player, I suggest you stop reading now and devote your study to more beneficial material.

Throughout these notes, strength requirements, unless specifically designated as high-card points (HCP), are presumed to be *high-card* points for natural notrump bids and *total* points (distributional values included) for all other bids.

The following abbreviations and notations are used:

F	forcing	X, Y	an unbid suit	Cue	bid in enemy suit
NF	nonforcing	P	pass	DJ	double jump
I	invitational	Dbl	double	JS	jump shift
GF	game forcing	Act	bid or double	FS	fourth suit
M	major suit	Any	pass, bid or double	•	unusual treatment
m	minor suit	Rdbl	redouble		
R	red suit (♦ or ♥)	Rel	relay		
um	unbid minor	Xfr	transfer		

Basic Approach

Opening bid structure:	1 ♣, 1 ♦	13-22; 3+ cards
	1 ♥, 1 ♠	13-22; 5+ cards
	1 NT	15-17; balanced
	2 ♣	23+; artificial; F
	2 ♦, 2 ♥, 2 ♠	5-11 HCP; weak two-bid
	2 NT	20-22; balanced
	3 of suit	weak
	3 NT	good preempt; any suit; 8½+ tricks; F
	4 of suit	weak
	4 NT	Blackwood
	5 ♣, 5 ♦	weak
	5 NT	minor-suit freak

Balanced Notrump Openings

Notrump Structure

An opening bid of 1 NT shows 15 to 17 HCP and a balanced hand. It is permissible to have a 5 card major suit provided the hand is otherwise suitable for notrump. Off-shape hands (5-4-2-2 or 6-3-2-2) are allowable when each doubleton contains an honor.

1 NT	P	?	2 ♣	Puppet Stayman
			2 ♦, 2 ♥	Jacoby transfer
			2 ♠	minor-suit Stayman
			2 NT, 3 ♣	minor-suit transfer
			• 3 ♦	5-5 in majors; GF
			3 ♥, 3 ♠	splinter; 3 suited slam try
			3 NT	sign-off
			4 ♣	Gerber
			4 ♦, 4 ♥	Texas transfer
			4 ♠ (rare)	sign-off
			4 NT	quantitative

An opening of 2 NT is similar in nature to 1 NT, but 20 to 22 HCP.

2 NT	P	?	3 ♣	Puppet Stayman
			3 ♦, 3 ♥	Jacoby transfer
			3 ♠	minor-suit Stayman
			3 NT	sign-off
			4 ♣	Gerber
			4 ♦, 4 ♥	Texas transfer
			4 ♠ (rare)	sign-off
			4 NT	quantitative

Puppet Stayman

The 2 ♣ response to 1 NT is a modified version of “puppet” Stayman. Responder must have at least game interest unless he is able to pass opener’s rebid of 2 ♦, 2 ♥ or 2 ♠.

1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	2 ♦	relay (usually no 5-card major)
?				2 ♥, 2 ♠	5 card suit
1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	• 2 ♥	exactly 4 spades or no major interest
2 ♦	P	?		• 2 ♠	exactly 4 hearts
				• 2 NT	4-4 or 5-4 in majors; I
				• 3 ♣	5-4 or 6-4 in majors; GF
				• 3 ♦	4-4 in majors; GF
				• 3 ♥	5+ <i>clubs</i> ; no 4 card major; slam try
				• 3 ♠	5+ <i>diamonds</i> ; no 4 card major; slam try
				3 NT	sign-off (was looking for 5 card major)
				4 ♣	Gerber

Memory aid: After the 2 ♦ relay responder’s next suit bid is always artificial. Note that a 2 ♥ or 2 ♠ bid denies interest in the major bid and denies five cards in the major shown.

1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	2 ♠	spade fit*; minimum; NF
2 ♦	P	2 M	P	2 NT	no fit; minimum; NF
?				• 3 ♣	no fit; maximum
				3 ♥	heart fit; minimum; NF
				3 ♠	spade fit*; maximum
				4 ♥	heart fit; maximum

**if responder has 4 spades*

1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	Pass	no major fit; minimum
2 ♦	P	2 NT	P	• 3 ♣	relay; maximum; responder bids <i>shorter</i>
?					major (Smolen) or 3 NT with 4-4
				3 ♥, 3 ♠	that fit; minimum
				3 NT	maximum (no interest in 5-3 fit)
				4 ♥, 4 ♠	that fit; maximum

1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	• 3 ♦	relay; responder then bids <i>shorter</i> major
2 ♦	P	3 ♣	P		(Smolen style)
?				3 ♥, 3 ♠	that fit*
				3 NT	no interest in 5-3 fit; if responder bids
					again it is natural

**If responder has slam interest, he may continue with a minor-suit splinter, opposite major (natural) or key-card Blackwood.*

Puppet Stayman (cont.)

1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	2 NT, 3 NT	corrective*; NF
2 ♦	P	2 M	P	3 ♣, 3 ♦	5+ cards; slam try
Fit	P	?		• Unfit major	ambiguous slam try
				3 ♠ (fit)	trump-quality concern; I
				4 ♣, 4 ♦	splinter; slam try
				4 ♥ over 2 ♠	splinter; slam try
				4 fit	sign-off
				4 NT	key-card Blackwood (fit suit key)

**denies spade fit; 3 NT offers choice of game after heart fit*

1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	3 ♣, 3 ♦	5+ cards; 4 card major; GF
2 ♦	P	2 M	P	• 3 ♥*	4 clubs; 4 card major; slam try
No Fit	P	?		• 3 ♠	4 diamonds; 4 card major; slam try
				3 NT	sign-off
				4 ♣ over 2 NT	Gerber
				4 NT	quantitative

**If 3 ♣ is not available (i.e., if opener bid 3 ♣) then 3 ♥ shows 5+ clubs and 4 ♣ shows exactly 4 clubs.*

After interference:

All doubles or redoubles by either player are for penalty.

If responder's L-H-O doubles 2 ♣ or bids 2 ♦, the structure is unchanged (assuming no further enemy bid). Opener should make his normal rebid or pass, double or redouble. If responder rebids 2 ♦ it is to play (he would have passed 2 ♦).

If either opponent bids 2 ♥ or higher (after the Stayman 2 ♣ bid), the structure is off and the bidding reverts to a natural style. If opener cannot make his normal rebid, he should pass or double. If responder bids a major suit, he shows 4 cards in that suit (3 ♥ could be both majors after a 3 ♣ or 3 ♦ overcall); this is invitational at 2 ♠ or forcing at the 3 level. Opener may raise, return to notrump, or show the other major if appropriate.

1 NT	P	2 ♣	2 ♥ up	2 ♠	4 spades; I
P/D	P	?		2 NT	invitational (ambiguous over 2 ♠)
				3 m	5+ cards; GF
				3 M	4 cards; GF
				cue	asks for stopper
				3 NT	sign-off

Puppet Stayman (cont.)

After a 2 NT opening:

The use of puppet Stayman after 2 NT is almost identical to after 1 NT, although any bid that commits the partnership past 3 NT with no assured major fit promises slam interest.

2 NT	P	3 ♣	P	• 3 ♥	exactly 4 spades or no major interest
3 ♦	P	?		• 3 ♠	exactly 4 hearts
				• 3 NT	4-4 or 5-4 majors; choice of games; NF
				• 4 ♣	5-4 or 6-4 majors*; slam try (4 ♦ relays then shape is shown Smolen style)
				• 4 ♦	4-4 in majors; slam try
				• 4 ♥	5+ <i>clubs</i> ; no 4 card major; slam try
				• 4 ♠	5+ <i>diamonds</i> ; no 4 card major; slam try
				4 NT	quantitative
				5 ♣	Gerber

**With 6-4 majors and no slam interest, responder should just use Texas.*

2 NT	P	3 ♣	P	3 ♠	spade fit (if responder has 4 spades)
3 ♦	P	3 M	P	3 NT	no fit
?				• 4 ♣	heart fit; maximum (responder should bid 4 ♦ as <i>transfer</i> to play in 4 ♥)
				4 ♥	heart fit; minimum

2 NT	P	3 ♣	P	3 NT	sign-off (denies spade fit)
3 ♦	P	3 M	P	• Cheapest suit	ambiguous; slam try in fit
Fit	P	?		Other suit	splinter; slam try
				4 NT	key-card Blackwood (fit suit key)

2 NT	P	3 ♣	P	4 ♣, 4 ♦	5+ cards; 4 card major; slam try
3 ♦	P	3 M	P	• 4 ♥	4 <i>clubs</i> ; 4 card major; slam try
3 NT	P	?		• 4 ♠	4 <i>diamonds</i> ; 4 card major; slam try
				4 NT	quantitative
				5 ♣	Gerber

When opener shows a 5 card major:

1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	2 ♠	4 spades (weak minor, no fit for M); I
2 M	P	?		2 NT, 3 M	natural; I
	(or)			3 NT, 4 M	sign-off
2 NT	P	3 ♣	P	other M (3+)	raise of M; slam try
3 M	P	?		nonjump ♣ or ♦	5+ cards (does not deny fit); GF
				jump 4 x	splinter raise; slam try
				4 NT	quantitative
				5 ♣	Gerber

Jacoby Transfer

The 2♦ response to a 1 NT opening shows at least 5 hearts; 2♥ shows at least 5 spades.
Rebids by opener: (M = major shown)

1 NT	P	Xfr	any	2 M	nondescript; except over a double shows 3+ trumps and happy with lead
?				Pass enemy act	nondescript; usual action
				Rdbl	penalty suggestion
				3 M jump	maximum; 4+ trumps
				3 M nonjump	good to max; 3+ trumps

Rebids by responder:

1 NT	P	Xfr	P	• 2♠ over 2♥	5-5 majors; I
2 M	P	?		3♣, 3♦	4+ cards; GF
				3 M	6+ card major (rare 5); I
				• 3 other M, 4 m	6+ card major; splinter
				• 4 M	6+ card major; no splinter; slam invitation (NF)
				2 NT	5 card major; I
				3 NT	5 card major; choice of game
				4 NT	5 card major; quantitative
				• 5 NT	choice of slam; F

Opener's third bid:

1 NT	P	Xfr	P	Shown suit	fit-showing
2 M	P	3 m	P	Jump shown	good fit; prime values
?				Unshown suit	strength; implies minor fit
				3 NT	no fit or "wrong" cards

Responder's third bid:

1 NT	P	Xfr	P	3 M	6+ cards or strong 5
2 M	P	3 m	P	3 NT, 4 M, 5 m	no slam interest; NF
any	P	?		4 m	5-5; slam try
				Unshown suit	splinter; slam try
				4 NT	natural unless opener raised major (then Blackwood)

Jacoby Transfer (cont.)

After a 2 NT opening:

The 3 ♦ response to a 2 NT opening shows at least 5 hearts; 3 ♥ shows at least 5 spades. Opener may jump to game (rare) with a maximum and an excellent fit, but generally he will complete the transfer. Rebids by responder:

2 NT	P	Xfr	P	• 3 ♠ over 3 ♥	5-5 majors; slam try
3 M	P	?		• 4 ♥ over 3 ♠	5-5 majors; choice of game
				4 ♣, 4 ♦	4+ cards; slam try
				• 4 M	6+ card major; slam try; NF
				Jump shift	6+ card major; splinter
				3 NT	5 card major; choice of game
				4 NT	5 card major; quantitative
				• 5 NT	choice of slam; F
2 NT	P	Xfr	P	Shown suit	discourages slam; NF
3 M	P	4 m	P	Unshown suit	strength-showing; implies minor fit
?				4 NT	discourages slam; NF
2 NT	P	Xfr	P	4 M, 5 m	discourages slam; NF
3 M	P	4 m	P	Unshown suit	splinter
any	P	?		4 NT	natural unless opener raised major (then Blackwood)

Transfer bypass:

If opener jumps in responder's major (bypasses the transfer) to show a maximum hand with an exceptional fit, responder's rebids are changed:

1 NT	P	Xfr	P	Pass, 4 M	sign-off
3 M	P	?		• New suit	splinter; slam try
				• 3 NT	no splinter; slam try; F
				4 NT	Blackwood
2 NT	P	Xfr	P	5 M	no splinter; slam try
4 M	P	?		Other	as previous auction

Minor Suit Stayman

The 2 ♠ response to 1 NT promises at least 5-4 in the minor suits (may be 4-4 if slam try) and at least game-invitational strength.

1 NT	P	2 ♠	P	2 NT, 3 ♣, 3 ♦	minimum; NF
?				3 ♥, 3 ♠	strength in suit; max; GF
				3 NT	maximum; NF
				4 ♣, 4 ♦	pure values; max; GF
1 NT	P	2 ♠	P	3 ♣, 3 ♦	5+ cards; NF
2 NT	P	?		3 ♥, 3 ♠	splinter; slam try
				• 4 ♣, 4 ♦	5+ cards; slam try
				3 NT	sign-off
				4 NT	quantitative
1 NT	P	2 ♠	P	3 ♥, 3 ♠	splinter; slam try
3 m	P	?		Other minor	5+ cards; GF
				Raise to 4	freak; I
				3 NT	choice of game
				4 NT	quantitative
1 NT	P	2 ♠	P	4 ♣, 4 ♦	5+ cards; slam try
3 NT	P	?		4 ♥, 4 ♠	splinter; slam try
				4 NT	quantitative
1 NT	P	2 ♠	P	4 ♣, 4 ♦	5+ cards; not necessarily
3 M	P	?			a slam try; F
				Major raise	3 trumps; choice of game
				Other major	splinter; slam try
				3 NT	short in bid major; NF
				4 NT	quantitative

After a 2 NT opening:

The 3 ♠ response to 2 NT shows at least 4-4 in the minors and promises slam interest.

2 NT	P	3 ♠	P	3 NT	no fit or "wrong" hand
?				4 ♣, 4 ♦	fit-showing
				4 NT	maximum; no fit; I
2 NT	P	3 ♠	P	4 ♣, 4 ♦	5+ cards
Bid	P	?		4 ♥, 4 ♠	splinter
				4 NT	quantitative

Minor Suit Transfers

After a 1 NT opening, a response of 2 NT or 3 ♣ shows at least 6 cards in the next higher minor suit. This does not apply over 2 NT.

1 NT	P	Xfr	P	Pass	bust hand
3 m	P	?		New suit	splinter; slam try
				3 NT	no splinter; mild try; NF
				4 NT	no splinter; quantitative
				Raise to 4	freak; I
				Raise to 5	freak; gambling

Note: To invite game in notrump it is necessary to use Puppet Stayman (which does not promise major interest) and then rebid 2♥ over the 2♦ relay.

Splinter Responses

After a 1 NT opening, a response of 3♥ or 3♠ shows a 3-suited hand (4-4-4-1 or 5-4-4-0) short in the major bid with interest in slam. This does not apply over 2 NT.

1 NT	P	3 M	P	Suit bid	fit-showing
?				3 NT	no fit or “wrong” cards
1 NT	P	3 M	P	Raise	minimal slam interest; NF
Suit	P	?		Other suit	control-bid; 4 M = void
				• 4 NT	natural if minor fit (implies singleton A, K or Q); NF
					Blackwood if major fit
1 NT	P	3 M	P	• 4 ♣	artificial; opener is urged to show any suit fit; F
3 NT	P	?		• 4 M	5 card club suit
				• 4 other suit	5 cards; NF in major
				4 NT	quantitative
1 NT	P	3 M	Dbl	Rdbl	strong 4-5 cards; to play
?				Pass	no 4+ fit; doubts about 3 NT
				Other	as without double

In subsequent bidding 4 NT is Blackwood only if opener has indicated a major-suit fit; otherwise 4 NT is natural.

Three Diamonds 5-5 in Majors

The 3♦ response to 1 NT shows at least 5-5 in the majors and game-forcing values. This does not apply over 2 NT.

1 NT	P	3♦	any	3♥, 3♠	normal action; indicates better fit
?				3 NT	natural; extreme strength in minors
				• 4♣, 4♦	excellent fit (either major); no control in <i>other</i> minor
				• 4♥, 4♠	excellent fit; both minor-suit aces
				Rdbl	penalty suggestion
1 NT	P	3♦	any	3♥, 3♠	natural (rare)
any	any	?		3 NT	natural (honors in short suits); NF
				4♣, 4♦	splinter; slam interest
				4♥, 4♠	game interest only; NF
				4 NT	natural over 3 NT
					Blackwood otherwise

Texas Transfer

The 4♦ response to a 1 NT or 2 NT opening shows at least 6 hearts; 4♥ shows at least 6 spades. (M = major shown)

1 NT	P	Xfr	any	4 M	routine; happy with lead over double
?	(or)			Pass Dbl	routine; no desire for lead
2 NT	P	Xfr	any	5 M over bid	natural; good fit; good cards
?					

Rebids by responder:

1 NT	P	Xfr	P	Pass	routine sign-off in game
4 M	P	?		New suit	void splinter; slam try
	(or)			4 NT	Blackwood
2 NT	P	Xfr	P	5 M	freak; I
4 M	P	?		5 NT	trump asking

Enemy Interference

1 NT	Dbl	?	Redouble	rescue with one minor suit; opener
2 NT	Dbl	?		should bid clubs
			Other	entire system on

After an enemy suit overcall, a different structure is incorporated as described below. Competitive transfer bids show game interest if suit could be bid naturally at the 2 level; else they may be weak.

1 NT	2 X	?	• Pass	forcing after 2 NT opening; opener
1 NT	3 X	?		should usually double (optional)
2 NT	3 X	?	Double	penalty at 2 level
				negative at 3 level
			2 of suit	takeout if shown by enemy
				natural if not shown; NF
			• 2 NT thru 3 ♡	transfer to suit above, or “Stayman” if
				next higher suit was <i>naturally bid</i>
				(not implied) by the overcaller
			• 3 ♠	asks for stopper in enemy shown suit
			3 NT	sign-off
			4 ♣	Gerber (even if nonjump)
			4 ♦, 4 ♡	transfer to major above, or splinter slam
				try if next higher suit is enemy suit
			4 NT	quantitative
1 NT	2 NT*	?	Double	creates forcing auction
	*minors		3 ♣	Stayman (not puppet)
			Other	as above

Rebids by opener:

1 NT	Bid	Xfr	P	Complete Xfr	normal action
?				Jump raise	maximum; good fit
				3 NT	maximum; good stopper
1 NT	2 X	Sta	P	Cue-bid	no stopper; no unbid major
?				3 unbid major	4+ cards
				3 NT	stopper; no unbid major
1 NT	Bid	3 ♠	P	3 NT	stopper in enemy suit
?				4 of suit	4+ cards; no stopper; NF
				Cue-bid	maximum; no stopper; GF

One-Level Suit Openings

One-Over-One Structure

A 1-level suit response to an opening bid of 1 ♣, 1 ♦ or 1 ♥ shows 6+ points and 4+ cards in the suit bid. Respond up-the-line with 4 card suits, except a 4 or 5 card diamond suit may be suppressed if strength is minimal (6-10 points) or if another response is more descriptive.

1 X	P	1 Y	P	New suit	13-18; 4+ cards
?				Reverse	17+; 4+ cards; F
				Jump new suit	19+; 4+ (rare 3) cards; GF
				• Jump reverse	19+; at least 4-6 shape; GF
				DJ new suit	19+; splinter raise
				1 NT	12-14; balanced
				2 NT	18-19; balanced; I
				3 NT	16-19; good 6+ cards in X; usually singleton in Y
				2 X	13-15; 6+ cards or 5 cards in minor if no alternative
				3 X	16-18; 6+ cards; I
				• 4 X (minor)	shape raise (4-6, 4-7); F
				4 X (hearts)	19+; 7+ (strong 6); NF
				2 Y	13-15; usually 4 trumps
				3 Y	16-18; 4 trumps; I
				4 Y (major)	19+; 4 trumps; no splinter

Rebids by Responder

After a 1-over-1 response and opener's nonjump, non-reverse suit rebid, the following rebidding structure applies:

1 m	P	1 R	P	4th suit*	11+; artificial; F
1 M	P	?		Other nonjump	6-10; NF
				Jump 4th suit	13+; 5-5 or 6-4; GF
				Other jump	13+; GF
				DJ 4th suit	16+; splinter raise
				• 4 opened minor	16+; splinter raise (of M)
				Game bid	13-15; poor slam values; NF

**1 ♠ may be 6-10 with 4 spades*

1 R	P	1 M	P	4th suit	11+; artificial; F
2 m	P	?		2 R, 2 M	6-10; NF
				2 NT	10-12; I
				• 3 m, 3 R, 3 M	13+; GF
				• 3-level JFS	13+; 5-5 or 6-4; GF
				3 NT	13-16; NF
				4-level JFS	16+; splinter raise
				4 M	13-15; poor slam values; NF

1 X	P	1 Y	P	New suit	11+; seminatural; F
2 X	P	?		2 Y	6-10; NF
				2 NT	10-12; I
				• 3 X (minor)	13+; GF
				3 X (hearts)	10-12; I
				3 Y	13+; GF
				• 3-level JS	13+; 5-5 or 6-4; GF
				3 NT	13-16; NF
				4-level JS	16+; splinter raise
				Game in major	13-15; sign-off attempt

Especially note:

Responder's raise to three of a minor suit is game forcing (except by a passed hand or if either opponent has bid). If responder wants to invite game, he must bid a third suit (improvising if necessary) after which his next nonjump bid will be invitational.

Opener's Third Bid

After the fourth suit force, opener should describe his hand naturally according to this general structure:

1 R	P	1 M	P	2 NT or lower	bare minimum; NF
2 m	P	2 X	P	Nonjump 3 lev	any strength; F
?				Jump	15+ (good 14); GF
1 m	P	1 R	P	• 2 ♠	at least 4-5 shape; F
1 ♠	P	2 X	P	Other	as previous auction
?					

These two sequences are unique:

1 ♣	P	1 ♦	P	Nonjump	13-15; NF
1 ♥	P	1 ♠	P	Jump	16-18; I
?					
1 ♥	P	1 ♠	P	3 ♠	any strength; 3 spades; F
2 ♦	P	3 ♣	P	• 3 ♦	nondescript; bare minimum without 3 spades; NF
?				Other	15+ (good 14); GF

After the third suit force, opener should rebid naturally according to the following two structures:

1 m	P	1 X	P	2 X, 2 NT, 3 m	bare minimum; NF
2 m	P	2 Y	P	2 ♠ new suit	any strength; implies ace; F
?				Other nonjump	any strength; F
				Jump	15 (good 14); GF
1 R	P	1 M	P	3 M	any strength; 3 cards; F
2 R	P	3 m	P	• 3 R	bare minimum; nondescript but not 3 cards in M; NF
?				3 ♦ new suit	any strength; F
				Other	15 (good 14); GF

Responder's Third Bid

Responder need not bid again after the third or fourth suit force when opener has shown a bare minimum. If responder does bid again he names the final strain. If this is a nonjump below game, responder shows an invitational-range hand. A jump below game is forcing.

Other notes:

1. Rebidding the fourth suit (or third suit) shows at least 5-5 shape. This is invitational at the 3 level; game forcing at the 4 level.
2. If opener has raised the fourth suit (or third suit) or indicated a 3-card preference for responder's first suit, this does not constitute suit agreement; it simply describes opener's hand. It is still up to responder to select the final strain.
3. After a third suit force, if responder bids the fourth suit this is game forcing and implies the ace in that suit.

Rebids after a 1 NT Rebid

When opener rebids 1 NT, the following two structures apply:

1 ♣	P	1 ♦	P	• 2 ♣*	11+; artificial; F
1 NT	P	?		2 ♦	sign-off
				2 ♥, 2 ♠	at least 4-5; GF
				2 NT	11-12; I
				3 ♣, 3 ♦	13+; GF
				• 3 ♥, 3 ♠	16+; splinter; GF

**There is no sign-off in clubs on this auction*

1 X	P	1 M	P	New minor*	11+; artificial; F
1 NT	P	?		2 X, 2 M	sign-off
				2 ♥ new suit	no game interest; NF
				2 ♠ new suit	at least 4-5; GF
				2 NT	11-12; I
				3 X, 3 M	13+; GF
				3 m, 3 ♥ JS	13+; at least 5-5; GF
				• 3 ♠ JS	16+; splinter; GF

**Bid better minor after a 1 ♥ opening*

Memory aid: Responder's 3-level jump-shift rebid is a splinter only if a lower bid in the same suit would be game forcing. Else it is natural (5-5 or 6-4).

Opener's third bid:

After the artificial 2 ♣ or new minor force, opener should bid in the priority listed below:

1 ♣	P	1 ♦	P	2 ♥*, 2 ♠*	min or max; 4 cards
1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	2 NT	min; majors stopped
?				3 NT	max; majors stopped
				2 ♦	min; 3 cards
				3 ♦	max; 3 cards
				3 ♣	min or max; 5 cards

**Plus other major stopped; else would not rebid 1 NT*

1 X	P	1 M	P	2 ♥ new suit	min or max; 4 cards
1 NT	P	2 m	P	2 M	min; 3 cards
?				3 M	max; 3 cards
				2 NT	min; unbid suit stopped
				3 NT	max; unbid suit stopped
				Other	min or max; natural

Rebids after a 1 NT Rebid (cont.)

Responder's third bid:

After the artificial 2 ♣ or new minor force, responder is not required to bid again if opener has confirmed a minimum. When responder does bid again, these structures apply:

1 ♣	P	1 ♦	P	New major	stopper or ace; 5+ ♦; GF
1 NT	P	2 ♣	P	Other nonjump	game I in that strain; NF
Bid	P	?		J new major	splinter; GF
				Other jump	natural; GF
1 X	P	1 M	P	New suit	natural or stopper; GF
1 NT	P	2 m	P	Bid suit	game I in that strain; NF
Bid	P	?		2 NT*	5 cards in M; I
				3 NT*	5 cards in M; NF
				Jump new suit	splinter; GF
				Jump bid suit	natural; GF

**Opener has option to play notrump with 5-3 major fit*

A special case:

1 m	P	1 ♠	P	• 2 ♠* over 2 ♥	5 spades; F
1 NT	P	2 um	P	• New ♥ bid	5-5 in majors; I
Bid	P	?		Other	as previous auction

**Opener must bid 2 NT or 3 ♠ with a minimum. If 2 NT, responder's next bid if any follows 3rd-round format*

Rebids after a 2 NT Jump Rebid

When opener rebids 2 NT (18-19 HCP) after a 1-level suit response, the following structure, similar to that after 1 NT, applies:

1 ♣	P	1 ♦	P	• 3 ♣	artificial; GF
2 NT	P	?		• 3 ♦, 3 ♥, 3 ♠	natural; slam try
1 m	P	1 M	P	New minor	artificial; GF
2 NT	P	?		3 m	natural; GF
				• Other suit	natural; slam try
1 ♥	P	1 ♠	P	3 ♣, 3 ♦	better minor; GF
2 NT	P	?		3 ♥	natural; GF
				• 3 ♠	natural; slam try

Opener's third bid:

After the artificial 3 ♣ or new minor force, opener should bid in this general priority:

1 X	P	1 Y	P	3 new major	4 cards
2 NT	P	3 m	P	3 Y	3 cards (optional in ♦)
?				3 X	5 cards (if hearts suggests weakness in unbid minor)
				3 NT	none of above or option

Responder's third bid:

1 X	P	1 Y	P	3 Y	5 good cards
2 NT	P	3 m	P	New suit	ace or splinter; slam try
Bid	P	?		3 NT	5 cards in Y; NF
				4 opened minor	natural; slam try
				4 m	5-5 shape; slam try
				Game	sign-off

A special case:

1 m	P	1 ♠	P	• 3 ♥	5-5 majors; no slam interest
2 NT	P	3 um	P	• 4 ♥ over 3 NT	5-5 majors; no slam interest
Bid	P	?		Other	as previous auction

Notrump Responses to Minor

The 1 NT response to 1 ♣ or 1 ♦ shows 6-10 HCP and it denies a 4 card major suit. It is nonforcing.

1 m	P	1 NT	P	2 ♣ after 1 ♦	13-18; 4+ cards
?				Reverse	17+; 4+ (rare 3) cards; F
				3 ♣ after 1 ♦	19+; 4+ (rare 3) cards; GF
				• Jump reverse	19+; at least 4-6 shape; GF
				2 NT	16-18; I
				2 m	13-15; 6+ cards
				3 m	16-18; 6+ cards; I

The 2 NT response to 1 ♣ or 1 ♦ shows 15+ HCP. See separate topic.

The 3 NT response to 1 ♣ or 1 ♦ shows 13-14 HCP and it denies a 4 card major suit. If opener bids again:

1 m	P	3 NT	P	4 ♣ after 1 ♦	4+ cards; GF
?				4 m	6+ cards; GF
				Other suit	4+ cards; unbalanced; slam try
				4 NT	quantitative
				• 5 m	slam I (see Voluntary Bid of Five)

One Notrump Forcing

The 1 NT response to 1 ♥ or 1 ♠ shows 6-14 HCP (it may be less with a trump fit) and denies 4 spades after 1 ♥. It is forcing.

1 M	P	1 NT	P	2 ♣, 2 ♦	13-18; 3+ cards
?				• 2 ♠ after 1 ♥	19+ with 4-5 shape or 16+ with 4-6; F
				• 3 ♠ after 1 ♥	minimum; 5-6 shape; NF
				• 4 ♥ after 1 ♠	minimum; 6-5 shape
				• 4 ♣, 4 ♦	19+; 3 cards w/honor; 7 cards in M (broken); F
				4 M	19+; excellent suit
				Other	standard

Rebids by responder:

1 M	P	1 NT	P	New suit	6-10; 5+ cards (3 ♣ = 6+); NF
2 m	P	?		2 M	6-10 with doubleton or 4-7 with 3+
				• 2 ♠ after 1 ♥	12+ raise of m (then 2 NT or 3 m by opener is NF)
				2 NT	11-12 (good 10); I
				3 m	9-11; 4+ cards (usually 5); I
				• JS below 3 M	13+ value-raise* of m (then 4 m by opener is NF)
				3 M	11-12 (good 10); 3 trumps; I
				• JS above 3 M	13+ value-raise* of M
				3 NT	13-14; balanced; NF
				4 m	freakish; 6+ trumps; I
				4 M	12-14; 3 trumps; unslammish

**A value-raise shows normal trump support for opener's suit, usually with the king or queen in the suit bid; further, if just one unbid suit remains, this implies no secondary honors in the unbid suit.*

1 ♠	P	1 NT	P	3 ♣, 3 ♦	6-10; 6+ cards; NF
2 ♥	P	?		3 ♥	9-11; 4+ trumps; I
				• 4 ♣, 4 ♦	13+ value-raise of ♥
				4 ♥	9-12; usually 5 trumps
				Other	as previous auction

1 M	P	1 NT	P	3 M	2+ trumps; I
2 M	P	?		• 2 ♠ after 1 ♥	at least 5-5 in minors; limit bidding follows
				• Jump shift	13+ value-raise of M
				4 M	sign-off
				Other	as previous auction

One Notrump Forcing (cont.)

1 ♥	P	1 NT	P	• 2 NT	weakness or waiting; F
2 ♠	P	?		3 ♣, 3 ♦	5+ cards; GF
				3 ♥	10+; 3 trumps; GF
				3 ♠	10+; 3 trumps w/honor; GF
				3 NT	10-12; minors stopped
				4 ♣, 4 ♦	10+; value-raise of ♥
1 M	P	1 NT	P	• 3 ♣, 3 ♦, 3 M	sign-off attempt
2 NT	P	?		3 ♥ after 1 ♠	5+ cards; F
				• 3 ♠ after 1 ♥	at least 5-5 in minors; limit bidding follows
				• Jump shift	13+ value-raise of M
1 M	P	1 NT	P	New suit	5+ cards
3 m	P	?		3 M	weak hand (assumed) or 13+
				• 3 ♠ after 1 ♥	11+ raise of m
				4 m	weak raise
				• Jump shift	11+ value-raise of m
				4 M	10-12; slam invitation
1 ♠	P	1 NT	P	3 ♠	weak hand (assumed) or 13+
3 ♥	P	?		4 ♣, 4 ♦	6+ cards; F
				4 ♥	weak raise
				4 ♠	10-12; slam invitation
				• 5 ♣, 5 ♦	11+ value-raise of ♥
1 M	P	1 NT	P	• 3 ♠	at least 5-5 in minors; limit bidding follows
3 M	P	?		4 ♣, 4 ♦	6+ cards; F
				4 ♥ after 1 ♠	6+ cards; NF
				• Jump shift	11+ value-raise of M

Two-over-One Response to Major

The 2-over-1 response to 1♥ or 1♠ shows at least 13 points with 5+ cards (rarely, a good 4 card minor), or 11-12 points with 6+ cards in the suit bid. This is game forcing unless responder rebids the same suit at his next turn.

1 M	P	2 m	P	New suit	natural; reverse does not show extra
?				2 M	6+ or strong 5 cards
				2 NT	12-14 or 18+; natural
				3 NT	15-17; natural
				3 m	3+ cards (not 3 small)
				• 3 M	13+ HCP; 6+ card solid suit or K-Q-J-10-x-x
				Jump shift	16+; splinter raise
				• 4 m	minimum opening; 5-5 shape
1 ♠	P	2 ♥	P	3 ♥	3+ cards (not 3 small)
?				• 4 ♥	16-18; 3+ cards (not 3 small)
				Other	as previous auction

Rebids by responder:

1 M	P	2 X	P	2 NT	13-14 or 18+; natural
Bid	P	?		3 NT jump	15-17; natural
				3 NT nonjump	13-17; natural
				New suit	natural (4th suit is suspect)
				Rebid X	6+ cards; I (only non-GF)
				Raise, pref	13+; natural
				Jump shift	16+; splinter raise
				Jump X	13+; 7+ or strong 6 cards; GF
				• Other jump	13-15; natural; no control in any unbid suit

Opener's third bid:

1 ♠	P	2 ♥	P	• 4 m	18+; control-bid; suggests heart x-x-x, A-x, K-x or Q-x
2 NT	P	3 NT	P	4 ♥	12-14; three small trumps
?				• 4 ♠	18-19; 6 spades; semibalanced

Two Clubs over One Diamond

The 2 ♣ response to 1 ♦ shows 11+ points and 4+ clubs. With a minimum opening opener must make an artificial 2 ♦ rebid; otherwise game must be reached (except for 4 ♣ jump raise).

1 ♦	P	2 ♣	P	• 2 ♦	minimum; nondescript; F
?				2 ♥, 2 ♠	4+ cards; GF
				2 NT	14+; balanced; GF
				3 ♣	3+ trumps; GF
				3 ♦	6+ cards; GF
				3 ♥, 3 ♠	16+; splinter raise
				3 NT	18-19; balanced; NF
				• 4 ♣	minimum; 5-5 minors; NF

Rebids by responder:

1 ♦	P	2 ♣	P	2 NT, 3 ♣	11-12; usually end; NF
2 ♦	P	?		Other	natural; GF

Inverted Minor Raises

A single minor raise shows 10+ unlimited (with exactly 10 prefer 1 NT if balanced), at least 4 trumps (usually 5), and no 4 card major suit. This is forcing for one round.

1 m	P	2 m	P	3 m	minimum; NF
?				2 NT	minimum; often 3 card m; NF
				New suit	4+ cards or stopper; at least a “queen” more than a minimum; F
				3 NT	18-19; NF
				Jump shift	splinter; slam try
				• 4 m	6+ cards; no splinter; slam try

In subsequent bidding, any rebid in the agreed minor by either partner is nonforcing and shows minimal values for his previous bids. Exception: Removal of 3 NT to 4 of a minor is forcing.

The jump minor raise shows 6-9 points and at least 5 trumps (or 4 good trumps). It is basically preemptive. Raises to the 4 and 5 level are also weak, but indicate freakish distribution.

Direct Major Raises

The following responses to a major opening show trump support. Single raise shows 3+ trumps; all other raises show 4+ trumps.

1 M	P	?	2 M	7-10
			3 M	11-12 (good 10); I
			• 3 M + 1 step	13-15; unknown splinter
			• 3 M + 2 steps	16-18; non-4th-step splinter
			• 3 M + 3 steps	13-15; no splinter
			• 3 M + 4 steps	16-18; natural splinter
			4 M	weak

Special follow-ups:

After a 1-step raise, opener may relay with the cheapest bid to locate the splinter, which is shown naturally except a bid of 4 in the trump suit indicates the unshowable splinter.

After a 2-step raise, opener may relay then the two possible splinters are shown by Astro-like relation: $\diamond = \spadesuit$, $\heartsuit = \clubsuit$, $\spadesuit = \diamond$.

After a 3-step raise, opener may relay as an all-purpose slam try.

Weak Jump Shift Responses

Except for the specialized major raises (3 \spadesuit thru 4 \heartsuit), all jump-shift responses are weak. General requirements:

1 X	P	?	2-level JS	2-5 HCP; 6 cards or decent 5
			3-level JS	2-7 HCP; 7 cards or decent 6
			4-level JS*	2-7 HCP; 8 cards or decent 7

**Over minor opening or 4 \spadesuit over 1 \heartsuit .*

Rebids by opener:

1 X	P	2 Y	P	2 NT*	same as response to weak two-bid; F
?	(or)			Any suit bid	natural; suggests extreme shape; NF
1 X	P	3 Y	P		
?					

**Responder follows the same rebid structure (3 \clubsuit = 5 card suit, etc.)*

Two Notrump Response

The 2 NT response to one of a suit shows 15+ HCP (no upper limit) and usually denies a 4 card major biddable at the 1 level.

1 X	P	2 NT	P	New suit	4+ cards; unbalanced; reverse does not show extra values
?				3 X	6+ cards
				3 NT	to play; no slam if 15-17
				4 NT	quantitative (assuming 15-17)

Rebids by responder:

1 X	P	2 NT	P	3 NT	15-17
Suit	P	?		• 4 NT	18-19; I
				Raise, pref	15-17 (assumed)
				• New suit	15+; value-raise of opener's suit (either if two bid)

1 X	P	2 NT	P	• 4 X	15-16; good trump support
3 NT	P	?		• New suit	17+; value-raise of X
				4 NT	18-19; I

Major Suit Game Tries

The following structure applies *any time* a major suit is raised from one to two. This can be a raise of a major-suit opening, a one-level response, a one-level rebid or a one-level overcall. It also applies after a Drury 2 ♣ response, a 2 ♦ rebid and a 2 M rebid by Drury bidder.

It also applies in competition provided there is no enemy bid *after* the raise to two.

1 M	any	2 M	P*	• Cheapest bid	relay; game or slam try
?	(or)			2 NT over 2 ♥	balanced; I
1 X	any	1 M	any	3 M	preemptive; no game interest
2 M	P*	?		• 3 other suit*	4+ cards; slam try; alternate strain is possible
	(etc.)				
	*or Double			4 new suit	splinter; slam try

**Note that a jump to 3 ♠ is natural, not a splinter.*

After the “cheapest bid” relay:

1 M	P	2 M	P	• 2 NT	secondary values* in <i>spades</i>
Rel	P	?		3 new suit	secondary values* in suit bid
				3 M	minimum; scattered values
				4 M	maximum; scattered values
				• Raise relay	maximum; 4-3-3-3 shape

**Typically at least 3 cards including the king or queen*

When secondary values are shown, it is still unknown whether the raise was minimum or maximum. Continuations:

1 M	P	2 M	P	3 M*	turned off by values; NF
Rel	P	Val	P	• Cheapest suit	relay; asks if min or max (return to trump suit = min)
?					
				3 NT	choice of games; NF
				4 M	sign-off
				Other suit	control-bid; slam try
				• Jump new suit	splinter; slam try

**If no relay is available below 3 of major, this is the only available invitation, so responder should continue to game if maximum.*

Opener's Reverse Bid

Opener's reverse after a 1 ♥, 1 ♠ or 1 NT response to a minor opening shows 17+ points and is forcing. Rebid structures:

1 m	P	1 M	P	• 2 M	6-10; any 5+ cards; F
Rev	P	?		• 2 NT	6-10; no 5 card major; F
				4th suit	10+; natural or waiting; GF
				Pref, raise	10+; GF
				3 M	11+; 6+ cards (max 2 losers)
				3 NT	11-13; NF

1 m	P	1 NT	P	• 2 NT	weakness or waiting; F
Rev	P	?		3 ♣ new suit	5+ cards; F
				Pref, raise	8-10; GF
				Other new suit	8-10; stopper; GF
				3 NT	8-10; unids stopped

Opener's third bid:

1 m	P	1 M	P	2 NT, 3 m, 3 M	minimum; NF
Rev	P	2 M	P	3 Rev	6-5 shape; F
?				4th suit	shows the ace; GF
				4 m	7+ cards; F
				Jump 4th suit	splinter raise

1 m	P	1 M	P	• 3 m	minimum; may be 5 cards; NF
Rev	P	2 NT	P	3 Rev	6-5 shape; F
?				3 M	3 good trumps; F
				New suit	3+ cards; F
				3 NT	19+
				4 m	7+ cards; F

1 m	P	1 NT	P	Same as above (except 3 M does not exist)	
Rev	P	2 NT	P		
?					

Note: Opener's reverse after a 1 NT response to 1 ♥ is covered under 1 NT forcing. See topic.

Fourth Suit Bids in General

Except for the fourth-suit-forcing structure used to invite game after a 1-over-1 response, bids in the fourth suit are usually game forcing. Meanings of fourth-suit bids are outlined below with examples.

1. Responder's rebid after a 2-over-1 response shows either a natural suit or at least six cards in his first suit. Opener should tend to support responder's first suit with a doubleton honor or better.

1♥ P	2♣ P	1♠ P	2♦ P	1♦ P	2♣ P
2♦ P	2♠	2♥ P	3♣	2♠ P	3♥

2. Responder's rebid after opener's reverse after a 1-over-1 response is a waiting bid and implies five cards in responder's major suit.

1♣ P	1♠ P	1♣ P	1♥ P	1♦ P	1♠ P
2♦ P	2♥	2♦ P	2♠	2♥ P	3♣

3. Opener's or responder's third bid in a 1-over-1 or 2-over-1 auction indicates the ace or a splinter. Partner assumes the ace and may bid notrump without a stopper (if hand is suitable). Fourth-suit bidder should not pass 3 NT if his bid was based on a splinter.

1♦ P	1♠ P	1♥ P	1♠ P	1♥ P	2♣ P
2♦ P	3♣ P	2♣ P	3♣ P	2♥ P	3♦ P
3♥		3♦		3♠	
1♣ P	1♦ P	1♣ P	1♥ P	1♠ P	2♣ P
1♠ P	3♣ P	2♣ P	3♣ P	2♦ P	2NT P
3♦ P	3♥	3♦ P	3♠	3♦ P	3♥

4. Opener's fourth bid (below 3 NT) in a 1-over-1 or 2-over-1 auction suggests two or three small cards, essentially a nothing bid to keep the possibility of 3 NT alive. In some cases, this may be a repeat of a fourth-suit-forcing bid if it could not be natural.

1♣ P	1♥ P	1♣ P	1♥ P	1♠ P	2♣ P
2♣ P	3♣ P	1♠ P	2♦ P	2♠ P	2NT P
3♦ P	3♥ P	2♠ P	3♣ P	3♣ P	3♦ P
3♠		3♦		3♥	

Passed Hand Modifications

In third or fourth seat slightly weaker hands may be opened. Further, when opening a subminimum hand, it is permissible to bid a good 4 card major for tactical purposes.

The following changes apply when responder is a passed hand:

1. A 1-over-1 response may be passed if opener has only 13 points, and should be passed if opener has less. When opener does bid again, his rebids retain their normal meaning.
2. The 1 NT response to a major shows 6-12 points and is intended as forcing. Opener may pass with 13 points, and should pass with less. The bidding continues normally if opener bids again.
3. The 2 ♣ response to 1 ♦ shows 9-11 HCP and 5+ clubs. Opener should pass with a subminimum opening and may pass with 13 points. If opener does bid again, the system structure is unchanged.
4. The 2 ♣ response to a major is “reverse Drury.” See topic.
5. A 2 ♦ response to a major (or 2 ♥ over 1 ♠) shows 9-11 HCP and 5+ cards. Opener should pass with a subminimum opening and may pass with 13 points. If opener does bid again, a rebid of the same suit, raise or 2 NT bid shows minimal values and is nonforcing; a new suit or jump bid is forcing (below game). The same is true of responder’s rebids.
6. The 2 NT response to a minor shows 11-12 points and is invitational to game. Any rebid by opener below game is forcing.
7. The 2 NT response to a major shows a “limit raise” with an unknown splinter. Rebid structure:

P	P	1 M	P	3 ♣	asks for splinter (3 M shows ♣ splinter)
2 NT	P	?		• 3 ♦ after 1 ♥	demands 3 ♥ with ♠ splinter; else 4 ♥
				3 M	no game interest; sign-off

8. Responder’s rebid after a 1-over-1 response is affected. A jump or raise to the 3 level is invitational instead of forcing.
9. Responder’s rebid in a third suit is no longer an artificial force. This is natural and invitational, showing a two-suited hand.

Note: Fourth suit forcing and new minor forcing still apply as a passed hand.

Reverse Drury

The 2♣ response to a major by a passed hand is reverse Drury. It shows either 11+ (good 10) points with 3+ cards in opener's major, or 9-11 HCP with a 6+ card club suit. It is forcing.

P	P	1 M	P	2♦	artificial; game interest
2♣	P	?		• 2♥ after 1♠	4+ hearts; no game interest
				2 same major	no game interest

Responder's rebids:

P	P	1 M	P	2 M*	10-11; 3+ trumps; NF
2♣	P	2♦	P	2 NT	11-12; balanced; major fit; I
?				• 3♣	6+ clubs; no major fit; I
				3 M	12+; 3+ trumps; GF
				Other suit	4+ cards; major fit; F
				Jump shift	splinter raise

**Major-suit game-try structure applies by opener after this bid*

Enemy interference:

Reverse Drury does not apply in competition. If the enemy interferes *after* the 2♣ bid, use these structures:

P	P	1 M	P	• Pass	4+ clubs; weak opening
2♣	Dbl	?		• Redouble	4+ clubs; full opening
				Other	as without double
P	P	1 M	P	Pass	weak opening
2♣	Bid	?		• Double	good defense; full opening
				Bid past 2 M	natural; full opening
				Other	as without bid

Competitive after One of a Suit

After a Takeout Double

If our opening bid of one of a suit is doubled for takeout:

1 X	Dbl	?	Redouble	10+; implies no fit; creates forcing auction
			1 of suit*	6+; 4+ cards; F
			1 NT	6-9; balanced; NF
			2 over 1	6-9; 6+ (good 5) cards; NF
			Jump shift	as without double

**Rebid structure is unchanged unless an opponent bids.*

After a minor opening:

The following bids show 4+ card trump support:

1 m	Dbl	?	All raises	as without double
			• 2 NT	9-11 HCP; natural; I
			3 NT	12-15 HCP; natural; NF

After a major opening:

The following bids show trump support:

1 M	Dbl	?	2 M	6-9; 3+ trumps
			2 NT	10-12; 4+ (rare 3) trumps
			3 M	6-9; 4+ trumps
			• Steps 1 to 4	as without double
			4 M	as without double

After a Suit Overcall

If our opening bid of one of a suit is overcalled in a natural unbid suit thru the level of 4 ♦:

1 X	Suit	?	Double	negative (see topic)
			New suit	6+; 4+ cards at 1 level; F 9+; 5+ cards at 2 level or higher; F if below game
			1 NT	7-10; NF
			Jump shift	weak (at or below game)
			• Cue below 3 NT	13+; balanced with stopper; opener continues as if forcing 2 NT resp
			Cue by PH	11-13; splinter raise
			2 NT jump	11-12; I
			2 NT nonjump	10-12; I
			3 NT nonjump	10-16; NF
			Jump cue	13+; splinter raise
			Cue above 3 NT	13+; fit with control
			DJ raise	weak
			4 NT	Blackwood

After a minor opening:

1 m	Suit	?	2 m, 3 m jump	as without overcall
			3 m nonjump	8-10
			4 m jump	11-13; I
			4 m nonjump	9-12
			5 m jump	13-16
			5 m nonjump	10-16
			• 3 NT jump or DJ	10-12; natural but based on 5+ card minor fit; NF
			DJ new suit	natural; weak

After a major opening:

1 M	Suit	?	2 M	6-10
			3 M jump	11-12 (good 10); I
			3 M nonjump	8-10
			4 M jump	11-13
			4 M nonjump	8-13
			• 3 NT jump or DJ	13+; 4+ trumps; no control in enemy suit; F
			• DJ new suit	splinter raise if below 4 M; else natural, weak

Negative Doubles

After our opening of one of a suit, the double of a suit overcall thru 4 ♦ (or 4 ♥ after a minor opening) is a negative double. The strength shown is 6+ at the 1 level; 7+ at the 2 level; 8+ at the 3 level; 9+ at the 4 level. Suit requirements:

1 ♣	1 ♦	?	Double	4+ cards in each major
			1 ♥, 1 ♠	4+ cards
1 m	1 M	?	Double	4 cards in one major; may be 5+ cards
1 m	2 M	?		if unable to bid
1 m	3 M	?	New suit	5+ cards
1 m	4 ♥	?		
1 X	2 m	?		
1 X	3 m	?		
1 X	4 m	?		
1 ♥	1 ♠	?	Double	4+ cards in each minor
1 ♥	2 ♠	?	Minor suit	5+ cards
1 ♥	3 ♠	?		
1 ♠	2 ♥	?		
1 ♠	3 ♥	?		

Negative doubles also apply over a *natural* overcall in opener's suit, e.g., 1 ♣ 2 ♣.

Rebids by opener:

1 X	Suit	Dbl	any	Nonjump bid	13-15 below game; NF
?					13-18 if game
				Jump bid	16-18 below game; I
					16+ if game

Rebids by doubler when opener has not shown extra strength:

1 X	Suit	Dbl	any	New suit*	7-10; 6+ (good 5) cards; NF
any	any	?		Preference	7-10
				Single raise	7-10 at 2 level
					10-12 at 3 level or 4 m; I
					10-15 if game
				2 NT	10-12; I
				Jump new suit	10-12; 6+ cards; I below game
				Jump raise/pref	11-12 below game; 13-15 if game
				3 NT	13-15 if J; 11-15 if NJ

*Exceptions: A spade bid after doubling 1 ♥, or a minor-suit bid when opener bid a major that responder showed, is natural and GF.

After a Two-Suited Overcall

After a Michaels cue-bid, unusual 2 NT, Roman jump overcall, or any other bid that shows a two-suited hand, the following structure called “invisible cue-bids” applies:

1 X	Bid* ?	Double	10+; creates forcing auction
	<i>*2-suited hand</i>	• New suit	6-9; 6+ (good 5) cards; NF
		Single raise	6-9; NF
		2 NT	9-11; natural with fit; I
		3 NT jump	12-14; natural with fit; NF
		3 NT nonjump	9-14; natural with fit; NF
		Jump shift	weak
		• Jump raise	weak
		• Cheapest cue*	10+; raise of suit opened
		• Higher cue*	10+ HCP; 5+ cards in the 4th suit; F
		Any jump cue*	13+; splinter raise; GF

**A bid is a cue-bid only if the suit was specifically shown. The “higher cue” is available only when two specific suits were shown.*

Subsequent bidding:

1. After the “higher cue,” if opener rebids in notrump or his original suit, this confirms a minimum and is nonforcing. A “raise” of responder’s indicated suit is forcing below game.
2. After doubling, if responder next bids a new suit or a suit implied by the enemy, it is natural and forcing below game.
3. If responder passes over the two-suited overcall and later bids a suit implied by the enemy, it is natural and nonforcing.

Competitive Rebids

Opener's competitive rebids after a 1-over-1 response carry the same meaning as those without interference provided a lower bid in the same strain is not eliminated by the interference. If opener is *restricted* by elimination, the following structure applies:

1 X	any	1 Y	bid	2 NT nonjump	17-19
?				3 NT jump	15+; based on 6+ suit
				3 NT nonjump	17+ (or 15+ with 6+ suit)
				3 X nonjump	15-17
				4 X jump	18-20; I in minor
				4 X nonjump	16-18
				3 Y nonjump	14-16
				4 Y jump	17-20; I if diamonds
				4 Y nonjump	16-20; I if diamonds
				2 ♠ reverse	17+; F (structure off)
				3 lower suit	15-18; NF
				3 reverse	17+; F
				3 ♠ jump reverse	19+; 4-6 shape; GF
				Jump shift	19+; GF

Responder's rebids after a 1-over-1 response revert to a "limit" style after any enemy bid. A new suit bid below game is forcing; but raises to the 3 level and jump bids are invitational.

Two-over-one auctions:

After a 2-over-1 (or nonjump 3-over-1) response following an overcall, responder is not required to bid again; no forcing auction is created. If opener repeats his suit, bids 2 NT or raises, he confirms a minimum and it is nonforcing. Jumps and new suit bids are forcing below game. The same is true of responder's rebids.

Cue-Bids as Rebids

After our opening bid of one of a suit and some action by responder, a cue-bid in the enemy suit by opener or responder is game forcing. The meanings are shown below:

1 X	any	Act	any	Cue below 3 NT	nondescript; general GF
?	(or)			Cue above 3 NT	ace or splinter; fit assured
1 X	any	Act	any	Jump Cue	splinter raise
any	any	?			
	(or)				
1 X	any	Act	any		
any	any	any	any		
?	(etc.)				

If the enemy has shown two suits, the first cue-bid below 3 NT implies a stopper in that suit; hence, partner may bid notrump with a stopper in the other suit.

Special follow-ups:

1 X	any	Act	any	Pass double	waiting; no clear action
Cue	any	?		Redouble	ace
	(or)			Raise cue	splinter; fit assured
1 X	any	Act	any	Recue by cuer	ace; fit assured
Cue	any	any	any		
?	(etc.)				

Corollary to above: Opener's double-jump raise to 4 of responder's major denies control in the enemy suit; else cue twice (ace) or splinter (singleton or void).

Competitive Doubles

Certain doubles, while penalty in standard bidding, are best played as competitive meaning, "I want to compete further but I am not sure what to bid." Certain basic conditions must always exist:

Partner must have acted.

Your side has not established a fit.

Your side has not bid notrump.

You did not pass the doubled suit at your last turn.

A forcing auction does not exist.

Applicable situations:

Assuming the above conditions the following are competitive doubles:

1. All doubles at the 1 level.

1 ♣ P 1 ♦ 1 ♠
Dbl

1 ♣ P 1 ♥ 1 ♠
P P Dbl

1 ♣ 1 ♥ P 1 ♠
P P Dbl

2. Double of a raised enemy suit thru 3 ♠, provided the enemy action was *direct* (doubles of enemy balancing actions are for penalty). This also includes the case of an implied enemy fit, such as an enemy response to a takeout double.

1 ♦ 1 ♥ 1 ♠ 2 ♥
Dbl

1 ♣ 1 ♠ Dbl 2 ♠
P P Dbl

1 ♣ Dbl 1 ♠ 3 ♥
Dbl

3. The double of an invitational cue-bid, jump cue-bid, or any kind of fit-showing bid at the 2 or 3 level.

1 ♣ 1 ♠ Dbl 2 ♣
Dbl

1 ♦ 1 ♥ 1 ♠ 3 ♦
Dbl

1 ♣ P 1 ♥ 1 ♠
P 2 ♥ Dbl

Strength requirements:

The minimum strength for a competitive double at the 1 or 2 level is slightly more than previously shown; at the 3 level, you should have about an ace extra. There is no upper limit; the double might be the first step with a game-going hand.

After a competitive double:

Partner of the competitive doubler should choose the contract from the alternatives suggested by the previous bidding. Any nonjump bid (even a new suit) is nonforcing; jumps below game are invitational. Passing the double is a real possibility, requiring a suitable defensive hand with 4 trumps, or 3 trumps at the 3 level.

Cooperative Doubles

A cooperative double is a penalty suggestion. Doubler typically holds 3 or more cards in the suit doubled, all-around values, and no fit for partner's suit. Cooperative doubles apply in the following situations thru 3 ♠. (Higher doubles are penalty.)

1. A double by a player who bypassed the opportunity to redouble or to make a strength-showing double.

1 ♠ Dbl P 2 ♣
P P Dbl

1 ♥ 2 ♥ P 2 ♠
P P Dbl

1 ♣ P 1 ♠ Dbl
P 2 ♥ P P
Dbl

Important: Doubler's strength is not limited by the failure to act at his previous turn. The above sequences would be ideal with any strong 4-4-3-2 shape (doubleton in partner's suit).

Corollary: If you redouble or make a strength-showing double, you are unable to make a cooperative double. If you later double, it requires at least 4 good trumps.

2. A double by the *partner* of the player who just redoubled or made a strength-showing double. This blends well with the corollary above.

3. A double of a suit in which you denied 4 cards.

1 ♦ P 1 NT 2 ♥
P P Dbl

1 ♣ P 1 ♥ P
2 ♣ P P 2 ♠
Dbl

1 ♠ P 1 NT P
2 ♦ P P 2 ♥
Dbl

4. A double by a player who made a competitive double.

1 ♣ 1 ♦ 1 ♠ 2 ♦
Dbl P 2 ♠ 3 ♦
Dbl

1 ♦ 1 ♥ 1 ♠ 2 ♥
P P Dbl 3 ♥
P P Dbl

After a cooperative double:

Partner should remove the double with a singleton or void in the enemy suit or with a hand very unsuited for defense. Limit bidding applies.

After a One Notrump Overcall

After an enemy 1 NT overcall of our suit opening bid:

1 X	1 NT	?	Double	penalty
			New suit	6-9; 6+ (good 5) cards; NF
			• 2 NT	artificial; 2-suiter; F to 4 level
			Jump shift	6+ cards; I
1 M	1 NT	?	2 M	6-9; 3+ trumps
			3 M	10-12; based on shape; I
1 m	1 NT	?	• 2 m	artificial; weak takeout for majors
			3 m	weak (no change)

Actions when Responder Passes

Point ranges are shown by probable high-card points, however, suit bids may be shaded.

1 X	any	P	Act	Redouble	18+; no force created
?				1 NT	18-19
				2 NT	16+; natural; trick source
				Suit bid	16+; unbalanced
				Jump suit bid	18+; very unbalanced; I
				Cue-bid	16+; 5-4-4-0 shape
				Dbl suit thru 4 ♦	16+; takeout*
				Dbl 1 NT	18+; optional
				Dbl 2 NT, 3 NT	penalty
				Dbl 4 M	18+; optional ; takeout if <i>raised</i>
				4 NT over 4 M	18+; takeout

**If artificial suit bid (or cue-bid) double is takeout of enemy suit shown. If enemy has shown no real suit, then double shows extra length in suit doubled.*

Balancing actions:

1 X	Suit	P	P	Pass	Length in enemy suit*
?				Double	13+; takeout
				Suit bid	13+; unsuitable to double
				Other (rare)	same as direct action

**If the enemy bid is a jump, opener may pass without length in the enemy suit if he feels it is too risky to double or bid.*

Two-Level and Higher Openings

Two Club Opening

An opening bid of 2 ♣ is strong, artificial and forcing, and typically shows 23+ points or a one-suited hand within a trick of game.

If responder has a 5 card or longer suit headed by at least 2 of the 3 top honors, he should make a suit-showing response. Otherwise, he must define his point count.

2 ♣	P	?	2 ♦	0-4 or 8+ (or an ace + king)
			2 ♥	5-7 or bad 8 (or an ace)
			• 2 ♠	any 5 card suit; 2 of top 3
			• 2 NT	any 5 card suit; A-K-Q
			3 of suit	6 cards in suit bid; 2 of top 3
			• 3 NT	any 6 card suit; A-K-Q
			4 of suit	7 cards in suit bid; 2 of top 3
			• 4 NT	any 7 card suit; A-K-Q

Special jump rebid by opener:

After any response, a jump suit rebid by opener (even if game) establishes the trump suit and is forcing. Responder must continue:

2 ♣	P	Bid	P	• Cheapest NT	no aces
JS	P	?		• Suit bid	that ace

Follow-up: Opener may sign off in his suit or notrump or bid any other suit as control asking (see topic).

Rebids by opener after a point-count response:

2 ♣	P	2 ♦	P	2 NT	23-24; balanced; NF
?				3 NT	25-28; balanced; NF
				4 NT	29-30; balanced; NF
				Suit bid	5+ cards; F
2 ♣	P	2 ♥	P	2 NT	23+; balanced; F
?				• 3 NT	semibalanced; 6+ minor; NF
				Suit bid	5+ cards; F

Two Club Opening (cont.)

Rebids by responder after a point-count response:

2 ♣	P	2 ♦	P	• Cheapest bid	waiting
Suit	P	?		Other nonjump	natural; suits show 5+ cards
				• Jump raise	Q-x-x-x or better; no controls
				Jump shift	splinter raise

Note: Responder is always presumed to have 0-4 (even if he jumps) unless he voluntarily bids beyond game. The only way to stop below game is when opener rebids the same suit.

2 ♣	P	2 ♥	P	Nonjump bid	natural (no waiting bids)
Suit	P	?		• Jump raise	Q-x-x-x or better; no controls
				Jump shift	splinter raise
2 ♣	P	2 X	P	Any	system on* (as if 2 NT opening)
2 NT	P	?			

**If responder tries for slam after a 2 ♦ response, he logically must have 8+.*

2 ♣	P	2 ♦	P	4 ♣*	Stayman (not puppet)
3 NT	P	?		4 ♦*, 4 ♥*	Jacoby
				4 ♠*	both minors
				• 4 NT	8+; balanced; F
				5 ♣	Gerber

**If responder next bids a suit, it is natural NF (unless illogical); 5-level bids may be raised. The only way to show 8+ is to rebid 4 NT (F) or 5 NT (F).*

2 ♣	P	2 ♦	P	5 ♣*	Stayman (not puppet)
4 NT	P	?		5 ♦*, 5 ♥*	Jacoby
				5 ♠*	both minors

**There is no way to show 8+ here (may as well bid 7 NT). Any rebid by responder below slam is forcing (5 NT asks opener to pick a slam).*

Two Club Opening (cont.)

Rebids after a suit-showing response:

2 ♣	P	2 ♠	P	2 NT	23+ balanced (system on)
?				Suit bid	5+ cards
2 ♣	P	2 ♠	P	Suit bid	real suit; F (even if game)
Suit	P	?		3 NT, Raise	minimal values; inconvenient to bid suit
				Jump shift	splinter raise

After a 2 NT or higher response, opener should know responder's suit, so there is no need to repeat it. The bidding proceeds naturally; any game bid is NF. An immediate 4 NT by opener is *regular* Blackwood, and a raise to 5 of responder's suit (NF) asks for the jack.

Competitive agreements:

2 ♣	Dbl	?	• Redouble	5-7; good clubs (Q-10-x-x)
			• Pass	0-4 or 8+; good clubs
			Other	as without double
2 ♣	Bid	?	Pass	0-4 (or more with no call)
			Double	penalty; trump stack
			Cue-bid	5+; splinter
			Suit bid	5+; 5+ cards
			2 NT	5+; balanced; stopper
			3 NT nonjump	5-7; balanced; stopper

All doubles by opener or responder are for penalty. All direct passes are forcing.

A cue-bid of the enemy suit by opener, when responder has not acted, shows 5-4-4-0 shape (or 4-4-4-1 in balancing seat).

Any suit bid by opener, whether responder has acted or not, is forcing below game unless opener bids the same suit twice, in which case responder may pass with nothing.

If responder has not shown values and opener makes a natural, forcing suit rebid, the cheapest bid is artificial and waiting. This applies only once; any subsequent bid is natural.

Any *jump* suit bid by opener (at his second bid) is ace asking, even if this completes game. The structure is unchanged.

Weak Two Bids

Opening bids of 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ are weak two-bids. Range is 5-11 HCP and style is undisciplined but sensible. Good 5 card suits (usually 3 of top 5 cards) are permissible at all vulnerabilities. Decent 5 card suits are permissible at favorable vulnerability.

2 X	P	?		Any raise	obstructive; preemptive
				New suit	6+ cards; semiconstructive; NF
				2 NT	game or slam try; F
				• 4♣ jump	trump asking (see topic)
				Other jump	6+ cards; I if below game

2 X	P	Suit	P	Pass	minimum or misfit
?				2 NT, 3 NT	maximum; doubleton fit
				Raise	at least Q-x or x-x-x
				Jump raise	exceptional fit
				New suit	4+ cards (6-4, 6-5)
				Same suit	at least K-Q-J-10-x-x

2 M	P	2 NT	P	3♣	5 cards in original suit
?				3♦	6 cards; not worst hand
				3 M	6 cards; worst hand
				3 other major	natural (4 cards); not worst hand
				3 NT	6 cards; A-K-Q or A-K-J
				4♣, 4♦	at least Q-x-x-x (6-4, 6-5)

2♦	P	2 NT	P	3♣	5 card diamond suit
?				3♦	6 cards; any minimum
				3♥, 3♠	6 cards; stopper
				3 NT	6 cards; no major stopper
				4♣	at least Q-x-x-x (6-4, 6-5)

Rebids by responder:

2 M	P	2 NT	P	• 3♦	artif. F; opener bids 3 M if min, else 3 NT
3♣	P	?		3 M, 3 NT	sign-off
				Other suit	5+ cards; F if below game

2 M	P	2 NT	P	3 M	NF; opener may bid if max
3 X	P	?		3 NT	NF; opener may correct
				New suit	5+ cards; F if below game

2♦	P	2 NT	P	3♦, game	sign-off
3 X	P	?		4♦	NF; opener may bid 5♦
				New suit	5+ cards; F if below game

Weak Two Bids (cont.)

Competitive agreements:

2 X	Dbl	?		Pass then Dbl Redouble New suit Other	cooperative below 3 NT; penalty above strong; creates F auction not constructive; NF as without double
2 X	Bid	?		Double • Cue below 3 NT • Cue above 3 NT Other	penalty stopper ask (3 NT = yes) control ask as without bid
2 X ?	any	2 NT	Act	Any	standard defense (see topic)

Preemptive Openings

Suit openings 3 ♣ thru 5 ♦ are weak, roughly by rule of 2, 3, 4+ according to vulnerability.

3 X	P	?	5 M over 4 M	slam invitation (good trumps?)
4 X	P	?	Any other raise 3 NT • 4 ♣ nonraise • 4 ♦ over ♣ • 5 X over 4 M Other suit	obstructive or to make; not invitational to play; opener may run with no A or K trump ask trump ask control ask natural; F if below game

Competitive agreements:

3 X	Dbl	?	Pass then Dbl	cooperative below 3 NT; penalty above strong; creates F auction
4 X	Dbl	?	Redouble New suit* Raise, 3 NT	6+ cards; NF (asking bids are off) as without double
3 X	Bid	?	Double	penalty
4 X	Bid	?	New suit* • Cue-bid Raise, 3 NT	6+ cards; F below game (no asking bids) control ask as without bid

**May be tactical lead-director with fit for opener*

Three Notrump Opening

An opening bid of 3 NT shows a strong preempt in any suit. This typically shows 11-15 HCP and $8\frac{1}{2}+$ tricks. It is *forcing*.

3 NT	P	?	4 ♣	normal takeout; F
			4 ♦	exactly 2 aces; F
			4 ♥, 4 ♠	7+ (strong 6) cards; NF
			• 4 NT	exactly 3 aces; F

Rebids by opener:

3 NT	P	4 X	P	Suit*	real suit; NF (forcing over 4 NT)
?				4 NT over 4 ♦	Asks for kings (how many)
				4 NT otherwise	Blackwood (regular)

**Over 4 ♦ implies that 2 aces are not enough for slam*

Rebids by responder:

3 NT	P	4 m	P	Any	same as response to "Suit" opening
Suit	P	?			

Competitive agreements:

3 NT	Dbl	?	Pass	nondescript; may be worthless
			• Redouble	good hand without 2 aces
			• 4 ♣	1 ace
			Other	as without double
3 NT	Bid	?	Pass	nondescript; opener must bid suit at 4 level and may bid 5 if prudent
			Double	penalty; trump stack
			• Cheapest suit	competitive in opener's suit
			Other suit	7+ (strong 6) cards; NF
			• 4 NT	slam try; 2+ aces (not BW)

Defense to One of a Suit

Takeout Doubles

A direct takeout double shows opening values (may be shaded with ideal shape) and 3+ cards in each unbid suit, or any hand that is too strong for an overcall.

1 X	Dbl	any	?	Double	responsive or penalty (see below)
				New suit	0-9 if forced 6-9 if free below game 8-15 if game
				1 NT	6-9 (poor 10)
				Cue-bid	10+; F until raise or game
				Jump in suit	10-12 if below game; I 10-15 if game
				2 NT	10-12; I
				• Jump cue-bid	13+; splinter; 3-suiter
				DJ in suit	weak if below game; 6+ cards weak or 10-15 if game
				3 NT jump	13-16

Responsive doubles apply:

After a new suit thru 2 ♠ (takeout for two unbid suits).

After a *major* raise thru 3 ♠ (takeout for minors).

Note that the double of 1 NT or any *minor* raise is for penalty.

Special over a redouble:

1 X	Dbl	Rdbl	?	Pass	no preference (if weak)
				• Pass then bid	9-11; constructive; I
				Suit bid	weak; preference
				• Jump suit	weak; 5+ cards; preemptive

Takeout Doubles (cont.)

Rebids by takeout doubler:

1 X	Dbl	any	Suit	Double	18+; no 4 card fit; optional
any	?			1 NT	18-20
				New suit	18-21; 5+ cards; NF
				Cue-bid*	20+; F; no rebid promised
				Single raise	18-20 if voluntary to 3 level 16-18 otherwise
				2 NT jump	20-22
				2 NT nonjump	19-21
				Jump cue*	splinter raise; slam try
				Jump new suit	what you can make
				Jump raise	19-20 (good 18)
				3 NT jump	better than 2 NT or 9 tricks

**Cue must be in opener's suit (else natural).*

Note: If partner bid freely (6-9 points) the ranges above would be 2 points less; except for a new suit, which still shows 18+ and then would be forcing.

After a 1 NT response:

1 X	Dbl	any	1 NT	Double	penalty
any	?			New suit	corrective at 2 level; NF 18+ at 3 level; F
				Cue-bid	18+; splinter; no rebid is promised

Suit Overcalls

Direct nonjump suit overcalls typically show 8-17 HCP at the 1 level or 11-17 HCP at the 2 level.

1 X	Suit	any	?	• Double	8+; responsive or penalty (see below)
				• New suit	8+ at 1 level; F
					8-12 at 2 level up; NF
				1 NT	8-11
				Cue-bid	11+ (good 10) with fit or 13+ nonfit; F
				Single raise	6-10
				Jump new suit	11+; 6+ cards; I
				2 NT jump	12-14; I
				2 NT nonjump	9-11; I
				• Jump cue-bid	11+ (good 10) with 4+ trumps
				Jump raise	weak; about 5-8 below game
				3 NT jump	better than 2 NT

Responsive doubles apply:

After a raise thru 4 ♦ (takeout for two unbid suits).

After a 1 NT response (takeout for two unbid suits).

After a new suit thru 2 ♠ (4+ cards in unbid suit; 2 cards in partner's suit).

Special over a negative double:

1 X	Suit	Dbl	?	Redouble	11+; implies no fit
				Cue-bid	11+ (good 10); promises fit
				• 2 NT if major	8-10; 4+ major fit
				Other	as without double

Rebids by overcaller:

1 X	Suit	any	P	Double	takeout thru 4 ♦
any	?			• Suit X	natural (2-suiter)
				Other	natural
1 X	Suit	any	Cue	Same suit	minimum; nondescript; NF
any	?			2 NT	constructive; NF
				New suit	natural; F

Weak Jump Overcalls

Direct jump suit overcalls are weak at all levels, basically adhering to the rule of 2, 3 and 4+ according to vulnerability.

1 X	2 Y	any	?	Any	same as response to weak two-bid*
1 X	3 Y	any	?	Any	same as response to weak opening*
1 X	4 Y	any	?		

**Opening bid does not constitute interference although it enables a cue-bid response. Asking bids are still in effect as long as RHO passes.*

Good Jump Overcalls

A good jump overcall shows a self-sufficient 6+ card suit with about 1 playing trick less than bidder has contracted for.

Situations where this apply are noted later.

Responding agreement:

A new suit response is forcing below game.

Notrump Overcalls

Direct notrump overcalls over 1 of a suit:

1 X	?	1 NT	15-18 (system on)
		2 NT	unusual (see topic)
		3 NT	15-20; based on long minor
		4 NT over 1 m	Blackwood
		4 NT over 1 M	takeout for minors; freakish

Unusual Notrump Overcall

For defensive bidding purposes, two-suited hands will be divided into three groups. Marginal hands may be upgraded or downgraded according to judgment. These will be referred to as weak, good or strong.

Weak = 11 HCP or less

Good = 12-15 HCP

Strong = 16+ HCP

A direct jump overcall of 2 NT shows either the weak or strong hand (not the good hand) with at least 5-5 shape in the two lower unbid suits.

1 X	2 NT	any	?	Pass double	no preference
				Double	penalty
				Suit shown	preference
				Jump shown	weak; good trump fit
				Cue-bid	game or slam try; F
				Other suit	6+ cards; NF
				3 NT (rare)	to play

Rebids by unusual 2 NT bidder:

1 X	2 NT	any	Cue	Cheaper real	worst weak hand
any*	?			• Raise cue	not worst; splinter
				• Notrump	not worst; other splinter
				• Unshown suit	not worst; 3 cards
				Other real	not worst; 6+ cards

**If RHO acts use standard defense (see topic)*

1 X	2 NT	any	NF*	Double	strong; optional
any	?			Redouble	strong; good defense
				Cue-bid	strong
				• 3 NT	strong; enemy stopper; NF
				• 4 NT	strong; Blackwood if pref shown; else takeout
				• Unshown suit	strong; 3 cards (5-5-3-0)
				Real suit	weak; extreme shape

**Any nonforcing action (suit takeout or pass)*

Michaels Cue-Bid

The direct Michaels cue-bid, like the unusual 2 NT overcall, shows either the weak or strong hand (not the good hand). The cue-bid of a *minor* opening shows both majors, at least 5-4 shape. The cue-bid of a *major* opening shows the unbid major plus either minor suit, at least 5-5 shape.

1 X	2 X	any	?	Shown suit	preference
				Jump shown	weak; good trump fit
				2 NT	game or slam try; F
				Cue-bid	game or slam try; F
				• 3 ♣, 4 ♣, 4 NT	to play unknown minor after major cue-bid only
				Other suit	6+ cards; NF

Special over a double:

1 X	2 X	Dbl	?	Pass 2 m	no major preference
				Pass 2 M	to play unknown minor
				3 ♣	6+ cards; NF
				Other	as without double

Rebids by Michaels cue-bidder:

1 m	2 m	any	2 NT	• 3 ♣	longer hearts
any*	?			• 3 ♦	longer spades
*If RHO acts use standard defense (see topic)				3 ♥	worst weak hand; 5-5
				3 ♠	not worst; 5-5; F
1 M	2 M	any	2 NT	3 ♣, 3 ♦	worst weak hand; that minor
any*	?			• 3 ♥	not worst; clubs
*If RHO acts use standard defense (see topic)				• 3 ♠	not worst; diamonds
1 X	2 X	any	NF*	Double	strong; optional
any	?			Redouble	strong; good defense
*Any nonforcing action (suit takeout or pass)				Cue-bid	strong
				• 3 NT	strong; enemy stopper; NF
				Denied suit	strong; 3 cards
				Real suit	weak; extreme shape

Three-Level Cue-Bid Overcall

Any 3-level cue-bid as our side's first action shows a strong one-suited hand (not in the suit cue-bid) provided the enemy has not bid notrump. This may be a jump cue-bid over one of a suit or a nonjump cue-bid over two of a suit, but it must be at the 3 level.

Cue-bidder should have a self-sufficient suit and about 8½ playing tricks or more. If the suit is a *major*, cue-bidder should have a singleton or void in the cue-bid suit (else double).

1 X	3 X	any	?	• Lowest option*	0-2 controls; no stopper if below 3 NT
	(or)			• Next option*	3+ controls; no stopper
1 X	P	2 X	3 X	Double	trump stack; penalty
any	?			New major	6+ cards; F if below game
	(etc.)			3 NT	stopper in cue-bid suit
				• 4 NT	stopper; 3+ outside controls
				• 5 NT	control stopper; 3+ outside controls

**Options include, in order: pass (if RHO bids or doubles), redouble, cheaper minor, and next minor. Use what is available.*

Rebids by cue-bidder:

1 X	3 X	any	any	Suit, pass	real suit; NF
any	?			4 NT	Blackwood (even over 3 NT)
	(etc.)				

Balancing Actions

If an enemy opening bid of one of a suit is passed:

1 X	P	P	?	Double	10+; takeout
				1 of suit	7-14; suit overcall
				1 NT	10-14 (system on)
				2 of suit	9-14; suit overcall
				Cue-bid	Michaels; good or strong
				Jump suit	good jump overcall
				2 NT	18-20 (system on)
				Jump cue	3-level cue-bid overcall
				3 NT	16-20; based on suit

After a balancing double or suit overcall, respond the same as in direct position except that all point ranges for responder are *increased* by 2 points. Responsive doubles do not apply. Responses to Michaels and the 3-level cue-bid overcall are similar to direct actions.

After Two Enemy Bids

If *both* opponents have bid, the following agreements apply:

1 X	P	1 Y	?	Double	takeout
				1 NT	15-18 (system on)
				2 X	takeout; at least 5-4
				2 Y, new suit	natural overcall
				2 NT	takeout; at least 5-5
				3 X, 3 Y	3-level cue-bid overcall
				3 NT	to play (no systemic responses)
				4 NT	takeout; weak; freak
				Other jump	weak jump overcall
1 X	P	2 Y	?	Double	takeout
1 X	P	3 Y	?	New suit	natural; may be shaded
				2 X	takeout; at least 5-4
				• 2 NT	weak takeout if Y is F 15-18 if Y is NF (system on)
				3 X, 3 Y	3-level cue-bid overcall
				3 NT	to play (no systemic responses)
				4 NT	takeout; weak; freak
				• Other jump	weak jump overcall if Y is F good jump overcall if Y is NF
1 X	P	1 NT	?	Double	takeout (of suit X)
1 X	P	2 NT	?	2 X, 3 X, 4 X	Michaels
1 X	P	3 NT	?	New suit	natural; may be shaded
				Any NT	unusual
				Jump suit	weak jump overcall
1 X	P	2 X	?	Double	takeout
1 X	P	3 X	?	New suit	natural; may be shaded
1 X	P	4 X	?	2 NT, 4 NT	unusual
				3 X	3-level cue-bid overcall
				• 3 NT	unusual over 3 X if F; otherwise to play
				• Jump 4 m	minor bid + highest unbid major
				4 X, 5 X	Michaels
				• Other suit jump	weak jump overcall if F raise good jump overcall if NF raise

Responses to all actions after two enemy bids are the same as or similar to those to the related topic. An exception: Responsive doubles do not apply. The description “takeout” means that responses should be like those to a takeout double.

Additional Agreements

The following topics (defined earlier) also apply to defensive bidding provided the conditions are met:

1. Major-suit game try structure
2. Competitive doubles
3. Cooperative doubles

The following defensive actions are changed if the bidder is a passed hand (for obvious reasons):

1. Direct 1 NT overcall is unusual.
2. Any 3 NT overcall is unusual.
3. The 3-level cue-bid overcall (strong 1-suiter) does not exist. Any such bid is natural if a jump or Michaels (takeout) if a nonjump.

Belated doubles:

Assuming partner has not acted:

1. The double of a *raised* suit, direct or balancing, is for takeout thru 4 ♦, unless the opponents have bid all four suits naturally.
2. A *direct* double after three enemy bids is for takeout thru 2 ♦ even if just one unbid suit exists (in that event the suit opened is a takeout candidate). Examples:

1 ♦ P 1 ♥ P
1 NT Dbl
Takeout

1 ♥ P 1 NT P
2 ♦ Dbl
Takeout

1 ♥ P 1 ♠ P
2 ♣ Dbl
Takeout

3. A *balancing* double of a suit bid is for takeout thru 2 ♠, even if just one unbid suit exists.
4. A *balancing* double of 1 NT is for takeout only if both major suits are unbid. Otherwise it is a penalty suggestion with strength in dummy's suit. Examples:

1 ♦ P 1 NT P
P Dbl
Takeout

1 ♥ P 1 NT P
P Dbl
Penalty

1 ♣ P 1 ♠ P
1 NT P P Dbl
Penalty

Miscellaneous Defensive Bidding

Defense to One Notrump

After an opening bid of 1 NT, regardless of its meaning, all overcalls suggest about 9 to 14 HCP. The structure is:

1 NT	?	2 ♣	hearts + minor (Astro)
		2 ♦	spades + other (Astro)
		2 ♥, 2 ♠	usually 6+ cards
		2 NT	2-suiter; both minors
		3 ♣, 3 ♦	6+ cards
		3 ♥, 3 ♠	good jump overcall

A direct double of a 1 NT opening shows 17+ HCP or 14-16 with a good lead. It is optional (leaning toward penalty).

Balancing position:

1 NT	P	P	?	Any bid	same as direct but may be weaker
------	---	---	---	---------	----------------------------------

A balancing double shows 14+ HCP, usually with all-around values.

If the opening is a “weak notrump” (maximum 15 HCP), a double of a Stayman 2 ♣ response is *not* lead-directing. It shows 14+ HCP, similar to a balancing double.

Responses:

1 NT	2 M	any	?	Respond as to weak two-bid	
1 NT	2 NT	any	?	Suit, 3 NT	natural; NF
1 NT	3 m	any	?	Jump suit	natural; I below game
1 NT	Dbl	P	?	Pass	normal action (penalty)
				2 of suit	5+ cards; weak and unbalanced
				3 of suit	6+ cards; I
				• 2 NT	2-suiter; F until game or raise

Note: Responses to balancing actions would have the same meanings.

Runout Defense

The runout defense applies if an opponent is the first to bid over our strength-showing double in the following situations:

1. After a 1 NT opening (direct or balancing)
2. After a Stayman 2 ♣ response to a weak notrump opening
3. Defense to 2 NT and 3 NT opening (see topic)
4. Junkyard defense (see topic)

Actions in direct position:

1 NT	Dbl	2 X	?	Pass	weak or length in X
	(or)			Double	takeout*
1 NT	P	P	Dbl	Suit	5+ cards; NF
P	P	2 X	?	Jump suit	6+ cards; I
	(etc.)			Cue-bid	splinter; GF

**Should have 2+ cards (rarely singleton) in suit doubled as partner may convert*

Actions in balancing position:

1 NT	Dbl	2 X	P	Pass	prudent with length in X
P	?	(or)		Double	takeout (partner can convert if that
1 NT	P	P	Dbl		was his intention)
P	P	2 X	P	Other	as in direct position
P	?				
	(etc.)				

Note: The runout defense applies thru the level of 4 ♦ (e.g., 1 NT Dbl 4 ♦) and over multiple runouts (e.g., 1 NT Dbl 2 ♣ P; 2 ♦) provided we have not acted after our initial double and we have not faced the same suit bid twice. In other words, once we act after our initial double, or a player is confronted with the same denomination twice, all doubles are penalty.

Astro Structure

In direct or balancing seat after an opening bid of 1 NT, an overcall of 2 ♣ shows hearts and a minor suit; and 2 ♦ shows spades and another suit (which could be hearts). In either case shape should be at least 5-4 in two suits, or 4-4-4-1.

1 NT	2 m	P	?	Pass	6+ cards; misfit expected
				Cheapest suit	relay; suit search; NF
				Shown M	3+ cards
				Unshown suit	6+ cards; I if raise or jump
				2 NT	game or slam try; F
				Jump shown M	4+ trumps; mild invitation
1 NT	2 m	Dbl	?	Pass	willing to play if Astro bidder's minor
				• Redouble	5+ cards in <i>next higher</i> suit (enables an escape if partner has tolerance)
				Other	as without double
1 NT	2 m	Bid	?	Double	penalty
				• Cheapest suit*	suit search thru 4 ♥; NF
				Cue-bid	game or slam try; F
				4 NT over 4 M	request for minor
				Other	as without bid

*Must be an unshown suit that Astro bidder might hold

Rebids by Astro bidder:

1 NT	2 ♣	P	2 ♦	Pass	hearts + diamonds
P	?			2 ♥	5+ cards (usually with clubs)
				• 2 ♠	3 cards
				• 2 NT	at least 4-4 minors
				3 ♣	5+ cards
				3 ♦	5+ cards; I
				3 ♥	6+ cards; I
1 NT	2 ♦	P	2 ♥	Pass	spades + hearts
P	?			2 ♠	5+ cards (with minor)
				• 2 NT	at least 4-4 minors
				3 ♣, 3 ♦	5+ cards
				3 ♥	5+ cards; I
				3 ♠	6+ cards; I

Astro Structure (cont.)

1 NT	2 ♣	any	2 NT	3 ♣, 3 ♦	min; NF
any*	?			• 3 ♥	max; clubs
				• 3 ♠	max; diamonds
				• 3 NT	max; diamonds; 3 spades

**If RHO acts use standard defense (see topic)*

1 NT	2 ♦	any	2 NT	3 ♣, 3 ♦, 3 ♥	min; NF
any*	?			• 3 ♠	max; hearts
				• 3 NT	max; either minor
				4 ♣, 4 ♦, 4 ♥	max; freak; GF

**If RHO acts use standard defense (see topic)*

Further agreements:

1 NT	2 m	P	Rel	2 ♠	5 cards (no more)
P	2 X	P	?	2 NT	request for minor
				3 of suit	NF; I if raise

1 NT	2 ♦	Dbl	P	• Redouble	Suggests 4-3-1-5 shape to allow possible rescue to hearts
P	?				

Standard Defense

This defense is a practical method to counter enemy interference over our forcing bids that elicit specific rebids in the following situations:

1. 2 NT response to weak two-bid or analogous structure after our weak jump overcall, weak jump shift response, or 2 ♥ or 2 ♠ overcall of an enemy 1 NT opening
2. 2 NT response to Michaels cue-bid or Astro 2 ♣ or 2 ♦
3. Cue-bid response to unusual 2 NT overcall

Rebid structure:

After an enemy bid:	All rebids	normal meaning
	Pass	minimum; normal rebid unavailable
	Dbl	maximum; normal rebid unavailable
After an enemy double:	All rebids	normal meaning
	Pass	minimum; useful defensive values
	Rdbl	maximum; useful defensive values

Defense to Two and Three Notrump

If the opening bid or immediate response is 2 NT or 3 NT, carrying any meaning (weak or strong) provided no specific suit has been shown, the following structure applies:

2 NT	?			Double	strength-showing; runout defense
3 NT	?				applies thru 4 ♦
2 NT	P	P	?	Pass then Dbl	takeout if suit thru 4 ♦
3 NT	P	P	?	• Cheapest ♣	hearts + minor (Astro)
Bid*	P	2 NT	?	• Cheapest ♦	spades + other (Astro)
Bid*	P	3 NT	?	Major	natural
*1 NT, 2 NT or a strong artificial 1 ♣ or 2 ♣.				Any NT	minor-suit takeout
				Jump minor	7+ cards

The above defense also applies over Bergen-Cohen 3 ♠ (gambling 3 NT equivalent).

Unusual 2 NT opening:

If an opening bid of 2 NT shows both minor suits, use this structure:

2 NT	?	Double	strength-showing; runout defense
			applies thru 4 ♦
		Pass then Dbl	takeout if suit thru 4 ♦
		3 ♣	majors; weak or strong
		3 ♦	majors; good
		3 ♥, 3 ♠	natural
		3 NT	natural
		4 ♥, 4 ♠	good jump overcall

Defense to Weak Openings

This defense applies to natural, nonforcing suit opening bids from 2♣ thru 4♦. This includes weak two-bids, intermediate two-bids (such as the 2♣ opening in most club systems), and all preemptive bids.

Actions in *balancing seat* have the same meaning as direct actions, but ranges are reduced slightly (about 2 points); hence responder should compensate accordingly. For example, a balancing 2NT overcall would show 13-16 points instead of 15-18.

2 X	?	Double	takeout
		New suit	12-18; 6+ (good 5) cards
		2 NT	15-18 (system on)
		• Cue-bid	3-level cue-bid overcall
		Jump 3 Y	good jump overcall
		3 NT	19+ or less with running suit
		• 4 unbid m	minor bid + highest unbid major; NF
		• Jump cue	Michaels; good or better over minor; too strong for 4 m over major
		4 unbid M	good jump overcall
		4 NT over m	Blackwood
		4 NT over M	minor-suit takeout
3 X	?	Double	takeout
4 m	?	New suit	12-18; 6+ (good 5) cards
		Cue-bid	Michaels; good or strong
		• 4♦ over 3♣	diamonds + spades; NF
		Other jump suit	good jump overcall
		3 NT	natural, 16+ (no systemic responses)
		4 NT over m	Blackwood
		4 NT over M	minor-suit takeout

Responding agreements:

2 X	Dbf	any	?	Double	penalty
3 X	Dbf	any	?	New suit	0-9 below game (6-9 if free)
4 m	Dbf	any	?		0-15 if game (6-15 if free)
				2 NT	8-10
				Cue-bid	11+; GF
				Jump suit	10-11 below game; I 10-15 if game
				3 NT jump	11-15
				3 NT nonjump	8-15
				4 NT	Blackwood unless "4 NT Response for Takeout" applies (see topic)

Defense to Weak Openings (cont.)

2 X	Suit	any	?	Double	penalty
3 X	Suit	any	?	Rdbl neg dbl	10+; creates F auction
4 m	Suit	any	?	• New suit	8+; F below game BUPH if weak opener
				2 NT	8-10
				Cue below 3 NT	11+; general force
				Cue above 3 NT	13+; fit plus control
				Single raise	8-10 if below game
					8-15 if game
				• Jump suit	self-playable; GF; slam I if nonjump F
				3 NT jump	11-15
				3 NT nonjump	8-15
				Jump cue	13+; splinter raise
				Jump raise	11-15 if game
				4 NT	Blackwood

Defense to Four of a Major

The following agreements apply in direct or balancing position if the opening bid is a natural 4 ♡ or 4 ♠:

4 M	?			Double	15+; optional*
4 M	P	P	?	New suit	6+ cards (5+ spades)
				4 NT over 4 ♡	minor-suit takeout
				4 NT over 4 ♠	3-suit or red-suit takeout
				Cue-bid	Michaels; strong (very)

**Doubler should have 3½+ honor tricks*

Responding agreements:

4 M	Dbl	P	?	Pass	normal
	(or)			Suit bid	6+ cards (or 5 spades) and “good”
4 M	P	P	Dbl		distribution
P	?			4 NT over 4 ♡	minor-suit takeout
				4 NT over 4 ♠	3-suit or red-suit takeout

Defense to Strong Artificial Openings

If the opening is 1 ♣ strong (16+), artificial and forcing, or over an artificial response to same, pass with opening-bid strength or better. On the next round, once a natural bid has been made, you may enter the auction as if all artificial bids never existed.

All initial actions show weak hands:

1 ♣	?			Double	suit doubled
1 ♣	P	1 X*	?	1 of suit	5+ cards
	*Artificial			• 1 NT	pointed suits (spades + diamonds)
				• 2 NT	rounded suits (hearts + clubs)
				• 2 of suit	suit bid plus next higher
				3 of suit	6+ cards
				4 of suit	7+ cards

Memory aid: The number "1" is pointed and "2" is rounded.

Responses to weak actions:

1 ♣	Act	any	?	• 1 NT, 2 NT	cue-bid; game try; F
	(or)			Raise	obstructive; blocking
1 ♣	P	1 X	Act	Other suit	natural; NF
any	?			Jump	preemptive

Defense to 2 ♣ opening:

If the opening bid is 2 ♣, strong and artificial, no special structure applies. All bids are presumed to be weak and obstructive.

2 ♣	?			Double	suit doubled
2 ♣	P	2 X*	?	Suit bid	6+ (good 5) cards
	*Artificial			Any NT	minor-suit takeout

Defense to Transfer Bids

If the opening bid is artificial and shows one specific suit, use the following defense. Examples: Transfer preempts, Namyats 4 ♣ (hearts) or 4 ♦ (spades). The term “cue-bid” refers to a bid in the opponent’s *real* suit, not the artificial suit.

2 X	?	Double	11+; takeout of real suit
3 X	?	Double twice	15+; still takeout
4 X	?	Pass then Dbl	13+; optional
		Suit bid	natural; good suit
		Cue (2/4 lev)	Michaels; good or strong
		2 NT	15-18 (system on)
		Cue (3 lev)	3-level cue-bid overcall
		Jump suit	good jump overcall
		3 NT	to play (no systemic responses)
		4 NT	takeout if enemy suit is a major; else Blackwood

If the opening bid does not indicate a specific suit and the response is artificial showing one specific suit, use this defense. Examples: Jacoby and Texas transfers.

1 NT	P	2 X	?	Double	shows suit doubled
1 NT	P	4 X	?	Double twice	takeout thru 4 ♠
2 NT	P	3 X	?	Pass then Dbl	takeout thru 3 ♠
2 NT	P	4 X	?	Cue-bid	Michaels
	(etc.)			Suit bid	natural; good suit
				Any NT	unusual
				Jump suit	good jump overcall

Junkyard Defense

This defense applies to opening two-bids that do *not* show 5+ cards in the suit bid and do *not* show a specific one-suited hand. The current list includes:

1. Flannery 2 \diamond (5 hearts + 4 spades)
2. Roman 2 \clubsuit or 2 \diamond (3 unknown suits)
3. Precision 2 \diamond or 2 \heartsuit (3 known suits)
4. Meckwell 2 \heartsuit (3 suits, 2 of which are known)
5. Meckwell 2 \spadesuit (weak preempt in any suit)
6. Multicolor 2 \diamond (unknown 6-card major usually)

General structure:

2 X	?		Double	strength-showing (about 15+) and our
2 X	P	2 NT		runout defense applies (see topic)
			Pass then Dbl	takeout (if suit) thru 4 \diamond
			Suit bid	natural*; good suit
			2 NT	15-18; natural (system on)
			Jump in suit	good jump overcall*
			3 NT	natural (no systemic responses)

**Except if opener has shown 5+ cards in suit; then it is a cue-bid, the meaning of which is appropriate to the level.*

After a suit response:

2 X	P	Suit	?	Double	takeout thru 4 \diamond
				Other	as above

Clarification notes:

Two-suited two-bids that show the suit bid plus one other suit (known or unknown) will be treated as natural weak two-bids, although an overcall in opener's known 5+ card second suit is a *cue-bid*, the meaning of which is appropriate to the level.

If according to the enemy methods a two-suited hand *might be* 5-4 shape but typically is at least 5-5 shape, this should be ignored. Both suits should be presumed to be 5+ cards for the purpose of determining the meaning of our bids.

Lead-Directing Doubles

Doubles of artificial suit bids are lead-directing unless otherwise defined or qualified as one of the two exceptions below:

1. Double by an unpassed hand of an artificial response (thru 3 ♦) to any natural opening bid is a takeout double of the suit opened. These are takeout doubles:

2 ♣* P 2 ♦ Dbl

**Natural suit*

1 ♠ P 3 ♦* Dbl

**Limit raise*

2 ♠ P 3 ♣* Dbl

**Inquiry*

2. Double by an unpassed hand of a splinter bid as our first action shows length in that suit and suggests a sacrifice bid.

Doubles of notrump:

The double of any notrump bid (not specifically defined elsewhere) is for penalty and requests, in order of priority, the lead of:

1. Leader's suit if *both* leader and doubler have shown suits
2. Doubler's suit
3. Dummy's suit unless leader can *safely* lead his own shown suit
4. Leader's shown suit
5. Leader's weaker major suit

Doubles of suit slams:

The double of a suit slam by non-leader requests, in order of priority, the lead of:

1. A side suit bid by the enemy
2. Leader's longest suit not bid by his side

Slam Bidding Methods

General Approach

To avoid ambiguity it is essential to have firm rules to determine when a bid is natural and when it is a control-bid.

In a forcing auction, the first bid after suit agreement is natural if the suit was bid naturally earlier. The last bid in each auction is *natural*:

1 ♣ P	1 ♠ P	1 ♠ P	2 ♦ P	1 ♥ P	2 ♣ P
3 ♠ P	4 ♣	2 ♥ P	3 ♥ P	2 ♦ P	3 ♦ P
		4 ♦		3 ♥	

The following bids are recognized as “advance control-bids” and establish suit agreement (partner’s suit, or the *lower* ranking of his two suits) by inference. These bids are just like a raise of a suit; i.e., they do *not* initiate a control-showing auction.

1. A new suit bid beyond 3 NT by a player who has bid notrump
2. A bid in the only remaining unbid suit beyond 3 NT
3. A cue-bid in the enemy suit beyond 3 NT

Starting a control-showing auction:

A control-showing auction may be started only *after* suit agreement by bidding an unshown suit, an enemy suit, or a suit that cannot possibly be natural from your previous bidding.

After a control-showing auction has started:

A bid in any prior agreed suit is natural and discourages slam.

A bid in an unagreed suit is a control-bid, even if this suit was naturally bid by you or partner. No further suit agreement is possible.

A control-bid does not require extra strength (only suitable values) unless it forces the partnership beyond game.

Bypassing a particular bid does not deny that control. There are many situations in which it is desirable to show a higher control before a lower one to facilitate subsequent bidding.

A control-bid beyond 5 of the highest agreed suit obviously means that a grand slam is possible. It further implies that no suit remains uncontrolled.

Control-Bids

The following guidelines, listed by priority, determine the meaning of control-bids:

1. If a splinter bid, it shows a singleton or void. If splinter bid is beyond 5 of the agreed trump suit, it shows a void.
2. If bid is a suit naturally shown by partner, it implies the ace or king. It should not be a void or small singleton.
3. If bid is the enemy suit or the only unbid suit, it implies the ace or a splinter (if a splinter bid is impractical). Do not bid this way with the king. Partner should presume the ace and may bid 3 NT without a further stopper; if bid was based on a splinter, do not pass 3 NT.
4. If our side has shown only *one* suit, it implies the ace or king and length (4+ cards). It should not be based on shortness.
5. If our side has shown exactly *two* suits, it shows first or second round control (ideally, the king) and it implies *no king* in the remaining suit. For example:

	1 ♠	P	2 ♥	♠ 4 3
P	3 ♥	P	4 ♦	♥ A Q J 8 5
				♦ K Q 4
				♣ A 6 2

Opener should be encouraged by short clubs and discouraged by short diamonds, not vice versa.

Rules 4 and 5 apply only to slam tries *below game* so partner can evaluate his hand better. Slam tries beyond game follow the standard practice of showing first-round control.

Second control-bid

A second control-bid in the same suit, or a redouble (if enemy doubles a control-bid), indicates:

1. The ace if partner splintered in that suit or if the previous bid (by either you or partner) implied the ace or a splinter
2. A void if you splintered in that suit
3. The ace or king if a previous bid implied the ace or king

Blackwood

Barring contrary agreements, 4 NT is Blackwood:

1. As an opening bid
2. As an overcall if the enemy showed only a minor suit
3. If a major suit is agreed
4. If partner has acted, notrump has not been naturally bid (the forcing 1 NT response is not considered natural) and the “4 NT Response for Takeout” (see topic) does not apply.

Observe from Rule 4 that these auctions are *not* Blackwood:

1 ♠ P 2 NT P
3 ♥ P 4 NT
Quantitative

1 ♠ P 2 ♣ P
2 NT P 3 ♥ P
4 NT
Quantitative

2 NT P 3 ♦ P
3 ♥ P 4 ♣ P
4 ♦ P 4 NT
Natural

If a player uses Blackwood immediately after making a splinter bid, it is defined as “exclusion Blackwood.” Asker implies a void in splinter suit, and partner should not show that ace.

Key-card situations:

Key-card responses (see topic) apply if and only if a key suit can be determined by one of these rules, listed by priority:

1. If one suit is agreed, the agreed suit is the key suit.
2. If two suits are agreed, the *higher* agreed suit is the key suit.
3. Immediately over our opening bid of 4 of a major, or after a rebid of 4 of a major after our 3 NT opening (strong preempt), the bid major is the key suit.
4. Immediately over our *jump* overcall of 4 of a major, or over a rebid of 4 of a major after a 3-level cue-bid overcall (strong one-suiter), the bid major is the key suit.
5. If 4 NT is a jump, the last suit shown by our side is the key suit. Exception: If two suits are shown *simultaneously* (as with the unusual notrump), this does not determine a key suit.

Another exception: After a 2 ♠ or higher response to our 2 ♣ opening, a jump to 4 NT by opener is *regular* Blackwood (opener may need to distinguish between A-Q and K-Q).

If a key suit is not determined by the above rules, then standard responses apply (0 or 4 aces, 1 ace, 2 aces, 3 aces). Blackwood bidder may sign off in any contract, except for 5 NT which promises all 4 aces and asks for the number of kings by steps (0, 1, 2, 3, 4).

Gerber

Barring contrary agreements, the following bids are Gerber. It makes no difference if the enemy has bid.

1. A response of 4 ♣ (jump or not) to partner's 1 NT or 2 NT opening bid or overcall (if "system on" applies).
2. A jump to 4 ♣ over partner's last bid of 1 NT or 2 NT.
3. A jump to 4 ♣ after a puppet Stayman response when opener has indicated no real suit.

1 NT P	2 ♣ P	1 NT P	2 ♣ 2 ♥
2 ♦ P	4 ♣	P P	4 ♣

4. A jump to 5 ♣ over a natural 3 NT response or rebid, provided clubs have not been naturally shown by our side. Each 5 ♣ bid is Gerber:

1 ♦ P	3 NT P	1 ♠ P	2 ♦ P	2 NT P	3 ♣ P
5 ♣		3 NT P	5 ♣	3 ♦ P	3 ♠ P
				3 NT P	5 ♣

5. A jump to 5 ♣ after a puppet Stayman response to 1 NT or 2 NT provided no major is agreed and clubs have not been naturally shown. Each 5 ♣ bid is Gerber:

1 NT P	2 ♣ P	2 NT P	3 ♣ P	2 ♣ P	2 ♦ P
2 ♥ P	5 ♣	3 ♦ P	5 ♣	2 NT P	3 ♣ P
				3 ♠ P	5 ♣

Key-card situations:

Key-card responses (see topic) apply only if Gerber bidder *himself* has shown a suit that could be 5+ cards (this excludes the implied 4 card major in puppet Stayman sequences since it cannot be 5). Of the examples above, only the first two auctions after Rule 4 would include a key suit.

If no key suit exists, standard responses apply (0 or 4 aces, 1 ace, 2 aces, 3 aces). Gerber bidder may sign off in any contract, except for the cheapest club continuation, which promises all 4 aces and asks for the number of kings by steps (0, 1, 2, 3, 4).

Key-Card Responses

If a key suit exists (see Blackwood & Gerber rules), the king of that suit is counted as an ace so there are 5 key cards. The responses to Blackwood or Gerber are:

...	4 ♣	P	?	1 step	0 or 3 key cards
...	4 NT	P	?	2 steps	1 or 4 key cards
...	5 ♣	P	?	3 steps	2 or 5 key cards*

**This is different from Roman key-card Blackwood in that it does not deny the queen of trumps. The fourth step is instead used to show a void (see topic).*

Responses over enemy interference:

At the 5 level or lower use D-O-P-I:

...	4 ♣	Bid	?	Double	0 or 3 key cards
...	4 NT	Bid	?	Pass	1 or 4 key cards
...	5 ♣	Bid	?	Cheapest bid	2 or 5 key cards

At the 6 or 7 level use D-E-P-O:

...	4 ♣	Bid	?	Double	0, 2 or 4 key cards
...	4 NT	Bid	?	Pass	1, 3 or 5 key cards
...	5 ♣	Bid	?		

Sign-off bids:

Blackwood bidder may sign off in the key suit, any agreed suit, 6 NT, or 6 of any previously shown suit (unless illogical). Further, if no suit is agreed, he may sign off in 5 of any previously shown suit.

Gerber bidder may sign off in 4, 5, or 6 of any previously shown suit or in 4 NT, 5 NT, or 6 NT. Especially note: A bid of 5 ♣ is *not* a Gerber continuation if clubs have been previously shown.

Sign-off exception: If the reply showed 1 or 4 key cards and in fact is 4, any rebid below slam (even the key suit) is forcing.

Key-Card Continuations

If Blackwood or Gerber bidder continues with the cheapest forcing bid, it ensures that at least 4 key cards are held (all 5 if at or beyond 5 of key suit), and asks for the queen or extra length (QOEL) in the key suit. Responses are:

...	4 M	P	?	4 NT, key suit	denial
...	5 X	P	?	Cheapest bid*	QOEL; nothing showable
...	5 NT	P	?	Other bid*	QOEL; that king
...	6 m	P	?		

**Cheapest bid (excluding denials) assures QOEL and implies that responder is unable to show a king by the other available bids. A response of 5 NT (if not the cheapest bid) or 6 NT shows the "cheapest-bid" king.*

Rare: If Blackwood bidder makes a forcing suit bid below 5 NT that is not the cheapest available, it is a relay to sign off in 5 NT.

If Blackwood bidder makes a forcing bid of 5 NT or higher which is not the cheapest available, or if Gerber bidder makes a forcing (suit) bid which is not the cheapest available, this promises all 5 key cards and the key-suit QOEL. Responses:

...	4 ♠	P	?	4/5 NT, key suit	denial
...	5 X	P	?	Other suit	that king (may have 1 other)
...	5 NT	P	?	6 NT	all 3 non-key-suit kings
...	6 X	P	?	7 any	sign-off or "you pick the grand" if illogical to play

Further inquiry:

Blackwood or Gerber bidder may, in some cases, probe further by making a forcing bid below 6 of the key suit. Responses:

...	5 X	P	?	5 NT, key suit	denial
...	5 NT	P	?	Other suit	that king
...	6 X	P	?	6 NT	unshown king; doubts about 7; NF
				7 any	sign-off or "you pick the grand" if illogical to play

Void-Showing over Blackwood

A void suit may be shown over key-card Blackwood only if responder has 1, 2 or 3 key cards. Two different sets of responses apply depending on whether the void suit would be known to Blackwood bidder.

If void suit is unknown:

...	4 NT	P	?	5 ♠*	1 key card
				5 NT*	2 key cards
				6 of suit	3 key cards; void in suit bid if possible (else natural with unshowable void)

**If feasible, asker may continue with cheapest forcing bid, then responder can bid his void or return to a natural suit if void cannot be shown at the 6 level.*

If void suit would be known:

...	4 NT	P	?	5 ♠*	1 key card
				5 NT*	2 key cards
				• 6 non-key suit	3 key cards; that king (or key-suit QOEL if bid is void suit)
				6 key suit	3 key cards; nothing else to show

**Continue as on previous page: Cheapest forcing bid asks about QOEL; other forcing bid assures QOEL and asks about non-key-suit kings.*

Note: A void suit should *not* be shown when regular Blackwood applies since it is not clear where Blackwood bidder is headed.

Voluntary Bid of Five

A voluntary bid of 5 in a major is a slam invitation if deal belongs to our side (forcing pass situation); or if our side has not made a weak bid and at most one opponent has acted; or over our 4 M opening if next hand passes. (Otherwise, 5 M is obstructive.)

A jump to 5 in a minor is a slam invitation if a bid of 4 in that minor would be forcing.

In either case, the slam invitation asks for:

1. Control in the unbid suit if we have bid three suits
2. Control in the enemy suit if not already shown
3. Good trumps relative to the bidding if the above do not apply

Responses:

If the bid asks for control:

...	5 X	P	?	Pass	no control in critical suit
				5 NT	guarded king
				6 X	control, usually singleton
				Other suit	control-bid; promises first-round control in critical suit

If the bid asks for good trumps:

...	5 X	P	?	Pass	sorry, pal
				Other	use trump-asking steps (see topic)

Trump Asking Bids

The following bids are trump asking:

1. A jump to 4 ♣ after our weak two-bid, weak jump overcall, weak jump shift response, or major-suit overcall of 1 NT
2. A bid of 4 ♣ over our 3 ♦, 3 ♥ or 3 ♠ opening or weak jump overcall with no interference
3. A bid of 4 ♦ over our 3 ♣ or 4 ♣ opening or weak jump overcall with no interference
4. A bid of 5 NT if a major suit is agreed or if a jump over partner's natural major-suit bid (see "5 NT bids" for a rare exception)
5. A bid of 5 ♠ (when no major is agreed) if a minor suit is agreed or if a jump over partner's natural minor-suit bid

Responses:

...	4 ♣	P	?	Trump suit	worst response
...	4 ♦	P	?	1 step	ace or king
...	5 ♠	P	?	• 2 steps*	queen or extra length
...	5 NT	P	?	3 steps	K-Q or A-Q
				4 steps	A-K
				5 steps	A-K-Q or no trump loser

**Eliminate this step if clubs are trump or if responder (to trump ask) has shown 6+ cards (which includes weak two-bids although suspect).*

Note: Step responses skip over the trump suit, which always indicates the weakest response.

Continuations:

Trump asker may continue by bidding the cheapest unagreed suit to ask for extra length (or queen if possible): Return to trump suit denials.

If asker continues with 4 NT it is *regular* Blackwood (not key-card).

Four Notrump Response for Takeout

After partner has doubled or bid a suit, a response of 4 NT is for takeout (for the unbid suits) only if an opponent has bid 4 ♥ or 4 ♠, you have not previously acted, partner has not made a weak bid or overcalled an enemy weak bid, and there are at least two unbid suits among ♣, ♦ and ♥. Otherwise a 4 NT response is Blackwood.

1 ♥ 1 ♠ 4 ♥ 4 NT <i>Minors</i>	4 ♠ Db1 P 4 NT <i>3-suit takeout</i>	P 1 ♦ 4 ♠ 4 NT <i>Clubs + hearts</i>
1 ♥ 2 ♠ 4 ♥ 4 NT <i>Blackwood</i>	1 ♥ Db1 4 ♥ 4 NT <i>Minors</i>	P 1 ♦ 4 ♥ 4 NT <i>Blackwood</i>
2 ♥ 2 ♠ 4 ♥ 4 NT <i>Blackwood</i>	1 ♦ Db1 4 ♥ 4 NT <i>Blackwood</i>	1 ♣ 1 ♦ 4 ♠ 4 NT <i>Blackwood</i>

Five Notrump Bids

Provided no major suit is agreed, a bid of 5 NT has one of the following meanings unless part of another agreement.

1. A jump to 5 NT over any balanced notrump bid, provided no real suit has been shown, invites a grand slam. Partner should bid 6 NT with a minimum or 7 NT with a tiptop maximum. A suit bid indicates a good 4+ cards with in-between strength.
2. If a real suit has been shown, a jump to 5 NT over any bid except a natural major-suit bid asks partner to select a slam from the obvious alternatives, with 6 NT being a possibility.
3. A nonjump bid of 5 NT over any bid (including a major) has the same meaning as above, but 6 NT is a possibility only if notrump was previously bid naturally. Otherwise, partner must choose a suit.
4. After a 4 or 5-level enemy preempt, *whether partner has bid or not*, a bid of 5 NT at your *first* turn requests partner to choose an unbid suit (cheapest first if there are 3 unbid) with 4 cards (or 3 cards with an honor). Example:

4 ♦ 4 ♠ P 5 NT	♠ 3 2
	♥ A Q J 4 3
	♦ 2
	♣ A K J 7 2

This bid would normally be interpreted as a grand slam force (trump ask), but the need for an unbid-suit takeout is more important and there is no other way to effect it.

Splinter Raises

The following bids indicate a singleton or void in the suit bid and at least 4 card support for partner (or 3 cards if partner has rebid his suit) with or without enemy interference. The point count requirement is stated in “dummy points” (distribution included).

Rebids by opening bidder:

1. Double jump shift or jump cue-bid after a 1-over-1 response = 19+
2. Jump shift or jump cue-bid after a 2-over-1 response = 16+

Rebids by responder:

3. Double jump shift, 4-level jump shift, or jump cue-bid after a 1-over-1 response = 16+
4. Double jump rebid of 4 in opener’s minor after a major suit rebid at the 1 level = 16+
5. Jump shift or jump cue-bid after a 2-over-1 response = 16+
6. Jump shift to 4 level after a puppet Stayman response to 1 NT and a major-suit rebid by opener = 13+
7. Jump shift rebid after a 2 \diamond response to 2 \clubsuit = 6+
8. Jump shift rebid after a 2 \heartsuit response to 2 \clubsuit = 8+

A control-showing auction is immediately started with a splinter raise unless the raised suit is a minor and partner next bids a previously shown major suit.

Non-Raise Splinter Bids

A splinter bid also may be made by the originator of a suit following a raise by partner. Unless otherwise defined, any jump shift after a raise (even in a previously shown minor suit) is a splinter bid. This shows slam interest and a control-showing auction is started.

Another kind of splinter bid is the shape-descriptive variety, usually made by a player who has indicated two suits or one long suit, such as in the Jacoby structure. These bids do not initiate a control-showing auction unless suit agreement has previously occurred.

Splinter Asking Bid

After a jump major raise to the 3 level as an immediate response or at opener's rebid, the cheapest bid (3 ♠ or 3 NT) is a relay to ask for a splinter. This is not affected by an enemy takeout double, but it is off if either opponent has *bid*.

1 M	P	3 M	P	• Cheapest bid	no splinter
Rel	P	?		New suit*	that splinter
	(or)			• Agreed major*	"unshowable" splinter
1 X	P	1 M	P		
3 M	P	Rel	P		
?					

**On the second auction if opener shows a splinter in his original suit (obviously impossible), it indicates 5-4-2-2 shape with a good 5-card suit.*

Control Asking Bid

These bids ask for control in the suit bid:

1. A 5-level response in a lower suit to partner's 4 ♥ or 4 ♠ opening bid or weak jump overcall with no interference
2. A 4 or 5-level cue-bid in the enemy suit after partner has made a weak bid
3. A new-suit follow-up by 2 ♣ opener after he has established trumps with a jump suit rebid

Responses:

...	4 X	P	?	1 step	no control
...	5 X	P	?	• 2 steps*	queen or doubleton
				3 steps	king or singleton
				4 steps	ace or void

**This response is used only in case (3) above; else there are just 3 steps.*

Defensive Carding

Opening Leads at Notrump

Ace (power lead) from 5+ cards with A-K-Q-10-x, A-K-J-10-x, A-K-J-x-x-x or better.

King from A-K-Q, A-K-J, A-K-10, K-Q-J, K-Q-10, or tripleton A-K-x or K-Q-x.

Queen from A-Q-J, Q-J-10, Q-J-9 or tripleton Q-J-x. Also from K-Q-10-9-x to demand jack unblock.

Jack from A-J-10, K-J-10, J-10-9, J-10-8 or tripleton J-10-x. Also from A-Q-J-x-x or K-Q-J-x-x if count is desired.

Ten from A-Q-10-9, A-10-9, K-10-9, Q-10-9, 10-9-8, 10-9-7 or tripleton 10-9-x. Rarely, A-K-10-9 if king lead is undesirable.

Fourth best from four-card or longer suits. No honor strength is necessarily implied, although a high card may be led from a weak suit if desiring a shift to another suit.

Lowest from A-x-x, K-x-x, Q-x-x, J-x-x or 10-x-x.

Highest from 9-x-x or weaker. Exception: If partner has indicated a 5 card or longer suit (which includes third and fourth-seat major openings, although suspect), lead low from three-small unless you have raised the suit.

Higher from a doubleton.

Opening Leads at Suits

Ace from A-K through 4 ♠ except in a suit originated by partner. (Beyond 4 ♠ or in a suit originated by partner lead the king.) Reverse of this procedure shows a doubleton.

King from K-Q.

Queen from Q-J.

Jack from K-J-10 or J-10.

Ten from K-10-9, Q-10-9 or 10-9.

Lowest from an odd number of cards.

Third best from an even number of cards. Note that a nine lead could be third best (K-J-9-x) or low (K-J-9) but otherwise must be doubleton or singleton.

Higher from a doubleton.

Leads After Trick One

Subsequent to the opening lead, against notrump or suits, leading the jack, 10 or nine shows zero or two higher; e.g., jack from K-Q-J or J-10; 10 from K-J-10 or 10-9; nine from K-10-9, Q-10-9 or nothing above. Excepted of course are situations where a specific card must be led for technical reasons.

When shifting to another suit at notrump, lead fourth-best to encourage the return or high to discourage the return. At suit contracts, however, follow opening-lead methods for spot cards (low odd, third-best even).

Count Signals

The general strategy is to show count, both in following suit and discarding, regardless of who led the suit. When discarding, tend to discard from suits you do not wish led and give count in doing so.

In giving count, normally play your second highest (if affordable) from four cards and the highest affordable from six cards. Play the indicated card:

9 <u>8</u> 6 2	10 <u>9</u> 8 2	J <u>10</u> 9 2	Q <u>10</u> 9 2
Q <u>J</u> 10 3 (if intent is to give count)		<u>J</u> 10 9 7 4 2	

This method is more helpful in distinguishing between two and four, or between four and six, especially in situations in which the ace is led and dummy has the queen with two or three small cards. Note that the highest outstanding card rules out count from four cards.

Modifications and exceptions:

Ace against notrump requests the unblock of the king, queen, or jack; otherwise, give a count signal.

Ace against a 5-level or higher suit contract requests attitude.

When the ace of an unbid suit is led at a suit contract and dummy has exactly three cards without the queen, signal attitude.

Ace subsequent to the opening lead requests attitude.

King against notrump requests attitude.

Queen against notrump asks for unblock of the jack or ace; otherwise, it requests attitude.

At notrump, if dummy wins partner's opening lead with a *singleton* ace, king or queen, signal attitude.

Suit Preference Signals

The following suit-preference situations take priority over any other signals:

Against any contract, if the opening leader leads a suit originated by partner in which partner showed 5+ cards. (Third hand should play a middle card to be neutral.) Note: The suit preference is generally more urgent if leader retains the lead.

Against a suit, if the opening leader leads dummy's singleton and *retains the lead* at trick two. Note that when a king is led (thru 4 ♠), this applies only when third hand has the ace.

When leading or following in a suit that partner is expected to ruff.

Against a suit, when partner's opening lead is an obvious singleton and you are not trying to win the trick.

When removing declarer's last stopper at notrump.

When playing from insignificant cards in a suit in which declarer has shown out (or will show out on the current trick). Note that strategic plays (unblocking, playing a known card, etc.) should not be interpreted as suit preference.

When following suit or discarding (but not when leading) from insignificant cards after count has been given. For example, in the following two holdings the first play is required to show count, but the order of the subsequent plays is suit preference:

6 5 4

4-5-6 suggests lower suit; 4-6-5 suggests higher suit

9 5 4 3

5-3-4 suggests lower suit; 5-4-3 suggests higher suit

The Wakeup Signal

At a suit contract, a nonsystemic or unusual lead or play (excluding normal suit preference situations) indicates the *ability to ruff something*. This is not a suit preference signal in that partner must determine which suit might be ruffed. Examples would be:

1. Underleading an ace on the opening lead. (When underleading an ace it is best to lead a false spot card so that partner is less likely to misplay thinking declarer has the ace.)
2. A nonsystemic lead such as the queen from K-Q or the jack from Q-J.
3. A blatantly wasteful or illogical signal such as dropping the king from K-J-x-x when you cannot be short in the suit.

Second Plays in the Same Suit

After leading an honor, continuing with your highest card warns partner not to unblock or overtake. Continuing with your lowest card of a sequence invites partner to do so. Your first play is indicated:

K Q x Continue with the queen

K Q J 9 Continue with the jack

Second-round count:

If your first play in a suit did not indicate count (generally because you led or played an honor), count should be given on the second round when leading, following or discarding. Play the highest card you can spare from an original odd number; lowest from an original even number of cards. Your first play is indicated:

K 9 7 4 2 Next play the 9 (or the 7 if you cannot spare the 9)

A 9 8 7 4 2 Next play the 2

A J 10 9 Next play the 9*

**Note that this takes priority over leading the top of a sequence.*

Second leads from honor sequences follow the usual practice of playing “top-down” from short holdings (warning partner *not* to overtake or unblock) or leading the lowest of equals from long holdings (suggesting an overtake or unblock). Besides the obvious cases, this principle can solve problems like this at notrump (first trick is indicated):

<u>4</u>	
A J 7 <u>5</u> 3	<u>Q</u> 9 8 2
<u>K</u> 10 6	

If West gets in and leads the *jack*, East should unblock the nine (and later the eight); but if West led the ace first, East should *not* unblock. The situation might be:

<u>4</u>	
A J 6 <u>5</u>	<u>Q</u> 9 8 2
<u>K</u> 10 7 3	

Here West continues with the *ace*, and East plays the two (present count). The location of the 10, of course, is not known to West, but he knows that declarer started with four (or two if conceivable) and a trick is not blown by a misguided unblock.

Miscellaneous Agreements

Third-hand play of the higher of equals at notrump requests partner to unblock if necessary. Thus, normal plays warn partner not to unblock. For example:

	J <u>10</u>	
<u>9</u> 8 2		K Q 7 6 4 3
	A 5	

Assume the nine is led. Playing the king then the queen tells partner to unblock. Otherwise, partner should not unblock as declarer may have A-7-x. Also note that if declarer won the first trick, partner could *safely* lead the eight next if your first play were the king (but not if you played the queen).

Splitting honors:

When splitting honors as *second hand*, play the next-to-highest card if intention is to inform partner. This blends well with the method of showing count from four cards so both meanings are often served. Play the indicated card:

10 <u>9</u> 8 7	K <u>9</u> 8 7	J <u>10</u> 9 8	Q <u>10</u> 9 8
Q <u>J</u> 10 9	K <u>J</u> 10 9	K <u>Q</u> J 10	K <u>Q</u> 10 9
A <u>K</u> Q 2	A <u>K</u> J 2	<u>A</u> Q J 9 (denies K)	

Trump echo:

A trump echo is routine to show an odd number of trumps; this does not necessarily suggest the ability to ruff anything. If intention is to enlighten partner, echo with the highest of equals, which is sometimes helpful to distinguish whether you have a promotable trump holding. It also may distract declarer. Play the indicated card:

<u>J</u> 10 9	<u>10</u> 9 8	J <u>9</u> 8	<u>9</u> 8 6
---------------	---------------	--------------	--------------

Note that any play denies the card immediately above it.