



## Vancouver Club System - June 2007

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**Layout of Notes**

Opener and overcaller bids use letters (A or B), responder and advancer numbers (1 and 2), indents used to indicate new

bidder, GF= game force. The first section describing the opening bids is the essential part of the system, the remaining notes can be incorporated in almost any system with minor changes.

## Unique features of system

The Vancouver Club system is basically a standard system (with 2♣ as the strong opening bid), aimed at allowing ready identification of long minor suits and handling balanced 18-19 HCP hands better than in standard methods. Extensive use of transfers in non-traditional settings allow for handling of more hand types than 2/1 or sayc.

### Opening bids

1. Weak no trump openings (12-14) with 4 suit transfers
2. 1♣ opening is balanced 15+ or clubs, with transfer responses and a special 2♦ rebid by opener (18-19) in non-competitive auctions (responses by steps, allowing sign-offs at low levels)
3. 1♦ opening is unbalanced with 4+ (usually 5+) diamonds
4. Multi 2♦ opening -weak one major (when not permitted, 2♦ opening is equivalent of normal 2NT opening, and 2NT is minors). Normally 1.5 to 2 quick tricks.
5. Two Suited 2 level major openings (2♥ = hearts and minor, 2♠ = spades and other), nominally weak but can have excellent playing strength. Normally 1.5 to 2 quick tricks.
6. Namyats 4♣ and 4 (good preempts in hearts/spades respectively)
7. 1M, 2♣ as in standard

### Other methods and ideas

Frequent splinters (rule 1 is always splinter)

Italian style cue bidding (kings and aces without distinction at four level)

[Lebensohl](#) - after reverse, two level jump shifts, opponents weak two or overcall of 1nt

[Weak must speak](#) -when advancer interference prevents openers normal rebid, 2NT is artificial with a good unbalanced hand, 3 of opener's suit is lighter than normal

Bart (1♠ -1NT - 2♣ (may be 2) -2♦ asks openers heart length

Two way new minor after 1♠ or 1NT rebid by opener - 2♣ puppet (for invites or to stop at 2♦), 2♦ to game force (GF), jump rebids are limited

Jump rebids of 2NT by opener forcing and may be unbalanced - then 3♣ to ask clarification.

Intermediate Jump Overcalls - opening hand or better, rule of 500, 1+ side defensive trick

e.g. x xx AKx AQJ10xxx

Almost all bids promise some defense, even those that are nominally preemptive. We believe preemption causes opponents to bid higher than normal, so have defense. The minimum for a preemptive raise of 1M to three level is something like Kxxx

x QJxx xxxx if not vulnerable, to four level vulnerable is perhaps AQxxx xx Qxxx xx.

When opponents preempt, we aim to penalize abuses of the law of total tricks such as weak raises with no tricks

UDCA signals and first discard

Tendency to passive leads (trump leads versus suits, and short suit leads versus no trump)

### Quick Tricks hand evaluation

For suit play, the correct ratio of the honour cards is A=6, K=4 Q=2 and J=1 (3-2-1-0.5).

Since few if any players think in anything but the 4321 scale, we use quick tricks and adjustment as a simpler method. In that method AK - 2 AQ - 1.5, KQ or A -1 K=0.5. To assure not being off too many top losers, game in a major requires 5 quick tricks, in a minor 5.5 quick tricks, slam 6.5 quick tricks. For offensive purposes only, singletons and voids may compensate for missing quick tricks.

Typical quick trick requirements

One level opening bids are 12+HCP or 2.5 quick tricks. Third seat may be 10 HCP if at least 2 quick tricks

Two and three level opening bids - 1.5 to 2 quick tricks

Single weak raise or preemptive raise - 0.5 to 1.5 quicks

Limit raise - 2 quick tricks

Game forcing bid or raise - 2.5 quick tricks.

### 1♣ opening

- Either
- a) 15+ balanced, lacking 5 card major- Indicated by 1NT or artificial 2♦ rebid
  - b) 4+ clubs in unbalanced hand - suggested or guaranteed by suit rebid

### Responses (non-competitive or after double) - Transfer responses

1. Pass - rare, very weak hand, 5+ clubs
2. 1♦ - shows 4+ hearts, any strength (transfer response). Denies 5 spades.
  - . 1♥ - shows 4+ spades, any strength (transfer response). May be 55 in majors
  - Failure to transfer to a major denies one (unless suitable for group 5 bid below)
3. 1♠ - denies 4+ in either major, usually balanced, invites opener to rebid 1NT if balanced (transfer response)
4. 1NT - shows 5+ clubs with at least 8 HCP or equivalent additional playing strength.
  - 2♣ - shows 5+diamonds with at least 8 HCP or equivalent additional playing strength.
5. 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ - 6 card suit with fewer than 6 HCP.

An alternative is 2♦=majors, 2♥=hearts and minor, 2♠ = spades and minor, all about 4-7 HCP

6. 2NT - **weak minor two suiter**, at least 55, 4-7 HCP
7. 3 bids - 7+ suit with no side king or ace and at most KQJ in suit
8. 4 bids - Approximately an opening hand with 7 playing tricks and 1- loser suit

After a 1 level transfer response, opener has the following options

#### Balanced hands

- A. minimum rebid in transfer suit, usually 3 card support, limited to 17 HCP.  
After 1♣-1♦ response, opener rebids 1♥ with 4-2-3-4 with spades, or 1NT with fewer than 4 spades and only 2 hearts.
- B. minimum rebid in NT, shows 15-17 HCP and normally at most 2 cards in responders suit. After 1 response (showing spades) , may have a poor 18 count.
- C. jump in transfer suit (2♥ or 2♠ rebid) - 4 card support, usually 15-17 or equivalent playing strength
- D. 2♦ rebid artificial Mexican, showing 18+ HCP in a balanced hand, usually with 3+ support for transfer suit.

#### Responder rebids

2♥ - very weak hand (0-5 HCP)

2 - moderate hand (5-7 HCP)

2NT - game force, no singleton, otherwise no strict requirements

3 new suit - unbalanced game force, can be longer suit than transfer suit

3 transfer suit - good suit playable in game or slam opposite 2 card support

♠ A1073

♠ J92

1♣

1♦

♥ AKJ

♥ 7652

2♦

2♥

♦ Q942

♦ K8

P

♣ A7

♣ 9532

#### Unbalanced hands

- E. double jump in transfer suit - strong unbalanced 4+ card raise, implies real clubs
- F. double jump in a new suit, splinter raise, much as in standard
- G. rebid in clubs (not the transfer suit) - 6 clubs, roughly as in standard
- H. jump rebid in NT, shows 18+ HCP or equivalent, usually long clubs, denies 3 cards in transfer suit
- I. 1♠ rebid (after 1♦ response) shows 4+♠, 5+♣, not super strong, then 1NT by responder forces 2♣, two way new minor applies.
- J. 2♠ rebid (after 1♦ response) shows 4+♠, 5+♣, strong. Similarly 2♥ after 1♥ response, Lebensohl applies.

## After 1NT or 2♣ response

Opener with a balanced hand will either accept the transfer (minimum, not forcing, 2+ support) or bid 2NT (17+) or rebid 2 of a major (strong stopper, usually suit, may be unbalanced).

With 4+ support and 17+ in support, opener may jump in responder's suit or jump to three level in new suit (splinter). After acceptance of transfer, jumps by responder are splinters with 6 cards in his suit, two level suit rebids show stoppers and 2NT or 3 of his suit are not forcing. The following example uses a new idea, direct raise of splinter ace asking (see [splinters](#))

♠ AK42	♠ Q95	1♣	1NT (clubs)
♥ AJ10	♥ K6	2♣ (min)	3♦ (splinter)
♦ J654	♦ 7	4♦ (KCB)	4♠ (1-4)
♣ K4	♣ AQ97652	4NT (queen?)	5♥ (yes and K)
		6♣	P
♠ AQ62	♠ KJ7	1♣	2♣
♥ A94	♥ J	2♠	3♠ (GF)
♦ 5	♦ AK109643	4♥	5♦
♣ AK1083	♣ J6	6♦!?	P

## Responders rebids

If opener's rebid was 1NT or lower, two way new minor rebids are used.

- 1) A rebid of 2♣ forces opener to rebid 2♦, responder may then pass or continue naturally with an invitational bid (at two or three level).
- 2) A 2♦ rebid is used on all game going hands.
- 3) A rebid of 2NT is a puppet to 3♣, responder will then either pass (6 clubs) or rebid 3♦ (6 diamonds). All balanced hands that want to invite 3NT must rebid 2♣ and follow with 2NT.
- 4) Jump bids at the 3 level show invitational 55 hands with all values concentrated in the suits shown (and 7-9 HCP).
- 5) A rebid in the major responder showed initially is a signoff
- 6) A rebid of 2♥ (other major) is not invitational with 54 or 55 in majors (may be very weak hand)
- 7) A rebid of 2♠ (other major) is a one round force and shows a singleton in spades, it asks opener to bid a minor, or to rebid

2NT only with excellent spade stoppers.

After 1♣-1♦-1♥, responder continues 1♠ (denying spades) to force opener to rebid 1NT, or 1NT (showing 44 in majors, less than 9 HCP, opener may correct to 2♠ or rarely to 2♥).

After 1♣-1♦-1♠, responder may continue with 1NT to force opener to rebid 2♣. This sequence is used either with weak hands or invitational hands that will rebid in the singleton suit. Note we can not play 1NT after that start.

♠ K62	♠ AQ94	1♣	1♦ (4+ hearts)
♥ 1074	♥ AKQ32	1♥	2♦ (GF)
♦ AK7	♦ 84	2♥ (3 cards)	2♠
♣ KQJ3	♣ 104	2NT	3♠ (cue)
		4♣	5♥ (invite)
		6♥	

## Competitive

Transfer responses do not apply after an overcall.

1. Negative doubles are used (usually 7+ HCP)

after 1♦ overcall, double promises at least 4 cards in both majors.

after 1♥ overcall, double denies four spades

after 1♠ overcall, double either promises hearts or strength to handle heart rebid by opener

Openers rebids

- 2♣ - always 6 clubs
- 1NT - 15-17 (or 18-19 if responder has passed) and does not guarantee a stopper in suit overcalled.
- 2 of suit doubler showed - 4 card support, not more than 16 points if balanced
- 2 of suit not shown by double - unbalanced hand, sound values, not forcing
- 2♦ - artificial game force, 18+ balanced or some strong unbalanced hand

2. 1 level major responses show 4+ suits

support doubles and redoubles available to opener, 2♦ is non-specific game force

3. 1NT by responder is 8-11 with at least partial stopper in suit overcalled.

A. Openers 2♣, 2♠ or 2♥ (OM) are unbalanced

B. Openers 2NT is 15-16 with help in suit overcalled

## C. Openers 2♦ is presumed balanced, 15+, asks more information

4. Reopening double by openers (after responder has passed) is takeout and suggests a good 16 balanced.

♠ 3	♠ A87	1♣	1♠	1NT	P
♥ K942	♥ Q65	2♥	P	2♠	P
♦ AKQ	♦ J98	3♦	P	4♣	P
♣ K10975	♣ QJ64	P	P	P	

### 1♦ opening

Shows an unbalanced hand of about 11-21 HCP with at least 4 diamonds. The hand may be 4441 pattern or include 5+ clubs, in all other cases the diamond length is 5+. Responses are natural, with inverted raises in non-competitive auctions.

#### Responses

**1. 1M response** - may be weak four card suit, 6+ points  
opener rebids

A. single raise with four card support (strong three card fit with singleton and bad diamonds is a remote possibility also). Responder then continues 2NT to ask for singleton, opener with 3 trumps rebids 3, or 3M with four trumps and no singleton, or new suit with singleton and four trumps.

B. 2♣ - usually 5 clubs, not forcing. Responder will not give false preference to diamonds, but may bid 2 with equal length with mild game ambitions, over which opener will continue with around 16+ points, or with 3 card support for responders suit. Other responder options over 2♣ include 3♣ or 3 forcing with 4 card support and 2OM (invite or better, see Tsar principle in C).

C. 2♦ - usually 6 card suit. Responder may then continue with 3 forcing (opener then bids a stopper in OM, bids 3M with a club stop, or 3nt with both side suits stopped), or 2OM as a one round force relay (either to ask for three card support for major, or to show an invite hand for diamonds). If the relayer bids 3 on his third turn this is invitational only (a switch of meanings suggested by Jeff Rubens). Any bid beyond 3 by either player shows extras and sets up a game force. Over the relay opener shows support if possible, bids 3 with a minimum and a decent 6 card suit, bids 2nt natural or hedges with 3♣ to determine responders intent. This treatment is known as TSAR.

D. support doubles and redoubles through 2♥.

E. 1NT - may have singleton in responder's suit, usually 5 diamonds, may have 4 clubs. Two way new minor applies (2♣ forces 2♦ to signoff or invite, 2♦ to game force). 1♦-1M-1NT-3M shows a six card suit invite with a hand poorly suited to no trump, 1♦-1M-1NT-2♣-2♦-3M shows a suit with two top honours.

F. 2♥ reverse or 2♠ jump shift (may be 14+ with 4-6 shape) at two level

Lebensohl applies.

G. 3♣ - game force, at least 55 in minors

responder may offer a false preference as waiting bid

- H. 3♦ - good trick taker, 6+ suit but poorly suited to no trump, either side singleton or broken or aceless suit  
 I. 2NT - semi-balanced hand, 17+ points, forcing

responders three level rebids are transfers (3♠ shows clubs) but opener is not required to accept transfer with preference for major

- J. **Jump reverse (e.g. 1-1♠-3 asks for stopper)**  
 K. Double jump raises is splinter, promise control in the fourth suit  
 L. Jump rebid of 4m is 64 with support and usually no king or ace in unbid suits (picture jump).

♠ 2	♠ AK983	1♦	1♠
♥ KQJ6	♥ A105	1NT	2♦ (GF)
♦ A9432	♦ K7	2♥	2NT
♣ K75	♣ AQ4	3♣	5NT (pick slam)
		6♥ good suit	P

Keep in mind that 1 openings usually have a singleton, so responder needs stoppers in any suits he has bid to venture 3NT. The following hand illustrates the problem.

♠ Q954	♠ AK10	1♦	1♥
♥ Q	♥ 9863	1♠	2♦ (GF)
♦ AKQ1065	♦ 974	3♦	3♠
♣ 104	♣ KQ6	4♦	5♦
		P	

## 2. 1NT response - 6-10, denies a major

opener may

1. light reverse, Lebensohl applies.
2. rebid 2 with only 5 card suit and weak or singleton major

## 3. Inverted 2♦ raise

opener rebids

1. cheapest major stopper

2. 2NT rebid shows semi-balanced hand with both majors stopped.
3. 4♦ is KCB

Jumps by either player are splinters, double jumps are voids, jump rebid of 4m by opener is KCB. Off in competition (cue bid or 2NT after double shows limit raise or better

♠ KJ	♠ A10	1♦	2♦
♥ 3	♥ A1076	3♥ (splinter)	3♠
♦ QJ10962	♦ K8754	3NT (limited)	5♦
♣ KQ54	♣ 102	P	

**4. 2♣ response** - Forcing one round, however rebids of 2NT or 3♣ are not forcing, rebid of 3♦ is forcing. Opener rebids naturally, rebid of major does not promise extra, raise to 3♣ is forcing to at least 4 level. Jump rebids by either player are splinters.

♠ 87	♠ 654	1♦	2♣
♥ A10	♥ KQ	3♣	3♦
♦ QJ1098	♦ K65	3♥	4♣ (not forcing)
♣ KQ106	♣ AJ872	P(2 quicks)	

5. 2♥ response - 4-8 with both majors 55. Allows the sequence 1♦ - 1-2♦ -2 to be forcing and artificial. Opener usually places the contract
6. 2♠ response - 4-8 with 55 in black suits. Opener usually places contract
7. 3♣ response 4-7 HCP, about 5-6 playing tricks, at most half a quick trick outside suit,
8. Three level major response - splinters, with 5 card support, game going or better

## Competitive

When 1♦ is overcalled

- 1 raises are no longer inverted
- 2 cue bid is limit raise or better
3. negative doubles apply thru 3♠
- 4 new suit at two level promises a rebid but may be as little as 9 HCP
5. new suit at 3 level is game forcing

- 6 jump shift to 2♠ is weak
- 7 other jumps are game forcing
8. 4 level jumps are splinters.

When 1♦ is doubled

1. redouble promises at least 33 in majors with 10+ HCP
2. new suits are forcing and may be strong lacking suitable shape for redouble
3. A jump to 2NT is limit+ with diamonds
4. 3♦ raise is weak
5. 2♦ raise is 6-9 HCP with 4 diamonds.

## 1 Major opening

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> seat – Sound 12+ HCP if balanced (5332), always five card suit, may be 10-11 HCP with six card major and 2 and ½ quick tricks.

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> seat – May be four card suit with 11-12 HCP, or five + suit with 10+ HCP and 2+ quick tricks

Special Responses by passed hand

1. 2 - Reverse Drury (rebids 2M weak, 2♦ sound opener, higher strong)
2. 1NT - wide range non forcing
3. 3 - to play, 6 card suit
4. 2NT - 4 card support for major and a singleton somewhere, 6-9 HCP

Responses

**1. Single Raise** – constructive by unpassed hand, 8-10 HCP, 3+ trumps, usually 3 possible cover cards.

Help suit game tries, 2NT is artificial balanced or semi-balanced 15+, asks responder to show where his values are..

2. 1♥-2♠ or 1♠-3♥ - **Limit raise in openers major**

**3. 2NT** - Game force raise with 4 trumps, rarely strong 3.

Opener rebids

A. second suit -natural

then step bid asks residual shape (openers third bid is his extra length, 3NT with 5422). Non step bid initiates cue bidding.

B. 3NT (12-14) balanced, not forcing

C. 3M (6322 or 5332 with 15+),

D. Jump rebid is Splinter with 6331 (sound minimum+)

**4. Double Raise** – mixed raise, 4+ trumps, 5-9 HCP with about 1 defensive trick, may have a singleton

**5. Splinters** – 1M-4m, 1♠-4♥ and 1♥-3N (spade singleton) with about 2+ quick tricks, 11-15 HCP. Repeat of splinter

shows singleton ace.

**6. Void splinter** – 1♥-3♠ or 1♠-3N shows unspecified void, with 1 and ½+ quick tricks, 10+ HCP  
cheapest rebid asks void (1♥-3♠-3N-4♥ minimum spade void, 4♠ maximum with spade void).

**7. 1 spade** – 6+ HCP, J10xx or better suit,  
opens 1NT rebid is 12-16 HCP, then two way new minor applies. 3m is 46 hand.

**8. 1 NT** – forcing by unpassed hand, 5-11 HCP, if 10-11 HCP usually no five card minor).

Openers rebids

- A. 2♦ - promises 4 card suit
- B. 2♠ - reverse, forcing, Lebensohl applies
- C. 3 new suit - game forcing (8.5 tricks or more or 18+ HCP) and show 55 shape
- D. 2♣ - may be as short as a singleton (4531 or 6331 with weak spades).

After 1♥-1N-2♣, 2♦ is natural (5+), pass is usually six card support, raise is 6 card support, 2N=10-11 HCP, 2S = 8-11 with good 5 card club support. After 1♠-1N-2♣, 2♥ is usually 6 card suit (may be 5 with singleton spade), 2♦ is **Bart**, asks for three card heart support (opener rebids 2S with 5233), then 2N shows 9-11 HCP with club fit, direct 2N over 2♣ rebid = 10-11 with red suit stoppers. After 1♥-1N-2♥, 2♠ is minors (at least 55)..

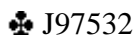
E. 2NT - 18+ HCP, may be unbalanced 6331, 6322, 5422 or 5431,

responders 3♣ rebid asks shape clarification (**Mecksroth adjunct**)

F. 3M (opened suit) - shows about 7 playing tricks with good 6 card major, responder needs 9-10 HCP or three cover cards to raise.

♠ AQJ65	♠ K4	1♠	1NT
♥ AQJ72	♥ K9653	3♥ (5-5)	3♠ (waiting)
♦ A86	♦ Q95	4♦ (ace)	5♥ (big fit)
♣ -	♣ 874	6♥	P

♠ AQJ96	♠ K73	1♠	1NT
♥ AQJ5	♥ K2	2NT	3♣ (ask)
♦ 84	♦ A9	3♥ (5-4M)	4♦ (cue)



**9. 2 over one response** – sound, 2+ quick tricks, nearly always a 5 card suit (2♥ always 5). Game forcing unless responder rebids suit (limiting his hand to about 9-11 HCP, but with potentially runable suit). May also stop below game if opener rebids his suit and responder continues with 2NT (forcing for one more round).

Openers rebids

- A. **3 new suit** -game forcing, 14+ HCP
- B. **2NT** -game forcing, 14+
- C. **single raise** -game forcing, usually 14+

After 1♠-2♥, 3♥ is stronger than 4♥.

- D. **Jump new suit** - splinter, does not promise much extra.
- E. 1♥-2m-2♠ - does not guarantee extras.
- F. **2 new suit** - natural, 2NT rebid by responder may be passed
- G. **3 of suit opened** - usually solid suit, sets trumps, cue bidding may follow
- H. **2 of suit opened** - neutral response, unsuitable for any of above, may be 6 card broken suit, or 5332 or 54 with lower ranking suit and 11-13 HCP

Responders rebids (after any of above)

After 1M-2m-2M,

- 1) 2NT rebid is forcing and semi natural, may be as little as 11 HCP (openers 3m or 3M are not forcing)
- 2) 3m is not forcing with decent 6 card suit (usually headed by the ace)

After 1M-2m-2x,

- 1) 2M is not forcing (if opener is very short in responders minor)

After other rebids by opener

- 1) 3 level rebids are usually natural and are forcing
- 2) 3M is slamish.
- 3) Delayed splinters apply to responders rebids and show support for openers last bid suit.

**10. Jump shifts to a minor** – Weak, 5-8 HCP, good six or broken 7+ suit, at most a king outside suit, deny three card support for major or second biddable suit. Openers new suit rebids are forcing, jumps in new suits are splinters.

Optional relay structure after 1M-2♣

It is possible to use a 2♣ response to a major opening as an artificial game forcing response. The hand will either be balanced, or with 4+ trumps support, or with long clubs. Opener make a series of semi-natural rebids to show strength and pattern, responder can continue with step relays or revert to natural. This method is useful with awkward hand patterns like 2443 or 3442 over a 1♠ opening, allowing you to restrict responses of 2♦ or 2♥ to hands including a 5 card suit. There is also no need for the 2NT response as a game forcing raise, you can use it instead as a limit or Bergen raise as desired.

After 1M-P-2♣-P, opener rebids

2♦ = minimum hand (up to 14 HCP), but not including the other major as a side suit

2♥ = shows at least 45 or 54 in the majors

2♠ = shows 6 cards in major opened and maximum (defined as all working 15+ HCP)

2NT = 5332 shape with 15+ HCP

3m = At least 54 in major and suit bid, 15+ HCP

3♥ (OM) = At least 55 with 15+ HCP, including better hearts than spades (in terms of secondary cards or total honours)

3M = Solid or semi-solid suit with maximum, good controls, sets trump suit

3♠ (OM) = 0544 pattern with 15+ HCP, responder can then set trump suit with rebid?!

4M = long broken suit, no slam interest (i.e. fewer than 5 controls)

1M-2♣-2♦-2♥ relay (implies at least 2 cards in M)

Opener rebids naturally with 2♠, 2NT, 3m or 3M. A rebid of 3OM can not be natural (since all both major hands rebid 2♥ over 2♣), so is used to show a 6331 or similar hand with shortness in OM, jumps to 4m have the equivalent meaning.

1M-2♣-2♥-2♠ relay (implies at least 2 cards in openers first bid suit)

Openers first rebid is either 2NT (any minimum or 5422 with 18+), or showing additional length. 3m=4531 with 3 cards in minor (or possibly 5440), 3M=64, 3OM=55 or 56, 3NT=4522 or 5422 with some but not a lot of extras (say 15-17, not forcing)

If opener has shown a one suiter (6+), next relay asks singleton (rebid of M is no singleton, rebid of 3NT is singleton in suit used for last relay (usually clubs).

If opener has shown a two suiter (at least 54) the next relay asks additional length (opener rebids a 6 card major, a 5 card side suit, a 3 + unbid suit or NT with no additional shape (can make irregular response with lots of extras such as 4NT).

If the opponents compete with overcalls after openers first rebid, double is penalty by responder, pass asks opener to continue describing.

If fourth hand interferes after a relay, opener doubles if his response would have been the bid made, passes with lower response (responder may again double for penalty), or makes his normal response if possible. (e.g. 1♠ - P - 2♣ - 2♥, double = both majors, pass=minimum).

If the opponent doubles a relay by responder, redouble by opener is equivalent to a bid of that suit at next level (e.g. 1♠-P-2♣-P-2♦-P-2♥-D-3♦ shows a minimum hand with 5 spades and 4 decent diamonds).

## Competitive

## After 1M-D

1. redouble is 10+ HCP and presumed to hold 4+ in unbid major
2. single raise is weak but not hopeless, suggests a lead(5-7 HCP)
3. transfer raise (suit below raise) is constructive 8-10
4. other bids of 1NT thru 2♦ are transfers with 7-10 HCP
5. jump shifts are weak
6. 2NT is limit+ with four trumps.
7. A balanced hand of 7-9 HCP may be shown by passing and reopening with a double for takeout.

## After 1M and overcall

1. negative doubles
2. preemptive raises
3. cue bid is limit +
4. new suit at 2 level forcing one round
5. new suit at 3 level without jump is game force
6. 2NT is semi-natural with stopper(s) and game forcing.

After 1♠-P-1NT-P-2♣-D, Bart no longer applies, 2♦ or 2♥ are natural not forcing.

If opponents double an artificial new minor rebid, pass is neutral (can have length in suit doubled), redouble shows double stopper (but not necessarily length).

### 1NT opening

12 to 14 HCP, almost never a five card major, but a 6 card minor or 5 card minor and second 4 card suit are ok with helper cards in at least one of short suits.

## Responses

1. 2♣ Non forcing Stayman - Opener rebids 2♥ with both majors.
  - A. After 2♦ rebid,
    - 1) 2♥ is trash Stayman, opener may pass or prefer spades
    - 2) 2♠ is invite with five spades, if opener rebids 2nt, then responders 3m rebid is 55 shape
    - 3) 2NT is invite, does not promise a major.
    - 4) 3♣ asks solid stopper up the line. Responder will have a weak doubleton somewhere, and either one or both minors
    - 5) 3♦ asks for minor (3♥ = clubs, 3♠=diamonds, 3NT=both). Responder has slam potential.
    - 6) 3M is singleton (4441 or 5431 with both minors)

B. After 2♥ rebid, 2♠ is invite with four or five spades.

C. After 2M rebid,

- 1) 3OM is Johnson, a forcing raise and usually balanced,
- 2) 4m is splinter
- 3) 4NT is quantitative
- 4) 3♦ rebid is game force, suggests a singleton, does not promise a major.
- 5) 3♣ is sometimes a 4 card suit with 16+ balanced

**2. Jacoby transfers** – Opener may super accept with four trumps (3M, need not be max, 3m is good suit and max).

Rebids by responder

1) 2♠ - relay forces 2NT (Martin method), then responder continues 3m=5♥ and 5 of minor, invitational., 3♥=46 in majors, 3♠=45 in majors, no help in minors, 3NT=45 in majors, minor help cards.

2) **3 new suit** - game values natural, may stop in 4m if flaw for NT detected

3) **4M** - mild slam invite, with no slam interest use Texas transfer.

4) **Jump in new suit** - splinter with 6331, about 14+ HCP. Optionally jump to 3♠ asks opener to bid 4♥ or cue with 3+ hearts (direct 3NT offers opener choice to pass with fit (a Mecksroth treatment)

**Alternative method** - After transfer to 2♥ and acceptance, responder bids (Mecksroth method).

2♠ - any heart invite. With 3+ hearts opener rebids 3♥ or 4♥, otherwise bids 2NT, 3NT or good 5 card minor. Over 2NT responder can show a second 4+ suit.

2NT - game force with clubs

3♣ - game force with diamonds

3♦ - game force with 6 hearts

3♥ - game force with singleton spade

3♠ - choice of game with 5 hearts semi-balanced, opener must raise or cue bid with heart support

3NT - choice of games with 5332 hand or other suitable for 3NT opposite 4333 hand (opener uses his judgement)

**Note** - A symmetric solution is not possible, with invitational hand including 5 spades and a second suit, start with Stayman, rebid 2♠ and if opener continues 2NT introduce your second suit.

3. 2♠/2NT – 6+ cards in clubs/diamonds respectively, no second suit. Opener super accepts with Qxx or better and near maximum(first step) or normal accepts with second step. Responders rebid at 3 level is singleton with game values
4. 3♣ – very mild invite at least 55 in minors, opener usually passes or prefers 3<sup>..</sup>  
3♦ - game force at least 55 in minors, opener may rebid 3NT with excellent majors, or cue a major ace, or prefer one of responders suit (tends to deny a major ace).
5. 3♥ – Game invite 55  
3♠ – Game force 55 - Opener can super accept with 4♣ (for hearts) or 4♦ (for spades)
6. 4 – 44 in minors slam invite, 4♦ rebid by opener asks for doubleton
7. 4♦/♥ – Texas transfers, 4NT rebid is KCB
8. 4♠ - To play, freaky hand that does not wish to be dummy.
9. 4NT – slam invite, 4333 shape

♠ A8	♠ Q3	1NT	2♦
♥ Q643	♥ AKJ752	2♥	3♦
♦ Q632	♦ A1097	3♥	4♣ (cue)
♣ A73	♣ 9	4♥ (min)	P

## Competitive

After natural two level overcall

1. 2 of suit competitive
2. 3 of suit is game forcing, unbalanced, natural
3. cue is game force without stopper in overcall suit, usually short, opener shows a major if possible.
4. 3NT is natural without stopper in opponents suit
5. Double is value showing (8+ HCP) with at least 2 defensive tricks and at least 2 trumps.
6. 2NT is **Lebensohl** forcing 3♣, then

1) 3 lower suit - competitive

- 2) 3 higher suit -invite
- 3) 3NT to play, stopper in overcallers suit
- 4) Cue bid - Stayman with at least partial stopper in suit overcalled, opener rebids 3NT without 4 cards in unbid major

**After penalty double-** ALWAYS RUN IF WEAK (fewer than 6 points).

1. system on at two level (transfer then follow-ups retain normal constructive meaning)
2. Stayman possible on 4333 bust
3. redouble forces 2♣, which responder will either pass or correct to 2<sup>+</sup> (can be 34 in minors).
4. 3 bids all invitational one suited.

Reopening double by opener is takeout (with two decent suits), 2m is good five card suit.

After 1N - P - P - D -

Rebids by opener

- A) Redouble - both minors,
- B) 2m - five+ suit
- C) Pass- then

responder

1. Pass - shows values
2. RD to force 2♣ (for either minor)
3. suit bids (DON'T, usually 44)

Alternative method - Opener's redouble shows a max with 5 card minor, then responder's 2♣ is pass or correct.

After double of 1NT showing one suiter

1. redouble shows values (8+)
2. full system on.

After 2♣ overcall showing unspecified one suiter

1. double is values, subsequent 2 bid may be four card suit
2. direct 2 bids are competitive with values
3. 3 bids are forcing

4. 2NT is minors
5. 3NT is to play
6. Pass then bid is weaker than direct bid
7. Pass then double is penalty

**After a bid showing majors (2♣ Landy or 2♦ Cappelletti)**

1. double shows fair defense against hearts at least
2. 2♥ is takeout to minors primarily
3. 2♠ is general game force
4. 2N is to play.
5. Pass then 2♠ is to play.

**After a 2M overcall showing that suit and a second suit (Cappelletti)**  
double is takeout but convertible, **Lebensohl** applies

**After a 2m overcall showing that suit and another higher suit (DONT)**

1. double is penalty oriented of suit bid, **Lebensohl** applies

**After a 2 level overcall showing an anchor major (Astro)**

1. double suggests defense against anchor suit (3+ length)
2. cue bid of anchor suit is Stayman
3. other two bids competitive
4. 2NT is natural
5. 3 bids are forcing
6. jump in anchor suit is three suited takeout.

**After a transfer is doubled**

- A. acceptance of transfer is usually 3 card support
- B. redouble is strong holding in suit doubled
- C. pass is neutral, then

**1. redouble is suggestion to play**

**2. cue bid of suit doubles forces transfer acceptance**

**After 2♣ Stayman is doubled**

1. bid of a major promises stopper in suit doubled as well as 4 cards in major
2. redouble shows strong 5 clubs
3. pass is neutral, then double forces usual Stayman response.

These agreements apply also in other NT auctions. (1NT or 2NT overcall or 2NT opening) where appropriate

## 2 club opening

Strong, at least 4 quick tricks if unbalanced, 22+ HCP if balanced, within one trick of game in long suit if unbalanced.

### Responses

1. **2♦ game force** - with 2+ cover cards (2 kings, A and Q in different suit, or KQ in good 5+ major, or any 8+ HCP). Natural rebids, **2NT is 22+ HCP**, Stayman, Jacoby transfers and minor suit Stayman (both minors) apply.

Jump rebid by opener is solid suit, responder bids cheapest ace or cheapest no trump without, then 4♣ asks for kings, other second suit is Precision asking bid. Note opener is 100% captain in these auctions, he likely has a void

♠ AKQJ52	♠ 984	2♣	2♦
♥ AQJ97	♥ K6	3♠	3NT
♦ A5	♦ K109432	4♣	4♦ (king)
♣ --	♣ 86	4♥	5♥ (king)
		7♠	

2. 2♥ negative - then opener rebids

- 2♠ is natural and unbalanced (responders 3♣ is second negative -> 2NT=4+ HCP, 3♠ = at least one cover card, 4♠ = four card support but weak, jumps are splinters).
- 2NT is 22-24 -> Puppet Stayman, Jacoby transfers, Minor suit Stayman (one or both minors).
- 3♣ natural -> 3♦=waiting, may have 4 card major, 3M= 5 card suit, doesn't promise values, 3N = diamonds.
- 3D natural -> 3♥=4+ spades, 3♠=4+ hearts, 3N = no major.
- jump to 3M or 4m shows solid suit, sets trumps, asks for cheapest king or ace, then second suit is Precision asking bid.
- Jump to game is to play.

3. 2♠, 2N(hearts) or 3m – **limited positive**, decent 6 card suit (QJ10 to KQJ) or weaker 7 card suit (J109xxxx) with at most ½ quick trick and at most 6 HCP. Opener's new suit is forcing with 6 card suit, single raise is not forcing, 3NT is either very strong or has fit for suit.

♠ KQ52	♠ 96	2♣	3♦
♥ AKQ87	♥ -	3♥	4♣

♦ AQ

♦ J10976543

5♦

♣ A10

♣ QJ43

4. 3♥ - semisolid 7+ suit -> 3♠ asks transfer to suit

5. 3♠ -solid 6+ suit -> 3NT asks suit

## Competitive

If 2♣ is doubled

1. pass by responder is negative
2. 2♥ is hearts with limited values

If 2♣ is overcalled

1. double by responder is negative
2. pass is positive or strength in the opponents suit
3. no trump bid is natural
4. new suits are positive and natural with 8+ HCP and good suit.

If 2♣ is overcalled at 4 level

1. double shows weak hand
2. pass shows useful values (forcing pass principle).

After 2♣-overcall-P-P, openers

- A. double is takeout
- B. 2N promises stopper in opponents suit
- C. 3 of opponents suit is natural (to prevent random interference from destroying the bidding).

After 2♣ - P - 2♥ - overcall

1. double is penalty
2. pass is flat hand (responder should reopen with double if also flat, or bid a suit with shortness in overcall suit).

## Two level openings

Two methods of two bids are described, the first method uses a multi 2♦ with two suited 2M openings, the second method is used when multi is not permitted, and uses ordinary weak two bids in majors, a 2NT opening for the minors, and a 2♦ opening replacing the normal 2NT opening.

## Standard Method

### 2 No Trump

Good 20 to 22 HCP, balanced or semi-balanced (6322 and 5422 permitted with strong doubletons).

Responses are all standard

1. 3♣ - Stayman.

If opener shows a major, either 3♠ or 4♥ (other major) is a slam try with fit for openers major

2. 3♦ and 3♥ are Jacoby transfers.

3. 3♠ is minor suit Stayman with both minors or diamonds

4. 4♦/4♥ are Texas, may be followed by KCB.

♠ AQ95

♠ J1087

2NT

3♣

♥ A3

♥ KJ95

3♠

4♥ (spade fit)

♦ A94

♦ 5

4NT

5♣

♣ AQ65

♣ K1094

6♠

P

## 2 diamonds - Multi 2 diamonds

Weak two bid in either major. Not vulnerable weak two usually 6-9 HCP, suit may be broken, vulnerable vs not should be decent suit and 8-10 HCP including minimum of 1.5 quick tricks. Weak four card side major permitted if main suit at most two losers, four card minor permitted and never shown. Third seat not vulnerable anything goes.

Responses

1. **Pass** - 6+ diamonds, no major fit or weak Applies also if doubled

2. 2♥ - normal response, no interest in game if opener has heart weak two bid, opener passes or corrects to 2♠ (weak two in spades)

3. 2♠ - invitational if opener has hearts (normally 10+ HCP with 3+ hearts) or to play if opener has spades.

Opener passes with spades, bids 3♥ with minimum and hearts, 2NT or 3m feature with maximum and hearts

4. 2NT - 12 + HCP, usually 3+ quick tricks, at least doubleton support for both majors if minimum, opener rebids

3♣ - maximum, then 3♦ request puppet to show openers major (3♥=♠, 3♠=♥) or 3M natural and forcing seeking support or cue bid

3♦/♥ - minimum weak two bid in hearts or spades respectively. Responder places contract or cue bids 4 of a minor.

3♠/3NT - maximum weak two bid with 46 or 64 respectively in majors

5. **3m** – Not forcing, good 6 card suit with about 10-15 HCP, no fit for majors

6. 3♥/4♥ - Pass or correct, shows double fit but is weaker than 2NT
7. 3♠ - Invite, long decent spades, short hearts, around 12-15 HCP
8. 4♠ - To play

### Competitive

If 2♦ is doubled, pass by responder shows willingness to play in diamonds, 5+ suit

If second seat overcalls, responders rebids are:

Double asks opener to pass or correct.

2NT asking and 3m unchanged,

bid in other major assumes that is openers suit, and is competitive

### 2 hearts

Two suited with 5 hearts (sometimes 6) 6-10 HCP, at most 2 quick tricks, and a 5+ minor (may be Qxxx at favorable vulnerable in third seat). A minimum hand is x Q10xxx xx KQxxx, a maximum is x KQ10xx x Axxxxx.

### Responses

Pass – tolerance or heart support, no game interest

2♠ – Natural, 5+ spades, some values, short hearts. Opener may pass or bid his minor with 55, 2NT with 1543 or 1534, raise with 3 spades, jump raise with 4 spades

2 no trump – Either strong hand or short hearts, opener rebids

3m - Second suit, not super maximum

3♥ - Six card suit, then 3 by responder requests minor

3♠/3NT - Super max (KQxxx(x) in both suits) with clubs/diamonds side suit respectively

4 minor – Super max with 6 card minor

3m - 6 card suit, short in other minor and hearts, not forcing

3♥ – good fit, not really invitational but opener may continue with excellent tricks

3♠ – forcing, very strong suit

### Competitive

Doubles by responder are penalty, cheapest no trump is for takeout asking second suit

After an overcall, responders 4♥ to play, does not bar opener from continuing with good sac (typically void in opponents suit) or to make with super maximum. Responder must cue first to bar opener from going past 4♥

### 2 spades

5 card suit with side suit, 5-10 HCP, usually 55 or better, may be 54 with decent five in third seat NV. Hand type and rebids similar to those for 2♥ opening.

### Responses

1. 3♠ – good fit, opener may continue if auction becomes competitive
2. 3 new suit – not forcing, good suit, does not invite further bidding.
3. 2NT – asks second suit, does not promise values  
opener may rebid 3♠ with 6 spades and max (then 4♣/♦ is pass or correct for minor) or jump rebid to 6 card side suit with extra playing strength. If responder continues with spade rebid he shows slam interest.
4. 4♥ - to play
5. 4m - Values and length in bid suit with fit for spades (lead directing, also used in competition, does not invite further bidding past 4♠ unless this is opener's second suit
6. 4♠ - if vul, at least an opening hand, if not vulnerable probably purely preemptive.

## Competitive

Doubles by responder are penalty, cheapest no trump is takeout

After an overcall, 4♠ to play but does not bar opener, cue bars partner from continuing beyond 4♠ unless strong.

## Alternative method of 2 bids - when multi not allowed

**2 of a major suit** – Weak two bids, sound with 1.5 to 2 tricks if vulnerable, minimum opening strength in fourth seat. Suit is always 6 cards in length, side minor allowed, side weak card major allowed only if the major opened is semi-solid. Voids permitted, not 64 or wilder shape if 2 quick tricks.

## Responses

Any response in a non-competitive auction shows approximately opening strength or better. New suits are forcing by an unpassed hand, raises are semi-preemptive but partner is not barred from continuing with exceptional shape.

Over 2♥ opening – 2♠ asks about spade support (may be used with spades or to check for spade stopper. Opener rebids 2NT with stopper, 3♠ with four trumps, shows a feature or rebids 3♥.

Over 2M opening – 2NT shows support and asks for a singleton, opener bids singleton, else 3M with minimum, 3NT with maximum. 3♣ suggests support and asks for a feature (Qxx or better) if opener is maximum. If responder continues with a new suit after either response it is forcing.

## Competitive

If weak two bid is doubled

1. redouble shows a strong defensive hand (invites penalty double by opener)
2. 2NT asks for feature
3. 2 level bids are forcing
4. three level bids below 3 of suit opened are lead directing and forcing with fit for openers suit (flower bids)

If weak two bid is overcalled

1. raises are preemptive
2. cue bid is game force equivalent to strong raise to 4 of openers suit
3. new suits are flower bids

4. 2NT if available asks for a feature but may be psychic.

**2♦ opening** - Replaces the standard 2NT opening (shows 20-22 HCP). Allows more sequences (especially weak ones) than normal 2nt opening. Responses are

2♥ - very weak puppet to 2♠, responder then passes or transfers into his suit, which opener must accept. Opener with off shape hand can bid good 6 card minor instead of 2♠

2♠ - forces opener to bid 2NT (Opener with off shape hand can bid good 6 card minor), then all rebids are game going, normal Stayman and transfers, 3♠ is both minors.

3m - Show at least mild slam interest with six card suit or strong five.

**2 NT opening** – at least 55 in minors, normally 8-13 HCP, at most 2 defensive tricks, suits excellent if vulnerable. Responses are

3m – to play

3♠ – forcing, natural

3♥ – artificial, strong hand, asks for openers short major, then

3♠ = short spades, 3NT = short hearts, continuation of 4m by responder is forcing

3NT – to play, very strong

4m – preemptive or competitive, but with some defense, does not invite sacrifice

doubles are penalty

Footnote on ACBL rules

The multi 2♦ is legal in National events, and often also in regional A flight events that use the so-called super chart. When the event is under general or mid-chart, the possible meanings for a 2♦ opening include Flannery and 3 suited hands of opening strength or better. Using the bid to show a weak hand with both majors (a popular treatment in the rest of the world) is apparently not legal, even though a 2NT to show the minors is. The only semblance of logic in these regulations is familiarity by American tournament players.

### Higher opening Bids

**3 of a suit** – sound standard preempts. 3m opening is presumed to have two top honours or at least 7 to king (so Qx or better fit should make suit runnable).

1. New suits forcing
2. 4om is KCB after 3m opening.

After double

1. 3 of new suit by responder is lead directing with length in suit and fit for opener
2. 4 level raise shows some defense
3. 3NT may be psychic with weak raise or natural.

**3 no trump** – weak 7 card minor preempt, lacking the top honour strength or too freaky for 3m opening. Responder bids

1. 4♣, 4♦ or 5♣ - pass or correct
2. 4M - to play
3. P - rare

**4 minor** – **Namyats**, sound 8.5+ trick opening major preempt with at least one side ace and about 2.5-3 quick tricks. Controls in two side suits typically high card in one, singleton in other. With more quick tricks, usually open with one bid unless partner is a passed hand.

1. With no slam interest, responder bids opener's suit
2. bid of next suit above opening is a mild slam try requesting opener show where he needs secondary help

There is a good case for playing what I call Super Strong Namyats in third seat (9+ tricks with controls in 3+ suits, i.e. slam possible opposite a passed hand).

1. ♠AKQ10xxx ♥xx ♦A ♣AQx minimum

2. ♠AKQJxxx ♥KJ ♦Ax ♣Ax maximum, the bidding went 2♣-5♦-P-P, opener choose double and collected an inadequate penalty when responder held ♠xxx ♥9xxx ♦x ♣KQxxx

Using the Super strong version, responder will cooperate with 1.5 quick tricks or equivalent, so on second hand he would compete with 5♠ after the overcall, or cooperate with 4♥ if no interference, opener would then use Blackwood. On the first example over 4♥, opener would continue 5♣ looking for the club king.

**4 major** – normal preempt with seven+ card suit, rule of 500, lacking one of features required for Namyats. Typically very little outside the bid suit, unless partner is a passed hand. Playing the Super strong Namyats version the 4 major opening may have up to 3.5 quick tricks, if opponents compete opener may double to suggest maximum defense.

System amendments (insert below)

### COMPETITIVE BIDDING – by opener's side

For the most part, the rest of these notes are not specific to the Vancouver Club system and may be used in any system

Over a takeout double of one level suit opening

1. New suits at one or two level are forcing, tend to ignore the double.
2. Two level bid does not promise a rebid, may be 10-11 HCP.
3. Redouble - 10+ HCP, no five card suit, may have support for minor opened, Invites a penalty double from opener, or weak takeout to 6 card suit, new suit By redoubler is forcing through 2NT, strength and stopper showing
4. Jump shift - - weak, usually at most 7 HCP
5. 2NT - limit raise or better of opener's suit, 4+ support for major, 5+ support for minor
6. Jump raise - preemptive after major or 1♦ opening
7. Single raise – not constructive for major, 6-9, 3 or 4 trumps, similar for minor, 4 or 5 trumps

Optional treatment - After 1M-D, 1NT thru 2M are transfers

## Doubles of suit overcalls

A. After 1♣-1♦ overcall

1. double shows 44 in majors
2. 1M=4+ suit

support double after single raise, value showing double after jump raise (responder may takeout with singleton)

B. After 1m – 1♥

1. Double - denies 4 spades, shows 8 + HCP
2. 1♠ - 4+ suit

1m – 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♥ – double is support double

1m – 1♥ – 1♠ – 3♥ – double is sound 3♠ raise (15+), 3♠ raise is distributional raise.

C. After 1m – 1♠

1. double - shows 4 or 5 hearts, 8+ HCP, no freak shapes

1m – 1♠ – double – 2♠ – 3♥ is competitive with good distributional hand, double usually shows hearts also with strong balanced or semi-balanced hand, 3m is distribution and limited strength (**weak must speak principle**), 2NT is strong distributional hand (**Lebensohl** forces 3♣)

2. 2♥ - may be as little as 8 HCP and six card suit with singleton spade
3. 2NT - game forcing, natural, may be very strong, does not totally deny weak four card holding in other major if M double stopped

D. After 1♥ – 1♠

1. Double - 8+ HCP, 44 at least in minors, doubleton heart. Doubles by opener are penalty or strong balanced hand. If spades raised, 2NT by opener is takeout.
2. 3♥ is preemptive (but not broke)
3. 2NT is game force raise
4. 2♠ is limit raise, splinters apply

E. After 1♦ – 2♣

1. Double - at least 44 in majors, 8+ HCP, or one major and diamonds, opener should jump respond with 15+ HCP, or cue bid with 17+ and no strong shape.

F. After 1♦-2M

1. double is at least 4 cards in other major, but not a freak hand, 10+ HCP if overcall is 2♠.
2. 3m is competitive with 5 card support,
3. 2NT is forcing to at least 3NT and shows at least one stopper in M.

G. After 1m – 1NT (natural overcall)

1. double is penalty (9+ HCP)
2. 2♦ is competitive, decent 4 card support (1♦ opening)
3. 2M is competitive, may be very weak with 6 card suit (like weak jump shift).
4. 2♣ - Stayman. Either 5+,4+ in majors or with diamond fit

H. After 1M – 1NT (natural overcall)

1. Double - penalty

Double then bid suit may be four card suit, double and jump in suit is forcing.

2. 2 bids - competitive with good suit, limited values
3. 2N is minors
4. 3 bids are invite.

I. After 1m – 2NT

1. double shows fair defense versus both of suits shown
2. 3m is very good 5 card support (wide range)
3. 3M is forcing
4. 3om is forcing cue bid primarily stopper asking

J. After 1M – 2 overcall

1. 2M – 3 card raise, 6-9 HCP, may be four trumps if vulnerable with minimum
2. 2N – natural, game force
3. Cue bid – limit raise or better, 10+ HCP, 3+ trumps
4. 3M – preemptive if not vulnerable, sound 7-9 HCP with four trumps if vulnerable

### K. After 1M – 2NT- unusual versus unusual

1. double is penalty oriented with at least two cards in each minor, about 3+ defensive tricks
2. 3♣ = invite or better for hearts
3. 3♦ = invite or better for spades
4. 3M = competitive only
5. 3OM not forcing, good suit

### L. After 1♦ – 3 higher

1. double is value showing (10+ HCP) with 3+ cover cards outside overcall suit and at least 2 cards in the suit doubled, at least 2 sure defensive tricks. Opener will tend to pass with a flat minimum hand.

### M. After 1m – 4x

1. double is value showing (8+ HCP) with 2+ cover cards outside overcaller's suit, 2+ defensive tricks, may have singleton in opponents suit.
2. With pure penalty double of 4x, you must pass.

### N. After 1M – P – 2M – double

- A. redouble is balanced strong
- B. 3M is preemptive
- C. two way game tries still apply.

### Other Doubles

After a fit has been found, doubles through 3♠ are cooperative, inviting a pass with some trump length, and showing defense oriented hand (aces primarily, and no extra length in suit of fit. Doubles at 4 level are penalty, tend to show a trump trick is auction not forced to four level, or no extra values if auction was game forcing (where forcing pass is encouraging).

If no fit has been found, doubles are penalty oriented and tend to show a trump trick, they may be pulled with a concealed fit or very good suit and limited defense.

Rescue redoubles apply only after 1m – P- P – D-P-P, and tend to show length in the highest of the unbid suits.

Penalty doubles are in effect in direct or balance seat after we have converted a double to penalty and after a strength showing redouble.

### Two Suited and Stopper asking Cue Bids

A jump cue bid at the four level is a splinter bid.

If opponents have bid two suits, a cue bid at three level shows stopper in that suit, asks stopper in other suit. If opponents

have bid one suit only, a cue bid at three level is asking, usually west coast cue bid with partial stopper.

## General, slam bidding, forcing passes

**Forcing passes** apply to auctions following a strength redouble by responder (through 2♠) and after a two over one (prior to competition) or other game force auctions (Jacoby 2NT, fourth suit, strong 2 way new minor). In a forcing pass situation a direct bid shows extra shape, pass then bid over double shows extra high card strength.

If the opponents sacrifice beyond five of your agreed suit, the player in the direct seat must double unless he has a control. If they sacrifice at the 6 level, a pass in direct seat shows first round control in their suit.

A **jump to five of a major** asks for a control in that suit if the opponents have bid one suit, In most other situations including non competitive auctions a jump to five of a major asks for general strength and trump quality.

A **jump to 4NT is ace asking** in competition, agreeing partners last suit, but in pure no trump auction, it is invitational.

After 1♥-4♠ overcall, 4NT is takeout, either minors or slam invite with hearts.

After 1m-4♠ overcall, 4NT is takeout, hearts and unknown minor.

After 1♠-4♥ overcall, 4NT is minor takeout, 5♥ invites spade slam and shows heart control, 5m is to play (typically with tolerance for spades).

## Weak must speak

After 1♦ - P - 1♥-2♠ overcall or equivalent auctions where fourth seat bid prevents opener from rebidding his suit (or raising partner's suit) at the two level, a method is needed to allow opener to show both very strong high card hands (17+ points, a hand that would normally jump rebid) and also good playing hands (but which would normally simply rebid at two level in their suit). Some people use a form of Lebensohl known as **good-bad 2NT** where 2NT is usually an attempt to compete at three level without inviting game, and a direct bid at three level is sound and invitational. The alternative approach is to use a bid at three level as merely competitive and use some other bid (2NT or double) to show good high card values. This method is known as **weak must speak**. In the sample auction, openers 3♥ bid would show only the values for a single raise, double would show a good overall hand (17+ points, intended for takeout but convertible with some trump length by responder) and 2NT would show a game invite with either a heart fit or strong diamonds (responder will bid 3♣ as in Lebensohl, opener then shows why he bid 2NT).

## Use of Lebensohl

After 1NT and natural overcall, we play standard Lebensohl with fast denies, 2NT to compete, direct three level bids game forcing. Direct cue bid is singleton, 2NT then cue bid is flatter, in either case opener shows a major if possible.

After a reverse or jump shift (1♦-1♠-2♥ or 1♦-1♥-2♠)

1. a raise of either of openers suit is game forcing,
2. 2NT instead forces 3♣, which responder can pass or make a weak correction, or continue with 3NT (doubtful stoppers in own suit or unbid suit).

After a double of opponent weak two bid

1. 2NT by doublers partner forces 3♣ if double bid on normal shape (or equal correction 3♦ rebid possible)

2. direct 3 bids promise about 9 HCP but are not forcing.

## The Law? of total tricks

The total tricks on a hand will only correspond exactly with the total trumps on about 40% of all hands. The exact distribution of the missing trumps in each sides long suit is critical, if unbalanced (4-2, 3-1) it is more likely the total tricks are right than if the suits break 3-3 or 2-2. The most likely suit breaks for various combined lengths are

7 - 4-2 48%      8 - 3-2 68%      9 3-1 50%

10 - 2-1 90%    11 - 2-0 52%    and these represent the upper limit of the accuracy of total tricks = total trumps

Hands with an 11+ card trump fits should be treated like the fit is one card shorter (for 11 card fit, the even 1-1 break is as likely as the 2-0 break).

A good rule is to discount 1 trump unless you have a singleton or void in the hand.

Abuses of total trick bidding are common, and we try to exploit these.

## DEFENSIVE BIDDING

**General** – Direct overcalls at one level may be light, frequent four card overcalls, balancing bids are sound, usually 10+ HCP. Sound two level overcalls, cheapest cue bid at two level is Michaels, three level cue bids are stopper asking, Michaels and unusual no trump are wide range but reasonably sound (tend to be 9+ HCP). Fit raises. The general principle is **bid immediately or not at all**.

### Overcalls

1. One level – usually 9-16 HCP, may be less at favorable vulnerability by passed hand or with at least 54 in unbid suits. A moderate five card suit may be overcalled (Q10xxx is minimum if hand is minimal in points).

Over 1♣, a 1♦ overcall is usually 10+ HCP, tends to deny a good four card major.

Over 1m, a one level major overcall may be made on a **strong four card major** (AQxx, KJ10x), typically will have two cards in other major with a five card minor (could be openers suit) with 10 HCP, or good 8 HCP with five card suit.

Over 1♥, a 1♠ overcall is usually a five card suit, but it can be a very strong four card suit with 5 clubs and no support for diamonds (making a takeout double unattractive).

Overcalls in balance seat show similar values to direct seat.

Sandwich seat overcalls are always good suits.

Single raise of an overcall is about 8-10 HCP with sound values, cue bid is at least a good 10, new suits are not forcing, can be 4 card suit at one level with singleton in overcallers suit. A cue bid usually promises a fit but may be a better than opening hand with a suit of ones own (bid next and forcing).

**2. Two level** – Overcalls are always decent 5+ card suits. Direct seat by unpassed hand shows a hand of opening strength or better (good 13 HCP if 5332 shape).

After 1m-1M overcall-P/D/1♠, 1NT is a raise of major with 7-11 HCP and three card support. Double or redouble shows good values without fit, equivalent of normal one no trump response to overcall. A single raise of major shows four card support, a jump cue is a limit raise with 4 card support, a cue bid is a strong hand (12+ HCP) but does not promise support, jumps in new suits are invitational with a good suit. The 1NT response to overcall is not forcing, overcaller may pass with only four card suit and stopper in opener's suit, bid 2m as a canapé, bid 2M to play, show additional shape with bid in another major, bid 2m naturally, or jump to 3m as a strong cue bid.

After 1♦ overcall or 1♠ overcall of 1♥ opening, 1NT is natural without fit and with stopper in suit opened, about 10-13 HCP, single raises show 3+ support, cue bid does not guarantee support, jumps in new suits are weak.

After all one level overcalls, jump to 2NT is about 13-15 balanced with good stopper in suit opened and no fit for overcaller promised, jump raises are preemptive, jump cue at three level is limit raise with four card support (about 10-13 HCP).

After a two level, new suits are forcing for one round, cue bid invites no trump or shows strong raise, single raises are constructive (about 8-11 HCP with some defense), 4 level jumps are splinters, 3 level jumps are flower bids with good suit and fit, jump raises to 4 level may be sound or preemptive. 2NT shows a fit with stopper, overcaller may cue bid with doubts about side stoppers.

## Takeout Doubles

### Direct seat

A double may be made with 10 HCP and good shape, but suggests at least 2 quick tricks. With 4432 shape a double promises 12+ HCP. Tends to promise good support for the two highest ranking unbid suits. Equal correction principle applies (after minimum response in clubs, doubler's minimum correction to diamonds does not promise extra).

1. Jump response to a takeout double is nearly always 5 card suit
2. simple response can be up to 9 HCP (doubler can raise with as little as 14 HCP with fit)
3. cue bid is 10+ with two places to play, and promises a rebid.

Over 1m opening, double is permissible with 4333 shape (4 card major) with 13 HCP outside minor (or including minor ace). Do not double with 5332 shape or 5431 shapes with 5 card major and 3 card major (overcall if you can).

Over 1♥, a double shows four cards in spades, or strong three with heart singleton, it denies 5 cards in spades. Support for minors is nominally at least three cards, but 4252 shape is possible (2♦ rebid after 2♣ response does not promise extras. With 4225 shape you may either overcall 1♠ if suit very strong or 2♣, do not double without 17+ HCP.

Over 1♠, a double may be made with five moderate hearts (1543 or 1534 or 0544 shape) but not with 5332 shapes (overcall 2♥ or pass). With 2452 shape, you may double, with 2425 tend to overcall 2♣ (but double with 17+ HCP, intending to rebid 3♣ over 2♦ response).

If you double a major and rebid in other major you show at least 16 HCP.

## Sandwich Seat

If opponents have bid two suits, double guarantees 44 or 45 in unbid suits, as usual overcall in single unbid major is

preferable with five card length. Minimum strength is 10 HCP, or 8 HCP if you are a passed hand.

If opponents respond with forcing no trump to a major, double should be good support for all unbid suits. If opponents respond 1NT to a minor opening, double promises the majors at least 44 with 12 HCP or 45 with 10 HCP.

Overcalls at two level show good suits (nearly always 6+) but may be as little as 10 HCP.

## Balance Seat

A balancing takeout double shows at least 10 HCP, usually with doubleton or singleton in suit opened, if 3 card length it shows at least a sound opening hand. At least 3 card support for either major is promised.

A balancing one level overcall is 10 + HCP, or 8+ with good suit (KQ10xx)

## 1 NT overcall

Direct seat – sound 15+ to bad 19, source of tricks if light, does not deny four cards in a major (especially 1NT over 1♠). A 1NT overcall of a minor may be 4333 with a four card major, but will not be 44 in majors (double instead). **Full no trump system is on with transfer into opener's suit indicating doubts about no trump** (opener may bid 2NT with double stopper, else he accepts the transfer). If third seat raises or bids a new suit, cheapest cue bid is Stayman, 2 bids are competitive, 3 bids forcing, double is penalty oriented (flat hand), 2NT is **Lebensohl**. Minor suit Stayman (2♠) need not be a strong hand.

Balance seat – 11-16 HCP, promises sound stopper if a major opened. **Rebidding is natural**, cue by overcaller is Stayman. Double followed by 1NT shows 16+.

Sandwich seat – same as direct seat

Passed hand – unbid suits (55) or minors (55).

## Two Suited Cue Bids

### Direct seat

Over 1 of a suit – **Michaels**, at least 55 in majors or other major and unspecified minor. Minimum of QJ in both suits, at least 5 tricks, or 6 tricks for 2S cue bid. At least 10 HCP, shaded to 8 by a passed hand. There is no upper limit of strength, you may bid again with 16+ HCP and 7+ tricks.

Where second suit is not known, 2NT asks for suit

If overcaller showed majors, 2NT asks for extras, 3♥ is the weakest rebid

Jump cue bid is stopper asking with a long minor (1m-3m or 1M-3M).

3NT - stopper

4 minor - pass or correct

Four level cue bid is natural.

## Sandwich seat

After 1x - P - 1y -

1NT - natural

2x - **Michaels** at least 55 in unbid suits. May be as little as 8 HCP if not vulnerable and partner can respond at two level.

2y- natural and fairly strong, excellent suit.

Over a weak two bid –

3 level cue is stopper asking

**Leaping Michaels** in direct or balance seat

Over a three level opening – a direct cue bid is a very strong two suiter

Over 1x – p – 2x, 3x is stopper asking with strong running suit

Over 1x – p – 3x, 4x is very strong two suiter.

After 1 ♠-P-2 ♣, advancer's 2NT bid is hearts and a minor (much more useful than playing this bid for minors, a jump to 3NT can be treated as minors)

If you pass a minor opening and then bid the suit on your next turn, the bid is natural with a six + card suit.

### **Intermediate Jump Overcalls**

Single jump overcalls of non preemptive opening bids are **intermediate** with a very good six card suit (usually one loser or less) and at least an opening hand (12+ HCP at two level, 14+ HCP at three level). Should have at least one quick trick outside the long suit. They suggest but don't guarantee it is your sides hand. Losing trick count is within 1 or 2 tricks of level bid. May be up to 17-18 HCP with hand unsuited for double and rebid of suit because of extreme shortness in an unbid suit.

Responses -

- 1. 2NT** - about 8-10 HCP with stopper(s) in suit opened, overcaller should not raise without some help in unbid suits, cues stopper instead when in doubt
- 2. 3NT** - to play with 10+ HCP after 2 level overcall, gambling with modest fit and stopper in opponents suit and 7+ HCP after 3 level overcall (overcaller may take out if side tricks are slow)
- 3. New suit below 3NT** - strong suit (6+ if minor, 5+ if major), forcing one round, implies tolerance and may have fit for overcallers suit. Overcaller may cue with max or bid NT with stopper in openers suit.
- 4. 3 level bid of openers suit** - Strength showing with 10+ HCP or 2+ sure cover cards, invites overcaller to bid NT with stopper in openers suit.
- 5. Single raise to 3 level** - 2 probable cover cards, may be singleton or doubleton in overcallers suit, may be 1 with good fit
- 6. Game raises** - 2 + cover cards with at least doubleton support, do not preclude overcaller from doubling (penalty) or bidding at five level (expecting to make)

**7. 4 level cue bid** - Promises a control, fit and slam interest with 3+ cover cards, requests an ace cue bid by overcaller

**8. Jump in new suit (or new suit after raise)** - Lead direct, with fit or tolerance, forces correction to overcallers suit or cue bid

Single jump overcalls of weak two bids, of 3 or 4 level preempts, or in the balance seat over a one level opening by an unpassed hand are all strong (intermediate at two level). Structure is similar to that described above.

### Preemptive Jump Overcalls

Preemptive jump overcalls are used only by a passed hand or when opponents have established a game force. They tend to show 7 card suits, are tactical in nature, and suggest a smattering of side suit defense (i.e. we don't mind if they overbid)

### Responses

Raises promise some defense, NT response shows fit with little or no defense and invites a sacrifice, new suits are lead direct with fit

### Unusual no trump overcalls

A direct overcall of 2NT over a one bid is unusual for two lower unbid suits, should be at least KJ in weaker of two suits, at least 7 sure tricks if vulnerable with probably 2+ quick tricks.

A minor suit overcall followed by a later no trump bid (when advancer has not bid) is unusual, typically 6 cards in minor and four cards in cheapest unbid higher ranking suit (1♠-2♦-2♠-P-P-P-2N is 46 in diamonds and hearts).

A 2NT overcall of a weak two bid opening or Precision 2♣ opening is 15+-19 HCP. Stayman, Jacoby transfers (super accept allowed) and 3♠ minor Stayman apply.

Over opponents strong 2♣ opening, double is clubs, 2NT is minors, 2 level overcalls are lead directing if not vulnerable, suggest a sacrifice, tend to be sound if vulnerable. 3 level overcalls are preemptive.

Over opponents artificial 1♣ strong opening,

Double shows majors (55),

2NT shows minors (usually 65 or sound 55),

1NT is an unspecified 55 two suiter (major-minor), then

2♣ = can stand clubs, 2♦ = short clubs, can stand diamonds or major, 2♥ = prefer either major to minor (hence at least 43 in majors), 2♠=4 spades, short hearts, can stand either minor.

All one level overcalls are natural with decent suit, 2 level overcalls are preemptive.

Over 1♠-P-2♠, 2NT is hearts and a minor, then 3♣ response is .pass or correct, cue asks minor, NT is to play

Over other 1x-P-2x, 2NT is for two lower unbid suits.

Over 1x-p-p-2NT is strong two suiter in unbid suits.

Over 1m-p-1M-p-2M-p-p, 2NT is for minors, this is the only case where unusual no trump can include a bid minor.

### Three no trump overcall

A jump overcall of 3NT is always natural with a long running suit, stopper in any bid suits, and at least 7 fast winners.

### Four of a major overcall

This type of overcall tends to get doubled, so it should be within two tricks of contract if not vulnerable, or one trick if vulnerable. May have better than opening strength if vulnerable.

### Defense to 1NT opening

The basic defense is **Multi Landy** (overcalls have the same meaning but higher strength as 2 level openings using Multi. Direct seat suit bids are typically 9-15 HCP, with 5+ tricks not vulnerable, 6+ or max strength if vulnerable. Balance seat minimum is 7 HCP not vulnerable with 55 shape

1. 2♣ - majors, at least 54

A. 2♦ response asks longer major (overcaller rebids 2♥ if equal) and may be prelude to major invite

B. 2♠ response is real fit

C. 2♥ no preference or longer hearts

D. 2NT response is natural and strong, good minor stoppers

2. 2♦ - One 6+ major, possible 4 card side suit, strength 9-15 HCP

Responses have the same meaning as after a multi 2♦ opening

3. 2M - Show 55 in bid major and a minor (possibly 54 in balance seat)

2NT requests minor

new suits show values and suit, not forcing

4. 2NT - Good 55 or better in minors, strong vul, weak not vulnerable versus vulnerable.

5. 3m - Good 6 card suit and about an opening hand, usually a major suit singleton.

6. 3M - vary from preemptive with little defense to intermediate according to vulnerability

7. Double of weak no trump - 15+ HCP, penalty oriented, does not establish force but doubles of runouts by either player are penalty. If responder passes or redoubles, system on as if doubler had opened 1NT (but he may make irregular bid to show off shape double)

8. Double of strong no trump - **Woolsey style**, shows 4 card major and 5 card minor, at least opening hand

### Advancer bids

- A. 2♣ - asks pass or correct to 2♦ (doublers minor)
- B. 2♦ - asks doublers major
- C. 2M - to play, independent suit
- D. Pass - flattish hand, with about 7+ HCP, can stand lead of doublers minor
- E. 2NT - game force, asks minor then may relay to ask for major

### Other auctions over 1NT opening

A double of opponents Stayman bid shows clubs and a decent hand (willing to have partner compete). No junk doubles.

When opponents transfer

1. double = length in suit doubled and approximately opening strength (willing to have partner compete),
2. **cue bid of the suit shown by the transfer is Michaels** (55 in other major and a minor, strength varies with vulnerability).

### Defense to conventional openings

Versus strong 1♣ –

- A. Double = majors
- B. 2NT = minors,
- C. 1NT== major-minor two suiter 55 or better

advancer usually bids 2♥ with 44 or better in majors, or 2♣ with 3+ clubs, or 2♦ otherwise, higher bids are independent suit.

Versus strong 2♣

- A. Double = majors
- B. 2NT = minors, 2 bids may be very weak if not vulnerable, should be sound if vulnerable
- C. 3 bids are preemptive, suggest a sacrifice
- D. 2 bids tend to show good suit and some defense, protecting against 2♣ openings with nothing much besides a long solid suit.

Versus Flannery 2♦ (11-16, 45 in majors)

- A. double = strong no trump

- B. 2NT = minors
- C. 2♥ = takeout of hearts

**Versus Multi 2♦ (weak two in a major)**

- A. Double- strong and balanced or semi-balanced
- B. overcalls show good 6 card suit with about 9-12 HCP
- C. 2NT overcall is natural with system on (but unsuited to defense).
- D. If overcaller bids a major, then advancers bid in other major is treated like a cue bid.
- E. Pass then later double of major opener has is takeout (but convertible), pass then bid of suit is 5 card suit but tends to show opening strength

**Versus Precision 2♦ (short diamonds, three suited, opening strength) –**

- A. Double is strong hand, overcalls are natural
- B. 2NT = diamonds and another suit
- C. 3♦ = diamonds only

**Versus Two suited two bids or weak two bids**

- A. Double is takeout with Lebensohl 2NT response on 0-7 HCP, 3 bids are 8-11 HCP
  - B. 2NT=15+-18,
- 3♣ Stayman, 3♦ not forcing, 3♠ minors, 3♥ is natural after 2♠ opening, transfer after 2♥ opening,

**Versus Two No trump for minors**

- A. Double is penalty oriented,
- B. 3♣ = weak major takeout
- C. 3♦ = strong major takeout, 3M= natural, 6-7 tricks usually

**Versus Gambling 3NT**

- A. Double penalty
- B. 4♣ = majors
- C. 4NT= minors strong, others natural

**Versus Namyats 4 of a minor (good major preempt)**

- A. Double is lead directing
- B. cue of real suit for takeout

### **Versus Splinter Bid**

- A. Double suggests a sacrifice if not vulnerable, else is leading directing for lowest unbid suit.

### **Versus unusual two no trump overcall of a major**

- A. 3♣= limit + with hearts
- B. 3♦= limit + with spades
- C. 3M weak raise
- D. 3OM to compete only

### **Versus Michaels cue bid of major opening**

- A. Double is 10+ HCP
- B. 2NT= Game force raise
- C. 2♠ or 3♥(OM) – limit raise
- D. 3M is weak to limit
- E. 3m forcing one round and natural
- F. 4bids are splinters
- G. 4M to play, has defense if vulnerable

### **Versus Michaels cue bid of minor opening**

- A. Double – 10+ flat
- B. 2NT= 10+, 5 clubs
- C. 3m= weak preempt
- D. 2M -natural?
- E. 3 jump = splinter
- F. 3NT = to play, major stoppers

## SLAM BIDDING

### Splinters

Splinter bids are used extensively, most jumps to the four level by openers side in unbid suits are splinters. In addition, 1m-1x-1y-4m is a splinter. Splinters are used also in competitive auctions (e.g. 1♠-3♣ overcall-4♦ by responder) in auctions which others might use as fit jumps. Splinters do not necessarily show slam strength values, only values which make it safe to be game (about 23+ HCP). Wherever possible splinters are distinguished from voids by separate bids. When a splinter may be made on a singleton or a void, it is recommended that 4NT by the splinter bidder partner include the ace of the splinter suit, and that cue bidding be used instead without the ace to allow clarification of the splinter by repeat of suit. When a splinter bid is doubled, redouble by partner shows the ace, by the splinter bidder shows first round control (possibly singleton ace where a void splinter was available). In auctions where a splinter is made at three level in support of a major, an immediate raise of the splinter is ace asking (see RKC below), used without the ace in the splinter suit (so partner may show a void).

♠ 3	♠ J97	1♦	2♣
♥ A654	♥ K73	3♠	4♠ (aces)
♦ AQ 74	♦ KJ2	5♥	6♣
♣ Q753	♣ AKJ8		

### Void Jumps

**Jumps in new suits beyond 4 of the agreed suit show voids**, partner may then continue with 5NT if 4NT is not available as KCB. Exclusion Blackwood is not used. The auctions 1♥-3♠ and 1S-3NT show unspecified voids, next bid asks for the void. Other direct splinters over a major opening show singletons only. Where a jump to the three level shows a singleton splinter, a jump to the four level instead shows a void.

### Cue Bidding

1. Cue bidding does not start till the four level.

Most bids below 3NT which can not be natural show stoppers and interest in playing 3NT. Only clarification by a later cue bid changes the meaning of the earlier below 3NT bid into an advanced cue bid.

2. High card controls are cue bid before singletons or voids

One of the primary reasons for cue bidding is to determine the degree of fit for slam. Where possible shortness controls are shown by splinters or void jumps, short suit controls are generally only shown in a single unbid suit, and then only after bypassing the suit on a previous round to show a different control.

3. Kings and Aces are cue bid without distinction at the four level

partner can then show the other high card control by a return cue bid.

4. A repeat cue bid normally shows the AK, sometimes the AQ, or if partner has cue bid the suit the KQ.

5. A cue bid past five of the agreed suit in a previously non cued suit shows first round control of suit, normally the ace.

6. The first cue bid by a very strong hand generally shows two top honors or ace in the suit cue bid and does not deny a control in a suit bypassed.

7. When a cue bid is doubled

A. redouble shows the ace or king (for splinters or cues of opponents suit, the ace only)

B. pass denies a high card control but shows continuing slam interest

C. a new suit cue bid shows first round control.

D. return to agreed suit shows weakness, no slam interest

### Four No trump

1. When there is a previously agreed suit, 4NT is key card Blackwood.

Where several suits have been agreed then the highest ranking of those suits is the agreed suit for key card purposes (as a matter of convenience).

2. Where there is no agreed suit, 4NT by responder in auctions in the no trump complex (where opener's first natural bid was 1NT or 2NT (following 2♣ opening) is natural, invitational if a raise or jump, discouraging otherwise.

1) 1N-2♣ Stayman-2M-4NT or 1NT-2♦ transfer-2♥-4NT are both invitational.

2) 1NT-4♦-4♥-4NT is KCB, a Texas transfer self agrees the suit transferred to. Similarly after transfer and super accept, 4NT is KCB.

3. In other auctions where there is no agreed suit, a jump to 4NT agrees partner's last suit bid for KCB purposes (even a fourth suit bid).

If partner's last bid was pass, double or redouble, then a jump to 4NT agrees the last suit naturally bid by your side (e.g. 1♠ - P - 2♥ - 3♣ - P - P - 4NT agrees hearts). This type of agreement is tentative, the asker may bid 5 or 6 of any previously bid suit to play. If partner's last bid was below 3NT, then 4NT is considered a jump bid if RHO bid 3NT or higher (2♠ - 3♥ overcall - 4♠ - 4NT is KCB for hearts).

4. In auctions where partner has never bid (other than pass), a non jump 4NT is for takeout, with some kind of two suited hand. (e.g. 1♠-P-4♠ - 4NT is strong two suiter).

### After Key Card Blackwood

Responses to 4NT

5♣ - 0 or 3 key cards

5♦ - 1 or 4 key cards

5♥ - two key cards, no trump queen

5♠ - two key cards with trump queen or extra length to make 10 card fit

5NT – two key cards and a void in unbid suit

6♣ – 1 or 3 key cards and a void and no extras

6♦ – 1 or 3 key cards and a void and extra (trump queen, long suit king)

6 of key card suit - 5 key cards

Voids are not shown with 0 or 4 key cards, and are only shown in unbid suits when the responding hand has not shown shortness in the suit already (as by a splinter bid).

Continuations by 4NT bidder

1. cheapest non natural bid over a 5♣ or 5♦ response asks **for the trump queen**.

Responses are

- A. minimum bid in agreed suit without the queen
- B. slam in agreed suit with queen and no side king,
- C. bids cheapest side king with trump queen.

If the trump queen is denied, 5NT by the asker asks for bulk side kings by steps (6♣=0, 6♦=1, 6♥=2, 6♠=3) but does not promise all the key cards. This auction may be used to reach 6NT when missing an ace.

2. after a 5♣ or 5♦ response the asker may bid 5 of the agreed suit.

This is a sign off in principle, but could be a result of the ambiguity in the number of key cards shown. Since 4NT always promises one key card if you responded 5♦ with 4 key cards, you should continue to slam, responding as if partner made a queen ask. In an auction where you have not shown opening strength and he signs off after a 5♣ response and you have 3 key cards, you may also continue as if over a queen ask.

3. after any response, if the asker continues immediately after 4NT with 5NT

this guarantees all the key cards and asks the responder to

- A. show his cheapest side king by bidding that suit
- B. return to 6 of the agreed suit with no side king.
- C. jump to 7 with a source of tricks (KQJxx).

4. 6 of a suit bid by partner or his own longest suit

offers a choice of contract, which should usually be accepted (especially when the suit is likely to be a 44 fit).

5. 6 of an unbid suit

asks responder to bid 7 with third round control of that suit (queen or doubleton with adequate trumps), otherwise rebid 6 of agreed suit. If there is no clearly supported suit, this bid may be natural

7. 5♠ - to force 5NT if 5♥ was available as the queen ask

If the opponents bid over 4NT, responder uses DOPI after 5 level interference (double and pass replace the first two steps) or DOPE (double 1 or 3, pass 0 or 2, bid with 4) after 6 level interference.

If the response to 4NT is doubled, redouble by asker replaces the queen ask bid.

### Low Level Ace Asking

A bid of 4♣ is never Gerber, it is either natural, a cue bid or a splinter bid.

When a minor is the agreed suit, a bid below 4NT is ace asking in three situations

- 1) 1♦ - 2♦ (inverted) - 4♦ ( by opener first rebid)
- 2) 3m opening - 4om response
- 3) direct bid at 4 level of a splinter in support of a minor

### Defensive signals

The preferred method is upside down count and attitude (UDCA, high card discourages, low card encourages, low from even number, high or second high from odd number). Attitude is normally given when partner leads a suit. When opponent leads a suit count is not normally given except in situations where dummy has a long suit and a high honor is missing, where a holdup might shut out the suit

### Discards

When discarding, the first discard is the most significant, showing attitude towards that suit. When you cant afford to discard a suit you want lead, discard discouraging in an alternative suit. Later discards are normally not signals.

### Opening leads Versus No trump

1. Jack - denies a higher honor, normally promises the ten. A common lead, if you have bid another suit, especially a major, suggests tenace in bid suit. Partner shows attitude, does not play the king unless dummy played the queen.
2. 10 or 9 - promise zero or two higher (lead 10 from AJ10, KJ10, lead nine from A109, K109 or Q109). Normally a suit you want returned
3. Queen - shows QJ10, QJ9, or KQ10xx to request either attitude or the jack.
4. King - shows KQ (without 10) or less often AK, requests attitude. Generally KQxx(x) leads high in auctions where declarer is likely to be short in the suit.
5. Ace - meaning varies by auction

A. Versus gambling 3NT - does not promise other honours, asks attitude (specifically partner encourages with the king)

B. In a suit you have bid - Shows strong suit (AQJ, AKJ10,AQ10) - requests count or unblock from doubleton honor

Attitude is given over king, queen, or jack lead, encouraging low card shows four or another honor (possibly from three when partner has shown five card length). After giving attitude the second play or discard in the suit is present count, high from two, low from three or more (UDCA does not apply).

After leading from interior sequence or sequence

a. the continuation of the next higher honor says don't unblock

b. the lead from a lower honor suggest an unblock

6. Spot leads –

Attitude leads (high spot from weak suit, top or nothing or from weak suit headed by ten or nine or possibly the jack with side values.) Normally six to eight is considered a high spot card. From a long suit headed by the queen or better lead a low spot card (five or less), usually lowest spot from any suit you want returned. Fourth best is not used.

More NT agreements

The return of the opening lead is usually high from present doubleton, or third best from present cards (assuming there is no need to smother a dummy card).

Later new suits by opening leader follow the above rules.

Later new suit by the hand behind dummy is either fourth best, top of interior sequence or top from any holding weaker than jack (assuming dummy is also weak in the suit). This will help partner to place the honors, but deception may suggest a different spot lead.

**Smith echo** - When the declarer wins the opening lead, an echo by the non leader in the first other suit lead by declarer may be a signal that you like the opening lead (have an honor card left in the suit), however a count signal takes precedence if the ace is missing.

Opening leads versus suits

1. Spot leads - third best (4card suit) or fifth best (5+ length)

An abnormal spot lead such as second best from long suit may indicate a void somewhere.

2. Either high (normal) or low is lead from three small (not a common lead except in the single unbid suit)

3. Top from doubleton (regardless of whether an honour is held).

4. **Ace** - denies king (except perhaps in deceptive situations where dummy known to have a singleton - normally lead only to give or get a ruff, or from AK doubleton.

5. **King** -shows either AK or KQ, if ace not visible partner plays low from doubleton, or encourages with an honour.

6. **Queen** - promises the jack, asks encouragement with an honour
7. **Jack** - promises the ten, denies higher, common neutral lead, partner encourages with any honour
8. **10 or 9** - shows 0 or 2 higher, partner assume two higher if that is consistent with bidding

### Priority of signals versus suits

The normal priority is attitude first (even with singleton in dummy), count (unless singleton in dummy), suit preference if attitude or count not relevant

**Count signals** – UDCA, normally given only when partner leads the king, low from even, highest you can afford from odd number. Trump echo shows three trumps (high-low), delayed echo shows four trumps.

**Suit preference** -When giving a ruff, normal suit preference applies, with low card indicating a preference for the lower ranking side suit, high card for higher suit and middle card with no preference or with a trump entry. A clear signal for one suit or the other suggests the ace or king, so partner with the ace should be able to afford to under lead. .

Against a suit contract, **when dummy will be void after the lead which partner is winning, attitude is normally still given** (i.e. encouraging card indicates the highest missing honor, that helps partner to place the cards and sometimes continuing that suit will weaken declarers trumps or prevent a late entry to dummy). Only in situations where partner wins the trick and dummy has a strong holding is suit preference given. Even in that case, if partner leads the ace and the king-queen and others are in dummy, a count signal is given since partner was probably trying to give you a ruff. When partner plays the king and ace of a suit and dummy started with Qxx the first card should be count, the second card suit preference (highest remaining card to show preference for higher ranking side suit).

### Opening Lead Tips

- 1) **Always take at least 10 seconds before leading**, giving yourself time to analyze the auction and ask questions as needed.
- 2) Determine if the defense should be passive (normal) or active (less frequent)
- 3) **Active defense** is normally indicated versus a small slam in a suit, when declarer has made a preemptive bid, when both sides have good fits, or when dummy has positively indicated a strong suit that appear to be ready to provide discards. Active leads include cashing winners, seeking ruffs, leads from broken unbid suits.
- 4) **Passive defense** is indicated when the opponents appear to have stretched, or are balanced, suits appear to break badly or are poorly placed for declarer,. or when you have length and strength in trumps. Passive leads include trump leads, sequence leads, weak long suit leads.
- 5) Versus no trump, **leads from broken four card suits are poor leads**, to be avoided unless the auction calls for an attacking lead. Under leading an ace is the worst of this category. When you are very weak (no sure or likely entry) and partner must have strength, try to lead his suit (if he had an opportunity to overcall in a major, his suit is probably a minor, applies also when 1NT is passed out). A high spot lead (7 or higher) in a weak 2 or 3 card suit (occasionally a singleton) is as likely to be the winner as any lead from a broken 4 card suit. If you have a five card unbid suit, that lead is generally best (reasonably safe),the main exception is with an entryless hand.
- 6) If you have a singleton plus a sure trump trick, wait to lead the singleton until you get your trump winner (this will force partner to take ace and give you a ruff). An opening lead of a short suit should be presumed to be a doubleton when it appears the leader will have a trump trick (so non-leader will hold up the ace with no side entry).

7) There are many situations where a **trump lead** is indicated or the lesser evil.

- a) low level doubled contracts,
- b) when 1 of a minor has been passed out,
- c) part scores where declarer is in a 44 or 53 fit (the latter is almost a mandatory trump lead)
- d) when declarer has shown two suits at least 55 and received a preference and you have side suit well covered.
- e) high level contracts that appear to have been bid on distribution
- f) when partner has not bid and you have broken holdings in all side suits

Holdings of 2 or 3 small, or three to king or ace make ideal trump leads. A singleton lead is less ideal but may still be indicated (broken side suits, partner has shown a strong balanced hand are 2 cases).