Micro Bridge Lesson 1

Attitude Signals

These tell partner whether you like or dislike a particular suit. Playing “High to Encourage”, we play a high card if we like partner’s lead. Similarly, when we discard, we can play a high card to help partner decide which suit we like. Sometimes, we can’t afford to discard a high card in the suit we like. Instead, play a low card in a different suit. Hopefully, partner can work out which suit to play.

- ♠QJT7
- ♥A7
- ♦KJ53
- ♣T86
- ♠A42
- ♦86
- ♥JT93
- ♦T942
- ♦KJ52
- ♥A93
- ♦K953
- ♦K86
- ♦AQ6
- ♦Q74

Against 4S, West makes the safe lead of HJ. Holding most of the high cards in defence, to would be too risky to find the killing club lead. declarer wins HA, disguising his HK. However, East plays H2, a discouraging card. Declarer now plays on trumps.

Against 1NT – 3NT, partner finds the excellent lead of SK, on which you play S9 (high to enc). You, but not partner, know that SA must be knocked out to remove the entries to those good clubs. Partner continues spades until declarer takes the 3rd round (cutting you off from returning a spade when you gain the lead). Declarer now starts on the clubs. When should you take your ace? If declarer has only two clubs, you want to take the 2nd lead giving him just one trick in the suit. If declarer has 3 clubs, you must take the 3rd lead. Otherwise declarer enjoys 4 club tricks. If declarer has 4 clubs, you have no hope. The answer is “Partner will tell you when to take it!” West carefully plays the C3 then C2 showing that he started with two clubs. Now, you know the club layout and declarer should fail in 3NT scoring just 1S+3H+2D+2C.

I once played an event with an expert. I said “What about the count?” “Ken, when you need count, I’ll be giving it to you.” I nodded my head wisely, having no idea what I had just agreed to!

Defensive Signals

Against 1NT – 3NT, partner finds the excellent lead of SK, on which you play S9 (high to enc). You, but not partner, know that SA must be knocked out to remove the entries to those good clubs. Partner continues spades until declarer takes the 3rd round (cutting you off from returning a spade when you gain the lead). Declarer now starts on the clubs. When should you take your ace? If declarer has only two clubs, you want to take the 2nd lead giving him just one trick in the suit. If declarer has 3 clubs, you must take the 3rd lead. Otherwise declarer enjoys 4 club tricks. If declarer has 4 clubs, you have no hope. The answer is “Partner will tell you when to take it!” West carefully plays the C3 then C2 showing that he started with two clubs. Now, you know the club layout and declarer should fail in 3NT scoring just 1S+3H+2D+2C.

I once played an event with an expert. I said “What about the count?” “Ken, when you need count, I’ll be giving it to you.” I nodded my head wisely, having no idea what I had just agreed to!

Count Signals

Count signals tell partner the number of cards which you hold in the suit. Play high – low to show that you started with an even number of cards in the suit. Play low – high to show that you started with an odd number of cards. This is called giving “natural count”. It is common to play “Count in declarer’s suit where appropriate”. There is nothing worse than faithfully giving count to partner, only to find declarer uses it against you! When declarer runs a long long suit, it is frequently useful to give count in your discards to help partner to know which suit to keep.

- ♠A74
- ♥954
- ♦86
- ♣KJ75
- ♠963
- ♥T7
- ♦T9532
- ♠T82
- ♣AKQ6
- ♦AK4
- ♣9T5
- ♠A74
- ♥954
- ♦86
- ♣KJ75
- ♠963
- ♥T7
- ♦T9532
- ♠T82
- ♣AKQ6
- ♦AK4
- ♣9T5

Against 4H, west might find the killing lead, S7. S9 from dummy and east wins ST. Now SA, as west completes the “peter”. West is going to ruff the next spade. Which spade should east lead? He must lead SQ, asking for the higher suit back (diamonds!). After the ruff, West leads DT to DA, suggesting another of the higher suit, spades. east leads his 4th spade. West now might win HQ for a two trick defeat. Notice that, if west had returned the more attractive club, declarer makes his contract. HA and HK clears the trumps. Then, play 5 club tricks pitching dummy’s 3 diamonds.

Suit Preference (SP) Signals

If playing SP, a low card asks for the lower of the remaining suits. A high card asks for the higher of the remaining suits. Most established pairs play SP in two situations:-

- When it is clear from dummy that partner must change suits. e.g. You bang down ace of our suit and a singleton appears in dummy. Partner’s card will be SP, giving a suggestion of the suit to which you should shift.
- When leading a card which you expect partner to ruff, the card which you lead is SP. A low card asks for the lower suit back. A “highish” card asks for the higher suit. It is frequently the 2nd ruff which defeats declarer.

Against 4S, West makes the safe lead of HJ. Holding most of the high cards in defence, to would be too risky to find the killing club lead. declarer wins HA, disguising his HK. However, East plays H2, a discouraging card. Declarer now plays on trumps. When leading a card which you expect partner to ruff, the card which you lead is SP. A low card asks for the lower suit back. A “highish” card asks for the higher suit. It is frequently the 2nd ruff which defeats declarer.

- ♠KJ94
- ♥KJT6
- ♦Q4
- ♣86
- ♠A74
- ♥954
- ♦86
- ♣KJ75
- ♠963
- ♥T7
- ♦T9532
- ♠T82
- ♣AKQ6
- ♦AK4
- ♣9T5
Two-Suited Overcalls

- Michael’s Cue Bid – bidding their suit
  * Over their major, the cue bid shows the other major and an unknown minor. To find out which minor, partner bids cheapest No Trump which asks for the minor suit to be bid. This continues to apply, even when the opponents keep bidding, e.g.
    (1H) – 2H shows spades and minor
    (1H) – 2H – (4H) – 4NT asks for the minor to be bid.
  * Over their minor, the cue bid shows both majors e.g.
    (1D) – 2D shows both majors
  * Notice that there is always one pair of suits for which you have no two-suiter bid available.
  * You can also apply two-suiters over pre-empts e.g.
    (3C) – 4C shows both majors, strongish since their bid is weak.

Micro Bridge Lesson 2

Rationale

When the opponents open the bidding and you hold 5-5 in two of the remaining suits, things are looking good for your side. There is an 85% chance that you will find a fit with partner in one of your suits. This means that you can bid with a very low number of high card points (HCP). This recognizes the power of distribution over “points”.

These notes provide a framework to show your two-suiter with just ONE bid. To help partner decide how high to bid, we make our two-suiter bids with either a weak hand (6 – 10 HCP) or a strong hand (16+HCP).

- With the weak hand, we make our bid and then bid no more – Leave it up to partner.
- With the strong hand, we make our bid and then bid again.

- With an in-between hand, common practice is to simply bid the suits.
- What constitutes a strong hand may require judgment. For example, a hand which is 6-6 in shape is far more powerful than 5-5. Of course, if your side doesn’t finish up as declaring, your hand will be useless for defence!
- Your high cards should be mainly located in your long suits to justify your two-suiter bid.
- Think of partner. When you force partner to choose one of YOUR long suits, he may have only a doubleton! With the weak two-suiter, make sure that you let partner do any pushing in the bidding.
- When partner shows a weak two-suiter and you have no good fit, be wary of bidding too much. 3NT on a misfit will rarely be a success, despite the fact that you are looking at a good hand.
- When you have a good fit with partner’s two-suiter, be prepared to bid aggressively. Length in one of his suits and shortage in the other is fine. Imagine how the hand will be played. You will be cross-ruffing madly.
- When you have a good fit with partner’s two-suiter, you should be able to bid to the Total Number of Trumps (TNT) easily. Say you have 5 trumps to go with partner’s promised 5 trumps. That makes 10 trumps. So, bid comfortably to the 4 level (10 tricks)
- When you have a good fit with partner’s two-suiter, a sacrifice over there suit game contract is attractive. The penalty is rarely severe. Of course, you must take the vulnerability into account.
- Notice that it is the partner of the two-suited hand who makes most of the decisions! He is in the best position to judge how high – and often – to bid.

The Bids

- 2NT Jump Overcall
  This bid (alert) shows 5-5 in the lowest two of the remaining three suits. Opposition bids are in brackets.
    (1S) – 2NT shows 5-5 in the minors
    (1C) – 2NT shows 5-5 in the red suits
  2NT can also be used to show 5-5 in the unbid suits when the opponents show two suits
    (1H) – P – (2D) – 2NT shows 5-5 in the blacks.
  Since both opponents are showing values, this bid may seem risky. However, they are probably going to miss a good contract too.
Roman Keycard Blackwood

Rationale
Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKC) has replaced regular blackwood as the most popular ace asking convention amongst congress players. It’s advantage is that it conveys valuable information regarding the four aces, the trump king and the trump queen. Devotees believe that, providing we are in the slam zone, holding four of the five keycards is sufficient to make slam a reasonable bet. They argue that the trump king is more valuable than other kings. Hence, its elevation in status.

• 4C remains popular as simple Gerber when partner’s last bid was NT. When considering suit slams, it remains unpopular with congress players as the ace ask. This is because of the loss of a natural or cue bid meaning for the 4C bid.

The bids
4NT asks for the number of keycards in our agreed trump suit. If the suit agreement is not “in writing”, trumps are presumed to be the last natural bid suit.

| 2C | 2H | Opener opens with a big bid and gets a positive response & 5 hearts |
| 3H | 4NT | 3H is stronger than 4H (Fast Arrival) |
| 5D | 5H | After 4NT response, the sign off is raised to slam. 4 keycards must be enough! |
| 6H | The bids |

| 1H 2C | Here, responder is unfazed by the prospects of zero keycards. He must be looking at 4, otherwise he would have signed off in 5H. 5D asks for the HQ. Opener doesn’t have it either! |
| 2H 4NT | RKC in hearts |
| 5C 5D | 5S 5NT HQ held. What about other kings? |
| 5D 6H | Opener doesn’t have it. Otherwise, we would be in 7H! |

| 1H | 2C | Here, opener will be answering in diamonds. 3 or 0 keycards in |
| 2D 4NT | diamonds. 3 or 0 keycards in |
| 5C 5H | diamonds. 5H is “to play” opposite 0. |

| 7.. | Where there is doubt about whether it is, say, 3 or 0, the 4NT bidder signs off, presuming the worst. Partner then bids the slam if holding the 3 keycards. |
| 8.. | After the answer to 4NT, bidding the next suit up asks for the trump queen. When not holding it, partner bids the next suit. When holding trump queen, partner skips one suit to bid the next. Note that bidding 5 of our trump suit can’t be used to ask for the trump queen – partner will take it as a signoff and pass! Instead, the asker skips the trump suit to bid the next as the trump queen asking bid. |
| 9.. | After the answer to 4NT, 5NT is simple blackwood asking for kings, excluding the trump king. Signing off in 5NT is sometimes unavailable. |

| 1NT 2C | Simple Stayman. |
| 2H 4NT | RKC in hearts. 1 keycard answer. |
| 5D 5S | 5S asks for HQ – 5H is the sign off |
| 6D 6H | Opener doesn’t have it. Otherwise, we would be in 7H! |

| 5C 5D | 5NT P have signed off in 5H. 5D asks for |
| 5H 5S | HQ held. What about other kings? |
| 6H | Under 5NT 6H Opener doesn’t have it. Otherwise, we would be in 7H! |

| 6.. | Where there is doubt about whether it is, say, 3 or 0, the 4NT bidder signs off, presuming the worst. Partner then bids the slam if holding the 3 keycards. |
| 7.. | After the answer to 4NT, bidding the next suit up asks for the trump queen. When not holding it, partner bids the next suit. When holding trump queen, partner skips one suit to bid the next. Note that bidding 5 of our trump suit can’t be used to ask for the trump queen – partner will take it as a signoff and pass! Instead, the asker skips the trump suit to bid the next as the trump queen asking bid. |
| 8.. | After the answer to 4NT, 5NT is simple blackwood asking for kings, excluding the trump king. Signing off in 5NT is sometimes unavailable. |

| 1H 1S | Simple Stayman. |
| 2C 2D | RKC in hearts |
| 2S 4NT | RKC in spades, etc |

Try bidding these hands:-

| ♠AK642 | ♥J98 | 1S 3S |
| ♥KQ74 | ♥JT8 | 4NT 5D |
| ♥K9 | ♥AT84 | 5H 5S |
| ♠A | ♠KQ7 | P |

With perhaps just an 8 card fit and missing a keycard and SQ, slam is a low percentage.

| ♠AQ94 | ♠KT73 | 1C 1S |
| ♥K9 | ♥AQ8 | 2S 4NT |
| ♥T76 | ♥KQ3 | 5D 5H |
| ♠KQ87 | ♠A92 | 5NT 6S |

While slam is no certainty, it certainly has fair chances. If west didn’t have SQ, 5H is enough

| 7 | 1A982 | 1D 1S |
| ♥KQ4 | ♥8 | 2C 4NT |
| ♥AQ972 | ♥KT865 | 5D 6D |
| ♠J732 | ♠AK6 |

Although we are missing a keycard and DQ is unknown, the 9 card fit is an additional chance. OK, we could be missing AQ of trumps. That would be very pessimistic! As the cards lie, it is an excellent slam, even though the heart honours opposite our singleton is usually a poor feature. CQ not needed?
Transfer Bids

Since 2NT now shows diamonds, it cannot be used as a quantitative bid. This means we must go via 2C (Stayman) to invite opener to bid 3NT. Responder may not have a major. So, 2C must be alerted.

1NT 2C! This is our game invite in NT.
2H 2NT A major is not promised.

Try bidding these hands. West is dealer. Let’s presume we are playing 1NT (15 – 17) :-

| ♠AK94 | ♥52 | 1NT 2D! |
| ♦K92 | ♣Q | 4H P |
| ♠A9 | ♥7432 |

Although only 16 HCP, 4th trump and short club suit are good features. Too good for just 3H.

| ♠AQ | ♥3 | 1NT 2NT! |
| ♦K93 | ♣A9754 | 3D 3NT |
| ♠A9 | ♥Q83 |

Choice of Game Contracts

1NT 2D! Responder has 5 hearts and enough for game. Pass with a doubleton or return to 4H with three or more.

1NT 2H! Responder has 5 hearts and 4+ spades. Responder has a two-suiter

When responder holds at least 5-4 in two suits, we transfer into the first suit, then bid the 2nd suit naturally. This is forcing for one round at least. With 5-5, responder transfers to the higher suit first. Otherwise, opener will presume 5-4 only. Knowing the likely shape, opener can choose the appropriate bid. He may not pass. If he can see game, then he should bid directly. Responder may only hold an invitational hand. Where responder’s 2nd suit is a minor, the suit should be KQxx or 5-5.

1NT 2D! resp has 5 hearts and 4+ diamonds.
2H 3D opener has 2 hearts, 3 diamonds
3NT

1NT 2D! Resp has 5 hearts, 4 spades.
2H 2S opener has 2 hearts, 3 spades and a minimum.
2NT

1NT 2D! Resp has 5 hearts, 4 spades.
2H 2S opener has 3 hearts, 2/3 spades and a minimum.
3H

1NT 2H! Responder is 5-5 in majors
2S 4H opener will pass or correct to 4S

1NT 2C! Simple Stayman
2D! shows 5 hearts, strength unknown
2H! shows 5 spades, strength unknown
2S! shows 5 clubs, strength unknown
2NT! shows 5 diamonds, strength unknown
3B Your preference. Suit setting for slam try?
3NT to play
4C Simple Gerber
4H, 4S, 5C or 5D to play. Resp. may have kings.

Rationale

These notes support the concept of “4 suit transfers”. It needs to be discussed with partner. Transfers bids have remained popular over our 1NT and 2NT bids since their inception some 35 years ago. There are three types of responding hands which are well-suited to the use of transfers:-

- Hands where you want to invite game while holding a five card major
- Two-suited hands
- Deals where there are benefits in keeping the strong hand off the table

Here are the suggested responses to 1NT opening:-

2C Simple Stayman
2D! shows 5 hearts, strength unknown
2H! shows 5 spades, strength unknown
2S! shows 5 clubs, strength unknown
2NT! shows 5 diamonds, strength unknown
3B Your preference. Suit setting for slam try?
3NT to play
4C Simple Gerber
4H, 4S, 5C or 5D to play. Resp. may have kings.

Choice of Game Contracts

1NT 2D! Responder has 5 hearts and enough for game. Pass with a doubleton or return to 4H with three or more.

Invitation to Game

1NT 2D! Opener can pass, bid 3H , bid 3NT
2H 2NT or bid 4H. Remember, responder probably won’t bid again. Bid game with a maximum.

Invitation with 6 Trumps

1NT 2D! 2D showed 5 hearts. So, bidding 2H 3H them again must show six. Opener ? can pass with a minimum or bid 4H with maximum. If responder has enough for game and six hearts, he needed to rebid 4H, not 3H.

Responder has a two-suiter

When responder holds at least 5-4 in two suits, we transfer into the first suit, then bid the 2nd suit naturally. This is forcing for one round at least. With 5-5, responder transfers to the higher suit first. Otherwise, opener will presume 5-4 only. Knowing the likely shape, opener can choose the appropriate bid. He may not pass. If he can see game, then he should bid directly. Responder may only hold an invitational hand. Where responder’s 2nd suit is a minor, the suit should be KQxx or 5-5.

1NT 2D! resp has 5 hearts and 4+ diamonds.
2H 3D opener has 2 hearts, 3 diamonds
3NT

1NT 2D! Resp has 5 hearts, 4 spades.
2H 2S opener has 2 hearts, 3 spades and a minimum.
2NT

1NT 2D! Resp has 5 hearts, 4 spades.
2H 2S opener has 3 hearts, 2/3 spades and a minimum.
3H

1NT 2H! Responder is 5-5 in majors
2S 4H opener will pass or correct to 4S

Responder may end up regretting not passing 2H. However, the lure of a fit or a tight game slightly favours the above bids.

| ♠A92 | ♥K763 | 1NT 2H! |
| ♥KQ | ♥T42 | 2S 2NT |
| ♦KJ86 | ♣Q73 | 3S 4S |
| ♦Q982 | ♠K7 |

Responder’s hand is slightly improved when the fit is found. SQ needs to be with North.

| ♠A92 | ♥KJ763 | 1NT 2H! |
| ♥KQ | ♥TJ732 | 3C 3S |
| ♦KJ86 | ♣A | 4C 4NT |
| ♦Q982 | ♥AKT63 | 5D 6C |

| ♠A92 | ♥QJ7 | 1NT 2C! |
| ♥KQ | ♥A74 | 2D! 2NT |
| ♦KJ86 | ♣Q73 | P |
| ♦Q982 | ♥6543 |

This is our invitational sequence, alerted all the way. Remember 2C doesn’t promise a major.
Micro Bridge Lesson 5

Cue Raise

Rationale

When partner makes an overcall at the one level, it can cover a wide range of High Card Points (HCP). Many pairs play it as 8 – 15 HCP. At the lower end of the range, it should be a goodish five card suit, headed by the Ace or King and another high honour. To use a chess analogy, such bids are often called “the pawns of bridge”. Their goal is to disturb the opposition bidding sequences. There is little chance of the opposition collecting a hefty penalty against you at the one level. If they chase such a low level penalty, they will frequently be missing a game score. Continuing the destructive action by raising partner’s one level overcall is an attractive proposition when we have an eight card or better fit. Having a fit with partner again protects us from large penalties and makes it difficult for the opposition to judge how high they should be bidding.

- With about 5 -9 HCP, raise partner according to the Total Number of Trumps (TNT). Alert!
- With three trumps, raise to the two level. We have 8 trumps, bid to make 8 tricks.
- With four trumps, raise to the three level. However, when vulnerable, it’s ok to be a bit cautious!
- With five trumps, bid to the four level.

FAQ: How can partner tell when you have a good hand to raise him, as opposed to TNT?
ANS: With 10+ HCP and a fit with partner, we make a “Cue Raise”. i.e.

- We bid the opposition suit. This asks the overcaller whether he has an opening hand or just a one level overcall.
- To show the weaker hand, the overcaller simply rebids his suit.
- To show the stronger hand, he changes suit or does something else. Hopefully, the partnership can then have a constructive approach towards a game contract.

- If the opponent raises opener’s bid, double replaces the cue raise

Cue Raise is also known as “Unassuming Cue Bid” Here are bidding sequences to show the cue raise:-

(1C) 1H (P) 2H shows 3 hearts, weak
(1C) 1H (P) 3H shows 4 hearts, weak
(1C) 1H (P) 4H shows 5 heart pre-emptive or may be a rich hand! Next...
(1C) 1H (P) 2C
(P) 2D (P) 2H
(P) 3H (P) P

2C is the cue raise showing a limit raise or better

The 2D bid shows the overcall is an opening hand 2H bid shows that the heart game is not certain 3H bid is invitational. Partner is only 10-11 HCP.

(1C) 1H (P) 2C
(P) 2H (P) P

2C is the cue raise showing a limit raise or better 2H, simply rebidding the suit shows less than an opening hand. Partner subsides quietly.

Older bidding systems may bid 3H immediately and may be set by one trick.

(1C) 1H (P) 2C
X P Pass confirms weaker overcall

To the contrary, when we have little fit with partner’s overcall, passing is frequently the best bet, even when we hold a light opening hand. Aim to get a plus score on the board.

By contrast, our two level overcalls should be the equivalent of an opening hand. Chasing a penalty will be attractive to the opponents since fewer tricks are required and they are less likely to be missing game. Cue raise is not needed. Instead, it can be asking partner to bid No Trumps with a stopper.

Dlr: W  ♠AQT62
Nil Vul  ♥K43  ♦753  ♣T6
♠74  ♥A962  ♣AKT4  ♠K95
♥J95  ♥QT87  ♦982  ♦AJ2

(1D) 1S (1NT) 2S all pass

2S will probably go one off (-50) while 1NT or 2C makes in some comfort (+90)

Dlr: W  ♠AQT62
Nil Vul  ♥K43  ♦753  ♣96
♠74  ♥A962  ♣J953
♥J95  ♥QT87  ♦982  ♦AJ32

(1D) 1S (X) 3S! !pre-emptive

?? Will he or won’t he? West knows there is a fit but East could be weaker. 4H makes. Swap CT & C9 and it is one off. 3S is two off but hard to double

Dlr: W  ♠AQT62
Nil Vul  ♥K43  ♦753  ♣96
♠74  ♥A962  ♣J953
♥J95  ♥QT87  ♦982  ♦AJ

Older bidding systems may bid 3H immediately and may be set by one trick.

(1C) 1H (P) 2C
X P Pass confirms weaker overcall

(1D) 1S (P) 2D
(P) 2S all pass. South gives up opposite the weak overcall. Note 3S is one off, so 2S is a great sign-off. EW make 3C (110) at least.
Micro Bridge Lesson 6

Contested 1NT

If we REOPEN 1NT, it has quite a weaker meaning. i.e. (1B) P (P) 1NT

Here, responder's pass means that our partner almost certainly has some values. Perhaps even an opening hand! Why didn't he double? Probably has the wrong shape. Making a takeout double with the wrong shape is a no-no. So, for the reopening 1NT, we use a range of 10 – 12 HCP. Remember, we are bidding for partner too! This is sometimes called “balancing” or “protecting”. We don't want to give up too cheaply. Again, we play “system off”. With more than 12 HCP, we need to reopen with a double, then bid NT.

Dlr: W

♠ Q4
♥ 72
♦ AJ6
♣ AJT43

♦ J9
♥ AJ63
♠ QT
♣ QT93
♠ K7
♥ 65
♣ A832
♥ K954
♠ K2
♥ 982

W N E S
1D 1NT P 2D! 2D is Stayman
P 2NT P 3NT 2NT is no major.

East will probably lead D7. “2nd highest from four small.” Although HQ works a little better, declarer covers with HK and the H9 will hold the suit. West is marked with almost all the HCP. Declarer enters dummy to run C9 to establish the suit.

♠ Q8743
♥ 754
♦ 9
♣ AJ32

♠ J
♥ T965
♣ AJ63
♥ KQT
♠ KQT43
♣ 875
♠ K7
♥ 654
♣ AK2
♥ 982
♣ AJ62
♥ T98

W N E S
1D P P 1NT
P 2S all pass.

That 1NT looks a bit scary, doesn't it? However, it gives North the chance to bid 2S. Balancing removes the need for north to overcall immediately with that bad suit. This time 2S may be no better than 1NT. However, they can almost certainly make 1NT, 2D or 3D. i.e. They make 90 or 110. Whether our 2S hopefully one off is a good result will depend on vulnerability. i.e. –50 or –100.
The Barrier Principle

Rationale

When you open the bidding with one of a suit, always have an idea of the rebid which you plan to make. You are more likely to make the right opening bid if you have thought about your possible rebids. Your goal will be to describe your hand as accurately as possible in terms of HCP and shape by using your opening bid and rebid.

The Barrier Principle states that:-

After an opening bid of 1B, opener may not make a rebid in a new suit above 2B unless extra values are held. e.g.

- 1NT 2NT 3NT After an opening bid of 1H, opener’s barrier is 2H
- 1H-------2H 3H He may not rebid a new suit above 2H unless extra values are held.
- 1D 2D 3D
- 1C 2C 3C

Say responder answers 2C to opener’s 1H bid.

- With a minimum hand, opener may show a diamond suit by bidding 2D. It is below the barrier.
- Reverse and jump shift must carry a larger burden because it is not a new suit above 2H.
- With a minimum hand, opener may NOT rebid 2S. This is a new suit above the barrier, 2H.

Opener can breach the barrier in several ways, all of which show extra values:-

- Jump rebid in NT. This shows a hand too strong to open 1NT
- Jump Rebid own suit e.g shows 16-18 HCP, 6 card suit
- Jump Rebid partner’s suit e.g Forcing after a 2 level response
- Bidding a higher suit above the barrier. Called a reverse Here, it shows 16 – 18 HCP and extra values, 5 - 4 in reds
- Making a Jump Shift. i.e. Skip one level of bidding

- If you play Benjamin Twos, you have two very strong bids available, 2C and 2D. That means that the reverse and the jump shift don’t have to carry so much load and can therefore be made on 16 – 18 HCP. If you have only one big bid, say 2C, the reverse and jump shift must carry a larger burden and need to be made on 17 - 20 HCP. Under such circumstances, they must be forcing for one round, at least.

- Try coming up with good bidding sequences for these hands with a favourite partner. Dealer West:-
  - ▲AKT42 1H 1S
  - ♥J2 1S 2D
  - ♦J4 ♦KT6 2NT Pass
  - ♠A963 ♠K42 to bid 3C, which would drive the partnership too high. West takes a chance on East having hearts when bidding 2NT. Poor options.

- Although responder has more clubs than spades, he is not strong enough to show them at the three level. If responder starts with 2C.....
  - 1H 2C The spades have been lost. Opener 2NT pass is not strong enough to reverse in 2S
  - 1H 2NT The guide is :-

  Respond in the major rather than the minor unless your are strong enough to show it on the next round.

- When opener shows 9 red cards, responder, with the clubs covered, gives up on a spade contract and places the contract. 2NT would be non-forcing and a 2S rebid would show six opposite so many known red cards. Note opener's reverse promised exactly this sort of hand.

- All pass

When you open the bidding with one of a suit, always have an idea of the rebid which you plan to make. You are more likely to make the right opening bid if you have thought about your possible rebids. Your goal will be to describe your hand as accurately as possible in terms of HCP and shape by using your opening bid and rebid.

- Many partnerships have the additional agreement:-
  - New 3 over 2 over 1 is forcing
  - 1S 2D 3C here is forcing. i.e. You need
  - 3C ? 15HCP to make this rebid. Since you can't bid like this with a minimum opening, weak hands 5–5 in the black suits can be a headache. You may have to open 1S and rebid 2S promising a 6th spade which you don’t have and losing the club suit!

- Try coming up with good bidding sequences for these hands with a favourite partner. Dealer West:-
  - ▲AKT42 1H 1S
  - ♥J2 1S 2D
  - ♦J4 ♦KT6 2NT Pass
  - ♠A963 ♠K42 to bid 3C, which would drive the partnership too high. West takes a chance on East having hearts when bidding 2NT. Poor options.

  - K942 K875

- Although responder has more clubs than spades, he is not strong enough to show them at the three level. If responder starts with 2C.....
  - 1H 2C The spades have been lost. Opener 2NT pass is not strong enough to reverse in 2S
  - 1H 2NT The guide is :-

  Respond in the major rather than the minor unless your are strong enough to show it on the next round.

- 7 1D 1S
  - AQ64 2H 3NT
  - AK94 3NT 4S

- When opener shows 9 red cards, responder, with the clubs covered, gives up on a spade contract and places the contract. 2NT would be non-forcing and a 2S rebid would show six opposite so many known red cards. Note opener's reverse promised exactly this sort of hand.

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- Try coming up with good bidding sequences for these hands with a favourite partner. Dealer West:-

- All pass
Negative doubles are doubles made by responder after an opening bid by partner and an overcall by the next player. e.g. 1C – (1S) – X

Typically, the double shows both unbid suits. However, the emphasis is always on majors.

- **At the ONE level**
  1C – (1D) – X shows both majors
  1C – (1H) – X shows spades and diamonds. With just spades, we simply bid them.
  1C – (1S) – X shows hearts. To expect diamonds as well is too restrictive.
  1D – (1H) – X shows both black suits
  1D – (1S) – X shows hearts
  1H – (1S) – X shows both minors

The opponents will frequently overcall at the one level on quite modest values. For this reason, we treat changes of suit by responder as natural and forcing. These are called **Positive Free Bids**. e.g. 1C – (1S) – 2H shows 10+ HCP, 5+hearts, forcing. With only 4 hearts or 6-9 HCP, make a neg. double.

- **At the TWO level**
  The opponents will usually have a good hand when they make a simple overcall at the two level. For this reason, we can respond with a new suit and lesser values. Commonly, it is 8 – 11 HCP, 5 card suit and is not forcing. e.g.
  1D – (2C) – 2H! 8-11 HCP, 5 hearts, not forcing. These bids are called **Negative Free Bids**.

**FAQ**: What do I do with 12+HCP and 5 hearts? It is a helpful plan to play that a new suit by responder at the three level is forcing. 8 – 11 HCP, 5 card suit or 1NT without a stopper.

**ANS**: You can double provided you have a plan. Opener may still bid 1S with poor alternatives. Remember, 1H is forcing showing 6+HCP.

**ANS**: Bid 3H not 2H. This is forcing. These bids are called **Negative Free Bids**.

- **After pre-emptive overcalls**
  Most pairs play negative doubles as high as 4H. e.g. 1C – (4H) – X is takeout. Obviously, responder needs a better hand to make the double. There will be lots of times when opener will pass, converting the doubles to penalties.

  - **When can responder make a penalty double?**
    1. When they bid 4S or higher. 1C – (4S) – X
    2. When opener has preempted. 2H – (3C) – X
    3. When opener bid 1NT 1NT – (2H) – X

  2 and 3 are highly descriptive opening bids. Responder is well-placed to decide how much bother the opponents are in!

- **Opener's Rebid**
  Occasionally, negative doubles leave opener poorly placed with literally no "right" bid. Sometimes, opener will have to bid a three card suit or 1NT without a stopper (my preference).

**Quiz**

This is your hand as responder. Decide what you would bid for each of the auctions shown. Think about the bids which might follow from your partner, the opener.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Bid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>1C – (1S) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>1C – (1D) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>1D – (2C) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>1C – (2S) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1C – (1H) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1C – (2H) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>Double. Sure, opener won’t know about your 5th heart. However, if you bid 2H immediately, partner will expect you to have 10+HCP and forcing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>1H! Sure, opener won’t know about your 5th heart. However, double would have shown both majors. Opener may still bid 1S with poor alternatives. Remember, 1H is forcing showing 6+HCP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>2H! This is a negative free bid. 8 – 11 HCP and a five card suit. Not forcing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d)</td>
<td>double. 3H, a new suit at the three level, would have been forcing. So, that bid is out. Sure, opener has to bid over 25X. However, opener will bid more quietly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e)</td>
<td>1NT. 6 – 9 HCP and their suit stopped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Pass. Smoothly. Opener, who is short of hearts, can hopefully reopen with a double. You will then pass, converting the double to penalties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>1C – (2S) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1C – (3D) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1D – (4S) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)</td>
<td>1NT – (2H) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g)</td>
<td>Double. If opener hasn’t got spades, responder rebids 3NT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h)</td>
<td>Double. If opener hasn’t got hearts, responder rebids 3NT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Double. If opener hasn’t got a major, responder rebids 3NT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j)</td>
<td>Double. If opener hasn’t got hearts, responder rebids 3NT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k)</td>
<td>Double. This is tougher decision than it looks. If opener has a major, you’ll be laughing. If he doesn’t, you have to hope he has an unlikely diamond stopper and can rebid 3NT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(l)</td>
<td>Double. Penalties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)</td>
<td>3H. When they overcall our NT, cue bid is Stayman. Alternatively, double for penalties depending on vulnerability or 3NT? Tough! Here, you are opener. What is your rebid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Bid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>1C – (1S) – X – (P) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>1C – (1S) – X – (2S) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>1C – (1D) – P – (P) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>1C – (2H) – X – (P) – .......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n)</td>
<td>2H! Clearcut since responder showed hearts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(o)</td>
<td>Double. This is called a responsive double. Most partnerships play an immediate 3H shows extras.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p)</td>
<td>Double. Make them bid higher. Over partner’s 1S will rebid 1NT – scary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (q)  | 2NT. They might make 2HX, but can I make 2NT?
Micro Bridge Lesson 9

Rationale

♠AQ643
♥AQ5
♦AQ3
♣KJ

This is a very good hand. However, its trick-taking ability is quite limited. It doesn’t expect to take more tricks in spades than in No Trumps. For this reason, experienced players prefer to treat it as a “balanced” hand rather than a “spade” hand.

Allowing balanced hands with a five card major to be included in the very big NT bids is a good solution. If you play Benjamin Twos, all of these might include a five card major:-

- 21 – 22 HCP balanced Open 2NT
- 23 – 24 HCP balanced Open 2C and rebid 2NT
- 25 – 26 HCP balanced Open 2D and rebid 2NT

Our treatment in these notes will deal with an opening 2NT. To discover the nature of the 2NT, we use a system of bids called Puppet Stayman.

It is currently the most favoured system with experienced players.

- Here are the responses to a 2NT (21–22) opening:-
  - 3C Puppet Stayman – see later
  - 3D transfer to 3H. If opener holds 3 hearts, he confirms the fit immediately by bidding 4H, not 3H.
  - 3H transfer to 3S as above
  - 3NT to play
  - 4C Gerber
  - 4D natural and forcing
  - 4M to play with 6 card major but prefer to use transfer system then raise.
  - 4NT Quantitative
  - 5M to play

- After 2NT, 3C says “Do you have a five card major?”
  - 3D no 5 card major but at least one 4 card major
  - 3H have 5 hearts
  - 3S have 5 spades
  - 3NT have no 5 or 4 card major

- After 2NT – 3C and rebid of 3D, responder bids the major he DOESN’T have or
  - 3NT saying he’s not interested in 4 card majors or
  - 4D saying he has BOTH four card majors. Opener picks.

The aim of this unusual sequence is to keep the strong hand off the table.

- Try bidding these hands. Dealer West
  - ♠AQ5 ♠K9872 2NT 3H!1
  - ♥AQ6 ♥T9873 3S!2 4H3
  - ♦AQ63 ♦72 pass
  - ♣KT5 ♣2
  - 1This is a standard transfer sequence, showing the higher suit first.
  - 2shows doubleton only
  - 3shows 2nd 5 card suit and is “to play”.

  - ♠AQ3 ♠K9872 2NT 3S!1
  - ♥AQ63 ♥T987 4H2 all pass
  - ♦AQ6 ♦72 1shows 5S & 4H
  - ♣AQ43 ♣872 4S4 all pass
  - ♣KT ♣A72
  - 1Puppet Stayman “Do you have a 5 card major?”
  - 2No, but I have at least one 4 card major
  - 3“This is the major I DON’T have”
  - 4Places the contract, making strong hand declarer.

  - ♠AQ54 ♠K987 2NT 3C!1
  - ♥AQ6 ♥K9873 3D!2 4D3
  - ♦AQ43 ♦87 4S4 4NT5
  - ♣KT ♣A72 5C5 5D5
  - 1Puppet Stayman. “Do you have a 5 card major?”
  - 2No, but I have at least one 4 card major
  - 3“I have both 4 card majors. Which do you have?”
  - 4opener’s major
  - 5Responder is not finished. RKC in spades. Without SQ, 5S will be enough.

  - ♠A42 ♠6 2NT 4D1
  - ♥AQ6 ♥73 4S2 4NT3
  - ♦AQ ♦K9872 5C4 6C5
  - ♣KT6 ♣AQ752 all pass
  - 1Natural and forcing
  - 2Have to bid something – doubleton diamond.
  - 3RKC Blackwood – in spades!
  - 43 or 0 keycards. We may be out of our depth!
  - 5This bid is a little scary!

  - ♠A4 ♠KT73 2NT 3H!1
  - ♥AK732 ♥864 3NT pass
  - ♦A44 ♦32
  - ♣AQ2 ♣863
  - 1With 5-3 in the majors, we have to abandon the 3 card suit. Notice that we miss the superior 4H contract and play in 3NT.
  - 2Going via 3C on this hand gives too much torture. If there is no 5-3 heart fit, responder will be unable to convince opener that he holds a 5 card spade suit.
**Fourth Suit Forcing**

**Rationale**

- 2S is a gross underbid and will be dropped.
- 3S promises a six carder which you don’t have.
- 3NT promises a stopper in hearts which will be led.
- What should be the final contract?
  - 3NT played by partner if he has the stopper/s.
  - 4S if he has 3 card support
  - 5C if he is 5-5 in the minors

The answer to responder’s torture is to bid 2H!

Since hearts is the 4th suit, it is alerted that it may not be natural. This bid, called Fourth Suit Forcing (4SF) asks opener for a further description of his hand. It is sometimes called “Clayton’s Bid” – the bid you make when you haven’t got a bid”.

**FAQ:** What does responder need in order to use 4SF?  
**ANS:** He needs a plan to cope with all likely answers from partner. Sometimes, he may have only a 4 card suit but be unclear as to where to go. Sometimes, he will have a stopper but may be more interested in a suit contract. If made at the two level, it is forcing for one round. If made at the three level, it is FTG.

**FAQ:** What are partner’s priority in answering 4SF?  
**ANS:** 1. Raising the 4th suit to the 3 level if hold 4 card support and partner’s bid could be natural.  
2. Bidding 3NT stopper/s in the 4th suit  
3. Giving 3 card support to partner’s first bid suit  
4. Making a descriptive rebid of one’s own hand.

What would you expect from opener after each of the following auctions? You have responded with the hand above. 

**What will be your next bid?:-**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1D 1S</th>
<th>Opener is 5/4 either way with a stopper and a minimum.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2C 2H</td>
<td>Responder rebids 3NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D 1S</td>
<td>Opener is 5/4 either way with a stopper and 15 – 17 HCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C 2H</td>
<td>Responder could pass a 2NT rebid with only 10 – 11 HCP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3NT</td>
<td>Responder passes 3NT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What do you expect from opener’s hand after each of the following auctions? You have responded with the above hand. What will be your next bid?:-**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1D 1H</th>
<th>Opener may well be just 4-4 in his suits with 3 hearts. Responder rebids 3NT.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1S 2C</td>
<td>Responder rebids 3NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Opener has about 15 – 17 HCP and didn’t open 1NT because 4153 or 4053 shape. Responder rebids 4C (gerber) the 5C(gerber) finally deciding whether to settle in 5D or 6D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D 1H</td>
<td>Opener has 5-4 in his suits and 12 – 14 HCP. Go for the cheapest game. Responder rebids 3NT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1S 2C</td>
<td>Responder rebids 4C (gerber) the 5C(gerber) finally deciding whether to settle in 5D or 6D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Responder rebids 3NT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Opener may also use 4SF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1D 1S</th>
<th>Here, opener has limited his hand with 3C 3H 1D then 2D. He has no club stopper.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2D 2H</td>
<td>Yet, he can’t pass a change of suit by an unpassed responder. Here we go again...where will we land?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C 3H</td>
<td>Opener is looking for a spade stopper besides 6 hearts, bad minors. Hopefully, opener has some spades to help responder with say QTx. For more details on 4SF, see Ron Klinger’s intermediate text “Guide to Better Bridge” p92, 93.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Micro Bridge Lesson 11

Rationale

- ♠K9
  - This is certainly a good hand.
- ♥AQ762
  - However, in terms of trick-taking
- ♦A86
  - it will need some help from partner.
- ♦AQ6
  - This hand deserves to be opened with 1H. If you think the hand is too good for 1H, ask yourself this question: "Am I likely to be able to make game opposite a hand which can’t respond to 1H?"
  - The answer is a resounding "No!"
  - The above is a good test as to whether a hand should be opened with a "demand" bid such as 2C.

- **Benjamin Twos and Balanced Hands**
  - Regardless of whether you have just one demand bid or two, your structure should allow you to describe ALL balanced hands with No Trump ranges. Here is one structure – work out your own with partner.
  - Balanced with no 5 card major
    - 12 – 14 HCP: open 1m & make a minimum NT rebid
    - 15 – 17 HCP: open 1NT
    - 18 – 20 HCP: open 1m and jump rebid 2NT or 3NT
    - 21 – 22 HCP: open 2NT
    - 23 – 24 HCP: open 2C and rebid 2NT
    - 25 – 26 HCP: open 2D and rebid 2NT
    - 27 – 28 HCP: open 2C and rebid 3NT
    - 29 – 30 HCP: open 2D and rebid 3NT etc
  - Balanced hands with a five card major
    - 12 – 15 HCP: Open 1M & make a minimum NT rebid
    - 16 – 18 HCP: Open 1M and rebid 2NT
    - 19 – 20 HCP: Open 1M and rebid 3NT (above hand)
    - 21 – 26 HCP: Open as for no 5 card major and use Puppet Stayman as per lesson 9.
    - 27+ HCP, open 2D and rebid the major.

- **Benjamin Twos and Unbalanced Hands**
  - Many strong 4-4-4-1, 5-4-4-2 and 6-3-2-2 hands with a 6 card minor are perhaps better treated as "balanced" since they lack the playing strength to focus on the suits. Be guided by the location of the high cards in making your decision.
  - Having both 2C and 2D as strong bids mean that the reverse (lesson 7) and the jump shift by opener don’t have to work quite so hard.
    - 1D – 1S
      - This bid can be made on 16–19HCP and 2H 5-4 in the reds and is not quite forcing. It may also be made with a little less and better shape.
      - 1D – 1S
        - This bid can be made with 17-19HCP and 3C 5-4 in the minors and is not quite forcing. It may also be made with a little less and better shape.

- **What hands should we open 2C?**
  - Remember 2C promise a hand just short of game Force. Having eliminated hands which we think we can adequately describe with a one level opening, we are left with the following:
    - Hands with a 6 card major and 19 – 22 HCP.
    - Hands with 5-4-3-1 shape and 20 – 22 HCP
    - Hands with 5-4-4-0 shape and 19 – 22 HCP
    - Hands with 5-5 or 6-4 or 7 with good strength
    - **What responses should we use to 2C?**
      - Here is one guide but you need to work it out with partner. Rarely pass opener’s rebid if a fit is found.
      - 2D! is a weak bid with 0 – 5 HCP, shape unknown. However, if you bid again, opener will keep going.
      - 2H, 2S, 3C, 3D are 5 card suits 6+ HCP, FTG
      - 2NT is 6+ balanced, no 5 card suit. If this is followed by opener’s 3Cl, it is stayman.

- **What hands should we open 2D?**
  - Remember, you will be going to game, even opposite 0 HCP. Apart from the balanced options, it should be a huge one or two suiter, 9 playing tricks
  - **How should we respond to 2D?**
    - 2H! is 0 – 5 HCP, shape unknown. But we will keep bidding until game is reached. Never drop partner when they open a game force. Even when it works out well, you have damaged the partnership.
    - Other bids are positives and encourage slam exploration. Be ready to raise opener whenever possible.

- **Big Two Suiters**
  - It’s tempting to open big two suiters with 2C or 2D because, you know they play so well. However, it can backfire. I rate this as the best hand I’ve ever held.
    - Drooling, I opened 2D artificial game and the partner would have shown preference to the loony across the table by returning to 7D.
    - "What if they pass me out in 1D?" I wailed. He replied "When you hold that hand, someone bids the majors"

**Principle of Fast Arrival (PFA)**

PFA states that, in a game-forcing situation, the faster that we bid to game, the weaker the hand e.g.

- 2C! 2H 2H established a game force
- 2S 4S 4S is weaker than 3S. But... 2C! 2H 2H established a game force
- 4H says "I have no more than you could reasonably expect". 3H would show that the hand has grown considerably.
- 2D! 2H! Again 4S is weaker than 3S, despite 2S 4S the 2H negative. Here, responder has two or three trumps and very little else.

Try bidding these hands

- **♠KQ2**  **♥AQ6432**  **♦AKQxxx**  **♣A9**
  - 2D! (4S) P (6S)

- **♥J6**
- **♦J86**
- **♥75**
- **♦K87**
- **♥J964**
- **♥A**
- **♠83**
- **♥9542**
- **♥A9**
- **♠T832** tricks – 7 spades and 2 aces.

Jx of trumps is plenty.

- **♥AK94**  **♦QT62**  **♣AQ76**  **♥KQJT**  **♦AK**  **♥K75**
  - 2C! 2NT! 3C! 3S!! 874 4S enough 962 Responder has just 6 HCP.
Micro Bridge Lesson 12

Rationale

Playing against lefthanders is never much fun – they're used to playing against righthanders but.... The same goes for playing against Precision pairs. Even though they will alert their bids, established pairs are wise to make a few variations to their system to cater for such opponents. If you give them too easy a ride, particularly over their 1C, they will land in good contracts. This strategy should apply against any other "Big Club" systems. If you are playing teams, you will be playing at least 8 boards against this pair. Be prepared to spend a few minutes discussing your strategy before playing the first hand. You are entitled to do so. First, you need to know a little about precision:-

- Their 1M openings are 5 card suits, 11-15 HCP
- Their 1D opening shows 11-15 HCP, a minimum of two diamonds and that is quite frequently the case.
- Check whether they open ALL 11 HCP hands. If not, what are the restrictions.
- Their 1C opening promises 16+HCP and virtually any shape.
- Their 1D answer to 1C shows 0-7HCP. If both majors have 6 or more cards, they will have one of these bids.
- Their 2C opening is "natural" 11-15 HCP showing either 6 clubs or 5 clubs and another suit.
- Their 2D opening may be a singleton or void in diamonds, 11-15 HCP. Check it.

The following changes to your system against precision are suggested:-

- Play "No michaels over their precision 1C & 1D" So, (1C) – 2C, (1C) – 3C, (1D) – 2D and (1D) – 3D are all natural bids
- Play (1C)-X for the majors. May be 4-4 nil vul, weak
- Play (1C)-1NT for the minors
- Play (1C)-2NT for both reds
- Overcall their 1C at the 1 level freely
- Play weak jump overcalls over their 1C
- Play (1D) – X as our usual takeout
- Since their 2C is natural, X is takeout, 2NT is natural, 3C is michaels,
- Play (1D) – 1NT as natural, 15-18, no need D stop
- X of their 1D! response to 1C shows diamonds
- If 2D! is short, X shows diamonds, 3D is natural
- If partner overcalls their 1C, their responder frequently has to double to show values or bid a 5 card suit with 5-7 HCP. Be prepared to raise partner’s overcall preemptively. (1C!) – 1S! – (X) – 3S. Now, let’s see if they can judge how high to bid when they haven’t yet mentioned a suit!
- Do watch the vulnerability unless the fit is good.

• Your right hand opponent has dealt and opened 1C. What will you do with each of the following hands, NOT VUL?

- **Pass.** Sure, you have a natural 1NT bid. Let them have a round of bidding. If your LHO makes a positive bid, you’ll be glad you passed and haven’t told them where everything is. You can bid it on the next round if it goes (1C!) – P – (1D!) – P 1H – ?

Clobber Precision

What will you do over their 1C with these hands?

- **AQ9753 ♥86 ♥72 ♥65**
- **Bid 2S.** Make life difficult for them.
- **AQ97 ♥KQT6 ♥543 ♥2**
- **Double.** For the majors.
- **2♥ 2♥6 ♥K9764 ♥A8743**
- **1NT.** For the minors.
- **AQ7 ♥QJ7 ♥76 ♥A8765**
- **Bid 2C.** Natural over their precision minors.
- **A9754 ♥KT6 ♥753 ♥32**
- **Bid 1S.**
- **AQ62 ♥KQ4 ♥QJ87 ♥32**
- **Pass.** X would be 5-4 in majors
- **5 ♥A8763 ♥K9873 ♥42**
- **Bid 2NT.** Lower two of remaining suits.

• This auction comes around to you, NOT VUL:- (1C!) 1S (X) ?
  You know that X says 8+ HCP, nothing to do with spades. (Remember, this will not be alerted since X and XX are self-alerting bids). What are you going to do with each of these hands?
- 5 ♥A8763 ♥K9873 ♥42
- **Pass and pray.** This is a misfit. Surely they won’t go after partner at the one level when they can probably make 3NT.
- **Q286 ♥K76 ♥86432 ♥7**
- **Bid 3S.** That should make life difficult for them.
- **Q87 ♥A42 ♥KQ63 ♥876**
- **Bid 2S.** Something smells here and I think it’s partner. To many HCP. 16+8+8+11
  (Precision pairs nearly always have their bid – otherwise they get in a mess)
- **5 ♥A8763 ♥K9873 ♥42**

• This auction comes around to you NOT VUL:- (1C!) 1NT! (X) ?
  Partner has both minors but the opposition have enough for game.
- **8 ♥T85 ♥K7876 ♥9743**
- **Bid 5D.** They are almost certain to make 6S. Let’s see if they bid it now.
- **K75 ♥A976 ♥T76 ♥432**
- **Pass.** When they double our two suited overcall and we have equal length in partner’s suit, it is best to pass. Partner will pull it. Remember, he may have one suit longer than the other and it would be a shame to pick the wrong one.
- **T9862 ♥A8753 ♥K ♥72**
- **Bid 2C, nice and smooth.** Looks like another horror coming up.

• This auction comes around to you NOT VUL:- (1C!) 1S (2H) ?
  2H shows 5 – 7 HCP and a 5 cards heart suit.
- **K87 ♥A97 ♥K32 ♥6532**
- **Bid 2S.** Sure, you have 10 HCP, but partner is weak.
- **K8 ♥AQ7 ♥K32 ♥6532**
- **Pass.** Do not try to play these hands in NT. Add up the HCP. Not much for partner is there?
- **T8765 ♥8 ♥K983 ♥976**
- **Bid 4S.** They have a huge heart fit. Can they diagnose a slam?
Micro Bridge Lesson 13

Responding to Double

FAQ: What sort of hand is needed to make a takeout double in the immediate seat?
• A minimum opening hand with the right shape. The right shape means support for all the unbid suits, especially majors. The doubler won’t bid again OR
• A strong opening hand with the right shape. The doubler will raise partner’s minimum response. OR
• A one suited hand with 16+ HCP. Here, the doubler will rebid in his own suit to show a hand too strong to make a simple overcall. OR
• A balanced hand with 19+ HCP. Here, the doubler will rebid in NT to show a hand too strong to overcall 1NT (15 – 18 HCP)

FAQ: What will the doubler NOT have?
• The doubler will not have length in the enemy suit.
• The doubler will not have an ordinary opening hand. With these problems, you must pass – smoothly. Partner will take action if it is appropriate. There are lots of opening hands in the range 12 – 14 HCP which do not qualify for a takeout double in the immediate seat. The “immediate” seat is the seat immediately after the opening bidder. e.g. (1H) – X

If you follow these guidelines, we say that our takeout doubles are “disciplined”. Experienced players will not even discuss this – they will assume disciplined takeout doubles. This means that partner bid their hand more accurately.

FAQ: How do we respond to (1B) – X – (P) – ?
• Suit bids show 0 – 9 TP. Total Points (TP) are the sum of HCP and Shape Points (SP) using the 5 (void), 3 (singleton), 1 (doubleton) scale. With a choice of four card suits, always prefer the major unless VERY weak and you can bid a minor more cheaply.
• 1NT response shows 5 – 9 HCP, their suit stopped and no interest in another suit. With 0 – 4 HCP and nothing but their suit, you need to bid a three card suit. Don’t pass! The weaker you are, the more likely they are to make their doubled contract.
• Jump in your suit 10 + TP. This is forcing for one round. Count SP, even when bidding a 4 card suit. Remember, you are entitled to presume a 4-4 fit in the majors. With a minor, be a little more conservative. The double may have only 3 card support.
• 2NT (10 – 12 HCP) and 3NT (13 – 15 HCP) with their suit well stopped are NOT what the doubler wants to hear. He hoped to hear a major from you. However, he can live with it. Usually, these bids will deny a 4 card major. However, with excessive values in their suit, NT bids are still considered. If the doubler plans to move again, he can cue bid their suit as Stayman.
• Cue bid their suit. e.g. (1m) – X – (P) – 2m. This form of torture is used when it is unclear where we should be playing. Commonly, the 2m bidder will have both majors and be unwilling to select the wrong one, probably at the 4 level. It may also indicate doubt about a NT contract because the stopper may not be enough. Usually, the 2m bid is forcing to game.

FAQ: What do we do when the next hand bids?
• (1B) – X – (2B) – ?
This is a common situation and their 2B response can be quite weak. Any bid made here is called a Free Bid. i.e. You are not obliged to bid.
1..With 0-5, you will pass. However, we don’t want them to buy the contract too cheaply.
2..Make a non-jump suit bid with 6 – 10.
3..Double is called a responsive double. This asks partner to select a suit, particularly a major. If they had opened 1M, the responsive double shows just 3 of the other major. With 4 of them, you would be bidding the major yourself.

• (1B) – X – (XX) – ?
Usually, the redouble shows 10+ HCP and no fit with partner. It suggests penalties if we bid too high. In this sequence, the whole world knows you have a terrible hand. It seems logical to pass and let partner get us out of this mess, doesn’t it? Not so. If we can make a very cheap bid that occupies little space, we should make it. Otherwise, we pass and partner pulls the redouble. His first suit may be higher than where we could be. Remember, we are trying to get out of this mess undoubled. e.g.
(1D) – X – XX – ? Bid a 4 card heart suit if you don’t want to hear partner bid 1S when he has 3 hearts and 4 spades.
(1S) – X – XX – ? Bid 2C if you have them and can’t stand the thought of partner bidding hearts.

FAQ: What do we do if next hand changes suit?
• (1C) – X – (1S) – ?
Sometimes, the 1S bid will be a denial of 10+ HCP and is not forcing. Such an agreement should be alerted.
• Pass when the shape and strength are not right.
• Here, a suit bid will be 5 – 9 TP and a 5 carder.
• 1NT should be 5 – 9 with opener’s suit stopped.
• Double will be responsive, certainly showing hearts and asking the doubler for more information.
• 2C or 2S will be stopper asks.

FAQ: Are our actions the same if the doubler is already a passed hand?
Absolutely not. Don’t punish partner for getting us into the auction. His doubles will be great shape and a near opening hand. Bid quietly.

FAQ: Are our actions the same if the double comes from the reopening seat?
• (1B) – P – (P) – X 
(P) – ?
No. This will be covered in lesson 27. For now, just remember that doubler’s shape may not be all that great and the HCP count could be a little low. The doubler may already be presuming that you have some values. Be wary of jumping, especially in NT.
Rationale
Most players are familiar with the Goren point count system where A = 4; K = 3 etc. When a fit is found, shape points are added for the 9th and subsequent trump, 5 for a void, 3 for a singleton and 1 for a doubleton. Points are deducted for an aceless opening hand, QJ doubleton etc.

Not surprisingly, this is not the only way of valuing hands. This lesson focuses on the Losing Trick Count (LTC). Under this system, when a fit is found, you add your LTC to partner’s LTC and subtract the answer from 18. This gives the level to which you should bid. e.g. You have a 6 loser, partner says he has an 8 loser. 8 + 6 = 14; 18 – 14 = 4. So, you can bid to the 4 level.

This is how you find your LTC
- Looking at only the top 3 cards in each suit, add one loser for each of the A, K and Q which are missing.
  • ♠K3  1 loser. Only Ace is missing
  • ♥AQT94  1 loser. King is missing
  • ♦A72  2 losers. K & Q missing
  • ♣873  3 losers. A, K and Q all missing
  We say this hand is a 1 + 1 + 2 + 3 = 7 loser
  Open 1H

  • ♠A94  2 loser
  • ♥J86  3 loser
  • ♦K6543  2 loser
  • ♣Q4  2 loser A & K are missing
  We say this hand is a 2 + 3 + 2 + 2 = 9 loser
  Responder just 2H with this hand being a 9 or 10 loser.
  See the note below.
  Opener adds his 7 loser hand to partner’s at best 9 loser, 7 + 9 = 16; 18 – 16 = 2 level is quite high enough. Notice that 4H has no hope and 3H is scary.

Further Notes
- Add one loser for an aceless hand if opening or as responder for marginal decisions.
- An ordinary opening hand is usually a 6 or 7 loser.
  A strong hand worthy of a jump rebid should be a 5 loser.
  A 4 loser warrants bidding to a major suit game.
  A single raise of opener’s major should be a 9 or 10 loser.
  A jump raise of opener’s major is an 8 loser.
  A game raise of opener’s major should be a 7 loser.
- Some 12+ HCP hands are 8 losers. If you are RESPONDING with such a hand, don’t make an invitational bid and risk missing game. With an opening hand each, there are compensating values as suits fit together to reduce the number of losers.
- If opener shows a six card suit and you plan to raise with a doubleton, don’t reduce your LTC because of a doubleton trump! Two trumps can never be better than three!
- Use RKC Blackwood to check that the opponents don’t have two aces to cash when LTC tells you to bid slam!
- We say that the LTC system is quite “robust”. i.e. It works on a surprisingly large number of hands. It is certainly a better indicator than “points” when it comes to distributional hands.

Losing Trick Count
- A weak Two Bid typically is a 7 or 8 loser hand.
  Devotees to LTC incorporate this into their requirements for an opening bid of 2M. Responder can then decide whether to bid game (6 loser), invite game (7 loser) or pass (8 loser)
  Try bidding these hands using LTC and judgment. In each case, West is dealer.
  • ♦KQ  ♠A94  1H  2H
  • ♥AQT94  ♠J86  3H  4H
  • ♦A72  ♠K6543
  • ♣Q4
  17 HCP & 6 losers? The hand is too good for that.
  Make it a 5 loser and invite game. Responder sees open as a 5 loser. 5 + 9 = 14; 18 – 14 = 4H

  • ♠K7  ♠632  Responder has a
  • ♥AQT94  ♥J7532  10 loser. In theory
  • ♥972  ♠4  we bid 1H – 2H.
  • ♥AJ7  ♥8542
  The weak freak is too much to resist! Bid 1H – 4H
  Let’s see them find their spade game now!

  • ♠7  ♠632  1H  3H
  • ♥AQT94  ♥K97  4NT  5D
  • ♦AQT87  ♦K2  6H
  • ♦A9  ♦KT864  Responder doesn’t need to add a loser for an aceless hand since he is not evaluating for game. 8 + 4 = 12; 18 – 12 = 6H
  Would you get to it using “points” – I doubt it.

  • ♠AK83  ♦QT64  1C  1H
  • ♥K87  ♥AT64  1S  3S
  • ♦T9  ♠532  pass
  • ♣A532  ♠K7
  Responder gives a limit raise (8 loser). Opener with a 7 loser declines. 8 + 7 = 15; 18 – 15 = 3

  • ♠K7  ♠A95  1H  2C
  • ♥AQT94  ♥K87  2NT  3NT or 4H
  • ♦A64  ♦K73
  • ♦J72  ♦QB64
  Despite responder holding an 8 loser, he decides not to make the limit raise. This would make 3H the final contract. 3NT is cold while 4H has fair chances.

  • ♠A84  ♠AQ73  2H  3H
  • ♥AK9765  ♥J82  4H
  • ♦T642  ♦K7
  • ♣6  ♣AT74
  2H opening promises 7 or 8 losers.
  This pair play 3H as invitational showing a 7 loser.
  Opener calculates 7 + 7 = 14; 18 – 14 = 4H

  • ♠QT765  ♠AK  1D  1H
  • ♥3  ♠A9874  2S  3C
  • ♥AQ943  ♥K75  3S  4NT
  • ♣A  ♣K64  5S  6D

1A 4 loser and well worth showing as a powerhouse.
24th Suit Forcing. 3the 5th spade confirms 6 diamonds.
4RKC in spades. 5Without knowing DQ, 6D is enough
Micro Bridge Lesson 15

Better Minor vs Up-the-line

6. What can we conclude about opener's hand after 1C – 1H and a rebid of 1NT?
   (a) Opener must hold 4 clubs. He doesn't hold hearts, he doesn't hold spades and he opened 1C.
   (b) Opener is either 3334 or 3235 shape.

- Check with your partner about your bidding styles "With 3–3 in the minors, which suit do we open?"
  "With 4–4 in the minors, which suit do we open?"
  That should help sort it out.

Try bidding these hands in your system. The auctions provided here will be under Better Minor. Dir: West

| ♠Q83 | ♦6 | 1C | 1D |
| ♦A95 | ♥K87 | 1NT | 2H |
| ♦K74 | ♥AQT53 | 3D | 3S¹ |
| ♦A743 | ♣K43 | 4D | 5D |

¹Suit Forcing highlights the headache in spades. If there wasn't a problem, responder would just rebid 3NT. 3NT may not make. 5D will make if hearts or clubs are 3–3 or the same player is 4–4 in clubs and hearts. Draw trumps and duck a club.

Bidding up-the-line should be the same.

| ♠AQT5 | ♦32 | 1D | 2C |
| ♥K87 | ♥54 | 2NT | P¹ |
| ♦K74 | ♥32 | ♦32 |

¹This is not an easy pass for responder. Opener probably has 4 or even 5 diamonds. Not this time! Responder concludes "I showed opener 10+ HCP and he couldn't make a forcing bid".

| ♠A87 | ♦QT32 | 1C | 1S |
| ♥K87 | ♥32 | 1NT | P |
| ♦AK7 | ♥QJ76 |
| ♦T54 | ♥J76 |

Despite having much better diamonds than clubs, open 1C with 3–3 in the minors. Unlikely to make any contract.

| ♠A65 | ♥K8 | 1C | 1D¹ |
| ♥Q87 | ♥A9 | 1NT | 3NT |
| ♦A98 | ♥K76 |
| ♦K852 | ♥A654 |

¹Occasionally, you have to respond with a "prepared 1D" and await developments. It is not alerted because it is expected to be natural and opener will raise with 4! Responder has that covered and will retreat to 3NT or 5C. A 3NT response would be reasonable but occupies too much bidding space.

Keep that response for 3334 shape and 12–14 HCP. Notice that NT plays better by west with the hearts better stopped.

| ♠AK7 | ♥432 | 1H | P |
| ♥AK62 | ♥J84 | Don't open a short |
| ♦Q86 | ♦T2 | suit with 18+. There |
| ♦K7 | ♦A5432 | is too big a chance that you will be passed out in 1D. 1H has chances. |
Micro Bridge Lesson 16

Jacoby 2NT

Rationale
In old-style bridge, 1H – 3H was a forcing raise in hearts. This allowed the suit to be set below the level of game and permitted some slam investigations below 4H. In the modern style, 1H – 3H is a limit raise and is non-forcing. 1H – 4H is the “weak freak” hand – 5 trumps and little else.

1H – 2C We go to game as responder by making a delayed-game-raise. This is an example. It leaves a lot unsaid.

Jacoby 2NT is a popular alternative. Under Jacoby, 1H – 2NT shows a flatish game-forcing raise in opener’s major. i.e. Responder has an opening hand, at least 3 trumps and no singleton or void. Purists insist on 4 trumps.

FAQ: What have we given up?
ANS: Every convention takes the place of a bid with another meaning. Whenever someone suggests a convention to you, consider the alternative meaning which is lost. In old style, 1H – 2NT was an opening hand without support. It is more common now for 1H – 2NT to be a limit NT bid showing 10 – 11 HCP and no support. Both styles are rarely used by experienced players because responder is refusing to show suits and it takes up space. As such, we are giving up little by assigning a new meaning to 2NT. The limit NT meaning is retained when responding to a minor or bidding by a passed hand or in a contested auction.

FAQ: Is there a meaning for 1H – 3NT?
ANS: It means whatever you and partner agree that it means. It occupies a lot of space and, as such, needs to be highly specific. 4-3-3-3 shape with a four card minor, side suits stopped and 12 – 14 HCP is one suggestion. It is suggesting 3NT as an alternative contract.

FAQ: What are opener’s rebids after 1H – 2NT?!
ANS: These are the important bits!
- 3C!, 3D! and 3S! are splinters showing a singleton or void in the bid suit and strength unknown.
- 3H! shows 16 – 18 HCP and no shortage
- 3NT! shows good 14 – 15 HCP and no shortage
- 4C, 4D and 4S are all card suits
- 4H shows a minimum and no shortage
- 4NT is RKC Blackwood in hearts

Notes
- Principle of Fast Arrival applies. We have managed to set the suit below level of game. See Lesson 11. “The faster we go to game, the weaker the hand.”
- After the splinter, responder can hopefully decide whether to proceed further. x opposite xxxx or Axxx is good news! See Lesson 17. Of course, opener is unlimited and does not have to respect a sign off from responder.
- Having a second 5 card suit is considered more important and a splinter. Show the suit as a first priority.
- 4C by opener is NOT gerber. Gerber applies only after a natural NT bid.
- If responder returns immediately to 4H after any of opener’s rebids, it shows no interest in going further. If responder bids another suit, it may not be natural. It shows Ace or King of that suit and a better hand.
- Responder is permitted to pass the 3NT rebid as an alternative contract. A rare action.
Try bidding each of these hands. West is dealer

\[\begin{align*}
\text{\begin{tabular}{l}
\text{ANS: What are opener's rebids after 1H – 2NT!} \\
\text{1H – 2NT}\text{, it shows no interest in going further. If responder bids another suit, it may not be natural. It}\text{ shows Ace or King of that suit and a better hand.}
\end{tabular}}
\end{align*}\]
Splinters opposite 1NT opening.
If you’re really into splinters, try this torture:-
1NT – 2H!  3C would be natural and forcing. To
2S – 4C  make opener pick a black suit, we
bid 3C and then 4C. So, this 4C is an auto-splinter.
Of course, responder must have six spades.
1NT – 2C!  4D as a splinter is the only “obvious”
2S – 4D  meaning for the bid

Try bidding these hands. West is dealer.
♠832  ♥4  1H  3S!
♥AQ76  ♥K43  4C  4H
♦KQ3  ♦A976  all pass.
♣K3  ♣A8765

1 Opener likes the splinter and makes a forward
move. Responder gets cold feet after the minimum
 splitted. Trump leads (recommended) will shoot slam
 efforts.

♠AQ76  ♥K954  1H  1S
♥KQ963  ♥A5  4C  4D²
♦AQ7  ♦K843  4H  4NT³
♣6  ♣832  5S  6S

1 Opener can easily reach game with his 4 loser.
2 Responder, with his 8 loser is ready to co-operate.
3RKC Blackwood confirms the slam.

♠K32  ♠5  1H  3S!
♥AQ76  ♥K432  4C  4D²
♦KQ3  ♦A976  4H  4NT
♣K3  ♣A8765

1 Despite the wasted SK, opener wisely makes a
forward move with his extra values.
2 Responder co-operates.
3 Opener doesn’t want to appear too keen.
4 Responder would like to know about HQ. Even
without it, the 9th trump could well be enough.

♠AQ86  ♠5  1D  3S!
♥AT65  ♥KQ2  3NT  pass
♦K74  ♦AQ53
♣Q7  ♣A963

3NT looks to be enough from opener’s point of view.
On a good day 6D makes. On a bad day 5D fails.
The field will be in 3NT at pairs. Go with them here.

♠AQ876  ♥K43  1S  2D¹
♥KT76  ♥A765  2H  4C²
♦K92  ♦AQ743  4D³  4NT
♣6  ♣9  5H  pass⁴

1 Responder could splinter immediately showing his
spade support but doesn’t want to give up on hearts
or even diamonds as possible slams.
2 Opener can hardly believe the splinter when he has
a singleton club too! Still it means all HCP are
working, so he co-operates by bidding 4D
3 Missing an ace and HQ is too much. So, 6H can’t
make. They will certainly lead a club. Annoyingly,
both 6D and 6S can make if both suits break 3-2.
4 For a more detailed treatment, read Max Hardy’s
“Splinters And Other Shortness Bids”
New Minor Forcing

- **AK7** 1C 1H
- **T42** 1D 1H
- **Q2** 1NT 2C!
- **AK6** 3C³ 3S²
- **Q3** 3NT³ P

1C could be genuine, so opener raises. If he held 3 hearts, he would prefer to bid hearts.

2H is 4th Suit Forcing. Opener is showing a lot of minor cards. Responder is worried that the spades are wide open.

3With spades well held, opener’s rebid is clear.

- **632** 1C 1H
- **Q2** 1NT 2S¹
- **A9876** 3H 4NT
- **K32** 5C 5D
- **A5** 6H

NMF works fine here. However, the slam may be better played by the strong hand which is now on the table. It still has many chances.

- **A90** 1C 1H
- **Q2** 1NT 2H
- **K654** 3C³ 3S²
- **Q42** 2NT 3C!
- **Q3** 3NT³ P

1This pass should be automatic.

You only responded because you couldn’t stand 1C, (if opener had rebid 1S, you were going to pass that too). This hand belongs to the opponents. Try not to go too many off. At least opener won’t see your hand!

- **A6** 1D 1H
- **K2** 2NT 3H
- **Q85** 1NT 2H
- **K76** 4H P
- **A952** 4

Not much point in showing a six card suit if opener won’t raise you with two. An easy sequence

- **A75** 1D 2C¹
- **Q83** 2NT 3H²
- **K76** 3NT³
- **K72** 3NT³

1Responder has sufficient values to show the hearts on the next round. So, he bids out his shape.

2Remember, opener wouldn’t show a major unless he holds extra values (If you follow Lesson 7)

3Yes, a spade probably be led after this sequence. As a general principle, it is best to bid out your hands for the partnership to make good decisions, rather than worrying about giving info to the opponents.
Micro Bridge Lesson 19

Rationale
The modern style seeks to bid aggressively when a fit is found. The goal is to make it as difficult as possible for the opponents to judge how high they should be bidding without being exposed to too high a penalty. Truscott is a convention applied by responder after we have opened the bidding with one of a suit and the next hand doubles. 1B – (X) – ?
- Basically, the actions are more aggressive than those we would take without the double:
- 1B (X) XX shows 10+ HCP, no fit
  1NT natural
  2B! 4-6 TP
  3B! 7-9 TP
  2NT! good raise to 3B or higher
  4B pre-emptive
  changes of suit are natural & forcing

- Following the redouble, all doubles are penalties.
- The usual meaning of a 2NT response is lost. It is irrelevant whether it is usually a limit NT bid (10 – 12 HCP) or Jacoby.
- Some care needs to be taken with the redouble. There is little point in chasing a non-vul low level penalty if we are giving up a vul game. Hence, the natural meaning attached to changes of suit.
- Beware of goading them into game with too much aggression. You'll need to know what to do when they bid it!

- Opener's actions after Truscott 2NT. Remember, the 2NT is a raise based mainly on high cards:-
  1. 3B is bid with an absolute minimum
  2. 4B is bid with extra values or a 5 loser.
  3. 3NT is not out of the question with poor trumps and spread high cards. Remember, responder didn't promise a balanced hand.
  4. Do not Pass!

- Bidding after the redouble
  1. The doubler’s partner should bid if it doesn’t take up much space. Everyone knows that he’s broke! See Lesson 13.
  2. Opener should pass unless he can double RHO’s bid for penalties or his hand is extreme – 7 card suit, 5-5 etc and 10 – 11 HCP and not suited for defence.
  3. Opener’s pass of RHO’s bid is forcing. Suppose partner doubles (penalties). Under what circumstances can opener pull the double? If he does, it should show a strong distributional hand where he believes game chances offer a better score than defending. Opener can’t be weak for this – He had the chance to make a weak bid at his previous bid.

- Opener’s actions after 1B – (P) – P – (X)
  These are not Truscott bids but are included here for completeness.
  1. Pass. Nothing more or less than what I promised.
  2. 2B. Pre-emptive. Extra length in B.
  3. 1NT. 18 – 20 HCP balanced, no shortage.
  4. New suit. Confirms both suits are genuine offering partner a real choice.
  5. Redouble. Extra values but not suited for 1NT

Truscott

| ♠K53 | ♠64 | 1H (X) 2H! |
| ♠AKT83 | ♥Q42 | The Truscott weak raise. Opener will pass. |
| ♠K6 | ♠Q972 | |
| ♠654 | ♠8732 | |
| ♠K53 | ♠64 | 1H (X) 3H! |
| ♥AKT83 | ♥Q542 | The Truscott weak jump raise. Opener will pass. |
| ♠K6 | ♠A42 | |
| ♠654 | ♠T983 | |

OK, 4H might make. If trumps are led at every chance, 4H is one off.

| ♠K53 | ♠A642 | 1H (X) 2NT! (P) |
| ♥AKT83 | ♥Q96 | 3H all pass |
| ♠K6 | ♠A983 | |
| ♠654 | ♠87 | Game Sequence |

Happy now? You’ve got them to a contract that you may not defeat. Opener play’s HA and there is a singleton in dummy. How will you get partner to shift to DK? Your card should be suit preference See Lesson 1. Maybe he will then find DK shift when dummy tracks with poor diamonds. DK will be an aggressive action, well justified at teams See Lesson 32. Of course, South might hold SA, making your defence a little different and the DK more difficult to find. From West’s point of view, we may be setting this contract by a trick in each suit.

| ♠J5 | ♠64 | 1H (X) 2H! (P) |
| ♥AKT853 | ♥Q42 | 3H! (?) |
| ♠K6 | ♠Q972 | |
| ♠654 | ♠8732 | Game Sequence |

The Truscott weak raise. Opener is NOT inviting game! He is showing an extra trump. To invite game, he needs to change suit. See Lesson 26. maybe they’ll find their spade game and maybe they won’t. Note that 3H also must be alerted since EW know that it shows an extra heart, not extra strength.

| ♠K76 | ♠543 | 1H (X) 2C1 (P) |
| ♥AQ764 | ♥J7 | 3C2 all pass |
| ♠92 | ♠K6 | |
| ♥K64 | ♥AQ7532 | |

1This doesn’t look a hand to defend, so no XX
2Opener isn’t permitted to pass. Since responder declined to redouble yet has 10+ HCP, it’s hard to see how 2C can be only a 4 card suit. They have a diamond contract their way.

“For a more detailed treatment, see Ron Klinger’s Guide to Better Bridge”
Gambling 3NT

FAQ: Should responder take it out with a void?
ANS: YES. Otherwise, how will he get to hand to run his great suit?
Try bidding each of these hands, In each case, West is dealer and EW are not vulnerable.

\[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
\spadesuit43 & \spadesuitK62 & 3NT! & 5C \\
\heartsuit65 & \heartsuitK72 & 5D & P \\
\spadesuitAKQ6543 & \spadesuitT872 & 3NT! & Pass \\
\spadesuitT652 & \spadesuitT652 & & \\
\end{array}\]

Can they unravel their spade tricks. Maybe not. Will also stick it if they double! I wouldn’t be at all surprised if we make 3NT and 4S is commonly made for NS.

\[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
\spadesuit43 & \spadesuitQ76 & 3NT! & Pass \\
\heartsuit65 & \heartsuitA77 & 3NT! & Pass \\
\spadesuitAKQ6543 & \spadesuitA87 & 3NT! & Pass \\
\spadesuitT97 & \spadesuitT97 & 3NT! & Pass \\
\end{array}\]

When I played a hand like this, I’m sure the whole table could see smoke coming from my nostrils. How could partner leave me in such a filthy contract? It was halfway through the hand before the penny dropped. They can make 4H with ease. 3NT six off was a good score!

This time South opens 1H in front of west.

\[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\spadesuit6 & \spadesuitK4 & (1H) & 3NT! & (P) & ? \\
\heartsuitK74 & \heartsuitT632 & & & & \\
\spadesuitAKQ6543 & \spadesuitA87 & & & & \\
\spadesuitA43 & \spadesuitA87 & & & & \\
\end{array}\]

Responder needs quick tricks for 3NT to make. Mind you, one off is likely to be a good score when they can make 4S. We’re not doubled yet. Let’s stick it. 4D may go off one more. Will we remove 3NTX? I think so. If north, with a singleton heart, puts SQ on the table as the opening lead, the score will not be pretty.

Again, South opens 1H, VUL, in front of west.

\[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\spadesuit62 & \spadesuitAK873 & (1H) & 3H & (4H) & P \\
\heartsuit43 & \heartsuitJ82 & & & & \\
\spadesuitAKQ6543 & \spadesuitT87 & & & & \\
\spadesuitA43 & \spadesuitA87 & & & & \\
\end{array}\]

This time, it has backfired. We have a good sacrifice in 5D available. However, east can’t tell that west has diamonds and not clubs. If it is clubs, 5CX will be too expensive. West must respect the bridge maxim:- “The pre-empt only bids once”

For all he knows, 4H may be in trouble.

\[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\spadesuitA43 & \spadesuitK87 & 3D & 3NT \\
\heartsuitT6 & \heartsuitA93 & & & & \\
\spadesuitQJT5432 & \spadesuitA876 & & & & \\
\spadesuit93 & \spadesuitA7 & & & & \\
\end{array}\]

Surely, this holding should be enough!
Micro Bridge Lesson 21

Rationale

- **♠A87**
  - If you wouldn’t dream of opening this hand in 1st or 2nd seat, your partnership might like to consider the Drury convention. Pairs who pass this hand will frequently want to open this south hand in 3rd or 4th seat.

- **♥K643**
  - The challenge is to avoid overbidding the hand. This is the auction which we don’t want!

- **♦QJ6**
  - The hand certainly belongs to us. The challenge is to stop in 2S.

- **♣AQ53**
  - In the modern style, opener simply rebids his suit to show the light opening. Any other action is natural and promises a genuine opening. (Technically, this is reverse Drury since the meanings are the reverse of Mr Drury’s original scheme). It has been changed as a memory aid to make it the same sequence as the Cue Raise (Lesson 5).

- **♠A72**
  - “Partner do you have a genuine opening or have you opened light in 3rd seat?”

Try bidding these hands. In all cases West is dealer.

- **♣A87**
  - ♥K6
  - ♥A72
  - 2C! 2S! all pass

- **♦QJ43**
  - ♥K9
  - AGAIN, 3S will be a perilous contract.

- **♠K6**
  - **♥K5**
  - **♥A72**
  - **1NT** 2C!

- **♠Q43**
  - **♠K9**
  - 2S! 3S

- **♠QJ4**
  - **♠A87**
  - 873 all pass

- **♣K85**
  - **♣K8**
  - **♣2C! 3D**

- **♣Q343**
  - **♣K9**
  - 4S all pass

- **♣K642**
  - **♣873**

- **♥K7**
  - **♥QJ432**
  - 1D 1S

- **♥Q432**
  - **♥873**
  - 1NT 3S

- **♠K7**
  - **♠Q432**
  - 2C! 3S

- **♠Q43**
  - **♠K9**
  - 4S all pass

- **♣J**
  - Despite the singleton CJ, most would treat this as an opening hand and a good game contract is found. Notice that if you open it a weak 2S or give the weak Drury rebid, the game won’t be found.

- **♠82**
  - **♥T9543**
  - 1S

- **♠94**
  - **♥A72**
  - 2NT pass

- **♣A92**
  - **♣K8**

- **♥Q654**
  - **♥K32**

- **♣J32**
  - **♣K987**
  - 1S

- **♥K53**
  - **♥A72**
  - 2C! 3D

- **♣K76**
  - **♣A4Q32**
  - 4D1 4H1

- **♣K42**
  - **♣--**
  - 4S 4NT2

- **♣J32**
  - **♣K987**
  - 1S

- **♥K53**
  - **♥A72**
  - 2C! 3D

- **♣K76**
  - **♣A4Q32**
  - 4D1 4H1

- **♣K42**
  - **♣--**
  - 4S 4NT2

- **♣J32**
  - **♣K987**
  - 1S

- **♥K53**
  - **♥A72**
  - 2C! 3D

- **♣K76**
  - **♣A4Q32**
  - 4D1 4H1

- **♣K42**
  - **♣--**
  - 4S 4NT2

1Since east already knows west has spade support from the 2C bid, west is in no rush return to 4S. Fast Arrival. 4D and 4H are control bids.

24NT looks silly when east is looking at a void. However one ace would be enough. If it is CA, it takes care of one heart loser. If it is SA, even better. Not this time. Remember west’s trumps could be even worse! Still, 6S might make on CA lead and it is only those wasted values in clubs which make it a poor slam.

A word on ethics

- There is no need to alert 3rd seat openings unless you and partner make it compulsory to open in that seat.
- It is important for the partnership to be squeaky clean. If partner forgets to alert your 2C, he may have forgotten. This is an easy gadget to forget. However, you must assume that he has remembered and bid according to his rebid. However, don’t alert his rebid – you’re not allowed to wake him up! Look at the mess. If the opponents find that they can make a club partial or fail to find the killing defence, they will claim that it is because of partner’s failure to alert your 2C. Even in doubtful cases, the director will award an adjusted score. At best, you’ll be told to stop playing the convention.
- Drury allows you to properly protect light openings.
- If you don’t play Drury but suspect partner has opened light, you had better “bid out your hand”. Maybe west thought for ages over partner’s 1S bid. You can’t assume he has a monster hand – he may have been thinking about dinner. In an established partnership, directors don’t like it if one player underbids their hand at the same time their partner overbids.
Ogust

Try bidding these hands. West is dealer

| ♠754 | ♦AQ63 | 2H | 2NT! |
| ♠AQ7653 | ♥K72 | 3D! | 3NT |
| ♠862 | ♥A93 | P |
| ♦9 | ♣A43 |

East can count 9 tricks before dummy goes down. Notice that 4H might fail despite the strength.

| ♠754 | ♦AK92 | 2H | 4H |
| ♠AQ7653 | ♥K72 |
| ♠862 | ♥3 |
| ♦9 | ♣AK642 |

Sure, 4H can be pre-emptive. Not much point in Ogust if you’re going to bid it anyway! Notice how good a hand is needed by responder to be sure – quick winners. Aces, kings, singletons etc.

| ♠754 | ♦2 | 2H | 4H |
| ♠AQ7653 | ♥K842 |
| ♠862 | ♥A43 |
| ♦9 | ♣T8543 |

They can easily make 5S. Let’s see if they can find it!

| ♠754 | ♦AQ732 | 2H | P |
| ♠AQ7653 | ♥-- |
| ♠862 | ♥A954 |
| ♦9 | ♣AK72 |

This is a bad one for weak twos. Notice that we can probably make 4S. Can west make 2H? Some pairs prevent this mess by not opening 2M with three or more cards in the other major. If you make this agreement, make sure that you warn the opponents with a pre-alert.

| ♠K54 | ♦AQ2 | 2H | 2NT! |
| ♠AQ7653 | ♥87 | 3S! | 4H |
| ♠862 | ♥AKT73 |
| ♦9 | ♥42 |

Don’t use Ogust if you can’t stand the rebid. 4H has good chances.

| ♠94 | ♥AKT53 | 2H | 2NT! |
| ♠AKQ643 | ♥J8 | 3NT! | ? |
| ♦732 | ♥AQ9 |
| ♦53 | ♥A92 |

What to do? If the spades can be ruffed good, slam might make. NT looks certain for exactly 10 tricks. At pairs, 3NT might be the winning action – especially with DQ protected. On balance, will return to 4H and hope to make exactly 11 tricks.

| ♠K43 | ♥A76 | 2H | 2NT! |
| ♠KJT652 | ♥A4 | 3H | ? |
| ♦K2 | ♥9864 |
| ♦87 | ♣AQ92 |

Still difficult to judge, isn’t it? Depending on the location of west’s high cards, there could easily be a loser in every suit.

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**Micro Bridge Lesson 22**

**Rationale**

Pairs who play an opening weak 2H and 2S have an opportunity to investigate game options because the bidding starts a little lower than other pre-empts. While changes of suit after a weak 2M are “to play” unless you and partner agree otherwise, 2NT is commonly used to ask the quality and strength of the weak two. This is called the Ogust convention. Here are opener’s rebids after a weak 2H:-

- 2H 2NT!
- 3C! weak HCP, weak suit
- 3D! weak HCP, strong suit
- 3H! strong HCP, weak suit
- 3S! strong HCP, strong suit
- 3NT! AKQxxx

It is presumed that responder will be able to place the contract or move towards slam after hearing opener’s rebid.

Let’s look at the **characteristics of 2H** when partner is an unpassed hand:-

- **HCP.** This will normally be in the range 6 – 10 HCP. 6 – 8 HCP is considered “weak”; 9 – 10 is “strong”

- A strong suit is one headed by two of the top three honours. The idea is that responder may consider 3NT as playable opposite a “strong” suit and holding Hx with the missing top honour. Even the “weak” suit should be no worse than Axxxxx or KJxxxx

- It is acceptable to open weak 2M with a seven card suit where the hand is too weak to open 3M
- Opposite and unpassed hand, a weak 2M should have no outside ace, no void and not 4 cards in the other major.

- When partner is a passed hand, the rules are out the window. After all, the person on your left has a good hand. Now, there are no restrictions. Not vul, a great five card suit should be considered!
- With 11 HCP and a six card suit in 1st or 2nd seat, it is generally best to open at the one level.

- Using Ogust allows us to bid 3M! as a pre-emptive raise. “We have 9 trumps, so we bid to the 3 level”.

**FAQ:** What are we giving up to use Ogust?

**ANS:** A natural meaning doesn’t make sense. We don’t want to play 2NT just because we have no fit. Dummy will be useless. A popular alternative to Ogust is to play 2NT as a **Feature Ask.** i.e. It asks opener to bid a new suit if the ace or king in it is held. If you play this convention, it is presumed that your original suit will always be sound.

- **Defence to weak 2M**
  While not part of the Ogust convention, pairs need to be ready for the opponents opening weak 2M. The standard treatment is similar to when they open 1M:–
  1. Suit bids have overcall strength.
  2. Double is takeout. See lebensohl in Lesson 23.
  3. 2NT is natural, 15 – 18 HCP, their suit stopped.
  4. 3NT is natural, 19 – 20 HCP.
  5. **Cue Bid** is strong Michaels.
Rationale
This lesson extends our handling of interference by the opponents when we open 1NT. In Lesson 6, we developed the idea of playing "system off" i.e Suit bids are to play, etc. This only works reasonably well. There are times when we would like to make more ongoing bids. e.g.

Key cards:

| ♠QJT54 | 1NT (2H) |
| ♠KJ9 | How do we best continue? |
| ♠Q73 | Under Lesson 6, we would bid 3S |
| ♠54 | forcing with a 5 card suit. The downside is that opener will be unaware that we have a good heart holding. He might be obliged to bid 4S with just a doubleton because of an unsatisfactory heart holding. Lebensohl (LEB) handles many of these problems. |

After 1NT – (2H) – ? it works like this:-

• X is always penalties
• New suit at the 2 level is to play”. 1NT – (2H) – 2S. An immediate bid of a new suit at the 3 level below the intervening suit is natural and forcing, stopper status unknown. e.g. 1NT – (2H) – 3D!
• An immediate bid at the 3 level of a suit ABOVE the intervening bid denies a stopper and is a 5 card suit and is forcing. e.g. 1NT – (2H) – 3S!
• An immediate cue bid of their suit is Stayman-without-a-stopper. 1NT – (2H) – 3H
• An immediate bid of 3NT denies a stopper. Responder needs to have somewhere to go if opener has to pull it. 1NT – (2H) – 3NT!

All other sequences commence with a response of 2NT!. This obliges opener to bid 3C!. After 3C:-

• Responder will pass or correct to a suit lower than the overcalled suit if responder wants to play there:-
  1NT (2H) 2NT! (P)
  3C! (P) 3H (P)

• To go via 2NT to a suit above the intervening suit, promises a stopper and shows a 5 card suit and is forcing. The slow auction. e.g.
  1NT (2H) 2NT! (P)
  3C! (P) 3S! (P)

• Going via 2NT to 3NT shows a stopper. Again with the “slow shows” auction. e.g.
  1NT (2H) 2NT! (P)
  3C! (P) 3NT! (P)

• Notice that we are robbed of all our invitational bids – quite a price, but please don’t try to find a way around it.

• When the opponents play Pottage (see Lesson 30), 2C by them shows any one-suited hand. We play:-
  1..any suit bid by responder is to play
  2..X shows clubs

Lebensohl

3..Otherwise responder and opener pass. When the suit is exposed, commence the Leb sequence again.
4..When the opponents are showing two suits, our bids pivot around the known suit. If both suits are known, our bids pivot around the lower suit.

If the opponents play DONT (see lesson 30), double by them shows any one suited hand. It is suggested that we play the same treatment as when they double us for penalties. System off or pass and then resume when clarified. Leb would then be available.

REdoubles is for REscue in the REopening seat only.

We play “system off” after we overcall 1NT. No Leb.

Lebensohl after their weak twos

Our immediate double of their weak two is strong takeout.

Many writers regard this as a more useful than Leb after our 1NT. It works like this:-

• 2S to play
• 3m! – 9+HCP, may be 4 card suit forcing
• 3H – 9+HCP, “Stayman” without a stopper
• 3S – 9+HCP, 5 card suit
• 3NT! – values for game, half a stopper

As before, (2H) – X – (P) – 2NT! – forces 3C from the doubler (unless the doubler is v.strong with his own suit, in which case he bids it). After the 3C bid partner:-

• Passes to play in 3C
• Converts it to a suit lower than the opener’s suit which is WEAK and to play

Bids 3H which is “stayman” with a stopper
Bids 3S which is 9+HCP, 5 card suit and shows a stopper
Bids 3NT which is to play with a stopper

Again, the theory is “Slow Shows”

In each of the following, west opens 1NT and north overcalls 2H. Complete the auctions:-

| ♠A9 | ♠KQ54 | 1NT (2H) 2NT! (P) |
| ♥A75 | ♥QT2 | 3C! (P) 3H (P) |
| ♠AT62 | ♠K7 | 3NT |
| ♠A54 | ♠Q862 | |

With 4 spades & a stopper, responder goes via 2NT.

| ♠A9 | ♠KQ632 | 1NT (2H) 3S! (P) |
| ♥JT6 | ♥9 | 4C (P) 4D (P) |
| ♠AQ94 | ♠KT32 | 5D |
| ♠AJ32 | ♠Q65 | |

Responder is forcing with 5 spades and no stopper. If opener had hated diamonds, he would return to 4S.

In the following auction South opens a weak 2H:-

| ♠AQ95 | ♠K62 | (2H) X (P) 2NT! |
| ♥43 | ♥KJ9 | (P) 3C (P) 3NT! |
| ♠AK43 | ♠765 | |
| ♠A62 | ♠K984 | |

The slow auction to 3NT shows the stopper.
Micro Bridge Lesson 24

Support Doubles and Redoubles

Rationale
This is your opening hand after the following auction: -

♠ K63 1D (P) 1S (2H)
♥ J85
♦ AT98
♣ AJ3

You haven't got 4 card support for responder's spades. You haven't got a heart stopper and you haven't got a rebid! Your probable action – and it's not an unreasonable one – is to pass. Then, responder will have a problem. Should he be competing? If so, what with? Even a five card spade suit rebid could work out badly if opener doesn't hold three. Support doubles allow opener to act. These are doubles by opener when the opposition have overcalled at the 1 or 2 level. Opener shows 3 card support for responder's 1 level suit, provided the suit can then be bid at the 2 level. e.g. Here

1D (P) 1H (1S) X

This shows 3 hearts. Note that, if you weren't playing support X, this double would be penalties since there is only one unbid suit. It is unlikely that you would want that meaning.

1C (P) 1H (X) XX

Redouble shows 3 hearts.

1C (1D) 1H (2D) X

Double shows 3 hearts because partner bid at the 1 level and can still rebid at the 2 level.

1C (P) 1H (2D) X shows 3 hearts because partner bid at the 1 level and can still rebid at the 2 level.

1C (P) 1H (3D) X

Double is penalties. Partner can't rebid at 2 level.

- Sometimes, opener has to decide which is more important – to rebid 1NT to show values and stopper or to make a support double. Judgment call.
- Pass by opener will usually deny the ability to make a support double. i.e. Only a doubleton is held.
- 1C (P) 1H (2D) P
- Pass shows a doubleton heart at best. Opener should not rebid 2NT here with a balanced minimum.
- The support double or redouble should be preferred by opener to rebidding a five card suit.

Try bidding these hands. West is dealer

♠ K7   ♠A9432 1C (1D) 1S (2D)
♥ A962   ♥K43 P1 (P) 2S2
♦ 74   ♦Q86 all pass
♣ KQ432   ♣87

Opener has no action available. 3C would require 6

2Responder is not prepared to let them play in their fit at the two level.

♠ 8   ♠Q93 1D (P) 1H (1S)
♥ KQ62   ♥A943 2H1 (2S) P (P)
♦ AQT4   ♦532 3H2 all pass
♣ JT32   ♣987

Bidding 2H shows a four card raise

2Bit of a push. 2S stands to make.

♠ KQ4   ♠765 1C (P) 1H (1S)
♥ Q2   ♥A987 1NT1 all pass
♦ AT54   ♦Q76
♣ K432   ♣765

1NT is a better description than a 2C rebid.

♠ 432   ♠AJ9 1D (P) 1H (1S)
♥ AQ2   ♥T943 X (P) 3NT1
♦ A432   ♦KQ65
♣ K76   ♣A2

1East knows there is a diamond fit (see Lesson 15)

However, 9 tricks are easier than 11.

♠ AQ9   ♠A43 1D (P) 1H (1S)
♥ KQ4   ♥AT872 3NT1 all pass
♦ AT43   ♦987
♣ A43   ♣QJ65

1Opener has a choice of rebids. The support double can't cost. The unilateral 3NT seems unjustified except to show the HCP. Better to make the support X, then follow with 3NT, choice of contracts.

♠ K93   ♠QT42 1D (P) 1S (X)
♥ AT6   ♥74 XX (2H) all pass
♦ Q32   ♦T
♣ K43   ♣AT8752

Yes, we may make 3C. The system is not perfect.

♠ 6   ♠A432 1D (1S) X (P)
♥ AQT7   ♥K864 3S1 (P) 4NT2 (P)
♦ AK93   ♦QJ8 5C2 (P) 5D2 (P)
♣ AQ42   ♥K53 5S3 (P) 6H

1Splinter. Responder can see all values must be working. 2S would be a stopper ask!

2RKC. Opener has 3 aces and HQ

♠ 6   ♠A432 1D (1S) X (P)
♥ AQT7   ♥K864 3S1 (P) 4NT2 (P)
♦ AK93   ♦QJ8 5C2 (P) 5D2 (P)
♣ AQ42   ♥K53 5S3 (P) 6H

1Opener has rebid choices of pass, 1NT, 2C or X

The support X looks to be best option.

2Responder reverts to his suit.
Long and Short Suit Trial Bids

Rationale

1H – 2H This used to be the only invitational sequence. It didn’t take long for players to realize that this should be just a general strength enquiry. Loser devotees realize that 1H-2H is a 9 or 10 loser. 3H by opener is a 5 loser. There should be a meaning attached to a change of suit after major suit agreement.

• After minor suit agreement, most pairs treat a new suit as NT probe, showing that the new suit is held. Partner does the same below 3NT

• Trial Bids occur when a major suit fit has been found at the two level. The two situations are:
  1M – 2M or 1B – 1M
  2M – ?

• After one of these sequences, to make a short suit trial (SST) bid, bid the short suit directly. After 1S-2S has been bid, 3C, 3D, and 3H are short suit trial bids. However, after 1H-2H has been bid, 2NT is short trial in spades, 3C and 3D are the usual short suit trial bids.

1H – 2H This is how we make a short suit trial in clubs.

• To make a long suit trial (LST) bid, start by bidding the next higher bid, ie bid 2S over 1H-2H, or bid 2NT over 1S-2S. Partner is required to puppet with the next higher bid (2NT or 3C respectively). Then you bid the long suit trial suit. The main challenge is to remember that the next bid up is reserved! e.g.:
  1S – 2S
  2NT – 3C! This is how we make a long suit trial in Diamonds.

Most of the LSTs are as clear as that. However,

• 1S – 2S
  2NT! – 3C! This is how we make a long suit trial in clubs. It was not possible
  3S! – ?
  to bid the club suit.

and

• 1H – 2H
  2S! – 2NT!
  3H! – ?
  This is how we make a long suit trial in spades. It was not possible
  to bid the spade suit.

When responding to a trial bid:

• SST – accept if you have few wasted high cards
• LSS
  0 or 1 loser in trial suit, bid game
  2 losers in trial suit, bid game if max no of points
  3 losers in trial suit, forget it.

• The choice of whether to make a long or short suit trial bid depends on the hand, but all things being equal you should favour the short suit trial bid.

Cue Bidding (See Lesson 34)

• New suits above game are cue bids looking for slam
• New suits after a game forcing suit agreement are cue bids. e.g.

Try bidding these hands. West is dealer:-

1M – 2NT!
2C! – 2S
2D! – 2S

Jacoby
3S
3S

Benjamin Twos with a positive response.

\[\text{\#AQ42, JQ6, 1S, 2S}\]
\[\text{\#K3, A9874, 3S, 4S}\]
\[\text{\#AQ4, K86}\]
\[\text{\#K74, 86}\]

\[1\text{A quantitative raise. Do you have a maximum or a nine loser?}\]

\[\text{\#AQ432, K76, 1S, 2S}\]
\[\text{\#A62, K942, 3D, 4S}\]
\[\#8, 7643\]
\[\#A97, QJ\]

\[1\text{SST in diamonds by bidding suit directly.}\]
\[2\text{great – rubbish opposite opener’s singleton}\]

\[\text{\#AQ432, J95, 1S, 2S}\]
\[\text{\#A432, QJ42, 3H, 3S}\]
\[\#8, 873\]
\[\#A97, Q2\]

\[1\text{SST in hearts}\]
\[2\text{Despite a maximum, the wasted values make game a poor bet.}\]

\[\text{\#AQ43, K52, 1S, 2S}\]
\[\text{\#A432, KJ6, 2NT, 3C}\]
\[\text{\#K3, QT2, 3S, P}\]
\[\text{\#A432, 987}\]

\[1\text{start of LST and puppet}\]
\[2\text{long losers in hearts}\]
\[3\text{Good news – responder’s shortage opposite losers}\]

\[\text{\#AQ43, KJ6, 1S, 2S}\]
\[\text{\#A432, QT6, 2NT, 3C}\]
\[\text{\#K3, QT2, 3S}\]
\[\text{\#A432, 987}\]

\[1\text{start of LST and puppet}\]
\[2\text{long losers in clubs}\]
\[3\text{bad news – 3 losers in clubs}\]

Sometimes science gets in the way. After this auction, you will certainly get a club lead keeping you to 9 tricks. Without the LST, you might get away with 4S by pitching clubs on diamonds.

\[\text{\#6, AQ4, 1D, 3D}\]
\[\text{\#AQ54, KT632, 3NT}\]
\[\text{\#K564, T987}\]

\[1\text{not a trial! Shows suit is held for NT}\]
\[2\text{Worth a shot but no guarantees. 5m are not great}\]

\[\text{\#AQ64, J32, 1S, 2S}\]
\[\text{\#6, KQ72, 3H, 3S}\]
\[\text{\#AQ43, 76}\]
\[\text{\#K86, QT32}\]

\[1\text{SST hearts}\]
\[2\text{values appear poorly placed}\]
Micro Bridge Lesson 26

Game Invite in Traffic

Rationale
1H (1S) 2H (2S)

This is a fairly common sequence at the bridge table, isn’t it? All too frequently, it’s back to your bid before you know it. Aggressively raising partner’s overcall is now a standard part of everyone’s armoury. See lesson 5 on the Cue Raise. The first problem that you have is one of tempo. It’s important to try to make your bids at the same speed whenever possible. This time it won’t be easy. Certainly, you are entitled to think. However, if you do, your partner may be poorly placed to make his bid. Partner’s actions may be scrutinized closely - particularly if you think long and hard and then come up with a pass. Your best hope of avoiding such a problem is to PLAN. Before you make that 1H bid, think of the rebids which you might make that 1H bid, think of the rebids which you might want to make. Will I jump? Will I give a choice of contract?

• Here are some hands to decide your rebid after the above auction.

▲652 Your rebid is “Pass”. This says “Partner, I have no more or less than what you could reasonably expect.”

♥AKT97
♦K87
♠K64

▲652 Rebid 3HI. This shows an extra trump, NOT extra values. It is not an invitation for partner to bid game with a maximum.

♥AKT972
♦J8
♠K6

▲652 Double. This is not penalties but is a game invite based mainly on high cards. Partner is expected to bid 3H or 4H but a penalty pass is OK with trumps, the right cards and vul. Unlike here.

♥AKT972
♦K8
♠AK

▲65 Rebid 3DI! This is a game invite based on shape. It may not be natural. Partner rebids 3H or 4H

♥AKT972
♦K876
♠A

▲6542 Rebid 4H. Partner is short of spades. Will they lead a trump? What will I do if they bid 4S? Think I’ll defend....

♥AKT972
♦AK8
♠--

▲AQ9
♥AKT97
♦K87
♠K6

▲A94 Rebid 3NT. The bid I was always going to make. 9 tricks may be easier than 10. Partner can pass or correct to 4H.

♥AKT97
♦K87
♠K6

▲2NT This is a mild game invite, showing about this hand. Partner can pass, bid 3H, 3NT or 4H.

Look how much tougher this is:-
1H (1S) 2H (3S!) ?

3S is a pre-emptive raise. This time, you have only “pass”, “double”, “3NT” or “4H” as your options. Most pairs still play double as the game invite. Responder will bid 4H with a good 2H response or a defenceless hand with an extra trump. Otherwise, he will pass and hope!

• Sometimes, you will want to invite game when the opposition have opened the bidding. The Cue Raise lesson covers a lot of this. However there are other hands.

(1H) X (2H) 2S
(3H) X (P) 3S

Some pairs play this as very weak. See Truscott.

This a considered a Free Bid. i.e. There was no obligation to bid. Typically, it would show about 5 – 9 HCP and 5 spades. X, called a “Responsive Double”, would have continued the takeout and have only 4 spades. Discuss this with partner.

This is the game invite. 3S would just be competitive. Remember, partner already knows you have spades from your first disciplined double. You need a reason to do something other than pass.

3S is enough partner.

(1D) X (2D) 4D (P) ?

Again with their rubbish 2D raise. Although cue bid of their suit is frequently a stopper ask, that is not the case here!. 3D instead of 4D would leave that rare option open. The doubler can’t be expected to have a stopper since he should be short in diamonds. Expect the 4D bidder to hold BOTH majors and unsure which one to bid. After all, the doubler might be 5-4, 4-4 or 4-3 in the majors. Yes, X instead of 3 or 4D would have been takeout. However, the 4D bidder doesn’t want to get tangled if opener bids more diamonds.

• Responding NT to partner’s overcall

(1H) 1S (P) 1NT 9 – 11 HCP
2NT 12 – 15HCP
3NT 16+ HCP

Since the 1S may be quite weak, the cheapest NT must show more than the values required to respond 1NT to an opening bid. Of course, you should not have more than a doubleton spade (Kx is great!) and the hearts will need to be well stopped.

• Change of Suit by Advancer

Advancer is the name given to the overcaller’s partner. e.g. (1H) 1S (P) 2C

What does 2C mean? It means whatever you and partner decide that it means. Without discussion, it would be played as forcing, saying “I have the value for a 2C overcall and little support for spades. What can you do?”

• The 1S bidder will rebid his suit or bid 2D (2nd suit) or 2NT or 3C with less than an opening hand. Do not pass unless partner knows that it is an option.

• With an opening hand, the 1S bidder needs to jump, or bid 2H as a stopper ask.
Here is a sequence:-

West  East  S  W  N  E

▲A97  ▲KQ32  1H  P  P  X
♥KJ65  ♥32  1NT  P  P  P
♦K87  ♦Q32
♣J54  ♣AQJ3

FAQ: Why didn't West jump?
ANS: The problem is that East, in the passout seat, will sometimes double with less than an opening hand in order to avoid leaving them in 1H. West doesn't want to punish partner for giving a push. So, a fairly reasonable 3NT has been missed. We know where the HCP are and south will be on lead a lot. Probably get 3S+2H+1D+3C.

• This problem can be avoided by insisting that the balancing double is ALWAYS an opening hand, except when a passed hand. Now, West will jump to 2NT and East will probably bid 3NT.

But now, what about this one?

West  East  S  W  N  E

▲A97  ▲KQ32  1H  P  P  P
♥K765  ♥32
♦K87  ♦J32
♣K54  ♣A632

Although some East will overcall 1S with a four card suit, most east have no viable action. OK, 1H will probably have difficulty. However, as a general policy, we seek to make them play above the 1 level. In Lesson 6, we talked about a balancing 1NT. We indicated that it showed 10 – 12 HCP and their suit stopped. Of course, the 1NT must be alerted.

• This problem can be avoided by insisting that the balancing double is ALWAYS an opening hand, except when a passed hand. Now, West will jump to 2NT and East will probably bid 3NT.

FAQ: Why would we want to accept such a change?
ANS: We are bidding 1NT on the basis that partner has some HCP but failed to take any action. The most logical reason for this is that partner has their suit! It is therefore reasonable logic that partner has the knowledge that partner has an opening hand will be times when both actions are right.

FAQ: Is West supposed to pull the 1NT if a stopper is not held?
ANS: No. There's no reason to presume that the 1NT doesn't have a stopper. West should make their natural bids. Consistent with these notes, EW will be playing “System Off”.

FAQ: Can east ever make a takeout double with less than an opening hand?
ANS: Yes. If east is a passed hand, a double with the right shape is a better plan than bidding 1NT without a stopper. In the above hand, if east is a passed hand, he should double and not bid 1NT. West then has the choice – to defend 1HX or to bid 1NT. Choosing the latter will allow for east having a little less than what is held here. As a passed hand, east's bidding reverts to the more standard treatment of Lesson 6.

• So, as an unpassed hand, we need a new collection of balancing bids. Don't accept them unless you are sure you and partner can remember them!

Balancing Bids

FAQ: Do we ever pass them out at the 1 level?
ANS: Yes, but not very often! If we have five of their suit, partner is clearly short of their suit but failed to take action. It may be because he has nothing! The hand is likely to be unplayable. Let them have it. Also, be wary when the opponents have just one “big” bid. You may jockey them to a better spot.

• Balancing with NT hands

..1NT promises 10 – 12 HCP, stopper not promised.
..X and rebid NT shows 13 – 16 HCP, with stopper.
..2NT is natural, shows 17 – 19 HCP with stopper.

• Overcalls

All overcalls show less than an opening hand.

• Cue Bid of their suit

This is Michaels.

• Double

Double and bid own suit, no longer shows 16+ HCP. It shows an opening hand and five card suit. Since our balancing double is no longer disciplined, partner must be careful not to take rash action. Of course, the knowledge that partner has an opening hand will help in the decisions.

Try bidding these hands after South has opened 1H

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>1H</th>
<th>1NT</th>
<th>3H</th>
<th>3C</th>
<th>3NT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠A86</td>
<td>♠K95</td>
<td>(1H)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>(P)</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥K72</td>
<td>♥654</td>
<td>OK. We’ve missed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥K62</td>
<td>♥A55</td>
<td>an easy 1NT. There</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥J32</td>
<td>♥Q765</td>
<td>have to be limits!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♠A62</td>
<td>♠K95</td>
<td>(1H)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>(P)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥K72</td>
<td>♥43</td>
<td>3NT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥K62</td>
<td>♥A54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥J32</td>
<td>♥K54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowing east holds an opening hand, 3NT is bid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>1H</th>
<th>1NT</th>
<th>2H</th>
<th>3NT</th>
<th>3C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠A86</td>
<td>♠K95</td>
<td>(1H)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>(P)</td>
<td>2C!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥K72</td>
<td>♥3</td>
<td>(P)</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>(P)</td>
<td>3C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥K62</td>
<td>♥A54</td>
<td>(P)</td>
<td>3NT</td>
<td>all pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥J32</td>
<td>♥Q54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, west cue bids their suit in the hope of hearing about spades. No such luck. 3NT is likely to fail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>1H</th>
<th>1NT</th>
<th>2H</th>
<th>3NT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠A86</td>
<td>♠K95</td>
<td>(1H)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥K72</td>
<td>♥3</td>
<td>(P)</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥K64</td>
<td>♥A9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥J32</td>
<td>♥54</td>
<td>2NT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2NT is 17 – 19. 3H is Stayman. No luck. 3NT will be quite playable since south has almost all the HCP. Just watch for them in the play of the hand.
Ghestem Two Suited Overcalls

Rationale
In these lessons, we have discussed a more popular set of two suited overcalls – Michaels (Lesson 2)
An alternative set of two suited overcalls popular on the Sunshine Coast are the Ghestem Two Suited Overcalls. The power of Ghestem is that both suits are known immediately. Partner is well placed to make high level decisions.

- Ghestem is used either very weak or very strong. It is not used in the range 10 – 15 HCP. With the weak option, the ghestem bidder never bids again. With the strong option, the ghestem bidder will bid again. With 5–5 or 6–6 shape, the ghestem bidder may revalue the strength of the hand upwards. Vulnerability needs to be considered.
- Two suited Overcalls are not recommended when the values are in the side suits.
- Ghestem is not used over pre-empts. Revert to Michaels Cue Bid.
- If you don’t wind up as declarer, you might end up with a poor score. A good declarer will pick the exact layout of the cards.

FAQ: What are the ghestem bids?
S H D C
Think of the suits in this familiar layout.
- Cue bid of their suit shows the extremes e.g. (1S) – 2S. Cross out spades. The extreme suits left are clubs & hearts.
- 2NT Jump Overcall shows lower two suits e.g. (1S) – 2NT! shows clubs & diamonds.
- Jump shift to 3C shows the unbid suits e.g. (1S) – 3C! shows hearts & diamonds
- The bids are different over a 1C opening. Since 1C is commonly short, 2C is natural. So,
  - (1C) – 3C shows the extremes, D & S
  - (1C) – 2D! weak jump overcall in 2D is NOT available. This sequence shows the unbid suits.

FAQ: What bids are lost using ghestem
ANS: weak jump overcall to 3C and 2D. This is quite a loss. However, ghestem supporters don’t mind.

FAQ: Can you use ghestem in the reopening seat?
ANS: Yes. However, you may be using a natural 2NT(17 – 19) as in Lesson 27
- Defence to Ghestem e.g. 1H – (3C1) Double. Use this to show clubs or, by agreement, suggesting penalties and showing a penalty double of at least one of their suits.
  - 3D Cue bid of their lower suit. Good raise to 3H+
  - 3H Not invitational. Good raise to 2H.
  - 3S splinter
  - 4C natural and forcing
  - 4D Splinter
  - 4H The usual weak freak
- If the ghestem bidders win the auction, trump leads are often good – unless it is a singleton or you hold AK in another suit.

Ethical Note
If partner forgets your ghestem bid, you will know because he has failed to alert your 3C or 2D bid. Do not attempt a rescue! You are not permitted to use the alerting system to save yourself. Similarly, if you bid 3C and mean clubs, you will be aware of your mistake when partner alerts.

You must bid on the assumption that partner has understood your bid. This can lead to some horrific penalties when you are doubled. Even when you land on your feet, directors will award an adjusted score if the opponents are misinformed.

If you are declarer, make sure that you correct any misinformation before the opening lead. It won’t help much but it is your duty under the laws.

Try bidding these hands. NS vul. South is dealer and opens as shown:-
- ♦K6543 ♠A9872 (1H) 2H (X) 4S ♥92 ♦6 (X) all pass
- ♦5 ♠J32 They just missed 6D/6H
- ♠Q4J32 ♦T876
- ♦8 ♠AKQ53 (1D) 2NT! (P) 3C ♥A9432 ♦8 all pass
- ♠63 ♠J8742
- ♠K7432 ♦96

Sometimes WE get caught. Don’t consider passing 2NT. It will be unplayable. They don’t know how bad a position that we’re in.

- ♠AKQ54 ♦73 (1C) 2D! (X) P1
- ♥AKT832 ♦Q6 (P) 4H2 all pass
- ♦8 ♠T973
- ♠62 ♠J8743
- ♠E west shows equal length in west’s suits.
- ♠6 This is a huge hand. 4H has chances.
- ♦8 ♠T74 (1S) 3C! (3S1) P2
- ♥KT543 ♠82 all pass
- ♠Q765 ♦93
- ♠94 ♠AKQ7632
- 1shaded raise – good raise to 2S
- 2east is not interested in red suits
- ♠KQT42 ♦6 (1H) 1S1 (2H) P2
- ♥A3 ♦654 (P) 3D3 all pass
- ♠A6543 ♠QT92
- ♦6 ♠A8732
- 1With this strength, we need to bid our suits. 2East is failure to support spades (Lesson 5) shows three card support is not held
- 3Too good to pass out 2H. Is this luck or good judgment? East doesn’t have majors. So, 3D looks to have good chances.
- ♥KT432 ♦J98 (1D1) P2 (1H) P
- ♥76 ♦T532 (1NT) all pass
- ♠A9432 ♦Q76 1Precision
- ♥T ♠AQ8 2We’re fixed. Not happy.
- ♠QT743 ♦862 (1H) P (2H) 2NT!
- ♥KT7432 ♥− (X) 3D all pass
- ♠A9 ♠KQ432 West shouldn’t bid with
- ♦2 ♠A9732 hearts. Pity we miss 2S
Multi Two Bids

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3D</th>
<th>To Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3H</td>
<td>To Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3S</td>
<td>To Play, pre-emptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3NT</td>
<td>To Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4S</td>
<td>To Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After 2S – 2NT, opener rebids as follows:-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>S &amp; C, minimum (lower HCP = lower bids)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>S &amp; D, minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3H</td>
<td>S &amp; C, maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3S</td>
<td>S &amp; D, maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If opposition interfere, X is penalties. 3C and 4C are pass or correct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2NT – 5-5 in the minors, 6 –10 HCP

All responses are “to play”.

Try bidding these hands. West is dealer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>♠</th>
<th>♦</th>
<th>♥</th>
<th>♣</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Q532</td>
<td>2D1</td>
<td>2H2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKT54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>932</td>
<td>A972</td>
<td>1weak 2M or 21-22 bal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>AK63</td>
<td>2pass or correct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

East is not worth an enquiry. Opposite a weak 2H, 8 tricks will be enough. However, if west was a weak 2S bid, east would bid 4S after the correction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>♠</th>
<th>♦</th>
<th>♥</th>
<th>♣</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>T72</td>
<td>2D</td>
<td>3S1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKT654</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Q32</td>
<td>4H all pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>932</td>
<td>JT654</td>
<td>2east bids to number of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>2trumps. Note that east must have both lengths to be so pre-emptive. Will they find 6S or 6C after this “snow” job? I doubt it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>♠</th>
<th>♦</th>
<th>♥</th>
<th>♣</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AKT43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2S1</td>
<td>3C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>K943</td>
<td>all pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Q32</td>
<td>1spades &amp; minor, 6-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT432</td>
<td>9876</td>
<td>2pass or correct. Nothing could be worse than 2S. Easy bid with this shape. Using 2NT might get us too high.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>♠</th>
<th>♦</th>
<th>♥</th>
<th>♣</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Q654</td>
<td>2H1</td>
<td>P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AK654</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>hearts &amp; another, 6–10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Not a good board for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JT432</td>
<td>KQ67</td>
<td>the system. 2S by east would be pass or correct. That could be OK or not. 2NT could elicit a 3D rebid – terrible. As the cards lie, west would have rebid 3C which is great. Why pass? (a) we’re not doubled (b) west might be 6-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>♠</th>
<th>♦</th>
<th>♥</th>
<th>♣</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AKT95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2S1</td>
<td>2NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>AQ42</td>
<td>3NT1</td>
<td>6C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>AK49</td>
<td>1spades &amp; minor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K6543</td>
<td>AQ76</td>
<td>2PASS OR CORRECT!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

East doesn’t dare bid clubs below the level at which he wants to play. Scary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>♠</th>
<th>♦</th>
<th>♥</th>
<th>♣</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>K642</td>
<td>2D</td>
<td>3H1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQ764</td>
<td>J32</td>
<td>3NT2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KQ7</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>Presuming weak 2M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQ6</td>
<td>J73</td>
<td>221 – 22 balanced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OK, we missed our 5-3 heart fit. Either game could be tricky.
Rationale
Defending against 1NT is often a hit and miss affair. A lucky or unlucky lead can make all the difference – declarer only needs just over half the tricks. Even one off not vul will be a good score for declarer. Evidently, we can make a part score – often 1NT. Sitting on the fence with a long solid heart suit to lead can also work out badly. You pass with a warm glow but the auction comes back to you with them in 2S. What are you going to do now?

Having been burnt with single-suited hands where there is no fit, many pairs prefer to compete with two suited hands unless they have a six carder. Rest assured that many, many gadgets have been tried. If there was a “right” answer, we’d all be playing it! Here are two reasonably common conventions.

• DONT
  • In either seat, double of their 1NT shows an opening hand and an unknown six card suit. Partner’s options are
    - bid 2C which is pass or correct to play.
    - bid own suit which is six carder without tolerance
    - pass for penalties showing balance of points
  • In either seat, suit bids are SPLASH - Suit Plus A Suit Higher. May be 5-4 either way.
  • After (1NT) – X – (2B), our double is penalties
  • After (1NT) – X – (XX) – 2C
    2C is own suit, otherwise pass.
  • Notice that we have given up on a double as strictly penalties. Defending 1NT with a big balanced hand isn’t much fun anyway. You are forever on lead and have to concede tricks. To catch them, both defenders need values. Then, they haven’t got a prayer.
  • If 1NT never gets doubled, pairs will start making it themselves.

In each of the following south has dealt and opened 1NT – X. Complete the auctions.

Micro Bridge Lesson 30

DONT & Capp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AKT43</td>
<td>♠A43</td>
<td>♠T96</td>
<td>(1NT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K6</td>
<td>♥K6</td>
<td>♥J75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>♦93</td>
<td>♦KQT5432</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQT876</td>
<td>♠AQT876</td>
<td>♥2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹You’re allowed to use judgment. East deduces that west will pass his forced 2C bid. No thanks. 2D from such a weak hand must be better. They’ve missed a heart part score.

• Cappeletti aka Pottage, Hamilton
  • Double is penalties.
  • 2C! shows a one suited hand (6+). Strength is not discussed but penalty doubles are never far away. So, vul must be considered. Partner is expect to bid 2D which is then pass or correct. If partner bids something other than 2D it is own suit & is “to play”.
  • 2D! shows both majors. Because the exact suits are known, 5-4 either way is OK. If 2D is doubled, partner passes to show equal length in majors.
  • 2H! shows hearts and a minor, 5-5. To find the minor, partner bids 2NT!
  • 2S! shows spades and a minor. As above
  • 2NT! shows both minors

In each of the following south has dealt and opened 1NT. Complete the auctions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K3</td>
<td>♠K3</td>
<td>♠874</td>
<td>(1NT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>♥85</td>
<td>♥QJ84</td>
<td>(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKT643</td>
<td>♦AKT643</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>¹one suiter, suit unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K62</td>
<td>♦K62</td>
<td>♦Q743</td>
<td>²forced. Not enough HCP to pass. 2D is predictable!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²forced. Not enough HCP to pass. 2D is predictable!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AK432</td>
<td>♠AK432</td>
<td>♠876</td>
<td>(1NT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>♥6</td>
<td>♥T943</td>
<td>(P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>♦32</td>
<td>♦9875</td>
<td>³Clubs and suit higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AK54</td>
<td>♠AK54</td>
<td>♦A</td>
<td>²nothing could be worse than clubs!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²Notice that when the 2nd suit is spades, it should be a decent suit. There will be nowhere to go if they double. They have 26 HCP. In the absence of anything better, trump leads continue to be suitable against two suited hands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Bid</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AK943</td>
<td>♠AK943</td>
<td>♠J6</td>
<td>(1NT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R86</td>
<td>♥R86</td>
<td>♥T943</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A8</td>
<td>♠A8</td>
<td>♦J432</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A43</td>
<td>♦A43</td>
<td>♦T75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²Sure, you have the best hand at the table. No reason to bid. Lead a low spade and defend.
Rationale
A knowledge of how a typical pairs game is scored is useful to help you understand the tactics involved. Let’s consider that you are playing in a 7 table mitchell movement, playing 4 boards against each pair whom you meet. You will be playing 7 x 4 = 28 boards in total. You are pair 3 NS.
- You will receive a score for each of the 28 boards. Each board is worth the same amount to your score. Remember, the last board is worth the same as the first. You could think of each board being worth 100/28 = 4%.
- This is what the travelling score card (TSC) for Board 1 would look like at the end of play.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Contract</th>
<th>Tricks</th>
<th>NS Pts</th>
<th>EW Pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>INTN</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3NTN</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3NTS</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3NTS</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2NTN</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3CS</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5CS</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each board, you are allocated a numerical score called matchpoints. If all the scores on the board are different then the points would be allocated according to this scale. Notice that the highest NS score receives 2N – 2 pts where N is the number of scores. Here a top = 2x7 – 2 = 12; Bottom = 0.

- Here, the top score for NS is 400. That was obtained at two tables, a shared top. So, NS3 and NS4 get to average the top two scores: 12 + 10 = 2 = 11 pts.
- So, we got 11 out of 12 or 92% for that board.
- Notice that it is the rank order of the score which is important, not the magnitude. From NS point of view, a score in the EW column is a “negative” score and worse than any “positive” score obtained by a NS pair.
- To get our score for the session, we add the pts obtained on each of the 28 boards. That will give us a total out of a maximum of 28 x 12 = 336.
- We can then convert this to a percentage. Perhaps we played 13 rounds of 2 boards so that we will find the EW pts. e.g.

Say we were pair 3 and played this board sitting EW while pair 10 sat NS. See row 10 above. We always write on the line according to the NS pair number. We defeated their 3NT contract and from our point of view, we got an equal top. Hence, on line 3 you find 11 pts. Pair 10 got an equal bottom. Hence, they have 1 point.
- Our percentage is calculated in the same way as before. Perhaps we played 13 rounds of 2 boards so that we could meet every other pair. That would give a Maximum = 26 x 12 = 312 pts.

FAQ: How are the EW scores determined?
ANS: These are obtained in the same way by looking at the TSC from the EW point of view. A “Top” to NS will be a “bottom” to the unfortunate EW pair who played the board against them.
- Effectively, we can consider that any matchpoints on a board NOT awarded to the NS pair must be given to the EW pair who played against them. i.e. If we take the NS pts on board 1 from the maximum, we will find the EW pts. e.g.

NS3 played board 1 against EW5
NS3 got a shared top. So, EW5 got a shared bottom.
NS3 got 11 pts. So, EW5 got 12 – 11 = 1 pts.
This is shown on the TSC shown.
- EW winners are determined in the same way. Notice that there will always be two winners for a Mitchell movement, one from each direction. The percentages obtained in one direction cannot be compared with those in the opposition direction. Say the NS winner obtained 62% and the 2nd placegetter got 59%. The winner EW got 58%. The EW winner could easily claim “How can we be beaten by the pairs in the other direction – our scores were never pooled with them!”
- The percentages shown above could result from a very weak pair sitting NS with that pair gaining 32%. As a result, all the other NS pairs will have “inflated” percentages.

Howell Movements
Howell movements produce one winner. This is because each pair is allocated a different pair number and the pair will be NS sometimes and EW on other occasions. In this way, a given pairs scores will be pooled with and against every other pair at some time during the session.
- For a 7 table howell, the pair numbers will be from 1 to 14. There can still only be 7 scores on the board since that will mean all 14 pairs have played the board. Here is how board 1 might look in a Howell movement:-

Say we were pair 3 and played this board sitting EW while pair 10 sat NS. See row 10 above. We always write on the line according to the NS pair number. We defeated their 3NT contract and from our point of view, we got an equal top. Hence, on line 3 you find 11 pts. Pair 10 got an equal bottom. Hence, they have 1 point.
- Our percentage is calculated in the same way as before. Perhaps we played 13 rounds of 2 boards so that we could meet every other pair. That would give a Maximum = 26 x 12 = 312 pts.
Teams Scoring & Tactics

At teams, you reconcile three times for each match.
1. Check that your opponents have the same scores before they leave. They should have the same numbers but with the opposite signs on each board.
2. Reconcile with your teammates by putting the scores together on the one sheet and working out the match result.
3. The captain of the winning team visits the opposition team to check that they agree with the result before signing and handing it in.

Butler Scoring

In this method of scoring, your score for a board is compared to the average at the tables in the room. By computer, this is then converted to imps etc. It’s like playing teams when your teammates are always bringing back an average.

The average is calculated by ignoring the most extreme scores, then the computer averages the rest.

FAQ: We scored +620 in 4H but the average was only +510. Good news for us but how did this happen?

ANS: Obviously, 4H making wasn’t a common result. Maybe it was hard to bid or perhaps it was defeated fairly often – better defence or poorer declarer play at the other tables.

Teams Tactics

- **Overtricks** are relatively unimportant. So,
  1. Be prepared to concede an overtrick in the hope of defeating the contract.
  2. Never risk the contract for the sake of an overtrick
- **Safety.** If 5D is safer than 3NT, then that should be your contract even though 3NT might score 430. Always play in the safest slam. Imagine going one off in 6NT when 6D makes and your opponents stopped in 3NT. Your greed cost 22 imps.
- **Never try to improve a partscore.** e.g. Partner is in 2D which will make and so should 2NT. 2D will do.
- The reward for bidding games is considerable. See Board 11. If game has a 30% chance of making, you should bid it.
- Don’t expose yourself to big penalties. They lose matches. If your teammates bring back a –800, DON’T ASK! Let them sort it out. We all know what –800 means.
- Be wary of doubling contracts from 2H to 3S. If they make the contract, they get the game bonus. 2HX making vul is –670. Undoubled, it is –110
- **Know your system.** Don’t play a convention that either you or partner might forget. Stuff ups cost.
- **Defend carefully.** Don’t finish up letting a contract make because you thought that you could set it two tricks by waiting.
- **Don’t discuss** boards during the match. Save your mental energy for the rest of the match.
- **Don’t play “catch up”** at teams. So, you’ve had a disaster. Don’t make it worse with crazy decisions. You don’t know what’s going on at the other table. Your teammates may already have saved you! Butler pairs is different – the average will never save you.
- **Plus scores** are hard to beat. Keep setting their contracts and making your partscores can win matches when the boards are “flat”.

### Board Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board</th>
<th>Contract</th>
<th>This table</th>
<th>Other table</th>
<th>diff</th>
<th>+imp</th>
<th>-imp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2HW</td>
<td>–110</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1NTS</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>–90</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4HN</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>–170</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3CW</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4HW11</td>
<td>–450</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>–30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4HW</td>
<td>–620</td>
<td>–620</td>
<td>–1240</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5CNX</td>
<td>–500</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2HN</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>–170</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Board 9. They made 8 tricks in 2H for 110 to them. So, we write –110. The score from our view. Our teammates brought back +110. They were probably in the same contract with the same result. We call this board a “wash” and put a line through it. The board was “squared” and now contributes nothing to the final scoreline.
- #10. We made an overtrick in 1NT for +120. The score was –90 from the the other table. The opponents at the other table missed the overtrick. At pairs, this could be huge. At teams, the difference is +30. This is converted to a new scale called International Match Points (imps). We look it up in a table and find that it gives us 1 imp
- #11. We bid game and made it for +620. It was not bid at the other table so back came –170. The diff is +450 or +10 imps. We say that this is a swing board. Notice that the opposition need 10 overtricks to make up for this result. Frequently, this one board could decide the match.
- #12 We defeated their vul partscore. Our teammates made it at the other table. Perhaps our defence was better or perhaps our west at the other table found a better or safer line of play. Another 5 imps to us.
- #14 This looks like a scoring error. It’s not. We let west play 4H and they made it. At the other table, NS “sacrificed” in 4S only to find that it made 10 tricks! This is called a “double game swing” and is a disaster when your on the wrong end of it. 15 imps out.
- #15 This time, we found a good sacrifice in 5C. That was –500 but our teammates were allowed to play in 4S for +620. The diff is +120 for a handy 3 imp pickup. Had we been set for –800, we would have lost 5 imps. Major penalties need to be avoided.
- In total, we won the match 19 imps to 16 imps. +3 imps is then converted to another scale called Victory Points. This win gives us 16VP.

**Micro Bridge Lesson 32**

**Rationale**

In the previous lesson, we saw that the scores at pairs are dependent on the rank order. 430 can be far superior to 420 and 400. At teams, the magnitude is extremely important. Below could be your scoresheet from a head-to-head teams match. Head-to-head means that you sit NS at one table while your opposition team fill the other seats. The rest of the room has no impact on your match and you may not even be playing the same boards!

The rest of the opposition needs to ensure that the scores from a head-to-head teams match. Head-to-head means that you sit NS at one table while your opposition team fill the other seats. The rest of the room has no impact on your match and you may not even be playing the same boards!
Teams vs Pairs again

As you can see, partner recovered to get 10 out of 16 matchpoints (62.5%). Notice the 7S bidder who got 100% when the finesse worked. Had it failed, they get 0%. If they had settled for 6S, they would have a shared top for 88%. They risked everything to gain 12%. Clearly, that is a rash decision. At teams, when a weak team plays a strong team, there is a theory that you should consider 50% grand slams like this one. You are probably not going to beat them if the match follows its ordinary course. Imagine the blood draining from their faces as this grand rolls home! Notice that the 3NT bidder who simply took his 9 tricks got 0% for the board. At teams, partner would have taken his 9 tricks for 600. This would minimize the damage provided the opponents hadn’t bid the slam at the other table. (–680 or –710) If they bid 6S, nothing could save the board and probably the match!

2. Of course, at teams – and at pairs too – our auction should have followed #2. 3C is forcing. “3 over 2 over 1 is forcing” is a well-accepted principle. Lesson 7. 3S by south now is also forcing. However it could be a doubleton with 2263 shape, highlighting the heart problem. 4NT should be RKC in spades. See Lesson 3. Although 4C would be Gerber, I need info on the trump quality. If I don’t hear we hold SQ, then I’m not bidding this slam unless we hold all 5 keycards.

Consider some slightly different South hands:-

| 🣩95 | 1S 2D |
| 🣩542 | 3C 3H! |
| 🣩AT963 | 3NT |
| 🣩AQJ |

If we really belong in 3NT, we will still get there and played by the correct hand (North). Without spade support, North can envisage this auction. North should also consider a club contract.

| 🣩9 | 1S 2D |
| 🣩542 | 3C 4C |
| 🣩AT963 | 4NT 5S |
| 🣩AQJ2 | 6C |

Again 3C is forcing. 4C is stronger than 5C under Fast Arrival (Lesson 11). If South turns up to have no keycards, then we will end in 5C. At teams, 600 vs 630 or 660 for 3NT is a small loss. At pairs, it is a terrible result. At pairs, South would probably have denied the club support and had the same auction as for the previous hand. Thus, we finish in 3NT “with the field” rather than risk being in 5C. Successful pairs players will frequently plan to be in the same contract as the rest of the field. Then, they rely on better defence and declarer play to get them results. When they elect to be in a contract different to the field, they will always want to be sure that it is a superior contract. This action confirms the well-accepted bridge principle :- “Teams play better allows the investigation of minor suit contracts”

3. Under Jacoby, North rebids 3D as a splinter. This is good news for South who can now see where his losing diamonds can be pitched. Since we have agreed spades, 3H rebid shows a control and strongly suggesting slam interest. North needs no further encouragement.
Cue Bidding to Slam

ANS: Yes! Sometimes, you will also use blackwood after you’re satisfied that we’re close and no open suit or void is evident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>♠️</th>
<th>♦️</th>
<th>1H</th>
<th>3S ¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♥️</td>
<td>4C</td>
<td>4D ³</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦️</td>
<td>6H ⁴</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✨</td>
<td>3S ²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FAQ: What is a “cue bid”?
ANS: After suit agreement, the bid of a new suit which can’t be a long suit trial is called a cue bid. It shows first round control of that suit. 1st round control is a void or the ace. 2nd round control is a singleton or the king. We start with the control which we have closest to our last bid.

FAQ: When should we be cue bidding rather than using blackwood?
ANS: 1. if you have a void
2. If you have an uncontrolled suit .i.e. two or more losers off the top
3. If you need to know whether partner holds a specific king

Slam suggesting bids
• When we have an agreed suit in a game forcing situation but below game, the bid of a new suit shows 1st round control of that suit. Further, it suggests that slam should be considered. It is an extension of Fast Arrival. “We’re going to game slower so I’m interested in more than game.”
• Partner agrees to the suggestion by cue bidding also. By agreement, partner is not obliged to cue bid if he feels his hand doesn’t suit. When he does cue bid, his bid will be 4th round control.
• All further cue bids are 1st round control unless the player has already denied 1st round control or our side has already shown 1st round control. Show cue bids in order with cheapest first.

Let’s look at a few bidding sequences

♠️832 ♦️6 ♢️1H 3S ¹
♥️AKT75 ♥️Q842 ♦️4C 4D ³
♣️Q6 ♣️A2 ♣️6H ⁴

*1st round control in clubs – slam suggestion
*2nd round control. Slam suggestion accepted.
*Without DA, east would decline and sign off in 4H.
*Not as rash as it looks. Do we have a trump loser to go with our spade loser. That wouldn’t leave east with much of a hand for his game raise.

FAQ: Surely an immediate 4NT would do?
ANS: If east is allowed to splinter with a singleton A or K, it may not do. Also, it can be a spade void.

♠️82 ♦️65 ♢️1H 3H ¹
♥️AKT863 ♥️Q842 ♦️5C 5D ³
♣️KQ ♣️A2 ♣️6H ⁴

*1st round control – slam suggestion
*2nd round heart control is gold!

FAQ: Aren’t you worried that you’ll bid slam knowing all the suits are “controlled” but the opponents still have ace king or trumps or trump ace and another ace?
Micro Bridge Lesson 35

Rationale
Let's review our bidding structures after minor suit openings. There are two major styles:-

• **Up-the-line.** Under this style, players 1C–1D tend to open 1C, even with 4-4 in the 1H–1S minors. Responder is expected to bid 1D 1NT with 4 diamonds and a major. After 1C–1D, opener will commonly rebid a 4 card major if held.

• **Major preferred responses.** Under this style, responder prefers to show a 4 card major rather than diamonds. The response of 1D! denies a major unless strong enough to bid the major on the next round of the bidding. After 1m–1H, opener will bid 1S unless strong enough to bid the major on the next round of the bidding. After 1C–1D, opener will rebid a 4 card major if held.

FAQ: What does it mean if opener does rebid 1M after 1C–1D?

ANS: It means that opener is 5-4 in his bid suits or 4-4 with extreme concentration of HCP.

Here are some typical auctions :-

1C 1H Make sure that you alert 1NT. Your opponents can’t be expected to know that a 4 card major is possible.

1C 1D! Responder is showing 5-4 in the reds and 10-11 HCP. Opener has spades

1NT! 2H 2S 2NT P

1D 1H Responder decides to show spades too. To opener, it looks like 5-4 in the major. So, west shows 3 card support. East reverts to 3NT confirming only 4-4 in majors. If responder is not strong enough to stand this sequence, he needs to suppress the spade suit.

1C 1H Opener shows 18-19 HCP. 3D is NMF (lesson 18). Opener doesn’t have 3 hearts but has 4 spades.

Under Walsh, 3D could be used to show 5 hearts OR just 4 hearts with 4 spades. Here, responder must have 5 hearts since he wasn’t interested in spades.

1C 1H Usually, opener doesn’t show 1S! 2C a major here. Alert 1S because it confirms that west’s club suit is genuine.

Walsh
Try bidding the following hands if you have agreed to play Walsh:-

| ♠KT65 | ♦QJ3 |
| 1D | 1H |
| ♠8 | ♦QT43 |
| ♦AQ64 | ♦7 |
| ♦AQ86 | ♦7542 |
| ♠K62 | ♦43 |
| ♦AT64 | ♦85 |

Not enough reason to show spades.

This bid “begs to be dropped”

| ♦AQ93 | ♦972 |
| ♦42 | ♦1C |
| ♦76 | ♦AKT832 |
| ♦AQ4 | ♦3H |
| ♦3S |

5D is probably worse. Responder passes 3NT with some comfort. West knows exactly what is going to hit the table as dummy.

17+ opposite 16. Too strong for two aces to be missing. Hope we don’t make 13.

| ♦AQ93 | ♦K42 |
| ♦42 | ♦1C |
| ♦76 | ♦AKT842 |
| ♦AQ4 | ♦3H |
| ♦AT86 | ♦43 |

1Opener won’t rebid 1NT with a singleton.

| ♦AQ93 | ♦K42 |
| ♦42 | ♦1C |
| ♦7 | ♦AKT84 |
| ♦AQ4 | ♦3H |
| ♦AKJ86 | ♦43 |
| ♦K6 | ♦AT86 |

4th suit forcing 5 confirmed 5 spades. Hence 6 clubs

4rkc in spades – last natural bid suit.

Tempting to write down 6S because of the void.

1Not a pretty contract. A friendly lead would be nice. 5D is probably worse. Responder passes 3NT with some comfort. West knows exactly what is going to hit the table as dummy.
Eight Ever, Nine Never

The bridge maxim “Eight Ever, Nine Never” was designed to make easier the decision whether to finesse for the SQ or play SA then SK. The theory is with 4 trumps missing, the queen will come down most of the time. So, with nine trumps, never finesse. This is called *playing for the drop*. The contrary is true with 8 trumps between you and dummy. Now, they are likely to break 3-2 with the queen with the longer holding. Therefore, you should finesse giving you a 50% chance.

With nine trumps, the reasoning is flawed. The queen is coming down 54% of the time. That isn’t much better than the finesse!

Instead, you need to look at the whole hand. There are frequently clues as to the approach you should take:-

- Did one opponent make a pre-emptive bid? If so, that takes care of more of his 13 cards making a spade shortage more likely.
- Did an opponent double your contract? Play him for the queen. Silly double, wasn’t it?
- Is this a slam and did your LHO bang down an ace at trick one with little indication that it would be a good idea? If so, this person might fancy their chances of having a trump winner also from Qxx
- In No trumps, can you play on other suits first to get an idea of the distribution?
- The flinch test. Quickly play ST look out for a pause from LHO. Of course, if you act on the opponent’s flinches, it is at your own risk! Somewhat bizarrely, some opponents will actually cover your ten.
- Avoidance play. If you cannot stand to have your RHO on lead, play ST to the SA and then run the SJ. OK, when the spades are 2-2, you have conceded a trick. How important is this? At teams, it is fine so long as your contract is safe. This safety play is highly recommended. At pairs, it is not so easy. The overtrick which you concede when the spades are 2-2 will cost. There are other issues to consider:-
  - Is this an unbelievably good contract?
  - Is this a slam?
  - Will an average result from this board be sufficient?
  - Would a different opening lead have scuttled the contract?

If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes”, then the safety play is warranted.

- Being *with the field*. At pairs, there are lots of boards where you expect most of the field will be in the same contract and you expect the “standard line” will be taken by most declarers. To do something different will probably result in a different number of tricks. Top pairs players wait for the good results to come to them – they don’t chase them on every board!

Here you are declarer in 3NT. There are no outside entries in dummy. How should you play the suit? Ask yourself a few questions:-

- How many tricks do I need from this suit? If you need six, you had better play for the drop. If you need only five and you don’t mind losing to RHO, then you should play SK then small to SJ.
- Notice if you play for the drop and it fails, you get two tricks.
- At pairs, if the opening lead seems odd and has donated a trick to you, you should finesse. Don’t be greedy unless you need to shoot for tops because of earlier bad scores.

**Tip:** On the CK did you drop the C8 from dummy? If LHO has all four clubs, you will then be able to run your C7 from hand, saving a valuable entry

**Defending with Qxx**

The answer to this is PLAN. When you’re looking at Qxx, you can be sure that declarer will be looking for your queen.

- Don’t fall for the flinch test!
- Check out dummy and decide your plan. As surely as night follows day, this suit is going to be played. If it is trumps, make sure that you have your plan immediately dummy hits the table.
- Does he have nine trumps? If so, he’s probably going to play for the drop unless you – or partner with a singleton – give him other ideas. Remember, it is very bad ethics to pause with a singleton. However, you don’t have to play it at the speed of light either.
- If dummy is on your left with AKx(x) of trumps, it looks like your queen is dead. Not necessarily.

Declarer’s trumps might be so bad that the finesse is not possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AKxx</th>
<th>x x</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qxx</td>
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**FAQ:** So, do I cover the jack from declarer or not?

**ANS:** Well, if you think about it when the jack hits the table, it’s too late! The bridge maxim, “Always cover an honour with an honour” is untrue. It should be “Cover an honour with an honour if it could promote a card in either your own or partner’s hand.”

If declarer has J432, he shouldn’t be leading the jack. He should be playing AK and hoping for a doubleton queen to drop. So, he probably has the ten. If it must be a 4-4 fit from the bidding, you should duck smoothly. Let him fish for it!
Bidding over Pre-empts

Pre-empt bids are designed to make life difficult for the opponents. We must start our auctions at a higher level making the investigations tougher. On the plus side, they are advertising a weak hand with little defence. So, with the right shape, our risk is not great. It is important that our partnership has agreements on the meaning of our actions. Here are some common agreements which you and partner should consider.

1. All our doubles of 4S or higher are penalties. The level is just too high for 4-4 fits with bad breaks likely.
2. 2NT over their weak twos should be natural, 15 – 18 HCP with their suit stopped. Partner continues as for a 1NT overcall. It is suggested that we play “system off”. See Lesson 6.
3. 3NT over their weak 2M and 3B should be natural, 19 – 20 HCP with their suit stopped.
4. Cue bid of their suit should be Michaels. e.g. (3B) – 4B. It should be strong over their weak bids.
5. Overcalls should have the same requirements as a 2 level overcall over their opening 1B. i.e. Goodish 5 card suit, at least 10 HCP and few cards in their suit.
6. A takeout double in the immediate seat should be an opening hand with good shape. It is unwise to reduce it too much in the reopening seat. Your RHO may have a good hand and passed because of a misfit.
7. 4NT bids should be for the minors, strong.

Coping with enemy pre-emptive overcalls

Negative Free Bids (Lesson #8) are our weak responsive bids used when the opponents show a good hand. e.g. 1H – (2C) – ? When they make a pre-emptive overcall, they are advertising a weak hand. Now, our responsive bids are forcing. A good guide for responder is:-

- New suits at the three level are forcing.
- When their bids are weak, our bids are strong and vice versa

Multi Two Bids (Lesson #29) have caused a rethink to defensive bidding.

When they open multi 2D, it is usually a weak 2M.

- New suits by us are overcalls of a weak 2M.
- 2NT should be natural with both majors stopped.
- Double should be 16+ with a one suited hand or 19+ and a plan.

With many hands, you will want to pass. Remember, you will get another bid. Once the nature of the opening has been exposed, you can restart the auction if they had opened a weak 2M. e.g. (2D!) – P – (2H!) – P (P!) – X

When opener, passes responder’s 2H bid, it confirms that he holds a weak two in hearts. Now, our double should be a classic takeout double of a weak 2H. When we first looked at this hand and saw RHO’s 2D bid, we were probably sure that it was a weak 2H. However, even with 4144 shape, it would be wrong to double immediately. Let them have their bid so that we can get our auction right.

- When they open a multi 2M (two suit), use the same actions that you take over a weak 2M. i.e. Forget about their second suit – nothing’s perfect.

Tempo. We are aware of the importance of trying to make our bids at the same speed. Otherwise, partner’s bids can be scrutinized. Pre-emptive bids will interfere with this and you will be given tolerance, depending on the level of the bids involved. Whatever you do, don’t go near the bidding slip until you have decided what you are going to write.

Your RHO has opened a weak 2H. What will you do with each of the following hands :-

♠AKT42  Bid 2S.
♥97     Sure, this is not a wonderful hand. However you may not get another chance
♠K87     ♦J65
♠J3      Pass.
♥QT87    Double is out because partner is almost certain to bid spades. Not quite enough for 2NT in the immediate seat but would probably bid 2NT in the passout seat.
♠AK85     3H. Michaels – Spades + minor.
♠A62     Partner will bid 3NT to enquire which minor that we hold.
♠86
♠K4      Bid 3NT.
♥A65     Yes, we could be a little stronger. However, the heart holding is better than it looks and we have no good alternative.
♥K237    Double. Then bid diamonds at the cheapest level. Yes, partner will probably bid a lot of spades. However, our hand looks too good for a simple overcall.
♠AKQJ6
♠8653
♠7
♠9      Bid 2NT. You have both majors stopped and full values.
♥K94
♠A84
♠AK87
♠A74
♥K7
♥AK98
♥A85
♥K432
♠A74
♥K94
♠A84
♠AK87
♠9
♥K7
♥AKT8642
♠864
♠A7
Pass. You can bid 3H next round if your ♥K9432
LHO makes no positive action.
♠A842
♠J9
Our 1NT is contested by RHO

Rationale
When we open 1NT, our partner will frequently respond with an artificial bid. It may be Stayman or a transfer. This allows our RHO the extra option of double to show that suit. (If the boot was on the other foot, would we do the same, wouldn’t we?)

This allows the opening 1NT bidder a few strategies:-
1. If RHO doubles responder’s transfer bid, opener doesn’t accept the transfer unless he holds at least three card support.
2. If RHO double responder’s transfer bid, opener has available a redouble for penalties. i.e. Opener has four cards in the suit written down and only a doubleton in responder’s suit.
3. If RHO double responder’s transfer bid, opener passes with only a doubleton in responder’s suit and no ability to redouble. Responder will be able to choose whether to bid his suit or ask for a stopper or show a second suit.
4. If RHO doubles our Stayman, redouble to show 4+ clubs and no major.
5. If RHO doubles our Stayman, opener shows a major if one is held.
6. If RHO doubles our Stayman, opener bids 2D to show a five card diamond suit.
7. If RHO doubles our Stayman, pass shows 3343 shape exactly.
8. If RHO bids a suit over responder’s bid, opener double to show that suit. (If the boot was on the other foot, we would do the same, wouldn’t we?)

On rare occasions, opener may be able to make a takeout double of 2C by the opponents. This would show doubleton club and 443 in the remaining suits. Opener will be unable to defeat 2C by himself. So, double for penalties wouldn’t make sense. Of course, we play double by responder as always penalties.

Remember, opener will have a doubleton in their suit at worst. This meaning appears to be changing. Responder should not be “pushed” into 2NT when he had no intention of bidding it. The reasoning is:- “If we can make 2NT, they can’t make 2B”

A double by responder may help partner defend better. With a strong 1NT opening, he will be on lead a lot. When you remain silent, he will probably play you for nothing. When you double, he should defend naturally but will be looking for your values.

That is why 2NT is commonly used to have unusual or different meanings.. Do not play Lebensohl when the opponent in last seat makes a bid.

1NT (P) 2CI (X)
2H Penalties
XX have 4 or 5 clubs, no major
2D have 5 diamonds, no major
2H 4 hearts, spades unknown
2S 4 spades, not 4 hearts
P no major, 2-3 clubs, not 5 diamonds

Here, responder was looking to escape from 1NT with the first auction. So, he may be unhappy that opener accepted the transfer. Not so. We can’t remain in 2HX anyway! Even when 2S fails, the opponents have missed a heart partial score.

1NT (P) 2CI (X)
XX have 4 or 5 clubs, no major
2D have 5 diamonds, no major
2H 4 hearts, spades unknown
2S 4 spades, not 4 hearts
P no major, 2-3 clubs, not 5 diamonds

Here, they are allowed to play in 2C by South. West must defend carefully or a lot of tricks will be conceded. Lead a trump. Don’t start new suits.
**FAQ:** What is a dummy reversal?

**ANS:** Usually dummy has fewer trumps than declarer. If declarer takes sufficient ruffs in hand, dummy will have more trumps than declarer. When this occurs, the roles of dummy and declarer have reversed and dummy will be used to draw the enemy trumps.

Here is a typical trump layout:-

**Dummy:** ♠KQ2
**Declarer:** ♠A6543

In the usual course of events, declarer will play small to the King and Queen then back to the Ace to draw the enemy trumps. Declarer will have two leftover trumps which can be used to stop the enemy running a suit. Ho Hum. Let's count the number of trump tricks:-

SK + SQ + SA + 2 dec ruffs = 5 tricks.

You will be aware that ruffs in the short hand are always desirable and generate extra tricks. If we can get a ruff with S2 above, that will be an extra trick. A ruff with SK or SQ are no good since a SJ will be promoted to a trick for the enemy.

dummy ruff + SK + SQ + SA + 2 dec ruffs = 6 tricks

Now watch what happens if you get three ruffs in your own (declarer) hand instead. The remaining trumps are:-

**Dummy:** ♠KQ2
**Declarer:** ♠A6

Now, when you draw the enemy trumps, you will be able to discard a loser from your hand on dummy's third trump!

SA + SK + SQ + 3 dec ruffs = 6 tricks

Dummy reversals are missed by a lot of players at club level. When you seize the chance, you will be pleasantly surprised by the travelling score card. As you gain more experience, you will realize that they come around every month. If you haven’t played one for a few months, you probably have to concede that you’ve missed some chances

♠A2 ♥AQJT2 ♦KT87 ♣AQQJ
♠543 ♥6543 ♦AQ32 ♣A43
♠KQJT6 ♥KJ9 ♦96 ♥T98

Contract 6H after DA lead and then C4.

Nightmare contract but let’s make it! The key is to focus on where South’s losers can be parked. The only losers are the clubs. Simply win CA and ruff a low diamond. Now, you have 4 trumps in dummy and two in hand. The losing clubs can go on the 3rd and 4th hearts.

**Dummy Reversals**

One clue to a dummy reversal is when you need to take an early ruff in hand.

♠KT ♥K4 ♦AJ872 ♣AK82
♠865 ♥9742 ♦98 ♣K9543 ♥QT6 ♦T ♣9643
♠AQJ3 ♥AJT73 ♦- ♥QJ75

Contract 7C by South. Opening Lead: CT

Declarer can count 4S + 2H + 1D + 4C = 11 top tricks

Two more tricks need to be generated. Diamond ruffs. Win the C lead with CJ. Cash CQ for that bad news. You want to ruff diamonds with your small trumps. Now, Hx to HK, ruff Dx. Sx to ST, ruff Dx. Sx to SK and draw trumps, pitching hearts from hand. Notice that the dummy reversal strategy is robust enough to cope with the bad trump break.

♠JT9 ♥J52 ♦A642 ♥Q87
♠643 ♥82 ♥KQ84 ♥AT7 ♦KJ878 ♣Q975
♠64 ♦JT95

Contract 6S. Club loser and 2 hearts. Can’t ruff hearts or trump loser appears. Ruff 3 diamonds.
End Plays

South plays 4S after the lead of the CT. South ruffs the 2nd club and leads trumps. East wins SA and returns 3rd club which South ruffs high. It appears that success depends on hearts breaking 3-3 or finding the DQ onsite. Not so. Play FOUR rounds of hearts. Although West wins the 4th heart, he is endplayed and must return a diamond avoiding the loser in that suit.

A common technique to produce an endplay is to eliminate side suits through ruffing or throwing a loser on a loser. From Card Play Technique (Mollo):

| ♠A | ♠J2 |
|♦Q3 | ♦AK4 |
|♦AQ32 | ♦9876 |
|♠AQT432 | ♠K365 |

North leads SK against 6C. Plan your play. The success appears to depend on DK being found. Not so. Presuming North has SQ, he can be endplayed. Win SA, draw trumps, eliminate hearts and lead SJ, pitching a losing diamond on this losing spade. Now, North must lead a diamond into declarer’s AQ or lead a major allowing DQ to be pitched, ruffing in dummy. Can you see another plan? Ruff SJ, eliminate hearts and run the D9. If South covers, so do you. If North wins DK, he is endplayed. Old timers will give you a tip “When you see AQ9, think endplay”

Avoiding an endplay is fun. Sometimes, you can pitch a high card in a suit where you know partner holds, or might hold, the next winner. This prevents declarer from throwing you in. Of course, you need to be sure. Is this declarer up to the task of endplaying you? This plan is attractive when you are known to hold most, or all, of the high cards. for the defence. To counter that, you should cash winners when it is safe to do so and retain an exit card. On other hands, partner can help. In the above hand, can you see how South might help North to avoid the endplay? After winning SA, East shifts to DX. Now, South must win DK to produce the endplay. Not likely so early in the hand. This defensive manoeuvre is called breaking up the endplay.

| ♠AQ8 |
|♦J72 |
|♣654 |

Defending 3NT by South, all suits except spades have been played. South idly leads S6. Is West awake? If he sleepily plays low, declarer will play the S8 and East will be endplayed. West can be a hero by rising SJ.

Defenders should also watch for the chance to endplay dummy. Sometimes, you can put declarer on the table to force an extra trick. Against NT,

| ♠KQT |
|♥A |
|♦AQ42 |
|♥6 |
|♠7 |

If East exits with D7 or S7, declarer makes 3 tricks. Exit H6, and west will do the rest. West will duck SK then win the remaining two tricks.