

COSL Precision Bidding System

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v2.70, 6 June 2021

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Note: In the text, bids that are forcing to game are marked with a double-dagger (\ddagger) symbol. Bids that are forcing for at least one round are marked with a dagger (\dagger) symbol. Descriptions of exceptions or unintuitive bids are highlighted [like so](#).

An right-pointer (\leftrightarrow) symbol in the text is a *hyperlink* that jumps to a related section describing follow-up bids or examples. Depending on the PDF viewer used, this may also be outlined by a box.

1 Opening bids

All strong hands ([with one exception](#)¹) are opened 1♣[†] which is forcing for one round.

In general, a major suit opening shows 5⁺-cards and the higher ranking suit is opened with suits of equal length. A no-trump opening shows a balanced hand with a possible 5-card minor. A club suit can be opened with 2♣ with six or more cards in the suit.

A 1♦ opening would normally be made with at least a 3-card holding but could [sometimes be made with a doubleton](#) when bidding 1NT or 2♣ is not attractive e.g., ♠AQJ10 ♥KQ ♦76 ♣J7642 (only 5 clubs) or ♠AK109 ♥AK98 ♦32 ♣432 (both majors, two suits unstopped). Three suited hands with a singleton or void in diamonds are opened with an artificial bid of 2♦.

All opening bids from 1♦ through 2♦ are made with between 11 and 15 *high card points* (HCP). The strictly limited nature of these openings means that, in general, partner is not forced to respond with less than 8HCP.

1♣ [†]	16 ⁺ HCP (unbalanced) or 17 ⁺ HCP (balanced). Hands with a powerful 6 ⁺ -card suit that can play opposite a singleton and have 15HCP with a void or singleton should also be opened with 1♣, e.g., ♠AQJ1098 ♥8 ♦KQ7 ♣QJ10. ↔
1♦	11-15HCP, 3 ⁺ -cards in ♦ (could be 2), no 5-card major and less than 6 clubs. ↔
1♥, 1♠	11-15HCP, 5 ⁺ -cards in suit bid. ↔
1NT	14-16HCP in 1 st /2 nd positions and 15-17HCP in 3rd/4th position , balanced. May have a five-card minor and even a 5-4-2-2 distribution with a five-card minor is acceptable with stoppers in the doubletons. ↔
2♣	11-15HCP, 6 ⁺ -card club suit (7SQ hand), may have a 4 or 5-card major. ↔
2♦ [†]	11-15HCP, 5-4-3-1, 4-4-4-1 or 5-4-4-0 shape with short diamonds (a 5-card suit, if present, would be clubs). ↔
2♥, 2♠	6-10HCP, <i>exactly</i> six cards in suit with two of the top three or three of the top five honours. ↔
2NT	22-23HCP, balanced hand, no 5-card suit. ↔
3♣, 3♥, 3♦, 3♠	Preemptive, 0-10HCP, 7 ⁺ -card suit (SQ of 9 when vulnerable and 8 non-vulnerable). Apply rule of 2/3/4. ↔
3NT	“ <i>Gambling</i> ”, solid 7 ⁺ -card minor suit (<i>AKQ</i> or better) with <i>no outside ace or king</i> . ↔
4♣ [†] , 4♦ [†]	<i>Namyats</i> —long semi-solid major suit (usually 8 ⁺ -cards) with 8 or more tricks, constructive. Used in 1st or 2nd seat only . ↔
4♥, 4♠	Preemptive with 7½ tricks.

As in *Standard American*, a 1NT response over an opening of one of a major is forcing for one round. Like the *2/1 Game Force* system a two-over-one response is mostly forcing to game.

In most cases, the bidding in *Precision* does not change with vulnerability or seat position.

¹Balanced 22-23 point hands are opened 2NT.

2 Responses to 1♣

The responses to 1♣[†] can be negative, constructive or positive. All positive responses are forcing to game, i.e., holding such a hand, you want to be in a game contract opposite any random 8HCP hand.

Negative response

1♦[†] 0-7HCP, no long major suit. *Note that with an ace and a king (3 controls) either in the same suit or two different 4⁺-card suits, a positive response should be made.* ⇨

Constructive responses

2♥, 2♠ 4-7HCP, 6⁺-card suit with two of the top four honours *but not both A and K* when a positive suit response should be made. ⇨

Positive responses—forcing to game

1♥[†], 1♠[†], 2♣[†], 2♦[†] 8⁺HCP, 5⁺-cards in suit. There are no restrictions on suit quality. ⇨

1NT[†] 8-13HCP, balanced hand with no five-card suit. ⇨

2NT[†] 14⁺HCP, balanced hand, forcing to 4NT. ⇨

3♣[†] A solid 7 or 8 card suit (with or without side controls) that will play for no losers opposite a singleton, e.g., *AKQJxxx* or *AKQxxxx*. ⇨

Unusual positive—three-suited hands without a 5-card suit

3♣[†] 8-11HCP or less than four controls, 4-4-4-1 shape with a black singleton (spades or clubs). ⇨

3♦[†] 8-11HCP or less than four controls, 4-4-4-1 shape with a red singleton (hearts or diamonds). ⇨

3♥[†], 3NT[†], 4♣[†], 4♦[†] 12⁺HCP and 4⁺-controls, 4-4-4-1 shape with a singleton in the suit above the one bid (♠, ♣, ♦, ♥ respectively). ⇨

2.1 Bidding after a negative response

Opener rebids no-trumps with balanced hands (1NT: 17-19HCP, 2NT: 20-21HCP, 3NT: 24-26HCP), a 5-card suit with 16-21HCP and jumps in a 5-card suit with powerful hands (22⁺HCP). The jump rebid in a suit may be made with a lower point-count given greater playing strength.

Examples of bidding after a negative response can be found here. ⇨

Balanced hands

1NT 17-19HCP, balanced, no 5-card major (*18-19HCP in 3rd/4th position*). Responder's rebids are:

Pass 0-5HCP, no major suit to escape to.

2♣[†] 6-7HCP, *Stayman*. ⇨

2♦[†], 2♥[†] 0-7HCP, transfer to 2♥ and 2♠ respectively. Responder will invite with 7HCP and pass with 0-6HCP unless opener *super-accepts*. ⇨

4♦[†], 4♥[†] *Texas* transfers to 4♥ and 4♠ respectively.

2NT 20-21HCP, balanced, *may have a 5-card major*. Responder's rebids are:

	<i>Pass</i>	0-3HCP.
	3♣†	4-7HCP, <i>Puppet Stayman</i> asking for 5-card majors if any. \leftrightarrow
	3♦†, 3♥†	Weak, transfer to 3♥ and 3♠ respectively.
	3NT	4-5HCP, sign-off.
	4♦†, 4♥†	Transfer to 4♥ and 4♠—sign-off.
3NT	24-26HCP, balanced hand, <i>may have a 5-card major</i> .	Responder's rebids are:
	<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP, balanced.
	4 of suit†	5-7HCP, 5 ⁺ -cards. Opener bids one above suit (4♦, 4♥, 4♠ or 4NT) to show fit and start <i>Roman key-card Blackwood</i> . \leftrightarrow
	4NT	5-7HCP, no 5-card suit, quantitative.
<u>Unbalanced hands</u>		
1♥, 1♠	5 ⁺ -card suit, non-forcing. Can be only four cards if opener started with a 4-4-4-1 shape (with a singleton minor, opener will rebid 1♥). Responder's rebids are:	
	<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP, especially when balanced.
	1♠†	4-7HCP, 4 ⁺ -cards, may have three hearts. It is important to bid the spades before supporting hearts since opener may have bid 1♥ holding a 4-4-4-1 distribution with both majors.
	1NT	5-7HCP, no 5-card suit, no 4-card spade after 1♥. May have 3-card support. This bid should be avoided as far as possible to prevent the strong hand from coming down.
	2♣, 2♦	5-7HCP, 5-card suit, denies 3-card support.
	<i>Single raise</i>	4-5HCP with 3 ⁺ -card support.
	<i>Double raise</i>	6-7HCP with 3 ⁺ -card support.
	<i>Jump shift</i> †	<i>Splinter</i> with 4 ⁺ -card support showing slam interest. E.g., bid 4♣ when holding ♠J1098 ♥93 ♦AJ10987 ♣5 after opener rebids 1♠. A splinter of 3♣ would be slightly weaker showing a game-going hand.
2♣, 2♦	5 ⁺ -card suit, may have a 4-card major, non-forcing. Responses have the same structure as over 1♥ and 1♠.	
2♥†, 2♠†	Powerful hand with 22 ⁺ HCP and 5 ⁺ -card suit, equivalent of a 2♣ opener in <i>Standard American</i> . Responder's rebids are:	
	2NT	0-3HCP, minimum, no support.
	3NT	4-7HCP maximum, spread values, no support.
	<i>Raise</i>	0-3HCP, minimum, 3 ⁺ -card support.
	<i>Game raise</i>	4-7HCP, maximum, 3 ⁺ -card support, no specific values in other suits.
	<i>New suit</i> †	4-7HCP, values in suit, does not deny support for partner's suit.
3♣†, 3♦†	Very strong unbalanced hand with a long minor and good playing strength that is too strong for either 2♣ or 2♦. E.g., ♠A ♥AK ♦KQJ10876 ♣QJ5 or ♠KQJ5 ♥6 ♦A ♣AKQ10964.	

$3\heartsuit\ddagger, 3\spadesuit\ddagger$	Extremely powerful hand with a solid suit and at least nine tricks. This bid sets trumps and asks responder to cue-bid an ace or void. E.g., $\spadesuit\text{AKQJ1098 } \heartsuit 4 \diamond \text{KJ3 } \clubsuit\text{AK}$ or $\spadesuit 65 \heartsuit\text{AKQ107543 } \diamond \text{AKJ } \clubsuit$ — where a slam is on if responder can cue-bid. Responder bids:
<i>New suit</i> \ddagger	First-round control—ace or void in suit.
$3\text{NT}\ddagger$	No first round control but has a king or singleton in a non-trump suit. Opener rebids $4\clubsuit$ to ask which suit.
<i>Game raise</i>	Denies ace, king, singleton or void.

2.2 Bidding after a constructive response

Since responder is showing a strictly limited hand of 4-7HCP with a long suit, the opener needs to decide on the best contract. If there is no chance for game or slam, he should pass with a tolerance for responder's suit.

<i>Pass</i>	Game unlikely.
$4\heartsuit, 4\spadesuit$	Sign-off, to play.
<i>New suit</i> \ddagger	Natural, 5^+ -card suit. Responder's rebids are:
<i>Raise</i>	3^+ -card support (or Qx).
<i>Rebid suit</i>	Minimum, no support.
3NT	Maximum, no support.
<i>New suit</i> \ddagger	Maximum, 3^+ -card support and a singleton or void in suit bid.
$2\text{NT}\ddagger$	Showing support for suit and asking for shortness. Responder's rebids are:
<i>Rebid suit</i>	Minimum, no singleton or void.
<i>New suit</i>	Singleton or void in bid suit.
3NT	AQ or KQ in suit.
$4\clubsuit\ddagger$	<i>Roman key-card ask</i> with modified responses since responder cannot have more than 2 key cards. \leftrightarrow

2.3 Bidding after a positive no-trump response

A no-trump response shows a balanced hand with 8-13HCP (1NT) or 14^+ HCP (2NT). After a 1NT response, opener can either (a) bid his own suit at the 2-level showing a 5-carder, (b) bid his own suit at the 3-level showing a very strong hand with slam interest, (c) bid $2\clubsuit\ddagger$ (*Transfer Stayman*) or (d) raise no-trumps.

All bidding sequences are forcing to game. Examples of bidding after a positive no-trump response are available here. \leftrightarrow

Transfer Stayman— $1\clubsuit$ –1NT– $2\clubsuit$

Responder's rebids after opener's *Transfer Stayman* bid are:

$2\diamond$	8-10HCP, 4 card \heartsuit , may have 4 card \spadesuit . Opener's rebids are:
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	2♥	Relay affirming fit in hearts—responder should bid 2NT with 4-3-3-3 or a second suit at 3-level.
	2♠	4-card ♠, no 4-card ♥.
	2NT	No 4-card major.
2♥		8-10HCP, 4 card ♠, denies 4-card ♥. Opener rebids:
	2♠	Relay affirming fit in spades—responder bids 2NT with 4-3-3-3 else second suit at 3-level.
	2NT	No 4-card ♠, may have 4-card ♥.
2♠		8-10HCP, no 4 card major. Opener then bids 2NT to ask for a further description. Responder's rebids are:
	3♣, 3♦	4-3-3-3 with 4-card suit.
	3♥	4-4 in minors with three hearts.
	3♠	4-4 in minors with three spades.
	3NT	5-card minor.
2NT		11-13HCP, 4-3-3-3 shape. 3♣ by opener is then a relay asking responder to bid his 4-card suit (3NT with clubs).
3♣		11-13HCP, 4-4-3-2 shape with 4 clubs. Opener bids 3♦ as a relay and responder bids 3♥ with spades, 3♠ with hearts and 3NT with diamonds.
3♦		11-13HCP, 4-4-3-2 shape with ♦ and ♥.
3♥		11-13HCP, 4-4-3-2 shape with ♥ and ♠.
3♠		11-13HCP, 4-4-3-2 shape with ♠ and ♦.
3NT		11-13HCP, 5-card minor suit. 4♣ by opener is then a relay asking responder to bid his suit.

Suit bid after 1♣–1NT

When opener has a possible trump suit, he bids it asking responder to show shape and point range. With a very strong hand and a good suit, he can jump in the suit setting trumps and asking partner for his holding in that suit.

2♦, 2♥, 2♠, 2NT	5 ⁺ -card suit, <i>support-asking bid</i> (2NT shows clubs). Responder's rebids are (minimum = 8-10HCP, maximum = 11-13HCP, support = <i>Hxx</i> , <i>xxxx</i> or better):
	1 step Minimum and no support.
	2 steps Minimum with support.
	3 steps Maximum and no support.
	4 steps Maximum with support.
3♣, 3♦, 3♥, 3♠	Very strong hand with slam interest, sets trumps and asks for responder's holding in the suit bid. Responses are in steps:
	1 step Two or three spot cards.
	2 steps Doubleton honour.
	3 steps Tripletton honour.
	4 steps Two honours doubleton.
	5 steps Two honours tripletton.
	6 steps Four card support.

Any suit bid after a support-asking bid is an ϵ control-asking bid in that suit. \leftrightarrow

No-Trump raise after 1♣–1NT

Since a raise to 2NT shows a club suit (see above), there are only two possible raises in no-trumps—3NT and 4NT.

3NT	Minimum balanced hand with no four-card major nor interest in slam.
4NT	Quantitative raise with a balanced hand and no four-card major inviting slam if responder has a maximum.

Bidding after 1♣–2NT

A 2NT response shows 14⁺HCP and immediately puts the partnership in slam range. It is, therefore, forcing to 4NT. Responses are:

3♣	<i>Baron</i> —asking responder to show 4-card suits upwards (3NT would show 4-3-3-3 with four clubs).
3♦, 3♥, 3♠, 4♣	5 ⁺ -card suit. Subsequent bidding is natural.
3NT	Asks responder to clarify his point range as follows:
4♣	14-15HCP.
4♦	16-17HCP.
4♥	18-19HCP.
4♠	20-21HCP.
4NT	22 ⁺ HCP.

2.4 Bidding after a positive suit response

Opener rebids no-trumps with a balanced hand. With support for responder's suit he has the option of initiating a series of *asking bids*.² With an unbalanced hand and no support for responder's suit, opener bids his suit and further bidding is natural.

With a 4-4-4-1 distribution, if responder bids the singleton suit, opener should rebid no-trumps. E.g., 1NT over 1♥ or 2NT over 2♦. If responder rebids his suit, opener should rebid NT. Partner should cater to this possibility and insist on his suit as trumps only with a 6⁺-card suit.

All bids short of game are forcing. Examples of bidding after a positive response in a suit are available here. ⇔

<i>New suit</i>	5 ⁺ -card suit, denies 3-card support for responder's suit. Subsequent bids are natural to find the correct game contract. Responder's rebids are:
<i>New suit</i>	4 ⁺ -card suit.
<i>Raise</i>	3 ⁺ -card support.
<i>Rebid suit</i>	6 ⁺ -card suit, semi-solid if minor.
<i>No-trumps</i>	5-3-3-2 shape, values in unbid suits.

²As a rule of thumb, asking bids should not be used if two of the outside suits are missing first-round controls. This is because once asking bids are triggered, there is no way to return to natural bidding.

1NT	17-19HCP, balanced (2NT over 2♣ or 2♦). No 5-card major, may have 3-card support (shows shape first). After 1♥ or 1♠, a <i>jump rebid</i> of the suit by responder would show a semi-solid 6 ⁺ -card suit. A <i>jump shift</i> would show a 5-5 two-suited limited hand—typically <i>KQxxx</i> in both suits with nothing outside.
2NT	20-21HCP, balanced (3NT over 2♣ or 2♦). No 5-card major, may have 3-card support.
<i>Single raise</i>	γ <i>trump-asking</i> bid—indicates a powerful hand with distinct slam possibilities. ⇔ Any further new suits bid by opener after the γ response will be ε <i>suit control-asking</i> bids. ⇔
<i>Double raise</i>	Minimum balanced hand, 4-card support with good controls. Avoids γ/ε sequences.
<i>Game raise</i>	Minimum balanced hand, 4-card fit with poor controls.
3♠, 4♣, 4♦, 4♥	<i>Splinter</i> bid with 4 ⁺ -card support and a singleton or void in the bid suit.
4NT	<i>Roman key-card Blackwood</i> . ⇔

In general, over a minor suit positive response, a rebid in no-trumps by opener is preferred if it is likely that the final contract will be 3NT. This will ensure that the strong hand is declarer. Similarly, with a 5-card minor suit, opener should consider rebidding no-trumps rather than his suit since, in most cases, 3NT is preferable to five of a minor.

2.5 Bidding after a 3♠ response

The 3♠ response is artificial and shows a solid 7⁺-card suit headed by *AKQ* with or without outside controls. The suit should be obvious on most occasions.

All bidding sequences are forcing to game. Bidding examples are available here. ⇔

Opener's rebids are:

3NT	To play. Responder should pass unless he has many outside controls.
4♣	β-ask for <i>outside</i> controls— responses from the 0-3 scale . ⇔ Any following non-trump suit bid is an ε <i>suit control</i> ask. ⇔
4♦	Asks responder to bid his suit (diamonds are indicated by a 4NT response). A subsequent bid in a new suit would be an ε <i>suit control</i> ask. ⇔
4♥, 4♠	5 ⁺ -card suit, to play. Responder should pass with 3-card support or doubleton honour.

2.6 Bidding after an *unusual positive* response

An *unusual positive* response shows a 4-4-4-1 distribution. With less than 4 controls (typically, 8-13HCP), the singleton is not shown directly—3♠ is bid with a black singleton and 3♦ with a red singleton. With four or more controls (typically 12⁺HCP), the singleton is immediately shown by bidding the suit below the singleton.

After $3\clubsuit\ddagger$ or $3\diamond\ddagger$, opener bids the next higher suit to ask responder to clarify where his singleton lies. Responder bids one step above the relay to show the lower ranking suit and two steps above to show the higher ranking suit.

All bidding sequences are forcing to game.

Possible sequences after an unusual positive of $3\clubsuit/3\diamond$

$1\clubsuit-3\clubsuit-3\diamond-3\heartsuit$	4-4-4-1 (\clubsuit)	$1\clubsuit-3\diamond-3\heartsuit-3\spadesuit$	4-4-1-4 (\diamond)
$1\clubsuit-3\clubsuit-3\diamond-3\spadesuit$	1-4-4-4 (\spadesuit)	$1\clubsuit-3\diamond-3\heartsuit-3NT$	4-1-4-4 (\heartsuit)

Once the singleton is known, opener can bid the singleton suit to initiate β and ask for the number of controls held (the 0-3 scale is used after a $3\clubsuit\ddagger$ or $3\diamond\ddagger$ response and the 4^+ scale is used after the stronger responses). \hookrightarrow

Examples of bidding after an unusual positive can be found here. \hookrightarrow

2.7 Handling intervention over $1\clubsuit$

Over a double of $1\clubsuit\ddagger$, the additional bids of *Redouble* and *Pass* are used to provide more granular information. When the double is conventional (e.g., shows both majors), the bidding is the same *except that a bid of 1NT would also confirm stoppers in both majors*. All other bids retain their normal meaning.

After $1\clubsuit$ -(Double)

<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP.
$1\diamond\ddagger$	5-7HCP, artificial.
<i>Redouble</i> \ddagger	8^+ HCP, usually balanced since 1NT cannot be bid without stoppers in the opponent's suits.
$1NT\ddagger$	Normal 8-13HCP, but if the double shows a two-suited hand, shows stoppers in both implied suits.
<i>Others</i>	Same as over $1\clubsuit$ without the intervention.

After an overcall in a suit at the one-level, *any suit or no-trump bid* is a positive response forcing to game. A *trap pass* can be made when responder wants to double for penalties—in this case, he will pass a re-opening double by opener.

When opponents overcall with 1NT, the responses are different depending on whether the overcall is a genuine strong hand or is conventional showing a two-suiter (the *unusual no-trump*). In the latter case, the *unusual over unusual* approach repurposes the $2\clubsuit\ddagger$ and $2\diamond\ddagger$ bids to show a game-going hand with a major suit.

After a one-level suit overcall $1\clubsuit$ -($1\diamond/1\heartsuit/1\spadesuit$)

<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP or a <i>trap pass</i> .
<i>Double</i> \ddagger	5-8HCP unbalanced or 5^+ HCP, balanced.
<i>Suit</i> \ddagger	Natural, 8^+ HCP, 5^+ -card suit.
<i>Jump to $3\clubsuit$, $3\diamond\ddagger$</i>	Unusual positive with 4-4-4-1.
<i>Cue-bid</i> \ddagger	8^+ HCP, balanced hand with <i>no stopper</i> in opponent's suit.
$1NT\ddagger$, $2NT\ddagger$	Usual meaning and promises a stopper in opponent's suit.

After an artificial no-trump overcall $1\clubsuit$ -(1NT) (showing minors)

<i>Double</i>	Modest high-card points, suitable for penalising one of opponent's suits, usually no 5-card major.
$2\clubsuit\uparrow, 2\diamond\uparrow$	8^+ HCP, 5^+ -card heart or spade suit respectively. These two bids are the so-called <i>unusual over unusual</i> responses in which cue-bids of known suits correspond to forcing bids in the unbid suits.
$2\heartsuit, 2\spadesuit$	Natural, non-forcing.
<hr/> <i>After a strong no-trump overcall $1\clubsuit$-(1NT)</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP.
<i>Double</i>	5^+ HCP, balanced—for penalties.
<i>Suit</i>	5^+ -8HCP, 5^+ -card suit.

Over higher level overcalls, bidding is largely natural but responses over an *unusual 2NT* are still *unusual over unusual*.

<hr/> <i>After a suit overcall at 2-level</i>	
<i>Double</i> \uparrow	6-8HCP, any shape. Any suit rebid by opener would be a one-round force.
<i>Suit</i> \uparrow	Natural and forcing to game. Note that a jump to $3\diamond$ over $2\clubsuit$ would be an unusual positive.
$2NT\uparrow$	8 - 10 or 14^+ HCP, with stopper in opponent's suit.
$3NT\uparrow$	11 - 13 HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
<i>Cue-bid</i> \uparrow	Values to be in game but no clear-cut action—no long suit, no stopper in overcaller's suit.
<hr/> <i>After an overcall of 2NT (unusual no-trump)</i>	
<i>Double</i> \uparrow	Penalty oriented, usually no 5-card major.
$3\clubsuit\uparrow, 3\diamond\uparrow$	8^+ HCP, 5^+ -card heart or spade suit respectively (<i>unusual/unusual</i>).
<hr/> <i>After an overcall at 3-level</i>	
<i>Double</i> \uparrow	Balanced hand with 8^+ HCP.
<i>Suit</i> \uparrow	Positive, natural, game forcing.
$3NT$	8 - 11 HCP with stoppers.
<hr/> <i>After an overcall at 4-level</i>	
<i>Double</i> \uparrow	Shows values—support for partner if he bids and provides defence if he passes.
<i>Suit</i>	Natural, non-forcing.

Intervention after a negative response

If the intervention occurs after partner's negative response of $1\diamond\uparrow$, e.g., $1\clubsuit$ -(*Pass*)- $1\diamond$ -(*RHO doubles / bids*), opener should rebid as follows:

<hr/> <i>After $1\clubsuit$-(<i>Pass</i>)-$1\diamond$-(<i>Double</i>) (usually showing diamonds)</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	Balanced minimum (no 5-card suit).
$1NT$	Upper end of range (19HCP) with diamond stopper.
<i>Suit</i>	Same meaning as without the double.
<hr/> <i>After a 1-level suit overcall $1\clubsuit$-(<i>Pass</i>)-$1\diamond$-($1\heartsuit/1\spadesuit$)</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	Balanced minimum (no 5-card suit).
<i>Double</i> \uparrow	For takeout with support for other suits.
<i>Suit</i>	Natural, at least 5-cards, non-forcing.

1NT	Upper end of the range (19HCP) with stopper.
2NT	Same as 2NT without interference but promises stopper.
<i>Cue-bid</i> †	Strong hand, lacking stopper in overcalled suit.
<i>After a no-trump overcall 1♣–(Pass)–1♦–(1NT) (showing minors)</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	Balanced minimum (no 5-card suit).
<i>Double</i>	Penalty oriented.
2♣†	Heart suit with extra values (<i>unusual/unusual</i>).
2♦†	Spade suit with extra values (<i>unusual/unusual</i>).
2♥, 2♠	Natural, non-forcing.
2NT	Upper-end of the 1NT rebid range (19HCP) with stoppers in both minors.
<i>After an intervention above 1-level</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	Balanced minimum (no 5-card suit).
<i>Others</i>	A little extra weight as compared to without the intervention.
	<i>Unusual/unusual over an unusual 2NT overcall.</i>

Examples of bidding after opponents intervene can be found here. ↔

3 Responses to 1♦

A 1♦ opening guarantees 11-15HCP and at least three diamonds although it could occasionally be a doubleton. Regardless, the bid is *not forcing* and partner can pass with a poor hand (0-7HCP and no 4-card major).

When opener does not have a genuine diamond suit, it is either because (a) he is interested in the major suits but does not have a five-carder, (b) he holds a club suit but cannot bid 2♣ because it is less than six cards or (c) he has a balanced hand that cannot be opened with 1NT, i.e., 11-13HCP. The opener's first rebid will clarify which type of hand he holds—bid or raise a major suit with (a), bid clubs with (b), or bid no-trumps or a minor with (c). Opener's rebids will also classify his point range into a minimum (11-13HCP) or maximum (14-15HCP).

The first priority for both partners is to establish a 4-4 major suit fit if there is one so a bid by either partner that skips a major suit implies that he does not hold four cards in that suit. If a major suit fit is found, a real diamond suit holding in opener's hand may never be mentioned.

Responder will always bid either spades or hearts (1♥[†], 1♠[†], 2♥[†], 2♠[†]) if he has a four-card or longer major so any other bid *denies four cards in either major suit*. As a consequence, *Precision* does *not* have the concept of 4th-suit forcing that is found in standard systems and a simple rebid by responder in a new suit (which may be a six-card suit) is always non-forcing. However, *any new suit bid at the three-level (with or without a jump) is forcing*.

3.1 Responder has a major suit

With a four-card or longer major, responder will bid one, two or four of a major depending on length and strength. Responder's bids are:

1♥ [†]	4 ⁺ -cards in hearts, usually 6 ⁺ HCP ³ , may also have four spades. Note that with 4-4 in the majors and a strong hand, responder will <i>reverse</i> , i.e., rebid 2♠ after first responding with 1♥.
1♠ [†]	4 ⁺ -cards in spades, 6 ⁺ HCP, less than four hearts.
2♥ [†] , 2♠ [†]	Strong hand (slam interest) with either a very strong suit or a good suit with diamond support. For example, bid 2♥ with either ♠AJ ♥KQJ10965 ♦K4 ♣K6 or ♠54 ♥AK1096 ♦KQJ98 ♣A. The first hand can play opposite a void so responder will rebid hearts unless opener raises (in which case responder will invoke <i>RKCB</i>). With the second hand, if opener does not raise hearts, responder will bid diamonds. After a <i>jump shift</i> , the final contract will be in one of—opener's suit, responder's suit or no-trumps. Hence, <i>a new suit by responder shows support for opener's suit with shortness in the suit bid</i> . E.g., 1♦–2♥–2NT–3♣ shows diamond support and shortness in clubs. Similarly, 1♦–(<i>Pass</i>)–2♥–(<i>Pass</i>)–3♣–(<i>Pass</i>)–4♣ would show diamond support and club shortness.
4♥, 4♠	Single-suited hand with 7 ⁺ -cards and no slam interest, sign-off.

³Sometimes, with favourable vulnerability and an extremely weak hand, a tactical bid may be made to interfere with opponent's game. E.g., holding ♠754 ♥J852 ♦985 ♣654, responder could bid 1♥ planning to pass any rebid by opener.

Opener's rebids after a 1♥ response

After a 1♥ response, opener's rebids are:

1♠†	4-card ♠, denies four cards in hearts. Responder rebids:
2♠	8-9HCP, 4 ⁺ -card spade support.
3♠	10-11HCP, 4 ⁺ -card spade support, invitational.
4♠	Weak hand with long trumps or strong hand with no interest in slam.
1NT	Minimum hand, sign-off.
2NT	10-12HCP, balanced hand, invitational.
2♣, 2♦, 2♥	Minimum hand, 5 ⁺ -cards, attempt to find a better part-score, <i>non-forcing</i> .
3♣†	Could be a 3-card suit. Opener should show 3-card heart support if he has it with 3♥.
3♦†	5 ⁺ -card suit, strong hand, game-going.
3♥	Jump rebid indicates a 6 ⁺ -card suit with 10-12HCP. Invitational.
<i>Double jump shift</i> †	<i>Splinter</i> bid with singleton or void and 4 ⁺ -card spade support.
2♥	Single raise—4-card heart suit, 11-13HCP. Could be a 3-card suit with a singleton elsewhere when no other bid is available. E.g., ♠2♥AK9 ♦J9832 ♣A1092.
3♥	Jump raise—4-card heart suit, 14-15HCP.
1NT	11-13HCP, balanced, denies 4-card major. Can be 3-3-2-5 shape. Responder can rebid:
2NT	11-12HCP, balanced hand, invitational.
3NT	13 ⁺ HCP, balanced hand.
2♣, 2♦, 2♥	Minimum with 5 ⁺ -card suit, retreat from no-trumps.
2♠†	<i>Reverse</i> , at least 4-4 in the major suits, strong hand.
3♦†	5 ⁺ -card diamonds, strong hand.
<i>Jump shift</i> †	Could be a 3-card suit. Intermediate bid to decide between 3NT and 4♥ (if opener shows delayed support with 3♥).
2♣	Unbalanced, usually 5-4 in minors and no 4-card major. Responder's rebids:
2♦	Weak hand, to play, preference for diamonds.
2♥	6 ⁺ -card suit, to play.
2♠†	<i>Reverse</i> , 5-4 in the major suits, strong hand.
3♣	10-12HCP, at least 3-card support for clubs.
3♦†	5 ⁺ -card suit, strong hand, invitational.
3NT	To play.
<i>Double jump shift</i> †	<i>Splinter</i> —singleton or void in suit bid and club support.
2♦	6 ⁺ -card diamond suit, no 4-card major, non-forcing.
2♠	<i>Reverse</i> —14-15HCP, 6 ⁺ -cards in diamonds and 4 ⁺ -cards in spades.
2NT	14-15HCP, good diamonds and stoppers in spades and clubs.

3♣	14-15HCP, at least 5-5 in minors with values concentrated in the two suits.
3♦	14-15HCP, 6 ⁺ -card diamond suit, no 4-card major.

Opener's rebids after a 1♠ response

Opener's rebids after 1♠[†] are similar to those after 1♥[†] but are repeated here for convenience.

2♠	Single raise—4-card spade suit, 11-13HCP. Could be a 3-card suit with a singleton elsewhere (see example under 1♥).
3♠	Jump raise—4-card spade suit, 14-15HCP.
1NT	11-13HCP, balanced, may have 4-card heart. Responder can rebid:
2NT	11-12HCP, balanced hand, invitational.
3NT	13 ⁺ HCP, balanced hand.
2♣, 2♦, 2♠	5 ⁺ -card suit, minimum, retreat from no-trumps.
<i>Jump shift</i> [‡]	Could be a 3-card suit. Intermediate bid to decide between 3NT and 4♠ (if opener shows delayed support with 3♠).
2♣	Unbalanced, usually 5-4 in minors but could have four cards in hearts. Responder's rebids:
2♦	Weak hand, to play.
2♠	6 ⁺ -card suit, to play.
3♣	10-12HCP, at least 3-card support for clubs.
3♦ [†]	5 ⁺ -card suit, strong hand.
3NT	To play.
<i>Double jump shift</i> [‡]	<i>Splinter</i> —singleton or void in suit bid and club support.
2♦	6 ⁺ -card diamond suit, may have four cards in hearts, non-forcing.
2NT	14-15HCP, good diamonds and stoppers in hearts and clubs.
3♣	14-15HCP, at least 5-5 in minors with values concentrated in the two suits.
3♦	14-15HCP, 6 ⁺ -card diamond suit, may have four cards in hearts.

3.2 Responder does not have a major suit

When responder does not have a major suit, he can bid:

Balanced hands

1NT	8-10HCP, usually balanced hand.
2NT	11-12HCP, balanced hand. Could be a 4-3-3-3 shape with a weak four card major and tenaces that would play better as declarer in NT. E.g., ♠AQ10 ♥10642 ♦Q109 ♣K107 or ♠9843 ♥KJ10 ♦AQ7 ♣J105

3NT	13-15HCP, balanced hand.
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Support for diamonds (inverted raises)

2♦ [†]	11 ⁺ HCP, 5 ⁺ -card diamond suit, forcing to 2NT or 3♦.
3♦	0-10HCP, 5 ⁺ -cards in ♦, usually with a singleton or void.
4♦	Preemptive, with more shape and trumps than for 3♦, i.e., 6 or 7-card diamond suit.

Unbalanced hands

2♣ [†]	Usually, 12 ⁺ HCP and a 5 ⁺ -card suit but could be four cards. Opener will show strength and stoppers targeting 3NT. Bidding may stop in 3♣ or 3♦ with missing stoppers.
2♥	11-14 ⁻ HCP, heart stopper, no spade stopper.
2♠	11-14 ⁻ HCP, spade stopper, no heart stopper.
2NT	11-14 ⁻ HCP, stoppers in both majors.
2♦, 3♦	No stopper in majors, genuine diamond suit. Jump shows a maximum 15HCP.
3♥	14 ⁺ -15HCP with a heart stopper and no spade stopper.
3♠	14 ⁺ -15HCP with a spade stopper and no heart stopper.
3NT	14 ⁺ -15HCP with stoppers in both majors.
3♣	No stopper in majors, club support.
3♣	Invitational, with a long club suit. E.g., ♠Q4 ♥75 ♦97 ♣AQJ8654
3♥ [†] , 3♠ [†] , 4♣ [†]	<i>Splinter</i> bid with 5 ⁺ -card diamond support and a singleton or void in the bid suit.

Examples of bidding after a 1♦ opening are available here. ↔

3.3 Intervention after a 1♦ opening

If an opponent doubles 1♦, most responses are the same except that [raises in diamonds are not inverted](#). Since opener often uses 1♦ as a vehicle to discover a 4-4 major fit, responder, lacking the strength to redouble should bid a four-card major if he has one.

Pass	0-4HCP or a “ <i>trap pass</i> ”.
New suit	4-9HCP, 4 ⁺ -cards, no longer forcing .
1NT	6-9HCP, no 4-card major.
2♦, 3♦	0-10HCP with length in diamonds since opener may be short.
2NT [†]	10 ⁺ HCP, 5 ⁺ -card diamond suit, replaces 2♦ “inverted raise” .
Redouble	10 ⁺ HCP. No specific distribution, may be for penalties.
Jump shift	Weak, usually 7 ⁺ -card suit without interest in playing in another suit or NT.

After an overcall by opponent up to the 2♠ level, the responses are:

Pass	Poor hand with nothing to bid or a “ <i>trap pass</i> ”.
Double [†]	8 ⁺ HCP, negative double. ↔
New suit [†]	10 ⁺ HCP, natural—if at two-level, values for two-over-one response.
Raise	6-10HCP, 5 ⁺ -card diamonds (no longer “inverted”).
Jump raise [†]	11 ⁺ HCP, 5 ⁺ -card diamonds (no longer weak).
1NT	8-10HCP, stopper in opponent’s suit, balanced.
2NT	11-12HCP, stopper in opponent’s suit, balanced.

3NT	12 ⁺ -15HCP, stopper in opponent's suit, to play.
<i>Cue-bid</i> ‡	13 ⁺ HCP with slam interest. A passed hand may cue-bid with 10 ⁺ HCP as a game try.
<i>Jump Cue-bid</i> ‡	After a one-level overcall, a <i>jump</i> cue-bid at the three level asks opener to bid 3NT with a stopper in opponent's suit.

4 Responses to 1♥ or 1♠

Responses to a major opening include *Bergen* raises, *splinter* bids, a forcing 1NT and 2/1 game force.

<i>Pass</i>	0-7HCP and poor support.
<i>Raises with support</i>	
<i>Single raise</i>	7-10HCP with 3-card support, constructive.
<i>Jump raise</i>	0-6HCP with 4-card support, preemptive <i>Bergen</i> raise. \hookrightarrow
3♣	7-10HCP with 4-card support, constructive <i>Bergen</i> raise. \hookrightarrow
3♦	10-12HCP with 4-card support, limited <i>Bergen</i> raise. \hookrightarrow
2NT‡	12 ⁺ HCP, 4-card support, slam interest. <i>Jacoby</i> 2NT. \hookrightarrow .
<i>Game raise</i>	Wide variety of hands where responder is fairly sure there is no play for slam. E.g., raise 1♠ to 4♠ with ♠K65 ♥AQ ♦K82 ♣J9876 or with ♠98732 ♥A5 ♦Q ♣109743.
<i>One-over-one response</i>	
1♠‡	8 ⁺ HCP, 4 ⁺ -card suit. See below for detailed treatment.
1NT‡	8-15HCP, balanced hand with mild support for opener's suit or unbalanced hand with insufficient HCP to justify a 2-over-1 response. Opener's rebids are: <i>With a minimum 11-13HCP</i> 2♣, 2♦, 2♥ 11-13HCP, 4-card suit (or better 3-card minor). <i>Rebid suit</i> 11-13HCP, 6-card suit. <i>With a maximum 14-15HCP</i> <i>Jump rebid suit</i> 14-15HCP, 6-card solid suit. The jump rebid should be made on the basis of playing strength rather than HCP. 2NT 5-3-3-2 distribution. <i>Jump in new suit</i> 5-5 distribution. A reverse, e.g., 1♥-1NT-2♠ would show shape rather than HCP (typically 14-15) and indicate a 6-5 distribution (or 6-4 with a very strong spade holding such as AKQx)
<i>Two-over-one game force</i>	
2♠‡, 2♦‡, 2♥‡	12 ⁺ HCP, 4 ⁺ -card minor or 5 ⁺ -card heart suit (over 1♠). Unless the suit is rebid at the three level, all 2-over-1 responses are forcing to game. Opener's rebids are: 2♥ (after 1♠) Natural, 4 ⁺ -card suit. 2♠ (after 1♥) 14-15HCP, <i>reverse</i> . <i>Rebid suit</i> Minimum, not necessarily a 6-carder. <i>New Suit</i> Natural, second suit. 2NT 11-13HCP, stoppers in unbid suits <i>Raise</i> 11-13HCP, good support, non-forcing. <i>Jump in new suit</i> 14-15HCP, good support for responder's suit, singleton or void in bid suit. <i>Jump rebid suit</i> 14-15HCP, very good 6-card suit. The jump rebid should be made on the basis of playing strength rather than HCP. 3NT 15HCP with stoppers in the unbid suits.

A 2-over-1 response by a *passed hand* indicates 8-10HCP with a good 5⁺-card suit and is non-forcing.

Other bids at 3-level and above

<i>Double jump shift</i> †	<i>Splinter</i> bid, singleton or void in bid suit, 4 ⁺ -card support, slam interest.
3NT†	14-15HCP, usually 4-card support for opener's major, no void or singleton and a minimum of 4 controls.

A response of 1♠† over 1♥ shows 8⁺HCP with a 4-card suit and is forcing for one round. Opener's rebids are:

Balanced hands

1NT	11-13HCP, minimum.
2NT	14-15HCP, balanced, stoppers in both minors.
3NT	To play with running suit.

Unbalanced hands

2♣, 2♦	11-15HCP, 4 ⁺ -card suit, non-forcing.
2♥	11-13HCP, 6 ⁺ -cards in hearts, non-forcing.
2♠	11-13HCP, 4-card spade support.
3♣, 3♦	13-15HCP, second 5-card suit.
3♥	13-15HCP, 6 ⁺ -card heart suit.
3♠	13-15HCP with 4 ⁺ -card spade support.
4♥	To play—distributional hand.
4♠	To play—maximum 13-15HCP and distributional values.

Slam tries

4♣†, 4♦†	<i>Splinter</i> bids, good spade support (<i>Qxx</i> , <i>xxxx</i> or better), slam interest.
4NT	<i>Roman key-card Blackwood</i> with spades as trumps. ⇔

Examples of bidding after a major suit opening can be found here. ⇔

4.1 Intervention after a major suit opening

After an opponent's double, responder can bid:

<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP or a " <i>trap pass</i> ".
<i>Raise, Jump raise, Game raise</i>	0-10HCP, preemptive, 3 ⁺ -card support (4 ⁺ -cards for jumps) following the <i>Law of Total Tricks</i> .
<i>New suit</i>	4-9HCP, 5 ⁺ -card suit, non-forcing.
<i>Jump shift</i>	Weak, usually 7 ⁺ -card suit without interest in playing in another suit or NT.
1NT	6-11HCP, balanced.
2NT†	12 ⁺ HCP, 4 ⁺ -card support, <i>Jacoby</i> 2NT. ⇔.
<i>Redouble</i> †	12 ⁺ HCP, no specific distribution, may be penalty oriented.

After an opponent's overcall, responder's bids are:

<i>Pass</i>	Poor hand of 0-7HCP or " <i>trap pass</i> ".
<i>Double</i> †	8 ⁺ HCP, negative double 4 ⁺ cards in unbid major. ⇔
<i>Raise</i>	Competitive, typically 6-10HCP, 3 ⁺ -card support.

<i>Jump raise</i>	11-12HCP, limit raise (replaces <i>Bergen raise of 3♦</i>).
<i>New suit</i> †	10 ⁺ HCP, 5 ⁺ -card suit (values for a 2-over-1 response).
1NT	8-10HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
2NT	11-12HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
3NT	12 ⁺ -15HCP, stopper in opponent's suit, to play.
<i>Cue-bid</i> ‡	13 ⁺ HCP, slam interest. A passed hand may cue-bid with 10 ⁺ HCP as a game try.
	After a 1♠ overcall over 1♥, a <i>jump cue-bid of 3♠</i> asks opener to bid 3NT with a stopper in spades.

5 Responses to 1NT

A 1NT opening shows a 14-16HCP balanced hand (15-17HCP in 3rd or 4th seat) without a 5-card major suit (a 5-card minor is possible). Simple arithmetic will almost always tell responder how high to place the contract. E.g., 0-8HCP: 1NT or 2 of suit, 9-10HCP: game invite, 11-17: game force, 18+: slam. The response structure below is applicable when 1NT is opened in 1st or 2nd seat since otherwise, responder is already limited to less than 11HCP.

<i>Balanced hands—Quantitative raises</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	0-8HCP, balanced hand (or 5-card minor).
2NT	9-10HCP, balanced hand—invitation to 3NT.
3NT	11-15HCP, balanced hand, sign-off.
4NT	16-17HCP, balanced hand, invites slam with a maximum.
5NT [†]	20-22HCP, balanced—partner to choose between 6NT and 7NT.
6NT	18-19HCP, balanced, sign-off.
<i>Unbalanced hands</i>	
2♣ [†]	<i>Stayman.</i> ⇔ This can be used on both weak and strong hands.
	<i>Weak hand with both majors</i> When 2♥ or 2♠ is preferable to 1NT, responder bids 2♣ and passes any major suit response. If opener denies majors with 2♦, responder rebids 2♥ asking opener to pass or correct to 2♠.
	<i>Invitational or game-forcing hands</i> To find a 4-4 major suit fit (implies one 4-card major). With 5-4 in the majors and a game-going hand, if opener denies majors with 2♦, responder jumps in the 4-card suit to 3♥ [‡] /3♠ [‡] which shows 5-cards in the <i>other major</i> (<i>Smolen</i> convention). Opener can then bid 3NT with a doubleton or 4♥/4♠ with 3-card support.
2♦ [‡] , 2♥ [‡]	<i>Jacoby</i> transfers to 2♥ and 2♠ respectively. May be made with both strong and weak hands. ⇔
2♠ [†]	<i>Minor suit Stayman</i> —shows a minor 2-suiter (5-4 or better) and asks opener to bid his 4-card minor. This is used with either very weak hands or strong slam-invitational hands. With intermediate hands, you will want to play 3NT so asking for minors is not helpful. Opener responds:
	3♣, 3♦ 4-card suit. Responder will pass with a weak hand or bid on with slam interest.
	2NT [†] No four card minor. Responder rebids 3♣ with a weak hand asking opener to pass or correct to 3♦. With a strong hand, responder bids 3♥ [‡] or 3♠ [‡] to show a singleton.
3 of suit [‡]	10 ⁺ HCP, good 5 ⁺ -card suit, forcing to game.
4♦ [‡] , 4♥ [‡]	<i>Texas</i> transfers to 4♥ and 4♠ respectively. Denies slam values.
<i>Others</i>	
4♠ [‡]	<i>Gerber</i> ace-asking. ⇔

5.1 Intervention after opening 1NT

If an opponent doubles 1NT for penalties, we use *Meckwell Escapes* to run out to a safer contract but this method does not work very well if responder has a 4-3-3-3 distribution. In this case, responder can either treat his four-card suit as a five-card suit, or treat his four-card suit and his best 3-card suit as a two-suiter and pray that the opponents elect to introduce a suit of their own.

<i>Pass</i> †	Forcing, shows either a single-suiter in clubs or diamonds or a two-suiter with both majors. Opener must rebid 2♣ after which responder rebids: <i>Pass</i> 5-card club suit, escape completed. 2♦ 5-card diamond suit. 2♥† 4-4 in the majors, opener passes or corrects to 2♠.
<i>Redouble</i>	Natural, non-forcing.
2♣	Clubs and another suit, 4-4 or better. Opener passes or corrects to 2♦ asking for the higher suit.
2♦	Diamonds and a higher ranking suit, 4-4 or better. Opener passes or corrects to 2♥ asking for the higher suit.
2♥, 2♠	Natural, 5-card suit.
3 of suit	6 ⁺ -card suit, invitational.

After an opponent's overcall, we use the *lebensohl* convention and responder has the following choices:

<i>Double</i>	Penalty double.
<i>Suit at 2-level</i>	0-6HCP, natural and non-forcing.
2NT†	<i>lebensohl</i> —partner must bid 3♣. ↔
<i>Suit at 3-level</i> ‡	Natural, forcing to game.
<i>Cue-bid</i> †	Asks opener to bid a 4-card major if he has one, denies a stopper in opponent's suit.
3NT	<i>lebensohl</i> —denies stopper in opponent's suit. ↔

6 Responses to 2♣

Bidding after a 2♣ opening (11-15HCP, 6⁺-card club suit) is largely natural except for the conventional 2♦‡ response that asks opener to further describe his hand. Note that a [jump to 4♦‡](#) (not 4NT) is used to trigger key card asking.

<i>Pass</i>	0-7HCP, poor hand.
<i>Weak responses</i>	
3♣	Preemptive raise based on a club fit. Not forward-going.
4♣	Preemptive raise with extra club support or distributional values as compared to a raise to 3♣.
2♥, 2♠	8-10HCP, non-forcing, invitational. Opener may pass with a minimum and mild support.
2NT	10-11HCP, invitation to 3NT. Any rebid other than 3♣ (sign-off) by opener commits to game.
4♥, 4♠	Very long suit with no interest in slam, to play.
<i>Strong responses</i>	
2♦‡	11+HCP, conventional (with club fit, may be made with only 8HCP). Opener's rebids are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2♥, 2♠ 11-13HCP, 4-card suit. 2NT 11-13HCP, 6-3-2-2 balanced hand with stoppers in two suits. Responder then bids 3♦ to enquire about stoppers and opener's rebids are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3♥ ♥ and ♦ stoppers. 3♠ ♠ and ♦ stoppers. 3NT ♥ and ♠ stoppers. 3♣ 11-13HCP, 6 clubs with 1 outside stopper. Responder bids 3♦ to enquire about the stopper and opener's rebids are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3♥ ♥ stopper. 3♠ ♠ stopper. 3NT ♦ stopper. 4♦ 5-card suit (6-5 in clubs and diamonds) 3NT 14-15HCP, 6-3-3-2 balanced hand, good club suit. 3♥‡, 3♠‡ 14-15HCP, 4-card suit.
3♦‡, 3♥‡, 3♠‡	6 ⁺ -card suit with game-forcing values (12 ⁺ HCP). Opener's rebids are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3NT Less than 2-card support. <i>Raise</i> Minimum, 3-card support. <i>New suit‡</i> Maximum, 3+-card club support, ace or void in suit bid.
3NT	13-15HCP, balanced hand with stoppers in the unbid suits and no interest in the majors.
4♦‡	Ace-asking, <i>Roman key-card Blackwood</i> ⇔

Examples of bidding after a 2♣ opening are available [here](#). ⇔

6.1 Intervention after a 2♣ opening

After an opponent's *double*, all bids carry their normal meaning. The extra bid of *Redouble* shows 10⁺HCP and is penalty oriented.

Over an opponent's overcall, raises are natural. Others:

<i>Double</i> †	8 ⁺ HCP, negative double. \hookrightarrow
<i>Cue-bid</i> ‡	12 ⁺ HCP, singleton or void in opponent's suit.
<i>New suit</i> †	Any new suit bid is natural and forcing.

7 Responses to 2♦

A 2♦ opening declares a three suited hand with a singleton or void in diamonds. The responder should be able to place the final contract fairly easily in most cases. The only positive responses are the artificial bids of 2NT♣ or 3♦♣ which are both forcing to game.

<i>Pass</i>	6+ diamonds, no interest in other suits or bidding higher.
2♥, 2♠, 3♣	Natural, sign-off.
2NT♣	11+HCP, artificial, asks opener to further describe his hand. Opener's rebids are: 3♣, 3♦ 3=4=1=5 or 4=3=1=5 shape respectively. 3♥ 11-13HCP and 4=4=1=4 shape. 3♠ 14-15HCP and 4=4=1=4 shape. 3NT 14-15HCP, 4=4=1=4 shape and ♦A or ♦K. 4♣ 11-13HCP, 4=4=0=5 shape. 4♦ 14-15HCP, 4=4=0=5 shape. A rebid in diamonds (the singleton suit) by responder would be β asking for controls. ↔
3♦♣	β control-asking bid.
3♥, 3♠	7-9HCP, preemptive, 5 ⁺ -card suit.
4♥, 4♠, 5♣	Sign-off, to play.

Here are some examples of bidding after a 2♦ opening. ↔

7.1 Intervention after a 2♦ opening

When opponents double (possibly showing values in diamonds):

<i>Pass</i> ♣	Waiting action, forcing. Partner will <i>redouble</i> with a minimum hand or bid 2♥ or 2♠ (four card suit) with a 3-4-1-5 shape.
<i>Redouble</i>	Desire to play in diamonds with a long suit. Prepared to punish the opponents when they run from the redouble.
<i>Others</i>	Same meaning as without the double.

Responses after an opponent's overcall:

<i>Double</i>	For penalties.
2NT♣	Same as without overcall.
<i>Others</i>	Natural, non-forcing.

8 Responses to 2♥ or 2♠

Opener shows exactly six cards in the suit bid with two of the top three honours (or three of the top five) and 6-10HCP. It denies four cards in the unbid major.

Without two-card support, it is generally correct to pass unless holding 16⁺HCP or a very good suit of one's own. The general system of responses is called *RONF* (Raise is the Only Non-Forcing bid) and any new suit bid is forcing asking partner to raise with 3-card support. A raise is a sign-off and opener should not bid again.

A 2NT[†] response asks opener to show a “feature” (an outside stopper, i.e., an ace or king). If there is a suit fit, the feature will help in deciding whether to bid game with an invitational hand. Likewise, without a suit fit, it could help in deciding whether to bid 3NT.

Summary of responses:

<i>Pass</i>	No game, no fit.
<i>Raise</i>	6-9HCP, 3-card support, sign-off.
<i>Game raise</i>	Variety of hands, sign-off. E.g., raise to 4♥ with either ♠AKJ3 ♥Q5 ♦4 ♣A76432 or ♠4 ♥KJ43 ♦KJ743 ♣1087.
<i>New suit</i> [†]	13 ⁺ HCP, 5 ⁺ -card suit, asking for 3-card support. E.g., with ♠AKJ943 ♥2 ♦AQ10 ♣1095, bid 2♠ over 2♥. Opener's rebids are: <i>Raise</i> 3 ⁺ -card support. <i>Rebid suit</i> No support.
2NT [†]	Either 16 ⁺ HCP or 13 ⁺ HCP with 3-card support. Opener's rebids are: <i>Rebid suit</i> No outside stoppers. <i>New suit</i> Stopper in suit bid. 3NT Very good suit headed by <i>AQJ</i> , <i>AKJ</i> , or exceptionally the <i>AKQ</i> .
3NT	16 ⁺ HCP, all other suits stopped. Normally indicates a solid minor with a singleton or void in opener's suit. E.g., bid 3NT with ♠K4 ♥2 ♦AKQJ876 ♣K76 over an opening 2♥.
4♣ [‡]	<i>Roman key-card</i> ask with modified responses since opener can have at most two key cards. ⇔

9 Responses to 2NT

Opener is showing a balanced hand with 22-23HCP and no five-card suit. Note that the rebids after a $3\clubsuit^\dagger$ response differ from those after $1\clubsuit-1\diamond-2NT-3\clubsuit$ because here, responder is not limited to 0-7HCP and slam is a possibility. Responses are:

<i>Pass</i>	Very weak, no suit to escape to.
3NT	To play.
$3\clubsuit^\dagger$	<i>Smolen Stayman</i> —asking for majors (implies at least one four-card major). Game-going with slam interest. Responses are:
$3\diamond^\dagger$	No 4-card major. Responder's rebids are:
$3\heartsuit$	4-card \heartsuit and 5-card \spadesuit (allows for 5-3 fit).
$3\spadesuit$	4-card \spadesuit and 5-card \heartsuit (allows for 5-3 fit).
3NT	To play (no five-card major).
$3\heartsuit, 3\spadesuit$	4-card major.
3NT	4 cards in both majors. Responder bids:
<i>Pass</i>	To play.
$4\diamond, 4\heartsuit$	Transfer to $4\heartsuit$ or $4\spadesuit$ respectively.
$3\diamond^\dagger, 3\heartsuit^\dagger$	Transfer to $3\heartsuit$ or $3\spadesuit$ respectively. With 5-5 in the majors, responder bids $3\spadesuit$ after a transfer to hearts. With 5-4 (four hearts), he bids $4\heartsuit$ after a transfer to spades. Bidding 3NT asks opener to pass or bid four of the major holding 3-card support.
$3\clubsuit^\dagger$	Minor suit slam try. Opener bids $4\clubsuit$ (corrected to $4\diamond$ if needed).
$4\clubsuit^\dagger$	Minor two-suiter. $4\diamond$ sets diamonds, any other bid agrees clubs.
$4\diamond^\dagger, 4\heartsuit^\dagger$	Transfer to $4\heartsuit$ or $4\spadesuit$ respectively. 6 ⁺ -card suit, to play.

10 Responses to 3-Level Preempts

A preempt at the 3-level is made with less than 10HCP and at least a 7-card suit with a suit quality of 8 (or 9 when vulnerable) and obeying the rule of 2/3/4. In general, it is expected that opener will not have a four-card major and have two or more good honours in his suit with not more than one useful honour in a side suit. Unless partner makes a forcing response, the opener is not expected to bid again.

Responses are based on playing strength (additional tricks that responder can provide) rather than high card points:

<i>Pass</i>	No support, no suit of one's own, at best can provide 2 or 3 tricks.
<i>Raise</i>	Could be preemptive with 3-card support or with good cards in side suits that can provide four tricks or more.
<i>New suit</i> †	6 ⁺ -card suit, good playing strength since this forces opener to respond. Opener should raise the suit with two or three trumps.
3NT	Natural, good controls in side suits, good chance of taking 6-7 tricks in opener's suit even with the known problems of entries in dummy.

11 Responses to 3NT

The “*gambling*” 3NT bid is made with a solid 7⁺-card minor suit (*AKQ* or better) and no outside ace or king. Responses are:

<i>Pass</i>	To play, stoppers in side suits.
4♣	Escape—asks opener to pass or bid 4♦ if that is his suit.
4♦†	Asks opener to bid a singleton or void if he has one. Responses: 4♥†, 4♠† Singleton or void in the bid suit. 4NT† Singleton or void in the other minor. 5♣, 5♦ Shows that minor and denies a singleton or void.
4♥, 4♠	Natural, to play.
4NT	Quantitative, asking opener to bid 6NT with extra length or an extra trick outside (such as <i>Qxx</i>).
5♣	Sign-off and weak. Opener should correct to 5♦ if that is his suit.
5♦	Also a sign-off but responder indicates he knows opener's suit is diamonds and it would be advantageous to play from his side.
5NT†	Grand Slam try showing no losers outside the trump suit but indicating a void in opener's suit. If opener is completely solid (e.g., <i>AKQJ</i> to seven card), he bids 7 otherwise he bids 6.
6♣	Asks opener to pass or correct to 6♦. This could be a tactical bid.

Here is an example of bidding after a 3NT opening. ⇔

12 Responses to Namyats

The *Namyats* convention (*Stayman* spelt backwards) shows a long (normally eight cards) semi-solid (not missing both ace and king) major suit with eight or more playing tricks with playing strength concentrated in the trump suit. The bid is meant to be constructive rather than preemptive and allows you to distinguish hands that are close to game versus purely preemptive openings.

4♣† shows hearts and 4♦† shows spades. With a weaker hand, the preemptive bids of 4♥ or 4♠ would be used instead.

Responses are:

4♥, 4♠	Bidding game in partner's suit is a sign-off with no slam interest (responder wants to be declarer).
4♦†, 4♥†	The next step above opener's bid is a relay asking him to bid his suit (♥ or ♠). After opener bids his suit, any new suit bid by responder is a cue-bid. Responder passes if he does not have slam interest but wants his hand to be dummy.
4NT†	<i>Roman key-card Blackwood</i> . ↷
<i>Suit</i> †	€ <i>suit control-asking</i> bid. A compressed scale of responses is used (note that the steps skip over NT because that has a special meaning):
<i>Cheapest</i> NT	Guarded king in suit. When you have ample tricks elsewhere, this allows you to declare an NT contract from the correct side.
<i>1 step</i>	No first or second round control.
<i>2 steps</i>	Second round control—any singleton.
<i>3 steps</i>	First round control—void or ace.
	A repeat ask in the same suit asks for third round control, i.e., a doubleton or guarded queen. Responses are—1 st step: no control, 2 nd step: doubleton and 3 rd step: guarded queen.

An example of bidding after a *Namyats* opening can be found [here](#). ↷

13 Competitive Bidding

In general, simple non-jump overcalls are made with 8-15HCP and a good suit—the higher the level of the overcall, the stronger the hand in terms of playing strength (better suit quality or length). Jump overcalls are always weak or preemptive. An overcall in no-trumps, however, shows the equivalent of an opening no-trump bid *with a stopper* in the opponent's suit.

Takeout doubles are made with an opening hand or better (12⁺HCP) and must have tolerance for all the unbid suits. This restriction can be relaxed holding a powerful hand of 16⁺HCP when you would double for takeout and bid your suit over partner's forced response.

A double of 1NT is not a takeout double (you cannot have tolerance for all four suits) and has special meanings described below.

13.1 Overcalls

Overcalls over an opponent's opening of one of a suit carry the following meanings:

<i>Non-jump overcall</i>	<hr/>	
	8-15HCP, good 5 ⁺ -card suit (11-15HCP, 6 ⁺ -card suit at 2-level). Partner's responses are:	
	<i>With support for partner's suit</i>	
	<i>Single raise</i>	8-9HCP, 3 ⁺ -card support.
	<i>Jump raise</i>	Weak, 5-8HCP, 4 ⁺ -card support, preemptive.
	<i>Game raise</i>	Hand good enough for game or weak and preemptive with 5-card support.
	<i>Cue-bid</i> †	9 ⁺ HCP, 4 ⁺ -card support (or 10 ⁺ HCP with 3-card support). If the overcaller shows a minimum by rebidding his suit, responder can pass with 9-11HCP, raise with 12-14HCP and cue-bid again with 15 ⁺ HCP.
	<i>Without support for partner's suit</i>	
	<i>New suit</i>	5 ⁺ -card suit, non-forcing.
	<i>Jump in suit</i>	11-13HCP, 6 ⁺ -card suit, non-forcing.
	1NT	8-11HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
	2NT	12-15HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
	3NT	16 ⁺ HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
	<i>Cue-bid</i> †	Strong hand with interest in game. To distinguish from the case with support for partner's suit, responder will rebid NT or jump in a new suit on his next bid.
<i>Jump overcall</i>	0-10HCP, preemptive with 6 ⁺ -card suit (7-card at 3-level).	

1NT	14-16HCP, stopper in opponent's suit. Responses (including <i>Stayman</i> and transfers) are the same as over a 1NT opening. Stronger balanced hands should open with a takeout double followed by a bid in no-trumps.
<i>Cue-bid</i> †	<i>Michael's cue-bid</i> showing a two-suiter in the highest ranking unbid suit and another. \leftrightarrow
<i>Jump to 2NT</i> †	<i>Unusual no-trump</i> showing a two-suiter in the two lowest ranking unbid suits. \leftrightarrow

13.2 Takeout doubles

A double of opponent's opening of one of a suit is either 12-15HCP with tolerance for any unbid suit or a power double with 16⁺HCP. A double of a minor suit opening bid usually shows 4-4 in the majors and a double of a major suit opening normally promises a 4-card suit in the other major. [A response must be made even with a blank hand unless the other opponent bids.](#)

Responder's bids:

<i>Suit</i>	0-8HCP, may be only four cards (forced response). Doubler should pass with a minimum, raise and invite with support and 15-17HCP or bid a new suit or no-trumps with 18 ⁺ HCP.
<i>Free bid or jump in suit</i> †	9-11HCP. Doubler should compete with 12-14HCP, force game with 15-17HCP and bid a new suit or no-trumps with 18 ⁺ HCP.
<i>Cue-bid</i> ‡	Strong hand, forcing to game.
1NT	6-9HCP, stopper in opponent's suit, non-forcing.
2NT	10-11HCP, stopper in opponent's suit, invitational.
3NT	Values for game, no interest in slam. Doubler can check aces and try for slam with 18 ⁺ HCP.

13.3 Takeout doubles over a weak two opening

The *lebensohl* convention is used after a double of a weak two opening (or when *RHO* raises opener's suit to the two level in an auction such as (1♥)–*Double*–(2♥)–??). Responses to the double are:

<i>Pass</i>	(Only when <i>RHO</i> has bid) Weak, 0-7HCP.
<i>2 of suit</i>	Weak, 0-7HCP.
<i>2NT</i> † or <i>3 of a suit</i> †	<i>lebensohl</i> convention. \leftrightarrow

13.4 Negative doubles

A *negative* double after an opponent overcalls one of a major implies possession of four cards in the other major and sufficient values to justify a response. Responder is also expected to have mild support either for the unbid minor or for partner's suit. At the two or three-level, it implies that the hand is playable in either of the unbid suits and possibly even partner's suit at the level he will be forced to bid. Sometimes, responder may make a negative double with a single-suited hand when he has insufficient high-card strength to make a forcing

bid in his suit.

Examples:

<i>Bidding</i>	<i>Sample hand</i>	
1♦-(2♠)-Double	Reasonable major suit holdings and strength to play at two-level.	♠KJ105 ♥QJ107 ♦Q109 ♣64
1♠-(2♥)-Double	Reasonable minor suit holdings and sufficient values to play at 3-level.	♠J10 ♥85 ♦QJ1043 ♣AJ109
1♦-(1♠)-Double	Four hearts with at least 8HCP.	♠87 ♥KQ103 ♦J104 ♣Q1092
1♦-(1♠)-Double	2♥ cannot be bid since it would imply values for a two-over-one response. The solution is to use a negative double and rebid hearts.	♠87 ♥AQJ1095 ♦1096 ♣J10

Note that after the sequence, 1♦-(1♥), responder should bid 1♠ holding four spades rather than make a negative double.

Opener's rebids after partner's negative double are as follows:

<i>Pass</i>	For penalties (see below).
<i>With a minimum hand (11-13HCP)</i>	
<i>New suit</i>	Shows fit in responder's implied suit (especially if a major).
<i>Rebid own suit</i>	Shows 6 ⁺ -card suit (or a strong 5-card suit).
<i>Cheapest NT</i>	No suit worth bidding, stopper in opponent's suit.
<i>With a maximum hand (14-15HCP)</i>	
<i>Jump shift</i>	Invitational but non-forcing.
<i>Jump rebid</i>	Shows a good 6 ⁺ -card suit, invitational.
<i>Jump in NT</i>	Stopper in opponent's suit, ready source of tricks.
<i>Cue-bid†</i>	Shortness in opponent's suit and by inference, support for doubler's suits.

Opener can also *Pass* for penalties after a negative double although this is rare since it implies opponents have bid opener's good suit. For example, after 1♦-(2♠)-Double, opener could pass with ♠5 ♥A76 ♦AKJ3 ♣Q10942 or ♠983 ♥Q♦AK865 ♣KQJ9 (but not with ♠Q1065 ♥9 ♦AK10 ♣K1032 where the correct bid would be to support one of partner's implied suits with 2♠).

13.5 Responsive doubles

A *responsive* double is used when the opponents have bid and raised a suit and partner has either doubled or overcalled in between. For example,

(1♦)-Double-(2♦)-Double or
(1♠)-2♥-(2♠)-Double

The last double in each case is a *responsive* double that shows at least 4-4 in the major suits when opponents have bid a minor or 4-4 in the minor suits when opponents have bid a major (and partner has doubled in between). When partner has overcalled, it indicates a 4-4 holding in the unbid suits with mild support (at least a doubleton) for partner's suit.

Responsive doubles are “on” up to the level of 3♠ and [can be made over artificial raises](#) (such as *Bergen* raises) or raises of weak two bids.

It is not a responsive double (i.e., the double is for penalties) if partner’s overcall was not a natural non-jump suit bid, e.g., a jump overcall, a *Michael’s* cue-bid or an overcall in no-trumps. It is also not a responsive double if opponents have not bid *and* raised a suit.

Examples:

<i>Bidding</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Sample hand</i>
(1♣)–1♠–(2♣)– <i>Dbl</i>	4-4 in the unbid suits, at least doubleton in partner’s suit.	♠92 ♥K9762 ♦AJ103 ♣64
(1♦)– <i>Dbl</i> –(2♦)– <i>Dbl</i>	4-4 in the major suits.	♠AQJ2 ♥Q1063 ♦843 ♣65
(1♥)– <i>Dbl</i> –(2♥)– <i>Dbl</i>	4-4 in the minor suits.	♠Q63 ♥5 ♦KQ43 ♣J1075
(1♠)– <i>Dbl</i> –(2♣)– <i>Dbl</i> (2♥)– <i>Dbl</i> –(3♥)– <i>Dbl</i>	4-4 in the minor suits since 2♣ is a spade raise. 4-4 in the minor suits.	
(1♥)–2♠–(3♥)– <i>Dbl</i>	Penalty double after partner’s jump overcall.	
(1♦)–2♦–(3♦)– <i>Dbl</i>	Penalty double after <i>Michael’s</i> cue-bid.	
(1♥)–1NT–(2♥)– <i>Dbl</i>	Penalty double after strong no-trump overcall.	
(1♥)– <i>Dbl</i> –(1♠)– <i>Dbl</i>	Penalty double since opponent has not raised but rather bid a suit implied by partner’s takeout double.	
(1♦)– <i>Pass</i> –(1♠)– <i>Dbl</i> (2♦)– <i>Dbl</i>	Penalty double since opponent has not raised his partner’s suit.	

If partner has made a takeout double, a 4-4 distribution is enough since he has support for both suits. However, when partner has made an overcall, you should have at least a doubleton in partner’s suit and preferably a 5-4 holding in your own suits.

The higher the level of the auction, the greater the strength required—if partner is forced to bid at the three level, you should have at least 8HCP (6-7HCP if he can bid at the 2-level). Playing strength and suit quality are more important than high card points when competing.

If you have a “real” penalty double of the opponent’s contract, you cannot make an immediate double. You must pass and hope that partner is strong enough to reopen with a double which you can then pass.

13.6 *Lightner* doubles of slam contracts

A double of a slam contract by a defender who is not on lead is a *Lightner* double requesting an unusual lead from partner. This is most often bid when you have a void in a side suit, or sometimes *AQ* or *KQ* in the suit bid by the dummy.

It asks partner not to lead trumps or a suit bid by the defenders. Instead, he is requested to lead one of:

- Dummy’s side suit if one has been bid.
- Declarer’s side suit if one has been bid.

- Any other unusual lead—usually his longest suit to get a ruff.

The *Lightner* double is **not in effect** if the opponents are sacrificing at the 6 or 7-level.

There is also a negative inference that can be drawn when partner does not double. For example, if opponents bid a side suit on the way to slam and partner does not double, it is an indication that partner does not want a lead of the side suit.

13.7 Defence against a no-trump opening

Doubles and overcalls over a 1NT opening have different meanings depending on whether the opponents are playing a strong no-trump or a weak no-trump. For our purposes, a strong no-trump is one whose point range includes 15HCP.

After a strong no-trump opening

Over a strong no-trump opening, we use the *Meckwell* convention. This set of responses is **also used when intervening over a weak no-trump after having passed once since a penalty double is no longer meaningful**.

<i>Double</i>	Single-suited minor or major two-suiter (5-4 or better but normally 5-5). Responder can then bid:
$2\clubsuit^\dagger$	Asks partner to clarify his hand who rebids $2\heartsuit$ with a major two-suiter, or his suit with $2\diamond$ or $3\clubsuit$).
<i>Pass</i>	Good hand, for penalties.
<i>Suit</i>	Good suit, natural.
$2\clubsuit, 2\diamond$	Two-suiter—the suit bid and a major suit. Responder can bid:
<i>Pass</i>	To play.
$2\heartsuit$	Ask partner to pass or correct to $2\spadesuit$.
<i>New suit</i>	Natural.
<i>Raise</i>	Preemptive, weak.
$2NT^\dagger$	Game interest, see below.
$2\heartsuit, 2\spadesuit$	Natural, 6+-card suit or an excellent 5-card suit.
$2NT$	Minor two-suiter or a big hand. Partner should bid his better minor. With a big hand, bidding continues naturally.

$2NT$ after $2\clubsuit, 2\diamond$ (or after $(1NT)\text{--}Double\text{--}(Pass)\text{--}2\clubsuit\text{--}(Pass)\text{--}2\heartsuit$) shows game interest and partner rebids as follows:

<u>After $2\clubsuit$</u>	
$3\clubsuit$	Minimum hand.
$3\diamond, 3\heartsuit, 3\spadesuit$	Maximum hand, second suit.
<u>After $2\diamond$</u>	
$3\clubsuit$	Minimum hand, diamonds and hearts.
$3\diamond$	Minimum hand, diamonds and spades.
$3\heartsuit, 3\spadesuit$	Maximum hand, second suit.
<u>After $(1NT)\text{--}Double\text{--}2\clubsuit\text{--}2\heartsuit\text{--}2NT$</u>	
$3\clubsuit$	Minimum, hearts longer than spades.
$3\diamond$	Minimum, spades longer than hearts.

3♥	Maximum, hearts longer than spades.
3♠	Maximum, spades longer than hearts.

After a weak no-trump opening

The *Cappelletti* system is employed over a weak no-trump (only if you have not passed previously—with a passed hand, use the *Meckwell* convention described above). As opposed to the *Meckwell* convention, the *Cappelletti* system has the advantage of retaining a double for penalties.

<i>Double</i>	Strong hand (normally equal strength), for penalties.
2♣†	Any one suited hand (6 ⁺ -cards). Responder bids 2♦ to ask partner to name his suit.
2♦†	Two-suiter—both majors.
2♥, 2♠	Two-suiter—hearts/spades and one minor. 2NT asks for the minor suit.
2NT†	Two-suiter—both minors.
<i>3 of suit</i>	Intermediate hands with 13-16HCP and 6 ⁺ -card suit.

After a 2♣ overcall, any bid other than 2♦ is natural and non-forcing. Responder may pass 2♣ with 6⁺ clubs and a void elsewhere (likely to be partner's suit ☺).

After (1NT)–2♦–(*Pass*)–???, responder can jump in a major suit to invite game or pass with 6⁺ diamonds and a disaster in the majors.

14 Gadgets and Conventions

14.1 β control-asking bid

A β control-asking bid is used in various situations to find out the number of aces and kings (controls) held by partner. An ace counts as 2 controls and a king as 1 control so there are a total of 12 controls.

The number of controls held are shown in steps:

<i>1 step</i>	0-2 controls. A relay bid by opener in the cheapest suit over the 1-step response will then ask for clarification with responses in steps:
	<i>1 step</i> No controls.
	<i>2 steps</i> 1 control.
	<i>3 steps</i> 2 controls.
<i>2 steps</i>	3 controls.
<i>3 steps</i>	4 controls.
<i>4 steps</i>	5 controls.

When responder has already shown controls as less than four or at least four, e.g., after an unusual positive, [a modified scale of responses is used](#):

<i>Known to have</i>	<i>0-3 controls</i>	<i>4⁺ controls</i>
<i>1 step</i>	No controls.	4 controls.
<i>2 steps</i>	1 control.	5 controls.
<i>3 steps</i>	2 controls.	6 controls.
<i>4 steps</i>	3 controls.	7 controls.
<i>5 steps</i>		8 controls.

14.2 γ trump-asking bid

The γ trump-asking bid is used to determine the quality of responder's suit, i.e., whether the suit will provide enough tricks in no-trumps or as a trump suit.

<i>Responses to a γ trump-asking bid</i>	
<i>1 step</i>	No top honour, 5 ⁺ -card suit.
<i>2 steps</i>	5-card suit, 1 honour.
<i>3 steps</i>	5-card suit, 2 honours.
<i>4 steps</i>	6-card suit, 1 honour.
<i>5 steps</i>	6-card suit, 2 honours.
<i>6 steps</i>	AKQ of suit, any length.

The γ bid may be repeated to get clarification on the first response.

<i>Honours already shown</i>	<i>Responses to repeat γ-ask</i>	
<i>Zero or AKQ</i>	<i>1 step</i>	7 ⁺ -card suit
	<i>2 steps</i>	6-card suit
	<i>3 steps</i>	5-card suit

<i>One</i>	1 step	<i>Ace</i>
	2 steps	<i>King</i>
	3 steps	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Two</i>	1 step	<i>AK</i>
	2 steps	<i>AQ</i>
	3 steps	<i>KQ</i>

14.3 ϵ suit control-asking bid

The ϵ asking bid is used to find out what controls the responder holds in a specific suit. It follows a γ asking bid and terminates only when trumps or no-trumps is bid, i.e., any other suit bid is an ϵ -ask in that suit. Responses are in steps:

<i>Responses to a epsilon suit control-asking bid</i>	
<i>1 step</i>	No control— <i>Jxx</i> or worse.
<i>2 steps</i>	Third round control— <i>Q</i> or doubleton.
<i>3 steps</i>	Second round control— <i>K</i> or singleton.
<i>4 steps</i>	First round control— <i>A</i> or void.
<i>5 steps</i>	<i>AK</i> or <i>AQ</i> .

The ϵ -ask can be repeated if it is important to know whether the control is based on shortness or strength. The response is again in steps—the first step showing that the previous response was based on *shortness* and the second step showing *strength*.

If the first ϵ bid is at the level of 5♣ or higher, a compressed scale of responses is used:

<i>Compressed responses to a epsilon suit control-asking bid</i>	
<i>1 step</i>	No control— <i>Qx</i> or worse.
<i>2 steps</i>	Second round control— <i>K</i> or singleton.
<i>3 steps</i>	First round control— <i>A</i> or void.

14.4 *Bergen* raises

After a 1♥ or 1♠ opening, responses of 3♣, 3♦, 3♥ and 3♠ show different types of 4-card support. The mnemonic *CLAP* (Constructive, Limited and Preemptive) helps to remember the order of the bids.

<i>1♥–3♣</i>	Constructive, 7-10HCP, 4-card ♥.
<i>1♥–3♦</i>	Limited, 10-12HCP, 4-card ♥.
<i>1♥–3♥</i>	Preemptive, 0-6HCP, 4-card ♥.
<i>1♠–3♣</i>	Constructive, 7-10HCP, 4-card ♠.
<i>1♠–3♦</i>	Limited, 10-12HCP, 4-card ♠.
<i>1♠–3♥</i>	<i>Spare bid</i> —used to show a strong 12 ⁺ HCP hand with 4-card support and an undisclosed singleton/void.
<i>1♠–3♠</i>	Preemptive, 0-6HCP, 4-card ♠.

14.5 Gerber ace-asking convention

An immediate response of $4\clubsuit$ to any no-trump bid (or overcall) is the *Gerber* ace-asking convention. A *jump rebid* of $4\clubsuit$ in response to a natural no-trump bid is *Gerber* as also when a trump suit has not been identified and no-trumps has been rebid. Gerber should not be used holding a void.

Opener shows the number of aces held in steps as follows:

$4\spadesuit$	Zero or four aces.
$4\heartsuit$	One ace.
$4\clubsuit$	Two aces.
$4NT$	Three aces.

14.6 Jacoby transfers

After a 1NT opening, responder bids $2\diamondsuit$ with a 5-card or better heart suit and $2\heartsuit$ with spades. Opener will bid $2\heartsuit$ or $2\spadesuit$ so that the strong hand becomes declarer. Responder's rebids are:

<i>Pass</i>	A weak hand with 5 ⁺ -card \heartsuit or \spadesuit .
$2\spadesuit$	Invitational with 5-5 in the majors after 1NT- $2\diamondsuit$ - $2\heartsuit$.
$2NT$	Balanced or semi-balanced hand with a 5-card major. Invitational—partner can pass or sign-off in 3 of a major or bid 3NT.
$3\clubsuit$, $3\diamondsuit$	4-card suit in addition to 5-card major.
<i>Raise</i>	6-card suit, invitational.
$3\heartsuit$	(After $2\spadesuit$) 5-5 in the majors with slam interest. Stronger than an immediate jump to $4\heartsuit$.
$3\spadesuit$	(After $2\heartsuit$) Singleton or void with slam interest.
$3NT$	Balanced or semi-balanced hand. Partner can pass or correct to 4 of major.
$4\heartsuit$	(After $2\spadesuit$) 5-5 in majors with no slam interest. Partner can pass or correct to $4\spadesuit$.
<i>Double raise</i>	6 ⁺ -card major, sign-off.
$4NT$	Quantitative , inviting slam in major or no-trumps.

Super-acceptance of a transfer

Opener could *super-accept* the transfer with a 4⁺-card holding in the transfer suit. In this case, he can break the transfer and show any doubletons. For example, after 1NT- $2\heartsuit$ (transfer to $2\spadesuit$), opener with a 4-card spade suit could bid:

$2NT$	4=3=3=3 shape.
$3\clubsuit$	4=x=x=2 (doubleton club).
$3\diamondsuit$	4=x=2=x (doubleton diamond).
$3\heartsuit$	4=2=x=x (doubleton heart).
$3\spadesuit$	4 spades, any other distribution.

14.7 *Jacoby* 2NT

A 2NT[†] response over an opening of 1♥ or 1♠ is conventional and shows 12⁺HCP with 4⁺-card support of partner's suit. It is forcing to game and opener's rebids are:

<i>New suit</i> [†]	Singleton or void in suit bid.
<i>Rebid of suit at 3-level</i> [†]	Maximum strength hand.
<i>Jump shift</i> [†]	Good 5 ⁺ -card side suit.
<i>Game in original suit</i>	Minimum opening, sign-off.
3NT [†]	12-13HCP, medium strength hand. Responder will pass only if he thinks hand will play better in no-trumps in spite of the nine card fit.

14.8 *lebensohl* convention (over weak two)

The *lebensohl* convention is used to respond to partner's takeout double of a weak two opening. This system is geared to show weak, invitational and strong hands without consuming too much bidding room.

2NT [†]	Artificial, partner must bid 3♣. Over partner's forced response, responder bids:
<i>Pass</i>	0-7HCP, sign-off in clubs.
3♦, 3♥, 3♠	0-7HCP, correction to longest suit when not clubs, sign-off.
<i>Cue-bid</i> [†]	4 ⁺ -cards in unbid major (or one of the majors if double was over two of a minor), confirms stopper in opponent's suit.
3NT [†]	Denies 4 ⁺ -cards in majors, confirms stopper in opponent's suit.
3♣, 3♦, 3♥, 3♠	8-11HCP, 4 ⁺ -card suit, invitational.
<i>Cue-bid</i> [†]	4 ⁺ -cards in unbid major (or one major if double was over 2 of a minor), no stopper in opponent's suit.
3NT [†]	Denies 4 ⁺ -cards in majors, no stopper in opponent's suit.

lebensohl applies even when *RHO* raises opener to the 2-level e.g., over the sequence (1♠)–*Double*–(2♠)–???. In this case, since responder is not forced to bid, he will *Pass* with the weak 0-7HCP hands. The suit bids after the 2NT–3♣ sequence now become invitational and the direct raises to three of a suit become game forcing bids.

14.9 *lebensohl* convention (after 1NT)

A different *lebensohl* convention is used by responder after an opponent overcalls partner's 1NT opening in order to compete further without necessarily committing to game. It is initiated after the right-hand opponent makes a suit overcall at the two-level.

<i>New suit at 2-level</i>	Natural and non-forcing.
2NT [†]	A puppet bid requiring opener to bid 3♣. After opener's forced 3♣ bid, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 3 of a lower ranking suit than overcaller's is natural, to play. — 3 of a higher ranking suit than overcaller's is natural and invitational. — 3 of the opponent's suit is artificial asking opener to bid a 4-card major and showing a stopper in opponent's suit. — 3NT is natural, to play, and shows a stopper in the opponent's suit.
<i>New suit at 3-level</i> [‡]	Natural and forcing to game.
<i>Cue-bid</i> [†]	Artificial—asks opener to bid a 4-card major and denies a stopper in opponent's suit.
3NT	Natural, to play but denies a stopper in opponent's suit.

14.10 Michael's cue-bid

A cue-bid in the opponent's suit after they have opened the bidding is conventional and shows a two-suited hand (5-5 or better). Over a minor-suit opening (i.e., a bid of 2♣[†] or 2♦[†]) it shows both majors and over a major-suit (i.e., a bid of 2♥[†] or 2♠[†]), it shows the unbid major and an unspecified minor.

<i>After a cue-bid of 2♣/2♦</i>	
2♦	Natural, showing a very good 6 ⁺ -card suit. Tends to deny 3 cards in either major. Non-forcing.
2♥, 2♠	Non-forcing sign-off. With support for both majors, bid 2♥.
2NT	Natural, invitational.
3♣ [†] , 3♦ [†]	When not a cue-bid, shows a very strong 6-card suit.
<i>Cue-bid</i> [†]	Artificial, shows game or slam interest.
3♥, 3♠	Preemptive, usually with 4-card suit in accordance with the <i>Law of Total Tricks</i> . Non-forcing.
3NT	Natural, sign-off. Shows a big, balanced hand with no interest in a major-suit game. Rare.
<i>After a cue-bid of 2♥/2♠</i>	
2♠	Over 2♥, is a sign-off.
2NT [†]	Asks opener to bid his minor suit. Made on a variety of hands but is usually to sign-off in 3♣ or 3♦ with support in both minors.
3♣, 3♦	Natural, 6 ⁺ -card suit—opener probably has the other minor. Non-forcing.
3♥	Over 2♠, natural sign-off.
3♠	Over 2♥, preemptive with 4-card suit.
<i>Cue-bid</i> [†]	Artificial showing game or slam interest.

If responder raises the cue-bid, e.g., (1♥)–2♥–Pass–3♥, the Michael’s cue-bidder is expected to bid his cheapest suit (in this case, 3♠) with a weak hand of 0-10HCP. All other bids show 10⁺HCP and are game forcing.

14.11 Roman key-card *Blackwood*

A *Roman key-card Blackwood* bid of 4NT[†] is used to enquire about the number of key cards (any ace or the trump suit king) in partner’s hand. It should not be used when you have a void or two fast losers.

Responses are in steps and differ slightly (when holding all five key cards) depending on whether opponents have doubled or overcalled over 4NT.

<i>Holding</i>	<i>Silent</i>	<i>Double (ROPI)</i>	<i>Overcall (DOPI)</i>
<i>1/4 key cards</i>	5♣	<i>Redouble</i>	<i>Double</i>
<i>0/3 key cards</i>	5♦	<i>Pass</i> (0/3/5 key cards)	<i>Pass</i> (0/3/5 key cards)
<i>2/5 key cards (no queen of trumps)</i>	5♥	5♣ (<i>two</i> key cards)	<i>Cheapest suit</i> (<i>two</i> key cards)
<i>2/5 key cards with queen of trumps</i>	5♠	5♦ (<i>two</i> key cards)	<i>Second-cheapest suit</i> (<i>two</i> key cards)

When holding a void, after a trump suit is agreed, jumping to another suit at the 4 or 5 level in the void suit initiates a *key card exclusion* asking bid. Partner shows his key cards *excluding* any in the void suit in steps.

<i>1 step</i>	1 or 4 key cards.
<i>2 steps</i>	0 or 3 key cards.
<i>3 steps</i>	2 key cards without trump Q.
<i>4 steps</i>	2 key cards with trump Q.

Asking for the Trump Queen

After a 5♣ or 5♦ response to the *RKCB* ask, bidding the cheapest non-trump suit asks about the trump queen. Responses to the queen-ask are:

<i>Trump suit</i>	No trump queen.
<i>Non-trump suit</i>	Trump queen <i>and</i> king in suit bid.
5NT	Trump queen without any side-suit kings.

Asking for Kings

A 5NT rebid following *RKCB* asks for any kings held. It is a grand slam try, and should only be bid if the partnership holds all 5 key cards and the queen of trumps.

Partner will respond by bidding his cheapest king.

Modified RKCB (4♣ over 2♥/2♠)

A bid of 4♣ is used to ask for key cards after either an opening weak two bid or a weak two response to a 1♣ opening. The response structure is based on

regular *RKCB* taking into account the fact that the responder cannot have more than two key cards. The responses are slightly different depending on whether the suit is hearts or spades.

When spades are trumps, the 1st step (4♦) shows 0 or 2 key cards, the 2nd step (4♥) shows one key card without the ♠Q and the 3rd step (4♠) shows one key card with the ♠Q. If partner signs off in 4♠ after a 0/2 response, opener bids 4NT holding the ♠Q allowing responder to push on to slam if possible.

When hearts is the agreed suit, the 1st step (4♦) shows 0 or 2 key cards and the 2nd step (4♥) shows 1 key card. If partner wants to ask about the ♥Q, he bids 4♠. Without the queen, opener signs off in 5♥ otherwise he bids another suit showing a side suit king or 5NT with no side suit king.

14.12 Stayman convention

The *Stayman* convention is used to find a 4-4 major suit fit after a 1NT opening by bidding 2♣. Opener responds with one of:

2♦	No four card major.
2♥	4-card heart suit, may have 4-card spades.
2♠	4-card spade suit, no 4-card heart suit.

Puppet Stayman

Used over a 2NT bid that may be made with a 5-card major, 3♣ is a conventional bid that endeavours to find a major suit fit. Responses are:

3♦	No five card major but at least one four card major. Responder with one four card major should bid the major that he <i>does not have</i> and if there is a 4-4 fit, opener will bid it.
3♥	5-card heart suit.
3♠	5-card spade suit.
3NT	No 4 or 5-card major. Responder can bid 4♣ or 4♦ to transfer to 4♥ or 4♠ respectively when he has a six-card major.

14.13 Unusual 2NT

A jump to 2NT over opponent's opening of one of a suit is conventional and shows a two-suited hand in the two lowest ranking unbid suits. E.g., a 2NT overcall of a 1♣ opener shows hearts and diamonds. The *unusual 2NT* is possible even when both opponents bid.

For example, (1♥)–*Pass*–(1♠)–2NT shows 5⁺-clubs and 5⁺-diamonds. There is an overlap with the Michael's cue-bid in this case since a cue-bid of 2♥ would also show the same shape.

As another example, (1♣)–*Pass*–(1NT)–2NT would show 5⁺-hearts and 5⁺-diamonds.

Responder's bids:

<i>Better suit</i>	Longer of overcaller's two suits. With equal length in both suits (especially with two doubletons), bid the cheapest suit.
<i>Jump</i>	4-card support for suit, preemptive, non-forcing.

<i>Cue-bid</i> [†]	Support for at least one of partner's suits and interest in game or slam. Asks 2NT bidder to bid the cheapest suit with 0-10HCP or to make any other bid with 10 ⁺ HCP.
<i>4th suit</i>	Bidding the suit not shown by partner or opponent shows a 6 ⁺ -card suit, a decent hand and no support for either of partner's suits.

All raises by the 2NT bidder are natural and non-forcing. All other bids show a very good hand in terms of points and/or shape but with the exception of a cue-bid, are non-forcing.

15 Miscellaneous

High-card Points (HCP) are assigned as follows—Ace=4, King=3, Queen=2 and Jack=1. Once a trump-fit has been found, distribution points can be assigned—Void=3, Singleton=2, Doubleton=1.

Singleton honours should be counted only once (either HCP or shortness).

Suit Quality (SQ) is calculated as suit length plus number of honours in the suit. The Jack or Ten should be counted only if a higher ranking honour is held. For example, a holding of K-J-9-5-4 would have 7SQ but J-10-9-5-4 would have 5SQ.

For an overcall, the SQ should equal or exceed the number of tricks bid (e.g., SQ of 8 for a 2-level overcall).

When preempting, the SQ should equal the level of preempt when vulnerable and can be one less when non-vulnerable.

Rule of 2/3/4 When preempting, the expected number of undertricks should be no more than two with unfavourable vulnerability, three with equal vulnerability and four with favourable vulnerability.

For example, a 3♦ preemptive bid is made when expecting to take at least seven tricks in the case that the opening bidder is vulnerable facing non-vulnerable opponents.

The *Losing Trick Count* (LTC) is used only once a trump suit has been established. Count losers only in the top three cards of the suit holding—there are never more than 3 losers in a suit. With three or more cards, A/K/Q are not losers but any lower card is a loser. With two cards, only A or K are not losers.

Add your and partner's loser count and subtract from 24 to estimate the number of tricks that can be won. You can estimate your partner's LTC as follows:

HCP	<i>Expected Losers</i>
7-9	8-9 losers (9)
10-12	7-8 losers (8)
13-15	6-7 losers (7)
16-18	5-6 losers (6)
19-21	4-5 losers (5)
22+	4 losers or less

16 Bidding Examples

16.1 Negative response to 1♣

After a 1♦ response, there is no temptation to get too high on misfitting hands. For example,

West	East	West	East
♠ 4	♠ K J 10 7 5 3	1♣	1♦
♥ A K 9 5 4	♥ 6 2	1♥	1♠(1)
♦ A J 4	♦ 7 5 3	2♣(2)	2♠(3)
♣ K Q 10 9	♣ 5 4		

- (1) 4-7HCP, 4+-card suit.
- (2) Shows minimum with second 4-card suit (implies 5 hearts).
- (3) 6-card suit, no fit.

Opener shows discipline and passes recognising misfit and no chance for game.

A 1♦ response does not rule out game. With a 2-suited hand, it is easy to find a game contract when the fit is in the second bid suit.

West	East	West	East
♠ A K 7 5 2	♠ 4	1♣	1♦
♥ A Q 10 4 3	♥ K 8 5 2	1♠	1NT(1)
♦ A 5	♦ 9 6 4 2	2♥	3♥
♣ 2	♣ J 7 5 4	4♥	

- (1) As he has already limited his hand, East is not afraid to improve the contract. After that, all goes smoothly.

Suppose the lead against 4♥ is a low diamond. The best technique for declarer is to win with the Ace, cash ♠A and ruff a spade with a low trump. Then he plays a club to establish communication between the two hands.

The opponents will probably continue diamonds. West ruffs the third round and leads another low spade, ruffing with the ♥8. If, at worst, spades are 5-2 and South overruffs, declarer retains the possibility of ruffing the other spade loser with the ♥K. The contract will fail only against very unlucky distribution.

With a powerful hand, opener would jump rebid his suit and responder would know there is a game or slam on if he is in the upper range. For example,

West	East	West	East
♠ A K J 8 7 5 3	♠ 6 4 2	1♣	1♦
♥ A	♥ J 7 3	2♠(1)	3♦(2)
♦ K 7 2	♦ A J 5 4	3♠(3)	4♠
♣ A Q	♣ 8 6 5	4NT	5♠(4)
		6♠	

- (1) 22+HCP, 5-card suit.
- (2) 4-7HCP, showing side-suit before showing fit in spades.
- (3) After the new suit bid at the 3-level, opener knows he will not be left in 3♠.
- (4) One key card.

After a heart lead and assuming trumps don't break worse than 2-1, the contract can be made without the club finesse by playing A and K of diamonds followed by a low diamond towards the J. This works whenever diamonds break 3-3, ♦Q is held by North or is a doubleton with South.

With a balanced hand, opener will rebid NT. For example,

West	East	West	East
♠ K 6 3	♠ A J 7 4 2	1♣	1♦
♥ K J 10	♥ 7 5 4	1NT(1)	2♥(2)
♦ A 8 6 2	♦ J 9 5	2♠	2NT(3)
♣ A K 3	♣ 10 4	3NT(4)	

- (1) 17-19HCP, balanced.
- (2) Weak transfer to 2♠.
- (3) Balanced hand, invitational.
- (4) With 18HCP and three cards in spades, East tries for game in no trumps.

North leads the ♥3, South plays the Queen and West the King. After this favourable opening, West can afford to make a safety play in spades. He plays King and another, North following suit with low cards. To make absolutely sure of four tricks, even when North holds Q10xx, declarer ducks in dummy. He makes game with four spades, two hearts and three top tricks in the minors.

Even with a weak two-suiter, Precision enables finding slams with relatively low point counts following a negative response. For example,

West	East	West	East
♠ A 8 5 4	♠ 6	1♣	1♦
♥ A K 9 4 3	♥ J 8 7 6 5 2	1♥	3♠(1)
♦ A K J 8	♦ Q 9 7 6	4♣	4♥(2)
♣ —	♣ 6 4	6♥	

- (1) Splinter showing 4-card or better support in hearts and a singleton or void in spades.
- (2) Responder could conceivably also bid 5♥ with the 6-card suit.

With a combined total of 22 points, although 13 tricks are available if the opening lead is not ruffed, most pairs will probably stop in 6♥ after the splinter bid using a sequence similar to the one above.

16.2 Positive response in a suit over 1♣

Using Precision, game is always reached after a positive response to a 1♣ opening. The partnership will have a minimum of 24 points if opener is unbalanced (16 vs 8) or 25 points if he is balanced (17 vs 8). This works well in practice, for example:

West	East	West	East
♠ A K J 8 6	♠ Q 9 2	1♣	1NT
♥ 6 4	♥ 8 7 5	2♠	3♠
♦ K Q 10 9	♦ A 5 4 3	4♠	
♣ K 6	♣ Q 9 4		

A dull 16HCP 1♣ opening against an equally dull 8HCP but still 4♠ is an odds-on favourite to make.

Game contracts can be reached on smaller point counts if there are distributional features. For example,

West	East	West	East
♠ A K J 10 9 6	♠ Q 8 2	1♣(1)	1♦
♥ A	♥ 9 6 5	1♠	3♠(2)
♦ Q J 10 9	♦ K 7 4 3	4♠	
♣ 6 5	♣ 7 4 3		

- (1) A strong 15HCP with a good suit should be opened with 1♣.
(2) As he has already limited his hand, East is not shy in raising partner's suit with 5HCP and inviting game.

As compared to the previous deal, this is a 15HCP vs 5HCP hand that may be passed out after 1♠ in standard systems. However, the game contract is virtually lay-down.

With a balanced hand, opener will rebid NT over a positive suit response. Even with 3-card support for partner's suit, it is sometimes correct to first bid NT and only later raise partner's suit. For example, with ♠ A J 10 ♥ K Q 10 9 ♦ Q J 4 ♣ K J 7, if responder bids 1♠, it is correct to rebid 1NT showing a balanced minimum before raising spades. However, with a slightly different hand such as ♠ A J 10 7 ♥ K Q 10 ♦ Q J 4 ♣ K J 7, the rebid could be 3♠ or 4♠ showing a minimum hand, probably balanced, with 4-card support.

Alternative sequences showing support have slightly different meanings. For example, whereas the sequence 1♣–1♠–4♠ would show a minimum hand with poor controls, the sequence 1♣–1♠–1NT–any–4♠ would show a balanced minimum with good controls.

The intermediate 1NT rebid can also be made when you want to find out if responder has a distributional hand. For example, when holding ♠ A K 8 7 ♥ A 7 5 3 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ A 6, after partner's positive response of 1♠, rebid 1NT and if partner rebids 2♣ (four-card suit), you may have very good play for 7♠ if partner is holding something like ♠ Q J 5 4 3 ♥ 8 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ K 9 5 4. However, you need to know about the four clubs first.

With a distributional hand where you have strong support for partner's suit and the only question for slam is whether his suit has good quality, *asking bids* (γ and ϵ) can be used to good effect. For example,

West	East	West	East
♠ Q J 6 3 2	♠ A K 10 5 4	1♣	1♠
♥ 5	♥ 9 8 7	2♠(1)	3♥(2)
♦ A K Q 8	♦ 10 4	4♣(*)	4NT(3)
♣ K J 9	♣ A 5 3	5♥(*)	5♠(4)
		6♠	

- (1) γ trump-asking bid (possible slam if trumps are strong).
(2) 2 honours, 5-card suit.
(*) ϵ control-asking bid in clubs and hearts.
(3) Ace or void.
(4) No control.

With a sure loser in hearts, opener stops in the small slam.

16.3 Positive no-trump response to 1♣

With both majors, it is sometimes correct to use *Stayman* even when holding a 5-card suit. For example, holding ♠ A K Q 6 4 ♥ K Q 8 7 ♦ A 5 ♣ 9 5, it is

better to bid $2\clubsuit$ over a 1NT response rather than bidding $2\spadesuit$. If responder holds something like $\spadesuit J 10 2 \heartsuit A J 9 4 \diamond 5 4 3 \clubsuit Q 4 3$, he will certainly raise spades after $2\spadesuit$ and the 4-4 heart fit will not be discovered. In this case although there are 10 tricks in spades and 11 in hearts (given normal breaks), sometimes the difference may be 10 tricks in the 4-4 fit versus 9 in the 5-3 fit.

Similarly, with $\spadesuit 3 \heartsuit A K Q 7 \diamond A Q \clubsuit K Q J 10 9 8$, bid *Stayman*. If partner bids $2\diamond$ (four hearts), you will bid $2\heartsuit$ and later ask for aces. If partner has two aces, you can confidently bid the grand slam or the small slam if he shows only one ace. If partner holds something like $\spadesuit A Q 6 \heartsuit J 10 8 6 \diamond J 7 6 \clubsuit 5 4 3$, $6\heartsuit$ from the strong side is best, while $6\clubsuit$ will depend on the diamond finesse.

16.4 $3\spadesuit$ response to $1\spadesuit$

Opener can place the contract fairly easily given responder's solid suit and use asking bids to decide if a slam is on. For example,

West	East	West	East
$\spadesuit 4$	$\spadesuit A K Q J 9 8 7$	$1\spadesuit$	$3\spadesuit(1)$
$\heartsuit A 10 9 8 7$	$\heartsuit 3$	$4\clubsuit(2)$	$4\heartsuit(3)$
$\diamond A 4$	$\diamond K 7$	$7\spadesuit(4)$	
$\clubsuit A K Q 8 7$	$\clubsuit 10 9 6$		

- (1) Solid suit. Opener can tell that it is spades by looking at his own hand.
- (2) β -ask for outside controls.
- (3) One outside control (\diamond or \heartsuit king).
- (4) 13 tricks are on top.

16.5 Unusual positive response to $1\spadesuit$

If responder bids an *unusual positive*, slam is most likely on the cards and with the right cards, grand slams can be reached on very low point counts.

West	East	West	East
$\spadesuit A K Q 8 7 6$	$\spadesuit J 5 4 3$	$1\spadesuit$	$4\diamond(1)$
$\heartsuit 9 7 6$	$\heartsuit A$	$4\heartsuit(2)$	$4NT(3)$
$\diamond A K 4 3$	$\diamond 10 9 8 7$	$7\spadesuit(4)$	
$\clubsuit —$	$\clubsuit A K 4 3$		

- (1) 4-1-4-4, 4^+ -controls, 12^{+HCP}
- (2) β asking for controls
- (3) 5 controls (2 steps)
- (4) Partner must have two aces and $\clubsuit K$, 13 tricks are visible.

Barring horrendous breaks and a ruff on the opening lead, this 27-point grand slam is lay-down.

16.6 Intervention after a $1\spadesuit$ opening

Some examples of bidding after opponents double or overcall after a $1\spadesuit$ opening.

After a takeout / unusual double: $1\spadesuit$ -(Double)

1 $\spadesuit J 8 4 \heartsuit A J 8 2 \diamond 10 5 \clubsuit K 10 4 2$

If the double is an ordinary takeout double either *Redouble* or bid 1NT showing a balanced 8-13HCP if vulnerable.

If the double shows majors, *Redouble*. If partner doubles 1♠, you will be delighted to defend.

- 2 ♠ A 8 7 ♥ 8 ♦ K J 8 6 5 4 ♣ Q 6 3
Bid 2♦. Slam is a real possibility despite the double.
- 3 ♠ Q 10 3 ♥ — ♦ J 10 9 7 5 3 ♣ Q 10 9 3
Bid 1♦ (5-8HCP). If partner bids 1♥, you will bid 2♦ showing the long suit.
- 4 ♠ A Q ♥ A 8 6 3 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ J 10 8 5
Bid 2NT showing a balanced 14⁺HCP hand and good stoppers in the majors. If the double is real (not a mistake showing clubs), the information of length in majors on the right is likely to be useful in the play.
- 5 ♠ 6 ♥ K J 10 5 ♦ A 7 3 2 ♣ J 10 8 7
Bid 3♣ showing the 4-4-4-1 hand with a black singleton.

After a direct 1-level overcall: 1♣-(1♠)

- 6 ♠ Q ♥ A Q J 3 2 ♦ K J 6 3 ♣ J 9 7
Bid 2♥ which is natural and game forcing.
- 7 ♠ 4 ♥ J 8 6 5 4 ♦ 10 9 7 6 ♣ K J 6
Double to show 5-8HCP.
- 8 ♠ 10 9 5 3 ♥ 4 ♦ A 7 6 4 ♣ A Q 9 2
Bid 3♦, unusual positive showing 4-4-4-1 with a red singleton.
- 9 ♠ J ♥ Q 6 5 2 ♦ A Q 10 9 6 4 ♣ 10 2
Bid 2♦, natural and forcing.
- 10 ♠ 9 5 3 ♥ A 10 4 3 ♦ A J 7 2 ♣ 9 5
Bid 2♠. There is enough to force game but no suit to bid and no stopper to bid NT.

After an unusual no-trump overcall showing minors: 1♣-(1NT)

- 11 ♠ 10 9 ♥ A Q 6 4 ♦ K 8 6 2 ♣ A Q 5
Double for penalties. If partner bids hearts, explore for slam. If not, you can also bid no-trump since the combined hands are in the slam zone.
- 12 ♠ A 10 9 4 2 ♥ Q 4 ♦ 7 4 3 ♣ 10 9 8
Bid 2♠ (non-forcing).
- 13 ♠ K 9 7 4 3 ♥ A Q 9 8 ♦ 9 2 ♣ 8 7
Bid 2♦ showing spades and forcing to game.
- 14 ♠ A Q 2 ♥ A 10 8 2 ♦ K J 3 ♣ 8 7 4
Double showing values with a balanced hand. If partner bids 2NT, you can show the 4-card hearts on the way to 3NT.
- 15 ♠ A 4 ♥ J 9 8 ♦ K 10 6 4 ♣ K 10 8 7
Double (penalty oriented) showing values with a balanced hand. There will be a massacre if the final contract is in either minor.

After a 2-level overcall: 1♠-(2♥)

- 16 ♠ A Q 10 ♥ 8 5 ♦ K 7 4 ♣ K Q 10 9 6

Bid 3♣ which is natural and forcing. The main reason for not cue-bidding is that this hand will make an excellent dummy should partner bid 3♦ or 3♠ which you will happily raise showing slam interest by bypassing 3NT.

17 ♠ 9 8 7 2 ♥ 5 2 ♦ A K J 4 ♣ 10 6 4

Double. This is more flexible than cue-bidding 3♥. Partner can bid 2NT with a stopper and then you could bid 3♣ (*Stayman*).

18 ♠ Q J 4 3 2 ♥ A 6 ♦ J 10 6 3 ♣ K 4

Bid 2♠.

19 ♠ 4 ♥ K J 10 9 4 ♦ Q J 7 ♣ A 7 3 2

Pass. You are certain partner will bid again and you hope it is a double. The penalty will be a rich one if so.

20 ♠ A K 6 4 ♥ 8 7 6 5 ♦ A K Q 7 ♣ 7

Bid 3♥—game-forcing with no heart stopper and no long suit. You can explore slam after getting more information from partner.

16.7 The 1♦ opening

Some examples of bidding after a 1♦ opening.

Opening bid

1 ♠ 6 3 ♥ K 4 ♦ A K J 9 ♣ K 10 9 8 4

Open 1♦ and if partner bids 1♥, rebid 2♣. Alternatively, open 1NT.

2 ♠ A J 7 6 ♥ 2 ♦ A Q J 6 2 ♣ 10 7 2

Open 1♦ rebid 1♠ if partner bids 1♥.

3 ♠ Q 7 6 ♥ J 3 ♦ A Q 9 ♣ A 10 9 8 2

Open 1♦ and rebid 1NT over 1♥/1♠. You cannot bid 2♣ which would show an unbalanced hand.

4 ♠ Q 10 9 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ Q 4 ♣ A J 9 6 2

Pass with this weak 11-point hand.

5 ♠ 6 5 ♥ 10 ♦ A K Q 10 8 ♣ K Q 10 9 7

Open 1♦ and rebid 3♣ over 1♥/1♠ showing 5-5 in the minors.

Responses to a 1♦ opening

6 ♠ 9 7 ♥ A K 5 ♦ Q J 8 7 3 ♣ K Q 5

Bid 2♦ showing at least a limit raise. Raise to game over 2NT or find a forcing bid if opener rebids a minimum. You want partner to be declarer in NT with the weak doubleton spade.

7 ♠ Q 9 5 ♥ 5 ♦ A K Q 5 3 2 ♣ K 6 4

Bid 3♥—a splinter showing the singleton heart and fine diamond support.

8 ♠ 7 ♥ A K 9 4 2 ♦ K Q J 5 4 ♣ A 8

Bid 1♥ and use *RKCB* if opener supports hearts. Otherwise, jump to 3♦ if opener responds with 1NT showing the two-suiter and indicating slam interest.

9 ♠ 6 ♥ A K 7 4 ♦ 4 2 ♣ A K 10 9 4 3

Bid 1♥ and clubs next in the search for the best game contract or slam if opener raises clubs.

10 ♠ 7 6 ♥ 9 ♦ A J 10 6 4 2 ♣ 8 5 3 2

Bid 3♦ (or 4♦ if non-vulnerable) interfering with opponent's possible game.

Rebids after partner's one-over-one response: 1♦-1♠-???

- 11 ♠ 8 2 ♥ 7 5 ♦ A Q 5 2 ♣ A K 10 6 5
Rebid 2♣.
- 12 ♠ 6 ♥ K 10 ♦ A J 10 8 7 ♣ K Q J 9 2
Rebid 3♣ showing 5-5 in the minors.
- 13 ♠ K 10 9 2 ♥ 9 ♦ A K 10 6 4 ♣ K 6 5
Rebid 3♠ showing strong support and a singleton / void.
- 14 ♠ A 10 4 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ J 9 6 4 ♣ A K 8
Rebid 1NT. Raising spades is inadvisable with this flat hand.
- 15 ♠ K 10 4 ♥ 4 ♦ Q J 9 7 4 ♣ A K Q 4
Rebid 2♣ as the least worst evil—if partner bids again, you can show the spade support.

16.8 Major suit openings

Some examples of bidding after a 1♥ or 1♠ opening.

Opening bid

- 1 ♠ A 10 9 7 6 5 ♥ Q 8 ♦ K 6 ♣ K 5 2
The quintessential 1♠ bid.
- 2 ♠ K J 10 6 ♥ A K J 10 9 2 ♦ K 8 ♣ 9
Open 1♣—there are 15HCP, a very good suit and a singleton. With unfavourable vulnerability, it may be better to bid 1♥ since opponents may intervene at a high level after 1♣.
- 3 ♠ Q J 9 6 5 4 ♥ K 10 5 ♦ K 8 ♣ Q 7
Open 1♠—this is not a great hand and many may choose to pass it or open 2♠.
- 4 ♠ Q 10 7 5 2 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ A J 7 ♣ A 6
Open 1♠. A case can be made for opening this hand with 1NT and with ♥KJ4 and ♣KJ (same HCP), it would be preferable to open 1NT.
- 5 ♠ 3 2 ♥ K Q 8 7 4 3 ♦ Q J 6 ♣ A K
Open 1♥. Although there are 15 HCP, the suit is not good enough to play against a singleton and the hand has no singletons of its own.

Responses to a 1♠ opening

- 6 ♠ A J 10 9 ♥ K J 8 ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ K J 6
Bid 4♠—it would be a very unusual hand with partner for there to be a slam. Opponents do not know if your hand type is a weak distributional hand or this one.
- 7 ♠ A Q 9 8 2 ♥ A 10 8 ♦ 4 ♣ K 10 7 6
Bid 4♦ (splinter) with real slam potential.
- 8 ♠ 9 8 7 3 2 ♥ A 5 ♦ Q ♣ 10 9 7 4 3
Bid 4♠—the textbook example of a game raise. Contrast to hand #6.
- 9 ♠ K 8 3 2 ♥ A 6 5 ♦ A K J 9 ♣ 7 4
Bid 2NT—game-forcing raise showing at least 4-card support. If partner shows shortness in clubs or hearts, slam is a distinct possibility.
- 10 ♠ A J 8 7 4 ♥ 4 ♦ Q 5 3 ♣ A 10 9 5
Bid 4♥ (splinter). Another hand with good slam potential if partner's hand matches.

Responses to a 1♥ opening

- 11 ♠ Q 10 6 3 2 ♥ K 7 2 ♦ A 5 3 2 ♣ 10
 Bid 1♠. If partner raises, you can bid game. If partner bids 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦, you will show limit raise values with 3♥. Partner will know you have only 3 hearts since there was no direct raise.
- 12 ♠ A J 7 6 3 ♥ 9 7 2 ♦ A K 7 5 3 ♣ —
 Bid 1♠ and if partner raises, you will explore slam. If partner bids 2♣ (likely), you will bid 2♦ (fourth-suit forcing). If partner rebids 2♥, you could bid 5♥ (asking about trump quality) or 4♣ (splinter). This is a difficult hand to assess since opposite the first opening hand below, a grand slam is on but opposite the second, no game is possible.
- | Opener 1 | Opener 2 |
|---------------|-------------|
| ♠ 8 | ♠ 8 6 |
| ♥ A K Q 8 6 3 | ♥ Q 8 5 4 3 |
| ♦ Q J 7 | ♦ J 6 |
| ♣ 10 7 6 | ♣ A K Q 6 |
- 13 ♠ Q 10 ♥ A 10 9 8 ♦ 4 3 2 ♣ Q 9 6 5
 Bid 3♣—a constructive *Bergen* raise.
- 14 ♠ Q 7 6 ♥ J 8 7 6 ♦ — ♣ A J 9 8 5 3
 Bid 4♥. It is certain that the opponents have some high card points so this makes them start at a high-level if they are going to bid.
- 15 ♠ A 9 4 ♥ Q 6 4 3 ♦ J 10 3 ♣ A 6 2
 Bid 3♦—a *Bergen* limit raise.

16.9 The 2♣ opening

Some examples of bidding after a 2♣ opening.

Opening bid

- 1 ♠ K J 6 2 ♥ 3 ♦ 9 2 ♣ A Q J 9 8 2
 A good example of a hand that should be opened with a bid of 2♣.
- 2 ♠ Q 10 6 ♥ K Q 6 ♦ 6 3 ♣ A Q 8 4 3
 Bid 1♦ not 2♣.
- 3 ♠ K 3 ♥ — ♦ A J 8 2 ♣ A Q J 10 9 7 4
 Bid 1♠. This hand is too good for a 2♣ opening.
- 4 ♠ Q 8 6 ♥ A 6 ♦ 10 8 ♣ A K Q 8 7 4
 Bid 1♣ and rebid 2♣. Let partner be declarer in NT if that is the right spot.
- 5 ♠ 6 2 ♥ 8 7 ♦ Q 10 ♣ A K Q J 9 8 2
 Bid 3NT (*gambling*), showing a solid suit with no ace or king outside.

Responses to a 2♣ opening

- 6 ♠ A K 10 6 ♥ J 8 6 5 ♦ 10 9 ♣ 9 7 6
 Bid 2♦. This is a perfect hand to enquire about majors. If partner bids a major or 3♣, pass (you need at least another queen to raise partner's major). If partner bids 2NT, correct to 3♣.
- 7 ♠ K 10 9 8 3 2 ♥ 5 ♦ 9 7 5 ♣ K J 7
 Bid 2♠. If partner raises spades, raise to game. Pass if he denies spades by rebidding 3♣ or bid 3♣ if he rebids 2NT.

- 8 ♠ K 8 5 ♥ K J 9 5 ♦ A 10 6 3 ♣ 9 3
 Bid 2NT (invitational). If partner accepts game by bidding 3♥, bid 4♥. If partner accepts with 3♠, raise to 3NT.
- 9 ♠ A J 10 7 6 3 ♥ K Q 9 ♦ 10 7 ♣ Q 2
 Bid 3♠. This is forcing to game and shows at least 6 spades. Pass if partner signs-off in 3NT.
- 10 ♠ K 7 3 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ A 9 3 2 ♣ 9 7 3
 Bid 3♣ forcing *LHO* to come in at the three-level. The *Law of Total Tricks* will protect you ...

Rebids after partner's invitational response in a suit: 2♠-2♥-???

- 11 ♠ K Q J 5 ♥ 5 3 ♦ 4 ♣ A Q 10 9 6 5
 Bid 2♠. This hand will play better in one of your suits so let partner know you have four spades.
- 12 ♠ 4 3 2 ♥ A Q ♦ K 7 ♣ A 10 7 6 4 3
Pass. There is no reason to think there is a better spot.
- 13 ♠ 3 ♥ A Q 10 8 ♦ 10 8 ♣ A K J 10 8 4
 Bid 3♠ (splinter) or 4♥. Ten tricks should be on with this dummy.
- 14 ♠ 9 6 ♥ K J 6 3 ♦ J 10 ♣ A K Q 7 4
 Bid 3♥. Although the hand is a maximum, the shape is not inspiring. It may have been preferable to open 1♦ with this hand.
- 15 ♠ K J 2 ♥ 5 2 ♦ 3 ♣ A K J 10 9 6 2
 Bid 3♣. Although you have a doubleton heart, the clubs are good enough to play opposite a void. It must be better to have it as trumps.

16.10 The 2♦ opening

Some examples of bidding after a 2♦ opening.

Responses to 2♦

- 1 ♠ Q J 5 4 3 ♥ A 10 5 ♦ K 10 5 ♣ A 10
 Bid 4♠. Why mess about?
- 2 ♠ 5 4 ♥ A 9 ♦ A 10 8 7 6 4 3 ♣ 6 3
Pass. You would also pass if one of the low diamonds was a low heart since bidding 2♥ may land you in a 3-3 fit.
- 3 ♠ 2 ♥ J 10 7 3 ♦ K Q 6 4 ♣ K 8 5 2
 Bid 2♥. If partner is 4-3-1-5, he will bid 2♠ which can be corrected to 3♣. Do not ask for shape since that may push bidding to the 4-level.
- 4 ♠ A J ♥ A 9 3 ♦ A J 10 9 7 ♣ 10 8 7
 Bid 3NT. Diamonds are well under control and there are no better prospects for game.
- 5 ♠ A Q 10 6 5 ♥ K J ♦ 9 8 7 ♣ A Q 5
 Bid 2NT—there is a grand slam possible here. Whatever partner bids, you will bid diamonds next to ask about controls.

Responding over *RHO*'s 2-level suit overcall: 2♦-(2♥)-???

- 6 ♠ Q 10 6 ♥ J 10 9 ♦ K Q J 4 ♣ A 6 4

Double. This can get ugly since opponent is bidding at the 2-level with at most seven trumps and without the balance of HCP.

7 ♠ 9 ♥ 10 6 4 ♦ A Q 8 6 5 4 3 ♣ K 8

Pass. You could double but that would probably drive the opponents to spades which is a better spot.

8 ♠ 8 4 ♥ 3 ♦ A K 10 5 ♣ 9 8 7 6 5 3

Bid 4♣. This is a preemptive bid to make *LHO* decide whether to support at the 4-level.

Responding over RHO's 3-level suit overcall / cue-bid: 2♦-(3♦)-???

9 ♠ 9 5 2 ♥ A 9 5 ♦ A J 7 3 ♣ 7 4 3

Double.

10 ♠ K 9 3 ♥ A Q 10 ♦ A 10 2 ♣ J 10 9 4

A *Double* is probably best with favourable vulnerability.

However, with unfavourable vulnerability, it is a choice between 3NT (if you feel lucky) and 5♣ (more realistic).

11 ♠ A 10 9 8 4 2 ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ 10 5 ♣ 7 4

Bid 3♠ (non-forcing).

Responding after RHO's double: 2♦-(Double)-???

12 ♠ K 9 6 2 ♥ K 4 ♦ A Q J 6 ♣ 8 6 2

Redouble. There could be overtricks here even if partner plays in a 4-1 diamond fit.

13 ♠ K J 9 6 5 ♥ J 8 6 4 ♦ J 4 ♣ Q 7

Bid 2♠—if opponents compete, you can try hearts next.

14 ♠ 10 6 4 2 ♥ Q 10 6 3 ♦ J 10 ♣ K 7 5

Pass. Let partner describe his shape with a redouble or bid.

15 ♠ A 5 ♥ K Q 10 ♦ K 10 9 8 6 3 ♣ Q 2

Redouble. You have a lot of diamonds and good spot cards. Even if opponent's have a 4-4 spade fit, they may not find it and even if they do it is likely you have a penalty double against them in spades.

16.11 “Gambling” and “Namyats” openings

Responses to a “gambling” 3NT

1 ♠ 3 2 ♥ A K 8 5 ♦ A K J 4 3 ♣ J 10

Bid 4♦ asking partner to show singletons or voids. If he is short in spades, you can commit to a club slam.

2 ♠ A Q J ♥ 9 7 4 3 ♦ 10 6 ♣ A J 8 6

Pass. Opponents may be able to run some hearts but the odds are in your favour. Even if someone has five hearts, he may not be on lead or the suit may be blocked.

3 ♠ A 9 2 ♥ A K 9 7 6 5 2 ♦ — ♣ A 8 5

Bid 5NT. This asks partner to bid 7♦ with *AKQJ*. You certainly want to be in 6♦ although there are no guarantees.

4 ♠ A ♥ A K Q 10 8 4 ♦ K Q J 9 ♣ 5 4

Bid 6♣ which should be cold.

5 ♠ Q J 8 4 ♥ 6 5 ♦ 10 8 7 ♣ J 10 9 7

Bid 5♣. You don't care what partner's suit is (although it looks to be diamonds). What you do know is that opponents can make a lot of tricks in hearts (or even spades) and this robs them of room to find their best spot.

Responses to a "Namyats" 4♦ opening

6 ♠ 10 ♥ A 7 6 5 ♦ K Q 9 5 ♣ A K 3 2

Bid 4NT (*RKCB*).

7 ♠ 8 7 4 ♥ K J 10 9 ♦ K Q 6 5 ♣ K J

Bid 4♠. Partner cannot have many aces in addition to a solid suit (he probably would have opened 1♣ if so) so slam is out of question.

8 ♠ 9 7 2 ♥ Q J ♦ A K 6 5 2 ♣ A J 10

Bid 4♥, a relay to partner's suit. You plan to cue-bid 5♣ inviting slam and if partner has a cue-bid in hearts, you can bid 6♠.

9 ♠ J 7 5 2 ♥ A 9 2 ♦ A K Q 5 3 ♣ 4

Bid 4NT (*RKCB*). If partner shows 3 key cards, you will bid 7♠. This is likely to be lay-down after the opening lead.

10 ♠ 8 7 2 ♥ A Q J 7 3 ♦ — ♣ A 10 7 4 2

With a solid suit and the heart king, 7♠ is odds-on. Since there is no way to confirm both of these (an asking bid will only find the heart king), it is probably best to simply bid 6♠. The success of the slam may depend on the heart finesse, finally.