

COSL Precision Bidding System

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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 1♦ opening normally shows a 3-card holding but could sometimes be made with a doubleton when bidding 1NT or 2♣ is unattractive e.g., ♠AQJ10 ♥KQ ♦76 ♣J7642 or ♠AK109 ♥AK98 ♦432 ♣32.

1♣	16 ⁺ HCP (unbalanced) or 17 ⁺ HCP (balanced) forcing. 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, at least 2 cards in ♦, no 5-card major and less than 6 clubs. 🐼
1♥/♠	11-15HCP, 5 ⁺ -cards in suit bid. 🐼
1NT	14-16HCP in 1 st /2 nd positions and 15-17HCP in 3 rd /4 th position, balanced. May have a five-card minor (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 ♦ (5-card suit if present is ♣), forcing 🐼
2♥/♠	5-10HCP, 6 ⁺ -card suit (SQ of 8 when vulnerable and 7 non-vulnerable). With 6 or less losers, open 1♠/♥/♦. 🐼
2NT	22-23HCP, balanced hand , may have a 5-card major. 🐼
3 of suit	Pre-emptive, < 10HCP, 7 ⁺ -card suit (SQ of 9 when vulnerable and 8 non-vulnerable). Apply rule of 2/3/4. 🐼
3NT	“Gambling”, solid 7 ⁺ -card minor suit with nothing outside in 1 st or 2 nd position. In third or fourth position, any side suit has limited strength. 🐼
4♣/♦	Pre-emptive, 8 ⁺ -card suit.

2 Responses to 1♣

The responses to 1♣ can be negative, constructive or positive. All positive responses are forcing to game unless both hands are minimum and no fit is found. There is no response to 1♣ above 4♦.

Negative Response

1♦	0-7HCP, forcing. 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. 🐼
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¹Balanced 22-23 point hands are opened 2NT.

Constructive Responses

2♥/♠ 4-7HCP, 6⁺-card suit with two of the top four honours but not AK. 🐼

Positive Responses forcing to game

1♥/♠, 8⁺HCP, 5⁺-cards in suit. There are no restrictions on suit quality. 🐼

2♣/♦ 8-13HCP, balanced hand with no five-card suit. 🐼

1NT 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 forcing to game

3♣ 8-11HCP or < 4 controls, 4-4-4-1 shape with a black singleton (♠ or ♣). 🐼

3♦ 8-11HCP or < 4 controls, 4-4-4-1 shape with a red singleton (♥ or ♦). 🐼

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

2.1 Bidding after a negative response 1♣–1♦

Opener rebids 1, 2 or 3NT with balanced hands (17-19, 20-21 or 24-26HCP respectively), a non-jump in a suit with 16-21HCP and a jump in a suit with powerful hands (22⁺HCP). The jump rebid may be made with a lower point-count with greater playing strength.

Bidding Examples

Balanced Hands

1NT 17-19HCP, balanced hand, no 5-card major. Responder's rebids are:

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

2♣ 6-7HCP, Stayman. 🐼

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

4♦/♥ Texas transfers to 4♥/♠ respectively.

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

Pass 0-3HCP.

3♣ 4-7HCP, Puppet Stayman asking for 5-card majors if any. 🐼

3♦/♥ Weak, transfer to 3♥/♠ respectively.

3NT 4-5HCP, sign-off.

4♦/♥ Texas transfers to 4♥/♠ respectively.

3NT 24-26HCP, balanced hand, may have a 5-card major. Responder's rebids are:

	<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP, balanced.
	<i>4 of suit</i>	5-7HCP, 5 ⁺ -cards. Opener bids one above suit (4♦/4♥/♠ or 4NT) to show fit and start <i>Roman Key-Card Blackwood</i> . ♣
	4NT	5-7HCP, no 5-card suit, quantitative.
<u>Unbalanced Hands</u>		
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♥).
	<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♣/♦	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♣/♦		5 ⁺ -card suit, may have a 4-card major, non-forcing. Responses have the same structure as over 1♥ and 1♠.
2♥/♠		Powerful hand with 22 ⁺ HCP and 5 ⁺ -card suit, equivalent of a Standard 2♣ bid. 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>Jump 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. forcing
3♣/♦		Very strong unbalanced hand with a long minor and good playing strength that is too strong for 2♣/♦. E.g., ♠A ♥AK ♦KQJ10876 ♣QJ5 or ♠KQJ5 ♥6 ♦A ♣AKQ10964. forcing
3♥/♠		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., ♠AKQJ1098 ♥4 ♦KJ3 ♣AK or ♠65 ♥AKQ107543 ♦AKJ ♣— where a slam is on if responder can cue bid. forcing Responder bids:

<i>Suit</i>	First-round control—ace or void in suit.
3NT	No first round control but has a king or singleton in a non-trump suit. Opener rebids 4♣ to ask which suit.
<i>Game raise</i>	Denies ace, king, singleton or void.

2.2 Bidding after a constructive response 1♣–2♥/2♠

Since responder is showing a strictly limited hand with a long suit, the opener needs to decide 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♥/♠	Raise to game is a sign-off.								
<i>New suit</i>	Natural, forcing. Responder's rebids are: <table> <tr> <td><i>Raise</i></td><td>3⁺-card support (or <i>Qx</i>).</td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Rebid</i> ♥/♠</td><td>Minimum, no support.</td></tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td><td>Maximum, no support.</td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Cue bid under</i> 3NT</td><td>Maximum with support, singleton or void in suit bid.</td></tr> </table>	<i>Raise</i>	3 ⁺ -card support (or <i>Qx</i>).	<i>Rebid</i> ♥/♠	Minimum, no support.	3NT	Maximum, no support.	<i>Cue bid under</i> 3NT	Maximum with support, singleton or void in suit bid.
<i>Raise</i>	3 ⁺ -card support (or <i>Qx</i>).								
<i>Rebid</i> ♥/♠	Minimum, no support.								
3NT	Maximum, no support.								
<i>Cue bid under</i> 3NT	Maximum with support, singleton or void in suit bid.								
2NT	Support for suit, asking for shortness forcing to game. Responders's rebids are: <table> <tr> <td><i>Rebid</i> ♥/♠</td><td>Minimum.</td></tr> <tr> <td><i>New suit</i></td><td>Singleton or void in bid suit.</td></tr> </table>	<i>Rebid</i> ♥/♠	Minimum.	<i>New suit</i>	Singleton or void in bid suit.				
<i>Rebid</i> ♥/♠	Minimum.								
<i>New suit</i>	Singleton or void in bid suit.								
3NT	<i>AQ</i> or <i>KQ</i> in suit.								
4NT	<i>Roman Key-Card Blackwood.</i> 🗝️								

2.3 Bidding after a positive No-Trump response 1♣–1NT/2NT

Responder is showing a balanced hand with 8-13HCP (1NT) or 14⁺HCP (2NT). 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♣ (*Stayman*) or (d) raise no-trumps.

Bidding Examples

1♣–1NT–2♣

A 2♣ rebid after a response of 1NT is *Transfer Stayman* (other rebids are shown subsequently) and responder rebids as below:

2♦	8-10HCP, 4 card ♥, may have 4 card ♠. Opener's rebids are: <table> <tr> <td>2♥</td><td>♥ fit assured; responder should then bid 2NT with 4-3-3-3 or a second suit at 3-level.</td></tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td><td>4-card ♠, no 4-card ♥.</td></tr> <tr> <td>2NT</td><td>No 4-card major.</td></tr> </table>	2♥	♥ fit assured; responder should then 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♥	♥ fit assured; responder should then 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 ♥. <table> <tr> <td>2♠</td><td>Spade fit confirmed, relay; responder bids 2NT with 4-3-3-3 else second suit at 3-level.</td></tr> <tr> <td>2NT</td><td>No 4-card ♠, may have 4-card ♥.</td></tr> </table>	2♠	Spade fit confirmed, relay; responder bids 2NT with 4-3-3-3 else second suit at 3-level.	2NT	No 4-card ♠, may have 4-card ♥.		
2♠	Spade fit confirmed, relay; 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♣/♦ 4-3-3-3 with 4-card ♣/♦. 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 with a 4-card minor. 3♣ by opener is then a relay asking responder to bid his suit or 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, poor 5-card minor suit. 4♣ by opener is then a relay asking responder to bid his suit.

Suit bid after 1♣–1NT

A bid of 2♦/♥/♠ or 2NT (for ♣s) over a response of 1NT shows a 5⁺-card suit and asks responder to show strength and fit in steps as below. [This is a support asking bid and in this context, a minimum is 8-10HCP a maximum is 11-13HCP and support is *Hxx, xxx* or better.](#)

1 step	Minimum and no support.
2 steps	Minimum with support.
3 steps	Maximum and no support.
4 steps	Maximum with support.

A jump rebid in a suit, e.g., 1♣–1NT–3♣ shows a very strong hand with slam interest, sets trumps and asks for responder's holding in that suit. Responses are in steps as below:

1 step	Two or three spot cards.
2 steps	Doubleton honour.
3 steps	Tripleton honour.
4 steps	Two honours doubleton.
5 steps	Two honours tripleton.
6 steps	Four card support.

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 or interest in slam.
4NT	Quantitative raise with a balanced hand and no four-card major inviting slam.

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 after 3♣ shows 4-3-3-3 with four cards in ♣).
3♦/♥/♠ or 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 1♣–1♥/1♠/2♣/2♦

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. All bids short of game are forcing.

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.

Bidding Examples

<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. Responses 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>Lowest NT</i> 5-3-3-2 shape, values in unbid suits.
1NT	17-19HCP, balanced (2NT over 2♣/2♦). No 5-card major, may have 3-card support (to show shape first).
2NT	20-21HCP, balanced (3NT over 2♣/2♦). No 5-card major, may have 3-card support.
<i>Single raise</i>	<i>γ-trump asking bid</i> —shows an extremely powerful hand with distinct slam possibilities.☛ Any further new suits bid by opener after the <i>γ</i> response will be <i>ε-control asking bids</i> .☛
<i>Double raise</i>	Minimum balanced hand, 4-card fit with good controls. Avoids <i>γ</i> sequences.
<i>Game raise</i>	Minimum balanced hand, 4-card fit with poor controls.
3♠, 4♣/♦/♥	<i>Splinter</i> bid 4-card fit promised.

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.

In general, over a minor suit positive response, an NT bid 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 NT rather than his suit since, in most cases, 3NT is preferable to 5 in a minor.

2.5 Bidding after a 3♠ response

A 3♠ response places responder with a minimum 7-card suit headed by *AKQ* with or without outside controls. The suit should be obvious on most occasions. Opener's rebids are:

3NT	To play. Responder should pass unless he has many outside controls.
4♣	β -ask for <i>outside controls</i> —responses are in the lower (0-3) scale. Any following suit bid that is not the trump suit is an ϵ control ask.
4♦	When opener cannot identify the suit—asks responder to bid his suit. Diamonds are indicated by a 4NT response. A subsequent suit bid would be an ϵ -ask.
4♥/♠	5 ⁺ -card suit, to play. Responder should pass with 3-card support or doubleton honour.

Bidding Examples

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♦ is bid with a red singleton. With more than 4 controls (typically 12⁺HCP), the singleton is immediately known since responder bids the the suit below the singleton.

After 3♣ or 3♦, 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.

Possible sequences after an unusual positive

1♣-3♣-3♦-3♥	4-4-4-1 (♣ singleton)
1♣-3♣-3♦-3♠	1-4-4-4 (♠ singleton)
1♣-3♦-3♥-3♠	4-4-1-4 (♦ singleton)
1♣-3♦-3♥-3NT	4-1-4-4 (♥ singleton)

Once the singleton is known, a bid by opener in the singleton suit is β and asks responder for the number of controls held (the lower scale is used after 3♣/♦ and the upper scale is used after the stronger responses). ♠

Bidding Examples

2.7 Handling intervention over 1♣

If an opponent doubles 1♣, the responses other than 1♦ remain the same. However, the additional possible responses of *Pass* and *Redouble* are used to provide more granular information. Over an opponent's overcall in a suit at the 1-level (or a 1NT overcall), different responses are used as in the table below.

<i>After 1♣-Double</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP.
1♦	5-7HCP, forcing
<i>Redouble</i>	8 ⁺ HCP, 4-4 in the major suits.
<i>Others</i>	Same as over 1♣ without intervention.
<i>After 1♣-1♦/♥/♠</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP.
<i>New suit</i>	5-8HCP, 5 ⁺ -card suit.
<i>Jump in new suit</i>	8-10HCP, 6 ⁺ -card suit.
1NT	9-11HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
2NT	12-14HCP with one or two stoppers.
<i>Double</i>	5-8HCP or 9 ⁺ HCP, no 5-card suit, <u>takeout</u> . Cue bid on next round clarifies hand as 9 ⁺ HCP.
<i>Cue Bid</i>	9 ⁺ HCP, forcing to game
<i>After 1♣-1NT</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP.
<i>New suit</i>	5-8HCP, 5 ⁺ -card suit.
<i>Double</i>	5 ⁺ HCP.
<i>At 2-level</i>	
<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP or 9 ⁺ HCP with strength in opponent's suit.
<i>New suit</i>	5-8HCP, 5 ⁺ -card suit.
<i>Double</i>	5 ⁺ HCP.
<i>At 3-level</i>	
<i>Double</i>	5 ⁺ HCP, takeout.
<i>At 4-level</i>	
<i>Double</i>	Weak hand.
<i>Pass</i>	forcing pass, ask opener to take action.

3 Responses to 1♦

Although a 1♦ opening may be made on a doubleton diamond, it is non-forcing and partner can pass with a weak hand. The first priority is to find a 4-4 fit in the majors if there is one.

<i>Pass</i>	0-7HCP and usually, no 4-card major.
<i>Balanced Hands</i>	
1NT	8-10HCP, balanced, no 4-card major.
2NT	11-12HCP, balanced, no 4-card major. 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, no 4-card major.
<u>New Suit</u>	
1♥/♠	Usually ³ 6 ⁺ HCP, 4 ⁺ -card suit. 1♠ denies four cards in hearts but responder will bid 1♥ with both majors. forcing Opener rebids:
1♠	4-card ♠, denies 4-card ♥. Responder rebids:
	1NT Sign-off.
	2♣ 4th-suit- forcing (“do something clever”).
	2♠ 8-9HCP, 4-card ♠.
1NT	11-14HCP, balanced, denies 4-card fit. Can be 3-3-2-5 shape. Responder can rebid
	2♣ New minor- forcing
	2♦ 8-9HCP, 4-card ♠ (after initial 1♥).
2♣	Unbalanced, usually 5-4 in minors and no 4-card major. Responder can rebid
	2♦ Weak hand, to play.
	2♥/♠ 6 ⁺ -card suit, to play.
	3♣ 8-9HCP, keep bidding alive.
	3NT To play.
2♦	6 ⁺ -card ♦ suit, non-forcing.
2♥/♠	Raise of responder’s suit shows 3-4 card support (if 3-card, it promises a singleton in a side suit).
	A <i>reverse</i> (bidding the other major) shows 14-15HCP, 6 ⁺ -♦ and 4 ⁺ -cards in the suit bid.
2NT	14-15HCP, good diamonds and stoppers in the unbid major and clubs.
3♥/♠	A double raise shows a maximum 14-15HCP, 4-card support and distributional values.
3♦	14-15HCP, 6 ⁺ -card ♦ suit, no 4-card major.
3♣	14-15HCP, at least 5-5 in minors with points concentrated in the two suits.
2♣	10 ⁺ HCP, 5 ⁺ -card suit, no 4-card major, forcing . Opener’s rebids are:
	2♥ 11-14HCP, ♥ stopper, no ♠ stopper.
	2♠ 11-14HCP, ♠ stopper, no ♥ stopper.
	2NT 11-14HCP, stopper in both majors.
	2♦/3♦ No stopper in majors, genuine ♦ suit.
	3♥ 15HCP, forcing to game ♥ stopper, no ♠ stopper.
	3♠ 15HCP, forcing to game ♠ stopper, no ♥ stopper.
	3NT 15HCP, stopper in both majors.
	3♣ No stopper in majors.

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

Inverted Raises with Diamond Support

2♦	10-12HCP, 5 ⁺ -card diamond suit. forcing to 2NT or 3♦
3♦	< 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♥/♠	Weak jump shift (0-7HCP) with a long suit, non-forcing. Opener's rebids are: 2NT 11-12HCP, no 4-card major. 3♣ Shows both minors and asks responder to choose between 3♣, 3♦ and 3NT.
3♣	Invitational, with a long club suit. E.g., ♠Q4 ♥75 ♦97 ♣AQJ8654
3♥/♠/4♣	<i>Splinter</i> bid with 5 ⁺ -card diamond support and no 4-card major.
4♥/♠	Single-suited hand with 7 ⁺ -cards and no slam interest.

3.1 Intervention over 1♦

If opponent doubles 1♦, the responses are:

<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP or 9-10HCP.
<i>New suit</i>	5-8HCP.
1NT	6-8HCP, balanced.
2♦, 3♦	<8HCP, 4+-card support, preemptive.
<i>Redouble</i>	11 ⁺ HCP.

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

<i>Double</i>	8-10HCP, 4 ⁺ -cards in other major, negative.
<i>New suit</i>	5-card suit if major, 4-card otherwise.
2♦	6-9HCP, support for major.
3♦	10-11HCP.
1NT	8-10HCP, stopper in opponent's suit, balanced.
2NT	11-13HCP, stopper in opponent's suit, balanced.

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.
<u>Direct and Bergen Raises</u>	
<i>Single raise</i>	7-10HCP with 3-card support, constructive.
<i>Double raise</i>	0-6HCP with 4-card support (preemptive <i>Bergen</i> raise). 🐼
3♣	7-10HCP with 4-card support (constructive <i>Bergen</i> raise). 🐼
3♦	10-12HCP with 4-card support (limited <i>Bergen</i> raise). 🐼

Game raise Wide variety of hands where responder is fairly sure there is no play for slam. E.g., raise to 4♠ with ♠K65 ♥AQ ♦K82 ♣J9876.

One-Over-One Response

1♠ 8⁺HCP, 4⁺-card suit, forcing. 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. forcing Opener's rebids are:

With 11-13HCP

2♣/♦/♥ 11-13HCP, 4-card suit (or 3-card better minor).

Rebid of suit 11-13HCP, 6-card suit.

With a maximum 14-15HCP

Jump rebid of suit 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.

Jump in new suit 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)

Two-Over-One Game Force

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♥ (following 1♠) Natural, 4⁺-card suit.

2♠ (following 1♥) 14-15HCP, reverse.

Rebid suit Minimum, not necessarily a 6-carder.

2NT 11-13HCP, stoppers in unbid suits

Raise 11-13HCP, good support, non-forcing.

Jump in new suit 14-15HCP, good support, control in bid suit.

Jump rebid of suit 14-15HCP, very good 6-card suit. The jump rebid should be made on the basis of playing strength rather than HCP.

3NT 15HCP, stoppers in unbid suits.

2NT 12⁺HCP, 4-card support, forcing to game, *Jacoby* 2NT. See 13.8 for responses.

Other Bids at 3-level and Above

Double jump shift Splinter bid, singleton or void in bid suit, 4⁺-card support. forcing to game

3NT 14-15HCP, usually 4-card support for opener's major, responder lacks a void or singleton, minimum 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:

1NT	11-13HCP, minimum.
2♣/♦	11-15HCP, 4 ⁺ -card suit, non-forcing.
2♠	11-13HCP, 4-card support.
2NT	14-15HCP, balanced, stoppers in both minors.
3♣/♦	13-15HCP, 5-card suit.
3♥	13-15HCP, 6 ⁺ -card suit.
3♠	13-15HCP, 4-card spade support.
3NT	To play with running suit.
4♣/♦	<i>Splinter</i> bids, forcing to game
4♥	To play—distributional hand.
4♠	To play—maximum hand with 13-15HCP and distributional values.
4NT	<i>Roman Key-Card Blackwood</i> ♠ with agreement in ♠.

4.1 Intervention over a major suit opening

If an opponent doubles, responder can bid:

<i>Pass</i>	0-4HCP or 9-10HCP.
<i>Raise</i>	<8HCP, preemptive, 3 ⁺ -card support following the <i>Law of Total Tricks</i> .
<i>New suit</i>	5-8HCP, 5 ⁺ -card suit.
1NT	6-8HCP, balanced.
2NT	<i>Jacoby</i> 2NT—see 13.8 for responses.
<i>Redouble</i>	12 ⁺ HCP, support for opener's suit.

If an opponent overcalls:

<i>Pass</i>	0-7HCP or 8 ⁺ HCP and waiting for penalty if opener reopens with a double.
<i>Double</i>	7-9HCP, 4-card suit in other major.
1NT	8-10HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
2NT	11-12HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
<i>Cue bid</i>	15 ⁺ HCP with singleton or void in opponent's suit. forcing

5 Responses to 1NT

A 1NT opening shows a 14-16HCP balanced hand (15-17HCP in 3rd/4th seat) without a 5-card major holding but could be a 6-3-2-2 or 5-4-2-2 hand with a long minor suit in which case opener must hold stoppers in both doubletons. Responses are as below:

<i>Pass</i>	0-7HCP, poor support.
2♣	10-11HCP, <i>Stayman</i> . ♠
2♦/♥	<i>Jacoby</i> transfers to ♥ and ♠ respectively. See 13.7 for rebids.

2♠	8 ⁺ HCP—Minor suit <i>Stayman</i> , denies 4-card major and asks opener for a 4-card minor. Shows a minor 2-suiter (5-4 or better).
3 of suit	Good suit, forcing to game
4♣	Gerber ace-asking. ♠
4♦/♥	<i>Texas</i> transfers to 4♥ and 4♠ respectively. Denies slam values.
4NT	17-18HCP, balanced, quantitative.
5NT	22-23HCP, balanced, <i>Grand Slam Force</i> .
6NT	19-21HCP, balanced.

5.1 Intervention after 1NT

If an opponent doubles 1NT, responder can bid:

Pass	Weak or 6-11HCP, balanced.
Redouble	5-card suit, asking partner to bid 2♣ and then pass or rectify.
2♣	4-card suit (or good 3-card clubs).
2♦	Short in clubs.
2♥	Tolerance for majors (at least 4-3).
2♠	12 ⁺ HCP, forcing
3 of suit	6 ⁺ -card suit, invitational.

After an opponent's overcall, responder has the following choices:

Double	Penalty double.
Suit at 2-level	0-6HCP, natural and non-forcing.
2NT	<i>Lebensohl</i> —partner must bid 3♣. See 13.10.
Suit at 3-level	Natural, forcing to game
Cue bid	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. See 13.10.

6 Responses to 2♣

Bidding over a 2♣ opening (showing a 6⁺-card club suit) is largely natural except for the conventional 2♦ response that asks opener to further describe his hand.

Pass	0-7HCP, poor hand.
2♦	11+HCP, conventional and forcing (with club fit, may be made with only 8HCP). Opener's rebids are:

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: 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: 3♥ ♥ stopper. 3♠ ♠ stopper. 3NT ♦ stopper. 4♦ 5-card suit (6-5 in ♣ and ♦)
3NT	14-15HCP, 6-3-3-2 balanced hand, good club suit.
3♥/♠	14-15HCP, 4-card suit.
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.
3♣	Pre-emptive raise based on a club fit. Not forward-going.
3♦/♥/♠	6+-card suit with game-forcing values (12+HCP). Opener's rebids are: 3NT Less than 2-card support. <i>Raise</i> Minimum, 3-card support. <i>New suit</i> Maximum, 3+-card support, cue bid ace.
3NT	13-15HCP, balanced hand with stoppers in the unbid suits and no interest in the majors.
4♣	Pre-emptive raise with extra club support or distributional values as compared to a raise to 3♣.
4♥/♠	Very long suit with no interest in slam, to play.

6.1 Intervention over 2♣

<i>Negative double</i>	Through 3♠.
<i>Redouble</i>	10+HCP.
<i>Cue bid</i>	12+HCP, singleton or void in opponent's suit.

7 Responses to 2♦

A 2♦ opening describes a three suited hand with shortness in diamonds and the responder can place the contract fairly easily in most cases. The only positive response is 2NT which is forcing to game.

<i>Pass</i>	6+ diamonds, no interest in other suits or bidding higher.
2♥/♠, 3♣	Natural, sign-off.
2NT	11+HCP, artificial forcing to game asks opener to further describe his hand. Opener's rebids are:

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 further rebid in diamonds (the singleton suit) by opener would be β asking for controls. ♠

3♦	6+-card ♦ suit, invitation to 3NT.
3♥/♠	7-9HCP, preemptive, 5+-card suit.
4♥/♠, 5♣	Sign-off, to play.

7.1 Intervention over 2♦

If opponents double 2♦, responder can either *Pass* if he wants to play in diamonds or *Redouble* asking partner to bid a major.

8 Responses to 2♥ or 2♠

Opener shows a 6+-card major with 8-10HCP and a good suit with a minimum suit quality of 8 when vulnerable or 7 when non-vulnerable.

<i>Pass</i>	No game, no fit.
<i>Raise to 3 or 4</i>	Natural, sign-off.
<i>New suit</i>	Natural, forcing Opener's rebids are: <i>Raise</i> 3-card support. <i>Rebid own suit</i> forcing
2NT	forcing Opener is asked to bid suit where he has a singleton or void or rebid his own suit lacking either.

9 Responses to 2NT

Opener is showing a balanced hand with 22-23HCP and no 5-card suit—this is the only 16⁺HCP hand that is not opened with 1♣. Responses are:

<i>Pass</i>	Very weak, no suit to escape to.
3♦/♥	Weak hand that doesn't want to play in no-trumps. <i>Flint</i> convention—asks for a transfer to ♥/♠ respectively.
4♦/♥	Transfer to 4♥/♠ respectively. 6+-card suit, to play.
3NT	To play.
3♣	<i>Smolen Stayman</i> —asking for majors. Game-going with slam interest. Responses are:

3♦	No 4-card major—responder can now rebid:
3♥	4-card ♥ and 5-card ♠ (allows for 5-3 fit).
3♠	4-card ♠ and 5-card ♥ (allows for 5-3 fit).
3NT	To play.
4♣	Transfer to diamonds.
3♥/♠	4-card major.
3NT	4 cards in both majors. Responder bids:
Pass	To play.
4♣/♦/♥	Transfer to ♦/♥/♠ respectively.
3♠	Transfer to clubs with a correction to diamonds. <i>Minor suit slam try.</i>

10 Responses to 3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠

After a preemptive opening of three of a suit, responder's rebids are:

<i>Raise</i>	Preemptive.
<i>New suit</i>	Natural, forcing
<i>Others</i>	Natural.

11 Responses to 3NT

Responses to the gambling 3NT are:

4♣	Escape—asks opener to pass or bid 4♦ if that is his suit.
4♦	Asks opener to bid his short suit(s).
4NT	Quantitative, asking opener if he has an 8 ⁺ -card suit.

12 Competitive Bidding

12.1 Overcalls

At the one level, overcall with a 5-card suit and 8-15HCP. At the two-level, overcall with at least 11-15HCP. Responses to a suit overcall are:

<i>Pass</i>	<8HCP.
<i>Raise</i>	9-10HCP with 3-card support.
1NT	9-10HCP, balanced with a stopper in opponent's suit.

A 1NT overcall should be 13-15HCP with a stopper in the opponent's suit.

A jump suit overcall is a weak preemptive bid with a 6⁺-card suit.

A cue bid is *Michael's* showing a 2-suiter in the highest unbid suit and another.

12.2 Doubles

A direct double over opponent's opening is either 13-15HCP (takeout) or a power double with 16⁺HCP.

A *takeout* double over opponent's minor opening bid usually promises a 4-card suit in both majors. Over a major suit opening, it promises a 4-card suit in the other major. A response is requested even with a blank hand unless the other opponent bids.

<i>Pass</i>	Long and solid holding in opponent's suit
<i>1-level</i>	5-8HCP.
<i>2-level</i>	7-11HCP.
<i>3-level</i>	9-13HCP.
1NT	8-10HCP with stopper in opponent's suit.
<i>Jump</i>	9 ⁺ HCP.

If the doubler rebids or raises, it indicates a power hand of 16⁺HCP.

Doubles of an opponent's overcall are *negative* doubles indicating a lack of a biddable 5-card suit and no fit with partner's bid suit. Interest in one of the unbid suits is strongly indicated.

At the one-level, the *negative* double shows 8-15HCP; at the two-level, it shows 11-15HCP. Over an opponent's overcall in a major, it promises a 4-card holding in the other major.

A double in a competitive auction is a *responsive* double indicating 3-card support in partner's suit.

A double of a slam contract is a *Lightner* double requesting an unusual lead from partner.

13 Gadgets and Conventions

13.1 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.

13.2 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.

RKCB should not be used when you have a void or two fast losers.

The responses to the bid of 4NT are in steps and differ depending on whether opponents have bid over 4NT. Note that the 3rd and 4th steps show only 2 key cards if opponents have intervened since the 5 key card response is shown by step 2 in such cases.

<i>Holding</i>	<i>Silent</i>	<i>Double (R0P1)</i>	<i>Overcall (D0P1)</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 without queen of trumps</i>	5♥	5♣ (two key cards)	<i>Cheapest suit</i> (two key cards)
<i>2/5 key cards and queen of trumps</i>	5♠	5♦ (two key cards)	<i>Second-cheapest suit</i> (two 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 or 5 key cards without trump Q.
<i>4 steps</i>	2 or 5 key cards with trump Q.

13.3 Gerber Ace-asking Convention

An immediate response of 4♣ to any no-trump bid (or overcall) is the *Gerber* ace-asking convention. A jump rebid of 4♣ 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 number of aces in steps as follows:

4♦	Zero or four aces.
4♥	One ace.
4♠	Two aces.
4NT	Three aces.

13.4 β Control Asking Bid

A β control asking bid can occur either after a 1NT rebid by the 1♣ opener over a positive suit response or by cue bidding a singleton suit after a positive response of 3♣, 3♦, 3♥, 3♠, 4♣ or 4♦ over 1♣.

The number of controls held ($A=2$, $K=1$) are shown in steps as below:

<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 and again the responses are in steps:
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	<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 as follows:

<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.

13.5 γ Trump Asking Bid

The γ -asking bid is used to find out the quality of responder's suit. It is typically used to find out whether the suit will provide enough tricks in no-trumps or as a trump suit.

<i>Responses to a γ-suit 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, 5 ⁺ -card suit.

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

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

13.6 ϵ 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 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 where the first step shows no control, second step shows second-round control and the third step shows first-round control.

13.7 Jacoby Transfers

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

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

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♥ (transfer to 2♠), opener with a 4-card spade suit could bid:

2NT	4=3=3=3 shape.
3♣	4=x=x=2 (doubleton club).
3♦	4=x=2=x (doubleton diamond).
3♥	4=2=x=x (doubleton heart).

13.8 Jacoby 2NT

A 2NT response over an opening of 1♥ or 1♠ is conventional and shows 13⁺HCP with 4⁺-card support of partner's suit. It is forcing to game. 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	12-13 HCP, medium strength hand.

13.9 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.

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

13.10 Lebensohl

The *Lebensohl* convention is used by responder after an opponent overcalls partner's opening 1NT bid 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>2 in new suit</i>	Natural and non-forcing.
2NT	A puppet bid requiring opener to bid 3♣. After opener's forced 3♣ bid, — 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>3 in new suit</i>	Natural, 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, and denies a stopper in opponent's suit.

14 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.

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

15 Bidding Examples

15.1 Negative Response over 1♣

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

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

(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 $1\Diamond$ 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	North	East	South
\spadesuit A K 7 5 2	\spadesuit 4	$1\clubsuit$	Pass	$1\Diamond$	Pass
\heartsuit A Q 10 4 3	\heartsuit K 8 5 2	$1\spadesuit$	Pass	$1NT(1)$	Pass
\diamondsuit A 5	\diamondsuit 9 6 4 2	$2\heartsuit$	Pass	$3\heartsuit$	Pass
\clubsuit 2	\clubsuit J 7 5 4	$4\heartsuit$	Pass	Pass	Pass

- (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 $4\heartsuit$ is a low diamond. The best technique for declarer is to win with the Ace, cash $\spadesuit A$ 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 $\heartsuit 8$. If, at worst, spades are 5-2 and South overruffs, declarer retains the possibility of ruffing the other spade loser with the $\heartsuit K$. 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	North	East	South
\spadesuit A K J 8 7 5 3	\spadesuit 6 4 2	$1\clubsuit$	Pass	$1\Diamond$	Pass
\heartsuit A	\heartsuit J 7 3	$2\spadesuit(1)$	Pass	$3\Diamond(2)$	Pass
\diamondsuit K 7 2	\diamondsuit A J 5 4	$3\spadesuit(3)$	Pass	$4\spadesuit$	Pass
\clubsuit A Q	\clubsuit 8 6 5	$4NT$	Pass	$5\clubsuit(4)$	Pass
		$6\spadesuit$	Pass	Pass	Pass

- (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 $3\spadesuit$.
 (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, $\diamondsuit Q$ is held by North or is a doubleton with South.

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

West	East	West	North	East	South
\spadesuit K 6 3	\spadesuit A J 7 4 2	$1\clubsuit$	Pass	$1\Diamond$	Pass
\heartsuit K J 10	\heartsuit 7 5 4	$1NT(1)$	Pass	$2\heartsuit(2)$	Pass
\diamondsuit A 8 6 2	\diamondsuit J 9 5	$2\spadesuit$	Pass	$2NT(3)$	Pass
\clubsuit A K 3	\clubsuit 10 4	$3NT(4)$	Pass	Pass	Pass

- (1) 17-19HCP, balanced.
 (2) Weak transfer to $2\spadesuit$.

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

(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.

15.2 Positive Response in a Suit after 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	North	East	South
♠ A K J 8 6	♠ Q 9 2	1♣	Pass	1NT	Pass
♥ 6 4	♥ 8 7 5	2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
♦ K Q 10 9	♦ A 5 4 3	4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
♣ 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	North	East	South
♠ A K J 10 9 6	♠ Q 8 2	1♣(1)	Pass	1♦	Pass
♥ A	♥ 9 6 5	1♠	Pass	3♠(2)	Pass
♦ Q J 10 9	♦ K 7 4 3	4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
♣ 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 \spadesuit A J 10 \heartsuit K Q 10 9 \diamondsuit Q J 4 \clubsuit K J 7, if responder bids $1\spadesuit$, it is correct to rebid 1NT showing a balanced minimum before raising spades. However, with a slightly different hand such as \spadesuit A J 10 7 \heartsuit K Q 10 \diamondsuit Q J 4 \clubsuit K J 7, the rebid could be $3\spadesuit$ or $4\spadesuit$ showing a minimum hand, probably balanced, with 4-card support.

Alternative sequences showing support have slightly different meanings. For example, whereas the sequence $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-4\spadesuit$ would show a minimum hand with poor controls, the sequence $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-1\text{NT}-\text{any}-4\spadesuit$ 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 \spadesuit A K 8 7 \heartsuit A 7 5 3 \diamondsuit K Q 4 \clubsuit A 6, after partner's positive response of $1\spadesuit$, rebid 1NT and if partner rebids $2\clubsuit$ (four-card suit), you may have very good play for $7\spadesuit$ if partner is holding something like \spadesuit Q J 5 4 3 \heartsuit 8 2 \diamondsuit A 8 \clubsuit 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	North	East	South
West	East	$1\clubsuit$	Pass	$1\spadesuit$	Pass
\spadesuit Q J 6 3 2	\spadesuit A K 10 5 4	$2\spadesuit(1)$	Pass	$3\heartsuit(2)$	Pass
\heartsuit 5	\heartsuit 9 8 7	$4\clubsuit(3)$	Pass	$4\text{NT}(4)$	Pass
\diamondsuit A K Q 8	\diamondsuit 10 4	$5\heartsuit(3)$	Pass	$5\spadesuit(5)$	Pass
\clubsuit K J 9	\clubsuit A 5 3	$6\spadesuit$	Pass	Pass	Pass

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

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

15.3 Positive No-Trump Response to $1\clubsuit$

With both majors, it is sometimes correct to use *Stayman* even when holding a 5-card suit. For example, holding \spadesuit A K Q 6 4 \heartsuit K Q 8 7 \diamondsuit A 5 \clubsuit 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 \diamondsuit 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 \diamondsuit A Q \clubsuit K Q J 10 9 8, bid *Stayman*. If partner bids $2\diamondsuit$ (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 \diamondsuit J 7 6 \clubsuit 5 4 3, $6\heartsuit$ from the strong side is best, while $6\clubsuit$ will depend on the diamond finesse.

15.4 3♠ response to 1♣

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	North	East	South
♠ 4	♠ A K Q J 9 8 7	1♣	Pass	3♠(1)	Pass
♥ A 10 9 8 7	♥ 3	4♣(2)	Pass	4♥(3)	Pass
♦ A 4	♦ K 7	7♠(4)	Pass	Pass	Pass
♣ A K Q 8 7	♣ 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.

15.5 Unusual Positive Response to 1♣

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	North	East	South
♠ A K Q 8 7 6	♠ J 5 4 3	1♣	Pass	4♦(1)	Pass
♥ 9 7 6	♥ A	4♥(2)	Pass	4NT(3)	Pass
♦ A K 4 3	♦ 10 9 8 7	7♠(4)	Pass	Pass	Pass
♣ —	♣ 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 ♣K, 13 tricks are visible.

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