

# Natural Relay

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## Glossary

- ART: artificial
- NF: non-forcing
- GF: game forcing
- INV: invitational
- **M/m**: Major/minor
- L/M/H: low, middle, higher suit
- Rxx: relay with xx. E.g. R2♦: relay with 2♦ (meaningless)
- kc (lower case): keycard

## General Approach

- 5 card Major, 1♣=16+; 1♦=1+♦, 11-15; 1NT=13-16, no 5M, no 6m, no (5422); 2♣=5♣+4M OR 6♣, 11-15.
- Transfer GF responses to 1♣
- INV+ Relay after 1 level opening (excluding 1♣), relay twice is GF. Most of other bids are (6)8-11 NAT, NF.
  - 1♦ - 1♥: 4♥ weak OR ART GF
  - 1M - 2♣: ART INV+

## Opening structure

- 1♣: 16+ semi-bal, or 17+ bal
- 1♦: can include
  - 11-12 Perfect-BAL
  - 6+♦
  - 5♦ + 4 other
  - 5♣ + no 4M

- any 3 suiter (including ♦ shortage)
  - 1M: 11-15, 5M
  - 1NT: 13-16, Perfect-BAL (minor 5332, 4432, 4333)
  - 2♣: 11-15, 6+♣ OR 5♣+4M
  - 2♦: 11-15, 6+♦, no 4 card side suit
  - 2M: weak 2s
  - 2NT: minors 55
  - 3x: pre-empt of preference.
  - 3NT: Gambling.

# Table of Contents

- [Natural Relay](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [General Approach](#)
- [Opening structure](#)
- [Table of Contents](#)
- [Relay Guideline](#)
  - [Step 1: shape](#)
  - [Step 2: Sign-off/Keycard](#)
    - [Keycard procedure](#)
      - [Range](#)
      - [Keycard - A](#)
      - [Keycard - K/Q](#)
      - [Keycard - J](#)
  - [Shape classification](#)
- [Exact relay definition](#)
  - [1♣ – 1♥ \(R1♠\)](#)
  - [5M relay](#)
  - [1♣ – 1♠ \(Bal\), \(R1NT\)](#)
  - [1♣ – 2♦ \(6♥, void/bal\), \(R2♥\)](#)
- [1♦ Opening](#)
  - [1♦ – 1♥](#)
    - [2♣ – 2♦](#)

# Relay Guideline

## Step 1: shape

The responder shows his shape. Any bid + 1 is relay. The enquirer may break the relay by bidding anything higher to skip to step 2 or sign off.

General principle when showing shape in relay:

1. Balanced hand: 4 card suit, 2nd 4 card suit, then 3 card suit to complete 4432.
2. Bid your first suit, then always second suit, then shortage
  - 54: first then second
  - 64: first then second
  - If there is a lower bid available and meaningless, use it to replace highest bid to show shortage.
3. If you rebid your suit, it's one card longer
  - 6: bid your first suit twice
  - 64: first suit, then second suit, then first suit again
4. Second suit cannot be longer than first suit. Bid lower of equal length first.  
The order is H
5. C then D then D means 56
6. D then C then C means 55
7. There may be multiple ways to bid the same suits. A jump usually indicate a void/no shortage
  - 1♣ - transfer 2 level = 6322 or hint a void
  - 1♣ - suit once, suit twice = no void
8. Shape relay stops at 3NT. Any bid at 3NT or higher is not asking for shape.  
But the shape response may go beyond 3NT.

## Step 2: Sign-off/Keycard

Partner may choose not to keycard.

If partner makes a non-jumping game bid, it is sign-off. Any 3NT immediately after complete shape relay is sign off.

After enquirer chooses to sign-off with a minimum, if the responder has extras, e.g. ultra-good 1M opening, 12+ responder to 1♣ with good controls, he may responder

to a sign-off bid with keycard. E.g. 3NT (sign-off) - 4♥ (+3 steps, 2 without Q, with extras)

After starting of keycard, any relay bid, even if it's also a game bid, is still relay. Do NOT relay further if you cannot tolerate the response.

## Keycard procedure

The enquirer is allowed to keycard in any suit, and keycard in any suit does not imply suit-setting the suit. Any bid breaking the relay after initiating the keycard procedure is the intended final contract, including 4NT.

Warning: 4NT is rarely used in relay for keycard.

## Range

If responder's point range is wider or equal to 4 points, including 1x opening, 1NT (13-16), responding to 1♣ opener, we recommend relay for point range.

- +1: minimum (11-12 if 1x, 13-14 if 1NT, 8-11 if responding to 1♣)
- +2: maximum, first step response in keycard
- +3: maximum, second step response in keycard
- so on

## Keycard - A

The enquirer can choose to keycard in any suit. This is very beneficial if the enquirer want to do a pure A ask (gerber) or investigate Ks in case of a double fit, the enquirer can choose to keycard in a suit that he has the K.

The default relay bid is to keycard in responder's first suit. +2 bid for relay is in responder's second longest suit. +3/+4 are so on.

In case of 2 suits are the same length, major first, then lower first.

E.g. if p is 4225, then +1 = ♣ (longer), +2 = ♥, +3 = ♠ (Major first), +4 = ♦

We recommend RKCB, while even/odd responses can be used.

- +1: 1/4

- +2: 0/3
- +3: 2 no Q
- +4: 2 with Q

### **Keycard - K/Q**

Relay once for K, and again for Q

- +1: no
- +2~4: L/M/H K or the other 2 side suit Ks

After the K&Q ask, the next relay seeks to clarify any confusion in case the enquirer is missing all 3 K/Qs in the side suit.

- +1: I have one of each responded
- +2: I have one extra honor
- +3: I have two of each responded

### **Keycard - J**

Respond side suit J in the same way as K/Q. If there are more space, the next relay is trump J, where +1=no, +2=yes.

## **Shape classification**

1. Bal/Semi-bal 4333, 4432, 5332 (5m), 4441
2. Single suit no shortage 5332, 6322, 7222
3. Unbal:
  1. Single suit: 6331, 7321, 7330
  2. 5~7+4: 5431(22), 5440, 6421, 6430, 7411
  3. 55+: 5521, 5530, 6511, 6520, 6610

## 4. Exact relay definition

1♣ – 1♥ (R1♠)

1NT (waiting bid) shows the higher suit (♠), any other bid shows ♥. This applies in competition where X/XX is ♠, P or any other bid shows ♥.

- 1NT: 5♠ (R2♣)
  - See [5M relay](#)
- 2♣: 4♣. (R2♦)
  - 2♥: 6+♥, =4♣ (R2♠)
    - 2NT: replaces 3♦, ♦ shortage, =2614
    - 3♣: replaces 3♠, ♠ shortage, =1624
    - 3♥: 7♥, =1714
  - 2♠: 1♠, =1534 (R2NT = kc in ♥)
  - 2NT: 22, =2524
  - 3♣: 5♣. Deny void generally (R3♦)
    - 3♥: 6♥, 5♣, =1615
    - 3♠: ♠ shortage, =1525
    - 3NT: replaces 4♦, ♦ shortage, =2515
    - 4♣: 6♣, implies 6♥, take it slow so lower shortage, =1606
    - 4♦: originally meaningless, implies longer ♥, =1705
  - 3♦: 1♦, =3514
  - 3♥: 7♥, jump implies void (R3♠ for void if couldn't jump to differentiate void)
- 2♦: 4♦. (R2♥)
  - TODO
- 2♥+: See [5M relay](#)

## 5M relay

5M relay response starts after 2♣.

Applicable situations include:

- 1M – 2♣
- 1♣ – 1♥ (– 1♠ - 1NT) - 2♣

Key concept:

- **minor** compression: 2♦ shows an unknown 4+m. R2♥, 2♠=♦, anything else shows ♣.
- 2♥ and 2♠ are the same regardless of which **Major** relayee has.

Relay:

- 2♦: unknown 4+m (R2♥)
  - 2♠: m=♦ (R2NT)
    - Natural relay continuation
  - 2NT: 5422, unknown **minor** (R3♣)
    - 3♦: min, (R3♥)
    - 3♠/3NT: ♠/♦
    - 3♥/3♠: max, ♣/♦
  - 3♣+: m=♣, Natural relay continuation
- 2♥: Single suited **M**. 5322/6322/7321 (R2♠)
  - 2NT: 6(322)/7(321) (R3♣)
    - 3♦/3♠/3NT: 6322, 3 in ♦/♠/♣
    - 3**M**: 7(32)1, low shortage
  - 3♣/3♦/3♠: 5332, 2 in ♣/♦/♠
  - 3**M**: 7(32)1, middle shortage
- 2♠: 4♠
- 2NT: 6(331) (R3♣)
  - 3♦/3♠/3NT: ♦/♠/♣ shortage
  - 3**M**: ? //TODO
- 3♣: 55, implies void
- 3♦: 55, implies void
- 3**M**: 7(32)1, high shortage
- 3NT: 7222

1♣ – 1♠ (**Bal**), (**R1NT**)

Transfer to 1NT shows a balanced hand. This could include perfectly balanced ones including 4432, 4333, and semi-balanced ones including 5332 with 5m, and 4441.

1. 4333: bid the suit and then NT

2. 4432: bid 4 card suits up the line, and then your 3 card suit to complete the shape.
  1. If the second 4 card suit is the relay bid, then skip all bids that shows any 4 card suit, skip 2NT that shows a 4333, use 3♣/3♦ to show the 3 card suit and a touching 4 card suit.
  2. If the next 2 bid matches the 2 unbid 3 card suit, then bid the matching one.
  3. If one of the bid matches the 2 unbid 3-card suit, then the one matches shows that suit.
  4. If both bids don't match, then the lower bid matches the lower suit
3. 5332: Use 2NT for 5♣ and 3♣ for 5♦
4. 4441: 3♦-3NT. 3♦-3♠ shows matching singleton and 3NT shows ♣ singleton.

- 2♣: 4♣, 4333/4432 (R2♦)
  - 2♥: 4♥ (R2♠)
    - 2NT: 3♦
    - 3♣: 3♠
  - 2♠: 4♠ (R2NT)
    - 3♣: 3♥
    - 3♦: 3♦
  - 2NT: =3334
  - 3♣: 4♦, lower 3 card suit (♥), =2344
  - 3♦: 4♦, higher 3 card suit (♠), =3244
- 2♦: 4♦, deny 4♣ (R2♥)
  - 2♠: 4♠ (R2NT)
    - 3♣: 3♣
    - 3♦: 3♥
  - 2NT: =3343
  - 3♣: =2443
  - 3♦: =3442
- 2♥: 4♥, deny 4m (R2♠)
  - 2NT: =3433
  - 3♣: =4423
  - 3♦: =4432
- 2♠: 4♠, =4333
- 2NT: 5♣, 5332, relay for doubleton



- 3♣: 5♦, 5332, relay for doubleton
- 3♦~3NT: 4441. All bids except 3NT are keycard.

## 1♣ – 2♦ (6♥, void/bal), (R2♥)

- 2♠: 4♠ (R2NT)
  - 3♣: ♣ shortage, =4630
  - 3♦: ♦ shortage, =4603
  - 3♥: 7♥, =4♠
  - 3♠: 5♠, implies 6♥, and low shortage (didn't jump again), =5620
- 2NT: 6322 (R3♣ for LMH tripleton)
- 3♣: 4♣
- 3♦: 4♦
- 3♥: 7♥, middle shortage, 1♦, (32)
- 3♠: 5♠, implies 6♥, and high shortage, =5602

## 1♦ Opening

- 1♥: weak NAT or INV+
- ◦ 6–11, 4♥
- ◦ 12+ INV+
- 1NT: 8-11 Note: be prepared for a 11-12 bal NT or 2NT invite
- 2m: 5-11, 5+
- 2M: 8-, 6+ suit. No game interest.
- 2NT: INV opps 11-12
- 3x: NAT, no game interest

## 1♦ – 1♥

The opener have 6 types of hands. 1. 11-12 Perfect-BAL 2. 6+♦ 3. 5+♦ + 4M 4. Both minors 5. 4441 (including ♦ shortage) 6. 5440 with 5♦ Principal: always show majors first ignore NT and H fit.

- 1♠: 4♠, may have 4♥
- 1NT: no 4M.
- 2♣: 5♣ + 4+♦

- 2♦: 6+♦ OR 5♦+4♣
- 2♥: 4♥, no 4♠
- 2♠, 3m: 4441, max (14-15), go through 1♠/2♥ if min
- 3M/4♣: 4450
- 2NT/3♦/3NT: D

2♣ – 2♦

2♦: ART, INV+

- 2♥: 4♥,
- 2♠: 4♠,
- 2NT: max, 6+♣ (R3♣)
  - 3♦: (331)6 (R3♥)
    - 3♠: =1336
    - 3NT: =3136
    - 4♣: =3316 (skipping 3NT requires both majors)
  - 3♥: =2326
  - 3♠: =3226
  - 3NT: =2236
- 3♣: min, 6+♣ (R3♦: same as above)
- 3♦: max, 6♣, 4♦
- 3♥: max, 7330
- 3♠: max, 7321
- 3NT: max: 7222