

# Kaninklöver / Cottontail Club

## A Cheatsheet (2022)

Jan Eric Larsson<sup>1</sup> and Anu Uus  
Revision by George Wang<sup>2</sup>

*Kaninklöver is a system including a strong club, four-card majors, and aggressive preempts developed by Larsson and Uus and descended from Larsson's earlier Tangerine/Cranberry Club.*

*For more notes, options, and acknowledgements, see the last page.*

*Because all the opening bids are natural, except for 1♣ and 2NT, Kaninklöver is in principle permissible everywhere, but you may need to tweak e.g., point counts occasionally.*

## 1 Opening Bids

In order of attractiveness,

1. Open 1NT if you can
2. Open your *longest suit*. In a tie, open the higher-ranking suit unless 44 in the majors  
**Exception:** With exactly 3334 shape, open 1♦
3. Open 1♣ with a strong hand
4. Preempt if you can/dare!
5. Pass

## 2 1♣ opening

**Any seat:** 15+ points, any distribution. If your 1NT is strong, 1♣ will not include hands opened with 1NT.

### Negative response

Responder's 1♦ shows any 0–8 HCP.

Opener's 2nd bid	
1♥♠	15–20, 4+ cards
1NT	balanced minimum
2♣♦	15–20, 5+ cards
other	21+, <i>särskild Stödfrag</i>
2NT	21–22, balanced

With 0–4 HCP, Responder passes.

Opener bids suits naturally; responder bids minors naturally but bids [♥, ♠, NT] to show [♠, NT, ♥] respectively.

If “balanced minimum” for opener is 15–17, she shows a balanced 18–20 by bidding her longest suit (1♥♠/2♣♦), intending to rebid NT.

Positive response: 1♣ – other

Responder's 1st bid	
1♥	10+, 5+ spades
1♠	10+, balanced
1NT	10+, 5+ hearts
2♣	10+, 5+ diamonds
2♦	10+, 5+ clubs

Positive responses force to game. Opener can...

- **begin a relay** to find controls
- **bid a new suit** to ask a *support question*
- **bid responder's suit** to ask for *trump quality*
- **jump** to show a solid suit and ask for controls.

### Asking bids

### Dealing with interference

Opponents always interfere over a strong club. Always.

### Opponents overcall

Passing shows 0–8 points.

<sup>1</sup> jan@goalart.com

<sup>2</sup> egroegw@tutanota.com

Double shows 9+ and means that responder would have bid what the opponents just over-called ("stolen bid").

Other responses are transfers.

If opponents overcall 1♦, passing shows 0–5, doubling shows 6–8, and higher bids are unchanged.

### Opponents double

Pass shows 0–7, redoubling shows 8–9, 1♦ shows 10+ and 5+ clubs, while higher bids are unchanged.

### Responder is weak

If responder shows weakness, opener can double for takeout, bid 1NT with a balanced 18–20, bid a new suit naturally with 15–20, or show 21+ and ask for support with a jump shift.

### Responder is strong (10+)

If advancer passes, opener can double for takeout, bid 1NT with a balanced 18–20, bid a new suit naturally with 15–20, or show 21+ and ask for support with a jump shift.

### 1♣ in 3rd/4th seat

## 3 1♦♥♠ opening

**1st/2nd:** 10–14 HCP, 4+ cards

**3rd seat:** 8–14 HCP, 4+ cards

**4th seat:** 12–14 HCP, 4+ cards

1♦ may also show exactly 3334 shape.

### Responder's first bids

Without interference, responder can bid a general response:

- 1-over-1 to show 10–14 and 4+ cards

- 2-over-1 to show 13–14 and 4+ cards *except* 2♥ over 1♠ shows 5+ hearts

- Negative 1NT to show 10–12 and a balanced hand or 7–10 and 3 card support for opener

In addition, responder has the following special responses available.

### Blocking raises

With 3-card support and 7–10 pts or 4-card support and 0–6 pts, raise to the two-level.

With 4-card support and 7–10 pts, double raise to the three-level.

If slam is unlikely, raise 1♥♠ to game.

### Jump shifts

Jumps in a new suit show weak hands with disinterest in the opening suit.

### Key raise (Tangenthöjning)

Bidding the suit under the opening bid at the two-level shows:

- 4+ card support for opener and 10–12, or
- a natural suit and 13+ points

With a minimum, opener bids two of his original suit. Responder passes if he has trump support, or bids again if he had a two-over-one.

Otherwise opener invites game by bidding anything else.

### Invitational 2NT

2NT shows 5-card support and 13–17 points. Responder has a strong invitation, but is not interested in slam.

Opener bids three of his suit with a minimum.

### 3NT (pass or correct)

15–17 points, no four-card major, no five-card minor, and exactly 3-card support.

### Relays and weak takeouts

Responder can begin a strong relay when holding 15+ points.

Responder can make a weak takeout of opener's suit with 443+ in the other suits and 0–9 points.

1♦–1♥ or 1♥–1♠ is:

- a natural 1-over-1, or
- a strong relay, or
- a weak takeout.

1♠–2♣ is:

- a natural 2-over-1, or
- a strong relay

1♠–1NT is:

- a negative 1NT, or
- a weak takeout.

After any of these sequences, opener must bid again (except when balanced and minimum after 1♠–1NT) at the lowest level.

He

- raises responder with four-card support
- bids NT if balanced,
- bids a new suit with 45, and
- re-bids the opening suit with 6 cards.

Responder's second action depends on what he has.

### Responder began a strong relay

If responder has 15+ he bids the next step (skipping 2 of opener's first suit), asking for top controls, followed by question bidding.

Opener's third bid shows number of peak controls and then the responder can make support questions and trump questions in the same way as in the questioning after 1c.

Sometimes the opening hand responds to the other relay message at level 3h or higher, and then the the support or drum call of the response hand is made at the four-position and cannot be distinguished from a final bid. If the opener's response to peak control question is 3h or higher. This can be solved with a stop relay. If the responder bids relay (except 3N), the opener must also bid relay, and after this the responder bids the final bid.

Also a direct 3N from the responder is a final bid. If the responder does not bid 3N or relay but a suit this is a support or trump question.

### Responder made a weak takeout

If responder made a weak takeout of opener's suit, responder must not make a second bid.

Sometimes you have a choice between a weak relay and raising with three-card support. Then consider whether the opener might have a better five-card suit on the side, when a weak relay is often better than raising.

### Responder made a natural 1-/2-over-1 or negative 1NT

If responder's first bid was natural, he bids anything else. Bidding continues as if you had never heard of relays and takeouts.

### Opener's second bid

Assuming that responder made a general response (and not a special response):

- Bids at lowest level show 10–12
- Jumps/reverses show 13–14
- NT shows a balanced hand

Rebidding the opening bid normally shows 6+ cards, bidding a new suit shows 54 shape.

Opener can raise responder's suit with 3+ card support.

With 5332, opener usually has to choose between bidding NT and rebidding the opening suit. At the 1-level, usually prefer NT, and at the 2-level, usually prefer rebidding.

Even with a maximum, opener should invite game after a 1-over-1 or negative 1NT, never blast it.

### Responder's second bid

#### 4th suit forcing

Shows invitational strength and asks for

- extra length in the suits bid so far
- 3+ card support for responder
- a stopper in the 4th suit

A jump in the 4th suit shows invitational strength and 55+ shape.

### Weak jumping removal

The jump of the response hand in the new suit shows a weak hand of 0-9 points and at least six suits, and a maximum of one card in the opening suit.

### Higher response bids

The higher response bids of the response hand are all weak and based on a long suit. The opener has normally only have to pass or possibly raise the latch with good alignment.

### Interference over 1♦♥♠

Opponents will often compete over 1♦♥♠ by doubling or overcalling.

### Opponents double (takeout)

<i>Responses after 1x (X)</i>	
pass	balanced
raise	blocking
2NT	13+, support showing
suit	10–14, natural, NF
XX	15+, strong relay

With a strong balanced hand responder can pass and hope to later double for penalty.

### Opponents overcall

<i>Responses after 1x (1y)</i>	
pass	weak, no fit
X	10–14, 44+ in unbid 15+, 5+ in some suit
raise	blocking
suit	10–14, 5+ cards
1NT	10–12, bal with stop
2NT	13+, 5+ card support
3NT	15–17, bal with stop
cue	13+, 4 card support 15+, bal <i>without</i> stop

Jumps in a new suit show support for opener and a natural suit.

Doubling and then bidding a suit shows a stronger hand than bidding a suit directly.

## Cuebids

If we have bid a suit, a cuebid usually shows support and an invitational+ hand.

If we have bid several suits, the cuebid invites 3N, asking for a stopper.

Immediately after an opponent's 1-of-a-suit opening, a cuebid shows 10+ and 55 in the two highest unbid suits.

Additionally, you can always cuebid to show a strong hand and ask your partner to describe his hand further.

Double followed by a cuebid is used to show a natural suit, if the opposing opening could be short.

Repeated cuebidding is also natural.

## 4 1NT opening

Use your favorite system. I'm serious: almost any system not masochistic works well after 1NT.

Personally, I use 12–14 HCP (no 5-card Major) in 1st/2nd seat and 15–17 HCP in 3rd/4th, but you can stick to one range throughout or use your own notrump ranges.

## 5 2♣ opening

**1st/2nd:** 10–14 HCP, 5+ clubs

**3rd seat:** 8–14 HCP, 5+ clubs

**4th seat:** 12–14 HCP, 5+ clubs

Responses to 2♣	
2♦	13+, relay
2♥♠	10–12, 5+ cards
2NT	13–14, balanced
raise	blocking
3♦♥♠	13–14, 5+ cards
3NT	15–17, sign-off

Responder can use 2♦ to learn more about opener.

Opener after 2♣–2♦	
2♥♠	10–12, 4 cards
2NT	13–14, some 5332
3♣	10–12, 6+ clubs
3♦♥♠	13–14, 4 cards
3NT	13–14, strong 6+ ♣

If opponents interfere after 2♣ use the same methods as with interference after 1-of-a-suit.

## 6 2♦♥♠ opening

**1st/2nd:** 0–9 HCP, 5 or 6 cards

**3rd seat:** 0–14 HCP, 5 or 6 cards

**4th seat:** 12–14 HCP, 6 cards

Responses to a weak-two	
raise	sign-off
new suit	6+ card suit, NF
2NT	forcing
jump shift	sign-off
3NT	sign-off

Bid 2NT if you'd want to be in game opposite a maximum (8–9 points).

2♦–2NT	
3♣	0–7, all hands
3♦	8–9, no 4 card major
3♥	8–9, 4 hearts
3♠	8–9, 4 spades
3NT	8–9, 4450 shape

2♥–2NT	
3♣	0–7, all hands
3♦	8–9, weak hearts
3♥	8–9, strong hearts
3♠	8–9, weak ♥, 4 ♠
3NT	8–9, strong ♥, 4 ♠

2♠–2NT	
3♣	0–7, all hands
3♦	8–9, weak spades
3♥	8–9, weak ♠, 4 ♥
3♠	8–9, strong spades
3NT	8–9, strong ♠, 4 ♥

If responder still has game interest after opener opens 2♥♠ and shows a weak hand with 3♣, she can then ask if opener has 0–5 (partscore) or 6–7 (game).

## 7 Higher openings

2NT shows 55+ in the minors and 1–9 HCP.

3NT shows a 7+ card solid major suit.

Other suit preempts are natural and follow the rule of 2-3-4. Please experiment with your partner.

## 8 Notes and Choices

Some options and changes you might consider adopting.

### Canape

*Kaninklöver also works with canape! You'd use canape on any ♦♥/♦♠/♥♠ two-suited hand (everything else is still "open your longest suit"). You can call some 5332 hands two-suited, but be ready to play quite a few 3-3 fits at the 2-level!*

### Run-out system after 1NT (X)

*Here's a system I devised: it emphasises having the 1NT opener declare whenever responder has shape.*

<i>Responses after 1NT (X)</i>	
pass	<i>Relay to XX</i>
XX	<i>Relay to 2♣</i>
2♣♦♥	<i>Transfers to 2♦♥♠</i>
2NT	<i>Strong, unbalanced</i>

<i>... after 1NT (X) – – XX –</i>	
pass	<i>Happy with 1NTxx</i>
2♣	<i>3 or 4 clubs, no 5cM</i>
2♦	<i>443+ outside clubs</i>

<i>... after 1NT (X) XX – 2♣ –</i>	
pass	<i>5+ clubs</i>
2♦	<i>44+ in the majors</i>

Of course, the double might instead come from balancing seat. Opener must then pass.

<i>Resps. after 1NT – – (X) – –</i>	
pass	<i>Happy with 1NTx</i>
XX	<i>5+ card minor</i>
2♣	<i>3 or 4 clubs</i>
2♦	<i>443+ outside clubs</i>

### Sounder opening bids

You can make opener's bids all require one point more (or two!) if you want, but then subtract one point from each of responder's replies.

### Hate opening 3-card minors?

If your 1NT is right below 1♣ in strength, you might just decide to pass any 3334 shape too weak to open 1NT.

### Statistics

#### How many cards does each opening bid show?

	3	4	5	6	7+
	<i>Kaninklöver 12–14 NT</i>				
1♦	7	16	48	24	6
1♥		32	47	17	4
1♠		24	52	19	5
2♣			60	32	8
	<i>Kaninklöver 15–17 NT</i>				
1♦	10	25	44	17	5
1♥		47	37	13	3
1♠		38	42	16	4
2♣			66	27	7
	<i>Standard American</i>				
1♣	12	21	39	22	6
1♦	4	37	37	18	4
1♥			65	28	7
1♠			66	27	7
	3	4	5	6	7+

Probabilities in percentages. For

Standard American, I assume you open 1♦ with equally long minors (except when 33).

### 8.1 Works cited

I'm grateful to Jan Eric for sharing his work:

- The Tangerine Club, pp. 2–20, Larsson 1995
- Kaninklöver, pp. 3–38, Larsson 2015, and
- Kaninklöver Sammanfattning, Larsson and Uus 2020

as well as Chris Ryall, Richard Pavlicek, and everybody else who has shared ideas in bidding and in cardplay. For a fuller list, contact me.