

YES, NO or MAYBE
A LOGICAL APPROACH TO BRIDGE



BIDDING BASICS

DAVID GLANDORF

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The *Yes, No or Maybe* series is dedicated to my father

Oscar Glandorf

an elementary school teacher
from whom I must have inherited my love of teaching.

Other books in the *Yes, No or Maybe* series

Introduction and Card Play Basics

Introduction and Card Play Basics Workbook

Bidding Basics Workbook

More Bidding Basics

More Bidding Basics Workbook

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

Yes, No or Maybe is designed to teach beginning players the fundamental concepts of contract bridge. While it can be used as a self-study resource by a student with some understanding of the game of bridge, the intent is that it be used in a classroom format with an experienced teacher.

CONTENT

Yes, No or Maybe is a series of three textbooks, each with an associated workbook. Each textbook has 13 chapters plus an Index of Terms. Each chapter is designed for one three-hour lesson. *Yes, No or Maybe* therefore provides a resource for approximately a one-year series of classes meeting weekly with some time off for holidays, short breaks or personal (teacher) scheduling factors.

Each workbook also has 13 chapters with several exercises for the associated textbook chapter and most chapters include practice deals. The exercises can be done in the classroom, assigned as homework or divided between these two activities.

Each textbook/workbook can be used for a single 13-week course or divided approximately equally between two courses.

Introduction and Card Play Basics covers the mechanics of the game, a little bridge history, scoring, hand valuation and preferred contracts, along with the basics of declarer play and defense. No bidding is included here but MiniBridge or a variant is used for sample and practice deals. The Yes, No, Maybe bidding concepts are introduced for the determination of preferred contracts even though no real bidding is involved. The associated workbook includes a set of supplemental scoring exercises for both duplicate and rubber bridge.

Bidding Basics introduces the student to bidding including opening bids at the one level with responses and rebids, overcalls and takeout doubles with advances and rebids, the use of cuebids by responder and advancer and the practical application of the Law of Total Tricks. This textbook also includes an appendix containing some of the basic bridge information provided in *Introduction and Card Play Basics*.

In *More Bidding Basics* the student learns about balancing, several conventions (Stayman, Jacoby transfers, negative doubles, fourth suit forcing, new minor forcing), strong opening bids, preemptive opening bids and overcalls, game tries, slam bidding (direct, Blackwood, Gerber, control bidding) and opening the bidding in third or fourth chair.

The basic material presented in these volumes is not new; in fact, books on fundamental card play and bidding in contract bridge have been around for about a century. What is new is the organization and methodology. To the best of my knowledge the *Yes, No or Maybe* approach to bidding decisions presented herein is unique in the world of teaching bridge. Finally, while MiniBridge has been around for some time, I don't know that it has previously been worked into a complete framework for teaching beginners of all ages.

Be forewarned that there is a tremendous amount of information in the two bidding books. While some of the content may be considered to be more intermediate-level material, every bridge player needs to have at least a rudimentary understanding of all the basic elements of bridge. In the classroom it is possible to play in a controlled environment using deals that are set up to illustrate the topic of the day. When playing in the real world you will frequently encounter situations that were not considered in practice deals. The details included herein should provide a handy reference for many, but by no means all, of these puzzling scenarios.

Several different bidding systems, each with several variations plus optional partnership agreements, exist in today's bridge world. One of the most common systems in current use is Standard American – 5-card majors, which is used in the *Yes, No or Maybe* series. The method of presenting this system differs significantly from that used in other textbooks because of its emphasis on logic rather than memorization. Nonetheless, you will be compatible with anyone who plays this system even if your partner is unfamiliar with this way of thinking.

BACKGROUND

After several years of teaching beginner and intermediate bridge using the ACBL Bridge Series, I realized that students with limited past experience struggled significantly with the task of simultaneously learning the intricacies of bidding, playing the cards as declarer, and reasonably defending a deal. In particular, I observed that the demands of learning the fundamentals of bidding often adversely impacted their ability to study and comprehend the fundamentals of declarer play and defense.

I concluded that part of the problem was that the students were trying to learn how to bid using a memorization process rather than a logical sequential thought process. This realization came from the multitude of questions in the form “How many points do I need to make that bid?” or “How many points does that bid show?”

Many years ago as I worked with new players in a social environment, the idea of teaching the card play aspects of bridge before addressing bidding germinated in the back of my mind. Then a few years ago I was introduced to the concept of MiniBridge and found out that I was not the only person who was aware of the challenges of learning bidding and card play simultaneously and that someone else had actually done something about it.

About the same time, I began to present the basic bidding topics from the ACBL series in a somewhat different manner from the traditional approach. My method consists of (1) formulating a few basic questions, the answers to which are always “**Yes**”, “**No**” or “**Maybe**” and (2) using the answers, along with some other guidelines and rules, to make bidding decisions. This required my students to make mental adjustments/conversions as they studied their student textbooks. I received much positive feedback from my students, perhaps best summarized by a comment from one of my students who had been with me for about two years: “*Yes, No or Maybe* will take you a long way.” At the same time, I found myself apologizing to them for having to convert from the textbook approach to my approach. Eventually many of them suggested that I just write my own book.

I initially just rolled my eyes at their suggestion but in 2009 I decided to take their advice. The result was the first draft of my *Yes, No or Maybe* bidding books. This bidding book maintained the overall approach of starting new students with bidding concepts but referred them to the ACBL series bidding book for introductory play and defense topics. In the fall of 2011 I wrote the first draft of *Introduction and Card Play Basics* and in January of 2012 began using it for my introductory course for new students. Eventually the bidding book expanded and split into *Bidding Basics* and *More Bidding Basics*.

NOTATIONAL ISSUES

I realize that the modern style of writing is one of gender neutrality. While I understand the social implications of this style, I personally feel it makes for very awkward reading at times. I have found a way around this for much of this series. Opener and intervener (overcaller or takeout doubler) are assigned the masculine gender while responder and advancer (partner of the intervener) are assigned the feminine gender. When reference is made to a player outside of any of these roles the traditional masculine style is used.

Here are a few notational issues:

- I sometimes use M to represent either major suit, e.g., 4M for a contract of either 4♥ or 4♠.
- I sometimes use m to represent either minor suit, e.g., 3m for a contract of either 3♣ or 3♦.
- I sometimes use N and sometimes use NT to denote a notrump contract, e.g., 3N and 3NT both denote a contract of three notrump.
- The result of a contract that is made is written as LSD+N where L is the level of the contract, S is the strain of the contract, D is the declarer compass position and N is the number of tricks above **book** that were taken, e.g., 3SS+4 is written for a contract of 3♠ by South for which 10 tricks were taken.
- The result of a contract that is defeated is written as LSD-N where L, S and D are the same as above and N is the number of tricks the **contract**

was defeated, e.g., 2NW-1 is written for a contract of 2NT by West that was defeated by 1 trick.

- Bold italics is used to identify the first introduction of a bridge term and that term is included in the Index of Terms.
- Bold is used for major emphasis.
- A player's position relative to another is often denoted by LHO (left-hand opponent) or RHO (right-hand opponent).
- Distribution of the four suits in a hand without regard to specific suits is written in the form "i-j-k-l" where each letter represents a number 0-13 with $i \geq j \geq k \geq l$, e.g., 5-3-3-2 represents a hand with 5 cards in one suit, 3 cards in each of two suits, and 2 cards in one suit with specific suits unspecified. Equals signs (=) replace the dashes when the distribution of the cards with regard to specific suits is desired, with the corresponding suits identified in decreasing rank from left to right, e.g., 3=5=1=4 designates a hand with 3 spades, 5 hearts, 1 diamond and 4 clubs.
- Sections and topics: A major division of a chapter is referred to as a section while a major division of a section is referred to as a topic. Sections are identified by large, bold, all caps, centered titles. Topics are identified by medium, bold, left-justified titles with first letters of significant words capitalized.

I truly hope that you will find these books helpful in your journey into the wonderful world of bridge.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My greatest debt of gratitude must go to my students. I could not have written this book without their encouragement and cooperation in putting up with the experimentation of my approach to teaching them this game we all love.

Second, many thanks go to Audrey Grant and Betty Starzec who wrote and updated the ACBL Bridge Series which made it easy to start teaching bridge and provided the background for much of the content of this Series. In addition I owe so much to the other great players and authors whose works were such valuable resources for this endeavor. They are listed in the next section.

Third, I must thank two of my students who are also editors, Diane Cuttler and Leah Marchand, for the numerous hours they put into proofreading and editing the text along with their many suggestions for improving its readability. In this regard thanks are also due to Ray Lee of Master Point Press for his helpful suggestions regarding layout and formatting. Thanks also go to Sally Sparrow of Master Point Press for getting my copy ready for press and Ebook distribution.

Finally, special thanks go to my wife, Becky, who is not a bridge player but knows enough about the game to listen to my bridge stories and is willing to provide help with my class preparation and writing when I need it.

RESOURCES AND PERMISSIONS

Several books were invaluable resources for writing the *Yes, No or Maybe* series, and this author is deeply indebted to those authors for their contributions to bridge education. Of particular importance were the following five books in the ACBL Bridge Series originally written by Audrey Grant and later revised by Betty Starzec:

1. *Bidding in the 21st Century*, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 1990, Updated 2006
2. *Play of the Hand in the 21st Century*, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 1988, 2002, Revised April 2007
3. *Defense in the 21st Century*, 2nd Edition, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 1988, 2002, Revised October 2007
4. *Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century*, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 2001, Revised 2008
5. *More Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century*, Baron Barclay, Louisville, KY, © 2001, Revised January 2008

I used these books for several years when I first started teaching and was heavily influenced by them while writing the *Yes, No or Maybe* series. Most of the chapters in the *Yes, No or Maybe* workbooks include many sample deals for practice in the classroom or at home. All of these deals have been extracted from the above five books and are used with the permission of the American Contract Bridge League (www.acbl.org). Special “EZ-Deal” decks of cards for these deals are available from Baron Barclay Bridge Supply (www.baronbarclay.com).

Commentary in *Bidding Basics*, Chapter 9 – “Overcalls and Advances - Part 1” relating to the Law of Total Tricks was drawn from Larry Cohen’s book:

6. *To Bid or Not to Bid – The Law of Total Tricks*, Natco Press, Boca Raton, FL © 1992.

The following book by Max Hardy was influential in my presentation of the opening bid of 2♣ and responses thereto in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 6 – “Strong Opening Bids:”

7. *Two Over One Game Force*, Devyn Press Inc., Louisville, KY, © 1989

My treatment of weak two-bids and other preemptive bids, as well as their use in third and fourth seat in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 7 – “Preemptive Opening Bids and Overcalls,” Chapter 12 – “Opening the Bidding in Third or Fourth Chair - Part 1” and Chapter 13 – “Opening the Bidding in Third or Fourth Chair - Part 2” was drawn primarily from the following book by Ron Anderson and Sabine Zenkel:

8. *Preempts from A to Z*, Magnus Books, Stamford, CN, © 1996

While the ACBL Series includes a chapter on negative doubles, that material was supplemented by information gleaned from the following book by Marty Bergen devoted to this single topic for *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 11 – “Negative Doubles.”

9. Points Schmoints Series, *Negative Doubles*, Magnus Books, Stamford, CN, © 2000

Most of the content on balancing in Chapter 1 – “Balancing,” Chapter 2 - “Advances after a Balancing Double or Bid” and “Chapter 3 – “Rebids after a Balancing Double or Bid” of *More Bidding Basics* was based on the following book by Mike Lawrence:

10. *The Complete Book on Balancing in Contract Bridge -- Revised Edition*, Baron Barclay Bridge Supply, Louisville, KY, © 2012

Many of the sample hands were extracted from this book and used with the permission of Mike Lawrence and Baron Barclay Bridge Supply.

The above five books are highly recommended for further reading once you become comfortable with the material presented in *Yes, No or Maybe*.

The bridge history presented in *Introduction and Card Play Basics*, Chapter 1 – “Getting Started” and the Bridge Essentials portion of the Appendix of *Bidding Basics* was derived almost entirely from the following book written by Charles Goren and the editors of Sports Illustrated:

11. *The Sports Illustrated Book of Bridge*, Chancellor Hall Ltd., NY, NY, © 1961

Additional information included in the bridge history material came from private communication with Julian Laderman who so graciously read that portion of a draft of the book and provided a few corrections and enhancements.



CHAPTER 1

- Bidding Objectives

Introduction

The Golden Rules

Hand Valuation

Modus Operandi

Role Playing

Opening the Bidding

Bidding Messages

Summary



INTRODUCTION

Goals

There are two goals to the game of bridge. The first is of an entertainment nature – to have fun. If you don't enjoy playing this game, give it up and take up some other activity for your leisure time. The second is of a competitive nature – to score more points than your opponents. Most bridge players find they usually have more fun when they score more points than their opponents.

Game Stages

You are already familiar with the mechanics of the game of bridge, but for discussion purposes it is helpful to divide a deal into four stages:

- The *shuffle and deal*
- The *auction*
- The *play*
- The *scoring*

This book will deal primarily with the second stage, the auction. Issues regarding declarer play will be addressed only as they relate to specific practice deals. There will be some discussion of defensive play as it relates to the bidding and practice deals.

You will have great difficulty accomplishing the second goal of bridge if you do not understand scoring. Furthermore, you will have a hard time understanding many of the bidding ideas presented later in this book if you don't see how they relate to scoring.

Understanding scoring is the most important factor in learning to play Bridge.

If you do not know how to keep score, please study the Appendix before proceeding further. All deals in this book will be scored.

Bidding Strategies

When your side has most of the strength (high cards and long suits) the deal “belongs” to your side. You should be able to take more tricks than the opponents. In this case you want to maximize your score by bidding and making partscore, game, or slam contracts. Your usual objective is to get to a game contract so that you can get the game bonus in duplicate bridge or increase your chance of winning a rubber in rubber bridge. But on a grander scale you can score even more points if you can bid up to the slam level and get those bonuses too. Bidding to achieve these goals can be considered *offensive bidding*.

On the other hand, when your opponents have the majority of the strength and the deal “belongs” to them, you would like to minimize their score. From a

bidding perspective there are two ways to do this. One way is to make your own bids so they interfere with the opponents bidding and keep them from finding their optimum contract. Another way is to bid more than you think you can make, if the defensive points your opponents get for setting you are fewer than they would have received for bidding and making their contract. Clearly, knowing the cost for going set is just as important as knowing the reward you will receive if you make your contract. This is one concept that adds excitement to the game as each pair battles for a contract that they think will give them the best result. Bidding to achieve these goals can be considered *defensive bidding*.

Sometimes the hand strengths of the two sides are nearly equal and it is hard to tell during the auction which side is stronger. In these cases both partnerships are usually competing for the contract, not sure if the hand really belongs to them or their opponents.

Most of the bidding presented in this book is of the offensive nature. Nevertheless, the way it fits in with defensive bidding must always be kept in mind. Beginning bridge players often lose sight of the true competitive object of this game which is not to always make your contract or maximize the number of tricks you take but rather to

Score more points than your opponents.

To accomplish this you want to try to

- *Maximize your score.*
- *Minimize your opponents' score.*

In rubber bridge and the duplicate team games you are ultimately concerned only with your raw score – that which you record at the end of a deal. When that is the case your bidding decision is often based on how much you have to gain or lose by making certain bids or reaching various contracts. When you have a close decision to make regarding a game or slam contract, you usually tend to be aggressive/optimistic and make the bid that will give you the most points because that is important. Taking the risk of bidding to a game contract so that you will receive an extra 300 or 500 points (duplicate scoring) or win a rubber (or at least reaching the vulnerable state) versus giving the opponents 50 or 100 points if you fail to make your contract is very worthwhile. When you are playing in a partscore contract and you have a choice of two options, you are more likely to take the safest route, one that is most likely to make. For example, if you have a choice of playing in 3♦ or 2NT and you can determine that 3♦ is safer than 2NT, you would choose the 3♦ bid even though that would be worth only 60 trick points while the 2NT bid would give you 70 trick points. It is much better to take your “sure” 60 points than try for an extra 10 points at the risk of being set and giving the opponents 50 or 100 points (depending on your vulnerability).

In matchpoint play your raw score is rather insignificant. What is important is your score compared to the other pairs that held the same cards as you and your partner. Now your bidding decisions are based on the frequency of success rather than how much you have to gain or lose on a raw score basis. When you have a close decision to make regarding a game contract versus a partscore, you might well settle for the partscore if you think the game contract will be set more than half the time. Similarly, with respect to the partscore decision in the previous paragraph, you might well decide on the 2NT contract if you think it will make more than half the time. How do you decide on the percentages? Mostly through experience. So get out and play as much as you can.

The primary reason for presenting this information is that this aspect of making a bidding decision will crop up throughout the remainder of this book.

Auction Classification

Sometimes the strength of one side is so dominant that their opponents cannot risk entering the auction for fear of giving the dominant partnership more defensive points than the offensive points they would receive if left to play offensively. Under these conditions the dominant partnership will have the bidding all to themselves. This type of auction is called an *uncontested auction*.

On other deals it might not be clear which side has the majority of the strength and both sides will be competing for the contract. This type of auction is called a *contested auction* or a *competitive auction*.

About half of this book is devoted to uncontested auctions. But even when considering those auctions the above ideas of offensive bidding versus defensive bidding must be kept in mind.

Learning the Game of Bridge

As you continue your bridge adventure, it might be helpful if you compare learning this game with working a giant jigsaw puzzle. We can't fill in all the pieces at once but start with a framework and then build on that to fill in more pieces. Many jigsaw puzzles have certain features you might concentrate on and so does bridge. Here is a partial outline:

- Bidding
 - Opening Bids
 - Responses
 - Rebids
 - Competitive Bids
 - Slam Bidding
- Declarer Play
 - Play in Notrump Contracts
 - Play in Suit Contracts
- Defense
 - Opening Leads
 - Third Hand Play
 - Second Hand Play
 - Defensive Strategies
 - Signaling
- Scoring
 - Duplicate bridge
 - Rubber bridge
- Rules – What should be done when someone
 - Bids out of turn
 - Makes an insufficient bid
 - Makes an opening lead out of turn
 - Plays to a trick out of turn
- Proprieties
 - Proper etiquette at the table
 - Kibitzing (watching others play as a spectator)
 - Ethics

The Truth, the Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth?

Not quite! As described above, learning this game is like working a jigsaw puzzle. You have to start someplace and build on it. Most of the time it is best to focus on a particular area for a while and not get distracted with how all the different areas hook together. That often requires the presentation material to omit various exceptions to the “rules.” It is quite appropriate to use this material as “gospel” with your peers. But be cautious when discussing what you learn here with advanced players who may tell you something different. It is all right to respond with the retort “Well, the book says ... ,” but be willing to listen to their comments and see if they are reasonable when looking at the big picture.

THE GOLDEN RULES

The Golden Games

You know that you can receive a substantial bonus if you bid to a game level and make the contract. But you also know that you have to take more tricks in the minor suits than the majors or notrump. More specifically,

- For a minor suit game contract you must bid to the 5 level committing to 11 tricks and allowing your opponents only 2.
- For a Major Suit game contract you must bid to the 4 level committing to 10 tricks and allowing your opponents 3.
- For a notrump contract you must bid to the 3 level committing to only 9 tricks and allowing your opponents 4.

So you would be led to believe that your choice of strain is always prioritized as notrump, Major Suit, minor suit. While that is logical it is not quite true. A little later in this chapter we will learn why it is actually Major Suit, notrump, minor suit. For now we can be content to conclude that minor suit game contracts are the least desirable because they are the most difficult to make. Certainly 3NT is preferred to 5m. We can then state that most of the time our game bonuses will come from the

Golden Games

3NT, 4♥, 4♠

The Golden Fit

When should you consider playing in a trump suit as opposed to a notrump contract? Suppose that you could determine that between your hand and partner's you had 7 cards in a suit. Would that possibly be a good trump fit? It depends partly on how those 7 cards were divided between you and partner. If they were divided 7-0, it would probably work out all right. Even a 5-2 division might not be too bad. But, what if they were divided 4-3? The opponents have 6 cards and they will usually not divide 3-3, so one of them will likely have at least 4 trumps. If you play your 4 trumps to extract all of theirs, provided they divide 4-2, you will be out of trumps and play the remainder of the hand in notrump. These contracts do sometimes work out well. In fact, they were a favorite of an expert of years gone by, Alphonse Moyse, and are known as Moysian fits. Nonetheless, for the beginning player you will find it much more comfortable playing in a suit contract when you have a

Golden Fit

A partnership holding of 8 or more cards in a suit.

With fewer cards in a suit you will usually want to play in a notrump contract.

Which Golden Game?

From the previous two topics we know that we prefer to play in 3NT if we decide we want to be in a game contract and do not have a Golden Fit in a Major Suit. But, how do we decide on the contract if both 3NT and 4♥ or 4♠ are options? It might seem that 3NT should be the choice because that requires fewer tricks. That argument certainly has merit and is often the preference of some experts; however there is another school of thought. Remember that when you are bidding at the game level you are bidding from an offensive viewpoint and want to maximize your score. So another point that has been demonstrated by others needs to be considered.

If you have a Golden Fit, you can usually take one more trick with that suit as trumps than you can in a notrump contract.
4M Preferred over 3NT

This postulate says that if you can make 3NT (100 trick points) you can also make 4M (120 trick points). So you get 20 more points in the Major Suit contract than the notrump contract. These 20 points are not much to quibble over in a rubber bridge game or a duplicate team game. But in a duplicate matchpoint game it can make a significant difference. If you are in the notrump game just making it, and everyone else with your cards is making the Major Suit game, you just got a big fat ZERO for your matchpoints on that board. On the other hand, if you were making the Major Suit game and everyone else is just making the notrump game you got an absolute top on that board.

It is true that there are times when you will not get the extra trick in the suit contract. Then either 3NT makes while 4M goes down, or 4M makes and 3NT makes with an overtrick giving those players a score of 430 against your 420. Regardless, you lose. There are experts who are very good at deciding which course of action is best in these situations. When you get to be that good you can write your own bidding book. Until then go with the conventional wisdom and take the Major Suit contract.

Partscore Contracts

The arguments presented in the previous topic for choosing a Golden Game in a Major Suit over notrump also apply to partscore contracts.

The advantages of a Major Suit contract over a minor suit contract are also obvious from the higher trick score value of a Major Suit over a minor suit.

Comparison of a minor suit contract to a notrump contract is not quite so obvious and depends on the contract level. Working on the assumption that you can take one more trick in a suit contract than in notrump when you have a Golden Fit leads to a draw if you compare a 1NT+1 (40 trick points) contract to a

2m+2 (40 trick points) contract. Here you might well decide to play in the minor suit if you think it is a safer contract.

For higher-level contracts notrump is always a winner. For example 2NT+2 (70 trick points) versus 3m+3 (60 trick points). Obviously 3NT+3 is significantly better than 4m+4 since you will receive the game bonus for the notrump contract but not the minor suit contract.

While you will usually prefer a notrump contract to a minor suit the exception is on hands where you decide the minor suit contract is safer than a notrump contract. This will happen more often in a contested auction than an uncontested auction.

HAND VALUATION

The strength of a hand is partly determined by its high cards and long suits. If there is a trump suit and you do not have any cards in a plain suit that was led, you may be able to win the trick by ruffing it with one of your trump cards. Short suits can also be an asset.

You also know that when your side has most of the strength you would like to bid as high as possible up to a game or even a slam contract level if you think the contracts may be makeable, so that you can be rewarded with those bonus points. When the hand belongs to the opponents, you would like to be competitive and maybe push them to a higher level where they can be defeated or even take a sacrifice by overbidding and letting them set you if that will give them fewer points than making their own contract. Of course, you can't bid willy-nilly because the opponents may double you and you could be severely punished on the score sheet for such irrational behavior.

High-Card Points

Points assigned to the top four honor cards in each suit are called *high-card points* (HCP). These are assigned on a 4-3-2-1 basis as follows:

High-Card Points			
A - 4	K - 3	Q - 2	J - 1

If you add up all of the HCP in a suit you find there are 10 HCP in each suit. Since there are 4 suits, there is a total of 40 HCP in the entire deck.

You will be spending a lot of time adding up the HCP in your hand. Some players find it helpful to realize they have 10 HCP whenever they see one of each of the top 4 cards in their hand even if they are not all in the same suit. So, for example, an ace and jack in one suit plus a king and queen in another suit add up to 10 HCP. With a little practice you may find it helpful to recognize other combinations such as: A + J = 5, K + Q = 5, Q + Q = 4, K + J = 4. Again, the combination of the suit or suits is immaterial.

High cards are valuable regardless of whether you are declarer, dummy or defender. You must

Always count high-card points.

Long-Suit Points

Long suits (5^+ cards) are usually assets to your hand. If your partner has some cards in the same suit in his hand, you can usually play that suit a few times (2 or 3) and exhaust the cards in that suit from the opponents. Then whatever cards you have left in that suit will be the only remaining cards and you will be able to take tricks with them. This idea is valid for a notrump contract and suit contracts when that suit is trump or when that suit is played as a side suit once you draw the opponents' trump cards. In other words it is valid regardless of the strain of the contract.

Long-suit points are allocated as follows:

Long-Suit Points

Add 1 point for each card in excess of 4 in each suit.

There are two easy ways to count long suit points. One is simply to subtract 4 from the length of each suit containing 5^+ cards and add these up. The second is to mentally slide 4 cards in each long suit to the side and count the remaining cards. Whichever method suits your taste is fine. Or, you can use your own devices. Whatever you do, do it discreetly so neither your partner nor your opponents are tipped off to your holding.

Even though long suits are almost always assets, there are some restrictions on their use.

Count long suit points when:

- *You know or think you will be declarer in a suit contract, or*
- *You know you will be dummy in a notrump contract, or*
- *You opened the bidding with one of a suit and are rebidding 2N or 3N*

Do not count long suit points when you are opening the bidding at any level in notrump.

Short-Suit Points

Short suits (fewer than 3 cards) may be an asset or a liability, depending on the strain of the contract. Their greatest asset is when you are the dummy in a suit contract. Consequently, they are called ***dummy points*** and assigned the following values:

Dummy Points
Void - 5 Singleton - 3 Doubleton - 1

Short suits are always a liability rather than an asset in a notrump contract. If you are short in a suit, there are more cards for the opponents to hold in that suit, suggesting that your shortness is an asset for your opponents. Their asset is your liability. So, never give yourself any extra points for a short suit when you think or know you will be playing in a notrump contract.

Short suits have their greatest significance when you are going to be the dummy in a suit contract and have at least 3-card trump support for your partner. Then your partner (declarer) may be able to use your trumps to ruff some of his losers in that suit.

If you know you have a Golden Fit in a Major Suit you know that if your side wins the bidding contest the final contract will be in that suit. If you will be the dummy and have at least 3-card support for partner's suit you can count dummy points.

Now let's suppose you have support for a minor suit first bid by partner and a short side suit. During the auction it is quite possible, maybe even probable, that the strain of the final contract will be notrump rather than the minor suit. If you were to add points to your hand for dummy points you would have overvalued your hand if the final contract was notrump. What you thought was an asset turned out to be a liability. This could easily lead to a disappointing result. So, don't add dummy points when you have support for partner's minor suit unless a notrump contract has been ruled out.

These conclusions are summarized below.

Count dummy points when:

- *You are dummy in a suit contract and*
- *You have at least 3-card trump support and*
 - *Your partner's suit is a major, or*
 - *A notrump contract is not an option*

You may have learned the assignment of short suit points as 3-2-1 instead of 5-3-1. For the purpose of opening the bidding Goren did use the 3-2-1 values but he did not count for long suit points. However, as dummy, even Goren used 5-3-1; you may just never have become aware of that.

Adjustments

You have just been given a method for evaluating the strength of your hand. The points assigned for various features are not an exact science but approximations. Sometimes it is appropriate to make actual numerical adjustments to the values given previously and other times you should simply make a judgment decision.

Quite often you will be on the borderline between making an aggressive bid or a conservative bid. Do you just guess and hope you are right? Do you always take the aggressive move because you have so much to gain? Or is there a better way to make your decision?

You know the basic HCP system for evaluating the strength of your hand. But, did you know that not all HCP are created equal? For example, an ace is worth 4 points, but so are 4 jacks. The ace should always take a trick. The 4 jacks could be worthless. In general, an ace is a little undervalued, a king is about right (a little light), a queen is a little overvalued and a jack is even more overvalued. We won't go into specific fractional numerical adjustments – too much math, although some players do. Besides, a desire for integer arithmetic was what led Charles Goren to develop this system. Just remember that aces and kings are great but *quacks* (bridge slang for QUEENS and JACKS) tend to be kind of yucky unless they are in the trump suit, a side suit your partner has bid or are combined with higher honors in the same suit.

Honors together in the same suit are better than if they are divided. Compare the following 10-point hands which decrease in true value from left to right.

♠ A K Q J	♠ A 7 3 2	♠ A 7 3 2	♠ A 7 3 2	♠ A 7 3 2
♥ 8 7 2	♥ K Q J	♥ K Q 2	♥ K 7 2	♥ K 7 2
♦ 6 5 3	♦ 6 5 3	♦ J 5 3	♦ Q J 3	♦ Q 5 3
♣ 9 6 4	♣ 9 6 4	♣ 9 6 4	♣ 9 6 4	♣ J 6 4

With the first hand you are almost guaranteed of taking 4 tricks with your high cards. With the second hand you can take only 3. With the third hand you are relatively certain of only 2 tricks, but do have a chance for a third. With the fourth hand you should take a trick with your ace. You have about a 50% chance of taking a trick with the king and about a 75% chance of winning a trick with the queen (or jack). With the last hand your ace should be good for 1 trick, the king might win a trick, and the quacks are about useless unless partner has some honors in those suits.

Honors in long suits are better than honors in short suits.

♠ A Q J 8 6 3	♠ 9 8 6 5 4 3	You should have a reasonable expectation of taking 5 tricks with the first hand. With a reasonable distribution of the outstanding spades in the second hand you could take 3 spade tricks and the ace. But if the suit divided poorly your spades could produce only 1 or 2 tricks.
♥ 8 7 2	♥ A 7 2	
♦ 6 5	♦ Q 5	
♣ 9 6	♣ J 6	

High intermediate cards are not given any points but can certainly improve the quality of your hand.

♠ K J 10 9 8 6	♠ K J 6 5 4 3	Don't you like the first hand much more than the second? If not today you will learn to as you progress. The ♠1098 significantly increase the solidity of the suit.
♥ A 7 2	♥ A 7 2	
♦ 6 5	♦ 6 5	
♣ 9 6	♣ 9 6	

♠ A 8 6 4 3	When supporting your partner's Major Suit be careful about counting both HCP and short suit points for singleton or doubleton quacks. Counting 5 points in diamonds and 2 points in clubs really overvalues your hand in support of either Major Suit opening bid by partner. Maybe 3 points in diamonds and 1 point in clubs is about right. If partner later bids diamonds the value of your ♦Q improves.
♥ A 8 7 5 2	
♦ Q	
♣ J 6	

In summary of the above illustrations:

Judgment Factors

Pluses

Honors touching in the same suit
Honors in long suits
High intermediate cards
Quacks in a suit partner has bid

Minuses

Divided honors
Quacks without higher honors in the same suit
Quacks in short suits

Sometimes the values of your honor cards are affected by your opponents' bids. Quacks in a short suit are almost worthless if that suit was bid by an opponent. Suppose you hold the KJ5 in some suit. If that suit was bid by your RHO, you expect that player might well have the ace and queen, improving the chance of winning tricks with both the king and jack. But, if the suit was bid by your LHO, their value has probably significantly decreased. That player likely has the ace and queen to capture your cards.

You have been introduced to the value of long suits and short suits. The points assigned for either are often collectively referred to as ***distribution points***. Those introductory topics were considered separately. Whenever you have a long suit, you will also have a short suit although not necessarily conversely. You could have 4 cards in 3 suits and a singleton in the 4th suit. Or even 4 cards in each of two suits with the remaining 5 cards divided 3-2 in the other two suits. When you do have a long suit, you usually overvalue your hand if you count for both long and short suits.

It should now be clear that there will be times when the value of your hand is affected by your partner's bid. You may have initially counted something for

long suits, and later in the auction found that you will be the dummy in a suit contract. You must now deduct the value of your long suits and add the value of your short suits.

The above three paragraphs can be summarized with the following two key points. They are so important that they are presented in all bold type.

Never count both long-suit points and dummy points.

***Revalue your hand after every call,
whether by partner or an opponent.***

The use of the word “call” instead of “bid” was intentional in the second point. A pass or redouble is not so critical, but in Chapter 11 – “Takeout Doubles and Advances” you will find that double sometimes carries inferences similar to a bid.

The value of your hand is partially measured by your ***total points***, the sum of your HCP and distribution points.

Quick Tricks

A ***quick trick*** is a card that can win a trick the first or second time that suit is played.

- AK = 2
- AQ = 1½
- A or KQ = 1
- Kx = ½

Quick tricks are also sometime called ***defensive tricks*** because they are almost as likely to take a trick on defense as they are on offense. That is why they must be able to win a trick on the first or second round of the suit. If you have AKQ in a suit you have three winners on offense, but if you are defending a suit contract there is a good chance one of the opponents has a doubleton (especially if you have 4⁺ cards in the suit) and will be able to ruff the high card you played on the third round.

Quick tricks are another measure of the value of your hand.

Shape

How your 13 cards are divided between the four suits is an important consideration in bidding. Three words seem to be used synonymously in the bridge literature for this division: ***shape***, ***pattern*** and ***distribution***. They usually refer to the division without regard to specific suits. Yet many times it is desirable to identify the number of cards held in each suit. There is actually an established method

of differentiating the two types of divisions¹. If dashes are used to separate the numbers, specific suits are unspecified and the larger numbers appear first. If equals signs separate the numbers the corresponding suits are identified in decreasing rank. So, if a shape is given as 5-4-2-2 the suits are unspecified; whereas, if it is given as 5=1=3=4, there are 5 spades, 1 heart, 3 diamonds and 4 clubs.

As an aside, if you ever ask a more experienced player for his opinion on a hand you held, be prepared to give him your holding in the same order as the specific suit patterns used here. That is the way bridge players think.

A **flat hand** is one in which the suits are divided as evenly as possible – 4-3-3-3.

A **balanced hand** is a flat hand or one that is no more than one card removed from being flat. If you take one card from a suit with only 3 cards in a flat hand and move it to one of the other suits with 3 cards you have a 4-4-3-2 shape. If instead you move it to the suit with 4 cards your shape is 5-3-3-2. If you take a card from the suit that has 4 cards and move it to any other suit, you still have a 4-3-3-3 shape.

Any hand that is not balanced is an **unbalanced hand**.

Other authors may have slightly different definitions and it is even popular to define semi-balanced hands. But for our purposes the definitions presented here are adequate.

For the most part a flat hand does not play an important role in the bidding presented here. It has been included primarily because you might hear another player use the term in a conversation. A flat hand is the least desirable shape to hold. You have no long suit or short suit for additional values.

Hand Shapes

Flat hand: 4-3-3-3

Balanced hands: 5-3-3-2, 4-4-3-2, 4-3-3-3

Unbalanced hand: Any hand that is not balanced

The 5-3-3-2 pattern in this summary is intentionally emphasized. For some reason beginning bridge players have a tendency to not recognize this as a balanced hand, especially if the doubleton consists of two low cards.

Unbalanced hands can be further classified as follows:

- **Single-Suited Hands:** Those hands with one suit of at least 6 cards and no more than 3 cards in any other suit, e.g., 6-3-2-2, 7-3-2-1.
- **Two-Suited Hands:** Those hands with one suit of at least 5 cards, another suit of at least 4 cards and no more than 3 cards in any other suit, e.g., 5-4-2-2, 5-5-2-1, 6-5-2-0.

¹<http://www.bridgeworld.com/index.php.php?page=/pages/readingroom/bws/bwscompletesystem.html>

- **Three-Suited Hands:** A hand with at least 4 cards in each of 3 suits, viz, 4-4-4-1 or 5-4-4-0.

Impact on Bidding

What do hand valuation and shape categorization have to do with bidding? Everything – they form the very foundation of the bidding system.

Charles Goren spent years developing his system, deciding in particular how many points were required to have a reasonable play for game contracts. His conclusion was 26 and was accepted well into the 21st century. More recently a computer study by Matthew L. Ginsberg produced the following results for notrump contracts with relatively balanced hands for both partners.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF TRICKS VERSUS PARTNERSHIP HCP

HCP	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Tricks	6.1	6.7	7.2	7.6	8.2	8.7	9.1	9.7	10.1	10.6	11.1

This table substantiates Goren’s conclusion that 26 points will produce 9 tricks on average. But, note that 25 points will produce 9 tricks just a little less than half the time, since the average is 8.7. This is the figure used by many players today and will also be used here. It is especially appropriate for rubber bridge or duplicate bridge team games where you have so much to gain if you can get the extra points for the game bids. In duplicate matchpoint play you might want to be a little more conservative.

Another factor to be used when drawing conclusions from the above table is one of theory versus practice. The table was produced using a principle of best offense and best defense for the given cards for each deal. Seldom will this be the case in practice and since defense is so much more difficult than declarer play, it generally pays to be on the aggressive side when bidding.

You might wonder why 20 HCP produce only slightly over 6 tricks. You perhaps think that the number should be closer to 6.5 since the points are equally divided. The answer lies in the fact that the defenders have the advantage of the opening lead and these results are based on best defense and best offense, disregarding the fact that declarer has the advantage of being able to see both hands for his side, while each opponent sees only his hand and dummy.

The high end of the table goes up to 11 tricks or a 5-level bid. What about the slam levels of 6 or 7? When you are considering the stratosphere for your contract it is more important how many points the opponents have than how many you have. You certainly don’t want the opponents to hold an ace if you are thinking about a grand slam. So, you would like to be sure they have fewer than 3 HCP. That means you must have at least 37. Similarly for a small slam you don’t want to risk them holding two aces, so you must have at least 33. It is true they might have an ace and king in the same suit and if they took them “off the top” you would be set before you ever obtained the lead. But for that to happen

they would probably both have to be in the hand of the opening leader, and that is unlikely. If it does happen just blame it on a bad day.

With this analysis we can construct the following table showing how high you should be willing to bid from an **offensive** viewpoint based on the combined points between your hand and partner's.

OFFENSIVE BIDDING LEVEL VERSUS PARTNERSHIP POINTS

Points ¹	21 - 22	23 - 24	25 - 26	27 - 28	29 - 32	33 - 36	37⁺
Notrump	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Suit	2	3	4	4	5	6	7

¹For a notrump contract count HCP from both hands plus long suit points from dummy. For a suit contract count HCP from both hands plus long suit points from declarer plus dummy points from dummy.

There is a slight anomaly in the suit row of this table that occurs from working from both ends to the middle. You normally count on taking one more trick in a suit contract than in a notrump contract. But this does not apply to high-level contracts. Obviously if you can take 13 tricks in notrump it is impossible to take one more in a suit contract! You do not want to be at the 5 level unless you are quite confident you have a reasonable chance of making it. So the generally accepted standard is that from the 4 notrump level up the number of tricks available in a suit contract is the same as in a notrump contract.

The bold columns indicate the Golden Game and slam contracts, your targets for achieving significant bonus points. The slam contracts herein are considered only as they relate to the bidding toward partscore and game contracts.

During the auction all of the players try to determine how high they are willing to compete and whether their best contract is in notrump or a suit. They do this by making calls which, at least to some degree, indicate their strength and their shape.

MODUS OPERANDI

How does a partnership go about determining their final contract? The modern trend in bridge books, especially for beginners, is to seek answers to two questions:

- What strain? (In what suit (or notrump) should we play the contract?)
- What level? (How high should we bid?)

I am going to use a little different approach but the results will be identical. I'm going to replace the strain question with the following:

- Do we have a Golden Fit in a Major Suit?
 - Do we have a Golden Fit in a minor suit?

or, in shortened form:

- Golden Fit in Major Suit? (*GFMS?*)
 - Golden Fit in minor suit? (*GFms?*)

Similarly, the level question is replaced with:

- Do we want to be in a game contract?
 - Do we want to be in a small slam contract?
 - Do we want to be in a grand slam contract?

or, in abbreviated form:

- Game? (*G?*)
 - Small Slam? (*SS?*)
 - Grand Slam? (*GS?*)

Throughout the remainder of this book, there will be times when we want an answer to the general question: Do we have a Golden Fit in any suit? We will then often use the abbreviated form “*GF?*” Similarly, we sometimes use *S?* for either slam level.

The advantage of this approach is that all of these questions can be answered with one of three choices:

Yes, No or Maybe (*Y, N, M*)

THIS IS REALLY, REALLY IMPORTANT. It is the basis for every offensive uncontested bidding decision you will make. It also plays a role in many other bidding decisions.

These answers may at first seem rather trite. But it is this very simplicity that makes the approach so effective and easy to apply. Eventually one of the partners has to make a Y or N choice, but until that final decision is made M is an option. As the bidding progresses and you get more information, you may very well change your answer – usually from M to either Y or N – but there are other possibilities. Remember to revalue your hand after every call by another player.

Your answers often change as the auction progresses.

Both the strain and level questions are in hierarchical structures. For the strain questions you don’t bother with the second question unless the answer to the first one is N. For the level questions you don’t bother with the next question unless the answer to the current question is Y. We will not consider the two sublevels in detail until *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 9 – “Bidding Slams - Part 1” and Chapter 10 – “Bidding Slams - Part 2” but will keep them in mind in earlier

chapters because their existence does affect some bidding decisions. For both of these sets if the answer to the current question is M, you may have the next question in mind, but you won't actively pursue an answer until the current question is resolved.

If you have some previous bridge experience, I suggest you do your best to put part of that out of your mind. At the very least, try to translate it into this way of thinking. I will not go into details of what I am referring to as it would only confuse those who have never played. It will be obvious as you continue through this book. If GFMS? = Y, the strain question is resolved – you will play in that Major Suit. The answers to G? and S? will determine the level.

If GFMS? = N you will prefer a notrump contract if that is reasonable, especially if G? = Y. If G? = N you will rarely choose to play in a minor suit even if GFms? = Y.

All of the G? answers are based on the number of points you have in your hand and the message sent by partner. The Y and N answers are very definitive and determined by discrete break points. The M range can be quite wide, so it is frequently helpful to divide that category into three or more subcategories of 2 or 3 points each. Often three subcategories are sufficient:

- Weak Maybe (M^W)
- Intermediate Maybe (M^I)
- Strong Maybe (M^S)

If further division is needed, we hold the M^S subcategory to a two or three point range and further divide the M^W and M^I subcategories into two additional subcategories by adding a “+” or “-” after the superscripts to indicate the high or low end of the range, respectively.

All bids indicate to some degree the strength of the hand held by that player. Sometimes the range indicated by the bid is very narrow and sometimes it is quite wide. When the range is no more than two points their partner can almost always make a Y or N decision regarding G?. If the range is larger, their partner may still be able to make a Y or N decision, but often it will be some degree of M. Regardless of that player's decision his call will indicate his degree of game interest.

Always keep the following in mind when it is your turn to bid:

Unless you have already defined your strength to within 2 points, your partner may not have been able to make a G? = Y or N decision.

While each player expresses his game interest with his bids, he also passes information regarding his shape to help determine an appropriate strain for the contract.

ROLE PLAYING

Each player has a primary role to play in their search for the proper contract.

The main role of the opening bidder is to describe his hand; therefore, he is sometimes called the *describer*. You might say he is a show and tell guy. His primary job is to describe the strength and shape of his hand to responder.

The responder has the role of *captain*. You might say that her primary role is to ask and listen. As she gains more knowledge of opener's hand she steers the contract to a proper destination.

Roles of Opener and Responder
Opener: Describer Responder: Captain

While these are the primary roles of these partners, there are times when they are not quite so clear cut and there may be a certain amount of role reversal. But if you keep these primary roles in mind, you should be able to follow the ideas behind the bidding structure presented in the remainder of this book.

The roles of the intervener and advancer parallel those of opener and responder, respectively.

OPENING THE BIDDING

Finally! I bet you thought we would never get here. You came along on this journey to learn how to play bridge, especially how to bid, and all we have considered so far (including material covered in my first book) is (have a little fun with this list and see if you can pick up on the riddles – don't worry if you can't figure out a few):

- A history lesson
- An admonishment on how to treat your partner
- Learned that you will play with weapons, jewelry, blood pumps and shovels
- An introduction to royalty and how honorable they are
- Instructions on how to shuffle cards
- How to turn a trick, throw things away or ruffle an opponent
- How to be a leader, a follower, a winner, a dummy and a recorder
- How some foreclosure sales work
- Different ways to use your cell phone
- Something about a business agreement between a seller and buyer
- An alphabet lesson, a military lesson, a discussion of adolescents
- How to conduct an inquisition
- Math lessons on arithmetic and statistics
- A kitchen and construction lesson on trays and boards

- When to cross the line or draw the line
- Learned that being vulnerable can be good for you
- Slams apply to bridge as well as baseball
- Double and redouble are not always as they seem
- Matchpoints, International Matchpoints, Victory Points, High Card Points, Long Suit Points, Short Suit Points, Dummy Points, Distribution Points, Total Points, Compass Points and Masterpoints
- Something about boxing and basketball
- A geography lesson
- Sometimes you must be offensive, other times defensive
- A strategy for working a jigsaw puzzle
- The gold standard
- Ducks have their place in the deck
- Sometimes you have to enter the legal profession and become a judge
- Positioning is everything, or just like a realtor would say: “Location, location, location.”
- Similar to your stock market portfolio, the value of your holding frequently changes
- It is always great to be shapely
- Many important questions can be answered with Y, N or M – Duh!

Believe it or not, I was not just trying to take up space and time with the above topics. All of the above, except the history lesson, play some role in learning to play bridge, and most of them relate to bidding. So with the preliminaries out of the way let’s get started with the heart of this journey.

The dealer is the first person that has the opportunity to bid. If the dealer elects to pass, the next player in turn clockwise may bid. This process continues until some player makes a bid or all four players pass. In the former case the first player to bid is called the opening bidder and his bid is the opening bid. In the latter case that deal is over (said to be passed out) with no one receiving a score (rubber bridge) or both pairs receiving a score of zero (duplicate bridge) and the players move on to the next deal.

To Open or Not to Open

If it is your turn to make a call and no other player has yet opened the bidding, you will have to decide if you want to bid or pass. To some degree your decision is influenced by your position in the auction.

- In first or second chair your offensive bidding centers on the possibility of reaching a game contract, although slam is also a remote possibility.
- In third chair you may still have some interest in a game or slam contract but a partscore contract is another viable goal.

- In fourth chair game, slam or partscore contracts are still possibilities, but if only a partscore is reasonable you want to be a little cautious. You will be disappointed if the opponents end up competing and outbid you making their own partscore when you could have passed for a neutral result.

With regard to opening bids, this book is focused only on first or second chair and the subsequent auction. Opening bids in third or fourth chair are covered in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 12 – “Opening the Bidding in Third or Fourth Chair - Part 1” and Chapter 13 – “Opening the Bidding in Third or Fourth Chair - Part 2”.

Since a partnership wants to be in a game contract when the combined strength is at least 25 points, it stands to reason that if you have half of those points in your hand you should open the bidding. If you didn’t and your partner took the same stance, you could easily miss a game contract and the bonus points that go with it.

You must open the bidding if you hold at least 13 total points.

In spite of this **bold** statement, you may choose to pass if you have made adjustments and devalued your hand.

With a weaker hand you would not have an interest in a game contract unless partner had a hand of 13⁺ points. So we have now established the break point between the N and M answers to G? when you are considering an opening bid:

- G? = N if your total points are fewer than 13
- The start of the G? = M range is 13

We know that if we have at least 25 points we want to be in a game contract, at least if we can find a Golden Fit in a Major Suit or a notrump contract is reasonable. This establishes the break point between the M and Y answers to G? when you are considering an opening bid:

- G? = Y if your total points are more than 24
- The end of the G? = M range is 24

We now have the G? = M range extending from 13 to 24 points, a 12-point interval. With such a wide range, we choose 3 points for M^S:

- G? = M^S if your total points are between 22 and 24, inclusive

This leaves the range from 13 to 21 for M^W and M^L. Since we prefer intervals of 2 or 3 points, we break down the range as follows in terms of your total points:

- 13 - 14: $G? = M^{W-}$
- 15 - 17: $G? = M^{W+}$
- 18 - 19: $G? = M^I$
- 20 - 21: $G? = M^{I+}$

All of these results can be combined to give the following table for answering $G?$ when you are considering an opening bid:

Opening Bidder's $G?$ Decision Table

$0 - 12: G? = N$	$13 - 14: G? = M^{W-}$	$18 - 19: G? = M^I$	$22 - 24: G? = M^S$
	$15 - 17: G? = M^{W+}$	$20 - 21: G? = M^{I+}$	$25+: G? = Y$

What to Open

Opener can actually make any legal bid from the lowest bid (1♣) to the highest (7NT). Most bids fall into a category with a particular general meaning as summarized below (going up the bidding scale):

1. 1 of a suit (13 - 21 total points, but not eligible for a category 2 or 5 opening bid)
2. 1NT (15 - 17 HCP and a balanced hand)
3. 2♣ (all hands with more than 21 total points)
4. 2 of any other suit (5 - 11 HCP and a good 6-card suit)
5. 2NT (20 - 21 HCP and a balanced hand)
6. 3 of any suit (Fewer than 13 total points and a respectable 7-card suit)
7. 4 of any suit (Fewer than 13 total points and an 8-card suit)

Opening bids in categories 1, 2, 3 and 5 are all offensive opening bids. They are made when you think or know the deal “belongs” to your side. You have a good chance of winning the bidding contest and making your contract – at least a partscore and hopefully a game or maybe even a slam.

Many players use a couple of other guidelines for a category 1 opening bid when on the low end of the point range. One is based on the number of quick tricks.

- Open the bidding with 13 points only if you have at least 2 quick tricks
- Consider opening the bidding with 12 points if you have at least 2½ quick tricks
- Consider opening the bidding with 11 points if you have 3 quick tricks (AK in one suit plus another ace)

Another guideline is the ***Rule of 20***:

Rule of 20

Do not open the bidding unless the sum of your HCP plus the combined lengths of your two longest suits is at least 20.

Even this guideline has some limitations. Note that it does not say that you should open all hands that satisfy the rule of 20 – only that you should not open the hand if it does not satisfy the rule. Some players have refined this rule to give the **Rule of 22**:

Rule of 22

Open the bidding if the sum of your HCP, the number of your quick tricks plus the combined lengths of your two longest suits is at least 22.

Opening bids of type 4, 6 and 7 are defensive bids commonly referred to as **preemptive bids**. They are made when you think the deal “belongs” to your opponents and are attempting to jam their communication system thereby making it difficult for them to find their best contract. Of course it has the same effect on your partnership but you are willing to take that risk.

Higher level bids are extremely rare and are not discussed at this time.

In this book we will focus primarily on opening bids in categories 1 and 2. For completeness a few instances of opening bids in category 5 will enter the discussion. Opening bids in categories 1 and 2 are considered the “bread and butter” of offensive opening bids. They come up quite frequently and their mastery is essential to a comfortable feeling at the bridge table. Before getting into the details of these opening bids we provide a very brief discussion of the 2♣ opening bid.

The 2♣ Opening Bid

The 2♣ opening bid is reserved for all hands where $G? = M^S$ or Y. When opener is this strong he needs to send a message to responder that a game contract is either very likely or perhaps even in his hand. This opening bid almost always leads to a game contract and sometimes a slam. It is a forcing bid (responder may not pass) so opener will get another bid to further describe his hand. Detailed discussion of this bid is deferred to *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 6 – “Strong Opening Bids.”

Opening Notrump Bids

Requirements for Opening Notrump Bids

A balanced hand

HCP

1NT: 15 - 17 2NT: 20 - 21

Remember that the balanced hand shapes are 5-3-3-2, 4-4-3-2 and 4-3-3-3; and only HCP are used for the bidding decision.

All of the opening notrump bids are very descriptive. They give partner excellent clues regarding the ultimate answers to G?, GFMS? and GFms?. For G?:

1NT: M^{W+}

2NT: M^{I+}

The opening bids of 1NT and 2NT are the only two opening bids that make explicit use of the M^{W+} and M^{I+} G? decisions. You may find it easier to just memorize the point count requirements for those bids instead of the M subdivisions. But if you ever forget you should be able to back out the M subdivisions from the entire M range.

Balanced hands with other HCP ranges would be categorized as follows but not opened with a notrump bid:

13 - 14: M^{W-}

18 - 19: M^{I-}

22 - 24: M^S

25+: Y

The first hand would usually be shown by opening with 1 of a suit and rebidding as cheaply as possible in notrump – but other options are possible. The second hand would usually be opened with 1 of a suit followed by a jump to 2NT – but other sequences would also be appropriate. The last two hands would be opened with 2♣ and probably followed with a 2NT or 3NT rebid, respectively.

For the Golden Fit questions we have GFMS? = GFms? = M.

Because of the precise descriptions given by the opening notrump bids,

Always open the bidding with one of the notrump bids whenever you meet the requirements.

There is another, perhaps even more important, reason for opening the bidding with 1NT or 2NT if your hand meets the requirements. As you will find out in Chapter 5 – “Rebids by Opener - Part 1” and Chapter 6 – “Rebids by Opener - Part 2,” **if you do not make that opening bid it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to accurately describe your hand with your rebid.**

Here are some examples.

♠ Q 10 8 A typical balanced hand with 16 HCP for an opening bid of 1NT
♥ A 9 4
♦ K 6 3
♣ A K 9 4

♠ A Q 10 The same hand as the previous one with the ♠8 changed to the ♠A.
♥ A 9 4 Now the hand is worth 20 HCP and an opening bid of 2NT.
♦ K 6 3
♣ A K 9 4

- ♠ K Q 8 4 A balanced hand with 15 HCP. Don't worry about the worthless
 ♥ 4 3 doubleton – bid 1NT.
 ♦ A J 3
 ♣ A J 9 4
- ♠ K 8 6 4 2 Your hand is balanced with 17 HCP. A 5-card Major should not
 ♥ A Q keep you from bidding 1NT if that is the best description of your
 ♦ Q J 3 hand.
 ♣ A J 9
- ♠ A K Q 6 2 This hand has the same shape and strength as the previous one, so
 ♥ 7 6 it certainly satisfies the requirements for an opening bid of 1NT.
 ♦ Q J 3 But it just doesn't look the same as the previous one. With 18 total
 ♣ A J 9 points many players would open this hand 1♠ instead of 1NT feeling
 it was too strong for 1NT.

Opening a Suit at the 1 Level

Of all the offensive opening bids 1 of a suit is your last choice but the one you will use most often. It is made when $G? = M^w$ or M^l and your hand does not qualify for an opening bid of 1NT or 2NT.

Requirements for an Opening Bid of 1 of a Suit

- $G? = M^w$ or M^l (13 - 21 total points)
- Your hand does not qualify for a bid of 1NT or 2NT

Once you have decided you should open the bidding with 1 of a suit, which suit should you choose? We have four simple rules to follow:

Rules for Choosing the Suit

1. *Longest suit rule*
Bid your longest suit.
2. *Major Suit rule*
You need at least 5 cards to open 1 of a Major.
3. *Tie-breaker rule*
In case of a tie, bid the higher-ranking suit.
4. *Tie-breaker exception rule*
If the choice is between two 3-card minors, bid 1♣.

Are there exceptions to these rules? Of course. But they are not in the part of the puzzle we are working on in this book. So these rules will work just fine for now. They are not really that hard to remember and after a little practice you will not have difficulty deciding on your opening bid when you have concluded it should be 1 of a suit. Pay special attention to the first two rules. The second rule does **not** say you **should** open the bidding with 1M if it has 5+ cards. Only that you need at least 5 cards if you are going to open 1M. The first rule dominates your choice of suits.

Let's look at a few examples.

♠ A K 10 5 2 You have 14 HCP plus 1 for the 5-card spade suit. Your longest
♥ 7 5 3 suit is spades and you have five of them. Open 1♠.
♦ A Q J
♣ 8 5

♠ K 4 You have 15 HCP, but do not have a balanced hand, so you cannot
♥ A J 8 4 2 open 1NT. You have two 5-card suits for a total of 17 points. So
♦ K 9 8 6 5 you open 1♥, not because it is a Major, but because it is the higher
♣ A ranking of your two 5-card suits.

♠ 4 2 You have 13 HCP and no distribution points. Your longest suits
♥ A K 9 are your two 4-card minors. Use the tie-breaker rule and open 1♦.
♦ 9 6 5 2 Yes, your clubs are much stronger, but there is nothing in the bid-
♣ K Q J 10 ding rules regarding relative strengths of suits.

♠ K 4 2 With only 6 total points, you are not even close to the strength for
♥ Q 9 8 7 6 an opening bid. Pass.
♦ 9 5 2
♣ 8 2

♠ Q 10 8 2 This is a balanced hand with 14 HCP and no distribution points.
♥ Q J 9 Your longest suit is spades and you have only 4 of them so you
♦ A K 5 cannot open 1♠. And you certainly cannot open 1♥ either. What
♣ Q 7 4 should you do? You absolutely must open the bidding for fear of
missing a game contract. Partner could have 11 or 12 points and
pass at his turn. Your side would have 25 or 26 points and the opponents would
have only 14 or 15 between them and they would both likely pass. What a shame
to pass out a hand on which you had a game! So you have to open in one of your
minor suits. The tie-breaker rule says to bid 1♦, which is also your stronger mi-
nor. But don't forget the exception to the tie-breaker rule! When you have to
choose between two 3-card minors, you always pick clubs. So, bid 1♣. Again
remember that there is nothing in the bidding rules about relative strengths of
suits.

♠ Q 10 8 2 This hand is very similar to the previous one. In fact, the only
 ♥ Q J 9 4 difference is that one card was moved from the club suit to the
 ♦ A K 5 heart suit. You must open the bidding and cannot choose either
 ♣ Q 7 Major Suit so have to pick a minor. You have more diamonds
 than clubs so bid 1♦. There is a special significance to this hand
 pattern: 4=4=3=2. It is the **only** hand pattern for which you will hold only three
 diamonds when you open the bidding 1♦. Therefore you will almost always have
 at least a 4-card diamond suit when your opening bid is 1♦.

♠ K 10 8 4 2 You have just barely enough to open the bidding with 10 HCP
 ♥ 9 plus 1 for your 5-card spade suit and 2 for your 6-card club suit.
 ♦ 6 Yes – you have a 5-card Major and might be tempted to open with
 ♣ A Q J 8 5 2 1♠ but the first bidding rule says to open with your longest suit so
 bid 1♣. The point of this hand is that when you open the bidding
 with 1 of a minor you do not deny holding a 5-card Major. In fact if you moved
 the ♥9 to the ♠9 and the ♦6 to the ♣6, you would have a 6-card Major, but a 7-
 card minor and open the bidding the same way. These distributions are extreme-
 ly rare but they do happen.

BIDDING MESSAGES

When a player makes a call he sends diverse information to his partner AND to the opponents. This includes something about the strength and shape of his hand (G?, SS?, GS?, GFMS?, GFms?). It also sends a message regarding his interest in proceeding with the auction. Every bid falls into one of four categories:

- Sign-off Bids
A ***sign-off bid*** tells partner that you have no interest in bidding any higher than the current contract level. Partner is expected to pass but might occasionally override your decision. One reason he might do so is if an opponent competes further. If partner so chooses he has been warned that he is doing that at his own risk. A sign-off bid has several aliases: “***drop dead***,” “***stop***” and “***close out***.”
- Invitational Bids
An ***invitational bid*** tells partner to proceed with caution. Partner may bid or pass at his discretion but he is invited to bid on, usually toward a game contract but sometimes to a slam contract. Some bids can be further classified as a ***strong invitational bid*** or a ***moderate invitational bid***. When in pursuit of a game contract, a strong invitational bid would be made when $G? = M^S$ while a moderate invitational bid would be made when $G? = M^W$ or M^I , provided such distinctive bids are available.
- Forcing Bids
A ***forcing bid*** tells partner you either need to get more information from him or give more information to him. In either case, he usually must bid

again. The only time he may elect not to bid is if your LHO makes a call other than pass. In that case you will get another chance to bid even if partner passes. If your LHO bids your partner may pass, bid or double. If your LHO doubles your partner may pass, bid or redouble.

Most forcing bids are forcing for only one round but some are forcing to game. In the latter case the bid is further classified as a ***game-forcing bid*** and each partner must keep bidding until a game contract is reached. The only exception is in a competitive auction when you or your partner decides to double an opponent's bid or to redouble their double.

- Nonforcing Bids

Sometimes a player makes a bid that does not really fall into any of the above three categories. Partner is allowed to bid or pass, but is not particularly invited to bid again, that is the bid does not necessarily express an interest in proceeding further. Such a bid is classified simply as a ***nonforcing bid***. Certainly sign-off bids and invitational bids are not forcing, but they carry additional connotations. One example of a nonforcing bid could be a bid made after partner has made a forcing bid. You had to bid something and that bid may not necessarily suggest a desire to either end the auction or proceed further.

One of the most difficult tasks for a beginning bridge player, and sometimes even those with considerable experience, is recognizing the category of partner's bid. You will learn about the messages associated with many bids in subsequent chapters. For the offensive opening bids considered in this chapter we have:

- 1 of a suit – moderate invitational
- 1NT – moderate invitational
- 2♣ – forcing
- 2NT – strong invitational

SUMMARY

The competitive goal of bridge is to

Score more points than your opponents.

To reach this goal you try to

- *Maximize your score.*
- *Minimize your opponents' score.*

Therefore

Understanding scoring is the most important factor in learning to play Bridge.

The primary goal of bidding by you and your partner is to reach one of the Golden Games (in order of priority):

Golden Games

- *4♥ or 4♠*
- *3NT*

You consider playing in a suit contract only if you have a

Golden Fit

A partnership holding of 8 or more cards in a suit

Your preference for the strain of your contract is:

Strain Preference

- *Major Suit*
- *Notrump*
- *Minor suit*

You give value to your hand for

High-Card Points

A = 4 K = 3 Q = 2 J = 1

and distribution points; either

Long-Suit Points

1 point for each card in excess of 4 is used when

- *You know or think you will be declarer in a suit contract, or*
- *You know you will be dummy in a notrump contract, or*
- *You opened the bidding with 1 of a suit and are rebidding 2N or*

or

Dummy Points

*Void = 5 Singleton = 3 Doubleton = 1
are used when you know you have a Golden Fit and*

- *Your partner's suit is a Major or*
- *Your partner's suit is a minor and a notrump contract is not an option*

Hand shapes are classified by the number of cards in each suit.

Hand Shapes

- *Flat: 4333*
- *Balanced: 5332, 4432, 4333*
- *Unbalanced: Not balanced*

Unbalanced hands can be further classified as:

- Single-suited – A hand with one suit of at least 6 cards and no more than 3 cards in any other suit.
- Two-suited – A hand with one suit of at least 5 cards, another suit of at least 4 cards and no more than 3 cards in any other suit.
- Three-suited – A hand with at least 4 cards in each of 3 suits.

The following table provides a guideline for the level to which you can safely bid in notrump or a suit based on the combined points in the partnership hands. COUNT ONLY HCP FOR NOTRUMP CONTRACTS.

BIDDING LEVEL VERSUS COMBINED POINTS

Points	21 - 22	23 - 24	25 - 26	27 - 28	29 - 32	33 - 36	37 ⁺
Notrump	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Suit	2	3	4	4	5	6	7

Bidding by you and your partner centers on your answers to three key questions:

Key Questions		
<i>GFMS?</i>	<i>GFms?</i>	<i>G?</i>
Answers to Key Questions		
<i>Y</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>

There may be several levels of M and your answers change as the bidding progresses when you find out more about each other's holding.

Revalue your hand after every call by your partner or an opponent.

You are also guided by the above table knowing that you dare not bid too high unless you have sufficient strength to have a reasonable chance of making the contract.

- Role Playing*
- *Opener - Describer, shows and tells*
 - *Responder - Captain, asks and listens*

Opening the bidding:

- Open the bidding whenever you have 13 or more total points.*
- *Open with a notrump bid if you have a balanced hand with*

15 - 17 HCP: 1N
20 - 21 HCP: 2N
 - *Open with one of a suit if you have 13 - 21 total points and are not able to open 1N or 2N.*
- Rules for choosing the suit*
- Longest suit rule*
Bid your longest suit.
 - Major Suit rule*
You need at least 5 cards to open 1 of a Major.
 - Tie-breaker rule*
In case of a tie bid the higher-ranking suit.
 - Tie-breaker exception rule*
If the choice is between two 3-card minors, bid 1 ♣.

Additional guidelines for opening the bidding:

- Open the bidding with 13 points only if you have at least 2 quick tricks
- Consider opening the bidding with 12 points if you have at least 2½ quick tricks
- Consider opening the bidding with 11 points if you have 3 quick tricks (AK in one suit plus another ace)

Rule of 20

Do not open the bidding unless the sum of your HCP plus the combined lengths of your two longest suits is at least 20.

Rule of 22

Open the bidding if the sum of your HCP, the number of your quick tricks plus the combined lengths of your two longest suits is at least 22.

Each bid carries a message:

Bidding Messages

- *Sign-off*
- *Invitational*
- *Forcing*
- *Nonforcing*



CHAPTER 2

- Responses to a 1NT Opening Bid

Responder's General Approach

Responder's Bids

Opener's Rebid

Summary



RESPONDER'S GENERAL APPROACH

Your partner's opening bid of 1NT has given you a very accurate description of his hand. You know that he has 15 - 17 HCP and his hand is balanced - one of three shapes: 5-3-3-2, 4-4-3-2 or 4-3-3-3.

Your first job as responder is to answer the questions **GFMS?**, **GFms?** and **G?**. Once you answer these questions you can start thinking about your call.

Responder's first step is to answer GFMS?, GFms? and G?

Responder Answers GFMS? and GFms?

You know that opener has at least 2 cards in every suit, and not more than 5 cards in any suit. Furthermore, opener cannot have more than one doubleton (if any), so he is very likely to have at least 3 cards in any specific suit. Given this information, we can construct the following table to answer GFMS? and GFms?:

Number of cards in your suit	GF?
0 - 2	N
3	M ^w
4	M ⁱ
5	M ^s
6+	Y

Note that there is no need to memorize this table. All you need to memorize is that partner has a balanced hand (5-3-3-2, 4-4-3-2 or 4-3-3-3), but you need to memorize that anyway to use when you are considering a notrump opening bid.

This is the first application of the different levels of M for a Golden Fit. When you have a 5-card suit, there is a high probability that opener has at least 3-card support (a Golden Fit). When you have a 3-card suit, there is a low probability that opener has the required 5-card support for a Golden Fit. Finally when you have a 4-card suit, we have an intermediate probability that opener has a 4-card (or 5-card) suit for a Golden Fit. Odds are a little less than 50% if you have only one 4-card suit and a little over 50% if you have two 4-card suits. We won't delve into other possibilities here. The point is that the more cards you hold in a suit, the more likely there is a Golden Fit in that suit.

Responder Answers G?

Once you evaluate your hand you should have no problem determining an answer to G?. While opener counted only HCP when he decided to open 1NT, you, as responder, count **total points**, adding points for long suits. Those extra cards are very likely to take tricks in a notrump contract once the high cards have been played. Remember that you want to be in a game contract if the partnership has at least 25 points. Let's see how easy this is with a few abstract examples.

Suppose you have a hand worth 4 points. The most partner can have is 17, so the partnership total is no more than 21. This is not enough for a Golden Game contract, so $G? = N$.

If your hand is worth 12 points you know that the partnership total is at least 27 because opener must have at least 15. Plenty of points for a Golden Game contract, so $G? = Y$.

What if you have a hand worth 9 points? If partner has only 15 HCP the partnership has a total of only 24 points, but if he has 17 HCP you have 26 total points between you. Now $G? = M$. Since opener has narrowly described his point range, you do not need to divide your M conclusion any further.

We can formally generalize this $G?$ decision process for either player in a partnership if one partner has made a bid that limits his hand to a specific point range. Suppose your partner has made a bid which shows a minimum of mPP (minimum Partner Points) and a maximum of MPP (Maximum Partner Points) while you have YP (Your Points). Then,

General $G?$ Decision Logic

If $YP + MPP < 25$ then $G? = N$

Else if $YP + mPP \geq 25$ then $G? = Y$

Else $G? = M$

Responder's Goal

While partner's opening bid of 1NT has the advantage of very accurately describing his hand, it has the disadvantage of having taken up a lot of bidding space. You no longer have the option of bidding at the 1 level. As responder your objective or goal is dependent on your $G?$ decision:

- $G? = N$: Get to best (or at least reasonable) partscore contract
- $G? = M$: Invite partner to a game contract
- $G? = Y$: Get to the best game contract

You can accomplish these goals by assigning the following messages to the bids you make.

RESPONDER'S BIDS

Responder's Bidding Messages

Responder's Bidding Messages

- *Pass - Sign Off* $G? = N$
I am unlikely to have a long suit
- *2 of any suit - Sign Off* $G? = N$
I have at least 5 cards in my suit
- *2NT - Invitational* $G? = M$
- *3M - Forcing* $G? = Y$
I have exactly 5 cards in my suit
- *3NT - Sign Off* $G? = Y$
I do not have a long Major Suit
- *4M - Sign Off* $G? = Y$
I have at least 6 cards in my suit

The astute student might have observed that a bid of 3m is missing from this list. It was not an oversight. While such an option does exist, it is beyond the scope of the current discussion. The meaning of such bids is deferred to *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 5 – “Jacoby Transfers.” Until then that bid does not exist.

This may seem to be a rather complicated list to remember. After you read the following discussions of these calls and look at the associated examples, you will recognize them as simply logical conclusions to ensure that you meet your overall objectives.

Responder's Calls When $G? = N$

When you have a very balanced hand (4-4-3-2 or 4-3-3-3) and $G? = N$, there is no reason to disturb the 1NT contract so you simply pass.

There are going to be many hands when you decide $G? = N$ and $GF? = Y$ or M^8 . When you have such a hand you usually would like to play at a partscore in your known or highly probable Golden Fit. One way to do that is to have the entire 2 level for suit bids be reserved as sign-off bids, and that is the method in standard bidding.

Note that a contract of 1NT+1 gives a trick score of 40, the same as a contract of 2m+2. A contract of 2M+2 gives a trick score of 60 which is better than 1NT in all forms of scoring. So regardless of the form of scoring – raw score or matchpoints – you always tend to prefer the safer contract of a Golden Fit even if it's in a minor suit. If you are on the high end of $G? = N$, and it looks like a contract of 1NT might make 2, the choice of 1NT might be a winning matchpoint decision even though 2m might then make 3.

Here are a few examples:

♠ Q 10 8 4 3 2 GFMS? = Y in spades – bid 2♠. You would make the same bid
♥ Q J 9 even if the heart and spade honors were small cards. **There is**
♦ 9 6 5 **no minimum point requirement to make a sign-off bid at the**
♣ 8 **2 level.**

♠ J 10 8 GFms? = M^S in diamonds – bid 2♦, although in a matchpoint
♥ 9 7 4 game you might pass and play in 1NT, hoping you can make
♦ K 9 6 5 2 2NT. Change the ♣Q to a small club and 2♦ is the clear choice.
♣ Q 6

♠ Q 3 2 GFms? = M^I in diamonds. Pass and play in 1NT.
♥ J 9 7
♦ J 10 9 5
♣ 8 6 4

♠ Q 3 GFms? = M^S in clubs, bid 2♣.
♥ J 9
♦ 9 6 4 2
♣ 10 8 5 3 2

Responder's Bid When G? = M

When G? = M you do not know if the partnership belongs in game so you have to pass the final decision back to opener. The **only** way you can do this is to bid 2NT. Opener should recognize this as an invitational bid. (You did not pass or sign off with a 2-level suit bid or make a forcing bid or bid game.) So clearly opener should conclude G? = N and pass with only 15 HCP or G? = Y and bid game (probably 3NT) with 17 HCP. With 16 HCP G? = M but opener really does not have any way to invite you to go on to game if you have 9 points and stop short of game with only 8 points. Opener must make the decision himself usually favoring the game bid.

When opener decides G? = Y he may have an option other than bidding 3NT. If he happens to have a 5-3-3-2 shape with a 5-card Major he should bid it at the 3 level. With this understanding responder can deduce that opener must have decided G? = Y and is showing 5 cards in the Major. Responder then has an easy task of answering GFMS? simply by counting the number of cards she has in opener's Major. She can then pick the final strain by bidding 3NT with fewer than 3 cards in that Major or raising opener to the 4 level with 3⁺ cards in that suit.

Let's look at a few examples.

♠ Q 8 4

♥ A 7

♦ Q 9 7 4

♣ J 9 8 6

A typical G? = M hand, bid 2NT.

♠ Q 8

♥ K J 9

♦ 6 5

♣ J 10 8 6 4 2

Only 7 HCP but a 6-card suit and you might have a couple of entries to run the clubs once they get set up. Bid 2NT.

♠ A 7 4

♥ J 10 5

♦ Q 10 9 8 4

♣ 9 6

Only 8 total points, but the diamond suit looks like it might produce some tricks. Your ♠A is a little undervalued and the ♦Q is a little overvalued. The ♥10 is a plus. Bid 2NT. The modern trend is not to invite with only 8 points unless you have a little something extra.

♠ J 4 3

♥ J 4 3

♦ J 6 4 3 2

♣ K J

Another hand with 8 total points. But the jacks are way overvalued; it will take a lot of work to get the diamond suit established and you may not have an entry if you do. Bid 2♦ or pass (matchpoints) since you do have a little something in all of the suits and have a good chance to make 2NT.

Responder's Bids When G? = Y

When you decide G? = Y you know you want to be in one of the Golden Games: 4♥, 4♠ or 3NT. If GFMS? = Y you have an easy decision. You simply jump to 4 of your Major. If GFMS? = N you also have an easy decision; 3NT is the obvious choice.

If GFMS? = M^s you need some help from opener. You pass the decision back to him with a bid of 3 of your 5-card Major. If he has only a doubleton in your suit, he will know there is not a Golden Fit there and bid 3NT. Otherwise he will raise you to 4 of your Major.

♠ K Q J 9 4 3

♥ 7 3

♦ Q J 2

♣ 5 4

GFMS? = Y in spades so bid 4♠.

♠ 4 3

♥ K 3

♦ A 6 4 3 2

♣ Q J 7 2

GFMS? = N so bid 3NT even though GFms? = M^s in diamonds.

♠ 9 4 3 GFMS? = M^S in hearts so jump to 3♥ – a game-forcing bid showing exactly 5 hearts. Opener will bid 3NT with a doubleton heart
 ♥ K Q 10 4 3 – otherwise he will raise to 4♥.
 ♦ A J 2
 ♣ Q 6

♠ A Q 10 7 GFMS? = M^I in spades but you have no way to find out if opener has a 4-card spade suit. Settle for 3NT.
 ♥ Q 10 5
 ♦ Q 10 9 3
 ♣ 7 2

♠ K 7 GFms? = Y in diamonds. But since G? = Y ignore that fit and just bid the Golden Game of 3NT.
 ♥ A 8 3
 ♦ K 10 8 7 3 2
 ♣ 9 3

More to Come

Have you noticed something missing?

- How can you pursue a Golden Game in a Major Suit when you have a 5-card suit and G? = M?
- How can you pursue a Golden Game in a Major Suit when you have one or two 4-card Major Suits and G? = M or Y?

The simple answers are “You can’t.” At least not with the bids presented here. For the time being you will have to be satisfied with **notrump contracts** for these situations. But stick around until we get to *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 4 – “The Stayman Convention” and Chapter 5 – “Jacoby Transfers” where we’ll find solutions to these problems.

OPENER’S REBID

Opener’s second call is his rebid. When he started with 1NT opener should have an easy time deciding what to do by basing his action on his understanding of responder’s message. He should usually just pass responder’s call because most often it is a sign-off call. There are only two exceptions.

- If responder bid 2NT she has an invitational hand (G? = M) and has passed the final decision back to opener. Opener can deduce that responder has fewer than 10 points, because then G? would be Y. She also has more than 7 points because then G? would be N, so she has 8 or 9 points. The modern trend is not to invite with only 8 points unless you have a little something extra, so opener should decide G? = N if he has only 15 HCP and G? = Y with 16 or 17 HCP. However, before doing so he should revalue his hand, adding 1 point if he happens to have a 5-card suit. When G? = Y opener should usually bid 3NT, but if he happens to

have a 5-card Major Suit he can bid 3 of his Major and pass the strain decision back to responder, who will bid 3NT with a doubleton in opener's Major Suit or raise to 4 of that Major.

- The other exception is when responder jumps to 3 of a Major. She has decided $G? = Y$ and $GFMS? = M^S$ meaning that she has exactly 5 cards in the suit she bid. Opener now has a really easy decision. With a doubleton in responder's suit he bids 3NT, otherwise raises to 4 of her Major.

As opener, what would you rebid with each of the following hands if responder bid 2NT, 3♥ or 3♠?

♠ Q 9 5 2 If responder bid 2NT, pass. If responder bid 3 of either Major
♥ A K 7 raise to 4 of that Major.
♦ A Q 3
♣ 8 4 2

♠ Q 9 5 2 This hand is the same as the previous one except that the ♣8 has
♥ A K 7 been replaced with the ♣Q. Now you will raise 2NT to 3NT,
♦ A Q 3 while your bids if responder bid 3 of either Major are the same as
♣ Q 4 2 for the previous hand.

♠ Q J 10 8 5 If responder bids 2NT you revalue your hand as 16 points because
♥ A K 7 of your 5-card spade suit. So you bid 3♠ to accept partner's invita-
♦ A 8 tion and show your 5-card spade suit. Responder now must bid
♣ J 10 5 3NT with fewer than 3 spades, else raise to 4♠ with 3+ spades. If
responder bids 3 of either Major you will raise to 4 of that Major.

♠ Q 7 If partner bid 2NT you would pass. If she bid 3♥ you would raise
♥ A 7 4 to 4♥. If she bid 3♠ you would bid 3NT.
♦ Q 8 4
♣ A K 7 5 2

SUMMARY

Responder's First Step

When partner opens the bidding with 1NT your first step is to answer GF and G? Since opener has a balanced hand he has 2 - 5 cards in each suit, so the answers to GF? are straightforward. He has shown 15 - 17 HCP, so all you have to do is look at your total points. If they are 10⁺, G? = Y. If they are 7 or fewer, G? = N. Otherwise G? = M. You do not need to memorize these values if you remember the 15 - 17 range opener has shown.

Responder's Second Step if G? = N

If GF? = N, you pass. If GF? = M^S or Y, you bid 2 of that suit. Bid the longest suit if there is a choice. If they are the same length, bid the Major if one is a Major and the other a minor. If they are both Majors or both minors, bid the stronger one. If your hand is balanced or nearly so and your long suit is a minor, you can consider passing if you think you might make 2NT and you are playing in a duplicate matchpoint game.

Responder's Second Step if G? = M

If G? = M, bid 2NT.

Responder's Second Step if G? = Y

If G? = Y bid 4 of either Major Suit if GFMS? = Y for that suit. Bid 3 of either Major Suit if GFMS? = M^S for that suit. Otherwise bid 3NT.

Bidding Messages in Response to a 1NT Opening Bid

SIGN-OFF	INVITATIONAL	FORCING
Pass	2NT	3♥, 3♠
2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠		
3NT, 4♥, 4♠		

Opener's Rebid

After a sign-off bid by responder:

- Pass

After responder's invitational bid of 2NT:

- Revalue your hand adding 1 point for a 5-card suit
- If G? = M, use adjustments to change the answer to Y or N. You do not have any bidding space available to get more information from responder.
- Pass if G? = N

- If $G? = Y$
 - Bid 3 of a 5-card Major
 - If no 5-card Major bid 3NT

After responder's forcing bid of 3♥ or 3♠:

- Bid 3NT with a doubleton in responder's Major
- Raise to 4 of partner's Major with at least 3-card support



CHAPTER 3

- Responses to an Opening Bid of One of a Suit - Part 1

Responder's General Approach

Responding to a Major Suit

Summary



RESPONDER'S GENERAL APPROACH

All of the discussion in this chapter applies only if partner has opened the bidding with 1 of a suit in first or second chair.

Responder Answers GFMS? and GFms?

These questions are a little more difficult to answer when the opening bid is 1 of a suit than they are if the opening bid is 1NT. But we do know that if opener's bid was 1M he promised at least 5 cards in that suit, while if he opened 1m he promised at least 3 cards. We also know that if partner opened 1M he does not have a longer suit. Even if partner opened 1m and you have at least 5-card support, so you know you have a Golden Fit there, your job is not necessarily over because there still might be a chance for a Golden Fit in a Major, which is your preference. Nonetheless, you can always come up with Y, N or M answers to these questions knowing the suit that partner opened and the distribution of your hand.

Responder Revalues Her Hand

Most of the time responder will not make any major changes to the value of her hand after partner has opened the bidding. But whenever the opening bid was 1M and responder has at least 3-card support she knows that will be the contract strain and she will be the dummy; therefore she revalues her hand counting dummy points instead of long suit points.

While not making any numerical adjustments, responder always notes any quacks she holds in partner's suit as "plusses" if she has a close bidding decision.

Responder Answers G?

Opener has shown at least 13 points. Whenever you have at least 12 points you know that the partnership has at least the 25 combined points required for a game contract. So $G? = Y$. On occasion you will later discover that $GFMS? = N$ and that 3NT is not a reasonable contract, so you may change your answer. But at least initially you will proceed on the basis that $G? = Y$.

On the other hand, opener may have as many as 21 points, so whenever responder has as few as 4 points, the combined partnership total may be the 25 required for a game contract. However, as will be seen shortly, most of the time you will be bidding a new suit, which is a forcing bid. Opener's next bid then could be 1NT or 2 of a lower-ranking suit. If he has only the minimum 13 points required for his opening bid, you will have a total of only 17 points. This is not nearly close enough to the minimum of 21 to have a reasonable chance to make either of those contracts. Also, if opener has the maximum of 21 points for his opening bid, he might jump all the way to the game level. Experience has shown that when the points between the partners are divided so unevenly, an extra point or two are often needed. So the common consensus is that responder should have at least 6 points to bid after partner has opened the bidding with 1 of a suit. This

will guarantee that the partnership has at least 19 points, almost enough to make a contract of 1NT or 2 of a suit. Consequently whenever you have fewer than 6 points, you really need to pass, a de facto conclusion that $G? = N$. Now it should be clear that if you cannot conclude that $G? = Y$ or $G? = N$, then $G? = M$.

The minimum number of points (12) required by you for you to conclude that $G? = Y$ is readily derived from the minimum number of points shown by opener's first bid. On the other hand the minimum number of points that you must have (6) to conclude that $G? = M$ is really a number that must be memorized, because the logical number would be 4.

We now have the following conclusions:

<i>Answers to G?</i>		
<i>0 - 5: N</i>	<i>6 - 11: M</i>	<i>12+: Y</i>

Because the M category encompasses a 6-point interval it is helpful to break it down into three 2-point subsets as follows:

<i>G? = M Subsets</i>		
<i>6 - 7: M^w</i>	<i>8 - 9: M^l</i>	<i>10 - 11: M^s</i>

Once you remember that there are 3 equal intervals with the lower starting at 6 points and the upper ending just below the start of the $G? = Y$ level, you need not memorize the actual intervals. You can always work them out when needed. After a little practice they will become second nature.

While we generally use 6 as the start of the $G? = M$ range, remember that not all 6-point hands are equal in true value. For example, consider the following two possible hands held by responder after an opening bid of 1♠:

♠ K Q 8 6	♠ J 3	While the first hand has only 5 points, it is worth a bid. Partner will love your four trumps with two high honors. The second hand has 6 points including 1 for the 5-card suit but should be passed. You have only a doubleton spade so there is probably not a Golden Fit in spades. Your distributed quacks and the poor quality of your long suit are highly overvalued. In general, 5-point hands with KQx, KQxx, AJx or AJxx should be upgraded to $G? = M^w$ while 6-point hands with distributed quacks and poor Major Suit trump support should be downgraded to $G? = N$.
♥ 9 7 2	♥ J 7 5	
♦ 6 5 2	♦ Q 5 2	
♣ 9 6 3	♣ J 6 5 4 2	

Responder's General Bidding Messages

The types of bids you make can be categorized as follows:

- Sign-Off Bid: Tells partner you have no interest in proceeding further. He is expected to pass.
- Invitational Bid: Encourages partner to bid again but he may pass.

- Moderate Invitational Bid: Moderately encourages partner to bid again but he may pass.
- Strong Invitational Bid: Strongly encourages partner to bid again but he may pass.
- Forcing Bid: Forces partner to bid again.
- Game Bid: A bid at the game level. Neither invitational nor forcing, but opener may bid again.

Before discussing these types of bids it is helpful to consider the following table which introduces **hand types** and applies primarily to responder's first bid, although portions of it have application to responder's second bid if needed:

G?	Hand Type	Bid Type
N	<i>Terrible or "Weak Freak"</i>	<i>Sign-Off</i>
M	<i>Invitational</i>	<i>Invitational or Forcing</i>
M ^W	<i>Weak Invitational</i>	<i>Moderate Invitational or Forcing</i>
M ^I	<i>Intermediate Invitational</i>	<i>Moderate Invitational or Forcing</i>
M ^S	<i>Strong Invitational</i>	<i>Strong Invitational or Forcing</i>
Y	<i>Game-Forcing</i>	<i>Forcing or Game</i>

The "Weak Freak" hand is discussed later in this chapter and can be ignored for the time being. Hands for which a slam is possible or definite are not included in the above table and are not discussed in this book but deferred to *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 9 – "Bidding Slams – Part 1" and Chapter 10 – "Bidding Slams - Part 2".

In the hand type categorization "Invitational" refers to responder's game interest. His hand strength is such that he wants to invite partner to bid on to a game contract. In the bid type categorization "Invitational" plays a dual purpose. It invites partner just to bid one more time, but also invites him to go all the way to a game contract. On the other hand, the term "Forcing" forces opener only to bid one more time – not necessarily to the game level – although he may choose to do so. The term "Game-Forcing" forces partner to the game level, but opener need not necessarily bid to the game level right away. He just needs to keep the auction open until a game contract is reached. He is allowed to pass if his RHO bids or doubles because responder will get another chance to bid.

It is also observed that

- The same bid type is often used for two or more different hand types.
- Two different bid types are frequently used for the same hand type.

There just is not enough bidding space available to be precise with your first response.

Bridge terminology can be difficult for a beginner. Use of the same words to mean different things in different contexts certainly does not help matters. Hopefully, the above table and discussion will make life a little easier for you.

Now let's look at the types of bids in each category.

Sign-off Bids: Other than an immediate jump to a grand slam contract, which is extremely rare and beyond the scope of this text, there are only two sign-off bids that responder can make. Whenever you immediately decide that $G? = N$, you will pass (technically not a bid but a call). The other sign-off bid is an immediate raise of an opening bid of 1M to 4M. This bid is made with the "Weak Freak" hand discussed later in this chapter.

Invitational Bids: Since opener may pass, you should never make such a bid when $G? = Y$. Typical invitational bids are:

- A raise of opener's suit from 1 to 2. This is the bid you usually make when you have adequate trump support and $G? = M^w$ or M^l , especially if opener's suit is a Major. Since this bid is made for two different M subdivisions, we call it a moderate invitational bid.
- A bid of 1NT. This is always a bid of last resort when $G? = M^w$ or M^l and you have no other choice of acceptable bids available. It is also a moderate invitational bid.
- A jump raise of opener's suit from 1 to 3. This is the bid you usually make when you have adequate trump support and have decided $G? = M^s$. This is a strong invitational bid.
- A bid of 2NT. This is a strong invitational bid.

It is important to note that the **1NT response is always a bid of last resort**. That is, it is made when responder's hand does not meet the requirements for the bid of a new suit or a raise of opener's suit. **As such and in contrast to an opening bid of 1NT, a response of 1NT in no way promises or even suggests a balanced hand.** The higher the rank of the opening bid the more this is true. It may be the only option after an opening bid of $1\spadesuit$, whereas a response of 1NT after an opening bid of $1\clubsuit$ actually does show a balanced hand because there are so many other options available.

Forcing Bid: The only purely forcing bid is a bid of a new suit. You will often make a forcing bid simply to get more information from opener, i.e., to let opener further describe his hand in terms of strength and shape. When you have decided $G? = M^w$ or M^l , you can bid a new suit only at the 1 level. If $G? = M^s$ or Y, you are strong enough to bid a new suit at the 2 level if needed.

After an opening bid of 1 of a suit in first or second seat, a response of a new suit is forcing for one round and shows at least a weak interest in game. Opener must bid again unless his RHO bids or doubles.

Game Bid: The only game bid responder will make when $G? = Y$ is a bid of 3NT. This bid will be made only if

- Responder has a balanced hand
- Responder does not have a 4⁺-card Major or 3⁺-card support for a Major opened by partner
- Responder has 12 - 15 HCP

Responder's Call when $G? = N$

When you have decided $G? = N$, your only reasonable course of action is to pass. If you make any bid, opener will expect that you have decided $G? = M^W$ or better and might take further action, possibly even jumping to a game contract.

♠ J 10 9 7 6 4 2 Here is a simple example. Your partner opened the bidding with
 ♥ - 1♥ and you hold this hand. As much as you dislike partner's 1♥
 ♦ 7 4 3 contract and think that 1♠ might be much better, you know that
 ♣ 9 6 3 $G? = N$, so you have to pass. Besides, you can never play in 1♠
 if you bid it now anyway. It would be a forcing bid and partner
 would bid again, maybe even jumping to 4♥! Then how would you feel when
 you put your hand on the table as dummy? You would probably want to crawl
 under it!

It is extremely important that the student recognize a significant fundamental difference between certain responses to a 1NT opening bid and an opening bid of 1 of a suit:

- *After an opening bid of 1N a response of a new suit at the 2 level is a sign-off bid.*
- *After an opening bid of 1 of a suit, a response of a new suit is forcing for 1 round and shows at least a weak interest in game.*

If partner opens 1NT you can “rescue” him from a bad contract when you have a long suit and a weak hand, but this option is not available if partner opens the bidding with 1 of a suit.

Responder's First Priority when $G? = M$ or Y

Whenever you know that game is a possibility or are sure you want to be at a game contract, you will make some bid. Your goal is to reach a Golden Game. If partner opened 1M and you have at least 3-card support, you know there is a

Golden Fit so the only remaining question might be the level, if $G? = M$. Otherwise your first priority should be to find a Golden Fit in a Major Suit even if you know there is a Golden Fit in a minor suit.

When $G? = M$ or Y , responder's first priority is to get a Y or N answer to GFMS?

Responder's Bid of a New Suit

Rules for Bidding a New Suit

- Bid at the **cheapest** level available
- Cannot bid at 2 level unless $G? = M^S$ or Y
- Almost always promises at least 4 cards
 - Always if at the 1 level
 - Rarely a 3-card minor at the 2 level

The first rule does not mean that you should make the cheapest bid available, only that once you choose the suit to bid you bid that suit as cheaply as possible. The guidelines for choosing the suit to bid as responder are similar to those for opening the bidding:

1. Bid your longest suit
2. Tiebreaker rules
 - a. Higher ranking of two 5-card or longer suits
 - b. Cheapest of two or more 4-card suits

The Two-Over-One Response

A bid of a new suit by responder at the 2 level when a bid of the same suit at the 1 level is not available is called a ***two-over-one response***. For example, a response of $2\heartsuit$ after an opening bid of $1\spadesuit$. Such a bid should not be made unless responder's decision regarding $G?$ is M^S or Y . This bid is a very significant move toward a game contract, and in some bidding systems can be made only if $G? = Y$. Quite often this bid can consume significant bidding space. It always eliminates all 1-level rebids for opener, and can even eliminate many 2 level rebids such as a $2\heartsuit$ response to a $1\spadesuit$ opening bid. Other times it leaves opener with more options at the 2 level, for example, a $2\clubsuit$ response to any opening 1-level suit bid.

Because so many possible rebids have been eliminated for opener, he may often have difficulty describing his strength and shape without going past a safe level for the partnership. As a result it has become a standard agreement that after a two-over-one response, responder promises to bid again unless opener

rebids at the game level or above, although some partnerships allow responder to pass if opener rebids his suit or 2NT.

This means that responder will have to use some judgment when faced with certain bidding decisions. She must make sure that she is prepared to make a rebid after any rebid opener may choose (below game). In particular, when she has the option of bidding a 4⁺-card Major at the 1 level or a longer minor at the 2 level, she should usually choose the Major unless $G? = Y$. Otherwise the bidding may get too high for the partnership resources.

RESPONDING TO A MAJOR SUIT OPENING BID

For the remainder of this chapter we focus on responses to an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠. Responses to an opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦ are addressed in the next chapter.

Responder's Bidding Messages

Here are the general categories of your options and the messages they send:

1. Pass – Sign Off, $G? = N$ (previously discussed)
2. 1 of a new suit (1♠ after an opening bid of 1♥ in the current context) – Forcing, I have at least 4 cards in my suit and $G? = M^W, M^I, M^S$ or Y; please do not pass
3. 1NT – Moderate Invitational, $G? = M^W$ or M^I , I have fewer than 3 cards in your suit and fewer than 4 spades if your opening bid was 1♥
4. 2m – Forcing, I almost always have at least 4 cards in my minor suit and $G? = M^S$ or Y; please do not pass
5. 2♥ (after an opening bid of 1♠) – Forcing, I have at least a 5-card suit and $G? = M^S$ or Y, I may have 3⁺-card spade support; please do not pass
6. 2M (opener's Major) – Moderate Invitational, $G? = M^W$ or M^I and I have at least 3-card support for your Major
7. 2NT – Strong Invitational, $G? = M^S$ and I have a balanced hand with fewer than 3 cards in your suit and no 5⁺-card suit (never a 5-card Major, rarely a 5-card minor)
8. 3M (opener's Major) – Strong Invitational, $G? = M^S$ and I have at least 4 cards in your suit
9. 3NT – $G? = Y$, I have a balanced hand with fewer than 3 cards in your suit and fewer than 4 spades if your opening bid was 1♥
10. 4M (opener's Major) – Sign Off, I have at least 5 cards in your suit with a singleton or void, but $G? = M^I$ at best and could be N (see weak freak hand below).

Bids in categories 2 through 9 are all offensive bids. They are made when you really believe the hand belongs to your side or at least it is very likely that it does. After all, partner has at least 13 points and you have at least 6 so you have 19⁺ in

the partnership. If either of you has a little extra you are likely to have more points than the opponents. Of course when everyone adds a little for long suits or short suits, there can be significantly more than 40 total points. So as responder when you are on the low end of your game interest, you are not sure. Nonetheless, you certainly want to be in the bidding battle from an offensive viewpoint.

Bids in the last category are defensive bids. They are made with a hand that is commonly called a “weak freak.” They fall into a general category of bids that are referred to as preemptive bids. The idea is to take as much bidding space as possible away from the opponents to make it difficult for them to communicate when you know or suspect that they may have more strength than you do. Let’s get our discussion of bids in category 10 out of the way so we can concentrate on the offensive bids.

Responding to a Major Suit with a “Weak Freak” Hand

♠ Q 9 7 6 2 Suppose you have this hand when you hear partner open the bidding with 1♠ and your RHO passes. Whose deal do you think this is –
♥ 7 yours or your opponents? What are your prospects if your side
♦ 7 4 3 plays the deal on offense? Do you think the opponents have a heart
♣ K 9 6 3 fit? What are your prospects if the opponents outbid you and your
 side has to defend against a heart contract?

You have only 5 HCP. Unless partner has at least 15 HCP the opponents have more than you do. Even if he does have 15 HCP it’s a toss-up. Of course partner could have a big hand with about 20 HCP and then it is clearly your deal.

If partner plays the deal in a spade contract he should not lose more than 1 spade trick and quite possibly not any. He certainly won’t lose more than 1 heart trick. Hopefully he has some help in the minor suits so he should not lose more than a few tricks there. He could easily be in a situation to take anywhere from 8 - 10 tricks.

You have only 1 heart and partner probably has 4 at the most. That leaves at least 8 for the opponents. They are almost certain to have a Golden Fit in hearts.

If you defend against a heart contract by the opponents, your side won’t take more than 1 spade trick since one opponent has at most a singleton. Your side may not take any heart tricks. If you are lucky you might take a trick with the ♣K. Any other tricks will have to come from partner. It looks like your opponents might be able to take 8 - 10 tricks.

It is a little difficult to judge this hand exactly. But the fewer tricks you can take, the more they can take, and vice versa. You do know that if you give the opponents bidding room to find their fit and show each other the strengths of their hands, they will be able to make a reasonable decision regarding the level to which they should compete. However, if you can make them guess by removing much of their bidding space, you have an excellent chance of achieving your goal of minimizing their score. You can do this with a jump to 4♠ AND partner has a

reasonable chance of making this contract. But even if he goes set, the opponents probably could have scored more points by bidding and making a heart contract.

This is a good time to emphasize that the goal of bidding is not necessarily to always bid to a level that you are relatively certain of making, but rather to a level that will give you the best score. Certainly in a noncompetitive auction, stopping at a level you have high expectations of fulfilling is reasonable, taking into consideration that you would like to receive game and slam bonuses when those levels appear reachable. But in a competitive auction bidding higher than you think you can make and giving the opponents 50 or 100 points for setting you is better than letting them play in their suit and score 110 or 140 points, or perhaps even up to a game bonus level.

This jump raise to 4 of partner's Major should never be made with a G? = M^S or Y hand. The bid warns partner that slam is really out of the question so he can comfortably pass even if he has a hand worth approximately 20 points.

Responding to a Major Suit When G? = M^W or M^I

When your hand is this weak your options are very limited. Of the list given previously your choices are restricted to 2, 3 and 6, repeated here in order of priority and abbreviated form.

Priorities When Partner Opened 1M and G? = M^W or M^I

1. *Raise to 2 of opener's Major*
2. *1♠ after an opening bid of 1♥*
3. *1N*

Let's look at a few examples where your partner has opened the bidding with 1♥.

♠864 GFMS? = Y in hearts, no change in the value of your hand, G? = M^W.
 ♥953 Bid 2♥. You know you have a Golden Fit so that is definitely the
 ♦K98 strain. You have only a moderate game interest so you make the
 ♣K932 cheapest bid you can that also tells him you have a Golden Fit in
 hearts. This tells partner about your decisions and lets him further
 describe his hand. Your message was a little ambiguous. He will know your G?
 decision was M^W or M^I, but not which. He will make a new decision regarding
 G?. If he decides G? = N he will pass. If he decides G? = Y, he will raise to 4♥.
 If he decides G? = M, he will raise to 3♥ to tell you he still is not sure. You
 don't need to worry about how many points he has, only that his decision was G?
 = M because he didn't know if yours was M^W or M^I. But you do know. It was
 M^W so you revise your answer to G? = N and pass. But change the ♥9 to the ♥Q
 and your initial decision would have been M^I so your revised decision would be
 G? = Y and you would bid 4♥.

♠ K 8 6 4 GFMS? = M in hearts (if opener has 6⁺), GFMS? = M in spades
 ♥ 9 5 (partner could have 4⁺ spades), no change in the value of your hand,
 ♦ K 9 8 G? = M^I. Bid 1♠. Partner could be 4=5=x=x, x=6=x=x, 5=6=x=x or
 ♣ K 9 3 2 some other shape. So tell partner you probably do not have 3-card or
 better heart support, but definitely have at least 4 spades. Since you
 have bid a new suit, your message regarding your game interest is very ambigu-
 ous. It could be anywhere from M^W to Y. In the next two topics you will see
 that sometimes you make this same bid even when you do have trump support for
 partner.

♠ 10 8 GFMS? = N , no change in the value of your hand, G? = M^W.
 ♥ - Bid 1NT. Yes, this bid is very distasteful. You would really
 ♦ 9 6 5 2 prefer to bid 2♣. However, bidding a new suit at the 2 level
 ♣ K Q 9 8 7 3 2 shows a hand for which G? = M^S or Y, and you are not that
 strong. While an opening bid of 1NT promises a balanced
 hand, **a response of 1NT can be made with any shape.**

♠ K 8 6 4 GFMS? = Y in hearts, GFMS? = M in spades, no change in the
 ♥ 9 5 3 value of your hand, G? = M^I. Bid 2♥. Even though there may
 ♦ K 9 8 be a Golden fit in spades, you know there is a Golden Fit in
 ♣ K 3 2 hearts and **your first priority is to raise partner**, so do it.

Responding to a Major Suit When G? = M^S

When your hand is a little stronger you have a few more options. Of the list given previously, your choices are 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8, repeated here in order of priority and abbreviated form.

Priorities When Partner Opened 1M and G? = M^S

1. *Raise to 3M (promises 4⁺-card support)*
2. *1♠ after an opening bid of 1♥*
3. *2♥ after an opening bid of 1♠ (promises a 5⁺-card suit)*
4. *2m*
5. *2NT (denies 3⁺-card support)*

It is convenient to discuss these options by looking at some examples, starting with responses to an opening bid of 1♥.

♠ 8 6 This is a classic hand for a raise to 3♥. This jump raise of partner's
 ♥ A 10 5 3 suit is referred to as a **limit raise** in modern bridge terminology. It
 ♦ K 9 8 promises **4⁺-card** trump support and shows a hand for which G? =
 ♣ K 9 3 2 M^S. The term comes from the idea that this level is as high as the
 partnership can safely bid if opener has the minimum strength re-

quirements for his opening bid, about 13 or 14 points. Opener has an easy decision at his second turn. With 13 or 14 points he decides $G? = N$ and passes. With a stronger hand he decides $G? = Y$ and bids $4♥$.

$♠ K 9 3 2$ This hand has exactly the same strength as the previous hand but
 $♥ A 10 5$ only 3-card heart support so it does not qualify for the jump raise.
 $♦ K 9 8 5$ Instead you have to start out by bidding a new suit and $1♠$ will work
 $♣ 9 2$ quite well. Now opener may think that you do not have trump support for him, but since you bid a new suit he will have to bid again. Your intent is to bid $3♥$ at your next turn to show your strength and **3-card** support. This is one example of “*two-step bidding*” when you have trump support. You first bid a new suit which forces partner to bid again. Then you show your support with your second bid.

$♠ 8 6$ This hand is similar to the above with the black suit patterns reversed. Since you can't bid $1♠$, you have to choose one of the minors. With a choice of 4-card suits you bid them “*up-the-line*” meaning the **cheaper** one first. In this case it really doesn't make a lot of difference, since you expect to bid $3♥$ at your next turn anyway. But just to develop the habit bid $2♣$.

$♠ J 9 3 2$ Here is an exception to the second preference. **When bidding a new suit the general rule is to bid your longest suit if you can.**
 $♥ K 10 5$ When $G? = M^S$ you are strong enough to bid at the 2 level so start
 $♦ A 9 8 6 5$ with $2♦$. Again, your intent is to bid $3♥$ at your next opportunity.
 $♣ 9$

In the third example above the concept of bidding suits “up-the-line” was introduced. This means the cheapest suit available on the bidding ladder **not** the lowest-ranking suit. For example, if partner bid $1♥$ and you held 4 clubs and 4 spades you would bid $1♠$ not $2♣$. Clubs are lower ranking than spades but the bid of $1♠$ is cheaper than the bid of $2♣$.

In all of the above examples you had trump support for partner. Let's look at a few hands where that is not the case. The opening bid is still $1♥$.

$♠ K 9 3 2$ Just as in the second example above, you start with a bid of $1♠$.
 $♥ 10 5$ What you do next depends on opener's rebid, but you should tend to
 $♦ K 9 8 5$ bid again to show the strength of your hand. If he rebids $1N$ you
 $♣ A 9 2$ may pass. If he rebids $2♣$ you will rebid $2N$. If he rebids $2♦$, $2♥$ or $2♠$ you will raise to the 3 level.

$♠ A 8 6$ A bid of $2NT$ perfectly describes this hand – $GFMS? = N$, $G? =$
 $♥ 10 5$ M^S , you have a balanced hand, you have fewer than 4 spades and
 $♦ K 9 8 5$ fewer than 3 hearts. Since this bid perfectly describes your shape
 $♣ K 9 3 2$ and strength, you do not plan to bid again.

♠ K 9 3 2 While we often like to bid our longest suit first, you need to plan
 ♥ 10 5 ahead with this hand. If you start with 2♦, what are you going to
 ♦ A 9 8 6 5 rebid if opener then rebids 2NT? Your 2♦ bid promises another
 ♣ K 9 bid, but you are not strong enough to rebid 3♠ over 2NT since that
 would be a new suit and forcing, *de facto* to game. So you have to
 start with 1♠. Now if partner rebids 1NT you may pass since your revised G?
 decision will change from M^S to N. If he rebids 2♣ you will show a preference
 to 2♥. If he bids 2♦ you will raise to 3♦. If he rebids 2♥ you will raise to 3♥. If
 he raises you to 2♠ you will raise to 3♠. If he rebids 2N you will bid 3NT.

♠ 9 2 Although you have 10 points with your two 5-card suits, you will
 ♥ 5 have a rebid problem if you start with 2♣ or 2♦ and opener rebids
 ♦ A 9 8 6 5 2NT. In fact, with this distribution and the poor quality of your
 ♣ K J 9 3 2 minor suits, you will have the same problem with a little stronger
 hand. You are better off if you bid 1NT with the intent of passing
 opener's next bid, although if he next bids 2m you could raise to
 3m.

Suppose partner opened the bidding with 1♠. The first and fourth priorities work about the same as for an opening bid of 1♥. But now we have the third priority available as shown below.

♠ 8 6 Since your hand is strong enough for a 2 over 1 response, it is nat-
 ♥ A 10 8 5 3 ural to bid 2♥. **This specific sequence, a 2♥ response after an**
 ♦ K 9 8 **opening bid of 1♠, is sometimes referred to as a “five and dime**
 ♣ K 9 2 **bid” because it promises at least 5 hearts and at least 10 points.**
 Let's change the hand a little to see why you need a 5-card heart
 suit for this bid.

♠ 8 6 You have only 4 hearts but you also have a 4-card club suit. We
 ♥ A 10 5 3 bid 4-card suits “up-the-line” so your response would be 2♣. Are
 ♦ K 9 8 there any hand shapes where you would not have a 4-card minor to
 ♣ K 9 7 2 bid when G? = M^S? Yes there is one as shown in the next exam-
 ple.

♠ K 8 6 Here you have the strength for a limit raise bid – a jump to 3♠.
 ♥ Q 10 5 3 But that bid requires 4-card trump support and you have only 3
 ♦ K Q 8 spades. You would like to bid 2♥ but as we have just seen, that
 ♣ 9 4 2 requires 5 hearts. So what are you to do? This is one of those rare
 instances where you have to respond in a 3-card minor. Some
 players might prefer to bid their stronger minor – 2♦ in this case. But if you al-
 ways bid 2♣ when faced with this dilemma then when you do respond 2♦ partner
 will know you have at least 4 diamonds. That is the recommendation here.

Responding to a Major Suit When $G? = Y$

When you know that you want to be in a game contract, you have to be careful and make sure that you do not make a bid below game that partner can pass. You must either make a forcing bid or a game bid. Of the options given earlier, only the bids in categories 2, 4, 5 and 9 satisfy this requirement. They are listed below in order of priority and abbreviated form.

Priorities When Partner Opened 1M and $G? = Y$

1. $1\spadesuit$ after an opening bid of $1\heartsuit$
2. $2\heartsuit$ after an opening bid of $1\spadesuit$
3. 3NT
4. 2m

Note especially that a raise of partner's suit does not appear in this list. Raises to the 2 level and 3 level are invitational bids that partner may pass. **Those bids are out of the question.** You must train yourself to resist the urge to jump to 4 of partner's Major. When you have a fit for partner's Major and 12^+ points, it is very easy to conclude $GFMS? = Y$, $G? = Y$. I am the captain. It is my job to get to the proper contract. I guess I should bid 4 of partner's Major because I know that is where we belong. Remember **that bid** is reserved for the "weak freak" hand discussed earlier.

So what do you do when $G? = Y$ and you have a fit for partner's Major? You do a little dance that everyone, at least us Texans, should know. It's called the two-step. Your first step is to bid a new suit – the 1st, 2nd or 4th option above. That bid is forcing so you know you will get another chance to bid. Your second step is to jump to game in the Major at your second turn to bid. This is another example of the idea initially presented in the earlier example where you had limit-raise strength but only 3-card trump support.

These priorities are somewhat flexible depending on the specific Major Suit opening bid and responder's shape. The following general principles provide additional guidance:

1. Whenever you have trump support (Golden Fit) for partner's Major Suit, start by bidding a new suit and jump to game in partner's suit at your second turn.
 - a. Longest (5^+ cards if hearts)
 - b. Higher ranking 5-card
 - c. Cheapest 4-card suit or 3-card minor (clubs)
2. Without trump support
 - a. With an unbalanced hand, start by bidding a new suit.
 - i. Choose longest suit
 - ii. Higher ranking of two 5-card or 6-card suits
 - iii. Cheapest of two or more 4-card suits

- b. With a balanced hand
 - i. Bid 1♠ if you have 4 or 5 spades and partner opened 1♥
 - ii. Bid 2♥ over 1♠ with a 5-card heart suit
 - iii. Bid 3NT with 12 - 15 HCP and no 5-card suit (your shape will be 4-4-3-2 with a doubleton in partner's Major)
 - iv. Bid 2m (your shape will be 5-3-3-2 with a 5-card minor and a doubleton in partner's Major), you might choose to bid 3NT instead if your minor is rather weak

Several examples should also be helpful. As usual we start with an opening bid of 1♥ so the 1♠ response is available.

♠ K 9 3 2 Respond with a bid of 1♠ intending to jump to 4♥ at your second turn. But if partner raises your spades, bid 4♠ at your second turn.
 ♥ A 10 5
 ♦ K 9 8 5 **When you have both a 4-4 fit in one Major and a 5-3 fit in the other Major, you can often score an extra trick or even two by playing in the 4-4 fit.**
 ♣ K 2

♠ 8 6 Respond with 2♣ and jump to 4♥ at your second turn.
 ♥ A 10 5
 ♦ K Q 8 5
 ♣ K 9 3 2

♠ K J 9 3 2 Respond 1♠. You are probably headed for a 3NT contract but 4♥ and 4♠ are possibilities.
 ♥ 10 5
 ♦ K 9 8 5
 ♣ A K

♠ K J 3 2 Respond 2♦. You are strong enough to rebid spades at your next turn if partner rebids 2♥, 2N or 3♣. Of course, if he should happen to rebid 2♠ you will raise to 4♠.
 ♥ 10 5
 ♦ K 9 6 8 5
 ♣ A K

♠ K 2 You are hoping to get to 3NT eventually but there might also be a slam in one of your minor suits. Start with 2♦, planning to rebid 3♣ if opener rebids 2♥ – he very likely has a 6-card suit. If instead opener raises your diamonds, try the Golden Game of 3NT, hoping to scramble home with 9 tricks.
 ♥ 5
 ♦ A 9 8 6 5
 ♣ K J 9 3 2

♠ K 9 3 2 You are probably headed for 3NT with this balanced hand but no reason not to check first for a Golden Fit in spades or even hearts. Respond 1♠. If opener bids 1NT you will raise to 3NT. If he bids 2 of either minor, you will bid 3NT. If he bids 2♥ you will raise to 4♥. If he bids 2♠ you will bid 4♠.
 ♥ 10 5
 ♦ K 9 8 5
 ♣ A K 2

♠ K 3 2 This is a classic hand for a response of 3NT.

♥ 10 5

♦ K 9 8 5

♣ A K 3 2

♠ K Q 2 You are too strong to bid 3NT so start with the bid of a new suit –
♥ 10 5 2♣.

♦ K Q 8 5

♣ A K 3 2

♠ K Q 2 Resist the temptation to bid 4♥. Remember that is the “weak freak”
♥ K Q 8 5 bid. Start with a new suit, 2♣. Then bid 4♥ at your next turn.

♦ A 5 3

♣ 10 5 2

Responses after an opening bid of 1♠ are similar to those above except that the 2♥ bid is available. But that option is very similar to those sequences where G? = M^S discussed in the previous topic of this section.

SUMMARY

First Things First

- Answer GFMS? and GFms?
- Revalue your hand
- Answer G?

Types of Bids

- Sign-off
 - Pass
 - Jump to 4 of partner's Major (shows a "weak-freak" hand)
- Invitational: Moderate Invitational, Strong Invitational
 - Moderate – Raise partner from 1 to 2 or bid 1NT
 - Strong – Raise partner from 1 to 3 or jump to 2NT
- Forcing
 - New suit
- Game
 - 3NT

Rules for Bidding a New Suit

- Bid at cheapest level
- Cannot bid at 2 level unless G? = M^S or Y
- Almost always promises at least four cards
 - Always if at the 1 level
 - Rarely a 3-card minor at the 2 level

Guidelines for choosing a new suit

1. Bid your longest suit
2. Tiebreaker rules
 - a. Higher ranking of two 5-card or longer suits
 - b. Cheapest of two or more 4-card suits

Responses to Opening Bids of 1 of a Major

- G? = N
 - Pass
- G? = M^W or M^I
 - Raise to 2 of opener's Major
 - 1♠ after an opening bid of 1♥
 - 1NT

- $G? = M^S$
 - Raise to 3 of opener's Major
 - Bid a new suit
- $G? = Y$
 - $1\spadesuit$ after an opening bid of $1\heartsuit$
 - Bid 3NT (12 - 15 HCP) with a balanced hand and no trump support
 - Bid a new suit at the 2 level



CHAPTER 4

- Responses to an Opening Bid of One of a Suit - Part 2

Responding to a Minor Suit Opening Bid

Potpourri

Summary



RESPONDING TO A MINOR SUIT OPENING BID

Responding to partner's opening bid in a minor suit is significantly different from responding to his opening bid in a Major Suit. As we saw in the previous section, in the latter case the first priority was to raise partner if we could. Sometimes we could do this immediately and sometimes we had to delay the show of our support. But regardless, when we had at least 3-card support for partner's Major Suit the eventual strain was pretty well determined.

When partner opens a minor suit the final strain is rarely known, because we would like to see if we can find a Golden Fit in a Major Suit or if notrump is a reasonable strain. Also, since opener could have only a 3-card suit we are not even guaranteed a Golden Fit in his minor unless we have at least 5-card support. Sometimes we really have no option other than to raise partner's minor suit. We can always feel safe doing this when we have 5-card support. Since there is only one hand pattern (4=4=3=2) for which partner holds only 3 diamonds when he opens 1♦, he will almost always have at least a 4-card suit, so we can feel fairly comfortable raising his diamonds with only 4-card support. There is a higher probability that partner holds only 3 clubs when his opening bid is 1♣, so we are a little shaky when we raise that opening bid with only 4 cards. But in reality he is more likely to have 4, 5 or 6 cards than only 3 when he opens 1♣, so we should not be too fearful.

Since one of our objectives is to find a GFMS, does that mean we should always respond in a Major Suit if we hold 4⁺ cards in one? Not necessarily. There are times when we should bid 1♦ after a 1♣ opening or 2♣ after a 1♦ opening, even if we hold a 4-card Major. We'll address these issues later in this section.

When partner opens in a minor suit there are very few changes you will make to the value of your hand. You will have already counted extra for long suits but not short suits, so you will not make any changes for those. The only thing you might do is note any unsupported quacks you hold in the suit he bid. They are worth a little more than the discounted value you initially gave them.

Responder's Bidding Messages

Here are the general categories of your options and the messages they send:

1. Pass – Sign Off, G? = N (This response was discussed in the previous chapter. It is included here just for completeness in this list.)
2. 1 of a new suit – Forcing, I have at least 4 cards in my suit and at least a weak interest in game, but my hand is unlimited. Please do not pass.
3. 1NT – Moderate Invitational, G? = M^w or M^l, I usually do not have a 4-card suit that is higher ranking than your suit (for tactical reasons you might choose to make this bid with a 2=3=4=4 or 3=2=4=4 pattern after a 1♣ opening bid).

4. 2♣ after an opening bid of 1♦ – Forcing, $G? = M^S$ or Y, I have at least 5 clubs. I probably do not have a 4-card Major, but don't rule out that possibility. Please do not pass.
5. 2m (opener's minor) – Moderate Invitational, $G? = M^W$ or M^I , I do not have a 4-card Major but I have at least 4-card support for your minor (usually 5⁺-card support if clubs).
6. 2NT – Strong Invitational, $G? = M^S$, I have a balanced hand without a 4⁺-card Major and probably not a 5⁺-card minor. 3NT looks like our best Golden Game but you are free to suggest something else if you wish.
7. 3m (opener's minor) – Strong Invitational, $G? = M^S$. I do not have a 4⁺-card Major and I have at least 4 (usually 5 if clubs) cards in your suit.
8. 3NT – $G? = Y$, I have a balanced hand similar to that for a 2NT response.

Many of these bids are similar to their Major Suit response counterparts. All of the bids in categories 2 through 8 are offensive bids.

We do not include a “weak freak” raise of a minor suit at this time because responder should never be tempted to jump to 4 or 5 of partner's minor suit opening bid **with a good hand**. These bids are strictly preemptive in nature and are extremely rare since opener may have only a 3-card suit.

Responding to a Minor Suit When $G? = M^W$ or M^I

When your hand is this weak your options are very limited. Of the list given previously, your choices are restricted to 2, 3 and 5, repeated here in order of priority and abbreviated form.

Priorities When Partner Opened 1m and $G? = M^W$ or M^I

1. 1 of a new suit
2. 2m
Usually 5⁺-card support if clubs
Always 4⁺-card support if diamonds
3. 1N

Let's look at some examples after an opening bid of 1♦.

♠ K J 9 2 Even though you probably have a Golden Fit in diamonds, it is more
♥ 10 5 2 important to look for a Golden Fit in spades. Respond 1♠. Note that
♦ K 9 8 5 while you cannot open the bidding in a Major Suit unless you have a
♣ 8 4 least 5 cards, you may respond in any suit holding only 4 cards. After
all if there is a 4-4 fit in a Major Suit, WHO is going to mention it if
you don't.

♠ K Q J 2
 ♥ 10 5 3 2
 ♦ 9 8 5
 ♣ 8 4

Just enough strength to respond. Bid 1♥. With more than one 4-card suit, you start with the cheapest bid, regardless of relative strength. If partner has 4 hearts he will raise your hearts and you will pass. If partner does not have 4 hearts but has 4 spades, he will most likely bid 1♠, but 2♠ is a remote possibility. After a 1♠ response you will pass. Add a couple of points, say change the ♥5 to the ♥Q and you would raise to 2♠.

♠ J 10 9 8 2
 ♥ K Q 3 2
 ♦ 9 8 5
 ♣ 4

The general rule is to respond in your longest suit if you can. Respond 1♠.

♠ J 10 9 8 2
 ♥ K Q 7 3 2
 ♦ 9 5
 ♣ 4

With two 5-card (or 6-card) suits start with the higher-ranking. Respond 1♠.

♠ 9 6
 ♥ K 5 2
 ♦ K 9 8 6 5
 ♣ 8 7 4

With two very weak suits and a known Golden Fit in diamonds pick the safe contract of 2♦.

♠ K 6 4
 ♥ K 5 2
 ♦ 9 8 6 5
 ♣ Q 7 4

You probably have a Golden Fit in diamonds but your hand looks very notrumpish. Bid 1NT.

♠ 6 4
 ♥ 5 2
 ♦ K Q 6 5
 ♣ Q 9 7 5 4

Better to raise to 2♦ than bid 1NT, even with only 4-card support.

♠ 6
 ♥ J 5 2
 ♦ 9 5 3
 ♣ K Q 8 7 6 4

You can't pass for fear of missing a game if partner happens to have a really strong hand of about 20 points. You can't raise partner with only 3-card support and you are not strong enough to bid 2♣. As reluctant as you might be, you have to bid 1NT (the bid of last resort).

Most of your decisions when partner opens the bidding with 1♣ are the same as when he opens 1♦. But you now have one other choice. The 1♦ response is available. One reason for you to bid 1♦ is that you do not have a 4-card Major, you do have 4⁺ diamonds and you cannot raise opener's club suit. But if you have a 4-card diamond suit and a 4-card Major, which should you bid? What if

you have a longer diamond suit, say 5 or 6 cards? Before answering these questions, let's lay a little groundwork.

If you have only a 4-card diamond suit and a 4-card Major, what would you hope to accomplish with a bid of 1♦? Do you think partner has 4 diamonds in his hand? If he does, why did he open 1♣? The only reason to do so would be if he had more clubs than diamonds. His shape would then have to be something like x=x=4=5. But now if you have 3⁺ clubs, you also have a Golden Fit in clubs so you really don't need to worry about a diamond fit. So when you have moderate support for clubs (3⁺, or maybe even a high doubleton honor such as Qx or better) there is no particular reason to mention the diamond suit. If partner is forced to rebid 2♣ after your response, you will be in a reasonable contract.

But suppose that opener does have this pattern. You are short in clubs and bid your Major instead of 1♦. It is very likely that he will have a little rebid problem. As you will discover later in this book, he cannot rebid 2♦ unless he has a significantly stronger hand than the minimum required for his opening bid. If he cannot support your Major, he really should not rebid notrump with an unbalanced hand, and may be forced to simply rebid his 5-card club suit. Now you will not be able to mention your diamonds because that would be another new suit and forcing for one round. You would have to pass and you would be in an inferior contract.

The conclusion is that it is all right to bypass a bid of 1♦ to show a 4-card Major when you have tolerance for a 2♣ contract but it is better to bid 1♦ when you think 2♣ would be a poor contract.

Other authors have differing opinions and different arguments regarding this issue and I certainly respect those. But for a beginning player I believe the argument presented here has merit and is an easy guideline to follow.

If opener does not have the pattern mentioned above, and does have a 4-card Major, he will have a chance to show it after your 1♦ response. That is, if the opponents don't get into the auction and take away his bidding space. This interference factor by the opponents is the main argument used by some authors for bypassing the 1♦ response when you have a relatively weak hand; and showing your Major Suit right away. By the way, this is more of an issue when your Major Suit is hearts than spades. If your suit is hearts, after your 1♦ response and a bid of 1♠ by your LHO, your partner will not be able to bid 2♥ unless his G? decision is M or Y. If your Major suit is spades and your LHO bids 1♥ your partner will still be able to bid 1♠. Of course if your LHO jumps to 2♥ partner may still have a problem if he feels he does not want to bid 2♠, possibly ending up in a 3-level contract.

Let's move on and look at a few examples after an opening bid of 1♣.

♠ K J 9 2 You will be happy with a 2♣ contract so there is no reason to suggest
♥ 10 5 a diamond contract. Bypass the diamonds and bid 1♠.
♦ K 9 8 5
♣ 8 7 4

♠ K J 2 You do not have a 4-card Major so respond 1♦. However, you
 ♥ 10 5 2 would not be wrong if you chose 1NT instead. After your 1♦ bid
 ♦ K 9 8 5 opener is likely to bid 1M and then you will bid 1NT anyway. In
 ♣ 9 8 4 this sequence you and partner have given each other quite a bit of in-
 formation which is useless to each other, but may be quite helpful to
 the opponents for defensive purposes. Therefore, from a tactical
 viewpoint, it is actually preferable to bid 1NT immediately.

♠ K J 9 2 From your perspective any other suit would be better than clubs.
 ♥ 10 8 7 5 Start bidding your 4-card suits “up-the-line.” Respond 1♦.
 ♦ K 9 8 5
 ♣ 4

Responding to a Minor Suit When $G? = M^S$

When your hand is a little stronger you have a different set of options. Of the list given previously your choices are 2, 4, 6 and 7, repeated here in condensed form.

Responding When Partner Opened 1m and $G? = M^S$

1. *New suit - Longest*
 - *Higher ranking if two 5⁺-card suits*
 - *Up-the-line if two or three 4-card suits*
 - *Do not bypass a 4⁺-card major to bid a longer club suit after a 1♦ opening bid*
2. *2NT - balanced, no 4⁺-card Major*
3. *3m*
 - *Usually 5⁺-card support if clubs*
 - *Always 4⁺-card support if diamonds*

This list is difficult to prioritize because other factors, such as the specific minor that was opened and lengths of suits come into play. Before looking at specific example hands we'll discuss some of these issues.

Your partner opened the bidding with 1♣ and you have a 4-card Major and 5 clubs. You now have a choice of bidding your Major or making a limit raise by jumping to 3♣. Because of the goal to search for a Golden Fit in a Major Suit, you should show your Major Suit. But if you had 4 diamonds and 5 clubs without a 4-card Major, bidding your diamonds would not serve any useful purpose so you should respond 3♣.

Here are some examples after a 1♣ opening bid.

- ♠ K J 9 2 Start with 1♦ showing your 4-card suits up-the-line. No need to
 ♥ A 5 bypass the diamond suit when you are this strong.
 ♦ K 9 8 5
 ♣ 8 7 4
- ♠ K 10 9 8 2 Start with 1♠, your longest suit.
 ♥ A 5
 ♦ K 9 8 5
 ♣ 8 4
- ♠ 8 2 While you could respond 1♦, that would not serve any real pur-
 ♥ A 5 pose. Better to make a bid that more accurately describes your
 ♦ Q 9 8 5 hand, 3♣.
 ♣ K J 9 8 2
- ♠ 8 2 With only 4 clubs it is better to start with 1♦.
 ♥ A 8 5
 ♦ Q 9 8 5
 ♣ K J 9 2
- ♠ J 7 2 This is an ideal hand for a 2NT response. You have only 4-card
 ♥ A 8 5 club support and no other 4-card suit. Partner will be pretty sure
 ♦ Q 9 8 you have 4-card club support because you probably would have
 ♣ K J 9 2 bid 1 of a new suit instead of 2NT if you had 4 cards in some other
 suit.

Now let's see what might happen after a 1♦ opening bid.

- ♠ K J 9 2 You have two 4-card suits. Make the cheapest bid – 1♥.
 ♥ K 9 8 5
 ♦ 8 4
 ♣ A 7 4
- ♠ K 9 8 2 Even though your clubs are longer than your spades, you are not
 ♥ 8 5 quite strong enough to start with 2♣ and then perhaps be “forced”
 ♦ K 4 to introduce spades at the 3 level after a 2NT rebid by opener.
 ♣ A 10 8 7 4

Responding to a Minor Suit When G? = Y

Just as when responding to a Major Suit opening bid, when you know that you want to be in a game contract, you have to be careful and make sure that you do not make a bid below game that partner can pass. You must either make a forcing bid or a game bid. Of the options given earlier only the bids in categories 2, 4 and 8 satisfy this requirement. They are listed below in order of priority and abbreviated form.

Priorities When Partner Opened 1m and G? = Y

1. *New suit - Longest*
 - *Higher ranking if two 5⁺-card suits*
 - *Up-the-line if two or three 4-card suits*
2. *3NT (12 - 15 HCP, balanced, no 4-card Major)*

When bidding a new suit you need not worry about bypassing a 4-card diamond suit to show a 4-card Major. You have plenty of strength to show the Major later if appropriate. You also need not worry about bypassing a 4⁺-card Major to bid a longer club suit after a 1♦ opening bid. You can always bid the Major later.

All of these ideas have been illustrated in previous examples, but we'll look at a couple more as a refresher, starting with an opening bid of 1♣.

♠ K Q 8 2 Even though you know there is a Golden Fit in clubs, you want to
♥ 9 5 look for a Golden Fit in spades. Respond 1♠.

♦ K 4

♣ A J 8 7 4

♠ K Q 8 2 Start with a bid of 1♦. If partner bids either Major you will raise to
♥ Q J 6 5 game in his suit. If he raises your diamonds, bids 1NT or 2♣, you
♦ A J 8 7 will bid 3NT. Note that if he raises your diamonds and you jump to
♣ 4 3NT, you give him the option of pursuing slam, perhaps in dia-
monds if he thinks that is a possibility.

♠ 8 2 Respond 1♥, the higher ranking of two 5-card suits. If partner does
♥ A Q J 6 5 not raise your hearts, you plan to bid 2♦ at your next turn.

♦ A K J 8 7

♣ 4

In the next example the opening bid is 1♦.

♠ 8 2 Respond 2♣, your longest suit. If opener rebids 2♥, you will raise
♥ A Q J 5 to game. After just about any other bid by opener you will show
♦ 8 7 your heart suit.

♣ A K J 8 7

POTPOURRI

The Two-Over-One Response

As mentioned earlier, a 2 over 1 response can be made only if G? = M^S or Y. But just because you satisfy this requirement does not necessarily mean you should make that response, especially if G? = M^S.

There are two issues that arise with these responses:

- What are opener's options after your bid?
- When do you promise another bid?

These are rather complex issues and cannot be fully discussed without considering some of the subject matter of the next two chapters. In general, responder tends to promise another bid if opener makes a rebid below the game level, but there are certain scenarios in which this is not practical. Such responses actually fall into three separate categories, each of which has its own nuances:

1. A 2♣ response after a 1♦ opening
2. A 2m response after a 1M opening
3. A 2♥ response after a 1♠ opening

We will briefly address each of these categories and in so doing will introduce some ideas that are more fully discussed in the next two chapters.

Category 1: The main consideration here is whether you should bypass a 4-card Major when $G? = M^S$. If you do, you run the risk of missing a Golden Fit in that Major because opener is not allowed to bid 2M at his next turn unless $G? = Y$ from his perspective. So if he has a balanced hand he is forced to bid 2NT.² In this scenario responder certainly cannot be expected to always bid again because any such bid (except 3♣) would be game-forcing. Consequently, responder should not make this bid if he has a 4-card Major and $G? = M^S$. He should bid the Major at the 1 level instead.

Category 2: In this scenario responder almost always promises another bid. The only exceptions are if opener bids 2NT or raises responder to 3m.³

Category 3: In this auction responder may pass opener's rebid of 2♠, 2NT or 3♥, otherwise she must bid again.

The bottom line here is that responder should use caution in making a 2 over 1 response when $G? = M^S$. She should be thinking about how the auction might proceed and be prepared for her rebid if opener makes a rebid she cannot pass. In some cases she may want to make a 1NT response even with 10 or 11 points.

² Some partnerships allow a rebid of 2♦ even with a hand pattern such as 4=4=3=2 in this sequence, just to allow responder to show a 4-card Major at the 2 level with her next bid. But this agreement is not recommended here for beginners.

³ Some partnerships allow responder to also pass opener's rebid of his first suit.

The 3NT Response

When $G? = Y$ and you have a balanced hand with 12 - 15 HCP you will often be faced with the choice of bidding 3NT or a new suit. Here are some simple guidelines:

- Bid the suit if it contains 5 cards, unless it is quite weak
- Bid the suit if it contains 4 cards and you can bid it at the 1 level (especially a Major Suit)
- Otherwise bid 3NT

Jump Shifts by Responder

There was a time, not in the 21st century, when it was common practice for responder to make a jump bid in a new suit (e.g., $2♥$ after a $1♣$ opening) when they had a very powerful hand and a long powerful suit. Those bids came up very infrequently so many players switched to using them when they had a long suit and a weak hand – as preemptive bids. There are some players today that probably still use these bids for one of those purposes, but many experts now use them as specialized conventional bids to resolve certain bidding problems.

For the **beginning player** you can follow a simple rule:

Responder NEVER EVER makes a jump shift in a suit.

Some players may feel they need that bid to describe their hand to opener. The counter argument is simple: It is not your job to describe your hand to opener. It is opener's job to describe his hand to you.

Jump Raises of Opener's Suit

In some circles the jump raise of opener's suit is used as a game-forcing raise when $G? = Y$. When $G? = M^S$, those players would first bid a new suit and then support partner at the 3 level at their second turn, just like the method presented in the main body of this chapter when you have only 3-card support.

Also, some players do not adhere to the modern requirement that you have 4-card support for a limit raise of partner's Major Suit. They will make the bid with only 3-card support. Knowing responder has 4-card support can really help opener make correct decisions regarding $G?$ or even $SS?$ with some hands. Besides, we have another way to show a limit raise with only 3-card support. So why not use everything at our disposal?

Minimum Game Requirements

Up until fairly recently the common thinking was that you did not want to be in a Golden Game unless you had 26 points instead of the 25 presented here. Some players still bid on that basis. As a result their $G? = M^S$ range for responder is 11 - 12 points instead of 10 - 11. In this case the lower "M" ranges can be adjusted

to M^w (6 - 8) and M^l (8 - 10), with the 8-point hand going either way depending on your judgment.

When playing with a new partner you might discuss these technicalities. You should be able to adapt to their methods if needed. The most difficult task is to remember the changes in the heat of battle.

SUMMARY

Responses to Opening Bids of 1 of a Minor

- G? = N
 - Pass
- G? = M^w or M^l
 - 1 of a new suit
 - 2 of partner's minor
 - Usually 5⁺-card support if clubs
 - Always 4⁺-card support if diamonds
 - 1NT
- G? = M^s
 - Bid a new suit – longest
 - Higher ranking if two 5⁺-card suits
 - Up-the-line if two or three 4-card suits
 - Do not bypass a 4⁺-card Major to bid a longer club suit after a 1♦ opening bid
 - 2NT – balanced, no 4-card Major
 - 3m (partner's suit)
 - Usually 5⁺-card support if clubs
 - Always 4⁺-card support if diamonds
- G? = Y
 - Bid a new suit – longest
 - Higher ranking if two 5⁺-card suits
 - Up-the-line if two or three 4-card suits
 - 3NT

Potpourri

After a two-over-one response, responder usually promises to bid again unless opener jumps to a game contract. But, there are exceptions dependent on specific bidding sequences. Responder must be cautious when deciding whether choose a 2 over 1 response as opposed to another option. She must be prepared for her rebid if opener makes a rebid she is not allowed to pass.

Guidelines for choosing between 3NT and a new suit bid

- Bid the suit if it contains 5 cards, unless it is quite weak
- Bid the suit if it contains 4 cards and you can bid it at the 1 level
- Otherwise bid 3NT

Responder never jumps in a new suit

Responder NEVER EVER makes a jump shift in a suit.

Jump Raises

Always check with a new partner regarding his treatment of jump raises.

Some players require 26 points for a $G? = Y$ decision.



CHAPTER 5

- Rebids by Opener - Part 1

Opener's General Approach to the
Second Bid

Classification of Opener's Rebids

Responder Made an Invitational Bid

Summary



OPENER'S GENERAL APPROACH TO THE SECOND BID

Opener's first bid did not really give partner very much information about his hand. With respect to strength all responder knows is that opener has 13 - 21 points. If opener's bid was in a Major Suit responder knows that it is opener's longest suit (although opener may have another lower-ranking suit of equal length) and that it contains at least 5 cards. Opener's bid in a minor suit was even more ambiguous. About all responder knows is that opener has at least 3 cards in the suit he opened.

It is with opener's rebid (his second bid) that he at least starts to clarify his hand in terms regarding his own answers to GFMS?, GFms? and G?.

Opener Answers GF?

There are only three types of bidding sequences when you can answer GFMS? with Y:

- You opened the bidding in a Major Suit and partner raised your suit
- Responder bid 1 of a Major and you have at least 4-card support
- You opened the bidding with 1♠, responder bid 2♥ and you have at least 3-card support

There are very few situations when you can answer GFMS? = N. Suppose you do not have a 5⁺-card Major so you open the bidding with 1m. Responder raises your minor or bids 1NT, 2NT or 3NT. She denies a 4-card Major with all of these responses so even if you have a 4-card Major there is no GFMS. If your longest Major Suit is 3 cards or fewer and responder fails to respond in either Major after your minor suit opening bid, you can conclude there is no GFMS. (Responder could be 5=2=6=0 and bid 1♦ after your 1♣ opening but we usually ignore the possibility of these extreme distributional hands when making bidding decisions. Responder will let us know later in the auction if she has this hand.)

Quite often your answer to GFMS? will be M, in which case you will want to continue your probe.

You are rarely interested in a GFms – never if GFMS? = Y – and only as a fallback position if GFMS? = M. Of course any time responder raises your minor suit you know or are fairly certain that you have a Golden Fit there. Partner always has at least 4-card support for your minor and usually 5-card support if your suit is clubs. Another time you know you have a Golden Fit in a minor is when your shape is x=x=4=5 and partner responds 1♦ to your 1♣ opening bid. In cases like this you should be thinking of 3NT if G? = M or Y.

Opener Revalues His Hand

When opener's first bid was 1M he will seldom need to revalue his hand after hearing partner's response, but there are exceptions. Suppose for example that your shape is 4=5=1=3 and you open the bidding 1♥. You initially counted only

HCP plus 1 point for your 5-card heart suit. If partner bids 1♠ you know that you have a Golden Fit in spades and will be playing in that strain. You will now be the dummy so you add a net of 2 points to the value of your hand, subtracting 1 point for your length and adding 3 points for your singleton diamond.

Opener will more frequently revalue his hand when he has opened the bidding with 1m. Now whenever partner responds with 1M and opener has 4⁺-card support, he will make appropriate adjustments as dummy. One of my favorite examples is when opener's shape is 4-4-4-1. He counts only HCP when he opens the bidding with 1m. But if responder bids 1M and that is one of opener's 4-card suits he adds 3 points to his strength for his singleton.

Opener Answers G?

After hearing responder's bid, answering GF? and possibly revaluing his hand, opener revises his own opinion regarding G?, although his opinion on M is not subdivided as responder's is. To do this opener must absolutely be able to recognize **responder's bid** as being one of the following:

- Sign-off (Pass or jump raise to 4M)
- Moderate invitational (simple raise or 1NT)
- Strong invitational (jump raise or 2NT)
- Forcing (new suit – ambiguous strength, G? = M^S or Y if at 2 level)
- Game (3NT with 12 - 15 HCP)

When responder has made a moderate invitational bid opener **knows** her opinion of G? is M^w or M^l. When responder has made a strong invitational bid, opener **knows** responder's opinion of game is M^S. Opener can readily infer responder's point count range in both cases.

When responder has made a forcing bid opener really doesn't have much of an idea of her strength. But this does not prevent him from making a judgment regarding G?. He simply **assumes** she is in a minimum range for her forcing bid. So if responder has bid a new suit at the 1 level opener **assumes** her viewpoint of G? is M^w or M^l. If she has bid a new suit at the 2 level opener **assumes** her viewpoint of G? is M^S. Since responder has made a forcing bid she knows she will get another chance to bid and will clarify her opinion after hearing more from opener.

Opener Revises His Answer to G?

- *If responder raised opener's suit from 1 to 2 or bids a new suit or NT at the 1 level opener **knows** or **assumes** her game interest is M^W or M^I .*
- *If responder raised opener's suit from 1 to 3 or bids a new suit at the 2 level opener **knows** or **assumes** her game interest is M^S .*

So once opener figures out responder's **known** or **assumed** strength, he has little difficulty deciding on an answer to G?. Let's look at a couple of abstract examples and see just how easy this is.

Suppose you opened the bidding with $1\spadesuit$ and partner raised to $2\spadesuit$. Responder made a moderate invitational bid, so her game interest is M^W or M^I , meaning she has 6 - 9 points. If you didn't remember that point range you could work it out knowing that the M range is from 6 to just below the start of the Y range and if responder has as few as 12 points $G? = Y$. There are three M divisions to cover the 6 - 11 interval so that breaks down into 2 points per division. M^W is 6 - 7 points and M^I is 8 - 9. Now suppose your hand values to 15 points. The maximum for the partnership is $15 + 9 = 24$, not enough for game so $G? = N$. But what if you had 19 points? Then you have at least 25 between you and $G? = Y$. If you had 17 points, your combined strength would be 23 - 26 and you would conclude $G? = M$.

You opened the bidding with $1\heartsuit$ and responder raised to $3\heartsuit$ – a strong invitational bid. $G? = M^S$ for responder showing 10 or 11 points. If you have only 13 or 14 points you can conclude $G? = N$ but with anything more you conclude $G? = Y$.

Get used to these two point ranges because your G? decision will **always** be based on either **knowing** or **assuming** responder's strength is in one of those two ranges. Some things in bridge really are simple.

Opener Chooses His Rebid

If responder made an invitational bid you may pass or bid as you see fit. Certainly you would pass only if you decided $G? = N$. But even then you might bid if you thought there was a better contract. This would occur only if responder bid 1NT or 2NT (the other invitational bids are raises of your suit) and you were unbalanced. Note that whenever you have decided $G? = N$ there is no reason to bid higher if you are in a reasonable contract. This is especially true in duplicate bridge scoring. In rubber bridge it may be advantageous to bid to a higher partscore contract to get more points "below the line," but doing so also may jeopardize your contract and if you fail to make your contract you will not even get the lower score you may have been able to obtain had you not been so greedy.

Of course if responder made a forcing bid you must bid again. In this case remember that you are the describer so you should make a bid that describes both

your interest in game and your shape. Sometimes this bid will be very descriptive – other times quite vague. This information will be used by your partner, the captain, to guide the partnership to a reasonable contract.

Opener chooses a rebid which further describes his hand in terms of his game interest and shape.

CLASSIFICATION OF OPENER’S REBIDS

Opener’s rebids can be classified in various ways. In this section we consider their classification with respect to the action responder is expected to take at her next (and possibly subsequent) turn(s) to bid:

- Signoff
- Forcing
- Game Forcing
- Nonforcing

Each of these bid classifications is discussed below. For the purposes of this chapter we mostly ignore any bids which might be used to investigate a slam possibility.

Signoff Rebids

Other than a pass (strictly speaking not a bid but a call) the only signoff bids by opener are game bids when responder has **limited her hand** by raising opener’s suit or bidding 1NT or 2NT. It is extremely important that responder understands that just because opener made a game bid she is not required to pass. Consider the following two auctions:

(a)		(b)	
OPENER	RESPONDER	OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♠	1♦	1♠
4♠		4♠	

In both auctions opener is telling responder that he has enough strength to be in a game contract even if she has as few as 6 points. So opener must have about 20 points to make that G? decision. In auction (a) responder has limited her hand to a maximum of 9 points by her 2♠ response so there can never be sufficient strength between the two hands for a slam contract. Therefore, the 4♠ bid is a signoff bid and responder should not consider further action other than pass. In auction (b) responder has in no way limited her hand with her 1♠ response. Certainly if responder has about 12 or more points she should be considering the possibility of a slam contract and has the option to pursue that level if she so desires.

Forcing and Game-Forcing Rebids

A forcing rebid is one which forces responder to bid one more time but not to the game level. This type of bid is sometimes referred to as a 1-round force since it is forcing for only one round of bidding. As always, if responder's RHO bids or doubles she may pass since opener will have the opportunity to bid again.

A game-forcing rebid is one which forces both partners to keep bidding until a game contract is reached. Of course, if an opponent bids or doubles any time after a game-forcing bid has been made the next player may pass because his partner will still get another chance to bid.

Both forcing and game-forcing bids are lumped together in this topic because their full discussion requires an understanding of a general type of rebid by opener that in some cases is simply a forcing rebid and in other cases is a game-forcing rebid.

Opener's Reverses

Certain rebids by opener fall into a category that is called a *reverse* in bridge terminology. Before delving into the details of these rebids let's look at the background for the terminology.

Consider for the moment the following auction pairs where opener has an unbalanced hand with two suits. He opens the bidding in one suit and then rebids the other suit after responder has bid a new suit. Then responder decides to support one of opener's suits as cheaply as possible.

	(a)		(b)	
	OPENER	RESPONDER	OPENER	RESPONDER
1.1)	1♦ 2♣	1M Pass/2♦	1♣ 2♦	1M Pass/3♣
1.2)	1♥ 2m	1♠ Pass/2♥	1m 2♥	1♠ Pass/3m
2.1)	1♠ 2♥	2m Pass/2♠	1♥ 2♠	2m Pass/3♥
2.2)	1M 2♦	2♣ Pass/2M	1♦ 2M	2♣ Pass/3♦
3.1)	1♣ 1M	1♦ Pass/2♣	1M 3♣	2♦ Pass/3M
3.2)	1m 1♠	1♥ Pass/2m	1♠ 3m	2♥ Pass/3♠

Clearly if responder prefers opener's second suit she can simply pass, but if she prefers his first suit she must bid again. Perusal of the auctions reveals that if responder chooses to support opener's first suit, she can do so at the 2 level when opener has bid the two suits in the (a) sequence but she must do so at the 3 level when opener has bid the two suits in the (b) sequence. Now, if the partnership does not have sufficient combined strength to reach a game contract, they would like to stop at the lowest level possible for safety purposes. So we can say that the (a) sequences are the **preferred** sequences while the (b) sequences are the **reverse** sequences. In such cases we say that opener has reversed or his bid is a reverse.

Opener's Rebid is a Reverse if

- *Opener started the auction with a bid of 1 of a suit.*
- *Responder bid a second suit.*
- *Opener bid a third suit that would require responder to bid at the 3 level if she chose to bid opener's first suit.*

So, as opener, it is really easy to tell if you are about to reverse with your rebid. Just ask yourself "If partner wants to go back to my first suit, will he have to bid at the 3 level?" If the answer is yes, you are about to make a reverse bid. Similarly, responder can tell if opener reversed just by checking to see if she would have to go to the 3 level to bid opener's first suit.

Now, you might wonder, why doesn't opener always bid the preferred way since that is safer? Well, there are two reasons:

1. There are "rules" governing which suit you open.
2. Opener has no *a priori* knowledge of what responder will bid.

So, the only thing you can do as opener is decide whether you want to make a reverse when confronted with that option. Perhaps you have a better option that is not so risky.

You might have been wondering about the perhaps unusual numbering of the six example auction pairs. A closer look reveals that the reverse auctions are in three pairs which we can classify as Type 1, 2 and 3 reverses as follows:

- Type 1: For the first two examples responder first bid at the 1 level.
- Type 2: For the next two examples responder first bid at the 2 level and opener also bid at the 2 level.
- Type 3: For the last two examples responder first bid at the 2 level but opener bid at the 3 level.

We will look more closely at these different types of reverses on an individual basis.

Type 1 Reverses: Let's look at a typical situation which is a common trap for beginner bridge players.

OPENER	RESPONDER	
♠ 6 5	♠ K J 3 2	Opener has bid his two suits in the reverse order of that preferred. But what is responder to do at her second turn? Remember she can't see opener's actual cards, but from the auction knows he probably has only 4 hearts. She certainly can't pass and leave him in an expected 4-2 trump fit or rebid her 4-card spade suit. She might try 2NT but this looks like a misfit deal and they usually do not play well in notrump without extra strength. If she wants to show her club suit it would have to be with a 3♣ bid, and the bid of a new suit at the 3 level is game forcing. So that doesn't look like a good idea either. It appears her only reasonable choice is to show a preference for his diamonds with a bid of 3♦.
♥ K Q 7 2	♥ 8 5	
♦ A Q J 6	♦ 4 3	
♣ J 5 2	♣ Q 7 6 4 3	
1♦	1♠	
2♥	3♦	

How would he like playing in a 3♦ contract? The most he could hope for would be 2 spades, 2 hearts 3 diamonds and 1 club for down 1 at best; and at worst only 1 heart and 2 diamonds for down 6! Furthermore, since he is at the 3 level, the opponents are more likely to double him for penalties. If he were vulnerable they might earn 1700 penalty points, not at all close to his objective to score more points than his opponents. What did we learn from this?

Opener should not make a Type 1 reverse when G? = N.

What should opener have bid? Well, he has a balanced hand and 1NT would have been a fine bid. In fact, by bidding 2♥ he suggested that he was unbalanced. That is why responder decided to show a preference for diamonds. Now the 1NT contract would probably have been set too, but not nearly as badly as 3♦. But suppose his hand had been unbalanced, such as

♠ 6 5	Here he has a choice of 1NT or 2♦. With the strong 5-card diamond suit and weak club doubleton, I would lean toward the 2♦ bid but others might prefer 1NT. If the diamonds were a little weaker and the clubs a little stronger, I would prefer 1NT. For example, replace the ♦QJ with 2 small diamonds and the ♣5 with the ♣K.
♥ K Q 7 2	
♦ A Q J 6 5	
♣ 5 2	

In order to prevent these types of disasters the bridge community has established the following requirements for a Type 1 reverse:

Requirements for Opener's Type 1 Reverse

- *Opener's decision regarding G? must be M or Y.*
- *Opener must have at least 4 cards in his second suit.*
- *Opener must have more cards in his first suit.*

The last two requirements derive from the inference that opener shows an unbalanced hand with a reverse if responder bid at the 1 level. If he had a balanced hand he would have a notrump rebid or raise of responder's suit available.

Since opener must have a fairly strong hand for his Type 1 reverse it has also become a standard agreement that

Opener's Type 1 reverse is forcing for 1 round.

Type 2 Reverses: It is generally agreed that opener's Type 2 reverse also shows extra values, but experts are divided as to the exact strength required. Some require the same power as after a Type 1 reverse and others just enough for a G? = Y decision. Note that since responder has bid at the 2 level she promises more points than if she had bid at the 1 level, so opener need not have as much strength to conclude G? = Y for the Type 2 reverse as she would need for a Type 1 reverse. I'm going to recommend the latter because I think it is more logical for beginners. As you gain more experience you may decide to change your requirements to the former.

Opener should not make a Type 2 reverse unless G? = Y.

This requirement leads immediately to the following corollary:

Opener's Type 2 reverse is a game-forcing bid.

So what should opener do if the auction starts as with the first two bids in the 2.1b or 2.2b sequences and G? = N or M? The solution is rather simple:

- With a balanced hand he can rebid 2NT. It is generally agreed that this does not promise any extra values.
- With an unbalanced hand he may rebid his first suit, promising at least 5 cards. Note: In the rare case that opener started with 1♦ holding a 4=4=4=1 pattern and responder bid 2♣, opener may rebid 2NT.

Now let's look at the inferences when opener does make a Type 2 reverse. It should be clear that for the 2.1b sequence opener is showing an unbalanced hand

with at least 4 spades and more hearts. Nothing more need be said about this sequence.

But, what about a 2.2b sequence? Is opener unbalanced? Or could he have something like a 4-4-3-2 pattern and just be looking for a GFMS? Opener should be unbalanced with more diamonds than cards in his Major in this sequence too. If he has a balanced hand he should rebid 2NT. Of course, if he does so, he will have either 13 - 14 HCP or 18 - 19 HCP since he did not open the bidding with 1NT or 2NT. He does not need to worry about missing a game contract, possibly 3NT if he has 18 - 19 HCP, or a Golden Fit in a Major Suit if he has one or two 4-card Majors, since responder has promised another bid with her two-over-one response and had to be prepared for his possible 2NT rebid⁴.

Type 3 Reverses: There is really not any significant difference between the two Type 3 reverses. In each case the opening bid was a Major, responder bid a new suit at the 2 level and opener bid a third suit at the 3 level, with no jump bids involved. In some circles (British), these are known as *high reverses*. Regardless of the terminology, it is generally accepted that:

Opener's Type 3 Reverse

- *Is game-forcing.*
- *Shows extra strength ($> G? = Y$) and/or extra shape (5-5 or better).*

Note that you may be headed for a 5m contract in these sequences, so you need a little extra for the bid.

Closing Comments: Perhaps the key point of this topic is that opener needs to be continually on the lookout for a reverse so he does not improperly describe his hand, while responder must do the same so that she can draw the proper inferences from opener's rebid. It is one thing to have at least a rudimentary understanding of reverses "on paper," and another to catch them at the bridge table.

Also note that in the original (b) examples, pass was included as an option for responder's second bid. But, as we have seen, all of the reverses are forcing for at least 1 round, so in practice that option is removed. Responder must bid something.

You may occasionally hear another player make a statement to the effect "We don't play reverses." Hogwash! If they make a bid that satisfies the definition of a reverse, they have reversed, whether they know it or not. What they probably mean is "We don't understand reverses." or "We don't worry about sat-

⁴ If the partnership has agreed that responder can pass the 2NT bid, opener should bid 3NT with 18 - 19 HCP. In such cases it is best if responder not bypass a 4-card Major to bid a longer club suit.

isfying the strength and shape requirements when we reverse.” Shame on them. They will receive their just desserts in due time.

More Forcing and Game-Forcing Rebids

Other than a Type 1 Reverse, opener has very few merely forcing bids at his disposal. One such option is the bid of a new suit after responder has raised the opening bid to the 2 or 3 level. Consider for example the following three auctions:

(a)		(b)		(c)	
OPENER	RESPONDER	OPENER	RESPONDER	OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	2♣	1♦	3♦	1♥	2♥
2♠		3♥		3♣	

In auction (a) opener’s 2♠ rebid could be an attempt to reach a 3NT contract or opener might have a 5=x=x=6 pattern and be looking for a game in either clubs or spades. In either case responder should not pass but bid something that makes sense.

Similarly in auction (b) opener’s 3♥ rebid is probably an attempt to reach a 3NT contract and responder should bid again.

In auction (c) opener’s 3♣ bid is definitely some sort of game try for a 4♥ contract. The exact meaning is subject to partnership agreement but hearts has been established as the ultimate strain so responder should not pass.

In addition to the Type 2 and Type 3 reverses discussed in the previous topic, the only game-forcing bid by opener is a jump shift as illustrated below.

(a)		(b)		(c)	
OPENER	RESPONDER	OPENER	RESPONDER	OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♥	1♦	1♠	1♥	2♣
2♠		3♣		3♦	

Note that the jump shift is always the bid of a new **suit** made one level higher than the minimum required for that suit. In the following example the rebid is made one level higher than the minimum needed but it is not in a new suit and therefore not considered a jump shift. It is also not even a forcing rebid but a strong invitational rebid.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♥
2NT	

Nonforcing Rebids

Many of opener’s rebids are nonforcing. These are any bids that are not a signoff, game-forcing or forcing rebid. It is important to remember that while re-

sponder’s bid of a new suit is forcing, such bids by opener are nonforcing unless they are a reverse, a jump shift or are made after a raise. Here are a couple of typical examples of nonforcing rebids by opener:

(a)		(b)	
OPENER	RESPONDER	OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♥	1♦	1♠
1♠		2♣	

In both auctions opener’s G? decision is N or M. In auction (a) he is showing at least 4 spades but his hand may be balanced or unbalanced. He almost always has only 4 spades but could have a 5=x=x=6 pattern. In auction (b) he shows an unbalanced hand with at least 5 diamonds and at least 4 clubs with no more clubs than diamonds.

These two auctions also illustrate a limitation of many of opener’s nonforcing rebids; they may be quite vague regarding his game interest. He must often use the same bid for a hand in which his G? decision is N as for one in which his G? decision is M.

When opener makes a nonforcing rebid responder may pass or bid at her next turn. Her decision will be based on her distribution and G? decision. If her G? decision is M^S or stronger she should nearly always bid again. If her G? decision is M^I she should strive to bid again, especially after an auction such as that given in (a) above.

RESPONDER MADE AN INVITATIONAL BID

Responder Raised a Major-Suit Opening

Whenever responder raises an opening bid of 1M the strain has been set. The only question to be resolved is the level, which will almost always be a partscore or game. Only rarely will opener be interested in a small slam after a limit raise.

Consider first the case when responder makes a moderate invitational bid with a simple raise of your Major Suit. You know responder has decided that G? = M^W or M^I, so you conclude her point count is 6 - 9. You now need only to further describe your interest in game. Let’s look at three very similar hands of increasing strength for opener.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♠
?	

♠ K Q 10 8 7 2	You have 11 HCP plus 2 for the 6-card suit = 13 total points.
♥ Q J 10	Even if responder is on the top of her range for her bid there are
♦ K 5 3	not enough total points in the partnership for a game contract.
♣ 7	

So, you decide $G? = N$ and pass.

♠ K Q 10 8 7 2 You have 15 HCP plus 2 for the 6-card suit = 17 total points. If
 ♥ K Q 10 responder's game interest is $G? = M^W$, there are not enough total
 ♦ K Q 3 points in the partnership for a game contract. But if her game
 ♣ 7 interest is $G? = M^I$ the partnership does have enough total points
 for a game contract. You decide $G? = M$. Clearly you can nei-
 ther pass for fear of missing a game contract nor bid game for fear of being too
 high. So you take an in-between action by bidding 3♠. Responder should rec-
 ognize this as a further invitational bid, asking her to pass if her game interest
 was M^W but to bid game if it was M^I . In essence responder will revalue her $G?$
 decision into Y or N.

♠ K Q 10 8 7 2 You have 18 HCP plus 2 for the 6-card suit = 20 total points.
 ♥ K Q J Even if responder's game interest is only $G? = M^W$, there are
 ♦ A Q J enough total points in the partnership for a game contract. You
 ♣ 7 decide $G? = Y$ and bid 4♠.

After responder makes a moderate invitational bid by raising a Major-Suit opening bid to the 2 level, opener further describes his hand, usually by passing if he decides $G? = N$, raising to the 3 level if $G? = M$, or jumping to game if $G? = Y$. Opener might also bid a new suit which would be forcing for 1 round. Such bids are discussed in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 8 – “Moving Forward”.

Now consider the case where responder makes a strong invitational bid with a jump raise of your Major Suit. You know responder has decided that $G? = M^S$ so conclude her point count is 10 - 11. You must decide if $G? = Y$ or N. We'll look at two very similar hands of increasing strength for opener.

	OPENER	RESPONDER
	1♥	3♥
	?	
♠ Q J 5 ♥ A 10 9 5 4 ♦ K Q 8 ♣ 9 3	You have 12 HCP plus 1 for the 5-card suit = 13 total points. Even if responder is on the top of her range for her bid there are not enough total points in the partnership for a game contract. You decide $G? = N$ and pass.	
♠ K 5 ♥ A J 7 5 4 3 ♦ A J 4 2 ♣ 7	You have 13 HCP plus 2 for the 6-card suit = 15 total points. Even if responder is on the bottom of her range for her bid there are enough total points in the partnership for a game contract. You decide $G? = Y$ and bid 4♥. Since the strain has already been decided there is no reason for you to introduce the diamond suit into the auction.	

When responder makes a strong invitational bid by raising a Major-Suit opening bid to the 3 level, opener passes if he decides $G? = N$ and raises to game if $G? = Y$. Note that there is no bidding space available for opener to invite game if he decides $G? = M$. This is the primary reason for the narrow point range used for the $G? = M^S$ decision by responder. Even with this narrow range, opener will sometimes have difficulty reaching a $G?$ decision. For example, if opener has 14 total points there are 24 or 25 combined points depending on whether responder has 10 or 11. In this case opener makes a $G? = Y$ or N decision based on the “quality” of his hand. This is a subtle difference that becomes easier to see with experience (previously discussed in Chapter 2 – “Responses to a 1NT Opening Bid”).

Responder Raised a Minor-Suit Opening

When responder raises opener’s minor suit **the strain is not necessarily determined**.

Unless opener has a very distributional hand with a 5-card Major and 6-card minor, there cannot be a Golden Fit in a Major Suit. Since this distribution is very rare we will ignore that possibility here and assume that $GFMS? = N$.

If opener decides $G? = N$, then playing in the partscore in the minor is fine and opener can just pass. On the other hand, if $G? = M$ or Y , 3NT should be the goal. Let’s look at a few examples.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦ ?	2♦
♠ A 7 3 ♥ 5 ♦ K Q 10 7 4 2 ♣ Q J 6	You have 12 HCP plus 2 points for the 6-card suit, giving 14 total points. Even if responder’s game interest is $G? = M^I$ there are not enough combined points in the partnership for a game contract. So, you decide $G? = N$ and pass.
♠ A K 3 ♥ 5 ♦ K Q 10 7 4 2 ♣ Q J 6	You have 15 HCP plus 2 points for the 6-card suit = 17 total points. You decide $G? = M$ and describe your unbalanced hand with some game interest by bidding 3♦. Just as when responder makes a moderate invitational bid in a Major Suit, this bid passes the final decision back to responder. But in this case responder is strongly encouraged to bid 3NT if she accepts the game invitation.
♠ A J 7 ♥ A 9 4 ♦ K J 7 4 ♣ K Q 6	You have a balanced hand with 18 HCP that is just a little too strong to have opened 1NT. You decide $G? = M$ and can show this hand with a bid of 2NT which invites partner to go on to 3NT if she is on the high end of her raise.

♠ A Q 2
♥ A J
♦ K J 7 4
♣ K J 6 5

With 19 HCP this hand is a little stronger than the previous one but your HCP are somewhat concentrated in your short suits. Some players might gamble on game with a bid of 3NT but many would take the more conservative approach of making the invitational bid of 2NT.

♠ A 10
♥ A 10 5
♦ A Q J 10 5
♣ K J 10

This hand also has 19 HCP but it has an excellent 5-card suit, prime values and several tens which increase its value. It is strong enough to take a chance on a 3NT contract. Don't leave the decision to partner; bid 3NT yourself. By the way, some players would have immediately upgraded this hand to 20 HCP and opened with a bid of 2NT.

Opener's rebid when responder raises a minor suit to the 2 level is similar to that when responder raises a Major Suit to the 2 level. Opener passes if $G? = N$, raises to the 3 level or bids 2NT if $G? = M$ and usually bids 3NT if $G? = Y$.

Similarly when responder raises opener's minor suit to the 3 level, opener passes if $G? = N$ and usually bids 3NT if $G? = Y$.

There are more sophisticated methods of probing for a 3NT contract after a raise of his minor suit when opener has serious concern regarding stoppers in one of the side suits. One possibility is to just show stoppers "up-the-line" by bidding a suit in which you have a stopper, usually an ace or king, but something like QJx or even 4 small is sufficient. This subject is addressed further in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 8 – "Moving Forward." For now, suffice it to say that after responder raises opener's minor suit the bid of a new suit by opener is forcing for one round.

SUMMARY

When making a rebid, opener first answers GF?. He then revalues the strength of his hand, perhaps as dummy if appropriate. He next adds his strength to that he either deduced or assumed from responder's bid and answers G? = Y, N or M. Opener then chooses a rebid that best describes his hand.

Opener's rebid can be classified as a signoff, game forcing, forcing or nonforcing.

Opener's signoff bids are game bids when responder has **limited her hand** by raising opener's suit or bidding 1NT or 2NT. After a signoff bid responder is expected to pass.

Opener's Reverses

Opener's Rebid is a Reverse if

- *Opener started the auction with a bid of 1 of a suit.*
- *Responder bid a second suit.*
- *Opener bid a third suit that would require responder to bid at the 3 level if she chose to bid opener's first suit.*

There are three types of reverses:

1. Responder first bid at the 1 level.
2. Responder first bid at the 2 level and opener rebid at the 2 level.
3. Responder first bid at the 2 level and opener rebid at the 3 level.

Opener really has only two forcing bids available – a Type 1 reverse and the bid of a new suit after responder has raised his first suit. If opener makes a forcing bid responder must bid at least one more time unless her RHO bids or doubles.

Opener's game-forcing rebids are the Type 2 and Type 3 reverses and a jump shift. Responder must continue to bid until a game contract is reached.

Any bid by opener that is not a signoff, forcing or game-forcing bid is a nonforcing bid. Many of opener's nonforcing rebids are made with a hand for which his G? decision is either N or M. Responder may bid or pass at her discretion after opener makes a nonforcing bid.

The topics below are organized by the strength shown by responder's bid – from the weakest to the strongest. All of opener's actions are listed in priority order.

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Moderate Invitational Bid by Raising Opener's Major Suit to the 2 Level

When responder raises your Major Suit, the strain of the final contract is set. The only question is the level. You know responder's interest in game is either M^w

or M^I so you can easily determine your answer to $G?$ and take the indicated action below.

G?	ACTION
N	Pass
M	Raise to the 3 level
Y	Bid game in the Major

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Moderate Invitational Bid by Raising Opener's Minor Suit to the 2 Level

When responder raises your minor suit, the strain of the final contract is not necessarily set. You know responder's interest in game is either M^W or M^I so you can easily determine your answer to $G?$. If it is N you are satisfied to play at a partscore in your suit. If it is M or Y you would prefer notrump.

G?	ACTION
N	Pass
M	Raise to the 3 level with an unbalanced hand Bid 2NT with a balanced hand (18 or 19 HCP)
Y	Bid 3NT

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Strong Invitational Bid by Raising Opener's Suit to the 3 Level

Now you know that responder's game interest is M^S so you can easily answer $G?$ with Y or N and take the action indicated below.

G?	ACTION
N	Pass
Y	Bid game (Raise to 4 of a Major, bid 3NT if a minor)



CHAPTER 6

- Rebids by Opener - Part 2

Responder Made an Invitational Bid
(Concluded)

Responder Made a Forcing Bid

Potpourri

Summary



RESPONDER MADE AN INVITATIONAL BID (CONCLUDED)

We continue here with opener's rebids after notrump invitational bids by responder.

Responder Bid 1NT

A 1NT response is a moderate invitational bid and opener can either pass or bid again. Of course, responder has NOT promised a balanced hand and opener may be balanced or unbalanced so the strain is undecided. Opener will consider both his strength and shape when deciding on his second call. We'll look at a few specific examples but in several cases extrapolate them into other related possibilities.

Our first auction to consider starts as follows:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	1NT
?	

The following 4 hands fall into the category $G? = N$ for opener.

<p>♠ Q 9 3 ♥ A K 10 8 3 ♦ K 10 9 ♣ 9 6</p>	<p>With only 13 points and a balanced hand you can readily conclude $GFMS? = N$ and $G? = N$. Since you have no thoughts that there is a better contract, you pass. You could interchange the heart suit with any other suit and your initial bid would change to that suit, but after a 1NT response your conclusions would be identical, with one exception. If your heart suit were the spade suit, there could be a Golden Fit in hearts because responder could have a long heart suit but not sufficient strength to bid it at the 2 level.</p>
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<p>♠ J 9 3 ♥ A K 10 8 6 3 ♦ K 10 9 ♣ 9</p>	<p>You again have 13 points but this time your hand is unbalanced. While you cannot be sure there is a Golden Fit in hearts, it certainly looks like 2♥ is a better contract than 1NT so that is your bid. Once again you could interchange the heart suit with any other suit and have similar conclusions.</p>
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Opener's rebid of the heart suit without having heard support from responder promises at least a 6-card suit. There is a general principle associated with this idea:

*Each time you rebid a suit **without having your partner's support** you **usually** promise one more card than the previous time you bid the suit.*

As an example, consider the following auction:

YOU	PARTNER
1♥ (Promises at least 5 cards)	1♠
2♥ (Promises at least 6 cards)	2NT
3♥ (Promises at least 7 cards)	

On the other hand, you should recall from the discussion of reverses in the previous chapter that opener does not promise extra length in auctions such as 1♥ – 2m; 2♥ or 1♠ – 2♦; 2♠. In the first case opener could be unbalanced with a 4-card spade suit but not sufficient strength to make the reverse bid of 2♠. Similarly in the second case opener could be unbalanced with a secondary club suit but insufficient strength or shape to reverse into 3♣.

Back to the original auction.

<p>♠ Q 9 3 ♥ A K 10 8 3 ♦ K 10 9 6 ♣ 9</p>	<p>This time you have an unbalanced hand and do not particularly like the prospects of a notrump contract with your singleton club. You cannot rebid your hearts because you don't have 6 of them. You do conveniently have another 4-card suit that is lower ranking than hearts and you can bid it. After your 2♦ bid, partner will know you are unbalanced and should usually choose from the following prioritized options:</p>
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- Pass if she has at least 4 diamonds
- Bid 2♥ if she has a doubleton heart

With more she would have bid 2♥ instead of 1NT the first time.

And what if she doesn't have 4 diamonds or 2 hearts? Well, she has at most 3 spades because she would have bid 1♠ instead of 1NT if she had more. So she might be 3=1=3=6 or have more clubs and fewer cards in one or more of the other three suits. She will have to decide between the following non-prioritized options based on her exact distribution, quality and length of her club suit, and overall strength of her hand:

- Pass 2♦ if she has 3-card support
You could have 5 diamonds so there might be a Golden Fit. If you have only 4, the 4-3 fit might be the best place to play.
- Bid 2NT
This would tend to suggest strength in spades and weak diamonds with a mediocre club suit at best.
- Bid 3♣
This would suggest strength concentrated in clubs and/or more than 6 clubs. This is the bid of a new suit but would not be forcing since she previously limited the strength of her hand with her 1NT response. In fact, since you have somewhat limited your hand as well, it tends to be

sign-off oriented. Or, you might have a little different hand with extra values and try the Golden Game of 3NT after her 3♣ bid.

None of these latter three options may work out well. But bridge is a game where you try to do the best you can with the cards you were dealt.

You can change the specific 5-card and 4-card suits keeping the 4-card suit lower ranking than the 5-card suit and have similar bids by opener, starting with the 5-card suit and rebidding in the 4-card suit. Responder would then have similar options, but without support or tolerance for one of opener's suits and a long suit of her own, she might be able to bid it at the 2 level. For example, if opener started with 1♠ and rebid 2♣, responder could bid either 2♦ or 2♥ with at least a 6-card suit. This would tend to be her bid of choice.

Let's make what may appear at first glance to be a minor change to the last hand, but what is actually a major difference. We will interchange the diamonds and spades.

♠ K 10 9 6	You might be tempted to rebid 2♠ with this hand to show your second suit. There are two reasons not to do this. First of all responder does not have 4 spades. If she did her first bid would have been 1♠ instead of 1NT. So you know there is not a Golden Fit in a Major Suit. The second reason is that this bidding sequence falls into the reverse category and will be discussed in a subsequent example.
♥ A K 10 8 3	
♦ Q 9 3	
♣ 9	

Although not ideal, for this specific example opener should simply pass. Responder must have length in the minors since she has at most 3 spades and 2 hearts.

In the following hands opener realizes that after responder bids 1NT there will be enough points for game if her hand is in the M^l range but not if it is in the M^w range. So his decision is G? = M.

♠ A J 3	You have 17 points and a good 6-card suit. Jump to 3♥. Partner should be able to easily figure out that you have decided G? = M; you didn't sign off at 2♥ as you would have done if G? = N or bid 4♥ (or made some other forcing bid) if G? = Y.
♥ A K 10 8 6 3	
♦ K 10 9	
♣ 9	

♠ A Q 8 3	You are not really sure where you are going with this hand, but you know game is a possibility and you are unbalanced. You can get your point across to partner with a reverse to 2♠. Just like a Type 1 reverse discussed in the previous chapter, this is forcing for one round. Actually a reverse after a 1NT response is sometimes called an "impossible" reverse or a <i>faux reverse</i> because you cannot be looking for a 4-4 fit. If responder had 4 spades she would have bid that suit instead of 1NT. It is sort of an artificial bid made to show an unbalanced hand with extra values and let responder make a better decision for the contract.
♥ A K 10 8 3	
♦ K 10 9	
♣ 9	

♠ K 10 9 This is the same hand as above with the spades and diamonds
 ♥ A K 10 8 3 interchanged. Unfortunately there is no way to show the extra
 ♦ A Q 8 3 strength and you have to settle for a rebid of 2♦ to show the un-
 ♣ 9 balanced hand. This is a good example of the limitations of all
 bidding systems. Sometimes there is no bid that fully describes
 your hand. Partner may well think you have an unbalanced hand with G? = N.
 You will just have to live with the results and go on to the next deal knowing you
 did the best you could on this one.

♠ K 10 9 This hand is very similar to the previous one but the ♥3 has been
 ♥ A K 10 8 replaced with the ♣Q. Now you have a balanced hand with 18
 ♦ A Q 8 3 HCP. This hand is too strong to open 1NT and not strong
 ♣ Q 9 enough for 2NT – so you open 1♦ and we consider your rebid if
 responder bids 1NT. You can show your game interest by rais-
 ing to 2NT. Responder should be able to deduce that you have a balanced hand
 with 18 - 19 HCP. With 13 - 14 you would have passed. With 15 - 17 you
 would have opened 1NT. With 20 - 21 you would have opened 2NT. Actually,
 with a decent 19 HCP you could rebid 3NT.

Let's move on to some hands where as opener you decide G? = Y. Suppose the auction starts as follows:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	1NT
?	

♠ K Q J 9 3 You have a balanced hand with 18 HCP so you could not open
 ♥ Q J 3 1NT or 2NT and were left with an opening bid of 1♠. After
 ♦ K Q 9 partner responded 1NT you revalued your hand to 19 total
 ♣ A 6 points, adding a point for your fifth spade. You didn't have any
 trouble determining G? = Y – did you? Since you know GFMS?
 = N, you jump to the Golden Game of 3NT.

♠ A Q J 10 9 5 This hand has 20 total points and a nice almost solid spade suit.
 ♥ Q J 3 Even if responder has a spade void you should have a reasonable
 ♦ K J 9 play for your 4♠ bid.
 ♣ A

♠ A K 7 5 3 With only 19 HCP you were not quite strong enough to open
 ♥ 7 3 2NT and you also do not quite have a balanced hand. With your
 ♦ K Q J 9 20 total points you really think you should be in a game contract.
 ♣ A Q Your best descriptive bid is a jump shift to 3♦. The standard
 definition of a jump shift is a bid in a new suit skipping one lev-
 el, and when made by the opening bidder is forcing to game.

Where is this hand going and how are you going to get there? You know you do not have a Golden Fit in spades and it might be really difficult to find out if you have one in hearts. Your best bid might just be to jump to 3NT and hope the opponents don't take too many heart tricks before you get in the lead. Even if they don't and you get the lead, where are your 9 tricks coming from? Unless you are really lucky to find partner with the ♠Qx and the suit breaks 3-3, you won't take many tricks in spades before having to give up the lead in that suit to the opponents. Of course, if you do bid 3NT you might be lucky and find partner with a 6-card heart suit. If so, he could correct to 4♥ knowing that you had at least a doubleton so there was a Golden Fit in hearts.

There is a simple solution to problems like this. Pass the buck back to partner. Make the 3♦ bid and let her decide what to do. At least then if things turn out badly, you can't be blamed for making a bad decision!

Suppose that in the last example your hand pattern had been 4=5=2=2 with identical cards in the corresponding suits. Your opening bid would have been 1♥ instead of 1♠, and your rebid could have been a reverse to 2♠. While this would not have forced to game, it would have been forcing for one round and conserved some bidding space, making it a little easier for both partners to search for the best contract.

Responder Jumped to 2NT

A jump to 2NT by responder shows a balanced hand with 10 - 11 HCP so is a strong invitation to game. This bid can be made over any 1-level opening bid but does deny holding a 4-card Major that could have been bid at the 1 level. It strongly suggests a 3NT contract but leaves the door open for opener to further describe his hand below 3NT if he so chooses. If the opening bid was 1M, responder is showing only a doubleton in that Major and therefore must have at least 3 cards in the other Major.

In general opener should further describe his hand (perhaps by passing) so that the partnership can reach the proper level and strain.

The auction starts:

	OPENER	RESPONDER
	1♠	2NT
	?	
♠ K Q 9 6 4	With only 14 total points, you have 24 - 25 in the partnership.	
♥ Q 7 6	Game is unlikely without a spade fit to go with your mediocre suit,	
♦ K 8	so 2NT looks like a reasonable contract. You should just pass and	
♣ Q J 4	leave well enough alone.	

- ♠ K Q 9 7 6 4 Since responder has a doubleton spade you know GFMS? = Y and
 ♥ Q 7 6 with your 15 total points you also decide G? = Y so you bid 4♠.
 ♦ K 8
 ♣ K 4
- ♠ K Q 9 6 4 You can show this unbalanced hand by bidding 3♥. Although
 ♥ A K 7 6 this is not really an invitational bid, responder might raise to 4♥ if
 ♦ 10 8 she has 4 hearts and is at the top of her range. If her shape is
 ♣ 4 2 2=3=4=4 she should correct to 3♠; the 5-2 spade fit should play
 better than the 4-3 heart fit.
- ♠ K Q J 6 4 You can show this unbalanced hand simply by jumping to 4♥
 ♥ A Q J 6 2 knowing that responder has a balanced hand with a doubleton
 ♦ 10 8 spade, so she must have at least 3 hearts.
 ♣ 4
- ♠ 6 4 For this deal you opened 1♣ and partner jumped to 2NT. Since
 ♥ K J 6 she does not have a 4-card Major she probably has either 4 dia-
 ♦ K 8 3 monds and 3 clubs or 3 diamonds and 4 clubs. With your good 14
 ♣ A Q J 5 4 HCP, decent 5-card club suit and knowledge that responder has
 some support for your clubs, you should have a reasonable play
 for 3NT.

Recap of Opener's Action after Responder Made an Invitational Bid **Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Moderate Invitational Bid by Rais-** **ing Opener's Major Suit to the 2 Level**

G?	ACTION
N	Pass
M	Raise to the 3 level
Y	Bid game in the Major

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Moderate Invitational Bid by Rais- **ing Opener's Minor Suit to the 2 Level**

G?	ACTION
N	Pass
M	Raise to the 3 level with an unbalanced hand Bid 2NT with a balanced hand (would have to be exactly 18 or a mediocre 19 HCP)
Y	Bid 3NT

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Strong Invitational Bid by Raising **Opener's Suit to the 3 Level**

G?	ACTION
N	Pass
Y	Bid game (raise to 4 of a Major, bid 3NT if a minor)

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Moderate Invitational Bid of 1NT

G?	ACTION
N	Pass with a balanced hand Bid 2 of a suit that is lower ranking than your first suit if it contains at least 4 cards Rebid 2 of your first suit if it is 6 cards or longer
M	Bid 2 of any new suit if it contains at least 4 cards (includes a <i>faux</i> reverse bid) Rebid 3 of your first suit if it contains at least 6 cards Bid 2NT with a balanced hand and 18 - 19 HCP
Y	Jump to game in your 6 ⁺ -card Major Suit Bid 3NT with a balanced hand with a good 19 HCP Make a <i>faux</i> reverse bid Make a jump shift

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Strong Invitational Bid of 2NT

G?	ACTION
N	Pass with a balanced hand Bid 3 of a suit that is lower ranking than your first suit if it contains at least 4 cards Rebid 3 of your first suit if it is 6 cards or longer
Y	Jump to game in your 6 ⁺ -card Major Suit Bid 3NT with a balanced hand – since you did not open 1NT or 2NT you will have either 14 HCP with a really good 5-card Major (partner has only a doubleton for support) or a decent 5-card minor (partner will have 3-card or 4-card support), or else you will have 18 - 19 HCP. Make a <i>faux</i> reverse bid Make a jump shift Jump to 4♥ if you opened 1♠ and are 5-5 in the Majors

Examples

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♠
?	

- ♠ K 10 9 7 5 2 GFMS? = Y and G? = N. There is no need to disturb the present contract. Pass.
 ♥ K 9
 ♦ A 8 4
 ♣ K 7
- ♠ A Q J 10 6 GFMS? = Y, G? = Y. Describe your hand by jumping to 4♠.
 ♥ K 8 3
 ♦ A J 6
 ♣ A 7
- ♠ K J 10 9 6 2 GFMS? = Y, G? = M. Raise to 3♠ and leave the final decision to partner.
 ♥ 9 4
 ♦ K J 6
 ♣ A K

What do you bid with the following hands when the auction starts:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	2♣
?	

- ♠ A 10 7 2 GFMS? = N, G? = N, pass and stop in a partscore. Remember that responder will almost always hold 5 clubs when raising your clubs, so you should be playing in a Golden Fit.
 ♥ A 9 8 3
 ♦ K 7
 ♣ Q 8 4
- ♠ A J GFMS? = N, G? = M. Raise to 3♣. Responder will decide whether to stay in a partscore or carry on to game, hopefully 3NT.
 ♥ K Q 7 2
 ♦ 7 4
 ♣ A Q 8 6 2
- ♠ K Q 8 GFMS? = N, G? = Y. Rebid the Golden Game of 3NT – not 5♣.
 ♥ Q J With all of the HCP you have in clubs, partner's points must be in your other suits.
 ♦ J 9 5
 ♣ A K Q J 6

What do you bid with the following hands when the auction starts:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1NT
?	

♠ K 7 GFMS? = N, G? = N, but you have an unbalanced hand with your
 ♥ 2 second suit lower ranking than your first so give responder a
 ♦ K Q 9 7 4 choice of suits by bidding 2♣.
 ♣ A 9 6 4 3

♠ A 7 Even though you have 19 HCP and a 5-card suit, your lack of
 ♥ K Q 8 aces suggests there might not be time to develop 9 tricks in
 ♦ K Q 7 3 2 notrump unless responder has a little more than the minimum for
 ♣ K Q 8 her response so you decide GFMS? = N and G? = M. Bid 2NT.

♠ A 7 3 GFMS? = N. You can describe your unbalanced hand with a long
 ♥ K 9 5 suit and G? = M by jumping to 3♦.
 ♦ A K J 10 6 3
 ♣ 6

♠ K 10 8 4 GFMS? = N. G? = N. Diamonds looks like a better strain than
 ♥ A 7 notrump. Bid 2♦.
 ♦ A J 8 7 5 3
 ♣ 8

♠ K Q GFMS? = N. G? = Y. Describe this hand with a jump shift to 3♣
 ♥ 7 4 forcing to game. Let partner decide.
 ♦ A K J 9 6
 ♣ A Q 7 3

♠ Q 9 GFMS? = N. G? = N. There is nothing wrong with the present
 ♥ K 6 5 3 contract. Pass.
 ♦ K 8 6 5
 ♣ A J 6

Opener's rebid after a jump to 2NT by responder will depend a lot on opener's first bid. Here are a few examples.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	2NT
?	

Responder has denied a 4-card Major and probably does not have a 4-card diamond suit either. She is also unlikely to hold 5 clubs so should have 3 or 4 clubs. Her shape is probably 3=3=4=3 or 3=3=3=4 with 2=3=4=4 and 3=2=4=4 other possibilities. Unless she held a very good 4-card diamond suit or a weak doubleton in a Major, she would not have had a compelling reason to respond with 1♦.

If opener has a balanced hand he will have either 13 - 14 HCP or 18 - 19 HCP. If in the lower range he will usually pass but will bid 3NT when in the

higher range. If opener is unbalanced his point count could be anything in the 13 - 21 range.

♠ K 8 2 Here is a typical minimum hand for opener. With no real hope
♥ Q J 4 for game he will pass.
♦ A 9 6
♣ K 7 6 3

♠ K 8 This is a hand where opener has some hope of taking 9 tricks in a
♥ Q 10 9 notrump contract. With 14 HCP, a good 5-card suit and respecta-
♦ Q 9 8 ble interiors in the other suits he should bid 3NT. It may not
♣ A K 10 9 6 make but you can't wait for guaranteed contracts in this game.

♠ 8 4 Knowing that partner has some support for your club suit you
♥ Q 9 5 should be able to take 6 club tricks. With your other high cards
♦ K 4 and partner's 10 or 11 HCP you are almost a lock to take at least 3
♣ A K Q 7 6 4 more tricks in the other suits. 3NT is your bid.

♠ K 4 2 With such a poor club suit and a clear weakness in diamonds your
♥ Q 5 4 prospects of taking 8 or 9 tricks in notrump are quite slim while
♦ 4 3♣ should be relatively safe. Partner should be able to read your
♣ A Q 7 6 4 2 3♣ bid as a sign-off. However, if she holds something like ♣K83
she might take a shot at 3NT.

♠ A 4 With this hand you want to be in a game contract but you don't
♥ 6 4 know if it should be 3NT, 5♣ or 5♦ – yes, sometimes we are seri-
♦ K Q J 3 ous about a contract of 5m. Furthermore, you know partner has
♣ A K J 4 2 4-card support for at least one of your minors and perhaps both.
Bid 3♦. This bid is actually another form of a high reverse, with
characteristics of both a Type 2 reverse and a Type 3 reverse. As such it is game
forcing. If partner's high cards are concentrated in the majors she will bid 3NT
and you will accept that. If she bids 4 of either minor you will raise to 5 of that
minor. If she bids 5 of either minor you will pass.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	2NT
?	

This auction is similar to the previous one. Responder's shape is probably 3=3=4=3, 3=3=3=4, 2=3=4=4 or 3=2=4=4 but could be 3=3=2=5 with a weak 5-card club suit. With a balanced hand you will pass or bid 3NT as discussed for the previous auction. With an unbalanced hand and long diamonds you will also bid as suggested above for the previous auction. Let's look at a few other possible hands.

♠ 8 4 There is unlikely to be game in this hand and 3♣ or 3♦ should be a
 ♥ 6 better contract than 2NT. Bid 3♣ and let partner pass or correct to
 ♦ K Q J 5 3 3♦.
 ♣ A J 7 4 2

♠ 8 4 This hand is similar to the previous hand but with only a 4-card club
 ♥ K 4 suit. While 2NT might work out all right 3m is probably a safer
 ♦ A Q 8 5 3 contract so you can again bid 3♣ and let partner pick the minor.
 ♣ Q J 4 2

♠ K 4 You have the same shape as the first hand in this set but now you
 ♥ A have significant high card strength in your short suits and a weaker
 ♦ Q J 10 5 3 long suit. 2NT is probably a fine contract so you can pass.
 ♣ J 7 6 4 2

Let's look at a couple of stronger unbalanced hands.

♠ K 4 With this hand you would like to make a natural forcing bid of 4♣.
 ♥ 6 But, as you will learn in the sequel to this book, that bid is generally
 ♦ K Q J 5 3 agreed to be a conventional bid (Gerber). Therefore, you are forced
 ♣ A K 7 4 2 to make a jump all the way to 5♣. Note that responder does not
 have a 4-card Major so must have at least 4-card support for one of
 your minor suits. So, she will probably pass your 5♣ bid or correct to 5♦. With
 prime cards she might even bid 6♣ or 6♦.

♠ A 9 4 You don't need to have club length when you have an unbalanced
 ♥ K Q 7 4 hand. Here you can envision game in notrump or diamonds. Make
 ♦ A Q 8 5 3 a *faux* reverse bid of 3♥. This bid is game forcing and tends to
 ♣ 2 show the typical reverse shape with at least 4 hearts and more dia-
 monds, but you might make the same bid with only 3 hearts and
 another small club. The key point of the bid is that you have a strong interest in
 game with heart strength but are not sure if the best game is in notrump or dia-
 monds, and you are suggesting a weakness in at least one of the black suits. You
 would make the same bid if your black suits were reversed or you had worthless
 doubletons in both black suits with extra strength in the red suits.

RESPONDER MADE A FORCING BID

Most of the time when partner bids a new suit following your opening suit bid you are not allowed to pass. You must bid again. There are two exceptions:

- Partner passed at her first opportunity to bid. In this case you know she does not have a strong hand. If you think her bid is a reasonable contract you may pass. But most of the time you should bid again. This topic is further addressed in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 12 – “Opening the

Bidding in Third or Fourth Chair - Part 1” and Chapter 13 – “Opening the Bidding in Third or Fourth Chair - Part 2”.

- Your RHO bid or doubled after your partner’s response. Now she will get another chance to bid even if you do pass. If you do decide to bid, you should be telling her something she doesn’t already know. If you have a fit (4-card support) for her Major Suit by all means show it by raising her. You might even raise her minor suit if you know GFMS? = N. Otherwise a bid by you shows extra strength and/or distribution.

FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS SECTION WE WILL IGNORE THESE EXCEPTIONS.

Responder Bid a New Suit at the 1 Level

Responder’s bid is completely ambiguous regarding her decision regarding G? other than N. It could be M^W, M^I, M^S or even Y. If it was Y and you passed her forcing bid, she would be greatly disappointed to say the least!

Remember that you will base your decision on G? assuming that responder has the minimum requirements for her bid. Since we are considering here the case when she has bid a new suit at the 1 level, you will assume that her interest in game is M^W or M^I, or equivalently that she has only a moderate invitational hand. If she has a stronger hand she will show it with her rebid.

Before making your decision regarding G? you also consider your decision regarding GFMS?. If responder bid a Major Suit for which you have 4-card (or better) support, you know that will be the trump suit and you will become the dummy. So you adjust the value of your hand adding for short suit points but subtracting for any long suit points you may have included when you made your opening bid. For example, suppose your hand pattern is 4=1=5=3. Initially you added a point for your fifth diamond, but if responder bids 1♠, you subtract that point and add 3 for the singleton heart.

In general, here are your options for various G? decisions:

- G? = N
 - Raise partner to 2
 - 1NT
 - 2 of first suit
 - New suit (not a reverse)
- G? = M
 - 2NT
 - Raise to 3M/♦
 - 3 of first suit
 - Reverse
- G? = Y
 - 3NT

- 4M
- Reverse
- Jump shift

Let's see how opener approaches his rebid after the following auction:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♥
?	

♠ K 9 7 You know GFMS? = Y in hearts. So your hand value has increased
 ♥ A 6 5 3 from 13 to 15 points, but you still decide G? = N. However, you
 ♦ K Q 8 6 5 cannot pass. You need to tell partner that you have heart support so
 ♣ 6 you make the cheapest bid you can to send that message by bidding
 2♥.

Change the ♥6 to the ♥K and your hand value increases to 18 points. Now you decide G? = M. You send this message by bidding one level higher with a jump raise to 3♥.

If you also change the ♠9 to the ♠Q the value of your hand goes up to 20 points and your G? decision becomes Y. You can describe this hand with a jump all the way to game – bid 4♥.

Note that while it is not proper for responder to immediately raise opener's bid of 1M to the game level when she decides G? = Y and has a Golden Fit for opener's suit, it is correct for opener to take that action when he has support for responder's suit and decides G? = Y. Opener's jump to game simply describes his hand. He tells responder that there is a Golden Fit in her suit and he doesn't care if all she has is a hand of M^w strength; his hand is strong enough for a Golden Game contract.

Contrary to popular opinion among beginning bridge players, this jump to game is NOT a stop bid. Responder's hand is unlimited. Don't you think she should bid 7♥ (or perhaps make some other forcing bid to investigate slam) if she has 19 points herself?

♠ A 6 5 3 For this hand we have just interchanged the Major Suits of the pre-
 ♥ K 9 7 vious hand. Now the original 13 point value of opener's hand has
 ♦ K Q 8 6 5 not changed after responder's bid. She may have only a 4-card
 ♣ 6 heart suit, so opener does not know if there is a Golden Fit in hearts
 and cannot raise that suit. But if responder happens to have a 4-card
 spade suit there is a Golden Fit in spades. Opener can probe for this
 fit with a bid of 1♠.

Change the ♣6 to the ♣A and the hand value increases to 17 points, making G? = M. It would be nice if opener had a bid available to describe this extra strength but there isn't one. A jump to 2♠ would show a hand for which G? = Y and be

forcing to game. With this hand you might very well get too high if responder actually has a hand of her assumed strength and there is no spade fit. So you have to settle for a 1♠ rebid. Just as responder makes the same call with a G? = M^w or M^l hand, opener sometimes has to make the same bid with a G? = N or M hand.

If you also change the ♠6 to the ♠K the hand value increases to 20 points. Now G? = Y and you are strong enough to make the game-forcing jump shift bid of 2♠. Note that while responder never makes a jump shift in a suit

*It is quite proper for **opener** to make a jump shift in a new suit if that bid appropriately describes his hand.*

♠ A J 3 Your original 13 point hand evaluation remains the same after
 ♥ 9 7 5 partner's response. You show this hand with a rebid of 1NT.
 ♦ K Q 8 6 If you kept the same shape but added more strength in high
 ♣ K 9 7 cards to reach the 15 - 17 HCP region, you would have opened
 1NT. And if you put in enough to reach the 20 - 21 HCP level
 you would have opened 2NT. But suppose we change 2 of the hearts to the king
 and queen. Now you have 18 HCP and would still open with 1♦. After the 1♥
 response you get to show this extra strength with a jump to 2NT.

What if you also changed one of the small cards in some suit to the jack? That gets you up to 19 HCP. In theory this gets the combined count up to the minimum of 25 for a 3NT contract. In practice you will have to use a little judgment to decide whether to bid 2NT or 3NT based on the overall texture of your hand. This idea was discussed in Chapter 2 – “Responses to a 1NT Opening Bid.”

♠ K 9 8 You started with a hand worth 14 points and partner's 1♥ re-
 ♥ 6 sponse did nothing to improve it. You cannot support hearts or
 ♦ K J 10 6 5 bid 1NT but you do have another lower-ranking suit to bid. Your
 ♣ K Q J 6 2♣ rebid will show an unbalanced hand with at least 4 clubs and
 by inference at least 5 diamonds. You would have to make the
 same call if your hand was a little stronger and you decided G? = M. If you in-
 crease the strength up to the 19 - 21 range you will have to make a jump shift to
 3♣.

♠ 9 7 GFMS? = N. G? = N. You have an unbalanced hand with a long
 ♥ 6 3 diamond suit. A rebid of 2♦ is an accurate description.
 ♦ A K 10 8 6 5 Change the ♥6 to the ♥A and your 13-point hand increases to
 ♣ A 8 6 17 points. Now G? = M and a jump to 3♦ is a good description.

What should you do if we also change the ♣8 to the ♣K bringing the value of your hand up to 20 points? You have to make a forcing bid. Since you certainly cannot make a reverse bid the only other option is a jump

shift. Slide one of your spades in with your clubs and later tell your partner you miss-sorted your hand when you made your jump shift to 3♣! Seriously, sometimes you have to manufacture a bid to describe your hand. If you find you need to do this, always choose a minor suit. Partner might believe you if you choose a Major. If your red suits were interchanged and partner’s response was 1♠ after your 1♥ opening bid, you would simply jump to 4♥ with this hand.

Suppose an auction starts with:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♠
?	

♠98 With your 14-point hand you decide G? = N. There probably is not
♥AK64 a Golden Fit in spades; responder would need a 6-card suit and she
♦KQJ64 promised only a 4-card suit with her response. What about a Golden
♣65 Fit in hearts? Not if she has only 4 spades. With 4 cards in each
 Major she would have bid hearts first. But she might be 5=4=x=x
and have correctly bid the spades first. There is a natural temptation to bid 2♥ at
your second turn. Unfortunately you should not do that. Remember that bid
would be a Type 1 reverse and show a hand for which your G? decision was M
or Y. So what should you bid? Your choice is between 1NT and 2♦. Some
players would treat the 2♦ bid as showing a 6-card suit. But with your strength
concentrated in the red suits I would choose the 2♦ bid.

Strengthen your hand a little by changing the ♠9 to the ♠K so that you have
17 points and G? = M. Now you are strong enough to reverse into 2♥. This bid
is forcing for one round, promises at least 4 cards in your second suit and more in
your first suit. Partner will know you have extra values and a little more about
your shape, giving her more information to steer the partnership to a reasonable
contract.

Make an additional change of the ♣6 to the ♣K and you have 20 points.
You make the same reverse bid of 2♥, but will insist on game after partner’s re-
bid if she makes a bid below game.

Responder Bid a New Suit at the 2 Level

When responder bids a new suit at the 2 level she shows a hand for which her
decision regarding G? is M^S or Y, so she has at least 10 points. Just as her bid of
a new suit at the 1 level, her 2-level response is forcing for one round. But, now
you can base your decision on G? assuming her decision is G? = M^S, or equiva-
lently, that she has a strong invitational hand.

In Chapter 4 – “Responses to Opening Bids of One of a Suit - Part 2” we also
discussed the idea of responder’s two-over-one response promising another bid,
so you know she will bid again.

We'll look at just a few auctions and hands here.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♥
?	

♠ K Q J 6 4 Remember that responder has made a “five and dime” bid promising at least 5 hearts and at least 10 points. So, with your 13 dummy points (you added 1 to your original evaluation for the doubleton, but subtracted 1 for your fifth spade for no net change), you decide GFMS? = Y in hearts and G? = N. You raise to 3♥. Change the ♣6 to the ♥8 to give a total of 15 points so your decision is G? = Y and you bid 4♥.

♥ K 6 4

♦ Q J 4

♣ 6 4

♠ K Q J 6 4 This is the same hand as the previous example with clubs and hearts interchanged. GFMS? = M, but only if responder has 3-card spade support or a 6-card heart suit, so you assume N for now. G? = N.

♥ 6 4

♦ Q J 4

♣ K 6 4

You can show your balanced hand with a rebid of 2NT. Change the ♥6 to the ♥Q increasing your strength to 15 points (but only 14 HCP so you would not have opened 1NT) and you decide G? = Y, shown by a bid of 3NT.

Quite often responder's bid will be 2 of a minor. Let's look at a couple of those auctions:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♦
?	

♠ K Q 9 6 4 GFMS? = M. With only 14 points, you conclude G? = N. Responder may be intending to support spades at her next turn, or may have a 4-card heart suit. Your best action is to show the unbalanced hand with a bid of 2♥. Partner will bid again and then you will have a better idea of what the final contract should be.

♥ K Q 6 4

♦ K 4

♣ 6 4

Strengthen this hand a little by changing the ♣6 to the ♣Q and you have 16 points. Now G? = Y. You can still simply bid 2♥ and see what responder decides to do next. The final contract should be 3NT, 4♥ or 4♠ depending on responder's second bid.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	2♦
?	

♠ K Q 6 4 This is exactly the same hand as the previous one with the Major
 ♥ K Q 9 6 4 Suits interchanged. Since G? = N, you cannot afford to bid 2♠ to
 ♦ K 4 show your unbalanced hand so have to settle for a 2♥ bid.
 ♣ 6 4

More Examples

We will look at a few more examples here after the auction starts

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♠
?	

♠ J 9 6 4 GFMS? = Y. G? = N. A raise to 2♠ describes this hand.
 ♥ Q 7 6
 ♦ A 8
 ♣ A Q 7 4

♠ J 9 4 You can't support partner's spades with only 3 cards. Since G? =
 ♥ Q 10 7 6 N, you also can't reverse into 2♥. Responder has made a forcing
 ♦ A 8 6 bid so you can't pass. You certainly can't rebid your 3-card club
 ♣ A Q 7 suit. Your only real option is to bid 1NT which is actually a per-
 fect description of your hand.

♠ 6 GFMS? = N. G? = N. You can't show your second suit since that
 ♥ 7 6 would be a reverse. You can show your unbalanced hand with no
 ♦ A Q 8 7 game interest by bidding 2♣. Change the ♥7 to the ♥K and you
 ♣ A Q 9 7 4 2 have 17 total points. Now G? = M and you can describe your hand
 very nicely with a reverse to 2♦. Partner will know you have at
 least 5 clubs and at least 4 diamonds with more clubs than diamonds. In addition
 change the ♦7 to the ♠7 and you would jump to 3♣.

♠ A Q 6 3 You initially evaluated your hand by counting 15 HCP and adding
 ♥ - 2 for your 6-card club suit giving a total of 17. But now since you
 ♦ A 8 7 have support for responder's Major Suit you will be dummy and
 ♣ A J 9 7 4 2 revalue your strength to 20 points – 15 HCP plus 5 points for the
 void in hearts. Obviously G? = Y, so describe your hand with a
 jump to 4♠.

♠ Q 3 With 19 HCP and a fifth club your hand is worth 20 points so G? =
 ♥ A K 7 Y. Your hand is balanced. Bid 3NT.
 ♦ Q J 10
 ♣ A Q J 4 2

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Balanced Hand Bidding

When opener has a balanced hand with 15 - 17 HCP he opens with a bid of 1NT. If he has a balanced hand with 20 - 21 HCP he opens with 2NT. What does he do with 13 - 14 HCP or 18 - 19 HCP and a balanced hand? He opens with 1 of a suit and then tends to make a minimum or jump rebid in notrump, respectively. But sometimes there are other priorities. A complete outline is provided below with options given in priority order.

- With a balanced hand of 13 or 14 HCP open 1 of a suit with the intent of making a non-jump rebid in notrump; but
 - If responder bids 1 of a new suit
 - If responder's suit was a Major, raise to 2 of responder's Major with 4-card support
 - Bid 1 of a 4-card Major if space is available
 - Bid 1NT
 - Pass if responder bids 1NT or 2NT or raises your suit
 - If responder bids 2 of a new suit
 - If responder's suit was a Major (2♥ after a 1♠ opening is the only possibility here), raise to 3♥ with 3-card support (the 2♥ bid promised a 5-card suit)
 - Bid 2NT
- With a balanced hand of 15 - 17 HCP open 1NT
- With a balanced hand of 18 or 19 HCP open 1 of a suit with the intent of making a jump rebid in notrump, but
 - If responder bids 1 of a new suit
 - If responder's suit was a Major, raise to 3 (maybe even 4) of responder's Major with 4-card support
 - Bid 2NT (3NT with a good 19 HCP)
 - If responder bids 1NT or raises your minor to the 2 level, bid 2NT (3NT with a good 19 HCP)
 - If responder raises your Major, jump (if necessary) to 4 of your Major
 - If responder bids 2 of a new suit
 - If responder's suit was a Major (2♥ after a 1♠ opening is the only possibility here), raise to 4♥ with 3-card support (the 2♥ bid promised a 5-card suit). You might even consider a slam contract, but we will leave that option for another day.
 - If you and your partner have an agreement that the two over one response usually promises another bid (highly recommended) then bid 2 of a 4-card Major.
 - Bid 3NT
 - Raise to 3NT if responder bids 2NT.

- If responder bids 3NT you should usually be thinking about a small slam but we leave that idea for another book.

SUMMARY

The topics below are organized by the strength shown by responder's bid – from the weakest to the strongest. All of opener's actions are listed in priority order.

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Moderate Invitational Bid of 1NT

G? ACTION

- N Pass with a balanced hand
Bid 2 of a suit that is lower ranking than your first suit if it contains at least 4 cards
Rebid 2 of your first suit if it is 6 cards or longer
- M Bid 2 of any new suit if it contains at least 4 cards (includes a *faux* reverse bid)
Rebid 3 of your first suit if it contains at least 6 cards
Bid 2NT with a balanced hand and 18 - 19 HCP
- Y Jump to game in your 6⁺-card Major Suit
Bid 3NT with a balanced hand and a good 19 HCP
Make a *faux* reverse bid
Make a jump shift

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Strong Invitational Bid of 2NT

Now you know that responder's game interest is M^S so you can easily answer G? with Y or N and take the action indicated below.

G? ACTION

- N Pass with a balanced hand
Bid 3 of a suit that is lower ranking than your first suit if it contains at least 4 cards
Rebid 3 of your first suit if it is 6 cards or longer
- Y Jump to game in your 6⁺-card Major Suit
Bid 3NT with a balanced hand with a good 19 HCP – since you did not open 1NT or 2NT you will have either 14 HCP with a really good 5-card Major (partner has only a doubleton for support) or a decent 5-card minor (partner will have 3-card or 4-card support), or else you will have 18 - 19 HCP.
Make a *faux* reverse bid
Make a jump shift
Jump to 4♥ if you opened 1♠ and are 5-5 in the Majors

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Forcing Bid of a New Suit at the 1 Level

Responder has made a bid that is ambiguous regarding her game interest. It could be anything from M^w to Y. But since it could be moderate, you base your G? decision on that assumption. If she has bid a Major Suit for which you have at least 4-card support, the strain is set. Otherwise you would like to still search for a Golden Fit in a Major Suit if you think there might be one. Your job is to describe your hand in terms of your game interest and its shape. Because her bid is forcing, pass is not one of your options.

G? ACTION

- N Raise partner's Major to the 2 level if GFMS? = Y in that suit
 Bid a new suit (has to be a Major) of at least 4 cards at the 1 level if possible
 Bid 1NT with a balanced hand
 Bid a new suit (has to be a minor) of at least 4 cards at the 2 level if it is lower ranking than your first suit⁵
 Bid 2 of your first suit (will always be at least a 5-card suit)
- M Raise partner's Major to the 3 level if GFMS? = Y in that suit
 Bid a new suit (has to be a Major) of at least 4 cards at the 1 level if possible
 Bid 2NT with a balanced hand (18 - 19 HCP and at best a poor 19 total points)
 Bid 2 of a suit that is higher ranking than your first suit if you have at least 4 cards in that suit (a reverse)
 Jump to the 3 level of your original suit if it is at least a 6-card suit
 Bid 2 of a suit (has to be a minor) that is lower ranking than your first suit if you have at least 4 cards in that suit⁵
- Y Raise partner's Major to the 4 level (game) if GFMS? = Y in that suit
 Bid 2 of a suit that is higher ranking than your first suit if you have at least 4 cards in that suit (a reverse)
 Jump to 3 of a new suit (jump shift) containing at least 4 cards if it is lower ranking than your first suit⁵
 Jump to 4 of your Major (would have to be hearts) with a solid 6-card suit
 Bid 3NT⁶

⁵ This bid almost guarantees at least 5 cards in your first suit. Clearly if your first bid was 1♥, you have at least 5 cards there, and in the current context, you could not have started with 1♠ since responder bid a new suit at the 1 level. So the only other case would be if you started with 1♦ and rebid 2♣. You also do not have a balanced hand or you would have either opened or rebid in notrump. With a little thought you can conclude that the only time you would not have 5⁺ diamonds is if you were 1=4=4=4 and partner responded 1♠ to your 1♦ opening bid.

Opener's Rebid after Responder Made a Forcing Bid of a New Suit at the 2 Level

Just as responder's bid of a new suit at the 1 level is ambiguous regarding her game interest, so is her bid of a new suit at the 2 level. But now it must be either M^s or Y and you base your G? decision on the assumption that it is M^s. Consequently your G? decision will be either Y or N. If she has bid 2♥ over your 1♠ opening bid, she promises at least a 5-card suit. So if you have at least 3-card support, the strain is set. Otherwise you would like to still search for a Golden Fit in a Major Suit if you think there might be one. Your job is to describe your hand in terms of your game interest and its shape. Because her bid is forcing you are not allowed to pass. Also remember that partner has promised to bid again.

G? ACTION

- N Raise responder's 2♥ bid to 3♥
 Bid a new suit of at least 4 cards that is lower ranking than your first suit at the 2 level
 Raise responder's bid of 2 of a minor to the 3 level
 Bid 2 of your first suit
 Bid 2NT
- Y Raise responder's 2♥ bid to 4♥
 Bid a new suit of at least 4 cards at the 2 level
 Bid a new suit of at least 4 cards at the 3 level if it is lower ranking than partner's suit and you have extra strength and/or shape
 Raise responder's bid of 2 of a minor to the 3 level
 Bid 3 of your first suit
 Bid 3NT

⁶ This bid can be made with two types of hands:

- A balanced hand with 18 HCP plus a 5-card suit or a good 19 HCP
- A long solid minor suit with stoppers in the unbid suits



CHAPTER 7

- Rebids by Responder - Part 1

Responder's General Approach to the
Second Bid

Responder's Initial Bid Was a Moderate
Invitational Bid

Responder's Initial Bid Was a Strong
Invitational Bid

Responder's Initial Bid Was a Forcing Bid
Summary



RESPONDER'S GENERAL APPROACH TO THE SECOND BID

Here you are sitting at the bridge table. Your partner has opened the bidding with 1 of a suit. You made initial decisions regarding GF? of Y, N or M and revalued your hand if appropriate. You also came to an initial decision regarding G? of M^w, M¹, M^s or Y. (If your decision was N, you passed and don't need anything in this chapter!) So you made a bid and partner made his rebid; we will assume he did not pass, although that might have been an option. Now what do you do?

There are so many different specific auctions which could have transpired that, although they could be enumerated and considered individually, such an effort would be rather fruitless and more confusing than helpful. But, there are some general guidelines that can be followed and we will consider certain categories of combinations later in this chapter.

Before you even think about your next bid you should revalue your hand in terms of GFMS?, GFms? and G?, especially if your initial decision was M. You might come to the same revised conclusions, but either or both may have changed.

Responder Revises Her Answers to GFMS?, GFms? and G?

When you revalue your hand in terms of G? you need to be able to interpret opener's second bid in terms of his opinion regarding G?. Sometimes his bid will be quite clear and other times rather vague. You also have to reconsider your position in the contract. Will you be declarer or dummy? You may have made your initial evaluation assuming you would be declarer but now find you will be the dummy. **If so, don't forget to revalue using dummy points.**

You also need to know if opener's bid was forcing or nonforcing. If forcing you must bid again regardless of your revised opinion regarding G?, but if nonforcing you are allowed to pass. Of course you would pass only if you decided G? = N. Even then in some auctions you would bid again if the strain of the current contract were not reasonable. Fortunately (or not!) very few of opener's rebids are forcing so you are usually allowed to pass.

If you decide to bid again you need to know the message sent to partner with your call:

- *Sign-Off:* Opener is expected to pass. You have decided on the final contract.
Pass is the most common sign-off. Any game bid is a sign-off **if opener has limited his hand with his second bid.**
- *Invitational:* Opener may choose to pass or bid as he sees fit.
Many of responder's rebids are invitational.
- *Forcing:* Opener must bid again.

Similar to responder's first bid a new suit tends to be forcing. This bid is often made after opener rebids his first suit. If opener rebids 1NT, a new suit is forcing only if it is a jump bid or higher ranking than responder's first suit. In the latter case the bid is a **reverse by responder**.

Responder needs to remember that she is the captain and needs to steer the partnership to a reasonable contract. The primary goal is a Golden Game: 3NT, 4♥ or 4♠ with the Major Suit games preferred. If there is not sufficient combined strength (25 points) for a Golden Game contract, the partscore priority list is: Major Suit, notrump, minor suit – always looking for a Golden Fit in a suit contract.

Responder needs to recognize that the partnership cannot always reach the optimal contract. Quite often the lack of combined strength limits the amount of bidding for both partners so that not all appropriate information can be communicated.

As you read through this chapter and the next do not try to memorize all of the sequences and combinations. Rather, try to follow the logic of the sequences and conclusions that are drawn. In a few instances critical principles will be introduced that really must be memorized, but you should find most of it very logical.

RESPONDER'S INITIAL BID WAS A MODERATE INVITATIONAL BID

This type of bid is made when responder initially decided $G? = M^W$ or M^I . Responder has no way to distinguish between these two hand strengths with her first bid. While this message is a little ambiguous it is pretty clear that responder does not have much interest in a game contract. Opener does not need to bid again and he is free to pass or bid as he sees fit. Opener can readily deduce that responder has only 6 - 9 points and easily determine if $G? = Y$, N or M. It will be M if he wants to be in game when responder has the M^I hand but not if she has the M^W hand.

There are only three possible auctions where responder's message to opener is definitely one that shows only a moderate interest in game:

- A raise of opener's Major Suit to the 2 level
- A raise of opener's minor suit to the 2 level
- A bid of 1NT

In the first two cases opener will always pass if he decides $G? = N$. If he makes a bid below game, he is showing that he still has some game interest and is further describing his hand; he is asking responder for help in determining the final contract. Opener's bid may be nonforcing or forcing. If opener decides $G? = Y$, he will either jump to a game contract to sign off or make a forcing bid.

In the third case opener will pass if $G? = N$ and he is satisfied with notrump as the strain. Further action by opener below game may be a move toward game or just toward a better partscore contract. Opener's bid may be forcing or nonforcing. If nonforcing it may be invitational or simply descriptive. If opener decides $G? = Y$, he might simply sign off with a jump to a game contract.

Let's look further at each of the three possible auctions.

Responder Raised Opener's Major Suit to the 2 Level

If responder has raised opener's Major Suit to the 2 level, the strain has been set. So if opener decides $G? = N$ he will pass, and if $G? = Y$ he will just jump to 4 of the Major to sign off. In the latter case he has not really taken over control of the auction; he has simply described his hand telling partner that his hand is strong enough for game even if she has only 6 points. Since responder has limited her hand to at most 9 points, both partners know that slam is out of the question so the bid becomes a signoff bid.

If $G? = M$ opener's most common action to invite game is a simple additional raise to the 3 level. It is very important for responder to understand the significance of this bid. Opener could have passed but didn't. He also could have bid game himself but didn't do that either. Opener already knows that responder does not have much interest in game. In fact, he was able to deduce that responder has only 6 - 9 points, but this is a pretty wide range. Opener must have a hand where he wants to be in game if responder is on the upper end of her range ($G?= M^l$: 8 or 9 points) but not if she is on the lower end of her range ($G? = M^w$: 6 or 7 points). Responder can't just think "I have a bad hand so I guess I will pass." Opener wants to know if she has a "good" bad hand ($G?= M^l$) or a "bad" bad hand ($G?= M^w$). In the case of the former, responder should raise to game but pass with the latter. By the way, responder would have passed initially with a "terrible" hand having no game interest whatsoever.

There are more advanced actions opener could take but they are beyond the scope of the current discussion and are not considered here. The only reason for even mentioning the possibility is to prepare you for the unexpected if you are playing with a new partner who opens the bidding and the auction goes something like

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	2♥
3♣	?

Opener's 3♣ bid is some sort of game try but you have no idea what he meant. Different players have different agreements. You know that the contract should be played in hearts so don't pass! It is best to bid either 3♥ or 4♥ putting the contract at the same level you would have if opener had bid 3♥. This topic is discussed in more detail in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 8 – "Moving Forward."

Here are a couple of normal examples.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♠
3♠	?

Opener is asking you if your first bid was based on $G? = M^W$ or M^I .

♠ Q 8 3 Your first bid was based on $G? = M^W$. You now conclude $G? = N$
♥ 7 5 and pass.

♦ K 8 5 2

♣ J 10 7 3

♠ Q 8 7 6 Your first bid was based on $G? = M^I$. You now conclude $G? = Y$ and
♥ K 3 bid 4♠.

♦ K 9 6 5

♣ 5 4 3

Responder Raised Opener's Minor Suit to the 2 Level

When responder raises opener's minor suit to the 2 level, the strain has not yet been finalized. Notrump is still a viable, in fact, preferable option – especially if a game contract is to be reached. If opener takes any further action below game he is likely looking for a 3NT contract. The two most likely actions by opener are a bid of 2NT or a further raise to 3 of his minor. In either case the arguments just presented regarding responder's raise of opener's Major Suit to the 2 level also apply here. Opener doesn't know if responder has a "good" bad hand or a "bad" bad hand; however, there are subtle differences in the implications of opener's two invitational bids.

When opener makes a 2NT rebid he is probably showing a balanced hand with maybe only 3 or 4 cards in his minor. Can you deduce that he must have 18 or 19 HCP? (He didn't open 1NT or 2NT so doesn't have 15 - 17 or 20 - 21 HCP and would not be interested in game with only 13 - 14 HCP.) Actually opener might have a hand with 17 HCP that wasn't quite balanced with maybe two doubletons and high honors in each. Although he might have "fudged" a little and opened that hand 1NT (it is OK to push the guidelines a little on occasion), he may have also chosen to open in his 5-card minor instead. Once again responder should pass with a "bad" bad hand and raise to 3NT with a "good" bad hand. Actually, with a "bad" bad hand and very unbalanced distribution, responder might return to 3 of opener's minor.

When opener raises to 3 of his minor, he is suggesting that his hand is unbalanced and his strength is concentrated there. In this case responder should bid 3NT if she has a "good" bad hand and her HCP are distributed in the other three suits; otherwise, pass.

The bid of a new suit by opener is forcing for one round and responder should bid something that makes sense, probably notrump or opener's first suit.

Responder Bid 1NT

There are seven likely actions other than pass that opener might take:

- Bid a new suit at the 2 level that is lower ranking than his first suit
- Rebid his first suit at the 2 level
- Bid a new suit at the 2 level that is higher ranking than his first suit (a *faux* reverse unless 2♦ after a 1♣ opening)
- Bid 2NT
- Bid a new suit at the 3 level that is lower ranking than his first suit (jump shift)
- Rebid his first suit at the 3 level
- Jump to game in notrump or a Major

When opener bids 2 of a new suit that is lower ranking than his first suit, he is showing an unbalanced hand that is not suitable for notrump and is asking responder to choose between the two suits. The bid is **not** forcing, so if responder prefers the second suit she can pass; otherwise, she will usually simply bid 2 of opener's first suit. There are a couple of exceptions that should be obvious when they occur. Here are two examples.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	1NT
2♣	?

♠ - Responder was not quite strong enough to bid her suit at the 2 level the first time, so had to start with 1NT. She really does not like
♥ K Q J 8 4 2 either one of opener's suits and is quite sure that the contract belongs in hearts. She can bid 2♥ at her second turn. Opener will
♦ 9 7 6 3 2 know responder does not have a good hand because she has already limited her strength with her 1NT bid. Opener will also know that responder does not like either of his suits and has a long suit of her own.
♣ 8 3

Suppose responder has the same hand as above but the bidding goes

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	1NT
2♥	?

On the surface it would appear that responder's hand has just improved from 8 points (I'm not counting anything for the fifth diamond in such a worthless suit) to 14 points, adding 5 points for the void and one point for the doubleton! However, be careful about counting for shortness in a suit where partner has shown length. He probably has some HCP in that suit and if responder also counts for shortness they will have what is commonly referred to as a ***duplication of values***. The combined hands would have much more playing strength if his HCP were

elsewhere or responder had shortness in some other suit. Opener may have something like ♠KJxxx, and those 4 points will not really be worth much in terms of tricks. Furthermore, responder undoubtedly has the longer trump holding so her hand will play more as a declarer than a dummy. Nonetheless, there is a great Golden Fit in hearts so responder should raise to at least 3♥ and 4♥ would not be unreasonable.

When opener rebids his first suit at the 2 level he is simply showing a long suit with no game interest. Responder should just pass. Here is an example.

	OPENER	RESPONDER
	1♥	1NT
	2♥	?
♠ Q 5 2	Opener has shown extra length (at least 6 cards), so you know there	
♥ 7 5	is a Golden Fit in hearts. Opener has also said that G? = N. You are	
♦ K 5 4	happy with the contract so pass.	
♣ K 9 6 3 2		

Opener’s bid of a new suit at the 2 level that is **higher ranking than his first suit** carries significantly different implications from his bid of a new suit at the 2 level that is lower ranking than his first suit. Most importantly it is a *faux* reverse (except 1♣ – 1N; 2♦ is just a Type 1 reverse because responder may have chosen to bypass diamonds and bid notrump with a 3=3=4=3 pattern), therefore a **forcing bid**, and shows a hand for which opener’s game interest is M^S or Y. It also tends to be a natural bid (showing at least 4 cards) and promises more cards in his first suit than the second. Since responder has already denied 4 cards in this new suit, opener is probably not looking for a Golden Fit there (although he could be 6-5 in his first and second suits, respectively). He likely is just further describing his hand and looking for responder to guide the way to the proper contract, hopefully game someplace. At times this sequence can prove awkward for both opener and declarer. While there are sophisticated methods that can be used here, they are beyond the scope of this book. The best advice for responder is to just do something that makes sense:

- Bid 2NT (“bad” bad hand) or 3NT (“good” bad hand) with stoppers or length in the unbid suits,
- Bid 3 of opener’s first suit or even bid 3 of opener’s second suit (with 3-card support) if it is a Major

Yes, you might be playing in a 7-card fit instead of a Golden Fit, but worse things could (and will) happen. Here is an example of the latter action.

	OPENER	RESPONDER
	1♦	1NT
	2♥	?

♠ 5 Responder didn't really like her initial bid of 1NT but did not have
 ♥ K J 6 any other choice. Now she can't pass after opener's reverse and
 ♦ 8 5 2 finds herself with few attractive choices. It looks like the partner-
 ♣ K 9 6 4 3 2 ship belongs at game but 3NT and 5♦ are not appealing, so maybe
 4♥ is the place to be. She can suggest this by raising to 3♥ and
 letting opener take it from there. Opener will know that responder has only 3-
 card heart support because she would have bid 1♥ instead of 1NT at her first turn
 if she had held 4 hearts.

Responder has to be careful not to be lulled into complacency by opener's
 raise from 1NT to 2NT. Opener is not showing a weak hand. He would have
 passed with a weak hand. Just as in the discussion of opener's 2NT rebid after
 responder raised his opening bid of 1 of a minor to the 2 level, opener is showing
 a balanced hand with 18 or 19 HCP. Responder should almost always raise to
 3NT. One exception is when responder has a very poor 6 points and passing is a
 reasonable option. Another is when responder holds a long heart suit and the
 opening bid was 1♠. Responder should now bid 3♥ with a 5-card suit and 4♥
 with a 6⁺-card suit. After the 3♥ bid opener can choose between 3NT and 4♥.
 This sequence is similar to responder's jump to 3♥ after a 1NT opening bid.

The strongest bid opener can make below game is a jump shift to the 3 level
 in a suit lower ranking than his first suit. This bid is natural and game forcing
 with opener having at least as many cards in his first suit as his second and an
 unbalanced hand. The best advice for responder is just to bid something that
 makes sense. Bidding 3 of opener's first suit, especially if it was a Major, is a
 good idea if she has a high doubleton honor in that suit.

Opener's jump to the 3 level in his suit is a strong invitational bid. It shows a
 good 6-card suit or a longer suit with perhaps not quite such solidity. Responder
 should strive to bid 4 of opener's suit if it is a Major. If it is a minor responder
 prefers to explore for a 3NT contract. She can do this by bidding 3 of a side suit
 in which she has some strength. If she has values or length in all of the side suits
 she should consider bidding 3NT herself. She can also raise to 4 of opener's mi-
 nor if a notrump contract is not appealing and she has significant support. Of
 course, the bid is not forcing so responder can pass if she is on the lower end of
 the range for her 1NT response and a game contract does not seem reachable.

Sometimes opener has a hand with a long solid suit that is so strong that he
 wants to be in game if responder has as little as 6 points. With a long Major he
 shows this hand by jumping to game in his Major Suit. With a long minor suit he
 jumps to 3NT. Responder should pass opener's bid.

Suppose the auction starts as follows:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	1NT
4♥	?

♠ 8 6 2
♥ 10 8
♦ K 10 8 3
♣ A J 8 2

Responder's hand is worth 8 HCP. Opener has shown a hand with at least 6 hearts and enough strength to be in game even if responder has only 6 points. You have a Golden Fit in hearts and slam is out of the question, so pass. You should pass even if you have fewer hearts. Opener's unilateral jump in hearts shows either a very solid 6-card suit or extra length such that he needs no trump support from you.

RESPONDER'S INITIAL BID WAS A STRONG INVITATIONAL BID

This bid always implies that responder's game interest is M^S but not conversely. That is, there are some hands when responder's game interest is M^S but she makes an ambiguous forcing bid.

There are only three possible auctions when responder's message to opener is definitely one that shows a strong interest in game:

- A raise of opener's Major Suit to the 3 level
- A raise of opener's minor suit to the 3 level
- A jump to 2NT

Responder Raised Opener's Major Suit to the 3 Level

In the first case, excluding slam probes which are very rare and not pursued here, opener either passes or bids game since there clearly is no room to explore for game.

Responder Raised Opener's Minor Suit to the 3 Level

In the second case opener will usually either pass or bid 3NT. There is another possibility upon partnership agreement and that is to show stoppers for notrump "up-the-line." For example, suppose an opening bid of 1♣ is raised to 3♣. Now a bid of 3♦ by opener would tell responder he had diamonds under control, but is worried about one or both Majors. Responder could then bid 3♥ with a heart stopper but no spade stopper, 3♠ with a spade stopper but no heart stopper, or 3NT with stoppers in both Majors. If opener did not have a diamond stopper but had a heart stopper, his first bid would be 3♥. If it becomes apparent that neither partner has a stopper in some suit, either partner can bid 4♣ for a relatively safe partscore contract. This approach is a little more complicated after a 1♦ opening, and more sophisticated options are available, so these ideas may be best reserved for more experienced players and established partnerships. This concept is further discussed in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 8 – "Moving Forward."

Responder Bid 2NT

Responder's jump to 2NT is a very descriptive bid and opener will usually pass, bid game in notrump or a major suit or rebid his first suit at the 3 level. Responder should not bid again after any of these actions by opener. Opener might

also bid a new suit at the 3 level and the significance of that bid depends on whether the new suit is lower or higher ranking than opener's first suit. We will look at a few examples for both cases.

When opener bids a new suit that is lower ranking than his first suit he is denying any real interest in game and is showing a 2-suited hand that he deems unsuitable for a notrump contract with at least as many cards in his first suit as his second suit. He is really asking responder to choose between the two suits at the 3 level by passing his rebid or correcting back to his first suit. Responder's decision should be based on her relative support for the two suits.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	2NT
3♣	?

In this auction responder's shape almost has to be 3=2=4=4 – the 2NT response denied holding 4 spades or 3 hearts and promised a balanced hand. Responder should almost always pass the 3♣ bid. An exception would be if responder held a pair of high heart honors and 4 small clubs. A correction to 3♥ would then be appropriate. Responder might also have chosen to bid 2NT with a 3=2=5=3 pattern if the diamonds were very weak. In that case responder will have to choose between passing 3♣ and playing in a possible 4-3 fit or correcting to 3♥ and playing in a probable 5-2 fit. It is usually right to bid 3♥ but a pass would be reasonable holding 2 small hearts and 3 strong clubs. After all, opener may be 5-5 in his two suits.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2NT
3♣	?

In this auction responder's shape could very well be 2=4=4=3 so his decision is not so clear cut. He will have to decide whether to pass or bid 2♠ based on the quality of his trump support for the two suits.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2NT
3♥	?

If responder's shape is 2=3=4=4 he should usually correct to 3♠. But if it is 2=4=3=4 or 2=4=4=3 he should usually pass but might raise to 4♥ if he has reasonable hearts, secondary support for spades and prime cards in the minors. For example,

♠ Q 3 Opener should find this to be a nice dummy in a 4♥ contract after
 ♥ Q 10 9 5 the above auction.
 ♦ A 10 6 3
 ♣ K 8 4

When opener bids a new suit at the 3 level that is higher ranking than his first suit he expresses a real interest in game and is showing a 2-suited hand which might not be suitable for a notrump contract with more cards in his first suit than his second suit. This is actually another form of a reverse by opener. It is a forcing bid so responder must not pass.

When opener's second suit is a Major Suit responder will have already denied holding 4 cards in that suit by virtue of her 2NT response. If she decides to raise that suit opener will know it is with only 3-card support.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	2NT
3♠	?

Opener's shape is probably 4=2=2=5 with worthless doubletons in the red suits but he could also be something like 4=1=2=6 and be thinking of game or even slam in clubs. If responder has strength in both red suits a 3NT contract is reasonable. But responder might have a hand such as the following.

♠ K Q 3 Now it looks like maybe 4♠ is the best game contract even though
 ♥ 9 5 4 there is probably only a 7-card spade fit. It is possible if not probable
 ♦ 6 3 2 that opener is 5=1=1=6 so there could be an 8-card spade fit. A raise
 ♣ K Q J 4 to 4♠ with this hand is quite reasonable.

♠ A 3 Neither spades nor notrump seem reasonable with this hand so a raise
 ♥ K 7 4 to 4♣ is the only bid that makes sense. You will let opener decide
 ♦ 8 6 5 2 what to do next.
 ♣ Q J 8 4

Opener's second suit need not always be a Major Suit as illustrated below.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	2NT
3♦	?

This is a rather interesting scenario. Responder has denied holding 4 or more cards in either Major so she must have 4-card support for at least one of opener's minor suits. If responder's strength is concentrated in the Major Suits she should bid 3NT and if concentrated in the minor suits she should raise one of opener's minor suits.

♠ K Q 3 This is an ideal hand for a 3NT bid.

♥ A J 4

♦ 9 6 5 2

♣ 8 4 3

♠ 8 4 3 This is an ideal hand for a raise to 4♦. Note that opener can have a maximum of 10 HCP in the minor suits so must have at least 7 worthwhile HCP in the Majors as well as shortness in one or both Majors. Your excellent support for both his minors should give him a reasonable play for a minor suit game and perhaps even a slam if he chooses to pursue that option.

With strength divided between the Major and minor suits responder should look for a notrump contract by bidding the Major Suit in which she has strength. Opener will know she has only a 3-card suit (perhaps even a doubleton) because she denied holding 4 cards with her initial 2NT response. Opener may then be able to bid 3NT if he has some side strength in the other Major Suit.

♠ K Q 3 Bid 3♠ with this hand.

♥ 8 4 3

♦ 9 6 5 2

♣ A J 4

RESPONDER'S INITIAL BID WAS A FORCING BID

Quite often responder's first bid will be a forcing bid for which her interest in game is quite ambiguous. This will be the case whenever she bids a new suit. The mere fact that she did not pass indicates that she has some game interest, but, depending on the level of the bid, it could be as weak as M^W or as strong as Y. For example, if responder bid a new suit at the 1 level, it could be M^W , M^I , M^S or Y. On the other hand, if responder's bid was at the 2 level her game interest is either M^S or Y. In all of these cases opener bases his rebid on the **assumption** that responder has the minimum game interest that could be suggested by her bid. So if responder's bid was at the 1 level, opener assumes responder's game interest is moderate (M^W or M^I). But if responder's bid was at the 2 level opener assumes responder's game interest is M^S . It is extremely important that responder keep this concept in mind when considering her rebid. Opener could not peek into her hand to see exactly what she had and her message may have been very vague, so opener made the most conservative assumption and rebid accordingly. Responder will never have defined her point count to within a 2-point interval with her forcing bid, so she may have to clarify her strength with her rebid.

After responder hears opener's rebid she must revalue her hand in terms of GFMS?, GFms? and G?. The answers to all of these may again be Y, N or M; with M perhaps divided into M^W , M^I and M^S . Responder's decision, particularly regarding G?, is often compounded by the fact that opener's message regarding

G? may also have been ambiguous! Since responder bid a new suit opener did not have the option of passing so he had to bid something. Only a few of opener's rebids send the message G? = N, and only a few others send the message G? = Y. Many of opener's rebids would be made with either a G? = N hand or a G? = M hand and some are made with either a G? = M hand or a G? = Y hand. While this may all seem a little confusing, in practice it usually is not all that difficult. We will look at several examples in the remainder of this chapter and continue this section in the next chapter.

Responder Bid a New Suit at the 1 Level

The main thing for responder to remember in these sequences is that when opener made his rebid he **assumed** responder had 6 - 9 points and made his rebid accordingly. While there are many specific rebids opener could have made, they can be categorized as follows (listed in order going up the bidding scale – assuming the bid is available — not by priority):

1. Bid a new suit at the 1 level (must be a Major), e.g., 1♣ – 1♥; 1♠
2. Bid 1NT, e.g., 1♦ – 1♠; 1NT
3. Bid a new suit at the 2 level that is lower ranking than his first suit, e.g., 1♥ – 1♠; 2♣
4. Rebid 2 of his original suit, e.g., 1♦ – 1♥; 2♦
5. Bid a new suit at the 2 level that is higher ranking than his first suit and lower-ranking than responder's suit (a reverse), e.g., 1♦ – 1♠; 2♥
6. Bid 2 of responder's suit, e.g., 1♣ – 1♥; 2♥
7. Bid 2 of a new suit that is higher ranking than responder's suit (a jump shift), e.g., 1♣ – 1♥; 2♠
8. Bid 2NT, e.g., 1♦ – 1♠; 2NT
9. Bid 3 of a new suit that is lower ranking than his first suit (another jump shift), e.g., 1♥ – 1♠; 3♣
10. Bid 3 of his original suit, e.g., 1♦ – 1♠; 3♦
11. Bid 3 of responder's suit, e.g., 1♣ – 1♥; 3♥
12. Bid 3NT, e.g., 1♣ – 1♥; 3NT
13. Bid 4 of his original suit if a Major (would have to be hearts in the current context since responder bid 1 of new suit — obviously spades), e.g., 1♥ – 1♠; 4♥
14. Bid 4 of responder's suit if a Major, e.g., 1♣ – 1♠; 4♠

Quite a daunting list isn't it? Nonetheless it will prove helpful for the student to spend a little time reviewing each of the categories. While some have common or similar meanings, many carry significantly different messages.

Regardless of which rebid opener chose, before responder thinks about her rebid she should revalue her hand from the perspective of GFMS? and G?. It is quite possible that responder now discovers that she has a fit for one of opener's suits with one or more short suits on the side. She now counts dummy points

instead of length points and this may lead to a stronger hand than she originally envisioned. Then responder must remember that she is the captain and it is her responsibility to make sure that the partnership reaches a reasonable contract. Note that you will not always be able to reach the best contract, especially if it is a partscore. Responder strives for the best contract by using the following guidelines.

- If $G? = N$, make the cheapest bid possible in a strain you think is reasonable
- If $G? = M$, bid one level higher than you would if $G? = N$
- If $G? = Y$, either bid game or make a forcing bid

Let's look at each of the rebids in a little more detail. The numbered headings have been changed slightly for emphasis in some cases, but the effect is the same as the original list.

1. Opener Rebid $1\heartsuit$ or $1\spadesuit$

Opener's message here is that $G? = N$ or M . Opener has no bid available to distinguish between the two possibilities. Responder should take a conservative view and assume the message from opener is N . But at the same time she should strive to keep the bidding open just in case opener actually has a $G? = M$ hand. So how strong could opener be? He did not make a $G? = Y$ bid. How strong would he have to be to make such a bid? Strong enough for game even if responder had only 6 points, which would be at least 19 points. Opener could have as many as 18 points. See how easy it was to work out the upper limit for opener's bid. Much easier than trying to memorize it.

Opener is showing at least a 4-card Major Suit. It would be very rare that he would have a 5-card Major Suit because his opening bid would then have probably been one of his Major. But he could have 5 cards in his Major and 6⁺ cards in the minor that he opened. It does happen. Even more unusual would be that opener has 6 cards in his Major and a 7-card minor suit.

If responder's bid was $1\heartsuit$ and opener rebid $1\spadesuit$, opener is denying 4-card heart support. If opener started with $1\clubsuit$ and responder bid $1\diamondsuit$, it would be very unusual that opener had 4-card diamond support. In fact opener's distribution would have to be $4=0=4=5$ or $0=4=4=5$. Can you see why? Opener has shown 4 cards in his Major. If he also has 4 diamonds why did he open $1\clubsuit$? Because he has 5 clubs. That leaves him no cards for the other Major. See how much you can infer from certain bidding sequences just by knowing the rules for opening the bidding.

Opener has painted a little clearer picture of his hand but it is still kind of fuzzy. Now what should responder do? First and foremost she should not pass unless she is sure there is a Golden Fit in opener's Major, and then only if she is relatively sure $G? = N$ from her perspective. Now if she has 7 points and opener 18 there are enough for game. But this requires opener to have the absolute max-

imum that he might have and we tend to be a little more conservative in our bidding. With a Golden Fit in opener’s Major responder can pass if she has only 6 or 7 points. In all other cases responder should bid something.

Let’s look at some examples.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♥
1♠	?

♠ Q 8 7 It does not appear that there is a Golden Fit in spades so responder
 ♥ K 9 5 4 should not pass. With only 9 points it is very doubtful that there is
 ♦ A 5 3 game. It looks like notrump is a reasonable strain. Responder bids
 ♣ 9 8 4 1NT. This sends the message $G? = N$, but is not quite a sign-off bid.
 It really carries the same message regarding strength as if 1♠ had
 been the opening bid.

Opener will probably pass but might take further action. If opener next bids 2♣ he is showing an unbalanced hand with long clubs (most likely 6⁺) with no game interest. Responder should then pass. But if opener next bids 2♠ he is showing a 5=x=x=6 hand with $G? = M$. Responder should raise to 4♠. Finally if opener next bids 3♣ he is showing an unbalanced hand (probably 4=x=x=6) with $G? = M$. In this case responder should bid 3NT.

If responder’s hand were just a little stronger (for example, change the ♣9 to the ♣Q), responder would conclude $G? = M^S$, so should bid more – 2NT being quite appropriate.

Make responder’s hand even stronger (for example, change the ♣9 to the ♣A) and responder would conclude $G? = Y$. Doesn’t 3NT look like the best game contract? That should be responder’s bid.

♠ Q 9 7 5 Responder initially values this hand at 6 points. After partner’s open-
 ♥ K 8 6 4 ing bid of 1♣ responder started showing her 4-card suits “up-the-line”
 ♦ J 7 5 by bidding 1♥. When opener rebids 1♠ she knows there is a Golden
 ♣ 7 6 Fit in spades and now revalues her hand as dummy, adding 1 point
 for the doubleton. But since opener has limited his hand to a maxi-
 mum of 18 points, she decides $G? = N$ and passes. Note that technically this
 hand revalues to 7 points in support of spades so if opener does have 18 points
 there might be enough for game. But we tend not to invite game if partner needs
 the absolute maximum to reach game values because he will also accept the invi-
 tation with a little less. Also, for this hand the ♦J and doubleton club (in part-
 ner’s suit) tend to be overvalued. Thus the conservative action of passing is rec-
 ommended. This hand would be worth a little more if the holdings in the minors
 were reversed or the opening bid had been 1♦. Then a raise to 2♠ would be ac-
 ceptable.

If responder were a little stronger, say the $\heartsuit J$ were the $\heartsuit K$, she would decide $G? = M^1$ and raise to $2\spadesuit$. This is similar to responder's immediate raise to $2\spadesuit$ after an opening bid of $1\spadesuit$ – just slightly stronger – in the M^1 range.

Along the same line strengthen responder's hand even more such that she has 10 - 11 points and $G? = M^S$. Now she should jump to $3\spadesuit$.

Finally suppose all of responder's honor cards were aces. Then she would decide $G? = Y$ and jump all the way to $4\spadesuit$. Even though this is a game bid it is not quite a sign-off bid although opener will usually pass. Note that responder could have an even stronger hand and make the same bid. If opener has about 16^+ points he might make a move toward slam.

$\spadesuit 63$ Even knowing there is a Golden Fit in clubs after partner's $1\clubsuit$ opening bid, responder follows her first obligation of bidding a new suit
 $\heartsuit A984$ if she can by starting with $1\heartsuit$. Opener's rebid lets responder deter-
 $\diamond 84$ mine that $GFMS? = N$. Responder bids $2\clubsuit$ to tell opener of the
 $\clubsuit QJ653$ Golden Fit in clubs and that her current decision regarding $G?$ is N. Opener should pass this bid even if his hand pattern is $4=3=3=3$. He should know that responder would not take him back to clubs without 5-card support.

Change the $\clubsuit 6$ to the $\clubsuit K$ giving responder 11 points. Now $G? = M^S$, so responder should bid more. $3\clubsuit$ makes a lot of sense. Responder is hoping opener has a little more than the minimum required for an opening bid plus a diamond stopper so he can bid $3NT$.

In addition to the above change, replace responder's $\heartsuit 9$ with the $\heartsuit Q$ increasing her strength to 13 points. Now her decision is $G? = Y$. But what is she to bid? There are probably not enough points in the two hands for a $5\clubsuit$ contract, and a bid of $3NT$ is a little scary without any indication of a diamond stopper. Yes, sometimes bidding is a little difficult. The experts have devised special bids called conventions to resolve these problems, but we are not ready for those yet. They will have to wait until we understand the basics. So for now, responder should just bid $3NT$ and hope for the best.

2. Opener Rebid 1NT

Opener's message to responder is loud and clear:

- I have a balanced hand that was not strong enough to open 1NT
- I do not have a 4-card suit I could bid at the 1 level
- I do not have 4-card support for your suit
- $G? = N$

Because opener's message is so precise responder will usually have an easy time deciding what to do next. Her decision regarding $G?$ should be quite easy since opener is known to have a balanced hand with only 13 or 14 HCP. Responder's decision regarding $GFMS?$ is usually Y or N, but there are a couple of exceptions.

- If responder has a 6-card or longer Major Suit, GFMS? = Y
- If responder has a 5-card Major Suit and fewer than 4 cards in the other Major Suit, or is 4=5=x=x, GFMS? = M in her 5-card Major
- If responder is 5=4=x=x, GFMS? = M in either Major (her first bid would have been 1♠)
- If responder does not have a 5⁺-card Major Suit, GFMS? = N

As always, after responder makes her decision regarding GFMS? and G?, she tries to steer the partnership into a reasonable contract.

Let's look at some specific examples where responder decides G? = N.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦ 1NT	1♠ ?
♠ Q 9 8 4 ♥ Q 8 5 ♦ K 5 4 ♣ Q 6 3	With only 9 HCP responder knows the partnership belongs in a partscore. While there might be a Golden Fit in diamonds, opener could have only a 4-card suit so responder is not sure and passes.
♠ A Q 10 6 4 2 ♥ 8 5 4 ♦ 6 4 ♣ 8 6	Since opener has shown a balanced hand responder knows there is a Golden Fit in Spades. With only 8 total points she also knows the partnership belongs in a partscore. She bids 2♠, a sign-off bid telling opener to pass.
♠ K 10 8 4 ♥ 7 ♦ A 9 6 5 3 ♣ 10 5 2	Responder knows the partnership belongs in a partscore and has a Golden Fit in diamonds. With a singleton heart, notrump does not look promising, so she signs off with a bid of 2♦.
♠ K J 9 5 2 ♥ K 8 7 5 ♦ 9 6 5 ♣ 8	Responder does not like the idea of a notrump contract holding a singleton club when partner opened 1♦. There is also the possibility that opener has a 4-card heart suit or a 3-card spade suit so there might be a Golden Fit in either Major. Even if opener does not have 4 hearts or 3 spades, the partnership has at least a 7-card spade fit which should play reasonably well. Responder can show this hand with a rebid of 2♥. Since responder's second suit is lower ranking than her first suit this bid is not forcing or even invitational. It simply asks opener to choose between the two suits. Opener will know responder has at least 5 spades because responder would have bid hearts first if she had only 4 cards in each Major.

Now let's look at some specific examples where responder decides G? = M, keeping the same starting sequence as for the previous series.

♠ Q J 10 5 Responder has 11 HCP and no extra values. She wants to be in
 ♥ K 7 4 game if opener has 14 HCP but in a partscore if opener has only
 ♦ Q 6 13 HCP. Consequently G? = M. With GFMS? = N, notrump is
 ♣ K 9 7 3 the only reasonable game contract and she makes an invitational
 bid of 2NT.

♠ K Q J 9 7 6 With 9 HCP and a 6-card spade suit responder knows there is a
 ♥ Q J 10 Golden Fit in spades and G? = M. She invites opener to game in
 ♦ 10 9 4 spades by bidding 3♠. Opener will know this is an invitational
 ♣ 8 bid because she jumped a level on the bidding scale.

♠ K J 8 5 3 With 9 HCP and two 5-card suits responder knows G? = M and
 ♥ 7 2 GFMS? = M. With a known Golden Fit in diamonds responder
 ♦ K Q 7 4 3 gets her thoughts on game across to opener by jumping to 3♦.
 ♣ 5 Opener will not know that responder has a 5-card spade suit.
 Nonetheless, if opener decides to move on to game, he should
 start with a 3♠ bid if he has a 3-card spade suit. If this happens responder will
 know that opener has only 3-card support since he did not support spades imme-
 diately. For this hand responder will then bid 4♠. Note that responder would
 have made the same 3♦ bid with only 4 spades and another small club. (Change
 ♠ J to the ♠ Q to keep the total points at 11.) In that case responder would bid
 3NT after opener's 3♠ bid.

Finally let's look at some specific examples where responder decides G? = Y, again with the same starting sequence.

♠ K 10 9 With 13 HCP responder already knew G? = Y when she made her
 ♥ A K 10 8 3 first bid. Now she also knows GFMS? = N, so bids 3NT, a sign-
 ♦ A Q 8 3 off bid.
 ♣ 9

♠ Q 9 8 6 4 3 This time responder has 12 HCP plus 2 points for the 6-card spade
 ♥ K 7 suit and again knew that G? = Y when she bid 1♠. She just did
 ♦ 8 7 5 not know if there was a Golden Fit in spades. Now that opener
 ♣ A K has rebid notrump (promising a balanced hand) the spade Golden
 Fit is assured. She jumps to 4♠, another sign-off bid.

The game bids in the above two examples are sign-off bids only because opener has significantly limited his hand with his 1NT rebid - **not because they are game bids**. In other auctions, where opener has not limited his hand, a jump to game may just be a bid that shows game values, but slam might still be a possibility.

♠ K J 9 8 5 With 15 HCP and a 5-card suit responder knew G? = Y as soon as
 ♥ A Q 8 4 she heard partner open the bidding. She just didn't know which
 ♦ K Q 6 game – hearts, spades or notrump. She started by bidding her long-
 ♣ 7 est suit. Opener's rebid has not really clarified anything since he
 could still have 4 hearts or 3 spades. Responder must make a forcing
 bid to get more information from opener. A jump to 3♥ fits the bill very nicely.
 Opener can infer that responder has at least 5 spades and at least 4 hearts, with at
 least as many spades as hearts. (With more hearts than spades she would have
 bid hearts first.) If opener happens to have a 3=4=x=x hand, he has a choice of
 Major Suits. The better choice is hearts. If responder happened to have equal
 length in the two suits, the partnership would be in the strain with the most
 trumps. For the current hand, a 4-4 fit usually plays a little better than a 5-3 fit.

Note: This section is continued in the next chapter.

SUMMARY

After opener has further described his hand with his rebid you, as responder, revalue your hand in terms of GF? and G?. When you revalue the strength of your hand you may have to make an adjustment for your position in the contract, declarer or dummy. If opener's message regarding G? was ambiguous, take the conservative approach and assume it is the weaker of the possible options. Always be aware of the message you are sending to opener with your bid. Is your bid a signoff, invitational or forcing bid? After making your decision, pass or make an appropriate bid steering the contract to the best strain and level that is attainable.

Responder's Initial Bid was a Moderate Invitational Bid

If responder initially raised opener's 1M bid to 2M the strain has been set and opener's probable action was to pass, bid 3M or bid 4M. The only time responder need consider taking further action is after opener's rebid of 3M. Opener doesn't know if responder's initial G? decision was M^W or M^I . If the former, responder should now pass, and, if the latter, she should bid 4M.

If responder initially raised opener from 1m to 2m, opener will bid again only if he has an interest in game and if so is probably looking for a notrump game. If he bids 2NT he is showing a balanced hand that was too strong to have opened 1NT but not strong enough to have opened 2NT. Therefore, he has 18 or 19 HCP and responder has an easy decision to pass or bid 3NT.

Opener might also bid 3m after responder's raise to 2m. In this case he is showing an unbalanced hand with his strength concentrated in his long minor suit. Responder should pass if his initial G? decision was M^W , otherwise take some other action – bid 3NT, 3 of a new suit (showing strength in that suit) or 4m if a notrump contract does not appear reasonable.

If opener bids a new suit after responder's raise to 2m, he is definitely looking for a 3NT contract and responder should cooperate in that endeavor.

If responder's first bid was 1NT and opener bid again, he may just be looking for a better contract or he may be inviting responder to a game contract. If he bids a new suit at the 2 level that is lower ranking than his first suit he is showing a 2-suited hand and is probably just looking for a better contract, although he has no way to distinguish between a hand for which $G? = N$ and one for which $G? = M$. Responder will usually pass or show tolerance for opener's first suit by bidding 2 of that suit. With maximum values and good support for opener's second suit, responder should usually raise to the 3 level; although, she could bid 2NT if the second suit is a minor, her initial G? decision was M^I and her strength is concentrated in the other two suits. She also has the option of bidding 2 of her own long suit if its rank is between the ranks of opener's two suits.

Opener's reverse is forcing for 1 round and his jump shift is forcing to game. A jump to the 3 level in his first suit is highly invitational and a jump to game is a signoff bid.

Responder's Initial Bid was a Strong Invitational Bid

If responder raised opener's Major Suit to the 3 level, opener will have passed or bid 4 of his Major. In either case responder will take no further action.

If responder raised opener's minor suit to the 3 level, opener will have passed or perhaps made a move toward a 3NT contract. In the later case responder should cooperate in that endeavor.

After responder's jump to 2NT opener will usually pass, bid 3 of his original suit or jump to a game contract. After all of these rebids responder should pass. The only other action opener is likely to take is the bid of new suit that is lower ranking than his first suit. He is then showing an unbalanced hand without any real game interest that he deems unsuitable for a notrump contract and is asking responder to choose between the two suits. Responder will invariably have support for opener's second suit and should usually pass. But with good tolerance for opener's first suit, especially if it is a Major, responder can improve the contract by bidding that suit. Once in a while opener will reverse into a new suit at the 3 level. This bid is forcing and responder should just bid something reasonable.

Responder's Initial Bid was a Forcing Bid

Whenever responder bids a new suit at either the 1 level or 2 level, she has made a forcing bid and opener must bid again. This is by far the most frequent action by responder, and there are many possible subsequent rebid categories for opener, each with their unique nuances. Most rebids by opener will be made with a hand for which his G? decision is either N or M and responder will not know which. So responder must be somewhat cautious with her rebid to avoid reaching a contract level which will not be makeable. Nonetheless, when her initial G? decision was M^S she should usually bid one more time. Of course if her initial decision was Y and it has not changed, she should make sure the partnership gets to a game contract.



CHAPTER 8

- Rebids by Responder - Part 2

Responder's Initial Bid Was a Forcing Bid
(Concluded)

Potpourri

Summary



RESPONDER'S INITIAL BID WAS A FORCING BID (CONCLUDED)

This chapter continues the discussion of continuations by responder after a set of listed rebids by opener that was started in the previous chapter. We are considering those sequences where responder bid a new suit at the 1 level.

3. Opener Rebid a New Suit at the 2 Level that is Lower Ranking than His First Suit

Before delving into the specifics of this sequence, let's set the stage for the possible auctions. It should be obvious that opener's first bid was 1♦ or higher so responder's first bid was 1M and therefore opener's second bid must have been 2m.

Regardless of the specific sequence opener's second bid is not forcing so his game interest could be either N or M. As usual, responder should take the conservative approach and assume it is N. Opener is also showing an unbalanced hand with at least 5 cards in his first suit and at least 4 cards in his second suit, so he surely does not have 4-card support for responder's suit. With a balanced hand and no support for responder, opener would have bid notrump. Actually, there is one special hand that opener could have where he has only 4 cards in his first suit. If opener's hand pattern is 1=4=4=4 he would open 1♦. If responder bids 1♠ opener really has no choice other than to rebid 2♣. (Some experts recommend a rebid of 1NT with this hand pattern, especially with a high honor singleton.)

Now let's look at a few examples.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♠
2♣	?

♠ Q J 5 3 With only 7 HCP responder wants to find a reasonable partscore contract. Opener may have more diamonds than clubs, so responder gives
♥ 9 6 5 a *preference* to diamonds with a 2♦ bid. There is no guarantee of a
♦ A 4 3 Golden Fit but opener has shown an unbalanced hand thereby suggesting
♣ 8 7 3 more diamonds than clubs, at least 4 clubs and probably 5 diamonds. The only exception would be the 1=4=4=4 hand discussed in the introductory comments.

Change the ♣8 to the ♣A and responder's hand is worth 11 points. Now G? = M^S so responder needs to make a stronger bid. How about 3♦?

Make an additional change of the ♥9 to the ♥K to increase responder's strength to 14 points and G? = Y. Now 3NT is the obvious game choice.

♠ A 9 8 5 2 While it is true that opener might have 3 spades and there is a
 ♥ 7 6 Golden Fit in spades, responder has no indication that this is the
 ♦ 8 7 case. But responder can be certain that there is a Golden Fit in
 ♣ J 10 7 3 clubs. Since $G? = N$, responder passes and leaves opener in 2♣.
 Knowing that the contract would be played in clubs, responder
 could evaluate her hand as 7 points – 5 HCP plus 1 for each of the
 2 doubletons.

Now change the ♦8 to the ♦A and responder has 9 HCP. Adding 1 for the fifth spade gives 10 total points and $G? = M^S$, with notrump the game contract responder has in mind. She can get this message across by raising to 3♣, obviously showing game interest and club support but also suggesting weakness in hearts, the unbid suit.

Go back to the original hand and change the ♥7 to the ♥A. This time a rebid of 2NT is a better game try even though responder has club support. It lets opener know he doesn't have to worry about the heart suit.

After either of these encouraging bids, if opener decides $G? = N$, he should probably just pass. With higher distribution in the minors he might elect to retreat to 3 of either minor after responder's 2NT bid. If however opener decides $G? = Y$, it is not necessary that he immediately bid 3NT, even with a heart stopper, if responder's bid was 3♣. If opener has 3-card spade support he should first bid 3♠ (just in case responder has a 5-card spade suit as is the case here). Responder can then play in the spade Golden Fit by bidding 4♠. If responder's hand were a little different, with only 4 spades, she would bid 3NT.

♠ Q J 9 8 5 2 Responder does not care for either of opener's suits. With only 8
 ♥ K 6 5 4 total points she cannot afford to make a forcing bid of 2♥ (a new
 ♦ 4 suit) or an invitational bid of 2NT, so 2♠ is the only reasonable
 ♣ 9 6 alternative. There may not be a Golden Fit, but at least this hand
 should take some tricks with spades as trump. It might not take
 any tricks in some other strain.

Change responder's ♠9 to the ♠K and responder's hand value increases to 11 points. Now responder must make a stronger bid. With so much strength concentrated in the spade suit, a bid of 3♠ should get the message across to opener of $G? = M^S$ with a good 6-card spade suit.

Go back to the original hand and change the ♥6 to the ♥Q. Now responder's hand is worth 10 points but both hearts and spades are suits of interest to responder. The problem is opener has already shown at least 9 cards in the minors so it is very unlikely he has 4 hearts. Although not ideal 3♠ is still the best bid.

4. Opener Rebid 2 of his Original Suit

This is another case where opener's message is quite precise:

- I do not have 4-card support for your suit

- I do not have any other 4-card suit I could have bid at a lower level
- I have an unbalanced hand with at least a 5-card suit (6-card if a Major – would have to be 2♥ after a 1♠ response in the current context)
- G? = N

Before looking at specific auctions or hands let's examine the third bullet item a little more closely to see why opener promises at least a 6-card heart suit, but only a 5-card suit if a minor.

In the current context responder's first bid was a new suit at the 1 level. If opener has rebid a Major Suit it must be hearts. If opener has only 5 hearts his hand shape is either 5-3-3-2 or he has a second 4-card suit. If his shape is 5-3-3-2 he would have rebid 1NT. If he has another 4-card suit (has to be a minor – if it were spades he would have raised responder), he would have bid it. Therefore he must have at least 6 hearts.

We can show that opener might have only a 5-card minor by a simple example. Suppose that opener's hand pattern is 1=4=5=3 with 13 total points. He opens 1♦ and responder bids 1♠. Now opener **cannot** bid

- 1NT because he does not have a balanced hand – although some experts might recommend that action,
- 2♥ because that would be a reverse showing a stronger hand,
- 2♣ with only a 3-card suit,
- and cannot pass.

Opener's only choice is to bid 2♦. Opener has the same restriction if his hand pattern is 1=4=3=5 or 1=3=4=5 but now he would open 1♣ and rebid 2♣.

Now let's look at some examples.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♠
2♦	?

♠ K Q J 8 7 5 3 With 12 HCP and a 7-card suit worth 3 more points, you already knew G? = Y when you made your first bid. Unless opener has a ♥ - spade void there will be a Golden Fit so 4♠ is your best bid.

♦ A 7 5

♣ Q 5 4

Suppose we weaken this hand by changing the ♦A to the ♦8. Now you have only 11 points, not quite enough for game but almost. In fact, G? = M^s. You can show this by bidding 3♠.

If we weaken the hand even further by changing the ♣Q to the ♣9, you have only 9 points and are faced with a more difficult decision. Do you pass and play in 2♦ where you know you have a Golden Fit? Or do you try for a little better score by bidding 2♠ hoping that opener has at least one spade so you still play in a Golden Fit? This is the type of decision both opener and responder will often have to

make. In this case, with the really strong spade suit, 2♠ is probably the better choice, especially in a matchpoint game.

♠ K Q 7 6 Again you knew G? = Y when you made your first bid. Your only
♥ A J 4 unknown was the strain. Now that GFMS? = N, you can sign off in
♦ Q 8 7 3NT. If you weaken the hand to G? = M, by changing the ♠Q to
♣ J 10 9 the ♠8, a bid of 2NT would be appropriate. If you weaken the hand
much further, you should just pass.

♠ K J 10 7 3 You know the partnership belongs in game but what strain? While
♥ A 8 you could simply try 3NT you would miss a Golden Fit in spades if
♦ 6 opener happened to have 3-card support. A better bid is 3♣. This
♣ K Q 7 6 4 is game forcing since it is a new suit at the 3 level and gives opener
the opportunity to bid 3♠, showing 3-card support if he has it.

Suppose you weaken this hand by changing the ♠J to the ♠2 and the ♣Q to the ♣5 so you have 10 HCP plus 2 for your 5-card suits giving 12 total points. Normally you would still put this hand in the G? = Y category. But the mediocre quality of your suits and lack of a known Golden Fit suggest that a little caution be exercised. Still, you are worth a try for game, so bid 2NT. Don't worry about your singleton diamond. Partner bid them twice without your support so he has at least 5 of them. By the way, if partner accepts your invitation he should bid 3♠ if he has 3-card support – just in case you have a 5-card suit as you do with this hand.

5. Opener Rebid a New Suit at the 2 Level that is Higher Ranking than His First Suit and Lower Ranking than Responder's Suit

It is extremely important that both opener and responder are aware of the significance of this sequence. This bid is a Type 1 **reverse** as discussed in some detail in Chapter 5 – “Rebids by Opener - Part 1.” Recall that it shows a hand for which

- G? = M or Y
- Opener has at least 4 cards in his second suit
- Opener has more cards in his first suit than his second suit
- Opener has < 4 cards in responder's suit

Opener cannot make this type of bid unless he has significantly more strength than the minimum required for an opening bid. His hand must be at least strong enough that G? = M, even if responder has only 6 - 9 points.

A word of caution to beginner players – it is one thing to understand this concept “on paper” and quite another to put it into practice. Don't be surprised if you or your partner, or even both, forget this concept in the heat of battle. Keep working at it and you will eventually get it down.

From opener’s viewpoint G? could be Y. **Remember** a Type 1 reverse is forcing for one round so responder cannot pass. First and foremost, responder must re-think her opinion of G?. If she has a “bad” bad hand she should conclude G? = N and try to stop as cheaply as possible. She can do this by making the cheapest bid possible in any suit that has been bid by either partner or by bidding 2NT. Any other bid below game is forcing and should be made if responder has even as little as a “good” bad hand, for then G? = Y. If responder bids cheaply opener will pass if his previous assessment was G? = M. Otherwise opener will bid again. Any such bid below the game level (except 2NT) is forcing for one round.

Now let’s look at some examples.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♠
2♥	?
♠ A 9 8 6 4 ♥ 10 8 5 2 ♦ Q 4 ♣ 6 2	With support for opener’s hearts responder revalues her hand using dummy points for a total of 7 points (counting only 2 points in the diamond suit), still a “bad” bad hand. She has to show opener her heart support but does so by bidding as cheaply as possible (3♥) to also show her lack of game interest. Opener will then pass if his initial game interest was M but go on to 4♥ if it was Y.
♠ K 8 7 6 ♥ 8 5 ♦ K 8 6 3 ♣ 8 5 4	Responder has another “bad” bad hand so bids in a manner similar to the previous example. 3♦ shows her diamond support and lack of game interest.
♠ Q 10 9 8 6 4 ♥ 5 2 ♦ 8 5 ♣ K 7 4	Responder does not like either of opener’s suits and her G? decision is N. She can show her extra spade length and lack of game interest by simply rebidding her first suit cheaply – 2♠. This bid promises only a 5-card suit.
♠ A Q 5 4 ♥ 9 5 3 ♦ 5 4 ♣ K 10 8 3	With 9 HCP responder decides G? = Y. Apparently GFMS? = N, so she makes the reasonable game bid of 3NT.
♠ K J 9 8 5 ♥ A Q 8 4 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ 7	This hand is very similar to the previous one but now responder has 11 HCP. She initially evaluated her strength as G? = M ^S and reaches the same conclusions as in the previous example and again bids 3NT.

♠ J 8 7 5 4 Responder initially evaluated her hand as worth 8 HCP plus 1 for
 ♥ K 9 8 2 the fifth spade. Now that she knows the contract will be in hearts,
 ♦ 2 she revalues her hand using dummy points totaling 8 HCP plus 3 for
 ♣ A 7 3 the singleton. This is clearly enough for game after opener's re-
 verse so she jumps to 4♥.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♠
2♥	?

♠ A Q J 7 4 With 13 points in support of hearts responder should be thinking in
 ♥ K 8 5 3 terms of slam. But since that topic is beyond the scope of this book
 ♦ 9 3 2 responder will have to settle for the game bid of 4♥.
 ♣ 6

♠ K Q 6 4 With 13 HCP responder wants to be in a game contract. Even
 ♥ J 5 2 though there is a Golden Fit in clubs, 5♣ is not a Golden Game so
 ♦ K Q 3 responder chooses a bid of 3NT.
 ♣ Q 8 6

6. Opener Raised Responder's Suit to the 2 Level

This is probably the easiest auction for responder, especially if her suit is a **Major**. Then the strain has been set and the only question remaining is the level. The only other possibility in the present context is that opener initially bid 1♣ and then raised responder's 1♦ bid to 2♦. We'll address this case first and then move on to the Major Suit raise sequence. Regardless of the sequence, opener's message should be easy to decode:

- I have at least 4-card support for your suit
- G? = N

Opener's raise of responder's 1♦ bid to 2♦ definitely denies a 4-card or longer Major. But there is more to it than that. It also shows an unbalanced hand with at least 5 clubs. The only reason to open 1♣ when you hold at least 4 diamonds is because you have more clubs than diamonds. Now if responder is thinking about game prospects it should be in notrump. Since opener has at least 9 cards in the minors responder should not expect much help from opener in the Major Suits unless she has significant strength in the minors – opener's high cards have to be someplace. Ultimately responder should make a decision regarding G?. If G? = N, responder should simply pass and play in the minor suit Golden Fit. If G? = M, 2NT is her best bid. If G? = Y, responder should bid 3NT.

When opener raises responder's 1M bid to 2M, she can usually just go with her initial hand strength evaluation regarding points but reevaluate G?. She can then pass if G? = N, raise to 3M if G? = M, or bid 4M if G? = Y. There is one adjustment responder might make and that is to consider whether she also has a

fit with opener’s first suit. If she has a good fit her hand improves a little but with a poor fit her hand devalues somewhat. This adjustment can be used if she is on the borderline between two choices.

Here are some examples.

	OPENER	RESPONDER
	1♦	1♥
	2♥	?
♠ A 8 4	Based on an assumption that you have 6 - 9 points opener decided	
♥ Q J 8 5 3	G? = N, but showed you 4-card heart support with her raise to 2♥.	
♦ 7 2	You have exactly what she assumed so have no reason to change	
♣ 8 7 5	her decision. Pass.	
♠ 9 3	You have a Golden Fit in both hearts and diamonds. But as in the	
♥ K 8 6 4	previous example G? = N. Choose the heart contract since it will	
♦ K J 9 6 2	score more points than diamonds. Pass and leave well enough	
♣ 10 7	alone.	

	OPENER	RESPONDER
	1♣	1♠
	2♠	?
♠ K Q 9 6 5 2	Based on an assumption that you have 6 - 9 points opener decided	
♥ 8 3	G? = N, but showed you 4-card spade support with her raise to	
♦ 9 5	2♠. You have 9 HCP plus 2 for the 6-card suit. You initially de-	
♣ K J 4	cided G? = M ^S . Having heard opener’s rebid you reevaluate to just	
	a Y, N or M decision. You are not quite strong enough for the Y	
	choice but have more than opener assumed. You now decide G? = M. Get your	
	point across to opener by bidding 3♠. Change one of your red suit cards to a	
	king and your G? decision would be Y. Then you would bid 4♠.	

7. Opener Rebid 2 of a New Suit that is Higher Ranking than Responder’s Suit
 Since opener could have bid his second suit at the 1 level his bid is called a jump shift. He has jumped a level in the bidding and shifted suits. Because of the limited bidding space in the current context there are only four bidding sequences that fall into this category.

Opening Bid	Response	Opener’s Rebid
1♣	1♦	2♥
1♣	1♦	2♠
1♣	1♥	2♠
1♦	1♥	2♠

A jump shift is the strongest rebid opener can make below game. It is a game-forcing bid. Both players must keep bidding until a game contract is reached. Note that opener’s first suit is always a minor and his second suit is always a Major in the context of this topic. Opener has an unbalanced hand with at least 4 cards in his Major and more cards in his minor than his Major. With a balanced hand opener would have started with an opening bid of 2NT or jumped to 2NT.

After opener’s jump shift responder no longer has to make a decision regarding G?. She may have to think about S? but we leave that for another time. Responder can concentrate on the strain. She also does not have to worry about opener passing any bid she makes below game. She is free to bid anything that makes sense to guide the partnership to a reasonable strain. As always a Major Suit or notrump is preferred. But this is one case where a minor suit might be acceptable if she has a reasonably strong hand of her own and either a fit for opener’s minor or a long minor (diamond) suit of her own and notrump looks questionable. This is especially true if responder can envision a slam possibility. She must recognize that opener’s first bid promised a minimum of 5 cards in his minor and his second bid promised at least 4 cards in his major (with a longer minor than Major) for a minimum total of at least 9 cards. It is highly unlikely that opener has 4-card support for her suit or the fourth suit.

Let’s look at a few examples.

	OPENER	RESPONDER
	1♣	1♦
	2♥	?
♠ 8 6 3	<p>This is potentially a rather poor hand for responder. Her diamond suit could be worthless if opener’s hand pattern is 3=4=1=5. Nonetheless she cannot pass and it looks like 4♥ is the best contract so that is her bid. In this sequence the jump to 4♥ is actually weaker than a bid of 3♥. The latter would suggest an interest in slam while the former denies slam interest.</p>	
♥ K 9 5 2		
♦ Q J 7 4 3		
♣ 8 6		

This auction represents an excellent example of

The Principle of Fast Arrival

In a game-forcing auction, the faster one player bids to the level of a game contract the weaker his hand.

With the given hand responder has no interest whatever in slam. Opener has at most around 21 points and responder has only 7 points, and not even a very good 7 points. So the partnership total is no more than about 28 points – well short of the 33 required for a small slam. Unless opener’s shape is something like

1=4=3=5 slam is out of the picture and if opener has that shape he is free to pursue slam on his own.

Let's look at a better hand for responder.

♠ 7 6 3 With 12 HCP responder should be thinking about a slam contract so
♥ K J 5 2 she starts with a bid of just 3♥ to imply extra strength. How the auc-
♦ A 8 4 3 tion proceeds after the 3♥ bid is a topic covered in *More Bidding Ba-*
♣ A 5 *sics*, Chapter 9 – “Bidding Slams - Part 1” and Chapter 10 – “Bidding
Slams - Part 2”. But responder does not have to worry about opener
passing since he established a game-forcing auction with his jump shift and
therefore will bid again.

Let's move on to another example.

♠ K 8 5 2 Without a probable Golden Fit for either of opener's suits 3NT looks
♥ 9 8 7 like a reasonable contract. But there is no hurry to get there. Re-
♦ Q J 7 6 3 sponder should just bid 2NT. This will allow opener to further de-
♣ 7 5 scribe his hand below the game level.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♥
2♠	?

♠ K 9 6 2 Responder barely had enough strength to bid 1♥. But with the dou-
♥ 10 8 5 2 ble fit in the black suits opener should have no problem making 4♠.
♦ 6 3 Responder knows that should be the contract so she bids it.
♣ Q J 8

8. Opener Rebid 2NT

This is another one of opener's rebids that sends a pretty clear message:

- I have a balanced hand with 18 or 19 HCP (too strong to have opened 1NT – not strong enough to have opened 2NT)
- I do not have 4-card support for your Major Suit (if you bid 1♥ or 1♠)
- I might have 4 cards in any unbid Major Suit

While this bid is not quite game forcing, responder will pass only if she is on an absolute minimum of 6 points with a really lousy hand. For example

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♦
2NT	?

♠ J 7 5 3 While this hand might make 3NT most players would be con-
 ♥ J 4 servative and pass 2NT. In fact many players would have passed
 ♦ Q 8 5 3 2 at their first opportunity to bid.
 ♣ J 2

But let's not be so pessimistic and suppose responder has a little better hand. Then responder should bid something and any bid she makes below game is game forcing.

Here are some examples:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♠
2NT	?

♠ K 8 5 3 This is actually a pretty decent 7-point hand. With GFMS? = N,
 ♥ A 6 2 responder raises to 3NT.
 ♦ 9 8 2
 ♣ 7 5 3

♠ A Q 9 5 4 2 Since opener has a balanced hand responder knows GFMS? = Y
 ♥ 5 and chooses the Golden Game bid of 4♠.
 ♦ 9 8 6
 ♣ 9 7 3

♠ K J 8 6 3 With 8 total points responder wants to be in game but doesn't
 ♥ 6 2 know if it should be in spades or notrump. She can pass the deci-
 ♦ 8 6 2 sion back to opener with a bid of 3♠. Opener should realize that
 ♣ K 7 5 responder has exactly 5 spades. With only 4 she would not have
 rebid the suit and with more she would have bid 4♠. Opener bids
 3NT with a doubleton spade and 4♠ with 3-card support. Opener cannot have 4-
 card support for then his rebid would have been 3♠ or 4♠ instead of 2NT.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	1♠
2NT	?

Note that this sequence always shows a 5-3-3-2 shape with a 5-card heart suit for opener.

♠ Q 10 7 6 With 11 HCP responder now knows G? = Y. But she also knows
 ♥ J 6 GFMS? = N, so simply raises to 3NT.
 ♦ A 9 6 3
 ♣ K J 4

♠ K 10 7 6 5 2 Since opener has a balanced hand responder knows GFMS? = Y
 ♥ 4 and chooses the Golden Game bid of 4♠.
 ♦ K J 3
 ♣ J 10 2

♠ A Q 7 6 2 Responder wants to be in game but doesn't know if it should be
 ♥ 9 7 in spades or notrump. She can pass the decision back to opener
 ♦ K 8 4 with a bid of 3♠. Opener should realize that responder has ex-
 ♣ 7 6 5 actly 5 spades. With only 4 she would not have rebid the suit
 and with more she would have bid 4♠. Opener bids 3NT with a
 doubleton spade and 4♠ with 3-card support.

9. Opener Rebid 3 of a New Suit that is Lower Ranking than His First Suit

This sequence is similar to #7 in that opener has again made a jump shift. But this time he had to go to the 3 level because his second suit was lower ranking than his first. In our current context (responder bid a new suit at the 1 level) opener's first suit was no higher than 1♥ and his second suit must be a minor. Here are the four possibilities:

Opening Bid	Response	Opener's Rebid	In these auctions opener will always have an unbalanced hand implying his first suit is 5 cards or longer. He will usually have at least 4 cards in his second suit. But since the jump shift is his only available game-forcing bid he will occasionally make this bid with only 3 cards in his second suit.
1♦	1♥	3♣	
1♦	1♠	3♣	
1♥	1♠	3♣	
1♥	1♠	3♦	

When opener bids both minor suits responder should usually strive to get to a 3NT contract. If slam is in the picture or notrump is unreasonable, showing support for one of opener's minor suits is acceptable. When opener's first bid was 1♥, bidding 4♥ with a high doubleton honor is a reasonable alternative to 3NT if a notrump contract looks unattractive.

Here is an example.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	1♠
3♣	?

♠ A 7 4 2 Since opener has forced to game you cannot pass. With GFMS? = N,
 ♥ 5 4 choose the other Golden Game of 3NT. Actually, opener could have
 ♦ K 8 6 3 a 6-card heart suit so there might be a Golden Fit in hearts. Swap the
 ♣ 9 6 5 ♦K with the ♥5 and 3♥ would be a better bid. Opener will suspect
 you have only a doubleton since you did not raise him immediately.

10. Opener Jumped to 3 of his Original Suit

Once again we have an auction where opener has made a clear description of his hand:

- I have at least a 6-card suit
- I do not have 4-card support for your suit
- I probably do not have another 4-card suit, certainly not a 4-card Major
- G? = M

This bid is not forcing so responder can pass, but should do so only if her initial decision regarding G? was M^w so she has a “bad” bad hand. With a stronger hand her decision now should be G? = Y, and she should guide the partnership to the proper strain.

A few examples should help to clarify her decision.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	1♠
3♥	?
♠ Q 8 7 5 2	Responder’s initial thoughts were G? = M ^w but they have now
♥ 8 2	changed to N. Opener has shown at least a 6-card suit so responder
♦ K J 5	knows GFMS? = Y. There is no reason to disturb the current con-
♣ 7 6 4	tract so responder passes.
♠ A K 6 3	Responder’s initial thoughts were G? = M ^l but they have now
♥ Q 7	changed to Y. Opener has shown at least a 6-card suit so responder
♦ 9 8 4	knows GFMS? = Y. Responder accepts opener’s invitational bid
♣ 10 8 7 2	and raises to 4♥. Note that before partner opened you doubted the
	value of the ♥Q. Once he bid 1♥ its value improved and after his
	jump to 3♥ it became a wonderful card. Don’t you think he will be
	delighted to see it in dummy?
♠ K 10 8 6	As in the previous example responder has changed her thoughts re-
♥ 6	garding game from M ^l to Y. But it appears that GFMS? = N be-
♦ Q J 7 3	cause opener likely has only a 6-card heart suit so she chooses the
♣ K 10 8 4	Golden Game of 3NT.

In the following two hands responder’s initial thoughts were G? = Y and they have not changed after hearing opener’s invitational bid. The only issue is determining the strain.

♠ A J 7 2	Responder knows GFMS? = Y in hearts so chooses the Golden Game
♥ K 10	of 4♥. This hand is almost worth a slam try but is slightly overvalued
♦ Q 10 3	at 13 points because of the ♠J, ♦Q and ♣QJ. The ♥10 and ♦10 do add
♣ Q J 8 6	a little but with only 2-card trump support game is probably the limit.

♠ A K 8 4
 ♥ 2
 ♦ K 9 8 7
 ♣ Q 10 8 5

Apparently GFMS? = N, so responder bids 3NT. In the unlikely event that opener has a 7-card heart suit he will probably correct to 4♥ knowing it is very unlikely that responder has a heart void, and even if she does his long suit should play well.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♠
3♣	?

In the following hands responder's initial thoughts were G? = M^S but have changed to G? = Y after hearing opener's invitational bid. The only issue is determining the strain.

♠ K 10 9 6
 ♥ K J 4
 ♦ K 7 3
 ♣ J 6 5

Responder knows GFMS? = N so chooses the Golden Game of 3NT.

♠ A Q 10 9 8 6 2
 ♥ Q 10 7
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 6 3

Unless opener has a spade void there will be a Golden Fit in spades. Even if opener has no spades 4♠ should have a reasonable chance of making, so that is her bid.

♠ A 10 9 7 4
 ♥ 7 5
 ♦ K Q 9 7 3
 ♣ 4

Opener may have 3-card support for spades so there could be a Golden Fit there. Responder can get more information from opener by making a game-forcing bid of 3♦.

If opener **has 3-card** spade support he should show it by bidding 3♠ after responder's 3♦ bid. If he **does not have 3-card** spade support he will probably bid 3NT but may well bid 4♣ or even 4♦. After a 3NT bid by opener responder should pass. Responder should even pass a 4♣ bid by opener. But if opener happens to bid 4♦, a 5♦ contract seems reasonable.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♠
3♦	?

In the following 2 hands responder's initial thoughts were G? = Y and they have not changed after hearing opener's invitational bid. The only issue is determining the strain.

♠ K 10 9 5
 ♥ K 5 4
 ♦ Q 7 6 2
 ♣ A Q

Even though there is a Golden Fit in diamonds responder chooses the Golden Game of 3NT. Slam is a real possibility here but beyond the scope of this book.

♠ A 10 9 8 6 Responder does not know if the strain should be hearts, spades or
 ♥ K Q 9 7 2 notrump. She can help opener decide by making the game-forcing
 ♦ 8 bid of 3♥. Opener can infer that responder has at least 5 spades
 ♣ A 5 and at least 4 hearts, with at least as many spades as hearts. If
 opener had 4 spades he would have rebid 3♠. And if he had 4
 hearts he probably would have reversed into 2♥ instead of making his jump rebid
 in diamonds. So opener will have an easy bid of 4♠ if he has 3-card support. If
 not he might be able to bid 3NT with a club stopper. Otherwise he might have a
 little difficulty finding a good bid to describe his hand. He might have to bid 4♠
 with something like the ♠Kx or 4♥ holding something like ♥AJ5. You would
 have made the same bid if one of your small hearts were a small diamond. As a
 last resort he might have to bid 4♦, which you would raise to 5♦. Your prime
 high cards should give him a reasonable play for the minor suit game.

11. Opener Made a Jump Raise to 3 of Responder’s Suit

This is another case when opener’s message is very clear:

- I have at least 4-card support for your suit
- In the rare case that the auction started 1♣ – 1♦; 3♦:
I do not have a 4-card Major
- G? = M

This is really an easy auction for responder, especially if her suit is a Major, for then the strain has been set and the only question to resolve is G?. Regardless of the suit, just as in the discussion of auction #10, responder should almost always conclude G? = Y, the exception being if she has a “bad” bad hand.

Let’s get the rare case indicated by the second bullet item out of the way first, and then we can concentrate on the more common scenario where opener raised responder’s Major Suit. This case is very similar to the parallel situation in sequence #6 when the auction started the same way except that opener bid only 2♦. The main difference here is that opener is showing a stronger hand and more bidding space has been consumed. Since opener has a stronger hand it is a little more likely that he does have some high-card help in the Majors. So responder should not be quite so concerned about bidding 3NT if she has the strength to decide G? = Y. If she does have serious concerns about 3NT, responder should pass unless she thinks 5♦ (or even 5♣) is reasonable.

Now let’s turn our attention to some examples where responder’s suit is a Major.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♠
3♠	?

♠ K 10 9 8 3 With 8 total points you initially decided $G? = M^I$, because you had
 ♥ A 7 2 a “good” bad hand. You still have the same hand values but now
 ♦ 8 5 you decide $G? = Y$ and bid 4♠.
 ♣ 10 7 4

♠ 10 8 6 4 This hand is similar to the previous one but you have 9 total points.
 ♥ 6 5 Your fit with partner’s diamond suit improves its value but the
 ♦ K J 6 5 poor trump quality decreases its value, so the two hands end up be-
 ♣ K Q 9 ing about equal. Nonetheless, you have a “good” bad hand so car-
 ry on to game and bid 4♠.

If you held either of the above two hand patterns but were a little weaker (6 - 7 points), you would have passed.

12. Opener Rebid 3NT

The classic use of this bid is to describe a hand with a long solid minor suit that is just a little bit too weak to insist on a game contract unless responder has about 6 points. The hand is opened with 1 of a minor and if responder doesn’t pass opener jumps to 3NT with the hope of being able to make the contract. It is still used that way in the 21st century but is now also used to show a good 19 HCP balanced hand or an 18 HCP balanced with a 5-card suit that revalues to 19 points. Unless responder has visions of a slam she need take no further action.

13. Opener Jumped to 4 of His Original Major Suit (4♥)

In the present context this bid applies only if opener bid 1♥ and responder bid 1♠, although the connotation would be the same with either Major if responder had bid 1NT.

This bid is similar to auction #12 except that now opener has a long Major Suit of good strength and needs only about 6 points from responder to have a reasonable play for game. Having heard a bid (1♠) from responder, opener jumps to 4♥. Again, unless responder has slam aspirations there is no need for her to take further action.

14. Opener Jumped to 4 of Responder’s Major Suit

This auction is very similar to #13. But now opener has a fit for responder’s suit with a $G? = Y$ hand. So he just goes ahead and makes the game bid. **Contrary to popular opinion this is not a stop bid.** Responder has not limited her hand and could be quite strong herself. If that is the case, responder is free to pursue a slam, but most of the time she will just pass.

Responder Bid a New Suit at the 2 Level

Bidding sequences after responder makes a two-over-one response are significantly different from those after she simply bids a new suit at the 1 level. For one thing, the entire first level of bidding has disappeared. Responder has shown a hand for which $G? = M^S$ or Y and usually promises another bid. (See the “**The**

Two-Over-One Response” topic in the **POTPOURRI** section in Chapter 4 – “Responses to an Opening Bid of One of a Suit - Part 2” for the exceptions.) This greatly simplifies opener’s rebid decisions on many hands. The main advantage of this agreement is that opener can proceed slowly when further describing his hand, so he does not have to bypass 3NT to show a strong hand when a fit has not yet been found.

Here are a few examples.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	2♣
2♥	?
♠ A J 10 ♥ 4 2 ♦ K 10 5 ♣ Q 10 9 6 3	Your initial evaluation was $G? = M^S$ so you were able to bid 2♣ instead of 1NT. Opener’s rebid has not promised a 6-card heart suit. He could have a 45xx shape with 1 - 3 cards in the minors and be too weak to make the Type 2 reverse bid of 2♠. Bid 2NT.
♠ Q 10 9 ♥ 6 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ K Q 10 9 8 2	On the surface you have 10 HCP plus 2 for your 6-card club suit, so you might think $G? = Y$. But your quacks in the pointed suits are overvalued so you reduce your $G?$ decision to M^S . Since you must bid again, you have to choose between 2NT and 3♣. With a good 6-card club suit and intermediate values a bid of 3♣ might be all opener needs to hear to bid 3NT. As in the previous example, your 3♣ bid is not a rescue but a constructive move toward game.
♠ Q 10 9 ♥ K 8 3 ♦ Q J 2 ♣ K 10 9 6	Here is a hand worth a limit raise in strength but you have only 3-card support so cannot make an immediate jump to 3♥. Instead you start with a new suit, 2♣, and then bid 3♥ after opener makes his rebid. You would make this second bid over any rebid by opener below 3♥. If opener had jumped to 3♥ you would have rebid 4♥.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♥	2♣
4♥	?
♠ 9 8 5 ♥ A 4 ♦ J 10 7 ♣ A J 9 6 4	Opener probably would have made this bid even if responder had bid at the 1 level but knowing that responder has at least 10 points, instead of a possible 6 points, he may have a slightly weaker hand. Without an interest in slam responder should pass.

POTPOURRI

Responder's Forcing Bids

Responder is often in a position where she is unable to determine the final contract after a bid by opener. She needs more information regarding his hand. This is particularly true after opener's first bid but is often true even after his second bid. In these cases responder would like to make a bid that is forcing, at least for one round, so that opener can further describe his hand. Generally speaking a simple bid of a new suit by responder fits the bill. Opener must bid again. But are there exceptions? And, if so, what are they?

In Chapter 2 – “Responses to a 1NT Opening Bid” we found out that whenever the opening bid is 1NT responder's bid of a new suit is not forcing at all; it is just the opposite, a sign-off bid. A similar situation occurs after a 1NT **rebid** by opener. Consider an auction that starts as follows:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♥
1NT	?

Now the simple bid of a new suit by responder may be forcing or nonforcing, depending on the rank of her second suit relative to her first.

If responder's rebid is in a lower-ranking suit it is nonforcing and opener is simply requested to choose between responder's 2 suits – passing if he prefers the second suit or bidding 2 of her first suit if that is his preference. For example, in the above auction a rebid of 2♣ by responder would be nonforcing, asking opener to choose between clubs and hearts by passing or bidding 2♥.

If responder's rebid is in a higher-ranking suit it is classified as a reverse by responder. It is forcing for one round and opener must bid again, describing his hand as best he can, not necessarily choosing one of responder's two suits. Responder must have a hand for which $G? = M$ or Y to make such a bid because the auction may well reach the 3 level and there may not be a Golden Fit in any suit. Since opener has already shown a balanced hand with 13 or 14 HCP, he would bid as cheaply as possible. For the above auction a rebid of 2♠ by responder would be forcing. Responder probably has a 5-card heart suit and is looking for 3-card support, but could even have a stronger hand with slam aspirations and just wants to find out more about opener's shape. Here are some possible rebids by opener with his associated hand patterns (note that the auction has shown that opener has fewer than 4 spades or hearts and 4 or 5 diamonds):

- 2NT – 3=2=4=4 with a weak club suit
- 3♣ – 2=3=4=4 or 3=2=4=4 with strength concentrated in the two minor suits
- 3♦ – 3=2=5=3, 2=3=5=3 or 3=3=5=2
- 3♥ – 2=3=4=4 with a weak club suit or 3=3=4=3

As you study the above bids and hand patterns don't attempt to memorize the combinations of bids and patterns; just focus on understanding why opener would have made those bids with those hand shapes. After all, opener's job is to describe his hand and that is what those bids do with the associated shapes. Also, realize that for those bids where opener has 3-card heart support but bids 3♣ or 3♦, responder can still bid 3♥ to further inquire about 3-card support if that was the purpose of making the forcing 2♠ bid.

If responder wants to make a forcing rebid in a new suit that is lower ranking than her first suit, she will have to make a jump shift to the 3 level. That will become a de facto game-forcing bid, so she needs a hand for which G? = Y.

These auctions can be rather awkward at times and the experts have devised a convention called New Minor Forcing to resolve some of the potential bidding problems for this type of sequence. That option is presented in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 8 – “Moving Forward.” Until then you will have to do the best you can with the tools available at this time.

In some auctions even the bid of an old suit by responder is forcing. Suppose an auction starts as follows:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♥
3♣	?

Opener's jump shift is a game-forcing bid so, by implication, a rebid of either 3♦ or 3♥ by responder is forcing.

SUMMARY

Opener's rebid further describes his strength and shape. Some of his rebids are much more descriptive than others. With a balanced hand he tends to rebid in notrump unless he can raise responder's bid of a Major Suit or bid a new Major Suit at the 1 level. His rebids in notrump, raises of responder's suit and rebids in his own suit are the most descriptive bids he can make. The bid of new (Major) suit at the 1 level or a new suit at the 2 level that is lower ranking than his first suit are the least descriptive bids he can make. Reverses and jump shifts by opener are also quite descriptive.

Responder takes all of these factors into account along with her own strength and hand pattern to decide on her rebid.



CHAPTER 9

- Overcalls and Advances - Part 1

Contested Auctions

The Overcall

Advancing after an Overcall

Summary



CONTESTED AUCTIONS

In the previous eight chapters we considered uncontested auctions, those in which only one side was bidding; the opponents always passed. In this chapter and the next four chapters we will be considering auctions in which players on both sides are bidding. These are called *contested auctions*.

There are several truths when comparing contested auctions to uncontested auctions. These are presented here in box format with comments following each box.

Nothing has changed.

All players still use the Y, N or M philosophy to make offensive bidding decisions. This truth should be quite comforting to the beginning student.

Everything has changed.

What kind of double-talk is this?! In an uncontested auction all of the bidding is purely offensive in nature. In a contested auction some of the bidding may still be offensive oriented but much is defensive oriented. While it is possible to keep the same meanings and requirements for various bids, that approach is not the most effective. You will have much more success if you adhere to the well-accepted standard that **the requirements for and meanings of many bids change**. In essence, competitive bidding for both sides is an entirely new ball-game! Most beginning students will find this truth rather discomfoting. Just when they thought they were starting to understand bidding, they find out they have to virtually start all over again. Hang in there. If you keep the first truth in mind and then learn the reasons for the changes, you will not find this all that difficult.

- *There can be only one opening bid for any deal. That is made by the first player that bids.*
- *Once an opponent has opened the bidding your side no longer has the opportunity to do so!*
- *Pass is quite acceptable after an opponent has opened the bidding **even if you have an “opening hand.”***

Just because you have an “opening hand” does not mean you should get into the auction after an opponent has opened the bidding. I think I would be a millionaire, probably many times over, if I had a dollar for every time a player received a poor result after sticking his nose into an auction after an opponent opened the

bidding with the excuse, “But I had an opening hand. I had to do something!” Of course he had to do something. “Pass” would have been just fine.

Despite the fact that holding an “opening hand” is not in and of itself justification for competing after an opening bid, we will still use the term to describe the strength of a hand when discussing competitive auctions.

Suppose that an opponent has opened the bidding and neither you nor your partner has yet to make any call other than pass. It is your turn in the auction: **you may pass, bid or double**. If you make either of the last two calls, you have intervened in the auction and are called the *intervener*. Your partner is then called the *advancer*, and her bids are called *advances*. This new terminology is introduced to distinguish the players and their bids, since the requirements for and meanings of the bids are usually quite different from those of opener and responder.

Here are some simplified guidelines to follow:

- **Bid** when you want to name the suit or notrump.
- **Double** when you want partner to name the suit or notrump.
- **Pass** if you do not wish to compete or you would like to compete but **do not satisfy the requirements to bid or double**. These requirements will be explained in this chapter and Chapter 11 – Takeout Doubles and Advances

In this book and the next in the series intervener assumes a male gender while advancer is given the female gender, analogous to opener and responder.

Differences between Contested and Uncontested Auctions

When an opponent has opened the bidding he has announced a holding of at least 13 points. It is true that he might be counting a couple of points or so for long suits but it is not unreasonable to assume he has at least 10 HCP. That leaves only 30 HCP for the remaining players. Your side is unlikely to have enough points for a game contract unless responder has fewer than 6 points. Of course opener could have more than 13 points too and your side might have some distributional points, but most of the time the chance for a game contract will be small. On the other hand, deals can be constructed where both sides can make a grand slam, e.g., give one side all of the red cards and the other side all of the black cards.

In an uncontested auction all you need to worry about are your partner’s bids. In a contested auction the opponents’ bids may well rob you of some bidding space. By the same token your bids may take away some of their bidding space.

Let’s look more closely at what you might have to gain or lose by entering the auction when an opponent has opened the bidding.

Advantages of Competing

Here are the primary advantages of entering the auction when an opponent has opened the bidding:

- You might be able to outbid the opponents for a partscore or possibly even a game contract. The sooner you can start communicating with partner the better.
- You might be able to significantly disrupt the opponents' communication making it more difficult for them to find their best contract.
- You might push the opponents up to a higher level where you have a better chance of defeating their contract.
- This might be the only way to suggest a good opening lead for your partner if your side does end up defending and your LHO is declarer.

Disadvantages of Competing

While there are definitely some advantages to competing, taking such action also has some risks:

- Whenever you give information to partner you also give it to the opponents. You may tip them off to stop at a level they can make when they were going to bid more and you could have set them.
- They may outbid you and during the play of the hand take advantage of the information you gave them through your calls.
- You may bid too high and be defeated, perhaps suffering a significant penalty if the opponents decide to double your contract.

Decision Time

So what should you do? How do you decide? You need to weigh the pros and cons considering both your offensive objectives and your defensive objectives. You also need to consider the vulnerability. In this regard it is helpful to define three new terms:

- ***Favorable vulnerability:*** Opponents are vulnerable – you are not.
- ***Unfavorable vulnerability:*** You are vulnerable – opponents are not.
- ***Neutral vulnerability:*** Neither side is vulnerable or both sides are vulnerable.

In general it usually pays to

- *Be aggressive when vulnerability is favorable.*
- *Be cautious when vulnerability is unfavorable.*
- *Be cautiously aggressive if vulnerability is neu-*

THE OVERCALL

Definition of an Overcall

An *overcall* is a bid made when the following conditions are met:

- One of your opponents has opened the bidding
- Your partner has taken no action other than perhaps to pass
- Your bid immediately follows a bid by your RHO

Here are several examples where, for convenience, we assume North is the dealer. The last bid shown for each auction is an overcall.

	North	East	South	West
1)	1♦	1♥		
2)	1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
3)	Pass	1♣	1♦	
4)	Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠
5)	Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
	1♥			
6)	Pass	1♠	1NT	
7)	1♠	2♦		

All of these bids are at the cheapest level available for the strain that was chosen. These are referred to as *simple overcalls*. A bid at a higher level would be a *jump overcall*. We limit our discussion in this chapter and the next to simple overcalls. The first six overcalls were all made at the 1 level and are appropriately referred to as *1-level overcalls*. Similarly the last overcall was made at the 2 level and is referred to as a *2-level overcall*. Interveners who bid are *overcallers*, a subset of interveners.

Requirements for a Suit Overcall

Before delving into the specific requirements for an overcall, let's look at a couple of hands from the perspectives of overcalling or opening the bidding.

♠ A 7 2 This hand is a little light for an opening bid so if you were the dealer
 ♥ K Q J 9 3 you would pass. But suppose your RHO opened the bidding with
 ♦ 10 5 4 1♦. Now an overcall of 1♥ might allow your side to successfully
 ♣ 9 2 compete for a partscore or at the very least get your partner off to a
 good lead if your LHO becomes declarer in a spade contract. On the
 other hand if your RHO opened the bidding with 1♠ you would have to bid 2♥ to
 compete and that might get you into trouble with such limited values. Certainly
 you would look at the vulnerability before you took any action.

♠ Q 4 With this hand you would open the bidding with 1♣ if you were the
 ♥ K 8 7 3 dealer. But suppose your RHO opened the bidding with 1♣. Now
 ♦ A J 2 any bid you make could lead to a disaster without any real source of
 ♣ K 9 6 2 tricks in your hand.

These two examples illustrate two significant elements of competitive bidding:

After the opponents open the bidding there will be hands that

- *You would have passed as opener, but will overcall.*
- *You would have opened, but are not able to overcall.*

The specific requirements for a suit overcall depend on the purpose of your overcall and the level at which you will be bidding. Here are some general guidelines:

Requirements for a Suit Overcall

- *At least a 5-card suit of respectable quality*
- *8 - 16 HCP and 10 - 17 total points if at the 1 level*
- *10 - 16 HCP and 12 - 17 total points if at the 2 level, a 6-card suit is desirable*

Whenever you overcall in a suit you should be prepared to play the contract there, perhaps even doubled by an opponent. To protect against this possibility you always need at least a 5-card suit of respectable quality.

*When you overcall in a suit you are **always** strongly suggesting that as a trump suit.*

If you are making a 1-level overcall you can get by with a little less robust suit quality, especially if you have more than the minimum required strength. In this case you are bidding to compete for the contract and your extra strength compensates to some degree for your weaker suit. If you think you may be defending and have a very good suit you would definitely like your partner to lead, it is all right to overcall when on the low end of the strength range. As a word of warning:

Avoid overcalling with minimum strength and a mediocre suit.

If you are making a 2-level overcall you need to be more cautious because you are more likely to be doubled for penalties. You may have bid a suit your LHO

was about to bid and your partner may not have any significant strength or trump support to help you out. This could lead to a very disastrous result under unfavorable vulnerability conditions. It is very advantageous to hold a 6-card suit but an excellent 5-card suit sometimes has to suffice, particularly if you are near the upper end of the strength range.

Let's look at a few hands that are quite appropriate for an overcall. For these first hands your RHO has opened the bidding with 1♦. Vulnerability is assumed to be irrelevant unless comments are added to the contrary.

♠ K 7 5 Here is a hand for which you would have opened 1♥ if given the
♥ A K J 9 2 opportunity. Now that you cannot open there is nothing wrong
♦ 5 with a 1♥ overcall. It also suggests a lead you would like from
♣ A 10 9 6 partner if you end up defending.

♠ K Q J 7 5 With a choice of two suits you follow the same guidelines as for
♥ A K J 9 2 opening the bidding – choose the higher ranking. Bid 1♠. But,
♦ 5 see the following example for an exception.
♣ 9 6

♠ 8 7 5 4 3 You certainly don't want partner to lead a spade if the opponents
♥ A K J 9 2 outbid you and you don't even look forward to playing in a
♦ 5 spade contract. Bid 1♥.
♣ A K

♠ 9 5 Not much harm should come to you in a 2♣ contract since you
♥ A 3 2 are likely looking at 7 tricks in your hand. This is a perfect time
♦ 5 2 to bid 2♣. Besides suggesting a lead to partner and competing
♣ A K Q 10 9 4 for the contract, you have taken away the 1♥ and 1♠ bids from
your LHO.

♠ A K J 10 5 If you were the dealer you would pass with this hand because it
♥ 9 2 is not quite worth an opening bid, but with your heart shortage
♦ 5 4 you suspect that the opponents have a Golden Fit in hearts. If
♣ Q 10 9 8 they find it and play in it, you would certainly want partner to
lead a spade, which she is unlikely to do on her own. Further-
more, by bidding 1♠ you prevent your LHO from bidding 1♥. Even if the oppo-
nents do find their heart fit, your partner might have spade support and you might
be able to outbid them. Having the spade suit is a definite advantage in competi-
tive auctions. Let's look at two possible outcomes after your 1♠ overcall.

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

N		
W	E	
	S	

♠ A K J 10 5
 ♥ 9 2
 ♦ 5 4
 ♣ Q 10 9 8

Suppose this is the complete deal with North the dealer. After North opens the bidding with 1♦ and you overcall 1♠ South has just enough to squeak out a 1NT response. The quacks devalue her hand but the intermediates and two diamond honors in opener's suit compensate just enough to risk the 1NT response. With 19 HCP North will undoubtedly raise to 3NT. West will dutifully lead a spade and with a lack of outside entries East will play the ♠10. The 3NT contract is now doomed. If declarer let's East hold this trick, East can run off 4 more spade tricks

and West will eventually take her ♥A for a 2-trick set. If declarer wins the first trick she can take only 7 tricks off the top. Then when she eventually leads hearts, the defenders will take the rest of the tricks again for a 2-trick set. Declarer's best play is to cut her losses by immediately leading hearts. West can take her ♥A and lead another spade whereupon East takes 4 spade tricks. Those 5 tricks are all the defenders now get for a 1-trick set.

What would have happened if East had passed? South would have responded 1♥ and North would have raised to 4♥. This contract will easily make with declarer losing only 2 spade tricks and the ♥A. The club loser in declarer's hand can be discarded on a diamond in dummy after trumps are drawn.

Suppose the following was the complete deal instead of that just discussed.

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

N		
W	E	
	S	

♠ A K J 10 5
 ♥ 9 2
 ♦ 5 4
 ♣ Q 10 9 8

This time let's first discuss the auction if East passes North's 1♦ opening bid. South would respond 1♥ and North would rebid 1NT. Now South might jump all the way to 4♥ or settle for an invitational bid of 3♥ after which North would raise to 4♥. Either way South ends up in a very makeable 4♥ contract, losing only 2 spade tricks and the ♥A.

So what might happen if East overcalls 1♠? This doesn't slow down South who will bid 2♥. But now West should come into the auction, bidding at least 2♠ and perhaps 3♠ as you will see in the next chapter. Then what is North to do? He knows that responder has at least 10 points and at least a 5-card heart suit. His hand revalues a little stronger with his doubleton spade and the ♥J is worth a little more. He will likely bid 3♥ over a 2♠ bid by West, but will he bid 4♥ over a 3♠ bid by West? He might well elect to pass and if he does South will also pass

at her turn, not aware of the heart fit. Even if N-S get to 4♥, E-W might do well to sacrifice at 4♠.

What happens if E-W are allowed to play in spades? They will lose 5 tricks – 1 heart, 2 diamonds and 2 clubs. So they could make 2♠, would be down 1 at 3♠ and down 2 at 4♠. All of these results would be better than letting N-S make 4♥. The only losing situation would be if the vulnerability were unfavorable and they bid to 4♠ going down 2 doubled for a score of -500. If that were the vulnerability, they would be rather foolish to make the 4♠ bid.

The following deal illustrates the risk of overcalling at the 2 level with a light hand, even if you have a decent suit.

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

South opens the bidding with 1♠. Suppose West passes. North bids 2♣, South bids 2♦, North makes a constructive invitational bid of 2NT and South carries on to 3NT. For lack of anything better East will probably lead a club. This gives North 4 club tricks, 4 diamond tricks and 3 spade tricks via a spade finesse through East for a score of 460 (nonvulnerable) or 660 (vulnerable).

Now suppose West overcalls 2♥. North does not know if her side can make a game or not, but with a trump stack behind West and no support for partner's major, she may

well decide to double for penalties. West will likely lose 3 spade tricks, 1 heart trick, 2 diamond tricks and 3 club tricks for a 4-trick set and a loss of 800 (nonvulnerable) or 1100 (vulnerable). Not at all a good result any way you look at it! West just did not have quite enough weapons to enter the auction at the 2 level. He needed more strength or better shape – a longer trump suit or a second suit that could produce some tricks.

Let's look at one more hand.

♠ A K J 10	If you were the dealer you would have no qualms about opening this
♥ 9 2	hand with a bid of 1♣. But suppose your RHO opens the bidding
♦ A 5 4	with 1 of any suit. You are stuck without a bid since you have no 5-
♣ Q 10 9 8	card suit. All you can do is pass.

Requirements for a 1NT Overcall

The requirements for an overcall of 1NT are very similar to those of a 1NT opening bid.

Requirements for a 1NT Overcall

- *A balanced hand*
- *15 - 18 HCP*
- *At least one stopper in the opponents'*

Note that the strength range for the 1NT overcall is expanded one point over that for a 1NT opening bid. This just gives you a little more flexibility when the opponents open the bidding.

When you overcall 1NT you expect the opening lead to be in the suit bid by your RHO. If you do not have a way to stop the defenders from taking a lot of tricks in that suit you may be set before you ever obtain the lead. If both opponents have bid (different suits), you really need a stopper in both of their suits.

Here are a couple of examples after your RHO opens the bidding with 1♦.

♠ A Q You would have opened this hand 1NT. You have a diamond
♥ K 10 7 5 2 stopper and your heart suit is rather weak so there is nothing to
♦ A 5 4 keep you from overcalling 1NT.
♣ Q 10 8

♠ A Q With this hand you would also have opened 1NT. But now you do
♥ A K 10 7 5 not have a diamond stopper and your heart suit is of decent quality.
♦ 5 4 2 You are better off to overcall 1♥.
♣ Q 10 8

♠ A Q Here you would have opened 1NT, but after the 1♦ opening you
♥ A 10 7 have no reasonable action to take. You have neither a 5-card suit
♦ 8 5 4 2 nor a diamond stopper so you must pass. This example further
♣ K Q 10 8 emphasizes the point that once the opponents open the bidding you
may have to pass a hand with which you would have opened had
they passed.

Too Strong to Overcall?

You may wonder what to do if the opponents have opened the bidding and you have a hand that is too strong for an overcall. Of course you don't want to just sit back and pass. We consider that possibility in Chapter 11 – "Takeout Doubles and Advances."

When the Opponents Bid Your Suit

♠ A K 9 8 3 You pick up these cards and are all ready to bid 1♠ but look around
♥ A 10 7 the table and see it is not your turn to bid. Your RHO was the dealer
♦ 5 2 and before you have a chance to make your bid he opens the bidding
♣ K 10 8 with 1♠! What now? Pass smoothly without significant hesitation. You were ready for this because you read about it here and

learned that you need to be prepared for these types of events. You certainly do not want to bid 2♠ and try to play it there when you know one of your opponents has at least five of your trumps. Besides, as you will learn some day, your 2♠ bid is used by most players as a conventional bid meaning something entirely different. You might be thinking of doubling for penalties, but you are not sure you can defeat their contract and it gives them a chance to escape to another contract having been forewarned. Furthermore, as you will learn in Chapter 11 – “Takeout Doubles and Advances”, your double also has a conventional meaning, so that is not an option either. You are also not strong enough for a bid of 1NT, so just pass.

You would actually like to defend with this hand and the best way to have a chance of doing that is to say nothing, either through your call or your prolonged hesitation. Sometimes it is best to follow the popular adage “Silence is Golden.”

ADVANCING AFTER AN OVERCALL

In some respects the advancer and advances are similar to responder and responses. But to distinguish between the different players and their bids it is convenient to give them different names. As you will see shortly, it is also helpful because identical types of bids by these players have different meanings and the requirements for making these bids are different for the two positions.

When you are the advancer you can make the same types of calls as responder:

- Pass
- Raise your partner’s suit
- Bid a new suit of your own
- Bid notrump

But there is one other bid you can make that is not available to responder in an uncontested auction. You can bid a suit an opponent has bid. Such a bid is called a *cuebid*.

*A **cuebid** is simply a bid of a suit that was initially bid by an opponent.*

As you might guess you seldom want to play in a suit the opponents have already mentioned. So the cuebid can be used almost as a convention, although technically it is not treated as such. The availability of the cuebid will be found very helpful but perhaps somewhat confusing until you get used to it.

As we move further into the area of advances get ready to put aside almost everything you learned regarding responder’s calls and enter a new arena of this bridge puzzle we are trying to solve. Before proceeding further with advancer’s natural bids, let’s discuss the cuebid in more detail.

The Cuebid

Cuebids actually come in two flavors:

- A *simple cuebid* - the bid of an opponent's suit as cheaply as possible
- A *jump cuebid* - the bid of an opponent's suit one level higher than a simple cuebid

For simplicity we refer to a simple cuebid simply as a cuebid.

The meaning of a cuebid has evolved significantly over time and today depends upon the scenario in which it is made, i.e., what happened before the cuebid. These scenarios can be broken into two general categories.

- A cuebid made when your partner has not yet had anything to say in the auction other than perhaps to have passed
- A cuebid made after your partner has bid or doubled

In the first case a cuebid can have various meanings depending upon partnership agreement – anything from natural (particularly if a minor) to showing a very strong hand or some type of distributional hand. These bids are generally considered to be conventional and are beyond the scope of this book.

Meaning of a Cuebid

Depends on scenario:

- *Before partner has bid or doubled*
(Avoid these until you learn about them.)
- *After partner has bid or doubled*
(You will learn about these in this book.)

Generally speaking when a cuebid is made after your partner has bid, it is completely artificial; it says absolutely nothing about the cards you hold in that suit but shows a relatively strong hand and asks for more information from your partner. It is forcing for one round. There are many applications of the cuebid by opener, overcaller, responder and advancer. Without going into details just remember that:

In a competitive auction the cuebid is your good friend.

There will be many times when you are in a competitive auction where you really want to make a forcing bid but do not have a natural call available. When this happens seriously consider calling on your friend for help by making a cuebid, even if you don't have a specific agreement with your partner regarding its meaning. Just make sure your partner knows you want him to bid something. Without

prior discussion appropriate for your situation at the time, you can have the following general understanding for the cuebid:

“Partner, I have extra values in the current context, but I don’t have a natural forcing bid available to show them. Please bid something that makes sense in light of the auction and your hand.”

*After partner’s overcall a cuebid (simple or jump) is the **only** forcing bid by advancer.*

This statement is not quite absolute. There are some other bids associated with slam bidding that are also forcing but they are outside the scope of the current topic.

A simple cuebid always shows a hand strength comparable to that of a limit raise (if partner had opened instead of overcalled) or stronger. It may be made with at least 3-card trump support for partner but may also be made with some other holding.

Overcaller’s Rebid after Advancer Made a Simple Cuebid

It may seem that we are getting a little ahead of ourselves by discussing overcaller’s rebid after a cuebid before presenting all of advancer’s bids. But, knowing what partner is expected to do after advancer made a cuebid will be helpful when discussing all of the options available to advancer.

As the overcaller what are you supposed to do after partner makes a cuebid? First of all you do the same thing you always do after partner has made a call other than pass, revalue the strength of your hand in terms of your answer to G? assuming that the strength of advancer’s hand is the minimum that it might be for her call – in this case that of a limit raise. Then take one of the following actions realizing that she may not have trump support for you:

- If G? = N rebid your suit at the cheapest available level.
- If G? = M or Y make some other descriptive bid below game. Any bid you make, other than the cheapest bid in your suit, is forcing for one round, so do something else cheaply to describe your hand.
 - Bid a new suit of at least 4 cards if you have one; this might lead to the discovery of a 4-4 Major Suit fit.
 - Bid a new suit of 3 cards if you have a concentration of your HCP there.
 - Make a jump bid in your first suit with a good 6-card suit.
 - Bid notrump with a balanced hand (5-3-3-2) and a stopper in the opponents’ suit.

- Make a further cuebid with a balanced hand and no stopper in the opponents' suit or an unbalanced hand with a mediocre 6-card suit of your own.

Let's look at a few examples for the following auction:

OPENER	YOU	RESPONDER	ADVANCER
1♦ Pass	1♥ ?	Pass	2♦
♠ KJ76 ♥ KQ1076 ♦ 43 ♣ 76	If advancer has only a limit raise, G? = N. Show your lack of game interest by bidding 2♥. Note that while rebidding a suit without support from partner generally shows more length than promised with your first bid, this scenario is an exception to that rule. Change the ♠7 to the ♠A and you would rebid 2♠. Instead change the ♠7 to the ♥A and your rebid would be 3♥.		
♠ QJ6 ♥ KQJ76 ♦ KQ6 ♣ 76	Bid 2NT to show extra values with a balanced hand and a diamond stopper. But, if your minor suits were reversed, you would make your own cuebid of 3♦ to show extra values with no clear direction.		
♠ AQ6 ♥ KJ7652 ♦ 6 ♣ K106	Another case for a 3♦ cuebid of your own.		
♠ AKJ ♥ KQ1076 ♦ 43 ♣ 976	Bid 2♠. Those 3 excellent spades might be better than 4 small ones.		

Advancer's General Approach

Most often in a competitive auction both sides are battling for a partscore contract although sometimes one side or the other, or even both, might still have a game contract in mind.

Despite many differences between responder's bids and advancer's bids, there is one very significant commonality in the approaches of the two players. Just as if she were responder,

After partner's overcall advancer:

- *First answers GFMS? and GFms?*
- *Then revalues her hand*
- *Finally answers G?*

The strength range of overcaller's hand depends on whether the overcall was at the 1 or 2 level and is always different from that of an opening bidder (never more than 17 points if in a suit). Although advancer's point ranges for the G? decisions will be different from responder's, the same concept is used. In this respect advancer is no different from responder. So everything we have discussed earlier in this regard is still valid from a conceptual viewpoint, even though the details to be presented in the next chapter are different.

One major difference between responder's objective and advancer's objective is the search for a Golden Fit in a Major Suit. Remember that when partner overcalled he showed a decent suit of 5⁺ cards (often 6 if at the 2 level) and is strongly suggesting that suit is the strain in which he would like to play. Thus there is no reason for you to introduce a new suit unless it is also a 5-card or longer suit. In fact, the most common message you will send when you bid a new suit is that you do not like partner's suit and you have your own suit which would have satisfied the requirements for an overcall if you had been in partner's position. Of course, since partner has already bid, you do not need as much strength. You would usually bid a new suit only if partner had bid a minor and you had a Major, hoping to improve the contract. When you do this you should either have tolerance for partner's minor (in case he cannot tolerate your suit and must rebid his) or enough length and strength in your suit to rebid it if partner rebids his suit.

Another important issue in competitive bidding is that of estimating which side "owns" the deal. If your opponents are likely to have more strength than your side, the deal probably belongs to them. They will be able to bid and make a higher contract than you can. If your side is likely to have most of the strength, the deal probably belongs to your side. When the deal belongs to the opponents, you would like to do everything you can to disrupt their communication during the auction. In other words your bidding should be defensive oriented. If the deal belongs to your side you would like to further explore your game prospects, i.e., your bidding should be offensive oriented. How do you decide the owner of the deal? You decide based on the strength of your hand and the existence or lack of a Golden Fit. When you have 10⁺ points and a fit for partner, it is quite likely the deal belongs to your side. Of course when both sides are counting extra for long suits and dummy points the ownership may not be completely clear. If you have fewer than about 4 or 5 points the deal probably belongs to the opponents.

The Law of Total Tricks

Note: The material presented here was drawn primarily from Resource 6.

Fortunately there is an excellent guideline that can be used to determine the level to which you should bid in a competitive auction. This guideline applies when the points are approximately equally divided between the two sides and each side has a Golden Fit. It is derived from a principle called "*The Law of Total Tricks*." We need to define two terms before we can state the "Law."

- The ***total number of trumps*** in a deal is the number of cards held in the best fit for one partnership plus the number of cards held by the other partnership in their best fit.
- The ***total number of tricks*** is the number of tricks that one side could take if allowed to play in their best fit plus the number of tricks that the other side could take if allowed to play in their best fit.

The “Law” states the following:

The Law of Total Tricks

The total number of tricks is equal to the total number of trumps.

This can be illustrated by a simple example. Suppose that N-S have a 5-4 fit in spades (9 trumps in their suit) and E-W have a 4-4 fit in hearts (8 trumps in their suit) for a total of 17 trumps. Then the total number of tricks is also 17. How the 17 tricks are divided depends on the strengths of the two hands and the relative locations of the cards. But if N-S can take 8 tricks then E-W can take 9 tricks. If N-S can take 10 tricks, then E-W can take 7 tricks. The total is always 17.

It should be noted that there is no mathematical basis for this “Law,” and in fact it does not always hold true. But, it is an empirical observation and there are some rather sophisticated adjustments that can be applied to resolve some of the discrepancies. For the beginning player it is sufficient to simply apply the following two corollaries to your bidding decisions in competitive auctions:

From an offensive viewpoint you should bid up to the level equal to the number of trumps held by your side.

From a defensive viewpoint don’t let the opponents play at a level equal to the number of trumps held by their side.

Perhaps these statements can be clarified by a couple of examples. Suppose the bidding starts like this:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♥	1♠	2♥	?

You know that opener has at least 5 hearts and responder is expected to have at least 3 so the opponents have a total of at least 8 hearts. Their current contract of 2♥ requires them to take 8 tricks so the level of their contract is less than or equal to the number of trumps they have. Now suppose you hold 3 spades. It is usually right to bid 2♠ almost regardless of how many points you hold. From an offensive viewpoint you would be at a level equal to your number of trumps and

from a defensive viewpoint you would not be allowing them to play at a level equal to their number of trumps.

But suppose you held 4 spades instead of 3. Now from an offensive viewpoint you should bid 3♠ since you have 9 trumps between you. Look at the problem your jump to 3♠ may have given the opening bidder if he had wanted to make a game-invitational bid of 3♥. You have robbed him of that bid and he will have to decide what to do on his own. If you were to bid only 2♠, opener could bid 3♥ to invite responder to game, and responder could make the decision based on her relative strength. By jumping to 3♠ you force opener to guess whether to pass, bid 4♥ or double your contract. This is an application of another “rule” for competitive bidding:

In a competitive auction make the opponents guess last!

Now let’s switch the Major Suits:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♠	2♥	2♠	?

If you hold at least 4 hearts, from an **offensive** viewpoint the first point of the Law says you should bid 3♥. But what if you have only 3 hearts? From an offensive viewpoint you should pass but from a **defensive** viewpoint you should bid 3♥ anyway.

In both of these examples you may not make your contract, but that is not the point. The objective is to score more points than your opponents. Most of the time you will give your opponents fewer points by bidding higher and letting them set you than they would have received if left to play in their contract. Sometimes they will bid one level higher and you can set them.

While you never know for sure how many trumps your side or the opponents hold, you can get a very good idea from the auction, especially when each side has an apparent Golden Fit in a Major Suit.

Certainly vulnerability and your strength come into play in these auctions. You want to be a little more cautious when vulnerable and you usually don’t want to bid without any points, but under favorable vulnerability you can afford to be more aggressive.

By the way, the Law is not really a law but something that works out almost all of the time. There are times it will not work but it is a very good guideline. There are also advanced modifications to the Law that can be used under certain conditions, but the simple ideas presented here are adequate for a beginning bridge player. They can also be used by the side that opens the bidding. One thing to remember about the Law is that it is most appropriate when the points are approximately equally divided. In terms of HCP this means from 20 - 20 to about 16 - 24. This is not an exact science but these numbers should serve as a reasonable guideline.

By now, after seeing new “rules” to remember about overcalling and being introduced to this weird bid of the opponents’ suit as well as the Law of Total Tricks, you might be thinking, “Why can’t we just bid the same way as opener and responder?” The answer is, “You could.” But that approach is not nearly as effective as following the ideas presented here in achieving your goal of scoring more points than your opponents. So be prepared for some new and exciting challenges in this chapter and the next.

Advancer’s Bidding Messages after an Overcall in a Suit

How is the overcaller supposed to know if you are bidding from a defensive or offensive viewpoint? From the following rules:

1. A simple raise is primarily competitive – a weak game interest at best with usually only 3-card support.
2. A jump raise below game is preemptive – no interest in game with 4-card support.
3. A jump raise to game may be preemptive or offensive (intending to make) – definitely no interest in slam.
4. The simple bid of a new suit is an attempt to improve the contract – no game interest and not forcing.
5. A jump bid in a new suit below game is a strong invitation to game – usually in a Major and always shows your own good suit of 5⁺ cards.
6. A jump to game in a new suit may be preemptive or offensive (intending to make) – definitely no interest in slam.
7. Notrump bids below game are invitations to game – promise at least one stopper in the suit the opponents bid and deny support for overcaller’s suit if it was a Major, may have tolerance for overcaller’s suit if it was a minor; when considering these bids, count only HCP for your G? decision.
8. 3NT is based on strength with the intention of making the contract - same hand types as for bids of 1NT or 2NT – count only HCP for your G? decision.
9. A simple cuebid is forcing for one round – made when you are reasonably sure the deal belongs to your side (your strength is the equivalent of a limit raise or better) but you have no clear direction and need more information from partner.
10. A jump cuebid is a “mixed raise” – shows at least 4-card trump support for partner with $G? = M^W$ and is made only after a 1-level overcall. As shown in the next chapter, $G? = M^W$ corresponds to a hand worth 8 - 9 points for advancer. This is a hand that is too strong for a preemptive raise but not strong enough for a simple cuebid.

While this list may appear rather lengthy and complex, it is really quite simple if you make a few observations:

- A cuebid (simple or jump) is the only forcing bid.
- A jump bid in a new suit, notrump bids below game and a jump cuebid are the only explicit invitational bids.
- Jumps to game are sign-off bids.
- All other bids are simply competitive or preemptive.

A couple of other observations are appropriate to emphasize some differences between responder's bids and advancer's bids:

- While responder never makes a jump shift, advancer may do so to show her own good suit with a game-invitational hand.
- While responder's jump raise to game is a preemptive bid, advancer's jump raise to game may be either preemptive or a show of game values.
- While the bid of a new suit by responder is forcing, the bid of a new suit by advancer is not.

SUMMARY

It is important to emphasize that once the opponents have opened the bidding the fact that you have an “opening hand” is no longer relevant. The opponents beat you to the punch. You can no longer open the bidding. You can overcall but those requirements are quite different from those for opening the bidding. Furthermore, it is often proper to pass with an opening hand after an opponent has opened the bidding.

Overcalls

Once the opponents have opened the bidding, one way you can compete is to bid a suit as cheaply as possible or to bid 1NT. These bids are overcalls and you are the overcaller. Your partner is the advancer and her bids are advances.

The main difference between a suit overcall and an opening bid in a suit is that an overcall **always** strongly suggests a suit in which you would like to play, promising at least 5 cards. Overcalls at the 1 level are often made to indicate a suit you would like partner to lead if your LHO ends up being declarer, even if your hand is not worth an opening bid. 2-level overcalls are more risky and require a better suit and stronger hand, partly because one of the opponents may make a penalty double.

The 1NT overcall is very similar to the opening bid of 1NT.

A 1-level suit overcall in a suit shows:

- 8 - 16 HCP and 10 - 17 total points
 - A 5-card or longer suit whether a Major or a minor suit
- The weaker your hand the better your suit quality should be

A 2-level suit overcall shows:

- 10 - 16 HCP and 12 - 17 total points
- An excellent 5-card suit or a longer suit that need not be quite so good but still decent

A 1NT overcall shows:

- 15 - 18 HCP
- A balanced hand
- At least one stopper in the suit(s) bid by the opponents

After the opponents open the bidding there will be hands that you would have passed as opener, but will overcall.

After the opponents open the bidding there will be hands that you would have opened, but will have to pass.

Advancing after an Overcall

In some respects advancing after a suit overcall is similar to advancing after an opening bid. You answer the questions GFMS?, GFms? and G?, and then choose one of the following actions:

- Pass
- Raise your partner's suit
- Bid a new suit of your own
- Bid notrump
- Cuebid (simple or jump)

*A **cuebid** is simply a bid of a suit that was initially bid by an opponent.*

In a competitive auction the cuebid is your good friend.

*After partner's overcall the cuebid is the **only** forcing bid by advancer.*

Overcaller's Rebid after Advancer Made a Cuebid

- If G? = N rebid your suit at the cheapest available level.
- If G? = M or Y make some other descriptive bid below game. Any bid you make, other than the cheapest bid in your suit, is forcing for one round, so do something else cheaply to describe your hand.
 - Bid a new suit of at least 4 cards if you have one; this might lead to the discovery of a 4-4 Major Suit fit.
 - Bid a new suit of 3 cards if you have a concentration of your HCP there.
 - Make a jump bid in your first suit with a good 6-card suit.
 - Bid notrump with a balanced hand (5-3-3-2) and a stopper in the opponents' suit.
 - Make a further cuebid with a balanced hand and no stopper in the opponents' suit or an unbalanced hand with a mediocre 6-card suit of your own.

Advancer's General Approach

After partner's overcall advancer:

- *First answers GFMS? and GFms?*
- *Then revalues her hand*
- *Finally answers G?*

The Law of Total Tricks

- The total number of trumps in a deal is the number of cards held in the best fit for one partnership plus the number of cards held by the other partnership in their best fit.
- The total number of tricks is the number of tricks that one side could take if allowed to play in their best fit plus the number of tricks that the other side could take if allowed to play in their best fit.

The Law of Total Tricks

The total number of tricks is equal to the total number of trumps.

From an offensive viewpoint you should bid up to the level equal to the number of trumps held by your side.

From a defensive viewpoint don't let the opponents play at a level equal to the number of trumps held by their side.

In a competitive auction make the opponents guess last!

Advancer's Bidding Messages after an Overcall in a Suit

1. A simple raise is primarily competitive – a weak game interest at best with usually only 3-card support.
2. A jump raise below game is preemptive – no interest in game with 4-card support.
3. A jump raise to game may be preemptive or offensive (intending to make) – definitely no interest in slam.
4. The simple bid of a new suit is an attempt to improve the contract – no game interest and not forcing.
5. A jump bid in a new suit below game is a moderate invitation to game – usually in a Major and always shows your own good suit of 5⁺ cards.

6. A jump to game in a new suit may be preemptive or offensive (intending to make) – definitely no interest in slam.
7. Notrump bids below game are invitations to game – promise at least one stopper in the suit the opponents bid and deny support for overcaller's suit if it was a Major, may have tolerance for overcaller's suit if it was a minor; when considering these bids, count only HCP for your G? decision.
8. 3NT is based on strength with the intention of making the contract – same hand types as for bids of 1NT or 2NT – count only HCP for your G? decision.
9. A simple cuebid is forcing for one round - made when you are reasonably sure the deal belongs to your side (your strength is the equivalent of a limit raise or better) but you have no clear direction and need more information from partner.
10. A jump cuebid is a “mixed raise” – shows at least 4-card trump support for partner with $G? = M^W$.

Observations:

- A cuebid (simple or jump) is the only forcing bid.
- A jump bid in a new suit, notrump bids below game and a jump cuebid are the only explicit invitational bids.
- Jumps to game are sign-off bids.
- All other bids are simply competitive or preemptive.

Advancer vs. Responder

- While responder never makes a jump shift, advancer may do so to show her own good suit with a game-invitational hand.
- While responder's jump raise to game is a preemptive bid, advancer's jump raise to game may be either preemptive or a show of game values.
- While the bid of a new suit by responder is forcing, the bid of a new suit by advancer is not.



CHAPTER 10

- Overcalls and Advances - Part 2

Advancing after a 1-Level Suit Overcall

Advancing after a 2-Level Suit Overcall

Advancing after a 1NT Overcall

Overcaller's Rebids

Responder's Bids after an Overcall

Summary



ADVANCING AFTER A 1-LEVEL SUIT OVERCALL

Having gotten some new general ideas for advancing out of the way, let's get more specific and see what you do as advancer after partner has made a 1-level overcall in a suit. As mentioned in the previous chapter your first steps are exactly the same as responder's! First determine answers to GFMS? and GFms?, then revalue your hand and finally answer G?. Use the same logical steps as if you were responder. In essence everything has changed but nothing has changed!

Advancer Answers GFMS? and GFms?

In some respects answering these questions is easier when you are the advancer than they are when you are responder. Remember that partner has promised at least 5 cards in his suit, so if you have at least 3-card support you know GF? = Y in that suit. Most of the time it will be a Major Suit because we are considering only 1-level overcalls. The only exception would be his 1♦ overcall of an opening 1♣ bid.

If you do have at least 3-card support for partner's Major Suit overcall, then you know GFMS? = Y and the strain will be set; the only issue is the level.

If you do not have 3-card support for partner or even if you do and his suit was diamonds, assume GFMS? = N unless you have at least a 5-card Major of your own and then GFMS? = M. Yes, it is true that if you have a 4-card Major there will be a Golden Fit there if partner also has 4 cards, but that is unlikely.

Advancer Revalues Her Hand

If GFMS? = Y advancer should revalue her hand as dummy. Even if GFMS? = N but GFms? = Y and a notrump contract can be ruled out, advancer should also revalue her hand as dummy. Revaluation is not required if advancer does not have a GF with partner's suit or if partner is considering a notrump bid or a bid in her own suit.

Advancer Answers G?

First and foremost you must remember that partner has not opened the bidding. He has overcalled in a suit at the 1 level; therefore his strength range is not 13 - 21 but 10 - 17. It is absolutely imperative that you remember this or you may very well get the wrong answer to G?. Once you get partner's point range in mind, it is a simple matter to conclude that G? = Y if you have 15⁺ points and G? = N if you have 7 or fewer points. That leaves G? = M if you have 8 - 14 points and we break this down into 3 subdivisions as shown in the following complete list:

POINTS	G?
15 ⁺	Y
13 - 14	M ^S
10 - 12	M ^I
8 - 9	M ^W
0 - 7	N

Note that as responder the M range is a 6-point interval (6 - 11) while as advancer it is a 7-point interval (8 - 14). Therefore we need a 3-point range for one of the subdivisions and choose the middle one.

You need not memorize this list. You can easily work it out following the logic presented here. In fact working through the logic will help to keep you focused on the big picture.

Advancer's Call when G? = N

Most of the time you will pass if you have decided G? = N, but there are exceptions.

♠ Q 4 3 If partner has overcalled in either Major, raise his bid to the 2 level,
 ♥ K 7 5 the same action you would take if he had opened and you were res-
 ♦ 8 6 4 3 2 sponder. You will be satisfying the Law and helping partner to
 ♣ 6 3 make an informed decision if opener bids again. The bid also has
 some preemptive value, taking away one bidding level from opener.
 You should have 6 or 7 points to make this raise when G? = N.

♠ J 8 6 4 Here you want to jump to the 3 level (preemptive) if partner over-
 ♥ K 9 7 5 calls in either Major. Make life difficult for opener. In general you
 ♦ 8 should have at least 4-card support with a singleton or void when
 ♣ 6 5 3 2 you make this call. You may also make this call with a much weaker
 hand, perhaps as few as 0 HCP if the vulnerability is favorable.

The above two examples apply whether responder bid or passed.

Suppose an auction started

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	1♥	1♠	?

♠ 6 You have only 6 points, so G? = N. You are almost positive the op-
 ♥ 10 9 7 5 ponents have a Golden Fit in spades. You know you and your part-
 ♦ Q J 4 3 ner have at least a 9-card fit in hearts. Jump to 3♥ and watch opener
 ♣ 10 8 6 3 squirm, especially if they are vulnerable and you are not. Isn't this a
 fun game?

Change a club to a heart in this hand and a jump to 4♥ would not be unreasonable (follow the Law) under favorable vulnerability. Your hand would have sig-

nificant offensive potential and very little defensive value. Normally we do not like quacks but in this auction your partner is likely to hold a little diamond strength on the side.

Very seldom do you want to introduce your own suit when $G? = N$. But consider the following auction:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	1♦	X	?
♠ QJ 10 8 5 3	Your spades are likely to be of little value to partner in a contract of 1♦ ^x , whereas partner's high cards should be helpful to you in a 1♠ contract. Take the corrective action of bidding 1♠. Remember that your 1♠ bid is not forcing or even invitational but corrective, so partner is not expected to take further action.		
♥ 9 7 5			
♦ 5			
♣ 1 0 6 3			

This auction is a little touchy because it depends on the meaning of responder's double. Right now, you know only about penalty doubles. But sometimes a double is used for another purpose. In this sequence the double could be something called a negative double (see *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 11 – "Negative Doubles"), essentially asking opener to bid a Major Suit if he has one. But even if that is the opponents' agreement, you are still afraid opener might pass and convert the negative double into a penalty double. So take the same corrective action.

Advancer's Call when $G? = M^w$

When your hand is this weak you would like to bid something, but your options are limited. In order of priority:

1. Jump to game in partner's Major Suit with 5-card support, especially if short in the other Major. You should have a singleton or void to make this bid. This is analogous to responder's jump to game in a Major Suit with a "Weak Freak" hand.
2. Make a jump cuebid with 4-card support of partner's 1M overcall. This bid is called a mixed raise – your hand is too good for a preemptive raise but not good enough for a simple cuebid. With 4-card support the Law says you should be competing to the 3 level and the jump cuebid will force partner to that level while also telling him you might have game if he has near the maximum for his overcall.
3. Raise partner's Major Suit to the 2 level with 3-card support. By all means raise partner's Major Suit to the 2 level if you have a Golden Fit.
4. Bid a decent 5-card or longer Major of your own at the 1 level. Your requirements for this bid depend on whether you are bidding either Major over partner's 1♦ overcall or if you are bidding 1♠ over partner's 1♥ overcall.

In the first case you are trying to improve the contract and should either have support for partner's diamonds if he really does not like your Major or your suit should be long enough and strong enough to rebid at the 2 level if partner rebids his diamonds. He should know that he can safely retreat to 2♦. If he does have support he can consider a raise with extra values because you could also make the same bid if you decided G? = M¹. Even without extra values, he should raise according to the Law if opener or responder bids again.

In the second case you are already in a Major Suit and have no need to improve the contract from a scoring viewpoint. You should have a very good suit without support for partner's hearts, two small cards at best. You are really telling partner you think 1♠ is a much better contract than 1♥.

5. Bid 1NT with a stopper in the opponents' suit.
You might make this bid after partner's 1♦ overcall – even with support. If partner's overcall was 1 of a Major you would make this bid only if you did not have support for his suit.
6. Make a jump cuebid with 4-card support. In this case you have the preemptive value of the bid coupled with a possibility that partner might be able to bid 3NT if he has a maximum overcall.
7. Raise partner's 1♦ overcall to 2♦ with 3-card support.
This is a bid of last resort. The opponents may not yet have found a Golden Fit in a Major Suit. Try to keep them from finding it if they have one. Even if they have found one, make them guess what to do next.
8. Pass.
Sometimes you just can't take any of the previous actions and have to pass.

Let's look at a few examples, starting with the following auction:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	1♦	Pass	?
♠ K Q 9 7 6 ♥ 7 4 ♦ Q 4 3 ♣ 8 6 3	You know GFms? = Y in diamonds, but GFMS? = M in spades and if partner has spade support you can probably take as many tricks in spades as diamonds. A spade contract will give a better score than the diamond contract. Bid 1♠ in an attempt to improve the contract. If partner doesn't like spades he knows he can retreat to 2♦.		
♠ J 10 7 6 ♥ K 10 4 ♦ 8 4 3 ♣ K Q 7	Doesn't 1NT look like a better bid than 2♦?		

♠ K Q 7 6 Similar to the previous hand but no club stopper and strength concentrated in two suits. Bump partner up to 2♦, making it a little harder for opener to bid his heart suit if he has one.
 ♥ 7 5 4
 ♦ K 4 3
 ♣ 8 6 3

♠ K Q 7 6 Follow the Law and make the jump cuebid of 3♣ with your 9-card fit. The opponent's have not found their heart fit yet. See if you can keep them out of it. From an offensive viewpoint, partner might be able to bid 3NT if he has 16 - 17 points and a slightly unbalanced hand so that he did not open 1NT.
 ♥ 5 4
 ♦ K 9 4 3
 ♣ 8 6 3

Let's change the bidding a little.

	OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
	1♣	1♥	Pass	?

♠ 9 7 6 Raise partner to 2♥.
 ♥ Q J 3
 ♦ 9 4 3
 ♣ K Q 9 6

♠ 9 7 Make a jump cuebid of 3♣.
 ♥ Q J 8 3
 ♦ K J 9 7 6
 ♣ 9 6

♠ 9 You are terrified of the opponents finding a game in either black suit, especially spades. Follow the Law and put the pressure on opener with a jump to 4♥. If the vulnerability is unfavorable, you might settle for 3♥. Under favorable vulnerability you would make this bid even if the ♦Q were a spot card.
 ♥ Q J 7 8 3
 ♦ Q 9 7 6 2
 ♣ 9 6

♠ A K J 10 6 You really think 1♠ is a better contract than 1♥. Tell partner you do not like his suit and have a good suit of your own.
 ♥ -
 ♦ 9 7 5 4 3
 ♣ 8 6 3

♠ Q 10 6 3 You do not like partner's suit but you have enough points to bid something and have a club stopper or two. Bid 1NT. You might even have a notrump game if partner has 16 or 17 points.
 ♥ 8
 ♦ 9 7 4 3
 ♣ A Q 7 3

♠ Q 10 6 3 As much as you would like to bid with your 9 points, you really do
 ♥ 8 not have a good bid available. Pass for now. Maybe you will get a
 ♦ A Q 6 4 3 chance to do something later.
 ♣ 8 7 3

Advancer's Call when $G? = M^1$

When your hand is this strong (or stronger) there is a very good chance the hand belongs to your side. Your bidding should be more offensive than defensive oriented. As a result there are only three bids you should consider here:

- A bid of a new suit at either the 1 level or the 2 level (not a jump bid)
- Bid 1NT with a stopper in the opponents' suit
- A cuebid

The arguments for bidding a Major Suit at the 1 level presented in the previous topic are appropriate here as well. The only new consideration is the bid of a new suit at the 2 level. From a process of elimination you can conclude that this will either be the bid of a minor suit after partner has overcalled in a Major Suit, or a bid of 2♥ after partner has made a 1♠ overcall. In either of these cases you will be denying support for partner's Major Suit and showing a good suit of your own. When you bid at the 1 level partner will not know if your decision regarding $G?$ is M^W or M^1 . But when your bid is at the 2 level he will know that your decision is M^1 .

The 1NT bid can be made if $G? = M^W$ or M^1 . You would usually make this call when $G? = M^1$ only if you if you had at most 11 HCP. This allows partner to pass, bid 2NT (invitational) or bid 3NT with relative confidence if he is satisfied with a notrump contract. You would make the bid with 12 HCP only if you had negative adjustments to your strength.

The cuebid is a general purpose bid used simply to give overcaller a chance to further describe his hand as discussed in the previous chapter. After he makes his call you will have a better idea what to do next.

Advancer's Call when $G? = M^S$

Advancer has 3 calls available for this strength range:

- A jump bid in a new suit (a jump shift)
- A jump to 2NT
- A cuebid

The jump shift shows a hand with

- An excellent 5⁺-card suit, almost always a Major
- Enough points for game if the overcaller has a fit (or at least tolerance) and an opening hand
- The values of an opening bid.

The jump to 2NT shows a balanced hand with at least one stopper in the opponents' suit and enough points for game if partner has about the values of an opening bid. If partner overcalled in a Major, the bid denies support for partner.

The cuebid is used here in the same manner as when $G? = M^I$.

Advancer's Call when $G? = Y$

When you know you want to be in a game contract you have to either bid game or make a forcing bid. Your choices are limited to:

- Jump to game in a Major Suit
- Bid 3NT
- Make a cuebid

The jumps to game always show sufficient values for game with no interest in slam. Since partner may have as few as 10 points, you need at least 15. Since partner may have as many as 17 points, you should not have more than 15. So it looks like they show exactly 15 points! In reality there is a little leeway on the high end. You might well decide just to settle for game with a poor 16 or maybe even 17 points. But with a stronger hand you should start with a cuebid. Subsequent action to get to a slam is beyond the scope of this book.

Obviously if you jump to game in partner's suit you are showing support for his suit. If you jump to game in your own suit (a Major of course) you are showing a solid 6-card or longer suit that does not need any help from partner. A jump to 3NT promises at least one stopper in the opponents' suit and denies support for partner's suit unless it happened to be diamonds (his only possible minor suit overcall at the 1 level).

Summary of Advancer's Offensive Bids

Here is a summary of all of advancer's offensive bids. Those usually made when $G? = M$ or Y .

- New suit – good 5-card or longer suit, made to improve contract, limited to $G? = M^I$.
Strength could be only M^W if made at the 1 level.
- Jump in a new suit – good 5-card or longer, made when $G? = M^S$.
- 1NT, 2NT or 3NT — balanced hand with stoppers in opponents' suit(s), $G? = M^{W,I}$, M^S or Y , respectively.
- Jump to game in a Major Suit - $G? = Y$, Slam? = N, support for partner's suit or self-sufficient suit of your own.
- Simple cuebid – general purpose strength-showing bid, asking overcaller to further describe his hand, the only forcing bid available except for a jump cuebid.
- Jump cuebid – mixed raise of partner's suit, usually a Major, $G? = M^W$.

Let's look at some examples of these bids. Suppose the auction starts:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	1♦	Pass	?
♠ K Q J 7 6 ♥ 7 4 ♦ A 4 3 ♣ 8 6 3			If partner has spade support you should get a better score playing in spades instead of diamonds. In fact, if he has spade support and extra values you could have a game in spades. You also have support for diamonds if partner is short in spades and has to retreat to 2♦. Bid 1♠.
♠ K Q J 10 7 6 ♥ K 9 4 ♦ 4 3 ♣ 8 6			With this hand you would also like to improve the contract by playing in spades instead of diamonds. While you don't have support for diamonds, your suit is good enough and your hand strong enough to rebid 2♠ if partner retreats to 2♦. Bid 1♠.
♠ K Q J 10 7 6 ♥ A Q 4 ♦ 4 3 ♣ 6 3			Here you have some real hope of a game contract in spades. Show your excellent suit and strong hand with a jump to 2♠. You need a 6-card suit or an excellent 5-card suit to make this jump bid because it is not forcing and partner is expected to pass if she has a minimum overcall and tolerance for spades.
♠ K Q 8 7 6 ♥ A Q 4 ♦ K 7 3 ♣ 6 3			Your suit is not good enough for a jump to 2♠, but your hand is too strong for a bid of 1♠. Start with a 2♣ cuebid and then bid spades at your next turn.
♠ A Q J 10 7 6 ♥ A K 4 ♦ 4 3 ♣ 6 3			You should have a reasonable play for your jump to 4♠ even if partner has only 10 points. Not much chance for slam but if partner has just the right hand, he might go forward.
♠ K Q 7 6 5 ♥ A Q 4 ♦ 4 ♣ 9 6 5 3			This is a rather difficult hand. With 11 HCP you would like to bid and 1♠ is your natural choice. But if partner is short in spades and retreats to 2♦ he will not be pleased with your hand as dummy and your suit is not good enough to rebid 2♠ in that scenario. On the other hand, if partner has 3 or 4 spades with 14 or more points you may well miss a spade game if you pass. It is probably best to bid 1♠ and hope for the best.
♠ K J 7 6 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ 4 3 ♣ K Q 6 3			Bid 2NT inviting partner to bid 3NT if he has about an opening hand or better (12 ⁺ points).

♠ K J 7 6
 ♥ A 7 4
 ♦ Q 3
 ♣ K Q 6 3

Even if partner has only 10 points you should have a reasonable play for your jump to 3NT.

♠ K J 7 6
 ♥ A 7 4
 ♦ 4 3
 ♣ K 10 6 3

Your best action with this hand is a bid of 1NT.

Now let's look at some hands when partner's overcall is in a Major.

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	1♠	Pass	?
♠ K J 7 6 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ 4 3 ♣ Q 10 6 3	This hand may look like a limit raise and worth a simple cuebid. But the ♣Q is probably significantly overvalued so it is likely better to treat this hand as worth 8 - 9 points and make a jump cuebid of 3♣ instead.		
♠ K 9 7 6 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ K 10 6 3 ♣ 6 3	At first glance this hand looks a lot like the previous one. They both have the same shape and 10 HCP. But in light of the auction they are quite different. The ♣Q in the previous hand is highly overvalued while the ♦K in this hand is much more significant. You can show this hand with a simple cuebid of 2♣.		
♠ Q J 6 ♥ A 7 6 4 ♦ K 10 6 3 ♣ 6 3	The lack of a 4th spade does not prevent you from making a simple cuebid of 2♣.		
♠ K J 7 6 ♥ A Q 8 4 ♦ K Q 5 ♣ 6 3	With 16 points as dummy, partner should be able to make 4♠. Slam is probably out of reach so settle for the Golden Game of 4♠.		
♠ 6 2 ♥ 10 9 4 ♦ A K Q 7 5 2 ♣ 6 3	Show your good suit and strength with a bid of 2♦.		
♠ 8 6 ♥ K 9 4 ♦ A K Q 7 5 2 ♣ 6 3	This hand is strong enough for a jump shift to 3♦. You are hoping partner has a club stopper and can bid 3NT.		

ADVANCING AFTER A 2-LEVEL SUIT OVERCALL

In many ways your advances after a 2-level overcall **Error! Bookmark not defined.** are similar to those after a 1-level overcall but there are a few differences. Your willingness to bid is increased because partner has promised a couple of more points than if he had overcalled at the 1 level. On the other hand, your competitive nature is tempered by the fact that you will have to bid at the 2 level or higher.

By now you should know that your first steps are to answer GFMS?/GFms?, revalue your hand and answer G?.

Advancer Answers GFMS? and GFms?

As always partner has promised at least a 5-card suit but since his overcall was at the 2 level, he might very well have a sixth card. While his 1-level overcall is most often in a Major, his 2-level overcall is usually a minor. The only exception is his 2♥ bid after a 1♠ opening bid. Also when he has overcalled in a minor the opening bid was a Major unless he overcalled 2♣ after a 1♦ opening bid. These observations are also not something to be memorized; they will be obvious from the auctions when they occur. They are made here simply to help you keep the remainder of this discussion in perspective.

In the rare case of partner's 2♥ bid you will know GFMS? = Y in hearts if you have at least 3-card support. When partner's overcall was in a minor, you will assume GFMS? = N unless you have at least a 5-card Major, and then GFMS? = M. Any time you have 3-card support for partner's minor you know GFms? = Y in his suit.

Advancer Revalues Her Hand

Advancer follows the usual protocol for revaluing her hand dependent on the existence of a Golden Fit and her expectation of being dummy or declarer.

Advancer Answers G?

We know that when partner has overcalled at the 2 level he suggests the strength of an opening bid, but we will cut him a little slack and give him a minimum of 12 points. Again, as opposed to an opening bid upper limit of 21 points, he is limited to 17 points. So we can readily derive the following table for our answer to G?:

POINTS	G?
13 ⁺	Y
11 - 12	M ^S
10	M ^I
8 - 9	M ^W
0 - 7	N

Notice that we keep 2-point intervals for the weak and strong M ranges, leaving just the 1-point value for the intermediate M range. Rather than devote a lot of effort discussing what should be done with this specific range, it is easier to either upgrade this hand to the M^S category or downgrade it to the M^W category based on the quality of the hand.

Again, this is not a list to be memorized. Just work it out when needed. What you do need to memorize is that partner has shown 12 - 17 points with his 2-level overcall. The rest will fall into place.

Advancer’s Call when G? = N

About the only action you will consider taking when you have decided G? = N is a raise of partner’s suit.

Suppose an auction started

	OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
	1♠	2♥	2♠	?
♠ 4 3	The opponents obviously have a spade fit but you have at least a 9-card heart fit. Follow the Law on both points and bid 3♥. This is simply a competitive bid. Admittedly you would make the same bid with a little stronger hand where you wanted to make a weak invitational bid, so partner will not know your intentions. There are methods to distinguish between the two hand types but they are beyond the scope of this book.			
♥ K 9 7 5				
♦ 8 5				
♣ Q 9 6 5 3				

Now consider this auction:

	OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
	1♠	2♣	Pass	?
♠ 4 3	Your hand is probably useless to partner in a club contract but his hand should be quite helpful to you in a diamond contract. Bid 2♦. This is one of those rare hands where you bid your own suit even without any game interest. Partner should realize that you do not have support for his suit. You cannot have club support and be trying for a better score since diamonds and clubs score equally.			
♥ 9 7 5				
♦ K J 10 9 8 5 3				
♣ 3				

Advancer’s Call when G? = M^W

When your hand is this weak you would like to bid something but your options are very limited since you will be bidding at the 2 level or higher. In order of priority:

1. Raise partner’s Major Suit (hearts).

By all means raise your partner if you have 4-card or longer support so that you satisfy the Law. With 5-card support consider a preemptive jump to game.

2. Bid a decent 5-card or longer Major of your own at the 2 level.
This will be an option only if partner overcalled in a minor. So, you need to have either a tolerance for his suit if he does not like yours and retreats to 3 of his suit or a very good suit that you can rebid at the 3 level.
3. Raise partner's minor suit.
This is a bid of last resort. Use the Law to decide on the level of your bid. The opponents may not yet have found a Golden Fit in a Major Suit. Try to keep them from finding it if they have one. Even if they have found one, make them guess what to do next.
4. Pass.
Sometimes you just can't take any of the previous actions and have to pass.

Here are a few examples.

	OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
	1♠	2♥	Pass	?
♠ 9 7 6	Don't violate the Law if you don't have to. Pass for now. If responder had bid 2♠ you would bid 3♥ following the second point of the Law. If opener rebids his spades and his bid gets passed around to you, a 3♥ bid would not be unreasonable, although you hate your flat hand.			
♥ Q J 3				
♦ 9 4 3				
♣ K Q 9 6				

♠ 9	You have at least a 9-card heart fit. Follow the Law and raise to 3♥.			
♥ Q J 8 3				
♦ 9 7 4 3				
♣ K 9 6 4				

	OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
	1♠	2♣	Pass	?
♠ 9 6	Try for a better score and bid 2♥. You don't have a problem if partner is very short in hearts and retreats to 3♣.			
♥ K Q J 9 3				
♦ 9 4 3				
♣ Q 9 6				

♠ 9 6 Again try for a better score with a 2♥ bid. If partner retreats to
 ♥ A Q J 10 9 3 3♣ your suit is good enough to bid 3♥ at your next turn.
 ♦ 9 7 4 3
 ♣ 6

♠ 9 Give opener a problem by raising partner to 3♣. You would
 ♥ Q J 8 3 make this same bid if your Major Suits were reversed and your
 ♦ 9 7 4 3 hand might be a little weaker for this same bid. Responder
 ♣ K 9 6 4 passed but could have 4 or 5 points, maybe a little more with just
 nothing to bid over partner's 2♣ bid. Your partner might be on a
 minimum for his overcall or have 17 points. How is opener supposed to know
 for sure who has what? He will have to guess at the 3 level and he may guess
 wrong.

Advancer's Call when G? = M^S

When your hand is this strong (or stronger) you have every expectation that the hand belongs to your side. So your bidding should be more offensive than defensive oriented. As a result there are only three bids you should consider here:

- A jump bid in a new suit (a jump shift)
- 2NT
- A cuebid

From a practical viewpoint a jump shift will almost always be to 3 of a Major. The only exception would be a jump to 3♦ after partner made a 2♣ overcall following an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠. Advancer would not want to jump shift into 4 of a minor.

The 2NT bid shows a balanced hand with at least one stopper in the opponents' suit and enough points for game if partner has a couple of points above the minimum required for his overcall. If partner's overcall was 2♥ the bid denies heart support.

As usual the cuebid just asks opener to further describe his hand.

Note that a jump cuebid is not included as an option after partner has made a 2-level overcall. It would always be at the 3 level in a suit that was higher ranking than partner's, therefore forcing to the 4 level.

Advancer's Call when G? = Y

Your choices here are no different from those when partner made a 1-level overcall. You have to either bid game or make a forcing bid. Again your choices are limited to:

- Jump to game in a Major Suit
- Bid 3NT
- Make a cuebid

When partner's overcall was at the 1 level, you needed 15 points to reach the partnership level of 25 for a Golden Game. Now that partner has overcalled at the 2 level you can get by with 13. So the jump to game in a Major can be made with 13 to about 16 or 17 points. With a stronger hand start with a cuebid.

The 3NT bid promises a stopper in the opponents' suit and denies 3-card support for partner if his overcall was 2♥.

Summary of Advancer's Offensive Bids

Here is a summary of all of advancer's offensive bids. Those made when G? = M^S or Y.

- Jump in a new suit – good 5-card or longer (6 preferred) suit made when G? = M^S
- 2NT or 3NT – balanced hand with stoppers in the opponents' suit(s), G? = M^S or Y
- Jump to game in a Major Suit - G? = Y, Slam? = N, support for partner's suit or self-sufficient suit of your own
- Cuebid – general purpose strength-showing bid asking overcaller to further describe his hand, the only forcing bid available

Let's look at some examples of these bids. Suppose the auction starts:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♠	2♥	Pass	?
♠ 4 3 ♥ K 9 7 5 ♦ A 5 ♣ Q 9 6 5 3	With 11 points in support of hearts you do not have quite enough to insist on game but too much for a raise to 3♥, which would just be competitive. Start with a 2♠ cuebid. If partner denies game interest by bidding 3♥, you will pass. If partner bids anything else your next bid will be 4♥. Change the ♣Q to the ♣A and you are strong enough for game – so just bid 4♥.		

♠ A 6 3 ♥ 7 5 ♦ A J 7 ♣ K 10 8 5 2	This is not quite enough to bid 3NT, but you do have a stopper in the opponents' suit and enough to invite game with a bid of 2NT. Change one of the small cards in any suit to the queen of that suit and you could bid 3NT.		
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OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♥	2♣	Pass	?
♠ A K 10 8 6 3 ♥ 7 5 ♦ 9 7 ♣ Q 9 7	Jump to 3♠. Highly invitational. Change the ♠10 to the ♠Q and your hand is worth a jump to 4♠.		

♠ A J 10 8 6 3 Your suit is not quite good enough to stand alone in a 4♠ contract unless partner has extra strength. Start with a 2♥ cuebid. If partner shows a minimum with a 3♣ bid you can pass but 3♠ is probably better. After any other rebid by partner try 4♠. It may not make, but you should have a reasonable play for it.
 ♥ 7 5
 ♦ K 7
 ♣ Q 9 7

ADVANCING AFTER A 1NT OVERCALL

Partner's 1NT overcall is almost identical to an opening bid of 1NT. The HCP range is extended to 15 - 18 instead of 15 - 17 and he promises a stopper in the opponents' suit.

As advancer your decision regarding G? is basically the same as if you were responder to an opening 1NT bid, just allow for an extra point in partner's hand. You have all of the same bids available:

- Pass with a balanced hand if G? = N.
- Sign off at the 2 level in any 5-card or longer suit if G? = N.
- Bid 2NT to invite game if G? = M.
- Bid 3 of a Major with a 5-card suit if G? = Y and let partner decide between 3NT and 4 of your Major based on his length in your suit.
- Sign off in 4 of a Major with a 6-card suit if G? = Y.
- Bid 3NT without a 5-card or longer Major Suit if G? = Y.

Review Chapter 2 – “Responses to a 1 NT Opening Bid” for more details on this topic.

OVERCALLER'S REBIDS

We've been dwelling on advancer here for quite a while. Now let's address overcaller's rebid decisions. Your first step is to revalue your hand in terms of GFMS?/GFms? and G? in light of advancer's call. Then choose an appropriate call to further describe your hand. Remember that:

Pass is always an option unless partner made a cuebid or a jump cuebid.

We have already covered your rebids after advancer's cuebid. For her other bids you should not have much difficulty if you remember the meanings associated with those bids. We'll give a brief rundown of those for your suit overcalls here. That will also serve as a brief summary of advancers' bids.

If all advancer did was raise your suit, don't bid any more unless the opponents do and you decide you want to compete further. Partner's raise denied any interest in game. If she had such interest she would have started with a cuebid or perhaps a jump cuebid.

If your overcall was in a Major Suit and partner bid a new suit, she is showing her own good suit and denying support for your suit. She has no real interest in game, but feel free to raise if you have support, especially if the opponents compete further. The same is true if your overcall was in a minor and she bids the other minor.

If your overcall was in a minor and she bid a Major, she may have support for your suit and may be trying for a better score. If you have tolerance or support for her suit, you may pass or raise as you see fit. Without at least tolerance for her suit you may rebid your suit. She probably has support or tolerance for it. If she doesn't, she has a really good suit of her own and will rebid it.

If advancer makes a jump bid in a new suit, she shows a good suit with a strong invitational hand.

Advancer's jump cue bid promises 4-card trump support and a hand for which $G? = M^W$.

A 1NT bid by advancer is a moderate invitational bid with a stopper in the opponents' suit. It can be made with either a $G? = M^W$ or M^I decision. If made after a one of a Major overcall, it denies trump support. If made after your 1♦ overcall, she may have support for your diamonds and just be looking for the Golden Game of 3NT. You should usually pass, raise to 2NT or raise to 3NT, depending on your $G?$ decision. But, you also have the option of choosing some other bid if you think your hand is not suitable for play in a notrump contract.

Advancer's bid of 2NT is a strong invitational bid regardless of whether it is a jump after your 1-level overcall or a simple bid after your 2-level overcall. You should almost always raise to 3NT if you decide $G? = Y$. If you decide $G? = N$ you will usually pass but might rebid your suit if you think that would be a better contract.

A jump to 3NT by advancer is very nearly a close-out bid, but you might correct to 4 of your Major with a self-sufficient suit.

RESPONDER'S BIDS AFTER AN OVERCALL

An overcall by responder's RHO often affects her planned action. Consider the following auction:

OPENER	OVERCALLER	RESPONDER	ADVANCER
1♣	1♠	?	

Responder may have been all set to bid 1♥ with her 8 points and 4-card heart suit. The overcall has robbed her of that bid. She is not strong enough to bid 2♥, and if she does not have a spade stopper will have to pass. A method to circumvent this problem is presented in *More Bidding Basics*, Chapter 11 – “Negative Doubles.”

However, in general, responder does not have to sit idly by and let the opponents have all the fun interfering with her. She can fight fire with fire and bor-

row a weapon from advancer’s arsenal. You might even be able to guess what it is. Now that an opponent has bid, responder has a new call available that she did not have without the interference. Did you figure it out? That’s right – the cuebid! Responder’s use of the cuebid is so similar to advancer’s that it makes a lot of sense to include it at this point.

After an overcall by RHO responder’s cuebid of the overcall suit replaces the jump raise as the bid that shows 4-card trump support and strong invitational values. That frees up the jump raise to be used as a preemptive bid just like advancer. All of responder’s other bids remain about the same with the minor exception of notrump responses which now promise a stopper in the overcaller’s suit. Actually the use of the cuebid is also slightly broader. It can be used for any hand with 4-card trump support and the values of a limit raise **or stronger**.

*After an overcall responder’s jump raises are preemptive.
A cuebid shows a limit raise or better with 4-card support.*

Here are some examples:

OPENER	OVERCALLER	YOU	ADVANCER
1♥	1♠	?	
♠ 4 3 ♥ K 9 5 ♦ A 8 5 ♣ J 9 6 5 3		Make your normal raise to 2♥.	
♠ 4 3 ♥ K 9 5 3 ♦ 10 8 5 ♣ J 9 6 3		Make a preemptive jump raise to 3♥.	
♠ 4 3 ♥ K J 5 3 ♦ 10 8 5 ♣ A Q 6 3		Make a cuebid of 2♠. You will then abide by partner’s decision and pass his next bid whether 3♥ or 4♥.	
♠ 4 3 ♥ K Q 5 3 ♦ 10 8 5 ♣ A K 6 3		Start with a 2♠ cuebid. Then pass if opener bids 4♥ – but raise his 3♥ bid to 4♥.	

♠ 4 3	With only 3-card heart support bid in your normal manner. Start
♥ K J 3	with a natural bid of 2♣ planning to jump to 3♥ at your next turn.
♦ 10 8 7 5	Change one of the diamonds to the ♦Q and you would start the
♣ A Q 6 3	same way. Plan to bid 4♥ at your second turn.

SUMMARY

Advancing after a 1-Level Suit Overcall

Advancer first answers GF? If partner's overcall was 1M and you have at least 3-card support then GFMS? = Y. Otherwise you assume GFMS? = N unless you have at least a 5-card Major of your own, and then you decide GFMS? = M. If partner overcalled an opening bid of 1♣ with 1♦ and you have at least 3-card support then GFms? = Y. Otherwise you assume GFms? = N unless you have at least a 5-card minor of your own; then you decide GFms? = M.

Advancer then revalues her hand if appropriate and answers G? knowing that partner has 10 - 17 points. It is a straight-forward procedure to deduce the following table "on-the-fly" when needed.

POINTS	G?
15 ⁺	Y
13 - 14	M ^S
10 - 12	M ^I
8 - 9	M ^W
0 - 7	N

When G? = N or M^W advancers bids will be primarily defensive oriented. She will usually pass if G? = N, but should try raise partner if GF? = Y in his suit. A simple raise is just competitive showing 3-card support while a jump raise is preemptive showing more support. The higher you bid the more trumps you have. Advancer may also bid a new suit of 6 or more cards at the 1 level if on the high end of her range.

Advancer has more flexibility if G? = M^W. Her priorities are:

1. Jump to game in partner's Major Suit with 5-card support.
2. Make a jump cuebid with 4-card support of partner's 1M overcall.
3. Raise partner's Major Suit to the 2 level with 3-card support.
4. Bid a decent 5-card or longer Major of your own at the 1 level.
5. Bid 1NT with a stopper in the opponents' suit.
6. Make the jump cuebid of 3♣ with 4-card support if partner makes a 1♦ overcall of a 1♣ opening bid.
7. Raise partner's 1♦ overcall to 2♦ with 3-card support.
8. Pass.

When advancer's G? decision is M^I or stronger her bids will be primarily offensive oriented as summarized below:

- New suit – good 5-card or longer suit, made to improve contract, limited to G? = M^I.
Strength could be only M^W if made at the 1 level.

- Jump in a new suit – good 5-card or longer, made when $G? = M^S$.
- 1NT, 2NT or 3NT – balanced hand with stoppers in opponents' suit(s), $G? = M^I, M^S$ or Y.
- Jump to game in a Major Suit – $G? = Y$, Slam? = N, support for partner's suit or self-sufficient suit of your own.
- Simple cuebid – general purpose strength-showing bid, asking overcaller to further describe his hand, the only forcing bid available except for a jump cuebid.

Advancing after a 2-Level Suit Overcall

Partner's 2-level overcall will usually be in a minor suit, the only exception being his $2\heartsuit$ bid after a $1\spadesuit$ opening bid. Advancer follows the same basic protocol of answering GF? and G? as after a 1-level overcall, but now partner has shown 12 - 17 points yielding the following G? table:

POINTS	G?
13 ⁺	Y
10 - 12	M^S
8 - 10	M^W
0 - 7	N

When $G? = N$ advancer will usually pass, but might raise partner competitively if responder bids. She also might bid a new suit at the 2 level if she has a long (6⁺-card) suit of her own.

When $G? = M^W$ advancer will choose from the following prioritized options:

1. Raise partner's Major Suit (hearts).
2. Bid a decent 5-card or longer Major of your own at the 2 level.
3. Raise partner's minor suit.
4. Pass.

When $G? = M^S$ or Y advancer's bid will be more offensive oriented and she will choose one of the following:

- Jump in a new suit – good 5-card or longer (6 preferred) suit made when $G? = M^S$
- 2NT or 3NT – balanced hand with stoppers in the opponents' suit(s), $G? = M^S$ or Y, respectively
- Jump to game in a Major Suit – $G? = Y$, Slam? = N, support for partner's suit or self-sufficient suit of your own
- Cuebid – general purpose strength-showing bid asking overcaller to further describe his hand, the only forcing bid available (other than a jump cuebid)

Advancing after a 1NT Overcall

Advancing after a 1NT overcall is virtually identical to responding to an opening bid of 1NT. Just remember that the range for the 1NT overcall is 15 - 18 HCP instead of the 15 - 17 HCP range for the 1NT opening bid. See the responses discussed in Chapter 2 – “Responses to a 1NT Opening Bid” for more details.

Overcaller's Rebid

As overcaller, at your second turn to bid, follow the standard procedure of reevaluating your hand in terms of answers to GF? and G?. Since most of advancers bids are quite informative, you should usually not have much difficulty deciding what your call should be. Remember that you are always allowed to pass unless your partner made a cuebid. Even then you are allowed to pass if the opening bidder made any call other than pass.

After partner has made a cuebid you must remember your systemic bids. When you are answering the G? question you assume the strength of partner's hand is such that her answer to G? was M¹. Then if your decision regarding G? is N, you simply rebid your suit at the cheapest level. Otherwise you make some other descriptive bid:

- Rebid your suit skipping a level.
This bid promises a good 6-card or longer suit or a suit of 7⁺ cards of a little lower quality.
- Bid a new suit of 4⁺ cards at the cheapest level.
- Bid notrump at the cheapest level.
This bid promises a stopper in the opponent's suit.
- Make your own cuebid.
This bid invariably shows a somewhat balanced hand without a stopper in the opponents' suit and scattered values.

Changes to Responder's Bids

Most of responder's bids carry the same message after an overcall as they do without an overcall. There is a minor difference to the 1NT response and significant changes to raises of opener's suit.

- 1NT promises a stopper (or length) in the overcalled suit.
- A simple raise tends to be more competitive/preemptive than invitational.
- A jump raise is strictly preemptive.
- A cuebid shows a limit raise or better (4-card trump support and G? = M^S or Y).



CHAPTER 11

- Takeout Doubles and Advances

The Takeout Double

Advances after a Takeout Double

Summary



In the last two chapters you learned of a way to compete after the opponents had opened the bidding and you had a good 5-card or longer suit of your own to bid or a balanced hand similar to that for a 1NT opening bid. You could overcall in your suit or notrump, but what are you supposed to do if you would like to compete and your hand does not meet those requirements? Sometimes you will have to pass, but in this chapter you will learn about another option.

THE TAKEOUT DOUBLE

In the early days of bridge all doubles were for penalties. Then one night Major Charles Lee Patton was playing against R. F. Foster, one of the early experts of bridge. Mr. Foster had the habit of opening 1NT every time he was the dealer. Patton got tired of this disruption of his bidding intentions, stopped the game momentarily and told his partner, “The next time Mr. Foster bids 1NT and I have strong cards I am going to double. If you have a 5-card suit, bid it. If you haven’t, pass, because you know I will have the notrump set in my own hand.” Thus was born what is today known as the takeout double. This is really the oldest known convention, a nonstandard use for a call. Over a period of time its use became refined and a universally accepted understanding. Now it is just considered a standard part of bridge.

Doubling for Takeout

♠ K Q 8 4 Your RHO opens the bidding with 1♣ and you have this hand. You
♥ A K 6 4 certainly would like to compete. You are not quite strong enough to
♦ J 8 5 3 2 overcall 1NT – never mind that you clearly do not have a stopper in
♣ — the club suit. You might overcall 1♦, but it really is a lousy suit and
 certainly not the one you would like partner to lead if your side ended up defending. Besides, hearts or spades might be a much better contract, and partner is unlikely to have the necessary 5 cards in either of those suits to mention one. You might decide to “cheat” on the overcall requirements and bid one of your 4-card Major Suits, but that would be guesswork. If you pick either one you might find partner short in your suit with 4 cards in the other one. You don’t have any idea which suit would be best but would be happy if you could get partner to pick any suit other than the one opener bid.

You can get this point across to partner by saying “double.” This sends the following message:

- I have the strength of an opening hand but have no idea what suit would be best for our partnership
- I have support for all suits not bid by the opponents
- Please bid some strain not bid by the opponents
- Choose a 4-card or longer Major Suit if you have one
- Pick your longest suit if you have both majors

- I really would rather you did not bid notrump but I understand if that is your only reasonable choice

This call is referred to as a **takeout double**.

Takeout Double Message
Partner, take me out of this double!

Penalty or Takeout?

In my introductory bridge book, *Introduction and Card Play Basics*, or the appendix of this book you learned that a double generally shows an expectation of defeating the contract for the last bid that was made (by an opponent), and that you would increase the score you received if you were able to defeat the contract, at the risk of giving your opponents a greater score if you were not able to defeat it. Has the meaning of the call suddenly been changed? Not at all. When used in this manner, the double is called a **penalty double**. How does partner know what you mean? When you double do you have to say “penalty double” or “takeout double” to clarify your intentions? No, all you can say is “double.” The intent has to be inferred from the situation. There are many situations in which a double is intended for takeout or other purposes rather than penalties, and they all have separate names and requirements to identify the specific scenario. For example, there are balancing doubles, reopening doubles and support doubles, none of which will be further discussed here. In this regard, note that the term “takeout double” refers to the specific scenario being discussed in this chapter, while saying a double is “for takeout” simply describes the intent of the double.

Here are the guidelines for identifying a double as a takeout double:

- Neither partner has made any call other than pass
- Opponents have bid one or two suits
- Opponents are in a partscore suit contract
- It is the doubler’s first or second opportunity to bid

Why do we not like to double low-level contracts for penalties?

- Difficult to set the contract
- Opponents might run to a safer contract
- Shows the opponents where our strength is

Here are some examples of takeout doubles (note that X is used as a shorthand notation for double):

West	North	East	South
1♦	X		
1♦	Pass	1♥	X
	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	X		

The following are examples of penalty doubles:

West	North	East	South
1NT	X		
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♠	X		
1♥	2♣	2♠	X

Distributional Requirements for the Classical Takeout Double

Later in this chapter we will talk about a secondary use of a takeout double. For now, we will consider the most common or classical use of the takeout double.

When you make a takeout double you are pleading with partner to bid one of the unbid suits, especially an unbid major. When you do this, you are promising support for any suit she bids. Ideally you will have at least 4-card support for whichever suit she chooses.

In a typical case where your RHO has opened the bidding and you make a takeout double there will be only one bid suit so you are asking partner to bid one of three suits. Ideally your hand shape would be 5-4-4-0 or 4-4-4-1 with shortness in the suit bid by the opener; however, if you wait around for this perfect shape, you will miss many opportunities to compete with hands where you could have gotten a better result if you had entered the auction. So frequently you will make a takeout double with a 4-4-3-2 hand pattern where your doubleton is in the suit bid by the opener. This will often be the case when your 3-card suit is a minor.

4=4=2=3: Suppose you hold a hand with this shape and your RHO opens the bidding with 1♦. It is quite acceptable to double with this hand if you satisfy the strength requirements for a takeout double. You hope that partner can bid one of the Major Suits, but if she has to bid clubs you at least have reasonable support for that suit. If your RHO had opened the bidding with 1♣ instead of 1♦, a takeout double would not be appropriate because you do not have enough support for diamonds if that is the suit partner chooses to bid.

4=3=2=4: This hand shape is even less desirable for a takeout double after an opening bid of 1♦. In the previous example there was a good chance that partner

would bid one of the Major Suits and you would be playing in a Golden Fit. With this pattern it is slightly more probable that partner will bid hearts than spades, so you may well end up playing in a 4-3 fit. That will not necessarily be a disaster but usually not ideal either. To compensate for this possibility it is best to have a couple of extra points above the minimum required to make a classical takeout double when you have this hand pattern.

3=3=3=4: This is about the worst shape you could have to even consider a takeout double of a 1♦ opening bid. (It would be even worse after a 1♣ opening bid.) You should really have a few extra points for a takeout double here. And, if you are that strong, maybe a 1NT overcall would be better, but with no diamond stopper that bid would be ruled out.

4=3=1=5: Although not very common, here is an example of a takeout double with a 5-4-3-1 hand shape. With a weak or moderate club suit and strong or at least decent hearts, you might well prefer a takeout double to a 2♣ overcall if you satisfy the strength requirements.

4=5=1=3: This is the same general hand pattern as the previous example but now your 5-card suit is a major. Unless it is of very poor quality, a 1♥ overcall is preferred to a takeout double after a 1♦ opening bid.

When two suits have been bid by the opponents before you make your takeout double, you have a little more flexibility for your hand shape because there are only two suits you need to support. Typical distributions for the unbid suits would be 4-4, 5-4 or 5-5, although more cards in one or both suits is possible.

There is really a very simple guideline regarding your distributional requirements for a takeout double:

If you are not willing to play the contract in any unbid suit, don't make a (classical) takeout double.

Strength Requirements for the Classical Takeout Double

In some respects making a classical takeout double is similar to opening the bidding. Most importantly you are telling partner you have a hand with at least the strength of an opening bid. Shading this requirement a point when you are doubling a minor suit opening bid and have at least 4-card support for both majors is acceptable. However, you evaluate the strength of your hand differently from that used when you are opening the bidding. Since you expect partner to bid one of the unbid suits, she will be declarer and you will be dummy. This means that you will give value to short suits but not long suits.

*When making a classical takeout double, **evaluate your hand as dummy.***

Of course, you can have only one short suit (the one you are doubling) because you promise support for all of the unbid suits. This evaluation process has some interesting side effects. Suppose you have a hand with 10 HCP and a 4-4-4-1 shape. If your RHO opens the bidding in your singleton, your hand strength suddenly changes from 10 points to 13 points. While you were not prepared to **open the bidding** you are now able to **compete with a takeout double**. This has been mentioned before but is repeated here for emphasis:

Revalue the strength of your hand after every call.

This leads to the following corollary which is analogous to one presented in Chapter 9 – “Overcalls and Advances Part - 1” regarding overcalls.

After the opponents have opened the bidding there will be hands that you would have passed as opener but you will compete with a classical takeout double.

While the minimum strength required for a classical takeout double is that of an opening hand there is no upper limit shown by a classical takeout double.

The strength shown by a takeout double is 13 or more points.

Note: The qualifier “classical” was intentionally omitted from the above boxed statement. As will be seen in a later section of this chapter, they also apply to another form of the takeout double.

Classical Takeout Double Examples

Having defined the distribution and strength requirements for a classical takeout double, let's look at a few examples.

♠ A 10 4 2 Your RHO opens the bidding with 1♣. You were prepared to open
♥ A 8 7 3 the bidding with 1♦. While you could still overcall with 1♦, don't
♦ A 8 6 3 2 you think a double is a more accurate description of your hand? If
♣ - you had been given the opportunity to open the bidding with 1♦,
 you would have hoped partner could have responded in one of the

Major Suits, otherwise raised your diamonds. If you overcall 1♦ you are suggesting that is your preferred strain and that partner lead a diamond if your side ends up defending. Although a diamond lead by partner may work out all right if your side defends, a lead of one of the Majors could work out better. You have no real preference, and you certainly would prefer a Major Suit to diamonds on offense. You can resolve all of these issues with a takeout double.

Suppose you replace the ♦A with the ♦4 in the above example. Now you were all set to pass if your RHO passed since you had only 9 points. But after the 1♣ opening bid your hand revalues to 13 points. Get your oar in the water with a double!

♠ K 10 4 2 This is a more typical hand for a takeout double of a 1♣ opening bid
♥ Q J 8 3 by your RHO.

♦ A K 6

♣ 3 2

♠ A K 4 2 With this hand you were prepared to open the bidding with 1NT, but
♥ Q J 8 3 when your RHO opens the bidding with 1♦, you cannot overcall
♦ 3 2 1NT without a diamond stopper. Double fits the bill quite nicely.

♣ A K 6

♠ 9 8 4 2 You are prepared to open the bidding 1♦ but your RHO gets in your
♥ 8 3 way with an opening 1♥ bid. No problem – double.

♦ A K 8 3

♣ A K 6

♠ K Q 2 You are all set to open the bidding with 1NT but your RHO bids 1♦
♥ A 10 7 5 before you have a chance. You have a flaw for a takeout double
♦ 8 5 3 with only 3-card spade support. At the same time you have compen-
♣ A K 6 sation with your extra strength. Go ahead and double. If partner
bids spades she will have to be satisfied with your 3-card support.

♠ K 10 4 2 After your RHO opens the bidding with 1♥, your double asks partner
♥ 3 to bid one of the other suits. You hope she can bid spades but won't
♦ A K 6 5 mind if she has fewer than 4 spades and picks a minor.

♣ Q J 8 3

♠ 4 2 You are prepared to open the bidding with 1♦ but your RHO bids 1♠.
♥ 6 5 3 While you do have the strength and shape required for a takeout dou-
♦ A K 6 5 ble, your partner may not enjoy playing in a 2♥ contract with your
♣ A Q 8 3 poor 3-card support. **Sometimes** passing is your best option.

Be sure to pick up on the implication in this topic that the less ideal your distribution (especially regarding support for unbid Major Suits) the more strength you need for a takeout double. Try to avoid a takeout double with only 3-card support for a Major Suit unless you have a little extra strength and at least one high honor (ace or king) or a couple of smaller honors in your 3-card Major.

Another Use for the Takeout Double

Up until now in this chapter we have been considering what is often called the classic use of the takeout double. This might be called a *shotgun double* (my

terminology). You have fired a shot shell with typically three pellets (one for each of the three unbid suits) and hope one of them hits a suit in your partner's hand.

The second application of the takeout double might be called a *rifle double* (also my terminology) where you fire a single bullet (usually for your own long suit) and hope it hits a suit in your partner's hand that can support you. This occurs when you have a good long suit of your own but are too strong for an overcall (more than the 17-point upper limit). Alternatively, you might have a balanced hand with a stopper in the opponent's suit and be too strong for a 1NT overcall (more than the 18-HCP upper limit). In these cases you start out with a takeout double. Note the additional analogy that just as a rifle bullet is significantly more powerful than a shotgun pellet, a rifle double requires more strength than a shotgun double.

In these analogies the takeout double is like a double-barreled firearm called an over-under. It has a rifle barrel on the top and a fused shotgun barrel on the bottom, traditionally with two triggers, one for each barrel. Some modern models have a single trigger with a toggle switch to select which of the two firing pins is activated.

When you make a takeout double, how does partner know which trigger you pulled? Initially **she doesn't** so she assumes you fired the shotgun (by far the most common use) and bids accordingly. If you are extremely lucky and she bids your suit (or notrump if you had that type of hand) when you actually pulled the trigger for the rifle, you will be delighted and rebid just as if you had fired the shotgun. Most of the time you will not be so fortunate. Now you have to tell her you pulled the other trigger. You do this by bidding your own suit or notrump, as appropriate, usually at the cheapest possible level.

Partner should recognize this as a huge red flag. Why are you bidding a new suit (or notrump) when you supposedly told her you had support for any suit she chose? Evidently you don't really have support for her suit but pulled the trigger for the rifle instead of the shotgun. For this reason you must not abuse the use of the takeout double. You cannot make a shotgun double without support for all of the unbid suits planning to "correct" partner's bid to another suit if she bids one for which you have no support. Partner might get excited expecting you to have the stronger hand and bid more than your combined strength can support.

When making a rifle double you evaluate your hand as declarer not dummy because you usually expect to become declarer. In some instances you may actually become the dummy. In such cases your partner may simply be a surrogate declarer; you will have the master trump length but she will be playing the deal. In other cases she might actually have the master trump length. Under such conditions you can revalue your strength later in the auction.

Here are a couple of examples of a typical rifle double.

♠AKJ1065 Your RHO opens the bidding with 1m or 1♥. Your hand is way too strong for a simple overcall of 1♠. Partner would undoubtedly pass with many hands where a 4♠ contract is a sure thing. For example, she might have the ♣K and the ♠Q. You start with a takeout double intending to follow up by bidding spades at your next turn if partner bids one of the minors or notrump.

♠KQ5 Your RHO opens the bidding with one of any suit. With 20 HCP your hand is too strong to simply overcall 1NT. You start with a double and follow up with a notrump bid at your next turn.

♥AQ
♦A765
♣AJ93

Sometimes you can use the rifle double when you have a choice of two suits. Here are two examples:

♠AKJ1065 Your RHO opens the bidding with 1♦. You are too strong to overcall and have a great spade suit but would also be willing to play in hearts. You can start with a double and then support partner's hearts if that is the suit she chooses, or else bid your spades at your second turn.

♥AQ73
♦5
♣K3

♠AKJ65 Suppose your RHO opens the bidding with 1♣. How can you get across the message that you have two suits with a strong hand? Experts have conventional methods to handle a hand of this type. Until you learn those, let me suggest that you start with a double. If partner bids either Major you will be in great shape. But, what if she advances with a 1♦ bid? How about calling on your good pal the cuebid for some help? A 2♣ bid by you at your second turn says "Partner, I have a better hand than you expected, but no clear action." Don't you think partner could work out that you have the other two unbid suits with no strong preference of one over the other and were too strong to start with an overcall?

♥AQ873
♦A5
♣7

Recap

*A **takeout double** may be either of the following:*

- A **shotgun double** with at least 3-card support for all unbid suits and at least the strength of an opening hand (count dummy points).
- A **rifle double** with a hand that is too strong for an overcall in a suit or notrump (evaluated as declarer).

ADVANCES AFTER A TAKEOUT DOUBLE

Advancer's General Approach

By now you can probably guess that your general approach is to first answer the questions GFMS? and GFms? then revalue your hand and answer the question G?.

Once you have answered these questions, your priorities are:

- Major Suit contract if GFMS? = Y
- Minor suit contract if GFMS? = N but GFms? = Y
- Notrump contract if GF? = N and you have a stopper in the opponents' suit(s)
- Pass

The types of calls you have available are:

- A bid of an unbid suit
- A cuebid
- A notrump bid
- Pass

Let's see how this works.

Advancer Answers GFMS? and GFms?

These questions are particularly easy to answer after partner has made a takeout double. You always assume he has the shotgun double with support for all of the unbid suits. So, if you have 5⁺ cards in any unbid suit you are quite certain that GF? = Y in that suit. If you hold 4⁺ cards in any unbid Major Suit you assume GFMS? = Y in that suit. It is true that on occasion he may have only 3 cards in an unbid Major, but then he should have extra strength to compensate for his lack of the 4th card.

Advancer Answers G?

Most of the discussion in this topic is restricted to the case when GFMS? = Y. When partner has made a takeout double you know he has at least the strength of an opening hand and there is no fixed upper limit to his strength. This means that your answer to G? is Y if you have at least 12 points and **it will never be N**. That leaves the range from 0 to 11 for M. This is a much broader range to break down into three subdivisions than we have had to consider for responder or advancer after an overcall. As usual we would rather not have the top division too large, so use the following complete breakdown:

POINTS	G?
12 ⁺	Y
9 - 11	M ^S
5 - 8	M ^I
0 - 4	M ^W

Note that you do not have to memorize these if you really understand the process used to come up with them. You should be able to work it out when needed. The key is that the strength of partner's hand is unlimited. There may be a game even if your hand is absolutely worthless!

By the way, since you are expecting to be **declarer**, you **may count extra for long suits** (only if they are not a suit bid by the opponents) **but not short suits**. Yes, if partner has made the rifle double you may actually end up as dummy, but you will find that out later in the auction and can revalue your hand at that point.

Advancer Bids an Unbid Suit

This is the most common action you will take. Your first choice of suits is always an unbid Major in which you hold at least 4 cards. If you hold both Majors and they are of **unequal length**, choose the **longer** one. If they are of **equal length**, you usually choose the **stronger** one. But if they are both 4-card suits you may be able to make a cuebid to let partner choose. This option is the next topic in this section.

If you do not have a 4-card or longer Major Suit your second choice is an unbid minor in which you hold at least 4 cards. If you hold both minors your priorities and options are the same as if they were both unbid Major Suits.

Every once in a while you will be faced with a dilemma – you won't have 4⁺ cards in any unbid suit. If this happens and you have at least 9 points (G? = M^S or Y) and a stopper in the doubled suit, you can make a notrump bid. With fewer points or no stopper in the doubled suit you may have to bid one of your 3-card suits. When faced with this problem, choose a 3-card Major rather than a 3-card minor.

Once you have chosen the suit you must decide the level of your bid. It may seem a paradox but

When advancing after partner's takeout double, the weaker your hand the more important it is that you bid rather than pass.

You simply cannot afford to let the opponents play in a doubled partscore contract they are likely to make, possibly with several overtricks (each worth 100 points if they are not vulnerable and 200 points if vulnerable). Also, if the opponents are in a contract of 2 of a Major or higher, **even if they just make their contract, they will receive the game bonus.**

Deciding how high to bid will be much easier if

When advancing after partner's takeout double by bidding a suit, think in terms of raising partner, not bidding on your own.

But, you say, “Partner didn’t bid a suit, he doubled.” However, did not partner’s double tell you he had support for all of the unbid suits? Let’s look at an example.

Suppose that your partner doubled an opening bid of 1♦. It is as though he bid 0♥, 0♠ and 1♣ all at the same time! This is the magic of the efficiency of the shotgun double. He got to “bid” three suits at once without taking up any bidding space. What a bargain! For example, if you should choose to bid 1♥, you are raising partner from 0♥ to 1♥. It then follows that if you bid 2♥, you are giving partner a jump raise from 0♥ to 2♥. Similarly if you bid 2♣ you have raised him from 1♣ to 2♣.

With this understanding your choice of level is easy.

You bid the same way as if you were raising partner's opening bid!

A simple raise (bidding at the cheapest level) is a moderate invitational bid made with a hand where $G? = M^w$ or M^l . A jump raise (skipping one level) is a strong invitational bid made with a hand where $G? = M^s$. And finally a jump to game in a Major Suit is made when $G? = Y$. Note that we do not treat this bid as showing a “weak freak” hand.

Some examples should help to show just how easy this is. Consider an auction that starts:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	X	Pass	?
♠ 9 7 6	What a terrible hand! But, don’t even think of passing. Partner could have 25 points with 4 cards in each Major and you would miss your game of 4♥! OK, that really is not very likely. More to the point is that you cannot let the opponents play in a contract of 1♣ doubled. When you have a hand like this, don’t hesitate and let the opponents know your hand is so bad. Be bold and step right up with a 1♥ bid. Swap the red suits and your bid would be 1♦.		
♥ 10 6 5 2			
♦ 8 4 3			
♣ 7 6 3			
♠ K Q 7 6	Here you have a choice between 1♥ and 1♠. If partner had opened the bidding with 1♦ and you were responder, you would show your suits “ up-the-line ” and respond 1♥. The choice is a little different when advancing. When one suit is clearly stronger than the other, you choose the stronger one . Partner will not bid again unless he		
♥ 10 6 5 2			
♦ 8 3			
♣ 7 6 3			

really pulled the rifle trigger instead of the shotgun trigger. Bid 1♠. Swap the ♥2 with the ♠Q and you would bid 1♥.

♠ K Q 7 6 With unequal length choose the longer suit. Bid 1♥.
 ♥ 10 8 6 5 2
 ♦ 8 3
 ♣ 7 3

♠ K Q 7 6 With 8 HCP plus 1 for your 5th heart you decide G? = M^S. Give
 ♥ 10 8 6 5 2 partner a jump raise to 2♥ to show your extra strength. Note that
 ♦ K 3 this jump raise is only to the 2 level, not the 3 level as it must have
 ♣ 7 3 been if partner had opened the bidding with 1♥. So we can afford
 to make the jump with a little weaker hand than if he had opened
 the bidding. Change the ♥10 to the ♥A and you should jump to
 4♥.

By the way, are you concerned about jumping to game for fear that partner really has the rifle double instead of the shotgun double and does not have support for your suit? Let's see how likely that is. You have 13 points, partner would need at least 18 points, and opener has at least 13 points. That adds up to 44 points! Now, it is possible that opener, partner and you may have some extra distribution points, but this would be a very rare occurrence. Even if it did happen your partnership has at least 31 points, and you will probably survive.

♠ K Q 7 6 Even though your diamonds are longer than your spades, show your
 ♥ 10 2 Major with a bid of 1♠. The key point is that you are not bidding a
 ♦ 10 8 6 5 2 new suit; you are raising partner. You are also showing a hand
 ♣ 7 3 with only a moderate game interest so partner will likely pass and
 you won't get another chance to bid.

♠ K Q 6 If you don't have a 4-card or longer Major, you usually have to bid
 ♥ 10 7 a minor. Bid 1♦. Add another king to the hand and you have just
 ♦ 10 8 6 5 2 enough to jump to 2♦.
 ♣ 7 3 2

In all of the above examples you have had a lot of flexibility. Not only was the opening bid a minor so there were two Major Suits from which to choose, but it was also the lower-ranking minor, so all of your bids could be at the 1 level. Let's look at the other extreme and suppose the auction starts:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♠	X	Pass	?

Now you have only one Major Suit to choose from so it is more likely that you will bid a minor. All of your simple raises will be at the 2 level; a jump raise will

take you up to the 3 level. Nonetheless, you should be reasonably safe there even if partner has barely enough strength for his double.

♠ 8 7 6 You really have only one choice. Bid 2♥ without too much hesitation. You would make the same bid with more strength – up to 8 points. Increase it to the $G? = M^S$ level and you would jump to 3♥. ♦ 10 8 6 5
♦ 8 3 If your strength was even greater so that $G? = Y$ your bid would be ♣ 8 7 6 4
♣ 8 7 6 4 4♥.

♠ 8 7 Bid 2♥ even though your clubs are longer and much stronger. With ♥ 10 8 6 5 just another point you would jump to 3♥ and with a little more your ♦ 8 3 bid would be 4♥.

♣ A K 9 6 4

♠ 8 7 With a choice of two 4-card minors of equal length choose the stronger. Bid 2♦, but if one of your Major Suit cards were another ♥ 8 6 5 club, you would select the longer minor and bid 2♣.
♦ A K 6 4

♣ 10 8 6 5

Advancer Makes a Cuebid

The cuebid was discussed at some length in Chapter 9 – “Overcalls and Advances - Part 1” in relation to advancer’s bids after partner has made an overcall. So you should be comfortable with the idea of using the cuebid to get more information from partner. There are two situations that are very similar to each other in which the use of the cuebid can be very helpful after partner has made a take-out double. In both cases you must have decided $G? = M^S$ or Y .

*Advancer’s cuebid shows a hand for which
 $G? = M^S$ or Y and no clear choice of a bid.*

The first case is when partner has doubled a minor suit opening and you have an equal number of cards (at least 4) in both Majors. Your holding in the minors is irrelevant. You would like to play in your best Major Suit fit.

The second case is when partner has doubled a Major Suit opening and you have an equal number of cards (at least 4) in both minors and fewer than 4 cards in the unbid Major. You would like to play in your best minor suit fit.

In both cases you are aware that partner might have only 3-card support for one of your suits and 4-card support for the other. You can get partner to choose the suit he prefers by making a cuebid. Here is the principle used:

Advancer's cuebid of a¹

- *Minor suit asks partner to bid his longest Major Suit.*
- *Major suit asks partner to bid his longest minor suit.*

¹*Some players expand this use slightly.*

In both cases he bids the stronger if his suits are of equal length.

Here are a couple of examples. Suppose the bidding starts:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♦	X	Pass	?
♠ K Q 7 6	G? = M ^S . If we did not have the cuebid available to find out more about partner's length in the Major Suits, we would just have to pick one and jump to 2 of that suit. The cuebid allows us to eliminate the guesswork – bid 2♦. Partner will probably bid 2 of one of the Majors and we will pass.		
♥ A J 5 2			
♦ 8 6 3			
♣ 7 3			

In the discussion of this hand it was assumed that partner's second call was a bid at the 2 level. Since his hand is unlimited and he knows you have shown a strong invitational hand, he could very well have jumped to game himself if he decided G? = Y. We will further discuss rebids by doubler and advancer in the next two chapters, Chapter 13 – “Rebids after a Takeout Double - Part 1” and Chapter 14 – “Rebids after a Takeout Double - Part 2”.

Change the auction to:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♥	X	Pass	?
♠ 7 6	Although our hand strength suggests G? = M ^S , we have no heart stopper and GFMS? = N, so we are resigned to playing in a partscore in a minor. We could just pick one and play at the 2 level, risking a possible 4-3 fit. But, we can start with a cuebid of 2♥ and let partner pick the suit, virtually guaranteeing a Golden Fit. It is true we will be one level higher but we should be safe there with our combined strength.		
♥ 6 5 2			
♦ K Q 7 6			
♣ A J 5 2			

Note that you cannot afford to use the cuebid with a weaker hand because you might end up in a contract higher than your resources can support. Furthermore you would distort your strength to your partner.

Advancer Bids Notrump

A bid in notrump by you is about the last thing partner wants to hear. He doubled thinking he would be dummy in a suit contract, hopefully a Major. Since he

has promised support for all of the unbid suits, he is usually short in the suit he has doubled and probably included 1, 3 or 5 points for his shortness. That shortness will not be an asset in a notrump contract and he likely has no compensating length values. You should really make an adjustment to the value of **his** hand. It makes sense to subtract 3 points, giving him a minimum of 10 points instead of 13. Now we have to adjust our G? decision table as shown below with the corresponding table for responding to an opening bid of 1 of a suit for comparison. The heart suit has been selected for illustrative purposes.

**Advancing in notrump after a
takeout double (bid of ONT)**

POINTS	G?	BID
15 ⁺	Y	3NT
13 - 14	M ^S	2NT
11 - 12	M ^I	1NT
9 - 10	M ^W	1NT
0 - 8	N	Your longest suit

Responding to an opening bid of 1♥

POINTS	G?	BID
12 ⁺	Y	A new suit
10 - 11	M ^S	3♥
8 - 9	M ^I	2♥
6 - 7	M ^W	2♥
0 - 5	N	Pass

Note the similarity of the two tables. The point-count intervals (2 points each) for the three G? = M decisions are identical and from top down start just below the points required for a G? = Y decision. The bids are also similar. When G? = Y, you jump right to the notrump game or start with a new suit with the intention of jumping to game in hearts at your next opportunity. When G? = M^S you make a jump raise in both cases. When you have only a moderate invitational hand (G? = M^W or M^I) you give a simple raise in both cases. With a weaker hand do not consider notrump (choose some other bid) or pass when partner has opened the bidding.

When you make a simple raise to show a moderate invitational hand, partner doesn't know if your G? decision was M^W or M^I. He can bid game if he decides G? = Y or pass if he decides G? = N. If his decision is G? = M he can raise you one level by bidding 2NT or 3♥. You then pass if your initial decision was G? = M^W or bid game if it was M^I.

Understanding this parallel structure should make it relatively easy to mentally construct the notrump game decision table and then decide on your bid when needed as advancer.

As advancer you bid notrump only if you

- Do not have 4 or more cards in a unbid Major Suit, and*
- Have length and/or strength in the opponents' suit, and*
- Have a hand for which G? = M or Y.*

In order to be safe in a notrump contract you need to be assured the opponents cannot take a lot of tricks in their suit before you obtain the lead. Since partner has promised support for the other suits, he is likely to be short in their suit and probably does not have a stopper. That means you should have either some high cards or significant length in the opponent's suit.

Let's look at a couple of examples. Suppose the bidding starts:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	X	Pass	?
♠ 7 6 5	Just what you need for a bid of 1NT. You have nice club stoppers and enough strength. If partner raises to 2NT you will pass. But, if you had another queen in your hand, you would raise 2NT to 3NT. Change a small heart to the ♥A and you would have 13 HCP. Enough to jump to 2NT. Also changing a small spade to the ♠Q would increase the value of your hand to 15 HCP for an ideal 3NT bid.		
♥ 6 5 2			
♦ K 7 6			
♣ A Q 5 2			
♠ K 6 5	You may not have a club stopper, but you should have enough length to keep the opponents from taking too many club tricks before you get the lead. Without a 4-card suit to bid 1NT looks like it might be the best contract. Even if you go down you may have kept the opponents out of a makeable partscore in a Major Suit. As in the previous example with more strength and the same shape, you could jump to 2NT or even 3NT. In the latter case some of your additional strength should be in clubs so that you have a stopper to prevent your opponents from immediately taking 5 club tricks.		
♥ A 5			
♦ K 7 6			
♣ 9 7 5 4 2			

Advancer Passes

The only call partner wants to hear from you less than a notrump bid is a pass.

Never pass out of weakness!

The opponents will lick their chops when they record their score if you do. Besides as a famous bridge author once said: “If you rode to the game with your partner, you may have to find your own way home after the game!” Let’s look at an example of what might happen if you violate this rule.

♠ K 10 4 2 Suppose you are South and partner doubles an opening bid of 1♣ by
 ♥ Q J 8 3 his RHO, responder passes, you pass and opener also passes. You
 ♦ A K 6 are unlikely to take any tricks while partner will probably get no
 ♣ 3 2 more than 4 tricks: 1 spade, 1 heart and 2 diamonds, and perhaps

N
S

 only 3. So declarer will make his contract with 2 or 3 overtricks
 ♠ 9 7 6 giving him a score of 340/440 if not vulnerable or 540/740 if vulner-
 ♥ 10 6 5 2 able. Suppose instead of passing you bid 1♥ and you are allowed to
 ♦ 8 4 3 play it there (not doubled). You should be able to take at least 5
 ♣ 7 6 3 tricks and maybe 6 for down 1 or 2 which will give the opponents
 50/100 if you are not vulnerable or 100/200 if you are vulnerable.

All of these scores are much better than any result if you had passed.
 Of course, there is always the chance that the opponents may bid again and end
 up playing in a club partscore contract making 3 or 4 for a score of 110/140.
 Both of these scores are also much better for your side than the result if you had
 passed partner's takeout double.

If you do pass it is because you have length and strength in the suit the oppo-
 nents bid and at least a little something extra on the side. You fully expect to
 defeat the opponents. Your action is called a **penalty pass**. You have converted
 a takeout double into a penalty double with your pass. When estimating the
 number of your defensive tricks you can count on 2 from your partner. Expect-
 ing a 2-trick set is a good idea. One of those tricks might disappear but you will
 still defeat your opponents by 1 trick.

It is hard to conceive of a hand where you would pass when you held 4⁺
 cards in an unbid Major. Maybe one could be constructed where you would pass
 if the opponents were vulnerable and you were not. If you could set them 2
 tricks for a score of 500 you would come out ahead of the approximately 420 you
 would get for your nonvulnerable game. A 2-trick set would require that you
 took 8 tricks (assuming they were only at the 1 level). That actually might be
 easier than taking the 10 tricks required for your game contract, but this scenario
 is rare indeed.

Here are some examples. Suppose the bidding starts:

	OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
	1♣	X	Pass	?
♠ K 5 ♥ 6 5 ♦ 9 7 6 ♣ A K Q 6 5 2	You and partner need to take 8 tricks for a 2-trick set. You have a good chance to take 5 tricks in clubs, maybe even 6. Your ♠K could also be a winner. Adding 2 tricks from partner gives you 7 tricks with prospects for 1 or 2 more. Pass with the full intent of defeating the contract.			
♠ K 5 ♥ Q 5 ♦ A 7 6 ♣ 9 8 6 5 3 2	Even though you have a lot of clubs, your trick-taking potential on defense is not very good. It is better to bid 1NT than pass.			

♠ 8 5 4 You have good strength in opener's suit but you can count on
 ♥ 7 6 5 only your 3 trump tricks plus 2 from partner if you defend.
 ♦ 9 7 6 They could easily make their contract, perhaps with an overtrick
 ♣ A K Q 2 or 2. This is another hand where bidding 1NT is fairly certain
 to give you a better result than passing.

♠ 9 8 5 4 Even though you might get a diamond ruff if you defend, your
 ♥ 7 6 5 defensive prospects are not that good. Besides, you have a 4-
 ♦ 9 7 card Major with 9 points. Jump to 2♠. You might have a game
 ♣ A K Q 2 there.

A Rainy Day

It's not always a clear sky and sunshine after partner makes a takeout double. Some days it's cloudy or downright nasty weather! Suppose partner doubles an opening bid of 1♣ and responder passes. You hold the following hands.

♠ 9 8 4 Yikes! What do you do now? Don't panic or squirm in your
 ♥ 7 6 5 seat. And don't take a long time to bid. You know you can't
 ♦ 9 7 4 pass or bid 1NT. Bid 1♥. **Always choose a 3-card Major**
 ♣ 8 5 3 2 **over a 3-card minor in a situation like this.** Choose hearts
 over spades unless the spades are significantly stronger. For
 example, if your spades were KQ4 in this hand.

♠ 9 8 With this hand you have to bid 1♦.
 ♥ 7 6
 ♦ 9 7 4
 ♣ 10 8 6 5 3 2

♠ 9 8 "Can't we just skip this hand and go on to the next one?" Don't
 ♥ 7 6 start crying. You do have two choices – Pass or 1♦. Even
 ♦ 9 7 though they may make 1♣^x if you pass, it might give you a bet-
 ♣ 10 8 7 6 5 3 2 ter result than bidding 1♦ and having them double you and set-
 ting you several tricks. It is also possible that opener may bid
 again.

The above hands are extreme but illustrative of "problems" you will occasionally run into. Somebody at the table has a lot of points. It isn't you or responder. You have no HCP and responder has at most 5. That leaves 35 HCP for opener and partner. It is almost guaranteed that one of them will bid again, so what you bid will probably not be the final contract. Whatever happens, you will pass for the remainder of the auction unless partner makes a forcing bid.

The main thing to remember when a situation like this does arise is to be prepared in advance. Avoid any body language that will tip off the opponents or your partner to your "problem," which really is not a problem at all if you are prepared for the possibility. Bid like you really have what you say you have.

SUMMARY

When the opponents have opened the bidding and you have a hand with which you would like to compete, but it does not satisfy the requirements for an overcall, you may be able to make a takeout double. The takeout double instructs your partner to bid something – “Partner, take me out of this double.”

Guidelines for Recognizing a Takeout Double

When your partner doubles the opponents, how do you know if it is a penalty double or a takeout double? Use the following guidelines to recognize a takeout double:

- Neither you nor partner have made a previous call other than a pass
- It is partner's first or second turn to bid
- The opponents are in a partscore suit contract (see exception below)
- The opponents have bid 1 or 2 suits
- A double of an opening bid of 1NT is for penalties
- A double of a response of 1NT to an opening bid is for takeout
- A double of a suit response to an opening bid of 1NT is for penalties

Requirements for a Takeout Double

There are two types of takeout doubles – the shotgun double and the rifle double.

The shotgun double is the more common of the two. It is often referred to as the classic(al) takeout double. For this double you need:

- Support for all unbid suits
Usually 4⁺ cards, 3 cards in one unbid minor is always acceptable
Good 3-card support for one unbid Major is acceptable if you have extra strength
- An opening hand
Since you expect to be the dummy, count HCP and dummy points

For the rifle double you need:

- An unbalanced hand with a 5-card or longer suit that is too strong (18⁺ points) to overcall. You might also have a strong 2-suited hand.

or

- A balanced hand with a stopper in the opponents' suit(s) that is too strong (19⁺ HCP) to overcall 1NT

There is no upper limit for the strength of doubler's hand for either type of take-out double.

Advances after a Takeout Double

You always assume partner’s takeout double is a shotgun double and advance accordingly. The priority of your calls is:

- Bid a suit
 - 4-card or longer Major
 - Longest
 - Strongest
 - 4-card or longer minor
 - Longest
 - Strongest
- Bid notrump
 - Only if you have a stopper in the opponent’s suit and G? = M or Y. See table below.
- Pass
 - Never because you are weak – only if you have length and strength in your opponents’ suit(s). Expect to defeat their contract by 2 tricks, counting on 2 tricks from partner.

If you decide to bid (practically all the time), think of partner’s double as a hypothetical opening bid in your strain at one level lower than the cheapest level at which you will have to bid. Then bid as though you are raising partner, not as if bidding your own suit. Knowing that partner has at least 13 points and no upper limit your G? decision tables are:

For suit bids		For notrump bids	
POINTS	G?	POINTS	G?
12 ⁺	Y	15 ⁺	Y
9 - 11	M ^S	13 - 14	M ^S
5 - 8	M ^I	11 - 12	M ^I
0 - 4	M ^W	9 - 10	M ^W
		0 - 8	N (make some other bid)

If G? = M^{W,I}, make a moderate invitational bid by “raising” partner one level. If G? = M^S make a strong invitational bid by giving partner a “jump raise,” skipping one level.

If G? = Y, you may jump to game in a Major Suit. If you are not considering a Major Suit, strive for a 3NT contract.

If G? = M^S or Y and you have a choice of both Majors or both minors (equal length in both cases) consider the use of a cuebid to get partner to choose his longest or best suit.

- A cuebid of a minor suit asks partner to bid his longest Major Suit.
- A cuebid of a Major Suit asks partner to bid his longest minor suit.
- In both cases, if his suits are of equal length, he bids the stronger.

This approach gets you to your best fit in case partner has only 3 cards in one of the suits and 4 cards in the other – or even a 54xx distribution in the two suits.



CHAPTER 12

- Rebids after a Takeout Double - Part 1

Rebids by the Takeout Doubler and
Advancer

Summary



REBIDS BY THE TAKEOUT DOUBLER AND ADVANCER

Having heard advancer's bid the takeout doubler revalues his hand accounting for the message sent by advancer and makes decisions regarding GFMS?/GFms?/G?. He then decides what further action is indicated, including pass.

Rebids after a Shotgun Double

For the present we will assume the takeout doubler has the classic hand for his takeout double. We consider the case when he made a rifle double in the next chapter.

1. Advancer Made a Non-Jump Bid in a Suit

This is by far the most common action by advancer. Her message is $G? = M^w$ or M^l and shows a hand worth 0 - 8 points. It is not difficult for the takeout doubler to conclude that he needs at least 17 points to even be thinking about a game contract – **so most of the time he will pass**. If he does have game aspirations, he must recognize that he virtually forced partner to bid and she may not have any points at all; consequently he must be cautious in moving toward game.

If advancer bid a Major Suit it can be assumed the strain is set since advancer “raised” doubler's suit and the only remaining question is G?. If advancer bid a minor suit, 3NT is the most likely game contract. Sometimes advancer will be able to make her bid at the 1 level. Other times she will be forced to go to the 2 level. Clearly the doubler has a little more flexibility for the first case than the latter. Because of the nuances related to doubler's actions depending on the strain and level of advancer's bid, it is helpful to consider separately the four different general possibilities of advancer's bid: 1M, 2♥, 1♦, and 2m.

1.a Advancer Bid 1M

When advancer's bid is a Major Suit at the 1 level, doubler has the following options:

- A. Raise advancer to game.
- B. Raise advancer to the 3 level.
- C. Raise advancer to the 2 level.
- D. Pass.

In principle, doubler has one other call available – a cuebid. But we reserve that action for the scenarios when he made a rifle double or advancer made some other bid.

Let's see if we can work through a logical understanding of the meaning of these bids and advancer's second call.

- A. The jump to game must mean doubler has a very strong hand. It is reasonable to hope that advancer has a point or two but that is all doubler needs. Advancer will always pass.
- B. The jump to the 3 level must mean doubler needs a little more from advancer, about 3 or 4 points, i.e., advancer must be on the high end of $G? = M^W$. Now advancer has enough information to make a Y or N decision regarding $G?$. With 3^+ points her decision is Y, otherwise N. In the latter case she will pass. If her decision is Y she will raise to game.
- C. The simple raise to the 2 level must mean doubler has game interest only if advancer is in the M^I range. Now advancer can make a straight Y, N or M $G?$ decision:

- 0 - 4 points = N
- 5 - 6 points = M
- 7 - 8 points = Y

Advancer will pass if $G? = N$, raise to the 3 level if $G? = M$ and raise to the 4 level if $G? = Y$.

- D. When doubler's $G?$ decision is N he will pass. This will be his most common choice.

1.b Advancer Bid 2♥

In the current context this scenario occurs only when partner doubled an opening bid of 1♠. Since advancer's bid is at the 2 level, doubler has the following options:

- A. Raise advancer to game.
- B. Raise advancer to the 3 level.
- C. Make a cuebid.
- D. Pass.

All of these bids are the same as for advancer's bid of 1M discussed above except for the cuebid. Since advancer has already bid at the 2 level, the third option for a 1 level bid is not available but can be conveniently replaced with a 2♠ cuebid. After the cuebid advancer makes a $G?$ decision following the structure outlined for option C when advancer bid 1M. I suggest the following actions based on that decision:

- $G? = N$ – bid 3♥.
- $G? = M$ – Bid 3m if you have strength or shortness in that suit, otherwise bid 2NT.
- $G? = Y$ – bid 4♥.

1.c Advancer Bid 1♦

Clearly this scenario is possible only after partner's takeout double of opener's 1♣ bid. Doubler will have to play a lot of bridge before he encounters this scenario and has a hand where he is interested in a 5♦ contract. From a practical viewpoint the only time he would be interested in 5♦ is if he had made a rifle double with a long diamond suit. But, in the current context we are considering only shotgun doubles, so we can simply ignore this possibility here.

But, doubler might be interested in a 3NT contract. He may well have a balanced hand or a 4=4=4=1 pattern with 17 or more HCP but no club stopper, so a notrump overcall was not feasible and a notrump rebid is also not appropriate. If that is the case, the only call he can make to show a notrump game interest is a cuebid of 2♣ or a jump cuebid of 3♣. (Actually, a bid of 3♦ when doubler has made a rifle double with a long diamond suit might also lead to a 3NT contract. That scenario is discussed in the next chapter when we address rebids after a rifle double.)

While there might be some reason for assigning a meaning to the jump cuebid, that bid really seems unnecessary if we adopt the following rebids for advancer after a simple cuebid by doubler:

- 2♦ – I do not have a club stopper or I have a club stopper but < 3 HCP, e.g. J109x... and at most another jack.
- 2♥ – I have a club stopper and 3 - 4 HCP ($G? = M^{W+}$).
- 2♠ – I have a club stopper and 5 - 6 HCP ($G? = M^L$).
- 2NT – I have a club stopper and 7 - 8 HCP ($G? = M^{L+}$).

These bids should provide doubler with all the information he needs to decide on his next bid. In the current context you might think that advancer should simply bid 3NT instead of 2NT if she has a club stopper and 7 - 8 HCP. The reason it is prudent to bid only 2NT is that doubler may have made the cuebid if he actually made the rifle double and is looking for more information from advancer regarding a possible slam contract. The 2NT bid gives doubler more options for his next bid. It is also observed that when advancer bids 2♥, virtually all of her HCP are in the club suit where she must hold the ace, king or queen and jack; although she could hold ♣J109x... plus another king or queen (and jack).

It should be noted here that these bids are not really “standard” in the bridge world, but have been presented simply as a possible option for dealing with this particular scenario.

1.d Advancer Bid 2m

This sequence has some similarities to advancer's 1♦ bid discussed above. Rarely will doubler be interested in a 5m contract, and then probably only if he has made a rifle double. When he has made a shotgun double he is much more likely to be looking for a 3NT contract but lacks a stopper in the doubled suit. Just as after the 1♦ bid by advancer, we can use a cuebid of the doubled suit by doubler

to suggest an interest in a 3NT contract, and a set of four step bids by advancer to describe her hand. The general structure is as follows:

- First step – I do not have a stopper in the doubled suit
- Second step – I have a stopper in the doubled suit and 3 - 4 HCP
- Third step – I have a stopper in the doubled suit and 5 - 6 HCP
- Fourth step – I have a stopper in the doubled suit and 7 - 8 HCP

Here are the specific steps for all of the possible sequences.

1♦ - X - Pass - 2♣
 Pass - 2♦ - Pass - 2♥/2♠/2N/3♣

1♥ - X - Pass - 2m
 Pass - 2♥ - Pass - 2♠/2N/3♣/3♦

1♠ - X - Pass - 2m
 Pass - 2♠ - Pass - 2N/3♣/3♦/3♥

Whenever advancer has shown a stopper in the doubled suit it will usually be advantageous for her to be declarer in a 3NT contract to protect her possible holding of Kx... in the doubled suit. If doubler decides he wants to play in 3NT and advancer did not make a 2NT step response, let me suggest that doubler can make a further cuebid of the doubled suit at the 3 level to request advancer to bid 3NT. Note from the above sequences that this will always be available at the 3 level.

Here is a sample deal and bidding sequence illustrating these ideas.

<p>♠ AK 8 7 ♥ K Q 7 4 ♦ 2 ♣ A Q 10 3</p>	<p>West North East South</p> <p>1♦ X Pass 2♣</p> <p>Pass 2♦ Pass 3♣</p> <p>Pass 3♦ Pass 3NT</p> <p>Pass Pass Pass</p>
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♠ Q J 4 2 ♠ 10 6 5

♥ 9 3 ♥ 10 9 7

♦ A Q J 8 5 ♣ 8 6 2

♣ K 4

N

W E

S

♠ 9 3

♥ A 8 6

♦ K 6 4 3

♣ J 9 7 5

West has a comfortable 1♦ opening bid. North is hoping South has a 4-card Major and has some prospects of a game contract in one of those suits. East has nothing to say and passes. South has almost enough strength for a jump response but that action is marginal at best and her ♦K appears to be poorly placed so she settles for a 2♣ bid. West has nothing more to say and

passes. North’s hopes for a Major suit game have been dashed, but he is somewhat encouraged by the passes of both opponents and now considers the possibility of a notrump contract if partner has a diamond stopper and decent hand in the

context of her simple bid. So he makes a cuebid, after which South perks up and shows her maximum hand with a diamond stopper. Now North feels good about a notrump contract provided that South becomes declarer. So he makes a further cuebid and South cooperates with her 3NT bid.

If West leads a diamond, South will make an overtrick with her $\spadesuit K$ providing the extra trick. With any other lead South will likely have to settle for 9 tricks – 2 spades, 3 hearts and 4 clubs (taking the successful club finesse).

Note that if North had bid 3NT the contract would have been set after an opening lead of the $\spadesuit 10$ by East, with the defenders taking 5 diamond tricks off the top.

2. Advancer Made a Simple Jump Bid in a Suit

Now the doubler knows advancer's game interest is M^S so she has 9 - 11 points. Analogous to the previous case, doubler has a little more flexibility if advancer's bid is at the 2 level than if she were forced to the 3 level to make the jump, and doubler's further action will depend on whether advancer bid a Major Suit or a minor suit. So we again consider four distinct general scenarios (advancer bid 2M, 3♥, 2♦ and 3m) and look for a 3NT contract when advancer bids a minor suit.

2.a Advancer Bid 2M

Since advancer has shown 9 - 11 points doubler should not have a problem making a G? decision and selecting an appropriate action: pass if G? = N, bid 3M if G? = M or bid 4M if G? = Y. After doubler's 3M bid advancer should pass with 9 points, bid 4M with 11 points and use her judgment with 10 points – leaning toward a bid of 4M.

2.b Advancer Bid 3♥

Clearly doubler has only two options here: pass or bid 4♥. In most cases, if his G? decision happens to be M he should bid 4♥ but sometimes he might look at the quality of his points and decide to pass instead.

2.c Advancer Bid 2♦

This jump bid by advancer will occur only after partner has doubled an opening bid of 1♣. Adopting the ideas presented earlier in this chapter for continuations after a simple bid by advancer, doubler can make a cuebid of 3♣ to suggest an interest in a 3NT contract. Advancer then bids 3NT if she has a club stopper and 3♦ without a club stopper. After the 3♦ bid, doubler will usually pass but might bid 4♦ or 5♦. The 4♦ bid is obviously an invitation to 5♦.

2.d Advancer Bid 3m

Advancer's jump to 3m will always be in a suit that is lower ranking than the doubled suit. So doubler can make a cuebid in the doubled suit to ask advancer to bid 3NT with a stopper in the doubled suit. Without such stopper, advancer

will have to settle for 4m which doubler will usually pass, but he might bid 5m with a really good hand.

3. Advancer Jumped to Game

This bid will almost always be in a Major Suit. Doubler rarely has any further action to take. While slam is actually a possibility, it is extremely unusual and beyond the scope of this book.

4. Advancer Made a Cuebid

Advancer's cuebid is always at the 2 level and asks opener to choose between one of two suits – the Majors if the cuebid is in a minor and the minors if the cuebid is in a Major. It also shows a hand for which $G? = M^S$ or Y. Doubler now has several options depending on his current decision regarding $G?$ and whether his choice is between the Majors or the minors. Doubler makes his current $G?$ decision **assuming** advancer's $G?$ decision was M^S .

4a. Advancer's Cuebid was in a Minor

If $G? = N$, doubler will simply bid 2 of his longest Major or strongest if equal length. With no clear preference he may choose either one. Depending on her strength advancer should then pass, raise to 3 of partner's Major or raise to 4 of his Major.

If $G? = M$, doubler may

- Jump to 3 of his preferred major
Advancer then passes if her decision regarding $G?$ was M^S or raises to 4M if it was Y.
- With no preference he can make a further cuebid
Advancer then bids her preferred Major, jumping to game if she had decided $G? = Y$, otherwise bidding 3M. Doubler will pass at his next turn regardless of advancer's choice.

If $G? = Y$, doubler may

- Jump to 4 of his preferred Major
- With no preference he can make a further cuebid
Advancer continues as above when $G?$ was M^S since she cannot distinguish between the two uses of the cuebid by doubler. If she bids below the game level doubler will carry on to a game contract.

4b. Advancer's Cuebid was in a Major

Bidding continuations in this scenario are somewhat different from those when advancer's cuebid is in a minor. In that case there are no questions other than which Major is going to be trump and whether the contract is going to be in a partscore or game. In the current scenario the option of a notrump contract must

also be considered. While doubler is typically short in the doubled suit, he does not necessarily lack a stopper there.

If $G? = N$, doubler will simply bid 3 of his longest minor or strongest if equal length. With no clear preference he may choose either one. Advancer should then pass if her $G?$ decision is M^S , otherwise make a move toward a 3NT contract.

If $G? = M$ he may

- Bid 2NT to show a stopper in the doubled suit
Advancer may then pass, raise to 3NT or bid $3\clubsuit$ to insist on a minor suit contract. Doubler may then pass or correct to $3\diamondsuit$ as he wishes. In rare instances advancer may even jump to $5\clubsuit$ to insist on a minor suit game. Doubler may then pass or correct to $5\diamondsuit$.
- Make his own cuebid
This cuebid asks advancer if she has a stopper in the cuebid suit. If she does, she bids 3NT. Without a stopper she makes the same bid as if doubler had bid 2NT only at the 4 level or higher.

If $G? = Y$ he may

- Bid 3NT to show a stopper in the doubled suit and a desire to play in that contract. Advancer should accept that decision unless she has slam interest, but her continuation in that case is beyond the scope of this book.
- Make his own cuebid
Advancer continues as above when $G?$ was M since she cannot distinguish between the two uses of the cuebid by doubler. If there is no stopper in the doubled suit, doubler may change his $G?$ decision to N and stop at a contract of 4m by passing advancer's bid.

5. Advancer Bid Notrump

When advancer bid notrump it is very important that doubler revalue his hand, counting only HCP and long suit points. He then really has only two options in the current context of his takeout double – pass or raise the notrump bid. When he makes his $G?$ decision he must remember that advancer is counting on him to have a minimum of 10 HCP, not 13. If his decision is Y , he will raise to 3NT and if N , he will pass.

If advancer bid 2NT, doubler has no flexibility for a M decision but has to settle for Y or N . However if advancer bid only 1NT doubler has the option of bidding 2NT to show a $G? = M$ hand and leave the final decision up to advancer.

Examples of Rebids after a Shotgun Double

Suppose the auction starts:

OPENER	YOU	RESPONDER	ADVANCER
1♦	X	Pass	1♥
Pass	?		

♠ K Q 7 6 You have 13 points including 1 for your doubleton diamond. Partner
♥ Q J 5 2 has shown a hand for which $G? = M^w$ or M^l , so she has at most 8
♦ 8 3 points. Your decisions are GFMS? = Y in hearts, $G? = N$. You are
♣ A 6 3 in a great contract. Don't mess it up by bidding any more. Just pass.
Note that you would pass even if partner had jumped to 2♥. She
would have been showing a maximum of 11 points and you would
come to the same decisions.

♠ K Q 7 6 This is the same hand as the previous one except for the ♣K, which
♥ Q J 5 2 increases your strength to 16 points. You still are not strong enough
♦ 8 3 to be interested in game, so you would pass. But, if advancer had
♣ A K 3 jumped to 2♥ you would know she had at least 9 points and should
raise to 4♥.

♠ K Q 7 6 Changes in the heart suit of the previous hand has brought the value
♥ K Q 8 2 of your hand up to 18 points. Now you are interested in game but
♦ 8 3 remember that partner may not have any points. The opponents
♣ A K 3 could be as strong as you, perhaps even stronger! Take it easy and
raise to just 2♥. This may not sound like a big bid, but it is. Partner
will know that her initial decision had to be $G? = M^l$ for there to be a chance for
game. So if her hand is weaker (fewer than 5 points) she will pass and you will
be in a reasonable, but not necessarily safe, contract. If she is on the low end of
 M^l (5 or 6 points) she will raise to 3♥. With more (7 or 8 points) she will jump
to 4♥.

♠ K Q 7 6 Having changed the ♣3 to the ♣Q from the previous hand, the value
♥ K Q 8 2 of your hand has increased to 20 points. This is a monster but still
♦ 8 3 worth only a raise to 2♥. You know partner will pass only if she has
♣ A K Q fewer than 5 points. And if she does, you will be in a good contract.
If she bids 3♥ (showing 5 or 6 points) you will raise to 4♥. Of
course she may have 7 or 8 points and bid 4♥ herself. If she does,
you will pass.

♠ A Q 7 6 Changing the Major Suit kings to aces in the previous hand increased
♥ A Q 8 2 your value to 22 points. Now all you need are 3 or 4 points from
♦ 8 3 partner to have a decent play for game. Show this hand that is al-
♣ A K Q most worth a game by itself with a jump to 3♥. Note that even this
may be optimistic. If all partner has is one of your Major Suit kings,
you could easily lose 2 diamond tricks and 2 tricks in the Majors for
down one. A little pessimistic perhaps, but still possible.

Note that you had a lot of flexibility to explore for a game contract in the above auction.

Let's make what may seem to be just a little modification to the above scenario by changing the opening bid to 1♠ and swapping the diamond and spade suits in a couple of your hands.

OPENER	YOU	RESPONDER	ADVANCER
1♠	X	Pass	2♥
Pass	?		

The first thing you should observe in this auction is that advancer had to bid at the 2 level instead of the 1 level. You no longer have three raises available without going past game. You have only two, so your direct invitational raise options are reduced. In this sequence the simple raise to 3♥ and the jump to 4♥ carry the same meanings, respectively, as the jumps to 3♥ and 4♥ in the previous auction. The simple raise to 2♥ in the previous auction is replaced with the cuebid of 2♠ in this auction. **This cuebid is a little more risky because partner is not allowed to pass, so your bid is forcing to the 3 level.** Therefore, while not ideal, the cuebid is a useful tool and better than nothing. Let's look at those hands (modified) from the previous auction where you would have made the simple raise.

♠ 8 3
♥ K Q 8 2
♦ K Q 7 6
♣ A K 3

With 18 points you have some interest in game. You are not strong enough to bid 3♥ which would ask partner to bid game with only 3 or 4 points. So you bid 2♠ and partner will continue as outlined in topic 1.b earlier in this chapter.

For the above hand you will pass her 3♥ or 4♥ bid. If she bids 2NT, 3♣ or 3♦, you will sign off at 3♥. But let's look at the next hand.

♠ K 3
♥ K Q 8 2
♦ K Q 7 6
♣ A Q 8

This 20-point hand is not quite worth a raise to 3♥ so again you start with 2♠. Now if partner bids 3♥ or 4♥ you will pass. But, if she bids 2NT or 3m you will bid 4♥.

Now let's consider a couple of examples when advancer bids notrump. We'll use the following auction:

OPENER	YOU	RESPONDER	ADVANCER
1♦	X	Pass	1NT
Pass	?		

♠ K Q 7 6 No reason to introduce either of your Major Suits. If partner had a 4-
 ♥ J 7 5 2 card Major she would have bid it. She probably does not have 4
 ♦ 8 clubs either. You have only 10 HCP – just what she expected. She
 ♣ A 8 6 3 has only 9 - 12 HCP. 1NT looks like your best spot. Pass. You
 would pass even if she had bid 2NT.

♠ K Q 7 6 Now you are up to 12 HCP. Still not enough for game so you would
 ♥ Q J 5 2 pass. But if her bid was 2NT you should raise to 3NT. Change the
 ♦ 8 3 ♣ 6 to the ♣ Q and your hand increases to 14 HCP making it worth a
 ♣ A 6 3 raise to 2NT over her 1NT advance or 3NT over her 2NT advance.

SUMMARY

Rebids by the Takeout Doubler and Advancer

Guidelines for the doubler:

- Revalue your hand in terms of G?
- Pass if $G? = N$
- The higher you bid, the less you need from advancer
Avoid a bid of 3M unless all you need from partner is 3 or 4 points to be in a game contract.
- A bid in notrump (not a raise) or a new suit shows a hand too strong to have overcalled
- A cuebid is available if you are squeezed for bidding space

Guidelines for the advancer:

- Revalue your hand in terms of G?
- Pass if $G? = N$
- Otherwise bid something that makes sense (always a good idea!)



CHAPTER 13

- Rebids after a Takeout Double - Part 2

Rebids by the Takeout Doubler and
Advancer (Concluded)

Responder's Bids after a Takeout Double

Summary



REBIDS BY THE TAKEOUT DOUBLER AND ADVANCER (CONCLUDED)

Rebids after a Rifle Double

When you have a hand that is too strong for an overcall you start with a takeout double. Regardless of advancer's bid you will always bid again if her advance was below game. Even if advancer shows a hand for which $G? = M^W$ or M^I , there is a chance for game if she is on the high end of M^I when you have at least the 18 points required for the rifle double.

It will be very rare that advancer will do anything other than show such a hand by bidding a new suit at the cheapest level. If opener has 13 points and doubler 18, that accounts for 31 points. So advancer can have a maximum of only 9 points plus adjustments for opener's long suit(s) and doubler's short suit, if he has one (remember that he could be balanced with more than 18 HCP). So it could happen but it is unlikely. If advancer does show a hand for which $G? = M^S$ by making a jump bid or a cuebid you should definitely be thinking $G? = Y$ but may not know the strain. Under these circumstances any rebid of a new suit or notrump by you below game should be taken as forcing to game – with slam a distinct possibility.

Let's look at the more common case where advancer shows a hand for which $G? = M^W$ or M^I . Again, you must realize that advancer may not have any points and proceed cautiously. If by some chance advancer happened to bid your suit, a simple raise will get across the point that you have a very strong hand. If she bid some other suit, a bid of your suit at the cheapest level accomplishes the same purpose. A jump bid in either case would show significantly extra values. The bottom line is that you revalue your hand in terms of advancer's bid, make a decision regarding $G?$ and bid accordingly.

As with the scenario when you had a normal takeout double, you have more flexibility when advancer's bid is at the 1 level than when it is at the 2 level. Your action will also depend on the following factors:

- Do you have support for advancer's suit?
- Your rifle double was based on
 - A long Major Suit
 - A long minor suit
 - A balanced hand

Advancer Bid at the 1 Level

After advancer's bid at the 1 level you can:

- Raise advancer to game
- Raise advancer to the 3 level
- Raise advancer to the 2 level

- Bid 3NT, 2NT or 1NT
- Bid a new suit cheaply
- Make a jump bid in a new suit
- Jump to game in a new suit
- Cuebid

The first three options are exactly the same as when you have the shotgun double. These bids would be made when advancer just happened to bid your long suit or a suit in which you had 4-card support with a balanced hand that was too strong to overcall 1NT. It is also possible that your shape was something like 64xx and advancer bid your 4-card suit. These actions would normally be made only if advancer bid a Major Suit.

The three notrump bids, respectively, are comparable to the first three options, only show a balanced hand too strong for an immediate 1NT overcall. If advancer bid a Major Suit, these bids also deny 4-card support for her suit. After the 1NT and 2NT bids advancer may pass, raise the notrump bid, bid a new suit, or rebid her first suit.

Bids in a new suit are not forcing but do show hands that are too strong for an immediate overcall. The more you bid, the stronger your hand.

Generally speaking, when advancer bids 1M, the cuebid can be used for a variety of strong hands where doubler is looking for more information from advancer. Experts have differing agreements on the meaning of the cuebid and continuations thereafter. A full discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this book.

However, in the current context, let me suggest this as an option when doubler has a long diamond suit and advancer has bid 1♦ after his double of an opening 1♣ bid. This sequence was discussed earlier in the context of a shotgun double. In the case of a rifle double the doubler has a choice of raising advancer to 2♦ (or higher) or bidding 2♣. The cuebid can be made when doubler either has interest in a 3NT contract (with or without a club stopper) or wants to know more about advancer's general strength.

After the cuebid advancer will make one of the four step bids listed on p. 232. If advancer bid 2M or 2NT doubler should have enough information to place the final contract. If instead advancer bid 2♦ doubler will not know advancer's strength. The following agreement can be used to resolve this issue. A bid of 2♥ by doubler requests advancer to show her strength with these bids:

- 2♠ – 0 - 2 HCP
- 2NT – 3 - 4 HCP
- 3♣ – 5 - 6 HCP
- 3♦ – 7 - 8 HCP

Doubler should now be in a position to set the contract, perhaps by bidding 3NT if he has a club stopper, or else by bidding 3♦ or 5♦. Note that there is no need for a 4♦ bid by doubler.

There does not seem to be a reason for doubler to make a jump raise in diamonds in this sequence since a raise to 2♦ is enough to suggest a game interest, and we may as well keep the bidding low if game is out of reach. Furthermore, it may be more important to know where advancer has strength rather than how much strength she has. With this in mind, advancer would show suits up-the-line (including diamonds) in which she had strength, such as an ace or king. Lacking such values she should pass the 2♦ bid. If doubler subsequently bids a new suit, he is showing strength there and asking advancer if she has anything else to show. In this case advancer may have to make a jump bid to show something in diamonds since a simple bid in diamonds would deny any additional strength.

Here is a sample deal and bidding sequence illustrating these ideas.

<p>♠K9</p> <p>♥AKQ</p> <p>♦AKJ974</p> <p>♣83</p>		<p>♠QJ42</p> <p>♥943</p> <p>♦2</p> <p>♣AKQ106</p>	<p>♠10865</p> <p>♥J1052</p> <p>♦Q5</p> <p>♣742</p>		<p>♠A73</p> <p>♥876</p> <p>♦10863</p> <p>♣J95</p>
<div> <div> <div>N</div> <div>W</div> <div>E</div> <div>S</div> </div> </div>					

West	North	East	South
1♣	X	Pass	1♦
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	5♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West has a comfortable 1♣ opening bid. North doubles expecting South to bid 1M after which he intends to bid 2♦. But South surprises North by bidding 2♦. Now North can see the possibility of a 3NT contract (expecting to take 9 tricks in the red suits) if South has a club stopper, otherwise perhaps a 5♦ contract if South has the ♠A. So North

continues with a 2♣ cuebid, probing for a club stopper from South. When South denies a club stopper with her 2♦ bid North gives up on the 3NT contract but pursues the 5♦ contract by bidding 2♥ asking South to show her strength. When South shows 5 - 6 HCP North carries on to the minor suit game contract.

Advancer Bid at the 2 Level

If advancer's bid was at the 2 level, doubler has the following options:

- Raise advancer to game.
- Raise advancer to the 3 level.
- Cuebid.
- Bid 3NT or 2NT.
- Bid a new suit cheaply.
- Make a jump bid in a new suit.
- Jump to game in a new suit.

These bids carry essentially the same meaning as when advancer had bid at the 1 level, with the exception of the cuebid. In the sequence that starts 1♠ – X – Pass – 2♥; Pass – 2♠, the 2♠ cuebid plays the same role as it does after a shotgun double. Similarly, when advancer bids 2m and doubler’s rifle double was based on length in that minor the cuebid can be used to probe for a stopper in the doubled suit just as after the shotgun double – after all, advancer will not know whether you made a shotgun double or a rifle double. If advancer denies a stopper, the bid of the next step by doubler asks advancer to clarify her HCP values with her next bid using four steps as discussed in the previous subtopic. Furthermore, the raise of advancer’s bid of 2m to 3m should request her to show aces or kings up-the-line.

Examples of Rebids after a Rifle Double

We begin by looking at a few hands after the auction starts:

OPENER	YOU	RESPONDER	ADVANCER
1♦ Pass	X ?	Pass	1♠
♠AKQ96 ♥A52 ♦8 ♣A643	You initially valued your hand as 18 points, 17 HCP plus 1 for the 5th spade (thinking partner would bid something other than spades, so you would end up as declarer after bidding spades yourself). Now that you will be dummy you revalue your hand as 20 points, dropping 1 for the 5th spade but adding 3 for the singleton diamond. Since partner made only a moderate raise, her hand is in the $G^? = M^W$ (0 - 4) or M^1 (5 - 8) point range. Despite your very strong hand a simple raise to 2♠ is sufficient to express your game interest. After your raise partner will revalue $G^?$ as Y (7 - 8), N (0 - 4) or M (5 - 6) and will bid 4♣, pass or bid 3♠, respectively. So if she passes or bids game you are in a good contract. If she bids 3♠ you will raise to 4♠, again getting to a good contract.		
♠AKJ96 ♥A52 ♦84 ♣AJ3	As with the previous hand you initially evaluate this hand as 18 points – 17 HCP plus 1 distribution point. Now when partner bids 1♠, you drop 1 for the 5th spade and add 1 back for the doubleton diamond giving no net change. You bid this hand the same way as the previous one, except that if partner raises to 3♠ you pass.		
♠AKJ96 ♥AK2 ♦84 ♣AQ3	This hand has the same shape as the previous one but has 4 more HCP to raise the total value to 22 points, both before and after partner’s raise. That makes it worth a jump to 3♠. Partner will pass with 0 - 2 points or bid 4♠ if she has 3+ points.		

Let’s keep the same auction but swap your Major Suits.

♠ A 5 To show that your hand was too strong for an overcall simply bid
 ♥ A K Q 9 6 3 2♥. The fact that you bid a new suit is all that is necessary to tell
 ♦ 8 partner you have at least a 5-card suit with more than 17 total
 ♣ A 6 4 3 points. What advancer does next depends on her strength and
 support for your hearts.

If advancer has at least 3 hearts she obviously has support for you. But even a high doubleton honor (Qx or better) or something like J10 would be sufficient in some cases. Then she can bid the same way as if she had bid 1♥ and you had raised to 2♥. This was discussed in the three previous examples.

Advancer's action if she does not have support depends on her distribution and strength. Her options include:

- Pass.
- Rebid her first suit.
- Bid notrump.
- Bid a new suit.
- Cuebid.

Your simple bid of a new suit showed a hand worth about 18 - 21 points. With more you would have jumped to 3♥ or even 4♥. So advancer can deduce the following G? table to guide her rebid.

POINTS	G?
7 - 8	Y
4 - 6	M
0 - 3	N

Note that advancer's hand is limited to 8 points because she didn't make a jump bid or cuebid at her first turn.

Advancer's pass would indicate G? = N and at least a tolerance for hearts, perhaps as little as a small doubleton or even a high singleton honor.

Any rebid of her spades would definitely deny heart support and show at least a 5-card suit. A simple rebid of 2♠ would suggest G? = N or perhaps a very weak M. You could raise with support and the upper range of your values. A jump to 3♠ would be invitational with G? = M. She would need a very good 5-card suit or a 6-card suit for this bid. Obviously a 4♠ bid would be made only if G? = Y and she had a solid 6-card suit or a longer suit of perhaps a little lower quality.

Notrump bids would also deny heart support and show a diamond stopper. 2NT would be invitational with G? = M. Obviously 3NT would be G? = Y.

A bid of a new suit would be similar to her rebid of her suit, denying heart support with G? = N or a weak M. You could raise with support and the upper

range of your values. A jump bid in a new suit would be game forcing, showing a second suit.

Her cuebid would be a strength-showing bid with no clear direction. G? would be a high M or Y.

Let's keep the same auction as at the beginning of this topic, but see what might transpire when you have a balanced hand that is too strong for a 1NT overcall.

♠K9
♥AKQ
♦AKJ974
♣83

This balanced hand with 19 HCP is a typical hand for your double. With 1 point less you would have made a 1NT overcall. Now you can bid 1NT to show your extra strength. Change the ♥5 to the ♥K and your hand is worth 22 HCP, enough for a jump to 2NT. Also change the ♣6 to the ♣Q and you can jump to 3NT with your 24 HCP.

When you rebid notrump, partner will know the strength of your hand:

- 1NT 19 - 21 points
- 2NT 22 - 23 points
- 3NT 24+ points

Note that the range for your 1NT rebid is a 3-point interval, the same as for your 1NT opening bid, just a higher level. So advancer can make a G? = Y/N/M decision and proceed along exactly the same lines as if you had opened 1NT.

Your 2NT bid is also the same interval as for your 2NT opening bid but with a higher range. Advancer can therefore proceed based on the same principles used after your 2NT opening bid.

♠KQ96
♥A52
♦AQ6
♣A63

What a difference the change of one card can make! The ♦9 from the previous hand has been moved to the ♠9 for this hand. Now a simple raise to 2♠ is your best bid. Advancer will expect you to have the shotgun double but it makes no difference that you have this hand. The bidding will continue just as if you had the classic takeout double.

Let's look at a couple of auctions where advancer had to bid at the 2 level.

OPENER	YOU	RESPONDER	ADVANCER
1♠	X	Pass	2♥
Pass	?		

This auction could easily lead to a poor result when you have a long minor suit because you will have to introduce it at the 3 level and advancer may not have any help. If you anticipated this problem you might have been better off to have just overcalled in your minor at the 2 level. After all, if you have only 18 - 20

points, advancer will need around 9 points for the minor suit game. And if she is that strong she will probably bid something if you overcall.

This auction might even be troublesome if you have a balanced hand with 19 - 20 HCP. For example:

♠ QJ6 While you do have 19 HCP you have only one spade stopper and no
♥ K5 real source of tricks. You also have only two invitational bids availa-
♦ A Q96 ble, 2NT and a 2♠ cuebid. You would also make the 2NT bid with a
♣ A K63 little stronger hand so advancer might have a difficult time making an
accurate G? decision. Finally, it is a little more difficult to establish
the meaning of and suggested subsequent actions for the 2♠ cuebid for this auc-
tion compared to those discussed earlier in this chapter when advancer bid 2m.
So it would probably be better if you simply overcalled 1NT instead of doubled
at your first opportunity. By the way, this example illustrates the significance of
the 1♠ opening bid from a preemptive perspective. It just makes life more diffi-
cult for the opponents. In general, the higher your opening bid, even at the 1 lev-
el, the more difficult it is for the opponents to compete.

OPENER	YOU	RESPONDER	ADVANCER
1♥	X	Pass	2♣
Pass	?		

♠ QJ96 This hand appears to be very similar to the previous hand, but when
♥ K5 combined with the different opening bid presents a significantly dif-
♦ A Q6 ferent scenario. In this case you have a 4-card spade suit and had
♣ A K63 some hope that advancer would bid 1♠ so you could then give her a
raise to 2♠. That did not happen but she did conveniently bid your
second suit so you might not be in too much trouble in a 3♣ contract. You can
start with a 2♥ cuebid, ostensibly looking for a heart stopper. Who knows? She
might have one, and if she does her bid will be such that you can either stop safe-
ly at 3♣ or bid a comfortable 3NT. If she denies a heart stopper with a 2♠ bid
you can make one more game try with a 2NT bid. That will definitely show a
heart stopper and at least 19 HCP, but you will be unable to more accurately de-
scribe your strength. Advancer will have to decide between passing, bidding 3♣
or bidding 3NT and you will accept her decision.

You would have been in a little more difficult position if advancer had bid
2♦ in this example. You would bid the same way, but not have felt so good if
she ended up in a 3♦ contract.

RESPONDER’S ACTION AFTER A TAKEOUT DOUBLE

There is considerable discussion in Chapter 9 – “Overcalls and Advances - Part 1” concerning the differences between competitive and noncompetitive auctions. In particular it was recommended that the meanings of responder’s bids after an

overall be changed somewhat to more effectively permit interference with the opponents' bidding, using the cuebid for strong hands. These same concepts apply after an opponent has made a takeout double. There are some rather sophisticated changes that are used by many experienced players but those are beyond the scope of this book. Instead, the rather simple adjustment discussed below is recommended for beginners.

While the cuebid is not available to responder after a takeout double, there is another call that can be used – redouble. It is recommended that responder redouble whenever she has **any** hand for which $G? = M^S$ or Y, regardless of her support for partner's suit. Opener can probably make his contract when the partnership has this much combined strength. The redouble is particularly effective if the opening bid was 1M because the redouble effectively puts the contract at the game level since the trick score is now 120 points per trick instead of 30. If the opponents do not bid and opener is left to play the redoubled contract you will receive the game bonus if he is able to make the contract, plus significant extra points for overtricks.

It will be extremely rare that the opponents will allow you to play the contract redoubled – one of them will likely bid something. **The redouble tells partner that the deal probably belongs to your side so you should try to either outbid them or double them for penalties later in the auction.**

Opener should definitely pass if his RHO passes after responder's redouble. If his RHO bids after responder's redouble, he has the following options:

- Double – this is a penalty double and should be made when he has at least three cards with a high honor (queen or better) or 4⁺ cards in the suit bid by his RHO and reasonable defensive values.
- Pass – this might be the most common option, leaving the decision to double or bid to responder.
- Rebid his own suit – this action should be taken only if he has a good 6⁺-card suit with poor defensive values.

Responder clarifies her offensive/defensive intentions with her subsequent call after her redouble. At this point she has various options depending on what has transpired in the auction after her redouble:

- Raise partner's first suit – either a simple raise (indicating a $G? = M^S$ hand) or a jump to game (obviously $G? = Y$).
- Double the opponents – this is a penalty double.
- Bid her own good suit or Notrump.
- Pass if she has no other desirable action.

Use of the redouble by responder for all hands when $G? = M^S$ or Y frees up all of her other bids for hands when $G? = M^{w,1}$ (< 10 points). In particular her single raise is simply constructive while jump raises are preemptive. Her bid of a new

suit definitely denies support for opener and shows a decent 5⁺-card suit or a very good 4-card suit. Be very careful bidding a suit in which your RHO has shown (or at least suggested) 4⁺ cards. A 1NT response shows a balanced hand without support for partner.

Here are some examples after your RHO doubled a 1♦ opening bid by your partner.

♠ 9 6 You suspect this deal belongs to the opponents. Make it hard for
♥ 5 4 them to find their best fit by jumping to 3♦. This is a weak bid, **not**
♦ Q J 7 6 2 **a limit raise**, after the intervening takeout double.
♣ 8 6 4 3

♠ 9 6 3 It is hard to tell whose deal this is. But you do have support for
♥ Q 4 partner with moderate values. Make your normal raise to 2♦.
♦ Q J 7 2
♣ A 6 4 3

♠ K 6 3 It really looks like this deal belongs to your side. Let partner know
♥ Q 4 that with a redouble. You should be thinking of a 3NT contract, but
♦ Q J 7 2 doubling the opponents for penalty or even playing in a 5♦ contract
♣ A 6 4 3 are other possibilities.

♠ Q J 9 6 You have a good hand but no support for partner. Nonetheless, he
♥ K 10 9 5 should be able to make a 1♦ contract. Start with a redouble. If it
♦ 6 gets passed out, partner should be in good shape. Most likely the
♣ A K 6 3 opponents will run to something, which you will double for penalties if partner doesn't beat you to that action. Get ready to collect a nice score by defending.

♠ Q J 9 You don't have quite enough strength to redouble and you don't
♥ K 10 5 2 have support for partner. But you do have a little something in all
♦ 10 8 of the unbid suits. You can show your moderate values and a balanced hand with a 1NT bid. Note that without the intervening double a 1NT response does not promise a balanced hand. However, when you make that bid freely after the takeout double you do show a balanced hand.
♣ K 10 3

♠ A J 10 9 5 Here you have a decent 5-card suit and it is even a Major. You also
♥ 10 5 2 have moderate values so can make a bid of 1♠. You do not promise a 5-card suit with this bid; a good 4-card suit would be adequate, especially if you had support for opener's suit. If you had a stronger hand, you would redouble first with the intent of bidding your suit at your next turn.
♦ K 8
♣ 9 5 3

SUMMARY

Rebids by the Takeout Doubler and Advancer

Guidelines for the doubler:

- Revalue your hand in terms of G?
- Pass if $G? = N$
- The higher you bid, the less you need from advancer
Avoid a jump to one level below game unless all you need from partner is 3 or 4 points to be in a game contract.
- A bid in notrump (not a raise) or a new suit shows a hand too strong to have overcalled
- A cuebid is available if you are squeezed for bidding space

Guidelines for the advancer:

- Revalue your hand in terms of G?
- Pass if $G? = N$
- Otherwise bid something that makes sense (always a good idea!)

Responder's Bids after a Takeout Double

After a takeout double by her RHO, responder redoubles whenever her G? decision is M^S or Y. All other bids by responder indicate her G? decision is $M^{W,I}$, although a preemptive raise might even be made when it is N.

After responder's redouble, opener should proceed cautiously from an offensive viewpoint, but he will be eager to employ a penalty double if his RHO bids a suit in which he holds reasonable length and strength.



APPENDIX

Bridge Essentials



BRIDGE ESSENTIALS

Bridge History

The history of bridge is part factual and part speculative. Europeans were playing triumph, a game similar to bridge, back in the 16th century. Whist evolved from triumph sometime during the next 100 years. By the end of the 17th century whist was common throughout England and played there for three centuries. In 1742 Edmond Hoyle published the internationally renowned, *A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist*. A later version of the book brought about the phrase “according to Hoyle” which is still heard today. This book became the second most widely circulated book in the 18th century, the Bible being first. Whist was so popular it eventually became the subject of hundreds of books. There was even a game called “Duplicate Whist” the forerunner of today’s duplicate bridge format.

But when, where and how did whist evolve into bridge? The Russians, Turks, British and French all lay claims to the beginning of bridge, and to this day no one knows for sure who is right. We do know that its documented arrival in England occurred in 1894 by Lord Brougham at the staid Portland Club, the traditional headquarters of whist. He had just returned from the South of France where he had been introduced to the game.

It was not long before bridge overcame whist in popularity at the Portland Club. Understand that this establishment was not just a neighborhood pub but a gathering place for the aristocrats of London society. As might be expected this new game was not accepted by many who considered whist to be “the game” to be played.

Bridge had been introduced in the United States a little earlier. In the fall of 1892 Henry Barbey brought the game to the New York Whist Club after having learned it in Paris.

This early game of bridge is now called “**bridge whist**” and was much simpler than the game we play today.

In the mid 1800’s the idea of “dummy” and “bidding with levels” arose in India when a foursome became a threesome because one player failed to arrive. This idea also spread quickly. Throughout the remainder of the first quarter of the 20th century, there were several other attempts to make changes to the game, but none of them came to fruition.

Then came 1925... the year of bridge as we know it today! Harold S. “Mike” Vanderbilt was on a long cruise from San Francisco to Havana on the liner *Finland*. Vanderbilt and his three companions, just enough for a game of **auction bridge** as it had become known, tired of the relatively simple game. Vanderbilt devised a new scoring system adding the idea that you had to bid to the game or slam level to receive the associated bonus and the concept of **vulnerability**. The contract concept was part of auction bridge and adapted from the French game of **plafond** which had been well established 10 years earlier. The term **vulnerable** was suggested by a young female observer as Vanderbilt was explaining his system of scoring.

Vanderbilt had no intention of revolutionizing the game of bridge as it was currently being played. He was simply looking for a change in the daily entertainment of his cruise partners. But, once they returned home and introduced the idea to their bridge-playing friends, the idea took off like wild fire, quickly spreading throughout the United States and overseas. There were several early changes to scoring associated with notrump contracts, but that soon settled down to the present system. Otherwise, except for two minor changes to the scoring system (adopted by the World Bridge Federation in 1987 for duplicate bridge and in 1993 for rubber bridge⁷), the contract bridge game we play today is essentially the same one Vanderbilt introduced.

In the early days of contract bridge many different bidding systems developed in the United States. Much of the impetus for this was the prospect of writing and selling books on your ‘system,’ thus gaining fame and fortune. This made it very difficult for a group of strangers to join in a game, none being familiar with the system played by the others. Communication was very difficult if not impossible, almost like everyone speaking a different language. The British, on the other hand, did not believe in trying to pass information to partner through an artificial bidding process.

Enter Ely Culbertson, a flamboyant personality, expert player and writer who had devised his own system. The year was 1930. Culbertson came across a challenge in a bridge book written by Lt. Col. Walter Buller, the bridge editor of the *London Daily Telegraph*. In essence, Buller stated that he believed any good British foursome could beat any American foursome ‘sky-high’ regardless of what fancy ‘system’ they used and would lay heavy money on the line. Of all the American bridge experts who must have been aware of this challenge, Culbertson was the only one to formally accept it through a column in his own magazine, *Bridge World*. Culbertson won the match and soon thereafter launched a new book espousing his ‘system’ which he naturally claimed was the reason his team won the match. Thus was born the Culbertson System which was used by many players for several years. By the way, Ely’s partner in marriage and bridge was Josephine, who many experts today believe was a better player than Ely.

A new era, a new expert player and writer, a new system. It is the 1940s and 1950s. Enter Charles Goren and the point-count system which was based on earlier ideas from Milton Work. In fact, the system is sometimes referred to as the Work point-count system. Charles Goren was “Mr. Bridge” during his prime, winning many major events and the undisputed leader in tournament competition, playing most often with his favorite partner Helen Sobel, although he remained a bachelor. Goren’s bidding system was easier to learn than Culbertson’s and had many advantages, so eventually it overtook the Culbertson system in popularity. Although several changes have been made over the years, Goren’s system is essentially the one that is the basis for bidding in this series.

⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridge_scoring#Recent_scoring_changes

Goren could not have had his success without an outstanding partner in her own right, and there is an interesting anecdote involving Ms. Sobel. She was once asked what it felt like playing with a great expert. Her reply: “Ask Charlie!”

While not as prolific as in the early days of contract bridge, other bidding systems do exist in today’s bridge world. Nonetheless, the one presented in this series is known by almost all players in the United States and many other countries. So, once you learn it, you should be able to join in a game almost anywhere you might be.

There are almost 40 million bridge players in North America playing home style rubber bridge or tournament style duplicate bridge, both forms of contract bridge. Most duplicate bridge is played under the auspices of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL – www.acbl.org). There are more than 3200 ACBL bridge clubs, and hundreds of tournaments are held each year across the United States, Canada and Mexico. The American Bridge Association (ABA – <http://ababridge.org/>) is another sponsor of duplicate bridge in North America.

The Four Stages of a Deal

A session of bridge consists of a series of deals each of which entails four stages:

- The *shuffle* and *deal*
- An *auction*
- The *play*
- The *scoring*

The Shuffle and Deal

It is recommended that the cards be shuffled in a fanning manner seven times to ensure a random deal. The only rule regarding dealing is that the cards be dealt to the four players one at a time. This is usually done by starting with the player to the dealer’s left and distributing the cards one at a time in a clockwise direction.

The Auction

After the cards have been dealt and the players have looked at their hands, the dealer starts the auction by making the first *call*. A call is one of the following:

- *Pass* – Indicates the player has nothing to say regarding the auction at this time but retains the right to say something later if any subsequent player makes any call other than pass
- A *bid* – A tentative contract for the partnership to take some number of tricks with the deal being played in a specified suit or notrump. A bid is of the form LS where L is the *level* of the contract (a number from 1 to 7) and S is the *strain* in which the deal is to be played (one of the four suits or notrump). For the purpose of bidding, the 4 suits have rank. From bottom up the order is clubs, diamonds, hearts and spades with notrump sitting on top of all the suits. So at any particular level there are five

available bids. The set of all possible bids in increasing sequence from 1♣ to 7NT is sometimes referred to as the **bidding ladder**. Every bid must be higher on the bidding ladder than the previous bid in the auction.

The first player to make a bid is called the **opening bidder** or the **opener**. Opener's partner is called the **responder**. If an opponent of the opening bidder enters the auction with a bid or a double, the first one to do so is called the **intervener** and his partner is called the **advancer**.

- **Double** – Generally a statement of intent of defeating the contract for the last bid that was made. If no subsequent bids are made the points scored for the deal are greater than if the double had not been made. If a subsequent bid is made by any player the double is no longer in effect. The double is often used for other purposes to pass certain information to your partner.
- **Redouble** – Generally a statement that you think your side can make a contract for which a double is in effect. This call can be made only if an opponent doubled a bid made by you or your partner and that double is still in effect. The redouble further increases the points scored for the deal if no subsequent bids are made. If another player makes a bid after a redouble, the redouble is no longer in effect. The redouble is sometimes used for other purposes.

Calls are usually spoken in a rubber bridge game. The modern method of communicating calls in a duplicate bridge game is through the use of bidding boxes. Bidding boxes are special small boxes that sit on the table by each player. Each box has two partitions – each containing special cards for a subset of the calls that can be made. One partition contains one card for each bid that can be made from 1♣ up to 7N. The cards are notched, of different lengths, and labeled so that each of the 35 different bids is clearly visible. The other partition contains several cards labeled Pass, a few labeled Double and a couple labeled Redouble for the other calls that can be made during the auction. These cards are placed in front of you on the table to display your call at your turn and remain there until the auction is complete, then returned to the boxes. There is no requirement that special bidding cards be used in a duplicate game but most duplicate players prefer them. These boxes may be used in a social game.

Duplicate Bridge and Rubber Bridge

Duplicate bridge and **rubber bridge** are both forms of **contract bridge**. There are many similarities between the two games but there are also differences. Duplicate bridge is always a game where there are at least two tables of four players involved while rubber bridge is often played by only four players at a single table.

In a duplicate bridge game, after a deal has been bid, played and scored, the cards are returned to a tray with 4 slots, one for each compass direction. Each player must retain his cards during the play so that he can return them to the

proper slot in the tray at the end of the deal. To accommodate this requirement, cards played to each trick are laid on the table in front of each player. After everyone has played to the trick the cards are turned over and stacked overlapping along the edge of the table pointed in the direction of the side that won the trick. The cards for each deal are shuffled and dealt only once at the beginning of the session. The trays are numbered consecutively from 1 to 36, the maximum number that would ever be in play in a given session. Each tray/deal is referred to as a **board**. At the beginning of a session the boards are distributed to the tables (numbered consecutively starting at 1) in groups of 2 to usually no more than 5 – the same number of boards being given to each table. Generally speaking, the fewer tables in play the more boards given to each table. All players are given an allotted amount of time to bid, play, and score those boards (about 7 minutes per board on average). More time is allotted for games restricted to less experienced players. These deals constitute a **round**. At the end of a round the cards and at least some players move to another table, keeping the same partner throughout the session. By the end of the session everyone has played most, if not all, of the boards and against about half of the other partnerships.

The format of rubber bridge is usually much simpler. The cards are simply reshuffled after each deal and reused for a subsequent deal. The cards played to each trick are often placed in the middle of the table and collected by one of the partners of the side that won the trick. But there are forms of rubber bridge often referred to as **party bridge** where several tables may be in play with players moving from one table to another and perhaps even changing partners after some set number of deals.

Perhaps the greatest difference between duplicate bridge and party bridge is in the scoring methodology. In duplicate bridge the score received for a deal is independent of the scores received for any previous or subsequent deals. In rubber bridge scoring there is a cumulative effect.

Recording the Result of a Deal

The result of a deal is written in the form LSDR where

- L is the level of the contract (a numeral from 1 through 7),
- S is the strain (C, D, H, S or N or the symbol equivalents for the suits),
- D is the declarer compass point (N, E, S or W) and
- R is the result (either a plus sign followed by the number of **tricks made** – the number of tricks taken over book or a minus sign followed by the number of **undertricks** – the number of tricks short of the contract).

Here are a couple of examples:

- 2DS+2: South was declarer in a contract of 2 diamonds and took 8 tricks exactly making his contract. In this example we would say that declarer made 2 diamonds.

- 6NE-1: East was declarer in a contract of 6 notrump and took only 11 tricks thereby defeated (set) by 1 trick.

Trick Points

Whenever declarer makes his contract, his partnership is awarded points based on the strain of the contract and the number of tricks made. If the strain is a minor suit (clubs or diamonds) each trick made is worth 20 points. Each trick made is worth 30 points for a Major Suit (hearts or spades) contract. Technically if the strain is notrump the first trick is worth 40 points and subsequent tricks are each worth 30 points. An alternate way of thinking of the trick points for a notrump contract is that you receive 30 points per trick (the same as for a Major Suit contract) plus a supplement of 10 points. This makes it easy to calculate the trick points for contracts that are made by simply multiplying the number of tricks made by the points per trick for the strain of the contract, and then adding 10 if the strain is notrump.

Vulnerability

At the beginning of each deal, each side is either vulnerable or nonvulnerable. Vulnerability affects the scoring. The term arises because when you are vulnerable your opponents will score more points if you fail to make your contract than when you are nonvulnerable.

Vulnerability for duplicate bridge is independent of any previous deals. For each deal there is a board which contains each of the 4 hands. Reflected on the top of each board is the board number, identity of the dealer and vulnerability of the players. This information is also shown on the standard score sheets used for duplicate games.

Vulnerability for rubber bridge is more complicated because it depends on the results of previous deals. To understand this we need to consider a rubber bridge score sheet.

BLANK RUBBER BRIDGE SCORE SHEET

WE	THEY

← The Line

The score sheet is divided into two columns headed WE (left) and THEY (right). One player is designated the scorekeeper and enters the scores for his partnership on the WE side and the scores for the opponents on the THEY side. Underneath the column headers the scoring area is divided into upper and lower regions by a horizontal line commonly referred to simply as *The Line*. Trick points up to the level of the contract for contracts that are made are entered below The Line. This

includes the supplemental 10 points for a notrump contract. Trick points for overtricks, bonuses and defensive points are entered above The Line. Points entered below The Line accumulate for both sides until one side has reached 100 points or more. Then another horizontal line is drawn below those scores. As an example, consider the following three results where North is keeping score: (1) 2HN+4, (2) 2CE+3, (3) 2NS+3. The resulting score sheet with annotations for these three results are shown below.

RUBBER BRIDGE SCORE SHEET AFTER ONE SIDE
REACHES A GAME BELOW THE LINE

WE	THEY	
(3) 30		
(1) 60	(2) 20	← The Line
(1) 60	(2) 40	
(3) 70		

Note that points above The Line are entered “from bottom up” in the upper area while points below The Line are entered “from top down” in the lower region.

Once one side reaches a game total below The Line they become vulnerable. Play then continues as each side again strives to accumulate 100 points below The Line. The last horizontal line that was drawn wipes the slate clean for both sides with regard to this quest. There is no carry-over of points in excess of 100 for the side that reached the game level or partial game points for their opponents. This procedure continues until one side accumulates two separate game totals. That ends the current rubber (except for some scoring bonuses discussed in the next topic) and another rubber is started on a new blank score sheet, or if space is available, the same score sheet can be used. In the latter case a second horizontal line is drawn to indicate the end of the current rubber.

Bonus Points and Defensive Points

Bonus points, if any, are awarded only to the side that makes a contract. Defensive points apply only when a contract is defeated and are given to the side that set the contract.

Whenever you make your contract in duplicate bridge you immediately receive some bonus points in addition to your trick points:

- Any partscore contract50 points
- A nonvulnerable game contract300 points
- A vulnerable game contract500 points

- A nonvulnerable small slam contract.....500 points
- A vulnerable small slam contract.....750 points
- A nonvulnerable grand slam contract1000 points
- A vulnerable grand slam contract1500 points

You receive either the partscore or the game bonus, but not both. To receive the game bonus you must bid to the game level. So, for example, if you bid 2 notrump and make 3 you will receive only the partscore bonus. But if you bid 3 notrump and make at least 3 you will receive the appropriate game bonus. **Slam bonuses are in addition to the game bonuses.** Just as for the game bonuses, you must bid to the slam level and make your contract to receive the bonus.

There are no immediate partscore or game bonuses in rubber bridge. Instead there is a bonus for “winning the rubber.” You win the rubber if your side accumulates two game scores below The Line. If your opponents have not yet accumulated a game score below The Line, you are awarded a bonus of 700 points. If the opponents have accumulated a game score below The Line, your bonus is only 500 points. These bonus points are entered above The Line. Rubber bridge players receive the same slam bonuses as in duplicate bridge.

Rubber bridge players are eligible for a special bonus not available to duplicate players. These ***honor points*** are awarded strictly on the “luck of the draw.”

- 100 points if you hold 4 of the 5 honor cards in the trump suit
- 150 points if you hold all 5 honor cards in the trump suit
- 150 points if you hold all 4 aces in a notrump contract

These honor bonuses can be claimed (declared) before the start of the next deal by any of the 4 players who was dealt all of the required cards in his hand.

You are awarded defensive points whenever your side defeats your opponents’ contract. You receive 50 points per undertrick if they are nonvulnerable and 100 points per undertrick if they are vulnerable. In rubber bridge these points are entered above The Line.

Doubled or Redoubled Contracts

The score received for a doubled or redoubled contract is not simply 2 or 4 times the score received for a standard contract.

For a doubled or redoubled contract the trick points must be divided into those received for tricks up to the contract level and overtricks. The score for the former is simply 2 (doubled) or 4 (redoubled) times the standard value. Overtricks for a doubled contract are each worth 100 points if nonvulnerable and 200 points if vulnerable. Redoubled overtricks are worth twice as much as doubled overtricks.

You receive an extra 50 bonus points for making a doubled contract or 100 points for a redoubled contract. These extra bonus points are often called ***insult***

points. The partscore, game and slam bonuses are unaffected by a double or redouble.

Failure to make your contract when doubled or redoubled can be quite expensive because of the nonlinear scale used for defensive points.

If you are doubled and not vulnerable the opponents are awarded 100 points for the first undertrick, 200 points for each of the next two undertricks and 300 points for each subsequent undertrick. Counting by 100 this translates to 1, 3, 5, 8, 11, ... as the score received for the number of tricks set. If you are doubled and vulnerable they receive 200 points for the first undertrick and 300 points for each subsequent undertrick, or analogous to a nonvulnerable contract: 2, 5, 8, 11, If you have redoubled the contract and are set, the opponents get twice as many points as if you had not redoubled.

End-of-Rubber Scoring

In rubber bridge a rubber usually ends when one side scores two games, but sometimes because of time limits or mutual agreement of the players the rubber may be terminated prematurely. This is referred to as an unfinished rubber. In such cases if only one side has a partscore below The Line, they are given a bonus of 100 points. Similarly, if only one side is vulnerable, they receive a 300 point bonus.

When the rubber has ended the scores are totaled for both sides. Whichever side has the higher total is declared the winner of the match. If additional rubbers are to be played the difference in scores is rounded to the nearest 100 and carried forward to the next rubber. The example started earlier is continued below.

COMPLETED RUBBER SCORE SHEET

WE	THEY
(6) 500	
(5) 750	
(3) 30	(4) 100
(1) 60	(2) 20
(1) 60	(2) 40
(3) 70	
	(4) 120
(5) 120	
(7) 1590	(7) 280
(8) -280	
(9) 1310	

WE = North - South, THEY = East - West

(1) 2HN+4

(2) 2CE+3

(3) 2NS+3

← The Line

(4) 2H^xW+3

(5) 6DN+6

(6) Rubber bonus

(7) Totals

(8) Transfer from "THEY" side

(9) Net match win for WE. Would carry over 1300 to next match.

Matchpoint Scoring

A common form of duplicate play is called *matchpoints*. This is the type of game played most often at clubs and is almost always an option at tournaments. In matchpoint play your raw score on each deal is rather insignificant. What is important is your score compared to the other pairs that held the same cards as you and your partner. You receive one matchpoint for every other pair that received a lower score than yours and half a matchpoint for every other pair that received the same score you did.

These matchpoints are used to determine the winner of the event as well as those who “place” in the event. In an ACBL sanctioned duplicate game, *masterpoints* are awarded to the top 40% of the pairs. So if there were 10 pairs participating in the event, the top 4 matchpoint pairs would place and receive masterpoints. The number of masterpoints awarded to each pair depends on the ranking of the event, the number of tables in play and their place in the matchpoint totals.

IMP and Victory Point Scoring for Team Games

This topic is included primarily for informational purposes. However, the inferences as they affect bidding decisions will be referred to occasionally.

Another form of duplicate play is a team game. In a team game, players get together to form teams of 4 players each. Two teams are pitted against each other at two tables. The North - South players from one team sit at one table playing against the East - West players from the opposing team, and similarly at the other table. Each table is given some number of boards to play. When both tables have finished those boards, the players remain stationary and the boards are interchanged. Each board is scored just as in a duplicate game. This competition between the two teams is called a *match* or a *round*. After all boards have been played at both tables the East - West pairs return to their “home” tables where their partners are seated.

During the scoring of each board the results of a deal were recorded as positive if their partnership scored points and negative if their opponents scored points. After the East - West pairs return to their home tables they compare scores with their partners. The results for each board are added together and the net result is converted to *International Matchpoints (IMPs)* using the following table:

INTERNATIONAL MATCHPOINT SCALE

Diff. in Pts.	IMPs	Diff. in Pts.	IMPs	Diff. in Pts.	IMPs	Diff. in Pts.	IMPs
20 - 40	1	270 - 310	7	750 - 890	13	2000 - 2240	19
50 - 80	2	320 - 360	8	900 - 1090	14	2250 - 2490	20
90 - 120	3	370 - 420	9	1100 - 1290	15	2500 - 2990	21
130 - 160	4	430 - 490	10	1300 - 1490	16	3000 - 3490	22
170 - 210	5	500 - 590	11	1500 - 1740	17	3500 - 3990	23
220 - 260	6	600 - 740	12	1750 - 1990	18	4000 ⁺	24

There are a couple of significant features of the IMPs translation table. You will note that the raw score point-difference ranges for each additional IMP increases significantly from the low end to the high end of the scale. That means a single large score difference on one board is not as significant as an equivalent sum of differences on several boards. This puts an emphasis on consistency over brilliancy or luck on a single deal. But probably the most significant feature is that a score difference of 10 points is a draw. No IMPs are awarded. This may not appear significant to the beginning player but can be illustrated by a simple example.

Suppose that at one table N-S were not vulnerable and the result for the board was $3NS+4 = 430$ and at the other table it was $4SN+4 = 420$. The 430 score is only 10 points greater than the 420 score but If this were a matchpoint game the size of the difference is irrelevant. As long as it is positive that pair would have received one matchpoint when compared to the other pair. But in the IMP scale those extra 10 points are immaterial. So when playing in a game where IMP scoring is used notrump and Major Suit games taking the same number of tricks effectively produce identical results.

The resulting IMPs are recorded for each board with the same algebraic sign as the net result for that board. The IMPs for all of the boards are totaled. If the result is positive the team won the match. If it is negative the team lost the match.

There are 2 primary types of team games: Knockout (KO) and Swiss Teams.

Knockout games are 4-session events usually restricted to tournament play. They are typically played over a 2-day period with 2 sessions each day, although other formats are sometimes used. A single match of 24 boards is usually played between 2 teams in one session. At the end of the match the winning team advances and the losing team is “knocked out” or eliminated from the event. Those players are then free to enter some other event as a team or split up and go their separate ways.

At a large tournament the teams are bracketed into groups of 16. Half the teams are eliminated each round so for the fourth round there are only 2 teams remaining. This format is virtually identical to the “sweet sixteen” of the annual NCAA basketball tournament. Adjustments are made to the format if the number of entries is not an even multiple of 16.

Swiss Team events are usually completed in a single session. Each match consists of about 7 boards. No team is eliminated after any round. All teams remain in the event until it is completed. But after each round the net IMPs difference is used to allocate **Victory Points (VPs)** to each team. There are several versions of VP tables but a typical one is shown below.

TYPICAL VICTORY POINT SCALE

IMPs	VPs	IMPs	VPs	IMPs	VPs
0	15 - 15	5 - 6	22 - 8	17 - 19	27 - 3
1	18 - 12	7 - 8	23 - 7	20 - 23	28 - 2
2	19 - 11	9 - 10	24 - 6	24 - 27	29 - 1
3	20 - 10	11 - 13	25 - 5	28 ⁺	30 - 0
4	21 - 9	14 - 16	26 - 6		

There are two numbers in each VPs column. The winner of the match is awarded the first number, the loser the second. The scale shown here is a 30-point scale meaning a total of 30 points are allocated to the winner and loser. There are also 20-point scales and different versions dependent on the number of boards played in a match.

After each round matches for the following round are assigned based on team VP totals. Teams with comparable totals are matched against each other. The concept being that the “cream” will rise to the top. At the end of the event teams are ranked by their VP totals.

In both KO and Swiss Team events masterpoints are awarded in a manner similar to that used for matchpoint events.

A team can actually have up to 6 players. Of course only 4 play at a time and there are requirements on the minimum number of boards that each player must play during a match.

Chicago Bridge

Chicago Bridge is a popular alternative to rubber bridge for home play. It is sometimes referred to as four-deal Bridge because a “match” is over after 4 deals. At the end of the match the players change partners and a new match is played. This game is especially appropriate for 4 to 6 players. One or two players sit out for each match (if there are more than 4), but then enter the game after the match is over. This game is very popular among duplicate players because the scoring system is very similar to that used for duplicate bridge. There are a few variations of this game. See the following two web sites for rules and scoring:

- <http://www.baronbarclay.com/chicago.html>
- <http://www.pagat.com/boston/bridge.html#chicago>



INDEX OF TERMS



This index is primarily a reference to the definitions of various bridge terms used in this book. In a few instances more page references are included where additional information is provided for the term.

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Are you tired of learning/teaching bridge from a cookbook? Tired of memorizing how many points you need to bid this or that? Do you have trouble determining if you have a minimum, medium or maximum hand and what you are supposed to do if it fits in a particular category? Then *Yes, No or Maybe* is what you need. This is a series of three textbooks and companion workbooks for beginning bridge students.

Bidding Basics introduces the student to bidding, including opening bids at the one-level with responses and rebids, overcalls and takeout doubles with advances and rebids, the use of cuebids by responder and advancer, and the practical application of the Law of Total Tricks.

Once an opening bid has been made, responder and opener rely primarily on their answers to the basic questions to guide their bidding decisions. Their initial answers are usually 'Maybe.' But, as the bidding progresses, the answers are resolved into 'Yes' or 'No' and these answers govern the subsequent bidding. Of course, they must also have certain rules to follow regarding the number of cards shown with their bids as well as a few priorities for resolving bidding options. The same logical process is used for intervener and advancer after an overcall or takeout double.

I only wish that such a book had existed when I was starting out.

Barbara Seagram

Author of *25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know*



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