

REVISED EDITION

The Complete On  
Book



# BALANCING

IN CONTRACT BRIDGE

Mike Lawrence

**MIKE LAWRENCE**

*The Complete Book On*



**IN CONTACT BRIDGE**

**BARON**  
**BARCLAY**  
BRIDGE SUPPLY

REVISED EDITION

**The Complete Book on Balancing in Contract Bridge**

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# Prologue

There must be a dozen authors out there who have written on balancing. Some of them have good things to say, but not all. There are a few authors who claim the following:

*“Do not let the opponents play at the two level.”*

That statement is so bad that I feel obliged to pick on it specifically in this prologue. Balancing is not something you do because of a one line rule. It is something that you do when you take many factors into consideration.

Here are six auctions.

W	N	E	S	W	N	E	S
		1♥	P	1♥	P	1♠	P
2♥	P	P	?	2♥	P	P	?

W	N	E	S	W	N	E	S
		1♥	P	1♣	P	1♥	P
1NT	P	2♣	P	2♥	P	P	?
2♥	P	P	?				

W	N	E	S	W	N	E	S
		1♦	P	2♥	P	P	?
1♥	P	2♣	P				
2♥	P	P	?				

I am making the statement that these auctions are totally different. If some author says that you should balance on all of these sequences because the opponents are in 2♥, then I suggest you take that book and deposit it where it

deserves to go. You may in fact balance against all of these sequences, but surely not all of the time. If you want to know more, read the rest of this book.



## Foreword: Read Me

*Balancing* is unlike any other bridge book you have read, with the exception of the revised version of *Takeout Doubles*.

Because balancing is something that comes up in so many ways, it is impossible to discuss the topic by breaking it down into a few areas. Here is an example of the problems with writing about this topic.

Take the case where opener on your left bids one of a suit, which is passed to you in fourth seat. For example:

W	N	E	S
1♥	P	P	?

If you are thinking of bidding or passing it out, you have a lot to think about.

What suit did they open?

What is the vulnerability?

How many high-card points (HCP) do I have?

What is my distribution?

If I bid a suit, do I promise five cards or can I bid with four cards?

Am I afraid that if I bid something, they will find a better suit?

Am I afraid that if I bid something they will keep bidding to game?

If I bid 1NT, how many points do I show?

If I bid 1NT, what do my partner's bids mean?

What does it mean if I jump to two of an unbid suit?

What does it mean if I jump to three of an unbid suit?

What does 2NT show?

What would a cue bid show?

Lots to think about. Even scarier is that this is just one possible decision. What if the opponents open and respond in some way before they stop bidding?

It is impossible to write a simple book about balancing. So I wrote a complete book. It won't be an easy read, but it does have something you won't find in any other book except for the aforementioned *Takeout Doubles*.

You can look at almost any common sequence. Say it goes this way.

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
2♥	P	P	?

You look at your hand and wonder if you should balance. And if you do balance, what should you balance with? You can look in the chapter where both opponents have bid. Look for the section where they have found a fit. You will find this auction, with a discussion and with example hands. I hope you won't be daunted by this because the information contained here is very useful. Bidding judgment is a big key to doing well and judgment is a huge part of what you will find here. System and judgment. A good pair.

Included are some special bidding understandings that will be new to most, and some bidding tricks too that will prove invaluable. To get the most out of this book, read it at a modest pace. If you can restrain yourself from speeding, you will not go from one section to the next until you feel comfortable with the section you are in.



# Introduction:

## Why Should You Balance When They Finish Bidding?

### **The cost of doing nothing**

The cost of not balancing is huge. If you let the opponents play in a partscore and they make it, you may pay a price for it. If they bid and make 2♥ and you can make 2♠, you lose 110 instead of making 110. If you let them play in a lot of contracts that they like, you will get terrible results. If twelve is top on a board, your scores will be between one and three much of the time. Even if you set them a trick, it may be bad if you have a contract that could have been made. You have to weigh the cost of passing against the cost of bidding and getting a bad result.

Let's say they bid 1♥ - P - 2♥ and you pass it out. Let's say you do this ten times. Let's say you get 2 points each, or 20 points in total. This is not good for your score.

Let's say you balance ten times.

Two or three times you will bid and make something. This should be worth at least 9 points each time you do this.

Once or twice you push them a trick higher and set them one trick. These results are usually worth about 7 points each.

Perhaps you bid and go down, but you only go down 50 or 100. These results usually work out to being slightly better than average.

Then you have a couple of bad hands where you go down 300 or 500. You get a zero for these.

And finally, they do something silly and you double them and get 300 yourself for a top.

Add all of these scores up and you should get a little over 60 points on these ten hands. Much better than getting only 20 on these ten hands.

I guarantee that if you balance correctly, these results will be typical, not made up numbers from a fantasy.



## Balancing When One of a Suit is Passed Out

IN THIS BOOK, I am going to discuss all manner of auctions where the opponents bid something and you are given the opportunity to let them have it or to balance. There are many reopening sequences, and I will cover a number of them. I will start with some basic sequences and considerations which will help when we get to the more difficult problems.

### Expectations For Balancing Against One of a Suit

This situation is high on the list of times you will balance. Since they have not shown huge hands, your side can expect to bid and make some games. Slams will be rare but they do exist. I suggest you treat this situation as an opportunity. You won't balance all the time but you should always think about it.

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*If they open with a one-bid and it is passed to you, why should you bother bidding?*

There are many reasons. Your side may own the hand. You may be able to push them higher. You may steal something that really belongs to them. Here is one idea that you should keep in mind. Just because your partner passed over your LHO's opening bid, it does not mean he is broke.

*What kind of good hand might partner have when he did not bid?*

Some people “trap” by passing good hands when their RHO opens the bidding. The idea is to double them later if possible. My experience is that this doesn’t work against most good opposition and it does make it difficult to bid when the hand belongs to your side. Here are a couple of hands in this family. RHO opens 1♥.

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

Many players will pass, hoping to double the opponents in some final contract.

But what usually happens is the auction does not go as you wish.

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
1♠	P	2♠	?

It is hard to bid now. If you did have something your way, you can’t find it now.

Here is another possible sequence.

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
1NT	P	2♣	?

Hard to show your hand on this sequence, too.

I think it’s better to overcall 1NT and try to achieve something, instead of waiting for a miracle.

But in some cases, your partner will have a good hand which just doesn’t have a convenient bid.

Here are some hands your partner can have which will pass over an opening 1♥ bid. You can see that some of these hands are pretty good.

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

Pass. Not enough to overcall 1NT. Not enough diamonds to bid 2♦.

♠ J 6 5 4  
♥ A K Q 10  
♦ A J 5 4  
♣ 7

Pass. The shape is wrong for a takeout double and bidding 1NT with a singleton club is dangerous.

♠ 3  
♥ A Q 10 6 4 3 2  
♦ A K 8  
♣ K 2

Pass. There is nothing to bid with this hand. Yes, hands like this one do happen.

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

This hand has 13 fair points but there is no possible way to get into the bidding.

♠ A K  
♥ 8 5  
♦ A Q 8 5  
♣ Q 7 5 4 3

Pass. This hand has 15 fair points but there is no way to get into the bidding. You can't double with only two spades. You can't bid 1NT with two little hearts. You can't bid clubs with such a terrible suit. You might consider bidding 2NT, unusual, but that is a bit of a stretch.

♠ K J  
♥ K 10 7 6 4  
♦ Q 8 3

Of the examples shown here, this one is the most likely. It has a 14 count with a lot of hearts.

♣ A J 4

♠ Q 8 3

♥ Q 5 3

♦ K Q J

♣ K J 3 2

This is also a common type of hand. A wretched 14 points which has no good bid. A takeout double is the only possible bid and that is reaching.

The point of these examples is to show you what kinds of good hands your partner can have when he passes over an opening bid. Believe me, there are lots of them.

Here is a list of what you can do when LHO opens with a suit and it is passed to you.

1. Double
2. 1NT
3. One of a suit
4. Two of a lower ranking suit
5. A jump to two of a higher ranking suit
6. A jump to three of a lower ranking suit
7. A jump to three of a higher ranking suit
8. A cue bid
9. A jump to 2NT
10. Pass

There are even more obscure actions such as jump cue bids or jumps to 3NT or even jumps to the four level. But these are too rare to worry about. Knowing the basic sequences will take care of 99% of the hands and the others will fall into place by process of elimination.

### *What does a double show?*

There is almost no hand which would have doubled an opening bid on your right which would not also double the same bid if you are in the reopening seat. The question is how much less you can have to still qualify for a double.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 10 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥	K 9 5 4
1♣	P	P	?	♦	A J 3
				♣	4 2

A clear double. Certainly less than you would need for an immediate double. As a rule, you can double with a king less than normal. You might be even lighter if you have good shape.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A 8 7 6
W	N	E	S	♥	10 5 4 2
1♣	P	P	?	♦	K Q 8 6
				♣	3

Double again. As your shape gets better and better, the values you need get less and less. This hand is far from a minimum.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	10 6 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 10 7
1♣	P	P	?	♦	K 9 8 5
				♣	3

Even vulnerable, your shape makes this a fine double. You should have no qualms about doubling.

N-S VUL				♠	10 7 6 5
W	N	E	S	♥	K 10 9 3
1♣	P	P	?	♦	Q J 8 2
				♣	3

Double. You should want to double with this hand. Your shape is ideal and your few values are working. The danger is that partner might bid too much expecting more, but in practice that doesn't happen if partner uses a moderate amount of caution in his actions.

Here are two questions that are often asked about balancing with light hands such as this one.

*Could the opponents have missed a game?*

Do the opponents have a game they have overlooked? Most unlikely. One of the axioms of balancing is that when you are short in opener's suit, and they pass it out, they won't have a game in that suit. If they do have a game, it will be in another suit. On the hand above, you are not particularly worried that they have a different game.

*Won't partner expect more if you double with a weak hand?*

Will partner double them hoping you have more? Will he bid too much hoping for a better dummy? Perhaps, but if partner gives you a little leeway, even this should not occur. In practice, you will rarely have a hand this weak in the passout seat. The last time I had proper shape for a double and did not double was this one.

N-S VUL	♠	J 8 7 6
W N E S	♥	Q 9 6 4
1♣ P P ?	♦	Q 4 3 2
	♣	K

Pass. Note the huge flaw in the form of the king of clubs. Not only is it worthless (probably) but it decreases the chances that partner will have useful values. With a minimum hand and with bad high-card values, this is not worth a fight.

NO ONE VUL	♠	9 7 5
W N E S	♥	K 10 6 5
1♣ P P ?	♦	A 10 4 2
	♣	J 2



Probably best to pass. This hand does not have perfect shape. If your partner bids spades your dummy won't be fun. Shape really does count for a lot.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠	Q 8 7 6
<b>W N E S</b>	♥	K 5 4
<b>1♦ P P ?</b>	♦	3
	♣	A 10 8 6 5

Double. Decent shape and adequate values. 2♣ would be a clear error.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠	Q J 5
<b>W N E S</b>	♥	5 4
<b>1♥ P P ?</b>	♦	Q 9 8 7
	♣	A 9 5 2

Double. This is a perfectly ordinary hand for a double. You have 9 fair points, modest shape, and reasonable support for the unbid suits. You should feel comfortable balancing with hands like this one.

<b>N-S VUL</b>	♠	8
<b>W N E S</b>	♥	Q 10 6 5
<b>1♠ P P ?</b>	♦	K J 9 7
	♣	K 5 4 2

With good shape and useful values, you can still double. Be aware, though, that partner will have to go to the two level to bid a suit. He may choose 1NT, which is not good for you. This hand has 9 points, which you hope is enough for most auctions.

## SPADES RULE

There is something you must be aware of when you are balancing. The spade suit is king. It is harder to bid against 1♠ than against 1♣. There is something else about spades that you should always consider. Say they open 1♣, which is passed to you.

If you do not have spades, there is the danger that if you bid something, they will find a spade fit. Spades are a real pain if you do not own them.

NO ONE VUL	♠	Q 2
W N E S	♥	9 7 5
1♠ P P ?	♦	K J 6 5
	♣	K Q 4 2

You should pass. Your hand is too weak and too flawed to bid. Importantly, your partner will have to bid at the two level. Further, your worst suit is hearts and partner will bid those in preference to clubs or diamonds given equal holdings. The queen of spades may be worthless. This hand has too many flaws. Regardless of the vulnerability, this hand should pass.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	8 2
W N E S	♥	9 7 6
1♠ P P ?	♦	A Q 10 4
	♣	A J 9 3

Double. Your high cards are working and are sufficient to overcome the other flaws. Vulnerable, this is a minimum because of the poor heart holding.

## Equal Level Conversion

When you have a two suiter, you may have difficult shape such that a takeout double looks wrong. There is a convention called Equal Level Conversion (ELC) which allows you to make a takeout double with the rule that if your partner bids clubs and you then bid diamonds, you are not showing a big hand. Here is an example of ELC.

NO ONE VUL	♠	J 7 6
W N E S	♥	A 10 5 2
1♠ P P ?	♦	K Q J 3 2
	♣	5

Doubling is possible. You do not want to lose the heart suit. If your partner bids  $2\clubsuit$ , you could have problems. If you use ELC, you can double and then bid  $2\diamond$  over  $2\clubsuit$ , which does not promise a big hand. ELC is not a convention used by everyone and it can actually be used more broadly than shown here. It is a convention that will cause problems, though, if you are not in agreement. In other words, do not pop this bidding trick on your partner without discussion.

### *What does 1NT show?*

I often teach the topic of balancing and when I ask what a 1NT bid shows when a one bid is passed out, I get a large number of opinions. I have seen many cases where the range shown by the notrump bidder and the range expected by his partner were grossly out of whack.

If you ask ten good players, you might find less agreement than you expected, and if you ask ten inexperienced players, the discrepancy could be even greater. The ranges I'm going to recommend are a consensus of most of my partners. I recommend them to you.

Here are the ranges I suggest.

They open  $1\clubsuit$ . Your range for 1NT is around 12 to 14 points.

They open  $1\diamond$ . Your range for 1NT is around 12 to  $14\frac{1}{2}$  points.

They open  $1\heartsuit$ . Your range for 1NT is around 12 to  $15\frac{1}{2}$  points.

They open  $1\spadesuit$ . Your range for 1NT is around 12 to  $16\frac{1}{2}$  points.

Note that the one constant is that 1NT promises at least 12 points.

### **WHAT DOES A REOPENING 1NT BID SHOW IF YOU ARE APASSED HAND?**

If you are a passed hand, you might bid 1NT with 11 points. This is safe because your partner knows you are a passed hand. He won't play you for more than a nice 11 or a poor 12.

### *Why are the ranges for 1NT different over each suit?*

Why have these different ranges? If you don't bid 1NT over, say,  $1\spadesuit$  with 15 or 16 point hands, but double instead, partner will often bid two of some suit.

Now, to catch up on your values, you will have to bid 2NT, and if partner has a poor hand you'll be too high for no particular reason. Far better to bid 1NT on 15 or 16 and be a bit conservative. Don't worry about missing a game. You will save a lot on those hands where 1NT is your limit. Note also that when LHO has opened 1♥ or 1♠, he rates to have a five-card or longer suit and this may afford the defense an effective start. 1♣ or 1♦ openers do not promise a long suit. The opening leader may not have a clear lead against your notrump contracts.

## WHY NOT PLAY 1NT SHOWS 10 TO 12, FOR INSTANCE?

If you play 1NT can be bid with 10 to 12 points, then you will have trouble showing better hands. If you have 13 points but do not have a suit to bid or takeout double shape, you will either have to pass or make a bad bid. The ranges I am showing allow you to show the hands that have a future.

Here are many examples showing possible 1NT balancing bids.

N-S VUL	♠	K 8
W N E S	♥	10 6 5
1♣ P P ?	♦	K J 8 7
	♣	A J 5 4

A minimum 1NT. Double would be poor because you would feel awkward about passing 1♠, and rebidding 1NT after doubling shows more.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	K 7 6
W N E S	♥	A Q 2
1♣ P P ?	♦	K J 4
	♣	Q J 8 3

Double, followed by 1NT. This sequence shows around 15 to 17 points. This auction shows less than when you double an opening bid on your right and then bid 1NT.

NO ONE VUL	♠	4 2
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W	N	E	S	♥	K J 7
1♦	P	P	?	♦	Q J 9 8 7
				♣	A J 3

The values are there for 1NT, but it is better to pass. They're in your best suit now and if you bid, they may be able to find a good home in a major suit. Mind you, 1NT can work.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 8
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 8 5 4
1♥	P	P	?	♦	A Q 10
				♣	K 9 8 2

1NT. You would far prefer to have the nine or ten of hearts. I would not fault a pass with this.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	K 4
W	N	E	S	♥	10 6 2
1♥	P	P	?	♦	A Q 5 4
				♣	A Q 6 3

Tough. Double would show better spades, and pass is conservative. I would try 1NT but would be nervous. Note that bidding 1NT with no stopper requires maximum high-card points to justify this action. Also, given you do not have a stopper in hearts, your holding in their suit will never be less than three cards. If 1NT gets passed out, it should be okay even if they run the heart suit. If you get doubled you should probably have second thoughts and run. Redouble should be takeout by you, showing the minors. Something like what you have here.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K 7 6
W	N	E	S	♥	Q J 6 3
1♥	P	P	?	♦	A 5 4
				♣	K Q 7

1NT. This is a good hand, but it is not worth doubling. If you double, your partner may bid 2♣ or 2♦. Say, for instance, that he bids 2♣. That would leave you with three awkward choices.

1. You can pass 2♣, but would worry that you missed a good notrump contract.
2. You can bid 2NT, which will fail if partner has a poor hand.
3. You might raise to 3♣, which is bad for many reasons, the least of them being that you have just three-card support.

I vote for the conservative 1NT bid.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠	K Q 9
<b>W N E S</b>	♥	7 6 5
<b>1♠ P P ?</b>	♦	A K 8 6
	♣	A 4 2

Still 1NT. Just as above. On this hand, double by you is guaranteed to get two of something from partner, and you don't have the values to continue. 1♥ and 1♠ by the opponents are room-consuming and it is harder to reopen accurately than after 1♣ or 1♦. You should strive to reopen the bidding as often as possible, but it is not necessary to be pushy about it once you have decided to reopen.

### *What does one of a suit show?*

The decision to reopen with one of a suit is based on many factors. These are:

1. How long is your suit? Can you bid with a four-card suit or do you need five? How good must your suit be?
2. What strength do you require? Do you need 7 points? Ten points? More? What is the upper range?
3. What is your holding in LHO's suit?  
Do you have wasted values in their suit?  
How many cards do you have in their suit?

4. Do you have more than one suit to bid? Should you balance in your longest suit? Is your hand good enough to bid Michaels?
5. Are there any suits unaccounted for? Do you have shortness in an unbid major? Specifically, what do you have in spades if that is an unbid suit?

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 8 7 6 5 4  
 W N E S      ♥ A 8  
 1♣ P P ?      ♦ K 10 4  
                  ♣ K 5 4

1♠ is clear. Any five-card suit is acceptable for reopening at the one level when you have 10 or so good points.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A 2  
 W N E S      ♥ Q J 10 7  
 1♦ P P ?      ♦ 8 6 5 4  
                  ♣ A 9 7

1♥. Four-card suits present different problems. It is acceptable to bid a four-card suit at the one level if you have a fair hand. Do this only if you have no other obvious bid such as a takeout double or 1NT. Be aware that their side can have a spade fit.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ Q 10 8 7  
 W N E S      ♥ 9 3  
 1♦ P P ?      ♦ A 10 4  
                  ♣ A Q 4 2

Probably 1♠. Poor suit, but such a good hand that you really want to bid. 1NT is also a possible bid. The problem is that if you bid 1NT, your partner may not look for a spade contract. The main point here is that you bid something.

N-S VUL      ♠ A K 10 8

W	N	E	S	♥	8 7 3
1♥	P	P	?	♦	Q 7 4
				♣	8 5 3

The only thing this hand has is a good spade suit. If you had one more spade, bidding 1♠ would be fine. With only four of them and with minimum values and lousy shape, it is best not to bid. You really don't want to hear your partner raise you to 2♠, do you?

NO ONE VUL				♠	K J 9 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	3
1♣	P	P	?	♦	Q 10 4 2
				♣	10 6 5

With a goodish five-card suit, a few aggressive players would bid 1♠ on this hand. If you had the same high cards but with no singleton, passing would occur to the majority of players. Not vulnerable, a decent 6 points with a pretty good major that can be bid at the one level is worth consideration.

This hand is a matchpoint minimum. At IMPs, you should pass. Note that the less you have, the better your suit should be. Be aware that you do not have to bid. You will pass many 12 point or better hands.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	8 7 6 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 10 7
1♦	P	P	?	♦	K 3 2
				♣	K 4

Pass. 1♠ here would be risky. Even though you have more high-card points than in the previous hand, your suit is poorer and your high cards are of questionable value. That king of diamonds is especially suspect. Also, in the likely event the opponents play the hand, you do not really want a spade lead. Being vulnerable, I would let this one go. Even not vulnerable, this hand isn't a bargain. I showed a hand with a bad five-card suit that would bid 1♠ earlier. That hand had 10 good points.

This hand has 8 poor points.



E-W VUL	♠	A K J 8
W N E S	♥	7
1♣ P P ?	♦	10 6 5 4
	♣	8 6 3 2

1♠ is fine. A minimum hand, but good shape and a very good suit. The excellent spades are important.

N-S VUL	♠	A Q 9 8 7
W N E S	♥	A 6 2
1♣ P P ?	♦	A Q 9
	♣	7 6

1♠. Somewhere along the line, you will get a hand which is good enough to consider doubling first prior to bidding your suit. If your partner will raise a 1♠ bid with 8 fair points, bidding 1♠ will be fine. On the other hand, if partner won't respond to 1♠ without 10 points, then in order not to miss good game contracts, you will have to double with as few as 16 points.

I'll get into this problem more in the section on responding to a reopening bid. Treat the discussion here as an introduction to balancing with good hands.

### *What is your holding in LHO's suit?*

This point is critical. Secondary honors such as the queen and jack may well be worthless, and the king may do no more than offer safety from immediate attack. Even if the opponents can't get their tricks immediately, you may have to lose them later if no discards are available or if RHO can lead the suit before the discards can be taken. Your holding in LHO's suit will be one of the factors you consider when debating what to do on close decisions. Your holding in opener's suit is something that you need to consider no matter what bid you are contemplating.

E-W VUL	♠	J 8 6 4 3
W N E S	♥	7 2
1♣ P P ?	♦	A J 5

♣ Q 8 4

This is too thin to bid. Pass it out. The queen of clubs may be worthless, which is a factor in your deciding to pass. When you balance with minimum hands, you need all of your hand to be contributing.

E-W VUL	♠ Q J 8 6 4
W N E S	♥ 7 2
1♣ P P ?	♦ A J 5
	♣ 9 8 4

Bid 1♠. This hand is the same as the previous hand but with the queen of clubs moved to the spade suit. Now your suit is reasonable and your values are all working.

*Do you have more than one suit to bid?*

*Should you balance in your longest suit?*

This will depend on the strength of your hand and whether you intend to show both suits. If you feel that your only objective is to get your opponents a bit higher, you might simply bid your strongest suit intending to quit the auction immediately. This is usually the case when you have a weak hand with a good four-card suit higher ranking than opener's and a weak lower ranking five-bagger.

E-W VUL	♠ Q 8 7 4 2
W N E S	♥ A Q 10 7
1♦ P P ?	♦ A 8
	♣ 3 2

1♠. This hand is good enough that you might take another bid if the opportunity affords itself. Double runs the risk that partner will bid clubs.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ A K 10 7
W N E S	♥ 4 2
1♦ P P ?	♦ 7 3

♣ Q 8 7 6 3

1♠. You are showing your best suit at the one level. Bidding 2♣ is dangerous since it gets you to the two level on a marginal suit and a marginal hand. Even vulnerable, 1♠ is an OK bid.

E-W VUL	♠ K Q J 9
W N E S	♥ 8 7 6 5 4
1♣ P P ?	♦ 3
	♣ Q 4 2

Even though you can bid either suit at the one level, 1♠ is best. This will be your only contribution unless partner forces the issue. Your purpose in bidding on hands like this is an effort to get the opponents higher, and one of the side benefits is that of getting partner off to a good lead.

E-W VUL	♠ Q 8 4 2
W N E S	♥ 3
1♦ P P ?	♦ A K 5
	♣ 7 6 5 4 2

Pass. 1♠ or 2♣ could work, but you'd better be right. You should wonder where the hearts are. It is likely that they own them and if so, they could have a good heart contract. This hand reflects an important theme. You do not have to balance on every hand.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ A Q 8 7
W N E S	♥ 8 6 5
1♥ P P ?	♦ 2
	♣ A K 9 7 4

Double would be bad because of your singleton diamond, so your choices are between 1♠ and 2♣. Here you can expect to take a second bid if the auction permits. You should start with 2♣, intending to bid spades later. If you bid 1♠ it will be awkward to introduce clubs later, as that would run the

risk of getting a preference back to spades. Only if 2♣ gets passed out might you do poorly, and then only if spades was the better spot. (More on new suits at the two level in a later section.)

*Are there any suits unaccounted for? Are you weak in an unbid major? Especially, what do you have in spades if they are an unbid suit?*

One of the most embarrassing things you can do is reopen and watch the opponents, who were content to play at the one level, suddenly bid and make a game. I have already alluded to this idea in a few of the preceding hands.

Usually if they try to play at the one level they do not have a game. But when it does happen, the game they reach is in an unbid major. They won't have a game in the suit opened because responder would have raised with 6 points and support.

Here is a complete hand to show this sort of occurrence. South deals.

NORTH			
♠ J 8 4 3 2			
♥ 7			
♦ 10 6 5 4			
♣ Q 3 2			
WEST		EAST	
♠ 10 9		♠ 6 5	
♥ K J 5 2		♥ A Q 9 6 4	
♦ A Q 7 2		♦ K J 8 3	
♣ 8 7 6		♣ 9 5	
SOUTH			
♠ A K Q 7			
♥ 10 8 3			
♦ 9			
♣ A K J 10 4			
W	N	E	S

			1♣
P	P	1♥	1♠
2♥	3♠*	P	4♠
P	P	P	

\* Note North's good raise to 3♠. His hand has grown!

4♠ will make five. Might even make six if the defense leads a club or a trump.

What went wrong here? East has all of the things so far discussed as necessary for bidding. He has a good suit. He has shortness in opener's suit. He has adequate values. The one thing he doesn't have is one of the unbid majors, in this case spades. It would be somewhat timid for East to pass in fourth chair, but the danger is recognizable and should be considered when reopening.

For the most part, the danger suits will be majors. Only infrequently will your opponents find life in an unbid minor. True, they may be able to compete in an unbid minor, but they will seldom have a game. This is for the reason that game in a minor requires extra points and the opponents would have had to overlook an enormous amount of values.

This is a true story. I had this hand.

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

1♠ by West was passed around to me, and I tried 3♦. In our agreements, this showed a good hand. It went double by opener, pass, 4♥ by RHO, pass by me, 6♥ by opener. Dummy put down:

♠ A Q 10 6 2  
♥ A K 7 3  
♦ - - -  
♣ A Q 9 4

Declarer had a stiff spade and six hearts to the jack. They made seven. While I was cogitating over why I hadn't left 1 ♠ alone, East began complaining to West that he should have bid seven. Oh, well.

In a serious vein, I have no doubts that 3 ♦ was correct (I will discuss this bid shortly) and what happened was singularly unlucky. Not only did the opponents miss a game, but they missed a slam. I gave them a second chance and they took it. This was really the parlay of a lifetime.

The following hands will make reference to all of the preceding points.

NO ONE VUL	♠	K 7 2
W N E S	♥	J 5 4
1♣ P P ?	♦	A K J 8 7
	♣	4 2

1 ♦ is likely to be best. You have a good suit and more than adequate values. The alternative is double, and that runs the unnecessary risk of playing a 4-3 major suit contract. If partner bids hearts or spades after 1 ♦, you will be assured of a five-card suit. Note that there is nothing wrong with a 4-3 fit. It's just that if you have reasonable alternatives, you should consider them.

NO ONE VUL	♠	8 2
W N E S	♥	Q 3
1♣ P P ?	♦	A J 9 8 5
	♣	K J 10 7

Pass. This hand is easily worth a 1 ♦ bid, but those two major suit doubletons should give you second thoughts. Almost surely the opponents have at least one major suit fit, and perhaps two. Your partner is marked with moderate values and chose not to bid. He probably doesn't have a five-card major, and only if he is 4-4 in the majors will the opponents not have an eight-card fit. A risky alternative is 1NT, and that is a little of an overbid since you should have 12 points for that. I would consider 1NT dangerous but enterprising.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	3
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W	N	E	S	♥	A J 4
1♣	P	P	?	♦	K Q 9 7 5
				♣	A 4 3 2

Even though spades constitute a clear threat, your hand is good enough to bid 1♦. You have good defensive values. If they find a spade fit, your partner is likely to have four of them, which may frustrate declarer's line of play.

N-S VUL	♠	K Q 10 8 7
W N E S	♥	9 6 5 4
1♦ P P ?	♦	4 2
	♣	Q 5

1♠. With weak hands where you may well be outbid, be content to get your best suit mentioned. Double would be poor as partner could bid clubs and you have too few values to make up for your lack of clubs. The opponents are probably going to play this one. Get partner off to the best lead. A big thing here is that you do not have to worry about the club suit. Yes, they may find a club contract but it is a small worry. Mostly you have to worry about a missing major suit.

N-S VUL	♠	K Q 10 8
W N E S	♥	A 10 5 4
1♦ P P ?	♦	4 3 2
	♣	K 7

Double and pass if partner bids 2♣. Your hand is good enough to bid with. Only if partner has to bid a four-card club suit will this work out poorly. 1♠ would be a serious error. You expect this may be your hand so you should try to maximize your chances of getting to the best spot.

N-S VUL	♠	K J 9 7
W N E S	♥	A 10 5
1♥ P P ?	♦	J 8 6 3 2
	♣	7

Bid 1♠. In keeping with reopening in your best suit and at the one level. Do not worry about the singleton club.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>				♠	K Q 7
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	Q J 4 2
1♦	P	P	?	♦	4 3 2
				♣	A J 3

Double. Anything else would be a serious error. With adequate support for all suits, both 1♥ and 1NT would suggest a low opinion of partner's dummy play.

### *Reopening with two of a lower ranking suit*

This situation does not come up all that often. I would guess that I reopen with one of a suit about five times as often as I reopen with two of a suit. Here are the reasons for this.

The first reason is the obvious one. A two level bid guarantees a five-card suit, and it should be a pretty good one at that. This means that all those hands with four-card suits and mediocre five-card suits which were worth a one level bid are not worth two level bids.

The second reason is that you also need extra values in the form of high cards. Many minimum hands worth one level bids will have to be passed if your only option is a two level reopening.

### *How good must your suit be to bid a suit at the two level?*

At the two level, you have to have some extra source of tricks and that is almost always going to come from the trump suit. The more you have in high cards, the more you can fudge in terms of your suit, but I would rate Q J 9 7 2 as the minimum and any six-card suit will do in a pinch.

### *How many points do you need to bid a suit at the two level?*

For a two level reopening bid, you need a reasonably decent hand. I would say 10 useful high-card points would be enough, other things being equal. I expect to get some static on this point. Another well-known author has suggested you reopen on something like this:



NO ONE VUL	♠	9
W N E S	♥	8 7 2
1♠ P P ?	♦	10 4 2
	♣	A J 10 8 7 6

2♣ was recommended on the theory the partner has at least 15 points. He may have them but he may have less too. The trouble with this is that 2♣ is unlikely to end the auction. If partner has as much as you expect him to have, he will be bidding something, 3NT for example, and that's unlikely to succeed opposite this hand. Really, it's hard to envision a plus score.

Either partner has a good hand and he bids and we go down, or partner has a mediocre hand and the opponents get together in another suit and find a better contract; perhaps even a game.

### *Some reopening hands that might bid a suit at the two level*

Here are some example hands where the only question is whether you bid a suit at the two level or pass.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	8 6
W N E S	♥	J 10 7 6 5 4
1♠ P P ?	♦	A 7 6
	♣	A 2

Bid 2♥. Two defensive tricks and an extra heart help make up for the poor suit and minimum values. This is a minimum 2♥ bid.

N-S VUL	♠	Q
W N E S	♥	Q 10 7
1♥ P P ?	♦	Q J 8
	♣	K J 7 6 5 4

Pass. This is a dangerous hand, to say the least. You have a stiff spade, an unbid major. You have wasted cards in hearts and spades. You have poor spots in clubs. Offensively, the only plus is the sixth club. You could bid 2♣

at matchpoints but that runs substantial risks. If opener wants to compete, you have no defense against anything short of a grand slam. Your heart holding is extra bad. You won't like it if their side continues bidding and plays in hearts or spades.

I strongly suggest passing 1♥. Had the opening bid been 1♠ instead of 1♥, it would be marginally reasonable to bid 2♣. You have less to worry about than when they opened 1♥.

NO ONE VUL	♠	4 2
W N E S	♥	8 6
1♠ P P ?	♦	A 10 4
	♣	A K J 8 7 6

Bid 2♣. Finally, a hand so good that you will want to balance, even with the danger of their finding the heart suit.

E-W VUL	♠	8 6 5 4
W N E S	♥	4 2
1♥ P P ?	♦	K Q J 9 7
	♣	K 3

2♦. You should feel that it's the opponents' hand and you would like to push them up a bit. 2♦ will do that safely and it will get partner off to a good lead. With weakish hands your main intent is not to buy the contract. It is only to nudge the opponents higher. Hopefully where they can be set. For your side to make something in spades would require that partner have four decent spades and a fair hand. With such a holding he might have bid over 1♥.

E-W VUL	♠	8 6 5 4
W N E S	♥	4
1♠ P P ?	♦	9 4 3
	♣	A K Q 10 5

The consummate worry hand. Where are the hearts? Where are the diamonds? Both of these are valid concerns. Passing it out in 1♠ is probably

best.

*Reopening when you have two suits lower ranking than opener's suit*

When you have two suits lower than opener's to consider, you often have to worry about a missing suit.

NO ONE VUL	♠	A 5 4
W N E S	♥	3
1♠ P P ?	♦	Q 9 8 4
	♣	A K 10 8 7

Certainly worth 2♣, although as always, you should be worried about the missing major suit. Here, to compensate for the danger of the heart suit you have good defensive potential. Note that on this sequence your partner can easily have five or six hearts, along with a decent hand that was not worth an overcall. Partner's overcalls at the two level are far more disciplined than his overcalls at the one level. This means that while you must be concerned about the heart suit, your worst fears need not always come true. Your partner can easily have them locked up. Compare this hand with the hand below.

NO ONE VUL	♠	J 2
W N E S	♥	9 3
1♠ P P ?	♦	A Q 7 3 2
	♣	K J 10 7

Pass. On this hand, your fears are real. The heart suit is a real danger.

NO ONE VUL	♠	2
W N E S	♥	3
1♠ P P ?	♦	Q J 8 7 4
	♣	K Q J 6 4 3

Pass. For starters, a jump to 2NT in the balancing seat shows 19 to 20 HCP with a stopper in their suit. I will discuss this bid shortly. What this means is that you can not bid 2NT in the passout seat to show the minor suits. Frankly, I would not bid with this hand anyway since there remains a good chance that they own the hand.

*The jump to the two level in a new suit. Is it weak or is it something else?*

A jump to two of a suit after a one bid is passed out shows something special. Here is an example auction. There are a lot of important considerations with this kind of bid.

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1♦	P	P	2♥

What does it mean when it goes 1♣, pass, pass, and you jump to the two level in a new suit? Is this a weak bid? A strong bid? Something in between? How long is your suit supposed to be? Is this jump forcing or is your partner allowed to pass?

The most common misconception is that it is a weak bid similar to the weak jump overcall. This idea is easily dispensed with. Here is the logic.

Firstly: The purpose of the weak jump overcall is to make it difficult for opener and responder to maintain a smooth exchange of information. But when responder passes opener's bid, that is one of the most informative of all possible actions. Preempting now in the balancing seat has little to gain because opener pretty well knows the extent of his side's potential. Worse, if you bid with a weak hand, opener may be able to keep bidding. You might not like giving him a second chance.

Secondly: When you assign a meaning to a bid, you want to assign a meaning that will come up often enough to be useful. The point of this is that you want to use a treatment which has some expectation of occurrence. Say the bidding goes this way.

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
1♣	P	P	?

What are the chances of your holding a weak hand with a six-card suit? Remember that partner couldn't bid, which implies weakness (this is not a guarantee, of course) and RHO didn't bid, which does guarantee weakness. Furthermore, your long suit suggests a little distribution around the table, giving the other players extra reason to bid. This means that in practice, you are not likely to have a hand worth a weak jump reopening often enough to bother with. Even in the event you get the hand, it is not likely to be effective given the fact that opener knows the kind of hand he is facing. He won't be doing any more bidding unless his hand calls for it, or unless he's nuts. And that is not worth playing for.

### *What does a reopening jump to the two level look like?*

There are a number of possibilities, ranging from an invitational bid to a strong bid to various conventional meanings such as two suiters, etc. The most common usage is to play a jump as showing about 15 support points, plus or minus, with a decent six-card suit. Or perhaps a seven-bagger with a point or two less. This is a reasonable interpretation which has withstood the test of time and it fits nicely into the scheme of things yet to be discussed. Here are some examples:

NO ONE VUL	♠	Q J 9 8 7 4
W N E S	♥	A 2
1♣ P P ?	♦	A K 3
	♣	10 7

2♠. A routine example of a reopening jump in a new suit. It has a good six-card suit in the 14 to 16 support point range.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	K Q 3
W N E S	♥	A K J 8 7 4
1♦ P P ?	♦	4 2
	♣	7 2

2♥. It has the required good suit and an opening bid in the 14 to 16 point range.

E-W VUL	♠ J 10 9 7 4 2
W N E S	♥ 3
1♦ P P ?	♦ A 2
	♣ A K J 7

2♠ is about right. You would like slightly better spades but any other approach could prove more troublesome. The nice thing about 2♠ is that it tells your partner what you have better than any other bid.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ Q J 10 8 7 5 4
W N E S	♥ A 2
1♦ P P ?	♦ 3
	♣ A 9 7

Bid 2♠. The extra spade makes up for a couple of points. This emphasizes the spade suit, which a 1♠ bid does not do. 3♠ might be the winner. (See next section.)

This convention won't come up a lot, but it will come up far more often than if you treat jumps as weak. And when it does come up, you should get good results. If nothing else, you will have a definition and will be able to avoid a misunderstanding.

### *The reopening jump to three of a lower ranking suit*

For all of the reasons that jumps in a new suit to the two level show values, the same is true for jumps to the three level. I suggest you play something like this.

Whereas a jump to the two level shows a goodish six-card suit and opening-plus strength, a jump to the three level shows a good six- or seven-card suit with similar or slightly greater values.

A jump to three of a major suggests you are looking for four of that major.

A jump to three of a minor hints of getting to 3NT.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ Q 2
W N E S	♥ 3 2
1♥ P P ?	♦ A J 6

♣ A K J 9 8 3

3♣. This shows a good six-plus suit with more than a minimum opening bid.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 8 7
W N E S	♥ K 4
1♠ P P ?	♦ A K Q 10 8 6 5
	♣ 7 3

3♦. Definitely aiming for the 3NT rather than 5♦.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 7 2
W N E S	♥ Q J 9 8 7 6 2
1♠ P P ?	♦ A Q
	♣ A 2

3♥. This is the one case where you are jumping in a major suit at the three level. Your emphasis is no longer on 3NT so your suit need not be as good.

N-S VUL	♠ 8 7
W N E S	♥ A J
1♠ P P ?	♦ A K J
	♣ Q 10 8 5 4 3

With a club suit this poor, 2♣ is enough. To make 3NT, partner needs two spade stoppers plus a club honor, or one spade stopper and an extra good club holding such as AKx or AJx. In those cases where 3NT can make, your partner will often be bidding if you bid 2♣. You will not miss many games by bidding 2♣ on hands like this. If one of your red jacks was the jack of clubs, you could choose 3♣.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 6 2
W N E S	♥ A K

1♠ P P ?      ♦ A K 3  
                      ♣ K 9 8 7 6 5

Hard hand. I am not sure there is a good bid here. My guess is to bid 2♣. Double, intending to bid clubs later, is a dangerous alternative. Nice if you can do it. Not so nice if your partner bids three of a red suit along the way.

### *The jump to the three level in a higher ranking suit*

You can get a lot of opinions on this one. The one thing that's clear is that it won't come up very often. The important thing is that you have an agreement, and what it is doesn't matter too much as long as it is reasonably safe and sane. For whatever it's worth, I offer this. Play the jump as a good preempt with which you expect to make your contract opposite a random 10 count.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K J 10 8 7 6 4  
     W N E S      ♥ 3  
     1♣ P P ?      ♦ A Q 5  
                      ♣ 4 2

Bid 3♠. Better than a normal preempt.

The difference between a jump to the two level and a jump to the three level is that the two level jump shows more values. The three level jump shows extra playing strength, usually with a seven-card suit. The distinctions are not always clear.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 8 6 5 4 3 2  
     W N E S      ♥ K 4 2  
     1♦ P P ?      ♦ K 3  
                      ♣ Q

Bid 1♠. It is wrong to bid 3♠ for two reasons. Bad suit and only a fair hand. It is also wrong to bid 2♠ for the same reasons. The suit is not good enough and the hand is way too weak.

E-W VUL      ♠ A Q 2



W	N	E	S	♥	J 10 9 8 7 4 3
1♣	P	P	?	♦	A 4
				♣	7

3♥. Your suit is not exactly wonderful, but it is solid. When jumping to three of a major you are aiming for game in the major, not 3NT.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	K J 4
W	N	E	S	♥	Q J 10 8 6 4 2
1♦	P	P	?	♦	A 10
				♣	5

3♥. This is about par. The suit is good and the values all sound.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	A 8
W	N	E	S	♥	3
1♣	P	P	?	♦	K Q J 8 7 5 4
				♣	Q J 8

Bid 3♦. You have a good hand that wants to bid but which does not want the opponents to get back in the bidding, which they could do more easily if you bid just 1♦ or 2♦. Perhaps your partner can consider 3NT. He knows you have a good hand.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	A K Q J 8 7 4
W	N	E	S	♥	8 5
1♦	P	P	?	♦	7 5
				♣	Q 4

3♠. If you had six spades, you would choose 2♠ instead. Under no circumstances should you bid 4♠. You have too many losers. Partner needs three tricks to cover your losers and he will know if he has them. With the definitions we've discussed, you will be able to describe hands like these and can avoid getting to silly games. Over your 3♠, partner may be able to choose 3NT when that is right. Partner will bid 3NT with this hand:

♠ 9 3  
 ♥ K 10 9 4  
 ♦ Q J 10 8  
 ♣ A K 8

3NT is likely to make. 4♠ could go down if the defense leads or shifts to hearts in time. Much better to be in the excellent 3NT. That's not possible if you have already skipped past it to 4♠, or if your side has its understandings confused.

### *The reopening cue bid*

It has taken awhile to come to this but Michaels cue bids are used by most players today. This is fine by my lights. Here are some examples and a few comments.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K Q 8 7 6
W N E S	♥ K J 9 4 3
1♦ P P ?	♦ A
	♣ 9 7

Bid 2♦. You are showing the majors. This is the Michaels cue bid. The important thing is that if you have a lousy hand, you shouldn't bother making this bid. If you do not use Michaels you have to choose from 1♠ and double. Each of these bids can lead to trouble. I like the Michaels bid because it shows most of my hand in one bid.

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q J 8 5 3
W N E S	♥ K J 9 4 3
1♦ P P ?	♦ J
	♣ 9 7

Pass. Do not bid 2♦. If your RHO had opened 1♦, you might use Michaels because your bid has some chance of confusing their bidding. When you are in the balancing seat with this hand, a Michaels bid won't do anything to

bother their bidding. Also, being in the passout seat comes with a hint that partner does not have a good hand.

NO ONE VUL	♠	3
W N E S	♥	K Q 9 4 3
1♠ P P ?	♦	A J 10 8 4
	♣	9 7

Bid 2♠ if your system allows this bid. Some players choose to use Michaels on hands with the unbid major and one of the minors. This is a sane treatment and if you already use it, no serious need to change. Note, however, that this bid gets you to the three level some of the time, and that may not be safe.

What is a minimum Michaels bid in the balancing seat? If no one is vulnerable, I would consider bidding with the following hand.

NO ONE VUL	♠	A J 8 7 4
W N E S	♥	K J 10 5 3
1♦ P P ?	♦	9 8
	♣	4

This is a minimum balancing Michaels bid.

### *The reopening jump to 2NT*

This isn't a very common action either. It does come up and you better know what it means. The one thing it should not be is the unusual notrump. If you are in fourth seat with ten minor suit cards, regardless of the major suit opened, you should be wondering where all the major suit cards are. Partner may well have opener's suit stopped, but the other major is somewhere and more likely than not, the opponents have a fit in it.

In my life, I have only once wished I was using the unusual notrump in the reopening seat. And when the hand was over, I was glad I hadn't been able to.

There remains to decide what 2NT should show, and my suggestion is the natural one. Use it to show about 19 or 20 points. This is simple, efficient,

and it works. There may be other uses, but they will require systemic understandings and what you don't want is to have complex treatments in situations that are as rare as this one.

If you do use 2NT to show a 19 to 20 point notrump hand, you can use Stayman and transfer bids just as always. You might wish to confirm this agreement with your partner, but it only takes a second or two to agree that your normal system is on.

NO ONE VUL	♠	Q 8 7
W N E S	♥	A 2
1♠ P P ?	♦	A K J 10 7
	♣	A J 7

2NT. Double followed by 2NT is possible, but you don't want partner to bid and rebid hearts, or possibly hearts and then clubs. Nor do you want to double and then have to bid 3♦ over 2♥ by partner. Not only does 2NT describe your hand, but now you won't feel so bad if partner persists in hearts.

NO ONE VUL	♠	K 2
W N E S	♥	A Q
1♣ P P ?	♦	Q J 10 8 7
	♣	A K 10 6

2NT. Again, you do not want to double and hear spades or hearts from partner.

N-S VUL	♠	A Q 2
W N E S	♥	10 6 4
1♥ P P ?	♦	A K 10 7
	♣	A K 4

Double. 2NT, unlike 1NT, does guarantee a stopper. After partner's response, you can look for a game.

## *Difficult hands*

Every now and then you get a hand which might produce game opposite a random 7 or 8 count. But the shape doesn't quite fit any of the requirements for special jumps or a natural 2NT bid.

Basically, the problem is with hands of 16 or more points which do not fall into the reopening bid structures so far covered.

Here are some typical problem hands.

		W	N	E	S
		1♣	P	P	?
♠ A Q 9 7 5	♠ A 2			♠ J 2	
♥ 3	♥ A K Q 10 8 7			♥ A 5 4	
♦ A K 4 2	♦ A J			♦ K Q 10 9	
♣ A J 3	♣ 4 3 2			♣ A K J 4	

On the first hand, you are too good to bid 1♠.

On the second hand, you are too good to bid 2♥ or 3♥.

On the third hand, you are too good for 1NT and not good enough for 2NT.

The usual solution is to double and then take some additional action to describe whatever extras you may have. There are some dangers, however, and you will have to cater to them.

Firstly, the auction may go in such a way that you have to show your suit at an excessively high level. There may be competition, which will make it awkward for you.

Secondly, partner may get in your way, bidding suits you don't want to hear, again forcing you too high. Following is a discussion of the three hands above.

W	N	E	S	♠	A Q 9 7 5
1♣	P	P	?	♥	3
				♦	A K 4 2
				♣	A J 3

Double. Over 1♥, bid 1♠. Over 1NT, bid 2♠. And over 1♦, jump to 2♠. Note that your jump is not forcing. It just shows a big hand.

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

Double, followed by a jump in hearts. Partner can pass, but with any kind of excuse will continue.

♠ J 2  
♥ A 5 4  
♦ K Q 10 9  
♣ A K J 4

Double and then bid notrump. 1NT shows a maximum of 16 HCP and this hand has 18.

The range you will need for one of these extra strength showing auctions will vary according to your rebid. If you double and rebid at the one level, it shows a good opening bid. If you rebid at the two level, you show a king or so more.

NO ONE VUL	♠ A Q 10 7
W N E S	♥ K Q J 9 5
1♣ P P ?	♦ Q J 7
	♣ 4

Double first and then bid as follows:

Bid 1♥ over 1♦  
Raise 1♥ to 3♥  
Raise 1♠ to 2♠  
Bid 2♥ over 1NT

If partner passes 1♣ doubled for penalty, you will do very well since you have way more than you promised.

NO ONE VUL	♠	K 2
W N E S	♥	K Q J 9 5
1♣ P P ?	♦	A Q 4
	♣	9 6 4

Bid 1♥. If you double, partner will frequently bid 1♠. Now a 2♥ call would be an overbid. You can anticipate that partner's bid will make it awkward for you. Better to make a slight underbid and keep firm control of the auction than to allow things to get out of hand.

NO ONE VUL	♠	3 2
W N E S	♥	A Q 7
1♦ P P ?	♦	8 6 4
	♣	A K Q 8 6

Bid 2♣. True, you have a good hand, but not that good. Best to bid 2♣ now before the bidding gets too high. Even if you doubled and could bid 2♣ next, that would be an overbid.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	A K Q 8 6
W N E S	♥	3 2
1♦ P P ?	♦	8 6 4
	♣	A Q 6

Bid 1♠. Your partner needs 10 points to make a game, and he will bid if he has a fit or if he can bid notrump.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	A J 2
W N E S	♥	7 2
1♥ P P ?	♦	Q 8 6
	♣	A K J 8 7

Double. If he bids 1NT or 2♣, you will raise. If he makes a stronger bid you will keep bidding. If he makes a minimum bid, you will pass.

N-S VUL	♠	4 2
W N E S	♥	A 6 2
1♥ P P ?	♦	K J 7
	♣	A K Q 10 6

Double. If partner bids:

1♠, you bid 1NT or perhaps 2♣.

1NT, you bid 2NT. 3NT is sane too.

2♦, you bid 3♣.

### *Impossibly difficult hands*

Some hands are too difficult for words. Here are some examples. There is nothing you can bid that feels totally right. The first hand is actually easy but the rest of these get harder fast.

N-S VUL	♠	A K 5 4
W N E S	♥	- - -
1♥ P P ?	♦	K Q 7 4
	♣	A K Q 10 6

Double. If your partner passes for penalty, at least you should beat them a ton. Your partner rates to have five or six hearts and if so, he is not likely to have a fit with any of your suits. It used to be right to cue-bid 2♥ with this hand but that bid is now used as Michaels.

N-S VUL	♠	A K J 10 5 4
W N E S	♥	2
1♣ P P ?	♦	A Q J 7 5 4
	♣	- - -



A double is extra scary now because there are so many bad things that can happen. The old-fashioned strong cue bid of 2♣ is not available anymore because that bid is the Michaels cue bid showing the majors. The one good thing I can say about this hand and similar distributional monsters is that you won't have this problem very often. Usually there is bidding before the auction gets to you. What would I bid? I would guess to bid 4♠, a practical bid that gets me to a game that I rate to make. I might miss a grand slam in diamonds or spades, though, so this bid is not guaranteed.

N-S VUL	♠	A K 10 8 4
W N E S	♥	K Q J 10 7 3
1♦ P P ?	♦	A
	♣	4

This is easier. Bid 2♦, the Michaels cue bid. If you are lucky, your partner will show some interest in one of the majors and you can look for slam.

N-S VUL	♠	4
W N E S	♥	9
1♥ P P ?	♦	A K J 6 5
	♣	A K Q 10 6 3

2NT would be nice if it was unusual. But it isn't. 2NT shows 19 or so balanced points with a heart stopper. In the balancing seat, 2NT is a natural bid. I would suggest bidding 4NT, clearly unusual.

Some players have an unusual agreement that can be used here.

4♥, a jump cue bid, shows a terrific unusual notrump, much like the hand here.

4NT is also unusual but not quite as strong.

N-S VUL	♠	6
W N E S	♥	K Q J 5 4
1♠ P P ?	♦	A

♣ A K 10 9 8 5

Bid 2♠, showing a form of Michaels. In this case 2♠ shows hearts and a minor.

N-S VUL	♠ K Q J 10 7 5 3 2
W N E S	♥ 7
1♣ P P ?	♦ A K Q 5
	♣ - - -

Terribly difficult. All you need for slam is a major suit ace from partner. The only bid that will do the trick is to bid 5♣, if you use this as exclusion Blackwood. If you bid 5♣, your partner will answer aces other than the ace of clubs. He will bid 5♦ with no ace, 5♥ with one, and 5♠ with two. If he has two aces other than the ace of clubs, you get to bid a grand slam. Neat agreement if you have it. The hand would be harder if you had one club and no hearts.



# Balancing When 1NT is Passed Out

## Expectations For Balancing Against 1NT

Assuming you follow the suggestions in this section, you can gain quite a bit when bidding against a 1NT opening bid. If you pass, they will often be in a fair contract and defending against 1NT is famously difficult to do. If you have a good suit or if you have good distribution, you will often gain by bidding. Basically, you should not be afraid of bidding just because opener has a strong hand (assuming the 1NT bid is strong). I suggest you adopt an optimistic view when 1NT is passed to you.

---

When 1NT has been passed around to you, you can reopen in many ways.

1. Bidding a suit
2. Using one of many artificial devices, i.e. Landy, DONT, Cappelletti
3. Doubling for penalties
4. Doubling as part of a takeout structure used by many conventions

I don't intend to get involved with conventional treatments. Whatever suits you is probably OK. The main decision is whether to reopen. The method is up to you. I suggest you be very active whenever your distribution is worthwhile.

Unless otherwise stated, the opening 1NT bid shows 15 to 17 HCP.

NO ONE VUL		♠	K Q J 8 6 4
W	N	E	S
		♥	5 3
1NT	P	P	?
		♦	4 3
		♣	10 6 5

2♠ in whichever method your system dictates. Without question. Even if vulnerable you should act. This hand is far from a minimum. A thought that should motivate you is this. If you pass, what will your partner lead? It won't be a spade. Since they stopped in 1NT, your side rates to have 17 points, perhaps more. You have 6. Your partner should have 11 or more. The odds are pretty good that some of partner's points will help you.

NO ONE VUL		♠	3
W	N	E	S
		♥	K J 9 8 4 2
1NT	P	P	?
		♦	10 6 5 4
		♣	3 2

Bid 2♥. If you play a convention, then use it in whatever way you have to show a one suited hand with hearts. The only real danger is that partner will get excited. But as long as he keeps in mind that opener has 15 to 17, there should be no trouble. Only if partner has a huge hand plus a good fit should he be bidding.

When you balance with 2♥, your partner should always remember that an opponent has promised a good hand. He should appreciate that you may be bidding with weak, shapely hands.

Here are some hands from your partner's perspective when you reopen with 2♥.

W	N	E	S
		1NT	P
P	2♥	P	?

♠ Q J 8

Partner should pass 2♥.

♥ 5 3  
 ♦ K 8 7 2  
 ♣ K Q J 8

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

Pass again. The singleton heart is bad news.

♠ A 8 7 5  
 ♥ Q 10 7 6  
 ♦ K 2  
 ♣ K 9 7

3♥. When you take any action over partner's reopening bid, you need a fit in addition to the high cards he already expects you to have. Having a good fit makes up for some high-card points.

♠ K Q 2  
 ♥ 10 7  
 ♦ K 9 8 7  
 ♣ A Q 9 4

2NT only. This shows a hand which falls just short of doubling the 1NT opening. There is almost no hand worth a jump to 3NT because any hand that good should have acted sooner.

Some more examples of hands where you might balance against their 1NT opening:

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠ Q 10 8 6 4
<b>W N E S</b>	♥ J 10 4 3 2
1NT P P ?	♦ 7 6
	♣ 3

This hand shows the value of having conventions. If you do not have a convention to show two suits, you have to guess between bidding hearts or spades or passing. Guessing is very dangerous when the price of getting to the wrong suit can be expensive. If you have a convention to show the majors, then you should use it. The point here is that when your shape says bid, then you don't need much in the way of high cards.

NO ONE VUL

W	N	E	S
1NT	P	P	?

♠ 8 2

♥ A 10 6 5 4

♦ 3

♣ K J 6 5 4

Again, if you have a convention to show two suits, you should get in there.

♠ Q 10 8 6 5

♥ K 5 4

♦ K J 5

♣ K 2

**Pass. When you haven't much in the way of distribution, you will have to find partner with a fit as well as points. Bidding 2 ♠ will work if partner has a few spades, but not otherwise. Even if he has 10 or so points, they won't be worth much if he has a sti spade. It is safer to pass 1NT. Balanced hands are not good for balancing against 1NT.**

When you have a six-card suit, or a two suiter which you can show systemically, then you can assume a playable trump suit exists and can act on many marginal hands.

On hands where you feel like bidding but have no clearly worthwhile suit or distribution suitable for a convention, then you are probably balanced or semi-balanced. When this is the case, it is usually best to go quietly unless you have substantial high-card values. The reason for this is that the only available bid for these hands is double, and that is only if you do not play a conventional double.

If your system lets you double for penalty, your partner usually passes for want of a better action. He bids only when he has a weak hand with good distribution. If you end up defending against 1NT doubled, your high-card points will be in front of declarer's points, which may not be best for you.

Assuming that you use double as penalty in the balancing seat, it is necessary to determine what double shows. In practice, it turns out you need about 14 points if their 1NT is weak and you need about 15+ points if their 1NT bid is strong.

In the examples below, I am assuming double is penalty. If you use it as something else, there is nothing wrong with that. If that is the case, though, you will probably pass many of the following hands. Assume the 1NT bid is 15 to 17 points.

NO ONE VUL	♠	K J 7
W N E S	♥	K J 4
1NT P P ?	♦	Q 10 7 6
	♣	A J 3

A marginal double. On the minus side is that all your points are soft and may prove worthless. On the plus side, whatever partner leads, you will like it. If partner has a five-card suit, it should be easily established. Pass this hand if double is artificial.

N-S VUL	♠	A Q 6 2
W N E S	♥	A K 6 3
1NT P P ?	♦	K 5 4 2
	♣	7

Don't double. When you have good shape, it is usually right to bid whatever your system calls for. You have only four-card suits to offer but if you find a fit, you will find that playing the dummy is much easier than defending against 1NT.

♠	10 7 4 3
♥	10 5
♦	Q 6
♣	Q J 5 4 2

If partner has this hand, then 2♠ makes from eight to ten tricks while 1NT doubled would result in anything from +100 to -280 when they make an overtrick.

♠ 10 7	♠ 10 4
--------	--------

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

But if your partner has either of these hands then nothing is any good.

**If you don't have a convention to handle the combinations of suits you have, you are playing with a big handicap.**

NO ONE VUL	♠ A Q 10 7
W N E S	♥ A K 8 6
1NT P P ?	♦ Q 10 2
	♣ 4 3

If double is penalty, then double. At least you don't have a singleton or void so you can return your partner's lead if you defend. If double is not penalty, then using a convention to look for a major is sane, if exciting.

N-S VUL	♠ A J 9 7
W N E S	♥ K Q 10 6
1NT P P ?	♦ 10 9 6 5
	♣ 3

Not unreasonable at all to look for a major suit fit. Your four-card suits are strong and your shape is excellent. Partner can choose from two suits and may well have four of one of them. Even if he has three only it may work out well. If you feel it is scary to bid with this hand vulnerable, consider how you will feel defending against 1NT with a small club lead from your partner. The danger of defending badly is real. The dangers in bidding are not serious in the long run. You will get a surprising number of excellent results whenever your partner has a four-card fit with you.

NO ONE VUL	♠ A Q 8 3
W N E S	♥ 7 6 5 4 2
1NT P P ?	♦ J 10 7



♣ 3

Again, look for the majors, if possible. Note that if partner has equal length in the majors, he will bid hearts. This means that on questionable hands you must be well prepared for hearts, as partner will be more inclined to bid them. The following hand shows that consideration. It is a similar hand to the one above but with five spades and four hearts.

NO ONE VUL	♠	A Q 8 3 2
W N E S	♥	7 6 5 4
1NT P P ?	♦	J 10 7
	♣	3

If you show the majors partner, with xxx of both hearts and spades, will choose hearts. This just means that on close decisions, you should pass if you are likely to miss your best suit.

N-S VUL	♠	4
W N E S	♥	A 3
1NT P P ?	♦	K 10 9 7 3
	♣	A Q J 4 3

You need a convention for this hand, too. DONT handles it relatively well. You can bid 2♣ to show a hand with clubs and another suit. Your partner should be alert to various possibilities so you should avoid trouble unless your partner just has an unsuitable hand. As always, when you are thinking of bidding, consider how you will feel if you pass and your partner guesses to lead a major.

N-S VUL	♠	6 4
W N E S	♥	A Q 7 4
1NT P P ?	♦	8 3
	♣	Q J 9 8 4

Just one more example of a hand where bidding is probably right in the long run. You will have some lousy results along the way but if you have a convention that handles these hands, you are better off using it.

*How far can you go with balancing against 1NT?*

E-W VUL		♠	3 2
W	N	E	S
1NT	P	P	?
		♥	Q 10 9 8 6 5
		♦	8 7 3
		♣	Q 7

I am tempted to bid but can resist. The suit is OK but this hand is just plain lousy, both in terms of high cards and shape. Remember this next hand from the start of this chapter?

♠	3
♥	K J 9 8 4 2
♦	10 6 5 4
♣	3 2

I recommended bidding with this hand. It has some shape that makes it better than the hand above with its two queens. On close decisions, shape is important.

NO ONE VUL		♠	A J 10 3
W	N	E	S
1NT	P	P	?
		♥	Q J 9 7
		♦	4 2
		♣	10 6 5

Looking for a major is not a bad idea given that your partner won't know to lead one if you pass. This looks extreme and it is. But the rewards will make it a long term winner (but only if not vulnerable).

*When they open with a weak notrump*

Most of the examples so far have dealt with reopening after a strong notrump. This is because most players do use some strongish notrump range, i.e. 15 to 17, 16 to 18, or even an occasional 14 to 16. Precision players have ranges of 13 to 15, as do some “standard” players. But you will run into enough weak notrumps that you need to be alert to the differences.

Against a 12 to 14 or 13 to 15 point notrump, you should be slightly less inclined to reopen than after a strong notrump. The reason for this is that the partner of the weak notrump bidder almost always runs when he holds a bad hand. Experience has shown that it is better to escape with weak hands rather than to pass and let the opponents start doubling.

Therefore, when a weak notrump is passed to you, the player on your right tends to have some points. You need a little bit extra in addition to good distribution to justify reopening.

One other reason for passing is that they may be in a poor contract. Most of the other pairs playing a strong notrump will have been able to bid out their hands. Perhaps they have a major suit fit which has been missed.

If you decide to use a convention against their weak notrump openings, I suggest Cappelletti, known in some parts of the country as Hamilton. The reason for using this convention is that it uses a double as penalty, something you are likely to want to have against a weak notrump.

In a nutshell, it works this way. An opponent opens 1NT:

Double is penalty

2♣ shows a one suited hand

2♦ shows the majors

2♥ shows hearts and a minor suit

2♠ shows spades and a minor suit

2NT shows the minors.

You can use this structure when your RHO opens 1NT and when your LHO opens 1NT which is passed to you in the balancing seat.

## **SOMETHING SPECIAL—WHEN YOUR PARTNER DOUBLES A WEAK 1NT FOR PENALTY**

A pass by you says you are willing to defend.

A bid of 2♣ is Stayman. You usually have a bad hand for this bid because with a good hand, passing for penalty would be best.

A bid of 2♦ or 2♥ is a transfer. You usually have a bad hand for this bid because with a good hand, passing for penalty would be best.

There is inevitably more to bidding against 1NT doubled than I can include here. A full bidding structure would take quite a few pages.



## The Safety Factor in Reopening

Throughout this book, I have made and will continue to make references to suits that are safe to bid and suits that are dangerous to bid. The concept of “safe” suits is very important in most aspects of low level competitive bidding. Understanding it is a big and necessary step in developing your competitive judgment. In this section, I am giving a few auctions and showing where dangers exist. Note especially the comments about one or both of the opponents having length in other suits.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
2♣	P	P	?

When 1♣ is raised, responder denies a major suit and tends to deny diamonds. Opener can have four cards in any of the other three suits. Both opponents have limited hands.

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♠	P
2♠	P	P	?

Either opponent can have four cards in any of the other three suits. It is possible that responder has five cards in any of the other three suits. Both

opponents have limited hands.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♦	P	1♥	P
2♥	P	P	?

Their side has a 4-4 heart fit. Opener may have four spades. Responder is not likely to have four spades. Both opponents have limited hands.

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1NT	P
2♣	P	P	?

Responder denies four cards in either major. Opener usually has nine cards in the minors so is unlikely to have four cards in either major. Opener can have up to 16 points. Responder usually has less than 10 points else he would bid more strongly.

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	P
2♣	P	P	?

Opener does not have a four-card major. He didn't bid spades and he didn't raise hearts. Responder may have four cards in spades. Either opponent can have extra points. Opener can have up to 16. Responder can have up to 9.

When opener bids 1♦ and rebids 2♣, there is an excellent chance that he has a singleton heart. Not certain but worth thinking about.

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	P
1NT	P	P	?

Opener does not have four spades. He usually has two or three hearts. Responder may have four spades. Responder can have up to 10 HCP.

W	N	E	S
1♥	P	1NT	P
2♥	P	P	?

Opener has six or seven hearts. Responder does not have four spades. He can have four or five or six cards in either minor. Responder can have up to 10 HCP.

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1NT	P
2♣	P	P	?

Opener could have four cards in any suit other than clubs. Opener usually has six clubs but may have five after his partner's 1NT response. Responder does not have a four-card major. Responder usually has a minimum 1NT bid. He tends to raise to 3♣ when he has a maximum.

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♥	P
2♣	P	P	?

Opener usually has six clubs. Opener doesn't have four spades, but responder may have four spades. Either opponent can have four diamonds. Either opponent can have a couple points more than a minimum.

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	P	?

Opener usually has six clubs. When opener rebids his suit he can have as many as 16 HCP. Responder sometimes has 8 to 10 points that do not have a good bid available. This means that either opponent can have a couple points more than a minimum.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♥	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	P	?

Opener does not have four spades, but responder may. Either opponent can have four diamonds. Either opponent can have extra points. Either opponent can have a singleton in their partner's suit.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♥	P	1♠	P
2♥	P	P	?

Either opponent can have four diamonds. West has six or seven hearts. Either opponent can have extra values.

Studying these sequences and noting the inferences is useful. I suggest reviewing this section more than once. It deserves better than a brief glossing over.





## Reopening When the Opponents Find a Fit

There are many sequences where you might consider reopening, and it would be very difficult to consider all of them as we did after a one level bid was passed out. However, all of these cases can be vaguely broken down into two categories.

These cases are:

1. The opponents have a fit. They have bid and raised a suit.
  2. The opponents have no fit. They may have had a preference auction.
- Or either player may have bid and rebid a suit.

It is important when you are thinking of balancing that you recognize when they have a fit and when they do not have a fit. This chapter will discuss case one where they have a guaranteed fit.

### Expectations For Balancing When Your Opponents Bid and Raise a Suit

This is a special case. When they bid and raise a suit you will want to be aggressive. Say they bid and raise a suit and it is passed to you, as in this auction.

W   N   E   S

		1♥	P
2♥	P	P	?

They are in a good contract and it will be good for them if you leave them alone. It is hard to find a hand that will not balance. When they bid as they did here, you should want, more than ever, to balance.

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These two sequences also show real fits. Mostly they will have eight or more trumps.

1♣	1♥	1♣	1♦
2♥		1♥	2♥

On these two sequences, where your opponents have shown a real fit and limited values, your attitude toward reopening should be very aggressive. The only reason you are not obsessive about balancing is that your side does not have three suits it can bid.

### *Recognizing how many trumps they have*

Here are some fit sequences for you to think about. In each of the following auctions, what kind of fit do you think they have? It is useful for you to note the differences between the next three sequences.

W	N	E	S
1♠	P	2♠	?

Your opponents will always have an eight-card fit when they are playing five-card majors, and a fair amount of the time when they are playing four-card majors. They could have a nine-card fit.

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♠	P
2♠	P	P	?

Your opponents will have at least an eight-card fit about 80% of the time, and can easily have a nine-card fit. The important point here is that on

sequences like this one, there is a fair chance they have only a seven-card fit, which you should consider when estimating partner's holding in their suit.

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♥	P
1♠	P	2♠	?

They will have exactly a four-four fit about 99% of the time. It is very useful to recognize what sort of fit they are likely to have because it will be a key factor on close decisions.

### *Dangerous suits*

I've discussed the concept of "dangerous" suits before, and will again, because it is the basis for many competitive decisions. (See my updated book *The Complete Book on Overcalls*.)

Dangerous suits can be generally defined. If responder raises his partner or bids 1NT, all suits lower ranking than opener's are "dangerous" and all suits higher ranking than opener's are "safe."

After 1♠ by partner, all three of these hands would raise to 2♠:

♠ K 8 2	♠ K 8 2	♠ K 8 2
♥ K J 8 7 6	♥ J 5 4	♥ 10 7
♦ J 5 4	♦ K J 8 7 6	♦ J 5 4
♣ 10 7	♣ 10 7	♣ K J 8 7 6

None of these hands has the values to bid the long suit. This means that the raiser can have a very good holding in a suit lower ranking than the one he has raised.

But if responder could show a higher ranking suit at the one level, he would probably do so, particularly if it was a major suit. After 1♣ by partner, these hands would respond 1♥ or 1♠ rather than raise clubs:

♠ 9 3	♠ J 9 8 7
♥ K 10 8 6	♥ 7 6
♦ 7 6 3	♦ 10 5 4

♣ A 10 9 7    ♣ A Q 9 7

This means that when responder raises on one of these three auctions, he will not have a higher suit worth showing.

1♣ 2♣    1♦ 2♦    1♥ 2♥

There are two mild exceptions.

When the bidding goes 1♣ - P - 2♣, you should be slightly concerned about diamonds. Responder might have raised clubs in preference to mentioning diamonds.

♠ J 4 2  
♥ 10 7  
♦ K J 8 4  
♣ A 10 8 7

When the bidding goes 1♥ - P - 2♥, spades are a mild concern. Responder might have raised hearts in preference to bidding 1♠. He might have:

♠ K 10 8 7 5  
♥ K J 3  
♦ 4 2  
♣ 10 6 5

It is usually best to raise to 2♥ rather than to bid 1♠. Letting partner know you like his major is good bridge.

The concept of certain suits being relatively dangerous and other suits being relatively safe will be touched on in the following examples of reopening when the opponents bid and raise a suit.

*When they bid and raise a minor*

I can't really remember the last time I allowed the opponents to play in 2♣ or 2♦ when they raised a minor and tried to play it in two of their suit.

W	N	E	S	W	N	E	S
	P	1♣	P			1♦	P
2♣	P	P	?	2♦	P	P	?

These auctions always lead to reopening sequences where everyone suddenly finds something to say. This is a typical auction.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
2♣	P	P	2♥
P	P	3♣	P
P	3♥	P	P
P			

Sometimes there's even more bidding, and at matchpoints the final contract is frequently doubled. Here are some examples of balancing when they bid and raise a minor. When they have a fit you should strongly consider bidding in the reopening seat.

Be sure to note my comments about the various dangers that exist on each sequence.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K Q 8 7  
W N E S     ♥ 5 4  
          1♣ P     ♦ K 6 5 4  
2♣ P P ?     ♣ 10 6 5

An automatic 2♠. Your three clubs are not a bad holding because the opponents have raised. This suggests shortness in partner's hand and increases the chance that partner will hold spades. Double would be a serious error as it might induce partner to bid hearts at too high a level. Passing would be an error because you are allowing them to play in a good low level contract.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ 10 7 6 5  
W N E S     ♥ Q 10 8 4

1♣ P     ♦ A 10 8 5  
 2♣ P P ?     ♣ 8

Double. When you have the right shape, you should probably double and then look at your hand. Note that all suits are available for partner at the two level. Even though you are vulnerable, you could do this with less. Passing out 2♣ on this sequence would require a really bad hand.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K J 4  
 W N E S     ♥ Q 8 6 5  
           1♣ P     ♦ K 6 5 4  
 2♣ P P ?     ♣ 10 2

Double again. With decent shape you have to get in there on any excuse. This is still not a minimum. The few high cards you have are in the suits you are showing. Nothing is wasted.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ K Q 2  
 W N E S     ♥ A 10 5  
           1♣ P     ♦ Q 5 4  
 2♣ P P ?     ♣ 9 8 6 5

Even though holding four clubs, it is right to double. Partner is likely to have singleton club, so unless he is 4-4-4-1, he will have a five-card suit. Your values are all working and this will be a suitable dummy. You have a pretty good hand. Even vulnerable, you should be bidding.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 10 7 6  
 W N E S     ♥ K J 4  
           1♣ P     ♦ Q 6 5  
 2♣ P P ?     ♣ K J 6 5

Pass. Enough is enough. Here, much of your strength is wasted in clubs. With this distribution, you need your values where they will be useful to partner.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ J 7 3  
 W N E S     ♥ K 8 4  
           1♣ P     ♦ A Q 10 6  
 2♣ P P ?     ♣ 8 6 4

Double. The values you have are working. When your shape is minimal, it is often right to double when you have the magic holding of three or four small in their suit. This hand is not a classic double but the auction tells you that bidding is wise. It doesn't take much motivation for you to find a bid.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 8  
 W N E S     ♥ J 8 7 6 5  
           1♦ P     ♦ 9 4 2  
 2♦ P P ?     ♣ A Q J 5

2♥. Whenever you can reopen in a "safe" suit, you need very little encouragement to do so. Don't worry about where the spades are. Your partner has five or more. This fact suggests they aren't very good or he would have bid them. He is marked for about 11 to 13 points, and would have bid 2♠ with a good suit. This means his values will be in hearts or clubs, which suits you fine.

N-S VUL     ♠ Q 9 2  
 W N E S     ♥ Q 10 6  
           1♦ P     ♦ 4 2  
 2♦ P P ?     ♣ A Q 10 9 3

Double. 3♣ would be terribly risky. This suit is very "dangerous" so you shouldn't rush to bid it, especially at the three level. With adequate major suit holdings and better than a minimum, double is correct, at least at matchpoints.

**Note that on many hands where you reopen, you do not really expect or even hope to buy the contract. All you want is to push the opponents**

**up one trick higher where your chances of defeating them are improved. Bidding and making a contract your way is not your main objective.**

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 2  
W N E S      ♥ A 4 2  
1♦ P      ♦ K 8 7  
2♦ P P ?      ♣ Q J 8 6 3

This hand, in spite of its high cards, is not worth reopening. The “dangerous” suit concept means just that. Responder raised to 2♦, denying four hearts and denying four spades. It is very possible that he has four or five clubs. Scary.

The fact that you have a good hand doesn’t do that much for your reopening potential because it just means your partner has that much less. Look at the sequence above again.

You can be sure that their side has from 17 to 23 points and that your side has from 17 to 23 points. That’s a fact. You have 13 points and your partner could have 10. He might also have 4. If you double, your partner will often bid spades, which is bad. If you bid 3♣, you run into the possibility that your LHO has lots of clubs. Bidding at the three level is a nervous affair anyway. Best to pass.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ Q J 5  
W N E S      ♥ K 5 4  
1♦ P      ♦ 3  
2♦ P P ?      ♣ Q J 10 9 8 6

Even though clubs are dangerous, you can withstand most bad splits. All you need is a few useful high cards, and those are more or less guaranteed. As unsafe as 3♣ was on the previous hand with 13 points, 3♣ here on 9 points is acceptable, certainly at matchpoints and probably at IMPs. If your partner has kings in spades and clubs you are off to a great start.

N-S VUL      ♠ 10  
W N E S      ♥ Q J 5 3



1♦ P     ♦ 10 7 5  
 2♦ P P ?     ♣ A K 9 7 4

2♥. This hand is very important. It demonstrates clearly the difference in safety when reopening in higher ranking suits as opposed to lower ranking suits. Given additionally that clubs must be bid a level higher, you should feel that 2♥ is at twice as preferable as 3♣.

### *When they bid and raise hearts*

When their side raises hearts and tries to stop in 2♥, you will balance aggressively but not as much as when they bid and raised a minor suit.

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
2♥	P	P	?

This auction seldom gets passed out. But it might. This is because there is only one suit you can bid at the two level; spades. The minors, however, must be bid at the three level, and this is more dangerous. You can still make a takeout double in the balancing seat so overall, bidding against 2♥ is a common event.

Some examples of balancing when they bid and raise hearts:

NO ONE VUL     ♠ Q 10 8 4  
 W N E S     ♥ 9 8 7  
           1♥ P     ♦ K 2  
 2♥ P P ?     ♣ A 10 5 4

2♠. On this sequence spades are slightly suspect, but the three little hearts are a definite plus. You should feel no qualms about this one. The number of cards you have in their suit is important. Three or four cards is a good sign when you are thinking of bidding a suit. Two cards is bad.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ 3  
 W N E S     ♥ 9 7 6 5

1♥ P     ♦ K J 8 7  
 2♥ P P ?     ♣ A 10 5 4

Bid 2NT, unusual. This is extremely safe. Partner almost surely has a singleton heart, so he will have a four-card or longer minor about 95% of the time. With his expected strength, this hand will produce a plus result almost every time. Note that even though both clubs and diamonds are dangerous, you are offering a choice of two suits, and one of them will be good.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ K 6 2  
**W N E S**     ♥ 10 7  
                  1♥ P     ♦ J 10 7  
 2♥ P P ?     ♣ A Q 5 4 2

Double. When you have a stiff or doubleton in the opponents' suit, you reopen unless your hand somehow does not make the grade. Anytime you find partner with five spades or diamonds, you get a good result. This is not a great reopening hand but it is passable. A 3♣ bid would be very wrong.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ 10 6 4  
**W N E S**     ♥ K Q  
                  1♥ P     ♦ J 9 8 7  
 2♥ P P ?     ♣ K 6 5 3

Pass. Your shape says balance but your high cards tell you to pass. With more than half of your points in hearts and with only three spades, I would agree with pass. I would also agree that doubling can work. Be aware that it is not assured.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ K Q 8 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ 9 8 4  
                  1♥ P     ♦ J 10 7  
 2♥ P P ?     ♣ K J 5

2♠. Your hearts suggest shortness in partner's hand so partner rates to have a few spades. It is better here to bid 2♠ than double, because a 4-3 spade fit will play better than a 4-3 minor suit contract. In spades, you will be able to ruff hearts in your partner's hand, which may include three spades.

N-S VUL      ♠ K Q 6 4  
W N E S      ♥ 3  
1♥ P      ♦ Q 10 6 5  
2♥ P P ?      ♣ K 5 4 2

Double. No need to guess with 2♠. You almost certainly have a fit unless partner is specifically 3-4-3-3. You have support for three suits. Double shows this. This hand is somewhat better than you need for a vulnerable double given this bidding sequence.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 9 7  
W N E S      ♥ J 6 5  
1♥ P      ♦ K J 7  
2♥ P P ?      ♣ A 10 9 3

A crummy matchpoint reopening double. This is done in the hope that the opponents carry on to 3♥. The next time your partner reopens with a double, remember that he may have a hand like this one. Don't hang him.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 4 2  
W N E S      ♥ 8 3  
1♥ P      ♦ K 10 7 6  
2♥ P P ?      ♣ A 9 8 6 5

A 2NT bid. Even though holding nine minor suit cards, you don't have as much assurance of a fit as when you were 1-4-4-4 on an earlier hand on the same sequence. However, at matchpoints, you do want to get them higher. Being able to offer a choice of two suits gives you a far greater degree of safety, even though both suits are dangerous, than if you were merely reopening in one of them. This is a normal matchpoint travesty.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 4 2  
W N E S     ♥ 8 7 6  
1♥ P     ♦ K Q 10 7  
2♥ P P ?     ♣ A J 9 8

Bid 2NT. This hand is better than the previous hand. Even though you have only four cards in each minor, your three little hearts hint that your partner has one or two hearts. This increases your chances that partner has a four-card minor, in which case 3♣ or 3♦ will be a fair contract. Your hope is that you can actually make something but you will be happy if they bid to 3♥ or if you play in 3♣ or 3♦ and go down only a little. Enough good things can happen that bidding is worthwhile. I agree that you may be down a ton now and then.

E-W VUL     ♠ Q 2  
W N E S     ♥ Q 8 7  
1♥ P     ♦ Q J 8 7  
2♥ P P ?     ♣ K 10 6 5

No need to push a good thing into the ground. Pass. If you can't stand it, then 2NT not vulnerable at matchpoints could work, but if it doesn't, don't tell partner you got the idea here.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ 10 6 5  
W N E S     ♥ 4 2  
1♥ P     ♦ K Q 10 7  
2♥ P P ?     ♣ A Q 9 8

Double. With adequate spade support, it would be wrong to commit your side to a minor suit.

*When they bid and raise spades*

There is one sequence where they raise that you need to treat gingerly.

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
2♠	P	P	?

This is because you have to bid at the three level, which is more dangerous than bidding at the two level. You won't often feel like bidding a suit at the three level. Here are some example hands showing balancing against 2♠.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 3 2
W N E S	♥ A J 7 6
1♠ P	♦ K 4 2
2♠ P P ?	♣ Q 10 6 5

A matchpoint double. When the opponents are bidding and raising spades, you must be aware of the dangers I discussed earlier. Here they are again.

All three suits are dangerous because your LHO may have length in the suit you want to bid.

You will still be able to count on partner for certain values, and if you can double for takeout, you have a fair chance of finding a fit. Therefore, reopening doubles can reasonably be made. Be aware that you are going to the three level when you make a balancing double of 2♠, which means you need a little more to double 2♠ than two of any other suit.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 3
W N E S	♥ A 8 7 4
1♠ P	♦ Q J 5 4
2♠ P P ?	♣ Q 8 7 3

Double. Hands with this shape are perfect for a double. It takes a really lousy hand with this shape not to double.

But, you will have to be very cautious indeed about bidding a suit. The hand above has minimal values but the shape qualifies it for a balancing double. Compare it with the following hand.

E-W VUL	♠ 8 6 4
W N E S	♥ K 7 6 4 2
1♠ P	♦ Q J 6
2♣ P P ?	♣ K 9

An extremely dangerous matchpoint 3♥ bid. West can have a lot of hearts. And you are at the three level. The best you can say for this hand is that it has three small spades. You know your partner has just two and may have one. That is the only good news. Bidding at the three level is generally left for brave or foolhardy souls. If they are right, they look good. When they are wrong, they do not look so good. I agree that 3♥ might work but it is still dangerous.

Here is an important comparison. Say they had bid and raised hearts and you had the same hand, but with the majors switched.

E-W VUL	♠ K 7 6 4 2
W N E S	♥ 8 6 4
1♥ P	♦ Q J 6
2♥ P P ?	♣ K 9

You would be delighted, even thrilled, to bid 2♠. On the previous layout where you were thinking of bidding 3♥ over 2♠, you should be terrified.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ 4 2
W N E S	♥ K Q 8 6 5
1♠ P	♦ K 7 6
2♠ P P ?	♣ K 4 2

Scary. A better hand and a better suit than the previous hand, but you are vulnerable and have no particular reason to expect a fit. Double is dangerous because it runs the risk of playing a 4-3 minor suit fit instead of a 5-3 heart fit. And 3♥ runs the serious risk of finding partner with only one or two hearts. The extra length in spades on the previous hand was really very important in determining your chances of a fit. At IMPs, it would be a

terrible reopening action of any sort. At matchpoints, perhaps. But your victories will be small ones and your disasters enormous.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ 3  
**W N E S**      ♥ Q 8 6 5  
                  1♠ P      ♦ K 5 4 2  
 2♠ P P ?      ♣ K 10 6 5

When your shape is good, anything goes because you can always count on partner for certain point values. You know he has a good hand and will have at least a four-card suit for you except when he has 4-3-3-3 shape.

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ 8 6 2  
**W N E S**      ♥ K J 7  
                  1♠ P      ♦ A J 4 2  
 2♠ P P ?      ♣ K 10 6

Double is reasonable. When you have no values wasted in their suit and adequate support for all suits, it is okay to act. Partner is short in spades, thus increasing the chances that he has a five-card suit.

**N-S VUL**      ♠ Q 7  
**W N E S**      ♥ 10 5 4  
                  1♠ P      ♦ A J 7 5  
 2♠ P P ?      ♣ K J 4 3

It's dangerous to bid here because you have the wasted spade queen and you have poor hearts, which is the suit partner will bid given a choice. When you have cards like the spade queen which are worthless, you have to feel that you are playing with a 38 point deck rather than the usual 40. The spade queen is not doing you any good but it is a card the opponents don't have. They will still have their 21 or so points and partner will have his 8. If you didn't have the spade queen, you could count on partner for 10, and you could hope for none of them to be wasted. On the actual hand, you know you have that card. Better to pass on this minimum and try to beat them.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ Q 3  
**W N E S**      ♥ K J 7  
                  1♠ P      ♦ A 6 5 4  
 2♠ P P ?      ♣ K 10 6 5

Double is okay because you have assured values. Even with the spade queen demoted, your other cards are prime and you have a good three-card holding in hearts. As noted in the previous hand, your having the Q3 of spades is a bad omen. A jack anywhere else would be more valuable than the queen of spades.

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ 8 6 5 4  
**W N E S**      ♥ 3  
                  1♠ P      ♦ 4 2  
 2♠ P P ?      ♣ K J 10 8 7 6

3♣ is automatic. You have the likelihood of a fit and you have a good six-card suit, plus partner is marked for a good hand. He is probably just shy of a hand worth a takeout double of 2♠. Passing here would be losing bridge.

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ 3  
**W N E S**      ♥ J 2  
                  1♠ P      ♦ K 10 7 6 5  
 2♠ P P ?      ♣ A 5 4 3 2

2NT, unusual. The shape is right, so you really don't need any high cards to speak of. Partner has those, and it only remains for him to produce a three-card minor. Both minor suits are dangerous here, but because you are offering a choice, your chances are relatively good.

## **WHY DID AN OPPONENT FAIL TO BALANCE? SOME FALLACIOUS REASONING.**

I've been allowed on occasion to play in 2♥ or 2♠ after the example sequences on hands where I had no business playing there. It was the



opponents' hand, but for some reason no one reopened. After the result was in, one of my opponents made a comment along the lines of, "I would have bid, but I was afraid they would bid a game." This is an example of negative thinking of the worst kind.

Of all the guarantees I can give you, when your opponents bid one of something, pass, two of the same something, pass, pass to you, they did not miss a good game in their suit. If they can make a game, it will be lucky to make. One of the easiest things to do is evaluate your hand after you have found a fit, and even the least experienced player pretty well understands what a game contract requires.

What happens is that many people fail to reopen against good players, and that is the worst of all. I absolutely promise that no capable player has ever failed to bid after a raise if he has the slightest inkling that he has a game. Only against someone you know to be conservative should you not reopen, and then only on questionable hands.

Against strong players, if your hand says reopen, then do so! Here's a professional tip for you. When a good player does not make a game try after being raised, he can't make a game and he may have trouble taking nine or even eight tricks. Bid something.

N-S VUL	♠ 10 6 4
W N E S	♥ 3
1♠ P	♦ K Q 6 4
2♠ P P ?	♣ K 10 6 5 4

With good chances of a fit and decent cards, try 2NT. Note that when you are offering a choice of suits, partner with equal length will chose the lower suit. If partner has three each in diamonds and clubs, he will bid clubs. On this hand, you will have arrived in the best suit. (See next hand.)

N-S VUL	♠ 10 6 4
W N E S	♥ 3
1♠ P	♦ A Q J 8 3
2♠ P P ?	♣ J 9 6 5

This is a scary hand. You have two poor choices.

You can bid 3♦, which is an all or nothing stab.

You can bid 2NT, which risks getting to the wrong minor. Partner will bid clubs when he has the same length in the minors so you will be in the wrong suit.

Or you can pass, which is what I suggest. I am willing to give up on this hand.

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q 2
W N E S	♥ Q 8 7
1♠ P	♦ A K J 6 5
2♠ P P ?	♣ J 5 4

**This hand is typical of reopening disasters. There is so much wrong with this hand. Assume you are considering 3♦. Here are the dangers.**

**First, you have a doubleton spade. Now that is not bad in itself, but it is a much better holding when you are considering a takeout double than when you are considering bidding a suit. Having two spades does not give you any reason to expect a fit in any specific suit, in this case diamonds. Diamonds is a dangerous suit and bidding it is a committal action which must be right. If you bid 3♦ and hear a double, you will go down, probably badly.**

**Second, you have the spade queen, a wasted card. Remember this rule. The more wasted high cards you have, the fewer useful high cards you will find in your partner's hand. This is significant, something I mentioned a short time ago.**

**Third, you have only a five-card suit. It is a good one, but you would like another card in it given that you can't count on support from partner.**

**Fourth. With a spade lead, you may be subject to an early tap, which you won't appreciate. This is one of the advantages of three cards in the opponents' suit. When you bid a suit, you can hope for a fit, and your dummy will be able to take the tap rather than you.**

**Fifth. Your other cards are soft. The heart queen and club jack are questionable.**

**Sixth, and last, you are reopening at the three level where good opponents will be pleased to punish an indiscretion.**

**The objection to double is that you still have the wasted spade queen, and you have really poor support for two of the suits partner will bid, including the one he is most likely to bid, hearts. Pass with this awful hand.**

*What if your opponents play four-card majors?*

This is one more thing to think about. It may or may not be an issue in most games.

Once in awhile, you will run into opponents who play four-card majors, and in balancing situations you will have to be aware of this. These players will quite correctly raise 1♥ to 2♥ with three trumps. And if this gets passed around to you, you will have to consider that they may be in a 4-3 fit. This means that if you have three of their suit, partner will not always have the shortness you expect. Partner might also have three. And if you have two, partner may have four.

Now just because they play four-card majors does not always mean they have four, and when they bid 1♥- P - 2♥, they may have a 5-3 fit or a 5-4 fit just like anyone else. But there is the danger that it is a 4-3. This means you must tighten up just a bit against those pairs when reopening. Many players look down on four-card major players, but they shouldn't. Perhaps they lose a bit in science, but they can more than hold their own in the rough and tumble that occurs in competitive bidding. Reopening against them is one of the more difficult problems presented by their style.

*Sequences where they have bid two or more suits before they find a fit*

The next set of sequences to consider are those where the opponents have bid two or more suits before finding their fit. Note these three example auctions.

1♣	1♠	1♥	1♠	1♣	1♥
2♠	P	1NT	2♥	1♠	2♠
		P		P	

## Expectations For Balancing When Your Opponents Bid Two or More Suits Before Finding a Real Fit

When they bid back and forth before finding a fit, you will be a bit more cautious about balancing. There is more than one reason for this.

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The first reason is that their side can have more points than you expect. Take this auction.

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♠	P
2♠	P	P	?

West has his opening bid values but East may have extras. There are a lot of 10 or 11 point hands East can have that will pass 2♠.

Here is an example layout for this sequence.

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

East has a decent 10 point hand and chose to pass it out in 2♠. This is high enough for them. You can see that they have 23 HCP, meaning that you do not want to get involved.

The second reason for passing when they bid two or more suits before finding a fit is that there are fewer suits available for you to consider. This is not a trivial consideration.

Against sequences where they do not find their fit immediately, you should still consider reopening. The usual rule applies. If they want to play it where they are, give thought to not letting them. But be aware of the two dangers mentioned above.

Here are example hands. Do not forget that your side has only one or two suits to choose from.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 8 7 6  
W N E S      ♥ Q 6 2  
1♣ P 1♥ P      ♦ K Q J 8  
2♥ P P ?      ♣ 10 7

Double. With four cards in both unbid suits, you can think about bidding. Here you have excellent diamonds and fair spades. True, you have the wasted queen of hearts, but you will find that when the opponents have bid two suits you frequently have one or more questionable cards. An additional point here is that partner can bid spades at the two level. This is a reasonable double.

N-S VUL      ♠ K Q 7  
W N E S      ♥ 9 7 6 5  
1♦ P 1♥ P      ♦ 4 2  
2♥ P P ?      ♣ A J 10 7

Sort of OK to double. You have only three spades. At least they are good ones and partner can bid them at the two level. Importantly, you have pure working values. Don't obsess that you are vulnerable. You will get away with a fair number of balancing bids on hands like these. Just remember. A good partner will have five spades or four clubs often enough to make your bidding look good.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A J 10 7  
W N E S      ♥ 6 5 4 2  
1♣ P 1♥ P      ♦ K J 7  
2♥ P P ?      ♣ 6 5

As clear as it was to double with the previous hand, it is equally clear to bid 2♠ here. Partner may have one heart, which is excellent news. One thing you must avoid at all costs is doubling with three cards in a lower ranking

suit. If partner has four diamonds he may bid them at the three level. If at all possible, do something else. Here 2♠ is a standout. Partner has short hearts and that hints strongly that he can have a spade fit with you. It is not guaranteed but betting on it is a winning strategy.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 3  
W N E S     ♥ J 2  
1♦ P 1♠ P     ♦ K J 9 6 4  
2♠ P P ?     ♣ A 10 9 5 4

With West bidding diamonds, things are not so good. I suggest passing 2♠.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ J 8  
W N E S     ♥ K 10 8 7  
1♣ P 1♠ P     ♦ Q 10 6 5  
2♠ P P ?     ♣ K 6 4

Far too dangerous to bid. Wasted black suit cards plus being at the three level indicates a pass.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K 8 7 3  
W N E S     ♥ 4 2  
1♦ P 1♥ P     ♦ Q 7  
2♥ P P ?     ♣ A 10 8 7 2

Double for takeout. Your shape is good in that you have nine cards in the two suits you are showing. If you had five spades and four clubs, you would bid 2♠.

Here are two similar hands sharing the same auction on the left.

E-W VUL				♠ J 8 7	♠ J 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥ K Q 10 8 7	♥ K Q 5
1♦	P	1♠	P	♦ 3 2	♦ 3 2
2♠	P	P	?	♣ K Q 5	♣ K Q 10 8 7

Reopening at the three level as opposed to reopening with a double is as always a very dangerous action. Both of these hands are dangerous for a three level bid. I hate bidding at the three level in general and suggest passing on each of these hands. These two hands are a reminder that three level bids are usually avoided with balanced hands with five-card suits. You have as much as you are likely to have and passing is still a wise choice.

## **PSYCHOLOGY—SHOW THE OPPONENTS THAT YOU ARE CONFIDENT**

**When you make a balancing bid, it will frequently be on a hand that is not much to look at. It will help you if you always bid (and lead and play and defend) as if you know you are doing something good. If you can keep from showing anxiety at the table, your opponents won't have any clues that you are out of line.**

**BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ A 9 6 4**  
**W   N   E   S      ♥ 4 2**  
**1♣   P   1♠   P      ♦ Q J 9 8 7 6**  
**2♠   P   P   ?      ♣ 3**

You won't reopen vulnerable at the three level very often. When you do, it will be based on knowledge of a fit rather than a bunch of points with some random suit. This hand is typical of what you will have for a three level action. A six-card suit is much better than a five-card suit.

**BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ 3**  
**W   N   E   S      ♥ 4 2**  
**1♣   P   1♠   P      ♦ Q J 9 8 7 6**  
**2♠   P   P   ?      ♣ A 9 6 4**

You can try 3♦ here, but you should feel that the value of this hand is at least two tricks worse than the previous hand. This hand promises no particular fit, so you may have quite a few trump losers, and you will have to deal with three potential club losers. The prior hand suggested a diamond fit, so you might have only the ace and king of diamonds to lose, and you could

expect (hope) to get rid of some of your spade losers by ruffing them in dummy.

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q 10 8 7
W N E S	♥ K 2
1♣ P	♦ J 10 6 5
1♥ P 1NT P	♣ A 4 3
2♣ P P ?	

Double. It is rare for someone to play 2♣ is natural on this auction. If it does occur, the opponents have a guaranteed fit which did not include an immediate raise.

This hand is worth a takeout double. You have the required length in both unbid suits and your values are all working. Do not discount that heart king. LHO has announced a weak hand so there is no reason to feel the heart king is wasted. Note that LHO has bid two suits so he is unlikely to have much length in one of the other two suits. Also, opener didn't rebid 1♠, which tends to deny a four-card holding. The chances here are very good that partner has length in spades or diamonds.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 4 2
W N E S	♥ A 10 9 5
1♦ P	♦ 10 5
1♠ P 1NT P	♣ K 10 9 3 2
2♦ P P ?	

You should very much want to reopen on this auction. Double for takeout, showing hearts and clubs. West's 2♦ bid shows a fit and also implies a modest hand. You can count on your partner to have around 11 points, perhaps more.

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q 8 2
W N E S	♥ J 9 7 5
1♦ P	♦ K J 4
1♠ P 1NT P	♣ A 10 8



2♦ P P ?

Pass. On this sequence, opener could have four hearts. This, plus your crummy heart holding along with the wastage in spades and diamonds, dictates a pass. When they have bid two suits before finding a fit, the impetus to balance is not as great as when they have bid only one suit, as in 1♦ - P - 2♦.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♥	P	1♠	P
2♠	P	P	?

In this auction, they bid three suits before finding a fit. You won't want to reopen on very many hands. You might bid 2♠ if spades was the unbid suit. You will almost never bid the fourth suit at the three level. Only if your holding in the fourth suit is extra good, usually a nice six-card suit, should you bother bidding it, and with that good a suit, you would have bid it over 1♣. The next hand is the exception to this rule.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K J 8 6 3  
W N E S     ♥ 4  
              1♣ P     ♦ 4 3 2  
1♦ P 1♥ P     ♣ K 10 7 6  
2♥ P P ?

Marginally acceptable to bid 2♠. This is the only sequence where you can bid at the two level after a three suited auction, and your suit perforce is spades. Most likely, if your suit were any good you would have bid it earlier, so partner should not expect too much from you. Your values are good ones, just not many of them. This is a gamble that has chances of success but it may work poorly too.

Importantly, here is something that should scare you. Either opponent may have four spades.

Final comment on this hand. Some players would overcall 1♠ so this hand would not exist as a balancing problem.



# Reopening When the Opponents Have Not Found a Fit

## Expectations For Balancing When Your Opponents Have Not Found a Fit

In general, you should be careful about sequences where they do not have a fit. When you are faced with an auction where they stop without finding a fit, you should bid only when your hand tells you to bid. If they do not have a fit there is no guarantee or even expectation that you have a fit. You might have a seven-card trump suit, but more than that is a random thing. The simple advice is not to balance at all. But that is going too far. There are times when you can balance but you have to spot the times when it is right.

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These auctions can be broken down into three common types. They are:

1. They have ended in 1NT.
2. They have a pseudo fit where someone has taken a preference.
3. They have no fit, someone having rebid his suit.

## Balancing When The Opponents End in 1NT

## Expectations For Balancing When Your Opponents End in 1NT

Unless your hand strongly suggests you bid a suit, or you wish to ask partner to bid one, you should pass. I am going to suggest that a reopening double is for penalty, not for takeout. There is a special trick you can use if you are sure you want partner to bid a suit. That will appear at the end of this section.

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When the opponents have settled in 1NT, it is more dangerous to reopen. They have not found a fit, which is the usual motivation for you to reopen, and you will be forcing your side to the two level when you bid. Auctions ending in 1NT can include more high cards than “fit” auctions such as 1♥ - Pass - 2♥, so you will have less chance of finding partner with a extra high-card values.

All of this means that you will get doubled more often and more effectively than in other reopening sequences so far discussed. When deciding when to reopen in a suit, you will want to give extra attention to the safe suit/dangerous suit concept.

Lastly, a problem of definition. If you double, should it be for penalty or should it be takeout? I will discuss this specific question shortly.

*Examples of bidding a suit when they have bid back and forth to 1NT*

NO ONE VUL	♠	Q 9 8 6 5
W N E S	♥	Q 4 2
P P 1♦ P	♦	10 7 6
1NT P P ?	♣	A 3

Pass. I suppose you could try 2♠, as the suit is safe. Because you didn't bid 1♠ earlier, you won't have a good five-card suit. This hand is balanced, though, and given your poor suit I suggest passing.

I would say that you would want to pass most balanced hands on this sequence. Should you choose to bid, you do promise a five-card suit. Note

that responder denies a major suit and rates to have length in clubs. But opener can have four spades.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A 3  
W N E S      ♥ Q 4 2  
P P 1♦ P      ♦ 10 7 6  
1NT P P ?      ♣ Q 9 8 6 5

This is the same hand as the one above with the clubs and spades switched. Be aware that when East bids 1♦ and West does not bid a major, West does not have a major and he doesn't feel like raising diamonds. What West usually has is four or five clubs, making it very dangerous for you to bid clubs. On this sequence, clubs is defined as a dangerous suit. You should not ignore that danger. It is much more dangerous to bid 2♣ on this hand than it was to bid 2♠ on the previous hand.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 10 6 4 2  
W N E S      ♥ 3  
P P 1♣ P      ♦ A J 7  
1NT P P ?      ♣ 9 6 5 4

Probably 2♠. When LHO bids 1NT rather than a suit, he tends to have a club fit. 2♠ here is safe. You would probably reopen with 2♠ regardless of the opening bid, but you should be happy to do so after 1♣, content to do so after 1♦, and apprehensive after 1♥.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 7  
W N E S      ♥ J 2  
P P 1♥ P      ♦ Q J 9 8 7  
1NT P P ?      ♣ K J 10 7

Pass. It's so risky to reopen in a "dangerous" suit that you shouldn't bother unless it is just too obvious to do so. If you are going to bid a dangerous suit, you will probably need a six-card suit or a good five-card suit with some shape. If you have the suit, you won't have much else or you

would have overcalled. 2♦ is a dangerous bid. Oddly, you will almost never have to balance against this bidding sequence since a 1NT response to a major suit opening bid is considered forcing by many. This sequence, therefore, doesn't come up often.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ 3  
**W N E S**      ♥ K 6 5  
                  1♥ P      ♦ A 10 9 8 6 4  
 1NT P P ?      ♣ Q 7 5

Bid 2♦. You have the prerequisite suit, good shape, and reasonably working values. And 2♦ is still not all that safe. You should bid it because it will be right more often than not, even at IMPs, but your bad results will be impressive. Anytime you catch partner with a stiff diamond, you will be in trouble. And why shouldn't this happen?

Partner has at least five spades, or someone would have bid them. And he may have four hearts if LHO has a stiff. There's no reason why partner's last four cards should include two diamonds and two clubs rather than one diamond and three clubs. Given that you have six diamonds and three clubs, the chances of finding partner with only one diamond are significant.

As with the previous hand, this auction is rare. The important thing is that if you encounter this sequence you do need a good holding, such as the diamond suit here, to bid a dangerous suit.

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ J 8 7 6 5  
**W N E S**      ♥ A Q 2  
 1♣ P 1♥ P      ♦ K 4 3  
 1NT P P ?      ♣ 8 6

Pass or 2♠. 2♠ is a gamble at matchpoints, with minimum expectations. Once again, you usually won't have too much to reopen with. If you have a suit higher ranking than RHO's, as you do here, you might already have bid it. Note that RHO can still have four spades. There is nothing about this sequence that guarantees you will find spade support. I would pass at IMPs. For the record, if you bid 1♠ over 1♥, that is not a bad idea. Doing so would mean you did not have a later balancing decision.

On this sequence diamonds is a modestly dangerous suit because there's the chance that RHO might have skipped over diamonds in order to respond 1♥. There isn't really too much to this except to say that you would like to have some distribution when you elect to reopen. There won't be many hands where you can infer from the bidding that partner fits your suit. The more I think about this hand, the more I like bidding 1♠ earlier and not having to face this balancing decision. Books warn you about bidding 1♠ but they do not bother discussing your later bids.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ J 9 8 6 5  
W N E S      ♥ A 9 6 5 4  
1♦ P 1♥ P      ♦ 3  
1NT P P ?      ♣ 10 2

This is the kind of hand that would pass over 1♥ and later back in with 2♠ when they stop in 1NT. The auction implies short hearts in partner's hand, so 2♠ becomes a reasonable shot.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ J 10 8 6 5  
W N E S      ♥ A 9 6 5  
1♦ P 1♥ P      ♦ 3 2  
1NT P P ?      ♣ Q 2

Pass. This hand is far removed in value from the previous hand. Your partner may hold as many as three hearts so there is less chance of a fit. Adding the small diamond has given you an additional loser to replace the potentially winning long heart. And if partner has an extra heart, it may be at the expense of a spade. One more possible loser. The prior hand was a safe 2♠ bid. This hand is a risky 2♠ under any circumstances. I would be leery of bidding 2♠. Being not vulnerable can't excuse you from bidding foolishly.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 4 2  
W N E S      ♥ K 8 7  
1♥ P 1♠ P      ♦ Q J 8 6 5 4  
1NT P P ?      ♣ K 2

You can risk bidding 2♦ because you have a fair six-card suit. All you need from partner to make diamonds an adequate trump suit is two small cards. Your king of hearts is suspect, though, which is a bad sign. East did not raise hearts so you know your partner has three or four of them. There could be some heart losers. All in all, bidding 2♦ is OK at matchpoints but not at IMPs.

### *What does a double mean when they stop in 1NT?*

Finally, the question of double. What does it mean when your opponents have settled in 1NT and someone reopens with double? I am guessing that most partnerships have not discussed this.

There are two possibilities:

First, double can be for takeout, showing the unbid suits.

Second, it can be penalty oriented, showing strength in the suit bid on the doubler's right.

Seems like a simple choice, yet very few partnerships are on firm ground about this. Double should have some definition. Random guessing is not the answer.

### *Should double be for takeout?*

Probably not, and for quite a few reasons.

The opponents have not found a fit so you have no reason to expect that you have one.

If you have the shape for a reopening double, you won't have very good values or you would have acted earlier.

You will always be competing at the two level.

In addition to the fact that you are competing against a misfit sequence, your combined hands will not play well. If you are short in your RHO's suit, it just means that your partner will have a lot of them.

NO ON VUL	♠	Q 10 6 3
W N E S	♥	7
1♣ P 1♥ P	♦	A Q 10 4
1NT P P ?	♣	J 7 6 3

This looks like a hand that would like to get into the bidding. Be aware, though, that there are things to worry about. You know your partner probably has five or six hearts. He did not overcall, suggesting he doesn't have a good hand. Also, given that he has long hearts, his chances of having four spades or diamonds are slimmer than normal. Passing is not terrible. The big point of this hand is that there are reasons why your partner might not have a fit for you.

*Should double be for penalty?*

I suggest that this is the best treatment. Now I have to prove it to you.

NO ONE VUL	♠	8 2
W N E S	♥	K J 9 7
P P 1♥ P	♦	A Q 10 4
1NT P P ?	♣	A 6 3

Double would be very reasonable if intended as penalty. If there is no partnership agreement, then double runs the risk of causing partner to bid spades. If partner understands that double is primarily for business and he still bids spades, you needn't worry because you won't have promised him any. Note that RHO opened in third seat. He may have less than normal values. This is a sequence you won't hear often except when the 1NT bidder is a passed hand.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	K J
W N E S	♥	A J 10 8 5
1♣ P 1♥ P	♦	A 10 5 4
1NT P P ?	♣	9 3

Double could be worth a bundle to your side. Note the eight of hearts. If your hearts were AJ1042, you would have far less chance of bringing the suit home defensively. Note that your partner may have some high cards sitting over declarer's clubs. That would be helpful. On some occasions, your partner will have a heart honor. That would be sweet, especially since he will know to lead a heart. This is a minimum double of 1NT. You need a



little stuff on the side to give you a chance to get in to run the hearts after you set them up.

NO ONE VUL	♠	A K 4 2
W N E S	♥	K 8 6 5
1♦ P 1♠P	♦	K 4 2
1NT P P ?	♣	10 7

Pass. Your spade holding is not the kind you want when you make a penalty double. You want to have secondary tricks in the suit which will be developed by the lead. Here you have two fast tricks, but no deep potential. Your diamond king is possibly of no value. As for bidding 2♥, you should skip it. Their side is not as limited as you would like. Responder could have 10 or 11 HCP. Also, opener might have four hearts. Best go quietly.

N-S VUL	♠	Q J 10 8 3
W N E S	♥	A 8 4
1♣ P 1♠P	♦	A J 7
1NT P P ?	♣	8 3

A good double. With a spade lead, you rate to develop five tricks. No reason to feel that partner won't be able to contribute something. He ought to have from 5 to 8 points. Perhaps he has a spade honor.

1NT doubled could go for quite a few tricks even though they have more than half the deck.

My own feeling is that the potential for a large penalty by playing double is for penalty far outweighs the occasional partscore gain you may earn by playing double for takeout.

In my original version of *Balancing*, I suggested that you could use double to be penalty or takeout, hoping that partner could look at his hand and figure it out. That style is exciting but practice made it clear that partner didn't always know for sure. I am convinced that double as penalty is the best. No ambiguity.

NO ONE VUL	♠	Q 10 8 6 5
W N E S	♥	8 5

1♣ P     ♦ Q 8 6  
 1♥ P 1NT P     ♣ Q 7 6  
 P Db1 P ?

Your partner is doubling because he has good hearts and a good hand too. Do not bid 2♠. Pass and lead the eight of hearts.

NOTE: Here is an important example of why you should not use double as takeout after they bid two suits, ending in 1NT:

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♥	P
1NT	P	P	?

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

Look at this four hand layout. East and West have bid hearts and clubs. It might feel right to bid with the South hand, but that would be a disaster. East and West bid hearts and clubs but their best fits are in spades and diamonds. Your side has seven cards in each of the suits their side bid and six cards in each of the unbid suits. Bidding will not work well.

This layout is not unusual. I recommend you study it. This doesn't mean that South should automatically pass but it does mean that bidding can backfire.

*What if you are sure you want your partner to pick a suit after they stop in 1NT?*

I can almost imagine a hand that wants your partner to bid a suit. However, if you decide to play a double is penalty, very reasonable, then you need something else to ask your partner to bid.

There are many treatments you can use. This is the easiest of them.

*The balancing 2♣ bid when they bid two suits and then stop in 1NT*

If the opponents have bid two suits, you can play that 2♣ shows the two unbid suits. This is true regardless of how the bidding has gone. Note that if they have bid just one suit on the way to 1NT, there is a bidding trick that I will show you starting on page 109. Here are some examples of sequences where they bid two suits before stopping in 1NT:

N-S VUL	♠	A 7
W N E S	♥	J 8 7 5 4
1♣ P 1♠ P	♦	Q J 7 5 4
1NT P P ?	♣	10

This shapely hand is worth balancing with.

Bid 2♣. 2♣ always asks for the two unbid suits, in this case the red suits.

N-S VUL	♠	K 3
W N E S	♥	J 10 8 5 4 3
1♣ P 1♠ P	♦	4
1NT P P ?	♣	A 8 7 4

Bid 2♥. You know your partner has some high cards. You hope he has a couple of hearts.

N-S VUL	♠	Q 8 7 4
W N E S	♥	4
1♦ P 1♥ P	♦	A 8 3

1NT P P ?     ♣ J 10 7 5 4

Bid 2♣. You are showing, artificially, that you have the two unbid suits, clubs and spades. This hand is weak but it has good shape. This is a fair gamble.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K 3  
W N E S     ♥ Q J 8 6 3  
1♣ P 1♠ P     ♦ 4 3  
1NT P P ?     ♣ A 8 6 4

Bid 2♥, a definite gamble. If you pass, you will get a diamond lead from your partner and you will get a generally poor result. If you bid 2♥, you will get a number of good results. Partner is marked with some points and if they fit your hand, you can make something. If playing IMPs, 2♥ is risky, but I point out that if you let them make 120 when you might have made some hearts, the cost to you is around six IMPs. Not cheap.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ A 7 4  
W N E S     ♥ K Q 9 4  
1♣ P 1♠ P     ♦ Q J 7 3  
1NT P P ?     ♣ 7 4 3

Bid 2♣ if you use this bid for takeout. You have a nice four cards in each of the unbid suits. Some luck is required but playing bridge requires some well-judged adventures. This one is reasonable.

E-W VUL     ♠ 10 8 6 5 2  
W N E S     ♥ K 3 2  
1♦ P 1♥ P     ♦ - - -  
1NT P P ?     ♣ A 10 8 7 4

If 2♣ is takeout, that is the bid you would make. This time you have 5-5 in spades and clubs. If you didn't have 2♣ to show this fact, you would be forced to make a difficult guess.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 3  
W N E S      ♥ A 9  
1♥ P 1♠P      ♦ K J 4 3 2  
1NT P P ?      ♣ J 9 7 5 4

2♣, again showing the unbid suits. In this case, you have the minors. Be aware that they did not find a major suit fit so your partner may have quite a few cards in the majors and perhaps no good minor. At least you have five cards in each suit.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 5  
W N E S      ♥ 9 3  
1♥ P 1♠P      ♦ K Q 10 9 4 3  
1NT P P ?      ♣ 9 7 4

You have a real suit, diamonds, and you can bid it. Do so.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 8 4 3  
W N E S      ♥ K 7 4  
1♣ P 1♥P      ♦ J 8 5 4  
1NT P P ?      ♣ A J

Pass. Even though you have two four-card unbid suits, these suits stink. You are not obliged to bid if your judgment says otherwise.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 3  
W N E S      ♥ A 8  
1♦ P 1♠P      ♦ Q 8 7 6  
1NT P P ?      ♣ Q 10 9 7 6 4

Pass. You might like to bid 2♣ but against a dead 1NT bid, the 2♣ call shows the unbid suits, asking partner to bid one. This is a modest problem with the artificial 2♣ bid. If 2♣ is natural, you can bid them.

♠ K Q 6

NO ONE VUL

W	N	E	S	♥	A
1♦	P	1♥	P	♦	Q J 9 8 6 4 3
1NT	P	P	?	♣	5 3

Bid 2♦. It is natural. Opener on your left may have four of them but your spot cards should see you through.

*RHO bids 1♣ or 1♦ and passes a 1NT response*

What do your bids mean?

This is actually a difficult situation. I will show you a relatively easy solution on this page. A more difficult solution starts on the next page.

When this happens, there are three unbid suits, not two. I suggest that double is for takeout, not penalty as I showed against other sequences.

NO ONE VUL	♠	J 9 7 4			
W	N	E	S	♥	A 10 9 4
	1♣	P	♦	Q J 5 4	
1NT	P	P	?	♣	5

Double for takeout. You won't have much of a hand since you passed earlier. You are counting on your partner to have something.

Play that two of opener's minor shows the majors.

Play that all other suit bids are natural.

You can cue-bid with 4-4, 4-5, 5-4, or 5-5 shape in the majors. Note that when they open 1♦ and pass 1NT, it is very dangerous for you to bid 2♣.

NO ONE VUL	♠	J 9 7 4			
W	N	E	S	♥	A 10 9 4
	1♦	P	♦	Q J 5 4	
1NT	P	P	?	♣	5

You have the wrong hand for a takeout double but you can bid 2♦, opener's minor, to show the majors. With two suits to show the chances of finding a fit are good.

## **Bidding When Your RHO Opens a Suit and Passes His Partner's 1NT Response**

This is a common situation when they open a minor.

It is rare when they open a major in first or second seat. This is because a 1NT response to a major tends to be some kind of special bid that requires opener to bid again.

If they open one of a major in third or fourth seat, however, opener can and often does pass 1NT, giving you a reopening problem.

You can play a simple structure where a double by you has two different meanings:

- It is takeout if they opened a minor suit.
- It is penalty if they opened a major suit.

In addition, you can bid a suit in hopes that it is a good idea.

### *When RHO opens 1♣ and passes a 1NT response*

Given that LHO shows some clubs when he bids 1NT, it is not likely that you will have good clubs such that you want to double 1NT for penalty.

Here, there are three suits to show. It is possible that you have all three suits and it is also possible that you have a modest two suited hand.

Better is to use double as takeout to show shortness in clubs with support for the three unbid suits. You do not show much of a hand since you would double 1♣ earlier with a good hand.

In the following hands, you are East-West.

W	N	E	S
	1♣	P	1NT
P	P	?	

Double      Double is takeout with support for all three suits.

2♣      2♣ shows both majors with equal or longer hearts

2♦      2♦ shows both majors with longer spades.

2♥      Natural. Perhaps you have six of them.

2♠      Natural. Perhaps you have six of them.

*Note* in the bidding diagrams that the auction ends with (?). This indicates that the auction is not officially over. The opponents will often do some more bidding.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 2	♠ 10 9 7 4	1♣	P	1NT	
♥ J 6 5 2	♥ Q 9 8 3	P	P	Dbl	P
♦ Q J 9	♦ K 10 4	2♥	(?)		
♣ K 9 4	♣ A 5				

East can pass 1NT or risk a balancing double. If he doubles, West will bid 2♥. The important thing about this auction is that East-West know what it all means.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ K 2	♠ Q 9 7 4	1♣	P	1NT	
♥ 6 2	♥ A Q 5 3	P	P	Dbl	P
♦ Q 8 7 5 3	♦ K 10 4	2♦	(?)		
♣ K 9 4 2	♣ 6 5				

East's double is takeout and West bids his best suit. If East did not have three-card support, he wouldn't have doubled.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ K 10 3 2	♠ Q J 7	1♣	P	1NT	
♥ J 6 5 2	♥ K 9 8 3	P	P	Dbl	P
♦ Q J	♦ K 10 5 4 2	2♣	P	2♥	(?)
♣ A 9 4	♣ 8				



East doubles for takeout, a sane but not totally safe bid. West has four cards in each major and wants East to choose the suit. 2♣ says West has equal length. East, with four hearts and three spades, chooses hearts.

WEST	EAST	W N E S
♠ A 5 3	♠ K Q 8 4 2	1♣ P 1NT
♥ 10 5 4	♥ J 9 8 3	P P 2♦ P
♦ K 8 5	♦ Q J 4	2♠ (?)
♣ Q J 8 3	♣ 10	

East bids 2♦, showing hearts and spades with longer spades. In this case, West knows to bid spades and does so.

WEST	EAST	W N E S
♠ K 7 5 3 2	♠ A 6	1♣ P 1NT
♥ 10 4	♥ J 9 8 3 2	P P 2♥ P
♦ A J 5	♦ K 10 4 3 2	P (?)
♣ Q J 4	♣ 3	

East can not show the red suits so he guesses to bid 2♥ or to pass. There is a more intense and more difficult version of these methods which, when perfected, will be published.

WEST	EAST	W N E S
♠ K 7 5 3	♠ A 6	1♣ P 1NT
♥ 7 5	♥ 10 9 8 4 3 2	P P 2♥ (?)
♦ A K 6 4	♦ 3 2	
♣ Q J 4	♣ K 9 3	

When you reopen by bidding a major you often have a hand like this one. Here, you have six hearts and a hand not worth a heart bid earlier. Note that your partner will not bid after your 2♥ bid. He knows you are weak.

WEST	EAST	W N E S
♠ 7 4	♠ K Q 10 9 8	1♣ P 1NT

♥K J 8 6 3	♥4 2	P P 2♠(?)
♦K J 5	♦Q 9 7 4	
♣A 7 4	♣10 3	

If you choose to bid a five-card major, it will require a hand like this one. A pretty good suit but not a good enough hand to bid earlier. If you would have overcalled 1♠, then you won't have this much when you bid 2♠.

<b>WEST</b>	<b>EAST</b>	<b>W N E S</b>
♠6 4	♠Q J 10 2	1♣ P 1NT
♥A 9 5 4	♥7 3	P P P
♦A 5 4 2	♦K Q 10 3	
♣K 10 3	♣8 4 2	

On this hand it would be nice to find a way to 2♦ but that is too difficult. In time I will write about the more detailed methods mentioned earlier.

*When RHO opens 1♦ and passes a 1NT response*

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
	1♦	P	1NT
P	P	?	

This is the easiest of these situations to balance against. You know that your LHO has some clubs for his 1NT bid so when the bidding goes this way, your main focus will always be on the major suits. The methods are the same as when they open 1♣ and pass it out in 1NT.

Double	Takeout with support for all three suits. While clubs are not very important, your double still caters to them.
2♣	2♣ shows both majors with equal length or longer hearts.
2♦	2♦ shows both majors with longer spades.
2♥	2♥ is natural. Perhaps you have six of them.
2♠	2♠ is natural. Perhaps you have six of them.

WEST	EAST	W N E S
♠ 9 8	♠ A J 4 2	1♦ P 1NT
♥ A 8 7 2	♥ J 10 6 3	P P Dbl P
♦ Q 7 6 3	♦ 10 4	2♥ (?)
♣ K 9 4	♣ A 5 2	

East doubles for takeout. He has 4-4 in the majors but he also has club support. West bids 2♥.

WEST	EAST	W N E S
♠ J 10 5	♠ K 8 7 4	1♦ P 1NT
♥ J 8	♥ Q 10 7 5 4	P P 2♣ P
♦ A 8 7 4	♦ 10 6	2♠ (?)
♣ K Q 7 3	♣ A 5	

2♣ shows spades and hearts with equal or longer hearts. West more or less has to bid 2♠, and he does.

WEST	EAST	W N E S
♠ J 10	♠ K 8 7 4 2	1♦ P 1NT
♥ A Q 5 3	♥ K J 8 4	P P 2♦ P
♦ J 6 4	♦ 3	2♥ (?)
♣ A 10 7	♣ J 9 4	

2♦ shows spades and hearts with longer spades. West has a great hand but should be alert to the bidding. East did not bid initially so West just bids 2♥ and probably plays it there.

WEST	EAST	W N E S
♠ A 6 5 3	♠ Q J 8 7	1♦ P 1NT
♥ 9 3	♥ K Q 6 4	P P 2♣ P
♦ J 8	♦ Q 7 6 4	2♠ (?)
♣ K 8 7 6 3	♣ 4	

East's 2♣ bid shows both majors with equal length or longer hearts. West bids 2♠.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ K Q 8 3	♠ J 10 4		1♦	P	1NT
♥ 10 9 6 3	♥ A J 7 4	P	P	Dbl	P
♦ 8 5 3	♦ 6 4	2♦	P	2♥	(?)
♣ K J	♣ A 8 4 2				

East's double is takeout. West is not sure which major is best so he cue-bids 2♦, opener's minor suit. East has a preference for hearts and bids them.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ A 8 5	♠ Q J 10 4 2		1♦	P	1NT
♥ Q J 7 5	♥ 4 2	P	P	2♠	(?)
♦ 4 2	♦ K 9 5 3				
♣ A 9 8 3	♣ 10 2				

East's 2♠ bid just shows spades. His suit is not that good but his four diamonds to the king suggest West is short in diamonds and that hints West may have a spade fit.

*When RHO opens 1♥ and passes a 1NT response*

W	N	E	S
			P
P	1♥	P	1NT
P	P	?	

The first thing to note is that LHO did not raise hearts. There is a fair chance that you will have good hearts and want to play a double as business. Further, there is no suit that is scary here. Your side may have a fit in any of the three missing suits. You need to cater to as many possible layouts as possible. Here are my suggestions. When they open 1♥ and pass a 1NT

response, usually after a third seat opening bid, you can actually show quite a few of the possible two suited holdings you may have.

Why spend so much time on two suited hands instead of one suited hands? The reason is that you won't have much of a hand so bidding with just one suit is a dangerous choice since if you are wrong, you are in trouble. Offering two suits gives you more safety.

In the sequences below, I am showing an auction where North bids 1♥ in third seat. If he should be in first or second seat and the bidding goes this way, your bids will be the same as shown.

- Dbl Double is penalty, suggesting partner lead a heart.
- 2♣ 2♣ shows clubs and spades with longer clubs.
- 2♦ 2♦ shows diamonds and spades with longer diamonds.
- 2♥ 2♥ shows five spades and a four- or five-card minor.
- 2♠ 2♠ shows just spades. Tends to be a six-card suit.
- 2NT 2NT shows the minor suits.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ K 8 6 5 3	♠ J 7				P
♥ 7 6	♥ K Q 10 8 5	P	1♥	P	1NT
♦ J 8 3	♦ A Q 4	P	P	Dbl	P
♣ K 8 4	♣ Q 10 5	P	(?)		

When they open a major and you later double 1NT, it is for penalty. East should have just short of a strong notrump overcall with excellent hearts.

West usually passes, as he does here. Perhaps you will set 1NT doubled. Perhaps they will run somewhere else. Whatever, your double puts you in contention for a good result.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ 9 8 3	♠ K J 7 5				P
♥ Q J 6 3 2	♥ 4	P	1♥	P	1NT
♦ A 4	♦ 9 8 3	P	P	2♣	P
♣ K 8 4	♣ A J 9 5 3	P	(?)		

East's 2♣ bid shows clubs and spades with longer clubs. West sees clubs is best and passes.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 3	♠ A 7 5 4				P
♥ K 9 8 7 6	♥ 10 4	P	1♥	P	1NT
♦ 5 4	♦ K Q 8 6 3	P	P	2♦	P
♣ K Q 10 5	♣ 9 3	P	(?)		

2♦ shows diamonds and spades with longer diamonds. This time these methods do not work well. West at least knows your diamonds are longer than your spades and passes. This is a potential disaster hand for E-W. I suspect that most players would bid with the East hand so you will have company.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ A 9 8 3	♠ 7 4				P
♥ Q 10 6 5 3	♥ 2	P	1♥	P	1NT
♦ Q	♦ A J 10 8 4	P	P	2NT	P
♣ K 3 2	♣ Q J 9 7 4	3♣	(?)		

East's 2NT bid shows clubs and diamonds. Nothing special here. Passing would be acceptable. The reason I vote for 2NT here is that both of my minor suits are pretty good.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ 9 4 3	♠ Q 10 8 7 5				P
♥ A J 7 6 2	♥ 4	P	1♥	P	1NT
♦ 8 2	♦ K Q 9 7 6	P	P	2♥	P
♣ K Q J	♣ 8 3	2♠	(?)		

Assuming East passes over 1♥, he can consider bidding 2♥, which shows long spades and a minor. West has three spades so is content to bid 2♠. If West had lesser spades, he would have the option of asking for East's minor suit by bidding 2NT.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ A 6 2	♠ Q 10 8 7 3				P
♥ 8 5 2	♥ A J 10 4	P	1♥	P	1NT
♦ K 10 7 3	♦ J 4	P	P	2♠	P
♣ K J 4	♣ 9 7	P	(?)		

Passing is OK but if you bid 2♠ you might survive. The important thing here is that when you can show only one suit, you need a reason to do it. Winning bridge includes a lot of stinky bids and 2♠ is the kind of bid that can work.

### *When RHO opens 1♠ and passes a 1NT response*

Spades are a drag when they have them and you don't. But they are not invincible. I suggest that you use double as business because responder's failure to raise means you will have some good hands with good spades. Doubling for penalty is logical and consistent with modern bidding. Bidding when you have just one suit is scary because you have no reason to think you have a fit and if you do not have a fit, it can be horrible. Finding a structure that lets you show two suits is more promising.

In the sequences below, I am showing an auction where North bids 1♠ in third seat. If he should be in first or second seat and the bidding goes this way, your bids will be the same as shown.

W	N	E	S
			P
P	1♠	P	1NT
P	P	?	

Here are the meanings of various bids.

- Db1 Double is penalty, suggesting partner lead a spade.
- 2♣ 2♣ shows clubs and hearts with longer clubs.
- 2♦ 2♦ shows diamonds and hearts with longer diamonds.
- 2♥ 2♥ shows five hearts with a four- or five-card minor.
- 2♠ 2♠ does not exist in this discussion. You might decide that it is

natural.

2NT 2NT shows the minors.

Note that after a 1♠ opening bid, there is no bid that shows just one suit.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ 10 3	♠ A J 9 8 4				P
♥ K 9 6 3	♥ 10 4	P	1♠	P	1NT
♦ K 4 3	♦ A Q 8	P	P	Dbl	P
♣ 10 7 5 3	♣ Q J 8	P	(?)		

If they ever bid a major suit and pass out 1NT, a double is penalty. No guarantees, but these doubles have a high rate of return.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 7 2	♠ K 8 4				P
♥ 8 4	♥ K Q 7 2	P	1♠	P	1NT
♦ 9 8 3 2	♦ Q J 4	P	P	P	
♣ A J 5 3	♣ K 10 4				

Passing is best. You have no suit or shape so you do not want partner to bid. And you do not want a spade lead, which is what you would get if you doubled.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 7 3	♠ 4 2				P
♥ K 9 6 3	♥ A Q 4 2	P	1♠	P	1NT
♦ Q J 3 2	♦ A 8	P	P	2♣	P
♣ 9	♣ J 10 8 5 2	2♥	(?)		

It is clear to bid 2♣. This shows five or more clubs and four hearts. There is something very important to know about this bidding.

Responder would raise spades if he had support so you can count on your partner to have four cards in spades, perhaps five. This is not a good omen. Still, since you are offering two places to play, you can take a chance if you



wish. While the bidding tricks I am showing here are nice, I caution you not to overdo them. These tools will let you bid on many hands that would be dangerous otherwise. Use some judgment and restraint in the process.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ K 8 7 5	♠ 4 2				P
♥ K 3	♥ A Q J 2	P	1♠	P	1NT
♦ J 10 9 6 3 2	♦ A 8	P	P	2♣	P
♣ 7	♣ J 10 8 5 2	2♦	(?)		

East has a pretty good hand for a 2♣ bid. West knows that he doesn't have a fit for East's suits, and he bids 2♦. East accepts West's decision and passes it out.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ 9 8 4	♠ Q 10 5				P
♥ 6 3	♥ K Q 10 8 7	P	1♠	P	1NT
♦ A Q 4 3 2	♦ 8	P	P	2♥	P
♣ K 8 4	♣ Q J 5 3	P	(?)		

East has pretty good suits so can consider bidding 2♥, showing hearts and a minor. What East is unhappy about is his three spades. West frequently has three cards in opener's major on this auction, and that is a bad sign. It is so bad that East might even not bother bidding with his hand. West suspects that East has clubs so he passes 2♥. If West had 4-4 in the minors, he would ask for East's minor suit by bidding 2NT.

WEST	EAST	W	N	E	S
♠ 10 8 7 3	♠ K 4				P
♥ K Q J 4 3	♥ 6	P	1♠	P	1NT
♦ A 4	♦ K J 8 3 2	P	P	2NT	P
♣ 8 2	♣ A 7 6 4 3	3♣	(?)		

The point of this hand is to show you that even with a fair 5-5 hand, bidding 2NT is not wonderful. East knows that West has four or more spades and he

knows that West is likely to have five hearts too. Doesn't leave much room for the minor suits. If East had bid 2NT over 1 ♠, it would be marginally acceptable because the bid is made before their side figures things out. Waiting for them to finish bidding and then coming in with the minor suits is hugely dangerous because they have finished their bidding. Doubling you may be a welcome addition to their inventory of bids.

You might notice that there is no meaning for 2 ♠. It is not needed. All three suit combinations of clubs, diamonds, and hearts are covered, and there is no other bid that I found worthy of being included. I mentioned a possible meaning in the introduction in which a 2 ♠ bid could be played as natural. That would be rare.

SUMMATION: When they bid a suit and pass 1NT, it is not likely that you will have a one suited hand that needs to bid. The hands that have merit tend to be two suited hands, but these are hard to show without the tools shown in this chapter.

HOMEWORK: Do this. Look at the hands above and ask yourself what you would bid in the balancing seat if you had no two suited bids to use. The methods I am showing here, if used with sanity and discipline, will give you many opportunities that you do not currently have. I recommend them.

## Reopening After the Opponents' Auction Ends With a Preference Bid

### Expectations For Balancing Against a Preference Auction

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
1♠	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	P	?

This is a preference auction. East bid two suits and West preferred hearts. West usually has two cards in this situation. Declarer often is unhappy with his contract. When you consider reopening the bidding after a preference auction, you should tread gingerly.

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You need to be sure you are doing the right thing if you decide to balance. If they are in a poor contract that won't make, you don't want to bid and go down when they were about to go down themselves.

This means that when the opponents have arrived at two of a suit after a preference has been taken, you won't balance very often.

This is based on the theory that when the opponents have a fit, you should have one as well, and whenever convenient, you should try to find it.

But when the opponents don't have a fit, it is often best to let them stew in whatever contract they have achieved. Why balance into a marginal contract of your own when theirs was no better?

Here are some basic preference auctions and what they mean.

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
1♠	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	P	?

LHO usually has a doubleton heart. Frequently he has two clubs as well. This suggests a misfit for them. Perhaps responder has diamonds as well as spades, but insufficient strength to bid them. On this three suit sequence there is only one remaining unbid suit, in this case diamonds. It is usually best to let them play in their preference contract rather than to balance. Here, if you bid diamonds, you have to bid at the three level. Too many strikes for me.

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
1NT	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	P	?

If 1NT is not forcing, then the 2♥ bid usually shows two hearts and not more than three clubs. A misfit auction.

If 1NT is forcing, then the 2♥ bid still usually shows two hearts, but responder may hold up to four clubs. The reason he didn't pass 2♣ was that opener might have only three of them. (Opener often bids a three-card minor in response to a forcing 1NT bid.) It is marginally possible that responder has three hearts and a lousy hand. So you do have that to think about.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♦	P	1♥	P
2♣	P	P	?

This sequence is a preference sequence, but it has some unusual qualities. It is an auction where responder increases the level of the bidding to take his preference. Usually responder has genuine support for the minor. If he didn't, he might pass opener's last bid or he might choose 1NT. There is only one unbid suit but still, the auction suggests you should think about balancing.

W	N	E	S
1♥	P	1NT	P
2♣	P	P	?

This sequence is a preference sequence and it almost guarantees a fit. You can treat it as such. Be concerned that responder usually has a singleton heart, which will work against you if you play the hand.

W	N	E	S
1♥	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	P	?

This sequence shows a preference, but there is some chance that responder has only three clubs. The reason for this is that responder has shown length in one suit, thus reducing the chances of his holding length in any other specific suit.

### *Dangers of bidding against preference auctions*

Preference auctions lead to contracts that opener does not like in general.

If they do not like a contract, you have little reason to bid.

Here are some example hands along with some observations about potential dangers.

NO ONE VUL	♠	K 6 5
W N E S	♥	3 2
1♥ P	♦	K J 9 8 5
1♠ P 2♣ P	♣	A 4 2
2♥ P P ?		

Pass. It is clear not to bid over 2♥. It is extremely unsafe to reopen in a dangerous suit at the three level after a misfit auction. West conceivably has four spades, two hearts, five diamonds, and two clubs.

NO ONE VUL	♠	Q 9 4 2
W N E S	♥	3
1♥ P	♦	K 7
1♠ P 2♦ P	♣	Q J 10 8 6 4
2♥ P P ?		

Pass. This is the sort of suit you need to reopen with at the three level after a misfit sequence. The hand itself is not that good. Your stiff heart is nice. But it suggests that your partner has five of them. Your spades are dangerous because your LHO has something in spades and your partner often has three or four of them. I would consider bidding 3♣ but it is a gamble. Interestingly, it is possible that your best trump suit is spades.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 10 7 6 4  
W N E S      ♥ A 6 2  
P P 1♦ P      ♦ K 7 2  
1♥ P 2♣ P      ♣ 9 3  
2♦ P P ?

Much as I recommend reopening when holding the spade suit, it was difficult to construct a hand where I would want to do it on this sequence. With this hand, for example, I would have overcalled 1♠ earlier, so I wouldn't even have this particular problem. If I hadn't overcalled, I would be nervous about bidding 2♠ for a number of reasons.

1. I don't have any reason to think we have a fit.
2. West did not say he liked diamonds, he said he preferred diamonds to clubs. They could be in a 5-2 fit. Rarely, they are in a 4-2 fit!
3. West could have four spades and four or five hearts.

That is bad news for me if I bid 2♠. Additionally, when the bidding goes this way, opener often has a singleton heart. Having not overcalled, I would hesitate to reopen the bidding. Note that if you bid 1♠ earlier, your opponents will have problems because you got in their bidding before they had a chance to discuss things.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A 10 8 7  
W N E S      ♥ Q 8 2  
1♥ P      ♦ A 10 5 4  
1NT P 2♣ P      ♣ 8 7  
2♥ P P ?

It is barely right to double at matchpoints. You have both unbid suits, but you also have a terrible heart holding. They are probably in a 5-2 fit, which is a warning that you might lose the first three heart tricks. No fault to passing. If you are vulnerable, this is a clear pass.

Note this comparison. If East had opened 1♥ and West had raised to 2♥, passed to you, you would have a sane 2♠ bid. On this sequence they like their 2♥ contract, so it is one that you should balance against.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q J 4 3 2  
W N E S      ♥ 10 6  
1♣ P 1♦ P      ♦ A 4  
1♥ P P ?      ♣ 10 7 6 5

Bid 1♠. This is a curious situation. The opponents have passed out a one-bid after both opponents have bid. You know a lot about their hands. Notably, the opponents almost surely do not have a game anywhere. There is no hidden suit for them to suddenly discover. The sequence shows that RHO barely had enough to respond with and it usually implies that he has three trumps for partner. Opener failed to make a strong bid. This is going to be a partscore hand for sure.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 10 7  
W N E S      ♥ A 2  
1♣ P 1♦ P      ♦ A J 8 7 5  
1♠ P P ?      ♣ J 6 5

1NT. This shows values similar to when the opening bid is passed out. East does not have much so there is a good chance the hand belongs to you. Here, since three suits have been bid, you will need to have at least two of them stopped. You should have RHO's suit stopped and at least one of opener's suits.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q J 3  
W N E S      ♥ K 8 7 5 4  
1♣ P 1♦ P      ♦ K 4

1♠ P P ?      ♣ Q 6 5

Pass. They have bid three suits and have not found a sure fit. You can bid 2♥ but given they do not have a sure fit, you have less reason to get involved. It is rare that you will bid 2♥ on this auction because if you had any kind of hand, you would have bid 1♥ over 1♦. For the record, this hand is not worth a 1♥ bid over 1♦. Bad suit, poor quality points, and balanced distribution.

## Balancing When an Opponent Has Rebid His Suit

### Expectations For Balancing When an Opponent Rebids His Suit

Most auctions in this family scream that they could have a misfit. Leave them alone unless you know it is right to bid. Interestingly, you may be able to penalize them when they are getting a bad trump break.

These sequences are usually identified when someone rebids a suit and is passed there by partner. These five sequences are typical.

1♣ – 1♥  
2♣

1♣ – 1♥  
2♣ – 2♥

1♥ – 1NT  
2♥

1♣ – 1♥  
1NT – 2♥

1♣ – 1♦  
1♠ – 2♦

There may be as many as three unbid suits to choose from, and there can be as few as one. Also, as you must reopen at the two or three level, there are no natural notrump bids. You either bid a suit or you make a takeout double or perhaps an unusual notrump bid. As you will see, you may have some pretty good hands.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 8 7 6 5  
W N E S      ♥ 4 2



1♥ P 1NT P     ♦ A 10 7  
 2♥ P P ?     ♣ K Q 5 4

Double. Against this sequence, you will want to bid aggressively if you have the shape for it. With three suits available, you have some safety in bidding. This is an acceptable double. A frequent result of this double is that your partner passes for penalties, which could be very good for you. Opener doesn't always find support and may be playing a 6-1 fit. A penalty is fairly common on this auction. Here you have fair defense for your bid so you do not mind if partner passes.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ A J 8 7 2  
**W N E S**     ♥ 8 6 3  
 1♥ P 1NT P     ♦ K 8  
 2♥ P P ?     ♣ J 10 7

2♠ at matchpoints, but not as happily as you might think. It could work poorly. You have three hearts, which is bad for you. Do not be surprised if you lose the first three heart tricks. Your gains will be small and your disasters many. It is a fact of matchpoints that you can do well with six little decent results and two horrible results.

The principle of safe and dangerous suits applies here. Strive to reopen in a higher ranking suit at the two level, but almost never bother to do so in a lower ranking suit at the three level.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ J 8 7 5 2  
**W N E S**     ♥ 3  
 1♦ P 1NT P     ♦ A 6 5 3  
 2♦ P P ?     ♣ K 4 2

2♠. You are a favorite to have a fit and it is much easier to play hands than to defend them. Spades are safe in that your RHO does not have four of them. Opener might. One very nice thing is your four diamonds. Your partner might have just one.

Here is a pop quiz.

How many points do you think your partner has?  
 How many hearts do you think your partner has?  
 What do you think your partner's shape is?

Partner rates to have at least 10 points and may have a dozen points. He surely has five hearts and he would have bid them if they were good. He rates to have a poor five-card suit. You expect partner to have one or two diamonds. Here is an interesting point. East bid 1NT. He often has four or five clubs when he bids 1NT after partner's 1♦ bid.

This suggests that your partner does not have a lot of clubs so you would expect your partner to have something like 3-5-2-3 shape.

All of these facts suggest that it is wise for you to bid 2♠.

NO ONE VUL	♠	Q 8 7 2
W N E S	♥	K 2
1♦ P 1♥ P	♦	7 3
2♦ P P ?	♣	A Q 10 6 5

Double. With only two suits available, there is less chance that partner will be able to fit one of them than when your double shows three suits. Be slightly suspect of RHO's strength. He can have a decent 10 point hand with a stiff diamond and have elected to take a conservative view.

NO ONE VUL	♠	A 2
W N E S	♥	Q 10 8 7 6
1♦ P 1♥ P	♦	9 7
2♦ P P ?	♣	A 6 5 4

This hand represents the chance to make an unusual bid. Bid 2♥. LHO's 2♦ rebid more often than not shows a stiff heart. You will almost always find partner with two hearts and often with three hearts. Even though you are missing the high heart honors, you have good spots and they will be over RHO's holding. With sure tricks on the side, whatever partner has will be useful. I would expect to find partner with something like this:

♠ K 8 7 6 5

♥ 9 4 2  
 ♦ Q 10 5  
 ♣ Q J

You might go down one or you might make an overtrick. I expect that making 2♥ would be par. The play will be easy in that you know where the heart length is. If your partner has just the jack of hearts, your play will be much easier.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K 6 5  
 W N E S     ♥ A 6 5 4 3 2  
 1♦ P 1♥ P     ♦ J 7  
 2♦ P P ?     ♣ K 4

Pass. Here you have poor heart spots. Even with six hearts, three losers are likely. Your side values are not sure winners. Both of your kings could be worthless. This is a good time to quit. Be sure to appreciate the heart spots you had on the previous hand and the heart spots you do not have on this hand.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ J  
 W N E S     ♥ 10 2  
 1♥ P 1♠ P     ♦ Q 10 8 7 5  
 2♥ P P ?     ♣ K 10 7 6 5

2NT, unusual. Here you choose 2NT rather than double because you don't have much defense and would prefer partner didn't pass. Both 2NT and double will get partner to bid a minor, so you choose a bid which doesn't run the risk of a pass from partner. By the way. I think that South's pass over 1♠ was a good choice. This hand is not good enough to get involved on the previous round.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A 4 2  
 W N E S     ♥ 3  
 1♥ P 1♠ P     ♦ A 10 8 7 5

2♥ P P ?     ♣ Q 7 6 5

Double. With decent defensive strength you don't mind if partner passes for business. In fact, you hope that will happen. Your partner usually has four hearts and he might have five. Since you are pushing your side to the three level you need fair values to bid here.

Be aware of the fact that your partner may have to choose clubs with three clubs and three diamonds. You would prefer four diamonds and five clubs. One sane way to avoid this issue is for you to play that if partner bids 2NT after your double, it is asking you to choose the minor.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ 8  
**W N E S**     ♥ K 10 8 7 5  
 1♦ P 1♠ P     ♦ 4 2  
 2♦ P P ?     ♣ K J 6 5 3

Double. Don't consider an unusual notrump bid with this combination of suits. If partner prefers hearts, he would have to bid them at the three level. No need to get partner too high for no reason. You hope he will not pass for penalty because you don't have much defense.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ 3 2  
**W N E S**     ♥ K J 9 8 7  
 1♦ P 1♠ P     ♦ 3  
 2♦ P P ?     ♣ J 10 8 7 6

Here the chances that partner will make a penalty pass are substantial. You have just one diamond (you had two on the previous auction), and he will be disappointed in your hand for defensive purposes.

If you double, your partner may pass.

If you bid 2NT, your partner has to bid hearts at the three level instead of the two level.

The solution?

Bid 2♥. Half a loaf is better than no loaf. Any bid can work out poorly.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ K 10 6 5

W N E S	♥	Q J 8 4 2
1♦ P 1♠ P	♦	3
2♦ P P ?	♣	K 6 5

2♥, but with concern. If 2♥ works, it tends to work well. Either opponent, however, can have four hearts, which you won't like. Perhaps your best suit is spades. Hard to know. Hands where you can't be sure of finding support are something of a crap shoot. Good luck.

BOTH SIDES VUL		♠	K 2
W N E S	♥	K 3 2	
1♦ P 1♠ P	♦	3 2	
2♦ P P ?	♣	A J 8 6 4 2	

Pass. Dangerous to act. 2♣ on the previous round would have been safer than 3♣ now. Vulnerable, it is surely right to pass it out in 2♦. Note that East can have 10 points and pass 2♦. Also note that East can have a lot of clubs.

NO ONE VUL		♠	J 10 7 5 3
W N E S	♥	A 4 2	
1♣ P	♦	4 2	
1♥ P 2♣ P	♣	A 8 3	
2♥ P P ?			

A dangerous matchpoint 2♠ bid. There is no reason why this should work or not work. Typical of auctions like this where their points are unclear and they are not in a fit auction.

You are probably noticing that bidding when they have bid two suits before giving up can be dangerous. A successful 2♠ bid can gain you a partscore. Bidding 2♠ and getting smacked can cost you a lot.

A major reminder. They do not necessarily like their 2♥ contract. Balancing when they may not like their contract is not the same as bidding when you know they are happy.

You can avoid decisions like this by bidding 1♠ over 1♣. Many books have been written that say you should not bid 1♠ with hands like this one.

What those books do not say is what you should do when you pass and then have to decide what to do later.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A 2  
W N E S      ♥ J 9 7 6 3  
1♣ P      ♦ K Q 5  
1♠ P 2♣ P      ♣ J 4 2  
2♠ P P ?

Pass. This is a reminder hand. There is almost no hand which couldn't act over 1♣ which becomes good enough to bid at the three level. Note that East can have 16 points and West sometimes has an 8 or 9 point hand. They have not promised weak hands. Finally, realize that your club holding is as bad as possible. You hate to have three cards in an opponent's suit unless it has been raised.

You may have noted that I suggested overcalling 1♠ on the previous hand and am not suggesting 1♥ on this hand. The reason is that a 1♠ bid does more harm to the opponents' bidding than a 1♥ overcall. A small extra vote for bidding 1♠ is that the previous hand has two aces and a spade suit that is a tiny bit better than the heart suit on this hand.

N-S VUL      ♠ J 10 8 7 5  
W N E S      ♥ A 9 7 6  
1♦ P      ♦ K 2  
1♥ P 2♣ P      ♣ 9 3  
2♥ P P ?

This sequence tells you nothing about whether or not you will have a fit. Too many things are wrong with this hand.

1. You have good defense against hearts.
2. There is no guarantee your partner is short in hearts. It is more likely that opener on your right is short in hearts. If so, you will have a hard time avoiding a lot of heart losers.
3. The vulnerability is the worst.
4. Each of the opponents can have some extras.

Remember that auctions where both opponents keep bidding suits without finding a fit are not as informative as fit auctions. Here is a possible layout of the opponents' cards:

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

Both opponents have normal minimum values. They are going to play in 2♥ but would welcome hearing a balancing bid from you.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K Q J 10 7
W N E S	♥ 3
1♦ P	♦ 10 7 6 5
1♥ P 2♣ P	♣ J 9 8
2♥ P P ?	

This hand is not worth an overcall but it is worth a reopening 2♠ bid. But it's no bargain. You hope your good suit may keep you from getting doubled. Good opponents may take a whack at you on general principles. Earlier in this book I told you to be very aggressive against good players when reopening. Let me amend this slightly.

Balance aggressively when their one-bid has been passed out.

Balance aggressively when they have a fit.

Don't be so fast to reopen against one of those sequences where they appear to be competing against each other unless you can do so via a proper shaped takeout double. On the sequence being discussed there is only one unbid suit, so a double would be unavailable for takeout in the traditional sense.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 3
W N E S	♥ A 10 6 5
1♥ P	♦ 4 2
1♠ P 2♦ P	♣ K J 10 9 7 5

2♠ P P ?

This is a very rare hand which might pass after a one-bid and which later can bid at the three level. Since you have a good suit and can hope for a few points, bidding 3♣ is OK. Do not be ecstatic about this bid. Your partner could have five spades over there.

Note that if the opponents had bid:

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
2♥	P	P	?

You would be delighted to reopen with 3♣.

W	N	E	S
		1♦	P
1♠	P	2♣	P
2♠	P	P	?

What hand can exist which can't bid after 1♦, but can later bid after 2♠? Bidding the fourth suit at the three level is close to impossible. But you might have a hand that can double after three suits have been bid.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**

	♠	A 8 4 2			
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	3
		1♦	P	♦	A Q 8 3
1♥	P	2♣	P	♣	A J 9 7
2♥	P	P	?		

This is a takeout double even though three suits have been bid. Very rare. Your partner may be able to pass for penalty. He may be able to bid spades. The idea is that you have a good hand to justify this dangerous double. You have to be ready for partner to pass your double.

Here are some hands that your partner can have and what he should do if you double. I changed the layout of the bidding to show you the problem from



his side.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	P
2♣	P	2♥	P
P	Dbl	P	?

♠ J 7 3  
♥ A J 10 5  
♦ 9 7  
♣ Q 6 5 4

Pass. Partner should have a good hand and you have three or four trump tricks. This hand should have a successful outcome.

♠ 10 9 7 5 3  
♥ K J 5  
♦ J 10  
♣ 10 4 2

2♠. Partner's double is takeout and you have five spades. Bidding them is easy.

♠ J 7 6 5  
♥ A 7 6 4  
♦ 6  
♣ 10 6 5 3

2♠. The hearts aren't strong enough to pass. At least you have four spades and a smattering of nice values.

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

A true horror. I would guess to bid 2♠ and I would do it with confidence. Huddling and admitting to everyone that you are unhappy is a good way to alert the opponents that you are in trouble, which you are.

♠ K 6 5  
♥ 8 6 5 4  
♦ 2  
♣ Q 10 8 6 2

3♣ could be the winning bid. 2♠ is a reasonable choice also. Pass is out as the requirement is good hearts, not just four of them.

♠ Q 10 7 6

♥ A Q 2

♦ 10 9 4 2

♣ 6 3

Clearly best to bid 2♠. You actually have a good enough hand that you can expect to make it.

♠ J 7 5 3

♥ K J 8 2

♦ J 2

♣ Q 4 3

Pass. Not easy. Bidding 2♠ could be right and passing for penalty could work. I would vote for passing since my partner needs a good hand to double on this sequence.

Remember this. It is important to have a good hand when you reopen with double on one of those sequences which has just one unbid suit. Partner's options are limited, so you need a good hand to cater to those frequent times when partner doesn't have a useful hand.

### Reopening When RHO Opens in Third or Fourth Seat and Passes His Partner's Bid

The last common low level sequence you will encounter is when third or fourth seat opens and passes his partner's response in a new suit.

W	N	E	S	W	N	E	S
P	P	1♥	P	P	P	1♥	P
1♠	P	P	?	2♦	P	P	?

Against the first sequence, you should wish to balance. You know your partner is a passed hand but their side is seriously limited. If your hand looks like a balancing bid is worthwhile, do so. Here are your guidelines.

1. Passing is fine if you have no obvious bid. You are not obliged to balance here.
2. Double if you have takeout double shape.
3. Bid 1NT with 12 to 15 and something resembling stoppers. You are not going to get to a game but you may buy the contract.

4. Bid a suit if it is obvious to do so.

Against the second sequence where LHO made a passed hand two-over-one response, you know that LHO has some serious values. RHO may have a minimum hand but their side can still own the majority of the points. Overall, though, it is likely that you will pass.

Here are your guidelines.

1. Pass unless your hand says you should bid.
2. Since you did not overcall at the one level, it is unlikely you will have a suit worth bidding at the two level.
3. You might make a takeout double since you have two suits to offer.
4. Bidding a suit at the three level is very rare. Do it if you know it is right but if you are not sure, then pass.

From this short discussion, you should learn that balancing is something to consider. Just do it wisely. Some examples of these bids are shown below.

NO ONE VUL	♠	Q 10 8
W N E S	♥	K J 4
P P 1♣ P	♦	7 6 5
1♠ P P ?	♣	A Q 9 5

1NT. These sequences do not follow easy rules. You did not bid on the previous round so 12 to 15 will be your likely range. You could, I suppose, have 16. Remember that just because opener didn't keep the bidding open doesn't mean he has psyched. He may have up to 13 balanced points with no particular future. If responder has a bit extra, 1NT could be in trouble. This means you should not bid 1NT with cheese, but it is reasonable to be bidding when you have at least 12 nice points.

One good thing to know is that they will not suddenly discover they have a game contract somewhere. That does not happen on this auction.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	K 8 4 3
W N E S	♥	8 4 3
P P 1♥ P	♦	K 6

2♦ P P ? ♣ K J 4 3

The important things to consider when they bid this way are:

1. West has a maximum passed hand.
2. Opener usually has a 10 or 11 point hand with nothing special unless he is psyching, which is rare.
3. Opener may have one or two diamonds. They could be in a poor contract.
4. You have three little hearts, which is horrible.
5. Your king of diamonds is suspect.

All in all, passing is usually clear-cut. When they make a two level response and opener passes, you need good reasons to bid.

One nice new possibility for you is that when third hand opens and passes his partner's response, you have the additional option of reopening with a natural bid in RHO's suit.

NO ONE VUL ♠ 4 2  
 W N E S ♥ Q 8  
 P P 1♦ P ♦ A Q 10 8 7 6  
 1♥ P P ? ♣ K 9 5

With this good a suit and with values on the side, 2♦ is correct. The important thing here is recognizing that 2♦ is a natural bid.

NO ONE VUL ♠ Q 7  
 W N E S ♥ K J 8 7 5  
 P P 1♥ P ♦ A 7 3  
 1♠ P P ? ♣ K J 5

1NT. Even though lacking a complete spade guard, it is a better action than 2♥. Your suit is not good enough to chance playing opposite a singleton. There is nothing in the auction to suggest partner will have a fit for you. Earlier there were examples where you reopened in RHO's suit on something

like Q10873. But the situation then was that RHO responded in the suit at the one level, and his partner's rebid implied shortness in that suit. This was the sequence:

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♥	P
2♣	P	P	?

On this sequence, opener could easily have a stiff heart and responder could have had as little as 10963 to be bidding them.

But when the auction is:

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♥	P
1♠	P	P	?

there are no inferences suggesting you should bid hearts. You might bid them if you had sensational hearts, but you should not speculate with a broken five-card suit.

N-S VUL	♠	8 4 2
W N E S	♥	K J 8 7
P P 1♦ P	♦	4 3
1♠ P P ?	♣	A J 6 3

Double. Straightforward action. Anytime you can offer a choice of suits, reopening with a double is worth considering. The goal, as always, is to find a decent spot or to push them up one level. Your partner rates to have around 10 points so your greatest wish is that he has a four-card suit to bid.



## Responding to the Reopening Bid

### **Partner Makes Any Reopening Bid. Is Partner a Passed Hand or an Unpassed Hand?**

This little section is a reminder that when your partner reopens with a double, or for that matter any other bid, you must be aware of this question.

Is partner an unpassed hand or did he pass at his first turn?

**Simply speaking, if your partner is a passed hand and reopens the bidding, you must be aware that his best hand won't have more than 10 good points, or perhaps a shoddy 11 or 12 points. Be sure to give him room when you make a decision.**

Here are just a few hands to show the difference between bidding when your partner is a passed hand and when he is not a passed hand.

W	N	E	S	♠	A Q J 3
	P	1♦	P	♥	J 7 3
P	Dbl	P	?	♦	Q 8 4
				♣	K 5 4

Here, your partner is a passed hand. Bid just 1♠. No need to get excited with a balanced hand when you know it is not going to game.

If your partner had not passed, you would bid 2♠.

W	N	E	S	♠	J 8
	P	1♥	P	♥	Q J 8 4
	P	Dbl	P ?	♦	K Q 8 5
				♣	A 6 3

Facing a passed hand, bidding 1NT is enough. You do not have a game.

If your partner wasn't a passed hand, you could bid 2NT. Game is possible facing some hands with 12 or 13 points.

W	N	E	S	♠	10 8 4 2
	P	1♥	P	♥	A 6
	P	Dbl 2♥	?	♦	Q 9 8 4
				♣	Q 9 8

Partner is a passed hand. You do not need to compete with this hand because you know he has a maximum of 11 points and he may have only three spades.

If you had five spades, bidding 2♠ would be correct since you know you have an adequate trump fit.

If partner was not a passed hand, you could bid 2♠ because he might have a hand that will make it worthwhile for you to compete.

W	N	E	S	♠	K Q J
	P	1♥	P	♥	8 6 2
	P	1NT	P ?	♦	Q J 7 3
				♣	K 4 3

Pass. 1NT normally shows 12 to about 16 points after 1♥. But partner is a passed hand so his maximum is a bad 12. This hand has no future.

Whatever the topic being discussed for the rest of the book, you should note whether partner has or has not passed.

When someone reopens the bidding, the frequent effect is that of starting a small scale war in which everyone gets involved. This is especially the case when both sides have a fit or when opener thinks he has a good hand and decides to continue. Both sides will be called upon to make some delicate

decisions with huge bushels of matchpoints, money, or IMPs hanging in the balance.

On a few occasions, the balancing side will have enough to get to and make a game. Or perhaps they will have enough that they will be allowed an uncontested auction which stops short of game. Even rare slams will be bid and made.

When the balancing side has the majority of the values it is easy to judge the auction and I don't intend to spend much time on it. It is the family of hands in which the two sides have relatively equal values that I will discuss in detail.

**When your partner reopens by bidding a suit or making a takeout double, you should be willing to compete if you like what your partner is doing. Before discussing specific auctions, I want to give you two very important thoughts regarding balancing.**

- 1. Fight like crazy throughout the one and two levels. If partner makes a takeout double, try really hard to show a fit if your RHO bids something.**
- 2. If you have already made a bid, continue to contest at the two level, but go to the three level with caution.**

The point of these rules is that you will go far to establish that you have a fit, and then leave the final decision to partner. If you refuse to bid on marginal hands, your partner will be locked out of the auction on many hands which belong to your side.

In the discussions following, your partner is not a passed hand except where noted.

### **Your Partner Reopens by Doubling One of a Suit. Opener Passes.**

This is the easiest case of all. The only question here is how much you need to make more than a minimum response. Here are your possible responses along with a few comments on each. Keep in mind that your partner has not yet passed. His double does not show a lot but he could have a good hand.



### *Minimum responses in a suit*

Much of the time responder bids his best suit. The main thing here is that responder can have a modest hand with some values. When does a hand stop being a simple response and when is it worth a stronger response? Some examples.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K J 5 4  
W N E S      ♥ J 7  
1♣ P      ♦ K 5 3  
P Db1 P ?      ♣ Q 9 7 4

Bid 1♠. You have a choice of 1NT or 1♠. Showing the major is normal. This hand is not worth a stronger bid in response to a balancing double.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 8 7  
W N E S      ♥ A K J 4  
1♣ P      ♦ J 5 3 2  
P Db1 P ?      ♣ J 8 4

Bid 1♥. You have great hearts but otherwise, an ordinary hand.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 10 8 4 3  
W N E S      ♥ Q 3  
1♦ P      ♦ 9 4  
P Db1 P ?      ♣ A J 6 4 2

Bid 1♠. Nothing going on here. Usually it is better to bid a major at the one level than a minor at the two level.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 7 5 4 3  
W N E S      ♥ Q J 3  
1♥ P      ♦ A J  
P Db1 P ?      ♣ J 5 4

Bid 1♠. This is a fair hand considering that you did not bid 1♠ earlier but your values are crummy. Your partner will bid again if he has a good enough hand to make game worthwhile. Remember how weak your partner might be. He does not guarantee an opening bid for a balancing double.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A J 8 3  
W N E S      ♥ 7 3  
1♠ P      ♦ K 3 2  
P Db1 P ?      ♣ J 8 4 3

Bid 1NT. You would like to bid a suit if possible but these clubs are weak and you do have 9 HCP and you do have two spade stoppers.

### *The jump to two of a major*

Inasmuch as your partner's balancing double can be rather light, you should have a decent hand to make an invitational jump response. Generally speaking this jump to two of a major shows from 11 to 13 support points.

Basic to this is the fact that if you have the values to jump, your suit will be lousy, else you would have been worth an overcall.

N-S VUL      ♠ Q 8 7 6 5  
W N E S      ♥ K Q 3  
1♣ P      ♦ Q 8  
P Db1 P ?      ♣ K J 4

Bid 2♠. This is a typical maximum jump to 2♠. This hand is not quite an overcall because of the questionable queens and the spotless suit.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 3  
W N E S      ♥ 10 7 6 5 4  
1♦ P      ♦ A 2  
P Db1 P ?      ♣ K 9 7 5

Bid 2♥. A minimum 2♥ bid. This hand has useful high cards with a five-card suit.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 9 8 7  
W N E S      ♥ A 6  
1♦ P      ♦ 10 6 5 4  
P Dbl P ?      ♣ A J 5

2♠. This does not guarantee a five-card suit. With suitable values, even this poorish suit is acceptable.

### *The jump to 2♦ after they open 1♣*

If you have values and do not have another bid, don't overlook a jump to 2♦.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 8 7  
W N E S      ♥ A J 3  
1♣ P      ♦ Q 10 6 5 4  
P Dbl P ?      ♣ 9 3

2♦. Fair five-card suit plus no major plus a decent hand. You do this to show partner some values, which may allow him to keep bidding. If you bid only 1♦, he won't know whether he should keep bidding. For the record, would you have bid 1♦ or pass over 1♣?

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A 7  
W N E S      ♥ 7 6 3  
1♣ P      ♦ A K J 8  
P Dbl P ?      ♣ 8 6 5 2

Bid 2♦ if you didn't already overcall 1♦ with this hand. I have not discussed four-card overcalls in this book, but they are an important part of your bidding inventory. If you would have overcalled 1♦, then you can't have this hand. For more on this important overcalling concept, I refer to you to my book *Overcalls*.

### *The jump to 3♥ after a 1♠ opening bid*

This shows slightly more than jumps to the two level, and it shows a five-card suit or a good four-card suit.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 9 3  
W N E S      ♥ Q J 8 7 4  
1♠ P      ♦ 4 3  
P Dbl P ?      ♣ A K 10 4

Bid 3♥. You have a much better hand than your partner will expect if you bid just 2♥. You might have a game and this bid will help you reach it. Here you have a five-card suit. You do not promise it. Four is OK if your hand has the correct values.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 8 6 4 3  
W N E S      ♥ A Q 10 5  
1♠ P      ♦ K Q 3  
P Dbl P ?      ♣ J 4

Bid 3♥. This could get you too high, but you might get to a good game. The main point of this hand is that your partner is not a passed hand. There are a lot of shapely minimum hands that will give you a play for ten tricks. Not bidding 3♥ is an oversight.

### *The jump to three of a minor*

A jump to three of a minor almost always shows a nice five- or six-card suit. The reason these minor suit jumps show good suits is that you may end up in 3NT if your partner can bid it.

**Jumps to the two level in a major tend to deny good suits because with a good suit plus the appropriate values you would have overcalled.**

**When you jump to three of a minor, it is very likely that you have a good hand and a good suit. This is because many fair hands are not good enough to overcall at the two level.**

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 3  
W N E S      ♥ 8 7 6  
          1♥ P      ♦ A Q 10 6 5  
P Dbl P ?      ♣ Q J 3

Bid 3♦. This is a pretty decent hand but it is not good enough to bid 2♦ over opener's 1♥ bid. In comparison, if you had the same hand with a five-card spade suit instead of the diamond suit, you would bid 1♠ earlier.

### *The 1NT response*

This is not a strong bid, but it does show some values. The upper range is around 11 points and might even be more if partner had passed originally. The lower range is sometimes dictated by necessity, but it should seldom stray below 7 or 8 points.

Very important point:

W N E S  
          1♣ P  
P Dbl P 1NT

W N E S  
          1♠ P  
P Dbl P 1NT

Here are two auctions.

In the first, partner doubled 1♣ and you bid 1NT.

In the second, partner doubled 1♠ and you bid 1NT.

After 1♣, your 1NT bid shows 8 to 11 points.

After 1♦, your 1NT bid shows 7 to 11 points.

After 1♥, your 1NT bid shows 6 to 11 points.

After 1♠, your 1NT bid shows 5 to 11 points.

These examples will help show the problems with hands where you are thinking of bidding 1NT.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 4  
 W N E S      ♥ K 9 3  
                  1♣ P      ♦ Q J 5  
 P Dbl P ?      ♣ J 7 4 3 2

Bid 1NT. Do not pass. If you pass with hands like this, your partner will start thinking twice about balancing. Keep him happy.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 8 7 4  
 W N E S      ♥ J 3  
                  1♦ P      ♦ Q 9 7 5 4  
 P Dbl P ?      ♣ Q 8

Bid 1♠. Do not bid 1NT and do not pass for penalty. You were asked to bid and you have one of the things your partner is interested in: a major suit you can show.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 8 5 3  
 W N E S      ♥ Q 6 4 2  
                  1♥ P      ♦ 8 5  
 P Dbl P ?      ♣ K J 8 3

Bid 2♣. If you bid 1NT, your partner will expect you to have more. You have 6 points but your heart stopper is thin and you have a nice four-card club suit. If you could bid 1NT and command your partner to pass, that would be OK. But he will often bid again and you will hate that.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ J 10 6 4  
 W N E S      ♥ J 5 3  
                  1♠ P      ♦ J 6 3  
 P Dbl P ?      ♣ 9 5 3

This and the next two hands show the problems of responding to partner's double when you have a bad hand with no suit to bid. Here, after partner's double of 1♠, you have bad choices. You can pass and watch them

make 1♠ doubled, perhaps with overtricks. I really have no solution to offer. This is just an ugly moment. I would bid 1NT and hope we survive.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 9 5 2  
 W N E S      ♥ J 5 3  
                  1♣ P      ♦ J 6 3  
 P Db1 P ?      ♣ J 10 6 4

This time, partner doubled 1♣ instead of 1♠ and you have a lousy hand with four clubs and no suit to bid. With this hand you should bid 1♦. You are looking for a home. And you are still at the one level. With this hand I can imagine a safe resolution. With the previous hand and auction, I am scared out of my mind.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ J 8 4  
 W N E S      ♥ Q 8 4 2  
                  1♥ P      ♦ 8 4 2  
 P Db1 P ?      ♣ 9 7 6

I vote for 1♠. If I bid 1NT, my partner will expect (hope for) more. He might raise to 2NT. He might jump to 3NT. We are not going to make that. My 1♠ is just another example of finding a bid from a list of horrible possible choices.

### *The jump to 2NT*

This is invitational, showing 12 to 14 HCP. Partner is expected to continue with most 12 point hands and he might even bid 3NT if he has a nice 11 point hand with a good five-card suit.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 10 8 3  
 W N E S      ♥ K 3  
                  1♠ P      ♦ Q J 4 3  
 P Db1 P ?      ♣ A J 5

About right for 2NT. If you are thinking of bidding more, remember that partner can have as little as this hand:

♠ 6  
♥ Q J 6 5  
♦ A 8 5 2  
♣ Q 6 4 2

2NT would be high enough, if not too high. As long as you trust partner to continue with a decent 12 points, it is sufficient to invite. Don't hang partner.

### *The jump to 3NT*

Very unusual, but it could happen. You probably have a hand just short of a notrump overcall.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 2  
W N E S      ♥ K J 6  
1♥ P      ♦ Q J 8 6 5  
P Db1 P ?      ♣ A Q 7

3NT. This is the wrong kind of hand on which to overcall 1NT or 2♦ initially, but is too good to merely invite now. Don't think 3NT will be cold. It may not be. But it will make on many hands where partner would rightly pass 2NT.

### *The cue bid*

Even rarer. The most likely possibilities are good hands like these.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ J 6 5 4  
W N E S      ♥ A J 8 3  
1♥ P      ♦ A K 2  
P Db1 P ?      ♣ J 3



2♥. You are looking for four-card spade support. There is no number of spades that shows this hand. If partner bids spades, you will raise to 3♠. If he bids a minor, you will bid 3NT.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 7 6 5  
W N E S      ♥ A J 6 5  
1♦ P      ♦ A 10 5 4  
P Dbl P ?      ♣ 3

You have enough values to cue-bid and then raise when partner bids a major suit. When he does, just raise to the three level.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A J 2  
W N E S      ♥ 8 6 5 4  
1♥ P      ♦ A K J  
P Dbl P ?      ♣ Q 10 7

Cue-bid 2♥. At the moment, partner will think you are looking for spades. You will have to make a second cue bid in order to look for a heart stopper. A side question. Would you have considered doubling 1♥ for takeout? It is not a bad idea given your quality points. You do have good three-card support for anything partner does.

I don't intend to discuss the cue bid any further here. Whatever your treatment will be, fine. However, I offer a couple of questions for your partnership discussion.

1. Is a cue bid game forcing?
2. If not, does the cue-bidder promise to bid again?
3. Is the cue bid presumed to show a major suit?

### ***The penalty pass***

One of your options is to pass partner's double, converting it to penalty. This is often a winning action, but before passing, consider:

1. Partner does not need much for a reopening double.

2. How good are your spots in opener's suit? Q76542 is not a particularly good holding, while KJ974 is.
3. Do you have any offensive potential of your own? Perhaps you have a game.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A 8 7 6  
 W N E S      ♥ 3  
                  1♦ P      ♦ Q 9 7 4 2  
 P Dbl P ?      ♣ J 9 7

1 ♠. On any close hand, you should lean toward playing rather than defending. Here you have a major suit to show.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 8 7 6  
 W N E S      ♥ J 10 5  
                  1♦ P      ♦ Q 6 5 4 3 2  
 P Dbl P ?      ♣ 7

Your diamond spots are terrible. I suggest bidding 1 ♥. If your partner raises, he will have four-card support and you just might scratch up some tricks by ruffing clubs in your hand. When you pass one of these bids for penalty, you really do want to have an expectation of setting it. Note that if partner has a huge hand with a couple of diamonds, passing may work. Since partner does not promise a full double in the balancing seat, this 1 ♥ bid rates to be a good idea.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 7 6  
 W N E S      ♥ J 5  
                  1♦ P      ♦ Q 7 6 5 4 2  
 P Dbl P ?      ♣ 7 5 3

Pass. As noted, sitting for a double with such a lousy trump suit is not good in general. Here, however, you do not have an escape bid. If they make 1 ♦ doubled, perhaps with overtricks, it may turn out that any bid by you would have led to a bigger disaster.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 3  
W N E S    ♥ A 7 6 3 2  
P P 1♥ P    ♦ Q 10 7  
P Dbl P ?    ♣ Q 9 5

1NT. You have bad spots in hearts. Opposite a light takeout double you have little or no chance of beating 1♥. With the values you have, 1NT should be safe. Pass 1♥ doubled if you feel you need a good board. Then, after passing, decide what you will lead.

N-S VUL            ♠ J 8 7 4 2  
W N E S    ♥ Q 2  
          1♣ P    ♦ 3  
P Dbl P ?    ♣ A Q 8 7 6

Far better to declare than defend. Bid 2♠. Passing would be seriously wrong. When you have an obvious good bid available, declaring the hand is usually wiser than defending with it. Incidentally, if you pass, your LHO may bid. They could find a decent fit.

BOTH SIDES VUL    ♠ K 10 9 7 5  
W N E S    ♥ Q J  
          1♠ P    ♦ A 3 2  
P Dbl P ?    ♣ J 10 7

Pass. These spade spots have substantial value. You don't have so much that you should worry about making a game and you do have excellent spades with chances of a modest to big penalty.

BOTH SIDES VUL    ♠ K J 9 3  
W N E S    ♥ K 5 4  
          1♠ P    ♦ K 9 3  
P Dbl P ?    ♣ 10 6 5

It is reasonable to bid 1NT. Passing is worth thinking about. As always, the best choice is usually not known until the hand is over.

### ***Special agreement when opener redoubles—What does it mean if you pass?***

I might have put this discussion in the section where opener does something over partner's takeout double. However, the topic fits in with hands where you make a penalty pass so I included it here. Read this agreement closely. The potential for super results comes with the potential for disasters. You and your partner must know what you are doing when this situation comes up.

This is the bidding situation I am discussing here.

W N E S  
1♣ P  
P Db1 RD\*?

\*The usual meaning for opener's redouble is that opener is showing a big hand.

**It might be worth asking what the opponents' bids mean, although asking this question is more likely to help them sort out their agreements than be helpful to you. The big question that you have to answer is what a pass by you means, and what a bid by you means.**

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ J 8 7
W N E S	♥ 10 9 3
1♣ P	♦ Q 4 2
P Db1 RD ?	♣ 9 7 5 3

This presents a problem that you better know the answer to. Here is the key issue:

If you pass, are you saying you want to defend 1♣?

If you pass, are you asking partner to get you out of this mess?

The right answer is subtle but rewarding. Here is the agreement I suggest.

When opener redoubles, a pass by you says to partner: "I have them beaten in 1♣ and I want you to pass." Your partner usually does pass unless he has a good reason not to.

Hence, with the lousy hand above, you bid 1♦.

In this layout, you are West and your partner is East.

W	N	E	S	♠ 8 7 6 5
			1♣	♥ 9 6 4 3 2
P	P	Dbl	RD	♦ 10 2
P	P	?		♣ 4 2

♠ K 10 4

♥ J 10

♦ J 9 4

♣ K Q 10 9 8

♠ Q 9 3

♥ K Q 7 5

♦ A 8 7 5 3

♣ 3

♠ A J 2

♥ A 8

♦ K Q 6

♣ A J 7 6 5

This is not a common auction but the consequences of getting it right or wrong are huge. You are sitting West and hear South bid 1♣. You pass and North passes and East makes a balancing double. South has a pretty nice hand, almost worth an opening 2NT bid, and he redoubles to tell the world that he has a huge hand. West is willing to defend against 1♣ doubled and redoubled and he passes. West has four probable club tricks, one or more spade tricks, and pushers in the red suits.

Here comes the bid that makes or breaks it for East-West. If East knows that West is making a penalty pass of 1♣, East can and will pass. He has everything he is supposed to have for his double so he passes, trusting that West is on the same wavelength.

West leads the jack of hearts and South ends up with one spade, one heart, one diamond, a diamond ruff in dummy and two clubs. The defense

will set 1♣ doubled one trick for 400 points, and if declarer is careless, it might be set two tricks for 1000 points.

It is all due to East-West having the agreement that West's pass is a penalty pass, not a cry-for-help pass.

## Partner Reopens With a Double and Opener Bids Again

This is the first of many important bidding situations. The auction has become competitive to a mild degree and you will be forced to make decisions you wouldn't have faced had opener passed. What you choose to do will often be a function of what opener bids on his second turn.

### *When opener rebids his original suit or a new suit*

Opener is back in the auction, threatening to play the hand. If you have anything to say, you should fight to do that through the one and two levels. In some circumstances you might even compete at the three level.

Then quit.

Let's see how it works.

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q 10 8 7
W N E S	♥ K 2
1♣ P	♦ A 9 8 7
P Db1 1♥ ?	♣ 10 5 4

It's clear to bid 1♠. Every one of your high cards is working. This hand is quite good enough to take further action. For instance, if the auction continues:

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
		P Db1 1♥	1♠
2♣	P	P	?

You should bid 2♦ and not feel guilty of overbidding. You rate to find four-card support for one of your two suits.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K Q 8 7  
 W N E S      ♥ A 9 6 5  
                  1♥ P      ♦ 4 2  
 P Db1 2♥ ?      ♣ 10 7 5

2♠. Strive to bid when possible. Knowing of a fit is a fine excuse. Even though you have some defense against hearts, it is not overwhelming.

A very important point regarding reopening sequences is this. On some reopening auctions game is possible, while on others, game is impossible or highly unlikely. Here partner is not a passed hand so game is not out of the question. In such circumstances, you have added reason to bid on marginal hands. By comparison, if partner had passed originally, you would not expect a game opposite this hand. It would still be right to bid 2♠, but you would have lowered expectations or hopes.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ K J 8 7 5  
 W N E S      ♥ 4 2  
                  1♦ P      ♦ 10 6 5  
 P Db1 2♦ ?      ♣ 9 4 3

If you want to bid 2♠, that's okay, but best only to want to. You should pass. It's not that 2♠ will be a bad spot. If everyone passes, you are in good shape. If they bid again, your partner will likely do so too. Your hand won't be good enough. Keep in mind that partner gets a second chance if you pass.

E-W VUL      ♠ K J 8 7 5  
 W N E S      ♥ Q 2  
                  1♦ P      ♦ 10 6 5  
 P Db1 2♦ ?      ♣ J 10 4

OK to bid 2♠. Up to minimum values now. It is very important to compete with these hands. Here are five possible hands for your partner to have. If you do not bid 2♠, your partner will have to pass 2♦ on all of these hands. If you think you might have something your way, you should bid something if you can. Note that you are not vulnerable so you can afford some liberties.

**DUMMY ONE**

♠ Q 6 4 2  
 ♥ K 10 7 5  
 ♦ J 2  
 ♣ A 9 7

**DUMMY TWO**

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

**DUMMY THREE**

♠ 10 9 3  
 ♥ K J 4 3  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ A Q 5 3 2

**DUMMY FOUR**

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

**DUMMY FIVE**

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

**YOUR HAND**

♠ K J 8 7 5  
 ♥ Q 2  
 ♦ 10 6 5  
 ♣ J 10 4

NO ONE VUL

W N E S

1♦ P

P Dbl 2♣ ?

♠ Q 10 7 5

♥ A 4 2

♦ A 9 7 6

♣ 8 6

2♠. As good as this hand is, it isn't good enough to jump. In order to introduce your suit, it is frequently necessary to do so on marginal values. The price you pay for this is that your range becomes rather wide. 2♠ here turns out to show from a 6 count with a five-bagger up to 11 or even a terrible 12 count with a four-bagger. You may, on occasion, miss a game. What you get in return is a large number of partscores and small sets in your favor. In the long run, your sacrifice in definition is many times returned in results.

N-S VUL

♠ J 8 7 6



W N E S    ♥ K 3  
               1♦ P    ♦ A 10 6 3  
 P Dbl 1♥ ?    ♣ Q 5 2

1♠. You are willing to take the push to 2♠, but not higher unless helped by partner.

BOTH SIDES VUL    ♠ Q 2  
 W N E S    ♥ J 10 8 7 5  
               1♣ P    ♦ A J 9 5 4  
 P Dbl 2♣ ?    ♣ 8

Bid 2♥. If opener continues to 3♣, you will compete with 3♦. This apparently violates the principle of not competing at the three level when you have already taken a bid. But when you are introducing a new suit, it is part of the search for a fit rather than confirming one.

N-S VUL    ♠ 4 2  
 W N E S    ♥ K 10 9 7 6  
               1♦ P    ♦ 3  
 P Dbl 2♦ ?    ♣ A 10 9 6 5

2♥. If opener continues to 3♦, you should bid 3♥. This sequence is very rare and to bid in this fashion requires good distribution and a good suit. Considering that you weren't able to jump or overcall, there won't be many hands in this family.

NO ONE VUL    ♠ Q 10 4 3 2  
 W N E S    ♥ Q J 3  
               1♦ P    ♦ Q 8 7  
 P Dbl 2♣ 2♠    ♣ K 2  
 3♣ P P ?

Pass. Very doubtful that you should continue. You have soft cards and bad shape.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q J 7 3  
W N E S      ♥ K 8 5  
P P 1♥ P      ♦ K Q  
P Dbl P ?      ♣ Q 7 6 5

1 ♠ only. Partner is a passed hand. Try to buy this hand as low as possible.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ Q 9 7 3  
W N E S      ♥ Q 8  
1♦ P      ♦ K 5 4  
P Dbl 2♦ ?      ♣ A Q 7 6

3♠. Partner is still unlimited. Game is possible. The important point here is that this hand is not worth either a direct game bid or a cue bid.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A Q 10 8  
W N E S      ♥ 4 3 2  
1♥ P      ♦ 7  
P Dbl P 1♠      ♣ Q 6 5 4 2  
P P 2♥ ?

2♠. It's curious that you would bid and rebid a four-card suit and never mention a five-card suit. But there is a slight danger that partner won't have adequate club support. This plus the fact that he does need spade support suggests sticking with the known fit. If you had four bad spades, you might not try this. Also, if you had a singleton heart, you might fear the tap and choose to bid clubs first.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 8 7  
W N E S      ♥ Q J 8  
1♥ P      ♦ Q J 8 7 5  
P Dbl 2♥ ?      ♣ 9 7

A minimum and unhappy 3♦ bid. You take this action because it is important to get your suit in. Had the auction gone as shown below, your bidding would be different.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
P	Dbl	2♣	2♦
P	P	3♣	?

You would not continue to 3♦.

**Having once expressed your values, you should subside. There are many reasons to be heard, but once heard, there are not so many reasons to be heard again.**

When opener rebids, your notrump bids will acquire a stronger flavor than when opener passes. Inasmuch as you don't have to get involved, a free notrump bid shows substantial values. When partner doubled he was hoping to find a fit, and notrump was not something he particularly wanted to hear. Considering how few high-card points partner needs for a reopening double, you will need about 9 or more for 1NT and twelvish for a non-jump bid of 2NT.

NO ONE VUL	♠	Q 8 7
W N E S	♥	Q 9 5
	1♣	P ♦ K 5 4
P Dbl	1♥	? ♣ J 9 7 5

Pass. If you must, bid 1NT at matchpoints, but I don't care for it.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠	Q 7
W N E S	♥	J 5 4
	1♦	P ♦ K 10 7 5
P Dbl	1♠	? ♣ A 6 4 2

1NT. Not much more than a minimum. Note that partner has promised something in spades so you don't need a full stopper. But you shouldn't be doing it on a stiff either.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 5 4  
W N E S      ♥ 9 2  
1♦ P      ♦ A J 9 7 5  
P Dbl 1♥ ?      ♣ A 10 5

1NT. Getting close to a maximum. With this good a hand, you can fudge a bit on the heart stopper. Normally, you would like at least 10x of opener's second suit.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 9 7 5  
W N E S      ♥ K J 7  
1♠ P      ♦ K J 7  
P Dbl 2♣ ?      ♣ Q 10 6

2NT. But not happily. This is really a crummy hand. Your alternative is to double, and that is not unreasonable. But you would rather have some fast tricks.

There will be times when you want to make a penalty double. Some thoughts on this:

1. Would it be better to play it yourself?
2. Are you hanging partner?
3. Is it close?
4. What is the vulnerability?

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ A 8 5 4  
W N E S      ♥ A Q 10 7  
1♥ P      ♦ J 8  
P Dbl 2♥ ?      ♣ J 10 3

With the opponents vulnerable, a double is very reasonable. You have trump tricks, which is the first requirement for a low level double, and you have an ace on the side. Note that you have heart spots which are sure to promote to winners. If no one was vulnerable, it would be acceptable to bid 2♠.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ Q J 9 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ A 6 5 4 2  
                  1♥ P     ♦ Q 3  
                  P Db1 2♥ ?     ♣ Q 4

Bid 2♠. This hand offers only one sure trick on defense plus some kickers. The heart suit has no spot cards, which is a minus. Overall, this hand is much less useful on defense than the previous hand. It would be better if you had the ten or jack as well.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ K 4 2  
**W N E S**     ♥ A 3  
                  1♦ P     ♦ Q J 9 6 4  
                  P Db1 2♣ ?     ♣ K 5 4

Not unreasonable to double this. You intend to lead a trump. Furthermore, you may get lucky and hear LHO go back to diamonds. Yum.

### ***When opener rebids 1NT***

This bid should show a good hand but some players tend to err with it. Whether it shows an 18 to 19 point hand or some other range, you should be willing to compete.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ Q 8 7 5 4  
**W N E S**     ♥ K 4  
                  1♦ P     ♦ 9 7 5 2  
                  P Db1 1NT ?     ♣ 9 3

East's 1NT bid usually shows 18 to 19 points. Bad players may do this with less but it doesn't make much sense. Opener knows his partner is close to broke so bidding 1NT without a good hand is just offering up some unnecessary penalties.

Just because opener has a good hand does not mean you should pass, but it does suggest some care. Bid 2♠. You have no wasted cards and you have a fifth spade. However, this hand is not so good that you will volunteer another bid. Partner shouldn't credit you with very much here. He knows opener has a good hand and can infer that you are bidding with something like the hand you have.

**The important principle here is that when either player knows a fit exists, he should do everything possible to share that information with partner.**

N-S VUL	♠ K 8 7
W N E S	♥ K 8 7
1♥ P	♦ A 10 8 7 5
P Dbl 1NT ?	♣ J 2

Bid 2♦. This hand is close to a penalty double. But you probably shouldn't for a number of reasons.

1. It's almost always right to play in a reasonable contract rather than to make a speculative double.
2. The opponents aren't vulnerable.
3. You would like better hearts. Perhaps K108. Even with this reasonable hand you might not beat them, or they might run to 2♥. Now you would have to bid 3♦.

**A second important principle is this one. When you see a good contract to play in, give up speculative doubles. Often, just finding a good contract your way leads to a good result. Since playing a hand is easier than defending a hand, opting to be declarer in a good contract is rewarding.**

♠ Q 10 8 3

**BOTH SIDES VUL**

W N E S    ♥ Q 10 7 2  
          1♥ P    ♦ A 3  
P Db1 1NT ?    ♣ K J 4

Double. You have a good lead available, the spade three, and you have declarer's main suit locked up. Even if partner has one of those shapely minimums, declarer will have trouble developing his tricks. Keep in mind that your partner does not have to have a minimum. He may have a solid 10 or 11 point hand.

### **Partner Reopens by Bidding a Suit and Opener Passes**

When this happens you will have fewer options than when partner doubled. These options include:

1. The simple raise
2. Bidding notrump
3. Bidding a new suit
4. Jump raises
5. Cue-bidding
6. Passing

#### ***The simple raise***

The raise is one of your more likely actions and it will be most welcome to partner. The range for this is about the same whether partner's suit was bid at the one level or the two level. When opener passes, your range is from a good 7 to a bad 11, but you should realize that some weaker hands are better than they seem.

The reason that the range is so large is that you have fewer techniques available when the other side opens. Having to put science aside means that on many hands where you would normally shilly-shally around, you can't. You just have to raise, that being your only option. As you will see later, the range changes when opener rebids.

**NO ONE VUL    ♠ J 9 8 7**

W N E S    ♥ A 3  
               1♣ P    ♦ 9 7 5 3 2  
 P 1♠ P ?    ♣ 10 4

2♠. This is theoretically not enough to raise. Still, you have four trumps, an ace, and two doubletons. I can imagine this counting for 8 support points. If your partner bids to 3♠ somehow, he will not think poorly of what you have.

NO ONE VUL    ♠ Q 8 4  
 W N E S    ♥ J 7 5 3  
               1♣ P    ♦ Q J 7  
 P 1♠ P ?    ♣ Q 8 6

Pass. You do have 8 HCP but anyone that thinks this is an 8 point hand is not listening to the bidding. This is a trashy 8 that has poor quality points, only three trumps, and no useful shape at all. Which dummy do you think you would prefer to see if you bid 1♠ and got raised? Would you like the previous hand with 5 HCP or the current hand with its 8 HCP?

NO ONE VUL    ♠ K 8 7  
 W N E S    ♥ A 10 9 5  
               1♣ P    ♦ 4 2  
 P 1♠ P ?    ♣ Q 9 7 3

2♠. Slightly better than a minimum. 1NT would be an error and passing would be worse.

N-S VUL    ♠ J 8 7  
 W N E S    ♥ K 10 9 7  
               1♥ P    ♦ K 8 4  
 P 1♠ P ?    ♣ Q J 3

1NT. A reopening bid at the one level does not guarantee the same quality suit as an overcall. While J87 of spades is adequate support, the rest



of your hand suggests notrump, and you do have two heart stoppers. If you had any unstopped suit at all you should not be so quick to give up the raise.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ Q 8  
**W N E S**    ♥ K 5 4  
           1♣ P    ♦ K 9 7 5  
 P 1♦ P ?    ♣ Q J 6 3

1NT. When partner reopens with 1♦, it is less imperative to raise than if partner had reopened with a major.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ Q 10 7 5  
**W N E S**    ♥ K 5 4  
           1♦ P    ♦ K 9 5  
 P 1♠ P ?    ♣ Q 8 3

This hand has bad quality values. You could have more than this for a raise. Bid 2♠.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ K J 9 7 5  
**W N E S**    ♥ Q J 3  
           1♦ P    ♦ K 2  
 P 1♥ P ?    ♣ 9 6 3

2♥. 1♠ would be non-forcing and runs the risk of playing in an inferior trump suit. One of the most frustrating things you can have happen is to reopen and have partner fail to raise, as per this hand.

**NO ONE VUL**    ♠ A 8 4 2  
**W N E S**    ♥ 8 7 3 2  
           1♥ P    ♦ K 2  
 P 2♣ P ?    ♣ Q 9 8

3♣. But very minimum. Two nice things to consider. Partner bid at the two level so he has more, in general, than he would have for a bid at the one

level. Also, he will not balance with a four-card suit at the two level. He has five or more clubs.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ K 8 7 6  
                               ♡ 8 7  
                               1♠ P    ♦ K J 8  
                               P 2♦ P ?    ♣ Q 9 8 3

Bid 3♦. Your values are a bit slow to do more. Note that you have no objection to raising diamonds with three of them since partner will never bid 2♦ with only a four-card suit.

### ***Bidding notrump***

Any number of notrump shows ranges similar to those shown on other sequences. All of these bids show stoppers, although at the one level, it may be suspect.

1NT shows a decent 9 to a crummy 12.

A jump to 2NT shows a good 12 to 14.

A 2NT non-jump bid shows a good 11 or 12. This is when your partner reopens with a suit at the two level.

Understand that the edge of each of these ranges is tempered by such pluses and minuses as spot cards, fit for partner, etc.

**NO ONE VUL**    ♠ 7  
                               ♡ K Q 9 7  
                               1♦ P    ♦ K Q 10 5  
                               P 1♠ P ?    ♣ J 8 6 3

1NT. This is not because you have a singleton spade. It is because you have some values worth showing.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ J 7 4  
                               ♡ Q 8 7 4

1♣ P     ♦ A Q 8  
P 1♦ P ?     ♣ K J 6

2NT. You could have a bit more. Note the softness of your cards, i.e. queens and jacks. These are poor for play in a suit contract. Notably, you have two club stoppers.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ Q 7  
W N E S     ♥ K 9 3 2  
1♥ P     ♦ A J 9 7  
P 2♣ P ?     ♣ Q 10 7

2NT. About average. 3♣ would be a conservative alternative. Note that this 2NT bid is not a jump. It shows a little less than when you are able to jump to 2NT. Note the value of your nine of hearts. If your partner has the queen, jack, or ten, that nine will give you an extra stopper.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ A 7 6 5  
W N E S     ♥ K Q 6 4  
1♠ P     ♦ 9  
P 2♦ P ?     ♣ K J 8 3

2NT is enough. You actually have extra values, but getting tricks will be difficult if partner has a minimum, or a good hand lacking in fast tricks. Your spade spots are poor. You would be far happier to have the spade nine. Plus you have a bad diamond holding. You could bid 2NT and hear partner bid 3NT, and then go down quite a few.

Give partner this hand:

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

He will bid three in a flash. And you will have no play. This hand very much shows those pluses and minuses I mentioned when discussing notrump ranges. I think that your singleton diamond plus your lack of spade spots are enough of a worry that passing 2♦ could turn out to be the best call. Hard to find that bid, though.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ 7 6 5  
**W N E S**     ♥ A Q 7 4  
                  1♥ P     ♦ K Q 5  
                  P 2♦ P ?     ♣ K 9 5

Bid 3NT. You are just short of a hand that would have overcalled 1NT. Now that your partner has bid diamonds your hand has improved. You have likely got six diamond tricks, two hearts, and surely one can be found somewhere. Worrying about spades? I agree. I don't get scientific because I do not want to tell the opponents that I wouldn't like a spade lead. 3NT is a practical bid.

### ***Bidding a new suit***

Once in awhile, partner will reopen and you will bid a new suit. There are five situations where this might occur, and they are rather unlikely.

**A.** Partner reopens at the one level and you bid a new suit at the one level.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ J 8 7 6 5  
**W N E S**     ♥ 3  
                  1♣ P     ♦ A J 8  
                  P 1♥ P ?     ♣ Q 10 6 4

Bid 1♠. This hand is not worth overcalling on. When you pass and then bid a suit at the one level after partner's reopening bid, you rate to have a so-so five-card suit and obviously, not enough to have bid with earlier. Also, you tend to deny support for partner. One important issue is that 1♠ is definitely not forcing.

B. Partner reopens at the one level and you bid a new suit at the two level.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K 3  
W N E S     ♥ J 2  
1♦ P     ♦ 10 7 5  
P 1♥ P ?     ♣ K Q 10 8 7 4

Bid 2♣. You need a decent suit for this. And you deny support for partner. Given the good suit, you won't have too much else.

C. Partner reopens at the two level and you bid a suit at the two level which is lower ranking than opener's.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A 8 2  
W N E S     ♥ J 3 2  
1♥ P     ♦ K J 10 6 4 3  
P 2♣ P ?     ♣ 4

2♦. This is not good enough to overcall 2♦ earlier, something your partner will consider, but it is clearly good enough to bid to what you will expect is an improved contract.

D. Partner reopens at the two level and you bid two of a suit higher ranking than opener's.

Almost inconceivable. You did not overcall in the first place so making a natural bid in a suit that you could have bid at the one level is not practically possible. Perhaps it should be some kind of cue bid for partner's suit.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ A Q 2  
W N E S     ♥ 8 7 6 5 3  
1♦ P     ♦ 4 2  
P 2♣ P ?     ♣ A Q 8

Should you bid 2♥, intending it as a natural bid? Your partner will wonder why you did not bid 1♥ on the previous round. That is a serious thing

to think about.

Should you raise to 3♣, very conservatively?

Or should you cue-bid 2♦? This is the bid most would make. Basically you are showing a good hand and are suggesting notrump.

Here is a thought which is theoretical. Your partner will not know what you are doing if you haven't discussed this. And, if you do discuss it, you will wait for months before it comes up. I will show this thought via the following example.

BOTH SIDES VUL		♠ 8 7 4 3	
W	N	E S	♥ A J 10
	1♦	P	♦ 4 3 2
P	2♣	P ?	♣ A Q J

If it is agreed that you can not have a good hand with a good heart suit, perhaps you can bid 2♥ with this hand with the intention of saying you like clubs and have something good in hearts. This treatment can be described as a “natural” cue bid.

E. Partner reopens at the two level, and you bid a new suit at the three level.

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
P	2♦	P	3♣

It might be used to show a long club suit, but that sounds impossible since if you had a club suit that wanted to play in 3♣, you might have bid it earlier.

Here is my suggestion, which will require you and partner talk about it.

**Play both a new suit that is higher ranking than partner's, or which can only be bid at the three level, as a natural kind of cue bid. This idea is identical to the one I showed in the previous hand.**

BOTH SIDES VUL		♠ J 9	
W	N	E S	♥ 8 5 3
	1♥	P	♦ K J 4 3

P 2♦ P ? ♣ A Q J 10

Again, you could bid 3♣ to say you have good club honors and a nice fit for diamonds and at least 12 HCP. Your bid does not show a real suit. It shows values in the suit. Partner must not pass. At the least, he goes back to his suit if he is weak.

### ***When Partner Balances at the One Level and You Have a Good Hand***

It is possible that you will have some good hands when your partner balances. These usually fall into one of three categories.

1. A good four-card fit for partner
2. A good hand with a three-card fit for partner
3. A good but random hand, with no fit for partner

### ***You have a good hand with a four-card fit for partner. The limit raise.***

When you have a four-card fit for partner's suit and a good hand, life is easy. Just raise right away to whatever level your hand is worth.

In this discussion I am going to suggest a jump shows a limit raise. This is different from cases where your partner overcalls and you make a jump raise. Here are two auctions. Note the differences.

W N E S

1♣ 1♥ P 3♥

Today, it is almost standard to play that if your partner overcalls and you jump raise, your raise is preemptive, showing four or more trumps, some shape, and a hand with 5 to 7 support points.

W N E S

1♣ P

P 1♥ P 3♥

On this auction, North did not overcall. He made a balancing bid. Overcalls and balancing bids are two completely different things. When you jump in hearts after partner balances, you should go back to using limit raises. There is no need to use preemptive jump raises here since your LHO has already shown a bad hand. This way you tell partner what you have immediately.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K J 7  
W N E S      ♥ Q 10 5 4  
1♣ P      ♦ 4 2  
P 1♥ P ?      ♣ A Q 7 3

A minimum 3♥ bid. Importantly, you have four trumps and some shape. Do not waste time playing preemptive raises here. The opponents have done their bidding and are not likely to bid more after this start. Note that you have length in opener's suit, clubs. If you had short clubs and the values to jump to 3♥, you probably would have bid over 1♣. Having length in opener's suit is commonplace.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ A J 8 6  
W N E S      ♥ 3  
1♦ P      ♦ 10 7 5 4 2  
P 1♠ P ?      ♣ A K 9

Bid 4♠. Too good to leave the decision to partner. You have excellent trump support, excellent high cards, and excellent shape. If you play splinter bids, you can bid 4♥ to show this hand. There is no way that 4♥ can be a natural bid so playing it as a singleton is a useful plan.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q J 4 2  
W N E S      ♥ A 8  
1♥ P      ♦ Q 5  
P 1♠ P ?      ♣ K 7 5 4 3



Treat this hand as unbalanced and bid 3♠. But be aware that it's a slight overbid. When you make a limit raise, you should always have some distribution. If you have three trumps only or are 4-3-3-3, a cue bid is the best way to show your hand. You do not want to make a limit raise with a balanced hand only to go down. If you find they can not make anything, you will have turned a likely plus into a minus.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 9 4  
W N E S      ♥ K 4  
1♣ P      ♦ Q 9 8 4  
P 1♦ P ?      ♣ A Q 7 4 3

Bid 3♦. If opener had bid 1♥ or 1♠ instead of passing, you would also bid 3♦.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K J 7  
W N E S      ♥ Q 10 5 4  
P P 1♣ P      ♦ 4 2  
P 1♥ P ?      ♣ A Q 7 3

**You saw this hand a moment ago. Note that on this auction, your partner is a passed hand. I suggest that when you have a limit raise for your partner along the lines of the hands above, you should still lean towards making these bids even though you know he does not have opening bid values. He is allowed to have good enough shape that he can bid games even if he does not have opening bid high-card points.**

***You have a good hand with three-card support. The simple cue bid.***

When partner balances by bidding a suit at the one level, you will have to be careful when you have a good hand with just three-card support. You should almost never make a jump raise without four trumps.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 10 8  
W N E S      ♥ A 5 4

1♣ P     ♦ K J 8 7  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ K 6 2

This hand is not as good as it looks. Cue-bid 2♣, intending these follow-ups.

1. Pass if partner rebids 2♠ showing a minimum.  
This may feel conservative to you but you need to remember that partner can reopen with some 7 or 8 point hands. 2♠ will be high enough.
2. Bid 2♠ if partner bids 2♥ or 2♦.
3. Raise 2NT to 3NT. Partner promises real values when he bids notrump.

The point of this hand is that you do not wish to get partner too high. Nothing is worse than voluntarily bidding to the three level on balanced hands and going down one. When it's your hand, you must go plus. Your 13 point hand will not stretch to game unless partner shows extra values. Remember that your partner won't bid 2NT without a good hand. If he has a poor hand, he rebids his suit.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ K J 8 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ 8 6 5  
1♥ P     ♦ A 5 4  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ K J 4

Cue-bid 2♥, intending to stop in 2♠ if possible. If partner bids 2NT, he shows around 13 points. You will bid 3♠ to offer him a choice of games. It is odd to cue-bid when you have four trumps. The reason you do that here is that you have bad shape and do not want to leap to the three level. Balanced hands are just not as good as hands with some shape.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ J 7 2  
**W N E S**     ♥ K Q 10  
1♣ P     ♦ A Q J  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ 8 6 5 4

Cue-bid 2♣, intending to return to 2♠ or raise 2NT to 3NT. For the record, you might have doubled 1♣ for takeout.

***You have a good hand without trump support. The cue bid.***

In some cases your partner balances by bidding a suit at the one level and you have a good hand that does not include support for partner. You may have a hand looking for a notrump game. Sometimes you can jump to 2NT or 3NT. Sometimes you do not have a stopper in their suit and you need to find another bid. A cue bid may be the answer.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A K 9  
W N E S     ♥ J 8  
1♦ P     ♦ 7 5 3 2  
P 1♥ P ?     ♣ K Q J 7

Bid 2♦. This is a good hand which is hoping to find partner with extra values. If partner can bid notrump, you are delighted to raise to game. If he rebids his suit, you have to reconsider. Here, if he bids 2♥ you probably should pass. Note that your partner is not a passed hand. He can have some decent hands over there. If he was a passed hand, you might just choose to pass 1♥.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ Q 10  
W N E S     ♥ 9 5 3  
1♥ P     ♦ A Q 8 4  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ A K 8 4

This is about as good a hand as you will ever have. It is typical of the good hands you can have which do not include a fit or a stopper. I would guess to bid 2♥, intending to continue as follows:

1. If partner bids 2♠, I bid 3♥. You need a very good hand to cue-bid their suit twice. If he rebids 3♠, I will close my eyes and raise to 4♠.
2. If partner bids 2NT, I raise to 3NT. I would not worry about a slam.

3. If partner bids 3♣ or 3♦, implying extra values, I am stuck for a perfect bid. I imagine I would try 3♥, cue-bidding again, hoping for a useful bid from partner.

Your partner should be aware that when you do not overcall and then make a cue bid followed by a second cue bid, you have a good hand like the one you have here. This hand, good as it is, just does not have a wise bid over 1♥.

### ***When Partner Bids a Suit at the Two Level***

When he does this, whether it is a major or a minor, he has five or six cards and a better hand than he needs to bid a suit at the one level. There are not that many things you can do so I will put your possible bids in this single section.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ A 8 7 5  
                               ♥ Q 10 5  
                               1♠ P     ♦ 3  
                               P 2♥   P ?     ♣ A 10 9 5 4

4♥. Partner has a fair to good five-card suit, and may have six. It is hard to say what your hand is worth but in support of hearts, I would rate it as a sound opening bid. Don't make some fancy bid that forces your partner to guess. With your RHO opening the bidding, you can forget about slam auctions. Just bid game and hope your partner makes it. He does have the advantage of knowing where most of the missing high-card points are.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ 9 7 4 2  
                               ♥ K 10 4  
                               1♠ P     ♦ 3 2  
                               P 2♥   P ?     ♣ A Q 10 9

Raise to 3♥. This shows a solid 9 to 11 points. If you had a fourth heart, you could bid game.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K 8 7  
 W N E S     ♥ J 10 5 4 2  
               1♥P     ♦ 3  
 P 2♣ P ?     ♣ A Q 9 7

Hands like this are very difficult. Anything could be right. I would try 4♣. This almost always guarantees a stiff somewhere. Perhaps 3♦ should be a splinter bid. I can't think of a natural meaning for it.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A 10 3  
 W N E S     ♥ K Q J 4  
               1♦P     ♦ 7 4 3  
 P 2♣ P ?     ♣ Q 7 4

Bid 2♦. A cue bid after partner's balancing bid at the two level usually shows a good balanced raise of partner's suit. Your intent is to pass if partner bids 3♣, showing a minimum hand. You will bid 3NT if he bids 2NT.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ Q 9 4 3  
 W N E S     ♥ A 10 4 2  
               1♥P     ♦ J 10  
 P 2♦ P ?     ♣ K Q 2

Bid 2NT. Never make a cue bid when you have a good natural bid you can make instead. Cue bids should be used when you have something really special or when you do not know what to do. This hand has notrump values and can be shown with 2NT.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 9  
 W N E S     ♥ A J 5 3  
               1♠P     ♦ K 3 2  
 P 2♣ P ?     ♣ Q 8 6 4 3

Bid 3♠. This is a splinter bid showing a big hand with a singleton spade and great club support. Sometimes you hit a home run by reaching slams with

minimum points. Partner should note that you did not bid over 1♠ so your hand is limited by that fact.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ Q 4 3  
W N E S     ♥ 9 4 2  
1♥ P     ♦ A K Q 9 3  
P 2♣ P ?     ♣ Q 8

This hand was not worth a 2♦ overcall. Take credit if you agree. At this point, you want to do something, but what that might be is not clear. I suggest bidding 2♥, hoping to find 3NT. A 2♦ bid would show a weaker hand.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ 8 6 5  
W N E S     ♥ A Q 9  
1♠ P     ♦ 10 8  
P 2♦ P ?     ♣ A Q 10 7 5

The higher ranking their suit, the more likely you will have a random good balanced hand. This is because there are many good hands that have no useful bid to make over 1♠. This hand should not overcall 2♣ over 1♠. But if the black suits were reversed, you would overcall 1♠ over any other opening bid. With the actual hand and auction, you should cue-bid 2♠, intending to raise to 3NT or to pass 3♦.

### ***When Partner Balances by Bidding a Suit, You Are Always Allowed to Pass***

While this is obvious, it is worth mentioning. There are some hands where you may feel like bidding but either can't or shouldn't. Here are some typical examples. Note that a few of these hands are pretty good.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K J 8 7  
W N E S     ♥ J 5 4  
1♣ P     ♦ 8 6 5  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ J 9 7

Pass. A raise should show a good 8 points. This hand doesn't make it. The fine spade support doesn't compensate for the poor distribution and lack of useful cards.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ 10  
**W N E S**    ♥ J 6 5  
               1♥ P    ♦ K J 8 7 3 2  
 P 1♠ P ?    ♣ Q 8 4

You expect diamonds is a better trump suit than spades, but it is very likely that your partner will bid again if you bid 2♦. Better to pass 1♠. Do not start something if you will hate many of the consequences.

**NO ONE VUL**    ♠ K J 7  
**W N E S**    ♥ J 2  
               1♦ P    ♦ 9 6 3  
 P 1♥ P ?    ♣ A J 8 6 2

Probably best to pass. Even with this much, game is unlikely. No reason to suppose clubs from your side is better than hearts from his side. With the 963 of diamonds, you can't consider notrump.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ 8 3  
**W N E S**    ♥ 8 6 4  
               1♥ P    ♦ A Q 6 4  
 P 1♠ P ?    ♣ A J 8 3

Pass. Again, good hand, but no convenient bid. If the hearts were as good as Jxx or 10xxx, you might chance 1NT. As it is, you should probably pass. My sympathies.

**NO ONE VUL**    ♠ 3  
**W N E S**    ♥ K 7 6 5  
               1♦ P    ♦ 8 5 4 2  
 P 1♠ P ?    ♣ A K Q 8

Possibly 1NT. You would like better diamonds, but you have compensating values. In part, you are running because of the stiff spade. Note that the previous hand had a doubleton spade so you were content in 1♠. This is not an easy hand. Even a pass might be best.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 9 2  
W N E S     ♥ 8 6 5  
1♥ P     ♦ A Q 6 2  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ A K J 4

This hand is just too good to pass. Try 2♥, intending to pass 2♠. If partner bids 3♣ or 3♦, you will have another problem. In practice, I've never had this hand and auction. It is hard to accept that 1♠ might be your best spot. This could be true if your partner has three bad hearts.

### **Partner Reopens With a Suit and Opener Rebids Something**

As when opener passes, you have a number of options when opener bids again. A new option is doubling opener if he bids a suit or notrump. The fact that opener has rebid changes things significantly. Here are your options, plus a look at the differences that occur as opposed to when opener passed.

1. The simple raise
2. Bidding notrump
3. Bidding a new suit
4. Cue-bidding and the jump raise
5. The penalty double
6. Passing

#### ***The simple raise***

The simple raise of partner's suit is the easiest method you have of establishing a basis for competition. This remains true whether opener has rebid or not. But there is a change in the values shown by the raise. When opener passes, the raise shows around 8 to 11 support points. But when opener intervenes, it becomes incumbent on you to raise far more



aggressively. You can raise with some attractive 6 point hands. This is because failure to raise runs the risk that you may be shut out of the auction. It's not that you will be missing any games. It is that you will be missing all kinds of partscores. Compare these two auctions:

W	N	E	S	W	N	E	S
		1♦	P			1♦	P
P	1♠	P	?	P	1♠	2♣	?

In the first sequence, partner's 1♠ bid may buy the contract. You are in contention for a partscore. A raise by you is encouraging, with an eye toward getting to game.

The second sequence is much different. If you pass, the opponents may buy the hand for 2♣ on hands where you might have a partscore of your own. True, partner may have enough to bid further. But against that, if LHO raises to 3♣, your side may be shut out of the bidding. If you raise to 2♠, your partner will be informed and may be able to continue.

**The upshot of this is that when opener competes, you may be more aggressive to raise than when opener passes. This is contrary to most concepts of "free" bids, but necessary if you are not going to be robbed blind.**

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q 10 8
W N E S	♥ K J 3 2
1♣ P	♦ 10 9 5 3
P 1♠ 2♣ ?	♣ 4 3

2♠. You would pass if opener had passed also. It's very important to establish a fit. More values would be nice, but the fit is more important than the odd queen or two. Note that all of what you have has some potential.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ A 10 8 7 5
W N E S	♥ 4 2
1♠ P	♦ Q J 9

P 2♦ 2♥ ? ♣ 10 6 5

3♦. Another minimum which wouldn't have acted over a pass. If you are worried that you may push them to game, don't be. Once opener has bid 2♥ they will get there regardless of your action, should they choose to do so.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 10 6 5  
 W N E S     ♥ K Q 9 7  
               1♦ P     ♦ K 5 4  
 P 1♠ 2♦ ?     ♣ K 6 2

2♠. The upper range of the raise remains the same. You could even have a little more than this. You may lose some games now and then by having such a wide range for 2♠, but you will hold your own on partscore hands. The return vs. gain will be substantially in your favor.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ Q 8  
 W N E S     ♥ J 9 7  
               1♠ P     ♦ K 8 7 5  
 P 2♥ 2♠ ?     ♣ K 6 5 4

Pass. This one sequence is rather special. Most of the time when you raise partner's suit from the two level to the three level, he will either pass or look for the 3NT. The one thing he won't do is continue voluntarily to the four level. This is because in all other cases his suit is a minor, and there are no bonuses for getting to the four level. In this auction, partner's suit is hearts. If you raise, partner may well go on to 4♥. This sequence doesn't allow for game tries so partner will have to guess.

This means that you should not raise to 3♥ on bad hands. Barring your having some scientific solution, your partnership has to muddle through this auction. If your queen of spades was the queen of hearts, this would be worth a raise.

***You can bid some number of notrump***

Notrump ranges remain the same as when opener passes. But there are additional considerations when he rebids.

When opener rebids a new suit, a notrump bid by you will require two stoppers, not just one. And if opener rebids his suit, he will have a much better than average suit. You will be subject to an especially effective defense, so you may want to reconsider bidding on marginal hands.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ J 7  
W N E S      ♥ Q 9 8  
1♥ P      ♦ K Q 10 7  
P 1♠ 2♥ ?      ♣ K Q 10 9

Nothing is obvious. It is very dangerous to bid with this hand. It looks like you have values to bid at least 2NT, but if you visualize opener's hand you will see why you would be lucky to make even 1NT, let alone two or three. Opener rates to have a good six-card or longer suit, and at least one additional ace. Opener typically has a hand like this:

♠ K 3  
♥ A K 10 7 5 4  
♦ A J 3  
♣ 5 2

If you bid 2NT, you will get a heart lead and will quickly lose five hearts, the ace of diamonds, and probably a spade as well. I would probably bid 2NT anyway, but would hate it. Perhaps raising to 2♠ is right. Maybe double, or even pass, is best. No one said bridge is easy.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 2  
W N E S      ♥ J 7 4 2  
1♥ P      ♦ A Q 10 9 3  
P 1♠ 2♥ ?      ♣ Q 10

You could try 2NT with this. You have better help in spades plus you have a good diamond suit which could easily come home. Here you have two

reasonable sources of tricks. The previous hand had no such hope. Again, a 2♠ raise could be the best option.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ Q 8 7  
**W N E S**    ♥ 10 2  
           1♦ P    ♦ A Q 8  
 P 1♥ 2♦ ?    ♣ K J 10 8 7

2NT again. Here you have a second stopper plus a suit which could provide tricks. Don't consider doubling. Also, do not expect 2NT to be cold.

**NO ONE VUL**    ♠ Q 10 3  
**W N E S**    ♥ 10 4  
           1♣ P    ♦ A J 9 8 3  
 P 1♥ 1♠ ?    ♣ K 10 7

1NT. This is a minimum hand for 1NT. You need stoppers in both suit of their suits.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ 9 8 7 6 2  
**W N E S**    ♥ K 5  
           1♦ P    ♦ K 10 3  
 P 1♥ 2♣ ?    ♣ A Q 2

2NT, I suppose. While neither of opener's suits presents an enormous threat, the opening leader will be able to select the right lead almost without exception. Opener is likely to be 5-5 or perhaps 5-4. Note that in the previous hand, opener had four spades, but the club suit was of undetermined length, ranging from three to six. When you finish a hand like this one, you should look to see if a raise with the K5 of hearts would be better or if just passing is the winner. These balancing auctions are quite delicate. No easy answers.

*You bid a new suit*

Whatever principles you have adopted for showing new suits when opener has passed will work when opener rebids.

*Partner bids a suit, and opener rebids his suit. You make a jump raise.*

When opener rebids his suit, it will have an effect on the way you treat your strong raises and your cue bids. Those hands with shape and support will still jump raise, but the other hands will become more difficult to handle. Opener's rebid will frequently have the effect of taking away your cue bid, or will force you to make it a level higher. Sometimes your hand just isn't that good. Here are a few examples of hands that might make a limit raise.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ Q 9 8 7  
W N E S     ♥ 6 5 4  
1♥ P     ♦ A K 9 8 3  
P 1♠ 2♥ ?     ♣ 10

3♠ is enough. The jump still shows a good hand with four trumps and useful distribution.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ K J 7  
W N E S     ♥ K Q 8 6  
1♦ P     ♦ Q 2  
P 1♠ 2♦ ?     ♣ Q 10 6 3

Had opener passed, you would have cue-bid 2♦ and been content to stop in 2♠. Opener's rebid has stolen your cue bid and leaves you with an awkward problem. You can do any of the following:

1. Jump to 3♠. This hand has the approximate values for that bid, but lacks the fourth trump and has poor shape. Getting to 3♠ risks an unnecessary minus score.
2. You can cue-bid 3♦. This will also get you too high on a number of occasions. At least your partner won't play you for four-card support.

3. You can raise to 2♠, which will cause you to miss a few games. If partner were a passed hand, I would choose the simple raise. Here partner has not passed, but I still suspect 2♠ is best.

There are two things worth specific mention.

1. It will be a very poor result to get to 3♠ voluntarily and go down. You just can't afford minus scores when the hand belongs to your side.
2. Your diamond queen is wasted. Effectively, you are no longer playing with a 40 point deck. You are playing with a 38 point deck.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ K Q 8  
**W N E S**    ♥ A 6 5 4  
                   1♥ P    ♦ 2  
 P 1♠ 2♥ ?    ♣ K 6 5 4 2

Very reasonable to treat these spades as four-card support and jump to 3♠. Partner rates to have five spades, else he would have doubled for takeout. You draw this inference from the fact that your partner is known to be short in hearts. If you had a similar hand with a stiff heart, you would have no assurances as to partner's length in spades. This hand looks like it might be worth bidding more, but hands with three trumps play much worse than hands with four trumps.

## OPTIONAL NEW TREATMENT

**Partner bids a suit, and opener rebids his suit or a new suit. You double.**

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
		1♦	P			1♦	P
P	1♠	2♦	Dbl	P	1♠	2♣	Dbl

**What should these doubles mean? Traditionally, these doubles are for penalty. You show a good hand with four or more good cards in the suit you are doubling and you tend to deny support for your partner.**

There is a minority trend nowadays that suggests a double on one of these auctions is for takeout, not penalty. Players who use this style have almost no penalty doubles available, just takeout or value-showing doubles. A double on both of these auctions has no penalty connotation. It just shows a good hand.

This treatment allows you to compete on many hands that otherwise would not be able to bid. You do lose some penalty doubles but you gain a lot of partscore swings. Also, you do not automatically lose a penalty double because your partner may be able to make a delayed takeout double himself.

Here are a few hands showing the difference between hands that make a takeout double and a cue bid. This is the kind of thing you can do when using this new optional double.

NO ONE VUL	♠ J 3
W N E S	♥ 8 6 2
1♥ P	♦ A K J 4
P 1♠ 2♥ ?	♣ K J 8 3

This is a good hand. But where is it going? If you cue-bid, you have to bid 3♥, which is an awkward choice. I suggest doubling if you are using the new meaning for double. You are telling partner that you have a nice hand with no easy bid to make. Your partner will bid whatever looks sanest to him. He will rebid 2♠ on some hands and if he has a minor, he can consider bidding that. You should be aware that when opener rebids his suit, it makes life uncomfortable for you when you have a good hand. I will discuss this hand again in the next section where this new double is not in use.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ A 9 2
W N E S	♥ 8 6 5
1♥ P	♦ A 6 3 2
P 2♣ 2♥ ?	♣ K Q 4

Cue-bid 3♥. This hand is good enough to try for 3NT. Even 5♣ is possible. You have a club fit and you have excellent chances for fast tricks if partner can stop hearts. Do not use the new double when you have good trump support. This cue bid is ambiguous in that you should have some kind of fit for partner. It is not always an excellent fit.

N-S VUL            ♠ 8 6 5  
W N E S        ♥ A 9  
          1♠ P     ♦ Q J 5  
P 2♦ 2♠ ?    ♣ A Q 5 4 2

Cue-bid 3♠. Your fast tricks plus diamond help make this hand worth a cue bid. Note that this hand is not worth an overcall yet once partner shows some values you have a shot at 3NT.

I suspect that this brief discussion will be expanded in a book on competitive bidding somewhere and I will be happy to read it, barring my doing it myself.

NO ONE VUL       ♠ J 5  
W N E S        ♥ K 6  
          1♦ P     ♦ Q J 8 7 6  
P 1♠ 2♦ ?    ♣ A J 10 5

You would like to double 2♦ for penalty. Using the new optional takeout double convention, you can not double. You can bid 2NT or you can pass. I suggest you pass. You are hoping that your partner can double now, which is possible. Here is a hand he might have that can do that.

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

If your partner doubles 2♦, you can pass and you get your wish to defend 2♦ doubled. Note that your side can't make much of anything.



**Your partner has a typical reopening 1♠ bid and your side has just over half of the high cards. Defending is your best option.**

The rest of this section shows bidding *without* the new optional takeout double.

*Partner bids a suit, and opener rebids his suit. You make a cue bid.*

If you make a cue bid, there will be some confusion as to whether you are showing true support for partner, or a good hand that is interested in notrump, or perhaps something in between.

NO ONE VUL	♠ J 3
W N E S	♥ 8 6 2
1♥ P	♦ A K J 4
P 1♠ 2♥ ?	♣ K J 8 3

This hand appeared in the previous discussion where the optional takeout double was in use.

**Bid 2♠. Cue-bidding is not acceptable since you do not have the values to be safe at the three level. Without the optional takeout double, you have a headache. It is remarkable how often raising with two trumps to an honor is a sane choice. You hope your partner has five spades. Note that if opener had passed over partner's 1♠ bid, raising with two trumps is not a real option. As you saw, a takeout double would help with this hand.**

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ Q 9 2
W N E S	♥ 8 6 5
1♥ P	♦ A Q 3
P 2♣ 2♥ ?	♣ K J 4 2

3♥. This hand is good enough to try for 3NT. Even 5♣ is possible. You have a club fit and you have excellent chances for fast tricks if partner can stop hearts.

N-S VUL	♠ 8 6 5
W N E S	♥ A J 4
1♠ P	♦ Q J
P 2♦ 2♠ ?	♣ A J 5 4 2

Cue-bid 3♠. Even though you don't have a true fit, your fast tricks plus diamond help make this hand worth a cue bid.

***Partner bids a suit, and opener rebids a new suit. You make a cue bid.***

When opener rebids his own suit, it makes it difficult for you to cue-bid because that action automatically gets you to the three level. But when opener rebids a new suit, you can often cue-bid his first suit and save an entire level of bidding.

Here are some examples of this situation. Note the increase in bids available to you when opener rebids a new suit as opposed to rebidding his original suit.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K J 7
W N E S	♥ K Q 8 6
1♥ P	♦ Q 2
P 1♠ 2♦ ?	♣ Q 10 6 3

Here you have room to cue-bid 2♥, opener's original suit. This implies support for partner and lets you stop in 2♠ if that is what partner bids. This hand has points but they are pretty bad ones. No need to get higher than 2♠ if partner is minimum.

NO ONE VUL	♠ J 5 4
W N E S	♥ A 6 4
1♠ P	♦ A Q J 4 3
P 2♣ 2♥ ?	♣ 4 2

If you should ever find yourself with this problem, you might actually try passing. You have two possible bids, 3♣ and a 2♠ cue bid. I hesitate to say which bid, pass, 3♣, or 2♠, is correct. If you are afraid of missing a game, try constructing a few hands for partner. You'll find the only games available are in clubs or diamonds and there is no way to explore these possibilities. 3♣ by you will usually end the auction. Raising with the 42 of clubs is exceptional and is chosen only because you have such good high cards. Note that this would be a good hand for the optional takeout double shown a few pages ago.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ 8 6 2  
                               ♡ A 9 7  
                               1♠ P     ♦ K J 7  
                               P 2♦ 2♡ ?     ♣ A J 9 3

2♠. You can show a good hand and still not get past 3♦ if partner is minimum. Note that your cue bid says nothing about your holding in that suit.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ 8 6  
                               ♡ A Q 10 7  
                               1♡ P     ♦ A Q 6 5  
                               P 1♠ 2♣ ?     ♣ 4 3 2

Difficult choices. One that is not obvious is a penalty double of 2♣. If everyone passes, you will lead a trump. This can lead to a triumph or a disaster. What you are really hoping for is that they return to 2♡, which you will be pleased to double. Note that this would be a good hand for the optional takeout double shown a few pages ago.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ Q 7 3 2  
                               ♡ A 5 4  
                               1♦ P     ♦ K J 7  
                               P 1♠ 2♣ ?     ♣ K 6 2

2♦. Too balanced for a jump raise. The jump raise shows both four-card support plus good distribution. This hand has the four-card support but it has lousy shape.

### *The penalty double*

When opener rebids, you may wish to double for penalties. The usual considerations apply.

Should you prefer to try for a contract of your own?

Are you allowing for the minimums partner may have?

NO ONE VUL      ♠ J 8 2  
W N E S      ♥ A J 6 4  
1♥ P      ♦ K 10 7  
P 1♠ 2♥ ?      ♣ Q 5 4

2♠. Don't take extreme positions. 2♠ should be safe and 2♥ doubled doesn't rate to be more than one down.

N-S VUL      ♠ K J 8  
W N E S      ♥ K 8  
1♠ P      ♦ A 8 5 4  
P 2♣ 2♠ ?      ♣ Q J 8 5

3NT. This should be cold. Note that partner's two level bid shows more than a one level bid.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 3 2  
W N E S      ♥ A 9 8  
1♦ P      ♦ K J 9 3 2  
P 1♠ 2♦ ?      ♣ K 10 4

This is the kind of hand you want when you double them. Good trumps, adequate values otherwise, no fit, and no worry that game exists. If there is a game for your side, the penalty will be that much more for you.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ Q 7 5  
**W N E S**     ♥ Q 8 5 4 2  
                  1♥ P     ♦ K 9  
 P 2♣ 2♥ ?     ♣ Q 5 2

Pass or 3♣. Not a clear choice. This is exactly the kind of hand you shouldn't double with. You have no heart spots, and your partner hasn't promised that much. His normal values will include 10 HCP with a trick or two for defense.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ Q 9 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ A 8 6 5  
                  1♣ P     ♦ A J 9 5  
 P 1♠ 1NT ?     ♣ 10 7

2♠. As usual, try to play in a reasonable contract rather than make a close double. Be especially concerned about opener's suit in a situation like this one. It's almost never right to double when you can't control that suit. Keep in mind that opener's 1NT rebid shows 18 to 19 points. It isn't safe for him to bid with less given his partner is showing a bad hand.

### *Passing*

Finally, when opener makes a second bid, you have the option to pass. Usually, this shows a poor hand, but as we've seen there are some quite good hands which can't act intelligently. One important point here is that you should not act on unclear hands unless you have maximum values for that action.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ Q J 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ 10 6  
                  1♣ P     ♦ K J 8 4 2  
 P 1♥ 2♣ ?     ♣ Q 6 5

No reason to do anything. If partner can't bid again, this hand has no future.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ A 8 7  
                               ♡ 8 3 2  
                               1♥ P    ♦ K J 9 8 3  
                               P 2♣ 2♥ ?    ♣ K J

3♣. Unusual with only two clubs. Because of this flaw, you require a maximum to try it. You may occasionally raise to the two level with a doubleton honor in partner's suit. It is rare to do this at the three level. Importantly, you know that your partner has five or more clubs. He does not bid a four-card suit at the two level when reopening after a passed out one bid.

**NO ONE VUL**        ♠ K Q 9 8  
                               ♡ Q 6 4 2  
                               1♥ P    ♦ Q J 3  
                               P 2♣ 2♦ ?    ♣ J 5

Pass. The values are too slow for 2NT, the club support too poor to raise, and the diamonds too weak to double. If they continue to 2♥, you will pass that too.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ Q J 8  
                               ♡ 8 6 5 2  
                               1♥ P    ♦ A K Q 7  
                               P 2♣ 2♥ ?    ♣ 4 3

Pass. Another decent hand with no safe way to enter the bidding. Doubling for penalty would be horrible. That requires sure trump tricks, not just four pups. This would be a good hand for the optional takeout double treatment I mentioned earlier.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ J 8 7

W	N	E	S	♥	10 2
			1♠	P	♦ A K J 5
P	2♥	2♠	?	♣	J 10 9 7

Pass. With no obvious bid available, you go quietly. Anytime you don't know what to do, you need extra values to try an experiment.

NO ONE	VUL	♠	K J 7
W	N	E	S
			1♥
			P
P	2♣	2♦	?
			♣ 8 6 3

Pass. If your clubs and hearts were interchanged, you would raise. As it is, this hand is mostly worthless.



## Continuing the Auction After Balancing Against a One-Bid

A lot of space has been devoted to the balancing bid when a one-bid is passed out. Almost as important is what the balancer does next. The reason for this is that this is the only reopening sequence in which game is likely to exist. For this reason I am going to devote additional attention to how the reopener should continue. Space won't permit a thorough inspection of all the cases, but there are quite a few generalities worth discussing.

**Note there is one exception to this discussion. If they open with a preempt and it is passed to you, you will be dealing with games and slams. Much more on this in the section on reopening after a preempt.**

**They bid one of a suit. You reopen with a takeout double. What, if anything, do you do next?**

When you have doubled for takeout, you will continue the auction far more often than if your reopening bid was a simple bid of a suit. This is because your range for the double is so enormous. Your minimum is a shapely 7 and your maximum can be as much as a super 25 or even more. Having doubled, it is necessary to catch up on the strength.

Whether or not you continue will frequently depend on whether partner has made a simple forced response, a free bid, a jump, a cue bid, or a bid of



any number of notrump. I will discuss many bidding situations. There are more situations than these but these are the ones you are likely to encounter.

1. Opener passes and partner makes a minimum bid in one of the unbid suits.
2. Opener bids again and partner makes a minimum bid.
3. Opener passes, your partner makes a minimum bid, and RHO bids something.
4. Opener passes. Your partner makes a jump bid in an unbid suit.
5. Opener bids something. Your partner makes a jump bid in an unbid suit.
6. Opener passes. Partner bids any number of notrump.
7. Opener bids something. Your partner bids any number of notrump.
8. Opener bids again and your partner passes.
9. Opener passes and partner cue-bids.
10. Some good but hard-to-bid hands after making a double

*Opener passes. Partner makes a minimum bid in one of the unbid suits.*

A raise by you will show values such that game is possible opposite the maximum partner may have. Inasmuch as partner can have 10 or 11 points and still make a simple response, a raise by you should show a good 14 or so support points. Note that this is somewhat less than what you would show if your double was immediately after the opening bid. Other bids by you will show similar sound values but will still not be up to the standards that would be required for an immediate takeout double and rebid.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K J 8 7
W N E S	♥ Q J 6 2
1♣ P P Dbl	♦ A 4 3
P 1♥ P ?	♣ 10 7

A normal decent hand. Nothing special here. Pass.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K J 3
W N E S	♥ A 2

1♥ P P Db1     ♦ K 10 9 7  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ A 6 4 2

Pass. Partner won't have both five spades and the 10 points you need for game. He would jump. If you had a fourth spade, you would have an average raise to 2♠. That fourth trump is extremely significant.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ Q 10 8 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ A K 10 2  
1♦ P P Db1     ♦ 3  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ K 9 7 6

The good shape and well coordinated high cards suggest a raise. Raise to 2♠. Given you are not a passed hand, the raise shows around 14 to 16 support points. This hand is minimum.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ K J 8 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ 3  
1♥ P P Db1     ♦ A Q 10 7  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ A J 9 7

3♠. Had you doubled an opening 1♥ at your right and heard partner bid 1♠, you would raise to 2♠.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ K 10 8 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ 7 3  
1♥ P P Db1     ♦ A Q 10  
P 1♠ P ?     ♣ A J 9 7

2♠. This hand is the same as the one above but with one less high-card point and one additional heart. This is now a good 2♠, not a 3♠.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ J 10 8 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ 3  
P     ♦ A K 10 6

1♥ P P Db1 ♣ Q J 9 3  
P 1♠ P ?

2♠. You wouldn't do this normally, but having passed originally, you can afford to raise. This caters to the possibility that partner is being conservative. He knows he is facing a passed hand, so he might have a little extra. He won't expect more from you.

NO ONE VUL ♠ K Q 10 8 7  
W N E S ♥ A 10 5  
1♦ P P Db1 ♦ 3  
P 1♥ P ? ♣ K Q 7 5

1♠. This shows more than a minimum opening bid, but does not guarantee the earth.

BOTH SIDES VUL ♠ A 10 5  
W N E S ♥ K Q J 8 7  
1♦ P P Db1 ♦ 3  
P 1♠ P ? ♣ A Q 6 5

2♥. Because you doubled and then bid your suit at a higher level than was necessary, you do show extras. On the previous hand, you doubled and bid 1♠. Here you could have bid 1♥, but doubled and then bid 2♥. This sequence shows a good hand. Note you do not promise spade support when you bid 2♥.

NO ONE VUL ♠ J 8 7  
W N E S ♥ K J 7  
1♦ P P Db1 ♦ A Q 9  
P 1♥ P ? ♣ A J 10 5

Bid 1NT. You will remember that the reopening 1NT range varies according to the suit opened. Over 1♠, 1NT shows 12 to 16; over 1♥, 1NT shows around 12 to 15; and over 1♣ and 1♦, it shows around 12 to 14. If you

double and then bid 1NT, you are showing a hand slightly better than whatever 1NT would have shown on the round before.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K 9 7 5
W N E S	♥ K 2
1♥ P P Db1	♦ A 9 5
P 2♣ P ?	♣ K 10 8 7

Pass. Any further action would be wrong. If partner had responded 1♠, you might be talked into going to 2♠ if pushed. But this hand is not good enough to volunteer for the three level.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ K Q 7 4
W N E S	♥ A J 3
1♥ P P Db1	♦ A J 6 4
P 2♣ P ?	♣ 10 2

2♣ wasn't what you wanted to hear. Perhaps 1♠ or 1NT would have been better. The point is that having doubled, you can't try 2NT. That would show more. Double was a reasonable action which seems to have backfired. 2♣ could be alright. Don't make it worse. Pass.

*Opener bids again and partner makes a minimum bid.*

The important thing to note here is that partner does not have to bid when opener rebids. If he makes some kind of minimum bid, he promises a few points. I estimate he needs 7 to 10 support points to bid a suit at the one level. Your partner should try hard to bid when he has the right hand, something that is not always done.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ J 9 8 6
W N E S	♥ A 7 4 3
1♦ P P Db1	♦ 4
1♥ 1♠ P P	♣ K Q 8 4
2♦ P P ?	

When partner makes a “free” bid, it does not show a lot but you can count on something. Bid 2♠. On this hand your 2♠ is just an effort to push them higher. It is nice to know that your partner has something. If your partnership is lazy about bidding in competitive auctions, especially when you have a fit, you will lose a lot. Here you can bid at the two level, which is extra reason to continue.

*Opener passes, your partner makes a minimum bid, and RHO bids something.*

When the bidding becomes competitive, you have slightly different guidelines when it comes to raising your partner.

NO ONE VUL	♠ A 5 4
W N E S	♥ Q J 10 7
1♣ P P Db1	♦ A 8 6 3
P 1♥ 2♣ ?	♣ 4 2

Bid 2♥. You would not raise if RHO had passed. But he didn't. He made a belated raise to 2♣. You raise here to show good trumps and a bit more than some of the real minimum hands you could have. Your partner can have a decent hand with 9 or 10 points and not feel like bidding a poor suit again. Your four-card support gives you reason to be aggressive.

This means that if the auction becomes competitive, you can be freer in raising your partner. The cost of their buying the contract is high when you could have made something or could have pushed them up one level.

NO ONE VUL	♠ A J 8 7
W N E S	♥ 10 9 5
1♣ P P Db1	♦ A J 8 2
1♥ 1♠ 2♥ ?	♣ 9 3

2♠. You have nothing wasted and you have a fourth spade. And you know your partner has something. He didn't have to bid 1♠. You can fight through the two level. You shouldn't be as quick to push to the three level. The two level is sort of a dog-eat-dog world where no one is sure what's going on.

But when you get higher, things become better defined and the doubling starts. This doesn't mean you should never compete at the three level; just don't be too wanton about it. There is much to be said for pushing the opponents up and then letting them have the contract.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ Q 10 3 2  
**W N E S**            ♥ A 9 5  
 1♦ P P Db1        ♦ A 2  
 1♥ 1♠ P ?        ♣ Q 10 6 3

Pass. Partner's maximum is about the same regardless of whether the 1♠ is free or not. You don't have to raise. If they compete to 2♦, for example, you will bid 2♠.

**NO ONE VUL**        ♠ K Q 8  
**W N E S**            ♥ 3 2  
 1♥ P P Db1        ♦ K J 7 3  
 2♥ 2♠ P ?        ♣ A 9 4 3

Pass. 2♠ doesn't show nearly enough to get you excited with this hand. Having only three spades is a worry.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**    ♠ K J 7  
**W N E S**            ♥ Q J 3 2  
 1♣ P P Db1        ♦ A Q 10 3  
 2♣ 2♥ P ?        ♣ 4 2

Pass again. Getting close, but still not quite worth a bid. Here is a typical 2♥ your partner might have:

♠ Q 4 2  
 ♥ K 10 8 5 4  
 ♦ K J 2  
 ♣ 8 7

If this is partner's hand, 2♥ is high enough. If your partner had more than this he would have overcalled.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠ 7 6 4 2
<b>W N E S</b>	♥ A 2
1♥ P P Dbl	♦ A K 4 2
2♥ 3♣ P ?	♣ K Q 6

You could try 3NT with this. It has good chances. The important point is that partner ought not to bid a minor suit freely without genuine values. Had partner bid 2♠ instead, you would have a clear pass.

*Opener passes. Your partner makes a jump response in a new suit.*

If your partner makes a jump response in a new suit he is showing a good hand. This is a typical auction.

<b>W N E S</b>
1♦ P P Dbl
P 2♥ P ?

The only thing you need to know is his range. You will bid according to that range.

Your auction will continue very much as if you had doubled the opening bid at your right and partner gave you a jump response. The only differences are:

1. Partner's jump shows more when responding to a reopening double than when responding to an immediate double.
2. If partner jumps in a major suit, it is very likely to be a poor five-card suit or a ho-hum four-card suit. With values for the jump, he might have overcalled with a good suit.

*Opener bids something. Your partner makes a jump response in an unbid suit.*

Of importance is that your partner should bid the full value of his hand. He should not make a simple bid in a suit if he has a good enough hand to make a jump response.

*Opener passes. Your partner bids some number of notrump.*

You should expect him to have a better hand than when responding to a direct takeout double. This is because your reopening double doesn't show that much. He will need a good hand to aspire to any number of notrump.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 8 7
W N E S	♥ K J 9 6
1♠ P P Db1	♦ A Q 10 5
P 1NT P ?	♣ A J 4

A minimum raise to 2NT. Partner's spade holding will be useful on this sequence because he is behind the bidder. KQ6 or Q1063 will be two stoppers. Important reminder. When you double 1♠ and partner bids 1NT, he can have a horrible 4 points up to a nice 11 points. This is because he may have nothing at all to bid except for 1NT.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ K J 9 6
W N E S	♥ A Q 10 5
1♣ P P Db1	♦ A J 4
P 1NT P ?	♣ 8 7

3NT. Partner should have a better hand for 1NT after an opening 1♣ than after an opening 1♠ bid. This and the previous hand are similar. The change in the sequences dictates the change in how you should treat this hand.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K Q 8 7
W N E S	♥ A 9 5
1♦ P P Db1	♦ 10 2
P 2NT P ?	♣ K 10 3 2



An easy 3NT. Partner wants to know if you have a decent hand. You do. Considering you could have doubled with an ace less, you have plenty to accept.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ J 10 8 7  
**W N E S**            ♥ 3  
 1♥ P P Db1        ♦ K Q 10 9 7  
 P 2NT P ?        ♣ A 10 3

**Even though you have a nice diamond suit, passing rates to be best. This is not the worst hand possible but it is in the minimum family.**

**Note that if you were a passed hand, you would now view your hand as a maximum and would raise to 3NT.**

*Opener bids something. Your partner bids some number of notrump.*

Partner does not have to bid after opener rebids something. This means that when partner bids 1NT, he has serious values. Roughly speaking, a 1NT bid should start at around 9 good points and go as high as 11 fair points. If he bids 2NT, he needs a little more.

**NO ONE VUL**            ♠ Q 9 7  
**W N E S**            ♥ K J 8 2  
 1♦ P P Db1        ♦ 4 2  
 2♦ 2NT P ?        ♣ A Q 8 6

Pass. Partner is under pressure and may have had to stretch slightly. You have a slow hand without many obvious winners. If partner has only one diamond stopper, you may already be too high.

The important thing is that your partner will not be bidding notrump with weak hands as he sometimes does when opener passes.

*When opener bids something and your partner passes*

You will frequently pass as well. But sometimes you will have enough to try again. If it had been your intention to double and then bid a suit, you will probably do so in spite of partner's pass. If your shape and values warrant, you can double again, still for takeout. If you doubled intending to bid notrump, you should think twice about it. Partner can be weak, and opener's rebid implies a better than average hand or suit.

NO ONE VUL	♠ A 10 7 3
W N E S	♥ A J 9 5
1♣ P P Db1	♦ K J 7 6
2♣ P P ?	♣ 3

Double again. It won't take much to make a partscore and you may push them one trick higher. You have about 6 points more than a minimum. Note that partner could have bid at the two level and didn't.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K Q 10 8 7
W N E S	♥ A Q 4
1♦ P P Db1	♦ 3
2♣ P 2♦ ?	♣ K Q 9 3

Bid 2♠. You doubled with the intention of showing a good hand with spades. Finish your message.

BOTH SIDES VUL	♠ A J 7
W N E S	♥ A Q 2
1♦ P P Db1	♦ 3 2
2♦ P P ?	♣ A J 7 4 2

Double again. You may end up in a 3-3 major suit fit, but the alternative of bidding 3♣ is too dangerous. Perhaps, rarely, partner can pass for penalty.

N-S VUL	♠ A Q 8
W N E S	♥ K 10 7
1♦ P P Db1	♦ A J 9

2♣ P P ?      ♣ Q 8 6 4

Pass. You had intended to rebid 1NT over 1♥ or 1♠ by partner. Here partner couldn't drag up a bid. You haven't enough to bid 2NT and the hand doesn't rate a second double.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 8 7  
W N E S      ♥ A 9 5  
1♥ P P Db1      ♦ K Q J 7  
2♥ P P ?      ♣ K Q 7

You would do well to pass. With hearts being rebid, they pose a very serious threat to a notrump contract. Before opener's rebid, you were sort of hoping to find a heart honor in partner's hand. Now you don't expect to find one, and opener has extra length as well. I recommend giving up.

### *When partner makes a cue bid*

If partner cue-bids, you treat it similarly to cue-bidding in response to a takeout double.

### *Some good but hard-to-bid hands after making a double*

There is a family of hands whose description clearly must start with a takeout double, but which are awkward to handle after partner's response. These hands will usually be those where you have good three-card support for partner, or where you want to bid notrump but have no stopper. Usually these hands can be handled with a cue bid.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A Q 8  
W N E S      ♥ K 8 7  
1♣ P P Db1      ♦ A K Q 9  
P 1♥ P ?      ♣ 10 5 4

This is a typical problem hand. You have good values. You haven't another suit to bid. You can't bid notrump. Importantly, you have just three

hearts so raising is not safe. Bid 2♣. Most of the time when you cue-bid you will have a balanced hand, often with three-card support. If partner bids 2♥, you will pass. So if partner has enough to make game opposite this hand, he must not make that simple rebid.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ K 7  
**W N E S**     ♥ 8 6 5  
 1♥ P P Db1     ♦ A K J 9  
 P 1♠ P ?     ♣ A K Q 8

2♥. You are hoping partner can bid notrump. If he bids 2♠, you will have a very difficult decision. Note that your partner will be expecting three cards in spades.

**NO ONE VUL**     ♠ K Q 9  
**W N E S**     ♥ Q 10 8 7  
 1♦ P P Db1     ♦ A 3 2  
 P 1♥ P ?     ♣ A K J

Bid 3♥. You have maximum values to jump to 3♥, but your shape stinks. Losers all over. You could cue-bid 2♦ and not get higher than 2♥. I lean to bidding 3♥ because if you cuebid instead, your partner won't expect you to have four-card support. He will expect some kind of balanced hand. This hand is not as good as it looks. Say these are the two hands, your partner having the ace of hearts and nothing else.

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

You could end up losing seven tricks.

♠ K Q 9	♠ J 4 3
♥ Q 10 8 7	♥ K J 6 4 2

♦ A 3 2  
♣ A K J

♦ 7  
♣ 9 7 5 4

But if this is the layout, things are much better. Now game is cold. Partner's fifth heart and his shape are the keys. If you raise to 3♥, he will pass with the first hand and he will bid game with the second hand. The important point of this hand is for South to know that North can have a pretty weak hand when he bids 1♥.



## Continuing After Balancing Against One of a Suit

**The Opening Bid is One of a Suit.**

**You Reopen by Bidding a Suit.**

**What, if Given the Chance, Do You Do Next?**

If your reopening action has been to bid a suit, you will have different problems in the later rounds than when you reopened with double.

When you doubled, most of your subsequent decisions were to raise or to pass. Sometimes, when you had a strong hand, you bid notrump or a new suit.

When you reopen in a suit, however, most of your decisions will be whether to compete in your own suit (perhaps partner has raised) or to introduce a new suit, or even make a delayed takeout double.

Note that you will seldom have a strong hand. You might have chosen a different reopening bid than simply bidding a suit.

Here are your partner's options when you balance by making a simple bid in a suit:

1. A simple raise in your suit
2. Bidding notrump
3. Bidding a new suit
4. A jump raise
5. Cue-bidding
6. Doubling if the opponents choose a bad time to keep bidding
7. Passing

### *When partner makes a simple raise in your suit*

There will be times when you will want to bid further. You may wish to make a game try, or you may wish to bid further simply because the opponents have done so. In either case, you should note whether or not partner made a free raise. Remember. If opener passes, partner's raise should show a decent hand. But if opener has rebid, partner may have stretched some to raise. He would do this in order to tell you that he does have a fit for you.

NO ONE VUL				♠ Q 10 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥ A Q 3
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦ K Q 9 4
P	2♠	P	?	♣ 9

Bid 3♦. Partner's raise shows a fair hand, a good 7 to a bad 11, so game is possible. You would not try this if you had opened and partner raised, as the values for this raise would be about 6 to 9. Note that this is not a particularly strong hand. It isn't worth doubling first and following with 1♠. But when partner raises, it improves substantially. It is the added value of a fit which makes this hand strong enough to make a game try.

NO ONE VUL				♠ Q 10 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥ A Q 3
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦ K Q 9 4
2♣	2♠	3♣	?	♣ 9

Same hand. Another auction. This sequence suggests more than the prior sequence that partner has nothing wasted in clubs. I would bid 3♠, which is not a game try. But it's close. If you want to try with 3♦, it could work.

E-W VUL				♠ 10 8 7 6 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥ K 9 8
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦ 3
2♦	2♠	3♦	?	♣ A J 4

3♠. You have a good offensive hand. This should not be interpreted as forward going.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A K 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	8 6 4
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦	A Q 8
P	2♠	P	?	♣	K 8

Bid 3♠. Since your partner can have 8 to 11 points, you are in range of game. You do have horrible shape, with the three little hearts being a huge warning. 3♠ is asking partner if he has a maximum. With your scattered points, you don't mind asking partner his opinion.

**Note that on the preceding hand, South competed to 3♠, which was not a game try. The only time that your 3♠ bid is a game try is when your RHO passes.**

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	A Q 8 6
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 10 9 4 3 2
1♦	P	P	1♥	♦	3
2♣	2♥	3♣	?	♣	A 10

Bid 4♥. This is the sort of distributional hand which starts with a suit bid. Partner's raise so improves the hand that you go directly to game.

N-S VUL				♠	10 7
W	N	E	S	♥	A 8 7
1♦	P	P	2♣	♦	K 9
P	3♣	P	?	♣	A Q 10 8 7 5

3NT. It is more likely that you will have a strongish hand when you reopen at the two level rather than the one level. This is because it is more difficult to handle decent minor suit hands than decent major suit hands. Also, since it is hard to make five of a minor, you often look for notrump first.



N-S VUL				♠ A 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥ 5 4 2
1♥	P	P	2♦	♦ K Q 10 9 6
P	3♦	P	?	♣ K 8

Pass. Straightforward. You need too much from partner to try 3NT. A sixth diamond would give you reason to think of 3NT. Since making 3NT is against the odds, it is best not to explore for it, which might turn 3♦ making three into 4♦ down one.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ A 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥ 4 2
1♥	P	P	2♣	♦ A 8
P	3♣	P	?	♣ K Q 8 6 5 4

Bid 3♥, asking partner to bid 3NT if he can. This is a very reasonable hand to try for 3NT. Your partner won't raise you without decent values so you have good chances of nine tricks if partner can stop hearts. And if it turns out partner has a minimum or no heart stopper, you will have a play for 4♣. You are not automatically giving up a plus score to try for game. Note that your six-card suit gives you an excellent source of tricks.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ A 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥ 4 2
1♥	P	P	2♣	♦ A 8
2♥	3♣	P	?	♣ K Q 8 6 5 4

Same hand. Different sequence. Partner can be somewhat lighter for this free raise than if opener had passed. Also, opener's 2♥ rebid implies a better suit. 3NT will be less likely. You can try for it but your chances are sufficiently diminished that on balance, pass will be best.

NO ONE VUL				♠ K Q 4
W	N	E	S	♥ 4
1♥	P	P	2♣	♦ 10 7 5

2♦ 3♣ 3♦ ? ♣ A Q 10 8 7 5

As a general rule, you should almost never compete to the four level. This hand looks good for clubs. Partner has short diamonds; you have a good trump suit, a stiff heart, and a strong holding in your fragment suit, spades. You may not make 4♣ but it is a good bid. It may push them into 4♦, which could be too high.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ Q 2
W	N	E	S	♥ Q 7
1♠	P	P	2♦	♦ K Q J 10 4
2♥	3♦	3♥	?	♣ K J 8 7

This is a good example of when to quit. You have lots of garbage with losers everywhere. Your 2♦ bid was marginal since you have shortness in both majors and poor defensive values. They might have a very good heart fit. Well, they found that fit. I suspect that your best result was to defend against 1♠.

### *When partner bids 1NT or 2NT*

When partner bids 1NT, you will be able to count on him for decent values. You won't often have enough to raise him, but you may have enough distribution to introduce another suit or to rebid your own. If you rebid a major suit, you will need six of them. If you rebid a minor suit, which can only be diamonds, you ought to have six, but might do it with a five-bagger.

When your partner bids 2NT you can count on him for a real hand that wants to go to game if you have anything resembling a good hand.

NO ONE VUL				♠ A 3
W	N	E	S	♥ K Q J 10 4
1♦	P	P	1♥	♦ 8 3
P	1NT	P	?	♣ A 10 8 4

You have a minimum raise to 2NT. Partner shows around 10 points for this notrump bid. You should almost never concern yourself with opener's

suit. Partner frequently has two or more stoppers. If you didn't have the ten of hearts, you would pass. As it is, your suit rates to take four tricks opposite a stiff or doubleton heart. Under no circumstances should you rebid 2♥.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K J 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	3
1♦	P	P	1♠	♦	Q 2
P	1NT	P	?	♣	A 9 8 6 3

2♣. This shows nothing extra. Just bidding your shape.

E-W VUL				♠	A 10 6 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	3
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦	Q 10 9 5
P	1NT	P	?	♣	K Q 4

2♦. You should be worried about the heart suit. RHO couldn't respond 1♥, but he will probably lead one. Partner has about 10 points and didn't overcall, so he won't have good hearts.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	K Q J
W	N	E	S	♥	Q J 4 3 2
1♦	P	P	1♥	♦	4
P	1NT	P	?	♣	Q 8 6 5

Pass. You don't want to play a 4-3 club fit, and if partner returns to hearts he is likely to have only two. As both of your suits are poor, you should not want to play in one of them. Diamonds could be a problem, but partner can easily have five of them. He could have this hand:

♠	A 8 6
♥	9 5
♦	K J 10 5 3
♣	J 7 4

1NT is going to be better than 2♣ or 2♥. The defense may err and set up partner's diamonds.

**If partner jumps in notrump, you will have a systemic consideration. That is, if you bid again, is it forcing or not forcing?**

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	P	1♠
P	2NT	P	?

**What would it mean if you bid 3♠, rebidding your suit?**

**What would it mean if you bid 3♥, bidding a new suit?**

**Are these bids forcing or not forcing?**

**I suggest you play a rebid of your suit is not forcing.**

**I suggest you play a bid of a new suit is forcing.**

**If you wish, play it differently. Promise me only that you and your partner have an agreement so that if this auction comes up, you will know what your bids mean.**

NO ONE VUL				♠ A 10 8 7 6 5
W	N	E	S	♥ K Q
1♦	P	P	1♠	♦ 9 3
P	2NT	P	?	♣ K Q 4

You have values for game, but the game could be 3NT or 4♠. If 3♠ is forcing, you can bid that. If 3♠ is not forcing, you have a problem. Perhaps it can be solved by bidding 3♦, their suit, asking partner to choose between spades and notrump. This hand shows how agreements are important.

NO ONE VUL				♠ Q J 10 8 7 4
W	N	E	S	♥ 3
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦ 4 2
P	2NT	P	?	♣ A 8 6 5

Whatever your system calls for. 3♠ if it's not forcing. If it is forcing, I would bid 4♠ on the theory that as long as I can't stop in three, I'd rather play in 4♠ than in 2NT. Obviously, your agreements play a role in your thinking.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ Q J 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥ K Q 4
1♦	P	P	1♠	♦ 8 2
P	2NT	P	?	♣ A J 7

Bid 3NT. No misfit. Help for all suits, and a bit more than a minimum.

NO ONE VUL				♠ Q 10 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥ K Q 4
			P	♦ 8 3
1♦	P	P	1♠	♣ K J 4
P	2NT	P	?	

If I hadn't passed originally, I would pass 2NT. But inasmuch as I did pass earlier, I would treat this as enough to go on to game. This is a maximum for this auction.

Always, when you are thinking of what to bid, consider these things:

Is partner a passed hand?

What things could partner have done that he did not do?

NO ONE VUL				♠ 8 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥ 5
1♥	P	P	2♣	♦ K 10 6
P	2NT	P	?	♣ A K J 9 8 5

3NT. You have a good source of tricks. Hands like this seldom make just two. Partner ought not to have a stiff club. It's possible, though, and if so, you may go down a lot. Consider yourself lucky that your 2♣ bid did not stir up some more bidding from opener. He might have been able to double 2♣ and

they might have found a good fit somewhere. The test for whether 2♣ is a good bid or not is usually not known until the hand is finished. Here, you got lucky. Don't count on it happening every time you bid with a hand like this one.

### *When you reopen with a suit bid and partner introduces a new suit*

For the most part, a new suit is not forcing. Partner should not bid just to run from your suit, but he shouldn't have a big hand since he didn't overcall earlier.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 8
W	N	E	S	♥	A 10 6 5 4
1♣	P	P	1♥	♦	K 10 7
P	1♠	P	?	♣	Q 8 4

Pass. You need more to bid 1NT. Remember, partner couldn't overcall at the one level. 1♠ is not forcing. He rates to have a smattering of points with five ordinary spades. 1♠ should be a fine contract.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A Q 3
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 2
1♦	P	P	2♣	♦	8 6 3
P	2♥	P	?	♣	K J 10 8 7

This is a very unusual bid from partner. Why did he not bid 1♥ over 1♦?

I discussed this earlier, and what you do requires that you have agreements. If you are not playing any agreements, you would assume your partner has a fair but not great heart suit and about 10 points. If you think he has that hand, you would pass 2♥.

But, if you have an agreement, he might be showing a hand like this one:

♠ 8 5 4    ♥ A J 10 7    ♦ 9 4    ♣ A Q 6 3

This is an odd agreement but it is useful. Since 2♥ is an unexpected bid, it might be used to show good heart values and a nice club fit. If this agreement is used, you would bid 3♣ with the hand above.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	K 10 7
W	N	E	S	♥	8 6 3
1♠	P	P	2♣	♦	4 2
P	2♦	P	?	♣	K Q J 10 3

Pass. Partner has a fair hand with good diamonds that was not good enough to overcall 2♦. Here is a possible hand:

♠ 9 5 2  
♥ K J 5  
♦ Q 10 9 7 6 3  
♣ A

### *When partner makes a jump raise*

You know your partner has a limit raise with four-card support. Your decision will be simple. If you have a fair hand, bid game. If you have a lousy hand, pass.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	Q 10 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	K 6 2
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦	A 9 5
P	3♠	P	?	♣	4 3

Pass, but close to going on. Partner's raise shows a good hand with four trumps and with distribution. He probably has length in clubs, else he would have acted earlier, so he will be short in either hearts or diamonds.

N-S VUL				♠	K Q J 7
W	N	E	S	♥	A 4 3 2
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦	3

P 3♠ P ? ♣ Q 8 5 4

Clear to continue. Although holding only four spades, your values are solid. Good trumps, an ace, and a little distribution.

N-S VUL                      ♠ K 5 4  
W    N    E    S       ♥ Q J 7 6 5  
1♦    P    P    1♥       ♦ Q 8  
P    3♥   P    ?       ♣ A J 4

Pass. You have 13 points but the queen of diamonds is likely wasted and you have bad shape. Whatever your partner has, he couldn't bid over 1♦.

### *When partner cue-bids*

When partner cue-bids, the auction frequently becomes involved. His cue bid normally will be based on a fit with your suit. But looking for notrump is possible.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ J 8 7 6 5  
W    N    E    S       ♥ K Q 6  
1♣    P    P    1♠       ♦ K 5 4  
P    2♣   P    ?       ♣ 7 6

With a minimum, bid 2♠. This does not imply a good suit. Note that you expect partner to have three spades for you. There are some hands where he might bid this way with only two spades. Leave that worry to him.

BOTH SIDES VUL                      ♠ K J 9 7  
W    N    E    S       ♥ 8 6 5 4  
1♥    P    P    1♠       ♦ A Q 2  
P    2♥   P    ?       ♣ 8 6

Again, 2♠. Sometimes you are forced into rebidding a four-card suit. Partner should be wary of this possibility. This is especially true when the cue bid doesn't leave you with any room.



N-S VUL				♠	Q 8 6 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	3 2
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦	A Q 8 6
P	2♣	P	?	♣	4 2

2♦. You do not show a good hand with this. You are merely describing your hand. Partner's cue bid is forcing to 2♠, so he will bid again. If you had the same shape with a good hand, you would bid 2♦ to show your shape and would bid again later to show extra strength.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A K 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	8 6 4
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦	A J 5
P	2♣	P	?	♣	4 2

2♦. You can't rebid 2♠, as partner might pass. 3♠ would show a better suit and a distributional hand. 2♦ is a waiting bid. You don't intend to stop in 2♠. This is a good hand. If partner bids 2♠, you will bid 3♠.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	8 7 6
W	N	E	S	♥	K Q 10 8 5
1♣	P	P	1♥	♦	4 2
P	2♣	P	?	♣	K 9 8

2♥. Not enough values to show a club stopper. You need around 12 HCP to bid 2NT.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	J 8
W	N	E	S	♥	A Q 9 5 4
1♦	P	P	1♥	♦	K J 3
P	2♦	P	?	♣	Q 4 3

2NT. A decent hand with balanced shape and stoppers. Don't worry about lack of a spade stop. There's almost no way you will reopen in a suit

and hold stoppers in all the other suits. Your bid shows a minimum opening bid, which may help partner decide what to do.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>				♠	Q J 7 6 3 2
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	A 9 2
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦	A 3
P	2♣	P	?	♣	9 7

3♠. You show a six-card suit with opening bid strength. You can't have more than this as you probably would have reopened with a jump to 2♠.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>				♠	K J 8 7 5
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	4 2
1♦	P	P	1♠	♦	9
P	2♦	P	?	♣	A Q 10 8 7

3♣. This shows better than a minimum and implies five spades plus four or more clubs.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>				♠	J 9 8 7 6
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	4 2
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦	3
P	2♥	P	?	♣	A J 9 7 5

2♠. You need more than this bare minimum for 3♣.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>				♠	K J 8 7 5
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	3
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦	A Q 10 4 3
P	2♣	P	?	♣	9 7

Bid 2♦. You expect partner to have spade support and if he shows that, you will bid 4♠. If you wanted to bid 4♠ instead, that is probably OK.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>				♠	A 10 9 7 5
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W	N	E	S	♥	K 5 4
1♦	P	P	1♠	♦	Q 2
P	2♦	P	?	♣	K 4 2

I suggest 2♠. If partner can't bid over 2♠, you should be OK there. This hand is full of marginal values, starting with the queen of diamonds.

### *When opener rebids and your partner doubles*

The next area is a rather emotional one. What do you do when opener keeps bidding and your partner doubles them?

Now this doesn't sound like it ought to be an emotional decision, but when you have reopened on absolute garbage, and partner doubles, it can be almost traumatic.

Your decisions to sit or run will depend on a number of factors.

1. Your defensive potential
2. Your offensive potential
3. If you run, how likely are you to find a safe contract?

The vulnerability is not as important a consideration as you might think because partner knew what it was when he doubled.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 10 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	A 3
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦	K J 9 3
2♣	Db1	P	?	♣	4 3

An easy pass. One of the criteria is your defensive potential, which is quite good. You have an ace and your diamond holding can easily be worthwhile. You even have a doubleton club. The only bad feature of this hand is the weak spades. Partner may lead a doubleton ace of spades. But even this is not necessarily bad. Considering that you will often reopen in a bad suit, you shouldn't feel that partner will automatically get off to a bad lead. Partner will appreciate that your suit can be bad. Further, he may have a good lead of his own. In any event, he will be doubling on trump tricks and something on the side.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A K 9 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	8 4 3
1♣	P	P	1♠	♦	J 10 8 3
2♣	Dbl	P	?	♣	4

You should be thinking along these lines: I have two spade tricks and likely can give partner a ruff. After all, he wouldn't double 2♣ if he had three spades. I have some pushers in diamonds so all in all, I have some defense. My 1♠ bid does not promise a lot of winners on defense. What I have is adequate.

Note that if you refuse to sit for the double, you should run to diamonds. Rebidding a five-card suit is not good. Partner's double hints he is short in spades; not a good thing if you end in a spade contract.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	A 9 8 6 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	A 3
1♦	P	P	1♠	♦	8 2
2♦	Dbl	P	?	♣	J 7 3

Pass. In spite of having six spades, this hand is a 100% pass. You have two aces; guaranteed tricks. In addition, you might get a ruff in hearts. Lots of potential defensive tricks here. With both sides vulnerable, down one should be an excellent result.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	J 10 9 7 6 5
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 10
1♦	P	P	1♠	♦	3
2♦	Dbl	P	?	♣	K Q 6 3

Getting close to running back to spades. You have weak defense but you do have good shape and a fair suit. Note that mere possession of a six- or seven-card suit is not grounds for running. My choice? I bid 2♠ but won't insist.

NO ONE VUL				♠	10 3 2
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W	N	E	S	♥	A Q 9 8 6 5
1♦	P	P	1♥	♦	3
2♦	Dbl	P	?	♣	J 5 4

Pass. Partner will get off to a good lead, which is a major consideration on very close hands. Also, aside from the heart suit, you don't have many winners in a heart contract. If you had better shape, you might consider running back to hearts. You have to ask yourself. Am I more likely to set 2♦ doubled or to make 2♥? Not easy. Partner says he doesn't like hearts, so I am inclined to accept his decision to defend.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	K 10 8 6 5
W	N	E	S	♥	- - -
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦	K 7 6 5
2♥	Dbl	P	?	♣	10 9 4 2

Pass. One of the reasons you didn't double for takeout was so you wouldn't have to defend 1♥ doubled. As your reward for this anticipation, you now have to decide whether to sit for 2♥ doubled. You should pass, if for no other reason than that there is no sure way to escape. If you had a second five-card suit you could run, but even then, if your partner puts down KJ9875 of hearts and some other values, you might regret not defending. Note that if he has five or six hearts, he is not likely to have a four-card minor suit to play in.

NO ONE VUL				♠	8 7 6 5 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	K 10 9 7
1♦	P	P	1♠	♦	3
2♦	Dbl	P	?	♣	K 2

2♥. This implies a weak hand with five, maybe six spades and four hearts. With 5-5, you might have reopened by using the Michaels cue bid.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A 10 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	3 2

1♣	P	P	1♠	♦	Q J 9 8 7
2♣	Dbl	P	?	♣	3

Clear to bid 2♦. You are at the two level and you have two nice suits. Even with this shape, however, you should not be surprised if 2♣ doubled was the best spot. Since I have a good excuse for bidding, I do so.

**When you have reopened on a weak hand and partner doubles something or another, you will often regret having bid. C'est la vie. The one thing you mustn't do is run solely because you have a weak hand. When you don't think you can beat them, you run only when you have something sensible to run to.**

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	J 8 7 6 5
W	N	E	S	♥	3
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦	8 7
1NT	Dbl	P	?	♣	K Q 10 9 7

With a minimum hand, and knowing partner will lead spades, you have an easy run to 2♣.

NO ONE VUL				♠	10 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	K 9 7
1♦	P	P	2♣	♦	- - -
2♦	Dbl	P	?	♣	A J 9 6 5 4

I made the statement much earlier that a reopening bid at the two level should show around 10 working points. This should be qualified slightly. If you have only a five-card suit and your hand is rather ordinary, i.e. balanced, you will need about 10 points. When you have excellent distribution, you can shade the requirements somewhat. This hand may have shaded the requirements somewhat and then some, but it was a reasonable effort. Matchpoint-wise, it is a typical action bid.

Having heard partner double, you should have no part of it. Run to 2♠. Partner will expect more, but he won't expect much more.

N-S VUL				♠ Q 6 2
W	N	E	S	♥ 4
1♥	P	P	2♣	♦ K J 4
2♥	Dbl	P	?	♣ A K 10 6 3 2

This is a surprisingly easy pass. You have two likely club tricks and useful cards in spades and diamonds. You also have a heart. One of the worst things you can defend with is a void in trump. On some hands it may come to a point where you have to lead a trump for various reasons. If you do not have one to lead, it will be hard to do that.

N-S VUL				♠ 6
W	N	E	S	♥ Q J 3
1♠	P	P	2♦	♦ A K 9 7 5 3 2
2♠	Dbl	P	?	♣ J 10

This one is not so clear. You have a good seven-card suit with some side cards. Against that, you have some defense. Either pass or 3♦ can be the winner.

### ***When opener rebids something and your partner passes***

The last group of sequences occurs when opener rebids something and your partner passes. You are not obliged to pass. Your partner can have some fair hands without a sane bid to make. You have to judge whether he can have enough for you to continue bidding.

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	P	Dbl
2♦	P	P	?

W	N	E	S
1♠	P	P	Dbl
2♥	P	P	?

The question is whether you should continue and if so, how much do you show? In deciding your action, there are a number of points to consider:

1. If your partner has a fit for you, he hasn't got much of a hand.
2. There are 40 points in the deck, and if the opponents are not showing strength, your side may have as many as 20 of them, partner's silence notwithstanding.
3. You can usually gauge partner's values fairly accurately, and if they are significant, you can determine why they weren't worth bidding.
4. A further bid by you should not be interpreted as showing a good hand. It is merely an effort to show some additional feature of your hand. You likely are still counting on partner to produce something.

NO ONE VUL				♠ 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥ A 10 8 5 4
1♣	P	P	1♥	♦ K Q 9 7
2♣	P	P	?	♣ 8 3

2♦. Partner is marked for some values. He didn't overcall 1♠, he didn't raise hearts, and he didn't whack 2♣. He has some kind of boring hand that didn't have a bid he could make. You are entitled to bid 2♦ with this.

Here is one hand partner can have:

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

This hand is par for your partner. He has some points, as you expected. He did not bid spades so he rates to have five bad ones, or perhaps four of them. He did not raise hearts so he probably doesn't have three. He isn't likely to have four clubs, so his having four diamonds is worth hoping for.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ Q J 9 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥ 4 2
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦ A Q 8



2♥ P P ? ♣ 10 7

2♠. Still bidding partner's values, but confirming a good suit. Your upper range is limited by your failure to take a stronger initial action. Your partner's pass denied points with spade support but it didn't say he was broke. He can still have 10 or 11 points with two small spades.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ A Q 10 6 5
W	N	E	S	♥ 3
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦ K 10 5 4
2♥	P	P	?	♣ Q 10 8

Double. This shows slight extra values above those already shown. Partner will play you to have a hand with five spades, short hearts, support for the other suits, and values similar to these or more. Double is very flexible. Partner may be able to pass this. He may have any of these hands:

♠	J 2	
♥	K J 9 8	
♦	Q 9 3	He can pass.
♣	K 7 6 4	

♠	J 9 4	
♥	Q 8 7 5	
♦	J 9 3	He can bid 2♠.
♣	K 5 4	

♠	4	
♥	J 7 6 4	
♦	Q J 2	He can bid 3♣.
♣	A 9 7 5 4	

♠	9 2	He probably should bid 2♠. This is the worst of
♥	8 6 4 2	these example hands.

♦ Q J 3  
 ♣ K 7 5 4

**This routine of making a belated takeout double is an important bidding tool. Be aware of it. I have shown many examples of hands where you first bid a suit and later came back in with a takeout double.**

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ K 7  
 W   N   E   S                    ♥ 4 2  
 1♥   P   P   2♦                 ♦ A Q 8 7 6 5  
 2♥   P   P   ?                  ♣ K 7 3

Pass. When you reopen at the two level you show a decent five-card suit, so on this sequence you have only one additional trump. You should not rebid this suit. You do have a little more than you might but you don't have a good bid. Double is wrong because your partner will expect you to have some spade support.

BOTH SIDES VUL                ♠ A 9 7  
 W   N   E   S                    ♥ 8 7  
 1♥   P   P   2♦                 ♦ K Q J 10 8 7  
 2♥   P   P   ?                  ♣ 4 3

Bid 3♦. The hand is not as good as the previous hand but the suit is solid. On this hand you are assuming your partner has some values and are, in fact, counting on them.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ Q J 8 7  
 W   N   E   S                    ♥ 3  
 1♥   P   P   2♣                 ♦ 9 2  
 2♥   P   P   ?                  ♣ A Q 10 6 5 4

2♠. Not promising a lot of extra values. Promising useful distribution and more than a minimum. If it were legal to rebid 2♣ at your second opportunity, you would still bid 2♠. As a general rule, it is usually safer to introduce a

second suit than it is to rebid the first. Note that if you bid 2♠ and the opponents go on to 3♥, your partner will be able to judge whether to compete in spades or to double or to pass. If you rebid your clubs and the opponents continue bidding, your partner will be uninformed.

NO ONE VUL				♠ 8
W	N	E	S	♥ 9 2
1♠	P	P	2♣	♦ A Q 9 3
2♠	P	P	?	♣ A K 9 6 5 4

This is an excellent systemic hand. Bid 2NT, unusual. Having shown clubs, you can now show your diamonds and at the same time be able to stop in 3♣, if partner prefers them. Partner will credit you with this shape and will return to 3♣ with three diamonds and two clubs. Note how well this treatment works if partner has four or more diamonds and short clubs. Important reminder: South should not reopen freely when all he has is the minor suits. Here, South has a pretty good hand so is entitled to bid 2♣ and then to bid again. He has good defense so even if East-West find hearts, they do not necessarily have to be safe there.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ 3
W	N	E	S	♥ K Q 8 7
1♠	P	P	2♣	♦ 4 2
2♠	P	P	?	♣ A J 10 8 7 5

Obnoxious hand. You should want to bid in the worst way. Here are your options:

1. Pass. Safe, but you will lose many partscore wars and a few games as well.
2. Double. This will get you to hearts when it is right. If partner passes, you have some defense. If partner bids 3♣, I pass. If he bids 3♦, I bid 3♥. If he bids 3♥, I pass but at least I am content that we are in the right suit.
3. You can bid 3♣, which runs the risk of playing in the wrong suit. You won't be down a lot, but 3♣ down one when 4♥ is cold would be bad.

4. You might bid 3♥, but that risks being put back into clubs at the four level.
5. You might bid 2NT if your partner would play you for some kind of takeout hand and if partner bids diamonds, you will bid 3♥.

I would vote for double since it gets us to hearts whenever hearts is best and it lets us play in 3♣ on some hands. Also, there is the rare time where partner can pass for penalty. We could have a game in hearts and I do not like losing that chance.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>				♠ A 8 7
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥ 3
1♥	P	P	2♣	♦ Q 10 8
2♥	P	P	?	♣ A J 9 6 5 4

Double. This is another hand where you bid a suit first and then make a takeout double. A decent hand, usually with this distribution. Partner can sit for the double, can bid 3♣, or can try a new suit according to his hand. You need more than just shape for this action as partner can convert your takeout double to penalties. This hand is a normal minimum.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>				♠ K J 7
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥ 4 2
1♣	P	P	1♦	♦ A Q 10 9 7
1♠	P	P	?	♣ A 9 4

1NT. This doesn't show a huge hand (16-17) as you wouldn't have started with one diamond. All it shows is a sound hand of this approximate description.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>				♠ Q 10 8 7 5
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥ 3
1♥	P	P	1♠	♦ A J 4
P	P	2♥	?	♣ K J 9 8

Double. The delayed takeout double again. You are showing moderate values, five spades, and shape. East has shown a fit of sorts so there is little chance that your partner will pass for penalty.

NO ONE VUL				♠ 3
W	N	E	S	♥ K Q 8 7 5
1♣	P	P	1♥	♦ K 9 8 4
P	P	1♠	?	♣ A 10 6

Double. You were worried about spades when you reopened. Perhaps the opponents have gotten back together. But maybe not. Double shows this hand and allows partner a range of options, including the unusual one of playing in clubs. Your expected shape is exactly the one you have.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥ A J 9 7 6
1♣	P	P	1♥	♦ K Q 8 7 5
P	P	1♠	?	♣ 4

Nuts. You took a chance when you bid 1♥ and they have taken advantage of it by finding spades. You can bid 2♦ here. Your partner doesn't seem to have hearts but he may like diamonds. Also, they do not have a proven spade fit. East bid them but West is not yet known to be interested.

NO ONE VUL			
W	N	E	S
1♦	P	P	1♠
1NT	P	P	?

I am not showing a hand here. The auction is a reminder that the 1NT bid should show 18 to 19 points, not the 12 to 14 that he would have normally. Be aware of this.



## Continuing the Auction When Their Side Bids and Responds and Your Side Balances

IN THIS SECTION, I will show examples of how hard your side should compete after your side balances.

When an opening bid is passed to you in the balancing seat, you may end up bidding a game or a rare slam. These auctions are pretty easy.

It is when both opponents have bid before your side balances that things become difficult. It is hard enough deciding whether to balance. It is harder to judge when to balance and stop bidding vs. balancing and continuing bidding.

Here are some auctions where the opponents have both had something to say before your balancing bids begin. These sequences can become involved because either opponent may still have something left to offer.

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
2♥	P	P	Dbl

Expectations For Balancing When  
Your Opponents Both Bid Before  
You Balance

If the opponents bid and raise a suit, your side can balance with positive expectations. You won't bid many games but you often own the hand in a partscore. These are common sequences and your coming out on top is important.

On auctions where they bid and respond but do not find a fit, both opponents are showing some values and that means your side will have virtually no slams and not many games. When the bidding starts with both of the opponents bidding before they run out of bids, your side will balance some of the time but with less optimistic expectations. If they haven't found a fit, your side may balance profitably but your expectations are low.

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## They Bid and Raise a Suit and Your Partner Balances with a Takeout Double

This is the one sequence where both opponents have bid in which you have serious hopes when you balance.

You will have some busy auctions after your side balances with a takeout double. You have a lot to gain but you need to know how far you can go in competing.

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♥	P
2♣	P	P	Dbl

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♥	P
1NT	P	P	2♦

W	N	E	S
1♥	P	1NT	P
2♥	P	P	Dbl

When they bid and raise and your side doubles in the balancing seat, there may be a lot of bidding left. Knowing when to balance and how aggressively to continue bidding is a key issue.

The following examples show sequences where they bid and raise and your partner balances with a double. In these hands, I am showing you what you should bid now and commenting on your further goals, if any. Here are some of the things that you may do:

You may make one bid and then shut up.

You may make a bid and then make a second bid of some sort.

You might (very rarely) choose to pass partner's double and play for a penalty.

You may double something for penalty later if the bidding continues.

You might (rarely) be able to make an invitational bid.

You won't have many games. The reason it is rare is that if your side has a game, you or your partner would have been in the bidding earlier.

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	2♣	P
P	Dbl	P	?

Bid 2♠. This is not a good hand. Partner didn't act over 1♣, so this hand is going nowhere. You will not compete if the opponents go on to 3♣. If you bid twice with this kind of hand, your partner will lose interest in balancing on future hands.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q J 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	J 4
1♣	P	2♣	P	♦	K J 7 6
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	Q 9 7

**This time you have a good hand. So good, in fact, that you were close to bidding over 2♣. But as good as this hand is, you should content yourself with a simple 2♠.**

**You intend to start with 2♠, and later to bid 3♦ if they compete. This should not mislead partner. When he doubled he promised at least three spades, so if you had five spades and four diamonds you would just rebid your spades. If you do bid 2♠ and then 3♦, partner should not correct to**



spades unless they are longer than the diamonds or unless he has four of each. With equal three-card holdings he should leave it in diamonds. Only when partner has three spades and two diamonds will you get to a bad contract, and that would require partner to have a pretty strange hand.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ K Q 7 6  
W    N    E    S    ♥ K 4  
1♣    P    2♣    P    ♦ Q 10 6 5 4  
P    Dbl    P    ?    ♣ 3 2

Bid 3♥. With East raising diamonds, there is a good chance of finding partner with a stiff diamond. If opener has three diamonds and responder five of them, you are in trouble, because it means opener is 4-4 in the majors. In any event, this hand is pure enough to warrant an invitational bid. It is rare that you will ever jump in response to a balancing double, but it can happen. If you feel that this hand should have overcalled with 2♥, you won't have this problem.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ K 10  
W    N    E    S    ♥ J 10 6 5 2  
1♦    P    2♦    P    ♦ 9 6 4 3  
P    Dbl    P    ?    ♣ A Q

Pass. Had responder passed, you would have guessed 2♥ or 2♠ and not bid again. Your goal would be to get them to the three level. That has been done. Accept it. For you to bid would require a hand with values and shape, not just a flat and soft 11 count.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ Q J 4 2  
W    N    E    S    ♥ K 9 7 6  
1♦    P    2♦    P    ♦ Q J 2  
P    Dbl    3♦    ?    ♣ Q 3

You are sure to find an eight-card fit. Maybe a nine-card fit. With pure values and excellent shape, you are entitled to bid 3♥. Do not consider bidding any more if they bid to 4♦. Your partner is expected to give you a little room when you make bids like this one.

E-W VUL				♠	J 10 8 4 3
W	N	E	S	♥	Q J 4 3
1♦	P	2♦	P	♦	A 9 5
P	Dbl	P	2♠	♣	9
3♦	P	P	?		

Bid 2♠. This is a good hand which may produce a game. You might feel like bidding 3♠ with this. The problem is that your partner doesn't rate to have a great hand, and even though you may take ten tricks, trying for game is risky because you might get too high. If partner has three spades only, you will want to stop in a partscore. If you want to bid 3♠ you get my vote for well judged optimism, but I think you are trying too hard.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K J 10 8
W	N	E	S	♥	9 7 5 2
1♥	P	2♥	P	♦	A Q 9 7
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	3

Bid 4♥. You would like to bid an invitational 3♥ but that is not possible. I like 4♥ because it may make facing some hands partner may have. It is unlikely that it will be doubled because your hearts are so good. Who knows? Perhaps they can make 3♠, which means that if you go down 100, it will be a good result. It is a rare hand like this one that can bid a game after partner's balancing takeout double.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	8 6 5 2
W	N	E	S	♥	A J 10 4 3 2
1♠	P	2♠	P	♦	K J
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	8

Bid 3♥. This is not the hand your partner hopes you have. If partner has four hearts, you should be OK. If you go down a lot and get a bad result, it is one of those things. Bad stuff does happen. One thing you must not do is pass for penalties. Your spades are in front of the bidder and that is usually bad for the defense. Declarer will know what you have in spades and he will play the hand well as a result of this.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ K Q 10 6  
W    N    E    S    ♥ J 8 7 4  
1♠   P    2♠   P    ♦ 5 3  
P    Dbl   P    ?    ♣ Q 8 3

Bid 3♥ and then pass if they bid 3♠. Barring something exceptional, you shouldn't argue once you get them to the three level. For you to make a four level contract your partner needs a full opening bid, and you know he does not have that because he passed over the opening 1♠ bid.

**Here is a very useful bidding trick that is for scientists only. If you already use the Lebensohl convention when partner doubles a weak two bid, you might consider using it when your partnership doubles them for takeout when they bid and raise a suit. For instance:**

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ 10 5  
W    N    E    S    ♥ K 10 5 3 2  
1♠   P    2♠   P    ♦ 5  
P    Dbl   P    ?    ♣ Q J 8 7 4

**It is reasonable to play that North will respond as if he is responding to a double of a weak two bid in spades.**

W    N    E    S  
1♠   P    2♠   Dbl  
P    ?

**In a related vein, when partner makes a balancing double you might use this agreement. If partner doubles 2♥ or 2♠ in the balancing seat,**

**play as follows.**

2NT shows both minors and is tentatively an effort to play in the best minor fit.

3♣ or 3♦ do not show values. You are just bidding your longest suit.

3♥ says you have long hearts with some values. With a weak hand with hearts, bid 2NT and then bid 3♥.

**I offer this as something to think about. It is not mainstream but that does not mean it is not worth consideration.**

### **They Bid and Raise a Suit and Your Partner Balances by Bidding a Suit**

When your partner bids a suit, he is offering only one place to play. The bidding won't be as hectic as when he reopens with a double. Still, there are some modest fights to be fought after your side reopens by bidding a suit.

W	N	E	S
1♠	P	2♠	P
P	Dbl	P	?

**Some thoughts on this sequence that you should be aware of:**

**When your partner reopens in a suit, you will seldom bid. Whatever high cards you have, partner is expecting them. Notrump is out of the question unless you have some fantastic hand, and it will be obvious to you if it happens.**

1. About 80% of the time you will pass partner's bid.
2. On most of the occasions where you bid, it will be to raise your partner.
3. If you have a great fit and a maximum hand, you may raise immediately.
4. More likely, you will pass and then compete if the opponents keep bidding.
5. Very rarely, you will have a terrible holding in partner's suit and you have an unexpected suit to offer which you couldn't show earlier.

6. Once in awhile the opponents will make an indiscretion which you can double.

**Note that when partner reopens in a suit which could have been bid at the one level, he has either a bad hand, a bad suit, or both. Here are some examples:**

W	N	E	S
1♥	P	2♥	P
P	2♠	P	?

Pass. When your partner fails to overcall immediately and later bids three of a suit, you know he is taking a risk of some kind. This hand has 10 points but the king of spades may be useless. Your partner obviously is hoping you have some points and you do, but they may not be worth as much as he needs. Generally speaking, when your partner balances in a suit at the three level, you should pass unless you have a remarkable hand with trump support, quality points, and unexpectedly good shape. It is not likely that you will bid after this sequence.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	7 4 2
1♠	P	2♠	P	♦	A 3
P	3♦	P	?	♣	Q J 9 6 4

Pass now, and pass again if they keep bidding. Hard to know what partner has, but he is obviously counting on you for a lot. The one good thing you have is nice hearts. The only way bidding 4♥ can be right is if your partner is void in spades, and that seems like a long shot given the opponents' passive bidding. Anytime you start getting the urge to bid, just ask why your partner did not bid earlier. It will have a calming effect on your bidding.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K 9 7
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 9 7
1♠	P	2♠	P	♦	Q J 2

P 3♥ P ? ♣ Q J 7

If there is a hand that bids after your partner reopens at the three level, this is it. And it is not automatic. This is typical of the hand that goes on to 4♣ and which goes down a trick or two. You then discover that you could have taken two clubs and two diamonds and a diamond ruff to beat 3♠. I wouldn't blame anyone for bidding 4♣ because you have super trumps plus a source of tricks, but it is worth noting the hand type. If you had another spade and one less heart, that might be worth two additional tricks for your side. It could mean one less spade loser in partner's hand, and one less heart loser in yours. Watch out for balanced hands.

E-W VUL				♠	8 7
W	N	E	S	♥	9 5 4
1♠	P	2♠	P	♦	A K J 9 2
P	3♣	3♠	?	♣	K Q J

Pass. If they bid to 3♥, pass again. You have a lot of high-card points, and all that means is that your partner has very few high-card points. You have nothing extra. Extra is usually defined as exceptional trump support (which means four good ones), unexpectedly good distribution, and quality high-card values. This hand has bad shape, only three spades, and only two good cards, the king of spades and the ace of diamonds. It also has two questionable cards, the queen of hearts and the queen of clubs.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 10 6
1♥	P	2♥	P	♦	A J 5 3
P	2♠	P	?	♣	Q 9 6

Pass again. There are very few hands which will make 3♠ which couldn't act over 1♥. Here is an example layout showing you the two hands.

E-W VUL				♠	K 4 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	J 3

1♥ P 2♥ P ♦ K 8 7 5  
 P 2♠ P P ♣ A 6 4  
 3♥ P P ?

These hands make 3♠ about one time in five. Mathematicians need not correct this estimate. On the other hand, partner has gotten them to 3♥, which also makes about one time in five. Note that I gave partner good working cards with nothing wasted, and 2♠ is not assured, let alone 3♠. Keep in mind the mantra you need to use. Your partner did not overcall 1♠. If he had the same high cards with one more spade, he would have bid 1♠. The hand your partner has is typical for a 2♠ balancing bid.

♠ Q 10 7 6	♠ K 4 3 2
♥ 10 6 5	♥ J 3
♦ A 10 4	♦ K 8 7 5
♣ K 5 2	♣ A 6 4

You can raise to 3♠ with this hand. It has perfect cards and perfect shape. Do not raise to 4♠. That would be punishing your partner for balancing.

E-W VUL                      ♠ J 6 4 3 2  
 W N E S ♥ 3  
 1♥ P 2♥ P ♦ K Q 7 5  
 P 2♠ P ? ♣ K 6 4

Bid 3♠. A fourth trump and everything else both working and prime. Your four small hearts tell you that you have only one heart loser. When you have two fast losers in their suit, it gives the defense too quick a start and it's hard to catch up. If they had not bid 3♥, you would not bid 3♠. There is a difference between raising immediately and raising when they compete.

BOTH SIDES VUL           ♠ J 10 8 7  
 W N E S ♥ 8 6 5 4  
 1♥ P 2♥ P ♦ A 9  
 P 2♠ 3♥ ? ♣ A 8 7

Bid 3♠. This is an exceptional case where you might accept the push on a hand where you have two losers in their suit. It helps that you are not vulnerable. You have good enough trumps that you are unlikely to get doubled, plus a good enough hand otherwise to hold down side suit losers. Had RHO passed 2♠, you would have done so also. This is a solid hand but it is not a wonderful hand.

E-W VUL				♠	K Q 10 8
W	N	E	S	♥	J 2
1♥	P	2♥	P	♦	A 9 7
P	2♠	3♥	?	♣	Q 10 6 4

Double. Some opponents don't know when to quit. It is likely that they have made a bad bid. Or perhaps their bidding is sane but they are running into a bad trump break. In any event, you have hopes for four defensive winners, perhaps five, so you won't need much from partner. As long as you double only when you are sure, your partner shouldn't be unhappy leaving your double in. For the record, if you are playing IMPs, passing might be best.

NO ONE VUL				♠	10 6
W	N	E	S	♥	K Q J 9
1♥	P	2♥	P	♦	K Q 4
P	2♠	3♥	?	♣	J 8 7 4

Partner looks to be short in hearts. Run to 3♣. This is a little unusual, but you are the only one who knows the nature of your values. You don't have the spade support partner is looking for, and this time you can offer a good alternative.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	J 8 7
1♥	P	2♥	P	♦	Q 2
P	2♠	P	?	♣	K Q 10 9 7 5



3♠. Another rare hand which can invite partner when he has reopened. If you think this is conservative, I would suggest that it is actually average for a raise. Here is a possible layout. You can see how strong your hand is for a spade contract.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**

				♠	A J 10 7
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	A 4 3 2
1♥	P	2♥	P	♦	K J 8
P	2♠	P	?	♣	7 2

4♠ has fair chances, something you suspected. You might make 5♠. Heck, with a heart lead, you might make 6♠. Your partner must trust you to have a good hand such as this one.

The big point of this hand is that if you raise your partner's balancing bid, you are serious about it.

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

Reasonable to bid 4♣. Good shape with useful working values. Typical of what you need to raise. With one less diamond and another heart, you would pass.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**

				♠	J 8 7
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	2
1♥	P	2♥	P	♦	A K 10 6 5
P	3♣	3♥	?	♣	Q 10 8 3

The kind of good hand which can try 3NT. You expect partner to have six diamonds to the ace (What else can he have?) and some other feature. If the defenders persist in leading hearts, they may end up giving you a heart trick and that might be enough to make 3NT all by itself. Bidding and making a game after a balancing sequence is rare. Don't expect this to happen often.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ A 10 5 4  
**W**   **N**   **E**   **S**   ♥ J 10 8 2  
1♥   P   2♥   P   ♦ K Q 3  
P   3♦   P   ?   ♣ A 9

Partner appears to be short in diamonds so he probably has five spades. If he is 4-2-2-5 he is in trouble. It's not up to you to get him out of it. Pass. I don't really think 2NT exists in this auction, but if it does, this isn't the hand for it.

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ 4 2  
**W**   **N**   **E**   **S**   ♥ A 8 7 5  
1♦   P   2♦   P   ♦ K 10 7  
P   2♠   P   ?   ♣ A 8 5 4

As good as this is, you haven't got a game. Partner passed 1♦ and is merely expressing additional distributional values, and is counting on you for the high cards. Here is a possible hand for him to have:

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ K 7 6  
**W**   **N**   **E**   **S**   ♥ Q J 5 4  
1♦   P   2♦   P   ♦ 8 6 4  
P   2♠   3♦   P   ♣ K J 4  
P   3♥   P   ?

Note that your partner refrained from bidding 2♦, Michaels, on the first round. A Michaels bid should show a sound minimum of 8 nice HCP if not vulnerable and 10 if vulnerable. This is not a nice 8 point hand. Good judgment by your partner.

## **The Opponents Have Found a Fit After a Two Suited Auction**

*When your partner reopens with a takeout double*

When your partner balances against a two suited auction, your side will do less bidding than when your partner balances against a one suited auction. Here are some reasons. I will use this auction for the discussion below.

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

1. Both you and partner have passed up a chance to act at the one level, thus limiting your hands. Neither of you rates to have a lot.
2. There are only two suits remaining for you to compete in, not three. You have less chance of finding a fit when there are two suits available than when there are three suits available.
3. The 1♥ bidder can have 6 to 11 points. Their side could have a good majority of the high-card points.
4. The opponents may be in a 4-3 fit, which means that when you hold three of their raised suit, you can't be as sure of shortness in partner's hand. This can happen if opener raised 1♥ to 2♥ with only three hearts. This is a good idea on some hands, and you will encounter opponents who do this.
5. The opponents' defense will be better because they have more options as to the opening lead and subsequent play.

Given all of this, your side needs more reasons to balance. And, when you do balance, your partnership will seldom do anything dramatic. Playing in a minimum contract or pushing them a trick higher are your normal goals. In the event that you find a super fit, your side might do more than balance, but it is not likely.

W	N	E	S
		1♣	P
1♥	P	2♥	P
P	Dbl	P	?

Bid 3♥. Partner made a takeout double. You are happy to have four cards in an unbid suit.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 10 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 9 8 2
		1♣	P	♦	A Q
1♠	P	2♠	P	♣	9 4 3
P	Db1	P	?		

Bid 2♠. Your partner's double is takeout and since he didn't bid earlier, he doesn't have a good hand. Your 10 points are not good ones and your shape is poor. The one bid you should not make is 2NT. Bid 2♠ and hope you escape for a small penalty.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 10 8
W	N	E	S	♥	A 8 4
		1♦	P	♦	Q 8 7 3
1♥	P	2♥	P	♣	Q 9 7
P	Db1	P	?		

2♠. No further bidding by you. You have the wasted heart queen and terrible shape. Partner may have three hearts, too. Both hearts and diamonds are vulnerable to attack and the defense can take their pick on opening lead. Partner hasn't much and is trusting you not to get too excited. Don't disappoint him. Remember. Your partner is counting on you for high cards. The things that he does not expect are super trumps, super shape, and quality points as opposed to random points.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K J 7 3
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 6 5
		1♦	P	♦	A 4 2
1♥	P	2♥	P	♣	Q 8 6
P	Db1	P	?		

Bid 2♠. This is a rare hand that will continue to 3♠ if the opponents keep bidding.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ J 10 7 5 4  
W    N    E    S    ♥ 9 7 5 3  
                 1♣ P    ♦ A Q 7  
1♥    P    2♥   P    ♣ 6  
P    Dbl   P    ?

3♥ only. You won't have more than this or you would have overcalled. As it is, quite a few players would overcall so they won't have this decision. Your hand is nice, but with no shape just making 3♥ is not assured.

### *When partner reopens by bidding a suit*

Not much happening here. When your side reopens by bidding a suit, that usually ends the bidding.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 3 2  
W    N    E    S    ♥ A 8 6 5 4  
                 1♣ P    ♦ Q 8 7  
1♠    P    2♠   P    ♣ Q 6  
P    Dbl   P    ?

This is a good hand but it lacks trumps. Your high cards are nice enough that you can expect 2♠ to make. Might make three. What will partner have? Probably a boring five-card spade suit and some aggressive tendencies.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K Q  
W    N    E    S    ♥ K 8 4  
                 1♦ P    ♦ A 9 6 5 3  
1♥    P    2♥   P    ♣ J 8 2  
P    2♠   P    ?

Let partner have it here. He doesn't a good hand since he didn't bid over 1♠. He must have a good club suit. There is no reason to bid 3♦. Pass happily and hope no one thinks of doubling.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 4
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 4 3
		1♥	P	♦	Q J 8 7 5 4
1♠	P	2♠	P	♣	8
P	3♣	P	?		

This is a hand with exceptional values. It is good enough to raise to 4♥. You have two aces. You have four good trumps. You have a singleton diamond. And your clubs include the ten and nine. These will help partner if he needs to set up the club suit.

### *When partner reopens with an unusual 2NT bid*

The important point of this discussion is that the 2NT bid is not used as often as it should be. Players seem to think that the unusual 2NT applies only when there is an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠ on their right. This not true. The unusual 2NT bid is a useful convention in many situations. In the balancing seat, it will come up more than you would expect.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A 8 4 3
W	N	E	S	♥	J 10 9 3
		1♦	P	♦	3
1♠	P	2♠	P	♣	A 10 9 4
P	3♥	P	?		

**Bid 3♦.** If they go on to 3♥, you should pass. The fact that the opponents have gone quietly suggests that responder doesn't have too many hearts. Three probably, four maybe, but not more, which means your partner may have three or four hearts himself. He might have 1-4-4-4 or 1-3-4-5 shape. If this is the case, then your spade holding and partner's heart length will both be useful defensively. If they bid to 3♥,

you should be glad that your partner successfully nudged them to the three level.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ K 10 8 6 5  
**W**    **N**    **E**    **S**    ♥ 2  
 1♥    P    2♥    P    ♦ K 10 8 7  
 P    2NT    P    ?    ♣ Q J 4

3♦ only, but be willing to compete to 4♦. Everything you have is working. It's not that you have extra high cards, it's that the ones you have are all in the right places. You have the spade ace, a stiff heart, a fifth diamond, and useful cards. Even the club ten can come into its own.

Note that if partner has three or four hearts, possible, then he is likely to have a singleton spade. Nothing but good things are going on here.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ A 6 4 2  
**W**    **N**    **E**    **S**    ♥ 3  
 1♥    P    2♥    P    ♦ K 10 8 7 5  
 P    2NT    P    ?    ♣ Q 10 3

Bid 3♦. Do not consider passing 2NT. If they bid 3♥ you can think about doubling. But remember that partner is on lead. If he hasn't a clear lead he may lead a diamond, which you don't want. You would like a spade lead, but you're not likely to get it. A good declarer will expect things to be breaking poorly and will have made allowances for that if he bids 3♥. Likewise, if it is responder who bids 3♥, he will have some reason for it. If you do double and if they do go down, you get at least 200, which is a prime reward.

**E-W VUL**      ♠ A K 8 7  
**W**    **N**    **E**    **S**    ♥ K 10 8 7  
 1♥    P    2♥    P    ♦ 8 6 5  
 P    2NT    P    ?    ♣ 4 2

Partner's 2NT bid is unusual for the two unbid suits. They bid diamonds and spades so you need to choose between hearts and clubs. You prefer

clubs. Bid 3♣. Note that your partner could have doubled here, too. That would also be takeout. Technically, your partner's 2NT bid should show better distribution than a double. At least you have an ace and you have J84 of clubs. Not a hopeless situation.

## Balancing When the Opponents Have Conducted a Preference Auction

### Expectations For Balancing When They Have a Preference Auction

You do not have high hopes here. They may not have a real fit so your side may not have a real fit either. On preference auctions, your side will be unlikely to do more than offer one effort at reopening. Pushing the opponents a trick higher or going down a trick undoubled are your usual goals. Making something your way is slightly against the odds.

Balancing against a preference action is a delicate matter. The big gain comes when their misfit runs into a bad trump break and you can double it. But don't expect much in general.

Here are examples showing cases where declarer has bid two suits and gotten a preference from his partner.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q J 4
W	N	E	S	♥	8 4
		1♦	P	♦	A 10 7 5 3
1♠	P	2♠	P	♣	J 8 4
P	2NT	P	?		

On some preference auctions the opponents will have bid three suits, with partner reopening in the fourth. When this happens, partner will be in serious jeopardy. He will be right or he will be wrong. When he's wrong, there is no escape. Here, it does appear that partner has gotten away with it. You have three hearts, which is the first thing that should catch your eye, and you have a hodgepodge of points, some of which may be useful. The spade king may not be useful, as opener can have the spade ace.



When your side bids the only unbid suit, it is usually based on a five-card suit. Of note here is that their side may have a 5-2 diamond fit, which means your partner has three diamonds too. Not an excellent sign.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥	J 4 2
1♦	P	1♠	P	♦	Q J 3
2♣	P	2♦	P	♣	K 9 6 5
P	2♥	P	?		

As this is almost a fit auction, you can be a little optimistic about making something. If you have a good hand, you can raise. This is not a good enough hand. When you are balanced, it means that all you really have is points that your partner was counting on. You do not have shape that your partner was hoping for.

N-S VUL				♠	Q 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 10 6 5
		1♦	P	♦	K 8 3
1NT	P	2♣	P	♣	K 9 5
P	2♥	P	?		

Again, they can have a fit so you can hope to make something. With four cards in each major, you can cue-bid 2♦, telling partner you want him to choose the suit. You do not promise a big hand for this cue bid.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K J 9 7
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 4 2
		1♦	P	♦	K 3
1NT	P	2♣	P	♣	9 6 4
P	Dbl	P	?		

Pass. Partner will reopen quite freely after this auction. Both majors are safe. Note that when responder bids 1NT and takes a preference to diamonds, he has three or four of them. If responder first bids 1♥ or 1♠

instead of 1NT and later takes a preference to diamonds, he may have a doubleton.

When opponents bid as they did here, your side can usually compete with impunity in a safe suit at the two level, but responder's high cards will keep you from competing too high.

As usual, almost no amount of high cards will be worth a raise. Partner knows all about them. He is interested in the quality of them, the quality of your trump support, and some unexpectedly good distribution. This hand is a routine pass.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 10 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	K 4 2
1♦	P	1NT	P	♦	Q 3
2♣	P	2♦	P	♣	A 6 5
P	2♥	P	?		

Pass. Partner is probably looking at four or even five clubs and is bidding on your shape as well as your strength. You have what he expects. This is a nice hand in that it has fair high-card points and it has three good diamonds. You could have two of each minor.

### ***Balancing when either opponent bids and rebids his suit and the bidding stops***

Warning! Auctions where an opponent bids and rebids a suit without any hint of support from partner are dangerous to bid against. You need to be cautious out of respect for their potential misfit. Watch out for auctions like these.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A 10 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥	K 9 8 6 2
		1♥	P	♦	Q 10 5
1♠	P	2♣	P	♣	4
P	2♦	P	?		

W      N      E      S

1♣	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	P	?

W	N	E	S
		1♦	P
1♥	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	P	?

Their side frequently has matching singletons and is able to establish an immediate crossruff. Both your decision to reopen and your decision to compete when partner reopens should show cognizance of their possible misfit and what it means to you.

NO ONE VUL

				♠	Q 8 7 3
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 8 4
		1♦	P	♦	Q 3
1♥	P	2♦	P	♣	J 9 2
P	Db1	P	?		

Bid 2♠. You have four spades, which partner has asked you for. You should be aware that bidding against 2♦ is not as safe as it sounds. Opener can have some extra values and so can responder. If opener has a singleton heart, which is likely, your 2♠ contract may play poorly.

NO ONE VUL

				♠	J 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 8 5 4
1♦	P	1♥	P	♦	9 5 3
2♦	P	2♥	P	♣	K Q 4
P	Db1	P	?		

Bid 2♠. This auction is frustrating since they can have from 16 points to 24 points. You can't really tell. Your partner did balance so he has something, meaning that the points are probably even, but still, you are stuck bidding a three-card suit. Nuts.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K 5 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	9
1♣	P	1♠	P	♦	Q J 10 8 5
2♣	P	2♠	P	♣	Q 8 3
P	Dbl	P	?		

Bid 3♦. Your partner has something since he is making you bid at the three level. You are really lucky to have this fine a diamond suit. But all is not wonderful. Your K532 of spades may turn out to be losers if West can ruff your king, which is not unlikely. Your queen of clubs is no good. Likely, your partner has some heart values, but by the time you get around to using them the opponents may have picked your hand clean.

### *Converting partner's reopening double to penalty*

When partner reopens with a double after an opponent bids and rebids his suit, your side can sometimes get a nice penalty.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A 6 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	4 2
		1♣	P	♦	9 6
1♠	P	2♣	P	♣	K J 8 4 3
P	Dbl	P	?		

North's double is takeout. You have more choices than you might think.

You can bid hearts or diamonds, which is not exciting with only two cards in either suit.

You can bid spades and hope that your partner has four of them; definitely possible.

You can pass the double and hope you can take six tricks.

The choice that offers you the most hope is to pass. You may be able to take a spade and three club tricks. All that is needed is for your partner to take two tricks. If they make 2♣ doubled they get 180 points, which may be

better than your bidding something and going down a lot. If you had four clubs and three cards in a red suit, this hand would be more difficult.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K Q 10 8
W	N	E	S	♥	6 5 4
1♣	P	1♠	P	♦	K Q 2
2♣	P	2♠	P	♣	10 5 4
P	Dbl	P	?		

Pass. Partner could have bid 2NT, unusual, if he had a shapely hand. He probably has fair defense. Here is a sample hand for your partner. He won't have more than this since he didn't double earlier.

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

Partner suspects they have a misfit and is hoping that you can pass for penalty.

E-W VUL				♠	K 4 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	J 8 7 5
1♣	P	1♠	P	♦	J 10 8 3
2♣	P	2♠	P	♣	5
P	Dbl	P	?		

This one you aren't going to beat. Bid 2NT. Partner should get the idea that you don't have anything so will treat it as takeout. This way you don't have to guess which red suit to play in. If you get doubled in 2NT you will redouble and trust partner to reconsider his pass. Fortunately, you will not have a hand this bad very often.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A 10 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 6 4 3 2

1♣	P	1♥	P	♦	J 10
2♣	P	2♥	P	♣	4 3
P	Dbl	P	?		

Bid 2♠. You could pass but your hearts are much too poor. 2♠ is playable so you should bid it. With confidence, I might add. Look happy and you will play more undoubled contracts. With your nice spades, you do not have too much to fear here.

### *When the opponents end in 1NT*

Finally, there is a group of auctions where the opponents end in 1NT. When this is the case, your side should be cautious out of regard for the fact that they have some values and the fact that they have no known fit. In an early part of this book I discussed that when they stop in 1NT, you use the following methods.

1. Double is for penalty, asking for the lead of dummy's suit.
2. 2♣ is takeout, no matter which suits have been bid. I suggest using 2♣ as your takeout bid is best since it is easy to remember. The only drawback is that you cannot bid clubs with just the club suit. This isn't much of a loss.
3. A bid in any other suit is natural, even if it was bid by the opponents.

Here are examples reflecting these agreements. In these hands, your partner balanced over 1NT and you need to consider what to do. Remember that in these hands I am using the methods shown above.

NO ONE VUL				♠	9 4 3
W	N	E	S	♥	J 8 5 3
		1♥	P	♦	K J 4 3
1♠	P	1NT	P	♣	Q 7
P	Dbl	P	?		

Pass. Partner's double says he wants a spade lead. He should have 14 or 15 points with good spades. You should not lead a diamond here since you know what partner wants. You should lead the three of spades.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ J 10 7 4

W	N	E	S	♥	5 3
		1♦	P	♦	A 8 7 4
1♥	P	1NT	P	♣	K 8 4
P	2♣	P	?		

Bid 2♠. You have four of them and your partner's 2♣ bid is asking you to choose from the unbid suits. He has clubs and spades and you prefer spades.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ A 7 4

W	N	E	S	♥	K 8 7 5
		1♣	P	♦	10 5
1♦	P	1NT	P	♣	J 10 7 3
P	2♦	P	?		

Pass. Your partner says he has diamonds. If he wanted you to bid one of the unbid suits he would have bid 2♣.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ K J 5 3

W	N	E	S	♥	7
	P	1♦	P	♦	A 7 4 3
1♠	P	1NT	P	♣	Q 10 8 4
P	2♥	P	?		

Pass. This is bad news. Your partner could not bid over 1♠ but he seems to feel that he should bid hearts now. Your hand, in spite of its 10 HCP, is not going to be good for him. You have to hope that he has six reasonable hearts that for some reason were not worth an opening 2♥ bid or a 2♥ overcall. Then you have to hope that your high-card points will somehow be useful. He may be bidding in hopes rather than on his cards and if so, his hopes won't be answered by your dummy.

N-S VUL                      ♠ J 8 4

W	N	E	S	♥	7
---	---	---	---	---	---

	P	1♦	P	♦	A 7 4 3
1♠	P	1NT	P	♣	Q J 10 8 4
P	2♣	2♠	?		

Bid 3♣. North has hearts and clubs. You have a super club holding and very importantly, you have good shape. You should worry that your partner has three spades. Opener did not raise spades, he competed in spades, showing three cards. Even so, your hand should be good enough to bid 3♣.





## Bidding Naturally in a Suit the Opponents Have Bid

I have shown you some situations where you might balance by bidding a suit that they have bid. Because this is such an important but little known area, I am showing some hands where this occurs. Additionally, I am including a few thoughts on bidding an opponent's suit naturally other than in balancing auctions.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K 8 5
W N E S	♥ A Q 6 2
P 1♥ P	♦ K 8 4 3
1♠ P 2♣ P	♣ 9 2
P 2♠ P ?	

Pass. Partner made a natural reopening bid in a suit they have bid. You have only to judge whether or how high to raise. The sequence by opener frequently shows a stiff spade so partner is hoping to find you with two or three of them. You have the maximum number of spades you can have plus you have extra working values. Note that responder's auction is unclear in terms of high-card points. He could have from 5 to 10. From partner's viewpoint, this leaves a wide range of values that can be in your hand. This time you have the goods. If partner was not a passed hand, you would raise to 3♠.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 9  
W N E S      ♥ Q 10 8 7  
         1♥ P      ♦ K 9 8 7 5  
1♠ P 2♣ P      ♣ Q J 4  
P 2♠ P ?

Pass. You haven't got what partner wants, but you haven't anything better to offer. Opener's pass suggests he hasn't more than one spade himself, so that improves the chances that partner has a good suit. If his trump suit divides 5-1 or even 6-0, partner will be better off scrambling for tricks in spades than you would be scrambling for tricks in diamonds or notrump.

LHO isn't going to have six spades very often. He would rebid them.

On this hand and auction, your partner rates to have something like this:

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

On some sequences where the opponents have bid more than one suit, someone on your side will reopen with a balancing double. Be aware that if the opponents have not found a fit, it may be that your best fit is in one of the opponents' suits.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 2  
W N E S      ♥ J 10 7 6 3  
         1♣ P      ♦ K 5  
1♥ P 2♣ P      ♣ J 8 6 5  
P Dbl P ?

2♥. Not a cue bid. You would prefer to bid one of partner's suits, but you haven't got one. There is a good chance, however, that partner has a 4-3-5-1 hand or a 4-3-4-2 hand and hearts will be playable. Partner knows your hearts will be a poorish five-carder as with better, you would have overcalled, and with fewer, you would have bid some other suit.

If partner has something like the following hand you will do well.

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

If partner has only two hearts, you do less well.

***A secret weapon. The natural bid in a suit when your RHO responds at the one level***

Here is a professional secret. You saw in the hands above that you might balance in a suit they have bid. Here is a case where you make a natural bid in their suit before they can finish their bidding. For example.

W	N	E	S
1♥	P	1♠	2♠

When opener bids a suit, and responder bids a suit at the one level, a bid of your RHO's suit is natural.

This is because responder often bids a bad four-card suit. When you have a proper hand, you can bid your RHO's suit intending to show a natural overcall. The 2♠ bid in the auction above is natural, not a cue bid, showing a fair hand wishing to play in spades.

This is a very effective agreement that actually occurs if you are aware of it. When you bid RHO's suit at the two level, opener will often have a difficult problem. Here are some example hands. I would bid as shown no matter what the vulnerability.

W	N	E	S
1♣	P	1♥	?

♠ A 3	2♥. You have a good six-card suit with fair values. This
♥ K Q 10 9 7 5	is a minimum hand to bid their suit.
♦ 10 9 3	

♣ 5 4

♠ 3

♥ A Q J 9 3

♦ A J 10 4

♣ 9 5 3

2♥. You can bid this way with a good five-card suit and high-card values on the side.

♠ A K

♥ Q J 10 8 7 5

♦ K 6 3

♣ 4 2

2♥. You are missing the top hearts but your suit is good.

♠ A K

♥ Q 9 6 4 3 2

♦ K 6 3

♣ 4 2

Pass. Do not make this bid without good spot cards in the suit.

♠ 9 3

♥ K Q J 10 7

♦ Q 6 3

♣ 4 3 2

Pass. You need close to an opening bid or an excellent six-card suit. This hand has a good five-card suit but it has nothing but losers on the side.

Here is a hand from actual play. South is the dealer.

NO ONE VUL

W N E S

1♦

P 1♥ 2♥ ?

♠ A 10 8 4

♥ 7 6 5 4 3

♦ K 4

♣ J 9

♠ Q 7 6 5

♥ Q

♠ 9

♥ A K J 10 8 2

♦ J 8 2

♣ Q 6 5 4 2

♦ Q 6 3

♣ 10 8 3

♠ K J 3 2

♥ 9

♦ A 10 9 7 5

♣ A K 7

The bidding started as shown. When East bid 2♥, South was stumped. Do you know what South should bid? North-South have an easy game in spades. East can take six tricks in hearts.

Here is a suggestion. If your opponents bid this way against you, play that a double by opener is a takeout double of the opponent's suit. Sounds odd, but it works nicely.

One last thought.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 3

W N E S      ♥ 9 4

1♦ P 2♣ ?      ♦ 9 7 4

♣ K Q J 10 8 7 5

When they make a two-over-one response you can bid responder's suit naturally, as was done in the previous hands. Try as I may, I can not remember doing this and I can not imagine a use for a 3♣ bid other than as natural. If you ever do this, I can promise the reaction from your opponents will be interesting.



# Reopening After a Preempt

## Expectations for Balancing Against a Preempt

When you are balancing against a preempt, you are in very dangerous waters. If you come into the bidding and your RHO has a big hand, you could be clobbered. But against this, there is the real possibility that your side has a game. Slams are not out of the question at all. Further, your partner may have a good holding in opener's suit and you may get some good penalties now and then. So as dangerous as it is to balance, it is also especially dangerous to do nothing.

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Sadly, there are no easy rules to help you. I can give you some guidelines but the rest is up to you and your judgment. The examples in this section should give you some help.

## **The Rule of Seven and the Reopening Rule of Eight or Nine (8/9)**

When bidding against a preempt made on your right, there is a rule that says you can assume your partner has 7 ordinary points. This is called the rule of seven. When your LHO makes a preempt and the bidding comes to you in the balancing seat, you are allowed to be a little more hopeful. I estimate that playing partner to have 8 or 9 or so fair points is about right. I will call this the rule of 8/9 since writing it out takes up too much space. In fact, if he has 10 points, that would fall, more or less, into the 8/9 rule. Note that when you

are envisioning the 8/9 points you hope partner has, you can not hope for him to have four trumps and some shape and aces and kings in the right places. What he is going to have in general is a hodgepodge of points scattered randomly in his hand.

The reason for the rule of 8/9 is that you can not afford to do nothing at all. If you wait for huge hands to make a balancing bid, you will be locked out of many contracts. Winning bridge is aggressive bridge. You do not want to be shut out of the bidding because that will get you a string of poor results. Preempts do that to you. What you want is to minimize the number of bad results you get after their preempts. You have to do some fighting for what is yours.

## **Reopening When They Open with a Weak Two Bid**

Here are your options plus something to think about when a weak two bid is passed to you.

1. You can make a takeout double.
2. You can bid a suit.
3. You can bid 2NT.  
What does 2NT mean if you are not a passed hand?  
What does 2NT mean if you are a passed hand?
4. You can jump to 3NT.
5. You can jump to three of a suit.
6. You can jump to four of a major.
7. What can you bid with a good hand with wild shape?
8. You can pass.

### ***When you reopen with a takeout double***

A takeout double is perhaps your most common choice of bids. The normal rules for doubles apply here with the main issue being how light you can be in the reopening seat.

**A question that will arise later is whether you should use Lebensohl when your side balances with a double. I am mentioning this now but won't discuss it for a few pages. For now, you should be aware that Lebensohl can be used in balancing auctions.**

NO ONE VUL     ♠ J 7 4 3  
 W N E S     ♥ A K 8 3  
 2♦ P P ?     ♦ 5  
                  ♣ Q 10 8 4

Double. In the balancing seat you can double a weak two bid with some light hands. Just as you can do in the balancing seat when they have opened with a one bid that is passed to you. Here you have perfect shape, which is a prime motivator in what you decide to do. Note that you do not mind, in fact you'd rather like it, if your partner passes for penalty. You are hoping partner has 8/9 points and if he does, you should be OK. Note that the rule of 8/9 when in the balancing position refers mostly to high-card points. Distribution is a bonus.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ J 4 2  
 W N E S     ♥ K Q 6 4  
 2♦ P P ?     ♦ 8 4  
                  ♣ A J 4 2

Double. As your shape gets worse, you need slightly better values. This hand is still OK for a double but your three spades could be a problem.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ Q 7 4  
 W N E S     ♥ Q 8  
 2♥ P P ?     ♦ K Q 4 3  
                  ♣ Q 9 7 4

Pass. Anytime you have a worthless high card in their suit, you should deduct it from your estimate of what the hand is worth. You have 9 HCP that may be useful, but they are lousy quality. Further, you have just three spades. This is not a problem necessarily but it is not a good thing either. For you to make a contract you need your partner to have an opening bid, which is too optimistic.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K Q 7



W N E S     ♥ 8 4  
 2♥ P P ?     ♦ K 8 4  
                  ♣ A J 10 7 4

Double. More flexible than bidding 3♣.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K Q J 9 4  
 W N E S     ♥ 9 4  
 2♥ P P ?     ♦ A K J  
                  ♣ K Q 7

Double. You intend to bid spades next. The point is that a double followed by a voluntary bid in a new suit shows a good hand, just as in normal takeout double sequences.

### *When you reopen by bidding a suit*

Since you are reopening at the two or three level, you must be a bit saner than when balancing against a one-bid. No balancing in four-card suits. No balancing with crummy 8 point hands. A two or three level bid in a suit requires real values in the form of points or a good suit or both.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ A 8  
 W N E S     ♥ Q J 7 4 3  
 2♦ P P ?     ♦ A 8  
                  ♣ 10 8 4 3

Bid 2♥. Nothing special here. A decent suit and quality points. This is a classic case of either putting your neck on the line by bidding 2♥ or passing and letting them steal something. If your partner has his 9 or so points with a modest holding in hearts, you are a favorite to have something your way. A second major goal is to nudge them to the three level, where you might be able to set them.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ A 8 6 4 2  
 W N E S     ♥ 3

2♦ P P ?      ♦ A 8  
                      ♣ Q 10 8 7 5

Bid 2♠. Your shape is excellent. No guarantee that you have a home but the hand has enough potential that it is worth a bid. I promise you that if you balance whenever you can, you will endure some huge disasters. Can't be helped. If you pass all of the time you will endure a different set of bad results, including losing many games and numerous partscores. Did you know that if you let them make 110 when you can make 110, it costs you 6 IMPs? Or, if you are playing matchpoints when top on a board is 12 points, you will get about 2 points for letting them have the hand.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ J 8 7 6 5  
 W N E S      ♥ A 7  
 2♥ P P ?      ♦ A 9 5  
                      ♣ K 8 4

2♠. While this could be terribly wrong, you will lose a large number of partscore swings by passing. Note that there is nothing safe about this bid. Their bidding has been totally uninformative other than that West has six hearts and about 8 points. This is strictly a percentage action.

Note also that the king of clubs is a good card. Opener is unlikely to have the ace of clubs. If West had opened with 1♥, you would expect West to be the one with the ace of clubs.

Finally, do not reopen with a double. That would run the risk of losing the spade suit, which is the biggest feature of your hand.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ K J  
 W N E S      ♥ K 6 5  
 2♥ P P ?      ♦ J 9 7 5 4  
                      ♣ K J 7

Pass. Hopeless situation. On the previous hand you had a five-card major you could bid at the two level. If you want to bid diamonds, it is a minor suit and you have to bid it at the three level. This hand is horrible for a takeout

double for many reasons, including the fact that the king of hearts is a suspect card. Pass and see what partner leads.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠ K 4
<b>W    N   E   S</b>	♥ 9 7 3
2♥   P   P   ?	♦ K J 8 7 5 4
	♣ A Q

**Bid 3♦.** Bidding a suit at the three level is a fair commitment. You need something useful to do this. If they had bid 1♥, you would reopen with 2♦. After 2♥, you have to bid 3♦. This is not a small change. If I am bidding a minor, I consider if I am happy if partner bids 3NT. If I am bidding a major, I consider if I am happy to hear partner raise my major or bid notrump.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠ J 3 2
<b>W    N   E   S</b>	♥ A Q 7 5 4
2♠   P   P   ?	♦ K 7 4
	♣ K J

Pass is likely best. This is a 14 point hand but it is full of danger. You have three spades, a terrible worry. Your RHO often raises when he has three spades and may do so with two. This hints that your partner will have two or three spades. Not a good sign. Your suit is full of holes and you are at the three level. If your partner doesn't provide some help in the minors you will have a tough time.

Bid 3♥ if you must. It can work. It is the nature of bidding against preempts that you have difficult decisions. Here is a test of bidding 3♥ on this hand. If your partner bids 4♥ and RHO doubles, do you think you did the right thing? I have noted that you can bid when you think 8/9 points in partner's hand will be enough. Here you have 14 points so the arithmetic says your side has 23, and that normally is enough. But you must use judgment, which tells you that your J32 of spades is not good. And your judgment should warn you that hearts may break worse than normal. If you had the 109 of hearts or the 987 of hearts, you would be more optimistic.

E-W VUL	♠ 9 3
W N E S	♥ Q
2♠ P P ?	♦ A K J 3 2
	♣ Q 8 6 4 3

Pass. The only way you can bid with a remote amount of safety is to use a bid that shows both suits. Unfortunately, 2NT shows a notrump hand and not both minors. You can show the minors by bidding 4NT (or 4♠) if you have either of these tools, but your hand is not worth bidding at the five level. 3♦ is the only sensible bid but it is too one-dimensional. It only shows one suit. You would hate to play in a 5-2 diamond fit if there was a 5-4 club fit available.

E-W VUL	♠ 9 5 4
W N E S	♥ 8 3
2♠ P P ?	♦ A K Q 3 2
	♣ A J 4

You usually have a six-card suit when you bid a minor. Some hands have only five cards and they present issues. I imagine that most players would bid 3♦, but note all of these considerations:

If partner has weak diamonds, you may go down a few or a lot.

Your balanced hand is a minus.

When you bid three of a minor, the only game your side rates to bid is 3NT. You would feel better if you had a six-card suit.

When you balance in a major suit, by comparison, you offer a chance at 3NT and at four of a major.

On the hand here, usually the best result available to you is that you can make a partscore when they might have made one if you stayed out of the auction. There are few great rewards here.

### ***When you reopen with 2NT—You are not a passed hand***

A 2NT bid often causes confusion. Assume for these hands that you are not a passed hand. I will discuss what 2NT shows when you are a passed hand very shortly.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K J 7  
W N E S     ♥ 9 5  
2♠ P P ?     ♦ A K J 7 5  
                 ♣ K Q 9

Bid 2NT. This bid is defined rather loosely. You can bid 2NT with a good 14 points but for the most part, you will have 15 to 17 with a balanced hand and a stopper in their suit. Your partner can use Stayman and Jacoby and Texas transfers and any other special devices you like.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ Q 10 5  
W N E S     ♥ 9 4  
2♠ P P ?     ♦ A K Q 10 4  
                 ♣ K 10 8

I said that you might bid 2NT with 14 points if it was sensational. It was difficult to come up with many 14 point hands that qualified. This one comes close. Note these ten spots. They are important. If you choose to bid 2NT only with 15 points, that would not be terrible. If you wish to include 14 point hands, please be patient for the right hand. Some players do it with 14 and then they decide that a good 13 is OK. Uh-oh.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ J 5  
W N E S     ♥ A Q 7 6  
2♥ P P ?     ♦ K Q J 8 3  
                 ♣ K 9

You have choices.

You can pass, hoping to set 2♥.

You can bid 3♦, hoping for whatever. I really do not like this bid.

You can bid 2NT, showing this range of points.

I recommend 2NT. Passing risks missing a game. 3♦ does not show these values. 2NT shows what you have fairly accurately. If I held this hand as

dealer, I would open 1NT. On this sequence, it still looks like a notrump hand.

### ***When you reopen with 2NT—You are a passed hand***

If you are a passed hand, a 2NT bid can be treated as unusual, showing the lower two unbid suits. Usually, the opening bid will be 2♥ or 2♠ and your 2NT bid will show the minors. Here is one example of a passed hand balancing 2NT bid.

No one vul	♠ 5
W N E S	♥ 8 3
P P	♦ K Q 8 7 4
2♠ P P ?	♣ A 10 9 5 3

You can bid 2NT with this. You are a passed hand and you have two good suits. Things you should be aware of are the following.

1. It is unlikely that you have a game. Your partner would have bid if he had the 16 points your side needs to make a game.
2. Your partner may have a bunch of spades and is hoping you can double for takeout.
3. They may discover a heart fit. This is not likely, but it can happen.
4. So in the long run, you are usually fighting for a partscore.
5. Optimistically, one of the best results you can get is to push them to 3♠ and have your partner double it. You have excellent defense given your bidding so hearing partner double 3♠ is excellent news.
6. Having 5-5 in the minors does not make you bulletproof. You may be doubled and you may go down a bunch.

Happy guessing.

### ***Examples of reopening with good balanced hands***

Some hands are too good for normal methods. Here are some examples. In a later section I will show you a family of hands that have good values and wild distribution.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K Q 10  
 W N E S       ♥ Q J 4  
 2♠ P P ?       ♦ K Q J 7  
                  ♣ A J 7

Double. A middling 19 point hand. Hard to say what you should do. Since having a pessimistic attitude at the bridge table is a dangerous tendency, I suggest you treat this as a good hand. Double and bid 3NT over whatever partner bids. Here is a possible hand for partner.

♠ 8 4  
 ♥ 10 8 5 3  
 ♦ A 8 3  
 ♣ Q 10 8 4

If you bid 2NT, your partner will pass with this hand and you will miss a very good 3NT contract. You might make ten tricks. Winning bridge requires some optimism and as long as you have not gotten a specific warning, take modestly optimistic views.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ Q 7 3  
 W N E S       ♥ A K 8  
 2♥ P P ?       ♦ A K 7 4  
                  ♣ K Q J

Double. Bigger balanced hands also tend to start with a takeout double. The idea is that you will bid 3NT next but you wish your partner to know that he can bid again if he has a really weak, shapely hand. Give him this hand, for instance:

♠ J 10 8 5 4 2  
 ♥ 3  
 ♦ 9 8  
 ♣ 10 5 4 3

Your partner will bid 2♠ with this hand. Now when you bid 3NT he will know you have support for everything, especially something in spades, and he will bid 4♠.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A K  
W N E S     ♥ Q J 3  
2♥ P P ?     ♦ Q J 7 5 4  
                 ♣ A K 3

Double. If partner bids 2♠, you will bid 2NT, showing a super 18 to 20. There is a big difference between auctions where you double 2♦ or 2♥ and when you double 2♠. When you double 2♦ or 2♥ your partner usually bids at the two level, allowing you to bid 2NT. When you double 2♠ your partner always bids a suit at the three level and you must bid 3NT. A delicate distinction.

If your partner bids 3♠ or 4♠, you have a serious guess to make. Your choices won't be easy.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K Q 8  
W N E S     ♥ A K J 8 7  
2♦ P P ?     ♦ 4 2  
                 ♣ A J 6

Double and correct to 3♥ over 2♠ or 3♣. If partner bids 2NT, what you do depends on whether 2NT is natural or Lebensohl (to be discussed shortly).

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 8 6 5  
W N E S     ♥ A J 5  
2♠ P P ?     ♦ A K Q 8  
                 ♣ A Q J

Double. If partner bids three of a suit, you will cue-bid 3♠. The intent of this bid will be to look for 3NT. You can't come close to guaranteeing a game with this hand, but you can't just pass either. If partner doesn't have a



spade stopper, you may have trouble sorting out where to play. At least you made a good try.

### ***When you reopen by jumping to 3NT after a weak two bid***

Since you can bid notrump or double and then bid notrump with many of your balanced notrump type hands, you can use a jump to 3NT to show something special.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠ 4 2
<b>W   N   E   S</b>	♥ K 3
2♥   P   P   ?	♦ A K Q J 8 7
	♣ A J 5

3NT. This auction tends to show a solid suit plus a stopper plus another trick or so. It does not invite partner to bid a suit. If partner bids 4♠, it is not because you implied them. You might even have a stiff spade.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠ A K
<b>W   N   E   S</b>	♥ Q 7
2♠   P   P   ?	♦ K Q J 10 7 5
	♣ K J 4

3NT. You do not have a solid diamond suit but you have two spade stoppers so you will have time to set up the diamond suit if they attack spades. Of course, if they attack hearts or clubs, it might be bad for you. Still, 3NT is a reasonable guess. Many 6 point hands from partner will let you make it.

### ***When you reopen by jumping to the three level in a new suit***

These jumps are not weak bids. You do not make weak jump bids against a weak two, or any other preempt for that matter. You show an excellent six-card or longer suit with invitational values. Partner bids game when he has a nice 7 points with a doubleton in your suit.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	♠ A
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W N E S     ♥ Q J 9 8 5 4 3  
 2♦ P P ?     ♦ 7 3  
               ♣ A K 9

Bid 3♥. This jump is invitational. You have six potential losers so bidding 4♥ is too much and bidding just 2♥ is too little. 3♥ asks partner to bid game with a decent 8 points or a good 7 points. If partner bids 3NT, I would guess to continue to 4♥.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K Q J 10 7 6  
 W N E S     ♥ 3 2  
 2♥ P P ?     ♦ A Q 9  
               ♣ A 8

Bid 3♠. This bid is invitational, showing a good six-card or longer suit. The hand is not quite good enough to insist on game. Your partner will bid a game if he has two spades or more and 7 or 8 useful points. He can do other things too, such as bidding 3NT. If he does bid 3NT, you can pass.

### *When you reopen by jumping to four of a major*

A jump to game in a major after a weak two bid shows a very good hand that does not want to merely invite. You should have a hand such that you will make a game unless your partner really has a bad hand. You can't explore enough to find out if partner has zero points or a sane 4 points. Take a small gamble and jump to game. There are all kinds of hands that fall into this category. The first one is a bit unusual.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ 5  
 W N E S     ♥ A K Q 8 5 4  
 2♦ P P ?     ♦ 8  
               ♣ K Q J 8 4

Bid 4♥. Only 15 points but wonderful suits and distribution. You might make game if all partner has is three little hearts. You should be willing to

take that chance. Note that if your partner has two aces and some heart support, he is entitled to bid. Your 4♥ bid isn't a sign-off at all.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ Q J 10 8 7 6 5  
**W    N   E   S**        ♥ 7 2  
 2♥    P   P   ?        ♦ A K Q  
                          ♣ A

Bid 4♠. 3♠ shows a good hand, but not this good. You need partner to have the ace or king of spades or the ace or king of hearts. Bid game and hope he has one of these four cards.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ A Q J 10 8 7  
**W    N   E   S**        ♥ K 3  
 2♥    P   P   ?        ♦ A Q  
                          ♣ A K 9

Double, followed by 4♠ if partner shows weakness. 3♠ here would be an underbid, as it could be passed by partner. 3♠ is invitational, not forcing. A 4♠ bid immediately is also OK since it protects the king of hearts from the opening lead.

### ***Balancing with a cue bid when the opening bid is 2♥ or 2♠***

A reopening cue bid means one thing if they opened with a weak 2♥ or 2♠ bid. It means something else if they opened with a weak 2♦ bid. These hands discuss cue-bidding after a weak 2♥ or 2♠ bid.

**NO ONE VUL**        ♠ 8 5  
**W   N   E   S**        ♥ A 8  
 2♠   P   P   ?        ♦ Q J  
                          ♣ A K Q J 7 4 3

Bid 3♠, showing a hand that is interested in 3NT if partner can stop their suit, spades. You have seen a few examples of this cue bid in the previous discussions.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 8 3 2  
                   W N E S     ♥ 2  
                   2♠ P P ?     ♦ A 8  
                                  ♣ A K Q J 9 7 6

Bid 3♠. 3♣ is an extreme underbid. You would feel miserable if you bid 3♣ and your partner thought and thought and finally passed. 4♣ gets you past 3NT. Your best alternative is to cue-bid, with the understanding that you want partner to bid 3NT with a spade (their suit) stopper. If your partner has a spade stopper, he bids 3NT. The singleton heart is scary, which is a price of using this convention.

*When your side asks for a stopper, how does responder bid with no stopper?*

W	N	E	S
		2♥	P
P	3♥	P	?

If your partner cue-bids their major, asking you to bid notrump with a stopper, and you do not have a stopper in their suit, this is how you respond.

You bid 4♣ with a generally lousy hand. You can stop in four of a minor after a 4♣ bid. You bid 4♦ with 8 or more useful points. This bid is forcing to game.

If you have a singleton in their major and 8 or more useful points, you cue-bid their major. Your partner may be able to use this information to look for a slam.

You may bid four of the missing major if you have a super suit, such as QJ107543. This bid is rare.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ 8 7 4 2  
                   W N E S     ♥ Q 7 3  
                   2♠ P     ♦ 9 8 4  
                   P 3♠ P ?     ♣ Q 7 4

Bid 4♣. This is a poor hand. You could have a little more, you could have a little less. Your bid is artificial, saying you do not like your hand.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ 9 5 3
W	N	E	S	♥ K Q 4 3 2
		2♠	P	♦ K 7
P	3♠	P	?	♣ 10 7 2

Bid 4♦. This is an artificial bid, saying you have 8 or more useful points. You still have to guess where to play the hand but at least your partner knows you are not broke.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠ 9
W	N	E	S	♥ Q J 4 3 2
		2♠	P	♦ A Q J 5
P	3♠	P	?	♣ 8 5 4

Bid 4♠. You are telling partner you have some useful points and a singleton spade. There are some hands he can have that will make a slam and your singleton spade is likely to be the key to bidding it.

Interesting bidding trick: Partner asks you for notrump and when you say you have a good hand without a stopper, he then bids four of their suit.

W	N	E	S
		2♠	P
P	3♠	P	4♦
P	4♠	P	?

What can your partner be doing? You already know he does not have a stopper in their suit. What he is doing is showing a singleton. He has a big hand and now that you have shown some values, he is showing he is not worried about spades for slam and is hoping you can contribute a useful bid.

W	N	E	S
---	---	---	---

		2♠	P
P	3♠	P	4♦
P	4♥	P	?

What is partner up to here? You told him you have a good hand but no spade stopper. Your partner now cue-bids 4♥. He is saying that he is interested in a slam and he is showing by inference that he has a spade singleton. Neat!

### ***Balancing with a cue bid when the opening bid is 2♦. The Michaels cue bid.***

When they open 2♦, you have more important things to do than use the cue bid to look for 3NT. You will have a lot of hands with the majors and you will need to show these hands when you have them. I suggest you play that a cue bid is Michaels showing 5-5 in the majors, a very important kind of hand to show. You need in the range of 12 good HCP to qualify for this cue bid.

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q 8 7 4 3
W N E S	♥ A Q 8 7 4
2♦ P P ?	♦ 5
	♣ 8 4

Pass. This hand is too weak to bid 3♦, but I acknowledge that it can work. One common error is to think that the hand belongs to your side if they open a weak two bid and it is passed out. Your RHO can have some pretty good hands and be laying low hoping for you to do something silly. You have to draw the line somewhere. They have stopped in 2♦ so you do not want to bid Michaels with a bad hand that may cause you to go down 300 or more. It is not wise to get involved with weak hands like this one. Learn to resist the temptation.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K J 6 4 3
W N E S	♥ K Q 9 5 4
2♦ P P ?	♦ 6
	♣ Q 7

Still marginal by my lights. Your partner needs to know what kind of minimum you can have for this bid. Keep in mind that your Michaels bid is not to bother their bidding. If your RHO opens 1♣ and you bid 2♣, showing a Michaels hand, part of the benefit of the bid is that it bothers their bidding. When they open a weak 2♦ bid and it is passed to you, they are admitting that they are relatively content. If you bid Michaels in the balancing seat against a weak two, the only benefit to you is that you are helping your side decide what to do. I noted that your RHO had accepted 2♦ as a contract. He might be very happy to whack you in a major suit contract.

I would want a better hand than this to bid 3♦. The flaky 11 points I have here doesn't give our side much safety.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A Q 8 7 5  
 W N E S        ♥ A Q J 7 4  
 2♦ P P ?        ♦ 5 4  
                  ♣ 8

Now you have some real values. Bid 3♦. This is slightly above average but considering that you are pushing the bidding to the three level, you need something. Note that on this hand you have a doubleton diamond. You would prefer just one. If partner bids three of a major, you should pass. If you can trust your partner to know when he has a good hand, you do not have to bid a game with this hand.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K Q J 9 4  
 W N E S        ♥ A K J 7 5  
 2♦ P P ?        ♦ 5  
                  ♣ A 4

This is a Michaels 3♦ bid. It is good enough that you will bid again. In fact, it is so good that you can consider cue-bidding 4♦ when partner bids a major.

***How does your partner respond to your Michaels bid?***

There isn't much room for science. Either your partner bids three of a major or jumps to four of a major. Essentially, if he has four trumps and 10 support points, he bids game. If he has three trumps and 12 support points, he bids game. These ranges are not exact. Judgment is needed in these auctions.

If partner can't bid four of a major, he tends to bid three of a major. This forces you to make a decision. If you have around 17 support points, you can go on to game. This is a hard decision because your partner might be broke.

About the only time you will bid a slam is when your partner jumps to game and you have a maximum hand.

### ***Reopening by jumping to four of a minor suit after a weak 2♥ or 2♠ bid***

Jumping to four of a minor is a bid that I expect you have not heard of. What kind of hand would jump to 4♣ after a 2♠ bid? A scientific solution to what it means has been created. It is called the Leaping Michaels convention.

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q J 9 7 3
W N E S	♥ A
2♥ P P ?	♦ 5 3
	♣ A K Q J 4

This is not the right hand for a classic Michaels bid but science has come up with an alternative approach. When the opening bid is two of a major, you can bid four of a minor to show that minor and the unbid major. This bid shows a good hand since you are at the four level. It has the advantage of showing your suits in one bid and it also, to some degree, gets in the way of the opponents' bidding. The hand here is minimum for a 4♣ bid.

You need at least 5-5 distribution for this bid. Your partner will often have to choose a three-card suit and might even be forced into bidding a two-card suit.

### ***When they open a weak two bid, and you have a good hand with wild distribution***

Sometimes you have a good hand that does not offer an easy bid. Often you have to double first and then finish describing your hand on the next round.



**BOTH SIDES VUL**     ♠ A K J 8  
**W   N   E   S**        ♥ - - -  
2♥   P   P   ?        ♦ A Q 8 7  
                             ♣ A J 6 5 4

Double. With perfect takeout double shape, a takeout double is best. You worry that your partner might pass 2♥ doubled but if he does, it means he has a lot of hearts and may not have a suit to play in.

And now, a virtually unbidable hand. A real nightmare!

**NO ONE VUL**        ♠ - - -  
**W   N   E   S**        ♥ A K 9 8 7 2  
2♠   P   P   ?        ♦ A 4  
                             ♣ A K 10 6 5

This is a miserable problem and I can't offer a clear answer. It is still useful, though, to look at possible solutions.

1. 4♥. This is likely to make, but will end the auction on many hands where you have a cold slam. Even a grand slam is possible. If partner has the following hand, you are cold for 7♣.

♠ J 8 7 2  
♥ 3  
♦ J 6  
♣ J 9 8 4 3 2

2. Double. This is the most flexible of all the possible calls and will leave you relatively well placed in comparison to other choices. But it has dangers. For one thing, partner may pass. You won't care for this but it could be right. Partner would pass 2♠ doubled with this hand:

♠ K 10 7 6 2

♥ 3  
 ♦ K J 5 3  
 ♣ J 8 4

You will get a moderate penalty with slam being a questionable proposition. Note that partner is likely to have good spades, as RHO did not raise. Many aggressive opponents will make a preemptive raise when holding three trumps. RHO's silence suggests that he does not have three or more.

3. You might bid 4♣, if you play a jump in a minor shows that minor and the unbid major. This is a useful convention but it is not widespread yet. If you choose to bid 4♣, though, you would hate to hear your partner pass, as I believe he can with a truly hopeless hand.

Still not sure what the best bid is? Welcome to the world of bidding when they preempt.

### ***When they open a weak two bid, you can pass***

This is obvious but the range of hands you can have is larger than you might expect. Here are examples of nice hands that do not offer a sane way into the bidding.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠ A Q
<b>W N E S</b>	♥ 8 7 5 4
<b>2♥ P P ?</b>	♦ Q 8 7 4
	♣ A Q 6

Fourteen nice points but no bid to make. Double is out. No spade support. 2NT is out. No heart stopper. Bidding a minor is out. No good five-card suit.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠ 8 3
<b>W N E S</b>	♥ J 7 5 4
<b>2♦ P P ?</b>	♦ A K 7
	♣ K Q 7 4

This hand has only 13 points. They are nice but they do not offer you a good bid.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ K  
**W   N   E   S**        ♥ K Q J 3  
 2♥   P   P   ?        ♦ 7 5 4 3  
                          ♣ A K 5 4

A 16 count with a singleton king of spades. If you choose to bid, the only thing you can bid is 2NT. If partner bids spades, you aren't happy. 2NT can work, I suppose, so I won't tell you to pass. But it is an ugly moment.

### Reopening When They Open With a Weak Three Bid

The higher the opponents preempt, the more difficult it is for you to judge the auction. I can offer a few guidelines, but they will be limited in scope. The best advice I can give you is to appreciate that an opponent's preempt is entitled to some good results. If you can accept this and can bring yourself to pass on those good hands which offer no safe bid, you will be ahead of the game. It seems to me that many bad results are the result of bidding with hands which are not suited to action. For example:

**NO ONE VUL**        ♠ 7 3  
**W   N   E   S**        ♥ Q 2  
 3♥   P   P   ?        ♦ K J 8 7 5  
                          ♣ A K Q 7

The person holding this hand couldn't stand passing and made a takeout double. Partner responded 3♠ and went down three. 4♦ would have been down two. 3♥ by them would have been down two. I won't bother giving you partner's hand. His 3♠ bid was correct.

The point of this discussion is that there is no safe or even relatively safe way to enter the auction with a hand such as this.

If you wait for proper hands to bid with you will avoid most gross results.

As you have already seen, not all good hands can act safely. Sometimes you will have the best hand at the table and no good bid to make. Live with that.

Incidentally, you won't be able to get away with much at matchpoints. When you're at the four level with inadequate values, even Mrs. Guggenheim can take a whack at you. The three or four level is no place to be on a prayer.

Here are your options after a three level preempt is passed around to you:

1. Double
2. Three of a suit
3. Four of a lower ranking suit
4. Four of a higher ranking suit
5. 3NT
6. Cue bid
7. Pass

### ***The balancing takeout double after a three level preempt***

A reminder. When bidding against a preempt, you are entitled to wish for partner to have a few points. Hoping for partner to have 8/9 or so points is valid and you can bid as if he has them.

When you are blessed with the perfect shape, 4-4-4-1 with the stiff in their suit, you can double on some rather light hands. You will be influenced by the vulnerability and by whether partner can respond at the three level or whether he must do so at the four level.

Other hands with softer patterns will require additional values to compensate for worsening distribution. Keep in mind that partner will try to respond in a major suit, so if you are weak in an unbid major, you will have to make allowances for that fact. Here are the examples. Note that some of these hands are completely obnoxious.

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q 10 8 7
W N E S	♥ 3
3♥ P P ?	♦ A 9 8 7
	♣ K J 4 2

A minimum double. You are well prepared for the unbid major, spades, which partner can bid at the three level. This hand, by the way, is worth about 13 support points for whatever suit partner bids. If he bids 3NT, it is worth just 10 points.

Note that when you make a takeout double, you have to consider that partner may pass the double for penalty. This can get you a very good score. This possibility is always in the back of your mind when you double. When you have a singleton in their suit, the chances are increased that your partner will pass. If you have a void, the chances are even better that he will pass.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>				♠ Q 9 8
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥ 3
3♥	P	P	?	♦ A J 10 7
				♣ K J 9 5 4

Marginal but acceptable to double at matchpoints. Probably not at IMPs. Note that you have only three spades. Partner will bid these in preference to another suit because:

1. They can bid at the three level, which is not true of clubs and diamonds.
2. Partner will tend to bid a four-card spade suit rather than a five-card minor suit because spades offers the most potential.

Note that because you do not have 4-4-4-1 distribution, you only get credit for 2 points for your singleton heart.

Here is a possible hand for your partner to think about when you double 3♥.

♠ K J 7 5
♥ Q J 4
♦ 3
♣ Q 8 6 3 2

If this is partner's hand, he will bid 3♠ and you will miss a much better club fit.

Here are two possible hands for you to think about when LHO opens 3♠.  
What do you think about each of them?

NO ONE VUL	♠ 8	♠ 8 3
W N E S	♥ A 9 4 2	♥ A K 2
3♠ P P ?	♦ A 8 7 2	♦ A 8 7 2
	♣ A 9 4 3	♣ A 9 4 3

The first hand has three aces and perfect distribution.

The second hand has an extra king but it also has one less heart and one more spade.

The first hand is actually safer to bid with than the second. Admittedly, if you double and partner bids 3NT, you will prefer the second hand. The point I am making is that shape counts for a lot. Having four cards in the unbid major is an important concept.

NO ONE VUL	♠ A K 4
W N E S	♥ Q 8 4 2
3♣ P P ?	♦ K J 5 3 2
	♣ 8

Do not bid 3♦. Always look for a chance to make a takeout double first. This hand is way better for double than 3♦.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 8 3
W N E S	♥ 10 7 2
3♠ P P ?	♦ A Q J 7
	♣ A Q J 5

Pass. You have minimum values to be bidding at this level. Note that 3♠ is much worse to bid against than 3♥. Spades are a beast when it comes to fighting them. Learn to pass trap hands like this one. You will not miss much and you will avoid some horrendous results. You would hate to hear partner bid 4♥ and the next player double it.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 8 3  
 W N E S     ♥ A Q J 7  
 3♠ P P ?     ♦ 10 7 2  
                  ♣ A Q J 5

This is the same hand as the previous one but with the suits rearranged. It is marginally OK to double with this. The reason is that you have four hearts, the suit that your partner will try to bid whenever he can.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ - - -  
 W N E S     ♥ J 6 5 4  
 3♠ P P ?     ♦ K 8 7 6  
                  ♣ A 9 5 4 2

A mess. Is partner sitting there with a pile of spade tricks, hoping you can double? Or is your RHO sitting there with a pile of points, hoping you will bid? There are dangers and temptations here. This hand does not qualify for a bid if you use the rule of 8/9 but there is a tempting reason to bid anyway.

The temptation is that a takeout double may make you rich if your side can kill 3♠ doubled. You do not want a heart lead, but partner doesn't always find a bad lead. Your partner often has an effective lead available.

It all adds up to being a guess. My guess? Double. If it doesn't work out, the next thing I will say is, "Sorry."

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 3  
 W N E S     ♥ K 8 7 6 5  
 3♠ P P ?     ♦ A Q J 8 3  
                  ♣ K 4

Double. Did I say that bidding against a preempt can be difficult? You intend to bid 4♦ if partner bids clubs. This auction is not to be construed as showing a huge hand but rather shows hearts and diamonds. You may not get to hearts every time they are right, but at least you don't get to hearts when they are wrong. If partner bids 3NT, you will have to make another decision,

and that should be to pass. You should feel that 3NT will make and not try to guess how many hearts partner has.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 3  
W N E S     ♥ K 8 7 5 4  
3♠ P P ?     ♦ K 8 6 3  
             ♣ A 10 2

I suggest passing. If you double, you have no assurance of getting to the right suit. When you double with a minimum hand, you want to know that you will get to as reasonable a contract as there is. If partner bids clubs, you have no assurance that you are safe.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 3  
W N E S     ♥ K 2  
3♠ P P ?     ♦ A 8 6 5 4  
             ♣ K J 9 7 5

Pass. There is no bid you can make to safely show this hand. Some partnerships play that 4♠ shows the minors. Some play that 4NT shows the minors. Even if armed with a convention, this hand is still too weak to look for the minors.

Note that 3NT is natural. However, if you were a passed hand you could bid 3NT expecting partner to treat it as an unusual notrump. This because you could not possibly want to play in 3NT.

## Reopening with Three of a Suit After a Three Level Preempt

Bidding a suit at the three level is a far more dangerous thing than bidding a suit at the one level after a one-bid is passed to you. At the three level you have new things to consider in addition to the normal things.

1. You are at the three level, where life is dangerous.
2. You can expect your trump suit to break more poorly than normal.
3. You are still entitled to hope your partner has some values. If your partner has a normal 8/9 point hand and your bid is a disaster, it is



probably because you bid too much.

4. Shape is an important factor. If you are thinking of bidding a suit, a balanced hand should be a strong warning sign for you to think twice.
5. This could be the most important thing on this list. If you bid a suit, you are offering one home. If partner doesn't like your suit your side may be stuck.
6. At least you will never have to contend with spades. You have room to bid three of a suit only when they open 3♣, 3♦, or 3♥.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 3 2  
W N E S     ♥ A K J 4 3  
3♣ P P ?     ♦ Q 8 4  
                 ♣ J 8 4

Pass. When you are bidding a suit, you are offering only one place to play, which is dangerous since you are putting all your eggs in one basket. This heart suit is good enough but you have a balanced hand, which is a big warning sign. What do you need from partner to make 3♥? You need, on average, a 12 count with heart support. Even if your partner has four hearts to the queen, you might take just five tricks. Compare this with the next hand.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K J 7 5 4  
W N E S     ♥ A 2  
3♣ P P ?     ♦ Q 10 7 5 2  
                 ♣ 3

Bid 3♠. It is still dangerous to bid a modest suit but you do have good shape, which is a positive. What do you need to make 3♠? You need spade support and as few as 6 well placed points. The big difference between this hand and the previous hand is that this one has shape. The previous hand had balanced garbage. If your partner has four spades to the queen and nothing else, you have a play for eight tricks. A big difference between this hand and the one before.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K J 10 5 4 2  
W N E S     ♥ A K

3♣ P P ?      ♦ A Q 3  
                      ♣ 6 3

This hand is too good to bid 3♠. If your partner has a boring 7 or 8 points he will pass. Best is to double. Partner will usually bid a red suit and now you can bid 3♠, showing a big hand. Partner won't be sure you have six spades but he will know if his hand is useful to you.

You intend to bid spades no matter what partner bids but if he bids 3♥ and then bids 4♥ over your 3♠ bid, you should accept this.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 10 9 4 3 2  
     W N E S      ♥ 8  
   3♦ P P ?      ♦ A 9 4  
                      ♣ K 10 2

Bid 3♠. As the suit you are bidding gets longer, the braver you can be. This hand has six spades with good spot cards. It has shape. It has three diamonds to the ace. You hope your partner is short in diamonds, which means if he has some spades, you can use them to ruff diamonds. Further, if their side has the ace of clubs, East is the one who should have it, meaning the king of clubs is a good card for you.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A K 9 7 5  
     W N E S      ♥ 8 7 4  
   3♦ P P ?      ♦ 3  
                      ♣ 10 7 3 2

Pass. Your singleton diamond is oddly a warning to you. Your partner probably has a few of them and that detracts from your chances of finding a fit. Always, when you are being tempted to bid, ask yourself if you will be happy if partner raises you with 12 points. Here, most 14 point dummies won't be enough unless they include good spade support. The fact is that this hand is just too weak to bid with. Nothing about it suggests you get into the bidding.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A

W N E S     ♥ Q J 10 7 4 3 2  
 3♦ P P ?     ♦ 9  
                  ♣ A J 10 4

Bid 4♥. Do not bid just 3♥. You have seen some modest hands that reopened with a three level bid. This is a good hand. If partner has, for instance, the king of hearts and the queen of clubs, you have a game. Show your full values by bidding game.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ Q J 7 6 5  
 W     N     E     S     ♥ K 5 4  
 3♥     P     P     ?     ♦ A 8 7  
                  ♣ Q 2

Pass. Not even close. You have a modest suit, you have no shape, you have a king of hearts that could be worthless, and you have a balanced hand. Too many strikes.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K Q 8 5 3 2  
 W     N     E     S     ♥ 6 3  
 3♥ P P ?     ♦ K Q 5 3  
                  ♣ 5

3♠. Opposite a moderate 7 count including a couple of spades, this should be safe. If partner has an additional king or more, he will consider bidding on if his hand warrants it. This hand has fewer high cards than the hand above but it has an extra trump, excellent shape, and high cards that rate to be useful. This hand is way better than the previous hand.

N-S VUL     ♠ K 8 5 4 3  
 W N E S     ♥ Q 5  
 3♥ P P ?     ♦ K Q J  
                  ♣ Q J 4

This hand has 14 points, but that is an illusion. This hand has junk points. It has the wasted queen of hearts, which is a bad holding. The minor suit values are all slow, and are subject to the opponents getting ruffs. Finally, your spade suit is weak.

I suggest passing without a second thought. Learning bad signs is important. These two hands are good to compare to see what makes one hand good and another bad.

N-S VUL      ♠ K J 8 7 3  
W N E S      ♥ 8 4  
3♥ P P ?      ♦ A Q 6  
                 ♣ A 7 3

Bid 3♠. A typical difficult decision. You have 14 points, just like on the previous hand, but these points have some meaning. Also, your spades are much improved from the last hand. The vulnerability is dangerous and your heart holding is poor, which is not good. But on the plus side, you have prime side cards and your spade spots are adequate. Do not underrate the 87 of spades. Bid 3♠, but don't be too proud of it.

Keep in mind that if the 3♥ bidder has 7 points, there are 19 points between your dummy and East. Your partner is a favorite to have some of these and if he has a few spades, you should be safe in bidding.

Do not double. If you double and partner passes, you have hit the jackpot. But if you double and partner bids four of a minor, you won't know what to do. Avoid a double when you have a good five-card major to bid if you can bid it at the three level.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ A K Q J 8  
W    N    E    S      ♥ 7 6  
3♥    P    P    ?      ♦ 8 5 4  
                 ♣ J 7 3

Pass. Even though you have five relatively sure tricks, you have no potential to develop more. Note the previous hand. On a bad day, it might take only four tricks. But given the auction, it rated to develop, with luck, into quite a few. This hand offers no such future. Whatever cards partner

produces will be of questionable value because RHO will rate to have the missing strength.

Look at this hand and the previous hand side by side. I have provided you with a modest dummy that includes four cards in spades. How well will you do in 3♠ with each of the previous two hands facing this dummy?

	YOUR DUMMY
♠ K J 8 7 3	♠ 10 9 4 2
♥ 8 4	♥ Q 5
♦ A Q 6	♦ K J 3 2
♣ A 7 3	♣ K 6 4

	YOUR DUMMY
♠ A K Q J 8	♠ 10 9 4 2
♥ 7 6	♥ Q 5
♦ 8 5 4	♦ K J 3 2
♣ J 7 3	♣ K 6 4

On the first hand you have to lose the first two heart tricks. After that, you can make game if you can hold the spade losers to one trick.

On the second hand, it is possible that dummy's high cards will all be eaten up if the cards are at all unfavorable. West might be held to five tricks.

Why? Because East's minor suit honors are worth something facing the first hand and almost worthless facing the second hand.

NO ONE VUL	♠ 10 8 7 5 4 3 2
W N E S	♥ 9
3♥ P P ?	♦ A Q
	♣ K J 9

Bid 3♠. Seven spades is an uncommon number. Almost any hand partner has barring total garbage should be enough to make you safe. A key here is that if you bid 3♠, you will love it if your partner raises.

## Reopening by Bidding Four of a Lower Ranking Suit

This is a rare action. Bidding a suit at the four level requires good values and frequently, when you hold sufficient strength, you may decide to try for 3NT instead. Except for the case where opener bid 3♠ and you are considering 4♥, your four level actions will be in a minor. This is sort of a never-never land. If you bid four of a minor and make it, you get 130. When you go down, it will have been in pursuit of a fairly nebulous reward. Only when partner can raise your minor to game and only when you can make it will you have achieved a significant return. Once in awhile you will get to slam, but that will be an uncommon result of your balancing.

Let me emphasize this point. When you are thinking of bidding four of a minor, always stop and consider if 3NT might not be better. Some of the time 3NT will obviously be silly but as long as you form the automatic habit of considering 3NT, you will be more likely to bid it.

### ***Special optional bidding trick***

In the discussion on bidding against a weak two bid, I mentioned the possibility of playing a jump to four of a minor over a weak two of a major shows that minor and the other major. You can do the same thing after an opening bid of three of a major. If you bid 4♣ or 4♦, you promise that suit plus the unbid major.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 3  
W N E S      ♥ K J 9 3 2  
3♠ P P ?      ♦ A K Q 8 3  
                 ♣ K 3

Bid 4♦, but only if you have the agreement that four of a minor over 3♥ and 3♠ shows that minor and the other major. This treatment is still not used by many players. Do not assume your partner is one of them. Discuss this trick before trying it.

In the examples following I will stick to more normal agreements. In all of these hands your LHO opens with three of a major.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 3  
W N E S      ♥ 9 3 2

3♠ P P ?      ♦ A Q 10 6 5 4  
                      ♣ K Q 7

Pass. If they had opened 2♠, you would be happy to reopen with 3♦. That might get your partner to bid 3NT. Here, they opened 3♠. If you bid 4♦, you can't get to 3NT. Only if partner can raise to game and only if you can make it will you get a nice reward. In other words, bidding 4♦ has little upside.

N-S VUL      ♠ 3  
 W N E S      ♥ - - -  
 3♠ P P ?      ♦ A Q J 8 6 3  
                      ♣ K Q 10 9 6 4

I have already mentioned a possible agreement of using four of their major to show the minors. If you do not like that treatment, then use 4NT to show the minors.

Alternatively, you might use four of their major to show a powerful minor suited hand and 4NT as a normal minor suited hand.

On the hand above, you would bid 4♠ if that was your agreement to show the minors.

On the hand above, you would bid 4NT if that was your agreement to show the minors.

If you play that both 4♠ and 4NT are used to show the minors, you would treat this hand as a strong hand and would bid 4♠, which says you have an excellent unusual notrump.

The important thing is that you know what your bids mean.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A 3  
 W N E S      ♥ Q J 8 6 5 4  
 3♠ P P ?      ♦ K J 10 2  
                      ♣ 7

4♥, with apprehensions. If partner has a few values you may make it, and partner won't raise to the five level as he might if your suit was a minor. When you can bid 4♥ over 3♠, you are allowed a few liberties since your bid

rates to end the auction. Better, if you make it you are rewarded with a game bonus. You are hoping partner has 8/9 points or so with a few hearts. Bidding 4♥ is a little bit of a stretch but it is in a good cause.

## RULE

**If you make a balancing bid that may result in a partscore, you need to follow the 8/9 point rule.**

**If you make a balancing bid that commits your side to game, you may bid a little bit aggressively because your partner won't be bidding. He might raise a 3♥ bid to 4♥ but he will almost always pass a 4♥ bid unless he is thinking of a slam.**

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 8 6  
W N E S     ♥ 2  
P P     ♦ A K J 10 7 6 2  
3♠ P P ?     ♣ Q 5 4

Only if you are a passed hand may you bid with this hand. Most people would have opened this with one thing or another, but if is not your style, then you could pass and then reopen. Partner should be able to draw the proper inferences from your chosen style to tell what sort of hand you might hold for this sequence. Remember that if you have agreed to play that 4♦ shows diamonds and hearts (the unbid major), this bid is not available to you.

## Reopening With a Jump to Four of a Higher Ranking Suit

Whenever you have sufficient strength that game will be on opposite partner's random 8/9 count, you should not make a bid that will permit your side to stop short of game.

One solution will be a direct jump to game when you are worried that partner will pass you in a simple balancing bid.

Another solution may be to double and then bid your suit. This way you get to find out if partner is broke or if he has 8/9 points, assuming that this trick is available to you.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ A Q J 10 7 6



W	N	E	S	♥	A 5 3
3♥	P	P	?	♦	5
				♣	A J 7

Bid 4♠. If partner has nothing, this will go down, but you can't bid just 3♠ because partner will pass with a few working cards and you will miss a game. Doubling isn't so good here because you aren't really interested in anything but spades.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	K Q 3
W	N	E	S	♥	A K J 9 7 3 2
3♣	P	P	?	♦	A
				♣	9 4

Bid 4♥. You have a huge hand. You need very little for game. If you bid 3♥, your partner will pass if he has the jack of spades and three hearts. You will miss a game. Best to bid 4♥ and not force partner to guess what to do.

N-S VUL				♠	9
W	N	E	S	♥	Q J 10 9 6 4
3♣	P	P	?	♦	A K J 2
				♣	A 8

Bid 4♥. Double followed by 4♥ would imply some spades. If you bid 3♥ your partner will pass on many hands that would make a game. Bid game and if you have missed a slam, unlucky. Be willing to be fixed. Perhaps everyone else went crazy with your hand and found partner with nothing. Fixes work both ways.

## Reopening With 3NT

Frequently, when you have a good hand with a stopper in their suit and no other convenient bid, you can choose 3NT as a least-of-evils bid. Partner will expect you to have something resembling an opening strong notrump. But he should not count on it. You will see the range of hands that bid 3NT is extreme. You may have a balanced 15 point hand. You may have a 24 point

hand. You may have some kind of freaky hand that is best handled with 3NT. Partner should treat your reopening 3NT bids carefully.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 7  
W N E S      ♥ A Q 2  
3♥ P P ?      ♦ A K J 8 7  
                 ♣ A Q 2

3NT. The practical bid. Stay fixed. Double may get partner to bid too many spades and it will be played from the wrong side. And if he bids 4♣ or 4♦ you will not be able to get back to 3NT. If partner bids 4♠ over 3NT he will be doing so on his own. You have not promised spade support so your hand will be quite suitable.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q 8 7  
W N E S      ♥ K J 3  
3♥ P P ?      ♦ K J 8 7  
                 ♣ A Q 3

A nervous but acceptable 3NT bid. I would risk this at matchpoints and IMPs and would not be surprised to be down a lot in some cases. But in between, I expect to make quite a few 3NT contracts. In the play I will know where the missing high cards are and if it's at all possible to make 3NT, I would hope to find the needed line. Overall, bidding 3NT should be a net winner.

N-S VUL      ♠ A 2  
W N E S      ♥ 9 7  
3♠ P P ?      ♦ A Q J 8 7  
                 ♣ A Q 5 4

Bid 3NT. You have aces and a good suit which may run. It is this or pass.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ A K Q 10 7 6  
W N E S      ♥ Q J 2

3♥ P P ?      ♦ A 3  
                      ♣ Q 7

It looks obvious to bid some number of spades, but how many? Three is a big underbid and four may have too many losers. Too often, at a spade contract heart ruffs on the go are a killer. I would try a slightly off-beat 3NT. At least, I would consider it.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ 3  
**W N E S**      ♥ 2  
                      P P      ♦ Q J 10 8 7 6  
 3♥ P P ?      ♣ A Q 10 9 7

If you are not a passed hand, you have to either bid 4♦, pass, or whatever it is that you use for unusual on this sequence. Here, you are a passed hand and can't have a big notrump hand. You can bid 3NT to show the minors. Your hope is that your partner remembers you have already passed.

**N-S VUL**      ♠ A J  
**W N E S**      ♥ J 8 2  
 3♥ P P ?      ♦ A K 5  
                      ♣ A J 8 7 4

Bid 3NT. You have a chance to be a hero. If you are lucky. You know you want to bid but double is out for many reasons. The one bid that rates to give you a reward if you get away with it is 3NT. If you consider how lousy preempts are today, you have a good chance of finding partner with something in hearts. Or, the heart suit may be blocked. It is a sane gamble.

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ 4 2  
**W N E S**      ♥ Q 3  
 3♦ P P ?      ♦ A 8  
                      ♣ A K Q J 7 6 5

An unexpected problem. Where are the high cards? Where are the majors? Very likely, RHO has some of the above in a quantity insufficient for action. You can try 3NT, but it's not as if you have a lock. You will note on some of the other 3NT hands that you were worried about one suit, but never about two suits. LHO will have a very good chance of hitting his partner if he chooses to lead a major. They may be able to run either or both majors. Hopefully, your partner has some of the missing major suit high cards.

Another danger is partner! He might try to play in a major suit. If he is thinking about it, he should realize the kinds of hands you may have to bid 3NT.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	♠ K 3
<b>W N E S</b>	♥ 4 2
<b>3♠ P P ?</b>	♦ A K J 7 5 4
	♣ A 6 3

3NT. Typical of the hand which might reopen with four of a minor but which should decide to try for 3NT instead. Your hand has a lot of notrump potential. Note that if you get to 5♦, they may lead a spade and ruff off your king. That would be a disaster.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	♠ A 10 7
<b>W N E S</b>	♥ J 3 2
<b>3♠ P P ?</b>	♦ A K Q 8 5
	♣ K 5

Same as above. Try 3NT. If you have a game, 3NT is clearly it.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	♠ 4 2
<b>W N E S</b>	♥ K J
<b>3♠ P P ?</b>	♦ K Q 9 8 7 6
	♣ A Q 6

Pass. Or try a scary 3NT bid. It could work. I have seen players make bids like 3NT and when the hand is over, everyone is impressed one way or

the other. The idea is that if East has some spades, he might have raised. Your partner might have a spade stopper and the ace of diamonds. If 3NT does not appeal, you have to judge whether it is worthwhile bidding 4♦. The main hope is that your partner can bid a game and make it. The reward for bidding 4♦ is not worth the risk. I admire a pass here.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ A K  
**W   N   E   S**      ♥ K Q 10  
**3♠   P   P   ?**      ♦ K 8 7 5 3 2  
                          ♣ A 3

Bid 3NT. This hand shows the problems with bidding over a preempt. You have seen a range of possible 3NT bids in the balancing position. The range of points and the shape of these hands have been all over the place. Recognize that when they put your back to the wall, you have to make the most practical bid possible. Here, any bid but 3NT comes with uncertainty.

**N-S VUL**      ♠ Q J 8  
**W N E S**      ♥ A Q  
**3♦ P P ?**      ♦ A K J 4  
                          ♣ K J 5 4

Bid 3NT. You won't get much of a score for setting 3♦ at 50 points per trick. You should have good chances at 3NT. Try it.

## Other Reopening Problems When You Have Good Hands

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ K Q 7  
**W   N   E   S**      ♥ A K Q 8 6  
**3♦   P   P   ?**      ♦ 3 2  
                          ♣ A K 8

Double and bid 4♥ over 3♠ or 4♣. Partner should expect you to have decent spades else you wouldn't have bothered doubling first. Note that if your partner has some diamonds, he can pass. If he does, you will do well.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A K J 7 6  
W N E S        ♥ Q 10 4  
3♣ P P ?        ♦ A J 8 7  
                  ♣ 3

Double, followed by 3♠ if partner bids hearts or diamonds. You will pass 3NT.

BOTH SIDES VUL     ♠ K 7 6 5 4  
W N E S        ♥ A Q 2  
3♦ P P ?        ♦ 3  
                  ♣ A K J 7

A tough hand. It is too good for 3♠ and the suit is a bit shabby to double and then bid. Nothing is perfect. The main thing is that you have a huge hand and can not bid just 3♠. I would start with double and then try to guess what to bid over my partner's 3♥. If he bids spades or clubs, I raise to game. If he bids 3♥, you have to make a decision. Raise to 4♥ or bid 3♠. Your choice.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A Q J 8 6 4  
W N E S        ♥ A K Q 7  
3♦ P P ?        ♦ 3  
                  ♣ Q 10

Double and then bid 4♥ over 3♥, and 4♠ over anything else. As you can see, partner shouldn't count on you to have a good club holding.

N-S VUL        ♠ 3  
W N E S        ♥ A Q J 10 7  
3♦ P P ?        ♦ A 6 4  
                  ♣ A K J 3

Another typical nightmare stemming from an opponent's preempt. The one bid I reject for sure is 3NT.

3♥ feels too weak. I would hate to bid 3♥ and see my partner huddle and then pass.

Another choice is to double. This risks partner bidding too many spades.

My guess, not likely to be unanimous, is to bid 4♥. My shape is a little skewed but my partner will understand my values and perhaps can bid something.

### Passing After a Three Level Preempt

I said earlier that some good hands just do not offer a realistic reopening action. If you can accept this and go quietly, you will be far better off than the person who can't resist bidding. Be willing to be fixed!

Here are a few hands in this family.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ 10 5 3  
W N E S        ♥ K Q 8  
3♦ P P ?        ♦ Q 8 4  
                  ♣ A Q J 5

Double is out. The combination of a minimum hand plus balanced shape says you can't double. 3NT is too much on a thin hand that offers few fast tricks. You have no suit to bid. The only choice is pass.

N-S VUL        ♠ Q 2  
W N E S        ♥ A Q 8 7 6  
3♥ P P ?        ♦ 4 2  
                  ♣ A K 8 7

Pass. This is a real hand. Everyone was serious. The opening bid really was 3♥!

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K 10  
W N E S        ♥ 8 6 3  
3♥ P P ?        ♦ K Q 9 8  
                  ♣ A K 10 6

Typical of a good hand with nothing to bid. Weak in an unbid major suit, and no stopper in their suit.

E-W VUL      ♠ Q 7  
W N E S      ♥ K Q J  
3♦ P P ?      ♦ Q 5 4  
                 ♣ K Q J 9 7

Pass. A point count trap. Not all points are working. The ones you have here are awful. No aces is a bad sign.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 8 7  
W N E S      ♥ 8 6 4  
3♦ P P ?      ♦ 10 3  
                 ♣ A K Q J 8 7

Pass. Don't compete in a minor with poor hands. You need partner to have a good 14 support points to make 4♣. If partner has them, he will raise to 5♣. If he has 6 to 10 ordinary points, you will go down in 4♣, possibly doubled. This decision is not close. The worst result would be to go down some amount and then discover that they were going down in 3♦.

N-S VUL      ♠ J 4 2  
W N E S      ♥ J 6 3  
3♠ P P ?      ♦ K Q 2  
                 ♣ A K Q J

A good pass. Bad shape and a poor holding in the unbid major.

## Other Odd Reopening Bids After a Three Level Preempt

This is a recap of ideas that have appeared in this book.

*When they open with three of a major and you have an unusual notrump hand*



According to your agreements you can have more than one way to show an unusual notrump hand. Here are two auctions showing different bidding tools. Note that I do not give any vulnerability. Judgment is going to be important. Use it.

W	N	E	S	W	N	E	S
3♠	P	P	4NT	3♠	P	P	4♠

You can do one of three things.

1. Play that 4NT is unusual for the minors.
2. Play that 4♠ (cue-bidding their major) is unusual for the minors. This saves you some bidding room.
3. Play both of the above. Here is how you can do that.

Play 4♠ (the cue bid) shows an excellent unusual notrump hand. You are willing to have partner bid a slam. This shows around 17 working points.

Play 4NT as a normal competitive bid showing the minors. You still need a good hand for 4NT. It is just that 4♠ (the cue bid) shows a bigger hand.

### ***When they open with three of a major and you bid four of a minor***

This can also be played two ways.

W	N	E	S
3♠	P	P	4♣

1. Play that this shows a good hand with clubs.
2. Play that this shows a good hand with at least 5-5 in clubs and the unbid major.

### ***When they open with three of a minor***

W	N	E	S
3♦	P	P	?

4♦, cue-bidding their minor, shows the majors. A good hand with 5-5 is required.

## Reopening When They Open with a Weak Four-Bid

Your LHO opens with a four-bid and that is passed to you. This is a rare case and I am not going to address all the various situations.

As always, the vulnerability plays a big role. Never lose sight of it.

Other than the vulnerability, the only issue I am going to discuss is this.

What does double mean when you double an opening four-bid?

W	N	E	S
4♣	P	P	?
4♦	P	P	?
4♥	P	P	?
4♠	P	P	?

My suggestion is that you play a double here as takeout. It does not matter which suit they bid; a double by you is takeout. You are balancing but you still need a fair hand. Here are some thoughts on what you need to double.

After a 4♣ bid, your double shows three suits that can be bid at the four level.

After a 4♦ bid, your double shows two suits that can be bid at the four level.

After a 4♥ bid, your double shows only one suit that can be bid at the four level.

After a 4♠ bid, a takeout double by you forces your partnership to the five level. Hate those spades.

A double of 4♣ starts with good shape and 12 good HCP.

A double of 4♦ requires a little more. Good shape with about 13 HCP.

A double of 4♥ requires a little more. Shape and about 14 good points are needed.

A double of 4♠ requires a little more. Shape plus 14 and a half points are needed to double 4♠. Judgment will have to be used. Violate these guidelines and the penalties will be large ones since you are up at the five level.

It is one thing to double 2♥ and have your partner bid 3♦. It is another thing to double 4♥ and then hear your partner bid 5♦.

Here are a few hands.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K Q 9 3  
W N E S       ♥ A 8 7 4  
4♣ P P ?       ♦ K 10 8 4  
                 ♣ 6

This is a normal double. You can double 4♣ with this shape and only 12 useful points. The reason you might double is that you have perfect shape. When you are thinking of doubling with minimum points, it is imperative that you have proper distribution. This is not a rule you can ignore.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A J 9  
W N E S       ♥ K J 9 3  
4♦ P P ?       ♦ 8 3  
                 ♣ K Q 10 3

Double, with concern. You have a slightly better hand than the previous one but you have a doubleton diamond, and perforce slightly less shape. As their preempt goes up from 4♣ to 4♦ to 4♥ to 4♠, you must be aware that you are being put under extra pressure.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K Q 8  
W N E S       ♥ 9 4  
4♥ P P ?       ♦ A J 5 3  
                 ♣ A J 8 7

An acceptable double. However, the only unbid major is spades and you have just three cards. This is the kind of decision that can work badly. Yes, this is a double. No, it is not guaranteed.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A 7  
W N E S       ♥ A 5

4♠ P P ?      ♦ K Q 4 3  
                      ♣ A 10 7 4 2

Pass. A double of 4♠ is takeout, not penalty, and you must bid with that in mind. A thoughtful bid exists here. You might risk bidding 4NT. Lovely if it works. Not so lovely if it doesn't.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 7 3  
 W N E S      ♥ A K 5 3  
 4♠ P P ?      ♦ A 10 3  
                      ♣ K J 10 7

Double. This is the kind of hand that makes you want to give up bridge. You have enough to open 1NT. You have some shape. You have some defense. The problem is that for you to make something, you need partner to have a fair hand. I would double but not be thrilled at all. Note this one very important fact. Many players play a double of 4♠ is always for penalty. That is bad bridge.

By playing double is for takeout, your partner has the option to pass if he hates his hand, and if he feels that he has a nice playing hand, he will bid. This hand would be so much better if it had one less spade and one more diamond.

One last painful observation. Two cards in opener's suit is a real drag on your bidding judgment.

The other assortment of bids over a four level preempt includes hands where you either overcall or do not overcall. These decisions are based on judgment. I will not show examples here. Just be aware that if you bid at the four level, you must take ten tricks. I promise you that if you get out of line, you will pay the piper more than you like.



## When Partner Reopens After a Preempt

WHEN THE OPPONENTS have started with a preempt, reopening sequences are going to be more cramped for space than after an opening one-bid. The higher the preempt, the more difficult it is to overcome. No more nice, scientific auctions with takeout doubles followed by cue bids and quantitative raises. No more dialogue. Instead, one, maybe two bids, and that's it. Here are two example sequences.

W	N	E	S	
1♦	P	P	Dbl	This auction gives your side room to make:
P	2♦	P	2♥	• A takeout double
P	3♥	P	P	• Then a cue bid
P				• Then an invitational raise
				• An evaluation at the end

W	N	E	S	
4♦	P	P	Dbl	You have room to make:
P	4♥	P	P	• A takeout double
P				• Then an informed guess

Because preemptive bidding takes up so much room, a rule has been developed to help differentiate reopening auctions after preempts from reopening auctions after one-bids.

This rule has been alluded to before. It is this. When you reopen after a preempt you are crediting partner with 8/9 or so semi-working points. Plus, when you reopen in a suit, you are counting on finding partner with a holding slightly better than a medium doubleton.

When your partner balances he assumes you have 8/9 or so points rather than 4 or 2 or none. If he waited for a good enough hand to make something opposite nothing, he would almost never reopen. Thus, it becomes practical for him to assume that you have these 9 points and to bid accordingly.

With this in mind, let's see how you should respond to partner's reopening bids.

## **Partner Reopens After a Weak Two Bid With a Takeout Double**

The most important thing here is to give partner some room. Be aware that he is balancing and will not always have the values you would expect if he was not balancing.

### ***The Lebensohl convention***

When I wrote the early version of *Balancing*, there were fewer conventions in use. One that I wish had been around is the Lebensohl convention, used after your side doubles a weak two bid for takeout. This convention is not to be confused with the Lebensohl convention that is used when your partner bids 1NT and they overcall.

Here's how Lebensohl works. When partner doubles a weak two bid, responder bids 2NT (Lebensohl), which forces partner to bid 3♣. If responder has a bad hand he passes 3♣ if he has clubs, and bids a suit that is lower ranking than the one that partner doubled.

Here are examples.

These are sign-off auctions:

NO ONE VUL	♠	J 4 3 2
W    N    E    S	♥	6 3
	2♥   P	♦   K 5 4 2
P    Dbl   P	2♠   ♣	9 7 6

You show a weak hand with spades. If you bid a suit at the two level, there are no Lebensohl implications. You can have from zero points to a pathetic 9 HCP.

NO ONE VUL				♠	4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	9 6 3
		2♥	P	♦	K 8 4
P	Dbl	P	2NT	♣	Q J 8 4 3
P	3♣	P	P		
P					

You show a weak hand with clubs. Since you might have no points at all, this is a decent hand for this auction. You could have less than this.

NO ONE VUL				♠	9 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	6 3
		2♥	P	♦	J 8 7 5 3 2
P	Dbl	P	2NT	♣	Q 8
P	3♣	P	3♦		

You show a weak hand with diamonds. Here you have a terrible hand but you do have six diamonds. All in all, you are not worried yet. Your partner knows you do not have much and will bid accordingly.

NO ONE VUL				♠	9 5 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	J 10 6 4
		2♠	P	♦	3 2
P	Dbl	P	2NT	♣	9 5 4
P	3♣	P	3♥		

This sequence allows you to show a bad hand with hearts. Only when they bid spades can you use this trick to show a bad heart hand. This one is really bad. You should recognize and remember that this hand is possible.

## Responding to a Takeout Double When You Have a Fair Hand

### *A big benefit of Lebensohl*

You saw in the previous examples how you bid with weak hands. How do you bid when you have a decent but not good hand? Given you can use Lebensohl with weak hands, you can now show fair hands of around 8 to 11 HCP by making a natural bid at the three level. Here are some example hands.

The following discussion will include what you would bid with and without Lebensohl.

NO ONE VUL		♠	Q 7 2
W	N	E	S
		♥	K Q 8 7
	2♠	P	♦
P	Dbl	P	?
		♣	J 9 4

Without Lebensohl: You would bid 3♥ and your partner would have to guess if you were broke or if you had some points.

With Lebensohl: You also bid 3♥, but your partner knows you have something. If you had a bad hand with hearts, you would bid 2NT to warn partner you could be broke and would then bid hearts on the next round.

BOTH SIDES VUL		♠	K Q 6 4 2
W	N	E	S
		♥	K 3
	2♦	P	♦
P	Dbl	P	?
		♣	K 9 8

3♠ is enough. This is a maximum. If you had more, you would usually bid over their preempt.

Note that Lebensohl does not apply here since you are bidding a suit higher ranking than their suit.

N-S VUL		♠	Q 3
W	N	E	S
		♥	K 8 3



		2♥	P	♦	8 6 5
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	J 7 6 4 2

Without Lebensohl, you would bid 3♣. Partner won't know if you have zero points or a modest hand.

With Lebensohl, you would bid 2NT and when your partner bids 3♣, you would pass.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	J 7 3
		2♠	P	♦	Q 9 5 2
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	10 7 3

Without Lebensohl, you would bid 3♦ and you would worry that your partner might bid again.

With Lebensohl, you would bid 2NT and then bid 3♦ after his 3♣ bid. The big benefit here is that your partner knows you have a bad hand for sure. It is true that you might have 6 or 7 points so you are not out of the woods yet. At least you are trying to avoid getting too high.

### *When partner doubles and you have a notrump hand*

Here is a nice bidding trick you can use with Lebensohl. Bid 3NT directly with a 14 or more point hand. Bid 2NT and then 3NT with lesser hands. This way your partner will know when he should keep bidding and when he ought to pass.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	K J 3
W	N	E	S	♥	K 7 6
		2♠	P	♦	5 4 3 2
P	Dbl	P	2NT	♣	K J 3
P	3♣	P	3NT		

This shows a minimum 3NT bid. You should have 11 to a modest 13 points. This is not a wonderful sequence but with Lebensohl, you are stuck

with it. It is either this or bidding 3♦ over partner's double, which would tell him you have a 10 point hand with diamonds.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>				♠	Q J 7
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	Q 8
		2♠	P	♦	A Q 9 8 4
P	Dbl	P	3NT	♣	A 8 4

This shows a maximum 3NT bid. Your hand did not bid over 2♠ so the range for 3NT is a good 13 to 15 or so.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>				♠	Q 3
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	A Q 7
		2♥	P	♦	K 8 6 5 2
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	K J 8

With or without Lebensohl, it is sane to bid 3NT. You show real values. You will not have more than this since you would bid earlier. Forget about finding a minor suit slam. It could be there but it isn't biddable.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>				♠	Q 3
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	♥	10 8 5
		2♠	P	♦	A Q 8 6 4 3
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	K 3

Without Lebensohl, this hand is almost impossible to bid. Your queen of spades could be worthless but even so, this is a nice hand. I really do not know what to say. 3♦ is conservative, although it could work facing a minimum takeout double. You could jump to 4♦. You could bid 3♠ but if partner doesn't bid 3NT, you are not happy.

With Lebensohl, you can bid 3♦, which comes close to showing your hand. 3♦ shows a positive bid in the 8 to 11 point range. Your queen of spades is not a sure value so your hand is approximately right for a 3♦ bid.

### ***The immediate cue bid***

Lebensohl gives you two ways to cue-bid in response to partner's takeout double of 2♥ or 2♠, the immediate cue bid and the delayed cue bid.

The immediate cue bid asks for a stopper for 3NT. Probably you have a good minor suit.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K 3
W	N	E	S	♥	9 6 2
		2♥	P	♦	J 9
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	A K J 4 3 2

Bid 3♥, asking partner to bid 3NT. It is likely that he has a stopper in hearts given that your LHO did not raise. A reasonable wish. If partner can not bid notrump there may be issues, but at least you made a good try.

### *The delayed cue bid*

You can also bid 2NT, Lebensohl, and then cue-bid after partner's 3♣ bid. This approach is asking for a major.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K J 5 3
W	N	E	S	♥	A Q 7 5
		2♦	P	♦	10 9
P	Dbl	P	2NT	♣	Q 9 2
P	3♣	P	3♦		

Here, responder bid 2NT, getting opener to bid 3♣. Now a cue bid of 3♦ shows a game forcing hand with at least one major.

If their side opened in a major, you show the unbid major. Use your judgment here. Finally, my usual observation. If you had more than this, you would have bid over 2♦.

Suggestion. If you make either cue bid, play it as forcing to game.

### *Should you use Lebensohl if your partner is a passed hand?*

You can choose to use Lebensohl or you can reject it when the balancing doubler is a passed hand.

W	N	E	S
P	P	2♠	P
P	Dbl	P	?

If you do not use Lebensohl when your partner is a passed hand, you won't have many problems with your notrump hands. You can bid 2NT with a 10 count and a stopper in their suit and you can play it there if partner passes.

But you will have problems when you have invitational hands because you don't have the Lebensohl bids available to tell partner you have a happy 3♦ bid or a sad 3♦ bid.

You need to ask your partner if Lebensohl is on when partner makes a passed hand takeout double.

Here are additional examples of hands where Lebensohl is not in effect. When Lebensohl is not in use, you have a different set of problems.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 8 7 6 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	A J 3
	P	2♥	P	♦	4 2
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	K 5

4♠. An extra spade. Working values. A good playing hand with a long suit. Your hand is limited by the fact you passed over 2♥. This is as good as it gets. With anything more than this, you would have bid spades earlier.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	3
W	N	E	S	♥	K 7
	P	2♠	P	♦	K 10 8 7
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	K J 10 7 4 3

4♣. A good hand that's not interested in 3NT. A nice suit with excellent distribution. You have no way to show a good hand with clubs other than by making a jump response. 4♣ is not forcing but it is a serious statement.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ 3 2  
**W    N    E    S**    ♥ 8 4 2  
          P   2♥   P   ♦ K 10 8 7 3  
 P   Db1   P   ?   ♣ Q 7 3

Bid 3♦. If Lebensohl is not in effect you just bid your best suit, leaving partner to wonder if you are broke or actually have some points. Given partner is a passed hand, you are relatively happy since you have a pretty good suit. They will probably bid 3♥ and that will be passed out.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ 7 5 2  
**W    N    E    S**    ♥ K Q  
          P   2♥   P   ♦ K 6 4 3  
 P   Db1   P   ?   ♣ Q 7 5 4

Just not your day. You have 10 points but they are lousy. Your heart holding is bad, and you do not have four spades. Your choices are to guess to bid 3♣ or to bid 2NT. If you have an agreement that 2NT asks partner for a minor suit, that is best. If you play 2NT is natural, then choose 3♣ and hope you find a fit.

### If Using Lebensohl Partner Doubles a Weak Two and You Have Invitational Values with One Major

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ A 10 4 3  
**W    N    E    S**    ♥ 9 7  
                2♥   P   ♦ A 10 8 7  
 P   Db1   P   ?   ♣ Q J 7

This is a nice hand with a four-card major that is strong enough to do more than bid 2♠. What can you do?

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ A 10 9 3 2  
**W    N    E    S**    ♥ 9 7 3

2♥ P ♦ A 10  
 P Db1 P ? ♣ Q 10 7

This is a nice hand with a five-card major that is strong enough to do more than bid 2♠. What can you do?

A solution exists that allows you to distinguish between invitational hands with four trumps and invitational hands with five trumps. Note that this trick works only when your suit is higher than opener's suit. It takes advantage of the Lebensohl tools.

If you have invitational values with a four-card suit, bid 2NT. Your partner will bid 3♣ and now you will bid your suit. Since you would have bid 2♠ with a weak hand, this sequence must say that you have some values. The definition of this auction, where you bid 2NT first and then bid a major, is a hand with four cards in your suit with invitational values.

If you have invitational values with a five-card suit, jump to three of your suit. Your partner will learn that you have invitational values and you have a five-card suit. This information is very useful to your partner because he knows that he can raise you with only three trumps if his hand is good enough otherwise.

A problem. Lots of conventions can be useful but now and then a glitch creeps into the best laid plans.

While it is very useful to be able to tell partner you have an invitational hand with a four-card major or a five-card major, the section above has a flaw that can be fixed, but it feels backwards.

Here is the problem.

W	N	E	S
		2♥	P
P	Db1	P	2NT
P	3♣	P	3♠
P	?		

If you bid 2NT and then bid 3♠, showing an invitational hand with four spades, it is possible that your partner will wish to bid 3NT when he has a heart stopper. This can happen when he has just three cards in spades and

does not want to raise them. The trouble is that you have already bid notrump, which means the hand will be played from the wrong side of the table.

There is a cure. But it is a cure that is not intuitive. It is the kind of thing that is subject to being forgotten.

Play that jumping to 3♠ shows an invitational hand with four cards. If your partner wants to bid 3NT, he can do so and he will play the hand.

If you have an invitational hand with five spades, bid 2NT and then bid 3♠. On this sequence, your partner will almost never want to bid 3NT. He will usually either pass 3♠ or raise to 4♠.

## Partner Reopens With Two of a Suit

Your most common action will be to raise or to bid some number of notrump. Given you didn't bid over their preempt, you won't often have enough to do more than raise or bid notrump.

Less common bids are to bid a new suit, non-forcing, or to cue-bid. The cue bid is usually a good, balanced raise but it may include hands looking for notrump.

Whatever you choose, remember that partner "expects" you to have 8 or 9 points. If you have 8 or 9 or fewer points, you usually pass. The exception is that you might bid a new suit.

### *Some example hands where you might raise your partner*

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥	A 9 7 3
		2♦	P	♦	K 5 3
P	2♠	P	?	♣	8 6 4

Pass. Partner will like your hand, but not enough to be higher than 2♠. You might miss a miracle game, but it would be exceptional. Pass is in keeping with the theory that you should not trap partner. I would rate this hand at about one queen less than a raise. Note that the king of diamonds may not be working.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	K Q 3
----------------	--	--	--	---	-------

W	N	E	S	♥	K J 8 2
		2♦	P	♦	8 7
P	2♥	P	?	♣	Q 10 8 3

Just 3♥. If partner passes, don't be surprised if he goes down.

NO ONE VUL				♠	9 7 6 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	A Q
		2♦	P	♦	5 4 3 2
P	2♠	P	P	♣	A J

4♠. This ought to be playable. Note, though, that if your partner needs finesses in clubs or hearts, there is a good chance that they will lose.

### *Some example hands where you might bid a new suit*

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	10 7 3
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 5
		2♦	P	♦	J 8
P	2♥	P	?	♣	A J 7 6 4 3

Pass. Bidding a new suit doesn't show the earth, but it should show something. 2♥ rates to be a fair spot and you do not have assurances that 3♣ is too.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	10 7 3
W	N	E	S	♥	K 5
		2♦	P	♦	J 8
P	2♥	P	?	♣	A Q J 7 6 4

A reasonable 3♣ bid. You won't have more else you would have overcalled earlier. This is a nice example of passing and then bidding a suit at the three level. Following are the two hands:

♠ A 8 2

♠ 10 7 3



♥ A Q 10 8 6	♥ K 5
♦ 9 3	♦ J 8
♣ K 10 2	♣ A Q J 7 6 4

As reopening 2♥ bids go, this is a good one. Your partner will be happy with your 3♣ bid and will keep bidding. Here is one possible auction. There are others.

W	N	E	S
		2♦	P
P	2♥	P	3♣
P	3♦	P	3♥
P	3♠	P	4♣
P	4♥/5♣		

5♣ is more or less cold. 4♥ has a play but relative to 5♣, it is nervous. Partner makes the last choice here.

### *Example hands where you cue-bid their suit or bid notrump*

In practice, you will find that you have very few cue-bidding sequences when partner reopens at the two level. A cue bid almost always shows a fit, although notrump might be an issue.

NO ONE VUL		♠ Q 2		
W	N	E	S	♥ 5 3
		2♥	P	♦ A 6 4 3 2
P	2♠	P	?	♣ A K Q 10

Bid 3♥. Mostly you are looking for 3NT on a sequence like this. You have a big hand but couldn't bid earlier. This is not a 3♦ overcall and it is not a takeout double. It is a pass. Now that your partner has shown something, you can make a try for game. If partner rebids 3♠, you have a difficult choice of passing or bidding 4♠.

♠ J 2

### BOTH SIDES VUL

W	N	E	S	♥	Q 10 4
		2♥	P	♦	A 9 4 2
P	2♠	P	?	♣	A J 10 7

2NT. Your range is around 12 to 13 HCP. With more, you would bid 3NT. Note that you do not cue-bid when you have proper values to bid notrump.

### NO ONE VUL

				♠	K 4
W	N	E	S	♥	A Q 7 5 4
		2♥	P	♦	6
P	3♣	P	?	♣	Q J 7 4 3

Not easy. I suggest bidding 3♥, a cue bid. Your partner will probably bid 4♣ since there is little else he can do. You will bid 4♦, which is surely a cue bid for clubs. This bid, combined with your 3♥ bid, should tell your partner that you are interested in a slam in clubs. I agree that this sequence will test your partnership. Still, your partner is not a passed hand and slam is very possible.

### *Examples of awkward hands*

There will be times when you want to bid something but for some reason or another, there is nothing good to bid.

### NO ONE VUL

				♠	A Q 10 7
W	N	E	S	♥	3 2
		2♦	P	♦	J 5
P	2♥	P	?	♣	A Q 5 3 2

An impossible hand. I can think of no satisfactory sequence. All possibilities have serious traps. You are not strong enough to bid earlier, but this is still a tempting hand. I would guess to bid something, either 2♠ or 3♣, and I do not have any rationale to offer other than I hate to pass with such a good hand.

NO ONE VUL            ♠ 3  
W   N   E   S   ♥ J 8 7 2  
             2♦ P     ♦ 3 2  
P   2♠   P   ?   ♣ K Q J 9 7 3

You know 3♣ is better than 2♠, but there is a good chance that partner will bid again, expecting a bit more. Pass and run to 3♣ if 2♠ gets doubled.

NO ONE VUL            ♠ 8 2  
W   N   E   S   ♥ 5 3  
             2♥ P     ♦ A J 6 2  
P   2♠   P   ?   ♣ A J 9 5 4

No reason to disturb 2♠. This is a good hand, but it would be excessive to look for game. The only sensible bid would be 3♣, and there is no reason to think partner will bid over this. As good as this hand is, it is best not to get involved when you have no clear bid to make.

### Partner Reopens with Two of a Suit and They Bid Again, Usually by Competing In Their Suit

NO ONE VUL            ♠ Q J 7  
W   N   E   S   ♥ A J 10 4 2  
             2♦ P     ♦ 8 7 3  
P   2♠   P   P   ♣ 9 2  
3♦   P   P   ?

This wasn't worth a raise the first time, but is good enough to compete with now. Bid 3♠. Your three little diamonds look better than before because the auction suggests partner is short in diamonds and implies no wasted high cards there.

BOTH SIDES VUL       ♠ K J 8 3  
W   N   E   S   ♥ 9 7 3

		2♦	P	♦	Q 9 7
P	2♥	P	P	♣	K J 4
3♦	P	P	?		

Pass. A lot of junk here. No need to hang your partner.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A 2
W	N	E	S	♥	J 10 9 3
		2♦	P	♦	Q 10 8 7
P	2♠	P	P	♣	K 5 2
3♦	P	P	?		

Double. You have good diamonds plus some defense. Incidentally, lead the heart jack. Partner's 2♠ bid didn't promise that much in spades.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 2
W	N	E	S	♥	K Q 10 9 8 7
		2♦	P	♦	8
P	2♠	P	P	♣	Q J 3 2
3♦	P	P	?		

3♥. You need a good suit for this and consequently will not have much on the side, or you would have bid earlier.

This is about the only sequence where partner reopens with a suit and you pass and then back in later. All other sequences would force you to act at the four level. There are very few hands which can make so delicate a decision.

## Partner Reopens with Three of a Lower Ranking Suit

This will usually be in a minor. You will seldom raise and will either pass, bid 3NT, or make a cue bid. Cue-bidding will clearly be a try for 3NT, probably confirming a mild or better fit. Seldom will you bid a new suit. Because partner needs a better hand for three level bids than for two level bids, you will have a good idea of your side's potential. It is possible that

you might pass partner's bid and then compete later. If you do, you need a good quality hand, not a boring mess.

### *Passing when partner balances and competing later. One example*

NO ONE VUL				♠	A K 10
W	N	E	S	♥	7 5 4
		2♥	P	♦	J 10 5 4 2
P	3♦	P	P	♣	Q 7
3♥	P	P	?		

Bid 4♦. A rare (and nervous) example of a hand which passes partner's reopening three level bid and which bids later. Discretion is often best here. West is hoping to push you to the four level. Don't let him do this without good reason.

### *Hands where you might bid 3NT or explore for 3NT*

Getting to 3NT is one of your priorities when you have a good hand. Sometimes you can bid it. Sometimes you have to explore for it. A cue bid is often the tool for that.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 7
W	N	E	S	♥	K 8 2
		2♥	P	♦	A 6 5
P	3♦	P	?	♣	A J 9 7 5

3NT. About average. Unexceptional hand. Do not cue-bid 3♥. Importantly, you have some help in diamonds. Three level suit bids by partner imply more than two level bids, so you can expect a decent dummy.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	A Q 6 5
W	N	E	S	♥	8 7
		2♥	P	♦	K Q 5 4 2

P 3♣ P ? ♣ 9 7

Pass is reasonable. You have no club fit so partner will need some fitting cards to produce nine tricks. There are a few hands that will make 3NT, and a lot that won't. You would rather have the queen of clubs than one of the other queens.

N-S VUL                      ♠ A 10 6 5  
W    N    E    S    ♥ 8 7  
         2♥ P    ♦ K J 5 4  
P    3♣    P    ?    ♣ Q 9 7

Still a pass. You have club help for partner. But your hand is thin. If you want partner to balance with some 12 or 13 point hands, you have to give him room when you have a hand like this one.

You may be able to look for 3NT, usually by making a cue bid.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ A 10 7  
W    N    E    S    ♥ 9 6 3  
         2♥ P    ♦ A Q 7  
P    3♣    P    ?    ♣ Q 8 6 4

Bid 3♥. A classic cue bid. If partner can bid 3NT, you'll probably make it. Note that those aces are fast tricks. It's not as though you have kings and queens and must concede the lead numerous times before coming to nine tricks.

One problem with the cue bid is that it is not clear whether you have a whole stopper, a partial stopper, or no stopper. It seems to me that with a full stop, you should just bid 3NT, other things being equal, but you still can't differentiate between a half stopper and no stopper. There is just no room. I do play that the cue bid asks for a full stopper, and this is not always successful.

NO ONE VUL                      ♠ A 10 7  
W    N    E    S    ♥ 9 6 3

	P	2♥	P	♦	A Q 7
P	3♣	P	?	♣	Q 8 6 4

This is the same hand and auction as the hand above. With one small change. Do you see what is different? On the previous hand, your partner was not a passed hand. On this hand your partner passed as dealer. He does not have an opening bid. It is unlikely that you have a game. Passing 3♣ is best.

NO ONE VUL				♠	8 7 5 3
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 5
		2♠	P	♦	10 6 5
P	3♥	P	?	♣	A J 2

Bid 4♥. This sequence is special because it is the only time you would go to the four level with a so-so hand. This is because 4♥ pays a game bonus, which four of a minor suit does not. If partner had bid 3♣ or 3♦, you should pass, as five of a minor would be against the odds even if partner accepted the invitation.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	8
W	N	E	S	♥	A 8 6 5 2
		2♠	P	♦	K Q 2
P	3♣	P	?	♣	J 10 8 7

Bid 4♣. A rare hand which would raise a minor rather than look for 3NT. Partner should work out that you have good shape. Note that partner probably has fair length in spades, or they would have been raised, so he doesn't rate to have much in hearts. Looking for notrump is possible but this hand has clubs written all over it.

### *A super trick: You cue-bid and someone doubles*

When you make a cue bid, you will sometimes be met with a double by the next player. Sometimes you can use the double against him. Here are two examples of this situation.

W	N	E	S
		2♠	P
P	3♦	P	3♠
Dbl	RD	P	?

W	N	E	S
		2♠	3♠
Dbl	RD	P	?

Ask this question. What does partner's redouble mean on each of these two auctions?

Your 3♠ bid on both of these auctions asked partner to bid 3NT if he has a spade stopper. If he had one, he would have bid 3NT.

If your partner does not have a spade stopper but does have half a stopper, he can redouble to let you know he has something in spades. If you have Qx, Jxx, or singleton king, you can bid 3NT yourself knowing partner has some help in the suit. This way you can untangle your stoppers with assurance. If successful, it may make the opponents think twice about doubling your cue bids.

### Partner Balances by Jumping to the Three Level

This is a very rare action. It is also easy to handle. Partner shows a good suit and a good hand with strong game interest. The main problem for you is one of definition, and if you define it as I have described, you will continue to game with anything resembling one and a half tricks and a couple of trumps.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 3
W	N	E	S	♥	A Q 6 5 4
		2♦	P	♦	8 6 5 2
P	3♠	P	?	♣	10 3

This is a fair raise to 4♠. Note that all of these jumps will be in a major suit. Note also that if you are interested in 3NT, you will just have to bid it. The cue bid is not available. A good omen is your four little diamonds. This



suggests your partner may be short and if so, he may have some hearts, which suits your hand fine.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ 3  
W   N   E   S   ♥ Q 10 8 7  
             2♥ P   ♦ K 9 6 4  
P   3♠   P   ?   ♣ A J 6 3

Bid 3NT. Even with a misfit, you need only a moderate hand to bid 3NT. Partner has 15 or 16 HCP with a good suit. Your singleton spade won't help but you should have a decent shot at 3NT. If partner continues to 4♠, your hand will be useful.

**NO ONE VUL**      ♠ J 10 6 3  
W   N   E   S   ♥ A 2  
             2♦ P   ♦ A Q 3  
P   3♠   P   ?   ♣ J 10 8 6

4♦. This sequence can lead to a few slams, and this cue bid is a start in that direction. Your diamonds are over the bidder so they should be worth two tricks. You have another ace, some shape, four trumps, and a potentially useful club holding.

**BOTH SIDES VUL**      ♠ K Q J 9 6 5  
W   N   E   S   ♥ 10  
             2♦ P   ♦ 6 5 4  
P   3♥   P   ?   ♣ Q 10 5

3♠. Forcing. You show a fair hand. If you had nothing but a bunch of spades you would pass 3♥. If you had more than this, you probably would have bid spades on the previous round.

**N-S VUL**      ♠ 8 3  
W   N   E   S   ♥ Q 10  
             2♥ P   ♦ Q J 6 3

P 3♠ P ? ♣ Q 9 5 4 2

Pass. Game may be on, but it would require a perfect fit. After discounting your queen of hearts, you have about 6 points and they are not good ones.

## Partner Reopens with 2NT

This is either:

1. Natural, with the approximate values of an opening notrump
2. Unusual, if your partner is a passed hand

When it is strong, which is almost all of the time, there will be some question of what your bids mean.

I suggest you use the most common package of bids, which is Stayman and Jacoby transfers. If you add Texas transfers to this you will have a good structure. Some examples.

N-S VUL		♠	J 4 2
W	N	E	S
		♥	7 3
		2♥	P
		♦	K J 8 5
P	2NT	P	?
		♣	A 10 9 8

Bid 3NT. Your partner has, on average, a decent 16 points. You have 9. Basic notrump arithmetic. Always assume that after a preemptive auction, your side should play the hand as well as can be done because you have a good idea of where the high cards are and you can draw some distributional inferences too.

N-S VUL		♠	Q J 3 2
W	N	E	S
		♥	8 3
		2♥	P
		♦	Q J 8 6 3
P	2NT	P	?
		♣	A J

Bid 3♣, Stayman. If your partner has four spades, you will play in 4♠. If he bids 3♦, you will bid 3NT. Note that your partner will not show four cards in opener's major.

N-S VUL				♠	J 8 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	8
		2♥	P	♦	10 8 7 6 5 3
P	2NT	P	?	♣	K 8

Bid 3♣, Stayman. If your partner bids spades, you will pass. If he bids 3♦, showing no major, you will pass. This helpful gimmick is known as Drop Dead Stayman, as well as Garbage Stayman.

N-S VUL				♠	J 8 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	8
		2♥	P	♦	K 9
P	2NT	P	?	♣	10 8 7 6 5 3

Drop Dead Stayman can not save you here. Your partner may bid 3♦, and you do not have a way to escape that. Pass 2NT and hope your partner survives.

N-S VUL				♠	J 8 5 4 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	9 4
		2♥	P	♦	K 6 3
P	2NT	P	?	♣	5 2

Bid 3♥. This is a transfer bid. It is not a cue bid. Your partner is expected to bid spades and you will pass.

N-S VUL				♠	K Q J 7 4
W	N	E	S	♥	8 3
		2♥	P	♦	8 4
P	2NT	P	?	♣	K Q 7 4

Bid 3♥. Partner will bid 3♠ and you will bid 3NT. This gives your partner a choice of games. He will pass 3NT or will bid 4♠.

Other conventions such as Texas transfers and a few other bidding tricks can easily be used after partner's 2NT balancing bid.

## Partner Reopens with 3NT

If you play as I suggest, your partner's 3NT bid shows a long, running suit with a stopper in their suit and some high cards on the side. It is rare that you will bid over this.

Here is a reminder hand to show you a typical 3NT reopening bid from partner. They open 2♥, which is passed to partner.

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

Your partner has what he hopes is seven certain tricks with chances for a heart trick, and maybe another trick from your hand. 2NT would not show these values or these tricks. Hence, the jump to 3NT. You can see that he is not looking for you to bid a suit. If you choose to bid 4♠, you need a pretty good suit.

## Partner Reopens with a Cue Bid

There is a difference between a cue bid of a 2♦ bid and a cue bid of 2♥ or 2♠.

### *Partner reopens with a cue bid after an opening 2♦ bid*

Your RHO opens with a weak 2♦ bid, and this is passed to your partner. He bids three of their suit. What is he doing? What does he want you to do?

Here is a structure that has evolved in the last 30 years. A great many players use this already.

W	N	E	S
		2♦	P
P	3♦	P	?

They bid 2♦ and when it gets to partner, he bids 3♦.

This is the Michaels convention. Your partner is showing a nice hand with 5-5 in the majors. He should have at least 13 useful points and can have more. Here are some examples of hands for partner that should consider bidding Michaels. Assume no one is vulnerable in these examples.

♠ J 9 7 5 4

♥ K J 7 6 4

♦ Q 7

♣ A

This hand is too weak for Michaels. 3♦ would push the bidding to the three level at least.

♠ K Q 9 5 3

♥ A J 10 9 4

♦ 8

♣ J 10

This hand can bid Michaels but it should pass if all partner can do is bid three of a major.

♠ A Q 9 8 5

♥ K Q 10 5 3

♦ 3

♣ K 4

This is a middling hand. Good but not great. When partner bids a major, it is close between bidding game and passing. Raising is acceptable since your partner really does not need much for game.

♠ A K Q 5 4

♥ Q J 8 7 4

♦ 8

♣ A Q

This is a normal maximum, although more is possible. Raising partner's three of a major bid to game is routine. You may go down but that is just too pessimistic.

♠ A K Q 5 4

♥ A Q 10 7 4

♦ 8

♣ A 9

Bid 3♦ and when partner bids a major, bid 4♦, telling him that you have a great hand and are interested in slam. If partner has a smattering of useful cards and a good fit, there may be a slam.

Here are some examples of bidding when they open 2♦ and your partner reopens with a Michaels 3♦ bid.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 8 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	7 4 3
		2♦	P	♦	Q J 4
P	3♦	P	?	♣	J 8 4

Bid 3♠. This is not as bad as it looks since you have four spades. The rest is bad but four trumps makes up for many bad features.

N-S VUL				♠	K 4
W	N	E	S	♥	A 7 4 3
		2♦	P	♦	9 7 5 4
P	3♦	P	?	♣	Q J 3

Bid 4♥ with this. You have three terrific features; four hearts, the king of spades, and the ace of hearts. Your club holding might be useful too. If you bid 3♥ only, your partner may fear you have a hand like the previous one.

E-W VUL				♠	5
W	N	E	S	♥	J 5
		2♦	P	♦	Q 8 7 4
P	3♦	P	?	♣	K Q 8 7 4 3

Bid 3♥. Try not to look sad when you do this. Your hope is to be allowed to play in 3♥ not doubled.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 8
W	N	E	S	♥	A Q 8
		2♦	P	♦	A 8 7
P	3♦	P	?	♣	10 7 4 3 2

Bid 4♥. You are not bidding a three-card suit. You are raising a five-card suit that your partner promises. Always think in terms of your raising a suit rather than bidding a suit in these circumstances.

NO ONE VUL				♠	9 3 2
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W	N	E	S	♥	J 4 3
		2♦	P	♦	Q J 9 8
P	3♦	P	?	♣	A Q J

Bid 3♥. You have a poor hand even though you have 11 points. Do not bid 3NT. Many of your partner's 3♦ bids will be made on good 11 or 12 point hands and stretching to 3NT is not likely to be successful. Be happy if you bid and make 3♥.

### *Partner reopens with a cue bid after an opening 2♥ or 2♠ bid*

In the section on balancing against a weak 2♥ or 2♠ bid, I showed this meaning for a cue bid after they open two of a major.

NO ONE VUL				♠	7 4
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 3
2♠	P	P	3♠	♦	A 4
				♣	A K Q 10 7 4

A cue bid of a weak two in a major shows a hand with a long, hopefully running suit and some stoppers on the side. The idea is to find out if partner can stop their suit. The hand above has seven likely tricks. If partner has a spade stopper, there will be eight tricks. Sometimes a ninth trick has to come out of somewhere. The important thing is that the hand above is ballpark for this cue bid.

Now look at it from the other side of the table. Imagine they open 2♠ on your right and it is passed to your partner, who cue-bids 3♠, opener's suit.

W	N	E	S
		2♠	P
P	3♠	P	?

I will use this approximate auction for the next few example hands showing you what you might bid when partner cue-bids their weak 2♥ or 2♠ bid.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 8 4 3
W	N	E	S	♥	J 5 3
		2♠	P	♦	Q 7 4 2
P	3♠	P	?	♣	9 6

Bid 3NT. This is actually a pretty rancid hand. But given you have a spade stopper, you bid 3NT. You could have quite a bit more and you would still bid 3NT showing a stopper. This reopening cue bid is not intended to get you to slams. You might bid one but doing so will be rare.

NO ONE VUL				♠	9 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	K Q 8
		2♥	P	♦	A 7 5
P	3♥	P	?	♣	J 7 5 4

Bid 3NT. If you miss a slam, give credit to their preempt.

NO ONE VUL				♠	8 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	J 5 3
		2♠	P	♦	J 5 3 2
P	3♠	P	?	♣	7 4 3

What do you bid when you do not have a stopper and have a lousy hand too? See the next section below.

NO ONE VUL				♠	8 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	A J 5 4 3
		2♠	P	♦	Q J 3
P	3♠	P	?	♣	J 10

What do you bid when you do not have a stopper but do have some nice values? See the next section below.

***The artificial 4♣ bid***



If you do not have a stopper in their suit, you can not bid 3NT. What can you do? The answer is this. Assuming you do not have a stopper in their major, you bid as follows.

With a lousy hand, bid 4♣. This is artificial and says only that you do not like your hand. Your range of points starts at zero and goes up to a poor 8.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	Q J 7 5
		2♠	P	♦	K 8 7
P	3♠	P	?	♣	7 4 2

Bid 4♣ with this hand. You have 7 points but they are not very good. Treat this as a poor hand.

NO ONE VUL				♠	4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	J 10 7 5 3
		2♠	P	♦	Q 8 7
P	3♠	P	?	♣	8 4 2

Bid 4♣. Do not bid 4♥. Partner says he has a good minor suit (probably clubs) and he won't be interested in your heart suit. You have a very bad hand this time. Tell him you have a bad hand.

### *The artificial 4♦ bid*

If you have a nice 8 count or more, but do not have a stopper in their suit, you have a bidding trick available. You can bid 4♦, telling partner you have some values which include 8 or more useful points. Hardly perfect, but if your partner has an extra good hand, he may be able to look for slam.

For him to do this, he should have a singleton spade, since you did not promise a spade stopper and he has denied a stopper himself. Note that 4♦ is forcing to game.

NO ONE VUL				♠	9 8 3
W	N	E	S	♥	A 8 4 3 2
		2♠	P	♦	K J 4

P 3♠ P ? ♣ 10 7

Bid 4♦. This is a decent 8 point hand with all its values having potential. Perhaps partner can use this information. Note that your 4♦ bid says you have nice points. It does not say you have anything in diamonds.

NO ONE VUL            ♠ 8 3  
W   N   E   S   ♥ K J 4 3  
         2♠ P   ♦ A K J 5  
P 3♠ P ? ♣ 8 3 2

Bid 4♦. You are telling partner you have some values which include 8 or more useful points but you can have a lot more, limited only by your failure to bid over 2♠. Mostly, your partner will sign off in his minor, which is known to be clubs. Assuming he has two spade losers, you will have bid to a safe game. If your partner has a singleton spade, however, your bid may interest him a lot. Again, remember that your 4♦ bid is forcing to game.

### *Bidding the unbid major*

You can bid the unbid major if you have a good enough suit. This is a rare bid and your partner will never be expecting it. Remember that your partner may have a singleton in this suit.

NO ONE VUL            ♠ 7 4  
W   N   E   S   ♥ Q J 10 8 7 5 4  
         2♠ P   ♦ A 4 2  
P 3♠ P ? ♣ 8

Bid 4♥. A bid in the unbid major is natural. You should not have a great hand since you passed over 2♠. But you can have a hand like this which is willing to play in four of your major. You should not bid this unless you have some certainty that playing in hearts is a good thing. Note that since your partner is denying a spade stopper, he might have something in hearts. Even a singleton king would be nice.

## *Cue-bidding opener's major to show a singleton*

NO ONE VUL            ♠ 4  
W   N   E   S   ♥ K J 7 5 3  
          2♠ P   ♦ A 8 5 3  
P   3♠   P   ?   ♣ 9 7 5

Bid 4♠, cue-bidding their suit. This is an odd bid indeed. It says that you have some useful values and you have a singleton spade. This is not impossible at all and if this news excites your partner, he will bid a slam or at least look for one. Yes, there will be some ambiguities because you do not always know which minor your partner is showing. Note this bid is forcing to game.

## **Partner reopens by jumping to four of a minor**

This final case is rare.

If they open with two of a major and your partner reopens by jumping to four of a minor, he is using a convention called Leaping Michaels. If you choose to use this convention, talk to your partner first. Do not bid four of a minor expecting your partner to be on the same page.

Here is what a jump to 4♣ or 4♦ shows:

It says you have five or six cards in the minor you are bidding.

It says you have five cards in the unbid major.

It says you have a hand ranging from 14 working HCP up to something bigger.

NO ONE VUL            ♠ K 7 4 2  
W   N   E   S   ♥ 5 4  
          2♠ P   ♦ J 9 7 5  
P   4♣   P   ?   ♣ 8 4 3

Your partner is showing a very good hand with hearts and clubs. It is doubtful that this hand can make a game so passing it in 4♣ is a sane thing to do. If your partner has such an enormous hand that he can't stand to hear you

pass him in 4♣, then he probably should start with a takeout double. His truly big hands are not going to be easy to bid. Hopefully, he will not have many monsters.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q J 8 5 3
W	N	E	S	♥	J 4
		2♠	P	♦	K 7 5 3 2
P	4♣	P	?	♣	8

Your partner is showing a very good hand with clubs and hearts. You happen to have a terrible hand with spades and diamonds. I am showing you this hand in hope that you will remember it. Bid 4♥ and hope it ends the bidding. Your partner must be aware that some of your possible hands are as bad as this one.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 7 4 3
W	N	E	S	♥	J 7 5 4
		2♠	P	♦	K 4
P	4♦	P	?	♣	8 4 3

Your partner is showing a very good hand with hearts and diamonds. Your hand is remarkable in that you have four-card support for the major and the fitting king of diamonds. Bid 4♥ and be happy with this contract.

NO ONE VUL				♠	9 5 3
W	N	E	S	♥	A Q 5 4
		2♠	P	♦	A 4 2
P	4♣	P	?	♣	Q 4 3

This hand is unexpectedly good. You could have a grand slam. How to bid it is going to be up to you, because there are no charted methods for handling such a hand. My suggestion would be to bid 5♥, asking partner if he has spades controlled for slam purposes. If he does, he might bid 5♠, cue-bidding and saying he has first round control. You still have work to do here but at least it's happy work.

## Partner Reopens by Jumping to Four of a Major

The thing to remember when partner jumps to game is that he has an excellent hand with an excellent suit. You might wish to review at some point the section showing examples of hands where you balance with 4♥ or 4♠ over their weak two bid. (See page 309.)

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 9 4
W	N	E	S	♥	J 4
		2♠	P	♦	Q 9 8 5 4 2
P	4♥	P	?	♣	K 2

Partner has a big hand with hearts. You have heart tolerance and one useful card, the king of clubs. Be happy you are in 4♥. It should have a play. If you miss a slam, possible, chalk it up to the vagaries of bidding against preempts.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A 5 3
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 5
		2♠	P	♦	10 9 3 2
P	4♥	P	?	♣	A J 10 2

Given you expect a lot from partner, you can bid 4♠, a cue bid, or can bludgeon the hand with a 4NT bid. Either bid has chances of getting you where you want to go. The big deal is that your partner thinks he can make a game facing some crummy hands and you have a good hand. Always compare what you have with what your partner is expecting.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K 4
W	N	E	S	♥	4
		2♥	P	♦	A 8 7 5 4
P	4♠	P	?	♣	K J 5 4 3

Trusting your partner to have what he promises, a big hand with excellent spades, you can just ask for aces and bid accordingly. Note that you did not have a way to show this hand over the 2♥ bid.

NO ONE VUL				♠	9 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	- - -
		2♠	P	♦	K Q 9 8 7 5 4 3
P	4♥	P	?	♣	10 4

Pass. You might make six. You probably will go down. The one thing that you should not do is bid 5♦.

NO ONE VUL				♠	A K 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	2
		2♦	P	♦	Q 10 7 5 4
P	4♥	P	?	♣	10 4 3

You would like to have had a shot at doubling them in diamonds but your partner apparently has a huge hand with hearts. That is what his bid says. You have two sure tricks but your singleton heart is a bother. Best to pass and expect 4♥ will make.

### Partner Reopens After a Three Bid

If your options were few when partner reopened after a weak two bid, you will feel positively cramped when he reopens after a three bid. When partner balances by doubling or bidding a suit, there will be very few cue bids. Subtle invitational bids? Forget them. You can introduce a new suit now and then, but generally speaking, you will either bid a game or you will pass.

Remembering the 8/9 rule, here are some hands.

#### *Partner doubles*

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 10 6 3
W	N	E	S	♥	8 3
		3♥	P	♦	Q 8 5 4
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	K 10 5

Bid 3♠. Be happy with what you have, but feel that it is not up to the 8/9 points your partner is expecting.

N-S VUL				♠	K 7 6 3
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 4 2
		3♦	P	♦	3 2
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	A 9 6

Bid 4♦. Just strong enough to do this. Note that with 4-4 in the majors, partner will bid hearts first.

E-W VUL				♠	10 8 7 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	K 10 5
		3♥	P	♦	A 2
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	8 6 5

3♠. This hand has real values. It has two good high cards and it has five spades. An optimist might bid 4♠ with this.

NO ONE VUL				♠	8 6 2
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 5
		3♥	P	♦	8 3 2
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	K J 8 3

Pass. You have fair expectations here. You should get two heart tricks and your clubs could contribute another. Partner's reopening double doesn't show a huge hand but hoping for a one or two trick set is normal. Note that if you do not set 3♥ doubled, you are not likely to make 4♣ your way. 3NT is a possible call but making would require partner to have a much bigger than expected double.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	J 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	K 6 5 4
		3♠	P	♦	2
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	A 10 6 4 2

Bid 4♥. This hand is good enough that you can hope to make something. Hence, 4♥. You hope partner has four of them. (See next hand.)

N-S VUL				♠	J 7 5
W	N	E	S	♥	10 8 6 5
		3♠	P	♦	3
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	Q J 10 9 5

A case could be made for passing and leading the singleton diamond. This is a bit desperate so finding a bid if one can be found is best. I suggest bidding 4♣. You do not expect to have a game so if you are going to play in a suit at the four level, at least play in your best suit.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 10 7 3
W	N	E	S	♥	4 2
		3♣	P	♦	K Q J 5
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	A 7 3

A confident 4♠. Certainly at IMPs. You won't make this all the time, but you have too much for a simple 3♠. One side reason for being aggressive here is that your partner will be aware of your aggressive tendencies. He won't always feel that he has to double and bid again to cater to your conservative side.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 3
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 10 7
		3♥	P	♦	K 8
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	K Q 6 5 4 2

Bid 3NT. You hope the clubs run. If they do, you have good chances.

N-S VUL				♠	Q 9 4 2
W	N	E	S	♥	8 6 5
		3♠	P	♦	Q 9 6 3
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	J 2



Pass. IMPs or pairs. If you choose 4♦, your partner will raise you with good hands, getting you too high, and you will get doubled when partner has normal values. Passing is your best chance of getting a plus score. If your partner has any spade honor, including the ten, you will have two trump tricks. Your minor suit honors may contribute something too.

N-S VUL				♠	K 3
W	N	E	S	♥	8 7 5
		3♥	P	♦	3 2
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	A Q J 9 6 4

Bid 5♣. This hand is worth much more than the 9 points your partner will play you for. In support of clubs you have a huge hand, especially if your partner has a singleton heart. Slam is not out of the question.

E-W VUL				♠	K Q 3
W	N	E	S	♥	8 7
P	P	3♥	P	♦	Q J 3
P	Dbl	P	?	♣	K 10 6 5 4

Bid 4♣. Even though you have a good hand you have losers all over, plus an atrocious heart holding. I hope you noticed that partner is a passed hand. Your decent hand may have to struggle to make even 4♣.

### Partner Bids a Suit at the Three Level

N-S VUL				♠	Q J 8 7 4 3
W	N	E	S	♥	K 9
P	P	3♣	P	♦	K 5
P	3♦	P	?	♣	8 7 3

Partner is a passed hand so you do not have much of a future. Best is to pass 3♦.

If your partner had not passed originally, bidding 3♠ would be reasonable. Partner knows you could not bid 3♠ before but he also knows

you would not bid 3♠ without a reason. 3♠ should show a decent hand but not a forcing hand.

NO ONE VUL				♠	3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	K 8 7
		3♥	P	♦	A 10 6 5 4
P	3♠	P	?	♣	Q 9 3

Pass. Ordinary shape. Ordinary points. A clear pass.

N-S VUL				♠	Q 10 6 3 2
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 5
P	P	3♦	P	♦	4 2
P	3♥	P	?	♣	A K 9

Bid 4♥. Be sure you noted that your partner is a passed hand. Bidding 4♥ here is probably right. Don't err by bidding 3♠.

BOTH SIDES VUL				♠	8
W	N	E	S	♥	K J 3
P	P	3♥	P	♦	A J 10 4 3
P	3♠	P	?	♣	K Q 10 7

Bid 3NT. Partner is a passed hand but he won't be bidding with a lousy hand. He has something of value. You have potential tricks in each minor and two stoppers in hearts. 3NT is a fair gamble. In any event, your chances of making 3NT are better than making 3♠.

N-S VUL				♠	3
W	N	E	S	♥	K 2
		3♥	P	♦	J 10 8 7 6
P	3♠	P	?	♣	K J 9 5 4

Pass. If this gets doubled, you can consider redoubling for rescue. Do not bid 3NT.

N-S VUL				♠	Q 9 7 5 4
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 2
P	P	3♥	P	♦	Q J 7
P	3♠	P	?	♣	K 4 2

Pass. Your partner is a passed hand. You have too many questionable values. You have lots of inferences. For example, he did not open a weak two bid. Lots of things for you to think about. He probably has some shape to go with a decent spade suit. Even with your super spade support, 3♠ is likely to go down.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K 2
W	N	E	S	♥	Q 9 6 5 4 2
		3♣	P	♦	A J 4
P	3♠	P	?	♣	9 5

Pass. In this case, you have no objection to spades so there is no reason to introduce a nebulous suit. It is rare for you to bid a new suit at the four level. It would have to be a better suit. If you had one more spade, you would think of bidding 4♠.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q 10
W	N	E	S	♥	4 2
		3♥	P	♦	A J 8
P	3♠	P	?	♣	A J 8 6 5 4

Bid 4♠. No need to get tangled up in clubs. Your partner rates to have a good spade suit, although I agree it is not guaranteed.

### Partner Bids 3NT

The thing to remember here is that partner is expecting you to have 9 points, and frequently he is hoping for more. He is under the gun and may have been forced to take a serious chance. Don't hang him for it. Given that he may be hoping for some values and given that you did not bid, it is unlikely you will

have much to think about. You should assume your partner has something like a strong notrump hand when you are considering whether to bid. But do not be adamant about this. Be aware that he can have a lot of odd looking hands.

N-S VUL				♠	Q J 3
W	N	E	S	♥	J 2
		3♥	P	♦	A Q 8 6
P	3NT	P	?	♣	K 9 7 4

Pass. You can credit partner with about 17 points. He may have less. He may have lots more. If he has 22, then you miss a slam. If he has 16, you may be high enough. Take your occasional fix and go quietly on these hands. Learn to accept whatever happens.

NO ONE VUL				♠	Q J 8 6 4
W	N	E	S	♥	3
		3♥	P	♦	K 6 5
P	3NT	P	?	♣	Q 9 4 2

Do not bid 4♠! Partner has not promised spades and may even have a singleton. Unlikely perhaps, but a small doubleton would be no surprise. For the record, do you think transfer bids should be on here? How about Stayman? I will discuss these issues shortly.

N-S VUL				♠	K 3
W	N	E	S	♥	4 2
		3♥	P	♦	A 8 6
P	3NT	P	?	♣	K 10 9 6 5 4

Don't bother trying for a club slam. It's too hard to bid accurately on this sequence. Whenever you have an unclear road to a questionable slam, pass.

N-S VUL				♠	Q 2
W	N	E	S	♥	3
		3♥	P	♦	J 8 7 6 5 4 2

P 3NT P ? ♣ 10 6 5

Pass. 4♦ is not a sign-off bid. I will discuss a possible treatment shortly.

N-S VUL                      ♠ Q 10 9 7 6 4 2  
W    N    E    S    ♥ 3  
             3♦ P    ♦ 4  
P 3NT P ?    ♣ A 10 7 4

You should feel like bidding with this hand. A big issue for you is, how should you do that? Should a 4♠ bid be natural? Should a 4♥ bid be a transfer? I can tell you that the world is not of one mind about how you should bid when partner reopens with 3NT. Following are some thoughts.

### ***What do your bids mean if your partner reopens with 3NT?*** ***What is 4♣?***

Play that 4♣ asks partner how many points he has. Do not play it as Stayman. The reason is that your partner won't have a major all that often and when he does not have a major, then you will have to find a good place to play the hand. Not easy.

When you bid 4♣, your partner bids artificially to tell you how many points he has.

4♦	Shows up to 15 points
4♥	Shows 16 or 17 points
4♠	Shows 18 or 19 points. This bid forces the partnership to slam.
4NT	Shows 20 or more points. This bid forces the partnership to slam.
5♣ or higher	These bids do not exist for the reason that no definition seems to work well.

If partner bids 4♦ or 4♥, 4NT by you says there is no slam.

### ***What are 4♦ and 4♥ bids?***

I suggest you use transfer bids. When you bid 4♦ or 4♥, you are transferring to the next suit, hearts or spades. 4NT next is keycard for that major. You do not transfer with a five-card suit.

There is very little science to this method. It will get you to balanced slams reasonably well. It will let you show a major and then ask for keycards. It will allow you to bid some minor suit slams when you find out how many points partner has, after which you can bid naturally.

Since bidding against preempts is a nightmare, all I offer here is a band-aid. There are very complex methods in use and I am not going to present them here for this simple reason. When I see these vaunted methods being used, they often result in a disaster when some glitch appeared in the form of bad method or bad memories.

### Partner Bids Four of a Lower Ranking Suit

W	N	E	S
		3♠	P
P	4♣	P	?

If you play 4♣ or 4♦ is natural, your partner has a good hand that chose not to bid 3NT. He usually has good shape for this. If you play 4♣ shows clubs and the unbid major, you have a totally different problem.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K Q 7
W	N	E	S	♥	J 9 6 4
		3♠	P	♦	K 2
P	4♣	P	?	♣	10 9 8 7

If 4♣ is natural:

You should pass. Too bad. You are past your most likely game, 3NT. This happens. Note that your partner did not have a way to ask if you have a stopper in spades.

If 4♣ shows hearts (the unbid major) and clubs:

Some players use this 4♣ bid to show clubs and the unbid major, hearts. If you are using this convention, bid 4♥.

N-S VUL				♠	A 10 2
W	N	E	S	♥	4 2
		3♥	P	♦	K 10 8 6
P	4♣	P	?	♣	Q 6 4 2

If 4♣ is natural, raise to 5♣. Those two little hearts are especially bad because partner did not bid 3NT. He is likely to have two fast heart losers also.

If 4♣ shows spades (the unbid major) and clubs you should bid 4♠. A ten trick contract is easier than an eleven trick contract.

NO ONE VUL				♠	K Q 8 7 6 4
W	N	E	S	♥	J 2
		3♦	P	♦	10 6 5
P	4♣	P	?	♣	Q 2

When they preempt 3♦, a 4♣ bid is always natural. You know your partner has a good hand with clubs. A possible choice is 4♠, which is really just a guess. My guess would be to pass 4♣.

N-S VUL				♠	8 5 3
W	N	E	S	♥	A 5
		3♠	P	♦	A Q 7 5 4
P	4♥	P	?	♣	10 7 4

Pass. Nothing special about this bid other than that partner has a pretty good hand with hearts. He may have stretched a little to bid a game, something he does not do when he bids four of a minor. You have a nice hand but not enough to continue.

## Recap to the Section Above

On auctions where the opponents open three of a major, you can use a variation of Leaping Michaels, discussed earlier. Here is a brief recap of Leaping Michaels.

***What a jump to 4♣ or 4♦ shows after their opening weak 2♥ or 2♠***

It says you have five or six cards in the minor you are bidding.

It says you have five cards in the unbid major.

It says you have a hand ranging from 14 working HCP up to something bigger.

***What 4♣ or 4♦ shows after they open with a three level preempt of 3♥ or 3♠***

4♣ or 4♦ shows you have five or six cards in the minor you are bidding.

It shows you have five cards in the unbid major.

It shows you have a hand ranging from 14 working HCP up to something bigger.

♠ Q J 9 7 5  
♥ 3  
♦ A 8  
♣ A K J 10 4

You would bid 4♣ with this hand over a 2♥ opening bid and over a 3♥ opening bid. In both cases you show a good hand, 5-5 or better, with the minor you are bidding and the unbid major.

Do you want to use this bidding trick? The answer I can give you is this.

It is easy to use.

It will only be forgotten once.

A lot of good players have spent time working with this convention and they like it.

Now it is up to you to decide.

## **Partner Jumps to Game**

You will usually pass this unless you care to make a slam try. Partner is showing a good hand which expects to make a game opposite an 8 or 9 point



hand. If you have these points or less, then pass. With more and useful values, you may act. The definition here is what's important.

N-S VUL				♠	K 3
W	N	E	S	♥	A J 6 5
		3♣	P	♦	K Q 8 6 2
P	4♠	P	?	♣	4 2

Bid 5♠, asking partner if he has a club control. Or, you might bid 5♥, which should be interpreted as a cue bid for slam.

NO ONE VUL				♠	J 8 7
W	N	E	S	♥	K Q 6
		3♣	P	♦	J 8 6
P	4♥	P	?	♣	Q J 8 2

Pass. You have nice support but little else. Your club honors are likely worthless. 4♥ will make but that might be all.

N-S VUL				♠	Q 10 8 7 6 5 2
W	N	E	S	♥	3
		3♣	P	♦	A 5 4
P	4♥	P	?	♣	J 2

Pass. No reason to run. Partner's hearts are often better than your spades.

The big deal with these auctions is that your partner is showing a very good hand, not a weak hand. As long as you recognize that partner is showing real values, you should be able to find an appropriate bid.



## Bidding Again When You Have Reopened After a Preempt

I am going to hold the discussion in this section to a minimum. The two areas touched on here are when you have reopened after a weak two bid and when you have reopened after a weak three bid.

### **They Opened with a Weak Two Bid and You Balanced**

Your range can be quite large here if you are not a passed hand. You can balance with some 8 or 9 point hands and your range can go up to the moon. Obviously you will not bid again with minimum hands. What do you need to keep bidding? Here are some examples of decent hands that may present a problem.

NO ONE VUL	♠ Q J 4
W N E S	♥ A K 5 3
2♦ P P Db1	♦ 9 4
P 2♥ P ?	♣ Q J 4 3

You should pass 2♥. Your partner needs an opening bid to make game and he would bid more than 2♥ if he has that.

NO ONE VUL	♠ A Q 7
W N E S	♥ K Q 6 4

2♦ P P Db1     ♦ 3  
P 2♠ P ?     ♣ Q 10 8 7 5

If you had a fourth spade, raising would be OK. With three trumps you need a better hand. And, if you have a better hand, you will not always have a good bid to show your values.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K J 3 2  
W N E S     ♥ A 7  
2♦ P P Db1     ♦ Q 5 3  
P 2NT P ?     ♣ 9 7 4 2

If you are using Lebensohl, you should bid 3♣ to see what he has in mind. If you are not using Lebensohl, then you should pass.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ K 9 3  
W N E S     ♥ A Q J 4  
2♦ P P Db1     ♦ 3  
P 3♠ P ?     ♣ K 10 8 7 4

Raise to game. Partner's jump to 3♠ shows invitational values. Your K93 is good enough to raise and the rest of your hand is way better than a minimum. Your partner has in the range of 11 to 12 support points so 4♠ should be a good contract. You would like a fourth trump. Now if you are using Lebensohl, your partner's 3♠ bid promises five cards, making your decision easier. Note that if you need finesses to work they are likely to succeed. If partner is missing the king of hearts and the ace of clubs, East is likely to have them.

NO ONE VUL     ♠ A J 10 7 4  
W N E S     ♥ Q J 8 7 5  
2♦ P P 3♦     ♦ 4  
P 3♥ P ?     ♣ A Q

You did well to show your majors and partner showed he prefers hearts. Unfortunately, your approach left you with no invitational bid. I would go to game with this hand but it won't always be cold. You know that your partner did not bid game himself but he is still able to hold some ordinary 6 or 7 point hands, or even weaker hands that happen to fit your hand.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A K 8 5 4  
W N E S      ♥ J 4  
2♥ P P 4♣      ♦ A  
P 4♠ P ?      ♣ A Q 10 9 7

Pass. Your 4♣ bid showed clubs and spades and a good hand. This is a tough situation. If you pass, you may make seven if partner has the right 9 point hand. But you may find that making ten tricks is impossible. This can happen if partner has two heart losers, a trump loser, and nothing in clubs. Tough game.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 9 7 4  
W N E S      ♥ 5  
2♥ P P Db1      ♦ A 8 5 3  
P P P      ♣ K J 9 7

You should be happy. You have a fair 11 points with some defense. Your partner knows that you can have something like this and he chose to pass. He made an educated guess and you should not worry. One hugely nice thing is that whatever he leads, you have something good in that suit.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ Q J 7 4  
W N E S      ♥ 4  
2♥ P P Db1      ♦ A 9 4  
P 2♠ P ?      ♣ A K J 8 7

You only need for partner to have a nice 6 point hand. Bid 4♠. A raise to 3♠ does not do this hand justice.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A 7  
W N E S      ♥ A K 4 2  
2♠ P P Db1      ♦ K Q J 7 4  
P 2NT P ?      ♣ Q 10

If you play Lebensohl and respond 3♣ as you are supposed to, you will probably be in the wrong suit. You can choose to bid 3♦, which shows a big hand, or you can venture 3NT. Both are acceptable bids. If you are not using Lebensohl, just raise 2NT to game.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ K 3  
W N E S      ♥ J 10 8 3  
2♠ P P Db1      ♦ Q 8 7 3  
P 3♠ P ?      ♣ A Q 3

This is a Lebensohl trick. When partner makes a cue bid, he is asking you for a stopper in their suit. You have one. Bid 3NT. Your partner has some kind of good hand that was not suited to bidding over 2♠. Trust him and answer his question about the spade suit. He would bid this way, for instance, with ♠652, ♥95, ♦AKJ642, ♣KJ.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ 5 3  
W N E S      ♥ A K J 5  
2♠ P P Db1      ♦ K 6 4  
P 2NT P 3♣      ♣ A Q 8 3  
P 3NT P P  
P

This is another Lebensohl auction. Your partner bid 2NT asking you to bid 3♣. You do not have enough to override that instruction so you bid 3♣. Your partner now bids 3NT. It is useful to know what partner has. Here is the rule. If partner bids 2NT and then 3NT (when using Lebensohl) he is showing a weakish 3NT bid. If he bids 3NT directly, he is showing a good (14-15) 3NT bid. If he had more than this, he would have bid over 2♠. Now that you have learned he has around 12 to 13 points, it is easy to pass 3NT.

## They Opened with a Weak Three Bid and You Balanced

Some of the time you will have quite a good hand when you reopen, and you will wish to bid again. The question is how good a hand you need to take a second bid.

In practice, the only time you need to worry about this is when you double and partner makes a simple response. When you reopen in a suit, the auction is usually over by the time it gets back to you.

NO ONE VUL      ♠ A J 9 7  
W N E S      ♥ K Q J 6  
3♦ P P Db1      ♦ 3 2  
P 3♥ P ?      ♣ A Q 8

Bid 4♥. You are playing partner to have 8/9 points, and there is no way to find out what he really has. Raise to game and hope he has them.

N-S VUL      ♠ A Q 10 8 6  
W N E S      ♥ K J 7  
3♦ P P Db1      ♦ 3 2  
P 3♥ P ?      ♣ A K 6

3♠. Your double followed by bidding 3♠ shows a pretty nice hand. Your partner will bid 4♠ if he has 7 or so points with a modest fit. This is not a perfect sequence because your partner will pass 3♠ with six hearts and a bad hand.

BOTH SIDES VUL      ♠ A Q 8 7  
W N E S      ♥ A K J 8  
3♦ P P Db1      ♦ 3 2  
P 4♠ P ?      ♣ A J 8

5♠. Asking about partner's diamond holding. Partner has a hand of 12 to 14 points. He could have only four spades, but likely has more. With your big hand the only thing that worries you is diamonds. You can check on them with a 5♠ bid.

NO ONE VUL	♠ K Q J 3
W N E S	♥ K Q 5 3
3♦ P P Db1	♦ Q 2
P 3♥ P ?	♣ K 6 5

Pass. Discount the diamond queen. You might miss a game but bidding it is taking too big a position. If partner has a poor hand you may already be too high.

N-S VUL	♠ K J 8 7
W N E S	♥ A K Q 10 8
3♣ P P Db1	♦ K Q 9
P 3♠ P ?	♣ A

4♣. This is a slam try with good spade support. Partner will count on you for something like this. If he has a good hand within his zero to 9 point range, he will cooperate with your slam try. Here are three possible hands for him to think about.

♠ Q 10 6 4 2
♥ 9 3
♦ A 6 2
♣ 9 5 4

He will bid 4♦. Now you can ask for aces knowing your partner is not broke.

♠ A Q 9 6 4
♥ 7 6 2
♦ J 3
♣ 10 9 5

He will jump to 5♠, showing a good suit and not much more.

♠ 9 6 4 2
♥ J 4 2
♦ J 8 3
♣ K J 7

He will sign off in 4♠. His king and jack of clubs are terrible values. He would prefer another spade and no club honor at all. You will pass 4♠.



## Two Sets of Example Hands

The following section is divided into two parts.

1. Problems of the reopener
2. Problems of reopener's partner

Some of the time, there will be a bid and a number in parentheses behind the bid actually chosen.

e.g. 3♦ (Pass = 80)

This means that 3♦ is the best call, but that pass is an alternative that scores 80 points out of 100. In all of these problems, you are South.

### Problems of the Reopener

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 8 7	1♦	P	P	Dbl
♥ A 6 5 4	P	2♦	P	2♥
♦ 4 2	P	3♥	P	P
♣ Q 10 9 8	P			

You have a minimum double and are happy to pass 3♥.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
------------	---	---	---	---



♠ Q 10 8 7				P
♥ A J 5 4	1♣	P	P	Dbl
♦ K J 9 7	P	2♠	P	4♠
♣ 8	P	P	P	

As a passed hand, you can't have more. Your shape is excellent and you have good values. It won't take much to make game.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K Q 10 7	1♣	P	P	Dbl
♥ 8 6 5 4	P	1♠	P	P
♦ A J 3	2♣	P	P	2♠
♣ 8 2	P	P	P	

With good trumps, you can push to 2♠. Partner rates to have 9 or 10 points but was unable to take further action. He probably has poor spades.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A 8 7 5	1♦	P	P	Dbl
♥ K Q 10 7	2♦	P	P	Dbl
♦ 3	P	2♠	P	P
♣ A 9 6 5	P			

Your second double confirms sound values for your takeout double.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A K 8 7	1♦	P	P	Dbl
♥ Q 6 5 4	P	2♠	P	P
♦ K 3	P			
♣ J 10 5				

Partner's jump shows 11 or 12 points with a poor suit. Aside from your good spade support, your values are soft and your king of diamonds may be worthless.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 8 6	1♦	P	P	Dbl
♥ A Q 9 6	P	2♦	P	3♦
♦ 8 2	P	3♥	P	4♥
♣ K 8 7	P	P	P	

You have a good double and want to be sure to play in the right major. Your 3♦ bid says you have both majors and want your partner to choose the right one.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 4 2	1♥	P	P	Dbl
♥ 4 2	P	1♠	P	2♣
♦ K 10 7	P	2♠	P	P
♣ A K Q 7 5	P			

South doubles and then bids 2♣ to show a pretty good hand. North's 2♠ bid shows nothing special other than five spades.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 3 2	1♠	P	P	Dbl
♥ A 8 6	P	2♥	P	3♣
♦ K Q 4	P	3♦	P	3♥
♣ A K Q 8 5	P	P	P	

Your auction is quite strong. No need to do more than 3♥ at your second turn.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J	1♠	P	P	P
♥ K J 2				
♦ 10 8 7 5 3				
♣ K J 9				

1NT would show more and would show a better suit. The spade honors are wasted. There is no reason to bid.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 10 3	1♦	P	P	Dbl
♥ K Q 5 4	2♦	2♠	P	P
♦ J 2	3♦	3♥	4♦	P
♣ A J 8 3	P	P		

Pass. Don't hang partner. His strength was limited by his 2♠ bid. 3♥ was just an effort to get them a little bit higher.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 10 7	1♠	P	P	1NT
♥ A 4	P	2NT	P	P
♦ Q 10 9 7	P			
♣ A 10 8 7				

Your range is 12 to 16. This hand is under average. A clear pass.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 10 3	1♣	P	P	1NT
♥ A 4	P	2NT	P	3NT
♦ Q 10 9 7	P	P	P	
♣ A 10 8 7				

After 1♣, the range for 1NT is 12 to 14. This hand is good enough to continue. Compare this discussion with the one on the previous hand.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 3	1♠	P	P	1NT
♥ K 5	P	2♦	P	2♥
♦ A Q 6 5	P	2NT	P	3NT
♣ K 4 3 2	P	P	P	

You bid 1NT, showing up to 16 or so. North transferred to hearts. You bid 2♥ and North invited with 2NT. You have a maximum hand so go on to game.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A K 3	1♥	P	P	1NT
♥ Q 10 5	P	2♣	P	2♦
♦ Q 4	P	P	P	
♣ K 8 7 6 4				

Partner's 2♣ bid is Stayman. It is possible for a 1NT bidder to have a major. North's pass of 2♦ shows a weak hand with five or more diamonds and four spades.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 3	1♣	P	P	Dbl
♥ A Q 10	P	2♠	P	3NT
♦ K Q J 7 3	P	P	P	
♣ A 10 5				

South's double is best. He has too much for 1NT and a jump to 2♦ does not do the hand justice. North's 2♠ bid shows a 10 point hand or so with spades. South is happy to bid 3NT.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K Q 5				P
♥ K Q 5 4	1♣	P	P	Dbl
♦ Q 8 3	P	2♠	P	P
♣ 10 8 7	P			

South doubles and North's 2♠ bid shows about 10 points with spades. Even though South has a maximum hand given his first pass, he gives up. This is really a lousy 12 points.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 2	1♣	P	P	1♥

♥ Q 10 7 5 4	P	3♥	P	4♥
♦ A 10 8 3	P	P	P	
♣ 9				

Everything is working. Not even close to passing. Partner has four trumps and good distribution else he would have started with a cue bid. In support of hearts North should have about 12 points. You can count your own support points as close to 13. Your singleton club is a big part of your decision.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 10 7	1♥	P	P	1♠
♥ 3 2	P	2♥	P	2♠
♦ A 5	P	P	P	
♣ 8 7 5 4 2				

3♣ would show a better hand. 2♠ does not show a five-card suit. Having four is common. You do promise a minimum hand.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 8 7	1♥	P	P	1♠
♥ K 8 3	P	2♥	P	2NT
♦ A Q 6 3	P	3NT	P	P
♣ 10 7	P			

Decent values. This is enough to bid 2NT after the 2♥ bid.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 10 8 7 5	1♣	P	P	1♠
♥ J 2	2♣	P	P	2♦
♦ A 10 9 5 4	P	P	3♣	P
♣ 7	P	Dbl	P	P
	P			

Pass. You have all of your bids. When you bid 2♦, you were ‘rebidding’ your partner’s values. Trust your partner to know this.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 10 8 7 5 3				P
♥ A 5 4	1♣	P	P	1♠
♦ A Q J	P	2NT	P	3NT
♣ 9 2	P	P	P	

Having passed, you have a maximum. You can bid 3NT.

N-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 10 7 5	1♣	P	P	1♠
♥ K Q 5	P	1NT	P	2NT
♦ A 8	P	3NT	P	P
♣ Q 9 2	P			

Partner needs around 10 points to bid 1NT. You have a fair 14. It is reasonable to invite. You should feel good about the ten of spades.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A Q 2	1♣	P	P	1♥
♥ Q 7 5 4 2	1♠	2♥	2♠	P
♦ K 7	P	P		
♣ 8 6 4				

Having balanced with this hand, you need serious signs of life from your partner to bid again. His raise is not enough.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A Q 10 8	1♥	P	P	1♠
♥ A 9 4 3	P	2♥	P	2NT
♦ Q J 8	P	3♠	P	3NT
♣ 3 2	P	P	P	

When you bid 2NT in response to North's cue bid, you show a good hand. With less, you would just bid 2♠ to show a minimum. North is giving you a choice of games.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 2	1♦	P	P	P
♥ J 10 8 7 5				
♦ K J 9 6				
♣ K 3				

(1♥ = 60) Where are the spades? This, plus the fact that defending 1♦ could be your best result, suggests a pass.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A 8 7 5 4	1♦	P	P	1♠
♥ A 10 7	2♦	P	P	Dbl
♦ 3 2	P	2♥	P	P
♣ K Q 5	P			

You had lots of extra values for your 1♠ bid. When 2♦ gets back to you, you can double for takeout showing these values and this approximate shape.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 8 2	1♠	P	P	P
♥ 3				
♦ K Q 9 7 5 3				
♣ Q 8 5				

(2♦ = 40) No defense against hearts and soft defense against spades suggest you pass.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A J 8 7	1♥	P	P	2♣
♥ 5 3	2♥	P	P	2♠

♦ 9 3	P	3♠	P	P
♣ A K 10 8 7	P			

You have a good enough hand to bid twice, hence bidding clubs and then spades to show four spades and five clubs. While you have enough for this bidding, you do not have enough to continue.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ A J 8 7	1♥	P	P	2♣
♥ 9 6 5	2♦	P	P	Db1
♦ 3	P	2♠	P	P
♣ A K 10 8 7	P			

With West bidding the red suits, you can double 2♦ for takeout. Perhaps your partner can pass for penalty.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ Q J 9 7 5 4	1♣	P	P	2♠
♥ K Q 8	P	3♠	P	P
♦ A 7	P			
♣ Q 2				

The 2♠ bid shows six spades and a good hand around 13 to 14 points. The queen of clubs may be wasted so this is an average hand. Pass.

<b>E-W VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ 8 2	1♥	P	P	P
♥ 7 3				
♦ K Q J 10 8 7 4				
♣ 9 7				

Pass. You are worried about all of other suits. Bidding any number of diamonds is giving opener a second chance.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
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♠ - - -	1♠	P	P	3♦
♥ J 8 7	P	3NT	P	P
♦ A K Q 10 7 5 3	P			
♣ Q J 4				

Your 3♦ bid shows a nice six-card suit and solid opening bid values. Your partner knows about West's spade suit and he said 3NT. Accept his informed opinion.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K Q J 8 7 6	1♥	P	P	Dbl
♥ 3	P	2♣	P	3♠
♦ A Q 8 7 6	P	3NT	P	4♦
♣ A	P	4♠	P	P
	P			

A tricky auction. You double at the risk of having partner pass. When he bids 2♣, you jump to 3♠. This is invitational. If you wished to force to game over 2♣, you have to bid 2♥ and then bid your spades.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 7	1♠	P	P	2NT
♥ A K J 9 6	P	3NT	P	P
♦ K 2	P			
♣ A J 5				

The only feature of this auction is the understanding that 2NT is a natural bid showing about 19 to 20 balanced points with stoppers in spades. You might do this with a good 18.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A J 7	1♣	P	P	Dbl
♥ K J 8 5	P	1♦	P	1NT
♦ A 5	P	P	P	

♣ K 10 9 7

After West's 1♣ bid, 1NT by you would show 12 to 14. Your sequence shows 15 to 18. Your partner's pass says he has a weak hand.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A Q J	1♦	P	P	2♣
♥ J 2	P	3♣	P	3♦
♦ 8 6 5	P	4♣	P	P
♣ A K J 7 4	P			

South has a maximum 2♣ bid. When North raises, South has enough to try for 3NT. Sadly, North bids 4♣. No 3NT for North-South. Now South has to take ten tricks with his balanced hand.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 10 7 6 4	1NT	P	P	2♠
♥ 4 2	P	P	P	
♦ 8 3				
♣ A 9 7				

Balancing against a strong notrump is wise if you have some shape and/or a good suit. This hand has a good suit. Hopefully, your partner will turn up with a few points.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 4	1NT	P	P	?
♥ A K Q				
♦ 8 7 6				
♣ K 10 8 7 5 4				

Bidding with this hand is a good idea but only if you have a convention to use. If you can not show your clubs you should pass.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
---------	---	---	---	---

♠ Q J	1NT	P	P	P
♥ K Q 10				
♦ K 8 7 6 4				
♣ Q J 4				

Pass. Balanced hands are dangerous to bid with. You have a five-card suit but it is poor, and the hand is full of soft points.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ 8 7 6 4 3	1NT	P	P	?
♥ A 8 6 5 3				
♦ K 8				
♣ 2				

If you have a system bid that shows the majors, use it. Your good shape will protect you most of the time. Your partner rates to have around 12 points so all you need is a fit.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ 7 3			1♣	P
♥ K J 10 5	2♣	P	P	2♥
♦ A 10 7 5	3♣	3♥	P	P
♣ 8 7 5	P			

You are passing, of course. Oddly, you are happier now than you were when you bid 2♥. Now you know your partner has a good hand with heart support.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ J 10 8 6			1♦	P
♥ A 10 6 4	2♦	P	P	Db1
♦ 3	P	2♥	3♦	P
♣ Q 9 6 3	P	P		

You succeeded in pushing them to the three level. Be happy. If anyone is going to bid again, it should be your partner.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 10 9 7 5			1♦	P
♥ A Q 8	2♦	P	P	Dbl
♦ 6 5 3	P	2♠	P	P
♣ A 10 3	P			

It is dangerous to balance with this shape. There is danger in passing, too. If you pass, they will probably make 2♦. Balancing with this balanced 10 count is probably OK since you have useful points.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ J 10 9 5			1♦	P
♥ 3 2	2♦	P	P	2♠
♦ A 4	P	P	P	
♣ K J 9 7 6				

West rates to have clubs. Do not bid 3♣. If your side has a future, it is in spades. This is the kind of bid that works often enough that it is OK.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 6 5			1♠	P
♥ 3	2♠	P	P	2NT
♦ A J 9 7	3♥	Dbl	3♠	P
♣ A 10 7 5 4	P	P		

(Dbl = 50 at matchpoints) Partner has good hearts. You can risk doubling 3♠ if you wish.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 8			1♦	P
♥ K J 6	2♦	P	P	P

♦ Q 5  
 ♣ K Q 9 7 6 4

Pass. Bad shape. Poor cards. Wasted diamond queen, plus clubs is a dangerous suit.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 10 3			1♥	P
♥ 9 7 4	2♥	P	P	Dbl
♦ A 8 7 5	P	3♣	P	P
♣ K Q 3	P			

Your double was perfect. Now you have to hope that 3♣ works out. At least they are not in 2♥ and you are not doubled.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 3			1♠	P
♥ A 6 5	2♠	P	P	P
♦ Q 9 8 7 5				
♣ K J 4				

Pass. You are balanced with a so-so suit. Doubling gets you to the three level and you risk playing in a 4-3 fit. Bidding diamonds requires you find a fit. Too dangerous all around.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 7 6 3			1♠	P
♥ 2	2♠	P	P	3♣
♦ A 4 3	P	P	P	
♣ K J 9 7 6 3				

The reason you can bid 3♣ is that you have three spades, which hints that you may find club support in partner's hand. Do not do this at IMPs.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
---------	---	---	---	---

♠ 3 2	1♣	P	1♠	P
♥ A 10 8 6	2♠	P	P	Dbl
♦ K Q 9 6	P	3♦	3♠	P
♣ 10 6 4	P	P		

A normal takeout double followed by a common sequence. You have gotten them up to the three level, an important achievement.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ - - -	1♣	P	1♠	P
♥ J 9 8 6 4	2♠	P	P	2NT
♦ K Q 10 6 4	P	3♦	3♠	P
♣ 8 6 3	P	Dbl	P	P
	P			

Pass. The big issue here is whether to pass the double. You have what you said you had. And your partner knows you did not bid over 1♠. You should pass.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 8 5	1♣	P	1♥	P
♥ 10 6 5	2♥	P	P	2♠
♦ K 7	P	P	P	
♣ A 6 4 2				

A sane gamble. As is often the case, the number of cards you have in their trump suit is important. With 1065 of hearts, you can hope to find your partner with one or two hearts.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A 6 3			1♣	P
♥ Q 10 6 4 3	1♦	P	1NT	P
♦ 10 8 6	2♣	P	P	2♥
♣ J 2	P	P	P	

They have a fit and your lack of points tells you that partner has a good hand. 2♥ is a toss-up. I like it because it has some upside.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 3			1♥	P
♥ J 9 7	2♥	P	P	2NT
♦ A Q 6 2	P	3♣	P	P
♣ K Q 10 8	P			

You should feel pretty good about this. Your partner will often have four clubs and a few points. You might make this.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 7 6	P	P	1♥	P
♥ 3 2	1NT	P	P	P
♦ K 4 3				
♣ K J 9 6 3				

Pass. West did not raise hearts and did not bid spades. He rates to have one or both minors. Bidding 2♣, if natural, is dangerous. There are other issues as to what 2♣ might show. (See pages 110–122 for a discussion on balancing when the opponents bid as they do here.)

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 9 7 5 3	1♣	P	1♦	P
♥ A 2	1NT	P	P	2♠
♦ 10 7 4	P	P	P	
♣ K 10 9				

A very wishy-washy choice. 2♠ can work. Being vulnerable, passing has a lot of merit too. Never forget the vulnerability.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K Q 7	P	P	1♥	P

♥ K Q 10 7	1NT	P	P	Dbl
♦ 10 5	P	P	P	
♣ K Q 10 5				

This is a penalty double. East bid 1♥ in third seat, where he may be fudging a bit. This double has huge potential. South would bid 2♣ if he wanted partner to bid.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 5	P	P	1♠	P
♥ Q J 7 4	1NT	P	P	P
♦ Q J 7 3				
♣ K 8 6 4				

Pass. When they open one of a suit and pass their partner's 1NT response, there are peculiar problems for the balancing routine. Double should be penalty when they opened a major and takeout when they opened a minor. Here, you expect your partner to have five spades and he may not have a four-card suit. I suggest you pass. (See pages 110–122 for thoughts on what you might bid if you feel bidding is a good idea.)

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 7 5			1♥	P
♥ Q 2	1♠	P	2♦	P
♦ 9 7	2♥	P	P	P
♣ K Q 8 7 6 4				

Pass. They have bid three suits and have not found a sure fit. Bidding 3♣ is mildly wonky.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A Q 3	1♦	P	1♥	P
♥ K 6 4	1♠	P	P	1NT
♦ J 8 7 6 3	P	2NT	P	P
♣ K 5	P			



1NT shows 12 to 14 or so. You have average values with no obvious place to get tricks. It would be nicer if you had the J10963 of diamonds.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ J 7 6 5 4	1♦	P	1NT	P
♥ A 3	2♦	P	P	2♠
♦ 8 7 5	P	P	P	
♣ A Q 2				

2♠ is probably safe. RHO does not have four spades. West has a long diamond suit so is not likely to have four spades. 2♠ will work often but if it doesn't work, it may be costly.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 6 3	1♦	P	1♥	P
♥ A Q 10 7 5	2♦	P	P	2♥
♦ 5	P	P	P	
♣ A J 6 3				

A nice choice. West rebid his minor, which often implies shortness in his partner's suit.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 8 6 5 3 2	1♦	P	1♠	P
♥ K J 4	2♦	P	P	P
♦ 5				
♣ A 5 4				

No spade spots. This is a serious warning sign. Best to pass. If you had the KJ10943 of spades, you could have bid 2♠ over 1♠.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A Q 7 5 2			1♦	P

♥ 10 8 6 3	1♥	P	2♣	P
♦ Q 7 4	2♥	P	P	P
♣ 8				

You won't reopen often after this auction. You've no guarantee of a fit and both opponents can have something in reserve. I lean to passing. Would you have considered bidding 1♠ on the first round? That is a possible bid.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ A 6 4 2			1♦	P
♥ 8	1♥	P	2♣	P
♦ A Q 10 5 3	2♥	P	P	Db1
♣ A Q 5	P	P	P	

A rare action. You show support for the one unbid suit plus a very good hand with shortness in the doubled suit. Partner frequently passes for penalty on this sequence.

<b>N-S VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ K 5 4	P	P	1♦	P
♥ K 9 6	1♥	P	P	1NT
♦ A Q 10 6 4	2♥	P	P	P
♣ Q 3				

You balanced and correctly gave up.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ Q 8 6 5	1♣	P	P	Db1
♥ A K 7	P	1♠	P	2♠
♦ A 10 9 6 4	P	P	P	
♣ 3				

The double was fine. When your partner bids spades, you have enough to raise to 2♠. Remember that you can double with a lot less.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 8 7	1♣	P	P	Dbl
♥ A J 4	P	1♠	2♣	2♠
♦ A 10 6 5	P	P	P	
♣ 8 2				

When they bid 2♣, you are allowed to raise slightly more aggressively than normal. Your partner can have many fair hands with just four cards in spades and might not know to bid again.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A K 9 8 6 5	1♥	P	P	1♠
♥ 3	2♥	P	P	2♠
♦ J 10 7	P	P	P	
♣ 8 6 4				

You expect your partner has some points. You hope he has two spades.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A 6 2	1♣	P	P	Dbl
♥ K J 8 7	2♣	2♥	3♣	3♥
♦ K 6 5 4 2	P	P	P	
♣ 7				

Partner made a free bid. You have a good hand for a balancing double. 3♥ is a normal competitive bid based somewhat on your shape. You are close to raising to 4♥.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 8 7	1♥	P	P	Dbl
♥ Q 2	2♥	2♠	P	P
♦ K Q 7 6	3♣	P	3♥	P
♣ A 9 6	P	P		

Pass. You have four spades but you also have a balanced hand with a wasted queen of hearts. Give up.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A 8 6 4	1♥	P	P	Dbl
♥ A 2	2♥	3♣	P	P
♦ J 8 7 6	P			
♣ K Q 3				

This hand is better than it might have been. Still not quite worth a 3NT bid. If you can make 3NT, it is likely that your partner would have bid 2♣ over 1♥.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A Q 6	1♥	P	P	Dbl
♥ 8 6	P	1♠	P	2♥
♦ K Q 10 9	P	3♠	P	4♠
♣ A K J 5	P	P	P	

Your 2♥ bid shows around 18 to 19 points with three cards in spades. Your partner's 3♠ bid shows five spades and a few points. Bid game.

ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K Q 5	1♦	P	P	Dbl
♥ A Q 6 4	P	1NT	P	2NT
♦ 10 5	P	P	P	
♣ A 10 9 5				

Your partner's 1NT bid shows up to 11 points. It is reasonable to raise to 2NT with this.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 8 7	1♦	P	P	Dbl
♥ A J 6 4	2♣	P	2♦	Dbl
♦ 3	P	2♠	P	P

♣ A 9 6 3                      3♦      P      P      P

You made a good takeout double and you doubled a second time. You have done all you can. When partner passes 3♦, you should too.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A K Q	1♥	P	P	Db1
♥ A 2	2♥	P	P	Db1
♦ Q 8 7 6	P	2♠	P	P
♣ K J 5 4	P			

Your first double was fine. Your second double showed extra values. Your partner has shown no interest. With just three spades, passing it out is best.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 4	1♣	P	P	1♥
♥ A Q J 6 2	P	2♥	P	3♥
♦ A 8 7	P	4♥	P	P
♣ 3 2	P			

When partner raises to 2♥, he shows a sound normal raise. You have enough to bid 3♥, asking if partner has a maximum. He does.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A J 4	1♣	P	P	1♥
♥ A Q 7 6 2	2♣	2♥	P	P
♦ Q 8 7	P			
♣ 3 2				

The important feature of this auction is that West rebid 2♣. Your partner can raise with less on this sequence than on the previous sequence.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 3	1♠	P	P	2♣

♥ A 3	2♠	3♣	P	3♠
♦ A 5	P	3NT	P	P
♣ K 10 8 7 6 5 4	P			

You cue-bid 3♠, hoping partner can bid 3NT. That will be a success if partner has the ace of clubs.

ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A Q	1♦	P	P	1♥
♥ K J 10 8 6 5	P	2NT	P	3♥
♦ 3 2	P	4♥	P	P
♣ J 10 4	P			

Bid 3♥ if it is forcing. If not, you should risk bidding 4♥.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 8 7 6	1♣	P	P	1♠
♥ Q 3 2	P	2♣	P	2♦
♦ A K 8	P	2♠	P	P
♣ 8 7	P			

By the time North bid 2♠, you learned he has 12 or so points in support of spades. You have a boring 12 yourself. Pass.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ J 7 4	1♣	P	P	1♦
♥ A 2	P	2♣	P	2♦
♦ K Q 10 9 8 7	P	P	P	
♣ 8 6				

Even though you have a nice suit, you have only 10 points. Passing is best.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A K 8 5 4 2	1♣	P	P	1♠

♥ 10 6 3	2♣	Dbl	P	P
♦ 8 2	P			
♣ 7 2				

Pass. You have two tricks in spades and you have chances of a diamond ruff. Your chances of making 2♠ are not good, especially if partner has one spade.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ J 10 8 7 5	1♦	P	P	2♦
♥ A Q 5 4 2	3♣	3♥	P	P
♦ 4	P			
♣ 9 7				

If you play Michaels cue bids in the balancing position, you can bid 2♦. This is a good convention which lets you show both suits at once. If you bid 1♠ or 1♥ instead, you may miss the right suit. North's 3♥ bid tells you that you have done something good but you have nothing extra to offer.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ J 10 7 3	1♥	P	P	Dbl
♥ - - -	2♥	Dbl	P	P
♦ A Q 9 8 6	P			
♣ Q 8 5 2				

Doubling for takeout with a void is never much fun. Double was fine but now you have a difficult bid. Since bidding a suit is a guess, it is probably best to guess to pass.

<b>ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ 3	1♠	P	P	2♥
♥ A K 8 7 5	2♠	P	P	Dbl
♦ K 5 4	P	3♣	P	P
♣ Q 7 6 2	P			

A good auction by South. The 2♥ bid might not have worked if there was no fit but South's later double of 2♠ offered more places to play. The double of 2♠ was comfortable.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 5	1♣	P	P	1♥
♥ A J 9 7 5	1♠	P	P	1NT
♦ 10 5 4	P	P	P	
♣ A Q 8				

South hated to give up and went on bidding with 1NT. This was a sane bidding route by South.

### Problems of the Reopener's Partner

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ J 7 6 4 2			1♦	P
♥ A Q 3	P	Dbl	P	2♠
♦ K 8 6	P	3♠	P	4♠
♣ Q 5	P	P	P	

South's jump to 2♠ shows a fair four-card suit or a lousy five-card suit with around 11 to 12 points. North raises and South correctly goes on.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ J 8 7 5			1♠	P
♥ Q 3	P	Dbl	P	1NT
♦ K Q 6 4	P	P	P	
♣ K 10 5				

This is a normal sequence. The big deal is that the range for 1NT is not clear. (See the next hand.)

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
------------	---	---	---	---



♠ J 10 8 7			1♠	P
♥ Q 5 4	P	Dbl	P	1NT
♦ Q 5 4	P	3NT	P	P
♣ J 6 2	P			

Partner expects more. You should try to avoid 1NT with less than 7 or 8 points. Here you have no other choice.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 3 2			1♦	P
♥ A 7 6 5	P	Dbl	P	2♦
♦ K Q 4	P	2♥	P	3♥
♣ 8 2	P	P	P	

Partner could have 8 points. With 12+, he will bid game.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A Q 2			1♥	P
♥ 8 6 5 4	P	Dbl	P	2♥
♦ K Q J	P	2♠	P	3♠
♣ K 8 7	P	4♠	P	P
	P			

Not easy. Perhaps 3♥, asking for a heart stopper, is best. That might be better than getting partner to a 4-3 spade fit. It is possible that 2♠ is your best spot.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 8 7 5		P	1♠	P
♥ K 2	P	Dbl	P	P
♦ Q 10 9 6	P			
♣ A 8				

Even with this hand you shouldn't expect too much. Partner can have a very shapely minimum. He is a passed hand so 3NT is probably out of the picture.

Lead the ten of diamonds, not the king of hearts or the ace of clubs.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 6 2			1♥	P
♥ Q 8 6 4 2	P	Dbl	P	2♠
♦ K Q 6	P	P	P	
♣ 8				

With clear offensive potential, it is better to try for game than to pass for penalties. You want better hearts to choose to defend.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K Q 9 7			1♦	P
♥ 8 7 5	P	Dbl	1♥	1♠
♦ 4 2	2♦	P	P	P
♣ J 6 5 2				

Likely best to let them play in 2♦. You have nice spades but you have a bad hand. If 2♠ is a good spot, your partner might have bid 2♠ himself.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 10 8 2			1♠	P
♥ K 10 7 6	P	Dbl	P	2♥
♦ 3	2♠	P	P	3♣
♣ A J 8 7 5	P	P	P	

Partner should not return to hearts without four of them. With a five-card suit, you would tend to rebid hearts in preference to mentioning clubs.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 10 9 4 2			1♣	P
♥ A J 6	P	Dbl	2♣	2♠
♦ 2	P	3♠	P	4♠
♣ 9 7 4 3	P	P	P	

This hand has grown a lot. Facing a likely singleton club and four-card support, you can easily imagine where ten tricks will come from.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 3			1♦	P
♥ K 9 7 6	P	Dbl	2♣	2♥
♦ 10 6 4 2	3♣	P	P	P
♣ 8 6 3				

Your two major suit kings gave you enough values to bid 2♥. That was enough. Your partner's failure to raise says a lot.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 10 4 3			1♦	P
♥ Q J 5	P	Dbl	3♦	3♠
♦ 3 2	P	P	P	
♣ J 6 5				

Barely enough to bid. When you are known to bid with hands like this one, your partner won't worry that your side is underbidding.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 10 8 7 5			1♥	P
♥ K 5 4 2	P	Dbl	2♥	2♠
♦ K J	P	P	P	
♣ K 7 6				

You have bad spades and partner does not promise four of them. Still, it is clear to bid 2♠. You will bid game if partner invites.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 3 2			1♦	P
♥ K 9 8 6 4	P	Dbl	2♣	2♥
♦ Q J	3♣	P	P	P

♣ Q 8 7

Having shown some values, it is not necessary to rebid. This hand is a point counter's trap. The only really good feature is the heart suit. Most of the remaining values are garbage.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 3	P	P	1♦	P
♥ K Q 8 7	P	Dbl	P	1♥
♦ Q 6 2	P	P	P	
♣ K 9 5				

Opposite a passed hand, there is no need to get excited.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ J 2			1♦	P
♥ Q J 8 7 5	P	Dbl	1NT	2♥
♦ K 4 2	P	P	P	
♣ A 10 6				

Best to play it rather than try to defend against 1NT. RHO shows about 18 points, but you have a solid playing hand.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K Q 7			1♦	P
♥ 4 2	P	1♠	P	2♠
♦ A 9 6 5	P	3♠	P	4♠
♣ 10 7 4 2	P	P	P	

You have a maximum raise and partner is inviting. Easy to go on. Note your raise shows some values. (See next hand.)

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q J 3			1♥	P

♥ 8 7 5	P	1♠	2♥	2♠
♦ K 9 6 5	3♥	3♠	P	P
♣ J 10 5	P			

The main point of this auction is that South's raise to 2♠ was a free raise. Free raises can be pushy since you want to let partner know you like his suit.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ 10 8 7 5			1♠	P
♥ 4 2	P	2♣	P	3♣
♦ A J 3	P	P	P	
♣ K J 8 7				

Don't err by passing hands like this. Among other things, you may have a game. Importantly, it makes it hard for their side to continue bidding.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ Q J 8 7			1♥	P
♥ Q 8 6	P	2♦	2♥	2NT
♦ K Q 5	P	P	P	
♣ Q J 3				

In spite of 13 points, even 2NT could go down due to a lack of fast tricks.

<b>N-S VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ 8			1♦	P
♥ K J 8 7	P	1♥	P	3♥
♦ Q J 5 4	P	4♥	P	P
♣ A 8 6 2	P			

A jump raise promises shape. This is an excellent 3♥ raise.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ Q J 3			1♦	P

♥ K Q J 3	P	1♥	P	2♦
♦ J 8 7	P	2♥	P	P
♣ K 5 4	P			

Balanced hands should be careful about getting too high. This hand barely qualifies for a 2♦ bid. 2♥ could be best.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A K 8			1♥	P
♥ 7	P	1♠	P	2♥
♦ J 8 7 6 5	P	3♣	P	4♠
♣ Q J 4 2	P	P	P	

You had a minimum cue bid of 2♥. Partner's 3♣ bid showed extras. You bid game on the basis of having a good fit with partner's clubs.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 2			1♣	P
♥ K J 7	P	1♥	P	2♣
♦ K J 8 6	P	2♦	P	2♥
♣ K J 4 2	P	3♥	P	4♥
	P	P	P	

You cue-bid and then bid 2♥. Partner asked if you have anything extra, and you do. Bid game.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ A J			1♥	P
♥ 8 7 5	P	1♠	P	2♥
♦ 8 7 5	P	2♠	P	P
♣ A K J 5 4	P			

It is hard to bid when you have a nice hand but do not have three-card support. You have two possible bids and neither is wonderful. You can bid

2♥ but your partner will expect another spade from you. Also you can bid 2♣ but partner will not expect this good a hand. My choice is 2♥, but it is nervous. Perhaps pass is the winning bid. Partner is not a passed hand, though, so he can have some hands that will make a game.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 3	P	P	1♥	P
♥ 7 6 5	1♠	P	P	?
♦ K 6 5				
♣ A K 6 4 2				

Pass. Worries everywhere. Balanced hand. Poorish suit. Three small hearts. Nothing good here. Let this one go.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 3		P	1♥	P
♥ J 6 5	P	1♠	P	2♣
♦ A 4 2	P	2♦	P	P
♣ K J 10 7 6 4	P			

Pass. At least you have a tolerance for diamonds. Note that East is likely to lead a trump.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K J 2		P	1♥	P
♥ Q 6 4	P	1♠	2♥	2♠
♦ Q J 3 2	P	P	3♥	P
♣ Q 8 7	P	P		

Facing a passed hand, raising to 2♠ and quitting after 3♥ is enough.

ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K Q 10		P	1♥	P
♥ 8 6 5	P	2♣	2♥	3♣

♦ A J 8 6 5      P      P      P  
 ♣ Q 2

Passing is OK but raising to 3♣ has some merit. Partner is a passed hand so he probably won't bid again.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ Q 3 2			1♥	P
♥ 5 4 2	P	1♠	2♣	2♥
♦ A K 6 3	P	2♠	P	P
♣ K 10 5	P			

East's 2♣ bid leaves you room to cue-bid 2♥, showing a good spade raise. You are content to pass his 2♠ rebid.

<b>ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ K Q 4 3			1♥	P
♥ 10 6 5	P	1♠	2♣	2♥
♦ K Q 4	P	2♠	P	3♠
♣ K 8 7	P	P	P	

Barely enough to raise after a sign-off from partner. I remind you how horrible your three little hearts are. You may have three fast losers.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ J 6 5 4 2	P	P	1♠	P
♥ A 6 5	P	2♦	2♠	P
♦ 8 6	P	P		
♣ K J 7				

Pass. Do not double. Your partner passed and then bid 2♦. He won't have an opening bid.

<b>E-W VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
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♠ K 8 7 6	P	P	1♥	P
♥ K 5 4	P	2♣	2♥	P
♦ K 8 7 5	P	P		
♣ Q 2				

Pass. The values are too slow to raise to 3♣ or to bid 2NT.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ Q 10 7 5	1♠	P	2♠	P
♥ K 4	P	Dbl	P	3♦
♦ K 9 7 6 5	3♠	P	P	P
♣ 9 2				

Don't double. You did well to bid 3♦ and should be content that you have pushed them up a level, where you have a chance to beat them.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ J 9 8 7	1♥	P	2♥	P
♥ Q J 10 7	P	Dbl	P	2♠
♦ A Q 3	P	P	3♥	Dbl
♣ 8 2	P	P	P	

You have four potential tricks. With guaranteed defense, doubling makes more sense than it did on the hand above.

<b>NO ONE VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♠ K J 5 4	1♦	P	2♦	P
♥ 8 7	P	2♥	3♦	P
♦ Q J 3	P	P		
♣ K Q 4 3				

Passing is clear. Don't even think about bidding. Bad values all around.

<b>BOTH SIDES VUL</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
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♠ J 8			1♣	P
♥ A Q 8 3 2	1♠	P	2♣	P
♦ Q 4 2	P	2♠	P	P
♣ 9 7 6	P			

Your partner has spades. Pass. He will be happy with your hand.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 7 6 4	1♣	P	1♠	P
♥ Q 9 6 3	2♣	P	2♠	P
♦ K 4 2	P	Dbl	P	3♥
♣ 7 3	P	P	P	

This is not a good hand. Bid 3♥ without looking concerned.

N-S VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 3 2	1♠	P	1NT	P
♥ Q 8 6 4 2	P	Dbl	P	P
♦ J 8 7	P			
♣ Q 10 5				

Partner's double is penalty. Pass and lead the three of spades. You won't hear this sequence often today since the 1NT bid is usually forcing.

NO ONE VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 8 6 2	1♠	P	2♠	P
♥ Q 6 3	P	3♣	P	3♦
♦ K Q J 9 8 5	P	P	P	
♣ 4				

It is safe to judge that your diamonds are better than your partner's clubs.

E-W VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ 10 8 7 6 5 4	1♥	P	2♥	P

♥ 3 2	P	Dbl	P	2♠
♦ A J	P	P	3♥	3♠
♣ K 4 2	P	P	P	

Seldom do you take a second bid on this sequence. You need a hand like this one; a very long trump suit with nice values that could not bid earlier. Very rare auction.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ K 8 6 5 2	1♦	P	1♥	P
♥ Q 6 5	1NT	P	2♦	P
♦ J 2	P	Dbl	P	2♠
♣ K 9 8	P	P	3♦	P
	P	P		

Partner's double was takeout. You have a nice 2♠ bid but your shape is bad. Give this hand up.

BOTH SIDES VUL	W	N	E	S
♠ Q 10 7 4	1♣	P	1NT	P
♥ 8 4	P	Dbl	P	2♠
♦ A 8 3	P	P	P	
♣ J 7 5 4				

On page 105 I discuss the specific sequence where RHO bids a suit and LHO bids 1NT, passed to you. I suggest that double is takeout when they have bid a minor and penalty when they have bid a major. If you play this, your bid here is 2♠. It is all a matter of knowing what partner's double means.



## About the Author



In the world of contract bridge, there is no one who comes close to matching Mike Lawrence's combined record as a player, author, and teacher.

Mike started playing bridge while attending the University of California. During a chemistry experiment, he caused an explosion which for three weeks meant he was unable to use his writing hand. The result was that he could not take his finals and was instructed to take them during the summer session instead. Not wishing to waste his time on campus, Mike discovered the card room where he proved more adept at bridge than he was as a chemistry student. It was not long before bridge became his major interest.

As a player, Mike has won three World Championships and was second three times. In ACBL play, he has won over 23,000 masterpoints and more than twenty major National Championships, including more than ten wins in the Vanderbilt, Reisinger, and Spingold.

Mike was lucky to be an original member of the Dallas Aces, a team brought together by Ira Corn of Dallas. Ira was one of those individuals who had a vision and the strength of character to make it happen. Ira Corn wanted to see the US regain the World Championships and to this end, he arranged for a group of experts to move to Dallas, Texas. The original players were Jim Jacoby, Bobby Wolff, Bobby Goldman, Billy Eisenberg, and Mike Lawrence. Ira needed a sixth and a few months later, added Robert Hamman.

Ira added two strong personalities to aid his efforts.

The first addition, Dorothy Moore, was instrumental in helping with the team when problems emerged. She was a powerful balance when one was needed. Many nervous moments were calmed by her insights and 'people' skills.

Additionally, Ira added Joe Musumeci to coach the team. This was no easy task given the diverse personalities and egos of the team members. Joe was the taskmaster who made things happen, including organizing an exercise regimen for a group that abhorred doing anything more physical than shaking a backgammon cup or dealing cards.

Ira did what he set out to do. In virtually no time at all, the Aces were winning the major US championships and in 1970, they brought the first of two consecutive World Championships back to the US.

It was during the years of being an Ace that Mike added writing and teaching to his playing abilities. Ira was instrumental in this too. One day, Ira told Mike to come into his office. During this meeting he instructed Mike to write a book, something that was totally alien to him at that time. Denying the skills to do that, Ira pointed out who wrote the checks and Mike was convinced. A month later, Ira again had Mike in his office. This time, it was to tell Mike that he was going to start teaching bridge. "Here is a list of your students. You start in three weeks."

Once again, Mike denied the skills, but under Ira's reminder that he was the check-writer, Mike became a teacher. Credit to Ira for his judgment. Ira died in 1982, but his achievements still impress. In 2002, Ira was voted into the Bridge Hall of Fame, a very popular choice.

The original members of his team continued to be forces in the world of bridge.

More than any other author, Mike is known for an ability to share his experiences with his readers and students. As an author, Mike has written more than twenty bridge books, most of them exploring areas that no one else

was willing to write about. His writings include numerous book-of-the-year awards starting with his first book, *How to Read Your Opponents' Cards*.

In a slightly different vein, Mike published a bidding newsletter that emphasized Standard American bidding. It discussed conventions and the judgment needed to make them work. Mike's Bidding Newsletter ran through 100 issues spanning 1988 to nearly 2000.

In 1994 Mike was a co-author of the annual bridge calendar and which became a staple of the bridge world for nearly 15 years.

And finally, Mike joined forces with Fred Gitelman to produce a series of bridge software products which allow the user to learn bridge in an interactive format.

When Mike is not creating bridge books and bridge software, he spends time lamenting that he has been unable to finish his science fiction book. Next time you see him, ask him how the book is going. Perhaps that will motivate its finish.

Mike's web page address is [MichaelLawrence.com](http://MichaelLawrence.com) It includes information on all of his bridge materials.