

Bridge Conventions

George Willcox

Zeph Britten

Contents

- Rules
 - Rule of 12
 - Rule of 20
- Openers
 - Suits
 - Strong 1NT
 - Weak 2s
 - Weak 3s
 - 2NT
 - Strong 2C
- Constructive Bidding
 - Natural rebids
 - Bidding Controls
 - Stayman
 - Jacoby Transfers
 - Minor Suit Stayman
 - Texas Transfers
- Slam Bidding
 - RKCB 1430
 - Gerber
- Defensive Bids
 - After Opposing 1NT
- Doubles
 - Penalty Doubles
 - Takeout Doubles
 - Responsive Doubles
- 1NT Escapes
- Standard Leads
- Other Optional Conventions
 - Puppet Stayman
 - Bergen and Bravos
 - Bergen Raises
 - Bravos
 - Jacoby 2NT
 - Ambiguous Splinters
 - Key Card Swiss
 - Other Defensive Bids
 - Michaels Cue Bids
 - Unusual 2NT
 - Optional Jacoby Transfers Responses
 - Optional Minor Suit Responses

Rules

- High Card Points (HCP) are the main method of determining the value of a hand

Card	Value
A	4
K	3
Q	2
J	1

Rule of 12

- A common rule for determining whether to open with a hand is to count the HCPs and open if you have 12 or more.

Rule of 20

- An alternative, which also takes into account the shape of a hand, is the Rule of 20.
- The Rule of 20 is a calculation to see if your hand has opening strength.
- Count HCP and then add the lengths of your 2 longest suits, if this is 20 or more, you can open.

Openers

Suits

Suit	Requirement
1M	5 cards
1m	3 cards

- If Both Majors have the same length open Spades, unless 17+ HCP where you can show a reverse by opening Hearts and then rebidding Spades
- If both minors have equal length open 1C

Strong 1NT

- 15-17 HCP
- Over-calling 1NT shows 15-18 HCP with stopper in enemy suits
- No more than 1 doubleton
- No voids or singletons
- 12-14 HCP open 1 of a suit then rebid 1NT
- Responses:

Response	Meaning
Pass	0-7 HCP. No 5M or 6m
2C	Have 4 card Major Stayman
2D/2H	5+ Hearts or Spades Jacoby Transfer
2S	5-4 shape in Minors Minor suit Stayman
2NT	8-9 HCP denies 4 of a Major unless 4-3-3-3
3C	6+ Clubs, 7-8 HCP
3D	6+ Diamonds, 7-8 HCP
3NT	10-13HCP denies 4 of a Major unless 4-3-3-3
4C	Gerber
4D/4H	Texas Transfer
4NT	17-18 HCP invites 6NT

Weak 2's

- < 12 HCP
- 6 cards in suit
- 2 of 3 top honours or 3 of 5 top honours
- NOT 2C
- Responses:

Response	Meaning
Simple Raise	3/4 card support and 6 - 13 HCP
Jump Raise	5+ card support
New Suit	Natural 5+ cards in new suit, Denying openers suit
2NT	15+ HCP

Weak 3's

- < 12 HCP
- 7+ cards in Suit
- 2 of 3 top honours or 3 of 5 top honours

Strong 2C

- 22+ HCP balanced
- 17+ HCP no less than a "Trick short of game" unbalanced
- Responses:

Response	Meaning
2D	0-7 HCP or 8+ with 4-4-4-1
2H	8+ HCP 5+ Hearts
2S	8+ HCP 5+ Spades
2NT	8+ HCP balanced
3C	8+ HCP 5+ Clubs
3D	8+ HCP 5+ Diamonds

- Openers responses to 2D:

Response	Meaning
2H	17+ HCP 5+ Hearts
2S	17+ HCP 5+ Spades
2NT	22-24 HCP balanced
3C	17+ HCP 5+ Clubs
3D	17+ HCP 5+ Diamonds
3NT	25-27 HCP balanced
4NT	28-30 HCP balanced
5NT	31-32 HCP balanced

- Openers response to Positive suit:

Response	Meaning
2NT	23-24 HCP balanced
3NT	over 3m shows same as 2NT; over 3M shows 25-27 HCP
Raise	17+ HCP 3+ card support
New Suit	17+ HCP 5+ card suit

- Responders Rebids
 - opener bids 2NT: See [Strong 1NT](#)
 - opener bids a suit:
 - Single Raise: 3+ cards slam interest
 - Double Raise: 3+ cards sign-off

2NT

- 20-21 HCP Balanced
- can hold a 5 card Major
- see [Strong 1NT](#) responses, just one level higher
- for 18-19 HCP open 1 of a suit then rebid 2NT

Constructive Bidding

Natural rebids

- Require 6+ HCP for suit support
- Change of suit 8+ HCP and 4 card suit
- Changing suit from a Major and then bidding back into it shows 10+ HCP and 3 card Support

Stayman

- After [Strong 1NT](#) bid
- Bid 2C with 4 of a Major
- Openers rebids:

Response	Meaning
2D	Denies 4 of a Major suit
2H	4 Hearts Possible 4 Spades
2S	4 Spades denies 4 Hearts

Jacoby Transfers

- After 1NT
- Bids:

Bid	Meaning
2D	5+ Hearts
2H	5+ Spades

- Openers Rebids:

Rebid	Meaning
2M	must complete the transfer
3M	4+ card support for the suit

Minor Suit Stayman

- After 1NT bid 2S if no 4 card Major but want to ask for a 4 card minor

Openers Rebid	Meaning
2NT	No 4 card Minor, implies stoppers in both majors
3C	4+ Clubs, or 4-4 in minors
3D	4+ Diamonds, denies 4 Clubs
3H	Heart Stopper, Invites 3NT with a spade Stopper, may have a 4 card minor
3S	Spade Stopper, Invites 3NT with a heart Stopper, may have a 4 card minor
3NT	Denies 4 card minor, shows max strength and stopper in both Majors
4C/4D	4+ of bid suit with max strength

Texas Transfers

- After 1NT

Bid	Meaning
4D	6+ Hearts & 10-15 HCP
4H	6+ Spades & 10-15 HCP

- Opener must Complete Transfer in the same way as [Jacoby Transfers](#)

Slam Bidding

RKCB 1430

- The most well known slam asking bid
- Bid 4NT to ask partner for key cards; these are the Aces and the King of Trumps

Response	Meaning
5C	1 or 4 Key Cards
5D	0 or 3 Key Cards
5H	2 or 5 Key cards & no Q of Trumps
5S	2 or 5 Key cards with Q of Trumps

- Void Showing Responses (Optional)

Response	Meaning
5NT	Even number of Key Cards and a Void
6C	Odd number of Key Cards and Club Void if Clubs aren't Trumps, otherwise a Void higher up
6D	Odd number of Key Cards and Diamond Void if Hearts or Spades are Trumps, otherwise a Void higher up
6H	Odd number of Key Cards and Heart Void if Spades are Trumps, Spade Void if Hearts are Trumps

- After the usual response, a bid of 5NT is asking for Kings

Response	Meaning
6C	0 Kings
6D	1 King
6H	2 Kings
6S	3 Kings

- Asking for the Trump Queen:
- To enquire, the Blackwood bidder will bid the cheapest non trump suit

Response	Meaning
Trumps suit	No Trump Q
5NT	Trump Q without side Kings
Non Trump Suit	Trump Q with King in that Suit

Gerber

- 4C over NT or jump rebid of 4C over NT
- requires slam points
- Ace asking bid

Response to 4C	Meaning
4D	0 or 4 Aces
4H	1 Aces
4S	2 Aces
4NT	3 Aces

- Gerber bidder may respond 5C to ask for kings

Response to 5C	Meaning
5D	0 or 4 Kings
5H	1 Kings
5S	2 Kings
5NT	3 Kings

Defensive Bids

After Opposing 1NT

- Used after opponents open a [Strong 1NT](#)
- Shows all 1 suited and 2 suited hands at the 2 level
- Require 8+ HCP

Overcall	Meaning
Double	Any 1 suiter (Normally 6+ Cards), relay to 2C
2C	Clubs & higher Suit (5-4 distribution)
2D	Diamonds & higher Suit (5-4 distribution)
2H	Hearts & Spades (5-4 distribution)
2S	Spades (Normally 6+ Cards), weaker than double followed by 2S rebid

- After a Double 2C relay

cue-bidder's rebid	Meaning
pass	6+ Clubs
2D	6+ Diamonds
2H	6+ Hearts
2S	6+ Spades

Doubles

Penalty Doubles

- As its name implies, this is just used when you don't believe your opponents are going to make their contract

Takeout Doubles

- Artificial Double at the 1 level
- Shows either
 - 11+ HCP and 3+ card support for each unbid suit
 - 16+ HCP and 1 suit

Partners Response	Meaning
pass	Converts Takeout to Penalty; Strong Holding in opponents Trumps, no biddable suit
"Cheapest" suit	3+ cards 0-9 HCP
Jump Suit	4+ cards 10-12 HCP
Double Jump Suit	6+ cards 6-8 HCP
Cheapest NT	7-10 HCP, stopper in enemy suit, no 4 M
Jump NT	11-12 HCP, and see above
3NT	13-15 HCP Balanced, Stopper in enemy suit, sign-off
Cue-Bid	10+ HCP Unbalanced

Responsive Doubles

- A double used too show shape when:
 - Left-hand opponent opens
 - Partner Takeout Doubles
 - Right-hand opponent raises

Double	Meaning
Opponents bid Minor	4-4 in Majors
Opponents bid Major	4-4 in Minors

1NT Escapes

- Used after opponents double 1NT

Bid	Meaning
pass	requires partner to make an artificial Redouble; Shows a 4-4 hand
redouble	5+ Clubs
2C	5+ Diamonds
2D	5+ Hearts
2H	5+ Spades

- After The Artificial Redouble

Bid	Meaning
pass	Desire to Play 1NT redoubled
2C	4 Clubs & 4 cards in a higher Suit
2D	4 Diamonds & 4 cards in a higher Suit
2H	4 Hearts & 4 Spades

Standard Leads

AFTER deciding on suit to lead, match suit structure in table.

H is any honour

Trumps	No Trumps	Comment
Axxx	Axxx	Never under-lead an Ace in trump contracts
Hxxx	Hxxx	4th Highest with an honour
Hxx	Hxx	
xxxx	xxxx	2nd with no honour
xxx	xxx	MUD (Middle, Up, Down)
Txx	Txx	
Hx	Hx	Top of doubleton, excluding Kx and Qx
xx	xx	
AK	AK	lower in suit contract showing the higher after shows you are voided
KQ	KQ	
QJ	QJ	
AKQx..	AKQx..	Top of a 3 card honour sequence
KQJx..	KQJx..	
QJT _x ..	QJT _x ..	
JT9 _x ..	JT9 _x ..	
AKJ _x ..	AKJ _x ..	Top of a 2 & 1/2 card honour sequence
KQT _x ..	KQT _x ..	
QJ9 _x ..	QJ9 _x ..	

Trumps	No Trumps	Comment
A Kxx..	AK x x..	Top of 2 card honour sequence against Trumps
K Qxx..	KQxx..	
Q Jxx..	QJxx..	
A JTx..	AJTx..	Top of an internal honour sequence in No trumps, else the ace
K J xx..	KJxx..	Top of an internal honour sequence
Q T xx..	QTxx..	

Other Optional Conventions

Puppet Stayman

An alternative to Stayman to use after a [2NT](#) opening.

- After 2NT responder Bids 3C to show either a 4 or 5 card major and 3+ HCP

Response to 3C	Meaning
3D	no 5 card major but at least one 4M
3H	5 Hearts
3S	5 Spades
3NT	no 4 or 5 card major

- stayman responses to 3D

Response to 3D	Meaning
3H	shows 4 Spades
3S	shows 4 Hearts
4C	shows 4 in both majors with slam interest
4D	shows 4 in both majors with no slam interest

Bergen and Bravos

These are responses to show 4+ card support, choose either Bergen or Bravos, up to partnership agreement.

Bergen raises

- T shows major bid, O shows opposite Major
- After a 1M opener if responder has 4+ cards of the Major suit

Responders Bid	Meaning
2T	3 cards in suit, 6+ HCP
2NT	12+ HCP Balanced Jacoby 2NT
3C	9-11 HCP 4+ cards in Trump suit
3D	5-8 HCP 4+ cards in Trump suit
3T	0-4 HCP 4+ cards in Trump suit
3O	12+ HCP Singleton/Void Ambiguous Splinters

Bravos

- Most responses show 4+ card support unless stated otherwise

Responders Bid	Meaning
2T	3 card support 6-9 HCP
2NT	16+ HCP Balanced Jacoby 2NT
3C	3 way relay showing either: 6-10 HCP, 12-15 HCP & Void, 16+ HCP & Void
3D	2 way relay showing either: ~11 HCP balanced or ~11 HCP with 3 controls and a singleton/void
3T	0-5 HCP
3O	12+ HCP Singleton Ambiguous Splinters
3NT	Balanced 3 card raise
4C/4D	12-15 HCP Balanced Key card Swiss
4NT	RKCB

- 3 way Relay:
- Opener Must rebid 3D

Response	Meaning
3T	6-10 HCP
3O	12-15 HCP and void; Opener can rebid 3NT to ask for void
4C/4D	16+ HCP with void in bid suit
4H	16+ HCP void in Opposite Major

- 2 Way Relay; Opener can sign-off in 3T or Enquire with 3O

Response	Meaning
3NT	balanced
4C/4D	Singleton or void in bid suit
4H	Singleton or void in opposite Major

Jacoby 2NT

- After a 2NT bid from partner showing major suit support, slam could be on the table
- Openers Rebids

Rebid	Meaning
3C/3D	Singleton/void in Suit bid rebidding this suit shows a Void
3T	16+ HCP with slam interest, asks a description of 2NT bidders hand
3O	Singleton/Void in Opposite Major rebidding shows a Void
3NT	14-15 HCP balanced
4C/4D	5+ cards of bid suit
4H	if H are trumps its a sign-off, if S are trumps shows 5+ hearts
4S	Spades sign-off
4NT	RKCB

- Priority of openers Rebid:
 - Show a 5 Card side suit
 - show a Singleton/Void
 - bidding 3NT
 - Jumping to 4T
 - Bidding 3T
- After any 3 level rebid responder can rebid to show first round control - Ace/Void

Ambiguous Splinters

- To ask for the Void Suit bid 3NT

Response	Meaning
4C/4D	Singleton/Void in Bid Suit
4H	Singleton/Void in the unbid Major

Key Card Swiss

- Shows either Balanced or semi balanced hands - Singleton Aces allowed
- Features are
 - Third Key card
 - Q of Trumps
 - 5+ Trumps or singleton,

Bid	Meaning
4C	2 Key cards and a Feature
4D	lacks the strength of 4C

- After 4C opener can enquire about the Feature with a bid of 4D

Response	Meaning
4T	Q of Trumps
4O	5+ Trumps
4NT	3rd Key card

Other Defensive Bids

Michaels and Unusual 2NT are used after your opponent opens, to show the shape of your hand.

Michaels Cue-bids

- A forcing bid used to show shape
- 8+ HCP

Overcall	Meaning
2C over 1C	5+ Hearts & 5+ Spades
2D over 1D	5+ Hearts & 5+ Spades
2H over 1H	5+ Spades & 5+ minor
2S over 1S	5+ Hearts & 5+ minor

- Since all these bids are forcing; partner must make one of the following bids
- After 2C:

Response	Meaning
2D	Very Good Diamond Suit 6+ Cards, Denies 3+ card support for either major
2H	non forcing signoff
2S	non forcing signoff
2NT	Invites 3NT
3C	Artificial, showing slam or game interest in Hearts or Spades, Forcing
3D	Very strong Diamonds 6+ Cards Forcing
3H	Preempt with 4+ Hearts
3S	Preempt with 4+ Spades
3NT	Natural Signoff with a Big balanced hand with no interest in Major game

- After 2D:

Response	Meaning
2H	non forcing signoff
2S	non forcing signoff
2NT	Invites 3NT
3C	Very Good Club Suit 6+ Cards, Denies 3+ card support for either major
3D	Artificial, showing slam or game interest in Hearts or Spades, Forcing
3H	Preempt with 4+ Hearts
3S	Preempt with 4+ Spades
3NT	Natural Signoff

- After 2H:

Response	Meaning
2S	non forcing signoff
2NT	Asks Overcaller to Bid minor Suit
3C	Very Good Club Suit 6+ Cards
3D	Very Good Club Suit 6+ Cards
3H	Artificial, showing slam or game interest in Spades or a minor, Forcing
3S	Preempt with 4+ Spades
3NT	Natural Signoff

- After 2S:

Response	Meaning
2NT	Asks Overcaller to Bid minor Suit
3C	Very Good Club Suit 6+ Cards
3D	Very Good Club Suit 6+ Cards
3H	Natural Signoff
3S	Artificial, showing slam or game interest in Hearts or a minor, Forcing
3NT	Natural Signoff

- Overcallers Rebids
- If partner raised a cue bid, overcaller rebids their cheapest suit to show 8-10 HCP, all other bids show 10+ HCP
- If partner Bid 2NT overcaller bids their minor suit
- With equal length in 2 suits bid the cheapest suit first when responding to Michaels cue-bidder.

Unusual 2NT

- Shows 5-5 Shape in the 2 lowest unbid suits.
- 8+ HCP

Overcall	Meaning
2NT over 1C	5+ Hearts & 5+ Diamonds
2NT over 1D	5+ Hearts & 5+ Clubs
2NT over 1H	5+ Diamonds & 5+ Clubs
2NT over 1S	5+ Diamonds & 5+ Clubs

- Partners responses:
 - Bid suit with greatest tolerance
 - With Equal length suits Bid the cheapest
 - Weak 4 card support - Jump bid
 - With a Strong Hand, Cue-bid opps, this asks Unusual bidder to bid cheapest suit with 8-10 HCP and anything else with 10+ HCP
 - A bid of the 4th suit is natural 6+ cards of the suit

Optional Jacoby Transfers Responses

- Responders Rebids after 2D → 2H (Optional)

Rebid	Meaning
pass	0-7 HCP 5+ Hearts
2S	5 Hearts & 5 Spades, 8-9 HCP invitational
2NT	5 Hearts balanced/semi balanced invitational
3C	5+ Hearts & 4+ Clubs game forcing
3D	5+ Hearts & 4+ Diamonds game forcing
3H	6+ Hearts invitational
3NT	balanced/semi balanced partner can pass or correct to 4H
4H	6+ Hearts sign-off
4NT	Quantitative inviting slam or correct to 5H

- Responders Rebids after 2H → 2S (Optional)

Rebid	Meaning
pass	0-7 HCP 5+ Spades
2NT	5 Spades balanced/semi balanced invitational
3C	5+ Spades & 4+ Clubs game forcing
3D	5+ Spades & 4+ Diamonds game forcing
3H	5+ Hearts & 5+ Spades game forcing with slam interest
3S	6+ Spades invitational
3NT	balanced/semi balanced partner can pass or correct to 4S
4H	5+ Spades & 5+ Hearts game values
4S	6+ Spades sign-off

Optional Minor Suit Stayman Responses

- Responders Rebids:
- After opener bids 2NT:

Rebid	Meaning
Pass	Minimum Strength, relatively balanced, less than 5-5 in minors
3C	Natural 5+ Clubs could have 5+ Diamonds
3D	5+ Diamonds opener expected to pass
3H	Singleton/Void in H with slam interest Forcing
3S	Singleton/Void in S with slam interest Forcing
3NT	Sign-off
4C/4D	Strong and Forcing with 5+ of the minor bid

- After Opener Rebids 3C:

Rebid	Meaning
pass	minimum strength
3D	Strong 5+ Diamonds
3H	Singleton/Void in H with slam interest Forcing
3S	Singleton/Void in S with slam interest Forcing
3NT	Natural Balanced Hand
4C	Invitational to 5C, shows Unbalanced hand due to bypass of 3NT
4D	Interest in Diamonds Slam

- After Opener Rebids 3D

Rebid	Meaning
pass	Minimum Strength
3H	Singleton/Void in H with slam interest Forcing
3S	Singleton/Void in S with slam interest Forcing
3NT	Natural Balanced Hand
4C	Interest in Clubs Slam
4D	Invitational to 5D, shows Unbalanced hand due to bypass of 3NT

- After Opener rebids 3H

Rebid	Meaning
3S	Singleton/Void in Spades, Forcing
3NT	To Play
4C	5+ Clubs Natural and forcing
4D	5+ Diamonds Natural and forcing
4H	3 Hearts, unbalanced proposes playing the 4-3 Major fit

- After Opener rebids 3S

Rebid	Meaning
3NT	To Play
4C	5+ Clubs Natural and forcing
4D	5+ Diamonds Natural and forcing
4H	Singleton/Void in H with slam interest Forcing
4S	3 Spades, unbalanced proposes playing the 4-3 Major fit