

This is the bridge system used by Jeff Yutzler and Jenn Colmer for the 2018 season. It is a 2 over 1 game force (no exceptions) with other commonly used conventions. It is suitable for Flight C players. For more information on this document, see <https://github.com/jyutzler/Bridge-Systems>.

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Chapter 1. General Approach

Two-over-one game forcing with five-card majors

Strong forcing opening: 2♣;

Chapter 2. Balanced Opening Hands

Balanced hands have either 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, or 5-3-3-2 distribution. This includes five-card majors unless the major is particularly strong. Semi-balanced hands with either 5-4-2-2 or 6-3-2-2 distribution may be treated as balanced if the doubletons are Qx or better.

A hand may be upgraded 1 point for a long suit with good texture (e.g., QJT9x) and downgraded 1 point for a 4-3-3-3 hand with poor texture (e.g., AJx-KJx-Axx-Qxxx).

The bidding structure for balanced hands is as follows:

- 12-14 (weak NT): Open 1 of a suit, rebid NT
- 15-17 (strong NT): Open 1NT
- 18-19 (1.5 NT): Open 1 of a suit, jump NT
- 20-21: Open 2NT
- 22-24: Open 2 \clubsuit , rebid NT
- 25-27, 4-3-3-3: Open 3NT
- 24+: Open 2 \clubsuit , jump NT unless response promises a game force

2.1. 1NT 15-17

2.1.1. Basic Responses

- 2 \clubsuit : Stayman (also for invitational hands)
- 3NT: sign-off
- 4 \clubsuit : Gerber, asking for aces. (See Slam Bidding)
- 4NT: natural, quantitative invite to 6NT. 4NT is slam invitational only because 4 \clubsuit is available as Gerber (to ask about aces).

2.1.2. Non-forcing Stayman

2 \clubsuit is "non-forcing" Stayman, meaning that the bidding can stop in two of a suit (Garbage Stayman). Garbage Stayman is suitable for weak hands with the following shape:

- 4=4=4=1
- (3-4)=5=1
- 3=3=5=2 (maybe)
- (3-4)=4=2 (maybe)

Usually responder will have a decent 8+ HCPs (assuming a 15-17 1NT range).

Opener rebids:

- 2 \clubsuit : no four-card major

- 2♥: four or five hearts and less than five spades
- 2♠: five spades (possibly with four hearts) or four spades

Responder's rebids after 2♥ or 2♠:

- 2♥ (over 2♥): four spades, denies four hearts
- 3♥ (over 2♥) or 3♠ (over 2♠): forcing raise, slam interest, requests cue bid
- 3 of that major: invitational
- 4 of that major: to play

Responder's rebids after any response:

- 2NT: invitational, not necessarily with an unbid major
- 3♥, 3♠: 5+ cards, denies opener's shown major (if any), GF, slam interest; opener responses:
 - 3♥ after 1NT-2♥; 2♥-3♥: good support for hearts, 5=4=2=2 pattern
 - 3♠ after 1NT-2♥; 2♥-3♠: good support for spades (responder's implied major)
 - 4 other major (see hand patterns from previous two lines) or 5m: to play
 - new previously denied suit: cue bid in support of minor
- 3NT: to play (over 2♥ it promises 4♥ – choice of games)
- 4♥, 4♠, 4♣ (over 2♥): splinter
- 4NT: quantitative

2.1.3. Jacoby Transfer

The Jacoby Transfer shows a five-card major. After a 1NT opening (or overcall if systems are on - see Defensive Bidding):

- 2♥: transfer to hearts
- 2♠: transfer to spades

Opener accepts the transfer, though he can jump to the three level with 17 points and four-card support for responder's major. For example:

1NT — 2♥

- 2♥: normal acceptance of the transfer
- 3♥: 17 points and four-card heart support

If, after the transfer is accepted, responder bids a new suit, that is natural and game forcing. Possible calls after the accepted transfer are:

1NT — 2♥; 2♠

- Pass: content to play 2♥
- 2NT: invitational with a five-card suit

- Pass or 3♣: minimum
- 3NT or 4♣: maximum
- 3♣, 3♠: natural (4+), slam interest
- 3NT: asking for a choice between 3NT and 4♣
- 4NT: quantitative invitation to 6♣ or 6NT with a five-card suit
- 5NT: pick a slam (6♣ or 6NT)
- 6♣: to play

2.1.4. Single-suited Major Hands

The Texas Transfer shows a six-card major. After a 1NT or 2NT opening or overcall (if systems are on):

- 4♥: transfer to hearts
- 4♠: transfer to spades

Opener must accept the transfer.

When used in conjunction with the Jacoby Transfer, the Texas Transfer gives you a way to show a range of single-suited hands while reducing the risk of unwanted interference from the opponents. The following shows how they are used with strong NT (15-17) openings.

- Bust (would pass a 1-bid): Jacoby, pass
- Invitational with a six-card suit (would make a 1 over 1 bid): Jacoby, raise to 3; Opener rebids:
 - pass: minimum
 - 3NT: to play (rare - usually requires three cards and a balanced hand)
 - 4M: maximum
- Game signoff (weak 2 strength): Texas, pass
- Slam invitation (opening strength): Two options:
 - Jacoby, raise to 4 in suit (balanced)
 - Jacoby, jump in another suit (splinter)
- Slam (stronger-than-minimum opening): Two options:
 - Texas, 4NT (Blackwood) OR
 - Jacoby, other major (requests cue bids)
- Pick a Slam: Texas, 5NT

It is rare, but a direct bid of 4♥ or 6♥ is to play and is only used when your hand is not amenable to transferring (for example, an unprotected king).

2.1.5. Minor Suit Transfer Bids

Transfers are used to show hands with a long minor.

- 2♣: transfer to clubs
 - 2NT: preacceptance (good support)
 - 3♣: normal response
- 2NT: transfer to diamonds
 - 3♣: preacceptance (good support)
 - 3♣: normal response

After the transfer, responder can bid again to show extra length or strength:

- New suit: shortness, mild slam try
- 3NT: balanced, mild slam try
- Raise to 4: invitational
- Raise to 5: sign-off

When using this treatment, responder bids 2♣ (Stayman) with any game invitational hand. A rebid of 2NT over a 2♣ or 2♦ response shows an invitational hand that may or may not have a four-card major.

2.1.6. When Opponents Double

If an opponent doubles, all conventional responses are "on." For example:

- 1NT — (Double) — 2♣: Stayman
- 1NT — (Double) — 2♦: transfer to hearts

With a bad hand and a long minor, redouble for SOS.

- 1NT — (Double) — Redouble: Rescue - weak with a long minor (opener bids 2♣, pass or correct).

Otherwise pass and let opener reopen the bidding.

- 1NT — (Double) — pass - (pass): Forcing - opener must either bid a 5-card suit or redoubles. Responder passes the redouble with 7+ (possibly less) or bids a 4-card suit to attempt to scramble to safety.

2.1.7. Lebensohl

When the opponents interfere with a 1NT opener, a conventional 2NT response is used to show a wider range of hand types.

1NT(2♣ or higher):

- Double:
 - Penalty (if the opponent's bid showed that suit)
 - Systems on (if the opponent's 2♣ bid did not show clubs)
 - Penalty in at least one shown suit (if the opponent's bid was artificial)

- Negative if the opponent's bid is 3 \heartsuit or higher (since Responder rarely has a true Penalty Double here)
- 2Y:
 - sign-off (if the suit is unshown)
 - takeout (if the suit is shown)
- 2NT: Relay to 3 \heartsuit ; followups:
 - pass: to play
 - 3Y, below opponent's suit: sign-off
 - 3X (Cue): Stayman, showing a stopper
 - 3Y, above opponent's suit: natural, invitational
 - 3NT: Game values, showing a stopper
- 3Y: Natural, 1 round force (GF if suit is higher than opponent's suit)
- 3X (Cue): Stayman, denying a stopper
- 3NT: Game values, denying a stopper
- 4 \heartsuit /4 \spadesuit : Texas through 3 \heartsuit . (In other words it must be a jump.)

2.2. 2NT and 3NT

Systems are off for 3NT opening bids, rebids over 2 \heartsuit , and [overcalls](#).

- 4 \heartsuit : Gerber
- 4 \heartsuit : GF with diamonds or both minors
- 4 \heartsuit , 4 \spadesuit : To Play
- 4NT: Quantitative for 6NT
- 5NT: Pick a slam

Chapter 3. Major Openings

Normally open five-card majors in all seats.

Open the higher of long suits of equal length: 5–5 or 6–6.

3.1. 1♠ Over 1♥

Since the immediate objective is to support with support, 1♠ must be skipped in favor of heart support without game-forcing values.

3.1.1. After any Non-Supporting Rebid by Opener

- pass: minimum, 4 or 5 spades
- 2♥: minimum, 6+ spades
- 2NT: 4 spades, 11-12 HCP
- 3♥: three-card limit raise
- 3♥: As per 1 over 1 system
- 3NT: 4 spades, 13-15 HCP
- 4♥: Game-forcing, minimum hand
- 4♥: To play, 7+ spades
- 4NT: quantitative, 16-17 HCP

3.1.2. After 1NT Rebid

- 2♥ or 2♠: New Minor Forcing
- 2♥: preference (rare, 2 hearts and concern about NT)

3.1.3. After 2♥ or 2♠ Rebid

- raise minor: Invitational
- other minor: New Minor Forcing
- 2♥: preference (2 hearts and no more than 3 of the minor)

3.2. 1NT Forcing

1NT typically shows 6–12 points and is used in a number of circumstances:

- No support for the major opened
- A three-card limit raise
- A bust hand with otherwise good trump support (too weak for a direct raise)

It also denies four spades after a 1♠ opening.

3.2.1. Rebids

1NT is 100% forcing by an unpassed hand. With a good hand, see [\[strong-rebids\]](#). Otherwise rebid as follows:

- 2m: 3+ cards
- 2M: 6+ cards (rarely a good 5)

Responder can sign off or invite game with the rebid:

- other 2-level bid: weak hand, sign-off (opener may raise 1 \heartsuit -1NT;2m-2 \heartsuit with 5=4-0-4 distribution and a good hand)
- 2M: to play (2-card support or hand too weak for a constructive raise)
- 2 \heartsuit after 1 \heartsuit -1NT;2m: good support of minor (impossible spade)
- single raise of minor: good support (could be a minimum especially if 2 \heartsuit is available)
- 2NT: balanced invite (11-12)
- 3 \heartsuit after 1 \heartsuit -1NT;2 \heartsuit : invitational
- 3X: invitational (usually a 6-card suit)
- 3 of major: three-card limit raise
- 4 of other major: to play (preemptive, too weak for a 2/1 bid)

3.2.2. Over Interference

Double is for penalty (requires a trump stack). Generally bid a 4-card or longer suit at the 2-level if possible. Otherwise pass and wait for further developments. Bidding a new suit at the 3-level requires at least two of the following:

- significant extras
- at least 5-5 distribution
- non-vulnerable

3.3. Raises

3.3.1. Jacoby 2NT

As an unpassed hand, a 2NT bid over a 1 \heartsuit or 1 \spadesuit opening is a game-forcing raise (13+ dummy points, 4+ trumps, generally balanced and/or extras) that asks opener to describe his hand to help responder evaluate slam prospects. For example, over 1 \heartsuit :

- 3 \heartsuit , 3 \spadesuit , 3 \clubsuit : singleton or void in that suit.
- 4 \heartsuit : minimum hand.
- 3NT: medium hand (15–17).
- 3 \clubsuit : maximum hand (18+).

- 4♣, 4♦, 4♥: 5-card suit with two of the top three honors.

This treatment is off in competition and as a passed hand. Unless otherwise stated, 2NT is natural.

2NT: 11-12 HCP, balanced hand with two-card support for partner.

3.3.2. 3NT

3NT: 13-15 HCP, balanced hand with two-card support for partner.

3.3.3. Splinter Raises

Over a 1♣ or 1♦ opening, a double jump shows 13+ dummy points, 4+ card support, and shortness in the suit bid (either a singleton or void). Opener can explore slam by bidding controls or attempt to sign off by bidding game. For example:

1♣ — 4♣: game forcing, club shortness

- 4♣, 4♦: slam interest, first round control (usually ace)
- 4♥: to play

Responder shows a void by rebidding the splinter suit:

1♣-4♥;4♦-5♥: void

Opener can also self-splinter with a strong distributional hand. 1♣ — 2♥:

- 4X: game forcing, shortness

In competition, splinters are off except for jumps in the opponent's suit.

Note: This is the treatment recommended by Richard Pavlicek as described in this quiz[<http://www.rpbridge.net/cgi-bin/quiz.pl?5h4100>].

3.3.4. Two Way Reverse Drury

In third or fourth position, a 1♣ or 1♦ opening may be light (equivalent to an overcall). To prevent the contract from getting too high, responder may bid the following:

- 2 of a minor shows a limit raise
 - 2♣: 3 card support
 - 2♦: 4+ card support

These bids also apply after a double by the opponents.

Opener clarifies strength with the rebid:

- 2 of the major: to play
- 3 of the major: good hand, requests cue bid

- 4 of the major: to play
- 2♣ over 2♣ or 2♦ over 2♦: full opener, game try
- 2♥ over 1♣-2♦: 4 hearts, game try or better
- 2♠ over 1♦-2♥: 4 spades, game try or better

Other passed hand bids by responder:

- 2♣ (after 1♣ opening): natural, 10-11 points (non-forcing)
- 2M: courtesy raise (may be less than constructive)
- 3X: fit jump – 4-card support, good 5+ cards in new suit
- 3M: 5+ card support, unbalanced (rare)

3.4. Jump Shifts

3.4.1. Weak Jump Shift

A jump shift shows a weak hand (less than constructive values) and 6+ cards. Opener must pass without good support.

1♣:

- 3♣, 3♦, 3♥: weak

To show an invitational hand, bid 1NT and then jump or reverse.

1♣ — 1NT; 2♦:

- 3♦, 3♥: invitational

Chapter 4. Minor Openings

A 1 \heartsuit opener suggests a four-card or longer suit, since 1 \heartsuit is preferred on hands where a three-card minor suit must be opened. The exception is a hand with 4=4=3=2 shape which should be opened 1 \heartsuit . With 9+ cards in the minors, generally open the longer minor first. Opener should take care to ensure that a suitable rebid is available after partner's response.

4.1. Raises

Responder needs more trumps to raise (four to raise 1 \heartsuit ; five to raise 1 \spadesuit). Since four card majors should be bid up-the-line, a raise denies a four card major. Once a minor is raised, the bidding must end in that suit or NT. Raises are inverted so a raise to two is strong (limit raise or better) and a raise to 3 is weak (preemptive). When vulnerable, a jump raise should be sound (8-9 dummy points) but when non-vulnerable it is much more wide-ranging.

1 \heartsuit

- 2 \heartsuit : limit raise or better (limit raise as passed hand)
 - 2 \heartsuit , 2 \spadesuit , 3 \heartsuit : stopper
 - 2NT: balanced minimum, side suits stopped
 - 3 \heartsuit : unbalanced minimum
 - 3 \heartsuit , 3 \spadesuit , 4 \heartsuit : extras, splinter
 - 3NT: 18-19, side suits stopped
 - 4/5 \heartsuit : to play
- 3 \heartsuit : preemptive

4.1.1. In Competition

Inverted raises are off in all competition.

- 2m: courtesy (3-4 card support)
- 3m: preemptive
- cue: good support (redouble if interference is a double unless another convention described elsewhere is in effect)

4.2. One Over One

- A 1/1 bid shows 6+ dummy points and either a 5+ card suit or no lower 4-card suit.
- Bid 4-card suits up the line
- With two 5+-card suits bid the highest first.
- A diamond suit is routinely skipped if it is not particularly long or strong.

4.3. NT Responses

4.3.1. 1NT

1NT: balanced 6–10 points, no four-card major. It is not forcing, but opener is expected to bid with a strong and/or unbalanced hand.

4.3.2. 2NT

2NT: invitational balanced hand (11-12 HCP), no four-card major.

4.3.3. 3NT

3NT: game-value balanced hand (13-15 HCP), no four-card major.

4.3.4. 4NT

4NT: quantitative balanced hand (16-18 HCP), no four-card major.

4.4. Opener Rebids

Opener's rebids are natural and standard. Unless the hand qualifies for a [Strong Rebid](#), make one of the following bids.

- pass: partner is a passed hand, you have a minimum with 3-card support or a sub-minimum with 4-card support
- 1NT: balanced with 2 or 3-card support for partner, or unbalanced with a stiff A or K in partner's suit and no other alternative
- rebid suit: 6-cards or strong 5
- new suit (non-reverse): 4-cards
- raise to 2: minimum, usually 4-cards, though good 3-card support is acceptable if notrump is not
- jump raise: invitational, 17-18 dummy points
- 3NT: to play, usually long running minor
- double jump shift: game force, splinter
- jump to game: 18-19 balanced

4.5. Responder Rebids

If responder has bid a suit at the one level, he next determines whether he wishes to sign off in a partscore, invite game, sign off in game, or force to game and get more information about opener's hand.

4.5.1. Sign-off

Bids available for a sign-off in partscore: Pass, 1NT, 2 of a previously bid suit.

Example: 1♣-1♦;2♣:

- Pass
- 2♦: 2-3 hearts, likely misfit
- 2♠: 6+ spades

There is one exception to the rule that new suits are forcing: 1♣—1♦;1NT:

- 2♦: sign-off - opener must pass or correct (bust with 5-4 or better distribution)

4.5.2. Inviting Game

Bids available for inviting game: 2NT, jump in a bid suit, new minor:

Example: 1♣-1♦;2♣:

- 2NT, 3♣, 3♦, 3♥: 11–12 points, inviting game.

4.5.3. Forcing to Game

Bids available for forcing to game:

- Fourth suit
- Jump or reverse in new suit
- New Minor Forcing followed by a rebid of previously bid suit
 - For example, 1♣-1♦;1NT-2♦;2♣-2♥ shows a game-forcing hand and a 6-card suit

Opener can sign off in game or make a slam try. 4NT is Blackwood (see [Slam Bidding](#slam-bidding)) only if suit agreement has been established. Otherwise it is quantitative, asking responder to proceed with a maximum. Suit bids usually show controls.

4.5.4. New Minor Forcing

A new minor suit at the responder's second bid or later is forcing for one round and thus is invitational at the 2-level and game forcing at the 3-level. When more than one minor is available (1♣-1♦;1NT-2m), it tends to show a stopper for NT.

Example: 1♣-1♦;1NT (or 2♦)-2♣ (forcing)

After New Minor Forcing, opener must describe his hand further.

- 2 of responder's suit: 3-card support, minimum
- 3 of responder's suit: 3-card support, extras (preacceptance)
- 2 of other major: 4 cards, minimum

- 3 of other major: 4 cards, extras (preacceptance)
- 2NT: minimum
- 3NT: to play (maximum)

If opener has rebid 1NT, rebids should be designed to find a suit contract.

- raise new minor: extras, stopper, forcing to 3NT or higher

If opener has rebid his suit, rebids should be designed to find a 3NT contract.

- raise other minor: 4-cards, extras
- rebid opener's suit: retreat (minimum, no stopper in new minor)

Chapter 5. Two Over One

By an unpassed hand, a two-over-one response shows 13+ points and 4+ cards or support for opener's major. It is forcing to game.

2♣ over 1♣ shows 5+ cards.

2♣ over 1♠ shows 5+ cards and does not deny a 4-card major.

5.1. Opener's Subsequent Bids

Opener responds naturally to clarify the hand.

- 2NT: balanced minimum, misfit minimum (generally with stoppers in the unbid suits), or balanced maximum
- 3NT: intermediate hand (15-17)
- New suit: 4+ cards (reverse implies extra strength)
- Jump shift: splinter support of previously bid suit
- Rebid of original suit: no better response

Chapter 6. Game Tries

6.1. Help Suit Game Try

Once any major suit is raised from 1 to 2 (declaring suit agreement), a new suit is a game try. It suggests a suit JTx or better that would benefit from fitting honors (Qxx or better). One may bid game, sign off, or make another game try.

When this treatment is used, other bids change their meanings:

- 2NT is natural (allowing a NT contract if opener happened to raise on a three-card suit)
- 3 of the trump suit shows bad trumps but otherwise a good hand

[\[strong-rebids\]](#) ## Strong Rebids

6.2. Jump Rebid

After an opening at the 1-level and nearly any response by partner, a jump rebid shows at least 16 total points and a good six card suit. The suit should be strong enough to play opposite a small singleton. Responses:

- pass: bad fit, bad hand
- 3NT or raise to game: to play
- Other suit: cue bid in support of opener's suit
- 4NT: Ace/keycard asking (see [Slam Bidding](#))

6.3. Opener Jump Shift

After a 1/1 or 1NT/1 bid, a jump shift shows 19+ total points and an unbalanced hand. Usually it shows 5+ cards in the first suit and 4+ in the second suit, although it can also show 6-3-3-1 or 4-4-4-1 distribution if the second suit is a minor. It is forcing to game.

Responses:

- A rebid at the two-level: 5+ cards in the suit
- 3NT: denies support, extra length, or shape
- new suit: natural, extras, often a first round control
- support of either suit below game: sets trumps and shows extra shape; responder rebids:
 - Suit: first round control
 - Exception: return to first suit (major only): 6-3-3-1 distribution (warning responder from a 4-3 fit)
 - Jump new suit: splinter
- game in either suit: signoff

6.4. Opener Jump to 2NT

Opener's jump to 2NT shows a stronger-than-1NT opening (18-19 HCP). Responder's rebids are mostly natural.

6.4.1. 1m - 1M; 2NT...

- pass: weak hand, 4-card suit
- rebid suit: weak hand (signoff), 5+card suit
- retreat to opener's minor: weak hand (signoff), 4-card major, 5+ cards in opener's suit (or 4-4-4-1 distribution)
- new minor: 5 card suit and/or unbid four card major, game-forcing
- 3 \heartsuit : 5-5 or better, game-forcing or better (if 6-5 then looking to signoff at game)
- 3NT/4NT/5NT/6NT: natural (signoff/quantitative/pick-a-slam/signoff), 4-card suit
- 4 \heartsuit : Gerber
- 3 \heartsuit , 4 \heartsuit , 4 \spadesuit : 6-5 distribution or better, slam interest
- raise to 4: 6+ cards, signoff

6.4.2. 1 \heartsuit - 1 \spadesuit ; 2NT...

Same as the above with the following addition:

- 3 \heartsuit , 3 \spadesuit : 4-card major, game-forcing

6.5. Jump to Game

After a 1-level bid and any response by partner:

- a direct jump to game in opener's suit shows a one-suited hand that is too strong to preempt and too weak to jump rebid, reverse, or jump-shift. Responder is expected to pass without support and/or excellent controls.
- a direct jump to game in responder's suit shows a strong balanced hand (18-19 HCP), generally with 4-card support and a side doubleton or stiff honor. Responder is expected to continue with a limit hand or better.

6.6. Reverses (with Lebensohl)

After a 1/1 bid, a reverse shows a good 15+ HCP, an unbalanced hand, and at least five cards in the first suit. (HCP strength can be lowered in cases of extreme distribution.) Bidding 2NT is the only weak response. It is a relay to 3 \heartsuit (pass or correct). In cases of extreme strength and/or distribution, Opener may bypass the relay.

All other bids by responder are natural and forcing to game. A rebid of a major shows a decent 5+ card suit.

6.7. Self-Splinters

The following bids are self-splinters, showing a maximum (usually 17+ HCP), shortness, and game-forcing / slam interest:

- A double jump-shift after a 1/1 bid
- A jump shift after a raise
- A jump shift in a game-forcing auction (suit agreement on the last shown suit, but the hand can be less powerful)

Responder is expected to bid a first round control if possible.

In competition, splinters are off except for jumps in the opponent's suit.

Note: This is the treatment recommended by Richard Pavlicek as described in this quiz[<http://www.rpbridge.net/cgi-bin/quiz.pl?5h4100>].

Chapter 7. Strong 2

A 2 opening shows at least 22+ points balanced, 8 1/2+ tricks in a major, or 9 1/2+ tricks in a minor.

Responses:

2:

- 2: conventional, could be “waiting” with a good hand not suited to a positive response
- 2, 2, 3, 3: natural and game forcing with a minimum of 8 HCP and a five-card suit with two of the top three honors
- 2NT: 8+ HCP, balanced (systems off)

After a 2 response, opener rebids naturally:

- 2, 2, 3, 3: natural, forcing to 3 of opener’s major or 4 of opener’s minor
- 2NT: 22-23 points (see responses for 2NT opening above)
- 3NT: 24-25 points (see responses for 3NT opening above)
- 4NT: 28+ points

In response to a suit rebid, responder indicates strength.

2 — 2; 2:

- 2, 3: natural, game force
- 3: artificial (cheaper minor), very weak (0-4, not an ace)
- 3NT: 5-7 points, balanced
- 3: positive support, requests cue bid sequence
- 4: fair support, discouraging slam

2 — 2; 3:

- 3: "cheaper minor" (instead of 4)
- others: same as above

Chapter 8. Weak Two Bids of 2♣, 2♦, or 2♥

A weak two-bid shows a 6-card suit of reasonable quality and roughly 4–10 HCP, but flexible based on vulnerability and position. It may be a good 5-card suit (if vulnerable it must be very good). It may also be a poor 7-card suit (not good enough to open with at the three level) but in MP scoring three level bids are pretty lenient.

8.1. Responses

- New suit: forcing
 - Raise of responder's suit: honor-doubleton or better
 - Retreat: no outside strength
 - New suit: strength in that suit
 - 3NT: solid suit (AKJxxx or better)
- 2NT: forcing, showing game interest (on in competition)
 - New suit: feature (usually A or K in that suit)
 - Rebid of 3: no feature
 - 3NT: solid suit (AKJxxx or better)
- Any raise: to play, preemptive
- 3NT: to play (typically a good hand with three-card support)

8.2. After Interference

- 2X(any):
 - redouble of double: lead-directing (shows top honor)
 - double of overcall: penalty
 - 2NT: systems on
 - 3X: to play (preemptive), usually with a 3-card suit but honor-doubleton is permissible
 - new suit: non-forcing, lead-directing
 - 4X: to play (could be strong or preemptive)

Chapter 9. Slam Bidding

9.1. Roman Key-Card Blackwood 1430

Once suit agreement has been reached, 4NT is used to ask for keycards - the 4 aces and the king of trump. It can also be used to ask for "Queen or Extra Length" (queen: queen of trump, extra length: enough trump to promise 10 total).

4NT KC Asking:

- 5♣: 1 or 4 keycards
- 5♦: 3 or 0 keycards
- 5♥: 2 keycards, no QOEL
- 5♠: 2 keycards, QOEL

After a 5♣ or 5♦ response, the Blackwood initiator may ask for QOEL by bidding the next step:

- (heart suit agreement)-4NT;5♦-5♥: Queen ask
 - 5♣: no QOEL
 - 5♦, 6♣, 6♦: QOEL, that king, and no lower kings
 - 5NT: QOEL, no kings

9.1.1. 5NT

5NT guarantees the partnership holds all five keycards plus QOEL and is invitational to grand. A 6-level bid shows the king in that suit.

9.2. Gerber 0314 First/Last

4♣ is Gerber over first or last NT. In the case of first NT, it is key card for the last bid suit. Responses show the number of aces, by steps, just as over a plain Blackwood 4NT.

Ace Asking:

1NT — 4♣

- 4♣: 0 or 4 aces
- 4♦: 1 or 4 aces or key cards
- 4♥: 2 aces or key cards

If the player using Gerber makes any bid other than 5♣, that is to play (including 4NT).

5♣ is used to ask for kings. King Asking:

1NT — 4♦ — any — 5♣

- 5♣: 0 or 3 kings
- 5♦: 1 or 4 kings
- 5♥: 2 kings

9.3. 5NT Pick a Slam

A voluntary bid of 5NT is forcing and asks partner to try to pick the best slam available. There are no hard-and-fast rules here, but possibilities include:

- bidding a new 4-card suit (looking for a 4-4 fit)
- showing secondary support (looking for a good 7-card fit)
- rebidding a previously bid suit with unannounced length and/or strength
- returning to 6NT with no better options

The asker may continue to bid up the line if completely displeased with the response.

9.4. Quantitative 4NT

When suit agreement has not been reached, a bid of 4NT is quantitative (slam invitational). There are a number of ways to accept the invitation.

4NT quantitative:

- 5♣: 0 or 4 aces
- 5♦: 1 ace
- 5♥: 2 aces
- 5♠: 3 aces
- 5NT: [5NT Pick a Slam](#)
- any 6-bid: undisclosed length in suit, suggesting a place to play (pass or correct)

Chapter 10. Defensive Bidding

10.1. Doubles

A double is for takeout over a partscore bid (4 \square or lower). In the direct position over a 1-level bid, it shows support for the unbid suits and enough strength to warrant getting into the auction (usually 10+ points with shortness in opener's suit OR 18+ points and any distribution). In the balancing position it can be 2-3 points lighter.

Advancer is expected to bid after a takeout double. The Rule of 9 (#cards + #honors + bid level \geq 9) is a reasonable guideline to determine when to convert the double to penalty. With insufficient strength and no compelling suit, a 1NT bid is permissible. If you have two places to play, look for a way to show both suits if you have 6+ HCP:

- Spades and a minor: bid the minor first (example: (1 \square)X(p)2m;(2 \square)p(p)2 \square)
- Hearts and a minor: bid hearts first (example: (1 \square)X(p)2 \square ;(2 \square)p(p)3m)
- Both majors or both minors: bid the higher suit first (example: (1m)X(p)1 \square ;(2m)p(p)2 \square)

A below-game jump response to a takeout double is invitational (9-12 declarer points). To force for one round, responder cuebids opener's suit. This is forcing to game by an unpassed hand.

Any subsequent bid by doubler shows significant extras and is strongly invitational to game. If advancer has jumped, then a new suit or NT bid by doubler is forcing to game.

10.1.1. Reopening Doubles

When the opponents bid to a level, either player may make a reopening double. These are takeout-oriented, but responder has latitude to convert to penalty if warranted. At low levels, this requires a trump stack. At higher level part-scores, it is more flexible (Kxx or even Qxx may be sufficient).

10.1.2. After a Game Bid

Over 4 \square , a double is penalty-oriented, usually with spade tolerance. Advancer may pull the double with undisclosed distribution and/or poor defensive values. 4NT (either directly or after a double) shows the minors.

After 4 \square , a double is penalty-oriented. Advancer may pull the double with undisclosed distribution and/or poor defensive values. 4NT (either directly or after a double) is for takeout, showing at least two places to play.

10.1.3. Balancing

When the opponents have shown a major fit, balancing is very aggressive especially when non-vulnerable.

- (1 \square)-p-(2 \square)-p;(p)X: takeout (promises hearts and tolerance for minors)
- (1 \square)-p-(2 \square)-p;(p)2NT: minors (promises 4-4 or better in the minors)

10.1.4. Lebensohl after Doubling a Weak-Two

After a Weak-Two by the opponents followed by a Takeout Double and a pass by responder, 2NT is a conventional response, requesting (but not insisting) on a relay to 3♣. This allows Advancer to distinguish between minimum, intermediate, and maximum hands.

(2♣)X(p):

- 2NT: Relay to 3♣
 - pass, 3♣, 3♦: to play (7 or fewer HCP)
 - 3♥: 4 hearts, spade stopper, GF
 - 3NT: to play, no heart suit, stopper
 - *The 3♣ Relay may be bypassed with 22+ HCP or 9+ playing tricks*
- 3♣, 3♦, 3♥: semi-positive (8-11 HCP)
- 3♥: game values, 4 hearts, no stopper
- 3NT: game values, no heart suit, no stopper

10.1.5. Responsive Doubles

After an opponent bids at the one level, partner doubles for takeout, and the other opponent raises, a double by advancer is responsive. This allows the original doubler to be declarer and to pick the preferred suit.

Responsive Doubles are on through 4♣ but off after a preemptive opening.

10.2. Suit Overcalls

Suit overcalls show 8–16 points (double and bid the long suit with a stronger hand). A reopening bid means much the same as a direct seat bid, but it may be made with about a king less. Versus an opening preempt, an overcall is natural.

10.2.1. Advances of Suit Overcalls

The only forcing response is a cuebid of opener's suit, asking the overcaller about the quality of his overcall:

(1♣) — 1♦ — (Pass) — 2♣:

- (Pass) — 2♦: minimum overcall.
- (Pass) — other: extra strength (11 or 12 points minimum).

New suit advances are non-forcing but constructive.

10.2.2. Jump Overcalls

Jump overcalls are preemptive, showing the same value as an opening bid at the same level:

(1 \square):

- 2 \square : a hand that would open a weak two-bid in spades.
- 3 \square : a hand that would open 3 \square .

A cuebid overcall when the opponents have bid two suits is natural in the second suit but Michaels in the first suit.

10.2.3. vs. Opening Preempt

Versus an opening preempt, an overcall is natural.

- Two-level: any opening hand with a five-card suit
- Three-level: extras: 15+ total points
- Four-level: significant extras: 17+ total points
- Jump overcall over a Weak-Two: significant extras, but non-forcing (with a Strong-Two hand, double first then jump to game.)
- Jump overcall to game is to play and is semi-preemptive
- *In the balancing seat, an overcall can be a king lighter*

10.2.4. Responses

Raises are natural and generally preemptive. A new suit is non-forcing but constructive.

A cuebid of opener's suit by an unpassed hand shows any good hand and is forcing for one round. Advancer will return to Overcaller's suit to show a limit raise or better. A cuebid of opener's suit by a passed hand shows good support (limit raise or better).

Examples: (1 \square) — 1 \square — (Pass) — 2 \square :

- (Pass) — 2 \square : minimum overcall.
- (Pass) — other: natural, game-forcing.

10.3. NT Overcalls

With appropriate strength and a stopper in the opponent's suit, you may make a NT overcall. All systems are on - effectively the opening bid is ignored.

10.3.1. Direct Position (1X-?)

- 10-14 HCP: pass or double then pass
- 15-18 HCP: 1NT
- 19-21 HCP: double then bid NT
- 22-24 HCP: double then jump NT

10.3.2. Balancing Position (1X-p-p-?)

- 12-15 HCP: 1NT
- 16-18 HCP: double then bid NT
- 19-21 HCP: double then jump in NT
- 22-24 HCP: 3NT
- 2NT is unusual (see below)

10.3.3. 2-Level (2X-? or 1X-p-2X-?)

- 15-18 HCP: 2NT
- 19-21 HCP: 3NT
- 22-24 HCP: double then 3NT

10.3.4. 3-Level (3X-? or any-p-3X-?)

- bad 16 HCP or less: pass or double then pass
- good 16 HCP or more: double or 3NT

10.3.5. Unusual 2NT

A jump overcall of 2NT shows at least 5–5 in the lower two unbid suits. (It may show 2=2=4=5 distribution but in that case it should be a king stronger.)

(1 \square) - 2NT: hearts and clubs

The strength is either weak or very strong/distributional. (Any subsequent bid by the overcaller shows extra strength or distribution.) With an normal opening hand it is better to bid the higher suit then rebid the lower suit if needed.

Note: Unusual 2NT may be off in the reopening seat (see NT Overcalls above).

10.3.6. Unusual 4NT

In a highly competitive auction, 4NT is also unusual.

Over an opening 4 \square bid, 4NT is takeout, showing at least two places to play.

10.4. Michaels Cuebid

A cuebid overcall when the opponents have bid only one suit is a Michaels cuebid, showing a 5–5 two-suiter (or more distributional).

- If the opening is in a minor suit, the cuebid shows the majors;
- If the opening is in a major, the cuebid shows the other major and an unspecified minor.

The strength is either weak or very strong/distributional. With an normal opening hand it is better to bid the higher suit then rebid the lower suit if needed. When vulnerable, it is best to avoid very weak hands. (This also makes it easier for advancer to decide to bid game.) When non-vulnerable, the low-end range is much wider.

10.4.1. Responses to a Minor Cuebid

1. Major at lowest level: Preference (usually 3)
2. 2NT: Invitational
3. Opponent's suit: Game or slam try

10.4.2. Responses to a Major Cuebid

1. Major at lowest level: Preference (usually 3)
2. Jump in major: Weak if below game
3. 2NT: asks for overcaller's minor.
 - If advancer then returns to the major, this is invitational.
 - If there is further interference, 4NT may also ask for the minor.

10.4.3. Rare Responses to Either Cuebid

1. Jump in major: Good support, but weak if below game
2. Unbid minor (no further interference): Weak
3. 3NT: To play

10.4.4. Overcaller Rebids

Overcaller will normally have a weak hand and will pass or make a minimum response. With a strong hand or freakier distribution, overcaller will make some other bid.

10.5. Meckwell vs. Strong 1NT

Meckwell features multiple ways to show single-suited or 5-4 hands.

- double: long minor or both majors or 18+ HCP
- 2♣: clubs and a major
 - 2♣, 2♦: natural, to play
- 2♦: diamonds and a major
 - 2♦: natural, to play
- 2♥: natural, rebiddable
- 2♠: natural, rebiddable
- 2NT: minors

After double, advancer is expected to relay to 2♣ but may break the relay with a 6-card suit.
Responses to 2♣:

- pass: single-suited with clubs
- 2♦: single-suited with diamonds
- 2♥: both majors
- 2♠: both majors, but spades are stronger
- 3♣: natural, rebiddable

After 2♦ or 2♥, Advancer may pass or bid 2♣. Overcaller may pass or correct to 2♣.

Chapter 11. Preemptive Bids

Opening suit bids at the three level and higher are preemptive and may be very weak particularly in first or third seat. In a major they typically show seven cards. In a minor (particularly clubs) the rules are less strict especially in Matchpoints and/or non-vulnerable.

Preempts are generally not made in first or second position with:

- more than one outside trick
- a four-card major Q-x-x-x or better
- a void in a minor

Responses in new suits or NT are natural and forcing if below game.

Raises are best used with an unbalanced hand and decent trump support.

Chapter 12. Competitive Bidding

When the opponents interfere, opener sometimes has an awkward rebid. For example:

- 1♣ — (Pass) — 1♣ — (2♣)
 - Rebid 2♣ with ♠943 ♥A875 ♦AQJ4 ♣Q3 (rebid 1NT if RHO has passed, make a reopening double if the ♣Q is in another suit)

12.1. New Suits

In a competitive sequence, new suits by an unpassed hand are forcing. (To make a constructive, non-forcing bid, consider a Negative Double.) New suits by a passed hand are constructive but non-forcing.

Jump shifts are weak, showing a similar hand to a preempt.

12.2. Cue Bids

Cuebidding right-hand opponent's suit shows a limit raise or better:

- 1♣ — (2♣) — 3♣: limit raise or better.

Note: If playing inverted minors ON in competition, then that treatment supercedes this one.

12.3. Jump Raise

When using this treatment, a jump raise is weak / competitive.

- 1♣ - (2♣) - 3♣: weak, 4+ card support

Note: if you pass a suit bid and bid it later, it is natural, not a cue bid:

- (1♣) - p - (1♣) - p; (1♣) - 2♣: natural, 6+

12.4. With Conventions

Unless otherwise noted elsewhere, any bid or double by an opponent cancels a convention intended for non-competitive sequences.

12.4.1. Examples

- 1♣ — (2♣) — 2NT: natural (11-12 HCP).
- 2♣ — (Double) — 2♣: natural and positive.

12.5. Against Conventions (Unusual over Unusual)

After partner opens in a suit and a conventional bid by the opponents shows one known suit, a cue bid shows a good raise, a double shows a good hand without support, and other bids are weak. For example:

1♣ — (2♣:Michaels)

- 3♣, 3♦, 3♥: weak
- 3♠: Limit raise or better in spades.
- Double: at least 10 HCP, possibly willing to make a penalty double.

If the conventional bid shows two known suits, there are two cue bids available and the second shows the fourth suit. For example:

1♣ — (2NT:Unusual)

- 3♣, 3♦: weak
- 3♥: Limit raise or better in clubs.
- 3♠: 10+HCP, 5+ spades
- Double: at least 10 HCP, possibly willing to make a penalty double.

12.6. Vs. Takeout Doubles

If RHO makes a takeout double:

1♣ — (Double)

- 1♣, 1♦: forcing, point count not limited.
- 2♦: non-forcing (6–10 points, usually a six-card suit).
- 2NT: limit raise (at least 10 points) — or better.
- Redouble: 10 points or more, but it is better to make a more descriptive bid of 1♣, 1♦, or 2NT with the appropriate hand.
- 3♦: preemptive, good trump support but fewer than 10 points.

A responder's jump shift after a double is to play:

1♣ — (Double) — 2♦, 2♥, 3♦: six-plus card suit, like a weak two-bid or preemptive three-bid.

12.7. Negative Doubles

The negative double is used through 4♣ promising four cards (at least) in an unbid major. Bidding a major in competition shows a five-card or longer suit and strength suitable to the level. With insufficient high-card strength for a free bid, double may also be used with a five-card or longer suit.

- 1♠ — (1♠) — Double: 4–4 or better in the majors.
- 1♠ — (1♠) — Double: exactly four spades (1♠ promises at least five).
- 1♥ — (1♥) — Double: four hearts and 6+ points or five hearts and 5–6 points.
- 1♥ — (4♥) — Double: four hearts and 10+ points or five hearts and 8-10 points.

If both majors are bid, then a double shows both minors.

- 1♠ — (1♠) — Double: 4-4 or better in the minors.

When the opponents overcall a minor over a minor at the two-level or higher, a double shows at least one four-card major and at least two places to play.

- 1♠ — (2♠) — Double: at least one four-card major.
- 1♥ — (2♥) — Double: at least one four-card major.

If opener bids the a major you cannot support, rebid opener's first suit or NT to imply the other major.

12.8. Card-Showing Doubles

In a competitive auction below game where no other double applies, a double is card-showing. Partner is requested to do something intelligent, such as:

- Show secondary support for a previously bid suit
- Rebid an extra-long or extra-strong suit
- Bid a previously unbid four-card suit
- Bid NT with at least one good stopper
- Convert to penalty (usually with a decent four cards)

12.9. Penalty Doubles

A double is unequivocally for penalty in the following cases:

- After a game contract by the opponents
- After a natural NT bid by any player
- After two previous doubles by either partner
- After partner has bid or doubled over an opposing preempt and preempter's partner has raised

12.9.1. Lightner Doubles

A double of a NT or slam contract is Lightner, asking for a specific lead such as:

- dummy's first bid suit
- a suit doubler has not shown

12.9.2. Lead-Directing Doubles

In fourth position or after a pass, double of an artificial bid is lead-directing. To make the bid, doubler must be confident that:

- the lead will be helpful
- the opponents will not be able to make the contract redoubled

12.10. Redoubles

A redouble can have one of three meanings:

To play if:

- your side is at the four level or higher:
 - 4♣ — (Double) — Redouble: Penalty
- the opponents double a conventional bid:
 - 1NT — (Pass) — 2♣ — (Double) — Redouble: Penalty, good diamond suit;

A good hand if:

- their double is for takeout:
 - 1♣ — (Double) — Redouble: 10+ points;

SOS, requesting a different suit if:

- your side is doubled for penalty in a trump suit at the three level or lower:
 - 1♣ — (Pass) — Pass — (Double); Pass — (Pass) — Redouble: SOS, responder can support at least two of the unbid suits.

Chapter 13. Defensive Leads and Signals

13.1. Carding

First discard is attitude for that suit. (See "Signals" below.)

13.2. Signals (Upside-Down Count and Attitude)

When signaling, defender must first determine what information is most useful. Signals are made in this priority:

1. Attitude (low encourages)
2. Count (low: even)
3. Suit preference (high: higher suit)

13.3. Leads

Leads are:

- top of touching honors and interior sequences.
- A from A-K-x(x...)
 - Q from partner either is singleton or promises J
- K from A-K tight or A-K-J(x)
- Q from A-K-Q-x(x...) - requests count
- Top of all doubletons (including honors)
- Against suits:
 - 3rd/5th/7th best from x-x-x(-x...)
- Against NT
 - Bottom from H-x-x, top from x-x-x (BOSTON)
 - 4th best from H-x-x-x(-x...)
 - 2nd best from x-x-x-x (show original 4th best at next opportunity)