

The SBU Standard System File

Summary of the SBU Standard System

“Weak no-trump, 4-card Majors, 3 weak twos”

Opening Bids and Responses

1NT = 12-14 Stayman, transfers, 2♠ = weak takeout to either minor
1 suit = 10-20: Open longest suit: with 5-5 open higher-ranking
With 4=4 open: 1♥ with both Majors
1♣ with both minors
1Major with Major + minor
4=4=4=1 opens 1♣ with a red singleton, 1♥ with a black singleton

Limit raises; long suit trial bids

1NT response = 6-9, denies a 4-card major that could be bid at the 1-level
1over1 response = 6+, F1; 2over1 response 10+HCP, F to 2 of opener's suit
Strong jump shifts

Opener's reverse = F1 after 1over1 response; FG after 2over1;

Responder's reverse = FG

1NT rebid = 15-17; jump 2NT rebid = 18-19; 2NT after 2over1 = 15-19, FG

2♣ = 23+ balanced, or FG unbalanced. 2♦ response = relay with no good suit
2♦♥♠ = Natural weak 6-card suit, 6-10HCP 2NT response = forcing enquiry

2NT = 20-22 Stayman, transfers

Higher openers = pre-emptive

Slam Bidding: Roman Keycard Blackwood (14 30)

Gerber 4C **only** as immediate response to 1NT/2NT

Cuebids = 1st or 2nd round controls. Splinter Bids

Competitive Bidding:

Doubles are takeout **except:** Dbl of 1NT = Penalty

Overcalls are wide-ranging with a good suit. Raises are limited, cue = good raise
Weak jump overcalls.

Michaels cuebids, Unusual 2NT

Coping with Intervention

New suits are F1; jump new suit = FIT; cues of their suit are strong raises

They dbl 1M: jump raises are distributional, 2NT = sound limit raise

Leads and Signals

Leads: 4th highest, top of a sequence.

K asks for count signal, A and Q ask for Attitude

Signals:

Count:	Standard (High Even Low Odd)
Attitude:	Reverse. Low = like; High = hate
Suit Preference:	low card = lower-ranking of possible suits; high card = higher
Remainder count:	high from remaining even number, low from odd number

Introduction

Hand Evaluation

High Card Points (HCP):	Ace = 4; K = 3; Q = 2; J = 1 are used to determine the strength of a balanced hand
Playing Tricks (PT):	the number of tricks you expect to make in your own hand with your best suit as trump
Quick Tricks (QT)	Honour combinations that expect to win the first or second round of a suit: A = 1QT; AK = 2QT; KQ = 1QT; K = ½QT
Losers	The number of tricks that will be lost without help from partner.

Definitions

Natural Bids are bids that show willingness to play in the named denomination

Artificial Bids have a meaning not associated with the named denomination

Conventional Bids are artificial bids associated with a named convention

Bids can be **Forcing** (partner must respond) or **nonforcing** (partner may pass)

Some bids are **game-forcing** (the auction may not stop below game-level)

Invitational Bids invite partner to bid on to game if suitable

Sign-offs are bids partner is expected to pass

Limit Bids define a hand's strength within a narrow HCP range

A **void** is a holding of 0 cards in a suit; **singleton** = 1 card; **doubleton** = 2 cards

Balanced hands have no voids or singletons, at most one doubleton

Semi-balanced hands have no voids or singletons, but two doubletons

Major suits (Ms) are hearts and spades

Minor suits (ms) are diamonds and clubs

Preference is returning to partner's original suit: **false preference** may be necessary with a doubleton

A **reverse** is a rebid in a second suit that is higher-ranking than the original suit. Since it requires partner to give preference at a higher level it shows extra values

Chapter 1: No-trump Bidding

1.1 *Balanced hands try always to bid no-trump.*

A **Balanced hand** has no voids or singletons, at most one doubleton

4=3=3=3

4=4=3=2

5=3=3=2

Balanced hands open the bidding like this:

HCP	Opening Bid	Further action
12-14	1NT	Partner is in charge
15-17	1 of a suit: The 5-card suit with 5=3=3=2 The 4-card suit with 4=3=3=3 1♥ with 4=4 in the Majors 1♣ with 4=4 in the minors 1Major with 4Major + 4minor	Rebid NT 1NT after a 1over1 response 2NT after a 2over1 response
18-19	1 of a suit: Choice as for 15-17 range	Rebid 2NT
20-22	2NT	Partner is in charge
23-24	2♣	Rebid 2NT
25-26	2♣	Rebid 3NT
27+	2♣	Bid a suit and improvise!

Exception: you open 1♥ with 44 in the Majors, partner responds 1♠.

Raise spades.

But if you open 1♣ and partner responds 1♦ rebid 1NT/2NT anyway.

Notes:

- 5=3=3=2 opens NT even with a 5-card Major (with a strong suit and 2 unstopped suits you may open 1Major, provided you are happy to rebid 2Major)
- It is not compulsory to open 1NT with all balanced 12 counts. Pass is an option.
In third seat, especially vulnerable, avoid opening bad 12 counts with 1NT
Prefer 1 of a suit, because you need no longer find a rebid.

A **Semi-balanced hand** has no voids or singletons, but two doubletons

5=4=2=2

6=3=2=2

Semi-balanced hands usually open the longest suit, but occasionally they will be treated as balanced hands because there is no good rebid: the hand is not strong enough to reverse, or the 6-card suit lacks quality.

1.2 Further Bidding After a 1NT Opener

1NT is a **Limit Bid**. (It has a narrow 12-14 HCP range).

Responder is in charge and decides both level and strain.

With a **Balanced Hand raise** to the appropriate level (possibly via Stayman):

Response	Point range	Opener's rebid
Pass	Less than 11HCP	-
2NT <i>Invitational</i>	11-12 HCP	Pass if minimum Bid 3NT if maximum
3NT <i>Sign-off</i>	12-18 HCP	Pass
4NT <i>Invitational</i>	19-20 HCP	<i>See quantitative 4NT in Slam Bidding</i>
5NT <i>Forcing</i>	23-25 HCP	<i>See quantitative 5NT in Slam Bidding</i>
6NT	21-22 HCP.	Pass

1.2.1 The Stayman Convention

Responder uses **Stayman** over 1NT to look for a 4-4 Major suit fit.

The **2♣ response** promises at least one 4-card Major

Do Not Use with a 5-card Major unless you also have 4 cards in the other Major

Opener's Rebid	Hand type	Responder's rebid
2♦	No 4-card Major	Pass. Weak hand, short ♣s, 4+♦ 2♥♠ Weak hand 5-4 in Majors, bid 5-carder 2NT Invitational with a 4card Major 3♣♦ Invitational 6card minor 3♥♠ 5-card Major, 4cards in the other Major. Forcing to game 3NT To play 4NT Quantitative
2♥	4-card ♥suit May have 4 ♠s also	Pass. Weak hand 2NT Invitational with 4 ♠s 3♣♦ Invitational 6card minor with 4 ♠s 3♥ Invitational with 4 ♥s 3NT To play, with 4 ♠s (Opener converts to 4♠ with 4=4Majors) 4♥ To play 3♠4♣♦ Slam tries agreeing ♥s 4NT Quantitative
2♠	4-card ♠ suit, Denies 4 ♥s	As after 2♥, except that non-raises promise 4 ♥s

Note: Before using Stayman consider all 3 possible replies
If any of them gives you a problem with your rebid **do not use** Stayman

1.2.2 Major Suit Transfers

Responder may Transfer into a 5+card Major to improve the contract or to offer a choice of partscore or game.

To **Transfer** bid the suit below your actual suit: 2♦ shows ♠s; 2♥ shows ♣s.

Response	Opener's rebid	Further Bidding	
2♦	2♥ with 2/3 ♠s	Pass	Weak hand with 5+♥s
		2♠3♣♦	Natural, 4+cards, forcing to game
		2NT	Invitational with 5♥s, balanced
		3♥	Invitational with 6+♥s
		3NT	Asks opener to choose: 3NT or 4♥
		4♥	To play
		4NT	Quantitative
	3♥ with 4/5 ♠s (transfer break)	Pass	Weak
		4♥	To play
		4NT	Ace-asking
		3♠4♣♦	Cuebids
2♥	2♠ with 2 or 3 ♣s	Pass	Weak hand with 5+♣s
		3♣♦♥	Natural, 4+cards, forcing to game
		2NT	Invitational with 5♣s, balanced
		3♠	Invitational with 6+♣s
		3NT	Asks opener to choose: 3NT or 4♠
		4♠	To play
		4NT	Quantitative
	3♠ with 4 or 5♣s (transfer break)	Pass	Weak
		4♠	To play
		4NT	Ace-asking: 4♣♦♥ Cuebids

Note: When opener completes the transfer that is NOT a raise.
Responder 'rebids' the transfer suit only with 6+cards.

1.2.3 Minor Suit Transfers

If responder has a 6+card minor in a weak distributional hand, 3 minor may be a better part score than 1NT. The **2♣ response** is a *Transfer into either minor*.

Response	Opener's rebid	Further Bidding	
2♣	3♣ (no choice)	Pass	Weak with 6+♣s
		3♦	Weak with 6+♦s <i>Sign off</i>

1.2.4 Other Responses to 1NT

- 1NT 3any Natural slam try with a 6+card suit
- 4♣ Ace-asking: Extremely rare
- 4♥♠ To play. 6+card suit, normally unbalanced
- 5♣♦ To play. 7+ card suit. Extremely rare

1.3 Further Bidding after a 2NT Opener (20-22 balanced)

Responses are similar to those over 1NT, but a level higher, so there is less room
Do not attempt to make a weak takeout of 2NT – partner has a strong hand
 Do not try to play in a minor unless extremely distributional, or interested in slam

Response	Meaning	Opener's rebid	Further Bidding
Pass	0-4 HCP	None	None
3NT (Sign-off)	5-10HCP, balanced	None	None
4NT (Invitational)	11-12HCP balanced	<i>See Quantitative 4NT in Slam Bidding</i>	
5NT (Forcing)	15-16HCP balanced	<i>See Quantitative 5NT in Slam Bidding</i>	
6NT (Sign-off)	13-14HCP balanced		

3♣ Stayman (Forcing)	Unlimited, seeking 4-4 Major fit	3♦ No 4card Major 3♥ 4+♥ 3♠ 4+♠, not 4♥	Game bids to play New suits forcing
3♦/3♥ Transfers (Forcing)	Unlimited, choice of game/slam	Normally complete transfer With 4card support break to 4♥/4♠ or cue-bid	Game bids to play New suits forcing
3♠ Minor suit Stayman	9+HCP, slam interest	3NT No 4+card minor 4♣♦ Natural, 4+cards	<i>See Slam Bidding</i>

4♣ Ace ask (Forcing)	Slam interest	Show number of aces held	<i>This is VERY rare Responder sets the contract</i>
4♦ (Forcing)	Natural 6+card suit. Slam interest	4NT no diamond fit 4♥♠ cue-bids agreeing diamonds	<i>See Slam Bidding</i>
4♥♠ (Invitational)	Natural 6+card suit. Slam interest	Pass no fit. 4NT ace-asking New suit cue-bid	
5♣♦ (Sign-off)	Natural, 7+card suit Weak	None	<i>This is VERY rare</i>

Note: Use these methods whenever 2NT is the first natural bid in your auction.
 (adjust the HCP to fit different point ranges)

eg 2♣ 2♦ or (Weak2bid) 2NT
 2NT (23---24)

Chapter 2. Opening Bid of One of Suit

- 1x = a) a balanced hand with 15-19 HCP OR
b) an unbalanced hand with 10-20 HCP

Normally open the longest suit.

With 2 5-card (6-card) suits open the higher-ranking; rebid the 2nd suit
(with ♠+♣ it is more economical to start with 1♣, then bid and rebid ♠s.)

With 2 4-card suits open: 1♥ with both Majors;
1♣ with both minors;
The Major with 1 Major and 1 minor

4441: open 1♣ with singleton ♦/♥; middle of 3 touching suits with singleton ♣/♠
(it is not compulsory to bid xxxx – consider suit quality and possible rebid)

2.1. Limit Raises

Opening	Response	Further Bidding
1♠	2♠ = 5-9 HCP, 4+♠ (may be 3♠ if unbalanced and not strong enough for 2over1)	Opener's new suit = *Game Try 3♠ = re-raise = to play
	3♠ = 9-12 HCP 4+♠.	New suit = cue = slam try
	4♠ = distributional game raise	Very rare
	4♣♦♥ = Splinter: (game raise with 4+♠, singleton/ void in the suit bid)	4♠ = sign-off Others cue-bids/Blackwood
	Change of suit followed by 4♠ = Delayed Game Raise, slam try	Cue-bids/Blackwood
1♥	As to 1♠ (2♥ may be 3x♥ if not worth a 2over1 and without 4x♠) 3♠4♣♦ = Splinter	
1♦	2♦ = 5-9 4+♦ No biddable 4-card Major	*Opener's new suit = Natural, may be probe for 3NT
	3♦ = 9-12, 4+♦ No 4-card Major	Opener's 3NT = to play
	4♦ = pre-emptive 6+♦	
	3♥♠4♣ = Splinter	
1♣	As to 1♦. Raising a minor usually denies a 4+card Major	

Note: whenever raising partner's Major is an option, choose that option.
(**Exception:** when your hand is too strong for a limit raise)

*Game tries after 1M-2M show length, a suit where help is required.

Partner bids game if maximum or suitable, signs off in 3M if minimum

*Game tries after 1m-2m and 1m-3m usually show stoppers, looking for 3NT.

2.2. Responding in NT

NT responses are limit bids with a precise range.

They are never used when we can show a 4-card Major instead.

Opening	Response	Opener's Rebid
1♠	1NT = 6-9 Semi-balanced – may have short ♠s if not worth 2over1, but not short in another suit. (Often prefer a 3-card raise)	Pass = balanced 14-16 2new suit = Natural, 54+, unlimited 2♠ = 6+♠, to play 2NT = 16+-19, Invitational 3new suit = 18+, 54+ game-forcing 3♠ = 6+♠, invitational
1♥	1NT = 6-9. Denies 4x♠ May have singleton ♥ but not short in another suit.	Similar to 1♠ 2♠ = natural, strong game invitation with longer hearts (reverse)
1♦	1NT = 6-9. Denies 4-card M May be 3325, or 3316	2♦ = -5+♦, unbalanced, sign off 2♣ = natural, unbalanced, 54+ 2M = natural, 17+ (reverse)
1♣	1NT = 6-9. Denies 4-card M Normally 3334 or 3325, may have 4 weak ♦	2♣ = 5+♣, to play 3♣ = 6+♣, invitational to 3NT (responder may bid stoppers) 2NT = 16+-19, Invitational 3NT = running ♣s, to play
1x (x=any)	2NT = 10-12. 3334, 3244 (may have 4 of opener's minor) or 3325 Denies 4-card M that could be bid at 1-level	3x = to play, weak Any game bid = to play New lower suit = natural, 54+, investigating best game.
1x (x=any)	3NT = 13-15. Normally 4333 Denies 4xM that could be bid at 1-level	4M = to play 4m = slam interest, forcing.

Notes:

- (1) Do not use a 1NT response to show weakness, prefer an unlimited 1M if possible.
- (2) Do not respond 1NT with an unbid singleton, prefer a 3-card raise of partner's Major, or a stretched two-over-one
- (3) Occasionally respond 1NT with 5HCP if there is a good chance of improving the contract.
- (4) Consider adopting an alternative meaning for the 2NT response: it can easily be replaced by a change of suit, followed by a 2NT rebid.

2.3 Change of Suit Response

A new suit at the 1-level (1over1) shows 6+HCP, unlimited, forcing for 1 round
A new suit at the 2-level (2over1) shows 10+HCP, unlimited, forcing for 1 round
Tend to respond in a 4+card Major wherever possible.

Opening	Response
1♣	Respond in longest suit. With 2 5-card suits bid higher, then lower. Bid 4card Ms up-the-way (with 4♦4M prefer 1M, particularly if worth only one bid)
1♦	May respond 1M with 4M 5+♣ with fewer than 12HCP (NB 1♦–2♣–2♦–2M, responder's reverse, is game-forcing)
1♥	May respond 1♠ with 4♠ 5+♣/♦ with fewer than 12HCP May respond 1NT if not strong enough for 2over1
1♠	May respond 1NT if not strong enough for 2over1 2m = 4+cards; 2♥ = 5+cards, 10+HCP
1x	Jump new suit = strong, game-forcing. Either a self-supporting single-suited hand, or a good suit with 4+card support for partner.

Our priority is to find 8-card major fits, since the easiest games are 3NT and 4 of a major.

Notes:

- (1) With 4-card support for partner's Major prefer to raise the Major.
Do not bid a new suit unless the hand is too strong for a Limit Raise.
- (2) Over 1m normally bid a 4card Major even with 4+card support.
If appropriate show support for the minor next time
- (3) Occasionally respond with fewer points if short in opener's suit and there is a good chance of improving the contract.
- (4) Occasionally stretch a 2-over-1 response with a distributional hand, but only if:
 - a. you have a doubleton in partner's suit and can happily Pass a rebid or give preference over a change of suit
 - b. you have a 6+card good suit that you can rebid, not forcing.

2.4 Opener's rebid after a change of suit response

The change of suit is forcing, so opener must choose one of 4 options:

- a) Raise partner
- b) Rebid in no-trump
- c) Rebid the suit opened
- d) Bid a new suit

2.4a): Raising Partner

	Opener's Rebid
1♣ - 1♥	2♥ = single raise. 12-15 HCP with 4-card support. Limit Bid (Occasionally 3-card raise with an unbalanced hand) 3♥ = jump raise. 15-18 HCP with 4-card support. Limit Bid 4♥ = game raise. 18-20 HCP, (16+ with extra distribution) 4♣ = game raise with 2-4-2-5 distribution 3♦♠ = Splinter Bids with 4-card support and game values
1♥ - 2♣	3♣ = single raise. 12-15 HCP with 4card support 4♣ = jump raise. 15+HCP, Game-forcing opposite 10+HCP

Note: Raises of partner's suit are Limit Bids, mostly non-forcing. They set the suit raised as trump. Responder may Pass, bid game, or make a game / slam try by bidding a new suit

2.4b): Rebidding in no-trump

	Opener's Rebid
1♣ - 1♥	1NT = 15-17 HCP after a 1-over-1 response 2NT = 18-19 HCP, game-forcing
1♥ - 2♣	2NT = 15-19 HCP after a 2-over-1 response. Game-forcing

Notes:

- (1) Choose a NT rebid with a balanced hand unless you have 4-card support for partner's Major.
- (2) All natural NT bids are Limit Bids, therefore non-forcing. But a 2NT rebid guarantees game values and is therefore forcing. It leaves room to investigate a better strain.
- (3) Responder may Pass a 1NT rebid or make a weak takeout into 2 of any suit. A raise to 2NT, or a jump rebid in a previously bid suit, is invitational; a jump in a new suit is game-forcing.
- (4) Over a 2NT rebid all bids are forcing, describing the distribution

2.4c): Rebidding the Suit Opened

	Opener's Rebid
1♣ - 1♥	2♣ = simple rebid. 12-15 HCP with 6+♣s, no second suit. (Maybe 5♣s if not strong enough for 2♦ reverse) 3♣ = jump rebid. 15-18 HCP with 6+cards, no second suit
1♥ - 2♣	2♥ = simple rebid. 12-15 HCP with 6+♥s, no second suit. (Maybe 5♥s if not strong enough for 2♠ reverse) 3♥ = jump rebid. 15-18 HCP with 6+cards, no second suit 4♥ = jump to game. 12-15 with a 7-card suit, to play

Notes:

- (1) A simple rebid of the suit opened is a Limit Bid, non-forcing. It puts Responder in charge of deciding the level.
- (2) A jump rebid shows a 6+card, nearly solid suit: non-forcing after a 1over1; game-forcing after a 2over1
- (3) Normally prefer to show a second suit if possible
- (4) After a jump rebid any rebid by responder makes the auction game-forcing

Further Bidding after a Simple Rebid:

	Responder's Rebid
1♥ - 1♠ 2♥ -	<i>(This sequence promises 6+♥ since a new suit would not be a Reverse, would not need extra values)</i> Pass = no game, so stop in best available part score 3♥ = invitational raise. May be ♥Hx opposite 6 cards 4♥ = "I think this is the best available game" 2NT = 10-12HCP, stoppers in unbid suits, invites 3NT 3NT = "I think this is the best available game" 2♠ = Weak with 6+♠. To play in a better part score 3♠ = Invitational. 6+♠, doubleton will be adequate support 4♠ = "I think this is the best available game" 3♣/♦ = new suit at the 3-level is Natural and Game-Forcing <i>(Responder is unsure of the best game, seeks more information)</i>
1♥ - 2♣ 2♥	Pass, heart raises, NT rebids as after a 1-over-1 3♣ = 6+♣s, distributional misfit. Not forcing, sign off 2♠ = Responder's Reverse, 5+♠s, 4♠s, game-forcing <i>(weaker hands respond 1♠ initially)</i> 3♦ = new suit at the 3-level is Natural and Game-Forcing <i>(Strong sequences are unsure of best game, or interested in slam)</i>

2.4d): Rebidding in a new suit

	Opener's Rebid
1♣ - 1♥	1♠ = new suit at the 1-level. 4♠s, unlimited but nonforcing. Normally suggests longer clubs, may be 4144 2♦ = new, higher-ranking suit. 4♦s, longer clubs Reverse , 15+HCP, 1-round force 2♠ = jump new suit. 4+♠s, 18+HCP, Game-forcing (3♦ = <i>unnecessary jump, since is 2♦ is forcing. A Splinter Bid</i>)
1♥ - 2♣	2♦ = new, lower-ranking suit. 4+♦s, at least 5 hearts Unlimited, 1-round force after a 2over1 response 2♠ = new, higher-ranking suit. 4♠s, longer hearts, 15+HCP Reverse , game-forcing after a 2over1 response

Notes:

- (1) Bidding a second suit shows an unbalanced hand. Unlimited, but still possibly quite strong – a game-forcing jump new suit is 18+.
- (2) Bidding a second suit normally indicates 5+cards in your first suit. It is more informative than rebidding your first suit. But a Reverse – bidding a higher-ranking suit – promises extras. A minimum opener may have to rebid a 5-card suit if not worth a reverse.
- (3) With 5431, singleton in partner's suit, (particularly a singleton honour) and 15+HCP it may be more descriptive to rebid in NT; or a minimum opener may prefer to make a 3-card raise of a major.

2.5 Responder's Rebid

After 3 bids opener's hand is usually limited: by bidding/rebidding no-trump; by raising partner; or by rebidding the suit opened. Now responder will decide whether to sign off, invite game, bid game or make a slam try.

When opener bids a second suit his hand is unlimited, responder should strain to keep the auction open.

Further Bidding after a Change of Suit Rebid:

	Responder's Rebid
1♣- 1♥ 1♠	Pass = very weak, sub-minimum response. 1NT = misfit, 7-10HCP 2♣ = preference, minimum response 2♥ = Weak misfit with 6+♥. Suggests best available partscore 2/3♠ = Normal limit raises. Promise 4+card support 2NT = 11-12HCP, invitational with stoppers in the 4 th suit 3♣ = invitational limit raise 3♥ = invitational with 6+♥. Hx will be adequate support All game bids are to play.

1♥ - 2♣ 2♦	Pass, 2NT rebid as after a 1-over-1 2♥ = Minimum preference: often a doubleton to continue the auction 3♣ = 6+♣s, distributional misfit. Not forcing 3♦ = raise of second suit = 4+cards, NF.
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Where opener is unlimited 3 suits have been bid. Responder limits his hand by:

- giving preference to opener's first suit – shows a minimum response
- raising one of partner's suits (needs 4-card support for the 2nd suit)
- rebidding his own suit (normally shows 6+cards)
- rebidding in NT (no fit for partner's suit, stoppers in the unbid suit)

2.5.1 Fourth Suit Forcing

After 3 suits have been bid it is unlikely that there is a fit in the 4th suit
So it becomes an artificial forcing relay used on 3 types of hand:

- A hand worth bidding game that is unsure which game is best
- A hand too strong for a simple raise, or raise to game
- A hand that wants to make a forcing rebid of its own suit

1♥ - 1♠ 2♦ - 3♣ at the 3-level 4 th suit is forcing to game	Opener describes his distribution as best he can: 3♦ (rebid 2 nd suit) = 55+ in the red suits 3♥ (rebid 1 st suit) = 6x♥s, 4x♦s 3♠ (delayed raise) = 3=5=4=1 3NT = 1=5=4=3 with stoppers in clubs With 2=5=4=2 choose the least bad lie
1♥ - 1♠ 2♣ - 2♦ not game- forcing at the 2-level. (Some prefer to make it always GF for simplicity)	2♥ = (simple rebid 1 st suit) = 6x♥s, 4x♦s, minimum 3♥ = (jump 1 st suit) = 6x♥s, 4x♦s, extras, forcing to game 2♠ = (delayed raise) 3=5=1=4 or 2=5=2=4 minimum 3♠ = (jump raise) = 3=5=1=4, extras, forcing to game 3♣ = (rebid 2 nd suit) = 55, unlimited, forcing 2NT = 1=5=3=4 minimum; 3NT = 1=5=3=4 extras 3♦ = raise of 4 th suit = 'fifth suit' GF with eg Axx as a stopper
1♣ - 1♦ 1♥ - 1♠ not game- forcing at the 1-level – may be natural	Opener rebids naturally, jumping with extras, as above. Simple rebids can be passed. A raise of the 4 th suit here is natural: opener is 4=4=1=4 or 4=4=0=5. Jump raise to 3♠ shows extras, forcing.

If responder now shows support for opener, or rebids his own suit, he shows slam interest, a hand too good to make a non-forcing bid on the previous round.

2.6 Coping with Interference

Opponents' intervention gives several new options: we can double (or redouble), and if they bid a suit we can bid that as a strength-showing cuebid.

We can also Pass – partner gets another chance to bid whether we call or not.

2.6a): Coping with an Overcall

	Response
1♣ - (1♦)	<p>Pass = either weak, or with a strong holding in diamonds.</p> <p>Dbl = Negative, showing 4-4 in the Majors. Unlimited</p> <p>1♥/1♠ = 4+cards, other Major is shorter. Forcing for 1 round</p> <p>1NT = 7-10, stoppers no Major. Limit bid, non-forcing.</p> <p>2NT = 10-12, double stoppers, no biddable Major. Limit bid.</p> <p>2♣ = normal raise, balanced values. All raises are non-forcing.</p> <p>3♣ = jump raise: 4+card support, pre-emptive (Typically 1 outside high card + ruffing values)</p> <p>4♣ = 5+card support, distributional, weak</p> <p>2♥/2♠ = Fit Jumps, good 5+card suit with 4-card club support</p> <p>2♦ = Cue bid, Forcing. Often a strong raise – no better call.</p>
1♦ - (1♠)	<p>Dbl = Negative, normally with 4+♥s, 5 if not strong enough for</p> <p>2♥ = Natural 5+cards, 10+HCP, 1-round force.</p> <p>1NT/2NT natural limit bids</p> <p>Diamond raises all distributional, nonforcing.</p> <p>2♣ = new suit at 2-level, 1-round force, normally 5+cards</p> <p>3♣/3♥ = Fit Jumps, good 5+card suit with 4-card diamond support</p> <p>2♠ = Cue bid, Forcing. Often a strong raise – no better call.</p>
1♥ - (2♣)	<p>Dbl = Negative, normally with 4+♠s, 5 if not strong enough for</p> <p>2♠ = Natural 5+cards, 10+HCP, 1-round force.</p> <p>Heart raises all distributional, non-forcing</p> <p>2♦ = Natural, normally 5-cards, 1-round force.</p> <p>3♠ = Cue bid, Forcing. Often a strong 3+card raise – no better call.</p>

Notes:

- (1) A single raise in competition may be 3-cards in a fairly balanced hand. Jump raises are always 4+ cards, based on distribution, not high cards. Strong raises are shown via a cuebid.
- (2) Negative Doubles are takeout doubles, denying primary support. If followed by a change of suit that is not forcing. At low levels they promise 4cards in any unbid Majors. At higher levels they are stronger but need not have perfect shape.
- (3) A change of suit is forcing for one round, 10+HCP at the 2-level. Jump new suits are FIT, a good suit with primary support for partner
- (4) Natural NT bids promise at least one stopper in the overcalled suit.

2.6b): Coping with a Takeout Double

An intervening double relieves us of the responsibility to keep the bidding open in case partner is strong – partner automatically gets another bid. It gives us the extra options of Redouble and Pass.

	Response
1♥- (dbl)	Pass = weak, nothing to say. 2♥ = single raise, often 3cards, 4-cards only when balanced 3♥ = jump raise, pre-emptive, 4+card support, ruffing values 4♥ = jump to game, normally 5+card support, distributional. 2NT = sound 4+card raise, at least limit raise values. 2♠/3♣/3♦ =. Fit Jumps, good 5+card suit with 4-card heart support 1♠/2♣/2♦ =. normal change of suit, one-round force 1NT = 7-10, no primary support Redbl = 10+HCP, no fit, penalty interest
1♦ - (dbl)	Pass = weak, nothing to say. 2♦ = single raise, denies a biddable 4-card Major 3♦ = jump raise is pre-emptive, 4+card support, ruffing values 4♦ = double jump normally 5+card support, distributional. 2♥/2♠/3♣ =. Fit Jumps, good 5+card suit with 4-card club support 1♥/1♠/2♣ =. normal change of suit, one-round force 1NT = 7-10, no primary support 2NT = balanced 10-12, no biddable 4-card Major Redbl = 10+HCP, no fit, penalty interest

Notes:

- (1) Always choose to raise partner when that is an option.
There is no cuebid over a double. Good 4+card raises of a Major bid 2NT.
Good 4-card raises of a minor may also bid 2NT, but must be fairly balanced since we can change the suit with unbalanced hands
- (2) Redoubles are strength-showing with no good fit for partner.
After a redouble all later doubles are penalty and passes up to the level of 2NT are Forcing.
- (3) A change of suit is forcing for one round. 10+ HCP at the 2-level.
(Prefer to bid only suits that you would like partner to lead)
- (4) Jump new suits are FIT, a good suit with primary support for partner.

Chapter 3. *Higher-level Openers*

3.1 The 2♣ Opener

An artificial strength-showing bid that promises 23+HCP if balanced; or, if unbalanced, a hand too strong to allow partner to Pass in response.

Responding to a 2♣ Opener

2♣	2♦ = the normal response, a relay unsuitable for any other action 2♥/2♠ = natural, 5+card suit, with at least 2 top honours 3♣/3♦ = similar, but even better suit quality for space reasons 2NT = 8-10 HCP balanced, scattered Quacks but few controls
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Note: any sequence other than 2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT is forcing to game.

Opener's Rebid

2♣ - 2♦	2NT = 23-24HCP balanced. Further bidding as after a 2NT opener 3NT = 25+HCP. Respond as to 2NT but a level higher
	2♥/2♠ = Natural 5+card suits, forcing to game
	3♣/3♦ = Natural, 6+cards suits, normally unbalanced
	3♥/3♠ The jump promises a self-supporting solid suit. (Partner cues an Ace, bids 3NT with a King, else raises)
2♣ - 2M	3M = single raise, sets responder's suit as trump, demands cues. 2NT = 23+HCP balanced without primary support New suit = natural without primary support

Further Bidding after 2♣ - 2♦ - 2M/3m

2♣ - 2♦ 2♥	3♥ = single raise. 3+card support with at least 2 controls 4♥ = jump to game = 3+card support, fewer than 2 controls 3♠/4♣/♦ = Splinter, 4+card support, singleton, 0-1 controls
	2♠ = Natural, no heart fit 3♣/♦ = Natural, suit not good enough for immediate 3m response
	2NT = weak balanced hand
2♣ - 2♦ 3♦	This sequence shows an unbalanced hand 4♦ = 3+card support, nothing else to show 3M = natural, maybe showing a stopper for 3NT 3NT = rare, likely values in clubs, or scattered in all unbid suits

Note: Responder cannot have a very strong hand opposite a 2♣ opener.
Try to show your limited assets to help partner decide what to do

3.2 Weak 2s

Opening bids of $2\heartsuit/2\spadesuit/2\clubsuit$ show a 6-card suit and less than opening strength. 5 or 6 playing tricks, few defensive values.

The suit should have good intermediates, playable opposite a singleton
May be undisciplined in 3rd seat, after 2 passes. (eg 5card suit/extra strength)
We do not pre-empt in 4th seat: after 3 passes $2\heartsuit/2\spadesuit/2\clubsuit$ show 8 Playing Tricks.

Responding to Weak Twos

$2\heartsuit$	$3\heartsuit$ = a single raise is not invitational, it continues the pre-emption $4\heartsuit$ = raise to game. Either a strong hand that expects to make. Or a hand with 4+card support trying to silence opponents $2\spadesuit$ = responding in a new Major at the 2-level = good suit. NF, but should be raised with any support $3\clubsuit/3\heartsuit/3\spadesuit$ = new suit at the 3-level is F1 $3NT/4\spadesuit$ = Game bids are to play $2NT$ = Enquiry about strength
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Opener's Rebid

A weak Two is a limit bid: opener does not bid again unless partner makes a forcing response.

$2\heartsuit-2NT$	$3\heartsuit$ rebidding your suit shows a minimum $2\spadesuit/3\clubsuit/3\heartsuit/3\spadesuit$ new suit shows a high card feature (A/K/Q/J) $3NT$ shows a one-loser suit with little outside
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Coping with Interference

Responses do not change: raises are non-constructive, game bids are to play.

A new suit is no longer forcing, may be lead-directing with support.

After an overcall responder's double is Penalty.

After a takeout double redouble shows a strong hand with penalty interest.

Notes: Weak2s are normally 6=3=2=2; 6=3=3=1; or 6=4=2=1

Hands with a 7-card suit or 6=5 distribution generally have too much playing strength.

You may open a weak 2 with a 4-card M on the side provided the M is weak and your 6-card suit is fairly solid so that the 6=2 fit will play as well as a 4=4 fit. With a weak 6-carder and strong 4-carder prefer a 1-opener, or a pass, planning to compete later.

Generally avoid weak openers with 2 first round controls.

3.3 Pre-empts

Opening bids at the 3-level and higher are based on long suits with lots of playing strength but little defence in a hand too weak for a 1-opener. "I shall make lots of tricks if my suit is trump, very few otherwise." Their primary purpose is to make it hard for opponents to reach their best contract.

3♣/3♦	Usually 7cards, may be a semi-solid 6-carder
3♥/3♠	Usually 7-cards, may be 6 with extreme distribution
3NT	Gambling: a solid 7-card minor with no outside Aces or Kings
4♣/4♦	7+cards with extreme distribution
4♥/4♠	7+cards with extreme distribution
4NT	Specific Ace Ask (See Slam Bidding)
5♣/5♦	Normally 8 cards. (The higher you bid the more likely they will dbl)

You may vary the strength according to vulnerability and position at the table.

In second seat you must be sound (you pre-empt partner and only 1 opponent)

In third seat you need not worry about missing game and can vary the strength

In fourth seat there is no-one to pre-empt so bids are constructive.

3any invites game If partner has a couple of high cards

3NT is natural, to play with a long running suit and some controls

Games are contracts you hope to make.

Responding to pre-empts

Raises to game can be based on Quick Tricks, expecting to make game, or good support, continuing the pre-emption.

Single raise of 3m is continuing the pre-emption with some defence.
(do not push them into games they are likely to make)

A **new suit** below game-level is F1, looking for a fit.

Game bids are to play,

(3NT should have a running suit of your own, or a partial fit.

If opponents interfere, Dbl is Penalty

Responding to the Gambling 3NT

3NT	4♣: pass or Convert, to play in partner's minor at the 4-level 5(6)♣: Similarly, to play in partner's minor at the 5(6)level
	4♦: Slam try, asks partner to cue a singleton
	5♦: to play (you have guessed the suit), or convert to 6♣
	4M: to play with a long suit of your own
	Pass: exceedingly rare, must have at least one card in each minor (you need an entry!) and stoppers in all the suits partner does not have

Chapter 4. *Slam Bidding*

4.1 Cuebids

There are 2 types of cuebid:

Control-showing cuebids in unopposed auctions where slam is a possibility.

Strength-showing cuebids in competitive auctions where a bid of an opponent's suit does not promise a control.

First round controls are Aces and voids;

Second round controls are Kings (preferable KQs) and singletons

4.1.1 Control-showing Cuebids

Cuebids are used to discover whether you have good enough controls for slam. Once a suit is agreed a new suit at the 4-level and above is a cuebid, showing interest in slam and asking partner to co-operate.

By initiating a cuebidding sequence you show interest in slam if partner has the right cards. You need a clear idea of how to progress whatever partner responds.

- Make the cheapest available cue, 1st or 2nd round controls equally. (When partner has shown a shortage cueing that suit promises the Ace.)
- Bypassing a suit denies control in that suit; with no control in the bypassed suit partner signs off in the agreed trump suit. A return cuebid in a new suit promises controls in both suits.
- We cannot cuebid controls in the trump suit – bidding the trump suit is a sign off, denying control of a suit you might cuebid instead
- Cuebidding a suit partner bid before we agreed a suit promises an honour, Ace King or Queen. Do not cuebid a shortage in partner's suit
- **A repeat cue** in the same suit promises first round control
- If you have made a Limit Bid and partner starts a cuebidding sequence you must cuebid below game level if you can. If your hand is unlimited you should cuebid only if your hand is suitable
- Cuebidding does not preclude ace-asking: once you have established that partner can control a suit where you are weak you may still employ Blackwood. Partner shows aces as normal, including those already cued.
- **Advance cuebids** are apparently natural bids at the 3-level when partner has shown a strong minor. When you remove 3NT to 4 of partner's minor you are making a slam try.

4.1.2 Strength-showing Cuebids

Cuebidding opponent's suit may be the only way to show strength in a competitive auction. Such a cuebid at the 3-level or above shows support for partner, a raise to at least game that expects to make rather than a simply competitive noise. It need not promise control in their suit.

4.2 Control Asks

The **Blackwood** convention is designed to avoid bidding slams missing 2 Aces. When a suit is agreed **4NT** asks partner how many aces he holds.

(A **jump to 4NT** in response to a **new** suit agrees that suit and asks for Aces)

Responses are: 5♣ = 0/4 Aces; 5♦ = 1 Ace; 5♥ = 2 Aces; 5♠ = 3 Aces.

Roman Keycard Blackwood is a more sophisticated version.

It incorporates the King and Queen of the agreed trump suit in the ask.

Responses are:

4NT?	5♣ = 1 or 4 keycards (The original version reversed the responses 5♦ = 0 or 3 keycards but Kaplan now prefers this to 30-41)
	5♥ = 2 or 5 keycards but no Trump Queen 5♠ = 2 or 5 keycards plus Trump Q (or enough length for a 10-card fit)
	5NT = 2 keycards plus a void 6♣/6♦ = 1 keycard with a void in the suit bid (void-showing responses are used only when partner can recognise the void. Never show a void in a suit partner has bid.)

The 4NT bidder is in charge and should be prepared for all responses.

If unable to decide the final contract you can make further enquiries

Queen Ask applies after a 5m response.

The cheapest non-trump suit is a relay, asking whether partner has the Trump Q.

Without the Queen responder signs off in the trump suit as cheaply as possible.

With the Queen he cuebids a King if that is possible below slam level; bids 5NT with a King he cannot show; or jumps to 6 of the agreed suit with no King to cue.

The Queen Ask can be used if one keycard is missing; you can still stop in 5.

King Ask

5NT is a Grand Slam try that guarantees that the partnership holds all the keycards and adequate trump. It asks whether partner has anything extra.

With nothing extra responder signs off in the trump suit.

If, knowing that all the controls are held, he can count 13 tricks he bids the Grand.

If unsure he cuebids any extra King that he holds.

(In traditional Blackwood responder shows Kings in steps as for Aces, but in RKC we cuebid specific Kings.)

New suit ask

Bidding a new suit after any or all of the above asks for **third round control** in the suit bid. A definite Grand Slam Try.

Responder signs off in 6 of the agreed suit if he cannot oblige; bids the Grand slam with a doubleton; or 6NT with Qx(x) to suggest an alternative Grand.

Interference

If an opponent bids over 4NT keycard responses are DOPI:

Double = 0/3; Pass = 1/4; next steps = 2 without Queen; 2 with the Queen

If an opponent doubles responses are ROPI (redouble = 0/3) similarly.

4.2.1 Other Control Asks

Gerber: This convention uses 4♣ as the asking bid.

Responses are 4♦ = 0/4 Aces; 4♥ = 1 Ace; 4♠ = 2 Aces; 4NT = 3 Aces.

We use Gerber **only** as an immediate response to a 1NT/2NT opening bid.

(In other auctions 4♣ is too useful as a cuebid, Splinter, or a natural bid.)

Grand Slam Force

A jump to **5NT** in auctions where 4NT would be Blackwood asks about trump quality. Partner should bid the Grand Slam with 2 of the 3 top trump honours.

(The advent of Roman Keycard Blackwood has made this less useful as a way to find top honours: now it usually asks for a 1- or no-loser suit.)

5NT Pickaslam

Applies when no suit is clearly agreed and several suits have been bid.

5NT says slam should make and invites partner to choose a strain.

4NT opening bid

Asks partner to cuebid any ace held: 5♣ = no aces, 6♣ = ace of clubs.

Incredibly rare to hold a suitable hand!

Opening bid of 5M

Asks partner to bid 6M with the ace or king of trump, 7M with both

There are no other losers. Even rarer than the 4NT opener.

4.3 Quantitative 4NT

In auctions where *no suit is agreed* and partner has bid NT naturally, 4NT is NOT control-asking. It is an invitational raise, inviting slam if partner is not minimum.

Egs	1NT – 4NT	2NT – 4NT	1NT – 2♣ 2♦ - 4NT
	1NT – 2♦ 2♥ – 4NT	1♥ – 1♠ 2♦ – 3NT 4NT	

With a minimum partner passes.

If moving on look for an alternative slam if that is possible: a 4-4 or 5-3 trump fit may find it easier to make 12 tricks by ruffing.

A jump to 6 in an unbid suit shows a 5-carder; if a rebid it is a 6-carder.

A new suit at the 5-level is a 4-carder looking for a 4-4 fit; or delayed 3-card support. We bid possible places to play upwards, leaving partner room to propose alternatives below 5NT. If no fit is found the auction may stop in 5NT

Quantitative 5NT

A Grand slam try in situations where 4NT would be invitational.

5NT is forcing to the small slam. Use the same responses but a level higher.

Chapter 5. *The Competitive Auction*

5.1 Overcalls

Overcalls have three main functions:

- a) To buy the contract when it is our hand
- b) To obstruct opponents' auction when it is their hand
- c) To direct a good lead

Overcalls are based on Playing Strength, not HCP. Suit quality is paramount.

Overcalls at the 1-level have 4+ playing tricks with a good 5+card suit.

Wide-ranging strength, strong hands will bid again, rebidding a 6+card suit; bidding a second suit; or making a delayed takeout double.

Overcalls at the 2-level (not a jump) 5+ playing tricks, often 6cards.

Jump Overcalls are Weak like weak2 openers at the 2-level;
like pre-emptive openers at higher levels

Overcalls in the sandwich position (both opponents bidding), and interventions in opponents' forcing auctions are primarily lead-directing.

Responding to Overcalls

"Support with support"

A single raise is typically 3-card support with limited scattered high card values.
(may be 4cards in a balanced hand)

Jump raises promise 4+card support with distributional values, few high cards

A cuebid of opponent's suit shows a 3+card strong raise

A jump cue is a Mixed raise: 4-card support and a few high cards

A jump in a new suit is Fit: a good 5+card suit with 3+card support

"Let opponents play the misfits"

A change of suit is natural and forcing: with a weak misfit just pass.
(you may consider a rescue later if they double)

Bids in NT are natural, with stoppers in opponents' suits, stronger than a normal response to an opening bid.

5.2 Overcalls in NT

A 1NT overcall is 15+-18HCP, with a stopper in opponent's suit.

Need not be balanced if it is the best way to get your strength over.

(A weak 1NT either passes or, with a doubleton in their suit, makes a takeout dbl.)

Responses are System on – Stayman and transfers – as over a 1NT opener.

Stronger balanced hands start with a double.

A subsequent 1NT(2NT) rebid shows 19-21.

A subsequent jump in NT is even stronger.

In these sequences further bidding is natural.

5.2 Doubles

5.2.1 Takeout Doubles

When an opponent opens the bidding with one of a suit double is takeout.

It shows opening strength but no good alternative call.

It asks partner to bid his best suit, promising support, or enough strength to take charge of the auction later. It should be prepared for any response.

4441 with a singleton in their suit is ideal: other minimum doubles should have at least 3-card support for unbid Majors. (With a choice partner responds in a M)

Responding to Takeout Doubles

When 3rd hand passes

Bid your best suit, even with 0HCP.

(1♥)-Dbl-(P)	1♠	0-9HCP, may even be a 3-card suit if 3433
	2♠	7+HCP with a fair 5-card suit; 9+ if only 4
	3♠	6+card suit, a sound weak2 opener
	2♣	0-9HCP (If weak prefer to bid a Major if possible)
	3♣	7+HCP with a 5+card good suit
	1NT	7-10 HCP with stopper(s) in hearts
	2NT	11-13HCP with stopper(s) in hearts
	2♥	Cue-bid, 11+HCP 2 places to play, forcing to 2NT or suit agreement. May very rarely have slam interest
	Games	To play
	Pass	6+Hs, no other place to play. Partner is expected to lead a trump if held. Extremely rare – you have to make more tricks than LHO in his best suit.

Note: Double of 1m shows support for both Ms, not necessarily the other minor.

With 4-4 Ms bid hearts if very weak; spades if happy to bid hearts next

When 3rd hand calls

Now Pass is an option, so bids show values

(1♥)-Dbl	2/3♥	2/3♠ = values for a limit raise of a 1♠ opener Dbl = responsive, takeout with 2 places to play Cuebid = game-forcing
	1♠	2m = values for limit raise of a 1m opener Dbl = PEN with 4+Ss (some like to psyche here....) 1N = 8-11HCP with H stoppers (partner holds spades) 2♠ = NAT, 5+card good suit
	Redbl	Bid 1♠ with 4xSs: 2m = 5cards, happy to play opposite xx Pass = neither of the above

5.2.2 When is Double takeout?

An opponent has bid a natural suit, and partner has not bid: double is takeout.

Egs 1♠ (dbl) 2♠ (dbl) 3♠ (dbl)
 1♠ (P) 2♠ (dbl) 1♠ (P) 2♦ (dbl) 1♠ (P) 1NT (dbl)

Opponents have bid and raised a suit: double is takeout

1♠ (P) 2♠ (P) 1♠ (Dbl) 2♠ (P) 1♠ (Dbl) 2♠ (Dbl)
P (dbl) P (Dbl)

5.2.3 Double or overcall?

An overcall is wide-ranging – anything from 7-17HCP with a good suit.

We generally prefer to overcall in a 5-card Major unless the hand is too strong
With opening strength we can overcall, then make a takeout double next time.
A takeout double followed by a new suit shows a very strong hand, 18+HCP.
(A simple raise of partner's response promises 4card support, not extras)

5.2.4 Penalty Doubles

a) Doubles of their 1NT openers or overcalls are Penalty.

Eg (1NT) dbl = at least upper range of their NT, with a good lead
1♠ (1NT) dbl = 9+HCP

b) When partner has opened with a pre-empt doubles are Penalty
Similarly when partner has shown a 2-suiter doubles are penalty.
(You know what partner has and should not be asking for another suit.)

c) Doubles at game level and above are penalty whether you have been in
the bidding previously or not.

d) After one penalty double all subsequent doubles are penalty.
(includes auctions where someone has passed a takeout double,
converting it to a penalty double)

5.2.5 Lead-directing Doubles

a) Double of an artificial bid by an opponent (eg Stayman, Transfers) shows
values in the suit bid and suggests it would make a good lead.

b) Double of a cuebid of partner's suit shows typically Ax(x), Kx or Qx
suggesting that this is a good time to lead 4th highest

c) Out of the Blue doubles of games or slams ask partner to find an unusual
lead: something other than a suit you have bid, often asking for a lead of
dummy's suit.

If you have both bid suits double says "lead yours, not mine"

After (1NT) – P - (3NT) dbl says: 'lead your shorter Major'

5.3 Redoubles

Like doubles, redoubles can have more than one meaning.

5.3.1 Strength-showing redoubles

When an opponent doubles your final contract for penalty you may redouble if you are confident the contract will make.

(Beware of pushing them into a cheap sacrifice: you must expect to score well by doubling them if they run.)

When an opponent makes a take-out double redouble shows extra strength
1♥-(dbl)-redbl 10+HCP with no fit for partner's suit.

All subsequent dbls are penalty, passes forcing as far as 2NT, but...

1♥-(dbl)-redbl-Pass

If 4th hand passes the redouble opener also passes with a sound opener

But if he has opened light he runs immediately, rebidding his suit or bidding a second suit. The auction is no longer forcing

1♥-(P)-P (dbl)

Redbl Strong opener with 5+♥s (bid 1NT with 18-19 HCP and 4♥s).

5.3.2 Control-showing Redoubles

In slam auctions, when an opponent doubles a cuebid or a Blackwood response Redouble promises first round control, Ace or Void.

When an opponent doubles partner's overcall redouble shows a top honour

5.3.3 Redoubles for Rescue (SOS Redoubles)

When your hand is known to be weak, and partner's contract has been doubled.

Redouble is an attempt to rescue the situation.

1♥-(P)-P (dbl)

P (P)

RHO has a heart stack, worrying if you are short in hearts.

redouble suggests partner removes to the best of his other suits

eg ♠T954 ♥- ♦98654 ♣JT43

This is a very rare situation and should not be abused! For example, if partner has overcalled at the 2-level it is unlikely that you can improve the contract.

1NT (dbl)

most players nowadays use the redouble as the start of a rescue.

(A popular meaning is any 5+card suit, asking partner to bid 2♣.)

But if the double is not a Penalty double – some play it as any single-suited overcall – you can play System on and redouble to show strength

5.4 Re-opening the Auction (Protection/Balancing)

5.4.1 An opening bid of One of a Suit is followed by 2 Passes

In this situation there is a presumption that your side has at least half the points in the pack, and you may not want to defend a one-level contract.

The usual competitive bids have different meanings.

(1♠)-P-(P)	1M	An overall may be quite weak, bidding partner's values
	1NT	11-14 balanced, may rely on partner for a stopper
	2M	Jump overcalls are Intermediate: 6+card suit, full opening strength
	2NT	Natural, 19-21 balanced.
	2♠	Cuebid = any 2-suiter: prefer this to a takeout double with extreme distribution unless happy for partner to pass
	Dbl	Takeout, unsuitable for any other bid
	Pass	Very short in one Major, so either opponents have a better spot or partner might bid your singleton

Partner responds appropriately, using the normal system over 1NT and 2NT.

The Theory of the Transferrable King suggests mentally passing a King to partner to decide what your hand is worth opposite a double or overcall.

5.4.2 Other Re-opening situations

When opponents have found a fit and stop low you can assume that your side also has a fit, and you should try to push them up.

(1♠) – P – (2♠) – P
(P) – ?

it is normal to re-open with a 4-card major, dbl with both (partner knows you did not overcall / dbl first time, so you are bidding both your hands. He should not compete further if you succeed in pushing opponents up a level.)

(1♣) – P – (1NT) – P
(P) ?

similarly, there is an implied club fit

(1♠) – P – (1♥) – P
(2♥) – P – (P) ?

here 2♣ is often a 4-card suit – with a good 5-carder you would overcall first time round.
2NT would show a minor 2-suiter, at least 4-4
Dbl suggests just 3 spades.

Partner's 2NT response is pick-a-minor

Note: re-opening in auctions where they have **not** found a fit is dangerous

Let Opponents Play the Misfits

Chapter 6 *Defensive Play*

6.1 The Opening Lead

Basic Method: 4th highest, 2nd from bad suits

Leads of Honour Cards

	V NT	V suit contracts
Ace	AKx(x) Asks for an Attitude signal	From AKx(x). Rarely unsupported Ace Asks for an Attitude signal
King	AKQ(x..) AKJ(T/x); AKT(9) KQJ(x.), KQT(x.) Asks for unblock of any Honour, failing which count	AK....; KQ.... Ask for a count signal
Queen	QJT(x) QJ(x) AQJ(x) Asks for an Attitude signal	QJ(x.... Asks for an Attitude signal
Jack	JT9(x.) JT8(x) AJT(x.) KJT(x.)	JT(x..)
Ten	AT9(x.) KT9(x.) QT9(x.)	KT9(x.) QT9(x.)
Hi x	Top or second highest from a suit with no Honours	Top or second highest from a suit with no Honours
Lo x	4 th best from a suit with at least one Honour	4 th best from a suit with one Honour or two non-touching honours

Notes:

We lead 4th highest from suits headed by the Ace against NT contracts, but do not underlead Aces against suit contracts.

Other honour leads against NT show 3 significant cards: we lead fourth highest from any two honours against NT, but the higher of two touching honours against suit contracts

Strategy

Against NT contracts the defenders try to establish their length tricks before declarer can establish his.

We lead our longest suit unless an opponent has shown length in it, or partner has bid a suit that will be easier to establish.

We lead short suits against NT only when we are sure partner has length

Against suit contracts we need to cash our Quick Tricks before declarer has time to discard losers.

We may lead a short suit in the hope of getting a ruff before declarer can draw trump

6.2 Signals

Signalling is the only legitimate form of communication between defenders. Every card you play in defence, starting with the opening lead, should tell partner something about your hand.

There are three types of signal:

6.2.1: The Attitude Signal

We give an Attitude signal on partner's lead, if the lead is an Ace or a Queen; or when we cannot beat the card played by dummy.

(NB: Third Hand High takes precedence)

A **discouraging** signal suggests he should switch to another suit.

An **encouraging** signal suggests he should continue the suit he led.

Traditionally a High card was Encouraging, a Low card Discouraging.

A more modern approach is Reverse Attitude: Lo=like; high = hate

(This preserves your high cards in case they are useful later)

Note: you should discourage only when you want a switch

Better to continue a bad lead than do in another suit!

6.2.2 The Count Signal

We give a count signal when declarer leads and we are not trying to win the trick; or on partner's lead of a King.

Playing a high-low shows an even number of cards; low-high an odd number.

Do not signal count with cards you cannot afford: Qx, Jx, Tx, even 9x may do better to retain the honour rather than create a finesse position for declarer.

6.2.2.1 Remainder Count Signal

When you have been unable to give count earlier – you led an honour or played third hand high – you show how many cards you have left by playing low from a remaining odd number; high from an even number.

Eg partner leads ♠2. You win the Ace from A853. Return the 3.

You win the Ace from A85. Return the 8

Eg: you lead the Queen from QJ54. Partner encourages. Play the 4 next'
you lead the Queen from QJ4. Partner encourages. Play the J next

6.2.3 Suit Preference Signal

These tell partner where your entry might be in three situations:

- 1) You are giving partner a ruff, so he knows which suit to return
- 2) Partner has led an obvious singleton and you cannot win this trick
- 3) You are clearing your suit in NT and have a choice of card to play

A high card suggests your entry is in the higher-ranking of the possible suits

A low card suggests an entry in the lower-ranking.

Suit preference is also shown **once your length in a suit is known** and you have a choice of cards to play: you can show where your other values lie.

Note: you cannot choose to make a Suit Preference Signal except in agreed situations. Count and attitude take precedence.

6.3 Discards

These are another opportunity to give information to partner.

6.3.1 Attitude Discards

The first discard is usually Reverse Attitude (Lo= like; high = hate)

A low card is quite a strong signal requesting a switch to that suit

(Reverse attitude is preferable because it allows you to keep winners)

A high card shows a weak suit.

An intermediate card means you are unsure – you have no preference.

(There are many systems of discards: McKenney, Odd-even; Italian; Dodds.

All will work well on some occasions, but they lack flexibility and can lead to ethical problems when you have the 'wrong' cards for the method.

Attitude is relatively straightforward, and we recommend it.)

6.3.2 Later discards

Signal Count (remainder count if the suit has already been played)

Once the count is known cards played are Suit Preference.

Eg you are defending 3NT

	♠65		
Partner leads ♠3		♠Q942	You play SQ, declarer wins ♠A

Declarer runs a long suit, allowing you to discard

You discard S2 to show 3 remaining cards

Then either S9 or S4 to show where your high cards are.

6.3.4 Signalling with Honour Cards

You can show a strong holding by discarding the top of a sequence.

Discarding an honour card promises the card immediately below, denies the card immediately above

Eg: Throw the Q from QJTxx; or the J from JT9xx to make the position clear.

Eg you are on lead against 3NT

	♠65	
You lead ♠3 from J9732		♠8

Partner plays the 8 and declarer wins the Ten.

There is no future in spades – tell partner that by discarding the ♠J at the first opportunity. Later you can throw the 9 or the 2 as a suit preference signal

Note: When partner leads a King or an Ace drop the Queen from QJx to show an entry if he has AK; do not drop the Q from Qx

6.3.5 Forced discards

Declarer often runs a long suit to exert pressure on the defenders.

It is important to plan our discards so that partner knows what to keep.

Is there a suit that only you can guard? (you have 4 cards, partner is short)

Keep length with Dummy

Keep length with Declarer

You may have to discard other suits and rely on partner to hold them