

Mal-Brian supplementary notes 22 November 2024

1.1 Opening bids

1C	4+ with TRF responses
1D/M	4+
1NT	weak: NV (11)12-14, (10)11-13 at favourable, VUL (12)13-14 esp 3 rd seat. Can have 5M
2C	GF or 22-24 BAL/S-BAL
2D	weak either M
2M	5M, 4+m, (5)6-9. If VUL, 2H = 5H, 5+m (2S may be 5/4)
2NT	20-22 BAL/S-BAL
3 any	PRE
3NT	Solid any suit, or very good m pre-empt

1.2 General Methods: Constructive Auctions

Point ranges are only indicative: we freely upgrade or downgrade

X = Neg through 4H, X of 4S and higher typically shows values

Long suit tries

NT bids can be a little bit off shape (5M, 6m, 5422, singleton honour but it looks no-trumpy)

Last Train frequent in game try and slam interest auctions

New suit normally F1 (in constructive auctions etc) but not after 1 level response

New suit at 3 level GF

Openers reverse after 1-level response inc 1NT F1

Openers reverse after 2- level response GF

Openers jump new suit rebid NAT, GF except if non-jump is a reverse, when jump is SPL, GT+

Responders reverse GF

4th suit forcing is F but not GF

2NT rebid by opener GF ART after 2 over 1. NF after 1 level response.

Point ranges are guidelines

1.3 1C opening

1C	?
1D	4+H, 3+HCP but can be shaded
1H	4+S, continuations similar to 1D=H
1S	4+D, 6+ denies M unless GF 14+
1NT	4+C, 8-13, denies 5+M, F to 3C
2C	4+C, 8-13, denies 5+M, F to 3C
2D	4S/5H 4-7 or 6+D, 14+ single suited
2M	6+M, 4-7
2NT	4+C, GF
3C	4+C, 6-7
3D,M	SPL 14+
3NT	to play (typically 13-15, No M)

1C	1D
?	
	1H 3+H near-forcing
	1S 4+S, shows 5+C
	1NT may have 4S. May have 3H
	2H Min BAL 4 card H (typ 11-13)
	2S NAT, GF
	2NT 18-19, may have 3H but not Hxx
	3D 4+H, SPL, G INV+
	3H 4+H INV, strong
	4C 4H, 18-19 BAL (sim over any 1m – 1M): 4D then re-transfer

1C	2C
?	
	2D ART, 14+
	2H 4H or S SPL: 2S then 11-13 ask
	2S 4S or H Spl: 2NT then 11-13 ask
	2NT Mid values, no M
	3C MIN
	3D/M SPL, 17+
	3NT To play
1C	2C
2D	?
	2H 8-10 H SPL or 11-13 4S (maybe with H or D SPL)
	2S 8-10 S SPL or 11-13 4H (maybe with S or D SPL)
	3C MIN, NF
	3S TRF to 3NT

1C	1NT
?	
	2C D SPL, 11-16
	2D 4H or 11-16 S SPL
	2H 4S always, maybe also 11-16 H SPL
	2S C only, H Spl, MIN+ with good playing strength
	2NT INV+, typ 14+ BAL (has M if GF)
	3C MIN
	3D/M SPL, 17+
	3NT to play
1C	1NT
2C	?
	2D ART, 11-13
	2H 4H, 11-13
	2S 4S, 11-13

	2NT	Mid values
	3C	MIN

1C	1NT	
2D	?	
	2H	ART, 11-13
	2NT	Mid values
	3C	MIN

1C-1NT/2C other continuations similar style to 1C-2C-2H+

1C	1S	
?		
	1NT	?
	2C	NF checkback 8-11
		Rest NAT
	2D	NAT, NF, 3+D
	2H	ART: reverse in either M: 2S waiting, then 2NT=4H, rest S and NAT
	2S	5S/5C and 11-12ish, NF

1C	2D	
?		
	2M	to play opposite 4S/5H: 2NT=NAT, new suit=short with D
	2NT	ART, ENQ strong: 3D= 4S/5H, rest=D
	3M	NAT INV.

1C	2NT	
?		
	3C	MIN with shortage (3D then asks)
	3D	no shortage and not MIN
	3NT	MIN, no shortage

1C	(X)	?	System ON, 1D=4+H etc, XX=4S, 1H=5+S
1C	(1 suit)	?	System OFF, 2C=4+C, 6-7 or 3C, 8-9, 3C=4+C, 8-9
1C	(1D)	?	X=4S, 1S=5+S
1C	1H	(X) ?	XX=suggestion to play, Rest=system ON

1.4 1D opening

1D	?	
	1M	NAT 6+
	1NT	NAT 6-9
	2C	4+C, 10+ NAT, F:
	2D	NF
	2M	GF, 4+ (can be short)
	3C	NF
	2NT	GF
2D		4S/5H 4-7 or 4+D, 10-13 or 8-9 with SPL
2M		6+M, 3-7
2NT		4+D GF – conts as over 1C-2NT
3C		4+D, 8-9 no shortage
3D		4+D, 6-7
3M/4C		SPL 14+
3NT		13-15 BAL, NF, denies 4M
4D		Minorwood

1D	2D	
?		
	2M	to play opposite 4S/5H: conts show D
	2NT	ART, ENQ strong: 3C=8-10 SPL, 3D=4S/5H, 3M/4C=4+D, SPL 12-13
	3M	INV and NAT.
	3NT	to play

1D	(X)	?	system ON, XX=values
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1D	(1H)	?
	X	4S
	1S	5+S
	Cue	4+D, F to 3D

1.5 1M opening

1S	?	
	1NT	NF, 6-10
	2m/H	NAT, 10+, F1 (2H=5+, 2C might be 3 cards)
	2S	3+S, 5-8(9), typ 9 losers
	rest	S raises:
		2NT GT with shortage, 8 losers
		3C GF no shortage, 7- losers
		3D 6-9 raise 8 losers: 3H last train
		3H GF with shortage but MIN, 7 losers, 3S asks
		3S 10-11 INV
		3NT=H/4m SPL with typ 14+, 6- losers

M raises after interference

1S	(2D)	?	3D=raise, inv+, 3H=MIN GF, SPL, 3S=4S, 8-9 (8 losers)
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Other continuations

1S	2C-H	
?	2NT=GF, Jump new suit=SPL	
1S	1NT	
2NT	?	3m=NAT, NF, 3H=5 cards, GF

Drury after 3rd/4th seat opening:

2C shows (8)-11 (8 loser) raise or 10-12 BAL.

P	1S	
2C	?	
	2D	waiting, denies 4H after 1S opening: 2S=8-10, 3S. 2H=10-11, 3S
	2S	MIN and no G interest, 5+S
	2H	NAT, F1
	3S	GF slam interest
	Rest	NAT GF

P	1M	(X)	?	Drury still applies
P	1M	(overcall)	?	No Drury, Cue = G INV or better

1.6 1NT opening

1NT	?	
	2C	Stayman, guarantees 4M, then 2M over 2D is NF, 3m GF
	2D/H	TRF, then new m GF and 3NT denies 3 in OM. TRF then 4NT quantitative: 2M+1 superaccept: 3D/H retransfer, any M to play, long suit trial 3D/H superaccept, but TRF to H/S
	2S	Rangefinder or INV with C or slam interest BAL
	2NT	PPT to 3C, weak or GF in one minor. Over 3C: 3D weak, D 3M GF, bonded m 3NT both m NF 4C both m F
	3D	NAT, INV
	3M	(5)6+ slam try
	4C/D	TRF to H/S
	4M	to play

1NT	2C	2D	?	3M=5M/3+OM, GF
1NT	2C	2M	?	3NT=3M and 5 OM
1NT	2D/H	2H/S	?	OM=NAT 54, INV and NF
1NT	2S	2NT/3C	?	3D=asks 5M, 3H/S=4H/S, 4m=NAT, 5m
1NT	2C	(X)	?	Pass=No M, XX=offer to play, 2D=NAT
1NT	2D/H	(X)	?	XX=Offer to play, acceptance shows 3+
1NT	(X=ART)	?		System ON, XX=weak, "TRF" to their suit=NAT NF
1NT	(X=PEN)	?		XX=single suited, Suit=2+ touching suits, 2S=NAT
1NT	(X)	P	(P)	? Suit=NAT, XX=2 places to play

1.7 2C opening

2C GF except for 22-24 BAL/S-BAL

2C	?	
	2D	0-6 or waiting
	2M	NAT
	2NT/3C	positive response, TRF to C/D
	Rest	Suit set

2C	2D	
?		
	2H	GF BAL/S-BAL or H
	2NT	22-24 BAL/S-BAL
	Jump	GF suit-set CBM
	Rest	NAT, GF

2C	2D	
2H	?	
	2S	normal response: 2NT=25+ BAL/S-BAL GF, Rest=NAT with H
	2NT/3C	D/C, less than positive response
2C	(any)	?
X		TO, X of M guarantees 4 of other M, not necessarily any values, X of (2D) = 4+S
2NT+		TRF, positive response
TRF Cue		positive, ½ stop or better in their suit
Cue		positive, denies ½ stop in their suit
Pass		weak without other M or waiting

1.8 2D opening

2D	?	
Pass		allowed: no meaning, own suit somewhere possible
Any M		P/C
2NT		art, strong enq:
	3C	bad weak 2: 3D=bid your suit, 3M=P/C
	3D/H	Minimum weak two in next suit up
	3S/NT	Max in suit below
3C		INV with both M
	3D/H	Min in next suit up
	3S/NT	Max in suit below
	4M	to play
3D		Own M, G INV+, bid shorter M
	3M	OM, short M, NF
	3NT	MAX, some support, bid your major
	4C	bid 1 below your suit
	4D	bid your suit
3NT		to play
4C		bid 1 below your suit
4D		bid your suit
4M		to play (shows own suit)
2D	(X)	?
Pass		suggestion to play
XX		Own suit: opener bids 2H
Rest		System ON
2D	(any)	?
X		take out at or below 2S, else PEN
2NT		normal enquiry

In competition at 4 level opener TRF to suit if 2 TRFs are available, else shows suit

2D	(P)	P	X
P	(P)	?	
	XX		bid your suit
	Rest		own suit
2D	2NT	(X)	?
	P		MIN and defensive hand. Later X PEN: 3M=P/C
	XX		MAX and defensive hand. Later X PEN: 3M=P/C
	Rest		as normal

1.9 2M opening

2M	?		
	Raise	Very mild INV at best	
	2S/3H	(other M) NAT, F1	
	2NT	ART, ENQ with values, typ 14+: 3m=NAT, MIN, 3M=bonded minor, MAX	
	3C/D	P/C	
	4C/D	SPL	
	3S over 2H	SPL	
	3NT	to play	
	4H/S	to play, whether raise or not	
2M	(X)	?	XX=Own suit (opener bids next step)

1.10 2NT opening (including 2C-2D-2NT and 2NT overcall)

2NT	?	
	3C	Muppet Stayman
	3D/H	TRF (GF over strong 2NT, but not after 2NT overcall)
	3S	5S/4H
	4m	Minorwood
	4M	to play
After strong 2NT, acceptance shows 3+ support		
2NT	3C	
?		
	3D	4M: 3M shows other M, 4m=5+ suit
	3H	No 4 or 5M: 3S=ask for 5m, 4m=NAT, 5+
	3S/NT	shows 5S/H

1.11 3 level PRE opening

3x	?	4C=Keycard (4D over 3C opening): responses in steps 0, Q, 1, 1+Q, 2, 2+Q
3NT	?	
4C	P/C	
4D	strong ask: bid suit NF, 4NT = good in m, jumps allowed if very good	
4M	to play	
4NT	RKCB, suit assumed known	

2. They compete

2.1 They overcall Michaels

Both suits known

Pass then X by responder is PEN. 2NT = NAT, INV if available. There are 2 cuebids. If both cues are lower than 3 of our suit then tend to show bonded suit, including cue-raise. If one cue is higher than 3 of our suit then the lower cue shows the raise.

Only 1 suit known Similar, but the only cue below our game is cue-raise of our suit.

2.2 They overcall: X shows emphasis on highest unbid suit

2.3 They overcall 1NT (including COMIC)

1y	(1NT = strong)	?
X	PEN	
2 suit	NAT, NF	
2y	NAT, NF, 3+	
3y	NAT, 8-9ish, 4+	
2NT	y raise, 10+	

1y	(1NT = strong or COMIC)	?
X	values, guarantees highest suit	
2 suit	NAT, F1	
Rest	y raises as above	

3. They open

Jump overcalls: If Comic allowed jumps are intermediate except m-over-m = weak. If Comic not allowed jumps are intermediate VUL, weak NV, except m-over-m = weak always

Michaels: Constructive+ values. 2NT always 2 lowest suits. 2NT response always strong ENQ, cue = INV+ raise in known suit or M if both known. Raises not INV

1NT overcall – strong or Comic (if allowed)

NT = strong If strong then 15-18, system ON. In 4th seat 11-16: 2C=range ENQ else system ON

NT = strong or Comic (typ weak jump overcall)

Overcaller's "cue-bid" is their M after (1M) opening else 2D after (1m) opening

(1x)	1NT	(P)	?
	2C	ART, INV+ opposite strong NT, NF opposite Comic:	
		Cue/2D	strong with one or both M
		Suit	Comic
		2NT	strong but NF, 15-16, denies M
		3NT	17-18, denies M
	2S	rangefinder:	
		2NT	MIN
		3NT	MAX
		Cue/3D	MAX with 5M
	2D/H	TRF:	acceptance does not deny Comic
		TRF to their (H)	F, G INV+ opposite Comic: then new suit=F1
		2H	catch-all, strong or Comic
		2S	Comic in S (not compulsory)
		TRF to their (S)	F, G INV+ opposite Comic: then new suit=F1
		2S	catch-all, strong or Comic
		2NT	Comic in D (not compulsory)
		3C	Comic in C (not compulsory)
(1x)	1NT	(X)	?
	XX	own suit (PPT to 2C)	
	2C	2 suits (as over 1NT opening): 2NT shows strong distributional Comic in 2 suits	
	2(x)	cue = T.O. of (x)	
	2NT	T.O. of (x)	

Over short or ART bids

(1C may be short, 3+ or less) ? (same after (1D) e.g. Precision)

X	T/O
2C	Michaels
3C	normal jump overcall

(1C) P (1H = TRF to S=4+) ?

X	T/O style, typ more BAL or <4H
1S	T/O of S (guarantees 4H)

(1C) P (1S = no M) ?

X	T/O
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(1C) P (1S = D) ?
 2D T/O
 X general T/O

(1NT) P (2D/H = TRF) ?
 X T/O style, typ more BAL or <4OM
 2H/S T/O (guarantees 4OM)

(1NT) P (2C ART) ?
 X Clubs

Fourth seat

After partner overcalls:

- 2NT = 4 card raise to 3 level if both opponents bid, NAT if third hand passes
- new suit F if 3rd hand passes, NF if 3rd hand bids (above 1NT – see below)

After everyone has bid:

- bids from 1NT to one step below 2 of partners suit are TRF

Over their NT

(1NT) ?
 X 4+M/4+m: 2D=bid shorter M (typ own M or INV in openers M)
 2C both M
 2D good overcall 14+ any suit: all p/c except 2NT INV+ in both M
 2M NAT up to 13
 2NT good 5/5 touching suits: 3m=P/C NF, 3M=F1
 3any PRE

(1NT) X (P) P = PEN, F to agreement, subsequent X = TO

Defence to strong 2C opening

(2C strong) ?
 X T/O style, if min then at least 44 in M
 2NT both m

They redouble after our take-out double

- Pass **under** suit is never PEN
- Pass sitting over their suit is only a suggestion to play when NV v VUL

They preempt

(2D Multi) ?
 X takeout, good weak NT or better. Leb/Rub applies

(pre) 3NT ?
 4C Staymanic, mild slam try or better
 4D/H TRF
 4S both m slam interest
 4NT quantitative

(2x) 2NT (X) ? XX=TRF to C, 3 any=TRF, TRF to (x)=T/O of their suit

(3x) 3NT (X) ? XX=TRF to C, 4 any=TRF, TRF to (x)=T/O of their suit

(2D=both M) ?
 X T/O of S
 2H T/O of H
 any S NAT
 X then bid H NAT

(2H=both M) ?
 X T/O of H
 2S/3H NAT
 X then 2S/3H asks for stop

(2C=H+m) ? (and similar (2D=S+m))
 X T/O of H
 2H NAT
 3H Michaels

(2NT) ? 3C=both M, H>=S, 3D=both M, S>H

(3NT) ? 4C=both M, H>=S, 4D=both M, S>H

Leaping/Non-leaping Michaels

Over (M pre)	?	
	4C	C + Other M, highly INV but NF
	4D	D + Other M, highly INV but NF
	4(M)	Other M plus m, GF
	4NT	both m
Over (m pre)	?	
	4om	H + om, highly INV but NF
	4(m)	S + other, highly INV but not GF (i.e. can pass 4D)
Over (Multi)	?	
	4C	H + C, highly INV but NF
	4D	H + D, highly INV but NF
Over (PRE in unknown suit)	?	
	4C	Both M (Landy)

Other agreements

Unexpected X of their 3NT implies ask for H lead

4. Generic Methods in constructive auctions

4.1 Slam bidding

Last Train

Cue bid 1st or 2nd round control.

Sweep cues where applicable

5NT often pick-a-slam, never GSF

4NT quantitative if last suit bid was m. Show RKCB if moving

RKCB: 03/14/2 without/2 with no run-on to K's.

Over interference POD1/POR1. If steps lost and showing, then step 1 = 0/2/4, step 2 = 1/3/5

One step below our suit is always Last Train. If accepting Last Train then cheapest NT denies trump

Q (if not already shown or denied), suit shows K plus trump Q

After step 1 or 2 next step asks Q: Cheapest bid of trump suit denies Q. Jump in trump suit

shows Q and no K's. Rest shows specific Ks, 5NT = 2Ks

After Ks, new suit probing for 7 (asks for 3rd round control, extras, Last Train or something)

4.2 Special asks, potentially slam going auctions

Splinterwood Occurs after shortage shown. 3NT suggestion to play. Next step void, rest RKCB

Balsawood Needs hand rich in controls.

Majorwood Continuation after sign-off in 4M

Kickback Bid of step above trump suit is RKCB

Bidenwood Occurs after 3NT = suggestion to play

3NT in GF M agreed auction weaker slam try than 4 level cue

Residual Shape Ask (RSA) Next step ASK, responses in steps: next 2 steps show shortage, step 3/4 = no shortage, not MIN/MIN

Showing specific shortage in response to an ask when M agreed Bid NAT SPL if possible, else lowest suit up. Applies in competition, where we also use P, X or XX steps

4.2 1NT rebid

Shows 15-17 or 11-14 if length in any by-passed suit (D or H).

1x	1y	
1NT	?	
	2C	checkback, mild game interest or stronger
	2D	NF
	2H	after showing S 4+ NF, up to 8
	2y rebid	NF, (7)8-10
	2S	reverse after showing H, 4+S, GF
	2NT	INV opposite 11-14 if suit bypassed, no additional Major interest
	3NT	to play
	3C	catch-all, GF, mild slam interest+, denies 4+H. Bid features up the line
	3D-S	GF, some mild slam interest or better
1H	1S	
1NT	2C	
?		
	2D	MIN, both 5H & 3S
	2H	MIN, 5H (denies 3S)
	2S	MIN, 3S denies 5H
	2NT	MAX, 5H
	3H	6H (denies 3S)
	3S	MAX, 3S (denies 5H)
	3NT	MAX, 2533

1D	1S
1NT	2C
?	
2D	MIN with H: 2M/NT=NAT, NF, 3D=NAT, INV, 3 any=GF
2H	14-17, either 4H or 3S or both: 2S=5+S, F1, NAT continuations, 4H=p/c
2S	MIN, 3S +
2NT	14-15ish, NAT, NF, no extra M length
3D	13-14ish, 6D
3NT	to play 16-17

After 1C – 1S = D

1C	1S=D
1NT	?
2C	NF checkback 8-11
2D	NF, 6-11, NF
2M/3C	NAT, GF
2NT	INV opposite 11-14
3D	NAT, 6+D

4.3 2NT jump rebid after 1-over-1: 18-19: 3C checkback

4.4 2NT rebid after 2-over-1: GF, either own suit, support for partners suit or BAL 15+

1x	2y
2NT	?
3x	3+ support
3D (y=m)	6+ own minor and some slam interest
3H (y=H)	H rebid shows very good suit
3 suit	NAT
3C	checkback (fishing) (denies 3 of opener's suit): 3D ART else NAT

4.5 Lebensohl/Rubensohl

Fast Arrival Shows Stop. Transfer responses. Applies when they have bid only 1 suit NAT, over weak (2M) bids and 2-level PRE

(2x)	X	?
	2 suit	NAT, NF
	2NT	PPT to 3C, could be GF but with no stopper. After 3C acceptance new suit to play, 3x=Staymanic without stopper
	3C/D/H/STRF	to D/H/S/C, at least INV values (3S=C denies stop unless good hand)
	3x-1	TRF to their suit is Stayman with a stopper
	3NT	To play with a stop

4.6 Sundry

With m agreed, if we have bid 2 suits 3rd suit bid shows stop else ask stop

5. General methods in competition

Double then equal level conversion implies extra values

Cuebid opposite takeout double is self-forcing

Support doubles

X of directional ask is lead anti-directional

5.2 They double our 3-level directional cue

When they X our cuebid of their suit at 3 level (directional ask) then 3NT shows stop(s), XX shows partial stop, Pass denies. After Pass, XX by responder then shows Jxx or Qxx

6. Carding methods

Against suits

- 3rd and lowest (subsequent leads also 3/lowest)
- overlead honours
- A from AK (no Q or J), or A
- K from AK with Q or J, or from KQ... asks NAT ATT or count if dummy has Q or J
- Honour leads at 5 level are Roman (A from AK doubleton) except if leading partners suit
- UDCA
- NAT ATT on our honour leads v suit; else rev CNT
- Discards Smith or REV ATT. Later carding might be rev count if affordable

Against NT

- Leads ATT (subsequent leads also ATT or 3/lowest). Lowest implies 2 honours.
- REV ATT on honour leads
- AQ10 strong, asks unblock or count
- KJ9 asks for REV ATT
- UDCA
- Discards Smith or REV ATT. Later carding might be rev count if affordable

Sundry signals

Smith peter (REV ATT low = like of original suit from both sides) (unless CNT required)

If dummy has singleton show suit pref unless contributing

Highest (up to the 10) from 4 small when length in the suit has been shown or implied (i.e. takeout double, bid or support for partner)

Later carding might be rev count if affordable