

System Notes

Strong Club + Symmetric Relays

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0.1 Definitions

ASKER	Relay-initiator, strong hand which continues relays without showing shape
ART	Artificial
BAL	2-4 cards in every suit
CTRL	Control(s) (A=2, K=1)
DCB	Denial Cue Bidding
HCP	High Card Points (A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1)
HS	High Shortage
INV	Invitational
INQ	Inquiry
LEB	Lebensohl
L/D	Lead-directing
LONG	Two-suiter with both suits having at least 5 cards
L/T	Last Train
LS	Low Shortage
NV	Non-vulnerable
MS	Mid Shortage
P/C	Pass or Correct
PEN	Penalty
PH	Passed hand
PRE	Pre-emptive
SINGLE-SUITER	5+ cards in one suit, no more than 3 in another
SHORT	Two-suiter with one suit having exactly 4 cards
S/P	Suit Preference
TELLER	(Usually) weaker hand which shows shape/controls in relay
TWO-SUITER	9+ cards combined in 2 suits, no more than 3 in another
THREE-SUITER	4+ cards in each of 3 suits
TRF	Transfer
VUL	Vulnerable

0.2 Style

- Points are a guideline. Upgrades and downgrades frequent.
- Openings are extremely vulnerability and seat sensitive, with allowance of -2/+1 in point-value
- Positive responses to 1♣ require at least 2 CTRL. Openings do not require any CTRL.
- Openings are aggressive, especially 1st and 3rd seat NV.
- Distribution compensates for HCP.
- 1-level interference can be very aggressive.
 - 1x may be KJTxx and nothing else
 - DBL of 1♣/2♦ may be 44(41) 7+ HCP
- 2-level overcalls should be 10+ HCP, good suit, usually 6+ cards VUL.
- 4441 hands are opened more conservatively than other shapes in 1♦.
- 1NT openings may be semi-balanced. There may be multiple options for opening 4441s, 5332s, 5422s, 6322s, and 5431s with singleton A/K/Q.
- We prioritise showing shape before strength.
- Mini-splinters (SSGTs) frequent in constructive auctions, may be initially ambiguous
- 3T-1 as Last Train frequent, especially in competition
- The system is optimised to miss 25-count 3NT games
- I don't count HCP. Don't believe anything you read, it just depends on how much I like my hand.

0.3 Opening Bids

PASS NAT

- 1♣ 15+ HCP, any shape
- 1♦ (8)10-14 HCP, 0+♦, any two- or three-suiter without 5♥/♠
- 1♥ (8)10-14 HCP, 5+♥
- 1♠ (8)10-14 HCP, 5+♠
- 1NT 12-15 HCP, semi-BAL
- 2♣ (8)10-14 HCP, 6+♣, denies 4♥/♠
- 2♦ 10-14 HCP, 6+♦, denies 4♦/♥/♠
- 2M 0-13 HCP, 5+ suit, seating variable (see **Preempts**)
- 2NT 10-14 HCP, 5+♥, 5+♠
- 3X 0-13 HCP, 5+ suit, seating variable (see **Preempts**)
- 3NT Solid 7+♣/♦, no outside A
- 4X NAT, preempt
- 4NT Specific Ace Ask (5♣=0, 5NT=♣A, 6♣=2)
- 5X NAT, preempt

Relays

1.1 Shape Relays

The general objective is for RESPONDER, with a sufficiently strong hand, to show their exact shape by showing in order their suits (4+), shortages (2-), and then exactly distribution. Once a relay is initiated, we are in a GF auction.

1.1.1 1♣ Relay

1.1.1.1 Suit-Showing

After OPENER bids 1♣, RESPONDER gives a NEG response with ≤ 7 HCP OR < 2 controls.

1♣	1♦	NEG
	1♥	4+♠
	1♠	BAL OR ♦+♥
	1NT	4+♥
	2♣	4+♦
	2♦	5+♣

Exceptions:

♦+♥, 1♠ followed by 2♣ (*cf.* **Balanced Hands**);
 ♣+♦, R1 IMPLICATION; ♥/♠+♣, R2 IMPLICATION

1.1.1.2 Single-Suiters

In most cases, the following relay is used. Second bid by RESPONDER is always 2♠ or higher. After OPENER relays, RESPONDER defines shape at 3♦ or higher. Hands with LS shown with R2 IMPLICATION. 2♠ is not strictly a HS, 7222 also shown via this bid.

2♠	HS	
2NT	MS	
3♣	ES	7222
3♦	5332	
3♥	6331	L3
3♠	7321	M3
3NT	7330	H3

However, with 2-3 CTRL and any 5332, first bid 1♠ to rightside a potential 3NT contract. As there is only one possible shape, the shortage is immediately shown afterwards (HML, 3♦/3♥/3♠, see [return to this later]). When using this relay, ♦ are shown by IMPLICATION.

1.1.1.3 Two-Suiters

Aside from exceptions (1.1.1), RESPONDER bids both suits then defines their lengths. SHORT, non-REVtwo-suiters shown with IMPLICATION. May bypass 3NT with the most extreme shape (6520).

2♥	REV		
2♠	LONG		
2NT	HS		
3♣	5422	HS	
3♦	5431	ES	
3♥	6421	5521	
3♠	6430	5530	5611
3NT	7420	5620	6511
4♣		6520	

1.1.1.4 Three-Suiters

The minor three-suiter relay is structurally identical to the major three-suiter relay, except all bids are moved up one step.

1♣	1♥		
1♠	1NT		
2♣	2♦		
2♥	2♠	HS	
	2NT	4441	
	3♣	4450	4414
	3♦	4540	4405
	3♥	5440	4504
	3♠		5404

1♣	2♣		
2♦	2♥		
2♠	2NT	HS	
	3♣	4144	
	3♦	4045	1444
	3♥	4054	0445
	3♠	5044	0454
	3NT		0544

1.1.1.5 Balanced Hands

First bid by RESPONDER is always 1♠. Disambiguated as a balanced hand on the next bid.

1♣	1♠			
1NT	2♦	2=COL		
	2♥	2=RANK		
2♠		4333	4333	
2NT		2=♠		
3♣		2=♣	3433	3334
3♦		2=♦	4333	3343
3♥		2=♥		

1.1.1.6 Second Force Relay

After 1♣-1♦, OPENER with a stronger hand can initiate a 'second force' with 1♥. The relay structure is exactly the same as above, except all bids are moved up 2 steps (i.e. 1♠ NEG, 1NT 4+♠...), except a 1♠ negative response now shows 0-4 HCP (RESPONDER may upgrade with an Ace and good intermediate values or shape).

Note that the semi-balanced relay (1♣-1♠, see A.2) does *not* apply after a second force as many balanced hands bypass 3NT before clarifying exact shape. Instead, the following relay is used, showing only BAL shapes at 3NT or below. Note also that 2♦-2♥ still shows a red two-suiter in this scheme.

1♣	1♦			
1♥	2♣			
2♦	2♠	2=COL		
	2NT	2=RANK		
3♣		4333	4333	
3♦		2=♦		
3♥		2=♥	3433	3334
3♠		2=♠	4333	3343
3NT		2=♣		

1.1.2 1♦ Relay

1.1.2.1 Major/Minor Two-Suiters

May only be REV, as 1♦ cannot contain 5M. RESPONDER with 4♥ and 5m always rebids 2♣. Otherwise

shapes terminate exactly as in 1♣ Relay.

1♦	1NT		
2♣	4♥		
2♦	♣+♦		
2♥	♠+♣	♥+♣	
2♠	♠+♣+?	♥+♦+?	
2NT	♠+♦	HS	♥+♦
3♣			5422
3♦			5431
3♥			6421
3♠			6430
3NT			7420

1.1.2.2 Minor Two-Suiters

Relay as in 1♣ Relay, except one step higher. Again, most extreme shapes may bypass 3NT.

1♦	1NT		
2♦	2♥		
2♠	REV		
2NT	LONG		
3♣	HS		
3♦	5422	HS	
3♥	5431	ES	
3♠	6421	5521	
3NT	6430	5530	5611
4♣	7420	5620	6511
4♦		6520	

1.1.2.3 Three-Suiters

Black (including ♣+♠) 3-suiters immediately rebid 2♠, red (including ♦+♥) 3-suiters first rebid 2♣. Shapes written to denote HS or LS. Some shapes are impossible as 1♦ cannot contain 5M.

1♦	1NT	
(2♣)	(2♦)	
2♠	2NT	
3♣	HS	
3♦	4441	
3♥	4450	4414
3♠		4405
3NT		4504

1.1.3 1♥/1♠ Relay

Structurally identical, only differs in terms of long suit.

1.1.3.1 Single-Suiters

Essentially the same structure as follows a 1♥/1♠ RESPONDER bid to 1♣.

1♥/1♠	1NT
2♠	HS
2NT	MS
3♣	ES
3♦	5332
3♥	6331 6223
3♠	7321 6232
3NT	7330 6322

1.1.3.2 Two-Suiters

Cannot be a reverser, as a 5M has been shown.

Does not include the possibility of a 5+♥/5+♠ two-suiter. Such hands are instead opened 2NT. See Appendix A for a suggested method to incorporate the 2NT relay into the 1♠ Relay structure.

Due to the reduced number of possible hand shapes (and inability to transfer ♥), no special accommodation is made for ♦+♥ two-suiters, and these are shown with the ‘usual’ protocol of first showing ♦ with 2♣, then clarifying shape with 2♥ and above.

1♥/1♠	1NT
2♣	4+♦
2♦	4+♣
2♥	4+oM
2♠	LONG
2NT	HS
3♣	ES
3♦	5431
3♥	6421 5422 5521
3♠	6430 7411 5530 5611
3NT	7420 5620 6511
4♣	6520

1.1.3.3 Three-Suiters

Possibilities are extremely limited, as the only possible shape is 5440 with the 5 already specified by the opening bid. The maximal termination of this relay occurs at a very low level.

1♥/1♠	1NT
2♣	2♦
2♥	2♠
2NT	5044
3♣	5404
3♦	5440

1.1.4 2♣/2♦ Relay

Very few shapes, as these are already defined as minor single-suiters (2♣ can contain a reverser with ♦, but these must be 6-4 or better).

2♣	2♦
2♥	REV
2♠	HS
2NT	MS
3♣	ES
3♦	6331
3♥	7321 2236
3♠	7330 2326
3NT	3226

2♦	2♥
2♠	HS
2NT	MS
3♣	ES
3♦	6331
3♥	7321 2263
3♠	7330 2362
3NT	3262

1.1.5 2NT Relay

Even fewer shapes, as the hand shape is already specifically ♥+♠ LONG.

2NT	3♣
3♦	HS
3♥	ES
3♠	5521
3NT	5530 5611
4♣	5620 6511
4♦	6520

1.2 Post-Shape Options

1.2.1 Sign-off

Sign-offs generally show ASKER’s lack of interest in continuing to explore for a higher contract. They may also occur when ASKER fears a death response in a denial cue-bidding sequence.

They are not pass-forcing. TELLER with abnormal strength may override the sign-off, showing ‘super-positive’ hand (13+ HCP and 4 CTRL or 5+ CTRL).

3NT 3NT is always a sign-off.

4♦ If previous bid was 3NT or lower, puppet to 4♥. Rebid/pass is a sign-off. But see **Natural Slam Try**.

4♥+ If game/slam bids skip any bids, it is a sign-off.

Note that 4♦ is a puppet to 4♥ is *any* auction where it is not the immediate next bid – i.e. regardless of

whether TELLER has shown their number of controls or not.

1.2.1.1 Overrides

If TELLER overrides the sign-off, their next lowest bid shows 12+ HCP and 4 CTRL, the subsequent bids 5/6/7 etc. CTRL. DCB then proceeds as usual.

If an attempted sign-off is initiated with 4♦, TELLER should override immediately with 4♠+ instead of completing the puppet to 4♥, as 4♥ is passable.

It is theoretically possible for overrides to be based on extreme shape instead of strength. There are no clear rules on extreme-shape overrides (please interfere, it makes things easier).

1.2.2 Control Ask

Continuing the relay (i.e. making the lowest possible non-3NT bid) indicates some slam interest and asks for TELLER's number of controls.

Controls are valued with K=1, A=2. Singleton Ks are not counted.

TELLER's first step shows a minimum, and subsequent steps show +1 CTRL each. The minimum varies (see, e.g. **Opening Bids, Second Force, Relay Breaks**).

1.2.3 Natural Slam Try

If ASKER has the option to bid 4♦ to initiate a sign-off but instead makes a direct jump to game, this is instead a natural slam try. This will often be looking for hands that cannot be shown at a sufficiently low level via DCB. This may be because ASKER has only controls and a lack of soft/filler values or because ASKER fears a death response and cannot safely investigate.

Usually indicates that TELLER should be interested in slam based on their intermediate trump and long side-suit holdings. TELLER passes without interest, and bids as though responding to 1430 RKC.

1.2.4 5NT Pick-A-Slam

If 5NT is not the lowest available NT bid, then it is slam forcing and requesting TELLER to bid a preferred suit.

TELLER should be aware that ASKER already knows their full shape, so there cannot be unexpected length. 5NT is therefore likely to be oriented towards suit quality (possibly interested in playing a Moysian trump fit

rather than 6NT) and both parties should respond accordingly.

This should be extremely rare.

Alternatively, either party has lost track of the relay, or ASKER has fucked up in a way that makes their responses incomprehensible. Random 5NT bids are forcing to slam, somewhere.

This should also be extremely rare.

1.2.5 RKC

If 4♣ is not a relay (i.e. TELLER's last bid is 3♥ or lower), then it is instead initiating an RKC ask (1430). 4♣ is a puppet to 4♦. ASKER's 4♥-5♣ bids are RKC enquiries, with suits ordered by TELLER's length, tiebroken by **lower** suit.

e.g. If TELLER is 7321, this cannot be distinguished from 7231 in the shape relay. Therefore, ♥ and ♦ are considered 'equal-length' and the following RKC scheme applies:

4♥ RKC for ♠

4♠ RKC for ♦

4NT RKC for ♥

5♣ RKC for ♣

1.3 Denial Cue-Bidding

After TELLER has clarified their number of controls, denial cue-bidding (henceforth DCB) is initiated by ASKER making the next highest bid. DCB operates by having TELLER scan suits in an agreed order and showing whether or not they hold relevant honours.

DCB may involve several rounds of scanning, where the first scan is for controls (A/K), the second is for Qs, and the third for Js. In principle, DCB, can be extended indefinitely, but in practice there will rarely be enough space to even reach the J scan.

All bids aside from 3NT, 6NT, and anything at the 7-level can be a relay during DCB. Any game or higher relay break in a DCB sequence is a sign-off. TELLER is not permitted to make a bid above 7♣. If their DCB response would be above 7♣, they simply bid 7♣ instead. ASKER should be anticipating this possibility.

This subsection discusses post-relay DCB, so auctions where ASKER is aware of TELLER's full hand shape and number of controls. For exceptions, see **Relay**

Breaks.**1.3.1 Control Scan**

The first DCB call asks for TELLER to show the location of her controls (A/K). TELLER scans their suits in order of length, from higher to lowest. Ties and pseudo-ties (e.g. 7321) are broken by **higher** suit (*c.f.* RKC tie break).

Each subsequent bid to ASKER's DCB relay call corresponds to one suit, in this order. TELLER making the corresponding bid shows that they have either both AK or neither. With one of the A/K, TELLER skips that bid and continues scanning until they are able to make a 'denial' bid¹.

This is best demonstrated through an example. Suppose TELLER (North) holds ♠T843 ♥K2 ♦AK873 ♣54 and has shown a 2+ CTRL 4252 at 3♣. The next bid by ASKER (South) is therefore a control ask, and the auction proceeds as such:

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT(1)	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦(2)	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠(3)	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦(4)		

- (1) 4 CTRL
- (2) ♦AK or neither
- (3) ♠AK or neither
- (4) ♥A/K, no ♦Q

It is possible for opener to hold a hand like ♠QJ65 ♥A6 ♦9 ♣AKQJ65 and be unable to tell whether slam is cold or off a cashing AK. These situations are determined to be too unlikely and the general space and clarity gained by both/neither denial bids to be, on the whole, more than compensatory.

Note that ASKER has other options if she foresees issues with clarifying holdings during a DCB auction (see **Post-Shape Options, Relay Breaks**).

1.3.1.1 Skips

Note that the final 5♦ bid is *not* a denial bid for ♣. Certain suits are systematically skipped. We do not scan the following suits during control DCB:

- Any singletons (or voids)

¹Given the 'both or neither' nature of this system, 'denial' may not be an accurate descriptor of the bid. Nevertheless, that is the terminology that will be used throughout.

- TELLER's shortest suit *after* accounting for the above
- Any suit after TELLER has shown all controls.

This final requirement is particularly striking when TELLER has exactly 3 CTRL and they are the AK of their longest suit. In this case, TELLER will make a single denial bid and then move on to scanning for Qs.

1.3.2 Further Scans

After TELLER has shown information about all relevant suits (see **Skips**), the same method is used to determine which Qs TELLER holds, but we skip only **singletons**. The other skip rules do not apply.

If there is enough space following the Q scan, the DCB can be extended to scan for Js.

1.4 Relay Breaks**1.4.1 Weak Relay**

If ASKER is not interested in slam unless opposite a super-positive, she may break the relay after shape-showing is complete, asking TELLER only to continue with control-showing and DCB if they hold such a hand.

A relay skip is an weak relay iff the following conditions are met:

- TELLER's complete shape is shown at 3♦ or below

TELLER makes the lowest possible bid with a non-super-positive hand. Subsequent bids show 4+ controls with the usual steps. DCB commences after the number of controls is defined.

Sign-off principles still apply after a weak relay. If 4♦ is available, ASKER should use it as a puppet to 4♥ to sign-off, otherwise they are still making a natural slam try.

1.4.1.1 Common Inferences

TELLER is expected to draw inferences from the availability of weak relay. Two important situations are as follows:

- If weak relay was not available, TELLER may override a sign-off with a 'regular' super-positive (12+ HCP, 4 CTRL or 5+ CTRL)

- If weak relay was available, TELLER must have substantial extras to override (15+ HCP, 4 CTRL or 6+ CTRL)

However, the presence or lack thereof of weak relay possibilities has implications for almost all slam-interested auctions. Consider, for instance, the following situations:

1. Weak relay available, unused, TELLER signs off
2. Weak relay available, unused, TELLER makes natural slam try
3. Weak relay ‘accepted’, TELLER signs off
4. Weak relay ‘accepted’, TELLER makes natural slam try
5. Weak relay ‘rejected’, TELLER makes natural slam try

Since these are distinct sequences terminating at the same place, they should in principle these should call for different acceptance criteria.

1.4.2 Splinter Breaks

There are two types of splinter breaks, one game-oriented and one slam-oriented. Both occur before shape-showing is complete.

1.4.2.1 Choice of Games

When TELLER shows a balanced or semi-balanced hand, ASKER breaks the relay to show a short suit, minimal values, and likely no 4-card major.

This sequence is analogous to a 1NT-3♥/3♠ splinter auction, and occurs under the following conditions:

- The auction begins 1♣-1♠-1NT-2♦+
- TELLER has not shown their exact shape
- ASKER skips the normal relay bid
- ASKER makes a suit bid at the 3-level

1.4.2.2 Control Ask

When ASKER anticipates trouble distinguishing between control locations in a regular DCB auction, and does not care about TELLER’s exact shape anymore.

This splinter initiates a control ask at a lower level, and *excludes* controls in the splinter suit. It only occurs when TELLER’s last bid was 2♥ or lower. The scheme is as follows:

- Step 1: Normal relay
- Step 2: Unspecified void
- Step 3: Unspecified singleton

The splinter is ambiguous and a puppet to the next highest bid, after which ASKER clarifies the splinter with H-L coding.

TELLER then continues as though a control-ask and DCB sequence has been initiated regularly, with some modifications (see below).

1.4.2.3 Revised Control Count and DCB

When ASKER makes a splinter control ask, TELLER counts singleton Ks as 1 CTRL, as their shape has not been defined and ASKER does not know there is a singleton.

When ASKER shows a void, TELLER no longer counts *any* controls in the void suit. The responses therefore start at 0 CTRL, as it is plausible for TELLER to have nothing outside.

When ASKER show a singleton, TELLER no longer counts the K, but still counts the A as 2 CTRL. The responses therefore start at 1 CTRL, as TELLER may have only 1 K outside.

Given that TELLER’s exact shape is unknown, the suit scan order for DCB is modified. During DCB, TELLER bids as though the following are true:

- She has a singleton or void in ASKER’s splinter suit
- Any suit she has shown is her longest suit
- Any other suits are of equal length (ties go high)

The usual skip requirements for DCB apply (see **Skips**), and therefore in a splinter control ask auction, TELLER will never scan more than two suits.

1.4.3 Early Queenscan

If ASKER can already infer the location of controls or does not need to know their exact location, she may be able to bypass the control scan and initiate a Q scan with 4NT.

4NT is an early Q scan iff the following conditions are met:

- ASKER has asked for controls
- TELLER has shown 4+ CTRL at the 4-level

- 4NT is not the normal relay bid

(4) 4+♥

(5) Relay

4NT should never be a natural signoff when ASKER has already demonstrated slam interest with a control ask and received a favourable answer.

1.5 Intervention

If a relay is not established before intervention exceeding the lowest relay response, a relay can never be established and bidding is reverted to relatively natural (see **Competition Auctions**).

In effect, this means that relay can only be established post-intervention in the following auctions:

- 1♣-(DBL)
- 1♣-(1♦)
- 1♣ (1♥), DBL is a 1♥ relay response
- 1♦/1♥-(1x), but **not** (1NT), DBL is penalty

If a relay has already been established, it is continued so long as the relay responses are **no more than 2 steps up** from the original².

This is 2 steps up after accounting for the ability to now PASS or DBL. PASS becomes a default relay bid, and DBL represents the lowest step.

Consequently, the relay can occasionally become *lower* despite intervention.

Consider the following auction with interference:

West	North	East	South
	1♣(1)	Pass	1♥(2)
1♠	Pass(3)	Pass	Double(4)
Pass	1NT(5)		

(1) 15+ any shape

(2) 4+♠

(3) Relay

(4) 4+♥

(5) Relay

Compared to its uninterrupted counterpart:

West	North	East	South
	1♣(1)	Pass	1♥(2)
Pass	1♠(3)	Pass	1NT(4)
Pass	2♣(5)		

(1) 15+ any shape

(2) 4+♠

(3) Relay

²Note that this is how high the relay could become, without intervention, in the event of a second force

Constructive, Non-Relay

2.1 General Rules

- Non-relay responses are limited, NAT, NF.
- Jump bids out of competition are SPL.
- 2x will usually be 5-card, but could be 4-card on INV hands without a natural 2NT available.
- 3-card raises of a 4+ suit are rare but may happen if value distribution is appropriate (e.g. 1♦-1♠ and the opener is ♠AJT ♥A ♦Jxxx ♣xxxxx)
- GF SPL raises should show very mild slam interest. With no slam interest, responder can simply raise to game.
- High-level rebids show extra distribution instead of HCP.
- A passed hand cannot relay.

2.2 1♣-1♦

2.2.1 NT Ladder

There is no third force. Response structure to 1NT opening applies. 1♠ is often preferred to 1NT when balanced with 5♠.

1NT 16-18

1♥-1♠-1NT 19-21

2NT 22-23

1♥-1♠-2NT 24-25

1♥-1♠-3NT 26+

2.2.2 NF Rebids

1♠	5+♠
1NT	(14)15-17
2♣	5+♣
2♦	5+♦
2♥	5+♥
2♠	5+♣, 5+♦
3♣	5+♣, 5+♥
3♦	5+♦, 5+♥
3♥	6+♣/♦, 4♥
3♠	6+♣/♦, 4♠

2.3 1♦ Opening

While 1♦-1♥ is potentially light, both in terms of values and hearts, we treat it as though it were a 4+ constructive ♥ bid.

1♥	3+♥, NF, 5+ HCP
1♠	4+♠, <4♥
1NT	NAT
2♣	P/C
2♦	NAT, TO PLAY
2♥	10-13 HCP, 6+♥
2♠	8-13 HCP, 3+♠
2NT	NAT, INV
3♣	P/C, INV
1NT	5-4+ minors, denies three-suiter
2♣	TO PLAY
2♦	TO PLAY
2♥	10-13 HCP, 6+♥

2♠	? 5+♠, 6+♥
2NT	NAT, INV
3♣	4+♣, INV
3♦	4+♦, INV
3♥	? self sufficient heart suit, raise with sharp values?
2♣	4♥, 5+♣
2♦	INV in ♥
2♥	TO PLAY
2♠	Shortage ask, EHL
2♦	4♥, 5+♣ 2♥ TO PLAY 2♠ Shortage ask, EHL
2♥	4♥, otherwise undefined three-suiter
2♠	Shortage ask, NT=♠
2NT	♠ SSGT
3♣	♣ SSGT
3♦	♦ SSGT
3♥	INV
2♠	SPL
2NT	5+♣, 5+♦, max
3♣	SPL
3♦	SPL
3♥	?
3♠+	SPL, void, may be extreme shape
1♠	8-13 HCP, 4+♠
1NT	4+♣, 4+♦
2♣	4♥, 5+♣
2♦	4♥, 5+♦
2♥	Three-suiter without ♠, max
2NT	5+♣, 5+♦, max
3♣+	SPL
4♣+	SPL, void, may be extreme shape
1NT	14+ HCP, GF, see Relays
2♣	8-13 HCP, 4+♣
2♦	8-13 HCP, 4+♦
2♥	TO PLAY
2♠	TO PLAY
2NT	11-13 HCP, NAT, INV

2.4 1♥ Opening

1♠	6-13 HCP, 4+♠
2♠	3+♠
2NT	4♠, INV
3♣	3♠, 3+♣, FRAG
3♦	3♠, 3+♦, FRAG
3♥	3♠, 6♥ or 5♥, semi-solid
3♠	4♠, MIN
3NT	4♠, ?
4♣	4♠, ?
4♦	4♠, ?
4♥	4♠, ?
1NT	14+ HCP, GF, see Relays
2♣	8-13 HCP, 5+♣
2♦	8-13 HCP, 5+♦
2♥	8-11 HCP, 3+♥
2♠	SSGT in ♠ or ♦
2NT	NAT INV
3♣	♣ SSGT
3♦	INV
3♥	TO PLAY
2♠	SSGT in ♠ or ♦
2NT	Relay
3♣	♠ SSGT
3♦	♦ Min SSGT
3♥	♦ Max SSGT
2NT	NAT INV
3♣	SSGT
3♦	12-13 HCP, 3+ ♥
3♥	PRE, TO PLAY
3NT	15-17 HCP, 3♥, 4333
4♣	13-15 HCP, SPL
4♦	13-15 HCP, SPL
4♥	TO PLAY

2.5 1♠ Opening

Mostly the same as in 1♥ **Opening**, but they don't usually let you respond 1♠ (and the mini-splinter raise structure is a bit different with no natural NT invite).

- 2NT ♡ SSGT
- 3♣ SSGT
- 3◇ SSGT
- 3♡ 12-13 HCP, 3+ ♠

2.6 1NT Opening

Theoretically no 5cM, 2+ in every suit, max 1 doubleton. In practice, can be off-shape based on value distribution.

- 2♣ Stayman
- 2◇ ♡ TRF
- 2♡ ♠ TRF
- 2♠ Rangefinder or ♣
- 2NT Minors or ◇
- 3♣ 6+♣, invite
- 3◇ 6+◇, invite
- 3♡ GF, SPL, 31(54)
- 3♠ GF, SPL, 13(54)
- 4♣ 6+♡, slam interest
- 4◇ 6+♠, slam interest

2.6.1 Superaccepts

Only after 1NT-2◇ and 1NT-2♡ TRFs.

- 2M+1 14-15 HCP, 4+M
 - 3X SPL, mild slam interest
 - 3M-1 M TRF
 - 3NT ♠ cue if agreed ♡
 - 4X Slam interest, cue
- 3M 12-13 HCP, 4+M

2.7 2♣ Opening

- 2◇ 14+ HCP, GF, see **Relays**
- 2♡ NAT, INV
- 2♠ NAT, INV
- 2NT NAT, INV
- 3♣ NAT, **not** INV
- 3X Stopper ask
- 3NT TO PLAY
- 4X NAT, TO PLAY

2.8 2◇ Opening

Same as in 2♣, except 2♡ is 14+ HCP, GF, see **Relays**. 3♣ shows 5+♡, INV.

2.9 2NT Opening

We may open 1♠ instead of 2NT with a 5-5 majors hand in 3rd or 4th seat.

- 3♣ 14+ HCP, GF relay. NAT if responder is a PH.
- 3◇ Puppet to 3♡, intending to signoff. Can be overridden with an extreme shape.
- 3♡ INV in ♡
- 3♠ INV in ♠
- 3NT TO PLAY
- 4♣ **Don't know but it's not Gerber**
- 4◇ Asks for better major
- 4♡ TO PLAY
- 4♠ TO PLAY
- 4NT **Don't know but it's not keycard**
- 5M NAT, TO PLAY

2.10 2♥/♠

2NT is a forcing enquiry; responses based on suit length when NV and quality when VUL. A ‘good suit’ is defined as one with 2 of the AKQ.

NV:

- 3♣ 0-4 HCP, 5-card
- 3♦ 0-4 HCP, 6-card
- 3♥ 5-7(8) HCP, 5-card
- 3♠ 5-7(8) HCP, 6-card
- 3NT AKQxxx **DNE?**

VUL:

- 3♣ (3)4-6 HCP, bad suit
- 3♦ (3)4-6 HCP, good suit
- 3♥ 7-9 HCP, bad suit
- 3♠ 7-9 HCP, good suit
- 3NT AKQxxx

5NT Even keycards, unknown void

6X Odd keycards, void in bid suit. If x is the trump suit, unknown void above trump suit.

Next non-trump suit step from 5♣ or 5♦ asks for the trump Q.

- Lowest bid of trump suit denies Q
- Bid of new suit shows trump Q and K of bid suit
- If 5 and 6 of trump suit both available, 5NT shows trump Q and no Ks
- If only 6 of trump suit available, 5NT shows trump Q and K higher than trump suit

Follow-up of 5NT is a specific K-ask. TELLER bids the suit of any K they have, or the trump suit with no K or only K higher than trumps.

A bid of a suit by ASKER is looking to bid grand if TELLER has the K of that suit.

A direct bid of 6x by ASKER is looking to bid grand if TELLER has a 3rd control. **NB: Can be offer to play instead, if second suit has been shown by ASKER.**

2.11 Slam Conventions

NB: The authors are not good at this. That’s why they play relay.

In the case that we are unable to relay, the following apply:

- Any cuebid at the 4-level or above agrees the previously bid suit
- High level bid of suit immediately under trump suit is Last Train, takes priority over control cuebids
- Non-jump new suit bid after agreed trumps shows a 1st or 2nd round control
- 4NT is 1430 RKCB
- 5NT is Pick-A-Slam

2.11.1 1430 RKCB

- 5♣ 1 or 4 keycards
- 5♦ 0 or 3 keycards
- 5♥ 2 or 5 keycards, Q of trumps
- 5♠ 2 or 5 keycards, Q of trumps

Preempts

1st seat non-vulnerable: Pre-empts can be done on very bad hands (0 - 8 HCP, 5+ cards). 1st favourable pre-empts can be even worse - e.g. Jxxxx x xxx xxxx can be opened 2S.

2nd seat: pre-empts are close to a classical style. 2M and 3m will both always have 6+ cards.

When 2M pre-empts can be expected to be done on 5 cards (1st seat NV), we play 2NT as length-strength Ogust: responses show length of the suit and strength. When 2M pre-empts are expected to be 6 cards, we play quality-strength Ogust: responses show quality of the suit and strength.

3rd seat pre-empts can be heavier than usual: up to about 13 or 14 HCP.

Competitive Auctions

4.1 General Approach

These principles apply across all competitive auctions. Some specific sequences are given in sections below.

4.1.1 Known Fit

With an known fit, a higher ODR indicates a need to bid to higher levels, often as a two-way shot. The primary factors determining ODR are as follows:

HIGH CARDS	Greater high-card strength corresponds to a less significant ODR. Least significant factor.
SHAPE	A more unbalanced hand has a higher ODR, and vice versa
VALUE DISTRIBUTION	Values in agreed suit are offensive, values in opponents' suit are defensive. Value concentration in long suits suggests greater offence.
VALUE TYPE	Softer values in your long suits are very offensive, in theirs purely defensive. Hard values are likely to have both offensive and defensive value and therefore reduce ODR.

Consequently, we opt for and prioritise using multiple methods to show support (limiting ability to bid own suits), and prioritise methods to show shape and value concentration (over being able to accurately determine HCP).

4.1.1.1 Cue and 2NT Raises

When partner has shown a 5+ major suit and both a cuebid and 2NT are available, they are distinguished as such:

CUE = INV+ strength, 3-card support (or 4 card and low ODR)

2NT = INV+ strength, 4-card support, could be lighter with higher ODR if no mixed raise is available

JUMP CUE Mixed, 4-card support

Bids of the suit at various levels are therefore mixed to preemptive, denying INV+ values. Note that this scheme does not always distinguish between mixed and preemptive strength.

Note that if there is no cuebid to the 3-level (e.g. 1♥-(2♠), 2NT shows any INV+ raise; we cannot distinguish offensive and defensive hand types.

4.1.1.2 Long Suit Trials

In uninterrupted constructive auctions we use SSGTs, but after an opponent has overcalled, new suit bids are instead natural and LSGTs.

4.1.1.3 Fit Jumps

Fit jumps show support for partner's suit and a secondary side-suit of one's own. They occur only after the opponents have also shown a suit.

Should be raised by partner to confirm secondary fit if possible.

Fit jumps always invite further competition. Partner will expect a high ODR. Try to avoid making a fit jump with substantial defensive values (e.g. trump honours).

They are governed by the following principles:

- Usually show 4+ card support for partner's suit. 3-card permitted only in situations where extra distribution substantially increases ODR

- Own suit should be offensively oriented (i.e. KJ987 is preferred to Axxxx)
- Jumps to game (e.g. 4♥, 5♦) are not fit-showing, but simply to play

Ideally, the fit jumper should not need to bid again. However, there are cases where the fit jump does not express the quality of the suit (e.g. AKQxxx).

A fit jump in these cases is likely to prompt DBL from partner at high levels given their shortness and lack of honours, but the solidity of the suit makes one's hand extremely offensive nevertheless.

4.1.1.4 Fit Non-Jumps

When a passed hand introduces a new suit at the 3-level, this is the equivalent of making a fit jump in that suit. A hand strong enough to independently show a suit at the 3-level after initially passing should not exist.

After the opponents open, we overcall at the 2-level, and the opponents respond constructively (i.e. not just a simple raise), a new suit at the 3-level is the equivalent of a fit jump, even by an unpassed hand. With a suit we want to independently introduce, we wait until the next opportunity to bid.

4.1.1.5 Splinter Jumps

Any jump in an opponent's suit shows support for partner's suit and a shortness (singleton or void) in the opponent's suit. As in **Fit Jumps**, this should show 4+ card support for partner's suit unless there is substantial compensating distribution.

4.1.1.6 Other

If a bid of the suit immediately lower than the agreed one is **not** any of these options, then it is invitational, 'last train' style for game or slam depending on level.

If a two-suiter can be shown, it should be shown. Making a direct bid of the agreed suit should deny this sort of shape. Consider, e.g.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	1♠	Pass
2♠	3♦	4♠	

Given that 4♣ was available below the desired level for ♠, the negative inference that East does not have 5♣ or has very bad suit quality should be made.

4.1.2 No Known Fit

Aim to stay low on potential misfits. We reopen aggressively (most hands with shortages in opponents' suit), so hands that are reluctant to take independent action can often come in later on.

Passing in a competitive auction does not suggest weakness, no suit – it is often the case that, if partner *cannot* reopen, we do not want to buy the contract or force an undesirable rebid.

As a corollary, we should act less aggressively *over* partner's reopening bids, as they will often be somewhat light and shapely.

4.1.3 Artificial 2-Suiters

DBL of ART 2-suited bids indicates interest in penalising an opposing contract. Further DBLs are penalty.

Except 1NT-(2♣) as both majors, cues of known opponents' suits are tied, i.e. lower cue suit is a strong bid showing 5+ lower non-opposing suit. Consequently, new suit bids are weaker and may be purely competitive.

4.1.4 Transfers

DBL of a transfer bid is lead-directing, showing values (and length, usually) in the artificially bid suit.

Bids of the suit being transferred to are T/O, equivalent to making a DBL of a natural suit bid.

4.1.5 Two Places To Play

Bids of 4NT in high level auctions are often suggesting two places to play ('2P2P', 5-4 at minimum, usually better). Partner is expected to bid their lowest 4-card suit until we scramble to the a playable spot.

4.2 Takeout Doubles

Doubles are by default takeout.

There are no one-suited takeout doubles. Doubles when 3 suits have been bid are penalty or 'DSIP', the latter usually when a pure penalty double is clearly implausible.

There are few trump-stack doubles. With a trump stack, we usually pass and allow partner to reopen.

4.2.1 Takeout Style

All doubles through 4♥ are takeout. A ‘pure’ takeout of 4♠ is 4NT, DBL will often be a balanced, strong hand and can be comfortably passed for penalties.

The lower the level of the auction, the more ‘on-shape’ the double is. In high-level auctions (e.g. opponents preempt), DBL may be used on a variety of decently offensive hands with no clear bid otherwise.

At low levels, DBL usually denies a 5M or 6m (note, however, we prioritise DBL on 5332 shapes with 2 in the opened suit and 5 in a minor). At higher levels, DBL is acceptable on many 5431, 6331, etc. hands. The flexibility offered by DBL is too important to restrict to certain shapes.

Showing majors is prioritised over minors. DBL of a short 1♣ or 1♦ (i.e. promises 2 or fewer cards in the bid minor) are not promissory of support in the other minor.

The strength of a takeout double is inversely correlated with its ODR. To take either extreme, a 4441 8-count can be an acceptable DBL, as can a 4333 15-count (with no stopper).

DBL is, strictly speaking, not always promissory of other-suit support, as all strong one-suited hands begin with DBL.

4.2.2 Responses When RHO Passes

4.2.2.1 Suit

- Suit bid at the lowest possible level shows 3+ cards, 0-8(9) HCP
- Jump bid of a suit is 4+, (9)10-13 HCP and invitational
- Double jump bid of a suit is 6+, semi-preemptive

4.2.2.2 NT

- 1NT is variable depending on the available space. (1♣)-DBL-1NT should promise ‘full’ values (8-11 HCP), however (1♠)-DBL-1NT can be much lighter (5-11 HCP) with reluctance to bid at the 2-level (e.g. a 4333).
- 2NT is invitational, (11)12-13(14). Up/downgrades frequent.
- 3NT is to play, with unspecified shape. Can be bid with a long minor and no interest in slam.

4.2.2.3 Cuebid

Bids of opener’s suit are considered artificial. Bids of responder’s suit (e.g. (1♣)-DBL-(1♥)-2♥) are natural, and will usually promise 5+ of the bid suit, willing to play against a known 4-1 or 5-0 suit break.

A cuebid is made on the following types of hands:

- Any game-forcing hand without a clear indication of denomination, or with interest in slam.
- Any invitational two-suited hand. Usually 4-4 in the majors opposite a DBL of a minor opening.

A new suit or NT bid after a cuebid shows the former hand; raising partner’s next bid suit shows the latter.

A ‘counter’-cuebid or 2NT bid by the doubler is game-forcing.

4.2.3 Responses When RHO Bids

All bids in such situations are ‘voluntary’, and thus show genuine suits and some strength (can be compensated by length). Requirements to make jump or double-jump bids remain.

4.2.3.1 Responsive Double

Doubles by advancer show 4-4 in the unbid denominations when the opponents bid and support a suit.

Sample auctions:

West	North	East	South
1♥	Double	2♥	Double(1)

(1) 4+♣, 4+♦

West	North	East	South
1♦	Double	2♦	Double(1)

(1) 4+♥, 4+♠

4.2.3.2 Negative Double

Doubles by advancer in the auction (1m)-DBL-(1M)-? are strictly negative, showing exactly 4 cards in the unbid major.

4.2.4 Equal-Level Conversion

DBL can be used to show certain two-suited hands. These are hands with 5(+)-4 with 4 in a major, where overcalling the 5-card suit is likely to obscure the 4M.

We start with a DBL and then rebid the lower suit. Note that this is only practical when, as the name

suggests, we keep the bidding at the same level. Consequently, we can only show these hands when the 5-card suit is not ♣.

Sample auctions:

West	North	East	South
1♥	Double	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦(1)		

(1) 5+♦, 4♠

West	North	East	South
1♠	Double	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦(1)		

(1) 5+♦, 4♥

West	North	East	South
1♣	Double	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥(1)		

(1) 5-4 ♠+♥, 5-card unknown

4.2.5 Strong One-Suited Hands

Expectations for a DBL into an independent suit bid are:

- 5-card suit, 18+ HCP OR
- 6+ card suit, 16+ HCP

A new suit bid that does *not* represent an equal-level conversion (see above) shows a strong one-suited overcall. Raises by advancer are invitational; cuebids are game-forcing. A bid of *any* suit shown by the opponents is now considered a cuebid, and usually bid as a stopper-check for 3NT.

4.3 Other Artificial Doubles

4.3.1 Negative

When one major has been shown by either side, DBL in competition shows 4+ cards in the other. (1♥)-DBL shows exactly 4♠. Rebids of the suit shown by a negative double suggest extra length but insufficient strength to make a free bid earlier in the auction.

Sample auctions:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥	Double(1)	

(1) 6+ HCP, 4♠

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♦	Double(1)	

(1) 6-10, HCP, 4+♥

4.3.2 Support

In an opening-response-interference sequence, opener's DBL shows 3-card support for responder's bid suit.

Sample auction:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♦
Double(1)			

(1) 3♠

4.3.3 Rosenkranz

Opponents open, we overcall, they respond, advancer's DBL now shows 'good support' for overcaller's suit, 3+ card support with 1+ of AKQ. They are primarily indicating that the suit is safe to lead.

Negative inferences should be drawn from the choice to support by bidding the suit instead of using DBL in these situations.

Sample auction:

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	2♥	Double(1)

(1) Hxx ♠

If RDBL becomes available, RDBL suggests 'good tolerance' for overcaller's suit, exactly 2-card support with 1 of AKQ.

Sample auction:

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	Double	Rdbl(1)

(1) Hx ♠

4.3.4 Maximal

When we have an agreed suit and the opponents interfere such that we cannot distinguish between a competitive and invitational bid at the 3 level, DBL is instead used to invite.

Given that DBL shows some extra values for the invitation, it may occasionally be passed.

Sample auction:

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
Double(1)			

(1) INV in ♥

4.3.5 Lightner

When the opponents bid a slam and the player not on lead doubles, this asks for an unusual lead. This is usually dummy's first bid suit, but in any case heavily discourages any suit that we have bid and supported. Suggests a void but may also be used speculatively with e.g. AQ over dummy's rebid suit.

4.3.6 NT Overcalls

Doubles of natural NT overcalls are penalty, and also the only strong option in the sequence. The first double by either player afterwards is T/O.

West	North	East	South
1♥	1NT	Double(1)	
(1) 11+ HCP, Penalty			

4.3.7 Low-Level Penalty

When the opponents have bid two suits and partner doubles (showing 4-4 in the remaining), DBL of opener's rebid is penalty. There should not be any further 'takeout' shapes.

Sample auction:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Double
2♣	Double(1)		
(1) Penalty			

4.4 Forcing Passes

The following rules govern when a forcing pass is set up:

- No TO PLAY raise sets up a forcing pass
- A fit-jump or splinter-jump only sets up a forcing pass when it forces to the 4-level and we are VUL
- A cuebid forcing to the 4-level sets up a forcing pass
- A bid showing INV+ values sets up a forcing pass only at the 5-level
- Any auction in which we have 'bid to make' a game or higher contract sets up a forcing pass (e.g. we have voluntarily accepted an invitation; does *not* include auctions where we may have been 'forced' or 'pushed' into game)

Pass-and-pull in high level auctions are slam invitational.

4.5 We Open, They Interfere

4.5.1 General Approach

- ‘Interest in penalising’ in 1x-(DBL) auctions should be willingness to penalise at least 2 of the remaining suits. Ideally does not have a fit (e.g. 3 cards in partner’s major), but exceptions always exist. Note that they can get just as confused as we do over 1♦.
- The only strong option over (1NT) is DBL. Everything else is NAT, weak.
- If a ‘normal’ relay bid is available in a competitive auction, we assume that it will be used to establish the vast majority of GF auctions.
- Negative free bids when interference is 1NT or lower, though clearly forcing options (artificial, non-fit-jump raises) are theoretically unlimited.
- If a relay cannot be established, all free bids at NAT, F1.
- If a free bid could force to 3NT, we regard it as GF.
- Negative DBLs at 2 level and lower, otherwise generic takeout.
- When we open, responder shows a suit, and an opponent then interferes, DBL or RDBL are support, showing 3+ cards in partner’s suit.
- Reopening DBL are almost mandatory over 2m. We expect trap pass rather than NT bids with strong holdings in an opponent’s suit.

4.5.2 Interference over 1♣

4.5.2.1 Direct

- Transfers at the 2-level if relay is off.
- If the interference is natural, DBL is T/O, major oriented, can be fairly off shape.
- DBL is usually preferred over 1NT unless RESPONDER has a very good holding in the opponent’s suit (but does not wish to penalty pass). Systems (Stayman, transfers) on after a natural NT bid.
- If the interference is artificial and has no anchor suit, DBL is generic value-showing, usually looking for a penalty with a GF BAL. See section below.

- Penalty passes are semi-frequent, 1♣ opener is expected to be somewhat aggressive in reopening.

- Jump bids with transfers available show 7+ suits, good quality (comparable to VUL preempts).

1♣-(1♦)

PASS 0-4 HCP or trap

DBL 5-8 HCP, any

1♥+ 9+ HCP, relay responses

1♣-(1♥)

PASS 0-8 HCP or trap

DBL 9+ HCP, 4+♠, relay response

1♠+ 9+ HCP, relay responses

1♣-(1♠)

PASS 0-4 HCP or trap

DBL 5+ HCP, T/O

1NT NAT, mild INV

2♣ 5+ HCP, 5+♦

2♦ 5+ HCP, 5+♥

2♥ GF, not further defined

2♠ (8)9+ HCP, 5+♣

2NT NAT, GF

3♣ 5-8 HCP, KQTxxxx or better

3♦ 5-8 HCP, KQTxxxx or better

3♥ 5-8 HCP, KQTxxxx or better

3♠ ?

3NT TO PLAY

4.5.2.2 Post-Negative 1♣-1♦

RESPONDER acts in the context of a highly limited hand. There is little pressure on OPENER to act independently with (semi-)balanced 15-17 hands, and PASS will often represent this hand.

4.5.2.3 Other

1♣-1♠-(2♠)-P 2NT Lebensohl style, puppet to 3♣. Via 2NT shows stopper, otherwise denies.

2NT Stopper in ♠, puppet to 3♣

3♣ ?

3♦ ♥+♦, REV

3♥ NAT, 5+♥ (♥+♦ or 5332)

3♠ Stayman

4.5.2.4 Suction

This defence is with regard to ‘classic’ suction, where an overcall of x shows either a single-suiter in $x + 1$ or a two-suiter with $(x + 2, x + 3)$.

After a direct-seat suction overcall:

- Transfers at the 2-level apply, and are semi-positive or better.
 - Completing the transfer shows 2+ card support, a new suit is F1.
 - Responder rebidding their transferred suit later is NAT, NF. There are no re-transfer options.
 - Responder introducing a new suit is NAT, GF.
- DBL by RESPONDER after an initial transfer is GF, T/O oriented.
- An initial DBL is GF, forcing to 3NT. Usually denies a 5-card major. Later DBLs from either side are penalty, pass is forcing (‘takeout’).
- For the purposes of DBL and cue bids, we assume that the overcall is single-suited after advancer makes a P/C bid.
 - DBL of the P/C bid is T/O for the single suited option
 - Bidding the P/C suit is a cue raise, showing support and extras if partner has transferred earlier
- Principle of fast arrival applies; OPENER’s 3-level support of a transferred suit is NF, 4-level is GF but weaker than a cue raise.
- If a major suit is agreed, non-serious 3NT applies.
- 4NT bids in competition are forcing, showing multiple places to play.

After a third-seat suction overcall:

- If relay is 2 steps or fewer higher, relay continues.

4.5.3 Interference Over 1♦

All limited bids are constructive and likely to be on good suits, but NF. Hands with intent to preempt can jump bid.

Opener is assumed to have a 5 card minor. ♣ bids by responder are often P/C for the opener’s presumed minor.

4.5.3.1 1♦-Dbl

RDBL 10+ HCP, interest in penalising further bids

1♥ 8-13 HCP, 4+♥

1♠ 8-13 HCP, 4+♠

1NT 14+ HCP, GF relay

2♣ 8-13 HCP, 5+♣

2♦ 8-13 HCP, 5+♦

2♥+ To play (exceptions below)

2NT ?

3♣ P/C OPENER’s minor

4.5.3.2 1♦-(1M)

DBL 6-13 HCP, 4oM

1♠ 8-13 HCP, 5+♠

1NT 14+ HCP, GF relay

2♣ 8-13 HCP, 5+♣

2♦ 8-13 HCP, 5+♦

2♥ 8-13 HCP, 5+♥

CUE Generic force, likely GF without stopper

JUMP To Play (exception below)

3♣ P/C for OPENER’s minor

4.5.3.3 1♦-2♣+

DBL T/O, does not promise 4M

2X NAT, F1

CUE F1, prioritise NT with stop

2NT NAT, INV

3X NAT, GF

4.5.3.4 1♦-(Pass)-1♥-(1♠)

PASS here is fine, negative inferences are likely to be effective in the continuing auction (e.g. 2♠ raise passed out, RESPONDER having a singleton strongly suggests OPENER having 4 spades and no particularly strong minor suit, and not 3+♥. Count should become relatively clear soon into the board).

DBL 3♥ exactly

1NT 4+♣, 4+♦

2♣ NAT, does not imply 4♥

2♦ NAT, does not imply 4♥

2♥ NAT, does not imply 4441

2♠ F1, prioritise NT with stop

2NT 5+♣, 5+♦

3♣ Fit jump

3♦ Fit jump

4.5.4 Interference Over 1♥**4.5.4.1 1♥-(Dbl)**

RDBL is interested in penalising opponents. Otherwise all sequences as though no interference.

4.5.4.2 1♥-(1♠)

DBL 6+ HCP, 4+♣, 4+♦

1NT 14+ HCP, GF relay

2♣ 8-13 HCP, 5+♣

2♦ 8-13 HCP, 5+♦

2♥ 6-10 HCP, 3+♥

2♠ 11+ HCP, 3+♥, defensively oriented

2NT 10+ HCP, 4+♥, offensively oriented

3♣ Fit jump

3♦ Fit jump

3♥ 0-9 HCP, 4+♥

3♠ SPL

3NT ?

4♣ Fit jump

4♦ Fit jump

4♥ To play

4.5.5 Interference Over 1NT**4.5.5.1 General Approach**

- Transfer LEB usually applicable, i.e. 3x is INV+ transfer, transfer 'into' a cuebid is Staymanic
- Slow implies, i.e. LEB then 3NT shows a stopper, 3NT directly denies
- DBL is 'negative', showing values (10+ HCP), exactly a doubleton in the bid suit, and T/O shape, i.e. 3+ in others (except may be 4M5♦)
- Subsequent DBL after a negative DBL from either side are PEN

4.5.5.2 1NT-(Dbl)

If unwilling to play 1NTXX, bid 5+ suit or touching 4+ suits.

PASS Forces RDBL

RDBL Forced

2♣ 4+♣, 4+♥/♠, P/C for major
2♦ 4+♦, 4+♠

RDBL Single-suited, puppet to 2♣, P/C for suit

2♣ 4+♣, 4+♦

2♦ 4+♦, 4+♥

2♥ 4+♥, 4+♠

2♠ TO PLAY

4.5.5.3 1NT-2♣♥+♠

DBL 10+ HCP, negative, T/O of ♣

2♦ 5+♦, TO PLAY

2♥ INV+, no ♥ stop

2♠ INV+, no ♠ stop

2NT LEB

4.5.5.4 1NT-(2x) Nat

DBL T/O

2♥ 0-9 HCP, 5+♥

2♠ 0-9 HCP, 5+♠

2NT LEB

3♣ Forced

PASS 0-9 HCP, 5+♣

3♦ GF, Stayman, stopper

3♥ 11-12 HCP, 6+♥, INV

3♠ 11-12 HCP, 6+♠, INV

3NT GF, no stopper

4.5.5.5 1NT-Trf-(Dbl)

Sample auction uses 2♦ (TRF to ♥).

PASS No ♦ stopper

RDBL Suggestion to play

2♥ ♦ stopper

2♠ Superaccept, 4+♥, max

3♥ Superaccept, 4+♥, min

4.6 They Open, We Interfere

4.6.1 General Approach

- A minimum 1-level overcall NV is 5332, KJTxx. In general, our overcalls prioritise showing quality rather than strength. With a strong hand but weak suit, we will often find an excuse to DBL instead.
- 4-card overcalls are possible with 3+ honours (e.g. AKQx, AQJx, KQJx) and an otherwise offensive hand. We do not have a systemic way to detect the reduced length here and advancer raises as though it were 5-card. We are happy to play the 2-level Moysian.
- Suit overcalls can be light (in both points and strength) if it clearly looks like the opponents' hand but we need to lead-direct (and think the lead will not be otherwise obvious).
- Advancer's new suit bids – unless they fit the requirements for a FSJ or FNJ are NAT, NF. Consequently, cue bids, although assumed to be 'defensive support', can be more nebulous when responder passes (e.g. (1♣)-1♥-(PASS)-2♣ may be a good hand without 3-card support that simply needs to establish a force). Empirically, this has rarely caused issues, though it is inelegant.
- When the opponents open, we overcall, and they double, a raise of partner's suit can be on absolute shit. Preempts are fun.

4.6.2 (1NT)-?

Weak NT is defined as an NT opening with a lower limit of 13 HCP or fewer.

DBL If direct, 16+, penalty

DBL If in balancing seat vs strong NT, 4M5m, responses are P/C

2♣ 10+ HCP, 4+♥, 4+♠

2♦ 10+ HCP, 5+♦

2♥ 10+ HCP, 5+♥

2♠ 10+ HCP, 5+♠

2NT 10+ HCP, 5+♣, 5+♦

3♣+ Ambiguous strength, 6+♣

4.6.3 (1NT)-Dbl

DBL is expected to be taken out with extremely weak or offensive hands. Jump bids show offense rather than weak hands.

If the opponents try to escape from 1NTX, our first DBL from either side is T/O. Could be very off shape and checking for a penalty pass, later bids by doubler can and often will be 5+ length suits. Hands with extreme strength/running suits opt to for a cue. Second DBL from either side is penalties.

4.6.4 (1NT)-2x

2NT is an enquiry bid. 3m are nat or tied, weaker than 3M. All other bids are NAT, NF.

4.6.5 1 Of A Suit

DBL T/O

1X (4)6+ HCP, 5+ suit

1NT (15)16-18 HCP; responses as if opened 1NT

2X 10+ HCP, 5+ suit (usually 6 if VUL)

CUE 5-5+ as many majors as possible (Michaels)

JUMP Preempt, could be wide-ranging when partner is PH

2NT 10+ HCP, 5-5+ lowest 2 unbid suits (Unusual)

4.6.6 (2M)-?

Same defence is used regardless of whether 2M is one- or two-suited. It is effectively treated as one-suited in the second case.

DBL T/O

2♠ 10+ HCP, 5+♠

2NT 16-18 HCP, BAL, stopper in M

3X 12+ HCP, NAT, likely to be 6+ cards

CUE Asking for stopper for 3NT

3NT TO PLAY

4♣ 5+♣, 5+♠

4♦ 5+♦, 5+♠

4♥ TO PLAY

4♠ TO PLAY

DBL can be somewhat off-shape. Should promise at least 3 cards in the unbid major, but may have a doubleton in a minor.

Leaping Michaels ($4\clubsuit$ and $4\diamondsuit$) are *almost* forcing to game. Advancer must have an exceptionally bad hand to pass (e.g. 0-4 HCP, 5521, 2 in minor, 1 in major). They may still lose the post-mortem in these cases.

There are be no weak bids over an enemy preempt. Jumps to game suggest NAMYATS-type hands. A DBL into jump-bidding a suit suggests an extremely strong and distributional hand with substantial slam interest.

4.7 Balancing Actions

No weak jump shifts in balancing seat, any jump overcall is constructive/intermediate.

1NT 11-14 HCP, BAL

2X (Jump) 11-15 HCP, 6+

2NT 20-21 HCP, BAL

3X (Jump) 11-15 HCP, 7+

Specific Defences

5.1 1-Level Transfers

Applicable as direct bids over either transfer openings (i.e. $1\heartsuit = 4+\heartsuit$) or transfers following a naturalish $(1+)\ 1\clubsuit$ opening (i.e. $1\clubsuit-1\heartsuit = 4+\heartsuit$).

DBL T/O of shown suit, preference for \clubsuit if any

CUE 4oM, preference for \heartsuit

5.2 Precision

5.2.1 $(1\clubsuit)-?$

Suction; overcalls show either the next suit or the two afterwards. Never show the bid suit. DBL and NT reserved for non-touching suits.

Suction only applies so long as the opponents have not shown anything about shape, so over $1\clubsuit$ direct and $1\clubsuit-1\heartsuit$.

DBL $\clubsuit+\heartsuit$

$1\heartsuit$ \heartsuit or $\spadesuit+\clubsuit$

$1\heartsuit$ \spadesuit or $\clubsuit+\heartsuit$

$1\spadesuit$ \clubsuit or $\heartsuit+\heartsuit$

$1NT$ $\heartsuit+\spadesuit$

$2\clubsuit$ \heartsuit or $\heartsuit+\spadesuit$

5.2.2 $(1\clubsuit)-Pass-(1\heartsuit)-?$

DBL $\heartsuit+\spadesuit$

$1\heartsuit$ \spadesuit or $\clubsuit+\heartsuit$

$1\spadesuit$ \clubsuit or $\heartsuit+\heartsuit$

$1NT$ $\clubsuit+\heartsuit$

$2\clubsuit$ \heartsuit or $\heartsuit+\spadesuit$

$2\heartsuit$ \heartsuit or $\spadesuit+\clubsuit$

Advancer is expected to raise as high as possible with a P/C bid of the single-suited option. With the two-suiter, overcaller can correct and advancer can correct again as necessary.

5.2.3 $(1\heartsuit)-?$

If $1\heartsuit$ is 2+, we treat as NAT, i.e. $2\heartsuit$ is Michaels ($5+\heartsuit$, $5+\spadesuit$, 10+ HCP).

If $1\heartsuit$ is 0+ or 1+, we treat as ART and the following scheme applies:

DBL M oriented T/O, does not promise \clubsuit

$1\heartsuit$ NAT

$1\spadesuit$ NAT

$1NT$ 15-18 BAL, does not promise \heartsuit stopper

$2\clubsuit$ NAT

$2\heartsuit$ NAT

$2\heartsuit$ NF, $5+\heartsuit$, $5+\spadesuit$

$2NT$ 10+ HCP, $5+\clubsuit$, $5+\heartsuit$

$3\heartsuit$ F1, $5+\heartsuit$, $5+\spadesuit$

Although \heartsuit is treated as artificial, $2\heartsuit$ is still considered a cuebid in response to a NAT non- \heartsuit overcall. $3\clubsuit$ is a cuebid over a NAT $2\heartsuit$ overcall.

5.3 Multi 2♦

Direct DBL is ambiguous. Delayed DBL is T/O of shown suit. ‘Better minor’ LEB played in response to DBL.

DBL 13-15 HCP BAL OR 16+ HCP, any

2♥ 0-9 HCP, NAT

2♠ 0-9 HCP, NAT

2NT LEB

3♣ Better (or equal) ♣ than ♦

3♦ Better ♦ than ♣

3♥ (If not cue) 16+ HCP, 5+♥

3♠ (If not cue) 16+ HCP, 5+♠

3♣ (8)9-11 HCP, 4+♣

3♦ (8)9-11 HCP, 4+♦

2X 10-15 NAT overcall

5.4 Gambling 3NT

Similar to overcall structure over 1NT opening.

DBL Penalty. Future DBL from either side also penalty.

4♣ ♥+♠

4♦ 6+ ♥ or ♠

4♥ 5♥, 5+m

4♠ 5♠, 5+m

4NT Long minor (presumably not the same one as opener), slam interest

5M TO PLAY

Same method is used if 3NT is a transfer preempt, or in the auction 1NT-3NT, though this should be very rare.

Carding

6.1 Leads

	Lead	In Partner's Suit
Suit	3rd from even/Low from odd	3rd/Low
NT	2nd from bad suit/3rd or 4th from H	Top from 2-/Low from 3+
Subseq	Same	Same

Lead	Vs. Suit	Vs. NT
A	AKx(+) Ax	AKx(+) Ax
K	AK(+) KQx(+) Kx	AK(+) KQx(+) Kx
Q	KQ(+) QJx(+) Qx	AQJ(+) KQ(+) QJ(+) Qx
J	JT(+) Jx	JT(+) Jx
T	KJT(+) T9(+) Tx	KJT(+) T9(+) Tx
9	(K/Q)T9(+) 98(+) 9x	(A/K/Q)T9(+) 98(+) 9x
Hi-X	Xx xxX(+) when even, xxxxX(+) when odd	xXx(+) HxxX(+) HxX
Lo-X	xxX(+) when even, xxxxX(+) when odd	xXx(+) HxxX(+) HxX

- 'Bad suit' = Txxx or worse
- T may be treated as H occasionally
- All leads may be reverse ATT if length known
- A/Q asks for ATT (usually Q, K at 5+ level)
- K asks for reverse CNT (unblock at NT)
- J denies any higher card
- T/9 either 0 or 2 higher
- 98 is a sequence; 87 is not
- Leads may be revolving s/p when desirable

6.2 Signals

	Partner's Lead	Declarer's Lead	Discarding
1	Rev ATT	Rev CNT	Revolving S/P
2	Rev CNT	Revolving S/P	Rev CNT
3	Revolving S/P		

- 'Reverse' ATT/CNT denotes playing Low-High for positive ATT and even CNT, and High-Low for negative ATT and odd CNT
- 'Revolving' S/P denotes showing preference for the suit *relatively* higher or lower than the one played, skipping suits already signalled (e.g. on opening lead) and the trump suit.
- ♣ < ♦ < ♥ < ♠ < ♣
- Middle cards played when S/P is applicable shows no or equal preference
- S/P style is to show honour location, does not necessarily want suit led at next opportunity