

# PRECISION NOTES

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## 1. OPENING BIDS

- 1♣: 16+ HCP (17+ balanced)
- 1♦: 11-15 HCP, 2+♦, no 5-card M

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- 1M: 11-15 HCP, 5+ M
- 1NT: 14-16 HCP, balanced
- 2♣: 11-15 HCP, 6+♣(or (43)15 distribution), usually short  $\diamond$
- 2 $\diamond$ : 11-15 HCP, 3-suited hand with short diamonds (4414, 4405)
- 2M: preemptive, 5-10 HCP, 6M
- 2NT: 20-21 HCP, balanced
- 3 of a suit: preemptive, 7-card suit
- 3NT: Gambling, 7+-card minor headed by AKQ

## 2. RESPONSES TO 1♣

In a 1♣ auction, the opener is the captain and asks responder to describe their hand. In the first response, the most important thing is to show (1) whether you are forcing to game and (2) a five card suit. We use transfer bids for the responder to describe their hand. 1 $\diamond$  is 0-7 HCP. All other responses promise 8+.

- 1 $\diamond$ : 0-7 HCP
- 1 $\heartsuit$ : 5+♠ or 11-13 balanced
- 1♠: 5+ $\heartsuit$
- 1NT: 5+♣
- 2♣: 5+ $\diamond$
- 2 $\diamond$ : 8-10 balanced
- 2 $\heartsuit$ : 14+ balanced
- 2♠: 3-suited hand with both minors
- 2NT: 3-suited hand with both majors

**2.1. 1♣-1 $\diamond$  Auctions.** We want to decide whether to go to game and in what contract. 1M is most common rebid by opener, showing a 4 card major and not denying a longer minor. 0-4 points is a weak hand for responder and probably means game is not reachable. 5-7 points is a strong hand and game should be seriously considered. The primary goal in this situation is determining if we have a fit and how good of a fit it is. If, after 1♣- 1 $\diamond$ - 1M, responder shows 5-7 and denies support by bidding 2♣, then 2 $\diamond$  by opener is waiting and all other bids are game-forcing. This gives us plenty of room to determine in which game we want to play. If opener has a particularly strong hand, they can force to game by bidding 2 $\heartsuit$  directly over 1 $\diamond$ .

A 1NT or 2NT rebid by opener over 1 $\diamond$  or a 1♣-1 $\diamond$ -2 $\heartsuit$ -2♠-2NT auction is part of our no-trump ladder. Systems are on (see section on 1NT openings).

- 1M: 4+M
  - 1♠: 4+♠
  - 1NT: 0-4 HCP, NF
  - 2♣: 5-7 HCP, denies 3-card support, F1
    - \* 2 $\diamond$ : non-GF, waiting
      - 2M: 2 card support
      - 2oM: 3 cards in oM
      - 2NT: 6-7 Balanced
      - 2m: 5+ card minor
    - \* Others: GF. New suit promises 5. Rebid of M promises 6. Otherwise bid 2NT. Responder then bids 3m with long minor, otherwise 3NT.

- 2♦: 5-7 HCP, 3-card support, F1
- 2♥ over 1♠: 5-7 HCP, 4+♥
- 2M: 0-4 HCP, 4-card support
- 3M: 5-7 HCP, 4-card support
- 2NT: 5-7 HCP, 5-card support
  - \* 3M: 16-18 HCP, NF
  - \* 3NT: 19+ HCP, 5+M
  - \* 4M: 19+ HCP, 4M
  - \* Other suits: singleton or void in that suit (void and GF if at 4-level)
- jump shift: splinter (5-card support, singleton or void in suit bid)
- 1NT: 17-19 balanced. Systems on (see 1NT opening section). Responder invites with 6-7 HCP.
- 2m: 5+m, NF
- 2♥: GF, forces 2♠ by responder.
  - 3♣: 5+♥
    - \* 3♦: 4+♠, denies 3+♥
    - \* 3♥: 3+♥
    - \* 3♠: 2-♥, transfer to 3NT
  - 3♦: 5+♠
    - \* 3♥: 3+♠
    - \* 3♠: 2-♠, transfer to 3NT
  - 3♥: 5+ in both minors
    - \* 3♠: denies 4 of a minor, transfer to 3NT
    - \* 4m: 4+m
- 2♠: 5+ in both minors
- 2NT: 22-24 balanced

**2.2. Positive responses to 1♣.** There are three primary types of positive responses to 1♣: showing a 5-card suit, showing a balanced hand, and showing a 3-suited hand. All positive responses are forcing to game. After responder shows a suit, opener has three main options. If they support responder's suit, this initiates a series of asking bids, starting with a trump asking bid, which asks responder to describe the length and strength of their suit. A bid of a new suit is a support asking bid, asking responder to describe support in that suit and total number of controls. Opener can also show a semi-balanced hand, which asks responder to further describe their hand.

After responder shows a balanced hand, the primary goal of the auction is to determine whether we have a major card fit. Thus, opener can show a five-card major or ask responder for a four-card major. Opener can show a five-card minor, but other bids are of higher priority.

After responder shows a 3-suited hand, opener can support one of the known suits, ask about the short suit, or bid no-trump. Again, the goal of the auction is usually to determine if there is a major card fit or, if not, whether no-trump is safe.

### 2.2.1. Positive suit responses.

- 1♥: 5+♠ or 11-13 balanced

- $1\spadesuit$ :  $3+\spadesuit$ , modified TAB (1NT by responder affirms 11-13 balanced). All other rebids by opener deny  $\spadesuit$  support. Rebids by opener after  $1\clubsuit$ - $1\heartsuit$ - $1\spadesuit$ -1NT are:
  - \*  $2\clubsuit$ : Asks responder for a 4-card major. Answers are, in order: both, hearts, spades, neither. If responder answers 'both', a bid of a major by opener accepts that as trump and is TAB4. 2NT is control-asking. If responder shows a major, the next step by opener is TAB4 and the following step is control-asking. If responder denies a major, then SCABs commence.
  - \*  $2\diamond$ : Control-asking bid, denies  $4+M$ . Responses are, in order: 0-2,3-4,5-6
  - \*  $2M$ :  $5+M$ , support-asking bid
  - \* 2NT: both minors
  - \*  $3m$ : natural
- 1NT: semi-balanced,  $1-2\spadesuit$ 
  - \*  $2\clubsuit$ :  $4+\heartsuit$ , responder meant  $\spadesuit$ 
    - $2\diamond$ : CAB
    - $2\heartsuit$ : TAB4
    - $2\spadesuit$ : Show 2 spades. Asking about spade suit to find out if responder has 6. Responses are as in TAB4, but first step shows only 5 spades.
  - \*  $2\diamond$ :  $4+\heartsuit$ , responder meant 11-13 balanced
    - If responder shows  $\heartsuit$ , a bid of  $\heartsuit$  by opener shows 4-card support and is a TAB4.
  - \*  $2\heartsuit$ :  $6\spadesuit$ 
    - $2\spadesuit$ : Shows 2 spades. TAB4, but with a 6-card suit.
  - \*  $2\spadesuit$ :  $5\spadesuit$ , responder meant  $\spadesuit$ , denies  $4\heartsuit$
  - \* 2NT: responder meant 11-13 balanced, denies  $4\heartsuit$
- Other suit bids by opener are support-asking.  $2\clubsuit$  signifies hearts.  $2\diamond$  is diamonds.  $2\heartsuit$  is hearts.
- $1\spadesuit$ :  $5+\heartsuit$ 
  - 1NT: semi-balanced,  $1-2\heartsuit$ 
    - \*  $2\clubsuit$ :  $6\heartsuit$ 
      - $2\diamond$ :  $1\heartsuit$ , CAB
      - $2\heartsuit$ :  $2\heartsuit$ , TAB4 with a 6-card suit
    - \*  $2\diamond$ :  $4\spadesuit$ 
      - $2\heartsuit$ :  $0-3\spadesuit$ , CAB
      - $2\spadesuit$ :  $4\spadesuit$ , TAB4
    - \*  $2\heartsuit$ : Desire to play in no-trump, 0-3 controls.
    - \*  $2\spadesuit$ : Desire to play in no-trump, 4+ controls.
    - \* 2NT:  $5+\clubsuit$ 
      - $3\clubsuit$ :  $3+\clubsuit$ , TAB
      - $3\diamond$ : CAB
    - \*  $2\clubsuit$ :  $5+\diamond$ 
      - $3\diamond$ :  $3+\diamond$ , TAB
      - $3\heartsuit$ : CAB
  - $2\clubsuit$ :  $5+\spadesuit$ , SAB
  - $2\diamond$ :  $5+\diamond$ , SAB

- 2♥: 3+♥, TAB
- 2♠: 5+♣, SAB
- 1NT: 5+♣
  - 2♣: semi-balanced, desire to play in no-trump
    - \* 2♦: 4♥
      - 2♥: 4♥, TAB4
      - 2NT: No 4-card major, CAB
      - 3♣: 3+♣, TAB
    - \* 2♥: 0-3♥, 4♠
      - 2♠: 4♠, TAB4
      - 2NT: 0-3♠, CAB
      - 3♣: 3+♣, TAB
    - \* 2♠: No 4-card major
  - 2♦: 5+♠, SAB
  - 2♥: 5+♥, SAB
  - 2♠: 5+♦, SAB
  - 2NT: 3+♣, TAB
- 2♣: 5+♦
  - 2♦: Semi-balanced, desire to play in no-trump
    - \* 2♥: No 4-card major
    - \* 2♠: 4♥
      - 2NT: 4♥, TAB4
      - 3♣: 0-3♥, CAB
      - 3♦: 3+♦, TAB
    - \* 2NT: 4♠
      - 3♣: 4♠, TAB4
      - 3♦: 3+♦, TAB
      - 3♥: 0-3♠, CAB
  - 2♥: 5+♥, SAB
  - 2♠: 5+♠, SAB
  - 2NT: 3+♦, TAB
  - 2♣: 5+♣, SAB

### 2.2.2. Positive 3-suited responses.

- 2♠: 3-suited hand with both minors
  - 2NT: Asks for major
    - \* 3♣: 4♥
      - 3♦: Denies 4+♥, control-asking (0-3, 4+)
      - 3♥: 4+♥, TAB4
      - 4m: 4+m, TAB4
    - \* 3♦: 4♠
      - 3♥: Denies 4+♠, control-asking (0-3, 4+)
      - 3♠: 4+♠, TAB4
  - 3m: 4+m, TAB4
  - 3NT, To play, 16-19 HCP
- 2NT: 3-suited hand with both majors
  - 3m: Modified TAB4 with first response showing shortness and other responses shifted up one step.
  - 3M: 4+M, TAB4

- 3NT: To play, 16-19 HCP

### 3. RESPONSES TO $1\heartsuit$

An opening bid of  $1\heartsuit$  promises 11-15 HCP and  $2+\heartsuit$ . Since opener may not have a diamond suit, there is no lower bound for responder to bid 1 of a major, promising at least 4 cards in that major. If opener is in first or second seat, a bid of a new suit by responder is forcing. If opener is in third or fourth seat, they may pass responder's bid with 11-13 points. A rebid of 1NT by opener is part of our no-trump ladder, promising 11-13 HCP and a (semi)-balanced hand.

Responder should classify their hand into minimum (8-10 HCP), invitational (11-13 HCP), and game-forcing (14+ HCP). There are certain sequences through which responder can show a game-forcing hand at a low level. These are  $1\heartsuit$ - $1\heartsuit$ - $1\spadesuit$ - $2\clubsuit$  and  $1\heartsuit$ -1M-bid-1oM. In both cases, responder's second bid is artificial, merely showing 14+ points.

- $1\heartsuit$ : 4+ $\heartsuit$ 
  - $1\spadesuit$ : 4 $\spadesuit$ 
    - \* 1NT: 10- HCP, no support for spades
    - \*  $2\clubsuit$ : Artificial, game-forcing
    - \*  $2\heartsuit$ : 4+ $\heartsuit$ , 11-13 HCP
    - \*  $2\heartsuit$ : 5+ $\heartsuit$ , 11-13 HCP
    - \*  $2\spadesuit$ : 4 $\spadesuit$ , 8-10 HCP
    - \* 2NT: Invitational in no-trump
    - \*  $3\spadesuit$ : Invitational in spades
    - \*  $4\spadesuit$ : To play
  - 1NT: 11-13 HCP, balanced
    - \*  $2\clubsuit$ : New minor forcing
    - \*  $2\heartsuit$ : 4+ $\heartsuit$ , 11-13 HCP
    - \*  $2\heartsuit$ : 5+ $\heartsuit$ , 11-13 HCP
    - \*  $2\spadesuit$ : Artificial, game-forcing
    - \* 2NT: Invitational in no-trump
    - \* 3NT: To play
  - $2\clubsuit$ : 4+ $\clubsuit$ , 4+ $\heartsuit$
  - $2\heartsuit$ : 6+ $\heartsuit$
  - $2\heartsuit$ : 4+ $\heartsuit$ 
    - \*  $3\heartsuit$ : 11-13 HCP
    - \*  $4\heartsuit$ : To play
    - \*  $4\spadesuit$ : Kickback
- $1\spadesuit$ : 4+ $\spadesuit$ , denies 4 $\heartsuit$ . Responses are analogous to those for  $1\heartsuit$ , but  $2\clubsuit$  doesn't promise diamonds, and  $2\heartsuit$  is only 5+.
- 1NT: 8-11 HCP
- $2\clubsuit$ : 4+ $\clubsuit$ , 12+ HCP
- $2\heartsuit$ : 12+ HCP, 5+ $\heartsuit$ 
  - $2\heartsuit$ : 11-13 balanced
  - $2\spadesuit$ : good 13-15, unbalanced
  - 2NT: good 13-15, semi-balanced. After  $2\heartsuit$ ,  $2\spadesuit$ , or 2NT, subsequent suit bids show stoppers.
  - $3\clubsuit$ : 11-13 5+ clubs
  - $3\heartsuit$ : 11-13 and nothing else to say

- $2\heartsuit$ :  $5+\spadesuit$ ,  $4+\heartsuit$ , less than invitational. Opener should pass or correct.
- $2\spadesuit$ :  $5+\spadesuit$ ,  $4+\heartsuit$ , at least invitational. F1.
  - 3M: preference for that major. “If your hand is just invitational, I do not accept.” Responder can pass or bid 4M.
  - 4M: preference for that major and accepting the invitation.
- 2NT: 12-13 HCP, invitational in no-trump
- 3M: 7-10 HCP, 6+M
- 3NT: To play

#### 4. RESPONSES TO 1 OF A MAJOR

An opening bid of one of a major promises 11-15 HCP and a 5+-card major. Responses are natural for the most part. If opener is in first or second seat, a bid of a new suit by responder is forcing and, at the two-level, promises 12+ HCP. A bid of 1NT by responder shows 8-11 HCP. Splinters, Jacoby 2NT, and Kickback are used.

#### 5. RESPONSES TO $2\clubsuit$

An opening bid of  $2\clubsuit$  promises 11-15 HCP and 5 clubs. In practice, it should also promise either short diamonds (for otherwise opener could open  $1\diamondsuit$ ) or a strong club suit of 6+ cards. In particular, if opener bids  $2\clubsuit$  with only a 5-card club suit, they must have a 4-card major. The first goal of the auction is to determine whether partnership has a major-suit fit and, failing that, whether no-trump is a safe contract. Thus, responder’s first priority is either to show a 5-card major or ask opener to further describe their hand by bidding  $2\diamondsuit$ .

- $2\diamondsuit$ : Asks opener for a 4-card major and, failing that, to describe the strength of their club suit.
  - $2\heartsuit$ :  $4\heartsuit$ 
    - \*  $2\spadesuit$ :  $5+\spadesuit$ , invitational values
    - \* 2NT: Invitational to game in no-trump
    - \*  $3\clubsuit$ : Sign-off
    - \*  $3\heartsuit$ : Invitational to game in hearts
    - \*  $4\spadesuit$ : Kickback in hearts
  - $2\spadesuit$ :  $4\spadesuit$ . Responses are as in  $2\heartsuit$ , except  $3\heartsuit$  is used to show  $5\heartsuit$  and can only be bid with game-forcing values.
  - 2NT: Denies a 4-card major and a strong enough club suit to bid  $3\clubsuit$ .
    - \*  $3\clubsuit$ : Sign-off
    - \*  $3\diamondsuit$ : Asking for major-suit stoppers
      - 3M: Shows stopper in bid major and denies stopper in other major
      - 3NT: Shows stoppers in both majors
      - $4\clubsuit$ : Denies stopper in either major
    - \* 3M: 5+M and game-forcing values
    - \* 3NT: To play
    - \*  $4\clubsuit$ : Invitational to game in clubs?
    - \*  $4\diamondsuit$ : Kickback in clubs
    - \* 4NT: Quantitative raise

- 3♣: Denies a 4-card major and shows at least a 6-card club suit headed by AKQ or a 7-card club suit headed by AK. Responses are the same as for 2NT.
- 2♥: 5+♥, 8-13 HCP
  - Opener may pass with 2+♥ and a minimum hand.
  - 2♠: 4♠
  - 2NT: Denies 3♥ and 4♠ and a strong enough club suit to bid 3♣
  - 3♣: Denies 3♥ and 4♠ and shows at least a 6-card club suit headed by AKQ or a 7-card club suit headed by AK.
  - 3♥: 3+♥, invitational to game
- 2♠: 5+♠, 8-13 HCP. Responses are as in 2♥, except opener does not have a way to show 4♥, since the bidding would become too high with a bid of 3♥.
- 3♣: Invitational in clubs, 13+ HCP
- 3♥: 6+♥, GF
- 3♠: 6+♠, GF
- 4♣: Preemptive in clubs
- 4♦: Kickback in clubs

## 6. RESPONSES TO 2♦

Opener has very well described their hand with a 2♦ bid, showing 11-15 HCP and a three-suited hand short in diamonds. Therefore, responder is largely in charge of this auction. If responder bids a new suit, it is a sign-off if bid at the cheapest level, invitational if bid with a single jump, and to play if directly bid at game. 2NT is invitational to game in no-trump, and 3NT is to play. The only response that requires detailed discussion is 3♦, which is artificial, showing interest in slam, and asks opener to clarify the strength of their hand. Responses by opener to 3♦ are as follows:

- 3♥: 11-13 HCP
  - 3♠: Kickback in hearts
  - 3NT: To play
  - 4♣: Gerber
  - 4♦: Kickback in clubs
  - 4♥: To play
  - 4♠: To play
  - 4NT: Kickback in spades
  - 5♣: To play
- 3♠: 13-15 HCP
  - 4♣: Gerber
  - 4♦: Kickback in clubs
  - 4♠: Kickback in hearts
  - 4NT: Kickback in spades

## 7. WEAK 2 OPENINGS AND OTHER PRE-EMPTS

An opening bid of 2M is pre-emptive, showing 5-10 HCP and a 6-card suit. A bid of a new suit by responder is forcing, showing a strong hand, a 5+-card suit, and at least 2 cards in the opener's suit (so that opener can safely bid 3M without support for responder's suit). A bid of 3M by responder is a furthering of the pre-empt,



showing 3 cards in the suit. A bid of 4M indicates either 4 cards in the opener's suit or a strong hand with support for the suit. Opener should pass any raise of their suit.

A bid of 2NT by responder is Ogust, asking opener to further describe their hand so that responder can decide whether or not they should play in no-trump. Responses by opener are:

- 3♣: weak suit, weak hand
- 3♦: strong suit, weak hand
- 3♥: weak suit, strong hand
- 3♠: strong suit, strong hand
- 3NT: AKQ in long suit

A 'strong suit' is any suit containing two of the top three honors, and a 'strong hand' is a hand with 8-10 HCP.

An opening bid of 3 of a suit typically shows a 7-card suit and 5-10 HCP. Since a 2-level pre-empt is not available in the minor suits, 3m can be bid with a strong 6-card suit.

An opening bid of 4 of a suit shows an 8+-card suit and 5-10 HCP.

## 8. NOTRUMP

The auctions under discussion in this section are those in which opener shows a no trump hand by bidding a sequence in the notrump ladder, responder has shown a balanced hand after a 1♣ open, and (3) in a 1♣ - positive auction, opener denies responder's suit by suggesting notrump. After one of these, sequences, the partner needs ways to show 4 and 5 card majors.

**8.1. Notrump Ladder.** The auctions in our notrump ladder are

- 11-13 HCP: 1♦ - 1Maj; 1NT
- 14-16 HCP: 1NT
- 17-19 HCP: 1♣ - 1♦ ; 1 NT
- 20-21 HCP: 2NT
- 22-24 HCP: 1♣ - 1♦ ; 2 NT
- 25-26 HCP: 1♣ - 1♦ ; 2♥ - 2♠ ; 2NT
- 27+ HCP: 1♣ - 1♦ ; 3NT

Note that opening 3 NT is not a bid in our notrump ladder because it is used artificially as gambling 3NT.

Auctions after bids on the notrump ladder follow the standard stayman and transfer bidding sequences, with the exceptions of 1♣ - 1♦ ; 3NT showing 27+ and the 1♦ - 1Maj; 1NT sequence showing 11-13. In the 27+ case stayman is off, but transfers are still on. In the 11-13 case, responder can (with a good 10+ points) bid 2♣ to show a 5th card in his major (New Minor Forcing), or rebid his major to show a 6th.

**8.2. Notrump responses to 1♣.** If opener opens 1♣ and responder has 8+ points and a balanced hand, he shows his point range by causing one of the following three auctions:

- 8-10 HCP: 1♣ - 2♦
- 11-13 HCP: 1♣ - 1♥ ; 1♠ - 1 NT
- 14+ HCP: 1♣ - 2♥

Note that the  $1\heartsuit$  bid is also used to show spades. If the auction instead goes  $1\clubsuit - 1\heartsuit$ ; 1NT, see the section on opener's refusal of responder's spades.

After a  $1\clubsuit - 2\diamond$  or a  $1\clubsuit - 2\heartsuit$  auction, opener can show a 5 card suit by bidding it directly, and otherwise bids 2NT asking for a 4 card major. The responses to 2NT are

- $3\clubsuit$ : 4 hearts and 4 spades
- $3\diamond$ : 4 hearts
- $3\heartsuit$ : 4 spades
- $3\spadesuit$ : no 4 card major.

If after this opener wants to play in a major, he bids it as TAB4. Otherwise he can bid 3NT to end the auction,  $4\clubsuit$  to ask for aces, 4NT invite to slam, or bid slam.

After a  $1\clubsuit - 1\heartsuit$ ;  $1\spadesuit - 1\heartsuit$  auction, although *responder* has denied 5 spades, *opener* has not denied spades, and in fact has confirmed having at least 3 spades. Opener can show a 5 card major by bidding it directly, ask for 4 card majors with  $2\clubsuit$ , or deny a 4 card major by bidding  $2\diamond$ (CAB). Responses to  $2\clubsuit$  are

- $2\diamond$ : 4 hearts and 4 spades
- $2\heartsuit$ : 4 hearts
- $2\spadesuit$ : 4 spades
- 2 NT: no 4 card major.

Opener may also be interested in a minor since responder has enough points for game. Opener can show a minor by bidding it directly, or show both by bidding 2NT (very unlikely).

**8.3. Opener's Notrump refusals of responder's suit.** After a  $1\clubsuit$  - suit positive auction, one of opener's possible responses is to deny support and show a balanced/semi-balanced hand. Since hands with two 5 card suits are somewhat rare, responder's rebids here focus on 4 card majors (if they are new) and 6 card majors in the previously shown suit.

If opener asks for a 4 card major and responder does not have one, opener's next bid is SCAB in any of the *four* suits. In this case, 3NT and  $4\clubsuit$  are skipped as questioning steps, but not as answering steps.

We deal individually with each of the four cases of responder's first bid.

*Clubs.* After a  $1\clubsuit - 1\heartsuit$  auction, the Notrump bid is  $2\clubsuit$ . Responder can show a 4 card major by bidding the suit below it, and opener can accept the suit by bidding it as TAB4 or refuse it by bidding 2NT. If responder does not have a 4 card major, he bids 2 spades.

*Diamonds.* After a  $1\clubsuit - 2\clubsuit$  auction, the Notrump bid is  $2\diamond$ . Responder can show a 4 card major by bidding the strain *above* it, which opener can accept by bidding the next step, skipping  $3\diamond$ , as TAB4. Responder denies a 4 card major by bidding  $2\heartsuit$ .

*Hearts.* After a  $1\clubsuit - 1\spadesuit$  auction, the Notrump bid is 1NT. The responses are

- $2\clubsuit$ : 6+ hearts
- $2\diamond$ : 4+ spades
- $2\heartsuit$ : balanced with 0-3 controls
- $2\spadesuit$ : balanced with 4+ controls

- 2NT: long clubs and a desire to play in clubs over NT
- 3♣: long diamonds and a desire to play in diamonds over NT

*Spades.* After a 1♣ - 1♥ auction, the Notrump bid is 1NT. However opener doesn't know whether responder has 5 spades or 11-13 balanced, so responder must clarify that in addition to describing his majors. Responses to 1NT in this auction are

- 2♣: 4+ hearts and 5+ spades
- 2♦: 4 hearts and 11-13 balanced
- 2♥: 6+ spades (3- hearts)
- 2♠: 5 spades (3- hearts)
- 2NT: 11-13 balanced (3- hearts)

## 9. LEBENSOHL

Lebensohl is a system for dealing with interference by the opponents over an opening bid of 1NT. First note that after interference of 2♣ or Double, systems are on, with a Double over 2♣ being Stayman and a Redouble over a Double showing at least 8 points and a desire to play in no-trump. Thus, Lebensohl only applies to interference of 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠.

**9.1. Natural suit overcalls.** If the opponents' interference is natural or promises one known suit (and possibly one unknown suit), the following system is used. The key feature is the use of the 2NT - 3♣ sequence to show a stopper in the opponents' suit ('slow shows').

A double is always for penalty. Texas transfers are still on.

**9.1.1. *Balanced Hands.*** If responder has a balanced hand and does not want to be in game, they should pass. An immediate bid of 3NT shows sufficient values to play in game but denies a stopper in the opponents' suit. Opener should pass with a stopper or bid their favorite suit at the 4-level without a stopper. If responder has a balanced hand with sufficient values and a stopper in the opponents' suit, they should bid 2NT, forcing opener to bid 3♣, and then bid 3NT.

If responder wants to do Stayman, they can directly cuebid the opponents' suit. This denies a stopper. If they have a stopper, they would bid 2NT and cuebid the opponents' suit after 3♣ by the opener. In either case, opener responds by bidding a 4-card major (not the suit shown by the opponents, obviously). If they lack a 4-card major, they can bid 3NT if they know they have a stopper in the opponents' suit. Otherwise, they should bid their favorite minor at the 4-level.

**9.1.2. *Unbalanced Hands.*** If responder wants to show a suit of 5+ cards, they have either 2 or 3 options: bidding the suit at the 2-level (if available), bidding the suit directly at the 3-level, and bidding the suit at the 3-level after 2NT-3♣.

With 2 ways to show a suit, going through 2NT-3♣ is to play and should be passed by opener. Bidding directly at the 3-level is game forcing. Opener can bid game in that suit with 3-card support. Without support, bid 3NT with a stopper in the opponents' suit or bid 3 of the opponents' suit to ask responder to bid 3NT with a stopper (note that if responder's suit is spades, there will always be 3 ways to show it, so this is not an issue) or a suit at the 4-level (probably their original suit) without a stopper.

With 3 ways to show a suit, bidding at the 2-level is to play and should be passed by opener. Bidding at the 3-level after 2NT-3♣ is game-forcing and promises a stopper. Bidding directly at the 3-level is game-forcing but denies a stopper.

**9.2. Artificial 2-suited overcalls.** If the opponents' interference shows 2 known suits, things are a bit different. Responder still shows new suits as before. But the 2NT-3♣ sequence is no longer used to show stoppers. Instead, use cuebids of the opponents' suits to show stoppers. 3NT promises stoppers in both suits.

## 10. INTERFERENCE IN 1♣ AUCTIONS

The main ideas when dealing with interference in 1♣ auctions are as follows. If the interference is low enough that we can arrange so that we're not missing any bids, we do that. If the interference is higher, then bidding is 'natural,' where 'natural' means that opener's bids actually are natural and responder's bids are submarined transfers.

At this stage, we are not making a distinction between natural and artificial interference. Perhaps we should do so later.

**10.1. Interference after 1♣.** General rule: After interference in a 1♣ auction, before the strain has been agreed upon, responder's bid is a submarine transfer if and only if all bids since the interference have been Pass, Double, or a 1-step artificial bid. Also, over interference at the 3-level or higher, Double is always for penalty and Pass is forcing, transferring the decision to the other player.

If the interference is Double, 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠ natural, we can retain our full system as follows.

*Double.* We can take advantage of a Double by being more expressive with our negative responses. Over a Double, Pass shows 0-4 HCP, 1♦ shows 5-8 HCP, and Redouble is 5-8 HCP with two 4-card majors or, if opponents' double showed majors, two 5-card minors. All higher bids are as usual but requiring 9 HCP.

1♦. Here Pass is 0-4 HCP and Double is 5-8 HCP. Higher bids are as usual.

1♥. Pass shows 0-8 HCP and Double says that responder would have bid 1♥ if there were no interference. Higher bids are as usual.

*1♠ natural.* Here things have to be changed a little bit. We abandon the 1♥ bid, which means we have to put 11-13 balanced somewhere else. Pass shows 0-8 HCP, Double shows 5♥. 1NT, 2♣, and 2♦ are as usual. 2♥ shows 11-13 balanced, 2♠ shows 14+ balanced, and 2NT shows a 3-suited hand with short spades (If responder has a 3-suited hand with 4 spades, they can bid as if they were balanced). Opener's rebids are as usual, with the exception that, if responder bids 2♦ or 2♥, opener can bid 2♠ to ask for a spade stopper. Responder can deny a stopper with 2NT, after which opener's bids are SAB or confirm a spade stopper with any other bid (which would be natural).

Over interference that is either higher than 1♠ or is 1♠ artificial, pass by responder is 0-4 HCP, double is 5-8 HCP, and other bids are 9+ submarine transfers. After a pass by responder, opener can double as a standard takeout/strong double. A jump in a new suit promises 19+ HCP and a 6-card suit. A transfer cuebid shows a balanced hand lacking a stopper in the opponents' known suit. A transfer

to no-trump promises a stopper in opponents' known suit. After a positive response, opener can accept the transfer, which is TAB in a suit or asking for 4-card majors in no-trump. A new suit bid by opener is SAB, and no-trump is asking for a four-card major. If the responder's positive response showed no-trump, then the responder answers with Both-Hearts-Spades-Neither. If the responder's positive response showed a major, answers are Hearts-Spades-NT-NT-Clubs Diamonds (as after  $1\clubsuit-1\spadesuit-1NT$ ). If responder's positive response showed a minor, responses are Hearts-Spades-NT-Long, runnable minor - Long minor, bad for NT. After a negative response, opener can pass for penalty. The next available bid is artificial and forcing, showing 20+ HCP. Responder then bids a submarine transfer as before. Any higher response is natural 16-19, non-forcing (if bid is no-trump, systems are on).

**10.2. Interference after  $1\clubsuit-1\diamondsuit$ .** After  $1\clubsuit$ - Pass -  $1\diamondsuit$ - Interference, opener can Double for takeout with 16-18 HCP. Responder bids a submarine transfer, which is then completed. Responder can raise with a good 5-7. Opener can also bid a new 5-card suit with 16-18. This is non-forcing, and bidding continues naturally. If opener cuebids opponents' known suit, this shows a semi-balanced 17-19 without a stopper. Responder should bid no-trump at the appropriate level with a stopper or bid their best suit directly without a stopper. Opener can bid NT with 17-19. This shows a stopper, and systems are on. Lastly, opener can Pass with 19+. If responder has a good 5-7 points, they Double to force to game. In other cases, responder bids a submarine transfer. Any acceptance by opener is non-forcing. With three possible levels at which to accept the transfer before game, opener divides their hand into either 19-21, 22-24, or 25+ and bids accordingly. With two options, the division is 19-21 and 22+. A bid of NT by opener after responder's submarine transfer into a suit shows 22-24 balanced and is non-forcing. Systems are on. A bid of a new 5-card suit by opener after responder's submarine transfer is forcing.

**10.3. Interference after a positive suit response.** After  $1\clubsuit$ - Pass - Positive suit response - Interference, a Double by opener is a negative double, and responder bids one below the desired suit. A bid of responder's suit is TAB. A bid of a new suit shows 5+ and is SAB. Cuebidding the opponents' suit shows a balanced hand without a stopper. A bid of no-trump promises a stopper and is asking for 4-card majors.

**10.4. Interference after a positive NT response.** After  $1\clubsuit$ - Pass - Positive NT response - Interference, a Double by opener shows a semi-balanced hand without a stopper in opponents' known suit. A new 5+ suit bid is SAB. A NT bid promises a stopper and asks for 4-card majors. A cuebid of opponents suit shows slam interest in NT and promises a stopper.

**10.5. Other interference before a strain has been established.** After interference at the 3-level or higher, all doubles are for penalty. A bid shows serious interest in game. If responder is first to act over interference or is responding to opener's pass or double over interference, bids are submarine transfers. Opener's bids are natural.

**10.6. Interference immediately after a SAB.** If the interference is at the 2-level or below, then responder answers, using Pass and Double as the first two steps. If the interference is at the 3-level or higher, responder bids a submarine transfer. Transferring into opener's suit shows 3-card support, after which SCABs commence.

**10.7. Interference after a strain has been established (SCAB relay phase).** If interference interrupts an asking-bid sequence at the 2-level, then just continue, with Pass being 1 step, Double 2 steps, and continuing from there. Higher, if opener was about to ask a question, Double is for penalty, Pass asks responder to Double for penalty, bid game in the agreed suit, bid Kickback, or cue-bid. Opener can continue with asking bids, starting with the next bid after the interference. If responder was about to answer a question, they can answer it starting with the next bid. Double is Penalty. Pass asks opener to Double for Penalty, bid game, bid kickback, or bid the next available strain to re-ask the question.

If the interference is Double, then the next to bid (either opener or responder) passes for one step, redoubles for two steps, and then continues with the next available bid. If that person bids pass (meaning one step), then the other bidder can use Redouble for one step and then continue with the next available bid.

## 11. GAMBLING 3NT

Preemptive opening showing a 7+-card minor headed by AKQ. Responses are as follows:

- Pass: To play. Shows stoppers in both majors.
- 4♣: Shows weakness and desire to play in opener's minor suit. Opener passes or corrects to 4♦.
- 4♦: Asks for a singleton. If opener has a singleton major, they bid it. If opener has a singleton in the other minor, they bid 4NT. If opener does not have a singleton, they bid their minor at the 5-level.
- 4M: To play.
- 5,6,7♣: Desire to play in 5,6, or 7 of opener's minor. Opener should pass or correct to 5,6, or 7♦.

## 12. ASKING BIDS

**12.1. Trump Asking Bids.** If responder suggests a suit and opener accepts it, the bid is usually TAB asking how many of the top three honors responder has and, in situations where nothing else is known about responder's distribution, the length of the suit. Opener's next bid after a TAB is SCAB unless it is a reserved bid.

12.1.1. *Trump Asking with a 5+ Card Suit (TAB).* The most basic form of TAB only arises in the following two situations.

- Responder shows hearts, clubs, or diamonds (by bidding 1♠, 1NT, or 1♣) and opener immediately accepts it (by bidding 2♥, 2NT or 2NT)
- Responder shows a minor, opener asks for a 4 card major, and after hearing the response, opener bids the original minor at the 3 level.

In these cases, responder bids a number of steps showing length and strength of the trump suit.

- (1) 0 of the top 3 honors

- (2) 1 of the top 3 honors; 5= card suit
- (3) 2 of the top 3 honors; 5= card suit
- (4) 1 of the top 3 honors; 6+ card suit
- (5) 2 of the top 3 honors; 6+ card suit
- (6) 3 of the top 4 honors

12.1.2. *Trump Asking with a 4 Card Suit (TAB4)*. There are 4 classes of situations in which this show up.

- Responder's initial bid shows a 3-suited hand. Opener's bid of a suit that responder is known to have is TAB4. (This includes  $1\clubsuit - 2\spadesuit$ ; 2NT auctions.)
- Opener suggests NT and asks for a 4 card major, and responder answers with an artificial bid. Opener's bid of responder's suit is TAB4.
- Responder shows a major, opener suggests NT, and responder shows that the major has 6 cards. Opener's bid of responder's major is TAB4 (although responder has 6, not 4)
- In the auction  $1\clubsuit - 1\heartsuit$ ;  $1\spadesuit - 1NT$ ;  $2\clubsuit$ , responder should respond "both, hearts, spades, neither" with the majors aligning as natural bids. In this case, a 1 step bid is TAB4. Note that if responder bids  $2\spadesuit$ , then 2NT is TAB4 putting us in a spade auction, and  $3\clubsuit$  is the CAB putting us in a notrump auction.

In these situations, since the length is probably not longer than what is already known, responder just shows how many of the top 3 honors they have.

- (1) 0 of top 3 honors
- (2) 1 of top 3 honors
- (3) 2 of top 3 honors
- (4) 3 of top 3 honors

12.1.3. *Modified TAB*. There are a few auctions in which opener bids TAB on a guess. That is, responder has made a bid with multiple meanings, and opener bids a suit that he can support assuming responder actually has it. The responses are shifted up versions of the above bids with the cheapest bid meaning, "you guessed wrong." In particular, the following auctions are modified TAB.

- $1\clubsuit - 1\heartsuit$ ;  $1\spadesuit$ . Here 1NT shows 11-13 balanced, and from  $2\clubsuit$  on shows 012123 of the top 3 honors.
- $1\clubsuit - 1\heartsuit$ ; 1NT -  $2\clubsuit$ ;  $2\spadesuit$ . Here 2NT shows only 5 spades, and from  $3\clubsuit$  on shows 0123 of the top 3 honors.
- $1\clubsuit - 2NT$ ;  $3\clubsuit/3\diamond$ . Here responder has shows a 3-suited hand with both majors, and opener has support for the minor bid. The cheapest response says, "You have bid my short suit," and from  $3\heartsuit/3\spadesuit$  on shows 0123 of the top 3 honors.

12.2. **Support Asking Bids**. If opener opens  $1\clubsuit$ , responder bids a positive suit or positive NT response, and opener then shows a suit, it is a SAB, asking responder whether they have support for the suit shown, and how good their controls are. An Ace counts as 2 controls and a King counts as 1. The responses are

- (1) 2- cards in the suit; 0-3 controls
- (2) 2- cards in the suit; 4+ controls
- (3) 3+ cards in the suit; 0-3 controls

- (4) 3+ cards in the suit; 4+ controls.

If responder shows support, opener's next bid is SCAB unless it is a reserved bid.

If responder does not show support, the bidding continues naturally. There are no more asking bids in the auction, and so the only question that can be asked is keycards. In particular, if opener bids his own suit, it shows 6. If opener bids responder's suit, that promises 3-card support and is TAB. Responder should not pass game in their response.

**12.3. Specific Control Asking Bids.** In a  $1\clubsuit$  - positive auction, when a strain has been agreed upon at a low level, subsequent bids by opener are SCAB. Specifically, all bids by opener after a TAB or after a SAB with a supporting response are SCAB unless they are reserved. SCABs ask responder about a suit in which opener thinks there may be a few losers.

The cheapest 3 (4 in NT) non-reserved bids are all SCAB in the suit order  $\heartsuit\spadesuit\clubsuit\diamondsuit$ , with the trump suit deleted. The responses are

- (1) 1st round control in that suit (void or A)
- (2) 2nd round control in that suit (singleton or K)
- (3) 3rd round control in that suit (doubleton or Q)
- (4) 4th round/no control in that suit

Opener's next bid is another SCAB.

**12.3.1. Reserved bids.** When bidding SCABs, the following bids by opener are reserved (not SCAB):

- A bid of the playing strain at or above game is to play
- A 4 level bid in the strain above the playing strain is kickback
- If the agreed strain is a minor, 3NT is also to play.

The opener should skip over these bids when counting the number of steps to ask a SCAB. Responder should *not* skip in his answer.

Note that in a minor suit auction, although 3NT is available,  $4\clubsuit$  is not gerber. To ask about Aces, opener bids kickback, and then 4NT is a chicken out bid. This overrides the cases in which 4NT would otherwise be a queen ask.

**12.3.2. Reasks.** If opener SCABs about a suit for the second time, he is asking for clarification about the first response. The answers are

- (1) Length (shortness)
- (2) Strength (the honor)
- (3) More strength (the honor, and also the one right below)
- (4) Even more strength (the honor, and the two right below)

**12.3.3. Abbreviated SCABs.** Once we have passed game, i.e. once the question bid is above game, the answers to SCABs become

- (1) 1st round control in that suit (void or A)
- (2) 2nd round control in that suit (singleton or K)
- (3) 3rd round/no control in that suit



**12.4. Control Asking Bids.** In a notrumpy auction, if the declarer makes a bid finalizing a decision to play in notrump (and that bid is not just 3NT), the responder's next bid shows either the number of controls in his hand where an Ace is 2 controls and a King is 1 or the number of points. Responder shows controls if they previously made a positive no-trump response. Responder shows points if they previously made a positive suit response. The steps are:

- (1) 0-2 controls or 8-9 HCP
  - (2) 3-4 controls or 10-11 HCP
  - (3) 5-6 controls or 12-13 HCP
- etc.

There is one place in which we use a 8-10, 11+ distinction for points in notrump.

- After  $1\clubsuit - 1\spadesuit$ ; 1NT auction, a bid of  $2\heartsuit$  or  $2\spadesuit$  accepts notrump and shows 8-10 or 11+ HCP, respectively.