

# Basic Bidding System

1nt opening shows 15-17 points and a balanced hand.

2♣ response is stayman asking for a 4-card major. Opener bids 2♦ with no 4-card major, 2♥ with both majors or just shows the major if only one is held. \*1nt-2♣ - 2any-2nt is invitational to 3nt and carries no promise of a major as 1nt-2nt is conventional (see below).

2♦/2♥ responses are transfers promising 5+♥/♠ respectively. Opener completes the transfer by bidding the next suit up (2♥/♠) or may break the transfer to the 3-level with a maximum opening bid and 4-card support (2♦-3♥ or 2♥-3♠). 1nt-2♦-2♥-3♥ is invitational with 6+ cards. Other bids are natural and game forcing the same applies after a transfer to 2♠.

2♠/2nt are transfers to 3♣/3♦ respectively (maybe weak hands). Opener completes the transfer but with Qxx in the suit or better bids 2nt over 2♠ and 3♣ over 2nt (3 of the transferred suit from responder now shows a weak hand and must be passed). A new suit by responder after the transfer has been completed is natural and forcing to game showing at least 6 cards in the transferred suit.

3♣/♦/♥/♠ responses are single suited slam tries promising at least a 6 card suit.

4♣ is Gerber asking for aces-4♦=0 or 4/4♥=1/4♠=2/4nt=3.

4♥/4♠ are natural and to play.

4nt is quantitative (roughly 16-17 points) and invites opener to bid 6nt with a maximum (Opener can introduce a new suit at the 5/6-level with a min/max and a 5-card suit). This applies after stayman also. i.e. 1nt-2♣ -2any-4nt is quantitative NOT Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB).

Opening a suit and rebidding notrumps at the minimum level shows 12-14 balanced. **Check Back:** Over a 1nt rebid 2♣ is used as 'check back' for a 4 card major or 3 card support if responder has bid a major. With 3 card support and 4-cards in the other major opener shows the 3-card support first. Check back followed by 2nt is invitational. Other continuations after check back are game forcing. Sequences that do not begin with check back are all invitational. i.e. 1♣-1♠-1nt-3♥= inv.

1♥ and 1♠ openings promise at least a 5-card suit.

1nt response is non-forcing, showing 6-10 points.

Raising 1♥/1♠ to the:-

2-level shows 3+ card support and 6-9 points.

3-level shows 3+ card support and 10-11 points. \*(Maybe a bit less with good distribution).

4-level is pre-emptive. Normally 4+ card support.

A new suit at the 2-level in response to 1♥/1♠ shows 11+ points and is forcing as far as 2nt. (i.e. 1M-2any-2M=F1)

'**Fourth Suit Forcing**' is game forcing except ONE sequence: 1♠-1♣-1♥-1♦-1nt which can be passed or raised to 2nt.

### **Jacoby 2nt:**

1♥/1♠-2nt = game forcing 4+ card support. Opener can bid a second suit naturally at the 3-level or bid a suit at the 4-level to show shortage. 3nt from opener shows 18-19 balanced and is forcing. 3M by opener is usually minimum but could be waiting with a good hand that does not have shortage or a second suit. 4M shows a terrible hand.

1♥/1♠-3nt=natural 13-15 points.

1♥-3♠/4♣ /4♦=splinters

1♠-4♣ /4♦=splinters. N.B. 1♠-4♥ is natural and to play!

Open the **better minor** with no 5-card major to open.

Open 1♦ when holding 4♣ and 4♦. Usually open 1♣ with 3♣ and 3♦ and roughly equal suit quality.

Opening 1♦ is reasonable with say ♦KQx and ♣xxx.

**2♣ opening** is any game forcing hand or 22-24 balanced. A 2♦ response is negative or waiting. Suit responses are natural positives (an Ace and a King somewhere or roughly equivalent values) promising at least a decent 5-card suit. 2nt is 7-9 balanced and 3nt is 10-12 balanced. After opening 2♣ all sequences are game forcing except 2♣-2♦-2nt (continuations as over 2nt opening).

2♦/2♥/2♠ are weak twos. 6-card suit and about 6-10 points.

2nt response to 2♦/2♥/2♠ is an enquiry over which opener bids as follows:

3♣ shows minimum point count and a poor suit

3♦ shows maximum point count and a poor suit

3♥ shows minimum point count and a good suit

3♠ shows maximum point count and a good suit

3nt shows AKQxxx

2nt opening shows 20-21 points and a balanced hand.

3♣ response is stayman asking for a 4-card major. Opener either bids 3♦ to deny a major or shows the major at the 3-level. With 4♥/4♠ opener bids 3♥.

3♦/3♥ responses are transfers (like after a 1nt opening).

3♠ response shows slam interest and at least 5-4 in the minors.

4♣/4♦ are natural slam tries.

4♥/4♠ are natural and to play.

4nt is quantitative, roughly a good 11-12 points. Inviting opener to bid 6nt (as over a 1nt opening opener may bid a 5-card suit at the 5/6 level with a min/max)

3-level openings are natural and pre-emptive, usually a seven-card suit (+).

3nt opening shows a solid 7 or 8-card minor and at most an outside queen in 1st and 2nd seat. In 3rd and 4th seat 3nt is to play. Over 3nt responder can bid 4□ pass or correct.

4-level openings are natural and pre-emptive.

4nt opening asks for specific aces. Responses are:

5♣ - No Ace

5♦ - ♦ Ace

5♥ - ♥ Ace

5♠ - ♠ Ace

5nt - 2 aces

6♣ - ♣ ace

## Passed Hand Responses:

1♥/1♠-2nt= natural (11-12 balanced)

1♥/1♠-2-minor promises a 5+-card suit and is non-forcing (about 9-11 hcp)

Single jump responses in a new suit are:

**'Fit jumps'** showing support for opener's suit and length in the bid suit (usually about 7-11 points). Fit jumps opposite 1♥/1♠ are forcing to 3-major. Fit jumps opposite 1♣/1♦ are non-forcing.

e.g. 1♠-3♣ shows 7-11 points with spade support and a club suit.

Fit jumps opposite 1♥/1♠ promise at least 3-card support and usually 5+ cards in the 'fit' suit.

Fit Jumps opposite 1♣/1♦ promise 4-card support and usually 5+ cards in the 'fit' suit. (Always 5-cards if the 'fit' suit is a major).

e.g. 1♣-2♥ shows 4+♣ and 5+♥ and 7-11 points

Double jump responses to 1♥/1♠ are still 'splinters'.

Double jump responses to 1♣/1♦ are also 'splinters' by a passed hand and are forcing as far as 4-minor.

## More Doubles

Generally if a suit has not been agreed then a double by either player is takeout/competitive.

Some examples:

1♣-pass-1♥-2♦-double=takeout (4♠ would be likely or possibly just a good hand which is stuck for a bid).

1♥(opp)-1♠(you)-2♥(opp)-double(you)=competitive, typically some values and length in the minors.

1♠-double-3♠-double=responsive, showing values and no clear bid.

1♦-pass-3♦-3♠-double is **penalty** as your side as agreed a suit.

## Special Redoubles

1any suit-double-redouble shows 10+ points and usually a desire to penalise the opponents.

In a slam auction redoubling a 'cuebid' confirms 1st round control in that suit.

e.g.

1♠-p-3♠-p-4♠(cue)-p-4♦(cue)-double-p-p-redouble confirms 1st round control in ♦

## SOS Redoubles:

If your side is doubled for penalties in a contract at the 1-level or 2-level (redoubles at the 3-level or higher are NOT SOS redoubles) then unless you have guaranteed that it is your hand (i.e. 1♣-double-redouble) a redouble is asking partner to try something else.

Some examples:

1nt-double-2♣-double-pass-pass-redouble\*

This is the classic SOS redouble where responder first bids 2♣ suggesting 5+♣ but then redoubles to ask partner to try something else. Redoubles in analogous situations carry the same meaning of requesting partner to try something else.

1♣-1♠-pass-pass-double-pass-pass-redouble\*

Here the opponents have indicated a desire to defend 1♠ doubled. If you expect that contract to make then you can just pass happily. The redouble says 'I think we're in trouble, please try something else'.

## Warning:

We suggest that you exercise caution over when you use an SOS redouble as it may be misinterpreted and you may end up playing a disastrous redoubled contract. As with many advanced bids or plays we recommend that you take your partner's rating into account before you make an SOS redouble. (If they are a 3 star player they are much more likely to understand it than a 1 star player).

## Competitive Bidding

### 1). Bidding after the opponent's make a take out double.

a). 1♣/1♦-double-

Redouble= 10+ points (usually a desire to penalise the opponents)

1♥/1♠= Natural and forcing

1nt=6-10 points (no 4-card major in principle)

Raise to the 2-level=6-10 points 5+card support

2♥/2♠= 'Fit Jumps' (See 'passed hand bidding')

2nt= Limit raise or better (5+card support)

Raise to the 3-level=pre-emptive 6-10 points and 5+/often 6-card support

3♥/3♠=Natural/pre-emptive

3nt= To play. Maybe based on a fit for partner.

Raise to the 4-level= Pre-emptive non-forcing

4♥/4♠= To play.

b). 1♥/1♠-double-

Redouble= 10+ points (usually a desire to penalise the opponents)

1nt=6-10 points

2♣/2♦= Natural and forcing

Raise to the 2-level=5-9 points usually 3-card support

2nt=Limit raise or better. 3+card support.

3♣/3♦= **'Fit jumps'** (See 'passed hand bidding')

Raise to the 3-level= Pre-emptive 5-9 points and 4-card support

3nt= To play

4♣/4♦= **Splinter** (see 'Splinters')

Raise to the 4-level= Pre-emptive 0-11 points usually 5+card support

(1♥-1♠= Natural and forcing. 1♥-4♠= To play).

## 2). Unassuming Cuebids (UCB)

In competitive auctions cuebidding the opponent's suit at the minimum level is an 'unassuming cue bid' and shows at least a good raise to the next available level.

Some examples:

1♣-1♠-pass-2♣ shows at least a good raise to 2♠ (10+ points, 3+♠)

1♦(you)-1♠(opp)-2♠you shows at least a good raise to 3♦ (11+ points, 5+♦)

1♥(you)-2♣(opp)-3♣(you) shows at least a good raise to 3♥ (10+ points, 3+♥)

UCB raises of a minor are usually looking for 3nt so it is important to bid notrumps to show a stopper in the opponent's suit if you have it.

UCB raises of a major tend to be looking for game in the major.

Jump raises of an opening bid after an overcall are pre-emptive.

Jump raises of an overcall are also pre-emptive. (The basic principle is that sound raises make a UCB first).

## 1nt Overcall

Overcalling 1nt shows 15-17(18) points and a stopper in the opponent's suit.

Responses are exactly the same as after an opening 1nt.

(2♣=stayman, 2♦/2♥/2♠/2nt are transfers).

Note: Stayman and transfers do not apply if 1nt is doubled.

A 1nt overcall in the '**balancing seat**'\* shows about 11-15 points as partner can be expected to hold some values.

\*You are in the '**balancing seat**' when your left-hand opponent opens and the next two players pass. i.e. 1♣-pass-pass-balancing seat. Partner is expected to have something as your right-hand opponent has not responded.

## Carding

Standard count and attitude.

Leads are 4th best from an honour (low from Hxx), 2nd best from bad suits (middle/up/down from 3 small).

If partner leads a suit which you win- return the top of a remaining doubleton or original 4th best from 3 or more remaining cards.

When giving 'residual' count show the count of your remaining holding in the suit.

**(Do not expect everyone to understand this).**

Give attitude on Ace and Queen leads, Count on King leads.

First discard is attitude.

Most carding is attitude based. Give count when it is important to partner. For example if there is a long suit in dummy partner may need to know when to take the Ace to shut out the suit. (Also give count on King leads). If you are following suit with idle cards then giving count may help partner also.

When dummy produces a singleton in the suit led give suit preference (a high card suggests a higher suit/ a low card suggests a lower suit/ a middle card is neutral).

Suit preference is possible in situations where count or attitude is no longer necessary.

## Warning:

Some partners may card more accurately than others. We suggest that you pay careful attention to the rating of your partner and expect more accurate signals if they are 2 or 3 star player than if they are 1 star player. Also do not expect all partners to understand your signals, although hopefully they will.

# Slam Bidding

4nt-Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB)

Responses:

5♣=1 or 4 key cards

5♦=0 or 3 key cards

5♥=2 or 5 key card without the trump queen

5♠=2 or 5 key cards with the trump queen

After a 5□/5□ response the next suit up (not 5-trump suit which is a sign off) asks for the Queen of trumps. Without the Queen of trumps, sign off in 5 of the trump suit. With it bid of the trump suit or bid a new suit to show the King of that suit and also the Queen of trumps. **N.B not everyone will understand this.**

After 4nt (RKCB) 5nt confirms that all 5 Aces and the Queen of trumps are present and asks for specific Kings outside trumps. (You may not be able to show your king if it is higher than 6 of the trump suit.)

Responses to 5nt:

6♣=king of ♣

6♦=king of ♦

6♥=king of ♥

6♠=king of ♠

With 2 kings show the lowest one or possibly just bid a grand slam.

e.g.

1♣ -1♥ -3♥ -4♦\*

Shows usually first but maybe second round diamond control and slam interest.

Notable exceptions are:

## Trial Bids

When one of a suit is raised to the 2-level then a new suit by opener is a trial bid, asking for help in the suit and looking for game.

e.g.

1♥-2♥-3♣ \*

Asks responder to bid 4♥ with help in clubs or maybe a maximum raise. Trial bids show at least 3 cards in the suit bid in principle.

## SPLINTERS

1♥-3♠/4♣/4♦

1♠-4♣/4♦

Double jump responses to 1♥/1♠

which are not game show a void

or singleton in the bid suit and

4+card support and about 11-15 hcp.

\*(1♣-3♦/3♥/3♠. 1♦-3♥/3♠/4♣

are natural/pre-emptive)

## JUMP-SHIFT RESPONSES

Single jump responses to a 1-level

Opening bid are strong (GF).

Typically a self-supporting suit or perhaps

a good suit plus support for partner.

Usually 16+ hcp.

## DEFENCE TO 1NT

Overcalls are natural.

Double is penalty. Usually 17+ hcp, maybe

Slightly less if a good suit is held.

After doubling 1nt subsequent doubles

Are penalty from either player.

## **NEGATIVE DOUBLES**

(Make a natural bid if you can!)

Doubles are negative upto 4♥.

1 minor-1♥-double denies 4+♠ and

Shows about 6+hcp.

1 minor-1♠-double shows 4♥ and about 7+hcp.

(maybe 5+♥ if too weak to bid 2♥).