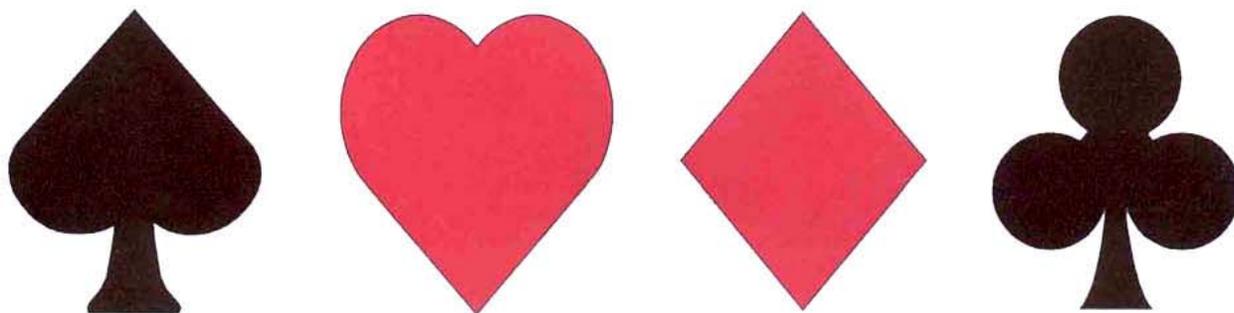


# ***FOUR-CARD MAJORS***



**WESTERN NATURAL  
UPDATED**

**THE BIDDING NOTEBOOK OF  
MARVIN L FRENCH**

## Foreword

It is easy to dismiss Marvin French as a crank or a curmudgeon or as the contrarian that he certainly was but this does not do justice to the man's life. Marvin was Life Master 1023<sup>1</sup> achieving the rank in 1956, "when it was hard" as he liked to say. This was not a boast, just a fact not well understood by many who started playing later, particularly after the great masterpoint inflation that kicked off shortly into the new millennium. Marvin was a force on the west coast bridge scene. Local San Diego Diamond LM, Anne Terry, never one to withhold an opinion positive or negative, called Marvin the "best of the best." D22 Director, Ken Monzingo said, "Like him or not, he was a unique man. A leader, not a follower. A brilliant man of honesty and integrity."

Marvin made significant contributions to bridge literature and less known contributions to bidding theory. He was a contributor to [\*Bridge World\*](#), *Popular Bridge* (published in the 1960s and 1970s), and the D22 [\*Contract Bridge Forum\*](#), and editor for the latter prior to Joel Hoersch. For many years Marvin maintained his own website where he posted his writings on bridge, blackjack, and literature. His 90 page [\*Squeeze Refresher\*](#) (*For Good Players*) is undoubtedly the best reference that is available for free.

Sometime in 2011 I got to know Marvin better because we started exchanging e-mail on various bridge topics in part because I had been reading his website and had taken some interest in his discussion of [\*four card vs. five card majors\*](#). We almost played a double session at the 2012 San Diego regional. Roger Zellmer, one of Marvin's regular bridge

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<sup>1</sup> A pleasing and easy to remember number for all conversant in binary.

partners and long-time blackjack sidekick suggested I had saved myself some grief but I have come to regret not partnering once with Marvin.

I told Marvin that I had vacuumed up a copy of Evan Bailey's website shortly after Evan's death in order to preserve it. Marvin thought that was cool and hoped I would do the same when he "kicked the bucket". When Marvin's webhosting contract ran out in 2015, I re-hosted his website under the La Jolla Unit website.

Marvin railed against the proliferation of bidding conventions arguing that, "It's a card game after all. First, learn how to play cards." And yet paradoxically he dedicated a lot of time to documenting no fewer than three bidding systems. His [Skeleton System](#) was very basic, designed to focus the partnership on card play rather than system memorization. By using weak (12-15 HCP) notrump bids, it even excludes Stayman. His [AmBIGuous Diamond](#) system was designed for matchpoint competition. The present document, *Four-Card Majors: Western Natural Updated* was Marvin's bidding handbook.

Marvin never bought into the transition to five card majors, either in the form we call Standard American today or the now popular Two-Over-One Game Force (2/1). The title of this handbook, *Four-Card Majors: Western Natural Updated*, appears to be a challenge to 2/1 issued in response to *Five Card Majors: Western Style* (1975), Max Hardy's first attempt to popularize the ideas of Dick Walsh that laid the foundation for 2/1.

Should anyone care about four card majors inasmuch as they have been consigned to the dustbin of history? On technical merits, I don't think they can be readily dismissed. Mike Lawrence, an expert and author of many key bidding books, has stated that four card and five card majors are comparable for bidding partials and games. He argued in part that the

occasional 4-3 major suit fit reached by four card major bidders was compensated by the fact that some of these Moysian fits were the best contract and perhaps more importantly that the four card major bid regularly picked off the opponent's major suit fit. Only for slam bidding did Mr. Lawrence feel five card majors were clearly superior.

My opinion is that five card majors have prevailed in part because they are easier to teach and that the 2/1 variety is arguably easier yet to teach. Players march right into their 6-2, 5-3, 4-4, and 2-6 major suit fits and fly low into many two level 5-2 major suit fits. The New Minor Forcing convention handles the 3-5 ugly duckling often enough. The system bid is usually clear. Four card majors by contrast require good judgment. There are often multiple choices and suit quality matters more when you might find yourself playing in a 4-3 fit. This didn't trouble Marvin—he had fine judgment and wasn't interested in teaching, holding the philosophy that those who can do and those who can't teach.

Easier bidding systems allow the mediocre player to advance further much as a larger racquetball racket allows the beginner to return more shots. And yet the sweet spot on the large racket is no bigger than on the smaller racket. A good opponent will take excellent advantage of a shot returned poorly from the edge of a big racket. At some level, the large racket not only provides no advantage but in fact is a hindrance as it weighs more and reduces dexterity. And so it proves at bridge. To beat the best you need to improve the size of your sweet spot, your bidding judgment.

The same might be said about defensive judgment. Marvin's first rule of defensive carding was "trick preservation" by which he meant do not signal with a card that might be too valuable. Signaling is all well and good and does get the beginner off to a good start but it takes more experience, judgment if you will, to know when not to signal. I prefer a

partner who knows what is going on in the defense because it provides many opportunities to mislead declarer.

I encourage you to expand your bidding judgment by giving four card majors a go. If nothing else, you will surely generate some interesting swings. Combining four card majors with a weak notrump and decent card play may be enough to throw even an expert team for a loop, much as Marvin said in his essay [\*Beating the Experts\*](#). Long live four-card majors!

Matthew Kidd

San Diego, July 2015

## INTRODUCTION

This is not a book--it's a handbook, used to document the bidding understandings I might want to have (if I could remember them), so it does not represent the agreements of any my partnerships. Many of the sections of the notebook are sketchy notes that assume the reader has an extensive knowledge of bidding. Other sections, many of which were written for publication, give a fuller exposition.

This notebook is constantly changing as new ideas come in, errors get corrected, improvements are made, and excess baggage is removed. The reader's help is solicited in this effort.

The basis for the bidding system used in the notebook is the old Culbertson system, which features natural bidding with non-forcing sequences. If in doubt, it isn't forcing. Also, the emphasis is on bidding suits, not distribution. AKQ3 is not given equal standing with 7642, as in so many modern bidding systems.

There are many new gadgets that Culbertson would not like, I imagine. I have adopted them only in self-defense, not because I like gadgets.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Adequate trump support (for a raise of partner's one level opening or response) - Four small cards, J10x, or better. Raises must often be given with worse three-card support, especially in competition.

Advancer - Partner of an overcaller or takeout doubler

Biddable suit - Q10xx or better. It is often necessary to bid an "unbiddable" suit, however.

Control - Ace is two controls, king is one.

Forcing to a limit situation - A call that forces the partnership to keep bidding until one of the following situations is reached:

- A cue bidder's partner ("replier") rebids his own suit minimally or the cue bidder rebids his own minor suit minimally.
- Either cue bidder or replier raises partner's last suit bid.
- A cue bidder bids the same suit twice in a row, after the cue bid.
- Game is reached.
- A suitable penalty double is imposed on the opponents.
- Either partner bids notrump, thereby limiting his hand. (Exception: a cue bidder may not pass a 2NT reply by a partner who has not previously acted--and a double/redouble is an "act").
- The person who made the force has inferentially given partner a final chance to show any values.

For a further discussion of all these situations, see page 10-1-2.

Free Bid - A bid made when partner will have another chance to call. Free bids with really minimum hands are frowned upon at IMP scoring or when vulnerable, but raises (even jump raises) may be quite weak over an opponent's takeout double.

HCP - High card points, 4-3-2-1 point count, excluding distributional or long suit points.

IMP - International Matchpoint

Key Card - There are five key cards: the four aces and the king of the presumed trump suit. If in doubt, the last suit named is "presumed" for this purpose, but of course not if it was a cue bid..

LHO - Left hand opponent

Notrumper cue bid - A cue bid by a person who has bid notrump strongly. Not ace-showing, it shows the suit in which it would be least desirable for partner to be short. See section 10-11.

Rebiddable suit - QJ9xx or better. It is often necessary to rebid worse suits, but only when there is no good alternative. Conversely, it is not necessary to rebid a rebiddable suit if another bid will describe the hand better.

RHO - Right hand opponent

RKCB - Roman Key Card Blackwood

## GENERAL BIDDING PRINCIPLES

1) When one partner makes a single jump to game in a suit when a non-jump bid would be forcing, he implies good strength in the partnership's bid suit(s) and no controls elsewhere. Also, the jumper's hand should be at least somewhat better than has been promised up to the time of the jump. If all partner needs for slam is good suit quality in the jumper's suit(s), s/he can go on to slam.

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣
2NT	3♠ - forcing
	4♠ - good spades and clubs

Responder might have ♠KJxx ♥xx ♦xx ♣AKQxx for the 4♠ bid. If the queen of clubs were a small card, she would bid 3♠, not 4♠, which encourages further bidding. The 4♠ bid would permit opener to bid slam with ♠AQxx ♥Axx ♦Axx ♣Jxx, while he would pass with a better hand that lacks first or second round control of an unbid suit: ♠AQxxx ♥QJx ♦AQJ ♣xx. The lesser bid does not deny good strength, however. Responder would bid just 3♠ (forcing) with ♠Jxxx ♥Kx ♦Kx ♣AQxxx, for two reasons: the spades are not strong and the hand has strength outside of clubs and spades.

Note that this principle applies only when a lesser bid would be forcing. Otherwise the jump merely describes overall strength:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
2♥	2♠ - weak preference
	3♥/3♠ non-forcing raises
	4♥/4♠ - too good for 3♥/3♠

2) When either partner has redoubled during an auction in which both have participated, a subsequent double by either partner is a business double:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Rdbl	2♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl - business double	

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
	Dbl - business double		

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	2♣	Pass	Pass
	Dbl - takeout double		

The last double is for takeout because North has not yet participated in the auction.

3) The bidding of three suits, including a jump, promises a singleton or void in the fourth suit, but there are two exceptions: (1) this does not apply after a Fourth Suit Artificial bid, and (2) when the last bid is a raise of partner's suit, and partner has bid and rebid just one suit, the raise *denies* a singleton or void:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	3♣
3♥	4♥

The 4♥ bid denies a singleton or void in diamonds, with which a 4♦ call would be made instead. See section 4-6, Non-Jump Splinters.

4) When a notrump probe gets doubled, a redouble by the next hand does *not* show strength in the doubled suit--it asks that partner bid notrump:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Dbl	Rdbl	

North has ♠92 ♥A43 ♦AQ964 ♣J54. She redoubles to indicate that she would have bid 3NT if there had been no double. South should play the hand, so that his spade strength (Kxx?) won't be led through on the opening lead. With the major suit holdings reversed, North would pass over the double, despite the ace of spades, because she lacks a heart stopper. This redouble must be Alerted. Note that this applies only to a probable notrump probe, not to doubles of other bids, artificial or natural.

5) When an opponent redoubles a takeout double (or a double that is primarily for takeout) of a suit bid, and the suit is one that *only that opponent* has bid, a pass over the redouble is for penalties. The passer wants to defend against the redoubled contract:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Rdbl	Pass	

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass		

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass		

In all three sequences, the pass over the redouble indicates a willingness to defend against the redoubled contract. Passes of all "SOS" redoubles are for penalties. Marshal Miles put it simply: "Whenever a penalty pass would not be improbable, the pass has that meaning even over a redouble."

When the suit has been bid by both opponents, however, or the redouble is made by the opponent who did *not* bid the suit, a pass over a redouble is non-committal:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass

In both sequences, East's pass does not show a willingness to defend against the redoubled bid. It merely says that she has nothing worth showing at this time.

When the double is for business (or more business than takeout), a pass over any redouble shows a willingness (or resignation) to defend:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
Dbl	Rdbl	Pass	- willing to defend

6) Immediate redoubles are not "S. O. S." They usually show a very strong hand, and tell partner not to be intimidated by the double:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	Dbl	Rdbl

If North's double is for business, East's redouble says that he expects 2♣ to make and does not want West to run. A pass by South at this point is non-committal if the double is negative, since the redouble is made by the opponent who did not bid the suit.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl			

South has a strong hand with good clubs; the redouble is not a rescue request, although it does encourage North to bid if he has anything worth showing.

*Reopening* redoubles (after two passes) ask for a rescue, but only at low levels, and only if partner has not participated in the auction:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Rdbl			

South wants to be rescued from 1♣ redoubled.

There is one situation when a redouble is S. O. S. even though both partners have participated in the auction: A responder to a takeout double may ask to be rescued after a minimum forced response:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣

Dbl Pass Pass Rdbl

East no doubt has made a "weakness response" in clubs and wants to be rescued. She might have ♠72 ♥7632 ♦J873 ♣J76. If 2♣ had been a free bid (e.g., over a redouble by North), then the redouble would be to play.

7) When partner uses an artificial bid (e.g., unusual notrump, cue bid) to ask for a choice between two suits, and you have equal length--choose the lower ranking suit. With a doubtful unusual notrump, holding longer clubs than diamonds, it is good to know that partner will prefer clubs with equal length. The corollary is that when partner bids two suits naturally, you usually prefer the first bid suit with equal length (but there are many exceptions). Another corollary is that with 5=4 or 6=5 suits you should try to *bid* both suits rather than show them in some conventional way, as you would want to do with 4=5 or 5=6.

8) When an opposing *voluntary* bid has been raised immediately to the two or three level, all doubles are negative, not business, unless notrump has been bid by your side:

South	West	North	East
1♠	1NT	2♠	Dbl - penalty, because of the notrump bid

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	Dbl - takeout

In the second case East's double is for takeout, showing the red suits (Advancive Double).

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	1♠	2♥
Dbl			

South has too much to pass, and doesn't know what to bid: ♠32 ♥98 ♦AQJ3 ♣AKJ82. The double asks North to bid again.

However:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♠
2♣	2♠	Dbl - business (1♠ a forced bid)	

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	Pass
Pass	2♠	3♣	Dbl - business double

North's raise to 3♣ was not "immediate." See section 9-2, Competitive Doubles.

Another exception: When a takeout doubler of one major later doubles a raised bid in the other major, he is exposing a probable psych:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	1♠	Pass
2♠		Dbl - business double	

If the doubled opening had been in a minor, say 1♣, the second double would be for takeout (e.g., a very strong 3=4=5=1 hand).

9) You can't double an overcall at the one or two level for business if the suit is bid on your left, unless partner has bid notrump:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♦
Pass	Pass	Dbl - for takeout (5=4=1=3?)	

A double of 2♦ by South would have been for business (suit bid on the right).

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♠	Pass	Pass
	Dbl - for takeout (balancing, with partner silent)		

This is the only exception to the rule that doubles are for penalty if one's side has bid notrump.

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	Pass	2♠
	Dbl - for business (direct double)		

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	Dbl - business	

The last double is for business because North's partner has bid notrump. With 4-4 in the majors North could bid 2♥, having denied five hearts with the first pass. Such a major-suit balancing bid should promise four cards in the next higher suit, so this would imply four spades also.

10) Whenever your side has opened the bidding and an opponent doubles (for business) a completely artificial bid (i.e., a bid that implies absolutely nothing about that suit, which excludes notrump probes, splinter bids, and cue bids), a redouble shows at least one stopper in that suit, a notrump bid shows a double stopper, a suit bid is non-committal, and a pass implies no stopper.

If partner has bid notrump strongly, the redouble of an artificial bid is okay with only a potential stopper (e.g., Qx, Jxx). The assumption is that a person who has shown a good notrump hand probably has at least a little something in the doubled suit, making the "potential" as good as actual.

These rules do not apply to doubles of Stayman 2♣/3♣ or to 2♦/3♦ responses to Stayman after an opening notrump. Doubles of these bids require a different treatment. See section 5-3, When the Opponents Intervene vs 1NT.

The principle does not apply in these situations either:

-- When a Blackwood or Gerber bid (or response) is doubled. See section 6-6, Blackwood, and section 6-9, Gerber.

-- Double of a Fourth Suit Artificial bid. See section 4-10, Fourth Suit Artificial.

-- Double of an artificial bid during Checkback Stayman sequences. See section 4-8, Checkback Stayman by Opener, and section 4-9, Checkback Stayman by Responder.

11) Whenever a 4NT bid would be a natural raise in notrump and a suit has not been bid previously, a bid of 4♠ is an artificial notrump raise. Otherwise it is sometimes Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB), sometimes natural, as described in the notrump bidding sections.

— The 4♠ notrump raise is a weaker raise than 4NT.

Opener	Responder
1NT/2NT/3NT	4♠ - mild interest in slam 4NT - strong interest in slam

The 4♠ response to 1NT (16-18 HCP) implies 15 HCP, while 4NT implies 16 HCP. However, the 4♠ raise can be used when there is a potential grand slam. That is, a player may plan on bidding 6NT if partner bids 4NT, but 7NT if he bids 6NT.

The 4♠ notrump raise is especially valuable after a 2NT or 3NT overcall, both of which (especially 3NT) are wide-range bids. See section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

The conventional four-level bids do not apply when a 2NT responder rebids at the four level after opener raises to 3NT:

Opener	Responder
1♣	2NT
3NT	4♠ - Five spades, 19-20 HCP 4NT - 19-20 HCP

12) When a splinter bidder follows with a 4NT bid on his very next turn to bid, that is Exclusion Blackwood. Partner does not show the ace of the splinter suit, because the 4NT bidder is void in that suit.

13) When competing at a high level, it is a stronger action to make a forcing pass and then pull partner's double than to bid immediately. With a strong hand you won't look unethical when you pull a double that partner has made after long thought. Another reason is that you may want to bid slam if partner bids, but stop at five if he doubles. Besides, why not bid right away with the weaker hand instead of letting partner agonize over a meaningless decision?

Note that this policy does not apply to non-forcing passes. Pulling a double after a non-forcing pass is a weak action.

If the double is pulled to a new suit, that is a cue bid:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	2♦	3♠
4♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	5♣ - cue bid, not a suit	

North's pull of the double after his forcing pass shows interest in slam. In order to bid clubs naturally, North would have to bid clubs immediately over 4♠:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	2♦	3♠
4♥	4♠	5♣ - natural, not a cue bid	

A player who doubles in the direct position instead of making a forcing pass is strongly suggesting that partner not go on. A reopening double is more optional.

14) When is a pass forcing? At least in these cases:

-- When either partner has previously made a bid that is forcing to game (but is not a game bid itself):

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2NT	3♥
Pass - forcing			

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	4♥	4♠
Pass - not forcing			

-- When either partner has made a strong (not preemptive) raise to game:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
4♥	4♠	Pass - forcing	

-- When a bid has been made that is forcing to a limit situation.

When is a pass not forcing? At least in these cases:

-- Following a limit raise, when opener has not made a particularly strong rebid.

-- When either partner has made a game bid that may be speculative or preemptive (i.e., the bid was not preceded by any strong call from either partner):

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♥	3♠
4♥	Pass	Pass	4♠
Pass - not forcing			

-- When the passer has previously limited his hand (e.g., by a notrump bid):

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♠	4♥
Pass - not forcing			

-- A player who has shown nothing and who may have nothing cannot make a forcing pass and cannot be subjected to a forcing pass. A direct double by such a player suggests only "cards," not a particular desire that partner stop bidding, and a pass is neither forcing nor invitational:

South	West	North	East
1♥	4♣	Pass	Pass
4♥	5♣	Pass - not forcing, weak	
Dbl - shows cards			

North's "cards" cannot be too impressive, in view of his pass to 4♣, but his double is not a warning for partner to stop bidding.

South	West	North	East
1♥	4♠	Pass	Pass
5♥	Pass	Pass	5♠
Pass - not forcing			

15) Whenever first seat has opened with one of a suit, and third hand has bid a new suit, a bid by fourth hand of opener's suit is natural and non-forcing. An exception may occur when RHO bids a new suit over partner's 1NT overcall. See section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥/Pass	1♠	2♣ - not forcing

If North had passed, the only way East could show a long club suit is by jumping to 3♣, not forcing. Bidding 2♣ and then 3♣ does not show a club suit. See section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids.

16) When an opposing takeout double has been left in, a redouble by opener is "SOS," asking for a rescue bid.

17) After a non-vulnerable limit raise, the raiser must not sell out to an opposing bid if a second raise is just one level higher than the first, unless his hand has worsened because of secondary strength in a suit bid over him.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	3♥	3♠
Pass	Pass	?	

North thought that his side could take nine tricks in a heart contract. If vulnerable, he has to pass, as he can't risk -200 against an opposing 140. If not vulnerable he must either bid 4♥ or double, as South's pass is semi-forcing. However, with, say, Kx of spades, he can judge that 4♥ would be likely to go -300, making a pass sensible.

## IMP VS MATCHPOINT BIDDING

	<u>IMPs</u>	<u>MATCHPOINTS</u>
Weak notrump - fourth seat only	No	Yes
Against weak notrump, double of a two level runout bid (after a business double - see section 12-3)	Major suit Minor suit	Takeout Penalty Penalty
4NT overcall of 4♣ or 4♦ opening (when 4♣/4♦ is a natural bid)	Blackwood	Natural
South West North East 3♥/3♠ 4♣/4♦ Pass 4NT	Blackwood	Natural
South West North East 4♣/4♦ Dbl Pass 4NT	Blackwood	Natural
South West North East 1NT 2♣ 3♥/3♠	Forcing	Invitational
Simple free bids opp 1NT opening	Invitational	Competitive
Boland Convention	See section 5-6	
Double of 3NT after opening the bidding with one of a suit (see section 9-4)	Asks for the suit to be led	Asks for <i>another</i> suit
Marvelous 2♦ - 1st/2nd seat	Yes	No
Marvin 2♦ - (Section 6-2) (weak 2♥, strong 2♠, or 21-22 HCP notrump hand with a five-card suit)	If legal 3rd/4th seat	If legal All seats
Marvin 2♥ (weak 2♠ or strong 2♥ or 23-24 HCP NT, Section 6 -3)	Whenever permitted	
Marvin 2♠ (seven-card minor, Section 7-5)	With Marvin 2♥ only	

## WHAT IS AN OPENING BID?

The requirements for an opening bid of one in a suit are a matter of personal preference for natural bidders. Some will open light, some will not--it is not a matter of system. In my experience, however, the super-light opening with trashy suits does not work out well in a system of natural bidding. It seems like a contradiction of the word "natural" to open the bidding with a weak hand and a suit like J842. The opening lead benefits that normally arise from natural bidding are undermined by such openings, and it is difficult for partner to judge many hands when he must allow for both a bad hand and a bad suit.

Light opening bids with balanced hands have an affect on other bids, too. The 1NT rebid range must be reduced to 12-14 HCP, leading to a 15-17 HCP notrump opening, an 18-19 HCP jump rebid of 2NT, and a 20-21 HCP 2NT opening. The last three range changes are overbids that often lead to a bad result.

The sort of light openings that work well with natural bidding are those based on good suits, especially good major suits, and distributional strength. It is easy to stop bidding in this system, even after a two-over-one response. Other systems find it difficult to stop at a low level after a two-over-one response, because their bidding sequences roll along with a momentum that is difficult to brake. That is why some players will pass with a promising hand such as ♠AQ1097 ♥KJ87 ♦3 ♣942, but will open 1♣ with a worthless collection such as ♠Q87 ♥Q83 ♦AK2 ♣J642, hoping they can slow things down by rebidding 1NT.

We often hear statements of this sort in the duplicate club: "I open all twelve (or eleven!) point hands." No qualifications, no exceptions, just a flat statement that shows an abysmal ignorance of what bidding is all about. It also reveals a pathetic dependence on the 4-3-2-1 point count, a notrump evaluation system that must be all fudged up with "adjustments" to have any validity in suit bidding (for which a 3-2-1-1/2 count would be more accurate).

All bridge writers are agreed on this subject of hand evaluation with the 4-3-2-1 count, but there are many otherwise fine bridge players who will or will not make a certain call because they have or have not the point count prescribed for that call (e.g., a Precision 1♣ opening requiring 16 HCP). They give no consideration to the fact that honors are worth more in combination with other honors than when standing alone, or that it is better to have high cards in long suits rather than in short suits. Wasn't it Culbertson who accused such people of knowing "the price of everything and the value of nothing"?

Instead of making categorical statements about the point count requirements for an opening bid, bidders should vary their minimum point count for opening in accordance with these considerations:

-- Opening lead support. If you can open the bidding with a suit headed by AK or KQJ, there is good reason to stretch for an opening bid, especially in a matchpoint game.

-- Suit solidity (e.g., QJ1097) provides a measure of safety for the light opener. A suit like Q8642 is not likely to provide a haven in a storm of doubling.

-- Major suit holdings are important. With 5-5 or 5-4 in the majors you have a better chance of reaching a reasonable but light game or of outbidding the opponents. Light minor suit openings do not have such potential.

-- Major suit openings have preemptive value. The opponents must usually come in at the two level, and may not be able to come in at all when the hand actually belongs to them.

-- The quality of the opposition is a consideration. This factor must not be over-emphasized, because even bad players can take tricks if they have lots of high cards. The main advantage arises from the fact that weak bidders have a difficult time when the other side opens the bidding. They can manage well enough when their side opens, but they do not have the skill or judgment required for accuracy in overcalling, doubling for takeout, and other defensive actions. Also, they defend poorly.

-- Partner's tendencies and skill must be taken into account. To open the bidding light opposite an aggressive or unskilled partner is bad strategy.

-- Ease of rebid often enters into the opening bid decision. If there is a fair chance that you will have to make a bad rebid, it is better to pass a doubtful hand. A 1♠ response leaves you in a poor position when you have opened 1♣ with ♠3 ♥Q873 ♦AK5 ♣Q8762. It is better to pass such a hand.

-- Honors in combination are worth more than isolated honors. Pass with ♠Q62 ♥K8763 ♦K54 ♣A5, but open 1♥ with ♠863 ♥KQ763 ♦AK5 ♣42.

-- It is better to have high cards in long suits than in short suits. Pass with ♠AQ ♥1087632 ♦A3 ♣543, open 1♥ with ♠76 ♥AQ10632 ♦A3 ♣543.

-- Vulnerability can be a factor, especially in an IMP or total point game. Not vulnerable open 1♥ with ♠3 ♥Q8762 ♦KJ7 ♣AQ83, but such an opening could result in a large adverse swing when vulnerable.

-- Light openings of one in a suit in first or second seat with a defensive sort of hand (e.g., ♠AJ ♥Q932 ♦Q975 ♣A109) are best made when no one is vulnerable. Going down two tricks (or one doubled) may be okay, while passing and beating the opponents two tricks (or one doubled) may not be okay. Going down two (or one doubled) when vulnerable is not okay, while passing and beating them two tricks (or one doubled) when they are vulnerable is okay, so tend to pass this sort of doubtful hand when either side is vulnerable. Besides, a 1♥ bid is unappetizing with the example hand. If playing weak notrumps, a 1NT bid describes the hand so well that it should not be eschewed at any vulnerability.

-- It is often better to pass a marginal opening with 4-4-4-1 distribution. Such hands are difficult to describe after opening, but are perfect for a takeout double if the opposing side bids the singleton suit. If the opposing side bids one or more of the four-card suits, it is likely that either side is going to get bad breaks in a suit contract (or languish in a misfit). Better them than you!

-- An opening hand in any seat should include at least two defensive tricks (QJ=1/2, K=1/2, A=1, KQ=1, AK=2).

## CHOICE OF SUIT

When your distribution is:

4-3-3-3

If the four-card suit is clubs, open 1♣. Otherwise, open the four-card suit only if it is a good suit and the hand has no rebid problem. With ♠K63 ♥AQ85 ♦986 ♣KQJ open 1♥, raise a 2♣ response, and rebid 2NT if partner responds 2♦. Raise a 1♠ response rather than rebid 1NT, choosing the stronger rebid because of the 15 HCP. If the hearts were weaker, or the hand weaker, a 1♣ opening would be correct.

If the four-card suit is diamonds, a 1♦ opening is usually right, but if the diamonds are weak and the clubs strong, a 1♣ opening is preferable when the hand is minimum. After opening 1♦ with a minimum such as ♠Axx ♥Kxx ♦AQ10x ♣xxx, the rebid has to be 2♦ if partner responds 2♣, since a 2NT rebid requires more strength. That is why a 1♣ opening is preferable with ♠Axx ♥Kxx ♦10xxx ♣AQx.

Sometimes a three-card diamond suit may be opened: ♠Q874 ♥AQJ ♦KQJ ♣983. The spades are weak, and it is unwise to open 1♣ with a suit weaker than Qxx (which is bad enough). After opening 1♦, the hand is good enough for a 2NT rebid if the response is 2♣. Substitute a small card for the Queen of spades and you have a real problem. What to do? Just pass! Thirteen HCP do not always make for a mandatory opening. Or you can open 1♦ with the plan of rebidding 2♦ if partner bids 2♣. Better to lie about a suit than lie about the strength of the whole hand, as Goren used to say.

4-4-3-2

Open the higher ranking of touching suits, but with both minors a 1♣ opening is sometimes preferable if the diamonds are weak and the clubs strong. For this purpose spades-clubs are not treated as "touching."

With four spades and four diamonds it is usual to open the suit below the short suit (spades are "below" clubs): Bid 1♠ with ♠AK43 ♥1075 ♦A943 ♣K2. Raise a 2♥ or 2♦ response, rebid 2♦ over a 2♣ response, pass 1NT. With the hearts and clubs reversed, however, open 1♦. If partner bids 2♣ you can make a stretched 2NT rebid (not 2♠!). With some hands it may be necessary to rebid a four-card diamond suit with a minimum hand (e.g., ♠AQ102 ♥83 ♦AQ103 ♣432).

With weak spade-diamond suits and a strong three-card club holding, a 1♣ opening is the least of evils: ♠J852 ♥KQ ♦J653 ♣AK3. You must rebid 1NT after a 1♥ response, however, to avoid the trap of a jump preference in clubs after a 1♠ rebid (which you would have to pass with this minimum). The rule is this: If you open a minimum hand with a three-card suit, you must not rebid one of a suit. Why? Because responder's invitational jump in the three-card suit must be passed with a minimum hand. Using Checkback Stayman (see section 4-8, Checkback Stayman by Responder), a 3♣ jump rebid by responder is forcing after opener's 1NT rebid, so the three-card club suit is not a problem in that sequence.

With four hearts and four clubs the usual call is 1♣, but there are exceptions. With ♠84 ♥AKJ2 ♦1043 ♣AK85 open 1♥ and raise a response in either minor. If you open 1♣ and the response is 1♠, you lack the 4-5 distribution implied by a 2♥ reverse, and a 1NT rebid is undesirable with this suit-oriented hand. In addition you hide the best feature of the hand: a strong four-card heart suit.

With 4-4 in the majors the general rule is to open 1♠, but if the spades are weak it is usually better to find another call:

1) ♠Q832 ♥AK104 ♦A3 ♣Q32

2) ♠J853 ♥Q874 ♦AQ ♣KQ3

3) ♠10873 ♥K1084 ♦KQJ ♣A4

With hand 1) open 1♥, rebid 2NT after a minor suit response. With a weaker hand it may be necessary to rebid a strong four-card heart suit. To avoid that, don't open a light hand of this type with 1♥ unless the hearts are strong.

With hand 2) open 1♣, rebid 1NT after a 1♦ response. A one-over-one rebid of 1♥ promises at least four clubs, or a stronger hand. Why? Because an invitational jump to 3♣ must be passed with a minimum hand. Change the queen of diamonds to the king and a 1♥ rebid is okay because over 3♣ you can bid 3NT.

With hand 3) open 1♥ (or pass), bid 2♦ (!) after a 2♣ response.

4-4-4-1

These hands require judgment. The usual practice is to open the suit below the singleton, but there are plenty of exceptions. If that suit is "unbiddable," open the next lower biddable suit, but a weak club suit is okay:

1) ♠AKJ8 ♥J932 ♦A943 ♣6

2) ♠J932 ♥AKJ8 ♦A943 ♣6

3) ♠J932 ♥Q943 ♦AKQ4 ♣6

4) ♠A943 ♥6 ♦J932 ♣AKJ8

5) ♠AKJ8 ♥A943 ♦3 ♣J932

With hand 1) open 1♠, the suit "below" the singleton.

With hand 2) open 1♥.

With hand 3) open 1♦, rebid 2♦ after a 2♣ response.

With hand 4) and 5), open 1♣.

It is often better to pass light hands of this shape, which are difficult to describe after opening. If the opposing side bids the singleton, a takeout double will describe the hand perfectly. If they bid other suits, they may end up in a misfit.

5-4-3-1 or 5-4-2-2

The five-card suit is usually opened, but there are certain minimum hands that require opening the four-card suit, especially when the five-card suit is weak.

First, when the suits are touching and the lower ranking is a weak five-card suit, open the four-card suit if it is strong:

1) ♠AKJ3 ♥Q8764 ♦K76 ♣3

2) ♠K1032 ♥AQJ87 ♦Q76 ♣3

With hand 1) open 1♠, but open 1♥ with hand 2). Neither hand is strong enough for a reverse, so rebid 2♥ with hand 2) if the response is 2♣ or 2♦ (not strong enough for a diamond raise either). After a 1NT response a 2♥ rebid normally shows six, but it must be chanced (but pass 1NT with a 4=5=2=2 hand).

When the suits are not touching and the five-card suit is very weak, it is usually right to treat the five-carder as a four-card suit. Open 1♦ with ♠108643 ♥A ♦AKJ6 ♣976, planning to rebid 2♦ if partner bids 2♣. You wouldn't want to open 1♠ and then rebid 2♠ if the response is 2♥, and any other rebid is out of the question.

5-5

Generally open the higher ranking suit, but open 1♣ with strong clubs and weak spades: ♠Q8763 ♥K2 ♦8 ♣AK876. If the two suits are switched, open 1♠, planning to rebid 2♠ after a red suit response. If the hand is strong enough to rebid 3♣ after a red suit response, however, a 1♠ opening is okay when the spades are not strong: ♠Q8763 ♥AK ♦8 ♣AK876. If you open 1♣ it will be difficult to show the five-card spade length. Besides, a 1♠ opening has preemptive value.

With 5-5 in other suits, open the higher ranking of touching suits. With non-touching suits it is generally right to treat the higher ranking suit as a four-card suit if it is very weak. Open 1♣ with ♠A7 ♥107654 ♦5 ♣AKJ82, since a 2♦ response to 1♥ would be embarrassing. Change the clubs to diamonds, however, and a 1♥ opening would be right.

6-5

Open the longer suit generally, but if the suits are 5-6 and touching then the shorter suit should be opened if it is much stronger and the hand is minimum. Bid 1♠ with ♠AKJ83 ♥Q108742 ♦6 ♣9. If the nine of clubs were the ace the hand would have good values for a reverse, so a 1♥ opening would be correct.

### **Ignoring the Rules**

A new suit response by a passed hand is not forcing, so the rules for suit selection, which are mainly aimed at providing a convenient rebid, can be violated freely in third or fourth seat.

The rules can also be ignored when the hand strength is such that no forcing response will be inconvenient. Open 1♠ with ♠AK93 ♥65 ♦J765 ♣AQJ, because the hand is good enough to bid 2NT after a 2♥ response, or to raise a minor suit response. Avoid bidding bad suits (which include any three-card minor) with good hands.

## CHOICE OF SUIT SUMMARY

The following are generalizations about the proper action with various shapes, not to be taken too literally, especially by a passed hand. Avoid bidding a weak suit or a three-card suit if there is no likely rebid problem connected with bidding a better suit.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 4=3=3=3<br>3=4=3=3                       | With a near minimum or no biddable major, bid 1♣. With extras (i.e., 15 HCP), bid the four-card major unless it is weak.   |
| 3=3=4=3                                  | Open 1♦ unless the diamonds are weak and the clubs are strong.   |
| 4=4=2=3<br>4=4=3=2                       | Bid 1♠, unless the spades are weak.  |
| 4=3=4=2                                  | Bid 1♠, unless the spades are weak.  |
| 4=2=4=3                                  | Bid 1♦, sometimes 1♣ (weak diamonds, strong clubs).  |
| 4=2=3=4<br>4=3=2=4                       | Bid 1♣.  |
| 3=4=4=2<br>2=4=4=3                       | Bid 1♥ unless the hearts are weak.   |
| 3=4=2=4<br>2=4=3=4                       | Bid 1♣.  |
| 3=2=4=4<br>2=3=4=4                       | Bid 1♦ unless the diamonds are weak.   |
| 4=4=4=1<br>4=4=1=4<br>4=1=4=4<br>1=4=4=4 | Bid 1♠ if spades are biddable, otherwise 1♥ if hearts are biddable, otherwise 1♦.<br>Bid 1♣, always.<br>Bid 1♦ if diamonds are biddable, otherwise 1♣.<br>Bid 1♥ if hearts are biddable, otherwise 1♦.     |
| 4=5                                      | If touching suits, bid the five-card suit if the hand is strong enough to reverse, or if the suit is strong. With a strong four-card suit and weak five, treat them as equals and open the four-card suit. |
| 5-5                                      | Bid the higher ranking suit, but with weak spades and a weak to moderate hand, bid 1♣ when 5-5 in the black suits. Bid 1♠ if either the hand or spades are strong.   |
| 5=6                                      | If touching and the hand lacks reversing values, bid the five-card suit if it is strong and the six-carder weak.   |

## THIRD SEAT OPENINGS

There are four reasons for opening light in third position:

- 1) To direct an opening lead
- 2) To crowd the opponents, interfering with their bidding
- 3) To put your side in a good position to compete for the hand
- 4) To prevent the hand from being passed out

A safety factor is that you usually don't have to rebid with a weak hand. Except for a 1♦ response to 1♣, you may pass any non-jump response, and may even pass a jump raise or jump to 2NT. This factor can affect your choice of suit even when the opening is full strength but minimum. With ♠AK83 ♥763 ♦KJ ♣Q842 you can open 1♠ instead of 1♣, because you can pass any two-level response. First or second seat you would open 1♣, of course, to provide a convenient rebid. The 1♠ bid in third (or fourth) seat is lead directing, preemptive, and safe.

A third seat opening in a weak four-card suit is to be avoided, even with a full opening bid. Bid 1♥ in first or second seat with ♠AJ ♥Q1065 ♦AQ108 ♣732, but 1♦ in third seat.

You can thus open some hands light, some hands differently, because partner's takeout can be passed. You do not open all 10-12 HCP hands, however. You need a reason to open, and an "out." With ♠AJ432 ♥6 ♦KJ3 ♣8754 you should pass in third seat. You have a reason to open, but no "out" if partner responds 2♥ or doubles a 2♥ overcall for business. If you must open, make it a weak two bid.

Similarly, with ♠42 ♥J8432 ♦KQ8 ♣KQJ you should pass in third seat. You will not be embarrassed by any response, but there is little reason to bid. You do not want a heart lead, and the hand has little merit. If you are straining for points, open 1♣ as a lead-directing tactic.

Examples of reasonable third seat openings:

- 1) ♦AKJ10 ♥832 ♦754 ♣Q65
- 2) ♠86532 ♥432 ♦J8 ♣AKQ
- 3) ♠A864 ♥KQ1076 ♦43 ♣J7
- 4) ♠AJ108 ♥95 ♦AJ106 ♣J83

Open hand 1) with 1♠, 2) with 1♣, 3) with 1♥, and 4) with 1♠. With 4) you choose spades over diamonds for preemptive reasons.

A passed hand may have to make a single or double raise of a major suit opening with less than normal trump support, which is another reason (other than lead direction) for not opening a weak four-card major in third position.

See section 4-12, Stoplight, which is a method of stopping at the three level when partner inelegantly responds 2NT to your weak distributional third-seat opening.

## FOURTH SEAT OPENINGS

In a duplicate game, you may open light in fourth position, but there is only one reason: to obtain a plus score rather than settle for a draw.

What are the requirements? Just this: a 51% chance or better of getting a plus score. With more than your share of high cards (10 HCP), or more than your share of major suit length, the chances of a plus score begin to outweigh those of a minus.

A hand with 11 HCP will often qualify for a fourth seat opening in a suit, but with a hand this weak you should have either 1) four or more spades, or 2) at least three cards in each major. With no spade suit, or few cards in the majors, the hand should be nearer to an opening bid. A full opening is rarely passed out, although one might pass a borderline hand with a singleton or void in spades.

Choice of suit will sometimes be a problem. With ♠KQ103 ♥J65 ♦AJ83 ♣64, you should open 1♦. In third seat 1♠ would be right, for both lead direction and preemptive reasons. In fourth seat these considerations are less important (both opponents having passed), and the main objective is to avoid getting too high. A 1♠ opening with this hand might provoke a dangerous jump raise or 2NT response from partner. After a 1♦ opening she is less likely to jump, and you can perhaps get out of the bidding at a low level by passing a major suit response. Of course you pass a 2♣ response.

Fairly strong opening preemptive openings are acceptable in fourth seat, since partner can't have much. Open 3♦ with ♠4 ♥63 ♦QJ109765 ♣AKQ, which is normally a 1♦ opening.

Fourth seat weak two bids need not adhere to the usual requirements for suit quality, but will be near-maximum for HCP, perhaps with opening-bid strength.

Fourth seat openings should be fairly decent in IMP or rubber bridge games, but you can open a little light with a good spade suit.

Also see section 5-1, Weak Notrump - Fourth Seat Only.

## ONE-OVER-ONE RESPONSES

### The One Notrump Response

A 1NT response requires at least 6 HCP, with a maximum of 9. Occasionally there is no alternative with a poor-looking 10 HCP, especially in a passed hand.

There is no need to stretch for a 1NT response in a matchpoint game when partner opens in a major suit in which you have three cards or a good doubleton. You would not be "improving" the contract by bidding, since you are already in an acceptable matchpoint contract. Pass a 1♠ opening with ♠873 ♥762 ♦A32 ♣Q643. At IMP scoring you might respond 1NT in case partner has a huge hand. At matchpoints the primary aim is to obtain a good part score, not to seek an unlikely game.

Goren's rule that a 1NT response to a 1♣ opening should show 8-10 HCP has very little merit. Holding 6-9 HCP and less than four cards in either major, prefer a 1NT response to 1♣ instead of a pointless 1♦ with a hand such as ♠Q87 ♥Q63 ♦K976 ♣964. The 1NT bid has preemptive value and describes the hand perfectly. Besides, you're going to rebid 1NT if partner rebids in a major. Why not bid it right away?

Avoid the 1NT response with a void or small singleton in partner's suit, and never bid 1NT with such a holding in a side suit. Better to pass or bid a weakish two-over-one.

A free 1NT response must be a little healthier than 6-7 HCP, but a double stopper in the opposing suit is worth an extra point or two.

### Response of One of a Suit

A suit response might contain less than 6 HCP. How much less depends on several factors. A good major suit like KJ987 is usually sufficient in itself for a response. Avoid bidding bad suits with bad hands. Partner may be leading your suit against an opposing contract, and it is important for partner to judge the partnership assets accurately when you are weak. He is likely to go wrong when you bid a bad suit with a bad hand.

Another consideration is the preemptive value of the response. At matchpoints a 1♠ response to 1♣ is often made with very weak hands when the vulnerability is favorable. The 1♠ response makes it more difficult for the opponents to enter the auction accurately, if they enter at all.

A free one-over-one response in a suit does not show extra values. It only implies that the hand is not sub-minimum, as it may be when bidding just to give partner a chance or to improve the contract.

### Biddable Suits

A biddable four-card suit is one headed by Q10 or better. Any five-card or longer suit is biddable. "Unbiddable" suits may be bid when there is no reasonable alternative. Avoid responding in an unbiddable heart suit when partner opens 1♦. He is unlikely to have four hearts unless he plans to reverse. You don't

want to play a trump suit of J654 opposite K32, or have partner lead from Kx into your Jxxx against an opposing contract.

The same reasoning holds for a 1♠ response to 1♥. Prefer a 1NT response with ♠J873 ♥983 ♦K86 ♣A84. If the alternative to bidding a weak suit is to bid 1NT with a short suit, however, prefer the suit response. If partner raises with three trumps you may be able to get a cross-ruff going. With a singleton honor in partner's suit the 1NT response is more acceptable. Respond 1NT to a 1♦ opening when you hold ♠K65 ♥8762 ♦Q ♣A7532.

With a good hand the dangers of bidding weak suits are somewhat lessened. You can investigate other denominations if partner raises, and he probably won't be on lead. Nevertheless, weak suits should still be avoided. Bidding a poor suit is a bad start for slam bidding, and is never helpful in assisting partner to judge his hand properly. He will downgrade a hand that includes a singleton in your suit, and will upgrade it with Qxx, neither of which is valid opposite 9632.

### Choice of Suit

When faced with a choice of suits at the one level, the classic rules are:

- Bid the longest suit first
- With two or more suits, bid the highest-ranking suit

The second rule is not in line with current "up-the-line" bidding practices. Too bad. And these rules are not absolute. The best course in bidding is not to follow some arbitrary rule religiously, but to just make the best bid. Lead direction will often play a part, as will preemptive considerations, when the hand is weak enough to suggest that the opponents may buy the hand.

A very strong four-card suit may be bid before a lower ranking five-card suit that is very weak, when they are touching suits and the hand is not worth a reverse. With ♠AKJ2 ♥108754 ♦3 ♣762 respond 1♠ to a 1♣ opening. If you bid 1♥ and partner rebids 1NT, you won't know what to do. After a 1♦ opening, a 1♥ response would not be so bad, since you could pass a 1NT rebid with less worry about the short suit.

Partner opens with 1♣ and you hold either of these hands:

1) ♠432 ♥Q543 ♦AKQ5 ♣84

2) ♠432 ♥Q543 ♦AK52 ♣Q4

Respond 1♥ with hand 1) and 1♦ with hand 2). If you bid 1♦ with hand 1) you will have no good continuation if opener rebids 2♣--a reverse would imply 4=5 distribution. Delete the queen of diamonds and the response is 1♦, planning to pass a 2♣ rebid. With hand 2) you can respond 1♦ because a 2♣ rebid can be raised to 3♣. The idea is that you must sometimes consider your next call as well as the current bid when choosing between four-card suits.

When the opening bid is 1♣, it is usually better to respond 1♥ than 1♠ with 4-4 in the majors. A 1♠ response could cause a 4-4 fit to be lost. This is certainly not an absolute rule. If the spades are very strong and the hearts very weak, it is better to bid 1♠. Remember that it is also possible to miss a 4-4 spade fit when opener raises a 1♥ response with three trumps. It is not correct for him to rebid 1♠ after a 1♥ response when he holds ♠Q963 ♥KJ7 ♦2 ♣AQ876. He will raise hearts because a spade bid followed by a heart raise on the next round would suggest a better hand, or stronger spades and weaker hearts.

When the opening bid is 1♦, lean toward bidding 1♠ with 4-4 in the majors and 10 HCP or less. Opener is unlikely to have four hearts unless he is planning to reverse, and you don't want him to give a three-card heart raise when he has four spades (often the correct rebid). If the spades are weak and the hearts strong, a 1♥ response may work out better.

With four spades and four diamonds respond 1♠ to a 1♣ opening if you won't mind being raised with three trumps. The 1♠ response is better with a hand such as ♠AQ103 ♥92 ♦Q1086 ♣742, because it is lead directing, preemptive (shutting out a 1♥ overcall), and shows the best feature of the hand at once--a strong major suit. Besides, opener might bypass a four-card spade holding and rebid 1NT with a 4=3=3=3 hand.

### **Raise Partner or Bid Something Else?**

The choice will often arise among raising partner's suit, bidding 1NT, or bidding one-over-one in a new suit. The 1NT response is preferable to a minor suit raise if the hand is suitable for notrump play. The raise of a major, on the other hand, is usually better than a 1NT response. With a "square" 4-3-3-3 hand the 1NT response may be preferred if the hand is weak, 6-7 HCP. With 8-9 HCP go ahead and raise with a square hand and adequate trump support. A 1NT response could result in a lost game if opener must rebid two of his suit but would have bid game opposite a raise. Also, a major suit raise is more preemptive than a 1NT response. When in doubt, rebid 1NT after opening a red suit, because responder could be 4=6 in major-clubs. If so, she can use Checkback Stayman (section 4-9) to avoid playing a Moysian (4-3) fit instead of a 6-3 or 6-2 club fit.

In general it is better to respond in a major rather than raise a minor, but there are many exceptions. With a weak hand, don't bid a four-card heart suit with good support for partner's diamonds: ♠83 ♥Q973 ♦KJ53 ♣652. Bid 2♦ in response to 1♦. Partner is unlikely to have four hearts, and you are going to bid 2♦ on the next round anyway. An immediate diamond raise will put partner in a better position to go to the three level if the opponents come in, something you could not do with this weak hand. Also, if partner ends up on lead you want diamonds led, not hearts. Lastly, the 2♦ raise may keep the opponents out of the bidding. Even if it doesn't, they will have to bid one level higher to come in, with a possible loss of bidding accuracy.

To a lesser extent, the same principle applies to a 1♦ opening when you have spades and diamonds, or to a 1♣ opening: With a weak hand, and especially with a weak major, generally prefer a four-card raise to a bid of the major.

When partner opens 1♥ there is often a problem of whether to raise hearts or show a spade suit. With 8-9 points, prefer the raise--even with five spades and three hearts: ♠A9873 ♥Q84 ♦62 ♣Q64. If you respond 1♠ and partner rebids 2♣, you would have to make a weak preference bid of 2♥ (which is not a raise). Opener would place you with a hand of this sort: ♠QJ653 ♥J4 ♦K874 ♣83 and might pass 2♥ when game could be made. He would pass, for instance, with ♠3 ♥A10876 ♦109 ♣AKJ75. With four spades and three-

card heart support, the 2♥ response is preferable even with 6-7 HCP, because a 1♠ response could lead to a 4-3 fit instead of a 5-3 fit when partner raises with three spades and five hearts. Besides, the 2♥ response has more preemptive value. These two factors just barely make up for the possible loss of a 4-4 spade fit.

All this leads to the following rebid meanings:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♥ is weak, five spades and three poor hearts
	3♥ is forcing, probably with three-card support
	4♥ implies four strong hearts, slam interest
	2♣ is Checkback Stayman (see section 4-9)

The 2♥ preference bid shows a hand like ♠Q8743 ♥986 ♦3 ♣K853. Opener can count on five spades, three poor hearts, and a weak hand. The jump to 4♥ implies strong hearts and spades, weakness in the minors: ♠AKQJx ♥KJxx ♦xx ♣xx. It shows mild interest in slam, so opener can bid six hearts with the right cards. Checkback Stayman is used prior to raising hearts with a game-invitational hand, while the jump raise is forcing to game.

## TWO-OVER-ONE RESPONSES

Requirements for a two-over-one response cannot be stated simply. To say that it requires 11 HCP or more is a straitjacket approach that does not work for natural bidders. In good bidding there are hands with less points that call for a two-over-one response. These are the hands with distributional features that make them unsuitable for a 1NT response. A two-over-one implies at least 1-1/2 defensive tricks, however.

Notrump is a desirable landing spot, especially at match points. You get more points for a given number of tricks, and game is scored with fewer tricks. Accordingly, partner will believe you when you bid notrump, and will tend to leave you in notrump, or raise you, if at all possible. You must therefore avoid bidding notrump with hands that are unsuitable for notrump play. Use a five-card major system with a forcing 1NT response if you want to bid notrump with suit-oriented hands.

With a hand like  $\spadesuit 3 \heartsuit 732 \clubsuit \text{AJ7632} \diamondsuit \text{K86}$ , respond  $2\clubsuit$  to a  $1\heartsuit$  opening. A two-over-one response does not promise another bid, so you can pass if partner rebids  $2\heartsuit$  or  $2\spadesuit$ .

Avoid bidding notrump with singletons, voids, 5-5 distribution, or a long suit. These features are desirable for suit play. Long suits are good for notrump, but only if they can be run. Bid your long suit and find out if partner fits your hand. A 1NT response is no help in finding a fit for a long suit.

Stretch a little to bid two-over-one after a  $1\heartsuit$  opening if your hand contains four or more hearts. A good heart contract might be missed if you respond 1NT and partner passes with 4-4 in the majors. With  $\spadesuit \text{K6} \heartsuit \text{J875} \clubsuit \text{83} \diamondsuit \text{KQ1093}$  respond  $2\clubsuit$  to a  $1\heartsuit$  opening. Partner may rebid  $2\heartsuit$ , and you can stand a  $2\spadesuit$  rebid. If your hearts and diamonds were reversed, a 1NT response would be preferable.

### One-Over-One or Two-Over-One?

With two (or more) suits and a choice of bidding at the one or two level:

-- If the longer suit can be shown at the one level, bid it.

-- If the longer suit must be shown at the two level, bid it only if the hand is worth a game try--11 points or more. If you will have to pass a minimum suit rebid by opener, prefer the one level response.

With  $\spadesuit 83 \heartsuit \text{KQ84} \clubsuit \text{76} \diamondsuit \text{KJ753}$  respond  $1\heartsuit$  to a  $1\clubsuit$  opening. Add the ace of diamonds and  $2\clubsuit$  is the correct bid, planning to bid hearts on the next round. It is wrong to bid  $1\heartsuit$  with the stronger hand in an attempt to "keep the bidding low." If partner rebids  $2\clubsuit$ , you would have to bid  $3\clubsuit$ . Result: the bidding is higher, not lower, and opener has no information as to the relative length of the two suits.

-- If the suits are of equal length a one-level response is usually preferable, but there are exceptions. With  $\spadesuit \text{AQ97} \heartsuit 73 \clubsuit \text{843} \diamondsuit \text{AK94}$  a  $2\clubsuit$  response to  $1\clubsuit$  is preferable to a  $1\heartsuit$  response. Suppose partner rebids  $2\clubsuit$ --then you bid  $2\heartsuit$ , aiming at a notrump contract. If partner then bids  $3\clubsuit$ , supposing you have five clubs, you can bid  $3\clubsuit$  (forcing). But suppose you respond  $1\heartsuit$  to  $1\clubsuit$ . The bidding might go:

Opener    Responder

1♠      1♥  
 2♠      3♥  
 3♥      Now what?

### Choice of Suit for Two-Over-One

When a two-over-one response is indicated, and there are two suits to choose from:

-- Bid the longer suit first, but count a very weak minor suit as having one card less in length. Treat ♠108753 as a four-card suit.

-- With equally long five or six-card suits, bid the higher ranking first. With touching 5=6 suits, a strong five-carder may be considered equal in length to a mediocre six-carder, especially with a weakish hand. Respond 2♥ to a 1♥ opening with ♠3 ♠AQ1097 ♠K107642 ♠8. With a stronger hand you could bid diamonds, then bid and rebid hearts, but this hand is not strong enough for that.

-- When choosing between four-card suits, do not choose hearts unless they are very strong (e.g., AKJ3, AQJ10). In a pinch opener can raise with three small hearts because you are supposed to have five. Also, he can jump to 4♥ with just three-card support. Can you bid a four-card heart suit with four of partner's spades and too much for a raise to 2♥? Only with a game-going hand. It is true that the hand will not play in hearts, but don't get trapped into this auction with a hand of just invitational strength:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♥
3♥	3♥ is forcing!

With ♠986 ♠AJ73 ♠574 ♠AQ9 respond 2♥ to a 1♥ opening. Partner will suppose you have a club suit, but you should be able to handle any development. If he raises clubs you can bid 3♥ (forcing) because he implies five spades and a good hand with that sequence.

In competition it is sometimes necessary to bid two-over-one with only a fair four-card heart suit when you are not playing negative doubles. What else can you do when partner opens 1♥, next hand bids 2♥, and you hold ♠J3 ♠AJ87 ♠873 ♠KJ97?

-- With two four-card minors it is often wise to bid the suit in which it would be undesirable for partner to have a singleton, when you don't plan to show both suits. Reason: partner will tend to devalue his hand when he has a singleton in your suit. Partner opens 1♥ and you have ♠J43 ♠Q5 ♠A1087 ♠KJ83. You have too much for 2♥ or 1NT, so you must bid a minor. Which? Bid 2♠, because that is the suit where a singleton would be undesirable in partner's hand. For instance, she could have ♠KQ9652 ♠A43 ♠Q65 ♠7. When you eventually raise her 2♥ rebid to 3♥, she will bid 4♥ if you responded 2♥ originally, and pass if you answered 2♠. This is an example of how natural bidders can help each other in hand evaluation.

Of course with a hand like this you have no choice: ♠J3 ♠765 ♠AKJ5 ♠KJ87. You must respond 2♥ to a 1♥ opening, to prepare for a rebid (3♥) if opener rebids 2♥. You would not want to reverse with a 4-4 holding in touching suits. It is only when you have a real choice that you can use judicial suit selection to assist partner.

### When RHO Overcalls in Notrump

-- If the notrump overcall is artificial, showing two suits (e.g., unusual notrump), see section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions.

-- If the overcall is natural, a two-over-one response is not forcing, a double is for business, all raises are preemptive, a jump to three of a new suit is invitational. A cue bid in notrump is unusual notrump, asking opener to choose between the lower two unbid suits:

South	West	North
1♠	1NT	Dbl - business
		2♠/2♥/2♣ - not forcing
		2♠/3♠ - weak, preemptive
		2NT - unusual notrump, clubs and hearts
		3♠/3♥/3♣ - invitational

The 2NT bid shows something like ♠ void ♥ Q10763 ♠3 ♠A108432. Fourth hand is going to bid some amount of spades, so opener will have the information he needs for his next call. The jumps to three in a major imply a very long suit and a distributional hand, one that cannot double the overcall with assurance: ♠ KJ98763 ♥ K4 ♠Q87 ♠2 (RHO could have a long solid club suit.). A jump in a minor implies a long suit headed by AQJ, inviting a 3NT bid but not forcing.

### When RHO Overcalls in a Suit

Free bids at the two level in a suit lower in rank than opener's suit requires no more strength than non-free bids. When the suit is higher in rank, however, and he may be forced to the three level, responder must have a good enough hand to provide a measure of safety at that level:

South	West	North
1♠	1♥	2♠ - may be light
		2♥ - promises a better hand

The nominal minimum for bidding 2♥ is 10-11 HCP, maybe less with diamond support. Neither North response promises another bid, so she may pass a minimum rebid by South.

## THE SINGLE RAISE

### In a Major

This raise is based on support tricks that may be in high cards or mainly distributional. When you raise 1♥ to 2♥, partner will take you to have at least ♠84 ♥Q1072 ♦984 ♣A752 or ♠9653 ♥J10653 ♦K74 ♣3. Just because partner would regard these as minimum hands for the raise does not mean that raises are never made with weaker hands. It is the same as with sub-minimum opening bids and overcalls--you risk misleading partner because good bidding has to be competitive as well as constructive. Of course, having raised 1♠ to 2♠ with a hand like ♠K763 ♥104 ♦J862 ♣942, you do not jump to 4♠ over a 3♦ game try rebid by opener, just because the hand "fits." A sub-minimum becomes only a minimum when the hand fits, not a maximum.

Over RHO's takeout double, however, sub-minimum raises are standard procedure. They can also be a little light when RHO overcalls, as that may be the last chance to show support.

At the other end of the spectrum are hands that are top-heavy for a single raise, but present no good alternative. These are the 4-3-3-3 hands with no side suit:

♠KQJ3 ♥A42 ♦542 ♣653

♠AK8 ♥QJ7 ♦7543 ♣862

Just raise 1♠ to 2♠ with these hands. The first one is not worth a limit jump raise to 3♠. With the second hand, a game try is just plain bad bidding. If we subtract a point for poor distribution, these 10 HCP hands are really just nine-pointers.

Adequate trump support for a raise is nominally J10x or better, but with good ruffing ability or extra strength in high cards, raises are sometimes in order with three small cards.

### In a Minor

Prefer a 1NT response (6-9 HCP, even over 1♣) to a minor suit raise, if the hand looks suitable for notrump play.

Usually prefer a major suit response to a minor suit raise, but the raise is often correct. The issue is discussed in section 3-1, One-Over-One Responses.

Three-card minor suit raises are sometimes necessary in competition, but otherwise are rare (and only in diamonds). Raise 1♦ to 2♦ with ♠5 ♥763 ♦AQ2 ♣J97642. If the minors were reversed and the opening was 1♣, a 1♦ response would be preferable to 2♣ (by far).

## LIMIT JUMP RAISE IN A MAJOR

The jump raise of a major suit is not forcing, whether made in competition or not. Requirements are:

- Four-card trump support, headed by queen or better, or any five
- About 11 points counting distribution, a game-try hand
  
- A balanced hand with generally scattered strength

The limit jump raise implies that it is not important where opener's strength lies; any high cards in his hand will be useful. This in turn implies a balanced hand for the raise, with no good side suit. When the degree of fit may be important, as when responder has a short suit or a good side suit, it is usually better to make a temporizing bid in a new suit before inviting game. This action will help opener in judging whether to bid game or not when he has a close decision.

Partner opens 1♠ and you have ♠Q1042 ♥K3 ♦AJ42 ♣976. This is a good raise to 3♠. But with ♠Q1042 ♥J86 ♦AQ943 ♣8 respond 2♦ and bid 3♠ on the next round. The bidding might go:

	Opener	Responder
	1♠	2♦
	2♠	3♠
or:	Opener	Responder
	1♠	2♦
	2♥	3♠ - not forcing

Note that responder must go to the three level to *raise* spades. A 2♠ rebid over 2♥ would be a *preference*, not a raise, showing something like ♠J3 ♥4 ♦AJ8763 ♣J764.

In competition one must usually forget about bidding a side suit, both for preemptive reasons and because the overcall often takes away bidding space. If you have ♠KJ54 ♥63 ♦AQ763 ♣95 and partner opens 1♠, then next hand bids 2♥, you cannot bid 3♦--you won't know what to do if partner bids 3♠--so you jump to 3♠ over 2♥.

If RHO had passed, you would have bid 2♦ before raising spades. If RHO had bid 2♣ instead of 2♥, you could bid 2♦, but even then 3♠ is better. An immediate jump might shut out a club raise by LHO, and partner does not need much guidance as to fit. With an opponent bidding clubs, he will know that a singleton or xxx in diamonds is a poor holding.

The trump support is sometimes not up to par in competition. Suppose partner opens 1♠, RHO bids 2♥, and you have ♠KQ8 ♥7 ♦A10874 ♣J953. This hand is too good for a 2♠ raise, but 3♦ over 2♥ is out of the question; the hand is not good enough. In a case like this you must bid 3♠ with three-card support.

When in doubt whether to give a single or double raise, look at the trumps. With good four-card support, lean toward the jump raise. A jump with three trumps should only be made when a single raise is completely ruled out.

As with the preceding hand, a jump raise in competition will often be made with an unbalanced hand.

A passed hand jump raise may also have an unbalanced hand and/or trumps weaker than Qxxx, perhaps only three-card support. See section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand.

A limit raiser cannot use Blackwood, so his 4NT bids are natural:

Opener	Responder
1♥	3♥
4♣	4♦
4♠	4NT - natural, club king

A jump raise over an opposing takeout double is a weak preemptive bid. A good raise (not a limit raise) is shown by an artificial jump to 2NT when the hand lacks sufficient HCP for a redouble. See section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double.

## LIMIT JUMP RAISE IN A MINOR

The jump raise of a minor suit opening is not forcing, whether made in competition or not. Requirements are:

- Four good trumps, although five is more usual
- About 11 points counting distribution--a game try hand
- No biddable major suit

### Notrump Probe

After a minor suit jump raise, opener can probe for a notrump game with a hand that is too good to pass:

- After a jump raise in clubs:

Opener bids his lowest ranking stopper if interested in probing for a notrump game. If opener bids 3♦ over the 3♣ raise, responder shows a heart stopper by bidding 3♥. With no heart stop, she bids 3♠ to show a spade stopper. With both majors stopped, she bids 3NT over 3♦, and with neither she bids 4♣:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
3♦	3♥ - heart stop, no spade stop
	3♠ - spade stop, no heart stop
	3NT - both majors stopped
	4♣ - neither major stopped

If opener bids 3♥ over 3♣, denying a diamond stopper but implying a spade stopper, responder bids 3NT with a diamond stop (counting on opener to have spades stopped), otherwise bids 3♠ with a partial diamond stopper (e.g., Qx, Jxx), otherwise bids 4♣ (or 4♥ with good hearts, since opener could have a heart suit):

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
3♥	3♠ - partial diamond stopper
	3NT - diamonds stopped
	4♣ - no diamond stopper
	4♥ - same, four hearts, four hearts, maximum strength

If opener bids 3♠ over 3♣, denying stoppers in the red suits, responder bids 3NT with those suits stopped, otherwise bids 4♣ (or 4♠, with four spades).

- After a jump raise in diamonds:

Opener bids 3NT with both majors stopped, not worrying about clubs. There isn't enough room to investigate clubs, and responder will usually have something in clubs anyway. With one major stopped, opener bids that major and responder bids 3NT with a stopper in the other major, otherwise bids 4♦ (or

raises the major with good support and a maximum diamond raise). A 4♣ rebid by responder is a "help-suit game try" with a good hand: ♠32 ♥65 ♦AQ873 ♣KJ75

When to probe? With a doubtful hand, one that makes you think the other pair(s) holding your cards will not automatically go to 3NT. With ♠Q ♥AK3 ♦AJ632 ♣J874, after your 1♦ opening is raised to 3♦, bid 3♥. This shows a heart stop, allowing responder to bid 3NT with ♠K76 ♥Q32 ♦KQ654 ♣108. With ♠J84 ♥K3 ♦AQ8743 ♣K6 just bid 3NT over 3♦. You don't want partner to bid notrump and have the lead come through one of your kings. Besides, the other person(s) holding this hand will bid 3NT, so you might as well go along.

When a probe gets doubled:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♠	Dbl		

A redouble by North does *not* show spade strength. It tells opener to go ahead and bid 3NT. North might have ♠54 ♥AJ7 ♦KQ832 ♣J76. The redouble is necessary because a 3NT bid by North would send a spade lead through South's possible AQ, Kx, or other vulnerable holding.

Since any new suit bid by opener is forcing, a jump in a new suit is a splinter bid, a slam try:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
4♥	- splinter bid

Opener has ♠AKQ ♥3 ♦Q87 ♣A87632, too good for a mere notrump probe of 3♦. Responder can now bid 6♣ with ♠753 ♥A54 ♦K3 ♣K9843. See section 4-4, Splinter Rebids by Opener.

A limit raiser cannot use Blackwood. In the last auction, a 4NT bid by responder would be natural--showing secondary heart strength and warning of duplication. Opener might well pass this bid, a good spot if responder has ♠932 ♥KQJ ♦KJ ♣Q10954.

A jump raise over an opposing takeout double is a weak preemptive bid. A good raise is shown by an artificial jump to 2NT when the hand lacks sufficient HCP for a redouble. See section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double.

## THE FORCING CLUB RAISE

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦

The 3♦ response to a 1♣ opening is a forcing raise in clubs, an artificial bid showing five or more clubs and a game-going hand. It crowds the bidding so much that it should be avoided, but with a hand like ♠AK3 ♥765 ♦82 ♣AQ983, there is no alternative.

The forcing club raise tends to deny a biddable major. A subsequent raise of a major will probably be based on three cards.

After a forcing club raise, opener will often probe for a 3NT contract in the same way as he might over an invitational jump raise in diamonds. See the previous section. With both majors stopped, opener can bid 3NT with three small diamonds or even Qx. Responder will usually have something in diamonds, since he has no major.

There is no analogous forcing raise for the diamond suit. If partner opens 1♦ you can bid 2♣ with a hand such as ♠AK3 ♥765 ♦AQ983 ♣82. No matter how high partner raises clubs, you can always go back to diamonds without increasing the bidding level.

There is only one situation when the forcing club raise can be made in competition, and that is when 3♦ is a splinter bid:

	South	West	North
	1♣	1♦	3♦ - splinter, no major suit
But:	1♣	1♥	3♦ - weak jump takeout
	1♣	Dbl	3♦ - normal preemptive bid

The forcing club raise cannot be made by a passed hand:

	South	West	North	East
	Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
	3♦ - normal preemptive bid in diamonds			

South has ♠3 ♥85 ♦QJ109732 ♣Q76. North passes with a big 4-4-1-4 hand.

If opener makes a jump rebid in a new suit, that is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦
4♥ - splinter	

Opener has ♠AJ10 ♥3 ♦KQ42 ♣AQ765, too much for a 3♠ notrump probe. Responder can now bid 6♣ with ♠KQ4 ♥862 ♦A3 ♣KJ1092. If the major suits were reversed, she would sign off in 4NT (4NT over a splinter bid in support of a minor is always a signoff).

Blackwood is not used by either partner after a forcing club raise:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦
4NT	

Opener has too much (18-19 HCP) for a 3NT bid, so invites slam by bidding 4NT.

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦
4♦	4NT - natural, majors stopped

## SPLINTER RESPONSES TO A MAJOR OPENING

A double jump response to an opening of 1♥ or 1♠ is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♥	3♠/4♣/4♦
or: 1♠	4♣/4♦/4♥

The requirements are:

- A singleton in the splinter suit--not a void
- Four trumps to the queen, or better
- Game-going strength, high cards in three suits
- First or second-round control in the other two suits

A splinter response has a range of 13-15 points or so, counting distribution. That is just a rough guide, because some hands in this range do not qualify. Examples of a 4♦ response to a 1♠ opening:

♠KJ62 ♥Q107 ♦8 ♣AQ863 (a maximum)

♠Q1074 ♥K83 ♦4 ♣AJ762 (a minimum)

But with ♠AKJ3 ♥Q83 ♦6 ♣108762, start with a 2♣ (or 2♥!) response. Too much of the total strength is in the trump suit, and there is no second-round control of hearts.

The splinter bid tends to deny a biddable suit in the other major, but responder may violate this rule if she is quite sure that opener's suit is the right trump suit.

When responder's strength outside of the trump suit is concentrated in one suit, it is necessary to bid that suit rather than make a splinter bid. With ♠AQ75 ♥983 ♦AQ872 ♣4, a 2♦ response is right. Splinter responses imply strength in three suits. If opener rebids 2♠, *then* you can splinter with 4♣, which does not promise control of hearts. Only an immediate splinter would do that.

### Splinter Bids in Competition

Splinter bids are used over a takeout double or overcall, with no change in meaning. After an overcall, single jump cue bids are splinter bids, as are any jumps to 4♣ or 4♦:

South	West	North
1♥	2♦	4♣/4♦ - splinter bid
		3♠ - natural, weak, preemptive (see section 3-16)

Note that the jump to 3♠ is a single jump in a major, so it is not a splinter bid. A double jump to 4♥ in response to 1♠ is a splinter, as if the overcall had not occurred, but a single jump to 4♥ is natural.

## SPLINTER RESPONSES TO A MINOR OPENING

In the absence of competition, a double jump response in a *major* suit, opposite a *minor* opening, is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	3♥/3♠

The requirements are:

- Game-going hand
- Singleton in the splinter suit
- Five cards in the unbid major
- Four or more cards in opener's minor
- No ace or king in the other minor

The last requirement could have been reversed, guaranteeing an ace or king in the other minor. Opener needs to know about controls, or lack of controls, in the other minor, for example when choosing between 3NT and five of the minor when he lacks support for responder's major. Also, he may need that information when contemplating a slam in one of the partnership's suits. Since responder should have good cards in the two suits he indicates, we choose to restrict high cards to those two suits, with none outside. Another reason is that weakness in the off suit means more probability that opener will have strength there. If opener plays the hand in responder's major, the lead will come up to that strength instead of through it.

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♥

Responder has ♠AJ1073 ♥4 ♦43 ♣KQ863. If responder were to bid 1♠ instead, and next hand preempts with, say, 4♥, this hand may not get described. The 3♥ splinter bid tells the whole story in one call, before the opponents can interfere, and tells it more accurately than any other sequence. It also has more preemptive value than a 1♠ response. Lastly, it can result in the right-siding of a spade contract, opener perhaps having Kx or AQ in diamonds.

A passed hand cannot make this special splinter bid. All such double jumps by a passed hand are normal preemptive bids.

Double jumps in a *minor* suit are not splinter bids:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦ - forcing club raise

See section 3-6, The Forcing Club Raise.

Opener Responder  
 1♦ 4♣ - normal preemptive bid

These splinter bids do not apply over a takeout double:

South West North  
 1♣/1♦ Dbl 3♥/3♠ - natural, preemptive

After an opposing overcall, however, most double jump takeouts by an unpassed hand are splinters, as are single jumps in an opposing suit. Jumps to game are natural bids. Splinter bids in the fourth suit deny control of the opposing suit. Here are all the possible situations after a simple overcall of a minor opening:

North East South  
 1♣ 1♦ 3♥/3♠ - splinter, five cards in the other major, no diamond control  
 1♣ 1♥/1♠ 4♦ - splinter bid, five cards in the unbid major, no control of RHO's major  
 1♣/1♦ 1♥ 3♥ - splinter bid, five spades, no control in the unbid minor  
 1♣/1♦ 1♥ 3♠ - natural preemptive bid (since hearts have been bid)  
 1♣/1♦ 1♠ 4♥ - natural bid (jump to game)  
 1♣/1♦ 1♠ 3♠ - splinter bid, five hearts, no control in the unbid minor  
 1♦ 1♥/1♠ 4♣ - splinter bid, five cards in the unbid major, no control of RHO's major  
 1♣ 1♦ 3♦ - undefined (diamond void, big club hand?)  
 1♦ 2♣ 4♣ - undefined (club void, big diamond hand?)

When opener rebids 4NT after a four-level splinter response, that is natural, to play.

### When the Overcall is a Jump

After an opposing jump overcall splinter bids are single jumps, and apply only over a major suit jump overcall at the two level:

South West North  
 1♣ 2♥/2♠ 4♦ - splinter bid, five cards in the unbid major, no control of RHO's major  
 1♦ 2♥/2♠ 4♣ - same  
 1♦ 2♥ 4♥ - splinter bid, five spades, no club control

All show five cards in the unbid major. The last sequence shows five spades, singleton heart, good support for opener's suit, no heart control. You can't do the same over a spade jump, because a 4♠ splinter forces the bidding to the five level. When the jump overcall is in a minor, splinter bids do not apply.

## WHEN OPPONENTS DOUBLE A SPLINTER

One of the disadvantages of a splinter bid is that it enables an opponent to show a suit (by doubling) without the risk that an overcall would entail. The splinter bidding side must, in retaliation, use the double as a bidding aid for themselves.

When a splinter bid is doubled, the next hand:

-- *With a poor hand* for the circumstances, signs off in a partnership suit. The signoff implies a hand that would not have been able to make its previous bids without the secondary strength held in the splinter suit.

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
4♦	Dbl	4♠/5♣	

Either of these signoffs says that North would not have been able to respond 2♣ if it were not for his secondary strength in diamonds. He bids 5♣ with ♠2 ♥Q87 ♦K76 ♣K108732. He bids 4♠ with ♠Q83 ♥42 ♦KJ3 ♣A8742.

-- *With a fair hand* for the circumstances, passes. A passer says that he would have made his previous bids without any king or queen that he may have in the splinter suit. The hand fits. However, he has little or nothing in the way of extra strength for his previous bid(s).

-- *With a good hand* for the circumstances, redoubles or bids something besides a signoff. A redouble does not imply the ace of the splinter suit. It merely shows extra values for previous bidding, disregarding any king or queen in the splinter suit. "Extra values" means a king or better in excess of what was necessary for previous bidding.

## OMNIBUS TWO NOTRUMP RESPONSE

There are various conventional 2NT responses to an opening bid of one in a suit (e.g., Jacoby 2NT) that require responder to bid something else with a normal 13-15 HCP notrump hand. The Omnibus 2NT response retains the valuable standard meaning of 2NT while adding two hand types that are hard to describe in standard bidding:

1) A 16-20 high-card point (HCP) notrump type hand. A 3NT response to a major with 16-18 HCP crowds the bidding too much, and may be useful for showing a different sort of hand (e.g., a game-forcing major suit raise). With 19-20 HCP standard practice is to respond 2NT, then bid 4NT (or a five-card suit) over 3NT. Such hands are included in Omnibus, so the 2NT response is expanded to include notrump hands of 13-20 HCP (maybe a good-looking 12).

2) A balanced hand with four-card or better support for opener that is too strong for a mere game-forcing raise. When partner opens 1♥, how do you describe a hand such as ♠K983 ♥AJ97 ♦K32 ♣AQ? A jump to 2♠ is highly questionable--neither the hand nor the suit is good enough for that action. If you respond 1♠, partner's two-level rebid leaves you without a clear-cut continuation.

The range of the Omnibus suit raise is 16-18 points (count 1 point for a doubleton), too good for a standard forcing raise and too weak for a strong jump response in a new suit (or perhaps lacking a good suit for that purpose). For an Omnibus minor suit raise, responder must have at least five-card support, stoppers in the unbid suits, and no major suit. A similar hand with four-card support is treated as a type 1) hand, not as type 2).

Omnibus also enables opener to show a 4-4-4-1 hand opposite a 2NT response. In standard bidding opener has no way of showing a three-suited hand after a 2NT response without going past 3NT, which could be the right contract. Not showing all three suits can result in missing a better contract than 3NT when a 4-4 fit goes undiscovered.

A 2NT response by a passed hand is a natural bid showing 11-12 HCP, and of course is not forcing.

A 2NT jump response to a 1♣ or 1♦ opening in competition by an unpassed hand has to be non-forcing with 11-12 HCP, just like the response by a passed hand. The reason is that such hands are difficult to show otherwise. A jump to 3NT must therefore show 13-15 HCP. The Stoplight Convention (Section 4-12) applies to the 2NT jump response, just as it applies to the 2NT jump response by a passed hand. Omnibus **does** apply after a 1♠ overcall of 1♥ opening, but of course a spade stopper is required with a type 1) hand.

### Opener's Rebid

After an Omnibus 2NT response, opener rebids as follows:

3♣ - A Stayman-like rebid showing interest in a major suit contract, or a good hand--at least a queen better than a minimum opening. This rebid lets responder show a major (or support for opener's major), and provides maximum bidding space for responder to show a strong hand when opener has extras.

3♦ - A 4-4-4-1 hand of any strength with a singleton in the expected place:

Opening Bid	Expected Singleton
1♠	Clubs
1♥	Spades
1♦	Hearts
1♣	Diamonds

If opener has a 4-4-4-1 hand with the singleton in other than the expected place, he bids 3♣ (to check for a major), not 3♦. He won't be able to describe the hand exactly in this case.

3♥ - a normal 3♣ rebid, minimum hand, probably unbalanced

3♠ - a normal 3♦ rebid, minimum hand, probably unbalanced

3NT - normal notrump raise, minimum hand

4♣ - Gerber, asking for aces

4♦ - "Autosplinter," singleton diamond, long strong holding in the suit opened.

4NT - Natural, 18-19 HCP (Boland applies, see Section 5-6)

5♣ - The Miller convention (Section 5-7)

Game jumps - A minimum hand with one or two long suits:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
4♥/4♠	- minimum opening bid

When the opening bid is 1♣, 1♦, or 1♥, opener can alternatively invite a notrump slam by bidding 4♠ instead of 4NT. This artificial notrump raise implies that opener's suit needs a good fit to be useful for slam (e.g., his five-card suit is headed by only one of the top three honors). Responder usually signs off at 4NT with a poor fit and only 13-14 HCP.

### Responder's Rebids

1) Opener has rebid 3♣, showing interest in a major suit contract, or a good hand, or both:

Opener	Responder
1 any	2NT
3♣	

With a 13-15 HCP notrump hand, responder:

- shows an unbid major if he has one;
- shows three-card support for opener's major (Jxx or better);
- bids 3♥ with both;
- bids 3NT with neither.

With a 16-18 HCP notrump hand, responder bids 3♦ over 3♣. Opposite a major opening, responder usually has 4-3-3-3 distribution, but could be 4-4-3-2 with both minor suits and a strong doubleton in opener's major. Opposite a minor opening, responder usually has 4-4-3-2 distribution with both minors (respond 3NT with 4-3-3-3), or 5-3-3-2 with a doubleton in opener's minor and five cards in the other minor.

Opener can now bid an invitational 4NT (or 4♠) with a balanced 15-16 HCP hand, make some other move toward slam, or bid slam. His rebid of the lowest unbid suit other than clubs (i.e., 4♦ or 4♥) is Super Gerber (see Section 6-10). Rebids of 3♥, 3♠, or 4♣ are natural:

Opener	Responder
1♦	2NT
3♣	3♦ - notrump hand, 16-18 HCP
	3♥/3♠/4♣ - natural
	4♥ - Super Gerber
	4♠ - invitational, weakish diamonds
	4NT - invitational, diamond fit unimportant

With a 19-20 HCP notrump hand, responder rebids 4NT unless he has a major. If so, he bids three of the major now, to be followed by 4NT on the next round if opener bids 3NT.

With an Omnibus raise (16-18 points) for opener's major, responder bids at the four level, showing his strength at the same time. When judging the quality of the hand, responder considers the quality of the trump support as well as his overall strength. Number of controls (aces and kings) is also important. If in doubt, downgrade a hand with poorish trump support (e.g., Q432) or few controls.

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
3♣	4♣ - minimum hand
	4♦ - fair hand
	4♥ - good hand
	4♠ - maximum hand

There is less room when the suit is hearts, so:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3♣	4♣ - minimum hand
	4♦ - middling hand
	4♥ - fine hand

4NT by either partner is then Roman Key Card Blackwood (Section 6-6).

Minor suit Omnibus raises (showing at least five-card support) are similar, except that 4NT by either partner is natural (responder must have all suits stopped):

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	2NT
3♣	4♣ - minimum hand 4♦ - fair hand 4♥ - good hand 4♠ - excellent hand

These artificial four-level raise clarifications apply only after a 3♣ rebid by opener. There is no point to them if opener has a minimum, since Omnibus raises are limited to 18 points.

Opener must rebid 3♣ with a non-minimum hand, even with a second suit to show. He can show the other suit later if he wants to:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
3♣	3NT
4♣/4♦/4♥	

Opener is showing a second suit in a non-minimum hand. He probably has slam hopes despite responder's known maximum of 15 HCP (Responder would have bid 3♦ or 4NT with a stronger notrump hand). If the side suit is hearts, it will be at least five cards long, since responder has denied holding four hearts. The 4♥ bid is non-forcing but mildly invitational, since opener would have bid 4♥ over 2NT with a minimum hand.

2) Opener has rebid 3♦, showing a 4-4-4-1 hand with the "normal" singleton. Responder now takes charge. He can ask for HCP by bidding 3♥:

Opener	Responder
1 any	2NT
3♦	3♥ asks for range of HCP 3NT is a signoff

The 3NT bid implies no four-card fit with any of opener's suits or too much strength in opener's short suit.

After a 3♥ bid, asking for range, opener bids one step (3♠) with 12 HCP or less, two steps (3NT) with 13-14, 4♣ with 15-16, etc. When showing HCP, do not count a singleton king, queen, or jack, and count a singleton ace as 3 HCP, not 4.

A repeat inquiry is possible by bidding the cheapest non-game suit bid on the next round, asking for further clarification: first step is lower value, second step higher value, of the two-point range previously shown:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3♦	3♥ - asks for HCP range
4♣	4♦ - asks for clarification
4♥ - 15 HCP	
4♠ - 16 HCP	

The 3♦ rebid shows a 4-4-4-1 hand with the "normal" singleton (in spades). The third-step response to the range inquiry shows 15-16 HCP after an appropriate deduction for any high card in spades. The 4♦ bid asks whether opener has 15 or 16 HCP.

A combined holding of 29 HCP (excluding king, queen, or jack of opener's short suit) is enough for a small slam, 32 for a grand slam.

3) Opener has rebid 3♥ or 3♠ with a minimum hand:

Opener	Responder
1 any	2NT
3♥/3♠	

A 3♥ rebid shows clubs, and a 3♠ rebid shows diamonds. If the opening was in a different suit, these bids imply that the original suit is at least five cards long.

-- When the opening was in a major, responder raises the major with three-card or better support, whether holding a notrump hand or a big Omnibus raise:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3♥/3♠	4♥

The 4♥ bid is ambiguous, in that responder could have an Omnibus raise with four trumps, or any sort of notrump hand with three trumps. Opener won't care what type of hand responder has, because he is going to pass 4♥ with his announced minimum hand (He must rebid 3♣ with extra values).

With a notrump hand that lacks three-card support for opener's major, responder can rebid 3NT or (fearful of 3NT or in search of a slam) probe further:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
3♥	3♠ - three spades, notrump hand
	4♠ - Omnibus raise
	4♣ - normal club raise
	4♦/4♥ - Notrumper Cue Bid (see Section 10-11)
	4NT - 19-20 HCP notrump hand

The 3♥ rebid shows clubs and a probable lack of interest in notrump. Responder's non-jump suit rebids are ambiguous as to strength, but they all may be made with a normal 2NT type hand. Opener assumes

responder has a 13-15 HCP notrump hand, and bids accordingly. With an Omnibus raise, responder (barring a great fit with the second suit) merely puts the hand in the spade game, knowing there is probably no slam in view of opener's minimum hand. The Notrumper Cue Bid may be in support of spades or clubs (opener assumes spades for now).

If responder has a 16-18 HCP notrump hand with no good fit in either of opener's suits, he will probably sign off in 3NT. In other cases he will just set the contract in a suit, since he knows opener's hand rather closely. With 19-20 HCP he bids 4NT (natural) if he can't see an obvious suit slam.

Sometimes responder can make a trial bid at the three level:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3♥	3♠

The 3♠ bid shows spade strength, club support, and probable diamond weakness: ♠KQ10 ♥Q3 ♦10432 ♣AQ76.

-- When the opening bid was in a minor, opener is either showing both minors or "rebidding" a minor:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥ - diamonds and clubs			

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥ - rebiddable clubs			

Both sequences show a minimum opening, so North now bids an appropriate game (or slam) or raises to the four level (forcing). A four-level raise at this point could be based on a 13-15 HCP notrump hand if responder is nervous about a weakly stopped unbid suit. (Opener's rebid implies a dislike of notrump.) Opener may want to cue bid after this raise, in case responder has a big Omnibus raise and a great fit.

4) Opener has rebid 3NT, showing a minimum balanced hand with no special interest in a major suit contract.

Responder can pass with a notrump hand of up to 18 HCP; a raise to 4NT shows 19-20 HCP. With a strong major raise sort of hand, responder will just bid four of opener's major. A four-level new suit bid by responder therefore shows a 5-3-3-2 (doubleton in opener's suit) hand with 19-20 HCP:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2NT
3NT	4♣/4♦/4♠ - 19-20 HCP, 5-3-3-2
	4NT - 19-20 HCP, no 5-card suit

5) Opener has jumped to game. Responder passes or otherwise sets the contract, remembering that opener has a minimum.

### When the Opponents Intervene

Omnibus applies in competition, but only when the 2NT bid is a jump over a 1♠ overcall of a 1♥ opening bid. It does not apply to a 2NT bid made over an opposing two-level overcall, or a jump to 2NT after a minor suit opening, which are non-forcing responses showing 11-12 HCP and at least one stopper in the opposing suit. It does not apply over a double, when a jump to 2NT has a different meaning (see section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double).

When an opponent doubles an artificial bid, a redouble shows a stopper in the suit doubled:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥	Dbl	Rdbl	

The redouble shows a heart stopper and denies spade support. A 3NT bid implies a double stopper and no spade support. A pass denies both spade support and a heart stop: ♠Q3 ♥9432 ♦AQ108 ♣KJ9. With spade support North usually bids 3♠ regardless of his heart holding, since South must have five spades and notrump is not likely to be the best strain.

### Advantages of Omnibus

- A 16-18 HCP notrump responding hand can be shown at a low level (3♦) when slam is a possibility (i.e., opener rebids 3♣).
- The opponents will often be in the dark defending 3NT, not knowing declarer's strength very closely when he could have from 12 to 20 HCP. They may well go to bed with an ace or other winner(s).
- Some suit contracts normally played from opener's side may be played from the notrumper's side, making the opening lead come up to his side-suit strength.
- Opener's 4-4-4-1 hands will often get quickly described, and the eventual contract will be an accurate one.
- Extra strong raises will be shown with greater precision.
- The 3NT response can be used for hands other than the 16-18 HCP 4-3-3-3 notrump hands (e.g., as an artificial strong major suit raise with 13-15 points).
- Responder can feel free to bid 2NT with four cards in an unbid major and a notrumpish hand (♠AJ3 ♥Q874 ♦KJ4 ♣K108), because opener can easily check (via 3♣) for a major suit. If there is no check, the opening lead will often be in that suit. Besides providing a good picture of responder's hand, the 2NT response gets any notrump contract played from the right side (the hand with tenaces).
- Opponents may be inhibited from overcalling when it would pay them to do so, out of fear that the 2NT bidder might have a powerful notrump hand.

### One-Over-One or 2NT?

Responder sometimes has a hand that is suitable for a 2NT response but includes a four-card major that could be shown at the one level. Some say that a 2NT response denies a major, but with a hand like ♠KJ9 ♥Q984 ♦J76 ♣AQ10 it is correct to bid 2NT over a 1♦ opening:

- The hearts are weak.
- Opener is unlikely to have hearts, having opened 1♦.
- 2NT describes the hand perfectly.
- If opener has four hearts he will probably bid 3♣, so a superior heart contract is unlikely to be lost.
- If opener has four weak hearts in a balanced hand and doesn't bother with 3♣, notrump may be better anyway.
- Notrump should be played from responder's side, because of the tenaces.
- The opponents may lead hearts if they are not bid.
- The 4-3-3-3 distribution suggests a notrump contract.

On the other hand, with ♠KQ32 ♥A65 ♦7643 ♣A7, a 2NT response to 1♣ would be wrong:

- The spade suit is strong and should not be suppressed.
- Opener quite possibly has four spades, and may not bid 3♣ to ask for a major if his hand is balanced.
- The hand may well play better in a suit, with the doubleton and lack of secondary strength.
- Diamonds are not stopped.
- There are no tenaces to be led up to, so partner should play any notrump contract.

Between these two extremes lies a great variety of hands with which one must judge whether to show a major or make the good descriptive bid of 2NT.

## QUIZ

You open 1♥ with each of the following hands, and partner responds with Omnibus 2NT. What is your rebid?

- 1) ♠AJ97 ♥AQ873 ♦J ♣987
- 2) ♠653 ♥AJ542 ♦AQ87 ♣2
- 3) ♠3 ♥AK874 ♦KQ3 ♣8762
- 4) ♠KJ3 ♥Q8743 ♦A4 ♣K96
- 5) ♠A98 ♥KQ1098 ♦AJ4 ♣65
- 6) ♠3 ♥AQ98 ♦AJ98 ♣A874
- 7) ♠4 ♥AKJ873 ♦Q84 ♣864
- 8) ♠J873 ♥AK74 ♦AQ93 ♣10
- 9) ♠A43 ♥AK10874 ♦3 ♣K83
- 10) ♠8 ♥KJ972 ♦AQ4 ♣AK83

### Answers

- 1) 3♣ - The 2NT response does not deny four spades, and if responder has heart support he can now show it. With both, he will bid 3♥, whereupon you can show the spades. If he rebids 3NT over 3♣, denying both spades and heart support, you will pass.
  - 2) 3♠ - Showing diamonds, implying five or more hearts, denying a good hand.
  - 3) 3♣ - To give responder a chance to show heart support. The clubs are too weak to show.
  - 4) 3NT - This hand should play well in notrump, even if responder has heart support.
  - 5) 3♣ - You may want to play in notrump even if responder has three hearts, but this hand is a little too strong for a 3NT rebid. The good suit counts for a point.
  - 6) 3♦ - Showing a 4-4-4-1 hand with a singleton in the expected place, spades.
  - 7) 4♥ - Minimum hand, good long suit.
  - 8) 3♣ - The singleton is not in the expected place. If responder has four spades you will play in that suit, but you may miss a good diamond contract. You correctly opened 1♥ because the spades are so weak.
  - 9) 3♣ - The automatic rebid with a good hand that is not of 4-4-4-1 shape.
  - 10) 3♣ - Too good to rebid 3♥, showing a club suit but denying a good hand. You will probably bid clubs on the next round.
- You open 1♦ with each of the following hands, and partner responds with Omnibus 2NT. What is your rebid?

- 1) ♠AJ97 ♥J ♦AQ873 ♣987
- 2) ♠653 ♥2 ♦AJ542 ♣AQ87
- 3) ♠3 ♥KQ ♦AK8742 ♣8762
- 4) ♠9432 ♥AK ♥QJ74 ♣K96
- 5) ♠8 ♥K8732 ♦AK8742 ♣2
- 6) ♠AQ98 ♥5 ♦AJ98 ♣A874
- 7) ♠4 ♥3 ♦AJ8742 ♣KJ1076
- 8) ♠5 ♥J873 ♦AQ93 ♣AQ76
- 9) ♠A43 ♥3 ♦AK10874 ♣K83
- 10) ♠8 ♥AQ4 ♦KJ972 ♣AK83
- 11) ♠K10874 ♥6 ♦AQ10654 ♣7

### Answers

- 1) 3♣ - The 2NT response does not deny four spades, and 3♣ does not promise extra values.
- 2) 3♥ - Showing clubs, implying five or more diamonds, denying a good hand.
- 3) 3♥ - "Rebidding" the diamonds. The clubs are too weak to show. It's better not to bid 3NT with that singleton spade.
- 4) 3NT - This hand should play well in notrump, even if responder has four spades.
- 5) 4♥ - Showing a two-suited hand, minimum opening.
- 6) 3♦ - Showing a 4-4-4-1 hand with a singleton in the expected place, hearts.
- 7) 5♣ - Minimum two-suited hand, unwilling to risk notrump.
- 8) 3♣ - The singleton is not in the expected place. If responder has four hearts you will play in that suit, but you may miss a good club contract. You correctly opened 1♦ because the hearts are so weak.
- 9) 3♣ - The automatic rebid with a good hand that is not of 4-4-4-1 shape.
- 10) 3♣ - Too good to rebid 3♥, showing a club suit but denying a good hand. You will probably bid clubs on the next round.
- 11) 3♣ - A jump to 4♠ is a conventional notrump raise, so you must bid 3♣, then 3♠, then 4♠ (or 4♠ immediately, if responder rebids 3NT).

## THE 3NT RESPONSE TO A MAJOR OPENING

Opener	Responder
1♥/1♠	3NT

The requirements are:

- Qxxx or better in opener's suit
- A balanced hand, no singleton or void
- Game-going strength, 13-15 points including distribution

If responder is too strong for the 3NT bid, he can use the Omnibus 2NT response (see section 3-10).

This artificial raise applies over a double, but not over an opposing overcall unless 3NT is a **double** jump (i.e., over 1♠):

South	West	North
1♥	1♠	3NT - strong heart raise
		4♥ - preemptive heart raise
		2NT - Omnibus

In overcalling situations a single jump to 3NT is natural, showing 13-16 HCP. A strong major raise is shown in one of two ways, depending on the overcall:

- 1) When the (preemptive) double jump raise to game is available, a cue bid shows a strong raise to game:

South	West	North
1♠	2♣	3♣ - strong spade raise
		3♠ - limit raise
		4♠ - preemptive raise

North's 3♣ bid tends to deny first or second round control of clubs, with which she can splinter.

- 2) When the double jump raise is not available, a (single) jump raise to game is strong:

South	West	North
1♠	3♣	4♠ - strong spade raise
		4♣ - normal cue bid

With a preemptive sort of raise to 4♠, responder should just bid 3♠. Even though this is not forcing, it is unlikely to be passed when there is so much strength outstanding. Either opener or an opponent will no doubt bid again. Bidding 3♠ and then 4♠ will sound to the opponents like you're stretching, which may cause them to make a wrong decision (although the opponents must be alerted to what may be going on when you bid twice). Of course you do not stand for a penalty double by opener after this kind of "limit raise."

When an overcall comes at the one level, a simple cue bid is the standard slam-interest hand with first round control of the opposing suit. A jump cue bid is a splinter bid in support of opener's suit, with a probable singleton:

South	West	North
1♥	1♠	2♠ - normal cue bid
		3♠ - splinter bid
		3NT - conventional raise
		3♥ - limit raise
		4♥ - preemptive raise

For appropriate action over conventional overcalls, see section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions. Also see section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double.

## THE 3NT RESPONSE TO A MINOR OPENING

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	3NT

The requirements are:

- 16-18 HCP, balanced hand, 4-3-3-3 distribution
- No biddable major suit (Q10xx or better)
- Strength in the unbid suits

To ask for aces after the 3NT response, opener bids the lowest unbid suit other than clubs (Super Gerber - see section 6-10):

Opener	Responder
1♣	3NT
4♣	- natural rebid of clubs
4♦	- Super Gerber
4♥/4♠	- natural
4NT	- invitational notrump raise, Boland applies
5♣	- Miller

Opener	Responder
1♦	3NT
4♣/4♦/4♠	- natural
4♥	- Super Gerber
4NT	- invitationl notrump raise, Boland applies
5♣	- Miller

See section 5-6, The Boland Convention, and section 5-7, The Miller Convention.

The Omnibus 2NT response is used with 5-3-3-2 and 4-4-3-2 notrump hands of this strength. See Omnibus, section 3-10.

### When the Opponents Intervene

-- When RHO overcalls a minor suit opening at the one level, the meaning of 3NT changes.

South	West	North
1♣	1♦/1♥/1♠	2NT - 11-12 HCP, not forcing
		3NT - 13-16 HCP
		4NT - RKCB

Stoplight (section 4-12) applies to the 2NT response.

With a 17-20 HCP notrump hand, just make a forcing suit response and decide what to do later..

-- When an overcall is at the two level, a necessarily non-jump 2NT response is not forcing, showing 11-12 HCP (no Stoplight), and 3NT shows 13-16 HCP.

-- When an overcall is at the three level, a 3NT response shows 13-17 HCP, 4NT 18-20.

Also see section 6-7, Four Notrump - Blackwood or Natural?

## PREEMPTIVE JUMP RAISE TO GAME

A double jump raise to game in a major implies very good trump support, usually five or six long, and a highly distributional hand including a singleton or void. It lacks the high card strength necessary for a splinter bid. A typical raise of a 1♥ opening to 4♥: ♠3 ♥K8765 ♦KJ632 ♣76. Add the ace of clubs and you have a 3♠ splinter response. With an in between hand: ♠3 ♥K8765 ♦AQ632 ♣76, a 2♦ response is probably better. This hand is too good for 4♥, not good enough for a 3♠ splinter bid.

South	West	North
1♥	1♠	4♥ - preemptive raise
		3NT - strong raise

See section 3-11, The 3NT Response to a Major Opening. A single jump raise to game (i.e., in competition) is a strong raise:

South	West	North
1♥	3♣	4♥ is strong

In the last sequence a raise to 3♥ would be taken as a merely competitive action, not a serious move toward game, so responder must bid 4♥ with a hand that is at the upper limit of a normal limit jump raise to 3♥. The single jump raise to game therefore has a fairly wide range, 12-15 points or so.

What should North do with a *preemptive*-type game raise, since the double jump is not available? Answer: Just bid 3♥ as a tactical measure. The bidding will surely not stop there, and your "slow bidding" may allow you to buy the hand, perhaps doubled, at a lower level than would otherwise be possible (although the 3♥ must be Alerted because of its ambiguous strength). With a preemptive-type game raise, responder must pull a double by opener when he hasn't had a chance to bid a second time.

If you jump to game with both preemptive and strong raises, partner will not have much to go on if he must make a decision at the five level. And if he doubles, you won't be sure whether to leave it in or not. When a two or three-level cue bid is available to show a strong hand, the jump raise to game is preemptive, even when just a single jump.

The jump raise to game in a minor is a rarity, showing a highly distributional hand, nothing in the majors, little defense, six or seven card support for opener's minor. This is a 5♦ response to a 1♦ opening: ♠3 ♥7 ♦KJ97643 ♣Q763. If the game bid is a single jump, however, responder must have a strong hand:

South	West	North
1♣	3♥	5♣ - strong, not preemptive

North must just bid 4♣ with a preemptive type hand, planning to bid 5♣ on the next round.

Also see section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand.

## STRONG JUMP TAKEOUT RESPONSE

The strong jump takeout, a single jump in a new suit over partner's one level opening bid, is not used in competition.

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♥/2♠/3♣

Responder's strong jump takeout says, "I know we have a game. We might well have a slam. I am afraid that if I do not jump on this round I won't be able to describe my hand accurately on later rounds." The requirements are:

- With four card trump support for partner's suit, 3-1/2 defensive tricks ("honor count") are sufficient, provided that a decent suit is available for the jump (headed by A, KQ, or better).
- With good three card support for partner, a stronger hand or stronger jump suit is needed. Usually four defensive tricks are enough.
- Without trump support for partner, a very good long jump suit or an extremely strong hand (4-1/2 defensive tricks) is required.

The reason for the emphasis on defensive tricks instead of HCP is that we are more interested in aces and kings for this bid, rather than queens and jacks. With a long strong suit that can play opposite a singleton, 3-1/2 defensive tricks are enough if controls look good.

It is not necessary to jump on the first round just because you have a strong hand. The main question is whether the hand can best be described by an immediate jump or an indirect approach. Some hands can never be described accurately without an immediate jump. You hold ♠AKQ543 ♥9 ♦A32 ♣J76 and partner opens 1♣. If you do not bid 2♠ now, later bidding may be guesswork. With a singleton ace of hearts and three little diamonds, however, just bid 1♠. A borderline jump should not have two or more fast losers in an unbid suit.

With a hand such as ♠K10874 ♥A7 ♦AKQ43 ♣5, just respond 1♠. You can jump in diamonds on the next round, and no rebid by partner will give you a problem. Besides, the spades are too weak for a strong jump takeout. Other considerations:

- Controls. If in doubt whether to jump or not, don't jump with two or more fast losers in an unbid suit.
- Hand description. With a three-suited hand containing four card trump support and too much for a splinter bid, responder will often defer the jump to the second round (especially if the first suit to be bid is not very strong):

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2♣	3♦
3NT	4♥

Responder has ♠K1084 ♥A932 ♦AKQ4 ♣5. He bids this way to emphasize diamond quality. If the spades and diamonds were reversed, he would jump immediately:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♠
2NT	3♦
3NT	4♥

Both sequences, in which responder bids three suits including a jump, promise a singleton or void in the fourth suit. See a further discussion of related sequences in section 4-5, Splinter Rebids by Responder, and section 4-6, Non-Jump Splinters.

Remember, however, that jump reverses by a two-over-one responder are splinter bids, not natural:

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♣
2♦	3♥/3♠ - splinter bids in support of diamonds

You can't use this sequence to emphasize the quality of a major suit. See section 4-5, Splinter Rebids by Responder.

These are jump takeouts to 3♥ in response to a 1♠ opening:

♠Q43 ♥AKQ10874 ♦A8 ♣6

♠A5 ♥AKQ87 ♦K6 ♣K432

With ♠10 ♥A105 ♦KQ73 ♣AQ743 respond 3♣ to 1♥, but just 2♣ to 1♠. A jump takeout bidder should have some idea of where the hand can play before she makes the jump.

## TWO-FOR-ONE RESPONSES

### Two-For-One Limit Raise in Clubs

A two-level major suit jump takeout of a 1♣ opening in competition into a major suit is called 2-4-1. It is highly invitational but not forcing, showing a four-card suit, a game-invitational hand, and at least four clubs. That's two bids for the price of one. A minimum opener can pass with four-card support (or a strong three, with a side singleton), bid 2NT, or retreat to 3♣. A 2NT rebid implies a three-card club suit. He can also bid 2♠ over 2♥ (you could have both majors), but that has to be forcing. With a good hand opener can raise, force with a new suit, or bid game. Having shown support for his minor, you are free to bid something else after opener's forcing rebid.

The purpose of 2-4-1 is to handle hands with a (possibly weak) four-card major and good four-card or better support for opener's clubs. A raise is not forcing, so a jump to game is stronger:

South	West	North
1♣	1♦	2♥ - four hearts, good clubs, may have spades too
Pass		Pass - minimum, four hearts
2♠		2♠ - forcing, but may be minimum
2NT		2NT - natural, minimum hand, maybe only three clubs
3♣		3♣ - signoff, minimum, would have passed a limit raise
3♦		3♦ - asks for a diamond stopper, but may be a cue toward slam
3♥		3♥ - invitational
4♥		4♥ - stronger raise
3♠/4♦		3♠/4♦ - splinter, very good hearts or maybe long strong clubs.
4♣		4♣ - invitational

The jump may be made with two four-card majors in a 4=4=4=1 or 4=4=0=5 hand. A jump to 2♥ gives opener room to bid 2♠ (forcing) if he has four spades. A jump to 2♠ therefore denies four hearts. The 2-4-1 response applies to either a passed or an unpassed hand, and over a takeout double.

### Two-For-One Limit Raise in Diamonds

After a 1♦ opening the only 2-4-1 limit raise response available is 2♠ over a 1♥ overcall:.

North	West	South
1♦	1♥	2♠ - four spades with diamond raise
Pass		Pass - minimum, four spades
3♣		3♣ - forcing
3♦		3♦ - minimum, would have passed a limit raise
3♥		3♥ - asks for a heart stopper, but may be a cue toward slam
3♠		3♠ - non-forcing raise
4♠		4♠ - stronger raise
4♣/4♥		4♣/4♥ - splinter bid, good spade support or maybe long strong diamonds

Two-For-One responses are not used in the absence of competition by an unpassed hand, but are used by a passed hand and may be used over a takeout double. See section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand, and 3-19, Bidding Over a Double.

## WEAK JUMP TAKEOUT RESPONSE

A single jump takeout response at the three level is a weak bid over an intervening simple overcall.  
Examples:

South	West	North
1♣	1♥/1♠	3♦
1♦	1♥/1♠	3♣
1♥	1♠	3♣/3♦
1♠	2♣	3♦/3♥
1♠	2♦	3♥
1♥	2♣	3♠

The requirements for a weak jump takeout are a six or seven-card suit and no defense. The suit quality will vary somewhat with vulnerability and the type of game (e.g., IMP, matchpoints). There is no HCP requirement.

Note that the weak jump takeout does not apply at the four level:

South	West	North
1♥	3♣	4♦ - splinter bid
South	West	North
1♠	2♥	4♣/4♦ - splinter bids

Nor at the two level, when playing 2-4-1 responses:

South	West	North
1♣	1♦/1♥	2♠ is a 2-4-1 response (section 3-15)

## RESPONSES BY A PASSED HAND

A two-over-one response should seldom be made in a four-card suit, since opener may pass with a doubleton and no good rebid. A 2♣ or 2♦ response should be avoided when the hand is suitable for notrump play.

A one-over-one response in a major can also be passed, but opener usually bids again if he is short in that suit. Nevertheless, a major suit response is undesirable with a weak four-card suit.

A 1♦ response to 1♣ is forcing. The force is often handy when holding a weak major suit. Respond 1♦ to 1♣ with ♠J963 ♥96 ♦AQJ10 ♣K103. If 1♦ were not forcing, you would have to make a bad bid like 1♠ or 2NT.

Two-For-One conventional responses to a minor opening are also handy (see below). Those made in competition are discussed in section 3-15, Two-For-One Responses

Temporizing bids (bid in a new suit, holding support for opener) over a major opening are dangerous, since partner may pass. It is usually better to raise immediately. This policy will lead to some pretty strong single raises when responder has only three-card support, especially in a matchpoint game.

Jump raises are the same as by an unpassed hand, except that major suit jumps do not always include four trumps. With three-card support a singleton or void is desirable.

The jump raise to game is as usual preemptive. If too strong for a limit raise, respond with a splinter (you must be short) or jump in a new suit. A splinter bid may be in order with a two-suited hand that has strength in three suits. Bid 4♦ over a 1♠ opening with ♠A10432 ♥K2 ♦3 ♣A9873. Jump takeouts of a major opening (see below) are unwise with an ace-high suit, because opener will devalue his hand with a singleton in that suit.

A 2NT response shows 11-12 HCP, or a bad 13. Do not stretch for this bid, which often goes down one. Spotlight, section 4-12, applies to this response.

There is no such thing as a 3NT response to a major, as a balanced passed hand can't be strong enough for the artificial strong raise. A 3NT response to a minor is natural. Partner opens 1♦ and you bid 3NT (maybe once in your life) with ♠K2 ♥A3 ♦K106542 ♣J108.

Cue bid responses are discussed in section 10-2, Cue Bids by Responder.

### Jump Takeout of a Major Opening

A jump takeout of a major opening is forcing, implying four cards (maybe a strong three) in opener's suit, and showing a side suit where a fit might be useful. It does not apply in competition, when jumps have other meanings. The jump is forcing for one round only. Responder is quite likely to pass a simple rebid of the "agreed" suit, which is a weak signoff. Opener must therefore bid something else if he thinks game is likely, either because of good overall strength or a good fit with responder's suit.

Suppose you have ♠KJ54 ♥63 ♦AQ763 ♣95. After you pass in first or second seat, partner opens 1♠. You bid 3♦, forcing, showing good spades and a diamond suit. If partner can only bid 3♠, you pass. If she has ♠AQ92 ♥A8 ♦K105 ♣10742 she will bid 4♠, because of the diamond fit. With ♠AQ1098 ♥KQ7 ♦952 ♣Q3 she signs off in 3♠, knowing the hands don't fit well. With ♠A10962 ♥AK ♦985 ♣K76 she bids 4♠ despite the poor diamond fit, because of the extra strength.

Opener will sometimes have a chance to make a trial bid of his own, either to investigate game chances or to find out if slam might be in the cards:

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
♠1074	♠9
♥AJ873	♥10952
♦KJ3	♦A74
♣Q5	♣KJ842
Opener	Responder
--	Pass
1♥	3♣
3♦	4♥

Opener's 3♦ call is a trial bid that hits responder well. With diamonds and spades reversed, responder would sign off in 3♥, which will probably go off one.

Responder can make a jump takeout even when he wants to bid game for sure. Suppose you have ♠K10942 ♥6 ♦AQ432 ♣J9 opposite a fourth seat 1♠ opening. You respond 3♦ (better than a 4♥ splinter bid), intending to bid 4♠ if partner rebids 3♠. If he jumps to 4♠ by himself you make another move, probably a 5♥ control-showing bid. Then opener can bid 6♠ with ♠AJ765 ♥852 ♦KJ6 ♣A4.

Suppose you open 1♥ in third seat with ♠A42 ♥KJ876 ♦AK4 ♣K5 and partner responds 3♣. Since you could have tried for slam opposite a mere jump raise to 3♥, you certainly have too much to bid 4♥. You should bid 3♦, which partner will think is just a trial bid. If she bids 4♥ over 3♦, you can bid 6♥ with confidence. If she signs off in 3♥, you continue with 4♣ (or 3♠, followed by 5♣). If the king of clubs were the queen, you would just jump to 4♥ over 3♣ and leave any further move to partner.

Since a new suit bid by opener is forcing, his jump rebid in a new suit is a splinter bid (1♠=3♣=4♥). This type of jump does not apply in competition:

South	West	North	
1♥	1♠	3♣	- weak jump takeout response (section 3-16)
1♦	1♥	2♠	- Two-Four-One response (section 3-15)

### Three-Level Jump Takeout Responses

All three-level single-jump takeout responses are preemptive in competition, and jump takeouts over a takeout double have different requirements (see section 3-16, Weak Jump Takeout Response, and section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double). Jump takeouts at the two level are conventional, see below.

### Two-For-One Two Diamond Response to One Club

A 2♦ jump takeout of 1♣ is artificial, showing a 2NT response with (probably) four cards in one or both majors. A light opener can rebid 2NT or sign off with 3♣. He can also show a major (hearts with both), which responder passes with four-card support. With less support responder bids 2NT (or 2♠ spades over 2♥). A stronger opener can employ the usual methods for rebidding after a non-forcing jump to 2NT, as described in section 4-12, Stoplight.

I said "probably" four cards in a major, but that is not mandatory. Having passed conservatively with ♠A32 ♥A76 ♦A87 ♣9865, 2♦ is a better response to 1♣ club than 2NT. If opener now bids a major (or asks for a major) you will have to bid notrump, but maybe he will rebid in notrump and get the play on his side.

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
1♣	2♦ - equivalent to 2NT, probably one or both majors
	2♥/2♠ - minimum, four or more cards in the suit, not forcing
	2NT - probably no major, would have passed a 2NT response
	3♣ - signoff
	3♦/3♥/3♠ - artificial bids (see section 4-12, Stoplight)

By the way, the 2♦ response is always optional. With a weak major, tenaces, and a good hand for notrump, e.g., ♠J965 ♥KJ9 ♦AJ9 ♣Q102, just respond 2NT. You won't be worse off than those making the same bid, and you ensure that a notrump lead comes up to your hand. Opener in like fashion may rebid 2NT with such a hand (or 3NT with a stronger hand), ignoring the major. Others will be in the same contract, probably from the wrong side.

Example deal:

West	East
♠AJ	♠Q872
♥9532	♥Q876
♦Q62	♦K5
♣KQ104	♣AJ3
Pass	1♣
2♦ *	2♥ **
Pass	

\* Values for 2NT, with (probably) one or both majors

\*\* Light opening, could have spades too

If West's major suit holdings were reversed, the bidding would go:

West	East
Pass	1♣
2♦	2♥

2♠            Pass

If the 2♦ bid gets doubled, opener's redouble says that the contract may be playable. He probably has at least four diamonds with a high honor. A pass (forcing) denies a four-card major but does not deny a good hand. A 2NT bid is a signoff, as usual, with strength in diamonds, and a 3♦ rebid is a transfer to 3NT, letting the lead come up to partner's hand (Stoplight does not apply in this situation).

### Two-Four-One Two Club Response to One Diamond

A 2♣ takeout of 1♦ is artificial, showing a 2NT response with (probably) four cards in one or both majors. A light opener can rebid 2♦ (which asks responder to bid 2NT), 2NT, or sign off with 3♣ (Stoplight) or 3♦ if not playing Stoplight. He can also show a major (hearts with both), which responder passes with four-card support. With less support responder bids 2NT (or 2♠ spades over 2♥). A stronger opener can employ the usual methods for rebidding after a non-forcing jump to 2NT, as described in section 4-12, Stoplight, starting with 3♣.

As with the 2♦ response to 1♣, the 2♣ response is always optional with a weak major and a hand that looks good for notrump.

### Two-Four-One Limit Raise in Clubs

After a 1♣ opening a limit raise can be made with either or both four-card majors.

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
1♣	2♠ - four spades with a club limit raise, denies four hearts
Pass	- minimum, four spades, maybe a strong three if unbalanced
	2NT - good diamonds/hearts, minimum hand
	3♦/3♥ - natural, forcing
	3♣ - signoff
	3♠ - non-forcing raise
	4♠ - stronger raise
	4♦/4♥ - splinter bid, good spades (or long strong clubs)

Opener	Responder (A passed hand)
1♣	2♥ - four hearts with a club limit raise, could have spades

A 2♠ rebid by opener has to be forcing, even though his hand could be light.

### Two-Four-One Limit Raise in Diamonds

After a 1♦ opening a jump to two of a major shows a limit raise in diamonds and four cards in the major. It is not forcing.

Opener    Responder (a passed hand)  
 1♦        2♠ - four spades with a diamond limit raise, denies four hearts  
 Pass - minimum, four spades  
 2NT - good clubs/hearts, minimum hand  
 3♣/3♥ - natural, forcing  
 3♦ - signoff  
 3♠ - non-forcing raise  
 4♠ - stronger raise  
 4♣/4♥ - splinter bid, good spades (or long strong diamonds)

The 2-4-1 2♠ jump response can also be made in competition over a 1♥ overcall, as described in section 3-15, Two-Four-One Responses.

Opener    Responder (a passed hand)  
 1♦        2♥ - four hearts with a diamond limit raise, could have spades  
 Pass - minimum, four spades  
 2NT - good clubs/hearts, minimum hand  
 2♠/3♣ - natural, forcing  
 3♦ - signoff  
 3♥ - non-forcing raise  
 4♥ - stronger raise  
 4♣ - splinter bid, good hearts (or long strong diamonds)

### Two-For-One Summary

Opener    Responder (a passed hand)  
 1♣        2♦ - 2NT hand with one or both majors (probably)

Opener    Responder (a passed hand)  
 1♦        2♣ - 2NT hand with one or both majors (probably)

Opener    Responder (a passed hand)  
 1♣        2♥ - limit raise in clubs, four hearts, maybe four spades  
             2♠ - limit raise in clubs, four spades, denies four hearts

Opener    Responder (a passed hand)  
 1♦        2♥ - limit raise in diamonds, four hearts, maybe four spades  
             2♠ - limit raise in diamonds, four spades, denies four hearts

Two-Four-One responses may also be used over a takeout double. See section 3-19, Bidding Over a Double. Two-Four-One limit raises apply as usual in competition, as described in section 3-15, Two-Four-One Responses. The artificial notrump bids are of course not applicable in competition.

Do not use 2-4-1 if you have a good major and can pass or raise a 1NT rebid. If partner opens 1♣, just bid 1♠ with ♠KJ92 ♥Q4 ♦876 ♣A976, since you are not too strong to pass a 1NT rebid. Why take a chance on getting too high? Similarly, with a strong major and weak four-card support for opener's minor, just bid one of the major even if you won't pass a 1NT rebid. Respond 1♥ to 1♣ with ♠J73 ♥AKJ2 ♦Q4 ♣10842. You don't mind playing hearts opposite three-card support. If opener rebids 1NT you will bid 2NT, suppressing the club support, since this is a good notrump hand.

## PREEMPTIVE NEW SUIT RESPONSES

Preemptive single jump takeouts are discussed in section 3-16, Weak Jump Takeout Response.

Higher preemptive responses in a new suit, which are at least double jumps, show about six playing tricks at the three level, seven at the four level, eight at the five level. They tend to deny any defensive trick, although a jump to game in a major may include the trump ace.

Double jump three-level preemptive responses can be made by a passed hand only, since an unpassed hand's 3♦ response to 1♣ is a strong club raise (see section 3-6), a 3♥ or 3♠ response to a minor opening is a splinter bid (see section 3-8), and a 3♠ response to 1♥ is a splinter bid (see section 3-7).

Four-level preemptive takeouts can be made in any suit, but only as double jumps in response to a minor suit opening.

Opener	Responder
1♣	4♦/4♥/4♠ - preemptive

These bids show a weak one-suited hand with seven or eight playing tricks. In response to a major opening such jumps are splinter bids:

Opener	Responder
1♠	4♣/4♦/4♥ - splinter bid

Five-level preemptive responses are made only in a minor, and are very rare. Respond 5♦ to a 1♣ opening with ♠3 ♥6 ♦KQ8765432 ♣J3.

## BIDDING OVER A DOUBLE

North	East	South	
1♠	Dbl	2♠	Very weak raise; may have passed 1♠
1♠	Dbl	3♠/4♠	Preemptive, weak, distributional. South is bidding as high as she dares, with few HCP.
1♥/1♠	Dbl	2NT	Artificial raise of opener's suit, four-card support or better, a hand too strong for any natural raise (all raises are preemptive), not good enough for a redouble. The Stoplight convention (section 4-12) does not apply in this situation.
1♣/1♦	Dbl	2NT	
1♥/1♠	Dbl	3NT	Normal strong artificial raise
1♣	Dbl	3NT	Natural bid: ♠K3 ♥K2 ♦J87 ♣A108765 Similar, with long diamonds
1♦	Dbl	3NT	
1♥/1♠	Dbl	4♣/4♦	Splinter bid, strong, ignoring the double
1♠	Dbl	4♥	Same
1♥	Dbl	3♠	Same
1♣	Dbl	1♠	Not forcing. Not a weak four-card suit. May be a weak hand, but does not deny redoubling strength. With a major suit and support for partner's suit, it pays to bid the major rather than redouble--even with as much as 11 HCP. When you have two important features to show in a hand, a redouble may get in the way. Of course you must redouble with a game-going hand.
1♠	Dbl	2♣	Not forcing, but not a worthless hand. Typical:  ♠64 ♥J76 ♦43 ♣KQ10986
1♦	Dbl	1NT	6-9 HCP, almost as if the double had not occurred. May have a weak four-card major. A minimum is dangerous against good opposition, who may double.
1♣	Dbl	2♦/2♥/2♠	Not quite forcing, showing a strong six-card suit and a fairly good hand, like a weak two bid.
1♠	Dbl	3♣/3♦/3♥	is the same, but the suit could be seven long. A minor suit jump, even by a passed hand, invites 3NT, requiring a suit headed by AQJ or better.
1♣	Dbl	3♦	Preemptive, not a forcing club raise

1♣/1♦ Dbl 3♥/3♠	Preemptive response, not a splinter bid
South East North West	
1♠ Dbl Rdbl P	
P 2♣ 2♠	A 10-12 point raise, maybe three trumps
1♠ Dbl Rdbl P	
P 2♣ 3♠	Good limit raise, four or more trumps, not forcing
1♣ Dbl Rdbl P	
P 2♣ 2♥	Forcing, in view of the redouble
1♥ Dbl Rdbl P	
P 2♣ 2NT	Forcing. With 11-12 HCP, pass (forcing) and bid 2NT on the next round (not forcing).
1♥ Dbl Rdbl 2♣	
P P 2NT	Not forcing, because the auction would be over if the redoubler passes
1♣ Dbl 1♠ P	
2♠ P 3♣	Not forcing, in view of the failure to redouble. Not weak, could have 11 points. Does not indicate a psychic spade bid. Probably 4-4 in the two suits.

A redouble nominally shows about 11 HCP or more, sometimes 10 with good support for partner's suit. A pass, however, does not deny a good hand. It is sometimes wise to pass with a good 4-4-4-1 hand that is short in opener's suit, rather than redouble. The redouble may keep the opponents from bidding higher than they should, a common fault of takeout doublers.

With two suits to show, it may be better to start naming the suits rather than redouble. When RHO doubles 1♣, bid 1♠ with ♠K10842 ♥3 ♦AQJ65 ♣42. If 1♠ gets passed out, you probably aren't missing a game.

After a redouble, the general rule is that opener should pass a bid by RHO around to the redoubler, who may want to double. However, if opener's hand is not suited for defending that suit, he may bid. A simple rebid of the same suit generally implies a minimum hand, but bidding a new suit says nothing about the strength of the hand. Either action is forcing, of course.

There are some medium strength hands that do not lend themselves well to *any* action over a double. With such hands it is better to pass and act later. Partner opens 1♠, next hand doubles, you have:

1) ♠3 ♥K987 ♦Q1087 ♣A974

2) ♠J73 ♥A9642 ♦K843 ♣6

Hand 1) is not good enough for a redouble, even if you like to redouble with this shape. Pass and double whatever the opponents bid.

Hand 2) is too good for a 2♠ raise, but the trumps are not good enough for the artificial 2NT raise. Pass and hope to act later.

When you pass over a double, then bid or double later, partner will assume you have a fair hand like one of the above. Be careful not to pass with a weaker hand and then act later.

When a takeout double has been redoubled, the doubling side cannot play the hand unless they play it doubled. A pass by either partner over an opposing bid is therefore a forcing pass.

When a takeout double is made on opener's right (over responder), opener should redouble with 17 HCP regardless of his holding in partner's suit. A jump rebid therefore tends to be based more on distribution than on high cards. As usual, raises are preemptive and a jump to 2NT is a strong raise.

The same principles apply over an opposing negative or support double: preemptive raises, jump to 2NT is an artificial strong raise, jump bids are not strong, redouble with a strong hand.

### **Alternative Treatments**

After a minor suit opening has been doubled for takeout, 2-4-1 bids (including the 2♦ response to 1♣) can be used exactly as described in section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand, provided the hand has merely invitational strength. Redouble with stronger hands.

Another alternative is to use a jump to 2♠ over a double of 1♥ to show an 11-12 HCP notrump hand, which can right-side a notrump contract.

## BUSINESS DOUBLES OF OVERCALLS

The business double of an overcall is a cooperative double, a suggestion to partner, not a definite command. See *Why You Lose at Bridge*, by S. J. Simon, for a good discussion of the principles involved: when to double, when to leave the double in, when to pull the double. Marshall Miles has good words on this subject in his book *How to Win at Duplicate Bridge*.

Here are the general rules Simon provides for deciding whether to pass the double or not:

- With three or more cards in the suit doubled, always pass.
- With a doubleton, pass unless you have opened with a minimum hand and a six-card or longer suit, or have a five-card second suit that can be shown cheaply (i.e., at the same level as the doubled contract).
- With a singleton, don't pass unless you have four defensive tricks.
- With a void, don't pass--period.

Isn't partner likely to have a lot of trumps when you are void? Perhaps, but the dummy is probably going to have some trumps, too. When you play a low level doubled contract, it is the same as playing the contract yourself. You hope to take seven or more tricks, and do you really want to play a suit contract when one hand is void of trumps?

You can count a high honor (A, K, Q) as two cards when following the above rules.

When vulnerable vs non-vulnerable, lean toward bidding if you are confident of game. To show a profit you would have to beat them four tricks, which may not be possible. If you are pretty sure of slam, then of course you would remove the double regardless of your trump holding.

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	Dbl	Pass
1NT			

South must have a three-suited hand, 0=5=4=4 or 1=4=4=4. No other holding makes sense.

If the overcaller gets rescued, a pass by opener is forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	Dbl	3♦
Pass - forcing, theoretically			

If North has nothing but hearts, then he should have passed (hoping opener doubles) instead of doubling. At this level, however, the doubler may not be able to find a safe bid and therefore may choose to violate system and pass.

If opener pulls the double, a new suit by responder is forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦ - forcing	
		2NT - not forcing	

The same principles for passing or pulling a double apply when higher-level overcalls are doubled. Partner is very unlikely to have good trumps when the overcall is at the three level or higher, and it is sometimes necessary to double with as little as three small in the opposing suit (never fewer). Accordingly, opener should pull when in doubt, especially if he has a reasonable bid to make.

If the doubler on the next round bids a major suit that he has doubled, it shows the suit and is forcing. If opener bids the doubled suit immediately, that is a strong cue bid showing first-round control of that suit. If he bids it after passing the double, that is natural, exposing a psych:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass
2♠ - strong cue bid, probably a void			

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
2♠ - natural			
2NT - not forcing			

Doubles of a notrump overcall are pulled only with a highly distributional hand.

## REBIDS BY OPENER

### After a One-Over-One Suit Response

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥

A 1NT rebid by opener shows 13-15 HCP, balanced hand (a singleton honor in responder's suit is sometimes acceptable).

A hand that has opened a three-card suit with a minimum hand that cannot raise the one-over-one response must rebid 1NT. After opening 1♣ with ♠AQ87 ♥983 ♦J76 ♣AQ9 opener rebids 1NT after a 1♦ or 1♥ response. A 1♠ rebid could result in a non-forcing 3♣ jump preference by responder, which opener would have to pass. Rebidding 1NT avoids this embarrassing situation, because a 3♣ rebid by responder is forcing after a 1NT rebid (see section 4-9, Checkback Stayman by Responder).

Should you raise partner or rebid 1NT when holding adequate trump support for his suit? With a weak 4-3-3-3 hand the 1NT rebid is preferable. With 15 HCP, however, the raise should be given if the suit is a major, since a raise is more forward-going than a 1NT rebid. Partner might give up on game over 1NT, but try for game after a raise. Always prefer a 1NT rebid when the response is 1♦.

Raise partner's heart response or rebid 1♠? With adequate trump support for hearts and a near-minimum the raise is usually preferable. One reason is that a jump preference would have to be passed, even with heart support:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1♠	3♣

A 3♥ bid by opener at this point is an acceptance of the game try, forcing, since the 3♣ raise is only invitational. It's better to raise a 1♥ response with ♠AJ76 ♥K83 ♦54 ♣AJ54. If opener does bid 1♠ over 1♥ with a minimum and three hearts, as he would with ♠AJ76 ♥983 ♦54 ♣AK54, then he must pass a jump preference of 3♣ and hope that clubs is a better spot than hearts.

A simple rebid in a new suit is non-forcing:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1♠/2♣ - not forcing	

A reverse is forcing if responder's suit is five cards or longer. It requires a good hand (at least 16 HCP), of course, since responder must go to the three level if she prefers the first suit, but it does not promise another bid if responder makes a discouraging or merely invitational rebid. See section 4-3, Rebids by Responder, for a discussion of bidding sequences after a reverse.

A jump rebid of 2NT shows 19-20 HCP, but a good suit counts for a point or two. It is not forcing, and Stoplight (section 4-12) applies. Responder passes only with a hand she is ashamed of, one that is not suitable for Stoplight.

A jump rebid of 3NT shows too much for a 2NT rebid, either in playing strength or HCP. It denies adequate trump support for responder's suit, because we open 2NT with 21 HCP and something in every suit.

Jump raises and jump rebids in the same suit are invitational, not forcing. Again, responder usually bids again if not ashamed of the original response, especially after a jump raise.

Jumps in a new suit are forcing to game.

See also section 4-7, The Double Jump Rebid in a Minor.

### After a 1NT Response

Opener	Responder
1 any	1NT

-- Except for reverses, a 2♠, 2♥, or 2♦ rebid is weak.

-- Reverses by opener are strong but not forcing.

-- With an invitational hand, opener raises to 2NT or bids 2♣ (Checkback Stayman, see section 4-8) and then invites.

-- All jump rebids by opener are forcing to game.

-- Gerber is not used (4♣ is a splinter rebid, see section 4-4).

### After a Single Raise

Opener	Responder
1♣	2♣

1♠	2♠
----	----

Opener's bid of a new suit is forcing after a raise, but a rebid of 2NT is not forcing. Responder can pass 2NT with only three-card trump support for a major, a balanced hand, and a minimum. She may pass 2NT with four-card support for a minor and a minimum if her hand is suited to a notrump contract. When opener rebids 2NT a new suit by responder is not forcing, weak, with a long suit. When opener rebids in a new suit, responder's new suit bid is forcing and may only show a stopper for notrump.

A 1-2-3 sequence is invitational in a major, preemptive in a minor.

For actions when opener's RHO bids, see Section 9-2, Competitive Doubles.

### After a 2NT Response

Opener	Responder
1 any	2NT

See section 3-9, Omnibus, or if responder is a passed hand, section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand, and section 4-12, Stoplight.

### After a Strong Jump Takeout Response

Opener	Responder
1♣	2♦/2♥/2♠

Opener usually raises immediately with J10x or better in responder's suit. Don't raise immediately with three small, even with a singleton or void outside. Bid something else instead, then raise strongly. Such a delayed raise, even a jump, tends to deny the trump holding required for an immediate raise, which means that it is usually based on small cards. If the immediate single raise would be a game bid, however, you can bid something else before raising--even with good trump support:

Opener	Responder
1♠	3♥
4♣	4♠
5♥/6♥	

Responder realizes that opener could have better than xxx in hearts, since opener obviously had too much strength for a raise to 4♥, which could end the auction.

Opener should avoid rebidding in a new suit that lacks the ace or king. With a singleton in responder's suit and a very weak opening, a notrump bid may be preferred when there is no good suit rebid to make. A 3NT rebid after a three-level jump says, "Bad hand!" Avoid this bid if you have anything extra, because it is not forcing.

See section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand, for rebids following a jump takeout by a passed hand.

### After a Two-Over-One Response

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣/2♦/2♥

A 2NT rebid shows extra values, about 15-16 HCP.

A 3NT rebid shows too much for a 2NT rebid.

A jump rebid in the same suit is highly invitational and seldom passed..

Reverses are forcing, but do not promise another bid in all circumstances. See section 4-3, Rebids by Responder.

A jump reverse is a splinter bid, as is a double jump in a new suit or a single jump to four of a new minor. See section 4-4, Splinter Rebids by Opener.

A new suit at the three level is forcing, and promises another bid even if responder merely rebids his suit:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
3♣	3♦ - forcing

A raise of partner's minor response is not forcing. It does show extra values, but two of the top three honors or four-card support counts as "extra values" in a pinch.

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣
3♣	

Opener has ♠KJ543 ♥42 ♦K32 ♣AQ2. If the response had been 2♦, he would have rebid just 2♠ with this minimum hand. See section 7-6, Marvelous Two Diamonds, for a partial solution to this problem.

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
3♦	

Opener is usually strong, but could have a minimum 4-3-4-2 hand: ♠AK76 ♥A63 ♦J952 ♣82.

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♦
3♦	

Opener will often have to make this bid with a minimum hand and 4-4 in the red suits. Responder should tend to bid conservatively until opener confirms a good hand.

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♣
3♣	

Opener will usually have extra values, but that may consist of merely a four-card club holding.

The raise of a 2♥ response to 3♥ does not imply extra values, with which opener should bid 4♥. This is one case where a jump raise may not be all that strong. In order to make the jump raise less wide-range, the following convention ("Valentine") is recommended:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♥
3♥	- minimum or near-minimum hand
4♥	- an extra king or queen (15-16 HCP?)
4♦	- an extra ace (17-18 HCP?)
4♣	- an extra ace and king (19-20 HCP?)

This conventional raise strategy replaces the seldom-used splinter rebid. The 4-3-2-1 count is not a good measure for such raises, since minor suit unsupported queens and jacks may not be useful.

If responder is a passed hand, then a raise of any two-over-one response definitely shows extra values, without which opener could just pass.

A jump raise of a minor suit response is forcing to game:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣
4♣	

If responder bids 4NT after this raise, he just wants to play there; he is not asking for aces. He might have a hand such as ♠3 ♥J1098 ♦QJ97 ♣AQ97, a little too good for a 1NT response.

### After a Business Double

South	West	North
1♠	2♣/2♦/2♥	Dbl

See section 3-20, Business Doubles of Simple Overcalls.

### After a Pass

When opener's partner passes an overcall, opener should not reopen with a double unless he is prepared for any action responder might take, including a pass.

We do not automatically reopen, but it is very unusual to sell out to a one-level overcall, especially at matchpoint scoring. The key is to look at the length in the opposing suit. With four cards, it becomes very unlikely that partner has passed much of a hand, so a sellout becomes more attractive.

Opposite a passing partner, it is unwise to make a free bid without extra values when partner has another chance to act:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♦
2♠			

Bidding 2♠ with a minimum hand and five spades is very dangerous, although one might bid 2♠ with six good spades and nothing extra when not vulnerable. Bidding 2♥ with a 5-5 hand is almost automatic at matchpoint scoring, however, even with a minimum.

A second-round bid of 1NT after LHO's overcall is passed around may sound like a merely balancing bid, but it shows a hand too strong for a 1NT opening.

## REBIDS BY THIRD OR FOURTH-SEAT OPENER

### After a New Suit Response

Opener can pass a response in a new suit, except for a 1♦ response to a 1♣, which is forcing. He will not pass with a singleton in responder's suit, so a rebid does not promise a full opening bid.

After a 1♥ response to 1♣ or 1♦, opener may sometimes rebid 1♠ with a doubleton heart, even when the opening was a little light.

With a full opening and a convenient rebid, it is usually better not to pass partner's response, even when game is unlikely. After opening 1♣ with ♠754 ♥AQ6 ♦K103 ♣A1084 in third seat, go ahead and rebid 1NT if partner says 1♠. This does not show extra values. After a 1♥ response you would pass, since you have heart support and game is unlikely. With a fourth heart you would raise 1♥ to 2♥, not so much with the thought of game as to shut out the opponents. A raise is encouraging, however, so you need some excuse for the raise: extra strength, four trumps, or ruffing values.

Opener should usually rebid with a 14 HCP hand, both to shut out the opponents and to keep the lines open to a possible game. A 14 HCP hand is sometimes passed, however. After opening 1♠ with ♠KQJ5 ♥862 ♦AJ6 ♣QJ2, you can pass any two-over-one response because game is unlikely.

It follows that any raise of a two-over-one response by a passed hand definitely shows extra values, and the rebid of 2NT is seldom shaded.

### After a 2NT Response

See section 4-4, Splinter Rebids by Opener, and Section 4-12, Stoplight.

### After a Jump Takeout Response

See section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand.

## REBIDS BY RESPONDER

See section 4-5 for a discussion of splinter rebids.

### Opener Has Rebid 1NT

A 2♣ rebid by responder is artificial, forcing. See section 4-9, Checkback Stayman by Responder.

Reverses by an unpassed hand are forcing for one round, but either partner can pass a discouraging bid on the next round:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♠ - forcing
2NT/3♣/3♥	- not forcing
3♦/3♠	- forcing
4♠	- good spades, good hand, heart fit

Responder may not pass a bid of the fourth suit (diamonds, above), or a raise of his suit. Responder's ruffing values in a 4-4 fit would automatically turn an invitational hand into a game-going hand. If opener makes an "unnecessary" jump raise to game in spades, he is implying very good spades, good clubs, and probably a heart fit. With high cards in the bid suits, he is probably weak in diamonds: ♠KQ32 ♥J94 ♦632 ♣AK6 Yes, the 1NT rebid is correct. A three-card club opener must rebid 1NT if he doesn't raise a one-level response. Responder can picture just this sort of hand for opener, since the only reason for not rebidding 1♠ with good spades is a 4-3-3-3 hand.

If responder raises opener after reversing, that is forcing:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♠
2NT	3♣ - forcing
	3♥ - not forcing (implying 4=6 in spades-hearts)

With only invitational strength for a club raise, responder must bid 2♣ (Checkback Stayman) over 1NT, then 2♠, and then make the invitation after bidding 2♠. If opener had rebid 2♣ instead of 1NT, responder's raise would also be forcing. He must therefore just bid 3♣ instead of 2♠ with a hand such as ♠A1054 ♥KJ763 ♦5 ♣Q86

Any other bid at the two level is weak, even in a new suit:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♣ - Checkback Stayman
	2♦/2♥/2♠ - are weak bids

The 2♥ preference denies adequate trump support for hearts, promises five spades and usually includes a minor suit singleton. Opener can go back to spades with three spades and four hearts. With a good heart

raise, or only four spades, responder must not use this sequence. He must either raise hearts immediately or pass 1NT.

All jumps to three in a suit by an unpassed hand are forcing. To invite game, bid 2♣ (Checkback Stayman), then make the invitation.

A raise of 1NT to 2NT shows 11-12 HCP, counting a good suit as a point, and upgrading any honor(s) in opener's suit.

### Opener Has Rebid 2NT (Non-Jump)

-- Opener's 2NT rebid after a two-over-one response is not forcing. If responder rebids his suit, that is a warning that his suit will not run unless opener has a fit (and that he had a weakish two-over-one response). Any other suit rebid by responder is forcing:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
2NT	3♦ - weak, long non-solid suit
	3♣/3♥/3♠/4♦ - forcing
	4♣ - Gerber
	4♥ - splinter, long diamonds, slam interest
	4♠ - strong spades, slam interest
	4NT - natural, invitational

See section 4-5, Splinter Bids by Responder. The 4♠ bid implies good diamonds and spades, with weakness in clubs and hearts. The 4♥ bid implies a hand that was not quite good enough for a 3♦ response on the first round: ♠Q2 ♥7 ♦KQJ7642 ♣A65. Opener signs off with 4NT when holding secondary strength in hearts

-- When opener bids 2NT after a raise, responder can pass with a minimum hand and a tolerance for notrump, or can raise to 3NT. With four-card support for opener's major he will generally sign off at the three level with a minimum hand, or bid game with a maximum. With four-card support for opener's minor, he may choose to remain in notrump with a balanced hand, either passing 2NT or raising to 3NT. A new suit at the three level is a weak signoff, usually showing six cards if it's a minor, five cards if the suit is hearts.

When opener rebids 2NT after a spade raise, a jump to 4♥ is natural, not a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♠
2NT	Pass - weak raise, three spades
	3♣/3♦ - weak raise, three spades, 5 or 6-card suit
	3♥ - weak raise, three spades, 5 or 6 hearts
	3♠ - weak raise, four spades
	3NT - good raise, three spades
	4♥ - good raise, three spades, 5 or 6 hearts

A simple raise hand would hardly have strength for splinter bid over the 2NT rebid. Note that after raising, new suits by responder are not forcing.

### Opener Has Jumped to 2NT

Responder should not pass unless he is ashamed of his first response and thinks 2NT is the safest spot. See Stoplight, section 4-12.

4NT is a natural raise, Boland (section 5-6) applies.

A jump to 5♣ is the Miller convention (section 5-7).

A jump rebid in a new suit other than clubs or spades is a splinter bid. See section 4-5, Splinter Rebids by Responder.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
2NT	4♥ - splinter bid
	4♣ - Gerber
	4♠ - mild notrump invitation
	4NT - stronger notrump slam try

The 4♠ notrump slam try implies that responder needs a good three-card fit (Qxx or better) in his diamond suit to make it useful for a notrump slam. Otherwise responder would bid 4NT to try for slam.

### Opener Has Jumped to 3NT

4NT is a natural raise, Boland (section 5-6) applies.

A jump to 5♣ is the Miller convention (section 5-7).

Responder has a weak hand in this auction:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3NT	4♥

This is the weak hand previously described: ♠Q8743 ♥986 ♦3 ♣K853. With a hand that was too good for a 2♥ raise, responder must find another bid at this point because slam would be possible. If opener has an unlikely 2=4=4=3 hand, he must pass or bid 4♠. The 4♥ bid is not forcing, of course, nor is this 4♥ bid:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
3NT	4♥ - natural, not Super Gerber
	4♦ - natural
	4♣ - Gerber

Although 4♥ is not forcing, responder should have a hand at least as good as ♠AJ763 ♥K9873 ♦42 ♣3, because opener is allowed to bid higher with a good fit. With a weaker hand, responder should just pass 3NT and hope for the best. This auction is an exception to the general rules that (1) a bid of the lowest unbid suit other than clubs is Super Gerber (see section 6-10), and (2) a non-jump 4♣ bid is natural.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
3NT	4♣/4♥ - natural
	4♦ - Super Gerber
	4♠ - artificial notrump raise
	4NT - notrump raise

The 4♠ notrump raise implies that responder's hearts need a good fit to be useful for slam (e.g., five cards to only one of the top four honors). This may help opener in deciding whether to go past 4NT.

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
3NT	4♣/4♦ - natural, forcing
	4♥ - natural, weak, long suit
	4♠ - super Gerber

Super Gerber takes preference over the artificial 4♠ notrump raise.

### Opener Has Raised

A return to opener's first suit is forcing for one round, unless the raise was made over a double:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
2♠	3♣ - forcing, game try at least

Don't make a 1♥ or 1♠ response with a weak major and a limit raise sort of hand. Just respond 3♣ originally or you may find yourself in a bad 4-3 spade contract. Also see section 3-15, Two-For-One Responses. In one bid they describe a hand with a four-card major and a limit raise for opener's minor.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣ - not forcing, invitational	

The 3♣ bid does not indicate a spade psych, only that North has a four-card spade suit. North has a good hand, but not a game-going hand in view of the failure to redouble. South can pass with three spades and nothing extra. North could show this hand in one bid if using 2-for-1 responses.

### Opener Has Changed Suits Minimally

-- When the original response was 1NT, a new suit by responder is a signoff if the suit is lower ranking than opener's first suit:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2♦	2♥/3♣ - signoff, long suit

If the new suit bid is higher ranking than opener's first suit, the bid shows strength in the suit and a raise of opener's second suit:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1NT
2♦	2♠ - good spade strength, good diamonds

Responder has values to raise opener's second suit. The 2♠ bid may change opener's mind about playing notrump.

Also see section 4-8, Checkback Stayman by Opener.

-- When the original response was a suit response and opener's rebid is a new suit at the one level, or a lower ranking suit at the two level (not a reverse), responder's rebid of the same suit is a weak signoff even after a two-over-one response:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
2♥	3♦ - weak, not encouraging

A jump preference is invitational, not forcing, even by a two-over-one responder:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
2♥	3♠ - invitational, not forcing

A 2♠ bid would be a preference, not a raise, equivalent to passing 2♥. Accordingly, the 3♠ bid is simply a raise, not forcing. If responder has three-card support and wants to force in spades, he must bid 3♣ (Fourth Suit Artificial, see section 4-10) and then raise. With four-card support he must jump to 4♠, a sequence that implies 5-4-2-2 with strength concentrated in the two suits: ♠KQ42 ♥95 ♦AQJ76 ♣32. With scattered strength responder would raise spades immediately instead of bidding 2♦.

As said before, a simple preference in a major denies adequate trump support:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣
2♥	2♠ - weak preference

The 2♠ preference is equivalent to passing 2♥ when hearts are preferred but cannot be raised. Responder has ♠J3 ♥4 ♦Q1087 ♣AJ7632. With adequate trump support for spades and a weak hand, the response is 2♠, not 2♣. With an invitational hand, the rebid is 3♠, not 2♠. A bid of the fourth suit is Fourth Suit Artificial (section 4-10).

A raise of opener's second suit from one to two shows 7-10 points, counting distribution. Pass with less. A jump to three is invitational:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1♠	2♠ - 7 to 10 points
	3♠ - invitational, 11-12 points

-- When the original response was a raise, opener's new suit bid is forcing. Responder is expected to clarify his raise in some way. If the raised suit is a major, bidding something else tends to show an original three-card raise. Responder must not go beyond three of the raised suit without extra values:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♠
3♣	3♦/3♥ - five or six cards, minimum spade raise, not forcing
	3♠ - signoff, weak
	3NT - good raise, red strength
	4♠ - good raise

In this case responder can feel free to jump to 4♠ with only three-card support, since opener must have five spades in view of the club rebid.. The 3NT bid is unlikely, perhaps based on a hand like ♠Q87 ♥QJ108 ♦QJ108 ♣J2. Splinter rebids by responder are discussed in section 4-5.

### Opener Has Rebid a Suit Minimally

Responder's rebid of the same suit is a weak signoff at matchpoint scoring. In a IMP match it is better to pass a hopeless hand than to "rescue" partner, so responder's rebid of the same suit is mildly encouraging. ("Mildly," since a jump rebid in the same suit is not forcing.)

A reverse by responder is forcing unless she is a passed hand. Other new suit rebids are also forcing by an unpassed hand, except for 2♥:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
2♣	2♦ - forcing
	2♥ - not forcing

At matchpoint scoring the 2♥ bid might be a stretch. At IMP scoring it has to be regarded as invitational, so responder must pass 2♣ with a weak 5-5 in the majors.

If responder raises opener's suit to the three level after reversing, that is not quite forcing if opener has failed to support one of responder's suits:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
2♦	2♠
2NT	3♦ - semi-forcing - ♠AJ76 ♥KJ532 ♦Q76 ♣4
	4♦ - forcing

However:	Opener	Responder
	1♦	2♣
	2♦	2♠
	3♣	3♦ - forcing, in view of the two-over-one response

### Opener Has Jumped in the Same Suit

A jump rebid in the same suit is not forcing, even after a two-over-one response. Responder bids again, however, unless she is ashamed of her first bid and is short in opener's suit.

If responder does not pass this jump, the partnership is usually committed to game, although responder might pass a third bid in the same suit:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
3♣	3♠ - forcing!
4♣	Pass is permitted

Responder has ♠KJ976 ♥5432 ♦Q87 ♣6 and elects to pass 4♣. He rightly bid 3♠ after his legitimate 1♠ response, because opener could have spade support. When this doesn't eventuate, he gives up.

### Opener Has Reversed

-- After a 1NT response, reverses are not forcing, nor do they promise another bid, and responder's preference bid of opener's first suit is weak. "A preference is not a raise," as is a 2NT bid, which is not forcing. However, a raise of opener's second suit is forcing and shows four-card support. With a weak hand responder can pass instead of raising.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1NT
2♥	2NT/3♣ - not forcing, weak
	2♠ - maximum, spades stopped but not diamonds
	3♦ - maximum, diamonds stopped but not spades
	3♥ - forcing (pass 2♥ with four hearts and a very weak hand)
	3NT - maximum, spades and diamonds stopped

-- After a one-over-one response, reverses are forcing only when responder has bid a five-card or longer suit. Opener can pass responder's discouraging rebid of 2NT or return to opener's first suit, both of which show weakness and deny five cards in the original response suit. Having responded 1♠ to 1♣ with 5-5 in the majors, responder must rebid 2♠, not 2♥ (which would deny five spades), when opener reverses with 2♦. A later bid in the fourth suit, hearts in this case, shows five cards in the suit.

A bid of the fourth suit denies five cards in the major and shows a good raise of opener's first suit. Simply bidding opener's first suit is therefore a weak signoff, as is a 2NT bid. However, a delayed bid in the fourth suit after showing five cards in the major shows five cards in that suit.

A raise of reverser's second suit is forcing, showing four-card support.

Responder's jump rebid in the same suit is forcing to game, showing a fairly solid six-card or longer suit. Opener might raise with a singleton honor if he has no better bid.

There are four possible reverse bids after a 1/1 response in a suit.

(1)	Opener	Responder
	1♣	1♠
	2♦	2♥ - good club raise, denies five spades
		2♠ - five spades
		2NT/3♣ - weak, not invitational, not forcing
		3♦ - forcing, 4+ card support (pass with a very weak hand)
		3NT - 8-10 HCP
		4NT - 11+ HCP

If opener rebids 3♣ after responder shows a good club raise, he has a minimum reverse and responder can pass. With more than a minimum he should find another bid. Responder, of course, can continue the bidding if he thinks game or slam is promising, and opener's response to 2♥ will help in that effort.

(2)	Opener	Responder
	1♣	1♥
	2♦	2♠ - good club raise, denies five hearts
		2NT/3♣ - weak, not invitational, not forcing
		3♦ - forcing
		3♥ - forcing

Lacking five cards in hearts and with no support for either of opener's suits, responder must have four spades when he bids 2NT. If opener has a little something in spades, maybe just a high singleton honor, notrump should be a good contract.

(3)	Opener	Responder
	1♣	1♠
	2♥	3♦ - good club raise, denies five spades

Since this means getting past 3♣, a "good raise" should be a little stronger and an immediate club preference may not be extremely weak.

(4)	Opener	Responder
	1♦	1♠
	2♥	3♣ - good diamond raise, denies five spades

Suppose responder, having rebid his suit, doesn't pass opener's third bid. Usually his next bid promises nothing extra:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
2♦	2♥ - five or more hearts
2♠	2NT/3♣ are both weak, not forcing
	3♦ is weak but promises four cards
	3♥ - long hearts, weak hand, not forcing
	3♠ asks opener to bid 3NT

The weak bids are not forcing. Opener's 2♠ bid implies a 3-1-4-5 shape with perhaps Axx in spades (wanting responder to bid notrump in case he has the queen or jack). Responder raises spades instead of bidding notrump when he likes notrump but has no desire to play the hand (e.g., with J109 in spades).

If opener has shown three-card support for responder's proclaimed five-card suit, then responder's bid in any other suit or notrump is forcing:

-- After a two-over-one response, reverses are forcing, but may not be as strong as a reverse following a one-over-one response. Opener will not pass responder's, 2NT rebid, rebid of his suit, or raise of opener's second suit, but may pass a preference for his first suit if it is diamonds. As always, a bid of the fourth suit shows a good raise of opener's first suit. Responder must rebid his suit if it has five cards or more.

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♣
2♥	2♠ - good diamond raise (fourth suit), only four clubs
	2NT - forcing
	3♣ - forcing, five or more clubs
	3♦ - weak preference, not forcing
	3♥ - forcing
	3♠ - spade suit, forcing
	4♣ - forcing

The 3♦ bid is a weak preference, despite the two-over-one response: ♠843 ♥5 ♦J83 ♣AQJ976.

A heart preference in the following auction is forcing, however.

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♣/2♦
2♠	3♥ - forcing
	4♥ - good hearts, good minor, maybe a spade honor

With a weak hand responder presumably would have raised hearts on the first round, so both heart rebids imply a hand that was too good for that action.

### Opener Has Escalated

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
3♣ - forcing	

A new suit at the three level is not only forcing, but promises another bid if responder makes a minimum call (such as 3♠ or 3♦, in this auction). This is called an “escalation” because opener has gone to the three level. If the response was one-over-one, however, and the three-level bid arises because of an opposing bid, the new suit is forcing only if it is a reverse:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♥
3♣ - not forcing			

South needs a fairly good hand to bid at the three level, but may have bid only 2♣ if East had passed. It is not treated as an escalation. Accordingly, a 3♠ bid by North at this point could be passed.

A reverse at the three level calls for the usual reverse understandings:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♥
3♦ - forcing			

Presumably South would have reversed over the 1♠ bid, so the usual reverse understandings apply. North must bid 3♠ (forcing) with five or more, without which 4♣ is a weak preference, 3♥ (fourth suit) is a good club raise, and 4♦ is forcing (since responder could pass with four and a very weak hand).

### Opener Has Made a Jump Shift

A jump shift (jump in a new suit) by opener is forcing to game.

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠/1NT
3♦ - game-forcing	

A 3♥ bid by responder may be a mark-time bid with aa

### Opener Has Raised a Strong Jump Takeout

Opener	Responder
1♠	3♣
4♣	4♠

The 4♠ bid is not quite forcing. Responder has an absolute minimum for the jump takeout, or she would have found some other call. Her hand: ♠AQJ ♥K6 ♦976 ♣AQ983 Opener can pass with a minimum hand such as ♠K10876 ♥54 ♦AK ♣J1074. If the K♦ and J♣ were interchanged, however, she would have enough

of a fit to cue bid 5♦, whereupon responder can bid 6♣ (both to protect the king of hearts from the opening lead and to suggest a safer slam).

### Opener Has Passed

When opener has passed over an intervening bid, a new suit bid at the one level is not forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♦	1♥
Pass	Pass	1♠	- not forcing

This is also true at the two level if responder has not reversed:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♦
Pass	Pass	2♥	- not forcing
		3♥	- one-round force

After the jump rebid, if opener can only bid 3♠ or 4♣, responder might pass.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	2♦
Pass	Pass	2♠	- one-round force (reverse)

## SPLINTER REBIDS BY OPENER

A double jump rebid in a new suit, and certain "unnecessary" single jumps in a new suit, are splinter bids. Splinter bids can only be made at the three or four level. Similar bids at the five level are asking bids, as are bids one level higher than a splinter bid. See section 6-5 for a discussion of asking bids and responses.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
3♥/3♠	- splinter bid
4♥/4♠	- asking bid

### After a New Suit Response

If the response to an opening bid was in a new suit, the requirements for a splinter bid are:

- Strong trump support for partner's suit, usually Qxxx or better
- More than just game-going strength--a little extra
- A singleton in the splinter suit, preferably not an ace, not a void
- Strength in the unbid suit, at least a queen

Lacking any of these requirements, it is usually better to avoid splintering.

Since reverses are forcing on a two-over-one responder, a jump reverse is "unnecessary" and is therefore a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♣
3♠	- splinter

A new suit at the three level is also forcing on a two-over-one bidder, so a jump to the four level is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
4♥	- splinter, not a two-suited hand

Although the remaining unbid suit is usually three cards long in a 5-4-3-1 hand, it could be a doubleton in a 6-4-2-1 hand. A 4-4-4-1 shape is generally inadvisable, because there could be a good contract in the unbid four-card suit. It may be better to make a forcing bid in that suit, then raise

partner. By including a jump somewhere along the line, you promise a singleton or void in the fourth suit:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
3♣	3♦
4♠ - four spades, short hearts	

A splinter bid is a mild slam try at least, not just a game-going hand. With barely enough for game, or weak trumps, don't make a splinter bid. The alternative will usually be a normal forcing new suit bid followed by a jump to game. The same is true if the short suit is a void. Splinter bids based on voids are undesirable because partner will regard an ace in that suit as an asset when it is practically worthless. You can splinter with a void, however, if the hand is strong enough to follow with a 4NT bid (Exclusion Blackwood--see section 6-6)

Splinter bids are used in competition, but then do not require more than mere game-going strength. With the opponents bidding, it is important to get the hand described before a preemptive raise shuts out communication. A lower bid in the splinter suit must be forcing if the higher bid is to be recognized as a splinter bid:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♥	1♠	2♥
4♣ - natural, because 3♣ is not forcing			

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♦
3♥ - normal jump shift (2♥ not forcing)			
4♦/4♥ - splinter			

A splinter bid in an opposing suit must be a single jump; a non-jump is just a cue bid and a double jump is an asking bid. Splintering in the remaining unbid suit (4♥, in the last sequence) tends to deny first or second round control of the opposing suit.

When responder is known to have at least a good five-card suit, it is possible to make the splinter bid with only three-card support. Opener's hand should be very powerful, and this splinter is usually made only because the opponents are crowding the bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	2♠	Pass
4♥ - splinter			

South has ♠KJ3 ♥A ♦AKJ763 ♣52. This splinter warns partner of at least two club losers, so North won't try for slam with ♠A109876 ♥K32 ♦Q4 ♣64, but would do so (via Roman Key Card Blackwood) with one less club.

Instead of playing 4♣ and 4♦ rebids after a 2♥ response to a 1♠ opening as splinter bids, the Valentine convention is preferable:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♥
3♥	- minimum hand
4♥	- extra king or queen
4♦	- heart raise, extra ace
4♣	- heart raise, extra ace and king

With 3♥ not forcing, Valentine is necessary to avoid too wide a range for a 4♥ jump raise.

### After a 1NT Response

If the response to the opening bid 1NT, a double jump to four in a new suit is a splinter bid showing a super hand. Gerber is not used after a 1NT response (or rebid).

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
4♣/4♦/4♥	- splinter, slam try

Opener has a hand like: ♠AQJ8742 ♥6 ♦AQ8 ♣A3. This splinter must be a double jump (or a single jump cue bid):

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1NT	2♦
4♣	- natural (3♣ not forcing here)		
4♦/4♥	- splinter, slam try		

The 4♥ splinter bid denies first or second round control of diamonds: ♠AKQ10876 ♥9 ♦76 ♣AQ3  
With five controls, this hand is too good for a NAMYATS 4♦ opening (see section 7-4).

### After a 2NT Response

A jump to 4♦ is the only splinter bid used after an Omnibus 2NT Response. See section 3-10, Omnibus.

After a 2NT response by a passed hand (which is not Omnibus), a jump to the four level in a new suit is a splinter bid, except for a Gerber ask:

Opener	Responder
--	Pass
1♠	2NT
4♣	- Gerber
4♦/4♥	- splinter bid, long/strong spades

See section 4-12, Stoplight, for other rebids following a non-forcing jump to 2NT.

### After a Single Raise

A new suit by opener is forcing after a single raise, so an "unnecessary" jump is a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	2♣
3♥ - splinter (2♥ forcing)	

Opener has ♠AQ6 ♥5 ♦KJ7 ♣AK8743. If responder has something like ♠6 ♥J93 ♦AQ652 ♣9652, a slam is almost a laydown.

This splinter bid is used in competition, but only when the situation is quite clear. A new suit rebid over RHO's overcall is a forcing game try, so an "unnecessary" jump is a splinter bid:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	2♣	2♦
2♥/2♠ - forcing			
3♥/3♠/4♦ - splinter bids			

The 3♥ and 3♠ splinter bids tend to deny first or second round control of diamonds.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	2♥	2♠
3♣/3♦ - forcing, game try			
4♣/4♦ - splinter bids			

### After A Limit Raise

A jump to the four level over partner's limit raise is a splinter bid, which means that the following is the only splinter possibility after a limit raise of a major:

Opener	Responder
1♥	3♥
4♠ - splinter, strong slam try	
5♣/5♦ - asking bid (see section 6-5)	

More splinters are available after a minor suit limit raise:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
4♦/4♥/4♠ - splinter bids	

Opener	Responder
1♦	3♦
4♥/4♠ - splinter bids	

### Other Splinter Bids

Splinter bids apply after a forcing club raise, but must be a jump to the four level:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦ - forcing club raise
4♥/4♠ - splinter	
4♦ - natural bid (non-jump)	

When opener's third bid is a jump in a new suit, the splinter is obvious:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
3♣	3♦
4♥ - splinter	

Opener has ♠A3 ♥5 ♦AKJ876 ♣AQ83. In this case it is opener's suit that is agreed. Opener cannot bid 3♠ to promise a singleton heart, because that would show three-card spade support.

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2♥	3♣
4♦ - splinter	

In this case opener has limited his hand with the 2♥ bid, so is free to splinter with ♠J3 ♥AK8654 ♦5 ♣KQ52.

## SPLINTER REBIDS BY RESPONDER

Responder can also splinter on his second or third bid, using a double jump rebid in a new suit or an "unnecessary" single jump. The splinter shows strong slam interest and a singleton in the splinter suit. In competitive auctions responder may have mere game-going strength. Splinter bids can only be made at the three or four level. Similar bids at the five level are asking bids, described in section 6-5.

There are seven types of splinter bid by responder:

1) An "unnecessary" single jump to the three or four level (even in opener's minor) by responder after a raise by opener:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
2♥	3♠/4♣/4♦ - splinter

A 2♠, 3♣, or 3♦ bid would be forcing, so the "unnecessary" jump is a splinter. For the 4♣ bid, responder has a singleton club and slam interest: ♠A87 ♥KJ843 ♦A983 ♣4. Opener signs off in 4♥ with ♠Q2 ♥A765 ♦KJ52 ♣KQJ. With ♠K76 ♥AQ6 ♦KJ1074 ♣98 opener bids 6♦ and responder corrects to 6♥.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
3♦	4♥ - splinter

2) A jump reverse after a notrump rebid by opener:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1NT	3♠/4♣ - splinter, diamond support
	4NT - natural raise

Gerber is not used over a 1NT rebid by either partner. A 2♠ reverse would be forcing, so the "unnecessary" jump is a splinter bid, showing great support for opener's suit. For the 3♠ splinter, responder has ♠3 ♥AQ43 ♦A9763 ♣K86. A 3♣ bid would be forcing (in accordance with the rules of Checkback Stayman--see section 4-9), but a 3♠ splinter bid describes the hand better. With five hearts responder would have responded 3♠ originally (see Section 3-8, Splinter Responses to a Minor Opening). This splinter therefore implies a four-card heart suit.

3) A jump to four in an unbid suit other than spades, or in opener's minor, when opener has rebid notrump (except that 4♣ over a 2NT bid is Gerber):

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠	1♣/1♦	1♥
1NT	4♣/4♦/4♥ - splinters	2NT	4♦ - splinter 4♣ - Gerber 4NT - notrump raise 4♠ - artificial raise

Gerber does not apply over 1NT rebids by opener or responder. Responder may be interested in slam with either suit as trumps, so opener bids the cheaper one to sign off. This splinter cannot be made in clubs if opener has rebid 2NT, because a 4♣ bid is Gerber in that case.

The 4♠ artificial notrump raise implies that responder's hearts need a good fit to be useful for a notrump slam (e.g., he has five hearts with only one of the top three honors). The usefulness of this conventional notrump raise precludes its use as a splinter bid.

4) A double jump after opener rebids his suit:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
2♣	3♦/3♥ is natural 4♦/4♥ - splinter

Even though a 2♦ rebid would be forcing and 2♥ not, for memory's sake we treat both bids the same. The splinters show good support for opener's suit and, as usual, slam interest.

In the following sequence, responder denies a singleton heart, which responder could have shown in a number of ways, including a splinter bid of 4♥ over 2♠. See section 4-6, Non-Jump Splinters, for another way.

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
2♠	3♣
3NT	4♠

5) A jump in the fourth suit at the four level (not the three level):

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1♥	1♠ - spade suit 2♠ - Fourth Suit Artificial 3♠ - natural

The 3♠ bid has to be a natural game-forcing reverse, since 2♠ is FSA in this sequence. See section 4-10, Fourth Suit Artificial. Splinter bid examples:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣	1♠	2♥
3♦	4♥	3♣	4♦

These are splinter bids. Remember that three-level jumps in the fourth suit are not splinter bids. When a non-jump bid would be Fourth Suit Artificial, a jump has to be natural.

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣
2♦	2♥ - FSA
	3♥ - natural
	4♥ - splinter in support of diamonds (or spades)

6) A jump in a new suit, when responder has previously made a non-forcing raise and then hears a new suit (not a notrump bid) from opener:

Opener	Responder
1♣	2♣
2♦	3♥ - splinter

Responder has a good hand and a great fit: ♠642 ♥3 ♦Q1087 ♣KQ542.

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
3♦	4♥

Responder has ♠J107 ♥3 ♦Q1032 ♣AQJ87. He could not show a major suit stopper, so he might as well make a splinter bid. Whether opener is merely showing a diamond stopper or has a diamond suit, this hand is well described by the splinter bid. If opener has ♠AK3 ♥98 ♦AK4 ♣K9652, he can bid the odds-on club slam. With the majors reversed, he would stop at five.

The following jump is not a splinter bid:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♠
2NT	4♥ - natural bid

Responder has a good spade raise, three spades, and five or six hearts. He must jump to 4♥ because 3♥, showing a weak three-card spade raise and five or six hearts (♠Q32 ♥K9873 ♦5 ♣9862), would not be forcing. See section 4-3, Rebids by Responder, for more on this subject. Had opener rebid 3♣ or 3♦, 4♥ would be a splinter bid, implying a good fit with opener's second suit.

7) A jump reverse by a two-over-one responder

8) A jump to four in opener's first-bid-minor after opener bids a new suit:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠	1♣	1♥
2♦	4♣	1♠	4♣

These splinters show at least four-card support for opener's second suit, plus interest in slam. Note that you can splinter in a suit bid by opener only if it is an unrebid minor, and only at the four level. To make a forcing raise of opener's minor, bid the fourth suit (Fourth Suit Artificial, section 4-10) and then raise.

## NON-JUMP SPLINTERS

What is the meaning of the 4♣ bid in these auctions?

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
2♠	3♥
3♠	4♣

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3♦	3♠
4♣	

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	3♦
3♥	4♣

Whatever the meaning, 4♣ can hardly show a suit. The natural bid with a 5-4-4-0 or 4-4-4-1 hand is 3NT, not 4♣.

Perhaps 4♣ is a vague sort of cue bid, accepting partner's suit as trump. If so, the bid implies short clubs. Let's make a definite rule that the 4♣ bid *promises* short clubs, and see if any benefit results.

There is a maxim that the bidding of three suits, including a jump, promises a singleton or void in the fourth suit. This generally accepted rule is a liability with many hands. Marshall Miles gives this example: You open 1♥ with ♠K3 ♥AKQ76 ♦72 ♣AKQ4, and the bidding goes:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3♣	3♠
?	

Marshall says that a raise to 4♠ would promise a singleton or void in diamonds, so he would reluctantly bid 4♣ instead. A better way to handle this situation is to say that a 4♠ bid would *deny* short diamonds, with which opener bids 4♦. This would be a non-jump splinter, showing something like: ♠K76 ♥AKQ76 ♦4 ♣AQ104.

Non-jump splinters are defined as fourth suit bids at the four or five level, when partner has bid and rebid just one suit. He may have bid notrump somewhere along the way, but his only suit bids have been in a single suit. There is just one situation in which a non-jump splinter may be made at the three level:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
3♣	3♥
3♠	

The 3♠ bid is ambiguous. Opener could have either of these two hands:

1) ♠A32 ♥7 ♦AKQ32 ♣AQJ3

2) ♠7 ♥A32 ♦AKJ32 ♣AQJ3

Opener will clarify her hand on the next round. Responder assumes for the moment that opener has short hearts, as in hand 1), and bids accordingly. *Responder* cannot make a non-jump splinter bid at the three level, because fourth suit bids by responder at that level are Fourth Suit Artificial (see section 4-10).

More examples:

Opener	Responder
1♠	3♥
3♠	4♣
4♠	5♠

Responder denies a singleton or void in diamonds, with which he would bid 5♦, not 5♠.

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣
2NT	3♦
3♠	4♠

Responder does not have short hearts, which would call for a 4♥ bid.

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♥
2♠	3♣
3NT	4♦

Responder has a singleton or void in diamonds, plus spade support. With two diamonds, she would bid 4♠.

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♣
2♠	3♣
5♣	

Opener has ♠AK87 ♥AQJ32 ♦32 ♣K10. In this auction the singleton-showing bid in diamonds would be a standard (i.e., jump) splinter bid of 4♦.

The rule that the bidding of three suits, including a jump, promises a singleton or void in the fourth suit would still apply in other situations:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3♣	3NT
4♠	

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3♣	3♥
3♠	

In these auctions opener promises short diamonds, and a 4♦ bid instead of the spade raise would not show spade support and short diamonds. Responder has not bid and rebid just one suit, so the necessary conditions for a non-jump splinter are lacking.

## THE DOUBLE JUMP REBID IN A MINOR

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥/1♠	1♣	1♦/1♥/1♠
4♦		4♣	

These double jump rebids in a minor, at the four level, after a one-over-one response, show:

-- Good four-card support for responder, slam interest.

-- Strength concentrated in the two suits, no secondary strength outside. Remember that splinter bids imply strength in *three* suits.

Typical hand for rebidding 4♣ after a 1♠ response to a 1♣ opening: ♠AQ83 ♥42 ♦6 ♣AKQ1083

A singleton ace in an unbid suit is okay, but usually no outside ace. The idea is that you want partner to discount secondary strength in the side suits. What you need for slam are not outside queens and jacks, and an outside king is of doubtful value.

This treatment applies to double jumps only, not to single jumps:

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

4♦ - does not show spade support

## CHECKBACK STAYMAN BY OPENER

Have you noticed how often partner's 1NT response to your opening bid leaves you with a rebid problem? To begin with, you may want to sign off, invite game, or force to game--but there is no way to do all three. For instance, with ♠AJ6432 ♥KQ3 ♦A10 ♣AJ you must rebid 3NT or 4♠ when partner responds 1NT to your 1♠ opening. You would like to bid a forcing 3♠ to give partner a choice, but 3♠ is not forcing.

Perhaps you have a good two-suited hand: ♠AQ942 ♥AQJ76 ♦4 ♣J2. After opening 1♠ and getting a 1NT response, should you jump to 3♥ or bid a weak 2♥? You would like to make an invitational 3♥ bid, but 3♥ is forcing. A jump in a new suit might be played as invitational, but then what would you do with ♠AQ1083 ♥AQJ2 ♦A4 ♣Q8? You would have to bid 3NT, perhaps missing a better game in a major.

Good bidders will open 1♥ with ♠A103 ♥AKJ3 ♦108743 ♣4, both as a lead directing bid and to avoid the rebid problem created by a 2♣ response to a 1♦ opening (the hand is not strong enough for a 2♥ reverse). After partner's 1NT response, however, a 2♦ rebid invariably fetches a 2♥ preference from responder, who has Qx of hearts and three diamonds (figuring opener for five hearts). How can we keep this from happening? Similar problems arise with hands such as ♠AKJ3 ♥A103 ♦J9752 ♣4 or ♠AQJ3 ♥J9542 ♦3 ♣AJ5 (both are 1♠ openings) or ♠2 ♥AK109 ♦A43 ♣J5432 (a 1♥ opening).

Another problem: You open 1♠ with ♠AK8742 ♥AQ93 ♦76 ♣4, and when partner bids 1NT you rebid 2♠ or 3♠, depending on how you feel that day. If partner has four or more hearts you are probably going to play in the wrong suit. If you rebid 2♥ instead, partner is likely to pass with two spades and three hearts. She might also pass with four hearts and a weak hand, perhaps missing an easy game. You cannot rebid 3♥ over 1NT, because the hand is not strong enough for a game-forcing jump.

The remedy for all these problems, and more, is to play all jump rebids by opener after a 1NT response as forcing to game. With an invitational hand, opener rebids an artificial 2♣, which we have named Checkback Stayman (CS), then makes an invitational bid. Rebids of 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ are weak, except for a reverse (two-level bid in a suit higher than the one opened), which is strong but not forcing. Opener may also rebid 2♣ with certain weak hands, seeking to find the safest landing spot. A raise of 1NT to 2NT is natural, invitational.

**Warning: DO NOT USE CHECKBACK STAYMAN IF A REVERSE OR OTHER NATURAL BID WILL SUFFICE!**

One advantage of CS is that you can bypass a weak four-card major suit, responding 1NT with a notrumpish hand such as ♠Q76 ♥J632 ♦K72 ♣K107 or even ♠9832 ♥10876 ♦Q2 ♣AQ10 when the opening is, say, 1♦. Such hands usually play just as well in notrump if opener's hand is also balanced, even if opener has four cards in your major. Besides, you don't want to play in a weak major suit opposite three-card support. If opener has an unbalanced hand with four cards in a major, he may be able to check back with a 2♣ rebid, or reverse with a bid of the major.

## Responses to Checkback Stayman

Responder shows an unbid major or three-card support (a very strong doubleton--two of the top four honors--is equivalent to three-card support) for partner's major. With both, support partner's major; with neither, bid 2♦:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2♣	2♦ - no spade support, no heart suit 2♥ - heart suit, denies three spades* 2♠ - three spades, could have hearts

\* Exception: 2♥ is okay with five hearts and three spades.

Opener	Responder
1♥	1NT
2♣	2♦ - no heart support 2♥ - heart support, could have spades 2♠ - an impossible bid

The last 2♠ bid is impossible because responder must not bypass a four-card spade suit when lacking heart support.

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	1NT
2♣	2♦ - no four-card major 2♥ - four hearts, could have spades 2♠ - four spades, denies four hearts

In general responder must rebid 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ in response to CS. With a six-card semi-solid minor suit, however, she may bid three of the long suit. The suit must be strong enough to play opposite a singleton in opener's hand:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1NT
2♣	3♣/3♦ - semi-solid six-card suit

## Opener's Next Bid

If opener does not pass responder's answer to CS, his next bid is as follows:

-- An immediate 3♣ bid is natural, showing five or more clubs and a weak hand. Opener would have made a natural (weak) 2♣ rebid if not using CS:

Opener	Responder
1 Any	1NT
2♣	2♦/2♥/2♠
3♣	- five or more clubs, weak hand

There is one sequence, however, in which 3♣ is forcing:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2♣	2♠
3♣ is strong, trying for game	

In this auction opener must have five spades (otherwise the opening would be 1♣) and would therefore pass 2♠ with a weak hand. The 3♣ call is a trial bid, asking if responder has a hand that fits well. With a suitable hand such as ♠1032 ♥854 ♦A54 ♣KJ7, responder will now bid 4♠ because of the good fit with opener's clubs. With a poor fit responder will sign off in 3♠. Opener's hand is ♠AK954 ♥K2 ♦6 ♣AQ543.

The situation is very different when the suit is hearts:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1NT
2♣	2♥
3♣ is a signoff	

In this case opener has a hand such as ♠4 ♥AKJ8 ♦A43 ♣Q8763 (with five hearts he would pass the 2♥ bid). A 1♥ opening is better than 1♣, to provide for an easy rebid opposite the expected 1♠ response. Responder will pass 3♣ or bid 3♦, knowing that opener has 1-4-3-5 distribution (with 3-4-1-5 or 2-4-2-5 the opening would be 1♣).

Another possibility for a 4-5 major-minor hand is a hand of this type: ♠AKJ3 ♥A32 ♦108763 ♣8. The correct opening bid is 1♠, and after a 1NT response opener must use CS because a 2♦ rebid promises five spades. Opener will pass a red-suit response to CS.

With nothing but long clubs and no interest in game, opener just keeps bidding clubs until responder gets the message:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1NT
2♣	2♦/2♥/2♠
3♣	Pass (forced - opener is weak)

-- An immediate bid of 3♦, 3♥, or 3♠ is invitational, not forcing:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2♣	2♦
3♦/3♥/3♠ are invitational	

The 3♥ bid shows a hand with 5-5 in the majors. With 5-4 opener would bid a forcing 2♥ instead of 3♥. If responder had bid 2♠ over 2♣, the 3♥ bid might be made with a four-card suit. Even then

the 3♥ bid is not forcing, although responder is unlikely to pass. To do so she would have a weak hand with four hearts and a poor fit: ♠873 ♥J984 ♦KJ3 ♣Q76.

-- If opener's next bid after 2♣ is 2NT, that is a game try showing clubs (as a second suit, or as a rebid of clubs if the opening was 1♣).

Opener	Responder
1 any	1NT
2♣	2♦/2♥/2♠
2NT shows clubs, invitational hand	

Opener cannot bid 3♣ with an invitational hand, because 3♣ is a weak bid. If his opening was 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠, he has a strong two-suiter with clubs as the second suit, and is inviting game. Responder pretends to have heard an invitational 3♣ bid (a 3♣ jump after the 1NT response would have been forcing) and acts accordingly. If she would have passed an invitational 3♣ bid, she now bids 3♣, which opener passes. She might pass 2NT, at her own risk, with a weak hand and strength in the "unbid" suits.

If the opening was 1♣, opener has a long club suit in a hand of invitational strength. It is usually best not to pass 2NT, because opener could have a very unbalanced hand. If 3NT cannot be made, 3♣ is probably a better contract than 2NT. Besides, with a liking for notrump opener might have raised 1NT to 2NT instead of using CS.

If the opening was 1♦, opener has at least 5-4 in the minors.

If the opening was 1♥, opener has at least 5-4 in hearts and clubs. When hearts have been supported, the reason for bidding 2NT is to help responder evaluate her hand in deciding whether to accept the game invitation or not. When a club fit is not important, opener should just bid 3♥ over 2♥ to invite game.

If the opening was 1♠, opener has at least 5-4 in spades and clubs. When spades have been supported, the 2NT bid definitely shows four clubs because (as discussed before) opener would bid a forcing 3♣ to invite game with a 5-5 hand. Here too, opener should just bid 3♠ over 2♠ to invite game when a club fit is not important.

A *delayed* bid of 2NT, however, does not show clubs. It is a normal invitation to game in notrump:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2♣	2♦
2♥	2♠ (forced)
2NT is natural, not club-showing	

Opener has ♠AK32 ♥AK76 ♦76 ♣QJ3 and bids 2♣ to check for a heart fit. Having found none, he must bid 2♥ (forcing) as a stepping stone to an invitational 2NT bid. He could not bid 2NT

immediately over 2♦, because that would show clubs. Responder's 2♠ bid is forced, even with a singleton spade. She has previously denied spade support with the 2♦ bid.

-- If opener's next bid after CS is a new suit at the two level (as above) that is usually a one round force. Opener has invitational strength or better. Let's discuss the above auction first:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2♣	2♦
2♥	is forcing

Opener has only four hearts, since he would bid 3♥ with five (over 1NT to force to game, over 2♦ to invite game). Responder has denied holding four hearts, so opener can only be bidding 2♥ on the way to describing her hand. Responder must bid 2♠ at this point (the 2♦ bid denied spade support). Opener may have 5-4-0-4, 5-4-4-0, 4-4-4-1, etc. If so, he will bid his minor next (not forcing). He might have a weak hand with six spades and four hearts, using the 2♥ bid as a device to get to a 2♠ contract (2♠ over 2♦ would show five spades, not six, as explained later). Or he might have: ♠AJ976 ♥KQ108 ♦AJ ♣Q9, planning to follow with an invitational 2NT bid. He could not bid 2NT over 2♦, because that would show clubs, remember?

Responder must usually just make the cheapest call when a major suit opener bids the other major at the two level in a CS sequence. There is no need to jump to 3NT with a maximum 1NT response, because opener will always bid again if he is interested in game. If the new suit is spades, responder may be in a position to raise instead of bidding 2NT:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1NT
2♣	2♥
2♠	?

Responder could have four spades (a weak suit, of course), since she must show heart support as a first priority. If she does have spades, she raises to 3♠ or 4♠, according to her strength. Otherwise she just bids 2NT, allowing opener to continue showing his hand.

Opener	Responder
1♥	1NT
2♣	2♦
2♠	2NT - forced

Responder has denied having four spades or three hearts. Opener is bidding 2♠ on the way to showing his obviously good hand, which may have a distribution of 4-5-4-0, 4-5-0-4, or 4-6 in the majors. Responder bids 2NT to allow opener to continue his hand description.

When a minor suit opener bids a new major after using CS, responder can sometimes give more information. She must never bypass opener's first suit, however:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1NT
2♣	2♦
2♥	2♠ - good spade strength 2NT - non-committal 3♣ - four clubs, maximum hand 3♦ - not permitted

The 2♠ bid, which shows good spade strength but not necessarily a maximum hand, may enable opener to invite game with a 2NT bid (or even bid 3NT) when he was planning some other bid: ♠J ♥AK42 ♦AK ♣K108732 The 3♣ bid could lead to a slam if opener has the same hand.

Opener	Responder
1♦	1NT
2♣	2♦
2♥	2♠ - good spade strength 2NT - non-committal 3♣/3♦ - four or more, maximum (3♣ denies four diamonds)

Opener	Responder
1♦	1NT
2♣	2♦/2♥
2♠	2NT - non-committal 3♣/3♦ - four or more, maximum (3♣ denies four diamonds)

What if a light 1♣ opener is 5-5 in the black suits? This is not a rare occurrence, since 1♣ is the right opening with a weak to moderate hand and weakish spades. The answer, unfortunately, is that we must have an exception: A 2♠ rebid by a 1♣ opener who has used CS shows five spades and is neither forcing nor particularly invitational. This means that opener cannot show a four-card spade suit at this point and must choose some other sequence (e.g, a reverse) with a good hand.

-- If opener's next bid after 2♣ is a rebid of his major suit at the two level, he shows five cards in the suit, plus four clubs, and a weak hand:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1NT
2♣	2♦
2♥	- five hearts, four clubs, weak hand

Opener could not bid 2NT to show clubs, because that requires a hand of game-invitational strength, and he needs five clubs to bid 2♣, then 3♣. Responder may pass, prefer clubs, or correct to 2NT

### More About Two-Suiters

A 1♠ opening followed by a 2♥ rebid after a 1NT response is never based on a holding of more spades than hearts. Opener either has equal length or the hearts are longer (e.g., ♠AKJ3 ♥J10863 ♦KJ2 ♣5):

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2♥	

Responder passes 2♥ with equal length in both majors. If responder's majors were reversed, with more spades than hearts, 6-4 or 5-4, opener could have used CS. If the response to CS is a disappointing 2♦, opener bids 2♥ to force a 2♠ bid:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2♣	2♦
2♥	2♠ is forced

This won't work very well if responder has a singleton spade and three hearts, but that doesn't happen very often.

Do not use CS with a 4-6 holding in spades-hearts and no interest in game. Just rebid the hearts. Remember that CS followed by a rebid of the opened major shows just five cards in the suit (plus four clubs).

A 1♥ opening followed by a rebid of 2♦ denies five hearts:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1NT
2♦ - denies five hearts	

Opener has a hand such as ♠3 ♥KQ108 ♦J7652 ♣AQJ. With five hearts opener can safely use CS after the 1NT response, since responder cannot bid 2♠. As discussed previously, a 1NT response to 1♥ must not be made when holding four spades and no heart support. When opener has ♠A4 ♥Q10832 ♦KQ764 ♣3, the bidding will go:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1NT
2♣	2♦/2♥
Pass	

Opener might even bid like this with five hearts and four diamonds, although this is a little risky, since responder could have a 3-2-2-6 hand. It might be better to pass 1NT or rebid 2♥. With six hearts and five diamonds, opener should forget diamonds and rebid 2♥ with a weak opening.

Now look at the spade-diamond situation. With five spades and four or five diamonds, opener (after opening 1♠ and getting a 1NT response) should usually rebid 2♦ with no interest in game. In this

case responder prefers spades with equal length in both suits (opener will never have longer diamonds). Use of CS with a hand such as ♠AJ875 ♥3 ♦KJ62 ♣K53 would lead to trouble if responder bids 2♥. When opener has three hearts, however, in a 5-3-4-1 hand, CS may be chanced (with the plan of passing any response). That is one reason why responder, holding three spades and four hearts, must bid 2♠ in response to CS.

With a hand like ♠AKJ2 ♥A103 ♦J9762 ♣5, the correct opening is 1♠, to provide for a comfortable rebid if the response is 1NT or 2♣. The hand is not strong enough to open 1♦ and reverse with 2♠, and the diamonds are too weak to rebid. With a 1♠ opening, opener can use CS after a 1NT response, then pass responder's next bid. That is why we permit a 2♥ response to CS when responder has three spades and five hearts (♠543 ♥J8752 ♦Q103 ♣AQ).

If opener has chosen to start with 1♦ holding a hand such as ♠KQ3 ♥4 ♦AKJ2 ♣97543, CS is fairly safe. Opener will pass a 2♠ bid, and otherwise will rebid 3♣, which shows five clubs. Responder should prefer clubs with equal length in the minors.

When opener has five diamonds and four clubs (♠KQJ ♥4 ♦97543 ♣AKJ2), she might pass 1NT. If she chooses to use CS, the plan is to pass 2♦ or 2♠, and to (probably) force a 2NT contract (by bidding 2♠) if responder bids 2♥. If responder then bids a minor (showing at least four) instead of 2NT, that's okay too! With six diamonds and five clubs opener has the choice of rebidding 2♦ after a 1NT response, or treating the two suits as if they were of equal length by bidding 2♣, then 3♣ (with the small risk of playing a 5-3 club fit instead of a 6-3 diamond fit). Don't worry much about this, because the opponents will surely be in the bidding when opener has a weak hand with both minors opposite a 1NT response.

### Some Final Points

When opener jumps to 3NT after using CS, despite being supported in his major, he must have four cards in the other major:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2♣	2♠
3NT	

Opener's jump to 3NT denies a five-card spade holding, so the only reason for using CS must have been the possession of four hearts. If responder has a heart suit in addition to the spade support shown, she may now bid 4♥.

Hands of 4-4-4-1 shape may present problems. With a weak hand 1NT must usually be passed, although it is no crime to open 1♠ and rebid 2♥ with ♠AK87 ♥AQ103 ♦8762 ♣3. Responder should not take a "false preference" with two spades and three hearts, because this sequence denies a 5-4 holding in the majors (as previously discussed). CS should not be used because responder will bid 2♠ with three spades and four hearts.

CS does not usually work well with 4-4-4-1 hands of invitational strength. Just raise 1NT to 2NT and hope responder has enough to continue, whereupon she will show an unbid major. With a game-going hand CS can always be used safely when it is needed.

CS is not used with 5-3-3-2 or 4-4-3-2 hands of mere invitational strength. With a five-card major in a 5-3-3-2 hand, there is usually no way to raise to 2NT after using CS. Just raise 1NT to 2NT, after which partner may be able to show support for the major. If partner didn't raise the major opening with three-card support he must be balanced, so the hand is likely to play just as well in notrump. Here too, using CS is okay with a game-going hand.

CS does not apply when responder's 1NT call is a rebid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1♠	1NT
2♣ - natural,	not CS
3♣/3♦ - invitational,	not forcing

CS does not apply after a 1NT response to an overcall:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣ - natural bid		

### When the Opponents Intervene

CS applies when the 1NT response comes over an opposing bid:

North	East	South	West
1♦	1♥	1NT	Pass
2♣ is CS			

All further bids by either partner retain the usual meanings, except that a natural bid in an opposing suit can show either four cards or a strong three. For instance, a 2♥ response by South would show four hearts with at least one honor or three good hearts (e.g., KJx), and would not deny four cards in spades.

CS does not apply if the 1NT bid is doubled, however. The bidding reverts to standard bidding in that case.

If there is an opposing bid following the 2♣ bid that initiates CS, all doubles are for business and all bids are natural:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	2♥
Dbl - business			

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	2♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl - business			
2NT - natural, not club-invitational			
3♣ - may not be weak			

### When an Artificial Bid Gets Doubled

When an opponent doubles an artificial bid, including the CS 2♣ bid, any elaborate scheme for always showing stopper(s) or lack of stopper in the doubled suit would get in the way of CS bidding sequences, so we just use common sense. Immediate bids continue the CS sequence, while reopening bids revert to natural bidding.

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Dbl	Pass - can support a club contract	
2♦ - normal response, poor clubs			
2♥/2♠ - says nothing about clubs			
Rdbl - good clubs, good hand			

The pass or redouble denies hearts or three spades. "Good clubs" means club strength, at least a double stopper, not necessarily with four-card length. The 2♥ and 2♠ bids do not deny good clubs, however (but 2♦ does).

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Dbl
Pass - playable diamonds			
2♥/2♠/2NT/3♣ - normal CS rebids			
Rdbl - good diamonds, good hand			

The normal rebids say nothing about diamonds. North could have good diamonds and just not want to complicate things by passing or redoubling.

If the double of an artificial bid gets passed around, a redouble suggests that the doubled contract may be playable, and may be the highest scoring (or only) game. Partner can pass if he agrees. Otherwise the bidding proceeds naturally, with no artificial bids:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Dbl
Pass	Pass	Rdbl - to play	
2♥/2♠/2NT/3♣ - natural			
3♥/3♠ - invitational			

### When a Natural Bid Gets Doubled

When a natural bid is doubled, a redouble is to play, a pass is suggestion (not a command) that the contract may be playable; and a bid just ignores the double, continuing the CS sequence. Partner can do what he wants after a pass: redouble (to play) or continue with natural bidding.



## Summary

After a 1NT response to an opening bid:

All three-level jump rebids by opener are forcing to game.

2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ is weak (reverses excepted).

To invite game, opener bids 2♣ (artificial), then invites.

2♣ followed by 3♣ is a weak signoff, so

2♣ followed by 2NT is a game try club bid.

Responder's action after CS:

Show three-card support for opener's major suit.

Lacking that, show an unbid major.

Lacking either of these, bid 2♦.

If opener does not pass responder's answer to CS, his next bid is as follows:

3♣ is natural, weak (unless spades have been supported).

3♦, 3♥, or 3♠ is invitational.

2NT shows clubs, invitational strength.

A new suit at the two level is forcing.

Rebid of a major is weak, shows four clubs too.

A spade opening followed by a 2♥ rebid never has longer spades, with which CS is used.

A heart opening followed by a 2♦ rebid never has longer hearts, with which CS is used.

A spade opening followed by a 2♦ rebid promises five spades, without which a weak opener must pass 1NT (or bid 2♣ with 4=3=5=1).

A diamond opening followed by 2♣, then 3♣, seldom has longer diamonds, with which opener must rebid 2♦ if he doesn't want to treat the two suits as equal in length.

When opener bids a new suit at the two level, that is a one-round force unless the opening was 1♣ and the new suit is spades (which shows 5-5 in the black suits). When the bid is forcing, responder generally makes the next higher ranking bid. If a minor suit opener bids a new major, however, a maximum responder has other options.

What do you give up with CS? Answer: You cannot stop in 2♣ after a 1NT response when both hands are weak. And when was the last time you were able to do that? The opponents may well sell out for 2♣ after such an auction, but are likely to be in the bidding before that point is reached. Remember that it is better to raise a minor suit opening with a very weak hand rather than bid a four-card major.

## CHECKBACK STAYMAN BY RESPONDER

Eddie Kantar has pointed out the unplayability of standard bidding after a 1NT rebid by opener:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT?	

Responder may now want to sign off, invite game, or force to game with a suit bid. There are only two levels of bidding available for the three actions, however, and three into two won't go. Kantar's answer was to make all jump rebids by responder invitational. With stronger hands he bids an artificial 2♣ and then makes his forcing bid. Unfortunately he can't sign off in clubs.

Others remedy that drawback by using the lowest unbid minor ("New Minor Forcing") for the artificial bid, permitting responder to sign off in opener's minor suit. He can no longer sign off in the unbid minor, however. Presumably this is a lesser evil. But what if there is no unbid minor?

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1NT?	

How can responder make a signoff bid in clubs, an invitational bid in clubs, or a forcing bid in clubs, with only two bids to choose from (2♣ and 3♣)? The same problem arises if responder wants to rebid in diamonds. How to sign off, invite, or force in diamonds?

The use of three-level jumps as invitational has other weaknesses. Suppose the auction goes: 1♣-1♠; 1NT-3♣, with 3♣ invitational, and opener holds ♠Q32 ♥AJ5 ♦K84 ♣K732. What now? Bid 3♠ and find responder with a weak four-card suit? Besides, 3♠ is forcing, accepting the game invitation. No, opener must pass and perhaps miss a 5-3 spade fit. His problem is worse with a 3-4-3-3 hand. If responder uses "New Minor Forcing" (bidding 2♦ artificially) with five spades and invitational strength, she can't then make an invitational club bid (a 3♣ bid following NMF is forcing to game) if opener lacks spade support. A poor notrump contract may result.

Another situation: You have ♦K983 ♥Q1086 ♦KQJ4 ♣8 and respond 1♥ to partner's 1♦ opening. After his 1NT rebid you invite with 3♦. He now bids 3NT with ♠AJ10 ♥K7 ♦A7632 ♣Q75 and has no play, down two. How could he tell that five diamonds would be a better contract? You might have held ♠8 ♥Q1086 ♦KQJ4 ♣K983, and notrump is the right spot. There ought to be a way to describe these three-suited hands more accurately.

Another: Partner opens 1♣ and you say 1♠ with ♠A97542 ♥K983 ♦7 ♣85. When he rebids 1NT you must sign off with 2♠, but he could easily have four hearts: ♠Q ♥A1075 ♦KJ5 ♣KJ432. A heart contract is better, but how do you get there? A 2♥ rebid shows a weak 5-5 in the majors, maybe 6-5, or even 5-4, but not 6-4.

More: You respond 1♠ to a 1♣ opening, holding ♠AJ75 ♥62 ♦863 ♣KQJ2. When partner rebids 1NT, should you bid 3♣ or 2NT? If he has a minimum 2NT might be better, especially if he has only three clubs. If only we could invite game *and* show club support without going past the two level.

One more: You have ♠AJ7632 ♥A2 ♦A76 ♣Q9 and respond 1♠ after partner opens 1♣. When he rebids 1NT, how do you indicate slam interest? Wouldn't it be nice if 3♠ were forcing? Then partner could use Blackwood with ♠K85 ♥K76 ♦K52 ♣AJ102, and a 4♠ rebid by responder would imply no interest in slam: ♠J976432 ♥A2 ♦A7 ♣93

Try this approach as a solution to most such problems:

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦/1♥	1♦/1♥/1♠
1NT	3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - forcing
	2♦/2♥/2♠ - weak (except for reverses)
	2♣ - Checkback Stayman

A 2♣ rebid is Checkback Stayman (CS), forcing and artificial. It usually shows a game try sort of hand, about 11 high card points (HCP). As we shall see, CS may also be used with some weaker or stronger hands. It's most common uses are (1) to find out if opener has support for responder's major, (2) to find out if opener has an unbid four-card major, and (3) to discriminate between game-going and game-invitational hands.

**Warning: DO NOT USE CHECKBACK STAYMAN IF A REVERSE OR OTHER NATURAL BID WILL ADEQUATELY DESCRIBE YOUR HAND!**

Partner will assume you do not have a good natural call when you use CS, and will therefore exclude certain holdings when he tries to picture your hand. Suppose you have ♠43 ♥KJ97 ♦AQ1083 ♣J4. After answering 1♦ to partner's 1♣ opening, your next call when he rebids 1NT is 2♥--a good descriptive forcing (but not to game) reverse, implying five diamonds and four hearts. CS would be unnecessary and incorrect.

If you have reversing values and support for partner's suit when he rebids 1NT, you can reverse and then raise or use CS, reverse, and then raise. Which? The former if you want to force, the latter if you want to invite. CS is not "adequate" with game-going values.

One advantage of playing CS is that opener can bypass a four-card major suit, e.g., rebidding 1NT after opening 1♣ with a 4-3-3-3 hand such as ♠Q1076 ♥J103 ♦AJ9 ♣AQ8 and receiving a red suit response. Even if a 4-4 fit is missed, such hands often play just as well in notrump if responder is also balanced. If she is unbalanced, she may be able to use CS to "check back" for spades. Besides, you don't want responder to make a club preference with a hand such as ♠842 ♥A987 ♦32 ♣K973, as she would after a 1♠ rebid. Nor do you want her competing to 3♣, or jumping to 3♣ invitational, with four-card support.

**RULE:** After opening 1♣, a new suit bid at the one level implies more than three clubs. If you can't stand bypassing a strong four-card major, just open the bidding with it (although you may have to rebid it with a minimum hand).

**RULE:** With a very weak hand responder should raise opener's minor rather than bid a new four-card suit. The raise is both descriptive and preemptive, shutting out a one-level overcall. It may enable opener to compete to the three level, something responder could not do.

RULE: Responder should not use CB with a 5-3-3-2 hand, even with five cards in a major. Just raise notrump. Similarly, do not use CB with a 4-3-3-3 hand (i.e., four spades and three-card support for partner's hearts).

RULE: Opener should not bypass a four-card spade suit when the response is 1♥ and he has a doubleton heart. It's okay to do this only with a 4=3=3=3 hand.

Further advice:

With a strong four-card suit and a weak next-lower five-card suit, respond in the four-carder when not strong enough to reverse. Respond 1♠ to 1♣ or 1♦ with ♠AKJx ♥J9xxx ♦xx ♣xx, then rebid 2H if opener bids 1NT and hope opener doesn't prefer spades. With ♠J9xx ♥AKxxx ♦xx ♣xx, respond 1♥ and pass a 1NT rebid, even with a singleton in opener's minor. With three cards in his minor you can use CS.

What does responder have in this auction?

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♥

Answer: A weak hand with five spades and three weak hearts, unbalanced: ♠Q8743 ♥986 ♦3 ♣K853. With four spades or better hearts, responder should bid 2♥ instead of 1♠.

Responder should generally not use CB with a 4-4-3-2 hand, even when holding an unbid major. If one of the suits is partner's and the strength is concentrated in the partnership's two suits, using CB is okay. Despite the balanced hand, inviting game by showing a raise for partner may be safer than raising notrump with zilch in the two unbid suits.

### Responses to Checkback Stayman

Now, how do you respond to CS? In one of just three ways:

-- Show three-card support for a major that responder has bid.

-- Lacking that, show an unbid major or rebid a five-card heart suit (Not spades? No. How can you rebid 1NT after opening 1♠?).

-- Otherwise bid 2♦.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♥	- four hearts, denies three spades
2♠	- spade support, may have four hearts
2♦	- denies spade support or four hearts

While opener may bypass a weak four-card major to rebid 1NT, even with 4-4-3-2 distribution, he must not bypass four spades over a 1♥ response unless he has three hearts, even with very weak spades. The reason is that a 2♠ response to CS might interfere with responder's plans.

### Responder's Next Bid

If responder does not pass opener's response to CS, her next bid has one of the following meanings:

-- A bid of 3♣ is a signoff:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦	1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣	1NT	2♣
2♦	3♣	any	3♣

Opener usually passes, but in the first auction he could now bid 3♦ with something like ♠A43 ♥K76 ♦9862 ♣AQ5. In the second auction responder has a weak hand, maybe 4-6 in the black suits, and opener must pass.

-- A 2NT bid, artificial, shows clubs and a game-invitational hand:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥	1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣	1NT	2♣
2♦/2♥	2NT	2♦/2♥/2♠	2NT

In both cases responder is showing clubs and a game-invitational hand, probably unbalanced. If opener bids 3♣, declining the invitation, responder will pass. If opener bids anything else, he is accepting the game try. Occasionally opener will pass the 2NT bid, with a minimum hand and strength in the "unbid" suits.

The 2NT bid is invitational in clubs when made immediately after the 2♣ call, but:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥
2♠	2NT is a natural bid

(I'll explain this auction later.)

-- A bid of 3♦, 3♥, or 3♠ is invitational, not forcing:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	3♦/3♥/3♠ are all invitational

Look at this sequence:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1NT	2♣
2♥	3♦

The 3♦ bid is invitational and denies five hearts. Opener must not go back to hearts unless he has a good hand and wants to be in game. With five hearts responder must bid 3♥ instead of 3♦ for her game try. The principle is this:

WHEN OPENER SHOWS SUPPORT FOR RESPONDER'S MAJOR, RESPONDER'S BID OF ANOTHER SUIT OR NOTRUMP DENIES FIVE CARDS IN THE MAJOR.

-- A heart raise at the two level is invitational, implying three-card support:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥

Responder has J10x or better in hearts. With four hearts she would usually invite with a 3♥ bid, but 2♥ may be preferred when the hand is marginal for a game invitation. Opener must pass 2♥ with a minimum hand, perhaps playing a 4-3 fit. With more than a minimum he can bid 2♠, 2NT, or 3♥ (all invitational); 3♣, 3♦, or 3♠ (all forcing); 3NT; or 4♥. Of course the spade raises show only good doubleton support, since opener has denied holding three spades.

-- A new suit at the two level is forcing. There are three basic situations:

1) A 1♦ responder bids a major after using CS. Let's start with 2♠:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠ - forcing
2NT	3♣/3♦ - invitational

Opener has denied holding a major, so responder can only be bidding 2♠ on the way to describing her hand. She may have 4=1=4=4 or 4=1=6=2, for instance. Opener must bid 2NT, forcing, as a mark-time bid, letting responder get on with the bidding.

When the 1♦ responder bids 2♥ after using CS, opener bids 2♠ with a double spade stopper, otherwise 2NT:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥
2♠ shows a double stopper	
2NT otherwise (forcing)	

Opener's 2♦ bid denied four hearts or four spades. His 2♠ bid shows good strength in spades, without which he must bid 2NT. Responder might have ♠J ♥A1097 ♦KJ8752 ♣Q9. When opener bids 2♠ over 2♥, responder can bid 2NT (instead of 3♦) to invite game.

2) A 1♠ responder bids 2♥ after using CS:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥

The 2♥ bid shows four hearts only, since responder would jump to 3♥ (invitational) with five. Opener must now bid 2♠. His 2♦ response denied a holding of four hearts or three spades, so responder must only be trying to describe her hand fully. Perhaps she has a weak hand with six spades and four hearts, using the 2♥ bid as a device to get back to spades (2♠ over 2♦ would show five spades, not six). She might have ♠AJ874 ♥K652 ♦J9 ♣Q8, planning to bid a natural and invitational 2NT after the forced 2♠ bid. She could not bid 2NT over 2♦ because that would show clubs, remember?

3) A 1♥ responder bids 2♠ after using CS. This is the only time that opener is allowed to show the quality of his hand after a two-level suit rebid by responder:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♣
2♦/2♥	2♠

When opener bids 2♥ he could have four spades, since he must show heart support as a first priority. If so, he can now raise spades (jumping with a maximum). Otherwise, or if he bid 2♦, he now bids 2NT with a minimum, which responder may pass, or something at the three level (perhaps 3NT) with a good hand.

Since a reverse would be preferable with a 5-4 hand, this sequence tends to show 4-4 in the majors. Responder usually can't do the same sort of thing after responding 1♠ with 4-4 majors (opener must bid 2♠ with three, leaving responder with no good bid with an invitationl hand unless she has four cards in opener's suit. That is one reason why 1♥ is the preferred response to a minor opening when holding both majors. If the opening is 1♦, responder can be quicker to bypass a weak heart suit with 4-4 majors (with opener unlikely to have hearts), but must not use CS. Also, if responder has a game-going hand, there is no problem:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♣
2♥	2♠
2NT	3♣ - invitational
	3NT - implies four hearts (else why CS?)

When a responder who uses CS bids two suits, then bids notrump or raises opener, she is making a game try. When she bids all three suits other than the one opened, she is forcing to game:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠	1♣	1♥
1NT	2♣	1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥	2♦	2♠
2♠	2NT/3♣	2NT	3♦

The 1♠ responder has only invited game with her last bid, so opener passes with a minimum. The 1♥ responder, who has also bid spades and diamonds, has made a game force, perhaps with a 4-5-4-0 hand (but could be 4-4-4-1). The 3♦ bid is natural, not "Fourth Suit Artificial," a convention that does not apply in CS sequences.

-- A rebid of a major suit at the two level shows a weak hand and a five-card suit, with trump support for opener's minor, or a minor suit on the side, or both:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠

With nothing but six spades and a weak hand, responder would have bid 2♠ over 1NT. With six spades and four hearts, she would have bid 2♥ over 2♦, forcing opener to bid 2♠. The 2♠ bid therefore shows five spades, and opener can pass with a good doubleton (J10 or better) in spades. Otherwise he must bid 2NT with two or three clubs (at least three, in this case), and 3♣ with four or more. Responder will then place the contract in either clubs or diamonds. Occasionally it will be impossible for opener to have fewer than four clubs:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠

Opener has denied holding four hearts or three spades, so he has eight cards in the minors and could hardly have opened a three-card club suit. In this situation a 2NT bid would show four clubs and a 3♣ bid would show five. There is one other such case:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥

Responder has five hearts and a weak hand, with diamonds or clubs in reserve. With a weak 4=6 in the majors, responder must bid 2♥, not 2♣, over 1NT. Again, opener must have at least four clubs, so a 2NT bid would show four, a 3♣ bid five. What would a 2♠ bid by opener mean at this point? "I have three strong spades and the minimum number of clubs--four." Responder can then bid 2NT with ♠10 ♥J9872 ♦AJ87 ♣Q65. Opener will not take the 2NT bid as invitational, since the 2♥ bid denies interest in game. Opener's hand: ♠KQ9 ♥65 ♦KQ83 ♣KJ72

If opener has ♠A32 ♥65 ♦KQ83 ♣KJ72, he bids 2NT over 2♥, showing four clubs. Then responder, knowing opener is 4-4 in the minor suits, would place the contract by bidding 3♦. Finally, if the 8♦ were the 8♣, opener would bid 3♣ over 2♥ and responder would pass.

In the following auction responder has ♠Q9873 ♥7 ♦K108 ♣A965:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♥	2♠
3♣	Pass

Opener must have a hand like: ♠K ♥Q863 ♦AQJ7 ♣K1032, since his 3♣ bid shows four clubs. Responder therefore passes.

This procedure of bidding 2NT or 3♣ (sometimes 2♠) to indicate the number of clubs held applies only when responder has shown a weak hand by rebidding her major after using CS.

A jump to 3NT after opener shows support for responder's major suit implies four cards in the other major or (if the opening was 1♥) support for opener's hearts:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♠	3NT

Responder must have four hearts, so opener can bid 4♥ if he has a heart suit.

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♠	3NT

Responder must have three-card heart support to be using CS, since she apparently has only four spades: ♠KQ73 ♥Q103 ♦AK4 ♣542. Opener can now bid 4♥ with a hand such as ♠J54 ♥KJ762 ♦QJ5 ♣AJ.

With CS opener can bypass a four-card major with a notrumpish hand. After opening 1♣ with ♠A754 ♥KJ8 ♦932 ♣KQ4, he can rebid 1NT after a 1♦ or 1♥ response. If responder has an unbalanced hand with four spades she will usually be able to check back with a 2♣ bid, or reverse into spades. With ♠J632 ♥AQ

♦KQJ6 ♣J86, she has no need to check for spades with such a beautiful hand for notrump. She will raise to 3NT, avoiding the bad spade game that most partnerships will find.

Opener should not bypass a four-card spade suit after a 1♥ response unless he has three hearts. There are many weak hands with which responder, holding five hearts and a singleton, will use CS. She is counting on a 2♦ or 2♥ bid from opener, and 2♠ would get the bidding too high. Knowing that opener must bid 2♥ over CS with three hearts and four spades, her assumption is a safe one.

If you must rebid 1NT after a 1♥ response, holding four spades and a doubleton heart, make sure the doubleton is very strong: ♠5432 ♥KJ ♦AQJ ♣K1098. Then you can bid 2♥ if responder rebids 2♣. Don't bid 2♦, which denies four spades.

After responding 1♥ to 1♦ with ♠9 ♥A10763 ♦Q975 ♣J32, do not bid 2♦ when opener rebids 1NT. A 2♦ preference denies five hearts, with which a 2♣ bid is safe (opener will bid 2♦ or 2♥, not 2♠). With three hearts opener no longer has to guess whether to pass a 2♦ preference or show the heart support.

Suppose responder to a 1♥ opening has a weak hand with spades and diamonds:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♦

A slight problem here is that responder, lacking the strength for an original 2♦ response, could have six diamonds and only four spades. If opener has 3-3 in those suits he will prefer spades, so responder may have to go on to 3♦, which opener must pass. Could responder have a weak hand with 4-5 in spades-diamonds? No. With such a hand responder should just pass 1NT. If responder is 4-5 in spades-diamonds, her distribution will be 4-2-5-2 or 4-1-5-3, suitable for a 1NT contract.

CS applies when 1NT is opener's third bid. There is only one such sequence:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1♥	1♠ (natural)
1NT	2♣ is CS

All subsequent bids have the same meaning as previously described. A 2♥ bid by opener would show five hearts, which is not impossible, or a strong four: ♠KJ ♥97632 ♦Q3 ♣AKJ3 or ♠J5 ♥AK105 ♦876 ♣A653. Responder can now raise hearts with three-card support.

The 2NT bid to show clubs is often useful with a 4-4-4-1 hand. Partner opens 1♦, you bid 1♥ with ♠Q ♥KQ52 ♦K652 ♣Q987, and he rebids 1NT. Your CS call now fetches a 2♦ bid. The best move now is not a 3♦ raise, the natural inclination, but 2NT (showing clubs). Partner will assume you have a two-suited hand with hearts and clubs, and will usually bid 3NT or 3♣. If he bids 3♣, you bid 3♦, completing the picture of your hand. He might pass 2NT, but that's all right--he must have good spades to do so. If he happens to bid 3♦ over 2NT (showing five diamonds and accepting the game try), you will raise. He must have a good hand with weak spades, so five diamonds should be playable. He might have ♠643 ♦A4 ♦AJ432 ♣AJ3.

CS is not normally used with 4-4-3-2 hands, but there are exceptions:

-- With two strong four-card suits, one of which is partner's suit, and little strength outside, CS may be preferable to a notrump raise: ♠KQJ3 ♥87 ♦AJ102 ♣943. Partner opens 1♦ and you respond 1♠. After his 1NT rebid you can bid 2♣, intending to follow with a diamond raise. This course is safer than a raise of 1NT to 2NT.

-- CS can be used with a 4-4-3-2 hand of invitational strength if it includes good three-card support for opener's hearts (J10x or better) or if the two four-card suits are majors and the original response is 1♥. CS doesn't work if the response is 1♠, so responder must just raise to 2NT in that case.

-- When responder is strong enough for game opposite a minimum, she can use CS to check for an unbid major, even with 4-4-3-2 distribution: ♠AQ104 ♥972 ♦AKJ10 ♣J3. Partner opens 1♣, you say 1♦, and he rebids 1NT. It is permissible to bid 2♣, just in case opener has bypassed a four-card spade suit. If opener does not bid 2♠, you jump to 3NT. With a weaker hand, however (♠AQ103 ♥854 ♦KJ82 ♣75), a 1♦ responder to a 1♣ opening can only raise 1NT to 2NT, because CS doesn't work. That is one reason for bidding 1♠ instead of 1♦ with this sort of hand.

CS is not generally used with a 4-4-4-1 hand when the singleton is in opener's suit, unless responder has a game-going hand or has responded 1♥ with both majors. Otherwise CS either wouldn't work or would serve no purpose.

An invitational hand with 5-3-3-2 distribution should just raise notrump, even with a five-card major. Partner opens 1♦ and you respond 1♥ with ♠A3 ♥Q10964 ♦Q76 ♣K83. After his 1NT rebid you should raise to 2NT rather than bid 2♣. You have a balanced hand, partner has not raised hearts, so respect his judgment and raise notrump. Besides, he can bid 3♥ over 2NT if he wants to. If you use CS and opener bids 2♦, you cannot raise to 2NT (since a 2NT bid now would show clubs). With a game-going hand the 2♣ bid is safe, but it is usually better to just raise notrump with 5-3-3-2 hands.

I said earlier that responder should not use CS "if a reverse or other natural bid will suffice." There are some situations where a reverse won't "suffice." Suppose you have ♠A1093 ♥KJ873 ♦Q96 ♣4 and partner opens 1♦, you say 1♥, and he rebids 1NT. What now? Reverse with a 2♠ bid or use CS? Answer: Bid 2♣ with this sort of hand, planning to show spades next, then follow with an invitational diamond raise if partner doesn't fit one of the majors. With a game-going hand (add a queen) you can bid 2♠ over 1NT, reversing, then raise diamonds. You can treat this as a forcing sequence if you don't already, because CS is available for invitational strength hands. The reverse sequence does not "suffice" to show both invitational and game-going hands of this type.

When a passed hand jumps to the three level after opener's 1NT rebid, opener may choose to pass the supposed force if the jump is a raise of his suit or a jump in the same suit:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

North opened with ♠86 ♥10964 ♦KQ4 ♣AQJ3. Naturally the 3♣ bid shows a great hand despite the original pass, since an invitational (CS) sequence is available. South's hand: ♠AK75 ♥4 ♦875 ♣K9874. Perhaps North should keep going with a 3♦ bid, getting the partnership to a mediocre 5♣ game.

When the jump is in a new suit, however, opener may not pass:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♥ - forcing			

If opener can only bid 3♠ (poor hand, poor fit) now, responder may pass. Opener can raise hearts with only three trumps, since responder must have at least 5-5, probably better, in the majors. "Probably better" because responder could use a CS sequence to invite game with 5-5 in the majors.

### When the Opponents Intervene with a Bid

CS is used even when the opening bid is overcalled or doubled at the one level:

North	East	South	West
1♣	1♥/Dbl	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣ is CS	

All further bids by either partner retain the usual meanings, except that a natural bid in an opposing suit can show either four cards or a strong three. For instance, after the heart overcall, a 2♥ response by North would show four hearts with at least one honor or three good hearts (e.g., KJx), (while denying three-card spade support).

CS does not apply if the 1NT bid is doubled, however. The bidding reverts to standard bidding in that case:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Dbl	2♣ - signoff	

If there is an opposing bid following the 2♣ bid that initiates CS, all doubles are for business, and all bids are natural:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	2♥	Dbl - business	

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl - business	
2NT - natural			
3♣ - may not be weak			

### When an Artificial Bid Gets Doubled

When an opponent doubles an artificial bid, including the CS 2♣ bid, any elaborate scheme for always showing stopper(s) or lack of stopper in the doubled suit would get in the way of CS bidding sequences, so we just use common sense. Immediate bids continue the CS sequence, while reopening bids revert to natural bidding.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Dbl
Pass - prefers clubs to spades, club strength			
2♦ - conventional response, poor clubs			
2♥/2♠ - says nothing about clubs			
Rdbl - good clubs, good hand			

The pass or redouble tends to deny five hearts or three spades. "Good clubs" means club strength, at least a double stopper, not necessarily with four-card length. The 2♥ and 2♠ bids do not deny good clubs, however (but 2♦ does).

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Dbl	Pass - playable diamonds	
Rdbl - good diamonds, good hand			
2♥/2♠/2NT/3♣ - normal rebids			

The normal rebids say nothing about diamonds. North could have good diamonds and just not want to complicate things by passing or redoubling.

If the double of an artificial bid gets passed around, a redouble suggests that the doubled contract may be playable, and may be the highest scoring (or only) game. Partner can pass if he agrees. Otherwise the bidding proceeds naturally, with no artificial bids:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Dbl
Pass	Pass	Rdbl - to play	
2♦/2♥/2♠/2NT - natural			
3♦/3♥/3♠ - invitational			

### When a Natural Bid Gets Doubled

When a natural bid is doubled, a redouble is to play, a pass is a suggestion (not a command) that the contract may be playable, and a bid just ignores the double, continuing the CS sequence. Partner can do what he wants after a pass: redouble (to play) or continue with natural bidding.

## Summary

After a 1NT rebid by opener:

All three-level suit jumps by responder are forcing.  
 Any two-level suit bid other than 2♣ or a reverse is weak.  
 To invite game, responder first bids 2♣ (artificial).  
 2♣ followed by 3♣ is a weak signoff, so:  
 2♣ followed by 2NT is a game-try club bid.

Opener's action after CS:

Show three-card support for responder's major suit.  
 Lacking that, rebid a five-card suit or show an unbid major.  
 Lacking either of these, bid 2♦.

When opener shows support for responder's major, responder's next bid of a minor suit or notrump denies five cards in the major.

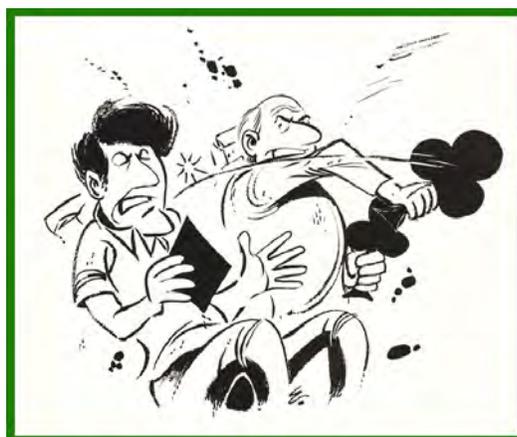
If responder's next bid after CS is a new suit at the two level, that is a force.

When using CS, if responder shows two suits and then bids notrump or raises opener's suit, she is making a game try. When she bids all three suits other than the one opened, she is forcing to game.

After CS, responder's rebid of her major at the two level shows a five-card suit and a weak hand. Responder must have support for opener's minor, or a minor suit on the side, or both. Opener can pass with a good doubleton in responder's major. Otherwise, he bids 2NT or 3♣, depending on how many clubs he has. Over 2♥ he can bid 2♠ with three strong spades, perhaps leading to a 2NT contract.

When opener shows support for responder's major after CS, responder's jump to 3NT implies four cards in an unbid major, or adequate trump support for opener's hearts.

After a 1NT rebid, a reverse by responder is forcing, and a subsequent raise of opener's suit is also forcing. Use CS with an invitational hand.



## FOURTH SUIT ARTIFICIAL

When opener rebids in a new suit, responder often has a problem:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1♠	?

To begin with, a responder who now wants to raise clubs should be able to sign off, invite game, or make a forcing bid in clubs. Standard bidding does not permit all three. In the auction above, responder might have one of these hands:

- 1) ♠3 ♥KJ872 ♦965 ♣J976
- 2) ♠3 ♥AJ872 ♦965 ♣KQ97
- 3) ♠3 ♥AKJ87 ♦965 ♣KQ97

With hand 1) responder bids 2♣, expecting opener to pass or bid 2♥. With 2), responder wants to bid more than 2♣, but is a 3♣ bid forcing or merely invitational? Let's say it's invitational, as most experts play, so 3♣ is the right bid. But what about hand 3)? Now we would like to play 3♣ as forcing. If we do, then we would have to bid 2♣ with hand 2), but surely it's not right that a weak bid should have such a wide range of strength. And if 3♣ is not forcing, then what?

Another sequence:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
2♣	?

Responder might have one of these hands:

- 1) ♠AQ875 ♥765 ♦Q32 ♣AQ
- 2) ♠AJ872 ♥765 ♦K2 ♣K76
- 3) ♠AJ9872 ♥7 ♦432 ♣AK7

With 1) responder has no call, unless he plays 3♦ as forcing. If so, what does he do with Kx in clubs instead of AQ? A weak preference of 2♦ would be inadequate. With hand 2) responder wants to invite game, but how? Raising a secondary suit with Kxx is misleading. Besides, 2NT might be the spot if opener has a minimum hand. With 3) responder wants to be in game, but where? Opener might have a little something in spades, but responder can hardly bid 4♠ without some investigating. A 3♠ bid is not forcing, is it? If it is, what does responder do without the club king? Bid just 2♠?

Another:

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♣
2♦	?

Responder has ♠643 ♥K2 ♦K87 ♣AKJ73. Now what? Without some understanding about fourth suit bids, a 2♠ call may only be postponing the problem. Suppose opener bids 2NT over 2♠ (and what does that bid require?). Should responder raise to 3NT?

Fourth Suit Artificial (FSA), popularly called Fourth Suit Forcing, can handle all these situations, and more, provided that the partnership has an agreement about the requirements for bidding the fourth suit, and about the meanings of subsequent bids by both partners.

FSA is defined as a bid of the fourth suit at the two or three level by responder, when neither partner has previously jumped in a new suit or bid notrump. Higher level fourth suit bids are either real suits, or cue bids, or whatever, and the following is not a conventional fourth suit bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1♥	1♠

The 1♠ bid is natural. Although it may be based on some three-card holding, opener will assume that 1♠ shows a suit. This is standard procedure. To make up for this, the following is a conventional fourth suit bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1♥	2♠

The 2♠ bid is FSA, not a regular jump shift, and not a splinter bid in support of hearts (use 3♠ for this). Why not use 1♠ as FSA? Because it is too valuable as a natural bid, and the seldom used 2♠ bid can be used instead.

FSA does not apply when either partner has made a jump in a new suit (except for the last sequence above):

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
2♠	3♦

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♠
3♣	3♥

These fourth suit bids are natural, showing some high card strength if not a real suit. However:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1♥	3♣
3♦	3♠

The 3♠ bid is FSA, since the jump to 3♣ was not in a new suit.

FSA does not apply when the opponents have bid, but does apply when an opponent has made a takeout double and received no response:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	1♥	Pass/dbl
1♠	Pass	2♦ is FSA	

FSA does not apply in Checkback Stayman sequences:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♣ - Checkback Stayman
2♦	2♠
2NT	3♦ - natural, 4-5-4-0 or 4-4-4-1, not forcing

With FSA a jump preference by responder, or a jump rebid in the same suit, is invitational (as most people play):

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1♠	3♣

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1♠	3♥

Neither sequence is forcing. If responder has too strong a hand for these non-forcing rebids, he must choose some other call. The alternative will often be FSA.

After FSA, a 4NT bid by either partner is natural unless a major suit fit has been definitely (not tentatively or implicitly) agreed.

**WARNING: DO NOT USE FSA IF AN ADEQUATE NATURAL BID IS AVAILABLE!**

## Two-Level Fourth Suit Bids

Fourth suit bids at the two level are at least game tries, but responder could have game-going strength or more. The fourth suit bidder may have any holding in the fourth suit, from a singleton to a real suit (no voids, please).

Kings and queens are better when led up to, not through, so avoid bidding the fourth suit bid with a holding like Kx or Qxx. Look for another bid, probably notrump. A doubleton queen is sometimes acceptable, since a notrump bid with Qx in the only unbid suit is somewhat risky. Axx is a common holding for FSA, with the hope that partner will bid notrump with Qx.

Opener's response to FSA is to continue showing his hand, giving priority to supporting partner's major suit with a very strong doubleton (two of the top four honors) or any three cards. He need not have the fourth suit stopped for a 2NT bid; three small cards, Qx, or even a singleton facecard will do in a pinch. Responder will not raise to 3NT without Jxx, xxxx, or better in the suit. Yes, xxx opposite xxx may be good enough, but we can't do everything. Sometimes responder can tell that opener has at least three cards in the suit, and then it's okay to raise with xxx (example later).

Opener makes the call that best describes his hand, not just his holding in the fourth suit. He may bid notrump with certain holdings in the fourth suit, or he may raise the fourth suit, but his first duty is to describe his hand. If some other bid does a better job, he chooses that bid.

Suppose the bidding goes:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
2♣	2♥
?	

If opener has ♠A ♥K3 ♦QJ765 ♣QJ832, he bids 3♣, not 2NT, because 3♣ gives a better picture of the hand.

In trying to show his hand, opener may choose to rebid a strong four-card minor suit:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
2♣	2♥

With ♠32 ♥76 ♦A10765 ♣AKJ8, opener should now bid 3♣, not 3♦. With AKJ85 of diamonds and A1076 of clubs, he should bid 3♦. Responder must remember that a rebid of the second suit may not be five cards long, although such a rebid does imply that the first suit has at least five cards.

Responder can pass any minimum bid, so opener must not be bashful with a good hand. If he raises the fourth suit bid, or jumps, he shows a good hand and game must be reached:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1♠	2♣
2♦/2♥/2♠/2NT are all non-forcing	
3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ are all forcing to game	

Let's examine the meaning of all these bids:

2♦ implies long diamonds, no heart support, probably Jx or worse in clubs, and a minimum hand.

2♥ is usually based on three-card support, but could be a very strong doubleton (KJ, AQ, etc.)

2♠ may not be a five-card suit. Assume a strong four-card suit in a 4=5 hand.

2NT implies a tolerance for notrump, in this case probably at least xxx in clubs (with all that room at the two level to bid something else), and a minimum hand.

3♣ is a good hand with no suitable bid, game-forcing. Denies much in clubs.

3♦ is a good hand with a good diamond suit.

3♥ may not have much in high cards if the shape is 4=3=5=1, because the hands probably fit very well. However, opener does not promise a singleton club.

3♠ is a good hand with six diamonds and five spades, or possibly four very strong spades in a 5-4 or 6-4 hand.

3NT is a good hand with clubs stopped, Qxx or better. It may be chanced with a stiff king.

A raise of the fourth suit is necessary when opener has a good hand but no way to show it conveniently. Perhaps he doesn't want to bypass 3NT with a four-level jump. While the following auction may be difficult, the extra strength will probably provide safety.

If the fourth suit bidder bids again after a minimum rebid by opener, opener must also bid again if game has not been reached and a limit bid has not been made. The limit bids are: any bid by a passed hand, a rebid of the fourth suit, a notrump bid, or a direct raise of opener's last bid:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1♠	2♣
2♠	?

If responder is a passed hand, no bid at this point is forcing. Otherwise:

2NT is invitational, not forcing.

3♣ is not forcing, showing a real suit and an opening bid (but bad fit). To force, bid 3♣ instead of 2♣.

3♦ is forcing (not a direct raise).

3♥ is forcing (but not if opener had bid 2♥).

3♠ is not forcing, showing good three-card support.

A rebid of the fourth suit shows that it is a real suit. Since this bid is made in the face of a possible misfit, each partner having a two-suited hand, it requires a hand of approximately opening bid strength. With less, or with fitting cards in partner's suits, bid notrump instead of using FSA. With more, jump in the fourth suit instead of using FSA. Example:

Opener	Responder
♠AQJ3	♠72
♥5	♥AQ1043
♦KQ973	♦2
♣743	♣AQ952

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1♠	2♣
2♦	3♣
Pass	

Responder would have bid a forcing 3♣ over 1♠ with a better hand, and 1NT over 1♠ with a weaker hand. Opener is happy to pass 3♣ with his bad fit. With a better fit (♠Q1087 ♥K ♦AQ973 ♣J87), he could bid 3NT.

When opener rebids a major at the three level, a rebid of the fourth suit by responder is defined as a slam try in the rebid major:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦
2♥	3♣
3♠	4♣ - slam try in spades

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♣
2♦	2♠
3♥	3♠ - slam try in hearts

In either case responder would normally bid notrump rather than show a biddable fourth suit, so this fourth suit rebid is more useful as a device to imply a hand that is too good for a mere raise to game in opener's rebid major. The principle does not apply if opener's rebid suit is a minor (diamonds, spades).

If opener bids 2NT in response to FSA, possibly with only xxx, Qx, or even a singleton king or queen in the fourth suit, responder must not raise to 3NT without at least Ax, Jxx, or xxxx in the suit. She might *pass* with less, however:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1♠	2♦
2NT	Pass

Responder has ♠A98 ♥A7632 ♦Q2 ♣J87. If opener does not have diamonds stopped, 2NT may still be a good contract. If the jack of clubs were the king, responder would have too much to pass 2NT. She must not raise notrump with Qx in the fourth suit, however. A forcing 3♣ would be right.

When responder does not raise notrump, she doesn't necessarily deny strength in the fourth suit. She may be fishing for slam or some superior suit contract, as any suit bid over 2NT is forcing.

If opener jumps to 3NT over the fourth suit bid, he shows a good hand and a stopper in the fourth suit, so responder can pass with a weak doubleton or singleton ace, king, or queen. She may not pass with a smaller singleton in the fourth suit, and if she even thinks of doing so then she should not have used FSA. Conversely, when responder pulls a jump to 3NT back to a suit, she strongly implies a singleton in the fourth suit:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2♣	2♦
3NT	4♣

Responder has ♠AJ765 ♥K3 ♦6 ♣J10832. Rather a strange fourth suit bid, but responder thought that 4♣ over 2♣ would sound too strong for this 9 HCP hand, and she wanted to find out if opener perhaps had some spade support or a strong heart suit. Opener's hand: ♠7 ♥AJ842 ♦AJ7 ♣KQ74.

Don't push to make a fourth suit bid, however. This convention is meant for hands that are difficult to bid by other means. Suppose you respond 1♠ to a 1♦ opening with ♠AK874 ♥932 ♦K86 ♣92, and partner rebids 2♣. Your correct call now is an invitational 3♦, not 2♥. Why? Because 2♥ could lead to complications--you have to look ahead. For instance, if partner's next bid over 2♥ is 3♣ you would have to bid 3♦, which is forcing. With ace of clubs instead of the jack, a jump preference to 3♦ would not suffice, and a 2♥ bid would be correct.

Here's another example of looking ahead: You have ♠K32 ♥76 ♦AQ97 ♣Q1087, and partner opens 1♣, you respond 1♦. When he rebids 1♠ it is tempting to use FSA (2♥). If partner has hearts stopped, this hand may play well in notrump. But partner may not have hearts stopped, and may have

to bid 3♦ with a hand such as ♠A1083 ♥J2 ♦K52 ♣AJ32. Too weak to bid further, you would have to play in this inferior contract. So, you must jump to 3♣ over 1♠. Again: Do not use FSA if an adequate natural bid is available.

The fourth suit bid denies four-card support for any major that opener has bid. Any later raise of such a major will be based on good three-card support. A raise to game in a secondarily bid major therefore promises good support for opener's minor suit, in case opener doesn't want to play a 4-3 trump fit:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1♠	2♦
3NT	4♠

Responder has ♠KQ3 ♥A7652 ♦9 ♣K874. Opener passes with ♠AJ104 ♥K ♦KJ4 ♣QJ653, but bids 6♣ with ♠J765 ♥K ♦AJ5 ♣AQJ65 (playing responder for a singleton diamond). With weaker spades, responder would have bid 4♣ over 3NT, hoping to raise spades later.

Responder should be very careful about making a fourth suit bid with much more than opening bid strength. Opener will assume that responder's hand is limited to just game-going strength at most, and will jump to 3NT with as much as 18 HCP. Responder could hardly raise this to 4NT with only 15 HCP and, say, xx in the fourth suit. Opener might also have just 15 HCP, and nine tricks could be the limit of the two hands. If responder does have a very strong hand, she is on her own. Until she makes a definite slam try, not just any old jump to game, opener will figure her for no more than mere game-going strength.

FSA can be used in many ways to show hands that are otherwise difficult to bid. Opposite a 1♣ opening, you respond 1♥ with ♠AJ9 ♥KQ8765 ♦3 ♣QJ7. Opener rebids 1♠. You should now bid 2♦, planning to follow with a forcing 3♥ bid. If opener bids 3NT over 2♦, you bid 4♥, which implies a singleton diamond and strongly suggests a 3-3 holding in opener's suits (with four clubs, the usual bid over 3NT would be 4♣). It also tends to deny a stronger heart suit, with which you would bid 3♥ or 4♥ over 1♠. Opener can now bid 4♠ over 4♥ with ♠KQ76 ♥2 ♦QJ4 ♣AK1062.

### If the Fourth Suit Bid Gets Doubled

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Dbl

Opener passes with a minimum hand and nothing important to show, such as a good long suit, trump support for spades, or enough heart strength to redouble. A redouble shows Ax, Jxx, or 10xxx or better in the fourth suit, a holding that will play okay in notrump opposite Qx or singleton king. Opener cannot bid 2NT or redouble with just three small cards in the fourth suit, but he can still bid 2NT with Qx or a singleton king. Responder won't raise notrump without Qx, Jxx, 10xxx, or better

(9xxx is not good enough here). In this situation North can raise a 2NT bid to 3NT with Qx because South won't bid 2NT with three small.

### If a Raise of the Fourth Suit Gets Doubled

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Dbl		

A redouble by North shows a heart stop, probably Ax(x).

### Three-Level Fourth Suit Bids

Responder's FSA bid at the three level is forcing to game. Opener need not make a precipitous leap with a good hand, unless the hand is best described that way. A 3NT bid shows at least Qx or Jxx in the fourth suit.

Responder must pull 3NT back to a suit with a weak doubleton in the fourth suit (no singletons at this level, please). Opener can rebid notrump (4NT) with safety in the fourth suit. If opener then bids the fourth suit, that is a cue bid showing the ace. In this auction, opener has A65 in diamonds, responder 32:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♥
3♣	3♦
3NT	4♣
4♦	4NT
Pass	

If opener had K65 in diamonds, he would just bid 4NT over 4♣.



## FORCING AND NON-FORCING SITUATIONS

### Responses to One of a Suit

1♣	1NT	3♠	Not forcing, but distributionally strong and invitational. Responder's hand is not suitable for a double.
1♥	P	3♥	Limit raises, invitational. See section 3-4.
1♠	P	3♠	
1♦	P	3♦	Limit raises, invitational. See section 3-5.
1♣	P	3♣	
1♣/1♦	1♠	2NT	Not forcing, as if responder were a passed hand. Bid 3NT with a stronger hand. Stoplight (section 4-12) applies. No Omnibus.
1♥	1♠	2NT	Omnibus response (section 3-10). With 11-12 HCP, bid a minor
1♦/1♥/1♠	2♣	2NT	Not forcing. Non-jump responses of 2NT are invitational, showing 11-12 HCP and stopper(s) in the opposing suit.. No Stoplight.
1♥/1♠	P/Dbf	3NT	Forcing, artificial strong raise. See section 3-11.
1♥	1♠	3NT	Forcing, artificial raise. Note the double jump. Single jumps to 3NT are natural bids.
1♥	3♠	4♣	Forcing. Non-game new suit responses by an unpassed hand are forcing.
1♠	2♣/2♦	4♥	A forcing splinter bid. See section 3-7, Splinter Responses to a Major Opening.

### Rebids by Opener

1♠	P	2♦	P	
3♠				Not quite forcing. Responder can pass with a weak response and a singleton or void in spades.
1♠	P	2♦	P	Forcing, and promises another bid even if responder bids 3♦.
3♣				

1♠ P 2♥ 3♣  
3♦

Also forcing, but does not promise another bid if responder bids 3♥. Here the bidding has been crowded, and opener may have planned a 2♠ rebid over a 2♥ response with something like ♠AK1074 ♥Q3 ♦AJ96 ♣42. A weaker hand should pass.

1♣ 1♦ 1♠ P  
2♥

Not forcing unless responder has five or more spades. He can pass with ♠KJ32 ♥7654 ♦Q85 ♣62. See section 4-3.

1♦ P 2♣ P  
2♠

Forcing. Reverses are forcing on a two-over-one bidder, and promise another bid unless responder merely rebids her suit or returns to opener's diamonds. A return to hearts, however, (e.g., 1♥=2♣=2♠=3♥) is forcing, as is a 2NT bid.

1♠ 2♣ 2♠ 3♣  
3♦/3♥

Forcing, a game try. A double of 3♣ would be takeout, with perhaps little interest in game.

1♥ P 2♦ P  
2NT

Not forcing, but with a long broken suit and a weak hand responder should bid 3♦.to sign off.

1♦ 2♥ 2♠ P  
3♣

Forcing, even if 2♠ was by a passed hand. A 4♣ bid would have been a splinter. Does not promise another bid (nor does 2♠).

1♦ 1♥ P P  
3♣

Not forcing, highly invitational

1♥ 2♦ 2NT P  
3♣

Normal force, not Stoplight (2NT not a jump)

1♥ P 2♣ P  
4♣

Forcing. Jump raises of a two-over-one minor suit response are forcing to game. If responder now bids 4NT, that is natural, showing a minimum hand such as ♠ K83 ♥64 ♦Q1084 ♣AQ75

1♥ P 1♠ 2♦  
3♣

Not forcing, but strong

1♣ P 1♠ 2♥  
3♦

Forcing. Reverses at the three level are forcing, even after a one-over-one response.

1♠ 2♥ Dbl 3♣  
P

A forcing pass. If the doubler is not strong enough to keep the ball rolling, she should not have doubled--no matter how many hearts she has.

1♥ Dbl Rdbl P  
3♥

Not forcing, but the redoubler should pass only with a small singleton heart and a minimum redouble. Opener should bid 4♥ if able to make game opposite such a hand.

1♣ P 1♥ P  
2♣ P 2♠ P  
3♥

Not forcing. If opener has three small hearts and extra values, he must bid 4♥ (responder guarantees five in this sequence). A reverse by responder does not promise another bid if opener's next bid is discouraging.

1♣ P 1♦ P  
1NT P 2♠ P  
3♠

Forcing. Ruffing values in responder's hand ought to produce game even if opener has a minimum. A jump to 4♠ by opener would imply not only good spades but good clubs and a diamond fit. Can opener have good spades? Yes, because he is supposed to rebid 1NT with a minimum 4-3-3-3 hand: ♠KQ32 ♥1087 ♦Q32 ♣AK3. See Rebids by Opener, section 4-1.

1♣ P 1♥ P  
1♠ P 3♣ P  
3♥

Forcing, accepting the game try. Opener must pass 3♣ with ♠AJ97 ♥762 ♦63 ♣AQJ3. Exchange the ♥7 for the ♥Q and the 3♥ bid is okay. If this seems too aggressive, raise a 1♥ response to 2♥ instead of bidding 1♠.

1♥ P 1♠ P  
2♠ P 3♣ P  
3♥

Not forcing. Shows five or six hearts and only three-card spade support. To accept the game try, opener must bid something else, perhaps even 4♥.

1♣ P 1♥ P  
 1NT P 2NT P  
 3♥

Forcing, accepting the invitation to game and giving responder a choice of contracts. Opener no doubt has less than adequate trump support for hearts, since a good hand raises hearts immediately with J10x or better. He could have ♠A10 ♥972 ♦AQJ10 ♣K1092.

### Rebids by Responder

1♣ P 1♥ P  
 1♠ P 3♣/3♥

Not forcing. Bid 2♦ (Fourth Suit Artificial -see section 4-10) if stuck for a good bid with a game-going hand.

1♥ P 2♣ P  
 2♦ P 3♥

Not forcing, merely a heart raise. A bid of 2♥ would be a preference, not a raise.

1♥ P 1♠ P  
 1NT P 3♠

Forcing. After a 1NT rebid by opener, all three level jumps by an unpassed hand are forcing. Use Checkback Stayman (section 4-9) with an invitational hand.

1♦ P 1♥ 1♠  
 P P 2♣

Not forcing. When opener refuses to make a free rebid, a non-jump new suit by responder is not forcing unless it is a reverse.

1♣ P 1♠ P  
 1NT P 2♥/2♦

Not forcing. A new suit by responder after opener's 1NT rebid is weak (barring reverses), but 2♣ is Checkback Stayman.

1♣ P 1♠ P  
 2♣ P 2♥

Not forcing, but invitational. May be a stretch at matchpoints, when you can't risk missing a heart contract. Forcing at IMP scoring.

1♣ P 1♠ P  
 2♣ P 2♦

Forcing. Pass with no game interest.

1♣ P 1♦ P  
 2♣ 2♥ 2♠

Forcing. Reverses by responder are forcing, even in competition.

1♣ P 1♠ P  
 2♣ P 3♠

Not forcing. Responder's jump rebids in the same suit are not forcing unless opener has rebid 1NT or reversed (whereupon all jumps are forcing).

1♣ P 1♠ P  
2♣ P 4♣

Forcing

1♦ P 1♠ P  
2♣ P 2♥

Fourth Suit Artificial. See section 4-10.

1♠ P 1NT P  
2NT P 3♣

Both partners have made limit bids, so how can one of them start forcing?  
Responder has a long weak club suit, doesn't like notrump.

1♠ P 2♠ P  
2NT P 3♥

Not forcing. With a hand like ♠Q65 ♥KQ943 ♦8 ♣6542 responder must bid 4♥, not 3♥, which he would bid without the queen of hearts. This jump to 4♥ is not useful as a splinter bid, because slam is out of the question after a single raise and mere 2NT rebid. A minor suit rebid is somewhat of a signoff, weak hand, six-card suit.

1♠ P 2♠ P  
3♣ P 3♥

Forcing. Responder may not have a heart suit, and is perhaps making a trial bid with a holding such as KJx. The difference between this and the previous auction is that opener, with five spades and four clubs, is unlikely to have heart support. A 3♥ bid is therefore more valuable as strength-showing than suit-showing.

1♠ P 2♣ P  
3♣ P 3♠

Forcing. Responder shows too much for an original 2♠ raise and opener shows extra values by going to the three level. The logic of the auction says that game will be bid.

1♣ P 1♠ P  
3♣ P 3♠

Forcing. Whenever responder bids over a strong but non-forcing jump by opener, opener must bid again. The only way to stop short of game now is for opener to bid 4♣.

1♣ P 1♠ 2♥  
3♣ P 3♠

Not forcing. Opener has a good hand, but may not have been planning a jump to 3♣ over 1♠. If he was stretching, he can pass 3♠.

1♣ P 1♦ P  
2NT P 3♣

Forcing. See Stoplight, section 4-12.

1♣ P 1♠ 2♦  
2NT P 3♣/3♠

Not forcing, weak signoff. Stoplight does not apply when the 2NT bid is not a jump.

- 1♣ P 1♠ P  
2♦ P 4♣ Splinter bid in support of diamonds, not a club raise. Denies five spades. 3♦ would be invitational and 3♣ a weak preference, so responder must often resort to Fourth Suit Artificial (section 4-10) to keep the bidding going.
- 1♥ P 2♦ P  
2NT P 3♦ Not forcing. When the 2NT bid is non-jump, a repeat of the same suit is weak, warning that responder's suit may not run at notrump. Opener needs a diamond fit to go on. Any other three level bid by responder, including 3♥, would be forcing.
- 1♦ P 1♥ P  
3NT P 4♠ Forcing. This is a notrump raise, not a natural bid. Responder's hearts need a good fit to be useful for slam. A natural new-suit 4♠ bid is not available over a natural 3NT bid.
- 1♣ P 1♥ 4♦  
P P 4♠ Not quite forcing. Responder probably has a 4-5-1-3 hand, so opener can run to clubs or hearts if he lacks spade support.
- 1♦ P 1♠ P  
3NT P 4♥ Not forcing, but invitational. Do not rescue a 3NT bid with a very weak hand.
- 1♥ P 2♦ P  
3♣ P 3♦ Forcing. When opener voluntarily goes to the level of three, he promises to bid again even if responder merely rebids her suit. Had the 3♣ been made in competition (e.g., over a 2♠ overcall) 3♦ would not be forcing.
- 1♠ P 2♣ P  
2NT P 3♠ Forcing. Responder's hand is unlimited. He is probably offering a choice between 4♠ and 3NT, but he could even have slam in mind.
- 1♥ P 3♣ P  
4♣ P 4♥ Not quite forcing, but opener will seldom pass with this double fit.
- 1♠ P 3♥ P  
4♥ P 4♠ Forcing, since responder could presumably pass 4♥ with a minimum jump takeout.
- 1♣ P 1♠ P  
2♥ P 3♥ Forcing. When a reverse into a *major* gets raised, opener must go on unless the original response was 1NT.

- 1♥ P 2♣ P  
2♠ P 3♥ Forcing. A return to hearts at the level of three is forcing on opener, unless the original response was 1NT. Responder must have heart support and too much for a raise of 1♥ to 2♥.
- 1♦ P 1♠ P  
2♥ P 2NT Not forcing. Theoretically denies five spades, but might have five weak spades and strong clubs: ♠108765 ♥J2 ♦85 ♣AQJ9
- 1♥ P 2♣ P  
2♠ P 2NT Forcing, in view of the two-over-one response and opener's reverse. If opener had rebid 2♦, 2NT would not be forcing.
- 1♦ P 1♠ P  
2♥ P 3♦ Not forcing, weak signoff. Denies five spades.
- 1♦ P 2♣ P  
2♥ P 3♦ Also a weak signoff, despite the two-over-one response: ♠432 ♥8 ♦Q87 ♣AQ10874. A 3♣ rebid would also be weak, and a 2♠ rebid is Fourth Suit Artificial (see section 4-10).
- 1♠ P 2♦ P  
2♠ P 3♣ Forcing. New suit bids at the three level by either partner are usually forcing.
- 1♣ P 1♠ 2♥  
P P 3♦ Forcing, despite opener's pass. Without enough to force, responder can double for takeout. See section 9-2, Competitive Doubles.
- 1♣ P 1♠ P  
2♠ P 3♣ Forcing. After a raise by opener, a return to opener's suit is usually forcing.
- 1♣ Dbl 1♠ P  
2♠ P 3♣ Not forcing, in view of the failure to redouble. Responder has psyched, possibly, but opener must not pass when holding four spades.
- 1♥ P 1♠ P  
2♠ P 3♥ Forcing. If responder has ♠AK93 ♥Q87 ♦42 ♣J432 she must respond 2♣ instead of 1♠, or she may find herself in this forcing situation.
- 1♠ P 2♥ P  
3♥ P 3♠ Forcing. Don't bid 2♥ with a four-card suit, spade support, and 11 points or so--or you might find yourself in this forcing sequence. With five hearts and a doubtful hand, just pass 3♥.
- 1♠ P 2♣ P  
2♥ P 3♥ Not forcing: ♠2 ♥10987 ♦A65 ♣KJ873

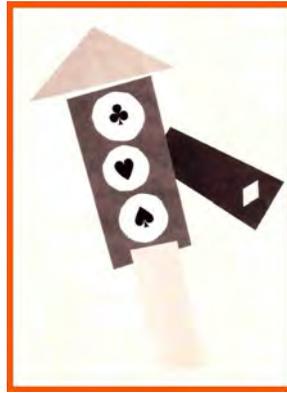
1♣ P 1♥ P  
 1NT P 2♠ P  
 2NT P 3♣ Forcing. After a 1NT rebid, a reverse followed by a raise is a forcing sequence. Use Checkback Stayman with an invitational hand.

1♣ P 1♥ P  
 2♣ P 2♠ P  
 2NT P 3♣ Not quite forcing. Responder must raise to 3NT, jump to 4♣ (promising short diamonds), or bid 3♦, with a game-going hand.

1♦ P 1♥ P  
 2♣ P 2♠ P  
 3♣ P 3♥ Forcing. After Fourth Suit Artificial (2♠) only a direct raise (4♣ over 3♣), a rebid of the fourth suit, or a notrump bid is non-forcing.

1♦ P 2♣ P  
 2♦ P 2♠ P  
 3♣ P 3♦ Forcing. Responder could presumably have passed 3♣ (or bid 3♦ over 2♦) with insufficient values to force.

1♣ P 1♥ P  
 1♠ P 1NT P  
 2NT P 3♣/3♥ Forcing, accepting the game try. Responder cannot say she likes notrump and then say she wants to stop in a suit. The 3♣ bid could be based on something like: ♠A9 ♥J9732 ♦J75 ♣QJ7. A 3♥ bid should be based on a good heart suit. (3♣ or 3♥ implies nervousness about diamonds).



## STOPLIGHT

Have you noticed how often partner jumps to 2NT when you respond to an opening bid with a hand such as ♠K8742 ♥J9432 ♦6 ♣82? Of course you must pass, even though you know that three of a major would probably be a better contract. Having stretched to respond 1♠, you dare not bid 3♥, which is forcing. Game is unlikely, but could be made if opener has a good fit with both majors, such as ♠AQ3 ♥KQ10 ♦AK7 ♣J963. If you bid 3♥, however, partner is sure to turn up with ♠Q6 ♥K85 ♦AKQ3 ♣KQ32. Three hearts is the right spot, but you can't stop there.

Another situation: You open 1♦ with ♠AQ83 ♥K4 ♦QJ9762 ♣4 and partner responds 1♥. Your 1♠ rebid fetches a 2NT rebid from partner:

You	Partner
1♦	1♥
1♠	2NT

A 2NT rebid by responder is invitational, not forcing, for most partnerships. In this auction partner perhaps has a hand of this sort: ♠K4 ♥98732 ♦K3 ♣AJ82. Three diamonds would be much more comfortable than a notrump contract, but can you stop in 3♦? Isn't any further bid by you an acceptance of partner's game invitation?

If you do play that a 3♦ bid now would be a signoff, then you will have trouble with a hand like ♠AQ83 ♥K4 ♦AQJ872 ♣4. You must bid 3NT over 2NT, missing an easy slam if partner has the hand shown. If you decide to go slamming in diamonds, partner may turn up with an unsuitable hand: ♠J4 ♥AQ832 ♦65 ♣KJ87. For this reason, and to avoid the possibility of misunderstandings, it is common practice to play any further bid after an invitational jump to 2NT as an acceptance of the game invitation. If the game try is not to be accepted, then 2NT must be passed.

Most partnerships make one exception to this rule: After a third or fourth seat opening, a rebid of the same suit by opener is a signoff bid after a 2NT response:

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
1♠	2NT
3♠ is a signoff	

Any other rebid by opener is forcing, and is in general an acceptance of the game try by responder. With a hand such as ♠KQ876 ♥A9762 ♦3 ♣42 opener should not rebid 3♥, which is forcing. Opener would like responder to take a choice between 3♥ and 3♠, but how can that be done? There is, however, a small chance of making game in a major. Responder could have ♠AJ3 ♥KQ8 ♦Q87 ♣8753. The only way to reach game is for opener to make the terrible overbid of 3♥. Then responder is sure to have ♠J10 ♥J108 ♦AQ84 ♣K953, and the result is a defeated game contract in hearts or notrump.

What we need is a "stoplight" bid, one that says, "Stop! I'm light!" The logical call, since it is the cheapest, is a bid of 3♣. After any non-forcing jump to 2NT, a bid of 3♣ says, "I think we should stop below game, unless you have a terrific fit. Please bid 3♦, and I'll clarify my hand--perhaps by passing!" Example:

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
1♠	2NT
3♣ - Stoplight	

A 2NT response by a passed hand is not forcing, but opener wants to stop in three of a suit. Opener may have ♠A87632 ♥KQ4 ♦4 ♣Q32 or ♠AQ863 ♥9 ♦A8763 ♣42. When responder now bids 3♦, opener bids 3♠ with the first hand and passes with the second. In this sequence responder should not bid 3♦ with a preference for spades over diamonds, because opener almost always has at least five spades. With ♠J109 ♥AJ5 ♦Q92 ♣KJ74 responder bids 3♠, not 3♦. With four hearts instead of four clubs responder bids 3♥ with the spade preference,, in case opener has spades and hearts. Another example:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2NT	3♣ - Stoplight

Now opener must bid 3♦ with equal length in spades and diamonds, because partner could have more diamonds than spades. He could have any of these hands:

- 1) ♠J97632 ♥4 ♦Q8 ♣J642
- 2) ♠KJ765 ♥543 ♦J943 ♣7
- 3) ♠A873 ♥4 ♦J86543 ♣65
- 4) ♠Q9742 ♥4 ♦K10832 ♣42

Responder wants to stop in 3♠ with hand 1), unless opener has a fine spade fit with quick tricks outside. With hand 2) responder will bid 3♥ if opener bids 3♦, offering opener a choice between 3♥ and 3♠ as a final contract. With 3) responder hopes to stop in 3♦. Otherwise the contract will be 4♦, which figures to be better than 2NT, or 3♠ (giving responder a chance to practice playing a 4-3 trump suit with a 6-2 suit on the side). With 4) there is a good chance that responder will end up playing 3♦ with a 5-3 fit in both spades and diamonds. The difference is unimportant at rubber bridge or IMP

scoring, and stopping anywhere at the three level is likely to be a top score (or if not, a bottom score) in a matchpoint contest.

An important sequence:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥/1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣ - Stoplight	

North must have bid a five-card major, so South can show support instead of bidding 3♦. If North had only four of the major, four-card support for the minor, and a weak hand, she would have raised the opening immediately. It is incorrect to respond in the major with such a hand. If the response was 1♠, opener can bid a four-card heart suit on the way to 3♠, in case responder has hearts.

Stoplight is often useful in takeout double sequences:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣ - Stoplight

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣ - Stoplight		

West has a minimum double and an unbalanced hand that includes a good five-card suit. He thinks that the partnership should stop short of game, despite East's 11 (or so) HCP, but he doesn't like the idea of passing 2NT. East must now bid 3♦, which the doubler will either pass or correct to three of a major. A bid of a new suit instead of using Stoplight would be forcing.

The Stoplight bid is not an absolute command to play at the three level. Suppose the bidding goes:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
2NT	3♣ - Stoplight

Responder probably wants to stop in 3♦, but opener can bid 3NT with a great diamond fit and fast tricks outside. On the way to 3NT he can show a four-card major previously bypassed, in case responder has a 6-4 diamonds-major hand.

May the Stoplight bid ever be passed? Not usually, but I can think of three situations where it might be:

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
1♣	2NT
3♣ - Stoplight	

Opener usually has a six or seven-card club suit with a weak hand, but could have a weak 5-5 in the black suits. Responder may pass with three clubs and a doubleton spade. Otherwise she bids her lowest-ranking non-doubleton (opener could have any 5=6 hand).

Another:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1♠	2NT
3♣ - Stoplight	

Responder may now pass with four clubs, but not with three. Opener might have ♠KQ76 ♥4 ♦Q873 ♣KQJ2, planning to pass 3♦ if responder has fewer than four clubs.

Another:

Responder	Opener
Pass	1♣
2♦	3♣

Playing Two-Four-One jump responses by a passed hand (described in section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand), the 2♦ bid shows a 2NT response. Opener denies a major with the 3♣ bid, so he must have nothing but clubs, and responder usually passes.

But suppose responder has a better hand, and wants to be in game? How can responder show club support in a good hand without going past 3NT, since a 3♣ bid is artificial? We must find another call to show a forward-going club bid in a game-going hand. Bid 3♦ to show clubs? But then how would we show diamonds with a good hand?

Before solving this problem, let's take a look at the bids of 3♥ and 3♠ over 2NT. These bids tell something about our major suit holdings. If instead of using these bids to inform partner about our majors, we ask partner about *his* majors, we can make that inquiry with just one bid. By using one bid to serve the purpose of two bids, we gain back the bid we used for Stoplight.

The bid that asks partner about the majors should obviously be 3♦. After a non-forcing jump to 2NT, a 3♦ bid asks, "Do you have one of the following: 1) an unbid four-card major suit? 2) support for a major that I have bid? 3) a rebiddable holding in a major that you have bid? With two of these, bid 3♥; with none, bid 3NT." If partner has previously denied a four-card major (e.g., in response to a takeout double), then the 3♦ inquiry asks for a three-card major.

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2NT	3♦?
3♥ - five hearts, may have spade support	
3♠ - spade support, four-card heart suit	
3NT - neither of the above	

The 3♦ inquiry is forcing to game, since Stoplight is used with weak hands.

Now we have two unused bids--3♥ and 3♠--which we can use to show a club or diamond bid in a game-going hand. After a non-forcing jump to 2NT, a 3♥ bid shows a normal forward-going 3♣ bid, and a 3♠ bid shows a normal forward-going 3♦ bid:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2NT	3♥ shows clubs
	3♠ shows diamonds

Opener now bids as if responder had made a normal forcing bid in the indicated minor suit.

The artificial nature of a 3♥ or 3♠ bid still applies when the minors have been bid previously:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
2NT	3♥/3♠

A 3♥ bid shows club support, while a 3♠ bid shows a rebiddable diamond suit. Both bids are an acceptance of opener's game invitation.

Stoplight is also used to differentiate between a slam try and a signoff in game:

1)	Opener	Responder
	1♣	1♠
	2NT	3♣ - Stoplight
	3♦	4♠
2)	Opener	Responder
	1♣	1♠
	2NT	4♠

Sequence 1) denies interest in slam, a signoff, while sequence 2) shows a desire for slam if opener's hand is suitable. The same principle applies after all invitational jumps to 2NT:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
2NT	3♣ - Stoplight
3♦	4♥

Responder has at least 5-5 in the majors and little interest in slam.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
2NT	3♦ - asking about majors
3♠/3NT	4♥

Since opener has denied four hearts or spade support, responder must be at least 5-5 in the majors. Since he did not use Stoplight, this sequence indicates some interest in slam. Why not jump to 4♥ over 2NT? Because that is a splinter bid, showing something like ♠AQJ10432 ♥6 ♦K76 ♣J4. See section 4-5, Splinter Rebids by Responder.

And finally, what does it mean when 3♣ is followed by 3NT? It can only show a desire to play 4♣ unless partner has a very good fit in clubs. That's *very* good, because the Stoplight bidder may have only seven clubs to the 10 in a weak hand. If he has previously bid a major, he has only four.

If an artificial bid gets doubled, the meaning of a redouble depends on whether the suit has been previously bid in a natural sense:

1) North East South West

1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Dbl
			Rdbl

2) North East South West

1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Dbl
			Rdbl

In sequence 1), where diamonds have not been bid naturally, the redouble just shows a double stopper or better in diamonds, not a desire to play in 3♦ doubled. In sequence 2) diamonds have been bid as a real suit previously, so the redouble shows good diamonds and suggests that perhaps a 3♦ contract can be made. South may use judgment in deciding whether to pass or bid on.

Stoplight is used when an opponent has bid, but remember that the 2NT bid must be a jump for Stoplight to apply:

North	East	South	West
1♣	1♦	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣ - Stoplight	

However:

North	East	South	West
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♦
2NT	Pass	3♣ is natural, weak	

Stoplight does not apply when the other side has made a takeout double (since a jump to 2NT over an opposing takeout double is conventional, not natural). It does apply after a jump 2NT advance of an overcall:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣ - Stoplight		
	3♦ - asks about the majors		
	3♥ - club suit		
	3♠ - diamond suit		

What should this auction show?:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥/3♠?	

Answer: Six diamonds and a five-card major, in a weak hand. Not forcing, theoretically, as opener has other ways to bid such a hand when holding game values (e.g., jump to game in the major).

Stoplight won second prize from the International Bridge Press Association for the best article on a system or convention in the year 1978. Terence Reese was one of the judges.

## Business Doubles of Overcalls

When opener doubles a non-raise suit bid by RHO after partner has responded, that is a penalty double. As with all penalty doubles in competition, partner may pull the double with a hand that is unsuitable for defense, particularly when short in the doubled suit.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♣
Dbl - penalty double			

A pull of this double to 2♥ is a weak action, not forcing. Therefore we use 2NT as a conventional bid showing 5-5 in spades-hearts, too strong for a 2♥ bid and not strong enough for a forcing jump to 3♥.

The conventional meaning of 2NT applies when responder can bid the fourth suit at the two or three level

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	3♣
Dbl	Pass	3♥ - not forcing	
3NT - 5-5 in the majors, too strong for 3♥			

Had the overcall been 3♦, North would have to choose between 3♥, not forcing, and 4♥, when holding both majors, as 3NT would be natural.

Responder can also double an overcall for penalty:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	2♦	Dbl - penalty double	
2NT - natural			

In this case there is no conventional takeout of the double, and 2NT is natural. Opener can pull the double with a hand unsuited for defense, particularly when short in the doubled suit.

As with all penalty doubles, partner may prefer to bid a game if that appears to be a more profitable call than a pass.

## WEAK NOTRUMP - FOURTH SEAT ONLY

With a marginal fourth seat opening such as ♠93 ♥AJ76 ♦Q103 ♣KJ87 in a matchpoint game, you figure that your side is a slight favorite to make a plus score if you can stop at a low level. If you open 1♣, however, you could be in trouble if partner jumps to 2NT. Or suppose someone bids spades. If it's partner, you must either pass or rebid 1NT. If you pass, she may have only four spades. If you rebid 1NT, she may raise. If either opponent bids spades, you may get outbid. Finally, if you open a standard weak notrump (12-14 HCP) partner may try for game. What to do? In deciding, consider the following:

- 1) Game chances are practically nil.
- 2) Neither opponent could open, even in third seat, so their hands (and suits) are limited.
- 3) In view of 2), partner is unlikely to have a bad hand.
- 4) A 1NT opening prevents a one-level overcall.
- 5) The danger of being outbid is lessened if fourth hand has four spades.
- 6) The main goal with a marginal hand in this position is to get a plus score of any sort, not to achieve the optimum result.
- 7) You do not want to get as high as 2NT or three of a suit with such hands.

Putting all these considerations together leads to the idea that a 1NT opening in fourth seat should be treated differently from other positions. The following describes such an approach:

At matchpoint scoring only, a fourth seat opening 1NT bid shows 11-13 HCP, balanced. It tends to deny a spade suit, with which a suit opening is preferable. With the highest ranking suit there is less need for a preemptive 1NT opening that risks shutting out your own major. With four very weak spades in a 4-3-3-3 hand, the 1NT opening is acceptable.

Game will rarely be reached voluntarily--the 1NT opening gives up on game unless partner has passed an unusual hand.

### Responses

No Stayman, no transfers. Any two-level response is a signoff, but 2♣ or 2♦ (Alertable) shows hearts too (unless you're prepared to bid again if opener bids 2♥). With spades and a minor you pass 1NT, since opener is not supposed to have spades. Be quicker to bid 2♥ with five hearts than to bid 2♠ with five spades--opener will sometimes have four hearts. A 2NT response is unusual, even in competition, asking for opener's longer minor. With equal length, opener bids 3♣.

### When There is Competition

If the opponents come in, opener cannot count on a minor suit responder to have four hearts:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	2♠	?

East should not bid 3♥ over 2♠ when he has four hearts, for West may not have a heart suit. A solution for this is to have East bid 2NT, an impossible bid, when he has both four hearts and good support for partner's minor. West can't do the same if 2♠ comes around, because a 2NT reopening would show six diamonds and four clubs.

Negative doubles apply in all situations in which the 1NT bidder's partner has not yet bid or doubled, even in a balancing situation--except that the 1NT bidder can double his right hand opponent for business:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl - takeout

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	2♣	Dbl - penalty

But if 2♣ is passed around to West, a double would be for takeout

After any kind of double--penalty, negative, takeout--any further double by either partner is for business:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♣	Dbl	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - penalty		

After the opening side has bid a suit, any double is for business:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	2♦
Pass	Pass	Dbl - penalty	

The use of negative doubles in most situations can cause an occasional large penalty to be missed. When either partner has length in the opposing suit, he must usually pass--even in a reopening situation, when a pass closes the auction. The main goal, however, is to get a plus score. Even if they go down undoubled, the goal has been met.

When opener has shortness in the opposing suit, he must make a takeout double in the pass-out position. Suppose you have ♠32 ♥AJ97 ♦K103 ♣K974 and open a fourth seat 1NT. If LHO overcalls 2♥ and this comes around to you, just pass. A double would be for takeout, and you will probably beat the pairs who pass the hand out. If a 2♠ overcall comes around, you double for takeout. Partner may have enough in spades to pass.

If the opponents overcall conventionally (e.g., Brozel, Astro), the usual countermeasures apply. See section 5-3, When the Opponents Intervene vs 1NT, and section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions.

### If You Don't Open 1NT

After opening one of a suit in fourth seat, a 1NT rebid shows 14-16 HCP; a jump rebid of 2NT shows 17-18 HCP, and a 3NT rebid shows 19 HCP or more. The jump notrump rebids can be weaker than usual because responder is unlikely to have a bad hand when the opponents are doing so much passing.

A *non-jump* 2NT or 3NT rebid is standard:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT shows 15-16 HCP, the standard bid

Opening one of a suit does **not** promise 14 HCP or more--opener may have a weak hand that is unsuitable for a notrump opening, or may have a spade suit. Only when he rebids notrump or makes some other strong call does he show a good hand.

## STRONG ONE NOTRUMP OPENING

### Requirements:

- 16-18 HCP, 3-1/2+ to 4+ honor tricks
- Balanced hand
- At least five cards in the majors
- Weakest major suit doubleton Jx
- At least three suits stopped

### Flaws:

- Five-card major
- Unstopped suit
- Lack of tenaces (e.g., AQ, KJ, Q10, etc.)

Do not open a badly flawed hand with 1NT. The ideal 1NT opening has 17 HCP, four honor tricks, many honor cards, good fillers (10's, 9's, 8's), tenaces in every suit, no unstopped suit, 4-3-3-3 distribution with a weak four-card minor suit: ♠AJ9 ♥KJ8 ♦Q1083 ♣AQ8.

The 16-18 HCP requirement is just a guide, because aces and kings are undervalued vs queens and jacks in the 4-3-2-1 count. Do not open 1NT with ♠KQ3 ♥QJ7 ♦J85 ♣AQJ8, despite the 16 HCP. Note that it lacks 3-1/2+ honor tricks. With 4-1/2 honor tricks, it is usually better to open one of a suit and then jump to 2NT. This hand is too good for a 1NT opening: ♠AK7 ♥A93 ♦A105 ♣QJ98.

Some 15 HCP hands qualify: ♠AQ8 ♥AJ9 ♦A108 ♣9872. This hand is too strong for a 1NT rebid. With the 3-1/2+ honor tricks, good distribution, and every suit covered, it is a 1NT opening.

A weak doubleton in a minor suit, while a flaw, may sometimes be chanced--usually with a hand that might have serious rebid problems if opened with one of a suit: ♠AJ3 ♥AQ7 ♦92 ♣AJ874. If opened 1♣, this hand has no good rebid after a one-over-one response. A major suit doubleton, however, should be no weaker than Jx. Partner should be able to count on a little support when he transfers to a major. Also, he should be able to accept a notrump contract with ♠KQ8732 ♥Q8 ♦764 ♣Q4, a hand that may not fare well in notrump if opener has two small spades.

A 5-4 hand is suit-oriented and should generally not be opened with 1NT, although tenaces in both doubletons might excuse a 1NT bid.

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO ONE NOTRUMP

Opener Responder

1NT 2♣ - forcing Stayman (but not game-forcing)

2♦ - Jacoby transfer to hearts

2♥ - Jacoby transfer to spades

2♠ - transfer to clubs

2NT - transfer to diamonds

3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - natural, slam try

3NT - signoff

4♣ - Gerber

4♦ - Texas transfer to hearts

4♥ - Texas transfer to spades

4♠ - a mild notrump raise, Boland convention applies\*

4NT - a stronger notrump raise, Boland applies

5♣ - Miller convention, slam force

5♦ - signoff, but opener can sometimes bid 6♦ (e.g., with four aces or ♦AK)

5♥/5♠/5NT - meaningless

6 any is a signoff, not invitational

The only way to raise to 2NT is to bid 2♣ first, then 2NT.

The Boland and Miller conventions are discussed in sections 5-6 and 5-7.

Before reading the remainder of this section, read section 10-11, Notrumper Cue Bids.

## TEXAS TRANSFER BIDS

Opener	Responder
1NT	4♦ - asks opener to bid 4♥ 4♥ - asks opener to bid 4♠

Opener has no option other than to bid game in the indicated suit. The Texas convention is used in competition, but only through 3♣ (i.e., when *both* 4♦ and 4♥ are jumps):

South	West	North
1NT	3♣	4♦/4♥ - Texas transfer
1NT	3♦	4♦ - Stayman, ostensibly 4♥/4♠ - natural game bid 4♣ - natural, not forcing (Gerber must be a jump)

Also see section 5-3, When the Opponents Intervene vs Strong Notrump.

Texas transfer followed by 4NT is Roman Key Card Blackwood (see section 6-6). This denies a short suit, so partner can correct a major suit slam bid to notrump if that looks right. Holding a short suit, either start with a strong jump takeout or start with Jacoby and follow with a splinter bid.

A Texas transfer must usually be made immediately in response to 1NT, but can also apply as a follow-up to Stayman if opener responds 2♦:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	4♦/4♥ - Texas transfer 4♣ - Gerber 4♠ - mild slam try in notrump 4NT - stronger slam try in notrump

The 4♦ bid implies a weak 4=6, the 4♥ bid a weak 6=4, in spades-hearts. Responder would bid a forcing 2♥ or 2♠ with slam interest.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♠	4♦ - splinter bid, not Texas 4♣ - splinter bid, not Gerber 4♥ - Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB) 4NT - slam try in notrump

Texas is used in competition only through 3♣, when both 4♦ and 4♥ would be jump bids.

Note that after a 2♥ or 2♠ response to Stayman, a four-level bid in the other major is RKCB.

## JACOBY TRANSFER BIDS

One advantage of transfer bids is that they enable the strong hand to become declarer, so that the opening lead will come up to her strength. Contrary to common belief, this is not the main advantage of transfer bids at the two level. More important is that transfers may be made with hands of any strength: weak, invitational, game-going, or even a slammish hand.

Suppose a 2♥ response is a natural signoff bid. How do you invite game in hearts? Or suppose you have hearts plus a minor suit. How do you show both at a low level? Using 2♦ to show hearts, you have it both ways. With a bad hand and long hearts, you pass opener's 2♥ bid. With a stronger hand, you bid again. Your 2NT rebid shows a 5-3-3-2 hand with five hearts and invitational strength, 3NT the same but with game-going strength. A minor suit rebid is forcing, showing a two-suited hand. A raise to 3♥ is invitational, showing at least six hearts. A jump to 4♥ is slam invitational, because you would make a Texas transfer bid (4♦) in response to 1NT with no slam interest.

The result of all this is that Jacoby transfers provide many ways for responder to describe her hand after a notrump opening.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦ - asks opener to bid 2♥
	2♥ - asks opener to bid 2♠

These transfer bids can be based on anything from a complete bust to a very strong hand. They show at least five cards in the indicated major. The converse is not true: Failure to use Jacoby does not deny a five-card or longer major (e.g., Stayman is frequently used with five or more spades).

Transfer bids apply over an artificial double of 1NT or artificial 2♣ overcall that does not specify a particular suit (e.g., "Hamilton" 2♣), but do not apply over a business double, a natural overcall, or a conventional call that shows one or more specific suits, e.g., a double that shows both majors.. See section 5-3, When the Opponents Intervene vs Strong Notrump, and section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions.

If opener has a super hand in support of the indicated suit, he can make a notrumper cue bid (see section 10-11), bid 2NT, or jump to three of the major:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦
	2♥ - the usual bid
	2♠/3♣/3♦ - notrumper cue bid, "super accept"
	2NT - two of top three honors in hearts
	3♥ - great heart support, good hand

With a minimum notrump, opener should just accept the transfer minimally, no matter what his holding in the suit. The notrumper cue bids show four-card heart support, an outside doubleton, and a maximum notrump. The 2NT bid shows a good hand for notrump in addition to the heart honors.

Responder can bid 3NT with ♠32 ♥Q108763 ♦K2 ♣875, so opener had better have quick tricks outside and good stoppers in all suits: ♠AJ9 ♥AK5 ♦J987 ♣AJ10. The jump to 3♥ shows a fine hand in support of hearts but no outside holding suitable for a notrumper cue bid: ♠A94 ♥AK105 ♦Q3 ♣A643. Do not jump with 4-3-3-3 distribution, even with a maximum.

Opener must never go past three of the indicated major unless invited to do so, and must pass a signoff bid in three of that major after a “super accept” cue bid, as responder could be really broke: ♠983 ♥107653 ♦986 ♣92.

A new suit bid by responder at the three level is game-forcing unless the bid follows an opposing overcall, after which a double is artificial showing a probable five-carder and good values, but not enough to bid 3NT:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	3♦	3♥ - weak two-suiter, not forcing	
		3♠ - not invitational, six spades	
		4♥ - strong two-suiter	
		4♠ - slam try, six or more spades, balanced	
		4NT - notrump raise, not forcing	
		Dbl - invitational spade hand	
		Pass - weak, not forcing, probably five spades	

Normally 4♥ would be a splinter bid, but not in this auction. Use the Texas transfer with a long suit and no interest in slam, and start with Texas if you want to use Roman Key Card Blackwood.

Be sure to read section 5-3, When the Opponents Intervene vs Strong Notrump.

With two-suited hands that lack the strength to insist on game but have enough to invite, don't use a Jacoby sequence. Respond 2♣ (Stayman) with five spades and any other suit. With five hearts plus a minor suit, use the Unbalanced Heart Convention, described in the next section. With 5-4 in the majors and an invitational hand or better, use Stayman. With a weaker hand, just transfer to the five-card major and pass the response.

When responder shows the 5-3-3-2 balanced sort of hand by rebidding notrump, opener usually stays in notrump with a doubleton in the indicated suit. With three-card support he uses his judgment, often staying in notrump with a 4-3-3-3 hand and scattered strength. With four-card support he normally returns to the suit. Opener must also decide whether to bid (or try for) game:

Opener Responder

1NT 2♥

2♠ 2NT

Pass - minimum, doubleton spade or 4-3-3-3 distribution

3♠ - minimum, three or four-card spade support

3NT - maximum, doubleton spade or 4-3-3-3 distribution

4♠ - maximum, three or four-card spade support

3♣/3♦/3♥ - "Have support for you, need help in this suit," a game-try bid

If the side suit trial bid fits responder well, she may be able to bid a marginal game because of the good fit. "Need help here" means a broken suit (e.g., KJ43), not an xxx holding.

Opener Responder

1NT 2♦

2♥ 2♠ is the Unbalanced Heart Convention (UHC)

2NT shows 5-3-3-2 distribution, invitational hand

3NT shows 5-3-3-2 distribution, game-going hand

4NT shows a 5-3-3-2 hand, invitational, strong hearts, too much strength for 3NT

4♠ is an artificial notrump raise, 5-3-3-2, hearts not strong.

3♣/3♦ is forcing to game, showing a second suit

3♥ is invitational, six or more hearts, balanced hand

3♠/4♣/4♦ is a splinter bid, slam try, six or more hearts

4♥ is a slam try, six or more hearts, balanced hand (use Texas if weaker)

UHC is described on page 5-2-7. The 2♠ rebid is not needed to show five hearts and four spades because Stayman is used with a hand of that sort. Over the 3♠ splinter bid, opener can bid 3NT with secondary spade strength and poor heart support. Over a splinter in clubs or diamonds, however, 4NT would be RKCB, so he must bid 4♥ with any unsuitable hand. The 4♠ rebid implies that opener needs a good fit in hearts if they are to be useful in a notrump slam. 4NT is not RKCB because responder would start with a Texas Transfer with that sort of hand.

"Strong" for a five-card suit means that it should have no more than one loser opposite a doubleton ace or king, so it must be headed by two of the top three honors or by the QJ9. A "strong" six-card suit is one that is likely to have no losers opposite a doubleton ace or king, so it must be headed by two of the top three honors. A suit headed by QJ9 is also okay, because RKCB will clarify the key-card situation.

If the hand is unbalanced, jump in the short suit after transferring. If the suit is not strong, use the Unbalanced Heart Convention if unbalanced, but start with Stayman if interested in slam and the heart suit is not strong.

A hand with five spades and six hearts presents a problem, because transferring to hearts and then bidding 2♠ is UHC, while 3♠ is a splinter bid. Instead of transferring, use Stayman. Bid 2♥ after the expected 2♦ response, then bid spades on the next round (a forcing sequence), rebidding them if necessary (also forcing).

Rebids after a Jacoby 2♥ response are similar, except that responder can show 5-5 or better in the majors, not just major-minor.

With a weak 5-5 in the majors, transfer to spades and hope for the best. There is no way to show both majors without inviting game and possibly getting too high, unless the opposition comes into the bidding and you can chance a 3♥ bid after transferring to spades (a weak competitive action in competition).

## THE UNBALANCED HEART CONVENTION (UHC)

There is one sort of hand that is difficult to describe when partner opens the bidding with 1NT: an unbalanced hand of game-invitational strength with five hearts and less than four spades (e.g., ♠AQ10 ♥J8732 ♦3 ♣J842). Assuming you want to try for game, how do you proceed? Using Jacoby transfer bids you might bid 2♦ (showing hearts) and then raise partner's forced 2♥ to 3♥. Or should you bid 2NT after his 2♥ bid? Would Stayman be the answer?

Any of these routes is risky. Raising hearts could result in a 3♥ contract with Kx or worse opposite your five to the jack. Besides, that sequence shows six hearts. Opener can raise with a doubleton, putting you into game with a 5-2 trump fit. Bidding notrump after a transfer bid is supposed to show a balanced hand with a liking for notrump. Opener might pass 2NT or go to 3NT with many 4-3-3-3 hands that would play better in hearts. With Stayman, a 2♠ response by opener shuts out the heart suit (you are too weak to rebid 3♥, which is dangerous even if you play it non-forcing).

Solution: With an unbalanced heart hand use the Jacoby 2♦ response, then bid 2♠ artificially on the second round:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦ - transfer to hearts
2♥	2♠ - UHC

The 2♠ spade bid says, "Please tell me more about your hand, especially your heart holding."

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦
2♥	2♠
2NT - no heart support, minimum hand (cheapest bid)	
3♣/3♦ - heart support, minimum hand (notrumper cue bid)	
3♥ - heart support, minimum	
3♠/4♣/4♦ - heart support, maximum (notrumper cue bid)	
3NT - maximum, no heart support	
4♥ - maximum, heart support (no suit in which to make a notrumper cue bid)	

Opener may count a moderate hand as a "maximum" if it contains good heart honors and outside points consisting mostly of aces. If in doubt, however, call it a minimum--let responder do any stretching.

Note that with a minimum and heart support, opener can only bid 3♥ or make a notrumper cue bid in a minor suit. Responder may sign off in 3♥ if she does not like the minor suit cue bid (i.e., with a singleton in the suit).

When opener bids 2NT over 2♠, a minimum heart "rebid" shows six hearts and an unbalanced hand, invitational. A 4♥ jump over 2NT implies that responder was looking for a slam, but was disappointed by opener's rebid. Over a notrumper cue bid, both 3♥ and 4♥ are a signoffs. Over

3NT, a 4♥ bid also shows that responder was interested in slam. Opener needs good top hearts to continue, as this sequence implies a non-strong heart suit.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦
2♥	2♠
2NT/3♣	3♥/4♥

Opener will probably pass 3♥ when he has bid 2NT, showing a minimum. With a balanced hand and six hearts, responder immediately raises 2♥ to 3♥, invitationally. Why differentiate? Because UHC gives opener a chance to make a minor suit notrumper cue bid in support of hearts when he has a minimum. Responder may be able to bid game on the basis of a good. With a balanced hand, she doesn't care where opener's outside strength lies--she just wants top cards.

UHC is useful for two-suited as well as one-suited hands:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦
2♥	2♠
2NT	3♣/3♦ - not forcing

Responder is showing a second suit and invitational strength. Opener will probably pass with his minimum hand and lack of heart support, but he could bid on with a good fitting hand. With game-going strength responder uses the standard Jacoby sequence:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦
2♥	3♣/3♦ - forcing

What if responder has an unbalanced hand with five or more spades? No problem here, since opener's response to Stayman cannot shut out the spade suit. After opener's 2♦ or 2♥ response, responder can bid 2♠, forcing, and then show a second suit on the next round, not forcing, if opener bids 2NT.

If the next hand bids over opener's 2♥ rebid, UHC does not apply:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	3♣/3♦	3♠	- natural, spade strength, not a suit

A UHC spade bid must be made at the same level as the transfer.

## MINOR SUIT TRANSFER BIDS

There is no reason that transfer bids cannot be extended to show the minor suits after a 1NT opening: A 2♠ response shows clubs and a 2NT response shows diamonds. How do you raise 1NT to 2NT? Just bid 2♣, Stayman, then bid 2NT. Minor suit transfers apply whenever Jacoby transfers do, as specified in the discussion of Jacoby transfers.

### The 2♠ Response

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♠ - transfer to clubs

Note that minor suit transfers have an added dimension: There is room for a bid between the transfer response and the transfer suit. After the 2♠ response, opener can bid 2NT or 3♣ without going past the transfer suit. Which should she bid? It depends on her hand, especially her club fit. If she would accept an invitation to game based on a long broken club suit, she bids 3♣. If not, she bids 2NT. For instance, responder could have ♠J2 ♥32 ♦Q87 ♣A98763. He needs a fine club fit and quick tricks outside in order to produce game in notrump.

The 2NT response to the 2♠ transfer does not necessarily show a minimum notrump opening. Opener can have a maximum, but a poor fit in clubs. Nor does the 3♣ response show a maximum notrump. Opener could have something like ♠AQ2 ♥K107 ♦A76 ♣K543, a hand that will produce game opposite six clubs to the ace with a finesse at worst.

With a bad hand, responder will pass opener's 3♣ bid, or correct a 2NT bid to 3♣, which opener must pass. With an invitational club hand, responder will bid 3♣ over 2NT (since opener would decline an invitation), and will probably bid 3NT over 3♣.

Suppose responder has a strong hand, with clubs plus another suit or a notrump shape (5-3-3-2, 6-3-2-2). Responder can force to game with anything but a 3♣ rebid:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♠ - transfer to clubs
2NT	3♣ is a signoff
	3♦/3♥/3♠ is natural, forcing to game
	3NT is a signoff (in view of the non-acceptance)
	4♣ - forcing
	4♦/4♥/4♠ - splinter bid, independent club suit
	4NT - notrump slam try, denies a short suit

If opener had rebid 3♣, showing club support, 4NT would become Roman Key Card Blackwood.

The splinter bids show a singleton in the splinter suit, very strong clubs, and a slammish hand. Opener signs off in notrump when holding duplication (secondary strength) in the splinter suit. If

opener shows support for responder's minor and responder splinters, he is saying in effect, "Bid slam if the splinter fits your hand, but bid 4NT if you have wasted values in the splinter suit."

Transferring to a minor and then bidding a major implies a hand that was too strong to use a Stayman sequence (a 3♣ or 3♦ rebid is not forcing in a Stayman auction).

Either minor could be longer (e.g., 5=4, 4=5) when responder shows both minors this way, so opener should be slow to raise either minor without four-card support. Responder may not be greatly interested in slam, since he has not gone past 3NT. Possibly he is afraid that 3NT might fail because of weakness in one or both majors. Suppose responder has ♠Q83 ♥6 ♦AK93 ♣J9762. He responds 2♠, transfer to clubs, and then bids 3♦ next. If opener has just one major stopped, he should bid it. With both majors stopped, he usually bids 3NT:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♠
2NT/3♣	3♦
3♥/3♠	- showing a suit stopped
3NT	- both majors stopped

### The 2NT Response

Opener	Responder
1NT	2NT - transfer to diamonds

After a 2NT diamond transfer, opener bids 3♦ to show a diamond fit, otherwise bids 3♣. The 2NT response is also used with a weak two-suiter in the minors. Whether opener rebids 3♣ or 3♦, responder passes, probably reaching the right spot. A "new suit" bid by responder is forcing to game, showing a second suit:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2NT - transfer to diamonds
3♣/3♦	3♥/3♠ - forcing, suit-showing
	4♣/4♥/4♠ - splinter bid, independent diamond suit
	4NT - natural over 3♣, RKCB over 3♦
	5♣/5♦ - asking bid

When opener shows support, 4NT is RKCB.

## FORCING STAYMAN

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣ - asks opener to bid a major
2♦	- no four-card major
2♥/2♠	- four-card major, denies the other
2NT	- two four-card majors, minimum hand
3♣	- two four-card majors, maximum hand
3♦/3♥/3♠	- five-card suit, maximum hand

The 2♣ response is not a telling bid, it is an asking bid: "Do you have a four-card major?" Responder may not have four cards in either major. He may be just kidding the opposition, or he may be planning a raise to 2NT, which requires a bid of 2♣ first (an immediate 2NT response is a transfer to diamonds). All responses other than 2♦ are Alertable.

The 2♦ response does not absolutely deny four cards in a major. Opener may elect to suppress a very weak major with a maximum hand and double stoppers in the other suits. Similarly, he may bid 2♥ or 2♠ when holding four weak cards in the other major, usually with a maximum hand and double stoppers in the minor suits.

Opener cannot bid 3♣ to show five clubs and a maximum, because responder could have a very weak hand with the plan of passing opener's response to Stayman: ♠10852 ♥J875 ♦Q8642 ♣ void. We therefore use this bid to show both majors and a maximum notrump. If responder now bids three of a major, opener must pass because responder could have that bust hand. After a 2NT or 3♣ response, responder can bid 3♦ to ask for opener's better major.

### When Opener Bids 2♦

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥/2♠ - asks if opener has support for the suit (forcing)
	2NT - natural invitational raise (only way to raise NT)
	3♣/3♦ - natural, mildly invitational, usually passed (4=6 hand with a major)
	3♥/3♠ - Smolen, four of the suit bid, five or six cards in the other major
	3NT - signoff
	4♣ - Gerber
	4♦ - Texas transfer to hearts (4=6 in the majors)
	4♥ - Texas transfer to spades (6=4 in the majors)
	4♠ - mild notrump slam try (see Boland, section 6-10)
	4NT - strong notrump slam try (see Boland, section 6-10)

The 2♥ and 2♠ rebids do not *show* anything. They merely ask if opener has trump support for the suit named. Responder probably has a five-card suit, but may have a weak doubleton, just trying to confuse the opposition. These bids must be alerted: "That is an asking bid, and I am not allowed to

bid higher than the three level at this point." A 3NT bid by responder after he bids a major should therefore also be alerted by opener ("I must pass"). Note that Smolen may be used with 6-4 in the majors, a good idea when holding a weak doubleton. If opener doesn't raise the longer suit, responder could force him to do so with a transfer bid, but that's an easily forgotten agreement.

When responder bids a new major on the second round, opener gives information concerning support for that suit and general strength:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥? (Alert: "She is asking about hearts, not telling.")
2♠/3♣/3♦	- notrumper cue bid, heart support, minimum hand
2NT	- minimum hand, no heart support
3NT	- maximum hand, no heart support
3♥	- heart support, maximum hand
3♠	- notrumper cue bid, heart support, maximum hand
3NT	- maximum hand, no heart support

All the suit bids by opener must be Alerted. Opener cannot go beyond 3♦ with a minimum hand, nor can he go beyond 3NT on his own. And once responder bids 3NT, the auction is over; opener must pass. Why? Because responder may have nothing in hearts! She was only asking about heart support, not *telling* anything.

Note that the only notrumper cue bid available with a maximum hand and trump support is 3♠. Bid 3♥ when the spade holding is not right for a notrumper cue bid.

The bidding after responder rebids 2♠ is similar:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦/2♥	2♠? (Alert: "She is asking about spades, not telling.")
2NT	- minimum hand, no spade support
3♣/3♦/3♥	- notrumper cue bid, spade support, minimum hand
3♠	- spade support, maximum hand
3NT	- maximum hand, no spade support

In this case there is no suit available for opener to make a notrumper cue bid with a maximum and support. Note that whichever major responder bids, opener's raise shows a maximum hand and support for the suit.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠
3♣	3♦/3♥ - natural, forcing to 3♠
	3♠ - signoff
	3NT - must be passed
	4♠ - accepting the game try

Opener's 3♣ was a notrumper cue bid, showing spade support and a minimum hand.

The auctions that might occur when responder rebids 2♥ and opener does not show support need elaboration:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥
2NT	3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠

The minor suit bids imply a good 4=5=4=0 or 4=5=0=4 hand, and are forcing. Stopping at 3♣ or 3♦ is a bit unrealistic, and there is no other way to show such a hand. With a 5-5 hand responder would have used UHC instead of Stayman. The 3♥ bid implies an invitational hand with 4=6 in the majors.. The 3♠ bid is forcing, implying six hearts and five spades.

### When Opener Bids a Major

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♥	2♠ - asking about spade support (see above)
	2NT/3♥ - invitational raise, natural
	3♣/3♦ - natural, mildly invitational (4=6 hand with four spades)
	3♠/4♣/4♦ - splinter bid, heart support, slam try
	3NT - signoff
	4♥ - signoff, no slam interest
	4♠ - Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB)
	4NT - slam try in notrump, Boland applies

With a weak 4-6 major-minor hand, just transfer to the minor and forget Stayman. Such hands usually do not play well in a 4-4 fit vs a 6-2 or 6-3 fit, so there is little risk in the possible loss of a major suit contract.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♠	2NT/3♠ - invitational raise, natural
	3♣/3♦ - natural, mildly invitational (4=6 hand with four hearts)
	3♥ - forcing
	3NT - signoff
	4♣/4♦ - splinter bid, spade support, slam try
	4♠ - signoff, no slam interest
	4♥ - RKCB
	4NT - slam try in notrump, Boland applies

Repeating: When opener responds in a major, four of the other major is RKCB.

### When Opener Shows Both Majors

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2NT/3♣	3♦ - transfer to hearts, possibly a weak 4=4=4=1 or 4=4=5=0 hand 3♥ - transfer to spades, also possibly weak (spades better than hearts) 3NT - signoff 4♣ - meaningless at present 4♦ - transfer to hearts, possibly a prelude to 4NT Key Card Blackwood 4♥ - transfer to spades, possibly a prelude to 4NT Key Card Blackwood 4NT - natural, invitational (for RKCB, transfer first to establish the trump suit)

When responder transfers at the three level and raises to four or bids a new suit, that shows slam interest Responder should transfer at the four level with no slam interest, just as Jacoby followed by a raise to game shows slam interest and Texas denies slam interest. (Unless, of course, responder intends to use Blackwood after a four-level transfer.)

### When Opener Shows a Five-card Suit

The jumps to three of a suit in response to Stayman show a maximum hand and a five-card suit. Responder's bid in a new suit denies trump support for opener, but shows slam interest.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
3♦	3♥/3♠ - natural, five or more, opener bids 3NT with poor support 3NT - signoff 4♣ - natural. With poor support opener bids 4♦ (strong suit) or a natural 4NT 4♦ - raise, forcing 4♥/4♠ - splinter bid, diamond support 4NT - RKCB (since opener's strength is closely known)

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
3♥	3♠/4♣/4♦ - natural, opener usually bids notrump with poor support 3NT - signoff 4♥ - signoff 4♠ - splinter bid 4NT - RKCB

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
3♠	3NT - signoff 4♣/4♦/4♥ - natural, opener bids 4♠ (strong suit) or a natural 4NT with poor support 4♠ - signoff 4NT - RKCB

## Two-Suited Hands

Stayman is used with two-suited hands of invitational strength when one of the suits is spades:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠ - forcing, asking about spades
2NT	3♣/3♦/3♥ - not forcing

Opener will probably pass, in view of his announced minimum opening and lack of spade support. He might raise a heart bid, however, with a good fit in both suits: ♠AQ ♥KQ2 ♦A873 ♣J542

With a two-suited invitational hand that includes hearts but not spades, use the Unbalanced Heart Convention.

Even when opener has indicated support for a major, responder can still show a second suit:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠
3♠	4♣/4♦ - second suit, perhaps a four-carder, forcing 4♥ - five-card suit, forcing 4NT - RKCB, because a suit has been agreed

## More on One-Suited Hands

Use Stayman with invitational strength, five or more spades, and an unbalanced hand, even if not two-suited:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦/2♥	2♠
2NT	Pass with ♠K9873 ♥2 ♦9632 ♣AJ2
3♠	with ♠Q87632 ♥4 ♦853 ♣KJ7 (invitational)
3♣	with ♠Q8753 ♥82 ♦9 ♣AJ984 (invitational)

The "invitations" will probably not be accepted, in view of opener's minimum hand. Opener may bid on with a good fit, however. The Stayman sequence gives opener a chance to make a notrump cue bid in support of spades, which may permit a game bid on the basis of a good fit. It is also the only way to bid two suits without forcing to game, since a second suit bid after using Jacoby is game-forcing.

When a Stayman responder insists on game in a major suit that has not been supported, and responder has shown the other major, it is obvious he had slam in mind.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♥	2♠
2NT	4♠

Responder has long spade suit, and the hand is unbalanced. With a balanced hand, bid 3♠ over 2♥ with a weak suit. With strong spades, responder would have started with 3♠ (if unbalanced) or Jacoby 2♥ (if balanced) to show slam interest. With no slam in mind, he would have used Texas.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♠	3♥
3NT	4♥ - weakish suit, slam interest

Responder could not bid 4♥ over 2♠, because that is RKCB for spades. Using Stayman to arrive at the heart game implies a balanced hand, since UHC or an original 3♥ response is available for unbalanced hands with hearts .

When opener has responded 2♦, the bidding goes this way with such hands:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠
2NT	4♠

Opener's 2NT bid showed a minimum and no support, so responder just bids game, despite his original slam interest. With a weak 6=4 in the majors, responder would use Texas over 2♦, bidding 4♦ with six hearts, 4♥ with six spades, or with a stronger hand would use Smolen, jumping in the four-card suit.

If responder's suit is hearts, the same logic applies:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥
2NT	4♥

Also see section 5-3, When the Opponents Intervene vs Strong Notrump.

## THE JUMP TAKEOUT RESPONSE

Opener	Responder
1NT	3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - slam try

The jump takeout shows a good suit of at least five cards, probably an unbalanced hand, and slam interest. With a side suit that lacks a control, it may be better to start with Jacoby in order to get opener to play the hand. The jump is not a slam try in competition:

South	West	North
1NT	2♣	3♦/3♥/3♠

If the 2♣ bid is natural, the jump is invitational at matchpoint scoring, forcing at IMP scoring. A cue bid is used for game-forcing Stayman. If the 2♣ bid is artificial and does not show a specific suit, then the jump takeout is strong (“Systems on”). It is also strong over an artificial double that shows no specific suit. See section 5-3, When the Opponents Intervene vs Strong Notrump.

After a jump takeout opener rebids 3NT if he lacks adequate trump support for responder's suit. He need not fear missing a slam by bidding 3NT with a maximum, because responder will bid again if all she needs is a maximum opposite.

With trump support, opener's action is different for majors and minors. If the suit is a major, opener raises with a minimum, makes a notrumper cue bid or jump raise with a maximum:

Opener	Responder
1NT	3♥ - slam try
3♠/4♣/4♦	- notrumper cue bid, heart support, maximum hand
3NT	- lacks heart support, may be minimum or maximum
4♥	- heart support, minimum hand
4NT	- Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB)
5♥/6♥	- extra good hearts and extra good hand, good controls

Opener	Responder
1NT	3♠ - slam try
3NT	- lacks spade support, may be minimum or maximum
4♣/4♦/4♥	- notrumper cue bid, spade support, maximum
4♠	- spade support, minimum hand
4NT	- RKCB
5♠/6♠	- extra good spades and extra good hand, good controls

Notice that opener's action is opposite of that taken when a Stayman or UHC bidder shows a major suit. In that case opener makes a notrumper cue bid with a minimum, not with a maximum, when he has support. Responder can therefore choose the sequence that is appropriate for the strength of his major suit slam try, using the jump takeout with a minimum hand for slam, Stayman or UHC with better hands. If responder's next bid is 4♣, that is natural. No Gerber after a jump takeout.

Jumps in a minor suit are treated differently: Raises are stronger than a three-level notrumper cue bid, which at the three level may be on a minimum (but four-level cue bids are strong):

Opener Responder

1NT 3♦ - slam try

3♥/3♠ - notrumper cue bid in support of diamonds, may be minimum

3NT - denies diamond support, may be minimum or maximum

4♣ - notrumper cue bid in support of diamonds, maximum hand

4♦ - diamond support, good hand

4NT - RKCB

The bidding is similar after a jump takeout of 3♣. The reason that a four-level bid shows a maximum is, of course, that game in notrump has been bypassed. With a minimum and support, opener must make a three-level notrumper cue bid, even when lacking an appropriate suit for that action. Hand evaluation must include a consideration of fit and side suit controls, not just HCP.

If responder bids notrump after hearing a notrumper cue bid in support of a minor, he probably has a singleton or void in that suit--the hand does not fit:

Opener	Responder
1NT	3♦
4♣	4NT - short clubs, signoff

Otherwise, 4NT by responder is Roman Key Card Blackwood (section 6-6), even if opener rebids 3NT. If responder wants to invite game with a 4NT bid, he must start with a transfer instead of a jump takeout. A 4NT bid by opener is RKCB unless he has bid 3NT, then 4NT, an obvious signoff.

A notrump bidder is allowed only one notrumper cue bid per auction. Any further cue bid shows an ace. See section 10-11, Notrumper Cue Bids.

The degree of fit is important after responder shows two suits. With ♠Q3 ♥A54 ♦AK76 ♣K1087, opener rebids 3NT when responder jumps to 3♠. If responder then bids 4♣, this minimum hand becomes a maximum. A jump to 6♣ is quite in order. With KQ of hearts instead of the ace (more points, but less fit), opener would just sign off with a 4NT bid over 4♣.

Opener should bid aggressively with many controls and a ruffing value. With ♠A3 ♥KJ7 ♦A10987 ♣A103 she should try for slam when responder makes a jump takeout of 3♥, even though it is a minimum notrump opening. A raise to 5♥ is about right. Conversely, secondary strength in side suits should be downgraded.

Strong jump takeouts by a passed hand are necessarily less invitational to slam than those by an unpassed hand. In a minor suit they tend to suggest that a minor suit game might be safer than a notrump game.

## SLAM TRIES WITH LONG SUITS

As shown throughout these pages, there are many ways to make a slam try with a hand that has a six or seven-card suit. A jump takeout response is one way, but other ways are available. A summary follows. All of the sequences that follow show that responder has interest in slam.

### Major Suit Slam Tries

-- With a balanced hand, use Jacoby and jump to four of the suit. This promises a strong suit:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦/2♥
2♥/2♠	4♥/4♠ - balanced, strong suit

-- With a balanced hand and a heart suit that is not strong, start with Stayman and insist on a heart game without jumping unnecessarily. This gives opener a chance to show heart support:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥
2NT	4♥ (because 3♥ is not forcing)

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♠	3♥ (because 4♥ would be a splinter bid)
3NT	4♥ - unbalanced hand, hearts not strong

-- With an unbalanced hand and a spade suit, strong or not, start with Stayman and bid 2♠. If the suit isn't strong, opener's next bid will show if he has support:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦/2♥	2♠
2NT	4♠ (because 3♠ is not forcing)

-- With an unbalanced hand and a heart suit, strong or not, use UHC:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦
2♥	2♠ - UHC
2NT	4♥ - unbalanced hand

Again: If the suit is not strong, opener's reply to UHC will show if he has support.

### Minor Suit Slam Tries

-- With balanced hands, transfer to the minor and then bid 4NT (or 3NT if opener's rebid disappoints) if opener denies good support. If he shows support by accepting the transfer, then 4NT is RKCB.

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♠ - transfer to clubs
2NT/3♣	4NT - natural over 2NT, RKCB over 3♣

Opener	Responder
1NT	2NT - transfer to diamonds
3♣/3♦	4NT - natural over 3♣, RKCB over 3♦

The natural 4NT bids deny a short suit.

-- With unbalanced hands transfer to the minor and then make a splinter bid if opener's rebid does not discourage slam ideas:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♠ - transfer to clubs
2NT/3♣	4♦/4♥/4♠ - splinter bid

Opener	Responder
1NT	2NT - transfer to diamonds
3♣/3♦	4♣/4♥/4♠ - splinter bid

It will just have to be remembered that the other artificial uses for 4♠ (RKCB or mild notrump slam try) do not apply after a minor suit transfer. If RKCB is a must, start with a strong jump takeout response. Then, if opener shows support, 4NT is RKCB.

## SLAM TRIES WITH TWO-SUITED HANDS

As shown throughout these pages, there are many ways to make a slam try with a two-suited hand. A summary follows:

### With Both Majors

When holding 5-5 or better in the majors, choose a Jacoby sequence with a marginal slam try hand:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♥
2♠	3♥ - forcing

With a maximum hand and a fit in both majors, opener can now make a notrumper cue bid of 4♣ or 4♦. Responder may be able to bid slam with this information.

Another approach, also good with a marginal hand for slam, is to jump to 3♠ over 1NT, then bid 4♥. Prefer this sequence when the spades are quite strong.

With a stronger hand, prefer a Stayman sequence:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠
3♦	3♥

The 3♥ bid is forcing, since opener has shown spade support with the 3♦ notrumper cue bid. Now responder may be able to get to slam even when opener has a minimum, if the hands fit well.

### With a Major and a Minor

Use a Jacoby sequence:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♥
2♠	3♣ - forcing

With a major and a minor, starting with a 3♥/3♠ bid means bidding the minor suit at the four level, so the slam interest should be strong in case opener can't support the major. Opener can sign off in 4NT, however, when responder bids the minor

### With Both Minors

When the two suits are minors, a transfer sequence is preferable with a marginal slam try hand:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♠ - transfer to clubs
2NT/3♣	3♦ - forcing

Since this is the only way to show both minors without going past 3NT, there is no way for opener to tell whether the suits are of equal length or, if unequal, which suit is longer. However:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2NT - transfer to diamonds
3♣	4♣ - club suit too
4NT	- signoff, strong in the majors

Here the clubs cannot be longer than the diamonds. Since this sequence bypasses 3NT, responder needs a pretty good hand. Another way to show this sort of hand:

Opener	Responder
1NT	3♦ - strong hand with diamonds
3NT	4♣ - club suit too
4NT	- signoff, strong in majors

You choose the second sequence when it is important to find about a third suit fit. With ♠Q32 ♥6 ♦AKJ65 ♣KQ65, you will rebid 3NT if opener makes a notrumper cue bid in hearts, and 4♣ if he rebids 3♠ or 3NT. The notrumper cue bid in spades could get you to a good slam opposite 16 HCP (give opener ♠KJ5 ♥AJ8 ♦Q1097 ♣AJ10), or keep you out of a doubtful slam (reverse your majors) even when opener fits your suits.

With a strong hand and longer clubs than diamonds, responder can bid this way:

Opener	Responder
1NT	3♣ - strong hand with clubs
3NT	4♦ - second suit (shorter)
4NT	- signoff, strong in the majors

## SUMMARY OF BIDDING APPROACHES AFTER 1NT

Major suit bust	Bid Jacoby 2♦ or 2♥
Club bust	Bid 2♠, then bid 3♣ if opener bids 2NT
Diamond bust	Bid 2NT, then bid 3♦ if opener bids 3♣
Weak 5-5 in the minors	Bid 2NT, pass opener's response
Weak 5-5 in the majors	Bid 2♥ and pass opener's 2♠ bid
<u>Invitational Hands:</u>	
Long clubs	Bid 2♠, then 3♣ over 2NT, 3NT over 3♣
Long diamonds	Bid 2NT, then 3♦ over 3♣, 3NT over 3♦
Balanced, 5-card major	Bid 2♦ or 2♥, then 2NT
Balanced, 6-card major	Bid 2♦ or 2♥, then raise to the three level
Unbalanced, 5-6 hearts	Bid 2♦, then 2♠ (UHC)
Unbalanced, 5-6 spades	Bid 2♣, then 2♠
Two-suiter with spades	Bid 2♣, then 2♠, then the second suit
Two suiter, hearts and a minor	Bid UHC, then bid the minor
<u>Game-Going Hands</u> (not much interest in slam)	
Both minors	Bid 2♠ to show clubs, then bid 3♦
Both majors	Bid 2♥, then 3♥
Major/minor, 5-5	Bid 2♦ or 2♥, then the minor
Balanced, 5-card major	Bid 2♦ or 2♥, then 3NT
Unbalanced, 5 hearts	Bid 2♦, then 2♠ (UHC)
Unbalanced, 5 spades	Bid 2♣, then 2♠
One long major	Bid Texas 4♦ or 4♥

## WHEN THE OPPONENTS INTERVENE VS STRONG NOTRUMP

### When an Opponent Makes a Natural Overcall

This includes a natural overcall that shows in addition another unspecified suit. If the natural overcall shows another specific suit, the defense is different. See section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions.

-- A double by responder is for business:

South	West	North
1NT	2♥	Dbl - business double

-- A *direct* double by opener is also for business:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	Pass	2♥
Dbl - business double, good hearts			

-- A *balancing* double by either partner is takeout by opener, business by responder:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl - takeout			

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl - business double	
2♥/2♠ - four-card suit, pass or correct			

When balancing with a four-card suit, responder promises four cards in the next higher suit. This means responder must not pass 1NT with a five-card major.

All other doubles by either partner are for business.

-- A non-jump 4♣ response is natural, not Gerber or Stayman:

South	West	North
1NT	3♥	4♣ - natural, not quite forcing
4♥ - probably meant as Stayman, but maybe a void		

-- Jacoby transfer bids do not apply, but Texas transfers apply after an overcall of 3♣ or lower (i.e., when both 4♦ and 4♥ would be a jump):

South	West	North
1NT	2♣	2♦/2♥/2♠ - natural 4♦/4♥ - Texas transfer 4♣ - Gerber

South	West	North
1NT	3♦	4♥/4♠ - natural 4♦ - Stayman, ostensibly

-- The cue bid replaces Stayman, and is forcing to game:

South	West	North
1NT	2♣	3♣ - asks for a major
1NT	2♦	3♦ - asks for a major
1NT	2♥	3♥ - asks for spades
1NT	2♠	3♠ - asks for hearts

In the first auction opener bids 3♦ with neither major, 3NT with both and a minimum, 4♣ with both and a maximum. In the second auction opener bids 3NT with neither major, 4♦ with both. (Remember that 3♣ is a natural bid unless the overcall was in clubs.) The cue bid may not be meant as Stayman when responder has a big hand with first round control of the opposing suit. If that is so, she will make it clear in the later bidding:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♠ - slam try, club void or ace	

Obviously North was not bidding 3♣ to find a major suit fit.

-- Simple free bids are not forcing, and are not even invitational at matchpoint scoring. With an invitational hand responder must generally bid 2NT at matchpoints, even with a suit-oriented hand. If space permits a jump, however, the invitation can be made that way (but major suit jumps are forcing at IMP scoring):

South	West	North
1NT	2♣	3♦/3♥/3♠ - invitational

When the overcall is at the three level, a 3♥ or 3♠ response is invitational at IMP scoring but not at matchpoints. A non-jump 4♣ response is natural, not Gerber or Stayman. Over 3♣, a 3♦ response is used for Stayman.

South	West	North
1NT	3♣	3♦ - Stayman
		3♥/3♠ - not forcing
		4♣ - Probably Stayman
		4♦/4♥ - Texas Transfer

If the overcall is 3♦ or higher, Texas does not apply, and a cue bid must be used for Stayman.

When responder raises to 2NT over an overcall, opener should show a major on his way to 3NT. A new minor suit rebid shows a maximum hand, five-card suit, and no stopper in the opposing suit.

### When an Opponent Makes an Artificial Overcall

-- If the overcall shows two suits section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions, applies.

-- An artificial overcall that shows one specific suit other than the one named (e.g., a transfer overcall) is handled by using the specified suit for Stayman. All other responses have the same meaning as over a natural overcall (see above).

-- If a 2♣ overcall shows a one-suited hand with an unspecified suit ("Hamilton"), a double replaces Stayman and all bids have the same meaning as if the overcall had not occurred. Since 2♣ is forcing, you can pass with a good hand if hopeful of doubling for business on the next round:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♦ - forced bid
Pass	Pass	Dbl	- business
			2♥/2♠ - four-card suit, weak

West's pass of 2♦ indicates that his suit is diamonds. If North has a good hand, he must either double 2♦ for business or make a strong bid like 2NT or a jump. A minimum reopening bid in a suit is not invitational. It tends to show a four-card suit because a five-carder would have been shown by a transfer earlier. It also implies support for the next higher suit if opener is short in responder's suit.

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♦ - forced bid
Pass	2♥	Dbl	- business
			2♠ - four-card suit

North has ♠KJ32 ♥76 ♦1032 ♣QJ54. South can bid 3♣ with a doubleton spade and a club suit.

### When 1NT is Doubled

-- If the double is natural, not conventional, you can redouble with as little as 6 HCP. Opener must be told of the 6 HCP or more so he can double an opposing bid more easily.

Suit responses over the double are weak at the two level, invitational at the three level. All suit bids at the two or three level are natural, no Jacoby, no Stayman. Responses at the four level retain their normal conventional meanings.

South	West	North
1NT	Dbl	2♣/2♦/2♥/2♠ - natural, weak 3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - natural, invitational

The jumps show a hand that is distributionally strong but weak in high cards, considering the failure to redouble.

A 2NT response is artificial, implying a two-suited hand. Opener assumes that responder has a weak hand with both minors (unusual notrump), but if responder does not pass opener's minor suit bid then her next suit bid shows a strong (distributional) hand and is forcing:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♥	

North has a two-suited hand, distributionally strong. The 2NT response is the only way to make sure she gets a chance to show both suits.

-- If the double is conventional, showing a one-suited hand, suit unspecified, a redouble promises only 6-7 HCP, but could have more. Otherwise the double is ignored and all bids retain the same meaning as if it had not occurred. All conventions are *on*: Jacoby, Texas, Gerber, Stayman, etc. With 8-9 HCP and a four-card or longer major, it may be better to make the normal response rather than redouble, to ensure that a major suit contract is not missed.

A minimum suit bid after passing, even when not reopening, is weak:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	Pass	2♦	- weak, just reopening

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	2♥/2♠	- just competing

North's major is a four-carder. She would have transferred on the first round with five. The balancing bid in a major promises four cards in the next higher-ranking suit.

-- If the double shows two unspecified suits (e.g., "both majors or both minors"), use the same tactics as against a one-suited conventional double.

-- If the double shows two specific suits (e.g., both majors), the countermeasure known as "Unusual over Unusual" may be used: A bid in the higher of the opposing suits shows a good hand featuring the higher "unbid" suit, usually a six-bagger, while a bid in the lower of the opposing suits shows the lower "unbid" suit. A simple new suit bid is therefore not invitational. A redouble shows "cards," at least 6 HCP:

South	West	North
1NT	Dbl*	2♠ - diamond suit, invitational 2♥ - club suit, invitational 2NT - mildly invitational 3♣/3♦ - not invitational Rdbl - 6 HCP or more

\* majors

If South lacks support for the suit indicated "invitationally," he signs off by bidding North's suit. With a fit he bids 2NT (expressing doubt, probably with an unstopped major) or 3NT. Since the "invitational" suit bids are forcing, they may be used with stronger hands.

### When a 2♦ Response to Stayman Gets Doubled

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Dbl		

Responder's actions are similar to opener's actions when a Stayman 2♣ bid gets doubled:

- With four diamonds headed by an honor, or better, she redoubles.
- With three diamonds to the queen or better, or four small, she passes.
- With less in diamonds, she makes her normal bid.

With 8-9 HCP and a five-card major to show, responder may choose to bid the major rather than pass or redouble. Otherwise the major could be shut out if opener bids 2NT, because responder would have to pass.

With a game-going hand or better responder can safely pass or redouble, since she can bid a five-card major at the three level (forcing) if opener bids 2NT. Opener may not pass if the double comes around, and must redouble if willing to play a 2♦ contract.

### When Responder's Major Suit Rebid Gets Doubled

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥/2♠	Dbl

This is probably one of those occasions when North is deceptively bidding a non-suit. South should redouble with support that includes a stopper, pass with no stopper, bid 2NT or 3NT with a doubleton stopper or stoppers. If South passes, no bid by North in another denomination is forcing, so she must not make a minimum bid with a game-going hand:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Dbl
Pass	Pass	3♣/3♦ - signoffs	
		3♥ - invitational	
		3♠ - partial spade stop	
		Rdbl - to play	

South has denied a spade stopper with the pass. The 3♠ bid can't be natural, so it asks for a partial spade stopper, with which South bids 3NT. The 3♣ and 3♦ bids are signoffs. The 3♥ bid is unlikely, as what sort of hand could North have? Maybe ♠65432 ♥KQJ108 ♦Q3 ♣6.

### When A Transfer Bid Gets Doubled

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♦/2♥/2♠	Dbl

-- With a partial stopper (e.g., Qx, Jxx) or worse in the doubled suit, opener passes. Responder should play the hand, if possible, so that the doubler will be on lead. If the double gets passed around, responder can redouble to force opener to bid the indicated suit. The redouble says nothing about the opposing suit, and of course responder may be busted.

To invite game, responder can "cue bid" the doubled suit (forcing the transfer at the same time) or jump in the indicated suit. If responder merely bids the indicated suit at a minimum level, opener must pass.

-- With a single stopper or better, opener redoubles if he doesn't want to accept the transfer. He might do this with Ax(x) in the doubled suit, wanting the lead to come up to responder's hand.

-- Opener's acceptance of the transfer (with at least three-card support) is non-committal. He may have a stopper in the doubled suit.

### When a Transfer Bid Gets Overcalled

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♦	2♠

Opener can bid only with a good support for responder's indicated suit (hearts, in this auction). Otherwise he must pass, since responder could have a bust hand. Or he can double, if he is confident of defeating the contract with little help from responder.

A second suit is not forcing if the bid follows an opposing overcall, and a double is artificial, a game try. Bidding the suit is merely competitive, not invitational:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♦/3♥	- weak
		Dbl	- interested in game
		3♠	- not invitational

If North were to pass with a fair but not invitational hand containing six spades, or a weakish 5-5 with which he planned to pass 2♠, South would probably have to pass also. North therefore competes with a three-level bid. With an invitational hand, or a game-going two-suiter, North must double. All the double says is, "I have at least a game-invitational hand." An invitational two-suiter is not shown via Jacoby, so a new suit bid after the double is forcing to game.

Suppose the overcall comes after a double showing a one-suited hand:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♥	Pass
2♠	3♣	3♦/3♥/3♠	- weak
		Dbl	- interested in game

The conventional double showing a one-suited hand is usually ignored by responder, and all bids retain the same meaning as if the double had not occurred. The 2♥ bid is therefore a transfer to spades. Any three-level bid by North in this situation is merely competitive, not invitational.

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♦	Pass
2♥	2♠	Dbl	Pass
2NT			- minimum, poor hearts, spades stopped
3NT			- maximum, poor hearts, spades stopped
3♥			- minimum hand, heart support
4♥			- maximum hand, heart support
3♣/3♦			- poor hearts, no spade stopper
Pass			- short hearts, good spades

West's 2♣ bid was "Hamilton," showing a one-suited hand. This convention is ignored (except that a double is Stayman), so 2♦ is a transfer to hearts. The 2♠ bid reveals that West's suit is spades.

North doubles (artificially) to show a hand of game-invitational strength or better. South then bids according to his hand, as shown. If North next bids a new suit, that is forcing to game (showing a two-suiter via Jacoby is a game force), but a 3♥ bid over opener's 2NT is merely invitational.

Repeating: A transferor's double on the second round is takeout, not penalty. Bidding the indicated suit instead of doubling shows a weak hand, and opener must pass.

## TWO NOTRUMP OPENING

Requirements for an opening bid of 2NT:

- 21-22 HCP
- Balanced hand (but avoid bidding 2NT with 5-4-2-2 distribution)
- Weakest doubleton Qx

Except for adjustment of HCP figures, this entire section applies to a rebid of 2NT after a 2♣ opening, Marvin Two Diamond opening, or Marvin Two Heart opening. See section 6-1, The Two Club Opening, section 6-2, Marvin Two Diamond Opening, and section 6-3, Marvin Two Heart Opening. For application to notrump overcalls, see section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO 2NT

Opener Responder

- 2NT 3♣ - Stayman, game forcing
- 3♦ - Jacoby transfer to hearts
- 3♥ - Jacoby transfer to spades
- 3♠ - transfer to clubs
- 3NT - transfer to diamonds
- 4♣ - Gerber
- 4♦ - Texas transfer to hearts
- 4♥ - Texas transfer to spades
- 4♠ - a mild notrump raise, Boland convention applies\*
- 4NT- a stronger notrump raise, Boland applies
- 5♣ - Miller convention, slam force
- 5♦ - signoff, but opener can sometimes bid 6♦ (e.g., with four aces and ♦K)
- 5♥/5♠/5NT - Meaningless
- 6 any is a signoff, not invitational.

The Boland and Miller conventions are discussed in sections 5-6 and 5-7.

Before reading the remainder of this section, read section 10-11, Notrumper Cue Bids

\* Depending on the auction, a jump to 4♠ may either have this meaning or one of Roman Key Card Blackwood, natural, or a splinter bid.

Responder's actions when RHO decides to compete are about the same as those described in Section 5-2, Strong One Notrump Opening.

## TEXAS TRANSFER BIDS

Opener	Responder
2NT	4♦ - asks opener to bid 4♥ 4♥ - asks opener to bid 4♠

Opener has no option other than to bid game in the indicated suit, no matter how good his hand.

If responder continues with a 4NT bid, that is Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB). See section 6-6. Unlike Texas Transfers after a 1NT opening, this sequence does not promise a short suit.

The Texas convention is used after a 3♣ overcall (when both 4♦ and 4♥ are jumps), but not after any higher overcall:

South	West	North
2NT	3♦	4♦ - Stayman, ostensibly 3♥/3♠/4♣ - natural, forcing 4♥/4♠ - strong suit, slam interest 4NT - natural raise, too strong for 3NT

If responder follows up the forcing new suit response with a 4NT bid, that is RKCB if the suit has been raised (implicitly or explicitly), natural otherwise:

South	West	North	East
2NT	3♣	3♠	Pass
4 any	Pass	4NT - RKCB	

South	West	North	East
2NT	3♦	3♥	Pass
3NT	Pass	4NT - natural, invitational	

Texas is used in competition only over a double or 3♣, when both 4♦ and 4♥ would be jump bids.

## JACOBY TRANSFER BIDS

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦ - asks opener to bid 3♥ 3♥ - asks opener to bid 3♠

With super support for the indicated suit, opener can bid higher than the requested bid. She should have four trumps and a ruffing value to jump to the four level or make a notrumper cue bid in support of the indicated suit. With two of the top three honors in the suit, she can bid 3NT with a good hand that has fast tricks outside and no unstopped suit:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦
	3♥ - the usual bid
	4♥ - a super-accept, including four trumps
	4♣/4♦/3♠ - same (notrumper cue bid)
	3NT - two of top three heart honors, good outside strength

The 3NT rebid requires good quick stoppers outside, because responder will pass with, say, a queen high heart suit and nothing outside.

If responder bids 3♦, then 3♠ over 3♥, that is the Unbalanced Heart Convention (UHC). UHC will be described in the next section.

When responder uses Jacoby, then raises opener's forced bid to game, she is making a slam try with a strong suit. With no slam interest, use Texas. With a non-strong suit, start with Stayman.

After a transfer to spades, no ace or key card convention is available. If that is important, start with a Texas Transfer, then bid 4NT, RKCB, or start with 4♣, Gerber. If the three-level transfer is followed by a 4NT bid, that is a natural slam try in notrump, balanced hand, and 4♣ is natural.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♥
3♠	4♠ - slam try in spades, balanced hand, strong suit 4NT - notrump slam try 4♣/4♦ - natural 4♥ - weak two-suiter

The 4♠ slam try shows a balanced hand with a long and strong trump suit. With a broken spade suit or an unbalanced hand, start with 3♣ instead of transferring. If spades become "agreed," either by a super-acceptance by opener (jump to four, or cue bid, or later preference), then 4NT is RKCB. Showing both majors this way denies any slam interest. The 4♥ bid is "pass or correct." With slam interest, start with Stayman and show both majors, giving opener a chance to make a notrumper cue bid. When the transfer is to hearts, 4♠ becomes immediately available for RKCB:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦
3♥	4♥ - slam try in hearts, balanced hand, strong suit 4NT - notrump slam try 4♠ - RKCB (but why not start with Texas?) 4♣/4♦ - natural

With an unbalanced hand, responder uses UHC. With a heart suit that is not strong, it's better to start with Stayman with a balanced hand, as the above 4♥ raise implies a strong suit. As with spades, 4NT after hearts are super-accepted by opener is RKCB. The reason for not using Texas as a path to RKCB might be that responder wanted to give opener a chance to super-accept.

If responder shows a minor suit after the Jacoby response, he probably has a strong 5-4-2-2 hand.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦/3♥
3♥/3♠	4♣ - probably 2=5=2=4, slam try 4♦ - probably 2=5=4=2, slam try

With an unbalanced hand responder uses UHC with hearts, Stayman with spades, to show a two-suiter when he has slam interest:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦
3♥	3♠ - UHC
3NT	4♣/4♦ - unbalanced, 5=4 or 5-5

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♠
3NT	4♣/4♦/4♥ - unbalanced, 5=4 or 5-5

Bidding spades and hearts this way definitely shows at least 5-5, with slam interest. Use Jacoby with 5-5 or better in the majors and no slam interest:

After showing a two-suited hand, a following RKCB uses the last bid suit (cue bids excepted) as the key suit:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦
3♥	4♣ - natural, second suit
4♦	4NT - RKCB

It is not known whether opener's cue bid of 4♦ is in support of hearts or diamonds, but for now it is assumed to be diamonds for key-card purposes.

## UNBALANCED HEART CONVENTION

Responder uses UHC with five or more hearts and an unbalanced hand:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦
3♥	3♠ - UHC
3NT - no heart support	
4♣/4♦ - notrumper cue bid, heart support	
4♥ - normal heart raise	

Opener bids 4♥ to show support when neither minor holding is suitable for a notrumper cue bid.

When opener rebids 3NT, responder may show a second suit or a six-card heart suit:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦
3♥	3♠ - UHC
3NT	4♣/4♦ - second suit, 5-4 or 5-5
	4♥ - six or more hearts, slam interest

Bidding a two-suited hand this way shows an unbalanced hand. With a 5-4-2-2 hand and slam hopes, bid the four-card minor suit immediately after opener's 3♥ bid.

The 4♥ bid needs an explanation: Responder did not raise opener's 3♥ bid to 4♥, which also shows six or more hearts, because that would show a balanced hand (and a strong suit). In this case responder has an unbalanced hand and some slam interest. The hearts may be weakish or strong, no telling. With a balanced hand, slam interest, and a weakish heart suit, he would have started with Stayman. With no interest in slam he would have started with a Texas transfer (4♦).

Using UHC instead of just raising the 3♥ response with a six-card suit gives opener a chance to make a notrumper cue bid in support of hearts. A fit discovered in this way could lead to a good slam that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to bid. With a balanced hand you just raise 3♥ to 4♥ to try for slam, indicating a need for good cards anywhere rather than the need for a meshing hand.

## STAYMAN CONVENTION

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣

The 3♣ response to a 2NT opening asks opener to bid any four-card major he may possess. With both majors, opener bids 3NT; with neither, he bids 3♦. Playing minor suit transfers (section 11-2), responder may not have a major suit, since she must bid 3♣ first in order to raise to 3NT. Or a bluff Stayman might be used with two short majors. Also, with a 4-3-3-3 hand, opener may suppress a major if it is very weak and he has double stoppers in the other suits.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦ - no four-card major (probably)	
3♥/3♠ - four or five-card major	
3NT - both majors	

If responder continues by showing a new major at the three level, the suit is at least five cards long:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦/3♥	3♠ - five or more spades, forcing

Without support, opener bids 3NT; with support, he bids 4♠ or makes a notrump cue bid. A 4♥ bid at this point is a cue bid in support of spades, not a suit-showing bid (i.e., not a heart rebid to show five hearts or a previously suppressed heart suit).

When a 4♣ or 4♦ bid immediately follows the 3♣ Stayman bid, it's natural:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
Any	4♣/4♦ natural, forcing

This must be at least a mild slam try, since responder has gone past 3NT. A 4NT bid by opener at this point is not RKCB. If he has a fit, he should cue bid and then responder can use RKCB.

When the reply to Stayman is 3♠, no Gerber or RKCB is immediately available:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♠	4NT - natural notrump raise
	4♣/4♦ - natural, forcing
	4♥ - natural, six or more weakish hearts, slam interest

When the reply to Stayman is 3♥, responder can use an artificial 4♠ for RKCB

When the reply to Stayman is 3♦, a jump to game shows a strong suit and some interest in slam.

Responder is probably 6-4 in the majors, but may be one-suited::

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦	4♥/4♠ - strong suit, slam try

With a non-strong suit, responder would not jump to game. The artificial 4♠ notrump raise is not used in Stayman sequences following a 2NT opening.

When the reply to Stayman is 3NT, showing both majors, responder will have to play any major suit contract, because both 4♣ and 4♦ are needed as natural bids. If playing minor suit transfers, they are not so needed and can be used as transfers to let opener play the hand.

When opener shows one major and responder insists on game in the other major, he is making a slam try. In spades, this slam try implies a weakish suit or an unbalanced hand. With strong spades in a balanced hand, use Jacoby. When the suit is hearts, the Stayman approach implies a broken suit in a balanced hand. Use UHC with an unbalanced hand, strong hearts or not, and use Jacoby with strong hearts in a balanced hand.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♥	3♠
3NT	4♠ - unbalanced, long spades

The spade suit may be broken or fairly solid, there is no way to tell. This sequence gives opener a chance to make a notrumper cue bid in support of spades.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♥	4♠ - balanced, long spades

This jump to 4♥ over a 3♦ reply is useful to distinguish between a balanced and an unbalanced hand. Contrary to the general principle that un-necesssary jumps show suit strength, the spades are definitely not strong. Responder would use Jacoby to invite slam with a balanced hand and strong spades. Since responder is balanced, there is no need to bid 3♠ in order to give opener room to make a notrumper cue bid (which is useful only opposite an unbalanced hand). Note that splinter bids are not used in Stayman sequences following a 2NT opening.

After a Stayman bidder shows a five-card major, a second suit bid tends to be a real suit, not a cue bid.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♠
4♥	5♣ - showing a second suit

## 6♣

Opener has ♠K87 ♥KQ3 ♦AQ8 ♣AK84, responder ♠AQ1065 ♥864 ♦5 ♣QJ72. If opener's hearts and diamonds were reversed, he would have made his notrumper cue bid in diamonds instead of hearts, and responder would have settled for game in spades.

When responder shows both majors via Stayman, she indicates slam interest:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♠
3NT	4♥ - slam interest

With no interest in slam, responder shows both majors by using a Jacoby sequence. Using Stayman gives opener a chance to cue bid in support of spades, perhaps leading to a good slam based on mesh of the two hands.

## MINOR SUIT STAYMAN

A response of 3♠ to 2NT is Minor Suit Stayman, asking opener to bid a minor suit of four or more cards. Holding both minors, opener bids 4NT. With neither, he bids 3NT. He may choose to show a five-card major if he likes his minor suit holdings, but a rebid of 3NT does not deny one.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♠ - Minor Suit Stayman
3NT	- no minor suit, probably no five-card major
4♣/4♦	- denies the other minor
4♥/4♠	- five card suit, no minor suit
4NT	- both minors

If responder rebids four of a minor after opener's 3NT bid, or 4♦ after a 4♣ bid, that shows a suit of at least five cards. Opener can make a notrumper cue bid in a major with support for the suit, or bid 4NT without support. Responder's rebid of 4♥ or 4♠ shows a four-card suit in a hand good enough to play 4NT.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♠ - Minor Suit Stayman
3NT	4♣/4♦ - at least a five-card suit
	4♥/4♠ - four-card suit, forcing

If opener's rebid does not catch a fit with responder's hand, responder can bid 4NT as natural and merely invitational. No control or ace-asking bid is available.

For an alternative approach, see section 11-1, Minor Suit Transfers in Response to 2NT Opening.

## SLAM TRIES WITH LONG SUITS

As shown throughout these pages, there are many ways to make a slam try with a hand that contains a six or seven-card suit. A summary follows. First, major suits:

-- With a balanced hand and strong suit, use Jacoby and raise to game:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦/3♥
3♥/3♠	4♥/4♠

-- With a balanced hand and non-strong spades, use Stayman and then bid 4♠:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦/3♥	4♠

Opener will probably pass, in view of his lack of spade support, but he might go on with a very strong doubleton spade.

-- With an unbalanced hand and non-strong suit, use Stayman and bid the suit minimally. The suit may be strong or not.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦/3♥	3♠
3NT	4♠ - unbalanced, slam try

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♥
3NT	4♥ - unbalanced, slam try

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♠	4♥ - unbalanced, slam try

Of course opener won't know immediately whether responder is interested in slam or not when he follows up Stayman with a 3♥ or 3♠ bid. He just shows his hand and waits to hear more.

-- With an unbalanced hand and heart suit, use UHC. The suit may be strong or not:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦
3♥	3♠ - UHC
3NT	4♥ - unbalanced, slam try

In all these auctions, responder's last bid shows that he had slam in mind, as he obviously could otherwise have started with a Texas transfer.

Now for the minors:

In the absence of Minor Suit Stayman (section 11-2), either minor can be shown immediately following a 3♣ response:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦/3♥/3♠/3NT	4♣/4♦ - natural, slam interest

Opener can now bid 4NT to deny a fit, or cue bid to confirm one. If a fit is denied, 4NT by responder is natural. If confirmed, 4NT by responder is RKCB.

Responder's bid of a second suit tends to show a real suit, not a cue bid.

## HIGH-LEVEL NOTRUMP OPENINGS

### The 3NT Opening

An opening bid of 3NT is natural, based on a long solid minor plus outside stoppers, with a total of eight or nine tricks (perhaps assuming a favorable lead). A minimum: S-Q3 H-K4 D-K8 C-AKQJ872. The same hand with red aces instead of red kings would be a maximum. At least three suits must be stopped, and the weakest suit no worse than Jxx, Qx, or singleton king. Partner bids 4NT with 2-1/2 to 3 quick tricks, 6NT with 3-1/2:

Quick tricks: ace counts 1-1/2

king	1
queen	1/2
AQ	2
AK	2-1/2
AKQ	3

Opener	Responder
3NT	4♣ - Gerber
	4♦/4♥ - transfer bids
	4♠ - slam try in opener's suit

A transfer bid followed by 4NT is Roman Key Card Blackwood. The 4♠ bid says responder is interested in playing a slam in opener's suit, whichever it is. Responder might have S-AK432 H-6 D-10764 C-J83. Opener signs off in 4NT with a minimum, bids five of his minor with an unstopped suit, and bids six of his minor with a maximum and all suits stopped.

### The 4NT Opening

An opening bid of 4NT is regular Blackwood. Starting at this level gives the opposition less chance to intervene. With a notrump type hand containing ten sure tricks, start with an artificial 2♣ opening,

### The 5NT Opening

An opening of 5NT shows eleven tricks, a 4-3-3-3 hand, at least three aces, asks partner to raise one level for every ace, king, or queen in her hand. Responder can chance six of a suit with nothing but a six-card suit headed by the jack, or any seven-card suit. Opener should not "correct" back to notrump unless he has a little card to reach partner's suit. AK2 is okay, but not AKJ.

### The 6NT Opening

An opening of 6NT shows a 4-3-3-3 hand, twelve tricks, missing just one queen. Responder can bid seven with the missing queen or a six-card suit headed by the jack, or any seven-card suit. If missing just an ace or a king, start with an artificial 2♣ opening.

## THE BOLAND CONVENTION

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
2NT	4NT

These and a number of similar raises to 4NT have a range of about two high card points (HCP). For instance, the 4NT bid above shows 13-14 HCP. The Boland convention is a useful tool in these situations. It goes like this:

-- With a minimum, pass.

-- With a medium holding, bid five of your lowest ranking biddable suit (Q10xx or better)--whether or not the suit has been bid before. To bypass a previously bid suit (clubs, in the auction above) shows that the suit was not "biddable." With no biddable suit to show, bid 5NT. The reason for requiring a biddable suit is to reduce the likelihood of playing a trump holding like A432 opposite J765 when more tricks could be scored in another denomination .

-- With a maximum, bid six of your lowest ranking biddable suit. With none, bid 6NT.

If the 4NT bidder wants to seek further for a suit fit, she also shows biddable suits "up-the-line."

As soon as either partner can count 33 HCP between the two hands, he/she bids six of something. Neither partner can go past 5NT until the HCP total is known to be at least 33 (perhaps counting a point for a ruffing value when a suit fit is found, or for good primary cards/controls).

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
4NT	6♥

Opener has 18 or 19 HCP and responder has 15 HCP, a maximum (assuming a 13-15 HCP notrump hand). She would have passed with 13 HCP or less. Knowing that opener has at least 18 HCP (required for the 4NT bid), she bids her lowest ranking biddable suit at the six level. With only 14 HCP she would bid just 5♥, which opener could pass with a heart fit and only 18 HCP.

At match points the bidding cannot stop at five of a minor, so it is not necessary to jump to 6♣ or 6♦ when holding a maximum hand. Bidding 5♣ or 5♦ keeps the bidding lower and facilitates the showing of suits. In this case, an unnecessary jump would show a five-card suit:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT (Omnibus, section 3-10)
3♣	3NT
4NT	6♣

Opener's 3♣ rebid asks about responder's majors, and 3NT shows a doubleton spade and no heart suit. The raise to 4NT shows 18-19 HCP, since responder has 13-15. Responder no doubt has a five-card club suit in her maximum hand, since she could have bid a forcing 5♣ with only four.

An unbidable suit can be shown if the suit has been previously bypassed:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
3♣	3NT
4NT	5♦
5NT	6♣

Responder has an unbidable club suit to go with her biddable diamond suit. She would have bid clubs first, of course, if they were biddable. However:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
3♣	3♥
4NT	5♣
5NT	6♥

The 6♥ call shows a biddable suit, since hearts were never bypassed. Boland shows biddable suits up-the-line. The 3♥ bid doesn't count as a Boland bid because it could be based on any sort of suit.

At IMP scoring or in rubber bridge the bidding can stop at five of a minor:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
4NT	5♣
Pass!	

Opener has ♠A10872 ♥A2 ♦AQ ♣A873. Since responder showed 13-15 HCP, he knows that she has 14 exactly. Feeling that 5♣ might be safer than 5♠ or 5NT, he passes. Responder might have ♠K3 ♥Q83 ♦K964 ♣KQJ4. Stopping at 3NT would have been best, but opener has a little too much strength for that.

Boland does not apply when opener has shown a ten-trick notrump hand by opening 2♣ and then rebidding 4NT:

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
4NT	

A five-level bid by responder at this point shows a six-card suit with no ace, king, or queen, and is therefore not forcing. See section 6-1, The Two Club Opening.

When the conventional 4♠ notrump raise is applicable, with 4♠ being a weaker raise than 4NT, the range for the slam try is usually narrowed to one point:

Opener	Responder
1NT	4♠ - inviting 6NT, 15 HCP
	4NT - 16 HCP

Opener bids 4NT to sign off over 4♠. Any five-level rebid accepts the slam try and the partnership cannot stop at the five level. Actually the 4♠ bid is unlimited, because responder may continue (with Boland) if he has 17 or more HCP.

If the 4♠ slam try is accepted, bidding continues as usual:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
2NT	4♠ - slam try
	4NT - minimum hand
	5♣ - biddable club suit (Q10xx or better)

## THE MILLER CONVENTION

Opener	Responder
1NT	5♣

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♥
3NT	5♣

These and other "out-of-the-blue" jumps to 5♣ over a notrump bid are the Miller Convention, forcing to slam and inquiring about strength. It promises a 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 hand. The Miller Convention does not apply if clubs have been bid naturally by anyone, partner or opponents.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
2NT	5♣ is natural, not Miller

Miller must be a jump bid:

Opener	Responder
1NT	4NT
5♣	is part of the Boland convention (q.v.)

After a Miller 5♣ bid, partner shows his exact strength:

Opener	Responder
1NT	5♣
5♦	- minimum hand
5♥	- middling hand
5♠	- maximum hand

Responder may be able to place the contract on the basis of the response. Perhaps a 5♠ response gives a total of 35 HCP for the two hands, so responder bids 6NT instead of searching for a suit contract. If responder bids 5NT or any suit, she is looking for a suit contract. Opener bids his cheapest ranking biddable suit (Q10xx or better). Until a fit is found, each player shows biddable suits in "up-the-line" fashion. If no fit is uncovered, the partnership will play in 6NT.

The Miller bidder may also be looking for a grand slam. If she finds enough strength for seven, she must not make a non-forcing bid below that level:

Opener	Responder
2NT	5♣
5♠	5NT
6♣	7♦

Responder sees enough points for 7NT after the 5♠ reply (showing a maximum), but is willing to play in a safer suit contract if a good fit is available. The 5NT bid was forcing, but over 6♣ she must bid seven of something because a six-level bid could be passed. Opener can pass 7♦ with good four-card diamond support, without which he shows a biddable major suit if he has one. Otherwise, he bids 7NT. Remember, Miller denies a five-card or longer suit.

If a player bypasses a suit that was bid prior to the Miller bid, he shows that the suit was "unbiddable":

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
2NT	5♣ - Miller
5♦	5NT
6♠	

The 5♦ bid shows a minimum hand. Opener has a biddable spade suit, but his diamonds were weaker than Q10xx, or he would have bid 6♦ over 5NT. Opener's hand: ♠AQ32 ♥Q3 ♦Q762 ♣AKQ

If the Miller bidder names a suit previously bid by partner, she must have a biddable holding in the suit:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
2NT	5♣
5♥	6♦ shows biddable diamonds

With only Qxxx or less in diamonds, responder would bid 5NT over 5♥, giving opener a chance to show that diamonds are biddable.

The reason for requiring biddable suits in these auctions is to reduce the likelihood of playing a trump suit such as A432 opposite Q765 when notrump is likely to produce more tricks.

## THE TWO CLUB OPENING

An opening 2♣ bid is artificial, showing a strong two bid sort of hand or a notrump hand of 23 HCP or more.

The 2♣ opening promises at least four defensive tricks. Open 1♠ (or 4♦, if playing NAMYATS) with ♠KQJ98632 ♥AKQ ♦4 ♣3. If you open 2♣ and partner doubles a high level preemptive bid by an opponent, perhaps thinking you have better defense, you won't know whether to pass or bid. Besides, 1♠ is not going to be passed out.

A hand with four losers in quick tricks should not open 2♣ if there is another potential loser and the hand may not play in a major. With ♠QJ1092 ♥KQ ♦AKQ3 ♣A4 open 1♠, even at matchpoints. There are four quick losers, the fourth diamond may be a loser, and if partner insists on a diamond contract you could go down in game even if he has an ace.

When the opening is based on a minor suit, opener should have no more than three losers unless the hand is likely to take nine tricks at notrump. Open 1♣ with ♠A532 ♥ void ♦KJ ♣AKQ9764, a hand that has too many losers for a 2♣ opening and is unlikely to play in notrump. But with ♠42 ♥A5 ♦A4 ♣AKQ7653 there is a good chance that the hand will make 3NT opposite a bust, so a 2♣ opening is okay. Don't open 3NT with that spade weakness and no holding such as Kx in a red suit to protect.

### Control Responses

Counting a king as one control, an ace as two controls, we use the following scheme for showing controls.

- 2♦ - 0 or 1 (king) control
- 2♥ - 1 ace or two kings (2 controls)
- 2♠ - AK in the same suit
- 2NT - AK in different suits, or three kings
- 3♣ - 4 controls (2 aces, or 1 ace and 2 kings)
- 3♦ - 5 controls or more
- 3NT - 4 kings (once in a lifetime)

After the initial response, bidding proceeds naturally, except that opener's rebid of 2♥ over 2♦ is the Kokish Relay (see below). The partnership may optionally use a jump rebid in a suit by opener to locate controls (see below).

### Higher Responses in a Suit

-- 3♥ or 3♠ shows a seven-card suit headed by the ace or king, or both, with or without the queen, and no ace or king outside. Opener can determine the exact nature of the suit by using Roman Key Card Blackwood.

-- A jump to the four level in any suit shows a solid suit headed by AKQJ, at least six long. AKQ10 is okay with seven cards. It denies an outside ace or king, and requires a balanced hand (i.e., 6-3-2-2 or 7-2-2-2 distribution). A passed hand may make this jump with a semi-solid (KQJ10, AQJ10) six-card suit. KQJ9 or AQJ9 is okay with seven cards (i.e., a fairly guaranteed one-loser suit).

Opener takes charge. A 4NT or other game bid by opener is a natural signoff, since he knows responder's hand exactly. For instance, after a 4♠ response by an unpassed hand he would bid 4NT with ♠3 ♥KQJ ♦AKQJ987 ♣KQ in a matchpoint game. He would have to pass 4♠ if responder is a passed hand, since the spade suit is not solid in that case.

### Rebids by Opener

With a suit-based opening, opener rebids in his main suit, bidding the higher ranking suit first when holding two suits of equal length. With a notrump type hand, he rebids the minimum number of notrump with 23-24 HCP. After a 2♦ response, opener bids 2♥ (Kokish Relay) with a 25+ HCP notrump hand. After a 2♠ response, opener bids 2NT. There is no need to jump with 25+, since this rebid is forcing.

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
2NT - 23-24 HCP, not forcing	
2♥ - Kokish Relay, 25+ HCP notrump hand or a heart suit	
3NT - a signoff, usually based on a long solid minor	

The 2♥ relay forces responder to bid 2♠ as a mark-time bid. If opener then bids 2NT, showing 25+ HCP, that is forcing. If he bids 3♥, that constitutes a "rebid" of the heart suit, and responder may pass with a completely worthless hand. If he bids three of any other suit (forcing), he is showing a second suit with hearts the primary suit.

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
2♥	2♠ - forced by the Kokish Convention
3♣/3♦/3♠ - hearts and a second suit	
3♥ - a "rebid" of the heart suit, not quite forcing	

Opener has a balanced hand, no singleton or void, if he would open Marvin 2♥ (strong with hearts or weak with spades) with an unbalanced hand. See section 6-3, Marvin Two Hearts. Similarly:

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
2♠	2NT
3♥	

Opener must have a 5-4-2-2 hand if an unbalanced hand is opened with 2♦ (weak with hearts or strong with spades) when the primary suit is spades. See section 6-2, Marvin Two Diamonds. If a

2♦ opening is being used for some other purpose, however, then opener could have an unbalanced hand in this auction.

If opener rebids 2NT, either immediately or after a 2♥ relay, the bidding proceeds in accordance with section 5-4, Two Notrump Opening, which is completely applicable to this 2NT rebid.

### Jump Rebid in a Suit by Opener (Optional)

After a control response at the two level, a jump rebid in a suit by opener is conventional, asking for details about responder's controls (if any). The jump is based on a solid suit headed by AKQ or KQJ, possibly even QJ10. The jump is ambiguous, showing one of two suits. With spades or diamonds (pointed suits), opener jumps in the cheaper suit. With hearts or clubs (rounded suits), opener also jumps in the cheaper suit. Thereafter, when opener bids one of the two possible suits, or notrump, the auction is over.

After the jump, responder starts revealing his high cards. A follow-up bid by opener in a known non-suit is a further "query" concerning responder's hand. Queries can be repeated (space permitting) many times to ask for further information. A bid in the ranking denomination is a negative response to a query. If notrump is not the ranking denomination, a notrump response shows a positive response in the ranking suit. Examples follow.

— After a 2♦ response (0 or 1 control), opener jumps to 3♥ with a heart *or* a club suit. With a spade *or* a diamond suit he jumps to 3♠. Over 3♥, responder bids 3♠ with no king, 3NT with the spade king, or bids a king suit at the four level with a different king. Over 3♠ responder bids 3NT with no king, otherwise bids the suit with the king.

When responder has shown a king, a query by opener asks for the number of additional tricks, if any, that responder has in the king suit, assuming opener's ace is played first. For instance, KQx is one additional trick, KQJx is two, etc. Lacking the x, count one trick less because opener is likely to have only Ax in the suit.

Additional tricks are shown by step bidding, first step is zero, second step 1, etc., including both suits and notrump.

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
3♠	4♣ - king of clubs
4♥?	4♠ - no additional trick in clubs
	4NT - one additional trick ( KQx)
	5♣ - two additional tricks ( KQJx)
	5♦ - three additional tricks (KQJ9x)
	5♥ - four or more additional (KQ10xxx or better)

The 3♠ rebid showed a hand with solid spades or solid clubs. When opener bids one of those suits, or bids notrump, the auction is over. To inquire further, opener must skip over either of those suits.

— After a 2♥ response (two controls, an ace or two kings), opener jumps to 3♠ with spades *or* diamonds, and jumps to 4♣ with clubs *or* hearts. Responder bids the ranking denomination (notrump over 3♠, 4♦ over 4♣) with no ace. Otherwise he bids the suit with the ace, but with an ace in the ranking suit he bids notrump. Ergo, with the diamond ace he bids 4NT over 4♣, since 4♦ would deny an ace..

When responder has shown an ace, opener's query asks how many extra tricks the suit will provide, assuming Kx in opener's hand. The step responses show none (Ax or AQ), one (AQx), two (AQJx), etc.)

When responder has denied an ace, opener's query asks where the two kings are. Responder shows the kings using the CRaSh method, bidding the ranking denomination (i.e., including notrump) with kings of the same Color, next step with kings of the same Rank (major or minor), and the third step with kings of the same SHape (spades-diamonds or hearts-clubs). If opener has a king, the location of responder's kings is instantly known. If he doesn't have a king it will take two queries to find responder's kings, the first asking for the cheaper king, and the second asking for the other king.

— After a 2♠ response (AK in the same suit), responder bids the suit when opener jumps in diamonds (diamonds or hearts) or clubs (hearts or clubs). A query then asks for additional tricks in the suit. The step responses show none (no queen), one (AKQ), two (AKQJ), etc.

— After a 2NT response (ace and king in separate suits, or three kings), opener jumps in diamonds or clubs and responder bids the ranking denomination with no ace, and bids notrump with an ace in the ranking suit. A query then asks for the location of the king. If responder denies an ace, holding three kings, a query asks for the suit lacking a king. Further queries TBD.

— After a 3♣ response (two aces or an ace and two kings), opener jumps in diamonds or hearts and responder bids the ranking suit to deny the kings. With kings, responder bids the suit with the ace, bidding notrump with the ace of the ranking suit. A query then asks for the location of the kings using the CRaSH method. After kings are denied, a query asks for the location of the two aces using the CRaSH method. Further queries TBD.

— After a 3♦ response (two aces and a king or one ace and three kings), responder bids the ranking denomination to signify two aces. With one ace she bids the suit with the ace, bidding notrump to show the ace of the ranking denomination. A query then asks for the suit lacking a king (opener having no king). After two aces are shown by a bid in the ranking denomination, opener's query asks for the location of the two aces (shown with the CRaSH method) and a further query asks for the location of the king.

### **Responder's Rebids Other Than Kokish**

--After a 2♦ response, over opener's 2♠ rebid 2NT is the "second negative." If the rebid is 3♣, 3♦ is the second negative, and if the rebid is 3♦, 3NT is the second negative. The second negatives only deny the ability to bid a new suit or to raise. They are not necessarily based on a

worthless hand, and could include a king. A five-card suit headed by the king is enough for a natural new suit bid, or perhaps a six-card suit headed by the queen.

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
2♠	2NT - second negative
	3♣/3♦/3♥ - natural

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
3♦	3♥/3♠/4♣ - natural
	3NT - second negative

When opener rebids in a suit, do not raise without adequate trump support, which in this case is Qx, xxx, or better. With trump support and a fair hand, raise a major immediately. Delayed support of opener's major suit tends to imply trump support that is less than "adequate." With trump support for minor, responder may bid a good five-card or longer suit rather than raise.

### **The Trump Ask (optional)**

After the immediate raise of a major, opener's Roman Key Card Blackwood bid of 4NT asks for key cards, as described in Section 6-6, Blackwood. However, the "queen ask" becomes a trump ask, asking for the ace, king, or queen, with five small treated as a queen. The ranking denomination (ie., including notrump) says "none of these." In that case opener's side suit bid asks about trump length, and responder's next higher suit bid says xxx, two higher, xxxx.

In response to the trump ask, responder shows the ace, king, or queen (collectively identified here as "H") by skipping over the ranking denomination to bid the next-higher. Opener's side suit bid then asks length, and responder's bid of the next higher denomination shows Hx, next Hxx, next Hxxx. In the rare case that he has AQ or KQ, the queen is treated as three small, so AQ is treated as Axxx.

Opener's rebid of 5NT is standard, saying that all key cards are held and asking for the cheapest (or most valuable) king in responder's hand.

A minor suit raise shows the same minimum support, but bidding a good five-card or longer major is preferable to raising. After an immediate raise, the trump ask after RKCB is as described above.

In the absence of an immediate raise of opener's suit, the queen ask is standard. If responder then shows a major suit queen, opener will know it's a singleton.

## Jump Rebids by Responder

If the response to 2♣ was 2♦, an immediate jump raise shows four or more trumps, no ace or king, no outside void or singleton:

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
2♠	4♠

Responder has ♠Q872 ♥654 ♦98 ♣J873. The immediate jump raise warns opener not to look for anything other than good trumps.

Responder's jump in a new suit shows a one-loser suit headed by the KQ

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
2♠	4♣/4♦/4♥ - KQJ9xxx or better, no spade support.

– When the response shows two or more controls, the bidding proceeds with no jumps by responder..

## When the Opponents Intervene

If RHO overcalls a 2♣ bid with a natural bid, a double by responder shows a bust hand with length in the opposing suit. It warns partner not to go on unless he has game in his own hand. A pass is forcing. Natural bidding otherwise, with responder's jump raise to game having the usual meaning.

If RHO doubles 2♣ to show clubs, responder must pass with no club stopper, even with a good hand. This is in accordance with the general policy for action when an artificial bid gets doubled. See section 1-2-10, General Bidding Principles. Controls are not shown

South	West	North
2♣	Dbl	Pass - probably no club stopper, may be quite strong
		2♦ - single club stopper, at least one control
		2♥/2♠ - natural, single club stopper
		Rdbl - double club stopper

QJx (Qxx, Q10x, etc.) counts as a single stopper only, no matter how many cards in the suit. AJx and KJx count as double stoppers. If holding a club stopper and zero controls (e.g., ♣QJx), pass.

If RHO makes an artificial call that shows two suits, the principles of section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions, apply. In this example the double of 2♣ shows both majors:

South	West	North
2♣	Dbl	Pass - no good call available
		Rdbl - clubs stopped
		2♦/3♣ - positive suit response, natural, good suit
		2♥/2♠ - Unusual Over Unusual, showing a mediocre minor
		2NT - both majors stopped

The 2♥, 2♠, 3♣, and 3♦ bids are in accordance with the principles of section 12-7: A 2♥ bid is a positive response in clubs and a 2♠ bid is a positive response in diamonds. Both responses deny a strong suit (two of the top three honors, five or more cards). With a good suit the right response is a natural 2♦ or 3♣.

A 2♣ opener cannot make a takeout double when balancing::

South	West	North	East
2♣	2♠	Pass	Pass
		Dbl - business	
		2NT - 23-24 HCP notrump hand	
		3♣/3♦/3♥ - forcing	

North's pass does not necessarily deny a good hand, since it is forcing. She could have, for instance: ♠752 ♥AQ3 ♦K84 ♣9832. South's double of 2♠ is probably exposing a psych by West. If South later bids spades, he means it to play. If he wants to make a takeout call, he has to bid 3♠ over 2♠. With a spade game in hand, he can bid 4♠.

If the spade overcall is absolutely known not to be a psych (considering who the bidder is ), and both partners know that, then a double can be played as takeout.

## MARVIN TWO DIAMONDS

An opening of 2♦ is a three-way bid:

- A notrump hand with 21-22 HCP and a five-card suit, or
- A weak two bid in hearts, or
- A strong two bid in spades, usually unbalanced, game forcing

The strong two bid in spades may be based on a balanced hand if 1) opener wants to be in game for sure; 2) opener has one or more tenaces on the side and wants to make sure he will play the hand; and 3) opener has the sort of hand that doesn't need to know how many controls partner has. If he wants that information, he must open 2♣. With a 21-22 HCP hand that lacks a five-card suit, the opening is 2NT.

### Responses

Responder assumes that partner has a weak two bid in hearts, and bids according to section 7-2, Weak Two Bids. If he would have passed a weak two bid opening in hearts, he now *bids* 2♥. One drawback of this convention is that responder cannot raise hearts preemptively, because opener may not have a weak two bid. Other than that, responder makes his normal response to a weak two bid if he has too much to bid 2♥.

If RHO bids or doubles, responder usually assumes the opening was based on a weak two bid and bids, doubles, redoubles, or passes accordingly (but 2♥ over a double is a "positive response" in hearts). Even if RHO bids spades, however, responder cannot raise hearts preemptively. Opener could have a notrump hand, or even a strong two bid in spades if RHO is lying to create confusion.

### Rebids by Opener

With a 21-22 HCP notrump hand, opener rebids in notrump. In the unlikely event that responder has made a positive response to a weak two bid type opening (i.e., has bid 2♠, 2NT, 3♣, or 3♦), opener must jump in notrump in order to show the 21-22 HCP notrump type hand. A 3NT rebid over 2NT shows a weak two bid sort of hand with a solid heart suit. A 3NT rebid over a three-level new suit bid shows some support for responder's suit (see section 7-2, Weak Two Bids). Likewise, a 2NT rebid over a 2♠ response shows a weak two bid with some spade support.

With a weak two bid in hearts, opener passes a 2♥ response. After any other response, opener rebids in accordance with section 7-2, Weak Two Bids. He must not otherwise bid again, not even in a competitive way with an extra good weak two bid:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	3♣
3♥ - strong two bid in spades, heart suit too			
Dbf - optional double, 21-22 HCP notrump hand			
Pass - weak two bid			

With a strong two bid in spades, opener rebids in spades to show a one-suited hand, or (as with 3♥ above) shows a second suit:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♥
3♣	- spades and clubs

Opener has already shown a spade suit, so now shows a second suit.

### Rebids by Responder

If opener verifies a weak two bid, responder proceeds in accordance with section 7-2, Weak Two Bids.

If opener shows a 21-22 HCP notrump hand by bidding 2NT, the bidding proceeds in accordance with section 5-4, Two Notrump Opening, except that a major suit response to Stayman shows a five-card suit:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♥
2NT	3♣
3♦	- no five-card major (five-card minor)
3♥/3♠	- five-card major

We can't play that 3♦ shows diamonds and 3NT shows clubs, because we must leave room for responder to show a five-card major.

If opener has had to jump in notrump to show a notrump hand because of partner's positive response, the partnership is committed to slam. A five-level suit bid over 4NT is a Boland response (see section 6-4), showing a biddable suit:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2NT
4NT	5 any - Boland response

If opener shows a strong two bid sort of hand, the bidding proceeds naturally, with a minimum notrump or minor suit rebid by responder showing a "second negative," usually a hand with no king and less than two queens.

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♥
3♣	3♦ - second negative

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♥
2♠	2NT - second negative

A minimum bid in a major suit is natural, however:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♥
3♦	3♥ - natural

Opener has spades and diamonds. Responder could have bid 3NT as a second negative with nothing worth showing.

There is no danger of opener's passing any notrump bid, because all these sequences show an unbalanced hand. Responder may therefore sometimes bid notrump with substantial values when he has no good suit to bid. If so, he must reveal these values later in the bidding (which may not be easy).

Responder must continue bidding until game is reached, no matter how weak his hand. One reason is that opener may have a 6-4 hand in an auction like this:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♥
2♠	2NT - second negative
3♣	

Opener "rebids" spades with game in hand, holding ♠AKQJ84 ♥A7 ♦4 ♣AKQ2, because he wants a chance to show this 6-4 holding. If responder has ♠6 ♥5432 ♦8743 ♣10843 and unilaterally passes 2♠ (or 3♣), she will miss a good club slam.

## MARVIN TWO HEARTS

An opening bid of 2♥ is a three-way bid:

- A strong two bid in hearts, unbalanced, game forcing, or
- A weak two bid in spades, or
- A 25+ HCP notrump hand

If there is no short suit in a strong 2H hand, open with 2C. The reason is that controls are less important opposite an unbalanced hand because a control may be worthless opposite opener's void or singleton. Since responder can't tell whether a side king is valuable, the strong 2H might as well be game-forcing. The hand must therefore have close to game in hand.

A weak two bid in spades should be "disciplined," a good six-card suit and 1-1/2-2 defensive tricks. If a hand can have anywhere from zero to two defensive tricks partner cannot bid or double accurately.

With a notrump hand of 21-22 HCP, open 2NT. With 23-24 HCP, open 2C and rebid in notrump.

### Responses

Responder assumes that partner has a weak two bid in spades, and proceeds accordingly. If she would have passed a weak two bid opening in spades, she now *bids* 2♠. One drawback of this convention is that responder cannot make a preemptive spade raise, because opener may not have a weak two bid hand.

If RHO bids or doubles, responder usually assumes the opening was based on a weak two bid and bids, doubles, redoubles, or passes accordingly (but 2♠ over a double is a "positive response" in spades, showing a good suit). Even if RHO bids hearts, however, responder cannot raise spades preemptively. Opener could have a notrump hand, or even a strong two bid in hearts if RHO is lying to create confusion.

### Rebids by Opener

With a 23-24 HCP notrump hand, opener usually makes a minimum rebid in notrump. In the unlikely event that responder has made a positive response to a weak two bid type opening (i.e., has bid 2NT, 3♣, 3♦, or 3♥), opener must jump to 4NT in order to show the 23-24 HCP notrump type hand. A 3NT rebid after a three-level suit response shows a weak two bid with support for responder's suit. A 3NT rebid over a 2NT response shows a weak two bid sort of hand with a solid heart suit (see section 7-2, Weak Two Bids).

With a weak two bid in spades, opener passes a 2♠ response. After any other response, opener rebids in accordance with section 7-2, Weak Two Bids. For example:

Opener	Responder
2♥	3♦
3♠	3NT - offers a choice

The 3♠ rebid confirms a weak two bid in spades, whereupon responder offers opener a choice between a contract of 3NT or 4♠. If opener had diamond support, by the way, he would have bid 3NT instead of 3♠. With a 25+ HCP notrump hand (unlikely, when responder has the good hand that 3♦ indicates), he would jump to 4NT over the 3♦ response. Finally, with a strong two bid in hearts he would have gone to the four-level in hearts or a new suit on the second round (i.e., 4♥, 4♦, 4♣). The 4♦ bid would show a second suit and is not just a diamond raise.

With a strong two bid in hearts, opener rebids in hearts to show a one-suited hand, or shows a second suit:

Opener	Responder
2♥	2♠
3♣	- hearts and clubs

Opener has already shown a heart suit, so now shows a second suit.

### Rebids by Responder

If opener shows a 23-24 HCP notrump hand by bidding 2NT, the bidding proceeds in accordance with section 5-4, Two Notrump Opening. If opener has had to rebid 4NT to show such a hand because of partner's positive response, the partnership is committed to slam. A five-level suit bid is a Boland response (see section 5-6):

Opener	Responder
2♥	2NT
4NT	5 any - Boland

If opener shows a strong two bid sort of hand, the bidding proceeds naturally, with a minimum minor suit rebid (or 3NT, whichever is cheaper) by responder showing a "second negative," usually denying a king or more than one queen.

Opener	Responder
2♥	2♠
3♣	3♦ - second negative
	3♠ - natural

Opener	Responder
2♥	2♠
3♦	3NT - second negative

There is no danger of 3NT's being passed, since opener is unbalanced.

## GRAND SLAM FORCE

An "out of the blue" jump to 5NT is the Grand Slam Force (GSF), asking partner about his holding in the presumed trump suit. If there is doubt as to which suit that is, use the same rules as for Roman Key Card Blackwood, section 6-6.

### Responses

	<u>7♣</u>	<u>6♠</u>	<u>6♥</u>	<u>6♦</u>	<u>6♣</u>
When holding,					
if the suit is spades:	AKQ	worse	AK	AQ,KQ	A or K
hearts:	AK	--	worse	AQ,KQ	A or K
diamonds:	AK	--	--	worse	AQ,KQ
clubs:	AK,KQ,AQ	--	--	--	worse

Lacking the high cards for any other response, make the "worse" bid. Note that AKQ drops out first, then "A or K."

Extra length may be counted as a queen. With two cards more than your nominal length in the suit, respond as if you had the queen. Sometimes one extra card is enough. If you have five to the king and are sure partner has five cards in the suit, you can show a KQ holding if your nominal length is four cards. You have only one extra card, but you can tell that is sufficient. Partner can now bid seven with Axxxx.

After a 6♣ bid showing "A or K," the 5NT bidder can ask for number of cards in the agreed suit by bidding 6♦:

Opener	Responder
1♠	5NT
6♣	6♦
6♥	- minimum length (four, in this case)
6♠	- one extra card (five, in this case)

The 6♣ bid shows ace or king of spades. After the 6♠ bid, showing five spades, responder can bid 7♠ with Kxxxx in trumps. Opener could not bid 6♦ (showing the queen, too) with Axxxx in spades, because responder could have just Kxxx. A 6♦ response without the queen would then require a six-card suit headed by the ace.

GSF can also be played as a non-jump bid in carefully defined circumstances. A non-jump 5NT bid should not always be GSF. When the partnership has bid three suits in a manner not strongly suggestive of slam (i.e., no strong jump takeout, no splinter bid, no opening strong two bid), and with no definite agreement on one of the suits, a non-jump 5NT bid should say merely, "Pick a slam."

## ASKING BIDS

The following bids, and no others, are asking bids:

-- A new suit rebid by a 2♣ opener after he has jumped to set the trump suit:

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
3♠	3NT
4♣/4♦/4♥ - asking bid	

-- A four-level minor suit response to an opening weak two or three bid in a major:

Opener	Responder
3♥	3♠ - natural, forcing
4♣/4♦ - asking bids	

-- A 5♦ response to a 5♣ opening:

Opener	Responder
5♣	5♦ - asking bid
5♥/5♠ - natural, signoff	

-- A takeout of an opening 4♥ or 4♠ to five of a new suit:

Opener	Responder
4♥	4♠ - natural
5♣/5♦ - asking bids	

Opener	Responder
4♠	5♣/5♦/5♥ - asking bids

-- A *rebid* by opener or responder that is one level higher than a splinter rebid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
3♠ - splinter bid	
4♠ - asking bid	

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♥	Pass
3♦ - splinter bid			
4♦ - asking bid			

This principle applies to rebids only, not original responses:

Opener	Responder
1♠	4♣ - splinter bid
	5♣ - natural preemptive bid

It does not apply after a notrump opening:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦
2♥	3♠ - splinter bid
	4♠ - Mild notrump raise (poor hearts)
	4NT - stronger notrump raise

-- A jump rebid in a new suit at the five level:

Opener	Responder
1♠	3♠
5♣/5♦/5♥	- asking bid

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♥
2♠	5♣/5♦/5♥ - asking bid
	4♣/4♦/4♥ - splinter bid

Opener	Responder
1♥	5♣/5♦ - natural preemptive bid (not a rebid)

Opener	Responder
1NT	5♣ - Miller (see section 5-7)
	5♦ - natural, signoff

-- A "new suit" bid by a NAMYATS opener, after responder has shown two or more key cards (see section 7-4).

### Responses to Asking Bids

Responses to asking bids are as follows: (x) means "or more"

<b>Response</b> (Steps are suits only)	<b>Holding in the Asked Suit</b>
Minimum bid in notrump	Kx(x), KQ(x) (guarded king)
First step	Qx(x), xx(x) (no control)
Second step	x (singleton)
Third step	Ax(x) (first round only)
Fourth step (raise asking bid)	A, AK(x) (two-round control)
Fifth step	void

Generally you do not indicate a singleton or void with fewer than two cards in the probable trump suit. If you have discards for partner in a side suit, you can indicate a singleton or void when holding only a singleton trump.

Memory aid: Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 show no control, second round, first round, first *and* second, and void, respectively: 0, 2, 1, 1 and 2, void.

A repeat asking bid in the same suit asks for clarification of the first response. Rather than make a table of detailed responses based on the original response, let's just say that the first step shows a poor holding for the first response (e.g., xxx for no control, Axx(x) for first round only, short trumps to go with a short suit, etc.), second step better, third step better yet, etc.

## BLACKWOOD

When no suit has been shown by either partner, (as with an opening bid of 4NT), standard Blackwood is used (5♣ no aces, 5♦ one, etc.), and a "new suit" bid by the Blackwood bidder is a signoff:

Opener	Responder
4NT	5♣
	5♥ - signoff

A 5NT continuation by the Blackwood bidder asks for kings (6♣ none, 6♦ two, etc.).

Note that an opening bid of 4NT is Blackwood, not a natural bid. To bid 4NT naturally, open 2♣ and then bid 4NT. See section 6-1, The Two Club Opening. Also see section 6-8, DOPI and DEPO, for appropriate action when LHO overcalls a Blackwood bid.

### Roman Key Card Blackwood

Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB) is an improvement on plain Blackwood. When a suit is agreed, either directly or by implication, the king of trumps is counted as an ace when responding to 4NT--it is a "key card." The responses to 4NT are:

5♣ - 1 or 4 key cards

5♦ - 0 or 3 key cards (note reversal of usual practice)

5♥ - 2 or 5 key cards, no queen of trumps

5♠ - 2 or 5 key cards, with trump queen

5NT - 2 key cards plus an important king  
(i.e., king of partnership's second suit)  
but lacking the trump queen

6 of agreed suit - useful void above key suit  
(and normal response is five of agreed suit)

6 of lower suit - useful void in suit named  
(and normal response is five of agreed suit)

Holding more cards in trump length than partner could assume, you can usually bid as if you have the queen. Whether you need one extra card or two depends upon the auction. If you know partner has at least five cards in the suit, for instance, then Jxxxx is just about as good as Qxxx if you have promised only four cards in the suit. Partner, going for seven with AKxxx or for six with Kxxxx, won't be too disappointed in either case.

With a useful void and a normal response that is not five of the agreed suit, make the normal response and then cue bid the void later or keep on bidding when partner shows signs of stopping. If the normal response would cause you to bid five of the agreed suit, and the useful void is lower in rank, bid six of the void suit. If it is higher in rank, jump to six of the agreed suit. Partner will understand how many key cards you have, knowing that your normal response would have been in the agreed suit.

If in doubt as to what the "agreed" suit is, the rule is that the last suit raised is the agreed suit, otherwise the last suit bid.

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♥
3♦	3♥
4NT - RKCB, hearts "agreed"	

Looking only at the suits bid by opener and responder on the first and second round, hearts is the last suit bid, so the agreed suit is hearts for purposes of (RKCB).

However, a secondary suit bid (usually a cue bid) on the third round doesn't count, even if it has been raised:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3♥	3♠
4♣	4NT - RKCB, spades "agreed"

Opener	Responder
1♣	2♦
3♣	3♦
3♠	4♠
4NT - RKCB, diamonds "agreed"	

With RKCB, a 5NT bid following 4NT does not ask for kings. It asks partner if he has any important feature to show--usually a king lower in rank than the agreed suit, but perhaps a singleton with lots of trumps. With more than one such feature to show, choose the one that is most likely to help partner evaluate grand slam chances. If in doubt, bid the lower ranking feature:

Opener	Responder
1♠	3♠
4♦	4♠
4NT	5♣ - 1 or 4 key cards
5NT	?

Responder bids 6♣ with the club king (denying the diamond king), 6♦ with the diamond king. With both, she bids 6♦, the suit opener has cue bid. Opener can now bid 7♠ with ♠K87432 ♥A ♦AQ932 ♣A.

When holding an "inconvenient" king in a suit higher than the agreed suit, it is sometimes possible to show it by bidding six of a suit that was used for a splinter bid. That is more useful than showing a king in the splinter suit. Similarly, Asker can bid a splinter suit at the six level to ask if responder has such a king.

When the bidding shows that it is impossible for responder to have a king not shown by RKCB, the 5NT requests asks for a significant queen. E.g., responder showed zero or one control in response to a 2♣ opening, then showed a key card (a trump king, necessarily) in response to RKCB, Then 5NT asks for the lowest-ranking queen (or a very significant queen).

The 5NT bid guarantees that all the aces and the king of trumps are held by the partnership. If the partner of the 5NT bidder can see that a grand slam is okay on the basis of this knowledge, he can just bid the grand slam instead of showing some feature. A player should bid 5NT to tell partner that all key cards are held, even with no intention of bidding seven himself. Then partner may have the stuff to bid seven.

When an opponent overcalls the 4NT bid, use DOPI or DEPO to show key cards (see section 6-8). If 4NT gets doubled, a pass shows no key cards and a redouble is to play. Otherwise the double is ignored.

If the RKCB bidder bids a new suit at the five level after partner shows key cards, and the bid could not possibly be meant as a final contract:

-- If the new suit is lower in rank than the agreed suit, he is asking about the queen of trumps:

Opener	Responder
1♠	3♠
4NT	5♦ - 0 or 3 key cards
5♥	

The 5♥ bid asks, "Do you have the queen of trumps?" Without the queen, responder signs off in 5♠. With it, she bids the next higher ranking bid other than a signoff, in this case 5NT. Extra length can count as a queen, as said before.

When there is enough bidding space below six of the agreed suit, it is possible to show one extra card when lacking the queen or "queen equivalent" by bidding one rank higher than the queen-showing bid:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♣
4NT	5♣ - 1 or 4 key cards
5♦?	5♥ - queen or six clubs
	5♠ - five clubs, no queen
	6♣ - four clubs, no queen

The 3♣ bid does not guarantee five cards, which therefore represent "an extra card."

-- If the new suit is higher in rank than the agreed suit, he is demanding that you bid 5NT. Probably the partnership lacks two key cards and he sees that 5NT is the safest contract.

It sometimes happens that the 4NT bidder cannot ask about the queen of trumps without going to the six level. If he needs that information for a grand slam bid, he can bid six of a suit that could not possibly become the trump suit:

Opener	Responder
1♠	3♥
3♠	4NT
5♥	6♣ - asks for the queen of spades
6♦	- spade queen or extra length (seven spades in this case)
6♥	- no spade queen, six spades
6♠	- no spade queen, five spades

### Exclusion Blackwood

To use this simple version of Exclusion Blackwood, a player first makes a splinter bid in a void suit, then immediately bids 4NT:

Opener	Responder
1♠	4♣ - splinter bid
4♠	4NT - Exclusion Blackwood

The responses are the same as for regular RKCB, except that the ace of the void suit is not counted as a key card. This means you cannot use regular RKCB on the next round after splintering with a singleton, but you can do so if you have made an intervening bid:

Opener	Responder
1♠	4♣ - splinter bid
4♦	4♥ - cue bid
4♠	4NT - regular RKCB

Another case of Exclusion Blackwood is an immediate 4NT bid after cue bidding an opposing suit:

South	West	North	East
2♠	3♣	4♣	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	- Exclusion Blackwood

South ignores the ace of clubs when responding. A 4NT bid made by a cue bidder's partner is regular RKCB, not Exclusion Blackwood.

## FOUR NOTRUMP - BLACKWOOD OR NATURAL?

An opening bid of 4NT is regular (not RKCB) Blackwood. With a sure ten-trick notrump hand, start with an artificial 2♣ and then bid 4NT. This policy lessens the chance that the opponents will get into the act when all you want to know about is aces. For Ace-asking and key-card asking bids following a notrump opening, see the sections 5-2 and 5-4.

Opener Responder

1♥ 2NT  
3♣ 3♥/3♠  
4NT

Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB), with last bid suit considered the trump suit for RKCB purposes.

1♠ 2NT  
3♣ 3NT  
4NT

Natural notrump raise. Opener still doesn't know whether responder is minimum or not--only that he has 13-15 HCP, no spade support, no heart suit. If opener wanted to ask for aces he could have bid 4♣ instead of 3♣ (which is an artificial response to the 2NT Omnibus bid. See section 6-9, Omnibus).

1♥ 3♥  
4♣ 4♥  
4♠ 4NT

A natural bid, showing ♦K. Limit raisers don't have a Blackwood sort of hand.

1♠ 2♣  
2♥ 4♣  
4NT

Natural, showing diamond strength, club shortness

1♠ 2♣  
4♣ 4NT

Natural, showing minimum values for a two-over-one response:  
♠2 ♥QJ93 ♦K1087 ♣AJ62

1♠ 2♥  
4♥ 4NT

RKCB. The preceding applies to minors only.

1♠ 3♣  
3NT 4NT

RKCB, clubs agreed. A player who makes a strong jump takeout cannot make a natural 4NT bid (and cannot use Gerber).

2♣ 2♦  
4NT A sure ten-trick notrump hand. With 28-30 HCP and no assurance of winning ten tricks, bid 3NT. For Blackwood, open 4NT.

1♠ 3♣  
3♠ 3NT  
4NT Natural. *Opener* can raise to 4NT, even after a jump takeout response. A 4♦ bid here would be Super Gerber (section 6-10).

1♠ 3♣  
3♠ 4♣  
4NT RKCB. When a jump takeout responder rebids his suit, that is considered the "agreed" suit. Opener can only bid 4♠ or 5♣ to sign off.

1♥ 1♠  
3♣ 3NT/4♣  
4♠ 4NT RKCB, not a signoff

1♠ 2♣  
2♠ 3♦  
3NT 4♥/4♠ (4♥ promises a singleton heart, 4♠ denies it)  
4NT RKCB, not a signoff (spades "agreed")

### Responding in Competition

South	West	North	
1♣/1♦	1♥/1♠	4NT	RKCB--Use Omnibus with a 19-20 HCP hand

1♣/1♦	2♥/3♥ /4♥	4NT	Natural, 18-19 HCP, too good for 3NT (Omnibus 2NT must be a jump)
-------	--------------	-----	--

1♠	any	4NT	RKCB
----	-----	-----	------

1♥	3 any	4NT	RKCB
----	-------	-----	------

1♥	4♣/4♦	4NT	RKCB
----	-------	-----	------

1♣/1♦	4♠	4NT	Takeout, two or three-suiter /1♥
-------	----	-----	-------------------------------------

When the opposing jump is to 4♠, the takeout can be a two or three-suiter, so RKCB loses out. Consider this auction:

South	West	North
1♣	4♠	4NT

North could have ♠3♥AJ1087♦AK8742♣5 or ♠5♥KQ843♦AJ74♣K85. The 4NT bid asks South to bid another suit if he has one, otherwise to bid 5♣. North will correct 5♣ to 5♦ with the first hand, showing a red two-suiter. With the second hand North will pass 5♣. South must not jump to 6♣ unless his suit is self-sufficient. If he wants to be in slam but does not know what to bid, he can bid 5NT to show interest in both minors, or 5♠ to show interest in hearts as well as clubs.

### Rebids in Competition

Unless it follows a minor suit raise, a jump rebid of 4NT is always RKCB, with the last named suit as the agreed suit. Non-jumps of 4NT by either partner are for takeout after a one-over-one response. RKCB after a stronger suit response or a major suit raise.

South	West	North	East
-------	------	-------	------

1♦	Pass	1♥	4♠
----	------	----	----

4NT - Takeout: ♠6♥KQ6♦AKJ872♣A76 or ♠6♥Q2♦AKQ87♣AKJ74

(With the first hand, opener will correct a 5♣ bid to 5♦, thereby implying three-card heart support.)

1♦ Pass 2♣ 4♠ - Now 4NT by either partner is RKCB.

1♥	3♠	4♣/4♦	Pass
----	----	-------	------

4NT - RKCB

1♥	Pass	2♥/3♥	4♠
----	------	-------	----

4NT - RKCB

After a minor suit raise, however (even a jump), a 4NT bid (even a jump) is natural.

### Four Notrump Overcalls

East	South
------	-------

1♥/1♠	4NT
-------	-----

2♥/2♠	4NT
-------	-----

3♥/3♠	4NT	These are all unusual notrump, asking for a minor suit preference.
-------	-----	--

- 1♣/1♦ 4NT  
 2♣/2♦ 4NT  
 3♣/3♦ 4NT  
 4♣/4♦ 4NT All natural, not Blackwood or unusual notrump, over a minor suit opening
- 4♥ 4NT Unusual notrump, stressing the minors, but could have a little something in spades
- 4♠ 4NT Hearts and a minor, which will happen much more often than both minors. With both minors just bid the better, or bid 5NT if strong enough. Lacking support for hearts, partner usually bids 5♣ unless his clubs are even shorter than his hearts. With weak three-card support for hearts, it is a good idea to bid a good minor suit in case that is partner's second suit.

### Advancing an Overcall

Double or triple jumps to 4NT are RKCB. A single jump is RKCB if partner overcalls in a major, natural otherwise:

South	West	North	East	
1♣	1♠	Pass	4NT	RKCB (triple jump)
2♦	2♠	Pass	4NT	RKCB (double jump)
3♥	3♠	Pass	4NT	RKCB (single jump over a major suit)
2♥	3♦	Pass	4NT	Natural (single jump over a minor suit)

The last 4NT bid shows a hand that is too good for a 3NT bid.

If both opponents have bid a suit (i.e., North bids 3♥ in the last auction), then a jump to 4NT is RKCB even when partner has bid a minor. Natural will not be missed, since a stopper becomes much less likely.

Non-jump 4NT bids are for takeout in general, but there is an exception at matchpoints: A 4NT response to a simple overcall of 4♣ or 4♦ is natural if the opposing suit has not been raised:

South	West	North	East	
3♥	4♣/4♦	Pass	4NT	Natural at matchpoints, RKCB at IMPs
3♠	4♣/4♦	4♠	4NT	RKCB always, because of the raise.
1♠	2♦	4♠	4NT	Takeout: ♠2 ♥AJ1092 ♦Q1032 ♣A98 or: ♠2 ♥KQ873 ♦K5 ♣AQJ83 (implies hearts plus a minor)

4NT responses to a strong jump overcall are always RKCB.

### Responding to a Takeout Double

The same principles apply as those applicable to partner's over-call. When 4NT asks for aces, it is regular Blackwood since the partnership has not bid a suit.

South	West	North	East	
1♠	Dbl	4♠	4NT	Takeout (over a major). West should avoid bidding a four-card heart suit unless it is very strong. Even if East has four hearts, which he might have bid, the suit may split 4-1 or 5-0 in view of the auction.
1♥	Dbl	4♥	4NT	Takeout, emphasis on the minors
3♣	Dbl	Pass	4NT	Natural (single jump over a minor)
1♣	Dbl	3♣/4♣	4NT	Blackwood (in view of the raise)
3♠	Dbl	Pass	4NT	Blackwood (jump to 4NT over a major)
4♣/4♦	Dbl	Pass	4NT	Natural at matchpoints, Blackwood at IMP scoring
4♠	Dbl	Pass	4NT	Any two-suited hand, doubler assumes minors for the moment

### Four Notrump Bids by the Takeout Doubler

If partner has bid a suit, 4NT is always RKCB.

South	West	North	East
3♠	Dbl	Pass	4♣/4♦/4♥
4♠	4NT - RKCB:	♠3 ♥KQJ4 ♦KQ10 ♣AKQJ2	

If partner has bid notrump, 4NT is always a notrump raise, even if an opposing suit has been raised.

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	3♠	3NT
4♠	4NT		Notrump raise, not takeout

If partner has not bid, 4NT over 4♠ is for takeout, emphasizing the minors, probably with three cards in the unbid major:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	4♠	Pass
Pass	4NT		Perhaps 1-3-4-5 distribution, big hand
	Dbl		Repeats the takeout, promises hearts

### Some General Principles

A player who has made a limit bid cannot use Blackwood. This holds for most natural notrump bidders, since notrump bids are limit bids. Any exceptions are clear-cut:

Opener	Responder	but:	Opener	Responder
1NT	3♠		1♣	3NT
4NT is obviously RKCB			4♥	4NT - signoff

Opener	Responder
1♠	3♠
4♣	4♦
4♠	4NT is natural, showing ♥K and a maximum.

There is just no type of hand that responder, who has made a limit bid of 3♠, could have that would warrant RKCB.

A passed hand is a "limit bidder" for this purpose:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	3♥	Dbl
Pass	4NT		

West has a good hand with two long minors. She could not have enough for Blackwood, considering her initial pass.

A player who has pulled partner's 3NT bid to four of a suit cannot change his mind and bid 4NT naturally. It has to be RKCB:

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♣
2♠	3NT
4♣	4♥
4NT - RKCB, clubs agreed	

Blackwood can seldom be used by either partner after Fourth Suit Artificial. After FSA, a 4NT by either partner is usually natural, a notrump slam try. See section 4-10, Fourth Suit Artificial.

Blackwood is not used after a forcing club raise--no exceptions!

Opener	Responder
1♣	3♦ - forcing club raise
4NT - natural, too much for a 3NT bid	

See chapter 5, Notrump Bidding, for the meaning of 4NT in bidding sequences following a notrump opening. Also see section 8-6, Getting a Preference at the Five Level.

## DOPI AND DEPO

When an opponent interferes with Blackwood or Gerber by sticking in a suit bid after the ace-asking call, use the following procedures:

- When the overcall is against Gerber, use DOPI: Responder doubles with zero, passes with one, bids 2♦ with three, etc.
- .
- When the overcall is below five of the agreed suit against Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB), use DOPI to show key cards, including the king of trumps.
- When the overcall is five of the agreed suit or higher against RKCB, double with an even number of key cards, pass with an odd number (Double Even, Pass Odd--DEPO) of key cards.
- When the overcall is at the five level against regular Blackwood, use DOPI at the five level (there is no agreed suit); at the six level or higher use DEPO. The reasoning is that a higher level overcall makes DOPI rather risky.

## GERBER

A 4♣ bid is sometimes used to inquire about aces and kings:

1) A 4♣ bid in response to any notrump opening or notrump overcall:

Opener	Responder
3NT	4♣ - Gerber

2) A 4♣ bid immediately following a 2♦ response to Stayman:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♦	4♣ - Gerber

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♣
2♥/2♠/2NT/3♣	4♣ - Splinter bid

The 2NT and 3♣ responses show both majors. See section 5-2, Strong One Notrump Opening,.

3) A jump to 4♣ over any 2NT rebid or response (including Omnibus, section 3-10), even if clubs have been bid.

Except for 1) and 2) above, a non-jump 4♣ bid is not Gerber. The reason is that a natural 4♣ bid is too valuable to give up, even when clubs have not been bid previously. When 4♣ is not Gerber, it is still possible to ask for aces by using Super Gerber. See section 6-10.

Gerber is not used opposite a 1NT rebid or response:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
4♣ is a splinter bid (see section 4-4)	

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	4♣ - splinter (see section 4-5)

Gerber is not used after a jump takeout of a 1NT opening, because responder's later bid of 4NT is Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB):

Opener	Responder
1NT	3 any
3NT	4♣ - natural
4NT	- RKCB

## Replies to Gerber

Opener	Responder
1NT	4♣
	4♦ - no aces or 4 aces
	4♥ - 1 aces
	4♠ - 2 aces
	4NT - 3 Aces

If an opponent interferes by bidding over 4♣, the DOPI principle applies: Double shows 0, pass shows 1, next rank up 2, etc.

If an opponent doubles the 4♣ bid, a pass shows 0, 4♦ shows 1, 4♥ shows 2, etc.

If an opponent doubles a reply to Gerber, a pass implies no first or second round control of the suit, while a redouble confirms control. If he knows where he is going, the asker is free to ignore the double and continue the auction, whether or not he has control of the doubled suit:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Dbl	Pass - no heart control	
		Rdbl - 1st or 2nd round control	
		5♣ - asking about kings	

North's pass of the double might be based on a hand such as ♠A3 ♥987 ♦KQJ10876 ♣A, with West possibly holding ♥AK or even ♥AKQ. South should bid 4NT with the king of hearts, redouble with the ace. If South bids 4NT, North can bid 6NT. If she redoubles, North will probably bid a safer 6♦. With no first or second round heart control herself, South bids the next higher ranking suit, after which North will place the contract.

## To Sign Off

The Gerber bidder signs off by bidding notrump or a previously bid suit (excluding artificial bids, of course).

## To Ask for Kings

The 4♣ bidder bids five of the lowest ranking unbid suit to ask for kings. A suit that has been bid artificially is considered "unbid."

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
2NT	4♣
4♠	4NT/5♣/5♦ are all signoffs
5♥	asks about kings

The king request does *not* guarantee that all aces are held by the partnership.

## King Replies

Kings are shown as follows if a suit has been bid naturally during the auction:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2NT
4♣	5♦ - 0 kings or 4 kings
	5♥ - 1 kings
	5♠ - 2 kings
	5NT - 3 kings

## Quick Trick Replies

If no suit that has been bid naturally, kings are not shown. Instead, the replier tells how many quick tricks can be run from his hand, excluding aces. In doing this he assumes that the ace of a suit will be played *first*, and that the partnership has all the aces (a prerequisite for the trick-asking bid). With a doubleton KQ replier counts just one playing trick (ace played first). The reason for this is that partner may have a doubleton ace. With KQx he counts two playing tricks, AKQJ as three, etc. The reason that aces are not counted is that the questioner already has this information.

Opener	Responder
1NT	4♣
4♥	5♣
5♦ -	♠AQJ10 ♥QJ9 ♦QJ10 ♣QJ10
6♣ -	♠KQJ10 ♥AJ3 ♦K54 ♣QJ8

The 5♦ bid shows no quick tricks, 6♣ shows four.

The reason for showing tricks instead of kings when no suit has been bid naturally is that the Gerber bid in such a case is usually based on a long solid or semi-solid suit: ♠32 ♥AK108763 ♦A6 ♣A6 or ♠A4 ♥KQ96542 ♦65 ♣A4. When a Gerber reply shows that the partnership has all the aces, these hands want to know how many tricks can be run off the top. That makes a KQJx holding just as good as three kings. The "quick trick" reply provides this information.

When the semi-solid suit is headed by AQ, it is better to find a bidding sequence that shows the suit prior to using RKCB, enabling the asker to find out about the king of that suit.

## The Jump to 5NT

If the Gerber bidder jumps to 5NT after partner's reply, that is the Grand Slam Force (see section 6-4). If two or more suits have been named, the last naturally-bid suit is assumed to be the key suit:

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♣
2NT	5♣
4♠	5NT - Grand Slam Force

Responder is asking if opener has two of the top three honors in clubs, with which opener must bid 7♣.

A non-jump 5NT bid is a signoff.

## SUPER GERBER

Because a 4♣ bid over 3NT is often needed in the natural sense, and a raise of 3NT to 4NT is usually natural, we need to devise an ace-asking convention for this awkward situation:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣/2♦/2♥
3NT	4♣ is natural, not Gerber 4NT is natural, not Blackwood

How to ask for aces? Solution: Use the lowest unbid suit other than clubs, a variation of the convention known as Super Gerber:

Opener	Responder
1♦	3NT
4♣/4♦	- natural
4♥	- Super Gerber
4♠	- notrump raise, implying weakish diamonds
4NT	- notrump raise, implying good diamonds

The 4♣ rebid is too valuable as a natural bid to be used as Gerber. The 4♠ bid says that opener's diamond suit needs a good fit to be useful in a notrump slam (e.g., five cards to only one of the top three honors).

Opener	Responder
1♥	2♦
3NT	4♣ - natural 4♠ - Super Gerber

Another sequence that needs comment:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3NT	4♣ - natural 4♦ - Super Gerber

It is true that in this sequence 4♣ is no more valuable than 4♦ as a natural bid, but for the sake of a general rule we let 4♣ retain its natural meaning and use 4♦ to ask for aces.

Unfortunately, we must have one exception to the general rule of what bid to use for Super Gerber:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
3NT	4♥ - natural, not Super Gerber 4♣ - Gerber

The 4♥ bid in this particular sequence is too valuable as a natural bid, so we revert to 4♣ as Gerber.

## Responses

Responses are the same as for regular Gerber, except for the necessarily higher ranking of the step responses:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣
3NT	4♦ - Super Gerber
4♥	- 0 or 3 aces
4♠	- 1 or 4 aces
4NT	- 2 aces, 0-2 kings
5♣	- 2 aces, 3-4 kings

To inquire about kings, the lowest unbid suit (which is often the Super Gerber suit) is bid at the five level:

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♣
3NT	4♦ - Super Gerber
5♣	5♦ - asks about kings

The king-showing responses are similar to regular Gerber, except for the higher level:

Opener	Responder
1♣	3NT
4♦	4♥ - 0 or 3 aces
5♦	5♥ - 0 or 4 kings
	5♠ - ♠ king or the other three
	5NT - ♥ king or the other three
	6♣ - ♣ king or the other three
	6♦ - ♦ king or the other three
	6♥ - two kings, same color
	6♠ - two kings, same rank
	6NT - two kings, nothing in common

If the Gerber bidder returns to a suit previously bid naturally, that is a signoff, as is a notrump bid. Remember that the lowest unbid suit is used to ask for kings, sometimes saving bidding space:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3NT	4♦ - Super Gerber
4♠	4NT/5♥ - signoffs
	5♣ - asks about kings
	5♦ - forgot this agreement, asks about kings

When a strong jump takeout responder rebids 3NT, opener must use Gerber to ask for aces--since 4NT would be a raise:

Opener	Responder
1♠	3♣
3♠	3NT
4♦	is Super Gerber
4♣/4NT	- natural raise

The strong jump takeout responder cannot use Gerber, however; as his 4NT bids are always RKCB, and other bids are natural:

Opener	Responder
1NT	3♦
3NT	4NT - RKCB
	4♣/4♦/4♥ - natural, forcing

## PSYCHIC OPENING BIDS

A psychic opening bid should comply with these general principles:

- First seat only. If one opponent has already passed, there is too much danger that partner has a big hand. Psychs in third seat seldom fool anyone.
- Maximum points: 3! (Which must not consist of a king) A queen must be held in the bid suit or long side suit, not in a four card or shorter suit.
- Bid your longest suit. Psyching with a short suit usually leads to disaster.
- Non-vulnerable vs vulnerable preferably, but sometimes (as when badly in need of points) when neither side is vulnerable.
- Duplicate pair events only.
- No four card or longer major suit outside of the bid suit.

You must pull a business double, of course, unless the bidding has been such that partner should realize you have psyched. How can partner know? If the opponents rush to a vulnerable game and he has two or more defensive tricks, he *should* know. Sometimes he can tell even below game level. Vulnerable opponents just don't fool around with notrump bids and the like.

There are some partners with whom you should never psych--those who are so greedy that they don't stop to think before doubling.

Don't psych if you are having a good game. Psychs average about 40% at best. They pay off on *other* hands when the opponents get into trouble because they think you may be psyching when you are not.

Don't psych in a team-of-four event--ever! It is rightly considered to be an insult to one's teammates.

## WEAK TWO BIDS

A weak two bid opening implies a hand that has a good six-card suit, but not enough in high cards to definitely call for an opening bid. Vulnerable vs non-vulnerable, weak two bids are often hands that might be opened with one of a suit if not playing weak two bids. Also, with unfavorable vulnerability a seven-card suit is permissible. It is difficult to have enough tricks for a weak two bid with this vulnerability and yet lack opening bid strength.

### Requirements

- 6-12 HCP, varying with seat position and vulnerability
- Weakest suit K109xxx, usually better
- Most of the strength in the suit opened
- No side suit of four or more cards

Flaws:

- Five-card suit (only in third or fourth position, please)
- Singleton or void in a minor, or major suit void
- Support for a side major
- Only one of the top three honors in the suit opened

Do not open a badly flawed hand.

Not vulnerable, the hand should have 1-1/2 to 2+ defensive tricks, vulnerable 1-1/2 to 2-1/2. Partner will count on more than one trick from you on defense if she has a singleton in your suit.

Playing trick strength requirements vary with vulnerability:

Favorable	5 to 6 playing tricks
Nobody vul.	5-1/2 to 6-1/2
Both vul.	6 to 7
Unfavorable	6-1/2 to 7-1/2

With a suit like AKQ10xx or KQJ9xx, six playing tricks are enough with unfavorable vulnerability.

These requirements may be relaxed somewhat in third or fourth seat.

## The Ogust Convention

This convention consists of an artificial forcing response of 2NT. Opener rebids as follows:

- 3♣ with a poor hand, poor suit
- 3♦ with a poor hand, good suit
- 3♥ with a good hand, poor suit
- 3♠ with a good hand, good suit
- 3NT with a suit headed by AKQ

A passed hand may use Ogust. A "good suit" is one good enough to play in game opposite a singleton without yielding (probably) more than two trump losers. This means the suit should be as good as QJ108xx, KJ108xx, KQ10xxx, AQ10xxx, etc., not vulnerable, even better when vulnerable (when suits should always be at least this good). What constitutes a "poor hand" or a "good hand" also varies with vulnerability.

Ogust applies over an intervening takeout double or two-level overcall:

South	West	North
2♥	Dbl/2♠	2NT - Ogust

Do not use Ogust without some good reason. If you know where the hand should play, just bid that contract immediately instead of wasting time using Ogust. Ogust gives the opponents an opportunity to bid at the three level, besides revealing to them the nature of opener's hand.

### Other Responses

-- Simple suit takeouts of a weak two bid are forcing, even over a double, unless responder is a passed hand. To invite with a new suit bid, use Ogust first:

Opener	Responder
2♥	2NT
3♣	3♦

The 3♦ bid is invitational, not forcing. If responder wanted to force, she could have responded 3♦ to the 2♥ opening. With his poor hand/poor suit, opener will no doubt pass 3♦, but could raise with good diamond support and perhaps a side singleton.

Opener "raises" responder's immediate (forcing) new suit response by bidding notrump--he must never make a real raise at the four level, because responder may be psyching or just trying to find out if opener has a little something in the suit in order to make notrump a reasonably safe contract. Responder might have only Jxx in the suit, for instance, which is okay for notrump if opener has Qx, xxx, or better in the suit. The use of notrump to "raise" must be Alerted ("That is an asking bid, not a telling bid"), as must the new suit response.

If the notrump "raise" is available at the two level, then opener is allowed to make a real raise to three with good support, while a 2NT bid implies a poor raise:

Opener	Responder
2♥	2♠
2NT	- poor spade raise
3♠	- good spade raise

The artificial raise applies in competition, and may be given freely even with a minimum weak two bid.

South	West	North	East
2♥	Pass	2♠	3♣
3♠	- spade support, may be minimum		
3NT	- spade support, club stopper		
Dbl	- no spade support, club stopper		

-- A 3NT response to a weak notrump opening in a major suit gives opener a choice between 3NT and game in the major. It implies a strong doubleton in opener's suit. Opener rebids his suit with a singleton or void, otherwise passes. To give opener no choice about passing 3NT, responder must either use Ogust or respond in a new suit before bidding 3NT.

Opener	Responder
2♥	3♦
3♥	3NT - opener must pass

-- A single raise is not invitational. This is one of the best preemptive bids there is. Do not pass partner's weak two bid if you are willing to go to the three level. Instead, raise immediately, even if RHO passes. This strategy makes life very difficult for the opposition.

-- A jump raise to game may be weak, preemptive, or strong, intending to make game. Let the opponents guess which sort of hand you have.

-- A jump to four of an unbid minor is an asking bid, described in section 6-5.

## PREEMPTIVE THREE BIDS

Preemptive openings at the three level show a hand with one long strong suit and nothing in the way of defensive strength. A suit headed by the ace is especially undesirable, representing too much defensive potential if partner has a singleton. Just pass and overcall later if the hand contains an ace.

A singleton or void in a side minor is undesirable for the same reason--too much defense. Shortness in a side major is okay. Adequate trump support for a side major is also a flaw, especially in first or second seat. You could miss a good contract in that major, since partner will assume that a weak preempt lacks good support for a side major.

The strength of a preemptive hand will vary with vulnerability, something like this:

Unfavorable vulnerability - within 1-1/2 tricks of contract

Both vulnerable                      within 2    tricks of contract

Neither vulnerable                  within 2-1/2 tricks of contract

Favorable vulnerability    within 3    tricks of contract

These can be relaxed 1/2 trick or so if partner is a passed hand.

### Responses

New suit responses by an unpassed hand are forcing, except for game bids. A 3NT response is a command for the preemptive opener to pass--it is not a "suggestion." Responder could have a void in opener's long suit and nine tricks of her own. A four-level minor suit response is an asking bid:

Opener	Responder
3♥	3♠ - forcing
	3NT - opener must pass
	4♣/4♦ - asking bids

When the response to a preemptive three bid is a new suit at the three level, opener bids 3NT to show a little support (Qx, xxx) for responder's suit. He must not raise because responder may have only Jxx in the suit, fishing for a notrump contract, or may be psyching. All this must be Alerted, of course: "That is an asking bid, not a telling bid. He is asking me to bid notrump with a little something in that suit, and otherwise to rebid my suit or show a lower-ranked feature."

See section 6-5 for responses to asking bids.

## HIGH LEVEL PREEMPTIVE OPENINGS

An opening bid of 4♥ or 4♠ in first or second seat shows a hand that is not good enough in high cards for an opening bid of one in the suit or for an opening bid of 4♣ or 4♦ (NAMYATS --see below). The hand will typically have five or six losers, depending on vulnerability. A side suit headed by KQ counts as one loser, even if there are one or more small cards in the suit. A void in the other major is okay, but a minor suit void is undesirable. In deciding on slam with a big hand, partner may consider that you could be void in a major, but not in a minor.

A preempt in second seat should be quite sound, since there is more of a likelihood that partner has a good hand.

In third or fourth seat the hand can have a little more defense, enough for an opening bid of one in first or second seat, provided that opener is quite sure there is no slam opposite a passed hand.

Opening bids of 5♣ or 5♦ are also preemptive, require an additional playing trick, and tend to deny adequate trump support for a major suit. They also deny opening bid values or a hand suitable for notrump play (e.g., AKQ suit).

### Responses to Game Bids

A response of 4♠ to an opening bid of 4♥ is natural, a signoff. The 4♠ bidder might have ten tricks in her own hand and a void in hearts, so opener must pass. All other new suit responses are asking bids (see section 6-5):

A raise of 4♠ to 5♠ or of 4♥ to 5♥ asks opener to bid six if his trumps are good: one loser at most, even with a singleton opposite.

A 4NT response is Roman Key Card Blackwood. See section 6-6 for responses to RKCB.

A response of 5NT is the Grand Slam Force (see section 6-4).

Opener	Responder
4♠	5♣/5♦/5♥ - asking bids
	4NT - Roman Key Card Blackwood
	5♠ - not invitational
	5NT - Grand Slam Force

A response of 5♦ to a 5♣ bid is also an asking bid, but a response of 5♥ or 5♠ to a 5♣ or 5♦ opening is natural.



## Opening Bids of 4♣ and 4♦ (NAMYATS)

These openings are artificial, showing a major suit preempt with fewer losers than a normal preempt: 4♣ shows hearts and 4♦ shows spades. The hand should have no more than four losers in top cards, except that the queen of trumps can be another potential loser. You can assume that finesses are possible, so AQJ is 1/2 loser, Kx is 1-1/2 losers. With three losers only, a forcing two bid is usually in order, but with fewer than five controls (ace 2, king 1) a 4♣ or 4♦ opening with ten tricks is acceptable.

In fact, these openings deny as many as five controls, and they deny having a void suit. Open one of a suit with five controls or a void, if the hand is not good enough in high cards for a strong two bid. A 7-4-1-1 hand is also undesirable for NAMYATS.

Typical hands for NAMYATS:

♠AKQ8732 ♥4 ♦KQJ ♣65

♠K3 ♥AQJ107654 ♦K3 ♣8

♠AKJ109732 ♥KQ ♦3 ♣75

♠KQJ1085432 ♥KQJ ♦3 ♣A

## Responses to NAMYATS

Responder knows that any ace will be worth a trick because opener cannot have a void. The king or queen of trumps is obviously worth 1/2 trick or more. Outside kings, even when accompanied by an ace, may not be of value. Twelve playing tricks will not produce a slam if the other side can take two tricks off the top. An outside singleton will not produce a ruffing trick if opener also has a singleton there.

With less than two key cards (aces, or king of trumps) responder signs off by bidding the next higher ranking suit. With two or more key cards (aces, or king of trumps), responder can employ Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB, see section 6-6) or show her hand by step bidding:

Opener	Responder
4♣	4♦ - signoff, one or no keys
	4♥ - two key cards
	4♠ - three key cards
	4NT - RKCB
	5♣ - four key cards

The "retransfer" signoff lets opener, who is likely to have more high cards to be led up to, play the hand. This supposed signoff may also be used as a device to get opener to bid his suit, prior to using RKCB. Responder should do this when she has no reason to play the hand (i.e., no tenace to protect):

Opener	Responder
4♣	4♦
4♥	4NT - RKCB

Opener	Responder
4♦	4♥ - signoff, one or no keys
	4♠ - two key cards
	4NT - RKCB
	5♣ - three key cards
	5♦ - four key cards

If opener jumps to five of his suit, or raises from four to five, he is asking about trumps:

Opener	Responder
4♦	4♠ - two key cards
5♠	Pass - bad spade holding
	6♠ - Q, xx, or better in trumps

Similarly, a jump by responder or non-competitive raise to five of opener's major asks about the trump queen, without which opener passes (unless he has nine trumps to the AKJ!).

Opener may have more problems than just key cards and trump holdings. What if responder has the wrong ace(s), or has the right ace(s) but no other cards to help out? For instance, responder shows two key cards and opener has ♠AKQJ1087 ♥KQJ ♦7 ♣32? If responder's two aces are red, there may be two club losers, but not if responder has KQ of clubs. If her two aces are in hearts and clubs, that is still only eleven tricks unless she has the king of clubs or heart length (and A432 is not good enough with a club lead). If responder shows three key cards (three aces, in this case), that is twelve tricks off the top. Is there a thirteenth? We may need some extra asking ability for these situations. We have two ways for opener to inquire further about responder's hand:

1) A 4NT bid by opener (not RKCB, since he knows about key cards from the response), or 5NT if the bidding is at the five level, states that all key cards are accounted for and asks responder how many quick tricks in side suits can be run from her hand, excluding aces. A club response shows none, diamonds one, etc. In doing this responder assumes that the ace of a suit will be played *first*, and that the partnership has all the aces (a prerequisite for the trick-asking bid). With a doubleton KQ responder counts just one playing trick (ace played first). The reason for this is that opener may have a doubleton or singleton ace. With KQx she counts two playing tricks, AKQJ as three, etc.

2) A new suit bid by opener (i.e., any suit other than his major) is an asking bid. See section 6-5, Asking Bids and Responses.

These methods may not solve opener's problems completely, but they should help.

## When The Opposition Intervenes

-- If the opening bid gets doubled naturally (i.e., either showing the suit, or for lead direction), responder bids exactly the same except that she passes with no controls and may not bid opener's suit (showing two key cards) with two fast losers in the doubled suit. Instead, she redoubles to show two key cards. A bid of opener's suit therefore not only shows two key cards, but also at least second round control of the doubled suit.

South	West	North
4♣	Dbl	Pass - no key cards
		Rdbl - two keys, no club control
		4♦ - one key card
		4♥ - two keys, club control
		4♠ - three key cards
		4NT - four key cards

The purpose of the redouble, of course, is to let the lead come up to opener's hand when responder lacks first or second round control of the doubled suit.

-- If the opening gets doubled conventionally to show a specific suit plus an unspecified suit (e.g., showing the "other major" plus diamonds), a bid of opener's suit requires not only two controls, but at least second round control of the doubler's known suit. Other calls have the same meaning as when the double is natural. If the double shows two specific suits, a redoubler may have control of one of the suits, but not both.

-- If the opening bid gets overcalled in the ranking suit, a pass shows no key cards, a double one key card, and other bids the same as over a pass.

-- If the opening bid gets overcalled in opener's suit, probably a Michaels cue bid:

South	West	North
4♣	4♥	Pass - no key cards
		Dbl - one key card
		4♠ - two key cards
		4NT - RKCB
		5♣ - three key cards
		5♦ - four key cards
		5♥ - preemptive, no key cards

The 4♥ bid was Alerted as showing spades plus a minor. The raise to five in competition is preemptive, not a query about trump quality.

-- If the opening bid gets overcalled in a suit higher than partner's suit, responder bids whatever she thinks is right. A double is for business.

### Opening Bids of Five in a Major

Opening bids of 5♥ or 5♠ show a hand that is solid except for the ace and king of trumps: ♠QJ108765 ♥AKQ ♦AKQ ♣ void. Partner bids six with one of the missing cards, seven with both. Lacking the ace or king of the suit opened, she must pass unless she can make slam in her own hand (e.g., 12 solid clubs and an outside loser).

### Opening Bids of Six in a Suit

These openings show a hand that is solid except for the ace or king of trumps: ♠KQJ108763 ♥ void ♦AKQ ♣AK. Partner raises with the missing high trump, otherwise passes.

## MARVIN TWO SPADES

The popular "Gambling 3NT" opening shows a solid seven-card minor with little outside strength. Besides being rather restrictive as to suit quality, the notrump contract is played from the wrong side. Not only is the lead through dummy's strength, but the exposure of that hand lets the opponents put up a "double dummy" defense. If responder can't support a 3NT contract, the bidding ends up at the dangerous four level.

Marvin 2♠ shows the same sort of hand, or (ten times as frequent) a semi-solid (KQJ or AQJ) seven-card minor with one ace or king outside. The hand must contain at least one ace, so responder can count on seven playing tricks. Besides a solid minor, opener could have:

♠32 ♥A7 ♦KQJ10876 ♣J2

or

♠K3 ♥9 ♦962 ♣AQJ9432

or

♠875 ♥92 ♦AQJ7652 ♣A

A third-seat bidder might cheat with an eight-card suit or regard an AKJ10 suit as solid.

Responder bids 3♣ to sign off, whereupon opener will pass with clubs, or rebid 3♦ with diamonds. If responder would raise clubs but not diamonds, she responds 3♦. If she would raise diamonds but not clubs, she bids 3♣. Opener can correct if responder bids the wrong suit.

A response of 3♥ or 3♠ is forcing. Opener bids 3NT to show Qx, xxx, or better support, so responder (perhaps fishing for a notrump contract) need not have a real suit (e.g., respond 3♥ with ♠A7532 ♥J76 ♦A87 ♣K2). Although this response must be alerted ("That is an asking bid, not a telling bid."), its ambiguous nature can make it useful as a lead inhibitor, or as a complete bluff when an opposing game is feared. (A worthless Asking Bid is not a psych because it says nothing, it only asks).

A 2NT response asks for clarification. Opener bids 3NT with a solid minor, or indicates where the outside high card is located when the minor is only semi-solid:

Opener	Responder
2♠	2NT?
3NT	- solid minor suit
3♣	- club suit, high card in diamonds
3♦	- diamond suit, high card in clubs
3♥	- high card in spades, may have either minor
3♠	- high card in hearts, may have either minor

Opener's rebid will usually give responder the information needed to place the contract. These bids are designed so that opener's LHO cannot double to direct a lead through the high card (perhaps an unguarded king).

A 4♣ response asks opener to show a short suit:

Opener	Responder
2♠	4♣?
4♦/4♥/4♠/5♣ - short suit	
4NT - no short suit	

A 4♦ response asks for a major suit preference ("Ripstra"), and 4NT is Blackwood (5♣ or 5♦ with one ace--must have one--5♥ with two).

A game response is a signoff, but a jump to 5♣ is "pass or correct" (to 5♦).

### When the Opponents Intervene

If the 2♠ opening gets doubled, presumably showing a spade suit, responder may choose to make a forcing pass. She would pass, for instance, with ♠972 ♥QJ543 ♦A2 ♣A53, giving opener a chance to bid notrump if he has spades stopped:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2NT - spade stopper			
3♣/3♦ - no spade stopper			

Suppose there is an overcall and responder cue bids:

South	West	North
2♠	3♣	4♣

South now bids 4♦ with solid diamonds, 4♥ with a high card in spades, 4♠ with a high card in hearts, 4NT with a high card in clubs, and 5♣ with a solid club suit! (Maybe 3♣ was meant as Michaels). Similarly:

South	West	North	East
2♠	3♦	4♦	Pass
4♥ - high card in spades			
4♠ - high card in hearts			
4NT - high card in diamonds, club suit			
5♣/5♦ - solid suit			

When the cue bid is in a major, opener has less room to show his hand and responder may have to guess opener's minor:

South	West	North	East
2♠	3♥	4♥	Pass
4♠ - high card in spades, unknown minor			
4NT - high card in hearts, unknown minor			
5♣/5♦ - natural			

The 5♣/5♦ bids show either a solid suit or a high card in the unbid minor.

South	West	North	East
2♠	3♠	4♠	Pass
4NT - high card in spades, unknown minor			
5♣/5♦ - natural			

The bidding here is so crowded that opener can show an outside high card in spades only.

Summarizing the advantages of Marvin 2♠ over Gambling 3NT:

- 1) It gives an accurate picture of more hard-to-describe hands.
- 2) It comes up ten times as often.
- 3) Notrump is played from the right side.
- 4) Responder can bail out at the three level.
- 5) Responder can inquire about a major at the three level.
- 6) Responder can ask for a short suit.
- 7) It frees the 3NT opening for another purpose (e.g., a nine-trick notrump hand, also hard to describe).

With a normal weak two bid in spades, you can use the Marvin 2♥ opening (section 6-3), which shows a strong two bid in hearts or a weak two bid in spades. Users of the “Multi” convention (weak two bid in an unspecified major) can incorporate Marvin Two Spades without losing the weak 2S bid.

## MARVELOUS TWO DIAMONDS

One of the awkward rebids for a five-card 1♥ or 1♠ opener comes after a two-over-one response in a minor, when opener has support for the minor but lacks the extra strength implied by a minor suit raise. He must just rebid the major, which could result in a 5-1 or even 5-0 trump fit when a 5-3 or 6-3 fit is available.

A less serious situation occurs when the response to a 1♠ opening is 2♥ and opener lacks the extra values required for a 2NT rebid. He does not need extra strength to raise hearts, but he does need three-card support. If he must bid 2♠ with a 5-2-3-3 hand, responder might have to pass with six hearts, or a five-card minor, and spade shortness.

In fact, a two-over-one responder has problems with any two-suited hand that lacks sufficient strength to show the second suit (a forcing bid, by an unpassed hand):

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦/2♥
2♠	?

Responder has five clubs, but not enough strength to make the forcing rebid of 3♣. The result could be a 5-1 spade contract when a 5-3 minor suit contract is available.

The Marvelous Two Diamond opening reduces these problems somewhat. It shows a minimum or near-minimum (good 12 to bad 14 HCP) opening bid with a five-card major suit, a doubleton in the other major, and support for both minors. The ideal hand has 5=2=3=3 or 2=5=3=3 distribution, but it's okay to have 4=2 or 2=4 in the minors if the four-card suit is very weak and the doubleton very strong (two of the top three honors).

The maximum strength for a 2♦ opening is a poor 14 HCP. Don't open 2♦ with a 14 HCP hand that could raise a two-over-one response in either minor or could rebid 2NT. It is permissible, for instance, to raise a two-over-one response in a minor with only 14 HCP when holding two of the top three honors in support. Open 1♠ with ♠Q8732 ♥62 ♦AQ5 ♣AQ3 and raise a minor suit response. You would rather not play 2♠ opposite a doubleton with that weak suit, and a minor suit raise is not too much of a stretch, nor is a 2NT rebid if the response is 2♥.

Similarly, rather than open 2♦ with ♠Q8732 ♥AQ ♦K87 ♣QJ8, open 1♠ and rebid 2NT after a minor suit response. In fact, a 2♦ opening tends to deny a holding of AQ or AK in the short major; responder will assume opener has at most one stopper in that suit.

The Marvelous Two Diamond opening is used in first or second seat only. Since a third or fourth seat opener can pass a two-over-one response (or three-over-two rebid), the convention is less valuable in these positions. For reasons shown later, the convention is not appropriate for a matchpoint contest. Use it only with International Matchpoint (IMP) or rubber bridge scoring.

## Responses

-- A 2♥ response is a signoff. Responder is not interested in game, and sees no better place to play the hand if opener's suit is hearts. If opener has spades, he rebids 2♠ over 2♥. Responder then passes or otherwise places the contract.

-- A three-level suit response is also a signoff. Responder has six or more cards for a major, five or more for a minor, and no interest in game. Opener can raise a 3♥ or 3♠ response, however, if the bid happens to hit his suit. It might seem unnecessary to sign off with a 3♦ response, since 2♦ can be passed, but the 3♦ response may be preferred for preemptive reasons. The major suit three bids imply shortness in the other major, and the minor suit three bids deny as many as three cards in either major.

-- A 2♠ response is an artificial relay asking opener to indicate his suit:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♠?
2NT	- heart suit
3♣	- spade suit

Responder might pass 2NT if his response was based on spade support and 10-11 HCP or so. With a weaker 4-1-4-4 or even with a weak 5-1-3-4 or 5-1-4-3 hand, responder must bid 2♥ and hope opener bids 2♠ or an opponent bids. With six spades the response is 3♠, even with a weak hand, hoping no one doubles.

Suppose responder has a weak hand with spade support and a five-card or longer minor. If opener's suit is hearts, responder will sign off in the minor:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♠?
2NT	3♣/3♦ - signoff

With a stronger hand, responder could invite game with a 3♠, 4♣, or 4♦ bid:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♠?
2NT	3♠/4♣/4♦ - invitational

Opener will tend to accept a game invitation if his trump holding is better than might be expected (i.e., a strong doubleton support for spades instead of a weak doubleton, good support for a minor instead of three small). If opener chooses not to pass, he will usually just raise responder's minor suit invitation. He may, however, bid his major instead if it is playable opposite a weak doubleton (e.g., AKQxx, AQJxx, KQJxx).

A jump to 4NT after a 2♠ response is Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB):

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♠?
2NT/3♣	4NT - RKCB

The "agreed" suit for RKCB purposes is opener's major, even if responder does not intend to play in that suit.

-- A 2NT response shows a heart raise and at least some interest in game; just bid 2♥ with no game ambitions. When you have responded 2NT, opener will bid 4♥ over an opponent's 3♠, 4♣, or 4♦ overcall if he likes his hand, so you had better have some game interest.

If opener has spades, he passes 2NT. With hearts, he clarifies his hand:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2NT - heart raise
Pass	- spade suit
3♣	- good hand, heart suit, clubs stronger than diamonds
3♦	- good hand, heart suit, diamonds stronger than clubs
3♥	- heart suit, minimum

With ♠6 ♥Q1087 ♦AQ83 ♣K964, respond 2NT, a heart raise. If partner has hearts, he will bid. If partner has spades, he will pass 2NT. If the hearts and spades were reversed, you would respond 2♠ and pass if opener shows hearts by bidding 2NT. With 5-3 in the minors, you would respond 2♠ and sign off in the five-card minor if opener shows hearts (safer than passing 2NT).

Don't bid 2NT with heart support and no hope for game; just bid 2♥. If opener bids 2♠ you can pass, bid 2NT, or three of a minor, according to your hand. Opener must pass any further bid you make.

Don't bid 2NT if you want to be in game no matter which major opener has, because opener will pass 2NT with five spades. Respond 2S with game-going or better hands if you can't place the final contract immediately.

-- A response of four in a major is a signoff but is unlikely to be weak. Why preempt in a major when opener no doubt has the other major and may have a good 3-3 in the minors besides?

-- A response of 4NT to the 2♦ opening is unusual notrump, asking opener to take a choice between the minors. Opener bids 5♣ with equal length, disregarding any difference in honor strength. To use Roman Key Card Blackwood (see section 6-6), respond 2♠ first and then bid 4NT (but opener's major will have to be the "agreed" suit).

-- A response of 5♣ or 5♦ is a signoff. To invite slam, bid 2♠, then five of the minor.

To summarize:

Opener	Responder
2♦	Pass! - five or more diamonds
	2♥ - pass or correct, weak
	2♠ - artificial relay
	2NT - heart raise
	3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - signoff
	4♣/4♦ - invitational
	Game bids - signoff
	4NT - asks for minor preference

If responder has a hand such as ♠K2 ♥42 ♦J8732 ♣AK97, he has a problem. He can either pass 2♦ (no need to preemptively bid 3♦, with this good hand) or bid 2♥. He probably should go for a sure plus and pass. Hands like this are why the Marvelous Two Diamond opening should not be used in a matchpoint game. There is too good a chance that a better result could be obtained in a major suit or notrump partscore. At IMP or rubber bridge scoring the difference is unlikely to matter, and a diamond contract is safer.

### If Two Diamonds Gets Doubled

If the 2♦ opening is doubled, any bid by responder is natural and non-forcing, and a redouble is to play. If not sure what to do, he can pass the double around to opener, who must bid his major.

### If Two Diamonds Gets Overcalled

If the overcall is in a major or in notrump, then a double is for business. If in a minor (through 4♦), a double is negative--asking opener to bid his suit. All new suit bids are non-forcing and there are no artificial responses:

South	West	North
2♦	2♠	Dbl - business
		2NT - invitational
		3♥ - heart raise
		3♠ - cue bid, strong
		3♣/3♦ - signoffs
		4♣/4♦ - invitational

The 3♠ cue bid doesn't exactly ask for a spade stopper, but opener will no doubt bid 3NT with spades stopped.

The free 2NT response will usually be based on a long minor and a single stopper. Opener should not raise unless he has a strong spade doubleton or good support for both minors. The raise to 3♥ is strictly competitive and should be passed. Responder must bid 4♥ with game interest, a bid that may push the opponents into a phantom save.

South	West	North
2♦	2♥	Dbl - business
		2NT - invitational
		2♠ - weakish spade raise
		3♣/3♦ - signoff
		3♥ - cue bid
		3♠ - invitational spade raise
		4♣/4♦ - invitational

South	West	North	East
2♦	3♦	Dbl*	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠ - invitational	
		4♣ - signoff	

\* Negative

North would bid 3♠ immediately with a non-invitational hand that lacks heart support.

### Further Advantages of the 2♦ Opening

Besides avoiding a rebid problem, the 2♦ opening has some preemptive value. It also has the merit of describing a hand pretty well in one bid, which is always good. Occasionally it will result in a good contract that is unreachable by standard methods. Since the bid is not weak, there are good possibilities for penalizing the opponents if they enter the auction.

### Disadvantages

The main disadvantage is that it uses up a bid (2♦) that could be used for other, more frequent purposes. It also prevents the hand from being played in one notrump, often a good contract for hands of this type. This is another reason that the convention is unsuitable for matchpoint contests.

## WEAK JUMP OVERCALLS

### Single Jump Overcalls

Single jump overcalls are normally strong, but not:

-- Directly over 1♣ or 1♦ artificial openings, strong or not, and responses to them:

North	East	
1♣	2♦/2♥/2♠/3♣	- weak, preemptive

South	West	North	East	
1♣	Pass	1♦/1♥	2♠/3♣/3♦	- weak, preemptive

-- Directly over 2♣ artificial strong opening and responses to it:

North	East	
2♣	3♦/3♥/3♠/4♣	- weak, preemptive

-- Directly over a 1♣ or 1♦ opening by five-card majorities, but not over responses to such an opening, when playing Marvin vs Five-Card Majors (see section 12-10).

North	East	
1♦	2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦	- weak, preemptive

South	West	North	East	
1♣	Pass	1♥	2♠	- strong jump overcall

And not when balancing:

South	West	North	East	
1♦	Pass	Pass	2♥/2♠/3♣	- invitational

This is a standard intermediate-strength jump overcall. See section 8-7, Reopening the Bidding.

-- Over a notrump opening, strong or weak:

South	West	
1NT	3♥/3♠/4♣/4♦	- weak, preemptive

A strong hand would reach these suits by a conventional route.

Balancing:

South	West	North	East	
1NT	Pass	Pass	3♥/3♠	- mildly invitational

The reopening jump is not very strong. With a really promising hand, fourth seat can show the single suit by an artificial overcall and follow with a jump. See section 12-2, Marvin vs Strong Notrump Openings, and section 12-3, Marvin vs Weak Notrump Openings.

If opener's partner has responded with a weak natural bid, or a conventional bid that might be weak, all jump overcalls are strong:

South	West	North
1NT	2♦*	3♠ - strong, invitational

\* signoff or transfer

-- Jump overcalls in RHO's suit, when partner has not bid:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	3♥ - weak, preemptive

South	West
1♣	3♣ - weak, preemptive

-- Jump overcalls of a 1NT response or negative double by RHO when partner has overcalled:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	1NT/Dbl	3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - weak, preemptive

A good hand would double 1NT or redouble over the double..

### Requirements

At the two level, requirements for a weak jump overcall are the same as for a weak two bid (see section 7-2, Weak Two Bids).

At the three level or higher, requirements are the same as for an opening preemptive bid at that level.

A jump overcall in a minor suit will often tempt an unpassed partner into a 3NT bid, so jumps to 3♣ or 3♦ should be sound if partner has not passed.

The Ogust convention (see section 7-2) applies to weak jump overcalls at the two level. New suit advances of the overcall are forcing for one round, unless advancer has previously passed. Overcaller bids notrump to show support for advancer's suit, but may raise a two-level advance instead of bidding 2NT when holding good values for the raise (e.g., three trumps and a singleton). If advancer then bids 3NT, overcaller must pass. This is the standard weak-two approach.

### Double/Triple Jump Overcalls

North	East
1♣	3♦/4♦/4♣

If less than game, these overcalls deny any defensive strength outside the suit bid (and preferably no ace in the bid suit). Game bids may be stronger, having the same considerations as opening game bids. See section 7-4, High Level Preemptive Openings.

## SIMPLE OVERCALLS

The partner of an overcaller ("advancer") will picture him as having a good long suit in a hand which may not qualify for an opening bid. It is best not to stray too far from this picture. Advancer will assume that overcaller has at least one defensive trick when not vulnerable, two when vulnerable. With less defense it is usually better to pass or preempt rather than make a simple overcall.

The hand should not be too strong, either. Even though good players raise overcalls with light support, a game may be missed if the simple overcall is based on a very strong hand. Strong hands are better shown by takeout doubles, jump overcalls, or cue bids. Do not, however, make an off-shape takeout double just because the hand is rather strong for an overcall. See section 9-1 for a discussion of the requirements for a takeout double.

Overcalls in a weak five-card suit or a four-card suit are seldom advisable. Both should occur at the one level only, and the four card variety should have three of the top four honors to make up for the shorter length.

Overcalls at the one level require a minimum of three to five playing tricks, depending on the vulnerability. A hand with only three playing tricks may be bid only with favorable vulnerability, a good suit, and good distribution: ♠AQ1087 ♥3 ♦9873 ♣542. With unfavorable vulnerability, a hand with the minimum of five playing tricks should also include a good suit. Otherwise it is best to have extra playing strength. Be even more conservative when coming in between two bidders, unless the vulnerability is favorable.

With a good defensive hand, do not overcall without extra playing strength. Then, if partner makes what he thinks is a sacrifice bid in your suit, you may make the contract. Prefer a pass, takeout double, or notrump bid with a good hand that lacks playing strength. Overcalls that are minimum in regard to playing strength should be defensively weak also. Otherwise you will be going down when the opponents can make nothing their way.

The preemptive value of the overcall is an important consideration. Stretch to bid 2♣ over 1♦, but not 2♣ over 1♠. The 1♠ overcall of 1♣ is often very weak, but there is little justification for making an overcall of, say, 1♥ over 1♦. Partner should take this factor into account in her bidding.

Suppose you have ♠AQ743 ♥K106 ♦43 ♣K86, vulnerable. Pass over a 1♥ opening. You might double 1♦. Over 1♣ you can bid 1♠ because of the preemptive effect of skipping so many ranks. After passing hands like this, you can back into the bidding later if the auction stops at a low level. Should the bidding get too high for a back-in bid, partner will probably be broke anyway. Often you will gain a trick in defense when declarer cannot place the outstanding high cards or distribution.

Lead direction is also important. With a borderline overcall, pass if the suit you must bid is not a good one for lead direction--especially if partner is likely to be on lead.

It is possible to make a takeout double after overcalling. See section 9-1, Takeout Doubles.

## ADVANCES OF SIMPLE OVERCALLS

The technical term for responding to an overcall is "advancing," and overcaller's partner is called the "advancer." The overcaller may also be called the "intervenor."

-- A raise should show the full limit of your hand. Do not raise 1♠ to 2♠ and then later go to 3♠ after being pushed. That is just asking for a double and lets the opponents communicate too easily. Either you are good enough for 3♠, or you are not--make the decision, make the call, and stick with it. If you go down after bidding 3♠ you will often find that the hand belonged to the opponents anyway. Your jump will have stolen the hand and averted a double. What if you could have bought the hand for 2♠? Against good players you will find that the reason is that they are weak and partner is strong. You will therefore make 3♠, so you might as well bid it immediately (in case you can't make it!).

One advantage of bidding the limit of your hand is that partner will know very closely the combined partnership assets. If you underbid good hands he will not be in as good a position for making decisions. Or do you make all the decisions?

With ♠K32 ♥A8 ♦7653 ♣J642 raise partner's 1♠ overcall of a 1♥ opening to 2♠ at any vulnerability, even if RHO passes. With ♠Q9876 ♥8 ♦K953 ♣J64 raise a 1♠ overcall to 3♠. Bids like these make life difficult for the opponents. Stronger hands must usually cue bid before raising.

Vulnerability doesn't have much effect on raises to the two and three level, despite the fact that overcaller should have a better minimum overcall when vulnerable. In effect, the raise says, "I think we can make this" when vulnerable, and "We probably won't go down more than one," when not vulnerable. The result is that vulnerable and non-vulnerable raises require about the same strength. Raises to game, however, or cue bid plus a raise (urging game), require more strength when not vulnerable. If the hand may belong to the opponents jump raises to games may be deliberate overbids justified by distributional values. Such bids are possibly speculative, and therefore partner's double of an opposing bid merely shows "cards" and is not a warning to stop bidding. Moreover, a pass by partner is not forcing.

Be conservative in raising when you have secondary strength in the opposing suit(s). You may be going down when they have nothing their way. Those secondary cards in the opposing suit(s) figure to be more useful for defense than for offense.

-- A cue bid advance of an overcall when third seat passes or doubles negatively is a probing cue bid, forcing to a limit situation. See section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids; and section 10-7, Cue Bid Responses to Overcalls, which also discusses the meaning of a cue bid when third seat bids 1NT, raises opener, or bids a new suit, and the meaning of a jump cue bid.

-- A 1NT advance varies with vulnerability. Be quicker to bid 1NT opposite a vulnerable overcall, because partner is supposed to have a good hand. It is not bid as a rescue with a poor hand--1NT shows encouraging strength, so pass if you don't have a fairly good hand, even with a singleton in partner's suit.

-- A 2NT advance strongly implies a double stopper in the enemy suit, or one stopper plus a high card in partner's suit. The overcaller can count on this when deciding whether to bid 3NT or not. A pass to 2NT is rare, since the overcaller will usually rebid his suit, or bid a second suit, with a hand that is unsuitable for notrump. The 2NT bid is not forcing, however; the overcaller can pass with a five-card suit and a marginal overcall. The Stoplight Convention (section 4-12) applies when the 2NT bid is a jump.

-- Transfer advances (bidding one suit to show another) are an optional convention that is discussed in section 11-1.

-- A non-jump new suit advance in a non-transfer situation is not forcing. You can do it with a weak hand and a long major suit if you think your suit is a better spot than partner's. Do not bid a minor over partner's major with a bad hand, however. The risk has little to gain, for you may not be improving the contract and you are one level higher. Such a takeout is deemed "constructive," i.e., it does not discourage additional bidding.

The minor suit takeout has a slightly different flavor when made over a bid by third seat:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♣/3♦

East might have passed 2♥ if North had passed. In this situation the takeout may not be very constructive. East wants to compete, but can hardly raise hearts with something like ♥32. He therefore suggests an alternative trump suit, which means his suit must be extremely strong if only five cards long.

-- A single jump in a new suit by an **unpassed hand** shows a strong suit, usually at least six-long. A jump in a minor tends to show a completely solid suit.

-- A single jump in a new suit by a **passed hand** is a "fit jump." It shows appropriate values for a raise of the overcall suit, plus a good holding in the jump suit. The bid can help partner evaluate defensive and offensive potential, and may enable him to make a killing lead against an opposing contract.

If the fit jump is in a major and the overcall was in a minor, it should be exactly five cards long and need be headed only by the ace or king. All other fit jumps may have fewer cards in the suit, which must be headed by the ace or king plus another honor.

South	West	North	East
-	-	-	Pass
1♦	2♣	Pass	3♥/3♠ - fit jump, five-card suit

East has values for a raise to 4♣. West can raise these bids with three-card support, since East must have five. These advances are not quite forcing.

Do not use fit jumps in a six-card major suit. Either transfer to the suit (see section 11-1, Transfer Advances) or bid the suit minimally. A cue bid is always available if the hand is strong.

-- A double (or higher) jump in a new suit is natural and preemptive, not a splinter bid. Splinter bids are not used in advancing an overcall, except for a double jump to show a void in a suit that opponents have bid twice (rebid or raise). If the opposing suit has been bid only once, a jump takeout in that suit is natural.

### **After a Negative Double by Third Seat**

-- A redouble shows a strong hand not suited for any other call.

-- Raises to any level are preemptive.

-- A bid in a suit explicitly indicated by a negative doubler is natural, non-forcing, not a cue bid.

-- A 1NT advance is natural

-- A jump to 2NT is artificial, showing a good raise that includes at least two defensive tricks. This is analogous to the artificial jump to 2NT over a takeout double.

-- A jump to 3NT is natural, implying a great fit in partner's suit and a distributional hand that calls for denying bidding space to the opponents.

-- After passing or redoubling over a negative double, a subsequent double at the two level is generally for penalties, not takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass/Rdbl
2♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl - business double

If South had rebid clubs instead of bidding 2♥, the reopening double would have been for takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass/Rdbl
2♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl - for takeout (2=4=4=3?)

-- This is one of the very few cases when a double is for takeout even though partner has previously acted.

-- Other bids have the same meaning as over a pass.

### After a Business Double by Third Seat

-- A direct redouble by fourth seat is not "S. O. S." It says, "Don't run! I have a strong hand!" The redouble may enable overcaller to double a runout by opener, who may have psyched an opening bid.

-- New suit bids are "rescues," supposedly saving partner (who will not be happy if the rescue makes things worse, especially if he could make his bid).

-- A bid of opener's suit is also natural, wanting to play there.

-- A raise is so illogical that we give it an artificial meaning: "Pick another suit." The raiser might have 6-6 in the two unbid suits.

-- Jump takeouts are preemptive.

-- A notrump bid is natural. When too weak for the artificial raise (showing the two unbid suits), which increases the level of bidding, bid notrump if that will keep the bidding lower. When this gets doubled by opener, redouble for takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	1NT
Dbl	Pass	Pass	Rdbl - diamonds & hearts

If the notrump bid gets doubled by third hand, North in this case, a redouble is to play, so just bid the lower ranking unbid suit, asking for a preference between the unbid suits:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	Dbl	1NT
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Rdbl - to play
			2♣ - clubs and diamonds

### After a Raise by Third Seat

When third seat raises opener's bid, the principles of Advancive Doubles (section 9-2) apply. A cue bid shows a strong raise if the overcall was in a major suit, as described in section 10-7, Cue Bid Responses to Overcalls. Since the cue bid is dedicated to that purpose, jumps in a new suit have to be played as forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	2♣	Dbl - spades/diamonds
			3♦/3♠ - natural (UPH) or fit jump (PH)
			3♥ - good heart raise
			3♣ - stronger heart raise

The double is an Advancive Double, showing the two unbid suits. When the overcall is in a minor suit, the cue bid of a raised suit merely asks for a stopper in the opposing suit.

### **After a New Suit by Third Seat**

When third seat bids a new suit over partner's overcall, Advancer has a choice of two suits for a cue bid. See section 10-7, Cue Bid Responses to Overcalls. Also see section 9-2, Advancive Doubles. A jump in the fourth suit is a fit jump, described above. With a real suit advancer can either bid it minimally, show it with an advancive double, or (with a powerhouse) cue bid in responder's suit before showing it (forcing). Bidding the fourth suit minimally implies no tolerance for overcaller's suit.

A bid of opener's suit is natural and non-forcing. Jump cue bids in either of the opposing suits are natural, non-forcing. Players do psych, do open short/weak minors, and do respond with very weak four-card suits.

### **After a 1NT Bid by Third Seat**

When third seat responds with a free bid of 1NT, any action by Advancer denies the ability to double 1NT. With 2NT available as a cue bid (with a good but distributional hand unsuitable for a double or other action), a bid of opener's suit is natural and a jump raise is preemptive:

## STRONG JUMP OVERCALLS

What is a strong jump overcall? As described by Culbertson, a single jump overcall shows a good strong suit in a hand with about eight playing tricks, whether made at the two or three level. It should have at least three and one-half defensive tricks ("honor count," to use Culbertson's term). For instance, this is a 2♠ jump overcall of a lower suit opening: ♠AQ109653 ♥AK5 ♦32 ♣6. The jump says, "I can just about make this bid in my own hand."

A jump to three of a minor suit is an invitation to three notrump, so it implies a solid suit plus a few high cards outside. This is a 3♣ overcall of a 1♠ opening: ♠54 ♥A7 ♦A76 ♣AKQ1096. Partner can bid 3NT with a spade stopper and little outside (nothing outside, if the stopper is the ace). A jump to two of a minor (i.e., 2♦ over a 1♣ opening) does not require a solid suit. If partner bids 2NT, showing a stopper in opener's suit, overcaller rebids 3♦ if his suit is not solid (unless he too has a stopper).

The jump to three of a minor is permissible with a semi-solid suit if the jump bidder has a stopper in the opposing suit. Partner will recognize the situation if she has a high card in the jump suit, and will bid 3NT with no stopper herself. With a partial stopper she can cue bid:

South	West	North	East
1♠	3♦	Pass	3♠ - partial spade stopper

West can now bid notrump with Jxx, Qx, or better in spades.

The jump overcall can be made with a two-suited hand, if the higher suit (in which the jump is made) is quite strong: ♠AKJ95 ♥AQ1087 ♦65 ♣6. Hearing a jump to 2♠ over a 1♣ opening, partner will raise to 3♠ with ♠Q3 ♥K95 ♦J853 ♣10654, and will pass a subsequent 4♥ bid.

As in the previous example, partner can respond to a strong jump overcall with little in high cards. Takeouts to 2NT or a new suit are forcing for one round. A raise of the jump suit is invitational but seldom passed.

One trouble with strong jump overcalls is that they don't come up very often. You can up the frequency a little by reducing the high card requirement (but not the playing trick requirement) for a one-suited jump at the two level. The jump should never be weaker in high cards than an opening bid, but a non-vulnerable jump to 2♠ may be chanced with a hand as weak as ♠AKQJ87 ♥92 ♦Q1097 ♣6. Optimistically counting only two losers in diamonds, this hand has eight playing tricks. There is a danger that partner will misjudge the auction in some way, counting you for more in high cards. That is why the bid should perhaps be just 1♠ when vulnerable--a good normal vulnerable overcall.

Not all jump overcalls are this strong. See section 8-7, Reopening the Bidding.

## NOTRUMP OVERCALLS

This section does not apply to reopening notrump bids or notrump bids by a passed hand. See section 8-5, Defensive Bidding by a Passed Hand; section 8-7, Reopening the Bidding; and section 8-9, Unusual Notrump.

### The Direct 1NT Overcall

The direct 1NT overcall of a natural suit opening shows a hand similar to a strong notrump opening bid. The opposing suit must be stopped, of course. With a double stopper or a solid suit, the minimum HCP requirement can be relaxed to 15 HCP. With a single stopper and no good suit, a 19 HCP hand is not too strong against a five-card major opening. Remember to upgrade tenaces a bit, since holdings like AQx or KJx are worth more when there is an opening bid on the right. The 1NT overcall is sometimes off-shape (but balanced), perhaps containing a six-card minor or 5-4-2-2 distribution.

A 1NT overcall is more likely to have a weak doubleton in some (unbid) suit than a 1NT opening bid. Also, the overcaller is less likely to have four-card support for an unbid major, with which he might have doubled instead of bidding 1NT. That does not mean that a 1NT overcall denies such major suit support. Generally speaking, a 1NT overcall is preferable to a takeout double when holding good values for the bid. Besides HCP, there should be a source of playing tricks, especially against an opponent who is likely to double.

Suppose you hold ♠A984 ♥AQ ♦KJ7 ♣QJ62 and RHO opens with 1♥. A double is unwise because you must pass a minor suit response. The hand is not strong enough to double and then bid 2NT, which shows at least 19 HCP. Also, a game could be missed by doubling. Partner could have enough to raise a 1NT overcall, yet not enough to make a jump response to a takeout double. She could have ♠K53 ♥983 ♦A10853 ♣43, a hand that could raise notrump but can only respond 2♦ to a takeout double. See section 9-1, Takeout Doubles, for a further discussion.

If overcaller's LHO passes 1NT, responses are the same as those for a 1NT opening. All bids have exactly the same meaning. Bidding opener's major in response to Stayman (which is always 2♣) shows four cards. A transfer to opener's suit, even a major known to be five cards long, just means what it says. It can happen that a suit is distributed 5-2-0-6, or that opener has psyched.

After a 1NT overcall, all doubles by either partner are for business, with one exception (below).

### When Third Hand Competes

A balancing double by the 1NT bidder, partner silent, is for takeout and implies a maximum hand:

South	West	North	East
1♠	1NT	2♣	Pass
Pass	Dbl is takeout, not business		

South	West	North	East
1♠	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♥/2♠	Dbl is business, not takeout		

While playing the double of 2♥ as takeout is not unreasonable, it is best to have one simple rule, as stated above.

As usual, if third hand's bid is artificial then a double shows that suit (even if it is clubs) and a bid in that suit is natural (and invitational, since a weaker hand can double).

If opener's partner enters the bidding with a raise or a new suit, Jacoby and minor suit transfers do not apply. Texas transfers do apply (through 3♣). The rules for cue bidding are these:

-- If opener's suit can be bid at the two level, that is Stayman (Minor Suit Stayman if both majors have been bid), while a bid of the new suit is a strong cue bid:

South	West	North	East
1♠	1NT	2♣	Dbl - business
			2♠ - Stayman
			3♣ - strong cue bid

After bidding 2♠, East is likely to pass a 2NT or 3♥ bid by West, so West should bid game with a maximum hand. The strong cue bid is forcing to game, probably based on wild distribution if opener hasn't psyched an opening bid.

South	West	North	East
1♠	1NT	2♥	2♠ - Minor Suit Stayman
			3♥ - strong cue bid

The Minor Suit Stayman bid may be based on a good hand, but more likely East has a weak 5-5 in the minors or a diamond bust. If West bids 2NT (no minor) and East bids 3♣, West must prefer a minor (pass or 3♦). Whether West bids 2NT or 3♣ (showing four clubs), she must pass a 3♦ bid by East. This is standard Minor Suit Stayman.

-- If opener's suit cannot be bid at the two level, a bid of the new suit is Stayman, and a bid of opener's suit is natural, not forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1NT	2♥	3♥ - Stayman, four spades
			3♣ - natural, signoff

The 3♣ is just a competitive bid that West is expected to pass. Other such auctions:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1NT	2♦	3♣ - natural, signoff
			3♦ - Stayman

South	West	North	East
1♥	1NT	2♠	3♥ - natural, signoff
			3♠ - strong cue bid

There is one exception to the "natural" rule regarding opener's suit:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1NT	2♣	2♦ - Stayman
			3♣ - strong cue bid
			3♦ - natural, a signoff

### The 1NT Overcall of a Suit Response

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1NT

East is very likely to have a good diamond suit as one of the assets for the 1NT overcall. If opener passes, the bidding proceeds as if East had opened 1NT. The opposing bids are ignored, having no effect on subsequent bidding.

### When 1NT Gets Doubled

Whether the double is natural or negative, direct or balancing (i.e., by opener), all actions by advancer are the same as when an opening 1NT bid gets doubled. Both the opening bid and any response are completely ignored, so a bid in an opposing suit has the same meaning as when an opening 1NT bid gets doubled. A redouble is definitely not S.O.S. See section 5-3, When the Opponents Intervene vs Strong Notrump.

### Jump Overcalls in Notrump

Jumps to 2NT or 3NT opening are unusual notrump (section 8-9) if made by a passed hand.

Otherwise jump overcalls of 2NT or 3NT are natural bids, usually based on a long solid minor, but could be a solid major. A typical hand for a jump to 2NT over a 1♠ opening: ♠K3 ♥J87 ♦A6 ♣AKQ1086. Add the ace of hearts and the bid is 3NT. Jump to 3NT over 1♠ with ♠QJ3 ♥AKQ9832 ♦A3 ♣A4. A heart game could be defeated by a spade ruff, while game in notrump is a near certainty. With a standard sort of notrump hand (e.g., 4-3-3-3 distribution), make a takeout double and then bid notrump. See section 9-1, Takeout Doubles.

Advancer raises 2NT to 3NT with a trick quick or so. Jacoby, minor suit transfers, and Texas Transfer bids are used, but no Stayman. Transfers are generally unwise unless the hand is highly distributional.

The natural 2NT applies even over a new suit response or a raise:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	1♠/2♥	2NT - natural

Respond to a double jump 3NT jump overcall in the same way as to a single or non-jump 3NT overcall (see below), keeping in mind that the double jump overcall is based on a long suit.

### Non-Jump 2NT Overcall

A 2NT overcall of a weak two bid shows about the same strength as a 1NT overcall, maybe a point more. Advancer will play you for 17-18 HCP when deciding whether to pass or not, even though you may have a trifle more or less. Responses are the same as those for a 2NT opening. A transfer to opener's suit is a cue bid, since a cue bid is not otherwise available.

A 2NT overcall of a 1NT or a two-over-one response is Unusual Notrump (see section 8-9). One would double a 1NT bid with a good notrump hand, and a two-over-one response gives the opposition so much strength that a natural 2NT overcall would be rare.

A 2NT overcall of a raised opening is the same as a 2NT jump overcall (see above).

The 4♠ artificial notrump raise, less invitational than a 4NT bid, may be useful after a 2NT overcall, which tends to have a wide range in actual practice, perhaps 16-19 HCP. Advancer bids 4NT with 16-17 HCP, 4♠ with about 14-15 HCP.

### Non-Jump 3NT Overcall

The 3NT overcall of a preemptive three bid requires about the same minimum strength as a 2NT overcall, but the maximum is higher. The bid could be based on a long minor, but could also be a standard notrump distribution. Most of the time partner just passes. The responses are the same as those for an old-fashioned 3NT opening bid. A transfer to the opposing suit is a strong cue bid, probably based on a void. There is no Stayman bid.

South	West	North	East
3♠	3NT	Pass	4♣ - Gerber
			4♦ - transfer to hearts
			4♥ - spade cue bid
			4♠ - notrump raise
			4NT - stronger raise (Boland applies)
			5♣ - Miller

The two ways to raise notrump are especially needed after a non-jump 3NT overcall, since the bid has such a wide range. Boland, section 5-6, and Miller, section 5-7, both apply in this situation. It is unwise to transfer to a weak six-card major, especially when holding sufficient points to be confident that 3NT will make. The 3NT bidder may be quite short and weak in an unbid major.

## DEFENSIVE BIDDING BY A PASSED HAND

### In the Direct Position

Single jump overcalls in a suit are obviously not as strong as a direct strong jump overcall but still show a good hand with 1-1/2 to 2+ defensive tricks. Suit quality may not be great, however, and could be a seven-card suit in a hand judged unsuitable for an opening bid. Bid 2 ♠ over a one-level suit opening when not vulnerable with ♠AJ98642 ♥K109 ♦3 ♣65 or ♠Q109432 ♥2 ♦43 ♣AQ53, both of which are normal simple overcalls when vulnerable. A jump to three of a minor suit implies a seven-card suit headed by AKQ or AKJ10, as a 3NT contract is not out of the question.

A 1NT or 2NT overcall shows the lower two unbid suits, at least 5-5, and may be worthless defensively. Partner prefers the lower ranking of the two suits when holding equal length if both are of the same rank, but will prefer a major to a minor with the same length in each. See section 8-9, Unusual Notrump.

A direct cue bid overcall is a Michaels Cue Bid: cue bid of a minor shows both majors, cue bid of a major shows the other major plus an unknown minor (partner bids notrump to inquire).

### When the Opponents Have Bid Two Suits

There are three ways of showing length in the unbid suits when the opponents have bid two suits:

1) A takeout double shows length in the unbid suits, and also shows defensive strength. The doubler should have close to an opening bid, and some of the high cards may be in the opposing suits. Length in a single unbid major is likely to be four cards, in both majors 5-5 or 5-4 (not 4-5, because partner will prefer the higher ranking with equal length).

2) A cue bid also shows a good hand, but implies that all high cards lie in the two unbid suits:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♦	2♦	- ♠AJ986 ♥K10973 ♦3 ♣65
			Dbl - ♠J10987 ♥QJ976 ♦KJ ♣A
			2♣ - natural

3) A notrump bid is the weakest in strength, but promises at least 5-5 in the unbid suits. Partner will prefer the lower ranking with equal length, so one might bid notrump with 5-6 in the two suits but just overcall with 6-5.

## Reopening Calls

Reopening calls when a one level opening is passed around are all unchanged in meaning when made by a passed hand, except for the limitation on strength implied by the initial pass. A reopening cue bid shows a 5-4-4-0 hand, void in the opposing suit, or a two-suited hand of any strength.

South	West	North	East
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass
1NT - 10-12 HCP notrump hand			
2NT - ♠3 ♥4 ♦AQJ32 ♣Q108765			
3♣ - ♠32 ♥76 ♦AJ ♣KJ98752			
2♠ - ♠ void ♥Q876 ♦Q9876 ♣AQ76			
2♠ - ♠6 ♥Q10873 ♦AJ9632 ♣5			

Note that a reopening 1NT bid is not Unusual Notrump, but 2NT is. To double and then bid 1NT requires no more than a 1NT bid (for an unpassed hand, doubling and bidding notrump after a minimum response shows more than a notrump overcall).

When the cue bidder takes out a suit response into a new suit, he shows a two-suited hand and asks for a choice:

South	West	North	East
Pass	1♣	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠ - spades and diamonds			

Also see section 8-7, Reopening the Bidding, and Section 10-5 Reopening Cue Bid Overcalls.

## GETTING A PREFERENCE AT THE FIVE LEVEL

When you have bid one or both suits of a two-suited hand opposite a silent partner, and you want him to take a choice (as a save, perhaps) over, say, an opposing 4♠ bid:

- With more length in the higher ranking suit, bid 4NT.
- With equal length, bid a lower ranking enemy suit; if not possible, bid 4NT.
- With more length in the lower ranking suit, bid that suit.

Suppose you open 1♥ with ♠2 ♥AJ10876 ♦AQ1098 ♣9, and the bidding goes:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	Pass	4♠
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦			

North's 5♣ bid just shows a preference of clubs over hearts; she doesn't know which minor you have. You correct to 5♦, and North knows you have a red two-suiter with longer hearts, or perhaps equal length. With 2-2 in the red suits, she will prefer hearts. If the hearts and diamonds were reversed, you would have bid 5♦ over 4♠. North would then pass with a doubleton in each suit, knowing your diamonds are longer.

Obviously the 4NT bidder must have touching suits or suits separated only by the opposing suit(s).

Another case: You open 1♥ with ♠ void ♥AK9843 ♦AJ10842 ♣4, and the auction proceeds:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	Pass	4♠
5♣			

The 5♣ bid implies equal length in hearts and diamonds. With xx in hearts and Qx in diamonds, North should bid 5♦. With longer hearts you would have bid 4NT, and with longer diamonds you would have bid 5♦. Had the lower opposing suit not been available (e.g., the opponents had bid spades only), you would have had to bid 4NT. This would be an unspecified minor, and partner would know only that the minor is not longer than the hearts.

When the opponents leap to a major suit game after you have opened 1♣, a 4NT bid by you asks for a minor suit preference. Of course the clubs will be longer:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Pass	4♠
4NT			

South's hand is ♠4 ♥8 ♦KQ1097 ♣AK10632

When the opponents rush to a major suit game after you have opened the bidding and partner has made a one-over-one response in a suit, a 4NT bid asks her to choose between your suit and hers:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	4♠
4NT			

South implies a long, strong diamond suit and three-card support for hearts, something like: ♠4 ♥KQ3 ♦AK10853 ♣A94. In doubt whether to bid 5♦ or raise hearts, South lets North make the decision. South could also have both minors plus hearts: ♠ void ♥KQ3 ♦AK1085 ♣AJ976. With weak hearts, North should bid his better minor. With the first hand, South will correct a 5♣ bid to 5♦. Had North responded 1NT, the 4NT bid would show both minors. Had the response been two-over-one, 4NT would be Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB), with responder's suit "agreed."

Responder can use the 4NT bid in a similar fashion, provided opener has passed (i.e., 4NT is a reopening action):

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	2♦	4♠
Pass	Pass	4NT	

This is not Blackwood. North has ♠5 ♥Q87 ♦KQJ973 ♣AJ9, and wants opener to choose between the red suits. If opener has not passed, however, 4NT would be RKCB:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	2♦	2♠
3♥	4♠	4NT - RKCB	

An overcaller can use the same device:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♦	4♥	Pass
Pass	4NT		

West is asking for a minor suit choice, and his diamonds are the same length as his clubs, or longer. With longer clubs, the right bid is 5♣, not 4NT.

Also see section 6-7, Four Notrump - Blackwood or Natural?

## REOPENING THE BIDDING

When an opening bid is followed by two passes:

South	West	North
1♣	Pass	Pass

South	West	North
1♠	Pass	Pass

-- A takeout double shows at least two defensive tricks. A cue bid response to the double is at least a game try, as usual.

-- Double and then bid a suit shows an opening bid or better (but you don't have to double with an opening bid).

-- A minimum overcall in a suit can be quite weak, but can be more than an opening bid if the suit is not strong or for some reason the hand is unsuitable for a stronger bid or takeout double.

-- A jump overcall in a suit is lighter than an immediate strong jump overcall. In a major, it shows a good suit and a good hand, perhaps a two-suiter. The jumper fears that a minimum overcall might be passed out and a game missed. A jump to the three-level in a minor strongly invites 3NT, so should be based on a solid six-card suit and perhaps an ace or king outside.

-- A jump overcall in notrump is a natural bid, showing a solid minor and a stopper in the opposing suit (or semi-solid suit with a double stopper). Bid 3NT if all you need is an ace or king in partner's hand, because he needs the equivalent of an ace *and* a king to bid 3NT.

-- A cue bid reopening is discussed in section 10-5, Reopening Cue Bid Overcalls. A jump cue bid asks partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in the opposing suit.

-- A reopening bid of 1NT varies in strength, depending on which suit was opened. As the likelihood of a two-level response increases, the HCP requirement increases accordingly:

Over 1♣, shows a light-to-fair opening bid, 11-14 HCP

Over 1♦, shows a fair-to-good opening bid, 12-15 HCP

Over 1♥, shows a sound opening bid, 13-16 HCP

Over 1♠, shows a very sound opening bid, 14-17 HCP

To remember these four-point ranges, you start with 11 for 1♣ and add 1 HCP for each step higher. A double stopper, or a good suit, can count as a point or two. All bids in response have the same meaning as over a 1NT opening: Stayman, Jacoby, Texas, etc., are all applicable, even a transfer into opener's major. If opener rebids over the notrump bid, 2NT by advancer is a natural invitational raise and a double is for penalties. Rumpelsohl and negative doubles are not appropriate to this situation.

A simulation by Rene Vernes showed that if you have a single range for a 1NT bid over all suits, it should be 13-16. However, the variations shown here are easy to remember and must be better than a single range. At the very least, bidding 1NT over minor and major suits should have different ranges. On the other hand, bidding 1NT with 11-12 HCP will often save opener from an embarrassing contract and perhaps get him into a good contract. With length in opener's minor, a pass may well be the best call. When that happens, the opening lead should generally be a trump.

-- To reopen with a double and then bid notrump after a minimum response requires more strength than a notrump overcall:

After doubling 1♣, a light opening 1NT hand, 15-17 HCP

After doubling 1♦, a strong opening NT hand, 16-18 HCP

After doubling 1♥, a point more: 17-19 HCP

After doubling 1♠, yet another point: 18-20 HCP

Each 3-HCP range is just above the HCP requirement for a double. The reason for the difference between a minor and a major is this: When you double a minor and then bid notrump, you are probably bidding 1NT. When you double a major and then bid notrump, you are probably bidding 2NT. It takes more points to make 2NT than to make 1NT, hence the difference in HCP requirements.

All subsequent bidding is the same as if the takeout double had been directly over the opening bid.

Since there is no overlap between a 1NT overcall and a double followed by a notrump bid, you must look ahead. When a 1♦ bid is passed around and you hold ♠42 ♥AJ93 ♦KQ5 ♣Q983, you must reopen with 1NT and not with a takeout double. A double is the instinctive action, planning to bid 1NT if partner responds 1♠, but that sequence shows a stronger hand. Yes, you may miss a heart fit by bidding 1NT, but you can't do everything in bridge. Your first duty is to describe your hand in general. If you double and then bid 1NT with everything from 10 to 17 HCP, your partner will never know what to do.

-- To reopen with a double, then jump in notrump, requires even more. As might be expected, the minimum is a hand that is too good for doubling and bidding notrump at the minimum level:

After doubling 1♣, 18-20 HCP

After doubling 1♦, 19-21 HCP

After doubling 1♥, 20-22 HCP

After doubling 1♠, 21 HCP or more

Note that each 3-HCP range starts at 7 HCP above a minimum double. After a cue bid response to the double, these requirements change:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT - not enough to reopen 1NT (not forcing) 3NT - a hand too good to reopen 1NT 2♦/2♥/2♠ - forcing for one round

With a hand that lies within the range of a 1NT reopening, East would not have doubled unless he had at least one major. His failure to bid a major in response to the cue bid therefore marks him as not having values for a 1NT overcall, or having too much. The cue bid response promises another bid if the doubler bids a suit, but a 2NT bid can be passed because East limits his hand by this call. (A 2NT response to a cue bid by a person who has not previously acted is forcing, but a double is an "act".)

A notrump rebid after a jump response to the double has similar implications.

-- To reopen with a double, then raise the response one level, shows at least 4 HCP more than a minimum double. A free raise (i.e., over an intervening bid) might be justified with four trumps and only a king extra. Any raise strongly implies at least four-card trump support, although a raise with strong three-card support is sometimes necessary when opener's partner throws in a bid. A three-card raise requires more HCP than a four-card raise, however.

An alternative approach over a major opening is to bid 1NT with 11-17 HCP. Partner bids 2♣ to show game interest and ask range, and then 2♦ shows 11-12 HCP, a bid in either major (one natural, one artificial), shows 13-15 HCP, and 2NT (forcing to game) shows 16-17 HCP. This suggests that advancer should have at least 8 HCP to make the 2♣ query. An honor in opener's suit is a plus, especially in a major.

Following the 2♣ query, the continuation bidding depends on the response:

After 2♦, a bid in opener's suit is Stayman, all other bids are signoffs.

After 2♥/2♠, all bids are signoffs (no need for Stayman)

After 2NT, all bids are forcing to game, but 3♣ is a signoff (use opener's major for Stayman).

If opener rebids over 1NT, the next hand has no idea of partner's range and may go wrong. Should he bid minimally with a good hand, or jump? Probably a rebid by the 1NT bidder should then imply 16-17 HCP, whether partner has passed or bid naturally.

For reopening actions by a passed hand, see section 8-5, Defensive Bidding by a Passed Hand. For cue bid reopenings, see section 10-5, Reopening Cue Bid Overcalls. For reopening when a 1NT bid is passed around, see section 12-2, Marvin vs Strong Notrump Openings, and section 12-3, Marvin vs Weak Notrump Openings.

## REOPENING DOUBLES OF 1NT RESPONSES AND REBIDS

What sort of hand should the doubler have in this auction?

	South	West	North	East
	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
	1NT	Pass	Pass	Dbl

Many players would take this as a reopening takeout double, showing both minor suits and a hand of this sort: ♠432 ♥76 ♦AQ76 ♣KJ75.

Played this way, such doubles are dangerous. The opponents have not found a fit, you have no reason to believe that partner has four cards in a minor suit (more likely he has four in each major), and you are contracting to take 8/13 of the tricks with perhaps 6/13 of the total points.

Since the opponents figure to have a majority of the high card points (HCP), few players would consider a double of this sort as primarily for business. How could it be? Even with the opening lead advantage, how can one hope to profit by doubling the stronger side in a notrump contract?

The fallacy in this logic lies in the implied assumption that points are the same as strength, which is not true. Point count is an estimate of strength, an estimate that may sometimes be way off. Points are values assigned to cards on the basis of their average worth. That worth does not apply to every deal, however; it is just an average. KJx counts as four points, but is almost worthless if AQ10 is on the left. If AQ10 is on the right, the value of KJx is greater than the point count would indicate.

This means that it is possible to double 1NT responses and rebids in the reopening seat, and to double primarily for business. When do you double? When the opponents seem to be overvaluing their hands, when their high cards may not be worth as much as they think. How can you know for sure? You can't. You go by the odds, as in the rest of bridge.

With length and strength (positional strength, that is: AQ10, not AKQ) in a suit or suits bid on your right, with shortness and weakness in any suit bid on your left, the odds become good that the opponents have misjudged their strength and are contracting for more tricks than they can take. Yes, they have 21-22 HCP, but with finesses not working and suits not breaking they may end up with only five or six tricks. They have enough *points* for their bid, but not enough *strength* for their contract.

There are four possible situations for a reopening double of a 1NT response or rebid, depending on how many suits have been bid:

1) South West North East  
 1♦ Pass 1NT Pass  
 Pass Dbl

2) South West North East  
 1♦ Pass 1♠ Pass  
 1NT Pass Pass Dbl

3) South West North East  
 1♣ Pass 1♥ Pass  
 1♠ Pass 1NT Pass  
 Pass Dbl

4) South West North East  
 1♣ Pass 1♦ Pass  
 1♥ Pass 1♠ Pass  
 1NT Pass Pass Dbl

What is required for each of these doubles? Let's look at each.

No. 1) is the reopening double of a 1NT response:

South West North East  
 1♦ Pass 1NT Pass  
 Pass Dbl

The minimum for a non-vulnerable double in this sequence might be something like: ♠A105 ♥KJ3  
 ♦K1097 ♣1097.

To double with a hand this light, conditions have to be just right, as they are here: a) The diamond suit, bid on the right, is well bottled up; b) If partner takes out to a suit, she will find support; c) You can stand any lead; d) You have tenaces (KJ, A10) that may kill honor strength in opener's hand; e) You have many honor cards, a very important factor; f) You are not vulnerable, so down one doubled (or two undoubled) may be okay if partner runs to a suit. If any of these conditions are weakened, you need extra strength to compensate.

One drawback of a No. 1) double is that you have information about only one enemy suit and cannot be confident that the opponents have over-valued their hands. Another is that the 1NT responder has a minimum of 6 HCP, and opener could have as many as 15 or 16.

On the other hand, the reopening double of a 1NT response is a crunching answer to the light opening bids one sees these days, especially in third seat. Rather than jump into the bidding with an immediate notrump overcall or takeout double, just pass with strength in opener's suit. If a 1NT

response gets passed around to you, the ensuing double may earn a big penalty. Sometimes the opponents bid even higher, making your pass even more profitable.

No. 2) is the reopening double of a 1NT rebid by opener:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	Dbl

This is the best opportunity for a lucrative double. Responder may have only four or five HCP, stretching to show a major suit. Opener has a maximum of 15 HCP (probably not that, if his notrump range is 15-17 HCP). With information about two suits, you can assess the relative strength of the two sides more accurately than in No. 1). You might have only 10 HCP with a hand that is otherwise ideal: ♠AQ108 ♥J106 ♦52 ♣QJ108. The conditions are perfect: strength over the spade suit, weakness in diamonds (any finesse there will fail), a good suit to attack after partner's probable spade lead, and no isolated kings or queens lying under opener's high cards. They could go down three! If partner must pull the double, you have support for both unbid suits.

No. 3) and No. 4) are similar:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	Dbl		

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	Dbl

In both sequences, each opponent has bid at least twice. Watch out here. Responder is unlikely to be sub-minimum. A great deal is known about the distribution of the opposing suits, but partner has little choice about passing the double. Where can he go? Still, with ideal holdings you can double. All it takes is a hand with good tenace/length combinations in suits bid on the right, weakness/shortness in those bid on the left, plus a reasonable supply of honor cards. The doubler in No. 3) might have: ♠AJ98 ♥42 ♦QJ10 ♣A1087. The No. 4) doubler could hold: ♠KJ97 ♥83 ♦AQ1086 ♣54.

So you have doubled. Now what does partner do? Deciding whether to pass or bid, he thinks: "Am I positionally strong in any suit bid on my right?" "Am I weak and short in any suit bid on my left?" "Could I score more (or lose less) by bidding instead of passing?"

If you are weak in a suit bid on your right you can rightly fear that the opponents have a running suit there. Remember, partner is usually weak in that suit.

Why is it good to be weak in a suit bid on the left? Partner has implied strength there, so wouldn't it be better to have a high card fit in that suit? No! Strength opposite strength is a wasteful duplication. If you are not swallowing up the opponents' high cards, you are biting the air and they may make their contract.

Always go for a likely plus in your own contract rather than attempt a doubtful defense of 1NT doubled, especially against non-vulnerable opponents. Buying the hand will probably be a satisfactory result, and partner's defensive hand should reduce the likelihood that the opponents can find a good suit contract after your takeout bid.

Don't pull the double to a four-card suit, even with a bad hand. If you can't beat 1NT you're probably dead anyway. Besides, the doubler's hand is unlimited (except for a passed hand, of course). He could have 1NT defeated in his own hand and have no support for your suit. It is murder to double 1NT with a monster hand and then have partner pull the double by bidding a Jxxx suit (opposite your Qx).

After a double of 1NT, the opponents cannot play the hand undoubled. If either opponent runs from the double, the next hand can pass the bid around to partner, who must bid or double. The die was cast with the double of 1NT. If you get killed once in a while, that's to be expected. More often you'll come out on top. Any other policy lets the opponents off the hook too often, when a player cannot double a runout bid and therefore chooses to bid out of fear that partner will not act.

If you do pass the double, what do you lead? (You *are* on lead.) If you lack a good suit of your own, try leading dummy's suit, which the doubler is supposed to have covered. She may not be that well fixed, however, so if you have some constructive lead of your own, give it a try.

Now let's look at a hand that is not a good double, but one with which many players would double:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	?

South holds, vulnerable: ♠952 ♥A87 ♦KJ9 ♣KQ64. What should he do? The answer is pass, fast. This hand is not nearly so good as its point count indicates. Diamonds have been bid on the left, so KJ9 may be only as good as 432. The spade suit is breaking well, and any finesse there will work. The ace of hearts is no surprise to the opposition, who are quite prepared to knock out aces. If the ace of clubs is on the left, the KQ of clubs needs the jack in partner's hand to be worth much. If a double here is supposed to be for takeout, good luck. North is unlikely to take more than six tricks in a doubled contract of 2♣ or 2♥. Here is the deal:

	North	
	♠K43	
	♥9653	
	♦Q86	
	♣1093	
West		East
♠J107		♠AQ86
♥QJ6		♥K102
♦A10732		♦54
♣AJ		♣8752
	South	
	♠952	
	♥A87	
	♦KJ9	
	♣KQ64	

Not so bad, at that. The diamond bidder does not have AQ over the KJ, and the club situation is okay, although blocked. Still, they make one or two overtricks if South doubles. Or should North pull the double? Two hearts goes down four, even with a 3-3 trump split.

Let's change the South hand, reducing the point count but increasing the real strength: ♠KJ108 ♥A1052 ♦94 ♣QJ10. Now South can double 1NT with some confidence, in view of the spade strength and diamond weakness. This time the deal is:

	North	
	♠54	
	♥763	
	♦KJ83	
	♣K842	
West		East
♠632		♠AQ97
♥QJ4		♥K98
♦AQ762		♦105
♣A5		♣9762
	South	
	♠KJ108	
	♥A1052	
	♦94	
	♣QJ10	

East-West have the same sort of hands as before, with 22 HCP. Lacking a good suit, North leads a spade against 1NT doubled. When the smoke clears, East-West are down two, minus 300 or 500.

Get the point?

## UNUSUAL NOTRUMP

Definition: A notrump bid that could not reasonably be considered natural. In general, an "unusual" notrump bid asks partner to choose between the lower two unbid suits. With equal length, she should select the lower ranking suit. Partner may not bid any suit other than the ones asked for, unless the suit is so good that it can play opposite extreme shortness.

### Unusual 1NT

A 1NT overcall is unusual notrump when made by a passed hand directly over an opening bid (reopening 1NT bids are always natural):

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
1NT - unusual notrump, hearts and clubs			
2♦ - Michaels, both majors			

See section 8-5, Defensive Bidding by a Passed Hand.

### Unusual 2NT

A jump to 2NT by an unpassed hand is natural, as is a 2NT overcall of a weak simple raise (but not an inverted minor raise):

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	2NT - natural

East has ♠KJ ♥J87 ♦AKQ1087 ♣AJ. West should raise to 3NT with a quick trick.

Any other 2NT bid made between two bidders is unusual notrump:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	1NT/2♣	2NT - unusual notrump

Any 2NT bid made over a two-level opening is natural, except for a 2NT bid over a strong two bid, whether artificial or natural:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Pass	Pass	2NT - natural bid

South	West
2♣	2NT - unusual notrump if 2♣ is strong natural if 2♣ shows 11-15 HCP

Other unusual notrump bids:

-- Any 2NT bid by a passed hand:

South	West	North	East
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass
		2NT - unusual notrump	

-- A bid of 2NT when partner's takeout double has been redoubled:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Rdbl	2NT

The 2NT bid shows the lower two unbid suits, hearts and diamonds, probably 4=6 in length, in a hand that might be quite weak. A 1NT bid is natural.

South	West	North	East
2♥*	Dbl	Rdbl	2NT - both minors
* weak			

-- A bid of 2NT when RHO overcalls partner's opening with 1NT:

South	West	North
1♦	1NT	2NT - hearts and clubs

The 2NT bid shows something like ♠ void ♥Q107632 ♦J ♣A108432. East is probably going to bid some big amount of spades, so opener will find this information useful for deciding on his next call.

A 2NT bid is not unusual when the bidder has previously opened the bidding or made a takeout double:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	Pass	Pass
		2NT - natural, not a 5=0=4=4 hand	

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	2♠	Pass
Pass		2NT - natural, not a 0=3=5=5 hand	

However, a person who has previously denied the strength required for a natural notrump bid can bid 2NT as unusual notrump, even if he has bid before:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
Pass	Pass	2NT - unusual notrump	

North could have made a Competitive Double (see section 9-2), but prefers unusual notrump with a poor defensive hand: ♠ void ♥Q103 ♦Q9762 ♣Q10874.

Yet another occasion for the use of 2NT as unusual comes when partner has shown a minor in which you hold three cards, and you have five cards of the other minor:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	2♣	2♠
Pass	Pass	2NT - unusual	

North probably has five diamonds, three clubs, and too much to pass. A similar auction:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	2♥	2NT - unusual

East has five clubs, maybe six weak, and probably a strong doubleton diamond. Having shown nothing so far, he bids 2NT to compete: ♠432 ♥874 ♦Q8 ♣A8763 West's 2♦ bid is not especially strong (♠AQ65 ♥10 ♦A107652 ♣K4), so East could not possibly have a real 2NT bid.

When the auction is such that partner is unlikely to take any precipitous action, unusual notrump can be based on the higher two unbid suits (but “not top and bottom”). If partner bids the lowest unbid suit, a takeout of his suit to the next one up clarifies the hand.

### Unusual 3NT

A 3NT bid is unusual only in very obvious situations:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	3♣	3NT

The 3NT bid is unusual notrump if North's jump is natural and strong, but is natural if the jump is artificial (e.g., a Bergen raise) or a weak natural preemptive response.

Weakish use of the unusual notrump is unwise when the suits are only 5-5, except in a reopening situation. Overuse of the convention is a good way to demoralize a partner. Too often she has the *other* two suits. Also, the bid tends to help the other side immensely in the play of the hand when they buy the contract.

The best use of unusual notrump is when you *must* do something. Instead of guessing which suit to bid, you can give partner a choice. The main idea of the convention is not so much to get into the bidding more often, but to get in more accurately.

### Unusual 4NT

For use of the 4NT bid as unusual notrump, see section 8-6, Getting a Preference at the Five Level. Also see section 6-7, 4NT - Blackwood or Natural?; section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls; section 8-5, Defensive Bidding by a Passed hand; and section 10-8, Cue Bids in Notrump.

## TAKEOUT DOUBLES

A double of a natural suit opening bid or response, or of a new suit rebid by opener, is for takeout, asking partner to bid her longest suit. It implies an opening bid or better, shortness in the suit doubled, and preparedness for any response. Unlike an opening bid, you can count ruffing values for shortness in the opposing suit, so a takeout double with a singleton in that suit may be made with as little as 11 HCP. Partner will count on at least two-and-one-half defensive tricks.

For takeout doubles in reopening situations, see section 8-7, Reopening the Bidding.

The ideal distribution for a takeout double is 4-4-4-1, with a singleton in the opposing suit. A singleton is actually better than a void, because partner may pass the double. If he does, you can lead a trump. A 4-3-3-3 hand is a bad holding for a takeout double. It is usually better to pass such a hand if you lack the requirements for a notrump overcall. With extra strength, however, a double may be chanced. Double 1♣ with ♠KQ3 ♥AK3 ♦A1087 ♣432, but pass if the hand is weaker.

A double of 1♣ with good (4-4-4-1) shape can be quite light, since partner can respond at the one level. A double of 1♠, on the other hand, should be fairly sound. Vulnerability is also a factor, because light doubles are dangerous when vulnerable.

A marginal double should have four cards in any unbid major(s) and a singleton in the opposing suit. Lack of major suit length, or more cards in the opposing suit, calls for extra strength to compensate.

With length and strength in the opposing suit, just pass with an unbalanced hand or a hand too weak for a notrump overcall. You may prefer a pass even when holding values for a notrump overcall, especially when the opponents are vulnerable. They often get into trouble after this "trap pass." Section 8-8, Reopening Doubles of 1NT Responses and Rebids, shows one way that such trouble can be exploited.

Do not double an opening bid with a two-suited hand. Prefer an overcall, hoping to bid the other suit later. Some such hands qualify for a cue bid (see section 10-4, Direct Cue Bid Overcalls, and 10-6, Top-and-Bottom Cue Bids). When the opponents have bid two suits, then of course you can double with the other two suits. If they have bid a major and a minor, then the double implies four cards (or a weak five) in the unbid major. With a very good hand, however, it is all right to double--then bid the major--when the major is a good five-card suit.

A takeout double of a minor suit implies seven or more cards in the majors, but six cards are okay with extra strength. You can double 1♣ with ♠AJ3 ♥AQ7 ♦KJ1083 ♣42. With a weaker hand, just bid 1♦.

A takeout double of one major implies at least four cards in the other major. With only three-card support the doubler should have extra values in high cards (especially in that major) and a singleton in the opposing suit. A doubleton in the only unbid major would be very unusual, but sometimes there is no alternative. What else can you do but double when RHO opens 1♥ and you hold ♠AQ ♥42 ♦A10873 ♣AKJ4?

### New Suit After Doubling

A takeout double followed by a new suit bid may or may not show extra strength, depending on circumstances. Here are the possibilities:

	<u>Suit Doubled</u>	<u>Response to Double</u>	<u>Doubler's Rebid</u>
1)	A minor	The other minor	A major
2)	A minor	A major	The other minor
3)	A minor	A major	The other major
4)	A major	A minor	The other minor
5)	A major	A minor	The other major
6)	A major	The other major	A minor

Situation 1) has two variations, depending on whether the doubler's rebid is at the one or two level:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♦
1♥/1♠			

South can have a minimum if his hand is what partner expects A 5-4 holding in the majors and three-card support for diamonds. When the bidding has gone to the two level, however, the doubler should have a good suit and at least an extra king:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♣
2♥/2♠			

If South has a good suit, the expected 5-4 in the majors and three-card club support, an extra king is enough for this sequence. With a minimum, South must either overcall in the five-card major instead of doubling, or pass the 2♣ response.

Situation 2) has two variations that show the same sort of hand:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥/1♠
Pass	2♦		

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♥/1♠
Pass	2♣		

West needs no more than a king over a minimum if she has what East will picture: four cards in the unbid major, three cards in East's major, a good five or six-card minor, and shortness in the opposing suit (i.e., a good 5-4-3-1 or 6-4-3-0 hand). Any deviation from this picture should have compensation in the form of extra high cards.

Situation 3) has two variations that are similar, except for one important difference:

South	West	North	East
1♣/1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠		

In this case the bidding is still at the one level and East can now show the unbid minor at the two level. West can have a minimum double with five spades, three hearts, and four cards in the unbid minor (as East will picture).

South	West	North	East
1♣/1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥		

Here the bidding is higher. If East wants to show the unbid minor now, he must go to the three level. Accordingly, West needs at least an extra king even with the expected hand: a 3-5-4-1 or 3-5-1-4 hand with a good five-card heart suit, three cards in spades, four cards in the unbid minor, and a singleton in opener's suit. With a weaker hand West must either pass a 1♠ response or just overcall with 1♥ instead of doubling.

Situation 4) has two variations that differ even more in strength:

South	West	North	East
1♥/1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦		

In this case West can have a minimum double if she has four cards in the unbid major, a singleton in opener's suit, two or three clubs, and five or six diamonds. She has not gone past 2♦, so she needs no more strength than a 2♦ overcall would entail (except that she has enough in high cards to justify a double).

South	West	North	East
1♥/1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣		

Here West must have a very strong hand, even with the expected four cards in the unbid major, good clubs, a few diamonds, and a singleton in opener's major. With a moderate hand (and perhaps a

singleton diamond), West could perhaps have made a top-and-bottom cue bid instead of doubling (see section 10-6).

Situation 5) has two variations that are similar, with one significant difference:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Pass	2♣/2♦
Pass	2♠		

East will picture a 5-2-3-3 hand, maybe 5-1-4-3 or 5-1-3-4, but not 6-1-3-3, with which an overcall is preferable. Obviously West has a strong hand; otherwise he would have bid 1♠ instead of doubling.

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣/2♦
Pass	2♥		

In this case West could not overcall at the one level, so he might be stretching a bit for the double in a matchpoint game. In an IMP game the 2♥ bid shows a good hand, since he would presumably pass East's response with questionable strength. This sequence implies both a modest five-card heart holding and good minor suit support (else why not overcall 2♥?), so East can safely retreat to a minor suit contract if short in hearts.

Situation 6) is always strong, but one variation is very powerful:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣/2♦		

West implies three-card spade support and a very good hand. She could pass the response with a moderate double, and she needs a good hand to double without four cards in the unbid major anyway. With five spades East can rebid 2♠ with no strength at all, and can jump to 3♠ with as little as ♠Q8732 ♥652 ♦K4 ♣J76.

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣/3♦		

West must have an extremely good hand, doubling with only three hearts and going to the three level all by himself. East can now bid 3♥ with five hearts and very little strength, since West almost certainly has three hearts. East should jump to 4♥ with ♠652 ♥Q8732 ♦K4 ♣J76.

## Raise After Doubling

There are four situations for a takeout doubler's raise of a suit response:

1) Raise of a forced response, when RHO passes:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠		

This raise requires the equivalent of an extra ace and good distribution, and almost guarantees four-card support: ♠KQ32 ♥AJ97 ♦AQ92 ♣4. Add a couple of more points with two little clubs.

2) Free raise of a forced response:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♥
2♣	2♥		

This raise may be a little lighter with good four-card support, but must be full strength (i.e., extra ace, good distribution) with three-card support. Vulnerability enters into the decision here.

3) Raise of a free response when RHO passes:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	1♦	1♠
Pass	2♠		

Since East must have some strength, this raise can be made with no extra values if West has four-card support. By "no extra values" I mean a normal minimum rubber bridge sort of takeout double. A shaded duplicate sort of double calls for a pass of 1♠, even with four-card support.

4) Free raise of a free response:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	1♥	1♠
2♥	2♠		

This raise can be made after a light takeout double, provided West has four-card support. Vulnerability enters into the decision.

After a reopening takeout double, which may be quite light, raises are okay with somewhat less strength. See section 8-7, Reopening the Bidding.

### Jump Takeout After Doubling

If the doubler jumps in a new suit on the next round, he shows a powerful hand, but the jump is not forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♠		

West has ♠A109762 ♥AQ3 ♦AK2 ♣3. This sequence strongly implies a three-card heart holding, so East can bid 3♥ (or 4♥) with a hand such as ♠3 ♥KJ876 ♦J87 ♣7632. If South had a stronger spade suit, or no heart support, he would just make a strong jump overcall in spades instead of doubling. If North had bid 1♦, making 1♥ a free bid, then West's 2♠ bid would have been forcing for one round.

### Repeat Doubles

A repeat double of the same suit at the two or three level is still for takeout, even if partner has bid a suit, provided the doubler has not bid a suit somewhere along the line and neither partner has bid notrump:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	2♦/3♦	Pass
Pass	Dbl - takeout		

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	2♣	Dbl
Pass	2♠	3♣	Dbl - takeout

East has ♠QJ3 ♥AKQ3 ♦AJ874 ♣6. If he had bid 3♠ instead of repeating the double, South would expect four-card support and might bid 4♠ with little more than four spades and, say, the king of diamonds.

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣
2♠	Dbl - still for takeout		

West has ♠2 ♥AKJ3 ♦KQ876 ♣Q96, the sort of hand implied by the repeat double when partner has made a suit response. If either partner has bid notrump, however, a repeat double is for business:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Pass	1NT
2♥	Dbl - business double		

If West has a big 4-1-4-4 hand, he can bid 2NT (natural) over 2♥.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Pass	1♣
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♥	Dbl - business double		

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣
4♠	Dbl - primarily for business		

When the double is at the four level, as above, partner is permitted to pass with nothing more to say. If the doubled suit is a minor, however, the doubler had better have at least four cards in any unbid major. Partner will be reluctant to pass a double of 4♣ or 4♦ when holding four cards in an unbid major.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥
2♣	2♠	3♣	Pass
Pass	Dbl - business		

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥	Pass
2♣	Dbl - business		

In the first auction, where the doubler has bid a suit, the repeat double is for business. The double of a new suit is for business in the second auction, but if South had rebid 2♦ the double would have been for takeout again, with a hand such as ♠AQ108 ♥KJ5 ♦3 ♣AJ652.

### Doubling After Passing

A double made on the second round after passing may be for business or takeout depending on whether it is the first or second opportunity to double the last suit bid:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Dbl - business		

If West wanted to double diamonds for takeout, she could have doubled 1♦.

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	Dbl - takeout		

This is the first opportunity for West to double clubs, so it is for takeout. West has ♠A1084 ♥3 ♦AJ972 ♣AQ3 and fears that 2♣ will be passed around. This implies length/strength in diamonds,

the only possible reason for passing on the first round with a good hand. A good hand? Yes. This is not a reopening situation, so West needs good cards to come in between two bidders.

Another example:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥		Dbl - takeout	

West has ♠AJ97 ♥3 ♦K1073 ♣AQ94. With that singleton heart he could not double or bid notrump on the first round.

When opener's suit has been raised, a reopening double is for takeout, not business, even though it is not the first opportunity for doubling that suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass		Dbl - takeout	

West had insufficient values for a double of 1♠. Playing East for some high cards on the bidding, he competes for the hand by doubling with ♠4 ♥J873 ♦AJ87 ♣K1093. It is unwise to double with less strength than this, since partner is allowed to pass with, say, four good spades and some outside defense.

### Bidding Notrump After Doubling

A takeout double followed by a notrump bid shows too much strength for an original notrump overcall:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass		1NT	

The 1NT bid shows a hand that was too strong (i.e., 19-20 HCP) for an original 1NT overcall. With a hand such as ♠92 ♥AJ97 ♦KQ10 ♣AQ32, West must bid 1NT over 1♦, not double.

If you make a takeout double of 1♦ with ♠A1032 ♥K874 ♦K3 ♣AQ5, you must pass a 2♣ response. A 2NT bid would show at least 19 HCP. Perhaps a 1NT overcall is better, especially at matchpoint scoring. Also see section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

When partner has made a jump response or a cue bid response, a minimum notrump bid does *not* show a hand too good for an original notrump overcall. The doubler must jump to show such a hand:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♦/2♥/2♠
Pass	2NT	- not good enough to overcall 1NT	
	3NT	- too good for a 1NT overcall	

If West had values for a 1NT overcall, the only reason for doubling would be good major suit length, which he would reveal at this point.

If the response to the double is 1NT, a raise to 2NT is okay with as little as 16 HCP. This does not show too much for a 1NT overcall, since the doubler may not have the stopper in opener's suit that is required for a notrump overcall.

Notrump conventions do not apply when a takeout doubler bids notrump, even if partner has not bid:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥	Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣ - natural bid

If the doubler has 21-22 HCP, he follows with a jump to 2NT:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♦/1♥/1♠
Pass	2NT		

But suppose the response to a double is a non-jump bid at the two level:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	?		

Now the doubler must bid 2NT, which really ought to require more than 19 HCP, to show a strong notrump hand, and apparently must jump to 3NT (opposite a possible bust) if he wants to show 21 HCP. A sensible compromise is to say that a non-jump 2NT rebid shows 19-21 HCP, and a single jump to 3NT shows 22 HCP or more. These bids may get you too high, but that can't be helped.

### Takeout Double by an Overcaller

An overcaller can make a takeout double on the next round, opposite a passing partner. This implies a 6-3-3-1 hand:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	Pass
Pass	Dbl - takeout		

West has ♠Q97632 ♥AJ3 ♦AQ2 ♣3. She doesn't want to sell out to 2♣, and a takeout double is the logical action with support in the unbid suits and poor spades. East will count on a six-card spade suit when deciding what to bid, so don't bid this way with 5-3-3-2 distribution unless the five-card suit is very strong.

When the overcaller doubles opener's rebid of the same suit, he is making a two-way double that may be for business or takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	Pass	Pass
2♥	Dbl		

West may have ♠AKJ98 ♥AQ108 ♦4 ♣Q87 or ♠K108732 ♥4 ♦AQ5 ♣AQ4. East must figure out which sort of hand West has.

When opener bids a new suit, the overcaller's double is for takeout if there is an unbid suit:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	Pass	Pass
2♣	Dbl - takeout		

West has ♠AQ1087 ♥AJ74 ♦A832 ♣ void, with which a first round double would be unwise in view of the void in clubs.

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	2♦	Pass
2♥	Dbl - business (no unbid suit)		

West has ♠2 ♥AQ109 ♦52 ♣K108732. He wants a heart lead against any contract played by North. Doubling 2♥ sends this message. Why not an original top-and-bottom cue bid? Perhaps the vulnerability was unfavorable.

When advancer has bid a new suit, direct doubles (of RHO) are for business if the doubled suit has not been raised.

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♥	1♠
2♣	Dbl - business		

You can't double a suit bid on the left at the one or two level, however, unless partner has bid notrump:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♥	1♠
Pass	Pass	2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl - takeout: ♠J2 ♥53 ♦AKJ73 ♣A632		

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♥	1♠	2♣
2♠	Dbl - takeout: ♠J103 ♥AKJ32 ♦AJ32 ♣Q		

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	2♣	2♥ (transfer to spades)
3♣	Dbl - takeout: ♠K ♥AQ108 ♦KQ1076 ♣J65		

These doubles say, "Please bid again, but I have some defense if you pass." Perhaps these doubles should be called "optional" instead of "takeout" because the doubler usually has three trumps or he would have some other bid available, and the double is often passed. The doubler must be prepared for any bid, however.

See section 9-2, Competitive Doubles, for the meaning of doubles by the overcaller's partner.

### Takeout Double by the Opening Bidder

The opening bidder can make a takeout double on the second round, but when partner has bid a double is usually for business:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl - takeout			

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♥
Dbl - business			

If opener has redoubled and partner has not acted, a subsequent double is takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl - takeout			

If North had bid 1♦ instead of passing the opening bid, South's double would be for business. There are some situations, however, when a double by the opening bidder is for takeout even if partner has bid. See section 9-2, Competitive Doubles.

## Responses to Takeout Doubles

Responses to takeout doubles will not be covered much here, since the subject is adequately treated in the bridge literature. There are a few special situations, however, that we will treat:

-- For cue bid responses see section 10-9, Cue Bids in Takeout Double Situations, and section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids.

-- The weakness response. When holding a worthless hand opposite a takeout double, it is better to avoid a response that might excite partner into making some dangerous raise. Toward this end, a bid in the lowest unbid minor is often a good slow-down action, even when holding only three cards in the suit. For instance, partner doubles a 1♠ opening and you have ♠32 ♥8743 ♦J864 ♣J53. Rather than bid 2♥ or 2♦, bid 2♣. Partner might raise a heart response, or might bid 3♣ after either a 2♥ or 2♦ response. This is not a convention--2♣ may be passed--it is just common sense.

-- Over a redouble, a jump takeout is preemptive, not strong. When partner doubles 1♥ and next had redoubles, jump to 2♠ with ♠Q10873 ♥54 ♦J8762 ♣3. With a good hand, as one might have if someone is psyching, just pass over the redouble and bid strongly later. Actually, *any* bid over a redouble tends to deny significant strength, even a cue bid or jump in notrump:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Rdbl	2♥ - ♠8432 ♥2 ♦Q853 ♣K843
			2♠ - ♠Q9832 ♥654 ♦Q87 ♣J3
			2NT - ♠8 ♥65 ♦A9632 ♣Q10854

-- Over a raise by RHO, responsive doubles are too ill-defined. The Positive Double, a good alternative, is described in section 9-3.

## Miscellaneous Auctions

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♥ - not forcing
Pass	2♠	- forcing, in view of East's jump	
			2NT - not forcing

The 2NT bid over a jump is like the same call after a cue bid response: a hand not good enough for a 1NT overcall (♠AJ87 ♥J93 ♦AQ ♣Q1087). If West had too much for a 1NT overcall, he should bid 3NT, not 2NT.

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥ - not forcing
			2NT - not forcing
			3♣/3♠ - forcing

The 3♣ and 3♠ bids are forcing because of the jump response. West needs extra values to bid over 2♥, so a pass of 3♠ (although this is a limit situation, strictly speaking) is not logical.

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣/2♦ - natural, weak

East probably has four hearts, a five-card minor, and a weak hand.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass - not forcing		

The leave-in of a takeout double promises no strength outside the doubled suit, and does not promise further action if the opposition runs elsewhere.

Also see section 6-7, 4NT - Blackwood or Natural? and section 12-01, Defense Against Preemptive Openings.

## COMPETITIVE DOUBLES

Competitive doubles are doubles at the two or three level that might be taken for business doubles, but actually have a more useful meaning. They are left in more often than takeout doubles, hence the different name. A competitive doubler must therefore be prepared for a leave-in of the double. Don't double with poor defensive potential. Similar doubles at the four level are primarily for business.

### Advancive Doubles

Responses to overcalls are "advances," and overcaller's partner is the "advancer." Doubles by advancer of a suit bid by RHO are "Advancive Doubles," also known as Advanced Responsive Doubles. It is wrong to call them Responsive Doubles, which are responses to a takeout double.

-- After opener's suit is raised to the two or three level

When partner overcalls and next hand raises opener, a business double would be very rare. Accordingly, we give the double a different meaning: "Advancive."

There are three situations: 1) one unbid major, 2) both majors unbid, and 3) both minors unbid.

1) When there is one unbid major:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣/3♣	Dbl

This double shows a hand with both unbid suits, nominally 5-5, a tolerance for partner's suit in case he must rebid it, and enough strength to make a disaster unlikely. It denies three spades, so a later spade raise implies a good doubleton.

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	2♠	Dbl

East could have ♠8 ♥AQ973 ♦Q10842 ♣Q8.

This double can also be based on a five-card major and support for partner's minor instead of the unbid minor: ♠83 ♥AQ973 ♦Q8 ♣KQ84. If West bids 3♦, East has enough to bid 4♣. This sort of double is even more handy when the overcall is in diamonds, since advancer can return to diamonds at the three level if overcaller bids clubs.

2) When both majors are unbid:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	2♦	Dbl
1♣	1♦	2♣	Dbl

This double may be made with as little as 4-4 in the majors, provided advancer can support overcaller's suit at the three level. If overcaller bids a major in response to the double, advancer's retreat to the minor implies

only four cards in the major. Over a club raise (not a diamond raise), transfer advances may be used; see section 11-1, Transfer Advances .

3) When both minors are unbid, an Advancive double implies 5-5 in the minors but could have long diamonds only:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♥	Dbl

East has ♠102 ♥3 ♦AJ876 ♣KJ984, too good a hand to pass but a doubtful spade raise. If the majors were reversed a pass would be right, because an Advancive double implies at least a doubleton or singleton high honor in partner's suit. Another possible hand for East: ♠Q4 ♥532 ♦AJ10832 ♣K6 Bidding 3♦ would deny spade support, but a spade raise doesn't look right. If West bids clubs, East can bid the diamonds. With a 2=3=2=6 hand, advancer must guess whether to raise spades or bid the clubs, since a double might result in an unwanted jump in diamonds by the overcaller.

-- After a new suit response by RHO

A double of the new suit is not a very useful call, so we use it as an Advancive double, with this particular one having the name of Snapdragon. There are four situations: 1) overcall in a major, unbid suit a major; 2) overcall in a major, unbid suit a minor; 3) overcall in a minor, unbid suit a major; and 4) overcall in a minor, unbid suit a minor. This double implies indecision whether to bid the fourth suit or raise.

1) Overcall in a major, unbid suit a major:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♦	Dbl

East has at least five hearts and a tolerance for spades: ♠Q2 ♥AJ7632 ♦42 ♣763. Rather than guess whether to bid 2♥ or 2♠, he makes an Advancive double to show this sort of hand. This example is about as weak as one can go, but the maximum is somewhat higher, anything short of cue bid strength. A 2♥ bid here would imply no tolerance for spades. The double denies three spades, so a later spade bid implies a good doubleton.

2) Overcall in a major, unbid suit a minor:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♥	Dbl

East has a tolerance for spades and a good diamond suit of at least six cards. As with 1), bidding the fourth suit would tend to deny a tolerance for partner's major. The double denies three spades.

3) Overcall in a minor, unbid suit a major:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♠	Dbl

West probably has five hearts and diamond support: ♠43 ♥AJ972 ♦QJ3 ♣432. The double does not deny good support for diamonds, nor does it imply six hearts. A heart bid would show six hearts, but would not deny diamond support.

4) Overcall in a minor, unbid suit a minor:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♦	2♥	Dbl

East implies six clubs and a tolerance for diamonds; West can take his pick. Here too, a 3♣ bid would imply no tolerance for diamonds.

### Competitive Doubles by Overcaller

When opener "reraises" his raised suit, or bids a new suit after being raised, an overcaller who has been raised may wish to try for game or merely want to compete further.

1) After an overcall in a major suit:

Overcaller's double is a game try if opener's rebid of a raised suit is in the suit just below the overcall suit:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♥	Dbl - game try ("Maximal Double")		
	3♠ - competitive, not invitational		

If there is room between opener's rebid and the overcall suit, a new suit bid is a game try and a double is for business:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	2♠
3♣	Dbl - business		
	3♦/3♥ - game try, forcing		
	3♠ - competitive, not invitational		

Neither 3♦ nor 3♥ necessarily shows a suit. With a choice of two suits, as in this sequence, overcaller bids the suit in which a fit would be helpful (e.g., KJx). When there is only one suit available for the game try, the new-suit bid implies nothing about the suit:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	2♦	2♠
3♦	3♥ - game try, forcing		

West may have any sort of holding for his 3♥ bid, which is a completely artificial (and Alertable) game try. West could really have a heart suit, of course, so East should bid 4♥ with a good raise and longer hearts than spades.

If opener's new suit bid is of lower rank than his first suit, overcaller can cue bid the first suit as a game try to avoid bidding a worthless suit, and a new-suit bid is natural and forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	2♦	2♠
3♣	Dbl - business		
	3♦ - game try		
	3♥ - second suit, forcing		
	3♠ - not invitational		

When opener's rebid is of higher rank than the overcall suit, or his suit has not been raised, a double is primarily for business:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
3♠	Dbl - business		

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	Pass	2♠
3♥	Dbl - business		

2) After an overcall in minor suit:

Game is less likely when the overcall suit is a minor, so the competitive double of a reraise carries a slightly different message: "I have too much to pass but don't know whether to bid or defend --what do you think?"

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	2♥	3♣
3♥	Dbl - optional double		
	4♣ - not invitational		

For the double, West has ♠AK2 ♥K4 ♦J2 ♣A98765. He wants to compete further, but doesn't want to miss a good penalty (and possibly incur one) by unilaterally bidding 4♣. East can pass or bid 4♣, as he sees fit. He might even bid 5♣ with something like ♠Q83 ♥A75 ♦86 ♣J10432, although strictly speaking this is not a game try double.

### Competitive Doubles by Opener

There are four situations for a competitive double by opener when an opposing overcall has been raised:

1) A major suit opening has been raised, and the opposing raise is in the suit just below opener's. A double here simply means opener wants to know if responder is minimum or maximum--a game try double:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
	Dbl - game try in spades		
	3♠ - not invitational		

The double serves to distinguish a merely competitive bid from a serious move toward game.

2) A major suit opening has been raised, and the opposing raise is in a suit other than the one ranking just below opener's:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	2♥	3♣
Dbl - competitive double, for takeout			
3♦ - game try: ♠AK10 ♥AJ873 ♦A87 ♣65			
3♥ - just competing, not invitational			

The double implies that opener's suit has only four cards, and that he has support for the unbid suits (e.g., ♠K87 ♥AK87 ♦K8765 ♣3), but has no serious interest in game. Responder could have five spades or four diamonds, three hearts, and a minimum hand that could not compete further if opener passes. To make a game try, opener must bid a new suit, forcing, even when lacking four cards in the suit.

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
Dbl - ♠7 ♥KJ87 ♦AJ98 ♣AQ87			

A new suit bid would be a forcing game try, so South doubles to show a desire to compete with this sort of hand.

When the opposing suit is spades, a double at the three level is still a game try, but opener is well prepared to defend:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♥	3♠
Dbl			

South hopes North can bid 4♥ but is quite willing to defend against 3♠. North will usually make a four level bid with a maximum raise, pass with a minimum. If in doubt, he passes with three-card support, bids with four, because the double implies a four-card suit.

3) A minor suit has been raised. In this case a double of any raised overcall is primarily for takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	2♠
Dbl - ♠A ♥J873 ♦Q765 ♣AKQ3			

Unlike the double of a next-lower-ranking-suit following a major suit raise, this double is for takeout. A new suit would be forcing, but would imply a two-suited hand. The double is preferable when holding good support for both unbid suits. It promises four cards in a single unbid major, and at least 4-3 or 3-4 in spades-hearts when both majors are unbid. In the auction above, West could have four, or even five, hearts.

4) Responder has bid a new suit at the one level:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♠	2♦
Dbl - ♠AJ ♥KJ10 ♦J32 ♣AK1073			

South feels that the hand belongs to her side, but has no suitable bid. The only answer is a competitive double, asking partner to bid again.

When an overcall has not been raised, a direct double is for business, while a reopening double is "competitive":

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♥
Dbl - business			

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♣	2♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl - takeout: ♠KQ ♥65 ♦AKJ32 ♣K1087			

Reopening doubles at the three level are more penalty-oriented. Also, if the original response was 1NT or higher, but not a raise, all doubles are penalty-oriented.

### Competitive Doubles by Responder

Responder can also make a competitive double of an opposing raised overcall, or of an unraised overcall in the pass-out position:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl - ♠42 ♥Q87 ♦A642 ♣K873	

North has too much to pass, so competes with a double that implies three-card support for opener, good defense, and good support for both unbid suits. With a hand weaker in high cards but better distribution (e.g., 1=3=4=5), an "unusual" 2NT is the right reopening bid.

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♠	2♦
Pass	Pass	Dbl - ♠AK832 ♥Q843 ♦3 ♣J42	

North has just the sort of hand implied by his double.

Reopening doubles of an unraised overcall are competitive doubles at the one or two level, business at the three level:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl - competitive double	

North might have ♠K8732 ♥97 ♦AK83 ♣J2 or ♠AKJ2 ♥J76 ♦J92 ♣873.

When the original response was 1NT or higher, and not a raise, all doubles are penalty-oriented.

### Business Doubles

In situations other than those described above, doubles are for business:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♣	Dbl - business (3♣ not a raise)	

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♣
Dbl - business (3♣ a delayed raise)			

If East had bid 3♣ immediately over 2♦, a double would be a competitive double. Similarly:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	Pass
Pass	2♠	3♣	Dbl - business

East's raise to 3♣ was not "immediate."

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♠
2♣	2♠	Dbl - business (1♠ a forced bid)	

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass
Pass	2♠	Dbl - business	

This double is business for two reasons: 1) the spade bid being raised was a forced bid, not a voluntary bid, and 2) the raise to 2♠ was not "immediate."

When the opponents have bid a suit three times, a double by responder is always for business:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	2♣	2♦
2♥/3♣	3♦	Dbl - business	

Another way to put this is that a double is for business when opener has bid twice before the double (presumably describing his hand sufficiently).

When a bidder has denied the strength required to play at a higher contract than the doubled contract, then a double must be for business:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	2♦	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl - business			

South did not have quite enough to double 2♥ for business.

After a 1NT response, a double by either partner is for business.

When either partner has redoubled during an auction in which both have participated, subsequent doubles are for business:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Rdbl
2♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl - business double

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl - business double			

However:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl - takeout (North has not previously acted)			

Doubles of back-in overcalls made after a single raise are usually competitive in the reopening position, for penalty in the direct position.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl - competitive, only four hearts			

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♣	Dbl - business	

## POSITIVE DOUBLES

When partner makes a takeout double and RHO raises, your "free bid" is a bit ambiguous. Maybe you would have jumped if RHO had passed, or maybe you're just stretching to compete. For instance:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	2♣	2♦/2♥/2♠

Was South going to make the same bid (a jump) if East had passed, or is she just competing and would have responded at the one level over a pass? There's no telling. Free bids over a raise are therefore wide-range, too much so. The doubler often doesn't know whether to pass or bid on.

The "Responsive Double" convention is popular in this situation. The trouble with responsive doubles is that they are either vague as to meaning, or so restricted in meaning that they rarely come up. For instance, in the above auction a responsive double by South might be played as showing both majors, or, as some play, two of the three unbid suits. Others play that it just shows "cards," with no decent suit to bid. Whatever the meaning, it isn't used much.

The Positive Double shows a hand that would probably have jumped if RHO had not raised. It follows that a minimum suit bid is just competitive, denying that strong a hand. For reasons that will appear later, this applies only to the cheapest and dearest unbid suits, not the one in the middle. A bid in that suit remains ambiguous:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dbl	2♦	Dbl (1)
			2♥/3♣ (2)
			2♠ (3)

- (1) Positive Double
- (2) Merely competitive
- (3) Ambiguous

If South would have jumped to 2♥ or 3♣ over a pass, she doubles. The 2♠ middle-suit bid is ambiguous. South might have bid either 1♠ or 2♠ over a pass, there's no telling. With too much for that, she can bid the standard invitational 3♠ or double "positively" and show the spades later.

So what does partner do in response to a Positive Double? If he would have passed a jump in the cheapest suit, he bids that suit. If he would have bid notrump, or the dearest unbid suit, he does so. With a good hand and four cards in the unbid major(s), he cue bids, forcing to game. With none of those messages to give, he usually bids the middle suit as an artificial mark-time bid:

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

- (1) Would have passed a jump to 3♣
- (2) A mark-time bid, "Tell me more," would not have passed 3♣
- (3) Five hearts, forcing
- (4) Four hearts, extra values, game force
- (5) Normal rebid (too strong for a 1NT overcall), forcing

When North bids 3♣, the cheapest suit, saying he would have passed a jump in that suit, South can either pass, holding that suit, or bid something else. Her bid in the middle suit is also an artificial mark-time bid. Any natural suit bid promises at least five cards. A jump in a new suit is forcing. A raise of bid in the cheapest suit is strong but not forcing. A cue bid shows four cards in any unbid major:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	2♣	Dbl
Pass	2♦	Pass	Pass (1)
			2♥(2)
			2♠(3)
			3♣ (4)
			3♦ (5)
			3♥/3♠(6)

- (1) Diamond suit, would have jumped to 2♦ over a pass, no more to say
- (2) A mark-time bid, "tell me more," no five card suit
- (3) Five spades, would have jumped over a pass, not forcing
- (4) At least 4-4 in the majors, does not promise another bid
- (5) Natural, too strong to pass, not forcing
- (6) Natural, forcing

The major-suit jumps are forcing because with a weaker hand South would have bid an ambiguous 2♥, or would have jumped invitationally in spades, instead of doubling. The 3♣ bid is not forcing to game, since 3♣ could have been bid over 2♣ with a game-going hand. If the takeout double was non-minimum, the doubler should bid four of a major, not three, which would probably be passed.

If the Positive Doubler bids notrump over doubler's mark-time bid, it means she would have jumped in *that* suit over a pass:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	2♣	Dbl
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT - would have bid 2♥ over a pass

North's 2♥ bid is artificial (would not have passed a jump to 2♦). South has a little too much for an ambiguous 2♥ response to the double, but not enough for an invitational 3♥ response over 2♣, or for a forcing 3♥ bid at this point. Other notrump bids by advancer are natural.

After a mark-time bid by either partner, a minimum bid by the other partner may be passed. Raises by either partner are limit bids that can also be passed.

If opener reraises over a Positive Double:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	2♣	Dbl
3♣			

A repeat double of the same suit by North is still for takeout. It shows extra strength, as does a "free bid." From this point on all bidding is natural. If the reraise is passed around to the Positive Doubler, a repeat double is for penalties, as are doubles of any other bid made by either opponent. After a Positive Double the opponents cannot play the hand unless they play it doubled, so one partner can pass a bid by RHO without fear that the other will also pass.

## SPECIAL DOUBLES AND REDOUBLES

### Slam Doubles

A double of a voluntarily bid slam (i.e., not a sacrifice bid against an opposing contract) asks partner to make an unusual lead. The doubler may have a void somewhere (usually in an opposing suit), or possibly a tenace--maybe just a king--over dummy's first bid suit. The doubler fears that a normal lead will allow the contract to be made.

The opening leader must sometimes guess which suit the doubler wants led. Certainly any suit bid by the defending side is not wanted. Also, an unbid suit is ruled out unless the opponents have not bid any suit other than trumps. If in doubt, lead dummy's first bid side suit. If dummy has not bid a side suit, the doubler may want the lead of a side suit bid by declarer. If there have been no side suits bid, lead from your longest holding in an unbid suit--partner may have a void there.

If the doubler has previously doubled a suit during the auction, the double calls for the lead of that suit--not for an "unusual" lead. Reason: sometimes a defender who has doubled an opposing suit is not particularly eager for the lead of that suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Dbl	6NT	Pass
Pass	Dbl		

West's double demands a diamond lead. If West had passed the 6NT bid, East could use judgment whether to lead a diamond or something else.

Against a notrump slam there is divided opinion about the meaning of a double when the doubler's side has bid. It would seem more useful to use the double to call for the lead of some suit other than one bid by the defending side, since that would be the normal lead.

When the opponents are in a notrump slam after dummy has shown a long suit, the double should not ask for the lead of that suit:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♥	Pass
5NT	Pass	6NT	Dbl

East has ♠QJ9876 ♥86 ♦KQ7 ♣A4. She could hardly be asking for a heart or club lead, since declarer no doubt needs those suits to bring in his contract. The double says, "Do not lead a spade," so the only thing left to lead is a diamond.

### The Surprise Double

Suppose you have ♠J5432 ♥AK64 ♦ void ♣8742. You're sitting East and the bidding goes:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
5♣	Pass	Pass	?

You should double. After this surprise double, coming after strong bidding in an auction that you have not entered, partner should figure you for a void. From his hand, he ought to be able to guess that the void is in diamonds. Another:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♠	2♥	2♠	4♥
Dbl!			

South could not open the bidding, is sitting opposite a hand that could only raise to the two level, and yet is doubling a strongly bid game. The probable reason for the double is a diamond void, and a diamond lead should be forthcoming.

Surprise doubles are dangerous at times. In some auctions the double may not strike partner as a "surprise," and he may miss the message. In such clear-cut situations as those above, however, there should be no problem.

### The Double of Three Notrump

-- Neither defender has bid a suit:

In this situation the doubler generally wants dummy's suit led. If dummy has rebid the suit, however, and declarer does not seem to have a long suit, the lead of dummy's suit is not advisable. The declarer will no doubt go after that suit to make the contract. While the doubler probably has the suit well stopped, the best line of attack will usually lie elsewhere.

If the opponents have not bid a suit, the opening leader should lead his shortest and weakest unbid suit, preferring a major if in doubt. The doubler probably has a long solid suit, or semi-solid suit with a fast entry outside. She figures that she may not get the suit led without the double. This means that if the bidding goes 1NT on your left, 3NT on your right, you can double with ♠A97 ♥83 ♦A62 ♣KQJ108, with fair assurance that partner will lead a club.

-- Doubler has bid a suit, opening leader has not:

Lead the doubler's suit unless partner's bid was an opening bid of one in that suit at matchpoint scoring. After opening 1♥ at matchpoints with ♠43 ♥QJ983 ♦KQJ102 ♣A, you can double 3NT to

tell partner *not* to lead a heart. Knowing that you open the higher of touching suits, she will probably be able to figure that the suit you want led is diamonds.

This is contrary to standard practice, which says that the doubler is asking for the suit he has bid. In a matchpoint game, however, where the frequency of gain is more important than the amount of gain, the double for *another* suit makes more sense. Just pass if the lead of your bid suit will defeat the contract. It won't happen often that partner will lead some other suit, and just beating 3NT should be a good enough score. If the suit has been bid as an overcall or opening weak bid, then the double of 3NT asks for the lead of the bid suit, as it always does at IMP or total point scoring.

-- Opening leader has bid a suit, doubler has not. This double calls for the lead of the bid suit. If, however, the bid was a three-level preemptive call, the double calls for the lead of an unbid suit. The reason for this policy is that a preemptive bidder will normally lead his suit, so doubling for that lead is unnecessary (and may cause a runout to some good suit contract). Accordingly, the double asks that the opening leader guess doubler's strong suit and lead it.

-- Both defenders have bid a suit. Use your judgment. If in doubt, lead partner's suit.

### Special Redoubles

-- When a notrump probe gets doubled, a redouble by the next hand does *not* show strength in the doubled suit--it asks that partner bid notrump:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Dbl	Rdbl	

North has ♠92 ♥A43 ♦AQ964 ♣A54. He redoubles to indicate that he would have bid 3NT if there had been no double. South should play the hand, so that her spade strength (Kxx?) won't be led through on the opening lead. With the major suit holdings reversed, North would pass over the double, despite the ace of spades, because he lacks a heart stopper. This redouble must be alerted.

-- When an opponent redoubles a takeout double (or a double that is primarily for takeout) of a suit contract, and the suit is one that *only that opponent* has bid, a pass over the redouble is for penalties. The passer wants to defend against the redoubled contract:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Rdbl	Pass	

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass		

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass		

In all three sequences, the pass over the redouble indicates a willingness to defend against the redoubled contract.

When the suit has been bid by both opponents, however, or the redouble is made by the opponent who did *not* bid the suit, a pass over a redouble is non-committal:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass

In both sequences, East's pass does not show a willingness to defend against the redoubled bid. It merely says that she has nothing worth showing at this time.

When the double is for business (or more optional than takeout), a pass over any redouble shows a willingness (or resignation) to defend:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
Dbl	Rdbl	Pass - willing to defend	

-- Immediate redoubles are not "S. O. S." They usually show a very strong hand, and tell partner not to be intimidated by the double:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	Dbl	Rdbl

If North's double is for business, East's redouble says that he expects 2♣ to make and does not want West to run. If it is a negative double, however, the redouble only shows the club ace or king in a (possibly weak) hand that cannot raise. A pass by South at this point is non-committal, since the redouble is made by the opponent who did not bid the suit.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl			

South has a strong hand with good clubs; the redouble is not a rescue request, although it does encourage North to bid if he has anything worth showing.

*Reopening* redoubles (after two passes) ask for a rescue, but only at low levels, and only if partner has not participated in the auction:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Rdbl			

South wants to be rescued from 1♣ redoubled.

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	Pass
4♠	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Rdbl			

South is not asking to be rescued!

There is one situation when a redouble is S. O. S. even though both partners have participated in the auction: A responder to a takeout double may ask to be rescued after a minimum forced response:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Dbl	Pass	Pass	Rdbl

East no doubt has made a "weakness response" in clubs and wants to be rescued. She might have ♠72 ♥7632 ♦J873 ♣J76. If 2♣ had been a free bid (e.g., over a redouble by North), then the redouble would be to play.

## CUE BIDS - GENERAL

In the early days of contract bridge, the cue bid was narrowly defined. It had only one meaning: first round control of the suit and a very strong hand. If the partnership had previously agreed on a trump suit, the cue bid was an information giving (and seeking) slam try:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣ - slam interest, ace or void in clubs			

The bid of an opposing suit could implicitly agree on a trump suit, force to game, and suggest a slam:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♥ - agrees spades, suggests a slam			

South	West	North
1♥	1♠	2♠ - suggests a heart slam

In either case, the cue bidder showed first round control of the opposing suit, implied strong four-card support for partner's suit, and invited slam.

The cue bid was also used to force a bid from a partner who had not yet bid:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Pass	Pass
2♠			

South showed a powerful hand, perhaps with 0-4-4-5 distribution.

South	West
1♦	2♦

This immediate cue bid overcall was forcing to game and showed first round control of the suit. Players came to make the bid with a singleton loser, and to play it as not quite game-forcing.

And that was all there was to cue bids, in the old days.

In going over cue bids as they are used today, we might as well include those non-forcing bids in a denomination first bid by the opponents:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♠ - natural, not forcing

East has ♠QJ9873 ♥AQ ♦Q87 ♣63. While the 2♠ bid is not really a cue bid, we shall have to discuss such hands here anyway, if only to differentiate them from forcing cue bids.

"Forcing to a limit situation" is a phrase that will be used often in connection with cue bids. Some cue bids are forcing to game, while some are only forcing to a limit situation. After a cue bid that is forcing to a limit situation, the partnership must continue bidding until one of the following occurs:

-- Either the cue bidder's partner ("replier") rebids his own suit minimally or the cue bidder rebids his own minor suit minimally:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
Pass	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣ - a limit situation, so North may pass			
3♦ - forcing			

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦ - not forcing (minor suit)	
3♣/3♥ - forcing			

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠ - forcing (major suit)	
3♣/3♦ - forcing			

-- Either the cue bidder or replier raises partner's last suit bid:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
Pass	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♣ - a limit situation	
4♦ - forcing			

The cue bidder has raised replier, but has not raised the last suit bid, so 4♦ is forcing.

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	1♠
Pass	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♥ - not forcing			

South's bid of North's last named suit is a limit situation, and North may pass.

-- The cue bidder bids the same suit twice in a row, after the cue bid:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠ - not quite forcing		

-- Game is reached.

-- A suitable penalty double is imposed on the opponents.

-- Either partner bids notrump, thereby limiting his hand. (Exception: a cue bidder may not pass a 2NT response by a partner who has not previously acted--and a double/redouble is an "act"):

South	West	North	East
1♣	2♣	Pass	2NT - forcing

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT - not forcing		

-- The person who made the force has inferentially given partner a final chance to show any values. For example:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥		

The repeat cue bid asks East to pick another suit. South probably has a diamond-spade two-suiter. If West can only bid 3♠ or 4♦ (or 4♣), he denies any useful cards. East can pass any such minimum second bid, even though 2♥ was forcing to a limit situation. Since this *is* a limit situation, East should jump to 4♠ with as little as Kxx in spades and nothing outside.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠

West's cue bid gives East a chance to show a second suit, or some extra strength. The 2♠ bid denies a useful hand, and is a rebid of replier's suit, so a limit situation has been reached. West can pass. A new suit bid by East would have been forcing, a 2NT bid not forcing.

### When a Cue Bid Gets Doubled

See section 10-12 for appropriate actions when a "probing cue bid" gets doubled. The following applies to doubles of other cue bids:

-- A pass is the weakest action the next hand can make. It denies a useful hand.

-- A bid made directly over the double is a "free bid," showing a hand that is at least slightly promising.

-- A jump bid is normal, as if the double had not occurred, as is any notrump bid (which tends to warn of duplication).

-- A redouble indicates a good hand for the circumstances, but no good bid that is available. It indicates nothing about the cue bid suit.

Incidentally, when a player opens the bidding and later doubles a cue bid in his own suit, he is showing a strong suit only--not necessarily a strong hand.

## CUE BIDS BY RESPONDER

### On the First Round

A first round cue bid response at the two or three level by an unpassed hand is always very strong, game forcing of course. In response to a minor suit opening, it shows excellent trump support and the lack of a suitable alternative bid, and may well lack first-round control of the opposing suit.:

South	West	North
1♣	1♥	2♥

The 2♥ cue bid might be made with ♠KJ3 ♥65 ♦AKJ ♣Q10875. With ♠KJ3 ♥void ♦AKJ2 ♣Q108752 responder should bid either 2♦ or a 3♥ splinter, but a cue bid (intending to rebid the suit later to show first-round control) is probably best.

We must have an exception of course. When a 1♥ bid is overcalled with 1♠, responder has 2♣ and 2♦ available for a forcing bid, so a 2♠ cue bid is of the classic kind: At least four-card support, first and second-round control of the opposing suit (usually a void), and at least some interest in slam.

South	West	North
1♥	1♠	2♠

A typical hand for the 2♠ bid: ♠ void ♥KJ65 ♦AK76 ♣Q987. It is important that opener bid notrump at this point if he has secondary strength that is probably wasted and he would not have opened without that spade strength. All a notrump bid rebid does is to warn of duplication, it does not indicate a desire to play in notrump. A jump to 3NT shows even more serious duplication, e.g., AK of the opposing suit, and a minimum opening bid. With opening bid values outside of any spade strength, an immediate notrump rebid is not in order.

A three-level cue bid does not promise excellent trump support for opener's suit. It is merely game-forcing with no suitable alternative bid available.

South	West	North
1♠	2♣	3♣

The 3♣ bid might be based on ♠K32 ♥KQ104 ♦AJ6 ♣432. With four-card or better support responder can either bid a new suit, perhaps a three-card minor, before raising to game, or respond with a splinter bid if short. Responder can repeat the cue bid when holding first-round control.

A cue bid response at the four level must show first or second round control of the opposing suit, as there is not enough bidding room for a splinter to do that job below game level (except for 1♦-3♣-5♣, which means that 4♣ would not promise shortness in clubs, but that's hard to remember).

See section 3-7, Splinter Response to a Major Opening; section 3-8, Splinter Response to a Minor Opening; and section 3-13, Preemptive Jump Raise to Game.

## On the Second Round

When a player cue bids on the second round, after failing to respond on the first round, the bid is natural:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥ - natural bid, non-forcing	

North has hearts that are good enough to play opposite a singleton, despite West's overcall (and West's bid may have been a psych or based on a four-card suit). He was hoping South would reopen with a double, which of course he would have passed. The 2♥ bid is not particularly strong, and South will generally pass.

The same principle applies if the overcall was doubled. A later bid in that suit by either partner is natural, a necessary counter to psychic overcalls.

Other cue bids by responder are discussed in section 10-10, Slam Try Cue Bids, and section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids. Cue bids in response to an opening notrump bid are covered in section 5-3, those in response to a notrump overcall in section 8-4. Cue bids in response to a reopening 1NT overcall have the same meaning as the bid would have if partner had opened 1NT (i.e., the opening bid is ignored).

### Passed Hand Cue Bid Response

A passed hand's cue bid response is forcing to a limit situation only. It can be based on various sorts of good hand with which responder doesn't want to risk opener's passing of a new suit response.

South	West	North	East
—	—	Pass	Pass
1♣	1♦	2♦	

North has ♠Q9763 ♥K1032 ♦ void ♣AQ65.

Thanks to the cue bid, his spade bid on the next round will be forcing. North could also have something like ♠Q976 ♥K1032 ♦65 ♣AQ6, since a non-forcing heart or spade bid would be dangerous.

## CUE BIDS BY OPENER

### Partner Has Responded in a Suit

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♥ - game forcing			

This cue bid has traditionally shown no losers in the opposing suit and terrific support for responder's suit. Today that is what we would like to have, but the modern meaning of the cue bid is much less precise. All that responder can tell at this point is that opener wants to be in game, at least.

Responder must now make the most helpful bid he can find, which is likely to be notrump if he has the opposing suit stopped. With a double stop and a *poor* hand, he can jump to 3NT. This will warn opener that there may be serious duplication (strength opposite a void), and that responder is weak.

In the auction above, South could have any of the following hands:

- 1) ♠AQ32 ♥ void ♦K1083 ♣AKJ94 (the traditional hand)
- 2) ♠A4 ♥32 ♦KQ ♣AKQJ976 (too good for a 3♣ rebid)
- 3) ♠AJ3 ♥4 ♦AJ4 ♣AKQ874 (ditto)
- 4) ♠A54 ♥87 ♦KQJ ♣AKQJ4

With hand 1) opener will follow up with a leap to 4♠ or a repeat of the cue bid. Bidding in this fashion shows the old-fashioned sort of cue bid. With hand 2) opener will rebid clubs on the next round, implying this sort of hand. With a weaker hand he would prefer a 3♣ jump rebid, so this sequence is very strong. With hand 3) opener will raise spades on the next round, feeling his way to the proper contract. He will do the same with hand 4). There is no need to do any jumping with hands 2), 3), and 4), because the cue bid is forcing to game.

### Partner Has Failed to Respond

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	Pass	Pass
2♥			

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	Pass	2♥
3♥			

South cannot be making game forces after only opening one of a suit and not getting a response, but the above cue bids show a very strong hand and are forcing to a limit situation. Opener could have four card support for both unbid suits (♠AK87 ♥ void ♦A1098 ♣AK1097), or a long strong suit with some support for one or both unbid suits (♠AJ3 ♥ void ♦Q107 ♣AKQJ873).

Such cue bids almost guarantee a void. Otherwise it is difficult to give opener a hand that is unsuitable for a takeout double. The implication is that opener would not relish a leave-in of a takeout double, and this implication strongly suggests a void.

Responder must now bid the full value of her hand, for if she makes a minimum bid the "limit situation" has been reached and opener could pass.

Additional cue bids by opener are covered in section 10-9, Cue Bids in Takeout Double Situations; section 10-10, Slam Try Cue Bids; and section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids.

## DIRECT CUE BID OVERCALLS

A two-level cue bid made directly over a natural opening bid in a suit is a two-way call:

North	East
1♦	2♦

The cue bid is either:

- A powerful hand that cannot be expressed by a jump overcall or takeout double, or
- A moderate hand with 6-4 distribution: six cards in the lowest-ranking unbid suit and four cards in the highest-ranking unbid suit. This is the "Top-and-Bottom" cue bid, fully described in section 10-6.

If not a top-and-bottom cue bid, this cue bid is forcing to a limit situation. It shows a hand that requires little or nothing in partner's hand for game. A takeout double would not be suitable because the cue bidder doesn't have that sort of hand. Perhaps he has a void or a two-suited hand. If it is a strong one-suited hand, the hand is too good for a strong jump overcall--which is not forcing.

The strong sort of cue bid should seldom be made with more than one loser in the opposing suit. Some typical 2♠ overcalls of a 1♠ opening:

- 1) ♠ void ♥AKQJ1087 ♦AK4 ♣Q107 (too good for 3♥)
- 2) ♠8 ♥AKQ6 ♦AJ108 ♣AQJ10 (too good for a takeout double)
- 3) ♠87 ♥AKJ43 ♦AK108743 ♣ void (a double could lead to difficulty)

With hand 3), if partner responds in clubs the cue bidder will repeat the cue bid, asking for a preference between the two unbid suits. With a weaker hand the cue bid with two fast losers would be unwise, because partner might bid a slam on the assumption that the cue bid showed at least second round spade control.

South	West	North	East
1♣	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	?

West is not only asking for a preference between diamonds and spades, he is asking East if she has anything of value to offer. If East now bids 3♦ or 3♠ she is denying any usable strength and West can pass. With as much as a king in the right place, West should make a jump preference in the preferred suit.

A direct jump cue bid overcall is a natural preemptive bid. With a good hand just pass and bid the suit later:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	3♣/3♠ - natural preempt

South West  
 1♣ 3♣ - natural preempt

A cue bid overcall of an opposing new suit response is lately being used as a natural bid, but the wisdom of this approach is doubtful. If an opponent bids your suit, you usually do better to pass and hope they get into trouble. Often you can double a notrump contract for a lead of that suit. Accordingly, cue bids such as the following have a more valuable use:

South West North East  
 1♣ Pass 1♠ 2♠

East is showing a two-suited hand with hearts and diamonds, 5-5 or better. A takeout double would tend to show four hearts and longer diamonds (making the top-and-bottom cue bid unnecessary), while a 2NT bid is natural: ♠A3 ♥J87 ♦AKQ1087 ♣K3

A cue bid in opener's suit after a new suit response is natural:

South West North East  
 1♦ Pass 1♥ 2♦ - natural overcall  
 2♥ - black two-suiter

A cue bid over a 1NT response to a natural opening bid is a top-and-bottom cue bid in a major suit, but a takeout for both majors in a minor:

South West North East  
 1♥ Pass 1NT 2♥ - top-bottom cue bid

South West North East  
 1♣ Pass 1NT 2♣ - shows both majors  
 3♣ - natural, not strong with a double available

A cue bid over a single raise of a natural opening bid of one in a suit is a top-and-bottom cue bid:

South West North East  
 1♥ Pass 2♥ 3♥ - top/bottom cue bid

A cue bid overcall of a preemptive opening, including weak two bids, implies a two-suited hand:

South West North East  
 2♠ 3♠ Pass 4♣  
 Pass 4♦ - asks for a red suit preference

In the last auction West has a heart/diamond two-suiter. Of course such a cue bid must be prepared for any response partner might make. Do not cue bid 4♣ over 3♣ with ♠3 ♥A10875 ♦AQ9763 ♣5, because if partner bids 4♠ you must then bid 5♦ to show a red two-suiter. That is forcing the bidding too high with this hand. The better course is to just bid 3♦ over 3♣ and hope to bid hearts on the next round.

A cue bid overcall of a response to a preemptive opening (including weak two bids) is natural, non-forcing, if the suit is a major:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Pass	2♠	3♠ - natural, not forcing

East is exposing a probable psych by North, while showing values for a three-level bid. With less strength, East should double 2♠, showing values for a two-level spade bid. Similarly, if East has enough strength to bid 4♠, he should do so. To force with a cue bid, East must bid 3♥.

When the response is in a minor, the cue bid is a forcing takeout call:

South	West	North	East
3♣	Pass	3♦	4♦ - asks for a major

Since East could bid either minor without sacrificing bidding space, her choice of 4♦ implies that she has better control of diamonds than of clubs.

Also see section 10-5, Reopening Cue Bid Overcalls.

Direct cue bids by a passed hand are Michaels Cue Bids: cue bid of a minor shows both majors, cue bid of a major shows the other major plus an unknown minor (partner bids 2NT to inquire). See section 8-5, Defensive Bidding by a Passed Hand.

## REOPENING CUE BID OVERCALLS

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	Pass	2♣

This is not a top-and-bottom cue bid, which does not apply in a reopening situation. Instead, it is a two-way call showing either a weakish three-suited hand with a singleton or void in clubs, or a normal strong cue bid. For a passed hand, the cue bid can be based on either a two-suited or three-suited hand. See section 8-5, Defensive Bidding by a Passed Hand.

If the cue bid is weak, 5-4-4 is the ideal distribution, but 4-4-4-1 is normal. The maximum is about 10 HCP, since the weak cue bid tends to deny two defensive tricks. With ♠ void ♥QJ32 ♦AJ1054 ♣Q873, after 1♠-P-P bid 2♠ rather than make a takeout double. The danger is that partner might pass a double, expecting a little more defense from you. But with ♠4 ♥AJ32 ♦A875 ♣9842, a double is okay because you have a couple of defensive tricks and a spade to lead through declarer if partner should pass.

### Responses

Partner assumes that the cue bidder has made a weak three-suited takeout, and bids accordingly. He gives partner about 7-8 HCP and bids the limit of his hand immediately. A 2NT response is not invitational; it will always be passed by a weak cue bidder.

A jump response is invitational, asking partner to raise with a maximum weak cue bid (9-10 HCP). With a weak cue bid, partner must raise or pass. If the cue bidder bids a new suit (or bids again when not invited) opposite partner's jump response, she shows a strong cue bid. See section 10-4 for a discussion of strong cue bid overcalls.

The strong type of cue bid may be a little weaker than a direct cue bid overcall, but not much. The minimum for a strong reopening cue bid of 2♠ is something like: ♠ void ♥AK54 ♦Q10876 ♣KQ96. With anything weaker, down to a weak cue bid, just make a takeout double.

A repeat cue bid by an unpassed hand also confirms a strong takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣

The cue bidder has a strong hand, but whether he has spade support or a strong two-suiter in hearts/diamonds is not yet clear. West assumes the latter and shows a preference for one of these two suits, jumping with anything of value. With ♠108763 ♥KJ3 ♦J7 ♣Q83 West should jump to 4♥, since 3♥ could be passed.

A new suit bid by a passed hand cue bidder definitely shows a two-suiter, but not a strong hand:

South	West	North	East
Pass	1♣	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♦ - diamonds and hearts, not forcing			

South has ♠3 ♥Q10874 ♦AQ8732 ♣6. If not a passed hand, South would have to reopen with 1♦ or 1♥.

A hand that passes an opposing bid and then reopens with a cue bid later is normally making a natural bid:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♠ - natural,	not forcing	

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♠ - natural,
not forcing			

There is one exception:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♦ - takeout for the majors		

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♣ - takeout for the majors		

After a 1NT response to a minor, the opponents will almost always have at least six cards between them in that suit, probably more. The reopening cue bid in this case is therefore more useful as a major suit takeout than as a natural bid. Rather than double, which is primarily for business, you cue bid the minor to ask for a major.

### **Jump Cue Bid Reopening**

Reopening the bidding with a jump cue bid asks partner to bid 3NT if he has the opposing suit stopped.

## TOP-AND-BOTTOM CUE BIDS

There are four ways to make a top-and-bottom cue bid:

1) Directly over a natural opening bid of one in a suit:

North	East
1♠	2♠

A cue bid over a higher level opening may be based on a two-suited hand, but is not a "top-and-bottom" cue bid. A cue bid over an artificial opening is a natural bid.

2) After a single raise by RHO:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	2♥	3♥

3) Over an opposing Drury response (see section 12-15)

4) After a 1NT response to a major suit opening by RHO:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1NT	2♠

When the opening bid is in a minor suit, however, the cue bid over a 1NT response is a major suit takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1NT	2♦ - shows both majors

But not over a suit response:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♦ - is natural

All of the above (except No. 3, by a passed hand) are two-way cue bids, either:

-- A super strong hand, the conventional cue bid meaning (see section 10-4, Direct Cue Bid Overcalls), or

-- A top-and-bottom cue bid, showing a moderate hand with four cards in the top unbid suit and six cards in the lowest unbid suit:

North	East
1♣	2♣ - six diamonds and four spades
1♦	2♦ - six clubs and four spades
1♥	2♥ - six clubs and four spades
1♠	2♠ - six clubs and four hearts

The strength required for a top-and-bottom cue bid varies somewhat with vulnerability and the level at which partner must bid. Two to three defensive tricks are about right, but the cue bidder may play it a little loose if partner has passed. A typical hand for a non-vulnerable 2♦ cue bid over a natural opening bid of 1♦: ♠KQ43 ♥Q4 ♦4 ♣AQ10872. A 2♣ overcall would be more advisable when vulnerable. A takeout double is unwise, because you would have to pass a 2♥ response; the hand is not good enough to double and then bid 3♣, which implies a hand that is too strong for a top-and-bottom cue bid.

With a stronger hand, but not super strong, the overcaller must choose from takeout double, simple overcall, and jump overcall.

Suppose RHO opens 1♣ and you hold ♠AQ108 ♥3 ♦AQ10854 ♣K3. This hand is too strong for a top-and-bottom cue bid. A jump overcall of 2♦ is better than a takeout double because of the singleton heart. If the club/heart holding were reversed, a takeout double would be acceptable, since you have enough to bid 3♦ after a 2♥ response.

A club jump overcall (necessarily at the three level) implies solid clubs. It may therefore be necessary to make a hefty 2♣ overcall at times. Suppose you hold ♠AKJ3 ♥8 ♦76 ♣AQJ987 and RHO opens 1♦. This hand is too good for a top-and-bottom cue bid, and is not the sort of hand for a strong jump overcall in clubs. The best course is to bid 2♣, which will probably not be passed out, with the hope of bidding spades later.

The suit requirements for a top-and-bottom cue bid may be stretched on occasion. The top suit can be a weak five carder, and the bottom suit a seven-carder. The top-and-bottom cue bidder can never bid either suit himself, however (unless invited to do so), even if it is longer than standard. He can only hope that partner bids the non-standard suit. When the top suit is a strong five-carder, it is better to start bidding the suits rather than cue bid.

### Responses

How does the cue bidder's partner distinguish between a strong cue bid and a top-and-bottom cue bid? First of all, he assumes that partner has made a top-and-bottom cue bid until he learns otherwise, and makes the appropriate response:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♦	Pass	2♥/2♠/3♣ - weak signoffs 3♥/3♠/4♣ - invitational 2NT - forcing

The heart responses require at least a six-card suit.

After a signoff response, the top-and-bottom cue bidder must pass, even if RHO makes a call. Any other action shows a strong cue bid.

After an invitational response, the top-and-bottom cue bidder can only pass or raise the response one level. Any other action shows a strong cue bid, and is game forcing in view of the invitational response. In the last auction, the invitation in hearts will generally be accepted with a doubleton heart, declined with a singleton.

The 2NT response asks for clarification--"What kind of cue bid is this?" In the auction above, West must bid 3♣ with a top-and-bottom cue bid; any other call shows a strong cue bid and is forcing to game (in view of the 2NT response). If the cue bidder shows a top-and-bottom cue bid, the 2NT bidder's next call will place the contract, except that a raise to 4♣ would of course be invitational.

One reason for limiting the top-and-bottom cue bidder's strength is that she may not reopen the bidding after making a cue bid:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♦	2♥	Pass
Pass	2♠ - forcing,	strong cue bid hand	

West must pass 2♥ with a top-and-bottom cue bid, even with ♠108543 ♥6 ♦5 ♣AKJ543, because she has already shown her hand.

After confirming a top-and-bottom cue bid, however, the cue bidder may choose to reopen a dying auction:

South	West	North	East
1♣	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♦		

West, not vulnerable, is willing to chance 3♦ with ♠KQJ10 ♥6 ♦AQJ1098 ♣32. If this goes down one doubled, North-South probably could have made 3♣.

Top-and-Bottom is not used by a passed hand, except over a Drury response. A direct cue bid by a passed hand is a Michaels Cue Bid. See section 8-5, Defensive Bidding by a Passed Hand. Also see section 10-4, Direct Cue Bid Overcalls, and section 10-5, Reopening Cue Bid Overcalls.

## CUE BID ADVANCES OF OVERCALLS

Responses to overcalls are technically known as "advances," and overcaller's partner is the "advancer." Most cue bid advances of overcalls are discussed in section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids. Also see section 8-2, Responding to Simple Overcalls; section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls; and section 10-1, Cue Bids - General.

### Non-Jump Cue Bids

If RHO comes in with a raise over a major suit overcall, a cue bid serves to distinguish a strong jump raise from a weaker jump raise. There is no two-level room to cue bid and then raise the suit to three, so the cue bid must carry the strong raise meaning:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♥	3♥

If West has extra values for the overcall, she can bid game. If South now bids 4♥, West should not be too quick to bid 4♠ unless she thinks she can make it, because the cue bid shows good defensive potential in addition to trump support.

When the opposing raise comes over a minor suit overcall, the cue bid asks for a stopper in the opposing suit:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	2♦	3♦

East has high cards in clubs and a good hand, but no diamond stopper. If West has a normal overcall with diamonds stopped, he bids 3NT. Otherwise he just makes the bid that best serves to further describe his hand. This is a "probing cue bid," discussed in section 10-12.

If RHO comes in with a new suit, the strong raise of a major suit is shown by a cue bid of responder's suit, while a bid of opener's suit is natural and non-forcing, showing the suit:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♥	3♥ - strong spade raise
			2♠ - weak spade raise
			3♠ - too good for 2♠
			3♣ - long club suit

Remember that the "strong raise" cue bid applies only over a new suit bid or a raise, not over a pass or negative double. Further, it applies to major suit overcalls only. After a minor suit overcall, the cue bid asks for a stopper. See section 08-02, Responding to Simple Overcalls; and section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids.

If RHO responds 1NT, advancer would double with a strong raise. A bid of opener's suit is natural:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	1NT	2♥ - natural, long hearts

East has long solid hearts and not much in high cards: ♠4 ♥QJ108762 ♦A54 ♣62

### Jump Cue Bid Advance

A jump cue bid shows a playable holding in the suit if the opponents have bid the suit only once:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	1♠	3♣/3♠

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	Pass	3♠

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♥	3♣/3♥

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	3♠

These jump cue bids are natural and not forcing. There is no other way to show playable strength/length in the opposing suit. Splinter bids are not used in support of an overcall.

A jump cue bid advance when opener has been raised shows excellent support for the overcall and a void:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦/1♥/1♠	2♣	4♣ - club void

## CUE BIDS IN NOTRUMP

### A Cue Bid of 2NT Over a Natural Notrump Overcall

South	West	North	
1♦	1NT	2NT - unusual notrump	

This cue bid shows great length in the lower two unbid suits, and asks partner to take a choice. In the auction above, North might have ♠ void ♥Q107632 ♦J ♣A108432.

### A Cue Bid of 2NT Over a 1NT Response

South	West	North	East	
1♣	Pass	1NT	2NT - unusual notrump	

East is asking West to choose between hearts and diamonds, the lower two unbid suits. Artificial bids do not count as a suit bid, so the 2NT bid above would show both minors if the 1♣ bid is artificial.

The principle applies when partner has doubled, with the addition of a small subtlety:

South	West	North	East	
1♦	Dbl	1NT	2NT	

East has hearts and clubs, all right, but the hearts are weak and only four long: ♠2 ♥9632 ♦65 ♣KQ10873 With good hearts East would just bid that suit, since the double implies heart support.

### When Partner Has Doubled 1NT for Business

South	West	North	East	
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2NT - game forcing	

East has a distributionally strong hand, perhaps a two-suiter, and doesn't pass the double because West might make a bad lead.

South	West	North	East	
1♠	1NT	Dbl	Pass	
2NT - forcing to game, not unusual notrump				

South	West	North	East	
1♣	Pass	1♥	1NT	
Dbl	Pass	2NT - forcing to game		

These 2NT cue bids show game-going hands that do not want to defend 1NT doubled. The 2NT bidder no doubt has a highly distributional hand, but could have any strong hand that fears missing a slam. Perhaps the notrump bid is a psych.

### Over Any Response to a Strong 1NT Opening

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	2NT - unusual notrump

An artificial bid such as this Stayman 2♣ response does not count as a suit bid, so East is asking West to take a choice between the minors.

### Over an Artificial Response to a Weak 1NT Opening

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	2NT - unusual notrump

North's bid was a Jacoby transfer bid, so the 2NT bid asks for a choice between the minors. If 2♥ had been natural, 2NT would be for takeout. See below.

### Over a Natural Response to a Weak 1NT Opening

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♠	2NT - takeout

When the response to a weak notrump opening is natural, as with the 2♠ bid here, a 2NT bid is for takeout. The reason for this is that a double shows a hand that has a little something in spades and would have doubled 1NT for business if RHO had not bid. See section 12-3, Defense Against Weak Notrump Openings.

The same principle applies when there has been an artificial response to the notrump opening, but only after the 2NT bidder has passed over the artificial response:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	2NT - takeout, not "unusual" Dbl - balanced good hand

Since 2♣ is an artificial bid (Stayman), an immediate 2NT bid over 2♣ would be unusual notrump and a double would merely show good clubs.

## When Partner's 1NT Opening Has Been Doubled

South	West	North
1NT	Dbl	2NT

If the double is for business, the 2NT bid shows both minor suits.

If the double is an artificial call showing a one-suited hand, or a two-suited hand but the suits are not specified (e.g., Cansino double showing both majors or both minors) the 2NT bid has the same transfer meaning as over a pass. See Minor Suit Transfer Bids in Section 5-2.

If the artificial double shows a specific two-suiter, (both majors, for instance), the principle of "Unusual over Unusual" applies. See section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions. In this situation the 2NT bid is a natural raise.

## CUE BIDS IN TAKEOUT DOUBLE SITUATIONS

Almost any cue bid can be a slam try, regardless of what the cue bid may sound like when it is made. When the cue bidder follows up the cue bid with some strong bid that shows he was not just seeking a suit or looking for a notrump contract, then the true meaning is revealed:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♠

Obviously East knew where he was going all along. Why the cue bid, then? To show first round control of diamonds and to invite a slam. Nothing complicated, just a normal slam try control-showing cue bid. With this in mind, then, the following discussion of cue bids in takeout double situations is concerned with the meaning that partner will *assume* the cue bid has, until the cue bidder makes clear that he had something else in mind.

### Cue Bid in Response to a Takeout Double

-- When RHO passes or raises:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	2♣
South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	2♣	3♣

These cue bids are forcing to a limit situation, so East cannot pass a non-game bid by West. A non-game notrump bid is not a "limit situation" if the bidder has not previously bid, so a 2NT bid by West in the first auction is forcing (a double is not a bid).

Since these cue bids are forcing to a limit situation, don't cue bid just because you have both majors. The weakest hand one could have for a two-level cue bid occurs when the suit is clubs, since partner can bid at the two level in any suit. When partner might be (or is) forced to bid at the three level, the cue bidder should have game-going values.

Avoid answering a cue bid with a very weak four-card suit, especially when it is the only unbid major. The double has already implied major suit length, so bidding a suit like 9642 is somewhat redundant. Instead, prefer to show some other feature of the hand. With no good alternative, go ahead and bid the weak suit.

When a passed hand cue bids at the three level, he is allowed to pass the response. If there are two unbid major suits, a passed hand is almost certainly just asking for a choice between them with the three-level cue bid. The takeout doubler must therefore not bid just 3♠ or 3♥ if game is likely.

Since the three-level cue bid by an unpassed hand is forcing to a limit situation, the doubler does not have to jump with just an extra king or so. A jump therefore shows substantial extra values:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	2♦	3♦
Pass	4♥		

West has ♠A93 ♥AKJ97 ♦4 ♣QJ87. The good suit, extra high cards, and diamond control justify the jump. With one more spade and one less heart, West could cue bid 4♦ to show both a good hand and a probable 4-4 major suit holding.

A repeat cue bid after the doubler has made a minimum answer to the first cue bid shows great support for the doubler's suit and at least second round control of opener's suit:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣

East has good diamond support, perhaps the ace of clubs, and is asking for more information. There is no need to make this repeat cue bid with something like 5-5 in the majors, because a 2♠ bid over 2♦ would be forcing.

-- When the opponents have bid two suits before the double:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	1♠	Dbl
Pass	2♥ - natural, not forcing		

The 2♥ bid is natural because 2♠ is available as a forcing cue bid. West has long hearts and not much in high cards.

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	2♣	Dbl
Pass	2♦ - natural, not forcing		

West is not asking East to choose a major. With 4-4 in the majors and not enough to cue bid 3♣, West must just bid 2♠.

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♦ - natural

East can count on diamond support, as implied by West's actions.

-- When RHO redoubles, all responses are weak (pass with strength):

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Rdbl	2♣ - weak, both majors

The cue bid in a minor asks for partner's better major. It shows a weak but distributional hand of some sort, perhaps even 5-5 in the majors. It does not promise another bid. With long clubs East can pass the redouble and "rescue" partner's bid by bidding 2♣

The cue bid in a major implies a weak three-suiter:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Rdbl	2♥ - ♠8432 ♥5 ♦Q843 ♣K765

Also see section 9-1, Takeout Doubles.

-- When RHO bids a new suit over a double, a cue bid in opener's suit is not to play (as it would be if partner had passed instead of doubling):

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	2♣	2♦

The 2♦ bid could be played as natural, but is more valuable as a cue bid in this situation.

When the new suit is a major, there is a good possibility that the bid is a psych. The best policy is to ignore the bid completely, except that a double is for penalty. The double is limited, however, in that it says, "I would willingly have made that bid." With a stronger hand, one that would have called for a jump or cue bid, go ahead and make the bid you would have made if RHO had passed:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	1♠	Dbl - "That's <i>my</i> bid!"
			2♠ - not forcing, but better than a double
			2♥ - normal cue bid
			3♠ - forcing, slam interest
			4♠ - not much interest in slam

The 2♠ bid is not forcing, just as a jump response of 2♠ would not have been forcing. Might East be giving up a good penalty by bidding 2♠ with ♠AJ873 ♥43 ♦K85 ♣J32? Don't be naive! It is important to be accurate about one's strength here, in case the bidding goes something like this:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	1♠	Dbl
Pass	Pass	4♥!	

If East had more than a double of 1♠, he is going to have a hard time showing that now unless he is sure of making game in spades.

-- When RHO bids 1NT:

If the suit doubled is a minor, the cue bid shows a weak hand with both majors.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	1NT	2♣

When the suit doubled is a major, however:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	1NT	2♥

This cue bid is forcing to a limit situation, based on a good but distributional hand that is not suitable for a double of 1NT.

A cue bid of 2NT over 1NT in either auction would be unusual notrump, showing the lower two or higher two unbid suits..

### Cue Bid by the Takeout Doubler

-- When the doubler's partner has responded minimally and the doubler cue bids opener's suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠		

This cue bid, forcing to a limit situation, can be based on almost any sort of strong hand. The doubler may be trying to find out if East has a spade stopper, or another suit, or a good club suit, or whatever. See chapter 10-12, Probing Cue Bids. If the doubler's next bid is something like a jump to 4♥ or 5♣, then the cue bid will be revealed as a normal slam try cue bid. If West repeats the cue bid, she shows *spades*--not forcing. After a major suit response, the sequence of cue bid, then raise, implies three-card support.

In the auction above, West can pass a minimum club rebid or a 2NT bid by East. If East bids a new suit or jumps to 4♣, West will not pass. Responder should avoid bidding beyond the level of his original response suit unless he has undisclosed strength, even if it means rebidding a four-card suit. With a five-card suit and undisclosed strength, he should jump in response to the cue bid.

-- A cue bid in response to a *jump* response definitely shows support for responder's suit:

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

4♣ - cue bid in support of diamonds

South is not asking for a major suit preference, but is showing a great hand for diamonds and first round club control: ♠AK832 ♥A432 ♦KJ87 ♣ void While not big enough to bid 3♣ over 2♣, this hand is so good in support of diamonds that South has good reason to try for slam. North can bid 6♦ with ♠Q2 ♥65 ♦A109642 ♣654.

-- When doubler bids LHO's suit after hearing a suit response:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	1♥	1♠
Pass	2♥		

2♥ - not forcing

West is exposing a probable psych. This bid cannot be based on mere suspicion, so West must have quite good hearts. In order to force, West must bid opener's suit first.

-- After a cue bid response to the takeout double:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦ - game forcing		

This bid does not just say, "I have both majors," but also "I have a good hand." With a modest hand and 4-4 in the majors, West should just bid 2♠. This will not be passed, as East's cue bid is forcing to a limit situation.

-- When the doubler's partner has passed over an intervening bid:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	2♣	Pass
Pass	2♦		

A 3♣ cue bid would be forcing to a limit situation, so the 2♦ bid is used when West doesn't want to sell out, has no good five-card or longer major to bid, and is not particularly interested in playing 2♣ doubled (as might well happen if he doubled again and East decided to pass with a little something in clubs). West might have: ♠AJ109 ♥KQJ10 ♦A2 ♣432.

We can make a rule out of this situation: When the doubler bids opener's suit, he is merely competing. When he cue bids responder's suit, he is forcing to a limit situation if the suit is a minor, but is making a natural bid when it is a major:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	1♥	Pass
Pass	2♣ - just competing, probably		
	2♥ - not forcing		

West's 2♣ bid implies a dislike for defending 2♥ doubled, for otherwise she might repeat the takeout double. Probably her hearts are questionable: ♠AQJ8 ♥987 ♦AKJ7 ♣32. A 2♥ bid by West exposes a probable psych. If North had bid 1♦, however, a 2♦ bid would be forcing (again, implying that a leave-in of a repeat double would not be welcome).

### Cue Bid as Responder's Second Bid

-- If the original response was a minimum response over a pass (i.e., not a free bid), a second round cue bid by responder is natural:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣ - long in both minors

East could hardly be making a strong move after responding just 1♦. The clubs were not good enough for a pass of the double.

-- If the original response was a free bid or jump, a second round cue bid is a probing cue bid. See section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids.

-- If the original response was a cue bid, a second round cue bid asks for more information from the doubler:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♥ - "tell me more"

## SLAM TRY CUE BIDS

The subject of slam try cue bids is too large for this particular writer. Besides, the whole field is well covered in two books:

*How to Win at Duplicate Bridge*, by Marshall Miles

*Blueprint for Bidding*, by Terence Reese and Albert Dormer

Some general principles:

-- When making a first cue bid toward slam, avoid cue bidding a void (except in an opposing suit) or a suit with no losers: singleton ace, doubleton AK, AKQ. Prefer a cue bid in a suit like Axx, where a fit would be welcome. Partner will evaluate his hand on the basis of fit in the first cue bid suit, and you want him to come up with the right answer: a king in the suit is good, xxx is bad.

-- It is not mandatory to cue bid an ace that can be cheaply shown if you have already stretched in the previous bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	?	

North should bid 4♠, signing off, not 4♦, with ♠Q432 ♥KJ ♦A87 ♣7632. With such a miserable limit raise, if South passes the 4♠ signoff there can surely be no slam. If all South needs for slam is the diamond ace, he should be able to make another move. South has ♠AKJ75 ♥983 ♦K9 ♣AK8. If North bids 4♦, South will bid 5♦, and North will have to bid 6♠ because 5♠ would deny heart control. If one of North's small clubs were traded for the queen of clubs, she could cooperate in the slam try by bidding 4♦. This would lead to a reasonable slam.

-- A cue bid is not possible in partner's major at the four level, unless the *other* major has been tentatively agreed:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠ - spade raise, not a cue bid	

The 4♠ bid is not quite forcing, although it will seldom be passed (in view of the club fit).

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	4♠ - forcing, may be a cue bid	

North could have ♠A4 ♥KQJ873 ♦AK3 ♣95. The 4♠ is forcing, because North presumably could have passed 4♥ with a minimum 3♥ jump.

## NOTRUMPER CUE BIDS

The problem: A player who has bid notrump strongly does not give valuable information when he cue bids an ace to show implied support for partner's suit. For instance, you open 2NT with ♠Q107 ♥KJ76 ♦AK7 ♣AKJ. Partner bids 3♣, Stayman, you say 3♥, and partner says 3♠. You have a good hand in support of spades, so you cue bid 4♦ or 4♣. This presumably shows an ace, agrees spades as trump, and suggests a good hand for slam. The bidding:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♥	3♠
4♣/4♦	

Such a cue bid is not very helpful. Partner knows you have aces, but not if the hands fit. Try this:.

Bid the suit in which it would be least desirable for partner to have a singleton or void (hearts, in the hand show above). A KJx holding is best for a notrumper cue bid, but KQx is also good. Lacking either of these, bid any other holding that includes secondary strength. The approximate order of preference for a notrumper cue bid: KJx, KQx, AKx, AKJ, AKQ, AQx, AQJ, QJx.

Opposite the 2NT bid above, responder would sign off in 4♠ after a 4♥ cue bid when he has ♠AKJ54 ♥3 ♦J642 ♣Q96. The singleton is in the worst place, hearts, so slam is unlikely. With a better mesh (♠AKJ54 ♥Q96 ♦J642 ♣3) he could go on. Note that a 4♣ or 4♦ ace-showing cue bid would be of no help.

A secondary benefit of the notrumper cue bid comes when the hand opposite has an unbalanced hand that looks questionable for notrump. If partner opens a strong 1NT and you make a slam try in clubs with ♠Q87 ♥KJ8 ♦3 ♣AQJ753, you can bid 3NT in comfort if she makes a notrumper cue bid in diamonds. First, you know the hands do not fit well, so slam is improbable. Second, you know the opponents won't run five quick diamond tricks, since partner has secondary strength in diamonds. She might have ♠AJ62 ♥A106 ♦KJ4 ♣K105. The usual ace-showing cue bid of 3♥ or 3♠ would be useless. With notrumper cue bids, a 3♠ cue bid shows something like ♠KJ42 ♥A106 ♦AJ6 ♣K105. Now you can bid the slam with some confidence, knowing that the hands fit.

Only the first cue bid by a notrump bidder is a notrumper cue bid. Subsequent cue bids show controls, as usual:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♠
4♣	4♦
4♥	- heart ace

Notrumper cue bids do not apply when the cue bid is in a suit bid by the opponents. The cue bid of an opposing suit has the standard meaning: first round control.

## PROBING CUE BIDS

Probing Cue Bids (made by "Prober") apply when the opponents have bid only one suit, the cue bid is not a jump, and the logic of the auction suggests that Prober may only be groping for the best contract, which is probably not a slam, and perhaps not even a game. Probing Cue Bids (forcing to a limit situation--see section 10-1) are made at the two or three level only. Here are examples:

-- The partnership has previously made a total of three or more bids:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦	

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠	

-- A non-jump new suit response has been made at a higher level than two of opener's suit (possibly giving opener a rebid problem).

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	2♥	Pass
2♠			

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

-- The partnership has raised a suit:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	Pass
2♠			

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

-- The cue bid is an advance of an overcall after opener's partner has passed:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Pass	2♣

-- The partnership has overcalled in a minor suit and opener's partner has raised or bid a new suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	2♠	3♠

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	2♦	3♦

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♥	2♥ - Probing Cue Bid
			2♣ - natural

-- Prober previously made a takeout double, received a response, and is now cue bidding the suit doubled:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦		

-- Prober's partner ("Replier") opened the bidding and then passed on the second round (rather than make a free bid):

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
Pass	Pass	2♠	

-- Both partners have previously bid, and an opponent has made a jump overcall during the auction:

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

The following are normal strong cue bids, not "Probing Cue Bids":

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♠			

The partnership has bid only twice, and North's response was not higher than two of South's suit (i.e., higher than 2♣). If East had bid 2♠, a jump overcall, then 3♠ would be a Probing Cue Bid.

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	2♣	Pass
2♠			

The partnership has bid only twice, and North's response is two of a suit that is lower than South's diamond suit. If North had bid 2♥ instead of 2♣, then 2♠ would be a Probing Cue Bid.

South	West	North
1♣	1♥	2♥

A normal strong cue bid, probably with first round control of hearts.

### Probing Cue Bids at the Two Level

Probing Cue Bids at the two level are not forcing to game, as are three-level probes, although Prober must have at least some interest in game, probably in a major suit or notrump. If it is a notrump game he is looking for, Prober must have one or both of the following:

-- "Solidity": Reason to believe that the combined hands of the partnership have nine fast tricks at notrump if entry can be gained in time (i.e., if the opposing suit is stopped by the partnership)

or:

-- Some sort of strength in the opposing suit--a partial stopper (K, Qx, Jxx, 10xxx) or a full stopper (usually Ax or Axx, wanting Replier to bid the notrump in case she has a holding that is more valuable in the declaring hand than in the dummy hand, e.g., Qx, J10x).

Replies to the Probing Cue Bid:

Replier makes the call that will best describe her hand, remembering that a simple bid of suit bid previously by the partnership may be passed. A 2NT bid may be passed if Prober has no strength in the cue bid suit and is willing to risk the loss of the first five tricks in that suit. Prober will not pass 2NT, however, if Replier has not previously limited her hand in some way (i.e., by a limit bid or a pass).

When a notrump game is the probable goal, there are two situations:

- 1) Prober is "Senior," sitting over the opposing suit.
- 2) Prober is "Junior," sitting under the opposing suit.

1) Senior is the better position:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	

Cue bids are more frequent for a Senior, because any notrump bid should be played from the other side, making the opposing bidder lead away from his strength.

In the above auction, South (Replier) can now bid 2NT with any one of the following:

-- More solidity in the partnership's long suit(s) than Prober might expect. South could bid 2NT with ♠87 ♥AKQ1083 ♦QJ3 ♣92 or ♠642 ♥AQ1083 ♦Q103 ♣KQ

-- A sure stopper in the opposing suit (with solidity too, bid 3NT)

-- A partial stopper in the opposing suit (K, Qx, Jxx, 10xxx)

Replier doesn't *have* to bid notrump with any of these requirements, but she may do so if no other call describes her hand better. The primary aim is to describe the hand in general. Lacking any of the above requirements for a 2NT bid, or not wishing to bid notrump because of the nature of her hand, South makes the call that will best serve to further describe her hand. Any minimum bid in a suit previously bid by either partner may be passed.

Senior continues with one of the following actions:

-- He bids 3NT over 2NT if solidity or a partial stopper in Replier's hand is sufficient for chancing that game.

-- He bids a partnership (i.e., previously bid) suit if he doesn't mind being passed there.

-- He can make any other call that serves to describe his hand, including a (forcing) bid in a new suit.

-- He can repeat the cue bid when Replier has bid 2NT, warning her that she needs a sure stopper (vs a partial stopper or suit solidity) for a game in notrump.

-- He can pass 2NT with perhaps three small cards in the opposing suit, if Replier has previously made a limit bid and he has a hunch that 2NT is better than any other spot.

-- He can repeat the cue bid when Replier has refused to bid notrump, asking that she please do so regardless of her holding in the opposing suit:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	

The 3♥ bid is equivalent to a 3NT bid, wanting South to play the hand. North has ♠A7632 ♥A8 ♦A93 ♣Q63. South has not *denied* holding something like Qx in hearts, despite his failure to bid 2NT. Besides, there is no reason for South to play the hand.

After Prober has made his follow-up call, it is Replier's turn to bid again:

-- If she had solidity plus a partial stopper for 2NT bid, she can bid 3NT even if Prober signs-off:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT

East has ♠873 ♥642 ♦Q7 ♣A10873. She has both a partial stopper and more suit-running ability than West could expect. With two reasons for bidding 2NT, she now bids 3NT. West has ♠AK4 ♥AQ3 ♦J83 ♣KQ94. Without the partial stop in diamonds, West would have bid 3♣ (a strong bid in this situation) instead of 2♦.

-- She can pass a minimum bid in one of the partnership's suits if she sees no game. In the preceding auction, East would have passed 3♣ without the queen of diamonds.

-- She can repeat the cue bid herself to show a good hand that unfortunately has none of the requirements for a 2NT bid. In the preceding auction, East would have bid 3♦ instead of 2NT with ♠Q52 ♥K85 ♦7♣J87532, with the intention of driving to game somewhere.

-- She can make some other appropriate bid.

An implied assumption in all of the foregoing is that one sure stopper plus one partial stopper will provide a double stopper when the opponent must lead away from her suit. This is not always so, but is true often enough to justify the assumption. The other assumption is that two partial stoppers will produce one sure stopper, which is almost always true.

Here is an example from actual play:

South has ♠J53 ♥A1082 ♦A83 ♣A64, North ♠K ♥763 ♦KQJ1092 ♣K85

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT			

North would not have made the cue bid if the spade king and heart seven were exchanged. South knows that responder must have some spade strength, since he can see that her diamonds are not solid. He bids 3NT because he has *two* of the requirements for the 2NT bid: a partial stopper and solidifying strength (in diamonds). Lacking one, he would pass 3♦ with a minimum hand.

2) Junior has the adverse suit sitting over him. This is the worse position:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♥	Pass
2♠			

Replier North cannot profitably bid notrump and have the opening lead come through Prober's possible spade strength. The bidding flexibility is considerably reduced by this factor. On the other hand, the person contemplating a cue bid can more readily bid notrump instead, since the lead will be coming up to his hand. Accordingly, with many hands that would call for a cue bid if the suit had been bid on the right, a player will bid notrump when the suit has been bid on the left. Senior tends to cue bid, Junior tends to bid notrump.

The following guidelines apply for a Junior cue bid:

-- Replier *raises* the cue bid instead of bidding notrump, holding one of the features supposedly being sought by Junior (solidity, stopper, partial stopper). With only a partial stopper and a doubtful hand, it may

be better to sign off rather than raise the cue bid. The purpose of raising the cue bid is to get the lead in the right place--making the opponent who bid the suit lead away from it.

-- Junior's repeat cue bid asks for a partial stopper, since he would seldom have any reason to insist that Replier play the notrump:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	- asks for a partial stopper		

East would not raise the first cue bid with a partial stopper and a weak raise, so South inquires about that possibility. South has ♠J64 ♥A65 ♦A ♣AK9876

Another: West has ♠Q3 ♥A8 ♦K96 ♣QJ9632, East ♠J54 ♥9642 ♦AQ8 ♣AK5:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT		

West did not raise the cue bid even though she has a partial stopper, because her clubs are not very good. With the partial stopper and a normal hand, however, she is able to bid 3NT after the repeat cue bid.

-- Rather than raise the cue bid, Replier can just bid 2NT with a holding that can be safely led up to (e.g., doubleton A10, AJ). Bidding 2NT in this position implies a potential double stopper, and a jump to 3NT implies a double stopper.

-- If the cue bid gets doubled, Replier can redouble to show at least a partial stopper in the opposing suit. This is a weaker action than raising the cue bid.

When a major suit game is the probable goal -- If the partnership has not bid a minor suit before the cue bid, it can be assumed that Prober is pointing toward a major suit game rather than a notrump game. One of the most common cases is the cue bid response to a major suit overcall:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Pass	2♣

Chances are that East has spade support and is going to try for a spade game (a jump to 3♠ is not particularly invitational). However, he could have something else in mind. Perhaps he has a strong hand with little in spades, but has no readily available bid that would describe the hand adequately (unless the partnership is playing transfer responses to overcalls, a new suit bid, even a jump, is not forcing). He therefore seeks more information about West's hand with a cue bid.

In response to the cue bid, Replier makes the bid that will best serve to further describe her hand. With a minimum overcall and no other suit to show, she will probably just bid 2♠:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠ - minimum overcall, no second suit		
	2NT - club stopper, likes notrump okay		
	3♣ - good hand, club stopper		
	2♦/2♥ - second suit, forcing		
	3♠ - good suit, good overcall, forcing		
	4♠ - very good suit and hand		

The 2NT bid tends to show a short club holding (e.g., AQ, Kx). With a holding like Qxx, Kxx, or Axx, it is better to raise the cue bid in order to show a stopper and maybe get the lead coming up to Prober's hand (which may include Kx, Qx, or Jxx in clubs).

The 3♣ bid shows a club stopper, but Replier can make this bid with nothing but a partial stopper and solid spades. Prober won't dare bid 3NT with no partial stopper and no high card in spades (as the cue bid tends to imply).

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♥/3♣/3♦ - not forcing

Prober East must repeat the cue bid if he wants to force. The 3♥ bid is only a strong invitation to game, since 2♥ would be just mildly invitational. The 3♥ bid shows a hand too good for an original 3♥ advance, while a 2♥ bid would show a hand too good for an original 2♥ advance.

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣		

Going to the three level with 3♣ implies a little extra, either in distribution (5-5) or high cards. If West has weak spades, he no doubt has extra high cards to justify the overcall. With a minimum overcall (no doubt with good spades), he should just bid 2♠, not 3♣, with 5=4.

### Probing Cue Bids at the Three Level

If both opponents have bid the same suit, a Probing Cue Bid at the three level requests a notrump bid from Replier if she has a sure stopper:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	2♠	3♠

East is suggesting that West bid 3NT with a sure spade stopper, but not with a partial stopper. The reasoning: Two partial stoppers, one in each hand, do not occur very often when both opponents have bid the same suit. It therefore makes more sense for a cue bid in this case to ask for a full stopper.

If only one opponent has bid the suit, however, the cue bid suggests that Replier bid 3NT with a partial stopper (K, Qx, Jxx, 10xxx) or better. There are occasions when Replier can bid 3NT opposite such a cue

bid when he has no strength whatsoever in the cue bid suit--when he is sure that Prober must have a stopper herself. For instance, when holding the ace of a suit in which Prober has shown good length--and she could not suppose that you have that ace--then you can bid 3NT without the partial stopper. Prober won't dare pass 3NT without a stopper, because she will suppose the partnership needs to have the opposing suit stopped twice.

Suppose South has ♠A4 ♥AJ ♦KQJ853 ♣Q107 and the bidding goes:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	2♠
3♠	Pass	?	

North has ♠106 ♥96432 ♦A976 ♣A8. Unless South has great heart support, she is probably looking for a notrump game with just such a hand as the one shown above. Holding the ace of diamonds, North can bid 3NT without a partial stopper. He knows that South, lacking that ace, will not dare pass without a sure spade stop. In actual play North missed this implication and bid 4♣ instead of 3NT. The final contract was 5♦, down one (I was North).

If the cue bid gets doubled, and both opponents have bid the suit, a redouble by either partner shows a partial stopper (bid 3NT with a sure stopper). If only one opponent has bid the suit, go ahead and bid 3NT with a partial stopper, as requested. A redouble in that case shows a "partial-partial" stopper (e.g., Q, Jx, 10xx). A redouble by Prober shows a sure stopper and asks partner to bid 3NT if he has the key card(s) that will provide solidity to the partnership's suit(s):

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	2♠
3♠	Dbl	Pass	Pass

Rdbl - sure stopper, asking for solidity

Other examples of Probing Cue Bids at the three level:

South	West	North	East
1♣	2♠	3♦	Pass

3♠ - asks for a partial spade stop

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♦	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♠	- asks for a sure spade stop

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	2♠	Pass

3♣ - asks for a partial club stop

Take the last auction: North is not *required* to bid 3NT with something in clubs if he thinks some other bid is more appropriate. In this case responder has ♠K10762 ♥AK3 ♦965 ♣Q5, so 3NT is the best bid. Opener has ♠A4 ♥Q7 ♦AKQJ87 ♣J42.

The following is *not* a Probing Cue Bid:

South	West	North
1♣	2♠	3♠

A jump overcall has been made, but both partners have not bid before the cue bid. This is a standard strong cue bid. Of course South will bid 3NT to show spade strength and a minimum hand.

A cue bid that sounds like a Probing Cue Bid may turn out to be a slam try cue bid. The logic of the auction usually reveals this fact plainly. Example:

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

North, assuming 3♦ was a Probing Cue Bid, bid 3NT with a diamond stopper. South's 4♠ bid makes it obvious he was going to raise spades, so 3♦ becomes a slam try cue bid, probably based on a void. Also see section 8-2, Responding to Simple Overcalls, and section 10-7, Cue Bid Responses to Overcalls.

## **MICHAELS CUE BID**

A direct cue bid over a one-level natural opening bid by a passed hand (only) is a Michaels cue bid. If in a minor, it shows both majors. If in a major, it shows the other major and an unspecified minor. Partner can bid notrump to ask which minor.

At least 5-5, please, but if 5-4, the four-carder has to be the higher ranking. As usual when showing two suits artificially, partner prefers the lower-ranking when given a choice.

A balancing cue bid is not Michaels, even by a passed hand. See section 8-7, Reopening the Bidding.

Michaels can be used over a raised opening.

## MISCELLANEOUS CUE BIDS

### Cue Bids in Partner's Suit

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Dbl *	3♣

\* Business double

When partner's suit has been doubled for business at a low level, his suit has really become the opponents' suit. A bid in this suit is therefore a cue bid, asking partner to take a choice between the unbid suits. In the auction above, East has a monstrous two-suiter in hearts and diamonds, perhaps 6-6. He also has a fair hand, since he would have to pass (or perhaps run to one of the red suits) with a bad hand. West can make a jump preference with the right cards: ♠9432 ♥AQ3 ♦K ♣QJ1097. Of course the 3♣ bid is a normal weak raise if the double is of the negative variety.

At higher levels it is entirely possible to make a natural bid in partner's suit, even when it has been doubled:

South	West	North	East
1♣	4♦	Dbl	5♦

Even if the double is for business, East may have a logical 5♦ bid. He figures that South is going to bid a major and wants to preempt with 5♦. He might have: ♠542 ♥873 ♦Q1084 ♣A65. There is no way that partner will buy the hand for 4♦ doubled, and 5♦ must be a good save.

### Telling Cue Bids

When the opponents have shown two suits naturally, and both partners have previously bid or made a business (not a takeout) double, a cue bid in one of the opposing suits shows a stopper in that suit. It suggests that partner bid notrump if she has the other suit stopped:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♦	2♥
2♠ - Telling Cue Bid, spades stopped			

South has spades stopped and values for 2NT, but lacks enough in diamonds for a 2NT bid. North can now bid 2NT with diamonds stopped, regardless of his spade holding. With a good hand, he should bid 3NT, because South will pass 2NT with a minimum hand. Raising a Telling Cue Bid shows a stopper in the *other* opposing suit. The raise is indicated when holding a non-vulnerable stopper in the other suit, as partner's stopper may be vulnerable (e.g., Kx, Qxx).

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	2♣	2♥ - transfer to spades
2♠/3♦ - telling cue bid, showing a stopper			

This principle is applied differently in takeout double situations. See Section 10-9, Cue Bids in Takeout Double Situations. It does not apply when the cue bidder has not previously acted:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	1♥	2♥ - strong diamond raise
			2♣ - natural
			3♦ - normal diamond raise

See section 10-7, Cue Bid Responses to Overcalls.

### Non-Forcing Cue Bids

When an opponent has made an artificial bid, a bid in that suit is natural, not forcing, in the absence of some conventional understanding.

A delayed cue bid, i.e., a bid in an enemy suit after that suit has been passed, is in general a non-forcing natural bid:

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♥ - natural,		not forcing

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♥	3♦ - natural,		not forcing

In a minor suit, however, after a 1NT response:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	2♣ - takeout for the majors		

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1NT	2♦ - takeout for majors

The opponents will usually have at least six cards in the minor between them, so the cue bid is more useful as a major suit takeout than as a natural bid. In the first auction, West has a hand that is not suitable for a (business) double of 1NT: ♠Q1043 ♥K10875 ♦A ♣873. As is usual for responding to an artificial takeout bid,, East will prefer the lower ranking suit (hearts) with equal length. Also see section 10-5, Reopening Cue Bid Overcalls.

A bid in opener's suit is not forcing when RHO has made a new suit response:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	2♣ - natural
			2♥ - spades/diamonds
			Dbl - spades/diamonds
			2NT - natural

The 2♥ bid shows at least 5-5 in spades/diamonds, while the takeout double implies only four spades. The 2NT bid is no doubt based on a solid diamond suit plus stoppers.

When partner has overcalled and RHO bids a new suit or notrump, a bid of opener's suit is natural:

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	1NT/2♣	2♥ - natural

The following is a forcing cue bid, not a natural bid:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠ - cue bid, forcing		

The partnership has not been "previously silent," so this is a cue bid. See section 10-12, Probing Cue Bids.

Also see section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls; section 10-7, Cue Bid Responses to Overcalls; and section 10-9, Cue Bids in Takeout Double Situations.

## MISCELLANEOUS CUE BID BIDDING SEQUENCES

1♥ P 1♠ P  
1NT 2♥ A natural bid. Must have a good hand, since this is not a reopening situation.

1♥ P 1NT 2♥ Top-and-bottom cue bid; Michaels by a passed hand

1♥ P 1♠ P  
1NT P P 2♥/2♠ are both natural, may not be strong.

1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 2♣ Natural bid, good club suit

1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 2♥ Probing cue bid, may have spades and diamonds

1♠ P P 2♣  
P 2♠ Probing cue bid (see section 10-12) The spade bid must be repeated to be natural.

1♥ Dbl P 3♦  
P 3♥ Asks for a partial heart stopper, a probing cue bid. With a solid diamond suit the diamond bidder can chance a 3NT bid without the partial heart stopper--partner won't dare pass without a sure heart stopper himself. Of course the cue bidder may have a heart void and no interest in notrump. If so, he will make this clear on the next round.

1♥ Dbl P 1♠  
P 2♣ P 2♥ Probing cue bid

1♥ Dbl 1♠ 2♥ Natural bid, long hearts

1♥ Dbl P 1♠  
2♠ Probably 0-5-4-4, may not have a lot in highcards. With a good hand, or 4-4-4-1 distribution, a takeout double would be usual. Might have a huge two-suited hand.

1♥ Dbl Rdbl 1♠  
P P 2♠ Normal slam try cue bid, not a probing cue bid. Opener bids notrump if his spade strength was needed for the opening bid, to warn of possible duplication.

1♠ 2♦ P 3♠ Demands that partner bid 3NT if with a spade stopper, unless she has a most unusual hand. This is a very strong call, showing something like ♠65 ♥AK7 ♦Q8432 ♣AK2.

1♣ 1♠ P 3♣ Splinter bid in support of spades, strong because the overcall was in a major suit).

1♠ 2♥ 3♥ P  
 3NT Implies that opener would not have opened if it were not for her heart strength.  
 Warns of duplication, in case the cue bidder has a void. Opener may even have  
 an unbalanced hand with five or six spades. With an opening bid outside the  
 heart suit, opener should not bid 3NT, even with KQJ of hearts.

1♠ 3♣ P 3♠ Asks for a partial spade stopper, in accordance with the principles of probing cue bids at the three level (only one opponent has bid the suit). A strong jump overcall in a minor tends to show a solid suit or equivalent, so the 3♣ bidder needs a potential double stopper (e.g., A10x, K10x) to bid 3NT if his suit is not solid.

## TRANSFER ADVANCES

It is often difficult to describe one's hand when partner overcalls, especially when you hold an unbid major. Suppose you sit East and hold ♠AQ873 ♥65 ♦Q3 ♣Q853. The bidding goes:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	Pass	?

If you bid 2♠, partner may pass with two little spades and no more to say. If you bid 3♣, you could miss a good spade contract if he has spade support. If you play 2♠ as forcing, then you won't know what to do with one more spade and one less club if overcaller rebids his clubs. Does he have a tolerance for spades or not? The hand is not strong enough for a fit-jump to 3♠, which gets you to the four level. Or maybe you have ♠A10762 ♥KQJ ♦J73 ♣Q8. Should you bid 2♠ or 2NT? Probably 2NT, which misses a better spade contract if West has ♠Q94 ♥62 ♦95 ♠AK10765. And what if you have both unbid suits? How do you show them?

What are the requirements for a transfer bid? Only one: Common sense! You must have enough in suit quality, HCP, and support for partner to provide adequate safety considering the vulnerability. The indicated (target) suit must be at least five cards long.

### When Do Transfers Apply?

Transfer advances apply when all the following conditions are met:

- There is at least one major unbid by either side.
- The overcall was 1♦, 1♠, or 2♣ (not 1♥), nothing higher.
- Third hand has passed, made a negative double, or raised a minor suit to the two level.

In other situations transfers do not work as well as natural advances. The reason for not including transfers after a 1♥ overcall is that a natural 1♠ bid is too valuable to give up. It's a cheap bid, and advancer often doesn't have the assets required for higher-level action.

### SWAPs and BUMPs

A SWAP consists of switching the names of two strains to indicate one by naming the other, e.g., hearts means spades and spades means hearts.

A BUMP consists of naming a suit ranked just below a suit in order to indicate that suit, i.e., clubs means diamonds, diamonds means hearts, hearts means spades, and spades ("below" clubs, for this purpose) means clubs.

Here are the rules for BUMPs and SWAPs:

- Both must point to a suit of at least five cards.

-- BUMPs are used to advance a "supercall" (simple overcall that takes up maximum bidding space) if third hand passes or doubles negatively (not when he raises).

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	P/Dbf	2♣ - diamonds
			2♦ - hearts
			2♥ - probing cue bid

The 2♥ bid doesn't point to clubs as a suit but as a cue bid: an all-purpose "probing cue bid" described in section 10-12. There is only one other occasion for BUMPs, since transfers aren't used to advance a 1♥, 2♦ or higher overcall:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	P/Dbf	2♦ - hearts
			2♥ - spades
			2♠ - probing cue bid

-- SWAPs are used for all other transfer advances. There are four such sequences if third hand passes or doubles negatively:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	Pass	1♥ - spades
			1♠ - hearts
			2♣ - probing cue bid

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♣ - hearts
			2♦ - probing cue bid
			2♥ - clubs

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	Pass	2♦ - spades
			2♥ - probing cue bid
			2♠ - diamonds

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♦ - hearts
			2♥ - diamonds
			2♠ - probing cue bid

Note that the probing cue bid in a SWAP situation is always a bid of opener's suit. If third hand raises the major in the last two sequences, transfers do not apply. There are two more SWAP sequences, however, because the two BUMP situations shown previously become SWAPs if third hand raises::

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	2♦ - hearts
			2♥ - diamonds

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	2♦	2♥ - spades
			2♠ - hearts

In order to cover all simple overcall sequences thoroughly, we will go through them one by one. Some added rules arising from this review will be listed at the conclusion.

### 1♣-1♦-Pass

Transfers are handy for such hands as:

--♠AQxxx ♥Qxx ♦Jx ♣AJx Transfer to spades (1♥), then bid 2NT if not supported. With minors switched, raise diamonds if not supported. With majors switched, transfer to hearts (1♠), etc.

--♠KJxxxx ♥Qx ♦Jxx ♣Ax or majors switched. With a forcing 1♠, advancer doesn't know if overcaller can "stand" spades if he now rebids clubs. With transfers, overcaller can indicate whether or not he has spade tolerance.

-- A two-suiter in the majors, which may not get described unless 1♠ is forcing. Transfer to spades, then bid hearts.

The broad picture for this SWAP situation:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	Pass	1♥ - spades
			1♠ - hearts
			2♣ - probing cue bid
			2♦ - normal raise
			2♥/2♠ - like a weak two bid (UPH)
			2♥/2♠ - fit jumps, five-card suit (PH)
			3♣ - natural, not forcing
			3♦ - too good for 2♦
			3♥/3♠ - preemptive
			1NT/2NT - not forcing

The raises, new-suit jumps, and notrump bids are the same as when not using transfers. See section 8-2, Advancing a Simple Overcall.

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	Pass	1♥ - spades
Pass	1♠		- xxx or better, not forcing
	2♠		- spade raise, opening values
	2♣		- spade tolerance (xx)
	2♦		- no spade tolerance
	2♥		- five hearts or a strong hand, forcing

We have found a purpose for a cue bid by overcaller: to show tolerance for advancer's suit. The 2♥ bid implies a five-card suit or a strong hand, since advancer might have cue bid with four or more cards in both

majors, and 2♥ crowds the bidding somewhat. It has to be forcing.

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	Pass	1♠ - hearts
Pass	2♣ - tolerance for hearts		
	2♦ - no heart tolerance		
	2♥ - xxx or better		
	2♠ - five spades, or a strong hand		

In this sequence the space-consuming “fourth-suit” bid of 2♠ by West cannot be a stretch, and practically denies heart tolerance.

These SWAPs can be made with a fairly light hand if advancer has good support for a 2♦ contract. Advancer won't "rebid" his suit opposite a denial of tolerance unless his suit is self-sufficient (playable opposite a singleton). Is this hand too weak for a SWAP: ♠QJ87xx ♥xx ♦xx ♣xxx? The answer is obviously yes. We could play 2♠ as preemptive, but that is unlikely to be useful. Lacking enough playing tricks to bid 3♠, we must pass a hand of this sort. A weakish hand (not this weak, however) should have diamond support or an independent spade suit. If overcaller doubles a club rebid, a weakish advancer must have a place to go.

What if opener butts in?

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	Pass	1♠ - hearts
2♣	Dbl - for penalties		
	2♦ - probable heart tolerance, good hand		
	2♥ - three or more hearts		
	2♠ - five spades, strong hand		
	Pass - poor hand		

Free acceptance of the transfer should show at least three cards in the suit, but not necessarily opening-bid strength. A free rebid of the overcall suit implies tolerance for advancer's suit as well as a promising hand, without which a pass is usually indicated. If advancer is quite prepared to bid 3♦ on her own, however, 2♦ need not require heart tolerance.

**1♣-1♥-Pass**  
**1♦-1♥-Pass**

Transfers just don't work after a 1♥ overcall; we must be able to bid a non-forcing 1♠. Overcaller won't pass without three-card support, however. He usually cue bids with tolerance for spades. Without tolerance, he will probably have the unbid minor or a six-card heart suit to bid. He might be able to bid 1NT. A spade raise shows a hand that would be a decent opening bid.

**1♣-1♠-Pass**

This supercall sequence calls for BUMPs:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	Pass	2♣ - diamonds
			2♦ - hearts
			2♥ - probing cue bid

**1♦-1♠-Pass**

This sequence calls for a SWAP because 1♠ is a supercall:

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♣ - hearts
			2♦ - probing cue bid
			2♥ - clubs

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♣ - hearts
Pass	2♦ - heart tolerance		
	2♥ - weak heart raise, not forcing		
	2♠ - no heart tolerance		
	3♥ - heart raise, opening values, not forcing		

The 2♠ bid may have to be made with only five spades. Overcaller should remember this before bidding a poor spade suit with short hearts.

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♥ - clubs
Pass	2♠ - probably six spades unless lacking club tolerance		
	3♣ - spades not good		

There is no point in transferring to clubs with spade support unless spades are to be raised on the next round. West must therefore accept the transfer to 3♣ with only five spades unless he has no club tolerance.

**1♦-2♣-Pass**

This supercall sequence calls for BUMPs:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	Pass	2♦ - hearts
			2♥ - spades
			2♠ - probing cue bid

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	Pass	2♦ - hearts
Pass	2♥ - almost forced, may have support		
	2♠ - five-carder, or strong hand		
	3♣ - self-sufficient suit, short hearts		
	3♥ - heart support, opening values		

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	Pass	2♥ - spades
Pass	2♠ - almost forced, may have support		
	3♣ - self-sufficient suit, short spades		
	3♠ - spade support, good hand		

Advancer will often have a five-card major, with either club support or a notrump bid in reserve.

**1♥-1♠-Pass**

No transfers here (no unbid major)

**1♠-2♥-Pass**

This sequence is out of order, put here because transfers don't apply in this case either.

**1♥-2♣-Pass**

This sequence calls for a SWAP:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	Pass	2♦ - spades
			2♥ - probing cue bid
			2♠ - diamonds

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	Pass	2♦ - spades
Pass	2♥ - spade tolerance		
	2♠ - spade raise		
	3♠ - spade raise, opening values		
	3♣ - no spade tolerance		

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	Pass	2♠ - diamonds
Pass	3♣ - prefers clubs for some reason		
	3♦ - prefers diamonds for some reason		

There isn't much sense in transferring to diamonds without a six-card suit, so overcaller can prefer diamonds with a doubleton if his club suit is not self-sufficient.

**1♠-2♣-Pass**

This sequence calls for a SWAP:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♦ - hearts
			2♥ - diamonds
			2♠ - probing cue

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♦ - hearts
Pass	2♥		- tolerance or better
	2♠		- heart tolerance, good clubs
	3♣		- no heart tolerance
	3♥		- heart raise, opening values

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♥ - diamonds
Pass	2♠		- diamond tolerance
	3♣		- no diamond tolerance
	3♦		- diamond support

**1♥-2♦-Pass****1♠-2♦-Pass**

Transfers don't work at all; we must be able to make a non-forcing bid in the unbid major.

Transfers don't work well for higher overcalls either, so we have finished.

**Conclusions**

Advances for all these situations should work satisfactorily over a either a pass or a negative double. Even when the doubler shows four cards in a certain suit, they could be four small. Transferring to that suit is therefore not irrational.

When a transfer is refused or accepted minimally (i.e., could be little or no tolerance), a new suit bid or return to the overcall suit by advancer is not forcing. When overcaller's acceptance is known to include three-card support, advancer's "new suit" bid (which will sound like a rebid) is a game try, forcing.

Overcaller's raise (not mere acceptance) of advancer's transfer target suit shows not only three-card support but also decent opening bid strength. Conversely, mere acceptance shows either a weaker hand or (in some sequences) fewer than three cards in the suit.

Overcaller's rebid of 2NT does not show extra values, but may have them. Advancer must remember that overcaller will not generally show extra values in reply to a transfer advance, except for jump raises of the transfer target suit. If advancer wants to hear about extra values right away, he can cue bid. Overcaller's cue bid says nothing about his strength. Whether weak or strong, he should make this tolerance-showing when not accepting a transfer.

The transfer bidder seldom has four cards in the suit used for the transfer bid, unless he plans to bid the suit later. Overcaller therefore needs five cards or a strong hand to "raise" the transfer bid, especially when the raise takes up considerable bidding space. This fourth suit bid is forcing.

Free bids (when opener butts in with a bid or double after an advance) imply a promising hand. Free acceptance of a transfer shows at least three cards in the suit, but does not require opening bid strength. If opener doubles a transfer bid, a redouble shows a stopper in the doubled suit, possibly resulting in a notrump contract from advancer's side. Let opener lead away from his strength.

Following an advance of any sort, doubles by either partner are for penalties, with one exception: If overcaller passes a suit rebid by opener, a two-level reopening double by a transfer advancer is not for penalties:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	Pass	1♠ - hearts
2♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl - takeout

The double asks overcaller to bid 2♦ with no heart tolerance, 2♥ with heart tolerance, or pass with good clubs. If South had bid 3♣, the double would be more penalty-oriented. If he had bid a new suit (2♠, in this case) the double would be for penalties.

### Transfers When RHO Raises

We can use transfers over most minor-suit raises, but they have to be SWAPs. We retain the rule of not using transfers in support of a heart overcall, and also will not use them if a major suit is raised.

#### 1♣-1♦-2♣

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	2♣	2♥ - spades
			2♠ - hearts

Use common sense: West should accept the transfer to spades with tolerance for spades, but he can show tolerance for hearts cheaply by bidding 3♣ over 2♠. No difference here in the fit jump bids. headed by at least the ace or king, and values for a raise to 4♦ (or better). Why have fit jumps if an advancive double can be used with a fit- jump sort of hand? For one thing, a fit jump requires at least the ace or king of the jump suit and another HCP card..

#### 1♣-1♥-2♣ 1♦-1♥-2♦

No transfers in support of a heart overcall. Use natural advances, including forcing natural jumps by an unpassed hand, fit jumps only by a passed hand.

**1♣-1♠-2♣**

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	2♣	2♦ - hearts 2♥ - diamonds

**1♦-1♠-2♦**

South	West	North	East
1♦	1♠	2♦	2♥ - clubs 3♣ - hearts 3♥/4♣ - Fit jumps (PH)

This doesn't look too good, since a natural 2♥ advance might be handy. However, we can double with hearts and clubs.

**1♦-2♣-2♦**

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	2♦	2♥ - spades 2♠ - hearts Dbl - hearts & spades

The transfer to hearts is ugly, but in the interest of simplicity we won't change the rules just for that reason. Overcaller must accept the transfer to spades with tolerance, but may reject the transfer to hearts with a weak doubleton and self-sufficient clubs.

**1♥-1♠-2♥**  
**1♠-2♥-2♠**

No transfers when both majors have been bid. A double shows both minors, new suit jumps by a passed hand are fit jumps. New suit jumps by an unpassed hand are natural and forcing, although a good case could be made for fit jumps. For consistency, however, we make them natural.

**1♥-2♣-2♥**  
**1♠-2♣-2♠**

No transfers when a major suit has been raised:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	2♥	2♠/3♦ - not forcing

## MINOR SUIT TRANSFER RESPONSE TO 2NT OPENING

Jacoby transfer bids are extended as over a 1NT opening, with a 3♠ response showing clubs and a 3NT response showing diamonds:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♠ - shows a club suit
	3NT - shows a diamond suit

The responses are not like those used for minor suit transfers after a 1NT opening. If opener has good support for the indicated suit, he stays at the three level. This shows a holding like AKx, AQx, AJx, KJx, or better. It tells partner that if he has nothing but six cards to the jack or queen in the suit, or seven to the 10 (9?), it will probably be usable at notrump.

Let's start with the 3♠ response:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♠ - showing clubs
	3NT - good club support (AQx, AJx, etc)
	4♣ - poor club support

Responder could have: ♠108 ♥J76 ♦95 ♣Q87432. If opener has good clubs, 3NT is probably a reasonable contract. If he has a doubleton, this hand will make a terrible notrump dummy, and 4♣ is the landing place.

If responder bids 4♣ over 3NT, perhaps with a 10-high suit, opener must usually pass although he might bid 4NT with AK32 in the suit (or 5♣ with four-card support and a ruffing value). To make a forcing club bid, responder starts with 3♣, then bids 4♣.

If responder follows by bidding a suit other than clubs, he is showing a second suit and slam ambitions. Such a bid is forcing even if game has been reached:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♠ - club transfer
3NT	4♣ - signoff
	4♦/4♥/4♠ - second suit, possibly four cards, forcing

If responder is not particularly interested in slam, he bids Stayman with five or six clubs and a four-card major. With five clubs and four diamonds he would not bypass 3NT without some slam interest.

Diamonds are handled a little differently. Responder cannot have slam potential, because opener can pass the 3NT transfer bid if he has good support for diamonds.

Opener	Responder
2NT	3NT - weak hand, long diamonds that need help
	Pass - good diamond support
	4♣ - poor diamond support
	4♦ - mediocre diamond support

"Good support" was defined above. "Mediocre" means any three cards or a very strong doubleton--two of the top four honors. Responder may be able to bid 5♦ when opener shows mediocre support.

If responder bids 4♦ after opener bids 4♣, opener must pass. To make a forcing diamond bid, responder starts with 3♣, then bids 4♦.

Here is how minor suit transfers can come in handy:

With a weak or invitational hand and one long minor, transfer to the minor

With a very weak 5-5 or 5=6 in the minors, transfer to diamonds, pass a 4♣ response. Hope for the best if opener passes 3NT. This is a great bid when holding six diamonds and five clubs

With a game-going or better hand and both minors, transfer to clubs, then bid 4♦ (assuming you're willing to bypass 3NT). Doesn't say which minor is longer.

With slam try hands:

Balanced, five or more clubs, bid 3♠ to show clubs, then 4NT

Unbalanced, five or more clubs, bid 3♣, then 4♣, then whatever

Balanced, five or more diamonds, bid, bid 3♣, then 4♦, then 4NT

Unbalanced, five or more diamonds, bid 3♣, then 4♦, then whatever

## YELLOWISH ROSE OF TEXAS

This is a simplified version of Danny Kleinman's convention, Yellow Rose of Texas, so called because two of the responses start with a Texas Transfer.

When partner opens 1NT or 2NT, or shows a 2NT opening after bidding artificially (e.g., 2♣) first, you may have enough HCP (33?) for 6NT in a 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 hand but are concerned that the two hands may have duplicated values (e.g., each with a doubleton in the same suit, or each with the same four-card suit in a 4-3-3-3 hand). Maybe the partnership should be in a suit slam instead of 6NT, or perhaps the bidding should stop at the five level if the hands mesh badly. To help opener evaluate the potential of the two hands, we use this scheme:

— With a 4-3-3-3 hand responder transfers to the four-card suit and then bids 5NT.

— With a 4-4-3-2 hand responder transfers to the tripleton and then bids the doubleton at the five level.

In the case of a major suit transfer, start with a Texas transfer, not Jacoby.

If not using minor suit transfers, some other scheme must be devised.

After showing his hand, responder relies on opener to determine the final contract, which may be anything from five of a major to 6NT.

For hands that are not quite strong enough for Yellowish Rose, use the Boland convention (section 05-06). For hands that are sure of slam, use the Miller convention (section 05-07) to investigate grand slam possibilities..

## TWO-WAY STAYMAN

This version of Stayman is easy to learn and remember. It is a useful convention for underdogs, because responder will often play a hand that is played by opener at the other tables. If things go right, the result may be a fine score. If they go wrong, so what, you were going to lose anyway.

In response to a 1NT opening, responses have these meanings::

2♣ - Any sort of invitational hand, denies game-going strength Opener shows any major, but with both majors he bids 2NT with a minimum and 3♣ with a maximum. This will avoid getting the bidding too high when opener has both majors and a minimum, with responder having neither major. This response can also be made with a weak three-suited hand short in diamonds, planning to pass any two-level bid by opener. If opener ungraciously shows both majors, responder's 3♥/3♠ bid closes the auction, even if opener has shown a maximum hand. Otherwise, any rebid by responder is invitational. That could be awkward when responder has an invitational hand with five hearts and opener bids 2♠. She will normally bid 3♥, which opener will have to pass with a minimum, even with a doubleton heart. To avoid this situation, responder should just bid 2NT over 2♠ when holding five hearts and a balanced hand.

2♦ - Any sort of game-going or better hand. Opener shows a major, bidding 2♠ with both (planning to bid 3♥ later if spades are not raised). When opener responds in two of a major, responder should not jump to 3NT when holding three-card support. Instead she should bid a forcing 2NT, giving opener a chance to rebid a five-card suit. She should also rebid 2NT when holding four hearts after opener has responded 2♠, in case opener has four hearts too. A rebid of three in a minor implies at least some slam interest.

2♥/2♠- Natural signoff bids (not Alertable). While the response denies much interest in game, opener can raise one level (only) to show an extremely good supporting hand.

2NT - Puppet to 3♣, usually with a long minor suit and weak hand, with no interest in game. If responder corrects 3♣ to 3♦, opener must pass. If responder follows with a 3NT bid, that shows something like 5-5 in the minors and little interest in slam. With a stronger 5-5 he can rebid 4NT, (implying a few high cards in the majors), or jump to 4♦ over 3♣ (implying major suit weakness) or just start with 2♦ and see what develops. Rebidding three of a major after a 2NT response is currently undefined.

3♣/3♦- A two-suited invitational hand with hearts and the minor named, not forcing. These conventional responses are necessary because opener's 2♠ response to 2♣ would prevent the showing of both suits at a reasonable level.

3♥/3♠- Natural, slam interest, a good suit of at least five cards.

Texas Transfers are applicable, but in competition only through 3♣ (when both transfers would be jump bids)..



## CLUTCH

The bane of those playing four-card majors is an opening hand with 4-4 in the majors and a minimum or near-minimum opening bid. If you open 1♠, you can lose the heart suit. If you open 1♥ you likely will not have a suitable rebid if responder bids two of a minor. A 2♠ rebid shows five hearts and four spades, while 2NT or a minor suit raise shows extra values.

Clutch ameliorates this problem by opening 2♦ with 4-4 in the majors. The convention is named after "Mr Clutch," the name given to Jerry West of the Los Angeles Lakers, whose number was 44.

Since the bidding is starting at the two level, the suits should not be very weak. It may be better to open 1♣ with 4=4=2=3 and club strength, or even 1♦ with 4=4=3=2 and diamond strength. Clutch denies diamond shortness, since a 4=4=1=4 hand is opened 1♣. Since Clutch shows a limited hand, responder can pass with short majors and long diamonds.

A sub-minimum hand, as when opening third seat, should use Clutch only when not vulnerable, and with two decent majors.

Responses to Clutch:

-- 2♥ or 2♠ must be passed, since responder may be completely broke. With 3-3 in the majors, the correct response is 2♥ when lacking the requirements for a pass or a higher response. Knowing this opener may choose to use Clutch with

-- 2NT must be passed, as opener has shown his strength fairly well and responder may be desperately seeking a landing place.

-- 3♣ must be passed, as responder could have a bad hand with long club suit. With too good a hand for that, responder must bid an invitational 4♣ or take a chance with 3NT.

-- 3♦ is forcing for one round. It implies a solid suit and no club stopper, or a semi-solid suit with a club stopper. If opener has the king or ace of diamonds he can bid 3NT, knowing that responder has a club stopper. If responder's hand or suit isn't good enough for this bid, she can pass 2♦.

-- 3♥/3♠/4♦ is invitational.

-- 4♥/4♠ could be weak (preemptive) or strong (not good enough for slam). Not Alertable.

The jump to four of a major is analogous to a jump raise to game of a weak two bid in a major, either weak or strong. If an opponent starts questioning the bid, give the same response as you would when partner raises a weak opening to game. You don't know what responder has, and you don't care because you are barred from further participation in the auction. This is a big plus for Clutch, as it gets the partnership to the four level quickly. Added to the preemptive value of a 2♦ opening, the jump to game can make life difficult for the opposition.

It is barely permissible to use Clutch with a 4=5=2=2 hand when the hearts are weak and the spades are not strong enough for a 1♠ opening. It may not be used with a singleton diamond, however.

If RHO intervenes with a double, presumably showing diamonds, a redouble is “to play.” Responder has long diamonds and enough strength to think there are eight tricks to be had with diamonds as trump. All other responses are the same as over a pass, except that 3♦ asks for a diamond stopper. If the double is passed around to opener, he should redouble to show three diamonds (responder may have enough to pass this), otherwise he must bid 2♥

If RHO overcalls, a double is penalty of course. If the overcall is passed around to opener, he must pass since he has already shown his hand.

When in doubt whether to use Clutch or not, don't. With ♠ 9xxx ♥ AKJx ♦Ax ♣ xxx open 1♥, planning to rebid 2♥ if responder bids two of a minor. With ♠ Q10xx ♥ K10xx ♦AJ ♣ Axx open 1♣ (but rebid 1NT if the response is 1♦, because a one-level suit rebid implies at least four clubs).

## DEFENSE AGAINST PREEMPTIVE OPENINGS

### Against Opening Three Bids

-- Doubles are primarily for takeout, but may be left in if the doubler's partner has no clear-cut bid. With a bad hand and no suit to bid, it is usually better to pass and hope the doubler can beat the contract rather than bid a three-card major or a very weak four-card minor.

Don't double a three-level opening with strength that is merely suitable for a takeout double at the one level. A takeout double made directly over an opening three bid shows more than three defensive tricks, perhaps 15 HCP minimum, even with 4-4-4-1 distribution. With less, just pass. If you're fixed, stay fixed. The requirements can be shaded, however, in the reopening position. Also, a double of 3♣ can be lighter than a double of 3♠, which asks partner to bid at a higher level.

-- A cue bid overcall implies a two-suited hand. If the cue bid is of a major suit, it implies the other major plus a minor. If the cue bid is of a minor, it implies both majors or spades and a minor. With hearts and a minor it is usually better to just bid the hearts, because a spade response could require you to bid at the five level:

North	East
3♦	4♦ with ♠AJ976 ♥K107654 ♦3 ♣A
	4♦ with ♠KQ974 ♥A3 ♦4 ♣AQ976
	3♥ with ♠A3 ♥KQ974 ♦4 ♣AQ976

A cue bid with the third hand is too risky, because you would have to bid 5♣ if partner says 4♠. The hand is not that strong. With an extremely strong hand, however, there is too much danger of the simple overcall's being passed. With ♠K4 ♥AKJ87 ♦6 ♣AKQ73, over a 3♦ preempt bid 4♦, then 5♣ (showing heart-clubs) if partner says 4♠.

-- Doubles of major suit responses to a preemptive three bid are for business, exposing a probable psych. The same principle applies for a "cue bid" of the major response:

South	West	North	East
3♦	Pass	3♠	Dbl shows a 3♠ overcall
			4♠ shows a 4♠ overcall

If you can bid 4♠, do so, because the double of 3♠ implies an inability to bid 4♠, although the double is unlimited with a two-suited hand. With a strong two-suiter in the unbid suits, East must cue bid 4♦.

The same principle applies when RHO bids a new major over partner's double:

South	West	North	East
3♥	Dbl	3♠	?

The 3♠ bid is psychic more often than not. If East was going to bid 3♠ willingly, he doubles. Except for doubling, both partners should bid as if the 3♠ bid had not occurred. This means that a double of 3♠ is a

limited call: "That's what I wanted to bid." If East was going to bid 4♠, he now bids 4♠, natural, not a cue bid, and not forcing. If he wants to make a forcing cue bid, he must bid 4♥.

Also see section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

### Against Opening Four or Five Bids

-- If the opening is artificial, some sort of transfer bid (as with NAMYATS, wherein a 4♣ opening shows hearts, a 4♦ opening shows spades), use the defense described in section 12-5, Defense Against Transfer Bids.

-- If the opening is natural:

North East

4♠ Dbl shows a *good* opening bid. Mostly a business double, but East can stand a takeout if West thinks he can make five or six of a suit. East should *pass*, not double, with ♠KQ108 ♥4 ♦A763 ♣A853.

4♠ 4NT is for takeout, with emphasis on the minors. Does not deny heart support, however. The 4NT bidder could have hearts and diamonds, planning to bid 5♦ if partner says 5♣. The 4NT bid does not promise club length, but strongly implies diamond length, so West should not get too excited with a long club suit.

4♥ Dbl shows a *good* opening bid, probably with adequate trump support for spades (J10x or better). A marginal double should have at least four spades.

4♥ 4NT is for takeout with emphasis on the minors. Might have some spade support, but definitely shows length in both minors.

4♣/4♦ 4NT is a natural bid, not a takeout, probably based on a long solid holding in the unbid minor. At IMP scoring, however, this is Blackwood.

5♣/5♦ Dbl Primarily for takeout

See section 6-7, 4NT - Blackwood or Natural?

### Advancing Partner's Game Overcalls

-- If the game bid was a jump, takeouts are cue bids, except that 5♥ or 5♠ over 5♣ or 5♦ is natural (but 6♣ over 5♦ is a cue bid, trying for a grand slam).

-- If the game bid was non-jump, all suit takeouts are natural.

## MARVIN VS STRONG NOTRUMP OPENINGS

Yet another defense against notrump openings? Is there no end? Well, no apologies, because this one does it all. It provides for the description of all one-suited, two-suited, or three-suited hands.

"Marvin vs Notrump" applies against all opening notrump bids, with slight differences for weak and strong notrumps. A strong notrump is defined as having a minimum of 14 HCP. See the next section for the defense against non-strong notrumps.

Common sense dictates the strength required for all actions, taking into consideration both vulnerability and the high card point (HCP) range of the 1NT bid. The defense applies in both direct and reopening seats. It also applies against 1NT rebids that show a strong notrump opening (e.g., 1NT rebid by a Precision 1♣ opener), provided that the defending side has not bid or doubled prior to the 1NT bid.

### Business Doubles

A double by an unpassed hand is a penalty double. In the direct seat it may be based on either superior high card strength or partly on the basis of a good lead. With seven spades AKQ you can double with no other points! When balancing it is dangerous to double with scattered high-card strength, since opener is sitting over you. Therefore this double indicates that a long strong suit is held and partner is expected to lead that suit. He will usually guess right by leading his shortest small-card suit, giving preference to a major if in doubt.

### Simple Suit Overcalls

A 2♠ bid is natural by a passed hand only. Other simple suit overcalls at the two level are artificial, showing one of three types of hand:

- A three-suited hand, short in the bid suit
- A two-suited hand, with the two suits just below the bid suit
- A one-suited hand with the suit below the bid suit

For this purpose, clubs and spades are "touching," and clubs rank "above" spades. The three-suited takeout is especially valuable in the balancing position, when you know 1) partner has some strength and 2) that he is probably going to lead your short suit. Be conservative with a short major in this position, however, because partner is likely to have length in that suit only.

-- An overcall of 2♣ shows both majors plus diamonds, or both majors only, or a one-suited hand with spades (a 6-4 hand is considered "one-suited"). The best three-suited distribution is 5=4=4=0, but 4=4=4=1 is also good. Might be 4=5=4=0, 5=4=3=1, or 4=5=3=1. Sometimes I do it with 5=3=4=1 or 4=3=5=1, what the hell, but 2♣ promises at least four spades if the hand is not strong enough to bid a red suit after a 2♠ response (e.g., a strong hand with 3=4=5=1 or 3=5=4=1 distribution). This provides a second way of showing a one-suited hand with spades, a 2♠ overcall being the other. The latter is the weaker way to show spades.

Partner ("advancer") chooses one of the three suits. He bids a four-card or longer major, preferring spades to hearts. He may (holding some high cards) bid a three-card major in preference to a four-card diamond suit. Lacking three cards in a major, he might have to bid a three-card diamond suit. Finally, with 2=2=2=7 he bids 3♣ or passes.

If advancer bids 2♦ in response to 2♣, overcaller bids 2♥ with both majors only. Advancer picks a major, preferring spades with equal length. Accordingly, it is better to pass a doubtful hand rather than overcall with 4-5 in the majors. If overcaller has spades only, then of course he bids spades over either 2♦ or 2♥:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	4=4=4=1	
		2♥ - hearts and spades	
		2♠ - spades only	

With a good hand, advancer can bid 2NT to inquire. Answers:

- 3♣ - three-suited hand, 4=4=4=1
- 3♦ - three-suited hand, five diamonds
- 3♥ - both majors
- 3♠ - spades only

Advancer now passes or picks a contract. Since 2NT shows a good hand, overcaller should jump (4♦, 4♥ or 4♠) with a good hand himself. Since 3♣ is forcing, it is not necessary to jump with that sort of hand. Overcaller can defer the decision whether to bid game or not until he has heard what the 2NT bidder says next.

-- An overcall of 2♦ shows both majors plus clubs, or spades and clubs, or clubs only. The best three-suited distribution is 5=4=0=4, but 4=4=1=4 is also good. Might be 4=5=0=4.

Advancer generally bids a major, preferring spades to hearts with equal length. Avoid the 3♣ response when holding three cards in a major, unless the clubs are quite good. Bid 3♦ only as a last resort with 2=2=7=2 distribution. With a two-suiter or one-suiter, overcaller corrects as necessary if advancer bids a suit not held:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠ - spades and clubs		
	3♣ - clubs only		

Advancer's 2NT response inquires. Answers:

- 3♣ - clubs only
- 3♦ - three-suited hand, four hearts
- 3♥ - three-suited hand, five hearts
- 3♠ - spades and clubs

-- An overcall of 2♥ shows both minors plus spades, or minors only, or diamonds only. Advancer bids 2♠ with three or more, otherwise picks a minor, preferring diamonds with equal length. Overcaller corrects as necessary:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	- both minors	
	3♦	- diamonds only	
	3♥	- three-suited hand, four spades	
	3♠	- three-suited hand, five spades	

### The Two Notrump Overcall

A 2NT overcall is a transfer to clubs, but may be based on a diamond suit. If the latter, the forced 3♣ bid will be converted to 3♦. The bid denies a good hand, with which one of the above methods would be used to get to three of a minor. This is not Alertable because it's a cue bid. If overcaller bids a major next, that is forcing and shows a powerful hand, possibly two-suited.

### Jump Overcalls

A bid of 3♣ shows clubs and hearts (rounded suits) and 3♦ shows diamonds and spades (pointed suits). With a very strong hand that fears the jump will be passed, overcaller can start with 2NT and bid the major on the next round.

A jump in a major suit is strong and shows an independent suit. It implies a fear that advancer might pass a conventional overcall. Advancer can raise with a few high cards, even when short in the suit.

### Overcaller's Rebid

When overcaller has a strong enough hand to try for game opposite a possible bust, he has a number of possible game tries:

-- A simple raise of advancer's response, showing at least five cards in the suit.

-- A bid in a suit that advancer has skipped over, showing a five-card suit and only three-card support for advancer's suit:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	- strong but not forcing, only three hearts (4=3=5=1)	

Holding five hearts and a few high cards, East should now bid 4♥, not 3♥.

### When Third Seat Doubles

A common action for third seat is to double a suit overcall, showing length in that suit or, for some, merely showing "cards." Some doublers will suppose they are invoking Stayman (double of 2♣) or a transfer

(double of 2♦ or 2♥). If you ask what the double means, chances are good you'll get the wrong answer. Few partnerships will have a clear understanding about the double. It is therefore wise not to ask and to use the same tactics over any sort of double, a policy that has the virtue of simplicity. It goes like this:

-- A pass (which must be alerted) shows at least six-card length in the doubled suit and no sure fit with doubler's hand. The suit quality required for a pass depends on the likelihood of a fit with overcaller. You don't want to go down in a doubled contract when there is a better contract available. A passer is therefore probably very short in the doubler's known suit.

-- A suit bid by advancer is to play, showing at least a six-card suit (four, in overcaller's known suit), and the 2NT response has its normal meaning:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♦	Dbl	Pass - to play
			2♥/2♠ - long suit
			3♣ - four or more clubs
			2NT - strong inquiry

Jumps over the double are preemptive, since a good hand can bid 2NT. All calls other than a bid of the "anchor" suit (clubs, in this auction) must be alerted (and explained as showing a long suit).

-- A redouble (alertable) promises no strength whatsoever, but merely asks the doubler to clarify his hand. With both a pass and a bid showing a playable suit, the only call left when lacking a "to play" suit is a redouble. Must be alerted, of course, and must never be forgotten if advancer values her life.

### When Third Seat Bids Freely

If opener's partner makes a free bid instead of doubling, common sense will usually guide advancer. Inferences can sometimes be drawn about overcaller's hand, depending on what third seat bids. Advancer's double of a suit bid is usually negative, for takeout, and suit bids by advancer (unless third seat bids notrump naturally) are always to play. If third seat bids the anchor suit, then a double is for penalties. The 2NT inquiry still applies, but 3NT is natural. If 2NT is available, a negative double denies the strength necessary for a 2NT bid (which always shows a strong hand). Sometimes third seat's suit bid will be conventional (e.g., a transfer bid), but (as with a double of an overcall) it is better to treat both natural and conventional bids in the same way.

-- When the overcall is a suit bid, there are four possibilities for a suit bid by third seat.

1) A bid in the same suit as the overcall:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	3♣	Dbl - negative
			3NT - natural
			3♦/3♥/3♠ - to play
			4♣ - cue bid, strong

In reply to the negative double West may want to jump with an extra good hand, since East promises some values. The "to play" suits must be quite good, and at least six cards long; overcaller is likely to pass, even with a singleton. Four cards are enough, of course, in overcaller's known suit (spades, in this case). With the negative double available, a cue bid must be based on a void and good trump support for either spades or spades and a red suit. If these calls seem unlikely after an opposing strong 1NT, remember that the opening bid could be a psych.

2) A bid in the next ranking suit:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♦	Dbl - negative
			2NT - inquiry
			2♥/2♠/3♣ - to play
			3♦ - cue bid, strong

In this auction the club suit had better be very strong, since West is likely to be short. If East has a few diamonds, West probably has both majors or spades only. East can therefore bid a three-card spade suit without much danger. Other "to play" bids require a good six-card suit. West can pass the negative double if he has good diamonds. Otherwise he can bid two (or three) of his better major, since this negative double implies support for both majors.

3) A bid in the second-higher suit:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♥	Dbl - negative
			2♠/3♣/3♦ - to play
			2NT - inquiry
			3♥ - cue bid, strong

If East has some hearts, West probably has spades only. In that case East can bid 2♠ with just a tripleton and a modicum of strength. Again, West can pass the negative double if he has a heart suit.

4) A bid in the next lower ranking suit (which overcaller must hold):

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♠	Dbl - penalty
			2NT - inquiry
			3♣/3♦/3♥ - to play

In this situation West must pass the double, since he has at least four spades.

If opener raises responder's suit, overcaller's double is for takeout if there are two or three "unbid" suits and partner has not yet acted.

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♦	Pass
3♦	Dbl - hearts and spades		

Had South raised a heart or spade bid, a double would be penalty.

-- When third seat bids notrump naturally, a double is for penalties and a suit bid is not "to play."

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2NT/3NT	?

A double is for business. North could have a nice long string of clubs or diamonds, so East should be careful about doubling without minor suit stoppers. In this case a suit bid is not "to play," and West should correct if East bids a suit not held by him. East would bid 3♦ over 2NT, for instance, with ♠Q2 ♥A105 ♦J10973 ♣432, which West should correct to 3♥ or 3♠ if he doesn't have a three-suiter.

-- When third seat bids 2NT conventionally (e.g., Lebensohl, asking opener to bid 3♣), a double is negative and suit bids are "to play:"

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♦	2NT *	Dbl - negative
			3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - to play
		* Lebensohl	

When South bids 3♣ over East's double, as Lebensohl requires, a free bid by West shows good values. Whatever the nature of his hand, he should pass with a minimum 2♦ bid and let East compete further if she can (perhaps with a repeat of the negative double).

-- When third seat bids a suit over a 2NT overcall (showing clubs or diamonds)::

South	West	North	East
1NT	2NT	3 any	Dbl - penalty
			3NT - undefined

### When Opener Bids

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♥
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♥

The heart "rebid" does not show five hearts. East could be 3-4 in the majors, so West must correct to 3♠ with a one-suited hand.

### After a Voluntary Takeout

A "voluntary" takeout is one made over a pass:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	?

-- If the takeout is natural, then a double (either direct or balancing) is for takeout; a 2NT is unusual notrump for the minors, and jump overcalls are all strong:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♠	Dbl - takeout
			2NT - minors, or hearts-diamonds
			4♣/4♦ - invitational

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - takeout		
			2NT - minors, or hearts-diamonds

-- If the takeout is a forcing artificial bid, such as Stayman or a Jacoby transfer, the situation is different. A double of Stayman 2♣ shows clubs and denies the ability to bid 3♣ if the hand is single-suited. It is primarily a lead-directing double, as is the double of a 2♦ response to Stayman. Action over a transfer response is discussed in section 12-5, Defense vs Transfer Bids.

## MARVIN VS WEAK NOTRUMP OPENINGS

### Overcalls

Overcalls have the same meanings as against a strong notrump opening, except that 2♠ is no longer a natural bid. It replaces the conventional double, showing clubs-diamonds-hearts or diamonds-hearts or just hearts. See section 12-2, Marvin Vs Strong Notrump Openings.

### The Business Double

The weak notrump opening is an overbid that should be penalized more often than it is. Anyone who contracts to take seven tricks at notrump with only 12-14 HCP (or even less) must be punished for impudence, lest it become a habit. The instrument for punishment is the penalty double.

To double a weak notrump for penalties you need a hand that figures to take more tricks than the opening hand. This is not just a matter of points, but also of playing tricks, stoppers/entries, and opening lead considerations. You can double with 9 HCP when holding seven spades to the AKQ! A weak notrump opener should be able to take about four tricks, so you need 4-1/2 or more to double. A good strong suit is especially desirable, to make the opening lead an advantage rather than a disadvantage.

This hand, with 14 HCP, is a pass over a 1NT opening that shows 12-14 HCP: ♠A32 ♥AK8 ♦K542 ♣764. Not enough playing tricks, few honor cards, no good lead. This hand, with 13 HCP, five playing tricks, many honors, and a good lead, is a minimum double: ♠QJ1097 ♥AJ9 ♦KJ8 ♣J10. If the notrump opening shows 13-15 HCP, you need a slightly stronger minimum.

If the hand contains a singleton, it is wise to have a little extra, especially if the singleton is higher ranking than any long suit you may have. Partner may bid the singleton, and you don't want to go to the three level with a doubtful hand. A simple (artificial) overcall may be a safer action with an unbalanced hand.

### Reopening Doubles

A double in the reopening position must be stronger, considering that the notrump bidder is sitting over the doubler. Tenaces and isolated honors should be reduced in value, while sequences are desirable. A marginal double should have something in every suit, to support partner's opening lead (or runout bid). A singleton or void is particularly undesirable, since partner is sure to lead (or bid) the suit. If you do double with a very short suit, you should have a place to go if partner bids it.

An alternative sort of reopening double is the artificial double, always used by a passed hand, described in section 12-2, Marvin vs Strong Notrump Openings. Its use makes a 2♠ bid natural. There are two reasons for an alternative: 1) Penalty doubles with distributed strength are less frequent in this position, with the notrump bidder sitting over the doubler; 2) A third hand who passes a weak notrump opening will have some strength if their policy is to always bid with bad hands.

I recommend playing both ways, choosing the approach that is suited to the opponents' methods. Double for penalties with distributed strength if they tend to pass 1NT with bad hands; otherwise use the type of reopening double you employ against strong notrumps.

If a pass shows strength it is supposed to be Alerted, so in the absence of an Alert assume that a pass doesn't show strength. It doesn't hurt to ask when you intend to take some action.

### Partner's Action After a Business Double

Although the double of 1NT is primarily for business, partner may bid for one of two reasons: 1) Fear that the opponents can make 1NT doubled when the doubling side has a satisfactory contract of its own or 2) fear that the penalty for beating 1NT will not compensate for the points that could have been made by playing the hand.

A bust hand is not sufficient reason in itself to run from the double. The doubler's hand is unlimited, after all. With a bad hand and no five-card suit, just pass and hope partner can beat 1NT. Bidding a four-card suit is unlikely to improve things. Minus 180 or 280 or 380 is better than minus 500 or 800. It is murder to have partner pull a double of 1NT with a suit like J432 (opposite your A5) when you could beat them in your own hand.

With a five-card or longer suit it is okay to bid if you're very weak or think that you can score more (or lose less) in your own contract. With a bad five-card suit and a balanced hand, a pass is probably better. With a singleton you can bet partner will lead that suit, so it may be better to bid in that case. With a six-card suit you can hope to make something your way, so go ahead and bid with a poor defensive hand.

A cue bid of 2NT in response to the double is a two-way bid, either 1) asking for a minor suit preference or 2) a general game force, usually based on a very distributional hand, often a two-suiter. The 2NT bidder shows the type 2) hand by bidding again (but a raise is only invitational):

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣/3♦	Pass	3♠ - game forcing
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣/4♦/4♥ - second suit

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣ - invitational

A jump in a new suit is invitational, and 3NT is natural:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	3 any - invitational
			3NT - solid minor, or equivalent

East is afraid that West will not lead East's suit against 1NT doubled, or that the penalty will not make up for a likely game.

### When the Opponents Run

Weak notrumpers are very adroit at escaping from dangerous situations. Whether doubled or not, opener's partner will often run from 1NT with no long suit and a weak hand. He knows that defenders usually have

difficulty making a penalty double stick at the two level. A common ploy is to use a fake Stayman response with a bust hand:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2 any	Pass	Pass	?

North has ♠10843 ♥J87 ♦543 ♣Q32. For some reason defenders have a hard time penalizing this tactic. They are confused about the meaning of doubles (takeout? business? optional?) and often end up bidding or passing when they could have doubled for a big penalty. The proper defense against such conventional escape bids is discussed later.

### When an Escape Bid is Natural

There are two methods for handling natural escape bids in an auction such as this:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♦	?

The first approach says that a double of 2♦ by either partner is a business double. Moreover, all passes are forcing; North-South cannot play the hand undoubled. If East passes the 2♦ bid, West must act. East must therefore double 2♦ with a hand like ♠3 ♥10832 ♦J973 ♣Q842. She dare not pass (forcing), because West is likely to bid 2♠. If a pass is not played as forcing, East would have to bid with a good hand and short diamonds. That would allow the opponents to escape too often, since West could be loaded in diamonds.

The second approach says that a double by East only shows general strength, 6 HCP or more. She does not promise more than a doubleton in the opposing suit. With just a doubleton, she should have an extra point, and with four cards she might double with just 5 HCP. A pass by East is not forcing, and a repeat double by West is for takeout, not business. If West is long in the opposing suit, he may just pass and accept an undoubled penalty. With this approach, neither partner can make a business double of the first escape bid. That is not too serious, since a double can be converted to business when partner chooses to pass a double with good defensive potential.

There are pros and cons to both approaches. The first approach never misses a good penalty double, but the opponents will make more doubled contracts. They will also penalize you more often. The risk is not great, since a partnership that is running from 1NT doubled is not likely to have much in high cards. There is a danger that some smart operator will "run" from 1NT doubled with a fairly good hand. You are then likely to double the opponents into game or be heavily penalized yourself.

The second approach is more conservative. You can judge the partnership's assets better on many hands, but you will miss some good penalty doubles. Alfred Sheinwold and Eddie Kantar favor this method, but they are experts. What is good for them may not be good for everyone. An expert figures he can win if he avoids disasters. Other players must not miss a chance for a good result, to make up for the inevitable disasters on other hands.

It might be sensible to play the conservative approach in IMP games or rubber bridge, and the aggressive one in matchpoint pair games. Or you could combine both approaches at IMP's or rubber bridge, playing doubles of 2♣ or 2♦ as business doubles (and passes forcing), but doubles of higher contracts (which

produce game if made) as optional. I recommend this compromise approach, along with the aggressive approach for matchpoint games.

Whether the runout bid is doubled optionally or for business, subsequent doubles are for business and subsequent passes are forcing:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♣	Dbl - optional/business
2♦		Dbl - business	
		Pass - forcing	

If the double has been passed around, the same principle holds. Doubles are for business and passes are forcing:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2♣		Dbl - business	
		Pass - forcing	

In all these situations, it is better not to pass a business double with only a singleton or void in the opposing suit. Also, one must not be bashful about doubling with just three good trumps.

Even when playing the "aggressive" defense, a defender who has had two chances in a row to act subsequent to the original double (passing a double counts as an "act"), and has failed to do so, can neither make a forcing pass nor be subjected to a forcing pass:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♠	Pass - forcing
Pass	3♥	3♠	Pass - not forcing

East must bid or double at his last turn if he has some stuff. When doubler's partner has shown some strength, however, all of his subsequent passes are forcing:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♦	Pass - forcing

West has passed twice in a row, but East's pass is nevertheless forcing, in view of his pass of the double and the 2♠ bid.

A defender who has run from partner's double with a weakness takeout cannot be subjected to a forcing pass:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2♣
2♠		Pass - not forcing	

Simple competitive bids by the doubler's partner are not at all invitational. Jumps are not forcing, since you can cue bid with a game-going hand:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♣	2♦/2♥/2♠ - weak bids 3♦/3♥/3♠ - invitational 3♣ - game forcing cue bid

West can treat 3♣ as Stayman for the moment, although East might have something else in mind.

### When There's a Natural Redouble

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Rdbl	?

If the redouble promises 9-10 HCP or more, you may have to scramble, but East should not bid immediately in the above auction unless he has a five-card or longer suit. Let West, who could have seven or more fast tricks (e.g., seven clubs headed by AKQ and nothing else!), do any running.

### When the Escape Call is Conventional

Most players use some conventional escape mechanism after their 1NT opening has been doubled. In one version third hand redoubles with a one-suited hand other than spades, forcing opener to bid 2♣. The redoubler then passes (with clubs) or bids a red suit. With spades only, he bids 2♠ immediately over the double. With a two-suited hand, he bids 2♣ over the double with hearts and clubs, 2♦ with hearts and diamonds, 2♥ with hearts and spades (but better hearts). Or, he can pass the double around to partner, who must redouble. Assuming he doesn't want to play 1NT redoubled, third hand then bids 2♣ with clubs plus a pointed suit (diamonds or four spades), 2♦ with diamonds and four spades, 2♥ with hearts and spades (but better spades), 2♠ with five spades and a five-card minor.

When third hand makes such a forcing pass or redouble (which must be alerted), doubler's partner can safely pass with a good hand, knowing that opener must bid. This freedom enables fourth hand to describe his strength more accurately. Immediate action denies a strong hand, delayed action promises a good hand unless it comes under pressure (i.e., opener's redouble is passed around).

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass*	2♣/2♦/2♥/2♠ - weak 2NT - minors, weak 3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - weak, preemptive

\* forcing

The "weak" actions are not too weak, however. With a hopeless hand it is better to pass until you are forced to rescue. Often the opponents will bid you out of trouble. With the unlikely good hand, just pass and await developments.

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Rdbl*	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Dbl - business
			2♥/2♠/3♣ - invitational
			2NT - invitational
			3♦ - game force
			3♥/3♠ - forcing
			Pass - forcing

\* artificial

In this auction the artificial redouble asked South to bid 2♣, whereupon North showed a one-suited hand with diamonds. East's second bids are all strong because he would have acted immediately, if at all, with a weaker hand. His pass is forcing for the same reason that a pass over an immediate "escape" bid is forcing when partner doubles 1NT: If you must bid with a good hand but short diamonds, the opponents may have evaded a serious penalty. Had North bid 2♥ or 2♠, the meaning of a double or pass would depend on whether East-West are playing the "conservative" or "aggressive" defense. That is, either action is the same as if North had bid 2♥ or 2♠ as a natural bid over the double.

When opener's partner makes a conventional bid that shows two suits, the standard defense against such conventions is used (see section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions).

If the opponents use transfer bids over a double, next hand can use the same approach as against voluntarily bid transfers (see section 12-5, Defense Against Transfer Bids).

### After a Voluntary Takeout

When the weak notrump's partner responds voluntarily (i.e., over a pass), her response may be natural or artificial:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2 any	?

-- If the takeout is natural, a non-forcing signoff, then a double by East is not a takeout double. Rather, a double shows a balanced hand, one with which he would have liked to double 1NT for business. It is an optional double, in that West needs a little something in the opposing suit, but not a lot, to pass the double. If this double is played strictly for takeout, as it is following a strong notrump opening, you will miss some good penalties.

But how do you make a takeout call? The answer is that a bid in the ranking suit is for takeout, and a 2NT bid shows an overcall in the ranking suit:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♠	3♣ - for takeout
			Dbl - optional
			2NT - clubs

In this auction East's 3♣ might be based on a hand like ♠3 ♥KJ32 ♦AJ4 ♣K10873 This may seem like a daring takeout, but West probably has some strength in view of North's 2♠ signoff. West should not go leaping to game because of a few high cards, with which she is marked by the bidding. She can bid game

if she has more in distribution or high cards than East could count on. Since 3♣ is not forcing, East can bid 3♠ with a monster takeout sort of hand, which might alternatively be based on a good two-suited hand. If East removes West's next bid to another suit (forcing), that tends to show a two-suiter without support for West's suit.

All jump overcalls by an unpassed hand are strong:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	3♠/4♣/4♦ - invitational

If the natural signoff is a jump to 3♣ or 3♦, which many play as weak bids, then the double still shows a balanced hand but the cheaper minor becomes the takeout call:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	3♣	Dbl - balanced hand
			3♦ - for takeout

If the jump is to 3♦, then 4♣ is for takeout. When the jump is invitational or strong, then a bid in the cheaper minor is a natural bid.

Reopening actions by the hand sitting over the notrump opener are as might be expected:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - for takeout		
		2NT - unusual notrump, both minors or hearts-diamonds	

West's hand is limited by the initial pass, so the reopening 2NT bid must be unusual notrump.

-- If the takeout is a forcing artificial bid, such as Stayman or a Jacoby transfer, the situation is different. A double of Stayman 2♣ shows clubs, as in a strong notrump situation, and denies the ability to bid 3♣. It is primarily a lead directing double. For appropriate action over transfer bids, see section 12-5, Defense Against Transfer Bids. Jump overcalls by an unpassed hand are strong in a major, preemptive in a minor. The strong type is particularly invitational, since the standard defense against transfer bids says that immediate simple overcalls should be sound.

With a good notrump hand or a takeout sort of hand, just pass the artificial bid and act on the next round if the bidding stops:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣/2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl - notrump hand
			3♣ - for takeout
			2NT - clubs

East's double or takeout bid is not merely a balancing action, since his hand is not limited by the first round pass. A double of 2♣ would only show a good club suit. He must pass a transfer bid with some strong hands because an immediate double, cue bid of a known suit, or 2NT bid shows two specific suits (per section 12-

5). West should therefore not be nervous about passing the delayed double with a little defense, and over 3♣ can jump to game in hearts with good values. Note that this policy nails the "fake Stayman" response and ultra-weak transfer responses, as West will pass the double with a hand that is suitable for defense against 2♠.

## DEFENSE AGAINST BIG CLUB OPENINGS

The following defense applies against artificial 1♣ openings that promise 16 HCP or more:

Immediate actions over 1♣ tend to deny a good hand, but calls that show two suits may be based on either a weak hand or a strong hand. With an in-between hand, pass with a two-suiter and hope to show your suits later. If the two suits include a major, you can overcall 1♥ or 1♠ and perhaps bid the other suit on the next round. Two-suiters are shown immediately by a variation of the "CRASH" (Color-RANk-SHape) convention:

-- A double shows both black suits or both red suits ("Color"). Advancer bids his better red suit, preferring hearts with equal length. If overcaller then bids spades, showing the black suits (or if the bidding makes it obvious that he has the black suits), advancer prefers spades with equal length.

-- A 1♦ overcall shows both majors or both minors, 5-5 or better ("RANk"). Advancer bids his better major, preferring hearts with equal length. If overcaller then bids clubs, showing the minors (or if the bidding makes it obvious that he has the minors), advancer prefers clubs with equal length. Knowing that advancer will prefer hearts to spades, the overcaller might have only 4-5 in the majors, but not 5-4. Against a strong 1♣, two minor suits had better be at least 5-5. With 6-5 or 5-4 in the majors it is better to just overcall 1♠ and hope to bid the hearts later. Then advancer will prefer spades when holding equal length.

-- A 1NT overcall shows both round suits or both pointed suits ("SHape": hearts-clubs or spades-diamonds). Advancer bids clubs when preferring clubs to hearts, otherwise bids diamonds when preferring diamonds to spades, otherwise bids hearts.

-- A major suit overcall is natural, and may be rather speculative.

-- A 2♣ overcall is natural, and also may be speculative.

-- Jump overcalls are preemptive.

-- A 2NT overcall is natural, based on a long solid minor plus stoppers. Partner can raise with one quick trick.

With most good hands, including really sound one-suited hands, you can afford to pass and act on the next round:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	2♠/3♣/3♦	- strong jump overcall	
	2NT	- solid minor, heart stopper	
	Dbl	- normal takeout double	
	1NT	- normal 1NT overcall	
	1♠/2♣/2♦	- natural, good hand	
	2♥	- normal cue bid overcall	

### When Opener Rebids 1NT

The strong notrump defense (section 12-2) applies after a 1NT rebid by opener, provided that the defenders have not bid or doubled prior to the 1NT bid. This is a good opportunity to show the "in-between" strength two-suiter (neither strong nor weak) that is not eligible for CRaSh.

If the response to 1♣ was a negative 1♦, a double of the 1NT rebid is a penalty double, not conventional.

If the 1♣ opening received a positive response, or the doubler is a passed hand, or the double is a balancing action, then a double of the 1NT rebid has the alternative meaning (clubs, diamonds, hearts; diamonds, hearts; or hearts only). Actually a one-suited or two-suited hand would probably have acted earlier, so the conventional double tends to be based on three suits.

### Actions by Fourth Seat

The meaning of a cue bid over a suit response to 1♣ depends on whether the response is artificial or natural. If artificial, it is a natural overcall and a double just shows the suit (a weaker action than bidding the suit). A notrump overcall shows the minors:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥*	Dbl - shows hearts
			2♥ - better hearts
			1NT/2NT - minors

\* artificial response

If the response to 1♣ is natural, all defensive actions are standard. Whether the response is artificial or natural, all jump overcalls are preemptive. With a good hand, pass and hope to act on the next round.

For defense against the Precision 1♦ opening, see section 12-10, Defense Against Five-Card Majors.

### Over a Two Club Opening

CRaSh may also be used against a strong artificial 2♣ opening, but the strength distinction between immediate or delayed action does not apply.

## DEFENSE AGAINST TRANSFER BIDS

The following defenses against transfer bids will allow you to show any two-suited hand with one call. They apply not only against Jacoby and Texas transfers, but against any bid that shows another specific suit (e.g., opening 3♥ to show a preemptive bid in spades). One disadvantage of transfer bids is that they give an opponent two opportunities for action: immediate or delayed. This aid to defensive bidding accuracy should be utilized.

### When Your Side Has Been Silent

When the transfer bid occurs before your side has bid or doubled (e.g., vs Jacoby or Texas response to a 1NT opening, or vs an opening preemptive transfer bid), use the following defense:

-- A notrump bid asks for a preference between the lower two suits, excluding the one indicated by the transfer bid.

-- A double of the transfer bid shows the higher two suits.

-- A "cue bid" (in the suit indicated by the transfer bid) is top-and-bottom, asking for a preference between the top and bottom suits.

For instance, after a 2♦ Jacoby response to a 1NT opening:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♦	2NT - both minors
			Dbl - spades/diamonds
			2♥ - spades/clubs
			2♠/3♣/3♦ - one-suited hand

The double can be made with less strength than any of the other two-suited calls. One of the suits indicated by the double is the suit bid by the opponent, so partner can pass with an unsuitable hand. This sequence has an easy mnemonic: Dbl for Diamonds and the other major, Cue bid for Clubs and the other major. Bids over a 2♥ transfer to spades has the same mnemonic.

When given a choice of suits in which you have equal length, prefer a major to a minor, hearts to spades, and clubs to diamonds. Partner can keep this in mind when deciding whether to overcall or pass with a marginal hand.

The immediate overcall with a one-suited hand should be quite sound. With a doubtful hand, just pass and reopen the bidding if the transfer suit gets passed:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	2♠/3♣/3♦

These reopening bids can be made with moderate hands, since partner is marked with some high cards when the opponents stop at the two level.

The soundness of immediate natural overcalls applies at higher levels, too:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	4♦	4♠/5♣/5♦ - sound bids
			4NT - for the minors, may be speculative

It has to be remembered that a direct 4NT bid is for the minors and a balancing 4NT bid is natural. That is the general rule, and for the sake of consistency it must be followed even at this level.

With a doubtful hand, perhaps taking a deliberate save with many playing tricks but little defense, East can pass on this round and bid next time. This policy may help partner when he has to make a double/bid/pass decision.

You may sometimes have a three-suited hand with shortness in the suit indicated by the transfer bid. In that case just pass the transfer, then double for takeout on the next round. You can do this with a huge hand, since the transfer bid is forcing; there is no need to jump into the bidding immediately:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl - takeout double if 1NT was strong

If 1NT was weak this double is optional, just showing a strong balanced hand. See section 12-3, Marvin Vs Weak Notrump Openings.

When the transfer is an opening bid that shows a preemptive bid in the next higher suit, the same principles apply. An immediate notrump overcall still shows the lower two "unbid" suits. A reopening notrump bid is therefore natural:

South	West	North	East
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl - normal takeout double		
		3♠ - competitive reopening bid	
		3NT - natural	

South's 3♦ shows a preemptive 3♥ type hand. The double is not a reopening action, since an immediate double would show a two-suited hand with spades and diamonds. It is true that passing 3♦ with a nine-trick notrump hand gives North a chance to make a preemptive raise in hearts, but that must be chanced. There are two advantages to this approach: (1) a two-suited hand in the minors can be easily shown by an immediate 3NT bid, and (2) the general principles of countering transfer bids remain the same, with no exceptions.

South	West	North	East
3♣	Pass	3♦	3♥/3♠/Dbl

Believe it or not, East is actually making a reopening call. North has indicated that he would have passed a normal 3♦ opening bid, so East pretends that is just what has happened. He is no worse off than he would be with a normal preemptive 3♦ opening. This is especially true if he is short in diamonds. The hand that is short in the opposing suit must be quick to act, since partner probably cannot.

## Against Strong NAMYATS

The NAMYATS convention uses a 4♣ opening to show hearts and a 4♦ opening to show spades. In the "strong" version a 4♥ or 4♠ opening is weak in high cards, while a 4♣ or 4♦ opening shows a good hand that would welcome a slam contract. The fact that there is an intervening suit between the transfer bid and the indicated suit affects the usual defense against transfer bids:

-- Passing and then doubling opener's major on the next round retains the same meaning: a strong three-suited hand short in opener's suit.

-- Immediate overcalls in the ranking suit (i.e., the suit lying between opener the opening bid and opener's major) may be weaker than overcalls in the remaining two suits. If you don't bid now, you have to bid higher next time.

-- Immediate overcalls in the remaining two suits are very sound, because you can pass and bid on the next round with a sacrifice type hand, at the same level that an immediate bid would require.

-- Jump overcalls are extra strong.

-- The immediate double, "cue bid" of opener's suit, and notrump bids all retain the same meaning: major/diamonds, major/clubs, and both minors, respectively:

South	West
4♣	Dbl - diamonds and spades
	4♦ - diamonds, may be a stretch
	4♥ - clubs and spades
	4♠/5♣ - good hand, not a stretch
	4NT - minors
	5♦/5♠ - extra strong

With a sacrifice sort of 4♠ or 5♣ bid, West could pass and bid on the next round. The immediate overcall shows a good hand both offensively and defensively. The difference may be important if partner has to decide what to do when the opponents go to 5♥.

There are two ways to show spades and a minor: double/cue bid, or bid 4♠ and then bid the minor (if you get the chance). Choose the the natural bid when spades are strong and longer than the minor, the conventional call otherwise. You are not going to run if 4♠ gets doubled, so the spades had better be pretty good. When you show the suits conventionally, partner will not take a false preference in order to play the major suit.

There at least two ways of showing both minors: bid 4NT immediately or on the second round. Common sense says that an immediate 4NT bid is stronger than a delayed one. The immediate bid promises a good hand, both offensively and defensively, while a delayed bid implies poor defense.

When the opening is 4♣ you can also show diamonds and clubs by just bidding them instead of overcalling 4NT, which provides a third way of showing both minors. Show the minors this way when the clubs are not longer than the diamonds. Partner will then prefer diamonds with equal length. After a 4NT bid, he prefers clubs with equal length.

There are also three ways to get to 5♦ after a 4♣ opening: bid 5♦ immediately; bid 4♦, then 5♦, or pass and then bid 5♦. The jump is stronger, the delayed bid (passing first) is weaker. Bidding diamonds twice (a seemingly illogical action) gives room for partner to bid 4♠, so it could be based on a good hand with some spade support.

When the opening is 4♦ it is the immediate major suit bid that may be a stretch:

South	West
4♦	Dbl - diamonds and hearts
	4♥ - may be a stretch
	4♠ - clubs and hearts
	4NT - minors
	5♣/5♦ - sound bids
	5♥ - extra strong

West has three ways to get to 5♥: bid 5♥ immediately, obviously the strongest action; bid 5♥ on the next round (weakest); or bid 4♥, then 5♥, which is somewhere in-between.

There are two ways to show hearts and a minor: double/cue bid, or bid both suits. With hearts longer than the minor, bid 4♥ and then the minor. When the two suits are of equal length, or the minor longer, double or cue bid.

There is no way left to double opener's eventual game bid for business, unless you are able to overcall in the ranking suit and then double on the next round. That is not a big deal, because doubling a strong NAMYATS game bid is seldom profitable and often disastrous.

### Against Weak NAMYATS

When the opening bid of 4♣ or 4♦ shows a weak major suit preempt, we must have a way of doubling the major for business. The delayed double therefore becomes a little more optional than takeout, not necessarily a three-suited hand. Otherwise the defense is the same as against the strong version of NAMYATS.

### Action vs NAMYATS by Fourth Seat

When the opening has been passed by second seat, third seat will either bid four of partner's major or bid the next higher suit (as a query bid, or as a "retransfer" to let opener play the hand).

-- When third seat signs off in opener's suit, a double is for takeout and a 4NT bid shows both minors:

South	West	North	East
4♣	Pass	4♥	Dbl - takeout
			4NT - minors

Against the weak version of NAMYATS, the double of 4♠ is more optional than takeout, just as it would be over a normal preemptive 4♥ or 4♠ opening.

-- When third seat bids the ranking suit so that opener can play the hand, that is treated like a transfer bid:

South	West	North	East
4♣	Pass	4♦	Dbl - spades and diamonds 4♥ - spades and clubs 4NT - minors

South	West	North	East
4♦	Pass	4♥	Dbl - hearts and diamonds 4♠ - hearts and clubs 4NT - minors

Other defensive actions are similar in meaning to those employed by second seat.

### When Your Side Has Previously Bid a Suit

When the transfer bid occurs after your side has bid a suit (e.g., opponent's transfer response to an overcall), a double is merely suit-showing. If both partners have bid, a cue bid in either the overcall suit or the suit indicated by the transfer bid is a "telling cue bid," showing that suit stopped and suggesting that partner bid notrump with the other suit stopped.

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	2♣	2♥ - transfer to spades Dbl - hearts 2♠/3♦ - telling cue bid, showing a stopper

See section 10-14, Miscellaneous Cue Bids, for more on telling cue bids. If partner has not previously bid, it is difficult to come up with a meaning for a cue bid in either suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♦ - transfer to hearts Dbl - diamonds 2♥ - takeout, spades and five diamonds 3♦ - very strong two-suiter

### When Your Side Has Bid Notrump

Suppose a 1NT opening is overcalled with a transfer bid:

South	West	North
1NT	2♥ *	?

\* transfer to spades

A double is merely suit-showing, denying the strength for a bid at the three level. A 2NT response has the same meaning as if the overcall were natural. It is clear that a cue bid of the indicated suit (spades, in this case) is Stayman, asking for a major and showing at least a game-invitational hand. In the auction above,

South must bid 3NT or 4♥ in response to 2♠ with a maximum opening, since 2NT or 3♥ is likely to be passed.

## MARVIN VS FLANNERY

As most people play this convention, a 2♦ opening shows 11-15 HCP, with five hearts and four spades. A 2NT response is conventional, asking opener to clarify her hand. Opener then shows a three-card minor, etc., etc. A 2♥ or 2♠ response to 2♦ is a signoff, of course. A 3♣ response is a signoff for some, invitational for others. A 3♦ response is at least invitational, since a weak hand with long diamonds and short majors could just pass the 2♦ opening. The defense:

-- A double of 2♦ is a two-way call, showing either a strong hand with both majors or a weak hand with both minors. You could have either ♠AJ96 ♥AQ1084 ♦63 ♣98 or ♠3 ♥84 ♦QJ1098 ♣KQ1097. Minors should be at least this good because third hand could well have both minors also. Partner should be able to tell which hand you have by looking at his own hand (and listening to the opponents).

South	West	North	East
2♦	Dbl	2♥/2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - business double,	had both majors	

- A 3♣ or 3♦ overcall is a preemptive sort of bid, no defense.

-- A 2♥ or 2♠ overcall is artificial, showing a good hand with a good minor suit. A 2♠ bid shows diamonds, and a 2♥ bid shows clubs. Overcall 2♦ with 2♠ holding a hand such as ♠A4 ♥63 ♦AK10873 ♣K94. Partner must bid the minor suit indicated by the overcall when he has a bad hand. Any other action is forward-going, although not always forcing:

South	West	North	East
2♦	2♠	Pass	3♦ - any sort of bad hand
			3♣ - natural, invitational
			2NT - invitational
			3♥/3♠ - stopper, forcing
			4♦ - invitational, too good for 3♦

The 3♥ or 3♠ bid shows that the suit named is stopped, and suggests that partner bid notrump if he has the other major suit stopped.

-- A 2NT overcall is unusual notrump, also showing a pretty good hand. With a weak minor two-suiter, you would double. Overcall 2♦ with 2NT holding ♠4 ♥82 ♦AK874 ♣AQJ42. With a real notrump hand, say 17-18 HCP, pass and hope to bid 2NT on the next round.

-- A 3NT overcall is natural, showing major suit stoppers and a long solid minor. The spade stopper may be sketchy or non-existent, since opener is known to have only four spades: ♠J32 ♥K4 ♦A4 ♣AKQJ872

-- A 3♥ overcall is a standard strong cue bid, since 2♥ is not available for that purpose.

-- A 3♠ overcall is natural, invitational: ♠AK109732 ♥4 ♦KJ4 ♣A2

With strength and length in just one major (unless the suit is spades and you are good enough to bid 3♠ or 4♠), just pass over a 2♦ opening and see what happens. Pass with ♠3 ♥AJ97 ♦AQ63 ♣K1043 or with

♠AQ97 ♥10 ♦AJ83 ♣K842. You will probably take action on the next round unless responder shows real strength (and perhaps even then). If a sharp-looking responder jumps to game in the short major, you will have to double for takeout--his bid could be a weak preemptive call. Knowing that you are sitting over the other major, partner may be able to pass the double (and lead a trump).

After passing 2♦, a reopening double of a 2♥ or 2♠ response is a two-way call, showing a good hand that has either a very strong or very short holding in the suit doubled, with support for both minors. "Very short" means a void or singleton.

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	- good hearts or very short hearts	
		2♠ - natural reopening bid, good spades	
		2NT/3♣/3♦ - natural reopening bid	

The 2NT reopening bid shows about 17-18 HCP, a hand such as ♠K42 ♥K4 ♦AK873 ♣A107. West could not bid 2NT on the first round with this hand, because that would be unusual notrump, showing both minors. The 3♣/3♦ reopening bids imply hands too good for an original (preemptive) 3♣/3♦ overcall, but not good enough for the (artificial) 2♥/2♠ overcall of 2♦.

When the response to 2♦ is 2♥ or 2♠, the next hand should be quick to act. These responses are signoffs that will be passed by opener, so this is really a balancing situation. Taking action may relieve pressure on partner when she has a good hand that is not suited to any reopening call.

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Dbl - ♠9832 ♥4 ♦AJ97 ♣KQ83
			2NT - ♠KJ6 ♥K4 ♦AQ1053 ♣A63
			3♣ - ♠92 ♥85 ♦QJ2 ♣AKJ987

A double of a 3♣ or 3♦ response can only be for business if that is a signoff bid:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	3♣/3♦	Dbl - business double

If the 3♣/3♦ bid is invitational or forcing, the double shows a two-suited hand in spades and the other minor.

A double of a 2♦ opening that has been passed around is also for business. As with the double of a signoff 3♣, it takes little more than good trumps since partner is marked with a lot of high cards:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl - ♠J863 ♥3 ♦AJ98 ♣K1087

## DEFENSE AGAINST TWO-SUITED CONVENTIONS

Two-suited conventions covered in this section are of six general types:

- (1) A call that shows two specific suits without naming either.
- (2) A bid that shows the suit named, plus another specified suit
- (3) A bid that shows the suit named, plus an unspecified suit
- (4) A call that shows a specified suit other than the one named, plus an unspecified suit
- (5) A call that shows two unspecified suits
- (6) A call based on either two specific suits or one specific suit, none named

### Type 1 Defense - Unusual Over Unusual

One of the most popular conventions for showing a two-suited hand is Unusual Notrump, wherein a notrump bid that could not be "usual" asks partner to choose between the minor suits (or two lower unbid suits). A conventional 1NT overcall showing the two unbid suits is known as Sandwich Notrump. The defense shown here may be used against other any artificial calls that shows two specific suits without naming either, such as:

- Michaels cue bid over a minor opening, showing both majors
- Top-and-bottom cue bid over any natural suit opening, showing the highest and lowest-ranking unbid suits
- 2♣ or 2♦ over a 1NT opening, showing both majors
- "Unusual" 2NT overcall, showing both minors

Unusual Over Unusual is applied a bit differently to the Flannery 2♦ opening, which shows five hearts and four spades. See section 12-6, Marvin vs Flannery. It also does not apply if one of the opposing suits is typified as a four-card suit (as many top-and-bottom bidders play). In such cases a bid in that suit is natural.

Definitions:

The "cheaper" suit is the closer of the two suits shown by the opponent going up the line from his bid. If his bid is 2♥ and the two suits shown are spades and clubs, then spades are the cheaper suit and clubs are the "dearer" suit, even though spades rank higher than clubs.

General Rules (examples will follow for all of them, but they are sufficient and there are no exceptions):

Natural new-suit bids are strong unless the bid is cheaper than either of the intervenor's suits (if cheaper, it's weak).

Rebids of the same suit and raises of partner's suit are merely competitive, not forward-going.

A bid in the dearer opposing suit is usually strength-showing and a bid in the cheaper suit usually is not.

If the partnership has bid just one suit, a bid in the dearer opposing suit shows a strong hand featuring that previously bid suit. If it is partner's suit this is called "Dear Partner." If it is one's own suit, it is called "Dear Me." Actually bidding the suit is a weaker action. In either case, bidding the cheaper opposing suit shows the suit not yet shown by either side, in a hand not good enough to make a strong bid in that suit.

If the partnership has bid two suits, then a bid in the cheaper opposing suit also shows strength. In this case the dearer suit is used for showing a strong raise for partner's suit ("Dear Partner"), and the cheaper suit is used for a strong rebid in one's own suit ("Dear Me"). This is the only case in which bidding the cheaper opposing suit shows strength. Just remember that a previously bid suit has to have a "dear" bid available. That means two "dear" bids if the partnership has bid two suits.

Note that a bid in the cheaper opposing suit allows partner a convenient bidding space for a "mark time" bid in the dearer opposing suit when he has no clear-cut action. Such bid has no significance regarding that suit. This convenient space isn't available after a bid in the dearer suit, so we apply the general rule that bidding the dearer opposing suit is a strong action.

If neither partner has bid a suit, the rule of "Cheap-Cheap" applies, which is that a bid in the dearer opposing suit shows a moderate bid in the dearer "unbid" suit, and a bid in the cheaper opposing suit shows a moderate bid in the cheaper "unbid" suit. Actually bidding those suits is a stronger action.

All notrump bids are natural.

A double of the opponent's conventional suit bid just says "I could have bid that." The hand may be limited to that degree of strength, but could be much stronger too (which can be revealed later). A double of a conventional notrump bid just shows "cards," enough HCP to suggest that the hand belongs to one's side. It does not guarantee further action, however.

Whenever a natural bid is labeled forcing, that of course applies only to an unpassed hand.

As usual, jumps in one of the opponent's suits is a splinter bid.

Unless indicated otherwise, conventional 2NT bids in the following auctions show the minors.

### **After a Direct Intervention Over One of a Suit**

-- A bid of the "fourth suit" (not shown by either side) is forcing:

South	West	North
1♠	2NT	3♥ - forcing

South	West	North
1♣	2♣*	2♦ - a weak bid, because cheaper than the majors
		3♦ - strong, forcing

\* majors

-- Jump raises are preemptive and jump rebids of the same suit deny good defensive values, while other jumps retain their normal meaning:

South	West	North
1♠	2NT	4♠ - standard preemptive raise 4♣/4♦/4♥ - splinter bid in support of spades

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	2NT	4♥/4♠ - not strong defensively (if so, double)	

South	West	North
1NT	2NT	4♣ - Gerber 4♦/4♥ - Texas transfer bids

Seeking a 4-4 fit in the majors is unwise, as the suit is likely to break badly.

South	West	North
1♣	2♣*	4♣ - weak, preemptive 3♥/3♠ - splinter bid in support of clubs 3♦ - strong, forcing

\* majors

-- A bid in the dearer (not the cheaper) of the two suits indicated by the opponent shows full values (or better) for a raise of partner's suit. Merely raising is a weaker action

South	West	North
1♠	2NT	3♦ - limit raise or better ("Dear Partner") 3♠ - competitive spade raise 3♥ - forcing 3NT - natural

If South rebids 3♠ over 3♦, North may pass. If she voluntarily bids again, she shows more than a limit raise.

-- A bid in the cheaper (not the dearer) of the two suits indicated by the opponent shows the "fourth suit" but an unwillingness to force with a bid in that suit.

South	West	North
1♥	2NT	3♣ - heart suit, unwilling to force with 3♥

This agreement leaves room for opener to make a "mark-time" bid in the dearer suit when unable to raise hearts or bid something else, which permits responder to "rebid" a six-card suit and perhaps stop at the three level. The 3♣ bid ("unwilling to force with 3♥") does not necessarily show less than game-going strength. Responder might want to save bidding space for some reason, e.g., to let opener show heart support cheaply, with a 3NT bid in reserve..

South	West	North
1♣	2NT*	3♣ - good raise, not much of a stretch 3♥ - strong raise, values for the four level 3♦ - spades, unwilling to bid 3♠ 3♠ - forcing 4♣/5♣ - weak, preemptive

\* hearts and diamonds

North's bid of the dearer suit, hearts, is equivalent to a strong club raise, necessarily a bit better than a normal limit raise. It is not game-forcing, however, so North may pass a 4♣ bid by South. Here a minimum raise implies good values for a three-level raise, since there is no other way to show such a hand. With less strength in support of clubs North can double to show values for a 2♣ raise. With five or more clubs, the weak jump raises are available.

South	West	North
1♦	2NT*	3♣ - spades, not enough to force with 3♠ 3♠ - forcing 3♦ - good values for a raise 3♥ - strong diamond raise, too good for 3♦

\* hearts and clubs

It might seem logical to reverse the general rules for this situation, using 3♣ for a strong diamond raise and 3♥ to show spades. We don't do this for two reasons: (1) to avoid an exception to the general rules, and (2) reversing the meaning might crowd the bidding too much for opener, who can rebid diamonds (perhaps stopping there!) or bid a mark-time 3♥ when unable to support spades.

-- A double of an artificial notrump bid shows "cards" (9+ HCP?), enough strength to suggest that the hand belongs to the opening side, but with no suitable bid. The double does not promise another bid, however. If opener passes RHO's response to the conventional call, the doubler may also pass if she has no reasonable alternative. Similarly, a pass or later suit bid by the doubler is not forcing on opener:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Dbl	Pass
Pass	3♣	Pass/3♥/3♠	- not forcing

Neither the pass nor a three-level bid is forcing on South. A 3♥ bid by North implies a hand that wanted to double an opposing 3♦ bid, but is not interested in defending against 3♣. The heart suit is probably five long, so South may "correct" to 3♠ with short hearts and good spades. A 3♠ bid by North at this point implies three-card support and a good hand, but is not forcing.

-- If the conventional call is a double, then a redouble shows "cards."

-- A double of a conventional suit bid shows values for a bid of that suit at that level:

South	West	North
1♦	2♦*	Dbl - diamond raise, weak or maybe three diamonds
		2♥ - clubs, invitational strength
		2♠ - strong diamond raise ("Dear Partner")
		2NT - not forcing
		3♣ - forcing
		3♦ - good raise

\*Michaels Cue Bid, both majors

North's double denies values for a 3♦ bid, which should be fairly sound (although not worth a limit raise).

-- A direct double by opener after partner passes is a takeout double:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Pass	3♣
			Dbl - takeout double, implying four hearts and five-plus spades

-- Balancing doubles by either partner are penalty doubles if either has acted previously:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl - penalty double	
		3♥ - weak balancing action	

With the double, North has enough to beat 3♣, but may not be able to support any further action by South. Bidding in a balancing position after passing is a competitive action:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Dbl	Pass
Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass
		Dbl - penalty double	
		3♥/3♠ - not forcing	

North's pass of 3♣ was not forcing.

-- When opener cannot support the suit responder indicates by bidding the cheaper suit, he has room to bid the dearer opposing suit as a mark-time bid, denying three-card support for responder's suit, sufficient assets to rebid his own suit, or the ability to bid notrump. It does not show values in the suit.

-- A bid in an opposing suit is conventional only when made directly over the opponent's conventional call. A later bid in one of the suits is natural, showing strength in the suit and implying none in the other:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♦*	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	

\* Michaels, both majors

North's 2♥ bid is Unusual Over Unusual, showing a club suit. If she had bid 3♣ instead, that would be forcing. Her 3♥ bid shows heart strength and implies spade weakness, suggesting that South bid 3NT with a spade stopper. South's 3♣ (a raise of North's known clubs) is not forcing, so 3♥ shows an unexpectedly good hand, perhaps fortified by the club raise.

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Dbl	Pass
3♣ /3♦ - stopper(s) in that suit, but not in the other			

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Dbl	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♦ - diamond stopper(s), but none in clubs	

Here's how Unusual Over Unusual works against a top-and-bottom cue bid:

South	West	North
1♠	2♠*	Dbl - minimum spade raise
		2NT - not forcing
		3♣ - diamonds, invitational hand
		3♦ - forcing to game
		3♥ - strong spade raise, at least limit-raise strength
		3♠ - too good for a double
		3NT - natural
		4♣/4♦/4♥ - splinter bid in support of spades
		4♠ - preemptive spade raise

\* hearts and clubs

In this case clubs are the cheaper suit, hearts the dearer.

South	West	North
1♦	2♦*	Dbl - minimum diamond raise
		2♥ - forcing to game
		2♠ - hearts, invitational hand
		3♣ - strong diamond raise, at least limit-raise strength
		3♦ - too good for a double

\* spades and clubs

Now spades are the cheaper suit and clubs are the dearer. While it might be better to change one or more meanings in this case, the general rules work well enough and exceptions are to be avoided.

### After a Direct Intervention Over 1NT

-- The rule of "Cheap-Cheap" applies in this case. A bid in the dearer (not the cheaper) of the two suits indicated by the opponent shows values for an invitational bid in the dearer of the two "unbid" suits, while

a bid in the cheaper of the two suits shows values for an invitational bid in the cheaper of the two unbid suits. Seeking a 4-4 fit in a major is not worthwhile, since bad breaks can be expected.

South	West	North
1NT	2NT*	3♣ - invitational heart bid (or better)
		3♥/3♠ - forcing to game
		3♦ - spades, invitational hand (or better)
		4♦/4♥ - Texas Transfer
		4♣ - Gerber
		Dbl - "cards," but not enough to bid 3NT

\* minors

The "or better" bids may have a 3NT bid in reserve, wanting to know first if partner has support for responder's suit.

South	West	North
1NT	2♣*	Dbl - club length, weak hand
		2♥ - clubs, invitational hand
		3♣ - natural, forcing to game
		2♦ - natural, weak
		2♠ - diamonds, invitational hand
		3♦ - forcing to game
		2NT/3NT - natural

\* major suits

With three ways to show a diamond hand, 2♦ can be used as a weak competitive bid.

South	West	North
1NT	2♦*	Dbl - diamond length, weak hand
		2♥ - clubs, invitational hand (no weak club bid available)
		3♣ - natural, forcing to game
		2♠ - diamonds, invitational hand
		3♦ - forcing to game
		2NT/3NT - natural

\* major suits

With long clubs and no game interest, responder may be able to bid 3♣ on the next round.

### When Neither Partner Has Bid

In this case the rule of "Cheap-Cheap" applies. A bid in the dearer opposing suit shows a strong bid in the dearer "unbid" suit, and a bid in the cheaper opposing suit shows a moderate holding in the cheaper "unbid" suit.

South West  
 2NT\* 3♣ - moderate heart overcall  
 3♦ - moderate spade overcall, or better  
 3♥/3♠ - strong overcall  
 Dbl - strong hand, undefined  
 3NT - natural

\* opening bid showing the minors

The bid of 3♦ can be based on a strong hand with both majors. With moderate strength just show hearts (3♣) and then bid 3♠ (not forcing) if partner marks time with a 3♦ bid (denying heart support).

### After an Intervention Over a Raise

South West North East  
 1♠ Pass 2♠ 2NT  
 Dbl - good hand, no suitable bid, probably four spades  
 3♣ - hearts, not good enough for 3♥  
 3♥ - forcing, game try  
 3♦ - spade "rebid," good hand ("Dear Me")  
 3♠ - merely competitive  
 4♠ - denies good defensive values

### After an Intervention Over a New Suit Response

South West North East  
 1♣ Pass 1♠ 1NT - diamonds and hearts  
 Dbl - good hand, no suitable call available  
 2♣ - probably six clubs, near-minimum hand  
 3♣ - a better hand  
 2♦ - strong club hand ("Dear Me")  
 2♥ - strong spade raise ("Dear Partner")  
 2♠ - normal raise  
 2NT - standard, 19-20 HCP, red suit stoppers  
 3♠/4♠ - preemptive raises (expecting to make, but defensively weak)  
 4♦/4♥ - splinter bid in support of spades

With three ways to describe a club hand, 2♣ can be used to deny a good hand. Note the exception in regard to the "cheaper" bid, which in this case shows a strong hand, not a moderate holding. A previously-bid suit has to have a "dear" bid available.

South West North East

1♠ Pass 2♣ 2NT - diamonds and hearts  
 Dbl - good hand, no suitable call available  
 3♣ - normal raise  
 3♦ - strong spade rebid ("Dear Me")  
 3♥ - strong club raise ("Dear Partner")  
 3♠ - competitive bid  
 4♦/4♥ splinter bid in support of clubs  
 4♣/4♠ - offensively good, not much defensive strength

### After an Intervention Over a 1NT Response

South West North East

1♠ Pass 1NT 2NT  
 3♣ - moderate hand with hearts  
 3♥ - forcing  
 3♦ - strong spade rebid ("Dear Me")  
 3♠ - merely competitive

South West North East

1♣ Pass 1NT 2NT\*  
 3♣ - not a strong hand  
 3♥ - strong club rebid ("Dear Me")  
 3♦ - moderate hand with spades  
 3♠ - forcing, strong hand

\*diamonds and hearts

### Type 2 Defense

This defense applies to a bid that shows the suit named, plus another specified suit. Examples:

- A 2♥ opening that shows five hearts and four spades
- An overcall that shows the suit bid plus another specified suit

There are (at least) four cases of Type 2 conventions:

- (1) Partner has not acted.
- (2) Partner has opened in notrump.
- (3) Partner has doubled 1NT for business.
- (4) Partner has opened with one of a suit.

Case (1) applies when an opponent opens the bidding with a conventional bid that shows the suit bid, plus another specified suit. Here's the defense:

-- A double is for takeout, showing strength/length in three suits, including opener's *other* suit, and shortness in the suit opened.

-- A "cue bid" in opener's other suit, the one not bid, shows a moderate hand with length in both "unbid" suits.

-- A cue bid in the suit bid by opener shows a strong hand with length in both "unbid" suits, or perhaps a very strong one-suited hand with the dearer unbid suit.

-- All other bids are natural.

For instance, against a 2♥ opening that shows five hearts and four spades:

North	East
2♥	Dbl - takeout, a three-suited hand
	2♠ - both minors, moderate hand
	3♥ - both minors, big hand (or maybe just diamonds)
	2NT - natural, 16-18 HCP

With length and strength in opener's bid suit, and shortness in his second suit, a pass is usually best. If the opening is passed around to partner, perhaps she can make a takeout double (which you will pass). If third hand responds, you can make a takeout double yourself on the next round:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - takeout		

West usually has good hearts. East will often convert this takeout double into a penalty double by passing with spade strength/length. If East is short in hearts she knows the defense will go well after a trump lead, in view of West's probable heart strength.

Case (2), wherein partner's opening notrump bid is overcalled with a conventional bid that shows the suit named plus another specific suit, is frequently encountered. An example is the Brozel convention, in which a 2♣ or 2♦ overcall of 1NT shows the minor named and a heart suit too. A 2♥ overcall shows hearts and spades. The defense goes like this:

-- A double is for penalty.

-- A "cue bid" in the opponent's other suit is Stayman, asking opener to bid a four-card major. If the overcall shows both majors, then this is "minor suit Stayman," asking opener to bid a four-card minor.

-- A cue bid in the suit named by the opponent shows a singleton or void in that suit, and a game-going hand or better. This may be a prelude to a slam try. If opener has secondary strength in this suit, he should bid 3NT to warn of possible duplication. If not duplicated, as with a bare ace or no stopper at all, opener must not bid notrump.

-- A new suit response is not particularly invitational at matchpoint scoring. A jump is forcing at IMP scoring, invitational at matchpoints.

-- A notrump bid is natural.

Let's look at various auctions after a 1NT opening is overcalled with 2♦, showing diamonds and hearts:

South	West	North
1NT	2♦	Dbl - penalty

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl - takeout	

In general doubles after one's side has bid notrump are penalty, but low-level balancing doubles have to be an exception. South may be able to convert this into a penalty double when holding good hearts. By the way, a direct double of 2♥ by South would be for takeout (since hearts are held over him). This is analogous to the takeout meaning of 1NT-2x-P-P; Dbl. Once partner has passed in a competitive auction, the double of a suit known to be held over the doubler is for takeout.

South	West	North
1NT	2♦	2♥ - Stayman

North is asking South to show a four-card spade suit. North may pass if opener makes a minimum bid, so she should jump to 3♠, 4♠, or 3NT with a maximum opening. Both partners must keep in mind that spades may not be breaking well.

South	West	North
1NT	2♦	3♦ - strong hand, game force

South bids 3NT only when holding secondary diamond strength.

The case (3) situation, in which the conventional bid is made over partner's business double of a 1NT opening, is handled similarly to case (2).

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♣*	2♦/2♠ - competitive bid
			2♥ - "Stayman," with four spades
			3♣ - strong cue bid

\* clubs and hearts

After the 2♥ bid, East may pass West's minimum spade, notrump, or diamond bid.

The case (4) situation, in which an opposing overcall of a suit opening shows the suit bid plus another specified suit, has a similar defense:

South	West
1♦	2♥ - hearts and spades

-- A direct double is for penalties, a balancing double is for takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♣	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl - takeout	

West's jump overcall showed hearts and spades. East no doubt has five diamonds and some club support. she could bid 2NT to show such a hand, so the double implies some defensive strength in case South wants to defend.

- A "new suit" response in the fourth suit is forcing.
- Notrump bids are natural, non-forcing, even a jump to 2NT.
- A cue bid in the suit named by the opponent is a strong slam try, showing support for partner and at least second round control of the cue bid suit.
- A "cue bid" in the opponent's other suit shows a good hand that has no alternative call available.

Note the similarities among the four cases of Type 2 conventions:

- Direct doubles are penalty if partner has acted, otherwise takeout.
- Low-level balancing doubles are takeout
- Cue bids in the bid suit are very strong.
- Cue bids in the other suit show a good, but not powerful, hand.

### Type 3 Defense

The Type 3 two-suit convention shows the suit named, plus an unspecified suit. The second suit may be described as being a major, a minor, or red, or black, etc., but is not specifically identified.

Examples:

- 2♠ overcall of a 1NT opening, showing spades and a minor suit

System off, 3♠ is Stayman, all other bids are natural and non-forcing.

- 2♠ opening showing spades plus a minor suit
- 2♥ opening showing hearts and a minor suit

No special defense is needed for this convention type when it is an opening bid. Just bid normally. If partner has opened with one of a suit, a double is penalty and a cue bid is strong.

## Type 4 Defense

A Type 4 two-suit convention shows a specific suit other than the one named, plus an unspecified suit. That is, the conventional bid does not name one of the suits held, and only one suit is specifically identified. Examples:

- Michaels cue bid over a major opening, showing the other major plus a minor suit
- Astro overcalls of a 1NT opening (2♦ shows spades and another suit, 2♣ shows hearts plus a minor)
- Raptor 1NT overcall--see section 12-16

## After a 1NT Opening

-- System off, because the opposing known suit is used for Stayman. A double is for business, and with a one-suited hand denies the ability to make a stronger bid. The double says, "He just bid my suit, and I don't have enough strength to do anything but double. The doubler will not bid again if one-suited, but if two-suited his hand is unlimited.

South	West	North
1NT	2♣	Dbl

West's bid shows hearts and a minor suit. North has ♠32 ♥876 ♦Q42 ♣KJ873. The double denies the ability to bid 2NT or 3♣, which would be invitational. She might bid something on the next round, however, which then shows a strong hand with clubs. For instance, doubling 2♣ and then bidding 3♣ is forcing, because an invitational hand would bid 3♣ immediately.

-- The forcing nature of a conventional call allows three degrees of strength for a new suit response (minimum bid, jump bid, pass and bid). All minimum suit bids other than the opponent's known suit are natural (no Jacoby transfers) and invitational, and jump bids are forcing. With a weak hand, responder can pass and hope to act on the next round. Texas applies as usual, but it has to be a jump bid. A bid in the opponent's known suit is used for Stayman:

In the following auction 2♣ shows hearts plus a minor:

South	West	North
1NT	2♣	2♦/2♠/2NT/3♣ - invitational
		2♥ - Stayman
		3♦/3♠ - forcing
		Dbl - club suit, not enough for 3♣

## After Partner's Suit Opening

-- A direct double shows the suit, but denies the ability to bid the suit at the next level:

South	West	North
1♣	2♥*	Dbl - heart suit

## 3♥ - forcing

\* spades and a minor

With a one-suited hand North has limited his strength by doubling and usually will not bid again. With a two-suited hand, good club support, or a strong notrump-type hand, the double is unlimited. Bidding notrump, or a second suit, or raising later will clarify North's hand if it is strong.

-- A bid in the opponent's known suit is a takeout bid that does not promise another bid. North would bid 2♠ over 2♥ with ♠432 ♥AK65 Jx ♣K872. In this auction it promises enough strength for probable safety at the three level, so don't bid 2♠ with a weaker hand.

-- A jump in the opponent's known suit is a splinter bid, showing first or second round control of the suit, good support for opener, and slam aspirations. Opener's notrump rebid then warns of duplication (secondary strength) in the suit.

-- A new suit bid is forcing.

-- When the opposing bid is in partner's suit, a raise of that suit must have full values for the level involved. You can double to show a light hand with support:

South	West	North
1♠	2♠	Dbl

West's 2♠ bid shows hearts and a minor. North's double limits his hand. She has a normal raise to 2♠, but not enough to bid 3♠ (which ought to be sound, close to a limit raise). A three-card spade holding is likely.

-- A 2NT response is not forcing.

### Against an Opening Bid

-- A double shows the suit bid, and with a one-suited hand denies the ability to bid the suit at the next level. With a two-suited or strong notrump-type hand, the double is unlimited.

-- A bid of the known suit is for takeout.

### Type 5 Defense

The Type 5 two-suit convention shows an unspecified two-suiter.

Examples:

-- Cansino double of 1NT, showing both minors or both majors

-- 2♣ overall of 1NT, showing an unspecified two-suiter.

-- 2♦ overall of 2♣, showing an unspecified two-suiter

In general, the defense against a Type 5 call over partner's 1NT opening is the general one that the double of a suit overcall shows the suit doubled, new suit bids are not particularly invitational, and a jump is forcing at IMP scoring, invitational at matchpoints. A double of 2♣ is Stayman, however, with "all systems on." A conventional double of 1NT is ignored completely, "all systems on," except that a redouble shows at least 6 HCP in a hand that may have passed 1NT. Opener may be able to double an opposing contract, knowing that partner has something to contribute. After a redouble, all doubles by either partner, direct or balancing, are for business.

When the call is a 2♦ bid made over an artificial 2♣ strong opening, however, a pass serves as a negative or waiting response and controls are not shown:

South	West	North
2♣	2♦	Pass - negative or waiting
		Dbl - diamond suit, positive response
		2♥/2♠/2NT/3♣ - natural positive responses

The double of an overcall higher than 2♦ shows the suit doubled, as usual, with enough strength for a positive response. If one-suited, the double is limited (i.e., the suit is probably not very strong). It is preferable to bid the suit when it is long/strong. With a two-suited hand the double is unlimited.

When the conventional call is a double of partner's natural opening bid in a suit, bid as you would over a takeout double.

### **Type 6 Defense**

The type 6 two-suited convention shows either of two hands: two specific suits or one specific suit, none named. The simplest defense is to double to show the suit bid, but retain the usual meaning for all other calls. Passing and acting later is another option, necessary when holding a strong raise.

South	West	North
1♠	2♦*	2♥/3♦/3♣ - natural response, forcing
		Dbl - diamonds, not good enough for 3♦
		3♠ - limit raise
		4♠ - preemptive raise

\* hearts or both minors

With no known suit to use as a cue bid when holding a strong raise, just pass and bid strongly later.

## DEFENSE AGAINST DISCIPLINED WEAK TWO BIDS

A disciplined weak two bid is defined as promising a good six-card suit and at least 6 HCP. See section 12-9 for defense against "undisciplined" weak two bids.

A takeout double must be slightly stronger than a minimum for a one-level double. A double of one major practically guarantees at least four cards in the other major, unless the doubler is quite strong. Even then, three cards is a minimum holding for an unbid major. A double of 2♦ should have at least seven cards in the majors, at least four in each if the double is a little light.

A direct 2NT overcall shows 16-18 HCP. With a single stopper one might want more than 16 HCP, and 19 HCP would not be too much. Partner raises to 3NT with 9 HCP or so. If he passes with 8 HCP and you miss a game, that's life. You can't do everything.

A 2NT overcall in the reopening position can be a little lighter, but not much. Third hand could be loaded, just waiting to double something. Besides, partner won't know what to do with 9 HCP if you bid 2NT with anything from 14 to 19 HCP.

After a 2NT overcall, use the same conventions and treatments as for a 2NT opening. A 3♣ bid is always Stayman, while a transfer acts like a cue bid, implying first or second round control and slam interest. With conventions "on," the normal cue bid is not available.

With too big a hand for a 2NT overcall, double and then bid 3NT. A 2NT bid after doubling would not be interpreted as too big a hand for a 2NT overcall (although the range should be higher, say 17-19 HCP):

South	West	North	East
2♦	Dbl	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT		

This sequence implies a hand with 3-4 in the majors, maybe a single diamond stopper, and 17-19 HCP. Just pass 2♠ with less (or bid 2NT instead of doubling).

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT		

Here too, East implies three-card spade support and only a single heart stopper: ♠AQ3 ♥K4 ♦A876 ♣KJ54

Since you can double and then bid notrump with a big hand, a 3NT overcall tends to be based on a solid minor. Don't "gamble" with this bid in the direct position. Bid 3♦ with ♠K3 ♥J4 ♦AKQ873 ♣432, even over a weak 2♠ bid. You could bid 3NT in the balancing position, knowing partner probably has a couple of high cards (but not enough to hang you with a slam bid).

When making a suit overcall of a weak two bid, you assume partner has 7 HCP or so. The converse is that responder generally passes with 7 HCP or less and no good ruffing potential. It also follows that you must make a jump overcall if an ace and a queen, or two kings, in partner's hand will produce game.

A cue bid overcall of a weak two bid is a strong bid that is often based on a two-suited hand. Overcall 2♠ with 3♠ holding ♠4 ♥AK1087 ♦8 ♣AQJ873. If partner bids diamonds, you bid 4♥, implying a two suited hand with hearts/clubs. Don't cue bid with a hand weaker than this. Just overcall in one of the suits and hope to bid the other later. A cue bid can also be based on a very strong three-suited hand.

A jump cue bid shows a game-going hand in a major, too strong for a mere jump to game:

South	West	North	East
2♥	4♥	Pass	5♣ -cue bid in support of spades
Pass	6♠		

East has ♠J♥8732 ♦10843 ♣AJ92, West ♠AKQ10843 ♥void ♦A92 ♣KQ6. A jump to 4♠ over 2♥ would not do the hand justice. East would have passed and missed a slam. A jump to game in a major should usually have no more than nine playing tricks. This one has 9-1/2, with first or second round control of every suit.

A jump cue bid of 4♠ over a 2♠ opening would be very unlikely, since overcaller would need close to eleven tricks.

A jump cue bid of 4♦ over a 2♦ opening is ambiguous, since overcaller could have either hearts or spades. Advancer can bid 4NT (regular Blackwood) or cue bid a minor as a slam try only if ready to play in either major. A 4♠ bid is not a cue bid. It implies slam interest if overcaller's suit is hearts, but not otherwise.

### When Third Hand Bids a New Suit

Partners of weak two bidders often psych a major suit response, so a double of such a takeout is for business if it is forcing::

South	West	North	East
2♥	Pass	2♠	Dbl - business if 2♠ is forcing
			3♥ - takeout if 2♠ is forcing

The double shows a 2♠ overcall. If East has a 3♠ overcall he should bid 3♠ rather than double, because the double is a limit call. The reason is shown by this auction:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Pass	2♠	Dbl
Pass	Pass	4♥	?

If East had values for a 3♠ bid, he can't show that now.

If the major suit response is not forcing (which must be Alerted), then a psych is much less likely to a double is takeout, showing both minors, and a cue bid in one of the opposing suits shows a stopper (Telling Cue Bid), implying that partner should bid 3NT with the other suit stopped.

A double of a minor suit response is for takeout:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Pass	3♣	Dbl - takeout

With 5-5 or better a 4♣ cue bid would be preferable if the hand is strong enough. A cue bid in opener's suit (3♠, in this case) is a Telling Cue Bid," showing a stopper and suggesting that partner bid 3NT with the other suit stopped (♠A4 ♥A9 ♦AKQ874 ♣972).

### When Third Seat Bids Over a Double

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	2♠	?

If East has four or more spades, North's bid is almost certainly a psych. East should double if she was going to bid 2♠ willingly (i.e., possessing 6-8 HCP or so). If she was going to jump to 3♠, she now bids 3♠, following the policy of ignoring the opposing bid except for possibly doubling it. A double is therefore a limit call, denying the values for a 3♠ or 4♠ bid. If you double with a wide range of HCPs and suit length, you and partner may be doing some guessing if the bidding goes like this:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	2♠	Dbl
Pass	Pass	5♥!	

Similarly, a bid by the doubler in a new major that was bid over the double is natural, whether or not it has been doubled:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Dbl	2♥	Pass/Dbl
3♦	3♥ - natural, not forcing		

These considerations do not apply when the suit involved is a minor:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	3♣	4♣ - forcing cue bid

East has first round control of clubs and a strong hand. A double would be for business.

When third hand raises, a double should be played as a Responsive Double or a Positive Double (section 9-1).

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	3♠	Dbl - Takeout

The double should say, "This is our hand, but I'm not confident that I can make 4♥."

## DEFENSE AGAINST UNDISCIPLINED WEAK TWO BIDS

An "undisciplined" weak two bid is defined as one that is quite likely to be based on a trashy suit, maybe only five long, or may well have fewer than 6 HCP.

This defense, aimed at penalizing the opponents, applies only when the vulnerability is favorable or equal. When the vulnerability is unfavorable use standard defensive bidding as described in section 12-8, Defense Against Standard Weak Two Bids. With this vulnerability a profitable penalty is unlikely if you have game your way.

While this defense is primarily for matchpoint contests (doubling the opponents into game is not uncommon, and slam is sometimes missed), it can also be used for short IMP matches, such as Swiss teams. For long IMP matches, it should be used only if the opponents are particularly wild bidders.

Here's the special defense, which is used only in the direct (i.e., not reopening) position by an unpassed hand:

-- A double is optional, showing 14 HCP or more, at least Jxx in the opposing suit, at least three defensive tricks, and a balanced hand. With a big hand a singleton in an unbid minor is all right, but you must have a place to go if partner bids that minor. With a marginal double it is good to have a fair holding in the opposing suit, and outside aces/kings rather than queens/jacks. You want to be ready with some good defense if partner takes the likely option of passing the double. It doesn't hurt to have a good lead against the doubled contract. After this double, the opponents usually cannot play the hand unless they play it doubled (an exception comes later), so advancer can make a forcing pass if her RHO bids.

-- A ranking suit (2♥ over 2♦, 2♠ over 2♥, 3♣ over 2♠) is for takeout, implying a three-suited hand with at least four cards in the unbid major and shortness in the opposing suit. It is not forcing, since a really big hand can cue bid. Advancer may pass with four cards in the suit. He should not jump to the four level in a suit without 10 HCP or so, since the ranking denomination bid is limited. A jump to 3♠ (i.e., 2♦-2♥-3♠) is okay with a little less. A jump to 4NT is regular Blackwood, as it is after a takeout double.

-- A 2NT bid shows an overcall in the ranking suit, and naturally must be a bit conservative. A plus for this bid is that it can begin the description of a two-suited hand. Advancer bids 3♣ to deny three-card support, but if the indicated suit is clubs advancer must bid 3♣ even without support. Such ranking-suit bids deny values for some forward-going bid, of course.

-- A cue bid is usually based on a good two-suited hand but (since a takeout bid is not forcing) sometimes a big three-suiter. A correction bid shows the two-suiter when partner perversely bids the fourth suit:

	South	West	North	East
	2♠	3♠	Pass	4♦
	Pass	4♥	- hearts and clubs	

A non-game advance of the cue bid is forcing, so jumping in a suit promises an independent suit, one that can play opposite a singleton.

-- Other actions are the same as when defending against standard weak two bids.

### After a Direct Optional Double

South	West	North	East
2♦/2♥/2♠	Dbl	Pass	?

North can take the double out into a five-card or longer suit if he doesn't want to defend the doubled contract. The decision whether to pass or bid depends on 1) the holding in the opposing suit, 2) other defensive strength, and 3) length in the suit you are going to bid. Shortness/weakness in 1), weakness in 2), and length in 3) all point toward bidding instead of passing.

With a balanced hand containing no long suit, pass no matter how weak the hand. Bidding a four-card suit is unlikely to improve the situation, since the doubler may well have a doubleton in that suit. Besides, the doubler has an unlimited hand. Perhaps he doesn't need to be rescued from the double.

A 2NT response tends to show a good long minor and at least a partial stopper in the opposing suit:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	Pass	2NT

East might have ♠A3 ♥Q7 ♦K108732 ♣952. It's dangerous to leave the double in with such a long suit. Partner may have diamond strength that would be worth little in the defense against 2♥. Besides, you might have a game even if you can beat them a trick. The doubler passes 2NT with 14-15 HCP. With 16 HCP or more he should go on. A double stopper in opener's suit or a fit for both minors is a plus for bidding 3NT.

After a 2NT response, doubler's new suit bid is forcing, showing at least a five-card suit, and denies the ability to bid 3NT.

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣/3♦/3♥	- forcing	
	3♠	- asks for a sure stopper	

West's 3♠ bid does not ask for a partial stopper, which the 2NT bid has already implied.

A cue bid response is game forcing, showing a strong hand that is unsuitable for defense against the doubled contract. It is usually based on a two-suited hand:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦ - probably both minors in a strong hand

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥ - hearts plus a minor

### When Third Seat Bids Over a Double

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	2♠	?

Unlike a (takeout) double of a standard weak two bid, the double of an undisciplined weak two bid in a major does not necessarily show anything in the other major. In this auction East cannot assume that North is psyching just because she holds five spades. She must therefore double with hands that might call for a 3♠ or 4♠ bid opposite a takeout sort of double that implies spade support.

Doubler's partner does not have to bid with a good hand that is short in the "rescue" suit, because a pass is forcing. This policy ensures that a big penalty is never missed because someone bids out of fear that partner will pass. When such a bid is passed around, a repeat double is a little more business-oriented:

	South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	3♣/3♦/3♥	Pass - forcing	
	Pass	Dbl - business, but still optional		

West has to do *something*, because East's pass is forcing, but he may have only three trumps. A double with two trumps is too dangerous, in view of East's pass.

A free bid in a new suit over the "rescue" is not constructive:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	3♣	3♦/3♥

With good values East would tend to pass and then pull a double if very short in clubs. That means "pass and pull" is the stronger action, just as it is at the five level in a competitive auction.

When the new suit is forcing over a double, it becomes possible for the opening side to play the hand undoubled:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	3♣ *	Pass
3♥	Pass - not forcing (double with extras)		
	* Forcing		

If 3♣ is not forcing, however, West's pass is forcing.

Responsive-type doubles are not used against undisciplined weak two bids:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	3♠	Dbl - business

## MARVIN VS FIVE-CARD MAJORS

An opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦ with a three-card suit is quite common in five-card major systems. Forcing club system bidders may even open 1♦ with a weak doubleton and a light hand. The following defense is aimed at punishing these practices. It may be applied selectively, e.g., against vulnerable opponents only. It applies only to direct action taken by an unpassed hand, and only against an opening that may be shorter than four cards. Some five-card majorites guarantee four diamonds with a 1♦ opening, so the defense does not apply against their 1♦ opening. Balancing and passed hand actions are standard. See section 11-1, Reopening the Bidding, and section 8-5, Defensive Bidding by a Passed Hand.

### Defense Against a One Diamond Opening

-- A double of 1♦ shows a notrump hand of two possible ranges, 16-18 HCP or 21-22 HCP, including Qxx or better in diamonds. With 19-20 HCP, bid 1♥ and follow with an appropriate notrump bid, just as you would normally double and then bid notrump with such a hand (see section 9-1, Takeout Doubles). With diamonds weaker than Qxx, a 1♥ takeout is probably a good alternative.

The reason for (reluctantly) excluding 19-20 HCP hands is that the doubler will sometimes have to bid 2NT between two bidders later in the auction, a dangerous action with only 19-20 HCP. You can cheat a trifle on the 16 HCP requirement when the diamonds are extra good (e.g., KJ97). Be sure to count a little more for tenaces like AQ, AJx, KJx, etc. Sitting over the opening bidder makes such holdings more valuable than their normal point count (and makes opener's honors worth less).

The double of 1♦ puts opener in a bind right away if his diamond suit is short. The opponents may have no place to go, and even if they do, they may have difficulty finding it. (Try to devise a system for locating the best contract after a double--it's not easy.) The double has constructive as well as destructive purposes. A 4-4 major suit fit, or even a minor suit fit, can sometimes be found when a 1NT overcall would have been passed out.

-- A 1♥ overcall is artificial, forcing, a takeout bid. Partner ("advancer") responds as to a takeout double. An advance of 2♦ is a normal forcing cue bid, while an advance of 3♦ is natural, invitational. A 1NT advance would be unusual, but would be necessary with a very weak 3=3=4=3 hand. Is it dangerous for advancer to bid 1NT with a bust hand? Sure, but no more dangerous than having West overcall 1NT instead of doubling. You'll have lots of company.

-- A 1♠ overcall is natural, too good (or spades too weak) for a preemptive 2♠ overcall.

-- A 1NT overcall is forcing, showing a simple heart overcall, too good (or hearts too weak) for a preemptive 2♥ overcall. Partner bids 2♥ to sign off, an action that requires no strength at all. Other advances are the same as if the overcall had been a natural heart bid. For instance, a 2♦ bid is a standard cue bid response to the overcall, while 3♣ or 3♦ is natural (invitational).

South	West	North	East
1♦	1NT	Pass	2♦ - standard cue bid
			2♥ - signoff
			2♣/2♠ - not forcing
			2NT - natural, invitational
			3♣/3♦/3♥ - invitational

-- A 2♣ overcall is artificial and forcing, showing a strong (i.e., eight playing tricks) jump overcall in some suit, or an eight-trick notrump hand based on a solid six-card minor plus stoppers. With a standard club overcall, too good for a (preemptive) 2NT call, bid 3♣ if you are strong enough, otherwise pass. Partner bids 2♦ (forcing) over 2♣ to find out what you have, or may bid a very good suit (also forcing):

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	Pass	2♦?
Pass	2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦		- strong jump in this suit
	2NT		- natural, solid minor, stoppers

One quick trick is enough to raise the 2NT bid. If opener's partner sticks in a bid (e.g., 2♦), 2NT can be used for the query. The solid suit for an eight-trick notrump hand is probably clubs, but could be diamonds. See section 8-3, Strong Jump Overcalls, and section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

-- Bid 2NT with a preemptive jump overcall in clubs, 3♣ with an intermediate club overcall, pass with a minimum club overcall.

-- A 2♦ overcall has the same meaning as a cue bid over a normal (e.g., four-card) diamond opening. With a natural diamond overcall, just pass and hope to act later if you can't double (see below) or bid 3♦. You may find that opener has a real diamond suit, or that you can eventually double a notrump contract for a diamond lead, or that you can balance with a diamond bid later..

-- Jump overcalls in a major or in diamonds are preemptive (but not very weak at the two level--about the same as a weak two bid). After a 2♥ or 2♠ overcall, subsequent bidding follows the same rules as for weak two bids.

When advancing the weak preemptive overcalls, use the methods for responding to a preemptive opening. See Section 7-2, Weak Two Bids, and Section 7-3, Preemptive Three Bids.

### Bidding After a Double

-- Unless advancer has indicated weakness by not doubling an opposing 1NT bid, his two-level bids have the same meaning as if doubler had overcalled 1NT naturally. All conventions are operative. See section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls. If doubler has a 21-22 HCP hand, he will have to use his ingenuity to disclose the extra strength somehow (e.g., jumping to 3♥ or 3♠ in response to Stayman, raising 3NT to 4NT, bidding 2NT in response to a Jacoby transfer).

-- With a weak hand (0-7 HCP) that would have passed a normal 1NT overcall, advancer can bid a four-card major at the one level (Use Jacoby with five, unless extremely weak). The doubler will pass with good

support (four cards, or three plus a ruffing value). A free bid of 1♠ (over RHO's 1♥) is also weak, 0-7 HCP. After a "weakness response," no subsequent pass by either partner is forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♥ - weak
2♦	Pass	- not forcing	
		Dbl - business, maybe 21-22 HCP	
		2♥ - 16-18 HCP, four hearts	
		2NT/3♥ - 21-22 HCP for sure	

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥	1♠ - weak
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣ - still weak!

East probably has four spades, five clubs, and a weak unbalanced hand that is unsuitable for notrump. West should pass unless he has more spades than clubs. Even though it is at the two level, the last bid is natural, not Stayman, because 1♠ showed weakness.

-- Passes of an opposing 1♥ or 1♠ bid by either partner are forcing unless advancer has indicated weakness (which would have to be via a 1♥ bid). Pass of 1NT bid over the double is not forcing. Passes at the two level are forcing only if advancer has previously indicated some strength (e.g., by passing the double of 1♦). Forcing passes will help prevent the opponents from getting out of trouble, as when the next hand to bid is strong but cannot double a runout bid.

-- Advancer can pass the double with a few high cards and a fair diamond holding, knowing that doubler has something in diamonds and lots of defense. Sometimes advancer will pass with a weak hand but long diamonds. If opener then runs to 1♠ and doubler passes (forcing), advancer can bid 2♦, not forcing, if the runout bid comes around:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	Pass	2♦ - weak, long diamonds
			1NT - up to 7 HCP

Other possible actions by East:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	Pass	1♠ - weak, four spades
			1NT - 7 HCP maximum
			Dbl - business

The 1♠ bid would be appropriate with ♠Q987 ♥7 ♦KQ32 ♣9643. It denies the strength required for a game try opposite 16-18 HCP, the same message given by the 1NT bid. Had North raised to 2♥, a 2♠ bid would have the same meaning as when the bidding goes 1♦-1NT-2♥-2♠ in standard bidding (five or more spades, not invitational).

-- Advancer's pass over a redouble is also to play. In fact, a redouble is completely ignored, whether it is "S. O. S." or not:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass - Business
			1♥/1♠/1NT - weak

Unlike the situation after a takeout double, East's pass says he is ready to defend 1♦ redoubled. This and any other action by East is the same as if the redouble had not occurred. East can't pass the redouble with short diamonds, even with a good hand, because a pass shows a desire to defend against 1♦ redoubled.

Is it dangerous for advancer to bid 1NT with a bust hand? Sure, but no more dangerous than having West overcall 1NT instead of doubling.

-- If third hand bids 1♥ or 1♠, a double is for business, as are all subsequent doubles by either partner. A one-level business doubler should have at least four cards in the opposing suit, and partner should have two or more to pass the double. (Defending a one-level contract with 3-3 trumps may not be profitable.) A pass by advancer is forcing.

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥	Dbl - business
			Pass - forcing
			1♠ - weak, four cards
			1NT - weak, both minors

Since doubler can't have a singleton, he will always pass a business double. Although the pass is forcing, it promises no strength whatsoever. West can double 1♥ with only 16 HCP, however, because East will pull the double to 1NT (or a forcing two-level bid) if he decides that his hand is not good enough to defend against 1♥. Pulling a double of 1♥ to 1♠ is a stronger action (but still weak, 6-7 HCP) than bidding 1♠ immediately. For the 1NT bid, a sort of advance rescue, the minors can be as short as 4-4. (A natural 1NT bid would be illogical in this situation, since West will bid 1NT if East passes).

Two-level bids have the same meaning as if doubler had overcalled 1NT naturally:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥/1♠	2♣ - Stayman
			2♦/2♥ - Jacoby transfer
			etc.

After advancer's forcing pass, doubler clarifies his hand if he can't double for business:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥	Pass - forcing
Pass	Dbl	♠104 ♥AJ98 ♦AQ108 ♣KQ2	
		1NT - ♠AJ8 ♥K10 ♦AQ108 ♣Q72	
		1♠ - ♠AJ98 ♥104 ♦AQ108 ♣KQ2	
		2NT - AK8 ♥K10 ♦AQ108 ♣AJ2	

2♥ - AK98 ♥102 ♦AQ108 ♣AKJ

After the 2♥ cue bid, a 2NT bid by advancer can be passed because overcaller has shown his hand pretty exactly: 21-22 HCP and no heart stopper. After the notrump rebids by doubler, the usual notrump conventions apply.

See section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

-- Third hand may sometimes bid 1NT over the double:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1NT	Pass - not forcing (weak)
			2 any - natural, weak
			2NT - artificial, forcing
			3 any - invitational
			Dbl - business

The 2NT bid and jumps to three of a suit are probably based on a distributionally strong hand that may not have much in high cards (in view of the failure to double 1NT). Doubler assumes that advancer's 2NT bid is offering a choice of the minors and bids 3♣ or 3♦, but it could be based on any two suits. If advancer then bids a new suit (forcing), opener raises or bids his next-best suit:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1NT	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥ - forcing
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣ - second suit, not forcing

### When Second Hand Passes or Overcalls Naturally

Fourth seat's defensive actions when partner passes or overcalls naturally are standard. The meaning of a 2♦ overcall of a third seat response to 1♦ depends on what the response was. For instance, 2♦ is natural over a new suit response:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♦ - natural bid
			Dbl - takeout

See section 10-4, Direct Cue Bid Overcalls. Reopening calls in the fourth seat (i.e., after 1♦-P-P) are also standard. See section 11-1, Reopening the Bidding.

### Defense Against A One Club Opening

The defense against a 1♣ opening is similar, except that 1♦ is the takeout call, and the meanings of 2♣ and 2♦ are reversed:

South West

- 1♣ Dbl - 16-18 HCP or 21-22 HCP, at least Qxx in clubs.  
 1♦ - takeout, forcing  
 1♥/1♠ - natural overcall  
 1NT - normal diamond overcall  
 2♣ - normal cue bid  
 2♦ - strong jump in some suit  
 2♥/2♠/3♣ - preemptive, but 2♥/2♠ not very weak  
 2NT - preemptive diamond overcall  
 3♦ - intermediate diamond overcall

A double of 1♣ shows a notrump hand of two possible ranges, 16-18 HCP or 21-22 HCP, including Qxx or better in clubs. With 19-20 HCP, bid 1♦ and follow with an appropriate notrump bid, just as you would normally double and then bid notrump with such a hand (see section 9-1, Takeout Doubles). With clubs weaker than Qxx, a 1♦ takeout is preferable.

After a double of 1♣, advancer can bid 1♦ to ask for a major. This denies the strength required for a 2♣ Stayman bid, and may be based on a complete bust. Bid 2♣ (Stayman), not 1♦, if game is a possibility opposite 16-18 HCP. If you bid 1♦ and then raise partner's major suit bid, he will know that the raise is merely a competitive move and you are not interested in game. Similarly, if you bid 1♦ and then bid 1NT or two of any suit, doubler must pass unless he has both majors or a big hand:

South West North East

- 1♣ Dbl Pass 1♦ - asks for major  
 Pass 1♠ Pass 1NT/2♣/2♦ - signoff  
 Pass 2♥/Pass - 16-18 HCP  
 2NT/3 any - 21-22 HCP

The 2♣ or 2♦ signoff implies four hearts and at least a five-card minor.

The 2♦ overcall of 1♣ is forcing, of course. Advancer bids 2♥ if he would pass a strong jump overcall in hearts, 2♠ if he would pass a spade jump but not a heart jump. Higher suit bids are natural, forcing. He can bid 2NT to inquire:

South West North East

- 1♣ 2♦ Pass 2NT?  
 3 any suit - strong overcall in that suit  
 3NT - solid minor plus stoppers

### Reopening an Opposing Auction

One auction that is very poor for five-card majorities is a minor suit opening, a major suit response, and a 1NT rebid:

South West North East

- 1♣/1♦ Pass 1♥/1♠ Pass  
 1NT Pass Pass ?

Since opener is reluctant to raise a major without four trumps, he can easily end up in a 1NT contract when there is a good 5-3 major suit fit. If East reopens in the auction above, South can show three-card support for North and possibly reach a better contract. East should therefore be slow to reopen the bidding unless North's pass denies five cards in his suit or he has North's suit well under control (which might call for a double of 1NT). See section 8-8, Reopening Doubles of 1NT Responses and Rebids.

### **When There's a 1NT Response to a Major Opening**

Five-card majorites play a 1NT response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening as forcing. The subsequent bidding may be wildly inaccurate, given the wide range (6-11 HCP) and unrestricted distribution of the 1NT bidder, plus the restriction that opener must have a six-card suit to rebid it.

Overcalling the 1NT response, besides being somewhat dangerous and generally unnecessary (since 1NT is forcing), may relieve opener of a serious rebid problem. He can just pass (or double) instead of having to bid a three-card minor, for instance. One effective overcall is a 2♠ bid, which can really jam their bidding. It is a safer bid than 2♣ or 2♦, since neither opponent is likely to have four spades, especially if they are playing Flannery. (But some Flannery bidders play that a 1NT response to 1♥ may include four spades, so watch out for that.) If opener's rebid is 2♣ or 2♦ and everyone passes, a trump lead should be automatic. The dummy is sure to have a singleton or void in opener's major, and you don't want to sit back and watch a cross-ruff develop.

## DEFENSE AGAINST GAMBLING 3NT OPENINGS

This defense is a variation of "Ripstra," a convention that was originally aimed at a 1NT opening: "Bid your better minor to ask for a major." That usage is obsolete now, but has been resurrected for use as a counter to the gambling type of 3NT opening (showing a solid seven-card minor and little outside).

-- A double is for business.

-- A major suit overcall is natural.

-- A minor suit overcall asks for partner's better major. The overcaller is showing his longer minor, Ripstra-fashion, so partner can pass (or raise) with extreme shortness in the majors and length in the minor. This call can also be made with spades and a minor when the spades are not good enough to bid at the four level. If partner bids 4♥, you bid 4♠ and she will know you have a two-suiter with spades plus a minor (4NT asks which minor).

-- A 4NT overcall shows hearts plus a minor; i.e., it is unusual notrump for the "lower two unbid suits." Lacking four or more hearts, partner bids 5♥ when not holding more cards in a minor; 5♣ with longer clubs than hearts (If overcaller then bids 5♦ over 5♣, he has hearts and diamonds); 5♦ if she prefers hearts to clubs and has more diamonds than hearts. A bid of 5♠ in response to 4NT is a signoff, showing a long spade suit that can play opposite a singleton.

South	West	North	East
3NT	4NT	Pass	5♥ - prefers hearts
			5♣ - prefers clubs
			5♦ - prefers diamonds
			5♠ - natural
			5NT - your minor?

If the opening could be based on a major suit, then 4NT is for the minors. Partner prefers clubs with equal length.

### The Opening Lead

When leading against a gambling 3NT bid, the standard advice is to forget fourth best leads and lay down high cards in the hope of finding partner with solidifying cards in some long suit, or enough top cards in multiple suits to defeat the contract.

When not leading a winner, the opening lead should express attitude, not count. This is also true of continuations and switches. Lead low from strength, high from weakness.

## DEFENSE AGAINST MULTI TWO DIAMONDS

A "multi-color" opening shows one of two specified suits, neither of which is named. The most popular is "Multi Two Diamonds," Multi for short, which shows a weak two bid in spades or hearts. Responder bids 2♥ if he would pass a weak two bid in hearts, 2♠ if he would pass a weak two bid in spades but would raise hearts, and so on. A 2NT response asks opener to clarify his hand, perhaps with a transfer to his suit. The ACBL requires Multi users to disclose it in advance ("Pre-Alert") and to offer opponents a choice of two ACBL-approved defenses to consult during the auction. Neither is of much value. The following is an alternative defense that may be used (but can't be offered to opponents by Multi users).

Multi may be based on some sort of very strong hand rather than a weak two bid. It is fairly safe to assume the opening is of the weak sort, which it usually is, until opener indicates otherwise. You can sometimes pass the opening, find out about opener's hand on the next round, and then act if he is weak.

If there is no strong adjunct, the convention is properly called Wagner. A defense against Wagner must take into account that, unlike Multi, the 2♦ opening may be passed around to fourth seat when responder has very long diamonds and is very short in the major suits (or, taking a chance, in just one major). With Multi's strong adjunct, the pass possibility is small enough to be ignored.

Both Multi and Wagner have weaknesses that should be exploited. They give defenders two opportunities for acting, immediate or delayed, providing more ways to describe their hands. They often let defenders into the bidding at a lower level than would have been possible after a natural weak two bid. Responder can seldom make a preemptive raise, not knowing opener's suit for sure. The same ignorance applies to his opening leads when opener has not been able to describe his hand.

As when facing standard weak two bids, you may get fixed when neither of you has enough to enter the bidding but the hand is your way. Accept it, because with this defense you will have many more advantages than disadvantages when comparing with those competing against standard weak twos. Be satisfied with that.

As against normal weak two bids, defenders must be reasonable in competing, even when balancing, if the Multi opening comes in first or second seat. They can compete more aggressively, of course, when responder is a passed hand.

## Double for Diamonds

The following defense ("Double for Diamonds") may be modified for use against any multi-color type opening that has a strong adjunct. I am much indebted to Danny Kleinman for his great assistance in this effort, but any dumb actions recommended here are mine, not his.

### Goals:

- To take advantage of Multi's drawbacks (e.g., second hand usually gets two chances to act)
- To be better off, never worse off, than those defending a standard weak two
- To show accurately as many types of hand as possible

M stands for a major suit, m for a minor suit, PH/UPH for passed hand/unpassed hand

### 2♦-

Dbl - diamonds and a major, typically 5-5

With a bad hand or a strong hand advancer usually passes the double. A later voluntary bid (e.g., not a forced preference) shows a strong hand.

With moderate values he bids a major of 3+ cards, 2♥ with both, or he can bid a non-forcing 3♣ or 3♦. Bid 3♥ or 4♥ with strength and 3+ in both majors.

2NT is forcing, natural, implying 2-2 majors (stopped) and a diamond fit, but is artificial over responder's 2♠ bid.

A redouble by responder is ignored.

If responder bids 2♥ advancer doubles with 3+ hearts (but not spades), and bids 2♠ with 3+ spades or 3+ in both majors.

If responder bids 2♠ advancer doubles with 3+ spades or 3+ in both majors and bids 2NT with 3+ hearts (but not spades) OR a strong hand.

When advancer has shown 3+ spades, opener passing, intervenor bids 2NT to deny spades, and advancer then chooses a contract.

With a minimum double, intervenor should not bid (his hand is known) over a rebid by opener, but he can double (penalty).

If intervenor's major is known (but not bid) by advancer, intervenor's bid of the major shows a six-card suit

Intervenor's 3♣ rebid (or double of 3♣) is artificial, showing a strong hand.

2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦ - natural

2NT/3NT - natural by UPH, minors by PH

3♥/3♠/4♥/4♠ - too good for a simple overcall

4♣ - clubs and a major, game strength (4♦ asks, 4♥/4♠ is to play)

4♦ - diamonds and a major, game strength (4♥ is pass-or-correct)

4NT - minors, game strength

With clubs and spades, pass and bid spades next round (over a likely 2♥ or 3♥)

With clubs and hearts, pass and bid clubs next round (over a likely 2♠)

With a takeout double of one major, pass, hoping to double that major next round

With a solid m, one major stopped, consider passing & cue bidding or bidding NT next round

With a hand too good for 3m, pass and bid strongly later (e.g., cue bid, notrump bid, jump bid)

2♦-P-2♥- (could be fairly strong with short hearts) -  
 2♠ - natural, possibly a two-suited hand  
 Dbl - shortness (takeout double) or length (possibly two-suited)\*  
 3♣ - natural  
 3♦ - natural, maybe with clubs too  
 3M/4M - natural  
 4m - m and spades, game strength  
 2NT/3NT natural by UPH, minors by PH  
 4NT minors, game strength

\*Opener's next call, pass or bid, will reveal the meaning of a double.

2♦-P-2♠- (a heart raise, but may have only three hearts and may be weak) -  
 As above, but 4m is m and hearts

2♦-P-2♥/2♠-P; P or 2♦-P-2♥-P; 2♠ -  
 Dbl is takeout, possibly 4=6 major-minor  
 Cue bid of opener's suit asks for a stopper (solid minor)  
 Over 2♥ a spade bid shows clubs too and 3m is natural and strong  
 Over 2♠ a club bid shows hearts too and 3♦ is natural and strong  
 2NT/3NT natural by UPH - needed to know opener's suit  
 4m - natural, too strong for original 3m

2♦-P-2♠-P; 3♥-  
 Dbl is takeout, possibly 4=6 spades-minor  
 3♠ - spades and clubs  
 3NT - natural by UPH, minors by PH  
 4m - natural, too strong for original 3m

2♦-P-2NT (forcing inquiry, unlikely to be a bluff) -  
 Dbl is extremely strong, enough to beat 2NT. Pass with less.  
 3m/3M/4M natural  
 3NT natural (long minor), minors by PH  
 4♣ - clubs and a major, game strength, 4♦ asks (other advances natural)  
 4♦ - diamonds and a major, game strength, 4♥/4♠ is pass-or-correct  
 4NT - minors, game strength

Note: Responder would usually preempt with a 3♥/4♥ pass-or-correct response when holding support for both majors and a weak hand, so 2NT tends to show a good hand. Since 2NT is forcing, fourth seat can pass and act later if that seems wiser. If opener's response to 2NT is a transfer bid, a double shows that suit and a bid in the target suit asks for a stopper (solid minor). With a takeout double of the target suit, pass and double that suit next round. If opener's rebid is artificial a double shows the suit, and if the rebid is natural a double is takeout.

If 2♦ gets passed around (unlikely), use the Wagner defense shown below.

## Defense Against Wagner

For the sake of simplicity, we do not change the meaning of direct actions against 2♦ in order to cater to the possibility of its being passed around. That happens too infrequently to justify compromising the Multi defense in the direct seat.

If 2♦ does get passed around it will be because responder is very short in both majors (but may not be weak) or is very short in just one major (a reasonable risk when weak). If the former, defenders likely have a good major suit fit. If the latter, they have the preponderance of strength and should be in the auction. It is also possible that a weak third seat will pass even with short diamonds as a sort of psych. Fourth seat actions:

Double - opening strength or better, balanced hand. Advances are all natural except for a diamond cue bid, which asks for a major or, secondarily, a diamond stopper.

2NT - stronger, natural, “systems on”

2♥/2♠ - natural overcall, 3♦ advance asks for diamond stopper

3♣ - natural, 3♦ advance asks for a diamond stopper, secondarily asks for a major

3♦ - takeout of diamonds, does not promise another bid

3♥/3♠/4♥/4♠ - too good for 2♥/2♠

3NT - natural, too strong for 2NT

4♣/4♦ - two-suited in that minor and a major, forcing by UPH. Over 4♣, 4♦ asks for the major and other advances are natural. Over 4♦ advancer can make a pass-or-correct major-suit bid, with other advances natural.

4NT - natural, too strong for 3NT

These bids do not cover all bases, and some are dangerous. Accept that you will be “fixed” occasionally.

## DEFENSE AGAINST THREE-SUITED CONVENTIONS

This defense is designed for use against a 2♣ or 2♦ opening that shows a 4-4-4-1 or 5-4-4-0 hand with 12-15 HCP or so (e.g., Roman Two Clubs), a distinct overbid that should be punished regularly. The following assumes a 2♦ opening, but the defense against a 2♣ opening follows the same lines.

-- A double of 2♦ shows diamonds, and denies the ability to bid 3♦. It is the equivalent of a 2♦ overcall. If you have enough to bid 3♦, do so, but be a little conservative because the suit is likely to break badly.

-- A notrump overcall is natural, based on a long minor (which had better be pretty solid, because it might not break well).

-- Other overcalls are natural, but remember that no suit will be breaking evenly.

-- With other hands, even if strong, just pass. The 2♦ bid is practically forcing, so you can act on the next round. The opponents will often bid themselves into trouble if you don't let them off the hook by bidding with a good hand. Let them play the misfit hands instead of you. If the opening does get passed around, as when third seat has a weak hand and great length in the suit, fourth seat should prefer to balance with 2NT rather than a suit bid (because no suit will break well), or double for business when long in diamonds. This can't be a two-way double, long or short in diamonds, because diamonds could be one of opener's suits. If so, partner will be short also, will assume you have doubled on length, and will pass the double. Defending against a 6-4 fit in trumps is not likely to be profitable.

-- A double of a response to the opening is a two-way double: either strong and long in the suit, or very short:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Dbl

North's 2♥ bid is a signoff if South has hearts. Lacking hearts, North must bid the next higher denomination. West will be able to tell by South's action which sort of double East has, because South will bid if short in hearts. If East has strong hearts, the double doesn't require great strength, since North's minimum suit bid denies a good hand. All he needs is good hearts and some non-finessable outside strength (a finessable honor in one of opener's suits is worth less in this position).

If East has a singleton or void in hearts with support for the other suits, he must have a very good hand to double. If West must bid (as when South passes the double and West can't leave it in), no suit is going to break evenly.

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	3♣	Dbl - two-way double
3♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl - business

Any suit East-West might bid now would break very badly, so this second double is not optional.

-- If the opponents have found an immediate fit on the first round they probably have eight or more trumps (second round "fits" may be 4-3) so a double is for takeout, a notrump bid natural:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - takeout		
	2NT - natural, not unusual		

Despite North's probable weakness, the takeout double requires a very good hand because no suit is going to break evenly. West's 2NT bid shows 16 HCP or more in a hand that probably lacks support for one of the other three suits.

After passing a good 4-4-4-1 hand yourself, you can pass and then double anything:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Dbl - two-way double		

West is either very long or very short in spades. This is a very bad sequence for the opponents, since South is probably bidding a four-card suit for which North may have no support. It is very likely that they have no fit and will go down a bundle. Be sure to lead trumps against a contract in one of opener's suits, to reduce any cross-ruff potential.

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Dbl - business		

South is short in spades. West probably is sitting over all three of South's suits, with spade shortness himself. He hopes East has a spade stack, as is probable.

Reopening doubles of opener's takeout of a signoff response are also two-way: either very short or very long in the suit:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl - two-way double

East could have ♠QJ98 ♥KJ4 ♦A2 ♣KQJ3 or ♠2 ♥KQ83 ♦AK32 ♣QJ103. West will know which by looking at his own spades. With a singleton or doubleton spade, he will usually pass and lead spades. With three or more spades he can pass or bid, as he thinks best, playing East for a hand of the second type.

When the response to the opening bid shows a good hand (e.g., 2NT or jump in a suit), it is very unwise to enter the bidding.

## DEFENSE AGAINST SPLINTER BIDS

Doubling a splinter bid to show strength in the splinter suit is seldom of much value, since there is little to be gained from the opening lead of that suit. A better idea is to use the double to show strength in the highest unbid suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	4♣	Dbl - heart strength

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	4♥	Dbl - diamond strength

These doubles show strength only, not length necessarily.

The same principle applies when partner has bid a suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♦	4♥	Dbl - diamond strength

East has ♠10 ♥A76 ♦K3 ♣1076532.

The double may enable West to bid 5♦ as a good save against a spade game. At least it will tell West that it is safe to lead diamonds.

If the doubler later makes a Lightner double of a slam bid, he asks that the indicated suit *not* be led; he wants a different lead, perhaps a suit in which he is void.

## DEFENSE AGAINST DRURY

The Drury convention uses a 2♣ (or 2♦) response to a major suit opening to ask whether the opening is full strength or not. Here's the defense:

A double of 2♣ (or 2♦) is takeout, with four-cards in the unbid major, and either support for both minors or six diamonds. This is an exception to the general rule that the double of an artificial bid is suit-showing.

A cue bid of opener's suit is a top-and-bottom cue bid, four cards in the unbid major, with six clubs (maybe five).

A 2NT bid is unusual notrump, showing both minors.

A double of an artificial response to Drury by opener is suit-showing, denying the ability to bid at the next-higher level.

## DEFENSE AGAINST RAPTOR

The Raptor convention is a simple one:

A direct 1NT overcall of a minor opening shows the other minor and an unspecified four-card major. Advancer cue bids opener's suit to ask which major.

A direct 1NT overcall of a major opening shows four cards in the other major and an unspecified minor. Advancer cue bids opener's suit to ask which minor.

With a standard 1NT overcall, an off-shape takeout double must be made.

The defense:

Double 1NT to show a 1NT response with at least Qxx in RHO's known suit if it is a minor. Don't worry about a stopper if the known suit is a four-card major.

A cue bid of the known minor suit (partner opened the other minor) is equivalent to a negative double, implying four cards in the "unbid" major.

A cue bid of the known major suit (partner opened the other major) is a strong cue bid.

2NT is natural, not forcing, so 3NT shows only 13 or more HCP.

Raises are standard, but the 3NT artificial raise of a major is not available. With a jump raise to game still weak, preemptive, a game-going hand must find another route to game, probably by starting with a cue bid.

All other actions are standard, but jump takeouts are weak ("in competition").

The 1NT overcall is probably not forcing, so a trap pass is unwise. Partner cannot be expected to balance with a minimum opening when his RHO may hold a fairly good hand and length in his suit.

## DEFENSE AGAINST BIVALENT ONE CLUB OPENING

A bivalent 1♣ opening shows a notrump-type hand that has two possible ranges, one fairly weak and one fairly strong, e.g., 12-14 HCP or 19+ HCP.

The defense is simple:

A double shows 13-15 HCP, balanced, or 19+

A 1♦ overcall shows both majors.

Other simple overcalls are standard, including 1NT.

Jump overcalls are weak, except for 2♦ which is artificial, and 3♦, which is natural..

A 2♦ overcall shows a strong jump overcall in some suit. Partner bids 2♥ if she would pass a strong jump overcall in hearts, 2♠ if she would pass a strong jump in spades but not in hearts, 3♣ if she would pass a strong jump overcall in clubs but not one in a major, and 3♦ if she would pass a strong jump overcall in diamonds, but not one in another suit. If too good for any of those actions, partner bids 2NT to ask for overcaller's suit.

A 3♦ overcall is not weak, since it is the only way to show a long diamond suit.

## GENERIC COUNTER TO ONE NOTRUMP COUNTERS

Countermeasures to our 1NT opening bid can vary widely, so we need a generic countermeasure against them. Those that show two suits have already been covered in 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions.

General rules:

- An artificial double of 1NT is ignored except to redouble with 5-7 HCP. Otherwise, all systems are on.
- Responder's bid of a known opposing suit is Stayman.
- Double of a conventional 2♣ bid is Stayman unless the bid shows clubs as well as some other suit. If it shows clubs, a double is for penalty and all systems are off except Texas Transfers. When the double is Stayman, all systems are on.
- This rule can be extended to say that doubles are business if the suit doubled is a natural bid even if it's conventional, and all systems are off except Texas Transfers.
- When systems are off, simple natural takeouts are competitive only and jump takeouts are invitational only.
- Other than 2♣, the double of an artificial bid by responder shows at least five cards in the suit and may not be particularly strong. Opener assumes it's a competitive action only until he knows differently. Rather than double the artificial bid it is better to actually bid the suit if strong enough to do so. The double does not deny strength, however, because the doubler could have a strong two-suited hand.
- Opener's double of an artificial bid or forced bid shows the suit, maybe four cards only.
- Direct doubles of a natural bid are for penalty.
- Balancing doubles are for takeout only if partner has not acted. Otherwise, penalty.
- It may pay responder to pass an artificial forcing bid and act on the next round, when an immediate action isn't clear. For instance, you can wait until a natural bid is available for use as Stayman if an artificial overcall doesn't have an anchor suit to use for that purpose. After passing, all jumps are forcing.