

## Notes for Yellow SCRAPE

The only treatments that differ from normal SCRAPE are those of the weak 2C, 2H and 2S openings. These show respectively 0-9HCP 4+ both majors, 0-9HCP 5+H of any quality and 0-9HCP 5+S of any quality. The minimum ranges for these bids now extend to 0 HCP subject to judgement about the seat, vulnerability, state of the match & event and opponents' skill level.

## Notes for Yellow SPREAD (Strong Pass Relay Ever Avoiding Defending)

This system is a “simple” modification of SCRAPE along forcing pass lines, incorporating double-under transfers to the majors, a 13+HCP forcing pass and a 1H fertilizer bid. Effectively the opening calls of Pass, 1C, 1D and 1H are rotated down one step, with Pass wrapping to 1H. The valuation in Opening Points is scrapped in favour of normal HCP valuation. Control bases are defined by the HCP minimum where appropriate.

1. An opening pass is now the only forcing bid, showing 13+HCP and any shape, except that a balanced hand of 13HCP without a major suit should open 1NT.

**After interference** of 1C through 1S we use a 0-8HCP pass, a 9-12 double forcing us to declare or defend doubled, and bids as level-adjusted game-forcing 13+HCP relay responses with normal continuations. After interference of 1NT or 2NT we use a value-showing double (penalty doubles on) and natural bidding. After interference of 2C through 2S we use takeout doubles and Rubensohl. After interference of 3C through 3S we use takeout doubles.

1. Responder bids 1C with 9-12HCP (subject to judgement), 1D with 0-8HCP (subject to judgement) and 1H+ as game-force relay responses with 13+HCP (normal relay continuations).

1. After P-1D, the auction continues as for the SCRAPE 1C-1D auction, except that the P-1D-1H relay shows about 19+HCP and the P-1D-1H-1S double negative shows about 0-4HCP.

**After interference** after P-(P)-1D the same agreements as SCRAPE are used : takeout doubles, no relays and natural bidding with Rubensohl where the auction is at 2 of a suit where neither of our hands has shown a suit.

2. After P-1C, opener may game-force relay with about 15+HCP by bidding 1D (normal relay continuations) or break to a natural auction where 1H or 1S show 5+ in the bid suit or a 3-

suiting hand, 1NT shows a (semi)-balanced 13-14 (Stayman and transfer continuations), 2C and 2D are natural 5+ suits, jumps to 2H and 2S or 3-level suits show strong independent suits of six or seven card length respectively. In these auctions the objective is to reach the best game when appropriate and to stop the auction at as low a level as possible when game is out of reach. All new suits, jumps and raises are non-forcing on a minimum hand opposite without (extra) fit or a convenient bid to make. A maximum hand should bid on naturally. A hand with extra fit should show a side concentration of values (forcing). A minimum hand with a convenient bid to make should make that bid.

**After interference**, if low enough (at most three steps lost) then pass is for game-force relay, double is penalty and suits are natural and non-forcing. If the interference is too high then takeout doubles and natural bidding (Rubensohl where appropriate) applies.

2. An opening bid of 1C and 1D are analogous to the SCRAPE 1D and 1H openings. They both show 8-12HCP and respectively 4+H and 4+S & 0-3H, including balanced, canape and three-suited possibilities. Responder may bid Step 1 with an invitational hand, or Step 2 with a game-forcing hand demanding a relay response according to the normal SCRAPE relay structures in these situations (See 1D-1H and 1H-1S).

**After interference**, if a relay bid or the double of it is available then it is relay, otherwise treat exactly as SCRAPE. Note after 1C-(1H) and 1D-(1S) only a game-force relay (by doubling) is available.

1. After 1C-1D or 1D-1H opener rebids Step 1 with a lower-range hand and makes a near game-forcing level-adjusted relay response with a higher-range hand.

**After low interference**, pass shows a low-range hand (no further relays, double is takeout) and double and higher bids are level-adjusted relay responses (normal relay continuations). After high interference pass is weak or trapping, double is takeout and new suits are probably canapes.

1. After 1C-1D-1H or 1D-1H-1S relays are off and responder makes a (nearly) natural bid suggesting a contract. Opener may rebid a 6+ suit, a suitable 5+ canape suit, naturally in notrumps or raise with fit and some game prospects. Game will be reached rarely and only with great fit.

2. After 1C-1D-1S+ or 1D-1H-1NT+ level-adjusted relay responses, responder may break naturally and invitationally, or confirm the game-force by relaying a second time.

Obviously responder's degree of fit will be a consideration here.

2. After 1C-1H or 1D-1S opener makes the normal SCRAPE relay response and game will always be reached. An undefined relay break by responder is natural and game-forcing in

context of the auction. Normally such a break will seek extra length for declaring this denomination rather than notrumps. In competitive auctions a stopper may be sought. Normal relay continuations, including in competition.

3. An opening bid of 1H shows a fertilizer or “fert” bid. Hands suited to an opening pass or 8-12 suit-showing bid or 10-13 no-major 1NT bid or a weak major-oriented preempt (2C, 2H, 2S) should take that action whenever it is reasonable at the vulnerability. The remaining hands open 1H showing 0-7(8)HCP in an unbalanced hand, or 0-9(10)HCP in a balanced hand lacking a major. After this opening, responder may bid a game-forcing 2C, or pass or bid (nearly) naturally. 1S may be responded on a four-card suit (possible canape). 1NT must be responded on some hands long in clubs that are unsuited to bidding a side suit or passing 1H. 2NT is 21-22 balanced including a 5-card major. Jumps are generally preemptive.

**After interference**, double is takeout and redouble is rescue, denying tolerance for the suit doubled.

1. After 1H-2C, opener normally makes a nondescript relay of 2D to allow opener to describe the hand, or opener may bid the suit below the shortage in a 3-suited or suitable quasi 3-suited hand (2S shows club shortage), or opener may bid 2NT to show a (semi)-balanced with no major suit and 6-9HCP.

**After interference**, doubles are takeout.

1. After 1H-2C-2D opener rebids 2NT with 23-24HCP (Puppet Stayman and transfers) or the longest suit naturally. Natural bidding continues.
2. After 1H-2C-2H/2S/3C/3D natural bidding continues, except that opener may break to 2NT or 3NT if responder bids a suit in which they hold only three cards in a quasi 3-suited hand
3. After 1H-2C-2NT bidding develops naturally. Notrump bids are quantitative.

2. After 1H-1S/2D/2H/2S/3C natural bidding continues. Doubles are takeout, redoubles deny tolerance where such a call might be useful.

3. After 1H-1NT opener must recall that responder will sometimes be off-shape with club length.

4. After 1H-2NT the auction develops as for 1H-2C-2D-2NT

4. The opening bids of 1S or higher are analogous to SCRAPE, and all agreements apply as for SCRAPE, including after **interference**.

1. 1S shows 8-12HCP with both minors or 6+C one-suited.

2. 1NT shows 10-13HCP balanced with no four-card major.

3. 2C shows 0-8HCP with 4+ cards in both major suits.

4.2D shows 8-12HCP with 6+D one-suited.

5.2H shows 0-9HCP with 5+H of any quality.

6.2S shows 0-9HCP with 5+S of any quality.

7.2NT shows 5-7HCP with 5+D and 5+C.

8. Three-level bids are normal preempts.

9.3NT is a four-level minor-suit preempt.

10. Four-level bids are Namyats.

**Strong  
Club  
Relay  
Avoiding  
Passing  
Ever**

as played by Michael Wilkinson and  
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# Strong Club Relay Avoiding Passing Ever

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# Preliminaries

## Hand Valuation

The hand valuation method used in constructive auctions when our side opens is that of **Opening Points**. Opening Points are the sum of the High Card Points and the lengths of the two longest suits. Thus a range in Opening Points is typically some 8-9 higher than the equivalent range in HCP. Opening Points is abbreviated "OP".

## General Approach

The system uses a strong club with symmetric relays, and transfer-style one-level openings. These are opened up-the-line and may be balanced or canape style. Thus any hand that is too weak for 1C and too strong for a weak action that has four or more hearts must open 1D. Any hand of similar strength that lacks four hearts but has four spades must open 1H. Any similarly strong unbalanced hand with at least four clubs and no major suit of four cards will open 1S (this includes long-club hands and unbalanced hands with both minors). A balanced hand without a four-card major opens 1NT (weak) and the remaining hands are those with at least six diamonds and no side suit which open 2D. The two-level openings may be modified at will. The unrelenting opening style means that a hand that passed in first or second position is significantly weaker than a hand that passes in these positions using standard methods, and so our requirements for the strong club opening in third and fourth seat are stronger than for first and second seat. The ranges of the other openings in third and fourth positions are also wider, but more judgement may be utilised by the opener in these positions.

All openings above 1C and below 2NT have one response that is unlimited and which expresses some degree of game interest. This response begins a relay sequence that establishes opener's shape and strength, and is always the strongest action available. Other actions are typically natural, limited, and non-forcing, however some range probes, transfer sequences, mini-splinters and fit-showing jumps are used.

## Opening Bids

In first and second position:

- 1C 23+OP.
- 1D 18-22OP 4+H, may be balanced, three-suited or have a longer second suit.
- 1H 18-22OP 4+S, 0-3H, may be balanced, three-suited or have a longer minor suit.
- 1S 18-22OP 4+C, 0-3H, 0-3S, unbalanced, may have a longer diamond suit.
- 1NT 19-22OP 2-3H, 2-3S, balanced
- 2C 4+H 4+S, weak undisciplined (15-17OP if required by regulations).
- 2D 18-22OP 6+D, 0-3H, 0-3S, 0-3C.
- 2H 5+H, weak undisciplined (15-17OP if required by regulations).
- 2S 5+S, weak undisciplined (15-17OP if required by regulations).
- 2NT 5+5+ minors, weak undisciplined (15-17OP if required by regulations).
- 3X Normal three-level actions subject to vulnerability and positional concerns.
- 3NT A four-level minor preempt.
- 4m An ace stronger than the corresponding 4M opening.

- 4M To play.
- In third and fourth position:
- 1C 25+OP.
- 1D 18-24OP 4+H, may be balanced, three-suited or have a longer second suit.
- 1H 18-24OP 4+S, 0-3H, may be balanced, three-suited or have a longer minor suit.
- 1S 18-24OP 4+C, 0-3H, 0-3S, unbalanced, may have a longer diamond suit.
- 1NT 20-24OP 2-3H, 2-3S, balanced
- 2C Usually 15-19OP 4+H 4+S.
- 2D 18-24OP 6+D, 0-3H, 0-3S, 0-3C.
- 2H Usually 15-19OP 5+H.
- 2S Usually 15-19OP 5+S.
- 2NT Usually 15-19OP 5+5+minors.
- 3X Normal three-level actions subject to vulnerability and positional concerns.
- 3NT A four-level minor preempt.
- 4m An ace stronger than the corresponding 4M opening.
- 4M To play.

Note that in 3rd and 4th positions, some judgement is allowed to be used. Many balanced hands in the 18-19 OP range might be passed, as are unbalanced hands with major-suit shortages.

# Relay Structure

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## General Notes

Relayer will normally make the next highest bid ("Step 1") to ask responder to continue describing the hand. The exception to this is 3NT, which is **never** a relay. Other non-relay bids by relayer below game are natural and may be invitational or forcing in context. 2NT is almost never a contract after a second relay.

### Responder's hand valuation after a 1C opening.

After a first- or second-seat 1C opening, responder normally gives a positive response with a 17+OP hand, unless that hand has substantially fewer than the number of controls normally held by a hand of that shape. Opener will eventually be able to ask for controls with A=2 & K=1 or A=3, K=2 & Q=1, of which there are at most 12 and 24 in a deck of cards with 40HCP. The ratio of AK and AKQ points to HCP is 0.3 and 0.6 respectively. When responder's shape is known, opener will know the lengths of responder's two longest suits and can find responder's minimum HCP from the definition of OP. Responder's minimum number of AK or AKQ controls (responder's "base") can be deduced by multiplying the minimum HCP by the appropriate ratio (0.3 or 0.6) and **always** rounding down to the nearest integer. With a hand on or near the HCP minimum with a large amount of the HCP contributed by queens and jacks, responder may have fewer than the putative base number of controls. In such cases responder may exercise his judgement, however it would be exceptionally rare to describe a hand with a positive response that was two AKQ controls below base.

Some examples of lower-range positive responses are in order:

S	H	D	C	
KJ65	J43	QJ76	K7	11HCP + 8 = 19OP. 9 is minimum HCP, so the bases are 2 and 5
K53	Q943	QT7	K96	10HCP + 7 = 17OP. 10 is minimum HCP, so the bases are 3 and 6
64	AT8753	QJ3	J8	8HCP + 9 = 17OP. 8 is minimum HCP, so the bases are 2 and 4
954	KJ985	-	QJT64	7HCP + 10 = 17OP. 7 is minimum HCP, so the bases are 2 and 4

With a hand of 14-16OP, or too few controls in a stronger hand, responder describes a **semi-positive** hand. With a weaker hand yet, responder describes a full negative hand. Note that again, a hand that meets the semi-positive criteria but has too few controls can be described as a full negative hand. The agreements in auctions after a negative response may be found [here](#).

After a third- or fourth-seat 1C opener, a positive response is made with 15-17OP and an appropriate number of controls, since responder is known to have held fewer than 18OP, and opener is stronger for the 1C opening in this position. A semi-positive hand usually has 12-14OP in this position, and fewer is a full negative hand.

## Positive responses to 1C

The responding scheme with a positive hand is almost up-the-line; responder makes the lowest bid that describes the hand held:

- 1H unbalanced, 4+S.
- 1S unbalanced, 4+H, 0-3S.
- 1NT unbalanced, 4+D, 0-3S, 0-3H.
- 2C balanced, including a four- or five-card major.
- 2D balanced, 2-3H, 2-3S.
- 2H three-suited with a major shortage.
- 2S 6+C, 0-2D (Low shortage).
- 2NT 6+C, 0-1H (Middle shortage).
- 3C 2236 (Even shortage)
- 3D 1336 (High shortage)
- 3H 1327
- 3S 1237
- 3NT 0337

The only exception to the up-the-line rule is the 2H response, which takes priority over the 1H and 1S responses. The simplest aide-memoire in subsequent bidding is that **responder usually makes the lowest bids possible to describe hands that have more cards in higher-ranking suits**. Some memorisation of structure is inescapable, but this principle is sufficient to resolve most of the fine detail.

### Balanced hands

With a balanced hand, responder selects whichever of 2C or 2D is appropriate. The subsequent relay structures are:

#### After 1C-2C-2D:

- 2H Any 4432 with 4S (continuations below).
- 2S Any 4432 with 4H and not 4S continuations 3C=3442, 3D=2443, 3H=3424, 3S=2434 (with zoom).
- 2NT Any 5332 with 5S continuations 3D=5332, 3H=5323, 3S=5233 (with zoom).
- 3C 4333 or 3433 continuations 3H=4333, 3S=3433 (with zoom).
- 3D 3532
- 3H 3523
- 3S 2533 (with zoom).

#### After 1C-2C-2D-2H-2S:

- 2NT 4432 or 4423 continuations 3D=4432, 3H=4423 (with zoom).
- 3C 4342
- 3D 4243
- 3H 4324
- 3S 4234 (with zoom).

### After 1C-2D-2H:

- 2S Any 5332 with 5D continuations 3C=3352, 3D=3253, 3H=2353 (with zoom).
- 2NT Any 5332 with 5C continuations 3D=3325, 3H=3235, 3S=2335 (with zoom).
- 3C 3244
- 3D 2344
- 3H 3343
- 3S 3334 (with zoom).

### One-suited hands

With a one-suited hand of at least **six** cards, responder shows that suit and then rebids at 2S or higher to describe the residual short suits. The mnemonic of bidding as low as possible with more cards in higher-ranking suits is valid:

- 2S 0-2 in the lowest-ranking other suit.
- 2NT 0-1 in the middle-ranking other suit.
- 3C A 6322 hand with the tripleton in the lowest-ranking suit.
- 3D 6133 with high-ranking shortage.
- 3H 7132 with high-ranking shortage.
- 3S 7123 with high-ranking shortage.
- 3NT 7033 with high-ranking shortage.

The structure is symmetric - for example, all hands of 6331 pattern include a 3D bid, possibly after 2S or 2NT to specify the suit of the singleton. Other patterns are similar, however the hands with "even shortage" (6322 and 7222) are treated by first showing the low-ranking doubleton (if held, else 3C as above) and then continuing 3C to show even shortage. Thereafter:

- 3H 6322
- 3S 6232
- 3NT 7222

### Two-suited hands

With a two-suited hand, responder shows his first suit up-the-line as listed in the positive responses. Responder then shows the second suit and resolves their relative length. A bid of 2D always shows at least four cards in the higher-ranking suit and at least five cards in the lower-ranking suit (always clubs, in fact). However a bid of 2H shows precisely four cards in the lower-ranking suit and at least five in the higher-ranking suit. Hands with two suits of at least five cards always start with two bids at or below 2D, and then a bid of 2S.

With both majors, responder continues with 1NT over the 1S relay. With a major and diamonds, responder continues with 2C (transferring to diamonds!). With any suit and clubs, responder shows the first suit and then bids according to the above scheme - 2D with at least five clubs, 2H with exactly four clubs.

After showing a second suit with 1NT, 2C, 2D or 2H, the structure is:

- 2D [Three-suited](#) with both majors.
- 2H 5+ in the higher-ranking suit, 4 in the lower-ranking suit.
- 2S 5+5+ in the two suits.
- 2NT 0-1 in the lower-ranking other suit.

- 3C A 5422 pattern.
- 3D 5431 with higher-ranking shortage.
- 3H 6421 with higher-ranking shortage.
- 3S 6430 with higher-ranking shortage.
- 3NT 7420 with higher-ranking shortage.
- 4C 7411

After showing a hand with 5+5+ in two suits, the structure is:

- 3C 0-1 in the lower-ranking other suit.
- 3D A (65)11 pattern (even shortage).
- 3H 5521 with higher-ranking shortage.
- 3S 5530 with higher-ranking shortage.
- 3NT (65)20 with higher-ranking shortage.

Note that the relative length of the 65 suits in the 6511 or 6520 patterns is not resolved.

### **Three-suited hands**

With a three-suited hand with a minor shortage, responder simply shows both major suits and then uses the "empty" 2D bid to describe his holdings. With a major shortage, responder simply responds 2H.

**After 1C-1H-1S-1NT-2C-2D-2H or  
After 1C-2H-2S:**

- Step 1 Low shortage (0-1).
- Step 2 4441 (high shortage).
- Step 3 5440 (high shortage).
- Step 4 4540 (high shortage).
- Step 5 4450 (high shortage).

After showing a low-ranking shortage, responder shows his exact shape by using the step responses as above, beginning at 4441.

## **Strength-showing**

### **Control asking relays**

After the shape is shown, the next relay asks for controls. Relayer has a choice of three asks: Step 1 asks for AKQ controls, Step 2 asks for AK controls and Step 3 asks for aces (Gerber!) subject to the usual stricture that 3NT is never a relay ask. Additionally, game bids that are not Step 1 are also never relay asks. As described in the section above on [hand valuation](#), both players can deduce responder's minimum HCP holding and thus the control base. Step 1 by responder then shows a number of controls that is at most equal to the base. Step 2, 3, 4, etc. show one, two, three, etc. extra control(s) over that required for the base. The onus lies on relayer to ask only when there are no replies that are reasonably likely to be awkward, since his next Step 1 is also a relay. Of course an ace ask begins at zero always! Note that a singleton ace or king is counted in the hand's controls, but a singleton queen is not.

### **Zooming**

When responder holds the shape that is the highest call defined in the response structure it is

efficient that that response follow on to the number of controls held without requiring relay to waste two steps in making a subsequent ask. If that final shape is resolved at or below 3NT then the steps **up** and **down** from 3NT show the following number of AKQ controls:

3NT Base AKQ controls  
3S Base + 1 AKQ controls  
3H Base + 2 AKQ controls  
etc.  
4C Base + 4 AKQ controls  
4D Base + 5 AKQ controls  
etc.

The 4C response always shows base + 4 controls, so the lowest available step at or below 3NT may be nebulous. If the highest shape would have been shown at 3H (e.g. a 2353) then 3NT is base AKQ controls, 3S is base + 1 AKQ controls, 3H is base + 2-3 AKQ controls and 4C is base + 4 AKQ controls, etc. Note that zooming never allows anything but AKQ controls to be shown. Should a [level-adjusted](#) relay auction occur where (for example) 3C is available to show a number of controls, then it shows Base + 4 AKQ controls and 4C shows Base + 5 AKQ controls, and any more radically level-adjusted auction works similarly.

In some of these "inversion" cases a response is made that shows a specific range of controls. When relay bids Step 1, responder zooms to Denial Cue Bidding (see [below](#)) when holding the highest number of controls. Relay should be prepared for this zoom by a maximum responder. This principle holds in other situations where control number is defined (but not where it a maximum might be inferred from a known HCP maximum).

There is one case in non-level-adjusted relay auctions where shape is shown above 3NT. This occurs when a 7411 pattern is shown with 4C. In this case, bids at or above 4D show the shape that was shown with 3NT (7420) with at least base+4 AKQ controls in the normal manner described above.

## Zooming in Level-adjusted Relays

In a variety of situations the relay structure can be shifted up a number of steps such that shape is shown with bids above 3NT (see [Relay Interference](#)). A balanced responder may never show shape past 3NT if the ask was at most 3C. An ask of 3D or higher requests normal responses. If truncation occurs, relay may relay with 4C to complete the shape description, with a zoom with base+4 for the highest-ranking shape. An unbalanced responder may show shape above 3NT. In these cases, a 3NT bid shows the shape that would be shown at 3NT with at most base+3 AKQ controls. Higher bids show the appropriate shape, however the bid above the highest-ranking shape shows the shape that would have been described by a 3NT bid, but with at least base+4 AKQ controls. I can't think of a good reason for this, but that's the agreement.

## Denial Cue Bidding

(Also known as "spiral scan".)

After controls (AKQ, AK or A) have been shown, the next relay starts denial cue bidding. The suits are assigned an order of priority - firstly by order of length, but if two lengths are equal, then the higher-ranking suit is scanned first. On the first ask ("scan"), the responder is asked to look for an ace or king in the suit of highest priority. If neither of these is held then responder bids Step 1 to show this. Otherwise, responder then scans the suit of second priority, also for either the ace or the king, bidding Step 2 to deny a top honour. This process continues through all

the suits, and eventually may return to the suit of highest priority (i.e. "spiralling"). When this occurs, responder is expected to look for a second top honour in the suit (if one was previously shown) or the queen (if the ace and king were previously denied). This process continues. In principle, jacks could be investigated, but such auctions are usually too high for such an ask to be useful. A suit of a given length can only be scanned that given number of times - a singleton may only be scanned once, a doubleton twice, etc. The highest possible relay ask is always **6C, a change from previous agreements**. If a response is made at 5NT or higher, then relayer must be prepared to place the final contract. There is now an agreement that no relay response higher than 7C may be given. The onus is on the relayer not to make an ask when there is reasonable chance of unfortunate consequences. Thus it is occasionally necessary to finesse a card during the bidding! (Don't tell your teammates, it spoils your image)

### Exceptions in Denial Cue Bidding

- When scanning a suit for the last card held (e.g. the first or second respectively for a singleton and doubleton), responder stops (i.e. bids the appropriate step) when holding the relevant honour, and spirals if the honour is **not** held.
- When holding the AKQ of a suit, that suit is **denied** on the first scan. The 3 or 5 control discrepancy that is flagged by this denial is almost always apparent to relayer and recognisable. On a second scan of this suit when holding at least four cards in the suit, the jack is investigated, not the queen which is already inferred. Thus the previous exception applies to a holding of exactly four cards to the AKQ; on the second round responder stops with AKQJ and spirals with AKQx. If a three-card suit contains AKQ then there is only one scan made of this suit.
- **Inapplicable in current opening style** After a 2C-2D-2H sequence where 2C shows 6+C, opener is showing a diamond suit no better than Jxxx. Such a suit is never scanned in DCB since the honour absence is already known.

### Ending relay auctions

Relayer may end a relay auction at any time by passing a response (where appropriate!) or by bidding Step 2 or higher when that bid is at least at game level. The only exception to this is that 3NT is never a relay - even if the previous response was 3S. Relayer must bid 4C to relay in this case. Responder is not required to respect that signoff with a hand that is significantly better than that promised by the auction to this stage. Usually this would occur when holding extra controls, or an extreme shape that can only be approximately shown in the above relay structure (e.g. 8-card suits, 7-5 shapes). In the latter case, responder must use their judgement based on what they know partner knew for their signoff decision.

More commonly, responder resolves or partially resolves their shape and relayer may have to choose a contract without establishing that responder has greater than minimum strength. This would often occur when the chosen contract is 3NT, or where shape is resolved at 3S or higher. The system permits an **unlimited** responder to bid on (known as "kicking") when holding (usually) base + 4 AKQ controls. When their shape is known, they use step responses to resolve the AKQ controls held, else they bid naturally.

It is not mandatory to kick with a hand that meets the requirements - any of the following may indicate to responder that kicking is undesirable without substantial extra values : an early signoff before shape resolution, responder's poor shape, poor intermediates and the state of the match/event. Relayer should be careful to sign off in tempo, particularly when slam requires substantial extras with responder, to avoid the transmission of unauthorised information.

In many cases, relay attempts to sign off after resolving shape only. After making their final shape-showing response, responder will plan their reply to an AKQ control ask. If the relay attempts to sign off, the responder will know that the relay has judged that it would not be safe to play in this denomination one level higher if responder had the number of controls that would have been shown by a response one step below the attempted signoff. Usually, this "damage level" will be base + 3 or lower. Rarely, opener may attempt to sign off when the damage level was base + 4 or higher. In this case, responder must have at least one more AKQ control than the damage level in order to bid on.

## Fast Relay Breaks

The light 1C and positive response style make it advisable to allow opener to show **minimum** hands without known fit after the positive response. Responder can normally then place the contract. In competition, the same general principles apply, but the game-forcing five-five hands are not shown. The structures vary with the response that has been made:

Response	Bid	Meaning
1H	1S	Game-forcing relay.
	1NT	0-2S either balanced or three-suited or 5431 with short spades (relay <a href="#">continuations</a> below).
	2C/D/H	6+ suit.
	2S	3S balanced or semibalanced.
	2NT	5+D 5+C game-forcing.
	3C	5+H 5+C game-forcing.
	3D	5+H 5+D game-forcing.
	3NT	To play.
1S	1NT	Game-forcing relay.
	2C	0-1H either three-suited or 5431 with short hearts (relay <a href="#">continuations</a> below).
	2D/2S/3C	6+ suit
	2H	2-3H balanced or semibalanced.
	2NT	5+D 5+C game-forcing.
	3D	5+S 5+D game-forcing.
	3H	5+S 5+C game-forcing.
3NT	To play.	
1NT	2C	Game-forcing relay.
	2D	0-1H either three-suited or 5431 with short diamonds (relay <a href="#">continuations</a> below).
	2H/2S/3C	6+ suit.
	2NT	Both majors balanced or semibalanced.
	3D	Natural.
	3H	5+S 5+H game-forcing.
	3S	5+S 5+C game-forcing.

	3NT	To play.
	4C	5+H 5+C game-forcing.
2C	2D	Game-forcing relay.
	2H	Three-suited short spades (relay <a href="#">continuations</a> below).
	2S	Three-suited short hearts (natural continuations).
	2NT	Natural, might hold major suit.
	3C	Three-suited short diamonds (relay <a href="#">continuations</a> below).
	3D	Three-suited short clubs (natural continuations).
	3NT	To play.
2D	2H	Game-forcing relay.
	2S	Three-suited short hearts (natural continuations).
	2NT	Balanced or semibalanced.
	3C	Three-suited short diamonds (natural continuations).
	3D	Three-suited short clubs (natural continuations).
	3H	Three-suited short spades (natural continuations).
	3NT	To play.

### After 1C-1H-1NT-2C

Response	Relay	Response	Meaning
2D			2S balanced.
	2H	2S	2S with some 5-card suit, then 3C=2533, 3D=3523, 3H=2335 (with zoom).
		2NT	2443
		3C	2434
		3D	2344 (with zoom).
2H+			0-1S three-suited or 5431 with short spades (relay <a href="#">continuations</a> immediately below).

### Three-suited or 5431 with known shortage

Step 1	4441 or 5440, continuations 4441, 5440, 4540, 4450 (with zoom).
Step 2	5 cards in the highest-ranking suit, or 4 cards in that suit and 5 cards in the next-highest-ranking suit, continuations 5431,5341,4531 (with zoom).
Step 3	4351
Step 4	3541
Step 5	3451 (with zoom).

### Three-suited with known shortage

Step 1	4441
Step 2	5440
Step 3	4540
Step 4	4450 (with zoom).



## Reverse Relay - SUPERSEDED BY THE ABOVE

Reverse Relay (RR) is the name used to describe some early relay-breaks by a 1C opener when holding minimum three-suited hand types. There are two motivations for using Reverse Relay:

1. To identify when there is no stopper opposite the singleton in 3NT so that another contract can be chosen.
2. To identify when there is no wastage opposite the singleton for slam purposes.

The former can be best achieved by agreeing to use a bid above Step 1 to show a singleton in the suit responder showed when holding a fairly minimum hand. Responder can resume relays in opposite roles if appropriate. The latter can be achieved by using other bids above Step 1 to show some degree of fit for responder's suit and a side shortage in a fairly minimum hand. Responder can resume relays in opposite roles if appropriate, however there is not the same urgency to show shapes below 3NT where there is a probable major fit.

There are a number of structure-specific concerns when using RR:

1. After 1C-1H when opener holds spade shortage the odds of a heart fit are quite good and it makes sense to have responder take over relay captiancy since they will declare a heart contract.
2. After 1C-1S any shortage showing is useful, but responder may be left wondering about a spade stopper when opener has heart shortage (opener should tend to relay when holding a spade stopper).
3. After 1C-1NT there is an excellent chance that the contract choice will be 3NT or 5m with a three-suited opener. If 3NT is right it has been right-sided, and the responder will be best placed to choose the strain.
4. After 1C-2C then a major fit is known so long as opener only shows genuine three-suiters. With a fairly weak hand a splinter auction is most useful.
5. After 1C-2D major fits are usually nonexistent and only genuine three-suited hands need to be shown to facilitate 3NT-or-5m decisions.

The lowest available non-relay step shows a shortage in responder's known suit (if any), and higher steps show other shortages in the normal low, medium, (medium,) high order. Two structures are used depending on the level of the first response and the level of the shortage-showing bid, the 10-shape structure and the 4-shape structure:

### 10-shape Reverse Relay structure

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Step 1 | 4441 or 5440, continuations 4441, 5440, 4540, 4450 (no zoom).  |
| Step 2 | 5 cards in the highest-ranking suit, or 4 cards in that suit and 5 cards in the next-highest-ranking suit, continuations 5431,5341,4531 (no zoom). |
| Step 3 | 4351   |
| Step 4 | 3541   |
| Step 5 | 3451 (no zoom)   |

### 4-shape Reverse Relay structure

- |        |                 |
|--------|-----------------|
| Step 1 | 4441            |
| Step 2 | 5440            |
| Step 3 | 4540            |
| Step 4 | 4450 (no zoom). |

## Reverse Relay Bids

(optional)

10-shape Reverse Relay is used only when no opposing bidding has occurred after the responses 1H, 1S and 1NT where the 1C opener's bid would be at most 2H. 4-shape Reverse Relay is used in all other cases. The 1C opener is only allowed to use Reverse Relay with at most base+2 AKQ controls (8-12 AKQ controls depending on the seat and shape of the 1C opener) and with at most a queen in the singleton suit. Thus in a subsequent DCB auction, a singleton is **never** scanned since neither the A or K can be held. Opener may not show controls with his first RR bid, but of responder makes a relay then normal agreements apply.

Response	Bid	Meaning
1H	1S	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	1NT	10-shape RR with S shortage (responder's known suit)
	2C	10-shape RR with C shortage (L)
	2D	10-shape RR with D shortage (M)
	2H	zoom into 10-shape RR with H shortage (H)
1S	1NT	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	2C	10-shape RR with H shortage (responder's known suit)
	2D	10-shape RR with C shortage (L)
	2H	10-shape RR with D shortage (M)
	2S	zoom into 10-shape RR with S shortage (H)
1NT	2C	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	2D	10-shape RR with D shortage (responder's known suit)
	2H	10-shape RR with C shortage (L)
	2S	4-shape RR with H shortage (M)
	2NT	zoom into 4-shape RR with S shortage (H)
2C	2D	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	2H	4-shape RR with C shortage (L)
	2S	4-shape RR with D shortage (M)
	2NT	4-shape RR with H shortage (M)
	3C	zoom into 4-shape RR with S shortage (H)
2D	2H	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	2S	4-shape RR with C shortage (L)
	2NT	4-shape RR with D shortage (M)
	3C	4-shape RR with H shortage (M)
	3D	S shortage 4441 (H)
	3H	S shortage 0544 (H)
	3S	S shortage 0454 (H)
	3NT	S shortage 0445 (H)

The sequence 1C-2D-3C-3D-4C (0445 opposite balanced with no major suit) is the only one that bypasses 3NT and it seems unlikely to cost. It isn't strictly necessary that the 1C-1NT-2NT zoom be only 4-shape RR since 10-shape will fit, but the above is a concession to memory burden.

## Dealing with Interference

### Interference after 1C at the one-level - Style One

This interference is insufficient to raise the level of relays damagingly, so pass is full negative, double is semi-positive and bids are full positive. The full positive bids are level-adjusted up or down using the identical step pattern used without interference. Game-forcing relays then continue as normal. After the semi-positive double, opener may then game-force relay with Step 1 if the direct-seat opponent passes or redoubles (i.e. the next suit or pass, respectively, is for relay). If the opponent in the direct seat after a semipositive double makes a bid, then relays are unavailable, but are not considered broken since they never began. In auctions where the bidding is at the one-level and relays have not begun and are not available, then natural bidding applies.

### Interference after 1C at the one-level - Style Two (advanced)

The style is similar to the above, but we use pass as a full positive, double as a full negative, and bids as semi-positive. This allows us to extract full mileage from psychotic interference, while getting in one descriptive bid early when the deal is only a partscore. The semi-positive bids are level-adjusted up or down using the identical step pattern used without interference. A further relay by opener establishes a game-force and suggests a non-minimum 1C opener.

After the positive pass, in any auction, double by the hand under the presumed length is "action" style - indicating desire to penalise the interference if the other hand isn't unsuitable and has some appropriate trump holding. A double over the presumed length is close to a classical penalty action. If the level of the auction is sufficiently low (maximum loss of three steps) then both hands have a (level-adjusted) relay available as the cheapest bid, or higher bids as relay steps. Such relays omit suits that would have been able to make or accept a below-the-length action double. If the level is too high for relays then action/penalty doubles and natural bidding apply. When the auction is at the two level and our side has not shown a suit aside from any implied by doubles, natural bidding is understood to include Rubensohl. If the opponents run from an action or penalty double, the same above agreements are still in force in the new situation. When a hand is unable to make or accept a double or to make a waiting pass, then the above agreements apply, with (level-adjusted) relays available in auctions sufficiently low.

After the negative double, doubles by both hands are takeout and bidding is natural.

If the opponents interfere with 1NT, responder's double indicates penalty interest and activates action doubles, bids are full positive relay responses and pass is negative.

### Example Auctions

1C 1H P P X	Action (including most hands with 4+H)
P P	Accepting with suitable hand and trump holding, say Jx or better
1S	Relay
$\frac{1N}{T}$	4+S 0-3H (note heart step omitted)
2C	4+D 0-3S 0-3H, etc.
1NT	4+S 0-3H (note heart step omitted)
2C	4+D 0-3S 0-3H, etc.

1C 1S P	2S P	Takeout/Waiting (relays broken)
	X	Action
	2NT	Rubensohl, etc.
	+	
1C 1D P	3DP	Takeout/Waiting (relays broken)
	X	Action
	3H	Natural & forcing
1C 1H P	1S P	Takeout/Waiting
	X	Penalty
	P P	Accepting
	$\frac{1N}{T}$	Relay (extreme measure)
	2C	4+H 0-3S (note spade step omitted)
	2D	4+D 0-3S 0-3H, etc.
	2HP	Takeout/Waiting
	X	Penalty
	1S	Relay
	$\frac{1N}{T}$	4+S
	2C	4+H 0-3S, etc.
	1NT	Relay
	2C	4+S unsuited for penalty
	2C	4+H 0-3S
	2D	4+D 0-3S 0-3H, etc.
1C 1S P	2S P	Takeout/Waiting
	X	Action
	2NT	Rubensohl, etc.
	+	
1C 1D P	3DP	Takeout/Waiting
	X	Action
	3H	Natural & forcing
1C 1H P	P X	Action (including most hands with 4+H)
	1S	Relay
	1NT	4+S 0-3H (note heart step omitted)
	2C	4+D 0-3S 0-3H, etc.
1CX		TWERB (D or majors)
	P 1DP	Takeout/Waiting
	1H	Majors
	P	Takeout/Waiting

	X	Penalty
	1S	Relay
	$\frac{1N}{T}$	4+S 0-3H
	2C	4+H 0-3S
	2D	4+D 0-3S 0-3H, etc.
X		Action (including most hands with 4+D)
	1H	Majors
	P	Takeout/Waiting
	X	Penalty
	1S	Relay
	$\frac{1N}{T}$	4+S
	2C	4+H 0-3S
	2D	4+D 0-3S 0-3H, etc.
	1H	Relay
	P 1S	4+S
	$\frac{1N}{T}$	4+H 0-3S
	1S	4+S 0-3D
	1NT	4+H 0-3S 0-3D
	2C	balanced with 4-5 card major, etc.
$\frac{1C}{T}$	$\frac{1N}{T}$ P	Unsuitable for penalty, activates action doubles
	X	Penalty interest, activates action doubles
	2C	No penalty interest, 4+S, etc.

### Interference after 1C at the two-level

Double by opener and responder are takeout-oriented. Bids by either hand at the two level are natural and limited. Bids at 2NT or higher either directly or after a takeout double are **Rubensohl** (see below). There are many kinds of auctions beginning with 1C that will leave the auction at the two level with relays not having begun and neither hand having shown a suit. In all such auctions, direct Rubensohl and Rubensohl after partner's takeout double applies to both hands. When the auction is at the two level after relays have begun, see [below](#).

### Interference after 1C above the two-level

Double is takeout up to 4H, bids are natural. After 4S, double is penalty-oriented and 4NT is takeout (2- or 3-suited).

### Interference in Relay Auctions

Relays have begun any time the unlimited hand makes a call that is for relay, or when a positive response is made to a 1C opening or when a semipositive response is made to a 1C-1D-1H sequence. Once relays have begun, relayer's double and redouble in both direct and pass-out

seats is for penalty. If the interference (by either opponent) is such that responder may bid steps that are at most three steps above normal, then level-adjusted relays are used. Note that responder will have a double (or redouble) or both a double and a pass (or a redouble and a pass) available as a relay step, depending on the position and type of the interference. If the interference raises the steps more than three steps, then both opener and responder may double for penalty. If the relay-breaking interference occurs at the two-level then both hands have Rubensohl available, both directly and after a penalty double by partner. If the relay-breaking interference was at 2NT or higher, then both hands bid naturally in the context of the preceding auction.

## Rubensohl

Rubensohl is a convention similar to Lebensohl that utilises **all** the bids from 2NT through 3S in a transfer sense in order to give great flexibility to hand description in contested auctions. When Rubensohl is available, two level bids are natural and limited. Other bids are:

- 2NT Transfer to clubs
- 3C Transfer to diamonds
- 3D Transfer to hearts
- 3H Transfer to spades
- 3S No major suit, no stopper for notrump, at least game values.
- 3NT No major suit, appropriate stopper, game values.
- 4X Natural

The following principles apply:

- The bid that would transfer into the opponents' suit is not needed naturally, and is used artificially to show a hand with at least game values and at least one four-card major. Such a hand may also have a stopper for notrump, and natural bidding continues to seek the best game contract.
- Bids above the transfer into the opponents' suit and below 3S are still transfers, but show a hand that has at least five cards in the suit shown and have at least invitational values, since that suit can also be shown in a non-invitational sense at the two-level. Natural bidding continues, with the other hand required to break the transfer with a hand that accepts the invitation.
- Other transfers are natural but a simple acceptance of the transfer can be passed in appropriate contexts.
- After a major suit is shown (but not necessarily agreed), suit bids are cuebids (except when the other major is still a possible contract) and notrump bids are to play, RKCB 03/14, Grand Slam Force or choice of contract.
- After a minor suit is shown (but not necessarily agreed), suit bids are natural except where a natural bid cannot be useful.
- Unless defined, all bids are natural. Where an undefined bid cannot be natural, it is a cuebid agreeing the last bid suit.

## Other interference

[SWINE](#) is used when the opponents double a natural 1NT rebid by the 1C opener.

## Example auctions

These auctions are taken from actual play. Commentary rationalising relayer's actions is included.

# Board 13, Round 1, 2000 Spring National Open Teams

All Vul  
Dealer N

	West		East
S	KJ43	S	AQ76
H	KQT7	H	J42
D	A963	D	KQ7
C	J	C	AK4

	1C	23+OP
1H	1S	17+OP 4+S
1NT	2C	4+H
2D	2H	Three-suited with both major suits.
2NT	3C	4441, then asking for AKQ controls (base = $(17-8)*0.6 = 5$ )
3NT	6S	8 AKQ controls, so relayer knows AD or AH is missing, but knows nothing about the QC

# Board 14, Round 1, 2000 Spring National Open Teams

Nil Vul  
Dealer E

	West		East
S	T7543	S	AJ
H	AKJ	H	9876
D	QJ7	D	A942
C	AK	C	986

	P	
1H	1S	18-24OP 4+S 0-3H followed by a response showing a maximum passed hand
3NT		Choice of contract. Conceivably 4S might be superior, though.

## Board 2, Round 2, 2000 Spring National Open Teams

All Vul  
Dealer N

West	East
S T8	S AKJ73
H Q	H 852
D KQ7654	D A8
C AKJ4	C T82

1H	18-22OP 4+S 0-3H
1S	1NT Invitational or better relay, balanced 4-5S or three-suited with short hearts.
2C	2H Game forcing relay, balanced with 5S
2S	3C 5323
3D	3NT Relay asking for AKQ controls (base = $(18-8)*0.6 = 6$ ), answer showing 8. Showing A, AK, AQ, K or KQ of S and either showing AKQ of H or denying A and K of H. Relayer holds the QH thus knows that opener has neither of the top two hearts and must hold AKxxx xxx Ax xxx or AQxxx xxx Ax Qxx. Relayer also knows that the asking sequence will continue 4S-4NT-5C-5S-5NT-6?. The last response of 6C or 6D will reveal which of these two hands are held but in both cases the best slam contract is 6D anyway. Not a good slam, but at the table both black suit queens were onside and spades were 3-3.
4C	4H

## Board 16, Round 2, 2000 Spring National Open Teams

EW Vul  
Dealer W

West	East
S KJ2	S A
H AQ5	H J9762
D AT92	D QJ6
C K32	C Q974

1C	1S	17+OP 4+H 0-3S
----	----	----------------



1NT 2H Relay, 5+H 4C.  
 2S - X 2NT 1534 (note gain of 2 steps from the lead-directing double)  
 3C 3H - X AKQ control ask (base =  $(17-9)*0.6 = 4$ ), answer showing 5  
 XX P Pass would be for relay, and as E/W were going to play 4H, redoubling 3H sounds like a good plan. +1360 when South held T543 AT742 3 Q653 and thought North had doubled 2NT to show general values...

## Board 15, Round 4, 2000 Spring National Open Teams

N/S Vul  
 Dealer S

North	South
S AQ963	S JT
H J74	H AKT953
D K52	D 7
C 83	C AK76

1C - 2S - 23+OP, then a natural and non-forcing 2S bid over the interference.  
 2D 3D  
 3H 4H Natural suit and raise to game.

## Board 20, Round 4, 2000 Spring National Open Teams

N/S Vul  
 Dealer S

North	South
S T	S KQ53
H AK4	H Q
D A64	D JT92
C AJT752	C KQ84

1C 2H 23+OP and 17+OP three-suited short in a major suit.  
 2S 2NT Short hearts  
 3C 3D 4144

3H	3NT	Relay asking for AKQ controls (base = $(17-8)*0.6 = 5$ ), answer showing 6 (QH isn't counted)
4C	4H	Showing A, AK, AQ, K or KQ of S and either showing AKQD or denying A and K of D. Showing A, AK, AQ, K or KQ of C, denying A and K of H, showing AK, KQ or AQ of S and either at best AKQT of D or at best Jxxx of D. According to relayer's hand, responder holds KQxx x xxxx KQxx or AQxx x xxxx Kxxx.
4S	5H	Responder cannot afford to ask again, because KQJx x xxxx KQxx would respond 6D. The second of the two possible hands is fractionally more probable, but both will offer various plays. The QH and the lead of the AS were bonuses that made 6C cold
6C	P	The QH with responder and the lead of the AS were bonuses that saw 6C home comfortably.

## Board 19, Round 5, 2000 Spring National Open Teams

E/W Vul  
Dealer S

	North		South
S	AJ92	S	KQT64
H	A9	H	KQ
D	KJ8765	D	4
C	K	C	98632

	1H	18-22OP 4+S 0-3H
1S	2D	Invitational or better relay, 4+S 5+C.
2H	2S	Game forcing relay, 5+S 5+C.
2NT	3C	0-1D
3D	3H	5215
3S	4D	AKQ control ask (base = $(18-10)*0.6 = 4$ ), response showing 6 Slightly conservative signoff... Kxxxx xx x AQxxx or KQxxx xx A xxxxx gives slam some play, but at the table a trump was lead and declarer was held to 10 tricks.
4S	P	

## Board 6, Round 6, 2000 Spring National Open Teams

**N/S Vul**  
**Dealer S**

North		South	
S	QT9863	S	K52
H	T5	H	AKQ8
D	AKJ3	D	QT6
C	8	C	A43

1C	1H	23+OP and 17+OP 4+S
1S	2C	4+D
2D	2H	5+S 4+D
2S	2NT	5+S 4+D 0-1C
3C	3H	6241
3S	4D	AKQ control ask (base = $(17-10)*0.6 = 4$ ), answer showing 6.
4H	4S	Showing AKQS or denying A and K of S.
4NT	5D	Showing A, AK, AQ, K or KQ of D and denying A and K of H.
5H	6D	Denying A and K of C, showing QS, showing AK, AQ or KQ of D and denying QH.
6S	P	The last ask was necessary to disambiguate Qxxxxx xx AKxx x from Qxxxxx xx Axxx K as the latter hand would respond 5S which relayer would pass.

## Example Hand 11

### Board 13, Session 13, 2000 South-West Pacific Teams

**All Vul**  
**Dealer N**

North		South	
S	76	S	AKQJT52
H	AQ3	H	T7
D	A32	D	K8
C	AQ752	C	K4

1C	1H	17+OP, 4+S
1S	2S	6+S, 0-2C
2NT	3C	6-7S, 2C
3D	4H	7222 shape that has zoomed past 3NT, so base + 6 AKQ controls, with base=4. Slam is certain, missing only 3 of the 24 AKQ controls.
4S	4NT	Responder denies a top spade, or shows SAKQ. The latter is clear from a quick control count. The remaining two controls must be two kings, and it won't matter which.

7NT No Cunningly avoiding the ruff on the opening lead.

## Example Hand 13

### Board 17, Session 13, 2000 South-West Pacific Teams

Nil Vul

Dealer N

	North		South
S	KJ	S	AQT52
H	AKT	H	J6
D	96	D	Q543
C	AQT863	C	K9

1C 1H 17+OP 4+S

1S 2C 4+D

2D 2H 5+S, 4D

2S 3C 5242. Relayee needs about 4 AK controls for slam to have play, but he also needs to know about queens, so an AKQ ask is appropriate. A 3NT "signoff" is also possible, since responder will bid on with 8 AKQ controls, but it does run the small risk of the opponents holding diamond tricks with a club entry.

3D 4C 7 AKQ controls. OK what can he have? DAK CK gives poor play in 6C. SA DA and a queen gives 50% at best. SA DK and either KC or two queens is also 50% at best. SQ DA CK and another queen is 50% on a diamond lead, and has good play on other leads. The trouble is we won't be able to find out in time that it isn't SQ HQ DKQ CK!

Without the QS the spade suit is mostly a mirage in a club contract - we're unlikely to be able to set it up and retain an entry to it. Anyhow, if we ask with 4D, the danger response is 4NT which will show SA and a high diamond. We can't really afford to pass and play there if that happens. We sign off, knowing that even if we were to hear 4H from partner over our 4D ask, we would still be guessing the final contract.

5C No Good decision.

## Example Hand 14

### Board 14, Session 13, 2000 South-West Pacific Teams

All Vul

Dealer E

	<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>
S	AT83	S Q
H	J4	H K98
D	-	D KJT4
C	AQT8643	C KJ752

- 1S 4+D, unbalanced.

2C 2D 5+C

2H 3D 1345 Relay needs to find heart controls.

3S 4C 3 AK controls. Clearly responder has CK. If he has HA then 6C is laydown. If he has DA then there are two cashing hearts missing. If he has the two red kings then we need the HA onside (50%). In the dangerous case, responder bids 4NT after our 4D which shows KC, a top diamond and no top heart, so we can't afford to ask. Guessing time.

What are the odds? Two red kings gives 50%, but they are much less likely than either red ace (pigeonhole principle). DA will be held more often than HA (4:3) so the odds for slam have slipped below 50%. We'll live to fight another day.

5C No (For the record the AH was onside...)

## Example Hand 15

### Board 10, Session 11, 2000 South-West Pacific Teams

All Vul

Dealer E

	<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>
S	KQ62	S AT985
H	AK5	H QT943
D	AK52	D 64
C	Q7	C T

- No

1C 1H 15-17OP (passed hand), 4+S.

1S 1NT 4+H

2C 2S 5+S, 5+H

2NT 3C 0-1 C

3D 3H 5521 Relay only cares that an ace is held. If HQ is not held, he may be forced to take a heart finesse or drop the HQ. In any case, the HQ won't be found below 5S. Second chances are available when partner has DQ and the opponents don't

cash their CA

4D 4S 1 ace  
6S No Practical.

## Example Hand 17

### Board 5, OKbridge MP Tourney, 19/3/2000

N/S Vul

Dealer N

East	West
S 2	S KQ9864
H KJ9	H Q8
D KQ54	D J9
C Q7432	C AKJ

1S 2C 18-22 OP 4+D unbalanced

2D 2H 4+D 5+C

3D 3NT 1345 Relayer has a choice between 3NT, 4S and 5C. 3NT is clear at any form of scoring.

The opponents lead a small heart and switched to the JS-QS-AS-2S. A small spade return saw TS inserted and 11 tricks claimed. Should the defence have gotten this right? How would they know?

Six tables failed in the spade game, and 11 tables were held to 9 tricks in 3NT. Two overtricks happened at only four tables.

## Example Hand 18

### Board 6, OKbridge MP Tourney, 19/3/2000

E/W Vul

Dealer E

East	West
S 87643	S A52
H T	H QJ9854
D AKT	D 7
C QT94	C AK2

1H 1S 18-22 OP 4+S 0-3H possibly balanced or with a longer minor suit

2H 2S 5+S 4C

3D 3H 5134 Relayer knows that KQxxx x Axx Qxxx (20OP) gives slam play, and there are plenty of better hands possible. Those queens are important, so an AKQ ask

is appropriate. Is a 4H response damaging? 4H shows base + 4 controls, and opener's base is  $9 \times 0.6 = 5$ , so 4H shows 9 AKQ controls. The above hand has only 7 AKQ controls so we will not be hard-pressed at the five level.

3NT 4S Opener shows only 6 AKQ controls, so a 4S contract is called for. While 4H is an excellent contract on these cards, to avoid 3 losers in trumps, it requires that opener hold a singleton A, K or T rather than one of four small hearts outstanding.

No Sadly the opponents doubled 4S on a 4-1 trump break and declarer misplayed to drift down two for a bottom. Only 5 tables played in 4S, with a large majority playing 2S+1 and 2H+2. Two tables made 4H, and tables in 3NT failed.

## Example Hand 19

### Board 15, OKbridge MP Tourney, 19/3/2000

N/S Vul

Dealer S

	East		West
S	AJT7	S	Q5
H	76	H	QJT2
D	AKJ4	D	QT87
C	432	C	KT9

1D-(No) 18-22 OP 4+H possibly balanced or with a longer side suit.

1H-(1S) No-(No) Balanced or three-suited with short spades.

X -(No) No-(No) Relayer's double is a strong suggestion of penalising, but opener with an unsuitable three-suiter could give a relay response of 1NT instead.

1S was two down and +500 was beaten only by 3SX

## Negative Response Structure

### Positive and semi-positive responses

After a first- or second-seat 1C opening, responder normally gives a positive response with a 17+OP hand. With 7-16OP, or more with a hand with few controls, the correct response is 1D. After a third- or fourth-seat 1C opening, the negative range is 7-14OP.

### After 1C-1D

Opener may bid 1H to describe any 27+OP hand (29+ after a third- or fourth-seat 1C opening) to continue the relay-style inquiry. The hands not strong enough for this 1H bid are divided into 5-5 shapes, semi-balanced shapes and other. The 5-5 shapes describe themselves with bids of 2S or higher (see [below](#)). The hands that are balanced rebid 1NT, as do those that are judged to be well described as balanced (e.g. some 5422, 6322, 5332, 4441 with good holdings in the "short" suits). Responder can then use normal Stayman and 4-suit transfers to continue the auction.

When opener is not 5-5 or close enough to balanced to bid 1NT then he will bid 1S with 4+S

unless he has a strong longer side suit. With fewer than four spades, opener bids his longest suit at the two level. The 1C-1D-1S auction is forcing on responder unless they are very weak and have 2-3S. A 1NT response denies 3S or a suit worth bidding, a raise is similar to the [1D-2H and 1H-2S styles](#), and new suits are not forcing or constructive. Jump shifts are fit-showing and invitational. Similar agreements apply after the two-level rebids by opener.

When holding 5+S and a side suit of at least 5 cards, opener rebids 2S. Responder may bid 2NT to inquire about the side suit without creating a forcing auction. When not holding 5S, opener bids 2NT with both minors, 3C with clubs and hearts and 3D with diamonds and hearts.

## After 1C-1D-1H

After a first- or second-seat 1C opener, responder has a full negative hand when holding 7-13OP or slightly stronger with few controls. After a third- or fourth-seat 1C opener, the range is 7-11OP. With a full negative hand, responder rebids 1S. Otherwise, when holding a semi-positive hand, the responding scheme is identical to that used with a positive hand but shifted up **two** steps.

- 1NT unbalanced, 4+S.
- 2C unbalanced, 4+H, 0-3S.
- 2D unbalanced, 4+D, 0-3S, 0-3H.
- 2H balanced, including a four- or five-card major.
- 2S balanced, 2-3H, 2-3S.
- 2NT three-suited with a major shortage.
- 3C 6+C, 0-2D (Low shortage).
- 3D 6+C, 0-1H (Middle shortage).
- 3H 2236 (Even shortage)
- 3S 1336 (High shortage)
- 3NT 1327
- 4C 1237
- 4D 0337

The full relay structure is used as normal, with the control base established by the shape and the known HCP minimum as normal.

## After 1C-1D-1H-1S

Similar principles apply here as applied after 1C-1D. With extra values, (31+OP or 33+OP after a first-or-second or third-or-fourth seat 1C opening) opener bids 2C to continue forcing. Opener bids 1NT with a weaker hand that is well described as balanced (transfers and Stayman are available to responder). Opener bids their longest suit with 2D, 2H, 2S or 3C when they are not 5-5 or better. With the 5-5 patterns, opener bids 2NT when **not** holding clubs (responder asks with 3C, and opener replies 3D=H+D, 3H=S+H, 3S=S+D) or 3D=D+C, 3H=H+C, 3S=S+C.

## After 1C-1D-1H-1S-2C

Responder may give a third negative when holding 7-10OP (after 1C openings in all positions) or bid as follows:

- 2H 4M and 5+m (neither suit specified) then 2S asks with responses 2NT=S+D, 3C=S+C, 3D=H+D, 3H=H+C.



2S Shows a hand describable with Puppet Stayman and transfers (all balanced, all long-major hands, both minors) and guarantees a rebid after any non-game bid by opener, who is not constrained to bid 2NT.

2NT Three-suited hand then 3C asks and the short suit is bid naturally (3NT = club shortage).

3X Usually shows a single-suiter of at least 7 cards.

Notice that there is no question of right-siding hands once all the suit denominations have been bid at the one-level!

## Dealing with Interference

### Interference after 1C-1D

Doubles by both hands are takeout. Pass is non-forcing and suggests either a trap pass or a hand with no good bid, including strong notrump type hands with no stopper. Responder's double is takeout showing a semi-positive hand. Higher interference is dealt with using takeout doubles and [Rubensohl](#) in a manner similar to the treatment of interference over 1C.

### After 1C-1D-1H-1S-2C

Responder may give a third negative when holding 0-2(3)HCP or bid as follows:

2H 4M and 5+m (neither suit specified) then 2S asks with responses 2NT=H+C, 3C=H+D, 3D=S+C, 3H=S+D (low bids promise high-ranking shortages, consistent with remainder of the system).

2S Shows a hand describable with Puppet Stayman and transfers (all balanced, all long-major hands, both minors) and guarantees a rebid after any non-game bid by opener, who is not constrained to bid 2NT.

2NT Three-suited hand, then 3C asks and the short suit is bid naturally (3NT = club shortage).

3X Shows a single-suiter of (usually) at least 7 cards.

Notice that there is no question of right-siding hands once all the suit denominations have been bid at the one-level!

### After 1C-1D-1H-1S-2C-2D

2H and 2S are non-forcing, 2NT is 23+ balanced (Puppet Stayman and transfers), three-level bids are forcing.

## Puppet Stayman Structure

After a 3C ask, opener responds 3H or 3S with a five-card suit, or 3NT with no four-card major. Opener responds 3D with at least one four-card major, whereafter responder bids 3H holding 4 **spades**, 3S holding 4 **hearts**, 3NT with no four-card major and 4D with **both** four-card majors.

After a 3D or 3H transfer, opener may superaccept by bidding 3H or 3S (as appropriate), deny support by bidding 3NT and show a normal acceptance by bidding 4H or 4S (as appropriate). After a 3NT denial, responder may repeat the transfer by bidding the suit below the one already shown.

After a 3S bid (both minors), opener bids 3NT with a hand not suited for 5C or 5D. With four- or five-card support, opener chooses a minor suit at the four-level to show extras and the five-level to deny extras. With both minor suits, opener may cue 4H or 4S or bid 4NT to deny the ability to cue.

# 1D and 1H Openings

The opening bids of 1D and 1H each promise 18-22 opening points (18-24 in third or fourth position subject to judgement). The former is opened on every hand with four or more hearts, the latter is opened on any hand with four or more spades that has at most three hearts. The limited nature of these hands often makes it very easy for responder to determine that the opening side has little (or no) play for game, and responder will take an action that is a suggestion of a final contract.

On most hands that may offer play for game, and almost all of those that will force to game, responder bids the next higher step (1H and 1S respectively) which is a relay, asking for further description of opener's hand. After subsequent bids by opener, responder continues to bid Step 1 for relay (with one exception). Opener's replies are structured so that the hands with lower playing strength make low-level responses so that responder may break relays with a natural invitational bid at the two- or three-level. Once broken, relays are never resumed, and natural bidding proceeds in the context of the previous auction. A passed hand may never relay, however one is expected to use the "relay" bid artificially to show a maximum passed hand without implying any fit.

Responder with minimum game-force holdings that are only interested in offering a choice of one or both major suits or 3NT. When opener indicates a balanced or three-suited hand, relay breaks are available to show such choice-of-game hands and get the required information without divulging unnecessary information to the defenders.

Responder may also utilise fit-showing jumps or mini-splinters as invitational actions.

The response structures for the two openings are almost identical:

## Responding to 1D and 1H

1D	1H	Meaning
No	No	No desire to bid; does not promise any holding in the bid suit, however negative inferences exist from the failure to make a non-forcing bid.
1H	1S	<b>Relay</b> , showing a hand with at least game interest. If unable to force to game, such a hand should be able to offer play for 2NT, three of opener's major or in its own suit if opener is minimum. In particular it needs to be prepared for a response at the three-level showing six or more cards in the suit opened.
1S	-	Any balanced or semi-balanced hand with 3-4S and no interest in game or hearts (pass next), OR 4S 5+m with no interest in game or hearts (rebid 2m where possible), OR 6+S with low game interest (rebid 2S), OR 3-4S 0-1H 3-6m with game interest (rebid 2H where possible), OR a strong 6+card minor and interest in 3NT (rebid 2NT or 3m).
1NT	-	Normally exactly five spades, non-forcing. Opener may revert to 2S with support, or correct to an unbid suit of at least five cards, or to any six card suit, subject to his judgement.
	1NT	Natural, non-forcing. Opener may correct to an unbid suit of at least five cards, or to any six card suit, subject to his judgement.
2C	2C	Natural, non-forcing, showing a suit of at least five cards. Opener is expected to pass without a good reason to bid, normally a concealed suit of at least five cards,
2D	2D	or a good six card opening suit, or a good fit and playing strength. When opener

	2H	rebids without showing fit, there is a fair tendency to deny tolerance. Opener may conceal tolerance any time his holding suggests an advantage in doing so.
2H	2S	Natural, non-forcing, 3-4 card support. This is a wide-ranging response which strongly discourages further action from opener. Responder is simply trying to pre-balance the opponents to the three-level in a way that makes it difficult for the opponents to judge the assets of the partnership. Opener may re-raise to the three- or four-level with six or seven trumps in a non-constructive sense. New suit bids show a side suit of at least five cards, and 2NT shows at least five trumps, and both kinds of action show super maximum <b>unbalanced</b> opening hands. Subsequent doubles by either hand are penalty-oriented, however responder has control of the auction.
2S	2NT	Unspecified mini-splinter showing at least four-card support for opener's suit, 0-1 in some side suit and values that suggest game is possible opposite a suitable hand. Opener bids Step 1 to find the shortage if this information may help find a game. Responder then bids his shortage naturally, bidding trumps when a natural bid is unavailable.
2NT	3C	Fit-showing jumps, showing 6+ in the suit bid (spades in the case of 2NT), 3+ support for opener's suit and interest in playing game.
3C	3D	
3D	3H	
3H	3S	4-5 card support (depending on shape), not constructive.
3NT	3NT	To play.
4H	4S	To play, could be pre-emptive.

## Relay structures

The relay structures are essentially identical to those after a 1C opening for [one-suited](#) and [two-suited hands](#). [Three-suited](#) and balanced hands are also accommodated via the steps below the "symmetric" ones.

### After 1D-1H and 1H-1S

1D	1H	Meaning
1S	1NT	Balanced, 4-5 cards in the suit opened, <b>or</b> a three-suited hand short in the other major suit.
1NT	-	4+S, unbalanced, with continuations identical to those for <a href="#">1C-1H-1S-1NT</a> .
2C	2C	4+D, unbalanced, <a href="#">symmetric continuations</a> .
2D	2D	5+C, 4+M, unbalanced, <a href="#">symmetric continuations</a> .
2H	2H	4C, 5+M, unbalanced, <a href="#">symmetric continuations</a> .
2S	2S	6+M, 0-2C, unbalanced, <a href="#">symmetric continuations</a> .
		etc.

### After 1D-1H-1S

After this sequence the single exception to the Step-1-for-relay principle occurs. Here 1NT is natural and invitational, and 2C is the relay. The available bids, of which only 2C and 2NT are forcing, are:

1NT	Natural, invitational, normally 1-2H.
2C	Game-force Relay, artificial.

2D	Natural, invitational (5)6+D.
2H	Invitational, normally 3H or a bad balanced 4H.
2S	Natural, invitational (5)6+S.
2NT	Major suit choice-of-games relay.
3C	Natural, invitational 6+C.
3D	Natural, highly invitational, long diamonds.
3H	Invitational, 4-5H.
3S	Natural, highly invitational, long independent spades.
Games	To play.

### **After 1D-1H-1S-2C**

The continuations after the game-force relay 2C are:

2D	Three-suited with short spades, with continuations as for <a href="#">three-suited hands</a> after a 1C opening.
2H	5H, balanced, continuations 2NT=3532, 3C=3523, 3D=2533 (with zoom).
2S	4H, 4S, balanced, continuations 3C=4432, 3D=4423 (with zoom).
2NT	4H, 4D, balanced, continuations 3D=3442, 3H=2443 (with zoom).
3C	3424
3D	2434
3H	3433 (with zoom).

The details are easily reconstructed from the principle of bidding cheaply when holding cards in high-ranking suits.

### **After 1D-1H-1S-2NT**

The continuations after the major-suit choice-of-games relay are largely natural:

3D	3S 4H
3H	5H 2-3S (now 3S shows 5+S and asks for 3-card support)
3S	4S 4H
3NT	0-2S 4H

This structure allows the unrevealed relay hand to declare most of the time, has fairly low frequency and consequences of lead-directing doubles, and transmits as little information as possible about the hand that is most likely to declare. A structure with 3D and 3S swapped is sounder from the view of avoiding lead-directing doubles, but isn't as natural to remember.

### **After 1H-1S-1NT**

The 2C bid is now available for relay in the normal manner, as well as a 3D major-suit choice-of-games relay:

2C	Game-force Relay, artificial.
2D	Natural, invitational (5)6+D.
2H	Natural, invitational (5)6+S.
2S	Invitational, normally 3S or a bad balanced 4S.
2NT	Natural, invitational, normally 1-2H.

3C	Natural, invitational 6+C.
3D	Major suit choice-of-games relay.
3H	Natural, highly invitational, long independent hearts.
3S	Invitational, 4-5S
Games	To play

### **After 1H-1S-1NT-3D**

The continuations after the major-suit choice-of-games relay are fairly natural:

3H	4-5S 3H (now 3S shows 3S and asks for 5-card support)
3S	5S 2H
3NT	4S 0-2H

The bids preceding 3D make known the declarer for the three possible contracts, so only conservation of information and avoidance of lead-directional doubles are concerns. There's no way of escaping 3D as an artificial ask which could well be doubled and lead to an effective lead to a heart or notrump contract. It is unlikely that a useful double of the responses will occur.

### **After 1H-1S-1NT-2C**

The continuations to the game-force relay are:

2D	Three-suited with short hearts, with continuations as for <a href="#">three-suited hands</a> after a 1C opening.
2H	5S, balanced, continuations 2NT=5332, 3C=5323, 3D=5233 (with zoom).
2S	4S, 4D, balanced, continuations 3D=4342, 3H=4243 (with zoom).
2NT	4324
3C	4234
3D	4333 (with zoom).

The details are easily reconstructed from the principle of bidding cheaply when holding cards in high-ranking suits.

### **After 1D-1S**

Opener may only raise with at least 4-card spade support, or bid naturally:

1NT	Balanced or semibalanced, 1-3S no good 5-card suit to bid.
2C,2D	Natural, 5+suit, 0-3S, non-forcing.
2H	Natural, (5)6+suit, non-forcing.
2S	Natural 4-5S
2NT	5+S 5+H
3C,3D	3406,3460 game interest
3H	3S 6H game interest
3S	6+S 4+H serious game interest

### **After 1D-1S-1NT**

2C,2D	Natural, 5+suit, non-forcing.
2H	3-4S 0-1H 3-6m game interest.

- 2S Natural 6+S, non-forcing.
- 2NT Strong minor suit with game interest & spade stopper.
- 3C,3D Natural, strong suit with game interest & no spade stopper.

### **After 1D-1S-1NT-2H**

- 2S Forward-going, 3S 4+H no heart wastage.
- 2NT Heart wastage, suggestion of contract.
- 3C Forward-going, 1-2S 4+C 2-3D no heart wastage.
- 3D Forward-going, 1-2S 4+D 2-3C no heart wastage.
- 3H Forward-going, 1444

### **After 1D-1S-2C/2D**

- 2D Natural, 5+suit, non-forcing.
- 2H 3-4S 0-1H 3-6m game interest (natural continuations).
- 2S Natural 6+S, non-forcing.
- 2NT Strong minor suit with game interest & spade stopper.
- 3C,3D Natural, strong suit with game interest & no spade stopper.

### **After 1D-1S-2H**

- 2S Natural 6+S, non-forcing.
- 2NT Strong minor suit with game interest, no stoppers implied.
- 3C,3D Natural, 0-1H game interest.

## **Competitive Bidding**

### **General**

When the opponents compete before a relay auction has begun, then if the relay bid or the double of it is available, then that call is for relay. A redouble of the 1D or 1H opening tends to deny invitational values and denies tolerance for diamonds or hearts respectively. Otherwise, their double of our opening or their overcall of our suit is ignored.

Again if a relay auction has not begun, doubles of suit bids are negative/takeout until either hand is defined, then penalty. Doubles of notrump bids show values and some degree of penalty interest depending on the meaning of the bid doubled. Jump bids in new suits remain fit-showing, non-jump suit and natural notrump bids remain non-forcing. Raises tend to be not constructive. Opener may continue over raises to 2H/S as in the absence of competition. Cuebids and double-then-raise auctions are constructive. Opener's second action (including pass) will normally "define" his hand for purposes of interpreting doubles. In various esoteric auctions where fit is known and further competition possible, jumps (and non-jumps that can't be natural) are fit-showing to empower partner's further actions in competition.

Some 2NT bids in competition show two places to play, particularly in smouldering 2-level auctions when double would be for penalties. 2NT is never natural in competition.

4NT in a competitive auction is RKCB whenever that is possible, and suggesting two possible strains at the five level whenever RKCB is not a possible interpretation. Jumps to five of opener's suit show control of their suit and issue a general or trump-quality-dependent slam try in the context of the auction.

When the opponents compete after a relay auction has begun, then the agreements used are identical to those used after interference during a 1C relay auction. In particular all doubles by relayer (and opener if relays have been broken) are for penalties.

## Specific Auctions

Abbreviations : M = Major suit shown by opening bid, oM = Major suit unshown by opening bid, R = Red suit, m = minor suit.

Auction	Conti	Meaning
1D-X	P	Shows at least 3+ tolerance for diamonds.
	XX	Shows intolerance for diamonds, and denies a clearly superior descriptive action.
	1H+	Normal system on, including 1H invitational or better relay.
1H-X	P	Shows at least 4+ tolerance for hearts.
	XX	Shows intolerance for hearts, and denies a clearly superior descriptive action.
	1S+	Normal system on, including 1S invitational or better relay.
1R-1NT (strong, natural)	X	Shows penalty interest, normally about 13+HCP, and activates action doubles, but does not create a force.
	suit	Good suit, prepared for raise in competition.
	2M jumps	Good 4-card raise, prepared for opener to compete when appropriate. Fit-showing, good 6-card suit with 3-card support and at least invitational values, non-forcing.
1R-overcall (non-jump)	X	Negative style, notionally with about a 4432 with a doubleton in their suit and at most 3-card support. Could include hands worth an invitation with only 3-card support, or game-forcing hands unsuited to any other action.
	suit	Non-forcing.
	2M	Non-constructive raise, normally not balanced with only 3-card support.
	2NT	At least invitational with 4-card or longer support.
	cue	Game-forcing with 3-card support.
	3M	Competitive raise with at least four-card support.
	jumps	Fit-showing, good 6-card suit with 3-card support and at least invitational values, non-forcing.
	jump cue	Strong raise to 4M.
	4M	To play, normally denying suitability for other actions.
	1R-2M	X
(2-suiter)	cue	Stronger general raise to at least 3M.
	of	
	oM	

with oM)	2NT	Balancedish raise to 3M, unsuited for 3m or 3M bid.
	3m	Fit-showing raise to 3M.
	3M	Competitive, denying suitability for alternate actions.
	jump cue	Good raise to 4M with shortage in oM.
	4m	Fit-showing offensive raise to 4M (later double shows the defensive strength for 4M as well and allows opener to make the final decision).
	4M	To play, normally denying suitability for other actions.
1R-2NT	X	Penalty interest for at least one of their suits. Activates action doubles for both hands.
(minors)	3m	Shows an invitational or better hand with the corresponding major (C-H, D-S) in the context of the opening bid. Continuations natural. If showing oM with only invitational values then quality of fit is not a significant concern for opener's valuation.
	3M	Non-invitational raise.
	3oM	Non-forcing natural suit, a good fitting hand may raise.
1R-jumps	X	Negative style, normally including possible 3-card support, or game-forcing hands lacking direction.
	suits	Non-forcing, constructive.
	3M	Normally at least 4-card support.
	cue	Good raise to 4M.
	4M	To play, normally denying a suitable alternative action.

## 1S and 2D Openings

The opening bids of 1S and 2D each promise 18-22 opening points (18-24 in third or fourth position subject to judgement). Both openings show at most three cards in each major suit. The former is opened on almost every hand with four or more clubs (that is, all six-card or longer club one-suiters and all minor two-suiters), and the latter is opened on single-suited hands with six or more diamonds.

The limited nature of these hands often makes it very easy for responder to determine that the opening side has little (or no) play for game, and responder will often take an action that is a suggestion of a final contract. Additionally the knowledge responder has of the opponents major suit fit(s) will sometimes allow him to violate agreements for tactical reasons.

On most hands that may offer play for game, and all of those that will force to game, responder bids a particular step (2C and 2H respectively) which is a relay, asking for further description of opener's hand. After subsequent bids by opener, responder continues to bid Step 1 for relay. Responder may break relays with a natural invitational bid at the two- or three-level. Once broken, relays are never resumed, and natural bidding proceeds in the context of the previous auction.

Responder may also utilise fit-showing jumps as invitational actions.

The response structures for the two openings are similar:



## Responding to 1S and 2D

1S	2D	Meaning
No	No	No desire to bid; does not promise any holding in the bid suit, however negative inferences exist from the failure to make a non-forcing bid.
1NT	-	Natural, non-forcing but opener will only pass with a 2254, or 2245 that offers good notrump play. Opener's rebids of 2C and 2D show 6+C and 5+D respectively.
2C	2H	<b>Relay</b> , showing a hand with at least game interest. If unable to force to game, such a hand should be able to offer play for 2NT, three of opener's minor or in its own suit. In particular it needs to be prepared for a response at the three-level showing six or more cards in the suit opened.
2D	2S	Natural, non-forcing, showing a suit of at least five cards (normally six or longer). Opener is expected to pass without a compelling reason to bid (e.g. a good seven card suit, or extreme shortage in responder's suit, or three card support in a maximum hand).
2H	3C	
2S	3D	
2NT	-	Asks opener to bid his longer minor suit.
-	2NT	Invitational values but 0-1 diamonds. Opener reverts to 3D when holding a minimum with poorer than expected prospects in 2NT. Opener bids 3NT with game values. Occasionally responder might hold a small doubleton in diamonds.
3C	3D	Non-constructive raise usually showing 4+C and 3+D respectively. This is a wide-ranging action that may be based on slightly fewer trumps or marginal invitational strength in an attempt to destabilise the opponents' bidding.
3D	3H	Fit-showing jumps, showing 6+ in the suit bid, 3+ support for opener's suit and interest in playing game. These bids are occasionally tactical.
3H	3S	
3S	4C	
3NT	3NT	To play.
4C	4D	To play, could be pre-emptive.
5C	5D	To play, could be pre-emptive.

## Relay structures

The relay structures are identical to those after 1C-1NT-2C and 1C-1NT-2C-2S+:

### After 1S-2C and 2D-2H

1S	2D	Meaning
2D	-	5+C, 4+D, unbalanced, <a href="#">symmetric continuations</a> .
2H	-	4C, 5+D, unbalanced, <a href="#">symmetric continuations</a> .
2S	2S	6+m, 0-2om, <a href="#">symmetric continuations</a> . etc.

Responder may break the relay to 3m after 2H and 2S (and sometimes 2NT) responses and this suggests a hand with 2+ fit and interest in 3NT. After higher responses by opener, such a hand takes its chances somewhere.

## Competitive Bidding

When the opponents compete before a relay auction has begun, then if the relay bid or the double

of it is available, then that bid is for relay. A redouble of the 1S opening tends to deny invitational values and denies tolerance for spades. A redouble of the 2D opening shows tolerance to play 2DXX and interest in penalising the opponents at the two-level. Doubles of suit bids are negative/takeout until either hand has been defined (e.g. a raise, an ask for minor-suit preference), then penalty. Thus the 2D opening defines the hand, so all doubles are penalties. Doubles of notrump bids show values and some degree of penalty interest depending on the meaning of the bid doubled. Jump bids in new suits remain fit-showing, non-jump suit and natural notrump bids remain non-forcing. Raises tend to be not constructive. Cuebids and double-then-raise auctions are constructive. Most 2NT bids in competition show two places to play.

When the opponents compete after a relay auction has begun, then the agreements used are identical to those used after interference during a 1C relay auction.

## 1NT Opening

The opening bid of 1NT promises 19-22 opening points (20-24 in third or fourth position) in a balanced hand with no four-card major or six-card minor. Clearly the responding structure has no place for Stayman. Instead responder has available transfers **two steps** below the suit shown, and a 2H game forcing relay. This relay asks for further description of opener's hand in the normal manner. After subsequent bids by opener, responder continues to bid Step 1 for relay. The 2S range probe should be used sparingly as opener's hand shape is already very tightly defined and giving a maximum response before playing 3NT is almost as bad as using Puppet Stayman! Contracts by the 1NT opener don't play as well as conventional judgement suggests.

### Responding to 1NT in 1st or 2nd seat

- 2C Transfer to hearts showing 5+H.
- 2D Transfer to spades showing 5+S.
- 2H Game-forcing relay.
- 2S Range-probe.
- 2NT Both minors, asking opener for preference. Usually responder will play at the three level.
- 3C Natural, not constructive showing 5+C.
- 3D Natural, not constructive showing 5+D.
- 3H Natural, forcing 6+H.
- 3S Natural, forcing 6+S.
- 3NT To play.
- 4C To play (mildly invitational).
- 4D To play (mildly invitational).
- 4H To play.
- 4S To play.

### Responding to 1NT in 3rd or 4th seat

- 2C Transfer to hearts showing 5+H.
- 2D Transfer to spades showing 5+S.
- 2H Range-probe or both minors; responses 2S=max with no 5m, 2NT=min, 3m=max 5m.

- 2S      Transfer to clubs (not invitational).
- 2NT     Transfer to diamonds (not invitational).
- 3C      Invitational showing 5+C.
- 3D      Invitational showing 5+D.
- 3H      Natural, invitational 6+H.
- 3S      Natural, invitational 6+S.
- 3NT     To play.
- 4C      To play (mildly invitational).
- 4D      To play (mildly invitational).
- 4H      To play.
- 4S      To play.

### **Relay structures**

The relay structure is identical to that after [1C-2D](#). Both structures use a 2H relay and identical responses.

### **After Transfers**

Opener bids Step 1 with 3-card support and Step 2 with doubleton support.

### **After 3H and 3S responses**

Opener bids 3NT with 2M, cuebids with 3M and a suitable hand, and bids 4M with 3M and an unsuitable hand.

### **Competitive Bidding**

We use SWINE for our escape mechanism after 1NT is doubled. SWINE also applies to auctions where a 1C opener rebids a natural 1NT. The SWINE structure is:

#### **Call      Meaning**

- Pass     Forces XX, intending to play 1NTXX or to bid the lower of two touching suits with a non-invitational hand.
- XX      Forces a 2C puppet, showing some weak single-suited hand.
- 2C      Shows clubs and a major suit, non-forcing.
- 2D      Shows diamonds and spades, non-forcing.
- 2H,2S   Invitational with at least a five-card suit.
- 2NT     Some game-forcing two-suiter.
- 3X      Game-forcing one-suiter.

After two-level interference we use takeout doubles and [Rubensohl](#).

After three-level interference we use takeout doubles.

After four-level interference we use penalty doubles.

Some 2NT bids in competition show two places to play.

When the opponents compete after the game-forcing relay auction has begun, the agreements used are identical to those used after interference during a 1C relay auction.

## 2C, 2H, 2S and 2NT Openings

These openings are made with hands approximately in the 15-17(19)OP range or with slightly stronger hands that are well-suited to the description. For a description of their basic requirements, see the [Preliminaries](#).

### Responding to 2C

Major-suit bids are not constructive and tend to be based on considerations of the Law of Total Tricks. Opener may act again only with unexpected extra distribution. 2D is available to request opener to choose his better (longer) major suit. 2NT is a values-based enquire, either invitational or better with a fit, or game-forcing without a known fit. 4C asks opener to bid the suit below his longer (or better if equal) suit (i.e. transfer). 4D asks opener to bid his longer (or better) suit.

In competition, doubles are penalties, 4C and 4D by responder at his first opportunity are identical to 2D-4C/4D, and 4NT by responder is a minor-suit takeout. After a double of the 2C opening, redouble denies tolerance to play in clubs, pass shows 5+ tolerance for clubs and 2D still requests opener's better major suit. After pass or redouble, opener can act as his hand suggests, bidding 2D with four cards or maybe two high honours to three cards.

### After 2C-2NT

Considerations of "minimum" or "maximum" are based on shapeliness, suit quality and honour location for major-suit contracts and do vary with vulnerability and position. For example, in first seat at all vulnerable, KTxxx Q8xx Jx xx is a minimum hand, but in third seat at favourable vulnerability, K98xxx QTxxx x x is a maximum hand despite its 15OP.

3C Minimum hand, somewhat apologetic.

3D 4S 4H, maximum hand.

3H 4S 5+H, maximum hand.

3S 5+S 4H, maximum hand.

3NT 5+S 5+H, maximum hand.

After a 3C response, responder continues to force with 3D (see below). Any other bid after the initial 3C response is natural and non-forcing.

After non-3C responses, major-suit bids are to play, 3NT is to play, 4C or 4D is forcing with a good 6+suit, 4NT is RKCB for **both** major suits (see below) others are natural.

### After 2D-2NT-3C-3D

3H 4S 4+H (3S enquires for 5+H, then 3NT denies)

3S 5+S 4H

3NT 5+S 5+H

### RKCB for both majors

At most a hand could have two of the six key cards and one major-suit queen, so the most useful and frequent cases are where one key card is held. Hence:

5C 1 key card, 5D asks for queens with step responses for 0, 1 or 2 queens. After the 1-queen response, 5NT asks which queen, with 6C=QH and 6D=QS.

5D 0 key cards, 5H asks for queens with step responses for 0, 1 or 2 queens. After the 1-queen response, 6C asks which queen, with 6D=QH and 6H=QS.

5H 2 key cards with 0 queens.

5S 2 key cards with 1 queen, 5NT asks which queen, with 6C=QH and 6D=QS.

## Responding to 2H

Heart-suit bids are not constructive and tend to be based on considerations of the Law of Total Tricks. Opener may act again only with unexpected extra distribution. 2NT is a constructive enquires, either invitational or better with a fit, or game-forcing without a known fit. 2S, 3C and 3D are natural and non-forcing, however they are constructive and are expecting a raise by opener with a fit. 3S, 4C and 4D are splinters with slam interest.

In competition, doubles are generally penalties, and 4NT by responder is RKCB for hearts.

If the opening bid of 2H is doubled, then redouble denies tolerance for hearts and asks opener to consider all three alternate suit denominations, but 2NT asks opener to choose his preferred minor suit. New suit bids remain non-forcing and constructive.

If the opening bid of 2H is overcalled, then double is for penalties, 2NT (if available) is an invitation in hearts, new suits and jumps in new suits are fit-showing. Jumps to four of the other major are to play. Cuebids show strong raises to game.

If the opponents overcall 3H, then double by responder can have two meanings, depending on what is shown by the cuebid. If 3H requests a stopper for a running-trick 3NT or shows general strength then responder's double is lead-directing with at least one of the top three honours to at least two cards. If 3H shows a two-suited hand, or has an unknown meaning, then double shows an offensive raise to 4H and suggests a five-level sacrifice. Note the corresponding structure for 2S is slightly different.

## Responding to 2S

Spade-suit bids are not constructive and tend to be based on considerations of the Law of Total Tricks. Opener may act again only with unexpected extra distribution. 2NT is a constructive enquires, either invitational or better with a fit, or game-forcing without a known fit. 3C, 3D and 3H are natural and non-forcing. 4C, 4D and 4H are splinters with slam interest.

In competition, doubles are generally penalties, and 4NT by responder is RKCB for spades.

If the opening bid of 2S is doubled, then redouble denies tolerance for spades and asks opener to consider all three alternate suit denominations, but 2NT asks opener to choose his preferred minor suit. New suit bids remain non-forcing and constructive.

If the opening bid of 2S is overcalled, then double is for penalties, new suits and jumps in new suits are fit-showing. Jumps to four of the other major are to play. Cuebids show strong raises to game.

If the opponents overcall 3S, then double by responder can have two meanings, depending on what is shown by the cuebid. If 3S requests a stopper for a running-trick 3NT or shows general strength or is undiscussed, then responder's double is lead-directing with at least one of the top three honours to at least two cards. If 3S shows a two-suited hand, or has an unknown meaning, then double shows an offensive raise to 4S and suggests a five-level sacrifice. Note the corresponding structure for 2H is slightly different.

## After 2H-2NT or 2S-2NT

3C/3D Shows any hand with at least four cards in the suit bid. Responder may issue an invitation to 4M by reverting to 3M, force to game in the unbid suits by bidding them, choose a game to play, set the minor suit for slam purposes by raising it to the four-level,

or bid 4NT RKCB for opener's major.

- 3M Shows any hand with 5332 distribution. New suits are natural and game-forcing, game bids are to play and 4NT is RKCB for opener's major.
- 3OM Shows a hand with a 6-card suit, but not good enough for a 3NT response. New suits are natural and game-forcing, game bids are to play and 4NT is RKCB for opener's major.
- 3NT Good 6-card suit headed by three out of four top honours. Responder's 4-level suits are natural and game-forcing, 4NT is not defined.

## Responding to 2NT

Minor-suit bids are not constructive and tend to be based on considerations of the Law of Total Tricks. Major-suit bids are forcing, looking for doubleton support (3NT denies). 4H and 4S are RKCB for **clubs** and **diamonds** respectively (hands that want to play 4H or 4S start with 3H or 3S respectively). 4NT asks for opener's better minor.

## Other Agreements

### Carding

From honour holdings when not leading an honour, we lead third from even length, fifth from odd length. If the holding does not include an honour (ace through ten) then the highest card is also permissible. When leading an honour we use normal standard overleads (ace from ace-king) from sequences including interior sequences. The queen may be led from five or more cards headed by the KQT9 asking for unblock of the jack.

At trick one, third hand when not attempting to win the trick signals reverse attitude according to Obvious Shift principles (define), except when the ace is led and the queen is on dummy (reverse present count) or in a cashout situation where count is important (reverse present count). Other cards on tricks 2-12 are reverse present count when not required to play a card of a specific rank. Natural high-low suit preference on rare occasions.

### Namyats

Four of a minor is opened with a hand an ace stronger than a hand that would open four of a major. Responder may suggest slam interest by bidding the step. Opener then shows any suit in which he has two or more quick losers. When no suit has two or more quick losers, opener rebids four of the major with a seven-card suit, 4NT with a broken eight-card suit and five of the major with a solid eight-card suit.

### 2NT in competition

2NT is **rarely** natural in competition. In defined situations it may be Lebensohl (including after double of a weak two-level opening by the opponents), Rubensohl (including after two-level interference of our 1NT or two-level interference over our strong club or power double auction where we have not shown a suit), a conventional raise of an opening or overcall, a strong enquires, or a natural suggestion of contract with invitational overtones (mostly after a two-level overcall or a 1NT takeout).

In other situations it is typically a mid- to late-round competitive action indicating at least two possible strains. Partner is expected to take preference between the two most logical or lowest reasonable strains, and to act accordingly if the 2NT bidder removes their preference to a new strain (showing intolerance for the preference). The availability of such actions colours the nature of late-round takeout doubles of (particularly) two of a major. Often a 2NT bid over 2S

might describe a takeout double with intolerance for defence. The availability of 2NT over 2H to describe minor-oriented hands allows a takeout double to be more spade-oriented. Where double would be for penalties then no inferences apply to 2NT other than that at least two strains are possible. A hand opposite a takeout double may freely use 2NT to indicate no significant preference and to ask the takeout doubler to bid the most appropriate strain.

## Defence to openings at the two level

- **Multi 2D** (showing among other possible options a weak two in either major) Double shows a takeout of spades, 2H shows a takeout of hearts, other bids are natural.
- **Myxo Twos** (bid showing the next suit or some possible other hands) A double at the partnership's first opportunity shows strength (16+), at the second shows a takeout action, and at the third shows a penalty interest. Bids are natural.
- **Ekrens 2C/D** (weak both majors) A double shows a desire to double and lead trumps. Bids are natural.
- **Roman 2D** (three-suited, possibly short in a known suit) Double shows great strength, further doubles are takeout. Try not to bid.
- **Precision 2C** (long clubs, possibly with a side major) Double activates Kokishohl (modification of Rubensohl; two-level bids to play, 2NT puppets a normal takeout double to 3C, then 3D is inv+ with majors and 3M is GF with that major and 1+ stoppers, 3C+ are transfers with inv+ values, 3S shows a game-forcing stopperless 3334 and 3NT shows club stopper(s) with no major suit interest), other bids natural.
- **Natural 2D** (long diamonds, possible with a side suit) Double activates modified Kokishohl (as above but 2NT includes hands wanting to play 3C and 3C is natural and invitational).

## 4NT in competition

The follow rules apply to 4NT bids in competition:

- Where a suit has been bid and raised, 4NT is RKCB 03/14 for that suit.
- Where the partner of the bidder has shown one suit only and where the bidder has not shown a suit, 4NT is RKCB 03/14 for that suit.
- Where the partner of the bidder has shown one suit only and where the bidder has shown another suit, 4NT asks for a choice of suits.
- Where the partner of the bidder has shown two or more suits, or shown one while possibly/certainly holding another suit, 4NT asks for a choice of suits.
- Where the partner of the bidder has not shown a suit, and the bidder has shown one suit only, then 4NT is RKCB 03/14 for that suit where the previously shown partnership values admit slam as a possibility, and otherwise asking for a choice between the suit shown and another suit. A suit-choice 4NT bid will typically show a side holding that is shorter than the holding shown, and a bid of a new suit implies (nearly) equal lengths in the two suits, where possible.
- Where the partner of the bidder has not shown a suit, and the bidder has shown two or more suits, then 4NT asks for a choice of suits.
- Where neither partner has shown a suit then 4NT is a takeout action; if double is available as a takeout action then 4NT implies that two suits are available for

consideration, otherwise all three suits are suggested.

## **After strong 2NT bids**

Where the partnership makes a strong natural 2NT bid, then [Puppet Stayman](#) and transfers are used.

## **Crowded-auction slam tries**

Where no room is available for detailed slam tries, a jump to five of an agreed or previously shown suit is a slam try needing control in the opponents suit, and a bid of five of their suit shows control in their suit and issues a general slam try for the agreed or previously shown suit.

## **Over their 1NT**

Where their 1NT range includes 13HCP (or is entirely weaker), we treat it as weak and use Cappelletti (also known as Hamilton or Pottage) where double is strong and penalty-oriented, 2C shows a single-suited hand, 2D shows both majors (normally 5+/4+ either way but might be 4+/4+ in extremis), 2H/2S show that suit and a minor (5+/4+ either way, 2NT asks for the minor suit, 3m by advancer in competition shows their own suit) and 2NT shows a strong 2-suiter. After the double we use action doubles under their shown length and penalty doubles over their shown length. Advancer's pass over responder's forcing action that does not show values creates a force. In fourth seat we act in the same way.

Otherwise over their 1NT we play Gawrys (also known as Meckwell) where double shows a single-suited hand in clubs or diamonds or a two-suited hand with both hearts and spades (correctable bidding in competition), 2C shows clubs and a higher suit, 2D shows diamonds and a major suit, 2H/2S are natural (may contain a weak suppressed side suit) and 2NT shows a strong 2-suiter. All two-suiters may be 5+/4+ either way. In fourth seat we act in the same way.

If they use Stayman or some similar enquires, we double the artificial ask or response to show that suit, request a lead and suggest competing. If they use a transfer, we double to show a full-valued takeout hand (after this double, or a pass instead of it, a later double of the takeout suit is still for takeout). If they transfer to a major suit then the bid of their transfer suit shows exactly four cards in the other major and an unspecified longer minor (2NT asks for the suit).