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Bidding System "Three-times-three"

A most of used natural and semi-natural systems have almost the same Class of Difficult Deals (CDD) – that means deals, when inside the system one can hardly declare optimal contract. Increasing players' level provided that leading pairs use almost full possibilities of natural systems and that's why struggle in sport bridge between such pairs consists on card-play.

At 60-ties years of previous century Polish theoretic Lukash Slawinsky concluded that for fighting against leading pairs weaker pair should use system with CDD that does not has common regions with CDD of natural systems. This conclusion provided him to invention of group of systems with strong pass and weak opening bids (HUM-Systems in modern terminology). Weak opening bids should either transfer to partner not only specific information about strength and distribution but also carry at preemptive function more frequently than natural systems. And then it became clear that all HUM-S's have rather low average level of opening bid: between 1 Club and 1 Diamond. So the aim of throwing opponents to intervention these systems did not manage. Moreover, "strong pass" itself became the weakest part of these systems because even not too high opponent's preemptive bid after such a pass destroyed constructive bidding of the system.

At the middle of 70-ties bridge-players from Kharkov (Ukraine) Vladimir Korop and his son Alexey Korop formulated ideology and spectrum of opening bids of absolutely unusual, extremely aggressive and destructive system, called "3x3". This system even nowadays is still maximal destructive and have average level of opening bids between 1 Spade and 1 NT because opening calls from Pass till 2 Hearts have in practice almost the same probability.

1. Spectrum of opening calls

1.1. Suits openings

System “3x3” has following so-called “suit openings” at 1st and 2nd levels:

At the 1 st level:	At the 2 nd level:
Pass	1 NT
1 Club	2 Clubs
1 Diamond	2 Diamonds
1 Heart	2 Heart

Every suit-opening call is made with one from three zone of strength:
at the 1st level: 0-2 or 7-9 or 16-18,
at the 2nd level: 3-5 or 10-12 or 18-20.

Moreover, every suit-opening-call describes one from three types of distribution:

- 4-3-3-3, 4-cards suit is bid natural (Pass and 1 NT – for 4 cards in Spade);
- at most one short (two or less cards in it) and at least three cards in all other suits the short suit is shown via Texas;
- at least two short suits (at most two cards in them) – main suit of the hand is shown via Texas.

So: every suit opening call has 9 meanings – three types of distribution and three zones of strength. That’s why it was named “3x3”.

Notes: A priori probability of these calls is:

- Texas in short suit – about 0.6,
- middle zone of strength – about 0.75.

And these probabilities should be informed to opponents in advance

1.2. Other opening bids

- 1 Spade – two zones of strength (5-7 or 13-15), any distribution;
- 2 Spades - 21 and more, suit distribution or 23 and more, NT distribution (in practice – forcing game);
- 2 NT - 21-22, regular distribution;
- 3 Clubs and higher – classical bids.

2. Development of the bidding (non-contested)

2.1. After suit opening bids

2.1.1. First replies:

No reply forces Opener! That’s why if responder’s hand is enough for game even with 1st zone of Opener’s strength Responder should bid the game that is more probable (or slam or bid 4 NT as Blackwood) Then – in accordance with logics. Opener knows that Responder has power hand!

If for game Responder needs in at least 2nd zone of Opener’s strength he should bid 2 NT – forcing to game with at least 2nd zone of Opener’s strength.

The most probable Responder's first reply is bid to the first step (from the opening call), examples: Pass – 1 Club or 2 Diamonds – 2 Hearts. It means that Responder has at least 2 cards in that suit (possibility to play contract in that suit if the suit is the main Opener's suit), absence of game intention if Opener has 1st or 2nd zone of strength.

With sharp hand (at least 4 cards in the suit of the first step, at least 5 cards in some side suit and usually with singleton) Responder should bid 6th step (suit of the 1st step with jump), examples: 1 Diamonds – 2 Hearts or 1 NT – 3 Clubs. Intention of that bid is:

- game in attack with 3rd zone of Opener's strength (in his suit or Responder's side suit or NT),
- suit game with common weak hand but sharp distribution,
- maximal high preempt when opponents have power hand.

Other bids are natural and non-forcing. One may think that Responder guessed type of Opener's distribution and his zone of strength. Note, that suit bids with jump have rather preemptive intention, reply 1 NT (after suit opening calls at 1st level, Pass included) is balance with 2nd zone of Opener's strength and stopper in suit of Opener's 1st step.

2.1.2. Following bidding

a) After Responder's bid game at once Opener bases his actions on position that Responder's bid was made in assumption that Opener's hand contained 1st zone of strength and one short suit with at least tripletons in other suits.

It is obvious that with 3rd zone of Opener's strength the Grand is almost sure, but with 2nd zone of Opener's strength small Slam may be impossible. So – logics of the following bidding is: every bids are natural and invites to small Slam (at least while Opener demonstrates only 2nd zone). With 3rd zone Opener bids small or grand Slam (by the way – to bid small Slam in one call is final because it may be done with nice hand and 2nd zone), or after Responder refuses Opener's invite – Opener continues bidding.

b) After 2NT reply Opener should describe his hand. With 1st zone of strength he passes and bidding is over (unless opponent re-open it – then in accordance with logic). Two bids will show 4-3-3-3 distribution: 3NT – 2nd zone and 4NT – 3rd zone, then – in accordance with logic. As exception 4NT may be made with 4-4-3-2 (or even 5-3-3-2, 5 cards in minor) and doubleton with high honor. Other bids describe suit hand:

- suit at 3rd level – main suit of the hand, at least 2nd zone (Opener may hide his 3rd zone for aim of better description his hand, especially with two-suited hands with two short suits); information about main suit of Opener's hand also shows to Responder type of distribution Opener's hand; then – in accordance with logic;

Notes: unfortunately 4-4-3-2 distribution is described as “suit” so Opener's bid at minor should be treated as 4+ cards (sometimes – 3+ cards) unless such a bid describes distribution with 2 and more short suits, direct Opener's bid at major shows at least 5 cards suit; if after 2NT question and Opener's rebid that showed hand with 1 short suit Responder bids major suit – it shows 4+ cards in it.

- suit at 4th level – natural, 3rd zone of strength, sufficiently one-suit-hand; then – in accordance with logic.

c) After first-step-reply Opener should Pass with following three cases:

- 1st zone, 4-3-3-3; if opponents re-open the bidding – in accordance with logic; usually Opener should call RDBL-SOS over opponents DBL (or make nearest bid);
- 1st zone, main suit of Opener's hand is the suit of the first-step-reply; then Opener should pass;
- 2nd zone, main suit of Opener's hand is the suit of the first-step-reply; then Opener may bid in accordance with logic (including free bid in his second suit – but not nearest bid).

Another Opener's bids:

- nearest NT – 2nd zone, 4-3-3-3; then – in accordance with logic;
- NT with jump – 3rd zone, 4-3-3-3 (or 4-4-3-2, even 5-3-3-2 5 cards in minor, doubleton with high honor; then – in accordance with logic;
- new suit without jump – main suit of the hand, distribution with 1 short suit, 1st or 2nd zone; then – in accordance with logic;

Note: here and then “new” means any but “first-step-reply” suit.

- repeat Responder's bid without jump – 3rd zone, distribution with at least two short suits and already fitted main suit of the hand; then – in accordance with logic;
- repeat Responder's bid with jump – as above but sufficient one-suit-hand;
- new suit with jump – 3rd zone, distribution with one short suit, jump is made in main (5+ cards) suit of the hand; then – in accordance with logic;
- new suit with double jump – as above but 6-3-3-1 or 7-3-3-0, usually one should not bid higher than 3NT; then – in accordance with logic.

d) After Responder's “sixth-step-reply” Opener has the following possibilities:

- Pass – final contract;
- any bids at Responder's suit – final contract and only Opener knows the aim: preemptive or attack;
- nearest NT (except 3NT) – 2nd zone, 4-3-3-3; then Responder bids final contract;
- NT with jump or 3NT – 3rd zone, 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 (5-3-3-2, 5+ cards in minor), doubleton with high honor; then – in accordance with logic;
- new suit without jump – 1st or 2nd zone, distribution with one short suit, the main suit of the hand was shown; then – in accordance with logic;
- new suit with jump – 3rd zone, distribution with one short suit, the main suit of the hand was shown; then – in accordance with logic;

e) After Responder's 1NT reply (after suit openings at 1st level) Opener bids almost final contract.

f) After Responder's new-suit-without-jump (not the suit of the 1st step after opening bid) reply Opener has the following possibilities:

- nearest NT (not 3NT) – 2nd zone, 4-3-3-3 (or 4-4-3-2 and high honor in doubleton); then – in accordance with logic;
- NT with jump (or 3NT) – 3rd zone, 4-3-3-3 (or 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2 and high honor in doubleton), then – in accordance with logic;
- support Responder's suit – 2nd zone, 4+ cards (rare – but may be 1st zone with extremely

- good distribution); then – in accordance with logic;
- support Responder's suit with jump – 3rd zone, 4+ cards (rare – but may be 2nd zone with extremely good distribution); then – in accordance with logic;
- new minor (not suit of the 1st step from opening bid) without jump – 4+ cards, distribution with two short suits, 2nd zone; then – in accordance with logic;
- new minor (not suit of the 1st step from opening bid) with jump – 4+ cards, distribution with two short suits, 3rd zone; then – in accordance with logic;
- new major (not suit of the 1st step from opening bid) without jump – 2nd zone, distribution with one short suit, this major is main suit of the hand; then – in accordance with logic;
- new major (not suit of the 1st step from opening bid) with jump – 3rd zone, distribution with one short suit, this major is main suit of the hand; then – in accordance with logic;
- new suit (suit of the 1st step from opening bid) without jump – 5+ cards, 3rd zone, the Opener's hand contain 4 cards in unbid major suit; then – in accordance with logic;
- new suit (suit of the 1st step from opening bid) with jump – 6+ cards, 3rd zone, sufficiently one-suit-hand; then – in accordance with logic.

g) After other replies bidding continues in accordance with logic, one should take into account that with fit in responder's suit Opener may make his bid with any zone, but without fit – only with 3rd zone. And absence of fit will describe type of distribution of Opener's hand.

2.2. After other openings

2.2.1. First replies

2.2.1.1. After 1 Spade opening Responder has the following possibilities:

- 1 NT – one-round-forcing (and if Opener shows 2nd zone it'll become forcing game);
- other bids – natural, non-forcing, 2 in major – 5+ cards, 2 in minor – 3+ cards (better minor).

2.2.1.2. After 2 NT opening Responder has the following possibilities:

- 3 Clubs – forcing game, puppet-Stayman (Responder may have no 4-card major); then Opener bids 3 NT without 4-card major, 3 in major – 5-3-3-2, natural, and 3 Diamonds – with at least one 4-card major, after that Responder bids 3 NT without 4-card major or bids 3 in major where he has NOT 4 cards (he has 4 cards in another major), with 4 cards in both majors Responder bids 4 in better minor; then – in accordance with logic;
- 3 NT – final contract;
- 4 NT – Boland-Miller (invite to Slam, described below);
- 3 in suit – Texas (3 Spades – Texas to 6+ cards in minor);
- 4 in minor – double Texas to major;
- 4 in major – for play.

Boland-Miller 2 NT (21-23) – 4 NT:

Pass – minimal hand (21),
 suit at 5 level – 22, nearest 4+ cards suit,
 5 NT – 23, no 5 card suit,
 suit at 6 level – 23, 5-3-3-2, natural.

After Opener's suit-bid at 5 level Responder decides the level of final contract (5 or 6) and continues at that level (Pass included). Then partners bid their 4-card suit up-the-line till they find

fit 4-4 (and pass at the level that was decided by Responder) or bid NT at the same level.

After Opener's bid 5 NT Responder bids his nearest 4-card suit at 6 level (or direct bids 6 NT as final contract) and partners' bidding is similar to one that is described above.

After Opener's suit-bid at 6 level Responder takes final decision.

2.2.1.3. After 2 Spades opening Responder has the following possibilities:

- 3 Clubs - negative (less than 5 PC);
- other bids – natural, 5+ PC.

Then – in accordance with logic.

2.2.1.4. After 3 Clubs and higher openings – partners should agree the bidding logic. Recommended is classic style.

2.2.2. Bidding after 1 Spade – 1NT

Opener should describe his hand. With 1st zone (5-7 PC) he makes suit bids at 2 level, other bids will show 2nd zone (13-15):

- 2 in minor – 3+ cards, better minor, 5-7;
- 2 in major – 5+ cards, 5-7
- 2 NT – approximately NT distribution, 13-15;
- 3 in suit – 5+ cards, 13-15.

After Opener's suit reply at 2 level Responder has only one bid that forces game – 2 NT. All other bids are natural and non-forcing. After forcing 2 NT Opener should transfer more information about his hand (show 4-card major, 5-card minor, repeat major as 6+ card suit or bid 3 NT otherwise). After Opener's reply that showed 2nd zone, the bidding is natural, but Responder's bid in minor may be constructive and pointing to 4-card major because direct major bid will show 5+ cards in it.

3. When opponents overcall

Intervention of opponents usually helps Responder better to estimate Opener's hand and to take decision about optimal contracts for both sides. Usually Responder bids almost final contract. Opener may continue rather with better shape than with more strength because his strength is known almost precise but distribution may have great improvements... Besides that Responder still has artificial bid 2 NT after suit-openings and 1 NT – after 1 Spade opening. All Responder's Doubles and Redoubles – natural, for penalty.

Afterwords:

The system is too aggressive in nature (usually it will wind you 1 level higher than you planned) that's why it is recommended in critical position (when one has doubts to continue bidding or to pass) to chose rather Pass

From Bridgeguys WEB-sites (<http://homepage.mac.com/bridgeguys/BGlossary/GlossB.html>):

Boland or Boland Slam Try

The origin of this bidding method is unknown, but is most likely the conclusions of Mr. V.F. Boland and Mr. John H. Law, two bridge experts and authors, who published their studies 1931 in the book: Accurate Contract Bridge.

This is a method of slam exploration after one partner opens especially with a 1 No Trump, but which can also be applied with a 2 No Trump opening, and the responder jump raises to 4 No Trump. After the bidding sequence: 1 No Trump - Pass - 4 No Trump, the opener declines the invitation by passing if he has a minimum.

The Boland Slam Try can be employed with various No Trump ranges: 15-17 high card points, 16-18 high card points; 15-18 high card points; and 20-22 high card points for a 2 No Trump opening. With an average hand in terms of point count, or a good 17 points using a strong No Trump range of 16 -18 high card points, the opener bids five of his lowest ranking biddable suit.

The responder bids accordingly, and may jump to the six level in another suit without excluding other contracts. A 5 No Trump rebid would deny a biddable suit. With a minimum hand, the opener jumps to the six level in his lowest ranking biddable suit in similar fashion. The Boland Slam Try can be employed in the same manner after any natural jump from 2 No Trump to 4 No Trump.

For the purpose of finding an appropriate trump suit in which to play the slam, a biddable suit is defined as one containing no less than 4 cards headed by at least the Queen-Jack -x-x, which insures the partnership against playing in a trump suit, in which the probability of losing more than one trick is greater.