

The Way Forward

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Introduction

History and Motivation

TWF is built around the 1♠ opener, designed as a low-level pre-empt. We were introduced to this idea by a system called 'The Science', a natural system in which, with a minimum hand, a four card major is opened whenever possible. The problem with the Science is that the stronger hands which are opened 1M cause difficulties: either they are badly handled, or they make things difficult for the weak canapé types; for example, when the auction starts 1♠-1NT (as it often does), in order to allow reasonably accurate bidding of strongish hands with 5♠+4m, 2m must show 5♠, and canapé types must pass. In order to rectify this deficiency, we play a strong 1♣ opener.

Early versions of the system featured a four card 1♥ opening, but we found that this opening was generally more of an inconvenience to the opening side than the opponents, so we moved the types with four hearts into the catchall 1♦ opening, and had 1♥ show five (this is a much less drastic step than it would be in the Science, where such a manoeuvre would seriously impair the 1m structure). Now that 1♥ guaranteed five, the original motive for playing it as limited was irrelevant, so we reconsidered this aspect: we decided that 1♥ was a better opening than 1♣ if the opponents intervened, that such a 1♥ opener worked well in natural systems, and that having the auction 1♣-1♦-1♥ free for artificial purposes (showing 20+ HCP) was extremely useful. Consequently, the range for 1♥ is now 11-19.

There are several schools of thought concerning the 1♦ opening in a strong club system. In Icelandic Precision, 1♦ covers all opening hands with a primary minor suit; this can be very difficult to handle in competition, and big fits are sometimes missed. Original Precision features a much more tightly defined 1♦ opener, but at the price of a 2♣ opening for all unbalanced hands with primary clubs, which we feel regularly leads to inferior partscores and missed games. Our approach is to remove the more distributional hands from 1♦ into 2m (at least six) and 2NT (both minors). 1♦ is therefore 'balanced' or 'three-suited'.

Our 1NT opener has show 14-16 since the inception of the system. This meshes well with the balanced types we like to open 1♠ and with our preferred lower limit for the strong 1♣ opening. We have considered opening 1♦ on 14-16 balanced and using 1NT for something else (perhaps both minors; perhaps 10-13 balanced with no four card major), but this would cause some difficulty with the 1♦ response structure, would probably reduce the frequency of 1NT and would either lead to missed games (a balanced 15/16 count opens 1♦ and runs into competition) or would require the lower limit on 1♦ to be raised.

Design Principles

There are many situations in designing the relays where arbitrary decisions have to be made. In order to make learning the system easier, some attempt has been made at consistency. The basic rules to remember are:

- i. Most balanced types first
- ii. Shapes are shown in ascending numerical order, which has the corollaries:
 - a. High shortage first
 - b. Low length first
- iii. Symmetry. Permutations of a shape generally make the same final bid(s). Shapes are grouped together the same way on earlier rounds.
- iv. Get the hands in by 3NT. If there is not much space, the order above may be violated in order to get all the shapes in by 3NT.
- v. Partial information. In the example in (iii), above, the 2NT bid has the meaning 'high shortage'; this is preferred to a structure in which 2NT has a meaning like 'low void or high singleton'. See 1♦-1♥-2♥-2NT for an example.
- vi. Right-siding. This is only a major priority in the early rounds of 1♣ auctions, but is a factor elsewhere, e.g. after 1♦-1♥, opener bids 2♦ with club length, and 2♣ without.
- vii. Linkage. Especially in 'natural' relay auctions, clubs are linked to hearts, and diamonds are linked to spades (so heart bids may show club length, etc.)

Shape Notation

3-1-4-5	This is an exact shape, suits in order ♠-♥-♦-♣
(31)45	3-1-4-5 or 1-3-4-5
(31)(45)	3-1-4-5, 1-3-4-5, 3-1-5-4, or 1-3-5-4
5431	Any (5431)
6♥(322)	3-6-2-2, 2-6-3-2 or 2-6-2-3

Definitions

balanced	4333, 4432 or 5332 shape
unbalanced	Anything else
core	Of an unbalanced hand: the suits of at least four cards
residue	Of an unbalanced hand: the rest of the shape
stiff	Singleton

Live and Dead

These refer to the likelihood of a partnership further participating in the auction. Usually this will be obvious, but since our system occasionally depends on the distinction, we give some rules here for the avoidance of doubt. A partnership is live until they:

- Pass consecutively after the first bid
- or make a pre-empt and pass
- or make a limited raise and pass or sign-off

After which the partnership is 'dead'.

Points

Where numbers are used to denote strength of hand, they refer to pure HCP, and denote the total range in the case of unexceptional distribution, so with a 5134 hand (good but unexceptional for 5♠+4m), the range for 1♠ is 9-14 HCP; with a 5224 (poor for 5♠+4m), the range is 10-15, and with 5♠+5m (exceptionally good), the requirements are less. The ranges are, of course, just a guide.

Sigma Ordering

In several places in the system, the natural order of suits is ♥-♠-♣-♦; this arises for two distinct reasons: firstly the order of game bids is 4♥, 4♠, 5♣, 5♦; secondly, in competitive auctions, the most important suits to be able to show are the majors, but hearts is more important than spades, since it is safer to introduce spades later (we will typically be a level lower). We call this ordering the σ -order, and use the terms σ -first and σ -last in the obvious senses. The term σ -longest is also used, meaning the longest suit, resolving a tie in favour of the σ -first suit.

Abbreviations

BAL	Balanced
INV	Invitational
F	Forcing
F1	Forcing for one round
F3NT	Forcing to 3NT
FG	Forcing to game
FRG	Fragment: a three card holding (preferably including an honour; H-x is sometimes OK)
LROB	Limit raise or better
m	Minor
M	Major
NAT	Natural
NF	Not forcing
PFA	Principle of fast arrival (i.e. that direct bids show weakness)
R	Relay
SPL	Splinter

Opening Bids

One-Level 1st and 2nd

- 1♣ 16+ any shape, but not suitable for 1♥ or 1NT
- 1♦ i. 11-13 balanced, no five card major, not suitable for a 1♠ opener
ii. 11-15, four hearts and a five card minor
iii. 11-15, (4441) with 4♥
iv. 11-15, (5/4) in the minors (not 4♠)
- 1♥ 11-19, normal five card major 1♥ opener
- 1♠ i. Balanced with four spades (but not 4♥); 1♦ is an alternative with poor spades
ii. Four spades and a five card minor; 1♦ is preferred with 44(05)
iii. Five card major 1♠ opener
The range is determined by the planned rebid over a 1NT response: if Pass, then 10-13; if 2m then 9-15; if 2♥ or 2♠ then 12-15.
- 1NT 14-16 balanced; perhaps 4-1-4-4 / 6m(322) / (5422); not usually five hearts
- NB: 5M + 6m opens 1M

Higher Openings 1st and 2nd

- 2♣/♦ 12-15, six card suit; four card side suit possible
 - 2♥ Weak two in hearts (according to P&V; roughly 5-9HCP)
 - 2♠ Weak, 8-11 with a six card suit
 - 2NT 12-15, at least 5/5 in the minors
 - 3♣+ Pre-emptive
 - 3NT Gambling
 - 4NT A 5m pre-empt with a solid suit
- See below for 2-level 1st non-vulnerable.

Third Seat

One-level unchanged, but a little more leeway allowed in 1♥/♠ openings.

- 2♣/♦ 12-15, six card suit; four card side suit possible
 - 2♥/♠ Weak twos, about 0-13HCP
 - 2NT 12-15, at least 5/5 in the minors
 - 3NT To play
- See below for 2-level non-vulnerable.

Fourth Seat

- 1♣ 16+
- 1♦ 12-15 both minors / 12-15 a minor and hearts / balanced 12-13
- 1♥ 12-19, five card major 1♥ opener
- 1♠ 11-15, shapes as other seats
- 1NT 14-16
- 2♣/♦ 12-15, six card suit
- 2♥/♠ 9-13, six card suit
- 2NT 12-15, at least 5/5 in the minors
- 3NT To play

Artificial Pre-emption (1st and 3rd NV)

This is probably not to everyone's taste, and is an optional part of the system.

- 2♣ Opening bid with six clubs or a weak two in diamonds
- 2♦ Opening bid with six diamonds or a five card heart weak two
- 2♥ Six card heart weak two or a bad spade weak two
- 2♠ Good spade weak two

The weak options in 2m are extremely weak in first seat (about 0-7).

In first seat the distinction between the spade weak twos is constructive/non-constructive, as at other vulnerabilities. In third seat, we distinguish between a five and a six card suit.

Auctions after 1♣-1♦ (negative)

Opener's Rebid

- 1♥ 20+ HCP, any shape (1♠ = 0-4 any; 1NT+ = game-forcing)
- 1♠ Five spades, 16-19 HCP
- 1NT 17-19 balanced (system on)
- 2♣♦ Natural, at least five, 16-19 HCP
- 2♥+ Natural, primary diamonds, 20-24
- 2NT Specific card ask

Continuations after 1♣-1♦-2NT

- 3♣ No aces
- 3♦ ♠A, etc.

After Ace holding is clarified (responder has at most one) the next relay is for kings (+2 relays for queens); responder bids his lowest card (step 1 = none), +1 asks for another unless responder is known not to have any owing to his negative response.

Continuations after 1♣-1♦-1♥-1♠

- 1NT 20-22 balanced (system on)
- 2♣ Artificial, game-forcing (2♦ = balanced; 2NT/3♣ = ♣/♦; 3♦+ = (4441), short in bid suit)
- 2♥♦♠ Show hearts/spades/clubs respectively; F1
- 2NT 23-25 balanced (system on)

Positive Responses to 1♣-1♦-1♥

- 1NT Hearts
- 2♣ Spades
- 2♦ Balanced (2NT = balanced relay)
- 2♥/♠ Show the link minor
- 2NT+ 4441, shortage in bid suit (2NT = ♠)

Continuations after 1♣-1♦-1♥-2♦-2NT and 1♣-1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣-2♦-2NT

- 3♣ No four card major, not 4333 [3♦ = R (3♥/♠ = five in link; 3NT = (23)44); 3♥/♠ = five]
- 3♦ One four card major [3♥ = hearts (3♠ = spades; 3NT = hearts, but 3-4-3-3); 3♠ = spades]
- 3♥/♠ Five in the other major
- 3NT 33(43)

Continuations

Natural bidding until the suit is set, which may be by a raise, a jump or a cue-bid. Responder's jumps show shortage; opener's are cuebids (sources of losers). After suit agreement, responder freely cuebids first and second round controls; opener bids his 'source of losers' - a suit of AQx/AKx quality. Opener's 4NT is a trump ask along GSF lines (bidding the trump suit is the weakest action, otherwise, the more you bid, the more you have). Responder's 4NT shows good trumps.

Positive Responses to 1♣

Classification of Hands

We treat 7+/4 and 4441 hands as special cases. Unbalanced hands are called two-suiters if they have two suits of at least four cards (5440 hands are two-suited in the two four card suits). Other unbalanced hands are one-suited.

Initial Response

- 1♥ Spades: one or two-suiter, balanced (no other suit), 44(41) or 7/4 with four or seven spades
- 1♠ Balanced (spades not the only long suit) or two-suited with both minors
- 1NT Heart single-suiter or two-suited, hearts and clubs
- 2♣ Two-suited, hearts and diamonds
- 2♦ Club single-suiter
- 2♥ 7/4 without long spades or (14)44
- 2♠+ Diamond single-suiter

Resolution of Two-Suiters

- 2♥ Void somewhere [2NT = high void; 3♣ = (5440); 3♦/♥/♠ = low void: 5/5, 4/6, 6/4]
- 2♠ No void, low length, resolved as 3♣+ below
- 2NT 5+/5+, no three card suit
- 3♣ High length, high singleton
- 3♦ High length, 5422
- 3♥/♠ High length, low singleton: 5/4, 6/4

After showing a 5+/5+, step one is either a hand that wishes to set responder's better suit or a hand that wishes to set the second suit (step one = my longer suit is the first (now normal suit setting); steps two+ = my longest suit is the second); step two sets the first suit. After suit setting, responder gives range, then residue (1-2, 2-1, 1-1, 0-2, 2-0, 0-1, 1-0, 0-0), then keycards & spirals.

Resolution of Single-Suiters

- 2♠ High shortage or 7222 [3♣ = 7222 or 7330; 3♦+ = singleton/doubleton, as below]
- 2NT Middle singleton/doubleton [resolution as below]
- 3♣ Middle or low void [3♥ = middle; 3♠ = low; 4♣ = eight, middle; 4♦ = eight, low]
- 3♦♥♠ Low singleton/doubleton: 6322, 6331, 7(32)1
- 4♣ Eight card suit, low singleton (8221)
- 4♦ Eight card suit, two singletons (8311)

Note: with 8311 and 6322 shapes, the shortage below the fragment is shown

Resolution of 1♠ Response

- 2♣ Both minors, resolved as above
- 2♦ Balanced with four hearts:
 - 2♠ 3-4-3-3 (3♣) or 5♥(332)
 - 2NT 4♥ & 4♣
 - 3♣/♦ 4♥ & 4♦
 - 3♥/♠ 4♥ & 4♠
- 2♥ 4♠ & 4m (2NT/3♣ = 4♠ & 4♣; 3♦/3♥ = 4♠ & 4♦)
- 2♠ 3-3-3-4 (3♣) or 5♣(332)
- 2NT 4♣ & 4♦
- 3♣+ 3-3-4-3 (3♣) or 5♦(332)

Resolution of 1♥ Response

- 1NT Spades (2♦) or spades and hearts (2♥+)
- 2♣ Spades and diamonds
- 2♦ Odd types: balanced or 7/4 or 4441
- 2♥+ Spades and clubs

Continuations after 1♣-1♥-1♠-2♦-2♥

- 2♠ 5♠(332) or 4-3-3-3 (3♣)
- 2NT 7+/4, four spades
- 3♣ 44(14)
- 3♦+ 7+/4, seven spades (now residue: 1-1, 0-2, 2-0, 0-1, 1-0, 0-0)

Resolution of 2♥ Response

2NT 7+/4, low length

3♣ (14)44

3♦ 7(+)♦ & 4♣

3♥ 7(+)♥ & 4♣

3♠+ 7(+)♥ & 4♦

When Opener has a Void

The relays do not work well when opener has a void. If possible, we tell responder about our void by bidding step two at some stage: on the first occasion shows a heart void, then diamonds, clubs, spades. If we manage to do this, then we continue the relays, displaced by one step, but it is impossible to set opener's void suit. Also, when the suit is set, responder ignores the ace of opener's void suit in his initial keycard response. The suit is scanned until responder denies the next card in line (the ace coming first, in with the side kings).

Zooming

If there are 'spare' bids between a shape bid and 3NT, then we use these to show extra information about responder's hand. By an unpassed hand we show the range: 3♠ shows extra values and is forcing past 3NT; bidding 3NT shows a minimum; if available, 3♥ shows an in-between hand (continuations: responders hand known to be weak). The ranges are roughly 8-12,12+ or 8-9,10-13,14+. When responder is a passed hand we show whether or not he has a stop in his fragment (the σ-first three-card suit) or, if he has no fragment, the quality of his σ-longest suit. In both cases, the more he bids, the better the holding.

Continuations after 1♣-1♠

Opener may of course relay with 1NT, or show a heart void with 2♣. He may also bid 2♥ and above to show both minors, anticipating a problem with choice of games (so probably a minimum strong club with a singleton or two small doubletons). The hands are shown by the usual two-suited scheme, but with no range resolution. Responder relays and may then bid 3NT to play, bid a terminator, or set a suit in the usual way. Opener may also bid 2♦ to show a minimum strong club, single-suited in a minor with a side singleton. Responder relays for the minor (clubs/diamonds) and then for the singleton (spades/hearts/other minor), before bidding 3NT, or a terminator, or setting a suit.

Other Relay Breaks

The first priority is to show the 'scared' big two-suiter(s), the ones where partner, with a misfit, may make a big jump next time, i.e.

1♣-1♥	2♣ = reds
1♣-1♥-1♠-1NT	2♥ = minors
1♣-1♥-1♠-2♣	2♠ = roundeds
1♣-1♥-1♠-2♦	2NT = minors; 3♣ = roundeds (low length first)
1♣-1♠-1NT-2♣	2♠ = majors
1♣-1NT	2♥ = pointeds
1♣-1NT-2♣-2♦	2NT = minors; 3♣ = blacks
1♣-2♣	2♠ = blacks
1♣-2♦	2NT = reds; 3♣ = pointeds; 3♦ = majors

After these have been taken care of, we can set the suit early, or make a specific card ask. Details coming at some point.

Interference over 1♣

Direct intervention

Dbl Pass = 0-5; RDbI = 6-7, any shape; 1♦ = 5-7, five hearts; 1♥+ = system on
If Dbl showed hearts, then 1♦ shows the σ-first suit Dbl did not show

1♦ Pass = 0-5; Dbl = 6-7 any shape; 1♥+ = system on

1♥ Pass = 0-7; Dbl = 1♥ response; 1♠+ = system on

After these negatives, a 1♥ bid (or a double of a 1♥ bid) still shows any 20+. Other bids natural.

Over 1♠ or higher overcalls, Dbl shows a balanced hand (around 7+). Pass = weak or length in bid suit; opener's reopening double is takeout.

1♠ 1NT/2♣/2♦ = transfers (6+); 2♥ = 8+, 4441/5440, short spades

1NT 2♣ to 2♠ = transfers

2♣ 2♦ to 2♠ = transfers; 2NT = 8+, 4441/(544)0

2♦ 2♥/♠ = NAT F1; 2NT = clubs; 3♣ = short diamonds

2♥ 2♠ = NAT F1; 2NT/3♣ - transfers

2♠-3♣ Transfers

3♦+ Bids natural, forcing to game

Bids from the cue-bid upwards show specific 5/5 two-suiters, in ascending order (minors, rounded, reds, blacks, pointeds, majors), excluding combinations with RHO's bid suit.

Intervention in relay sequences

System on if we haven't lost more than one step over the duration of the auction. Pass is the cheapest step, then Dbl/RDbI, then bids. Opener's Dbl in direct seat is penalties, not void showing; Pass, and RDbI when responder has passed are relays.

Intervention after 1♣-1♦

Natural bidding; takeout doubles from both sides.

Auctions after 1♦

Initial Response

- 1♥ Hearts or a game-forcing relay or a balanced 12-count
- 1♠ Spades (generally five), less than a game-force (NF in theory)
- 1NT 0-11 balanced; opener may pull to his five card minor, and must do this with a maximum, to allow responder to make an invitational raise
- 2♣/♦ Natural, non-forcing, about 8-11
- 2♥/♠ Natural and weak
- 2NT Both minors: 5/5, 6-9
- 3♣/♦ Natural, invitational to 3NT opposite 11-13 BAL
- 3♥/♠ Shortage, both minors (4m NF)
- 3NT To play

Opener's Rebids after 1♦-1♥

- 1♠ 11-13 balanced, not four hearts [2♣ = R, consistent with 4+♥ INV]
- 1NT Both minors, not four hearts [2♠ = R, FG]
- 2♣ Four hearts unbalanced, at least three diamonds [2♦ = R, INV+]
- 2♦ Four hearts unbalanced, short diamonds (doubleton or less) [2NT = R, FG]
- 2♥ Four hearts minimum, balanced or 4-4-4-1 [2NT = R, FG]

Continuations after 1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣

- 2♦ 3/2 in the majors [2NT = R: 3-2-4-4, 3-2-3-5, 3-2-5-3]
- 2♥ Three hearts, not four spades [2NT = R: 3♣= 2♠ & 3♥; 3♦+ = 3♠ & 3♥]
- 2♠ Four spades [3♣ = R: 4-2-(3-4), 4-3-3-3, 4-3-2-4, 4-3-4-2]

Note: if 2NT is a relay, then responder's 2♠ shows a balanced invite.

Continuations after 1♦-1♥-1NT-2♠

- 2NT High shortage, resolved as below
- 3♣ No shortage: 3♥ = 2-2-4-5; 3♠/NT = 2-2-5-4, max/min
- 3♦ 3-1-4-5 max
- 3♥ 3-1-5-4 max
- 3♠ 3-1-4-5 min
- 3NT 3-1-5-4 min

Continuations after 1♦-1♥-2♣-2♦

- 2♥ Minimum [2NT = R, FG]
- 2♠ Maximum [2NT = R, FG]
- 3♣ Maximum 4-4-4-1

Continuations after 1♦-1♥-2♣-2♦-2♥/♠-2NT

- 3♣ Stiff ♠: 1-4-4-4, 1-4-3-5, 1-4-5-3
- 3♦ Void ♠: 0-4-4-5, 0-4-5-4
- 3♥ 2-4-5-2
- 3♠ 3-4-5-1
- 3NT 4-4-5-0

Continuations after 1♦-1♥-2♦-2NT

- 3♣ 5♣ minimum: 2-4-2-5, 3-4-1-5, 4-4-0-5
- 3♦ 4-4-1-4
- 3♥+ 5♣ maximum

Continuations after 1♦-1♥-2♥-2NT

- 3♣ Three spades: 3-4-3-3, 3-4-2-4, 3-4-4-2
- 3♦ Two spades: 2-4-3-4, 2-4-4-3
- 3♥+ Four spades: 4-4-2-3, 4-4-3-2, 4-4-4-1

Opener's Rebids after 1♦-1♠

- 1NT 11-13 balanced or semi-balanced: natural continuations
- 2♣ 5♣ maximum (14-15)
- 2♦ 5♦ maximum (14-15)
- 2♥ Good raise to 2♠
- 2♠ Bad raise to 2♠

Opener's Rebids after 1♦-1♥ by a Passed Hand

- 1♠ Both minors (may continue with 2♥ to show three)
- 1NT 11-13 balanced, not 4♥
- 2♣ 4♥ & 5♣, maximum (2♦ = game-try)
- 2♦ 4♥ & 5♦, maximum
- 2♥ Minimum raise to 2♥ (but Pass was an option)

Interference over 1♦

1♦-(Dbl)

Pass	Neutral (opener scrambles, SOS redouble)
Rdbl	One minor
1♥	Hearts
1♠	Spades
1NT	4♣+4♦
2m	5m+4♥
2♥	5♥+4m
2♠	Weak

1♦-(1♥)

Dbl	T/O, i.e. both minors (1♠ = balanced, antipositional or no stop)
1♠	Five
1NT	Natural, sound
2♣/♦	Natural, F1
2♥	Balanced game-force
2♠	Weak
2NT	Natural, sound
3♥	Splinter

Similarly over 1♠ overcall

1♦-(2♥)

Dbl	Takeout
2♠	Natural, forcing
2NT/3♣	Transfers, F1
3♥	Splinter

Similarly over 2♦ and 2♠

Responder is a passed hand

Cue-bids and 2NT bids show both minors. Three minor is natural and non-forcing.

Continuations after 1♦-1♥-(overcall)

Openers rebids after Dbl or 1♠ detailed below; natural with takeout doubles over higher intervention. If it is still plausible to relay, we retain the system structure, collapsing the structure only on the last shape-showing bid. If they intervene after the auction has become unambiguously game-forcing, we play as in other relay auctions.

1♦-1♥-(Dbl)

Pass	Balanced, not 3♥
Rdbl	Balanced with 3♥
1♠	Minors, not 3♥
1NT	Minors, with 3♥
2♣+	System on

1♦-1♥-(1♠)

Pass	Balanced, not 3♥
Dbl	Minors, not 3♥
1NT	3♥, balanced or minors
2♣+	System on

1♦-1♠-(overcall)

Natural with takeout doubles.

Auctions after 1♥

Summary of Responses

- 1♠ Natural, may have longer minor unless FG
- 1NT Not strong enough for a 2/1; includes 3♥ 3-6
- 2♣♦ Natural, 9+, F2♥
- 2♥ 7-10, three card support (3♣ = random INV; 3♥ = 6♥, frivolous INV)
- 2♠ 4♥ balanced, limit raise or better
- 2NT Minor miniSPL (♦/♣), or extra-values splinter (3♠+ as direct 3♠+)
- 3♣/♦ Fit jumps
- 3♥ Semi-PRE
- 3♠ Unspecified void SPL (♣/♦/♠)
- 3NT+ Splinters (♠/♣/♦)

Continuations after 1♥-1♠

- 1NT 11-14, not six hearts, not three spades (unless 35(32)), no five card minor
- 2♣ Clubs (five or 15-19) or 15-17 balanced
- 2♦ Diamonds (five or 15-19)
- 2♥ Six hearts, weakish
- 2♠ Natural, often with three card support; good hands with three card support start with 2m
- 2NT 18-19 BAL
- 3♣/♦ Mini splinters
- 3♥ Invitational
- 3♠ 4-5-2-2 invite

Continuations after 1♥-1♠-1NT

- 2♣ Puppet, generally shows 5♠ or a good hand
 - Pass To play
 - 2♥/♠ Constructive, NF
 - 2NT Sound invite with 5♠
 - 3♣/♦ 5/5 invite
 - 3♠ Invitational with a good suit
 - 3NT 5-2-3-3: less balanced hands bid 2♦
- 2♦ Game-forcing checkback
- 2♥/♠ Weak
- 2NT Invitational
- 3♣/♦ 4♠+6m invitational
- 3♠ Invitational with a poor suit

Continuations after 1♥-1♠-2♣

- 2♦ Weak or misfit or FG (2♠ shows three and 15-17, not INV)
- 2♥ Constructive preference: 7-9 (2♠ = three, virtually FG, 2NT = INV)
- 2♠ Moderately constructive
- 2NT 10+ balanced, not 4♣ (forcing)
- 3♣ 10-12, 4♣
- 3♦ 4/6 INV
- 3♥/♠ Natural, invitational

Continuations after 1♥-1♠-2♣-2♦-2♥

- 2♠ 5-1-(3-4) or 5-2-2-4, 7-9
- 2NT 4-1-4-4 or similar, 7-9
- 3♣ Natural FG
- 3♦ Fourth suit forcing; semi-natural
- 3♥/♠ Natural, game-forcing

Continuations after 1♥-1♠-2♦

Pass Permissible
2♥ Preference
2♠ Moderately constructive
2NT 10+ balanced, not 4♦ (forcing)
3♣ Fourth suit forcing
3♦ 10-12, 4♦
3♥/♠ Natural, invitational

Continuations after 1♥-1♠-2♠

Pass Permissible
2NT Relay: 3♣ 3-5-1-4
3♦ 3-5-4-1
3♥ 3-6-x-x
3♠ 4-5-x-x, minimum
3NT 4-5-2-2, maximum
4♣/♦ 4-5-(1-3) (shortage)
3♣/♦ Canapé invite
3♥ Forcing game-try
3♠ Invitational with five weak trumps
3NT To play (choice hands start with 2NT)
4level Splinters

Continuations after 1♥-1NT

Pass Permissible
2♣/♦ Natural, NF (2♠ = serious raise; direct raise frivolous)
2♥ Natural (2♠=R; 3m = to play)
2♠ Natural, 17+
2NT 17-19 BAL or semi-BAL (3♣/♦/♠ transfer; 3♥ minors)
3♣/♦ 5/5 maximum
3♥ Maximum single suiter

Continuations after 1♥-2♣

2♦ Natural, unlimited
2♥ Random minimum
2♠/NT Natural, game-forcing
3♣ Natural, minimumish, perhaps only 3♣ (3♥ now NF)
3♦/♠ Splinters, extra values
3♥ Natural, extra values (3♠/4♦ agree hearts; 3NT NF; 4♣ NAT; 4NT RKCB)
3NT 2-5-2-4 extras
4♣ Picture raise, extras
4♦/♠ Minimum void splinter
4♥ Solid suit, not slammish

Continuations after 1♥-2♣-2♦

2♥ Not forcing; consistent with a weakish limit raise or a 2NT bid without a stop
2♠ Fourth suit (game-forcing)
2NT Natural, sound stop, not forcing
3♣ Invitational, not forcing
3♦ Natural, not forcing
3♥ Sound three card limit raise
3♠ Splinter
3NT Picture minimum game-force
4♣ Solid suit
4♦/♥ Picture, no spade control

Continuations after 1♥-2♣-2♥

- Pass Permissible
- 2♠ Natural, game-forcing (might be a fragment)
- 2NT Invitational
- 3♣ Invitational
- 3♦ Natural, game-forcing (might be a fragment)
- 3♥ Invitational
- 3♠/4♦ Splinters
- 3NT/4♥ To play
- 4♦ Solid suit

Continuations after 1♥-2♠

- 2NT Spade shortage or a minimum hand with no shortage (11-14):
 - 3♣ Relay; FG or turned off by spade shortage
 - 3♦ Limit raise, turned on by short spades
 - 3♥ Neutral limit raise
- 3♣ Diamond shortage (3♦ = R, FG or frivolous INV; 3♥ = serious INV)
- 3♦ Maximum (15-19), no shortage
- 3♥+ Club shortage

Resolving hands with a shortage

- 3♥ Minimum, then as 3NT+ after a 3♠ relay
 - 3♠ Maximum, either RKCV (4♣) or a hand with an excellent (KQJ/AKQ+) side suit (4♦/4♥+)
 - 3NT A void, with side suit disparity
 - 4♣ No side suit disparity (4♦ = void? zoom into keycards)
 - 4♦/♥ A singleton with side suit disparity: low/high length
- Step one is RKCB after the relays have finished.

Resolving hands without a shortage

- 3♠ (5422)
 - 3NT (5332) or (7222) (4♣ = R; 4♦ = soft 5332; 4♥ = hard 5332; 4♠+ = 7222 & keycards)
 - 4♣+ (6322)
- Step one is RKCB after the relays have finished.

Passed hand responses

1♠ to 2♦: natural with natural continuations. The raise structure is unchanged.

Intervention over 1♥

We play as recommended by Robson & Segal, except when they make a takeout double (see below), and when they overcall 1NT (when we play natural). The conventional treatments we play are thus:

Support 4th suit / support double after 1♠ response and 2m overcall

Good/Bad 2NT as and when

Cue = LROB with three card support

2NT = LROB with four card support

Fit jumps

Note that after a 1NT response, doubles are takeout and 2NT Good/Bad from both sides of the table.

Defence to 1♥-(Dbl)

Pass Neutral; may conceal a weak heart raise

Rdbl Misfit, 10+; sets up a forcing pass to 2♦

1NT Clubs, could be quite weak

2♣ Diamonds, could be quite weak

2♦ Normal offensive three-card raise to 2♥ (or better)

2♥ Poker raise: doubleton support and about 9-11 HCP

2♠ Pre-emptive heart raise

2NT Four card limit or better raise

3♣/♦ Fit jumps

3♥ Mixed raise

Auctions after 1♠

Summary of responses

- 1NT up to 11, not suitable for a raise
- 2♣ Relay, game-forcing (15+) or 12-14 balanced
- 2♦ Hearts, at least moderately constructive (unlimited) or an invitational jump shift to 3♣/♦
- 2♥ Spades; minimum is about four card support, nine points and a singleton
- 2♠ Pre-emptive; 3♠ and a singleton permissible
- 2NT Clubs, weak or game-forcing (break only with a fit)
- 3♣ Diamonds, weak or game-forcing (break only with a fit)
- 3♦ Game-force with very short spades and no particularly long suit
- 3♥ Mixed raise to 3♠
- 3♠ Pre-emptive
- 4♣/♦ Fit jumps
- 4♥ To play

Continuations after 1♠-1NT

- Pass 10-13 balanced
- 2♣ Spades & clubs
- 2♦ Spades & diamonds
- 2♥ Five spades & four hearts
- 2♠ Six spades (2NT = R)
- 3♣/♦/♥ Five/five (or longer), maximum
- 3♠ Lots of spades, maximum

Continuations after 1♠-1NT-2♣

- Pass Preference
 - 2♦ Natural, not constructive
 - 2♥ 10-11HCP
 - 2♠ Minimum 5♠
 - 2NT Minimum 4♠+5♣
 - 3♣ Maximum 4♠+5♣, no fragment
 - 3♦/♥ Fragments, maximum [3♠ = Q-x / x-x-x or better]
 - 3♠ Maximum 5♠+4♣, no fragment
 - 3NT To play
 - 2♠ Preference
 - 3♣ Weakish raise
- Similarly after 1♠-1NT-2♦

Continuations after 1♠-2♦

- 2♥ No great fit for hearts, not a maximum
 - Pass Permissible
 - 2♠ Hearts, game-forcing (opener generally bids 2NT)
 - 2NT Balanced invite with hearts (probably 2-5-3-3, 12-14)
 - 3♣/♦/♥ Invitational jump shifts
- 2♠ Interest opposite heart type (heart fit or maximum)
 - 2NT Hearts, game-forcing
 - 3♣/♦ Invitational jump shifts
 - 3♥ Minimum 2♦ response: 9-10 HCP and six hearts

Continuations after 1♠-2♥

- 2♠ Minimum
 - 2NT Asks for shortage
 - 3♣/♦/♥ Shortage, invitational to game or slam
 - 3♠ Neutral invite
 - 3NT Choice of games (probably 4-3-3-3)
 - 4♣/♦/♥ Void, slam invitational
- 2NT Random maximum, continuations as above
- 3♣/♦/♥ Second suit, maximum (probably 5/5)
- 3♠ Single suited (3NT = shortage?)
- 4♣/♦/♥ Single suited, void in bid suit

Continuations after 1♠-2♣

- 2♦ Minimum (9-12) with a minor, or three-suited (2NT)
- 2♥ Single suited (2NT) or balanced; now 2♠ = R, FG; 2NT = BAL INV
- 2♠ 12-15 with clubs
- 2NT Hearts
- 3♣+ 12-15, with diamonds diamonds, high shortage or 5/5

Resolving the Balanced Hands

- 3♣ 5(332); 3♦ = R
- 3♦ 4-2-3-4 or 4-3-2-4; 3♥ = R
- 3♥ 4-3-3-3
- 3♠/3NT 4-2-4-3, 4-3-4-2

Continuations when Opener shows a Single-Suiter

- 3♣ Relay, asking for shortage:
 - 3♦/♥/♠ Short in ♥/♦/♣ respectively
 - 3NT No shortageNow 3NT is to play, step one sets spades (range and keycards).
- 3♦/♥/♠ Choice of games; asking for help in ♦/♥/♣ respectively. Opener bids 3NT with a double stop or a single stop and a good suit. Bids other than 3NT are natural bidding.
- 3NT To play (although opener may move with a maximum, or remove to 4♠ if appropriate).

Resolution of the Three-Suiters

- 3♦ 5-4-0-4 or 5-4-4-0: 3♥ = R for shape.
- 3♥ 4-0-4-5 or 4-0-5-4: 3♠ = R for shape (can't play in ♠); 4♣=controls? 4♦=♠; 4♥=terminator
- 3♠ 4-1-4-4
- 3NT 5-0-4-4

Resolution of the Spade/Heart Two-Suiters

- 3♦ High shortage (i.e. 5-4-1-3) or 5/5
- 3♥ No shortage (i.e. 5-4-2-2)
- 3♠ Low shortage: 5-4-3-1
- 3NT 6-4-x-x

Resolution of the Spade/Minor Two-Suiters

- 3♣ High shortage or 5/5; resolved analogously to 3♥+ below
- 3♦ No shortage; 3♥ relays for core (could also be 6511)
- 3♥ 6/4 [relay for residue (then terminator & suit setting) or terminator & suit-setting]
- 3♠/NT Low shortage, 4/5 and 5/4 core respectively

Passed hand responses

Natural bidding, except that 2♥ shows a good raise to 2♠. 3m are weak jumps. 2NT shows both minors.

Interference over 1♠

1♠-(Dbl)

- RDbl 12+, fit-less; FP to 2♥
- 1NT-2♦ Show the next suit, forcing for one round only
- 2♥/♠ Constructive raises: 8-11 four/three spades respectively
- 2NT Neutral (four card) limit raise or better
- 3♣/♦ Fit jumps
- 3♥ Pre-emptive raise
- 3♠ Mixed raise

1♠-(1NT)

- Dbl Penalties
- 2level Natural, non-forcing
- 2NT+ As above

1♠-(2♣)

- Dbl Diamonds, F1
- 2♦ Hearts, F1
- 2♥ Poker raise (3♠, 10+) or 12+ BAL
- 2♠ Fair raise (7-10/11, 3♠ + 1♣ permissible)
- 2NT Neutral limit raise (four trumps)
- 3♣ Mini-SPL
- 3♦/♥ Fit jumps
- 3♠ Semi-preemptive
- 4♣/♦ Very distributional versions of the three-level actions
- 4♥ To play

1♠-(2♦)

- Dbl Hearts
- 2♥ Poker raise or balanced
- 2♠ Fair raise
- 2NT Clubs, F1
- 3♣ Neutral limit raise
- 4♣ Fit jump

1♠-(2♥)

- Dbl Poker raise or balanced
- 2NT+ Transfers, as above

1♠-(3♣/♦/♥)

- Dbl Penalty-ish, e.g. weak no-trump with Q-10-x trumps
- bids Natural, forcing to game
- 3♠ Constructive

Responder is a passed hand

Natural bidding, except that 2♥ shows a good four card raise. Dbl/RDbl show constructive three-card raises.

1♠-1NT-(Dbl)

- RDbl 4♠+5m
- 2m 5♠+4m

Continuations

(note: 'responder' means the partner of the relayer)

Relayer's Options - Responder's hand known to be weak

This is the case in most auctions starting with 1♦ or 1♠, and also 1♣ auctions where responder has passed or bid 3NT to show his shape and a minimum. In these auctions, there is a terminator puppet, 3NT is to play, and other bid set suits, in responder's σ -length order. Relayer may also make a control ask, which slots in between responder's four and five card suits.

Relayer's Options - Responder's hand known to be strong

This is the case in 1♣ auctions where responder has bid 3♠ to show his shape and 12+. In these auctions there is no terminator puppet: all bids set suits, with the control ask slotting in between responder's four and five card suits, as usual. When the opening was 1♣, we deduct two cards from responder's three card or shorter heart holding for the purposes of suit setting.

Relayer's Options - Responder's hand is unlimited

Shape bid was 3♦ or below: All bids set suits in order of responder's known length. Opener can also make a control ask, which slots in between responder's four and five card suits, unless this would place it at 3♥ or above 3♠, when 3♠ is the range and control ask. When the opening was 1♣, we deduct two cards from responder's three card or shorter heart holding for the purposes of suit setting.

Shape bid was 3♥ or above: If 3♠ is available, then it is a range & control enquiry, and other bids set suits. If responder's bid was 3♠, then 3NT is to play opposite a minimum (responder moves to show controls with a maximum) unless responder has shown a seven card major. In the case of incomplete shapes, step one will generally be a relay for the residue, steps two and above will set suits (if the suit is set without relaying for the residue, then the side suits will not be scanned). The exception to this is if responder has shown a long major by bidding one step below 4M; then 4M is to play opposite a minimum (responder moves with keycards), and 4M+1 is suit-setting.

Relayer's Options - Responder's hand is weak but wide-range

This is the case in some 1♦ and 1♠ auctions. In 1♠ auctions, we regard the three-suiters as wide-range, but not the spade one-suiters or the major two-suiters.

Shape bid was 3♥ or below: There is a terminator puppet, and 3NT is to play. Step one is a range enquiry, after which it is not possible to set a major suit. Higher steps set the major suits.

Range enquiry: Responder bids step one with a maximum (forcing past 3NT), and step two with a minimum, unless the range enquiry was 3♠, when 3NT shows a minimum. We now continue as in "responder known to be weak/strong" as appropriate, except that relayer cannot set a major suit.

Shape bid was 3♠ or above: 3NT is to play, there is a terminator, and bids set suits as usual. Responder divides his range in two after the suit has been set.

Terminator Puppet

This is a bid which asks partner to bid step one, which we may pass or make some other bid, which partner will pass. When we play a terminator puppet, it is the cheapest available bid, with two provisos: it will be at least 4♦, and it will not be directly below a known singleton or void suit.

Void-showing

If opener has a void he has not been able to show, he can set the suit and simultaneously show the void by bidding steps not assigned meanings above, in maximum frequency order: i.e. pairs of suits taken in order of decreasing order of length (higher combination first when equal), with void in the long suit first (but remember some of these will have been excluded).

Bidding after a Trump Suit has been Set

Responder's first bid: If responder is unlimited, he shows his range - step one is minimum, other bids show extras. After a step one minimum response, opener can sign-off, use RKCB (step 1), or set another suit (steps 2+; now we use two suit RKCB). When the range has been shown, responder shows keycards (step one: 1 or 4; step two: 0 or 3; step three 2). We then zoom into spirals (but, in this case only, no further than five of the trump suit).

Signing-off: Any bid 6NT or above is to play. Bids between six of the agreed suit and 6NT are investigating grand slam, with 6NT as a possible resting place. Any bid of the agreed suit is to play.

Spirals: Any bid which is not a sign-off after keycard responses is a spiral scan. The trump queen comes first, followed by the side kings, in order of responder's length, higher ranking suit first when two are equal. Responder's singleton suit is not scanned. Sign-off steps are not counted when they come in the middle of relays, e.g. if hearts are agreed and partner has just bid 4♣, then 4♦ asks for the first card, 4♥ is a sign-off, and 4♠ asks for the second card. If relayer asks for a card and responder denies it, the suit is not scanned again.

Two suit RKCB: The keycards are the four aces and two key kings. In addition, two key queens count as a keycard. The responses are: 1/4/7, 0/3/6, 2/5 (no Q), 2/5 (one Q). A bid of either of the suits is to play. We continue with spirals through the two side-suits.

The Control Ask

Responder's first bid: If responder has not already clarified his range, he does so immediately - step one is minimum, other bids show extras. After a step one minimum response, opener can sign-off or relay. The sequence 3♠(range?)-3NT(minimum)-4♦ sets the suit a direct 4♦ would have done. When the range has been shown, responder shows controls (0-2, 3, 4, 5, etc.).

Counting controls: A = 2, K = 1. Singleton kings are not counted.

Terminator puppet: We play a terminator puppet until we are committed to a spiral auction (unless there is only one question that responder could want to ask). The terminator puppet is step one, with two provisos: it must be at least 4♦, and it cannot be the bid directly below responder's singleton or void suit. Responder bids step one, and relayer places the final contract.

When responder shows 0-2 controls:

step 1: Terminator puppet.

step 2: Location? Responder shows his cheapest control (in responder's suit length order, as above), with step one showing no control. If this is still ambiguous, relayer can relay again to ask for the other control (there is a terminator puppet here, since opener may also wish to spiral through queens), with step one showing none.

step 3: "It's all over unless you have two controls." Responder bids step one with 0 or 1 controls (over which anything is to play), otherwise clarifies his holding as above.

When responder shows 3 controls:

step 1: Terminator puppet.

step 2: Location? With AK responder shows his K, with KKK, he shows his no-king suit (suits in descending order of responder's known length). After this, opener can spiral through responder's queens.

step 3: Queen spiral opposite KKK, Ace location ask opposite AK.

steps 4+: Queen spirals.

When responder shows 4 or more controls:

step 1: Terminator puppet.

step 2: A/K spiral. Aces and kings are not distinguished; responder's singleton suit is scanned, although only the ace will be shown.

steps 3+: Queen spirals.

Queen spirals: If opener does not need clarification of responder's controls, he can go straight into queen spirals, skipping steps to skip cards if there's a terminator. Once queen spirals have started, the relay is always step one: all other bids are to play. If relayer has little space left before committing himself to slam, responder can show a card he does not have when he has reason to believe that he has the 12th/13th trick. Once we have finished the queens, we start on the jacks.

When relayer has a void: The A/K of the void suit are not counted as controls. The suit is spiralled until responder denies a card or until opener skips it. The Ace comes in the first spiral sweep, whether this be Q spirals or A/K spirals; the King in the next sweep, etc. If opener's void suit is step two or three, then it is a relay, skipping one and two cards respectively.

Natural High-Level Auctions

Frivolous 3NT

When an eight card or longer major suit fit has been unambiguously agreed, and both hands are unlimited, 3NT is a frivolous slam try, saying: "I am willing to co-operate if you have a slam try, but I do not have no independent slam interest." Exception: after a 1♥ opening bid, an overcall, and a cuebid showing a three card raise, both hands have one chance to bid a natural 3NT.

Abortive Relay Auctions

If we have started a relay auction (1♣-+ve, 1♦-1♥ or 1♠-2♣), and the opponents interfere so as to take us out of relay, and we haven't agreed a suit then simple bids of 4♣ and 4♦ have the following meanings, regardless of context:

4♣ "I have a good hand." (by an unlimited hand only)

4♦ "What's going on?" (not if a takeout double is available)

What's going on 4♦ is a scrambling device, for example showing extra length in our own suit together with secondary support for partner, or looking for a 4-4 fit in the previously unbid spade suit.

Cue-bidding Style

The cheapest suitable control is shown. Suitable controls are: first round controls, a king in partner's bid suit, second round control in a suit where the partnership is known to have first round control or where we have previously denied first round control. Shortage in partner's suit is not suitable unless partner will know that we are cue-bidding shortage. Below game level, when one hand is limited, a cue-bid by the limited hand does not imply a maximum. In minor-suit cue-bidding auctions, 4NT is discouraging and 5m is encouraging.

RKC Blackwood

When a major suit is agreed, 4NT is always RKCB. The responses are '1430' and we continue with spiral scans. See the relay sections. When two suits have been agreed or when a known 5/5 faces a known balanced hand, we use six Ace RKCB.

Josephine GSF

This is a 5NT bid after trumps have been unambiguously agreed. Bidding the trump suit is the weakest action, otherwise, the more we bid the more we have, with 7♣ being the strongest action.

Pick-a-Slam

When we haven't agreed a suit, or when there are two plausible trump suits, 5NT asks partner to choose between them.

Auctions after 1NT

Summary of Responses

- 2♣ Five hearts or five clubs or (4441) with hearts and clubs
- 2♦ Five spades or five diamonds or (4441) with spades and diamonds
- 2♥/♠ Exactly four cards, invitational, non-forcing
- 2NT Invitational (3m = to play; 3M = five and a maximum)
- 3♣ Puppet Stayman (3♦ = no five card major, then 3♥/♠ = four in other major, 3NT = 4-4-x-x)
- 3♦ CONFIT
- 3♥/♠ Shortage with both minors (4m NF)
- 3NT To play
- 4♣/♦ Transfers to 4♥/♠ respectively

Continuations after 1NT-2m

Step 1 Good hand for the link major

Step 2 Bad hand for the link major

Imagine that the auction started 1NT-transfer-2NT: if you would Pass or bid 3M, then bid you have a bad hand; if you would bid game, then you have a good hand. Continuations are almost the same either way.

Continuations after 1NT-2♣-2♦/♥

- 2♥ To play
- 2♠ Clubs, invitational or better (2NT = club fit F3NT, 3♦+ = four clubs & concentration)
- 2NT Puppet: to play 3♣, hearts & spades FG, 5-5-x-x INV, 1-4-4-4 or 4-4-1-4 or retransfer
- 3♣/♦ Hearts and clubs / diamonds
- 3♥ Natural: invitational opposite a minimum; forcing when opener has shown a good hand
- 3NT Five hearts, choice of games
- 3♠/4♣+ Heart auto-splinters

Continuations after 1NT-2♦-2♥/♠

- 2♠ To play
- 2NT Diamonds, invitational or better (3♣ = diamond fit F3NT, 3♥+ = 4♦ & concentration)
- 3♣ Puppet: to play 3♦, spades & clubs FG, 4-1-4-4 or 4-4-4-1 or retransfer
- 3♦/♥ Spades and diamonds / hearts
- 3♠ Natural: invitational opposite a minimum; forcing when opener has shown a good hand
- 3NT Five spades, choice of games
- 4♣+ Spade auto-splinters

Continuations after 1NT-3♣-3♦

- 3♥ Four spades, denies four hearts
- 3♠ Four hearts, denies four spades
- 3NT Four hearts and four spades
- 4♣ Five/five in the majors, slam try (4♦ = two-suit RKCB)
- 4♦ Five/five in the majors, no slam interest (or to be followed by RKCB/RKCV)

CONFIT

Opener shows controls (1-4, 5, 6, etc.) and then responder may sign off or start bidding suits naturally until a fit is found. After a fit is found, both partners cue-bid queens (5NT = trump queen). A suit may be agreed by a bid in a suit in which there is known to be no fit (showing the queen of that suit). If there are inadequate controls for slam, then the partnership does not look for a fit. After the 1-4 response, 3♠ is a further relay, with responses 1-2, 3, 4; responder may relay again over the 3NT bid (1,2).

Intervention over 1NT

1NT-(2♣/♦)

We play the same methods (more or less) regardless of the meaning of their bid, so we should never be in the position of asking and passing with a penalty double - we just pass smoothly.

Pass Consistent with a weak hand or a penalty double of RHO's bid suit

Dbl Takeout but willing to defend: at least x-x in the suit doubled, and about 7+ HCP

2level Natural, unless RHO has shown the suit (I admit, you need to ask here); a cue-bid shows a constructive+ hand and the other major or the minors (better in link) or the majors, as appropriate.

1NT-(2♥)

Assuming this is natural...

Pass Weak or a penalty double

Dbl Takeout, at least x-x in hearts

2♠ Natural

2NT/3♣ Transfers, F1

3♦ Spades, invitational (3♥ = stop?)

3♥ Spades, forcing (3♠ = stop?)

3♠ Three-suited game-force short in hearts

3NT To play (hands without stops, etc. go via Dbl)

1NT-(2♠)

Pass Weak or a penalty double

Dbl Takeout, at least x-x in spade

2NT/3♣ Transfers, F1

3♦ Hearts, weak or game-forcing

3♥ Hearts, invitational

3♠ Three-suited game-force short in spades

3NT To play

1NT-2m-(bid)

If there isn't room for the uncontested structure of rebids by responder, then the following rules apply:

1. 3m is natural and weak
2. 3M is natural and constructive
3. 3NT is to play
4. The cheapest other bid is a constructive or better hand with the minor
5. The cheapest remaining bid is forcing with the major

Opener is expected to bid 2NT/3m with four card support for responder's potential major; 2NT showing a fit for the minor also.

Natural 2NT System

Summary of Responses

- 3♣ Stayman, includes 5/4 in the majors
- 3♦/♥ Transfers
- 3♠ Minor suit Stayman (4m = four; 4♥/♠ = five in link)
- 3NT To play
- 4level Mild slam try or better in link suit
- 5m To play, already stretching

Continuations after 2NT-3♣

- 3♦ No four card major (3♥/♠ = five in other major)
 - 3♥ Four hearts (3♠ = sets ♥; others = NAT)
 - 3♠ Four spades (3NT = to play; 4m = NAT; 4♥ = mild slam try+ for spades)
- With both majors, bid the better suit first, and pull 3NT to the other major.

Transfer Breaks

- 3♠ 5-2-3-3 (perhaps longer spades in awkward auctions)
 - 3NT If guaranteed to be balanced: maximum with H-H-x in partner's major
If 2NT bid over a pre-empt: source-of-tricks type with shortage in the major
 - 4level Maximum, four card support, concentration
 - 4M Random break
- Over these transfer breaks 4M-1 is a retransfer, unless the declarership has already been resolved.

Continuations after 2NT-3♦-3♥

- 3♠ Natural, game-forcing
- 3NT Choice of games [opener may cue-bid with a super-maximum]
- 4m Natural, F4NT [4NT = misfit; 4♥ = forcing; others agree the minor]
- 4♥ To play
- 4NT Invitational

Continuations after a Four-Level Transfer

After 4m, 4M is the weakest action, bidding the intermediate step shows some interest, bidding above 4M shows an excellent hand. After 4M, 4NT is the weakest action (NF, esp at pairs), 5m shows a fit but little else, the other step below 5m shows a decent hand; bids above 5m show significant extras.

Auctions after Two-level Openings

Responses to 2♣

- 2♦ Hearts, invitational or better [opener bid fragment with a fit, 2NT/3♣ with a misfit]
 - 2♥ Spades, invitational or better
 - 2♠ Invitational club raise (opener bids a shortage with a maximum)
 - 2NT Balanced relay
 - 3♣ Weak club raise
 - 3♦/♥/♠ Splinters
 - 3NT To play
- System on after a Double, but 2NT = anti-lead-directional raise.

Continuations after 2♣-2NT

- 3♣ 6/4: 3♦ asks for second suit
- 3♦ (6322): 3♥ = will your suit run opp. K-x? (3NT=yes); 3♠ = side values? (3NT=hard)
- 3♥ Heart shortage
- 3♠ Spade shortage
- 3NT Diamond shortage

Responses to 2♦

- 2♥/♠ Constructive, non-forcing
 - 2NT Balanced relay; responses as above
 - 3♣ Invitational raise
 - 3♦ Weak raise
 - 3♥/♠ Splinters
 - 3NT To play
- System on after a Double, but 2NT = anti-lead-directional raise.

After an Overcall

Take-out doubles, new suits forcing, cue = support, fit jumps.

Responses to Weak Twos

- +1 Relay: (3M = minimum; bids = singletons, but step one could be BAL extras also)
The ambiguity is resolved by making a natural bid (3M) when partner relays again if we made a natural bid on the previous round. This is equivalent to bidding 3♥ with balanced hands, but the general principle is applicable in several other auctions, so we state it here.
 - 3level raise Natural, FG or FNJ (2♥-2NT = ♠)
- Note: these continuations also apply after 1M-1NT-2M and (1NT)-2M

Responses to Third Hand Weak Twos

All bids show a fit, and are ostensibly natural.

Responses to 2NT (5/5 in the minors)

- 3♣/♦ To play
- 3♥/♠ Shows a stop in the suit; opener is expected to bid 3NT with values in the fourth suit. May also be the first move on a hand with that major suit
- 3NT To play
- 4m Pre-emptive

Auctions after Artificial Pre-Emption

Responses to 2♣

- Pass No constructive interest opposite club type
- 2♦ To play opposite the diamond type
- 2♥ Natural, invitational opposite clubs
- 2♠ Natural, F3♣ opposite clubs (else bid 2♦)
- 2NT Relay, invitational opposite the weak type
- 3♣ Weak club raise, diamond fit
- 3♦ Pass or bid 3NT (or a four card major)
- 3♥/♠ Splinters, double fit

System on after a double. If they overcall, doubles of clubs and hearts are takeout; doubles of other suits are penalties. Club and heart bids are correctable. New suits natural, forcing opposite the club type. After 2♣-(Dbl)-Pass, RDb1 = 5♦+4♥.

Continuations after 2♣-2♦

- Pass Diamonds
- 2♥ Clubs, no void, minimum [2♠ = NAT, NF; 2NT = R; 3♣ = to play; 3level = NAT FG]
- 2♠ Clubs, no void, maximum [2NT = R; 3♣ = to play; 3level = NAT FG]
- 2NT/3♣ 2-2-2-7, max/min
- 3♦/♥/♠ Seven clubs and a void

Continuations after 2♣-2NT

- 3♣ Clubs [natural bidding]
- 3♦ Minimum diamond hand
- 3♥/♠ Maximum diamond hand, with good suit / good side cards
- 3NT Maximum diamond hand, good suit and good side cards

Responses to 2♦

- Pass No constructive interest opposite the diamond type
- 2♥ To play opposite the heart type
- 2♠ Natural, invitational opposite the diamond type
- 2NT Relay [3♣ = diamond type, etc. as above]
- 3♣ Invitational plus heart hand, F3♦ [heart type bids 4♥]
- 3♦ Weak diamond raise, heart fit
- 3♥ Pass or bid 3NT (or raise or a four card spade suit)
- 3♠ Splinter

Similar to 2♣ in competition.

Continuations after 2♦-2♥

- Pass Hearts
- 2♠ Diamonds, minimum [2NT = R; 3♦ = to play; 3M = natural]
- 2NT Diamonds, maximum, no side four card suit [3♣ = R; 3♦ = to play; 3M = natural]
- 3♣ Diamonds, maximum, a four card major [3♦ = to play; 3M = four]
- 3♦ Diamonds, maximum, four clubs [3M = natural]
- 3♥-NT Diamonds, void ♥/♠/♣

Responses to 2♥

- Pass Normal
 - 2♠ To play opposite the spade type; heart fit (opener bids as 2♥-2♠ V)
 - 2NT Relay [3♣ = 6♥ unbal (3♦=stiff? 3♥=INV); 3♦ = 5♠; 3♠ = 6♠; 3♥/NT = 6♥ bal]
 - 3♣/♦ Constructive, not forcing
 - majors Correctable
 - 4♣/♦ Shortage, double fit
- Similar to 2♣ in competition.

Defence to Natural Openings

Defence to One of a Suit

Direct seat: Double is takeout; shape-suitable in the R&S style (opposite which a cue = weak scramble or game-forcing). A cue-bid shows the highest two unbid suits, 2NT shows the extremes; we require two good suits for these bids. 1NT is 15-18 (system on). Jump overcalls are pre-emptive. Jump cue = stopper? 1m-4m = good 4M bid; 1M-4M = natural.

Sandwich seat: Both cue-bids are natural. 1NT is 17-20 (system on). Weak jump overcalls.

Protective position: The cue-bid shows a strongish two-suiter (unspecified). Jumps are intermediate, about 12-16 with a six card suit. 1NT is 10-14 over 1m (Dbl then 1NT with 15-17), 10-17 over a major; 2NT is 20-22 (18-20 doubles then bids no-trumps). Over 1NT, 2♣ is a range ask, bids natural.

Defence to 1NT

See separate section.

Defence to Two of a Suit: Weak or Intermediate

Double is take-out, and may not be very shape-suitable. A cue-bid is a stopper ask. Four of a minor shows a two-suiter: that minor and a major (but 2m-4m = majors). Jump overcalls are strong.

Defence to Two of a Suit: Strong

Double shows the highest two suits, 2NT shows the extremes, a cue-bid shows the lowest two suits. Overcalls and jump overcalls are natural and weak.

Defence to 2NT

Asptro, with double showing the minors (or diamonds).

Defence to Weak Threes

Double is takeout, opposite which a cue-bid opposite shows 4M+5m in the first instance, doubler bidding his lowest four card major. 3NT is natural (4♣=relay; 4♦=terminator; 4M=inv). A cue-bid shows a two-suiter. Jump overcalls are strong; doubling then bidding carries scrambling overtones.

Defence to Artificial Openings

Defence to a Multi

By this we mean an opening bid of 2♦ which shows a weak two in a major or perhaps a strong hand of some sort. The defence is:

- Pass Consistent with a strong three-suiter
- Dbl An overcall in a major (now takeout doubles from both sides)
- 2♥/♠ A constructive overcall in the link minor (about 14+)
- 2NT Natural, about 16-19
- 3♣/♦ Weak obstructive overcalls, about 8-13

See below for actions under the opener.

Defence to Multi-Way Pre-Empts

By this we mean pre-empts which have more than one distinct weak option.

Over the opener: If the weak options never include the suit bid, then double shows a balanced hand (13-16 if a 2NT bid is available, 16-19 if not) or a really strong hand; a later double is takeout. If the weak options may include the suit bid, double is takeout. 2NT is natural, 3NT is to play.

Under the opener: If the weak options for opener do not have length in the suit we're doubling, then we defend as above. If the weak options could include the suit, then doubles are two-way, i.e. an overcall in the suit or a takeout double.

Defence to a Nebulous 1m Opener

By this we mean a minor opening that may be made with fewer than three cards in the suit. If the short types are all strong (14+) then double is takeout, and a cue-bid is the majors; if there are weak short types, then double is majors-orientated takeout, and the cue is natural. In any case, the jump cue is natural and weak, and cue-bids are artificial opposite a double or overcall.

Defence to a Strong 1♣ Opener

Dbl shows spades; 1♦ shows hearts; 1♥/♠/NT are two-suiters (4+/4+), colour/rank/shape, opposite which all suit bids are correctable. If you wish to play in your own suit you must Pass, RDbL or bid no-trumps. Stronger hands without a major pass for the time being. After 1♣-artificial response, we play Dbl = majors, 1NT = minors, and natural bidding.

Defence to Artificial Pre-empts

Transfer pre-empts, South African Texas, etc. Double shows a (light-ish) takeout of the suit shown. Strong takeouts will double again. Pass and double shows a strong balanced hand. A direct cuebid shows a two-suited hand.

Defence to 1NT

We use Aspro unless we are a passed hand, or they open a strong (14+ or better) no-trump or it is love-all at matchpoints, when we play reverse.

Aspro

Dbl Penalties, 15+ or a good lead (less in 4th): forcing passes to 2♥
2♣ Hearts and another
2♦ Spades and another, anchoring to the weaker major
2♥/♠ Natural, usually a six card suit: +1 = R, as opposite a sound weak two
2NT Minors
3level Weak

(1NT)-2♣

2♦ Prefer to play 2♠ than 2♥ opposite majors (non-forcing)
2♥ To play
2♠/NT Natural, non-forcing
3♣ Relay, FG
3♦ Constructive raise
3♥ Pre-emptive raise

(1NT)-2♣-2♦

Pass 4♥ 5+♦
2♥ 5♥ 4+♣/♦ (2♠/3♣/♦ NF; 2NT relay for minor)
2♠ 5♠ 4+♥
2NT 0-4-4-5
3♣ 4♥ 6♣

(1NT)-2♣/♦-3♣

3♦ Five-card major (3♥ asks for minor, then 3♠ clubs, 3NT diamonds)
3♥ Majors
3♠/NT Four-card major with longer clubs/diamonds

(1NT)-2♣-(Dbl)

Pass To play opposite length (RDb1 = 4♥ 5♦; 2♦ = 5♥ 4♦; 2♥ = 5♥ 5♠; 2♠ = 4♥ 5♠)
RDb1 Diamonds and spades
2♦+ Natural

(1NT)-2♦-(Dbl)

Pass To play opposite length (RDb1 = 4♠ 5♣; 2♥ = 5♥; 2♠ = 5♠ 4♣)
RDb1 Hearts and clubs
2♥+ Natural

(1NT)-Dbl-(Pass)

Pass Normal
2level Weak hand with a longish suit
2NT Game-forcing two-suiter

(1NT)-Dbl-(RDb1)

Pass Automatic unless RDb1 is a rescue manoeuvre and we have a weak hand with a long suit.
Opener may remove in scrambling style with a balanced hand.

(1NT)-Dbl-(2♥)

Pass Penalty double or weak balanced or a good hand (not PFA)
Dbl Not a penalty double, but happy to defend (unlimited FP if they run)
2♠ Weak hand, longish suit
2NT Weak hand, longish suit
3♣/♦/♠ Game-forcing, not a flexible hand
3♥ Limited three-suiter, short hearts

(1NT)-Dbl-(2♥)-Pass

- Dbl At least a doubleton, happy to defend:
Pass Penalty double (unlimited FP if they run)
2♠ Weak scramble
2NT Weak scramble
3♣/♦/♠ Invitational
3♥ Flexible game-force
- 2♠/3m Longish suit, unsuitable for defence
2NT Bad hand with a long minor
3♥ Good hand, short hearts

Reverse Asptro

- Dbl Majors or minors or diamonds (bids pass or correct)
2♣ Clubs and a major (2♦ natural, 2♥ pass or correct)
2♦ Diamonds and a major (2♥ pass or correct)
2♥/♠ Natural

(1NT)-Pass-(artificial bid)

- Dbl Shows the suit for lead-directing purposes unless the opponents might have only 12 HCP between them, when it shows a strong notrump (sets up a FP to 2♥)
Cue Shows a two-suited hand
Pass Contains three-suited hands

(1NT)-Pass-(natural bid)

Defend as weak two

2NT and 4NT in Competition

Lebensohl 2NT

A Lebensohl 2NT generally requests partner to bid 3♣ unless he has an exceptional hand for his bidding (bids other than 3♣ are natural with extras, rather than correctable), which you may pass, or bid something else at the three-level, expecting partner to pass.

In response to a takeout double: If partner's last call was a takeout double, and the auction is currently at 2♦/♥/♠, then 2NT is Lebensohl. A direct bid generally shows extra values (non-forcing), but 3♣ (over 2♥/♠) and 3♦ (over 2♠) are scrambling if any of the following apply:

- i. The bidder could have bid a Lebensohl 2NT on the previous round
- ii. Either partner has opened 1NT
- iii. We are in a strictly protective auction

By the opening side in a natural auction in fifth or seventh position: A virtually unlimited hand can bid at the three level in two ways: via Lebensohl to show a competitive hand or directly to show a constructive hand.

Fit Showing 2NT

- i. A good four card raise opposite a 1M overcall.
- ii. A sound raise of an overcall when no cue-raise is available.
- iii. A mixed raise of a two-level overcall when RHO bids but a cue-raise is available.

Two-Suited 2NT and 4NT

A hand which has bid one suit may back into the auction opposite a silent partner with 2NT or 4NT to show an undisclosed second suit (typically 6/4: 5/5 shapes should bid the second suit). If 2NT or 4NT is our side's first contribution to the auction, it generally shows an unspecified two-suiter, excluding any suits shown by the opposition; exception: 2NT directly over an opening bid.

Two Places 4NT

A simple 4NT opposite a takeout double is a scrambling device. We play differently at the three and five level because partner will sometimes wish to raise a one-suited five level bid to slam.

Good Raise 4NT

When we have not agreed a suit, partner has made a natural bid, and no cue-raise is available, a simple 4NT shows a good raise.

Doubles and Redoubles

Relay Auctions

By this we mean auctions starting 1♣-positive or 1♠-2♣; our agreements about auctions starting 1♦-1♥ are listed under the 1♦ opening bid, and other auctions in which we play some artificial system, e.g. 1NT-3♣ and 1♣-1♦-1♥-2♦-2NT, are considered 'natural': the meaning of double is determined by the rules below. In relay auctions, if the intervention occurs in front of responder, we play Pass as step one (over which Dbl/Rdbl is a relay), and Dbl/Rdbl as step two. If the intervention occurs in front of relayer, Pass is a relay, Dbl/Rdbl is penalties, and the cheapest bid is step two.

Takeout Doubles

Double is for takeout unless one of the rules listed below applies. A takeout double shows a fair hand with no clear bid to make. It may show an off-shape hand if a new suit would not be forcing, or if we are in a forcing pass auction and catering to partner's penalty double. If the opponents are in a fit auction, takeout means takeout of their fit; if they are in a non-fit auction, it means takeout of the suit doubled.

For the penalty double section below, we need to know which suits are implied by a takeout double. If the double is our side's first contribution to the auction, it implies all the suits not shown by the opponents. A later double may have a specific meaning (e.g. 1♥-(2♦)-Dbl implies spades, 1♦-(1♥)-Dbl implies the minors) but unless this is explicitly listed in the relevant part of the system file, the double is not taken to imply any suits.

Raise Doubles

- i. 1♥-1♠-(2♦)-Dbl and 1♦-1♥-(1♠)-Dbl show three card support.
- ii. A double of a cue-bid of partner's suit by a passed hand which has not yet had a chance to raise shows support.
- iii. Partner overcalls, next hand makes a forcing bid at the two-level: double shows a topless raise.
- iv. Partner pre-empts and next hand makes a forcing bid: double shows a save-suggesting raise.

Lead-Directing Doubles

Any double of an artificial bid by a dead hand is then lead-directing, suggesting partner leads the suit unless the doubler pre-empted in the suit, when the double shows a poor suit.

Action Doubles

If a hand which opened the bidding with a pre-empt doubles the opponents, this shows extra values, and normally shortage in the opponents' suit. If partner has not had a chance to double the opponents for penalties, the message is "I want to compete, but am giving you the chance to play for penalties"; if partner has had a chance to double their bid for penalties, the message is "I have extras: do you wish to play or defend?".

Penalty Doubles

Double is for penalties if one of the following applies:

- i. We have agreed a suit. A bid which shows one card less than primary support (e.g. 1♥-(Dbl)-2♥ or 1♥-1♠-2♠) counts as suit agreement, as does making a natural bid opposite a takeout double.
- ii. Partner has pre-empted (unless they make a forcing bid)
- iii. Partner's hand is defined: if partner makes a conventional call showing a specific one- or two-suiter, or if partner takes two natural bids, or if he opens 1♦ and takes a further call which specifies his shape exactly (or almost so).
- iv. We have already made a penalty double or passed a takeout double for penalties.
- v. They protect an auction in which we have both bid.
- vi. We emerge from a lurking position: Double is penalties of the suit lurked over, and takeout of the suit doubled, if relevant.
- vii. They bid a new suit opposite a pre-empt.
- viii. They bid naturally a suit we have shown or implied (see takeout doubles above).
- ix. They bid no-trumps naturally.
- x. The doubler is dead, and their bid is to play, unless protecting a two-level fit auction.

Strong Misfit Doubles

In some misfit auctions where they make an artificial competitive bid, we play that double shows a good hand, interested in taking a penalty. We do not define these doubles as penalty since the opponents are not proposing to play in the contract, and since we may wish to play subsequent doubles as takeout. This applies when they:

- i. Artificially bid a suit we have shown or implied
- ii. Artificially bid no-trumps

Exception: If their bid guarantees a fit, the doubling it is takeout of their fit.

"Forcing Pass" Doubles

These are closely related to action doubles. They apply after suit agreement, if:

- The doubler made a descriptive bid as he raised or after suit agreement
- The bid did not particularly invite partner to bid on
- We are not in a forcing pass auction

Partner is now invited to bid on with a fitting hand. There may sometimes be confusion about whether the second criterion is satisfied, and so whether the double is penalties or "forcing pass", but it doesn't really matter: if responder has a penalty double type, it means he thought he'd invited partner to bid last time, so bidding with a suitable hand now should be all right.

Redoubles

Penalty Doubles: If the bid doubled was a non-forcing part-score bid, and if we have not agreed a suit, then redouble is for rescue. If it was a forcing natural bid or a game bid, redouble is for business. If we have agreed a suit, redouble is for business.

Strong Misfit Redoubles: If we are the opening side, or if our initial action was an overcall at the two-level or higher, and they have made a takeout double of our natural bid, redouble shows strength and a desire to penalise the opponents. These set up a forcing pass for a level unless partner's bid was a pre-empt (see below).

Rosencranz Redoubles: If we have overcalled at the one-level, a redouble of their takeout double shows a top honour in partner's suit.

Cue-bidding auctions: Rdbl from either hand is equivalent to cue-bidding the suit. Pass is encouraging.

Stopper-asking auctions: Rdbl from either hand requests that partner bid 3NT. Pass shows doubt.

They double our agreed suit: Rdbl shows a maximum hand, not averse to penalising the opponents.

Artificial bids in natural auctions: Pass is neutral, Rdbl suggests playing there at the one- or two-level, shows a good hand with no clear bid at the three-level or above.

Scrambling redoubles: In auctions where our best strain is unclear, redouble may show preference for the more expensive suit. For example (1♣ strong)-1♥-(Dbl)-Pass-Rdbl shows 5♣ and 4♠.

Forcing Passes

The Meaning of a Forcing Pass

If double would be penalties, a pass expresses doubt about whether to bid on or defend. If double would be takeout, we double with the 'doubt' hand, and pass with the penalties hand. In either case, we may pass and then bid on in order to show extra values.

Setting up a Forcing Pass in Uncontested Auctions

If we force to game, we set up an unlimited forcing pass. The only exception is when a player's first bid is game in a suit: this does not set up a forcing pass. We include in this category strong auctions which may stop at 4m, like 1♦-3♥. Note that the auction 1♥-2♣-(2♦)-Pass-Pass, is permissible, even though 1♥-2♣-2♦-Pass is not.

Setting up a Forcing Pass while Raising in Contested Auctions

The following set up an unlimited forcing pass:

- i. A four-level fit-jump or splinter-jump at red
- ii. A bid showing a high-card raise to the four level

Setting up a Forcing Pass after Suit Agreement in Contested Auctions

The following set up an unlimited forcing pass:

- i. A four-level cue-bid in the opponents' suit
- ii. A natural suit bid at the four level at red (a new suit, or raising partner's fit-jump suit)
- iii. An 'impossible' 3NT, e.g. if we have agreed a major, and they have bid and raised a suit.

The Opponents Bid to the Five Level

It is often awkward when the opponents bid to the five level, and so in the following cases we play a forcing pass even though we have not previously set one up:

- i. One of us has made a "limit raise or better" bid, and not subsequently limited his hand (three-level fit-jumps may deliver only semi-preemptive values, and so do not count)
- ii. (pre-empt)-action-(raise to 5)-Pass is forcing

Penalty-Taking Auctions

Strong misfit doubles and redoubles set up a forcing pass for a level (i.e. pass is forcing unless the opponents jump, or eventually bid what would have been a jump if bid directly) unless we have preempted. If the next hand does not jump, the partner of the (re)doubler may cancel the forcing pass by bidding (showing weakness), or set up an unlimited forcing pass by doubling or passing.

See also the section on the defence to 1NT.

Artificial Raises

This is not a normal forcing pass. An artificial raise forces our side to get to the level raised to, or to double the opponents. When neither of these things happen, bidding the agreed suit at the minimum level is the offensively weakest action. Hence (as a side-effect, almost), pass is forcing, showing extra offensive values.

Appendix A - Licensing

EBU Restricted Licenses

Agreeing to open 1NT with 4-1-4-4 is illegal, so we are obliged to open these hands 1♠. Opening 1NT with 5422 and 6322 shapes is allowed. The two-way two-level openings are legal although this may change. Opening 1♠ as light as we do is forbidden by the Orange book, but the EBU do not have the power to do this:

Law 40D. Regulation of Conventions

The sponsoring organisation may regulate the use of bidding or play conventions. Zonal organisations may, in addition, regulate partnership understandings (even if not conventional) that permit the partnership's initial actions at the one level to be made with a hand of a king or more below average strength; Zonal organisations may delegate this responsibility.

Using the 'rule of' evaluation method, an average hand is about 18½. Our minimum opening bids are rule of 18, occasionally rule of 17: at most a queen or jack below average strength. The rule of 19 does legally apply to artificial opening bids, but an addendum to the Orange book states that 4333 11-counts are considered to satisfy the rule of 19, so our 1♦ opening is legal.

The 1♥ response to 1♦ is legal under 18.3.4(d): "Prepared minor suit openings with relay responses: the next suit up is an artificial relay, showing 6+ HCPs. The relay must not be compulsory.". The EBU impose a rule of 12 on natural responses to 1-level opening bids, but this is illegal under Law 40D (above).

The 1♠ system is all OK; playing 2♥ as a good raise is covered by 18.3.2.

All methods are allowed opposite an opening bid of 1NT or higher, and from opener's rebid onwards, so that's it.

EBU General Licenses

We're illegal on several counts at this level:

- The two-way two-level openings.
- 1♠-2♦ as an invitational relay.
- 1♦-1♥ as hearts or a game-force.
- Artificial fit-showing bids.
- Transfers opposite one of a suit.
- Artificial rebids by opener, except after 1♣.
- Non-penalty double of a strong 1NT opening.

Perhaps we should just play natural bidding.

WBF Systems Policy

The system is Blue (strong club/diamond). To avoid the two-way two-minor openings being brown sticker, the strong option must show a king or more above average strength, which requires us to be slightly sounder than we might otherwise be.

Appendix B: Example Auctions

All these hands come from books and system files advocating other systems (although occasionally with minor modifications). The section may at some stage also include deals from actual play.

K Q 9
K 9 5 3
J 4
A K J 9

A 10 3
Q J 8 7 4 2
A Q 10 7
void

Q 9 6 5 2
A K 2
3
A K 10 5

J 8 7 4
Q J 9 8 7
A K 6
2

1♣ 2♣ (red suits)
2♦ 2♥ (a void somewhere)
2♠ 3♠ (4-6-4-0 12+)
3NT (hearts) 4♠ (2, ♥Q, not ♦K)
5♣ (♦Q?) 5♥ (yes, but not ♠Q)
Pass or 6♥: do you feel lucky?

K 10 3
A 8 4
A K 9 8 5 4 2
none

A Q J 4
K 6 2
7 6 3
9 8 7

1♣ 1♥ (spades)
1♠ 2♦ (balanced or 7/4)
2♥ 2♠ (balanced)
3♣ (♣ void) 3♦ (4-3-3-3)
3NT (diamonds) 4♦ (good hand, one)
4NT (♦Q & ♠K) 5♦ (♥K, not ♣A)
5♥ (♠Q?) 5NT (♠Q, not ♥Q)
6♣ (♠J?) 6♥ (♠J, not ♥J)
7♦ Pass

4
K 9 2
A Q
A K Q 8 6 3 2

Q J 8 2
A 8 6 5
10 6 3
9 4

1♣ 1♦ (0-7)
1♥ (20+) 2♦ (5-7 balanced)
3♣ 3♠
3NT Pass
Responder shows his slow values below 3NT.

A K 8
A Q 5
A 4 2
J 10 7 5

10 6 5
K J 8 7 2
8
K Q 9 8

1♣ 1NT (hearts)
2♣ 3♥ (3-5-1-4)
3NT (hearts) 4♣ (minimum)
4♠ (&clubs) 5♥ (two + Q, not ♠K)
6♣ Pass

J 5
A J 2
10 8 4 2
A J 6 4

A K 10 6 5 2
3
A
K Q 8 7 3

1♦
1♠ (11-13 bal)
2♥ (3♥)
3♣ (2-3-x-x)
3♥ (2-3-4-4)
4♠ (two)

1♥
2♣
2NT
3♦
4♣ (clubs)
7♣

1♣ 1♥ (spades)
1♠ 1NT (spades or majors)
2♣ 2♠ (♥&♠, no void, ♥>♠)
2NT 3♥ (4-5-3-1)
4♣ (spades) 4♦ (minimum)
Opener is now in a difficult position: slam is good opposite KJxx/Qxxxx/Axx/x but 5♠ is poor opposite Jxxx/QJxxx/KQJ/x. It is probably percentage to sign off, although 4♥-4NT-Pass, is a possible continuation.

A J 2 7
9 7 K Q 4 2
K 8 6 A Q 9 7 4 3
K Q 9 7 5 A J

1♦ 1♥
1♠ (11-13 bal) 2♣
2♦ (3-2-x-x) 2NT
3♦ (3-2-3-5) 4♥ (diamonds)
5♦ (two) 6♦ (hardly scientific stuff)

K Q 3 A 4
Q J 10 5 A K 6 2
J A K 10 4
Q J 9 6 5 A 7 4

1♦ 1♥
2♦ (4♥, short ♦) 2NT
3♣ (5♣, min) 3♦
3♠ (3-4-1-5) 4♥ (hearts)
4NT (none) 5♣ (♥Q?)
5♥ (yes, not ♣K) 6♥
Pass

A J 10 5 3
J 7 3 A K Q 6 2
A K Q J 2 8
A 3 K 10 8 4 2

1♣ 1NT (hearts)
2♣ 2NT (5+♥&5+♣, no FRG)
3♦ (hearts) 4♣ (maximum, 2-5-1-5)
4♦ (RKCB) 5♣ (2+♥Q+♣K, not ♠K)
5♦ (♣Q?) 5♥ (no)
7♥ Pass

4
Q J 5 3
A K J 9 2
A 10 3

A 3 2
A K 8 6
8 7 5 4 3
8

1♦
2♣ (4♥, 3+♦)
2♠ (max)
3♣ (stiff ♠)
3NT (1-4-5-3)
4♥ (three)
5♦ (not ♣K)
5NT (♥Q, no ♣Q) 7♦

1♥
2♦
2NT
3♦
4♣ (diamonds)
5♣ (skip ♦Q, ♥K)
5♥ (♥Q?)

Note that clubs are still spiralled through even though relayer asked for ♣K and it was denied. This is because relayer couldn't ask for the ♥Q when he asked for ♣K.

J 9 4
9 8 7 6
Q J 3 2
3 2

A K Q 8 7 6 2
A 3 2
A K
A

Pass
1♦ (0-7)
1♠ (0-4)
2♦ (balanced)
3♠
4♠
6♠ (OK)

1♣
1♥ (20+)
2♣ (FG)
2♠
4♥ (heart losers)
5♦ (upgrade ♦ cards)
Pass

J 7 3 2
9 6 5
J 6 3
Q J 4

A K Q
A 8
A K Q 2
A K 7 2

Pass
1♦ (0-7)
2♦ (5-7 bal)
3♦ (4♥ or 4♠)
4NT (oh no)
Pass

1♣
1♥ (20+)
2NT (balanced)
4♣ (clubs)
6NT

These last two hands are from the file of a system which features a 0-7 1♣ opening with a game-forcing 1♦ response. It's difficult to match their performance.

A K 8 7 5 4
9 8 6 3 2
none
K Q

10 9 6 3
A.
9 8 6 4
A J 7 2

1♠
2♥ (waiting)
4♦ (void)
4♠ (more?)
5♦ (cue)
6♣ (cue)
7♠

2♦ (invitational)
2♠ (good raise to 2♠)
4♥ (cue)
5♣ (cue)
5♥ (cue)
6♥ (cue)
Pass

West has 1st, 2nd and 3rd round heart control; East can't really think he has ♣A and ♥AKQ.

J 8
K 7
A Q 3
A K 10 7 3 2

A 10 6
A J
J 10 9 7 6 2
Q 8

1♣
3♣

2NT (diamonds, short ♥)
3♦ (3-2-6-2)

K J 10 6 4 2
A K
9 7 3 2
10

A Q 5 3
9 4
A K
Q J 7 4 3

1♠
3♥ (6-x-4-x, 12+)
4♣ (6-2-4-1)
5♣ (2, not ♠Q)

2♣ (game-forcing)
3♠ (residue?)
4♥ (spades)
6♠ (at least 50%)

or
1♠
2♥

2♣ (game-forcing)
2♠

2NT (single suited)
3♠ (short clubs)

3♣ (shortage?)
4♣ (RKCB)

etc.
If we switch the majors, the auction is:
1♥
3♥ (min, short ♣)
4♣ (no side suit)
4♥ (no)
etc.

2♠ (4♥, 10+)
3♠ (relay)
4♦ (void?)
4NT (RKCB)

none
Q J 7
A J 6
A K Q J 6 5 2

4 2
A K 6 3
Q 8 3
10 9 8 3

1♣
South intervenes with a 4♠ overcall
Pass (extras/pen)
5♣ (good hand)
6♣ (not that good)

1♠
Dbl ("takeout")
5♥ (cue bid)
Pass

7 6	A K Q 8 4 3	K 9	A 6 3
A 9 6 5 3	K 7	K Q J 5	A 10 8 4
A K 5 2	Q J 9 4	A 8 6 5	4
A 10	6	K 8 3	A Q J 9 2
1♥	1♠	1NT	2♣ (clubs or hearts)
2♦ (5/5 or 15+)	3♣ (FSFG)	2♦ (good ♥ hand)	2♠ (clubs)
3♠ (2-5-4-2 shape)	4♥ (cue bid)	2NT (fit, F4NT)	3♥ (natural)
5♦ (cue-bid)		4♦ (cue bid)	4♠ (cue)
		5♣ (cue)	5♦ (cue)
K 4	A Q J 6 3	5♠ (cue)	5NT (GSF)
A J 8 4	7	7♥	Pass
K 7 6 2	A Q 9 5 4		
Q 9 5	A 3	6 5	A K 7
		K Q 10 8 6	A 7 3 2
1NT	2♦ (diamonds or spades)	A K 5 4	Q J
2♠ (poor ♠ hand)	3♦ (spades and diamonds)	K 5	A Q 10 6
3♥ (4♦ & 4♥)	4♣ (cue)		
7♦	Pass	1♥	2♠
		3♦ (15+ 'bal')	3♥ (relay)
5	A 10 4	3♠ (some 5422)	3NT (relay)
8 3	A 10 7	4♦ (2-5-4-2)	4NT (RKCB)
A 9 8 6 3	K Q 2	5NT (2+♥Q+♦K)	6♣ (♣K?)
A K Q 7 2	J 10 8 5	6♥ (yes)	7NT
2NT	3♥ (values/cue/suit)	5	A 10 4
4♣ (no ♠ values)	4♠ (cue)	Q 10 6	A K 8 5
5♣ (encouraging)	6♣	A 7 5 4	3
		A K 9 8 4	Q 10 7 6 3
10 3	A 7		
A K	9 8 4	1♦	1♥
K 10 8 7 6 4 3	A J 5 2	1NT (minors)	2♠
Q 4	A K 8 7	2NT (short ♠)	3♣
		3D (1-3-4-5 max)	3♥ (clubs)
2♦ (six)	2NT (relay)	3NT (three)	4♦ (♦K?)
3♦ (no shortage)	4♣ (cue)	4♥ (no)	4NT (♥Q?)
4♥ (cue)	4♠ (cue)	5♦ (yes)	7♣
4NT (minimum)	5♣ (cue)	Pass	
5♥ (cue)	...		
A K 7 6 4	Q J 3		
10 8 3	A 6 2		
K 9 6	A Q 8 7 5 2		
A 5	3		
1NT	2♦ (diamonds or spades)		
2♥ (good ♠ hand)	2NT (diamonds, INV+)		
3♣ (fit, F3NT)	3♦ (waiting)		
3♠ (natural)	4♥ (cue)		
5♣ (cue)	...		

Appendix D: Carding

Opening Leads: Suit Contracts

Ace	Requests an attitude signal; from A or AK.
King	Requests a count signal; from AK or KQ.
Queen	Requests an attitude signal; from KQ or QJ.
Jack	Denies the queen. Consistent with KJ10 and J10.
Ten	Strong, but denies the jack, i.e. K109 or Q109.
Nine	One higher honour; i.e. 109, K98, Q98 or J98.
pips	Third and low, i.e. third best from even length, lowest from odd length.

Opening Leads: No-Trump Contracts

Ace	Requests an attitude signal.
King	Requests an unblock, failing which a count signal.
Queen	Requests an attitude signal; from KQ or QJ holdings too weak for a king lead.
Jack	Denies the queen. Consistent with KJ10 and J10.
Ten	Strong, but denies the jack, i.e. K109 or Q109.
Nine	One higher honour; i.e. 109, K98, Q98 or J98.
pips	Attitude. When making a passive lead, we lead the highest pip we can afford. When making an active lead, we lead a low card: the lowest card from a six card suit or a suit containing two honours, the second lowest from a weaker suit (in general).

Opening Leads: Partner's Suit

We lead top of honour sequences. Against no-trumps, we lead third from length. If we have supported, but hold minimum length without an honour, we lead the top pip. If we would raise with H-x or with x-x-x, then the top card is led from x-x-x (example: two-level overcall or 2m opening bid).

Later Leads

We play top of honour sequences, although the king may ask for a count signal. Spot leads vary:

A suit partner has already led: Give count.

A new suit or a suit that we have already led: Attitude, i.e. a low card suggests partner returns the suit, a high card suggests he return a different suit.

An obviously passive exit: Count or suit preference.

Leading a suit for partner to ruff: Suit preference.

Signals at Trick One

We give attitude unless:

Partner led a king, asking for count

Partner made a passive lead (treat as a lead by declarer)

At no-trumps: partner leads an active pip, dummy plays the jack or lower, and we do not cover: our small card gives count.

At a suit contract: partner leads an Ace and dummy has a singleton (suit preference).

Or our holding in the suit is obviously irrelevant.

Later Signals on Partner's Leads

Our basic priority order is: attitude, count, suit preference. We give count when we are defending passively and in cash-out positions. We give suit preference when the position of the suit is known.

Signals on Declarer's Leads

These are count except in the trump suit, and when following on later rounds when our count is already known, in which case they are suit preference. See Smith Peters for the other exception.

Discards

The first discard is attitude towards the suit discarded. Subsequent discards are count if anything. If pitching from a known long suit, give suit preference.

Smith Peters

Against no-trumps, if the opening leader made an active lead, and the position in the suit is not known, then on the first suit played by declarer, high/low from either hand shows a better holding than they might have. Exception: if declarer leads the long suit of a dummy which is very short of entries, we play count from the hand without an honour.

Signalling Mechanics

In giving a signal we usually aim to play the clearest card (i.e. the lowest or the highest we can afford in two-way situations). When we have a choice of cards with which to complete a signal, we treat the relative rank of the second and third cards played in the suit as a second signal (often suit preference). The relative rank of the first and third cards is irrelevant, as it will usually be determined by the desire to make the initial signal as clear as possible.

Attitude: Low is encouraging, high is discouraging. Note that attitude signals are suggestions as to how partner should continue the defence, and are not simply determined by the signaller's holding in the suit being led.

Count: High from an even number, low from an odd number. From four cards we play the second highest unless this would affect our trick-taking capacity.

Suit Preference: A high card shows preference for the higher-ranking of the relevant suits, a low card shows preference for the lower-ranking. A middle card is neutral or asks for a trump lead or for a continuation of the suit being led or for the middle-ranking suit. In positions where it is essential to play an honour (e.g. when leading through an honour for partner to ruff), the jack and nine are considered high, the queen and ten are considered low.