

Fixing the Forcing Notrump (and other useful things) by Perry Khakhar

1NT Forcing: 1NT forcing is the garbage bucket of all bids. It is such a stupid, non-descriptive and obtuse treatment that no one would play it, if it were not absolutely necessary for constructive bidding! We feel that we gain a lot more by being able to signal a Game Force with a 2/1 bid and for that reason alone, it is worth it! But there must be ways to fix the Forcing NT and the subsequent bids. Please note that what follows are tools for the Bridge Player's utilization, not lessons in Bridge philosophy.

Let's start by breaking down the type of hands that would utilize this convention. Firstly, it is only used after a 1 of a Major opening. So, the first limitation is that the Opener has a 5+ card suit in the Major bid, and his hand is usually 11 - 21 points. As for the 20 - 21 area of the range, many of these hands will be put in to either 2NT (balanced hands) or upgraded to 2♣ (unbalanced hands). Essentially, that leaves an exceptional 11 to a normal 19 as the range described by 1 of a Major opener.

These Opener's hands can be broken down into 3 categories, definable by points and Losing Trick criteria, as follows:

1. **Minimum Hands:** 11 - 15 points, ≥ 7 LTC. It is a hand that has roughly 1/3 of the total values in the deck. The bid is made in the hope that if Partner also has a similar size hand, we may make a Game and earn Game bonus.
2. **Intermediate Hands:** 15 - 17 points, 5 or 6 LTC. It is a hand that has enough values that if Partner holds his normal $\frac{1}{4}$ share of the values in the deck, a Game is very likely. All of these hands have either a 6+ card Major or a side 5 card suit. They are described by jumping to the 3 level. The hands in the Intermediate point range without 5/5 or better shape usually cannot meet the LTC requirement and therefore are bid in the same manner as the minimum hands until the Responder declares possession of Invitational values. Then the appropriate Game can be bid.

Example: You hold AKxxx Kx AJxxx x; 15 points and 5 LTC. You would bid as follows (we are going to devise different methods for the Strong hands).

1♠ 1NT
3♦

3. **Strong Hands:** 18 - 21 points, 4 or 5 LTC. It is the hand that can make a game opposite a Partner that barely eked out a response.

Now that we have defined the Opener's hand, let's examine what a Forcing NT Responder's hand looks like. Its characteristics are:

1. Apparent misfit for the Major (except for the possible 3 card Limit Raise).
2. Enough to respond but less than 2/1 values. Usually can't make Game if partner has a Minimum opener. Slam is highly unlikely but not totally out of the realm of possibilities.

So, 6 - 11 points and most likely a misfit! There are 2 types of hands that need special handling:

1. Constructive hands with 9 - 11 points that could possibly make Game opposite an Intermediate range Opener (and very few exceptional Minimums). This includes the one fitting hand (3 cards LR).
2. The hand that is best played in a partial in the Responder's suit. A suit that he hasn't had a chance to show as yet, because 2/1 would show a better hand.

Following is an attempt to better handle these various combinations. The **Summary** of the 3 techniques used in these methods is at the **end of this article**. You should probably look at those techniques before continuing farther.

Major suit Openers 1♠ and 1♥ have traditionally been dumped in to the same bucket by the system designers. But in fact, they each have significant characteristic differences. It is crucial to address each one separately. It is also highly desirable to handle them in somewhat similar manners for the sake of memory! The following tries to cater to all of those limitations.

1♠ Openers: After the Forcing NT, if the Opener has a very descriptive hand he will show it as quickly as possible.

1. An Intermediate Opener with a 5 card side suit will jump to 3 of the side suit, as shown in the Example hand shown above.
2. An Intermediate hand with 6+ ♠ will jump to 3♠. (AQJxxx xx KQx Ax). 16 points, 5 LTC.
3. A Strong 5332 shaped hand will bid 3NT, directly. Responder may bid 2-under Transfers over 3NT when appropriate. The in-between step will be the super-accept and Key Card asking, except that 4NT will always be to play even if it is an in-between step.

Example: AKJxx KQx AX Qxx.

1♠	1NT
3NT	?

4♣ is transfer to 4♥. 4♦ is a transfer to 4♠. 4♥ is a transfer to 5♣. 4♠ is transfer to 5♦. Transfers to the minors are somewhat constructive.

If the Responder holds x Jxxx xx AKJxxx and tries to transfer to ♣, he is happy when partner super accepts by bidding 4♠. As you can see, 6♣ is a lay down.

x xxxx Jx KJxxxx would simply bid 5♣.

xx J10xxx x KJxxx would bid 4♦ transferring to ♠.

4. **Special Treatment:** A Strong hand with 4+ card ♦ suit will now raise 1NT to 2NT. (More on the rest of the Strong ♦ side-suit sequences later).

Example: KQJxx Ax AJxx Ax

1♠ 1NT
 2NT* ? More to follow (Page 5 if you can't wait).

5. A hand that would have opened 4♠, if it weren't for that pesky side card can now bid 4♠.

Example: KQJxxxx Ax xxx x

6. All of the Minimum and Intermediate hands that do contain 4+ cards in a Red suit will bid 2 of that suit.

Example: KQ10xx Axxx x Kxx

1♠ 1NT
 2♥ ?

7. **Special Treatment:** All other hands will relay to 2♦ by bidding 2♣.

Example: KQ10xx Kxx xx Axx

1♠ 1NT
 2♣*(Relay) 2♦*(Relay Accepted)

If the Responder accepts the relay, the Opener will bid 2 of the appropriate Major as described below, unless he has something quite special to show.

The relay breaks by the Responder are at least as important as the relay accepts are. Relay breaks are done with the following type of hands (note that they are mostly non-invitational hands):

1. Non-invitational hand that has a 6+ card minor suit. xx Kxx xx KJxxxx

1♠ 1NT
 2♣*(Relay) 3♣*(Relay not Accepted)

2. Non-invitational hand with 6+ card ♥ suit. x KQ10xxx Jx xxx

1♠ 1NT
 2♣*(Relay) 2♥*(Relay not Accepted)

3. 3 cards Constructive Raise (9 - 11). Qxx Ax Kxxxx xxx

1♠ 1NT
 2♣*(Relay) 2♠*(Relay not Accepted)

4. Non-invitational hand with 5 - 5 in the minors (bid 2NT). x xx K109xx QJ10xx

1♠ 1NT
 2♣*(Relay) 2NT*(Relay not Accepted)

Minimum (and Intermediate) 1♠ Openers: Intermediate range (15 - 17) hands of 5332, 5431, 5422 shape are treated exactly the same as the minimum range (11 - 14) hands, and will rely on the Responder to show the extras (when he has them) first before searching for a Game.

Summary:

Opener			Responder			Notes	Description
1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid	1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid		
1♠			1NT				
	2♣					Non relay sequence	Minimum hand, 6+ ♣, no side suit. (AKJxxx Ax xxx xx)
	2♦					Non relay sequences	4+ card side suit (KQxxx AQx AJxx x) or (AJxxx AQxx xx xx). As usual, 2♣ by the Responder is preference, 3♣ is 3 card LR.
	2♥						
			2NT			Alert!	Agrees the second suit in theory, and is a Game Try. Intermediate openers should shape out if possible. (xx KJxxx Qx Axxx) *Often, there may not be a ♦ fit.
Relay							
	2♣					Relay Request	Relay to 2♦ (AJxxx Axx Kxx xx). (Unless there is a special case for a Relay Break).
			3♣/♦			relay break (weak)	Non-invitational misfit hand with 6+ cards. (x Kxx KJxxxx xxx)
			2NT			relay break (weak)	Non-invitational misfit hand with 5 - 5 in the minors. (x xx Q109xx KJ10xx)
			2♠			relay break NB: Inv.	3 card <u>Constructive</u> Raise (9 - 11). Kokish Two-way Game Tries available over this. (Q10x Kx AJxxx xxx)
			2♥			relay break (weak)	Non-invitational misfit hand with 6+ ♥. (x KJxxxx Qxx xxx).
After Relay Accept							
			2♦			relay accept	Relay accepted. Denies any of the relay break type of hands above.
	2♥		2♠			After relay accept (like BART)	Minimum Opener with only 3 card ♥ suit. (AJxxx Qxx Ax Kxx). Over this 2♥ bid, the Responder's 3♥ is General Game Try, agreeing ♥. Example: With (x AKxxx QJxxx xx) Responder might bid: (1♠ - 1NT - 2♣* - 2♦* - 2♥* - 3♥*)
			P				
	2♠		P			After relay accept	Minimum Opener without 3 ♥. (AJxxx Kx Axx Qxx)
			3♣			after 2♥/♠ by Opener	Invitational hand with a 5+ ♣ or 6+ ♦ or 6+ ♥ suit (only 5+ over 2♥). For example, after 2♠ by the Opener (x xxxx AJx AJxxx) or (x KQJxxx Axxx xx).
			3♦				
			3♥				
			2NT			after 2♥/♠ by Opener	Invitational hand. E.g. after 2♥ by the Opener showing 3 ♥ (x KJxx Kxxx QJ10xx)

♠♥♦♣ **Strong 1♠ Openers:** 14 possible hand types (including 2 Strong hands w/ 6 card ♠ suit)

5341 2NT then 3♥ over the 3♣ query. (2NT directly over 1NT always shows ♦ side suit).

AKJxx Axx AQxx x	1♠	1NT
	2NT*(♦ suit)	3♣*(Query)
	3♥*(♥ fragment)	

5143 2NT then 3♠ over the 3♣ query. (2NT directly over 1NT always shows ♦ side suit).

KQJxx x AJxx AKx	1♠	1NT
	2NT*(♦ suit)	3♣*(Query)
	3♠*(♠ fragment)	

5242 2NT then 3NT over the 3♣ query. (2NT directly over 1NT always shows ♦ side suit).

KQJxx Ax AJxx Ax	1♠	1NT
	2NT*(♦ suit)	3♣*(Query)
	3NT*	

5♠/5♦ 2NT then 3♦ over the 3♣ query. (2NT directly over 1NT always shows ♦ side suit). After which, 3♠ agrees ♠; everything else is a cue for ♦.

AQxxx Ax AKJxx x	1♠	1NT
	2NT*(♦ suit)	3♣*(Query)
	3♦*(5 card ♦ suit)	

6??? Relay then 3♠. Start Cue-bidding please! Relay then 3NT is also 6♠, okay to play 3NT.

AKQ10xx Axx AQx x	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	3♠	

AK10xxx Ax QJx Ax	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	3NT	

5314 Relay then 3♥ (the fragment). 2♣ Relay followed by 3 level bid shows a natural 5314.

AKJxx Axx x AQxx	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	3♥*(fragment)	

5134 Relay then 3♦ (the fragment). 2♣ Relay followed by 3 level bid shows a natural 5134.

AKJxx x Axx AQxx	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	3♦*(fragment)	

5224 Relay then 3♣. 3♦ asks for shortness. 3NT=5224. Note the 5/5 sequence (similar) below.

AKJxx Ax Qx A10xx	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	3♣*(♣ suit)	3♦*(Shortness Query)
	3NT(none)	

5♠/5♣ Relay then 3♣. 3♠ agrees ♠; everything else is a mild slam try for ♣.

AKJxx x Ax AQ10xx	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	3♣*(♣ suit)	3♦*(Shortness Query)
	3♥*(5125)	
	3♠*(5215) (3♠ shows the query suit)	

5431 Relay then 2NT followed by 3♦ over 3♣ query. (Relay then 2NT shows ♥ side suit).

AKJxx AQxx Axx x	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	2NT*(♥ suit)	3♣*(Query)
	3♦*(♦ fragment)	

5413 Relay then 2NT followed by 3♠ over 3♣ query. (Relay then 2NT shows ♥ side suit).

KQJxx AJxx x AKx	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	2NT*(♥ suit)	3♣*(Query)
	3♠*(♣ fragment)	

5422 Relay then 2NT followed by 3NT over 3♣ query. (Relay then 2NT shows ♥ side suit).

KQJxx KJxx AJ Kx	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	2NT*(♥ suit)	3♣*(Query)
	3NT*	

5♠/5♥ Relay then 2NT followed by 3♥ over 3♣ query. (Relay then 2NT shows ♥ side suit).

3♠ agrees ♠; everything else is a mild slam try for ♥.

AKJxx AQ10xx x Ax	1♠	1NT
	2♣*(Relay)	2♦*(Relay Accepted)
	2NT*(♥ suit)	3♣*(Query)
	3♥*	

Strong 1♠ Openers: Strong hands of 4 or 5 LTC not good enough for a 2♣ opening.

Summary:

Opener		Responder			Notes	Description
1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid	1 st bid	2 nd bid		
1♠			1NT			
Over 1NT				SJS. GF.		
	2NT			Directly over 1NT.		Strong hand with ♦ side suit. (KQJxx Ax AJxx Ax)
			3♣	Query		3♣ is Query. 3♥ shows ♥ fragment. 3♦ shows 5 ♦, 3♠ shows the ♣ fragment, 3NT shows 5242. <u>Example:</u> (xx Kxxxx Qxx Qxx). 3♣ Query since it would be nice to find a ♥ fragment! (Here the Opener bids 3NT). 3NT instead of 3♣ query will show 3 cards LR for ♠. 3♠ is a hand with decent ♠ tolerance and no clear direction (Jx Qxxx Kx Jxxxx). 3♥ by the Responder agrees ♦ and is a mild slam try. (Ax xx Kxxxx Kxx) would bid: 1♠ - 1NT - 2NT* - 3♥* for a slam try in ♦. 3♦ shows a ♣ stopper for 3NT (xx Jxxx Qxx K10xx).
			3♦/♥/♠/NT	Non-Query bids		
Over 1NT						
	2♣		2♦	relay accept		Relay Accepted.
After Relay Accept				SJS. GF.		
	2NT			after 1♠-1NT-2♣*-2♦*		Strong hand with ♥ side suit. (AQJxx AKxxx Ax x).
			3♣	Query		3♣ is Query. 3♥ shows 5 ♥. 3♦ shows ♦ fragment, 3♠ shows the ♣ fragment, 3NT shows 5422. <u>Example:</u> (xx Qxx xxxxx Axx). 3♣ Query in case like in the example, Opener has 5 ♥.
			3♦/♠	Non-Query bids		3♠ is a hand with decent ♠ tolerance and no clear direction. <u>Example:</u> (10x Jx Kxxxx Q9xx). 3♦ agrees ♥ and is mildly slammish. (Kx QJ10x xxx Axxx)
After Relay Accept				SJS. GF.		
	3♣			after 1♠-1NT-2♣*-2♦*		Either 5+ ♠ / 5 ♣, or 5224 SJS (KQJxx Kx Ax AJxx).
			3♦			3Nt by the Responder to play. Or:
			3♥			3♦ asks for shortness. 3♥=5215, 3♠=5125, 3NT=5224
			3♠			3♥ shows a ♥ stopper and ♣ fit. (xx A10x Jxx Qxxxx)
						3♠ is a hand with decent ♠ tolerance and no clear direction. <u>Example:</u> (Ax Jxx K109xx xxx)
	3♦			after 1♠-1NT-2♣*-2♦*		5134 SJS (KQJxx x AJx AKxx). 3♠ agrees ♠. 3Nt to play. 4 th suit (♥) is a mild slam try for ♣. <u>Example:</u> (Ax xxxx Kx Q109xx). Bidding: 1♠ - 1NT - 2♣* - 2♦* - 3♦ - ? Try 3♥* as a slam try for ♣.
	3♥			after 1♠-1NT-2♣*-2♦*		5314 SJS. 3♠ agrees ♠. 3Nt to play. 4♣ is a mild slam try for ♣.
After Relay Accept						
	3♠			GF.		6+ ♠. GF values. Start cue bidding please! (AKQ109x x KQx Axx)
	3NT			GF.		6+ ♠. GF values. But okay to play 3NT (6322). <u>Example:</u> (AKJxxx KJx Kx Ax)

1♥ Opener: There are two possible 1 level bids after the 1♥ Opener versus only one after the 1♠ Opener.

Opener			Responder				
1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid	1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid	Notes	Description
1♥			1♠				4+ ♠. Unlimited (unless you play SJS).
	1NT					Non-Forcing	Minimum hand. May be passed.
1♥			1NT			Forcing	<4 ♠. Responding Values (< 2/1 GF).

Some people like to reverse the meaning of the above sequences (Kaplan Interchange: 1♠ denies 4 ♠ and is forcing. 1NT shows 4+ ♠ and is unlimited.). There is merit to that style. However, we will stick to the standard methodology here.

The Forcing NT sequences:

After the Forcing NT reply, if the Opener has a very descriptive hand he will show it immediately.

1. An Intermediate Opener with a 5 card side suit will jump to 3 of the side suit.
Example: Kx AKxxx AJxxx x
2. An Intermediate hand with 6+ ♥ will jump to 3 ♥.
Example: xx AQJxxx KQx Ax
3. A Strong 5332 shaped hand will bid 3NT, directly. Responder may bid 2-under Transfers over 3NT when appropriate. The in-between step will be the super-accept and Key Card asking, except that 4NT will always be to play even if it is an in-between step.
Example: KQx AKJxx AX Qxx.

1♥ 1NT
3NT ?

4♣ is transfer to 4♥. 4♦ is a transfer to 4♠. 4♥ is a transfer to 5♣. 4♠ is transfer to 5♦. Transfers to the minors are somewhat constructive.

4. A reversible hand (Intermediate or Strong) may bid 2♠. Lebensohl applies.
Example: AJ10x KQxxx x AKx
5. **Special Treatment:** A Strong hand with 4+ card ♦ suit will raise 1NT to 2NT. More later. (Page 10).
6. A hand that would have opened 4♥, if it weren't for that pesky side card can now bid 4♥.
Example: xxx KQJxxxx Ax x.
7. Any Minimum or Intermediate 1♥ Opener containing 4 cards ♦ suit will bid 2♦ over the forcing NT.
8. **Special Treatment:** All other hands will make a relay request to 2♦ by bidding 2♣. Responder may either accept the relay or describe the Responding

hand instead. If the Responder accepts the relay, the Opener will bid 2♥, unless he has something quite special to show.

Minimum (and Intermediate) 1♥ Openers (1NT response): Intermediate range (15 - 17) hands of 5332, 5431, 5422 shape are treated exactly the same as the minimum range (11 - 14) hands, and will rely on the Responder to show the extras (when he has them) first before searching for a Game.

Summary (Non Relays):

Opener			Responder			Notes	Description
1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid	1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid		
1♥			1NT				
After 1♥-1NT							
	2♦					Non relay sequence	4+ card side suit. (Ax KQxxx AJxx Qx) 2♥ by Responder is preference. 3♥ is 3 card LR.
			2NT				Responder shows 9 - 11 points, without a fit. (Q109 xx Kxx AJ9xx)
			2♠*			Alert!	*Agrees ♦ and is a general Game Try. (Kx xx Kxxxx Kxx)
			Special Treatment				
	2♥					Non relay sequence	Minimum hand, 6+ ♥, no side suit. (Ax AKJxxx xxx xx)

Minimum (and Intermediate) 1♥ Openers (1NT response):

Summary (Relays):

1♥			1NT				
Relay							
	2♣					Relay Request	(Axx AJxxx Kxx Jx) Relay to 2♦, unless there is a special case for Relay Break.
			3♣/♦			relay break (weak)	Non-inv. hand with 6+ cards. (Kxx x KJxxxx xxx)
			2NT			relay break (weak)	Non-inv. 5-5 in the minors.(xx x Q109xx KJ10xx)
			2♠*			relay break NB: Inv.	*Invitational hand (9 - 11 points) with 5+ ♣. (K10x xx Jxx AQ10xx)
			Special Treatment				
			2♥			relay break NB: Inv.	3 card Constructive Raise (8 - 11). Kokish GT available over this. (Kxx Qxx AJxx xxx)
After Relay Accept							
			2♦			relay accept	Relay accepted.
	2♥					P After relay accept	Minimum Opener without any redeeming features. (Qxx AJxxx Ax Kxx)
			2♠*			after 2♥ by Opener NB: Inv.	*Invitational hand (9 - 11 points) with 5+ ♦. (Axx xx KQJ10x Jxx)
			Special Treatment				
			2NT			after 2♥ by Opener NB: Inv.	Invitational hand w/o 5 card minor. (KJx xx Axxx QJ10x)

Strong 1♥ Openers (1NT response): Since there are no 4 card ♠ suits left to be dealt with (Opener would have Reversed), We are left with only the Strong 6 cards ♥ suit hands, Strong 5/5 with a minor, and the strong 5431 with 4 cards in a minor. Total 9 hand types.

♠♥♦♣

3514 Relay then 2♠ (the ♠ fragment). 2♣ Relay followed by non-minimum bid shows ♣ side suit.

1534 Relay then 2NT (the ♦ fragment). 2♣ Relay followed by non-minimum bid shows ♣ side suit.

2524 Relay then 3♣. 3♦ asks for shortness. 3NT=2524. Note the 5/5 sequence (similar) below.

5♥/5♣ Relay then 3♣. 3♥ agrees ♥; everything else is a mild slam try for ♣.

?6?? Relay then 3♥. Start Cue-bidding please! Relay then 3NT is also 6♥, okay to play 3NT.

3541 2NT (directly over 1NT forcing) followed by 3♠ over 3♣ query. (2NT shows ♦ side suit).

1543 2NT (directly over 1NT forcing) followed by 3♥ over 3♣ query. (2NT shows ♦ side suit).

5242 2NT (directly over 1NT forcing) followed by 3NT over 3♣ query.

5♥/5♦ 2NT (directly over 1NT forcing) followed by 3♦ over 3♣ query.

Strong 1♥ Openers (1NT response): Strong hands of 4 or 5 LTC not good enough for a 2♣ opening.

Summary:

Opener			Responder			Notes	Description
1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid	1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid		
1♥			1NT				
Over 1NT						SJS. GF.	
	2♣					Directly over 1NT.	Natural Reverse w/ 4♠. Play Lebensohl.
Over 1NT						SJS. GF.	
	2NT					Directly over 1NT.	Strong hand with ♦ side suit. (Ax KQxxx AQJx Ax)
			3♣			Query	3♣ is Query. 3♣ shows ♠ fragment. 3♦ shows 5♦, 3♥ shows the ♣ fragment, 3NT shows 5242.
			3NT			Non-Query bids	3NT instead of 3♣ query will show 3 cards LR for ♥. (Kx Jxx Kxx Kxxxx).
			3♥				3♥ is a hand with decent ♥ tolerance and no clear direction. <u>Example:</u> (Jxxx Jx Kx Qxxxx).
			3♦				3♦ is a Nt probe with ♣ stopper.
			3♠				3♠ by the Responder agrees ♦ and is a mild slam try. (KJx x Kxxxxx Kxx) would bid: 1♥ - 1NT - 2NT* - 3♠* mild slam try in ♦.
Over 1NT							
	2♣		2♦			relay accept	Relay Accepted.
After Relay Accept						SJS. GF.	
	2♠					GF.	Strong hand with ♣ side suit, and ♠ fragment. (KJx AQxxx x AKJx)
	2NT					GF.	Strong hand with ♣ side suit, and ♦ fragment. (x AKJxx Axx KQJx)
	3♣					GF.	5+ ♥ / 5 ♣ or 2524. (Ax KJ10xx Ax AQxx)
			3♦				3♦ asks. 3♥=1525, 3♠=2515, 3NT=2524
			3Nt				3Nt instead of 3♦ query will show Invitational hand w/ ♣ (Kx Qx Kxxx Kxxx)
			3♥				3♥ is a hand with decent ♥ tolerance and no clear direction. (Jxx Qx K109xx Jxx)
			3♠				3♠ is a Nt probe with ½ ♠ stopper. (Jxx xx Kxxx Kxxx)
	3♥					GF.	6+ ♥. GF values. Start cue bidding please! (KQx AKQ109x xx Ax)
	3NT					GF.	6+ ♥. GF values. But okay to play 3NT (6322). <u>Example:</u> (KJx AKJxxx Ax Kx)

The 1♥ - 1♠ sequences:

After the 1♠ response, if the Opener has a very descriptive hand he will show it immediately.

1. An Intermediate Opener with a 5 card side suit will jump to 3 of the side suit.
Example: Kx AKxxx AJxxx x
2. An Intermediate hand with 6+ ♥ will jump to 3 ♥.
Example: xx AQJxxx KQx Ax
3. A Strong 5332 shaped hand will bid 3NT, directly. Responder may bid 2-under Transfers over 3NT when appropriate. The in-between step will be the super-accept and Key Card asking, except that 4NT will always be to play even if it is an in-between step.
Example: KQx AKJxx AX Qxx.

1 ♥ 1NT
3NT ?

4♣ is transfer to 4♥. 4♦ is a transfer to 4♠. 4♥ is a transfer to 5♣. 4♠ is transfer to 5♦. Transfers to the minors are somewhat constructive.

4. A Strong hand with 4 ♠ or 4+ card ♦ suit will bid 2NT. More later. (Page 14).
5. A hand that would have opened 4♥, if it weren't for that pesky side card can now bid 4♥.
Example: xxx KQJxxxx Ax x.

The 1♠ response is natural but it is still treated as a relay request to 1NT if at all possible. Any suitable Minimum opener or Intermediate hand (may contain a bad 6 card ♥ suit) without a 4 card ♠ fit will bid 1NT.

Any off-shape Minimum or Intermediate 1♥ Opener containing 4 cards ♦ suit will rebid 2♦ over 1♠. Any off-shape Minimum or Intermediate 1♥ Opener with 6 decent ♥ will rebid 2♥.

All other hands will make a relay request to 2♦ by bidding 2♣. If the Responder accepts the relay, the Opener will bid 2♥, unless he has something quite special to show.

Minimum (and Intermediate) 1♥ Openers (1♠ response): Intermediate range (15 - 17) hands without shape will rely on the Responder to search for a Game as usual.

Summary:

Opener			Responder			Notes	Description
1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid	1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid		
1♥			1♠				Relay request to 1NT if minimum without shortness.
After 1♥-1♠			[checkered]				
	1NT					relay accept	All min hands without shortness (may incl. bad 6♥s).
				P			Flat minimum response.
				2♣			Invitational check-back.
				2♦			GF check-back.
				2♥			3 cards LR.
After 1♥-1♠			[checkered]				
	2♠					Directly over 1♠.	Normal Raise (11 - 14 points, 4 card support). For Invitational+ raises see below (Strong 1♥ Openers).
After 1♥-1♠			[checkered]				
	2♦/2♥					relay break	4+ card ♦ side suit or 6 card ♥ suit. Off shape.
				2♥		Over Opener's 2♦	Preference.
				3♣/♦		NB: Inv.	Inv. with 6♣ or 4+♦. (KQ10x x KJ10xx Qxx) or (KQ10x xx x KQJxxx)
				3♥		NB: Inv.	LR for ♥. (Axxxx Qxx Kx xxx) Intermediate Openers should shape out with 3 card ♠ suit. (KQx AKxxx Axxx x)
				2NT		NB: Inv.	9 - 11 points, <= 2♥. (KJxxx xx Jx AJ98) Intermediate Openers should shape out with 3 card ♠ suit. (Qxx AKJxx AQxx x)
				2♠		NB: Inv.	6+ ♠. Constructive (8 - 11). (KJxxxx x Kxx Qxx)
After 1♥-1♠			[checkered]				
	2♣					relay break	Relay to 2♦, unless there is a special case for Relay Break. (rb). Off shape min w/ 4♣, or extra values.
				2♠		relay break (weak)	Min. hand with a 6+ card ♠ suit. To play. (KJ10xxx x QJxx xx)
				3♣/♦		relay break (weak)	Min. hand with a 4+ card ♣ or 6+ card ♦ suit. To play. (Kxxxx x xxx KJxx) (QJxx x Q1098xx Jx)
				2NT		relay break NB: Inv.	9 - 11 points, <= 2♥. Less than 4♣, and less than 5♦. (KJxx xx AJxx Qxx)
				2♥		relay break NB: Inv.	3 card Constructive Raise (8 - 11). Kokish GT available over this. (Kxxxx Qxx Kxxx x)
After Relay Accept			[checkered]				
				2♦		relay accept	Relay accepted.
	2♥					After relay accept	Off shape Min Opeener without any redeeming features. (x AQxxx Kxx Axxx) (Axx AQxxx x Q10xx)
				2♠		after 2♥ by Opener NB: Inv.	Invitational hand (9 - 11 points) with 6+ ♠. (KJxxxx x Jxx AJx)
				3♣/♦		after 2♥ by Opener NB: Inv.	Invitational hand with 4+ ♣ or 6+ ♦. (Axxx x KJx QJxxx) or (Axxx x KJ10xxx Kx)
				2NT		after 2♥ by Opener NB: Inv.	9 - 11 points, <= 2♥. 5 card ♦ suit. (KJxx x AJ10xx Qxx)

Strong 1♥ Openers (1♠ response):

We are left with Strong 6 cards ♥ suit hands, the strong 5/5 with a minor, the strong 5431 with 4 card minors, and the Intermediate+ ♠ raises.

♠♥♦♣

3514 Relay then 2♠ (the ♠ fragment). 2♣ Relay followed by non-minimum bid shows ♣ side suit.

1534 Relay then 2NT (the ♦ fragment). 2♣ Relay followed by non-minimum bid shows ♣ side suit.

2524 Relay then 3♣. 3♦ asks for shortness. 3NT=2524. Note the 5/5 sequence (similar) below.

5♥/5♣ Relay then 3♣. 3♥ agrees ♥; everything else is a mild slam try for ♣.

?6?? Relay then 3♥. Start Cue-bidding please! Relay then 3NT is also 6♥, okay to play 3NT.

The above 5 sequences handled all of the strong, single suited ♥, and the ♥/♣ hands.

The Intermediate+ ♠ raise and ♥/♦ hands are special cases and are both handled by going through the 2NT rebid by the Opener.

♠♥♦♣

45?? 2NT. The responder will bid as if this is a ♠ game try with an Intermediate Opening hand (15 - 17 points, 5 or 6 LTC). Respond in the suit that you would accept the game try up-the-line (like Kokish). 3♠ says that there is no game opposite an intermediate opener. If the Opener has the Strong hand he can raise 3♠ to 4♠. 3NT by the Responder shows a hand that has 3 card ♥ support and is a mild slam try asking for Q-bids.

?54+? 2NT. If the Opener's hand was not a ♠ raise, he will bid 3NT or 4♦ as appropriate, over whatever the Responder bids.

Strong 1♥ Openers (1♠ response):
2♣ opening.

Strong hands of 4 or 5 LTC not good enough for a

Summary:

Opener			Responder			Notes	Description
1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid	1 st bid	2 nd bid	3 rd bid		
1♥			1♠				Relay request to 1NT if minimum without shortness.
Over 1♠						Invitational+	
	2NT					Directly over 1♠.	Either a Strong hand with ♦ side suit or an Intermediate (or better) hand with a ♠ raise.
			3♣/♦/♥			Rule: Assume ♠ raise initially!	Accept Game Try (for ♠) here.
			3♠				No game opposite Inv. hand. (Axxx x Qxx Jxxxx)
			3NT				3 card ♥ LR hand. (KJxx Qxx x KJxxx)
	3NT					After 3 of a suit bid by the Responder	Strong hand with 5♥ and 4♦. <u>Not</u> a ♠ raise! (x AKJxx AKJx Q10x)
	4♦						Extreme hand with 5+♦. (Kx AKxxx AKJ10x x)
Over 1♠							
	2♣		2♦			relay accept	Relay Accepted.
After Relay Accept						SJS. GF.	
	2♠					After 1♥-1♠-2♣*-2♦* (GF).	Strong hand with ♣ side suit, and ♠ fragment. (Kxx AKJxx x AQJx)
	2NT					After 1♥-1♠-2♣*-2♦* (GF).	Strong hand with ♣ side suit, and ♦ fragment. (x AKJxx Kxx AQJx)
	3♣					After 1♥-1♠-2♣*-2♦* (GF).	5+♥ / 5♣ or 2524. (Ax KJ10xx Ax AQxx)
			3♦				3♦ asks for shortness. 3♥=1525, 3♠=2515, 3NT=2524.
			3NT				3NT instead of 3♦ query will show Invitational hand w/ ♣ (Kx Qx Kxxx Kxxx)
			3♥				3♥ is a hand with decent ♥ tolerance and no clear direction. (K109x Qx Jxxx Jxx)
			3♠				3♠ shows an inv. hand with 6+♠. (KJ10xxx x Qxx AJx)
	3♥					After 1♥-1♠-2♣*-2♦* (GF).	6+♥. GF values. Start cue bidding please! (x AKQ109x Axx KQx)
	3NT					After 1♥-1♠-2♣*-2♦* (GF).	6+♥. GF values. But okay to play 3NT (6322). <u>Example:</u> (x AKJxxx AQx KJx)

Final Summary:

We have devoted several pages to try and improve the **1 over 1** sequence of bids over a Major suit Opener (Major Opener followed by a 1♠ or 1NT Response). However, there are only **3 main techniques** utilized in all of the previous sequence of bids. They are:

- 1) The use of **2♣ as a relay** bid asking for a 2♦ bid by the Responder in all of the sequences that are:
 - Minimum or Intermediate range Major suit Openers without a 4 card, non ♣, lower ranking side suit.
 - Strong Major suit Openers without a ♦ side suit (handled as per 2 below).
- 2) We have also made the **2NT** re-bid in these sequences **forcing**. In most cases, it is forcing to game (and shows the ♦ side suit) except over the sequence 1♥ - 1♠, where it is only forcing for one round, and may be an intermediate raise of the responder's ♠ suit.
- 3) Highly descriptive Intermediate hands with a 6+ card main suit or a 5 card side suit will **jump to the 3 level**. This is a limiting bid that is **not forcing** and may be passed or corrected at the minimum level.

The side benefits have been:

- 1) The improvement of all of the **Strong Jump Shift** hands (very early GF and **much more** complete description).
- 2) **3 cards Limit Raises** shown at the 2 level; thus leaving room for a Game try.
- 3) A method for the handling of the offensively oriented, and highly descriptive **Intermediate Two suiters and Single suiters**.
- 4) Finding the secondary fits in the other Major at a low enough level to investigate potential for games or slams or simply just the best partial.
- 5) Finding the secondary fits in Minor suits and signaling slam tries at the 3 level.