

The Vienna Relay System

Summary by Mr. Kerry Kappell

Overview

The Vienna Relay is a hybrid of the Vienna System and the Montreal Relay. It features a forcing but not necessarily strong 1 \heartsuit opening with a 1 \heartsuit waiting response. The 1 \heartsuit opening makes room for a weak 1 No Trump opening and eliminates all short Diamond openings.

Main features

Forcing but not necessarily strong 1 \heartsuit opening; promising 12+ HCP and 2+ Clubs.
1 NT = 12-14 HCP all seats, all vulnerabilities; denies 4 Spades or 5 Hearts.
1 \heartsuit / 1 \spadesuit response to 1 \heartsuit promises a 5 card suit and 6+ HCP.
1 \heartsuit response to 1 \heartsuit is waiting; denying the ability to make any other bid.
Opening 1 \heartsuit / 1 \spadesuit is exactly like any 5 card Major system showing 12-21 HCP.
The strong 2 \heartsuit opening is also unaffected.

1 \heartsuit Opening

2+ Clubs.
Denies a 5 card suit other than Clubs unless strong enough to reverse.
Shows one of 4 hand types:

Minimum balanced with exactly 4 Spades.
Unbalanced with 5+ Clubs (or specifically 4-4-1-4).
Balanced with 15-17 HCP.
Balanced with 18-19 HCP.

Responses to 1 \heartsuit Opening

1 \heartsuit / 1 \spadesuit promises a 5 card suit and 6+ HCP.
1 NT shows 8-9 HCP, no 4 card Major and invitational to 3 NT if opener has 15-17 HCP.
2 \heartsuit through 2 \spadesuit are weak drop dead bids with a 6 card suit & 0-5 HCP.
1 \heartsuit response to 1 \heartsuit is waiting, denying the ability to make any other bid.

Opener's Rebids after 1 \heartsuit -1

1 \heartsuit - shows exactly 4 Hearts. Eliminates the balanced 15-17 HCP hand. Responder must bid again with 6+ HCP. Typical hand patterns are: 4-4-3-2; 4-4-2-3; 4-4-1-4; 3-4-1-5; 1-4-3-5.
1 \spadesuit - shows exactly 4 Spades. Denies 4 Hearts but otherwise the same as a 1 \heartsuit rebid.
1 NT - 15-17 HCP, may have a 4 card Major.
2 \heartsuit - minimum unbalanced with 5+ Clubs, denies a 4 card Major.
2 NT - 18-19 HCP, denies a 4 card Major.

Opener's Rebids after 1 \heartsuit -1 -1 NT

2 \heartsuit is Stayman; system on including 4 suit transfers.

Opener's Rebids after 1 \heartsuit -1 / 1

1 NT rebid shows a balanced 15-19 HCP and is forcing for one round.

Responder's Rebids after 1 \heartsuit -1 / 1 -1 NT

rebid of Major shows 6-7 HCP.
2 \heartsuit is artificial and shows 8-9 HCP.
2 \spadesuit is artificial and shows 10+ HCP (game forcing).

1 \spadesuit Opening

shows a 5 card suit or any 4-4-4-1 hand with 4 Diamonds.
1 NT rebid shows 15-17 with 5+ Diamonds.

1 No Trump Opening

1 NT = 12-14 HCP all seats, all vulnerabilities; denies 4 Spades or 5 Hearts.
May be freely made with semi-balanced hand patterns e.g. 5-4-2-2, 6-3-2-2.

Responses to Weak 1 No Trump

2 ♣ is Stayman for Hearts. Responses are 2 ♣ denying 4 Hearts and 2 ♥ promising 4 Hearts. Responder's rebids as follows:

- 2 ♥ - 5+ Hearts, invitational
- 2 ♠ - 5+ Spades, invitational
- 2 NT - invitational, with or without 4 Hearts
- 3 ♣ - 5+ Clubs, invitational
- 3 ♦ - 5+ Diamonds, invitational
- 3 ♠ over 2 ♣ - 4+ Hearts, invitational

2 ♠ / 2 ♥ / 3 ♣ - to play

2 NT - Minors (weak or strong) or Clubs (strong); opener bids best Minor, responder rebids as follows:

- 3 ♠ over 3 ♣ = Clubs, strong (cheapest rebid)
- 3 ♥ over 3 ♣ = Minors, Spade splinter (Heart fragment)
- 3 ♦ over 3 ♣ = Minors, Heart splinter (Spade fragment)
- 3 ♠ over 3 ♥ = Clubs, strong (cheapest rebid)
- 3 ♥ over 3 ♥ = Minors, Heart splinter (Spade fragment)
- 3 NT over 3 ♣ = Minors, Spade splinter (Heart fragment)

3 ♠ / 3 ♥ - natural, game forcing

Runouts after Weak No Trump is Doubled

If 1 NT is doubled in the direct seat, responder may:

redouble with 8+ HCP.

bid a 5 card suit.

pass (forcing). If 1NT is passed around to opener, opener may bid a 5+ card suit (obviously a Minor) or redouble to start a scramble for a playable fit.

If 1 NT is doubled in the balance seat, opener may:

redouble with maximum hand.

bid a 5+ card suit. If 1 NT doubled is passed around to partner in the balance out seat, responder then may:

redouble with 8+ HCP.

start the scramble (a weak hand with a 5 card suit has already been denied, except possibly in Clubs).

Suggested Defense to 1 ♣ Opening

1 ♠ / 1 ♥ / 2 ♣ = natural.

1 NT = 15-18 HCP and does not guarantee a Club stopper.

X = any opening hand unable to overcall.

2 ♣ = 5-5 in the Majors - replaces the lost Michaels cuebid.