

Intermediate Conventions & More – 3 days of courses

Last revised May 17, 2022

You may attend any of these days, 1, 2, all 3. Email me with your desired registration.

(Topics modified June 2)

Monday June 9, June 16, June 23

12:30 – 3ish; \$20 per session

Topics (* indicates topic has been presented before, EBC notes exist)

Day 1: June 9 (content per day is approximate, may vary)

- Negative Doubles *
- Jacoby 2NT Forcing Raises *
- Fourth suit forcing *

Day 2: June 16

- Michaels, Unusual No-Trump *
- 1430 Ace-Asking *, including Queen Ask
- 2NT over Weak 2-bid
- Splinters
- Support Doubles
- ~~Cue bid as limit+ in competition~~

Day 3: June 23

- Hand Evaluation: to open or pass
- 3rd and 4th seat opening bids & The Drury convention
- Balancing – (Bidding when a pass means opponents get contract)
- Bidding HodpePodge
 - Reverses *
 - responding to overcalls *
 - Any other

Added after course

- New Minor Forcing - full 1.25 hr lesson

Negative Doubles

Consider this hand and auction

You hold S xx H KQxx D QJxx C xxx

Your partner opens 1 Club and you start going for the 1H bid but the robot RHO says “wait your turn” and bids 1 Spade. Without the overcall, you had a simple 1 Heart bid but now you are stuck. 2 Hearts would show 5+ hearts and 10+ HCPs so you cannot bid that. Also consider how often you would wish to make a penalty double at this low level, very rarely. Hence a “negative double” was created to deal with this very common problem. In general, a negative double is a direct, low-level double by responder over an overcall by the opponents, showing length in the unbid suits.

A 1-level negative double says

- I have 6+ points
- If there is one unbid major, I have 4+ cards in it
- If there are two unbid majors, I have 4 cards in both
- If both major suits bid, I am 4-4 or better in the minors
- I am not strong/long enough to make a direct bid at the 2-level in my suit

Partner now bids naturally, as if partner had bid a suit at the 1-level

- (best) – bid the doubler’s major if you have a fit (4 of them) at the appropriate level
 - Holding S xx H Qxxx D AQx C AJxx
 - You open 1C, next player bids 1 Spade, partner doubles, RHO Passes. Bid 2H
 - Holding S Ax H Kxxx D KQx C AQJx, same auction, bid 4H
- Otherwise bid as normal, ie 1NT with a stopper in opp’s suit, rebid a long first suit, etc.

Doubling over ...

- 1C – ^{1D} you should be exactly 4-4 in the majors
- 1C – ^{1H/1S} you must have 4 of other major or (5+ with less than 10 pts.)
 - Note over 1 Minor – ^{1 Heart}, the spade suit is still available at the 1-level. However, this gives you a chance to differentiate between a 4 or 5 card major. So double shows exactly 4 spades and bidding 1 spade shows 5+ spades
- 1H – ^{1S} or 1S – ^{2H} you should have 4+ cards in both the minors

Points indicated by a negative double

- A 1-level negative double shows 6+ pts
- A 2-level “ “ 9+ pts
- In general, the higher you force partner to bid, the more pts you should have

Experienced players play negative doubles typically through 3 Spades or higher. Newer players are probably best playing them through 2 Spades.

Thus 1C – ^{2S} - X is a negative double but ..

1D – ³H – X is a penalty double (as normal)

Negative doubles also provide a solution to a weak hand with a long suit

- You hold S QJ10xxx H x D KJx C xxx
- Partner opens 1 Heart, next player bids 2 Clubs. Double (neg), then bid 2 Spades over partner's rebid of 2H or 2D. How do you know partner is weak? They did not bid 2S immediately over the 2C overcall

Responding to a negative double

- Best advice is to bid as if partner had made the natural suit bid they would have made were it not for the opponent's overcall. So over 1C – ¹s – X Bid as if partner had bid 1H
 - With S xx H AQxx D Kxx C Axxx bid 2H showing a minimum rebid hand
 - With S Ax H KJxx D AQxx C x bid 3H showing 16-18 tot (dummy) pts
 - With S Axx H Qxx D KQx C Qxx bid 1N showing 12-14, 2 or 3 hts, spade stopper
 - With S xx H Qxx D Ax C KQJxxx bid 2C showing 6+ clubs, minimum hand

Jacoby 2NT Forcing Major Raise

(last revised May 3, 2022)

This bid allows responder to quickly show a game-forcing hand with a strong fit for opener's major. It also allows opener to make a very helpful and descriptive rebid so responder knows if slam is in the cards. Jacoby 2NT is a bid of 2NT in response to a major opening by partner. The bid (ie, 1H – 2NT)

- Shows 4+ cards of trump support
- Shows 13+ dummy points
- Is forcing to the major game and allows investigation of slam
- Takes away the natural meaning of 2NT; 11-12 pts and a balanced hand (see below)
- Here is a typical 2NT bid over partner's 1H opening
 - S Ax H KJxx D Axxx C Qxx

Rebids by the opener are as follows; (assume a 1H opening)

- Bid a good 2nd 5-card suit at the 4-level S x H KQJxx D AQJxx C xx Bid 4D. Note this identifies 10 of your cards (5,5) and partner also knows you are usually 2-1 (occasionally 3-0) in the other 2 suits – great shape information
Ideal responder holdings include an honour in partner's 2nd suit and Aces or nothing in the other suits. Here is a great responder's hand after this auction

1S – 2N

4D

- S KJxx H x D KJx C Axxxx. You would make a slam try with only 12 HCPs since you know every card is working beautifully
 - 1) Great D honours working w partner's good 5 card suit Know she has A Ds, probably Q.
 - 2) Ace Clubs opp partner's probable singleton or dub C
 - 3) Singleton ht ensures max 1 ht loserNote you can probably count 5s, 1 or 2 ht ruffs, 5 Ds and 1C = 12 tricks
- Here is a bad responder's hand with same HCPs
 - S KJxx H QJxx D x C KQxx
 - 1) redundant ht & club honours opp partner's shortness
 - 2) short in partner's long D Suit, making it much harder to develop long D winners

- Bid a singleton or void at the 3-level S Axx H AQJxx D x C Kxxx Bid 3D
This also allows responder to see if his high cards are well-placed.
 - If partner shows a singleton (or void)
 - Holding Axxx (or xxx) of a suit opposite partner's singleton is ideal and makes a slam more likely. Holding lower honours, ie KQx, indicates wasted values and discourages a slam
 - The key to hands fitting is how high cards are placed opposite partner's hand. If partner has a singleton and you have Axx, you know
 - 1) The Ace is ideal opposite a singleton
 - 2) and just as important; the rest of your high cards are in other suits, those being suits partner has length in, ie 4315 shape
 - Note that when you have 3 or 4 small in partner's singleton, you have one loser but the deck has now shrunk from 40 HCPs to 30 HCPs (AKQJ of that suit are of no concern, as you will lose one trick and can ruff the rest). Now if you and partner have 29 HCPs, you have 29 of 30 pts (that matter) and a great play for a small slam.
 - With Axx or Axxx opp singleton, you have no loser in this suit and have a 34 point deck (KQJ of suit of no concern). So 29 HCPs of 34 is likely to produce just one loser and again slam is likely.
- If neither of the above
Bid directly to the game with a bare minimum hand. Bid 4 Hearts – Principle of Fast Arrival: "When in a game forcing situation, the quicker game is bid, the less you have"
 - S xx H AJ9xx D KJx C Kxx
- Bid 3NT with more than a bare minimum (14-16 pts)
 - S xx H AKTxx D Axxx C Kx
- Rebid your suit at the 3-level with 17+ pts (Bid 3 Hearts)
 - S Ax H KQT9x D Axxx C Ax

Here is this convention in action. Note the 2NT and rebid by opener must be Alerted

S KQJxx	S ATxx
H AQx	H Kx
D x	D Axxx
C Jxxx	C KQx

1S	2NT ^{*A}
3D ^{*A}	4NT (1430 RKCBBlackwood)
5S	6S (5S shows _____)

Responder has 16+1=17 total pts + opener's "12" = 29 of 34 "point deck", go slamming

Now consider holding the same responder hand and varying opener hands

Responder has 16 HCPs plus 1 dummy pt = 17 total pts

What else is good about responder's hand?

1) 2 Tens

2) lots of controls (Aces, Kings); 4 of 5 honours are controls

Lets call it an 18 pt hand so combined assets are at least 12+18=30 pts.

1S 2NT

??

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
	S ATxx
Not	H Kx
Shown	D Axxx
	C KQT

Op. rebid (shows _____)

Responder then rebids

1. 3C _____

4S

2. 3H _____

4S

3. 4S _____

Pass

4. 3NT _____

4D (slam try, cuebid Ace)

5. 3S/3D _____

4NT

6. 4C _____

4D (slam try, cuebid, hoping partner bids 4 H)

7. 4D _____

4S (you have Ks, not As in prtnr's short suits)

8. 4H _____

4NT

This convention does not apply when...

- Responder has passed originally (unlikely to need this convention)
- There is an overcall or double directly over the opening bid

Also note that the standard meaning of 2NT, that being 11-12 balanced, must now be shown in another way. Bid a new suit, then rebid 2NT.

For example, 1H – 2C
 2D – 2NT

(End of Jacoby 2NT Note – Page 2 of 2)

Fourth Suit Forcing

This topic presented and updated May 16, 2022

Modern bidding has put an emphasis on precise, but often non-forcing bids, to be able to describe the most common hands. Consider the following auctions (opponents are silent)

1C 1H

2C 3H which is non-forcing, showing 6 hts and about 11 pts

1D 1S

2C 3S same as above

1C 1H

1S 3C which is non-forcing, showing 4 or 5 hearts, 5+ clubs and about 11 pts

Consider the following hands where you need to force the bidding

Opener	Responder	Responder
1D	1S	S KQxxx
2C	?	H Qx D Axx C Kxx

? : Responder has pts for game, but 2S/3S not forcing and you only have five, not 6. You would love to know if partner has 3 spades (to make an 8-card fit). The way to find out is to bid 4th suit forcing, hence 2H. Play this bid as forcing to game. If partner has 3 spades, they will bid 2S, and you can jump to 4S. If partner bids 2NT, showing a heart stopper, bid 3NT.

Opener	Responder	Responder
1C	1H	S Axx
1S	?	H KQxxxx D xx C Ax

? : You have a rebiddable heart suit but 2H/3H are not forcing. You cannot jump to 4H as partner may just have a singleton or void. To establish a game forcing auction, bid 2D, fourth suit forcing. Over partner's rebid, now bid 3H, which partner will now take as a 6-card ht suit and a forcing hand. Partner can now raise to 4H with 2 hearts, or do otherwise (3NT with a diamond stopper)

(continued next page)

Opener	Responder	Responder
1D	1S	S QJxx
2C	?	H xxx D Kxx C AKx

?: You would like to play NT with this balanced hand but you do not have a heart stopper (the unbid suit). Bidding 3NT would be guaranteeing a heart stopper. Perhaps partner does have a heart stopper, so you need to make a forcing bid to give him a chance to show this, so bid 2H 4th suit forcing. If partner bids 2NT, raise to 3NT. If partner instead bids anything else, best to raise diamonds, since you cannot afford to play NT lacking a Diamond stopper.

4th Suit as a slam try

Opener	Responder	Responder
1C	1H	S QJxx
1S	2D	H AKxx
2N	3S ¹	D AQx
4C ²	4N = KeyCardBW	C xx
5D	6S	

¹ 3S = why raise with 3 knowing partner has exactly 4 spades, you must have 4 spades. Why then not raise 1S directly, must be slam interest. The Principle of Fast arrival says the quicker you bid a game (here 4S directly over 1S), the less you have, hence by bidding "slowly" you show extra values. Here shows 16+ dummy pts

²4C = club control bid which means I have the Ace C and I am also interested in a slam. With no slam interest, instead bid straight to the game (4S) = again Princ of Fast Arrival.

Opener had	S AKxx	S QJxx
	H Qx	H AKxx
	D Jxx	D AQx
	C AKxx	C xx

For play practice, decide how this slam makes (it does) with a 3-2 trump split

Also:

- 4th suit is not in effect by a passed hand, since they do not have a game-forcing hand

- Because this is an artificial bid, when the bid is made, partner must either say “Alert” or show the Alert card, alerting your opponents to your partner’s non-natural bid.
- Exception auction: 1C 1D 1H 1S = best is natural, so here you jump to 2S to do 4th suit forcing
- 4SF is not used when opener’s rebid is 1NT, then use “New minor forcing” (and this would not be the 4th suit anyway, would be the 3rd “suit”
 - 1D 1S
 - 1N 2C
- To summarize; situations that are handled by 4th Suit forcing have opening + pts and..
 - Allow partner to show 3 card support for a major that could be 4 or 5 length
 - a 6-card suit (usually major) that cannot be rebid (correctly) at any level
 - Need partner to stop the unbid suit to play NT (and from correct side)
 - Show a hand of about 16-18 points with a 4-4 major fit

Two-suited Hands

Being able to show two-suited hands allows your side to find good games, part-scores or sacrifices, and occasionally with less than the normal number of points. The distribution typically required is 5 cards in each of two suits and 8+ HCPs. You should hold **good** suits such as KQJxx as opposed to Qxxxx. Usually partner will have at least 3 cards in one of your 2 suits, hence an 8-card or longer trump suit exists. When partner shows a 2-suited hand, you are expected to bid the suit you have more cards in. We will discuss two types of two-suited conventions.

Michaels Cue Bid

If the opponents open in a minor suit, cue bidding their suit shows 5-5 in the majors. Right-hand opponent opens 1 Diamond and you hold

S KQJxx H QJ9xx D x C xx Bid 2 Diamonds

If the opponents open in a major suit, cue bidding their suit shows 5 cards in the unbid major and 5 cards in one of the two minor suits.

Right-hand opponent opens 1 Heart and you hold

S AQ10xx H x D KQ10xx C xx Bid 2 Hearts

Responding to a Michael’s Cue-Bid

- You usually will bid the preferred suit at the next available level.
 - Over 1D – ^{2D} -- Pass; holding S Qxxx H xx D xxxx C Axx Bid 2 Spades
 - Note even with a very bad hand, you must pick a suit, you cannot pass

- If you have strong trump support for one of partner's suits and a good hand, you might jump the bidding.
 - Holding S Qx H JTxx D Axxx C xxxx Bid 3H, inviting 4H
- Holding S Qxx H Kxx D Ax C Axxx ..., you have a known 9-card spade fit and ..
 - A high honour in hearts that will really enhance partner's heart suit
 - Aces (vs lower honours) opposite partner's short suits are great working cards.
 - Conclusion: With such a good fit, bid directly to game in Spades.
- If partner has bid Michael's over a major, your first priority is to bid the unbid major. However, if you are better off playing in partner's minor, bid 2NT to tell partner to bid his minor suit
 - Over 1H – ^{2H} – Pass; holding S x H Jxxx D K10xxx C QJx Bid 2NT
 - You do not wish to play in Spades, so 2NT tells partner to bid his 5-card minor
- The other bid you should know is when you cannot fit either of partner's suits but do have a **very** good suit of your own. Bid the suit to play, despite partner's advertised holdings
 - Over 1S – ^{2S} – Pass; holding S Qxx H xx D KQJ10xx C xx Bid 3D (to play)
- Other
 - If, after partner bids Michaels, and the next player bids, you are no longer in a demand-bid situation, but may choose to bid with a fit and some values
 - Michael's is ON in balancing position
 - 1S – ^{Pass} – Pass – _{2S} would be Michaels
 - With a big 2-suiter, bid Michaels, get partner's preference then jump to game or explore for a slam
 - Holding S AKQxxx H KQJ10x D A C x
 - Over partner's expected 2H/2S bid, check for Aces and bid accordingly

The Unusual 2 NoTrump

Another common 2-suiter conventional bid is called the Unusual 2 NoTrump. This is a jump overcall of the opponent's opening 1-bid and shows 5-5 in the **lower two** unbid suits.

For example, right-hand opponent opens 1 Heart and you hold

S xx H x D QJ10xx C AJ10xx bid 2NT

Hence over a major opening, it shows minors. Over a minor opening it shows the other minor and hearts. It is similar to a Michael's cuebid in many ways, beyond the actual suits held. One difference is that the two suits held are always clear, whereas Michaels may involve an unspecified minor as the 2nd suit. Partner is therefore expected to pick one of the 2NT bidder's suits. As with

Michaels, bidding the 4th suit (partner has two, opponent has one) shows a very good suit, indicating this suit would make the best trump suit, even if partner only has a singleton.

What would you respond with these hands, over a 1 Diamond opening and partner's 2NT (RHO passes) ?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. S AQxxx H xxx D xx C xxx | Bid _____ |
| 2. S KJxx H xxx D xxx C QJx | Bid _____ |
| 3. S Axx H Kxxx D x C KJxxx | Bid _____ |
| 4. S AQJ10xx H xx D xxx C xx | Bid _____ |
| 5. S KJx H Kx D AQJx C Kxxx | Bid _____ |

1430 Roman Key Card Blackwood

Most open players now use a more informational form of Blackwood, called Roman Key-Card. The King of the agreed trump suit is as critical as an Ace, so "key cards" mean the 4 Aces and the K of the trump suit, hence 5 key cards. Add to this the fact that the asker can always distinguish how many key cards are held if the two possible answers are 3 key cards apart. So 0 or 3, and 1 or 4 key cards can be shown with only 2 bids, leaving two bids available when holding 2 Aces. The most commonly used version is called 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood.

5 Clubs (14) - 1 or 4 key cards (4 Aces and K of assumed trump suit)

5 Diamonds (30) - 0 or 3 key cards

5 Hearts - 2 key cards, but without the Q of trump suit

5 Spades - 2 key cards, but with Q of trump

Consider the following hand

S AJ10xxx	S KQxx
H A	H Qx
D KJxx	D Qx
C Qx	C AKxxx

1S	3C
3D	4S
4NT	5S ->showing _____
6S	Pass

Queen Ask after Blackwood Keycard response

If partner's Keycard response is not 5H or 5S, you will not know about the Q of trump, unless you have it! Over either a 5C or 5D response, you can ask partner if they have the Q of trump by bidding the next available bid, assuming it is not the trump suit at the 5-level. Consider the following auction

1S 2NT
 3D 4NT – 1430 Keycard Blackwood
 5C – means _____
 5D – Do you have the Q of trumps?

Answers

- 5S – No
- 5NT – Yes but no additional Kings
- 6 any non-trump suit – Yes with the King in bid suit

Sample Hand

Opener	Responder	
	♠AJT75	♠K93
	♥AKT	♥Q3
	♦AKT2	♦J8
	♣5	♣KQ7642

Opener	Responder
1 ♠	2 ♣
3 ♦	3 ♠
4NT (1)	5 ♣ (2)
5 ♦ (3)	5 ♠ (4)
Pass	

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

If 4) was 6S, shows _____
 was 6C, shows _____

2NT Convention over a Weak Two Opener by Partner

Review: If partner opens with a weak two-bid (assume major), responses are as follows

- Raise to 3: furthering the pre-empt, sign-off, not invitational
- Raise to 4: to make or furthering the pre-empt
- New suit: Forcing, looking for support or having a strong hand. Opener should raise partner with 3+, rebid their suit with a minimum, bid a control with maximum but no fit
- What then does one do with an invitational hand? The answer is to bid a conventional 2NT. You will typically have about 14-16 dummy points. Partner is expected to
 - Rebid their suit with a minimum
 - Bid an outside control (Ace or King) with a maximum
 - Bid 3NT with a solid suit (AKQxxx)

Sample Hand

S AQ10xxx	S Kxx
H xx	H KQx
D xxxx	D xx
C Kx	C AQxxx

2S	2NT	_____
3C	_____	
	4S	_____

Splinter Bids

LAST REVISED; May 2,2022

A splinter bid is a forcing raise of partner's major opening. It is usually bid by making a double-jump in a new suit. For example; 1S – 4D. This bid is forcing to game and invites slam investigation.

It shows

- 13-16 dummy points
- At least 4 trump
- A singleton or a void in the bid suit

You hold S AJxx H Kxx D x C KQxxx

Partner opens 1 Spade, next player passes. You bid 4D, which your partner alerts.

What holdings in opener's hand make for slam interest based on partner's splinter?

Consider the above hand, and opener having the following diamond holding

1. Holding Axx, you know you can win the Ace and ruff the other 2 diamonds = slam interest
2. Holding xxx, you know you can lose one diamond, but then ruff all the rest = slam interest. In both of the above, you also know all of your high cards in other suits mesh well with partners and hence are all working.

You can also think of the 2nd example as bidding with a 30-point deck. If you and partner have nothing in a suit, but can ruff all but the Ace (ergo the need for 4 trumps), you have eliminated 10 HCPs with only one loser. $40-10=30$ hence if you and your partner have 29 of those 30 HCPs, you are likely to make a small slam. This is why a splinter allows bidding of slams with less than 33 HCPs.

3. Holding KQx, your 2nd and 3rd round control is redundant with partner's singleton, meaning partner is counting 3 for singleton and you are counting 5 for KQ so 8 pts are allotted for a duplicated task. Those KQ honours would be much better in other suits = no slam interest

Consider the following hand

S AQxxx	S KTxx	1S	4D
H Ax	H Kxx	4N	5H*
D xxx	D x	6S	
C KQx	C AJxxx		

* 2 KeyCards no Q Trumps

A cold 26 HCP slam!!

A splinter can also be made by the opening bidder.

Consider holding S AQJx H Axxx D KQJx C x

You open a Diamond, partner bids 1 Spade, you splinter 4C. This would require a maximum rebid hand (19-21 dummy pts). And if you play this splinter, when you instead rebid 4S, partner knows you have no singleton or void.

Almost as important is staying out of a bad slam. If you have non-Ace honours in the splinter suit, ie QJx, this is a downgrade of your sides assets.

Most don't splinter with a singleton A or K.

A self-splinter is when you splinter, having started the trump suit.

Splinters can be made in other situations, specifically when a player makes an unnecessary, illogical jump that should not be natural.

1C – 1S

3H Does it make sense to jump to 3H to show a big 2-suiter hand? No, because 2H says that as it is a reverse and is already forcing for one round. Hence the unnecessary jump becomes a splinter.

1C – 1H

1S – 3D 2D would be forcing to game (4th suit forcing), so 3D is not needed with a good hand, hence it becomes a splinter.

1N – 2D

2H – 4D 3D would be natural and game forcing, so 4D not needed to show such a hand, hence is a splinter. Responder has 6 hearts (cannot do this with 5 as partner may have only 2) and a singleton diamond, and slam interest (otherwise rebid would be 4H).

Notes

Slam Bidding - Lesson - MayJune2021 Hand 13(2) 7 Spades ; maybe find a close small slam instead

BBO Slam Bidding Part 2 Pbn

Jacoby 2N -- Hand 1; Small slam using stiff opp xxx

Jacoby 2N -- Hand 5; Nice Axx opp stiff for a grand

Slam Hands - Misc {15}

Hand 7 – self splinter slam

Hand 13- splinter slam

Oct 4 17 SP

Used Hand 2: Opener splinter, denied by KJx opp stiff

Used Hand 3: 1c – 1s 4s = denies stiff, stay out of slam with flat 11

X – Hand 5: splinter as 4th bid

Support Doubles & Redoubles

Etobicoke BC

Last revised: May 11.21

One of the most significant uncertainties in bidding is whether partner has 4 or 5+ cards in a major when making his first response.

You hold S QJx H Axx D AJxxx C xx and open 1D. Partner responds 1S. Now you must find a rebid. Do you bid 1NT with a bad club holding, do you rebid 2D with a mediocre 5-card (instead of 6) suit, or do you raise spades with only 3 with partner expecting 4. The answer is you must a choice from 3 less-than-ideal options. However, a new convention makes the solution clear if your right-hand opponent makes an overcall or double, providing you with an extra bid (double or redouble).

A support double is a double made by the opening bidder after the opponent's overcall over responder's major bid. This double indicates that you have precisely 3-card support for your partner's major. This convention is active when partner could have only 4 cards in his major. Here is a sample auction.

1D (P) 1S (2C)

X : The double says you have 3 spades, so partner can set spades as trump if she has 5+ of them.

Hence

1D (P) 1S (2C)

2S : guarantees 4 spades, since you did not make a support double (with 3), hence a fit has been found.

If the opponent comes in with a double, redouble becomes the way to show 3-card support.

1D (P) 1S (X)

XX : Redouble says you have 3 spades

Note that if partner has made a bid that guarantees 5 cards in a major, the need to show 3 or 4 trumps is no longer there and hence a double is not a support double

1S (2C) 2H (P)

X -----> Since 2H shows 5+ hearts, the double means something else

And here is another auction where you know partner has 5 in his major

1Minor (1H) 1S --> shows 5+ spades as with exactly 4, responder would make a negative double.

How high do support doubles apply? If partner can rebid his suit at the 2-level, that is a support double. Any higher is not

1C (P) 1S (2H)

X -----> partner can bid their spades at 2-level, so X is support

1C (P) 1S (3D)

X -----> partner would have to bid spades at 3-level, not a support double

All of these support doubles/redbls must be **alerted**.

Responding to a support double:

If you have a 5-3 major fit, you can compete as normal, knowing you have found your fit.

If instead, you now know you have an undesirable 4-3 major fit, you must find another bid, as the support double is clearly forcing for one round. Choices are normal but you may have to make a bid where you have to "stretch" a bit from what you are usually showing

Bidding goes 1C (P) 1H (1S)

X (P) ?

What is your bid holding (answers below)...

1. S xxx H AJTxx D Jxx C xx _____

2. S xx H AQ9xx D Axx C Kxx _____

3. S Txx H AQxx D xx C Kxxx _____

4. S Kxx H KJxx D Qxx C Txx _____

5. S xxx H AQT9 D KQxx C xx _____

6. S AJT H QJxx D Kxx C K9x _____

7. S xx H Jxxx D AQT9xx C x _____

1. 2H – weak, 5+ hts

2. 4H – game, 5+ hts

3. 2C – 4 hts, 4+ clubs, weak

4. 1N – 4 hts, spade stopper, 6-10 HCPs

5. 2H – with no other bid, and v. gd ht cards, try playing in your 4-3 fit

6. 3N – game, 4 hts, spade stopper

7. 2D – 4 hts, long Ds, weak, not forcing (new suit but partner forced you to bid again)

New Minor Forcing

Etobicoke BC

Last revised: May 16, 2022

Bridge bidding does have a few areas of weakness and the biggest one is the 5-3 versus 4-3 major fit conundrum. When partner responds in a major, they are showing 4 or more cards in the suit. When the opener has 3 cards of that same major, they are not sure if partner has 5 giving their team the desired 8-card fit, or 4 of them for a not-desired 7-card fit.

You are the opener and have S Qxx H Kxxx D AKxx C xx

1D – 1S

?

Problem: If partner has 5+ Spades, you would like to bid 2S with your 8-card fit

If partner has 4 Spades, you would prefer not to be spades on a 7-card fit

You are the responder and have S Qxxxx H JTxx D AKx C x

1D – 1S

1N - ?

Problem: 2H is weak, showing 6-10 pts; 3H is forcing showing game going hand. What do you do when in between (good 10 -12)?

To minimize the frequency of these problems, bridge has created some conventions. One of these is support doubles (elsewhere in this document) and the other is this topic, new minor forcing.

New Minor Forcing mainly applies when

- 1) Opener bids a minor
- 2) Responder bids a major at 1-level (showing 4+)
- 3) Opener specifically rebids 1N
- 4) Responder has 11 or more points

What is needed is the ability to find out if partner has 4 of the major or 5 of them. Alternatively, the side may have a 4-4 fit in the other major and needs to find this out.

- 5) Bid the other (new) minor at the 2-level. This is an artificial bid (alert it please), that specifically asks opener to show 3-card support for responder or show 4 cards in the other major. The bid is forcing for one round.

ie, 1D – 1S

1N – 2C* - this is the new minor forcing bid (NMF)

3rd bid by opener.....

2S ----- I have 3 spades

2H ----- I have 4 hearts

Without a major bid.....

2N ----- I have a balanced hand (minimum)

S Jx H Axx D Kxxx C Axxx

3N ----- I have a balanced hand (maximum)

S Qx H Axx D KJxx C Axxx

2D ----- I have 5+ Ds and not a 2N bid

S Qx H Axx D KQJxx C Jxx

3C ----- I have 4 cards in your artificial suit & not a 2N bid, so I am raising your "suit/bid"

S Qx H xx D KQJx C QTxxx

You must have one or both of (5 major)/(4 other major) to make the NMF bid, otherwise make a different bid.

W E

1D

1S --- 4+ spades

1N

2C --- NewMinor Forcing -> either 5 spades or 4 hearts

2H ----- 4 Hearts

3N ---- not 4 hearts, hence must have 5 Spades for 2C NMF bid

4S ----- 3 spades, final contract

W: S KTx H Axxx D QJxx C Kx

E: S AJxxx H KJx D Kxx C Jx

WHAT A GAME!!

Hand Evaluation

While using High Card, Total and Dummy points provide a good foundation for modern bidding decisions, there are many more criteria which affect the valuation of your hand. This valuation also is a moving target, as it can change during the auction.

Things that make your hand better

- In our 4-3-2-1 system, Aces and tens are undervalued, Qs and Js are overvalued. With significantly more A/10s than Q/Js, your hand is at least one point better
 - This is more significant in a suit contract, where lower honours tend to be less helpful
- Shapelier hands have more value. If you have a flat hand, meaning 4-3-3-3 shape, subtract 1 pt. Having a 2nd 4+ card suit adds value, esp if as in next point
- Honours concentrated in long suits make for more value. It is much easier to develop small cards into winners.
 - Consider S AKJxxx H xx D KQJx C x which is much better than ...
 - S KJxxxx H Ax D KJxx C Q
- Holding a 9th trump (1 beyond 8-card golden fit). Partner opens 1 Spade, you hold
 - S QJxx H Axx D x C KQxxx ; 12 dummy pts, but add 1 for 4th trump
- Honours located behind suit strength based on bidding. Your right hand opp opens 2 Spades, and you hold S Kx H KQJxxx D Qx C xxx; Increase your point count by one as your King spades is almost a sure trick
- Length in the majors, especially spades. The side that owns the spade suit has an advantage since it is the highest ranking suit. If the opponents wish to compete over your 2S bid, they must go to the much harder 3-level.
- Honour cards in suits bid by your partner. This is a very important criteria. Similarly, holding Aces(especially) or Kings in suits not bid by your partner have more value, low honours have less value
 - You hold S AQxxx H x D AQxxx C Kx
Partner has S KJxx H Axx D Kxx C Axx
After 1S – 2NT
 - 4D - You should love your hand: K diamonds perfect for diamond suit
 - Aces in partners short suits, perfect
 - Notice 7 Spades is cold w 15+15 = 30 HCPs

What makes your hand better for defense?

- Good trumps, well-placed
 - If you have AQ108 of trumps and you are behind declarer, looks like 3 maybe 4 tricks. If you are in front of declarer, could be just 2 tricks
- Shortness in partner's suit. If partner bids hearts and you have 5 of them, you will cash 1 or none on defense. However, holding only 2 or 1 hearts, your side will probably cash about 2 tricks.
- Aces and Kings versus Quacks (Queens and Jacks)
- You (West) hold S AJ109 H AKx D xxxx C xx
Bidding goes South 1S - 2S 3S - 4S P - P You: _____

Deciding to Open the Bidding

- 20 years ago, one opened with 13 total points, and occasionally opened with 12, having some reason to do so. Nowadays, players open with 12 unless they have some reason not to. To decide on close hands, use the criteria "Things that make a hand better".
- In first or second seat, you should be more disciplined, since partner's hand is unknown. In 3rd or 4th, you can be more flexible/aggressive, since partner is known to have less than an opening hand.
- Which of the following hands would you open in 1st or 2nd seat

1. S AK109x H x D A10xx C xx _____
2. S KJxx H Qxx D Kxx C QJx _____
3. S Kxxxx H K D Kxxx C QJ _____
4. S QJx H KJxx D QJx C QJx _____

Rule of 20 (aggressive rule)

- Add your high card points to the length of your 2 longest suits. If that total is 20 or more, open the bidding.
- Ex: S QJxxx H Axx D KJxx C x
 - Since 11 (Hcps) + 5 (Sp) + 4 (Ds) = 20, open 1 Spade
- I recommend players use the Rule of 22
 - Apply Rule of 20, then add 1 for each quick trick. If you get to 22, open the bidding. Quick tricks are: AK=2, AQ=1.5, A=1, KQ=1, Kx[x]=0.5
 - Ex: S ATxxx H KQxx D Qxx C x
 - 11 HCP + 5 + 4 + 2 (quick tricks) = 22; Open 1S

Opening in 3rd Seat

- Once your partner has passed, you can open in 3rd/4th seat with a slightly lighter hand. You know your partner has less than an opening hand, which allows you some liberties. The benefits are
 - Pre-empts the 4th seat player, who very likely has an opening hand
 - Lead-directing

- Chance to buy the contract, which may be rightfully yours
- A sample 3rd seat light opening is S xxx H KQxxx D Jxx C Ax
- In response, partner must be prepared to play in any new suit as a light 3rd seat opener is not required to bid again and probably should not. This leads to a condition of a 3rd seat opener, that is being comfortable passing partner's new suit or have a tolerable rebid.
- A weak two-bid can be more aggressive, made on a less solid suit, especially at favourable vulnerability.
 - 3rd seat, not vul vs vul holding S Q10xxxx H xx D Kx C Jxx Open 2S

Drury

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- You are dealer and hold S Kxxx H Ax D Qxxx C JTx.
Bidding goes P P 1S P
3S All Pass
and partner goes down one. "I opened light in 3rd seat partner, we were too high".
Partner had S AQxxx H Qx D xx C Qxxx
- Because a 3rd or 4th seat opener can be lighter than normal, a convention is needed to avoid partner jumping to 3 as a limit raise, often getting the side too high. This convention is called Drury. If your partner opens a Major in 3rd or 4th seat, you bid an artificial 2 Clubs, which says you have a limit raise (with 3+ trumps). If partner does have a light opening, he signs off in 2 Spades (called "Reverse Drury"). If he has a normal opening bid, he bids anything else.
- A typical Drury auction
P P 1H P
2C* P 2H AP * Alerted; limit raise, 3+ trump
- Note that you must be careful as you now no longer can bid 2C naturally.
After P P 1S P and you hold S xx H Axx D xx C KQJxx
best bid available would be 1NT.
However, holding S x H Kxx D xxx C AQJxxx
bid 3C, showing 11ish pts and a 6 card club suit
- With interference by your RHO, most play Drury is still on if there is a double or a 1S bid.
 - P P 1H 1S P P 1H X
2C = Drury 2C = Drury

Opening in 4th Seat

- With 3 passes to you, you now have the option to pass out the hand. This may be the right call, since if your opponents outbid you and make their contract, you are getting a negative score. The spade suit is of great importance here, since it is the highest ranking suit. The “Rule of 15” says that if your HCPs + number of spades =15 or more, open in 4th seat.
- So, holding S KJxxx H Axx D xx C Kxx (11 +5 >=15); open 1S
- A weak two bid becomes chunkier because if you had a lower-range bid, you are probably going down, better to pass and not get a negative score. You should have about 10-15 HCPs, including a good suit, and expect to make the contract

Balancing

Balancing means to make a bid rather than a 3rd consecutive pass, ending the auction. One can bid here on slightly less than normal values, to avoid selling out to the opponents at a low level. For example, 1C – P – P - ?

Bid on a weaker hand than normal, ie bid 1H on S xx H K10xxx D Axx C Jxx
Note that your partner may have as much as 14 HCPs and not have been able to bid.
He might hold S xxx H Axx D KQx C KQxx, a lovely dummy for a heart contract.

Another good balancing bid is to double. This is the usual takeout double, but again, it can be a bit lighter in points. ie S Kxxx H Axxx D Qxx C xx

Balancing in NT shows a lower range, 11-14 typically. If you have a regular 1NT hand, you double first, then bid NT at lowest level available.

Since a normal preemptive jump overcall doesn't make sense (who are you pre-empting, NOBODY!), it shows a large 6+ suit overcall, such as
S KQ10xxx H xx D Axx C KQx

When not to balance: If the opponents have not found a fit, best to keep quiet. They may go down in their misfit contract. It also means they have more defense in their suit, since they don't have a ton of them.

To respond to a balancing bid, keep in mind that partner may have up to a King less than normal, and respond accordingly. If partner balances with 1 Heart, and you have
S AJx H QJx D Kxxx C xxx bid 2Hearts, not 3.

http://www.barbaraseagram.com/pdf/balancing_2012.pdf
good web site on balancing

End of Notes – Enjoy: What a Game!!