
Imprecise Precision

Release 10.3

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INTRODUCTION

Imprecise Precision is a strong club system, designed for advanced but not expert players. I have synthesized it from studying a variety of other systems listed in the *References* (page 20).

From version 10, Imprecise Precision is more like Meckwell versions of Precision, where the initial responses to 1♣ are focused on showing strength rather than strain.

1.1 Notes

Please see *Bidding Notes* for information on how to contribute, resources, acknowledgements, and a glossary. That book also contains a detailed section on notation and hand evaluation. The main things you need to know are:

- An exclamation point after a bid means it needs to be alerted. The alert explanation follows as needed.
- Opponents' passes are usually omitted; their calls are shown in parentheses. Thus 1♥ - (2♠) - 4♥ means we opened 1 Heart, LHO overcalled Two Spades, and partner jumped to 4 Hearts.
- Hand shapes that contain equal signs are in precisely spade = heart = diamond = club order. Parentheses show the shapes can be either way, as in (54)=2=2 meaning exactly two clubs and two diamonds and either 4 spades and 5 hearts or vice-versa. Hand shapes without separators can be in any suit order.

SUMMARY

We define the meaning of the opening bids up to and including 2N. Openings above 2N are whatever you like – typically preempts.

We briefly describe each opening bid here. Then we cover competitive bidding and explain a special bid called Beta. The subsequent chapters fill in the details.

2.1 Balanced Hands

Our opening 1N range is 14 to 16 HCP. Balanced hands with 11-13 HCP are opened 1♦, followed by a notrump rebid. Stronger balanced hands are opened 1♣!. A good 15 HCP hand with an excellent five+ card suit can be opened 1♣! also.

Any 14-16 HCP balanced hand (with shape 4333, 4432, or 5332) is opened 1N. There are also some 5422 hands that can be opened 1N to avoid rebid problems. It is recommended that at least one of the doubletons be Kx or better.

An 11-13 HCP hand with a five-card major is opened one of that major. A 14-16 balanced hand is opened 1N but may contain a five-card major.

Note: Optionally play 1N as 12-15 in first and second seats. In that case, a suit opener is known to have a second four-card suit.

2.2 Strong Hands (16+ HCP)

We open 1♣! with any other hand with 16+ HCP. We also open 1♣! with a 15 HCP hand containing an excellent six-card suit and a stiff or void.

1♣! has no upper limit and absolutely may not be passed. The responses and further bids after the 1♣ opening are covered in their own chapter, *Opening One Club* (page 10).

2.3 Opening Suit Hands (11-15 HCP)

- 1♦ (*as short as two, 11-15 HCP*) (page 4)

This bid is *announced* as possibly as short as two cards. It helps to think of 1♦ as between a standard 1♣ and 1♦. This bid is a catch-all that handles all 11-15 HCP hands not otherwise covered by 1♥, 1♠, 2♣, and 2♦.

With values concentrated in the minors, or balanced, 11 HCP hands should often be passed.

- 1♥ or 1♠ (*11-15 HCP*) (page 4)

Shows a five card major. Because of the limited range, some responses are not standard.

- 2♣! (*10-15 HCP, 6+♣*) (page 7)

This bid requires six clubs. It may contain a four- or even five-card major. However, in third seat with five good clubs we sometimes open 2♣! rather than open 1♦ and rebid 2♣.

- 2♦! (*11-15 HCP, 0-1 diamonds, no 5M, no 6♣*) (page 8)

The allowed shapes are 4=3=1=5, 3=4=1=5, 4=4=1=4, 4=4=0=5. Another way to describe this is “4=4=1=5 missing one card somewhere”.

Together the bids from 1♣ to 2♦ cover all hand types with 11+ HCP, since if you have five clubs, and no five card major, you are either short in diamonds and

should open 2♦!, or you have two or more and can open 1♦ or 1N; or you have 16+ HCP.

2.4 Preemptive Openers

- 2♥, 2♠ are standard preemptive openers.

Of course, they are not preemptive in fourth seat but rather show 11-15 with a six card suit.

- 2N!(5-5 minors, preemptive) (page 9)

Shows at least 5-5 in the minors with limited strength: 4-8 HCP if not vulnerable, 8-12 HCP if vulnerable. Responses are to play except for a 3♥! inquiry.

If not using the *Heart Relay* (page 17), the 2N opener reverts to the standard balanced 20-21 HCP bid.

2.5 Competitive Bidding

Most competitive bidding is identical to standard methods; with Precision you often have better information about the range of partner's hand. You can use whatever versions of things like Michaels, Unusual 2NT, Lebensohl, etc. that you are comfortable with.

Precision-specific strategies are given in the descriptions for interference after 1♦ (page 7), 2♣! (page 8), 2♦! (page 8), and 2N! (page 9) openers. *Interference With The One Club Opener* (page 14) has a chapter of its own, including *Interference Over Asking Bids* (page 16).

2.6 Beta

Some rebids made by the 1♣ opener are designated "Beta", requiring the sum of Aces and Kings held by responder, counting A=2 and K=1.

The responder bids steps to show how many he has. The first step response corresponds to:

- 0 to 2 controls, when responder is known to have 8-11 HCP;
- 0 to 3 controls, when responder is known to have 12+ HCP;

The second step would be one more than the minimum, three steps for two more, etc.

For example, in a Beta(2) response:

- First step is an Ace, or two Kings, or less.
- Second step is an Ace and a King, or three Kings.
- Third step is two Aces, an Ace and two Kings, or four Kings.
- Fourth step shows 5 controls, etc.

Note: In standard bidding, "controls" replies to a strong 2♣ opener are similar, but not the same.

Interference with Beta is covered in *Interference With Asking Bids* (page 16).

SUIT OPENINGS

The only strong opening is 1♣!. It has its own chapter.

Intermediate suit openings are 11-15 HCP. They are 1♥, 1♠, 2♣, and 2♦!; 2♣! can be opened with 10 HCP due to the extra length of the club suit.

The two of a major preemptive bids are standard. (Caution, 2♦! is artificial).

2N is a preemptive, unusual 2N for the minors, whose strength depends on the vulnerability.

Since the suit openings are limited to 15 HCP, you can, with caution, repurpose any 3-level rebids by the opener to indicate hands at the upper range, 14-15 HCP.

The sections in this chapter explain the details.

3.1 Opening One Of A Major

Opening of one of a major shows 11-15 HCP, instead of the standard 12-21 point range. We open 5332 hands 1N if 14-16, so a hand opened 1M is unbalanced if it has 14-15 HCP.

You can play your usual system with the following exceptions:

- 1M - 4M!(may not be weak)

An immediate 4M raise shows a hand whose strength may vary anywhere from the standard weak hand with five trumps to a relatively balanced 12-13 HCP hand with 3+-card support.

Be sure to alert. For standard bidders this bid shows a weak hand and to make it with a stronger hand risks missing a slam. In Precision, the opener can have no more than 15

HCP, and not 15 HCP with a great suit. Therefore responder can bid game without fear of missing slam with a minimal opening hand. However, be careful not to miss skinny slams by making this bid with more values. Opener will be able to revalue his hand when you show support, and he may have shape.

- 1M - 2N is natural and invitational with 2-card support.

To play it as Jacoby 2N would have to show a much stronger hand than normal to be of interest for slam, because opener is limited to 15 HCP. With a strong hand make up a 2/1 response if necessary, then bid 3M.

- Jump-rebidding at the 3-level shows only 14-15 HCP, since we did not open 1♣. This usually shows a very good six card suit but is not forcing.
- Jump-shifting on your second bid can be used with a maximum hand and excellent distribution. Again, it is not forcing.

3.2 Opening One Diamond

Opening 1♦ is the “catch-all” opening if no other opening applies. It can be as few as 2 diamonds, such as a 3=3=2=5 shape, because opening 2♣! requires six clubs.

Some of the time 1♦ is the prelude to a 1N rebid to show a balanced minimal opener. Otherwise 1♦ is probably a diamond opener, or it could be some combination of diamonds and five or less clubs. Think of it as a bid between a standard one club and one diamond.

One diamond openers will constitute about 32% of

our opening bids. Therefore, the system suggested requires some study. When first playing Imprecise Precision, you can get by with standard or inverted minor bidding – but try not to raise either suit immediately with four cards – give opener a chance to admit he really has clubs.

We open 1♦ if we have 11-15 HCP, two or more diamonds, and do not qualify as a 1N opener.

With 11 HCP or a flat 12 HCP, do not open if you have poor major holdings, especially if vulnerable or with poor intermediates. However, a hand with an AK in one suit and an Ace in another can be opened since it has 3 quick-tricks.

Responder bids a four-card major with 6 HCP. The lowest notrump response is 8 HCP. That means, if you do not have a major, pass with less than 8 HCP. Passing 1♦ is scary, but as Oliver Clarke remarks,

Partner should not be afraid to pass with a weak hand whether or not it contains Diamond support. It is rare that opponents will be able to profit significantly if they pass the hand out when having the balance of the points, whether or not they have Diamonds. Normally they will bid or double for takeout.

1♦ should be announced, “As short as two.” Then:

- Pass shows 0-7 HCP. With four diamonds and a minimal hand, lean toward pass. With 2 diamonds, and 4-5 HCP, you can consider 1M as an interfering tactical response.
- 1♥ shows 6+ HCP, forcing one round, with four hearts. Bidding continues almost naturally.

Any rebid other than a raise denies four hearts. Opener’s rebid:

- 1♠ shows 4 spades. Forcing one round.
- 1N shows a 11-13 HCP balanced or semi-balanced hand.
- 2♣ shows a shape of (31)45.
- 2♦ shows five or six diamonds.

- 2♥ shows 4 hearts, 11-13 HCP. Can be bid with 3 good hearts and a singleton.
- 2♠ shows five spades and six diamonds.
- 2N! shows a max, six good diamonds, and stoppers in spades and clubs. If responder now bids 3♦ it must be passed.
- 3♣ shows 5-5 or better in good suits in the minors, 14-15 HCP.
- 3♦ shows 6 or 7 good diamonds, 14-15 HCP.
- 3♥ shows 4 hearts, 14-15 HCP and probably an outside singleton.
- 4♦! shows six diamonds to the AKQ, four hearts to at least one of the top 3 honors.
- 4♥! shows four very good hearts, or five hearts to at least one high honor, and six good diamonds.

- 1♠ is similar to 1♥ with the obvious changes. In particular:

- 2♥ (reverse) shows four hearts, and 14-15 HCP.
- 2♠ shows four spades but can be bid with 3 spades and a singleton.
- 3♥ shows five hearts and six diamonds.
- 3♠ shows 14-15 HCP, four spades and probably an outside singleton.

- 1N shows 8-10, no four card major. Opener may pass or bid as follows:

- 2♣ shows at least 4 diamonds and 4 clubs. This allows responder to pass or correct, since he has at least one four-card minor.
- 2♦ shows at least five diamonds, non-forcing.
- 2♥ (reverse) shows five or six diamonds and four hearts, maximum.
- 2♠ (reverse) shows five or six diamonds and four spades, maximum.

- 2N! shows a 15 HCP semi-balanced hand. Responder with 10 HCP should bid game.
- 3♣ shows at least five diamonds and five clubs, both suits are very good, and the bid is highly invitational but not forcing.
- 3♦ is a very good six- or seven-card diamond suit, non-forcing.
- 3♥ is five hearts and six diamonds, forcing.
- 3♠ is five spades and six diamonds, forcing.
- 2♣ shows 11+ HCP, five+ clubs, and is *forcing to 2N*. With less than 13 HCP, you should bid a four-card major first. With a game-forcing hand, bid the major next if appropriate.

Opener rebids naturally:

- 2♦ at least five diamonds.
- 2♥ or 2♠ shows a four-card major and 4+ diamonds.
- 2N! shows a hand 4=5 in the minors or a semi-balanced 15 HCP. If the latter, the opener does not have both majors stopped.
- 3♣ is a good club raise.
- 3♦ shows an excellent diamond suit;
- 3♥ or 3♠ is a five-card major and six diamonds.
- 3N shows 14-16 points at least semi-balanced with stoppers in the major suits.

After 2♦ or 2♥ or 2♠, if responder bids 2N! or 3♣, the auction may end. Any other bid is a game force.

- 2♦! shows 11+ HCP, four or more diamonds, and is *forcing to 2N*. It denies a major. Opener bids:
 - 2♥ shows a heart stopper.
 - 2♠ shows a spade stopper and denies a heart stopper.

- 2N! shows a semi-balanced hand up to 15 HCP; if responder bids 3♦ opener must pass.
- 3♣ is exactly five clubs and only two diamonds. May be passed. If responder bids 3♦, opener must pass.
- 3♦ is four or more diamonds, a minimum in HCP. May be passed.
- 3♥! / 3♠! are splinters, 4 or more diamonds.
- 3N semi-balanced with 14-15 HCP and stoppers in the major suits.
- 4♣! is a splinter, five or more diamonds.

Whenever either partner bids 2N or 3♦ the auction may end. 1♦ - 2♦! - 3♣ can also be passed. Otherwise we're headed for 3N or 4♦. Responder bidding 4♣! in such cases is RKC for diamonds.

- 2♥! is five spades, four hearts, pass or correct. (Reverse Flannery)
- 2♠! is five spades, four hearts, invitational. (Reverse Flannery)
- 2N is invitational, no four card major.
- 3♣! is game forcing with slam interest. Responder has either a one-suited club hand or a two-suited hand in diamonds and clubs with the clubs longer. (Soloway JS)
- 3♦! is preemptive with six diamonds.
- 3♥, 3♠ are natural preempts.
- 3N shows 14-15 HCP, balanced.
- 4♣! is RKC for diamonds either directly over 1♦ or when bid by responder after any auction that agrees diamonds.
- 1♦! - 4♦! is preemptive, seven or eight diamonds
- 1♦! - 4♥ / 4♠ are to play.

3.2.1 Interference Over One Diamond Openers

If 1♦ is doubled, responder must redouble with any hand containing 10+ HCP. Otherwise,

- Pass if no suitable bid.
- 1M five+ cards or a great four such as AKJT, 5-9 HCP.
- 1N balanced, 7-9 HCP.
- 2♣ five or six clubs, less than 10 HCP, not forcing.
- 2♦ five or six diamonds, less than 10 HCP, not forcing.
- 2♥ or 2♠ preemptive with a good six-card suit, 4-7 HCP.
- 2N! shows 5-5 in the minors, 7-9 HCP

If opponent overcalls a suit,

- Pass – no suitable bid
- Double is negative
- All non-jump suit bids except 2♦ are forcing
- 1N is natural, 7-9 HCP, with a stopper
- 2N is game forcing with their suit well stopped, 12+ HCP.
- All jumps in new suits show 5-8 HCP and six or seven cards in the suit bid, non-forcing
- A cue bid of their suit shows either the Ace and a small card, or the K or Q and two small cards, indicating a desire to play 3N from opener's side. (Western Cue).

If responder passes, opener should usually reopen with a double if short in their suit.

3.3 Opening Two Clubs

The 2♣! opener is a constructive bid with 10-15 HCP and at least six clubs. A hand with a five-card major and six clubs can be opened 2♣.

In third seat a hand with five good clubs that would open 1♦ and rebid 2♣ can be opened 2♣! as a preemptive bid, especially not vulnerable.

The responses are:

- Pass – don't be afraid to pass with a weak hand, the opener has a six-card suit.
- 2♦! is artificial and forcing, asking for a further description of opener's hand. Strong hands will all start this way. Responses below.
- 2♥ / ♠ show five card suits and are not forcing, usually 8 to a bad 10 points.

Generally with 2 or more cards in the major, opener should pass, except with fabulous clubs.

With a singleton or void in the bid suit, opener will rebid 3♣. Over 2♥, opener can show a four-card spade suit. However, over 2♠ a bid of 3♥ is a reverse, showing five hearts and at least six clubs. Likewise, a bid of 3♦ over a 2M response would show five diamonds and at least six clubs.

- 2N is natural, invitational, 10-11 HCP. Opener declines if he bids 3♣. Opener can bid 3M to show a four-card major on the way to game.
- 3♣ is preemptive based on a club fit.
- 3♦ / 3♥ / 3♠ show six-card suits and game-forcing values.
- 3N shows 13-15, balanced, stoppers in the unbid suits.
- 4♦! is RKC for clubs, either directly or after any auction beginning 2♣ that agrees clubs.
- 4M is to play.

3.3.1 Responding to the Inquiry

Opener's responses after the 2♣! - 2♦! inquiry are:

- 2♥ = 4 hearts
- 2♠ = 4 spades

- 2N denies a four-card major, shows a relatively balanced 11-13 points.
- 3♣ = default response if nothing else applies
- 3♦ = four or five diamonds.
- 3♥ = five+ hearts, six+ clubs.
- 3♠ = five+ spades, six+ clubs.
- 3N = solid club suit or 14-15 balanced, suitable for notrump.

Subsequently, 4♦! by responder is RKC for clubs except after 2♣! - 2♦! - 3♦, where it is invitational to 5♦.

3.3.2 Interference Over Two Clubs

- If the 2♣! opener is doubled, the system is on; redouble shows 10+ and is penalty oriented.
- After an overcall, a double is negative; otherwise use Lebensohl. If you don't know Lebensohl just agree that 2N! shows a competitive hand with a long suit, asking opener to bid 3♣!(relay).

3.4 Opening Two Diamonds

The Precision 2♦! opener shows shortness in diamonds, no five-card major, and 11-15 HCP. Recall that you must have two diamonds to open 1♦, so this bid covers a number of hand shapes that are not otherwise covered.

The possible shapes are 3=4=1=5, 4=3=1=5, 4=4=1=4, and 4=4=0=5.

Note: It is NOT correct to say the shape is “like mini-Roman with a diamond shortage” or “4441”

Responses are:

- Pass, 2♥, 2♠, and 3♣ are to play. After 2♥, if opener has a 4=3=1=5, he must bid 2♠; then responder passes or corrects to 3♣ or 3♥, depending on his holding.

- 2N!(inquiry) bid is forcing and asks for a description of the opener's hand, to which opener mainly replies to show his holdings in hearts or spades. Since opener has at least one four-card major, he shows it.
 - 3♣! shows a shape of 3=4=1=5 (shows 4 hearts, but not 4 spades)
 - 3♦! shows a shape of 4=3=1=5 (shows 4 spades but not 4 hearts)
 - 3♥! shows a shape of 4=4=1=4 (4 hearts and 4 spades)
 - 3♠! shows a shape of 4=4=0=5 (4 hearts, and 4 spades, diamond void)
 - 3N! shows a shape of 4=4=1=4 with the Ace or King of Diamonds and a 15-point hand.

After the reply, 4♦! is *Beta (2)* (page 3), asking for a count of controls.

- 3♦! is *Beta (2)* (page 3).

3.4.1 Interference Over Two Diamonds

- If there is an overcall of 2♦!, 2N! is on. A double is for penalty.
- If 2♦! is doubled (usually showing diamonds)
 - Redouble shows a willingness to penalize it. Responder has diamonds.
 - Pass is waiting:
 - * Opener will redouble if 4414 or 4405 with a minimum;
 - * Bid 2♥ if 3=4=1=5; or maximum with hearts and maybe spades.
 - * Bid 2♠ if 4=3=1=5, or maximum with spades but not hearts.
 - All other bids over the double are as if there was no interference: 2N! asks shape, 2M or 3♣ to play, 3♦ to play, 3♦ *Beta(2)*.

3.5 Unusual 2N Opener

Open 2N with hands at least 5-5 in the minors with limited strength: 4-8 HCP if not vulnerable, 8-12 HCP if vulnerable. This bid is not used unless playing the heart relay.

Responses are all to play, except 2N! - 3♥!(inquiry), which is Ogust-like:

- 3♠! means a minimum 5-5 hand for the vulnerability.
- 3N! maximum hand for the vulnerability.
- 4♣ six clubs, five diamonds, minimum.
- 4♦ six diamonds, five clubs, minimum.
- 4♥! six clubs, five diamonds, maximum.
- 4♠! six diamonds, five clubs, maximum.
- 4N! six - six in the minors.

3.5.1 Interference Over Preemptive 2N

If the opponents interfere with the preemptive 2N opener, treat it the same as if we made an unusual 2N overcall.

OPENING ONE CLUB

4.1 What Hands Do We Open One Club?

We can open 1♣!(16+ HCP, artificial, forcing) with any 16+ HCP hand. Balanced hands of 16 HCP or less are opened either 1♦ or 1N, depending on the chosen notrump range.

A flat hand should be downgraded 1 HCP, and a balanced hand with a decent five-card suit should be upgraded 1 HCP. We also use 1♣! to open “good” 15 HCP hands, defined as those with a 6+ card suit playable opposite a singleton, usually containing a singleton or void.

Opening 1♣ is unequivocally forcing. Responder must never pass, even with a club stack and no points.

Dealing with interference is covered later in *Interference Over One Club* (page 14).

4.1.1 One Club Responses By An Unpassed Hand

There is one “negative response”, 1♦!(0-7, artificial).

All other responses (“positive responses”) show 8+ HCP and are game forcing.

A three-suited hand is one that has three four-card suits, with any five-card suit being a minor. A three-suited hand with a very good five-card minor can be treated as a that minor suit. A hand with a five-card major should always be treated as a suit.

- 1♥! shows any 8-11 HCP hand that is not three-suited.

It says nothing about hearts or about shape, just HCP. See *The One Heart Response* (page 12).

- 1♠! shows 12+ HCP, 5+ spades. Raising this to 2♠ is Beta.
- 1N!, 2♣!, 2♦!, show 12+ with 5+ cards in the suit above. Accepting the transfer is *Beta(3)* (page 3).
- 2♥! shows 14+ HCP, balanced, no five card suit.
 - 2N shows exactly 16 points and a 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 shape. If responder bids 3N next it is to play. This is the only sequence after 2♥ not forcing to 4N.
 - 2N - 3♣ is Baron, asking four-card suits up the line. There are no transfers.
 - Suit responses are natural and forcing to 4N.
 - 4♣ is Gerber;
 - 4N is quantitative (a good 17 to 18)
 - 3N is forcing to 4N. Opener has more than a minimum. 4♣ next is Gerber. Bidding a major is natural showing four cards.
- 2♥! shows 14+ HCP, balanced, no five card suit.

- Suit responses are natural and are forcing to 4N. Opener will not

five-card major.

- 3♣ is ordinary Stayman forcing to 3N. There are no transfers since responder has no five-card suit. If responder shows

a major, bidding the other major is a power raise and forcing to 4N.

- 3N shows exactly 16 points and a 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 shape, no major. This bid may be passed.
- 2N shows a better NT hand. Transfers are off and 3♣ is Stayman, but opener can deny a major either with 3♦ (no major but still forcing) or 3N (no major, can be passed).
- 4♣ is Gerber.

- 4N is quantitative (a good 17 to 18)

- 2♠! shows a three-suited hand, 8-11 HCP. Opener bids 2N(relay) and responder shows the shortness using the 3x bids, below. See *Three-Suited Hands* (page 13).
- 2N! shows 11-13 HCP, balanced, no five-card major; a good five-card minor is ok.
 - 3N by opener is to play.
 - 3♣ next is Baron.
 - Other bids are natural and forcing.
 - 4♣ is Gerber
 - 4N is quantitative (a good 20 to 21)
- 4N is plain Blackwood.

If a hand is not balanced and does not have a five-card suit, it is a three-suited hand.

1. With a 12+ HCP three-suited hand, we bid it “submarine-style:”
 - 3♣! ♦ shortage
 - 3♦! ♥ shortage
 - 3♥! ♠ shortage
 - 3♠! ♣ shortage

No other response to 1♣! is permitted.

The negative response is discussed in the section *The Negative Response* (page 11).

The positive suit bids are discussed in the section *Positive Responses* (page 12).

The Three-Suited bids are discussed in the section *Responding With A Three-Suited Hand* (page 13).

Interference after a 1♣! opening is discussed in the next chapter, *Interference Over One Club* (page 14).

4.1.2 One Club Responses By A Passed Hand

By a passed hand, responses are similar:

- 1♦! is negative (0-7)
- 1♥! shows 8-10 HCP balanced.
- 1♠ shows 5+ spades, 8-10 HCP.
- 1N!, 2♣!, and 2♦ show the suit above, 5+ cards, 8-10 HCP.
- 2♥, 2♠ show 4-6 HCP and a six card suit, HCP concentrated in the suit. Highly invitational.
- 2N shows 11-12 balanced (a hand that we choose not to open 1♦).
- 3x shows 8-10 three-suited hand short in x.

4.1.3 Responding With 11 HCP

There are two scenarios where a responder might have 11 HCP:

- A balanced passed hand with 11-12 HCP hand. This is a hand that responder chose not to open.
- For an unpassed hand, if they are unbalanced, the 2♠ (three-suited) reply applies, or 1♥. If balanced, bid 2N(11-13 HCP).

4.2 The One Diamond Response

After the weak 1♦(0-7 HCP) response, opener makes fairly natural bids designed to show his strength and shape. The *Heart Relay* (page 17) allows us to show various strong balanced hands.

After 1♣! - 1♦!(0-7), opener’s rebids are:

- 1♥! (hearts or 20+ balanced) describes a hand which is usually a heart suit but may also be a 20+ HCP balanced hand; or rarely, is 6-5 in the minors.

See *Heart Relay* (page 17) for the continuations.

- 1♠, 2♣, and 2♦ show five card suits. These bids are non-forcing. If your hand has 8 tricks, do not make these bids.
- 1N!(17-19, balanced)
- 2♥! or 2♠! shows a strong hand with a 5+ card major, like a standard 2♣ opener followed by a 2M rebid.
- 3♣ and 3♦ show very strong, unbalanced hands with a long minor suit.
- 3♥ and 3♠ set trump and show an extremely strong hand (9 tricks). Trumps are long and solid. Partner should cue-bid.
- 3N is to play based on a long solid suit.

Responder's second bid:

- With 0-4, pass, especially if balanced, unless you have an Ace.
- Over 1♥, the heart relay is on, see below. If not playing that, treat as with 1♠.
- Over 1♠, raise with 4-5 support points; jump raise with 6 or 7.
- Over 1N, systems are on; see *Balanced Hands* (page 17) for details.

4.3 The One Heart Response

1♣! - 1♥! is an artificial bid showing 8-11 HCP, any shape except three-suited. (When a passed hand, it is a balanced hand). Opener bids:

- 1♠/2♣/2♦/2♥ are natural showing five-card suits.
- 1N (17-21 or 25+), systems on.
- 2N (22-24)

- 2♠ shows opener's 3-suited hand, usually 4441, but sometimes (04)(45).

Responder bids 2N!(shortness?), and opener bids the suit below the shortness, 3♠ for a club stiff. Responder sets his desired strain, giving precedence to a major, and opener raises to game, or artificially bids the next step up, starting *Beta* (page 3).

- 3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ sets trump and is *Beta* (page 3).

It is quite common for opener to hide a five-card minor and bid NT instead.

4.4 Suit Responses

The response chosen shows the hand shape, and except for 1♠ are transfers to the next strain:

- 1♣! - 1♠!(5+ spades)
- 1♣! - 1N!(5+ clubs)
- 1♣! - 2♣!(5+ diamonds)
- 1♣! - 2♦!(5+ hearts)

These bids show 12+ HCP when made by an unpassed hand, 8-10 HCP by a passed hand.

These bids should be made with any five or more cards in a major suit. For a 5332 hand with a minor, we treat it as a notrump hand unless the suit is excellent, or the hand has 14+ HCP. Clubs in particular should almost always be a six-card suit since the 1N! transfer will wrong-side any notrump contract.

The auction is now game forcing. Then:

- Opener bids responder's suit; or,
- Opener bids his own strain.

An opener with three-card support of a minor will often bid notrump or show a major suit first.

4.4.1 Opener Bids Responder's Suit

Completing the transfer, or raising 1♠ to 2♠, shows support, and is Beta. Following the Beta response, a bid of trump asks the quality of responder's trump suit, *TAB* (page 18). Any other suit bid is a control-asking bid, *CAB* (page 19), while a notrump bid or a game bid ends the asking sequence.

IMPORTANT: opener does NOT “super-accept” with a strong hand. Following the Beta response with a TAB or CAB or RKC shows slam interest.

Examples:

```
1♣! - 2♦! (hearts, 12+ HCP)
2♥ - 3♣! (5 controls)
3♥ - TAB in hearts
```

```
1♣! - 1N! (clubs, 12+ HCP)
2♣ - 2♥! (4 controls)
2♠! - CAB for spades
```

```
-- Pass
```

```
1♣! - 1♠
2♠ - 3♣ (3 controls)
4♠
```

Opener had extras, so did not bid 4♠_U
→immediately.

```
1♣! - 2♦! (hearts)
2♠ - 3♥ (six hearts, < 3 spades)
```

```
1♣! - 2♦! (hearts)
2♠ - 3♠
3N! (Beta)
```

```
1♣! - 2♦! (hearts)
2N - 3♠ (hearts + 4 spades)
3N - 4N (quantitative)
```

4.5 Balanced Responses

An unpassed balanced hand 8-11 HCP will respond 1♥, and if nothing else suggests itself after opener's rebid, responder will bid NT to show his shape.

1♣ - 2N shows a balanced hand with 11-13 HCP. The hand does not contain a five-card major, but may contain a poor five-card minor. 3♣ is Baron, asking for four-card suits up-the-line, but may have clubs.

1♣ - 2♥ is the strongest balanced response, showing 14+ HCP and no five-card suit, forcing to 4N. If opener bids NT, Stayman but not transfers are on.

4.6 Responding With A Three-Suited Hand

If responder does not have a five-card suit, and is not balanced, then he usually has a 4441 shape. (Holding a mediocre five-card minor such as 4=0=4=5, you might choose to treat it as a three-suited hand rather than the minor suit.)

4.6.1 The Two Spade Rattlesnake Bid

With an ordinary three-suited hand, an unpassed hand bids 2♠! over 1♣!. This shows 8-11 points and is game forcing.

Opener bids 2N asking which suit has the singleton. Responder bids the singleton submarine using the 3x bids and the auction proceeds along the lines below.

4.4.2 Opener Bids His Own Strain

If responder suggests a suit but opener does not accept, bidding continues naturally. Responder may raise opener's suit, rebid his six-card or longer suit, bid a second suit of four cards or longer, or bid notrump.

If responder raises opener's suit, treat it as a 2/1 auction at that point. Bids of side suits show controls.

Responder with support for opener's suit may also choose a splinter bid if appropriate.

When opener bids NT, he does not jump, and systems are off. Responder can show a second suit of 4-cards, rebid his six-card suit, or raise NT.

Examples:

When opener has a 0=4=4=5 or 1=3=4=5 shape, the auction would go 1♣ - 1♥ - 2♠ - 2N - 3♥ and responder can place the contract. If the clubs are not great, and the hand is minimal, a 2♠ response may be preferable to the 2♣ response.

4.6.2 The Three-Suited Bids

When a three-suited has 12+ HCP, or 8-11 HCP by a passed hand we “submarine” the shortage:

- 3♣ diamond shortage;
- 3♦ heart shortage;
- 3♥ spade shortage; or,
- 3♠ club shortage.

When responder has shown a 12+ HCP hand, they may be interested in slam even when opener has a minimum. Therefore, we want a scheme in which opener places the contract, leaving responder free to bid on. With a 12+ responder, the auction should be treated as forcing to 3N, 4M, or 5m.

Opener’s rebid shows his strength:

- If the opener has slam interest, he can set trump by first bidding one of the four-card suits as *ETA* (page 19). After *ETA*, side-suit bids are CAB, 4N is RKC. Bidding trump is a sign-off.
- If the opener has a minimum 16-19, opener bids the shortage suit. This says, “I’m a minimum, no slam interest from my side.” Responder now relays the next step up. Opener then bids his desired contract.

With a 12+ HCP hand and extras, responder can then answer opener’s desired contract as *ETA* (page 19), with opener’s choice being trump, or make an appropriate quantitative raise in NT.

4.6.3 When There Is No Major Fit

If opener does not have a major fit, possible final contracts are in notrump, a minor, a 4-3 fit in a major, or the stiff suit itself at the four-level or higher.

Notrump is only possible with a stopper(s) in the shortage suit.

When the shortage is not clubs, a minimal opener has room to bid the stiff and then choose a strain. However, when the shortage is clubs, there is a problem since bidding 4♣ would skip over 3N, which might be a desired final contract. So:

- With a club stopper opener may bid 3N. Responder without slam interest should pass 3N.
- Without a club stopper, bid 4♣. Responder should bid 4♦, which opener can pass if responder is 8-10, raise to 5♦, or choose a 4-3 fit in a major.

4.6.4 When Responder Bids On

When responder has 14+ HCP or a source of tricks, he can bid on, but opener’s choice of suit or notrump is final. Bidding 4N is quant or keycard respectively. Responder can bid the stiff to suggest slam if there are no wasted values in the stiff suit.

INTERFERENCE OVER ONE CLUB

Opponents are often anxious to bid something to interfere with your 1♣! opening, or after 1♣! - 1♦!. We in turn are anxious to take advantage of it.

Our guiding principle is to ignore their interference when we can, and to cue-bid their suit or double when we can't respond normally.

5.1 Direct Interference

5.1.1 Responses Over 2nd Seat's Double

If they double after 1♣!, we split the negative bid into two ranges.

- Pass with 0-5 HCP. Assuming RHO bids, opener behaves as if they opened. Double is takeout, a cue bid is Michaels. A jump to 2N is Unusual.
- Redouble with 6-8 HCP or with a positive hand with no good bid. Doubles of their suit bid is takeout. Responder promises to bid once more.
- Suit bids are positive, game forcing, and show a five-card suit. Bidding proceeds naturally.
- 1N is a positive response with 8+ HCP and a stopper. It is game forcing. Reverse Stayman is on but not transfers (because if responder had a five-card suit he would bid it).

5.1.2 Responses Over 2nd Seat's Suit Bid

If 2nd seat bids a suit at the one- or two-level, we follow the same general idea. Double can be 6-8 HCP

or it could be a positive, balanced hand with no stopper. Responder promises one more bid.

Again, a new suit is a five-card suit with 8 or more points, game forcing. Our doubles are penalty now.

A bid of notrump by responder is game-forcing and promises a stopper. Reverse Stayman is on but not transfers.

A jump-shift is preemptive, 5-7 HCP with most of the points in the suit.

A cue-bid is a game-forcing hand with three suits, short in their suit.

5.1.3 Responses Over 3- or 4-Level Interference

Over 3- or 4-level interference, a double is game-forcing, but has no primary suit to bid below 3N. Opener can bid a 5+ card suit, pass the double for penalty, or try 3N. And of course, if responder bids a suit, it is a 5+ card suit and game-forcing.

Otherwise, with 0-6 HCP responder must just pass, and opener can pretend they have made a preemptive bid. Passing it is an option.

5.1.4 Conventional Interference

If opponents play transfer overcalls, treat it as if the target suit was the overcall.

There are conventional bids used to interfere with our opener. The three most popular are discussed in "Precision Today".

Unless otherwise discussed, we use our normal defense to two-suited bids. A double (or redouble)

shows a positive hand with no suitable bid, usually balanced.

Mathe is the only system we have seen so far in practice. In Mathe, double shows the majors, and 1N the minors, at least 4-4. As in our general defense, (invisible) cue bids show a positive response in the corresponding suit, and direct bids of those suits are competitive (say 5-8 HCP or some shape).

5.1.5 Interference by 1N

A bid of 1N that was not conventional would be equal hand.

When by the opener's LHO, responder's pass or double as usual ought to suffice. If responder has more than 8 HCP, clearly the bid may well be a psyche or miscommunication (that is, it really is conventional but the advancer forgot to alert it).

5.2 Interference by RHO

If they bid suit or NT after 1♣! - 1♦!, generally opener acts as if they have opened.

- Opener passes with any balanced minimum.
- Double (or redouble) by opener is for takeout.
- Sometimes the responder with shortness in their suit doubles to protect an opener possibly holding a stack in their suit. Responder's hand should contain four-card support for any unbid major.

If they double 1♦ redouble is point showing, and penalty oriented, so tends to deny a good suit to bid. The Heart Relay is off: 1♥ is natural.

If the opener's RHO overcalls a positive response, bidding is natural and doubles are penalty oriented.

5.3 Interference Over Asking Bids

Asking bids are those that request step responses: CAB, TAB, ETA, and Beta. We use a uniform sys-

tem to deal with interference to such bids:

- Double! / Redouble! is the first step
- Pass! is the second step
- The next available bid is the third step, etc.

For example, in the auction 1♣! - 1♥! - 1♠(Beta), suppose LHO suddenly bids 3♥. In that case 3♠ shows the third step.

SPECIAL BIDS

These bids are only used in auctions that begin 1♣!. We give them here to simplify the chapter on *Opening One Club* (page 10).

6.1 The Heart Relay

The Heart Relay, also called Kokish, applies only after the auction begins 1♣! - 1♦, and there is no interference.

1♣! - 1♦! - 1♥! asks responder to bid an artificial 1♠!. The opener will clarify his hand type on his next bid. The 1♥ bid usually means a hand with hearts, but it can be a strong notrump hand or (rarely) a hand 6-5 in the minors.

This bid should be explained as, “A five-card heart suit or a strong balanced hand; or rarely, a hand 6-5 in the minors.” The answer to “How strong a balanced hand?” is “20-22 HCP or 26+ HCP”.

After 1♣! - 1♦! - 1♥!, responder bids 1♠!(relay) except in these cases:

- 1N with 5-5 in the majors, very weak.
- 2-level suit bids with a modest six-card suit, weak hand, no outside Queens.
- 2N with 5-5 in the minors, very weak.
- 3-level suit bids with seven-card suits, very weak.

The 1♠! bid can be explained in more detail as “not a very weak distributional hand”.

6.1.1 Showing Balanced Hands

After 1♣! - 1♦!, we have three notrump bids, 1N, 2N, and 3N; and at each level you can bid it directly

or first use the heart relay. Using the heart relay first will show a stronger hand.

1. 1N! => 17 - 19
2. 1♥! - 1♠! - 1N! => 20 - 22
3. 2N! => 23 - 25
4. 1♥! - 1♠! - 2N! => 26 - 28
5. 1♥! - 1♠! - 3N! => 29+, forcing to 4N.
6. 3N is to play, usually based on a long solid minor.

After 1♣! - 1♦! - 1N!(17-19), the system is on. Responder bids 2♣ as ordinary (not Puppet) Stayman in three cases:

- As Stayman with 7 HCP. Yes, opener may have 19, but don't bid 2♣ with 6 HCP;
- As Stayman with a bust hand short in clubs, intending to pass the reply;
- When 5-4 in the majors, intending to bid 2♥! (Garbage Stayman).

After any of the stronger sequences the system is “on”. Transfers are on even if the suit has already been bid, as for example:

1♣! - 1♦! (0-7)
1♥! (hearts or strong NT) - 1♠! (relay)
1N! (20-21) - 2♥! (transfer to spades)

Responder shows his five spades, even though he will play a spade contract.

6.1.2 Showing Unbalanced Hands

After the 1♥! relay is accepted with 1♠!, an unbalanced opener bids as follows, all bids showing a heart suit, and jumps showing extras.

- 2♣! shows 3+ clubs as well as the 5+ hearts.
- 2♦! shows 3+ diamonds as well as the 5+ hearts.
- 2♥ shows a 6+ heart suit, no extras.
- 2♠! shows 4+ spades as well as the 5+ hearts.
- 3♣!, 3♦! are forcing, suggestive of 5+ in the minor as well, or extras.
- 3♥ shows 6+ hearts, invitational.
- 3♠ shows 4+ spades, 5+ hearts, with extras.
- 4♥ shows 6+ hearts, to play.
- 4N is RKC for hearts

Two special bids show 6-5 minor-suited hands:

- 4♣ forcing, 6+ clubs, 5+ diamonds.
- 4♦ forcing, 6+ diamonds, 5+ clubs.

6.2 Asking Bids

Bidding a bid that is *Beta* (page 3) starts a sequence of “Asking Bids”. After the response to Beta, an immediate bid of the trump suit is a *Trump-Asking Bid* (page 18). Subsequently or instead, a bid of a side suit is *Control-Asking Bid* (page 19). A notrump bid or a signoff ends the sequence.

6.3 Trump-Asking Bid

The Trump-Asking Bid (TAB) occurs when opener bids trump below game following a *Beta* (page 3). TAB asks about the quality of the responder’s suit. (A responder can never make a TAB, and opener can only make it if he does so the first chance he gets.)

Step responses indicate the length of the suit, and the number of the top three honors held:

- first step: zero honors, any length
- second step: one, five cards
- third step: two, five cards
- fourth step: one, six+ cards

- fifth step: two, six+ cards
- sixth step: three (AKQ), five+

Examples:

- 1♣! - 1♠!(12+ HCP, spades), 2♠ accepts spades and is TAB.
- 1♣! - 2♦!(12+ HCP, hearts), 2♥ accepts hearts and is TAB.

After a TAB, each rebid short of game is asking about the quality of the trump suit or of a specific side suit.

- Asking further about the trump suit, Repeat TAB (rTAB), is invoked by another bid in the trump suit below game.

– If you have shown 0 or 3 of the top three honors, the first step shows a seven-card suit; the second a six-card suit; the third a five-card suit. That’s right: worse is higher!

– If you have shown one of the top three honors, the steps show Ace, King, Queen. Again, worse is higher.

– If you have shown two of the top three honors, the steps show AK, AQ, KQ.

- Asking about control details for a given suit, CAB, is invoked by other suit bids. There can be a sequence of these.

After a TAB or repeat TAB, if you make a bid in a non-trump suit it is a Control-Asking Bid (CAB). So if you want to make an rTAB inquiry, you must do it immediately after the TAB, and once you make a CAB you cannot make any trump-quality inquiry.

Note that this is the ONLY scenario that involves TAB and rTAB, – when it is opener accepting responder’s suit. It is always asking about the responder’s suit.

Opener can show slam interest with one or more CABs.

6.4 Control-Asking Bid

A Control-Asking Bid (CAB) is asking about controls in that suit. A CAB must follow a Beta or a Beta/CAB. After CAB, TAB is no longer available. The replies are in steps:

1. No control (Jxx or worse)
2. Third round control (a queen or doubleton)
3. Second round control (a king or singleton)
4. First round control (an ace or void)
5. AK or AQ

For steps 2 through 4, opener can bid the suit again to ask responder to distinguish length (first step) from strength (2nd step); the 3rd step shows the honor and the one beneath it, or a stiff Ace.

Any subsequent bid in another suit that is not trump is again a CAB.

Once a control-asking bid is at the five level, the replies must be compressed:

1. Neither first- nor second-round control
2. Second-round control
3. First-round control

6.5 ETA

If you do not wish to learn ETA, substitute the CAB responses.

ETA is only used by a 1♣ responder who has a three-suited hand. ETA responses are similar to TAB responses, but since we know the suit length (4), we show the trump Jack instead:

1. Jxxx or worse
2. One top honor (AKQ), no Jack
3. One top honor, with the Jack
4. Two top honors, no Jack
5. Two top honors, with the Jack
6. AKQx or AKQJ

There is no repeat ETA. Bidding the trump suit again is to play.

Example:

```
1♣! - 2♠! (8-11, three suited)
2N! (shape?) - 3♣! (short in diamonds)
3♥ (hearts are trump) - 4♦! (one top,
→honor in hearts, with Jack)
6♥
```

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