

1 General Approach

We play a natural style with wide-ranging openings. Our artificial strong bid is $2\clubsuit$. The overall set of openings:

$1\clubsuit$	$3+\clubsuit$
$1\diamond$	$3+\diamond$
$1\heartsuit$	$5+\heartsuit$
$1\spadesuit$	$5+\spadesuit$
1NT	15-17 balanced, five-card major possible but could also open 1M.
$2\clubsuit$	Strong, artificial, normally 21+ hcp or 9+ tricks.
2NT	20-21 balanced, five-card major is fairly frequent.
3NT	$6+\heartsuit$ and a 5+ card minor, weak.
Else	Natural and preemptive.

Holding a five-card suit and a four-card suit, we will virtually always open the five-card suit. This includes patterns like 1345 where some people might open $1\diamond$ rather than $1\clubsuit$. With balanced hands lacking a five-card major, we tend to open the better minor (so might open either minor with 4333 for example). With six-five in two suits, we will sometimes open the five card suit if it's higher and we lack the strength for a reverse.

In some cases there are multiple opening bids possible with a specific strength and distribution. For example, we allow opening 1NT with a five-card major if in the proper point range, but a 1M opening is also acceptable. There are many factors in this decision, with suit quality and desire to declare the contract being primary. We will open $2\clubsuit$ fairly aggressively on hands with a single strong suit (especially a minor) but tend to open a suit on complex hands (especially three-suiters and two-suiters with minor longer than major).

Normally our first or second seat openings show around 12-20 points. We will sometimes open stronger hands with one of a minor if a $2\clubsuit$ opening would be awkward, and we will open on 10-11 points with a strong six card suit or five-five in two suits (with points in the suits). We will virtually never open a balanced hand in first or second with less than 12 points, and occasionally pass a balanced 12.

In third or fourth seat we can open very light with a major, and will open a reasonable four-card major in preference to a minor suit on weak hands. Typical minimums are around 10 points balanced with a decent suit, or as few as 8 points on a distributional hand (say 5-5 in two suits).

2 Minor suit openings

Our responses to minor suit openings are natural. We will occasionally bypass a four-card diamond suit in response to $1\clubsuit$, but will virtually never bypass a 5-card diamond suit to bid a shorter major. Jumps to the two-level are strong (game forcing). The responses to $1\clubsuit$:

$1\diamond$	Natural, $4+\diamond$, could have a 4-card major regardless of strength
$1\heartsuit$	Natural, $4+\heartsuit$, could have longer \clubsuit (but not longer \diamond)
$1\spadesuit$	Natural, $4+\spadesuit$, could have longer \clubsuit (but not longer \diamond)
1NT	Around 6-10 points, no 4-card major, no 5-card suit, could have $4\diamond$
$2\clubsuit$	Inverted; 10+ points, usually $5+\clubsuit$ but $4\clubsuit$ is possible, no 4-card major
$2\diamond-2\spadesuit$	Natural, game-forcing, 13+ points and a very strong suit
2NT	Natural and game forcing; 13-15 or 18+ balanced; no 4-card major
$3\clubsuit$	Wide-ranging; $5+\clubsuit$ and 0-9 hcp (upper end if vulnerable)
$3\diamond-3\spadesuit$	Game-forcing splinter bid in support of clubs

3NT 16-17 balanced, no 4-card major, no 5-card suit

Our strong jump shifts normally show a one-loser suit (or better). This will be a 6+ card suit unless also holding primary support for partner's suit (in which case it can be five cards). In no case will we jump shift into a four-card suit, or into a weak suit. In addition, the jump shift shows some interest in slam opposite the right hand; we won't jump shift into a solid suit holding nothing outside.

After an inverted minor raise of clubs, 2♦ is artificial and shows a minimum hand or a diamond stopper and no major suit stopper. At this point we can stop in 2NT or 3♣. Any other continuation after 1♣-2♣ is game forcing. After 1♦-2♦, we are forced to 3♦ (at least). So 1♦-2♦-2NT is forcing. In general we will bid stoppers up the line at this point. Over the three-minor raise we play Grant's Hack:

1♣-3♣ Wide-ranging raise with 5+♣ and less than limit raise values

- 3♦ Artificial asking bid; usually 18-19 balanced
- 3♥ Decent values; unsure who should declare notrump
- 3♠ Decent values, asks partner to declare notrump
- 3NT To play
- 4♣ Lousy hand, not forcing
- 3♥♠ Natural and forcing
- 3NT To play; do not pull this

After a one-level response to one of a minor, we play fairly natural rebids by opener. However, we have a few unusual treatments. Most notably:

1. We normally bid suits up the line. This includes balanced hands, even 18-19 balanced.
2. We will frequently raise major suit responses on three-card support, even if balanced.
3. We often rebid 1NT with a singleton in partner's first-bid suit, even if a small singleton.
4. Our reverses show extra values, but are somewhat light (any 16 is sufficient).
5. We will virtually never rebid a five-card minor (preferring 1nt on singleton or a light reverse).

2.1 Checkback after Notrump Rebids

When opener rebids 1NT, this shows approximately 12-14 points. Most often this is balanced with a doubleton in partner's major; however it can also be a three-suited hand holding a singleton in partner's major with an awkward rebid. In this case a 15-hcp hand is a possibility as well. Occasionally we will rebid 1NT with three cards in partner's major, especially if a 4333 pattern or holding a lot of slow positional cards. Over 1♥, a 1NT rebid normally denies four spades, although with a 4333 pattern we might again choose the notrump rebid over 1♠. After the 1NT rebid, we play a form of two-way checkback. This works as follows:

1♣-1♠-1NT 12-14, possible singleton in partner's major

- 2♣ Forces partner to bid 2♦, either diamond signoff or various invites
- 2♦ Artificial and game forcing
- 2♥ Natural, not forcing
- 2♠ Natural, almost always 6♠, not forcing
- 2NT Natural and invitational, tends to deny 4-card support for partner's minor
- 3♣ Signoff
- 3♦♥ Natural and game force
- 3♠ Natural and invite

3NT To play

Most invites go through 2♣. After the 2♦ bid we play basically natural bidding (immediate preference to partner's major shows three-card support). A direct 2NT is invitational, whereas a slow 2NT (via 2♣) is also invitational but promises four-card support for partner's minor. A direct jump to 3♣ is always signoff; jumping in a new suit is generally game forcing whereas jumping in a previously bid suit is invitational.

If opener rebids 2NT, showing 18-19 balanced, we play that all continuations (except pass) are forcing to game. Bidding the new minor suit is potentially artificial, checking back for a fit in opener's major. While this method makes it hard for us to stop at the three-level in a suit, slam bidding in opener's minor is relatively simple.

2.2 Raising Responder's Major

We will raise responder's major on three cards with great frequency. Because of this, it is often necessary to explore for the best game after the major suit raise. On the other hand, because we play better minor, the single raise is fairly tightly described (12-14 points, cards in the initial minor suit) and we don't have a great need for many game tries. In general we play that 2NT is a game try with four trumps and 3M is a game try with five trumps, with all other calls being natural and forcing to game (primarily exploring for the best game, but could be slam tries). For example:

1♣-1♠-2♠ 3-4♠ with approximately 12-14 points

- 2NT Game try with four spades only
- Pass Minimum with three card spades
- 3♣ ♦ ♥ Maximum with three-card spades, as natural as possible
- 3♠ Minimum with four spades
- 3NT Maximum with three-card spades and help in all suits
- 4♠ Maximum with four-card spades
- 3♣ Natural and game force
- 3♦ ♥ Only three spades, locating outside values (often short/weak in other red suit)
- 3♠ Four spades
- 3NT Balanced hand with three spades and help in both reds
- 3♦ Natural and game force
- 3♥ Only three spades, natural
- 3♠ Four spades
- 3NT Only three spades, cards in hearts and clubs
- 3♥ Natural and game force
- 3♠ Four spades
- 3NT Three spades, cards in the minors, often short/weak hearts
- 4♣ Three spades, long/good clubs, weakness in diamonds
- 4♦ Short diamonds
- 4♥ Four hearts, three spades
- 3♠ Game try with five spades
- 3NT Choice of games
- 4♣ ♦ ♥ Splinter with 5+♠ and slam interest
- 4♠ To play

We also play various stronger raises of partner's major, but these will all promise four-card support. The simplest is a direct jump to 3-major, which basically promises a better hand than the best balanced fourteen.

Note that this can be pretty light with shape, and doesn't promise anything resembling 18-19 flat. In fact we will often raise directly to 4-major with 18-19 balanced and a fit. We also play jump reverses as invitational or better splinters (1♣-1♠-3♥ is an example) and double-jumps as game forcing splinters.

2.3 Reverses

Over opener's reverse, we play 2NT as a general weakness signal, wanting to sign off. Any direct three-level bid is forcing to game. Rebidding responder's first suit shows five or more, and is forcing one round; however this does not guarantee a rebid over opener's next call. Opener should bid the full value of the hand, typically 3nt if a misfit or the fourth suit if concerned about a stopper there. In general bidding the fourth suit in a reverse auction is forcing to game and acts mostly as a stopper ask (or a hand with no clear direction).

2.4 Special sequences over 1♦

Most of our auctions over 1♦ are similar to those over 1♣. We will respond in a major holding a longer club suit if less than game-forcing values. There are a couple of specialized responses: those showing clubs. We play 2♣ as natural and forcing one round, which could be a balanced invitation. We will respond 2♣ on a game forcing hand even if holding a shorter major suit, but tend to respond in the major when holding only invitational values.

1♦ Natural, 3+♦ (better minor)

1♥	Natural 4+♥, may have longer ♦, may have longer ♣ if less than GF
1♠	Natural 4+♠, may have longer ♦, may have longer ♣ if less than GF
1NT	6-10 hcp, no 4cM, could be unbalanced if not suited for 3♦
2♣	Natural and forcing, on occasion a four-card suit, invitational or better
2♦	10+ hcp, invitational or better, 4+♦, no 4-card major
2♥ ♠	Strong jump shift
2NT	Game force, balanced, no 4-card major, 13-15 or 18+ hcp
3♣	13+ points, 6+♣ with a good suit, game forcing

After 1♦-2♣, we use opener's 2♦ rebid as *artificial*, showing either any minimum hand (could be only three diamonds) or a hand with no clear direction. Other rebids guarantee game-forcing values. After opener's 2♦ rebid, two of a major from responder is game forcing and shows the "better" major (could be three cards on occasion). A 3♦ bid from responder is natural and game forcing. Rebids of 2NT and 3♣ are non-forcing invites.

2.5 Passed hand bidding

Our bidding over 1-minor as a passed hand is similar. The major differences are that most forcing calls become non-forcing. We still play inverted minors, but the inverted bid is now a straight limit raise. Our jump shifts that would normally be strong are instead fit-showing (five or more cards in the suit bid and also four or more in partner's minor, with a good hand).

2.6 Opener's minor suit rebid

Suppose opener bids and rebids a minor. We need some rules about which bids are forcing or non-forcing, and how to establish a game force. This is made easier by our tendency to raise on three-card support, as there's less motivation for responder to try and check back for a 5-3 fit. The basic rules are as follows:

- If responder rebids his suit (at the two or three level), raises opener's minor, or rebids 2NT, this is not forcing. Rebidding responder's suit at the lowest level does not show any interest in game (we will correct here just to improve the partial). The other calls mentioned are invitational.

- If responder *reverses* into a new suit, it establishes a game force. This tends to show the suit reversed into, but a strong three-card holding is acceptable since opener will not normally have a four-card fit regardless.
- If responder *bids a new minor*, it's forcing to game. If the new major bid would be a reverse, then this call tends to show length in the minor named (a strong three-card holding is fine). Otherwise the new minor is simply an artificial game force.
- If responder bids *hearts* after originally naming spades, it simply shows both majors. This is 5-4 or better, and could be quite weak up to game-invitational (but not game forcing) values. It's not forcing, but opener will typically only pass holding three hearts (exactly) and one or fewer spades.

So for example:

1♣-1♠-2♣ : Opener shows 6+♣ (almost always)

- 2♦ Artificial game force; opener should describe as naturally as possible
- 2♥ 5+♠ and 4+♥, not forcing but could be invitational
- 2♠ 6+♠, very discouraging
- 2NT natural invitational
- 3♣ natural invitational
- 3♦ game-forcing 5+♠ and 5+♦
- 3♥ game-forcing 5+♠ and 5+♥
- 3♠ natural invitational

1♦-1♥-2♦ : Opener shows 6+♦

- 2♥ 6+♥, very discouraging
- 2♠ semi-natural reverse, values in ♠
- 2NT natural invitational
- 3♣ semi-natural game-force, values in ♣
- 3♦ natural invitational
- 3♥ natural invitational

2.7 Bidding after interference

Over a double, we play redouble as general values. We use 2NT to show either a weak raise of partner's minor, or a game-forcing minor raise. The direct raise to the three-level after double is a limit raise. In general we play all jump shifts in competition as fit-showing. After double:

1♦-Dbl Presumably double for takeout

- Redbl 10+ hcp, sets up a forcing auction
- 1♥ Natural and forcing
- 1♠ Natural and forcing
- 1NT Something like 6-10 hcp; occasionally has a four-card major
- 2♣ Natural and *not forcing*, at best around 10 hcp
- 2♦ Non-forcing single raise, something like 6-9 with 4+♦
- 2♥ Fit-showing, five or more hearts and a diamond fit
- 2♠ Fit-showing, five or more spades and a diamond fit
- 2NT Either a weak raise to 3♦, or a game-forcing diamond raise
- 3♣ Fit-showing

3♦ Limit raise of diamonds

After an overcall we play negative doubles and new suits forcing. Cuebid is a limit raise or better, with other raises being weak. We still play fit-showing jump shifts.

If opponents interfere after the response to an opening (for example 1♣-Pass-1♦-2♠) then double is *takeout*. This shows at most two cards in the enemy suit, and some support for both the unbid fourth suit and partner's suit. However, it normally denies four-card support for partner. While the takeout double will *usually* include three cards in partner's suit (like a support double), it can occasionally have only doubleton. Direct bids other than pass normally deny the right pattern for a takeout double. If opener passes the bid to responder, responder's double is also for takeout. In response to a takeout double, cuebid of the enemy suit creates a game-force, with other calls being non-forcing (jumps are invitational).

2.8 Fourth suit puppet by opener after responder's 1NT rebid

There are a few auctions in which responder bids 1NT at *second turn*. In these auctions, we use opener's bid of the fourth suit as an artificial puppet. Going through this puppet shows a weaker hand than bidding directly above the puppet. So for example:

1♦-1♥-1♠-1nt Responder's rebid is limited to about 10 hcp

- 2♣ Puppet to 2♦, showing a minimum opening bid
- 2♦ Forced puppet
 - Pass Bad hand with a bunch of diamonds, diamonds not likely to run in 3NT
 - 2♥ Bad correction to 2♥, often 4-3-4-2 or very minimum, normally pass this
 - 2♠ Bad 5-6, normally very minimum values and weak spades (else open 1♠)
 - 2NT Bad invite, typically 16-17 points with singleton heart; 3m here is *not forcing*
- 2♦ Natural, good diamond suit and a non-minimum, responder bids on with a fit
- 2♥ Natural, extras, typically 4-3-5-1 type shape. Not forcing.
- 2♠ Natural, 5♠+6♦, extra values but not enough to force game.
- 2NT Natural, normal invite, probably 18-19 balanced

1♣-1♥-1♠-1nt Responder's rebid is limited to about 10 hcp

- 2♣ Natural, not forcing
- 2♦ Puppet to 2♥, showing a minimum
 - 2♥ Forced puppet
 - Pass Bad hand with 3♥, typically 4-3-2-4 or 4-3-1-5 very minimum
 - 2♠ Bad 5-6 hand, usually very poor spades (else open 1♠)
 - 2NT Bad invite, typically 16-17 points and singleton heart; 3m here is *not forcing*
- 2♥ Natural, extras but not forcing
- 2♠ Good 5-6 hand, reverse strength but NF
- 2NT 18-19 balanced or equivalent

3 Major Suit Openings

Our responses to major suit openings are fairly standard in style. Our 1NT response is limited to at most a bad ten count, and *denies* support for opener's major. Our two-over-ones are forcing and unlimited, but only show invitational values. Typically this is ten or more points, but it can be even lighter with a strong six-card suit or a very shapely hand that will be hard to describe after a 1NT response. Our general policy is to support with support especially on non-game forcing hands: with a limit raise for opener we will show

this directly and not temporize with a two-over-one bid. Thus the new suit calls deny a fit for opener unless forcing to game values. We also play somewhat nonstandard strong jump shifts to the three level. These show a good six-card or longer suit and deny a fit for opener or a four-card side suit. However, the strong jump does not particularly show extra values (could be 12-13 points); we use these bids because bidding and rebidding a new suit is generally not forcing. Here are the responses to 1♥:

- 1♠ Natural, 4+♠, can have a longer minor if less than game forcing values
- 1NT 6-10 points, no heart fit, no 4♠, not forcing
- 2♣ 4+♣ and at least invitational; if balanced this is a good 10+ points
- 2♦ 4+♦ and at least invitational; if balanced this is a good 10+ points
- 2♥ Normal single raise, 3+♥
- 2♠ Strong jump; 5+♠ with a good suit (if only 5♠ will have 3+♥ also)
- 2NT Limit raise or better; if a limit raise will be either “bad” or game forcing
- 3♣ ♦ Game force jump shift with a good 6+ card suit, no 3♥, no 4-card side suit
- 3♥ “Good” limit raise
- 3♠ Game-forcing heart raise with singleton or void spade
- 3NT Natural; 3334 or 3343 pattern with 13-15 points
- 4♣ ♦ Game-forcing heart raise with singleton or void in the bid suit
- 4♥ Natural and preemptive, at most 8 or 9 high (else 2NT)

We distinguish limit raises into several categories:

1. Bad limit raises often have only three trumps. If four trumps, they are usually hands with single-raise values but shortness somewhere, or hands with 4333-type shape.
2. Good limit raises usually have four trumps. There are rare exceptions for very prime hands with side shortness.
3. Game forcing limit raises normally have five trumps. These are hands that are worth a game force because of shape and fit, but have only 9-11 points in high cards.

3.1 Bidding after Raises

After the strong raise of a major suit opening (2NT), opener must take care not to bid above three of the agreed major if holding minimum values. Otherwise, opener normally shows shortness. Bidding three of the major is signoff opposite a bad limit raise (of course responder can bid on with a game force). Followups other than bidding a new suit at the lowest level or rebidding three of the trump suit establish a game force, with 3NT “nonserious” indicating a minimum accept of a limit raise and four-level bids being cuebids without shortage. So opener’s rebids after 1♥-2NT are:

- 3♣ Singleton or void in clubs
- 3♦ Singleton or void in diamonds
- 3♥ Minimum opening; no minor suit shortness (maybe short spade)
- 3♠ Game values (at least a very good 14), singleton or void in spade
- 3NT Normally around 15-16 high with balanced shape, not really slam interested
- 4♣ Cuebid; ace or king of clubs; no short suit, slam interest opposite limit raise
- 4♦ Cuebid; ace or king of diamonds; no short suit, slam interest opposite limit raise
- 4♥ Long hearts (at least six) but no shortness and minimum values

After opener’s rebid, responder can bid game with no further interest. This normally shows a minimum game force which is made worse by partner’s shortness (wasted cards) or a limit raise that improves to a

game force based on partner's shortness. If responder has a little extra, then 3nt indicates mild slam interest. With a lot extra, cuebid. In any case responder's 3M rebid is non-forcing and shows a limit raise. So for example after 1♥-2NT-3♣:

- 3♦ Cuebid, game forcing, slam interested
- 3♥ Limit raise values only, not much improved by partner's club shortage
- 3♠ Cuebid, game forcing, slam interested
- 3NT Game force with mild interest in slam, gives partner the chance to take over
- 4♣ Cuebid, game forcing, slam interested (should be the *ace* of clubs opposite shortage)
- 4♥ Signoff, very discouraging of slam

After a direct three-level raise (the good limit raise) opener can pass, bid game, or choose to cuebid or bid keycard. After a two-level single raise we play natural game tries.

3.2 Two-over-one Auctions

Our two over one bids are *not* necessarily game forcing. Over a 2♣ bid, we use opener's 2♦ call as a "catch-all" with minimum values, or with a natural diamond bid, or various awkward hands. Bidding 2♥ (if the initial major was spades) is natural and not necessarily game forcing, so 2♦ would deny four hearts. However, all other rebids by opener establish a game force (and are natural). So after 1♠-2♣:

- 2♦ Catch-all, either diamonds or a minimum hand without four hearts
- 2♥ Natural, 4+♥, forcing but could be a minimum opening
- 2♠ 6+♠, game forcing
- 2NT Natural, game force
- 3♣ 3+♣, game force
- 3♦ 5+♦ (natural) and maximum, forcing to game, values normally in suits
- 3♥ 5+♥ (natural) and maximum, forcing to game, values normally in suits
- 3♠ 6+♠ with a very strong suit, this sets trumps

If a game force is not established, then responder's *non-forcing* rebids are two of opener's major, 2NT, three of responder's suit, and three of opener's second suit *if it was a natural second suit bid* (this applies only when opener bids 1♠ and rebids 2♥). The fourth suit is artificial and forcing to game, and raising an artificial diamond rebid or bidding the third suit in an auction like 1♠-2♦-2♠ also creates a force.

If the two-over-one bid is not in clubs, then opener's major at the two-level is the catch-all. This is forcing and could be a natural rebid (six-card suit) or any hand with no cheaper natural rebid that is not strong enough to force game. Bids by opener above two of the original suit are forcing to game (this includes 2NT and a raise of responder's suit to the three-level). After opener's catch-all, raising opener's suit to the three-level is forcing (we don't try to play potential 5-2 fits and we also don't make two-over-ones with limit raises of opener's suit). So after 1♥-2♦-2♥:

- 2♠ Natural and game forcing
- 2NT Natural and not forcing
- 3♣ Natural and game forcing
- 3♦ Natural and non-forcing (invite)
- 3♥ Game forcing agrees hearts
- 3♠ Game force heart splinter
- 3NT To play

3.3 Heart Raises after 1♠-2m-2♥

Opener's 2♥ rebid neither confirms nor denies extra values, so responder's raise to 3♥ is *not forcing*. We will need some forcing heart raises in order to look for slam. There are basically four ways to raise to 4♥:

1. A direct 4♥ bid over 2♥ shows a very minimum hand.
2. Rebidding four of responder's minor as in 1♠-2m-2♥-4m shows slam interest in hearts with a strong minor suit (normally two of the top three honors).
3. Rebidding four of the other minor shows first or second round control there (which could be shortness) in a slam interested heart raise. Usually bid the cheaper minor at the four-level if both descriptions are accurate.
4. Bidding the fourth suit at the three-level and then correcting to hearts shows a slam interested heart raise not well-described by either 4m jump.

3.4 Gazilli over 1♥-1NT

After a major-suit opening and one-level response, we use opener's 2♣ rebid as an artificial force. This could be a minimum hand (with clubs if hearts were opened, with hearts if spades were opened) but also encompasses most 17+ hcp hands. In general responder bids 2♦ with enough to force game opposite the strong option, and otherwise makes a fairly natural weakness-showing bid. The structure over 1♥-1NT is as follows:

- 2♣ Gazilli; either 4+♣ or 17+ hcp (forcing)
- 2♦ 8-10 hcp (game values opposite 17+); artificial and forcing
 - 2♥ 5+♥ and 4+♣, 11-16 hcp, if maximum usually 5-4 only
 - 2♠ 4+♠ and 5+♥, 17+ hcp (game forcing)
 - 2NT 17-20 balanced, game forcing
 - 3♣ 5+♥ and 4+♣, 17+ hcp, game forcing
 - 3♦ 5+♥ and 4+♦, 17+ hcp, game forcing
 - 3♥ 6+♥, 17+ hcp, game forcing
 - 2♥ 5-7 hcp, usually 2♥
 - Pass To play; can be up to 17-18 hcp, need not have clubs
 - 2♠ GF reverse, 19+ hcp, or 17-18 with 5-6 or better
 - 2NT 19-20 balanced
 - 3♣♦ Natural and forcing, 19+ hcp or 17-18 with 5-5 or better
 - 3♥ Invitational, strong one-suited heart hand
 - 2NT 5-7 hcp with 5-5 or better in the minors
 - 3♣♦ 5-7 hcp with 6+ in the bid suit, usually 0-1♥
 - 2♦ Natural, 11-16 hcp 4+♦, if 10 cards in ♥+♦ usually 11-13
 - 2♥ Natural, 6+♥ and 11-14 hcp
 - 2♠ 4+♠ and 6+♥ with 14-16 hcp
 - 2NT 6+♥ and a 4-card minor; 14-16 hcp (forcing)
 - 3♣ Asking for the minor (forcing)
 - 3♦ 4+♦
 - 3♥ 4+♣
 - 3♦ Natural

- 3♥ Very bad balanced hand with 2♥
- 3♣ 5+♣ and 14-16 high, points in the round suits
- 3♦ 5+♦ and 14-16 high, points in ♥ and ♦
- 3♥ a very good 14 to 16 hcp, 6+♥
- 3NT semi-gambling; solid ♥ and side cards, can be j 16 hcp

3.5 Gazilli over 1♥-1♠

Over 1♥-1♠ things are a bit different because responder may have a game-forcing hand opposite even a minimum opener. On the other hand, responder is known to have spades, making a 5-5 minors hand impossible. In this auction after the gazilli 2♣ we use 3-level suit bids as natural and game force, and 2NT as a sort of lebensohl with a long minor suit and shorter spades.

- 1NT 12-14 balanced or singleton spade, 3♠ rare
- 2♣ Gazilli; either 4+♣ or 17+ hcp (forcing)
 - 2♦ 8+ hcp; artificial and forcing; if GF values usually balanced
 - 2♥ 11-16 hcp with 4+♣ (if ten cards in ♥+♣ usually 11-13)
 - 2♠ 6+♠ with 8-10 hcp
 - 2NT Invitational with a good 10 to bad 12
 - 3♣ Preference, usually 4+♣ with 8-11 hcp
 - 3♦ Fourth suit forcing to game; typically balanced without ♦ stop
 - 3♥ Invitational; limit raise values
 - 3♠ Very invitational (11-12 hcp)
 - 3NT To play; balanced with game values
 - 2♠ 17+ hcp with 3+♠ (game forcing)
 - 2NT 17+ hcp balanced or short spades; 1-2♠
 - 3♣ 17+ hcp 4+♣
 - 3♦ 17+ hcp 4+♦
 - 3♥ 17+ hcp 6+♥
 - 3♠ 17+ hcp 4+♠
 - 2♥ 2♥, 5-7 hcp
 - 2♠ usually 6+♠ (rarely 5♠) with 5-7 hcp
 - 2NT Lebensohl; ♠ and a 5+ card minor with 5-7 hcp, 0-1♥
 - 3♣ Natural and game forcing, 5+♠ and 4+♣
 - 3♦ Natural and game forcing, 5+♠ and 4+♦
 - 3♥ Natural and game forcing, 5+♠ and 3+♥
 - 3♠ Natural and game forcing, 6+♠
- 2♦ Natural 11-16 hcp 4+♦, if 10 cards in ♥+♦ usually 11-13
- 2♥ Natural 6+♥ 11-14 hcp
- 2♠ Normal ♠ raise; 3-4♠ and fairly minimum
- 2NT 6+♥ and a 4-card minor; 14-16 hcp (forcing)
 - 3♣ Asks second suit (forcing)
 - Else Natural and GF
- 3♣ 5+♣ and 14-16 high
- 3♦ 5+♦ and 14-16 high

- 3♥ 6+♥ and a very good 14 to 16 hcp
- 3♠ 4♠ and a strong but non-forcing raise

If opener bids gazilli and partner shows a *bad hand* by bidding above 2♦, then if opener bids a suit which has already been shown (either opener's original suit at the cheapest level, or responder's suit if the auction started 1♥-1♠) then this shows a strong hand but is not forcing. If opener bids notrump at the cheapest level this is also not forcing. Any other bid by opener shows a strong hand and establishes a one-round force. The exception is bidding a minor over responder's 2NT (which is not forcing since responder requested a minor suit bid).

3.6 Modified Gazilli over 1♠-1NT

After 1♠-1NT, we use 2♣ as artificial showing *hearts* or 17+. This allows us to find all heart fits, and also removes some "problem" hands that would exist if 2♣ showed clubs or a strong hand. Here's the full set of bids after 1♠-1NT:

- 2♣ Either 4+♥ or 17+ hcp artificial (not 5-5 in two suits)
 - 2♦ 8-10 hcp; game values opposite 17+; artificial
 - 2♥ 5+♠ and 4+♥ with 11-16 hcp, if maximum not 10 cards in suits
 - 2♠ 5+♠ and 4+♥ with 17+ hcp; game forcing
 - 2NT Natural and game force
 - 3♣ 5+♠ and 4♣, game forcing
 - 3♦ 5+♠ and 4♦, game forcing
 - 3♠ 6+♠ and 19+ hcp, game forcing one-suiter
- 2♥ 5-7 hcp, prefer ♥ to ♠ (3-5♥)
 - 2♠ 17-18 hcp without 4♥, not particularly forward-going
 - 2NT 19+ hcp natural
 - 3♣ 5+♠ and 4♣, 19+ hcp, game force
 - 3♦ 5+♠ and 4♦, 19+ hcp, game force
 - 3♥ 5+♠ and 4♥, 19+ hcp, choice of games
 - 3♠ 6+♠ and game force (19+ usually)
- 2♠ 5-7 hcp, prefer ♠ to ♥ (2♠ and 0-3♥)
- 2NT 5-7 hcp and 5-5 or better minors
- 3♣ 5-7 hcp and 6+♣, usually 0-1♠ and 0-2♥
- 3♦ 5-7 hcp and 6+♦, usually 0-1♠ and 0-2♥
- 3♥ 5-7 hcp and 6+♥
- 2♦ 5+♠ and 4+♦, 11-16 hcp, if maximum tends not to be ten cards in the suits
- 2♥ 6+♠ and 11-16 hcp; artificial and almost forcing
- Pass 6+♥, 0-1♠, fairly minimum values
- 2♠ Would pass a 2♠ rebid
 - Pass Minimum, 11-14 hcp
 - 2NT Extras, 15-17 hcp with 6+♠ but not a good suit
 - 3♣ ♦ ♥ Natural, 14-16 hcp and 6-4 or better, not forcing
 - 3♠ Natural, good 14-16 hcp and 6+♠, a good suit
- 2NT 5-5 or better in two suits, not including spades
- 3♣ ♦ ♥ Natural, six card suit, at most 1♠
- 3♠ Good hand with 2♠

- 2♠ 5+♠ and 4+♣, 11-16 hcp, if maximum tends not to be ten cards in the suits (NF)
- 2NT **Game forcing** with 5+♠ and 5+ in a side suit, 18+ hcp typically
- 3♣ 5+♠ and 5+♣, 14-17 or so, points in suits if minimum, not forcing
- 3♦ 5+♠ and 5+♦, 14-17 or so, points in suits if minimum, not forcing
- 3♥ 5+♠ and 5+♥, 14-17 or so, points in suits if minimum, not forcing
- 3♠ 6+♠ and 17-18 hcp (with less rebid 2♥, with more rebid 2♣).

4 1NT Auctions

We play the walsh structure over our 1NT openings. This works as follows:

- 2♣ Stayman; could be weak if short clubs or both majors
- 2♦ Transfer to ♥; always 5+♥
- 2♥ Transfer to ♠; always 5+♠
- 2♠ Minor suit stayman; maybe weak with ♦ or weak with both minors
- 2NT Signoff in ♣ or a game-forcing three-suiter
- 3♣ ♦ Natural and invitational
- 3♥ ♠ Natural and game forcing; 5+ cards
- 3NT To play
- 4♣ Gerber
- 4♦ Transfer to ♥; 6+♥
- 4♥ Transfer to ♠; 6+♠

Here are the followups to stayman:

- 2♦ No four card major
 - Pass Weak, three-suited short in clubs (can be 3451-ish)
 - 2♥ Weak with both majors; usually ♥ ≥ ♠
 - 2♠ Invitational with 5♠; usually 4♥ also
 - 2NT Invitational, may or may not have a four-card major
 - 3♣ ♦ Natural and game forcing; 5+ cards in the suit
 - 3♥ ♠ Five+ cards in the *other* major, game forcing, usually 4 in bid major
 - 3NT To play
- 2♥ Four-plus hearts, maybe spades also
 - Pass Weak hand including 3+♥
 - 2♠ Invitational with four spades; not forcing
 - 2NT Invitational without a four-card major
 - 3♣ ♦ Natural and game forcing; 5+ cards in the suit
 - 3♥ Natural invite
 - 3♠ Artificial slam try in hearts; asks for cuebids
 - 3NT To play, but implies 4♠
 - 4♣ ♦ Splinter raise of hearts
 - 4♥ To play
 - 4NT Quantitative; implies 4♠
- 2♠ Four-plus spades, normally not 4♥

2NT	Invitational; may or may not have 4-card major
3♣ ♠	Natural and game forcing; 5+ cards in the suit
3♥	Artificial slam try in spades; asks for cuebids
3♠	Invitational
3NT	To play; usually includes 4♥
4♣ ♠ ♥	Splinter raise of spades
4♠	To play
4NT	Quantitative, implies 4♥

After a two-level transfer, responder's 2♠ bid shows invitational values with 5♥ and 4♠. A 2NT rebid or 3M raise shows an invitational hand. All three-level new suit continuations are natural and game forcing, but don't necessarily show serious slam interest. Jumps to four in a new suit are splinters for the major, jumps to four of a major are mild slam tries, jump to 3NT is choice of games, jump to 4NT is quantitative. After a four-level transfer, 4NT is 1430 keycard and other bids are cuebids agreeing the suit.

After the minor suit stayman bid, 3♣ is weak with both minors and 3♦ is weak diamonds. Three of a major is a cuebid for the minor partner named (if any) or a splinter (if partner rebid 2NT denying a four card minor). Minor suit stayman followed by 3NT normally indicates a mild slam try, but preferring the other minor if partner named a minor suit.

After the 2NT call, opener will always bid 3♣. This can be passed with a club signoff, or else responder bids a singleton. Responder's 3NT here shows a club singleton and is not forcing, whereas 4♣ by responder is a serious slam try with short clubs.

4.1 Interference in 1NT Auctions

If opponents double our 1NT or bid 2♣, we will play systems on. Redouble of a double is an attempt to run (asks partner to bid a reasonable suit) whereas pass of a penalty double is to play.

If the opponents bid 2♦ through 2♠, in most cases we play lebensohl (direct three-level bids forcing, direct 3NT denies a stopper, 2NT forces 3♣ and followed by three-level is weaker, 2NT followed by 3NT shows a stopper). If opponents make a bid which shows *two known suits* neither of which is the suit bid, then we play unusual vs. unusual (double shows values and desire to penalize, bidding "their" suits show our suits with lower showing lower and higher showing higher).

If opponents double a stayman or transfer bid, then opener's *normal rebid* shows *either* a real fit for the suit partner showed *or* a stopper in the suit opponents doubled (i.e. clear direction if responder continues with an invite or 3NT bid). Opener's redouble shows desire to play the redoubled contract. Opener's pass *denies* either of a known major suit fit or a stopper in the enemy suit. In this case responder's *redouble is forcing* and asks opener to make the normal rebid. Note that responder, who is sitting in front of the doubler, can never make a "business redouble" in these situations, whereas opener (behind the doubler) can redouble for business.

5 2♣ Auctions

In response to our strong 2♣, we play 2♦ as an artificial game force. Responder's 2♥ shows a really lousy hand and other bids are natural and game forcing (2NT shows hearts). After 2♣-2♦, opener's 2NT rebid is wide-ranging (but game forcing) and opener can bid on over a signoff with 25 or more points.

If opponents make a natural bid over our 2♣ opening, then responder's double shows a bad hand (pass shows game values, suit bids are natural and game force). If opponents make an artificial call *that cannot contain the suit bid* then we reverse these meanings (so double shows a good hand and pass shows weakness). In any case a double by opener in such an auction is takeout oriented (two-level) or penalty (three-level) as per our normal double agreements.

6 Doubles

Doubles are one of the more confusing agreements. We try to keep our definitions for doubles simple. Here are the basic rules:

1. Doubles of natural suit bids $2\spadesuit$ or below are normally takeout-oriented. These doubles will only be for penalty in the following situations:
 - (a) Partner opened the bidding with 1NT or a weak two bid, or partner has overcalled a natural 1NT or a weak jump overcall.
 - (b) We have already bid and raised a suit.
 - (c) Partner made a takeout double indicating support for the suit opponents just bid.
 - (d) We have previously made a double or redouble which indicated desire to penalize.
2. Doubles of natural suit bids $3\clubsuit$ through $4\heartsuit$ are normally penalty-oriented. However, there are several exceptions to this:
 - (a) If doubler has never made a bid other than pass or double, and doubler's partner has never doubled for takeout and has bid at most one suit, then double is takeout.
 - (b) If doubler's partner has never made a bid other than pass and doubler has bid at most one suit, then double is takeout.
 - (c) In some situations double is "general values" if a true penalty double seems very unlikely to make sense. However, these doubles are still normally left in unless partner holds a very offensive-oriented hand that has not been shown by the preceding auction.
3. Doubles of natural suit bids $4\spadesuit$ and above are normally general values and suggest defending. These are typically left in unless partner holds a very distributional hand, but they do not necessarily indicate trump strength.

If the opponents make a bid which shows two suits *including the suit bid* then we generally treat their bid as though it were simply natural. If the opponents make an artificial bid that *cannot* show the bid suit, then double shows general values and normally a defensive-oriented hand. If the opponents make a bid which is guessing at a suit partner might hold (pass or correct) then double is as though their suit bid were natural.

7 Cuebids and Bidding in Competition

When can bidding a suit named by the opponents be natural? What are the other possible meanings? Our rules are the following:

- If partner has bid a suit naturally, then a call in a suit bid naturally by the opponents cannot be natural ($1\clubsuit$ - P - $1\heartsuit$ - $1\spadesuit$; P - $2\clubsuit$ artificial).
- If only one suit has ever been bid, and the opponents bid it first naturally, then bidding it cannot be natural ($1\clubsuit$ - P - 1NT - $2\clubsuit$ artificial).
- If the opponents have bid *and raised* a suit, then bidding it cannot be natural ($1\spadesuit$ - P - $2\spadesuit$ - $3\spadesuit$ artificial).
- In other situations where opponents have bid two or more suits and partner has never bid a natural suit, bidding a suit named by the opponents is often natural ($1\clubsuit$ - P - $1\spadesuit$ - $2\spadesuit$ natural; $1\clubsuit$ - P - $1\spadesuit$ - P - $2\spadesuit$ - $3\clubsuit$ natural).

If bidding the opponents' suit isn't natural, what does it mean? This depends upon whether partner has bid a suit naturally. We have the following rules:

- If partner has never bid a suit naturally, then an artificial bid in the opponents' suit *at the two-level* can only occur when this is the only suit bid in the auction. This cuebid is Michaels, showing a two-suiter which includes any unbid major.
- If partner has never bid a suit naturally, then an artificial bid in the opponents' suit *at the three-level* is normally a stopper ask (1♠- 3♠ stopper ask; 1♠- P - 2♠- 3♠ stopper ask).
- If partner has never bid a suit naturally, then an artificial bid in the opponents' suit *at the four-level* normally shows an unspecified strong two-suiter (3♣- 4♣ two-suited).
- If partner *has* bid a suit naturally, then cuebidding the opponents suit shows *either* of a strong raise of partner, *or* a really big hand with no clear direction. Usually this will be made clear by cuebidder's next call.

Bidding a new suit (never before bid by anyone) is normally natural. While there are situations where it might be reasonable for such a call to be a control showing bid agreeing partner's last bid suit, we don't play it that way unless we've agreed the suit in a clear way earlier in the auction.

8 Defense to Opponents Openings

8.1 Defense to Opponents Notrump

If our opponents open a strong notrump (min ≥ 14) or if we are a passed hand, we play the following structure:

- Dbl shows a major-minor two suiter
- 2♣ shows both majors (normally 5-4)
- 2♦ ♥ ♠ are natural, usually six card suits
- 2NT unusual for the minors
- 3♣ natural, fairly wide range of values

After the 2♣ call, partner can sign off in a major or bid 2♦ (asking for longer major). If the 2♣ call is doubled, then redouble is rescue (pick a major) and 2♦ becomes natural.

After the double, advancer's 2♣ asks for a five-card suit. Doubler should pass with five clubs and a shorter major. Advancer's 2♦ asks for the major. Major suit bids by advancer are natural (suit of his own). After opener corrects, if responder bids again, the lowest suit of the other rank is pass/correct, and a 2NT call asks for the second suit and strength (low min/high min/low max/high max).

If the opponents bid on over the double, then a subsequent double of a natural suit is takeout, and a double of a transfer bid shows four cards in the bid suit (not the suit transferred to).

If a single suited hand is shown, a subsequent double by partner is penalty (much as if a weak two had been opened).

8.1.1 Vs Weak NT

If our opponents open a weak notrump and we are UPH, we play the following methods (Stayman):

- Dbl penalty, 15+ hcp in direct seat, or lighter with a runnable minor
- 2♣ both majors or 4M and longer minor, normally 10-15 hcp
- 2♦ ♥ ♠ natural, normally 10-15 hcp
- 2NT ♣, around 10-15 hcp and 6+ cards
- 3X preemptive

A balancing double of 1NT could be as light as 12 hcp, and is just “values” asking partner to act if possible.

If partner pulls a double of weak notrump, this normally shows a weak hand unsuited to defense. A jump-pull shows shape and invites game. If we are in a sequence where 1NT doubled or redoubled may be passed out, then partner of the doubler can bid 2♣ “fix-it” for rescue. This is an artificial bid asking partner to take action.

If the opponents run after a double of their weak notrump, the first subsequent double of a suit contract by our side is *takeout*. Later doubles as the scramble continues are penalty oriented.

8.2 Defense to Artificial Strong Bids

At vulnerable, we play *Mathe*. This means double shows both majors, notrump bids show both minors, and other calls are natural.

At nonvulnerable, we play psycho-suction. Bidding any suit shows *either* the suit bid or the two suits above (so for example a 1♠ overcall of a strong club is either ♠ or both minors). Most followups are pass or correct. Notrump calls show two non-touching suits.

We play these same methods in auctions starting with a strong 1♣ or 2♣ and following up with a negative or waiting response in diamonds.

8.3 Defense to Flannery

If opponents open 2♦ flannery, then *double* is takeout of hearts and 2♥ shows *both minors or an off-shape “power double”*. Other bids are generally natural (including 2♠) with 2NT being 16-18ish.

8.4 Defense to Weak Two bids

Over weak two bids we play fairly natural methods but include leaping Michaels and a stopper-asking cuebid. Thus over 2♥ weak:

- X Takeout; can be a bit off-shape if extras but always includes 3+♠
- 3♥ Ask for a heart stopper, often a hand with a minor but too strong to bid 3m.
- 3♠ Natural and strong, but not actually forcing
- 3NT To play; tends to deny interest in spades; with 3+♠ we double first.
- 4♣ Game forcing with 5+♣ and 5+♠
- 4♦ Game forcing with 5+♦ and 5+♠
- 4♠ Stronger than 3♠

We also play lebensohl when advancing partner’s takeout double. After lebensohl, if opener rebids 3♦ and not 3♣, this is *artificial* and shows a very strong hand. Partner can now bid three of a major with four cards, 3NT with a stopper in the opposing suit, or three of the opponents major with neither of the above (to ask doubler for a stop).

9 General Competitive Style

We like to raise partner in competition. When partner overcalls or opens, we will virtually always raise with a fit and single-raise values, and occasionally raise to the two-level on *less* than single raise values. Such a raise *does not imply* that the suit raised will be a good lead, there is no indication of an honor in the suit even with minimum strength.

Opposite a passed hand, our preempts will *not* typically include *both* of a good suit and multiple outside cards. While there is some possibility to pressure the opponents with such a hand, we find ourselves often forced to make the last guess after preempting a good hand. With this in mind, partner will frequently

not lead the preempt suit from shortness against a 3NT contract by the opposition. In other words, while a non-jump overcall is fairly lead directional, a jump overcall does not suggest leading the preempt suit against notrump unless holding length there or holding no other suitable lead.

We like to bid on distributional hands, especially when the hand includes primary spades or when the opponents open $1\heartsuit$ and we have primary clubs. An overcall will generally promise at least one of: a good suit, a good hand, or shape. Note that we will occasionally bid bad five card majors on weak hands when holding 5-5 distribution (for example). Two level overcalls in clubs over a $1\heartsuit$ opening can be somewhat suspect (not a terrible hand, but not necessarily a full opening bid). We also tend to be somewhat aggressive in overcalling after the opponents' forcing 1NT response to a major; we have no special agreements about these auctions, but it's not infrequent to overcall with a hand resembling a sound weak two bid in an unbid suit.

Our two level preempts are usually six card suits. Exceptions are rare, but sometimes at vulnerable we will bid only to the two level with seven trumps, and at nonvulnerable we may preempt with five. The five card preempt is invariably a good suit (two of top three honors) and not normally 5332 pattern.

In response to a takeout double, when holding both unbid majors and a hand too weak to cuebid, we will typically bid *spades*. While the hand may be "worth" only one bid, sometimes the subsequent auction forces a second call, in which case we will be glad to have bid spades first and hearts later (instead of reversing). With this in mind, it sometimes pays to make takeout doubles more aggressively with four spades rather than four hearts.