

# **A Standard American Bridge System**

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This document has been created as a guide only for bridge players who want a quick reference to various conventions commonly used in the system called “Standard American” used in modern Bridge play today.

It is by no means meant to be a “gospel” of any sort in bidding, there being many variations to the guidelines it gives. It is meant instead to be a helping hand for bridge partnerships to reach a consensus on the system they are using.

Please advise the author of any errors you may find or any changes you may wish by sending an email to:

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1. Calculate the value of your hand initially by assigning “High Card Points” (HCP) to particular cards in your hand as follows:

<u>For each</u>	<u>Assign</u>
Ace	4
King	3
Queen	2
Jack	1`

No other points are used in calculating the HCP.(i.e. do not use “length points” which you may have read about elsewhere since this is covered by “The Rule Of 20” mentioned under item 40)

When a “Fit” is found with partner (i.e. the partnership holds at least 8 cards in a suit between the two partners) then each partner can add “Distribution Points” (DP) to their HCP, giving what is called TP or “Total Points” as follows:

For each Void add 5HCP

For singleton add 3 HCP

For doubleton add 1 HCP

(so  $TP = HCP + DP$ )

Do not “double-dip” with assigning TP’s though

If you have already assigned HCP to the suit do not add TP to that suit as well UNLESS you are sure each honor card will win a trick.

e,g,

“Ax” add 1 TP for doubleton

“Kx” or “KQ” do NOT add TP

“AQ” do NOT add TP (Q may be caught)

“AK” add 1 TP since both cards will win

“KJ” do not add TP (BOTH might be caught!)

2. “Open” (start the bidding at the table) as follows:
- with 12+HCP always open
  - with 10/11 HCP open if “[Rule of 20](#)” works (see item 40)
  - with 6-10 HCP and only when playing [Multi-2s](#) you may also open at the TWO level (see item 43)
  - with 6-10 HCP and not playing [Multi-Twos](#) open if your hand fits the “Weak” criteria as outlined in item 14.

3. Open with your longest suit.

With two majors of equal length open 1♠ unless you have 16+HCP, in which case you open 1♥ (refer [“Reverses”](#) under item 31)

With no 5+ card Major open “[Longer Minor](#)”.  
If both minors are of equal length, open 1♣

4. If you have fewer than 12 HCP use the rule of 20 to see if hand is worth opening (item 40) no matter what position you are at the table.

5. Opening 1♥ or 1♠ guarantees at least 5 ♥/♠  
(See item 2 above to decide which major to open)

6. Opening 1♣ or 1♦ guarantees 3 or more ♣/♦  
(See item 2 above to decide which minor to open)

**7. Opening 1NT:**

You are guaranteeing:

15-17 HCP

No more than 1 doubleton

No singleton

No Void

A doubleton is a holding of TWO cards in a suit and a singleton is a holding of ONE card in a suit, and a “Void” is a hand in which there is NO card in a particular suit.

Such a hand is called a “Balanced” Hand.

**8. Overcalling 1NT**

You are guaranteeing:

15-18 HCP (Note the extra range)

No more than 1 doubleton

No singleton

No Void

(i.e. a Balanced Hand)

PLUS a “Stopper” in any opponents’ suit/suits

## 9. Stayman

Simple Stayman is a 2♣ response to a 1NT opening or Overcall.

The aim is to find a fit in a major and promises 8+HCP, a four card major and at least one doubleton or singleton. (Do not use Stayman with 4333 shape).

- Response by opener is to either bid a four card major ("up the line") or to respond 2♦ being artificial and showing NO four card major. Bidding must stop at either 2NT, 3NT or game in a major.

## 10. Transfers to a major:

You use transfers to a major under the following circumstance:

- Partner has opened 1NT
- You hold 5+ cards in a major suit

To transfer to a major, bid the suit immediately under your longest major

e.g. With 5+ ♥ bid 2♦

With 5+ ♠ bid 2♥

Partner must bid next suit up:

(i.e. 2♥ → 2♠ .2♦ → 2♥)

If opener has both MAXIMUM points (18) and FOUR cards in the suit to which he/she is transferring, then the transfer should be made at the THREE level (called “super accepting”):

(i.e. 2♥ → 3♠.....2♦ → 3♥)

After a transfer the responder is in control! Opener should not bid again unless responder makes a forcing bid (e.g. asking for Aces via Blackwood, or asking for a 4 card major via Stayman)

## 11. Transfers to a minor:

You use transfers to a minor under the following circumstance:

- Partner has opened 1NT
- You hold 6+ cards in a minor suit  
(Note SIX CARDS are required)
- You do not have a four card major and 8+TP
- You feel 1NT could be dangerous  
(e.g. you have no stoppers in short suits)

To transfer to a minor, bid TWO ranks immediately under your longest minor

e.g. With 6+♣ bid 2♠

With 6+♦ bid 2NT

Partner must bid TWO ranks up:

(i.e. 2♠ → 3♣    2NT → 3♦)

There is no super accept for transfer to a minor.

The Opener must then rebid in the appropriate minor at the lowest level.



**12. ALL RESPONSES TO OPENING 1NT ARE ARTIFICIAL** (except 2NT if not playing transfers to minors)

If playing transfers to minors, to invite game with a 8/9 HCP and a balanced hand, bid 2♣, then respond 2NT to any response by opener (opener must answer as if Stayman is being used). NB You MAY indeed find a four card fit with a major you hold using this method!

If NOT playing transfers to minors, to invite game with a 8/9 HCP and a balanced hand, bid 2NT. Opener will rebid 3NT with 16/17 HCP.

If opponents intervene over a 1NT opening and bid the suit which responder wished to use to signal a Transfer/Stayman, then responder should DOUBLE. Opener then knows that responder is saying “they stole my bid!!” (these doubles are not alerted)

All bids are natural over a “jump overcall” when opener opens 1NT and any double by responder over such a jump opposite a 1NT opening is for penalty.

If opponents intervene with a bid over a 1NT opening and responder has nothing, then he/she should PASS. If responder thinks game is on then he/she should bid something so that opener then knows that a bid for game contract is being made.

Do not transfer to a minor if you have 8+ HCP and you hold a 4 card major (use Stayman instead).

### 13. Inverted Minors:

If partner opens 1 in a minor, a response of 2 or 3 of that minor shows the following:

- a. No 4 card major
- b. An unbalanced hand
- c. Point range as follows:

Opener	Responder	Shows
1C.....	2C	10-11 TP with 5+ C
1D.....	2D	10-11 TP with 5+ D
1C.....	3C	6-9 TP with 5+ C
1D.....	3D	6-9 TP with 5+ D

This method of bidding is an “inversion” of the normal “limit raise”, hence the name. It must be alerted.

### 14. Weak 2 Openings (non multi-twos)

You can either use 2♥/2♠ to show weak openings or preferably use Multi-Twos (refer “Multi-Twos”).

#### Opening 2♥/2♠: (Weak)

NO VOID!!!

6-10 HCP

8/9 Losers

6+ ♥/♠

Holding Good Honors:

(at least 2 of top 3 honors

OR 3 of top 5 honors)

**15. “Cue Raise” of partner’s overcall**

When partner overcalls there are four ways to respond:

	Partner’s		Overcall
a. Opener	Overcall	Responder	Response
1C	1S	1NT	2S/3S/4S

A simple raise (to whatever level) shows 6-9TP and indicates the NUMBER of cards held in the agreed suit between the overcallers (e.g. 4S would show 10 cards between the pair, 5 from overcaller and 5 from overcaller’s responder)

	Partner’s		Overcall
b. Opener	Overcall	Responder	Response
1C	1S	1NT	2C (Cue Raise)

A “cue” raise (bidding opponents suit) shows 10+TP and a fit with the overcaller (at least 3 cards in overcaller’s suit). Overcaller will take the contract to the correct level if needed and must not leave the responder in the opponent’s suit.

	Partner’s		Overcall
c. Opener	Overcall	Responder	Response
1C	1H	1NT	X

A “first-bid” double that is not following an opening bid is called a “negative double” – it nearly always shows an unbid major (and perhaps not enough points to bid above the 1 level). In the above example

the double shows spades but not enough points to bid at the 2 level.(OR perhaps enough HCP but only FOUR spades.....bidding a NEW major at the 2 level or above always shows 5+ cards)

	Partner's		Overcall
d. Opener	Overcall	Responder	Response
1C	1H	Pass	1S

A bid of a new suit by an overcaller always shows enough points to bid at the level of the bidding AND at least 5 cards in the suit with good honors (2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5).

16. “DONT” - overcalling strong NT opening  
[ECBC Cheat Sheet on DONT](#)

17. Ogust 2NT when partner opens with Weak 2  
(non multi-twos)

In reply to a weak 2, change of suit is forcing (normally 16+HCP, no fit in opener's major and a strong 5 card or longer suit), raising openers suit to the 3 or 4 level is pre-emptive (except over interference) and hands worth an invitation to game/slam use a response of 2NT to investigate.

The best of the 2NT conventions is OGUST...a response of 2NT over a weak opening

After 2♥:2NT....or 2♠:2NT opening sequence:

- 3♣ response by opener = Minimum, bad suit
- 3♦ response by opener = Minimum, good suit
- 3♥ response by opener = Maximum, bad suit
- 3♠ response by opener = Maximum, good suit
- 3NT response by opener = Holds AKQxxx in major

Maximum = 9-10 HCP or 8HCP + 7 losers

Minimum = 6-7 HCP or 8HCP + 8 losers

Good Suit: Holding 2 of A/K/Q

Bad suit: Holding 1 of A/K/Q

Memory aid:

Minors = Minimum

Majors = Maximum

Order for honors: 1-2-1-2-3

(C=1,D=2,H=1,S=2,NT=3)

**18. Responder's continuations after reply to  
OGUST 2NT (see item 16)**

- a. A bid of game is always sign-off (including 3NT)
- b. A bid of 3 of the opening major is a sign-off
- c. Any other bid is slam interest (see item 43)

**19. Interference ahead of intended 2NT OGUST call:**

If partner opens 2♥ and second player overcalls 2♠  
a DOUBLE is for penalties and any other call is  
normal (including OGUST 2NT)

If they overcall at the 3 level :

DOUBLE is for penalty

Change of suit is forcing to game

Bid of 3 of opener's suit INVITES game.

**20. Opening 3♥/3♠: (Weak)**

Openings at three level are always weak, even if  
playing Multi-Twos

**NO VOID!!!**

6-10 HCP

7 Losers (exactly)

7+ ♥/♠

Holding at least 2 of top 3 honors

OR 3 of top 5 honors

**21. Opening 2NT: (non-multi-twos)**

Balanced Hand  
20-21 HCP  
5 or fewer Losers  
Stopper in every suit

**22. Opening 3NT (strong):**

Do not open 3NT!  
Instead bid 2C then rebid 3NT with:  
Balanced Hand  
25-27 HCP  
4 or fewer Losers  
Stopper in every suit

### 23. “Opening Light”

In third hand (after two passes) you can open with 9-11 HCP in two situations:

- you hold 5+♠ with good honors  
(2 of top 3 or 3 of top 5)  
OR
- you hold 4♠ headed by Ace and 2 of  
the other 4 honors (e.g. AQJ4, AJ107, AKQ2)

Partner must remember that an opening in third hand **COULD** be light (i.e. 9 points) and can assume 5 cards in the major. Notice that person opening light is only interested in SPADES.

In fourth hand:

- with 10-11 points only open with ALL the following:
  - i. you have a 5+ card SPADE suit
  - ii. you meet the rule of 20
  - iii. you have good honors in SPADES  
(2 of top 3 OR 3 of top 5)

THE SIDE WITH SPADES WINS MOST PART-  
SCORE BATTLES



**24. Counting Losers:**

Look at top 3 cards in each suit  
Any card NOT an A/K/Q=Loser  
Singleton K = Loser  
Doubleton Q = Loser

**25. Jump Overcall:**

Always WEAK: (same as 2♥/2♠/3♥/3♠ opening  
when not playing multi-twos)

(e.g. 1♦ opening → 2♥ overcall)

**26. Overcalls:**

At 1 Level (and not vulnerable):

8+ HCP

Holding 2 top 3 honors OR

3 top 5 honors

At 2 Level (or when vulnerable):

10+ HCP

Holding 2 top 3 honors OR

3 top 5 honors

## 27. LANDY Overcalls

Over 1NT opening by opponents, an overcall of 2C is called LANDY.

It shows a holding of 5♠ and 4♥ ( or 5♥ and 4♠) with 10-15 HCP and good honors in both majors.  
(2 of top 3 or 3 of top 5 honors)

If overcaller has 16+ points then he/she should DOUBLE for takeout instead then bid the 5 card suit.

Responder to the Landy bid must bid best major unless an intervening bid is made by ADVANCER (opener's partner)

## 28. Take-Out Double:

This is a “Double” which is the FIRST bid made by a pair and is called in EITHER of two situations:

- (1) 16+ HCP OR
- (2) hand of “doubling” strength  
AND 3+ cards in each unbid suit

To determine if your hand is of “doubling” strength take the following steps:

1. Add up your HCP (High Card Points)
2. Look at the suit that was bid by the opener
3. Deduct the number of cards you hold in that suit from 3
4. Multiply that number by 2 and add to your HCP

5. If you reach 15 then you must double, otherwise you are too strong in the oppositions' holding to double.

NOTE 1:

If the person making take-out double bids again in any suit (even the one bid by partner as a response) then doubler has 16+ points and 5 cards in the suit bid (with good honors). A re-bid in NT after a take-out double shows 19+HCP and balanced hand with stopper in opponents suit(s).

NOTE 2 :

An "overcall" "X" to an opening 1NT is always for penalty and not for takeout unless you play "DONT" or some other system over NT openings. If the "X" is for penalty then the doubler must have AT LEAST same number of points as opener (i.e. usually 17+...the others can't have much!)

Responses to Takeout Double:

A bid at the lowest level shows 8 or less HCP.

A jump bid shows 9+ HCP

- \* see if there is a fit in any suit, count losers, (doubler shows 7 losers) and bid game or appropriate level in selected suit

\* ELSE

with no 5 card suit and

9+HCP and

weak (no stopper) 4 card suits and

stopper in opener's suit

THEN bid 1NT

\* OTHERWISE

if no intervening by opponents bid longest suit  
(and keep fingers crossed).

## 29. Negative Double

This bid is the THIRD bid made at the table after partner has opened and the opposition have made an immediate overcall.

A negative double ALWAYS shows:

1. Support for the two unbid suits

OR

2. Support for the unbid major and  
(if you don't have support for the unbid minor)  
support for partner's opening suit

It ALWAYS shows support for any unbid major. If the negative double is over 1♥ overcall, it shows EXACTLY 4 spades (whereas a bid of 1♠ over 1♥ overcall shows 5+ spades). Opener should assume that the doubler has 6-9 HCP (although he/she may have more which is shown by bidding on after the double.)

Bid negative doubles through to the 3♠ level (but remember the higher you are forcing partner to bid, the more points you must have).

As a guide:

Forcing partner to bid at the 1-2 level => 6+HCP

Forcing partner to bid at the 3 level => 10+HCP

Forcing partner to bid at the 4 level => 13+HCP

It is wise to remember that the bidding of a new major at the two level always promises 5+ cards in that suit, whereas bidding a new minor may only show 4. Also the bidding of ANY new suit at the three level promises 5+ cards in that suit (unless you are cue-bidding for slam (see item 43)

A negative double is often the way to show exactly four cards in a suit without having to bid at the two level (even though you have enough points to do so).

Remember though, a negative double is always the first BID by responder after opener has bid and there has been an intervening overcall in SECOND place.

### **30. Responsive Double**

This is the first bid made by a side when both opposition players have made different suit bids and partner has not yet bid (in other words again it is the THIRD bid at the table)

It shows 8+ HCP (non-vulnerable) or  
10+HCP (vulnerable) and  
support for both the unbid suits.

### 31. Reverses:

When opener bids 1 of a suit, opener's bidding "limit" is set to TWO of that suit if he/she has fewer than 16 HCP.

If the opener bids BEYOND that limit (on opener's next bid) and has not bid NT then:

- \* Opener has 16+ points
- \* Opener has 5+ in 1<sup>st</sup> suit bid
- \* Opener has 4+ in 2<sup>nd</sup> suit bid  
(NB: 1<sup>st</sup> suit MUST be longer than second suit)
- \* Opener has 6 losers

A reverse FORCES the "reversers" partner to bid for one round unless the opponents have made intervening bid.

Are these reverses?

Opens 1 ♣ .....Rebids 2 ♦ YES!

Opens 1 ♦ .....Rebids 2 ♣ NO

Opens 1 ♠ .....Rebids 3 ♦ YES!

Opens 1 ♥ .....Rebids 2 ♦ NO

Opens 1 ♦ .....Rebids 2NT NO (but shows 19-20 HCP)

Opens 1 ♦ .....Rebids 3 ♦ NO

Note: Opening 1 in a suit then rebidding with a jump in NT shows 19-22 HCP and a balanced hand.

**32. Michael's Cue-Bids (incorporating Unusual 2NT):**  
(Bidding same suit as opener)

Must be 2<sup>nd</sup> bid made at table (i.e. overcall)  
8-12 HCPs only  
Shows 2X5 card suits

Opener => O/Call

1 ♣ => 2 ♣ shows 5 ♥/5 ♠ + 5 ♦  
1 ♦ => 2 ♦ shows 5 ♥/5 ♠ + 5 ♣  
1 ♥ => 2 ♥ shows 5 ♣/5 ♦ + 5 ♠  
1 ♠ => 2 ♠ shows 5 ♣/5 ♦ + 5 ♥  
1 ♣ => 2NT shows 5 ♦ + 5 ♥  
(2 lowest unbid suits)  
1 ♦ => 2NT shows 5 ♣ + 5 ♥  
(2 lowest unbid suits)  
1 ♥/1 ♠ => 2NT shows 5 ♣ + 5 ♦

Each of these 5 card suits should contain  
good honors:

i.e. 2 top 3 honors OR  
3 top 5 honors

**33. Play HIGH to encourage:**

When following suit on partner's lead, playing  
a card of 6 or higher encourages partner to  
keep leading that suit again at next  
opportunity.

Playing a 5 or less DISCOURAGES that suit.

- 34.** Leading an ACE ALWAYS shows a singleton or a doubleton comprising A and K.
- 35.** Leading a KING shows either:
- a. You hold the Ace and some others OR
  - b. You hold the Queen.
- 36.** Never lead an honor singleton (could be used to defeat an attempted finesse by declarer)
- 37.** When defending at no trump NEVER lead your partner's bid suit if you only have a singleton in his/her suit!!

For all other recommended leads refer to  
"Opening Leads"



**38. McKenney Discards:**  
(NEVER PLAYED AT NO TRUMPS)

Cannot Follow suit?

The card you discard must tell partner  
the suit you want led in the future so:

1. MacKenney applies to 1<sup>st</sup> discard only
2. Discard suit you DO NOT want led
3. If your discard < 6 you want LOWER  
of other 2 suits
4. If you discard a 6 or higher you want  
HIGHER of other 2 suits.

E.g. ♥ led, discard 2♣ signals ♦  
♥ led, discard 3♦ signals ♣  
♥ led, discard 5♠ signals ♣  
♥ led, discard 7♣ signals ♠  
♥ led, discard 8♦ signals ♠  
♥ led, discard 9♠ signals ♦  
♠ led, discard 3♣ signals ♦  
♠ led, discard 4♦ signals ♣  
♠ led, discard 5♥ signals ♣  
♠ led, discard 6♣ signals ♥  
♠ led, discard 7♦ signals ♥  
♠ led, discard 9♥ signals ♦  
♣ led, discard 2♦ signals ♥  
♦ led, discard 6♠ signals ♥

**39. Discards at NO TRUMP:**

At NO TRUMP simply discard cards that can never win or be of help for leads to partner. If you can NEVER win lead again it is OK to throw away suit which partner led on opening.

**40. Rule of 20:** (Applies to hands with < 12 HCP)

1. Add up your High Card Points (HCP)
2. Add the length of your two longest suits
3. If total = 20+, the hand **MAY** be worth opening!
4. It is only worth opening if you have “strength with length”. That means your strong cards are in your long suit. (i.e. good honors...2 of top 3 or 3 of top 5 honors)

E.g. This hand is worth opening 1♠ !!

♥ XXXX  
♠ AJ10XXXX  
♦ QJ  
♣

#### 41. Balancing Bid:

A balancing bid is one made when opponents have opened bidding (not showing strong holding) and this opening bid is followed immediately by two passes.

In this situation opener's partner has less than 6 points, and so it is likely that your partner has a "goodish" hand but could not overcall or double due to restrictions imposed by the rules of this system.

A balancing bid may be strong or weak, but your partner must assume weak. (particularly if you have already passed).

Balance according to the following rules (in order):

(1) Over 1♣/1♦ opening:

Bid 1NT with 11-14HCP, no biddable overcall and a stopper in opener's suit.

(Note: this does not guarantee 15-18 HCP!)

(2) Over 1♥/1♠ opening:

Bid 1NT with 15-16HCP, no biddable overcall and a stopper in opener's suit.

(3) Over any opening bid 1 of a suit make a biddable overcall if possible with 8+HCP

(4) With no length in the opponents suit (< 5) and 8+HCP DOUBLE. Partner must assume only 8+HCP for balancing hand.

(Responses to a double are as per "take-out" )

(5) Otherwise....Pass

## 42. Strong 2 Openings:

To show a strong bid there are several methods.  
The best are either “Benjamin 2s” (2♣/2♦) or  
”Multi-Twos” or the simple “normal” Standard  
American “Strong 2C” opening.

### Benjamin 2s (Strong Bids):

(Do not use if playing Multi-Twos)

This is a method of opening to show strong holdings of  
19-22 HCP.(unbalanced) and 23+HCP (any shape)

Opening 2♦ = 23+ HCP .

This is game forcing  
(pair must bid to game)

### Responses:

2♥ = “Waiting Bid” - Responder  
either does not have enough  
points for the team to consider  
slam (30) (i.e. < 7 HCP)  
or does not have a 5 card suit  
(Could be weak./strong!)

2♠/3♣/3♦ = Positive  
Shows a 5 card suit  
**and** 7 or more HCP

2NT = Positive  
No 5 card suit but  
does hold 7 or more HCP

Benjamin 2s (Strong Bids) – (continued)

Opening 2♣ = 19-22 HCP and pair may stop at 2NT  
Opener guarantees at most only 5  
losers (See item 23) and has  
an unbalanced hand.  
(i.e. must have a five card suit)

Responses:

2♦ = “Waiting Bid” - Responder  
either does not have enough  
points to make 26  
(i.e. < 7 HCP)  
or does not have a 5 card suit  
(Could be weak./strong!)

2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦ = Positive. (Game force)  
Shows a 5 card suit  
and 7 or more HCP

2NT = Positive (Game force)  
No 5 card suit but  
does hold 7 or more HCP

NOTE:

Opening 1 of a suit then re-bidding 2NT = 19-20 HCP  
(balanced hand with stoppers in opponents suit/s)  
Opening 2NT = 21-22 HCP and a balanced hand  
Opening 3NT = 25-27 HCP and a balanced hand

### 43. Multi-Twos

Weak 2 openings are great, but they don't come up enough and there is no way to show two-suited hands (e.g. 5♥/4♠ with 6-9 HCP)

A Multi-Two is a TWO level opening bid with more than one possible meaning.

2♦ shows a "Weak 2" in a Major, leaving the opening of 2♥/2♠ to show weak "2 suiters". The following opening "Multi-Two" system is recommended:

2♣ 21+HCP (Unbalanced)  
23+HCP (Balanced)

2♦.Weak opening (6-9HCP with good honors)  
with 6+♥ or 6+♠ (OR 21-22 HCP Balanced)

2♥ 6-9 HCP AND  
(5+♥ and 4+♣ OR  
5+♥ and 4+♦)

2♠ 6-9 HCP AND  
(5+♠ and 4+♣ OR  
5+♠ and 4+♦)

2NT 6-9 HCP AND.  
(5+♣ and 5+♦)  
(I.E. OPENING "Unusual 2NT")

-  
The Multi-Two 2♦ Opening:

This shows a weak two in a major or a strong 20-21 HCP Balanced hand:

♠ 8 7 2  
♥ K Q 10 6 5 4  
♦ 6 3  
♣ 5 4

Open 2♦. The suit and strength are right for a weak 2

Responses to 2♦ opening:

A response in a major is always “correctable”. That is, responder to the 2♦ opener is saying “either pass or correct to your long suit”

Response of 2♥:

Responder can see no future over an opening which is weak 2 in hearts. Opener will either pass if weak in hearts, bid 2♠ if weak in spades or bid 2NT if the 2♦ opening was a strong 21-22 HCP

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♦	?	♠ K 5 4
		♥ J 6
		♦ Q 6 5 3
		♣ 8 6 3 2

Bid 2♥. Game is not on opposite a weak 2♥

Responses to 2♦ opening: (cont)

Response of 2♠:

Sometimes there is potential in one major but not the other.

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♦	?	♠ 5
		♥ A J 6 5
		♦ Q J 5 3
		♣ A 6 3 2

Bid 2♠. It looks like partner has a weak 2♠ in which 2♠ is the level to be.

2♠ response always says :

“consider game if you are weak in hearts else pass if weak in spades.”

So with hearts opener would bid 3♥ with a minimum (6-7HCP) or 4♥ with a maximum (8-9HCP) (or 2NT with 21-22 HCP)



Responses to 2♦ opening: (cont)

Jump responses in a major are also correctable:

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♦	?	♠ J 9 8
		♥ Q 7 6 5
		♦ A 9 5 3
		♣ 6 3

Respond 3♠ to show a fit no matter which major is the long suit in opener's hand.

It is really a preemptive raise of a weak 2.

Opener pass if weak in spades or correct to 4♥ if weak in hearts.

(or bid 3NT with 21-22 HCP).

If weak in hearts you have forced opponents to guess whether you will make it or not.

In the above hand 4♥ would fail but the 10 card fit makes it safe enough.

Responses to 2♦ opening: (cont)

Response of 3♦/ 3♣:

Responses in a minor are natural and non-forcing. They show reasonable hands but no interest playing in a weak 2 major suit.

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♦	?	♠ 9 8
		♥ 6
		♦ A Q J 9 5 4 3
		♣ K 5 3

Respond 3♦.

“I don't care about your weak 2 !!  
I want to be in diamonds instead.”

Response of 2NT:

This is enquiry bid asking opener to show which suit is long and whether opener is minimum (6-7 HCP) or maximum (8-9 HCP).

Opener bids a major with a minimum range and a minor with a maximum range as follows:

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>North</i>
2♦	2NT	3♣ (weak 2 hearts, maximum)
		3♦ (weak 2 spades, maximum)
		3♥ (weak 2 hearts , minimum)
		3♠ (weak 2 spades, minimum)
		3NT (21-22 HCP balanced)

Response of 2NT: (cont)

When do you respond 2NT? to a 2♦ opening?

You do so if you have interest in game opposite a maximum opening so you should have a definite fit in a major and 16-19 total points as follows:

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♦	?	♠ A Q 3
		♥ A 7 6
		♦ K 5 2
		♣ Q J 5 3

Respond 2NT. Game will be possible if opener re-bids 3♣/3♦ since you will have your 16HCP plus their openers 8/9 (or possibly more with distribution). If opener has 10+ with distribution he/she may even bid game in the major since your 2NT enquiry guarantees a fit in a major plus 16+ total points.

Response of 2NT: (cont)

After a 2NT response a bid of the other major after opener's re-bid is forcing to game and shows 20+ total points. With such a hand responder must bid 2NT over the 2♦ opening since any other suit bid is non-forcing. (the only forcing response is 2NT) as follows:

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♦	?	♠ A K J 6 5 3
		♥ 6
		♦ Q J 2
		♣ A K Q

Bid 2NT. You know what partner has got (weak hearts), but a direct response of 2♠ says "pass if weak in spades". (you want at least 3NT) On the off-chance that opener is weak in spades (!! ) the re-bid would be "pass"!!!!

After the 2NT response, opener will probably bid 3♣ or 3♥ and you will respond 3♠ showing 20+ total points and 6+ of the suit bid (game forcing!!)

The Multi-Two 2♥ or 2♠ Opening:

This shows 6-9HCP with

Favorable Vulnerability:

5+ Major and a 4+minor.

Unfavorable Vulnerability:

5+ Major and a 5+minor

♠ K Q 8 6 4

♥ 3

♦ K 9 7 5

♣ 5 4 3

With favorable vulnerability open 2♠.

You get in first (where most Standard American pairs not playing Multi-Twos would pass) and “keep them guessing”.

“Pass” with unfavorable vulnerability since you would be promising 5+ in a minor if you opened 2♠ under such conditions.

Note:

With Multi-Twos there is no way to show a weak holding with both majors (e.g. 5+♠ and 4+♥) No worries! They can only bother you with a minor bid since NT their way is unlikely!

Responses to 2♥/2♠ opening:

A change of suit is invitational:

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♠	?	♠ 6
		♥ Q J 5 2
		♦ A Q J 7 6 2
		♣ A 2

Bid 3♦. Opener can pass or bid 5♦ with a fit in Diamonds and maximum total points.  
(Opener knows you have 18+ total points if a fit exists).

A raise of opener's major invites game:

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♥	?	♠ A K 7 6 4
		♥ Q 5 2
		♦ 6 2
		♣ A Q 2

Bid 3♥. Opener then knows you have 16-19 total points (you would bid 4♥ if you had 20 TP) and so would re-bid 4♥ with 9+TP

Responses to 2♥/2♠ opening: (cont)

To find out Opener's minor, respond 2NT:

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♠	?	♠ 4
		♥ K 5 4 3 2
		♦ A 6 2
		♣ Q 9 5 3

Respond 2NT. Opener will bid 3♣ or 3♦ which you will pass.

After responding 2NT and opener shows the minor, a bid of a new suit is forcing for one round.

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♥	2NT	♠ A Q J 8 6 4
3♦		♥ 4 3
		♦ Q 2
		♣ A K 5

Bid 3♠. This shows 16+ HCP and is forcing for one round.. You are still not sure of the best contract so show your spades and wait and see. Opener cannot pass!

**After responding 2NT and opener shows the minor, a bid of 3 of partner's major is forcing to game/slam (shows 20+ TP and a fit in the major)., but a raise of the minor only invites game if opener is maximum:**

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2♥	2NT	♠ 9 3
3♦	?	♥ 4 3
		♦ A K 7 2
		♣ A K 7 6 3

Bid 4♦. There could be 3 quick losers, but give opener a chance to bid game . This bid tells partner you have exactly 6 losers and a fit in diamonds .



### 2NT opening (with Multi-Twos):

This shows 2 x 5+ card minors,  
one with at least 1 of top 3 honors and other  
with at least 2 of top 4 honors and 6-9 HCP or  
16+ HCP (known as “Unusual 2NT opening”).

It is such a descriptive bid that it puts you in a  
dominant position.

♠ 9  
♥ 5 3  
♦ Q J 7 4 2  
♣ K Q 8 6 3

Open 2NT giving partner plenty of info in case  
you end up defending.

### Responding to 2NT opening:

Bid 3♣ and 3♦ to play in that contract.  
(Unless you transfer to minors) Opener must pass.

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2NT	?	♠ Q 7 6 5 4 ♥ A J 6 3 ♦ 7 2 ♣ J 3

Respond 3♣. Not a great position to be in but  
you cannot pass 2NT (forcing for one round)  
Opener must pass.

### Responding to 2NT opening: (cont)

Bid 3♥ or 3♠ with a decent 6 card major (two top 3 or three top 5 honors). This bid is forcing for one round.

Bid 4♣ or 4♦ to invite game in the minor if you have 7 losers. Opener would bid game with 6 losers, good honors in the suit bid and a certain outside trick (e.g. an Ace)

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South's Hand</i>
2NT	4♣	♠ 7 ♥ 6 3 ♦ A 9 5 4 2 ♣ K Q 6 5 2

Rebid 5♣. The outside Ace and good trumps should be all partner is after. If South had bid 4♦ it is suggested you pass since your KQ♣ are less powerful. You still have 6 losers but you must have an outside Ace. and good honors in the trump suit (2 of top 4).

Handling Interference to Multi-Two Opening by partner:

If opponents bid over your partner's opening of 2♦/2♥/2♠ you can work out fairly well where you stand so a "Double" over their overcall is for penalty, and suit bids are "Pass or correct".

<u>Partner</u>	<u>"Them"</u>	<u>You</u>	
2♦	(2♥)	Dbl	← Penalty Double
2♦	(3♦)	3♥	← Pass or correct
2♥	(3♦)	Dbl	← Penalty Double

44. “Normal” Standard American Strong 2C/2NT  
Opening

Opening 2♣ = 21+ HCP. Pair may stop at 2NT  
if responder bids 2♦ then opener rebids  
2NT (and responder holds fewer than  
TWO HCP) otherwise partnership must  
bid on to “Game”

Responses:

2♦ = “Waiting Bid” - Responder  
does not have enough  
points to think about slam  
(i.e. < 8 HCP)

2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦: Positive.

Shows a 5 card suit and > 7 HCP

2NT = Positive

No 5 card suit but  
does hold 8 or more HCP

The General rule is “After the 2C Opening and  
(possible) “2D” response, keep bidding to h=game  
when required by showing a 5 card suit until a fit is  
found or bid “NT” with no 5 card suit.

NOTE: Opening 1 of a suit then re-bidding 2NT  
shows 19-20 HCP (balanced hand with  
stoppers in opponents suit/s)

Opening 2NT = 20-21 HCP and a balanced hand

Opening 3NT = (Never do this – open 2C Instead)

## 45. Cue Bidding : (slam interest)

You must only cue bid (showing controls)  
ONCE YOU FIND A FIT and the fit is obvious in the bidding.

If the fit is not obvious but you are seeking slam use either Romex “CRO” Gerber (4C) or Roman Keycard Blackwood (if suitable).

Once a fit is obvious or game has been bid, a bid in any other suit is a cue bid and shows controls at different “levels”:

First levels controls (Aces or voids)

Second level controls (Kings or Singletons)

Every bid made by opener/responder shows a control unless the agreed trump suit is bid again (signoff).

Bid your “first level” controls and then your “second level “ controls.

Bidding agreed suit is a ”sign-off”

A Bid of 4NT/5NT after cue-bidding has started shows an Ace or King (but not both) in the “agreed suit”.

Skipping a suit denies control in that suit.

Bid “Grand Slam” only if ALL aces and Kings are held by your “team”.

Bid “small slam” if at most you are missing only one King.

#### 46. Splinter Bids (Game force)

A splinter bid is a “double jump” by opener or responder.

e.g. Opener: 1H  
Responder 3S  
(Responder could have bid 1S or 2S but jumped those two).

e.g. Opener 1C  
Responder 1S  
Opener 4D

It shows a fit with partner in the last suit he/she bid and a certainty of “game” (13+ HCP and 7 losers or fewer) and either a singleton (NOT a singleton ACE) or a void in the suit now called (the splinter suit). Partner of the person making the splinter bid should DEVALUE any honor cards (except Ace) in the splinter suit and then decide on game/slam.

If slam is on then “Cue Bidding” follows, with the splinter bid having been the first “cue”

47. Ace/King Asking (Blackwood 4NT)

These bids are only made when cue bidding (item 43) has not already started.

Blackwood (4NT) is “Ace asking” unless:

- \* Partner opened 1NT:
  - you bid 4NT here to invite 6NT (see also item 47)

Responses to 4NT:

(Think of “Dee HSC “)  
 (“The High School Certificate”)

Dee	HSC
↑	↑↑↑
1	2 3 4

5♦ = 1

5♥ = 2

5♠ = 3

5♣ = 4 (OR ZERO)

Ace/King Asking (Blackwood 4NT) – (continued)

After asking for Aces you can then  
ask for Kings (5NT)

PROVIDED YOUR SIDE HOLDS ALL 4 ACES)

To ask for Kings use the same formula as asking for  
Aces, except you are 1 level higher!

i.e. bid 5NT (“King asking”) after bidding 4NT  
as “Ace asking”

The responses to 5NT are the same as those to 4NT  
except one level higher.



**48. Ace/King Ask (Roman Keycard Blackwood 4NT)**

These bids are only made when cue bidding (item 43) has not already started.

Roman Keycard Blackwood (4NT) is “Ace asking” unless:

- \* Partner opened 1NT:
  - you bid 4NT here to invite 6NT (see also item 47)

Responses to 4NT:

(Think of “Dee HSC” – 14-30-25-25)

(“Dee High School Certificate”)

(Count the KING of Trumps as an extra Ace)

Dee	H	S	C
↑	↑	↑	↑
14	30	25	25

5♦ = 1 or 4 key cards

5♥ = 3 or 0 key cards

5♠ = 2 or 5 key cards (no Queen of trumps)

5♣ = 2 or 5 key cards (AND the Queen of trumps)

Ace/King Ask (Roman Keycard Blackwood 4NT) –  
(continued)

After asking for Aces you can then  
ask for Kings (5NT)

PROVIDED YOUR SIDE HOLDS ALL 4 ACES)

To ask for Kings use the same formula as asking for  
Aces, except you are 1 level higher!

A bid of next non-trump suit up asks for the Queen of  
trumps.

i.e. bid 5NT (“King asking”) after bidding 4NT  
as “Ace asking”

The responses to 5NT are the same as those to 4NT  
except one level higher (do NOT count the King of  
Trumps this time!)

**49. Points required for NT Slams:**

6NT ---→ 33 HCP

7NT → 37 HCP

**50. Jacoby 2NT response to opening of 1♥ or 1♠**

A response of 2NT to an opening of 1 in a major shows:

1. 4 card support for the major
2. 13+ TOTAL points (HCP+Distribution)

This bid is GAME force (perhaps even slam interest)

**Responses to Jacoby 2NT**

Responses depend on the type of hand on which you opened

(assess them in this order):

- a. A hand with a strong second five-card suit  
(2 of top 3 or 3 of top 5 honors)
- b. A hand containing a singleton or void
- c. Any other hand (i.e. not (a) nor (b))

- a. A hand with a string second five-card suit  
(2 of top 3 or 3 of top 5 honors)  
Bid the second 5 card suit at the FOUR level

e.g. Holding:

♠ 7 ♥ K Q 10 7 6 4 ♦ 4 ♣ A Q 10 7 2

Partner	You
	1♥
2NT	4♣

Note that this does not deny a singleton or void  
(you are in fact certain to have one)

Compare these two scenarios with the above  
bidding:

Partner	You
♠ A J 3	♠ 2
♥ A 10 8 2	♥ K Q J 7 5 3
♦ 8 7 3 2	♦ 4
♣ K 3	♣ A Q J 7 2

Excellent chance for slam!

Partner	You
♠ A J 3	♠ 2
♥ A 10 8 2	♥ K Q J 7 5 3
♦ K 7 3 2	♦ 4
♣ 8 3	♣ A Q J 7 2

Partner can see slam is less likely because you must be short in diamonds and spades (having shown length in both hearts and clubs) and so loser in Diamonds probable and loser in clubs possible..

b. A hand containing a singleton or void:

Bid the singleton or void at the 3 level

e.g. Holding: ♠ K42 ♥ KQJ75 ♦4 ♣AJ93

Partner	You
	1♥
2NT	3D

If partner has no “wasted values” he may press on to slam as in the following hand:

Partner	You
♠ A 3	♠ K 4 2
♥ A 9 8 2	♥ K Q J 7 5
♦ 8 6 3 2	♦ 4
♣ K Q 3	♣ A J 4 2

(“Wasted Values” means holding high cards in a suit when partner holds a singleton or void in that suit).

Whereas if partner has wasted values in the suit showing as a singleton or void, he will simply go to game , as per the following hand:

Partner	You
♠ A 3	♠ K 4 2
♥ A 9 8 2	♥ K Q J 7 5
♦ K Q 3	♦ 4
♣ 9 7 5 3	♣ A J 4 2

c. A hand with no singleton or void

Bidding 4♥ = minimum hand (13-15 TP)

3♥ = 16+TP, Good Trumps (2 of top 3)

3NT = 16+TP, Poor Trumps (0-1 of top 3)

In summary these are the responses to Jacoby 2NT :

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1♥	2NT
<u>Opener's Rebid</u>	
3♣,3♦,3♠	singleton or void in suit bid
4♣,4♦	GOOD second five card suit
3♥	16+TP, no singleton/void,good trumps
3NT	16+TP, no singleton/void,poor trumps
4♥	< 16 TP, no singleton/void

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1♠	2NT
<u>Opener's Rebid</u>	
3♣,3♦,3♥	singleton or void in suit bid
4♣,4♦,4♥	GOOD second five card suit
3♠	16+TP, no singleton/void,good trumps
3NT	16+TP, no singleton/void,poor trumps
4♠	< 16 TP, no singleton/void

Continuing on to slam after Jacoby 2NT:

If opener's response to 2NT IMPROVES responders hand.

Hands improve when the following occurs:

1. singleton/void in opener's hand and no honors in same suit in responders hand
2. responder holds honors in same suit as openers 2<sup>nd</sup> five-card suit
2. responder has 14+TP against a "Good Trump" holding response - 3♥ or 3♠

If opener rebids 3NT then slam should only be sought if responder holds 14+TP and good honors (else sign off in 4 of the major).

If opener signs off by going straight to 4 of the major, responder should only seek slam with a powerhouse hand (17+TP).

How to show slam interest:

A continuance by responder in any suit other than trumps or bidding beyond game in trumps is a "cue-bid" for controls and 4NT is Blackwood (asking for Aces/Kings). Remember that Blackwood should not be used by a bidder when he holds a void or two or three small cards in a suit (a singleton is OK).



## 51. Romex Gerber 4C ("CRO")

4C = ALWAYS Ace Asking  
(provided no obvious fit is showing in the bidding)  
(If a fit has been stated by the bidding then cue bidding  
is used instead).

Responses: 4D = 1 or 4 Aces  
4H = 3 or 0 Aces  
4S = 2 Aces same COLOR  
(the "C" in CRO)  
4NT = 2 Aces same RANK  
(i.e. both major suits or both minor suits)  
(the "R" in CRO)  
5C = 2 Aces of ODD ranks  
(i.e. a major and a minor of different colour)  
(the "O" in CRO)

Continuing on:

Do not ask for Kings if any Aces are missing –  
UNLESS you have voids in the suit(s) of the  
missing Ace(s))

To ask for Kings, bid the next suit up after the  
response to the 4C bid.

The responses to the “King Ask” are then STEP responses, starting at 0 and going up to 4

If 4H is used to King ask:

(after a 4D response to the Ace ask )

4H= 0 Kings

4S=1 King

4NT=2 Kings

5C=3 Kings

5D=4 Kings

If 4S is used to King ask:

(after a 4H response to the Ace ask )

4NT= 0 Kings

5C=1 King

5D=2 Kings

5H=3 Kings

5S=4 Kings\

If 4NT is used to King ask:

(after a 4S response to the Ace ask )

5C= 0 Kings

5D=1 King

5H=2 Kings

5S=3 Kings

5NT=4 Kings\

If 5C is used to King Ask:

5D = 0 Kings

5H = 1 King

5S = 2 Kings

5NT = 3 Kings

6C = 4 Kings

: If 5D is used to King Ask:

5H = 0 Kings

5S = 1 King

5NT=2 Kings

6C=3Kings

6D=4 Kings

So after the “Ace Ask”, a jump straight to a suit or NT is a “sign off”.

“4C-4D-4S” : settle in 4S

“4C-4D-4NT” : settle in 4NT

“4C-4H-5S” : settle in 5S

(since 4S would be King Ask)

Be aware that if you wish to sign off in Hearts the bidding might be:

“4C-4D-5H” since a “4H” response to the 4D would  
Be a “King Ask”

## 52. Penalty Doubles

Unless covered elsewhere in these notes, a double for penalty occurs at “Game” level or above.

A “Double” for a “Slam” bid by the opponents however is not for penalty. It asks for an “unusual” lead and should be interpreted as an instruction for the opening lead to be:

1. NOT any suit bid by the opposing side
2. preferably the FIRST suit bid by the player who will become dummy.

The reason for this is that most good players will only bid slam if they are fairly certain of making, and a double would only give them a certain “top”, rather than an equal top.

Of course, if a player who will be making the opening lead doubles a slam, it is for penalty.