

**4 A      General**

- 4 A 1      The purpose of alerting and announcing is to draw to the opponents' attention a call by partner that may have a special meaning.
- 4 A 2      Announcements: instead of an alert in the traditional manner, the partner of a player who makes an announceable bid makes a specified statement about the bidder's hand.
- 4 A 3      Alerting and announcing are compulsory; a player may not ask opponents not to alert or announce.
- 4 A 4      Alert or announce only your partner's calls, never your own.
- 4 A 5      Even if you cannot explain the meaning of partner's call, you should still alert (or announce) it if you believe that is required.
- 4 A 6      If there is no alert and no announcement, opponents can assume that the call does not fall within an alertable or announceable category, through either explicit or implicit understanding. *See also 2D2*
- 4 A 7      Do not alert or announce any play of the cards.
- 4 A 8      It is the responsibility of the alerting player to ensure that **both** of his opponents are aware of the alert.

**4 B      Basic alerting rules****4 B 1      Passes and bids**

Unless it is announceable (*see 4D, 4E, 4F and 4G*), a pass or bid must be alerted if it:

- (a) is not natural; or
- (b) is natural but has a potentially unexpected meaning.

**4 B 2      Doubles**

The rules for alerting doubles are:

- (a) Suit bids that show the suit bid  
Alert, unless the double is for take-out.
- (b) Minor suit openings which may be shorter than three cards but which may be natural and which do not promise a strong hand  
Alert, unless the double is for take-out.
- (c) No trump bids  
Alert, unless the double is for penalties.
- (d) Suit bids that do not show the suit bid  
Alert, unless the double shows the suit bid.

Doubles are also alertable if they convey a potentially unexpected meaning in addition to take-out or penalties (*see 3H2 and 3H3*).

In *4B2(a)* and *(d)* the word 'show' is defined as follows:

'it is natural, or shows willingness, in the context of the auction, to play in the suit, or it has been followed by two passes'.

## 4 ALERTING AND ANNOUNCING

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### 4 B 3 *Redoubles*

A redouble to show general strength which partner will normally pass if the next hand passes is not alertable. All other redoubles are alertable.

### 4 B 4 *Calls above 3NT*

Once the auction is **above** the level of 3NT, no calls are to be alerted except for:

- (a) Artificial suit bids above 3NT made **before the opening bidder's second turn to call** (i.e. the **first bid** and the next three calls)  
e.g. 1♠ – pass – 4♣ (splinter) or pass – pass – 1♠ – pass – 4♣ (splinter). In both cases 4♣ is alerted
- (b) Lead-directing passes
- (c) Doubles or redoubles that are lead-directing but ask for the lead of a suit other than the suit doubled (or redoubled)
- (d) Doubles and redoubles of no trump contracts that call for a specific suit to be led.

### 4 C *'Natural' bids and passes*

4 C 1 The following are considered 'natural' for the purposes of alerting and regulation of partnership understandings (*see also 3E1*):

- (a) A bid of a suit which shows that suit (3+ cards) and does not show any other suit; preference bids, completion of transfer bids and raises may be on shorter suits
- (b) A bid of no trumps which shows a preparedness to play in no trumps, and which conveys no unusual information about suit holdings; it must not be forcing unless a forcing auction has already been created. Note that certain ostensibly natural no trump bids are permitted to allow a shortage by agreement
- (c) A pass which does not unexpectedly convey values or specify suit holdings.

### 4D *Alerts and announcements – 1♣ and 1♦ openings*

4 D 1 Prepared or short 1♣ and 1♦ openings (which **are non-forcing but** may be made on two cards or fewer) are announced as "may be" followed by the minimum number e.g. "May be two". Strong and artificial 1♣ and 1♦ openings are alerted as are a two way 1♣ opening such as the Polish Club and any opening which may be short but is **unconditionally forcing**.

### 4 E *Announcements – 1NT Openings and Responses*

4 E 1 Natural 1NT openings are announced by stating the range, e.g. by saying "12 to 14". Where a 1NT opening which is in principle natural may be made by agreement on some hands which contain a singleton, it is announced by stating the range followed by "may contain a singleton".

4 E 2 A Stayman 2♣ bid is announced, but only in response to a natural 1NT opening where there has been no intervention; and only where it is used to ask for a four card major. Opener says "Stayman". After such a 2♣ response a standard 2♦ rebid by opener is not alerted. Unusual replies such as the opener bidding 2NT or higher or 2♠ showing spades but **not** denying hearts should be alerted. Stayman is announced whether or not it *shows* a four card major.

4 E 3 Red suit transfers at the two level i.e. ♦ to ♥ and ♥ to ♠, are announced, but only in response to a natural 1NT opening where there has been no intervention, and where the transfer shows

## 4 ALERTING AND ANNOUNCING

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at least five cards in the major suit concerned. Opener says “Hearts” when 2♦ is bid, or “Spades” when 2♥ is bid.

### 4 F *Announcements – Two of a Suit Openings*

4 F 1 A natural (5+ cards) opening bid of two of a suit is announced by stating its range from the following categories. Partner of the opener says the words shown.

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| (a) “Strong, forcing” | (b) “Strong, not forcing” |
| (c) “Intermediate”    | (d) “Weak”                |

4 F 2 It is possible to play a wide-ranging opening that covers more than one category, in which case the announcement should say so. Examples are:

- (a) “Intermediate to strong, forcing” or (b) “Weak to Intermediate”

For example, a 6-12 opening would be described as “Weak to intermediate”.

4 F 3 Distributional constraints do not stop an opening bid being considered natural. For example, a Precision 2♣ opening is traditionally only made on a 5-card suit when there is a 4-card major, but also may be made with a longer club suit and no major. A Precision 2♣ is considered natural since no other suit is guaranteed and thus is announced as “intermediate”. Some openings **guarantee** another suit so are not natural. For example a Lucas 2♠, showing spades and another suit, is alerted not announced.

4 F 4 **All** two of a suit openings are either announced (if natural, 5+ cards) or alerted (if artificial).

### 4 G *Announcements – 2NT openings and responses*

4 G 1 Natural 2NT openings are announced by stating the range, e.g. by saying “20 to 22”. It is not necessary to add “may contain a singleton”.

4 G 2 A Stayman 3♣ bid is announced, but only in response to a natural 2NT opening where there has been no intervention; and only where it is used to ask for a four card major. Opener says “Stayman”. After such a 3♣ response a 3♦ rebid by opener denying a major does not need an alert. Unusual responses such as opener bidding 3NT or higher or 3♠ showing spades but not denying hearts should be alerted. Stayman is announced whether or not it *shows* a four card major.

4 G 3 Red suit transfers at the three level, i.e. ♦ to ♥ and ♥ to ♠, are announced, but only in response to a natural 2NT opening where there has been no intervention, and where the transfer shows at least five cards in the major suit concerned. Opener says “Hearts” when 3♦ is bid, or “Spades” when 3♥ is bid.

### 4 H *Specific Cases*

The following are interpretations and examples of the above directives.

4 H 1 Because they are not natural, players must alert (unless excepted by 4B4 above):

- (a) Stayman and transfers, except when announceable (*see 4 E*). For example:
- (1) In response to a 1NT overcall
  - (2) Opener’s rebid of 2♦ in response to a 2♣ enquiry or 3♦ in response to a 3♣ enquiry which was not announceable

## 4 ALERTING AND ANNOUNCING

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- (3) A response of 2♦ to 1NT that usually shows hearts but may have another hand type e.g. strong, balanced included in the 2♦ response
- (4) Five card Stayman or Puppet Stayman
- (b) Any trial bid in a suit that may contain fewer than three cards
- (c) Any 'pass or correct' bids e.g. 1♥ – 2♥ (spades + a minor) – Pass – 3♣ asking partner to pass with clubs or bid with diamonds
- (d) A pass that shows unexpected extra values
- (e) Any forcing pass.

4 H 2 Because they have a potentially unexpected meaning, players must alert:

- (a) An opening bid of one of a suit which is forcing
- (b) The first bid in a potential canapé sequence
- (c) Responses to a non-forcing opening bid of one of a suit:
  - (1) If the next hand doubles, a pass that could have 10+ HCP or other defined characteristics
  - (2) If the next hand passes, a pre-emptive raise to three
  - (3) A non-forcing new suit response below game, unless responder has previously passed, bids over a natural NT overcall, or makes a double jump
  - (4) A forcing raise
  - (5) A new suit without a jump that is forcing to game.
- (d) A forcing natural response at the two-level to an opening natural 1NT bid, whether in competition or not
- (e) A minimum suit response to a take-out double, with the next hand passing, that shows values
- (f) The completion of a transfer that **shows a specific holding in the suit bid (e.g. following a 1NT opening, a transfer completion that specifically denies four card support or shows three card support)**
- (g) The pass in the specific sequence 1 of a suit – dbl – redbl – pass if it is for penalties: the expected meaning is a request for partner to bid
- (h) A 1NT response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening which might show more than 10 HCP

4 H 3 Players should **not** alert:

- (a) Any announceable call
- (b) Calls above 3NT unless specified as alertable in **4B4**
- (c) A non-forcing 1♣ or 1♦ opening bid promising three or more cards (**but see 4H2(b)**)
- (d) A bid of two of a suit by responder when an opening 1NT has been doubled, if it is ostensibly natural but there is a possibility that responder will remove or redouble for take out: this is considered general bridge knowledge
- (e) A minimum rebid in ♦ after an announceable Stayman 2♣ or 3♣ response
- (f) A pass of a redouble that suggests playing in the redoubled contract (**but see 4H2(g)**).

## 4 ALERTING AND ANNOUNCING

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4 H 4 The following doubles must be alerted:

- (a) A double of an opening natural 1NT which may have less than the normally accepted strength for a penalty double (i.e. 15 HCP or compensating distribution)
- (b) A double of a 1NT response which is for take out of opener's suit
- (c) Any 'competitive', 'co-operative' or 'optional' double, since these are not take-out doubles
- (d) A penalty double of a natural 2♦ in the sequence 1♦ – pass – 1♥ – 2♦ – dbl
- (e) A double of 1♦ in the sequence 1♣ – 1♦ – dbl if it shows one specific suit, since this is a potentially unexpected additional meaning
- (f) A take-out double which has unusual strength constraints, such as a double of a weak two opening showing 16+ HCP, as this is a potentially unexpected additional meaning.

4 H 5 The following doubles must not be alerted:

- (a) Any 'negative' or 'responsive' double played in a traditional manner, such as 1♣ – 1♠ – dbl showing 4 hearts. 1♣/1♦ – 1♥ – dbl is not alertable either if it shows exactly four spades, it may have four spades or if it shows general values without four spades (other meanings, such as 4+ spades, are alertable)
- (b) A take-out double of a transfer completion such as 1NT – pass – 2♥ – pass – 2♠ – dbl since this is deemed to show the suit bid
- (c) A take-out double of a 'pass-or-correct' bid such as 2♦ Multi – pass – 2♠ – dbl since this is deemed to show the suit bid.