

Durham Standard A

We will replace this document with our own basic system once this has been agreed!

Partnerships are free to play whatever system they like. This is here for teaching purposes and as an aide to pick-up partnerships.

General Principles

The underlying bidding philosophy is **Acol**. Points of note are:

- 4-card major openings
- 12–14pt 1NT opening
- Weak Twos in three suits
- Weak Jump Overcalls
- Good Raise principles where direct suit raises are strictly preemptive

Summary of Opening Bids

1♣/1♦/1♥/1♠	12–19pts, 4+ cards.
1NT	12–14pts, balanced (occasionally two doubletons).
2♣	The forcing opening: a game force, 23+ balanced, or 8+ playing tricks in any suit.
2♦/2♥/2♠	Weak. Typically 5–10pts, 6-card suit. Adjust these values according to position and vulnerability.
2NT	20–22pts, semi-balanced.
3 level	Preemptive
3NT	Gambling, AKQxxxx in a minor with little else
4 level	Preemptive

1-Level Suit Openings

1♣/1♦/1♥/1♠ openings show 12-19pts, 4+ cards. Open your longest suit, the higher of two 5-card suits, or the lower of two 4-card suits.

With '4441' hands open the highlighted suit: 14♦4, 41♦4, 441♦ and 4♦41.

Responses and continuations:

- Direct Raises to the 3 and 4 level are strictly preemptive.
- 2NT shows a good raise of a major (over a minor it shows 10-12pts, balanced).
- A single raise of a minor is *forcing* to the 3 level.
- A jump shift is *fit showing*.
- A double jump shift is a *splinter*.
- 1NT shows 6–9pts and is non-forcing.
- A 2/1 shows 10+pts and is forcing to 2 of opener's suit.
- Opener's Rebids
 - After a 1-level response, 1NT shows 15–17pts and 2NT shows 18–19pts.
 - After a 2-level response, 2NT shows 15–19pts and is game-forcing.
 - A *reverse* after a 1/1 is forcing for one round.
 - A *reverse* after a 2/1 is forcing to game.
 - Opposite a 2/1 a new suit by opener is forcing, e.g. 1♥ - 2♣ - 2♦.

1NT Openings

A 1NT opening shows 12–14pts, balanced. It will occasionally be semi-balanced (two doubletons with spread honours and rebid problems) or contain a 5 card major.

Responses and continuations:

- Regular non-promissory Stayman 2♣
- 4 suit transfers: 2♦ -> ♥, 2♥ -> ♠, 2♠ -> ♣, 2NT -> ♦. Over a minor suit transfer, step one shows a super accept, step two (responder's suit) shows no interest.
- Balanced invites go through Stayman.
- Three level bids are game forcing slam tries.
- A transfer followed by a new suit is natural and game forcing.
- Stayman followed by a new suit is natural and weak.
- 4NT is only RKCB if a suit has been agreed. If in doubt, assume it's quantitative.

After Interference:

- 2NT is Lebensohl (forcing opener to bid 3♣), showing a weak but competitive hand.
- Direct 3 level bids are natural and game forcing.
- Double is take-out.

The 2♣ Opening

A 2♣ opening shows a strong hand: a game force, 23+ balanced, or 8+ playing tricks in any suit.

Responses:

- Suit bids are natural, game forcing, 1.5 quick tricks, 5 cards.
- 2NT is game forcing, balanced, 1.5 quick tricks.
- 2♦ is the negative bid - none of the above.

Continuations are natural. After 2♦, 2♥/♠ may be an Acol 2; it is forcing to the 3-level but not to game. 2NT by response is a second negative.

Weak Two Openings

2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ openings show, in principle, a 6 card suit with a weak hand, 5–10pts. In practice, we bend these rules a little (a lot actually) according to seating and vulnerability.

Responses:

- 2NT is Ogust, asking opener to further describe his hand:
 - 3♣ - Poor hand, poor quality suit.
 - 3♦ - Poor hand, good quality suit.
 - 3♥ - Good hand, poor quality suit.
 - 3♠ - Good hand, good quality suit.
 - 3NT - AKQxxx in the trump suit.
- New suits are natural and non-forcing.
- Jump bids are *fit-showing*.

The 2NT Opening

A 2NT opening shows 20–22pts, balanced.

Responses:

- 3♣ is 5 card puppet Stayman, after which:
 - 3♦ - No 5 card major, does have a 4 card major.
 - 3♥ - 4 spades.
 - 3♠ - 4 hearts
 - 3NT - no 4-card major.
 - 4♦ - 4 cards in both majors.
 - 3♥ - 5 hearts.
 - 3♠ - 5 spades.
 - 3NT - No 4 or 5 card major.
- 3♦ is a transfer to hearts.
- 3♥ is a transfer to spades.

Two Suited Methods

- A direct cue bid of opener's suit is Michael's, showing 5/5 in the highest two unbid suits and either a weak or very strong hand. With an intermediate hand a simple overcall is best.
- A 2NT overcall is Unusual, showing 5/5 in the lowest two unbid suits, with either a weak or a very strong hand.

Other Conventions

- A bid of the fourth suit is forcing to 2NT and asks for a further description of opener's hand.
- We play Roman Keycard Blackwood with 14/30 responses.
- Cue bids (and 2NT if opposite a major bid) in competition show good raises, leaving direct raises to be strictly preemptive.
- Lebensohl 2NT opposite a takeout double.
- Checkback played in response to a NT rebid.

Carding Agreements

- Standard leads: 4th highest, MUD, top of honour sequences etc.
- Signals: attitude on partner's lead, count on declarer's.
- Discards: McKenney suit preference.