

Mentoring Notes



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Mentor and Mentee

Proposed Guidelines

Outline for Learning

The objective of this outline is to provide a framework for learning and to build on the knowledge base of the Mentee.

Communication

It is important that each playing session have objectives and that there be feed back after the session. It is envisioned that there will be approximately 10-12 playing sessions depending on the circumstances.

Basic Bidding Information Standard American System

It is expected that the fundamentals of bidding will be reviewed by the Mentor with the Mentee so as to avoid misunderstandings. Different players have different range expectations. It used to be 13 points to open and it is now 12 points. Some advanced players will open 1S with 11 and shape in any seat! It used to be 10 points to respond with a new suit at the 2 level, and now many use 9 points!

Basic bidding implies only the minimum in bidding conventions. It is assumed that the following conventions are not used: Bergen, J2N, Drury, Splinter, Smolen, Puppet, Inverted Minors, NMF, Unusual 2N, Michaels, etc.

Deciding which additional conventions are most useful is dependent on the Mentor. It is expected that some of the above are known or will be added as time permits.

Because they are not alertable, the 2 most important are Michaels and Unusual 2NT. Reference notes are attached.

Standard Stuff

Avoiding Bad Habits

1. **Count your cards** before you start.
2. **Bidding Box:** Do not place your hands anywhere near the bidding box until you know what your bid will be!
3. **Playing a card:** Do not pull or partially pull a playing card from your hand until it is your turn to play. This gives information to the opponents.
4. **Tempo:** When on defense establish a playing tempo. Be deliberate in your play. Play neither too fast nor too slow. Your partner will know that the card played was to deliver a message.



5. **Tempo:** When bidding, establish a bidding tempo. A break in bidding tempo indicates that you have a problem! A long pause and then a Pass will get your opponents upset and will often get a director call. This is because your long pause indicates that you have points but you do not know what to do with them. If you PASS, this is considered unauthorized information! **If you bid, all is forgiven!**
6. During the play of the hand, leave your card face up until you have seen each of the cards played by the other players and you have interpreted your partner's play! Take your time and **be deliberate!**
7. At the end of play **carefully count the tricks won and lost.** Do NOT fold the cards into a pile until there is 4 player agreement with respect to the number of tricks won!
8. **2nd hand plays Low.** Picture this: The dummy has QJT_x and you are sitting 4th seat and have Ax. The declarer leads low to the dummy and partner plays low, what do you play? You must play the Ace. Your partner could have K_{xx}. By taking your Ace he can hold up the King. Or if your partner has the A_{xx} and you have K_{xx}, you must take the K to avoid any chance of the A and K falling on the same trick!
9. **3rd hand plays high** except on Top of Nothing leads. Always play the lower of equal cards. If you hold the QJ_x of the suit led, always play the J.
10. Generally, open the **4th best** leads against NT contracts. There are always exceptions!
11. Be **patient** on defense particularly when holding good trump when it is late in the play of the hand. Do not lead the Ace of trump (or any trump) if there is any chance that your partner has a trump left. If the declarer has not attempted to take out the trump, you must ask why? He may be missing more than 1 high trump!
12. Try to understand what **line of play** the declarer will take and develop a plan to counter it. This means that you must try to visualize the cards in your partner's hand and in the declarer's hand. This may mean getting rid of access cards on the board, or removing trump, or...
13. **Play of the Ace.** The Declarer leads toward the KQ_{xxx}. You sit 2nd seat with the Ace. Generally, you must play the Ace. The King will always make a trick! The exception will be usually in a NT contract and the Dummy has a long suit like KQJ_{xxx} and No Outside Entry. Then you probably should hold up the Ace as declarer probably holds at most 2 of the suit. This happens often when the bidding is pre-emptive and the declarer ends up in a NT contract!
14. **Director Calls.** A Director is present so that there is fairness for both sides. New players are often mortified when a Director is called! Think of a Director as an adjudicator, or a mediator. Often a Director may be called just to clarify a point of order or an ACBL rule. Try not to be offended and learn to use the Director as a resource person. To call a Director say "Director Please".



Session Guidelines

Sessions 1 and 2 Objectives

Meet and Play The first session will be an evaluation session for both parties. The Mentor must find out where to start by asking questions (perhaps by filling out 2 convention cards) and then providing an initial set of goals. Note that the ACBL requires that both players have an identical convention card. The Mentee will want to know what the expectations are and to set a pace for progress. It is the Mentee who will be driving the bus!

This may be a good time to review the “Standard Stuff” in the previous section. After the 1st session, the mentor will have a good idea as to where to start.

Sessions 2-12

Because the game of bridge has the 3 main components of Bidding, Defense and Play-out Strategies, there will always be these 3 elements in each playing session. The process will always be, to review and discuss, and then to add a new component(s) or to further develop an existing element from the bidding or defensive elements, or playing strategies.

Each session will build on the previous one, adding to the knowledge bank.

Obviously, some sessions will touch all 3 of them and some will only focus on one or two elements.

It is up to both parties to set a pace so as to cover most of the elements in this document. It is up to both parties to read over the materials before the sessions.

“Repeating and reviewing is extremely important. Most people learn best by repetition.”

Sessions 2 and 3:

Review of any issues from previous session.

Review and discuss 1 Level Bids, 2C, Ace Asking and Weak 2s (p5)

Defense: Decide on Carding Attitude and 1st Discard (p14 ff.)

Playout Strategy: Review points 1 through 5 (p20)

Session 4 and 5:

Review of any issues from previous session.

Bidding: Review of Bidding items G-J

Defense: Review of carding attitude, and 1st discard, and discuss Leads.



Playing strategy: review of points 1-5 and 6.

Session 6 and 7:

Review of any issues from previous session.

Bidding: review of items A-J and discuss K-O.

Defense: Review and further discuss Leads

Playing Strategy: Review of points 1-6 and discuss 5-3 and 4-4 fits.

Sessions 8-9:

Review of any issues from previous session.

Bidding: Review and Add items P-T

Defense: Review and Switch Signals (Suit Preference)

Playout Strategy: Review

Sessions 10-11:

Review of any issues from previous session.

Bidding: Review and Add items U-Last item

Defense: Switch Signals and Count

Playout Strategy: Review

Sessions 12:

Review of any issues from previous sessions.

Play and Enjoy!

***Basic Bidding Concepts (Topics for Discussion)**

A checkbox is provided to keep a tab on what has been discussed and agreed upon. It is understood that there is never a definitive closure for any of these items but at least there is some initial understanding. See the Bidding Reference Notes.

- A. 1 NT range and responses.
 - (1) Jacoby Transfer bids
 - (2) Stayman and requirements
 - (3) Perhaps garbage Stayman?
- B. 1 of a Major.
- C. 1 of a minor.
- D. Strong 2C open and responses.
- E. Weak 2 bids.
- F. Ace and King asking
- G. Responses to weak 2 bids.



- H. Negative Doubles and responses
- I. Overcalls
- J. Penalty Doubles
- K. 3rd seat bids
- L. 4th seat bids
- M. Weak 3 preemptive bids
- N. Weak 4 preemptive bids
- O. Interference bids over the opponent's **1N**
- P. Super Accepts
- Q. Reverse Bids
- R. Jump Shifts over your partner and over the Opponent.
- S. 2NT and responses
- T. 3NT and responses
- U. Handling Interference bids
- V. Cue Bids
- W. Redouble
- X. Distributional Hands
- Y. 5NT Stop
- Z. The Law of Total Tricks
- AA SOS Redouble

Bidding Reference Notes

The following notes are meant only as beginning points for discussion. The mentor may disagree with some of the points and substitute his/her own values or meanings for the topics. The reader is urged to question and discuss each of the issues therein.

A. Responses to 1 NT. (GF = Game Force)

- a) With any 5+ card major and any point count, bid a transfer suit. As the Responder:
 - i. With <8 points you will pass the transfer bid.
 - ii. With 8-9 points and a 5 card suit rebid 2N and leave the final rebid up to your partner.
 - iii. With 8-9 points and a 6 card major suit, bid a transfer 2D or 2H and then raise to the 3 level. The opener now knows you have a 6 card suit and will usually bid 4.



- iv. With 10-12 and only a 5 card agreed suit you will rebid 3N. (The opener may opt to rebid 4 of the major with at least 3 card support.)
- v. With 10-12 and a 6 card suit you will rebid 4 of the major.
- vi. With 13+ points you may wish to rebid 3N or ask for aces depending on your hand.

- b) With <8 points and no 5 card major, most responders will pass with one exception, see (d) below).
- c) With a 4 card major and 8+ points bid Stayman 2C. If partner bids your 4 card major then you invite with 8-to a bad 9 points by bidding 3 major or bid 4 major with 9-12. With 13+ and features you may wish to investigate slam. (Note: A good 9 point hand has a singleton or void, or several 9s, 10s, and Jacks.)
- d) Garbage Stayman is rare but useful. It happens when your partner opens 1N and you have <8 points and the following distribution: 1C, 4D, 4H and 4S, or No Clubs, 5D, 4H and 4S. You respond 2C and PASS whatever the opener bids

B. Responses to 1 of a major: (Ranges can vary depending on the player. Some use 5-8, 5-9, or 6-9. Discuss this! Ranges are guidelines, not absolutes!) (Note: 2/1 responses may be different!)

(NF = Not Forcing F = Forcing) (See also the **Law of Total Tricks**, item Z)

- a) If the opener bids 1H and you have 6+ points and 4+ spades you must bid 1S even if you hold 3 hearts. The 1 Heart bidder does not deny having 4 spades! (F)
- b) With 5 card support and 7-9 points bid 4 Major.
- c) With 3 card support and 6-8,9 points bid 2 Major. (NF)
- d) With < 3 card support and 6-8,9 points bid 1 NT. (NF)
- e) With 4 card support and 10 points (including distribution) bid 3 Major.
- f) With 10-11 points and 3 card support bid 3 Major (NF)
- g) With 10+ points and 5 card suit, bid the suit. (F) Some will use 9 points.
- h) With 10-11 points and no 5 card suit and no 4 card major, bid 2NT (NF)
- i) With 12+ points try to bid a new suit at the 2 level and then jump or at least be in a game contract. Some will bid 3N with a flat hand and 3 card support! This needs to be discussed.

C. Responses to 1 of a Minor:

- a) With no 4+ card major and 5+ points, bid 1N. This assumes that you have no 4+ card minor support. Some players require 6 points minimum.
- b) If the opening bid is 1C and you have 4+ diamonds (no 4 card major) and 6+ points, you may respond 1D.
- c) With 5+ points and a 4+ cards in a major bid the major suit at the 1 level.
- d) With 2 (4 card majors), bid 1H. If your partner has 4 spades he will bid 1S.
- e) With 6-9 points and 5 card support bid 2 of the minor. This denies a 4 card major. With only 4 card support, you need at least 2 (or 3) honors to bid 2 minor. This is in case your partner opened with a 3 card suit! If you only have 4 card minor support with low honors, 1N may be a better bid.
- f) With 10-12 bid 2N.
- g) With 13-15 bid 3N.



D. Responses to 2C. This varies with different players so you will need to discuss your preferred method of response.

- a) Method 1: 2D is a waiting bid and 2H is negative showing no Aces or Kings or 2 Queens. 2D is forcing to game! Some play 2D as waiting 3-7. They play 2S, 2N (showing 5 hearts), 3C, 3D as 8+ with a 5 card suit and 2 honors.
- b) Method 2: Steps. Step responses are 2D = 0-3, 2H = 4-6, 2S = 7-9 and 2N = 10+
- c) Method 3: 2D is a catch all and the responder rebids the cheapest available minor suit to show a negative hand. See the example from the website at the right.

See the example from the website at the right.

<http://www.rpbridge.net/3100.htm>

- d) Method 4: 2D is a catch all bid and the responder passes with nothing when the opener bids his suit. So in the above example the responder would Pass instead of bidding 3C.

♠ AKQ9853		♠ 64
♥ J3		♥ 108654
♦ AK		♦ 873
♣ 93		♣ 872

2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	Pass	

E. A weak 2 preemptive bid of 2D, 2H or 2S shows a 6 card suit and 5-10 points for most players.

- a) Vulnerability is key. If the bidder is vulnerable, then most players play the range as 9-10 with 2 of the top 3 honors.
- b) If the bidder is not vulnerable then the requirements may be relaxed. Many also play that if you open a weak 2, then you do not have 4 of the other major. This an old standard which many now do not follow!
- c) Preemptive bids are disruptive and make it more difficult for the opponents to reach a contract.
- d) Preemptive bids are normally a 1 time bid.
- e) It is also important to bid a preemptive bid early otherwise you may lose the opportunity.
- f) It is also rare to preempt in the 4th seat because you already know that (1) your partner is weak and (2) you have lost the obstructive value and (3) you have increased the chances of a penalty double.
- g) Fourth seat preemptive bids should have a solid suit.

F. Ace and King Asking Bids:

- (a) The Blackwood Convention. If a partnership has decided that there is a possibility to make a slam contract, they will need to know if they have the Aces and Kings. A bid of 4NT asks partner to respond with 5C if he holds All or No Aces, 5D if he holds 1Ace, 5H if he holds 2 Aces, and 5S if he holds 3 Aces. Next, if he wants to know the King holdings, he bids 5N. The same responses are used at the 6 level. [6C shows All or None, 6D shows 1 King, 6H shows 2 Kings, and 6S show 3 Kings]
- (b) The Gerber Convention. If Clubs have never been bid as a suit, then, you can ask for Aces and Kings by using 4C, then 5C. So 4C then 4D is All or None, 4H is 1 Ace, 4S



is 2 Aces, 4N is 3 Aces. Similarly, to find the number of Kings, you bid 5C. The answer of 5D is All or None, 5H is 1 King, 5S is 2 Kings, 5N is 3 Kings.

Note: Some partnerships use 4C as Always Ace Asking!

G. Responses to a weak 2: If the partner thinks that there may be a game in NT, he may wish to know if the preemptive bidder has an outside control for an entry. The most common partner bid is 2N which asks for a control. A control is defined as an outside Ace or a protected King. If the preemptive bidder has an outside control, he bids that suit, otherwise he bids 3 of the long suit.

If the partner does not bid 2N but bids a new suit, is this forcing or non forcing?
Discuss this with your partner!

H. Negative Doubles: For new players, **doubles** generally are always forcing (take out) at the 1-3 level. Doubles show a 4 card suit(s). If you have a 5 card suit, bid it! If you have a 5 card suit and you double, your partner can never bid a 3 card suit so you miss an 8 card fit! Most players will bid a negative double up to 3S. You must decide this with your partner.

(i) If the opponents have bid both majors, then a double asks partner to bid a minor, otherwise a negative double asks the partner to choose a major suit if he has 4 in the suit. If he does not have at least 4 in the suit he must bid a minor or NT.
Example: The bidding is 1S Dbl Pass ?. This asks partner to bid 2H if he has 4 hearts and <9 points and to bid 3H if he has 4 hearts and 9+ points.

(ii) If the initial bid is 1 Minor and you double, you generally hold 4 Hearts and 4 Spades or at least a tolerance such as 4-3. As the partner of the doubler you must jump a level to show 9+ and a 4 card suit. The **exception** is: if the opener has bid 1 or 2 or 3S and you hold say a 5 or 6 card spade suit and 8+ points you may wish to pass and take the penalty points.

I. Overcalls: Generally, an overcall shows 5+ in a suit and 8+ points. (Some use 7) Again, vulnerability plays a role. You will rarely overcall when vulnerable with less than 9+ points. The player to your left may have 5+ of your suit. He will pass and wait for his partner to double or bid. If the partner doubles he will pass and take the penalty points.

An overcall generally is lead directing. It may or may not show an opening hand. The partner must slightly underbid his hand in case the overcall is weak! If the overcaller bids a 2nd time, this normally shows that he started with an opening hand and you can now fully disclose your hand.

J. Penalty Doubles: Normally penalty doubles happen at the game level or the 4 level or higher. Usually a double of a 4 level bid is an optional penalty double. This must be discussed with your partner. Usually any double below this level is a Forcing Take Out Double.

K. 3rd seat openings may be light. Some players may play it as low as 7 High Card Points when NV, but most players use 9 or 10 points and a 5 card suit as a rule. Many players use this bid as Lead Directing as they do not expect to get the final contract.



L. If 4th seat bidders do not have a full opener they may use the rule of 15. This rule simply states that you add your point count to the number of spades and if it is 15 or more you can open 1S. Other logical factors are involved so the reader is urged to look up 4th seat bidding on the web. Two such sites are below.

See <https://lajollabridge.com/French/biddinghandbook/02-04.pdf>

Also see: https://taigabridge.net/articles/web_open3.htm

See also the rule of 20. This uses your point count + the number of cards in your 2 longest suits. Marty Bergen suggests that it be used only in 1st and 2nd seats, but others have no restrictions. Discuss this with your partner. See: https://www.andrewrobson.co.uk/article/beginner_corner/632

M. Weak 3 Preemptive Bids: They generally show a 7 card suit and 0-10 points, except for 3C which may only be a 6 card suit. There are no restrictions on point count. Defensively, preempts indicate that your hand has little or no value when on defense. So preemptive bids are a gamble that what you will lose in down penalties are less than what you would lose by letting the opponents make a contract. There are many examples from:

<http://www.rpbridge.net/3j00.htm> Here is 1 example:

The web site indicates that you should: open 2♠ (a weak two-

bid) at unfavorable vulnerability; open 3♠ at equal vulnerability and open 4♠ at favorable vulnerability.

N. Weak 4 Preemptive Bids: They generally show an 8 card suit with 6-11 points. With more points the opener may choose to open 1 to avoid missing a slam. See: http://web.mit.edu/mitdlbc/www/novice-results/07/WJO_web.pdf

O. Interference bids over the opponent's 1N. There are several systems for interfering over the opponents 1N. Many beginners and intermediates play Natural bids. However, other systems exist which can show a long suit or a 2 suited hand. They are Meckwell, DONT, Cappelletti, Landy, etc. One of the better systems is Meckwell.

P. Super Accepts: A super accept occurs when there is a transfer bid. In the case where the bidding is 1N P 2H P. If the opener has 4 Spades and is at the top of the NT range, say 17 or 18, then he jumps a level. See the chart:

North	East	South	West	Meaning
1N	P	2H	P	
3S	The opener is showing 17, 18 with 4+ spades. He cannot bid 4S in case the responder has 0 points!			



Q. Reverse Bids: Definition: A Reverse bid occurs when you open a suit at the 1 level and then rebid a new higher ranking suit at the 2 level. Many players do not play any type of reverses! They will jump to show a big hand! Others play only minor suit and major suit reverses such as the opener bids 1C then 2D or 1H then 2S as showing big hands. They do not play a minor then a major as in 1C then 2H as a reverse. See the table:

	North	East	South	West	North	Meaning
Ex 1	1C	P	1H	P	2D	Reverse 17+ Pts
Ex 2	1H	P	1N	P	2S	Reverse 17+ Pts
Ex 3	1C	P	1S	P	2H	Not a reverse. The player is trying to find a fit or a NT contract

If players treat example 3 as a reverse, then the opening bidder with a hand <17 points MUST bid 1N (because any new suit shows 17+ points) even if he has 4 of a major. Now the Responder must understand that the 1N bid does not deny having 4 of a major. For more detail see:

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-learning-center/print/562>

R. Jump Shifts: A Jump Shift occurs when a partner jumps a level to a new suit. Is this a strong bid or a weak bid? Example 1C pass 2S Pass. Most partnerships now treat this as a very weak bid showing 6 spades and <6 points. It is weaker than a 1S bid! Discuss this with your partner! A jump bid over the opponent's bid is a preempt.

S. 2NT and Responses: The usual range is 20-21. Some use 19-21, others 20-22. Check with your partner. The responses are much the same as for 1NT, except for Stayman. To bid Stayman, you need a 4 card major and 4+ points. You still use Jacoby transfers with a 5 card major and 0+ points. With no 4+ major holding, and 4 to 10 points, responder bids 3N. (2NT is a NF bid!)

T. 3NT and responses. Many players do not play a strong 3N, they use 2C instead. Some use 24+ for 3N. Others will bid gambling 3N showing a long minor suit and no outside controls. If your partner does not have controls in the majors, he is obliged to bid 4C. If this is your long minor you will pass, otherwise you correct to 4D. Discuss this with your partner.

U. Handling Interference by the Opponents: A complex subject. Your partner opens 1 of a suit, and your right hand opponent overcalls: See the following website for a general reference: <http://www.rpbridge.net/2z12.htm>

Depending on the overcall, and your point count, if you have support for your partner's bid, you should show it. Be cautious!

If you have no support for your partner's bid but you have a control in the opponents bid suit, you may wish to bid NT, either 1, 2 or 3 depending on your strength. If neither of these 2 situations are valid then you may be able to bid a new suit, or negative double to show an unbid major!

Talk this over with your partner.



V. Cue Bids: An Excellent Cue Bid tutorial can be found at:

[https://www.santacruzbridge.org/info/learn/Cuebids%20\(Seminar%20Notes\).pdf](https://www.santacruzbridge.org/info/learn/Cuebids%20(Seminar%20Notes).pdf)

A cue bid occurs when you bid the opponents suit. All cue bids are Absolutely Forcing! The major types of cue bids are:

- 1) **Limit Raise.** This normally happens at the 2 level. This show 9+ points and 3 card support.

North	East	South	West
1H	1S	2S	
?			

Or

North	East	South	West
1C	1H	P	2C
P	?		

Note: A 2 or 3 level rebid by the opener of the Major suit shows a minimum hand and is normally a Stop bid but if the cue bidder has an opening hand, he can bid game or more.

- 2) **Western Cue.** These normally happen at the 3 level.

This sequence happens when a partner thinks that there is a 3N game possible, if his partner has a stopper in the opponent's suit! If his partner has a stopper, he bids 3N.

North	East	South	West
1S	2C	2D	P
3C			

- 3) **Michaels Cue Bid** (See the Distributional Hands)
- 4) Other types of cue bids.
- 5) When is a Cue Bid not a Cue Bid?

This frequently happens when there is a minor suit bid and one of the opponents has length in that minor suit. How do you show that it is Natural Bid and not a Cue Bid? Normally you cannot bid the suit during the same round of bidding! See below!

North	East	South	West
1C	P	1D	P
2D	3C		

The 3C is Natural and shows a very good 5 card suit or 6+.

W. Redouble: A Redouble normally shows 10+ points and is forcing. It may or may not show a Fit. Discuss this with your partner.

X. Distributional Hands e.g. 5521, or 6511 or 5152 etc.

If you are the first bidder in any seat you normally open with the higher 5 card suit even if they are not touching. (Many experts will tell you to open the lower of non-touching suits. The problem with this tactic is that you may not get a chance to show



your major if the bidding goes high very quickly and you are weakish. You may want to discuss this with your partner.)

If you are not the first bidder and you have an overcall then you are in luck as now you can use a Michaels or an Unusual 2N bid. Most players now play that a 2N overcall shows the **Lowest 2 Unbid Suits**. A Michaels bid always shows the highest unbid major + another suit.

These bids do not show strength so bid slowly. The point count for these 2 bids is a partnership agreement, but they are usually 8+ depending on vulnerability. These bids are Not Alertable.

Opps open	Bid	Convention	Shows	
1C	2C	Michaels	5S + 5H + any distribution in other suits	
	2N	UnUs2N	5D + 5H + any distribution in other suits	
	<i>exception</i>		5D + 5S + any distribution in other suits	Bid 1S See Note
1D	2D	Michaels	5S + 5H + any distribution in other suits	
	2N	UnUs2N	5C + 5H + any distribution in other suits	
	<i>exception</i>		5C + 5S + any distribution in other suits	Bid 1S See Note
1H	2H	Michaels	5S + 5Minor + any distribution in other suits	2N Asks for minor
	2N	UnUs2N	5C + 5D + any distribution in other suits	
1S	2S	Michaels	5H + 5minor + any distribution in other suits	2N Asks for minor
	2N	UnUs2N	5C + 5D + any distribution in other suits	

Note: There are 2 exceptions that Michaels and the Unusual 2N do not cover. There is a modified Michaels bid that says 1C-2C shows 5S + 5 of a lower suit. Similarly 1D-2D shows 5S + 5 of a lower suit. **Now all instances are covered.** However, very few people play this.

Y. 5NT Stop: You have 2 aces, so you bid 4N. Your partner bids 5C (No Aces). To stop at 5N, you must bid the highest unbid suit and your partner must bid 5N.

Z. The Law of Total Tricks: Briefly, it says that the number of tricks you can expect to make in a suit contract is equal to the total number of trumps you and your partner hold. Obviously, this law is subject to numerous conditions, and there are books written on the subject, so use it as a “Rough Rule of Thumb” and bid accordingly.

AA. SOS Redouble: The following sequence is an SOS to partner to rescue me: (1C Double Pass Pass) then Redouble. The Redouble says that I have no Club suit, HELP, bid something!



***Defensive Concepts and Tactics**

The Mentor and mentee will be expected to review and refine the basics. Notes are provided.

Basic Concepts

- A. Carding
- B. 1st discard
- C. Leads

More Advanced Concepts

- D. Switch signals (Side Suit Preference)
- E. Count signals

It is expected that at least 2-3 sessions be focused on defensive concepts. Since, you are playing defense roughly 50% of the time, partnerships that play good defense will usually score in the 45-55% range.

*The hardest concepts for new players to learn is that every card played sends a message! You are either telling your partner that you **Like/Dislike** a suit, or you are telling your partner to **Switch** to a particular suit, or you are giving **Count** as to how many cards that you have in that suit! You can also tell partner that you have No Winning cards by your Switch signal!*

Definition of Side Suits: If Spades are trumps, and Diamonds are led, then the Side Suits are Hearts and Clubs.

Carding Attitude

Carding attitude means the card that you play when your partner leads a High card, usually an Ace but it could be a King or Queen. Showing Attitude means that you play a card that says that you Like or Dislike the suit led.

- ❖ With **Standard Carding** you would play a High card to show that you like that suit or a Low card to tell partner that you do not like the suit.
- ❖ **Upside Down Carding** means that you play a Low card (2,3,4,5) to tell partner that you like the suit allowing you to keep a potential winner. So, if you have no potential winners when your partner leads an Ace, you can signal that with a 7, 8 or 9. A 6 tends to be viewed as a Neutral card neither High nor Low and it says Partner, I have nothing Protect Yourself! Of course, sometimes the 6 is the lowest card you have in the suit so...
 - Example 1: You have the 862 when partner leads the A. You play the 8 to tell partner that you have no interest in that suit.
 - Example 2: You have the Q82 when partner leads the Ace. To show that you have an honor you play the 2. (Playing an Ace implies that you also have the King.)



- ❖ Carding Attitude is **not** an absolute command to continue the suit, but it does tell partner that you have (or do not have) a potential trick in the suit. The partner may have to change suits i.e. A singleton Ace, or he may switch because of some other factor, i.e. suspected void, or he may wish to cash other tricks immediately.
- ❖ **The Next Step:** If you are playing Upside Down Carding and your partner leads an Ace (shows the King) and you encourage with the 2 showing the Queen.
 - If your partner next leads a Low card to your Queen, what is he saying?
He is saying to lead back the lower side suit in the dummy!
 - If your partner next leads say a 7,8,9 or 10 to your Queen, what is he saying?
He is saying to lead back the higher side suit in the dummy!
- ❖ Good Disciplined Carding is very important. You must be true to your system! **Never absent mindedly discard a card that may hurt your side.** Your partner must trust that your carding is a deliberate act. If you have no good cards in your hand then, you must discard **Negatively**, so as not to encourage, a bad lead. Example: You have no winning cards but there is an AKxxx in the dummy. Tell your partner that you like that suit! He should get the point!

1st Discard

Both parties must decide which system they will play and to select it on the convention card.

Your 1st discard occurs when your partner leads, or the declarer leads and you have no cards in that suit. This is your opportunity to tell your partner where your strength lies.

There are several methods to do this:

Sometimes your cards do not fit to show a suit preference. If this is the case, then for whatever system you play, you must discard negatively, telling your partner what suit you do not like! Maybe your partner can guess what suit you like! "Please, Please, Please", do not just play any card. Be true to the system that you play!

1. Standard

With this method you play a high card in a suit that you like or a low card in a suit that you do not like.

2. Upside down

This method is the opposite of Standard. You play a low card in the suit that you like and a high card in a suit that you do not like.

3. Lavinthal

With Lavinthal, to ask for dummy's Higher Side Suit, you play a high card in a suit that you Do Not Like. To ask for dummy's Lower Side Suit, you will play a low card in a suit that you Do Not Like.

4. Odd-Even



If your 1st discard is odd (3,5,7,9) you like that suit! If your 1st discard is even (2,4,6,8,10) you do not like that suit, BUT, if you play a 2 or a 4 it asks for dummy's lowest side suit. If you play an 8 or a 10, it asks for dummy's highest side suit. A 6 tends to be neutral, saying that you have no good cards.

5. Suit Preference

This simply says that you like the suit that you play. It does not matter if it is high or low or odd or even!

Note: As a declarer, you must ASK what system your opponents are playing! Be careful, some play Odd-Even in the reverse fashion. Ask what **odd** means! Also, some play Standard as Suit Preference. You must ask what a **low card** means! Also, some players will deceive you when they discard! You have no come back when this happens! Their defense is that either they had no correct card, or that they could not discard a possible winner!

Leads

Most players lead using the standard leads as found on the Convention Card. If your leads are different then you should select the card that you lead in each situation. Unfortunately, Standard leads are not Standard for everyone. Some Standard Lead systems will lead the King from AKJx, however, most players nowadays will lead the Ace from AKJx. Therefore, it is essential, that you select your leads from the LIST on the ACBL Convention Card.

Note that the most common leads are circled. Also note the interior sequence leads versus a suit contract is left for both players to agree on. Some players prefer not to make interior sequence leads against a suit contract, because of a likely shortness.

One of the best sites for modern day Standard leads is:

<http://www.bridgebears.com/bridge-card-game/defense/openingleads.html>

For a site that explains all types of leading systems see:

http://www.bridgebum.com/standard_leads.php

Standard leads

<http://www.bridgewebs.com/porthcawl/TUTORIAL%2012%20-%20OPENING%20LEADS.pdf>

LEADS (circle card led, if not in bold)			
versus Suits		versus Notrump	
X X	X X X X	X X	X X X X
X X X	X X X X X	X X X	X X X X X
A K x	T 9 x	A K J x	A T J x
K Q x	K J T x	A J T 9	A T 9 x
T J x	K T 9 x	K Q J x	K T 9
J T 9	Q T 9 x	J T x	Q T 9 x
K Q T 9		J T 9 x	T 9 x x

LENGTH LEADS:			
4th Best	vs SUITS	<input type="checkbox"/>	vs NT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3rd/5th Best	vs SUITS	<input type="checkbox"/>	vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>
			Attitude vs NT <input type="checkbox"/>

Primary signal to partner's leads			
Attitude	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Count	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suit preference	<input type="checkbox"/>		



Definition: Unblock means to play your high cards in your partner's long suit so that he can make extra tricks. This is particularly important against a NT contract but it is also true in a suit contract. Unblock means that you must be aware that your partner may have a 5 or 4 card suit when he leads. If you hold the Q92. Play the Q and the 9 (or the 9 then the Q) before you play the 2! You must be vigilant. If he leads say the 5 of D, and then shows the 2 of D...then this means he started with a 5 card suit, assuming that the lead was 4th best. Be sure to Unblock if you hold high cards.

Do's and Dont's

Review the bidding. *Avoid leading the Declarer's bid suits!*

1. Leading is the most difficult decision when on defense! A bad lead often lets the Declarer make a contract. When leading you are shooting blind, so **try to make a safe lead** that does not harm your defense and still keeps your assets hidden and the declarer guessing.
2. Top of Nothing Leads. For any lead of a 7-9 (10) this is considered a Top of Nothing Lead. If your partner leads a 7,8 or 9 and you hold: 1) Kxx or Qxx then **Do Not play** the K or Q. Hold it as a possible threat! If you hold the KQx then play the Q or if you hold the KJx then play the J and Keep the K as a possible threat. Etc. By withholding your top honor you make the declarer use up a dummy access to finesse you! If you hold the Axx, then generally take the Ace but **do not return** the suit unless you suspect that partner has a singleton or doubleton. (*This may occur when the bidding has been preemptive!*) In Standard play, a lead of a Low card indicates an honor! Beware of this play when you are a declarer, because some advanced partnerships will lead low from nothing. Check their card!
3. Do lead an Ace when you have any AK combination. Your partner now has an opportunity to give you a message such as Attitude (or count, or a Switch Signal). (Note: Some players will lead a King then play an Ace to show a doubleton.)
4. Never under lead an Ace against a suit contract! Obviously, you will under lead an Ace against a NT contract if you have at least 4 in the suit.
5. When **Leading** you always lead the higher of touching honors. e.g. Lead the A from AKx and the K from KQxx and the Q from QJxx etc. By leading the K you tell your partner that you have the Q. However, there are times when you do not need to lead the suit at all, as you want to make 2 tricks e.g. both the K and Q. Example if you have KQx vs a 3N contract. It is certain that the declarer has the A, so you will use a discard to tell your partner to lead that suit!
6. When **Defending** and taking a trick Always play the cheapest card that will do the job. e.g. If you have the KQx and you can take the trick always play the Q. If you play the K it tells your partner that you DO NOT HAVE the Q! The card you play denies the next lower one!
7. Avoid leading from an Honor, unless (i) your partner has bid the suit or (ii) you have no choice. A lead of a low card normally indicates a high Honor NOT an Ace. Avoid leading low from say 10xxx. Try to avoid finessing you partner for no reason.



8. Avoid doubleton leads like 52 or 42 or 62 or 32 or 43. These leads look too much like you are leading from an honor, so you will end up finessing your partner for no reason! Sometimes you may lead a doubleton like 92 or 83 etc when you have no better lead!
9. Aces are made to take Kings! Against a suit contract you may lead an A from Ax, but not against a NT contract. With Suit contracts you wish to create a ruff in your hand or your partner's hand. With NT contracts you want to establish a long suit! Normally leading an A from Ax is a last resort lead and you need a strong suspicion/hope that you can get a ruff.
10. Against a suit contract, you may lead a singleton before leading your partner's bid suit. Why? If your partner has an entry then we have possibly 2 ruff(s). He returns your led suit for a ruff. Then you lead his bid suit for a trick, and then he returns your led suit for another ruff!
11. Seldom lead a singleton trump because your partner may have 3 or 4 trump and you will be finessing him. If your partner leads a trump then protect yourself. You do not have to go up high if you have a potential trick. Example: You have Kxxx and your partner leads a trump, Do Not go up K! Make the Declarer work to get your trump honor. As long as you have the Trump Honor in your hand it is a potential threat!
12. Leading a trump is often a good lead (not a singleton trump), especially if the bidding has shown a 4-4 fit or the dummy has shown a reluctance to bid the suit, and you have no better options. When the dummy has shown a reluctance to bid a suit it usually means he has at most 2 in the suit, so leading a trump will reduce the ruffing possibilities.
13. Lead a trump when the bidding strongly suggests a 7 card (4-3) or a (5-2) fit. The declarer will be trying to ruff, so continue leading trump!

Example:

1S (shows 5 card Major)	P	1N (Denies fit)	P
2C (Denies 6 card suit)	P	2S (Stop - Suggests 2 card support)	P

14. If your partner leads a K (implies the Q) and you hold the Ax, play the A and return the x. Now you will get a ruff or a sluff that you can use to indicate a side suit.
15. Lead your partner's suit. Exception: if the declarer is in NT, it is highly likely that he has 2 stoppers in your partner's suit! If you have an honor in your partner's suit you have to decide to lead it, lead away from it, or hold it! However, at some point you must Unblock the suit, so:

Versus NT contracts when your partner has bid a suit:

- i. If you hold the Tx or Jx or Qx, lead the T or J or Q.
- ii. If you hold the Kx, **Do not lead the K** as partner may have bid a suit like JT765. If this is the case, then your partner will lead the J to you (trapping the Q) and you will make the K. Your partner must realize that there was a reason why you did not lead his suit!



- iii. If you hold the K62, then lead the 2, which promises an honor. **Do Not lead the K**. However, you should play the K on the next round of that suit (Unblocking) so that you have the 6 to get back to your partner.
 - iv. Any singleton Honor - Lead it.
 - v. Any singleton spot card (Probably not, unless partner signals for it at his first opportunity! Discuss with partner, some players want you to lead it!)
 - vi. If you hold KJ982 and you want to lead against a 3N contract, you should **lead the 2 and not the 8** to avoid your partner misinterpreting the lead as a Top of Nothing.
16. Use the rule of 11. When sitting 3rd seat and your partner leads his 4th best against a 3NT contract, you can determine how many cards the declarer holds that will beat the card led. If a 4 is led and you hold 2 cards that beat the 4 and the dummy holds 3 cards that beat the 4, you subtract 5+4 from 11, and conclude that the declarer holds 2 cards that will beat the 4. The problem here is it works for the declarer as well! However, it is still good information that you must use to your advantage.
17. Almost always lead to the short suit in the Dummy. Avoid leading through dummy's long suit. If the dummy's long suit is already set up then you may lead to it if you think that the declarer may only have a singleton, thereby stopping access, however, you only do this as a last resort!

Count Signals:

Standard Count Signals

Playing a high card then a lower card shows that you started with an even number of cards. i.e. 2 or 4 or 6.

Playing a low card then a higher card shows that you started with an odd number of cards, i.e. 3 or 5.

Upside Down Count is the reverse of Standard count.

**There is a place on the bottom left side of the ACBL Card to indicate the Primary signal to Partner's Leads! You must choose Attitude, Count or Suit Preference.*

**Some players always play Count when the opponent leads, and when their partner leads, they usually play Attitude. This is quite common, so watch all the cards!*

**If your Primary signal to partner is Attitude, then you should play COUNT when your card holding is something like the 345 (or 245 or 256) or the 789 (or 78T or 79T or 89T). Since it makes no difference which low card or which high card you play, you may as well show Standard Count by playing the 3 then the 4 or the 7 then the 8 to tell your partner that you have 3 in the suit. Of course, if you play Upside Down Count, then you would play the highest card first.*



Switch Signals (Suit Preference Signals)

There are several instances when a Switch Signal is in effect:

- i. There is a Singleton or a Void in the dummy and your partner leads the Ace.
- ii. When there is a protected K in the dummy.
- iii. When there is a protected Q in the dummy.
- iv. When you or your partner are/is void.
- v. When you know that your partner can ruff a suit, the size of the card you play indicates the Side Suit in the dummy that you want your partner to return. If you play a low card to be ruffed, you wish your partner to return dummy's lowest ranking side suit. Similarly, if you play a high card to be ruffed you want your partner to return dummy's highest ranking side suit.

Essentially any time you have a free play you give a SWITCH SIGNAL. The simplest cases are when the dummy has a singleton or a void in the lead suit. Clearly it makes no sense to play encouraging or discouraging signals in these 2 cases. A SWITCH SIGNAL is a request for a SIDE SUIT.

See appendix A for several examples.

*Playout of the Hand

Everyone needs a mental checklist before playing any card and you always need a tentative strategy for playout. This includes making sure that you always have 2 way access to the dummy and your hand. Your **Plan** may need to be changed but you always need a **Plan**.

Necessary Steps of your Plan:

1. Don't touch a card until you have counted your winners and losers!
2. Review the bidding. If East opens and his partner passed, then you can place most of the missing points in the East hand.
3. Identify the Specific Outstanding Trumps. If the outstanding trumps are smaller than your holdings then there may not be any advantage in capturing them. (see item 12)
4. How many access cards are there in the dummy?
5. What do you do with your losers? Can they be ruffed or sluffed on a long suit? Before you play any cards, you must have a **Plan as to what you are going to do with your sure losers!**
6. Does a long suit need to be set up? If so, do you pull trump before or set the suit up first? You may need to set the suit up first so that you have guaranteed access. If so, is there a danger of the opponents ruffing? If so, you may need to draw 1 or 2 rounds of trump.



7. In order to better make a Plan you should have a general idea of what the odds are for the usual splits! Here they are:

See the following website to get precise numbers. The table is attached at the end of the document.

Number of Outstanding	Split	Odds
4 outstanding trump	3-1	50%
	2-2	40%
	4-0	10%
5 outstanding trump	3-2	68%
	4-1	28%
	5-0	4%

https://www.bridgehands.com/P/Probability_of_Card_Distribution.htm

8. An 8 card fit has ruffing advantages. Try to ruff in the short hand. Hope for the best but plan for the worst. Plan for a 4-1 split. Normally, with 8+ trump, you must draw 1 or 2 rounds of trump to avoid singleton ruffs. This is especially true when there have been preemptive bids! If you have drawn 2 rounds of trump and the boss trump is outstanding, avoid calling for it. Try to make the opponent ruff with this boss trump and you will save 2 trumps!
9. If you have 7 or fewer trump then you seldom call trump more than once or twice. The exceptions to this general rule are when you have a good no-trump type hand, then you may be able to play the suit contract like a no-trump hand by calling out the trump and running your good cards. Example you hold the AKQJ of trump and a long running suit in dummy.
10. Always ensure 2 way access to and from the dummy. This usually means keeping low cards in each hand to ensure accessibility. Ex: Keeping a 2 or a 3 and playing a 7 or an 8 or higher.
11. Count-Count-Count and watch the opponents carding. They are messaging to each other. By watching their discards, you can often tell where the key missing cards lie.
12. Ask what the opponents carding and discard system is. However, don't bet your savings on what they say. You have no recourse if they tell you that they play a certain system but do not follow it!
13. Decide on the Master Hand by counting the losers in both hands. If the dummy has a long suit that will run and is accessible, then try to make the dummy the Master Hand. This is sometimes called Dummy Reversal. With a dummy reversal, you ruff in the declarer's hand rather than the dummy, hence the name. There are 3 conditions that you need to do a dummy reversal: i) you need a long solid trump suit so that the opponents' trumps are smaller than any of yours ii) you need shortness in the declarer's hand iii) you need many access cards in the dummy.

To better understand this concept, see the examples in Appendix B.



Appendix A

Switch Signal (Suit Preference) Examples

1. The simplest case is when your partner leads the AH and the dummy has a singleton.
Example: You sit South. The contract is 2S by West

	North	
<i>Contract</i>	S 73	
<i>2S by West</i>	H AK754	
<i>Lead AH</i>	D T974	
	C 97	
West		East
		S KQ65
		H 3
		D J862
		C 8653
	South	
	S 98	
	H J862	
	D Q53	
	C AK42	

What do you play? Answer: 2H. This asks for a C switch, the LOWER SIDE SUIT.

2. Consider the same lead and the same contract but this time you hold:

	North	
<i>Contract</i>	S 73	
<i>2S by West</i>	H AK754	
<i>Lead AH</i>	D T974	
	C 97	
West		East
		S KQ65
		H 3
		D J862
		C 8653
	South	
	S 98	
	H J862	
	D AK53	
	C Q42	

What do you play? Answer: 8H This asks for a D switch, the HIGHER SIDE SUIT.



3. The Second Most Common Situation for a Switch Signal is when you and your partner have bid the same suit. See the bidding. The bid is 4S by W. You lead the AH, your partner plays the 2H, an encouraging signal card. You want to go to your partner and have him lead a C. What card do you play?

North					
<i>Contract</i>	S 7				
<i>4S by West</i>	H AQJ83	Bidding			
<i>Lead AH</i>	D T974	North	East	South	West
	C AQ9	1H	Pass	2H	4S
West		Pass	Pass	Pass	
S AKQT93		East			
H T7		S J5			
D AK		H 654			
C KJT		D J862			
		C 8653			
South					
		S 8642			
		H K92			
		D Q53			
		C 742			

Answer: 3H for a Club return!

4. The Third Most Common Switch Signal Request is when you have a long suit and you have a count on the suit which shows your partner is void in the suit! The Declarer must follow in the suit and your partner will ruff! You want a return in a certain side suit so you must decide which card you play for your partner to ruff. A High card will ask for a return in the Higher side Suit, and vice versa. So here is an example. You sit North.

North					
<i>Contract</i>	S 7				
<i>4S by West</i>	H A83	Bidding			
<i>Lead AC</i>	D T972	North	East	South	West
	C AK864	2C	2H	Pass	1S
West		Pass	4S	Pass	3S
S AKQT93		Pass			
H T7		East			
D AK		S J5			
C Q52		H KQJ654			
		D J			
		C T973			
South					
		S 8642			
		H 92			
		D Q86543			
		C J			



When East puts down the dummy you see the long Hearts and you know that you have a problem. If west is void in Hearts, you will set up many sluffs by leading the Ace of Hearts. You know that you will need 2 Clubs, a Club ruff and a Heart to set, but West may be short in Hearts. To maximize your chances, you will need your partner to lead a Heart at trick 4 and if West is void you can hold back the Ace of Hearts. So, you lead the A and K of Clubs and then you lead the 8C (switch request) for a ruff, and your partner will know to lead back a Heart.

5. Another Example of a long suit and a ruff by your partner.

North		Bidding			
<i>Contract</i>	S 7	North	East	South	West
<i>2S by West</i>	H A873				1S
<i>Lead AD</i>	D AK976	2D	2H	Pass	2S
	C AQ8	Pass	Pass	Pass	
West		East			
S AKQT93		S J5			
H T		H KQJ654			
D QT2		D J54			
C KJT		C 76			
	South				
	S 8642				
	H 92				
	D 83				
	C 95432				

As North you lead the AD and your partner plays the 8D. You lead the KD and your partner plays the 3D. (Using standard count you know that your partner has either 2 or 4 Diamonds.) You lead the 6D (Switch request because the 6 is the lowest card not played), your partner ruffs and leads back a Club. You now have 6 tricks. 2D, 1 ruff, 2C and 1H for down 1!

6. The STUPID switch signal!

Sometimes you have NO potential tricks. PLEASE, PLEASE do not ask for a switch that will cost your defense a trick. Ask for a switch to a side suit that is clearly ridiculous, ie There is an AKx., or a void on the board. Your partner should realize the implication.

Another good discard is a 6, which usually shows no interest in that suit or any suit.



Appendix B

Examples of dummy reversal (Master Hand)

See the following website:

<http://www.acblunit559.com/cardplay/dumrev/index.html>

Example 1: Your contract in the South is 6H and the lead is the Ace of S followed by the King of S.

Problem

If you ruff the second spade and draw trump you will take five heart tricks, three diamonds and three clubs. That's 11 tricks and you need 12.

Solution: You must reduce the number of trumps in your hand to fewer than the number in dummy.

You need to ruff three spades, not just the second one. Cross to dummy with minor suit entries in order to do this. Your hand will then have only two trumps after ruffing three times, but that means you will take three ruffs, three trumps, three diamonds and three clubs to make 12 tricks.

<i>North</i>	
<i>S</i>	7632
<i>H</i>	AT3
<i>D</i>	KQ8
<i>C</i>	A65
<i>South</i>	
<i>S</i>	8
<i>H</i>	KQJ65
<i>D</i>	AJ4
<i>C</i>	KQ76

Example 2: See it at the right:

The contract is 6H in the South.

The Lead is the 10S. East captures it with the AS and returns the 7S

Winners: 2S, 5H, 1D, 3C = 11 tricks

Notice: i) you hold all the top trumps. ii) There is lots of dummy access and iii) There is shortness in the declarer's hand.

Plan the play!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQkBgbANoNQ>

Further examples of dummy reversals can be found at the following websites:

<https://youtu.be/9y6UEU3s5IM?t=1723>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMSQ9UieAkY&t=12s>

<i>North</i>	
<i>S</i>	432
<i>H</i>	QJT
<i>D</i>	A765
<i>C</i>	K52
<i>South</i>	
<i>S</i>	KQJ
<i>H</i>	AK987
<i>D</i>	2
<i>C</i>	AQ76



Appendix C

Probabilities of hand distributions.

https://www.bridgehands.com/P/Probability_of_Card_Distribution.htm

Outstanding Cards	Possible Holding	Percentage
2	1-1	52.0
	2-0, 0-2	48.0
3	2-1, 1-2	78.0
	3-0, 0-3	22.0
4	3-1, 1-3	49.7
	2-2	40.7
	4-0, 0-4	9.6
5	3-2, 2-3	67.8
	4-1, 1-4	28.3
	5-0, 0-5	3.9
6	4-2, 2-4	48.5
	3-3	35.5
	5-1, 1-5	14.5
	6-0, 0-6	1.5

Stop (Drop Dead) Bidding Sequences

1.

North	East	South	West
1 something	P	1 something	P
1N	P	P	P

1N says he has a minimum hand with no support for partner's suit.
South may bid again with a big hand.

2.

North	East	South	West
1S	P	1N	P
2H	P	3C	P

South's bid of 3C denies 3 card spade support and no 4 card heart support.
It also says that he has 6+ clubs! If North has 6 spades or 5 hearts he may bid again.



Web Links

Response to 2C

<http://www.rpbridge.net/3100.htm>

4th Seat Bidding

<https://lajollabridge.com/French/biddinghandbook/02-04.pdf>

https://taigabridge.net/articles/web_open3.htm

Weak 3 Preemptive Bids

<http://www.rpbridge.net/3j00.htm>

Weak 4 Preemptive Bids

http://web.mit.edu/mitdlbc/www/novice-results/07/WJO_web.pdf

Reverse Bids

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-learning-center/print/562>

Handling Opponent's Interference

<http://www.rpbridge.net/2z12.htm>

Standard Leads

<http://www.bridgebears.com/bridge-card-game/defense/openingleads.html>

http://www.bridgebum.com/standard_leads.php

<http://www.bridgewebs.com/porthcawl/TUTORIAL%2012%20-%20OPENING%20LEADS.pdf>

Probabilities with missing 2-6 cards

https://www.bridgehands.com/P/Probability_of_Card_Distribution.htm

Dummy Reversal:

<http://www.acblunit559.com/cardplay/dumrev/index.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQkBgBANoNQ>

<https://youtu.be/9y6UEU3s5IM?t=1723>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMSQ9UieAkY&t=12s>

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Covering Honors

Do you always cover an honor? Almost always, but there are exceptions!

You cover an honor when it will make another card good in your hand, or if there is a possibility that it may make a card good in your partner's hand.

Example 1: The contract is 4S and the dummy holds SA7 HAJ76 D8765 C876.

The declarer plays the Jack of Spades towards the dummy

You hold the K84. Do you cover with the King? Of course not. You have a guaranteed trick with the King!

Example 2: The contract is 4S and the dummy holds SK734 HAJ6 D865 C876

The declarer plays the Jack of Spades towards the dummy.

You hold the Q6. Do you cover with the Queen? Yes, you must. You do not know the location of the Ace or the 10.

Example 3: The contract is 4S and the dummy holds SK74 HAJ6 D865 C8765

The bidding was: 1S Pass 2S Pass, then 4S Pass Pass Pass

The declarer plays the Jack of Spades towards the dummy.

You hold the Q752. Do you cover with the Queen? No, according to the bidding, the declarer has 5+ spades, therefore your partner has only 1 spade at most.

** If you hold the Q952, do you cover with the Queen? Yes. This will set up your 9S.

Example 4: The contract is 4S and the dummy holds SK7 HAJT6 D865 CA876

The bidding was: The dummy started the bidding with 1C.

1C Pass 1S Pass

1N Pass 3S Pass

4S Pass Pass Pass

The declarer plays the Jack of Spades towards the dummy.

You hold the Q63 of spades. Do you cover with the Queen?

According to the bidding, you expect the declarer to have 6 spades, but you can never be sure! If he started with an 18 point hand with 5 spades 1 heart, 4 diamonds and 3 clubs, he would be reluctant to play in 3NT, so you must hope for the best. In any case your Queen of spades is lost, so, yes, you must play your Queen. Again, you do not know the location of the Ace or the Ten. If your partner has the T92 of spades, then playing the Queen will set up the Ten.



Ruffs and Sluffs

Ruff: A ruff occurs when you cannot follow suit, and you play a trump to capture the trick.

Sluff: When you cannot follow suit, the card you discard is called a sluff.

A beginning bridge player often hears “never give a ruff and a sluff”. Is this always true?

In bridge as in life “always” and “never” are seldom 100% true!

When both the declarer and the dummy are void in a suit it would almost never be a valid “Safe” suit to lead. Doing so, gives the declarer a free play because he can sluff from either his hand or the dummy. It is a rare occurrence when this is a good defensive play!

However, it can happen. See an example from Bridgebum:

http://www.bridgebum.com/husbands_and_wives.php

A second example can be found at:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/19/crosswords/bridge/19CARD.html>

**A ruff and a sluff will usually happen when a defender leads a suit expecting the declarer to follow suit and he happens to be void, thus allowing the declarer to sluff from either hand.*

Actually, a deliberate defensive lead for a ruff, but not a sluff, is a more frequent occurrence.

Example 1: If the dummy is void in a suit but the declarer is not void, then it may be a valid play to lead that suit. This will force the declarer to follow suit and to use up a trump from the dummy. This would be a “Safe” play for the defense in some situations. The following example would be a good example.

	North		
<i>Contract</i>	S 42		
<i>4S by West</i>	H 642		
<i>Lead 6H</i>	D Q6432		
	C K54		
		East	
West		S AQ	
S KT9865		H 3	
H JT87		D AKJT9	
D 8		C AT862	
C J9			
	South		
	S J73		
	H AKQ95		
	D 75		
	C Q73		

North	East	South	West
	1D	1H	2S
P	4S	P	P
P			

South will play the Ace of hearts and continue with the K. This may set up a trick for South’s Jack of spades.



Example 2: Sometimes, by leading a particular suit, a player would finesse himself (i.e. lead away from a possible defensive trick). So rather than lead away from a possible winner, he will knowingly lead a suit that the dummy will ruff. This is a No Brainer, because the declarer can do this on his own, but it provides a safe EXIT for the defender.

On the following play, the defender leads the Ace of Hearts, (his partner plays the 2H for a Club switch). Being void in Clubs, he must make a decision. Rather than lead a trump, he leads the K of Hearts for the declarer to ruff. He cannot lead a Club and he does not wish to lead away from his King of Diamonds. He could lead a trump, but he may finesse his partner (he could have the singleton King if the declarer has a 6 card suit), so he safely exits with the Heart. This also shortens the trumps in the dummy!

North	East	South	West
1S	2H	3S	P
4S	P	P	P

North
 ♠ AK875
 ♥ T98
 ♦ J2
 ♣ KQ4

West
 ♠ T2
 ♥ Q432
 ♦ T
 ♣ A76532

East
 ♠ J93
 ♥ AK765
 ♦ K9876
 ♣

South
 ♠ Q64
 ♥ J
 ♦ AQ543
 ♣ JT98



Penalty Cards

If an opponent makes an error by playing out of turn, causing the card to be a penalty card (aptly named penalty card) then you may capitalize or profit from his mistake. A penalty card must be played as soon as the player cannot follow suit or if he gains the lead.

Therefore, you should play a suit that the defender does not have, thereby, causing him to play the penalty card! If for example, the player mistakenly plays an Ace, (wow what an opportunity), you would run a suit, until he is void and he then must play the Ace as a discard!

Claiming and Concessions

Claiming in Bridge is a very good practice because it saves time and tedious annoying payout.

However, you must follow certain rules:

1. You state that you are claiming and that you will specify how you intend to play each card.
2. You lay down your cards on the table so that the opponents can clearly see all the cards.
3. You specify exactly how you intend to play each card. Failure to specify how you intend to play the cards may result in a Director's call. Unfortunately, different Directors, may rule in different ways especially if there is an outstanding trump!

On the defensive side you **do not show your cards**, until you examine the claimant's cards. If there is a problem, you must call the Director.

The following is copied from Law 68 in the 2017 ACBL Rulebook. I have highlighted certain important phrases.

“B. Concession Defined

1. Any statement by declarer or a defender to the effect that a side will lose a specific number of tricks is a concession of those tricks; a claim of some number of tricks is a concession of the remainder, if any. ***A player concedes all the remaining tricks when he abandons his hand.***
2. Regardless of B1, if a defender attempts to concede one or more tricks and **his partner immediately objects; neither a concession nor a claim has occurred.** Unauthorized information may exist, so the Director should be summoned immediately. Play continues. Any card that has been exposed by a defender in these circumstances is not a penalty card but Law 16C applies to information arising from its exposure and the information may not be used by the partner of the defender who has exposed it.

C. Clarification Required

A claim should be accompanied at once by a clear statement of the line of play or defence through which the claimer proposes to win the tricks claimed, including the order in which the cards will be played. The player making the claim or concession faces his hand.



D. Suspension of Play

After any claim or concession, play is suspended.”

Exit Cards and End Plays

End Play: During the playout of a hand, the declarer discovers that the only way to make an extra trick (or make a contract) is to give a defender the lead. The hope is that the defender would then need to lead away from a possible trick thereby finessing himself. The declarer will try to create a situation where the defenders have no safe **Exit Cards** and must then lead an Ace or lead away from a King.

So, it is up to the declarer to play so that the defenders have NO Safe Exit Cards. Thus, he must use “strip and run tactics”. He runs his tricks until there is a void in the dummy and/or in his hand. Additionally, he must try to strip the defenders of as many suits as possible, including trumps. Also, the declarer will delay any finesses as long as possible.

On the defensive side, the defenders must try to discard so that they keep an **Exit Card** should they gain the lead!

The type of hand that offers a speculative End Play are the mirror type hands, whereby, the declarer and the dummy have the same numbers of cards in each suit.

Let’s assume that the contract is 4S* by North.

East has doubled!

The lead is the Ace of Clubs followed by the King and the Queen. North ruffs the Queen. Now North has a sure loser in Hearts and a possible loser in Diamonds, for down 1.

East is marked with the T of Clubs. That will be his exit card if he gets in! So, as the declarer, you must try and strip this exit card.

So accordingly, at trick 4, you play the Ace of Spades.

At trick 5 you play a small Spade to the Queen and return a club which you ruff. There are now no more clubs remaining!

At trick 7 you draw the last spade.

Now you play the A and K of Hearts and a small Heart. East is now End Played. He must return a Diamond! It does not matter where the King of Diamonds is located.

Note that the hand can be defeated, if East drops the Q and J of Hearts on the AK! Good luck in figuring that one out!

	North	
Contract	♠ AKJ763	
4S* by N	♥ 962	
Lead AC	♦ AQ	
	♣ 54	
West		East
♠ 98		♠ T54
♥ T853		♥ QJ4
♦ J532		♦ K76
♣ J87		♣ AKQT
	South	
	♠ Q2	
	♥ AK7	
	♦ T984	
	♣ 9632	



An End Play is a last resort risky maneuver! It could have happened that the Hearts would not break 3-4 or that East would not have the Queen. However, the double by East suggested that he held the King of Diamonds, so a finesse was unlikely to be successful.

An excellent summary of defensive strategy can be found at:

<http://www.watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDefense/ExitCards.pdf>

Hand Evaluation

On the initial look for any hand if you are the 1st bidder, use the standard HCP of Ace=4, King=3, Queen=2, and Jack=1.

If you need to take a 2nd look when you do not have 12 HCP then you may use the following adjustment factors:

- 1) Use the rule of 20 or the rule of 15 if you are in the 10-11 HCP range.

Rule of 20: Normally applies to 1st and 2nd seat. Use your HCP + Length of your 2 longest suits. If this adds up to 20+, bid your longest suit, unless you have 5 clubs and 4 diamonds, then you should bid 1D, so that you can next bid the clubs without reversing.

3rd Seat: 3rd Seat bidders may open light, so there is no rule needed.

Rule of 15: Normally used in the 4th seat. Use your HCP + Number of spades. If this adds up to 15+, bid 1S assuming you have 5+ spades.

(The following factors are used more for 2nd round rebids when you must re-evaluate your hand after your partner has responded.)

- 2) Upgrade a singleton Ace in an unbid suit to 5 or 6.
- 3) Downgrade a singleton King or Queen or Jack, unless it is in your partner's suit. You may use K=2, Q=1, J=0; but others may use a different system! Just be wary of the standard 3,2,1. These singletons still may or may not have value, but how much?
- 4) Downgrade a doubleton KQ or QJ, unless it is in your partner's suit. These will probably not be worth their face value!
- 5) **Shortage Points:** (These only have value when they are in an unbid suit! If you are headed for a NT contract then they are a Negative!) A void is worth 3, a singleton a value of 2 and a doubleton a value of 1. Again, be wary of counting doubletons. They have minimal value.
- 6) **Length Points:** Many experts add 1 for a suit longer than 4, so for a decent 5 card suit say, AJTxx add 1, a decent 6 card say KQJxxx, suit add 2, etc. Add nothing for Jxxxx, or xxxxxx.
- 7) **Intermediate cards JT9.** These add value if the suit also has an Ace or a King. By themselves, they may have no value. Example: AJT9x or KJTx. How much value they add is a matter of how many are in your partner's hand. If your partner has none or only 1, then they add very little value. If your partner has 2 or 3 then your hand has potential.

I urge you to look at the following article by Larry Cohen. He offers some excellent advice!

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/hand-evaluation-671>

Also see Marty Bergen's Adjust 3 method of evaluating balanced hands.

http://fourseasonsbridge.com/harold/TOPICS/mb_adj_3.pdf



Invitation Bids: The opener may use an invitation bid when he has a good 15 to 16 points with a decent suit. You are asking your partner if he is at or near the top of his range. If he is at maximum or more than a minimum, then he must go to game. (For example: 1S Pass 2S Pass) If you next bid 3S you are asking your partner if he is at or near the top of his range, and/or shortness in an unbid suit to bid 4S. Some use a 5 to 8 point range to respond in the same suit with 3 card support. Others use 6 to 9 points. If the opener has 17+ points, he must bid game directly, and not invite. If the responder has a minimum 5 to 7 points and no shortness, he must pass. “Note: Some use 18+”.

2nd Round Bidding i.e. Rebids

Now is the time to revalue your hand using the above adjustment factors 2-7.

Example 1: You have: ♠ AKT96 ♥ 7 ♦ K87 ♣ AJ54. You open 1S.

The bids are: 1S P 2S P, what is your rebid?

You have 15 HCP + a singleton and helpers in the T9 of spades. You have potentially 18 points. You can definitely invite by bidding 3S asking your partner if he is at the top of his range! If the range for 2S is 5-8 or 6-9, then he will push to game with 7, 8 or 9 HCP or shortness in the unbid suits.

Example 2: You have: ♠ J ♥ AQT65 ♦ AT765 ♣ 98

The bids are: 1H P 2H P, what is your rebid?

You have 11 HCP and you can justify opening 1H using the rule of 20. But, you have a singleton Jack, which may be 0. You must Pass and Good Luck!

Example 3: You have: ♠ KQ ♥ AJT65 ♦ AT76 ♣ 98

The bids are: 1H P 2D P, what is your rebid?

You have 14 HCP, but the doubleton KQ may be a problem in NT, but it may be a plus in Diamonds or Hearts. You have a Diamond fit and you owe your partner a bid, (You cannot pass a change of suit.) so bid 3D. The best hope is that your partner may support your Hearts!

Example 4: You have: ♠ KQJ765 ♥ AJT5 ♦ Q ♣ 98

The bids are: 1S P 2D P, what is your rebid?

You have 13 HCP, but the singleton Q may be worth very little as you do not have a diamond fit. You can add 2 more points for the length in Spades and the doubleton club may/may not be an asset. Also, the connected AJTx in Hearts may be worth another 1 point. So, the revalue is a solid 16. Your partner shows 9+ points with the change of suit, so a rebid of 3S may be optimistic but it should be safe. Some may make an alternative bid of 2H, but that does not allow for the 6 card Spade suit and counting the extra 2 points for length.

Example 5: You have: ♠ 975 ♥ 6 ♦ QJ65 ♣ AKJ98

The bids are: 1D P 2D P, what is your rebid?

You have 11 HCP and you used the rule of 20 to open! You bid Pass.

Example 6: You have: ♠ AJ975 ♥ 64 ♦ QJ65 ♣ Q8

The bids are: Pass Pass Pass 1S, then Pass 2D Pass ? What is your rebid?



You used the rule of 15 to open. Your partner was a passed hand. Luckily you have 4 Diamonds, so you can pass. If your partner had said 2C or 2H, then you would pass! You have no rebid! The 2D bid shows 5 Diamonds, and less than 3 Spades.

Example 7: You have: ♠ JT95 ♥ 64 ♦ QJ65 ♣ AK5

The bids are: Pass Pass Pass ?, what is your bid?

You have 11 HCP and 4 spades. Should you open 1S?

No. The rule of 15 assumes 5 spades and if you open 1D, you risk the opponents interfering with 1H, 2C etc. You do not have a rebid so Pass and take an average.

Control Bids

A control bid shows an Ace or possibly a King. Control bids are not alertable. Control bids tell you specific Aces and Kings and can be used with Ace asking systems. Control bids only occur when a partnership has established a suit. They are commonly used after a Jacoby 2NT sequence. They can also be used (only with partnership agreement) with Splinters, Inverted Minors, Bergen sequences or after strong bids such as Strong Jump Shifts or Reverses.

Example 1: Control Bids after J2N

North	East	South	West
1S	Pass	2NT (Shows 4 spades + opening hand)	Pass
3C (Singleton or Void in C. If weak hand Stop at 4S)	Pass	3D (Shows Ace D)	Pass
3H (Shows Ace H)	Pass	4H (Shows King H)	Pass
4N	Pass	5H (2 Aces)	Pass
6S	Pass	Pass	Pass

Example 2: Inverted Minors needs Partnership agreement on Control Bids

North	East	South	West
1C	Pass	2C (Shows 10+ and 5+ Clubs) Forcing! The Club suit is now the established suit	Pass
2D (Ace of D. If weak hand then bid stop 3C)	Pass	2H (Shows Ace of H)	Pass
3H (Shows King H)	Pass	4D (Shows King D)	Pass
4N	Pass	5H (2 Aces)	Pass
6C	Pass	Pass	Pass

Example 3: Splitter needs Partnership agreement on Control Bids



North	East	South	West
1S	Pass	4C (Splinter shows Singleton Club with 4+ Spades and an opening hand)	Pass
4D (Ace of D, possible slam interest. If weak hand then bid stop 4S)	Pass	4H (Shows Ace of Hearts)	Pass
4N (Ace ask)	Pass	5S (3 Aces)	Pass
5N (King ask)	Pass	6H (2 Kings)	Pass
6S	Pass	Pass	Pass

Example 4: Reverse needs Partnership agreement on Control Bids

North	East	South	West
1H	Pass	2C (new suit 9+)	Pass
2S (Reverse shows 17+)	Pass	3H (shows 3 Hearts Now you have suit agreement)	Pass
4C (Ace Clubs)	Pass	4D (Ace Diamonds)	Pass
6H	Pass	Pass	Pass

Return Partner's Suit or Not

Returning your partner's lead suit MUST NOT be Automatic. There are clearly situations when you should return the suit and also situations when you should shift to a new suit! As always, STOP and THINK! Count all the cards in the suit led that you can see and review the bidding to get a better count. i.e. If the bidding was a Michaels, or an Unusual 2NT bid, then you know 10 cards in the declarer's hand! The declarer only has 3 other cards.

One of the key elements of defensive strategy is figuring out where your partner may have an entry card. You do not want to lead that suit if you have not established his running suit, assuming he has one. i.e. If he led the King of Clubs, implying that he has the Queen and possibly more Club tricks, and you calculate that he may have the Ace of Diamonds as an entry, then you must establish the Clubs before you lead a Diamond. So, you seldom shift suits, unless necessity demands it. In other words, don't knock out your partner's outside entry w/o a reason. Be patient!

- 1) Passive leads such as Top of Nothing leads (7*,8,9,10) should seldom be Covered and seldom be Returned. After all your partner has led his best card in the suit. *The 7 may be an exception especially against a NT contract. If my partner leads a 7,8,9 or 10 versus a suit contract and I hold the K94 and the dummy has the 83, then playing the King will almost certainly be a losing play. If I keep the King, it will be a threat and it will make the declarer use a dummy ruff or a dummy access to finesse me. I want Value for my cards!
- 2) If you play BOSTON leads, then a low card led promises an honor, so you should play a high card and Return you partner's lead in most cases.



- 3) Against a NT contract, if the lead is a top of sequence, like a King or Queen, then, you should probably Return the lead, when you gain entry.
- 4) If the lead is a top of sequence like 987, then take your Ace and consider a Shift, especially if the dummy is short. You may wish to Return a trump to reduce ruffing possibilities.
- 5) Is the lead a possible singleton? Or Doubleton? If so, then then you must consider this as a possibility and perhaps return the lead.
- 6) Sometimes, you have a good suit and you are not in the lead. If you gain the lead, should you try and establish your suit or Return partner's lead?
 - i) If your partner made a passive lead like a top of nothing lead, or a small trump, then you should try and establish your suit!
 - ii) If your partner made an active lead like a King, then you should probably return his suit.
 - iii) If your partner led to a short suit in the dummy, then you should shift to a trump suit or shift to the dummy's weak suit.
 - iv) If your partner did not lead your bid suit, then he probably has the Ace or King in that suit. So, a squeeze play is possible, especially against a NT contract.

2 Over 1 Quick Summary

1. *The 2/1 system is a way to show a Game Force (GF) bid at the 2 level as long as the 2 Level bid is not a jump. If the 2 level bid is a jump, it is Weak Jump Shift (WJS) preemptive.
2. *The 2/1 system is ONLY used after 6 possible bids when in 1st or 2nd seat! The bids are: 1S-2C, 1S-2D, 1S-2H, 1H-2D, 1H-2C and 1D-2C. (The 1D-2C is not universally played as Game Force.) See <http://www.acblunit390.org/Simon/2over1.htm>
3. *The 2/1 GF system is off when:
 - (i) The 1st bid is an overcall.
 - (ii) The opponents overcall or
 - (iii) The 1st bid is in 3rd or 4th seat.

Examples:

North	East	South	West	Explanation
1S	P	2 anything	P	2C, 2D,2H and Jacoby 2N are GF
1H	P	2C, 2D or Jacoby 2N	P	GF
1D	P	2C	P	GF (I do not like this one. Many do not play it as GF, because you may be forced to play at 3N or



				5 minor.) Discuss with your partner! I like Criss-Cross.
1C	P	2 any suit	P	Is NOT GF (It is WJS preemptive)
1H	P	1S	P	The responder has 4+ spades. It DOES NOT DENY Heart support. It DOES NOT DENY game going values! It is forcing 1 round.
1 Major	P	1 NT		See Below

Anomalies

1. *The 1 NT forcing bid!

*Originally the 2/1 system had a 1NT forcing response to a 1 Major bid as a 1 round forcing bid. It is a catch all bid, for all hands with 6-11 points that DO NOT FIT a support level 2 bid or a Bergen / Drury response or any other special responsive bid such as 1 Major Pass 4 Major!

*Recently, many players have adopted a semi-forcing / passing possibility as advocated by Larry Cohen (See <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/1nt-forcing>). This will only occur when the opener opens a bad 1 Major hand. The opener reserves the right to pass 1N. This will occur rarely, maybe 1 or 2 times in a hundred, but it is a legitimate possibility. For example, the opener may have:
S A8765 H A76 D JT3 C QJ

2. When you open 1 Major and get a 1NT response, your 2nd bid may only be a 3 card Minor. The Responder must understand this possibility and place the bid back to the Opener's Major EVEN with only 2 card support! The Opener must understand that this is a STOP sequence!

North: **S AK765 H A76 D JT C Q86**

South: **S 83 H KJ54 D A976 C 543**

North	East	South	West
1S	P	1N	P
2C	P	2S	P
All Pass			

When your partner opens 1 Major and you have a 6 card minor suit or the lower 5+ card major, the bidding sequence may be:

Example 1:

North	East	South	West
1S	P	1N	P
2D	P	3C	P
All Pass			

The opener must understand that this sequence shows a 6 card club suit, and little or no support for spades. It does not deny having 4 Hearts, BUT, the opener's 2D bid Does Deny having 4 Hearts.



Example 2:

North	East	South	West
1S	P	1N	P
2D	P	2H	P
?			

In this example the responder must bid 1N even with 5 hearts. (NOTE: This is a change from Standard American.) He can show his 5 Hearts in the 2nd round but doing so denies 3 Spades. The opener's 2D rebid has denied having 4 Hearts but he may still have 3 Hearts. In this case, the final bid will depend on the opener's hand and they could end up in 2H or 2S or 2N or ?

Example 3: When the opener has 5 spades and 4 Hearts then:

North	East	South	West
1S	P	1N	P
2H	P	?	P

Now the responder must make a choice as he knows that the opener has at least a 5-4 distribution.

3. When the Responder has 3 card Major suit support and 5-8, or a bad 9 points he should show it immediately, with 2 Major. If he has a good 9,-11 points; he should bid 1N and then support the opener's Major suit with his 2nd bid. A good 9 has a singleton or another distinguishing feature such as a KJT9 suit!
4. **Review:** When your partner opens 1 Major and you have:
 - i. No 3 or 4 card support and <6 points, bid Pass
 - ii. No 3 or 4 card support and 6-11 points, bid 1N in most cases no matter your distribution.
 - iii. 4 card support; bid Bergen or J2N or Splinter.
 - iv. 3 Card support and 5-9; bid 2 Major immediately
 - v. 3 Card support and 10-11; bid 1N, then support in the 2nd round
 - vi. 3 Card support and 12+ and an unbalanced hand, bid 2/1 then make sure that you play in at least game.
 - vii. 3 Card support and 12-15+ and a balanced hand, bid 3N. This is a preference bid. Some do not play this bid. Discuss it with your partner.
 - viii. 3 card support and 16,17+ bid 2/1 then try for slam by control bidding. It is very possible that slam is not there, especially if the opener has a weak major suit. It is tempting to use J2N in this situation, because it sets the agreed suit! If the opener is weak, he will bid 4 Major and that is probably all you can make!
 - ix. (Ignore this paragraph if you play Flannery!) If the opener bids 1H and the responder has 4 spades, and 6+ points then he bids 1S. (Note: The opener's 1H does not deny having 4 spades. The 1S response bid is not a limiting bid but the strength is unknown to the opener. The system is now Standard American. A 1 level response only needs 6 points! The bidding will now proceed in the normal fashion.



If the opener has 4 spades, he will bid 2S and the responder will bid accordingly. If the opener does not have 4 spades, he may bid 1N or 2 of a minor, and the responder will act according to his holdings.)

5. Special Notes:

- (1) The Opener must make “Value” bids. To show a weak hand, the opener should rebid the Major. To show a stronger say 15+, he should make a jump bid with 6 in the suit or jump shift with 17+. If the opener conceals his strength, the responder will have difficulty setting the contract.
- (2) A 1 NT response is a limiting bid (6-11). The opener must use caution. If he has a weak hand, he must be willing to settle for a partial score. The contract may be 1NT. One of the weaknesses of the 2/1 system is that players will often bid past the 1N level because it is considered “forcing” while Standard American players will be willing to stop. Larry Cohen advocates that the 1NT not be considered absolutely forcing, and that passing 1NT may be a viable play.
- (3) It is possible for the opener to have a 2 suited hand consisting of a major suit and a secondary minor suit! It may be better to accept a minor suit fit than to place the opener in his major.

Example: South has: **S** 74 **H** A87 **D** KJT976 **C** 95

North	East	South	West
1S	P	1N	P
2D	P	?	P

With an unknown Spade strength and no jump bid by the opener, 3D seems like a reasonable contract. A raise to 3D shows long diamonds and a mediocre hand. The opener should realize that spades are probably not viable and unless he has an unusual hand like 5-2-5-1, he will pass 3D. Remember that 1N limits the hand and 5D needs 11 tricks!