

Bridge Lesson On Hand Evaluation

Playing the 2-Over-1 Bidding System

Using “Optimal” Points

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Overview

This lesson is divided into two Parts

Part One - A review of the ACBL Convention Charts and how the ACBL defines an Opening Bridge Hand.

Part Two – Optimal Points defined and applied to hand evaluation playing the 2/1 Bidding System.

Opening a Bridge Hand – Part 1

To determine the points for an opening hand in bridge in the first or second seat, the ACBL says you must use High Card Points (HCP) and the Rule of N.

The ACBL has assigned values to honors using the 4-3-2-1 system for HCP defined: A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1, and 10=0.

The ACBL uses the combination of HCP with the Rule of N to determine hand strength.

The Rule of N is defined as the total of High Card Points (HCP) plus the sum of the two longest suits.

ACBL Rules for an Opening Hand also depend upon the ACBL Convention Chart.

Strength Requirements for an Opening Hand Vary by the ACBL Convention Chart

For the Basic Chart (<300mp) an opening hand needs “Average Strength”.
For the Basic+ (301-1500mp), Open (default) and the Open+ (3000+mp) Charts an opening hand may needs only “Near Average Strength”.

“Weak” Hand has $\leq 7\text{HCP}$ or Less than Near Average Strength.

“Near Average Strength” Hand has = 8HCP or meets the Rule of 17.

“Average Strength” Hand has = 10 HCP or meets the Rule of 19.

The above definitions only apply in the 1st and 2nd seats.

*For any bid that “normally” requires **Average Strength** to be legal may be made with **Near Average Strength in 3rd and 4th seats.**

Near Average Strength

Using the Rule of 17 for the Basic+, Open and Open+ Charts we have the following.

If a hand has only 7HCP it must also include at least two 5-card suits since by the Rule of N, $7\text{HCP}+10=17$.

With only 6HCP, you need a 6-card and a 5-card suit, $6\text{HCP}+11=17$

An opening hand with 5HCP needs two 6-card suits, $5\text{HCP}+12=17$

Playing Systems that may be opened at the 1-level with only **near average strength** requires a **pre-alert**.

Average Strength

A hand with “Average Strength” has 10HCP and does not require a pre-alert.

If an opening hand bid has only 9HCP it must also include at least two 5-card suits since $9\text{HCP} + 10 = 19$ using the Rule of $N=19$.

With only 8HCP, you need a 6-card and a 5-card suit, $8\text{HCP} + 11 = 19$.

Strong and Very Strong Hands

A “Strong” hand has 15HCP or 14HCP and must also meet the Rule of 24 where the HCP + two longest suits add to 24 so the two longest suits must add to 10.

A hand with 14HCP may contain two 5-card suits (e.g., 5521) or include a 6-card and 4-card suit because $14\text{HCP} + 10 = 24$ by the Rule of N.

A “Very strong” hand must have 20HCP or at least 14HCP with 4 Quick Tricks and 4 or less Losers or at least 5 Controls Points (A=2 and K=1).

These hand strength definitions apply to all ACBL Charts.

Meaning of Strong Hand

For pairs that play Precision or any Strong Forcing Club System, the ACBL requires a pre-alert. Why?

Interference bids over the strong bid with 15+HCP often differs from “standard” defenses used by 2/1 pairs bidding a strong 1NT. In addition, the opening 1NT bids for pairs using a strong club may be weak (e.g., 12-14).

A pre-alert allows pairs to review their interference conventions.

The ACBL also defines “Natural”, “Quasi-Natural” and Notrump Bids

Natural, Quasi-natural and Notrump Bids

A Natural NT bid contains no VOIDS, no more than ONE singleton A/K/Q and does not contain 10 or more cards in two suits. It must show at least 10HCP with a range of no more than 5HCP (one more than the difference the Highest and Lowest HCP range). The 1NT bid most often shows a balanced or semi-balanced hand (5521 hands are not allowed).

A Natural major suit 1-level opening bid must contain 4+ cards; a bid is still “Natural” if it shows 4+card distribution in another suit. An opening bid at the 2-level or higher must include at least 5+cards.

A Quasi-Natural minor suit opening bid may be as short as TWO or meet the definition of a Natural NT opening bid. Any opening 2-level bid must contain 5/6 cards. Any opening 3-level bid must contain 6/7 cards. Artificial 2/3-level bids if artificial; must be alerted and contain one or two known suits.

Balanced Hands =4333/4432/5332 and Semi-balanced Hands=5422/6322. Unbalanced hands usually contain a singleton or a void (e.g., 4441/5431, 6421, etc.).

Overview of ACBL - Hand strength

The ACBL uses HCPs (A=4, K=3, Q=1, J=1, 10=0) and the Rule of N (HCP + the sum of the two longest suits) to define hand strength.

Weak	0-7 points (Less than Near Average Strength)
Minimum	8-14 points (Near Ave=8-9pts/Average Strength =10-14pts)
Strong	15-19 points (Strong Hand)
Very Strong	20+points (Very Strong Hand)
Game Force	22+points (Very Strong Game Force (GF) Hand)

These definitions only apply in the 1st and 2nd seats.

*Any bid that requires Average Strength to be legal may be made with Near Average Strength in the 3rd and 4th seats. High Card Point minimums do not change.

Opening 1NT and Major Suit Bids

When making a NT opening bid, the hand is normally Balanced or Semi-Balanced with at least 10HCP and have a range no greater than 5HCP (Range is defines as High value-Low Value+1). Common ranges are: 10-12, 12-14, 13-15, 15-17 and 15-18.

A NT opening bid cannot contain a void and if it has a singleton, it must be an A/K/Q with 5431 shape, hands with 5521 shape are not allowed.

Any natural 1-level major suit opening bid, overcall or response in a suit that is natural or artificial must include 4 or more cards in the suit.

Minor Suit Opening Bids

A **minor suit 1♣** opening bid shows 3-cards or 4=4=4=2 (may be short and announced as Non-forcing). All bidding conventions that use a forcing opening **1♣*** bid requires a pre-alert (e.g., Montreal Relays and transfer bids over a forcing club bid).

A **minor suit 1♦** opening bid shows 3-cards; if the bid may include less than 3-cards, it requires a pre-alert.

A Quasi-natural **1♣*/1♦*** opening bid that may have no cards in the bid suit and must be announced as “could be zero” cards in the suit and requires an alert.

2-level Bids – Weak, Strong a & Very Strong

A Natural weak 2-level bid normally shows a 6-card suit with at least 4HCP and a range not greater than 7HCP [e.g., 4-10HCP ($10-4=6+1=7$), 5-11/6-12].

The bids of $2\spadesuit$, $2\heartsuit$, and $2\spadesuit$ may have a minimum range with a bad suit, minimum range with a good suit, maximum range with a bad suit, maximum range with a good suit; min range = 4-7HCP and max range = 7-10HCP.

A Natural $2\clubsuit^*$ bid that is weak 4-9HCP or has 10-15HCP must be alerted. An artificial very strong 20-22+HCP $2\clubsuit$ bid requires no alert.

Artificial $2\spadesuit^*$, $2\heartsuit^*$, $2\spadesuit^*$ or $2\clubsuit^*$ may be used to show an artificial known 5/6-card suit or two known 5-4 card suits require **average strength (10+HCP)** and must be alerted in the 1st or 2nd seat and be made with only Near Average Strength in the 3rd or 4th seat (pre-alerts are not required).

Popular Today in Clubs

Precision or Strong Clubs Systems use the 1♣* bid to show an opening hand with 15/16/17 points HCP (H).

Pairs that play the Two-Over-One (2/1) System open a hand with 13+HCP or 12HCP + with one 5-card major suit headed by A/KQ/QJ (12HL) points, some pairs may make 1-level bids with only 11HL points and 2 quick tricks.

A hand is normally opened at the 1-level bid with 11HL+ $\leq$ 21HL points; however, the ACBL Chart being used for an event permit fewer points.

Opening Suit Hands – Playing “Traditional” 2/1

Hands with one 5+card major and **12/13-21**HL points are opened 1♥ or 1♠

Hands with no 5+card major and **12-14**HL points or with **18-19**HL open the longer minor 1♣ or 1♦ and some will **11**HL and 2 quick tricks

Balanced and Semi-Balanced hands with **20-21**HL points are opened 2NT

Hands with **22+**HL points are opened 2♣

Hands with **4 -10**HL points with a 5/6 card suit are opened at the 2-level (preempt, exclude clubs)

Hands with **4 -10**HL points with a 6/7 card suit are opened at the 3-level

(A minimum opening hand with 11HL has a "feature" - either a 5-card suit, an ace or shortness with A and AK points in the 4-card suits)

General Principles

Open all hands with 13+HCP

If a hand has <14 but 11-12HCP – Consider the following; hands with:

- Two or More Quick Tricks

- Two Quality 4/5-card suits

- A good 6-card suit or a two-suited hand with easy re-bids

- Hands with length and strength in the majors

Opening 1NT= 15-17HCP Hands

No Trump hands are "balanced" if 4-3-3-3/5-3-3-2/4-4-3-2 or “Flat”

A hand may be “Semi-balanced” = 5422/6322.

In NT points are determined by applying HL points with one point deduction for “Flatness”. When opening with a singleton A/K/Q hand with 5431, an additional deduction is also made.

NT hands often deny a 5-card major (♥/♠) but may have a 5-card minor(♣/♦).

HL Point Requirements for Game/Slam

3NT	25/26+ (with 5-card suit/no 5-card suit)
Major Suit Game	26+
Minor Suit Game	29+
Small Slam	33+
Grand Slam	36+

Total points are defined using HCPs in two Hands

Traditional Responses for Majors/NT

<u>With 3-card support</u>		<u>After 1NT</u>	<u>Bids</u>
6-9pts	Bid 2M	<8 pts Balanced	Pass
10-12pts	Bid 3M	9 pts 2NT (Invitational)	2NT
13-15pts	Bid 4M	10+ Balanced	3NT
		8+HCP with 4-card Majors	2♣
2/1 Bids 13+pts			
No Fit 1NT*=7-12pts (forcing /semi-forcing)			

Some Suit Bidding Tools

Responder Bids

Direct Splinters-double jump by responder 1M-4m* or 1M-4oM* shows 4-card support and 13+points (some use ambiguous splinters).

Jacoby 2NT* 13+points with 4-card support

Opener Rebids

Reverse Bids - 17+points Jump rebid in own suit 16-17/18points

Strong Jump Shifts 17+ Jump Reverse -16+points

Opener/Responder (16+/13+ by agreement)

Mini Splinters – single suit jump bids in a lower ranking suit and show 3/4+ card support for partner's bid suit with a singleton/void in the bid suit

Jacoby 2NT*- Responses

Requires 13+points and 4-card support

<u>Bid</u>	<u>Suit Length</u>	<u>Points</u>
3 (new suit)*	Singleton/Void	12+
3 (major suit opened)	5/6+ in major bid	18+
3NT*	(5332)	15-17
4 (new suit)	4+ card suit	12-17
4 (major suit opened)	5+card major	12-14

*= Alert

Common Mini Splinters

Mini-Splinters: A jump shift or jump reverse (by opener) to show a 4 card fit, a singleton or void in the named suit, and invitational values:

1♣ - 1♥ - 3♦* = 4 hearts and a singleton/void in diamonds

1♣ - 1♠ - 3♦* = 4 spades and a singleton/void in diamonds

1♦ - 1♥ - 3♣* = 4 hearts and a singleton/void in clubs

1♦ - 1♠ - 3♣* = 4 spades and a singleton/void in clubs

Responder next bids the major at the 3-level with minimal values to sign-off and game with more. To initiate slam interest responder employs a cue bid. Or uses RKCB. *=alert

Hand Evaluation – Part 2

The hand evaluation method you employ must estimate the number of tricks a hand may generate whether you are playing in a suit or notrump contract, a **hands trick-taking potential/value**.

The **bidding process** converts an initial estimate of a hands trick-taking value into a **hands trick-generation potential/accuracy for a final suit or NT contract**.

The bidding process converts trick-“taking” into trick-“generation” by quantifying the interaction among Honors (**H**), Length (**L**) and Distribution(**D**) with Fit(**F**).

The Optimal Hand Evaluation (OHE) method with Optimal Points was proposed by Patrick Darricades (2019, 2020) using a Strong Club - 2/1 bidding System as described by Timm (2022).

In this lesson I have modified the OHE method so that it may be used when playing the 2/1 Bridge System.

Work/Goren Hand Evaluation Method

Milton Work in about 1915 developed the 4321 HCP system.

Charles Goren tried to improve upon it using the Standard American System by adding shortness to HCP for an opening bid in the 1950s.

Honors: A=4.0, K=3.0 Q=2.0, J=1.0 10=0.0

Shortness: Void =+3.0 Singleton (x) = +2.0 Doubleton (xx)=+1.0

Singleton: K or Q= -1 Singleton J= -1

Doubleton: QJ or Qx or Jx = -1

All Four Aces: +1 **No Aces** -1

Their approach Ignored Suit Length and the Value of Associated Honors, bid included suit shortness.

Value of Honors

Consider these hands with 10HCPs

(1) ♠Axx ♥Kxx ♦Qxx ♣Jxxx

(2) ♠AQx ♥KJx ♦xxx ♣xxxx

(3) ♠xxx ♥xxx ♦xxx ♣AKQJ

Hand (1) will win $1\frac{1}{2}$ tricks with the A and K while the isolated Q & J honors have no trick-taking value.

For Hand (2), its trick value is increased when a Q is associated with the Ace as does the value of the J by joining the Ace.

For Hand (3), all 4 honors will generate 4 tricks.

Associated Honors have more trick-taking value than Isolated honors.

Value of Suit Length

Consider these hands with 13HCPs

(1) ♠xxxxx ♥xxxx ♦AK ♣AQ

(2) ♠AQxxx ♥AKxx ♦xx ♣xx

(3) ♠AQ10xx ♥AK10x ♦10x ♣10x

Hand (1) will take tricks but not as many as hand (2) since suit length promotes honors called working honors or generate more tricks.

For Hand (3), the associated K10 has more value than isolated 10s.

High cards work better in LONG suits and associated 10s have more trick-taking value than isolated 10s.

Value of Distribution

The primary factor in determining the number of tricks between two hands is DISTRIBUTION not the Number of trumps.

Short suits and their location determine how effective trumps develop tricks.

Distribution converts a hand's trick-TAKING potential into
a hand's trick-GENERATING potential

The interaction of suit shortness and their location with fit are critical factors in hand evaluation.

Marty Bergen's- ADJUST-3 Method in 2002

Marty Bergen using a computer analysis found that Aces were Undervalued and that Js and Qs were Overvalued and assigned the following values to honors:

A = 4.5 K=3.0 Q=1.5 J=0.75 10=0.25

Note that for a Bridge deck the total points remained 40.0. He did not like the fractional values and devised a scheme called the ADJUST-3 Method for Hand Evaluation.

Later in about 2008 his method adjusted hands for Suit Length, Singleton Honors, Dubious Honor Combinations, Suit Quality and Flatness. His method failed to account for the true value of Associated honors, suit length was not correctly evaluated for all 4+card suits independent of suit quality, and suit shortness was overvalued whenever a trump fit was found.

A hand was opened at the one level with 11/12-18/19 starting points. Partner responded with Shortness and Fit points and Opener re-evaluates his hand using "Bergen" points.

Link to Method follows:

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/ocala/Hand%20Evaluation%20-%20Lesson.pdf>

Purpose of this Lesson

1. To illustrate how the opener and partner (responder) evaluate their initial points for a bridge hand using Optimal Points.
2. To show how to add trump distribution fit and shortness to initial points when a fit is discovered.
3. To show how Opener and Responder must re-evaluate their hand's initial points by accounting for additional fit in all suits and shortness discovered during the bidding process and to make appropriate adjustments when the opponents interfere.

Honors Values (H) & Suit Quality

Honors (H) A=4.5, K=3.0 Q=2.0, J=1.0 when accompanied by an Honor =A/K/Q/J/10

Isolated Qxx=1.5 J =0.5 but Q/J Doubleton: -0.5 so Qx=1.0 and Jx=0

Associated 10s: K10=0.5 J10 & Q10=1.0 so Q10=2.0 Q10x=2.5 J10x=2

Hands with No A: -1 (opener only) No K: -1 or No Q: -1 (Max Value ≤ 2)

Deduct -1pt for a Singleton Honor or for Honor doubletons AQ, AK, KQ, QJ (excluded doubletons AJ or KJ)

Added Quality (Q) 3 Kings:+1pt 4 Kings:+2pts 4 Queens:+4pts

3 honors (A/K/Q/J/10): In a 5-card suit: +1pt In a 6-card suit: +2pts

Examples of Optimal Honor Values

Honors(**H**) A = 4.5pts

Q with Honor = 2pts

Q Isolated (Qxx) = 1.5pt

K = 3pts

Jack with Honor = 1pt

Jack Isolated = 0.5pt

10 with K 0.5pt

10 with Q 1pt

AQ10x = 7.5pts

Q10 = 2pts

KQ10 = 6pts

Q10x = 2.5pts

J10x = 2pts J10 = 1pt and Jx = 0

Examples Hands with 10s in Some Detail

Example 1 ♠AJ10x ♥J10x ♦KQx ♣xx 11HCP

Example 2 ♠Axxx ♥Q10x ♦KJ10x ♣xx 10HCP

Example 3 ♠A10xx ♥Q10 ♦KJ10x ♣Kxx 13HCP

Hand 1 AJ10x=6.5 J10x=2 KQx=5 Total=13.5pts

Hand 2 A=4.5 Q10x=2.5 KJ10x=5 Total=12pts

Hand 3 A10=4.5 Q10=2.0 KJ10x=5 K=3 Total=15pts

Many may not Open Hands 1 and 2 counting only HCP.

Optimal Length (L) Points

Add +1 point for 5-card suit - headed by a **K/QJ** or **A**

Add +2 points 6-card suit - headed by **K/QJ** or **A**

Add +1 point for **any** 6-card suit

Add +2 points for **each card** from the 7th (**all suits**)

Remember to add for Suit Quality and multiple Honors in a suit.

Rank These Hands by Playing Strength

1	♠KJxxx ♥xx ♦Q10xxxx ♣A	10HCP
2	♠Axxxx ♥QJ ♦10xxxx ♣K	10HCP
3	♠Q10xxx ♥xx ♦AJ1xxx ♣K	10HCP
4	♠AQxxx ♥xx ♦KJ10xx ♣x	10HCP

Solution – For Hands

1 ♠KJxxx ♥xx ♦Q10xxxx ♣A 10HCP

2 ♠Axxxx ♥QJ ♦10xxxx ♣K 10HCP

3 ♠Q10xxx ♥xx ♦AJxxx ♣K 10HCP

4 ♠AQxxx ♥xx ♦KJ10xx ♣x 10HCP

(1) 3+1+1L+0+2.5+3.5

11HL Better than (2)/(3)

(2) 4.5+1L+(3-1)+0+2

8.5HL weakest

(3) 2.5+5.5+1+2

9.5HL weak

(4) 6+1L+0+5+1L+1Q

13HL Working honors & Quality

Motivation For Optimal Points

Hand (O) ♠KQ10x ♥Kx ♦Kxx ♣ QJ10x 14HCP

Hand (R) ♠xxx ♥QJ10x ♦QJ10x ♣Kx 9HCP

Observe both hands are Ace less and contain 10s which have no value using the 4321 System and have a Total HCPs=23.0<25.0

Hand Values using Optimal Points

(O) has (KQ10=6+K=3+K=3+QJ10x=4+1(for 3Ks) -1 for no A = 16**HL** pts

(R) has (QJ10=4+QJ10=4+K=3) = 11**HL** points

Total=16+11=27.0 optimal points or enough points for game!

Qs, Js, and 10's associated with honors have value!

Example

Hand (O) ♠KQ10xx ♥Kx ♦Kxx ♣QJ10 14HCP or 15HL

Hand (R) ♠xxx ♥QJ10x ♦QJ10x ♣Kx 9HCP

Both hands are Ace less and contain 10s which have no value using the 4321 system and have a Total of HCP=23HCP/24HL<25 points

Hand Value using Optimal Points

(O)[KQ10=6+1Q+1L]+K=3+K=3+QJ10=3+1(for 3Ks) -1 No A=17**HL**

(R) QJ10=4+QJ10=4+K=3 = 11**HL** points

Total Optimal Points =17.0+11.0=28.0 - YES enough points for game

What about Distribution?

1	♠Qx	♥AJxxx	♦Qxxx	♣Q	11HCP
2	♠AQxxx	♥KJx	♦AJ10x	♣x	15HCP
3	♠KQxxx	♥KQJ	♦K	♣AJxxx	19HCP
4	♠AKQJxxxx	♥xx	♦xx	♣A	13HCP

What is the value of a doubleton and singletons before an auction begins?

Solutions for Distribution

1	♠Qx ♥AJxxx ♦Qxxx ♣Q	11HCP
2	♠AQxxx ♥KJx ♦AJ10x ♣x	15HCP
3	♠KQxxx ♥KQJ ♦K ♣AJxxx	19HCP
4	♠AKQJxxxx ♥xx ♦xx ♣A	13HCP
(1)	1.5+5.5+1.5+0.5	9HL
(2)	6.5+1L+5+6.5	19.5HL
(3)	5+1L+6+2+5.5	19.5HL
(4)	10.5+1Q+6L+3.5	20.5HL

Adjust for singleton Honors or doubleton Honors but Not for spot singletons (x) or doubletons (xx) or Voids.

Inward vs Outward Honors

We have seen the value of primary honors (A/K) are better than secondary honors (Q/J), honors in long suits are good, honors in combination are important, honor in suits where partner has shortness are critical to a contract's success. However, another variable critical to contract success is honor location. As responder, which suit would you prefer in support of partner? And why?

(R1) ♠KQx ♥Axx ♦ xxx ♣xxxx 9HCP

(R2) ♠AQx ♥Kxx ♦ xxx ♣xxxx 9HCP

(R3) ♠AKx ♥Qxx ♦ xxx ♣xxxx 9HCP

In and Out Strength

(R1) ♠KQx ♥Axx ♦ xxx ♣xxxx 9HCP - 9.5H

(R2) ♠AQx ♥Kxx ♦ xxx ♣xxxx 9HCP - 9.5H

(R3) ♠AKx ♥Qxx ♦ xxx ♣xxxx 9HCP - 9.0H

Clearly Hand R1 is best since partner has length in spades but needs tricks outside of the trump suit. Better to have secondary honors in partner's suit and primary honors outside where weakness resides!

(1) ♠Kxx ♥xx ♦ Qxxx ♣xxxx

(2) ♠Qxx ♥xx ♦ Kxxx ♣xxxx

In the above two hands, Hand (2) is better than Hand (1) in support of spades with equal optimal strength!

In and Out Strength Example

The bidding goes: 1♠ 1NT (you)
 2♣ ?

You hold:

(1) ♠x ♥xxxx ♦Qxxx ♣Axxx PASS

(2) ♠x ♥xxxx ♦Axxx ♣Qxxx Bid 3♣

You have better support for clubs with Hand (2) than Hand (1).
Probably two winners with Hand (2) with the outside Ace!

Opener & Responder - Optimal Points

A hand is opened based upon **HL** points.

Responder hands are evaluated based upon **HL** points **initially** with no more than 2**L**pts **max**. **D** points are added once a Fit is Found.

The values defined using **HL** points apply to opener's hands in NT or suits.

H and **L** points are defined as OPTIMAL “starting ” points.

One opens a hand in the 1st or 2nd seat at the 1-level in a suit or NT with 12+**HL** points. The hand includes 10 HCP (or uses the Rule of 17).

Optimal Distribution(**D**) Points

Balanced 4333 and 4432 Hands deduct -1pt

These hands normally require at least 16/17**H** optimal points when opening 1NT.

Responder always applies **D** points **after** a major suit fit.

Overview Optimal Opening Bids

1m	11-19 HL
1M	12-19 HL
1NT	15-17 HL
2NT	20-21 HL
2♦/2♥/2♠	4-10/5-11 HL
2♣	22+ HL
3x	5-11 HL
3NT	Gambling

Total Optimal Points for Game

3 NT	24 25 26 points
Major Suit Game	25 26 27 points
Minor Suit Game	28 29 30 points
Small Slam (Suit)	31 32 33 points
Small Slam (NT)	32 33 34 points
Grand Slam (Suit/NT)	36+/37+ points

Total points are defined as the optimal points in the opener's hand plus the dummy/fit points in partner's hand with adjustments made during the bidding process. In **NT** you need 9-tricks, game in **Major** 10-tricks, game in **Minor** 11-tricks, **Small Slam** 12-tricks. Bold represents optimal points for success.

Calculate Optimal Points for Hands A, B, C, D, E

Hand (A) ♠AKQ10x ♥10xxx ♦x ♣Jxx

Hand (B) ♠AKx ♥KJx ♦J10x ♣xxxx

Hand (C) ♠AJx ♥KQxx ♦Qx ♣Jxxx

Hand (D) ♠A10x ♥10xxx ♦KJxx ♣K10

Hand (E) ♠Kxx ♥AQxxxx ♦A10x ♣A

Evaluate and bid the above Hands

Results for Hands A, B, C

Hand (A) ♠AKQ10x ♥10xxx ♦x ♣Jxx	10HL
♠:4.5+3+2+1+1Q+1L = 12.5 ♥:0 ♦:0 Sg ♣:0.5	13HL
Hand (B) ♠AKx ♥KJx ♦J10x ♣xxxx	11HL
♠:4.5+3 = 7.5 ♥:4.0 ♦:2.0 ♣:0 and -1no Q -1 flat 4333	11.5HL
Hand (C) ♠AJx ♥KQxx ♦Qx ♣Jxxx	13HL
♠:4.5+1 = 5.5 ♥:5.0 ♦:1.0 ♣:0.5	12HL

Results for Hands D and E

Hand (D) ♠A10x ♥10xxx ♦ KJxx ♣K10 11HL

♠:4.5 ♥:0 ♦:4.0 ♣:3.5 -1 no Q 11**HL**

Hand (E) ♠Kxx ♥AQxxxx ♦A10x ♣Q 17HL

♠:3 ♥:6.5+2L ♦:4.5 ♣:2 0.5 16.5**HL**

Note for singleton honors deduct one (-1) point

Overview - Hands A, B, C, D, and E

Hand (A) ♠AKQ10x ♥10xxx ♦x ♣Jxx	10HL vs. 13 HL
Hand (B) ♠AKx ♥KJx ♦J10x ♣xxxx	12HL vs. 11.5 HL
Hand (C) ♠AJx ♥KQxx ♦Qx ♣Jxxx	13HL vs. 12 HL
Hand (D) ♠A10x ♥10xxx ♦KJxx ♣K10	11HL vs. 11 HL
Hand (E) ♠Kxx ♥AQxxxx ♦A10x ♣A	17HL vs. 16.5 HL

Bids for above Hands:

(A) 1♠ (B) Pass (C) 1♣ (D) Pass (E) 1♥

Additional Hands - F, G, H, I, and J

Hand (F) ♠ Jx ♥ QJxx ♦ Axxx ♣ Axx

Hand (G) ♠ xxx ♥ AJ10x ♦ KQ10x ♣ xx

Hand (H) ♠ Axxx ♥ Qx ♦ KQ10xx ♣ xx

Hand (I) ♠ xx ♥ AJx ♦ xx ♣ KQxxxx

Hand (J) ♠ AQxx ♥ Q10xxxx ♦ KJ ♣ x

Evaluate and bid the above hands.

Results for Hands F, G, H

Hand (F) ♠Jx ♥QJxx ♦Axxx ♣Axx

12HL

♠:0.5 ♥:3.0 ♦:4.5 ♣:4.5 -1 no K

11.5HL -Pass

Hand (G) ♠xxx ♥AJ10x ♦KQ10x ♣xx

10HL

♠:0 ♥:6.5 ♦:5.0 ♣:0

11.5HL - Pass

Hand (H) ♠Axx ♥Qx ♦KQ10xx ♣xx

11HL

♠:4.5 ♥:1.5 ♦:6.0 ♣:0 +1L

13HL - Bid 1♦

Results for Hands I and J

Hand (I) ♠xx ♥AJx ♦xx ♣KQ10xxx

10HL

♠:0 ♥:5.5 ♦:0 ♣:6.0 +2Q+2L

15.5**HLD** - Bid 1♣

Hand (J) ♠AQxx ♥Q10xxxx ♦KJ ♣x

12HL

♠:6.5 ♥:2.5+1L(6-card w/o K/QJ) ♦:4.0 ♣: 0

12**HL** - Bid 1♥

A Simple Example

Each hand has 14HCP using the 4321 System!

Hand (O1) ♠AKxxx ♥AKxxx ♦xx ♣x

Hand (O2) ♠AKxxx ♥Axxxx ♦Kx ♣x

Hand (O3) ♠AKxxx ♥xxxxx ♦Kx ♣A

Hand (O4) ♠Kxxxx ♥xxxxx ♦AK ♣A

Your partner has the following hand

(P) ♠Qxx ♥Qxx ♦Qxx ♣Qxxx with 12HCP

Which hand combination is better?

Evaluate Suit Strength with Optimal Points

Hand (O1) ♠AKxxx ♥AKxxx ♦xx ♣x

Hand (O2) ♠AKxxx ♥Axxxx ♦Kx ♣x

Hand (O3) ♠AKxxx ♥xxxxx ♦Kx ♣A

Hand (O4) ♠Kxxxx ♥xxxxx ♦AK ♣A

O1: $4.5+3+4.5+3+2L=17$ 50%

O2: $4.5+3+3.5+3+2L=16$ 30%

O3: $4.5+3+3+3.5+1L=15$ 12%

O4: $3+4.5+3+3.5+1L=14$ 6%

% chance of Making 4♠ with an 8-card spade fit

As honors move from long suits to short suits playing strength decreases as reflected using optimal point calculations. Notice that partner has only 6H points and as we shall soon see, fit increases the value by only 1 point – Total= $17+7=24<25$ for O1.

Optimal Points for - Hands 1 and 2

Hand (1) ♠KQx ♥Qxx ♦QJx ♣ KQxx 4333 distribution 15HCP

Hand (2) ♠AKx ♥QJx ♦Kx ♣ Axxxx 3325 distribution 17HCP

Hand (1) has 15HCP but no Ace and Lots of Queens and Jacks

Hand (2) has 17HCP with many Aces and Kings and few Queens and Jacks

Hand (1) has 13.5**HL** since the HL ignores the fact that the hand is balanced (-1 point), has no Ace (-1 point) and the Qxx=1.5 is isolated (13.5=5+1.5+3+5-1)

Hand (2) has 19**HL** (19=7.5+3+3+4.5+1**L**) since HCP ignore the true value of an ace (4.5 not 4.0)

Open both Hands 1♣ NOT 1NT

Example Hand (3)

Hand (3) ♠AQxx ♥A10 ♦Kxx ♣Axxx with 17HCP - Open 1NT?

Partners Hand (4) ♠Kxxx ♥KQxx ♦xx ♣xxx with 8HCP

The bidding goes:	1NT	2♣
	2♠	3♠
	Pass	Pass

What happened, the pair missed their spade game. WHY?

Both Opener - Hand (3) and Partner - Hand (4) incorrectly counted their hands since the bidding process ignored both Fit and Distribution!

Responder – Positive FIT(F) Points

8-card Fit: +1 Point 9-card Fit: +2 points 10-card fit+3points

8-card Fit: 1 point (4-4, 5-3, 6-2)

9-card Fit: 2 points (5-4, 6-3, 7-2)

10-card Fit: 3 points (5-5, 6-4, 7-3, 8-2)

Responder adds +1 point for honor(s) in suits(s) **with a fit** when the **initial count for honor(s) <4** (i.e., K/Q/J/K10/QJ/J10)

TRUMP SEMI-FIT (F):Responder add +1pt for Kx, Qx, or Jx opposite trump suit.

Fit strength is added for all 5-card suits found during the bidding process.

Responder Adds for Distribution Fit(F) Subtracts for Misfit(F)

Responder Number of trumps:		4+	3	2
Distribution - Fit Trump Suit	Void:	+4pts	+3pts	+2pts
	Singleton:	+3pts	+2pts	+1pt
	Doubleton:	+2pts	+1pt	0pts

MISFIT Deductions

Void: -3pts Singleton: -2pts Doubleton: -1 pt

Opposite 5-cards suits:

Opener Re-Evaluates for Shortness

Opener Shortness for Misfit

Void: -3 points Singleton (x): -2 points **D**oubletons (xx): -1 points

Opening NT Hands 4333 Distribution : -1pt

Responder applies **D** points **after** a fit is found

Re-Analysis of Hand (3) with Partner

Hand (3) ♠AQxx ♥A10 ♦Kxx ♣Axxx	17HCP
(R)♠Kxxx ♥KQxx ♦xx ♣ xxx	8HCP

Opener Hand (3) - 3Aces=13.5pts +K=3 + Q=2 =18.5**HL** bid 1 ♣

Partner (R) - 8HCP **HLDF** points and responds 1 ♠

Opener bids 3♠ and adds 1 fit point for spade fit (19.5**HLDF** points) and partner bids 4♠.

Total Optimal points:19.5+8 = 27.5 points for game

If the initial trick-taking value of your hand is incorrect, the bidding process may not accurately find the optimal final bridge contract.

Optimal Totals for Suit and NT Contracts

A major suit game requires 25-27 points where the Optimal value is **26**.
If Opener has 12**HL** points, Responder needs 14**HLDF** optimal points for game but only 13**HLDF** to invite game.

If Opener has 15-17**HL** points in NT partner (Responder) needs 10**HL** optimal points for game but only 9**HL** to invite game.

Simple Responses for 1-level Suit Bids

Weak	7-9	HL	1-level
Minimal	10-12	HL	2-level
Invitational	13-14	HL	3-level
Strong	15+	HL	

Minor Suit Responses are also restricted to only **HL** points

For game in a major one needs 14**HLDF** points since $12+14=26$.

For a minor game one needs 17**HLDF** points

Simple Responses to Major & NT Opening

Minimum 3-card Major Support

After 1NT

Bids

7-9**HLDF**

Bid 2M

<8**HLD**

Pass

10-12**HLDF**

Bid 3M

9**HLD**

2NT

13+**HLDF**

2/1 Bid

10+**HLD**

3NT

8+**HLD**

2♣

Example from a Recent Club Game

O: ♠Jx ♥AJ10xx ♦Kxxx ♣Kx

12HCP or 13HL

R: ♠Qxx ♥Q ♦QJxx ♣AQxxx

13HCP

Bidding Went:

1 ♥

2 ♣

2 ♦

3 ♦

3 ♥

3NT

Down 1 - Why?

Analysis of Club Game Example

O: ♠Qx ♥AJ10xx ♦Kxxx ♣Kx 12HCP or 13HL

R: ♠Jxx ♥Q ♥QJxx ♣AQxxx 13HCP

O: $1.5 + 6.5 + 3 + 3 = 14$ HL

R: $0.5 + 0.5 + 3 + 6.5 + 1$ L in clubs -1 No K = 8.5 HL

After hearing 1♥ bid, Responder must subtract 2 **Misfit** Points 6.5 HLDF

1♥ 1NT

2♦ Pass

Responder does not have values for game! One must adjust hand value during the bidding process.

Value of Splinters

Why Splinters work!

Short Suit Total (SST) Rule

When opening one of a major, a direct splinter bid shows 4 card support (some pairs may use 3-card support) for the major suit bid and 13+ Working points with a SST=0-3 cards in singletons or doubletons between the pair in different suits.

If Opener's 12**HL** + Partner's **HLDF** points is between 19-21 points, then

$13 - (\text{SST}) = \# \text{ of potential tricks}$. Gain +1 trick with 22-24, +2 with 25-27, etc.

If the SST for both hands = 2, then we may make 11 tricks with a singleton in both hands, and with a void and a singleton $13 - (\text{SST}=1) = 12$. A SLAM

Modern Splinter Bidding Convention

1♠ -- pass -- 3♥* (singleton somewhere) – to ask where, bid next step (3♠)
Then 4♥ -- 4♣ -- 4♦ show singletons (direct bids) – or some may prefer use
submarine--like bids 3NT*=♣, 4♣*=♦, and 4♦*=♥ to avoid a double.

1♥ -- pass -- 3♠* (singleton somewhere) – to ask where, bid next step
(3NT). Then 4♣ -- 4♦ show singletons and 4♥ = spades (singleton) – or
again, you may use submarine-- like bids 4♥=♠, 4♣*=♦, and 4♦*=♥ to
avoid a double.

3NT* = Void in Other Major

4♣*/4♦* = Void in bid suit

4M = To Play

Opener Bids 1 ♠ with 12HL points

Calculate Fit Points for the following Hands

Hand (R1) ♠AJxx ♥xxxx ♦Void ♣AKxxx	12HCP
Hand (R2) ♠Qxxx ♥xxx ♦AK10xxx ♣void	9HCP
Hand (R3) ♠KQJxx ♥xxx ♦x ♣Jxxx	7HCP
Hand (R4) ♠xxxx ♥AK ♦xx ♣AQ10xx	13HCP
Hand (R5) ♠xxxx ♥K ♦xxx ♣Qxxxxx	5HCP
Hand (R6) ♠xx ♥Qxx ♦KQJ ♣KQxxx	13HCP

Results for Hands R1 and R2

Hand (R1) ♠AJxx ♥xxxx ♦void ♣AKxxx 12HCP

HL= 5.5+7.5 -1 No Q =12**HL**+2(9-card fit)+4(void) = 18**HLDF** points

Or 12+18=20.0 Optimal Points – Bid 2NT*=Jacoby.

Hand (R2) ♠Qxxx ♥xxx ♦AK10xxx ♣void 9HCP

HL=1.5+(8.0+2L)=11.5**HL**+4(void)+2(9-card fit)+1(Q)
=118.5**HLDF**points

Bid 2NT*

Results for Hands R3 and R4

Hand (R3) ♠KQJxx ♥xxx ♦x ♣Jxxx 7HCP

HL=(6+3**Q**+1**L**+0.5**J**)=10.5**HL** +3 for singleton+
3(10card fit)=16.5**HLDF** points

Bid 2NT*

Hand (R4) ♠xxxx ♥AKx ♦x ♣AQ10xx 13HCP

HL=(7.5AK-1honor doubleton+0+7.5(AQ10)+1**L**+1**Q** =16**HL**+ 2
doubleton+2(9-card fit) = 20**HDLF** points

Bid 4♦*— A direct splinter

Results for Hands R4 and R5

Hand (R5) ♠xxxx ♥K ♦xxx ♣Qxxxxx 5HCP

HL=2(for K)+1.5=4.5**HL**+3(singleton with a Fit)+1(9-card fit)
=8.5**HLDF**points

Bid 2♠

Hand (R6) ♠xx ♥Qxx ♦KQJ ♣KQ10xx 14HCP

HR=1.5+6+6(KQ10)+1L= 14.5**HL** +1(doubleton with Fit) =
=14.5**HLDF**points

Bid 2NT*

More on Adjusting for Trick-Generation During the Bidding Process

A critical factor that may affect trick-generation are “mirror” hands and “mirror” suits. So, adjustments must be made.

Two Perfectly “Mirror” hands: -2pt Two “Mirror” Suits: -1pt

Also effected are the values of honors (excluding the Ace) opposite a singleton or a void in partner’s hand lose value have wasted value.

Wasted honor points and enhanced fit adjustments discovered because of direct splinters and mini splinter bids.

Wasted Honors & Enhanced Fit Points

K/Q/J Honors (exclude an A)	Opposite a Singleton: -2 pts
	Opposite a Void: -3 pts
Singleton Ace (Added Value)	Opposite a Singleton: +1 point
No Honors (w 3+ spots cards)	Opposite a Singleton: +2 pts
	Opposite a void: +3 pts

Adjustments are made during the bidding sequence.

Wasted Honors - Example

O: ♠AQxx ♥x ♦AKxxx ♣xxx 13HCP/15**HL**

R: ♠Kxxxx ♥xxx ♦xx ♣ KQxx 8HCP/9**HL**

Bidding 1♦ 1♠

 3♠ ? Partner Knows Nothing about ♥/♣

Need to show shortness! 1♦ 1♠

 3♥ mini splinter 4♠

Responder – 9**HL**+2 pts (enhanced fit) +1**L** (at least 3-spades fit)
=12**HLDF**

So Bid Game!

Fit and Distribution Example 1

O: ♠KQxxx ♥Kxx ♦Ax ♣xxx

12HCP

R: ♠A10xx ♥AJx ♦xxx ♣xxx

9HCP

How would you bid this?

Opener

Responder

1♠

2♠

Pass

Pass

Solution Example 1

O: ♠KQxxx ♥Kx ♦Ax ♣xxxx 12HCP

R: ♠A10xx ♥AJx ♦xxx ♣Jxx 9HCP

(O): **HL**=5(KQ)+1L+4.5(A)+4.5(A) = 15.0**HL**

(R): 4.5(A)+5.5(KJ) = 10.0**HL**

10**HL**+2(9-card fit) =12.5**HLDF** points

Total is 15.0+12.5=27.5 points **GAME**

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
---------------	------------------

1♠	3♠
----	----

4♠	Pass
----	------

Fit and Distribution – Example 2

O: ♠A10x ♥A10xxx ♦Axx ♥Ax 16HCP

P: ♠KQxx ♥xx ♦KJ10 ♣Qxxx 10HCP

Bid this Hand! Would You bid as follows?

1NT

2♣

2♠

3NT

Pass

Pass

Doomed to Fail Losing 3-clubs and 2-Hearts

Solution Example 2

O: ♠A10x ♥A10xxx ♦Axx ♥Ax 16HCP

R: ♠KQxx ♥Qx ♦KJ10 ♣Qxxx 10HCP

(O):**HL**=18+1**L**-2(No K/Q)=18**HL**

(R):**HL**=5+1.5+4+1.5=12**HL**+ (semi-fit in hearts)=13**HLDF**

1♥ 1♠

2♦ 3♥

4♥ Pass

Responses for Minor Suit Openings

Bids after 1♦	1NT	7-9 HL
	2NT	10-12 HL
	3NT	13-15 HL
Bids after 1♣	1NT	8-10 HL
	2NT	11-12 HL
	3NT	13-15 HL

There is no **L** since a minor opening may have only 3-cards

Some Play inverted with 10+**HL** Where $1♦ - 2♦* = 10+H$

Some Play Criss-Cross Inverted with 13+**H** Where $1♦ - 2♦* = 13+HL$

and $1♦* - 3♣* = 10-12HL$ – Limit Raise in Diamonds

Fit and Distribution – Example 3

O: ♠AKxx ♥AQJx ♦xxx ♣KJ 14HCP

R: ♠xx ♥xx ♦AKQxx ♣Q10xxx 11HCP

Bid this hand?

Solution - Example 3

O: ♠AKxx ♥AQJx ♦xxx ♣KJ 14HCP

R: ♠xx ♥xx ♦AKQxx ♣Q10xxx 11HCP

(O): **HL**=7.5+7.5+4(KJ)-1(KJ doubleton)=18**HL**

(R): **HL**=9.5+1**Q**+1**L**+2.5(Q10x)=14.0**HL**

1♦

2♦*

3NT

4♣ Expert Gerber - Steps 1/4 - 0/3- 2Min 2Max (Aces)

4NT=2Aces

6NT

Fit and Distribution Example 4

O: ♠A10x ♥Ax ♦xx ♣AK10xxx 15HCP

R: ♠Kxx ♥xxx ♦xxxx ♣Qxx 5HCP

Bidding Goes

1♣

1♦

1NT

Pass

Pass

Pass

Bid this Hand Using Optimal Points!

Solution – Example 4

O: ♠A10x ♥Ax ♦xx ♣AK10xxx 15HCP

R: ♠Kxx ♥xxx ♦xxxx ♣Qxx 5HCP

(O): **HL** = $4.5(A) + 4.5 + 7.5(AK10x) + 2L + 2(Quality) = 20.5$ **HL**

(R): **HL** = $3(K) + 1.5 - 1(\text{for } 4333) = 3.5$ **HLD**

Bidding

1♣ 1♦

3♣ = 6-clubs 3♥ WQ Revised fit = 6.5 **HLDF** (+3 for 9-card club Fit)

3NT Pass

Fit and Distribution - Example 5

O: ♠AJxxx ♥K10xx ♦xxxx ♣KJxx 12HCP

R: ♠KQ10x ♥Axx ♦- ♣AQx 15HCP

(O): $5.5(AJ) + 1L + 3.5(K10) + 4(KJ) - 1 \text{ no Q} = 13\text{HL}$

(R): $6.0(KQ10x) + 4.5(A) + 6.5(AQ) = 17\text{HL}$

$17\text{HL} + 2(9\text{-card fit}) + 1 \text{ extra honors} + 4\text{-void} = 24\text{HLDF points}$

Total points $13 + 24 = 37$ Optimal Points

A Grand Slam

Fit and Distribution – Example 6

O: ♠Axx ♥AQxx ♦Kxx ♣Axx 16HCP=16**HL**

R: ♠x ♥Kxxx ♦QJxx ♣xxxx 6HCP=6**HL**

Bid this Hand – Clearly 1NT Pass !

Solution - Example 6

O: ♠Axx ♥AQxx ♦Kxx ♣Axx 16HCP

R: ♠x ♥Kxxx ♦QJxx ♣xxxx 6HCP

(O): $4.5+6.5+3.0+4.5 = 18.5-1$ for 4333= 17.5**HLD**

Do not Open 1NT, open 1♣!

1♣ 1♥

2♥ (?) (R): $6\text{H}+2(8\text{-card heart fit})+3 \text{ spade sig.}=11$ **HLDF**

A total of 28.5 Optimal Points for a game in hearts!

(?) Your bid depends on agreement (SSGT/LSGT/HS GT/mini splinter)

Which Game Try Agreement is Best?

Far and away SSGT is best. See for example Jeff Rubens (1969), “The Secrets of Winning Bridge”, pp. 21-24 on Hand Valuation Bidding Sequences.

In the Sequence 1♠ Pass 2♠, opener shows strength in a second suit by bidding 2NT* which asks for shortness while bidding a new suit at the 3-level shows shortness (say 3♣* – bid game with no values in clubs).

It is superior to LSGT/HSGT tries as they reduce high-card strength requirements and pinpoint specific shortages, allowing better judgment of a combined fit. Normally used with 16+HL points.

Hands with 5-card Major - Open 1NT or 1M?

Hand (N1) ♠A10x ♥A10xxx ♦Axx ♣Ax 16HCP

Hand (N2) ♠Q10 ♥AQ10xx ♦KJx ♣KJx 16HCP

Hand (N3) ♠KQxxx ♥AJx ♦KQ ♣xxx 15HCP

Hand (N4) ♠AKQJ10x ♥xx ♦AJ10 ♣xxx 15HCP

Evaluate the above Hands for Optimal Points!

Hands with 5-card Major-Open 1NT or 1M?

Hand (N1) ♠Q10 ♥AQ10xx ♦KJx ♣KJx 16HCP

Hand (N2) ♠KQxxx ♥AJx ♦KQ ♣xxx 15HCP

Hand (N3) ♠AKQJ10x ♥xx ♦AJ10 ♣xxx 15HCP

Hand (N1) $2+(7.5+1\mathbf{L})+4+4$ 18.5 $\mathbf{HL}$

Hand (N2) $(5+1\mathbf{L})+5.5+5-1(\text{doubleton})$ 15.5 $\mathbf{HL}$

Hand (N3) $11.5+2\mathbf{Q}+2\mathbf{L}+6.5$ 22.0 $\mathbf{HL}$

Tips -1NT vs. Major Suit Opening at 1-Level

Don't Blindly open all 15-17point hands 1NT.

With a 5-card Spade suit open 1♠ and play 1NT* as Forcing.

With a 5-card Heart suit open 1♥ and play 1NT* as Semi-Forcing.

Why? This often avoids difficult rebid problems since 2NT re-bid may be passed.

However, if you always play 1NT as Forcing, with 5-hearts open 1NT.

Why? More likely to shut out spade suit.

Do not open 1NT with a worthless doubleton in a major.

Minimal - 1NT Conventions

Beginners

Jacoby and Texas Transfers

Smolen and Stolen Bids

Stayman with Crawling and Garbage Stayman

Others

Lebensohl and Expert Gerber

Worthless/Vacant Doubleton Convention

Puppet Stayman (3♣*)

Puppet Using 3♣* Over 1NT

Opener

Responder

1NT

3♣* - asks do you have a 5-card Major (requires an alert)

3♦*

No 5-card Major. Responder next bids the major he does not have 3♥*=4-spades and 3♠*=4-hearts (like Smolen) and 3NT denies a 4-card major.

3♥*

5-hearts

3♠*

5-spades

3NT

5-spades and 4-hearts

Never used when 4-4 in the Majors Why? Use 2♣ (Stayman)

Vacant Major Doubleton (VD)

Example (1)

Opener ♠Ax ♠AKxx ♦xxx ♣KQxx 16HCP

Partner ♠xx ♥Qxx ♥AKxx ♣Jxxx 10HCP

(O): **HL**=4.5+7.5+5.0=16**HL**

(R): **HL**=1.5+7.5+0.5=9.5**HL**

Bidding goes 1NT - 3NT ! NO

Vacant Major Doubleton (VD)

Example (2)

(O): ♠AQJx ♠Jx ♦AQx ♣Kxxx 15HCP

(R) ♠Kxx ♥xx ♥Kxxx ♣Axxx 10HCP

(O):**HL**=7.0+0+6.0+3=16**HL**

(R):**HL**=3+3+4.5=10.5**HL**

Bidding goes 1NT - 3NT ! NO

Vacant Doubleton (VD) Convention

1NT - 2♠*	Shape Asking Bid
3♣	Minor two suiter
3♦	Doubleton in a minor
3♥	Asking Bid – Which Minor
3♠	Clubs
3NT	Diamonds
3♥/3♠	Doubleton in bid major

NOTE: It is not useful to show a vacant/worthless doubleton in a suit bid by the opener (e.g., after Stayman, if opener bid spades, responder should not bother to show a worthless doubleton in spades).

Solution for EXAMPLE (1)

Responder would bid 2♠*. When partner bids 2NT (the asking bid) responder bids 3♠ to show his vacant/worthless doubleton in spades. The rest is up to partner. Over 3♠ he would likely bid 4♥ and play in a 4-3 fit. Note that this contract has a good chance of making if hearts are 3-3. With a spade lead, the 3NT contract has almost a zero probability of making.

O: ♠Ax ♠AKxx ♦xxx ♣KQxx	16HCP/16HL
R: ♠xx ♥Qxx ♥AKxx ♣Jxxx	10HCP/9.5HL

Solution for EXAMPLE (2)

One would again bid 2♠*, and after a 2NT bid by opener, one would bid 3♥ to show the vacant/worthless doubleton. Now partner would bid 4♠. This will make if spades split 4-2, provided clubs split 3-2, or diamonds split 3-3. Much better than 3NT.

O: ♠AQJx ♠Jx ♦AQx ♣Kxxx	15HCP/17HL
R: ♠Kxx ♥xx ♥Kxxx ♣Axxx	10HCP/10.5HL

Slam Example Using Optimal Points

O: ♠AJ10x ♥KQJ ♦KQ10 ♣Kxx 19HCP 21.5HL

R: ♠KQxxx ♥x ♦xx ♣AKQJ10x 13HCP 17.5HL

1♣

1♠

2NT Forcing-Spade Support? 4♠

4NT

5♠ 2 Keycards with Q

5NT Pick a Slam

Pass No Red Aces!

The Effect of an Overcall Bid on Fit Points

When the Opponents make an overcall 1-level suit bid, it must include 4-cards and if it is an artificial bid or a transfer it must be alerted with a known suit. A X has 10+points and has unlimited value (no alert required), 1NT=15-18 and if not, it must be alerted.

For suit contracts, your **HLDF** count for their suit bid is reduced by -1/-2/-3 if you are holding respectively 3/4/5/cards in their suit.

Holding a K in their suit deduct -1pt for your hand but for a Void or Singleton add in their suit **add** +1-point (fit values become 5 and 4 respectively; ignore doubletons). Your points are the adjusted or **AHLDF** points.

Why Look at AHLDF Values?

The value of your AHLDF optimal points is a gauge of your Offense to Defense Ratio or ODR.

A High AHLDF value implies an Offensive Hand while a low value implies a Defensive hand.

1: ♠AJ10xx ♥x ♦KQxxx ♣xx

2: ♠Q10xxx ♥Kx ♦AJxx ♣x

Hand (1) has 14.5HLDF vs. **AHLDF**=15.5 against opponents playing in hearts.

Hand (2) has 11.0HLDF vs. **AHLDF**= 9.0 against opponents playing in hearts.

With hand (1) it is better to play in ♠/♦ but with hand (2) it is better to defend against the opponents' heart contract.

References

Patrick Darricades (2019), “Optimal Hand Evaluation”, Master Point Press

Patrick Darricades (2020), “Optimal Hand Evaluation in Competitive Bidding”, Master Point Press

Neil H. Timm (2022), “The Optimal Modified 2/1-Club System”, Trafford Press.

SOME BRIDGE RULES

Rule of 210: -Bid to 5-level with a void, Pass with 1 and X with 2

Rule of 88: - Bid 2NT with 8HL points and 8 cards higher than the 8

Rule of 64: -When 6-4 in 2-suits bid 4-card suit if HCP in it is 4-card suit $\geq$ to 6-card suit; otherwise rebid your 6-card suit

Rule of 9: - Level of bid + Number of cards in their suit + Number of cards greater than or equal is 10 or more = 9+ then leave X in (or used to X 3/4-level contracts when behind declarer)

Rule of 8 & 2: - Interfere over strong NT if if at least 6HL and $LT \leq 2$ or $6+2 \geq 8$ or with at least 2 shortness points in the balance seat. LT = Two Longest suits - number of Losers in the hand counting 3-cards in each suit (e.g., LTC)

Rule of 17: - Over weak 2-bid bid 4 if HL points + #of trumps=17+

Rule of 44: - Open 2♣ with 4 Quick tricks and 4 or less losers

Short Suit Total (SST) Rule: - $13 - SST = \#$ of tricks with 19-21 HCP and for each set of 3 points above 19-21 add one more trick

Rule of 26: - If the HL points excluding the splinter suit is ≥ 26 consider slam.

Law of Total Tricks: - Total Trumps in both hands minus $11 \leq$ Sum of the Bids. For example, $16-11=5$ - (So don't bid 3 over 3 Vulnerable)

LTC: $24 - 7\text{Losers in Hand} - \text{Estimate of 7 for Partner} = 10$ Tricks then bid to 4-level

Good Luck

With Optimal Points

The following Link provides an Overview of the Methods Used in this Lesson

www.bridgewebs.com/ocala/Optimal%20Hand%20Evlaution%20Revisited.pdf