

U3ABC Compendium Five: Bidding Commentary

Introduction

This is a summary of Hands 1-24 from Compendium Five, complete with Bidding Commentary to help explain the recommended bidding. As always, your mileage might vary when you play these hands.

Advanced topics

Advanced topics are in green. These are included for completeness; you can ignore them for now or dive in if you want *more*.

The Hands

North	East	South	West
1♦ Pass	3♥ Pass	Pass Pass	4♥
♠ AQ74 ♥ 3 ♦ K98 ♣ AKQ6	♠ J8 ♥ A7 ♦ AQ65432 ♣ 84 ♠ 632 ♥ KQ6 ♦ JT7 ♣ T973		♠ K95 ♥ JT98542 ♦ ♣ J52

Board: 1 Dealer: North #968

East has just 5 HCP, but a 7-card Heart suit headed by JT and a void in the opponent's suit; a nearly perfect hand for an obstructive double-jump overcall! This 3H double-jump (pre-emptive) overcall shows 6-9 HCP and a 7-card Heart suit.

OK, it's ***nearly*** perfect because it's got 5 HCP and promises 6-9, but it even passes the Suit Quality Overcall Test, with two Honours (JT) and seven cards making a score of 9, for 9 tricks. I've seen better Honours. Notice how useless this hand would be defending against a Diamond contract, the real clincher.

West has just one Heart, for a 7-1 fit. Not ideal, but with 18 HCP, they're reasonably certain that 4H will make, so they're happy to raise the Obstructive 3H overcall to a very Constructive bid of 4H!

If this convinces North-South to bid 5D, then they will be very happy to watch that contract go down; their hand is just as good in Defence.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If you look at the hands, 4H makes easily, losing three Hearts.

If North-South did bid 5D, they would probably lose two Spades, two Clubs and possibly a Diamond (as, with 10 Diamonds, they might play for drop rather than finesses the King) – for two or three down. That would actually score better than letting East-West make 4H, but 5D would be an unusual bid, they probably expect 4H to go down!

East	South	West	North
1NT Pass	Pass Pass	3NT	Pass
♠ K74 ♥ KJ3 ♦ T42 ♣ AK54	♠ J93 ♥ 9875 ♦ A7 ♣ QJ93 ♠ QT52 ♥ T42 ♦ Q986 ♣ 62		♠ A86 ♥ AQ6 ♦ KJ53 ♣ T87

Board: 2 Dealer: East Lead: ♠2 #2076

East has a balanced hand with 13 HCP, so opens 1NT.

This 1NT opening bids promises a balanced hand with 12-14 HCP.

West has a balanced hand with 14 HCP. With no 4-card major, they raise to 3NT, as they can see 26-28 HCP, more than enough for 3NT.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ K76		
	♥ A76		
	♦ 94		
	♣ KJT76		
♠ T82		♠ J943	
♥ QJ32		♥ T95	
♦ KJ632		♦ QT7	
♣ 2		♣ A98	
	♠ AQ5		
	♥ K84		
	♦ A85		
	♣ Q543		

Board: 3 Dealer: South Lead: ♦3 #113

South has 15 points and a balanced hand, with one 4-card suit, so they open that suit (1C) intending to rebid 1NT to show their points and shape.

North has 11 points, a balanced hand, and excellent 5-card support for partner's minor suit. They don't have stops in the other three suits, so can't respond in NT, and don't have another 4-card suit so can't make a forcing change of suit. They're too strong for a simple raise to 2C (which shows 6-9 points and four Clubs). So they jump raise to 3C, showing 10-12 points and 4+ Clubs. (Adding their 11 points to partner's minimum of 12 points makes 23 points, which should be enough to make 9 tricks in a suit with a fit.)

While in general you don't raise partner's opening bid if it's a minor, sometimes that's the only sensible bid.

South adds the minimum points shown by partner's to their own (15+10=25) and that's enough for 3NT.

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ AQ		
	♥ 43		
	♦ T9854		
	♣ T843		
♠ T982		♠ 7653	
♥ A52		♥ KQ97	
♦ AQ		♦ KJ	
♣ A765		♣ KQ2	
	♠ KJ4		
	♥ JT86		
	♦ 7632		
	♣ J9		

Board: 4 Dealer: West Lead: ♦T #1926

West has less than four Hearts but does have four Spades, so responds 2S to the Stayman 2C bid. This shows at least four Spades and denies four Hearts. Notice that you just need four Spades to bid 2S, they don't have to be good cards!

East has 14 HCP so can count 26-28 HCP and 8 Spades, so bids 4S.

If you look at the hands, you can see that Declarer is missing the A, K, Q and J of Spades. Oh dear! This may look like a disaster, but they still have a fair chance of making the contract if the Spades split evenly; they just have to make nine tricks in the other suits!

Stayman bidding doesn't promise anything about the quality of the major suits, just the length.

North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
		♠ AT98652	
		♥ 7	
		♦ AK98	
		♣ J	
♠ KQ			♠ J743
♥ AT63			♥ KQJ2
♦ J5			♦ 732
♣ 98654			♣ AT
		♠	
		♥ 9854	
		♦ QT64	
		♣ KQ732	

Board: 5 Dealer: North Lead: ♥K #1540

North has 12 HCP and a 7-card Spade suit in an unbalanced hand, so they open 1S (showing 12 HCP and 4 Spades, denying a similar length holding in Hearts e.g. 4H+4S or 5H+5S). They could rebid 2S to show their length, or show that they are two-suited by rebidding 2D. Hmm.

South has 7 HCP and no Spades, a terrible fit. They're not strong enough to show their longest suit (2C would promise 10+ points) so they bid 1NT, to show their point count (6-9) and that they don't have 4 Spades.

The 1NT response does not show a balanced hand and is not forcing.

North hears the bad news. In principle they could make 4S with a lot of luck, but with limited HCP (18-21) and no idea whether partner has 0, 1, 2 or 3 Spades, it looks unlikely. 1NT looks like a terrible contract with their two singletons, so North rebids 2S which is a sign-off bid; West must not bid again.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

When you look at the hands, N-S will probably lose one Heart, one Club, no Diamonds and two Spades, making 3S. The only way to make 4S is to set up the Clubs quickly and discard the losing 7H on the second round of Clubs – losing just 2 Spades and 1 Club. Risky!

In principle, North should rebid 2D over 1NT, to show that they are two-suited. This would show five Spades and four Diamonds and allow South to pass or bid 2S, depending on the fit. However, North has SEVEN Spades, not five, so South's decision would be based on misleading information. I'd bid 2S too in this situation.

East	South	West	North
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
		♠ T973	
		♥ J4	
		♦ K865	
		♣ T75	
♠ 642			♠ AK5
♥ 9632			♥ AKQ85
♦ JT2			♦ AQ4
♣ 842			♣ Q6
		♠ QJ8	
		♥ T7	
		♦ 973	
		♣ AKJ93	

Board: 6 Dealer: East #485

North has 24 HCP and a balanced hand with a good 5-card Major. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP) or 1H opening, they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

South has 1 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

North bids 2H to show their 5-card suit.

South only has 1 HCP but does have 4-card support for partner's Hearts. They don't have any other values to show, so they bid game, 4 Hearts.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

South's 4H bid feels a bit heavy-handed; the 2C opening bid is a game force, so a 3H response would give partner a bit more space for any other bids they want to make – they aren't going to miss game. Still, no harm done.

South West North East

1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ J6		
	♥ QJT86		
	♦ AK842		
	♣ 2		
♠ 9853		♠ 42	
♥ 2		♥ K74	
♦ 976		♦ QJT5	
♣ KJ865		♣ AT94	
	♠ AKQT7		
	♥ A953		
	♦ 3		
	♣ Q73		

Board: 7 Dealer: South Lead: ♦Q #3375

South has 14 HCP and a nice 5-card Spade suit, so opens 1S. This shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP. Note that, on this occasion, South has a 4-card Heart suit, but bids the 5-card Spade suit because it's longer. They plan to show their second suit, Spades, with their rebid.

North has 11 HCP, and two 5-card suits, Hearts and Diamonds. They're strong enough to bid a new suit at the 2 level, but which one? They choose Hearts for two good reasons: it's a lot easier to make game in a Major, and if they get a chance, they can show their Diamond suit on the next round fairly economically. (To show controls and maybe progress to 3NT.)

So North bids 2H, showing a 5-card Heart suit and 10-15 points. This bid is forcing for one round.

South can rely on North for 5 Hearts and 10 HCP, adding their own 4 Hearts and 14 HCP and 2 Shortage Points for the singleton Diamond (in a Heart contract) they have enough for game, so bid 4H.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If you don't find a fit with partner (say the bidding goes 1S-2H-2S-3D), your partner's bidding of 2 suits shows they probably have stops in those suits, which might be all you need to bid 2NT or 3NT. That's why it's often better to rebid a second suit than rebidding your first suit – it isn't always about finding a fit.

West North East South

1♥	1♠	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ QJT654		
	♥		
	♦ AK		
	♣ JT954		
♠ 983		♠ AK7	
♥ AKQ65		♥ JT87	
♦ 87		♦ J6	
♣ AK7		♣ Q832	
	♠ 2		
	♥ 9432		
	♦ QT95432		
	♣ 6		

Board: 8 Dealer: West #1332

North has 11 HCP and a poor 6-card Spade suit. They're also void in Hearts. They're strong enough to overcall at the 1-level.

The 1S overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit.

South has 1-card support for partner's overcall, just 2 HCP, but a 7-card Diamond suit. They're not strong enough to bid.

North	East	South	West
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ KQJ5		
	♥ K62		
	♦ AK84		
	♣ AT		
♠ A3		♠ T86	
♥ JT9		♥ AQ8753	
♦ JT65		♦ 2	
♣ Q982		♣ J64	
	♠ 9742		
	♥ 4		
	♦ Q973		
	♣ K753		

Board: 9 Dealer: North #2234

North has 20 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 2NT.

A 2NT opening shows 20-22 HCP and a balanced hand.

South has 5 HCP, so knows they have enough points for game (25-27) but not enough for a Slam. They could bid 3NT, but the singleton Heart is a worry. With 4 Spades they bid 3C, Stayman, to check if there's a 4-4 fit in a Major. 4S would probably be easier than 3NT with a fit.

Notice that South just needs 4 Spades, they don't have to be good cards!

North responds 3S to show they have 4 Spades and deny 4 Hearts.

South raises to 4S as they have at least 8 Spades and 25 HCP, just enough for game – although they can (perhaps) add two points for their singleton Heart.

East	South	West	North
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ JT		
	♥ K84		
	♦ J9862		
	♣ T97		
♠ AQ65		♠ 42	
♥ QJT93		♥ A	
♦ K4		♦ AQ753	
♣ A6		♣ Q8542	
	♠ K9873		
	♥ 7652		
	♦ T		
	♣ KJ3		

Board: 10 Dealer: East Lead: ♠J #2717

East has 14 HCP, in a very unbalanced two-suited hand. The suits are the same length, so they open 1D, the higher-ranking suit as they expect to rebid their lower suit next. Their shape makes up for their modest point count - as long as they play in Clubs or Diamonds!

This 1D opening promises four Diamonds and 12-19 points. It denies a longer major suit, but not much else can be gleaned from the bid at this time.

West has 16 HCP with two biddable majors and a fairly balanced hand; game is almost certain, with at least 28 HCP. They respond 1H, their longest suit, expecting to choose game on the second round.

East now rebids 2C as planned, showing 5+ Diamonds, 4+ Clubs and 12-15 points.

West may be tempted to rebid 2S (the fourth suit) but bidding the fourth suit has a special meaning that we haven't covered yet. Anyway, there isn't much point bidding Spades, as partner has shown 9+ cards in the minors, so the chance of a 4-4 fit in Spades is slim. West can't support either of East's suits(option 1), but does have a stop in the unbid suit, so can rebid NT. With 28+ HCP, they bid game, 3NT, with a clear conscience.

East could "correct" the bid to 5C or 5D if their hand is unsuitable for NT, but 3NT is usually a better contract!

South West North East

1♥	DbI	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	
	♠ 973		
	♥ 2		
	♦ T7642		
	♣ Q962		
♠ Q5			♠ AT64
♥ AQ64			♥ 973
♦ AK83			♦ QJ5
♣ AJ4			♣ 753
	♠ KJ82		
	♥ KJT85		
	♦ 9		
	♣ KT8		

Board: 11 Dealer: South #2726

West has 20 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and no 5-card suit - an ideal hand to double for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit - see the [Discussion](#) for Board #1.

The double is forcing.

East has 7 HCP and a balanced hand, but no stop in the opponents' suit, so they can't bid 1NT but must show their longest suit by bidding 1S.

This 1S response promises very little; at least 3 Spades and 0-8 HCP.

West only has 2 Spades, so can't support their partner's suit. With a stop in the opponents' suit they can bid 1NT. The 1NT bid shows a stop and 16+ HCP.

East decides to be a bit optimistic and bid 3NT, even though they can only see 23+ HCP. (They actually have 27 HCP. But they don't know that.)

West North East South

Pass	Pass	2♠	DbI
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	
	♠ KJ8		
	♥ J74		
	♦ 87		
	♣ A8432		
♠ 763			♠ QT9542
♥ 82			♥ A53
♦ KT532			♦ 964
♣ J76			♣ 5
	♠ A		
	♥ KQT96		
	♦ AQJ		
	♣ KQT9		

Board: 12 Dealer: West Lead: ♠6 #1708

East has 6 HCP and 6 Spades, an ideal Weak Two in the third set.

This Weak Two opening suggests 6 Spades and 5-10 HCP, and no (other) 4-card major

South has 23 HCP and a good 5-card Heart suit. They are far too strong to simply overcall with their suit, so they double first.

This double of a Weak Two is either a double for take out with 10-16 HCP, or a strong overcall (with 17+ HCP) - as here.

North is forced to bid by South's double, so they bid their longest suit, 3C.

This bid after a take out double by partner promises very little: a 4-card suit and 0 HCP!

South now bids their suit, 3H, showing that it was not a double for take out, but Double Then Bid.

Double Then Bid shows a good 5+ suit and 17+ HCP.

North can now see 28+ HCP and 8+ Hearts, so is happy to raise to 4H.

South is strong enough to use Blackwood, 4NT, to ask for Aces. As long as partner has one Ace, a small slam is likely as partner has shown at least 6 HCP and 3 Hearts with their bid.

North's 5D reply shows a single Ace, so North is happy to bid 6H.

North	East	South	West
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ A98752		
	♥ 542		
	♦ A		
	♣ J53		
♠ K983			♠ QJT6
♥ JT964			♥ QJT
♦ KT92			♦ 873
			♣ AQ8
	♠ K43		
	♥ A76		
	♦ KQ52		
	♣ 764		

Board: 13 Dealer: North Lead: ♥Q #2719

North has a 6-card Spade suit with just one Honour but 9 HCP; the high-ish point count compensates for the single Honour in their suit.

This Weak Two opening suggests 6 Spades and 5-10 HCP, and no (other) 4-card major.

South has three Spades, so they could raise to 3S based on that alone, to extend the pre-empt, but they have 12 HCP. They can see 9 Spades and 17-22 HCP. Not enough points to make 4S, but with most of their points outside Spades, their hand could be quite good in defence, so it's better to pass and see if the opposition bids.

East	South	West	North
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 76		
	♥ T9642		
	♦ KQJT		
	♣ A6		
♠ A5			♠ K43
♥ QJ87			♥ AK
♦ 962			♦ A753
♣ J543			♣ T987
	♠ QJT982		
	♥ 53		
	♦ 84		
	♣ KQ2		

Board: 14 Dealer: East Lead: ♠Q #25

East has a balanced hand and 14 HCP (High Card Points), so the best opening bid is 1NT. (They could in principle open 1D, but then would not have a sensible second bid if partner responds!)

The 1NT opening bid shows 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

West has a balanced hand and 8 HCP. With a maximum total point count of 22, they know that game is impossible, so they pass.

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ J6		
	♥ AQ73		
	♦ K53		
	♣ Q742		
♠ Q8542			♠ K73
♥ T85			♥ 642
♦ A62			♦ 987
♣ A5			♣ JT96
	♠ AT9		
	♥ KJ9		
	♦ QJT4		
	♣ K83		

Board: 15 Dealer: South Lead: ♠4 #143

South does not have four Hearts or four Spades, so responds 2D to the Stayman 2C bid. This shows less than four Hearts and less than four Spades. It doesn't say anything about Diamonds.

North knows there's no major fit, but with 12 HCP can count 24-26 HCP, so they bid the 2NT Game Invitation, asking partner to bid 3NT if they have the maximum points for their 1NT bid.

South has 14 HCP, the maximum for their 1NT opening bid, so bids 3NT as requested.

West North East South

Pass	1♠	Dbl	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ KT986		
	♥ J5		
	♦ K872		
	♣ AK		
♠ AJ72			♠ 43
♥ 83			♥ AQ94
♦ QT94			♦ AJ6
♣ 853			♣ QJT9
	♠ Q5		
	♥ KT762		
	♦ 53		
	♣ 7642		

Board: 16 Dealer: West #2734

East has 14 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and no 5-card suit - an ideal hand to double for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit - see the [Discussion](#) for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

West has 7 HCP, a balanced hand with a 4-card Diamond suit and a stop in Spades - so they bid 1NT. 1NT is a better bid than showing a 4-card minor.

This 1NT response promises 6-9 HCP, a stop in the doubled suit, and no un-bid 4-card major.

East can see 20-23 HCP and knows West has at most 3 Hearts, so can only pass.

North East South West

1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ AKQJ96		
	♥ K4		
	♦ T872		
	♣ 6		
♠ 3			♠ T82
♥ T872			♥ Q953
♦ AK63			♦ Q5
♣ QT72			♣ J843
	♠ 754		
	♥ AJ6		
	♦ J94		
	♣ AK95		

Board: 17 Dealer: North Lead: ♥3 #1554

North has 14 HCP, in an unbalanced two-suited hand. They open their longer suit, 1S, and could rebid Diamonds to show they're two-suited or rebid Spades to show they have 6+. Yes, it's a one-suited, two-suited hand! Golly.

This 1S opening promises four Spades and 12-19 points. It denies a longer Heart suit, but not much else can be gleaned from the bid at this time.

South has 13 HCP and a balanced hand with a 4-card minor. They could bid 3NT straight away to show their shape and point count, but bid 2C instead, to give partner a bit more information and room to describe their hand further.

This 2C response shows 10+ HCP and 4+ Clubs. It denies 4-card support for Spades and is forcing for one round.

North has decided to bid their hand as one-suited, so they rebid 2S. They have an excellent 6-card Spade suit and a puny 4-card Diamond suit, fair enough.

The 2S rebid promises 6+ Spades and 12-15 HCP.

South can count at least 8 Spades so they can support partner's suit (option 1); they can see 25 HCP, so they can bid 4S. Hurrah! (They don't have a stop in the unbid suit, so can't bid NT.)

East South West North

1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
♠ J76			
♥ 632			
♦ QJT9			
♣ 432			
♠ 8542		♠ KQ	
♥ KQJT95		♥ A8	
♦ K85		♦ A76	
♣		♣ KJ8765	
♠ AT93			
♥ 74			
♦ 432			
♣ AQT9			

Board: 18 Dealer: East #2692

East has 17 HCP and a decent 6-card club suit in an unbalanced hand. They opens 1C, showing 12-19 HCP and 4 Clubs. They intend to rebid their strong single-suited hand by a jump rebid of Clubs.

West has a good 6-card Heart suit and 9 HCP – and a void in Clubs. Their 1H bids shows 4 Hearts and 6+ HCP. Forcing.

East can now show their strength by jumping to 3C, as planned. This jump rebid promises 16-19 HCP and 6 Clubs, but it isn't forcing.

West has a problem. While they have enough HCP for game in Hearts, or (maybe) Clubs, they have no Clubs and partner hasn't shown any support for Hearts. They have a weak stopper in Diamonds, no stopper in Spades, and their Heart suit will need setting up – 3NT does not look likely.

Their best bid is to show their Hearts again, promising six, and hope partner can bid game in NT or Hearts. Their 3H bid shows 6 Hearts and 10-12 HCP.

Phew. East now knows that they've got 8 Hearts between them, as well as 27 HCP, so can bid 4H.

South West North East

2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
♠ Q6543			
♥ 8			
♦ KJ64			
♣ J74			
♠ KT92		♠ J7	
♥ QJT96		♥ 743	
♦ 83		♦ 952	
♣ 65		♣ AQT93	
♠ A8			
♥ AK52			
♦ AQT7			
♣ K82			

Board: 19 Dealer: South #780

South has 20 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 2NT.

A 2NT opening shows 20-22 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has 7 HCP so game should be on, with 27-29 HCP. In 3NT? Maybe. North has a decent 5-card Spade suit and a singleton Heart, so 4S sounds a better bet, but only if partner has 3+ Spades, for an 8-card fit. The way to find out is to use a Transfer.

North also wants South's much stronger hand hidden from the Defence, so they want South to be Declarer – another advantage of a Transfer.

So North bids 3H, a transfer to 3S, then bids 3NT rather than 4S. This tells partner that they have a 5-card Spade suit and enough points for game. Partner can pass if they only have two Spades, or bid 4S with three or more, confident of an 8-card fit.

South only has Spades, so 3NT is a abetter contract than 4S (with a 7-card fit) – so they pass.

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ T		
	♥ Q87		
	♦ J976		
	♣ QJT54		
♠ AKQJ64			♠ 752
♥ KJ93			♥ 542
♦ 54			♦ AKQ3
♣ 7			♣ K86
	♠ 983		
	♥ AT6		
	♦ T82		
	♣ A932		

Board: 20 Dealer: West Lead: ♣Q #1541

West has 4 HCP in a two-suited unbalanced hand, so they open one of their longer suit, planning to rebid Hearts.

The 1S opening promises four Spades and 12-19 points. It doesn't deny a biddable Heart suit, but they probably have more Spades than Hearts.

East has 12 points in a balanced hand. They bid their longest suit, 2D, to show 10+ points and 4+ Diamonds; you usually bid your longest suit on the first round in preference to a NT response, as it shares more information.

The 2D response promises 10+ points and 4+ Diamonds, denying 4+ support for Spades. It is forcing for one round.

West rebids 2H as planned, showing 5+ Spades and 4+ Hearts and 12-15 points.

East can see 24+ HCP and 8+ Spades. The Spade fit means they can raise partner's suit (option 1) but they can't see enough points to be sure of game, so they bid 3S, a Game Invitation.

West has a powerful Spade suit AND two more HCP than the minimum for their bid, so they are happy to accept the invitation and bid 4S.

North	East	South	West
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ AQ		
	♥ 972		
	♦ J984		
	♣ AKQT		
♠ T9865			♠ 32
♥ K86			♥ QJT543
♦ AK			♦ Q65
♣ 864			♣ 75
	♠ KJ74		
	♥ A		
	♦ T732		
	♣ J932		

Board: 21 Dealer: North Lead: ♥Q #27

North has 16 points and a balanced hand, so they open their longest suit (1D), intending to rebid 1NT to show their points.

South has 9 points, an unbalanced hand, and a major that they can bid at the one-level, so they bid 1S.

South's 1S bid shows 6+ points, 4+ Spades, and less than 4 Hearts. It is forcing for one round; partner must bid.

North hasn't got four Spades, so can't support partner's suit. They rebid 1NT as planned.

North's 1NT rebid shows a balanced hand with 15-16 points, and denies 4 Spades.

South can see 24-25 points, maybe enough for game in NT, so they respond with 2NT, a game invitation asking partner to bid 3NT if they have the maximum for their bid i.e. 16 points. This isn't forcing, it's an **invitation**.

North has the maximum 16 points, so they bid 3NT as requested.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

South's second bid of 2NT is a little dodgy, as they have a singleton Heart, suggesting that the opponents might have quite a lot of them. North's 1NT bid promises a balanced hand, but not a stop in every unbid suit. Indeed it only promises 2 Hearts, so the opponents might have ten Hearts.

Still, South's singleton Heart is an Ace, a stop. Not great, but 3NT is the only likely game contract – worth a try.

East South West North

1♥	1♠	2♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	
	♠ AQJ5		
	♥ J		
	♦ AJ65		
	♣ QJT4		
♠ 932		♠ 8	
♥ T983		♥ AQ7652	
♦ 82		♦ QT7	
♣ A765		♣ K98	
	♠ KT764		
	♥ K4		
	♦ K943		
	♣ 32		

Board: 22 Dealer: East #1385

South has 9 HCP and a weak 5-card Spade suit, just strong enough to overcall at the 1-level.

The 1S overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit.

North has 16 HCP and an excellent 4-card support for partner's Spades. They can also add 2 points for their Singleton Heart, so with 26-33 points they're strong enough to raise to game.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If North were feeling really optimistic, they might try for a slam, as partner might have 15 points – but that's unlikely, East couldn't open 1H with just 7 points!

South West North East

1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ K42		
	♥ 962		
	♦ A74		
	♣ AK87		
♠ QJT853		♠ 97	
♥ A7		♥ 8543	
♦ T95		♦ QJ8	
♣ J2		♣ QT95	
	♠ A6		
	♥ KQJT		
	♦ K632		
	♣ 643		

Board: 23 Dealer: South Lead: ♠Q #98

South has 13 HCP and a balanced hand. While in principle they could open 1H and plan to rebid 2D if partner responds, 1NT is a more descriptive bid, as it gives partner their point count and shape straight away.

The 1NT opening bid shows 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has 14 HCP and a balanced hand. Even if partner has the minimum 12 HCP for their 1NT opening bid, that adds up to 26 HCP, so they can bid 3NT with confidence. (3NT will usually make with 25 HCP.)

West North East South

1NT Pass 2♦ Pass

2♥ Pass 3NT Pass

4♥ Pass Pass Pass

♠ J832

♥ 4

♦ Q742

♣ KQJ9

♠ AQT

♥ QT32

♦ A3

♣ T854

♠ K7

♥ AJ976

♦ KT95

♣ A2

♠ 9654

♥ K85

♦ J86

♣ 763

Board: 24 Dealer: West Lead: ♣K #1676

East has 5 Hearts and 15 HCP, so they start by bidding 2D, asking (telling) partner to bid 2H.

West bids 2H as requested, what does East bid next?

They have 15 HCP, and partner has 12-14, so the partnership has 27-29 – enough for 3NT or 4H, but which is the better contract? East bids 3NT to tell partner:

- I have exactly 5 Hearts
- We have enough points for game in NT or Hearts
- You decide!

Yes, it's a proper dialogue. West can pass to play in 3NT or bid 4H to play in 4S. With just two Hearts, they'd pass 3NT, as they've only got a 5-2 fit, not enough. With three Hearts, they would probably bid 4H unless they hate the idea; with four or more Hearts, they would bid 4H.

With four Hearts, North is happy to bid 4H, game. (This type of bid is sometimes called a Correction or Preference Bid.)

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If West had three Hearts, they might pass 3NT if they had a 4333 hand and no Honours in Hearts, but would usually bid 4H. Then again, some people prefer playing in a suit, some people prefer playing in No Trumps