

DMA Bridge Conventions & Guidelines for Play

Rev 3/8/22

General Approach

Game: 25 HCP in NT, 25TP in a major, 28/29TP in a minor.

Small slam 33TP, Grand slam 37TP

Rule of 15 in 3rd or 4th position – can open if HCP+#spades >=15

1NT OPENING AND RESPONSES

Notrump openings show a balanced hand but may contain a five-card major suit.

1NT = 15–17 HCP, 2NT = 20–21 HCP, 3NT = 25–27 HCP

2♣ is **Stayman**, 8+points and at least one 4 (usually exactly 4) card major. Opener rebids 2♦ with no 4 card major. Opener rebids 2♥ (up the line) with 4–4 in the majors. Not forcing to game. If responder rebids three of either minor, he shows slam interest and at least a five-card suit. Stayman can still be used if opponent doubles. A cuebid substitutes for Stayman if opponent overcalls.

The **Jacoby Transfer** shows a 5+card major suit. Can be used even with 0 points. 2♦ is a transfer to hearts, 2♥ is a transfer to spades.

- If 5-5 in the majors:
 - Less than invitational strength – transfer to longest and strongest then pass.
 - Invitational strength - transfer to hearts then show spades later.
 - Game forcing – transfer to spades then rebid hearts.
- If 5-4 majors, and invitational strength, use Stayman.
- Opener can accept the transfer with a jump to the three level with 17 points and four-card support.

A 2♣ (extended Jacoby transfer) response requires the 1NT bidder to rebid 3♣, which may be passed) with a club bust (long suit, weak hand), or responder may rebid 3♦ with a diamond bust.

If, after the transfer is accepted, responder bids a new suit, that is natural and game forcing. Possible calls after a 2♥ accepted transfer to 2♣ are:

Pass = content to play 2♣

9 points. Invitational

2NT: exactly 5 cards

3♣ 6+ cards

3♣, 3♦, 3♥ = natural and game forcing.

10+ points. 3NT = giving opener a choice between 3NT and 4♣.

4♣ = placing the contract, with a six-card or longer suit.

Other responses to 1NT besides a transfer:

2NT 8-9 points, no 4 card major.

3♣, 3♦ = a six-card or longer suit and invitational to 3NT.

3♥, 3♠ = at least a six-card suit and slam interest (otherwise, responder uses a transfer bid).

4♣ = Gerber

A direct raise of 1NT to 4NT is natural and invites 6NT. 4NT is slam invitational only because 4♣ is available as Gerber (to ask about aces).

Stayman and Jacoby transfers can be used in response to a 2NT or 3NT opening.

If an opponent doubles, all conventional responses are “on.” If an opponent bids over your 1NT opener, conventional responses like Stayman and transfers are “off.” Bids are natural except for a cuebid, which may be used with game forcing strength as a substitute for Stayman.

MAJOR OPENING

Normally open five-card majors in all seats. 13-21 TP. No implied quality.

Open the higher of long suits of equal length: 5-5 or 6-6. If Responder has 4-4 then bid up the line.

1♥ and 1♠ openings show a five-card or longer suit. Responses to 1♥:

0-5 points, pass

6-9 points

2♥ = 3+card heart support

1♠ = 4+ spades, Tends to deny a heart fit.

1NT = denies four spades or three hearts. NOT forcing.

10-11 points

2♣, 2♦ = promises at least four of the suit.

3♥ = limit raise, 3+hearts

2♥ over 1♠ requires 5+hearts

12+points – game force

2NT balanced 13-15 points

3NT balanced 16-18 points

New suit

17+points, 2♠, 3♣, 3♦ = strong jump shifts. Invites a slam.

4♥ = usually 5+ hearts, a singleton or void, and fewer than 10 HCP.

MINOR OPENING

Open longest minor, 1♦ with 4-4 or 5-5 in the minors, 1♣ with 3-3 in the minors. A 1♦ opener suggests a four-card or longer suit, since 1♣ is preferred on hands where a three-card minor suit must be opened. The exception is a hand with 4-4-3-2 shape which is opened 1♦. Responses:

0-5 points: Pass

6-9 points

- Bid new suit at 1 level. Longest suit. Requires 4+ cards. Bid higher of two 5/6 card suits, lower of two 4 card suits. Forcing unless previously passed.
- 1NT. Not forcing.
- Raise to two level. Requires 4+ cards for diamonds, 5+ cards for clubs.

10-11 points

- Bid a new suit at 2 level
- Raise to 3 level. Requires 4+ cards for diamonds, 5+ cards for clubs.

12+ points

- Bid a new suit. 4 card major
- 2NT 13-15 HCP. Forcing
- 3NT 16-18 HCP. Not forcing.

There is no forcing minor-suit raise.

OPENER'S REBID

Rebids with a minimum hand (13-15 points):

- Notrump at the lowest available level;
- Raising responder's suit at the lowest level (may have good three-card support);
- A new suit at the one level
- A new suit at the two level that is lower ranking than the opening suit (not reversing)
- Opener's suit at the lowest level.

Rebids with a medium hand (16-18 points):

- Jump raise of responder's suit or jump rebid of opener's suit;
- Reverse in a new suit, *i.e.*, bid a new suit at the two level which is higher ranking than the opening suit.
- Non-reverse bid in a new suit (this has the wide range of 13-18 points).

Rebids with a maximum hand (19-21) opener must make a very strong rebid:

- Jump in notrump;
- Double jump raise of responder's suit or double jump rebid of opener's suit;
- Jump shift in a new suit.

Opener's Forcing Rebids

After a response at the one level:

- A jump shift in a new suit (19+points) is forcing to game.
- A reverse bid, higher suit than opener's original suit, shows 17+points. Forcing for one round.
- Other bids by opener not forcing.

After a response at the *two* level:

- A new suit by opener is forcing for one round.
- A jump rebid is forcing to game.
- A simple rebid of opener's suit, raise of responder's suit, or 2NT is not forcing.

Responder's Rebids

After opener's reverse (Libensol Over Reverses):

- A rebid of responder's major suit at the two level shows 5 cards but does not promise extra strength.
- A rebid of 2NT shows minimum hand 6-9 points.
- Any other bid is forcing to game.

After partnership has bid three suits (without jump shift or reverse):

- 1NT or old suit at the two level is not forcing, shows 6-9 points.
- 2NT or an old suit at the 3 level is inviting game, 10-11 points.
- Bid of game shows 12+ points.
- Bid of fourth suit is forcing one round.

After opener rebids 1NT, a jump shift or a reverse (of responder's 1st bid) is forcing to game.

After opener rebids 2NT, any bid by responder is forcing.

If responder initially bids a new suit at the two level, the same rules apply EXCEPT that a subsequent jump raise of opener's first suit to the THREE LEVEL is game forcing — responder should make a limit raise directly over the opening with 10-11 points and at least three-card support:

- 1♠ — 2♣
- 2♥ — 2NT, 3♣, 3♥ = invitation to game (10-11 points).
— 2♠ = preference, not forcing. Responder has 11-12 points and a doubleton spade.
— 3♦ = game force, could be conventional.
— 3♠ = game force.

NOTE: Responder promises to bid again if he responded with a new suit at the two level unless opener's rebid is at the game level. This applies when responder is an unpassed hand.

- 1♠ — 2♣
- 2♦ = forcing one round. Responder can limit his hand by bidding 2♣, 2NT, 3♣, or 3♦ at this point. He should not pass, since opener could have 18 points (just short of a jump shift rebid).

Strong 2♣ OPENING, RESPONSES, AND LATER BIDDING

A 2♣ opening shows at least 22+ TP. Responses:

2♥, 2♠, 3♣, 3♦ = natural and game forcing. At least a strong five-card suit and 8 TP.

2NT = balanced, 8 HCP, game forcing

Opener can bid 3♣ Stayman.

Otherwise 2♦ = conventional, could be “waiting” with a good hand not suited to a positive response.

If opener rebids 2NT (3NT) after a 2♦ response shows balanced hand with 22–24 points (25–27). Not forcing. The same responses are used as over a 2NT opening:

2NT — 3♣ = Stayman.

— 3♦, 3♥ = Jacoby transfers.

— 4♣ = Gerber.

— 4NT = inviting a slam in notrump.

If opener rebids a suit over a 2♦ response, the bidding is forcing to 3 of opener’s major or 4 of opener’s minor.

Alternative response to 2♣ - Step Response:

2♦ = 0-3 HCP, 2♥=4-6 HCP GF, 2♠=7-9 HCP GF, 2NT=10+HCP GF

PREEMPTIVE BIDS

A weak two-bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ shows a six-card suit headed by 3 of the top 5 honors and 5–11 HCP.

- Any raise of opener’s suit is to play and could be preemptive (weak). Opener is expected to pass.
- A new-suit response is forcing one round and shows at least a five-card suit. Opener should raise a major suit response with a three-card fit, or perhaps with a doubleton honor. With no fit for responder’s suit, opener rebids: With a minimum weak two-bid (5–8 points), rebid the suit at the lowest level. With a maximum weak two-bid, name a new suit or bid notrump.
- A 2NT response is forcing, showing game interest. (This applies also if the opponents intervene with a double or a bid.) Opener rebids his suit with a minimum weak two (5–8 points). With a maximum hand opener bids another suit to show a “feature” (ace or king in that suit); lacking a feature, he raises to 3NT and lets responder place the contract.
- A 3NT response is also to play.

Opposite an unpassed partner, an opening at the 3 or 4-level is preemptive – long suit, weak hand. It may prevent the opposition for finding a game. There is no guarantee that

the partner has any support – you may have to play it on your own. Judge if the potential penalty is justified – if you are vulnerable and doubled the first undertrick costs 200 points, the next 300 points.

SLAM BIDDING

Usually need 33+points for small slam. 37+for grand slam.

Cuebid Controls are used when partnership is committed to a game contract in a suit. Any bid the partnership can't possibly want to play is a cuebid.

- Shows first round control - Ace and void. Bid up the line.
- A second cubid in the same suit shows a second round control – king, void or singleton
- A rebid of the trump suit indicates there is nothing more to show. If the other partner continues to cubid then second round control king or singleton.
- Blackwood can be used if there is still room available. Can show trump ace by elimination.
- A jump or raise to 5 of trump asks partner to bid slam with good trump support but pass otherwise.
- A bid of 5NT asks partner to bid a grand slam if they hold 2 of the top 3 trump honors.

Blackwood 4NT is used to ask for aces & kings. Trump suit has been decided. Responses show the number of aces. 5♣=0 or 4 aces, 5♦=1, 5♥=2, 5♠=3. If partnership hold all 4 aces, 5NT asks for kings: 6♣=0, 6♦=1, 6♥=2, 6♠=3, and 6NT=4.

Gerber 4♣ used after a bid of 1NT or 2NT to ask for aces and kings. Responds show the number of aces: 4♦=0 or 4, 4♥=1, 4♠=2, 4NT=3. If partnership holds all 4 aces, 5♣ asks for kings: 5♦=0, 5♥=1, 5♠=2, 5NT=3, and 6♣=4.

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DEFENSIVE BIDDING

Simple overcalls

A suit at the 1 level: good 5 card suit, 8-16HCP, and 10-17TP.

A suit at the 2 level: good 6 card suit and 13-17TP. Bid higher of 2 suits first. Note vulnerability.

(Double and bid the long suit with 17+TP.)

1NT overcall shows 15–18 points and a balanced hand (preferably a stopper in opener's suit). No conventional responses are used except Stayman.

2NT jump overcall: at least 5–5 in the lowest two unbid suits.

Jump overcalls in a suit are preemptive, showing the same value as an opening bid at the same level.

Michaels cuebid: opponents have bid only one suit, 8+TP

If the opening is in a minor suit, the cuebid shows 5-5 or more in the majors.

If the opening is in a major, the cuebid shows 5+ in the other major and 5+ in an unspecified minor.

Responder may bid 2NT over a major suit cuebid to ask for partner's minor.

Takeout Double: 13+dummy points and 3+ support in the unbid suits. Forcing.

DEFENSIVE LEADS AND SIGNALS

Defensive signals when following suit or discarding are “high encourages, low discourages.” And “High-low is an even number, low-high is odd when count is given.”

Leads are fourth best. From three low cards against a suit contract lead low; against a notrump contract lead high. From four cards or longer lead fourth best. The one systemic exception is leading from a suit of four or more cards without an honor. In this instance lead the second highest card.

Against a suit contract:

- The best lead is your high card in the suit that your partner bid.
- Leads are top of touching honors and top from an interior sequence.
- If none of these is a possibility, don't lead away from an honor. This means that, sometimes, you're going to lead a suit in which you have nothing, like a nine high. In this case, lead the highest card in the suit.
- If you have nothing but an honor in all four suits, lead the low card from the suit that you choose to lead.
- Finally, when your opponents have bid three different suits, consider leading the fourth suit.

Against NT

- King from king, queen, ace from ace king, and high card of a sequence are still preferred,
- After that, lead the fourth highest card from your longest and strongest suit.