

System notes on Pascal

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November 5, 2018

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1 Administriva

1.1 Notation

References to the EBU Blue Book will be given as [BB 7A1]. References elsewhere in this document will be given as [2.4.4].

1.2 System regulation

Allowed systems are determined by the Regulating Authority for a given event. This system is primarily played under the auspices of the English Bridge Union who have recently split the highest level into Level 4 and Level 5. The majority of this system is allowed at Level 4 [BB 7], which is the standard tournament level in England. The major suit openings are only allowed at Level 5 [BB 9] (given in *italics*) and hence alternatives are provided for Level 4 events (given in *grey*). Events not directly run by the EBU may have other restrictions. References to the Blue Book sections allowing each convention at Level 4 or 5 are given throughout the document.

1.2.1 WBF classification

Under the WBF classification system this is a Red system with Brown Sticker Conventions. Thus, it is not legal in Category 3 WBF events and in Category 2 events the card with suggested defences and appropriate forms must be submitted in advance. Suggested defences are given in Appendix A.

1.2.2 WBF Category 3 variation

Modifications to the system to be permitted at WBF Category 3 events (as a Red system) are provided in Section 7.

2 System description

2.1 Philosophy

- lots of multi-way bids which show very distinct hands
- establish strength first
- establish shape (balanced/unbalanced) second
- then find a contract
- single-suited hands are all 6+ cards and deny a side 4-card suit, although this may be bent with 4 small cards in a minor.

2.2 Hand evaluation

The descriptions below of particular bids will generally be in terms of point ranges. These are not a hard and fast rule, however. We will try and make the bid which describes the hand best. This may mean small deviations of strength, particularly with extra shape. No-trump ranges are the least likely to vary and preemptive actions most likely.

Opening bids at the 1 level are 10–15. The lower limit is usually governed by the rule of 19 as much as the actual point count and some good 15 point hands may be upgraded to a 1♦ opening. Losing trick count is also useful for deciding when to upgrade. Upgraded hands will, obviously, meet the extended rule of 25 in all cases. [BB 5C3]

Weak opening and overcalling hands have nominal point counts associated with them but are likely to be wider ranging in third and weaker at favourable vulnerability. Fourth seat openings which are weak in other seats will be intermediate.

In order to determine whether a hand is game forcing (for example to open a distributional hand at the two or three level) we generally rely on losing trick count. Three or fewer losing tricks is enough to be game forcing, occasionally 4 if there are also 9 clear-cut tricks. This is just a guide, however, so might not strictly apply to all hands. The hands will meet the extended rule of 25 in all cases.

2.3 Openings

2.3.1 1 level

Responses in Section 2.4.1.

1♣ One of the following [BB 7B1(i)]:

- (1st/2nd non-vul) 12–15 balanced (4333, 4432, 5332). May occasionally include some semi-balanced hands esp. 5422.
- (1st/2nd vul) 11–13 balanced (4333, 4432, 5332). May occasionally include some semi-balanced hands esp. 5422.
- 10–15, not balanced, no 5-card major and at most one 4-card major

1♦ 16+, not game forcing [BB 7B1(ii)].

- If balanced or semi-balanced then 16–19 (17–19 1/2 Vul).
- If a two suiter (5422 or longer) or three suiter (4441 / 5440) then 16–GF.
- If a single suiter (6332 or longer) then 16–GF. (16–GF here is 'less than a 3-loser hand').

1♥ (Level 5)

- *10–15 points, not balanced 4+ spades, may be longer hearts or a minor (possible canape), but will always have 5 spades or 4 hearts [BB 9A].*

1♥ (Level 4)

- 10–15 points, not balanced, 4+ hearts, may contain a longer minor (possible canape) [BB 7B2].

1♠ (Level 5)

- *10–15 points, not balanced. 5+ hearts, 0-3 spades [BB 9A], may have a longer minor (possible canape).*

1♠ (Level 4)

- 10–15 points, not balanced. 5+ spades [BB 7B2], may have a longer minor (possible canape).

1NT Varies depending upon position and vulnerability [BB 5A5]

First or second seat non-vulnerable:

- 9–11 balanced [BB 7B3(i)].

Third seat non-vulnerable:

- 9–15 balanced [BB 7B3(i)].

First or second seat vulnerable:

- 14–16 balanced [BB 7B3(i)].

All other positions and vulnerabilities:

- 12–15 balanced [BB 7B3(i)].

For responses see Section 2.4.2.

2.3.2 2 level

Responses in Section 2.4.4. Range in HCP for each weak option is given, but may be wider ranging in 3rd or favourable vulnerability and will be intermediate in 4th position (12–16).

2♣ One of the following [BB 7C1(a) & (b)(iv)]:

- Weak (5–9) with ♦ (usually 6 cards)
- Weak (5–9) with ♥ & ♠, 5–4 or better
- 20–23 balanced
- Game forcing (3 losers) with ♥ & ♠, 5–4 or better

2♦ One of the following [BB 7C1(a) & (b)(iv)]:

- Weak (5–9) with ♥ (usually 6 cards)
- Weak (5–9) with ♠ & ♣, 5–4 or better
- Game forcing (3 losers) with ♠ & ♣, 5–4 or better

2♥ One of the following [BB 7C1(a) & (b)(iv)]:

- Weak (5–9) with ♠ (usually 6 cards)
- Weak (5–9) with ♣ & ♦, 5–4 or better
- Game forcing (3 losers) with ♣ & ♦, 5–4 or better

2♠ One of the following [BB 7C1(a) & (b)(iv)]:

- Weak (5–9) with ♣ (usually 7 cards)
- Weak (5–9) with ♥ & one of the minors, 5–4 or better
- Game forcing (3 losers) with ♥ & one of the minors, 5–4 or better

2NT One of the following [BB 7C1(a) & (b)(iv)]:

- Weak (5–9) with ♠ & ♦ , 5–4 or better
- Game forcing (3 losers) with ♠ & ♦ , 5–4 or better
- 24+ (Game forcing) balanced hands

2.3.3 Higher openings

Responses in Section 2.4.5.

3 level Three level bids are transfers. Either weak preempts or a 3-loser hand. Typically seven cards, they may be occasionally a good six (particularly at favourable vulnerability) or a bad eight.

- 3♣ - GF clubs or 7 card preempt in diamonds [BB 7D]
- 3♦ - GF clubs or 7 card preempt in hearts [BB 7D]
- 3♥ - GF clubs or 7 card preempt in spades [BB 7D]

3♠ GF spades or Gambling 3NT [BB 7D].

In the Gambling case it shows a solid seven or eight card minor suit and nothing outside better than a queen. Solid in this case is defined as 60% likely to run given all distributions of cards in the other hands. The following suits are all considered to be solid:

- AKQJxxx
- AKQxxxx
- AKxxxxxx

3NT Shows a 4-level preempt in either minor [BB 7D]. Usually eight cards.

4-level suit openings We play Namyats, so:

- 4♣ - Strong 4-level bid in hearts [BB 7D]
- 4♦ - Strong 4-level bid in spades [BB 7D]
- 4♥ - Purely preemptive 4-level bid in hearts
- 4♠ - Purely preemptive 4-level bid in spades

Strong is defined as an 8–9 playing trick hand.

4NT Asks for specific aces [BB 11L1].

Will be bid with a hand missing at most two aces, or with a void. It must be happy playing at the six level opposite some responses and the seven level opposite some others.

5 of a major Shows an 11 trick hand missing two of the top three trump honours. Raise one level per trump honour.

2.4 Responses & rebids

2.4.1 1 level

- 1♣ (3rd/4th Non-Vulnerable):
 - 1♦ = 0–5, no 6-card suit
 - * suits = unbalanced, possible canape
 - * 1NT = 10–15, 5–4 minors
 - 1♥ = 6–8, no 6-card suit
 - * 1♠ = any 10-11
 - 1NT = balanced, no interest in game. Responses are weak takeout.
 - suits = natural, NF
 - * suits = unbalanced, possible canape
 - * 1NT = 12–15, 5–4 minors
 - 1♠ /1N/2x = two-under transfer weak jump shift 6+ card suit two-above
 - * Complete the transfer with nothing more to say
 - * intervening bid = extras, 4+ support

- 1♣ (3rd/4th Vulnerable):
 - 1♦ = 0–8, no 6-card suit
 - * suits = unbalanced, possible canape
 - * 1NT = 10–15, 5–4 minors
 - 1♥ = 9-11
 - * 1♠ = any 10-11
 - 1NT = balanced, no interest in game. Responses are weak takeout.
 - suits = natural, NF
 - * 1NT = 12–15, 5–4 minors
 - * major suit bids 12-15 unbal and promise exactly 4; either 4-4-4-1 with singleton other major or has a longer minor (as there's no other hand shape that fits the opening and has exactly one 4-card major)
 - * minor suit bids deny a 4-card major and are 12-15 unbal.
 - 1♠ /1N/2x = two-under transfer weak jump shift 6+ card suit two-above
 - * Complete the transfer with nothing more to say
 - * intervening bid = extras, 4+ support

- 1♣ (1st/2nd Any vulnerability):
 - 1♦ = 0–8, no 6-card suit
 - * suits = unbalanced, possible canape
 - * 1NT = 11–13 (vul) 12–15 (non-vul) balanced; responses weak takeout.
 - 1♥ = 9–15 any
 - * 1♠ = any 10-11
 - 1NT = balanced, no interest in game. Responses are weak takeout.
 - suits = natural, F1
 - 2N = balanced, 13-15. Responses see “Continuations after 2NT” [2.6]
 - * 1NT = 12–13 (vul) 12–15 (non-vul) balanced. Responses see “Continuations after 1NT” [2.5].
 - * Major suit bids 12-15 unbal and promise exactly 4; either 4-4-4-1 with singleton other major or has a longer minor (as there’s no other hand shape that fits the opening and has exactly one 4-card major)
 - * Minor suit bids deny a 4-card major and are 12-15 unbal.
 - 1♠ = 15+ any, game-forcing.
 - * Major suit bids promise exactly 4; either 4-4-4-1 with singleton other major or has a longer minor (as there’s no other hand shape that fits the opening and has exactly one 4-card major)
 - * 1NT = 11–13 (vul) 12–15 (non-vul) balanced. Responses see “Continuations after 1NT” [2.5].
 - * Minor suit bids deny a 4-card major.
 - 1N/2x = transfer jump shift 6+ card suit above, 0–8 or slam try
 - * Complete the transfer with nothing more to say opposite the weak option
 - * 2N = extra values, nothing in the transfer suit
 - * Jump-completion = good support, invitational
 - * new suits = extras, tolerance, side suit

- $1\diamond$:
 - $1♥ = 0-7$ (not AK suited), no 6-card suit.
 - * Suit bids are natural
 - * 1NT rebid = 17–19 (vul) 16–19 (non-vul) balanced. Responses see “Continuations after 1NT” [2.5].
 - * Jump suit rebids are almost-GF, semi-solid single-suited.
 - $1♠ = 8+$, game-forcing.
 - * 1NT rebid = 17–19 (vul) 16–19 (non-vul) balanced. Responses see “Continuations after 1NT” [2.5].
 - * Simple rebids are suction-style, showing either the suit above (single-suited), the other two or all three, 16–21 HCP.
 - $♣ =$ diamonds or the majors or $♦♥♠$
 - $♦ =$ hearts or spades and clubs or $♥♠♣$
 - $♥ =$ spades or the minors or $♠♣♦$
 - $♠ =$ clubs or hearts and diamonds or $♣♥♦$
 - 2NT = non-touching two suiter
 - * Could be 3-suited, short in the suit bid. These are shown:
 - $2♣ - 2♦ - 3♣$: short clubs.
 - $2♦ - 2♥ - 2♦$: short diamonds.
 - $2♥ - 2♠ - 3♥$: short hearts.
 - $2♠ - 2NT - 3♠$: short spades.
 - * Continuations:
 - Responder will bid the next suit (relay). Opener then rebids 2NT with the single-suited hand, the longer suit with the two-suited option or as above with the three-suiter. After $2♠ - 2NT$, $3♣$ asks which option (longer suit or 3NT with longer clubs) and other suits are swiss-or-correct below game or pass-or-correct above.
 - After showing a 3-suiter, responder bids 3NT to play or a suit at the lowest level to agree the suit and make a slam try, or a suit at game to play.
 - After GF+ suit agreement with a 3-suiter if Swiss is still available then $4♣/♦$ is Swiss [4.5], otherwise suit bids are first round controls. 4NT is RKCB [4.1].

- After 1♦ -1x and showing suit(s) by opener, bidding 4♣/♦ is Swiss [4.5] agreeing opener's most recently bid suit, bidding one of the other suits below game is slam inviting asking opener to bid swiss for that suit. Other suits below 3NT are an enquiry either wanting a stop or to find out openers' longer suit.
 - * Jump suit rebids are almost-GF, semi-solid single-suited.
- 1N/2x = transfer weak jump shift 6+ card suit above, 0-7 or slam try
 - * Complete the transfer with nothing more to say opposite the weak option
 - * 2N = extra values, nothing in the transfer suit
 - * Jump-completion = good support, invitational
 - * new suits = extras, tolerance, side suit
 - * jump new suit = nearly-GF single suiter
- 1♥ (Level 5):
 - 1♠ = forcing enquiry.
 - * 1NT = both majors, minimum. Continuations as after artificial 1NT opening [2.4.3].
 - * 2♣ = 5+ spades and 4+ clubs, some extras
 - * 2♦ = 5+ spades and 4+ diamonds, some extras
 - * 2♥ = both majors, maximum
 - * 2♠ = 5+ spades, minimum
 - * 2NT = 6+ spades, no outside suit, maximum
 - 1NT = non-forcing, any negative without spades
 - 2♣/♦ = natural, forcing.
 - 2♥ = good raise to 4 spades
 - * Opener bids long suit trials below the trump suit
 - * Cues or Swiss [4.5] above the trump suit
 - 2♠/3♠/4♠ = to play/limit raise/to play.
 - 2NT = good raise to 3 or 5 spades
 - * Opener bids long suit trials below the trump suit
 - * Cues or Swiss [4.5] above the trump suit

- $3\clubsuit/3\diamond = \textit{fit jump.}$
- $3\heartsuit/4\clubsuit/\diamond = \textit{splinter agreeing spades}$
- $4\heartsuit = \textit{to play}$

- $1\heartsuit$ (Level 4):
 - $1\spadesuit = \textit{natural, F1}$
 - $1\text{NT} = \textit{6-9 no better bid.}$
 - $2\clubsuit/\diamond = \textit{natural, F1.}$
 - $2\heartsuit/3\heartsuit/4\heartsuit = \textit{to play/limit raise/to play.}$
 - $2\text{NT} = \textit{good raise to 3 or 5 hearts}$
 - * $3x = \textit{long suit trial}$
 - * $3\heartsuit = \textit{minimum}$
 - * $3\spadesuit/4\clubsuit/\diamond = \textit{cue, slam try}$
 - * $4\heartsuit = \textit{extras, no cue or trial}$
 - $2\spadesuit/3\clubsuit/3\diamond = \textit{fit jump.}$
 - $3\spadesuit/4\clubsuit/\diamond/ = \textit{splinter}$
 - $3\text{NT} = \textit{good raise to 4 hearts}$

- $1\spadesuit$ (Level 5):
 - $2\heartsuit/3\heartsuit/4\heartsuit = \textit{to play/limit raise/to play.}$
 - $1\text{NT} = \textit{1-round force.}$
 - $2\clubsuit/\diamond = \textit{natural, forcing.}$
 - $2\spadesuit = \textit{good raise to 4 hearts}$
 - * $\textit{Opener bids long suit trials below the trump suit}$
 - * $\textit{Cues or Swiss [4.5] above the trump suit}$
 - $2\text{NT} = \textit{good raise to 3 or 5 spades}$
 - * $\textit{Opener bids long suit trials below the trump suit}$
 - * $\textit{Cues or Swiss [4.5] above the trump suit}$
 - $3\clubsuit/3\diamond = \textit{fit jump.}$
 - $3\spadesuit/4\clubsuit/\diamond = \textit{splinter agreeing hearts}$
 - $4\spadesuit = \textit{to play}$

- 1♠ (Level 4):
 - 1NT = 6-9 no better bid.
 - 2♣ /♦ /♥ = natural, F1
 - 2♠ /3♠ /4♠ = to play/limit raise/to play.
 - 2NT = good raise to 3 or 5 spades
 - * 3x = long suit trial
 - * 3♠ = minimum
 - * 4♣ /♦ /♦ = cue, slam try
 - * 4♠ = extras, no cue or trial
 - 3♣ /3♦ /♥ = fit jump.
 - 3NT = good raise to 4 spades
 - 4♣ /♦ /♥ = splinter

2.4.2 Natural 1NT

If 1NT is natural and not in 3rd/4th non-vulnerable then the responses are detailed in the section “Continuations after 1NT” [2.5].

In the case of the third- or fourth-seat non-vulnerable 1NT the responses are weak takeout.

2.4.3 Artificial 1NT

- 1NT if artificial:
 - 2♣ /♦ : weak, to play.
 - 2♥ /♠ : preference, to play.
 - 2NT: forcing enquiry:
 - * 3♣ /♦ weak, 3♥ /♠ strong. 3♣ /♥ better ♥ , 3♦ /♠ better ♠ .
 - 3♣ /♦ : strong, good suit.
 - 3♥ /♠ : natural slam try.

2.4.4 2 level

- 2♣:
 - 2♦ = pass/correct.
 - * 2NT = 20–23 balanced; see “Continuations after 2NT” [2.6].
 - * 2♥ = weak majors.
 - 2♠ / 3♣ / 3♦ = to play
 - * 3♣ = GF opening
 - 3♦ = which major is better
 - 2♥ / ♠ = non-forcing; major-focused.
 - * Pass = minimum weak with both majors
 - * 3♥ = maximum weak with better ♥
 - * 2/3♠ = maximum weak with better ♠
 - * 2NT = 20-23 balanced
 - * 3♦ = weak, diamonds.
 - * 3♣ = GF opening
 - 2NT = F1, how good are your diamonds?
 - * 3♣ = GF opening
 - * 3♦ = bad diamonds
 - * 3♥ = 2-suited
 - * 3♠ = good diamonds
 - * 3NT = 20-23 balanced
 - 4♣ / ♦ = 2 under transfers to ♥ / ♠
 - 4♥ = RKQG
 - 4♠ = either minor
 - 4N = both minors
 - 3♣ = GF enquiry
 - * 3♦ = weak, diamonds
 - * 3♥ = weak, majors, better hearts
 - * 3♠ = weak, majors, better spades

- 2♦ :
 - 2♥ = pass/correct.
 - * 2NT = GF opening.
 - * 2♠ = weak blacks.
 - 3♣ /3♦ /3♥ = to play
 - 2♠/3♣ = non-forcing, ♣ /♠ -focused.
 - * Pass = minimum weak ♣ /♠
 - * 2/3NT = maximum weak, both equal.
 - * 3/4♣ = maximum weak, better ♣ .
 - * 3♦ = GF opening.
 - * 3♥ = weak with ♥
 - * 3♠ = maximum weak, better ♠ .
 - 2NT = F1, how good are your hearts?
 - * 3♣ = two-suited.
 - * 3♦ = dire, single-suited.
 - * 3♥ = good, single-suited, points spread.
 - * 3♠ = GF opening.
 - * 3NT = good, single-suited, running suit
 - 3♦ = GF enquiry

• 2♥ :

- 2♠ = pass/correct.
 - * 2NT = GF opening.
 - * 3♣ = weak minors.
 - 3♦ / 3♥ / ♠ = to play
- 3♣ / 3♦ = non-forcing, ♣ / ♦ -focused.
 - * Pass = minimum weak minors
 - * 3/4♦ = maximum weak, better ♦ .
 - * 3♥ = GF opening.
 - * 3♠ = single-suited.
 - * 3NT = maximum weak minors, both equal.
 - * 4♣ = maximum weak, better ♣ .
- 2NT = F1, how good are your spades?
 - * 3♣ = two-suited.
 - * 3♦ = dire, single-suited.
 - * 3♥ = GF opening.
 - * 3♠ = good, single-suited, points spread.
 - * 3NT = good, single-suited, running suit.
- 3♥ = GF enquiry

- 2♠ :
 - 2NT = Enquiry (strong or to play in hearts opposite clubs and hearts)
 - * 3♣ = weak with clubs
 - * 3♦ = weak with ♥ & ♦
 - * 3♥ = weak with ♥ & ♣
 - * 3♠ = GF, ♥ & ♣
 - 4♣ /♦ = General Swiss for ♣ [4.5]
 - 4NT = RKCB for ♥ [4.1]
 - * 3NT = GF, ♥ & ♦
 - 4♣ /♦ = General Swiss for ♦ [4.5]
 - 4NT = RKCB for ♥ [4.1]
 - 3♣ /♦ /♥ , etc = pass or correct
 - 3♠ = constructive but non-forcing with 5/6 spades
- 2NT:
 - 3♦ /3♠ = simple preference
 - 4+♦ /4+♠ = preemptive raise
 - * After weak preference/raise, any rebid shows GF hand.
 - 3♣ /3♥ = transfer preference; invitational.
 - * Opener breaks transfer if GF two-suiter; suit has been set so bid controls.
 - * A 3NT rebid shows 24+ balanced
 - 4♣ /♦ = 2 under transfers to ♥ /♠
 - 4♥ = RKQG
 - 4♠ = either minor
 - 4N = both minors
 - 4♣ /4♥ = transfer preference; mixed raise.

2.4.5 Responses to higher opening bids

- $3\clubsuit/\diamond/\heartsuit$:
 - complete transfer (at any level) = to play
 - * 3N (if available) = GF option
 - * Other slam tries (if available) = GF option
 - 3x = shortage ask
 - * 3N = no shortage, weak option
 - * 4 level-completion = GF option
 - * other suits = 0 or 1, weak option
 - 3N = to play
 - * slam tries = GF option
 - $4\clubsuit/\diamond$ = General Swiss [4.5]
- $3\spadesuit$:
 - 3N = stops in 3 suits
 - clubs at any level = pass or correct
 - $4\diamond$ = asks for singletons
 - * $4\heartsuit/\spadesuit$ = singleton in that suit
 - * 4N = no singletons
 - * $5\clubsuit/\diamond$ = singleton in the other minor
- 3NT:
 - clubs at any level = pass or correct
 - * Pass = weak clubs
 - * Diamonds = weak diamonds
 - $4\diamond$ = enquiry
 - * $4\heartsuit$ = clubs
 - * $4\spadesuit$ = diamonds

- 4♣/♦ :
 - next-step = slam try with support
 - * complete transfer = decline
 - * new suits = cues
 - completion = to play
- 4NT:
 - 5♣ = No aces
 - 5♦ = Club ace or Heart, Diamond and Spade aces
 - 5♥ = Diamond ace or Club, Heart and Spade aces
 - 5♠ = Heart ace or Club, Diamond and Spade aces
 - 5N = Two aces not including Spades
 - 6♣ = Spade ace or Club, Diamond and Heart aces
 - 6♦ = Spade and Club aces
 - 6♥ = Spade and Diamond aces
 - 6♠ = Spade and Heart aces

2.5 Continuations after 1NT

This refers only to a natural 1NT, though it may be 9–11, 11–13, 12–13, 12–15, 14–16, 16–19 or 17–19 depending on position, vulnerability and auction so far. Maximum is an 11-count, good 12–13-count, 13-count, 14–15-count, good 15–16-count, good 18–19-count or 18–19-count depending on range.

After a 9–15 no trump, or a NV 12–15 no trump (NV 3rd and 4th respectively), or after 1♣–1♦–1NT, all bids are natural and to play.

- 2♣ is 5-card puppet Keri (see below), which allows the system to be used with weak diamond hands with either tolerance for the majors or playing in 3♦. (e.g. 2=3=6=2 pattern with very limited values). It may also contain a weak hand looking to play in 3♣.

After 2♣ is doubled:

- Pass = no 4 or 5 card major, no diamond fit
- XX = a 4 card major
- 2♦ = diamond fit, no 4 or 5 card major
- 2♥/♠ = 5 card suit

After 2♣ is overcalled by 2♦:

- Pass = no 5 card major
 - * 2♥ = 4 spades, possibly hearts
 - * 2♠ = 4 hearts, denies spades
 - 2♥/♠ = 5 card suit
- 2♦ and 2♥ are transfers; transfer breaks apply with any 4-card fit. 2NT shows 4/5-card support, no side 4-card suit, and a maximum. Other suits show 4 cards, and 4-card support with a maximum. A simple jump acceptance shows 4-card support and a minimum.

After the transfer is doubled:

- Pass = 2 cards in support, minimum
- Redouble = 2-3 cards in support, maximum
- Complete = 3 cards in support, minimum
- Normal transfer breaks = 4+ cards in support

- 2♠ is a range enquiry or invitational+ transfer to ♣ . 2NT shows a minimum, after which 3♣ shows invitational with only clubs and other bids are GF, clubs and another. 3♣ shows any maximum, and can be passed if 2♠ showed clubs.
- 2NT is a transfer to diamonds; 3♣ is the only available super-accept which should be used with any 4 or honour-third.
- 3♣ promises a long suit that may need some help to run. Opener should pass, or bid 3NT with (e.g.) Kxx in the suit.
- 3♦ is 5–5 in the majors, at least invitational.
 - 3M = preference, minimum
 - 4M = preference, maximum
 - 4m = General Swiss [4.5]
- 3♥/3♠ are slam tries in clubs and diamonds.
 - 3N = small doubleton
 - * 4N = quant (NT)
 - * 4m = General Swiss [4.5] for the minor
 - 4m = General Swiss [4.5]
- 4♣ is Roman Key-Quant Gerber [4.6].
- 4N is Viscount [4.7].

Responses to 5-card puppet Keri Because we may have already established a game-force before bidding 1NT and we use the principle of fast-arrival some of the ranges vary. In the responses below, min/max and invitational / GF are inverted if a game force has already been established, so:

- min → max
- max → min
- GF → denies slam interest
- invitational → slam try

Accepting slam-tries should generally be done by bidding 4♣/4♦ which are General Swiss [4.5] where available. Either in a suit if one has been agreed or for no-trumps.

- 2♥/♠ with a 5-card major
 - 3♣ to play
 - 3♦ to play
 - other rebids are as after this sequence in 5 card puppet stayman.
- 2♦ with all other hands.
 - Pass if weak with diamonds
 - 2♥ = 4 spades; may have 4 hearts.
 - * 2♠ = forcing; promises 4 hearts.
 - 2NT/3NT = inv/GF, not 4 hearts.
 - 3♣/3♦ = 4 hearts, feature in suit bid; GF
 - 3♥/4♥ = inv/GF, 4 hearts.
 - 3♠ = GF, 4 hearts, auto-Swiss [4.5].
 - 4♣/4♦ = GF, 4 hearts, Swiss [4.5].
 - * 2NT/3NT = min/max, denies a 4-card major.
 - * 3♣/3♦/3♥ = 4 spades, feature in suit bid; max.
 - * 3♠/4♠ = min/max, 4 spades.
 - * 4♣/4♦ = max, non-serious Swiss [4.5].
 - 2♠ = 4 hearts; denies 4 spades.
 - * 2NT/3NT = min/max, denies 4♥.
 - * 3♣/3♦ = 4 hearts, feature in suit bid, max.
 - * 3♥/4♥ = min/max, 4 hearts.
 - * 3♠ = 4 hearts, maximum, auto-Swiss [4.5].
 - * 4♣/4♦ = GF, 4 hearts, Swiss [4.5].
 - 2NT = 3–3 majors; invitational strength.
 - 3♣ = to play
 - 3NT = 3–3 majors, GF.

2.5.1 After 1NT is doubled for penalties

After a direct seat double we play a modified form of suction as the escape after 1NT-X:

- Pass forces XX, to play or weak with clubs and another
 - XX forced
 - * Pass with a strong hand, to play
 - * bid 4 card suits up the line
- XX forces 2♣, weak with clubs or the reds
 - 2♣ forced
 - * Pass with clubs
 - * 2♦ with ♦ & ♥
- 2♣ puppets 2♦, weak with diamonds or the majors
 - Pass with 5 clubs
 - 2♦ with all other hands
 - * Pass with diamonds
 - * 2♥ with the majors
- 2♦ is weak with diamonds and spades
- 2♥ is weak with hearts
- 2♠ is weak with spades

This defence is played a level higher in the rare case of 2NT being doubled for penalties and applies in all cases that a natural notrump bid below game is doubled for penalties.

After a protective double of 1NT we play Aardvark with a Halmic redouble where bids show a two suiter (that suit and a higher) and redouble forces 2♣ and shows a weak single-suiter.

2.5.2 After direct overcalls of 1NT

Lebensohl:

- suits at the 2 level = to play
- suits at the 3 level = GF, natural
- direct cue = staymanic, denies a stop
- 3N = natural, denies a stop
- 2N = puppet to 3♣
 - 3♣ forced
 - * suits below the cue = to play
 - * suits above the cue = invitational, natural
 - * cue = staymanic, promises a stop
 - * 3N = natural, promises a stop
- Double is for penalties
- Double of a natural 2♣ overcall is stayman showing a club stop (optional)

2.6 Continuations after 2NT

- 3♣ : 5-card puppet Stayman
 - 3♥/♠ shows 5 cards.
 - 3♦ promises 4 hearts or 4 spades
 - * 3♥ = 4 spades, 0–3 hearts
 - 4♠ = to play
 - 3NT = to play
 - 4♣/♦ = Swiss [4.5] for spades
 - * 3♠ = 4 hearts, 0–3 spades
 - 4♥ = to play
 - 3NT = to play
 - 4♣/♦ = Swiss [4.5] for hearts
 - * 3N = 4–4 majors
 - Pass = to play
 - 4♥ = with 4 hearts.
 - 4♠ = with 4 spades.
 - * 4♣ = RKQG
 - 3NT denies 4 hearts or 3 spades
- 3♦/3♥ : transfers. Superaccept with any 4-card fit; note that 3NT is a superaccept that still allows the use of Swiss.
- 3♠ : puppet to 3NT, either to play or for minors.
 - 3NT = forced
 - * Pass = to play
 - * 4♣ = slam try in diamonds
 - * 4♦ = slam try in clubs
 - * 4♥ = both minors, heart splinter
 - * 4♠ = both minors, spade splinter
- 3NT: 5 spades + 4 hearts
- 4♣ is Roman Key-Quant Gerber [4.6].
- 4N is Viscount [4.7].

3 Encrypted bidding

Note: currently this is inactive, since we have dropped key agreement from the system.

Once responder makes an encrypted raise, opener can either accept or decline the key. To decline, simply rebid the suit (cheaply with a minimum; jump if maximum. Use common sense.).

If the key is accepted, subsequent bids are two-way, depending on the key.

Opener's rebid shows a useful side-suit if holding the trump K (0–1 losers) or a potential weakness if holding the trump A (2–3 losers). Responder can then either place the contract, cue-bid (either showing with the K or denying with the A), or use Blackwood.

Blackwood here is Roman Keycard, but it's modified because there are only three keycards still of interest.

4 Slam conventions

If suit agreement isn't possible after a multi-suited bid then (if possible) General Swiss agrees the minor (or lower) suit and Blackwood agrees the major (or higher) suit.

4.1 Roman key-card Blackwood (1430)

4NT with an agreed suit is Roman key-card Blackwood. The key-cards are the four aces and the king of the agreed suit. Responses are:

- $5\clubsuit$: 1 or 4 key cards
- $5\diamonds$: 0 or 3 key cards
- $5\heartsuit$: 2 or 5 key cards without the queen of trumps
- $5\spadesuit$: 2 or 5 key cards with the queen of trumps

After $5\clubsuit$ or $5\diamonds$ the next-step (other than trumps) asks for the queen of trumps. Responses are trumps at the lowest level without, or the appropriate king response (see Section 4.3) with the queen and an outside king, or 5NT with no outside king.

4.2 Exclusion Blackwood

Unwarranted bids of an outside suit at the 5 level are Exclusion Blackwood. Responses are as whichever form of Blackwood would apply, but ignoring the ace in the suit bid. The next available suit shows the normal 5♣ response and bids proceed from there.

4.3 King you have or king you don't

After RKCB, the next available suit which is not the trump suit asks for the queen of trumps and outside kings. 5N just asks for outside kings. Without the queen of trumps the response to the queen-ask is always the trump suit at the lowest level. Responses to 5N, or if you have the queen of trumps are; with one outside king, bid that suit. With two outside kings, bid the suit of the king you are missing. With no kings bid 6 of the trump suit (or 5N if available).

4.4 First-round-control showing cues

Once a suit is agreed and a GF is established, new suits are cues showing an ace or a void in that suit. Unless otherwise agreed to be something else the bid of a suit a level above when it would be forcing for a round is a first round control showing cue agreeing the most recently shown suit.

If a game-forcing auction has been established and if there are the following ways to agree a suit: bidding Swiss [4.5], bidding game and supporting below game, then the latter is a slam try which would prefer cue responses rather than swiss.

4.5 General Swiss

4♣/4♦, once a game-force is established and suit agreed, are slam tries, based on control points.

Control points are 2 for an ace, 1 for a king singleton, and 1 for the queen of trumps. There are 13 available from honours; it is possible to substitute outside singletons for kings, but care must be taken to avoid double-counting. 11 CPs are necessary for a small slam; 13 for a grand.

- 4♣ : 4 or 6 (exceptionally 8) control points
 - trump suit = 0–4 CPs
 - 4♦ = 5/6 CP, relay
 - * trump suit = 4 CPs
 - * suits = 6 CP, lowest king singleton
 - suits = 7 or 9 CP, lowest king singleton
 - small slam = 8 CP
 - grand slam = 10 CP
- 4♦ : 5 or 7 (exceptionally 9) control points
 - trump suit = 0–3 CPs
 - 4♥ = 4/5 CP, relay
 - * trump suit = 5 CPs
 - * suits = 7 CP, lowest king singleton
 - suits = 6 or 8 CP, lowest king singleton
 - small slam = 7 CP
 - grand slam = 9 CP

While cueing kings/singletons, 4NT shows a singleton or king which can't be shown below 5 of the trump suit (usually diamonds over clubs) and asks partner to signoff appropriately depending on duplication.

If you find duplication in kings/singletons subtract one CP and sign off at the appropriate level. If your partner signs off and you have 2 as-yet unshown CPs, raise one level.

If the hand bidding Swiss has shown a GF (opening a strong 2 level option, 1♦ and a jump rebid, or 1♦ and a 2NT rebid), add 2 to all numbers. If it has

shown a weak hand (opening a weak 2 or 3 level option or giving a 0–7 response to 1♦ or opening 9-11 1NT), subtract 2 from all numbers. Direct swiss over a 3-level bid that may be weak or strong assumes weak for counting control points.

There is a small problem if you have 7 CPs and are agreeing hearts, since in that case, there is no available next step. In this case you may wish to show 6 CPs and ignore one point of duplication.

4.5.1 Interference

After interference direct over the start of General Swiss:

- Pass = would sign-off in game (forcing)
- X or XX = next-step
- Suits = Accepting the slam try and checking for duplication as normal

After interference direct after a non-signoff response to Swiss:

- Pass = would sign-off in game (forcing)
- X or XX = a second-round control in that suit
- Suits = a second-round control in that suit

4.6 Roman Key-Quant Gerber

After a NT opening or rebid, 4♣ is Roman Key-Quant Gerber, asking for aces and quantitative. Responses are:

- 4♦ = 0 or 3 aces
- 4♥ = 1 or 4 aces
- 4♠ = 2 aces and denying a quant raise
- 4NT = 2 aces and accepting the quant raise

After 4♦/♥, next step asks for quant, with 4NT denying and bidding kings or 6NT accepting.

For RKQG sequences starting at higher bids, raise the responses appropriately.

4.7 Viscount

Since all the quantitative raises and ace asking go through Gerber (above), 4NT is now free. Bidding 4NT over a NT opening or rebid asks opener to bid 4 card suits up the line. It's very much like the Baron convention, only higher.

5 Competitive bidding

We tried an artificial overcall scheme but found it couldn't cope with a number of situations. Therefore, we have a fairly natural overcall style.

5.1 Natural suits

5.1.1 Simple overcalls

Simple overcalls are constructive and natural 5 cards, starting at 10HCP [BB 7E2]. A responsive cue is a good raise and direct raises are preemptive.

5.1.2 Double

Double is standard takeout (or a strong hand) [BB 7E2]. After a double and a response, a cue by the doubler is a general force, not suit agreeing.

5.1.3 NT overcall

Direct 1NT is 15-17 balanced with a stop or semi-balanced and may contain a singleton ace [BB 7E3], protective 1NT is 11-14 with a stop. After these "Continuations after 1NT" [2.5] apply, with the exception that after the auction (1x)-1N-(2y), 2x is stayman without a stop if available. Other bids are lebensohl [2.5.2].

5.1.4 Jump overcalls

Jump overcalls are weak, showing a 6 card suit and between 4HCP (favourable) and enough to make a simple overcall. In protective they are intermediate (11-15, reasonable 6+ card suit). This also applies after the sequence (Pass)-Pass-(1N).

5.1.5 Jump cue bids

Jump cuebids are stopper-asking for 3NT [BB 7E2]; they promise a long running suit. An overcall of 3NT promises a long running suit and a stopper [BB ?]. Responses are the same as a gambling 3NT opening [2.4.5].

5.1.6 2-suited overcalls

Simple cuebids are Michaels showing at least 5–5 in the majors (over a minor) or the other major and either minor (over a major) [BB 7E2]. In all cases they are either weak or strong. Similarly, 2NT over a 1 level bid is unusual, showing 5–5 or better in the minors (over a major) or the other minor and either major (over a minor) [BB 7E2]. Again, it's weak or strong.

After Michaels or Unusual, bidding any of the suits which could have been shown is pass or correct at that level. Overcaller then corrects to the next highest suit (or passes or raises) with a weak hand. With a strong hand he breaks to another suit. Of the two suits which are not 'pass or correct', re-cueing is strong and agreeing advancer's preferred suit and the other suit is strong with the remaining option.

For example:

- (1♥)-2♥-(P)
 - 3♣-3♦ is weak with spades and diamonds
 - 3♣-3♥ is strong with spades and clubs
 - 3♣-3♠ is strong with spades and diamonds
 - 3♦-3♥ is strong with spades and diamonds
 - 3♦-3♠ is weak with spades and clubs
 - 3♦-4♣ is strong with spades and clubs
 - 2♠-3♣ is strong with spades and clubs
 - 2♠-3♦ is strong with spades and diamonds

If advancer has a strong hand then the following response structures apply:

Any suit which overcaller could have at any level is to play opposite a weak hand and pass or correct. If responder has passed and overcalled has two known suits, then other two suits at the 3 level are strong raises in one of overcaller's suits; the cheaper outside suit for the cheaper known suit. These are invitational-plus if it is possible to stop below game in that suit and game

forcing otherwise. 2NT and 3NT are both natural. The special case of (1♣)-2♣-(P)-2♦ asks for the better of overcaller's majors.

After an invitational raise, overcaller bids the agreed suit at the 3 level with a minimum weak hand and bids game with a good weak hand. With a strong hand he bids swiss in that suit or does something else.

For example:

- (1♣)-2♣-(P)
 - 2♦ - which is your better major
 - 2♥ - to play
 - 2♠ - to play
 - 2NT - natural, invitational
 - 3♣ - invitational with hearts
 - 3♦ - invitational with spades
 - 3♥ - to play
 - 3♠ - to play
 - 3NT - to play

- (1♥)-2NT-(P)
 - 3♣ - to play
 - 3♦ - to play
 - 3♥ - invitational with clubs
 - 3♠ - invitational with diamonds
 - 3NT - to play

In the case where the two suits are not specified (responder still having passed), then any suit which overcaller could have is pass or correct. 2NT, if available (i.e. after Michaels), is an invitational-plus enquiry as to the other suit and re-cueing is a strong raise in the suit which has been promised. A direct 4♣/4♦ if the promised suit is a major is Swiss [4.5] for that suit and 3NT is to play. If 2NT is not available (i.e. after Unusual) then the re-cue is any stronger hand and responses are which other outside suit overcaller has.

For example:

- (1♥)-2♥-(P)
 - 2♠ - to play
 - 2NT - enquiry, invitational
 - * 3♣ - weak clubs and spades (responses = Swiss for clubs)
 - * 3♦ - weak diamonds and spades (responses = Swiss for diamonds)
 - * 3♥ - strong clubs and spades
 - * 3♠ - strong diamonds and spades
 - 3♣ - pass or correct
 - 3♦ - pass or correct
 - 3♥ - invitational in spades
 - 3♠ - to play
 - 4♣ - Swiss for Spades
 - 4♦ - Swiss for Spades
 - 3NT - to play

- (1♣)-2NT-(P)
 - 3♣ - any invitational
 - * 3♥ - hearts and diamonds
 - * 3♠ - spades and diamonds
 - 3♦ - to play
 - 3♥ - pass or correct
 - 3♠ - pass or correct
 - 3NT - to play

If responder makes a raise of opener's suit (so, the sequences (1♣)-2♣ - (3♣) or (1♥)-2NT-(3♣)) the structure is as follows: Double shows a strong raise of overcaller's known suit (if only one) or cheaper known suit (if two). If an outside suit other than the re-cue is available then that is a strong raise in the remaining suit(s) and the re-cue is a strong raise with no preference, otherwise the re-cue is a strong raise in the remaining suit(s).

For example:

- (1♣)-2♣-(3♣)
 - X - invitational hearts
 - 3♦ - invitational spades
 - 3NT - to play
 - 4♣ - GF, no preference

- (1♣)-2NT-(3♣)
 - X - invitational diamonds
 - 3♦ - to play
 - 3♥ - pass or correct
 - 3♠ - pass or correct
 - 3NT - to play
 - 4♣ - GF in either major

5.2 Defences

Aside from defences to natural suit openings, these are mostly all based on suction:

- clubs: diamonds or the majors
- diamonds: hearts or spades and clubs (or diamonds)
- hearts: spades or the minors
- spades: clubs or hearts and diamonds (or clubs)

The responses to these are not the same as the responses to a 2-level opening, but are more standard 'pass or correct' responses. For example, after (1N)-2♦-(P), 2♠ says pass with the blacks, invitational in hearts.

5.2.1 Natural 1NT

Suction, constructive values. Double is for penalties, which may be based on 7 top tricks, and 2N shows a non-touching two suiter. [BB 7E1]

After a direct penalty double, passes are forcing until we've bid or doubled them. Doubles are for penalties. In passout seat after they have escaped to the two level and partner has not bid then Lebensohl [2.5.2] is in effect, eg: (1N)-X-(2x)-P-(P)-2N

5.2.2 Artificial strong bids

Suction, weak. Double shows the suction bid in their suit and 2N shows a non-touching two suiter. [BB 7E1]

5.2.3 Short suits

If it 'could be as short as 2', then we treat it as a natural opening and the defences in Section 5.1 apply.

5.2.4 Phoney/Prepared suits

Suction, constructive values. Double shows the suction bid in their suit and 2N is natural. [BB 7E1]

5.2.5 Multi 2♦

- X: 16+ or 13-15 bal
- 2N: 16-18 bal, stops in both majors.
 - Responses as "Continuations after 2NT" [2.6]
- 3x: intermediate, natural

5.2.6 Natural weak openings

Double is for takeout up to 4♥. After a weak two and a takeout double, there are Lebensohl responses [2.5.2]. 4N is takeout over 4♠ and a big two suiter otherwise.

Over a weak two, 2NT is natural showing 16-18 and "Continuations after 2NT" [2.6] apply.

5.2.7 Natural stronger jump openings

For intermediate natural 2-level openings the overcalls are as natural 1-level openings [5.1], with 2N as modified unusual. All actions need to be sounder than over a 1-level opening.

Strong (forcing or not) natural 2-level openings all overcalls are weak and natural.

5.2.8 Transfer openings

Including 2♣ which is a weak 2 in diamonds or a strong hand.

- Double shows the suit bid
- Bidding the transferred to suit is takeout of that suit
- Jump-bidding the transferred to suit is Michaels
- Other bids and continuations are as normal for that level and strength of bid

5.2.9 Shortage preempts

If the suit bid is short then double shows an overcall in that suit or any large hand. Other suits are natural but reasonably robust and 2NT shows stops in all the other suits.

If the suit bid is one of the three promised then double is takeout or any large hand. Suit bids are natural but reasonably robust. 2NT shows a balanced hand with at least a stop in the suit bid and some cards in the others.

5.2.10 Other multi-way preempts

Multi-way preempts will deny the suit bid and so double shows an overcall in that suit. Big hands either pass then act or start with a double.

Other overcalls are natural.

5.2.11 Definite two-suited preempts

Such as 2NT showing both minors. Double shows the other two suits and a direct cue bid asks for a stop in that suit, promises stops for any lower suits, but does not show or deny stops in any higher suits. With a stop partner bids 3N if

he has a stop in all remaining higher suits, or the next suit he does not have a stop in.

5.2.12 Doubles

Doubles of freely bid slams are Lightner, asking for the lead of dummy's first shown suit.

Doubles of other artificial bids are lead directing. If the doubler has already shown that suit then it asks for the lead of a different suit.

5.3 Dealing with interference

5.3.1 Direct interference over 1♣

- 1♣-(X) (penalty interest (showing 16+):
 - Redouble shows either diamonds or the majors
 - Pass forces redouble; either to play or with diamonds and a major. Can be pulled rather than XX with an unsuitable hand for clubs.
 - 1♦/1♥ are transfers to 1♥/1♠. Note that opener may pass these if holding a 5-card suit.
- 1♣-(X) (showing ♣):
 - Pass shows a weak hand, with nowhere in particular to play.
 - Redouble creates a game-force; passes are now forcing and doubles are for penalty.
 - 1D shows some values (6-9), any shape
 - Suit bids are natural, 10–15, and promise 4 cards.
 - 1NT shows a balanced hand, 10–15, with a club stop.
- 1♣-(X) (takeout):
 - Redouble still creates a forcing pass situation.
 - 1D shows some values (6-9), any shape
 - Ask opponents “takeout of what, exactly?”.
 - 1NT cannot show a stopper in any particular suit.
- 1♣-(natural bid):
 - Responder’s double creates a game-force.
 - 1NT promises a stop; 10–15 balanced. See “Responses after 1NT” [2.5]
 - Suit bids are natural, 10–15. After a NT rebid by opener, 3♣ is checkback and normal system is off.
 - Exception: cheapest bid (or 2♠ over 1♠) shows a 12-15 balanced hand with no stop. System is on, including Keri, transfers etc. After 1♣-(1♦)-1♥, for example, 1♠ is a range enquiry or transfer to ♣. See [2.5] or [2.6].

- Pass is a weak hand with nowhere to go (potentially including an 8–11 balanced hand with no stop).
- 1♣ -(1N)-P-P:
 - 2N = minors

5.3.2 Direct interference over 1♦

- 1♦ -(X):
 - Redouble with good 8+ hands.
 - Pass with weak hands.
 - Suit bids are natural, weak, 6-card suit.
- 1♦ -(bid):
 - Pass with weak hands.
 - Double to establish a game-force (and forcing passes, etc.).
 - * Suction rebids are on; immediate NT bid denies a stop.
 - * To show a stop, Suction-force into opponents' suit then bid NT.
 - Suit bids are natural, weak, 6-card suit.
- 1♦ -(spade for a laugh):
 - Double is for penalties
 - Passes are forcing

5.3.3 Sandwich-seat interference (e.g. 1♦ -(P)-1♠ -(2♣))

- 1♣ -(P)-1♠ -(anything):
- 1♦ -(P)-1♠ -(anything):
 - Passes are forcing
 - NT bids promise a stopper.
 - Suction-style rebids are on if 3♣ is a sufficient bid (1♦ opener)
 - Pass indicates a balanced hand without a stopper in opponents' suit.
 - * Responder's NT bids here are Lebensohl style [2.5.2]

* There are no weak hands to show, so the only difference is in showing/denying a stopper.

– Double is penalties.

- 1♣ -(P)-1 any-X: XX shows a maximum and 4 cards in that suit.
- 1♣ -(P)-1♦ -(anything): it's a good idea to subside quietly, however, double is takeout below 2NT, penalties above.
- 1♣ /♦ -(P)-1♥ -(anything): passes are non-forcing, X is takeout / suction
- 1♣ -(P)-1♥ -(1♠)-P: 12-15 balanced without a spade stop.

Responses:

- 1NT = Lebensohl
 - * 2x = invitational
 - * 2♠ = stayman with a stop
- 2x = weak
- 2♠ = stayman without a stop
- 2NT = invitational with a stop
- 3x = forcing
- 3NT = to play, shows a stop

5.3.4 Interference over 1-major

- 1♥ -(X) (Level 5):
 - Pass = dross
 - XX = 4 hearts and starts a penalty (but not forcing pass) auction
 - * Pass = 4 hearts
 - * 1♠ = dross
 - * 1N = 5♠ + 4 minor
 - * 2♣ = 5♠ + 5♣
 - * 2♦ = 5♠ + 5♦
 - * 2♠ = 6+♠
 - 1♠ = to play

- *Other bids system on.*
- $1\spadesuit$ -(X) (Level 5):
 - *Pass = dross*
 - *XX = 5 spades and starts a penalty (but not forcing pass) auction*
 - * *1N = dross*
 - * $2\clubsuit = 5\heartsuit + 5\clubsuit$
 - * $2\diamond = 5\heartsuit + 5\diamond$
 - * $2\heartsuit = 6+\heartsuit$
- $1\heartsuit/\spadesuit$ -(X) (Level 4):
 - *Pass = 0-2 card support, bad hand, NF*
 - *XX = 0-2 card support, good hand, no specific suit to bid or strong enough to force, F1*
 - *1N = 3 card support, good values, F1*
 - *2M (raise) = 3 card support, poor values, NF*
 - *3M (raise) = 4 card support, poor values, NF*
 - *Other raises as without the double, F1 or GF*
 - *Other new suits = 0-2 card support, focussed suit, NF*
- $1\heartsuit/\spadesuit$ -(2x):
 - *2N = balanced, 10-12 with a stop*
 - *3x = good raise*

5.4 Interference after an artificial 1NT

- 1NT-(X):
 - *Pass = weak, no preference*
 - *XX = enquiry*
 - *2x = to play*
- 1NT-(bids)
 - *X = penalties*
 - *cue = forcing enquiry*

5.5 Interference over a 2-level opening

A few general principles here:

- 2_x-(X):
 - XX = forcing enquiry (even over further interference, starts a penalty auction)
 - Pass = no desire to play opposite a weak hand
 - Relay = some tolerance for the weak options
 - Enquiries = forcing unless oppo bid

- $2x-(2y)$:
 - X = optional (pass if it's your suit, pull otherwise, starts a penalty auction)
 - ...
- Opener's rebids facing passed responder:
 - Suit from a weak option at the lowest level = decent weak option
 - X/denied suit/NT = strong option (X is optional)
- $2x-(p)$ -relay-(X):
 - Pass = weak single suiter
 - Cheaper of two suits = weak 2 suiter, prefer cheaper suit
 - XX = weak 2 suiter, prefer other suit
 - $2N (x = \clubsuit) = 20-23$ bal
 - $2N (x \neq \clubsuit) = GF$, prefer cheaper suit
 - Other of two suits = GF, prefer other suit
 - Jump cheaper suit ($x = \clubsuit$) = GF, prefer cheaper suit
- $2N-(x)$:
 - Pass = no preference, weak
 - XX = no preference, strong
 - others = as normal

5.6 Forcing passes

There are a number of situations where a pass can be forcing in the sense of "either we bid at least once more or defend doubled". The following situations are definitely forcing-pass situations:

- After a freely bid game
- After $1NT-X$ and they escape at the two level
- If we have shown values for game in the auction so far
- ...

6 Carding

6.1 Leads

Leads are standard (2nd from bad suits, 4th from an honour, top of sequences), except that they may vary based on signal requested (see below).

The exception is that we lead top of bad suits against no trumps.

After the initial lead we lead high from bad suits and low from good suits.

6.2 Signals

Signals are reverse (low encourages) attitude on partner's lead of the A, Q or pip cards and standard count (high even) on K or J leads and on declarer's lead.

Carding will frequently be false on declarer's lead.

Leads to ruffs and other obvious situations may be McKenny.

6.3 Discards

Discards are a modified Italian style whereby prime (2357JK) discards are encouraging and composite discards (4689TQA) are suit-preference Lavinthal-style. Thus, low composite cards ask for the lower of the outside suits and high even cards ask for the higher of the two outside suits.

6.4 Prism

NOTE: currently we're not using Prism signals since the gain is marginal for the extra thought load and we don't play often enough to keep up with them.

Prism is a signalling system based on the shape of the whole hand. An initial hand of 13 cards will, perforce, have either one suit which is odd (and three even) or one suit which is even (and three odd). This denotes the parity of the hand.

The first card in a prism sequence will give the original parity of the hand. Low for odd, high for even. Second and subsequent cards will indicate the suit which is unique in parity. Take the spade suit 2 3 6, the following sequences indicate the following parities and suits:

order	parity	outside suit	relative to spades
2 3 6	odd	higher	hearts
2 6 3	odd	middle	diamonds
3 6 2	odd	lower	clubs
3 2 6	even	higher	hearts
6 2 3	even	middle	diamonds
6 3 2	even	lower	clubs

This information can be combined with the other defender's hand and dummy to deduce the shape of declarer's hand as follows. Add together the length of your suits and dummy's, then subtract each from 13. This will give you either four even numbers, four odd numbers or two of each.

- If all four are even then declarer's unique suit is the same as partners and the same parity.
- If all four are odd then declarer's unique suit is the same as partners and the other parity.
- If partner's suit is in the even pair, then declarer's suit is the other one in that pair and the other parity.
- If partner's suit is in the odd pair, then declarer's suit is the other one in that pair and the same parity.

7 Conventions for lower-level events

Sometimes it is necessary to play at WBF category 3 events or other venues more restrictive than EBU Level 4. In those cases, it is not permitted to play the system as described above. The treatments restricted at lower levels are the two and three level openings, although this also has minor differences to other bids.

7.1 1 diamond

The strong diamond opening must include GF single suiters. After opening 1♦, which is now forcing, jump rebids show GF single suited hands.

7.2 Two level openings

- 2♣ = 5-10HCP, 4+ hearts, 4+ spades
 - 2♦ = enquiry as to strength and better major
 - either major at any level = to play
- 2♦ = One of: 6+ weak major OR 21-24 bal OR 2-suited GF not ♠ +♦
 - 2♥ = pass or correct
 - * pass = weak hearts
 - * 2♠ = weak spades
 - * 2NT = balanced
 - * 3♣ = GF minors
 - * 3♦ = GF reds
 - * 3♥ = GF majors
 - * 3♠ = GF blacks
 - * 3NT = GF rounds
 - 2NT = enquiry
 - * 3♣ = bad weak hearts
 - * 3♦ = bad weak spades
 - * 3♥ = good weak hearts
 - * 3♠ = good weak spades
 - * 3NT = balanced

- * 4♣ = GF minors
 - * 4♦ = GF reds
 - * 4♥ = GF majors
 - * 4♠ = GF blacks
 - * 4NT = GF rounds
- 2♥ = 5-10HCP, 5+ hearts, 4+ minor
 - 2NT = enquiry for minor and strength
 - either minor at any level = paradox
 - 2♠ = 5-10HCP, 5+ hearts, 4+ minor
 - 2NT = enquiry for minor and strength
 - either minor at any level = paradox
 - 2NT = GF pointeds or 25+ balanced
 - transfer preference

7.3 Three level openings

Three level bids must be natural, not transfers, so all the three level suit openings are natural and weak. 3NT is gambling.

8 Conventions not legal at EBU events

We have some extensions / alternatives which we play when allowed, but are **not legal** in EBU tournaments. STES overcalls are brown sticker according to WBF rules and encrypted signals are not permitted at any level.

8.1 STES overcalls

STES overcalls are based on the suction construction used throughout this system. The acronym stands for Suction Transfer Exclusion Suction and represents the meanings of each available suit, going up stepwise, so, the suit above is suction, the next suit is a transfer, the suit below shows the other two and the cue is suction.

- 1♣ :
 - 1♦ = hearts or spades and diamonds
 - 1♥ = spades
 - 1♠ = diamonds and hearts
 - 2♣ = diamonds or hearts and spades
- 1♦ :
 - 1♥ = spades or clubs and hearts
 - 1♠ = clubs
 - 2♣ = hearts and spades
 - 2♦ = hearts or spades and clubs
- 1♥ :
 - 1♠ = clubs or diamonds and spades
 - 2♣ = diamonds
 - 2♦ = spades and diamonds
 - 2♥ = spades or clubs and diamonds

- 1♠ :
 - 2♣ = diamonds or hearts and clubs
 - 2♦ = hearts
 - 2♥ = clubs and diamonds
 - 2♠ = clubs or diamonds and hearts

When permitted, we play a simple STES overcall as a standard overcall range, with double for three suits or a big hand. Jump overcalls are also STES, weak if single suited or strong if two suited and 2NT is any weak two suiter.

8.2 Encrypted carding

Section 3 describes bidding systems where one side establish a key and can use that to pass information concealed from the opposition. It would be nice if this key was available to encode information during the defence, but this is unfortunately not permitted by the WBF or any regional authority.

There are a number of things which can be used as a key and a number of signals to which the key can be applied. Each key will be a binary key with a default state and an alternate state. Each signal will have a default mode and an alternate mode.

8.2.1 Keys

Keys are listed in preference order - use the highest key which is valid. If there is no valid key then the default options apply.

1. Explicit key—If a key has been agreed during the auction x3 then use this. The Ace is the default key and the King is the alternate key.
2. Declarer shown out—If declarer has shown out in a suit then defenders use parity in that suit as a key. Odd parity is the default key, even is the alternate.
3. Declarer specified length—If during the auction declarer has shown a precise number of cards in a suit then defenders use parity in that suit as a key. Odd parity is the default key, even is the alternate.

8.2.2 Signals

Each signal applies in a specific situation and has a default and alternate mode. Use the default mode if there is no key or the default key applies to you, use the alternate mode if the alternate key applies to you. Note that this means that one member of the partnership will be signalling one way and the other will be signalling the other way.

- Encrypted count—Signal standard count as the default option and reverse as the alternate. If the key is parity in another suit then signal with reverse count the sum of two suits.
- Encrypted attitude—Signal reverse attitude as the default option and standard as the alternate.
- Encrypted McKenny—The default option is normal McKenny (low card shows lower outside suit), the alternate option a low card shows the higher outside suit. Encrypted revolving discards apply similarly
- Sicilian—The default option is Italian, so odd cards are encouraging, even cards are McKenny, the alternate option is even cards encouraging, odd McKenny

When permitted we play Sicilian discards, encrypted count signals except on the lead of an Ace or Queen, when we play encrypted attitude.

9 A brief history

NB: the system has changed sufficiently that this history is out-of-date. Do not rely on it to describe our bidding!

We wanted to play a system making use of encrypted bidding. Our first attempt used a fairly standard Acol structure, with a weak NT and three weak 2s. It was soon apparent that crypto raises in these circumstances (requiring 11+, 4-card support and either A or K but not both) never come up, at least to a first approximation.

We also quite liked the idea of light and limited openings. This was from a couple of experiments with a (highly illegal) forcing pass system, where a pass in first or second seat showed any 12+, with 0–11 HCP hands forced to open somehow. In particular, 2-suited bids at the 1-level have a lot of attractions.

Our next attempt was to consider the idea of a 12+ 1♣ opener, with all other openings 8–11. This is fine in theory, but EBU regulations say that this 1♣ opener cannot have a 5+ card major suit without a longer minor. This meant that we needed an opening-values 2♣ bid, and generally lost the point of the system. We fell back upon a strong club structure.

Given the strong ♣ structure, we then looked at our other opening bids. Our 2-level openers are pre-emptive, and show either single-suiters or two-suiters. This is based upon the Suction convention: 2♣ shows ♦ or both majors, 2♦ shows ♥ or ♠ & ♣, 2♥ shows ♠ or ♣ & ♦, and 2♠ shows ♥ and a minor. We don't have a way to show a ♠ & ♦ two-suiter; this is a likely future use for 2NT.

Major suit openings are played as takeout bids. This means that 1♠ promises 5+ H and 0–3 ♠, with 1♥ promising 5+ ♠ and 0–3 ♥. These were, at one stage, 4-card openings in the other major, but we found that this made bidding in competition too difficult. In uncontested auctions, this has the great advantage that you gain a “free” cue-bid: after a 1♠ opening, 2♠ shows a good raise of ♥ while 2♥, 3♥ etc. are pre-emptive.

The next implication is that we need a way to show hands with 4+ in both majors. This falls to 1NT; we have 2♣/2♦/2♥/2♠ as weak bids “to play”, and 2NT as a strong enquiry. Bids in the major suits are primarily pre-emptive; 2NT asks for range and better major. 3m is strong and one-round forcing.

1♣ includes balanced hands 16–19 and 23+ (we're using 2NT as a 20–22 balanced hand, for now). The 1♦ opening, therefore, has to cover all opening hands that do not fall into one of the above categories. It therefore includes:

- 12–15 balanced.
- Unbalanced hands, 8–15, with no 5-card major and at most one 4-card

major.

Responses to $1\spadesuit$ are selected to allow the 1NT rebid, showing a weak NT opener, on all auctions. Therefore: $1\heartsuit = 0-7$, $1\spadesuit = 8+$. After interference, pass is weak; any other action promises $8+$.

So that's our one-level openings. For two-level openers, we wanted them to be the two-suited bids we'd originally considered for our one-level openings. I can't remember if it was Matt or me who first found out about Suction as a defence to 1NT, or who suggested it as a structure for 2-level openings, but the fact remains that we like it. Essentially, each 2-level bid shows either a weak 2 in the suit above OR the other two suits. Of course, this leaves the non-touching pairs uncovered, and leaves you with two ways to show a pre-empt in clubs. We soon thought of playing $2\spadesuit$ as showing \heartsuit and a minor (as opposed to the original \clubsuit or $\heartsuit \& \spadesuit$). This still left $\spadesuit \& \heartsuit$ uncovered, but we decided to cope.

At this stage, our 2NT opening was fairly standard: 20-22 balanced or semi-balanced. After a few sessions playing, we modified this to include the spade-diamond two-suiters. Of course, that makes the bid forcing, so we changed the NT ranges such that this included our game-forcing NT hands: any 23+. Responses are suit preference, on the assumption that the weak hand is more frequent, with transfer preference being used if responder has a strong hand. If opener has the strong option, he can rebid 3NT.

The next change (there's still more!) was to include GF two-suiters in our 2-level openings. This narrows the specification of the $1\clubsuit$ opening, and is easy to specify: opener can rebid his opened suit (whichever it is) over any response. In the 2NT case, this opening now shows GF (semi-)balanced, GF with $S\&\heartsuit$, or weak with $\spadesuit \& \heartsuit$. In the two-suited case, any rebid other than 3NT shows the strong hand, and any transfer break does also.

Finally, our responses to $1\clubsuit$: initially, these were natural, promising a 4-card suit and $8+$ (with any weak hands going via $1\spadesuit$). Boring! We then tried encrypted responses: $1\heartsuit$ promised HA or HK, not both; $1\spadesuit$ showed neither or both in \heartsuit , and exactly one in \spadesuit , and so on. 1NT was a positive with no potential key; $1\spadesuit$ was the negative. Opener would rebid NT if balanced, $2\heartsuit$ to deny a potential key, and anything else to show a potential place to play if holding the key K or denying if holding the key A. We ditched this structure not because it doesn't work but because it frequently (read nearly always) ends up at the 3-level before either hand has actually mentioned a suit, which could still be only 4 cards.

We now play a far more elegant structure, similar to our responses to $1\spadesuit$: $1\spadesuit$ is negative (0-7), $1\heartsuit$ is positive distributional (8+), and $1\clubsuit$ is positive balanced (8+, again).

As for the system name: suction is measured in Pascals, and the system is encrypted. It went from there.

A Prepared Defences

Please note that the EBU does not recommend providing prepared defences to systems. Nonetheless, if you would find these useful here are some *simple* defences to our system, but there are probably several better ones.

A.1 1 level bids

- 1♣ One of the following:
 - Your defence to a possibly short club or diamond
 - Your defence to a weak no-trump
 - Your defence to a natural club opening
 - Your defence to a polish club
- 1♦
 - Defend the same as you would a strong (e.g. precision) club
- 1♥ (Level 5 only)
 - X = a heart overcall
 - 1♠ = takeout of spades
 - 1N = normal 1N overcall range showing a spade stop
 - suits = natural overcalls
 - 2♠ = whatever a cue of a natural 1 spade would mean
 - Jump bids = normal jump-overcall range
- 1♠ (Level 5 only)
 - X = takeout of hearts
 - 1N = normal 1N overcall range showing a heart stop
 - suits = natural overcalls
 - 2♥ = whatever a cue of a natural 1 heart would mean
 - Jump bids = normal jump-overcall range
- 1NT (Artificial only)
 - X = clubs and diamonds
 - 2♣/♦ = natural overcall
 - 2♥/♠ = asking for a stop for NT
 - 2NT = decent NT overcall range with stops in both majors
 - Jump bids = normal jump-overcall range

A.2 2 level bids

- 2♣ /♦ /♥
 - X = an overcall in the suit bid
 - suits = natural overcalls
 - 2N = normal 2N over a weak-two range with some values in the other three suits
- 2♠
 - X = takeout of hearts
 - 2N = normal 2N over a weak-two range with a decent heart stop
 - suits = natural overcalls
- 2NT
 - X = takeout (showing hearts and clubs)
 - 3♣ /♥ = natural overcalls
 - 3♦ /♠ = asking for a stop for 3NT

A.3 3/4 level bids

- 3♣ /♦ /♥
 - X = an overcall in the suit bid
 - next suit = takeout of that suit
 - 3N = normal 3N over a 3-level preempt with a stop in the suit shown (not bid)
- 3♠
 - X = spade overcall (as of a 3-minor preempt or gambling 3N opening)
 - suits = natural overcalls (as of a 4-minor preempt or gambling 3N opening)
- 3NT
 - X = both majors (takeoutish)
 - suits = natural overcalls (as of a 4-minor preempt)
- 4♣ /♦
 - X = an overcall in the suit bid (as of a 3-major preempt)
 - suits = natural overcalls (as of a 3-major preempt)
 - our major = takeout