



Ken Eichenbaum

A MODERN APPROACH TO TWO-OVER-ONE

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331 Douglas Ave.
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M5M 1H2
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A Modern Approach
to
Two Over One

**For The Intermediate
and
Advanced Player**

By Ken Eichenbaum

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Introduction

The lure of 2/1 from Standard American was primarily due to the ease of rebids once a two-over-one had been made. The ambiguity of Standard American had been dealt a mighty blow.

However, once going past the basic approach of a 2/1 structure, there are many different understandings, treatments, and conventions that can be employed. The key in any system is to be able to cover the *most frequently occurring* hand types in the best way with methods that are easily understood by those who are playing that system. If the system is too complex for the user, confusion will reign supreme, and if too simple, guess work will prevail.

All too often I am asked questions on bidding problems, and when I query about the meaning of a systemic bid, I receive a blank stare as though this were the “final Jeopardy” clue. For the average player, a good bidding structure must be relatively easy, as well as coherent and comprehensive,

Most of the problems in bidding arise from either poor judgment due to poor evaluation, or confusion due to lack of preparation. This treatise is primarily geared to giving you methods that PREPARE you for a plethora of situations, allowing you to reach a good contract the majority of the time.

I. No-trump Structure

Stayman

OPENER

1NT

RESPONDER

A. 2♣ = Stayman: Asks for a four-card major.

2♦ No four-card major

1. Pass = no game interest, usually 4-3-5-1 or 3-4-5-1 pattern.

2. 2♥ = no game interest with four or five hearts and four spades, or possibly four hearts, three spades and five clubs.

If opener is 3-3 in the majors he should pass. With three spades and two hearts he should “correct” to 2♠. If responder has the “odd” 3-4-1-5 he will correct to 3♣.

♠KJ4 ♥A6 ♦Q974 ♣AJ85

♠Q86 ♥K974 ♦2 ♣107643

1NT

2♣

2♦

2♥

2♠

3♣

Pass

1NT

2♣

2♦/2♥

3. 2♠= five spades and mild game try, usually with a second four- or five-card suit.

1NT

2♣

2♦

4. 3♥ and 3♠ are SMOLEN: with 5-4 in the majors and a game forcing hand, jump in the FOUR card major!

1NT
2♦/2♥/2♠

2♣
5. 2NT = GAME INVITATIONAL in NT;
may or may not have a four-card major.

1NT
2♦/2♥/2♠

2♣
6. 3♣/3♦ = natural and slam invitational
with at least a five-card suit. May or may
not have four-card major.

♠A976 ♥3 ♦KQJ96 ♣K72 slam could make opposite
♠Kx ♥Q96 ♦A1053 ♣AQ43, a mere 15 HCP!

7. 3NT = to play; definitely has at least 1
four-card major.

8. 4NT = QUANTITATIVE SLAM TRY
with some four-card major, no longer in
focus. (If you want to ask for ACES I
would play GERBER (4♣) over a 2♦
response.

1NT
2♥/2♠

2♣

SPECIAL Goldman acceptances. If opener responds a major to a
Stayman inquiry, there are various ways responder can show a fit for
the major with slam interest.

a. Three of the other major shows
shortness somewhere

1NT
2♠

2♣
3♥ = ♠ fit slam try with unknown
shortness.

3♠ asks where

Responses showing shortness in suits up-
the-line.

3NT = short ♣: 4♣ = short ♦: 4♦ = short ♥

1NT

2♥

3NT asks where:

2♣

3♠ = ♥ fit slam try with unknown shortness

4♣=short♣: 4♦=short♦: 4♥=short♥

b.

4♣ becomes “RKC”

2♣

4♣ = RKC for the major suit

1NT

2♥/2♠

c.

4♦ = balanced minimum slam try, about 15-16 HCP

1NT

2♥/2♠

2♣

4♦ = balanced hand with fit for opener's major and minimum slam interest

d.

4NT again, quantitative. You must SET TRUMPS before you can RKC.

1NT

2♥ or 2♠

2♣

4NT = Quantitative: no fit

These are pretty much all the responses after a Stayman inquiry.

Transfers

“O”

1NT

“R”

B. 2♦/2♥ = TRANSFERS

Normally “O” will merely accept the transfer at the two-level. However, there are sometimes when he holds a “special” hand which he needs to describe in order to get to some low HCP games or slams. The following are the special responses regardless of which major is transferred.

2NT shows a maximum hand with a very good three-card fit in the major transferred; usually at least two of the top three honors. So, let's say “R” transferred to spades and you held:

♠KQ6 ♥A1084 ♦K3 ♣AJ108

you could bid 2NT to show a max with good three-card trump. “R” could hold

♠J109xx ♥Kx ♦QJ7 ♣xxx

and would not dream of moving over a mere 2♠ acceptance.

3♣ is an artificial bid showing a MAX with FOUR-CARD support, perhaps something like

♠KQ97 ♥A1083 ♦A4 ♣A103, 17 HCP with SEVEN controls!

[FYI: any ace is counted as TWO controls and any king is one control.]

This hand is “primed out” [PRIME cards are aces and kings. Queens and jacks are normally referred to as “quacks.”], and is almost too strong to open 1NT. “R” may “transfer” back to his major and pass, bid a game, or cue-bid looking for slam.

“O”	“R”
1NT	2♦ = transfer
3♣	3♦ = RE-transfer to hearts
3♥	Pass with
	♠J2 ♥Q9765 ♦Q96 ♣J42: You
	may be too high already.
	Bid 4♥ with
	♠J2 ♥K97642 ♦862 ♣J98:

Without the “super” accept you never would have gone to this excellent game.

Holding ♠A2 ♥KJ9742 ♦862 ♣K5.

Although you hold only 12 HCP, you have only 7 losers, and partner's super accept should normally contain about 6 “cover cards”, [cards which cover losers.] After re-transferring you should cue-bid 3♠ to show your slam interest.

“O”	“R”
1NT	C. <u>2♠</u> = Minor Suit Stayman (MSS) This
	bid asks opener to bid a four-card <i>minor</i> if
	he has one. If not, he responds 2NT,
	denying one.

When “R” uses MSS he either has a hand with BOTH minors (normally 5-5) and < 8 HCP, OR a hand that is at LEAST 5-5 in the minors with > 10 HCP.

If responder is 5-5 in the minors with 8-10 HCP, bid 3NT and pray!

If “O” responds 2NT (denying a four-card minor) “R” bids 3♣ to show a weak hand. “O” will either pass, or correct to 3♦. With 3-3 in the minors “O” should pass since “R” will have more clubs than diamonds when he is 6-4. If “R” is 6-4 with longer diamonds, he will re-bid 3♦ over a 2NT response by “O”

“O” ♠A976 ♥K104 ♦A96 ♣KQ2

“R”(1) ♠3 ♥J8 ♦QJ87 ♣J108754

1NT 2 ♠

2NT [no four-card mi] 3 ♣ [clubs longer than diamonds 6-4.]

Pass

♠A976 ♥K104 ♦A96 ♣KQ2

“R”(2) ♠3 ♥95 ♦J87532 ♣J875

1NT 2 ♠

2NT 3 ♦ [weak; ♦ longer than ♣.]

If “O” bids either 3 ♣ or 3 ♦ to the minor suit ask, “R” will pass the response. On “R” (1) he would pass 3 ♣ and play a 6-4 club fit. On (2) he would pass and play a 4-4 club fit. If “O” responded 3 ♦ he would play a 6-4 diamond fit!

If “R” has a game forcing (GF) hand (>10 HCP) with 5-5 in the minors, he will bid his *major suit shortness* over opener's response.

1NT 2 ♠

2NT/3 ♣/3 ♦ 3 ♥ = shortness (stiff or void) in hearts

3 ♠ = shortness in spades.

Opener will express his intentions over this bid. If he does not want to play NT, he can name the minor he is interested in at the four-level.

1NT 2 ♠

2NT holding

♠KQ10 ♥Q975 ♦QJ2 ♣AJ7.

3 ♠

Over “R's 3 ♠ response, “O” will sign off in 3NT with spades well stopped and wastage in the majors.

1NT 2 ♠

3 ♣ with

♠J98 ♥AQ73 ♦Q2 ♣AQJ6.

3 ♠

With no spade stopper, “O” will bid 4 ♣.

1NT	2♠
3♦ with	
“O” ♠A97 ♥AK2 ♦Q10853 ♣A2	
	3♠ with
	“R” ♠3 ♥J2 ♦AK976 ♣K10543

Over the 3♠ bid by “R”, “O” can bid 4♥, *kickback* RKC for diamonds.

1NT	2♠
3♦	3♠
4♥	5♣ = two/no queen
5♥ asks kings	6♣ = ♣K
7♦!	

NOTE: In “kickback,” the suit above the trump suit is used for RKC, thus

4♦ = RKC for clubs
 4♥ = RKC for diamonds
 4♠ = RKC for hearts
 4NT = RKC for spades

Do not be overly concerned with these bids. Just remember that MSS shows either both minors WEAK, [<8 HCP] or both minors STRONG [>10 HCP].

“O”	“R”
1NT	D. <u>2NT</u> is a <i>relay</i> to 3♣, showing either

SIMPLE:

a weak one-suiter in diamonds or clubs, or
 a game forcing 4-4-4-1 hand with a stiff *major*.

This is simple. “R” either passes the forced 3♣ bid, (with a weak club hand) or converts to 3♦ with long, weak diamonds.

EXAMPLES:

1NT

3♣ [FORCED]

2NT

Pass with

♠3 ♥J96 ♦ Q52 ♣ Q87654

Convert to 3♦ with

♠3 ♥J96 ♦Q87654 ♣Q52

With the 4X1 hand, responder will show his shortness.

1NT

3♣ [FORCED]

2NT

3♥ = stiff heart

3♠ = stiff spade

OPTIONAL ADVANCED:

The 2NT relay can be extended to include another family of hand types.

1NT

3♣

2NT relay

1. 3NT = 4-4 in the minors with
undisclosed 3-2 majors and 14-15 HCP

This will allow you to get to some good fitting, low HCP
slams, without jeopardizing the four-level.

2. 4♣ = 2-2-4-5 slam try

4♦ = 2-2-5-4 slam try

3a. 4♥ = 2-3-4-4 [three hearts] 16-17

3b. 4♠ = 3-2-4-4 [three spades] 16-17

HCP

“O”

1NT

“R”

E. 3♣ = Puppet Stayman

1. 3♦ = at least ONE four-card major

2. 3♥/3♠ = five-card major

3. 3NT denies a four- or five-card major.

Over the 3♦ response, “R” bids the opposite major of the one
he holds if he does hold a four-card major. [Otherwise he would sign

off in 3NT, or perhaps bid 4NT with Q-slam interest.] With BOTH four-card majors and no slam interest “R” would bid 4♦ over the 3♦ bid by “O”.

Any time “R” bids **4♣** over the 3♦ response by “O” he is showing BOTH majors with *slam interest*. *Opener responds the following.*

4♥ or 4♠ = to play
4NT = RKC for hearts
5♣ = RKC for spades

“O” (1) ♠AJ97 ♥K4 ♦KQ7 ♣Q1082

“R” ♠K1083 ♥A875 ♦A2 ♣K82.

“R” has a marginal slam try, and because “O” is *light*, slam is a poor proposition. The auction might go:

1NT $3\clubsuit$

$3\spadesuit$ $4\clubsuit$

4♠ showing no slam interest. Change opener's hand to

“O” (2) ♠AQJ9 ♥K2 ♦K97 ♣A5

and “O” will force to slam via **5♣ RKC** for spades

If you choose not to employ the extended meanings to the 2NT relay, then

1NT

4NT would be a quantitative raise with about 15-17 HCP and at least a four-card minor.

For those of you who have no special responses to this bid, I suggest:

5♣ = four clubs, no 4-3-3-3 distribution; “hedge” accept contingent on fit

5♦ = four diamonds, no 4-3-3-3 distribution, “hedge” accept

5♥ = five-card club suit, “hedge” accept

5♠ = five-card diamond suit, “hedge” accept

5NT = 4-4 minors, “hedge” accept .

“Hedge” acceptances are hands where it might be necessary to play a slam in a minor suit fit, where 12 tricks might not be available in No Trump.

“O” ♠A4 ♥K86 ♦KQ97 ♣K854

“R” ♠K96 ♥QJ5 ♦AJ84 ♣AQ3

You would need a 3-3 club split for 12 tricks in No Trump, but playing in diamonds, 12 tricks are easy.

1NT

4NT

5NT

6♦

Showing the Majors

“O”

“R”

INT

F. 3♦ shows at least 5-5 in the MAJORS with *game invitational values OR better!* NOTE that by using 3♦ to show the majors, the NT opener will generally play the final contract, which is what you WANT! “O” responds as though responder's bid were GI, even though he knows it might be better.

INT

3♦

3♥ or 3♠ says, “Partner, if you are only GI, you better pass.” What might the two hands look like?

“O” ♠Q4 ♥A86 ♦KJ97 ♣KQ763

“R” ♠AJ962 ♥Q10654 ♦32 ♣4

On a good day, you might take ten tricks in hearts. On a bad day you might take only seven or eight!

Notice if you changed opener's hand to

♠K4 ♥KJ97 ♦A962 ♣A74

you are likely to take eleven tricks. Opener has so many *prime cards* and such a good fit, that even though he has only 15 HCP he would *flag* hearts by bidding 4♣, showing a maximum opener and four hearts. On this hand, “R” would *transfer* to 4♥ with a 4♦ bid and then pass.

Make opener's hand

♠K4 ♥KJ7 ♦AJ95 ♣K976 and over the 3♦ bid by “R” he would jump to 4♥ proclaiming a hand good enough for game, but not good enough to explore slam! With a little practice, these bids are easy.

Fragments and Stiffs

INT G. 3♥/ 3♠ show *singletons* with a fragment (three-card holding) in the other major, and unspecified 5-4 in the minors with > 10 HCP. These are hands which are difficult to focus all possible suits. Don't worry about follow-up bids so much, just use common sense.

“O” ♠AQJ8 ♥Q96 ♦KQ32 ♣Q2

“R” ♠K105 ♥3 ♦AJ96 ♣K10754

Notice that 3NT is a terrible contract, 5♣ is excellent, but 4♠ is the best! How would this auction proceed?

1NT 3♥ [stiff heart, three spades, >10 HCP]

3♠ [offers trump] 4♠ accepts ♠ as trump with no slam interest.

Pass

Again, don't be overly concerned about the follow-ups, just use common sense.

1NT H. 4♣ = Gerber

I. $4\spadesuit/4\heartsuit = \textit{Texas transfers}$

One expert point: If you JACOBY transfer at the two-level and then bid 4NT, it is quantitative.

After a TEXAS transfer at the four-level, 4NT = RKC.

“O”

“R” ♠K76 ♥KJ976 ♦A4 ♣KQ2

1NT

2♦ transfer

2♥

4NT QUANTITATIVE slam try (16 HCP)

♠KQJ7642 ♥A3 ♦Q5 ♣32.

Now you would TEXAS to spades with a 4♥ bid, and then bid 4NT/RKC!

Bidding Problems

“O” ♠AJ96 ♥Q4 ♦AK86 ♣J75

“R” ♠Q75 ♥K986 ♦J8752 ♣3

1NT	2♣
2♠	Pass

“O” ♠A5 ♥J753 ♦AK86 ♣K104

“R” ♠3 ♥K4 ♦J8752 ♣QJ853

1NT	2♠
3♦	Pass

“O” ♠A86 ♥K4 ♦AK865 ♣Q85

“R” ♠K2 ♥Q85 ♦Q1097 ♣AK96

1NT	2NT
3♣	3NT
6♦	Pass

“O” ♠KQ1076 ♥K8 ♦A865 ♣Q10

“R” ♠J95 ♥Q75 ♦K4 ♣KJ72

1NT	3♣
3♠	4♠

“O” ♠KQ6 ♥A1083 ♦97 ♣AK5

“R” ♠AJ975 ♥KQ962 ♦4 ♣103

1NT	3♦
4♣ = ♥flag	4♦ transfer back to hearts
4♥	5♦ shortness ♦
6♣	6♥

“O” ♠KQJ6 ♥J86 ♦AK97 ♣Q76

“R” ♠A105 ♥7 ♦Q864 ♣KJ984

1NT 3♥

3♠ 4♠

“O” ♠A964 ♥K5 ♦A97 ♣KQ106

“R” ♠KQ75 ♥AQ832 ♦2 ♣J73

1NT 2♣

2♠ 3♥ = shortness somewhere with ♠ fit

3♠ asks 4♣ = shortness ♦

4NT RKC ♠ 5♠ = two with ♠ queen

6♠

II. Major Suit Structure

We are going to use a slightly different approach than the one you might be used to, revolving around forcing no-trumps, semi-constructive raises, *graded raises*, random-suit-game tries, [RSGT] Drury by a passed hand, and “EICHOBY” 2NT, a game forcing raise. With game forcing hands that do not fit “EICHOBY,” we will start with a 2/1 response (usually 2♣) and use special “Rexford” cue-bidding methods.

A. *Simple Raises*

Generally, simple raises show THREE-CARD trump support with “semi” constructive values, about 7-10 “*dummy points*.” You may also have a weak hand with four-card trump support and about 4-7 HCP for a simple raise, as these hands will usually contain nearly the equivalent in *cover cards* as the stronger three-card raise.

Opener

♠AQ986 ♥K3 ♦A975 ♣Q5

Responder

♠K73 ♥A976 ♦J64 ♣J64 You want no part of the three-level, so raise to 2♠.

Responder

♠K732 ♥Q976 ♦84 ♣J64 Again, you want no part of the three-level unless pushed there. A simple raise to 2♠ will act as a “blocking bid,” and will suffice for the time being.

Responder

♠K732 ♥A976 ♦84 ♣J105 This hand is too good for a mere 2♠ raise, so you make a *mixed raise* (more on that later).

SOMETHING TO AVOID

Partner opens 1♥ and you hold: ♠A986 ♥J98 ♦Q952 ♣32. DO NOT bid 1♠. You already have a known heart fit and there is no sense looking for another fit. If you bid 1♠ now, what do you re-bid when opener (“O”) responds either 2♣ or 2♦? If you “preference” with 2♥, “O” will think you have only two-card heart support. Also, if you start with a 1♠ response, you allow the opposition to enter with a “cheap” bid at the two-level in a minor suit. Raise to 2♥ immediately.

B. Forcing NT

By an UN- passed hand, a 1NT response to a major suit opener shows a hand that is NOT game forcing, and no other bid could at this time better describe it. There are a plethora of possibilities of distributions and the only thing known at this time is that responder (“R”) does NOT have an opening hand.

C. *Delayed Limit Raise*

Delayed limit raises are hands where you are not quite good enough to game force when holding three-card trump support. These hands will normally contain about 11-13 *dummy points*.

(Dummy points [DMP] are HCP added to “distribution” points).

You hold ♠K108 ♥A96 ♦KJ953 ♣32 and partner opens 1♥. You are not quite good enough to force this hand to game, so you start with the *forcing no trump*, intending to jump to 3♥ at next opportunity.

If opener rebids 2♣, you now make a **“delayed/three-card limit raise.”** This hand is not quite good enough to game force, as the ♦KJ and ♠K are unknown contributors. They may or may not be assets.

However, if opener rebids 2♦, suddenly your diamond holding takes on full values. It is important to continue to re-evaluate your assets or liabilities as the auction progresses. Over a 2♦ rebid by opener, I would jump to 4♥, implying this type of holding.

If opener re-bids 2♥, showing at least 6 pieces, again you are allowed to jump to 4♥ as a nine-fit in hearts is now known. If you merely raise to 3♥, opener will assume you have only two-card trump support with 10-11 HCP.

D. *Graded Raises*

If you play that all jump raises are limit, 10 - 12 HCP with four-card trump support, opener will often be on a guess on how to continue. Let's say opener holds

♠AJ986 ♥K3 ♦A1097 ♣95

and responder makes a limit raise of 3 ♠. What does opener do now?

If responder holds

♠Q743 ♥A96 ♦Q4 ♣Q864, game is an illusion, but if he holds

♠K743 ♥A96 ♦K4 ♣Q964, game is almost a certainty.

Being able to distinguish various *ranges* with four-card trump support can be invaluable. I use a slightly modified group of raises SIMILAR TO, but different than *Bergen*. With FOUR-card trump support I break down responses into three groups:

1. mixed raise (including "LIMIX")
2. limit raise
3. minimum game force

1. A *mixed raise* is basically a constructive raise with four-card trump support. It will normally be a balanced hand with about 7-9 HCP, but could be slightly stronger or weaker depending on distribution and type of honors. "Quacks," (queens and jacks) are downgraded, and prime cards (aces and kings) are upgraded.

I play that a jump raise, *in and out of competition*, shows this hand type.

1♥/1♠

Jump raise = mixed

1♥/1♠ DBL

Jump raise = mixed

1♥/1♠ overcall

jump raise = mixed

I also have a specialized bid which I call a *limix* raise which specifically shows two guaranteed cover cards and four-card trump support with an unknown singleton. I call this a *LIMIX* raise because it is a cross between a limit and mixed raise. The distribution factor makes it slightly stronger than a mixed raise, but the *value* factor

makes it weaker than a limit raise. This hand will contain about 6-8 HCP, but cover cards are the key.

A jump to **3♦** (in and out of competition) shows this hand. This bid can be made over a double, or if an over-call was made below 2♦.

1♥ or 1♠	Pass	3♦ = limix raise
1♥ or 1♠	DBL	3♦ = limix
1♥/1♠ --or-- 1♠/1NT/2♣		3♦ = limix

Any ace, or king in the trump suit is considered a **cover card**, and any outside ACE, or KQ combination is also considered a cover card. If there is a potential outside **trick source**, the trump queen may also be considered a cover card. Therefore, if partner opens 1♠, any of the following would be considered a **limix** raise.

♠KQJ9 ♥J976 ♦2 ♣9862 low end. The ♠K is one cover card, and the ♠QJ combination is considered another
 ♠Q986 ♥2 ♦A10765 ♣986 mid-range. The ♦A is one cover, and the ♠Q another because of the potential trick source in diamonds
 ♠KJ87 ♥J765 ♦2 ♣A986 high end. The ♣A and ♠K are covers, and the two major jacks are just a bonus.

Opener will often be able to guess where responder's shortness is, but is guided by the principle of "***if it might be right, bid the game.***"

Playing this convention, my partner and I were one of only two pairs to reach game in a match-point event holding the following two hands.

"O" ♠A10864 ♥AQ5 ♦J764 ♣2

"R" ♠KQJ9 ♥J976 ♦2 ♣9862

1♠ 3♦ = **LIMIX**

My partner ascertained that I probably held a stiff diamond, and if so, I had to hold either the ♣A and ♠K, or the ♠KQJx. He aggressively bid 4♠. The opening lead was a high diamond. At trick two, the opposition switched to a trump, but it was too late. Partner

won in hand, ruffed a diamond, successfully finessed the ♥K, ruffed a diamond, heart to the ace, ruffed his last diamond, and claimed ten tricks.

2. A jump to 3♣ shows some form of four-card raise with a balanced hand and 10 -13 HCP, or an unbalanced hand with about 9 - 11 HCP.

“O”

1♥/1♠

“R”

3♣ shows either a balanced 10-13 HCP with four-card trump support, or about 9-11 HCP with shortness somewhere, a tad stronger than a *limix*.

If opener wants to play game opposite any hand, he can just jump to game. If he is on a “light” opener, he can attempt to “sign off” by rebidding his major at the three-level, warning partner of his limitations. If, however, he has a hand that he might be looking for either game or slam, he can ASK responder what kind of hand he has by bidding 3♦

The squarer the hand, and the more queens and jacks, the weaker the hand. Prime cards and ruffing values increase trick potential!

If responder holds a minimum raise, he responds 3♥

1♥ or 1♠

3♣ = limit

3♦ ask

3♥ = minimum

“O” ♠KJ876 ♥A106 ♦6 ♣K962

“R” ♠Q954 ♥QJ3 ♦KJ85 ♣Q85

1♠

3♣

3♦ artificial ask

3♥ bad raise

3♠

Pass

If responder holds an unbalanced hand with 9–11 HCP, he rebids 3♠.

1♥ or 1♠

3♣

3♦

3♠ shows shortness somewhere, forcing game.

If opener has slam aspirations, he can bid 3NT asking where the shortness is. Responses are

4♣ – stiff ♣: 4♦ = stiff ♦: 4♥ = stiff major

“O” ♠KQ9876 ♥A986 ♦K2 ♣A

“R” ♠AJ54 ♥5 ♦A876 ♣10832

1♠	3♣
3♦	3♠ [9-11 HCP with unknown shortness]
3NT asks where	4♥ = ♥shortness
4NT	5♥ = two without the queen
7♠	

Let's see how many other pairs reach this grand!

If responder holds a balanced “super” hand with 4-6 controls (an ace = 2 controls and a king = 1 control) he responds 3NT to the 3♦ ask.

♠KQ9765 ♥2 ♦AK94 ♣A3

♠A1042 ♥A976 ♦52 ♣K96

1♠	3♣
3♦	3NT [4-6 controls]
4♣	4♥
4NT = RKC	5♥ = two/no queen
5NT asks specific kings	6♣
6♦ asks 3 rd round control, as both sides know that responder cannot possibly hold the ♦K. 7♠ a 28 HCP GRAND!	

If responder holds a maximum with no shortness and fewer than four controls, he merely jumps to game in the known trump suit.

♠KQ9765 ♥2 ♦AK94 ♣A3

♠AJ102 ♥KJ97 ♦Q2 ♣J96

1♠	3♣
3♦	4♠
Pass	

♠Q9765 ♥Q2 ♦K94 ♣AQ3
 ♠AJ102 ♥KJ97 ♦Q2 ♣J96
 1 ♠ 3 ♣
 3 ♦ 4 ♠

♠KJ876 ♥A106 ♦6 ♣K962
 ♠Q954 ♥QJ3 ♦AJ85 ♣Q85
 1 ♠ 3 ♣
 3 ♦ 4 ♠

ADVANCED OPTIONAL

If responder holds a *concentration of values (COV)* in a four-card suit, he can show it over the 3 ♦ ask.

♠AQ97654 ♥A3 ♦3 ♣AJ5
 ♠KJ62 ♥J7 ♦Q92 ♣KQ103
 1 ♠ 3 ♣
 3 ♦ 4 ♣ [COV with four-card suit]
 4NT (RKC) 5♦ (one key card)
 6 ♠

Optional 3NT

1Major 3NT

I play that a jump to 3NT shows a balanced, minimum game force with three- or four-card trump support, 4-3-3-3 distribution and about 13-15 HCP. Opener has the option to pass.

E. DIRECT SPLINTERS

Hands with shortness and about 11-13 HCP are considered minimum game force type hands, and will be covered by direct splinters. These hands will never contain more than two “key cards” and the trump queen, or two key cards and an outside control.

“O”

1♥/1♠

“R”

4♣/4♦ = “*splinter*” - shortness and about 11-13 HCP; can have no more than two key cards and an outside control (including trump queen) at MOST!

EXAMPLES:

1♥

4♦ with ♠KQ76 ♥Q976 ♦2 ♣KQ76
low end

3♠ with ♠4 ♥AQ97 ♦A986 ♣Q976
mid range

4♣ with ♠AQ7 ♥QJ76 ♦A9853 ♣5
high end

F. EICHOBY 2NT

A 2NT response to a major suit opener proclaims at least four-card trump support and at least 14 HCP, with no 4-3-3-3 distribution unless greater than 15 HCP. This hand may be balanced, OR unbalanced, but will never contain a void. Not only is this bid game forcing, but it immediately focuses slam interest.

The “EICHOBY” 2NT is similar to Jacoby but the lower range is stronger, and the hand may be unbalanced. The responses, therefore, are different

Opener responds to the 2NT bid by either showing a balanced hand, or unbalanced hand.

If “O” has a **Balanced “light” opener**, he jumps to game in his trump suit, just as in Jacoby. These are hands with about 11-12 HCP usually with a lack of aces and other controls.

When opener has a balanced hand with at least **sound values**, opener responds **3♣**. These hands will generally contain about 12-14 HCP.

If opener is balanced with extra values, either 5-4-2-2 14+ HCP, or extra trump length 14+ HCP, he will respond **3♦**.

If responder is balanced with 14+ HCP, he will bid the **next step**.

1 Major	2NT
3♣ balanced sound	3♦ = balanced
1 Major	2NT
3♦ balanced extras	3♥ = balanced

At this point, cue-bidding starts, including **trump cues** (promising at least the ace or king), and ***serious 3NT**.

* If either partner bids 3NT during this sequence, it announces *serious interest* in slam, contextually extra values that could not have been shown previously.

“O” ♠AKJ976 ♥53 ♦A105 ♣K9

“R” ♠Q864 ♥AK9 ♦K4 ♣A864

1 ♠ 2NT

3 ♦ 3♥

3 ♠ 3NT = serious

4 ♣ 4♦

4NT 5♠

5NT asks specific kings 6♥ = ♥K; note that the ♦K was previously shown, so no need to show it again.

7♠

If responder is UN-balanced, he must hold at least 13 HCP. In these cases he SKIPS a step, and shows WHERE his shortness is by corresponding steps up-the-line.

1 Major 2NT

3 ♣ [sound balanced] 3♥ = shortness ♣

3♠ = shortness ♦

3NT = shortness other major

1 Major 2NT

3 ♦ 3♠ = short ♣

3NT = short ♦

4♣ = short major

“O” ♠AKJ976 ♥53 ♦A105 ♣K9

“R” ♠Q864 ♥AK9 ♦4 ♣A864

1 ♠ 2NT

3 ♦ 3NT = shortness ♦

4 ♣ 4♥

4NT 5♠

5NT 6♥ = ♥king

7♠

If **opener** holds an unbalanced hand with sound values, he skips 3♣ and 3♦ and SHOWS his shortness correspondingly.

3NT = shortness other major

7♠

G *Using 2/1 Responses*

There are certain hand types which do not clearly fit the parameters for the various graded raises or splinters. These are usually hands with extra trump length, side suits which may be a trick source, voids, or hands with stiff honors. With these hands it is best to start with a 2/1, especially in clubs.

*I play that a 2/1 in clubs promises no more than a two-card holding, although it is intended as natural.

***THIS BID MUST BE ALERTED**

The 2♣ bid is the cheapest bid to “get out of opener's way,” so that the trump suit might be set at the two-level, allowing specialized cue-bidding. If the trump suit can be set at the two-level, the “*Rexford*” approach is used.

Opener		Responder
1♥		2♣
2♦		2♥
	or	
1♠		2♣
2♦/2♥		2♠

Both the game force and trump suit have been established.

1. If opener has some really crummy opener, he can jump to game to express this.

2. However, if he has any SOUND opener or better, he starts by special cue-bids.

a. If opener does NOT hold at least two of the top three honors in the trump suit, he rebids 2NT. This immediately allows responder to evaluate prospects of one or more trump losers. The only exception to this rule is if opener has a six-card suit headed by the ace, in which case he treats it as two-of-the-top three.

b. If opener DOES hold two of the top three honors, he

immediately cue-bids a control. If he cue-bids his second suit, he promises either the ACE, or the king-queen combination. If responder cue-bids clubs at first opportunity, he too is promising at least the ace, or KQ combination.

EXAMPLES:

“O” ♠K9864 ♥AQ3 ♦KQ86 ♣2

“R” ♠J764 ♥KJ5 ♦AJ ♣KQJ5

1 ♠ 2 ♣

2 ♦ 2 ♠

2NT [denies 2/top3 trump]

Responder immediately realizes that slam will not be a good proposition, and can offer 3NT as a final contract.

NOTE: Bypassing cue-bids at the three-level and leaping directly to 3NT is NOT serious, but rather OPTIONAL.

♠K9864 ♥AQ3 ♦KQ86 ♣2

♠AQ764 ♥KJ5 ♦AJ2 ♣A5

1 ♠ 2 ♣

2 ♦ 2 ♠

2NT 3 ♣ “I am still interested, and have either the ♣A or at least the ♣KQ.”

3 ♦ “I have at least the ♦ace, or ♦KQ.”

3 ♥ = either ace or king

3 ♠ = TRUMP CUE: either ace or king

3NT = serious slam intentions

4 ♣ = first or second round control

4NT = RKC

5 ♥ = two/no queen

7 ♠

Yes, 7NT makes, but it is hard to find out about the ♥Q in opener's hand.

If opener does have two of the top three trump honors, he bypasses the 2NT rebid and cue-bids.

“O” ♠KQ986 ♥AQ3 ♦KQ86 ♣2

“R” ♠A764 ♥KJ5 ♦AJ2 ♣A5

1 ♠

2 ♣

2 ♦

2 ♠

3 ♣

3 ♦

3 ♥

3 ♠

3NT = “serious”

4 ♣

4 ♦

4 ♥

4NT

5 ♣ [0314] three “key cards”

Since opener knows that responder has second round control of hearts, he need ask nothing further, but places the final contract in 7 ♠. With the ♦J unknown to opener, responder may correct to 7NT, assuming opener has either an extra trump, the ♥Q, or the ♣K.

Here's a fun hand that came up when I was playing with “the King” himself, Mr. Kenneth Rexford.

Opener [“the King”]

♠QJ876 ♥AK95 ♦KJ96 ♣void

Responder [ME]

♠AK1053 ♥Q ♦A52 ♣J873

1 ♠

2 ♣

2 ♥

2 ♠

2NT

3 ♦ [ace or king] denies ♣A or ♣KQ

3 ♥ = at least ace, or KQ

3 ♠ trump cue

3NT = *serious*

4 ♥ = no ace or king of clubs; nothing extra in diamonds

4NT

5 ♣ [3 key cards]

6 ♥ = “anything extra you haven't shown?”

7 ♠

Note that Mr. Rexford could bid key card even with a void, since he knew I had nothing in that suit.

These auctions take a little practice, but after a while, it's like riding a bicycle.

H. Random Suit Game Tries [RSGT]

When responder makes a simple raise and opener has a hand where he has extras, but needs help to bid game, he re-bids 2NT. This is an artificial bid and is forcing. The 2NT bid proclaims, “Partner, I am interested in game ONLY, but need help. If you have a good raise you can jump to game. If you had a bad raise, you can sign off right now in three of our trump suit. If you are not sure, you can bid a suit where you have values which you are not sure are working, as they may or may not fit my hand. I will then make the final decision.”

The reason we call this a “random” try is because we are not pinpointing exactly where we need help; we just need “random” good values. Game bidding is generally “quantitative bash.” If we have enough values and the appropriate trump fit, we bid a game. We are not sure how our hands fit, but we know we probably have a chance to make game.

If I opened 1♥ holding

♠2 ♥AKJ876 ♦KQ6 ♣A95 and you raised me to 2♥, I am going to bid 4♥. Sure, you might hold some “death” hand like

♠KJ3 ♥Q95 ♦1074 ♣Q83, and game might go down, but chances are you hold enough fitting cards to give me a good chance for 10 tricks.

However, if I held

♠2 ♥AK9876 ♦KJ6 ♣A95, I am probably going to need some help. With this hand “O” will bid 2NT, a RSGT. What would responder do with the following?

“O”

1♥

2NT

With maximum HCP you could just jump to game, but with no ruffing values you might “hedge” with a 3♣ bid, or offer 3NT.

“R”

2♥

♠A84 ♥1052 ♦ Q1087 ♣K65

♠Q96 ♥Q43 ♦9876 ♣K87

With minimum values and distribution, I would sign off in 3♥ in a hurry!

♠A843 ♥K107 ♦6 ♣J10765

This is such an incredibly strong hand, I would think about “splintering” with 4♦, as opener could hold some magic hand like

♠5♥AQ643♦A42♣KQ43.

but, since I don't “chase rainbows,” I will content myself with a jump to 4♥, and leave the opponents clue-less as to the nature of my hand.

I. Drury

The use of a 2♣ bid by a passed hand in response to a 3rd or 4th seat major suit opening bid shows better than a simple raise, and asks opener to define his hand.

“O” [3rd or 4th seat]

1♥/1♠

“R”

2♣ shows EITHER:

A. three-card trump support with
limit raise values approximately 10-11 HIGH CARD POINTS, OR

B. four-card trump support with
MIXED RAISE values or BETTER, approximately 9-12 DUMMY POINTS.

Opener is now aware that responder has a hand that would have forced to at least the three level had he been an un-passed hand. But because opener is in 3rd or 4th seat, he may have opened light, and since responders' values are limited, the partnership is allowed to stop at the two-level.

Opener responds to the 2♣ inquiry as follows.

1. 2♦ shows a full opening hand that is INTERESTED in pursuing a game contract. This hand will usually contain about 12-14 HCP and about 6 ½ to 7 losers.

2. A re-bid of the major at the two-level warns partner of insufficient values to pursue game. This bid does not DENY opening values, it merely denies the values to pursue game.

This hand will usually contain about 10-13 HCP and more than 7 losers.

3. A 2NT rebid shows a balanced slam try. An example of a hand opener might have is:

♠AK9854 ♥AQ9 ♦K4 ♣A8, just shy of a 2♣ opener. GRAND might make opposite:

♠Q762 ♥K875 ♦A83 ♣72, a mere 9 HCP (10 *dummy points*)

4. A re-bid of a new suit at the three-level shows a slam try
NAMING *shortness*. A typical hand might be something like:

♠4 ♥AKQ96 ♦AQ87 ♣KQ5, where slam would be made opposite as little as

♠J765 ♥J1054 ♦K2 ♣A87, another 9 count.

5. A jump to four of the major shows a hand with no slam interest but willing to play game opposite any minimum Drury response. Typical hands are 5-6 losers, and about 15 or more dummy points, perhaps something like:

♠KQ10876 ♥QJ8 ♦3 ♣AQ9.

Responder's obligations are as follows.

1) Over a 2♦ bid by “O”, “R” will re-bid the major the two-level with any minimum response. This will be a hand with three-card support and ten “bad” points, or a hand with four-card trump support and about 8-9 “bad” HCP.

2) Responder should almost always pass opener's “weak re-bid,” unless he holds some amazing support. After a 1♠ opener, if “R” held something like:

♠QJ86 ♥4 ♦A10865 ♣Q105, he would certainly want to make one more try. Game could be made opposite as little as

♠K9754 ♥J86 ♦K4 ♣KJ4. When responder wants to make one more try over a “rejection” bid by “O”, he may re-bid his *shortness* at the three-level. Opener will now place the final contract.

3) Over a 2NT balanced slam try, “R” will bid shortness at the three-level if he has it, re-bid three of the major with THREE-card trump support and prime values, re-bid 3NT with FOUR-card support and prime values, and jump to four of the major with any minimum and minimal prime values; usually a lot of “quacks.”

4) Over a shortness showing slam try, “R” should cue-bid inferentially with appropriate cards in the shortness suit; appropriate cards would be minimal “wastage.”

5) Responder MUST pass!

Although there might be some other more complex

understandings and descriptive bids, these responses are pretty basic and easy to use, and you don't want to overload yourself with "system" on infrequent hand types.

J. Special Bids by Passed Hand

When responder is a passed hand, his values are limited, and therefore his responses change.

1♠ 2♦ = five diamonds and five
hearts 8-10 HCP, something like ♠xx ♥AJ965 ♦QJ1086 ♣2

1♠ = five hearts and five clubs 8-10 HCP

1♥ 2♠ by a passed hand shows five
spades and a five-card minor with constructive values, about 8-10
HCP

Opposite a minor suit opener, the following are responses by a passed hand.

1♣/1♦ 2♣ = five spades and five hearts
WEAK; ostensibly 3-7 HCP

2♦ = five spades and five hearts
with 8-10 HCP

1♣/1♦ 2♥ = CLUBS, competitive. If 1♣ opened, need only five-card suit. If 1♦ opened, need six-card suit.

2♠ = DIAMONDS; same principles apply as 1♣ opener.

1♣/1♦ **2NT** = BOTH MINORS (at least 5-4 unbalanced, usually 5-5) competitive.

Jump raises are weak:

1♣	3♣
1♦	3♦

There are many other treatments and conventions which may

be added to this structure, especially in competitive auctions, but for the most part these will suffice.

BIDDING PROBLEMS

Opener

Responder

1. ♠AJ975 ♥643 ♦AK6 ♣95

1 ♠

Pass

A. ♠K843 ♥Q9 ♦742 ♣K1064

3 ♠ = “MIXED”

B. ♠K843 ♥Q9 ♦72 ♣A10642

1 ♠

3 ♣ limit

This hand is borderline game interest, but with 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ losers I would choose a

3 ♠ bid showing a light opener. “R” should probably bid game anyway, for although he has only 9 HCP, he will have four “covers” opposite most hands.

C. ♠K843 ♥Q98 ♦J105 ♣AQ2

1 ♠

3 ♣

3 ♠

Pass even with 12 HCP. Too many losers and not enough covers to bid game over a weak sign off.

Change opener's hand to

♠AJ975 ♥J64 ♦AK6 ♣J5, and the bidding might go

1 ♠

3 ♣

3 ♦ ask

3 ♥ temporizing “lie”

3 ♠

3NT offer to play

Pass

2. ♠AQ8764 ♥3 ♦A1042 ♣A5

A. ♠KJ92 ♥Q976 ♦K6 ♣KQ8

1 ♠

3NT

4 ♣

4 ♦

4 ♥

5 ♣

6 ♠

♠AQ8764 ♥3 ♦A1042 ♣A5

1♠

3NT = stiff heart

4♦

4NT = RKC (0314)

5NT general ask contextually, since both minor suit kings are already known.

6♦ asks third round control

B. ♠KJ92 ♥A976 ♦K6 ♣KQ8

2NT = EICHOBY

4♣

4♥

5♥

6♣ = ♣queen

7♠

♠AQ8764 ♥3 ♦A1042 ♣A5

1♠

3♦ ask

4♣

C. ♠KJ92 ♥A976 ♦K6 ♣987

3♣

3NT = 4-6 controls with max and ruffing value

4♦

At this point, “O” knows that “R” has either four kings, or the ♥A and two kings, the appropriate controls. The key is whether “R” has a doubleton diamond, which he must have unless he is 4-2-3-4 (highly unlikely) or 4-4-3-2, in which case “R” might hold

♠Kxxx ♥Axxx ♦KQx ♣xx,

♠Kxxx ♥Axxx ♦J9x ♣Kx, or

♠Kxxx ♥Axxx ♦KJx ♣xx, and

slam is cold with no club lead, or on a finesse with a club lead.

“O” could “last train” with 4♥, but more practically would launch into RKC and bid the slam when he finds out about the ♠K and ♥A.

3. ♠AQ9764 ♥J5 ♦A96 ♣K2

1♠

A. ♠K105 ♥A98 ♦54 ♣Q9743

2♠

“O” has 6 ¼ losers and “R” might have 3+ covers, so “O” should look for game. He should bid

2NT = “RSGT”

With an absolute maximum, “R” should jump to 4♠, but he could invite back with 3♣ as a “hedge” if he is timid, and “O” will bid the game.

B. ♠1052 ♥K1083 ♦Q54 ♣QJ9

2♠

1♠

2NT

With no spade card, no ace, a bunch of “quacks” and 4-3-3-3 distribution, “R” should sign off as fast as possible and hope 9 tricks are available.

Opener is third seat and responder is a passed hand

4. ♠AQ976 ♥A85 ♦J87 ♣Q2 A. ♠K1084 ♥3 ♦K1064 ♣K985

1 ♠

2 ♣ DRURY

2 ♦ = full opener, game interest

3 ♥ = shortness game try

4 ♠

B. ♠K108 ♥32 ♦Q1064 ♣AJ85

1 ♠

2 ♣

2 ♦

2 ♥ = “last train” artificial

2 ♠

Pass

C. ♠J108 ♥32 ♦KQ104 ♣AJ85

1 ♠

2 ♣

2 ♦

4 ♠

5. ♠AJ9764 ♥J85 ♦AKQ2 ♣5

A. ♠KQ85 ♥2 ♦J976 ♣AQ64

1 ♠

4 ♥ splinter (12-13 HCP)

4NT

5 ♠

6 ♠

B. ♠KQ85 ♥K976 ♦3 ♣KJ87

1 ♠

4 ♦ splinter

4 ♥ “last train”

4 ♠

Pass

6. ♠AJ976 ♥2 ♦K107 ♣K986

♠4 ♥AJ743 ♦QJ853 ♣Q4

1 ♠

2 ♦ showing 5-5 in the red suits

and about 8-10 HCP

Pass With a trump lead you will probably take 8 – 9 tricks, and with a club lead might take more. Look how easy it was to bid this hand. With “conventional” methods, the bidding would start:

1 ♠

1NT

2 ♣ and responder will have to guess which red suit to bid.

7. ♠K104 ♥A97652 ♦2 ♣KQ5

♠QJ953 ♥8 ♦J94 ♣AJ963

1 ♥

2 ♠

2NT asking for minor

3 ♣

4 ♠

With conventional methods:

1 ♥

1 ♠

Does opener re-bid his hearts or raise spades? Your guess!

8. ♠K105 ♥Q4 ♦A9876 ♣A97

1♦

2♠

1♦

3♠ inviting

A. ♠Q9762 ♥J10853 ♦2 ♣J8

2♣ = weak 5-5 majors

Pass

B. ♠QJ976 ♥KJ853 ♦2 ♣K8

2♦ = 8-10 HCP with 5-5 majors

4♠

With a little practice you will become a master at these bids
and will improve your results while impressing your opponents!

III. Minor Suit Structure

There are a number of structures you might use, but here is my favorite, fairly simple to use.

- Simple raises are INVERTED, showing at least minimal limit raise values.
- Jump raises are “PRE/MIX” showing at least five-card trump support and about 6-9 “dummy” points.

That's pretty simple, isn't it? The follow-up bids are a little more complex. What does opener respond to these bids?

- In response to an inverted raise, (9+HCP with at least four-card trump support):

“O”		“R”
1 ♣		2 ♣
	or	
1 ♦		2 ♦

a) opener will make an artificial bid of the NEXT HIGHEST SUIT if he has any sound opening hand or better. If “R” also has a game forcing hand, (usually balanced), he will bid the next suit, proclaiming a game forcing auction, or jump to 3NT with non-prime values and 13-15 HCP.

“O”	“R”
1 ♣	2 ♣
2 ♦ [sound opener]	2 ♥ artificial game force (usually balanced).
1 ♦	2 ♦
2 ♥ [artificial sound opener]	<u>2 ♠</u> artificial game force, mere <u>step responses.</u>
	<u>3NT</u> = non-prime 13-15 HCP

b) opener will re-bid 2NT with a **BALANCED MINIMUM**, about 11-12 HCP. Responder may then pass, sign off in three of the minor, bid game, or force to game with some other bid, possibly looking for best strain and level.

1 ♣	2 ♣
2NT = 11-12 balanced	

c) opener may re-bid the minor at the three-level proclaiming a minimum opener with at least a five-card suit, often with shortness somewhere.

1 ♦	2 ♦
3♦ = 11-12 HCP with at least five diamonds	
EX: ♠2 ♥KJ8 ♦AJ987 ♣K864	

d1) Opener may “splinter” at the three-level with sound opening values, usually about 13-15 HCP, about 6 to 7 losers.

Opener: ♠2 ♥KJ8 ♦AJ987 5 ♣A86

1 ♦	2 ♦
3 ♠	

d2) With more, he will “delay” splinter.
 ♠A95 ♥3 ♦KQ98 ♣AKJ73 4 ½ losers

1 ♣	2 ♣
2 ♦	2 ♥
<u>3♥</u> = <i>delayed splinter</i>	

e) opener may jump to 3NT showing a balanced 18-19 HCP with a five-card suit.

The following are some examples.

Opener

a) ♠Q76 ♥K4 ♦Q108 ♣AQ985
 1 ♣
 2♦ sound+ opener
 2NT

Responder

♠K105 ♥QJ2 ♦A2 ♣K7432
 2 ♣
 2♥ artificial GF
 3NT

b) ♠Q76 ♥K4 ♦AJ75 ♣Q985 ♠K105 ♥QJ2 ♦K7432 ♣J6
 1♦ 2♦
 2NT [minimum balanced hand] PASS: With only 10 HCP and lots
 of “quacks” this is probably the best spot.

c) ♠QJ76 ♥4 ♦AJ1074 ♣Q98 ♠K105 ♥QJ2 ♦K7432 ♣J6
 1♦ 2♦
 3♦ Pass

d1) ♠2 ♥A96 ♦KQ5 ♣AJ9654 ♠J76 ♥K2 ♦A1062 ♣K873
 1♣ 2♣: Although 2NT shows a
 balanced 11-12 HCP, you have too many cards in the minors for this
 action*.

*If you are to play 3NT, you will get there. Over your 2♣
 raise if “O” re-bids 2NT, you will pass; if “O” re-bids 2♦ you will
 bid 2NT showing a NON GAME FORCE with a balanced hand, and
 if “O” wants to accept, he may bid 3NT.

A direct 2NT bid may look more like
 ♠QJ7 ♥K92 ♦A1062 ♣K87.

3♠ = SPLINTER with 13-15 HCP 4♣ = could be passed
 4♦ would be RKC
 4♥ would imply no diamond control
 5♣ would be “sign off”
 Therefore 4NT = last train 6♣
 Pass

d2) The “delayed” splinter works like this.

♠2 ♥A96 ♦KJ10 ♣AKJ986	♠A84 ♥K3 ♦Q94 ♣Q10532
1♣	2♣
2♦ = full opener	3♣ = limit raise only
3♠ = “delayed” splinter, extras	4♦ = RKC
4♥ = three key cards	6♣

e) Jump to 3NT.

♠K2 ♥A96 ♦KJ10 ♣AKJ98

1♣

3NT

4♥ = three

1Minor

♠A84 ♥K3 ♦Q94 ♣Q10532

2♣

4♦ = RKC

6♣

2NT = 11+-to bad 13 HCP with
minimal focus on the minor

We use the direct 3NT bid by responder to show 16-17 HCP with a balanced hand, but non-slammish in opener's minor.

1♣

3NT:

♠KQ6 ♥K105 ♦AQ8 ♣Q942

The jump raise shows about 6-9 HCP with at least five trump. It is a little stronger than a preemptive bid, but weaker than a limit raise; a cross between preemptive and mixed. This bid helps to keep the opposition out of the auction while maintaining a safe level.

♠Q76 ♥K4 ♦Q108 ♣AJ985

1♣

♠x ♥QJ4 ♦J92 ♣Q108532.

3♣

PROBLEMS

Opener

Responder

1. ♠A95 ♥KJ73 ♦KQ96 ♣J2

♠Q10 ♥A82 ♦AJ875 ♣Q96

1♦

2♦

2♥

3NT

2. ♠A2 ♥K765 ♦K9 ♣QJ976

♠K96 ♥A4 ♦A74 ♣K10852

1♣

2♣

2♦

2♥

3♣

3♦

3♥

3♠

4♦ [RKC]

4♥

6♣

3. ♠74 ♥K4 ♦A97 ♣KJ8765

♠QJ5 ♥Q107 ♦J10 A10932

1♣

2♣

3♣

Pass

4. ♠J87 ♥Q104 K3 AJ965 ♠93 ♥A96 ♦AQ72 ♣10874

1♣

2♣

2NT

Pass

5. ♠KJ9 ♥J3 ♦A97 ♣K10875

♠Q4 ♥108 ♦K52 ♣QJ9642

1♣

3♣

Pass

6. ♠K42 ♥J8 ♦KQ875 ♣K106

♠Q108 ♥AQ6 ♦AJ9 ♣Q95

1♦

2♦

2NT

3NT

7. ♠Q1075 ♥A7 ♦Q108 ♣KQ75

♠2 ♥J9 ♦974 ♣AJ89642

1♣

3♣ or 4♣

Pass

IV. Game Invitational Jump Shifts

The jump shift can be employed for various purposes. One is to show BIG hands. This has been discarded by most of the tourney community. The second is to show WEAK hands, not good enough to respond; usually fewer than 6 HCP. This is a popular treatment. I, however find that I can bid strong hands strong, and weak hands weak. The problem hands are GAME INVITATIONAL hands.

Let's say partner opens 1♣ and you hold: ♠KQ10973 ♥2 ♦A1074 ♣J86. Playing “normal” two-over-one methods, you respond 1♠. Partner now re-bids 2♣. What do you do now? If you bid “3 invitational spades” you might be too high. If you re-bid two “drop dead” spades, partner might pass when you should be in game. Both sides are reduced to guessing.

Here's another problem. Partner opens 1♦ and you hold: ♠J4 ♥876 ♦K4 ♣AQ10875. You are too weak to make a two-over-one game forcing 2♣ bid, yet too strong AND mis-descriptive for a mere 1NT response. It is another problem which cannot be solved in 2/1.

The *game invitational jump shift* [GIJS] not only allows you to stay low when necessary, it also opens up some spin-off bids which we will get to in a moment.

What are the requirements for the GI jump shift (J/S)? It should show a six to seven card suit with approximately 6 to 7 losers, or about 9-11 HCP if you are evaluating that way.

“O”	“R”
1♣	<u>2♦/2♥/2♠</u> are ALL GIJS
1♦	<u>2♥/2♠/3♣</u> are all GIJS
1♥	<u>2♠</u> is a GIJS

If you are playing some form of “Bergen,” or “*graded major raises*,” then 3♣ and 3♦ describe those hands. If you are NOT playing 3♣ and 3♦ as some form of major raises, then you can use these as “game invitational.”

1 ♠

3♣/3♦ = Major suit raises

Therefore;

1Mi

1Major

1NT/2Mi/2new minor 3 Major = GAME FORCING with at least a 6 card suit and often slam interest. (4 of initial major would be sign-off.)

“O”

“R”

1 ♣

1 ♦

1♥/1♠/1NT/2♣ 3♦ = GAME FORCING with at least a 6 card suit.

Notice that with this method you don't have to go through any check-back bids and then re-bid your suit in some convoluted auction to get your point across!

This also opens the “spin-off” of re-bidding your major when LESS than game invitational.

“O”

“R”

1Mi

1 ♠ with

♠QJ98654 ♥J87 ♦6 ♣K43

1NT/re-bid minor/re-bid 2♣/1♦

2♠ shows NO GAME INTEREST

because with a game invitational hand you would have bid 2♠ at first opportunity.

Opener does not have to worry about a “courtesy” raise in case you were marginally invitational after a 1♣-1♠-2♣-2♠ auction, or a 1♦ - 1♠ -2♣-2♠ auction; your 2♠ bid is CORRECTIVE, not GI!

Let's look at some hands.

1. “O” ♠J4 ♥A872 ♦KJ96 ♣K96 “R” ♠KQ10865 ♥953 ♦3 ♣AJ4
1♦ 2♠ (6 ¾ losers)

PASS – minimum with at most 3 cover cards. You need at least 3 ½ cover cards and partial fit to invite game. Note that the chances of taking 10 tricks on this hand are slim, and non-existent with a heart

lead. The three-level is in jeopardy. Playing “normal” methods you would end in three spades AT LEAST!

2. ♠2 ♥K75 ♦AQ976 ♣K986 ♠K1097652 ♥Q2 ♦2 ♣A74

1♦ 2♠ – Yes, you have SEVEN spades and only 9 HCP. But you still have only slightly < 7 losers.

PASS – This is a misfit hand and you do not have enough outside covers to invite. Once again, where would you get to using normal methods? It's hard to tell. The auction would start: 1♦-1♠-2♣. What now my love? Do you underbid with 2♠, or overbid with 3♠?

3. ♠J4 ♥A872 ♦AJ96 ♣K96 ♠Q109864 ♥K5 ♦108 ♣AJ8

Does this hand seem familiar? (see 1.)

1♦ 2♠ (with good textured spades, this is about 6 ½ losers.)

3♠ With two ACES, a fitting spade card, a good textured diamond suit and a side king, this hand has close to 3 ½ covers. It is almost worth a 4♠ bid.

4♠ – easy acceptance.

Had the bidding gone: 1♦-1♠-1NT, responder would have a difficult re-bid. Once again, 2♠ is an underbid and 3♠ an overbid. Perhaps you could go through some two-way check back, new minor forcing, or 2♣ ask, but it would still be precarious.

4. ♠2 ♥K976 ♦AKJ87 ♣A432 ♠643 ♥AQJ843 ♦Q42 ♣7

1♦ 2♥

3♠ = *splinter* Responder stretched initially because of what seemed a partial secondary diamond fit. This brought his losers down to just more than seven. His hand has now become a monster. If opener has three key cards, slam is likely. “R” should now cue-bid 4♣ and wait to see if “O” can cue-bid good diamonds.

4♦ cue-bid showing at least two of the top three honors.

4NT = RKC

5♣ = three key cards 6♥ How would this auction have gone using “normal” methods? You tell me!

5. ♠J1093 ♥AK3 ♦K2 ♣Q1042 ♠4 ♥742 ♦AQJ962 ♣K86
1♣ 2♦ normally shows something
akin to a good weak 2♦ opener. Responses by opener should be the
same as though you KNEW responder had a good weak 2♦ opener, or
about 9-11 HCP.

With a fitting diamond card, two QUICK tricks in the heart suit, the spade suit stopped and a possible useful club card, opener should probably jump to 3NT. However, you could ask with 2NT for partner to show some sort of feature.

6. ♠K5 ♥K4 ♦AQJ874 ♣987 ♠A43 ♥AQJ987 ♦K43 ♣2
 1♦ 1♥
 2♦ 3♥ Notice how you don't have
 to go through some convoluted auction using some sort of
 fourth suit forcing to set intentions.
 3♠ = cue-bid: 1♠^t or 2nd round control

control $4\clubsuit = \text{cue-bid } 1\spadesuit^t \text{ or } 2^{\text{nd}} \text{ round}$

4♦ = natural suit cue-bid showing at least two of top three honors
4NT= RKC [or you can use 4♠ as

RKC when hearts are trump]
 5♥ = TWO with no trump queen 6♥

7. ♠Q4 ♥A96 ♦AK8765 ♣32 ♠KJ9875 ♥J86 ♦2 ♣Q97
1♦ 1♠
2♦ 2♠

PASS – Opener does not have to worry about a “courtesy” raise as responder's hand is known to be less than game invitational.

This just gives you some idea how the GI-J/S works in conjunction with GF jump re-bids. They are simple and effective.

OTHER PROBLEMS

1. ♠3 ♥KJ86 ♦KQ5 ♣QJ962 ♠AJ10854 ♥103 ♦A1032 ♣8
2. ♠K97 ♥J93 ♦K5 ♣A10753 SAME AS 1.
3. ♠J1087 ♥AJ76 ♦K2 ♣A109 ♠42 ♥98 ♦AQJ976 ♣K4
4. ♠4 ♥K1042 ♦AK96 ♣A1086 ♠J86 ♥AQ98753 ♦75 ♣5
5. ♠63 ♥Q108 ♦AK96 ♣A1086 SAME AS ABOVE
6. ♠AQ976 ♥108 ♦A87 ♣K92 ♠K104 ♥AJ97632 ♦3 ♣Q10
7. ♠2 ♥AKQJ1086 ♦AJ4 ♣QJ10 ♠QJ109765 ♥2 ♦K96 ♣K5

ANSWERS

1. 1♣

2♠

Pass: with misfit, stay low. These hands might take only 8 tricks in spades, the best spot.

2. 1♣

2♠

4♠ four or more cover cards in honors and ruffing values. 7 losers minus 4 cover cards = 10 winners.

3. 1♣

2♦

3NT

4. 1♦

2♥

3♠ = *splinter*: contextually, this is a slam try!

This hand is SO good with three spades and a seventh heart, I would try

4♣ as a control showing bid

4♦ cue

4♠ = RKC

Depending on 0314 or 1430, show three key cards

6♥

5. 1♦

2♥

4♥

6. 1♠

3♥

4♥

7. 1♥

2♠

3NT

V. Power 2NT & Intermediate Jump Shifts Over Forcing No-trump

Let's say you open 1♥ or 1♠ and partner bids a forcing 1NT. What would a re-bid of 2NT by you mean? Some people play that this shows a balanced hand with 18-19 HCP, inviting game in case partner had responded with 5-6 HCP. However, as the late, great Paul Soloway once rhetorically asked, "How thin can you slice the cheese? If you have 18-19 HCP just re-bid 3NT. You should have a play for game most of the time."

Another meaning for this treatment might be to show a hand with a six-card solid, or semi-solid major with about 15-17 HCP, a hand that has 7+ winners and some side cards. Most players just jump re-bid their major with that hand and give partner an option to pass, bid 4 Major, or offer 3NT.

The **POWER 2NT** re-bid is used to show a game forcing hand, either just shy of a 2♣ opener, or a hand not conducive to opening 2♣ because it is two-suited.

The 2NT re-bid by "O" after a 1NT response to a major says, "Partner, I either have a 1-suited hand with about 4-5 losers, or, I have a two-suited hand with fewer than five losers." Responder will USUALLY ask "O" to define his hand by bidding 3♣.

"O"	"R"
1♥/1♠	1NT
2NT	<u>3♣</u> asks for clarification

and DENIES a three-fit for opener's major!

1. A re-bid of the major shows a one-suited hand.
2. With a second suit, "O" will re-bid it a the three-level. If the second suit is CLUBS, he will re-bid 3NT if NT is playable, or, 4♣ if NT is not a playable spot.

Let's see how this works.

“O” ♠AKJ987 ♥AQ9 ♦7 ♣A96	“R” ♠42 ♥K3 ♦A85 ♣J108543
1 ♠	1NT
2NT	3♣ asking
3♠ = single suited spades	4♠: not enough covers to cue-bid.

Without using this method, how might the auction proceed?

1 ♠	1NT
-----	-----

“O” would now have to “phony up” a jump shift in clubs. Now responder thinks he has a really good hand because of his huge fit in what he THINKS are natural clubs. Although there are methods to untangle this quandary, complex understandings are needed. With the power 2NT, DIRECTION is already known.

The following are some examples of how easy this method is to use.

♠A98654 ♥AK76 ♦A ♣A2	♠2 ♥QJ10853 ♦543 ♣K96:
1 ♠	1NT
2NT	3♣ asks
3♥	4♣ cue in support of hearts.
4♦ cue	4NT = RKC ♥
5♥ = the rare FIVE key cards with no queen	7♥!

♠AJ987 ♥AK5 ♦KQJ7 ♣5	♠2 ♥QJ876 ♦A95 ♣Q864
1 ♠	1NT
2NT	3♣
3♦	3♥ intended as natural, still
probing strain. With a diamond fit “R” would bid 4♦ SETTING TRUMP!	
4♥	4♠ = RKC in HEARTS
4NT = three	6♥

With five spades, four hearts, and a four-card MINOR, “O” would “power” in hearts and then re-bid his minor if appropriate. There was a hand in the July 2009 bulletin, problem #5 in “The Bidding Box,” that illustrates this situation.

♠AJ983 ♥AKJ6 ♦KQJ6 ♣void	62 ♥Q7 ♦A108732 ♣Q83
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Interestingly enough, both pairs in the contest got to 6♦ after a jump shift in hearts by opener, but were unable to untangle the rest,

and eventually landed in 6♦. The question was raised if there WERE an intelligent way to explore for a grand. The answer is YES! Using the “Power 2NT,”

1 ♠	1NT
2NT	3 ♣
3 ♥	3NT
4 ♦	

Since “R” knows that “O” is 5-4-4-0, 4♥ or 4♠ would be “sign-off” preference. 4NT would be to play, so 5♣ would have to be RKC in DIAMONDS! “R” knows that all responses will exclude any key cards in clubs, for “O” is void in that suit.

5♣
5♦ = three key cards 5♥ asks about trump queen and anything else useful

5NT = trump queen, no spade king, but other useful holdings, which inferentially must be in hearts.

At this point, “R” can intelligently gamble on 7♦, knowing there will be good play for the contract.

♠2 ♥AK987 ♦AK ♣AQ753: ♠A87 ♥2 ♦8764 ♣KJ986
1 ♥ 1NT
2NT 3♣ (denies heart fit)
4♣ (2nd suit/non-NT interest) With this hand you do not have to worry about an artificial J/shift in clubs in case opener really has a single suited heart hand. You can safely cue-bid

4♠ with slam interest in CLUBS!
Knowing that “R” has a big club fit, “O” can now RKC.

4NT 5♥ (two/no queen)
7♣ should be easy now as “R” cannot hold more than two hearts.

♠AKQ9875 ♥A96 ♦K8 ♣2 ♠J4 ♥KQ87 ♦A75 ♣9876
1 ♠ 1NT
2NT 3♣
3 ♠ 4♦
4♥ Not only is this a heart cue, but a club cue as well, as “R” denied a club control.
5♣ = three 4NT = RKC
6♦ = trump queen and ♦ king 5♦ = queen & king ask
6♠

How might this hand be bid using “normal” methods?

1 ♠ (not good enough for 2 ♣) 1NT

What now? “O” could now jump to 4 ♠, but “R” is in a quandary since opener COULD hold something like:

♠AK98765 ♥2 ♦KJ98 ♣K3 and be “gambling” with this five-loser hand. If responder passes they may be too low, if he bids past the four-level they may be too high!

This brings us to our first “spin-off.” Since opener will re-bid 2NT with a four- to five- loser BIG hand, he can jump to game with a “gambling” five-loser hand like the one above, FIT DEPENDENT in secondary holdings with fewer HCP

Responder now knows the limitations of opener's hand and will act accordingly.

But using the power 2NT, you can discriminate between the STRONG single-suited game force, and the 'GAMBLING' long suit, loser count hand.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE "AUTO" 3♣ ASK

There are a few exceptions to the automatic 3♣ asking bid by responder.

1. If "R" has three-card support for opener's major, but was too weak to make a semi-constructive raise, he jumps to the four-level in the major.

"O"

♠AKJ876 ♥A10 ♦2 ♣AK96

1♠

2NT

Pass

"R"

♠1053 ♥J64 ♦A875 ♣1083

1NT

4♠ alerts partner of a very weak initial spade raise.

2. If "R" started with a "delayed limit raise," rather than asking with 3♣, he re-bids the opened major at the three-level! Using opener's hand above, how would the following be bid?

♠AKJ876 ♥A10 ♦2 ♣AK96

1♠

2NT

4♣

4♥

5♦ = four key cards

6♣

7♠!

♠Q105 ♥K964 ♦A875 ♣Q3

1NT

3♠

4♦

4NT

5NT asks specific kings

6♦ asks for anything extra

3. If responder has a good six-card side suit and anything outside, what amounts to a good weak-two bid, he over-rides the 3♣ ASK with a NATURAL SUIT TELLING bid.

♠AKJ876 ♥A10 ♦2 ♣AK96

1♠

2NT

4NT [RKC ♥]

5♦ [queen ask]

6♥

♠53 ♥KQJ864 ♦K85 ♣83

1NT

3♥

5♣

6♦ shows the trump queen and diamond king.

Those are the only exception. [Incidentally, if your single suit were CLUBS as responder, you would bid 3NT over 2NT.]

1 ♠

2NT

1NT

3NT = good weak two bid in
CLUBS

Intermediate Jump Shifts Over Forcing NT

In conjunction with the power 2NT, we will use a jump shift *in response to a FORCING NT only* to show any INTERMEDIATE 5+5+ hand type, rather than showing the “normal” BIG hand. What is an INTERMEDIATE hand? It is one which contains about five losers, or usually about 14-16 HCP; a hand STRONGER than a sound opener, but weaker than a jump shift, a “tweener.” These are hard hands to show using normal methods.

1 ♠

1NT

♠AK986 ♥2 ♦KJ986 ♣Q4 This hand is too weak for a jump shift. This is a 6 loser hand with only 13 HCP and has too many holes. RE-bid 2♦ with this hand and await developments.

♠AK986 ♥2 ♦KQJ98 ♣Q4 This hand has only FIVE losers, and that does not include any value for the ♣Q. Partner needs very little to produce game. Bid 3♦.

♠AK986 ♥KQJ62 ♦Q5 ♣2

♠Q4 ♥10985 ♦K83 A653

1 ♠

1NT

In normal methods, “O” would have to decide to over-bid with a game forcing 3♥, or under-bid with a non-forcing 2♥. If he does choose to re-bid 2♥, does “R” owe a “courtesy raise?”

“O” may have started with

♠A10952 ♥KJ64 ♦Q5 ♣Q2, and 3♥ is in grave peril. [Is there any other kind of peril?] But using INTJS over forcing NT, you can smoothly re-bid 3♥ as opener, and “R” has no problem going to game.

3♥

4♥

♠AJ965 ♥2 ♦A4 ♣KQ1085

1 ♠

Playing normal methods “O” would re-bid

2♣ Is “R” good enough to raise to 3♣? “O” might hold something like:

♠KQ965 ♥A64 ♦Q2 ♣J85 and 8 tricks are in jeopardy! However, over a

3♣ intermediate 5-5, “R” can raise to 4♣, and “O” will carry on to 5♣! On this hand, 12 tricks are possible!

♠2 ♥J875 ♦K93 ♣A9742

1NT [forcing]

The most useful aspect of this treatment is to be able to show 5-5 in the majors with EXTRAS, but not good enough to game force. This takes the pressure off “O” on whether to under-bid or over-bid, and takes the pressure off “R” on when to invite or pass.

♠AJ965 ♥KQ876 ♦2 ♣A7

1 ♠

2♥ [normal]

1 ♠

3♥ INTJS

♠Q10 ♥AJ52 ♦9876 ♣843

1NT

?? Should I raise to 3♥?

1NT

4♥ - “easy”

The “spin-off” of course is that once “O” has re-bid a new suit only at the two-level, his hand is limited, which make follow-up bidding easier.

♠A9765 ♥2 ♦K2 ♣KJ1082

1 ♠

NORMAL 2♣ [could be three-card suit] If you pass, you could be playing a 3-3 fit with a 5-3 heart fit! You would probably bid

2♥ and pray!

3♣: does this show extras, or is it “corrective?” NOBODY KNOWS!

♠3 ♥A10985 ♦Q862 ♣Q94

1NT

Using INTJS, the auction would be simple.

1 ♠

2♣

1NT

2♥

3♣ = 5-5 black suits with minimum hand. Responder now has an easy pass, not having to worry about opener having extras.

PROBLEMS

1. ♠4 ♥AKQ96 ♦KQJ97 ♣A5 ♠J94 ♥105 ♦A10643 ♣K94
2. ♠KQJ975 ♥5 ♦AKQ4 ♦A5 ♠A105 ♠A10973 ♦3 ♣K97
3. ♠AKQ974 ♥-- ♦K5 ♣KQJ96 ♠3 ♥J876 ♦A94 ♣A10832
4. ♠AKJ984 ♥K72 ♦5 ♣AK3 ♠3 ♥AQJ986 ♦742 ♣Q95
5. ♠AK986 ♥AKJ64 ♦2 ♣96 ♠84 ♥Q986 ♦A864 ♣1032
6. ♠-- ♥AK986 ♦Q96 ♣KQJ43 ♠J76 ♥Q4 ♦KJ4 ♣A10752

1. 1♥ 1NT
 2NT 3♣ asks
 3♦ 4♦ = at least a four-card fit; semi
positive; if “R” were interested in 3NT or 4♥ in the 5-2, he would bid
3♠. 4♦ sets trump unless “O” offers 4♥. “R” can bid again at his own
risk.

$5\clubsuit = \text{one key card}$

1NT
3♠ = three-card limit raise
5♥ = 2 no queen
6♣ = ♣king

1NT
3♣
4♦ = cue in support of clubs
5♣ = 2 without the queen

4NT = RKC ♥: hearts was set as trump 4♠ would be natural.
5♦ = one key card

5♦ = one key card

1NT

1NT

3♣ 4♦ = RKC clubs

6♣ no way to actually show this hand – best guess for
 e who started with 1NT and is now asking for key cards.

VI. Two Way NMF

When partner opens a minor, you bid a major, and partner rebids 1NT, you have to have a way to check back to see whether he holds three-card support in your major. You also have to have a way to INTELLIGENTLY explore BEST LEVEL AND STRAIN! You need some method of defining a game forcing hand versus a game invitational hand. Some of you probably play new-minor-forcing (NMF). This will allow you to find out about the three-card major support, but often will not allow you to explore other avenues. Some of you might use two CLUBS as your asking bid, regardless of the minor suit opened. This too allows you to isolate the major suit fit, but makes slam investigation, especially in opener's minor somewhat vague and convoluted.

By using **TWO WAY NMF**, many of those problems are resolved.

In it's simplest form, there are two ways to inquire. The 2♣ check-back is a *semi-relay* to 2♦ and **shows** some sort of *game invitational* hand, or a hand that just wants to play a partial in diamonds. The 2♦ check-back shows some sort of *game forcing* hand.

“O”

1 Minor

1NT

“R”

1 Major

2♣ → semi-relay asks declarer to define his hand.

1. 2♦ says “I do not have three-card support for your major and a maximum.”

2. 2FM [focused major] shows three-card support and a maximum, with at least one honor (A,K or Q) in responder's major.

3. 2OM (other major) shows three-card support for “R's” major, four cards in the OTHER major, and a MAXIMUM with a ruffing value, (ergo, a doubleton in the unbid minor).

Responder can have any number of game invitational hands, but will usually hold

- a) a hand with a five-card major (or, possibly a six-card major)
- b) a balanced hand interested in 3NT

Let's look at some hands and see how this works.

♠K9 ♥A876 ♦KQ86 ♣J86

1♦

1NT

2♦ denies three-card support in spades and a maximum

2♠ = “I was interested in game in spades, but since you don't have three-card support, I am settling for an eight-trick contract.”

♠QJ876 ♥95 ♦J105 ♣AK9

1♠

2♣ 11 HCP and five-card suit makes this Game Inv.

NOTE: If “O” held one more spade and one less club, 4♠ would be a very reasonable contract. In that case, “O” could bid 2♥ over the 2♣ “semi-relay.”

Of course opener does not have to pass this 2♠ bid. With a maximum and honor doubleton, as is the case here, he can bid 2NT and still offer level and strain. In the example given, 3NT is a pushy game that might come home.

♠105 ♥KQ8 ♦A96 ♣QJ732

1♣

1NT

2♦ = again, not good enough for any other action

Pass - not enough to continue.

♠Q96 ♥AJ965 ♦KJ5 ♣105

1♥

2♣

2♥

♠K5 ♥KQ8 ♦A964 ♣J973

1♦

1NT

2♥ good enough for three-card positive

♠Q96 ♥AJ965 ♦KJ5 ♣105

1♥

2♣

4♥

♠A98 ♥KQ86 ♦AJ76 ♣32	♠K10753 ♥AJ97 ♦10 ♣A96
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♥ = FOUR hearts, three spades, and a MAXIMUM	
	4♥

♠J6 ♥KJ7 ♦A74 ♣K10876	♠A1074 ♥2 ♦K3 ♣A9543
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦ no three-card max	3♣ = GI with almost always five clubs, since opener is known now to hold at least four clubs. (Even with < than three hearts and a minimum, "O" cannot be 4-3-3-3 for lack of a 1♠ re-bid.)

Although opener has a minimum in HCP, with a 5-5 club fit, he has a trick source and stoppers in the red suits. You could take a pessimistic view and pass, but I would at least offer 3NT!

NOTE: If you changed opener's hand to:

♠J6 ♥ <u>A</u> 75 ♦A74 ♣K <u>J</u> 876, slam in clubs is an EXCELLENT contract. How might the auction proceed?	
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	3♣
3♦	4♥ [splinter]
6♣!	

This is a very tough slam to bid because of the low amount of HCP the two hands contain. However, with a little imagination, it is possible!

The last hand type actually comes up fairly frequently.

♠J72 ♥A4 ♦K1086 ♣A963	♠109 ♥K765 ♦QJ7652 ♣J
1♦	1♥
1NT	2♣ → semi-relay to 2♦
2♦	PASS

The Game Forcing 2 ♦ Check-back Bid

The sequence 1Mi-1Maj-1NT-2♦ is *artificial and GAME FORCING!* This asks opener to define his hand. The responses are logical and simple.

1. The first priority is to show partner three-card support in his major.
2. The second priority is to show a secondary four-card major.
3. The third priority is to deny both, by re-bidding 2NT.
4. The fourth priority is to DENY three-card support for responder's major, but SHOW a five-card minor with a MAXIMUM.
5. The last priority (rare) is to show five diamonds and four clubs by re-bidding 3♣ after having opened 1♦.

Let's examine a few cases.

♠K96 ♥A876 ♦KQ107 ♣Q4 (1) ♠AQ974 ♥K5 ♦85 ♣KJ6

1♦

1♠

1NT

2♦ = artificial game force

2♠ = three-card spade support (1♠^t priority)

4♠: enough information to place final contract.

1♦
1NT

(2) ♠AQ97 ♥2 ♦AJ984 ♣KJ6

1♠

2♦ = artificial GF

On this hand, responder is not interested in playing spades, but IS interested in pursuing a DIAMOND slam. “O” rebids 2♠ to show his three-card support, but “R” crosses him up by bidding

3♦ denies interest in spades as trump, and sets slam interest in diamonds. Why does this show slam interest? If “R” were only interested in game, he would have jumped to 3NT.

Except for the ♣Q, “O” certainly has prime cards, and therefore slam aspirations of his own. REMEMBER: opener has already limited his hand to 12-14 HCP and should evaluate **contextually!** He should now cue-bid his heart control.

3♥

3♠ at this juncture does not offer spades as a final strain, it is a cue-bid!

4♦ denies a ♣ control but shows good diamonds, implies a spade control and the heart ACE rather than the king, otherwise how could he go past 3NT, and where would his values be?

At this point, “R” could just jump to 6♦, but he could RKC with whatever your methods are. In my methods, 4♥ would be RKC in diamonds.

This is not an easy slam to get to, but with proper METHODS, JUDGMENT, and EVALUATION, it can and SHOULD be done!

Let's change opener's hand slightly.

♠K9 ♥A876 ♦KQ107 ♣Q43	(3) ♠AJ865 ♥KQ105 ♦A5 ♣K6
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♦ [GF]
2♥ = four hearts; only two spades	3♥ sets trump: 5+ spades, four hearts
3♠ = spade control	3NT = SERIOUS SLAM INTEREST
4♦ = 'LAST TRAIN' : no club control; implies good diamonds and/or good trump	

RKC to 6♥

Since 2♣ and 2♦ are artificial check-backs, you need a method for getting out in a minor suit partial. Getting out in 2♦ or 3♦ is fairly simple since you can bid 2♣ semi-forced to 2♦, and either pass opener's response, or convert to 3♦ if necessary. Getting out in clubs involves another convention.

“O”	“R”
1Mi	1Maj
1NT	<u>2NT</u> is a RELAY to 3♣ for a club 'get out.'
1♣	1♥ with ♠2 ♥K976 ♦J4 ♣J98654
1NT	2NT
3♣ FORCED	Pass

This is the basic thrust of two-way NMF check-back. I would recommend that your partnership make sure you know what bids are RKC in what suits, and that you employ the *serious 3NT convention*.

NOTE: The *serious 3NT convention* [ser/3NT] is used when a **MAJOR SUIT FIT** has been found in a game forcing sequence. If either side bids 3NT he is expressing serious interest in slam CONTEXTUALLY.

If either side bypasses 3NT and cue-bids, he is denying serious interest, but is 'courtesy' cue-bidding in case partner is seriously interested.

[For a more thorough discussion on this convention, refer to my book, “Let's Bid A Slam.”]

Problems

1. ♠KJ9 ♥A4 ♦KJ3 ♣J9876 ♠Q8 ♥K975 ♦Q108765 ♣5
2. ♠A96 ♥KQ96 ♦A962 ♣72 ♠KQ853 ♥AJ84 ♦8 ♣943
3. ♠AQ5 ♥94 ♦KQJ86 ♣J95 ♠K5 ♥A732 ♦A975 ♣AK4
4. ♠KJ9 ♥J765 ♦A965 ♣K43 ♠Q10853 ♥Q10 ♦K4 ♣A965
5. ♠Q863 ♥K94 ♦A1096 ♣K10 ♠KJ74 ♥AQ84 ♦43 ♣Q96
6. ♠KQ9 ♥J986 ♦K4 ♣A1052 ♠AJ9764 ♥4 ♦A96 ♣KQ3
7. ♠J10 ♥QJ108 ♦105 ♣AKQ104 ♠9864 ♥K4 ♦AK74 ♣J3

ANSWERS

“O”	“R”
1. 1♣ 1NT 2♦	1♥ 2♣ Pass
2. 1♦ 1NT 2♥ [max 3-4]	1♠ 2♣ 4♥
3. 1♦ 1NT 3♦ = max with five ♦/ only two hearts	1♥ 2♦ = GF 4NT = RKC in ♦ to conclusion
4. 1♦ 1NT 2♦ 3♠	1♠ 2♣ 2♠ 4♠
5. 1♦ 1NT 2♦ 3♠	1♥ 2♣ 2♠ = 4-4 majors GI 4♠
6. 1♣ 1NT 2♠ 3NT = <u>serious interest</u> 4♦ 5♠	1♠ 2♦ = GF 3♠ SETS TRUMP and is slam try 4♣ 4NT 6♠
7. 1♣ 1NT 2♦ 3NT	1♠ 2♣ 2NT [natural; no interest in playing spades]

VII. Modified DONT over Opponent's Strong NT

When the opponents open a strong no-trump, the following are what the next hand can do.

“O”

Over-caller (O/C)

1NT

2♣ = CLUBS and unknown major.

Normally the club suit will be at least five cards in length, and the major at least four cards, but nothing is etched in stone. Very aggressive not vulnerable.

1NT

2♦ = DIAMONDS and unknown

major. Same principles as 2♣ apply.

1NT

2♥ and 2♠ are natural and

LIMITED. Usually at least a five card suit and about 6-7 losers, but again, nothing etched in stone.

1NT

DOUBLE can be any number of hands.

1. Both majors LIMITED, generally no better than a 6 loser hand, or about 8-13 HCP with no extreme distribution. This can be anywhere from a constructive call to a “jam” bid. Responder (“R”) bids his longest minor, and if O/C bids 2♥ he has both majors.

2. Both minors UNLIMITED, anywhere from 6-7 losers (minimum) to a very big hand. The minimum for a BIG hand might be something like: ♠32 ♥A ♦KQ1076 ♣KJ986, or about 5 ½ losers.

3. DIAMONDS only, unlimited; anywhere from about 6 losers to a much better hand.

4. big ONE-SUITED MAJOR; AT LEAST seven expected winners.

Generally “R should preference at the two-level in his longest minor and await developments.”

If “R” merely takes a preference of 2♣ or 2♦ over the double:

“O”	O/C	“R”
1NT	DBL P	2♣/2♦
P		

a) O/C will pass with BOTH minors and a minimum.

b) If O/C has a BIG minor TWO-suited hand, perhaps something like:

♠2 ♥7 ♦AK9876 ♣KQJ43,

he will bid 2NT with longer diamonds (6-5) or 3♣ with longer clubs. [REMEMBER: O/C can never have one-suited clubs.]

c) If O/C has both MAJORS, he will bid 2♥.

d) If O/C has diamonds ONLY: He will convert 2♣ to 2♦, or pass 2♦ with a minimum. With a maximum hand, at least 7 winners, he will jump to 3♦ over 2♣. Or raise 2♦ to 3♦.

NOTE: If “R” wants to *over-rule*, rather than taking a minor-suit preference he can bid **HIS** suit. EXAMPLE:

“O”	O/C
1NT	DBL P “R”

“R” holds ♠K32 ♥KJ108765 ♦7 ♣92 and does not want to play any of the suits O/C has. Therefore, he/she bids

2♥.

1NT (O/C)

A DIRECT **2NT** by O/C is HUGE hand with both majors, no more than 4 ½ losers, typically something like

♠AK9765 ♥KQ1064 ♦5 ♣6. Only one cover card and a fit is needed.

<MOST PLAYERS BID 2NT WITH THE MINORS, BUT I FEEL IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO GET BIG MAJORS IN FIRST>

EXAMPLES

(1) RHO OPENS 1NT. You are NOT vulnerable. You hold:

♠KQ97 ♥2 ♦Q87 ♣AJ1087

You have a 6 loser hand and bid 2♣ showing clubs and a major. LHO passes and partner holds:

♠AJ85 ♥J10876 ♦J5 ♣Q5

“R” realizes that partner has limited values, and even though he has a big fit for either major, I would temporize with 2♦, asking for partner's major. If partner shows HEARTS, I would raise to 3♥, but if partner shows SPADES, I would pass.

(2) RHO OPENS 1NT. You are vulnerable. You hold:

♠2 ♥A ♦KQJ987 ♣A10864

You hold a *fit dependent* 4 loser hand. You start with a **double. This could be any number of hands.** After a pass by LHO, partner bids 2♦ which just says his diamond are longer than his clubs. Partner COULD hold any number of hands which would produce game, and you are not afraid of the three level. You bid 2NT to show a very big hand with both minors and equal or longer diamonds. With longer clubs, you would bid 3♣, and with diamonds only, and a BIG hand you would raise to 3♦

As it turns out, “R” holds:

♠J863 ♥98762 ♦A1065 ♣2. With a monster fit I recommend jumping to 4♦, inviting game. Partner will be happy to accept with 5♦, and you might take 12 tricks!

Sometimes you will have a major suit fit which you cannot find. After an opening NT your partner bids 2♦ showing diamonds and a major. After a pass, you hold: ♠KJ76 ♥84 ♦Q63 ♣J1065.

Although partner might have spades, you have already found a home. Pass and await developments. If the opponents balance with 2♥ you can back in with 2♠ and hope you are safe at the three-level if partner had hearts.

My partner and I were playing in the grand national team event at the San Antonio nationals when the following hand came up. Nobody was vulnerable and my LHO opened 1NT. After two passes, I held: **♠985 ♥J1084 ♦A9743 ♣J**. I balanced with **2♦** showing diamonds and a major. Some of you might think I was taking too big a risk, but you must be aggressive at both match-points AND IMPs. Your partner is going to hold somewhere between 11 and 13 HCP most of the time, and unless you have a misfit, you will probably be safe. As it turned out, partner held:

♠QJ74 ♥2 ♦KJ82 ♣A432 and raised to 3♦, preempting his LHO from any constructive action. We ended +130 for a push. (Did I mention that Eric Rodwell, playing with Jeff Meckstroth, held my hand at the other table?) Had I passed, the opposition would have scored +90 playing 1NT and we would have lost 5 IMPs.

(4) LHO opens 1NT and partner doubles. After a pass you hold: **♠AJ8654 ♥Q76 ♦1087 ♣2**. You bid 2♠ as an *over-rule* declaring long spades. After a pass, partner bids 3♣. What do you bid now?

There should be no problem CORRECTING to 3♦. As it turns out, partner holds:

♠2♥5 ♦AJ964 ♣QJ9852 and you are in the best contract

(5) 1NT on your right. You hold:

♠AKJ987 ♥2 ♦AJ108 ♣A5. What is your initial action? You double, and jump to 3♠ at your next turn, showing a big one-suited hand. Partner holds

♠10832 ♥QJ96 ♦K6 ♣Q102 and is happy to raise you to game.

(6) As “R”, you hold:

♠J10876 ♥AQ97 ♦2 ♦KQ5. LHO opens a strong (15-17 HCP) NT and your partner, O/C bid 2♣ showing clubs and a major.

Here, you could bid **2NT** showing a big hand with either a fit for clubs and ONE MAJOR. Or BOTH majors and a big hand. After a pass by the NT opener, O/C bids **3♣**, *flagging* HEARTS. [3♦ would “flag” spades]. What do you do now?

Even if partner holds as little as

♠5 ♥J1083 ♦96 ♣AJ432, you should have excellent play for

game. I don't like to “hang” partner for being aggressive, but this hand is just too good. I would bid 4♥ and not apologize later.

(7) RHO opens 1NT and you are not vulnerable at match-points and hold: ♠KJ96 ♥J10853 ♦2 ♣K76. What action do you take?

Believe it or not, you should double. Some of you might think that this is too weak, but more good things can happen taking action now than sitting back and doing nothing.

You decide to double, intending to show both majors via a 2♥ bid over partner's minor suit preference. However, the opposition throws a “monkey wrench” into the proceedings. Your LHO REDOUBLES, showing values. You and partner are now in “scramble” mode. If partner passes, he is saying, “bid your hand.” With both minors limited, you would bid 2♣. With both majors, 2♥.

If “R” has a suit of his own which he wants to introduce, he just bids it.

Occasionally you will go for a number, but it is important to exert pressure on the opposition. As the man said, “No pain, no gain.”

(8) You are 4th seat and LHO opens 1NT. Partner doubles and after a pass you hold:

♠Q97 ♥108642 ♦J107 ♣5. DO NOT be tempted to bid 2♥ as an over-rule. If partner holds either both minors OR diamonds only, you will probably be better off playing in two diamonds. If Partner shows both majors over your 2♦ “preference”, you will be thrilled!

This modified structure allows for more confusion for the opposition while giving flexibility to the initiator. It also allows for more constructive intervention.

Problems and Answers

On all problems, dealer opens 1NT, and his partner passes.

[1NT] You (O/C)	[P] Partner ("R")
1. ♠KJ986 ♥A1054 ♦4 ♣K76 DBL 2♥ = both majors limited Pass	♠Q754 ♥K2 ♦984 ♣Q543 2♣ = longest minor 2♠
2. ♠2 ♥A5 ♦QJ9876 ♣A1073 DBL Pass [but will compete to 3♦ if necessary]	♠J964 ♥982 ♦K1042 ♣K2 2♦ = longest minor
3. ♠AJ9864 ♥3 ♦AK97 ♣K3 DBL 2♠ = natural with extras you could actually get to slam, via 3♥ = shortness non min 4NT 6♠	♠K1073 ♥J964 ♦43 ♣A72 2♣ longest minor The practical bid would be 4♠, but *2NT asking bid 4♣ cue with fit 5♠ (we show the queen because of the fourth spade)

ADVANCED OPTIONAL

*2NT was an asking bid promising at least a three-fit in spades.

Opener's responses:

3♣ = all minimums

3♦ = maximum balanced

3♥/3♠/3NT = shortness ♥/♦/♣

4. ♠QJ97 ♥AK1052 ♦3 ♣K86 DBL 2♥ = BOTH MAJORS	♠1083 ♥Q9864 ♦A1086 ♣5 2♦ 4♥
---	------------------------------------

5. ♠5 ♥KJ108 ♦96 ♣AJ9843 ♠J10876 ♥AQ95 ♦2 ♣KQ7
 2♣ = clubs + unspecified major 2NT = game interest in the major
 3♣ = ♥flag; 4♥
6. ♠K84 ♥J9832 ♦KQJ8 ♣6 (a) ♠Q103 ♥105 ♦A975 ♣J975
 2♦ = ♦ + major Pass
 (b) ♠Q103 ♥10752 ♦A9 ♣J975
 2♥ do not be tempted to bid more
 Pass
7. ♠8 ♥J972 ♦AK964 ♣A86 ♠QJ10764 ♥4 ♦Q86 ♣K107
 2♦ = ♦ + major 2♠ “OVER=RIDE”/natural
 Pass
8. ♠void ♥K3 ♦KQJ87 ♣AQ8765 ♠J9864 ♥A96 ♦10943 ♣2
 DBL 2♦ preference
 3♣ = BIG minors; longer clubs 3♥ = cue-bid advance
 5♦
9. ♠86 ♥KJ10876 ♦2 ♣A976 ♠A732 ♥Q942 ♦876 ♣K3
 2♥ = natural and limited 2NT asks with game interest
 3♣ = “quasi” natural with non min 4♥
10. ♠AK9876 ♥J9532 ♦A4 ♣-- ♠J742 ♥3 ♦KJ764 ♣Q104
 2NT = BIG MAJORS 4♠

VIII. Transfers after 2NT Rebid by Opener

By implementing transfers after a re-bid of 2NT by opener, strain and level can be more easily facilitated.

	“O”		“R
	1Mi		1 Maj
	2NT		
or			
	1♥		1♠
	2NT		

Responder can now transfer to whatever suit he wants and make his intentions known on the next bid.

Let's start with the auction where a minor is opened, and “R” responds 1♥.

1♦	1♥
2NT	<u>3♣</u> → ♦
3♦ FORCED	Pass With a weak hand and long diamonds, “R” can transfer and PASS, perhaps with something like
	♠3 ♥Q984 ♦J10765 ♣Q76.

3♥ = at least four DI, five H, GF
 If “R” wanted to play 3NT there would be no reason to transfer. Therefore, he is searching strain and level.

3♠ = ♠ cue with at least four DI, only four H, slam try. If “R” had four spades he would have transferred to spades over 2NT re-bid.

3NT = four+ DI, four H, more mild slam try

2NT

3♥

3♦ → ♥ = five or more hearts

Pass = weak with hearts (rather than Wolffe)

3♠ = five hearts and four spades

GF

3NT = choice of games

4♣ or 4♦ = natural/slam try

EXAMPLE:

♠AJ96 ♥K84 ♦K2 ♣AK96

1♣

2NT

3♥ [forced]

♠4 ♥AQ974 ♦AJ875 ♣43

1♥

3♦ → ♥

4♦ = natural with slam interest

At this juncture,

4♥ would be attempted sign-off,

4♠ would be cue-accept in diamonds,

4NT would be sign-off, and

5♣/5♦/5♥/5♠ would be answers to RKC for hearts.

Therefore, "O" would bid

5♣ showing three key cards in hearts with three-card heart support.

"R" could now look for a grand with various bids but should be content to sign off in

6♥

1♣

2NT

1♥

3♥ → ♠; 4-4 in majors

NOTICE: since "R" did not transfer to hearts, that suit is not in focus, as no eight card fit exists.

If "O" has prime values and ♠ fit, he can cue. If "R" has no slam interest he will transfer back to spades with a 4♥ bid and then pass. If he has interest, he can transfer back and RKC with 4NT, or cue-bid at five level if he thinks RKC will not give him the right information.

"O"

1♣

2NT

"R"

1♥

3♠ slam try in CLUBS: note

the → ♣

Auctions where “R” responds 1 ♠ are primarily the same.

1Mi 1♠ is pretty much the same as if
“R” had responded 1♥ with the inference that a transfer to hearts
implies five or more spades.

“O”

1Mi

2NT

“R”

1 ♠

3 ♣ → ♦

3♦ → ♥ promising at least five
spades and four hearts.

NOTE: “O” can “flag” either suit. 4 ♣ = ♥ flag, and 4 ♦ =
♠ flag. FLAG means super accept with prime values.

“O”

♠K7 ♥AK96 ♦A976 ♣A42

1 ♦

2NT

4 ♣ = heart “flag”

4♥

5♦ = four (0314)

“R”

♠A9865 ♥Q1074 ♦KQ4 ♣8

1 ♠

3♦ → ♥

4♦ = re-transfer

4♠ = RKC in hearts

6♥

SPECIAL:

1Mi

2NT

3♥

1 ♠

3♦ → ♥

4♣/4♦ = “splinter” with 5-5
majors, slam try

4♥ = 5-5 majors, no slam interest.

Now let's make up some hands and see how this works in practice.

“O”

♠KJ7 ♥Q93 ♦AK4 ♣KQ95

1 ♣

2NT

3♥

4♥

“R”

♠105 ♥KJ876 ♦Q65 ♣J84

1♥

3♦

3NT

♠AQ76 ♥K4 ♦A96 ♣AJ98

1 ♣

2NT

4♣ = spade accept with prime values, cue ♣

4♥ = ♥ cue

5♣ = three

6♠

♠KJ83 ♥A986 ♦K5 ♣Q105

1 ♥

3♥ → ♠

4♦ = ♦ cue

4NT = RKC ♠

5♦ asks ♠Queen

♠A986 ♥74 ♦AK7 ♣AKJ8

1 ♣

2NT

4♣ = good clubs; prime values

♠2 ♥A864 ♦Q95 ♣Q10974

1 ♥

3♠ → ♣, slam try

4♠ = shortness (4♦ would have been RKC, and 4♥ would be ♦ shortness)

Since 4NT would be RKC, bids at five level are ANSWERS to RKC; therefore "O" would bid

5♦ showing FOUR key cards

6♣: a 26 HCP slam!

NOTE: You may not want to use the various splinters and RKC agreements, and instead use cue-bidding and "last guess" methods, but either way, at least you have a fighting chance.

♠AJ98 ♥QJ4 ♦KJ98 ♣AQ5

♠K765 ♥A962 ♦Q3 ♣KJ6

This is actually a hand where you might like to be in 3NT, especially at IMPS. How might the auction go?

1 ♦

2NT

1 ♥

3♥ → ♠; 4-4 majors.

With a bunch of "quacks" and both minors well stopped, "O" might consider

3NT rather than accepting spades. If you did accept spades as trump, you would just bid

4♠ as your hand is anemic for slam. If "R" is still interested in a slam, he may proceed at his own risk.

♠A976 ♥Q104 ♦KQ75 ♣AK4
1♦

2NT

3♥

♠KQ8 ♥A2 ♦KQ876 ♣A96

1♦

2NT

3♦

4♥ = RKC ♦

6♦

♠Q10 ♥AQ96 ♦AJ87 ♣AJ9

1♦

2NT

4♥

♠A5 ♥K3 ♦AQ976 ♣KQ52

1♦

2NT

4♣

agreement is that once a minor suit fit has been found, KICKBACK is in effect; the suit above the minor is RKC unless it is a focused suit in which case the next step is RKC.

4♥ = THREE key cards

5♥ shows heart king and club queen

Since 5♠ would ask for any further kings, **5NT** should ask about anything else, which must cater to the diamond suit.

7♣

♠KQ2 ♥Q1085 ♦KJ4 ♣AK75

1♣

2NT

3♥

4♥

♠J85 ♥J97654 ♦82 ♣Q5

Not wanting the auction to die in

1♦: 1♥

3♦ → ♥

Pass :The contract has been improved!

♠AJ42 ♥752 ♦AJ105 ♣J2

1♠

3♣ → ♦

3NT = mild slam try

5♣ = two/no queen

♠J9632 ♥K10732 ♦2 ♣32

1♠

3♦ → ♥

Pass

♠7 ♥AQ96 ♦K3 ♣AJ986

1♥

3♠ → ♣; at least mild slam try

At this juncture,

4♦ should be 1430 RKC. The

4♠ asks for queen

Since 5♠ would ask for any

♠J1086 ♥K9764 ♦3 ♣Q96

1♥

3♦ → ♥

3♠ = 5+ hearts and four spades

Pass

IX. Spades as Fourth Suit

This section is not for the faint of heart. Many complex sequences arise, so if you do not want to spend a lot of time practicing with your favorite partner, just use the basic ideas.

Sequences that specifically start:

“O”

“R”

1 ♣

1 ♦

1 ♥ can get awkward, and are highly problematical due to several implications.

1. The 1 ♦ response may be only a three-card suit if “R” has < 8 HCP because a 1NT response promises about 8-11 HCP.
2. The 1 ♦ response tends to deny a four-card major unless:
 - a. responder has reverse values with longer diamonds.
 - b. responder has a weak hand with two-card discrepancy.

Because of these implications, “O” will often bypass re-bidding a four-card major. The re-bid of 1 ♥ by “O” after a 1 ♦ response implies either a five-card club suit, or 4-4 holdings in the rounded suits with most of the values located in those two suits.

“O”

“R”

1 ♣

1 ♦

1 ♥ with:

♠104 ♥KQ87 ♦J96 ♣AQJ7

♠7 ♥QJ96 ♦A96 ♣KQ962

♠Q42 ♥A1053 ♦9 ♣KQ962

Rebid 1NT with:

♠Q4 ♥K987 ♦A96 ♣QJ76

♠J97 ♥KJ97 ♦K6 ♣AJ76

♠Q42 ♥A1053 ♦K96 ♣KJ7

After the sequence	1 ♣	1 ♦
	1 ♥	

There are TWO potential fourth suit bids here:

1 ♠ & 2 ♠

Let us explore the latter first.

“O”	“R”
1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	<u>2 ♠</u> shows a game forcing hand of some nature, DENYING four spades. What kind of hand could this be?

Before tackling that problem, let's take a look at some other “spin-off” auctions that we play, dismissing them from possible meanings.

“O”	“R”
1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	<u>3 ♦</u> we play as natural and game forcing with at least 6 diamonds, tending to be balanced.

[Review Section IV.]

“O”	“R”
1 ♣	2 ♦ = game invitational; about 10-12 HCP.

Therefore, the 2 ♠ temporizing artificial GF cannot mean those!

“O”	“R”
1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	<u>3 ♣</u> we play as 5 ♦ & 4 or 5 ♣, <u>game invitational</u> . This sequence is the only one that does NOT show 5-5 GF. Therefore the 2 ♠ re-bid cannot show that!

1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	2 ♥ would show reverse values

with four hearts and five diamonds balanced:

♠82 ♥A1086 ♦AKJ76 ♣K6.

With a heart fit and shortness, “R” can “splinter.”

<u>3♠</u> =	♠2 ♥A1086 ♦AKJ76 ♣A86
<u>4♣</u> =	♠A86 ♥A1086 ♦AKJ76 ♣2

NOTE: With hands such as: ♠3 ♥AJ97 ♦KQ962 ♣1086, I would respond 1 ♥.

THEREFORE: Hands that responder would use the artificial 2♠ would be

- 1) hands with only five diamonds, balanced, with 16+ HCP,
- or,
- 2) a hand with a secondary club fit, GF, or
- 3) a big, unbalanced hand with 6+ diamonds.

How do we untangle all of this?

“O”	“R”
1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	<u>2♠</u> RELAY TO 2NT

Unless opener has something special, he accepts

2NT = RELAY ACCEPT

something like:	<u>3♣</u> = secondary clubs; perhaps
	♠2 ♥A97 ♦KQJ98 ♣AJ76.

With single suited diamonds and SHORTNESS, “R” will bid shortness:

“O”	“R”
1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	2 ♠
2NT RELAY ACCEPT	3 ♦ = short ♣
	3 ♥ = short ♥
	3 ♠ = short ♠
	All of these bids show long

diamonds and slam interest.

EXAMPLE: ♠A65 ♥K2 ♦AKQ9876 ♣2

3NT = balanced hand with five diamonds and minimal slam interest, about 16-17 HCP type.

4NT shows a balanced hand with 18-19 HCP , and five diamonds.

With this approach you can narrow the parameters of your STRENGTH and SHAPE, making it easy on partner to EVALUATE his holdings, and decide where he wants to go.

If opener has an unbalanced hand, or is “semi-balanced” with no spade stopper, he does not have to accept the relay to 2NT.

“O”	“R”
1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	2 ♠

A re-bid of 3 ♣ tends to show a six-card club suit but it may be only a five-card suit with no spade stopper and no true diamond fit, with values almost exclusively in hearts and clubs. This bid just makes sense.

re-bid 3 ♣ with	♠2 ♥AJ86 ♦32 ♣KQ10876
re-bid 3 ♣	♠76 ♥AJ86 ♦32 ♣AQJ64

A 3♦ re-bid would show at least ♦Ax, ♦Kx, ♦Qx, or ♦Jxx and denying a full spade stopper.

Re-bid 3♦ with ♠102 ♥K987 ♦A87 ♣AQJ2, or

♠92 ♥QJ76 ♦Q7 ♣AQJ32.

“O”

1♣

1♥

“R”

1♦

2♠

3♠ SPECIAL: WESTERN CUE: Shows partial stopper in spades; ♠Qx or ♠Jxx

♠Q9 ♥K987 ♦J4 ♣AK986

1♣

1♥

1♦

2♠

3♥ denies spade stopper or diamond positive, implying six clubs and four “chunky” hearts with sound opener or better with no clear direction, perhaps

♠72 ♥AKJ4 ♦3 ♣AQJ862.

NOTE: With 6♣-5♥ bid 4♥!

Follow-up bidding is hopefully logical. 4♦ is RKC by “R” if diamond fit has been found at three-level. 4♥ is RKC in CLUBS if clubs had not been established at three-level.

“O”

1♣

1♥

3♦

“R”

1♦

2♠

4♦ = RKC ♣ (suit above)

1♣

1♥

3♣/3♠

1♦

2♠

4♥ = RKC ♦, NOT heart fit, which has already been denied!

Now let us explore the SECOND fourth suit spade auction.

SEQUENCES STARTING WITH:

1♣

1♥

1♦

1♠

The 1♠ bid by “R” promises four spades. Therefore, what could he have? In most situations he will have a game forcing hand with extra values, somewhere in the 14+HCP range, with at least a five-card diamond holding. Opener's responsibility is to attempt to bid his hand as naturally as possible. This hand came up at a local club game.

Opener

♠102 ♥K987 ♦A96 ♣AQJ7

Responder

♠AK74 ♥10 ♦KQJ1085 ♣94

Looking at both hands, 6♦ is not a bad contract, needing either the club king onside, or the heart ace onside with no club lead; better than 50%. At match-points, ten tricks are guaranteed in No Trump played from either side. How might this marginal slam be reached?

“O”

“R”

1♣

1♦

1♥ With no spade stopper, COV values in clubs, and secondary ♦ fit, a 1NT rebid looks unattractive. Whenever possible, TRY AND PAINT A PICTURE OF YOUR HAND!

1♠ = natural and forcing at least one round.

2♦ – Show your three-card support now. If no-trump is to be played, you certainly want it played from partner's side.

*At this juncture, any bid responder makes is game forcing. His 1♠ bid was “temporizing” and MIGHT have shown some weak hand looking for strain, but in that case he would not bid again.

3♦ sets trump

3♥ cue-bid

3♠

3NT = no ♥A with implied “soft” cards in rounded suits

At this point, responder can bid 4♦, guaranteeing a heart control, denying a club control, and still looking for slam. With his doubleton spade for ruffing purposes, along with his good secondary clubs and heart king, opener should be able to comfortably bid 6♦, which, as it turns out on this hand, the club king is onside and without a heart lead you can actually take all 13 tricks! Either way, 6♦ making 12 tricks is a top board!

***One simple agreement to have is:** after responder bids 1 ♠, no matter what opener rebids, if responder follows up with ANY BID past 2 ♦, a game force is set!

Let's go through some possibilities.

“O”	“R”
1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	1 ♠
1NT	2 ♦ = drop dead; all other bids are GF

2 ♣ = ♣ fragment, implying
♥ shortness 4-1-5-3 type, non-forcing.
2 ♥ = ♥ fragment implying
♣ shortness 4-3-5-1 type GF
2 ♠ = minimum hand with 6 ♦/5 ♠
2NT = balanced 5 ♦/4 ♠ Q-slam interest; 16-18HCP
3 ♣ = 4-1-5-3 or 4-0-5-4 GF
3 ♦ = 6-4 type with ♣ shortness
3 ♥ = ♥ shortness
3NT = TO PLAY

1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♣ = at least five clubs and four hearts	2 ♦ = to play
	All other bids attempt to show nature of GF within context of the auction.

1 ♣	1 ♦
1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♦ would show three-card diamond support and imply shortness in spades; 1-4-3-5 type.	
	All bids GF

You could choose to have all sorts of agreements on different sequences as to what might be game invitational, game forcing, competitive, preemptive, or what have you, but you run the risk of

losing control of the auction and getting to absurd spots; either way too low, or way too high. Simple understandings work well combined with good judgment.

♠Q982 ♥AJ43 ♦9 ♣KQ105

1 ♣

1 ♥

2 ♠

♠K1073 ♥2 ♦QJ8752 ♣J4

1 ♦

1 ♠

Pass

With six diamonds and four spades and game invitational values, start with a 1 ♠ response. Over a 1NT rebid, follow up bidding is easy.

1 ♣

1NT

usually some sort of GI hand [REVIEW SECTION VI. 2-way NMF]

2 ♦/2 ♥/2 ♠/2NT

1 ♠

2 ♣ = semi >relay to diamonds,

3 ♦ = GI with long diamonds.

There are some hands you might choose to start with a 1 ♠ response when you hold five diamonds. And less than game invitational values.

♠QJ96 ♥2 ♦K10765 ♣Q84

1 ♣

If “O” rebids 2 ♣

If “O” rebids 1NT, you can relay to 2 ♦. If opener accepts, you can pass 2 ♦. If he rebids 2 ♥ or 2 ♠ you can play the “Moysian” spade fit at the two level. Over a super three-card spade accept of 2NT, pass and pray!

1 ♠

Pass

Once again, depending on your style, and confidence in your bidding understandings, you must decide which initial bid will **PREPARE** the auction best!

X. Roman Key Card

Back in the old days, the 4NT bid was used to ask for aces. This bid would allow for staying out of slams when off two quick tricks. This bid has been dubbed “BLACKWOOD” for its creator, Easley Blackwood.

In Blackwood, 4NT asks for the number of *aces* partner holds. The responses are in steps.

5♣, the first step shows zero or four aces

5♦, the second step shows one

5♥, the third step shows two

5♠, the fourth step shows three.

If all the aces are present, kings can now be asked for by bidding 5NT, and the responses at the six level are the same.

6♣, the first step shows zero or four kings

6♦, the second step shows one king

6♥, the third step shows two kings

6♠, the fourth step shows three kings.

If the appropriate number of kings are found, a grand slam might be in the offing.

Blackwood worked fine as long as the number of aces and kings were all one needed to know, but all too often there was ambiguity in the trump suit. This led to the Italians developing a new convention called “Roman Key Card.”

In Roman Key Card (abbreviated RKC) there are five “key,” or essential cards, the four aces PLUS the KING OF THE TRUMP SUIT. When using RKC there must be a trump suit. In essence the king of trump is the *fifth ace!* The responses are similar to Blackwood.

5♣, the first step shows zero or three key cards

5♦, the second step shows one or four key cards

5♥, the third step shows two or (rarely) FIVE key cards WITHOUT the trump QUEEN!

5♠, the fourth step shows two or five key cards WITH the trump queen.

If there are not enough key cards for slam the partner asking signs off at the five-level of the trump suit. If, however, enough key cards are available for either a small slam or a grand slam the person asking may continue to seek information. If responder bid either 5♣ or 5♦ the presence of the trump queen may not be known and the person who is asking may now bid the next step *that is not a sign off* to ask for the trump queen.

Lets say that spades is the trump suit. I bid 4NT asking about key cards. You are my partner and respond 5♦ showing one of four. If I bid 5♠ at this point I am saying, "Partner, we do not have enough key cards and I am signing off." If, however, I bid 5♥, the next step non-sign off, I am saying, "Partner, we have enough key cards for slam but I need to know about the trump queen, either for purposes of bidding a small slam or possibly a grand slam. Do you have the trump queen, and if you do, how about any kings outside the trump suit?"

If responder does NOT have the trump queen, he/she signs off at the five-level if possible. If he/she HAS the trump queen it will be shown by jumping to the six level in trump if no outside kings are held, or bidding kings *up-the-line* if any outside kings exist.

SPADES IS TRUMP

4NT	5♣ (zero or three)
5♦ = trump queen ask	5♠ = NO
	5♥ = YES, plus heart king
	6♣ = YES, plus CLUB king (no heart king)
	6♦ = YES, and the DIAMOND king only.
	6♠ = YES I have the ♠queen but no outside kings.

If you skip the queen ask and sign off steps, the next step asks for *specific kings*.

4NT	5♣
5NT asks for specific kings	

Using 4NT as a Key card inquiry, however, can sometimes propel the partnership too high. Thus, a modification was made. This new modification is referred to as “kick back.”

Because of *conservation of space* I would recommend using “kick-back” in the minors and hearts. In this method the suit above the trump suit becomes RKC.

if hearts is trump	4♠ = RKC
if diamonds is trump	4♥ = RKC (unless hearts is a focused suit in which case 4♠ becomes RKC)
if clubs is trump	4♦ = RKC

The responses are the same only you are using STEPS for questions and answers.

Let's say that diamonds is trump.

4♥ = RKC

4♠ (first step) = zero or three
key cards

4NT (second step) = one or four

5♣ (third step) = two or five

without the ♦ queen :

5♦ (fourth step) = two or five

WITH the ♦ queen

The queen of trump ask is still the first non-sign off step, and the king asks are still the second non-sign off step.

This may be a little awkward at first but once you get used to it you will love it!

EXAMPLES

Opener

1. ♠AKJ854 ♥2 ♦KQ87 ♣A4
1 ♠

3NT = shortness ♥
with sound opener

4 ♣

4NT = RKC

5NT asks specific kings

7 ♠

2. ♠K3 ♥J964 ♦KQ85 ♣A3

1 ♦

2 ♥

3 ♦ cue-bids below game in a “natural” suit promise at least the ace, or KQ of that suit.

3 ♠

4 ♣

4NT [first step] shows one key card

Responder now knows that opener has the ♠K, ♣A, and ♦KQ, and does not care about the ♥Q because of his extra trump length, and therefore places the final contract in 6 ♥

3. ♠2 ♥AJ976 ♦A853 ♣K972

1 ♥

3 ♠ = “splinter”

4♥ [first step] shows THREE key cards

Responder

♠Q973 ♥AJ42 ♦A3 ♣K95
2NT [EICHOBY]

3NT = serious slam interest
denying ace or king of spades

4 ♦

5 ♠ = two with the ♠Q

6 ♣ = ♣king

♠AJ5 ♥AK9752 ♦J6 ♣K82

1 ♥

3 ♣ = GF: 2NT would be random
game try

3 ♥

3NT *serious slam try*

4 ♠ = RKC

♠J96 ♥K4 ♦K2 ♣AQJ1084

2 ♣

4 ♦ = RKC in clubs

6 ♣

4. ♠102 ♥J3 ♦KQ85 ♣AQ976 ♠K6 ♥AQ7 ♦AJ9762 ♣K3

This one is a little tricky. First off, I would not open 1♦ as I dislike “corrupting” the distribution. I would open 1♣ with the intent of rebidding 1NT over a major suit response by partner. Imperfect, but all sequences are.

1♣	1♦
2♦: this is NOT a reverse; 3♦ would be	2♥
3♣	3♠
4♣ stressing good clubs	4♥ = RKC
5♦ [fourth step] = two with ♦Q	6♦

Why Kickback?

Sometimes you cannot have a “pure” auction, and must take the most practical route to your final destination. You pick up

♠2 ♥AK7 ♦K4 ♣AJ108752 and open 1♣.

Partner bids 2♣, *inverted*, showing at least a limit raise in clubs, either five-cards or more in support, or four-card support and a hand not conducive to bidding 2NT, 11-12 HCP with a balanced hand. Although there are a plethora of hands partner could hold, would you not want to take a shot at slam if partner holds two key cards? The ♣K and either pointed ace should give you a chance any time partner holds either fewer than three hearts, or the ♥Q, and partner could hold the ♣K and ♦AQx, which again would make slam a virtual claim.

If you are playing that 4NT is RKC, you are in great shape when responder holds

♠AJ7 ♥96 ♦QJ83 ♣K964

and his response is 5♥,

but what happens when he holds

♠Q98 ♥2 ♦QJ832 ♣KQ96

and his response is 5♦, only one key card? You are too high already!

5. ♠2 ♥AK7 ♦K4 ♣AJ108752

1♣

3♠ = “splinter”

4♦ = RKC

5♣

♠Q98 ♥2 ♦QJ832 ♣KQ96

2♣ *inverted*

4♣

4♠ [second step] = one key card

Pass

Because you started your RKC ask at a lower level, you are able to get out in 5♣!

EPILOGUE

There are, of course, many more “gadgets and gizmos” available out there in “Wonderland” for all you system junkies. The basic structures and conventions presented in this thesis should, however, serve you well, and if used properly will bring you better results, I “gar-on-tee.”

THE END

GET OUT OF THE STONE AGE

For those of you who wish to expand your horizons, this book may be the answer you have been looking for.

A Modern Approach to Two-Over-One was written for the player who already uses a basic two-over-one approach, but is looking for more comprehensive methods to “glue” his system together. Special modern treatments and conventions are introduced to help cover the outer edges of the bell curve, allowing you to intelligently explore those “hard to reach” places.

We can no longer live in the past with limited tools. If you want to be competitive in this modern age of bidding, get out of the stone age and enter the twenty-first century!



Ken Eichenbaum is a nationally known author and bridge instructor. He has won numerous regional events and has lectured at numerous tournaments. His two bridge plays, “The Wizard of Odds” and “Annie Count Your Trumps”, have been performed at various bridge tournaments. Ken’s previous books, *Bridge Without a Partner* and *Winners, Losers, and Cover Cards*, are available from Master Point Press.

