

The MaxFirst principle:

When we start a relay against a hand that is very variable in strength (at least 3 hcp difference from minimum to maximum), the first answer to the relay is often according to the MaxFirst principle. This means that the 1st step in the answer is reserved for all the hands with extra values, whereas all the remaining steps shows minimum values and some particular distribution.

The MaxFirst principle is frequently used when the opener has shown 2 suits. The principle is then to show the flattest distributions first as follows:

- extra values, any distribution, relay asks
- minimum, no extra card in any of the suits
- minimum, one extra card in the shortest (or lowest or only possible) suit
- minimum, one extra card in the longest (or highest) suit (if both are possible)
- minimum, one extra card in each of the two suits
- minimum, two extra cards in the longest suit
- ...

Alternatively, if the opener has shown a key suit and a mystery side suit (i.e. the 2 and 2 NT openings in the LOW system), the first step shows a maximum (as always), whereas the next bids shows "lowest side suit", "second lowest side suit" and "highest side suit".

If we use the second round relay after the 1 No Trump opening (1 NT-2 -2 /2 -2 or 1 NT-2 -2 -2 NT), the first step shows a maximum as before, but the ordering of the different possible distributions afterwards is irregular.

The MaxFirst principle can also be combined with the LoHiNo principle for shortness (as in the Minor suit relay). In that case the 1st step shows a maximum (as always), and the next bids are according to the LoHiNo scale (lowest/middle/highest singleton).

If the responder shows a maximum, the next relay bid asks for distribution and the answers follow the same scale.

On rare occasions when the opener has shown a very wide possible point-range for his bid (i.e. 11-19 hcp) we use the MaxFirst principle twice if opener shows extra values in the first answer to the relay.

The MaxFirst principle is used in several situations:

- after the 4th suit forcing relay
- after the 3rd suit forcing relay when responders first bid was on the 1-level
- after the Minor suit relay when opener shows 11-16 hcp and a specified side suit (LoHiNo scale)
- after the 2 /2 NT relay over 1 NT-2 /2 -2 /2
- after the 2 NT relay to a 2 opening
- after the 2 NT relay to a 2 opening (both LOW and HIGH)
- after the 3 relay to a 2 NT opening (LOW)