

## SYMMETRIC RELAY 1986

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### INTRODUCTION

This is an adaption of methods developed in New Zealand over the last few years. It is a strong club system, similar in many ways to Precision Club but using relay continuations over all of the openings.

#### Opening Bids:

- 1C 16+ HCP any shape (17+ HCP if balanced)
- 1D 11-15 HCP, no 5 card major, not 14-15 balanced, not single suited with 6+ in a minor, not 6C4D.
- 1H 11-15 HCP, 5+ hearts, may have a longer minor, not 5+ spades.
- 1S 11-15 HCP, 5+ spades, may have a longer minor, not 5+ hearts.
- 1N 14-16 HCP balanced.
- 2C 11-15 HCP, 6+ clubs, no outside 4 card major. Could have 4 diamonds.
- 2D 11-15 HCP, 6+ diamonds, no outside 4 card suit.
- 2H 11-15 HCP, at least 5-5 in the majors.
- 2S Weak 2.
- 2N At least 5-5 in reds or majors, less than opening values.
- 3X Standard preempt
- 3N Minor preempt at 4 level.
- 4C Transfer to hearts.
- 4D Transfer to spades.
- 4H To play.
- 4S To play.
- 4N Ace ask.

### ONE CLUB OPENING AND CONTINUATIONS

The 1C opening is the only strong opening in the system. It shows either 16+ HCP unbalanced or 17+ HCP balanced. Hands with exceptional playing strength may be upgraded to open 1C however this should only be done with discretion.

#### Responses:

- 1D Any negative. To qualify for a positive a hand must contain 2 controls and at least 8 points. All higher responses show positives.
- 1H 4+ spades.
- 1S Balanced (any 4333 or 4432) OR at least 54 in the reds (either way).
- 1N 4+ hearts, denies 4+ spades and 4+ diamonds.
- 2C 5+ diamonds OR three suited with both minors.
- 2D 5+ clubs, single suited.

2H 4 diamonds, 5+ clubs.  
2S At least 55 in minors.  
2N+ 4 clubs, 5+ diamonds.

Notes:

1. It is important that the positives be kept up to strength since all auctions following a positive are forcing to game. Stronger hands with less than two controls can still force to game having started with 1D, since change of suit by responder after a negative is forcing for one round (e.g. 1C Pass 1D Pass  
2C Pass 2H).

2. Suits are in general not bid naturally in the hope that the described hand will not end up being declarer. In general suits are shown in the order SHDC (ie with 6 hearts and 4 spades you still bid 1H showing spades first). The exceptions to this are with balanced hands (which bid 1S) and three suiteders with both minors (which bid 2C).

Relay continuations after a positive response:

In general after a positive response opener will bid the next suit as an artificial relay. This will continue until opener has sufficient information to place the contract.

There are various basic divisions into which hand types can be placed when describing them via this relay method. These are as follows:

Single suited	5+ cards in one suit, no other 4+ card suit.
Balanced	Any 4333 or 4432 shape.
"Long-legged" 2 suiter	Two suited hand with 5+ cards in both suits.
"Short-legged" 2 suiter	Two suited hand with one 4 card suit and one 5+ card suit.
Three suited hand	Any 4441 or 5440 shape.

Single Suited Hands:

The suit is shown by the first response as detailed above. When partner relays with the next suit up any bid of 2S or higher shows a single suited hand in the suit already shown. The next piece of information that must be conveyed is which suit is shortest or whether the hand has equal shortages. The method is outlined below:

2S	High Shortage
2N	Middle shortage
3C	Equal shortage
3D	Low shortage 5332
3H	Low shortage 6331
3S	Low shortage 7+ card suit with void
3N	Low shortage 7+ card suit with singleton.

The terms high middle and low relate to the ordinary ranking of the suits i.e. spades highest, clubs lowest. What suits each term refers to depends upon the suit in which length has been shown. Where high shortage or middle shortage has been shown the next relay asks for

further clarification of the hand pattern. These resolve at the same steps as the direct resolution with low shortage. For example a 6331 type hand with high shortage will bid 2S first to show high shortage and then over partner's 2N relay will bid 3H to show 6331 pattern. This is an example of the symmetric nature of the system. The same hand shapes always resolve at the same level and it is only the way in which you have arrived at that level that describes the rest of the hand.

The hands with equal shortage are 6322 patterns and 7222's. It is most efficient to divide these up into two groups, and for half of them to bid 3C direct and for the others to show high shortage by bidding 2S first, then show equal shortage by bidding 3C. The natural way to divide them is for the 6322's with 2 cards in the highest ranking suit to go via 2S and the 7222 and the 6322 with the high three card suit to go direct to 3C.

To illustrate how this all works following are complete charts showing the resolution of single suiters with hearts:

1C 1N (showing hearts)  
2C:

2S	S shortage				
2N	D shortage		Relay		
3C	Equal shortage		Relay	Equal	
3D	3532	Relay	3523	2533	Relay
3H	3631	2722	3613	1633	2623
3S	7+ H,void C	3622	7+,void D	7+,void S	2632
3N	7+ H,sing.C		7+,sing D	7+,sing S	

There are various principles demonstrated in this structure which are central to the Symmetric Relay method. It is important that they are understood at this stage otherwise the rest of the system will be far harder to learn. Once the basic principles are learned it is fairly easy to derive the meaning of a sequence from first principles. This saves a lot in terms of memory work.

1. We always show length from the bottom and shortage from the top. This means that when disclosing length in a suit we will always start from the lowest ranking suit while if disclosing shortage we will start from the highest ranking suit.

2. In many situations the last alternative is shown implicitly by going on and answering the next question. For example 3D and up in single suited hands only really show hand patterns. Normally we go via either 2S, 2N or 3C to explicitly clarify the shortage, however if we do not go via any of these bids but bid it direct we have implied low shortage. This principle occurs in almost all relay situations.

3. The least likely hand shape is shown at the next to last step. In general the hand shapes are ordered in order of decreasing frequency (the most frequent at the lowest level) because the most efficient auctions should be the ones that come up most frequently. The exception to this is the least frequent shape which resolves at the second last step rather than the last. The reason for this is that the sequences that resolve at 3S are the least efficient since 3N

is never treated as a relay but is always to play. This means that to relay over 3S opener must bid 4C.

4. A consequence of the implicit bidding principle described above is that when responder holds the last possible shape in any sequence (e.g. 6430 for short legged two suiters) he will often immediately show the number of controls held. In other words by bidding beyond the second last shape he is implying the last shape and actually showing controls. This is sometimes referred to as zooming.

Since final hand patterns will sometimes zoom past 3N, relayer should take some care that he does not accidentally become overboard particularly after intervention where the structure has been displaced. Sometimes this will be unavoidable, however judicious use of weak relays can often avoid the problem.

Balanced Hands:

Balanced hands are all bid via 1S. This allows the strong and undisclosed hand to be declarer in the most likely contract of 3N. Throughout the system some effort is made to avoid the disclosed hand becoming declarer.

The continuations are as follows:

1C - 1S  
1N:

2C Hearts and diamonds at least 5-4 either way.  
2D 4432 two suits of the same colour or 4333 4 card major.  
2H 4432 two suits of the same rank.  
2S 4333 4 card minor.  
2N 2434  
3C 4342  
3D 3424  
3H 4243

The balanced hands are bid along slightly different principles to the other types of hands. We do not adhere to the length from the bottom rule but rather follow the mnemonic CRO. This stands for Colour, Rank, Odd and refers to the way in which the 4432's are shown. First the parity of the suits is determined i.e. same colour, same rank or odd and then the doubleton is shown. In the case of odd suits the doubleton is shown directly and it is implicit that the long suits are of odd parity. The doubleton is shown by bidding the suit of the doubleton except in the case of spades in which case we bid 2N.

4333 type hands are all bid via 2S. With a 4 card major we get to 2S via 2D while with a 4 card minor 2S is bid direct. One way to remember this is that by bidding the major via 2D the undisclosed hand will become declarer in a heart contract.

The full structure for balanced hands is listed below:

2D	Colour or 4333 Major		
2H	Rank	Relay	
2S	4333 minor	Relay	4333 Major

2N	2434	Relay	2344	2443	Relay
3C	4342	3334	4432	3442	3433
3D	3424	3343	4423	4324	4333
3H	4243		3244	4234	

Two Suited Hands:

General:

With two suited hands first the two suits must be identified, then their relative lengths, then the shortage clarified, and finally the exact hand shape. The principle of bidding suits in a non-natural way still applies in an attempt to stop the disclosed hand from becoming declarer.

We have already seen that minor two suiters bid 2H or higher direct after the 1C opening. This is another example of implicit bidding - no suits have been explicitly shown so the minors have been implied. The red two suiters have also been shown to go via 1C-1S-1N-2C. All other two suiters contain a major and hence go via either 1H or 1N.

The structure is as follows:

1C - 1H  
1S:

1N 4+ hearts  
2C 4+ diamonds  
2D 4+ clubs 5+ hearts  
2H 5+ clubs 4 hearts  
2S+ Single suited.

1C - 1N  
2C:

2D 4+ clubs 5+ hearts  
2H 5+ clubs 4 hearts  
2S+ Single suited.

Where two suits have been shown it is then necessary to sort out their relative lengths. 2H always shows 4 cards in the higher ranking suit and 5+ cards in the lower ranking suit (length from the bottom), 2S shows at least 5-5 (long-legged) and 2N and up resolve shortage and implicitly show 4 cards in the lower ranking suit and 5+ cards in the higher ranking suit.

Note that this principle still exists with two suiters with clubs and a major, although it is not intuitively obvious. The two auctions in question are listed below:

1C 1H  
1S 2D 5+ spades, 4+ clubs.  
2H 5+ clubs, 4 spades.

1C 1N  
2C 2D 5+ hearts, 4+ clubs.  
2H 5+ clubs, 4 hearts.

This area of the system has consistently proved difficult to remember. The best way to consider these sequences is that 2D simply shows that clubs is the second suit, while the spare step (2H) runs on to show the first type of two suiter. As with all other short-legged two suiters, 2H shows 4 cards in the higher ranking suit and 5+ in the lower.

The full structure is shown below for major two suiters:

1C - 1H  
 1S - 1N  
 2C:

2H	5+H,4S					
2S	5+H,5+S (conts below)		Relay			
2N	D short			D short		
3C	Equal short		Relay	Eq short		Relay
3D	5431	Relay	5413	4531	Relay	4513
3H	6421	7411	6412	4621	4711	4612
3S	7420	5422	7402	4720	4522	4702
3N	6430		6403	4630		4603

Long-Legged Two Suiters:

1C - 1H  
 1S - 1N  
 2C - 2S  
 2N:

3C	D short		
3D	Eq short		Relay
3H	5521	Relay	5512
3S	5530	5611	5503
3N	5620	6511	5602
4C	6520		6502

Three Suited Hands:

Three suited hands are divided into two categories; minor three suiters and major three suiters.

The major three suiters are shown via the sequence:

1C - 1H  
 1S - 1N  
 2C - 2D

Two suits have been shown however the sequence stops short of 2H where two suited resolution starts.

The minor three suiters are shown via the sequence:

1C - 2C  
 2D - 2H

One suit has been shown however the auction stops short of 2S where

single suited resolution starts.

This is one area of the system where the symmetric nature breaks down and really the only way to handle the sequences is by counting steps. The first step shows high shortage and all subsequent steps show low shortage. 4441's are shown first and then five card suits from the bottom.

The full structure for major three suiters is shown below:

1C - 1H  
1S - 1N  
2C - 2D  
2H:

2S	Short diamonds	
2N	4441	Relay
3C	4450	4414
3D	4540	4405
3H	5440	4504
3S		5404

The structure for minor three suiters is entirely analagous, however it starts one step higher.

Extreme Shapes:

The structure given above allows for about 99% of the distributions that will be encountered. The other one percent are the extremely distributional hands which occur very rarely. When they do occur usually it is not after a strong club opening, or if it is the opponents intervene. In the rare instances where one is allowed to relay with these hands it is important to be able to describe them since they often have extreme playing strength.

The method adopted is to describe the hand as a more normal distribution and then when partner asks for controls add one full level to the response. Partner should always be able to determine that this shows an impossible number of controls and should be able to work out the approximate distribution. If partner does not ask for controls then responder must decide whether to move.

Below are listed extreme shapes and the equivalent normal shapes that would be described:

6610	5521
7600	6511
7510	5431
8410	6421
8500	7411
8221	5332
8320	6331
9211	6322
9220	7+ void
9310	7+ singleton
10,111	7222

With the one suited hands there is some discretion as to whether to treat the hand as an extreme hand or to just treat it as 7+. This will depend upon such considerations as quality of hand.

Control Showing:

The next relay after the full shape has been determined asks for controls. Where partner has shown a positive the first step shows two controls, after which they go up in single steps. If responder has shown a negative then the first step shows 0 or 1. If opener relays over this the first step shows 0 and subsequent steps go straight into denial cue-bidding.

Singleton kings are not counted as controls. This method seems to be right on the majority of hands although sometimes it can cost where this card is required to solidify opener's suit.

Control Showing in Situations where Run-On is Possible:

In situations where the last hand-shape is held, sometimes controls will be shown immediately. The hands that will zoom are determined by the type of hand. With the more extreme hands responder will zoom with fewer controls than with less extreme hand types. The principles governing this are as follows:

Single-Suited Hands:

3N shows 2-4 controls, 4C shows 5 controls.

Short-Legged 2 Suited Hands:

3N shows 2-3 controls, 4C shows 4 controls.

Long-Legged 2 Suited Hands:

3N shows 2 controls, 4C shows 3 controls.

Denial Cue Bidding (DCB):

After the number of controls has been shown, the next step begins a denial cue sequence. This is a method suited to the relay style which allows the placement of honour cards to be determined.

The basic idea is that responder considers the suits in descending order of length (highest ranking first if equal) and either bids the step or skips the step according to his holding in the suit in question. Each suit is considered one less time than the number of cards in the suit. This means that singletons are never considered and doubletons are only considered on the first sweep through the suits. On the first sweep responder stops with either neither of the top two (i.e. no control card in the suit) or all three of AKQ. He skips the step with one or two honour cards. On the second sweep his action depends on what he did on the first round. If he stopped with no control card then he will now stop to deny the queen and skip holding the queen. If he stopped with AKQ then he now shows or denies the jack. If he skipped the first time then he will skip again to show two of the top three honours. This process can continue until

jacks and maybe even tens have been located.

Note that neither singleton aces nor singleton kings are located. Singleton kings are not counted as controls so there is no way to identify them. Singleton aces should be picked up during the denial cueing.

The step is always the relay in this situation except at the 6 level. Any bid at the 6 level is to play.

Queen Ask:

In a situation where responder has shown 5 or more controls, DCB often becomes less efficient since opener is likely to know most if not all of dummy's control cards and is only really interested in queens. When responder has shown 5 or more controls a bid of 4N is a Queen Ask. The responses are as follows:

5C	None
5D	QD
5H	QH
5S	QS
5N	QC
6C	Two same colour
6D	Two same rank
6H	Two odd
6S	Three
6N	Four

If responder's response to the control ask, showing 5+ controls, is 4S then 4N is Queen Ask and 5C is relay. If responder's response to the control ask is 4S but this shows less than 5 controls (rare), then 4N is to play and 5C is the relay.

Weak Relays:

Weak relays apply in situations where opener is only interested in moving towards slam opposite a good hand which could not be discovered by the normal relay method or would be found too late. The weak relay takes the form of a two step bid below the level of game by the relayer. It will usually occur either instead of, or immediately after, the control ask. Occasionally it will occur during the resolution of hand shape.

In response to the weak relay responder is expected to bid the step with a poor hand and to continue to describe his hand with a good hand. The definition of a good hand and a bad hand depends upon the circumstances.

If the weak relay is made immediately after the shape has been determined then a good hand with 4 controls or any 5 controls are required to bid more than the step. This means that step plus one shows a good hand with 4 controls etc.

If the weak relay is made after the control ask then responder should move with a hand with good intermediate cards and texture.

If the weak relay is made during the resolution of hand shape then this warns partner not to zoom past 3N showing controls unless he has 5 or more. This is a fairly rare circumstance since it presumes quite a lot of foresight on the relayers part.

Note that a bid of more than two steps below the level of 3N asks for a stopper in that suit.

Continuations After the 1D Negative:

As mentioned earlier the 1D response covers all hands with less than two controls and all hands with less than 8 points. This means that some hands that bid 1D always intend to force to game. Opener's continuations are as follows:

- 1H Artificial and forcing. 20+ balanced, good 19+ unbalanced.
- 1S 5+ spades, 16 to bad 19, occasionally only 4 spades if 5431 with a five card minor.
- 1N Semi-balanced 17-19.
- 2C 5+ clubs unbalanced, 16 to bad 19.
- 2D 5+ diamonds unbalanced, 16 to bad 19.
- 2H 5+ hearts unbalanced, 16 to bad 19.
- 2S Forcing, sets spades. Hand that wishes to bid naturally.
- 2N Minor two suiter at least 5-5. Good playing strength.
- 3C Forcing, solid clubs. New suits show stoppers.
- 3D Forcing, solid diamonds. New suits show stoppers.
- 3H Forcing, sets hearts. Hand that wishes to bid naturally.
- 3N To play. Normally based on running suit.
- 4H To play. Weaker than 3H.
- 4S To play. Weaker than 3S.

After the 1H relay, responder must decide whether his hand is worth a semi-positive, or a second negative. The second negative in principle shows something like 0-4, maybe 5 balanced. It should be remembered that the semi-positive is in principle forcing to game (it is absolutely forcing on responder). It is often better to underbid slightly at this stage and then invite if partner tries to sign off. With a second negative responder bids 1S. With a semi-positive responder makes his normal relay response but starting at 1N rather than 1H. This means that the whole structure is up two steps. Opener can now relay out shape in the normal way.

After 1C-1D-1H-2C: 2N by opener is an attempt to reserve the declaration. Responder continues in the following way:

- 3C Staymanic, guarantees at least one 4 card major.
- 3D Reds, longer diamonds, only four hearts.
- 3H Reds, longer hearts usually only 4 diamonds.
- 3S Extreme reds. Not a poor hand.
- 3N Flat, no interest in majors.

Over the Staymanic 3C, 3D denies a major, 3H shows hearts, 3S shows spades and denies hearts.

Over the 1N rebid by opener (17-19 semi-balanced) we play Stayman, transfers and 2S range enquiry as per opening 1NT, however the structure is modified to cater for the possibility of having 5 hearts.

After opener bids 2H, showing 4 or 5 hearts, 3C by responder is an enquiry asking for further description. Now 3H shows 5 hearts, 3S shows 4 spades and 3D shows neither.

Continuations after the other rebids are basically natural. After 1C-1D-1S, 1N is constructive.

Continuations after 1C-1D-1H-1S:

In this position 2C is a game force. Other bids are basically natural. Jumps are forcing. 1N shows 20-22 (Lavings and transfers), 2N shows 23-24 (54 Stayman and transfers) and 3N is to play (not necessarily a balanced hand).

54 Stayman:

3C asks for 5 card majors. In response to this responder bids 3D with no 5 card major, bids a 5 card major, or 3N to show either 5 card minor. Over 3D responder bids lowest 4 card major until situation is clear. Over the 2N rebid 3S shows 5 spades and 4 hearts.

In response to the forcing 2C, 2D shows any balanced hand (4333 or 4432) 2H and 2S are natural 5 cards, 2N shows any 4441 and thence 3C asks for the singleton (bid singleton or 3N with singleton club), 3C and 3D are natural and 5+ cards, 3H and 3S are natural and 6 card suits. Over 2D the relay structure for balanced hands continues (up two steps).

Intervention After 1C Opening:

One of the weaknesses of playing a strong club system is that it is fairly difficult to handle interference and preemption after the 1C opening. Our basic philosophy is to try to ignore the intervention as much as possible and not go out of our way trying to penalise them. There are fairly frequent positions where it is nevertheless quite possible to catch them.

We attempt to keep the relay structure intact wherever possible. The basic rule is that we can relay as long as the structure has not been displaced by more than two steps.

We will handle the different situations separately:

They X 1C:

This actually increases the amount of space available, however it is often the springboard for a preemptive jump so it is important to get as much information across as possible. The responses are:

Pass 0-4 any shape. Second negative.  
XX Any hand with 8+ HCP but not 2 controls.  
1D 5-8 any shape. Semi-positive.  
1H+ Normal relay responses.

We continue to relay over all but pass where the bidding is natural i.e. over 1D, 1H is GFR and now 1S shows 1H response as per uninterrupted auction over 1C.

They overcall below the level of 1N:

This usually takes away some space but can just be managed. The method is that we double with any second negative, pass with any positive and make a relay response with semi-positives. The amount of disturbance of the relay responses depends on the level of the overcall. The relay is only off over the X showing the second negative.

They overcall above the level of 1S:

This is too high for the relay to continue. Bids at the two level are natural and non-forcing. X shows values but no clear bid, less than game forcing. Bids of 2N and higher are transfers based on Rubensohl principles. These are at least invitational, so opener must do more than accept the transfer if he wants to accept the invitation. A transfer into their suit is Staymanic with game going values, 3S shows values for game but no stopper, 3N shows values for game and a stopper.

Developments in these auctions depends on the exact level of the overcall. Following are some examples of specific auctions:

1C (2D) 3C Pass:

In this situation responder has shown values for game and interest in the majors. Opener should bid a five card major or bid 3N with a stopper and no 4 card major. Other hands would accept the transfer. If opener accepts the transfer, responder bids 3N with neither major and no stopper, or bids his lowest major. Note that:

1C (2D) 3C Pass  
3D Pass 3H Pass  
3N:

shows no major and no stopper.

1C (2H) 3D Pass:

Opener would bid 3S with a 5 card suit and 3N without 4S and with a stopper. Otherwise he would normally bid 3H. Responder will now bid 3S with no stopper and 3N with a stopper.

Where responder makes a non-forcing bid at the two level change of suit by opener is forcing.

They intervene in a relay auction:

Usually this gives extra space since it normally takes the form of a lead-directing double. In a forcing situation if the intervention is in front of the relayer then pass is the relay, X or XX (whichever is appropriate) is for penalties. If the interference is in front of the responder then pass is the first step, double is the second etc. This only applies if there is sufficient space for the relay to continue.

They double the 1H second force:

If they double the 1H second force, then the extra space is used to further define the negatives. XX shows 0-2, Pass shows 3-4, all other responses show 5-8 relay style. This means that the structure is down one step for semi-positives and the range of the bad hands has been further defined. Over Pass, XX is a relay with the structure displaced only one step. Over XX, 2C is an artificial game force, continuations as per normal uninterrupted auctions of 1C-1D-1H-1S-2C.

#### ONE DIAMOND OPENINGS AND CONTINUATIONS

The one diamond opening shows 11-15 HCP and denies the ability to make any other opening bid. This means that the hand will contain no 5 card major and will not contain a 6 card minor in a single suited hand or 6+ clubs and 4 diamonds. If the hand is balanced it will be in the 11-13 range. Balanced 11 point hands will only be opened if they contain a 5 card suit or if they have only 7 losers.

Some tactical variations may be allowed however they are not covered by the system.

This means that the relay continuations must deal with a variety of different hands:

- 1/ Balanced hands in the 11-13 range.
- 2/ Three suited hands.
- 3/ Two suited hands with a four card major and a longer minor.
- 4/ Two suited hands with both minors (not 6C4D).

At the same time it must be possible to bid naturally on weak hands. The solution to this is to play the 1H response as a two way bid showing either any hand which wishes to relay or a hand with a natural 1H response (4+ hearts).

The responses to this relay are geared so that when the responder has the weakish hand with hearts this can be determined and a part score can be reached.

Responses to 1D:

- 1H Either any game going hand or any hand with a natural 1H response. Can sometimes be a hand which will try to invite if given the chance.
- 1S Natural and in principle non-forcing. In practice opener will usually bid.
- 1N 6-11, no four card major.
- 2C 8-12, reasonable 5+ card suit.
- 2D 8-12, reasonable 5+ card suit.
- 2H Weak jump shift (then 2N Ogust).
- 2S Weak jump shift.
- 2N At least 5-5 minors, non-constructive.
- 3C Intermediate jump shift.
- 3D Intermediate jump shift.
- 3H+ Preemptive.

Initial responses after 1D - 1H:

1S Either balanced or at least 5-5 in the minors.  
 1N Either three suited with both black suits or two suited with 4  
 spades and a longer minor.  
 2C 4 diamonds and 5 clubs precisely.  
 2D 4 clubs and longer diamonds.  
 2H 4 hearts and longer clubs.  
 2S Three suited with both red suits.  
 2N+ 4 hearts and longer diamonds.

Continuations after 1D - 1H  
 1S:

1N 4+ hearts, weakish, to play.  
 2C Forcing relay.  
 2D Invitational relay with 4 card major.  
 2H 6+ hearts. Better than 1D - 2H.  
 2N Invitational, no 4 card major.

Continuations after 1D - 1H  
 1S - 2C:

2D	Any 4333 or 4432		
2H	5332 with 5 clubs.		
2S	Minors 5-5.		Relay
2N	2353	Relay	2335
3C	3253	Short spades	3235
3D	3352, 2 controls	Even shortage	3325, 2 controls
3H	3352, 3 controls	2155	3325, 3 controls
3S	3352, 4 controls	3055	3325, 4 controls
3N	3352, 5 controls	2056	3325, 5 controls
4C	3352, 6 controls	2065, 2 controls.	3325, 6 controls

Note that 6 controls are the maximum that can be held by a hand in the 11-13 range. This means that responses from 4C and up run on to denial cue bidding.

Continuations after 1D - 1H  
 1S - 2C  
 2D - 2H:

2S 4432 same colour or 4333 4 card major  
 2N 4432 same rank.  
 3C 4333 4 card minor.  
 3D 2434  
 3H 4342  
 3S 3424  
 3N 4243

Note that this is the same as the balanced hands structure over a 1C opening except everything is up two steps. As a consequence of this the hands with doubleton hearts do not run on for controls. The continuations are analagous to those in the sequences over 1C.

Continuations after 1D - 1H  
 1S - 2D:

2H Minimum 4 hearts.

2S Minimum 4 spades, not 4 hearts.  
2N Minimum no 4 card major.  
3C Minimum 55 in minors.  
3D Maximum 55 in minors.  
3H Maximum 4 hearts.  
3S Maximum 4 spades not 4 hearts.  
3N Maximum no 4 card major.

When opener shows a maximum all auctions are forcing to game. When opener shows a minimum all auctions are droppable.

Continuations after 1D - 1H

1N: (S and minor or black 3 suiter)

2C Relay.  
2D Weakish with both red suits.  
2H 6+ hearts. Better than 1D - 2H.  
2S To play. Weakish hand with hearts and spades.  
3H 6+ hearts (usually 7), highly invitational.

Continuations after 1D - 1H

1N - 2C:

2D Three suiter with short hearts.  
2H 4 spades with longer clubs.  
2S Three suiter with short diamonds.  
2N+ 4 spades with longer diamonds.

The relay continuations follow general symmetric principles, and in the case of the two suiters is at the same level as two suited resolution after a 1C opening. The only point to note is that when resolving the three suited hands it should be borne in mind that 5 card majors are not possible. This means that the resolutions after the auction 1D - 1H - 1N - 2C - 2D - 2H are as follows:

2S 4144  
2N 4045  
3C 4054, 2 controls  
3D 4054, 3 controls

whereas after the auction 1D - 1H - 1N - 2C - 2S - 2N continuations are:

3C 4414  
3D 4405, 2 controls  
3H 4405, 3 controls

Continuations after 1D - 1H

2C: (Minor two suiter 4D longer clubs)

2D To play in 2D. Weakish hand with both red suits.  
2H To play in 2H.  
2S Relay.  
2N Invitational to 3N.  
3C Preemptive.  
3D Preemptive.

Continuations after 1D - 1H  
2C - 2S:

2N	Spade shortage		
3C	Equal shortage		Relay
3D	3145, 2 controls	Relay	1345, 2 controls
3H	3145, 3 controls	2245, 2 controls	1345, 3 controls
3S		2245, 3 controls	

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Continuations after 1D - 1H  
2D: (Minor two suiter 4C longer diamonds)

2H	To play in 2H.
2S	Relay.
2N	Invitational to 3N.
3C	Preemptive.
3D	Preemptive.

Continuations after 1D - 1H  
2D - 2S:

2N	Spade shortage		
3C	Equal shortage		Relay
3D	3154	Relay	1354
3H	2164	1174	1264
3S	2074	2254, 2 controls	0274
3N	3064	2254, 3 controls	0364

Continuations after 1D - 1H  
2H: (showing 4 hearts and 5+ clubs)

Pass Weak hand with hearts.

2S	Game forcing relay.
2N	Invitational flat hand, without 3 hearts.
3C	Invitational, 3 hearts, club tolerance.
3D	Stopper ask, game forcing.
3H	Invitational with hearts.
3S	Stopper ask, game forcing.

Continuations after 1D - 1H  
2H - 2S:

2N	Short spades.		
3C	Equal shortage.		Relay
3D	3415	Relay	1435
3H	2416	1417	1426
3S	2407	2425, 2 controls	0427
3N	3406	2425, 3 controls	0436

Alterations to the structure after interference:

If the opponents intervene directly over the 1D opening the relay is off in all cases except after a take-out double. If the opponents double, redouble by responder replaces the relay. The relay now continues as long as three steps have not been lost.

When the opponents intervene over the 1H response, we attempt to continue the relay. The exact method depends upon the level of the intervention.

1. If they X 1H:

Pass 11-13 balanced.

XX 55 minors.  
1S Spades and a minor or black three suiter.  
1N Hearts and a minor or red three suiter.  
2C 4D and longer clubs.  
2D 4C and longer diamonds.  
2H Minor Two-suiter with 3 card heart fragment.

Over 1D-(P)-1H-(X)-P-(P):

Pass Penalties.  
XX Relay.

Over the XX:

1S Balanced.  
1N 5C.  
2C+ 5D (resolving shape).

Over 1D-(P)-1H-(X)-P-(1S):

X Takeout. Limited hand with 4+ hearts.  
1N 4+H, limited hand, S values.  
2C Game forcing relay.  
2D Relay (at least invitational).  
2H 5+ hearts, limited hand.

2. If they bid 1S:

Pass 11-13 balanced.

X Hearts and a minor or red three suiter.  
1N Spades and a minor or black three suiter.  
2C 4D and longer clubs.  
2D 4C and longer diamonds.  
2H Minor two suiter with 3 card heart fragment.  
2S 55 minors or better.

Over 1D-(P)-1H-(1S)-P-(P):

X Takeout. Limited hand with 4+ hearts.  
1N Limited hand with 4 hearts and spade values.  
2C Game forcing relay.  
2D Relay (at least invitational).  
2H 5+ hearts, limited hand.

3. They bid above the level of 1S:

The relay is off and X is unlimited takeout. In the first instance this should be treated as a limited hand with 4+ hearts, to be clarified by the subsequent auction.

Continuations after 1D - 1S:

1N 11-13 balanced, 3 suited short spades or 5C4H.  
2C Both minors, 54 either way or better but not 65.  
2D 4 hearts, longer diamonds (5+).  
2H 4 hearts, longer clubs (6+).  
2S Raise no extra values.  
2N 5C6D  
3C 6C5D  
3D 7D4H good hand.  
3S Good raise.

Continuations after 1D - 1N:

2C Natural, 5+ clubs (often 6).  
2D Natural, 5+ diamonds (often 6).  
2H Good hand with 4 hearts and 6 card minor.  
2S Good hand with 4 spades and 6 card minor.  
2N Good hand, at least 55 in the minors.  
3C Good hand 6+ clubs, 4 diamonds.  
3D Good hand, 6+ diamonds, 4 clubs.

Control showing responses:

The first step in response to the control ask shows 2 controls. If the hand has been opened with 1 control, the only way out of the predicament is to only show that one control in denial cue bidding.

#### ONE HEART OPENING AND CONTINUATIONS

The 1H opening shows 11-15 HCP and at least 5 hearts. The hand may have a longer minor but may NOT have 5 spades. 1S is the relay and is either game-forcing, or invitational with a balanced hand without four card heart support, or invitational with 5+ diamonds or spades. All other bids are limited by the failure to relay.

Responses:

1S Relay. Either GF or invitational (without 4+ hearts).  
1N Natural, 5-10.  
2C 5+C 8-12 HCP.  
2D 5+D 5-10 HCP.  
2H Weakish raise.  
2S Weak jump shift.  
2N Limit raise with 4 hearts (could be three by passed hand).  
3C Intermediate jump shift (fit showing jump by passed hand).  
3D Intermediate jump shift (fit showing jump by passed hand).  
3H Preemptive.  
3S Splinter, little slam interest.  
3N 12-15 balanced with heart support.  
4C Splinter, little slam interest.  
4D Splinter, little slam interest.  
4H To play.  
4S To play.

Continuations after 1H - 1S:

1N Any minimum.

All higher responses show more than a minimum:

2C 4+ clubs or 3 suited.

2D 4+ diamonds.

2H 4 spades.

2S+ Single suiters following symmetric principles.

Continuations after 1H - 1S

2C - 2D:

2H Any 3 suiter.

2S At least 55 in hearts and clubs.

2N+ 5+H4C a la symmetric.

Continuations after 1H - 1S

2C - 2D

2H - 2S:

2N 0544

3C 4504

3D 4540, 2 controls.

All other auctions continue along symmetric principles.

Continuations after 1H-1S-1N:

2C Game forcing relay.

2D Invitational hand with 5+ diamonds.

2H Limit raise with only 3 card support.

2S Invitational hand with 5+ spades.

2N Invitational hand.

3C Invitational fragment, 3 hearts, singleton diamond.

3D Invitational fragment, 3 hearts, singleton spade.

3H Invitational fragment, 3 hearts, singleton club.

3N To play.

Over 1H-1S-1N-2C the relay structure continues up two steps.

Note that weak relays do not now apply after a 1H opening. This means that relay breaks at the three level are all asking for a stopper.

Continuations in Limited Auctions:

Game Tries:

The option of playing either long or short suit game tries is available after a simple raise in hearts. The structure is as follows:

After 1H - 2H:

2S Puppet to 2N, beginning a short suit try sequence.

2N Long suit game try in spades.  
 3C Long suit game try in clubs.  
 3D Long suit game try in diamonds.  
 3H Preemptive.

After 1H - 2H  
 2S - 2N:

3C Short suit game try in clubs.  
 3D Short suit game try in diamonds.  
 3H Short suit game try in spades.

Where there is a choice between making a long suit try or a short suit try a short suit try should almost always be preferred. This means that a long suit try would effectively deny a singleton or void. The rationale behind this is that it is generally easier for responder to evaluate his hand opposite a short suit try than it is opposite a long suit try.

This same structure applies in other situations where hearts has been agreed. These are as follows:

1. In cue raise auctions below the level of two hearts.
2. Where an overcall has been raised.

Alterations to Raise Structure After Intervention:

1. After Take-Out Double:

1H (X) 2D High card raise to 2H or 8-9 raise.  
 2H Weak raise.  
 2S Weak (equivalent of a weak 2 opening; 2N is Ogust).  
 2N Limit raise or better.  
 3C,D Preemptive.  
 3H Preemptive. As weak or weaker than 2H but more distribution.  
 3N Raise, 12-15 balanced.

Note that: 1H (X) 2D Pass  
 2H Pass 3H

would show 8-9 raise.

Over: 1H (X) 2N Pass

a new suit would be a long suit game try opposite a limit raise.

2. After intervention at the one level:

This only occurs in one specific sequence:

1H (1S) 2H Normal raise  
 2S Cue Bid. May not necessarily show support.  
 2N Limit raise.  
 3H Preemptive raise.  
 3N Balanced raise (12-15).

Note: Long and short suit trials apply after 2H. Long suit trials apply after 2N.

3. After intervention at the two level:

1H (2C) X Takeout. Could commence strong raise.  
2H Normal raise.  
2N Natural.  
3C Forcing by non-passed hand; limit raise by passed hand.  
3H Preemptive raise by passed hand, limit raise by non-passed.  
3N Balanced raise (12-15).

1H (2C) X Pass  
2H Pass 3H

is a strong raise, forcing to game.

#### ONE SPADE OPENING AND CONTINUATIONS

The 1S opening shows 11-15 HCP and at least 5 spades. The hand may have a longer minor but may NOT have 5 hearts. 1N is the relay and is either game-forcing, or invitational with a balanced hand without four card spade support, or invitational with 5+ hearts. All other bids are limited by the failure to relay.

Responses:

1N Relay. Either GF or invitational (without 4+ spades).  
2C 5+C 8-12 HCP.  
2D 5+D 8-12 HCP.  
2H 5+H 5-10 HCP.  
2S Weak raise.  
2N Limit raise with 4 spades (3 by passed hand).  
3C Intermediate jump shift (fit showing by passed hand).  
3D Intermediate jump shift (fit showing by passed hand).  
3H Intermediate jump shift (fit showing by passed hand).  
3S Preemptive.  
3N 12-15 balanced with spade support.  
4C Splinter, little slam interest.  
4D Splinter, little slam interest.  
4H To play.  
4S To play.

Continuations after 1S - 1N:

2C Any minimum.

All higher responses show more than a minimum:

2D 4+ clubs or 3 suiter.  
2H 4+ diamonds.  
2S 4 hearts.  
2N+ Single suiters following symmetric principles.

Continuations after 1S - 1N  
2D - 2H:

2S Any 3 suiter.  
2N At least 55 in hearts and clubs.  
3C+ 5+S4C a la symmetric.

Continuations after 1S - 1N  
2D - 2H  
2S - 2N:

3C 0544  
3D 4504  
3H 4540, 2 controls.

All other auctions continue along symmetric principles up one level.

Continuations after 1S-1N-2C:

2D Game forcing relay.  
2H Invitational hand with 5+ hearts.  
2S Limit raise with only 3 card support.  
2N Invitational hand.  
3C Invitational fragment, 3 spades, singleton diamond.  
3D Invitational fragment, 3 spades, singleton heart.  
3H Invitational fragment, 3 spades, singleton club.  
3S Limit raise 4333.  
3N To play.

Over 1S-1N-2C-2D the relay structure continues up two steps.

Note that weak relays do not now apply after a 1S opening. This means that relay breaks at the three level are all asking for a stopper.

Continuations in Limited Auctions:

Game Tries:

The option of playing either long or short suit game tries is available after a simple raise in spades. The structure is as follows:

After 1S - 2S:

2N Puppet to 3C, beginning a short suit try sequence.  
3C Long suit game try in clubs.  
3D Long suit game try in diamonds.  
3H Long suit try in hearts.  
3S Preemptive.

After 1S - 2S  
2N - 3C:

3D Short suit game try in diamonds.  
3H Short suit game try in hearts.  
3S Short suit game try in clubs.

Where there is a choice between making a long suit try or a short suit

try a short suit try should almost always be preferred. This means that a long suit try would effectively deny a singleton or void. The rationale behind this is that it is generally easier for responder to evaluate his hand opposite a short suit try than it is opposite a long suit try.

This same structure applies in other situations where spades has been agreed. These are as follows:

1. In cue raise auctions below the level of two spades.
2. Where an overcall has been raised.
3. After a 1D or 1H opening where spades are agreed in a non-forcing auction.

Alterations to Raise Structure After Intervention:

1. After Take-Out Double:

1S	(X)	2H	High card raise to 2S or 8-9 raise.
		2S	Weak raise.
		2N	Limit raise or better.
		3C,D	Preemptive.
		3S	Preemptive. As weak or weaker than 2S but more distribution.
		3N	Raise, 12-15 balanced.

Note that: 1S (X) 2H Pass  
 2S Pass 3S

would show 8-9 raise.

Over: 1S (X) 2N Pass

a new suit would be a long suit game try opposite a limit raise.

2. After intervention at the two level:

1S	(2C)	X	Takeout. Could commence strong raise.
		2S	Normal raise.
		2N	Natural.
		3C	Forcing by non-passed hand; limit raise by passed hand.
		3S	Preemptive raise by passed hand, limit raise by non-passed.
		3N	Balanced raise (12-15).

1S (2C) X Pass  
 2S Pass 3S

is a strong raise, forcing to game.

#### 1N OPENING AND CONTINUATIONS

The 1N opening shows 14-16 HCP and basically denies a five card major. The only exception would be a hand with a very weak 5 card suit and a 5332 type pattern.

Responses:

2C Stayman. Promises a four card major.  
2D Transfer to hearts.  
2H Transfer to spades.  
2S Range enquiry.  
2N Transfer to clubs.  
3C Transfer to diamonds.  
3D Natural and slammish.  
3H Natural and slammish.  
3S Natural and slammish.  
3N To play.  
4C Transfer to hearts.  
4D Transfer to spades.  
4H To play.  
4S To play.  
4N Blackwood.

Continuations:

After 1N - 2S:

2N Minimum, 3C is now staymanic, showing a hand with slam interest.  
3C 4+ clubs.  
3D 4+ diamonds, not 4+ clubs.  
etc.

After 1N - 2S

2N - 3C:

3D No major.  
3H 4H  
3S 4S, not 4H.

After 1N - 2C:

2D No 4 card major.  
2H 4 hearts, may have 4 spades.  
2S 4 spades, not 4 hearts.

After 1N - 2C

2D:

2H Weak with 5 hearts and 4 spades.  
2S Weak with 5 spades and 4 hearts.  
2N Invitational.  
3C Invitational with 5 clubs and 4 card major.  
3D Invitational with 5 diamonds and 4 card major.  
3H Invitational with 5 hearts and 4 spades.  
3S Invitational with 5 spades and 4 hearts.  
3N To play.

After 1N - 2C

2H:

2S Invitational with 5 spades and 4 hearts.  
2N Invitational with 4 spades.  
3C Invitational with 5 clubs and 4 spades.

3D Invitational with 5 diamonds and 4 spades.  
3H Invitational.  
3S Splinter agreeing hearts. Slam interest.  
3N Values for game, 4 spades not 4 hearts.

After 1N - 2C

2S:

2N Invitational with 4 hearts, not 4 spades.  
3C Invitational with 5 clubs and 4 hearts.  
3D Invitational with 5 diamonds and 4 hearts.  
3H Splinter agreeing spades, Slam interest.  
3S Invitational.  
3N To play.

After slammish three level bids by responder, opener bids 3N with no interest and doubleton, else relay cues.

Continuations after transfers:

A new suit is forcing to game and generally shows some slam interest. After a transfer followed by a new suit, a new suit by opener is a cue agreeing responder's second suit, a bid of responder's first suit below game level is stronger than bidding game immediately, a bid of 3N shows little interest in either of responder's suits.

Action After Double of 2C Stayman or Lavings

When the Double Shows clubs

XX 4+ clubs. Interested in playing in 2CXX.  
Pass Would have responded 2D if no interference, not 4+ diamonds.  
2D Natural showing 4+ cards.

After 1N Pass 2C (X)  
Pass Pass Pass (XX) shows 4+ clubs and attempts to play in 2C redoubled.

When Double is Takeout

XX Good hand with 4 cards in 2 of 3 suits.  
Pass Nothing to say.  
2D Natural 4+ (usually 5 card suit).  
2H,2S 4 card suit (denies penalty type hand).

#### Summaries of Control Showing and NT Structures

NT Structures:

1N 2C Stayman, 2S Range Enquiry.  
1C-1D-1N 2C Stayman, 2C-2H-3C checks for 5 Hearts. 2S range.  
1C-1D-1H-1S-1N Lavings and transfers (2S to clubs).  
1C-Inter-X-1N No Stayman. No Transfers. Bid of their suit is natural. 2N is invitational.  
1N o'call Lavings, Swine, transfers (2S to clubs).  
1N reopening As per 1N opening. Stayman, transfers, no Swine.

## 2C OPENING AND CONTINUATIONS

The 2C opening shows 11-15 HCP and at least 6 clubs. Generally the hand will be single suited, although hands with 6+ clubs and a 4 card diamond suit also open 2C.

Responses:

2D Relay. Generally forcing to game.  
2H 5+ hearts, invitational values.  
2S 5+ spades, invitational values.  
2N Natural and invitational.  
3C Basically preemptive.  
3D 9-11 HCP, good 6 card suit.  
3H 9-11 HCP, good 6 card suit.  
3S 9-11 HCP, good 6 card suit.  
3N To play.  
4C Preemptive.  
4D Splinter. Only mild slam interest.  
4H To play.  
4S To play.  
4N Roman Keycard Blackwood agreeing clubs.  
5C To play.

Continuations:

After 2C - 2D:

2H	4 diamonds.	*****
2S	High shortage.	
2N	Middle shortage.	
3C	Even shortage.	
3D	3-3-1-6	*****
3H	7+ clubs and singleton.	*****
3S	7+ clubs and void 2 controls.	*****
3N	7+ clubs and void 3-4 controls.	*****
4C	7+ clubs and void 5 controls.	*****

Note that the structure changes slightly due to the lack of a 5332 shape. This has the effect of changing the last two shapes around as well so that the least likely shape is still the one that resolves at 3S.

After 2C - 2D

2H - 2S:

2N	High shortage.	
3C	Even shortage.	
3D	2-1-4-6	*****
3H	3-0-4-6	*****
3S	2-0-4-7, 2 controls	*****
3N	2-0-4-7, 3-4 controls	*****
4C	2-0-4-7, 5 controls	*****

After 2C - 2D

2H - 2S  
3C - 3D:

3H 1-1-4-7, 2 controls  
3S 1-1-4-7, 3 controls  
3N 1-1-4-7, 4 controls

## 2D OPENING AND CONTINUATIONS

The 2D opening shows 11-15 HCP and at least 6 diamonds in a single suited hand.

Responses:

2H Relay. Generally forcing to game.  
2S 5+ spades, invitational values.  
2N Natural and invitational.  
3C 9-11 HCP, good 6 card suit.  
3D Basically preemptive.  
3H 9-11 HCP, good 6 card suit.  
3S 9-11 HCP, good 6 card suit.  
3N To play.  
4C Splinter. Only mild slam interest.  
4D Preemptive.  
4H To play.  
4S To play.  
4N Roman Keycard Blackwood agreeing diamonds.  
5D To play.

Continuations:

After 2D - 2H:

2S High shortage.  
2N Middle shortage.  
3C Even shortage.  
3D 3-3-6-1 \*\*\*\*\*  
3H 7+ diamonds and singleton. \*\*\*\*\*  
3S 7+ diamonds and void 2 controls. \*\*\*\*\*  
3N 7+ diamonds and void 3-4 controls. \*\*\*\*\*  
4C 7+ diamonds and void 5 controls. \*\*\*\*\*

Note that the structure changes slightly due to the lack of a 5332 shape. This has the effect of changing the last two shapes around as well so that the least likely shape is still the one that resolves at 3S.

## TWO HEART OPENING AND CONTINUATIONS

The 2H opening shows 11-15 HCP and at least 5-5 in the majors. The main reason for this is to simplify the relay structure over 1H and 1S openings.

Responses:

Pass Preference for hearts.

2S Preference, to play.  
2N Relay, game forcing (natural by passed hand).  
3C Natural and forcing.  
3D Natural and forcing.  
3H Invitational  
3S Invitational  
3N To play  
4H To play  
4S To play

Continuations after the 2N relay are exactly the same as long-legged two suited auctions after 1C opening since they start at exactly the same level.

#### TWO SPADE OPENING AND CONTINUATIONS

The 2S opening shows 6-10 HCP and a 6 card suit. It would not be normal for the hand to have a void or a 4 card heart suit. The opening may be shaded somewhat at favourable vulnerability. In general we would attempt to be disciplined in this area of the system.

2N is now Ogust with the following responses:

3C Weak suit, weak hand.  
3D Strong suit, weak hand.  
3H Weak suit, strong hand.  
3S Strong suit, weak hand.  
3N AKQ to six and out.

New suits are non-forcing. 3S is preemptive (all invitational hands would go via Ogust).

Ogust followed by a new suit is forcing. Ogust followed by 4C is a control ask.

4C in response to 2S is natural and forcing. 4D is a splinter agreeing spades.

#### TWO NOTRUMP OPENING AND CONTINUATIONS

The 2N opening shows a weak hand with at least 55 in hearts and diamonds OR hearts and spades. In principle values will be concentrated in the suits. The strength of the hand depends upon vulnerability and position but the hand will normally contain 4+ zeeps (A=3, K=2, Q=1).

3C is the only forcing action. It will always show a hand which has at least game interest opposite a maximum. In response to 3C opener bids 3D with reds and 3H with majors. All corrections are invitational. If responder bids 4C over the response to the enquiry, this is a zeep-ask; the first step shows 0-4. After first step by opener, next step is a re-try and next step would show 0-3 zeeps.

After the number of zeeps has been shown the next non-signoff step will ask for outside distribution-first step showing lower singleton

or void, 2 steps showing higher singleton or void.

All bids other than 3C are correctable. They basically say that this is the contract if partner has this suit, otherwise opener should correct.

#### PREEMPTIVE OPENINGS AT THE THREE LEVEL

Openings at the three levels are fairly standard preempts. They are generally fairly aggressive, and can be made on a six card suit if not vulnerable. Note that 3H can often be on a six card suit since no weak 2 opening is available.

If there is no intervention change of suit is forcing and invites support on doubleton or better. A new suit by opener is either a high card feature or a distributional feature. It will only be a distributional feature in the case where opener later supports responder's suit.

If the opponents X or bid, a new suit by responder is non-forcing.

#### SLAM BIDDING AGREEMENTS IN NON-RELAY SITUATIONS

4 No Trumps:

In non-relay situations when a suit has been agreed, a jump to 4N is always Roman Keycard Blackwood. In many situations a jump to 4N will be RKCB implicitly agreeing partner's suit. If a cue bidding sequence has started then 4N is never RKCB, this will always be on-going and will usually deny the next relevant control in clubs (relay cue style). In auctions where no suit has been agreed (i.e. in NT sequences etc.) 4N is standard Blackwood.

Roman Keycard Blackwood:

The responses to RKCB are based on 5 aces, being the four aces and the king of the agreed suit, and the queen of the agreed suit. Responses are as follows:

5C 0 or 3 keycards.  
5D 1 or 4 keycards.  
5H 2 keycards, no Q of trumps.  
5S 2 keycards, Q of trumps.

When responder shows the two way options, and has the greater option, he cannot allow the auction to stop below slam.

The next non-sign-off step asks for clarification of the trump Q or for kings if the trump Q is known. In response the first step shows no Q and higher responses run on to kings outside the agreed suit.

Relay Cues:

In situations where a suit has been agreed and a cueing auction is possible, relay cues are played. This means that 3N and 4N are

waiting bids denying the next relevant control in clubs. Bids below the next level of NT are normal cue bids. Bids above the next level of NT deny any controls that could be shown below that level of NT and show all controls back to that level of NT. Naturally it denies the next relevant control.

#### COMPETITIVE AGREEMENTS

##### Negative Doubles:

We play negative doubles of overcalls up to and including 3S. The only exception to this is in the case of strong jump overcalls at the 3 level. In this case we double for penalties. The hands on which we will make negative doubles are either standard negative double hands with length in unbid suits and moderate values or strong hands which wish to make a forcing bid. Free bids are non-forcing up to and including 3S.

1H	(2C)	X	Negative, can be start of strong raise by non-passed hand.
		2D	Natural and non-forcing
		2H	Weakish raise
		2S	Natural and non-forcing
		2N	11-12 balanced with club stopper(s).
		3C	Forcing. Always a raise by passed hand. Never a raise by non-passed hand.
		3D	Slammish
		3H	Limit Raise by NPH, 8-9 raise by PH
		3S	Splinter agreeing hearts.
		3N	To play.
		4C	Splinter agreeing hearts.
		4D	Splinter agreeing hearts.
		4H	To play
		4S	To play

1H	(2C)	X	Pass
2D	Pass	2H	Weakish with heart tolerance, 4 spades.
		2S	Natural and forcing.
		2N	11-12, stopper, 4 spades.
		3C	Values for game, no support, no stopper.
		3D	Natural and forcing.
		3H	Forcing raise.
		3S	
		3N	Values for game, stopper, 4 spades.

##### Grand Slam Force:

This will normally only apply in competitive auctions since otherwise relay would handle this. The responses to some extent depend upon the agreed suit. 6N always shows 2 of top 3. 7 of agreed suit always shows 3 of top 3. Other responses are listed below:

##### Clubs agreed:

6C 0 or 1

Diamonds agreed:

6C 1  
6D 0

Hearts agreed:

6C 1  
6D 1 with extra length  
6H 0

Spades agreed:

6C 1  
6D Q with extra length  
6H A or K with extra length.

Slam Doubles in Sacrificing Situations:

These doubles only apply where it is clear that we are saving, a suit has been agreed and a sacrifice seems to be viable. Specifically it does not apply at adverse vulnerability.

In the direct seat:

X Shows 0 tricks.  
Pass Shows 1 or more tricks.

In the passout seat:

After Pass:

X Shows 0 tricks.  
Pass Shows 1+ tricks.

After X:

Pass with 2+ tricks.  
Save with 0 or 1.

Lebensohl

Lebensohl applies when they compete after our 1N opening and when we double their weak two opening.

A new suit at the two level is to play. A new suit at the three level is forcing. Bidding 2N then a new suit at the three level is to play unless that suit could have been bid at the two level in which case it is invitational. All strong balanced hands with a stopper go via 2N. All strong balanced hands with the other 4 card major go via the cue bid of their suit.

Rubens Advances after 1M TOX:

After we have opened 1 of a major, if they make a TOX we now play that bids of 1N up to the suit below the suit opened are transfers. The complete method is shown below:

1H (X) 1S Natural.  
 1N Transfer to clubs.  
 2C Transfer to diamonds.  
 2D Good raise to 2H.  
 2H Weak raise.  
 2N Good raise to at least 3H.  
 3H Preemptive.

1S (X) 1N Transfer to clubs.  
 2C Transfer to diamonds.  
 2D Transfer to hearts.  
 2H Good raise to 2S.  
 2S Weak raise.  
 2N Good raise to at least 3S.  
 3S Preemptive.

Action After Double of 2C Stayman or Lavings

When the Double Shows clubs

XX 4+ clubs. Interested in playing in 2CXX.  
 Pass Would have responded 2D if no interference, not 4+ diamonds.  
 2D Natural showing 4+ cards.

After 1N Pass 2C (X)  
 Pass Pass Pass (XX) shows 4+ clubs and attempts to play in 2C redoubled.

When Double is Takeout

XX Good hand with 4 cards in 2 of 3 suits.  
 Pass Nothing to say.  
 2D Natural 4+ (usually 5 card suit).  
 2H,2S 4 card suit (denies penalty type hand).

Miscellaneous Competetive Agreements:

1

(1D) Pass (1N) Pass  
 (2D) X(1) (1) Penalties.

2

(1C) Pass (1S) 2D (1) Asks for 2nd Stopper  
 Pass 2S Pass 2N (2) Denies 2nd Stopper  
 Pass 3D Pass 3S(1)  
 (X) Pass(2)

3

1D (1S) X (1) Responsive not four hearts  
 (3S) X(1) Pass 4S(2) (2) Minors

4

			Pass	
Pass	1D	(2C)	X	
Pass	2S	Pass	3C =	Equal length DH
			3D =	H with longer D
			3H =	D with longer H

3C followed by choice followed by 3S shows good spade raise.

5

	1D	(2C)	2H =	Non-forcing
			X then 2H =	Forcing
			3H =	Slammish
			4H =	To play.

6

(1N)(1)	Pass	Pass	X(2)	(1) 15-17
				(2) Penaltyish, direct double slightly more.

7

(1C)	1S	(X)	XX	General Strength.
			2C	Cue raise.

8

1N	Pass	Pass	X	
Pass	Pass	XX		For Takeout. Two suiter.

9

1N	(2H)	X		Penalties
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AND

1N	Pass	Pass	(2H)	
Pass	Pass	X		Also penalties.

10

1N	Pass	Pass	(2H)	
Pass	Pass	2N		Minors

11

1H	Pass	2C	X	
Pass	2S	2NT		is natural and shows an invitational hand and a spade stopper, but

1H	Pass	2D	X	
Pass	2S	2NT		is take-out because 2D never shows invitational hands.

DEFENSIVE BIDDING

The Takeout Double:

The takeout double will generally show either the traditional shaped takeout with at least three card support for the unbid suits, or a strong single suiter, or a strong balanced hand (19+HCP). Obviously there will be some hands that will not suit this approach and will have to fudge.

In response to the TOX a minimum bid shows 0-7 HCP, a jump shows 8-11 HCP, 1N shows 7-10 and a cuebid of their suit shows 12 plus and is forcing to game.

When partner has made a TOX and the opponents either raise or bid a new suit at the one level, double is responsive (take-out). This will show moderate values and no clear bid. If there is only one unbid major the responsive double will deny four cards in that suit. If both majors are unbid then it will tend to show equal length in the majors.

Over: (1H)-X-(1S):

X Takeout, minor oriented.  
1N Values and stoppers (7-10).  
2H Forcing.  
2S Natural and forcing (5+ spades).

It should be remembered that this is a situation where many better players may operate with a weak hand and a fit for partner's suit. Since X is for takeout, it must be possible to bid responder's suit naturally. Similarly the take-out doubler should protect in the pass-out seat after (1H)-X-(1S)-P-(P).

The Simple Overcall:

To make a TOX and then bid a new suit shows something close to a traditional strong jump overcall. This means that we overcall on hands up to about 16 HCP. It is important that responder should bear this in mind and should generally raise with support even on weakish hands.

In response to an overcall, change of suit by responder is forcing for one round.

The 1N Overcall:

The 1N overcall shows 15-18 HCP in the immediate position unless both opponents have bid naturally i.e. 1D Pass 1S. Under these circumstances it shows the other two suits and a weak distributional hand.

The strong 1N overcall may include a five card major in a balanced hand and hence 2C is now a Lavings enquiry. This always shows at least invitational values. The responses are as follows:

2D 15-16 no five card major.

2H 15-16 five hearts.  
 2S 15-16 five spades.  
 2N 17-18 no five card suit.  
 3C 17-18 five clubs.  
 3D 17-18 five diamonds.  
 3H 17-18 five hearts.  
 3S 17-18 five spades.

After the 2D and 2N responses, 3C is Baron and 3D is Stayman.

After the 2D response the bid of a major by responder is non-forcing, attempting to locate a 4-4 fit.

Other responses to the strong 1N overcall are listed below:

2D Transfer to hearts.  
 2H Transfer to spades.  
 2S Transfer to clubs.  
 2N Transfer to diamonds.

Responses at the three level are natural and forcing, showing slam interest.

If the strong 1N overcall is doubled, Swine applies:

The general principle of Swine is that Pass by responder forces overcaller to redouble. The full structure is shown below:

1X	1N	X	2C	Clubs and hearts.
			2D	Diamonds and spades.
			2H	5+ hearts, sufficient values to tolerate a competitive raise to three by a suitable hand.
			2S	5+ spades, as per 2H.
			2N	Distributional game-force.

1X	1N	X	Pass	
Pass	XX	Pass	Pass	Penalties.
			2C	Clubs and hearts.
			2D	Diamonds and hearts.
			2H	Hearts and spades.
			2S	Spades and clubs.

The immediate redouble by responder shows a single suiter and forces partner to bid 2C. Responder then passes or corrects as appropriate.

Note that in Swine rescue sequences XX is never to play.

Thus: 1N X XX Pass  
 2C X XX

is take-out for the other three suits.

If the 1N overcall is doubled in the passout seat, redouble by responder is for takeout showing more than one suit.

1N in the passout seat shows 11-14 HCP. It does not guarantee a stopper in their suit but usually would have half stopper at least.

We play as per 1N opening over this. No Swine.

#### Michaels Cue Bids:

If the opening promises three or more cards in the suit bid then the cue bid of that suit shows a 55 type hand. In the case of a minor suit opening it shows both majors; in the case of a major suit opening it shows the other major and one minor. Usually the hand will be weak and preemptive with the values concentrated in the suits. The idea is to have good offensive potential rather than two aces and empty suits. Occasionally it will show a strong hand which is basically prepared to force to game opposite nothing. Basically with the weak hand opener takes no further action. With the strong hand he will raise or cue bid.

#### The 2N Overcall:

This shows similar hand types to the Michaels Cue bids but in the two lowest ranking suits available. The principle of requiring three cards in the suit for a bid to be considered natural still applies.

#### Defence to their 1N Opening and Continuations:

For the purposes of this defence we will consider any NT opening that includes 14 HCP as a weak NT, all openings with a minimum of 15 or greater will be treated as strong.

#### Strong NT:

Double	Brozel style. A single suited hand with a good suit and an outside entry. Invites partner to convert to penalties.
2C	Minors.
2D	Diamonds and a major.
2H	Both majors.
2S	Spades and clubs.
2N	Extreme two suiter. Basically forcing to game.

#### Double of a transfer after a Strong 1N Opening:

5 cards in the suit bid. Overcall type strength.

#### Weak NT:

Double	Penalty oriented.
2C	Transfer to diamonds. Could show a weak hand with both majors.
2D	Transfer to hearts.
2H	Transfer to spades.
2S	Transfer to clubs.
2N	55 both black suits.
3C	55 clubs and hearts.
3D	55 diamonds and spades.

All transfers are Canape style. This means that the hand may be single suited in the suit transferred to, in which case the transferer will pass, or may be two suited with a longer second suit and a good hand. In this case the transferer will now bid that suit. A further

option is that it may be a 55 type two suited hand in the suit transferred to and the suit below. In this case the transferer will rebid 2N.

Double of a transfer after a Weak 1N Opening:

This shows the same values as a double of the 1N in the direct seat. This means that it is basically for take-out.

Defence to Strong Club Opening:

NOT Vulnerable:

X Hearts and another  
1D Spades and a minor  
1H Hearts or three suiter with short hearts.  
1S Spades or three suiter with short spades.  
1N Minors or majors.

The three suiters included in the 1H and 1S openings would be weakish hands, with at least three cards in all of the relevant suits. When responding to a 1H, 1S or 1N overcall responder should make a limit bid in the best fit presuming the worst case.

Vulnerable:

As above except overcalls in the majors cannot have the three suiter.

Defence to 2C, 2D Game Force:

X Reasonable overcall strength in that suit.  
2X Reasonable overcall strength in that suit.  
2N Minors.  
Jumps are weak.

Defence to Acol Twos (Specific):

X Michaels (major-major or major-minor).

Defence to 2D European Multi (including Weak 2 in either major):

X General values, 12-15 direct (11-13 passout) or 20+.  
2H Takeout X of weak 2S (then Lebensohl).  
2S Takeout X of weak 2H (then Lebensohl).  
2N 16-19 direct, 14-16 passout. 3C is now Staymanic.  
3C Clubs.  
3D Diamonds.  
3H Natural and strong.  
3S Natural and strong.

Defence to Multi 2's where major option is weak 2 in next suit:

This will mainly apply over Myxo 2's e.g. 2H shows weak spades or strong hearts or 5-5 minors.

X General strength, 12-15.  
2S Takeout X of 2S

2N 16-19, 3C is now Staymanic.  
3C Natural.  
3D Natural.  
3H Natural.  
3S Natural.

To pass at the first opportunity and then double the weak 2 is for penalties since the immediate bid of 2S would be takeout e.g.:

(2H) Pass (2S) Pass  
Pass X = Penalties.

2N in the passout seat would be a balancing takeout where X would be penalties.

Defence to 2D Flannery:

X 12-15 general strength, thence 2H = game force.  
2H Distributional takeout, 2S is now Game force.  
2S Strong takeout.  
2N 16-19  
3C Natural  
3D Natural

Defence to 2H Flannery:

X General strength, move towards penalty double.  
2S Takeout for the minors (Lebensohl applies).  
2N 16-19 balanced.  
3C Natural.  
3D Natural.

Defence to Klinger 2N (Clubs and another):

X General values, some interest in penalties.  
3C Takeout.

Defence to 2N for the minors (opening):

X 12-15 general strength.  
3C Takeout 16+, 3D is now general game force.  
3D Takeout 11-15. Generally more distributional.  
3H Natural.  
3S Natural.

Defence to Marston Style Forcing Pass:

This is a generalised defence to forcing pass systems based on Marston's FPR. Some alterations may be needed to handle specific systems.

Over Pass (showing 13+):

1C Natural overcall or poor 3 suiter with short clubs.  
1D Natural overcall or poor 3 suiter with short diamonds.  
1H Natural overcall or poor 3 suiter with short hearts.  
1S Natural overcall or poor 3 suiter with short spades.

1N 15-18 balanced, Lavings, Transfers and Swine apply.

Bids at higher levels are preemptive. Over two level bids 2N is Ogust. 2N overcall is minors.

With strong balanced hands or moderate balanced hands pass and balance later.

Over the two way bids at the one level, all bids are semi-signoff, i.e. a limit raise opposite the less desirable of the options. The overcaller is expected to correct and is compelled to correct if partner is doubled in a SSO bid where overcaller holds the other option.

Over 1C (showing hearts 8-12):

X Limited take-out of hearts (9-14)  
1D Overcall  
1H Take-out of hearts 15+ or any strong hand. 2H is now a game force. Jumps are invitational.  
1S Overcall.  
1N 14-17 balanced, Lavings and Swine apply.  
2C Overcall.  
2D Intermediate.  
2H Michaels.  
2S Intermediate.  
2N Minors.  
3C Intermediate.  
3D+ Preemptive.

Over 1D (showing spades 8-12):

X Limited take-out of spades (9-14)  
1H Overcall  
1S Take-out of spades 15+ or any strong hand. 2S is now a game force. Jumps are invitational.  
1N 14-17 balanced, Lavings and Swine apply.  
2C Overcall.  
2D Overcall.  
2H Intermediate.  
2S Michaels.  
2N Minors.  
3C Intermediate.  
3D Intermediate.  
3H+ Preemptive.

Over 1H (showing 0-7):

X 16+ any. 1S is now a negative (0-7), other responses are relay structure plus two steps (game forcing). 1N rebid after negative shows 16-19 (Lavings and transfers), 2N rebid is 20-22 (54 Stayman), 3N is 23+. Jumps after negative are strong. If they intervene over the X then same structure applies as over 1C and intervention (i.e. natural and Rubensohl).  
1S Constructive overcall.  
1N 12-15 balanced. Lavings and transfers.

## CARDING AGREEMENTS

### Signals:

Our basic carding style is to give natural attitude and natural count each in appropriate situations. We give present count having been forced to play an honour on the first round of a suit. Within this structure we try to give suit preference signals in secondary situations. We give suit preference signals in trumps. We tend to give attitude on opening leads and switches and count most of the rest of the time. On 4th best opening leads we give count if we cannot beat the card played from dummy. Against suit contracts we play Wenseslas if there is a singleton in dummy in the suit led. This means that odd cards are encouraging and even cards are suit preference. Against slams the play of a jack on the opening lead demands a switch. We do not give count from honour doubleton against notrump contracts, but we do from Jx and 10x when looking for a ruff.

### Suit Preference Signals in Trumps:

The first card played in trumps is suit preference. The order that the next cards are played dictates how strong the preference is. The natural action is to play the cards up-the-line, so this is used to show no strong desire for a switch. When the remaining cards are played down-the-line this suggests a good holding in the suit indicated and asks partner to lead it ASAP.

As an example suppose spades are trumps and your holding is 654. The various meanings of the sequence played are:

654	Requests heart switch.
645	Values in hearts, only switch if you think it right.
564	Requests diamond switch.
546	Values in diamonds, only switch if you think it right.
465	Requests club switch.
456	Values in clubs, only switch if you think it right, or not telling (or too lazy).

### The significance of Falsecards:

If incorrect count is given in a suit, then this will normally have some significance. We would rarely give incorrect count unless we wish to draw partner's attention to some action that is required.

### Leads:

We underlead honour sequences including interior sequences. The exceptions to this are in partner's suit and against slams. During the play we overlead. We lead fourth highest from length, middle from three, second highest from four or more small cards (next card is present count). Top from doubletons.

## Summaries of Control Showing and NT Structures

### NT Structures:

1N 2C Stayman, 2S Range Enquiry.  
 1C-1D-1N 2C Stayman, 2C-2H-3C checks for 5 Hearts. 2S range.  
 1C-1D-1H-1S-1N Lavings and transfers (2S to clubs).  
 1C-Inter-X-1N No Stayman. No Transfers. Bid of their suit is natural. 2N is invitational.  
 1N o'call Lavings, Swine, transfers (2S to clubs).  
 1N reopening As per 1N opening. Stayman, transfers, no Swine.

Control Showing Responses in Various Situations:

Auction	First Step
1C-Pos	2
1C-1D-Semi-pos	0-1
1D	2 (with 1 control panic)
1H	2
1S	2
1N	3
2C	2
2D	2
2H	2
2S	0-1
2NT	0-4 Zeeps

Control Showing in Situations where Run-On is Possible:

Single-Suited Hands:

3N shows 2-4 controls, 4C shows 5 controls.

Short-Legged 2 Suited Hands:

3N shows 2-3 controls, 4C shows 4 controls.

Long-Legged 2 Suited Hands:

3N shows 2 controls, 4C shows 3 controls.

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Swine

The general principle of Swine is that Pass by responder forces overcaller to redouble. The full structure is shown below:

1X	1N	X	2C	Clubs and hearts.
			2D	Diamonds and spades.
			2H	5+ hearts, sufficient values to tolerate a competitive raise to three by a suitable hand.
			2S	5+ spades, as per 2H.
			2N	Distributional game-force.

1X	1N	X	Pass	
Pass XX	Pass	Pass	Pass	Penalties.

2C Clubs and hearts.  
2D Diamonds and hearts.  
2H Hearts and spades.  
2S Spades and clubs.

The immediate redouble by responder shows a single suiter and forces partner to bid 2C. Responder then passes or corrects as appropriate.

Note that in Swine rescue sequences XX is never to play.

Thus: 1N X XX Pass  
2C X XX

is take-out for the other three suits.

If the 1N overcall is doubled in the passout seat, redouble by responder is for takeout showing more than one suit.

1N in the passout seat shows 11-14 HCP. It does not guarantee a stopper in their suit but usually would have half stopper at least. We play as per 1N opening over this. No Swine.