

# 4-Card Transfer-Oriented Canapé Symmetric Relay System

Known also as TOSR

By Mr. Daniel Neill and Mr. Josh Sher

## 2. 1 $\heartsuit$ Opening (15+ HCP 1/2 seat, 17+ 3/4 seat, any shape)

### Responses Summary

1  $\heartsuit$  : **Negative**: either 0-8(6) HCP any shape, or less than 2(1) controls (A=2, K=1), or both.

1  $\heartsuit$  : 4+  $\heartsuit$ , 9(7)+ HCP, 2+ (1+) controls.

1  $\spadesuit$  : Any 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2, or any red two-suited hand, 9(7)+ HCP, 2+ (1+) controls.

1 NT: 4+  $\heartsuit$ , 9(7)+ HCP, 2+ (1+) controls, 0-3  $\heartsuit$ , 0-3  $\spadesuit$ .

2  $\heartsuit$  : 4+  $\heartsuit$ , 9(7)+ HCP, 2+ (1+) controls, may be three-suited with both Minors.

2  $\heartsuit$  : 5+  $\heartsuit$  9(7)+ HCP, 2+ (1+) controls and no other suit longer than 3.

2  $\heartsuit$  +: both Minors, 9(7)+ HCP, 2+ (1+) controls and no other suit.

The transfer-oriented responses are designed to accommodate the desire, wherever possible, to have the unrevealed strong 1  $\heartsuit$  hand declare the contract. The 1  $\heartsuit$  response permits the unrevealed hand to declare a Spade contract. The 1  $\spadesuit$  response permits the unrevealed hand to declare a No Trump contract in either case, and a Diamond contract in the case of any red two-suiter, and when responder holds more than four Hearts, the unrevealed hand may still be able to declare a Heart contract. The 1 NT response may enable the unrevealed hand to declare a Heart contract, but not if responder holds four Hearts and longer Clubs. The 2  $\heartsuit$  and 2  $\spadesuit$  responses and rebids allow the unrevealed hand to declare both Club and Diamond contracts when appropriate.

### Continuations After Positive Responses To 1 $\heartsuit$

#### 2.1 Introduction

The 1  $\heartsuit$  opener will almost always make the cheapest call, which is a **relay** whose only meaning is "tell me more". Eventually the 1  $\heartsuit$  opener will break the relay sequence to name the final contract.

NOTE: 3 NT is never a relay. When 3 NT is the cheapest call, 4  $\heartsuit$  is the relay.

#### 2.2 Single-Suited Relay Structure (5+ suit)

STEP 1: Give positive response in the single suit (1  $\heartsuit$ , 1 NT, 2  $\heartsuit$ , 2  $\spadesuit$ ).

STEP 2: After relay by 1  $\heartsuit$  opener, rebid 2  $\heartsuit$  or higher as indicated below.

*Rebids after relay with single-suited positive:*

2 : **High shortage** - at most 2 cards in highest ranking outside suit, i.e. after 1  $\heartsuit$ -1 NT-2  $\spadesuit$ -2 shows a Spade shortage and a hand with 5+ Heart suit.

2 NT: **Middle shortage** - at most 2 cards in middle ranking outside suit; Diamond shortage if a Major is the long suit, Heart shortage if a Minor is the long suit. e.g. 1  $\heartsuit$ -1  $\spadesuit$ -1  $\clubsuit$ -2 NT shows Spades and a Diamond shortage; and 1  $\heartsuit$ -2  $\spadesuit$ -2  $\clubsuit$ -2 NT shows Clubs and a Heart shortage.

3  $\heartsuit$ : **Even shortage** - showing two or three doubletons. If 3  $\heartsuit$  is bid directly (1  $\heartsuit$ -1  $\spadesuit$ -1  $\clubsuit$ -3  $\heartsuit$ ) this shows either 6-3-2-2 (i.e. two low doubletons) or 7-2-2-2. If 3  $\heartsuit$  is bid indirectly (via 2  $\spadesuit$  - high shortage, i.e. 1  $\heartsuit$ -1  $\spadesuit$ -1  $\clubsuit$ -2  $\spadesuit$ -2 NT-3  $\heartsuit$ ), this shows a high doubleton and one other doubleton, i.e. either 6-2-3-2 or 6-2-2-3. *See continuations below.*

3  $\spadesuit$ : **5-3-3-2** type shape. If 3  $\spadesuit$  is reached directly (i.e. not via 2  $\spadesuit$  or 2 NT) then this implies low shortage.

3  $\clubsuit$ : **6-3-3-1** type shape. If 3  $\clubsuit$  is reached directly (i.e. not via 2  $\clubsuit$  or 2 NT) then this implies low shortage.

3  $\diamondsuit$ : **7-3-3-0** type shape, etc.

3 NT: **7-3-2-1** or **7-2-3-1** type shape (only identity of 7 card suit and singleton known - low shortage), minimum (9-12 – (7-11)) HCP)

4  $\heartsuit$ : **7-3-2-1** or **7-2-3-1** type shape (only identity of 7 card suit and singleton known - low shortage), maximum (13+ HCP), 3 controls; etc.

#### *Continuations after 3 $\heartsuit$ direct/indirect responses*

##### A. Indirect 3 $\heartsuit$ (Even shortage).

After the 3  $\heartsuit$  relay:

3  $\spadesuit$ : 1 High and 1 Middle doubleton (i.e. 223 residue).

3  $\clubsuit$ : 1 High and 1 Low doubleton (i.e. 232 residue), minimum

3 NT: 1 High and 1 Low doubleton (i.e. 232 residue), maximum, and 3 controls; etc.

##### B. Direct 3 $\heartsuit$ (Even shortage).

After the 3  $\heartsuit$  relay:

3  $\spadesuit$ : Seven carder (i.e. 222 residue).

3  $\clubsuit$ : Six carder (i.e. 322 residue), minimum

3 NT: Six carder (i.e. 322 residue), maximum and 3 controls; etc.

## 2.3 Two-Suited Relay Structure

STEP 1: Give positive response in cheaper Major suit (*for both Minors or Reds see later*)

STEP 2: After relay by 1  $\heartsuit$  opener, rebid from 1 NT to 2  $\heartsuit$ :

1 NT: **Hearts**

2  $\heartsuit$ : **Diamonds**

2  $\spadesuit$ : **Clubs** (and 5+ card Major)

2  $\clubsuit$ : **Reverser** (if bid directly after showing a Major, shows a 4 card Major and 5+ Clubs)

STEP 3: After both suits have been shown, re-rebid 2 or higher:

2 : **Reverser**, the higher-ranking suit is exactly 4 cards and other 5+ cards.

2 : 5/5+ shape (*See below*).

2 NT: **High shortage** (if bid directly, shows lower ranking suit is exactly 4 cards).

3  $\square$ : 5-4-2-2

3 : *Relay*

3 : **5-4-2-2**, minimum

3 : **5-4-2-2**, maximum, 3 controls

3 NT: **5-4-2-2**, maximum, 4 controls; etc.

4  $\square$ : **5-4-2-2**, maximum, 5 controls; etc.

3 : **5-4-3-1** type shape.

3 : **6-4-2-1** type shape.

3 : **6-4-3-0** type shape.

3 NT: **7-4-2-0** type shape; forcing.

4  $\square$ : **7-4-1-1** type shape, minimum.

4  $\square$ : **7-4-1-1** type shape, maximum, 3 controls; etc.

**Note:** Any bid of 3  $\square$  upwards bid directly, shows the lower ranking suit is four cards exactly, the higher ranking suit is longer and a **LOW** shortage.

*Continuations after 2 re-rebid (showing 5/5)*

After the 2 NT relay:

3  $\square$ : **High shortage**.

3 : **Even shortage** (6-5-1-1, 5-6-1-1 shape).

3 : *Relay*

3 : High shortage (**5-6-1-1**).

3 NT: Low shortage (**6-5-1-1**), minimum

4  $\square$ : Low shortage (**6-5-1-1**), maximum, 3 controls; etc.

3 : **5-5-2-1** type shape.

3 : **5-5-3-0** type shape.

3 NT: **5-6-2-0** type shape (high shortage).

4 ♠: **6-5-2-0** type shape, minimum.

4 ♥: **6-5-2-0** type shape, maximum, 3 controls; etc.

**Note:** Any bid of 3 ♣ upwards bid directly (i.e. not via 3 ♠/3 ♥) shows a LOW shortage.

*Rebids when holding both Minors*

Initial positive response to 1 ♣ is 2 ♣ or higher as follows:

2 ♣: **Reverser** (i.e. 4 Diamonds and 5+ Clubs).

2 ♥: **5/5** type hand (i.e. 5+ Diamonds and 5+ Clubs)

2 NT: **High shortage** (if bid directly shows 4 Clubs, 5+ Diamonds and a Spade shortage. If bid indirectly via 2 ♣, shows 4 Diamonds, 5+ Clubs and a Spade shortage).

3 ♣: **Even shortage**, 5-4-2-2 with longer Diamonds. With longer Clubs, bid 2 ♣ first then 3 ♣ over the relay, etc.)

3 ♣ *Relay*

3 ♣: **5-4-2-2**, minimum

3 ♣: **5-4-2-2**, maximum, 3 controls

3 NT: **5-4-2-2**, maximum, 4 controls; etc.

3 ♠: **5-4-3-1** type shape.

3 ♥: **6-4-2-1** type shape.

3 ♠: **6-4-3-0** type shape.

3 NT: **7-4-2-0** type shape, forcing.

4 ♠: **7-4-1-1** type shape, minimum; etc.

**Note:** To show longer Clubs, bid 2 ♣ first. To show longer Diamonds make a bid from 2 NT upwards directly. With a Spade shortage bid via 2 NT, with a Heart shortage bid directly from 3 ♣ upwards depending on hand shape.

*Rebids when holding both Red Suits:*

Initial positive response to 1 ♣ is 1 ♥, and after the 1 NT relay, bid 2 ♣ showing the red two-suiter. Then rebid 2 ♥ or higher as follows:

2 ♥: **Reverser** (i.e. 4 Hearts and 5+ Diamonds).

2 ♠: **5/5** type hand (i.e. 5+ Hearts and 5+ Diamonds).

2 NT: **High shortage** (if bid directly shows 4 Diamonds, 5+ Hearts and a Spade shortage. If bid indirectly via 2 , shows 4 Hearts, 5+ Diamonds and a Spade shortage); etc.

**Note:** To show longer Diamonds, bid 2 first. To show longer Hearts make a bid from 2NT upwards directly. With a Spade shortage bid via 2NT; with a Club shortage bid directly from 3 upwards depending on hand shape.

## 2.4 Three-Suited Relay Structure

A three-suited hand will use either of the following structures when responding to a 1 opening:

*Three-suited with both Majors:*

1 1	1	(Positive with Diamonds)
1	1 NT	(and Hearts)
2 1	2	(and a Minor)

*(b) Three-suited with both Minors:*

1 1	2 1	(Positive with Spades)
2	2	(and Clubs and a Major)

**Note:** this last bid is not a reverser since Minor two-suiters start at 2 )

After three-suiter has been established, step responses follow:

1st Step: **High shortage.**  
 2nd Step: **4-4-4-1** (i.e. low shortage)  
 3rd Step: **4-4-5-0** (i.e. low shortage)  
 4th Step: **4-5-4-0** (i.e. low shortage)  
 5th Step: **5-4-4-0**, minimum  
 6th Step: **5-4-4-0**, maximum, 3 controls, etc.

## 2.5 Balanced Relay Structure

With any 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2, or a red two-suiter, with 9+ HCP and 2+ controls, respond 1 to an opening 1 . After the 1 NT relay, a **CRASH** (Colour, **R**ANK, **S**Hape) relay structure is used.

2 : Red two-suiter (*for continuations see Section 2.3*)

2 : Two four card suits of the same **Colour** or 4-3-3-3 with a four card Major.

2 : *Relay*

2 : **4-3-3-3** or **3-4-3-3**

2 NT: *Relay*

3 : **3-4-3-3**

3 : **4-3-3-3**, minimum

3 : **4-3-3-3**, maximum, 3 controls, etc.

2 NT: **2-4-4-3**

3 ♠: **3-4-4-2**

3 : **4-3-2-4**

3 : **4-2-3-4**, minimum

3 : **4-2-3-4**, maximum, 3 controls, etc.

**Note:** Bid the doubleton

2 : Two four card suits of the same **Rank**.

2 : *Relay*

2 NT: **2-3-4-4**

3 ♠: **4-4-3-2**

3 : **4-4-2-3**

3 : **3-2-4-4**, minimum

3 : **3-2-4-4**, maximum, 3 controls, etc.

**Note:** Bid the doubleton

2 : **4-3-3-3** (bid directly shows a four card Minor, bid via 2 shows 4 card Major)

2 NT: *Relay*

3 ♠: **3-3-3-4**

3 : **3-3-4-3**, minimum

3 : **3-3-4-3**, maximum, 3 controls, etc.

2 NT: Doubleton Spade (♠/ ), **2-4-3-4**

3 ♠: Doubleton Club (♣/ ), **4-3-4-2**

3 : Doubleton Diamond (♦/ ), **3-4-2-4**

3 : Doubleton Heart (♥/ ), **4-2-4-3**, minimum

3 : Doubleton Heart (♥/ ), **4-2-4-3**, maximum, 3 controls, etc.

**Note :** Bid the doubleton.

**Note :** Two 4 card suits of the same shape are shown with an immediate response of 2NT or higher.

## 2.6 Controls and Minimum/Maximum

In most relay auctions, after exact shape has been shown, the next relay asks for hand strength, with a run-on to the number of controls held if the hand is maximum. Controls are counted as Ace = 2 and King = 1, and singleton Aces and Kings are counted.

**Note: 3 NT is *never* a relay. It is always to play.**

*After positive responses to 1  $\heartsuit$  by an unpassed hand:*

A minimum hand is any hand with 9-12 HCP and 2-5 controls. A maximum hand is any hand with either 13+ HCP (and 3+ controls) or with 6+ controls. Thus a hand with three aces is a maximum hand. The response structure is:

- 1st Step: **Minimum**
- 2nd Step: **Maximum, 3 controls**
- 3rd Step: **Maximum, 4 controls**

After a 1st step minimum response the next relay asks for controls. The maximum number of controls in a minimum hand is five (by the above definition of a minimum hand). Therefore the responses are:

- 1st Step: 2 controls
- 2nd Step: 3 controls
- 3rd Step: 4 controls
- 4th Step: 5 controls

After controls are shown, [denial cue bidding](#) begins (see Section 2.7)

*After positive responses to 1  $\heartsuit$  by a Passed Hand:*

A passed hand giving a positive response to a 1  $\heartsuit$  opening is limited to 7-9 HCP unless it is either 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, or 5-3-3-2 with a 5-card Minor, in which case it is 7-10 or 7-10.5 HCP. A passed hand runs immediately on to controls, but does not pass 3 NT.

*After semi-positive responses to 1  $\heartsuit$ :*

Semi-positive hands (5-8 HCP, or 9+ HCP with 0-1 controls) may give level-adjusted relay responses after the sequence 1  $\heartsuit$ -1  $\spadesuit$ -1  $\heartsuit$ . The response structure applicable after an ask that would normally ask for minimum/maximum (or in the case of a run-on) is:

- 1st Step: 9+ points, 0-1 controls
- 2nd Step: 5-8, 0 control
- 3rd Step: 5-8, 1 control
- 4th Step: 5-8, 2 controls
- 5th Step: 5-8, 3 controls

After the 1st Step response and next relay, the responses are:

- 1st Step: 9-12, 0 control
- 2nd Step: 9-12, 1 control
- 3rd Step: 13-15, 1 control

## **2.7 Denial Cuebidding**

(Also known as **Spiral Scan**)

After controls have been shown, next relay starts denial cuebidding. Responder looks at their longest suit, then next longest suit. When ties in suit length occur, look at highest-ranking suit first. Singletons

(including singleton honours) are not looked at in denial cuebidding and are shown by inference only. Doubletons are looked at once. Tripletons are looked at twice (on the second time round Queens are investigated). Longer suits are looked at three times. On the first look at a suit, it is inspected for an Ace or King. On the second look, it is inspected for the Queen, and on the third look, Jacks are checked. If the first suit looked at does not have the required honour, the responder denies it by making the cheapest bid. If the responder holds a required honour in the longest suit but not in the second longest suit, then he/she bids the second cheapest bid. Future relays continue asking from where you left off in the cycle of suits. The highest relay ask is 5 NT.

1st Step: No Ace or King in longest suit, or both Ace and King.

2nd Step: Ace only or King only in longest suit and no Ace or King (or both) in second longest suit.

3rd Step: Ace only or King only in longest suit, Ace only or King only in second longest suit, and no Ace or King (or both) in third longest suit; etc.

#### *Solid-suit Exceptions:*

When holding a solid suit of at least six cards, responder denies that suit on the first scan if the suit is not headed by at least two of the Ace, King or Queen. Having initially shown at least two of the top three honours, on the second scan, responder shows that suit only if it is AKQxxx or better. Having initially denied at least two of the top three honours, a second denial is made if none of the top three honours is held.

#### *Super-Relay:*

After a control ask results in a 13+ hand with 5+ controls, opener may relay as normal, or bid the second step as a super-relay, asking to ignore Aces. In effect, all honors are promoted a level and the normal rules are applied. Kings act as Aces, Queens as Kings, and so on.

### **2.8 Signing off: The 3 NT / 4 End-Signal**

There are a number of situations where the relayer fears that an auction is getting too high where responder might only have 3 or 4 controls. In these situations, the relayer should sign off.

3 NT is *always* to play.

To repeat: **3 NT is *never* a relay. It is always to play.**

Other sign-offs bid 4 , as a transfer to 4 , and then pass or correct to 4M/5m.

Responder is usually required to pass 3 NT, or bid 4 over 4 , with fewer than 5 controls but with more bid beyond 4 /3 NT as follows:

- 1st Step: Great hand, 4 controls
- 2nd Step: 14+ HCP, 5 controls
- 3rd Step: 14+ HCP, 6 controls
- 4th Step: 14+ HCP, 7 controls
- 5th Step: 14+ HCP, 8 controls

Relayer can resume relaying by making the cheapest bid. Any other bid is a sign-off. However, if responder has a *very* strong hand, he can make quantitative tries (raising 4 NT to 5 NT, or bidding a concentration of values) or force to slam (5 NT in a suit contract is pick-a-slam, and 6 of a suit is an awesome suit).

A corollary to this method, which really makes it worth playing, is that relayer can sign-off before asking range, or after asking range. The significance is that if relayer signs off without asking range, he is 15-17 HCP (17-19). If relayer asks range, then signs off over a minimum, this is a mild slam try opposite a 12-13 HCP hand, and responder is encouraged to reject the sign-off and show controls as above.

## 2.9 Asking Bids

Some auctions are best handled by setting trumps and then making asking bids. In particular, hands that need only specific cards can utilize such bids effectively. Relayer may use the lowest unassigned steps as indicated in the following table. Unassigned steps are those which are not 4 /3 NT, are not Step 1, are not a [Reverse Relay](#), and are not a [Stopper Ask](#).

- 1st Step: Sets responder's longest suit as trumps, invokes RKCB
- 2nd Step: Sets responder's second longest suit as trumps, invokes RKCB
- 3rd Step: Sets responder's third longest suit as trumps, invokes RKC
- 4th Step: Sets responder's shortest suit as trumps, invokes RKCB

Where responder has not resolved the relative length of some (or all) of his suits then those suits are set as trumps in the order: Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs.

Where the lengths of responder's long suits are unresolved (e.g. after a 5+ 5+ 2 response) then those suits are set in order of highest to lowest rankings. For example:

1 ♠ -1 NT -2 ♣ -2 NT sets Hearts (higher ranking of unknown 5+ 4+ suits).

When responder is balanced and only partially resolved (e.g. 3-3-(4-3) or rank 4-4-3-2) then the suits are set in order of highest to lowest rankings.

The style of the continuations after the RKC response vary with the response given. Since a trump suit has been set, 3 NT is now available as a relay.

After a 0/3 or 1/4 key card response, a return to the trump suit (at game level) is a sign-off. Step 1 asks for the trump Queen **and** starts denial cuebidding; higher steps simply ask for cards further into the scan sequence. Responder bids Step 1 or 2 respectively to deny or show the card. A positive response to the first ask after RKC is forcing to small slam in the trump suit or 6 NT. (This means we can have 7-level asking bids at matchpoints!) Relayer needs to remain aware that the responder promised 2+ controls with the positive response.

After a 2 key card response, Step 2 begins denial cuebidding and higher steps simply ask for cards further into the scan sequence, similarly to the above. The auction is forced to small slam in the trump suit or 6 NT, except when the first ask gets a negative response. This means that bids in the trump suit are available as asking bids, but it may be possible to contrive an early sign-off by asking for a card relayer holds.

Some examples are in order:

- 1 ♠            1            8+HCP 4+ , 2+ controls.
- 1                3            6-3-3-1 shape.
- 4 ♠            4            1 or 4 key cards.
- 4                4 NT        4 key cards and denies the Queen.

4 was a sign-off opposite 1 key card - the 4 NT bid is very unlikely to occur.

- 1 ♠            1            8+HCP 4+ , 2+ controls.
- 1                3            6-3-3-1 shape.

4 ♠	4 NT	2 key cards and shows the Queen.
5	5 NT	Shows Queen.
1 ♠	1	8+HCP 4+ ♠, 2+ controls.
1	3	6-3-3-1 shape.
4 ♠	4	1 or 4 key cards.
5 ♠	5	Denies King.
5 NT	6 ♠	Shows King.

In the last auction, 5 NT was the lowest unassigned bid since 5 ♠ is to play after a negative response.

The RKC and asking bid sequences are intended for use at high levels with hands that do not require much more than a minimum hand with responder. Where range and number of controls are more important than specific Queens, relay will be better served by normal denial cuebidding.

## 2.10 Reverse Relay

Reverse Relay (RR) is the name used to describe some early relay-breaks by a 1 ♠ opener when holding minimum three-suited hand types. There are two motivations for using Reverse Relay:

1. To identify when there is no stopper opposite the shortage in 3 NT so that another contract can be chosen.
2. To ascertain the degree of wastage opposite the shortage for slam purposes.

The former can be best achieved by agreeing to use a bid above Step 1 to show a singleton in the suit responder showed when holding a fairly minimum hand. Responder can resume relays in opposite roles if appropriate. The latter can be achieved by using other bids above Step 1 to show some degree of fit for responder's suit and a side shortage in a fairly minimum hand. Responder can resume relays in opposite roles if appropriate, however there is not the same urgency to show shapes below 3 NT where there is a probable Major fit.

All Reverse Relays are off in **all** competition, for both simplicity and avoiding bypassing 3 NT.

There are a few structure-specific concerns when using RR:

1. After 1 ♠-1 ♠ when opener holds Spade shortage the odds of a Heart fit are quite good and it makes sense to have responder take over relay captaincy since they will declare a Heart contract.
2. After 1 ♠-1 ♠ any shortage showing is useful, since this response includes the balanced hands, which is the only hand that knows if there are wasted values (or no stopper) opposite a short suit.
3. After 1 ♠-2 ♠ and higher, no Major suit is held and so 3 NT often become the contract. Any shortage should be made known to check on adequate control.

The lowest available non-relay step shows a shortage in responder's known suit (if any), and higher steps show other shortages in the normal high, middle, low order. Two structures are used depending on the level of the first response and the level of the shortage-showing bid, the 10-shape structure and the 4-shape structure:

### 10-shape Reverse Relay Structure

Step 1: 4-4-4-1 or 5-4-4-0, continuations 4-4-4-1, 4-4-5-0, 4-5-4-0, 5-4-4-0 (no zoom).

Step 2: 5 cards in the lowest-ranking suit, or 4 cards in that suit and 5 cards in the next-lowest-ranking suit, continuations 3-4-5-1, 4-3-5-1, 3-5-4-1 (no zoom).

Step 3: 4-5-3-1

Step 4: 5-3-4-1

Step 5: 5-4-3-1 (no zoom)

#### 4-shape Reverse Relay structure

Step 1: 4-4-4-1

Step 2: 4-4-5-0

Step 3: 4-5-4-0

Step 4: 5-4-4-0 (no zoom).

#### Reverse Relay Bids

10-shape Reverse Relay is used only after the responses 1 $\heartsuit$ , 1 $\spadesuit$  and 1 NT where the 1 $\heartsuit$  opener's bid would be at most 2 $\heartsuit$ , or 2 $\spadesuit$  is the beginning of the zoom. 4-shape Reverse Relay is used in all other cases. The 1 $\heartsuit$  opener is only allowed to use Reverse Relay with at most 17 HCP and with at most a Queen in the singleton suit.

Response	Bid	Meaning
1	1	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	1 NT	10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (responder's known suit).
	2 $\heartsuit$	10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage ( ).
	2	10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (M).
	2	Zoom into 10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (L).
1	1 NT	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	2 $\heartsuit$	10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (no suit is known, so highest is used).
	2	10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage ( ).
	2	10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage ( ).
	2	zoom into 10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (L).
1 NT	2 $\heartsuit$	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	2	10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (responder's known suit).
	2	10-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage ( ).
	2 NT	Zoom into 4-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (L)
2 $\heartsuit$	2	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	2	4-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (one of responder's known suits).
	2	4-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage ( ).
	2 NT	4-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (M).
	3 $\heartsuit$	Zoom into 4-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (L).
2	2	Relay, not 3-suited unless extras.
	2	4-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (responder's known suit).
	2 NT	4-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage ( ).
	3 $\heartsuit$	4-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (M).
	3	Zoom into 4-shape RR with $\heartsuit$ shortage (L).

The sequence 1 $\heartsuit$ -2 $\heartsuit$  -3 $\heartsuit$ -3 $\heartsuit$  -4 $\heartsuit$  (5-0-4-4 opposite a Club suit) is the only one that bypasses 3 NT, and therefore *it is tucked into 3NT along with the previous step*. Note that there is no zoom to controls in either 10-RR or 4-RR. It isn't strictly necessary that the 1 $\heartsuit$ -1 NT-2 NT zoom be only 4-shape RR since 10-shape will fit, but the above is a concession to memory burden.

Responder asks for controls starting with 4 instead of 2. Further, if shape has been found, and nobody has bid No Trump yet, a 3 bid by responder, even if relay, is a transfer to 3 NT. 3 NT would be to play, and 4 would have to be the relay, if 3 was previously the relay step.

## 2.11 Stopper Asks

Sometimes opener will know that 3 NT is the correct contract, especially at matchpoints, and wishes to place the contract there, but requires a stopper in a suit. When responder is short in a suit, there is no hope, and when responder has 4+ cards in the suit, there is no danger. Opener may ask about the strength of the 2-3 card fragments.

Stopper-asks are a final small subset of relay breaks which can come before the RKC style asking bid breaks, described above.

When responder has shown at least one *known* 2-3 card suit, opener can break relays by bidding extra steps below 3 NT, instead of relaying normally. The first step inquires about the highest fragment, the second about the next highest fragment, and so on. If there are only “n” fragments, then only the first “n” extra steps are stopper-asks, and steps starting at “n+1” extra steps are the RKC-style asking bids described already. If there are no 2-3 card fragments, then there are no stopper-asking bids, and the RKC-bids are used immediately.

*Special Case in Competition - If the opponents have explicitly shown strength (either with an overcall, or a X) in one of responder's fragments, that suit is moved to the front of the queue, with the remaining fragments following in normal descending order. This makes sure that the most likely stopper-ask is available if possible. If two suits have been shown by the opponents, they are both considered first before other fragments, in descending order themselves.*

The responses to the Stopper-Ask are in four basic steps, with one of the steps always 3NT and the other three running around it.

1. With a stopper and a minimum, responder rebids 3 NT.
2. With no stopper and a minimum, responder rebids the cheapest non-NT step. Opener passes or bids naturally, there is no relay since opener is pronounced minimum.
3. With no stopper and 13+ HCP, responder rebids the second cheapest non-NT step. Opener relays for controls (3+) or signs off.
4. With a stopper and 13+ HCP, responder bids run-on to controls (3+) starting with the third cheapest non-NT step.

## 2.12 Interference in relay Auctions

### 3 Criterion

Once interference occurs it is vital that responder and relayer know if relays are still available. If the hand shape that would have been shown with 3 can be shown at the level of 3 NT or below then relays will continue (the 3 Criterion). This is equivalent to a loss of not more than three steps, taking account of various passes, doubles and redoubles that are available as relay asks and steps. Note that it is quite possible to gain up to two steps after interference. If relays are broken, then takeout doubles and Rubensohl apply over two level interference, and takeout doubles and natural bidding apply over three level interference.

There are two situations that arise which will be covered separately, using the following definitions which apply only after relays have begun:

Relayer: Bids the asking relays  
 Responder: Answers the relays  
 2nd hand: Bids after relayer and before responder  
 4th hand: Bids after responder and before relayer

### Interference by Second Hand

Responder has two additional steps available with which to describe his hand, namely pass and double (or redouble if appropriate), and must determine by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Criterion whether relays continue. The following relay structure will apply:

Call	Meaning
Pass	Step 1 from the original relay
Double/Redouble	Step 2 from the original relay
Step 1	Step 3 from the original relay, etc.

After a relay step pass, double by relayer without further interference is for relay. After a relay step double/redouble, Step 1 by relayer without further interference is for relay. If further interference by 4th hand occurs, see immediately below.

If relays are broken, then the provisions of 12.2 apply for two- and three-level interference.

### Interference by Fourth Hand

If relays are not broken (3<sup>rd</sup> Criterion), then relayer may pass for relay.

In all cases double by relayer is for penalty of the suit shown, and redouble is to play in the redoubled contract.

If further interference by 2nd hand occurs, see immediately above.

### Natural Interference at One-Level

Over natural 1-level interference, but not including 1 NT, Pass shows any 0-5 hand, or a balanced 6-8 HCP without both unbid Majors. Relays are off, and the balanced 6-8 hands should catch up later.

Double (or XX) shows all 9(+) or better hands, and opener then can relay with the cheapest step or a pass if 4th hand calls.

Free-bids are 5-8, with OS style jump shifts. The notable exception is inversion of 1 NT and the cheapest new suit (including 1 NT/2 $\heartsuit$  over 1 $\heartsuit$  and 1 NT/1 $\heartsuit$  over X). 1 NT becomes a natural bid in the cheapest new suit, while bidding the new suit becomes the takeout double, but more traditionally-shaped than the NTO since we have the balance of strength. E.g. 1 $\heartsuit$ -(1 $\heartsuit$ )-1 NT shows 6-8 with 5 Hearts while 1 $\heartsuit$  is the takeout double of Diamonds. Relays are off. Responses to free-bids are natural, and responses to the OS jumps are per OS notes. After competition by fourth hand, Good/Bad 2 NT is in effect by opener since his strength is unlimited. Doubles continue to be takeout until a fit is found.

The theory is that we will invest one step when feasible to suggest penalizing the opponents if they butt into our bidding. Only opener can suggest this penalty. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Criterion is still followed.

Doubles by 1 $\heartsuit$  opener are always penalty opposite a GF hand. Responder may reject the penalty offer of her partner, by describing instead of passing.

### Artificial Interference

Over *artificial, unanchored* interference, like Suction, Random Spade, or CRaSH, it depends on the level. At the 1 or 2 level, X by responder is GF balanced usually, jump-shifts are GF one-suiters, simple bids are semipositive and natural (including NT, over which 2 ♠/3 ♠ is Stayman (if followed by a new suit, is nat GF), and new suits are NF), and pass is quite weak. At the 3-level, we use Rodwell: X is GF balanced or two places to play (will bid a new suit next round), and bids are GF 6+ suits normally. It's really Rodwell at all levels.

### Natural Interference at Two-Level - Transfer Lebensohl

- Pass: 0 - 9 HCP or penalty pass
- Double: Shortage in the bid suit, semi-positive or better (Good-Bad by 1 ♠ Opener in response)
- 2 bid: 5-7 HCP, natural and non-forcing.
- 2 NT: Normal Lebensohl puppet to 3 ♠: weak in a lower suit, or Clubs any strength.
- 3 ♠: Transfer to Diamonds, *see below*
- 3 ♥: Transfer to Hearts, *see below*
- 3 ♠: Transfer to Spades, *see below*
- 3 : **HELP** - balanced game force, no stopper, no 4-card Major
- 3 NT: Balanced game force, stopper(s), no 4-card Major

**Notes:** Transfer into the opponents' suit = balanced game force with at least one 4-card Major (implies unable or unwilling to double). Opener completes the transfer without a stopper, and bids suits with a stopper.

Cue of overcall by either opener or responder (except initial transfer) is stopper ask.

Transfer to a suit at 3 level which could be bid at 2 level is invitational or better. Opener must break the transfer with a maximum.

Reopening double by opener is usually mandatory with very few exceptions.

### Natural Three Level Interference

- Bid by responder is game forcing.
- Double by responder is takeout.
- Bid by opener is non-forcing.
- Double by opener is for takeout.