

The TresBoof Bidding System:
A Forcing Pass System with Moscito Relays

Last revision: 5/22/92

NOTE: this system is in a state of flux. For the latest version, mail

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1. Opening actions (with relative frequencies)

Pass (21%): 14+, any shape.
1C (17%): 8-13, 4+ hearts, possibly longer minor, possibly 4-4 majors.
1D (16%): 8-13, 4+ spades, possibly longer minor.
1H (11%): 0-8, any shape. Usually no 5-card suit except possibly clubs (since an off-shape weak 2 is safer, more descriptive, and more preemptive)
1S (10%): 9-13, balanced, no 4cM unless 4333.
1NT (3%): 9-13, 5+ diamonds, no 4cM. (Implies 6+ diamonds and/or 4 clubs).
2C (2%): 9-13, 5+ clubs, no 4cM. (Implies 6+ clubs and/or 4 diamonds).
2NT (0.3%): 8-12, 5-5 or more in minors.
3NT (0.2%): 8-13, solid 7-card or 8-card minor.
Others (20%): Preempts of various sorts. Wild, both because of our general style, and because often the only alternative is a 1H opening.

2. Strong Auctions

2.1 Introduction to theory of Moscito relays

In general, if we are in a game force then one player is always making cheap, meaningless bids ('relays') and the other describes his hand artificially. Up to about the level of 3H responder is describing shape, after which he describes first total number of aces and kings and then location of specific high cards. Responder doesn't really need to think, just obey opener's requests.

A lot of sequences are designed to be parallel, to minimize the amount of memory work needed. For example, after the 1C response, if opener relays 1D then all of responder's bids (1H and up) are the same as the initial responses of 1H and up, just a different point range. If I make reference, for example, to "S2 scheme", that's the name of one family of parallel sequences which I will describe later.

Note on notation: If I write something like "2S: Diamond shortness. 4414, 5404, 4504, 4405", then that means that after opener relays 2NT, 3C by responder shows 4414, 3D shows 5404, 3H shows 4504, 3S shows 4405.

Also note that you can stuff the same number of hand-types into a 2C bid as into all bids from 2H up. The S2 scheme uses either 2C or 2H+, the S1 scheme uses either 2D or 2S+.

Final note: This looks truly evil, but isn't that bad really. Especially when you can keep a printout for notes!

Of course, for all the openings and responses, you can cheat by a point or so if you really like or hate your hand, or if it's really late at night and you want to underbid because you're going to fall asleep playing the hand. :)

2.2 Responses to big pass (14+):

- * 1C: 8-10 pts, 2+ controls, any shape. With a minimum opener bids naturally (not 1D), with 17+ he relays (game-forcing), then 1H shows 4+ spades, 1S shows 4+ diamonds, denies spades, etc (same as first-round responses below).
- * 1D: 0-7 pts, any shape. Opener bids naturally (1NT rebid is 14-19, 2NT shows 20-22, jump suit rebid is game-forcing, all else natural). Responder should raise with a good fit and a max, or bid a new suit as a scramble with a misfit. Opener should show a 4-card major before a longer minor -- finding a potential 4-4 fit has priority.
- * 2C: 11-13 pts, balanced (4333, 4432, or 5332 with no 5-card major).

* This allows opener to quit the relays and just bid 3NT if he's minimum
* with no major. Also, if responder doesn't respond 2C but later shows one
* of these shapes, he promises 14+ pts. The relay structure is described
* later.

1H: 11+ pts, 4+ spades, says nothing else about shape. Opener relays 1S:

1NT: 4+ hearts. Opener relays 2C:

2D: 3-suited, both majors.

2S: Low (club) shortage. 4441, 5440, 4540, 4450.

2NT+: High (diamond) shortage. 4441, 5404, 4504, 4405.

2H+: S2 scheme.

2C: 4+ diamonds. Opener relays 2D, then 2H+ is S2 scheme.

2D: Spade 1-suiter or 4144, S1 scheme.

2H+: 4+ clubs, S2 scheme.

* 1S: 11+ pts, 4+ diamonds, denies 4+ spades.

* 2C: 4+ hearts. Opener relays 2D, then 2H+ is S2 scheme.

* 2D: Diamond 1-suiter or 1444, S1 scheme.

* 2H+: 4+ clubs, S2 scheme.

* 1NT: 11+ pts, 4+ hearts, denies spades or diamonds.

* 2D: Heart 1-suiter, S1 scheme.

* 2H+: 4+ clubs, S2 scheme.

2D: 11+ pts, club 1-suiter, S1 scheme.

* Others: 6-9 pts, good 6-card suit (7 if 3-level, 8 if 4-level). Everything

* natural afterwards (raise is invitational, everything else GF).

2.3 S1 scheme

Responder has just bid 2D, and opener relayed 2H, then:

3C: Three equal suits. 4333, [4144 or 1444 (one major)], 7222.

(remember, 4333 promises 14+ since responder didn't bid 2C originally to show 11-13 balanced. Same with 4432, or 5332 if responder's suit is a minor)

2S: Either low shortage or some 6322.

3C: Some 6322.

3H: Low 3-card suit.

3S: Mid 3-card suit.

3NT: High 3-card suit.

3D+: 5332, 6331, 7321, 7330

2NT: Mid shortage. 5332, 6331, 7321, 7330.

3D+: High shortage. 5332, 6331, 7321, 7330.

2.4 S2 scheme

Responder is bidding 2H and higher, holding a 2-suiter:

2H: Lower suit longer. Opener relays, then 2NT+ as below.

2NT: Higher suit longer, low shortage. 5431, 6421, 6430, 6520, 7420.
3D+: Higher suit longer, high shortage. 5431, 6421, 6430, 6520, 7420.
3C: Higher suit longer, 3-suiter (both minors) or equal shortage.
5422, 5440, 6511, 7411.

2S: Equal-length suits.

3C: Low shortage. 4432, 5521, 5530, 6610.

3D+: High shortage. 4432, 5521, 5530, 6610.

2.5 Balanced scheme

Responder responded 2C, opener relayed 2D, then:

2H: 4 spades.

2NT: 4 hearts. 4432, 4423.

3C: 4 diamonds. 4342, 4243.

3D: 4333.

3H+: 4 clubs. 4324, 4234.

* 2S: 4 diamonds.

* 3C: 4 hearts. 3442, 2443.

* 3D: 3343.

* 3H+: 4 clubs. 3244, 2344.

* 2NT: 4 hearts.

* 3D: 3433.

* 3H+: 4 clubs. 3424, 2434.

3C: 5 diamonds. 3352, 3253, 2353.

3D: 3334.

3H+: 5 clubs. 3325, 3235, 2335.

2.6 Control relays

1) 3NT is NEVER a relay. When relayer bids 3NT, it is to play.
So, if responder bids 3S, 4C is the relay.

2) Relayer can always sign off by making a non-relay minimum game bid.

* If relayer has determined that 3NT or 4M is impossible, and is unsure that
* partnership values are sufficient for 5m, he can bid a non-relay 4m
* as strongly invitational, but not forcing.

If relayer is interested in slam but does not think further relays will help
him, he can make a natural, invitational jump in a new suit.

3) It is important for responder to think in terms of the number of possible
bids he is skipping, rather than the bid itself. For example, 3S-4C
skips one step, while 4D-5D skips four steps. In general, responder has
one more good feature in his hand for every step he skips.

4) The first relay after shape has been determined asks for controls.
An ace is two controls, a non-singleton king is one control.

Responder must have 3 controls for a bid promising 11+ points, so he skips no steps to show only 3, skips 1 step to show 4, skips 2 to show 5, etc. Responder must have 2 controls for a bid promising 8+ points, so he skips no steps to show only 2, skips 1 step to show 3, skips 2 to show 4, etc.

5) After that, responder orders his suits by length, ignoring singletons and voids, breaking ties by rank. For example, for 3532 the order is H-S-D-C, while for 1453 the order is D-H-C.

6) Responder then makes a list like:

A xor K of first suit (not both, opener can always distinguish
A xor K of second suit between 0 and AK)
* A xor K of third suit
* ** A xor K of fourth suit (if applicable)
Q of first suit
Q of second suit
Q of third suit
** Q of fourth suit (if applicable)
*** "something extra"
*** "something extra"
*** "something extra"

* if this suit is a doubleton, the check is reversed, and this should read "0 or AK of nth suit"

** if the fourth suit is a singleton or void, it is completely ignored, so this item does not exist.

*** this is pure judgement. if nothing else is left on the list, responder can skip an extra step or two to show that he still has extra values that he hasn't shown yet. this could be the jack of a long suit, a singleton honor, etc.

7) Responder looks at the current list, and skips n steps to show that his hand meets the first n conditions on the list but not the (n+1)th. He then crosses off the n+1 conditions, to get a new, shorter list, starting with the (n+2)th condition. Lather, rinse, repeat.

2.7 Relay reversals

A cute trick. After Pass-1H or Pass-1S, there are certain times when opener does not want to be relaying. These happen most often when opener is minimum, does not have support for responder's suit, and has the suit which responder just bid (so that responder may be playing the contract, and opener would not wish to tip his hand to the defense). We have found that these are virtually the only occasions where opener doesn't want to relay. Relay bidding may still be effective, so we have devised this scheme to let *responder* relay:

After Pass-1H or Pass-1S, bids of 2C or higher by opener show 14-16 points, 4+ of the bid major, denies the other major. 2C shows diamonds, 2D shows a 1-suiter, 2H+ shows clubs, etc. Responder may then relay, and the bidding proceeds as with the normal S1 or S2 schemes, or responder may just bid naturally.

These bids are *optional* -- opener always has the right to retain captaincy if he wants it.

2.8 Examples

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--                AT98
K53                Q42
AKT83              QJ94
AKQ87              JT

Pass (14+)         1C (8-10)
1D (GF)           2C (balanced)
2D                2H (4 spades)
2S                3C (4 diamonds)
3D                3H (4342)
3S                3NT (2 controls)
4C (looking for 7) 4H (Skipping one step. The first condition holds but the
                    second does not. I have A xor K of spades, but
                    nothing (AK impossible) in diamonds.)
4S                4NT (Skipping no steps. The first condition does not
                    hold. I have nothing in hearts (or AK, but that's
                    impossible)).
6D (Missing HA, so sign off)
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```
KJxxx    AQx
AQ        Kxxxxx
Ax        Q
AQxx     Kxx
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Pass    1NT (11+ pts, 4+ hearts, denies spades or diamonds)
2C      2D (Heart 1-suiter or 1444)
2H      2NT (Heart 1-suiter, diamond shortness)
3C      3H (3613)
3S      4C (4 controls (2 for AS, 1 for KH, 1 for KC))
4D      (we must have all aces and kings except for irrelevant KD, so
        looking for likely grand slam)
        5C (KH, so don't bid 4H.
            AS, so don't bid 4S.
            KC, so don't bid 4NT.
            No QH, so bid 5C.)
5D      5S (QS, so don't bid 5H.
            No QC, so bid 5S.)
7S      (partner must have S AQx H Kxxxx D x C Kxx. Spades is safer, since hearts
        might break 4-1, which we can survive playing spades but not hearts.)
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```
KJ        AQxxx
AKQ98     Txx
AQx       Kx
QJx       T9x
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Pass    1C (8-10, any shape)
1D (17+, game forcing relay)
        1H (4+ spades)
1S      2D (One-suiter or 4144)
2H      2NT (Diamond shortness)
3C      3D (5323)
3H      3NT (3 controls (AS is 2, KD is 1))
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4C (Slam's still possible -- put responder's king in clubs for example)
 4H (AS but not KS, so don't bid 4D.
 Neither AH nor KH, so bid 4H.)
 4S 4NT (Either AK of clubs or neither AC nor KC)
 Pass (Partner has AS but only 3 controls, so he can't have AK of clubs. Thus we have 2 clubs losers. No slam. He has 3 controls and AS and nothing in hearts or clubs, so he must have KD, and probably QS to get up to 8 pts, though that's not certain. 4NT is probably safer than 5H, since no danger of a club ruff.)

AJ KQTxx
 Axx xx
 KJx AQxxx
 Axxxx K

Pass 1H (11+ pts, 4+ spades)
 1S 2C (4+ diamonds)
 2D 2S (equal length suits)
 2NT 3C (club shortness)
 3D 3S (5251)
 4C 4D (3 controls (AD is 2, KS is 1, KC is singleton and don't count))
 4H (Slam is likely if responder's values are concentrated in his long suits)
 5S (One top spade honor, so skip 4S.
 One top diamond honor, so skip 4NT.
 No top heart honors, so skip 5C.
 QS, so skip 5D.
 QD, so skip 5H.
 No QH, so bid 5S.)

5NT (Wow! Partner has KQxxx xx AQxxx x, possibly with the KC, which would be the 13th trick. Anything else you'd like to share, partner?)

6D (Well, I've got this stiff king...)

7NT (Cool.)

3. Intervention in relay sequences

3.1 First-round interference over opening Pass

General principle is

Over 1Z: Pass and Double are relatively strong bids,
 Other suit bids are natural 5-7.
 1nt = 0-4 artificial negative.
 Jump bids should be made on a 6 card or longer suit headed

by QJT, KJ, or KQ and no side strength.
A cue bid of 2Z should show control values in the suit.

Pass usually forces double so may be made on a penalty hand. The possibility of a penalty pass is a psychological edge as well as any theoretical gain. This is almost guaranteed to expose any psychics -- it seems psychics are frequent against the strong pass.

Over 1C: Pass forces double:

Pass is penalty
1D show 11+ with "something extra" denies 4+ spades
1H-2C show 11+ points, normal relay
2H+ show 6-9 and a good 6 card suit.
Double shows 8-10 points
1D, 1H, 1S, 2C are natural 5-7 point bids (1D may be made on 3 cards)
1NT is 0-4 artificial negative.
2D+ show <6 and a good 6 card suit

Over 1D: Pass forces double

Pass is penalty
1H-2C show 11+ points, normal relays
2H+ show 6-9 and a good 6 carder
Double shows 8-10 denies 4+ spades
1H shows 8-10 4+ spades
1S, 2C-2H show 5-7 natural.
1NT is 0-4 art neg.
2S+ show <6 a good 6 card suit

Over 1H: Pass shows 8+, denies 4+ hearts (double relays--suit order HDSC)

Double shows 8+, 4+ hearts (1S relays)
1S, 2C-2H show 5-7 natural
1NT shows 0-4 points, art neg.

Over 1S: Pass shows 8+, denies 4+ spades, double relays gf and then:

1NT shows H, denies S or D (as usual)
2C shows HD 2 suiter
2D shows C or D one suiter (relays off)
2H+ shows CD 2 suiter

Double is 8+, optional (usually 4 spades) bidding proceeds naturally.

1NT shows 0-4 art. neg.
2-bids show 5-7, natural.

Bidding after artificial negative 0-4:

Pass with a minimal balanced hand and use SOS and runout techniques.
Bid 2C as a choice of suit request.
Bid 2D-2S as signoff.
Bid 2nt as invitational with a strong hand.
Cue bid the enemy as the only forcing bid
3 bids are invitational, not forcing.

After a 5-7 natural bid, all raises are non-forcing, 2nt is invitational,

and cue the enemy suit to force.

Over 1N: Double with most hands of 8+.
Bids show a good suit and 7-9 points, and no desire to penalize the opponents.

Over 2C: X: Optional, 8+, 3+ decent cards in their suit.
2D: Takeout -- leaning towards majors.
2H, 2S: 8-10 points, good suit, non-forcing
2NT: Diamonds, 8+, good suit
Jump bids are natural, GF.

New suits after a Take-out ARE forcing. With majors bid 2d. With a good 2 suiter in diamonds and a major suit bid 2nt then the major--this is invitational. With a minimal 2 suiter with D, just bid the major.

Over 2D, 2H, 2S: X: Optional, 8+, 3+ decent cards in their suit.
2 suit: 8-10 points, 4+ card suit.
2NT - 3S: Transfers. Transfers to a lower suit than the opps bid is 8+. Transfer into their suit is 11+, 3-suiter. Transfer above their suit shows a game force and an excellent suit.

Over higher bids: X is penalty, all bids are game-forcing.

3.2 After Pass-1C

Over X, 1D, 1H, 1S: P is gf relay (use relays over N step interference)
suit bids and 1NT are natural 14-16
X or XX is 14-16 a takeout with the right SHAPE.
2Z is micheals 14-16.

Over 1NT: Will never happen.
P forces X, then any bid is gf.
X shows 14-16 optional.
suit bids are natural--2nt is unusual.

Over 2C: P forces X then
P is penalty
any other bids are gf.
2D is takeout -- leaning towards majors
3C general takeout shows a strong hand
all other bids natural.

X is optional.
2D is takeout 14-16.
all other bids natural, 14-16.
2NT is natural 15-16 points, invitational.

Over 2D+ P shows 14-16
X is optional leaning towards penalty
Bids are gf, natural.

3.3 After Pass-1D

If the opponent then bids we pretend that he opened the bidding and use normal defensive methods, except that both of us know something about the other's point-count.

3.4 Intervention after a game-forcing relay has been established

If they intervene with a 2-step bid, then we conduct our relay auction as normal, with pass substituting for the 1-step bid and double substituting for the 2-step bid.

1-step interference over responder: Double by relayer is penalty. Pass relays, after which responder may either make his normal bid or double to show values in the doubled suit and deny the cheapest response (opener may pass for penalties or 2-step to relay).

1-step interference over relayer: Pass and double both show a 1-step response, but double shows a high card (for defense or NT) in the opponent's suit while pass denies it. Opener may penalize the boofa or 2-step to relay. Other bids are as normal.

Double of responder: Relayer may redouble to play, or pass as the usual relay. Then redouble by responder shows extra values (14+ or compensating strength) (1-step relays), and a 1-step bid shows control in the doubled suit, no extras, and denies the cheapest response (2-step relays). Other bids by responder are as normal.

Double of relayer: Responder may pass to show extras (double relays), redouble to show a high card in that suit and deny the 1-step response (1-step relays) or make his normal response with neither of the above.

3+ step interference over responder:
Relayer may double for penalty, and Pass resumes relays n-2 steps higher.

3+ step interference over relayer: Drop relays, bid naturally. Responder should either double with undisclosed defense or pass without, should not get in the way if relayer wants to double. Afterwards cheapest suit by relayer may be artificial (depending on how deep we are in relays) to give responder more room to say something.

Intervention in control relays over responder: Relayer may double for penalty, or pass to continue relays (X by responder subs for first step).

Intervention in control relays over relayer: Responder doubles to show an undisclosed control in that suit, or passes to deny such. Relayer may then bid the cheapest step to relay, the intervention suit being skipped over since we have the info already.

4. Intermediate and Weak Auctions

4.1 Responses to 1C

Pass: Any really weak hand, with or without clubs.

1H: Either a solid invitation (based on HCP rather than playing points) or a game-force. Opener bids 1NT with both majors (then 2C is GF relay, all else is natural and invitational), 2C+ with a max (as Moscito), 1S with a min (then 1NT is GF relay as Moscito, all else natural and invitational).

1NT: 4-card support and 10-12 points in support. Basically a raise which won't go anywhere unless partner really likes his hand.

1S: 5-card suit, usually weak, but game might be possible if partner has a fit. So, partner should raise with a good hand and support.

2C, 2D: Weak hand, good suit.

Everything else except 1D: Signoff, preemptive.

1D: None of above. Starts a totally natural sequence. Could be a nondescript hand barely worth a response, could be a mediocre hand looking for a fit, could be almost worth an invitation but wants to find out more about partner's hand before evaluating.

Opener bids (in order of priority): 1H with 5+ hearts, 1S with 4 spades, 1NT with balanced, 2m with a longer minor suit, and something else with a really nice *distributional* max. (Rebid 1H usually with 4-5 majors, since partner can bid 1S to find a spade fit.) Most bids after 1D response are nonforcing, but many raises and jumps are invitational.

4.2 Responses after 1D

Very similar to above, except that 1S response is a game-force (and opener rebids as in straight Moscito, not showing point count).

4.3 Bidding after 1C or 1D in competition

Ignore a 1-step overcall. Ignore a double, except that redouble can be used to show a hand with 3-card support (so the 1-step response denies support).

Negative doubles through 2D. The negative double is like a 1D response to 1C or a 1H response to 1D -- it asks partner to describe his hand without actually saying much. Penalty doubles of 2H and higher.

New suit responses are forcing. The cheapest bid in partner's suit is a non-invitational raise. Jump shifts and raises are preemptive. Cue-bid of their naturally-bid suit shows at least invit strength, promises 4-card support.

After the initial action, either player may cue-bid the enemy to show extra values without a convenient bid. If responder does it, it's a GF. *These cuebids don't promise anything in their suit!*

4.4 Responses to 1H

Pass: Almost any 0-10 hand, and decent hands with hearts as well.

1NT: ~18+, artificial, forcing. Opener rebids 2C, artificial negative, with 0-4, after which the auction reverts to natural (responder must jump to force). With 7-8, opener bids 2NT (game forcing). With 5-6, opener bids a 4cM if he has one, otherwise 2D, and the auction proceeds naturally (generally nonforcing bids).

2NT: 21-23, natural.

2M,3*: Preemptive.

1S,2m: General runout, probably decent hand (since most really lame hands pass). Up to 17 pts. 1S shows 4+, 2m shows 5+. Opener should raise with a max and a good fit.

4.5 Bidding after 1H - X - ?

XX: SOS. Usually no 4-card heart suit, and no convenient 5-card suit to escape to. Could be a strong hand with a good suit (plans to jump next).

1NT: As normal.

1S, 2C, 2D: Weak runouts, decent 5-card suit. Should be a *good* suit for the higher runouts, since options are cut off.

Jumps: Weak. 2NT is unusual for minors.

After the first round actions, 1NT tends to show the most awkward suit that the bidder could hold. For example, 1H-X-1S-X-1NT shows diamonds (opener can't have good enough hearts to override partner's decision, since he didn't open 2H). 1H-X-P-P-1S-X-1NT shows hearts, since responder could have something like 6 hearts. XX, of course, is always SOS.

4.6 Responses to 1S

Pass: Bad hand, 4 or (weak 5) spades. With good spades, respond 2S (also a signoff, but more preemptive)

1NT: To play.

2C: Puppet to 2D. Either a diamond signoff, or any invitational hand. With an invite, responder next bids his suit.

2D: Artificial game force. Opener should bid a doubleton major if he has one, otherwise bid 2NT with 5 clubs, 3C with 5 diamonds, 3D with any 4333.

2NT: Light invitation to 3NT. With a strong invitation, bid 2C then 2NT.

Everything else: Signoff.

In competition: If they double 1S, redouble is SOS and all else unchanged. If they overcall, doubles are penalty, 2NT is an artificial game-force, and jumps are invitational. Bids are to play.

4.7 Responses to 1NT

2C: Puppet to 2D, either a signoff or an invitational hand. Responder bids his suit next with an invitation.
2D: Game-forcing relay. Then 2H shows 4 clubs (S2) and 2S+ is 1-suiter (S1). Responder will frequently break out of relays to find out about stoppers.
2NT: Invitational.
2H, 2S: Good suit, nonforcing.
3*, 4*: Signoff. 3C tends to imply a mild diamond fit.

In competition, doubles are penalty, redoubles are SOS, raises are competitive, and new suits are invitational and non-forcing. Cue-bids ask for stoppers.

4.8 Responses to 2C

2D: Game-forcing relay. Opener bids 2H with secondary clubs (S2 scheme), or 2S or higher with a 1-suiter (S1 scheme).
2H, 2S, 2NT, 3C, 3D: Invitational, natural.
All else: Preempts.

In competition: Same as after 1NT.

4.9 Responses to 2NT and 3NT

In response to 2NT, 3m is a signoff, 4m is invitational to game, 4NT is invitational to slam in a minor (opener bids 5C to reject, 5NT or something else high to accept), and 5m, 6m, 7m are signoffs. 3M is forcing. 3NT and 4M are signoffs, and opener should *not* pull.

In response to 3NT, pass is to play and should only be done with a couple of outside tricks and a couple of outside stoppers. Any club bid is a signoff in opener's minor. 4D asks for an outside second-round control (4H=H, 4S=S, 4NT = other minor, 5m = none). In general, the cheapest NT is natural, but a NT raise or jump is forcing and invitational to slam in opener's minor if opener has undisclosed extras.

4.10 Responses to preempts

Generally... Don't. If you must, new suits are non-forcing and nonconstructive (opener may raise with a great fit, at his own risk). Raises are preemptive, and require good (usually 4-card) support and some shape. 2NT, if available, is a natural invitation to game and covers a variety of invitational hands (since opener rarely drops the bidding in 2NT, usually preferring to sign off in a suit). All redoubles after a preempt are SOS. Preempter should *never* rescue himself, trusting partner to rescue if necessary.

Remember that opener probably had to choose between opening a preempt and opening 1H, and 1H is a generally undesirable opening, so opener may have a highly nonoptimal preempt. Thus be very cautious...

5. Defensive bidding (applies at all vulnerabilities)

5.1 Takeout Doubles

Double of a natural opening bid up to 3S is for takeout. (doubles of 3-level suit bids are more "optional" than lower-level doubles) Bidder shows a decent hand with shortness in the doubled suit and support for the unbid suits, or a strong hand with 17+ points. (further bidding by doubler after a minimum response from partner shows this type of hand. A cue-bid of the enemy suit by doubler shows an opening-2C-strength hand.)

Responses to takeout double:

Suit overcall-- 0-8, best suit.

Cue bid -- 7-10 HCP 2 stoppers in enemy suit, nt try.

Jump overcall-- 8-10 points good suit.

1NT -- Shows 11+ (or compensating values)

[In the descriptions below the low, high, and mid suits refer to the suits other than the one taken out in.]

2C shows 11-13 HCP (2D relays gf, then 2H+ as follows)

2D shows <= 10 HCP good shape, bids are natural.

2H+ shows 14+, gf

2H low suit one of longest

2NT low suit longest

3C some 5431. (high short, mid short)

3D+ 5332, 5440, 6331.

3D+ high suit equal length. 4441, 4432, 5530.

3C mid suit equal length 4432, 5530.

2S mid suit one of longest

3C high suit equal length 4432, 5530.

3D+ mid suit longest (as before)

2NT high suit longest.

3C+ offshape, strong hand (17+), natural bid.

5.2 Natural suit overcalls

A natural suit overcall shows a decent suit with 5 or more cards, and 10-16 points (may be shaded down). Jump overcalls show a weaker hand with a long suit.

In response to an overcall, a cue-bid of the enemy suit shows a limit raise or better (11+ points with at least 3-card support). Raises and jump raises are weaker, with a higher raise showing more trump support.

5.3 Artificial Overcalls

Over 1m:

X is takeout
2C shows majors (2D is gf relay S2 scheme)
2D shows top and bottom (natural).
2NT shows the bottom 2 (unusual nt).

Over 1M

X is takeout
2M is Michaels (other major and some minor).
-- 2NT response requests minor suit
2NT is unusual (both minors).

2-suited overcalls are generally dual-range bids, denying 13-16 points (just overcall directly in that case).

5.4 Defense to 1C Forcing (also Forcing Pass)

With two opportunities to bid (the nature of the 1C system usually ensures this), bids at first opportunity are weak, bids at the second opportunity are stronger.

At first opportunity:

1-level bid (or x of 1c opening or 1d response): shows at least 4-4, bid suit and the next higher one.
1NT: at least 4-4, spades and diamonds ("pointed" suits)
2C: at least 4-4, clubs and hearts
higher bids: pre-emptive

5.5 Defense to natural 1NT opening (Astro)

x = penalty
2c = at least 4-5, hearts and a side suit.
2d = at least 4-5, spades and a side suit.
2nt = unusual.

other bids are natural.

after 2c or 2d, responder bids the major with 4-card support or relays (cheapest step). Opener bids a 5-card major (his major might be only four),

passes if relay suit is his second suit, or bids his second suit. Responder can at any time bid 2nt to explicitly request the second suit.

with both majors, opener bids his 4-card major first. (This allows responder to relay, and opener to then show his 5-card major. Without good support for either major, responder can leave the contract at the 2-level.)

x of opening 1nt by a passed hand shows a long minor, responder should relay 2c. (penalty double does not make sense here)

6. When vulnerable vs. non-vulnerable

We use a natural system here, with 5-card majors, weak NT's, 2/1 game-forcing, invitational jump-shifts, and multi-2 bids.

Weak-two bids should be fairly disciplined because of the vulnerability. Bidder should have 7-10 points, 6-card suit to at least Q-10, no outside 4-card major or other feature that might pre-empt your partner. Two-suited openings should show the same strength, generally with no honors outside the two suits.

6.1 Opening bids

1C/1D = Natural, either a 4-card suit (usually 5) or a 15+ hand with a 3-card suit. 2C/1D game-forcing. Natural responses except that the cheapest jump shift is a limit raise or better (denies 4cM), often looking for NT (GF if opener bids NT afterwards, showing 15+). Other jump shifts show 6+-card suit, invitational. All NT responses are quantitative.

If opener rebids NT, he shows 15-17. We play similar structure over this as we do over our TresBoof 1S opening (2C puppets to 2D and starts invitations, 2D is a GF, 2M is signoff, 2NT-3H are Xfers and promise invit+ (except for 2NT)).

In comp responder should feel free to raise opener on 3-card support, since it will usually be a 5-3 fit, and if it's a 3-3, opener will bid again.

1H/1S = Natural, 5-card major. Cheapest response is 6-12, relay, forcing ('forcing NT') (if responder makes this response and then jumps to 3 of opener's suit, he shows 10-12, exactly 3-card support). 1NT over 1H shows 4+ spades, forcing. Jump shifts show 6+ cards in the suit, invitational. Jump raise is invitational. 2/1 GF unconditionally. 2NT is forcing raise ('Jacoby 2NT') and asks opener to bid a singleton if he has one, or 3M with 16+, 3NT with 12-15, or 4 of a suit with

5-5. Splinters.

1NT = 12-14 (occasionally a nice 11). All the Stayman, Jacoby, etc. No 5-card major. 2S response xfers to 3C, for a minor-suit signoff, direct 3m response is invitational.

2C = Either a "strong two" or a weak-two in diamonds. Responder MUST bid 2D unless he was planning to bid over a weak-two in diamonds (in that case, 2NT shows a strong opening, anything else a weak opening).

A "strong two" is either a 23+ balanced hand, a 21+ unbalanced hand with lots of playing strength (typically has a strong 5+ card suit), or a hand that is within one trick of game and has decent defensive strength. (otherwise just open 1 of the suit)

After 2C - 2D, opener bids 2NT (23-24 balanced), 3NT (25-27 balanced), 4NT (28-30 balanced), etc. (use standard NT methods: Jacoby, Stayman, quantitative invitations), or bids a suit. With less than 6 points, responder makes a negative bid (2NT over 2H or 2S, 3D over 3C, 3NT over 3D), or bids something else with 6+.

2D = Weak-two in hearts or spades. Responses:

-- pass: weak hand with long (5+) diamonds

-- major-suit bids up to 4H: pass-or-correct bids. Often these bids are made with support for the suit NOT bid. This way, after opener corrects, responder can invite or jump to game.

-- 2NT: asking bid. Opener bids:

3C, 3D: good hand with hearts or spades.

3H, 3S: bad hand with hearts or spades.

Further bids by responder that are not in opener's suit are forcing.

-- other bids: natural, non-forcing.

2H = Hearts and a minor, weak-two strength.

2S = Spades and a minor, weak-two strength.

-- 2NT response after either asks opener to show his other suit and his point range. Opener bids:

3C, 3D: bad hand with clubs or diamonds.

3H, 3S: good hand with clubs or diamonds.

2NT = 20-22 points balanced. Use standard NT methods.

3NT = gambling NT, same as normal.

6.2 In competition

-- cue-bid of the enemy suit shows limit-raise or better. Raises and jump-raises are weaker -- both show a similar point range, but jump raise shows more trump (4+). Over a takeout double, jump raises are also weak -- use 2NT for a limit raise or better.

-- negative doubles (through 3s) show 4+ cards in the (or an) unbid major, or both unbid minors. 7+ points at one-level, 8+ at two-level, 11+ at three-level.

-- new suits show 5+ in the suit. (6+ points on the one-level, 10+ on the two-level)

-- jump-shifts are weak. (A jump cue-bid in the enemy suit is a splinter,

though)

- redouble of takeout double: 10+ points, denies good fit with opener's suit, shows interest in penalizing the opponents.

6.3 Later on in the bidding

- Use RKC (Roman Key-Card) Blackwood. (Count K of trump as an A, responses to 4NT are: 5C: 0 or 3, 5D: 1 or 4, 5H: 2 or 5 without trump Q, 5S: 2 or 5 with trump Q. If no trump suit is agreed upon, RKC agrees as trump the last suit naturally bid by partner of RKC bidder.) 5NT afterwards is straight king-asking. In competition: forget about trump Q, use DOPI (double: 0, pass: 1, one-step: 2, etc.)
- jump to 5 of major asks partner to go to 6 with good trumps.
- jump-raise by responder at his second turn is invitational.
- fourth-suit-forcing is game-forcing.