

# The KD-Club

The K-Club is a Version of Precision Played by a Dozen Bridge Players in Kingston, Ont. The KD-Club is played by Ken and Don. It is based on the K-Club but employs the full panoply of Italian bids and, in addition, has a number of unique conventional agreements. For most of our agreements, see the K-Club. Most of what is presented here departs from the K-Club (though the first 2 items below are now played by most K-Clubbers).

## Support Showing 2NT

After  $1\spadesuit$  —  $1\heartsuit/\spadesuit$ , a 2 NT bid is undefined in most Precision systems. With a balanced 18-19 HCP hand, for which Standard needs this bid, we would open  $1\clubsuit$  rather than  $1\spadesuit$ . A conventional treatment was suggested by Don for the Bridge World Death Hand.

Consider left hand's options after left opens  $1\spadesuit$  and right responds  $1\heartsuit$ .

$\spadesuit$ J 9 8	$\spadesuit$ K 10 6 4
$\heartsuit$ A 9 4	$\heartsuit$ K J 10 7 3
$\diamondsuit$ A K Q 8 7 2	$\diamondsuit$ J 3
$\clubsuit$ 7	$\clubsuit$ 10 5
$\spadesuit$ J 9 8	$\spadesuit$ A 10 6
$\heartsuit$ A 9 4	$\heartsuit$ 10 8 7 3
$\diamondsuit$ A K Q 8 7 2	$\diamondsuit$ J 3
$\clubsuit$ 7	$\clubsuit$ A 9 5 3

The difficulty is that the left hand has quality heart support but, with only three, cannot jump. Left also has pretty good diamonds, but a jump to  $3\diamondsuit$  probably ends the auction in the first case — and while  $4\heartsuit$  is not guaranteed, you want to be there. With the second hand you want to be in 3NT.

The solution is to agree that the 2N rebids show three card support for responder's major with a very good diamond suit.

## Two Way Game Tries

After a constructive major suit raise, a two way game try allows us to use both short suit and help suit game tries. After  $1\spadesuit$ – $2\spadesuit$ ,  $3\clubsuit$ ,  $\diamondsuit$ ,  $\heartsuit$  are short suit game tries; if opener instead wishes to make a help suit game try, he bids 2NT, which asks responder to bid the lowest suit in which he would accept a help suit game try. The same applies after  $1\heartsuit$ – $2\heartsuit$  except that two of the bids have to be inverted to leave room to mention all the suits. If 2NT were used

to ask for help, it would not be possible to show spades. The solution is that instead of 2♠ showing shortness in spades, 2NT shows spade shortness and 2♠ asks for help.

We play these game tries only when there has been no interference. It is possible that they would be useful in many situations but for the time being we are only using them over direct raises of a major suit opening bid. The first exception we have made is play them after 1♠–double–1NT (constructive raise): 2 suit = short, 2NT = help.

### **Keycard after a 2♦ Opening Bid**

2♦ shows a hand that is 4-4-1-5 less 1 card from any of the four suits. 2NT asks.

After a 2N ask, responder has a choice of Roman Keycard bids as follows: 4♣–RKC for clubs, 4♦–RKC for hearts, 4NT–RKC for spades. Immediate bids of 4♦ and 4NT are also RKC for hearts and spades (but 4♣ would be natural and invitational to 5♣).

### **Relay Stayman over the 10-12 NT**

This is Don's invention and is a superb tool for investigating slam after a 10-12 NT. It is, however, so complicated that it can be recommended only to regular partnerships who play frequently and have a good memory for conventions. It may come as a surprise that a convention of this sort is legal—it falls under the same Class D blanket as Puppet Stayman: “Other artificial responses and rebids after natural NT.”

After an opening bid of 1NT (10-12 HCP), 2♣ is forcing to game and initiates a sequence of bids in which opener shows, first, his distribution, then number of controls, then exact location of controls. Responder can break off the relay at any time. Since opener will have few high cards, it is usually possible to discover opener's distribution and to locate all controls at a safe level.

#### *(1) Showing Distribution*

Opener first shows his longer major: with longer hearts than spades, he bids 2♦; with equal hearts and spades he bids 2♥; with longer spades he bids 2♠ or higher. More precisely, 2♠ shows 5 cards in the majors (3 spades and 2 hearts), 2NT shows 6 cards (4 spades and 2 hearts) and 3♣, 3♦, 3♥ all show 7 cards (4 spades and 3 hearts). In this last case opener also shows his longer minor: thus after 1NT–2♣, 3♣ shows 4-3-2-4 shape, 3♦ shows 4-3-4-2, and 3♥ (or higher) shows 4-3-3-3.

In general, whenever opener bids at the level of 3♣ or higher, opener's distribution will be fully determined; also, the system is designed so that a bid of 3 of a minor by opener will always be the longer minor, while a bid of 3♥ or higher will show equal length in the minors (or longer clubs if the 3♣ bid is unavailable). Bids of 3♥, 3♠ and 3NT all say the same thing about distribution but show different numbers of controls.

A summary of opener's first rebid:

1NT 2♣ :	2♦	Longer hearts than spades	all these bids show longer spades
	2♥	Equal length in hearts and spades	
	2♠	5 cards in the majors	
	2N	6 cards in the majors	
	3♣	7 cards in the majors, 4 clubs	
	3♦	7 cards in the majors, 4 diamonds	
	3♥+	7 cards in the majors, no 4-card minor	

The reason for organising the responses in this way is to limit the strain on the memory. Thus, after the 2♦ response showing longer hearts than spades, responder will usually relay again with 2♥. Opener can now follow the bracketed portion of the above bidding chart, simply interchanging hearts and spades. Thus only one system of responses needs to be learned for the two cases of unequal major suit length.

If opener bids 2♠, either directly over 2♣ to show 3 spades and 2 hearts, or with a 2♦ bid interposed to show 3 hearts and 2 spades, responder can relay with 2N to find out opener's minor suit distribution. Opener can be 5-3, 4-4, or 3-5 in the minors, so in accordance with the general principle of showing the minors naturally, opener bids his 5-card minor, or bids 3♥ to show equal minors. Thus after

1NT-2♣, or	1NT-2♣,
2♠-2NT:	2♦-2♥,
	2♠-2NT:
3♣ = 3-2-3-5	3♣ = 2-3-3-5
3♦ = 3-2-5-3	3♦ = 2-3-5-3
3♥ = 3-2-4-4	3♥ = 2-3-4-4

Similarly, if opener rebids 2NT, directly to show 4 spades and 2 hearts or after 2♦ to show 4 hearts and 2 spades, responder can relay with 3♣ to find out whether opener is 4-3 or 3-4 in the minors. With 4 diamonds, opener bids 3♦, while with 4 clubs, opener must bid 3♥, since the natural 3♣ bid is not available.

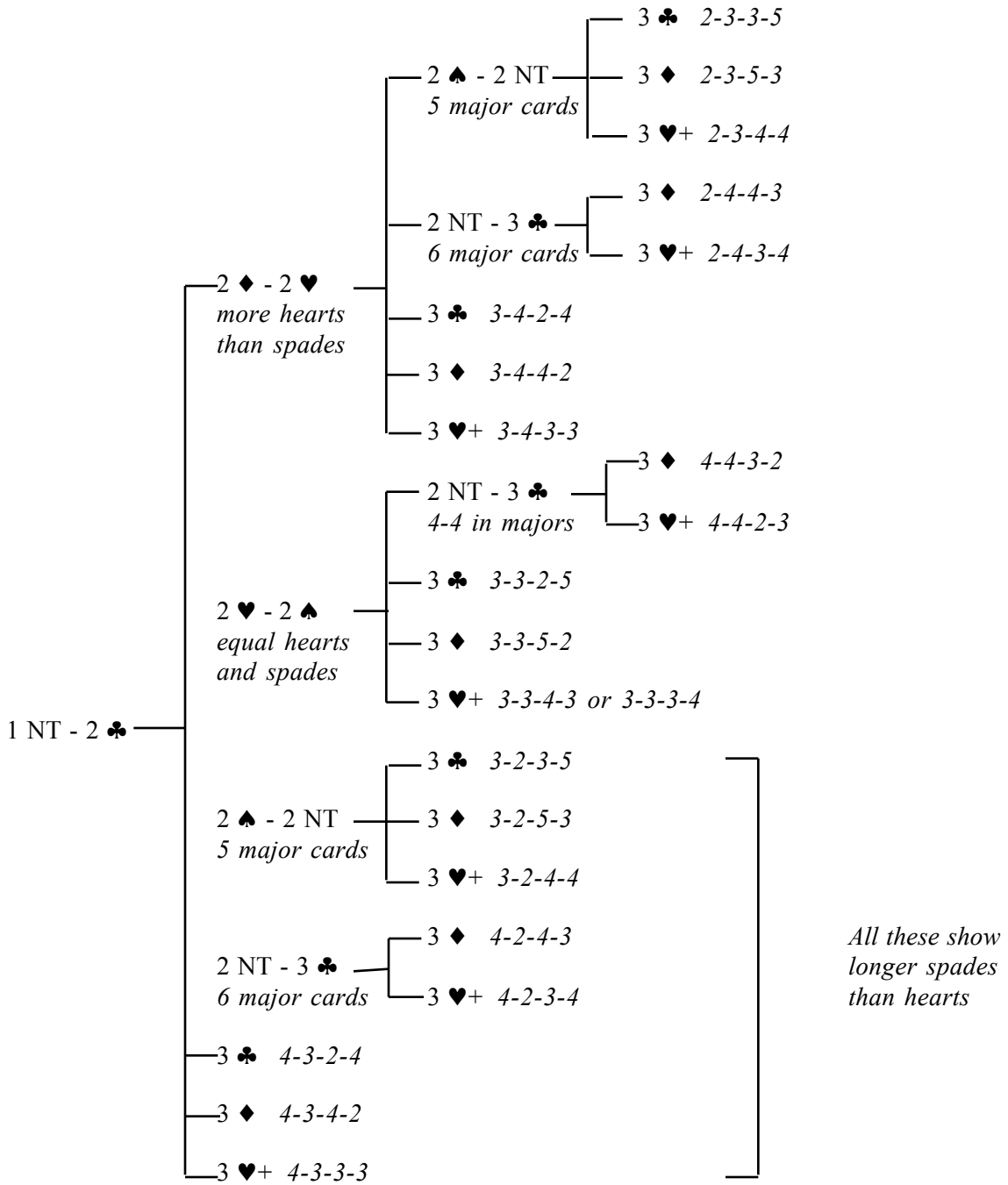
It remains to consider the case of the 2♥ response to the 2♣ relay, showing equal major suit length, either 3-3 or 4-4. If responder relays again with 2♠, opener's responses are:

1NT	2♣	2NT	4-4 in the majors
2♥	2♠:	3♣	3-3-2-5
		3♦	3-3-5-2
		3♥	Either 3-3-4-3 or 3-3-3-4*

\*In this case (flat hand with 4-card minor), the system does not allow us to determine the exact distribution.

After the 2N response, responder can relay with 3♣ to locate opener's 3-card minor, with 3♦ showing 3 diamonds and 2 clubs, and 3♥ showing 3 clubs and 2 diamonds.

A complete summary chart:



(3♥+ means that with the given shape, opener will bid 3♥ with 3 or more controls, 3♠ with 2 controls and at least 2 queens, and 3NT with 0-1 controls, or with 2 controls and 0-1 queens.)

(2) Showing Controls

After determining opener's distribution, responder may sign off by bidding game in any denomination, or continue with a control asking relay. He would do this to investigate slam and can find out how many aces, kings, and queens opener holds by the level of 4N. The first control asking relay and responses to it depend upon what opener's final distribution bid was.

(a) Opener bids 3♣:

Now 3♦ is a further relay, asking opener to show number of controls. The responses are:

3♥	2 controls, either 1 ace or 2 kings	
3♠	3 controls, either 1 ace & 1 king or 3 kings	
3N	0-1 controls, i.e., at most 1 king	
4♣	2 aces, 0 kings	4 controls
4♦	1 ace, 2 kings	
4♥	4 kings	
4♠	5 controls, i.e., 2 aces, 1 king	
4N	6 controls, i.e., 3 aces	

Further relays from the above table go as follows:

3♥-3♠	With 2 kings bid 3NT (4♣ asks for queens and 4♦, 4♥, 4♠, 4NT show 0, 1, 2, 3) With 1 ace bid 4♣, 4♦, 4♥ or 4♠ to show the ace and 1, 2, 3 or 4 queens
3♠-4♣	With 3 kings bid 4♦ (4♥ asks for queens and 4♠, 4NT show 0, 1) With 1 ace and 1 king bid 4♥, 4♠ or 4NT showing 0, 1, 2 queens
3NT-4♣	With no king bid 4♦ (4♥ asks for queens and 4♠, 4NT show 3, 4) With 1 king bid 4♥, 4♠ or 4NT to show 2, 3, 4 queens
4♣-4♦	Bid 4♥, 4♠, 4NT to show 0, 1, 2 queens
4♦-4♥	Bid 4♠, 4NT to show 0, 1 queens

When the final distribution showing bid is higher than 3♣, we can no longer achieve the complete determination available after the 3♣ response. However, by sacrificing accuracy on the hands weak in controls (0-2 controls), we can use the same responses for the rest.

(b) Opener bids 3♦:

Now 3♥ is the control asking relay, with responses:

3♠	3 controls.
3NT	0-2 controls.
4♣ or higher	As in previous section.

Bidding is the same as in the previous paragraph, except when responder chooses to relay with 4♣ over the weak bid of 3NT:

3NT-4♣	Bid 4♦ with 0-1 controls (4♥ asks and 4♠, 4NT show 0, 1 kings). Bid 4♥, 4♠, 4NT with 2 controls and 0-2, 3, 4 queens.
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We lose a little when opener has 0-2 controls, but otherwise our accuracy is unimpaired.

(c) Opener bids 3♥, 3♠, or 3NT:

Recall that these bids all show the same shape but different controls:

3♥ = 3+ controls.  
3♠ = 2 controls and at least 2 queens.  
3NT = 0-1 controls or 2 controls with 0-1 queens.

Further relays go as follows:

3♥-3♠	3NT shows 3 controls (4♣ asks and responses are the same as for 3♠-4♣ in section (a) above). 4♣ and up show 4+ controls and follow section (a) above.
3♠-4♣	4♦ shows 2 kings (4♥ asks for queens and 4♠, 4NT show 2,3) 4♥, 4♠, 4NT show an ace with 2,3,4 queens.
3NT-4♣	4♦ shows 0-1 controls (same as in section (b) above). 4♥, 4♠ show 2 kings with 0,1 queens. 4NT shows an ace and a queen.

### *Interference*

Since all relays are artificial, the opponents may double to show the suit named and they will occasionally bid a suit, just to get in the way. After a double of an ask, redouble shows maximum length in named suit and 2+ controls; pass shows less than maximum length in named suit but 2+ controls and an interest in playing there redoubled (after either of these calls, bidding becomes natural); any bid is the normal response to the relay.

When they bid a suit over a relay, double is for penalties, pass shows indecision, and bids are natural.

If they double the response to a relay, redouble is to play, pass shows indecision and all bids mean the same as they would have without the double. It is extremely unlikely that they would now bid a suit (having already had an opportunity to bid over the 1N opening bid) but if they do then, as above, double is for penalties, pass shows indecision, and bids are natural.

### *3) Denial Cue-bidding*

After the control showing bids, responder will almost always know opener's precise distribution and number of aces, kings, and queens. If responder needs further information before placing the final contract, he can now bid 5♣, requesting opener to show the location of his controls. Opener does this by denial cue-bidding, that is, he bids the cheapest suit in which he does not have a control. A bid in NT will deny control in the relay suit—thus after the 5♣ relay, 5NT would promise controls in diamonds, hearts, and spades, but deny control in clubs. Responder can continue with further relays; once opener has shown all his controls, further cue-bids show the location of his queens.

An example will make this clearer :

♠ A Q J 3 2	♠ K 7 6 4
♥ A K J 7	♥ Q 3
♦ 7	♦ A 5 3
♣ A Q 3	♣ K 9 6 5

The bidding:

West	East	Interpretation
	1NT	10-12, balanced
2♣	2NT	4 spades, 2 hearts
3♣	3♥	4-2-3-4, 3+ controls
3♠	4♦	1 ace, 2 kings
4♥	4NT	1 queen
5♣	5♥	♦ control, no ♥ control
5♠	6♦	♠ and ♣ control, no ♦Q
7NT		

If East instead held :

♠ K 7 6 4	
♥ 8 3	
♦ A Q 3	
♣ K 9 6 5	

the bidding would be identical until East's response to the 5♠ relay; now East would bid 6♥ to show spade and club controls with the diamond queen, and West would sign off at 7♠, which will make if trumps are 2-2, if clubs are 3-3, if the heart queen drops in three rounds, or if a squeeze develops.

Responder can terminate denial cue-bidding at any time by skipping a denomination. A simple bid of the next highest denomination by responder is always a relay, unless opener has already shown the location of every ace, king, and queen in his hand. Thus responder must plan ahead, preparing for an inconvenient answer to his questions, and occasionally passing up a chance of slam for the sake of safety.

## 2♠ Opening Bid

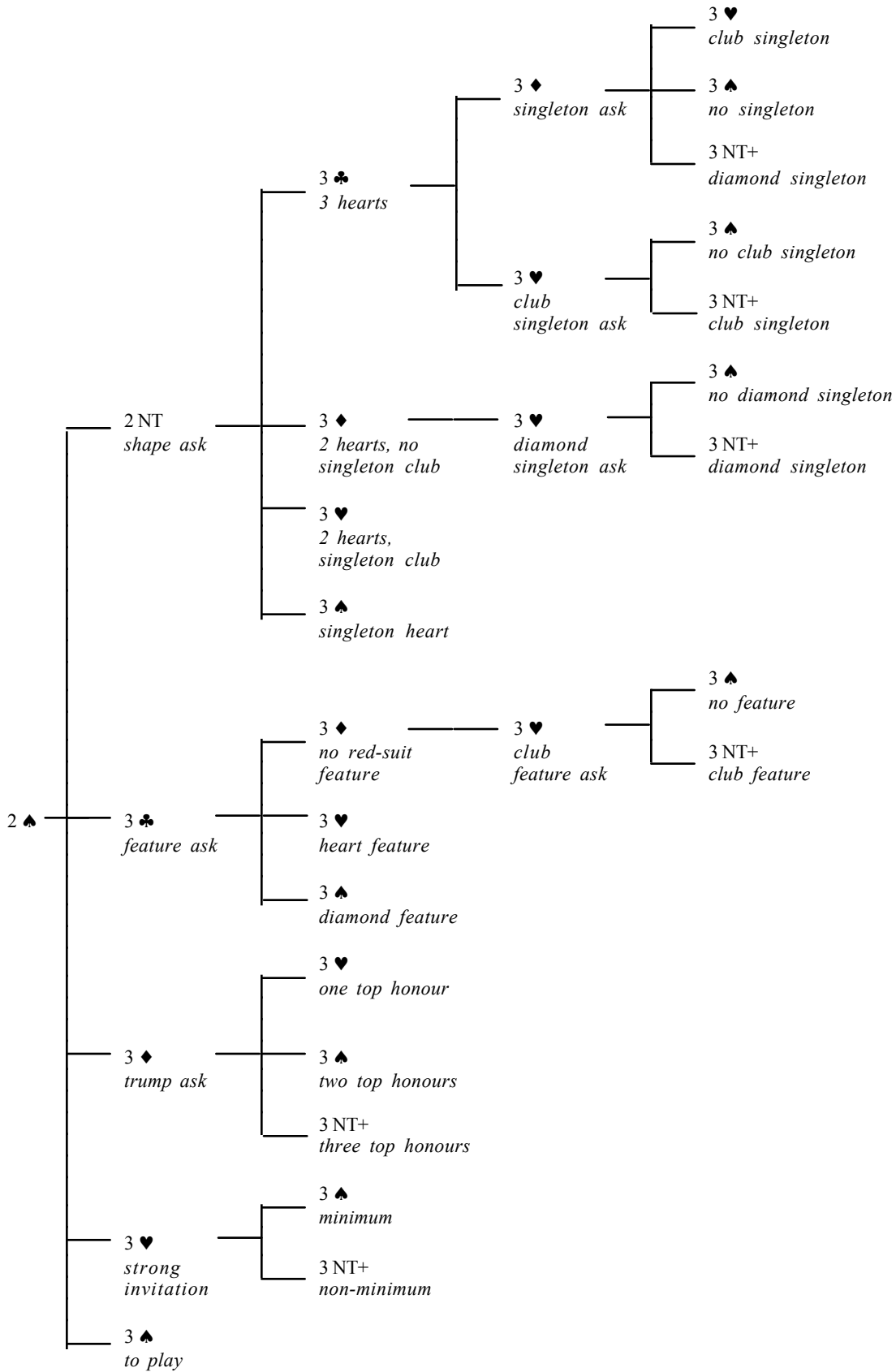
The spade suit should have 2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5 honours. Opener may have an outside Ace but should not have a void or a 4-card heart suit. New suits are forcing, 2N asks for a singleton and 3♣ asks for a feature.

When responding to 2♠, Don and I play ShaFTS (Shape-Feature-Trump-Strength), invented by Don, where the next 4 bids over 2♠ are all asking bids: 2NT asks for **Shape**, with responses keyed on heart length; 3♣ asks for a **Feature**; 3♦ asks for number of top three spades (ie. **Trump**); 3♥ is a strong invitation (ie. overall **Strength**), 3♠ is preemptive.

In the following chart, where the designation “3 NT+” occurs, it means that with the required assets, opener should cuebid any further asset. So, for instance, if opener has already shown a singleton, a suit bid past 3NT will show a feature; on the other hand, if opener has already shown a feature, a suit bid past 3NT will show shortness. In either case, a bid of 3NT will deny an additional asset.

Note that while 2♠ is our only weak two bid, this convention could also be used for a weak 2♥. The shape ask would be 2♠ and all responses would be one below those given below. It is not necessary to have a natural 2♠ bid because the response to the **Shape** response would show spade length (substitute spades for hearts in the diagram below).





## 1♣-1NT

Don and I play that the count for the 1NT response is 8-13 HCP so 2♣ asks about range as well as distribution; also, the 2-level responses, which show 8-10 HCP, are transfer responses so when opener has 4 cards in a major, the strong hand will play the contract.

1♣	1NT	2♦	8-10, 4 hearts (may also have 4 spades)
2♣:		2♥	8-10, 4 spades
		2♠	8-10, no major
		2NT	11-13, 4-3-3-3 distribution; 3♣ asks for the 4-card suit
		3♣	11-13, 4 clubs and another 4-card <u>suit</u> ; 3♦ asks for the other suit
		3♦	11-13, 4 diamonds and 4 hearts
		3♥	11-13, 4 hearts and 4 spades
		3♠	11-13, 4 spades and 4 diamonds

These responses are the hardest to remember of all the standard Precision Stayman sequences. They should be played only after the others are committed to memory and have been used for a few months (or years). Until then play the ranges originally proposed by C. C. Wei where 1♣-1NT (*that would be 1♠ in K-Club*) shows 8-10 HCP; 1♣-2NT shows 11-13, or 16+ and 1♣-3NT shows 14-15 HCP.

Playing 1♣-1NT as 8-13, 3NT still shows 14-15. 2NT, however, is now reserved for 16+: 3♣ is Baron and all other bids are natural (although they may ask about the named suit).

## Positive Suit Responses to 1♣

Don and I gave up on transfer positives (with some reluctance on my part) in order to play Italian style asking bids (see below). The problem with transfer responses, for those that play the Italian asking bids, is that only one of the majors can be shown at the 1 level. This means that the 1NT ask for controls would come up only half as often, so Don and I bid naturally to show a positive. We follow Wei/Radin for the responses from 1♥ to 2♦ with the exception that 2♥ and 2♠ are used for those minor suit positives which contain a 4-card major (see following).

## Jump Canape Positive

Minor suit hands are problematic because even when you find a good fit you may still want to play in a major or notrump. One of the many injustices suffered by minor suit hands is that, with much more to find out, the minor must be shown at the 2-level whereas a major can be shown at the 1-level. The Italians and Power Precision have an excellent set of responses for minor suit positives which used to be illegal so Don and I developed the following: a jump to 2 of a major is a positive with 4 cards in the major plus a longer minor; the bids that follow this are natural or are splinters (depending on opener's next bid). This treatment replaces the weak-2 semi-positive responses – the sacrifice is worthwhile only because the Jump Canape occurs more often.

After a Jump Canape, opener can ask for the minor by bidding 2NT, or bid a suit of his own. After a suit bid, responder shows support by splintering, bids NT with a stopper in the fourth suit or rebids the 4-card major. The specific responses are as follows:

1♣	2♥,♠	3♣	5 clubs, no void
2NT:		3♦	5 diamonds, no void
		3♥	6 clubs
		3♠	6 diamonds
		3NT	5-4 in the minors (hence void in other major)
		4♣	7+ clubs
		4♦	7+ diamonds
		4♥	4-4 in the majors, 0-3 controls; original major suit bid shows 5-card minor: 2♥ = ♣, 2♠ = ♦
		4♠	same as 4♥ but with 4+ controls

1♣	2♥	2NT	stopper in short minor with 0-2 spades
2♠:		3♣,♦	splinter in support of spades
		3♥	0 to 2 spades and no stopper in short minor
		3♠	doubleton honour in spades
		3NT	double stopper in short minor
		4♣,♦	extra long suit (7+)
		4♥,♠	same as above

1♣	2♥	3♥	no spade stopper, no fit
3♣,♦:		3♠	splinter (3-card support of the minor)
		3NT	spade stopper, no fit
		3♦,4♣	(other minor at cheapest level) splinter with 5+ support
		4♣,♦	(same minor at cheapest level) 5-card support with doubletons in off suits
		4♠	splinter (5+ support)

1♣	2♠	Reverse heart/spade bids above	
3♣,♦:			

1♣	2♠	3♠	0 to 2 hearts and no stopper in short minor
3♥:		3NT	stopper in short minor
		4♣,♦	splinter in support of hearts
		4♥,4♠	same as above
		5♣,♦	extra length (7+)

These responses are complicated but not as difficult as might appear at first glance. Most of the responses are intuitive and it usually works out that if you can't think of the appropriate response it is safe (and probably correct) to rebid the 4-card major.

The negative implication when using Jump Canape is that a positive response of 2♣ or 2♦ (to a 1♣ opener) denies a 4-card major and therefore a major suit bid by opener will promise 5 cards.

### Asking Bids

In addition to the C.C. Wei asking bids, (described below under the headings Trump Ask and Suit Control), the Italians use a general control ask, ie. How many Aces and Kings do you have? — in effect, a low level Blackwood. They can also ask about support for their own suit. Their asking bids are designated by the Greek letters alpha, beta, gamma; I have never been able to remember which letter refers to which bid so follow the Precision writers who use descriptive names instead.

### Control Ask

1NT following a 1-level positive asks for the number of controls, where Ace=2 and King=1. The first step shows 0-2 controls and 2NT shows 6+. If the response is 2NT then 3♣ asks “How many?” and 3♦ shows 6, 3♥ shows 7, etc. If the response is 2♣ then 2♦ asks “Is it 0, 1, or 2?”

### Trump Ask

After a positive in a suit, an immediate or delayed raise (but not a jump raise) asks about the length of the suit and the number of honours. The responses are:

1st Step	None of the top 3 honours, unspecified length
2nd Step	5-card suit, 1 of the top 3 honours
3rd Step	5-card suit, 2 of the top 3 honours
4th Step	6+ suit, 1 of the top 3 honours
5th Step	6+ suit, 2 of the top 3 honours
6th Step	All 3 top honours, unspecified length

These steps follow the mnemonic 012123 where 0 and 3 show number of top honours and say nothing about suit length; the first 1,2 shows a 5-card suit; the second 1,2 shows a 6+ suit.

The same responses are used when opener accepts responder’s transfer positive.

### Support Ask

After a suit or 1NT positive, the bid of a new suit asks for support and controls. Qxx or better is considered good support and 4+ is good controls (if responder us a passed hand then 3+ is good controls). The first 2 steps show poor support and the next 3 show good support:

1st Step	poor support, poor controls
2nd Step	poor support, good controls
3rd Step	good support, poor controls
4th Step	good support, good controls
5th Step	support is 4 small, good controls

When trying to remember whether one shows support or controls first, the guide is that if we don't have a fit then we need as much space as possible to find one, whereas when we have a fit we can afford to use the extra space.

After a 3rd, 4th, or 5th step showing good support, 4♣ is a further control ask: 4♦ shows 0 or 4 depending on whether the previous bid showed 0-3 or 4+; 4♥ shows 1 or 5 etc. If clubs is the agreed suit then 4♦ is the further control ask.

## Suit Control

After a Trump Ask or a good-support response to a Support Ask, a bid in any other suit asks for honours or distributional control in that suit.

1st Step	Jxx or worse
2nd Step	Qx(x) or xx
3rd Step	K(x) or x
4th Step	A(x) or void
5th Step	AK or AQ

An aid in making the response is to remember that the step is equal to the point count of the corresponding honour.

A rebid of the suit asks whether it is control by distribution or honours. Since the desired response will almost always be honours, the first step shows distribution and the second shows an honour. The third step shows an additional honour which responder thinks might be useful.

## Trump Ask when exact suit length is known

This could occur after Jump Canape Positive or a 1NT response to 1♣ followed by Stayman— now when responder bids 2♦ showing hearts, 2♥ is an asking bid which asks for the top three honours.

1st Step	none
2nd Step	one
3rd Step	one with jack
4th Step	two
5th Step	two with jack
6th Step	three

## Asking Bid Priorities

There must be clear cut understandings on when a bid is an ask. All asking is done by the 1♣ opener. Support Asks can only be made directly over the positive response. Trump Asks can be made immediately or after a Control Ask or after a poor-support response to a Support Ask. A Suit Control Ask occurs after a Trump Ask or a good-support response to a Support Ask.

## Interference over 1♣: The Inverted Method for Coping with 1-level Interference

It is often said that our own faults are what we dislike most in others. I confess that I have a tendency to interfere frivolously over an opponent's forcing club (both 1♣ and 2♣). This is partly because other players keep doing the same to us, which has prompted me to give a lot of thought to methods which would reduce the inconvenience and increase the chances of penalties when it seemed likely to be profitable.

The Goren method for coping with 1-level interference works well for the midrange hands but gives up on asking bids for the strong hands. Don and I play a system which gives short shrift to the weak responding hands but keeps the full arsenal of asking bids for positive holdings. The basic idea is that after a 1-level interfering overcall, double, pass and 1-level suit bids (by responder) are positives; 1NT is negative; 2♣ is a balanced positive; all other 2-level bids are semi-positives.

### Double of 1♣

After a direct double of a 1♣ opener, pass is negative, redouble is positive in clubs and all other 1 level responses are natural positives with all asking bids on. 2 level suit responses show 5+ in length with 5-7 HCP. 2NT=minors. This is the one case where the interferers are doing us a big favor—we can show both the minors at the 1 level and are still left with a pass for a negative response.

#### 1 Level Overcalls

(a) After Natural One Suited Overcalls of 1♦, 1♥, 1♠, positive bids by responder are as follows:

1♥,♠	normal positive
2♣	balanced 8+ HCP with stopper in overcall suit
Double	positive in next lower ranking suit
Pass	(i) positive in other lower suit or (ii) positive in bid suit (trap) or (iii) balanced 8+, no stopper

When responder passes showing an undefined positive, opener will tend to double to give responder a chance to describe his hand; responder will, with (i) show his suit, with (ii) pass for penalties or, if the vulnerability is wrong, bid 1NT, and with (iii) cue bid to show balanced positive, no stopper.

Following any of these responses, a new suit by opener is the usual Support Ask. After case (i), a raise is a Trump Ask. After re-opening double and 1NT in case (ii) showing a positive in the overcalled suit, 2 of that suit by opener is also a Trump Ask (psychic overcalls are not uncommon over the strong club).

Instead of doubling, after responder's pass, opener can bid a suit, which is a Support Ask, or 1NT which is a control ask. He should do this only when he has a clear idea of where the hand is going.

It will be necessary (after the interfering bid) for responder to bid 1NT or make a non-forcing 2-level bid with weak hands:

1N	any 0-4 HCP hand <i>or</i> 5-7 HCP with clubs <i>or</i> 5-7 balanced with a stopper (2N on next turn will show latter); followed by a jump shows a splinter
2♦,♥,♠	5-7 HCP with 5+ length in the suit
2N	5-7 HCP, both the minors (over natural 1♦, 2N shows ♣ & ♥)
Cuebid	5-7 HCP with no stopper

Jumps to the 3 level are unusual positives.

Some defenders bid 1♠ on any hand for which there is no better bid. This means that they will often have only 3 spades and sometimes fewer than 3. We have decided, however, to treat this as a natural bid for the purpose of our responses.

(b) *Artificial or Multisuit Overcalls of 1♦, 1♥, 1♠:*

The two changes in the way we deal with artificial (as opposed to natural) overcalls are: (1) Double shows a positive in the overcall suit. (2) Pass still shows a positive in one of the lower suits (trap pass is no longer one of the possibilities). And 2♣ is used for all balanced positives (without regard to stoppers).

The scheme for weak hands is the same as above, except that we bid naturally no matter what suits are shown or implied by overcaller — so 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ are all natural no matter what the overcall means.

After an overcall of 1♦, double shows diamonds and pass shows clubs. If opener bids the suit shown, it is a Trump Ask. After an overcall of 1♥ or 1♠, the double is still specific but the pass can be one of 2 or 3 suits. In this case, if interested in one of those suits, opener can double to ask which suit or bid a suit as a Support Ask.

### **Defending Against Artificial 2♦ Openers and Transfer Preempts**

When an opponent makes an artificial opening bid, the defender directly over that bid almost always has a second chance to bid. It seems to me that this is the main weakness of such bids but I have not yet seen a published defense which takes this into account. When they have good combined values, their convention will probably work to their advantage but when they are weak or have no fit, they have the disadvantage of being at the two level and good defensive methods will maximize the chances of penalizing when it is right. When it is not profitable to penalize, we must start bidding constructively at the two-level, so clear agreements are important.

Using the double of an artificial 2♦ to show diamonds is a waste since a strength showing double here is almost without risk (on the rare occasion that they elect to play in 2♦ and make the contract, it still may not be a disaster). The standard Flannery defense (where double shows a strong NT) is a move in that direction but the requirements for the double are so restrictive that it doesn't occur with practical frequency — I have been playing that defense for many years and have just once held a strong NT with stoppers in both the majors when the person on my right opened a Flannery 2♦.

A characteristic of many artificial openers is that there is an anchor suit which can be bid by the defenders as a takeout for the other 3 suits – hearts in Flannery, clubs in Precision 2♦ and the designated suit in Transfer Preempts.

Since the 2♦ bid often shows values and is as closely defined as a NT opener, responder is in a good position to double overcalls for penalties. Immediate overcalls should only be made with a very good suit. If you pass and responder signs off, the danger is somewhat reduced and, especially at matchpoints, your partner can back in with a weaker suit.

When you pass and responder signs off, takeout doubles and overcalls can be made by your partner on shaded values (with some respect, at teams, for the vulnerability)

A general scheme for bidding *in the direct seat* over 2♦ Openers and Transfer Preempts could go as follows:

Double	13+ HCP balanced or strong single-suited hand
Anchor suit cue	takeout
2NT	minors–preemptive
3NT	to play–running minor with stopper in anchor suit
Overcall	good suit, strength of good weak 2 to good opener
Jump overcall	preemptive
pass then double (of anchor)	penalty
pass then double (of anything else)	takeout (usually 10-12 HCP with shortness in their suit)
pass then 2NT	takeout for the minors
pass then suit	12+ HCP unbalanced, suit not good enough for immediate overcall, tends to have support for unbid suits
double then suit	same as a takeout double followed by suit bid
double then double	16+ HCP balanced
double then 2NT	18-20 HCP with stoppers
double then 3NT	21+ HCP with stoppers
double then cue	takeout

This general scheme would then be modified for specific conventions (Flannery, Precision 2♦, Roman 2♦, Multi-coloured 2♦, Transfer Preempts).

Most of these conventions will only be encountered in extended team games — there will be an opportunity to discuss specific treatments before the match.

The Transfer Preempt is a lock for inclusion in the list of the top ten worst conventions yet invented. This bid gives us several important options that take the sting out of the preempt, ie. the anchor suit cuebid for takeout, the immediate double to show scattered values and the pass followed by double of the anchor suit for penalties.

### Balancing Bids

Don and I follow some of the proposals of Lawrence in *The Complete Book on Balancing in Contract Bridge*.

1N	11-15 HCP, balanced, does not promise a stopper
Double	6+ HCP, either support for unbid suits or a strong hand
1 of suit	6+ HCP, good 4-card suit or any 5+ suit
2 of suit	10+ HCP, fairly good 5+ suit
Jump	14+ with a very good suit, usually 6+
Cue Bid	One trick short of game
2N	17-19 HCP

A jump in a suit in response to a balancing double shows close to opening values and suit length will not be 5+ since that hand would have overcalled.





## Note on Trump Asking bids

The standard responses are:

1st Step	None of the top 3 honours, unspecified length
2nd Step	5-card suit, 1 of the top 3 honours
3rd Step	5-card suit, 2 of the top 3 honours
4th Step	6+ suit, 1 of the top 3 honours
5th Step	6+ suit, 2 of the top 3 honours
6th Step	All 3 top honours, unspecified length

These steps follow the mnemonic 012123.

The exact suit length is revealed in just 2 of the 6 responses. Some time ago, I floated the idea of improvements. I wrote:

Trump Asks (where partner makes a positive in a suit and you bid that suit to ask for length and strength) are the backbone of Precision asking bids and, coincidentally, the only asking bids with which I have gradually become dissatisfied. My dissatisfaction is two-fold: (1) It isn't always possible to show extra length and when a suit is made trump, extra length adds to playing strength; (2) When showing strength, the Queen is treated as the equal of the Ace and King — but the bigger the fit, the less important the Queen.

Unfortunately, too many of us had ideas and there was no general agreement so we have left it unchanged.

Don's suggestion was the most efficient but not easy. It would be included here but was sketched out on paper and has disappeared.

I suggested two schemes and now have a third which just addresses trump length but would be easy to remember. Note that the 5<sup>th</sup> step of an ask response is always a rebid of the trump suit. Also, in 4 of the 6 responses, suit length is unknown. Reorder the responses as follows:

1st Step	None of the top 3 honours, unspecified length
2nd Step	6+ suit, 1 of the top 2 honours
3rd Step	6+ suit, 2 of the top 2 honours
4th Step	All 3 top honours, unspecified length
5th Step	5-card suit, 1 of the top 3 honours
6th Step	5-card suit, 2 of the top 3 honours

The mnemonic is now 012312. If the asker rebids the trump suit after one of the first four step responses it is a re-ask for additional length: 1<sup>st</sup> step—no extra length, 2<sup>nd</sup> step—one extra, etc.

Note that with 6+, the Queen is not shown. An option for responses to the re-ask would be: 1<sup>st</sup> step—no extra length, no Queen; 2<sup>nd</sup> step—no extra length, Queen; 3<sup>rd</sup> step—one extra, no Queen; 4<sup>th</sup> step—one extra, Queen; 5<sup>th</sup> step—two extra, etc.