

The Recursive Diamond

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General Approach

This system provides many ways to describe distributional hands, letting partnerships reach (and stay out of) games and slams that are difficult or impossible to reach using standard methods. All opening bids except 1♦ are limited, allowing opener and responder to focus entirely on shape and controls.

Most balanced hands with five card majors and some hands with six card minors are treated the same as balanced no trump hands. Thus, opening 1♥ or 1♠ suggests either a six card (or longer) suit or shortness in a side suit. To accommodate the wider variety of no trump hands, low information puppet stayman is used over all no trump bids (except 1C-1NT game forcing sequences).

Opening 1-bids (except 1♦) show 18-24 combined HCPs and the lengths of the two longest suits, discounting unprotected honors. They may be opened with as few as 9 HCP (5 in theory, but disallowed by the ACBL). 1♦ shows any hand with 25+ with the opener intending to rebid to show the equivalent opening bid or 2♦ to show a powerhouse (30+ combined), hence the name of the system.

Opening Bids

- 1♣ 1/2 NV: 13-15 balanced (possibly with 5-card minor or 6-card minor) OR
1/2 Vul or 3/4: 15-16 balanced (possibly with 5-card major or 6-card minor) OR
11-16 three-suited hand (w/o 5-card major) OR
12-14 5-5 or better in minors
- 1♦ 16/17+ balanced OR (14)16+ unbalanced (rule of 25)
- 1M 9-15 5+-carder, not 5332 shape
- 1NT 1/2 NV: 10-12 balanced, possibly with 5-card major or 6-card minor OR
Vul or 3/4: 12-14 balanced, possibly with 5-card major or 6-card minor
- 2m 10-15 6+-carder
- 2M Weak
- 2NT 8-11 with both minors (equal vulnerability)
- 3NT Gambling

1♣ Responses

- 1♦ 6-13, artificial and forcing
- 1M/2m Negative (0-6), cheapest 4-card suit
- 1NT unpassed hand: 14+, artificial game force OR
passed hand: 9-11, balanced (LIPS in effect)
- 2NT both minors, preemptive

1♣-1♦:

- 1M/2m Shortness in suit above (note major shortness guarantees exactly 4 cards in the other major)
- 1NT 13-15/15-16, balanced (LIPS in effect)
- 2♥ 13(54)
- 2♠ 31(54)
- 2NT Both minors (stronger than 2NT opening), at least 5-5

Over 2M, the first available bid asks for the longer minor. 4M are to play.

After opener shows his shortness, responder either attempts to sign off in a suit or continues the relay by bidding the short suit. At this point opener rebids as follows:

Shortness in a minor

With some (43)(51), bid the four card major
 With 44(41), bid notrump at the cheapest level
 With 44(50), bid the cheapest minor

Shortness in a major

With some (41)(53), bid the five card minor
 With (41)44, bid notrump at the cheapest level
 With (40)(54), bid the cheapest major

Bidding the short suit again is Ace-asking. All subsequent bids of the short suit are King and then Queen asking. On rare occasions, Jack asking is possible. All bids other than the short suit is to play. For example

♠7	♠A 9 5 2
♥K 10 7 5	♥A Q 3
♦A Q 5 4 2	♦J 10 9
♣A Q 5	♣K 8 2

Normal auction might go 1♦ - 1♠ - 1NT - 3NT ■ all pass, which may not make on a spade lead and diamond K offside. In Recursive Diamond, you have the option of stopping at 3NT, but also with the opportunity to play in 5♦. Aggressive bidding may also put you in 6♦ since the responder knows that there are no wasted values in spades.

- 1♣ See above
- 1♦ 6-13, artificial
- 1♥ Spade shortness
- 1♠ tell me your shape
- 2♦ 4153
- 2♠ Ace asking
- 3♦ 2 aces
- 3♠ King asking, we could bid 3NT to sign-off instead
- 4♣ 1 king
- 4♠ Queen asking (Since we can always stop at 5♦, fish for 6♦)
- 5♦ 2 queens
- 6♦ To play, feeling a little aggressive.

1♣-1NT (unpassed hand):

- 2x Shortness in suit bid
- 2NT 13-15/15-16, balanced (LIPS in effect)
- 3♣ both minors

On the rare occasion where opener has (13)(54), we might end up in a 4-3 fit at the 4 level, which is not bad since the short hand also has the ruffing potential.

After opener shows his shortness, the only forcing bid is the first step which asks partner to bid his second shortest suit. All other bids are to play. After finding out the two shortest suits or partner's void, all bids except the first short suit are to play. Bidding the short suit again is Ace-asking and so forth.

Interference over 1♣

1♣-noise:

Over direct interference, all suit bids are natural and shows 5-7 hcp and at least a 5card suit.

(Re)double shows the equivalent of a sound (8+) 1♦ response up to 2♠. Opener might be forced to bid to 3NT, so choose pass with balanced garbage, even if it is 8 or 9 points. Opener rebids normally except that with a (31)(54) hand, avoid bidding past 3NT. For example, 1♣-2♦-X-

pass-3 always shows heart shortness, but may only have three spades. The sequence 1 -2 -X-pass-3 guarantees 13(54) shape because 2 is available for spade shortness. Any other bid is natural, showing a weak hand. Responder should generally have some values (5-7) unless it is had at least 10 cards between two suits. In this case, responder should bid his second suit at his first opportunity showing opener the weak, distributional nature of the hand. [Remember: 1♣-X-1♦ shows a weak diamond hand, not a positive response!]

1♣-pass-1♦-noise:

Responder might be weaker than doubling over interference, so care should be taken not to bid too high. Thus, responder should bid only if he is short in the known suit of the overcaller or has a strong hand. With a strong balanced hand with a stopper, opener will rebid no trump at the lowest level (systems on). Without a stopper (or with desire to penalize), pass. Opener will also pass with a hand not short in known suit. If opener is short in the bid suit, he blissfully pretends his partner has just bid his short suit to ask for exact distribution. (31)(54) hands can be treated shown by bidding the second cheapest major (first cheapest shows (40)(54)). Also, because bidding no trump shows a balanced hand, to show (4441) opener should double.

If opener passes, responder has the option to double to inquire about the true hand type. At this time opener may bid no trump without a stopper or indicate shortness. Alas, what if the interference doesn't suggest a suit or shows multiple suits? If the interference shows two known suits, bid as if the interference shows only the higher suit. If the interference shows two suits with one anchored suit and one unknown suit, bid as if the interference shows the anchored suit. If the interference shows two unknown suits or one unknown long suit, bid as if spade is their suit.

1♣-noise-X-more noise:

Responder's double has authorized you to bid to 3NT, but some judgement is prudent. Reevaluate your values given the information from the opponents. If they are showing different suits, for purposes of showing exact shape, the known suit is the considered the most recent interference.

1♦ Responses

- 1♥ Positive (5)6+ (rebids below)
- 1♠ 0-5 balanced (or maybe (4441)) (rebids below)
- 1NT 0-5, a 5c minor and a 4c major
- 2♣ 0-5, both majors
- 2♦ 0-5, one long major
- 2♥ 0-5, hearts and a minor
- 2♠ 0-5, spades and a minor
- 2NT 0-5, both minors
- 3x 6+-card with one missing honor and no outside values

Note, if responder has a minimum hand that will not accept a game try after opener shows a major suit, consider bidding 1♠.

1♦-1♥:

In general, rebid your hand as you would have opened a similar weaker hand (except one level higher). 1♠ is used for both minors to save opener from leaping to 3NT on a possible 16-count 1345. Also, 1NT, 2NT and 2♣-2NT are available to show balanced hands, so each is given a two-point range.

- 1♠ 16-21 both minors OR 6-card minor (1NT inquires, bidding longer major if both minors)
- 1NT 16-18/17-18 balanced, possibly with 5-card major or 6-card minor
- 2♣ 21-22 balanced, possibly with 5-card major or 6-card minor OR (14)16-20 unbalanced, 3 suited hand
- 2♦ 23+ balanced OR (19)21+ unbalanced (rule of 30)
- 2M 16-20 natural
- 2NT 19-20 balanced, possibly with 5-card major or 6-card minor
- 3m 16-20 7-card

Should opener rebid 2♣ or 2♦, all responses to 1♣ or 1♦ are still on. Note that with a bare minimum 6 count, after 1♦-1♥-2♣, consider bidding a 4card suit or 2NT with 6-8 4333 hand.

1♦-1♠:

Opener may pass or bid 1NT to play. LIPS is also on should opener wish for game try.

1♥ Responses

1♠ 0-4 spades, forcing. Opener bids 1NT to show 4card spade suit. Note: NOT GCC legal

1NT 5+ spades, forcing

2m Natural, game forcing if there is a fit. Typically worth 14hcp playing strength.

2♥ 3-4 card support, 5-9 hcp.

2♠ Shapely limit raise or any game forcing hand

Note, balanced limit raises go through 1♠/1NT forcing

1♥ - 2♠:

2NT Garbage hand, typically 9-12 hcp

3♣ 12-15hcp, will accept limit raise, but no slam interest. Usually has 6 losers.

3♦ Slam interest opposite limit raise. Frequently with long trump suit.

3♥ Initiate cuebid sequence, typically holding a long 2 suiters.

3♠ Rkc in hearts

4x Void, slam try

After 1♥ - 2♠ - 2NT, responder, with a shapely limit raises, may try for game by disclosing his short suit at the 3 level. A 3♥ response indicate spade shortness. Opener may re-evaluate his hand given this new information and decide the final contract.

After 1♥ - 2♠ - 3♣, responder typically just bid game. With slam interest, bid 3♦ indicates an unspecified void ■ opener relays to find out which one. 3♥ initiate cuebid, 3♠ is RKC in hearts, and 4x is a singleton.

Similarly, after 1♥ - 2♠ - 3♦, 3♥ shows unspecified void, 3NT a balanced game force, and 4x is a singleton.

1♠ Responses

1NT Forcing

2x Natural, game forcing if there is a fit. Typically worth 14hcp playing strength.

2♠ 3-4 card support, 5-9 hcp.

2NT Shapely limit raise or any game forcing hand

Subsequent bidding after 1♠-2NT is the same as 1♥ - 2♠ except one step higher. For example, 3NT is now RKC.

Opener's Rebids after 1M-1NT:

2 bid major 6-card suit, 6 card suit, full opener. With 9-12, open weak 2

2 x 4 card suit

Jump/reverse Highly distributional hand, usually 6-5 or better. Does not promise extra value.

2♣ Responses

2♦ Stayman

2M 6-12, 5-carder, not forcing

2NT invitational

Responder with a strong hand and a major suit use 2♦ first and then bid your suit. In response to stayman, opener should bid 2NT with a good hand and no 4 card major; bid 3♣ with a weak hand and no 4 card major.

2♦ Responses

2M 4+-card, forcing.

2NT Invitational

3♣ Ask to cuebid major suit stopper: 3♦ = none, 3NT = both

With no Stayman bid available, responses must be forcing, looking for a 4-4 fit. With a weak hand, pass.

2♦ ■ 2M:

2NT No 3card support, good hand (13-15 hcp).

3♣ 3card support

3♦ No 3card support, weak hand (10-12 hcp).

Balanced Hand Treatment

Summary of rebid sequences

1/2 NV 1/2 Vul
or 3/4

10-12 12-14 1NT

13-15 15-16 1♣-1NT

16-18 17-18 1♦-1NT

19-20 1♦-2NT

21-22 1♦-2♣-2NT

23-24 1♦-2♦-2NT

25-26 1♦-2♦-3NT

27-28 1♦-2♦-3♣-3NT

29-30 1♦-2♦-3♦-3NT

31-32 1♦-2♦-3♦-4NT

[LIPS - Low Information Puppet Stayman](#)

Miscellaneous

Against opponents NT (both strong and weak):

X A 5c minor and a 4c major

2♣ both majors

2x natural

2NT both minors

Top and Bottom cuebids:

Cuebid of an opponent's suit shows the top and bottom unbid suits with emphasis on the bottom suit. Consequently, we use off-shape takeout doubles that do not promise support for the bottom suit. Should partner respond with the bottom suit, the doubler will bid equal-level correction to show the off-shape hand, which does not promise extra values.