



## Standard Cambridge

This system file, written by Robin Michaels, describes agreements that might be typical among more experienced University players.

### Opening Structure

- 1 ♣: 11-22 points with 4 plus Clubs, or 15-19 points, balanced, without 4 Diamonds or 5 Hearts or 5 Spades.
- 1 ♦: 11-22 with 4 plus Diamonds.
- 1 ♥: 10-22 points with 5 plus Hearts
- 1 ♠: 10-22 points with 5 plus Spades.
- 1 NT: 12-14 points and balanced. Balanced is fairly loosely interpreted.
- 2 ♣: 23+ points, or game forcing.
- 2 ♦: Multi: 5-card weak 2 Major, (or a very strong Acol 2 Diamonds).
- 2 ♥: 6-card Heart suit. Weak 2 Hearts.
- 2 ♠: 6-card Spades suit. Weak 2 Spades.
- 2 NT: 20-22 points, balanced.
- 3 ♣: A fairly standard preempt in Clubs.
- 3 ♦: A fairly standard preempt in Diamonds.
- 3 ♥: A fairly standard preempt in Hearts.
- 3 ♠: A fairly standard preempt in Spades.
- 3 NT: Solid Minor suit; very little outside.
- 4 ♣: Preempt in Clubs.

- 4 ♦: Preempt in Diamonds
- 4 ♥: Sort of preemptive in Hearts, but may be expecting to make.
- 4 ♠: Sort of preemptive in Spades, but may be expecting to make.

### **Extras:**

When legal to do so, it is often better to play the multi without the strong option, in order to make it more destructive.

It is slightly superior, and also more fun, to play the following modifications in 3rd and 4th seat:

- 1 ♠: 9-22 points, 4+ Spades; may be very weak, and if  $\leq 12$  high card points, say, may have a longer minor.
- 1 NT: 15-17 points, balanced.

Another modification is only used if another extra piece of system is used (transfers over 1 Club). When this is played, all strong balanced hands, even if they hold 4 Diamonds, are opened 1 Club.

The general preemptive style is heavily affected by position and vulnerability. Being in 1st or 3rd seat, being non-vulnerable, or opponents being vulnerable all encourage pretty frivolous, wide-ranging preemption. Thus 2nd in at V-VN, all preempts are pure, and sound, while 3rd at VN-V, everything is pretty random.

### **Responses to Opening Bids:**

#### **i) No Competition**

##### 1) 1 Club:

- 1 ♦: 4+ Diamonds, unless game-forcing values; denies 4+ Hearts or 4+ Spades.
- 1 ♥: 4+ Hearts; may conceal longer Diamonds if not game forcing.
- 1 ♠: 4+ Spades; may conceal longer Diamonds if not game forcing.
- 1 NT: balanced; 4+ Clubs; 6-9 points.
- 2 ♣: 4+ Clubs, 11+ points, denies a 4-card Major suit.
- 2 ♦: 4+ Clubs, fit bid, with Diamonds side suit and Club support. Values for 3 Clubs.
- 2 ♥: 4+ Clubs, fit bid, with Hearts side suit and Club support. Values for 3 Clubs.
- 2 ♠: 4+ Clubs, fit bid, with Spades side suit and Club support. Values for 3 Clubs.
- 2 NT: Preemptive Club raise (6 Clubs).
- 3 ♣: Semi-preemptive Club raise (6 Clubs).

After 1♣-1♦/1♥/1♠, opener tends to rebid 1 NT, which shows 15-17 points and balanced, whenever he holds a strong balanced hand, unless he holds 4-card support for a Major, in which case he will raise to the three level. After 1♣-1x-1NT, 2♣ now is checkback, asking opener to clarify his Major suit shape- it is at least invitational.

After 1♣-1♥/1♠, opener tends to raise to 2♥/2♠ on most minimum hands with 3-card support. Responder can then bid 3♣/3♦, non-forcing, showing a 4-card Major, and Club support, or 5 Diamonds, and an invitational hands, and step 1 as an enquiry, asking opener to clarify his support and shape. Opener should rebid above 3♥/3♠ with 4-card support.

### Extras:

After 1♣-1♦-1NT, 2♣ is checkback, but is game forcing.

After 1♣-1♥/1♠-1N, 2♣ is an puppet to 2♦, after which responder can show various invitational types, and 2♦ is game forcing checkback.

Transfer responses to 1♣- 1♦=4+ Hearts, 1♥=4+ Spades, 1♠=4+ Diamonds are an improvement on the above system, but the the follow ups involve some quite involved agreements to gain maximum advantage from the bids.

### 2) 1 Diamond:

1♥: 4+ Hearts.

1♠: 4+ Spades.

1 NT: 6-10 points, balanced; denies 4 Hearts or 4 Spades.

2♣: 4+ Clubs, 10.5+ points.

2♦: 4+ Diamonds, 11+ points, denies 4 Hearts or 4 Spades.

2♥: 4+ Diamonds, 11+ points, denies 4 Hearts or 4 Spades.

2♠: 4+ Diamonds, 4+ Spades, 8+ points.

2 NT: 5+ Diamonds, preemptive.

3♣: 4+ Diamonds, 5+ Clubs, 8+ points.

3♦: 5+ Diamonds, semi-preemptive.

Sequences after these bids are very similar to those after 1C openers.

### 3) 1 Heart:

1♠: 4+ Spades.

- 1 NT: 6-10 points, any shape without 4 Spades or 3 Hearts.
- 2 ♣: 4+ Clubs, 10.5+ points.
- 2 ♦: 4+ Diamonds, 10.5+ points.
- 2 ♥: 3 Hearts, 6-9 points
- 2 ♠: 4+ Hearts, 5+ Spades, values for 3 Hearts at least.
- 2 NT: 4+ Hearts, values for at least 3 Hearts, so about 9+ points, may be a little shaded.
- 3 ♣: 4+ Hearts, 5+ Clubs, values for 3 Hearts at least.
- 3 ♦: 4+ Hearts, 5+ Diamonds, values for 3 Hearts at least.
- 3 ♥: 4 Hearts, preemptive.
- 3 ♠: 4 Hearts plus, preemptive.
- 3 NT: 4 Hearts plus, splinter.
- 4 ♣: 4 Hearts plus, splinter.
- 4 ♦: 4 Hearts plus, splinter.
- 4 ♥: 5 Hearts plus, to play, not constructive.

After 1♥-1♠-1NT, checkback is played.

After 1♥-1♠, opener raises to 2♠ on most bad hands with 3-card support.

2/1 bids are pretty sound, and the ensuing auction is rarely dropped below 2NT.

### Extras:

The modified version of checkback may be played over 1H-1S-1N. After 1♥-1N, a forcing 2♣ relay may be used to clarify the responder's shape and strength.

Instead of the given use for 2NT, 3♣, 3♦ and 3♥, the following structure (Bergen raises) may be used:

- 2 NT: 4 Hearts, game-forcing raise.
- 3 ♣: 4 Hearts, invitational raise.
- 3 ♦: 4 Hearts, semi-preemptive raise.
- 3 ♥: 4 Hearts, preemptive raise.

The following *2-tier splinters* may be played:

- 3 ♠: Any void splinter - then 3NT asks which void.

- 4 ♣: Usual splinters
- 4 ♦: Usual splinters
- 3 NT: Shows a Spade splinter.

4) 1 Spade:

- 1 NT: 6-10 points, without Spades usually.
- 2 ♣: 4+ Clubs, 10.5+ points.
- 2 ♦: 4+ Diamonds, 10.5+ points.
- 2 ♥: 5 Hearts, 10.5 points
- 2 ♠: 3 Spades, 7-10 points.
- 2 NT: 4+ Spades, invitational raise at least, as over 1 Heart; about 9+ points.
- 3 ♣: Fit bids, similar to over 1 Heart.
- 3 ♦: Fit bids, similar to over 1 Heart.
- 3 ♥: Fit bids, similar to over 1 Heart.
- 3 ♠: 4 Spades, preemptive.
- 3 NT: *Idle bid.*
- 4 ♣: Splinters.
- 4 ♦: Splinters.
- 4 ♥: Splinters.

Very similar system is played to over 1 Heart.

**Extras:**

Again, similar to over 1 Heart.

In 3rd and 4th seat, in response to a 4 Spade opener, which can possibly be weak, the following sort of structure can be used:

- 1 NT: 6-10 points; denies 4 Spades.
- 2 ♣: 5+ Clubs, 10-11 points, non-forcing.
- 2 ♦: 5+ Diamonds, 10-11 points, non-forcing.
- 2 ♥: Various hand types, mainly balanced with 10-11 points, or with 3 Spades.
- 2 ♠: 4+ Spades, 6-9 points. Etc.

**Note:** For an unexplained reason Mr. Robin Michaels omits **5)** and continues his write-up with **6)** explaining the responses to 1 No Trump.

6) 1 No Trump:

- 2 ♣: Stayman, but also used on all invitational balanced hands.
- 2 ♦: 5+ Hearts, transfer.
- 2 ♥: 5+ Spades, transfer.
- 2 ♠: 5+ Clubs, transfer.
- 2 NT: 5+ Diamonds, transfer.
- 3 ♣: 6+ Clubs, to play.
- 3 ♦: 6+ Diamonds, to play.
- 3 ♥: 5+ Hearts, slam try.
- 3 ♠: 5+ Spades, slam try.
- 3 NT: To play.
- 4 ♣: Gerber !!

The same applies after a 1N overcall.

After a transfer, say 2♦-2♥, bids of 2NT, 3♥ are natural and invitational, non-forcing, but bids of a new suit are natural and game-forcing. Opener should cue bid on the way to 4 Hearts in these sequences if his hand is suitable for slam.

After 2♠, opener bids 2NT if he has Qxx or better in Clubs, otherwise bids 3♣.

The auction 1NT-2♠-2NT-3♣ is game-forcing, so opener may not pass. Similarly over 2NT for Diamonds.

**Extras:**

2♦ and 2♥ transfers can be broken on non-minimum hands with 4-card support, the precise style you use should be agreed.

7) 2 Clubs

- 2 ♦: Negative, fewer than 8 points (<8); game forcing.

After the sequence 2♣-2♦-2NT, showing 23-24 points, balanced, the same sort of system over a 2 No Trump opening is used.

**Extras:**

It is quite reasonable to play 2♣-2♦-2♥ as showing either Hearts or 25-26 points, balanced.

Then, 2S is an enquiry, and 2♣-2♦-2♥-2♠-2NT shows the balanced type. But this only comes up very rarely

#### 8) 2 Diamonds

Pass: Whenever responder feels this is likely to be the best spot.

2♥: To play in 2 Hearts opposite a weak 2 Hearts.

2♠: To play in 2 Spades opposite w weak 2 Spades, but to go higher opposite Hearts.

2 NT: Minor suit enquiry.

3♣: Strength enquiry.

3♦: Invitational in unspecified Major.

3♥: To play in 3 Hearts or 3 Spades; correctable.

3♠: To play in 3 Spades or 4 Hearts; correctable.

3 NT: To play.

4♥: To play in 4 Hearts or 4 Spades; correctable.

4♠: To play.

Opener has shown a weak hand with a 5-card Major, and usually a 4-card Minor on the side. If opener has Diamond length, and no tolerance for one (or both) of the Major suits, he should usually pass; eg. x Kxxx KJxxx Axx. Otherwise, where he has tolerance for both Major suits, he should raise to the lowest correctable spot, according to the Law Of Total Tricks (ie total trump length). With support for both Minor suits, he may bid 2NT to try and find the best Minor spot. 3 Clubs is a strength enquiry, with the following responses:

3♣ is a strength enquiry with the following response:

3♦: Any minimum or superlative with Hearts; (responses to this are correctable with 3 Diamonds bidder making a big move to show the strongest type.)

3♥: Good, with Hearts.

3♠: Good, with Spades.

3 NT: Superlative with Spades.

If 2 Diamonds is doubled, responder bids as follows:

Pass: To play, if opener's side suit is Diamonds.

Redouble: Asks opener to bid his suit.

2 Major: Shows support to at least the three level in the other Major suit.

Note: Higher bids as uncontested.

9) 2 Hearts

2 ♠: Constructive; non-forcing.

2 NT: Natural enquiry.

3 ♣: Constructive, F1

3 ♦: Constructive, F1

3 ♥: 3 Hearts, to play.

3 ♠: 4 plus Hearts, Spade side suit.

3 NT: To play.

4 ♣: 4 plus Hearts, Club side suit.

4 ♦: 4 plus Diamonds, Diamond side suit.

*Note: The above definition is from the original version. However, this may be a typo and that Hearts is the side suit.*

4 ♥: 4 plus Hearts.

4 ♠: To play.

4 NT: RKCB - Roman Key Card Blackwood.

10) 2 Spades

Same as over 2 Hearts, essentially.

11) 2 No Trump

3 ♣: 5-card Stayman.

3 ♦: 5 plus Hearts.

3 ♥: 5 plus Spades.

3 ♠: Minor Suit Stayman.

3 NT: To play.

4 ♣: Clubs, game-forcing.

4 ♦: Diamonds, game-forcing.

4 ♥: To play.

4 ♠: To play.



4 NT: Quantitative.

After 3 Clubs:

3 ♦: No 5-card Major suit, but at least 4 Hearts or 3 Spades.

3 ♥: Denies 4 Hearts.

3 ♠: Shows 4 Spades.

3 NT: Denies 4 Spades.

3 ♠: Shows 4 Hearts, but denies 4 Spades unless 5-4 in the Major suits.

3 NT: Denies 4 Hearts.

Now 4 Spades shows 5-4-x-x shape.

4♣ cue bids setting Spades with 5-4-x-x shape.

4♦ cue bids setting Spades with 5-4-x-x shape.

4♥ cue bids setting Spades with 5-4-x-x shape.

4 ♣: Cue bids agreeing Hearts with 4-card support.

4 ♦: Cue bids agreeing Hearts with 4-card support.

higher: Implies 4 Hearts.

3 NT: Shows 4 Hearts and 4 Spades.

4 ♣: Slay try in Hearts.

4 ♦: Slay try in Spades.

4 ♥: To play.

4 ♠: To play.

3 ♥: 5 plus Hearts.

3 ♠: 5 plus Spades.

3 NT: Denies 4 Hearts or 3 Spades.

## 12) General Stuff

After a 2/1 response to a 1 level bid, 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing sets up a game force. Otherwise, 4<sup>th</sup> suit isn't totally game forcing, but any sign of extras by either side will make it game forcing.

In Minor suit auctions, (i.e. where a Minor has been agreed), 4NT is not RKCB, which is what it usually is otherwise. There 4NT shows a bad bid of 5m while a direct bid of 5m is, although non-forcing, forward going.

## Extras:

It is possible to play 2/1 bids over 1♥/1♠ as forcing to 2NT, and this certainly can make some auctions a lot easier.

### ii) Competitive Bidding:

#### 1) After 1 Club:

Over 1 Club, double or simple overcall, the same raise structure (2♣ = 11 +4♣, etc.) is used, with new suit bids F1. Negative doubles are played, and 1♣-1♥-double is played by some as showing 4♠, and by others as denying 4 Spades. 1♣-double-redouble is for blood.

#### 2) After 1 Diamond:

Very similar to over 1 Club. All the same applies.

#### 3) After 1 Heart: After a simple overcall:

New suits are F1.

2NT = limit raise or better, 4 plus Hearts.

3 Hearts = preemptive.

3x (cuebid) = sound limit raise with only 3 Hearts.

Jumps in new suits are fit bids.

Double is negative, showing strength in unbid suits. Over 1♥ - 2♣/2♦ shows 4 Spades.

After a double:

1♠ = Spades, F1

1NT = Clubs; may be quite weak.

2♣ = Diamonds; may be quite weak.

2♦ = 3 Hearts, sound raise to 2 Heart or better.

2♥ = 3 Hearts.

2NT = 4 plus Hearts; limit raise of better.

2♥ = preemptive.

Jumps in new suits are fit bids.

#### 4) After 1 Spade: similar to over 1 Heart.

5) Defense to a Multi 2♦; something like ...

Double = 12-16 points, balanced, or a big hand. lebensohl applies after 2♦-double-pass/2♥/2♠.

2NT = 17-19 points, balanced.

Other bids are natural.

For more details on treatments in competitive auctions see *Partnership Bidding At Bridge* by Oliver Segal and Andrew Robson.