

This is a five-card major natural system. It is a relay system but the framework is natural and it can be played without relay continuations. Perhaps most importantly of all, this system is virtually convention free. It is directed at bidding the hand you hold. Logically, how is it possible to do better than that? The opening bids are natural and limited both in strength and in the shapes they may contain. The range of pass is 0-9 points. Whether you are locked in a part-score battle or searching for a key queen for that grand slam, you will outdo your standard-playing opponents consistently. You will know more about what is going on than they do.

Perhaps most importantly of all, the system enables you to find exact residual shape, without which really accurate slam bidding is impossible."

The system strong bid is 1NT. This is the opening bid for all 20+point hands. It will be seen that the single extra step, compared to the more common 2C, makes bidding simpler and more accurate. The 1NT opener can discover the exact shape and strength of any hand opposite including placement of all honour cards, sometimes down to jacks. This is particularly valuable when opener is very strong and responder very weak. 2C becomes free as a valuable natural bid.

The set of two-bids is unique. The bids are safe, simple, natural, accurate and space-consuming. Their shape resolution is easy for us, but opponents must enter into a dangerous bidding environment at an uncomfortably high level. The bids describe important classes of hand which are normally bundled into an opening one-bid. They show hands in the minimum opening-bid range, 10-14 points. The classes are; all the three-suiters, hands which contain a 4-card suit with a lower ranking longer one and 6+card club single-suiters. The fewer shapes any bid can contain, the simpler it is responding to it. Standard systems do not bid these important classes of hand well, their existence is ignored.

There is an underlying philosophy, we keep game and part-score bidding simple. We do not press for marginal games saving our science instead for where it counts, slam bidding. When we bid slams we usually know exactly where our tricks are coming from. We do not invite a limited hand to bid game. We bid it or get out at the lowest level possible. We do not voluntarily play 8-card fit part-scores at the three-level. We let our opponents take the risk pushing us there. Opponents will never know if the games we bid are marginal. Balancing becomes a very dangerous activity when we cannot be relied upon to announce a combined 23-25 points by inviting. The 2NT bid

is always forcing, many vital bidding problems are solved using it this way and no natural bid is sacrificed.

Standard point count is used with these adjuncts. Count one point for each card over four in a suit headed by an ace or a king. Open all 10 point hands and all hands containing AKQ, KKK or AA. The range of a one bid is 10-19 points often further broken down to 10-14 or 15-19 points. When the hand is balanced the system permits further strength-range resolution. Importantly, the range of pass is 0-9 points, and it will not contain two aces.

Table of opening bids in first or second position.

All one-level suit bids show 10-19 points.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1C | Balanced any strength, 4432, 4333 and 5332 with five clubs, or 15-19 points, not balanced, with clubs, 6+ clubs and no higher ranking suit or 5+clubs with a higher-ranking 4-card suit, three-suiter with clubs. The hand will not contain five cards in any suit outside clubs. The 10-14 point club hands are opened with a two-bid. See below. |
| 1D | No higher ranking 5+card suit. It is safe to treat the bid as showing five cards in low-level competition. It will be made on four only when 15-19 points and specifically 4441. The 10-14 point hand with this shape is opened 2D. |
| 1H/S | 5+card suit. A 1H opener will not have 5+spades. |
| 1NT | 20+points any shape |
| 2C | 10-14 points, 6+ clubs, no 4-card suit. Same over opposing 1C. |
| 2D | 10-14 points. Either 4-diamonds and 5+clubs or a three-suiter with both majors. Same over opposing 1C. |
| 2H/S | 10-14 points, 4-card suit with a 5+card minor or a three-suiter short in the other major. Same meaning when a jump-overcall at the two-level. |
| 2NT/3C | 10-14 points, 5+5+ two-suiter. 2NT shows diamonds and a major or both majors. 3C shows clubs and a major. These bids have the same meaning when used as jump-overcalls. |
| 3D/H | Transfer pre-empts. |

- 3S** Any solid suit. 4C asks for shortage, 4D for the suit.
- 3NT** Pre-empt in a minor.
- 4C/D** Very good pre-empt in H/S. Two or three of the top honours with an ace outside. Relay is for shortage, first step low or no shortage.
- 4H/S** Normal pre-empt
- 4NT** Specific ace Blackwood. 5NT shows the CA, 6C two aces.

Four-card suits are freely opened in third or fourth suit. Opener's rebid shows 14+points or extreme shape. Double of intervention is negative.

Early bidding after each of the opening bids.

There a relay response to each of the opening bids. In general this creates a game force, but after a minimum reply some sequences can be dropped. Double is the relay reply over intervention, new suits even at the one-level are not forcing, so responder should not bid a four-card suit at the one-level with a fit for partner. The 1NT rebid shows extra values, 14++ points.

After 1C

- 1D is the relay. Opener's first three steps show a balanced hand of, 10-12 points, 13-14 points or 15-17 points. Following the minimum reply, the partnership may settle in 1NT or two of a suit. The next five bids, one in each of the five denominations, are natural and strong. 2C shows a 15-19 point 6+card single-suiter, 2D, 2H and 2S show 15-19 points with 4-cards in the suit bid and 5+clubs, 2NT shows 18-19 points balanced. Next follow steps to describe strong three-suiters with a club suit. The steps show low shortage, middle shortage, high singleton, 0445, 0454 etc.
This structure is retained in the face of intervention. Pass is the first step and double or redouble the second. After the first three steps, bids in the five denominations follow with their natural meaning, then steps to describe the three-suiter.
- 1H and 1S replies are natural and not forcing. When made on a 4-card suit, the hand will not hold a longer lower ranking suit. See below.

- 1NT is balanced, 6-9 points, with no 4-card major and no 5-card suit, so 3343, 3334, 2344 and 3244. 2NT is a club slam try, asking responder to bid any suit lacking an A, K, or Q. 3NT denies one.
- 2C shows, one of the shapes immediately above, with 10-12 points. Lacking game values, opener passes but with two 4-card suits outside clubs, bids the lower ranking, correctable. 2NT is as above.
- 2D shows 5+ diamonds, 6-11 points, no 4-card major. Opener's 2H and 2S are natural, forcing.
- 2H and 2S show, 6-11 points, a 4-card suit, and a 5-card or longer minor. Opener can pass, bid 3C correctable to 3D or bid 2NT game forcing relay.
- 2NT shows 10-12 points, 5+clubs. Only 3C from opener can be passed.
- 3C is a pre-emptive raise

After 1D.

The relay reply is 2C, as it is to 1H and 1S, it will be dealt with in more detail below following the section **After 1H/S**. Opener rebids 2D on all 10-14 point hands. Responder can pass, continue in relay with 2H or make a natural, game-forcing, bid. A new suit will show 4-cards in the suit and 5+clubs. Responder's 2NT bid shows 4-hearts as 2H is the relay bid.

Other replies.

- 1H/S shows a 4+card suit but will not be made on a 4-card suit with a longer minor. A major suit response is (optionally) forcing, but not forcing opposite a passed hand or over intervention so responder should not introduce a four-card major with long diamonds. Over a diamond raise, a strong opener can introduce a major himself.
- 1NT may contain a 4-card major with longer clubs but not 4+diamonds. Now 2H or 2S from opener shows a 4-card suit and is forcing but not to game. 2NT from opener is game forcing, denying a 4-card major.
- 2D is a 6-9 point three-card raise, it does not deny a 4-card major.
- 2H/S/3C are mini-splinters, 4+card support, a singleton and 3 or 4 controls. Over opener's cheapest bid the first step shows 3 controls. The next step shows 4 controls with 0 or 2 control cards, ace or king, in the diamond suit. The hand is treated as a 4441, so control cards in the higher ranking unbid suit are shown next.
- 2NT is a 10-12 point balanced raise, with 4+diamonds. It does not deny a 4-card major. Only opener's 3D can be dropped.

- 3D is a pre-emptive raise.
- 3H/S/4C are maxi-splinters, 4+card support, 3 controls and a void.
- 3NT shows 4 controls and any void, over 4C, 4D shows the club void.

After 1H/S

This is all very similar to responding to 1D. Differences are noted below.

- The 1S reply to 1H will be made on 4-cards only when responder holds no fit and no longer suit.
- The 1NT reply to 1H does not deny four spades. Opener will introduce a 4-card spade suit with 15+. With support, 3S is stronger than 4S. Without 4-spades, responder retreats to a long minor or bids 2NT asking opener to show a 3-card minor or rebid a 6+card heart suit. With 4522 opener must rebid 3C.
- The 3S and 3NT maxi splinter replies to 1H are interchanged. So over 1H-3S, showing a void somewhere, opener can bid 3NT asking where.
- Opener's 2NT over 1NT asks responder to describe. Responder's 3C shows 4-cards in diamonds or hearts. Responder's 3NT shows no 4-card unbid red suit and by inference, long clubs.

The 2C reply to 1D/H/S

2C denies 5+cards in an unbid suit, see below. Opener rebids 2D with all 10-14 point hands. The bidding can subside when responder bids two of opener's suit which shows the 10-12 point 3-card raise. All other rebids show 15-19 points and are game forcing.

- A suit rebid shows 6+cards.
- A new suit shows 4-cards.
- A 2NT rebid shows 5332 shape with 15-19 points. Over 3C, opener's steps are 15-17 points, 18-19 points low doubleton etc.
- Steps after the fifth natural denomination, the 7th step and above, show 5+cards in whatever lower-ranking suits are possible, lowest ranking first. To stop at the highest ranking possible suit shows 5+5+ with low shortage.*

Following a 2D rebid, the other major, or 2H after a 1D opening, is the relay continuation. Opener's minimum rebid in each of the five denominations has the same shape meaning as above. The 2NT rebid now shows 10-14 points and over 3C relay, the steps are 10-12 points, 13-14 points low doubleton, etc.

The 1H or 1S opener who rebids 2D will not hold 5+cards in another suit, he will open 2NT or 3C with these hands. The minimum 1D opener may be 5+5+ in the minors. This begins to come out at 3S on the second round. A 10-14 point three-suiter is opened 2D, 2H or 2S.

*When the opening bid is 1D, opener's direct reply of 3H shows the strong three-suiter short in clubs. The strong 5+5+ minor two-suiter begins to come out next, at 3S. 3NT shows 1156 or 1165.

Further shape resolution, after opener has made a shape-showing rebid is explained below in the section **Finding residual shape**.

Other two over ones, 2D over 1H, 2D or 2H over 1S.

These are natural and game forcing showing a 5+card suit. Opener shows a holding in the other major ahead raising. Two-level new suit rebids show 5+4. Three-level new suit rebids show 5+5+. The cheapest bid over all of opener's suit rebids is relay with first step showing all 10-14 point hands. Opener's 2NT rebid will either be balanced or contain no 4-card suit biddable at the two-level. It is unlimited in strength. Responder's 3C reply to 2NT is a range-ask with these responses.

- Four card club suit. Responder with 4-diamonds can bid 3D over 2NT.
- 10-12 points
- 13-14 points
- 15-17 points
- 18-19 points

A non-jump suit rebid promises a 6+card suit, a jump rebid promises 3-card support as well. Further resolution of the single-suiter is described in the section **Finding residual shape**.

After 1NT, all 20+

When made directly the bids of 2H and higher are game forcing and show 6+points with 0-2 controls.

2C 0-5 points, no ace. Opener can continue in relay with 2D, responses are as 2H and onwards below. He can make any other bid, natural not forcing.

2D Full positive, 3+ controls. Responder is now captain. Opener replies to 2D as below.

- 2H Balanced. The first descriptive step is always used to show the balanced hands
- 2S 5+spades
- 2NT 5+hearts, replacing 2H, above
- 3C/D 5+card suit but not 5332. Over a relay, 2NT shows 4-cards in the relay suit, *iota*. No balanced shape is possible, so 2NT is not needed.
- 3H Three-suiter with both majors.
- 3S Three-suiter with hearts, 1444 etc.
- 3NT Three-suiter with spades, 4144 etc

Intervention over 1NT.

Responder must act, we play the hand or they play doubled. Pass, is full positive, cheapest bid shows balanced, minimum NT replaces the denomination used to show balanced. Double is penalty and is treated as showing a 5+card holding in the event that opener continues with a relay. A minimum bid in the opponent's suit shows a three-suiter containing it and the next bid show the three-suiter short in it. When opener passes intervention, full positive, opener's first step shows balanced. When responder shows shape, opener can continue with the cheapest bid, relay, or bid his hand, not forcing.

Simple example. See **Finding Residual Shape**, below.

♠AKQJ	♠87
♥A96	♥J2
♦AKJ	♦10875432
♣A74	♣Q5
1NT	2C (0-5 no ace)
2D (Shape demand)	3D (5+diamonds not balanced.)
3H	4D (Single suiter, 6+cards.)
4H (6D is safe)	5D (No 3-card suit, 7+diamonds.)
5H	6C (7222 with 1Q. 5NT would deny a Q and the next relay would be for jacks.)
6D (Last relay. Where?)	6H (Not in diamonds.)
7D	Pass

With a smaller diamond than the ♦J, or if partner shows ♦Q or a K we bid 7NT. It is nice to play the hand during the bidding.

After 2D.

The bid shows two quite different hand types, both in the 10-14 point range. The 12+ point relay reply is 2NT. The replies to 2NT are

- 3C showing 4-diamonds and 5+clubs. A further relay, 3D, asks for residual shape.
- 3D shows the major two-suiter with a club suit, so 4414 etc.
- 3H shows the first of the three-suiters with a diamond suit, 4441
- 3S 4450 etc.

Without game-going values the search is on for the best part-score. Responder's first priority is to show a 3+card major which opener will pass with the three-suiter with both majors. Without 3-cards in either major, responder retreats to a 6+card clubs suit. With neither responder will hold long diamonds, only four when precisely 2245. He must pass 2D.

When showing a major, responder should show the stronger of two 3-card majors, the 5+card major when 5+4 in the majors and the lower ranking of two 5+card majors. With the major two-suiter, opener will pass, but in correcting to clubs to show the minor oriented hand opener will use intermediate steps to show suitability for a major-suit contract. After a 2H reply, 2S shows 3-hearts and 2NT 3-spades, 3C shows poor tolerance for either major. After a 2S reply, 2NT shows 3 spades.

When regulations require an anchor suit, drop the 4414 from possible shapes. Open this hand 1C and show balanced over 1D relay.

After 2H/S

The strong reply is 2NT, these are the replies.

- 3C (first step after intervention) shows 5+clubs
- 3D shows 5+diamonds
- 3H shows the first of the three-suiters short in the other major, 1444 or 4144.
- 3S shows 4045 or 0445 etc.

After 2NT and 3C, and the cue-bid.

These bids cover all the 5+5+ shapes except both minors. It follows that when 1H/S opener shows a minimum hand, he will not hold 5+cards in another suit.

The cheapest reply is relay, strong and forcing, other replies are correctable. When opener has one major to show, he bids it. With two, after a 2NT opening, he bids 3D over 3C.

These bids have the same meaning when used as jump overcalls. When one of the possible suits is overcalled, they show specific two-suiters. The cue-bid overcall of a major shows the minor two-suiter. 2NT is relay.

Finding the residual shape, and thus the full shape, after a particular hand type has been shown.

Partner shows a balanced hand.

When a balanced hand is shown, with no suit known, the suit-showing replies to the relay are.

- NT Both minors
- Spades Spades one-suited or two-suited but not with hearts.
- Hearts Hearts one-suited or two-suited
- Diamonds Diamonds only
- Clubs Clubs only

When the fourth step reply is 3NT, after a 1C-1D; 2NT-3C or a pass of 3D on the captain's right, for example.

- 3D One minor. Over the relay clubs is first step. If partner passes 3D, relay, double shows this hand.
- 3H Hearts. Over 3S, relay, 3NT denies spades, 4C and 4D show both majors low doubleton, high doubleton. 4C over 3NT asks for a minor or if 3433. First step four clubs.
- 3S Spades, not hearts.
- 3NT Both minors.

Over intervention, when denominations are to be shown, pass shows the denomination below, double or redouble shows the last bid denominations.

With a single-suiter.

4333 and 5332 shapes

- Step 1 Low doubleton
- Step 2 Middle doubleton
- Step 3 High doubleton
- Step 4 4333 minimum controls rolling on

When a 5-card suit is not possible the shape is 4333 and the relay is for controls.

With a two-suiter.

- Step 1 Low doubleton, 4432

- Step 2 High doubleton, 4423 minimum controls rolling on.

Over intervention, when steps are required, pass is the first step, double or redouble the second.

Single-suiters.

A single-suiter is shown by opening 2C or by rebidding a suit. When a single-suiter has been shown, the next relay asks for 3-card suits. The denominations show.

- NT 3-3 in the suits of opposite rank to the long suit
- Clubs Clubs only
- Diamonds Diamonds only
- Hearts Hearts
- Spades Spades
- Long suit rebid Extreme single-suiter. A 7222 is by far the most likely shape. When asked, all the other shapes, which will contain an 8+card suit, are lumped together as the first step. The 7222, with minimum controls, is the second step, rolling on. A relay over the first step gets low shortage, middle shortage, high singleton, high void minimum controls. Improvise with say 9211. It is most unlikely that the opponents will be involved at this level except via double. We welcome this as it gives us two extra steps, pass and redouble.

When a 6+3 has been shown, further resolution is exactly as with a 5+4. See below. When a 6+3-3 has been shown, the relay first step response is singleton, second step void, minimum controls.

In auctions which begin with one of a major, a two over one bid in diamonds or hearts, and a rebid of the major, opener shows 6+cards without 3-card support, possibly 4-cards in a suit lower-ranking than responder's suit. When responder relays, his interest will be in what support opener does hold and shortages in the unbid suits. Over a relay, the first step will show all 10-14 points, then

- Two-card support. Over a relay, low shortage, no shortage, high singleton, high void 0-4 controls.
- No support, shortage, relay for it.
- No support, no shortage 0-4 controls rolling on.

Two-suiters.

The system separates the 5+5+ two-suiters from the 5+4 two-suiters.

When a specific 5+4 or 6+3 has been shown, and a further relay.

- Step 1 Low shortage
- Step 2 2-2
- Step 3 1-3
- Step 4 1-2
- Step 5 1-1 (1-1 is more common than a 2-0 or a 0-2)
- Step 6 0-2
- Step 7 0-1
- Step 8 0-0

After 5+5+ has been shown.

- Step 1 Low shortage
- Step 2 1-1
- Step 3 1-2
- Step 4 0-3
- Step 5 0-2
- Step 6 0-1
- Step 7 0-0

Three-suiters.

- When no suit is known, following a 1NT opening, first step after the five-denominations shows both majors, then hearts and both minors, spades and both minors rolling on.
- When an opponent bids a suit over a 1NT opening, the cue-bid shows the three-suiter containing the suit, then low shortage, middle shortage etc. The next higher bid shows the three-suiter short in the suit, the least described hand is shown first. When an opponent's bid shows no specific suit, or two suits, revert to the previous paragraph. Double shows 5+cards in the denomination bid, or balanced when the denomination bid is NT.
- When one suit is known, following a 1C opening, it is low shortage, middle shortage, high shortage, rolling on.
- When two suits are known, following a 2D, 2H or 2S opener, the lower ranking unknown suit is shown as first step.

Control base.

When 0-5 0Q, 1Q, 2Q, K, KQ with neither or both in the top suit.

When 6+	0K, 1K, 2K, A, but not in the top suit.
When 10-12	0-2 controls
1D/H/S- <u>2NT</u>	0-2 controls.
When 10-14	With a singleton or void, 0-2 controls. No shortage 0-3.
When 15-19	0-4 controls.
When 20+	5+ controls.

Intervention.

This is dealt with to some extent above, but, in general, double is relay or simply, positive, promising a game-going, or near game-going hand, of any shape. After a one over one beginning and intervention, a double is positive from both sides, new suits are not forcing. 1S over 1H and 1S or 1H over 1D is played as forcing when opener is a non-passed hand. Over intervention, a 1C opening or opposite a passed hand, new suits are not forcing. Double is negative only by a passed hand.

In contested auctions, this definition is used, "Double is for take-out until a denomination is agreed. Pass of partner's NT bid agrees NT." Double is penalty and passes are forcing once a game force has been established.

General.

It is system on all the time whether they open or we do. Double of an opening bid is used, only, to show shape, balanced or three-suiter. The cue-raise is used to show the 10-12 point 3-card raise and 2NT is used to show the 10-12 point balanced 4+card raise, always. Over all opponents' NT bids, any level, any meaning, double shows both majors or the unbid major, minimum bids in clubs and diamonds show the suit and a major, 4+4+. Double is positive after intervention over all our opening bids except 1NT, and when there is intervention over our intervention. 1NT as an overcall can be played the same way as the opening bid, but on balance it is probably better to play it to have the more traditional meaning with Stayman and natural non-forcing replies. (Put the opening bidder on lead!). Count is fundamental to relay, so play count leads, signals and discards, low from odd. The first discard is count in an unwanted suit.

You will not outbid this system using standard methods, and you won't forget it. It is simpler than most standard systems. Some standard players' system notes run to hundreds of pages.