

Bridge Lesson
Responding to the opening bid of 2NT

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Playing two club systems (e.g. Standard American or the 2/1 Game Force System), the opening bid of 2NT is used to show 20-21 HCP with a balanced hand and stoppers in all four suits.

Discuss the 20-21 range with your partner some use the range 20-22.

With 19 HCP and a 5-card suit you may also open 2NT. When opening 2NT with a 5-card major suit, many play Puppet or Muppet Stayman.

The distribution for 2NT opening bid is the same as opening a strong 15-17 notrump, namely 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 2-3-3-5 with length in a minor; however, some open hands that are 6-3-3-3 or 5-4-2-2, with a six or five card major.

If you open two clubs and rebid 2NT, it shows 22-24 HCP playing two club systems; the bid of 3NT shows 25-27 HCP; 4NT shows 28-30 HCP; and 5NT shows 31-33 HCP; etc.

Change ----To all ACBL Convention Charts

Effective Aug 1, 2016

Unbalanced 5-4-3-1, 6-3-3-1, and 4-4-4-1 hand patterns may be opened 2NT, provided the singleton is either an A, K, or Q with no more than one doubleton. So hands with two doubletons are not allowed. Also **Not allowed** are shapely 5-5-2-1 or 6-4-2-1 or 7-2-2-2 hands.

The change does not impact the one allowable exception of a partnership agreement where 1NT is treated as a 100% forcing opening bid (and not considered “natural”) with any distribution. The use of such a unbalanced, non-natural 1NT opening must be alerted.

The change also applies to strong 15-17/15-18 1NT overcalls.

When partner opens 2NT - What do you know?

- (1) He has 20-21 points.
- (2) He usually does not have a 5-card major; however, many open 2NT when 5=3 in the majors and use Muppet or Puppet Stayman.
- (3) If he has a singleton, it is usually an A or K and with no more than one doubleton; he does not have a shapely 5-5-2-1 or 6-4-2-1 or 7-2-2-2 hand.
- (4) He most often supports all of your suits with at least two cards. So, you can usually be sure of an 8-card fit, if you have any six card suit.

Not all 20-21 point hands with flat distribution are opened 2NT. Hands with 19+ points can sometimes be opened 2NT, and hands with 21 points may be opened in a suit, especially to avoid rebidding problems. If hands are “suit-oriented” or have other flaws, they can be opened in a suit rather than NT. You should think about possible rebids after opening 2NT versus opening one of a suit. DO NOT open hands 2NT that contain a worthless major doubleton.

Examples of 2NT Hands

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| ♠ KJ5 ♥ A1032 ♦ A5 ♣ AKJ4 | (20HCP) |
| ♠ KQ7 ♥ AKJ82 ♦ K52 ♣ K10 | (19HCP) |
| ♠ A54 ♥ AQ1083 ♦ AK54 ♣ A | (21HCP) |
| ♠ A94 ♥ AQJ10 ♦ KQJ10 ♣ K42 | (20HCP) |
| ♠ QJ7 ♥ A106 ♦ AKJ108 ♣ A7 | (19HCP with 5-card suit) |
| ♠ QJ7 ♥ AKJ108 ♦ A106 ♣ A7 | (19HCP with 5-card suit) |
| ♠ K7 ♥ KQ6 ♦ AK10 ♣ A10954 | (19HCP with 5-card suit) |

With the balanced 4=2=3=4 hand: ♠AK42 ♥102 ♦A65 ♣AKQ10 with 20-21 points and a major doubleton, open it 1♣ not 2NT.

You have bunched honors and not scattered honors or tenaces.

You have a natural 3♣ rebid.

With the worthless doubleton, notrump is not attractive.

You would like to play in 2♥, if partner has a weak hand.

If the opponents bid you would be happy with a club raise.

You would like a club lead if the opponents gain the contact.

Let's change the hand: ♠ KJ42 ♥K2 ♦AQ10 ♣AKJ9

Much better – a tenace rich hand and no worthless major doubleton, open 2NT!

What do you know about your combined points when your partner opens 2NT with 20-21 points?

By adding your points to your partners, you can tell if you should be in a part score below game, invite game, bid game, invite slam, or bid slam!

| <u>Responder</u> | <u>Point Count Guidelines</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 0-3 | Weak Hand - part score | 20-24 |
| 4-5 | Invitational Hand – Invite game | 24-26 |
| 6-11 | Game Invitational/Forcing Hand | 26-32 |
| 12+ | Slam Hand – Investigate slam | 33+ |

Game=26 (notrump); Slam=33+; Grand Slam=37+. Some believe 24/25 is enough for game!

To bid a part-score, game, or slam requires conventions or agreements when responding to the 2NT opening bid. In this lesson we will discuss and illustrate the following.

Jacoby Transfers

Jacoby Transfers with Super-Accept (SA) bids

Texas Transfers

Smolen Stayman with Transfers

Muppet Stayman (many use Puppet)

The 3♠* bid over 2NT and slam bids (with options)

Minor Suit Stayman (MSS)

Gerber, 1430-style Gerber (Expert Gerber), and Super Gerber

1430 RKC Gerber (RKCG), 1430 RKCB, and 1430 Minorwood

4NT Quantitative bids

Grand Slam Force

What do you do when they interfere?

Responding to 2NT with a Minimum Hand Jacoby Transfers

0–3 HCP without a 5-card major – PASS

0–3 HCP with a 5-card **major bid the suit** below the five card suit (a **Jacoby Transfer** – Mark on cc and announce)

Over 3♦/ 3♥ by responder, opener bids the next suit, 3♥/3♠. Responder then passes.

4+ HCP without a four card major (may have 5-card minor) – bid 3NT

4+ HCP with a four card major – bid 3♣ Stayman to try to find a 4-4 major fit (partner responds 3♦ without a 4-card major or 3NT with both. Responder then bids 3NT or 4 of the major).

4+ points with a 5-card major – bid the suit below the five card major (a Jacoby Transfer - announce).

Opener bids the next suit, 3♥ or 3♠. Responder bids 3NT with a five-card major suit (and opener can then judge accordingly), or bids 4 of the major with a six-card suit.

Jacoby Transfers over 2NT with Super-Accepts (SA) and 5+ points

When opening 1NT (15-17) super-accepts are sometimes used: the Bell Conventional bid of 2NT with 3-card support and a jump to 3M with 4-card support for Jacoby Transfer bids with a maximum of 17HCP.

Instead of SA bids being rare, as they are with the strong 1NT opening bid, they should be used more frequently when opening 2NT. Following the Bell convention, we have the super-accept GF single jump bids:

2NT - 3♦ - 3♠* = 21HCP with 3-card support for hearts

Responder bids 3NT=clubs, 4♣= diamonds, 4♦ (only hearts)

2NT - 3♥ - 3NT* = 21HCP with 3-card support for spades

Responder bids 4♣,4♦,4♥ (only spades)

*=alert

Opener returns to major or passes anything else accepts slam in the minor.

Jacoby Transfers over 2NT with Super-Accepts (SA) and 5+ points

What if you have 4-card support? Make double jump bid!

2NT – 3♦ - 3NT* = 21HCP with 4-card support for hearts

Responder bids 4♦ - retransfer to hearts weak - any other bid shows slam interest e.g. cue bid, 4NT, 5-level exclusion bid, etc.

2NT – 3♥ - 4♣* = 21HCP with 4-card support for spades

Responder 4♥ - retransfer to spades weak – any other bid shows slam interest e.g. cue bid, 4NT, 5-level exclusion bid, etc.

*=alert

With only 20 HCP, OPENER accepts partners Jacoby Transfer bid by bidding 3 of the appropriate major over 3♦ and 3♥!

Responding to 2NT with a Minimum Hand 4+ points

Texas Transfers are used to show hands with very long major suits worth a game contract (but not slam) after partner opens or overcalls a natural 1NT/2NT.

The theory behind Texas Transfers is much the same as that behind Jacoby Transfers: when one hand is stronger than the other, it is best for the strong hand to declare the contract for the purpose of high card concealment.

Playing Texas, the following responses apply:

4♦ At least 6 hearts and game values, partner to rebid 4♥.

4♥ At least 6 spades and game values, partner to rebid 4♠.

Announce 4-level bids as a transfer and mark on cc.

Smolen Stayman with Transfers and 4+ Points

3♣ asks for 4 card major (without Muppet/Puppet)

Opener's bids

3♦ shows no 4-card major

Responder bids

3♥* 5 spades & 4 hearts (alert)

3♠* 5 hearts & 4 spades (alert)

3NT to play

4♣ Transfer to diamonds

3♥/3♠ shows 4 (or 5) card major

3NT both 4-card majors

Responder bids

Pass to play

4♣ Transfer to diamonds

4♦ Transfer to hearts

4♥ Transfer to spades

3♦/3♥ Jacoby transfer to hearts and spades respectively

3♠* Transfer to clubs with a correction to diamonds

- 4♦ Texas Transfer to hearts with 6+ to play (announce)
- 4♥ Texas Transfer to spades with 6+ to play (announce)
- 3NT To play

Continuations after Three-Level Transfers

Opener should always accept the Jacoby transfer bids of 3♦/3♥ by bidding three hearts and three spades respectively with two or three card support for the major; a jump to the four level of the major shows four card support for the major.

Responder passes the transfer with a weak hand. There are three rebids by responder that indicate a hand of game going or slam value. The bids are 3NT, raising the transfer to game, transferring to spades the bidding 4♥ (5-4 in spades and hearts) and transferring to hearts and bidding spades to show a 5-5 hand in the majors.

A Jacoby transfer bids followed by 3NT asks the opening bidder to pass or correct to four of the major holding 3-card support.

Examples (Balanced Minimum Hand - Basics) – Responder bids

Partner opens 2NT – How do you respond?

R1: ♠Q763 ♥J763 ♦432 ♣32

Even though you are 4-4 in the majors with only 3HCP - Pass

R2: ♠98643 ♥108 ♦K32 ♣732

With 5 spades you must bid 3♥ as a Jacoby Transfer and pass partner's bid of 3♠.

R3: ♠Q98 ♥K108 ♦32 ♣J9732

You have 6HCP, bid 3NT.

Examples (Balanced Minimum Hand – Basics) – Responder bids

Partner opens 2NT – How do you respond?

R4: ♠Q763 ♥K763 ♦J32 ♣32

Bid 3♣ (Smolen Stayman) – with 6HCP. If partner bids a four card major, raise to 4 of the major. If partner bids 3♦ (no 4-card major), bid 3NT.

R5: ♠Q98763 ♥AJ6 ♦32 ♣32

Bid 4♥ - Texas transfer to 4♠ - No slam interest

R6: ♠76 ♥98762 ♦K32 ♣732

Bid 3♦ as a transfer to hearts even with 6, not enough points for a Texas transfer.

Examples (Balanced Minimum Hand – Basics) – Responder bids

Partner opens 2NT – How do you respond?

R7: ♠Q98763 ♥AJ7 ♦32 ♣52

Bid 4♥ (Texas transfer) and pass

R8: ♠76 ♥K8765 ♦K32 ♣732

Bid 3♦ and after 3♥ by opener bid 3NT. Allow opener to correct to 4♥.

R9: ♠ A1054 ♥ 4567 ♦ 67 ♣ J32

Bid 3♣ (Smolen Stayman) if partner responds 3♦ - bid 3♥* - shows 5=4 in the majors (Smolen).

Open 2NT with ♠ A54 ♥AQ1083 ♦AK54 ♣A - partner bids 3♥. Opener bids 3NT* (SA) to show 3-card support with 21 HCP. Responder bids 4♥ (no slam interest) and opener bids 4♠.

Popular conventions played by many bridge players when responding to the opening 2NT bid with 20-21 points are:

Jacoby Transfers

Texas Transfers

Smolen Stayman with Transfers

Most do not play SA bids over 2NT, but some play Smolen Stayman with Transfers while others play Puppet/Muppet Stayman.

We now review Muppet Stayman which replaces the Smolen Stayman bid of 3♣ (again the 3-club bid is NEVER alerted)

Your partnership has to decide on which convention you agree to play --- you cannot use both. How do you decide? If you open many 2NT hands with a 5-card major, it is best to play Muppet Stayman instead of Smolen Stayman with Transfers.

Opening 2NT with 20-21 HCP with a 6/5 card major and 4/5+ pts

When one opens 2NT, we have the following bidding sequences

- 3♣ Muppet Stayman, asks about majors (**NO ALERT**)
- 3♦ transfer to hearts (announce)
- 3♥ transfer to spades (announce)
- 3♠ transfer to 3NT (announce)
- 3NT 4=4=4=1 or 4=4=1=4, shortness in a minor invitational to slam
- 4♣ 5-5 in the minors with slam interest (some use Gerber)
- 4♦ transfer to hearts (announce)
- 4♥ transfer to spades (announce)
- 4♠ 2-3=4=4, 4-4 in the minors, slam try in a minor suit
- 4NT quantitative, probably with 4-3-3-3 distribution.

Many readers may not use Muppet (Modified Puppet) Stayman, but instead use Puppet Stayman. The advantage of Muppet over Puppet is that one may always find a fit in a major when responder is 5-4 in spades and hearts. This is not the case using Puppet Stayman.

Continuation after Muppet Stayman

The Muppet responses, with 3♥* and 3NT* are flipped (if you play Puppet):

| | |
|------|-----------------|
| 3♦* | no 5-card major |
| 3♥* | no 4-card major |
| 3♠* | five spades |
| 3NT* | five hearts |

While 3♣ is not alerted all responses are alerted

After 3♦* by opener (no 5-card major), the bidding is:

3♥* Responder bids the major he does not have (like Smolen). This sequence shows four spades and denies four hearts. Opener either bids spades or 3NT.

3♠* Responder bids the major he does not have. This sequence shows four hearts and denies four spades. Opener either bids hearts or 3NT.

4♣* Responder has both majors; it asks partner to pick the major.

4♦* Most partnerships play the bid of 4♦ to show slam interest, pick a slam. (Note: some switch these bids by agreement).

4NT Quantitative

If you have five hearts and four spades, **you do not need Muppet**; bid 2♦ (transfer) and then bid 2♠; opener can bid major game or 3NT.

After 3♥* by opener (no 4/5 card major), the bids are:

3♠* relay to 3NT

3NT* shows 5 spades (do you have 3?)

4♣/4♦ natural and forcing with 5+ cards in bid suit

4♥ 4=1=4=4 (shortness in hearts) with slam interest

4♠ 1=4=4=4 (shortness in spades with slam interest)

4NT Quantitative

After 3NT* by opener (5 hearts), the continuation bids are:

4♣/4♦ 5+ card suit, forcing

4♥ to play

4♠ 1430 RKCB kickback with hearts

4NT Quantitative

5♣ EKCB for hearts with void in bid suit, higher bids have the same meaning

After 3♠ by opener (five spades)

The bidding is similar to the responses after the bid of 3NT, except that 4♥ set spades in a forcing manner and 4♠ is to play. This eliminates the need for RKCB since opener will bid 4♠ over the heart relay and now RKCB is the bid of 4NT is employed.

We next consider a few examples.

Muppet --- Examples

Partner opens 2NT. What do you bid with the following hands?

♠ A1054 ♥ 4567 ♦ 67 ♣ J32

You have a weak hand 5HCP, bid 3♣ (Muppet), and if partner bids a major, support the major – raise the major; if opener bids 3♦ diamonds, bid 4♣ to ask partner to pick a major.

♠ AQ54 ♥ 456 ♦ 67 ♣ J1032

You want to find a 5-4 spade fit or a 5-3 heart fit. If partner responds 3NT* showing five hearts, you would next bid 4♦ as a transfer to hearts. If partner bids 3♠, you simply raise the bid to four.

Partner opens 2NT. What do you bid with the following hands?

♠ AK542 ♥ Q65 ♦ 67 ♣ 1032

You want to find your 5-3 spade fit or perhaps a 5-3 heart fit. If partner bids 3NT* finding the heart fit is no problem.

If partner bids 3♥* (showing no four- or five-card major, but may have a 3-card spade suit), responder next bids 3♠ to show that he is 5-3/4 in spades and hearts. Opener with only three spades would next bid four spades.

If responder is 5-5 in the majors, over 3NT* by opener he may bid 4♥ to show his 5-5 shape.

♠ AK5 ♥ Q6542 ♦ 67 ♣ 1032

If partner bids 3♥ (no 4-card major) bid next 3NT (do you have 3 spades?) If not pass.

Note: Using Puppet Stayman, the 5-3 spade fit could be found and using Jacoby Transfers one would lose the 5-3 heart fit; Muppet Stayman finds both fits.

What do you do if you are 5-4 in spades and hearts?

For example, you have the hand: ♠ AK542 ♥ K653 ♦ 67 ♣ 103

Using Muppet Stayman, bid 3♣, if partner bids 3NT, you can pass or bid 4♦ as a transfer to hearts; if opener bids 3♥, then bid 3NT= 5 spades.

If you have five hearts and four spades, you do not need Muppet, transfer to hearts and bid spades.

What do you bid after 2NT?

♠ J1032 ♥ AK9876 ♦ 53 ♣ 7

Use Muppet Stayman and bid 3♣; after the bids 3♦/3♥/3♠, use the extended transfer bid of 4♦* to show your 6-4 distribution.

What if opener bids 3NT*? You have a great heart fit (eleven hearts).

Bid five hearts which invites six; partner's values are outside of hearts.

SUMMARY

Muppet Stayman is simple Puppet stayman but with opener's 3NT and 3♥ bids reversed (3NT shows five hearts; 3♥ denies a 4+ majors). This allows Responder, over 3♥, to bid 3NT to show 5♠/4♥, an otherwise unbiddable shape below 3NT when playing Puppet.

So, suppose you have 5♠/4♥ and partner bids 3♦. You have both majors, but they are imbalanced 5-4 so bid 3NT to show five spades and four hearts. Or bid 3♠ to show five hearts and four spades.

Now, suppose that you have 5-5 in the majors. Muppet still works. If partner has a 4-card major, nothing can go wrong. If he has a 5-card major, wow. If you hear 3♥, bid 3NT to show 5♠ or 3/4♥. If opener declines (3NT), you can bid 4♥ to complete the picture.

Continuations after Three-Level bid of 3♠* and 6+ Points

Some play this as a transfer to a clubs with a correction to diamonds, other prefer Minor Suit Stayman (MSS) with slam interest in a minor and others use it as a relay to 3NT. Partnership agreement and you **MUST ALERT** the bid--- **DO NOT SAY TRANSFER!**

With both minors 4-4/5-5/5-4, I recommend that it be a relay to 3NT. Responder with a minimum will pass and with more bid 4♣ as Gerber.

With slam interest in a minor and a distributional hand, responder will **not bid 3♠***, but instead bid 4♣/4♦ as Minorwood.

4♣ -one suited ♣ slam invitation or better

4♦ - one suited ♦ slam invitation or better

4♥ - shortness in ♥, nominally 5-4 in the minors with 3 ♠ but may be 5-5

4♠ - shortness in ♠, nominally 5-4 in the minors with 3 ♥ but may be 5-5

4NT - 2-2 in the Majors with 5-4 in the minors. This is limited and can be passed.

Minorwood

When the agreed upon suit is a minor, the use of 4NT as a keycard ask will often get the responses too high. To avoid this problem, one uses Minorwood.

Again one can use 1430 or 3014 Minorwood so be careful when using the Minorwood Convention. Ask your partner what they play. Again I recommend the 1430 version because the strong hand asks most often.

There are many variations of the Minorwood convention, so it is best to review the bids with a new partner --- what follows is what I use with my partners.

Minorwood (1430 Recommended) – Clubs agreed

Keycard Ask is 4♣

Responses

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 4♦ | 1/4 keycards (the 14 step) | 1 st step |
| 4♥ | 3/0 keycards (the 30 step) | 2 nd step |
| 4♠ | 2 /5 keycards w/o queen | 3 rd step |
| 4NT | 2/5 keycards with queen | 4 th step |
| 5♣ | To PLAY | |

Voids

5NT = an even number of keycards (2/4) with a void (with 0, bid 5♣ -- ignore the void)

5♦/5♥/5♠ void with an odd number of keycards (1 or 3)

Minorwood (1430 Recommended) – Diamonds agreed

Keycard Ask 4♦

Responses

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 4♥ | 1/4 keycards (the 14 step) | 1 st step |
| 4♠ | 3/0 keycards (the 30 step) | 2 nd step |
| 4NT | 2/5 keycards w/o queen | 3 rd step |
| 5♣ | 2/5 keycards with queen | 4 th step |
| 5♦ | To PLAY | |

Voids

5NT = an even number of keycards (2/4) with a void (with 0, bid 5♦ -- ignore the void)

5♥/5♠/6♣ void with an odd number of keycards (1 or 3)

Minorwood Queen Ask*

Over 4♣

4♥/4♠ are the Queen Asks bids
(next steps over 1/4 or 0/3).

Over 4♦

4♠/4NT are the Queen Ask bids
(next steps over 1/4 or 0/3).

Minorwood - Queen Ask Responses*

The simple responses to any Minorwood Queen ask bid are:

(1) No Queen bid the agreed upon minor suit at the 5-level (5♣/5♦).

(2) With the Queen bid 5NT.

(3) With the Queen and a lower/higher king bid 6♣.

(4) With Queen and higher ranking king bid 6NT.

More complicated responses have been developed depending on the asking bid which involve steps, the above works best and requires less memorization.

***Over the first-step bids of 4♥ or 4♠, the 1/4 responses, the bid of 4NT by your partner is usually to play.**

Minorwood King Specific King Ask (SKA)

With all the Keycards, one may ask for specific Kings.

The SKA bid is **one level HIGHER** than the agreed upon Minor suit.

The SKA* bids are next step 5-level bids:

5♦ (clubs agreed)

5♥ (diamonds agreed)

Responses are:

(1) The bid of 5NT denies any kings.

(2) With two kings, bid the cheapest at the 6-level (below the agreed upon trump suit 6♣ for diamonds); if the second king is of higher rank, bid 6NT.

(3) With three kings, bid 7NT.

* Some use 5NT as the SKA – Discuss this with your partner and others use # of kings.

The Gerber Convention (Modern Version) - Overview

After 2NT, the bid of 4♣ is known as the Gerber Convention.

When using Gerber, remember that you should not use the convention if (1) you have a void, (2) you have worthless doubletons (e.g. Qx, Jx, xx) in an unbid suit, and (3) if you need to know if partner has controls in a specific suit.

The responses to the 4♣ (Gerber) are:

| | |
|-----|----------|
| 4♦ | 0/4 aces |
| 4♥ | 1 ace |
| 4♠ | 2 aces |
| 4NT | 3 aces |

Having all the aces, you may next ask for the number of kings by bidding

5♣ (number of kings asking bid). The responses are:

| | |
|-----|-----------|
| 5♦ | 0/4 kings |
| 5♥ | 1 king |
| 5♠ | 2 kings |
| 5NT | 3 kings |

In the July 2016 issue of the “**Bridge Bulletin**”, Marty Bergen in his article Gerber part 6, discusses “How experts view Gerber”. He states “Many players would be better off had they never heard of Gerber”.

He also discusses for example "Asking for Aces after 3NT", 1430-style Gerber (Expert Gerber), and jumps to 5♣ as Super Gerber (or Higher Gerber) to ask for aces after 3NT.

1430 – Style Gerber Convention – (Overview)

After 1NT/2NT, the bid of 4♣ may be the 1430 Style Gerber (Expert Gerber) Convention - you must play Gerber or the Expert Gerber by agreement.

When using Expert Gerber, remember that you should also not use the convention if (1) you have a void, (2) you have worthless doubletons (e.g. Qx, Jx, xx) in an unbid suit, and (3) if you need to know if partner has controls in a specific suit.

The responses to the Expert Gerber bid of 4♣ are:

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 4♦ | 1/4 aces |
| 4♥ | 0/3 ace |
| 4♠ | 2 aces with minimum hand |
| 4NT | 2 aces with maximum hand |

The king asking bid remains 5♣.

Partner opens 2NT, what do you bid?

♠ AKJ2 ♥ KQ53 ♦ K7 ♣ 1032

You have fifteen Starting Points. You are in the slam zone for a major or notrump. But suppose you hear the response 3♦*. You have two options: four clubs or four diamonds.

If you bid 4♦, it allows opener to pick the slam (perhaps notrump). The bid of 4♣ asks partner to pick a major and is invitational to slam.

It is NOT Gerber, instead one uses super Gerber, the bid of 5♣. See the **July 2016 “Bridge Bulletin” Page 56 --Better Bidding with Bergen – Gerber part 6.**

With a marginal hand, say only eleven Starting Points, you would definitely make the bid of four clubs since you need to know how the hands fit.

What do you bid after 2NT?

♠ 1032 ♥ 67 ♦ KQ53 ♣ AK1032

You have nice diamonds and clubs. The bid of 3NT does not describe your hand, partner may pass. Bid 3♠* for minor slam, if partner bids 3NT, you would jump to 6NT.

If partner bids 4♣, you have options 4NT/5♣ (1430/Super Gerber).

♠ 1032 ♥ AK9876 ♦ 53 ♣ 32

You have a weak hand with a six-card heart suit. Bid 4♦* as Texas transfer to your heart; you have no interest in slam. Fast arrival principle. What if you had one more spade? See the next example.

What do you bid after 2NT?

♠ 7 ♥ 7 ♦ AJ1032 ♣ AK9876

Bid 3♠* with both minors and 12 HCP. After partner bids 3NT, bid 4♣ as Gerber.

If you have a single minor:

♠ AJ7 ♥ 7 ♦ 1032 ♣ AK9876

Bid 4♣ as 1430 Minorwood for clubs.

♠ 93 ♥ 10 ♦ AQ7432 ♣ A1096

Bid 4♦ as 1430 Minorwood for diamonds.

Alternative 3♠* bidding convention with and 6+ Points

With slam interest in a minor and a distributional hand, responder will not bid 3♠, but instead bid 4♣/4♦ as invitational bids NOT Minorwood.

4♣ - Slam invite or better 5♣ 4+♦ or 5-5/6-5

4♦ - Slam invite or better 5♦ 4+♣ or 5-5/6-5

4♥ - ♣ slam try

4♠ - ♦ slam try

4NT = Blackwood.

Some play Crosswood, this reverses the 4♣ and 4♦ bids to keep the big hand as declarer.

Responding to 2NT with both Minors (Other options for slam in a Minor using the 3♠* bid)

Option A

Opener

2NT (20-21)

4♣ (I like clubs)

or

4♦ (I like diamonds)

Responder

3♠* (4-4/5-5/5-4 cards in
Minors with Slam interest)

4♦ (Minorwood for clubs
bid other Minor)

4♥ (Minorwood for diamonds)

Option B

Opener

2NT (20-21)

4♥/4♠ (I like clubs/diamonds

And Keycard bid for minor)
clubs/

Responder

3♠* (4-4/5-5/5-4 cards in
Minors with Slam interest)

Responds keycards for
diamonds

There are other options for the bid of 3-spades which some partnership use; see Patty Tucker (2014) “Three Spades over 2NT” An Honors eBooklet from Master Point Press.

Many partnerships use Minor Suit Stayman over the **3♠** bid!

Minor Suit Stayman (MSS) over 2NT - 3♠

- 3NT Opener does not hold a 4-card Minor suit.
- 4♣ Opener promises a 4-card Club suit.
- 4♦ Opener promises a 4-card Diamond suit.
- 4♥ Opener signals slam interest in the Club suit or Notrump.
Promises maximum values and at least a 5-card Club suit.
- 4♠ Opener signals slam interest in the Diamond suit or Notrump.
Promises maximum values and at least a 5-card Diamond suit.

1430 Roman Keycard Gerber (RKCG) - Overview

When is 4♣ asking for aces (Gerber/Expert Gerber)? When is 4NT asking for aces or 1430 RKCB? When is 4♣ a cue bid, a splinter, or invitational to slam? When is 4NT quantitative? What is 4♣ after a transfer or Stayman or 3NT?

These are all questions partnerships must discuss. In general, many tend to agree to play Gerber over 1NT and 2NT. That means if one **opens** 1NT or 2NT, however; some even play it over any first and last NT bid (e.g. 3NT while others play Super Gerber or use it as a slam try, for example 1NT-2NT; 3NT – 4♣=slam try and 5♣=Super Gerber – Ace asking bid).

When is 4♣ 1430 Roman Keycard Gerber (RKCG)?

In general, RKCG is played when one has agreed upon a major suit follows bids of 1NT/2NT. With a minor, Minorwood is used.

The responses to the bid **4♣ 1430 RKCG Convention** are:

Responses to **4♣ RKCG**

- 4♦ 1/4 keycards
- 4♥ 0/3 keycards
- 4♠ 2/5 keycards without the queen
- 4NT 2/5 keycards with the queen

To show a void with two or four keycards, bid 5NT; with an odd number of keycards, bid the void at the six-level. Over voids – next step may be used as Specific King Ask (SKA) outside of trump suit.

Queen ask -- 4♥/4♠ - Next step over 4♦/4♥

4♠ = SSA (Specific Suit Ask) over 4♦/4♥

4NT = to play

5♣ = Number of Kings

Quantitative 4NT Bid – (Overview)

After partner's 2NT bid, a raise to 4NT is invitational, asking partner to bid 6NT or pass. It works in the same way that 1NT-2NT invites partner to game.

Invite to 6NT

Use the quantitative 4NT bid when you have a strong balanced hand and you're not sure if your combined strength is enough for 6NT. Typically you need 33 HCP to bid 6NT when you don't have long suits to give you extra tricks. If you know you have 33 points between the two hands you can just bid 6NT, but if you are close to 33, you can use the quantitative 4NT. Partner will either pass with a minimum opener or bid 6NT with a good opener.

Grand Slam Force after 2NT – Is the bid of 5NT also called “Josephine”. It is used after a notrump opening or after one has agreed upon a suit (with an agreed suit it is asking for the number of honors in the trump suit). To use the bid responder should have 16HCP.

If opener is at the top of his bid, 21 HCP, he bids 7NT; otherwise he bids 6NT.

Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) Convention – 1430

When using the RKCB Convention, there are now five keycards, the four aces, and the king of trump. Another keycard is the queen of trump. If you do not use kickback (to be explained later), the 1430 RKCB ask is again 4NT. The responses are:

- 5♣ 1 or 4 keycards (the 14 step)
- 5♦ 3 or 0 keycards (the 03 step)
- 5♥ 2 (or 5) keycards w/o the queen of trump in the agreed upon suit
- 5♠ 2 (or 5) keycards with the queen of trump in the agreed upon suit

When one responds five clubs or five diamonds, the queen ask may be needed. After the response of five clubs, the bid of 5♦ is the queen ask (**when hearts or spades are the agreed upon trump suit**). After the bid of five diamonds, the bid of 5♥ is the queen asks.

Queen Ask

After five clubs and five diamonds, the queen asks are: 5♦ and 5♥ (the next step bids).

Responding to the 5♦ Queen ask – (next step)

- (1) If you do not hold the queen, responder returns to the agreed upon suit at the five- level (5♥/5♠).**
- (2) 5NT shows the queen, but no outside king!**
- (3) With both (Q of trump and one or two kings), bid at the six-level of the lowest ranking king.**

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Responses are:

(1) Return to the agreed upon trump suit at the six-level denies any kings.

(2) With two kings, bid the cheapest at the six-level (below agreed upon trump suit); if the second king is of higher rank, bid 6NT.

(3) With three kings, bid 7NT.

To find a second king below the trump suit, bid the suit. Without the second king, responder bids the trump suit at the six-level. With the king, jump to 7 in the agreed suit.

King Ask

Knowing you hold all the aces and king-queen of trump,
5NT is the specific king's ask!

The specific kings ask is needed for a grand slam try in the **agreed upon suit or notrump**; it tells partner that we have all the key cards.

(Note that the king ask is not used if you used the Queen ask)

In addition, some partnerships do not require all the Key cards with the Queen when making the bid of 5NT --- this practice is not recommended.

Responding to the 5♥ Queen ask (next step)

- (1) If you do not hold the queen, pass.
- (2) With the queen, bid 5NT.
- (3) With the queen and a king in the lower ranking suit, bid the suit at the sixth level (e.g. 6♣/6♦/6♥).
- (4) If you have the Queen and a higher ranking king, return to the six-level of the agreed upon suit, 6♥/6♠.

(Note how high your responses get --- for this reason many only play Queen Asks for the majors --- for the minors one may use kickback or minorwood)

Playing 1430 RKCB, the standard is to use the specific king ask; however, some still may play the number of kings from “Blackwood” excluding the trump suit

YOU BETTER ASK your partner.

Slam Bidding Examples over 2NT

O: ♠ A75 ♥ AQ54 ♦ AK76 ♣ K3

R: ♠ K82 ♥ K1072 ♦ Q82 ♣ AQ10

O

2NT (20HCP)

3♦* (no 5-card but 4-card Major)

4♥ (have 4-hearts)

5♦ (0/3 keycards)

6♦ (yes and K♦)

Pass

R

3♣ (Muppet – 14HCP)

3♠* (have 4 hearts)

4NT (1430 hearts)

5♥ (Queen ASK – next step)

6♥

Pass

In this example – 5♥ Queen ask bid is risky – some may pass!

Better to use 4♠ as kickback for hearts. But, more to remember.

O: ♠ K54 ♥ AQ4 ♦ AKJ6 ♣ A75

R: ♠ AQJ103 ♥ K2 ♦ 82 ♣ K1064

| O | R |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2NT (21HCP) | 3♥ (Jacoby Transfer) |
| 3NT* (max with 3 spades) | 4NT (1430 for spades) |
| 5♣ (1/4) | 5NT (SKA) |
| 6♦ (Diamond King) | 6NT |
| Pass | Pass |

In this example responder has 13 HCP or 15 starting Points and 16 Bergen points!

If you do not play SA Jacoby Transfers, you may be in 6♠!

O: ♠ AK2 ♥ A74 ♦ AKQ5 ♣ J75

R: ♠ Q3 ♥ K2 ♦ J982 ♣ AKQ64

O

2NT (21HCP)

7NT

R

5NT (Quantitative)

Pass

Responder has 15HCP and a great club suit; but 16 starting points. Some may use Gerber/Expert Gerber and finding 3 aces and only bid 6NT.

O: ♠ KQJ75 ♥ A5 ♦ AK5 ♣ K75

R: ♠ A2 ♥ K762 ♦ Q82 ♣ AQ64

O

2NT (20HCP)

4♠

5♦ (0/3)

6♣ (yes and club King)

7♠

R

3♣ (Muppet)

4NT (1430)

5♥ (Queen Ask)

6♦ (Second King ask)

7NT

Do not use Quantitative here with a 4-card major!

O: ♠ AQ72 ♥ AQ4 ♦ AJ875 ♣ K5

R: ♠ KJ106 ♥ AKJ2 ♦ J ♣ Q108

5♦ (0/3)

6♣ (yes and club king)

5♥ (Queen ask)

6♠

Responder has 15HCP and a great club suit; but 16 starting points.

Some may use Gerber/Expert Gerber and finding 3 aces and only bid 6NT.

O: ♠ AQ5 ♥ KQJ10 ♦ AJ ♣ KJ985

R: ♠ K76 ♥ 862 ♦ KQ762 ♣ A2

O

2NT (20HCP)

3♥* (5 hearts)

4NT

5♥

R

3♣ (Muppet)

4♥

5♣ (1/4)

all pass

O: ♠AK62 ♥A7 ♦AKQ5 ♣J75

R: ♠QJ1053 ♥ void ♦J98 ♣AKQ64

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| O | R |
| 2NT (21HCP) | 3♥ (Jacoby Transfer) |
| 4♣* (SA with 21HCP & 4♠) | 5♣ (cue bid) |
| 5♦ (cue bid) | 5♥ (cue bid) |
| 6♠ | 7♠ |
| 7NT | All Pass |

Without the SA Jacoby Transfer bid, it may go:

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| O | R |
| 2NT (21HCP) | 3♥ (Jacoby Transfer) |
| 3♠ | 4♣ (cue bid) |
| 4♦ (cue bid) | 4♥ (cue bid) |
| 4NT | 6♥ (1/3 Keycards with a void) |
| 6♠ | 7♠ |
| All Pass | |

Some may also bid 7NT in the second sequence; but the void response may preclude the bid of 7NT in the second sequence.

What if They Interfere – What do you bid?

There are many options Stolen Bids, Lebensohl, Rubinsohl/Rubensohl also called Transfer Lebensohl, and Rumpelsohl, to name a few.

Because Lebensohl is similar to the “stolen bid” method used by many of our members, we will use it; systems are on over X & **2♣** (mark cc).

Over a 2NT – X* = penalty If Responder Passes* (alert) = escape sequence is initiated: 2NT – X – pass* (responder). Partner must **alert the pass** and XX (re-double) if the opponents pass or bid a 5-card suit! If the opponent bids, the 2NT opener may pass or X for penalty. If Responder does not Pass* – responder are bids their best 5+ card suit or 4-card suits up-the-line. These bids are not part of Lebensohl and some use the XX (re-double) to start the escape bidding sequence (discussion with partner is necessary).

If the X is artificial - ignore it and even if the bid is **an unknown one-suited or natural** then X=Stayman (stolen bid).

BRIEFLY Lebensohl (Leb) BIDS over NT interference are:

Double is penalty

or (**Card showing “Negative Double” by agreement not part of Leb**)

Three-level bids are to play.

Four-level bids are forcing to game.

2NT is artificial, forcing opener to bid three clubs.

An immediate cue-bid by responder of a NATURAL BID is **Stayman**
(**2NT - 3♣ - X = Stayman; 2NT - 3♦ - 4♦ = Stayman, etc.**).

A direct jump to 3NT denies a stopper.

3NT followed by a cue-bid of the enemy suit after opener's forced club relay bid is **Stayman**.

Much of the material presented in this lesson is in my book:

Neil H. Timm (2016) “Two-Over-One Game Force System - For Beginners and Intermediate Players, The Final Word with Chapters on Precision”, Fifth Edition. Trafford Publishing. Available on Amazon.com – search on neil timm under books

Patty Tucker (2014) “Three Spades over 2NT” An Honors eBooklet from Master Point Press.

For more on slam bidding go to: www.bridgewebs.com/ocala and click on Lessons. You may also want to review Timm’s Bridge Bits, also on the site!

References from my Intermediate Slam Slam Bidding Lesson on the Ocala Web site.

(1) Irwin S. Landow (2009) “Win Bridge Tournaments with Innovative Slam Bidding”

(2) Eddie Kantar (2008) “Roman Keycard Blackwood – The Final Word”

(3) Ron Klinger (2001) “Cue-Bidding to Slams”

(4) Ken Rexford (2006) “Cuebidding at Bridge”

(5) Patty Tucker (2014) “Slam Bidding Conventions”

**(6) Krzystof Martens (2014) “Professional Slam Bidding”
Part 1 and Part 2**

**(7) Allan DeSerpa (2014) “SIXPACK - Adventures with
Keycards and Queecards”**