

Bridge Lesson
Interfering Over Strong and Weak
Notrump

The Villages Duplicate Bridge Club

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October 16, 2018

Introduction

Playing the 2/1 Game Force System, the strong notrump range is most often either (15-17 or 14-16). In general, any range that includes 15 the ACBL considers it a strong notrump range.

The weak notrump range is 12-14 and the “Kamikaze” mini range is 10-12. The average number of points for each of these ranges are 15/16, 13 and 11, respectively. Assuming partner has on average 9 HCP, one can expect about 8+, 7+ and 6+ tricks for each of these ranges. Thus, if on average your partnership can take 6,7, or 8 tricks for each of the ranges, strong, weak, and mini, you want to interfere/ compete over the notrump bid.

Overview

When competing/interfering over strong NT your system should be destructive and aggressive; however, over weak notrump it should be aggressive and constructive!

In this lesson we will review conventions for competing/interfering against both strong and weak notrump bids.

And finally we will discuss a few conventions one may use against the strong club bid when the opener has 16+/17+HCP.

Outline

- Interference over Strong 1NT bids
Opener has 15-17/14-16 HCP
- Interference over Weak 1NT bids
Opener has 10-12/12-14 HCP
- Interference over the Strong 1♣ bid
Opener has 16/17+HCP (unbalanced/balanced)

Losing Trick Count

- Assume you are playing in a suit contract where you have an agreed upon trump suit (usually an 8-card fit).
- 1. You count losers only for the first three cards in a suit. Why?
- Because you assume that excess cards are winners with “normal” breaks in the trump suit and that excess cards in other suits can be ruffed.
- 2. In a 3-card suit A-K-Q are winners and anything lower is a loser.
- 3. For a doubleton, A/K are winners; and, anything lower is a loser.
Exception A-Q=1/2 loser or 1 ½ winners.
- 4. For a singleton , count the Ace as a winner and anything lower as a loser.

Estimating Losers

- xxx, Jxx = 3 losers
- Qxx, Qxxx = 2.5 losers (or simply=2)
- Axx, AJx, KJx, Kxx, = 2 losers.
- QJx, Q10x, Qxxx, QJ, Qx, Jx, xx = 2 losers
- AQx, AQx, AJ10, KQx, KJ10, Q = 1
- AKx, AQJ, KQ, Kx, K, Q, J, x = 1 loser
- AQ = 0.5 losers
- AK, AKQ,void = 0 losers
- You do not count more than 3 losers per suit. For example, xxxxx is only 3 losers, not 5!

EXAMPLES Of LTC Hands

Hand	Losers	Hand	Losers	Hand	Losers
♠ KJ52	= 2	♠ QJ63	=2	♠ A98632	=2
♥ AJ864	= 2	♥ AKQ2	=0	♥ AQ986	=1
♦ 82	= 2	♦ 97	=2	♦ K2	=1
♣ K8	<u>= 1</u>	♣ A32	<u>=2</u>	♣ void	<u>=0</u>
12 points	7	16 points	6	13points	4

As the points increase the losers usually decrease.

The more unbalanced the hand, the fewer the losers.

Very bad hand – 9 Losers (Less than 9 HCP).

Just Less than an Opening Hand --- 8 Losers on average (9-11 HCP)

On average hands with 12-14 HCP = 7 losers (opening hand)

On average hands with 15-17 HCP = 6 losers (strong 1NT hands)

On average hands with 18-21 HCP = 5 losers (strong suit hands/2NT)

On average hands with 22+ HCP = 4 or less losers (2♣ hand)

Interference over strong notrump bid

When the opponents open a strong notrump, Mel Colchamiro's Rules of 8 and 2, based on average expected tricks are often used.

Rule of 8 says you need a minimum of 6 HCP. After adding the number of cards in your two longest suits and subtracting the number of losing trick count (LTC) the number must be 2 or more to compete/interfere over the strong NT bid. Note that $6+2=8$.

Rule of 2, used in the **balancing**, says if you have at least two shortness points, independent of HCP – then compete/interfere over notrump.

Do not bid with flat hands: 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2, and 4-3-3-3 shapes are defensive shapes. Don't overcall on those shape regardless of strength.

Judgment

Having applied the rule with judgment, what convention should you employ? The one you remember!

More seriously - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, shows 85+ different systems developed to interfere over strong Notrump bids (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_defenses_to_1NT).

The most used “Interference over strong notrump conventions” by players in the United States are Natural bids, Landy, DONT (Disturbing Over No-Trump), Cappelletti called Hamilton on the West coast, and Meckwell.

These are most often played in both the DIRECT Seat and the BALANCING Seat; however, discuss this with your partner.

Others common conventions played in specific regions within the U.S include Astro, Brozel, Multi-Landy, Woolsey, and Hello.

DONT (Marty Bergen)

Double – shows any single suit (**6 or more cards**); partner bids 2♣*, after which over-caller corrects to his actual suit

2♣*, 2♦*, 2♥* – shows the bid suit and any higher-ranking suit (usually 5-5); advancer bids next cheapest suit to find higher ranking suit

2♠ – shows spades (6 or more cards)

There is disagreement as to the use of the 2♠ bid. Some treat it as weaker than the sequence of a double followed by 2♠; others play it as showing a solid spade suit, and there are other agreements possible.

Finally, many have added to the original convention that 2NT* is for the 5-5 in minors

***=ALERT (Natural bids are not alerted)**

Problems with DONT

All 2-suited overcalls nominally promise good 5-4 or 5-5 greater distribution.

The 2M bid makes it impossible to choose a major effectively with equal length in the majors.

If you play bridge at a high level, you will have seen the proliferation of the comic NT opening in recent years.

The “comic” NT is a 1NT opening on a hand worth a 2-level or 3-level preempt.

This psychic bid aims to exploit the fact that so many players have given up the penalty double of 1NT.

Cappelletti (Mike Cappelletti)

- Double – PENALTY* (**Some play it as take-out – discuss with your partner**)
- 2 ♣* shows a one-suited hand (**6 or more cards**). Partner is expected to:
 - bid 2♦* with a weak hand, which the over caller can correct to his long suit, or
 - bid 2 of a Major if he has a good 5 or 6 card suit, or
 - bid 2NT* with a strong hand, (over caller bids the suit)
- 2♦* shows both majors (usually 5-5 – some play it 5-4)
- 2♥* shows hearts and a minor (usually 5-5 – some play it 5-4)
- 2♠* shows spades and a minor (usually 5-5 – some play it 5-4)
- 2NT* shows both minors at least 5-5
-
- Observe that these conventions are geared toward two suited hands; however because one-suited hands are more common they have been modified.
- *=ALERT (**Note that natural bids are not alerted**)

Problems with Cappelletti

Although very popular, this NT defense has multiple problems:

2♦* to show both majors makes it impossible to always get to your best major fit. e.g., you are 3-3 in the majors and the auction begins: (1NT)-2♦* (P)-? you must guess whether over caller is 4-5 or 5-4 in the majors.

2M overcalls make it difficult to get your best fit. The system permits you to overcall 2M on a hand like: x. AKxx, xx KTxxxx. Of course you might also hold: x, AKxxx, xx, KTxxx. How can responder know when to pass and when to correct?

You must wait to show your one suiter. Suppose you hold this hand: KQTxxx, x, xxx, KTx. Wouldn't you rather overcall 2♠ directly rather than bid 2♣* and make it easy for the opponents to bid hearts?

Meckwell/Modified DONT

- By Jeffrey (*Jeff*) John Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell
- The bids:
- Double* = a single minor or both majors; partner bids 2♣*, after which the over caller corrects to his actual suit if a minor, or hearts if holding both majors
- 2♣* /2♦* Shows the bid suit and a major, as in **DONT**
- 2♥ or 2♠ Shows the bid suit (usually 6+)
- 2NT* Shows the minors (usually 5-5)

***=ALERT (Note that natural bids are not alerted)**

Modified Cappelletti

- Double* = Penalty (some play double as takeout)
- 2♣* Shows a single long minor or a Major and a Minor; partner bids 2♦*, after which the over caller bids his major; the advancer can next bid 2NT for the minor
- 2♦* Shows both majors as Cappelletti
- 2♥ or 2♠ Shows the bid suit (6+cards and Natural)
- 2NT* Shows the minors (usually 5-5)
- ***=ALERT (Note that natural bids are not alerted)**

Natural/LANDY

NATURAL BIDS

Bid any 6+card suit (No alert required and NEVER a 5-card suit!)

X=penalty or takeout (partnership agreement)

LANDY

2♣* = Both Majors (usually 4-4 some also play 5-4, 5-5)

and all other bids are natural and a 6+ card suit

Most use X as penalty and others play it as take-out (needs discussion)

*=ALERT (Natural bids are not alerted)

Played in both Direct and Balancing Seats

- A “now ” popular modification to Landy, played in the Netherlands in the 1980’s and modified by Kit Woolsey with acceptance by the ACBL in the U.S. in 2015 is **Multi-Landy**.
- In his modification, the 2♣* overcall is the same as in Landy, the Multi 2♦* bid shows a 6-card major suit, and Cappelletti’s 2♥* or 2♠* bids shows 5-cards in the bid major suit and at least four cards in an unknown minor suit. Kit Woolsey’s X* takes care of all other hand types, 6+ card minor, 5-4 m-M or strong hand (18+)!

What do the Bridge Experts Say?

A group of expert players was recently polled on their favorite methods of competing over strong 1NT openings.

- All their views are posted on the web search
COMBATING 1NT OPENING Difesa su 1SA
- All suggest their favorite approach with no uniform agreement. However, they all agree that it pays to come in aggressively over a strong 1NT opener.
- Visit the web site for a review of defenses played by the experts.
<http://www.clairebridge.com/en/defenses-against-1nt/>

The Statistics – Be Aggressive

100,000 simulations show that the over caller can successfully compete 30% of the time. Success means a game (6%), a part-score (17%) or a part-score sacrifice (4%).

Incidence of over caller's successful hand types are roughly:

6+ cards, 10%

5-5 in two suits, 4%

Shortness (singleton/void), 5%

“Magic 4-4 Fits”, 5%

Over caller's Partner is weak, 5%

Over caller's Partner is strong , 2%

GOAL- Be aggressive and fight for a part – Score.

Short Comings and Problems

While many players of the 2/1 Game Force System play either DONT or Cappelletti or their modifications, a major disadvantage is that they are geared toward two-suited hands and **if the contract is played in a suit the notrump bidder is often NOT ON LEAD; the weak hand is on lead!**

Looking at Hand and Suit patterns, two-suited 5-5 hands occur far less frequently than one-suited hands and cards with SIX cards are 3.5 times more frequent. The 5-5 pattern occurs about 4% of the time, while a 6-card pattern occurs more than 15% of the time.

Thus, we need a convention that shows SIX cards **and has the notrump bidder (opener) on lead**. One such convention is what I have called Modified Blooman. A modification of Blooman developed by: Robert (*Bob*) Hoffman of Boynton Beach, Florida, United States, and Irv Bloom of West Palm Beach Florida published in the "Bridge Bulletin", March 2006, page 28.

Modified Blooman (Direct Seat)

The convention is modeled after the Suction Convention often played over strong club systems like Precision.

- X* is a Relay to 2♣* then apply Cappelletti bids
- 2♣* Transfer to 6+♦
- 2♦* Transfer to 6+♥
- 2♥* Transfer to 6+♠
- 2♠* Transfer to 6+♣
- 2NT* Shows the minors (5-5)

Where now you are 5-5 in two unknown suits with 6+HCP (Rule of 8): 2♦ = Majors (5-5), 2♠* = Spades and a Minor, and 2♥* - Hearts and a minor because if you are one suited you would use the transfer bid. **All bids are alerted.** With a weak hand and clubs, you can use X*=clubs and pass partner's bid of 2♣*.

***=alert and if you win the contract, the notrump bidder on lead.**

In the balancing seat bid your 6-card suit (natural), **double with both majors**, and use 2NT* to show the minors (5-5) (Modified Blooman is OFF).

Example

The opponents open 1NT and you hold

♠ 10 7
♥ K Q J 10 8 3
♦ 10 9 3
♣ 8 6

Do you compete/interfere or pass in the Direct seat?

What about the balancing seat?

What did you do?

Looks like a good hand with 6HCP.

However, the two longest suits - LTC= $9 - 8 = 1 < 2$

So you must NOT COMPETE in the direct seat.

(Playing DON'T do not X*, playing Cappelletti do not bid $2\clubsuit^*$, playing Meckwell do not bid $2\heartsuit$, and playing Modified Blooman do not bid $2\diamondsuit^*$)

However, in the Balance seat you have 2 shortness points, so you must interfere using your agreed upon convention.

Example

The opponents open 1NT and you hold

♠ AK
♥ K Q J 10 8 3
♦ 10 9 3
♣ 8 6

Do you compete/interfere or pass in the Direct seat?

What about the balancing seat?

What did you do?

Looks like a very good hand with 12HCP.

The two longest suits - LTC = $9 - 6 = 3 > 2$

So you must interfere/compete

Playing DON'T you would X, playing Cappelletti you would bid $2\clubsuit^*$, playing Meckwell would bid $2\heartsuit$, and playing Modified Blooman one may bid $2\diamondsuit^*$. Observe that **only** Modified Blooman puts the strong hand on lead.

In the Balance seat you have 2 shortness points, so you must also interfere using your agreed upon convention

Example

♠ 10 7

♥ 8 6 4

♦ 10 9 3

♣ K Q J 10 3

Do you compete/interfere or pass in the Direct seat?

What about the balancing seat?

What did you do?

You 6HCP;but the two longest suits- LTC= 8 – 9 (losers) = -1

Not 2.

So you must PASS using the rule of 8! And in the balancing seat you do not have two shortness points.

Competing with a five card suit is dangerous. With 5332 distribution, it is better to defend!

You must also pass in the balancing seat! You do not have two shortness points.

Never interfere over 1NT with 5332/4432/4333 distribution – PASS!

Example

♠ A K 7 4 3

♥ A Q 8 5 2

♦ 7

♣ 8 6

Do you your compete/interfere or pass in the Direct seat?

What about the balancing seat?

What did you do?

You have 13HCP and are 5-5 in the majors.

13HCP and $(5+5 - \text{losers}=5) = 5 > 2$.

In the direct seat. Playing DONT, bid $2\heartsuit^*$ (H+S), with Cappelletti bid $2\diamondsuit^*$ (both majors), with Meckwell bid $2\clubsuit^*$ (long suit or both majors), and with Modified Blooman you would bid X^* (5-5 in two unknown suits).

In the balance seat you would also compete/interfere.

What did you do?

You have 6 HCP and a 7-card Suit.

Two longest suits – LTC = $10 - 7 = 3 > 2$.

In the direct seat playing Modified Blooman bid $2\heartsuit^*$ (as a transfer to Spades), playing DONT X* (Long suit), and with Cappelletti bid $2\clubsuit^*$ (long suit), and with Meckwell bid $2\spadesuit$.

Now What?

North playing Lebensohl bids 3♥ (forcing).

Playing Modified Blooman East knows that west has 6+ spades so competes by bidding 3♠. Playing DONT or Cappelletti you are stuck, you have no bid.

Playing Meckwell you can still bid 3♠. But the weak hand is on Lead!

NEXT Step?

South next bids 4♥ with three.

What now West? Do you bid 5♠ or Pass.

Following the Rule of 210: X with 2 Hearts,
Pass with 1 and bid to the 5-level with a void.

- So Pass!

Some may be tempted to bid to the 5-level because E-W is not vulnerable; however, if you do N-S may find their diamond slam!

What did you do?

You have 10 HCP and a 6-card Suit.

Two longest suits – LTC = 9-7=2.

You must compete!

In the direct seat playing Modified Blooman bid $2\clubsuit^*$ (as a transfer to diamonds), playing DONT X^* (Long suit), and with Cappelletti bid $2\clubsuit^*$ (long suit), and with Meckwell bid X^* (long minor or both majors).

Now What?

North bids X* (Stayman).

Playing Modified Blooman East knows that west has 6+ diamonds and bids 2♦. Playing DONT, Cappelletti, or Meckwell one bids 2♣* (as a relay bid). Without a 4-card major south passes.

All west's must now bid 2♦ **not** playing Blooman and the weak hand is on lead and North may now X for penalty. Which is less likely playing Blooman since 2♦ down one is better than 1NT making.

What did you do?

You have 7 HCP and are two suited.

Two longest suits – LTC= 10-7=3.

You must compete!

In the direct seat playing Modified Blooman X* (5-5 - two unknown suits), playing DONT bid 2♦* (diamonds and a higher suit), and with Cappelletti bid 2♠* (spades and a minor), and with Meckwell bid 2♦* (diamonds and a major).

Now What?

- Clearly North must pass.
- With Modified Blooman East bids $2\clubsuit^*$ (relay).
- With DONT East bids $2\heartsuit^*$ (next suit up).
- With Cappelletti East bids $3\spadesuit$ (found fit).
- With Meckwell East bids $2\heartsuit^*$ (lowest major).

Next Bids!

- With Modified Blooman West bids 2♠* = spades and a minor.
- With DON'T West bids 2♠.
- With Cappelletti West bids 4♠.
- With Meckwell West bids 2♠.

SOUTH PASSES.

Modified Blooman - East bids 4♠.

DONT - East bids 4♠.

Meckwell - East bids 4♠.

All Conventions lead to the game of 4♠.

East can make the contract by establishing the 13th diamond.

Example

East Opens 1NT and you are South (Vulnerable), what is your bid?

NORTH

♠ A7
♥ 98753
♦ QJ1043
♣ K

SOUTH

♠ Q52
♥ KQ642
♦ 7
♣ Q742

What did you do?

You have 9 HCP and are two suited (5-4).

Two longest suits – LTC= 9-6=3.

You must compete!

Playing Modified Blooman X* (5-4 is good enough – two unknown suits), playing DONT bid 2♣* (clubs and a higher suit), and with Cappelletti bid 2♥* (hearts and a minor), and with Meckwell bid 2♣* (clubs and a major).

Now What?

- With Modified Blooman North bids $2\clubsuit^*$ (relay).
- With DONT North bids $2\diamondsuit^*$ (next suit up).
- With Cappelletti North bids $3\heartsuit$ (found fit).
- With Meckwell North bids $2\heartsuit$ (lowest major).

East the Strong NT Hand PASSES.

Modified Blooman - South bids $2\heartsuit^*$ (hearts and a minor).

DONT - South bids $2\spadesuit$.

Cappelletti – South Passes.

Meckwell - South Passes.

If E-W competes to $2\spadesuit$ bid $3\spadesuit$, but NOT 4 following the

Law: Sum of trumps 16-11 = sum of bid=5 ($3+2=5$)! Only bid 4 if E-W is Vulnerable and you are NOT.

Example

East Opens 1NT and you are South (Vulnerable), what is your bid?

NORTH

♠ QJ983

♥ 10986

♦ Void

♣ AQ94

SOUTH

♠ AK1072

♥ Void

♦ K8653

♣ 1085

What did you Do?

You have 10HCP and are two suited (5-5).

Two longest suits – LTC= $10-6=4$.

You must compete!

Playing Modified Blooman X* (5-5 two unknown suits), playing DONT bid $2\spadesuit^*$ (diamonds and a higher suit), and with Cappelletti bid $2\heartsuit^*$ (spades and a minor), and with Meckwell bid $2\clubsuit^*$ (diamonds and a major).

Now What?

- With Modified Blooman North bids 2♣* (relay).
- With DONT North bids 2♥ (next suit up).
- With Cappelletti North bids 3♠ (found fit).
- With Meckwell North bids 2♥ (lowest major).

East the Strong NT Hand PASSES.

Modified Blooman - South bids 2♥ (hearts and a minor) & North bid 4♥.

DONT - South bids 4♥.

Cappelletti – South bids 4♥.

Meckwell - South Passes 4♥.

Bidding

Some may overcall 2♠ as Natural. However look at your shape.

Never interfere with 5332/4432/4333 distribution – PASS!

Partner will balance by showing hearts/hearts and a minor/diamonds and a major depending on what you play.

West will raise to three hearts for a great result.

What do you do over 2NT?

Note that on the Convention card that it says

DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP

- So, the same systems apply! But, now 2NT=20-21 not 15-17 so add 5 points.
- **The Rule of 8 becomes the Rule of 13**
- 11 HCP to compete/interfere and again adding two longest –LTC= 2!

Weak Notrumps

Recall that the weak notrump range is 12-14 and the “Kamikaze” mini range is 10-12 (**Note 12-15 is strong NOT weak, but considered strong by the acbl!**).

These ranges are most commonly employed by many strong club pairs (e.g. the Precision Club).

The opponents are often miss guided because they think weakness by the opponent's make their hands “strong”. As with strong Notrump, numerous conventions have been proposed.

We will review a few, but first the priorities for the opponents have changed. You need to be even MORE aggressive.

You are:

- 1) More likely to locate a fit and make a part score.
- 2) Double the opponents for Penalty.
- 3) Bid game when find a fit.

The Statistics – Be More Aggressive

100,000 simulations show that the over caller can successfully compete 65% of the time.

Incidence of over caller's success are about:

Major suit part-score, 20%

Minor suit part-score, 15%

Major suit game, 15%

Notrump (part-score/game) , (2%/5%)

Sacrifice verses Part-score, 10%

2-Level Penalty Doubles, 3%

Be aggressive and fight for a part-score/game.

Problems You Must Consider

Playing Against a Weak/Mini No Trump is **Much Harder** than against a Strong Notrump.

In general there is a lack of experience playing against weak notrump bids and understanding how it works.

You can't give up the penalty double because it will come up more often, and you can't give up on game try's, because you can't let a 10/12 notrump count steal your game (especially at IMPS). However, you are immediately forced to the 2-level.

Your opponents will have a run-out system to escape when you make a penalty double.

And do the opponents play systems On/Off over a Weak/Mini notruump, partnership agreement? Look at their cc or ask!

Judgment

The most used “Interference weak/strong notrump conventions” by players in the United States are Natural bids, Landy, Cappelletti, and Meckwell. Yes, the same as some use against strong NT – Why change?

MOST DO NOT PLAY DONT SINCE the double (X) is not for PENALTY!

Others common conventions played in the U.S. are Woolsey, Mohan, Hello, and Multi-Landy.

However, to compete against the weak/mini Notrump, you should have **10-14 HCP** in the direct seat (adjusting for dubious doubletons) and **double for penalty with 15+ HCP.**

In the balancing seat, you again may use the Rule of 2 to compete.

As with strong NT, do not bid with flat hands: 4432, 5332, and 4333 shapes are defensive shapes.

Don't overcall on those shapes regardless of strength.

Woolsey Defense – Both Seats

Double* = 18+ for penalty/6+card minor/5m-4M (minor –Major)

Partner may bid 2♣* to ask for the minor (pass or correct), or bid 2♦* to ask for the major, or bid 2♥/ 2♠ to play, or pass.

2♣* = majors, advancer can bid 2♦* to ask which is better, so the over-caller's 2♣ bid can freely be made with 5-4 shape

2♦* = an unknown major 6+ card suit

2♥* = Hearts and a minor

2♠* = Spades and a minor

2NT* = both minors

3X = natural

*=Alert

3145 hands in balancing seat regularly penalty X*, even with no four-card major.

Woolsey is common convention played by bridge experts

LANDY Defense – Both Seats

Keep it simple over weak notump bids and play Landy in the direct and balancing seat.

Double* =15+HCP and partner may bid with 5+ or pass (0-4)

2♣* = 4-4/5-4/5-5 in the majors

- Pass = long clubs weak hand
- 2♦ = diamonds and major shortness
- 2♥/2♠ = to play
- 2NT/3♦ = natural and non-forcing
- 3♥/3♠ = invitational to game
- 3♣ = artificial and forcing to game

2♦/2♥/2♠ = 5/6+ and natural

2NT = at least 4-4 in the minors

3♦/3♥/3♠ = 7+ and pre-emptive

Mohan - Both Seats

X* = 15+ points and penalty.

If not, the advancer (partner of doublers) bids as though his partner had opened 1NT (systems may be on or off).

2♣* shows both majors, possibly 5-4. If responder does not have a preference, he bids 2♦* to let opener pick.

2♦* is a transfer to hearts (5/6+)

2♥* is a transfer to spades (5/6+)

2♠* shows spades and a minor (5-5),

2NT* shows hearts and a minor (5-5), 3 of a minor shows a long minor and is constructive, 3 of a major is pre-emptive

A very popular convention developed by John Mohan and used to interfere over weak NT bidding pairs.

HELLO Defense – Both Seats

X* = 15+HCP for penalty

If not, the advancer (partner of doublers) bids as though his partner had opened 1NT (systems may be on or off).

2♣* shows diamonds or a major-minor two-suited. Responder transfers to 2♦ which is either passed or advanced (diamond suit) or a major is bid (2 suited, unspecified minor) – 2NT ask for the minor.

2♦* is a transfer to hearts (6+ cards)

2♥* shows both majors (responder may pass or correct to 2♠)

2♠ shows spades (natural bid)

2NT* is a transfer to clubs (6+cards)

3♣* shows both minors(5-5), responder may pass or bid 3♦

3♦* shows both majors with strong playing strength (responder takes a preference to 3♥ or 3♠, or jumps to 4♥ or 4♠)

In many cases, the advancer will become declarer, thus placing the strong 1NT hand on opening lead.

The convention was developed by Jerry HELms and Bill LOhann.

MULTI-Landy Defense – Both Seats

X* = penalty (15+HCP)/6-card minor/5-4 m-M

2♣* = both majors (5-5/5-4/6-4)

2♦* = a single suited hand (6+ cards, could be any of the 4 suits, but usually a major)

2♥* = 5♥ + a minor suit

2♠* = 5♠ + a minor suit

2NT* = both minors (at least 5-5)

3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - Natural 7+card suit

*=alert

Multi-Landy seems to be “Optimal”

- Against weak Notrump bids, it allows one to show many types of hands.
- A long 6-card major
- The majors
- Major-minor 2 suited hands (5-5)
- Minor-Major (5-4)
- A long 6-card minor
- Strong hand
- A disadvantage is that you have given up the natural 2♦ bid (5-card suit), you must X*

Overview of Responses to Multi-Landy

- Opponents will more than likely want to compete when you bid over the weak Notrump.
- Advancers responses opponent's bid:
 - XX* shows support for the Over caller's possible suits
 - X* is negative showing support for the Over caller's possible suits
 - A suit bid may be natural asking for Over caller's best suit
 - 2NT* is forcing asking for suit/strength/length.

Responses to The X*

- 2♣ Shows clubs. Partner may pass or bid his major suit.
- 2♦* Artificial relay asking partner to bid his major suit. Partner may pass with good diamonds.
- 2♥ Natural, 6+ hearts, non forcing.
- 2♠ Natural, 6+ spades, non forcing.
- 2NT* Artificial, forcing. Asks the over caller to clarify his hand.

Over caller's responses are:

- 3♣* 4 hearts, minimum strength (10/11).
- 3♦* 4 spades, minimum strength.
- 3♥ 4 hearts, maximum strength (12-14).
- 3♠ 4 spades, maximum strength.
- 3♣/3♦ Natural, 6+ “good” clubs/diamonds, non forcing.
- 3NT To play.

Responses to 2♣*

- Pass Natural, 6+ good clubs, non forcing.
-
- 2♦* Usually shows equal length in the majors. Asks partner to pick one. When 5-4 in the majors, partner corrects to the 5-card major.
- 2♥ Natural sign-off, showing a preference for hearts even if partner is 5-4 in spades and hearts (4-3 fit at the 2-level).
- 2♠ Natural sign-off, showing a preference for spades even if partner is 4-5 in spades and hearts (4-3 fit at the 2-level)
- 2NT* Artificial, forcing. Asks the over caller to clarify his hand.

Over caller's responses are:

- 3♣* 4 hearts, minimum strength (10/11).
- 3♦* 4 spades, minimum strength.
- 3♥ 4 hearts, maximum strength (12-14).
- 3♠ 4 spades, maximum strength.

Responses to 2♦*

- 2♥ Natural signoff if over caller has hearts.
- This bid may also be made with game-invitational values in spades. If over caller corrects to two, then partner is allowed to raise to three.
- 2♠ Natural signoff if over caller has spades.
- This may also show game-invitational values in hearts. If over caller corrects to three, then partner is allowed to raise to four.
- 2NT* Artificial, forcing. Asks the over caller to clarify his hand.

Over caller's responses are:

- 3♣* 4 hearts, minimum strength (10/11).
- 3♦* 4 spades, minimum strength.
- 3♥ 4 hearts, maximum strength (12-14).
- 3♠ 4 spades, maximum strength.

Responses to 2♥*

- Pass A weak hand with tolerance for hearts.
-
- 2♠ Natural, 6+ good spades, no heart support, non forcing.
- 2NT Artificial, no heart support, asks partner to bid his minor suit at the three level.
-
- 3♣ Natural, 6+ good clubs, no heart support, non forcing.
- 3♦ Natural, 6+ good diamonds, no heart support, non forcing.
- 3♥ Preemptive, 3+ hearts, non forcing.
- 3♠ Natural, preemptive, 6+ good spades, no heart support, non forcing.

- 3NT To play.
- 4♥/4♠ To play.

Responses to 2♠*

- Pass A weak hand with tolerance for spades.
- 2NT* Artificial, no spade support, asks partner to bid his minor suit at the three level.
- 3♣ Natural, 6+ good clubs, no spade support, non forcing.
- 3♦ Natural, 6+ good diamonds, no spade support, non forcing.
- 3♥ Natural, 6+ good hearts, no spade support, non forcing.
- 3♠ Preemptive, 3+ spades. Non forcing.

Responses to 2NT*

- 3♣ Weak hand with tolerance for clubs.
- 3♦ Weak hand with tolerance for diamonds. Tends to deny club support.
- 3♥ Natural, 6+ good hearts, no support for either minor, non forcing.
- 3♠ Natural, 6+ good spades, no support for either minor, non forcing.
- 3NT To play.
- 4♣ 3+ clubs, invitational to five.
- 4♦ 3+ diamonds, invitational to five.
- 4♥ To play.
- 4♠ To play.

Success Rate for Multi-Landy

100,000 simulations show that the over caller can successfully compete 50% of the time.

Incidence of over caller's success are about:

Major suit part-score, 24%

Game, 15%

Sacrifice verses Part-score, 5%

Example

The opponents open a weak 1NT and you hold

♠ A 7
♥ K Q J 10 8 3
♦ J 9 3
♣ 8 6

Do you compete/interfere or pass in the Direct seat?

What about the balancing seat?

What do You Bid?

Looks like a good hand with 11 HCP.

And the two longest suits - LTC= $9 - 7 = 2$

So you must compete in the direct seat.

Playing Landy bid $2♥$. Playing Hello/Mohan $2♦^*$ is a transfers to $2♥$.
Playing Woolsey $2♦^*$ is a transfer to an unknown 6-card suit, partner bids next step $2♥$.

Playing DONT you would X^* =Long suit and with Cappelletti bid $2♣^*$ =long suit. With Meckwell bid $2♥$ as natural.

In the balancing seat you have 2 shortness points, so you must also interfere using your agreed upon convention.

Solution – Multi-Landy

- You have a 6-card major so bid 2♦* and as North you must bid 2NT* which asks about the suit. Over caller's responses are:
 - 3♣* 4 hearts, minimum strength (10/11).
 - 3♦* 4 spades, minimum strength.
 - 3♥ 4 hearts, maximum strength (12-14).
 - 3♠ 4 spades, maximum strength.

With 13 pts, bid 3♥ and partner will bid game!

Solution - Landy

- You have a 6-card major so bid 2♥ and as North you bid 3♥. South bids 4♥.
- Of the two approaches over the weak NT bids,
- Landy is less complicated than Multi-Landy.
- Play the system that works best for you.

Example

South is Dealer and Opens 1NT (WEAK) and North bids 2♣ (Stayman)
As East --- What is your bid?

NORTH

♠ 873
♥ K762
♦ 53
♣ 9742

WEST ♠ AQ4
♥ 985
♦ 10976
♣ Q63

♠ J52
♥ AQJ3 EAST
♦ KQJ4
♣ K10

SOUTH

♠ K1096
♥ 104
♦ A82
♣ AJ85

What do You Bid?

- You have 15+ HCP and must clearly X*.
- South will probably bid 2♠ with 4.
- How will West interpret the X*, is it lead directing or penalty?
- Against a weak NT, West must play it as penalty and NOT lead directing unless you are very very weak – 4 points or less!

Example

The opponents open a weak 1NT and you hold

♠ KJ52		♠ AQ863
♥ AJ864	or	♥ 764
♦ 82		♦ 972
♣ K8		♣ A10

Do you compete/interfere or pass in the Direct seat?

You have 13HCP (subtract 1 for honor doubleton)= 12pts in the first hand and 11HCP in the second hand. However, look at your hand patterns. In the first it is 3-5-2-2 and the second 5-3-3-2.

In the first hand you **MUST** compete and in the second it is better to defend. What about the balancing seat? Same principle!

Example

The opponents open a weak 1NT and you hold
♠ AKJ5 ♥ 1095 A84 ♦ 82 ♣ A82

You have 16 HCP, a clear X* for penalty.

The opponents will now use their escape sequence. A common one is that over the X* the advancer (1NT partner) will either bid a 5-card suit at the 2-level or XX* which asks partner to bid his best 5-card suit.

Without one the NT bidder will start bidding his 4-card suits are bid up-the-line to try to find a 4-3 fit at the 2-level (there are many variations of escape sequences)

Example

The opponents open a weak 1NT and you hold

♠ AJ875

♥ J

♦ AQ973

♣ 74

You are two suited 5-5 what is your bid in the direct and balancing seat?

What do you Bid?

You have 11HCP ignoring the singleton Jack.

You are two suited in Hearts and Diamonds.

Most will do something. If you have a two suited rule you can use it now or some may bid 2♠ as natural.

With Multi-Landy 2♠*(Major-minor) or Landy bid 2♥* = transfer. In Landy there is no two suit Major-minor bid!

Analysis of New Example

- You have 2 aces and and 2 1/2 Quick tricks with a 5-card spade suit! So South bids 2♠ and West bids 3♣ and your partner bids 3♠. All pass.
- East leads a diamond and west plays his Q♦ and shifts to the K♣, driving out the A♣. Declarer crosses to dummy with a heart and loses a spade, two diamonds, a diamond ruff, and a club for down 2.
- What happened?
- South made a bad overcall thinking he had a strong hand, he should pass and allow North to decide what to do!

Basic Principle when competing against Weak NT

- When one interferes over strong (15-17)NT contracts the direct seat is most important; however, this is not the case against a weak NT pair.
- Instead, the balancing seat is more important when competing against weak NT pairs.
- Allow the opponents to show their hands.
- Better to wait!

Other Expert NT Conventions

- Two other popular conventions used over both strong and weak NT bids that many experts play are:
- CRASH and Modified TRASH

CRASH over 1NT(weak/strong)

- X^* = Penalty weak NT/take-out strong NT
- $2\clubsuit^*$ = 2 suits of the same Color
- $2\diamondsuit^*$ = 2 suits of the same Rank (minors/majors)
- $2\heartsuit$ = Natural 5/6+ cards
- $2\spadesuit$ = Natural 5/6+ cards
- $2NT^*$ = 2 non-touching suits $\clubsuit - \heartsuit$ or $\diamondsuit - \spadesuit$
(same SHape – rounded/pointed)

- $3\clubsuit/3\diamondsuit/3\heartsuit/3\spadesuit$ = Natural bids 5/6+cards
- $*$ =alert

Modified TRASH

- X^* = Penalty weak NT/take-out strong NT
- $2\clubsuit^*$ Transfer to \spadesuit 6+ or (5-5) \heartsuit - \spadesuit (majors)
- $2\diamondsuit^*$ Transfer to \heartsuit 6+ or (5-5) \spadesuit - \clubsuit (black suits)
- $2\heartsuit^*$ Transfer to \spadesuit 6+ or (5-5) \clubsuit - \diamondsuit (Minors)
- $2\spadesuit^*$ Transfer to \clubsuit 6+ or (5-5) \diamondsuit - \heartsuit (red suits)
- $2NT^*$ (5-5) \diamondsuit - \spadesuit (pointed)
- * =alert
- Modified TRASH (**TR**ansfer and **SH**ape) has a great nuisance effect on the opponents because they are not familiar with 2-suited conventions.

Interference over the Strong CLUB BID

What do you play over a strong club bid, where $1\clubsuit^*$ denotes 16+ HCP and any shape hand.

Again in the direct seat there are numerous simple options like Mathe and Modified Mathe; however, some also use for example, DON'T where X^* = take-out!

You want to disturb/interfere and usually not win the contract, but be very careful the strong club bid is unbounded – not like the strong 1NT bid!

When do you interfere?

When the opponents open $1\clubsuit^*$, Mel Colchamiro's Rules of 8 and 2, still apply.

Rule of 8 says you need a minimum of 6 HCP. After adding the number of cards in your two longest suits and subtracting the number of losing trick count (LTC) the number must be 2 or more to compete/interfere over the strong NT bid. Note that $6+2=8$.

Rule of 2, used in the **balancing**, says if you have at least two shortness points, independent of HCP – then compete/interfere over notrump.

Do not bid with flat hands: 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2, and 4-3-3-3 shapes are defensive shapes. Don't overcall on those shape regardless of strength.

Mathe and Modified Mathe

Mathe 1NT*=Minors (5-5) and X*= Majors (5-5) all other bids are natural (6+ cards). While simple, it has little “interference” value.

Modified Mathe ---1NT*=Majors (5-5) and 2♣*=(5-5) in the minors.
Better than Mathe because it forces the opponents to bid at the 2-level.

Like interference over Notrump bids, there are many proposed conventions for interference over the strong club conventions (e.g. Precision).

Many play DONT/Meckwell to show a long suit or two suited 5-5 hands. And over their weak NT bids they play Cappelletti.

For a discussion I refer you to the web site:

www.chrisryall.net/bridge/debates/strong-club.htm

There again is no agreement on the “best” convention, but a very effective convention is called **Suction**. The convention was developed by **Harold Feldheim** of Hamden, Connecticut.

Systems like CRASH and TRASH are designed to show two suited hands and are very good conventions. However, Suction shows both one and 2-suited hands!

CRASH Convention

- X^* = 2 suits of the same Color
- $1\spadesuit^*$ = 2 suits of the same Rank (minors/majors)
- $1\heartsuit$ = Natural
- $1\spadesuit$ = Natural
- $1NT^*$ = 2 non-touching suits $\clubsuit - \heartsuit$ or $\diamond - \spadesuit$
(same SHape – rounded/pointed)
- $2\clubsuit/2\diamond/2\heartsuit/2\spadesuit$ = Natural bids 5/6+cards
- $*$ =alert

TRASH Convention

- Another system played over a strong club is the TRASH (TRansfer And SHape) convention. It is similar to Suction but has the advantage that the bids are at the one Level.
- X* 6+♦ or (5-5) ♥ - ♠ (next 2 suits)
- 1♦* 6+♥ or (5-5) ♠ - ♣ (next 2 suits)
- 1♥* 6+♠ or (5-5) ♣ - ♦ (next 2 suits)
- 1♠* Two-Suited unknown (rounded/pointed)
- 1NT* 6+♣ or (5-5) ♦ - ♥ (next 2 suits)
- *=alert

SUCTION Convention

The Suction convention may NOT currently be used over strong/weak Notump bids in Club Games (without permission) in the direct seat because it is not a GCC Convention. It may however be used in the balancing seat.

Effective November 22, 2018 this is not the case if clubs use the NEW open convention chart.

- 2♣* Transfer 6+♦ or (5-5) ♥ - ♠ (next 2 suits)
- 2♦* Transfer 6+♥ or (5-5) ♠ - ♣ (next 2 suits)
- 2♥* Transfer 6+♠ or (5-5) ♣ - ♦ (next 2 suits)
- 2♠* Transfer 6+♣ or (5-5) ♦ - ♥ (next 2 suits)
- 2NT* (5-5) ♣ - ♥ (the rounded suits)
- X* (5-5) ♦ - ♠ (the pointed suits)
- 1NT* = (4-4) in the Majors
- 1♦/1♥/1♠ Natural 5-card suit
- *=alert

Example – 2 with suits

The opponents open $1\clubsuit^*=16+$ and you hold

♠ KJ1075

♥ 854

♦ 3

♣ KQJ53

You are two suited 5-5 what is your bid in the direct seat?

10 HCP and $10-7=3>2$ so you must bid.

Your bids - show 2 suits

- Playing Suction, bid $2\heartsuit^* = 6+\spadesuit$ or $(5-5) \spadesuit - \clubsuit$ (next 2 suits) – Partner bids $3\clubsuit$.
- Playing CRASH – you must $X^* = 2$ suits of the same Color - partner next bids $2\clubsuit$.
- Playing TRASH – bid $1\diamondsuit^* = 6+\heartsuit$ or $(5-5) \spadesuit - \clubsuit$ (next 2 suits) – Partner bids $1\heartsuit$.
- Playing Mathe/Modified Mathe – you do NOT have a bid.

Example- Single Suit

The opponents open $1\clubsuit^* = 16+$ and you hold

♠ QJ85

♥ 942

♦ AJ10975

♣ Void

You have a 6-card suit with 8HCP and $10-7=3>2$ so bid $2\clubsuit^*$ playing Suction = 6+ diamond suit or X^* playing TRASH = 6+♦ or (5-5) ♥ - ♠ (next 2 suits) , $2\diamond^* =$ Natural playing CRASH/Mathe/Modified Mathe.

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