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# Starting Precision

*Release 2.0*

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**Jan 03, 2017**

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## STARTING PRECISION

This is a basic version of Precision for intermediate players transitioning from 2/1. See *Imprecise Precision* for references and a fuller scheme.

Note that the one-level suit bids other than 1♣! are not alerted.

### 1.1 What To Open

A (!) shows alert needed. Count HCP only for these rules, but rule of 20 ok with a five-card major or 6-5. The shape, not suit quality, completely determines the opening bid. In priority order:

- Other than 2N, everything above 2♦ is a preempt or anything else you want.
- Balanced hands: 5332, 4432, or 4333, including a five-card major.
  - 1N: 12-15
  - 1♣ then non-jumped NT: 16-18
  - 2N: 19-21
  - 1♣ then jump in NT: 22-24
  - 3N: 25-27
- Unbalanced Hands: 5422, 6331, 6222, etc.:
  - 1♣!: 16+, any shape. Opening 1♣! is unequivocally forcing.
  - 1♥ or 1♠: 11-15, 5+ card major
  - 2♣!: 11-15 6+ card clubs, fewer diamonds. For now, no five card major.
  - 1♦: 11-15; has 2 or more diamonds (Announce “As few as two diamonds”).
  - 2♦!: 11-15 none of the above: 0 or 1 diamonds, no five card major, no six card club suit. Possible shapes are 4415 minus a card somewhere.

### 1.2 Intermediate Openings

Precision defines the bids up to 2♦. Other than treating 2N as 19-21, everything above 2♦ is whatever you are used to and preemptive.

#### 1.2.1 Opening 1N

Balanced 12-15 HCP, open 1N. Shapes are 4432, 4333, or 5332. Systems on. Invitational is an 11 or bad 12. I like to play 3♣ as a GF Puppet Stayman. Don't open balanced 11's.

Note that any 11-15 suit opener is not balanced. Opener has a second four card suit, or his opener is six cards. He is not 5332.

#### 1.2.2 Opening a Major

Major openings show 11-15. Play 2/1 (with 13+ HCP) with the following changes. These changes are all due to the upper limit of 15. Responder is captain of the hand.

- 2N is not Jacoby 2N. It is invitational, with two cards in the major, relatively balanced. If 2N was Jacoby, with slam interest, it would have to be 17+, which makes it not frequent enough to give up the natural meaning of 2N.
- Use a jump-shift to show 17+ points with a good suit and support, or a great suit.
- 1M - 4M! is alerted and can show any hand responder thinks should be in game with 13 or

less points. Responder can often pass hands that one would ordinarily be required to bid, because of the limited range. However, raising with support is important since otherwise partner cannot revalue their hand.

Opener can show his other suit with his second bid, but a reverse into spades or jump-shift should be a maximum. As in 2/1, rebidding the major does not show six cards.

Opener with a maximum and good six-card suit can rebid 3M.

### 1.2.3 Opening A Diamond

Shows 11-15 HCP and 2+ diamonds. There is no five-card major, and the hand is unbalanced. Announce 1♦ as “as few as two cards”. Example, a 4225 hand is opened 1♦ since a 2♣ opener requires six clubs.

Responses:

- Pass with 7 or less.
- 2♣ shows 10+ HCP and four+ clubs and is forcing but not game forcing. Opener rebids of 2♦ or 2N or 3♣ are not forcing.
- Otherwise play normally as with inverted minors. 2N is invitational.

### 1.2.4 Opening Two Clubs

Shows 11-15 HCP and SIX clubs. Alert. Does not deny a four-card major.

- If responder bids 2♥ or 2♠, it is not forcing; it is just a suggestion to play with 4+ cards in the suit.
- 2N and 3♣ are invitational.

With a hand interested in game, bid 2♦!. This response is an artificial force. Opener bids:

- 2♥ or 2♠, a four-card suit with 6+ clubs. Skipping over a major denies it.
- 2N relatively balanced minimum 11-13.

- 3♣ unbalanced hand, the default
- 3♦ six clubs and up to five diamonds

If 2♣ is interfered with, ignore it except 2N! is usually a signoff relay to clubs:

- 2♣! - (2♠) - 3♣ is game-forcing. Opener should show stoppers up the line.
- 2♣! - (2♠) - 2N! - 3♣!(forced) can be passed.

If responder continues, it shows a stopper in the overcalled suit and the bid suit, and opener should bid stoppers up the line.

### 1.2.5 Opening Two Diamonds

Shows 11-15 HCP, short in diamonds, no four card major, and no six clubs. That is, the shape is 4=4=1=4, 4=4=0=5, 4=3=1=5, or 3=4=1=5.

Responses are natural and place the contract, except 2N! is Stayman and on over interference. Opener shows his lowest four-card major (He’s got one!) as follows:

- 3♣ shows hearts and denies 4 spades (the lowest suit, clubs, means lowest major).
- 3♦ shows spades and denies hearts (the higher suit, diamonds, means highest major).
- 3♥ shows both majors.

### 1.2.6 Opening 2N or 3N

We will open balanced hands with natural notrump bids or by first opening an artificial 1♣!(16+ HCP, artificial, any shape) and later rebidding notrump. The natural bids are:

- 2N shows 19-21 balanced. Systems on. 3♣ is Puppet Stayman.
- 3N shows 25-27 balanced. Systems on. 4♣ is Puppet Stayman.

Note that balanced hands of 16-18 are opened 1♣ and opener’s second bid is a non-jumped NT bid. For example:

- 1♣! - 1♥!(8+ HCP, 5+ hearts) -  
 1N!(16-18) or  
 1♣! - 2♦!(8+ HCP)- 2N!(16-18)

Jumping on the notrump rebid shows the range to 22-24 HCP.

### 1.3 Opening One Club

Open 1♣! with 16+ HCP, artificial, forcing, unless the hand qualifies as 2N or 3N opener.

We also use 1♣! to open “good” 15 HCP hands, defined as those with a 6+ card suit playable opposite a singleton, usually containing a singleton or void.

There is one negative response, 1♦!, showing a hand with less than 8 HCP.

The bids 2♥! and 2♠! are preemptive-type hands of 4-6 HCP concentrated in the suit, highly invitational.

Other responses show 8+ HCP and are called “positive” responses. There is a special treatment for positive responses with 4441 shapes, because these hands are not balanced but do not have a five-card suit.

#### 1.3.1 Positive Responses

If you have a decent 8+ HCP, you make a “positive” response, which is game forcing. Both partners may choose to conceal a poor five-card minor and bid notrump instead. Generally opener will assume responder has 8-10 HCP. Responder may bid on past game if stronger.

Opener’s second bid will generally limit his hand but if not, he too may “bid one more” if prudent.

- 1♥!, 1♠!, 2♣!, 2♦! show 8+ HCP, and five cards in suits. Do not bid a four-card suit even if it is AKQJ.
- 1N!(balanced, no 5M) shows 8-13 HCP and a balanced hand.

Opener rebids 2♦. 2♥, 2♠, 2N!(clubs) to show five+ card suits. 2♣ is Stayman. There are no transfers since responder already has denied a five-card major or long minor.

- 2N!(balanced or a strong 4441) shows 14+ HCP, and is forcing to 4N.

Opener’s conventional 3♣! rebid asks partner to bid 4-card suits up the line to find a fit. This takes the place of Stayman.

- 3x is a 4441 hand with x the suit containing the singleton.

Opener can pick a suit, which sets trump, or bid 3N to play. Bidding 4x is Ace-asking (plain Blackwood). (Awkward situation, remedied in more advanced versions).

#### 1.3.2 Invitational Responses

With 4-6 HCP concentrated in a six-card major, bid 2 of that major. This is not forcing but highly invitational.

#### 1.3.3 Negative Response

Otherwise, with less than a good 8 HCP, bid 1♦!(0-7 HCP, artificial).

After 1♣! - 1♦!(0-7), opener’s rebids are:

- 1♥, 1♠, 2♣, and 2♦ show five card suits. These bids are non-forcing. If your hand has 8 tricks, do not make these bids. Opener will frequently conceal a poor five-card minor.
- 1N!(16-19, balanced)
- 2♥! or 2♠! shows a strong hand with a 5+ card major, like a standard 2♣ opener followed by a 2M rebid.
- 2N(22-24, balanced). Systems are on, 3♣ is Puppet Stayman.
- 3♣ and 3♦ show very strong, unbalanced hands with a long minor suit.
- 3♥ and 3♠ set trump and show an extremely strong hand (9 tricks). Trumps are long and solid. Partner should cue-bid.
- 3N is 25-27 HCP balanced hand. Systems are on.

Responder's second bid:

- With 0-4, pass, especially if balanced, unless you have an Ace.
- Over 1♥ or 1♠, raise with 4-5 support points; jump raise with 6 or 7.
- With no support, you can bid a five-card suit.
- Over 1N,
  - Transfers are on.
  - 2♣ is Stayman but only bid it with a good 7 HCP; otherwise pass. One of our big competitive advantages is not ending up in 2N on hands like these so do not invite.

## 1.4 Interference Over One Club

Opponents are often anxious to bid something to interfere with our 1♣! opening, or after 1♣! - 1♦!. We in turn are anxious to take advantage of it.

Our guiding principle is to ignore their interference when we can, and to cue-bid their suit or double when we can't respond normally.

### 1.4.1 Direct Interference

If they interfere after 1♣!, we split the negative bid into two ranges.

For hands up to 8 HCP:

- Pass with 0-4 HCP.
- Double (or redouble) with 5-8 HCP or with a minimum positive hand with no good bid.

Responder with just an Ace can consider treating it as 5 HCP if the hand has some other attractive aspect.

Other bids are natural and positive. A cue bid shows a positive hand lacking a suitable bid – no five card suit of your own, and no stopper for notrump.

The rattlesnake bids are not available.

As the auction proceeds, a double by opener is for takeout. In a sequence such as:

1♣! - (1♥) - X!(5-8 HCP) - (2♥)

X

the (second) double by the opener is takeout, but a third double by the partnership is always penalty-oriented.

### Two-Level Interference

Over two-level overcalls, suit bids are positive, natural, and game forcing.

- Pass and X are the negative bids, as usual. Double should be at least 6-8 HCP.
- 2N is 8-10 and shows a stopper.
- 3N is 11+ and shows a stopper.
- A cue bid shows a positive bid with no other suitable bid, or without stoppers for notrump. A later bid in notrump can be made to give partner an offer to play there if partner has stoppers.

### Three-Level Interference

For interference at the 3-level,

- Double is a balanced hand with a positive response.
- Suit bids are natural and game forcing.
- 3N is 8-13 with stoppers.

### 1.4.2 Interference by RHO

If 4th seat intervenes after 1♣! - (P) - 1♦!, just bid as if they had opened that suit.

- Opener passes with any balanced minimum.
- Double (or redouble) by opener is for takeout.

If the opener's RHO overcalls a positive response, we're still in a game-forcing auction.

1♣! - (P) - 2♦!(positive, diamonds) - (2♥) 3♦!

agrees diamonds. Responder may bid 3♠! to deny a heart stopper, giving opener the chance to bid 3N, or if interested in a diamond slam cue bid 3♥.

1♣! - (P) - 1♠!(positive, spades) - (2♥)  
2N!(16-19, heart stopper)

1♣! - (P) - 1♠!(positive, spades) - (2♥)  
3♥!(no good bid, probably no heart stopper, no spade support)

## LEVEL TWO

Make these changes to improve the system. You won't be all the way to a full system, but it will cover most of what matters. The ones marked (\*) are the most important.

### 2.1 Improved Responses to Intermediate Openers

- (\*) See *Imprecise Precision* for a description of the full 1♦ opener responses. Add gradually as you are comfortable with them. Most are rare. Be aware that these responses are not standardized – you'll find other Precision players with many other schemes.
- Expand the defense to an overcall to our 2♣! opener to as much Lebensohl as you can handle. (See *Imprecise Precision*.)
- Add to the 2♦! - 2N! responses:
  - 3♠ shows a 4=4=0=5 hand, exactly.
  - 3N shows a 4=4=1=4 hand with 15 points and the Ace or King of Diamonds.

### 2.2 Improved Responses to One Club Openers

- Interchange the meanings of the positive responses 1♣! - 1♠!(notrump) and 1♣! - 1N(clubs)!.  
  
It is easiest to just play this switch off if they overcall.
- Change the 4414 bids as follows:

- 1♣! - 3♣! shows a black singleton 4441 hand, 8+ HCP
- 1♣! - 3♦! shows a red singleton 4441 hand, 8+ HCP.

Opener can bid the next suit up to ask which suit has the singleton. One step shows the lower of the two suits, a second step the higher. For example:

1♣! - 3♣!(4441, black singleton, 8+ HCP)  
3♦!(inquires) - 3♥!(club singleton)

Recall that 2♥ and 2♠ are 4-6 HCP in the suit, highly invitational. That's why these "ratlesnake" (4441) bids start at 3♣.

Again, this is off after an overcall.

#### 2.2.1 After Positive Suit Responses

- When responder shows a positive response in a suit by bidding 1♥!(hearts), 1N!(spades), 2♣, or 2♦, if opener bids that suit it confirms support for it and asks for a count of controls. Counting an Ace as 2, and a King as 1, responder bids as many steps as this minus one. So, the first step up shows 2 controls or less (that is, at most an Ace or two Kings), the second step shows 3 controls, etc. This request is called Beta(2), the number in parentheses showing the max number for one step.

Example: Responder holds ♠KQx ♥AJT42 ♦A52 ♣93. In response to the 1♣! opener, he bids 1♥:

1♣! - 1♥!(5+ hearts, 8+ points)  
2♥ - 3♦!(five controls)



In spades this example would be:

1♣! - 1N!(5+ spades, 8+ points)

2♠ - 3♥!(five controls)

What happens next is complicated in the full system, but it will work fine if opener bids again below game to start cue bidding with slam interest. At this point it is opener who will know most of the time if slam is not possible, so responder does not ask for Aces. 4N later by opener asks for the lowest suit containing a control.

- If opener does not support responder's choice of suit, bidding continues naturally.

### 2.2.2 After Positive Notrump Responses

After a positive 1♠! response showing a balanced hand, opener's bid of 1N agrees trump and shows 16-18 HCP. A jump 2N shows 22-24 HCP (because with 19-21 HCP, he would have opened 2N). Puppet Stayman is on but not transfers, because responder does not have a good five-card suit or they would have transferred to it.

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