

Bridge Tips

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Over the past several years I have been compiling information and guidelines which, cumulatively, have assisted me in improving my understanding, expertise and enjoyment, both offensively and defensively, in the playing of the game of bridge. These tips have been gathered from my bridge experiences during competitive play, from books that I have read, and from published articles that I have accumulated. Each week, when I am available to do so, I have added a new “tip” from these bidding and playing “pearls,” and hope that you, too, will find them interesting, informative, and equally helpful in your endeavor to improve your skills and enjoyment in the playing of this pastime that we all love and find so challenging.

I encourage you to drop me an E-mail if you have any questions, comments, additions or corrections to the tips enclosed herein, and look forward to you contacting me with any constructive comments or suggestions. My E-mail address is orthodoc1@optonline.net

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Bridge Tip # 470

You are in the position of an Opening Bidder faced with the need to make a re-bid, and hold minimum HCP values. On your first re-bid, you were planning to either bid **1-NT**, repeat your opening suit holding 6-pieces, or more; else raise Partner's bid suit if holding sufficient number of support pieces. Your right-hand Opponent interferes with a competitive overcall. Absent the ability to use a Support Double, either because you do not hold 3-pieces of Partner's presumed, 4-card, Major suit, else your Partnership does not use Support Doubles, what are your bidding options?

Answer: If you can make the re-bid which represents the bid you were planning to make, go ahead and do so; otherwise *"Pass."* Remember, absent doing any one of the above-listed, four, re-bid options, in of itself, gives your responding Partner information; i.e., *"I hold minimum values, and I do not have the cards that would be represented by any one of the four options available to me."* Remember – A *"Pass,"* by inference, is just as much a disseminator of information as any other potential bid you might have made as to the strength and distribution that you hold!

Bridge Tip # 469

There are two, 2-suited, overcall conventions – **"Michaels,"** and the **"Unusual-2-NT."** Both exhibit very weak (5-10 HCP) or very strong (16 {+} HCP) strength. Confusion exists, however, as to whether or not these two conventions can be correctly used in the direct (2nd) seat, in the balancing (4th) seat, or in both. It is correct to use the **"Michaels"** convention in either the direct (2nd) seat or the balancing (4th) seat subsequent to an opening one-of-a-suit bid by an Opponent.

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1C/1D	"2C"/"2D"		

(A standard **"Michaels"** 2-suited overcall referencing, in this bidding scenario, Hearts and Spades)

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1H/1S	Pass	Pass	"2H"/"2S"

(A standard **"Michaels"** 2-suited overcall referencing, in this bidding scenario, the alternate Major suit and an unspecified Minor, Clubs or Diamonds)

The “**Unusual-2-NT**” convention, however, is only applicable in the direct (2nd) seat.

<u>Example 3:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1H/1S	“2-NT”		

(A standard “Unusual-2-NT” 2-suited overcall referencing the two, lower, as-yet, un-bid suits, in this bidding scenario, Clubs and Diamonds)

In the balancing (4th) seat, a **2-NT** overcall is not the “Unusual-2-NT” convention. It is a natural, very strong, balanced, No-Trump overcall with at least one-stopper in the Opponent’s bid suit.

<u>Example 4:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1C/1D/1H/1S	Pass	Pass	2-NT (18-19 HCP’s)

Bridge Tip # 468

In Bridge, the same bids made under different bidding scenarios have different meanings. One of the most misunderstood of these variant meanings is between an “**Unusual 2-NT**” and a “*Delayed*” “**Unusual 2-NT**.” The former represents a two-suited overcall referencing the two lower, as-yet, un-bid suits (Example 1). The latter represents a two-suited overcall referencing the two Minor suits (Example 2).

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1D	“2-NT”		

(A standard “Unusual 2-NT” = a 2-suited overcall referencing, in this bidding scenario, Clubs and Hearts)

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1D	Pass	1S	Pass
	2S	“2-NT”		

(A “Delayed” “Unusual 2-NT” = a 2-suited overcall referencing, in this bidding scenario, both Minor suits, Clubs and Diamonds)

Bridge Tip # 467

Several axioms exist in Bridge regarding bidding recommendations; i.e., recommendations which, for the most part, when adhered to, work in the Partnership's best interest most of the time in terms of achieving the best, appropriate, makeable, final contract. A few of the more important ones include: (1) When using the "**Standard American**" 5-card Major bidding system, both Opener and Responder must confirm, if possible, to the '**Up-the-Ladder**' bidding principle as they course together through the 1-level of bidding," (2) "Opener must never '**Reverse**' if holding fewer than 17 HCP's," and (3) "One rarely re-bids an unsupported 5-card suit," to name just a few. With regards to this latter recommendation, circumstances do occur when a Player, forced to bid, must select the best "lie" from amongst a plethora of choices, all of which, in some manner or another, go against what is commonly advised. One such example can be seen in with the following circumstance:

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1D	1S
????	
XXX	(Note here that Opener cannot
"pass," as a "New Suit" bid by Responder is, almost always,	
AKXX	forcing for 1-round. Opener cannot
re-bid 2H as this would be a	
AJXXX	Reverse," and Opener holds fewer
than 17 HCP's.	
XX	
	"Bidding 1-NT might be an option but
with two suits without "stoppers," this seems risky, and finally, to	
re-bid 2D with only 5-cards seems to go against standard	
recommendation. In this particular circumstance, it is generally	
accepted that the best re-bid, one which is least likely to hurt the	
Partnership, is to re-bid 2D. All of the other choices seem less	
likely to be the best choice, and represent greater, possibly, damaging	
alternatives.	

Bridge Tip # 466

Unless you are on lead with setting tricks in hand, “*doubling*” a Slam contract for penalties in tournament events is, usually, non-productive. If the Opponents are in a Slam-level contract and fail to make the number of tricks necessary to fulfill their contract, you are likely destined for a top or near-top score on the board in any event. Since this is true, “*doubling*” a Slam contract, therefore, should only be for one of two reasons: (1) You are on lead and have the setting tricks in hand, else, (2) Partner is on lead and your *double* is a so-called a lead “**Lightner Double**,” a conventional “*double*” which requests Partner to make an unusual lead which may result in the defeat of the Slam.

A “*Double*” of this sort excludes the lead of a Trump, a suit bid by the Defenders, and probably any un-bid suit. The Player who “*doubles*” expects to ruff a lead of a side suit mentioned by the Opponents, or else to win the top two tricks in that suit. Some treat this “**Double**” rigidly by defining it as a request for Partner to lead the first side suit bid by Dummy.

Bridge Tip # 465

As a general principle, a new suit bid by a Responder to an Opening Bidder is forcing, usually for one round and, at other times, to a Game-level contract, (“4th-suit Forcing,” as an example), dictated by Partnership agreement. There are, however, several exceptions to this principle of a new suit by a Responder being forcing, and they are as follows:

1. A new suit bid by a Responder, following an intervening overcall of 1-NT, subsequent to Partner’s opening bid of one-of-a-suit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	If South, here, had “ <i>doubled</i> ,” it would have been a Penalty Double, and would have shown a hand with at least 9 HCP’s.
1D	1-NT	2S	South’s bid, here, of a new suit, shows a long suit, but a hand with limited HCP values. It is “ to play ,” and is non-forcing.

2. A re-bid of 2H following a first response of 1S, subsequent to Partner’s opening bid of either Minor suit and a subsequent re-bid, by Opener, of 1-NT.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	
5 or 5-4 distribution in the Majors, but weak in HCP's.				South's re-bid, here, shows either a 5-
1C/1D	Pass	1S	Pass	It is non-forcing and asks Opener to
either " <i>accept</i> " or " <i>correct</i> " to 2S .				
1-NT	Pass	2H		Had South desired to force the
bidding, he/she would have had to have re-bid 3H , instead.				

3. A new suit bid by a Responder, having previously first responded with 1-NT, subsequent to Opener having opened the bidding a having re-bid the same or a second suit at the 2-level.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	
shows 6-10 HCP's, a 6-card or longer suit, lack of support for either of Opener's bid suits, and is "to play!"				South's bid, here, of 2H or 3C ,
1S	Pass	1-NT	Pass	It is an example of a so-called:
"new suit out of the blue!"				
2D	Pass	2H/3C		

4. A bid of a new suit by a Responder, at the 2-level, following an opening bid of one-of-a-suit by Opener and a subsequent intervening overcall of a "Take-Out Double," by the would-be

Responder's right-hand Opponent (RHO).

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	
HCP's, a lack of support for Opener's bid suit, the inability to bid an un-bid Major suit at the 1-level,				South's bid, here, of 2D , shows 6-9
1H	Double	2D		is " to play ," and is non-forcing.
With 10 or more HCP's, South, here, would have " <i>re-doubled</i> !"				

Bridge Tip # 464

At times, although, thankfully, infrequently, one must choose to make a bid from what are several uncomfortable and slightly erroneous, alternative options! Two such circumstances come to mind:

(1) You, as Opener, hold the following: x **AJxx AKJxx xxx**
 You open **1D**, your right-hand Opponent (RHO) "*Passes*," and Partner responds **1S**.
 What is your alternative re-bid?

- a. You **must not** “*Pass*,” as Responder could have opening count and a game-level contract would likely be missed, and, as you are keenly aware, “*a new suit by Responder is, almost always, forcing for 1-round.*”
- b. You would like to show your 4-card Heart suit, but having opened with **1D**, a re-bid, here, of **2H** would be a “**Reverse**,” and would show 17 (+) HCP’s. The worst lie in bridge! Partner with as few as 9 (+) HCP’s would likely proceed to a game-level contract with your Partnership sorely lacking in the HCP’s needed to fulfill the stated final contract.
- c. You toy with the option to re-bid **1-NT**, but with this unbalanced distribution, you are dissuaded from choosing that alternative.
- d. You know one rarely re-bids an unsupported 5-card suit (doing so usually guarantees 6-cards or more), but in light of all of the other unfavorable options shown above, you reluctantly re-bid **2D**. The best of the unlikely alternatives!

(2) You, as Opener, hold the following: **AJx xx Qxx AQxxx**
 You correctly open **1C**, your RHO, once again, “*Passes*,” after which Partner responds **1S**. What is your alternative re-bid?

- a. You **must not** “*Pass*.” A new suit bid by a Responder to Partner’s opening bid of one-of-a-suit is forcing for 1-round.
- b. You choose not to re-bid your 5-card Club suit, nor to re-bid **1-NT**, owing to your very weak Diamond and Heart suit holdings.
- c. Finally, you would like to have 4-Spades in support of what might be Responder’s 4-card **1S** response, but you choose the re-bid of **2S** as your favored option. Once again, the best option from amongst several, seemingly-uncomfortable choices. “Bridge can be frustrating, at times, can’t it?”

Bridge Tip # 463

It is standard practice that one should usually cover an honor with an honor, unless there as a sequence of two honors, then the practice is to cover the second honor, not the first. If, however, you, as Defender, hold just two cards in the suit played, then you must cover the 1st honor, not wait for the 2nd to be played. In the following examples, the Queen is played from the Dummy. What card should be played by East?

Qxx

Kxx

QJx

Kxx

QJx

Kx

(Play the King)

(Play small on the Queen)
(Cover the Jack)

(Play the King)

Bridge Tip # 462

When the Opponents open the bidding, your Partnership is at a considerable disadvantage in that, as a potential Overcaller, it is not as easy to describe your hand compared to if you had been able to initiate the bidding as an Opening Bidder. In addition, waiting to enter the auction holds a further negative consequence in that the longer one waits to begin to describe one's holdings the harder it becomes to do so. **Solution:** Be aggressive, but prudent, in upgrading or downgrading your holdings as follows, and enter the auction aggressively, especially if non-vulnerable.

Upgrade that which you hold in cases where,

- (1) You hold Aces and/or good intermediaries (9's and 10's),
- (2) You hold suits of excellent quality (4 or more in length with 3 or more honors, and
- (3) You hold suits with excessive length (5 or more cards)

Downgrade that which you hold in cases where,

- (1) You have a **4-3-3-3** distribution,
- (2) Your hand holds multiple "***Quacks***," (Queens and Jacks)
- (3) You hold questionable doubletons (QJ or Qx) and/or singleton honors (K, Q, or J)

Bridge Tip # 461

When your right-hand Opponent (RHO) opens **1C**, whether or not it is "***short***," and assuming it does **not** represent an artificial and strong "**Precision 1C**," try to be aggressive in potentially acting in the 2nd seat. After all, there will never be a greater bidding space for you to overcall than over a starting bid, by an Opponent, of **1C**!

a. Normally, in order to make a “**Take-Out Double**,” in addition to holding opening HCP count or its equivalent, one must hold the right shape; i.e. fewer than 3-cards in Opener’s bid suit. In this case, however, over the **1C** opening bid, consider making the “**Take-Out Double**” as long as you hold at least **4-3** in the Majors, notwithstanding a holding of only two Diamonds, with hands such as:

KQxx Axxx Kx xxx (or) AQx xxxx AK xxxx

b. It will usually be successful in overcalling **1-NT**, *absent* a Club “*stopper*.” Statistically, Opener rarely holds more than 4-Clubs. Overcall **1-NT** with hands such as:

Axxx AQ AQxx Jxx (or) KQx AQ AJxx xxxx

c. Consider being aggressive and spirited with hands such as:

QJTxxx xx Qxxx x (Overcall 2S)
Qxxxx QJxxxx xx x (Overcall a “Michaels” “2C”)
xxx AQJxx xxxx x (Overcall 1H)

Bridge Tip # 460

A Dozen Defensive Bridge Tips

1. When leading against a Suit contract and holding an **AKQ(xx)** combination in an outside suit, having discussed this with Partner, previously, lead the Queen, then the King, and then the Ace. When holding just the **AK(xxx)** combination, lead the Ace and then the King. In this manner, having led the Ace first, Partner will know that you do not have the King-Queen combination.

2. When leading Partner's suit against either a Suit or a No-Trump contract, and holding three or more small cards always lead high if you have supported the suit, low if you haven't.

3. Even though your Partnership’s custom is to lead the Ace from an **AK** combination, the King is still led at trick one when:

- (a) The suit has been supported by Partner
- (b) Partner has bid the suit and you have not supported it.
- (c) The contract is at the 5-level or higher.
- (d) You have an **AK** doubleton.

4. When Dummy has shown Trump support plus a presumed long second suit, a Trump lead is desirable if you have Dummy's long second suit, to some extent, covered. Absent the ability to control Dummy's second suit, the lead of a Trump is contra-indicated. Better to make an attacking lead in one of the two remaining suits.

5. Notwithstanding your Partnership's agreement to lead the Ace from any suit in which one holds three or more cards, be advised that the lead of the King is still lead of choice at trick one if:

- (a) the suit has been supported by both you and Partner,
- (b) the contract is at the 5-level or higher,
- (c) Partner had bid the suit and you have not supported it, thus making it advantageous to attack his suit, or lastly,
- (d) you hold an **AK** doubleton.

6. When there is any artificial bid (cue-bids included), by your right-hand Opponent (RHO), as is likely the case when the Opponents are employing either **Stayman**, **Jacoby Transfers**, **Blackwood** or **Gerber**, among others, and you desire the lead from Partner to be in that suit, use a "**Lead-Directing**" **Double**. When making a "**Lead-Directing**" **Double** at a low level, however, especially at the 2-level you need five or six cards in the suit headed by at least two or three honors in the suit. To "**double**" an artificial bid made at the 4-level or higher, all that required is strength in the suit, not length. A holding of (**KQx**), even (**QJx**) if the bid to your right implies the Ace, will suffice.

7. When Partner has bid a suit and then "**doubles**" a Small Slam bid by the Opponents, and you are on lead, do not lead Partner's bid suit. Absent Partner's "**double**" you usually would have, anyway. Partner usually has a void, or an outside **AK**, in order to, justifiably, having made the "**double**." Attempt from a combination of that which you hold and the bidding just completed as to which suit being led represents the "**killing lead**," implied by Partner.

8. When following suit to a trick led by Partner, obviously you, as 3rd hand, would play high, under most circumstances, so as to attempt to take the trick. If the card played from Dummy, however, is higher than any you hold, and you, therefore, are not able to attempt to capture the trick, **you must give count** to Partner as to the number of cards you hold in the suit - high from any even number, and low from an odd number. This will help Partner determine the likely number of cards held by the Declarer so as to assist him/her in the future play of that suit going forward.

9. Do not lead a singleton vs. a voluntarily bid Small Slam if you have an Ace. Partner can't have the Ace and you will probably be helping Declarer by statistically giving him/her a free finesse at trick one. Any missing honors are unlikely to be in Partner's hand. On the other hand, a singleton lead against a Small Slam when you don't have an Ace has a much better chance of

succeeding. Hopefully, Partner might, on occasion, hold the Ace in the suit in which you have the singleton or, at the very least, a Trump trick which will allow Partner to possibly give you a subsequent ruff.

10. Assuming that it is your Partnership's understand that you lead of the Ace at trick #1 from any **AKx(x)** combination, this holds true only for trick #1. This is a trick-one convention, only. At any later trick, when on lead from any **AKx(x)** combination, always lead the King first. After trick-one a Defender is likely to want to lead an Ace *without* the King and does not want Partner to think that he/she has the King.

11. If Partner doesn't lead the suit that you have overcalled, assume Partner to have one of the following circumstances:

- (a) he/she is void in your suit,
- (b) he/she is leading a singleton, hoping it to be a more productive lead,
- (c) he/she is leading the top of a sequence which he/she believes to be, once again, a better choice,
- (d) he/she holds the Ace of our suit and fears that if you are missing the King that the lead of the Ace will give the Declarer a trick to which he/she would, otherwise, not be entitled.
- (e) Lastly, your worst fear should be that Partner was inattentive to the bidding and has not remembered that you bid the suit.

12. When leading an un-bid suit against a No-Trump contract and holding 4-cards *not* headed by an honor, it is too misleading to lead low which customarily shows strength. If your highest card is an 8 or lower, lead high, but if highest card is a nine, ten, or Jack, lead your second highest card. If holding a Queen or King in that as your highest card in that suit, always lead the lowest card. (Always lead low from any suit with three or more cards headed by a Queen or a King.)

Bridge Tip # 459

Confusion often exists as to whether No-Trump overcalls are natural and when they are conventionally, artificial (“**Unusual**”), especially when made by a “*previously-passed*” Player.

Any **Direct (2nd) Seat overcall** of “1-NT” or “2-NT” by a “*previously-passed*” hand is “**Unusual**,” and shows the two, lower-ranking, as-yet, un-bid suits (usually 5-5 or better).

Example 1 & 2: South, in both instances, here, shows 5-5 or better in Clubs and Hearts, but holds stronger values in Example 2.

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

1-NT

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

2-NT

Any **Non-Direct (4th) Balancing Seat overcall** of “1-NT” by a “*previously-passed*” hand is **not** “**Unusual**,” rather it is a “**Balancing NT**,” (an evenly-balanced, 10-14 HCP overcall).

South	West	North	East
Pass	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Pass	Pass

1-NT

Any **Non-Direct (4th) Balancing Seat overcall** of “2-NT” by a “*previously-passed*” hand is “**Unusual**,” and shows the two, lower-ranking, as-yet, un-bid suits (usually 5-5 or better).

South	West	North	East
Pass	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Pass	Pass

2-NT

When playing “*Roman Key-Card Blackwood*,” the suit referenced in the answers by Responder is in the agreed-upon suit, or, in the absence of one, it is the last suit mentioned by the Partnership, before the “**4-NT**” call.

Bridge Tip # 457

A “**2-NT**” response, following Opener’s weak opening 2-bid, notwithstanding an interference call by an Opponent, is still an “**asking**,” forcing response, subject to Partnership agreement as to which of the three conventions the Partnership uses: “*Feature*,” “*Ogust*,” or “*Klinger Ogust*.” It cannot be “*passed*.” It is **not** natural - to play!

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
2H	2S	“2-NT”	Pass
????			

Opener must respond with the appropriate answer, using one of the available, agreed upon, conventional responses.

Bridge Tip # 456

A “*Texas Transfer*” is still on after a “**2D**” response by an Opener, to a Stayman “**2C**” call by Responder. It shows game values, a 6-4 shape, and is called an “*Extended Texas Transfer*.” Responder has first attempted to find the preferred 4-4 Major suit fit, but absent having found the sought-after, preferred, 4-4 fit, Responder is using the “*Texas Transfer*” convention in order to maintain the Opening Bidder as Declarer, in order to keep the stronger holding concealed.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	“2C”	Pass

**“2D”
4H/4S**

Pass

“4D”/“4H”

Pass

**AXXX
AQXXXX
KX
X**

(or)

**AQXXXX
AXXX
KX
X**

Bridge Tip # 455

A “**4-NT**” bid by a Responder, following both a “**Jacoby**” and a “**Texas**” Transfer bid, differs, as follows:

(1) After a **Jacoby Transfer** it is **Quantitative** seeking a Slam in the Major suit referenced if Opener holds a maximum of his/her **1-NT** opening.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	“2D”	Pass
2H	Pass	“4-NT” (“Quantitative”)	

(2) After a **Texas Transfer**, it represents a **Blackwood**, Ace-Asking, inquiry.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	“4D”	Pass
4H	Pass	“4-NT” (“Blackwood”)	

Bridge Tip # 454

A “**double**,” by an Opponent, of any artificial bid is a “**Lead-Directing Double**.” Having just opened the bidding with a **1-NT** call, faced with the need to respond to Partners’ artificial **Jacoby Transfer** bid and a subsequent “**Lead Directing Double**” by

Opener's right-hand Opponent (RHO), Opener has the opportunity of making several different responses giving added information to Opener's responding Partner who is awaiting the acceptance of the transfer. The multiple possible responses and their significance are listed as follows:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	"2H"	"Double"
????			

- "Pass" = 2-card support
- "Re-Double" = 3-card support with a maximum 17 HCP's
- "2S" (accepting the transfer) = 3- or 4-card support with a minimum
- "3S" (accepting the transfer) = 4-card support with a maximum

Bridge Tip # 453

A "*Double*," by Opener, following a balancing bid by an Opponent, is not a **Penalty Double**. It is a **Take-Out**, (a "**Re-Opening Double**").

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	Pass	2D
"Double"			

AXX
AQXX
XX
AKXX

Bridge Tip # 452

When playing a “**2/1-Game-Forcing**,” bidding system, a jump-re-bid, by Opener, following a bidding sequence such as **1S – 2D – 3H**, is not a “**jump-shift**.” Rather it is a “**Mini=Splinter**” bid in support of Responder’s bid suit. **Jump-Shifts by an Opening Bidder do not exist after a “2/1” bid of a new suit by Opener’s responding Partner.**

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
AQXXX	XX
X	AXXX
KQXXX	AXXXX
AQ	KX
1S	2D
“3H”	“4-NT”
“5C”	(3-controls using “0314” Roman Key-Card
Blackwood)	
	6D
Pass	

Bridge Tip # 451

Following a Partnership’s **1D – 2C** bidding sequence, shown here, or any other 2/1 initial Partnership bidding sequence, Opener must re-bid any 4-card Major suit held (“**Up-the-Ladder**”) if he/she holds one. Responder could hold a 4-card, as-yet, un-bid, same Major suit, such as in the following hand.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
AJXX	KXXX
KXX	AX
AJXXX	XX
X	AQXXX
1D	2C
2S	4S
Pass	

Note: (1) Responder’s first response of **2C** was forcing, as “**any new suit bid by a Responder is almost always forcing for one-round.**”

(2) Responder, by bidding Clubs first with intent to re-bid Spades on his/her first re-bid, meant to evidence that his/her Club suit was longer in length than his/her Spade suit. At the same time, Responder, here, if he/she had re-bid 2S, would have shown a “**Reverse**,” would have shown opening values, and would have placed the

Partnership in a game-forcing bidding scenario, as “*a ‘Reverse,’ by a Responder is always forcing to game!*” This is exactly what Responder, here, had intended to show.

(3) Because of Responder’s 2-level first response, Opener would be forced to re-bid **2S**, and that re-bid would not have been a “*Reverse*,” and would not necessarily have shown extra values. Even if the Partnership had been utilizing a “*2/1-Game-Forcing*” bidding system, Opener’s re-bid of **2S** would not have been a “*Reverse*,” as a “*Reverse*,” by an Opener does not exist following a 2-level, new suit, first response by Opener’s responding Partner.

Bridge Tip # 450

You, holding a balanced hand, 19 HCP’s and 4-Spades, open **1C** or **1D**. Partner responds **1D** or **1H**. The question arises whether it is appropriate to make a jump shift to **2S**, else to re-bid **2-NT**.

Conventional wisdom is that it is better to show the balanced hand by bidding **2-NT**. If Partner does hold 4-Spades, he/she will explore for a 4-4 Spade fit by “*checking-back*,” with a “**3C**” Stayman call. With this understanding the Partnership allows the Opener to show his/her balanced 18-19 HCP hand, while never missing the 8-card Spade “*Golden-Fit*,” should it be present.

Alternatively, if Opener had made the jump-shift to **2S**, it would have shown the same 19 HCP’s, but implied an unbalanced 2-suiter, as opposed to the balanced hand which would have been referenced with the above-referenced, **2-NT** re-bid.

Bridge Tip # 449

When using the “*Gerber Convention*” for Ace-asking when exploring for the feasibility of a perceived Slam contract, most Partnerships, so as to avoid confusion, stipulate that a “**4C**” bid invokes “*Gerber*” following either a beginning or an ending No-Trump bid. All other times, under this agreement, a bid of **4C** represents a natural Club call.

To avoid further confusion, Partnerships need discuss how to collate the use of the “*Gerber*” convention with “*Jacoby Transfers*.” The following defines how this is done!

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	“2H”	Pass
2S	Pass	“4C”	

Here, the “4C” bid invokes is Ace-asking with Spades being designated as the presumed Trump denomination. This presumption is particularly important if the Partnership is utilizing “*Roman-Key-Card Gerber*,” with specific interest in the King of Spades as the 5th Ace. Absent the use by the Partnership of “*Roman-Key-Card Gerber*,” the “4C” bid, here, would invoke standard “*Gerber*.”

Bridge Tip # 448

When the opening lead has been made by the wrong Opponent, and its having been made face-up, eliminating the ability for the error to be rectified, Declarer has five options. The Director should be called and these five options will be presented from which a choice must be made. The following is a list of the pros and cons for each of the five options from which Declarer must choose:

- 1. Acceptance of the lead, as made, notwithstanding it having been made from the opposite Defender.** If accepted, Declarer will be playing 2nd to the trick, with the Dummy being tabled, *before* Declarer must make the choice of which card to play. The play then continues, without penalty.

Pros for acceptance of this option:

- a. Declarer seeing the Dummy before he/she has to commit a card to play, discovers an advantage to accept the card/suit led

Cons for acceptance of this option:

- a. Declarer finds that the card/suit led is disadvantages to his/her desired Declarer play
- b. Declarer sees a potential advantage to any of the other options available

- 2. Acceptance of the lead, as made, as in option #1, with the following alteration.** The designated Declarer, tables his/her hand. Without consultation from Partner, he/she becomes the Dummy, with Partner, the supposed Dummy, becoming the Declarer, with the play then continuing, without penalty.

Pros for acceptance of this option:

- a. Declarer likes the card/suit led, and feels it holds an advantage for his Partner's subsequent Declarer play
- b. You feel that Partner holds the better Declarer play capability

Cons for acceptance of this option:

- a. Declarer finds that the card/suit led is disadvantages to his/her sides eventual Declarer play
- b. You feel that Partner holds lesser Declarer play capability

- 3. Rejection of the lead. Would-be-Declarer's RHO returns the card to his/her hand, with the would-be-Declarer's LHO, the originally correct Opponent to have the responsibility to lead, forbidden to lead any card of the suit erroneously led, now forced to lead any other suit of his/her choice, as long as he/she maintains the lead.** (For example, If LHO were to have first played an Ace of any side suit, he/she *cannot* then switch to the suit that Partner has led out of turn.)

Pros for acceptance of this option:

- a. Declarer dislikes the card/suit erroneously chosen.

Cons for acceptance of this option:

- a. No further advantage other than the initial rejection of the suit/card chosen

- 4. Rejection of the lead as in option #3, except that following RHO picking up his/her card, you require LHO to lead that suit, with RHO allowed to play any card of that suit of his/her choice. Again, there is no further penalty.**

Pros for acceptance of this option:

- a. You welcome the suit erroneously led, and you desire the lead coming into your hand – perhaps into a trance (AQ).
- b. You fear that another choice of suit or card led might be harmful

Cons for acceptance of this option:

- a. No further advantage other than the initial acceptance of the suit/card chosen

5. You opt to allow LHO to lead any card/suit of his/her choice, including that of the suit chosen. In this instance, the card erroneously played by Declarer's RHO remains face-up as a major penalty card

Pros for acceptance of this option:

- a. You see a potential big advantage later in the play of the hand as a result of the presence of the penalty card

Cons for acceptance of this option:

- a. You are allowing LHO to lead any suit/card of his/her choice

Bridge Tip # 447

The question often arises as to how many pieces are shown when Responder to an opening of one-of-a-suit by Partner, bids a Major suit. When does it show at few as 4-pieces, and when does it guarantee at least five or more? Partnerships must discuss and agree-to any, or all of the following:

Absent an Overcall by the would-be Responder's right-hand Opponent (RHO), the answer is that, almost always, such a response shows as few as 4-pieces, although it could, of course, be more than four:

1C/1D - P - 1H/1S = Four or more
1H - P - 1S = Four or more (unless the Partnership is utilizing the "Flannery," Convention, in which case a response of 1S would guarantee Five or more)

Some Partnerships, in bidding sequences absent an Overcall by the would-be Responder's RHO, and in an effort to distinguish whether a response of a Major suit is 5 (+) cards or 4-cards, employ the "***Kennedy Method***," which is not a convention, but rather a style of bidding, as follows:

1C - P - 1H/1S = Five or more, allowing Opener to disclose the presence of 3-card support for Responder's 5-card Major

1C - P - "1D" = An "alertable," artificial call which may or may not signify a 4-card or longer Diamond suit holding, but which denies a 5-card or longer Major suit. Any subsequent "Up-the-Ladder" bidding sequence by the Partnership will

then uncover any potential 8-card Major suit "Golden Fit," if it is present.

Other than weak or strong jump-responses, a response of a Major at the 2-level occurs in only one instance: 1S - P - 2H = Five or more

In cases where Responder's RHO makes an intervening Take-Out Double, the answers are the same as above with regard to the length of Responder's Major suit holding:

1C/1D - Double - 1H/1S = Four or More

In cases where there is an intervening overcall, however, the answers are somewhat varied dictated by the use, or absence thereof, of a *Negative Double*:

1C - 1D - 1H/1S = Four or More (A "Double" = 4+ Hearts and 4+ Spades)

1C - 1H - 1S = Five or more (A "Double" = exactly Four)

1C - 1S - 2H = Five or more

1D - 1H - 1S = Five or more (A "Double" = exactly Four)

1D - 1S - 2H = Five or more

1H - 2C/2D - 2S = Five or more

1S - 2C/2D - 2H = Five or more

1-NT - 2C/2D/2H - 2H/2S = Five or more

In summary when an intervening Overcall takes place, and Responder bids a Major suit, if the Overcall is anything other than **1D**, Responder's bid of a Major suit guarantees **Five** or more pieces. If the overcall is **1D**, however, then Responder is allowed to bid **1H** or **1S** with as few as **four** pieces.

Bridge Tip # 446

One of the less frequently used overcalls, when using the "**DONT**" Convention when interfering subsequent to an Opponent's strong **1-NT** call, is an overcall of "**2-NT**." Conventional wisdom is that such overcalls can show one of two possible hands, both acceptable, but subject to Partnership understanding as to which one is preferred by the team. The two possibilities are as follows:

1-NT – “2-NT” (?)

1. 5-5 or better in the Minor suits but pre-emptive in nature wishing to raise the competitive level higher than that accomplished by a “2C” overcall.
 2. 6-5 or better in a Major/Minor, 2-Suiter hand. Here Partner is asked to select the lower-ranking of the 2-longest suits held by the Overcaller’s Partner. The Overcaller then either “*accepts*” Responder’s chosen suit, else “*corrects*” to the other, higher-ranking of the 2-suits held.
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-

Bridge Tip # 445

A “***Jump-shift***” by an Opening Bidder shows 19 (+) HCP’s, and opposite any initial response from Opener’s responding Partner, which shows 6 (+) HCP’s, the jump-shift is forcing to game. **Example:** (1X, 1Y, 3Z)

A “***Reverse***” by an Opening Bidder shows 17 (+) HCP’s and is forcing for one-round, not necessarily to game. **Example:** (1X, 1Y, 2Z) – where Z is a higher-ranking suit the X

Because a “***Reverse***” by an Opening Bidder is forcing (and up to 20 HCP’s), there is never a need for Opener to both “***jump***” and “***reverse***.” Why preempt your own strong auction? So, the following auctions do not make any sense!

- a. 1□-1□-3□ (2□ would be a big bid, so no need for 3□)
- b. 1□-1□-3□ or 3□ (again, no need to jump when a reverse would suffice)
- c. 1□-1□-3□ (2□ is forcing, so no need for 3□)

Since there is never any justifiable reason for a “***jump-reverse***” to exist, bids such as those shown in a, b, and c, above, if used, show an entirely different condition, other than those initially evidenced by either a “***Jump-Shift***,” or a “***Reverse***,” as described above. Such sequences shown in a, b, and c, are “***mini-splinter***” bids which show 4-card support, about 16-18 HCP’s, and shortness in the suit jumped in; i.e., not quite enough for a 4-level “***splinter***” raise. So, 1D-1S-3H would show something like: □ KQ106 □ 2 □ AQ654 □ A52.

When responding to Responder's "**New-(2nd)-Minor**" re-bid when the Partnership is playing "***New-Minor-Forcing***," Opener's second response (????) differs when Responder's Major suit is Hearts (a), as opposed to when Responder's Major suit is Spades (b).

- a. (One-of-either-Minor) 1H**
1-NT (2nd Minor)
????
- b. (One-of-either-Minor) 1S**
1-NT (2nd Minor)
????

Opener's re-bid of **1-NT**, in the bidding sequence shown in example (a) already guarantees the absence of Opener's hand containing 4-Spades. due to his/her failure to re-bid an obligatory **1S**, "***Up-the-Ladder***." Therefore, in the bidding sequence (a), Opener can immediately address whether or not he/she has 3-pieces of Responder's Heart suit using any one of the "***New-Minor-Forcing***" conventional bids (shown below) since a hypothetical Spade fit is, therefore, already proven non-existent.

- (a) (One-of-either-Minor)** **1H**
1-NT (2nd Minor)
(2H, 3H, 2-NT or 3-NT)

“2H” saying, “I hold 3-Hearts and a minimum 12-13 HCP’s”

“3H” saying, “I hold 3-Hearts and a maximum 14 HCP’s”

“2-NT” saying, “I hold only 2-Hearts and 12-13 HCP’s” or

“3-NT” saying, “I hold only 2-Hearts and 14 HCP’s”

In the bidding sequence shown in example (b), however, Responder, if holding five Spades and four or five Hearts would necessarily mention Spades first. Since Opener knows that playing the hand in a potential 4-4 or 5-4 Heart fit is preferable to playing in a 5-3 Spade fit, Opener's first response would indicate whether he/she does, or does not, hold 4-Hearts.

- (b) (One-of-either-Minor) 1S**
1-NT (2nd Minor)
(2H, 2S, 3S, 2-NT, or 3-NT)

“**2H**” saying, “I *do hold* 4-Hearts in case you, too, also hold 4-Hearts, if that information is not relevant to your inquiry, please bid **2S**, and I will then address my Spade and HCP holding.”

“**2S**” saying, “I *do not hold* 4-Hearts, but I do hold 3-Spades and a minimum 12-13 HCP’s”

“**3S**” saying, “I *do not hold* 4-Hearts, but I do hold 3-Spades and a maximum 14 HCP’s.”

“**2-NT**” saying, “I *do not hold* 4-Hearts, and I hold only 2 Spades, and a minimum 12-13 HCP’s.”

“**3-NT**” saying, “I *do not hold* 4-Hearts, and I hold only 2 Spades, and a maximum 14 HCP’s.”

Thus, in **all** of these bidding sequences, shown above, Responder becomes the “*Captain*,” of any bidding advancement, “*passing*” Opener’s third response, proceeding to the appropriate game, or exploring for Slam with the knowledge gleaned from the bidding sequence as to whether a Major suit, **Heart or Spade**, fit is present or absent; and whether Opener holds a minimum of 12-13 HCP’s, or a maximum of 14 HCP.

Bridge Tip # 443

A (4-3-3-3) distribution is the worst distribution in bridge. Hands distributed in this fashion generate the least number of tricks, especially when played in a Suit contract. This results from a lack of “*ruffing*” capability which generally reduces the offensive potential of these hands, on average, of almost one full trick.

Because of this fact, hands holding this distribution have a direct impact on changing what would otherwise be standard bidding practice. Two such examples of this are as follows:

1. Responder to a Partner’s opening bid of **1-NT** or **2-NT**, acting as the “**Captain**” of any advancement to the auction, should ***never*** initiate a **Stayman “2C”** call, looking for a possible 8-card Major suit fit. Such hands play better in **3-NT** rather than in **4H** or **4S**, even if an 8-card “**Golden Fit**” were to be present in Hearts or in Spades.

North

South

South Holds :

1-NT	????	A953	(Here, South should respond
3-NT		Q86	directly, without even looking
for		K75	a possible 8-card Spade fit with
		K82	Partner.)

2. Unless the Partnership is utilizing Larry Cohen's new, three "*super-acceptance*" scenarios, a **1-NT** or **2-NT**, an Opening Bidder should never make a "*super-acceptance*" to a Major suit "**Jacoby Transfer**," when Opener holds a (4-3-3-3) distribution, even when holding 4-pieces of Responder's requested Major. A "*simple-acceptance*," at the 2-level, is preferable since Opener's hand is likely to have a reduced offensive capability when played in a Suit contract.

	<u>North Holds:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
(Here, North should bid 2H	AK4	1-NT	"2D"
rather than taking a	K862	????	
"super-acceptance" of 3H)	A84		
	K93		

Bridge Tip # 442

The requirement for Opener to make a "*super-acceptance*" when Responder initiates a "**Jacoby Transfer**" into one of the Major suits has recently been the subject of discussion. Two schools of thought exist, the first, the old established concept, and the second, the newer concept set forth by Larry Cohen.

1. Opener should take a "*super-acceptance*" ("**3H**" or "**3S**") whenever holding 4-pieces of the Major suit requested by Responder, but *limited to only when also holding the maximum of 17 high-card points*.
2. Opener, conforming to the "**LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**," should *always* take a "*super-acceptance*" whenever holding 4-pieces of the Major suit requested by Responder, *without limitation to Opener's point count, but with some limitation with regards to the quality and distribution of his/her holdings*, as discussed below. ; i.e., doing so when holding 4-pieces and 15, 16 or 17 HCP's.

The three "*super-acceptance*" responses are as follows:

- (1) “**3H**” or “**3S**” when holding 4-pieces and the minimum of 15 HCP’s, or a bad 16,
- (2) “**3-NT**” when holding 16-17 HCP’s and a **4-3-3-3** distribution, and
- (3) “**3C**” or “**3D**” when holding 16-17 HCP’s and a doubleton in either of the referenced Minor suits.

A. Opener should “*super-accept*” with Hearts more often than with Spades and, especially, when holding a doubleton Spade. (The Opponents, under these conditions, are most likely to be inclined to balance seeking a competitive contract in Spades at the 2-level.)

B. Opener should “*super-accept*” with five Trumps. (With a 10-card fit, the chances are high that the Opponents can and will balance. In the recent past, it has been advocated to open **1-NT** with a balanced hand and 15 or a weak 16 HCP’s, even when holding a 5-card Major suit, so as to avoid an awkward re-bid, should one have to be made by the Opener.)

C. Opener should not “*super-accept*” with questionable working values. (When holding an excessive number of “*Quacks*” [Queens and Jacks], Opener should *not* make a “*super-acceptance*.”)

D. Opener should not “*super-accept*” with too many high cards of uncertain worth. (For example: **Qx, AKxx, KJx, QJxx**. This hand has 16 HCP, but facing a weak Responder, some or all of the outside high cards will not take tricks on offense.)

Bridge Tip # 441

Bidding is the language of the game of Bridge. If spoken correctly and listened to carefully by one’s Partner, it attempts to tell one’s Partner both the strength (HCP’s) and the distribution of the cards (the number held in each suit) held by the Bidder. The message that Partner is trying to impart, but often misunderstood, is, sometimes, however, as follows: “*Partner, please understand that my bid now is attempting to show you, in distribution and HCP’s, something different from that which this same bid would have implied, had I bid it earlier during the present auction!*” Here are some examples:

<u>(Example 1)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1H	P	1-NT	P
	2C	P	2H	

(Here, South, having originally shown 6-10 HCP's, fewer than 4-Spades, and lack of support for Opener's Heart suit is now showing either 3 or more Hearts and a very weak hand, one too weak to have originally supported Opener; i.e., one with a greater number of losing tricks (10 or more) than it would have shown had the Heart suit been supported earlier (**Hand 1**), else a hand which is forced to take the better choice of the two suits presented by Opener, one with only 2-Hearts, not three or more that it would have required, had it been supported earlier (**Hand 2**).

Hand 1: Q98 J76 Q52 Q952

Hand 2: Q73 Q7 5 K987532

<u>(Example 2)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1H	1S	P	P
	Double	P	2H	

(Here, South, having originally shown the inability to compete, is now, prodded and encouraged by Partner's re-opening Take-Out Double, showing three or more card support for Opener, but with 0-5 HCP's, a hand too weak to have entered the auction earlier, one not unlike that shown in **Hand 3**.

Hand 3: Q98 J76 87652 82

<u>(Example 3)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1H	1D	P	P
		1-NT	2C	

(Here, South, having originally shown the inability to compete over his/her RHO's opening call of **1D**, is now showing a desire to enter the auction, absent 3-card or longer support for Partner's Heart suit, but with a long Club suit and some competitive HCP's, not unlike that shown in **Hand 4**.

Hand 4: J954 Q7 7 AJ7652

Learn to listen to what is said in the bidding by one's Partner, but, more importantly, what is, sometimes, implied by the fact that that same bid, just made, had not been bid earlier.

Bridge Tip # 440

Standard bidding practice dictates that there is *never* a circumstance when one preempts over a previous preempt. Partner of the one who has previously pre-empted can, however, further the level of the preempt bid made by his/her Partner (Example 1), but must never pre-empt in another suit (Example 2).

(Example 1) **North** **East** **South** **West**

2D

P

4D (A furtherance of North's preempt)

(Shows 4-Diamonds and very few HCP's)

(An attempt to further the bidding mountain over which the Opponents must climb if they wish to compete in the auction)

(Example 2) **North** **East** **South** **West**

2D

P

2H (A forcing, on-going, game-seeking strong bid)

(Shows 15 or more HCP's or its equivalent)

(Is not a preempt)

Similarly, neither member of the opposition should ever preempt over a preempt bid made by the other Partnership (Example 3).

Example 3) **North** **East** **South** **West**

2D

2H

(A strong overcall with opening count or better)

(Is not a preempt)

Since, as just described, since no Player should preempt over a previous preempt by Partner or either Player from the opposition, the question, then, arises as to what would be the meaning should the bidding proceed as shown in Example 4?

Example 4) **North** **East** **South** **West**

2D

3H (?)

This jump overcall is clearly not a pre-empt over North's preempt of **2D**, and must, therefore, by elimination, be a very, very strong overcall, stronger than the hand needed to bid in Example 3, above, and not unlike the hand shown below.

East Holds:

AK5

AQJT7 (Shows a 5-card or longer suit with
53 very near game-values)
AQ6

Bridge Tip # 439

5-NT is almost never a contract at which one is usually desirous of playing. A bid of "**5-NT**" when used in the Blackwood Convention is used to ask for Kings, and when used following a **1-NT** opening by Partner is quantitative, based upon Partnership agreement, seeking **7-NT** if Opener holds the top HCP count of his/her opening **1-NT** call. In years past, it used to be that a bid of **5-NT** asked Partner to bid a Grand Slam with 2 of the top 3 honors (the so-called "*Grand Slam Force*," but, today, with the advent of the use of "*Roman Key Card Blackwood*," that method is no longer useful.

Other than the three uses referenced above, a bid of "**5-NT**" is, today, artificial and says, "*Partner, I want to be in a small slam, but I am not sure which one is best—please help me choose.*" In other words, outside of the three uses shown above, a "**5-NT**" call effectively says, "*Partner, pick a slam!*" The Responder should take into account the previous bidding sequence just concluded, and try to make an informed decision, based upon his/her holdings.

You, Responder hold: **A2**
 K54
 KJ8

AK972 Partner opens **1D** and you, Responder, bid **2C**.

Opener then re-bids **2-NT**. Now what? You are not interested in a Grand Slam (with 18 opposite maybe 13), but probably are willing to play in a small slam, but which one? Bid "**5-NT**." Bring Partner into the decision-making process!

You belong in: **6C** if Opener holds: **QJ76 A9 Q954 QJ6**
 6D if Opener holds: **K96 AQJ Q9732 64**
 6-NT if Opener holds: **KQ5 QJ6 A765 Q54**

Bridge Tip # 438

Two-suited overcalls, specifically “*Michaels Cue-Bids*,” and the “*Unusual No-Trump*” Conventions, are both widely used. It is commonly practiced that they each show two specifically- referenced suits, 5-5 or better in length, and are either (a) very weak (showing 5-10 HCP’s), else (b) very strong (showing 16 {+} HCP’s). What is less commonly understood, and, therefore, often misused, however, is that there use, with respect to at which seat at the table they are applicable, differs.

“*Michaels Cue-Bids*” are applicable in both the balancing (4th) and the direct (2nd) seats. Thus, assuming the suits referenced in each of the following bidding scenarios are correct and the strengths are as shown above, both of the bidding sequences shown here are correct.

<u>North</u> 1C, 1D, 1H, 1S		(or)	<u>North</u> 1C, 1D, 1H, 1S	
<u>East</u> “2C,” “2D,” “2H,” “2S”	<u>West</u> Pass		<u>East</u>	<u>West</u> “2C,” “2D,” “2H,” “2S”
<u>South</u> Pass			<u>South</u>	

The “*Unusual No-Trump*” Convention, however, is only applicable in the direct (2nd) seat. In the balancing (4th) seat, however, a **2-NT** overcall shows a balanced, very strong (18-20 HCP) No-Trump distribution, with at least one stopper in the suit bid by the opening Player. In this position, as a 4th seat overcall, it is not the “*Unusual No-Trump*.”

AQx		<u>North</u> 1H	
AQxx	<u>East</u>		<u>West</u>
KJx	2-NT		Pass
Kxx		<u>South</u> Pass	

Bridge Tip # 437

Conventional wisdom today seems to support the concept of opening **1-NT** even when possessing a 5-card Major, a **5-3-3-2** distribution, and especially when holding the minimum of 15 HCP's. This has become almost standard owing to the fact that if one were, alternatively, to open one-of-the-Major, with this specific holding, one's re-bid, if called upon to make one, would necessarily be a problem. For example: A re-bid of two of the Major would show 6-pieces, a re-bid **1-NT** would be capped at 14 HCP's, a re-bid of **2-NT** would be an overbid since it promises 18-19 HCP's, and no 4-card alternative suit exists, any one of which, if taken, would be in error of Opener's actual distribution and/or point count.

As a result, when opening **1-NT** under these circumstances, absent the Partnership's utilization of "*Puppet Stayman*," which would, most times, uncover the as-yet, un-bid 5-card Major holding, some Partnerships have adopted the following conventional responses which, seeks to uncover a possible 5-3 "*Golden Fit*" in an as-yet, un-explored-for Major. These conventional responses, if utilized, are both alertable.

a) Responder's bid of "**3H**" to Partner's opening call of **1-NT** shows game values (10 + HCP's) and a (**3-1-4-5**) or a (**3-1 5-4**) holding; i.e., **3-Spades**, looking for 5 in Opener's hand; and,

b) Responder's bid of "**3S**" to Partner's opening call of **1-NT** shows game values (10 + HCP's) and a (**1-3-4-5**) or a (**1-3 5-4**) holding; i.e., **3-Hearts**, looking for 5 in Opener's hand, to which;

Opener then either accepts the game-level **4H** or **4S** bid, if holding 5-pieces in the referenced Major, else corrects to **3-NT**, thereby finding the likely, optimum, final contract.

Bridge Tip # 436

Mel Colchamiro's Rule of 23 - Double or Bid On

Do not let the Opponents steal the bid when you know your combined point count. If you know your side has at least 23 HCP and the opponents "*have the bid*," you have only two options: "*Double*," or bid on. To "*Pass*" is not an option.

Example

<u>The Bidding:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>You</u>
	1S	P	1-NT	
	2C	P	P	?

Your Hand: **A4 Q83 7542 KJ73**

In the above-referenced example, you should “***Double!***”

Bridge Tip # 435

A “***Forcing No-Trump***” is customarily used in conjunction with the “***Two-over-One***” bidding system. After an opening bid of either 1H or 1S, Opener’s responding Partner’s first call of “1-NT” is forcing. **Absent a call from Opener’s right-hand Opponent, Opener must make a re-bid** in order to further describe his/her holdings as to both strength and distribution.

Absent a 6-card Major, enabling Opener to re-bid his/her Heart or Spade suit, and absent the presence of a second 4-card or longer suit which could then be bid, and absent holding 16-18 HCP's thereby enabling Opener to make a natural re-bid of **2-NT**, or a jump shift evidencing 19 (+) HCP's, Opener, being forced to make a re-bid, must often make a call of either **2C** or **2D** which, hypothetically, could be a suit with as few as 3-pieces.

With a weak hand and holding just 2-pieces of Opener's Major, and 3- or 4-pieces of Opener's re-bid Minor suit, Responder is left with an uncomfortable decision whether to "***Pass***" Opener's Minor suit re-bid, or to support Opener's Major with just two support pieces.

<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>South Holds:</u>
1S	"1-NT"	Q4
2C/2D	???	Q864
		K642
		932

Conventional wisdom is that Responder, under these circumstances, should re-bid Opener's Major rather than to "*Pass*" the Minor suit re-bid made by Opener. Obviously if Opener's Minor suit holding were to actually be a 5-piece suit, the final contract in

the Minor suit would be preferred over the 7-card Major suit fit. But, not knowing the length of Opener's Minor suit holding, and assuming, therefore, that it is as few as 3-pieces, Responder should sign-off by re-bidding Opener's Major suit. A 5-2 fit final contract is better than a 4-3 fit, if the Partnership holds but 7-pieces in the suit finally chosen. "*Crap happens!*"

Bridge Tip # 434

A line of play that benefits Declarer is usually detrimental to the Defense, and vice-versa. For this reason, when in a Suit contract and the Defenders see that Declarer is **not** drawing Trumps, they, the Defenders, when the lead is gained by them, should consider drawing Trumps themselves. It should be obvious to the Defense under such circumstances that Declarer is likely to be setting up a cross-ruffing scenario, and the potential beneficial effect of doing so, by Declarer, will be markedly diminished, or even thwarted entirely, if the Defenders can reduce the number of outstanding Trump cards held by Declarer's side, particularly those held in the Dummy. In such instances a good offense is often the winning play for the Defense.

Bridge Tip # 433

Declarer, when playing in a Suit contract, must not always rush to draw any outstanding Trump cards. There are many occasions when a Declarer should **not** rush to pull the outstanding Trumps. Among others they are:

1. When the only outstanding Trump card, the 13th, is a winner for the Defense, usually the Queen, Declarer should leave it outstanding and go about any other Declarer play available, letting the Defender take his/her Trump trick at a later time of the Defender's choice, and, thereby, not using two of Declarer's Trumps to take out the losing last Trump of the defense. This is the so-called "***Rule of 1.***"

2. When Declarer holds all of the outstanding high Trumps and can cross-ruff the entire hand allowing the Defenders to under-ruff whenever obligated to do so, thereby using his/her Trump cards one at a time and increasing the number of Trump tricks available. At such times, Declarer must take his side trick winners first, **before** cross-ruffing.
3. When Declarer realizes that if he/she were to draw the outstanding Trumps, that there is little productive trick-taking capacity left in the hand. In such instances Declarer should play his/her side suits enabling him/her to use his/her Trumps separately whenever, and as often as possible, by trumping when able to do so.
4. When there is a 4-4 Trump fit, there is a likely 4-1 or even a 5-0 Trump break nearly 1/3 of the time. If Declarer cannot withstand such a division, he/she should give serious thought to playing out the hand without, volitionally, touching the Trump suit.

Quite often, Declarer, having not rushed to draw Trumps, under the above-listed circumstances, among others, will often make contracts that would have otherwise failed, else increase the number of offensive tricks captured. Bottom line, **Declarer should not always rush to draw Trumps.**

Bridge Tip # 432

There is many a time where a Defender on lead suspects that Partner will win the first trick in a suit where Declarer is likely to hold only a singleton. This can be known in cases where the bidding indicates the number of cards held in each suit, or when Declarer or Dummy has, during the bidding, made a “***Splinter***” bid, for example. In such instances, Partner must lead to trick two, and his/her suit chosen, might be crucial to the Defenders securing the maximum number of defensive tricks.

In such cases, where this is a given and known by both Defenders from the start, it can be important for the Defender on lead to use the first card led, to give a suit-preference in order to assist Partner’s choice as to which suit to switch-to for the start of trick two. This is the same technique used when Partner plays the Ace at trick one, from an Ace-King combination and Dummy, once tabled, shows but a singleton in the

suit led. At such times, the Partner of the one on lead will give a suit-preference to assist his/her Partner as to which suit to switch-to at trick two.

When your side has found a fit, or when you know that Dummy or Declarer is likely to hold a singleton, your lead, in the suit chosen at trick one, is a suit-preference to help Partner find the better continuation after winning the first trick.

Bridge Tip # 431

It is widely recommended that amongst one of the better leads against a Suit contract is, oft times, a Trump card so as to cut down on the ruffing capacity of the hand with the shorter Trump holding, usually that of the Dummy. Having opted to lead a Trump card, the Defender on lead must determine which Trump card should be chosen to be led, and whether or not to lead a Trump in the first instance.

Although there is always an exception to any statistical probability, there are certain Trump holdings from which one might tend to lose a trick for the Defense if one chooses to lead Trump. They are: **JX, JXX, QX, QXX, or X.**

Assuming that one's Trump holdings is not one of the above-listed, and assuming that there is not a better lead such as top of a sequence, or the suit bid by Partner, and any of a number of other possible good choices, and assuming that one chooses to lead a Trump card; which of the several Trump cards should one choose to lead? The answer is, ***when leading Trump, always choose the lowest Trump card.*** The reasons for this are as follows:

1. A higher Trump card held by you might be sufficient to disallow Declarer from trumping in the Dummy if that Defender holds a higher Trump than the Dummy and is short in the same suit.
2. This informs Partner that all of the lower unseen Trump cards are held by the Declarer. Once known, this, oft times, facilitates the counting of the hand which might indicate a successful line of defense in preference from a lesser line, which might be less productive.

Bottom line, **intermediate Trump cards can be of immeasurable value later in the hand.**

Bridge Tip # 430

In practice, when bidding in a competitive scenario, the higher the level of the competitive auction, the less likely it is in all practicality that one should bid on. If you have succeeded in pushing the Opponents, then at some level, you must abandon the auction and hope that they have guessed wrong. The following bridge axiom exists, therefore, consistent with this thinking: “***Think twice before you bid five over five as the 5-level belongs to the Opponents.***”

The factors which contribute to usually make it ill-advised to bid five over five are as follows:

1. The Opponent's hands are likely to be balanced such that your side will frequently have more winners against their 5-level contract than you might imagine.
2. You and/or Partner are often likely to hold minor honors in their Trump suit and the Opponents are likely to have minor honors in yours.
3. In defending against high-level contracts the numbers of card combinations that affect the results become diminished, and as a result, the chances of you or the Opponents erring become less likely.
4. Unless the hand is very distributional, the trick-taking potential of the two sides, your and the Opponents, rarely exceeds 20 and, as a result, even if your five over five attempt works out, your potential profit is so small that it does not work out to be statistically profitable to justify the risk of your not making your five-level commitment.
5. The combined trick-taking potential of the hands is often 19 or fewer and when this is so, five-over-five auctions are often disastrous.

Bridge Tip # 429

One of the bridge axioms known to most Players is “***Eight ever, Nine never!***” This maxim refers to the fact that statistically, one should always (“***ever***”) finesse for a

missing Queen with *eight* trumps, and “*never*” finesse when holding *nine* or more Trumps.

A twist on the above-referenced axiom is “*Eight never, Nine ever*,” deals with a totally different bridge situation. The decision that a Partnership is customarily faced with during competitive bidding is just how high to bid during competitive situations. Consistent with the “**LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**,” when considering bidding to the 3-level over the Opponent’s 3-level contract, “*always*” bid when your side holds *nine* Trumps, and “*never*” bid when holding only *eight*.

Bridge Tip # 428

Competitive bidding is an integral part of both IMP and Match Point Duplicate play. The problem of when to compete in part-score situations is not definitive, but useful guidelines do exist. These guidelines assume that the HCP strength is nearly equally divided between the two sides.

1. Don’t save against a part-score when vulnerable. Only do so if you are reasonably certain that you will make your contract.
2. Don’t save when you have honors in the Opponent’s suit(s) or honors in short suits.
3. Don’t save when you have a balanced distribution.
4. Do save when your side has a double fit.
5. Do save when your high cards are concentrated in your long suits.
6. When attempting to save, only attempt to do so when the number of Trumps held by your side is equal or greater than the number of tricks to which your bid commits (“**THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**”). This factor can be impacted by the location of high cards and distributional values of the Partnership’s hand.

Bridge Tip # 427

Splinter” bids, a double jump-shift into a new suit, can be used by either Opener (**1H – 1S—“4D”**) or Responder (**1D – “3S”**). They show game-going values (20 + HCP’s by Opener and 13 + HCP’s by Responder, or their equivalent), at least a 4-card fit for Partner’s last-mentioned suit, and a singleton (***not*** a singleton Ace) or a void in the splintered suit. They are used for both game-forcing and slam exploration by guaranteeing a fit and enabling the Partnership to re-evaluate its holdings in a critical side suit which previously offered more losers than the Splinter bid will now, ultimately, eradicate.

Splinter bids, thus, often enable a Partnership to arrive at a makeable Game, and to explore, if feasible, for a potential Slam without the requisite number of HCP’s and, alternatively, stay out of an un-makeable Slam (one with the presence of duplication) that they might otherwise unknowingly reach.

Subsequent to a Splinter bid, the Partner, upon hearing the **“Splinter,”** is usually in a position to best judge his/her side’s Slam prospect. With high-card strength, other than the Ace in Partner’s splinter suit, Slam possibilities increase, and with no wasted values, the Partnership’s high-card points are enhanced. Once motivated by the **“Splinter”** bid to seek the possibility of the presence of a previously-unsuspected Slam, the use of an Ace-asking convention can further facilitate and explore for Slam prospects.

Bridge Tip # 426

A **3-NT** response to Partner’s opening bid of either **1H** or **1S** can vary amongst Partnerships, and needs to be discussed so as to avoid miss-interpretation. The three most common natural interpretations are as follows:

1. 13-15 HCP’s, necessarily denying support for Partner’s Major
 2. 13-15 HCP’s with 3- or 4-card support for Partner’s Major, but with a **4-3-3-3** or a **3-4-3-3** distribution such that the HCP and losing trick counts are out of sync. Such hands are best played in **3-NT** for a better match point score.
 3. 16-18 HCP’s; i.e., a hand equivalent to a strong **1-NT** opening with Slam interest if Opener holds greater than minimum opening values.
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Bridge Tip # 425

Opening leads can, and oft times do, affect the final result of most contracts. Leads against Small Slams and Grand Slams bid by the Opponents are necessarily different than leads against partial or game-level contracts.

A. As a general rule, one should make attacking leads against Small Slams, with the objective being to set us a defensive trick, assuming that an entry exists which enables the defense to win the established trick ***before*** Declarer can cash twelve winners. Therefore, leads against a Small Slam should be:

1. from a solid honor sequence, if present;
2. from an interrupted honor sequence or two touching honors in a suit that has ***not*** been bid naturally by the Opponents;
3. a singleton if there is a chance that Partner holds either the Ace of that suit or the Ace of Trumps;
4. from an unsupported King or Queen that has ***not*** been bid naturally by the Opponents;
5. an un-bid suit in hopes of finding Partner's strength
6. Do ***not*** lead aggressively against a **6-NT** contract – safety should be the operative word if you do not have an honor sequence to lead.

B. Leads against a Grand Slam are, again, necessarily different from leads against Small Slams. An Ace should ***not*** be led if the Opponents, on their way to bidding the Slam, did ***not*** use either the “**Gerber**” or the “**Blackwood**” Ace-asking conventions. In addition, do ***not*** chance giving up a trick by leading aggressively. Leads from a long suit through Dummy's bid suit(s) or a Trump lead are usually best.

Bridge Tip # 424

In the “**2/1 game-forcing**” system of bidding, the use of the “***forcing no-trump***” is an important adjunctive convention when responding to an opening **1H** or **1S** bid by Partner. The question arises, however, as to whether or not the “forcing no-trump”

should be used by a “*passed*” hand, and whether or not Opener should feel compelled to bid in response to this “*semi-forcing*” 1-NT response by Opener’s “*previously-passed*” Partner. The answer comes down to a Partnership discussion as to (1) does the Partnership play “*Drury*,” (2) does the Partnership customarily condone the opening of a good 4-card Major suit in the 3rd seat, and (3) how weak does the Partnership allow for a 3rd seat opening call.

Bottom line, if a Partnership never opens a 4-card Major, and rarely opens with sub-minimum values in the 3rd seat, there is **no reason not to play** a 1-NT response over a Major as forcing by a previously-passed hand.

Beneficial understandings when a previously-passed hand bids a semi-forcing, no-trump call:

1. Some form of “*Drury*,” either “*regular*,” “*reverse*,” or “*2-way reverse*” should be used.
2. A 2/1 response, since the Player has “*previously passed*,” shows limited strength, a good, suggested, outside suit, and denies a fit for Opener’s Major suit.
3. Thus, a semi-forcing no-trump call, by default, denies both (1) and (2) above; namely, a fit for Opener’s suit and a good outside suit that Responder wishes to suggest.

As a result, if Opener holds minimum or even sub-minimum values and no convenient re-bid, Opener should elect to “*pass*” a “*semi-forcing*” 1-NT call bid by a “*previously-passed*” hand, electing, alternatively, to end the auction in a playable 1-NT part-score.

Bridge Tip # 423

Some Partnerships have an understanding that, when vulnerable, their 1-NT opening shows 15-17 HCP’s; and when not vulnerable, their 1-NT opening exhibits 12-14 HCP’s. **This is alertable!** The weak opening 1-NT bid has several advantages over its stronger counterpart. These are as follows:

1. Balanced minimum opening bids sometimes cause re-bid problems for Opener, and the weak No-Trump opening solves these potential problems before they arise.

2. When non-vulnerable and holding 15-17 HCP's, Opener shows this by Opening one-of-a-suit and then re-bidding **1-NT**. This, too, is alertable! This approach has the advantage of allowing Responder, holding a weak hand, to bid a 4-card suit at the 1-level enabling the Partnership to potentially find a "**Golden Fit**" that would have otherwise been missed had the opening bid been **1-NT**.
3. By pre-empting the one-level of bidding with a weak **1-NT** opening call, you force your Opponents to either stay out of the auction, or to start their bidding communication at the 2-level. There is complication and danger for them in either event.
4. Weak No-Trump openings seem to invite ill-advised competition by the Opponents, thereby placing the **1-NT** opener's Partner in position to judge the best action for his/her side. A weak No-Trump opening thus tends to collect more penalties than stronger No-Trump opening calls.

To avoid being one-sided on this issue, and to explore the other side of the coin, the dangers inherent in using the weak No-Trump openings are as follows:

1. There is a greater danger of getting doubled without an acceptable and effective escape, thereby suffering a substantial penalty score.
2. There is a danger of missing a 4-4 Major suit fit.
3. There is also a danger in missing a good Minor suit fit which might play better than **1-NT**.
4. There is a danger of "**going against the field**" or getting hand played from the "**wrong**" side when the Responder has a better hand than the No-Trump Opener.

SUMMATION: Partnerships must discuss the pros and cons, as listed above, and make a decision as to whether or not they decide to use this duplicity of opening 1-NT calls, dependent singularly upon vulnerability.

Bridge Tip # 422

After your Partner has overcalled, a **cue-bid** by you of the suit bid by your right-hand Opponent (RHO), is an invitation to game in Partner's overcall suit, evidencing a limit raise or better in support of Partner (Example 1), and a **jump-cue-bid** by you of

the suit bid by your RHO asks Opener to bid **3-NT** with 13 or more HCP's and a stopper in Opener's suit (Example 2).

Example 1: You hold: AXXX XX AQXX KXX

<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1H	1S	Pass	"2H"

Example 2: You hold: QX XX AQXXX AQXX

<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1H	1S	Pass	"3H"

Bridge Tip # 421

If often becomes necessary to make the decision as to whether or not to allow the bidding to end at a low level whenever there is an opening bid followed by two successive "**Passes**" (**one-of-a-suit – pass – pass -- ?**), or when the bidding ends at a low level after your Opponents have established a fit (**one-of-a-suit – pass – two-of-the same-suit – pass – pass -- ?**). Statistically, your Opponents are not likely to hold much more than one-half of the available HCP's during such bidding sequences.

Allowing the bidding to end under such circumstances is unlikely to be a match-point advisable decision when playing under Duplicate conditions, since the bidding, thus far, has shown that the Opponents do not have a preponderance of the available HCP's. In addition, if the Opponents even do have a fit, the odds greatly favor that your side also holds a fit. Conventional wisdom is that one should, under either of the above-mentioned conditions look at your Spade suit. If you hold 5 or more pieces, or a good 4-piece Spade holding, bid them. With 3- or a poor 4-card Spade suit, make a Take-Out Double. With two appropriate 5-card suits make either a "**Michaels**" or an "**Unusual 2-NT**" call. Bottom line, when the Opponents are happy to stop at the 2-level, and have found a fit, do not let them play there! Even if you were to compete and to go down, the Opponents are not likely to "**double**" your contract, and you will either make a plus-score in your direction, else give up fewer match points than they would have achieved by making their thus-far, stated contract.

Alternatively, when the bidding dies at a low level and your Opponents have *not* necessarily established the presence of a fit, the situation is entirely different. In such bidding sequences such as, (1H – Pass – 2C – Pass – 2H – Pass – Pass – ?), or (1H – Pass – 1-NT – Pass – Pass – ?), you are advised to “*Pass*,” and *not* to compete. The Opponent’s bidding suggests a minimum of 22 HCP’s. With this much strength, one of two circumstances exists, either (1) your Opponents have erred in stopping short of a game-level contract, or (2) they have judged the auction correctly having diagnosed a misfit that will produce only a part-score. Under either circumstance you should remain silent and *not* enter the auction. To “*balance*,” and to enter the auction, under these afore-mentioned circumstances, will usually either allow your Opponents to re-enter the auction and make a game, find a better part-score, else, without the afore-mentioned holdings, your side attempts to compete, and gets “*doubled*,” giving-up more match points that would be gleaned by the Opponents, if you were to stay out of the auction.

Bridge Tip # 420

A “*Trap-Pass*” is a “*Pass*” by a Player holding a strong hand, hoping the opposition will bid themselves into difficulties. It is usually made by a Player holding both length and strength in the suit bid by the Opening Bidder seated to his/her right. Under these circumstances, there is strong evidence, at least thus far in the bidding, that the hand is a misfit, and that it will pay to defend rather than to bid.

A “*Trap-Pass*” becomes a doubtful proposition when holding 18 or 19 HCP’s, and is customarily unwise when hold 20 or more HCP’s, as the danger in passing up a game in favor of a small penalty becomes too great.

Alternatively, with a strong, but short holding in the enemy’s suit, it is often best to either make a Take-Out Double with appropriate support for the as-yet, un-bid suits, else to make an overcall of 1-NT with a balanced distribution, and sufficient high-card point strength.

When making a “*Trap-Pass*,” it is important and critical to “*Pass*,” “*in tempo*.” To hesitate and to then “*Pass*” is potentially detrimental for two reasons:

1. It is likely to be counter-productive to alert your Opponents that you have a good hand and likely length and strength in Opener's suit, especially if you end up defending against a final contract bid by your Opponents.
2. Partner is not entitled to the information that would be conveyed if you were to hesitate followed by a reluctant "***Pass.***" Under the worst circumstances, Partner may become barred from the bidding if such a message were to be potentially construed.

Bridge Tip # 419

When your right-hand Opponent (RHO) raises Opener's (your LHO's) suit, after your Partner has overcalled, a "***Double***," by you, is "***Responsive***" (for **Take-Out**), ***not*** for **Penalty** (Example 1). It shows at least 8 HCP values, lack of support for Partner's overcall suit, and a desire to compete in the auction in either of the two, as-yet, un-bid suits. "***Responsive Doubles***" are alertable!

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>West</u> 1H	<u>North</u> 1S	<u>East</u> 2H	<u>South</u> Double (" <i>Responsive</i> ")
	(Clubs and Diamonds, in the instance)			

Alternatively, when your right-hand Opponent (RHO) responds in a new suit, other than that bid by Opener, after your Partner has overcalled in yet a third suit, a "***Double***," by you, is a "***Rosenkranz Double***," (***not*** for **Penalty**, ***nor*** for **Take-Out**) (Example 2). It shows HCP values, and constructive support for Partner's suit, ***including either the Ace or the King*** of Partner's bid suit. If you, alternatively, had supported Partner's suit directly, absent the "***Rosenkranz Double***," it would have shown support, but ***without the Ace or King*** (Example 3). "***Rosenkranz Doubles***" are also alertable!

The advantage of this differentiation is that, following the completion of the auction, if you and Partner become Defenders, whether it is used or not becomes helpful in your decision with regards to making the opening lead. With this differentiation, you and Partner can know definitively whether it is, or is not, safe to lead your jointly-bid suit, away from either the Ace or the King, which, if Partner does not hold the missing top honor, may result in the loss of a trick for your side. **With** the ***Rosenkranz Double***

having been used, you can lead away from either the Ace or the King; without the **Rosenkranz Double** having been used, the Partner on lead will wait until the suit is led by his/her Partner, and will not lead away from either the Ace or the King, as it is not safe to do so.

	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
Example 2:	1D	1S	2C	Double (“Rosenkranz”) (Support of Partner’s Spades <u>with</u> the Ace or the King)

	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
Example 3:	1D	1S	2C	2S (Support of Partner’s Spades <u>without</u> the Ace or the King)

Summary: A “**Double**” by you, as Responder to Partner’s overcall, after your left-hand Opponent (LHO) has opened the bidding with one-of-a-suit and that same suit has been supported by your right-hand Opponent (RHO), (Example 1), is always a “**Responsive Double**.” (**Note:** Only two suits have been bid at the table!)
Whereas:

A “**Double**” by you, as Responder to Partner’s overcall, after your left-hand Opponent (LHO) has opened the bidding with one-of-a-suit and your right-hand Opponent (RHO) has responded in a second suit, (Example 2), is always considered to be a “**Rosenkranz Double**.” (**Note:** Three different suits have been bid at the table!)

These two “Doubles” are mutually exclusive.

Bridge Tip # 418

When using the “**Two-over-One, Game-Forcing**” bidding system, the following adjunctive conventions are used in sync for optimum results:

1. A strong **1-NT** opening (15-17 HCP’s) with Stayman and Jacoby Transfer bids
2. 5-card Majors
3. A “forcing No-Trump” response to Major suit opening bids
4. Pre-emptive jump-shift responses
5. Limit Major suit raises or Bergen Raises
6. Inverted Minor suit raises
7. New Minor Forcing

8. Negative and Responsive Doubles
9. 4th suit Forcing by Responder
10. Splinter Bids
11. “Namyats”

When an “***Unusual 2-No-Trump***” overcall (a distributional 5-5 or better Minor suit overcall) is used by your right-hand Opponent (RHO) after your Partner opens with a strong **1-NT** opening bid, the following responses are recommended:

- “**3C**” = Stayman for the Majors (game values)
 - “**3D**” = Transfer to Hearts
 - “**3H**” = Transfer to Spades
 - “**3S**” = 5-5 in the Majors (game-forcing)
 - 3-NT** = Natural, to play
 - Double** = Interest in doubling one, or both, Minors implied by the overcall
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Bridge Tip # 416

When responding to Partner’s opening bid of one-of-a-suit, followed by a **1-NT** overcall by the would-be Responder’s RHO, Responder, other than a non-competitive, “***Pass***,” has multiple bidding choices as follows:

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>West</u> 1C, 1D, 1H, 1S	<u>North</u> 1-NT	<u>East</u> Double (Penalty)
<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>West</u> 1C, 1D, 1H, 1S	<u>North</u> 1-NT	<u>East</u> 2C, 2D, 2H, 2S (Competitive)
<u>Example 3:</u>	<u>West</u> 1C, 1D, 1H, 1S	<u>North</u> 1-NT	<u>East</u> 3C, 3D, 3H, 3S (Pre-emptive)

<u>Example 4:</u> HCP's)	<u>West</u> 1H, 1S	<u>North</u> 1-NT	<u>East</u> 2C, 2D (6 + Diamonds) (Non-forcing with 0-7
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Bridge Tip # 415

Often, when Partner makes a **Jacoby Transfer** following your opening strong (15-17 HCP) **1-NT** bid, your right-hand Opponent (RHO) makes a “**Lead-Directing Double**.”

1-NT – P – (“2D” or “2H”) – “Double” – P

??

Normally, absent the “**Lead-Directing Double**,” Opener either takes the transfer into the referenced suit, **2H** or **2S** in the above example, or, on occasion, **3H** or **3S**, denoting a “**Super-Acceptance**” of four pieces of the referenced suit along with the maximum 17 HCP holding. Following the “**Double**,” however, Opener is relieved of the responsibility of taking the transfer in that his/her responding Partner is afforded another bid owing to Responder’s left-hand Opponent (LHO) having made the “**Double**.”

Under these conditions, therefore, we can ascribe individual meanings to whether or not Opener *does* or *does not* take the transfer, as follows:

- (a) **1-NT – P – (“2D”/“2H”) – “Double” – P**
Pass (“I have only 2-pieces of your desired suit”)
- (b) **1-NT – P – (“2D”/“2H”) – “Double” – P**
(2H/2S) (“I have 3-pieces of your desired suit, along with 15-16 HCP’s”)
- (c) **1-NT – P – (“2D”/“2H”) – “Double” – P**
(3H/3S) (“I have 4-pieces of your desired suit, along with 17 HCP’s”)

Bridge Tip # 414

Excluding dialogue on “*Puppet Stayman*,” “*Garbage Stayman*,” and “*Crawling Stayman*,” three modifications of the **Stayman Convention** which impact, to some extent, the following dialogue, there needs to be an understanding between Partners as to what is the minimum accepted high-card point (HCP) count necessary, under normal conditions, for Responder to successfully employ the “**2C**” asking-bid, following Partner’s strong opening (15-17 HCP) **1-NT** bid.

It is clear, that, on occasion, when Responder has either one or both 4-card Major suit holdings, and uses the **Stayman Convention** seeking the presence of a potential “*Golden Fit*,” that Opener may have either no 4-card Major suit at all, or holds the opposite one to which Responder is seeking. Under these circumstances, Responder, therefore, needs a sufficient high-card point count such that the Partnership’s return to either a **2-NT** or **3-NT** final contract is likely to succeed, should the Major suit, fit-seeking attempt fail for either of the reasons just enumerated.

Obviously, if Responder holds 9-10 HCP’s, he/she, hearing either a “**2D**” negative response, or a **2H** or **2S** call from Opener representing Opener’s holding of the opposite Major suit from that which Responder is seeking, Responder can use a fall-back continuation of a “**2-NT**” re-bid, inviting Opener to either “**Pass**” with a 15 or poor 16 HCP count, or to accept the invitation by bidding **3-NT**, when holding a good 16 or maximum 17 HCP count.

Confusion exists, however, and mistakes are often made with some Partnerships, when Responder holds 8 HCP’s, or fewer. Using Stayman under these conditions, and failing to find the Major suit fit sought, if Responder were to then re-bid **2-NT**, Opener might, with a good 16 HCP count accept the invitation and proceed to what turns out to be, at best, a 24 HCP count, game-level, **3-NT** contract, one which is statistically likely to fail, under some circumstances.

Conventional wisdom is, therefore, that Responder, with fewer than 9 HCP’s, and with the exclusions noted at the start of this discussion, should **not** employ Stayman, unless the following distributional mitigating conditions prevail:

- a. 8 HCP’s and an outside 5-card suit, or
- b. 7 HCP’s and an outside 6-card suit

With either of these added distributional holdings, Opener holds a better opportunity of establishing 9-tricks with the added assistance of the presence of Responder’s long outside suit, even if the “*Golden Fit*” sought, is **not** found.

Conclusion: With the exception of “Puppet,” “Garbage,” and “Crawling” Stayman, do not employ Stayman opposite Partner’s strong 15-17 HCP count opening 1-NT, with fewer than 9-HCP’s unless a compensating, potentially helpful, outside long suit is present.

Bridge Tip # 413

Much confusion exists with regards to the correct verbalization informing Opponents as to a Partnership’s agreement when conducting **Jacoby Transfers**, and similar bids, responding to Partner’s opening **1-NT** call.

It is universally agreed that (1) when a “**2D**” response is made, transferring to Hearts; and (2) when a “**2H**” response is made, transferring to Spades; that the correct and accepted verbalization, by Opener, is the word “*transfer*.” This is because Opener, under these circumstances, is irrevocably aware that the Responder holds five or more of the desired suit referenced, and wishes Opener to become the Declarer, should the referenced suit become the denomination of the final contract.

However, if the Responder’s call, opposite Opener’s **1-NT** opening bid, is “**2S**,” there is a possible duplicity of meaning, depending upon Partnership agreement.

(3) If the Partnership’s agreement is that, like (1) and (2) above, Responder holds five or more Clubs and wishes Opener to make a **3C** call in order to become the Declarer in a potential Club contract, then, like before, Opener’s verbalization is again, correctly, the word “*transfer*.”

(4) If, however, the Partnership’s agreement is that Opener is to make a “*puppet*” call of “**3C**” with Responder either “*passing*,” if that be Responder’s desired intent, else “*correcting*” to **3D**, if the Responder prefers that Minor, then the proper and correct verbalization by Opener is the word “*alert*.” Here, as you can clearly see, Opener, at the time of his or her “*puppet*” re-bid of “**3C**” has no idea, yet, as to which Minor suit Responder is referencing. Using the word “*transfer*,” under these circumstances, would be incorrect.

Bridge Tip # 412

AN EXERCISE IN BRIDGE LOGIC

Premise: Holding sufficient HCP's to bid a new suit at the 2-level, A Responder who bids, at the 2-level, the suit immediately below the suit bid at the 1-level by Opener, holds five or more pieces of that newly bid suit; i.e.,

2. A 2H first response over Opener's opening bid of 1S shows 5 (+) pieces.
3. A 2D first response over Opener's opening bid of 1H shows 5 (+) pieces.
4. A 2C first response over Opener's opening bid of 1D shows 5 (+) pieces.

Proofs:

1. A 2H first response by a Responder, over Opener's opening bid of 1S, shows **5 or more Hearts:** Since Responder did not support Opener's Spade bid, Responder holds, at most, 2-Spades; and if, hypothetically, Responder's Heart suit held only 4 pieces then he/she would have no fewer than 7-pieces in the two minor suits, one of which would have to have held no fewer than 4-pieces. Responder's hand would thus hold, minimally, either of the two distributions shown here.

	xx		xx
(1)	xxxx	(or)	(2) xxxx
	xxxx		xxx
	xxx		xxxx

If Responder's hand held either of the afore-mentioned distributions, however, his/her correct first response, holding two 4-card choices, would have been **2D** in the first example or **2C** in the second. Since Responder's first response was **2H**, his/her distribution necessarily had to have had, at least, one more card in the Heart suit.

2. A 2D first response by a Responder, over Opener's opening bid of 1H, shows **5 or more Diamonds:** Since Responder did not support Opener's Heart bid, Responder holds, at most, 2-Hearts; and since Responder's first call was not an "*Up-the-Ladder*" bid of 1S, he/she could not hold 4-Spades and would hold, at most, 3-Spades; and if Responder's Diamond suit held only 4 pieces then he/she would also have to hold a 4-card Club suit. Responder's distribution would, thus, be:

xxx
xx
xxxx
xxxx

If Responder's hand held the afore-mentioned distribution, his/her correct first response, holding two 4-card choices, would have been 2C. Since Responder's first response was **2D**, his/her distribution necessarily had to have had, at least, one more card in the Diamond suit.

3. A 2C first response by a Responder, over Opener's opening bid of 1D, shows 5 or more Clubs. Since Responder did not make an "*Up-the-Ladder*" first response of **1H** or **1S**, he/she had to have, at most, 3-pieces of both Major suits. Secondly, since Responder did not respond with a No-Trump call, at any level, his/her distribution was not likely to be balanced. One of many unbalanced distributions could exist, but one factor is clear. As a result of the aforementioned statements coupled with the fact that the Responder did not raise Opener's Diamond call (indicating that he/she has fewer than 5-pieces of Partner's Diamond suit), supports the conclusion that Responder has to have no fewer than 5-pieces of the Club suit.

Bridge Tip # 411

Today, in the "**Standard American**" system of bidding, an opening call of **1-NT**, irrespective of vulnerability, evidences a balanced hand with 15-17 HCP's. In the British "**ACOL**" system of bidding, the same opening call evidences a balanced hand with 12-14 HCP's.

Many Players, today, however, in the "**Standard American**" system, dependent upon vulnerability, have their **1-NT** opening calls showing, when vulnerable, 15-17 HCP's, and when non-vulnerable, 12-14 HCP's.

When non-vulnerable, the opening of **1-NT** with the 12-14 HCP range has a pre-emptive effect of eliminating the 1-level of bidding, making it more difficult for either Opponent to enter the auction. If this latter method of bidding is utilized, then when non-vulnerable, an opening call of any other bid than **1-NT**, shows either greater values than 12-14 HCP's, else an unbalanced distribution.

Bridge Tip # 410

A. A “**Splinter**” Bid (a *Double Jump-Shift*) is an extremely useful way to show Trump support for Partner and, at the same time, shortness in the suit used to “**Splinter**.” Such bids show Game values and either a singleton (*not a singleton Ace*), or a void, in the suit used to “**Splinter**.” Since “**Splinter**” bids promise Game values, they are forcing to a Game-level contract. Thus, a “**Splinter**” bid by the Responder (Example 1) shows 13 (+) HCP’s, and a “**Splinter**” bid by the Opener, opposite Responder’s call, (Example 2) shows 20 (+) HCP’s. **All “Splinter” Bids are alertable.**

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>West</u> 1H	<u>North</u> P	<u>East</u> “4D”	<u>South</u>
--------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------

(East’s bid here is a “**Splinter**” bid and shows Heart support, 13+ HCP’s, a singleton or void in Diamonds, and is forcing to Game.)

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>West</u> 1H “4C”	<u>North</u> P	<u>East</u> 1S	<u>South</u> P
--------------------------	--	---------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------

(West’s bid here is a “**Splinter**” bid and shows Spade support, 20+ HCP’s, a singleton or a void in Clubs, and is forcing to Game.)

B. A single jump-shift by an Opener, following a 2-level response from Responder is also a “**Splinter**” Bid. It is called a “**Mini-Splinter**.”

<u>Example 3:</u>	<u>West</u> 1S “4C”	<u>North</u> P	<u>East</u> 2H	<u>South</u> P
--------------------------	--	---------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------

(West’s bid here shows Heart support, Game values or better, a singleton or a void in Clubs, and is forcing to game.)

C. A *jump-level “Reverse”* by an Opener is also a “**Splinter**” Bid. If West had bid **2H**, here, it would have been a “*natural*” call showing a secondary Heart suit. It would have been a simple “**Reverse**” bid; i.e., showing 17 (+) HCP’s, with the Club suit greater in length than the Hearts, a lack of support for Responder’s Spade suit, and would have been forcing for 1-round. The “**Mini-Splinter**” bid here of “**3H**,” however, shows support for Partner’s Spades, with a singleton or void in Hearts, and is invitational to game. If West, alternatively, had had 20 (+) HCP’s with this same Spade

support, West would have gone directly to **4S**, and thus this “*Mini-Splinter*” is invitational to Game.

Example 4:

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1C	P	1S	P
“3H”			

(West’s single *jump-shift Reverse* here shows 16 (+) HCP’s, a singleton or void in Hearts, and support for Partner’s Spades), and is invitational to game in Spades.

Bridge Tip # 409

In the “**Standard American**” bidding system an opening bid of **1-NT**, has traditionally required **15-17** HCP’s and an evenly-balanced distribution; namely, one with no singletons and no voids.

It could, at the discretion of the Opener’s, however, hold two doubletons. **The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL)** has now slightly modified its stipulations with regards to acceptable distributions for a **1-NT** opening bid.

New Stipulation: At the discretion of the Opening-Bidder, the distribution of an opening bid of **1-NT** may now hold a singleton as long as the singleton is an **A, K, or Q**, (*Examples a & b*), and as long as, in addition, there is not an accompanying doubleton (*Example c*). As before, one may still hold two doubletons (*Example d*).

(a) **AQxx Kxxx K AJxx** (or) (b) **AQxx Kxx A KJxxx** (May now Open **1-NT**)

(c) **A Kxxxx Kx AJxx** (May not open **1-NT** – **Must** open **1H**, instead)

(d) **AQ Kx Kxxxx AJxx** (Can either open **1-NT** or **1D**)

Bridge Tip # 408

Bidding a No-Trump call in the balancing (4th) seat means different things when made at different levels and under varying circumstances.

1.	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (Balancing Seat)</u>
				Pass
	1-of-any-suit	Pass	Pass	1-NT
		(or)		
	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (Balancing Seat)</u>
	1-of-any-suit	Pass	Pass	1-NT

A 1-NT bid in the balancing seat, by either a non-passed hand or by a previously-passed hand both show 10-14 HCP's, an evenly-balanced hand, and a desired, but not mandatory, stopper in the suit bid made by Opener.

2.	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (Balancing Seat)</u>
	1C/1D/1H	Pass	Pass	Double
	Pass	1D/1H/1S	Pass	1-NT

A 1-NT re-bid in the balancing seat, by a hand which previously made Take-Out Double shows a strong, balanced holding (15-17 HCP's), a lack of support for Responder's bid suit, and at least one stopper in Opener's bid suit; i.e., a strong 1-NT opening.

3.	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (Balancing Seat)</u>
				Pass
	1-of-any-suit	Pass	Pass	2-NT

A 2-NT bid in the balancing seat, by a hand which had previously passed is an "Unusual-NT" bid showing 5-5 in the two, lower, un-bid suits, with 5-11 HCP's.

4.	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (Balancing Seat)</u>
	1-of-any-suit	Pass	Pass	2-NT

A 2-NT bid in the balancing seat, by an hand which had not previously bid, shows a balanced hand with 18-19 HCP's and at least one stopper in Opener's bid suit.

5.	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (Balancing Seat)</u>
	1C/1D/1H	Pass	Pass	Double
	Pass	1D/1H/1S	Pass	2-NT

A 2-NT bid in the balancing seat, by a hand which previously made a Take-Out Double and then re-bids 2-NT, over Partner's suit call at his/her cheapest possible level, shows an opening strong 2-NT holding (20-21 HCP's), a lack of support for Partner's bid suit, and at least one stopper in Opener's bid suit.

Bridge Tip # 407

Previously we touched upon the fact that in the direct (2nd) seat, any bid made by a would-be Overcaller must rigidly conform to specific standardized requirements. Among these are

:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-of-a-suit	????		

- A simple overcall, at the 1-level**, Overcaller's suit being of higher rank than Opener's suit, demonstrates a 5-card or longer suit (major or minor), and 8-15 high-card points.
- A simple overcall, at the 2-level**, Overcaller's suit being of lower rank than Opener's suit, demonstrates a 5-card or longer suit (major or minor), and 11-15 high-card points.
- A bid of 1-NT** demonstrates an evenly balanced hand, 15-17 HCP's, and at least 1-stopper in Opener's bid suit.
- A Take-Out Double** shows opening count, its equivalent, or better, and the appropriate shape, defined as fewer than three cards in Opener's bid suit.

In the balancing (4th) seat, however, all of the above-listed, mandatory requirements for any and all of the potential overcalls shown above are eliminated so as to give the Opponents feasibility to enter the auction without obstruction.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-of-a-suit	Pass	Pass	????

- A simple overcall, at the 1-level or at the 2-level** can be made with even as few as 4-cards and is not restricted as to a minimum HCP count.

- b. A **bid of 1-NT** now evidences 10-14 HCP's and a stopper in Opener's suit, although desirable, is not necessarily required as implicitly implied above in the direct (2nd) seat.
- c. A **Take-Out Double** can be made with fewer HCP's than opening count or its equivalent, and shape, although desirable, is not necessarily mandatory.

The standardized requirements for most overcalls differ in the direct (2nd) seat as opposed to similar overcalls potentially made in the balancing (4th) seat.

Bridge Tip # 406

Until recently, it was universally accepted that the appropriate distribution for an opening **Standard American 1-NT** call was a hand holding no voids, no singletons, and, at most, one doubleton. Suppose, however, you were to pick up a hand such as:

K K832 KQ932 AJ4

If you were to open with the customary **1D**, and Responder were to respond **1S**, you may *not* "**Pass**," (*a new suit bid by Responder is forcing for 1-round!*), but what re-bid would be correct?

- a. A re-bid of **1-NT** would show a balanced 12-14 HCP's.
Problem: You are *neither* balanced *nor* holding 12-14 HCP's)
- b. A re-bid of **2D** would tend to show 6 or more pieces held within the Diamond suit.
Problem: A possible option, but still *a distortion*.
- c. A re-bid of **2H** would be a "**Reverse**," showing 17 (+) HCP's
Problem: *Not true*, and the worst lie

Although, of the above listed alternatives, (b) appears the best lie, but there is another option, one that has just recently been approved by the **American Contract Bridge League (ACBL)**. Simply open **1-NT**!

"A No-Trump opening or overcall is natural and now accepted if, by Partnership agreement, it contains no void, at most one singleton which must be the A, K, or Q, or no more than two doubletons. If the hand contains a singleton, it may not also contain a doubleton."

Bridge Tip # 405

Many bridge Players are under the false assumption that the only requirement for a **Take-Out Double** in the direct (2nd) seat is opening count, its equivalent, or better. This is not true! A **Take-Out double requires not only opening count, its equivalent, or better, but also an appropriate shape.**

<u>You Hold:</u>	K964	<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	8	1S	?????		
	AK64				
	A632				

Pass! East, here, could and should, with glee, “**double**” if the opening bid had been **1H**. Under that hypothetical situation, East holds the perfect shape and could stand hearing from any of the possible other three suit choices that West, hypothetically, were to make.

Here, however, with the opening bid having bid **1S**, East should expect, and cannot tolerate, a response of **2H** from Partner. Under most circumstances, the ability to tolerate only some of the possible choices that Responder was to possibly make is unacceptable. Stay out of the auction unless prodded to do otherwise by Partner. Hope for a plus score by defending rather than by bidding offensively.

In order to correctly make a **Take-Out Double** in the direct (2nd) seat, one needs opening count, its equivalent, or better, and also shape. **“Shape,” under these circumstances, is defined as fewer than 3-pieces of Opener’s bid suit.** If you are considering making a **Take-Out Double**, in the direct seat, and hold three or more pieces of Opener’s bid suit, you must not make a **Take-Out Double**, for you do not have the required shape. You must “**Pass.**”

The requirements for bidding anything in the direct (2nd) seat are rigid. They cannot be violated. Whether it be a simple suit overcall, an overcall of 1-NT, a Michaels cue-bid, a pre-emptive jump response, or a Take-Out Double, the necessary and presumed requirements cannot be discounted and avoided. Partner will always expect them to have been followed. Good Partnerships are based upon consistency and trust.

Bridge Tip # 404

In the “**Two-Over-One, Game-Forcing System**” of bidding, a new suit at the 2-level, bid by Responder, absent competition, is customarily forcing to Game with one exception, if agreed-to by the Partnership.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1B	Pass	2A	(Game forcing)

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1H or 1S	Pass	2C or /2D	Pass
2H or 2S	Pass	3C or 3D	(Can be “ <i>Passed</i> ” by Partnership agreement)

In competition, however, a new suit by Responder, bid at the 2-Level, shows 10 or more HCP’s, and is not necessarily forcing to game. So as not to impede the bidding when in competition, the “Two-Over-One” is no longer necessarily in effect.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1B	2A	2E	(Not forcing to Game = 10 (+) HCP’s)

Bridge Tip # 403

Previous, most bridge players espoused an upper limit for the strength of a negative double. Many put it at **3S**, some even at **4H**. As part of this thinking, following either a **4S** pre-emptive overcall, or a **4S** opening bid, a “**Double**” by the opposition meant penalties, and a “**4-NT**” bid was for “**Take-Out**.”

Today, many experts espouse *no upper limit*, and with that in mind, the following new meanings have been placed on the previously mentioned oppositional bids described above. After a **4S** opening bid or a **4S** preemptive overcall as shown here:

(a)	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>		<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1C	4S	Double	(or)		4S	Double

The “**Double**” under either of theses bidding circumstances is a **3-suited overcall** with Game values or better.

(b)	<u>North</u> 1C	<u>East</u> 4S	<u>South</u> 4-NT	(or)	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u> 4S	<u>South</u> 4-NT
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The “4-NT” bid under either of these bidding circumstances is a 2-suited overcall with game values or better.

Obviously, any changes, as outlined in both (a), and (b), above, must be agreed-to, by Partnership understanding and agreement.

Bridge Tip # 402

Leading from AK combinations

A. On the opening lead, against a Suit contract, Defenders customarily lead the Ace from any AKx(x) side suit holding, if that suit is chosen to be led. Naturally, if the **AK** is led from a doubleton holding, however, the sequence chosen is the opposite, (the King first and then the Ace), so as to identify the doubleton holding to Partner in order to signal for a ruffing potential at a later time.

There are, however, three exceptions, against a Suit contract, when holding an AKx(x) combination, when the Ace is **not** led on opening lead (you lead the King, first, instead), and they are as follows:

- 1) When you are leading ***a suit which Partner has bid, whether you have supported it or not.***
- 2) When you are leading ***a suit which you have bid, and which Partner has supported.***
- 3) When you are defending against ***a suit contract at the 5-level, or higher.***

These three exceptions just enumerated have a specific goal. In each of these three cases, Partner’s card discarded on your King, whether high or low, shows one thing and one thing only; namely, whether or not Partner does or does not hold the Queen. A high card discarded shows that Partner does indeed hold the Queen, whereas a low discard denies the presence of the Queen. If the Queen is signaled and, thus, held by Partner, Leader has the option to choose to under-lead the Ace. By Leader doing this, he/she

telegraphs the desire for a specific, switch-of-suit return from Partner. A high card returned asks for a switch to the higher-ranking of the two remaining suits, and a low card led asks for a switch to the lower-ranking of the two remaining suits. **Defense can be fun!!!!!!**

B. Alternatively, in the middle of the hand, against a Suit contract, Defenders normally lead the King from any AKx(x) holding. Once again, if the lead is made specifically from a doubleton, the opposite is chosen, namely the Ace first, and then the King.

Bridge Tip # 401

Most Players permit Opener to make a Game try (a “*Super-Acceptance*”) directly over a **Jacoby Transfer** bid by jumping in Partner’s suit when holding **both**:

- a. a maximum opening **1-NT** count (17 HCP’s)
- b. 4-pieces of Responder’s referenced suit

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>		<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1-NT	2D		1-NT	2H
“3H”		(or)	“3S”	

This action holds a further benefit in that, as in the case of Bergen Raises, the jump in Partner’s referenced suit while the Partnership holds at least 9-pieces, also acts preemptively, even if the Responder holds very few HCP’s. Bergen raises are based on the 7, a hand evaluation concept which states that with nine trumps one should compete at the three-level regardless of high card strength.

Extending this concept even further, many Players, today, **when Opener holds 4-pieces of Responder’s referenced suit**, expand this super-acceptance concept notwithstanding the number of HCP’s held by Opener, as follows:

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1-NT	2D/2H
3H/3S (4-pieces and a minimum 15 or 16 HCP’s)	

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1-NT	2D/2H
2-NT (4-pieces, a maximum 17 HCP’s and, specifically, a 4-3-3-3 distribution)	

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1-NT	2D/2H
3C/3D (4-pieces, a maximum 17 HCP's and a doubleton in the Minor suit bid)	

Bridge Tip # 400

Customarily, a sequence of bidding between you and Partner, the Opponents having passed throughout, of **1S**, **2H**, **3C** or **3D** would be considered a “***High Reverse***.” This is why when holding the following: **AKJXX, XX, X, AQXXX**, Opener, playing standard systems, should open **1C** and plan to re-bid Spades twice as if 6-Clubs and 5-Spades were held. To open with **1S**, followed by a **3C** or **3D** re-bid after Partner were to, hypothetically, bid **2H** would be a “***High Reverse***,” evidencing 17 or more HCP's.

The above problem, however, is not true if the Partnership is playing a 2/1 system of bidding, for a “***High Reverse***” does **not** exist in the 2/1 system of bidding. With the above referenced hand, Opener should not hesitate to open **1S**. If Responder were to bid **1-NT**, Opener could re-bid **2C**, or **2D**, respectively. If Responder were to respond **2D** or **2H**, Opener could re-bid **3C** without concern that 17 or more HCP would erroneously be shown.

A “*High Reverse*” does not exist in the 2/1 bidding system in the game of bridge.

Bridge Tip # 399

It is often debated as to whether or not to open **1-NT** when holding a 5-card Major with 15 or 16 HCP's. Consider the following example: Opening **1H** or **1-NT** are both correct; but:

QX
AJXXX
KXX
KQX

1. **A 1-NT opening is decisively more descriptive than opening one-of-a-Major.** An opening bid of **1H** covers a wide range of strength; i.e., namely, from 11 - 21 HCP's; and a distribution which could be either balanced or unbalanced.

Alternatively, an opening bid of **1-NT** describes an exact, narrow range of strength (15-17 HCP's), and a balanced hand, most likely showing no voids, no singletons, and not more than one doubleton (Note: current allowance for the presence of two doubletons or a singleton Q, K, or A). As a result, an opening bid of **1-NT**, because it is more descriptive, is less likely to lead the Partnership into either under-bidding or over-bidding the final contract.

2. **A 1-NT opening avoids a potential re-bid problem.** If the above hand were to have been opened **1H**, examine the possible re-bids should Partner responds **1S**.

Passing is not an alternative, and,

- a. **1-NT** would show a minimum balanced hand of 12-14 points (**an under-bid**)
- b. **2-NT** would show a strong balanced hand of 18-19 points (**an over-bid**)
- c. A jump to **3H** would show 16-18 points and at least a six-card heart suit (**incorrect on both counts**)
- d. A re-bid of either **2C** or **2D** would show a second 4-card suit. (**incorrect here**)

There is no attractive re-bid if this hand were to have opened 1H under these conditions.

3. **The 1-NT opening has some additional pre-emptive value over a 1H opening call.** Over a **1H** opening bid, one's left-hand Opponent (LHO) can enter the auction with a **1S** overcall. This is no longer possible if the opening bid were to have been **1-NT**. One's Left-hand Opponent would have to enter the auction at the 2-level, and because Responder has a better descriptive picture of Opener's hand, Responder now has a clearer option to potentially "**double**" any Overcall for penalty, else bid on more effectively.

4. **Concealing the five-card major can be an advantage in the play.** By concealing the 5-card Major suit holding, the Opponents may have greater difficulty in determining Declarer's distribution during the play of the hand.

5. **The stronger hand is more likely to be declaring.** After opening **1-NT**, this hand is more likely to become the Declarer whether the Partnership plays in either No-Trump, or in a Suit contract, should **Stayman** or **Jacoby Transfer** bids be used by Responder. Keeping the strong hand concealed can, oft times, be advantageous during the play of the hand. If you were to have opened the bidding with **1H**, for example,

and Partner were to have responded 1-NT, now Partner is likely to be the Declarer and the strong hand will be exposed.

Conclusion: Do not hesitate to open 1-NT with a balanced hand that includes a 5-card major suit, especially if your HCP count is at the lower end of your Partnership's three high-card point count range needed for a 1-NT opening (15-16 HCP's for most Partnerships today).

Bridge Tip # 398

The **American Contract Bridge League (ACBL)** indicates that an opening weak-2 bid can hold as much as any seven (7) high-card point count spread to which a Partnership has agreed. Most use a 5-11 HCP range. There is no right-wrong to whatever spread to which a Partnership agrees. The question arises however, as to what, if any, are the limits to which 5-11 HCP count holdings are used, and what outside distributions, in addition to the 6-card or longer suit used, are acceptable to the Partnership.

Some, but not all Partnerships, agree that one should never open a weak 2-bid with an Ace outside the suit bid, while others say that one should never hold either an outside void or an outside 4-card Major suit holding. These three limitations are not mandatory, rather are by Partnership agreement.

In addition, some insist that the suit used for the weak 2-bid should contain two of the top three honors (so-called “*structured*” or “*disciplined*” weak 2-bids), while others deny this necessity (so-called “*unstructured*” or “*undisciplined*” weak 2-bids). Again this is simply by Partnership agreement.

One limitation, however, that does seem to be universal, is simply that amongst the 5-11 HCP spread, any hand holding two Aces should never open a weak 2-bid, because the hand holds too strong a defensive capability.

These limitations and restrictions, as reviewed above, must be discussed and agreed-to by each Partnership for maximum results when utilizing weak 2-bids.

Bridge Tip # 397

In bridge, all bids, done correctly so as to describe both one's high-card point count and distribution, are dependent not only upon one's holdings, but also upon the bidding environment prior to one's turn to bid. In the examples shown below, four different re-bids are needed as a result of different bidding sequences, notwithstanding a lack of change of one's holdings.

What is the correct re-bid, and why, given your following hand in the various bidding sequences as shown herein? You Hold: **AKXX AQ XX AQXXX**

1. You open **1C** and, after LHO "**Passes**," Partner responds **1S**. RHO also "**Passes!**" What is your correct re-bid? (**Answer: 4S**) Partner holds at least 6 HCP's, or its equivalent, so you are assured that you have a combined holding of at least 26 HCP's as your doubleton Diamond and doubleton Heart holdings are now worth a cumulative extra two points. A re-bid of only **3S** would be an under-bid. It could be "*passed*" as it would have been invitational. Note, also, that your **4S** re-bid is *not* a closeout. It invites Responder to proceed further toward a possible Slam-level contract if holding an appropriate hand with extra values. "*He who knows goes!*"
2. You open **1C** and, after LHO "**Passes**," Partner responds **1H**. RHO also "**Passes!**" What is your correct re-bid now? (**Answer: 2S**) This would be interpreted by Partner as a jump-shift evidencing 19 or more HCP's, an unbalanced hand of at least two biddable suits, and fewer than four Hearts. Any re-bid by Responder, here, would not evidence any extra values since his/her re-bid is forced, as the Partnership is now in a Game-forcing auction, 19 or more opposite 6 or more.
3. Your right-hand Opponent opens **1D**, after which you "**Double**." LHO "**Passes**" and Partner responds **1S**. RHO also "**Passes!**" What is your correct re-bid? (**Answer: 3S**) Partner, having bid at the cheapest possible level, shows 0-8 HCP's. He/she might have virtually nothing. A "**Pass**," here by you would have shown no extra values other than opening count or its equivalent (shown previously by your "*double*"), a re-bid by you of **2S** would have shown 16-18

HCP's, but a jump-raise to **3S**, opposite Partner's forced response, indicates a hand worth 19+ HCP's and invites Game if Partner holds the top of his/her bid; namely, 6-8 HCP's.

4. Your right-hand Opponent opens **1H**, after which you "**Double.**" LHO "**Passes**" and Partner responds **2D**. RHO also "**Passes!**" When you re-bid **2-NT**, Partner responds and re-bids **3D**. What would you bid now? (**Answer: Pass**) By virtue of your re-bid of **2-NT**, you have already shown an interest in Game. Partner must hold a dreadful hand such as: (**XXX XX JXXXXX JX**). Any second re-bid by Responder other than a re-bid of the same suit presented in his/her first response would show Game interest. You have already told Partner twice that you hold a very good hand by virtue of your original "**double,**" followed by a re-bid of **2-NT**. Three times would be once too many causing a possible disaster should you get "**doubled.**" *Don't fight City Hall!*

Bridge Tip # 396

Partnerships must come to a consensus whether a **3H** or a **3S** response can be used when responding to Partner's opening call of a strong (15-17 HCP) **1-NT**, and if agreed-upon to be used, what meanings for such responses are then designated. If such responses are agreed to be used by the Partnership, the question then arises as to whether such calls are natural or whether they are conventional, and if conventional, then what special significance are they meant to impart. Two possible, different, conventional meanings for the use of such responses are commonly offered, and they are as follows:

- 1a.** A "**3H**" conventional response evidences a 5-5, or longer, in both Majors and a very weak hand (0-6 HCP's). Opener either "*passes,*" else "*corrects*" to a partial **3S** final contract.

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1-NT	"3H" (Jxxxx Qxxxx xx x) ("Alertable")
Pass or 3S	

- 1b.** A "**3S**" conventional response evidences a 5-5, or longer, in both Majors and a strong hand with game values (10+ HCP's). Opener then re-bids either **4H** or **4S**, to play.

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1-NT	"3S" (KQxxx AJxxx xx x) ("Alertable")
4H or 4S	

Note: Alternatively, without the use of (b) as shown above, the same result can be achieved by Responder using a "**Jacoby Transfer**" to Spades, and then re-bidding a game-level **4H** re-bid.

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1-NT	"2H" (Transfer) (KQxxx AJxxx xx x)
2S	4H (Natural)
Pass or 4S	

2. By Partnership understanding and agreement, an alternative, conventional system is available which allows for an uncovering of the fact that many Partnerships, today, sanction and prefer to open some **1-NT** calls with a hidden 5-card Major, especially if holding a minimum 15 HCP opening count. This alternative, conventional system, uncovers this eventuality, while maintaining Opener, the stronger hand, as Declarer; and, at the same time, still allowing for a final **3-NT** contract should no 8-card Major "**Golden Fit**" be uncovered, if absent.

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1-NT	"3H" (Axx x KQxx(x) Jxxx(x)) ("Alertable")
4S or 3-NT	(Holding a (3-1-4-5) or a (3-1-5-4) distribution)

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1-NT	"3S" (x Axx Jxxx(x) KQxx(x)) ("Alertable")
4H or 3-NT	(Holding a (1-3-4-5) or a (1-3-5-4) distribution)

Bridge Tip # 395

Some confusion exists as whether there is a maximum point count beyond which a "**double**" by Responder is no longer "**Negative**," becoming, alternatively, a "**Penalty Double**." Some Partnerships play that such "**doubles**" are "**Negative**" through a level of **2S**, some through **3S**. Obviously, the higher the level at which a **Negative Double** is employed, the more HCP's are needed by the Partner invoking the **Negative Double**. For example, at the 1-level, **Negative Doubles** usually show at least 6 or more HCP's, while, at the 2-level, they show a minimum of 9-10 HCP's; etc.

Having said this, however, some Partnerships have no upper level beyond which a Double by a Responder to Partner's opening call becomes a **Penalty Double**. Under these agreed-to circumstances, **Negative Doubles** are, therefore, exercised through infinity; i.e., they never show length and strength in the Opponent's bid suit, rather they are all, effectively, "**Take-Out Doubles**;" as they exhibit no upper limit as to their HCP

strength. Again, this must be discussed and if used in this capacity, only by Partnership agreement.

Bridge Tip # 394

It is generally agreed that a “*Negative Double*” shows one of three types of hands:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1A	1B	“Double” (“ <i>Negative</i> ”)

- a. The two, as yet, un-bid suits 1D 1H “Double”
(Axxx xxx xx KQxx)
- b. One un-bid suit and a backup or fall-back plan enabling the “*Doubler*” to support Partner’s suit if Opener is incapable of bidding Doubler’s intended suit.

1D	1H	“Double”
(Axxx xxx KQxx xx)		

- c. One un-bid suit and a backup or fall-back plan enabling the “*Doubler*” to bid No-Trump; i.e., holding at least one stopper in the Opponent’s bid suit if Opener is incapable of bidding Doubler’s intended suit.

1D	1H	“Double”
(Axxx KQxx xx xxx)		

Bridge Tip # 393

Standard defensive bids subsequent to the Opponent’s use of “**Texas Transfers**” are as follows:

1. A “**Double**” is **Lead Directing**. A “**Direct Double**” of any artificial bid by an Opponent is always Lead-Directing!

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	“4D”	“Double” (Lead-Directing for Diamonds)

2. “**4-NT**” is an “**Unusual-NT**” bid for the two Minor suits.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	“4D”	“4-NT” (For Clubs and Diamonds)

3. “**4**” of Responder’s suit is a “**Michaels Cue-Bid**” for the alternate Major and an unspecified Minor.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	“4D”	“4H” (For Spades and an unspecified Minor, Clubs or Diamonds)

4. A “**Delayed-Double**” after Opener accepts the transfer is a **3-suited Take-Out**.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	Pass	“4D”	Pass
4H	Pass	Pass	“Double” (For Spades, Clubs, & Diamonds)

Bridge Tip # 392

“**Texas Transfer**” bids are used to invoke a Game-level contract in either **4H** or **4S** following Partner’s opening call of either **1-NT** or **2-NT**. Responder must hold sufficient Game-level HCP’s and at least a 6-card or longer holding in the desired Major suit.

(a)	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	
	1-NT	Pass	“4D”	(A “ <i>Texas Transfer</i> ” for Hearts)
	4H			

(b)	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	
	1-NT	Pass	“4H”	(A “ <i>Texas Transfer</i> ” for Spades)

4S

Unlike “**Jacoby Transfer**” bids (transfers made at the 2-level), which are not in effect following subsequent interference, (Example c), “**Texas Transfer**” bids (transfers made at the 4-level), are still in effect, even subsequent to interference by would-be Responder’s RHO (Right-Hand Opponent) (Example d).

(c)	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1-NT	2D	2H (A natural Heart overcall – To Play)
	Pass		

(d)	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1-NT	2D	“4H” (A “ <i>Texas Transfer</i> ” for Spades, <u>not</u> natural for Hearts)
	4S		

Bridge Tip # 391

Infrequently, but plausibly, the bidding proceeds, an opening strong, artificial and forcing “**2C**,” a subsequent response of “**2D**” by Opener’s responding Partner subject to their agreed-upon conventional understanding (“*Waiting*”), and then a jump to **3-NT** by the Opener, who, by circumstance, might have a “*game-in-hand*” holding. **Note:** When using the “**2D**” (“*Waiting*”) response system, Responder has not yet shown any available additional HCP’s.

The question then arises as to what, if any, conventions are still available to the responding Partner following such a bidding sequence. Under a “**2D**” (“*Waiting*”) scenario, Responder might have sufficient HCP’s to further the bidding to a possible, feasible Slam. Subject to Partnership understanding and agreement, accepted, follow-up, bidding sequences are available, as shown, herein:

- “**4C**” becomes “**Stayman**,” (Regular or “*Puppet*” as per Partnership agreement) and
- “**5C**” becomes “**Super-Gerber**” (Ace-Asking)

Note: When alternate conventional responses, other than “**2D**” (“*Waiting*”) are used by the Partnership, (“*Controls*,” or “*Jacoby Steps*,” for example), HCP count information

is immediately disclosed to the Opener, who, under circumstances where Responder shows sufficient HCP's or controls by virtue of his/her first response, Opener can himself/herself explore for a slam, encouraged by Responder's disclosure, and having been enticed to do so. For this, as well as other reasons, this latter factor is one of many which compel this author to dislike "**2D**" ("*Waiting*") as opposed to any of the four other, responding, conventions to Partner's opening "**2C**."

Bridge Tip # 390

The lead of Trump against a Suit contract is often a sound concept, assuming no other preferred leads are available. Its main objective is to reduce the ruffing power of the Dummy. Notwithstanding the potential benefit to the Defense of such a lead, there are five (5) Trump holdings where it is possible that a Trump lead can be counter-productive in that it potentially leads to a loss of a Trump trick for the Defense. The five holdings where a Trump lead is contra-indicated are: (1) **JX**, (2) **QX**, (3) **JXX**, (4) **QXX**, or (5) any singleton (**X**).

Another factor does impact this subject, and that is simply that when the contract against which one is attempting to minimize or defeat is one in which the declaring team, by virtue of its bidding, has indicated that it holds nine or more Trumps, then the impact of leading a Trump is diminished and a better likelihood of success is for the lead to be an aggressive, attacking lead, rather than a passive one. Success is not assured, but it statistically holds a higher percentage of likely success.

Bridge Tip # 389

Signaling is the language of defense. Many techniques exist such as "*Standard*" carding, "*Upside-Down*" carding, "*Odd-Even*" carding, and *Laventhal Discards*," among others. The "*Odd-Even*" **System** offers a unique method of carding in that a preference for a specific suit can be signaled to Partner in a number of ways, and against a Suit contract, is often a preferred methods:

An “Odd” card played on one’s first discard signifies a preference for the suit being discarded. An “Even” card played signifies a dislike for the suit being discarded with the following two qualifiers:

A high “Even” card played on one’s first discard signifies a desire and preference for the higher-ranking of the two remaining suits other than the one discarded and the suit enabling the discard.

A low “Even” card played on one’s first discard signifies a desire and preference for the lower-ranking of the two remaining suits other than the one discarded and the suit enabling the discard.

(Example: Spades are called for and you are desirous of indicating a preference for Diamonds with your first discard:

1. Discard the 3, or 5, of Diamonds or:
2. Discard the 2, or 4, of Clubs or:
3. Discard the 8, or 10, of Hearts

(Any one of the above choices would show a Diamond preference!)

Alternatively, a middle “Even” card played on one’s first discard signifies either a lack of preference for either of the other two remaining suits, else the preference for the lead of Trump.

Bridge Tip # 388

Assuming that a Partnership uses Michaels Cue-bids as one of its conventions, the question often arises as to when a repeat of either Minor suit bid by an Opponent is a cue-bid for the Majors (a Michaels Cue-Bid,) and when is it natural? The answer is dependent either upon the invoking Player’s position at the table, and/or the bidding sequence preceding the use of the Minor suit bid in question, as follows:

1. In the Direct, 2nd seat, it is usually always a cue-bid for the Majors, with one exception.

- (a) North East
1C/1D “2C”/“2D” (Michaels for the Majors – 5-5 or better)
(Either very weak, 5-10 HCP’s) or (very strong, 16 + HCP’s)

Exception:

(b) North East
 1C/1D 3C/3D (A **natural overcall** since “2C”/“2D” would be Michaels)
 10-15 HCP’s (Usually a 6-card suit or longer, else a good 5-card
 suit)

2. In the Balancing, 4th seat, however, the meaning is dependent upon the preceding auction.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| (a) | <u>North</u>
1C/1D | <u>East</u>
Pass | <u>South</u>
Pass | <u>West</u>
“2C”/“2D” (Michaels for the Majors) |
| (b) | <u>North</u>
1C/1D | <u>East</u>
Pass | <u>South</u>
1H/1S | <u>West</u>
2C/2D (a Natural overcall – <u>Not Michaels</u>) |
| (c) | <u>North</u>
1C/1D | <u>East</u>
Pass | <u>South</u>
1-NT | <u>West</u>
“2C”/“2D” (Michaels for the Majors) |
| (d) | <u>North</u>
1C | <u>East</u>
Pass | <u>South</u>
1D | <u>West</u>
2C (a Natural overcall – <u>Not Michaels</u>) |
| (e) | <u>North</u>
1D | <u>East</u>
Pass | <u>South</u>
2C | <u>West</u>
2D (a Natural overcall – <u>Not Michaels</u>) |
-
-

Bridge Tip # 387

Maximal Doubles

A “**Maximal Double**” is a competitive, conventional double used mainly in two specific competitive auctions by an Opener of the auction to differentiate between a competitive situation and a Game-try. It is a “*double*” used to invite to Game when the auction is too crowded for any other approach.

West North East South

1S

2H

2S 3H ????

(In this bidding scenario, South may have one of two (2) choices)

1. "Bid 3S" = A hand which he/she wished to compete further and to **sign-off**.

2. "Double" - A hand with which he/she wishes to **invite to Game**. **Note:** In this instance, Responder, North in this instance, has the option of (a)

dropping the bidding at **3S**, (b) continuing to Game by bidding **4S**, else, (c) converting the auction to a penalty scenario by "**passing**."

With the availability of the use of a "**Maximal Double**," either hand can be described: i.e., **3S** would be a competitive sign-off, and a "**Maximal Double**" would be used as a conventional bid inviting to Game. To reiterate, a "**double**" invites to Game, while a suit bid of the agreed-upon suit at the 3-level is merely competitive.

Prerequisites:

For a "**Maximal Double**" to be in effect, the following conditions are, thus, necessary:

1. The Opponents have competed and raised to the 3-level
2. We have bid and raised to the 2-level in our agreed-upon suit
3. Our suit **outranks them by one** (Spades over Hearts, or Hearts over Diamonds)
4. We have not yet established a Game-force.
5. The "**doubling**" hand can logically be in a position to try for Game

Important Note: The most apparent, obvious and evident disadvantage of the "**Maximal Double**" is the fact that the Partnership loses its ability to employ the call of a "**double**" as a **Penalty Double**.

If the competitive team's suit is not immediately below Opener's suit (as seen below), however, the "**Maximal Double**" is not needed and is **never** used.

West

North East South

1S

2D

2S 3D ????

(In this bidding scenario, South may have one of three (3) choices:

1. "Bid 3S" - a competitive sign-off.
2. "Bid '3H'" - A "**conventional forcing bid**" showing a hand with which he/she wishes to **invite to Game**.

3. "Double" - for **penalty**.

Bridge Tip # 386

"CARD-SHOWING" OR "ACTION" DOUBLES

Sometimes a "*double*" just means "*I think this is our hand, do something*". Here are some examples, where in each example, you show a maximum for your previous bid(s) and ask Partner to take appropriate action. It is a "*double*" that does not promise any particular distribution. Rather it shows general high-card strength and asks Partner to take some appropriate intelligent action, either to "*bid on*," else to "*pass*" for penalties. When in doubt, assume that any low-level double is anything but a **Penalty Double**.

(1)				(2)			
AT93	76	965	KQ98	KJ8	JT2	AT93	T98
PARD	OPP	YOU	OPP	PARD	OPP	YOU	OPP
1D	P	1S	2H	1S	P	2S	3C
2S	P	P	3H	P	P	DBL	
P	P	DBL					

Bridge Tip # 385

When you make an opening bid of one-of-any-suit, followed by a **Take-Out Double** by your left-hand Opponent, and a **Re-double** by your Partner, the following need be understood.

North (You)
1C, 1D, 1H, or 1S

East (Your left-hand Opponent)

Double

South (Your Partner)

Re-Double

East, your left-hand Opponent has shown opening count or its equivalent, and Partner, South, shown above, has shown 9 or more HCP's. Your team holds the majority of the HCP's and West, your right-hand Opponent, is faced with two unpleasant choices: (1) To "***Pass***" converting Partner's Take-Out to a Penalty scenario for a contract likely, by you, North-South, to make, or (2) To make a call which is unlikely to succeed and is likely to be "***doubled***" by your Partner, South.

The question arises, however, as to whether or not you should make another call when next it is your turn to bid, else to "***pass***," allowing Partner to make a possible **Penalty Double** over West's bid, should East-West make any bid, other than a "***pass***," in response to Partner's **Take-Out**.

Conventional wisdom for what action, if any, should you, here, take.

- a. If you have opened with a weak 11-12 HCP (a so-called **Bergen** – "**Rule of 20**") opening, or a weak 2-suiter, bid again removing Partner's ability to Double West's call, should he/she make one.
- b. If, on the other hand, you hold other than that enumerated in (a) above; i.e., a full opening count or better, "***pass***" giving Partner a chance to either "***double***" West's call, else to bid on to a possible Game-level contract.
- c. Subsequent to your decision, however, (a) or (b), above, vulnerability and Partner's actual point-count holding are both ultimate influencing factors needed to be considered by both you and Partner.

Bridge Tip # 384

"**New Minor Forcing**" is a convention used when Responder, following Opener's re-bid of **1-NT** or **2-NT**, finds it necessary to have a low-level forcing bid, either to inquire about Opener's possible support for Responder's Major suit, or to make Responder's description of his/her own hand additionally descriptive. When using this convention the bidding always initially proceeds as follows:

(One-of-a-Minor) – (One-of-a-Major) – (1-NT or 2-NT) – ("New" [2nd] Minor)

Opener must “*alert*” the Opponents since Responder’s re-bid of the new (“2nd”) Minor, is, oft times artificial, although it could be natural if Responder has a two-suited hand. Responder requires a minimum number of HCP’s in order to make this call; namely, (a) eleven or more opposite Opener’s re-bid of **1-NT**, and, (b) eight (or a good seven) or more opposite Opener’s re-bid of **2-NT**.

In either case, Responder’s bid, being possibly artificial, is forcing, but here, the similarity ends, in that “*New Minor Forcing*” opposite Opener’s re-bid of **1-NT**, is *forcing for only 1-round*, as a Game-level contract might not be possible; while opposite Opener’s re-bid of **2-NT**, it is *forcing to game*.

The explanation as to why this becomes necessary is as follows:

- A. A. Opener’s re-bid of **1-NT** (12-14 HCP’s), coupled with Responder’s minimum high-card point value of eleven, produces the possibility that the Partnership may not have a combined high-card
- B. point total enabling a game-level contract and, the Partnership, here, needs to have the ability to stop short of Game, should each of the Partners hold the minimum number of their respective required values, 12 for the Opener, and 11 for the Responder. Remember, Responder may hold a 2-suited hand and not necessarily hold 5-pieces of the referenced Major suit. Thus, Opener must proceed
- C. cautiously, as follows:

“New Minor Forcing” opposite Opener’s re-bid of 1-NT is forcing for one-round, not to Game.

Opener, here, has four choices for his/her second re-bid:

1. Minor – Major – 1-NT – “2nd-Minor” – “2 of Responder’s Major”

(Here, Opener is saying, “*I hold 3-pieces of your Major suit, but hold only a minimum of 12-13 HCP’s. Therefore, Caution! If you hold only the minimum number of your values we might not have game unless now that a fit has been revealed, and after re-evaluation, you feel otherwise!*”)

2. Minor – Major – 1-NT – “2nd-Minor” – “3 of Responder’s Major”

(Here, Opener is saying, “*I hold 3-pieces of your Major and a maximum 14 HCP’s. We need, therefore, to be in at least a game-level contract, either 3-NT or 4 of your Major, and even more, if you hold extra values!*”)

3. Minor – Major – 1-NT – “2nd-Minor” – “2-NT”

(Here, Opener is saying, *“I hold only 2-pieces of your Major suit and a minimum of 12-13 HCP’s. If you hold only the minimum number of your required values, we need to stop short of game!”*

Please ‘Pass,’ if this is the case, else bid 3-NT!”)

4. Minor – Major – 1-NT – “2nd Minor” – “3-NT”

(Here, Opener is saying, *“I only hold only 2-pieces of your Major suit along with a maximum 14 HCP’s, and so 3-NT seems, likely, to be the best contract, unless you hold extra values beyond your minimum.”*

Thus, when using “*New Minor Forcing*” after Opener, has re-bid **1-NT**, and Responder has bid a “new (2nd) Minor,” communication by Opener as to his/her possible support of Responder’s Major

suit and his/her high-card point strength are both necessary for Responder to proceed correctly in order for the Partnership to wind up in the proper denomination and level for their final contract.

B. Opener’s re-bid of **2-NT** (18-19 HCP’s), coupled with Responder’s minimum high-card point value of eight, or a good seven, produces the need for the Partnership to finish at least in a Game-level contract since the Partnership holds a minimum of 26 HCP’s. Thus:

“New Minor Forcing” opposite Opener’s re-bid of 2-NT is game-forcing.

Opener, here, has two choices for his/her second re-bid:

1. Minor – Major – 2-NT – “2nd-Minor” – “3 of Responder’s Major”

(Here, Opener is saying, *“Yes, I hold 3-pieces of your Major suit, and we need be either in a final contract of four of your Major, assuming you hold 5-pieces, else 3-NT if you initially held only 4-pieces of your Major suit”*)

2. Minor – Major – 2-NT – “2nd-Minor” – “3-NT”

(Here, Opener is saying, *“I only hold 2-pieces of your Major suit, and even if you held 5-pieces, our best final-contract is, therefore 3-NT.”*)

Unless altered by Partnership agreement, Responder's re-bids in a "*Two-Over-One*" bidding system stem from the basic fact that since the Partnership is in a "*game-forcing*" scenario, a "*slow arrival*" to Game is stronger than a "*fast arrival*," which is weaker. All jumps to Game are, therefore, weak actions. What should Responder re-bid after the following bidding scenarios, given the following holdings?

1♠ --- 2♣ --- 2♦ ---?

- a. Q6
AQJ7 - 2♥ - (Natural) (There is no "artificial, 4th suit, game-forcing" necessity since, in a 2/1 system, the Partnership is already in a game-forcing scenario)
Q7
A9753
- b. K64
A95 - 2♠ - (Promising primary support, or better, in Spades, but with greater than minimum values)
A7
KQJ73
- c. A7
86 - 3♦ - (Natural with support but not passing 3-NT which might be the optimal contract if Opener holds a Heart stopper - else 5D)
KQ74
A9753
- d. 86
KJ5 - 3-NT - (You hold stoppers and a flat minimum-value hand)
KJ7
AJ732
- e. K85
A8 - 4♠ - (You hold minimum values and Spade support for Partner, who, if holding 20 HCP's or more (or its equivalent, can still bid on)
Q75
KJ863

1♥ --- 2♦ --- 2♥ ---?

- a. 85

AQ6 - 3♥ - (Showing support with extra values; i.e., more than opening count)

AQJ74

QJ7

b. KQ84

7 - 2♠ - (Natural. There is no need to rush to 3-NT)

KQJ732

A6

c. J7

J86 - 4♥ - (Support with minimum values)

KQJ753

AJ

Bridge Tip # 382

In the “*Two-Over-One*” Game-Forcing, bidding system, a common re-bid from Opener to Responder’s first response of a “*Forcing 1-NT*” is two-of-either-Minor. This, oft times, absent any other plausible re-bid, is made with a suit holding as few as 3-pieces. Among others, Responder has multiple re-bid choices, such as in the case with the following holdings:

	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
KJ874		
Q54		
A2	1S	1-NT (Forcing)
Q32	2C	????

Responder has multiple standard re-bids depending upon his/her holdings:

<u>Opener</u>		<u>Responder</u>
	6	
	932	
1S	Q654	1-NT (Forcing)
2C	AKJ84	3C (Invitational)

<u>Opener</u>		<u>Responder</u>
	A53	
	QJ987	

1S	K92	1-NT (Forcing)
2C	98	3S (A 3-card Limit

Raise in support of Opener's suit)

<u>Opener</u>	Q9	<u>Responder</u>
	AJ62	
1S	9875	1-NT (Forcing)
2C	875	2S (A "False

Preference")

<u>Opener</u>	3	<u>Responder</u>
	Q987	
1S	KQ982	1-NT (Forcing)
2C	A98	2-NT (Natural,

Invitational)

<u>Opener</u>	3	<u>Responder</u>
	KQ9876	
1S	Q543	1-NT (Forcing)
2C	J6	2H (Natural, Non-

Forcing)

(Evidences a 6(+) card
suit and minimum values - usually creates a sign-off)

Bridge Tip # 381

When a Partnership is utilizing the "*Two-Over-One*" Game-Forcing system, there are multiple common first re-bids by Opener to Partner's "*Forcing 1-NT*" response. They are as follows:

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1S	1-NT (Forcing)
????	

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
---------------	------------------

AQ982	1-NT (Forcing)
A52	1S
QJ2	2D (A 2 nd suit with 3-cards or longer, absence of a 6 th Spade, with 11-18 HCP's)
73	

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
QJT652	1-NT (Forcing)
A52	1S
QJ2	2S (Minimum values (11-15 HCP's) with 6 or more cards in Opener's suit)
A	

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
AKQ52	1-NT (Forcing)
AKQ63	1S
762	3H (A Natural Jump-Shift - Game Forcing)

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
KT852	1-NT (Forcing)
AQ63	1S
2	2H (Natural second Major with at least 4-cards)
K75	(11-18 HCP's)

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
QT852	1-NT (Forcing)
AQ	1S
AK2	2-NT (Balanced with greater than minimum values)
K75	(16-18 HCP's)

Bridge Tip # 380

When playing in a Suit contract, one hand is usually longer in Trumps than the other. Routinely, under such circumstances, the hand with the longer Trumps usually becomes the “**Master**” hand, and the one with the shorter Trump holding is better suited for the “*trumping*” hand. Indeed, unless it is needed for communication between the hands, to Trump in the hand with the longer Trump suit holding, does not create and more tricks than Declarer was entitled in the first place. The question arises, however, that in hands with equal length in the Trump suit, say, as an example, with a 4-4 distribution of Trumps, which hand should be played as the “**Master**,” and which as the “*trumping*” hand? The rules for the best choice as to the “**Master**” hand are as follows.

1. 1. If there is a clear choice as to which hand holds the *stronger Trump holding*, the one with an obvious better Trump quality should be played as the “**Master**” hand and the other used for trumping when needed; i.e., ruff with the small Trumps and draw Trumps with the bigger ones.

AKQ4 (“Master” Hand)
9732 (“Trumping” Hand)

2. If one of the hands has a *second side suit which is either solid to begin with, else easily capable, given any reasonable split of the remaining cards, of being set up*, that hand should be treated as the “**Master**” hand, trumping in the other.

8 <u>Dummy</u>	AQ543 <u>You</u>	
KQ75 (Trumps)	AJ86	
97	83	<u>The contract is 4H!</u>
AK8542	76	

In this instance, a Dummy reversal is best, trumping, if needed, in your hand, and setting up the Club suit in the Dummy, using that long suit upon which to throw any losers. After losing two Diamonds, take the first Trump trick in Dummy, play the **AK** of Clubs, then trumping a third round of Clubs (high if needed). Then draw Trumps ending in the Dummy. With a normal 3-2 split in both Hearts and Clubs, the contract is secured.

3. If neither hand holds an obvious stronger Trump holding, and nether hand has a second strong side suit, determine which hand holds the *fewer side-suit losers*. Make that hand the “**Master**” hand.

8 <u>Dummy</u>	J543 <u>You</u>	
A864 (Trumps)	K972	
QJ64	AK7	<u>The contract is 4H!</u>
AK85	Q2	

In this instance, the Dummy holds 4-losers, exclusive of the Trump suit (one Spade and two Diamonds and one Club), and your hand holds 6-losers

three Spade losers, one Diamond, and two Club losers). The Dummy, here, should be considered the "**Master**" hand. Trump one Club in your hand, losing one Spade and one Heart, making five.

4. When there is a cross-ruff available, both hands are treated as the trumping Dummy and neither hand becomes the Master hand.

8	<u>Dummy</u>	A543	<u>You</u>
AK64	(Trumps)	QJT3	
A9864		7	
985		A742	<u>The contract is again 4H</u>

Take three side suit Aces, first, then trumping three Spades in the Dummy and four Diamond ruffs in your hand for a total of ten tricks.

When cross-ruffing, always take any outside winning tricks first

Bridge Tip # 379

Although infrequent, it is not out of the realm of possibility that Partner, in 1st or 2nd seat, will open a weak 2-bid or 3-bid finding you, in 3rd or 4th seat, with a hand that, coupled with Partner, holds definite Game values, and even a possibility for Slam.

"Poor Man's Blackwood" is a convention used under these circumstances for Partner to seek the possibility of Slam without by-passing the Game level in the suit opened by Partner. Following Opener's weak opening pre-empt, a response by Partner of "4C," by Partnership agreement, initiates ***"Poor Man's Blackwood."*** The responses by Opener are as follows:

"4D" = no key cards

"4H" = one key card

"4S" = one key card plus the Queen of the Trump suit

"5C" = two key cards without the Queen of the Trump suit, and

"5D" = two key cards plus the Queen of the Trump suit

This convention does **not** apply over Partner's preemptive opening of 3C.

Bridge Tip # 378

On the play of the cards, we have all been taught that “*3rd hand should play high.*” This concept usually results in the potential promotion of a lower card in Partner’s hand into an eventual winner.

Example: Dummy Partner leads the **5**. In order to prevent the Declarer from winning an unwarranted winner with the Jack,

932 You must play the King.
When done correctly, 3rd hand high sacrifices a card for the greater good of the defense.

<u>Partner</u>	<u>You</u>
<u>Q765</u>	<u>K1084</u>
<u>Declarer</u>	
<u>AJ</u>	

Example: Dummy Partner has led the **7C** against a **4H** contract. It cannot be 4th best since only the King and Ace cannot be seen.

JT92 Partner is not likely to have led away from two or three cards from the Ace or King, and, thus,

Partner You Partner must have led “*top of nothing,*” else from either a singleton or doubleton.

7(?) Q843 After Dummy plays the Jack, if you play the Queen, Declarer will cash the Ace and the King,

Declarer and after drawing Trumps, will cross over to the Ten-Nine, taking 4-tricks. The holding, therefore, must have been:

?

Dummy If you do not cover the Jack with your Queen, Declarer will win the 1st trick with the Jack and

JT92 then two more with the Ace and King, making only 3-tricks in the suit.

Partner You You will win the 4th trick, covering Dummy’s Ten with your Queen.

<u>75</u>	<u>Q843</u>
<u>Declarer</u>	
<u>AK6</u>	

If you hold a singular honor, and Partner holds no honor, *never play 3rd hand high!*

Bridge Tip # 377

Doubles are of several types. Their meaning is determined by the bidding environment in which they occur. Here are but a few of the possible available “*doubles.*”

1. **Penalty Doubles:** “Partner, I think they have overbid and I wish to punish them. Please “*pass*” unless you think we can do better to bid on, or you do not hold more or less than that which I am counting on you to have.”

<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>
2S	4H	1S	2H
		Double	

2. **Please-Bid Doubles:** “Partner, I would like you to bid something, please do not “*pass*” unless you wish to volitionally convert my request to a penalty scenario.” Examples of these are both **Take-Out** and **Negative Doubles.**

<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1S			
		Double (Take-Out)	

<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1D	1S		
		Double (Negative -	
		showing Hearts and Clubs)	

3. **Informational Doubles:** “Partner, I have some special information to share with you!” Examples of these are **Lead-Directing**, “**Lightner**,” and **Support** doubles.

<u>East</u>	<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>
Pass	"2D" (Transfer)	Double (Lead-Directing)	1-NT
	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (Partner)</u>
			<u>West</u>
			1C
Pass	1H	1S	
			Double (Support -
			showing 3-pieces of Hearts)

4. **Optional Balance of Power Doubles:** "Partner, we hold the balance of power, do you wish to bid on or to punish the Opponents, you choose, based upon your holding?"

	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>
1H	Pass			1-NT
2C	Pass	Pass		Double ("We
				hold 22 HCP's {+ or -}
				'Pass' for Penalties")
				Double ("We
				Either bid on or

Bridge Tip # 376

When considering a **Take-Out Double**, *high card points* and *distribution* (shape) are the key considerations.

In general, the ideal shape is to hold fewer than 3-cards in the Opponent's suit, but the fewer pieces you hold in the Opponent's bid suit, the more acceptable a **Take-Out Double** becomes. With 0 cards in their suit it is acceptable to bid with 10 HCP's; with 1 card in their suit it is acceptable to bid with 11 HCP's; and with 2 cards in their suit one can "*double*" with 12 HCP's.

With respect to shape, if one "*doubles*" with only 2-cards in an un-bid Minor, Partner is likely to compete in that suit with disastrous results. The only time it pays to "*double*" under this circumstance, "*off-shape*," is either (1) when you hold such a strong hand that you intend to "*double*" and then either bid your own suit or No-Trump later; or (2) when you hold 4-4 in the Majors and solid points, defined as 13 or more

HCP's. *If you hold 2-cards in an un-bid Major suit, do not make a Take-Out Double, absent intent to bid your own suit or No-Trump later.*

Examples: Your RHO opens with 1S. Do you make a **Take-Out Double** or not?

- a. 6 K975 K864 AJ64 (Yes, 1-card in their suit with 11 HCP's)
 - b. A85 K6 K984 KJ72 (No, Only 2-cards in the un-bid Major)
 - c. 975 K98 KJ75 AJ8 (No, 3-cards in Spades and fewer than 13 HCP's)
 - d. 98 K73 AQ64 K852 (Yes, 12 HCP's and 2-cards in their suit)
 - e. – 9754 KQ643 AJ98 (Yes, with 10 HCP's and a void, go for it!)
 - f. K63 A982 K6 Q654 (No, with only 2-card support for an un-bid Minor, then extra HCP's are needed)
 - g. K432 A5 K87 A865 (No, the 14 HCP's is tempting, but you hold too many of their suit and too few of the un-bid Major)
-
-

Bridge Tip # 375

At times, Opener, having opened with one-of-a-Minor, is forced to support Partner's first response of a Major suit with only 3-pieces, although Responder might assume it to be 4-pieces, as is the usual scenario. If Responder is interested in seeking Opener's number of support pieces, and Opener's HCP count, a re-bid, by Responder, of "2-NT," is called a "**Mini-Maxi 2-NT**," requiring a response by Opener of the following, artificial, alertable, calls after any of the following opening sequences:

Opening Bidding Sequences:

- 2. 1C – 1H – 2H – "2-NT"
- 3. 1D – 1H – 2H – "2-NT"
- 4. 1C – 1S – 2S – "2-NT"
- 5. 1D – 1S – 2S – "2-NT"

Opener's Responses to a "Mini-Maxi 2-NT" re-bid by Responder

- a. "3C" shows 3-piece support and a minimum 11-12 HCP count.
- b. "3D" shows 4 piece support and a minimum 11-12 HCP count.
- c. "3H" shows 3-piece support and a maximum 13-15 HCP count.
- d. "3S" shows 4-piece support and a maximum 13-15 HCP count.
- e. "3-NT" shows 4-piece support, a maximum 13-15 HCP count, and a (3-4-3-3) or a (4-3-3-3) evenly-balanced, distribution.

Responder can then place the appropriate final contract based upon this added information supplied by Opener.

Bridge Tip # 374

If you, as Declarer, have a number of equal honors in your concealed, Declarer's hand, and you desire to have the 2nd hand cover, lead the highest card in the sequence (Example 1). If, alternatively, you desire to have the 2nd hand duck, lead the second highest card in the sequence (Example 2).

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>Declarer's Trumps</u>	<u>Dummy's Trumps</u>
	QJT9	K863

Say, for example you hold the above-shown Trumps. If there is a danger of a possible ruff, lead the Jack from you hand. If the LHO (2nd Player) has the Ace, he/she will often duck, perceiving that Partner (Declarer's RHO) holds the Queen. If 4th hand (Declarer's RHO) started with only two Trumps, the potential ruff by the Opponents may be lost if the Declarer's LHO (left-hand Opponent) ducks the first round of Trumps. You will win trick one with the Ten, and RHO's second Trump will fall when Trumps are played the second time, thwarting the possibility of a potential ruff for the Opponent's.

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>Declarer</u>	<u>Dummy</u>
	JT	AKXX

Say, for example, that there is no side entry into Dummy and Declarer holds the **JT** in a side suit, as shown above. If you lead the Jack, 2nd hand is apt to cover, blocking the suit and limiting Declarer to two tricks in the referenced suit. Try the Ten first. LHO is likely to play low if holding the Queen, hoping that his/her Partner can win the first trick with the Jack. The result, if LHO ducks, is that Declarer will win three tricks in the suit, instead.

Bridge Tip # 373

Whether or not to continue to compete in stiff competition, absent any assistance from Partner can be a daunting decision. Mel Colchamiro's "*Compete Count*" to the rescue!

- a. 13 tricks are available
- b. Calculate the number of winners in your hand by subtracting your losing trick count based upon an assumed "**Golden Fit.**"
- c. Add one expected trick that Partner is expected to produce
- d. The answer is the number of tricks you can contract **by yourself.**

<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>
Pass	3C	1S	2C
		????	

You Hold: AQ754 KJ764 A8 4

13 possible tricks minus 5-Losers = 8
winners
+ 1 expected winner from Partner = 9
winners (Bid 3H)

<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>
Pass	2C	1S	Pass
		????	

You Hold: AK754 KJ76 Q8 Q4

13 possible tricks minus 7-Losers = 6
winners
+ 1 expected winner from Partner = 7
winners ("*Pass*")

Bridge Tip # 372

A “**Help-Suit (Side-Suit) Game Try**” is a commonly-used technique by many Partnerships. It is used after a (1H – 2H,) or a (1S – 2S,) bidding sequence. Opener, holding approximately 15 HCP’s then bids a new side-suit at the 3-level, asking Partner if he/she can assist in that presumably second suit held by Opener. Opener is seeking a Game-level contract in the agreed-upon Major suit, if help is present in Responder’s hand for the second suit referenced.

Responder’s decision, whether to accept or reject, is based upon *Mel Colchamiro’s* “**1-2-3 Loser Count**”

- a. If Responder holds a **3-loser count** in the side suit mentioned by Opener, he/she should reject the Game-try, even if Responder holds a maximum initial 2-level raise in Opener’s Major.
- b. If Responder holds a **2-loser count** in the side suit mentioned by Opener, the decision as to accept or reject is a judgment call.
- c. If Responder holds a **1-loser count** in the side suit mentioned by Opener, he/she should bid Game (4 of the referenced Major suit), no matter how weak the initial raise.

	<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
1H	P	2H		P
3C	P	???		

What should you bid with each of the following hands?

(1) K75 A84 K953 753

Even though you hold maximum values for your original raise, you hold 3-losers in Clubs. This factor coupled with the adverse 4-3-3-3 distribution, necessitates a 3H rejection of Opener’s game-try.

(2) 843 K74 Q7643 K6

Your doubleton K in the game-try suit (Clubs) is the perfect holding. Go for it and bid 4H!

(3) A75 932 K864 Q74

Four Queen-third of Clubs is two losers, so you need to use your judgment here. Although your count is a maximum, your three small Trumps coupled with your 4-3-3-3 distribution mitigate against accepting the Game-try offer. Bid 3H

(4) A82 JT5 Q74 K853

You hold 2-losers in Clubs, but both maximum HCP values and your JT of Trumps are definite assets. Bid 4H despite your 4-3-3-3 distribution.

(5) 764 K742 K642 7

You hold only 1-loser in Clubs. This, along with your four Trumps to an honor clearly calls for a 4H acceptance

(6) K86 K76 K863 542

Three small Clubs (3-Losers), coupled with the 4-3-3-3 distribution, here, mitigate against any thought of a 4H acceptance, Bid 3H!

Bridge Tip # 371

Using Ron Klinger's "*Losing Trick Count*" (LTC), when faced with Partner's raise to **2H** or **2S**, respectively, over your **1H** or **1S** opening call, with 5-Losers, Opener is expected to bid to a Game-level **4H** or **4S**, respectively, opposite Responder's perceived 9-Losers.

Apparently this only works when Opener holds a 5-5, 6-5, 6-4, or a 7-4 distribution. Unless Opener's hand is overloaded with Aces and Kings, this principle does not work with a 5-4 distribution. When holding the latter, Opener needs 4-losers to seek a Game-level **4H** or **4S** contract.

Bridge Tip # 370

Mel Colchamiro's two "**Rules of 23**" *do not tell you what to do*, rather, more importantly, they will very often tell you *what not to do*.

- (1) *In later rounds of bidding, avoid bidding 2-NT, unless you are certain that your side holds at least 23 HCP's.*

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>AJ753</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	8	1S	1-NT
	KJ95	2D	2H

A94 ("Pass" - Do Not Bid 2-NT)

(Partner has shown weakness, usually fewer than 10 HCP's, long Hearts, and almost always a 6-card suit. Just "Pass!")

<u>You Hold:</u>	K753	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	Q96		1-NT
	Q985		("Pass" - Do Not Bid 2-NT)
	94		

(If Partner holds 15 HCP's your side falls short of the 23 HCP's needed to make 2-NT, and if Partner holds 16 or 17, he/she will take the invitation to then bid 3-NT, a likely unmakeable contract.)

(2) *If you know your side has at least 23 HCP's, and the Opponents 'have the bid,' you have only two options, "Double" ... or bid on! To "pass" is simply not an option.*

<u>You Hold:</u>	K53	<u>Partner</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>
	A86	1-NT	2S	???
	J52			
	9432			

(Partner holds, no fewer than 15 HCP's, so together with your 8, you know that your side holds 23 or more HCP's, and the Opponents only 17 or fewer. They are attempting to steal the contract! Do not "pass!" "Double" for penalties.)

<u>You Hold:</u>	A3	<u>West</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>You</u>
	K864		1S	P	1-NT
	9542	2C	P	P	???
	KT2				

(What to do? Partner's minimum opening of 13, combined with your 10, hits or exceeds 23. One thing you will not do is to "pass." Partner does not know you hold 10 HCP's. You could bid 2S or 2-NT, but the bid of choice here is to "Double!")

Bridge Tip # 369

There are more than twenty bidding conventions which have some form of communication to deal with both a one-suited or a two-suited holding with which an Opponent chooses to overcall following a strong (15-17 HCP) **1-NT** opening by an Opponent. Among the most popular are, “**DONT**,” “**Cappelletti**,” “**Brozel**,” “**Meckwell**,” and “**TWERB**.”

These same Conventions can also be used over an Opponent’s Precision, strong, “**1C**” (16+ HCP’s) opening bid, or a strong, artificial, and forcing “**2C**” opening, but the preferred defensive convention in these instances is yet another of these overcall conventions, called “**Suction**.”

Bids, using the “**Suction**,” Convention, describe the Overcaller’s holdings as follows:

1. **The overcall of any suit denies the suit actually bid, and shows the next higher-ranking suit, or the other two lower-ranking suits.**
 - a. 1♦ (over “**1C**”), or 2♦ (over “**2C**”), shows Hearts, or Spades and Clubs,
 - b. 1♥ (over “**1C**”), or 2♥ (over “**2C**”), shows Spades, or Clubs and Diamonds,
 - c. 1♠ (over “**1C**”), or 2♠ (over “**2C**”), shows Clubs, or Diamond and Hearts, and
 - d. 2♣ (over “**1C**”), or 3♣ (over “**2C**”), shows Diamonds, or Hearts and Spades
2. A “**Double**” evidences both “**rounded**,” (similar shaped suits), non-touching, suits (Clubs and Hearts, owing to the rounded shapes of the tops of their pips).
3. A “**1-NT**” call evidences both “**pointed**,” (similar shaped suits), non-touching, suits (Diamonds and Spades, owing to the pointed shapes of the tops of their pips).

Assuming that Partner to the opening bidder “**passes**,” the Partner to the “**Suction**” bidder is obligated to “**puppet**,” the next higher-ranking suit, until he/she hears otherwise. The “**Suction**” bidder then shows his/her suit(s), as high as he/she can afford, usually at the cheapest level, by either “**passing**,” else by bidding the next higher suit of the remaining two suits. If the Partner to the Opening Bidder makes a call, however, the Partner to the “**Suction**” bidder is relieved of this “**puppet**,” relay responsibility.

Notes: 1. The “**Suction**” Convention requires abandonment of the **Penalty Double**. A **Penalty Double**, therefore, does not exist when using this convention.

2. The “**Suction**” Convention, in most Bridge Clubs, is outlawed over a strong **1-NT** opening bid because two-suited overcalls **must show** at least a 5-4 distribution in two “**known**” suits. In this Convention, an “**anchor**” suit is not necessarily promised, and it is **not initially known** what 2-suits are alternatively referenced. Therefore it cannot be used over the standard strong **1-NT** opening call, but

is authorized for use over a Precision, strong “1C” opening, or a strong, artificial, and forcing “2C” opening, a 1-NT opening call bid in the 4th “*Pass-out*” seat., and is the overall convention of choice, in these three instances.

Bridge Tip # 368

“Kickback” Roman Keycard Blackwood is an Ace-Asking Convention used to preserve space in the process of seeking a possible Slam contract. It eliminates the possibility that in asking for “*Key-Cards*,” Game-level may be inadvertently exceeded, especially when seeking a Slam contract in one of the Minor suits.

The bid immediately above the 4-Level of the agreed-upon suit is used to ask for key cards:

1. 4♦ is used with Clubs agreed
2. 4♥ is used with Diamonds agreed
3. 4♠ is used with Hearts agreed
4. and the normal 4-NT is used with Spades agreed

Extended “Kickback” Format

<u>Trump Suit:</u>	♣	♦	♥	♠
<u>Keycard Asking Bid:</u>	4♦	4♥	4♠	4N
<u>Standard Responses:</u>				
1 st Step=0 or 3	4♥	4♠	4N	5♣
2 nd Step=1 or 4	4♠	4N	5♣	5♦
3 rd Step=2 or 5, No Queen	4N	5♣	5♦	5♥
4 th Step=2 or 5, with Queen	5♣	5♦	5♥	5♠
<u>Void-Showing Responses:</u>				
5 th Step=Even #, any Voids	5♦	5♥	5♠	5N
6 th Step=Odd #, Cue-Bid Void	5♥	5♠	5N	6♣
7 th Step=Odd #, Cue-Bid Void	5♠	5N	6♣	6♦
8 th Step=Odd #, Cue-Bid Void	5N	6♣	6♦	6♥

The bid immediately above 5-Level of the agreed-upon suit is used to ask for the number of Kings – Standard step responses: (0 or 4, 1, 2, and 3)

1. **5♦** is used with Clubs agreed
 2. **5♥** is used with Diamonds agreed
 3. **5♠** is used with Hearts agreed
 4. and the normal **5-NT** is used with Spades agreed
-
-

Bridge Tip # 367

Bridge Players are well aware of the scoring methods used in match-point team games employed during local, regional and national bridge tournaments. The scoring in Swiss Pairs, **IMP** Pairs, or any other Team-of-Four matches, however, is so unlike that of match-point pair games that a whole different set of tactics is required. The following represent a synopsis of the major differences which are suggested for winning play during Team-of-Four matches scored using the “**IMP**” (**International Master Point**) system of scoring:

1. There is an insignificant difference between **IMP** and pair scoring in the extra points scored for No-Trump or Major Suit contracts. Settle on the surest and safest contract. In **IMP** scoring, there is little or no significant scoring difference between a **3-NT** contract versus a **5C** or **5D** contract; and similarly between a **3-NT** versus a **4H** or **4S** contract.
2. In **IMP** scoring, unlike match-point pair scoring, there is little import in jeopardizing any contract for the sake of an overtrick. Insure your contract before scheming for an overtrick.
3. In match-point pair scoring one hardly ever allows the Opponents to buy a Suit contract at the 2-level. In team-of-four matches, however, one fights for the 2-level, but does not do so at the 3-level. Compete at the 2-level, relinquish at the 3-level, and rarely enter the auction by balancing after the Opponents drop the auction in a part-score.
4. Sacrificing can be very rewarding at match-points, but at team-of-four scoring it does not offer a good return on its investment, and is, therefore, often of little value.
5. Penalty Doubles when in partial contracts are similarly of poor return when scoring at team-of-four **IMP** scoring, but, however, they are beneficial when it is believed that one is confident that it is possible to defeat a Game or Slam contract.

6. In team-of-four competitions, teams should stretch for vulnerable Games, not so when non-vulnerable. In the former the **IMP** differences are in favor of the stretch, not so in the latter.
7. In pair scoring one is trying to beat par – to stretch of overtricks, to “*double*” for penalties, etc. In **IMP** scoring one is usually just reaching for par; i.e., a 51% game is the goal.

In summary, when playing at IMP scoring during team-of-four match play, try a cautious, cowardly style, leaving the heroics to your Opponents. Then, at the end of the match, you can, oft times, compliment them for some brilliant bid, while they are congratulating your team for having won the round.

Bridge Tip # 366

As Declarer, before playing a card from Dummy to the first trick, one must take a moment, reflect, and consider several factors, in order to maximize the number of offensive tricks scored. Amongst others, they include the following:

When in a Suit Contract

1. If you are able to win the first trick, and an option exists to take it in either hand, you must decide in which hand it should be captured. Taking it in the Dummy or Declarer’s hand may make a difference as to entries needed later as well as plans for play beginning with trick number two.
2. When in a Suit contract, Declarer must count his/her losers and see how, if at all, any or all of them can be eliminated via finessing, trumping, sluffing on external winners, or promotion.
3. Declarer must decide whether to draw Trumps immediately, belatedly, or never, depending upon the lay of the cards. If a cross-ruff is required outside, winning tricks must first be taken and the drawing of the Defender’s Trump cards delayed, or even eliminated.
4. Trumping in the hand with the longer Trump holding (usually Declarer’s hand) does **not** increase the number of available tricks, but trumping in the shorter Trump holding hand (usually that of the Dummy) does increase the number of available tricks. If trumping in the Dummy is required, then the drawing of the Defender’s Trumps must sometimes be delayed.

When in a No-Trump Contract

1. If you are able to win the first trick, and an option exists to take it in either hand, you must decide in which hand it should be captured. Taking it in the Dummy or Declarer's hand may make a difference as to entries needed later as well as plans for play beginning with trick number two. (Same as in a Suit contract shown above)
2. Do not rush to take tricks that allow later tricks to be set up in that suit for the Opponents.
3. When only one stopper exists in the suit led by the Defenders, a hold-up might be needed to sever communication between the Defenders.
4. Running long suits might be beneficial in order to squeeze the Opponents into discarding cards in a suit that inures to Declarer's advantage.
5. When in a No-Trump contract, Declarer must count his/her winners and see how, if at all, more can be developed via finessing or promotion through length.
6. Attack the suit or suits that offer the greatest potential return as to the number of tricks that can be developed.
7. Declarer must work to set up his/her longest suits as soon as possible during the play of the hand, and can have the luxury of doing so as long as stoppers in the remaining suits are present.

Bridge Tip # 365

After Partner opens one-of-a-suit, responding over an Opponent's **Take-Out Double**, varies on Partnership agreement, but the most widely used responses are as follows:

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
One-of-a-Suit	Double	???	

1. **A Non-Jump, New Suit Response** - (Non-Forcing – 0-8 HCP's)
2. **A 1-NT Call** – (Absent primary support for Partner's suit, mildly constructive, promising 7-9 HCP's with a balanced distribution.)
3. **A Single Raise of Opener's Suit** – (Primary support for Partner's suit, with a possible slightly weaker HCP count, in face of the Opponent's "*double*.”)

4. **A Jump-Raise in Opener's Suit** – (A distributional pre-emptive call showing high-card weakness. The bid should conform to Larry Cohen's "**LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**" as to the number of Partner's suit held; i.e., the number of pieces of Trumps held by the Partnership should be equal to the number of tricks to which the pre-emptive call commits.)
5. **A Re-Double** – (Any hand without primary support for Partner's suit and nine (9) or more HCP's. After a "**re-double**," the Doubler's side is seldom allowed to play the hand un-doubled.
The "**Redoubler**" will usually have a defensive hand, and Opener will not bid at his/her next turn unless he/she has a distributional hand unsuited to defense.)
6. **A "2-NT" Conventional Call ("Jordan")** – (A limit raise, or better, in support of Opener's suit.) Some Partnerships use this as *only a limit raise in support of Partner's suit*, adding the following option:
7. **A "3-NT" Conventional Call ("Jordan")** – (Opening count in support of Opener's suit.)
8. **A Jump-Response in a New Suit** – (The meaning of such a bid is by Partnership agreement – Many use it as pre-emptive, showing a 6-card or longer suit with 3-6 HCP's.)

Bridge Tip # 364

"**Jacoby 2-NT**" is an alertable convention used as a jump-response to "**2-NT**," by an un-passed hand, as a forcing raise to Partner's opening bid of **1H** or **1S**. In so doing, Responder promises at least four Trumps, and a promise of at least opening count, but one of unlimited strength.

In response to such a call, Opener re-bids conventionally as follows:

1. Mention of a **new suit at the 3-level** evidences a singleton or a void in that new suit mentioned.
2. Mention of a **new suit at the 4-level** evidences a second 5-card suit.
3. The **bid of Game in the agreed-upon suit, (4H or 4S)**, evidences a minimum hand with no Slam interest.
4. The **bid of 3-NT** evidences one King better than opening count (16-18 HCP's).

5. The **bid of three in the agreed-upon suit, (3H or 3S)**, evidences two Kings better than opening count, (19 or more HCP's), with a Slam interest.

Responder, now armed with this additional information as to distribution and HCP strength in Opener's hand, can now take control, stop at game, or search for the possibility of a slam-level contract, if it seem feasible or assured.

Bridge Tip # 363

Over a **2-NT** opening bid, Responder, the designated "**Captain**" of any further bidding sequence, can invoke **Stayman** by bidding "**3C**," or use **Jacoby Transfers** to the Majors by employing "**3D**" when referencing Hearts, or by bidding "**3H**" when referencing Spades. The question arises, however, as to what is best signified when Responder, in response to Partner's opening call of **2-NT**, elects to bid "**3S**," (the so-called "**Minor Suit Stayman**.")

Minor suit Stayman is a Game-Forcing system used when there is a possible Minor Suit Slam interest.

In response to Responder's "**3S**" (**Minor suit Stayman**) call over your **2-NT** opening bid, Opener chooses from amongst the following re-bids:

1. **3-NT** evidences no interest in either Minor suit; i.e., Opener does *not* have 4-cards or more in either Clubs or Diamonds. (*Responder then "passes"*)
2. "**4C**" evidences a holding of four or more Clubs. (Responder then either raises to **5C** or **6C**, bids **4D** (with an option for Opener to then proceed either to **5D** or to **4-NT**), or bids **4-NT** (which is not "**Blackwood**," rather it is a "*sign-off*."))
3. "**4D**" evidences a holding of four or more Diamonds. (Responder then either raises to **5D** or **6D**, bids **5C** (to play), or bids **4-NT** (which is not "**Blackwood**," rather it is a "*sign-off*."))

Bridge Tip # 362

The decision to lead an Ace or a King from an Ace-King combination, at trick-1, at the start of play in the game of bridge, is purely by Partnership agreement. Either one is correct, subject to their understanding. However, whichever of the two methods is chosen by a Partnership, the reverse of their chosen sequence is used if the lead is from an Ace-King doubleton. This is the only way that Partner will know the lead was, indeed, from a doubleton.

Irrespective of a Partnership's understanding as to which of the two sequences the Partnership uses, their chosen method, however, only holds true for a lead at trick-1. At any other time during the play of the hand, other than at trick-1, the lead from an Ace-King combination is *always* the King, unless, again, it is from a doubleton, in which case the reverse of the normal sequence is used. This is because at some point, a Defender may elect to break a suit and lead the Ace, lest it possibly is lost, and having led the Ace, the message gleaned by Partner necessarily need not be that the Partner on lead guarantees the King, as well.

Bridge Tip # 361

Your Left-hand Opponent (LHO) has opened the bidding and Partner has made a **Take-Out Double**. Should you bid on or, alternatively, "*Pass*," thereby converting Partner's **Take-Out Double** to a penalty scenario? Answer: Convert it to a penalty by "*passing*" if you satisfy Mel's "*Rule of 9*."

Deciding to Pass Partner's Take-Out Double – Mel Colchamiro's "Rule of 9"

If the number of cards you hold in the Opponent's suit added to the number of honors you hold in that suit (including the 10) plus the level of the contract equals 9 or more, "PASS."

Your LHO has opened the bidding as follows, and Partner has made a Take-Out Double. Should you, holding the following, "bid on," or "Pass?"

<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
1C	Double	Pass	???

You Hold: a) 96, K74, 63, KQT532 (**Pass!** You hold 6 cards in the Opponent's suit, plus 3 honors in their suit, Clubs, plus a

contract level of **1** for a grand total of "10." - **Mel's "Rule of 9" has been satisfied!**)

b) **9642, K74, 96, KQ32** (Bid **1S!** You hold **4** cards in the Opponent's suit, plus **2** honors in their suit, Clubs, plus a contract level of **1** for a grand total of "7." - **Mel's "Rule of 9" has not been satisfied!**)

<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
3D	Double	Pass	???

You Hold: a) **96, K764, QJT3, 532** (Pass! You hold **4** cards in the Opponent's suit, plus **3** honors in their suit, Diamonds, plus a contract level of **3** for a grand total of "10." - **Mel's "Rule of 9" has been satisfied!**)

b) **42, KQ74, Q976, 532** (Bid **3H!** You hold **4** cards in the Opponent's suit, plus **1** honor in their suit, Clubs, plus a contract level of **3** for a grand total of "8." - **Mel's "Rule of 9" has not been satisfied!**)

<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
"2H"	Pass	1-NT	Pass
Pass	Double	2S	Pass
		Pass	???

You Hold: a) **AJT96, 4, Q983, 532** ("**Pass!**" You hold **5** cards in the Opponent's suit, plus **3** honors in their suit, Spades, plus a contract level of **2** for a grand total of "10." - **Mel's "Rule of 9" has been satisfied!**)

b) **AJ42, 74, Q9764, 32** (Bid **3D!** You hold **4** cards in the Opponent's suit, plus **2** honors in their suit, Spades, plus a contract level of **2** for a grand total of "8." - **Mel's "Rule of 9" has not been satisfied!**)

Bridge Tip # 360

Responding to Preempts – “Mel’s Rule of 17”

The question as to whether or not to try for Game when Partner has opened a weak 2-bid often comes into question. In general, conventional wisdom is that since Opener holds between 5-11 HCP’s, Partner should hold no fewer than 15 HCP’s to even consider the possibility that a Game-level contract be possible.

A subsidiary principle to the above is Mel’s “*Rule of 17.*” It states that, “*If the number of high-card points in your hand plus the number of cards you hold in Partner’s suit equals 17, or more, try for game.*”

Partner has opened 2S. Should you, holding the following, try for game?

5, KJ5, KQ7532, AQ7 (“*Pass!*”) – The Rule of 17 is not, here, satisfied)

K8, AQ84, A832, QJ6 (Try for Game!)

Bridge Tip # 359

The question as to whether or not to enter the auction after one’s RHO has opened 1-NT is, to some Players, a frightening contemplation. Mel’s “*Rule of 8,*” if satisfied, offers the likelihood, under most circumstances, that one, indeed, should choose to compete and to enter the auction, rather than to stay silent.

Overcalling in the Direct (2nd) Seat after a 1-NT Opening by your RHO **“Mel’s Rule of 8”**

1. Add the number of cards in your two longest suits.
2. Compute your Losing-Trick-Count (LTC), having assumed that a fit with Partner is present.
3. Subtract your LTC from the number of cards in your two longest suits.
4. If the number is one or less, then “*Pass!*” If the number is two or more, consider overcalling, but,

5. Lastly, one must hold at least six (6) HCP's – Therefore, the “*Rule of 8*” (2+6=8).

North East (You)

1-NT ????

Q9842, Q7652, 5, 32 (“*Pass*”)

10 cards – 8 Losers = 2

2 + 4 HCP's = 6 (Insufficient to satisfy the “Rule of 8”)

A7532, K743, K2, 74 (Using “DONT,” bid “2H”)

9 cards – 7 Losers = 2

2 + 10 = 12 (The “Rule of 8” is, here, satisfied)

Consideration

1. Honor cards should be in your long suits where they can be useful in trick development.
2. Honor cards should be connected and not isolated.

3, KJ652, Q9853, 32

10 cards – 8 Losers = 2

2 + 6 HCP's = 8 (Using “DONT,” consider bidding “2D”)
(Affirmed, since honor cards are in your long suits)

Q7532, 98743, K2, Q

10 cards – 8 Losers = 2

2 + 7 = 9 (The “Rule of 8” is satisfied, but the King of Diamonds is in a short suit, and the Queen of Clubs is likely to be worthless, therefore: (“*Pass*”))

Bridge Tip # 358

In bridge, no convention, tactic, or rule will work all of the time, but several of Mel Colchamiro's time-tested "**Rules**" ("**Principals**") seem to have merit when used under specific bidding and playing circumstances. A few of the more popular of these, in this and upcoming "**Bridge Tips**" are reviewed.

Balancing After a 1-NT Opening – "The Balancing Rule of 2"

The question as to whether or not to balance; i.e., to reopen the auction when the bidding has proceeded, (1-NT – Pass – Pass –?), is always a challenging, and to some, a daunting issue. Multiple conventions have been compiled, the more popular of which, among others, include, "*Natural*," "*Brozel*," "*Cappelletti*," "*Twerb*," "*DONT*," and "*Meckwell*," A rule as to whether or not to invoke your Partnership's favorite, chosen convention, amongst these or any other, is herein offered as Mel's "**Balancing Rule of 2.**"

The conditions here are simply that Opener holds 15-17 HCP's, (an average of 16), and Responder 0-8 HCP's, (an average of 4). Each side, therefore, holds, on average, 20, and, as a result, your side holds as much a right to the contract as do the Opponents. Partner probably holds a balanced hand as he/she had not chosen to enter the auction. *High-card points and vulnerability are essentially irrelevant – the controlling factor, here, is distribution.*

In the balancing seat, one should enter the auction after a (1-NT – Pass – Pass –?) auction whenever that Player, the one in the 4th seat, holds at least 2 shortness points, defined as either a void, a singleton, or two doubletons, irrespective of one's HCP's. Remember, under these circumstances, the HCP's, on average, are equally distributed. If you hold 6, Partner, on average, holds 14. If you hold 10, Partner will also have 10, etc., etc. In the pass-out (4th) seat, bid if you have two or more shortness points, regardless of HCP and vulnerability!

The bidding has proceeded: 1-NT – Pass – Pass –?
Should you, in the balancing seat, holding the following, bid?
Using the "DONT" Convention:

Q842, A76, 5, J7532 (Bid "2C" showing Clubs and a higher-ranking suit)

Q742, A95, 743, J62 ("Pass" – Shortness points are, here, absent)

KJ8543, -, 853, 8763 (Bid "2S" showing a single 6-card or longer suit)

7, K852, Q8754, 762 (Bid "2D" showing Diamonds and a higher-ranking suit)

KJ5, A83, K76, AJ54 ("Pass" - Shortness points are, here, absent)

KQ85, A8542, 76, 85 (Bid "2H" showing Hearts and Spades)

Bridge Tip # 357

When playing the "*Two-Over-One-Game Forcing*" (2/1 GF) system of bidding, the following applies:

- a. Partner's 2/1 response promises 12 or more HCP's and since it represents two opening bids facing each other, the bidding is assumed, under most conditions, not to end until a Game-level or beyond contract has been reached.
- b. The 2/1 GF system refers to the following six (6) bids: **1D/2C, 1H/2C, 1H/2D, 1S/2C, 1S/2D, and 1S/2H**
- c. Any other response at the 2-level other than that enumerated in (b) above is either a simple constructive raise (**1H – 2H**), a jump-shift (**1D – 2H**), an "*Inverted Minor*" bid (**1C – "2D" or 1D – "3C"**), or a jump to **2-NT**, the latter of which is either natural or a conventional "*Jacoby 2-NT*," or a "*Multi-Purpose 2-NT*."
- d. The 2/1 GF system does not exist after a **1C** opening call.
- e. If Opener's LHO "*doubles*" or overcalls, a 2/1 GF does not apply, and a 2-level bid by Opener's Responder shows 10 or more HCP's, not 12 or more.
- f. The opening bid cannot come in the 3rd or 4th seat since a "*passed*" hand is unlikely to be able to force to game. 2/1 GF, therefore, only applies after an opening bid by the Dealer or the Player in the 2nd seat.
- g. A 1-level, new suit, response is what it has always meant; i.e., 6-18 HCP's, and is forcing for one-round. Such bids, therefore do not deny the possibility of opening count or better, and are, therefore, unlimited.

- h. After a **2/1 GF** bid by Responder, Opener's obligation is to show his/her "**shape**" without implying anything about strength (Exceptions {e and f}, and his/her bidding is natural.
- i. After a Game-forcing, **2/1** series of bids, since the Partnership is committed to a Game-level contract, a slow arrival to Game shows stronger holdings than does a quick arrival, which is weaker.
- j. Some Partnerships have the understanding that (**1H – 2C – 2H – 3C**) or (**1S – 2D – 2S – 3D**) sequences can be "**passed**" shy of Game since it implies a misfit scenario.
- k. "**Reverses**" do not exist following a **2/1** bidding sequence.

<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>
1H	Pass	2C	Pass
???			

You Hold: 1) **63 KQ9853 AQ7 K5** (Re-bid **2H**, showing minimum values and a 6-card suit.)

2) **75 KJ863 K4 AQ73** (Re-bid **3C**, support for Responder with no extra values – Forcing until game is reached.)

3) **AK75 AK642 A63 7** (Re-bid **2S**, natural but not a "**Reverse**.")

4) **AJ4 KQ742 6432 K** (Re-bid **2D**, natural)

5) **QJ6 Q9642 K54 AQ** (Re-bid **3-NT**, natural and minimum opening values, since a "**quick arrival**" at game is weaker than a "**slow arrival**" when in a "**game-forcing**" auction.)

6) **A87 K8632 A86 AJ** Re-bid **2-NT**, natural, showing extra values.)

Bridge Tip # 356

A 4-4 trump fit usually plays at least one trick better than a 5-3 Trump fit at any level.

<u>West (You)</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>
AQJ4	K876
AQ1054	KJ9
A2	543
A2	543

Note: In a contract of **6S**, all you require is a 3-2 Trump division allowing you to discard two of Dummy's Diamonds (or Clubs) on your Hearts, eventually trumping a Diamond or a Club.

In a contract of **6H**, however, you cannot help but still lose one Club and one Diamond, going down one trick.

Bridge Tip # 355

When one makes a pre-emptive call, Partner becomes the "**Captain**" of any further bidding. Since one never bids one's values twice, the pre-emptive Bidder must never bid again unless prompted to do so by his/her responding Partner. It is up to the Partner of the Player making the preempt bid to decide to compete further, to try for Gme, else to commit to a Gme-level, or higher, contract.

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
2D (Weak)	Pass	???	

You Hold: a) **XXX KXXX XX XXXX** ("**Pass!**" You hold no support for Partner and are too weak to further the auction.)

b) **XXX KXX XXX XXXX** (Bid **3D**, furthering the pre-empt.)

c) **XXX XX KXXX XXXX** (Bid **4D!** "**LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**")

d) **XXX XX KXXXX XXX** (Bid **5D!** "**LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**")

e) **AKXXX AXX QJ AXX** (Bid **2S**, forcing! Any new suit is forcing, showing 15 or more HCP's and a possible interest in a Gme-level contract!) It asks Opener "**How many pieces of my new suit, do you hold?**"

(1) With none or one piece of Responder's suit = Opener re-bids his/her suit that was pre-empted.

(2) With two pieces of Responder's suit = Opener re-bids "**NT**" at cheapest level.

(3) With three or more pieces of Responder's suit, raise Responder in his/her suit.

f) **AKXX AQX KXX AXX** (Bid **3-NT!** "**He who knows, goes**")

Bridge Tip # 354

4th seat opening, weak, pre-emptive 2-level bids, subject to Partnership agreement, are usually not needed since if the 4th-seat Player could have just “*passed*” if he/she had perceived that to open the bidding would have allowed the Opponents to make a plus score, if it were truly their hand. Some Partnerships, therefore, agree that a 4th-seat opening 2-bid shows a 6-card, single-suited holding with extra opening values (16 or more HCP’s).

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
Pass	Pass	Pass	???

You Hold: a) **AKXXX KX KXX XXX** (Open **1S**, standard opening)

b) **AKXXXX AX KQX XX** (Open **2S**, a super maximum, 6-card or better, opening)

Bridge Tip # 353

A **Michaels Cue-bid**, used for 2-suited overcalls, must reflect either a very weak (5-10 HCP’s), else a very strong (16 or more HCP’s) holding. With intermediate (11-15 HCP) values, one must overcall both suits oneself, the higher-ranking suit first.

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East (RHO)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
	1C	???	

You hold: a) **QXXXX JXXXX X XX** (“**Pass.**” You are too weak to bid.)

b) **KQXXX KXXXX XX X** (Bid “**2C,**” and do not bid again. Never show your values twice. Partner, knowing you a 5-5 or better in the Major suits, becomes the “**Captain**” of any future bidding sequence, and will choose to compete further based upon knowing that not hearing from you again, that you hold minimum 5-10 HCP’s.)

c) **KQXXX AKXXX X XX** (Overcall **1S**, later bidding Hearts. Partner, knowing you had a 2-suited holding but had not used Michaels, must have held intermediate (11-15 HCP’s) values.

d) **KQJXX AKXXX A XX** (Bid "**2C**" showing both Majors, 5-5 or longer, and then cue-bid a second time, "**3C**," after Partner makes a choice between Hearts and Spades, as you have requested. Partner, who has become the "**Captain**" of any further bidding, will now know that you held 16 or more HCP's since you took a second bid after cue-bidding initially.)

Bridge Tip # 352

Signaling is the language of defense in bridge, just as **bidding** is the language of offense. There are many times when the defense has the opportunity of making a signal, and, of course, such signaling methods are according to Partnership understanding and must be discussed for maximum outcome.

One golden opportunity, among others, for a defensive signal occurs when either Partner is leading a card, when defending against a Suit contract, at a time when the suit led is known to be about-to-be trumped by Partner. In such circumstances the level of the card led, in the suit to be trumped is a **suit preference signal**. It tells Partner which of the two remaining suits, other than the suit led and the trump suit, Partner wishes you to return following your trumping the suit just led which Partner is aware you are about to trump.

Suit Preference Signals

- (1) The return of a **relatively high card** asks for the return in the **higher-ranking** of the two remaining suits. (*Example: If Hearts is the Trump suit and Partner leads a relatively high Spade which you and Partner are aware you are about to trump – Partner is asking for a Diamond return.*)
- (2) The return of your **lowest card** asks for a return in the **lower-ranking** side suit. (*Example: If Spades is the Trump suit and Partner leads a relatively low Diamond which you and Partner are aware you are about to trump – Partner is asking for a Club return.*)
- (3) The return of a **middle card** (by Partnership agreement) means either that you have **no preference**, asking Partner to use his/her judgment, **else to return a Trump card**.

Developing Partnership communication on defense is the secret to a winning defensive strategy. Discuss such methods with your Partner and learn to use these methods – your enjoyment in the Game of bridge will increase, and you will hold the Opponents to a minimum number of tricks possible, even setting contracts that normally would have otherwise been made, absent such communication methods. Some bridge players even find defensive play more enjoyable than when they are the declaring side.

Bridge Tip # 351

When you make a simple overcall, and your Partner, the “Advancer,” cue-bids Opener’s suit, Partner’s cue-bid shows primary support (3-cards) or better in your suit, and at least invitational (11) HCP’s or better. Partner shows an interest in a Game-level contract in your suit, and wants to know more about your hand so as to best tell the final bidding destination.

<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>
1D	1S	Pass	“2D”
Pass	??		

- (a) A re-bid of your overcall suit evidences a simple overcall (8-11 HCP’s).**

AQXXX XX KXX XXX

(Re-bid 2S, a minimum overcall of 8-11 HCP’s.)

- (b) A jump-re-bid of your overcall suit evidences an invitational overcall (12-13 HCP’s). AQXXXX XX KX KXX**

(Re-bid 3S, showing an invitational better-than-minimum overcall of 12-13 HCP’s.)

- (c) A bid of 2-NT is invitational (12-14 HCP’s) with strength in Opener’s suit.**

AJXXX KX AJX XXX

(Re-bid 2-NT, invitational 12-14 HCP’s with strength in Opener’s suit.)

- (d) A jump into Game shows a strong overcall of 15-17 HCP’s. AKXXXX XX**

AQX QX

(Jump to 4S, showing 15-16 HCP’s.)

- (e) A cue-bid following Partner’s cue-bid is a Game force, Slam invitational call. AKJXXX X AKXX AX**

(Bid "3D", a cue-bid evidencing a Game-force with Slam possibilities. Pursuit of a possible Slam is now up to the Overcaller's Partner, the "Advancer.")

Bridge Tip # 350

When Partner opens one-of-a-suit and your RHO (right-hand Opponent) makes a Take-Out Double, any new suit by you, as Responder, either at the 1-level or at the 2-level is limited, showing 0-8 HCP's, and is not forcing. Remember, if you as Responder had had 9 or more HCP's you would have "redoubled." Any jump-response in Partner's suit is pre-emptive, a simple raise in Partner's suit is constructive, and a "2-NT" bid by you ("Jordan"), by Partnership agreement, shows support and a limit raise, or better, in Partner's opening suit.

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East (RHO)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
1C	Dbl.	???	

You hold: a) XX AJXXX KXX XXX (Bid 1H. It shows a 5-card suit with a limited number of points 5-8 HCP's, and is not forcing.)

b) XX XX JXX AQJXXX (Bid 2D. This is not forcing.)

c) AJX AJXXX XXX XX (Redouble. The Opponents are in trouble. Your side has the dominant point count. At your next opportunity to bid, you can either "Double" for penalties if the Opponents try to run to Hearts, else bid Hearts, yourself.)

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East (RHO)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
1H	Dbl.	???	

You hold: a) XXX KQXX XXXX XX (Bid 3H. This is pre-emptive. The level of your pre-empt must always be at a level such that the number of tricks to which you commit is equal to the number of perceived trumps held by the Partnership {THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS}.)

b) XX KQXXX XXXX XX (Bid 4H, also pre-emptive)

c) XXX KXX KQXX XXX (Bid 2H. This is constructive showing 6-9 HCP's; i.e. usually a Losing Trick Count of 9)

d) **XX AQXX KXX KXXX** (Bid "2-NT." This is "*Jordan*" which shows support for Partner with a HCP holding equivalent to a limit raise or better.

Bridge Tip # 349

When Partner to an overcall makes a No-Trump response, it exhibits both a lack of support for Partner's overcall suit, and at least one stopper in the Opener's bid suit. In addition, dependent upon the level of the No-Trump response, it evidences a specific number of HCP's. These HCP ranges are as follows:

- (1) A 1-NT response shows 8-11 HCP's
- (2) A 2-NT response shows 12-14 HCP's, and
- (3) A 3-NT response shows 15-18 HCP's

<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1C	1S	Pass	???

Ex: (a) **XX AJX JXXX KXXX** (Bid 1-NT) Competitive
 (b) **XX AQX KXXX AXXX** (Bid 2-NT) Invitational, not forcing.
 (c) **JX AQX KQJX KXXX** (Bid 3-NT)

Bridge Tip # 348

If Partner overcalls with a Major suit, do not change suits if you have support for that Major. A change to any other suit, Minor or Major, would evidence lack of support for Partner's suit and would not be forcing. When the Overcaller's Partner does change suits, however, it does guarantee at least a 5-card suit or longer, and the necessary number of HCP's; i.e., 8 or more if the bid is at the 1-level, and 10 or more if at the 2-level.

<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1C	1H	P	???

Ex: (a) **XX KXX AKXXX XXX** (Bid 2H, 2D would deny support for Hearts.)
 (b) **AKXXX JXX XXX XX** (Bid 2H, 1S would deny support for Hearts.)

(c) **AQXXX XX KXX XXX** (Bid **1S**, denying support for Hearts.)

When you overcall a Major suit, and your Partner changes suits, thus denying 3-card or longer support for you, never re-bid your overcall suit unless you have a strong 6-card holding.

<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (Partner)</u>
1H	1S	Pass	2D
Pass	??		

Ex. (a) **AKXXX XXX X KXXX** ("**Pass!**" Partner has few Spades and you do not have Diamonds. Partner's **2D** bid is not forcing. Quit while you are behind!)

(b) **AQJXXX XXX X AXX** (Bid **2S**)

If Overcaller's Partner, the "Advancer," overcalls with a Minor suit, a change to a Major suit by does not necessarily deny support for Partner's Minor overcall suit. It does, however, guarantee at least a 5-card, or better, Major suit, and is merely an attempt to find a 30 point per trick contract, as opposed to Partner's 20 points per trick attempt. Overcaller's Partner might still, indeed, hold support for Partner's Minor suit holding.

<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1C	1D	P	???

Ex: (a) **XX AJXXX XXX KXX** (Bid **1H**, does not necessarily deny Diamond support.)

(b) **AKXXX QXX X XXXX** (Bid **1S**)

Bridge Tip # 347

The lead against a **3-NT** contract is usually different than a lead against a **6-NT** contract.

1. Against a **3-NT** contract, the lead of a suit bid by Partner is often best. Absent any suit mentioned by Partner, one usually leads top of any 3-card or longer sequence or 4th best, assuming one has at least one outside entry so as to run the suit once it assumedly has become established.

2. Against a **6-NT** contract, however, unless holding a sequence, one usually leads **passively** so as not to give Declarer a free finesse at trick #1.

Holding: **JT7 KT953 Q86 J6** - Lead the Jack of Spades.

The Opponents hold 32 or more HCP's – Partner holds none – Lead the safest card in the safest suit possible and let Declarer find the missing honors, don't find them for him/her.

Bridge Tip # 346

There are occasions when Partner has led one suit, gets the lead in a second suit, and then leads, yet, a third suit, You take the trick, but should you return the suit which Partner has first led or should you return the second suit led by Partner? The answer is as follows:

1. If Partner leads a high card (weakness) in the second suit led, Partner desires the first suit to be returned.
 2. If Partner leads a low card (strength) in the second suit, Partner wants the return of the second suit, not the first.
-

Bridge Tip # 345

After winning a trick which Partner has led, and making a continuation by returning the suit:

1. Return the higher of the two with only two remaining cards, as with the **A-9-6**, win the Ace and return the 9, (the top card any two that remain)
 2. Return the lowest with three cards remaining, as, with **A-9-6-3**, win the Ace and return the 3, (the lowest from any three or more that remain)
-

Bridge Tip # 344

The definition of a sequence differs when leading against a Suit contract or against a No-Trump contract. Whether or not to lead the top of such a sequence thus differs accordingly.

Against a Suit contract, a holding is considered to be a sequence if headed by any *two or more* sequential cards:

1. The Ace from **A-K-X-(X)**
2. The King from **K-Q-X-(X)**
3. The Queen from **Q-J-X-(X)**
4. The Jack from **J-T-X-(X)**
5. The Ten from **T-9-X-(X)**, etc.

Against a No-Trump contract, a holding is only considered to be a sequence if headed by *three or more* consecutive cards:

1. The Ace from **A-K-Q-(X)**
2. The King from **K-Q-J-(X)**, etc.
3. From only two cards in sequence at the top of the holding such as, for example, **K-Q-9-X**, this is not considered a sequence, and, therefore, 4th best is appropriate, not the K.

Bridge Tip # 343

Confusion often exists as to whether or not to lead the Ace or the King from any Ace-King combination when leading against a Suit contract. Choosing one or the other is not a right-wrong. It is, rather, merely a choice elected by Partnership agreement.

If the Partnership agreement, however, is to lead the Ace from any **A-K-X-(X)** against Suit contracts:

1. The lead of an Ace is a *trick-one* convention only. During the play of the hand following trick one, the King is led.
2. In any suit Partner has bid, whether supported or not, the King is always led from an **A-K**. Leading the Ace denies holding the King.

3. From an A-K doubleton, the reverse is true – lead the King followed by the Ace.
-
-

Bridge Tip # 342

The lead of any card which starts the play of the hand at trick #1 can oft times make the difference in the outcome of the results of the entire hand. Absent a better lead of one's own based upon the holding of the Partner on lead, the lead of Partner's bid suit is often favored.

When leading Partner's bid suit, however, the choice of the actual card to be led differs, and is dependent upon whether or not the suit has been supported or unsupported by the Partner on lead.

When leading Partner's supported suit:

1. Lead any singleton
2. Lead top of any doubleton
3. Lead your highest card when holding three or more pieces headed by a 9 or lower
4. Lead a low card from three or more headed by an honor (Queen or higher).

When leading Partner's unsupported suit:

1. Lead top of any doubleton
 2. Lead low from any three or four cards headed by a sequence
 3. With the Ace, if you lead the suit, lead the Ace.
-
-

Bridge Tip # 341

(1) A single raise of Partner's overcall, by the "Advancer," is equivalent to a single raise of an opening bid; i.e., 6-10 HCP's and at least three pieces for Partner's (5-card) overcall suit.

West North (Partner) East South (You)

1H	1S	2H	???
----	----	----	-----

AXX XX KXXX XXXX (Bid 2S)

(2) A Jump raise in Partner's overcall suit is preemptive. It promises at least 4 pieces of Partner's overcall suit with fewer points (3-5 HCP'S) than would otherwise have been evidenced by a simple raise, as shown above.

<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1H	1S	2H	???

AXXX XX JXXX XXX (Bid 3S)

(Do not make the sissy bid of **2S**. Your team is never going to buy the contract for **2S** anyway, and so you might as well attempt to pre-empt the Opponents, while, at the same time, informing Partner of the situation.)

(3) With primary (4 Pieces) support for Partner's overcall suit and a hand too strong for a single raise, or a preemptive call as in (1) and (2) respectively above, cue-bid the **first bid suit** of the Opponents inviting Partner to Game. **A CUE-BID IS THE ONLY FORCING BID THAT CAN BE MADE BY A RESPONDER (the "ADVANCER") TO AN OVERCALL.** No other bid is forcing.

<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1C	1H	Pass	???

AQX KJXX KXX XXX (Cue-bid "2C")

This evidences invitational (11-12 HCP's) or better, (8-Losers or fewer) and is inviting Partner to Game.)

Bridge Tip # 340

A vulnerable 2-level overcall, in the direct (2nd) seat should approximate an opening bid. A non-vulnerable 2-level overcall in the direct seat need not be as strong.

1H has been bid by the Dealer. You, the potential Overcaller, hold the following:

Ex: (a) **AX XX KJXXXX QXX** (In the direct (2nd) seat, "**Pass**," if vulnerable, overcall **2D** if you are non-vulnerable.)

(b) **AX XX AQXXXX QXX** (Overcall **2D** at any vulnerability.)

In the 4th (balancing) seat, all overcall disciplines are waved and one can overcall with fewer HCP's, and even with a 4-card suit.

Bridge Tip # 339

Following both an opening of one-of-a-suit and a possible minimum re-bid by your Partner, the Opening Bidder, a bid of any new suit at the 2-level by you (Example b), as Responder, shows at least invitational values and is forcing for 1-round. Under these circumstances, with fewer than 11 HCP's (Example a), Responder must not bid at the 2-level, absent invitational values.

Ex: (a) **North** **(South (You))**
 1C **1H (XX AJXXX QXXXX X)**
 1S **?? (Re-bid 1-NT, 2D would show 11{+}**
HCP's.)

(b) **North** **(South (You))**
 1C **1H (AX AJXXX QXXXX X)**
 1S **?? (Re-bid 2D, (shows 11{+} HCP's, and is**
forcing for one round)

Bridge Tip # 338

When a 1-level Responder wants to be in Game, but does not know which Game, a new suit should be bid in order to continue to force the bidding. If this new suit is the 4th suit, the bid may be completely artificial, and could evidence the possibility a 5-card first-bid suit.

A New Suit bid by a Responder is forcing for 1-Round
4th-Suit Forcing Bids are artificial, alertable and, if by Partnership
agreement, are usually forcing to Game

(Some Partnerships agree to 4th suit Forcing Bids to be forcing for just 1-round)

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1D	1H (AX AKJXX JXXX XX)
1S	"2C"

After Partner's 1S bid, you are sure that Game is likely, although you are uncertain whether this hand belongs in 4H, 5D, or even 3-NT.

"2C," in this instance, would be 4th-suit, alertable, and forcing. It enables Responder to find out more about Opener's hand and insures the most feasible Game-level contract. Opener will now support Hearts with 3-pieces, will bid No-Trump with a Club stopper, or will return to Diamonds holding 5 pieces.

(**Note:** a 3-level jump to 3D or 3H by Responder would have been invitational and would not have been forcing)

Bridge Tip # 337

After a one-level response by Opener's responding Partner, and a possible minimum re-bid by the Opener, Opener has now limited his/her HCP holdings and, as a result, Opener's Responder now becomes the "*Captain*" of any further bidding sequence and thus is responsible to guide the Partnership into its final contract with respect to both denomination and level. Responder, holding Game-going values, should re-bid Game in an independent Major suit, Game in Opener's Major, or 3-NT. Under these conditions, Responder should not bid 2-NT or 3 of any of the pre-mentioned suits with such a hand since such bids would be invitational and not forcing. (*See Tip # 336*)

Remember: "*He who knows goes!*"

<u>Ex:</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
	1D	1H
	1S	??
		<u>As South, you hold:</u>

(a) XX AKJXXXX KX XX (Re-bid 4H; 3H would not be forcing)

(b) **AQXX AQXXX XX XX** (Re-bid **4S**; **3S** would not be forcing)

(c) **XXX AKXX XX AQJX** (Re-bid **3-NT**; **2-NT** would be invitational)

Bridge Tip # 336

After responding at the 1-level with 10-12 HCP hands (invitational values), Responder to an opening bid of one-of-a-suit is expected to make an invitational re-bid after Opener makes a minimum re-bid. These invitational re-bids include: **2-NT**, or the 3-level of any of the suits that have already been bid by either the Opener or the Responder. These invitational bids are not forcing and can be “*passed*” by the Opener.

	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
(a)	1D 1S	1H (XX AKXX XXX AXXX) 2-NT (11-12 HCP's, <u>invitational</u> - Not <u>Forcing</u>)
(b)	1D 1S	1H (XX AKXXXX KJX XX) 3H (10-12 HCP's, a 6-card suit, <u>invitational</u>)
(c)	1D 1S	1H (XX AXXX AQXX XXX) 3D (10-12 support points, <u>invitational</u>)
(d)	1D 1S	1H (AXXX KXXX AX XXX) 3S (10-12 support points, <u>invitational</u>)

Bridge Tip # 335

When responding to Partner's opening bid of one-of-a-suit, and after first responding with one-of-a-new-suit at the 1-level and holding minimum responding values (6-9 HCP's), a Responder who wishes to sign-off has the following four possible re-bids: "*pass*" (Example a), **a re-bid of Responder's original suit** (Example b), **returning to Opener's first bid suit at the cheapest available level** (Example c), or **1-NT** (Example d).

<u>Ex:</u>	<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>North (You)</u>
	1D	1H
	1S	??

(a) **Axxx Kxxx xxx xx** ("*Pass.*" Opener, here, holds 11-18 HCP's, and game is not feasible.)

(b) **xx KQxxxx Jx Qxx** (Re-bid **2H** showing a 6-card suit, or at the very least a strong 5-carder, and a weak hand.)

(c) **x Axxxx Qxxx xxx** (Return to **2D**, Opener's first bid suit.)

(d) **xx Kxxxx xx Qjxx** (Re-bid **1-NT**. Do not even think of re-bidding those lousy Hearts.)

Bridge Tip # 334

With a {**5-4-4-0**} distribution, after opening **1S** and Partner responds **2C**, your void suit, re-bid **2H**, not 2D (Example 1). If you were to respond **2D**, you automatically would deny holding four Hearts (Example 2).

Ex: (1) **AJxxx Kxxx AKxx --** (Open **1S**, and over Partner's **2C** response, re-bid **2H**.)

(2) **AJxxx Kx AKxx xx -** (Open **1S**, and over Partner's **2C** response, re-bid **2D**.)

Bridge Tip # 333

After any **2-level** response from Opener's Partner, a new suit bid by the Opener is forcing (Example a). After a **1-NT** response from Partner, a new, **lower-ranking** suit bid by Opener is not forcing, (Example b). If, however, following a **1-NT** response from Partner, the second suit bid by Opener is of **higher rank** than Opener's first bid suit, it is a "**Reverse**," and is forcing for one round (Example c).

Ex: (a) **AKJXX X KXXX AXX** (You open **1S**, Partner responds **2C**.
What is your Re-bid? [**2D**] **Forcing!**

(b) **J AX KQXXX AXXXX** (You open **1D**, Partner responds **1-NT**.
What is your Re-bid? [**2C**] **Not Forcing!**

(c) **KXXX AKJXX A KXX** (You open **1H**, Partner responds **1-NT**.
What is your Re-bid? [**2S**] This is a "**Reverse**," and is **Forcing!**

Bridge Tip # 332

With a **(4-3-3-3)** distribution and 6-7 HCP's (a 10-loser hand) plus 3-card support for Partner's Major suit opening, respond **1-NT** rather than supporting Partner. With the same distribution and 8-10 HCP's (a 9-loser hand) raise Partner to the 2-level. However, if **all** of your points are in Partner's suit, raise regardless of point count.

Ex: (a) **QXX JXXX QXX QXX** (Partner opens **1H**, Respond **1-NT** in order to slow the auction down with this piece of cheese (10-Losers). If the opportunity arises wherein you have the chance to bid once again, then support Partner belatedly.

(b) **AQX XXXX XXX XXX** (Partner opens **1S**, Raise to **2S**, all of your strength is in Partner's suit.)

(c) **XXX KQX AXXX XXX** (Partner opens **1S**, Raise to **2S** (9-Losers)! A raise to **2S** is more encouraging than **1-NT** followed by a 2-level support.)

Bridge Tip # 331

A direct natural response of either **2-NT** or **3-NT** following Partner's opening bid of one-of-a-Minor denies a singleton. A **1-NT** response following Partner's opening bid of one-of-a-Major may contain a singleton - yes, even a void.

Ex: (a) **X AKXX KJXX AXXX** (Partner opens **1S**, Respond **2C**) Do not even think about bidding **2-NT**, you can always bid No-Trump later, if necessary.

(b) **AXX KXX AXXX XXX** (Partner opens **1C**, Respond **2-NT**)

(c) **AKX AXX KXXX XXX** (Partner opens **1C**, Respond **3-NT**)

(d) **- KXXX QXXXX QXXX** (Partner opens **1S**, Respond **1-NT**)

Bridge Tip # 330

Partner has opened the bidding with **1C**. With a 4-card or 5-card Diamond suit and a 4-card Major suit, respond in Diamonds if you have 11 HCP's or more, respond in the Major if you have 6-10 HCP's. With fewer than 11 HCP's it is possible that you will only have the opportunity of only one bid and it is, therefore, more important to mention the Major suit than the Minor. With 11 or more HCP's, you are strong enough for a second bid, and you can, thus, bid the Minor suit first and other suit later, if necessary.

Ex: (a) **AXXX XX KXXX XXX** (Partner opens **1C**, Respond **1S**, not **1D**)

(b) **XX AKXX JXXXX XX** (Partner opens **1C**, Respond **1H**, not **1D**)

(c) **AXXX XX AKJX XXX** (Partner opens **1C**, Respond **1D**, "*Up-the-Ladder*")

(d) **QX AKXX AXXXX XX** (Partner opens **1C**, Respond **1D**), "*Up-the-Ladder*")

Bridge Tip # 329

With 4-4 in the Majors, respond in the lower-ranking suit, Hearts, first to either Minor Suit (Club or Diamond) opening bid by Partner. This conforms to the “*Up-the-Ladder*” principle. However, with 5-5 or 5-4 in the Majors, respond in the higher-ranking, Spade suit, first.

Ex: (a) **AJXX QXXX XX QXX** (Partner opens **1C** or **1D**, respond **1H**)

(b) **KXXXX AKJXX XX X** (Partner opens **1C** or **1D**, respond **1S**)

(c) **KXXXX AKJX XX XX** (Partner opens **1C** or **1D**, respond **1S**)

Bridge Tip # 328

With a broken 6-card Minor (Clubs or Diamonds) and 15 HCP's, open **1-NT**, providing you have stoppers in the other three suits. Opening one-of-the-Minor does not afford the ability to show the true HCP strength of the hand with any convenient, available re-bid. Live a little!

Ex: (a) **KX KX KJX AJXXXX** (Open **1-NT**)

(b) **AX KX KQXXXX KXX** (Open **1-NT**)

Bridge Tip # 327

With a hand strong enough to open **1-NT** but absent stoppers in two of the four suits, open the preferred Minor rather than **1-NT**. Opening **1-NT** should evidence 15-17 HCP's and stoppers in at *least three* of the four suits.

Ex: (1) **AKJX XX XXX AKJX** (Open **1C**) If Partner responds **1D** or **1H**, re-bid **1S**. If Partner responds **1S**, re-bid **3S**. If Partner responds **1-NT**, re-bid **2-NT**. If Partner responds **2C**, "**Pass.**"

(2) **AKQX XXX AQJX XX** (Open **1D**) If Partner responds **1H**, re-bid **1S**) If Partner responds **1S**, re-bid **3S**. If Partner responds **1-NT**, re-bid **2-NT**. If Partner responds **2C**, re-bid **2S**. If Partner responds **2D**, "**Pass.**"

(3) **AKQX AQJX XXX XX** (Open **1D**) If Partner responds **1H** or **1S**, re-bid **3H** or **3S**) If Partner responds **1-NT**, re-bid **2-NT**. If Partner responds **2C**, re-bid **2-NT**. If Partner responds **2D**, "**Pass.**"

Bridge Tip # 326

There is one exception to the rule which holds that third hand should always play high. In the following situation: when **defending against a Suit contract:**

North leads **H(2)** --- Dummy shows **H(864)** --- and you, as South, hold **H(KJ95)**

<u>North</u>		<u>Dummy</u>
2		864
	<u>South (You)</u>	
	KJ95	

In this instance, when North leads a Heart as the opening lead against a Slam-level Suit contract, play the Jack. If this forces the Ace, you have located the Queen in Partner's hand and Partner knows that you may have the King. If it loses to the Queen, you have lost nothing, since Partner (hopefully) **never** under-leads the Ace.

If you play the King at trick one, however, you know nothing about the location of the Queen, and Partner does not know who has the Jack.

Locating as many cards as possible at trick one can often be very important for the Defense.

Bridge Tip # 325

Opening one of the Minors and then re-bidding the other should be reserved for hands with nine or more cards in the Minors. With a *minimum opening count*, however, and 5-4 in the Minors always open **1D** and then re-bid **2C**. This holds true whether one holds five Clubs and four Diamonds (Example 1), or four Clubs and five Diamonds (Example 2). This is necessary so as to (a) being capable of mentioning both suits, while (b) **not** “*Reversing*” (showing 17(+) HCP’s) when mentioning the 2nd Minor (Example 3).

- (1) **Ax xx KQxxx Axxx** (Open **1D** and re-bid **2C**)
- (2) **Ax xx Axxx KQxxx** (Open **1D** and re-bid **2C**)
- (3) **Ax xx AKJx KQxxx** (Open **1C** and re-bid **2D** = A “*Reverse*”)

Thus with 4-4 in the Minors, one should refrain from mentioning both suits. Alternatively, one should ***open the better minor*** (Examples 4 and 5); i.e. the Minor suit that Opener would want Partner to lead in case the team winds up defending, and then, if unsupported by Partner, re-bid **1-NT**.

- (4) **xx AJx Qxxx KQJx** (Open **1C**) If Partner bids **1S**, re-bid **1-NT**. If Partner bids **1D** or **1H**, raise to **2D** or **2H**, respectively.
- (5) **AJx xx AQJx Jxxx** (Open **1D**) Re-bid **1-NT** over **1H**, and raise **1S** to two.

Bridge Tip # 324

Responses by Opener to Responder’s invoking of a **Jacoby Transfer** call subsequent to Opener’s **1-NT** opening bid are standard:

- a) A direct call of the suit referenced by Responder: **1-NT** – “**2D**” – **2H**
- b) A “***Super-Acceptance***” evidencing Opener’s holding of the maximum possible; i.e., 4-pieces of the referenced suit and the top (17 HCP’s) of one’s **1-NT** HCP range: **1-NT** – “**2D**” – “**3H**”.

If, however, the Opponent to the immediate left of Responder's invoking of a transfer bid makes a "***lead-directing double***," Opener no longer has the obligation of taking the transfer since the Opponent's "***lead-directing double***" affords Responder another opportunity to bid as in the following example.

	<u>North</u>	
	1-NT/Pass	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
"Double"		Pass/Pass
	<u>South</u>	
	"2D"/2H	

A little-known extension of the **Jacoby Transfer** Convention, under these circumstances is the following:

- If Opener "***passes***" he/she shows just 2-pieces of Responder's referenced suit, and
- If Opener accepts the transfer and bids the suit referenced by Responder, Opener shows having held three or four pieces of the referenced suit.

<u>North</u>		<u>North</u>	
1-NT/Pass (shows 2-Hearts)		1-NT/"2H" (shows	
3 or 4-Hearts)			
<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
"Double"	Pass	"Double"	Pass
<u>South</u>		<u>South</u>	
"2D"		"2D"	

If Opener does "***pass***," as in (a) above, Responder does have the option of either bidding the intended Major as shown above, else "***re-transferring***" so as to make Opener the Declarer on any contract that is to follow, as shown below:

	<u>North</u>	
	1-NT/Pass	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
"Double"		Pass
	<u>South</u>	
	"2D"/"3D" (A " <i>re-transfer</i> ")	

Much confusion often exists as to when a bid of **4-NT** is natural, when is it conventional other than **Blackwood**, and when it is Ace-Asking. **There are seven occasions when 4-NT is either natural or conventional, other than Ace-asking. A bid of 4-NT, other than its use in an Ace-asking convention, can mean any one of the following:**

- (1) Following either Partner's opening bid of either **1-NT** or **2-NT** --- A response of **4-NT** is a quantitative, natural, slam-seeking call which can be "*passed*" if Opener holds the minimum of what was originally shown by his/her opening No-Trump bid, else **6-NT** if holding a maximum. A leap to "**4C**" (**Gerber**) is the artificial Ace-asking alternative in these instances.

- (2) Following a leap to **4-NT** subsequent to a 4th suit call.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1S	2D
3H	4C
4-NT (natural)	

- (3) Following a 2-level response by Responder, a new suit by Opener at the 3-level, and a leap to **4-NT** by the Responder.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1S	2H
3C	4-NT (natural)

- (4) Following a two-over-one response, a jump re-bid of **3-NT** by Opener, and a **4-NT** call by Responder.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1H	2D
3-NT	4-NT

- (5) Following an opening bid by an Opponent of **3H, 3S, or 4H**, and an overcall of "**4-NT**" is conventional for the Minors.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
3H, 3S, 4H	"4-

NT" (Minors)

- (6) Following a pre-emptive 4S opening, an overcall of "**4-NT**" is a two- or three-suited **Take-Out Double**.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
4S	"4-

NT" (Take-Out)

(7) Following an opening bid of **1C** or **1D**, a 2nd hand overcall of **4S**, a response of “**4-NT**” by Opener’s Partner is also a 3-suited “**Take-Out**.”

<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1C, 1D	4S
“4-NT” (Take-Out)		

Bridge Tip # 322

There has always been discussion as to whether or not to pre-empt when holding an outside void or 4-pieces of an outside Major suit. This should be discussed and agreed to one way or the other by each Partnership. However, in 1st or 2nd position; i.e., before Partner has acted, consensus seems to agree that one should never pre-empt when holding two Aces, an Ace and two Kings, or even with an outside Ace. With such holdings, you are too strong defensively to make a preempt bid.

(a) With **AQxxxx xxx Ax xx = Pass**

(b) With **Axxxxx Kxx xx Kx = Pass**

(c) With **KQxxxx Axx xx xx = Pass**

(d) With **AQxxxx Kxx xx xx = Open 2S**

After pre-empting in the 1st or 2nd seat, any new suit below Game-level bid by Partner, or a **2-NT** call, is forcing. Opener may not “pass.”

If Partner raises your pre-empt you must “*pass*.” Remember “**RONF**” (a Raise is the Only Non-Force. After you preempt, Partner is in charge and takes further bidding, including ALL sacrifices.

If Partner bids **3-NT** or any other Game-level contract, that ends the auction. Partner to any pre-empt is always the “**Captain**.”

Bridge Tip # 321

There are three times when you can cue-bid the Opponent's bid suit opposite Partner's **Take-Out Double**. In each instance you transfer the decision-making process as to which Major suit to choose back to your Partner.

- (a) When your left-hand Opponent (LHO) has opened one-of-a-Minor and you hold 4-4 in both Major suits with minimum values.

You (North) hold:

Kxxx QJxx xxx xx

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
1D	Double	Pass	"2D"
3D	3H	Pass	Pass

- (b) When your left-hand Opponent (LHO) has opened one-of-a-Minor and you hold 4-4 in both Major suits with invitational values.

You (North) hold: KJxx QTxx xxx Ax

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
1C	Double	Pass	"2C"
Pass	2H	Pass	3H

- (c) When your left-hand Opponent (LHO) has opened one-of-a-Minor and you hold 4-4 in both Major suits with Game-going values.

You (North) hold: KQxx ATxx xxx Ax

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
1D	Double	Pass	"2D"
Pass	2S	Pass	4S

It is risky to “*double*” an opening bid holding a small doubleton in an un-bid Major, particularly a small doubleton in Spades. To be able to pull this off, you should have 19 or more HCP’s.

Your RHO has opened with **1C** and you hold the following:

You hold: (a) 43 AK98 AK75 AJ9
(b) 43 QT42 AK75 AJ9

With (a) you are strong enough to “*double*.” If Partner bids the expected **1S**, you can now re-bid **1-NT**. This shows your 18 -20 HCP, a balanced hand, and at least one stopper in Clubs.

With (b) overcall **1-NT** directly. You don't need stoppers in all four suits to overcall **1-NT**, just one or two in any suit that the Opponent has bid. If you were to “*double*” with this holding and Partner were to bid **1H** you would be a hero, but upon hearing a **1S** call, any further bid you were to attempt to make would be in error. Remember, unless you have a fall-back position; i.e., a correct alternate re-bid (as seen in example (a), you must avoid making a **Take-Out Double** with inappropriate shape; i.e., three or more pieces or the Opponent’s bid suit.

Bridge Tip # 319

The requirements for a correct **Take-Out Double** in the direct (2nd) seat are two-fold: (1) opening count, its equivalent, or better, and (2) the appropriate shape, defined as fewer than 3-pieces of the RHO’s (right-hand Opponent’s) bid suit.

With a **(4-4-4-1)** pattern, it is normal to “*pass*” if your right-hand Opponent opens in one of your four card suits and then “*double*” later if they find a fit in your singleton suit.

You (South) hold: **AJ65 4 KQ98 A1087**

<u>East</u>	<u>South (you)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2H	????		

You, South, should now “*Double*.” The bidding has come up just the way you were hoping. Your belated “*double*” shows at least an

opening bid with short hearts, diamond length, plus support for the two, as-yet, un-bid suits.

Bridge Tip # 318

During any **Blackwood**, Slam-seeking, bidding sequence, Partner will never be asking for Kings unless the answer to “**4-NT**” guarantees that the Partnership holds all of the Aces. If Partner does ask for Kings, and you can count all thirteen tricks, bid the appropriate Slam.

<u>Partner</u>	<u>You</u>
	4H
“4-NT”	“5C”
“5-NT”	7-NT
	x
	KQTxxxxx
	KQx
	x

Bridge Tip # 317

Most Partnerships, today, utilize the **Michaels** convention to show 2-suited overcalls, either very weak (10-15 HCP's), else very strong (16 + HCP's). An offshoot of this convention is the so-called “**Leaping Michaels**” convention. It is a jump to the 4-level of either Minor suit, and shows near game values and 5-5 or longer in that Minor and the alternate Major. It is applicable in two bidding scenarios:

1. Following an opening **2H** or **2S** pre-emptive call by an Opponent as in:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
2H	“4D”		
	AQxxx		
	xx		

AKQxx
A

2. Following an opening of one-of-a-Major by an Opponent, and a support bid by one's RHO at the 2-level as in:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1S	Pass	2S	"4C"
			xx
			AQxxx
			A
			AKQxx

Bridge Tip # 316

A cue-bid by Responder, following a pre-emptive jump overcall by an Opponent, shows Game values, is forcing, and asks for a **3-NT** call by Opener should Opener hold at least 1-stopper in the Opponent's bid suit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1D	2H	"3H"
		Axx
		xx
		AQxxx
		Ax

A cue-bid by Partner, following an opening weak 2-bid by an Opponent shows at least 18 HCP's and, similarly, asks for a **3-NT** call should Responder hold at least 1-stopper in the Opponent's bid suit. (The statistic likelihood which makes a **3-NT** contract feasible, should a stopper in Responder's hand be present, is that the number of HCP's in an average "*un-passed*" or "*previously-passed*" hand is statistically approximately 8 HCP's.)

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	2H	"3H"
????		AQx
		xx
		AQxxx
		AKx

Bridge Tip # 315

After Partner opens one-of-either-Major and there is an intervening overcall, a cue-bid by Responder shows support for Opener and a limit-raise or better (Example 1), but a ***jump cue-bid*** by Responder shows a singleton in the Opponent's suit, at least four card support for Partner's suit plus minimum of 14-15 support points (Example 2). It is Game-forcing and a mild Slam-try.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1H	2C	"3C"
		Axxx
		Kxxx
		Ax
		xxx
<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1H	2C	"4C"
		AKxx
		KQxx
		Qxxx
		x

In the latter (Example 2) with 17 support points, Responder's jump to "4C" makes it easier for Opener to evaluate his/her hand for the possibility of a Slam-try with this Game-forcing, ***jump cue-bid***.

Bridge Tip # 314

In the sequence 1H P 1S P

2D P 2H Responder's 2H preference shows either two hearts, not three, (Example 1), and/or the presence of a 5-7 HCP hand, two or three support pieces, and 10 losers as shown below (Example 2).

(Example 1)	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
	1H	1S
	2D	2H
		Kxxxx
		xx
		xxx
		Kxx

(Example 2)	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
	1H	1S
	2D	2H
		Kxxx
		xxx
		Jxx
		Kxx

With a (4-3-3-3) distribution, Responder, holding 10 losing tricks instead of 9, might also not support Opener directly, even with 3 support pieces (Example 3). Rather, Responder should first respond **1-NT** and then, assuming the opportunity, support at his/her next opportunity. Not to worry, Partner will not complain when he/she sees Responder's weak holding. Supporting Partner directly at the first response is too encouraging with a 6-7 point, (4-3-3-3) abomination.

(Example 3)	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
	1H	1-NT
	2D	2H
		Kxx
		xxx
		Jxx
		Kxxx

With three supporting pieces, however, and a nine-loser “*constructive*” holding, Responder should raise Opener's suit directly at his/her first opportunity.

(Example 4)	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
	1H	2H

KJx
Jxx
xxxxx
Kx

Bridge Tip # 313

After a single raise, by Responder, of Opener's one-of-a-suit call, a new suit by Opener is forcing, and can be for one of several reasons.

When a Minor suit has been bid and supported (Example 1), the bid of a new suit is usually a suit holding a stopper looking for a **3-NT** contract should Responder hold a stopper in the un-bid Major suit. Opener is not running away from a "*Short Club*," rather is seeking help for a **3-NT** Game-try.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1C	2C
2H (forcing)	3-NT (Showing a Spade stopper)
(Absent a Spade Stopper, Responder would have re-bid 3C)	
xx	
Ax	
AQxx	
AKJxx	

When a Major suit has been bid and supported (Example 2), it is usually a "*help-suit*" Game-try. Opener holds a second suit with which, with support from Responder, could elicit an otherwise Game-level, final contract notwithstanding the Partnership holding fewer than 26 HCP's.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1H	2H
3D (forcing)	4H (Showing help in the Diamond suit)
(Absent help, Responder would have Re-bid 3H)	
xx	Kxx
AKQxx	Jxxx
AQxxx	Kxxx
x	xx

Bridge Tip # 312

In the Game of Bridge, in describing the bidding process, Opener's responding Partner is called the "**Responder**." For clarification and elimination of confusion or ambiguity, an Overcaller's responding Partner is not called a "**Responder**," rather he/she is termed the "**Advancer**."

Thus, in every bidding sequence in the Game of Bridge, there can be only one "**Opener**" (the Opening Bidder), one "**Responder**" (Opener's responding Partner), one "**Overcaller**" (an Opening Bidder's Opponent), and one "**Advancer**" (the Overcaller's Partner). Each has a minimum threshold of high-card point strength and distribution in order to properly bid in his/her capacity.

Bridge Tip # 311

In the "**Two-Over-One**" bidding system, there is *never* a reason for Opener, in his/her first re-bid, to jump the bidding in order to show strength. The Partnership is already in a Game-forcing scenario and it is far more important for Opener to show his/her shape instead. Alternatively, a jump-re-bid by Opener is a "**Mini-Splinter**" bid showing 4 (+) support cards for Responder, and a singleton or void in the "**Splintered**" suit. In such circumstances, the following principles are in effect:

1. In the "**Two-Over-One**" bidding system, because it is important to show shape first, and since the Partnership is already in a Game-forcing scenario, *there are no natural jump-shifts*.
2. "**Splinter**" bids can be made with minimum opening hands. You are already forced to Game, so just show both your fit and side-suit shortness. If your hand holds extra values, you can always look for a Slam-level contract later.
3. Never jump in a natural suit. With extra strength and a second suit, just bid the second suit at the 2-Level, and worry about a possible Slam later.

4. Whereas normal “*splinters*” are double-jump-shifts, 2/1 “*splinters*” are only single jumps.
5. “*Splinter*” bids in the “*Two-Over-One*” bidding system can occur at either the 3- or the 4-Levels. Examples:
- a. 1♥ - 2♣ - 3♦
 - b. 1♠ - 2♦ - 3♥
 - c. 1♥ - 2♦ - 4♣
 - d. 1♠ - 2♥ - 4♦
6. Opener should never make a “*Splinter*” bid with 3-card support for Responder’s bid suit. Four pieces or more are required.

Bridge Tip # 310

When rearranging the cards, when first dealt, keep your singletons and doubletons in the middle of your hand. Some Players watch where your cards come from, when played, and if they come from the end of the spread of the cards, it can more easily be detected as being a singleton or doubleton.

In addition, do not rearrange your cards, in the middle of the play of the hand, in order to maintain a red-black or black-red continuity following whenever you play the last card in any suit played. This signals that you are not holding any more cards in the suit last played and, oft times, assists the Opponents in their play of the hand. Furthermore, to do so, when on defense, is unethical in that it tends to give Partner unauthorized information as to your now being void in that last suit played, and/or, can further assist the Declarer when armed with this information.

Lastly, do not leave spacing between the suits held. Observant Opponents will be able to count the number of cards held in each suit held by a Defender.

Bridge Tip # 309

Declarer play is, oft times, counter-intuitive to what one, at first thought, might think to do.

- a. As Declarer, being able to take a trick with one of two equal cards, take the trick with the higher equal. This tends to hide from the Opponents your holding of the lower equal. The exception to this is that when in a No-Trump contract and you have an **AK** stopper, if you plan to take the trick, take it with the King. Taking the first trick with the Ace is very suspicious. If that were your only stopper, why didn't you hold up?
- b. As Declarer when leading a suit that has equal honors, or a sequence of 3-cards or longer, lead the higher or the highest if you want it to be covered. Alternatively, lead the lower or lowest of any sequence if you don't want it covered. It works like a charm.
- c. As Declarer, play cards you are known to hold if it cannot cost you a trick. For example, if a Queen is led, Dummy has only small cards, you hold a King-Jack doubleton, and the Ace is played on your right. Play the King, **not** the Jack. Third hand knows you have the King from the lead of the Queen, and the Opening Leader knows you have the King from Partner's play of the Ace. Since the King and Jack are equals, in this instance, and since they both know you have the King, **PLAY IT!**
- d. As Declarer concealing cards lower than the one that has been led or lower than the one played by your RHO. This strategy confuses the count plus the meaning of the signal that might be in the process of being attempted by the Opponents.

Bridge Tip # 308

The “double” of any artificial bid used by an Opponent is always a lead-directing double! Therefore, be on the lookout for any of the artificial bids used by Opponents during the regular course of most standard bidding procedures. These include, but are not limited to: *Stayman*, *Jacoby Transfers*, *Cue-bids*, *Responses to any Blackwood or Gerber Ace-Asking Convention*, and *New-Minor Forcing*, to name a few. Making a lead-directing “*double*,” can oft times help Partner out on the opening lead at the beginning of the play of the hand.

However, low level “***doubles***” of any artificial bid requires both length and strength (typically 5- or 6-card length with several honor cards in the suit doubled. The higher the level of the artificial bid, the shorter your length must be, but you still must have honor strength in the suit (**KQx**, for example). Otherwise, your “***double***” can be converted by your RHO (right-hand Opponent) by his/her simply “***re-doubling***,” to play, to their team’s scoring advantage.

Lastly, if you are on lead and Partner, absent any other information from the bidding phase, has not, having been given the opportunity, “***doubled***” an artificial bid made by his/her right-hand Opponent (RHO), has telegraphed that he/she has no singular desire to have that suit necessarily led.

Bridge Tip # 307

Partnerships, by agreement, may choose to lead Ace from an Ace-King combination, or the opposite, King from an Ace-King combination. Either method can be selected by Partnership agreement, but, **if you and Partner lead Ace from Ace-King, however, remember, that this is a trick-one strategy only.**

Irrespective of agreement as to either method, as stipulated above, the Ace is led:

- a. Whenever the Partnership’s decision is that the Ace is led from an Ace-King combination at trick-1, but if the holding of the Partner on lead, at trick one, is from an Ace-King doubleton, then the King is then led first.
- b. Any time during the play of the hand ***after*** trick-one, and at such times, except at trick one, the lead of the Ace does **not** guarantee the King.
- c. In any suit that you and Partner have supported, the lead of the Ace does not guarantee the King.
- d. In any suit that Partner has bid, supported by you or not, the lead of the Ace does not guarantee the King.
- e. When defending contracts at the 5-level or higher (The reason, here, is that the Ace is often led without the King at such a high bidding level.)

Bridge Tip # 306

When one's right-hand Opponent uses an artificial call such as a "2C" Stayman bid, and you, under such circumstances, hold five or six Clubs with at least two of the top three honors, "*double*."

Example: You (South) hold: 73 T64 963 AQT84

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1-NT	Pass	"2C"	????? "Double!"

Any "double" of an artificial bid used by an Opponent, is a "*lead-directing double*!"

This also holds true after an Opponent uses a "*4th suit-forcing*" call, a "*Jacoby Transfer*" bid, or any artificial response during a *Blackwood* or *Gerber Ace-Asking* sequence of bids. The reverse is also true! Absent a "*double*" of any artificial bid used by the Opponents, under circumstances as referenced above, you show no specific desire to have that suit led, should Partner be on lead once the bidding has concluded.

Bridge Tip # 305

When responding to Partner's opening bid of one-of-either-Minor, fewer than Game-values, and holding 4-4 in the Majors, always respond **1H**. This gives Opener the opportunity of finding a Heart suit "*Golden fit*," should it be present, else bidding **1S**, "*up-the-ladder*," should he/she also hold 4-pieces of the Spade suit. If Opener fails to do either, and assuming Responder's RHO fails to enter the auction, Responder should bid accordingly, as in the Examples, which follow:

Example 1: You (East) hold: KQ73 QT64 963

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<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2C	Pass	????	

Bid 2D: (This shows minimum values, 6-10 HCP's, and a preference for Partner's Diamond suit. Partner has denied holding 4-Spades and support for your Heart suit with his/her 2C bid. A Game-level contract is unlikely.)

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Example 2:

You (East) hold: KQ73 AT64 Q63

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2C	Pass	????	

Bid 2-NT: (This shows invitational values, 11-12 HCP's, at least one Spade stopper, and inability of supporting either of Partner's Minor suits.)

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Example 3:

You (East) hold: KQ73 A764 A63

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2C	Pass	????	

Bid 3-NT: (He who knows, goes!)

If you were to bid Spades, despite Partner having denied 4-pieces in the Spade suit, this, in most Partnerships, would have special, "*4th suit-forcing*" artificial meaning, and would be Game-forcing or 1-round forcing, based upon Partnership agreement.

Example 4: You (East) hold: 9873 AK64 AQ63 4

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2C	Pass	????	

Bid "2S": (This usually shows Game-values, asking Opener for a 3-NT call, should he/she hold a Spade stopper, else, alternatively, to bid 3C or 3D, after which you would, with this holding respond 5D.)

Bridge Tip # 304

A **Take-Out Double** by a "*previously-passed*" Player shows 9-11 HCP's along with shortness in Opener's bid suit (Example 1). If the Opponents have bid two suits, a

similar **Take-Out Double** by a “*previously passed*” Player promises at least 4-card support in the other two, as yet, un-bid suits (Example 2).

Example 1:

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
Pass	1D	Pass	Pass
Double			

West Holds:
A743 Q964 7 A853

Example 2:

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
Pass	1C	Pass	1H
Double			

West Holds:
AQ432 6 KJ753 53 (To overcall 2D, here, might easily lose the possibility of finding a Spade fit with Partner.)

Bridge Tip # 303

When a bid by one’s RHO (Right-Hand Opponent) is strong, a jump-bid by you is weak (Example 1); and when a bid by one’s RHO (Right-Hand Opponent) is weak, a jump- bid by you is strong (Example 2).

Example 1:

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
1D	Double (Strong)	2S (Weak)

Example 2:

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
2D (Weak)	3H (Strong)

Bridge Tip # 302

With any two 5-card suits, irrespective as to their relative strengths, (a) open, (b) respond, or (c) overcall in the higher-ranking suit first.

a) North
??? Open 1S
West
Pass

c)

<u>West</u> 1C	<u>North</u> ???	Overcall 1S
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Examples:
QJ864

d) North AKQ83 98 4
1C/1S/2S
West East
P/P P/P
South
1H/1-NT

Bridge Tip # 301

When responding to Opener's offering of two suits, and you, as Responder, with minimal HCP's and an equal number of pieces in both of Partner's suits, take Partner back to the first suit, even if it means bidding at a higher level.

You hold: A9 KJ73 97 98732

The Bidding has proceeded:

Partner

You

1C

1H

1S

??? (Bid: 2C)

You hold: KJ763 A7 97

9832

The Bidding has proceeded:

Partner

You

1D

1S

2H

??? (Bid: 3D)

Bridge Tip # 300

Overcalling in the direct (2nd seat), with a No-Trump distribution and at least one stopper in the suit by one's RHO (right-hand Opponent), varies as to the actual number of high-card points needed and shown to Partner, as follows:

(a)

North

1C,1D,1H,1S

East

1-NT = 15-17 HCP's

(b)

North

1C,1D,1H

East

Double/Then re-bid 1-NT = 18-19 HCP's

(c)

North

1C,1D,1H

East

Double/Then re-bid 2-NT = 20 (+) HCP's

Bridge Tip # 299

“***Bidding***,” is the language of the offensive in bridge; i.e., the attempt to achieve the best end-result with respect to the denomination and level of any final contract.

“***Carding***,” on the other hand, is the language of the defensive in bridge; i.e., the methods by which the Defenders exchange information about the make-up of their hands. It is an acceptable and legitimate attempt to communicate information to Partner via the play of a specific card(s), at a specific time, and/or in a specific sequence. Doing so is critical to the Defense making the greatest number of tricks to which they are entitled; to limit Declarer’s tricks, and to potentially set the contract at hand, if it is at all possible to achieve. Several signaling techniques are available to the defense. The major ones include the following:

- (1) **Attitude Signals Regarding a Specific Suit**: (The signaling which evidences whether Partner wishes to encourage a continuation of that suit already led, or, conversely, to discourage a continuation of the suit referenced)
- (2) **Count Signals Regarding a Particular Suit**: (The signaling as to the number of actual cards one holds in a specific suit referenced)
- (3) **Suit Preference Signals for a Particular Suit**: (The preferential signaling as to which suit you desire Partner to lead at his/her next available opportunity)

In this narrative, only one of the three above-listed signaling techniques will be discussed.

(1) **Attitude Signals** can be given, (a) *in response to when Partner first makes the lead of any as-yet un-led suit*, whether it be on the opening lead or in the middle of the play of the hand; or (b) as *a discard (“sluff”) at such time as one first makes the play of a card when showing out of any suit which has been led*. Such attitude signals can be of at least four equally effective types, “*standard*,” “*upside-down*,” “*odd-even*,” or “*Laventhal*.” In the first of these, “*standard carding*,” the system simply means that *the play of a high card* {in (a) or (b), above} is *encouraging*, and *the play of a low card* is *discouraging*, as to the suit played.

One further comment about any such carding, referenced in numbers 1-3 above, is critical and important for the *ethical bridge Player* to know and to consistently exercise. **Declarer is entitled to know the system and the meaning of any of the above-listed techniques that a Defender employs with his/her Partner.** At any time during the

play of the hand, a Declarer may ask either Opponent what is implied by the play of any card referenced. This is an internationally accepted practice, applicable in the United States, Holland, Aruba, or any other part of the globe. Any attempt to deceive by either not correctly answering such inquiry, to refuse to answer such inquiry if the answer be known by the one questioned, or to take exception that the inquiry is even posed, is not only unethical, but also rude and against any standard, acceptable, moral code in the play of the Game.

Bottom Line and Bridge Tip: *Develop, with Partner, a system of carding which allows you and Partner to maximize your defensive play of the hand, and exercise an ethical standard of play which means not falsely answering, or refusing to answer, any inquiry, by the Declarer, as to what system of defensive carding you and your Partner are using.*

Bridge Tip # 298

A “**Support Double**,” is any “**double**” or “**re-double**,” used by Opener to show 3-card support for Responder’s presumed, 4-card, new suit response during a competitive auction. It is made by an Opening Bidder at his/her second turn to bid; i.e., the 5th action taken during any auction once begun other than any initial “**Pass(es)**.”

Examples:

<u>North</u> 1D/Double		(or)	<u>North</u> 1D/Re-Double	
<u>West</u> 1S	<u>East</u> P		<u>West</u> Double	<u>East</u> P
<u>South</u> 1H			<u>South</u> 1H	

There are several factors when using “*support doubles*” or “*support re-doubles*” that are, however, often misunderstood or even never realized. They are as follows:

- 1) They are unlimited with regards to their HCP strength.
- 2) They are only used after a 1-level response by Opener’s Responder. After a 2-level response by Responder, “*support doubles and re-doubles*” are **never** used. A “*double*” used by an Opener in competition after Responder bids at the 2-level or higher, is for penalties.

- 3) They, and any other bid made by Opener under similar circumstances, are all alertable
- 4) They are usually used through the 2-level of Responder's suit. Above that level, a "*double*" is used by Opener, by Partnership agreement, usually for penalties.

Bridge Tip # 297

Although Responder to an Opening strong **1-NT** bid is always the "**Captain**" of any bidding sequence which follows, Responder often requires additional information from Opener in order to finalize the best, ultimate, final contract. A jump into one of the Major suits during advancement of the bidding in response to Partner's opening strong **1-NT** (15-17 HCP's) can be used for three different purposes, dependent upon Partnership agreement as to their meaning and usage. Their usage are mutually exclusive.

Bidding Sequence 1: 1-NT

Pass

"3H" (A weak shut-out bid with 5-5 or longer in the Majors, asking Opener to either "pass," else "correct" to 3S. Here Responder is seeking a 3-level, preemptive, partial-score, final contract in lieu of a No-Trump contract)

QXXXX
KXXXX
XX
X

Bidding Sequence 2: 1-NT

Pass

"3S" (A Game-forcing bid, with Responder holding Game values, 5-5 or longer on the Majors, asking Opener to choose a final contract of either 4H or 4S)

AJXXX
AXXXX

XX
X

Bidding Sequence 3: 1-NT

Pass

(a) "3H" / (b) "3S" (A forcing bid, with Responder holding Game values, 3-1-(5/4 or 4/5) distribution in (a); and

1-3-(5/4 or 4/5) distribution in (b)

(These conventional bids, if played, offer to seek a preferred Major suit contract if Opener has opened 1-NT with a concealed 5-card Major, as is, today, often done; i.e., to bid 4S or 4H respectively, else to bid a final 3-NT, absent a 5-card Major suit holding)

(a) AXX	(b) X
X	AXX
AXXX (X)	KXXX (X)
KXXX (X)	AXXX (X)

Bridge Tip # 296

Many bridge Players believe that whenever they are in a Suit contract they should immediately draw Trumps. In some hands, this may **not** be the best approach. In such hands, alternatively, if the hand were to be "**cross-ruffed**," there would be more tricks available to Declarer by not first, or even ever, drawing Trump. This is especially true when Declarer has high Trumps in both hands and/or when the side suits do not hold enough winners to make the contract once Trumps were to have been drawn. When planning to "**cross-ruff**" in a hand, remember to take any winners in the side suits **first**. You do not want the Defenders to throw off any of their losers in those suits while you are busy "**cross-ruffing**."

Note: Defenders, observing Declarer's plan of attack, would be wise to lead Trump at every opportunity, should they get the lead. (Doing what Declarer does **not** want to do is usually a good plan for the Defenders.)

Bottom line: Whenever there is a danger of losing too many Trump tricks, or when Declarer's and Dummy's Trumps are needed for a cross-ruff, Declarer should consider holding off a direct attack on the Trump suit. This is especially so when there has been competitive bidding because a favorable split in the missing Trumps is decidedly less likely. As Declarer: ***Do not always rush to draw Trumps when playing in a Suit contract.***

Bridge Tip # 295

There are many instances in the Game of bridge when Declarer, saddled with the responsibility of winning nine tricks in order to fulfill his/her **3-NT** contract, sees only eight solid tricks, but five clear losers.

One possible scenario which can reverse the eventual outcome, allowing Declare to make his/her ninth trick is by running one's long suit first, forcing one or both Defenders to discard without first having the opportunity of signaling each other as to where their individual strengths lie and what to hold and what to discard. The pressure exerted upon the Defenders, before they learn what is necessary to defeat the contract, can, oft times, reverse the fortunes of an otherwise unmakeable contract.

Of course, Declarer must realize that running a long suit early in the play of any No-Trump contract also causes him/her to have to discard. Declarer must, therefore, first convince himself/herself that by doing so, he/she does not wind up squeezing himself/herself before he/she too knows what is best to discard.

Assuming this latter situation is not the case. **Declarer, with eight winners and five losers, when playing in a 3-NT contract, might try running a long suit early in the play of the hand** before disclosing his/her eventual line of play.

Bridge Tip # 294

The most powerful card in the Game of bridge, when defending against any Suit contract, is the Ace of the Trump suit. When you, as Defender, hold this card, you must be sure to put it to the best possible use. There are occasions when holding back in

taking the Ace of the Trump suit can play a defensive role, other times, when it is advantageous to play it as early as possible.

One circumstance when holding back in taking the Ace of Trumps is defensively advantageous is when you are long in Trumps, three or more headed by the ace. This allows you, as Defender, to draw an extra round of Trumps stripping Dummy of a sorely-needed Trump with which Declarer might have needed to Trump an otherwise losing trick. A contra-indication to playing your Ace of Trump early could be that when in the second seat, playing your Ace of Trumps immediately, the first time Trumps are led by Declarer, may cause Partner to drop his/her singleton King on your prematurely-played Ace.

Whenever you, as a Defender against a Suit contract, hold the Ace of Trumps as one of your winning assets, you should consider whether or not to hold up this card when the Trump suit is first played. Remember, the Ace of Trumps will win a trick now, a trick later, or sometimes in the distant future in the play of the hand, but it will never fail to take a trick eventually. Do not necessarily rush to take it at the first opportunity.

Bridge Tip # 293

Defending against any contract is part, *luck* (the placement of relevant cards), *signaling* to Partner so as to communicate suit preferences and distribution, *concentration* and always and forever: *thinking*. In one situation, however, it is sometimes clear that in order to fool the Declarer a Defender must not hesitate and must not appear to *think*.

That situation is simply this: You are defending against a contract where Declarer is taking a *repeatable finesse* that you can clearly win at your leisure. ***Do not win the trick the first time! Do not even think about winning the trick. Play low with normal speed – not too slowly and not too fast.*** Play so as to convince Declarer that the finesse is clearly a winning play.

If your subterfuge is convincingly good enough, Declarer will assume the finesse has succeeded and will return to the appropriate hand to repeat his/her *winning* play by repeating the same finesse. The second time, to the dismay of Declarer, you take the trick and the finesse loses. In many instances this ploy of waiting one time to take a

trick to which you, as Defender, are always entitled, disrupts the communication of Declarer between his/her two hands, and can defeat the contract, or at the very least, diminish the trick-taking capacity of Declarer's plan.

Naturally there are some occasions where it is important to win an attempted finesse as soon as possible. For examples, if the trick you are about to win is the setting trick, or if Partner has led a good suit against any No-Trump contract and it is important, timing-wise, for you to win the trick as soon as possible so as to continue leading, and eventually to establish, Partner's led suit.

Unless one must absolutely win the first available trick, a Defender should play low without thinking when Declarer takes a repeatable finesse in your direction!

Bridge Tip # 292

The lead of a Trump is often an excellent lead against a **Suit contract** in that it generally cuts down the ruffing potential of Dummy, the hand of the Opponents which usually holds the fewer numbers of Trump cards. Obviously, other considerations come into play with other potentially more suitable leads such as a singleton in Partner's bid suit (attempting to secure a future ruff), the lead of Ace from Ace-King (attempting to give Partner a ruff or to achieve an attitude signal from Partner while seeing the Dummy for any future defensive play), the lead of top of a sequence in a side suit (attempting to promote a later trick), or even the lead of a long outside suit (attempting to shorten Declarer's Trump when you hold a significant number of Trump pieces and are seeking to make Declarer lose control of the hand by you having the same numbers, or even more Trumps than does the Declarer).

When you do decide to lead Trumps, however, unless you hold a three-card sequence of the Trump suit or are attempting to fool Declarer with an off-beat lead, like Jack from a QJ doubleton, it is generally wise to **always choose the lowest card when leading a Trump at trick one at the beginning of the play of any hand.** Intermediate Trump cards (eights, nines and tens), can often be of inestimable value later in the play of the hand such as blocking an entry into the Dummy. The lead of your lowest Trump card also gives Partner a clear image that all of the unseen Trumps are held by Declarer. This latter information may facilitate his/her counting of the hand and may indicate a successful line of defense in preference to another which might be slated to fail.

Do not lead a Trump, however, from either (1) a **singleton**, (2) or one from a **JX**, (3) a **QX**, (4) a **JXX**, or (5) a **QXX**, as a lead from any of these five holdings is, statistically, likely to give up a defensive Trump trick to the Declarer.

Bridge Tip # 291

Unless there is an extremely distorted distribution in any deal, the combined trick-taking potential of any hand in play; i.e., the number of tricks your side can take in your best Trump suit combined with the number the Opponents can score in their best Trump suit, seldom exceeds 20.

Therefore, even if your 5-over-5 bid works out well, the scoring profit scored by your side is destined to be small. For example, suppose the Opponents bid five Hearts, both sides are non-vulnerable, and you successfully save in five Spades. If 5-Hearts makes and you go down two, “*doubled*,” your gain will only be 150 points (-300 versus -450).

With the combines trick-taking capacity of most hands is often 19 or fewer. Therefore: **Think twice before you bid five over five – “*The 5-level belongs to the Opponents.*”**

Bridge Tip # 290

Competitive bidding is an integral part of the Game of bridge. It is not uncommon where both side hold an approximately even number of high-card points and the “*Law of Total Tricks*,” advanced by Larry Cohen clearly states that when one side can make two of any one suit, statistically, the other side can make two of yet another suit.

As a result of this adage, I have the clear understanding with most of my better Partners, that if the bidding is about to die at the 2-level and the Opponents appear happy with the “**Golden Fit**” that they have apparently found, do not be reluctant to

enter the bidding process in the balancing seat, irrespective of vulnerability and high-card point count.

When competitive bidding gets to the 3-level, however, we are now talking a very different story. Even with a fairly evenly distributed high-card placement, unless there be an excessively unbalanced suit distribution, both sides cannot make nine tricks, even if both sides find a **“Golden Fit.”**

During a competitive auction, when considering bidding at the 3-level over an Opponent’s 3-level contract, *always bid* when your side has *nine Trumps*, but *never do so* when it holds only *eight pieces of your agreed-upon suit*.

Bridge Tip # 289

The standard lead against No-Trump contracts is 4th best from one’s longest and strongest suit. In many hands, this will usually produce the most defensive tricks. Timing is always an issue when the hand is being played in No-Trump. There are, however, a few circumstances when a different lead would be more advantageous, or, at the very least, less damaging:

- (1) If Partner has indicated which suit he/she would like you to lead. (This may be done either through a **“lead-directing double,”** or by a suit which he/she has previously bid during the auction.)
- (2) If the Player on lead has no outside entries by which Partner can reach him/her once the suit has been established, As a result, there is no advantage in leading that suit.
- (3) If the Player on lead holds most, or all, of the remaining HCP’s in the deck on any given hand. Leading 4th best in this circumstance is likely to give Declarer a free finesse and a trick to which Declarer might otherwise not be entitled.
- (4) If the opening bid by your RHO is **2-NT** or **“2C”**, indicating that he/she holds the majority of HCP’s in the deck. Here again, an aggressive lead will, most likely, give Declarer a free finesse and an extra trick to which he/she would otherwise not be entitled. Under these conditions, lead passively.

In circumstances (3) and (4) above, since there is little left for Partner to hold, a lead away from an honor in one's longest and strongest suit will usually result in a free finesse for Declarer on the very first trick (and a top match-point score on that hand). Don't be so generous.

Bottom line: When such conditions occur, unless you hold a 3-card or longer honor sequence, *lead passively, not aggressively!*

(A) 2-NT
 Pass (*Lead passively*)
 3-NT

(B) “2C”/2-NT/Pass
 Pass/Pass Pass/Pass/Pass (*Lead passively*)
 “2D” (Waiting)/3-NT

(C) 1-NT/Pass
 Pass Pass/Pass (You hold 14 HCP's - The Opponents
 26 - Partner 0) (*Lead passively - Let Declarer find the missing honors*)
 3-NT

Bridge Tip # 288

When your Right-hand Opponent (RHO) opens the bidding and you hold an **evenly-balanced hand**, at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit, and at least 15 or more HCP's, it is imperative that Partner knows your HCP range so as to find the correct final contract as to both denomination and level. Responder will always become the “**Captain**” under these circumstances with respect to the possible use of **Stayman** or **Jacoby transfers**, and whether or not to seek a Game-level contract. Or just a partial score. The following HCP ranges are standard in today's bridge circles, giving Responder a finite message as to Partner's HCP strength, when holding a balanced hand and the desire to make a No-Trump overcall:

(1) 1D
 1-NT
 (15 -17 HCP's, an opening 1-NT equivalent)

(2) 1D
 1H Double/1-NT
 (18-19 HCP's, slightly better than a 1-NT opening)
 Pass

(3) 1D
 1H Double/2-NT
 (20-22 HCP's – Needing little from Responder for
 Game)
 Pass

Bridge Tip # 287

The Opponents have led a side-suit against Declarer's Suit contract and Declarer holds the following in the side-suit they are leading: Axx opposite xx, intending to ruff the third lead of the suit, so as to eliminate one of his/her losers, the question arises as to whether Declarer should play small or the Ace on the first trick of the suit that is played.

Answer: Declarer should hold up one round, win the second, and then Trump the third round of that suit. Declarer should not take the Ace on the first trick!

Reason: If Declarer wins the first lead with the Ace and then continues the suit, he/she will need a re-entry into the hand holding the Ace of the suit in question in order to do the ruffing that is planned. Holding up taking the Ace until the second trick saves Declarer one entry that might later be needed elsewhere to implement Declarer's play of the hand.

Bridge Tip # 286

There is no doubt that any opening weak 2-bid by an Opponent disrupts the Opponent's communication. The question arises, however, as to what are the minimum requirements for any safe, and potentially, likely-productive, overcall in the direct (2nd) seat when one's RHO (right-hand Opponent) has opened with a weak 2-bid. Remember, Opener's Partner, not having yet been heard from, could hold the balance of the HCP's, and any potential Overcaller in the direct (2nd) seat must be careful so as to minimize the chances of a disaster, should he/she opt to enter the auction.

Conventional wisdom, therefore, offers the following minimum requirements for a 2nd seat overcall, following an opening weak 2-bid by one's RHO:

North
2D, 2H, or 2S

East
?????

South

- (1) **For a Take-Out Double:** (A) **If there is still bidding room at the 2-level:**
 - b. Opening count or its equivalent. Fewer high-card points are needed if the would-be Doubler holds a singleton or void in Opener's bid suit.
 - c. The correct shape – Fewer than 3-pieces in Opener's bid suit, thereby insuring support for whichever of the remaining 3-suits Partner chooses.

(B) **If the opening weak 2-bid is 2S and Doubler's Partner is, therefore, forced to come in at the 3-level:**

 - b. At least one King better than opening count (15 or more HCP's)
 - c. The correct shape – As defined above
- (2) **For a 2-NT Overcall:** (Three requirements)
 - a. 15-17 HCP's (Identical to a 1-NT opening bid)
 - b. An evenly balanced hand (4-3-3-3) (4-4-3-2) or (5-3-3-2), and
 - c. At least one stopper in Opener's bid suit.
- (3) **For a Suit Bid:**

(At the 2-Level (Available following a 2D or 2H opening weak 2-bid):

 - a. A good 5-card or longer suit
 - b. Opening count or its equivalent

(At the 3-level (Necessitated following a 2S opening weak 2-bid):

 - a. A good 5-card or longer suit

- b. At least 15 or more HCP's

Bridge Tip # 285

Partnerships must be aware of the fact that the same bids made later in any auction have a different significance to the very same bid having been made earlier. Although there are numerous examples of such an occurrence, three examples are shown here.

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----|----------------|------------------|
| (1) | | 1H | | (2) | 1H/Pass | |
| | Pass | | Pass | | 1S | Pass/Pass |
| | | 2H | | | Pass/2H | |

In both examples, shown here, where North has dealt and opened with **1H**, South has shown Heart support, likely 3-pieces or more. In example (1), however, North can count on South holding 8-10 HCP's (9-losers) whereas in example (2) South holds 0-7 HCP's (10 losers or more).

-
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|-------------|-----------|-----|------------------|--------------|
| (3) | | 1D | | (4) | 1H/2H | |
| | Pass | | 1H | | Pass | 1S/2S |
| | | 2-NT | | | Pass/2-NT | |

In both examples, South has made a bid of **2-NT**. In the first instance, example (3), it was made directly, whereas in example (4) it was made belatedly following an initial previous “**pass**” by the same Player. In example (3) it is natural (desirous of playing in No-Trump), shows lack of primary support for North's suit, invitational values (10-12 HCP's), and at least one stopper in East's bid suit. In example (4) South's **2-NT** call is conventional. It again shows lack of primary support for Partner's bid suit, but this time, it is conventional (“**Unusual-NT**”) showing 5-5 in the Minor suits and a willingness to have the Partnership play in either **3C** or **3D**.

-
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|-------------|-----|-------------|-------------|
| (5) | | 1D | | (6) | 1H | |
| | | | 1-NT | | 1-NT | Pass |
| | | | | | Pass | |

In example (5) **1-NT** overcalls, made in the direct (2nd) seat, are strong (15-17 HCP), evidencing an evenly balanced hand and at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit. In example (6), we find a balancing (4th) seat (the so-called "*pass-out*" seat) **1-NT** call. Here it also shows a balanced hand, but this time 10-14 HCP's, and not necessarily any stopper in the Opponent's bid suit.

All 35 bids in bridge (1C through 7-NT) hold different messages as to strength, distribution and meaning, dependent upon the bidding environment in which they are used and the bids that have taken place previously in the auction in which they occur.

Bridge Tip # 284

You are on lead against a **3-NT** contract. Partner has overcalled a suit but your RHO has bid No-Trump so it is reasonable to assume that your RHO has at least one stopper in Partner's bid suit. Your normal lead, however, absent anything better is to lead Partner's suit in hopes that Partner's suit will eventually set up and Partner can run several tricks later during the play of the hand. Partner is sure to have at least one outside entry once the suit is established, so unless you have a better lead, the lead of Partner's suit is indicated.

If, however, you hold only a singleton in Partner's bid suit, a lead of Partner's bid suit is usually contraindicated, in that Declarer is statistically likely to hold many pieces of Partner's suit and most likely more than one stopper. Your lead under these circumstances is likely to finesse Partner out of a trick to which he/she would otherwise be entitled

Therefore, although not guaranteed, **any other lead other than Partner's bid suit is more likely to be the winning play when you hold but one card in Partner's bid suit.**

Bridge Tip # 283

Missing The Queen

A. What is your best chance to avoid a loser?

North
874

South
AKJT6

Start with the Ace in case the Queen is singleton. Then cross to North in another suit and play low towards the South hand. If East follows low, insert the Jack. If West shows out, return to Dummy in another suit and repeat the finesse.

This is the possible
situation shown above

North
874

West
3

East
Q952

South
AKJT6

B. What is your best chance to avoid a loser?

North
87

South
AKJT64

Start from the North hand and lead low to the Jack if East plays low. If the Jack wins, cross to North in another suit and play low towards the South hand. If East follows low, insert the Ten. Do not cash the Ace first. The chance of West having a low singleton is much greater than having the Queen singleton.

which you are playing:

This is the situation for

	<u>North</u> 87	
<u>East</u> Q952		<u>West</u> 3
	<u>South</u>	

AKJT64

If you play the Ace first you lose a trick. If you finesse twice, you make all the tricks.

Bridge Tip # 282

Bridge Myths & Fallacies (Circumstances When Supposed “Rules” Do not Apply)

1. “Always lead top of Partner’s suit.”

Not true!

If Partner has bid a suit, that suggests the suit to lead, the card led should be the standard one:

- (1) Yes, Top from a sequence
- (2) Yes, Top from a doubleton, but otherwise not top!
 - (1) “*Middle-Up-Down*” from three pieces
 - (2) “*Second-highest*” from three or more not headed by an honor card

(3) Fourth-highest from four or more pieces when defending against a No-Trump contract

(3) Lowest from three or more to an honor (A, K, or Q)

All of these apply when leading Partner's suit.

2. "Never Lead from a King."

Not true!

To lead from a King is **not** particularly attractive, but it depends upon the bidding and the other choices that are available.

(1) It is less risky to lead from a King than from a Queen or a Jack. You might still make your King if you lead from, say, **K-x-x-x**, but you will hardly ever recover from a disastrous lead from **J-x-x-x** or **Q-x-x-x**.

(2) Against a Trump contract it is much better to lead from **K-x-x-x** in an un-bid suit than from **A-x-x-x**.

To lead from **A-x-x-x** will work if Partner holds the King

(One useful card), but

To lead from **K-x-x-x** will work if Partner holds the Queen *or* the Ace.

(Two useful cards)

In addition, the Ace in yhe side suit is a sure entry if, and when, your suit sets up.

3. "Always cover an honor with an honor."

Not true!

(1) It is correct to cover an honor with an honor to win the trick or if it might promote cards in your hand or in Partner's hand, but it is almost always wrong to cover an honor with an honor if Partner cannot hold at least three cards in the suit.

Q3

9876

K2

AJT54

The Queen is led from dummy. If East plays low, Declarer has five tricks, the defense none. If East covers with the King, West scores a trick.

J843

K

Q62

AT975

The Jack is led from Dummy. If East covers, the Defenders score no tricks. If East plays low, the Defenders make one trick for sure. If South has shown 5-cards when bidding the suit, West cannot have three cards in it, and so East should, here, **not** cover.

- (2) It is always correct to cover the ***second*** honor with an honor, never the ***first*** when two touching honors are seen in the Dummy.

QJ93

A

K42

T8754

The Queen is led from Dummy. If East covers the first time, the Defenders score only one trick.

If East plays low the first time, however, the Defenders make two tricks. If South were to have held both the Ace and the Ten, East will not score a trick anyway, so East loses nothing by holding up until the second honor when the Jack, in this circumstance, is led.

4. “Do not pre-empt with a void, with an outside Ace, or with an outside 4-card Major.”

Not true!

When you have a 6-card or longer suit, it is not unusual to have a void. That should not bar one from pre-empting.

Likewise, an Ace outside your long suit is a defensive trick, but that should not inhibit you. To pre-empt is highly effective. If you insist on too many restrictions, you will pre-empt too rarely.

Furthermore, look at all the fun you will be missing!

Do **not**, however, pre-empt when holding two (2) Aces – Your hand is too defensively strong.

5. “A bid of a new suit by Responder is always forcing.”

Although this is generally true, there are some exceptions! It all depends on the situation.

- (1) After a **1-NT** opening, a 2-level interference by Opener’s LHO, a new suit at the 2-level by Opener’s responding Partner is *not* forcing, it is to play.

1-NT

2D

2S

- (2) After an auction of **one-of-either-Minor / 1S / 1-NT / 2H**, the **2H** bid is not forcing. It shows 5-Spades and 4- or 5-Hearts with minimum values, and an unwillingness to play in **1-NT**. It asks Opener to either “*pass*,” else “*correct*” to 2-Spades.

1C or 1D/1-NT

Pass

Pass/Pass

1S/2H

6. “You need two stoppers in the suit held by the Opponents in order to bid No-Trump.”

To adhere to this will lead to many good games being missed.
It is nice to have two stoppers, but it is sufficient if the first member of the Partnership to bid no-trumps has one stopper.
If their suit has been bid and raised, it is more attractive to have two stoppers, but it is still not essential.

7. “A Responder needs 10 or more HCP’s in order to bid twice.”

Not necessarily so. It depends on which bid Responder chooses.
In particular, if Opener re-bids a new suit at the 1-level, Responder’s 2-level re-bid in a suit already mentioned would all be below 10 high-card points, and is merely taking a preference, or is mentioning a 6-card new suit with few high-card point values.

	1C / 1S	Pass
Pass / Pass		1H / 2C

	(or)	
	1C / 1S	Pass
Pass / Pass		1H / 2H

(or)		
		1C / 1S
		Pass
Pass / Pass		1H / 2S

8. “You must bid when holding 13 HCP’s.”

Not true!

It is correct to open the bidding with 13 or more high-card points.
As a matter of application, when using the “**Rule of 20**” as a standard practice, one

might consider opening with even fewer high-card points.
However, if **RHO** has opened, there is no need to bid just because you have 13 or 14 points.

To overcall one needs both a good suit *and* the correct shape.
To make even a **Take-Out Double** with 13-14 points or so requires the right shape.

1D

??? A

KQxx

xxxx

Axxx (“Pass”)

(1) In the direct (2nd) seat one needs a 5-card or longer suit with which to make any appropriate overcall in addition to the 8-15 HCP’s at the 1-level, or 10-15 HCP’s at the 2-level, and, in addition, the proper shape defined as fewer than 3-cards in Opener’s bid suit.

(2) To make a **Take-Out Double** in the direct (2nd) seat, one needs not only opening count or its equivalent, but also the right shape; i.e., at least “**tolerance**.” This is defined as no fewer than 3-pieces of the remaining suits, especially any un-bid Major(s). Putting it in other terms, in the direct (2nd) seat, in order to hold the appropriate shape to make any **Take-Out Double**, one needs fewer than 3-cards in the suit bid by the Opponent.

It is sometimes correct to “Pass” and defend with a decent hand.

Bridge Tip # 281

When using the “**Roman Key-Card**” **Blackwood** convention, and assuming a “**1430**” bidding system, as opposed to a “**0314**” agreement, (both are acceptable, based upon Partnership agreement) following a “**4-NT**” key-card asking bid, the following answers apply:

“**5C**” = 1 or 4 Key Cards

“**5D**” = 0 or 3 Key Cards

“5H” = 2 Key Cards without the Queen of the Trump suit

“5S” = 2 Key Cards with the Queen of the Trump suit

If the Initiator, the “**Intervenor**,” having received either a “5C” or “5D” response from Partner, wishes, in addition, to inquire whether or not Partner holds the Queen of the Trump suit, such a request is initiated by the Initiator’s re-bid of the next highest suit, exclusive of the “*agreed-upon*” suit.

North
1S/ 2H/”4-NT”/”5D” (The “5D” bid, here, asks for the Spade
Queen)

South
2C/4S/”5C”/???

Responder’s Subsequent Responses are as Follows:

- a) If holding the Queen of Trump + any outside K = Bid the Suit of the outside King
 - b) If holding the Queen of Trump with no outside K = Bid 5-NT
 - c) Absent the Queen of the Trump suit = Bid 5 of the “*agreed-upon*” suit.
-
-

Bridge Tip # 280

A response of a new Minor suit at the 2-level by Responder to Partner’s opening call of one-of-a-Major shows a 5-card suit and 10 or more HCP’s in standard bidding practices, and 12 or more in a “*Two-over-One*” bidding system. In both cases, however, it is important to note that even in the “*Two-over-One*” Game-forcing system, a repeat of the Minor suit following Opener’s initial response is not forcing to Game, and can be “*passed*.” Such a bidding sequence shows minimum HCP’s by the Responder, a 6-card Minor suit holding, lack of support for Opener’s suit or suits shown, and the lack of a stopper in the forth, as-yet-un-bid suit making a final No-Trump contract unfeasible from Responder’s singular perspective. By Partnership agreement, this bidding sequence can be “*passed*” by Opener and even in a “*Two-over-One*” Game-forcing system, it removes the force to Game.

North
AKJXX

1S/2H/?? (Pass)

AJXX
XX
XX

South
XX
QX
JXX
AKQXXX

2C/3C

Bridge Tip # 279

When holding 18-19 HCP's and a balanced distribution, one's bidding procedure, in order to show such a holding, is to open one-of-a-suit and then re-bid **2-NT** at one's first re-bid opportunity, assuming Partner has responded with one of a new suit as in Example (1).

Example 1:

	$\frac{W}{P}$	$\frac{N}{1H}$	$\frac{E}{P}$
<u>You, South, as Dealer, Hold:</u>		$\frac{S}{1D/2-NT}$	
AKX			
KX			
AXXX			
KJXX			

If, however, Partner does **not** respond , rather your RHO has made a call, as in Example 2 below, one need not jump to **2-NT** with 18-19 HCP's. Rather a **1-NT** re-bid, absent a call from responding Partner, would show the same strength as above, even **without** the jump. If you had had 12-14 HCP's you would not have made a re-bid, and had you held 15-17 HCP's you would have opened **1-NT**. Absent these two latter circumstances, you have to hold 18-19 HCP's and you can show this without the commitment to take 8-tricks as a **2-NT** re-bid would have committed your team to produce.

Example 2:

	$\frac{W}{P}$	$\frac{N}{P}$	$\frac{E}{1S}$
		$\frac{S}{}$	

You, South, as Dealer, Hold:

1D/1-NT

AKX

KX

AXXX

KJXX

Bridge Tip # 278

Confusion often exists when using “*Jacoby Transfer*” bids as to whether Opener should call out the word “*Alert*” or “*Transfer*” when hearing Responder's choice of bids. When Responder is transferring to Hearts (a “**2D**” call by Responder), or to Spades (a “**2H**” call by Responder), there is little misunderstanding that the appropriate word, under these circumstances, used by the **1-NT** Opener, when hearing such transfer bids by his/her Partner, is indeed the word “*Transfer*.” This is universally correct and infrequently misused.

The confusion and error arises, however, when a “**2S**” bid is called by Responder. In this instance, the two possible verbalizations, “*Alert*,” or “*Transfer*,” are not interchangeable, in that one, or the other, is singularly correct, depending upon what the Responder is telegraphing to Opener by his/her bid of “**2S**,” based upon their Partnership agreement.

Some insist that, in this instance, they should always say “*Transfer*.” Others feel that they should always say “*Alert*,” and some think it does not matter at all; i.e., that the two words can be used interchangeably. **This is absolutely not correct**, and is far from the truth. It **does indeed matter**, depending upon the Partnership understanding as to what exactly the Responder is signaling when he/she bids “**2S**” in response to Partner's opening bid of 1-No-Trump.

1. **If the Partnership agreement is that a “2S” response to a 1-No-Trump opening bid directs the Opening Bidder to say 3C, (a “Puppet” Bid), without advanced knowledge as to whether the Responder (a) really wants Clubs (Responder will then “Pass”), or (b) really wants Diamonds (Responder may “Correct” the puppet bid of “3C” to 3D, if that be the desired spot by Responder), then the correct verbalization, by Opener, to the Opponents, is “Alert”** In effect, Opener is saying to the Opponents: “I am supposed to bid ‘3C,’ and I do not know at this point whether Responder really wants Clubs or Diamonds – Responder will “*Pass*” if he/she likes Clubs, else “*Correct*” to **3D** if that be Responder's choice.”) Under these circumstances, the singularly correct call from

Opener is "*Alert*," - saying the word "*Transfer*," under these conditions, is absolutely incorrect.

2. **Alternatively, if the Partnership is playing 4-way Transfers, and their agreement is that a "2S" response, by Responder, to Partner's opening bid of 1-No-Trump, absolutely signifies a Club desire by Responder, then the proper verbalization by Opener is, here, to say "Transfer".** Under these conditions, Opener is sure, without further clarification, that the Responder's intent is to have the Partnership play in Clubs. Under these latter circumstances, the singularly correct call from Opener is "*Transfer*," - saying the word "*Alert*," under these conditions, is absolutely incorrect.

3. **A third possibility of Partnership agreement might be that a "2S" response by Responder to Partner's opening bid of 1-No-Trump signifies a convention called "*Minor Suit Stayman*."** In this instance, Opener, in order to be accurate must say the word "*Alert*." In this instance Responder is looking to have Opener inform Responder as to which of the two Minor suits Opener has greater length. Opener bids "*3C*" if he/she has equal or greater length in Clubs, and an artificial "*2-NT*," if Opener has greater length in Diamonds. Responder can then use this information to proceed to a possible Minor suit slam, if that be Responder's intent, else "*Pass*" or "*correct*" to "*3C*" or "*3D*," if no slam interest is present.

Summary: The use of signaling to the Opponents the meaning of Partner's call to one's opening 1-NT bid varies with the Partnership agreement as to the meaning of Responder's intent. If Opener (as in 1. above), knows that he/she is obligated to simply "*puppet*" "*3C*," without advanced knowledge as to whether Responder will either "*Pass*" or "*Correct*" to *3D*, then the appropriate verbalization to the Opponents is "*Alert*." Alternatively, (as in 2. above), if Opener knows that Responder's intended suit is Clubs, then the correct informing-signal to the Opponents is "*Transfer*." The Opponents are entitled to know the difference, and to accomplish this, the correct choice of the two possible words used is imperative! Finally, (as in 3, above), if Opener knows that Responder might be seeking Opener's preference as to which Minor suit carries greater length, and/or is uncertain if Responder is just attempting to end the auction in "*3C*" or "*3D*," the correct verbalization to the Opponent's is with the use of the word, "*Alert*."

The correct and appropriate verbalization by Opener, either the words "*Alert*," or "*Transfer*," is not interchangeable. **The correct one is based upon the Partnership meaning, as to what Responder is asking Opener to do.**

Bridge Tip # 277

The standard lead against most No-Trump contracts generally calls for 4th best from one's longest and strongest suit, assuming that the Player on lead holds one or more outside entries, and no better holding is present like the top of a long sequence, for example. Of course, if Partner has bid a suit, the lead of that suit might, alternatively, be the lead of choice in order to establish Partner's long suit. Suppose, hypothetically, however, Partner has not bid. You hold on one occasion a 4-card suit, **AKXX**, and on another occasion a similar holding, but this time, **AKXXX**. Statistically, does the preferred lead differ from these two nearly similar holdings?

The answer is yes! The lead from these nearly similar holdings needs to vary as follows: From the **AKXX** the preferred lead is the Ace, and the statistically preferred lead from the **AKXXX** is 4th best. Here are the reasons why.

When you hold a 5-card suit, it is statistically improbable that Partner holds 3-pieces, and even more unlikely that Partner holds the Queen when you have the **AKXXX**. Since Partner probably holds 2-pieces and you need to give up a trick in any event in order to establish your small cards in the suit, better to, lead 4th best, give up a trick early, and hope that Partner or you will gain the lead at some later time, allowing you to, hopefully, run the suit if the Opponents held an original 3-3 split in the suit.

In the case of **AKXX**, however, Partner is much more likely to hold 3-pieces than in your previous 5-card holding scenario. Because Partner holds 3-pieces you can afford to lay down the Ace at trick one, which (a), tells Partner you have the King, (b), allows you to get a look at the Dummy in order to see if a continuation or a switch to another suit is preferred, and (c), allows Partner to give you an attitude signal as to whether or not, from Partner's perspective, he/she gives you either an encouraging or a discouraging signal to continue the suit or not.

Bridge Tip # 276

Signaling to Partner, as to suit preference, on one's *first* discard, is the mainstay of any bridge defense. Without Partnership agreement as to which of the several available methods of communication is employed, the trick-taking capacity of the Defense against any contract, whether the hand is played in a Suit or in a No-Trump contract, is severely limited. Because these alternative methods markedly differ as to their suit preference indicated, Partnership agreement as to which of these methods are to be used is paramount.

Amongst the main methods available for use on one's *first* discard ("*sluff*") are:

1. "*Standard*" Discards – An unusually *high* first discard (the discard of a 7 or a 9, for example) *encourages* the suit discarded; and a *low* first-card discard (the sluff of a 4 or a 2, for example) *discourages* the suit discarded.
2. "*Odd-Even*" Discards - An *odd* first discard (the sluff of a 7 or a 3, for example) *encourages* the suit discarded; and an *even* first discard (the *sluff* of a 6 or a 2, for example) *discourages* the suit discarded. In addition, if the even card discarded be a *high even card* it suggests a preference for the *higher-ranking* of the two remaining suits (the sluff of an 8 of Diamonds on a Spade trick would suggest a Heart preference); and if the even card discarded be a *low even card* it suggests a preference for the *lower ranking* of the two remaining suits (the sluff of a 4 of Clubs on a Heart trick would suggest a Diamond preference).
3. "*Laventhal*" Discards – An unusually *high* first discard suggests a preference for the *higher-ranking* of the two remaining suits other than the Trump suit (the sluff of an 8 of Hearts in a Spade contract would suggest a Diamond preference); and a *low* first discard suggests a preference for the *lower-ranking* of the two remaining suits other than the Trump suit (the sluff of a 3 of Diamonds in a Spade contract would suggest a Club preference)
4. "*Upside-Down*" Discards – The exact opposite of any of the above-listed methods.

Most **1-NT** bids in bridge evidence a **balanced** distribution; i.e. no voids, no singletons, and not more than one doubleton. There is, however, one **1-NT** bid that can evidence either a **balanced** or an **unbalanced** distribution, and one **1-NT** call that definitively shows an **unbalanced** distribution.

The consistently **balanced 1-NT** calls are:

- (2) **A 1-NT Opening Bid in any seat** (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th) – Shows 15 -17 HCP's in the **Standard American** (S.A.) system, and 12-14 HCP's in **ACOL**.
- (3) **A 1-NT Re-Bid by Opener** (Partner having responded at the 1-level and with no overcalls by either Opponent – Shows 12-14 HCP's.
- (4) **A 1-NT Re-Bid by Opener, Partner having responded at the 1-level** – Shows 18-19 HCP's.
- (5) **A 1-NT Re-Bid by Opener with Partner having “passed,” and with one Opponent having overcalled at the 1-level** Shows 18-19 HCP's, the same as if Partner had responded at the 1-level.
- (6) **A 1-NT Overcall in the 4th (“Balancing”) seat** – Shows a balanced hand with 10-14 HCP's, but without necessarily a stopper in the Opponent's bid suit.

The **unbalanced 1-NT** calls are:

- (1) **A 1-NT Call by Responder to Partner's opening bid of one-of-a-suit** – Shows 6-9 (some play 6-10) HCP's with either a **balanced** or an **unbalanced distribution**, and *without* primary support for Opener's bid suit.
- (2) **A 1-NT Overcall in the balancing (4th) seat with the 1st and 3rd seat Opponents both having bid two different suits at the 1-level** – Shows a 5-5 or better holding in the two, as-yet, un-bid suits and 5-11 HCP's (effectively a distributional **Take-Out Double** for the 2-un-bid suits when holding less than opening count. This latter **1-NT** call is called a “*Sandwich No-Trump*.”

Bridge Tip # 274

Confusion often persists as to when a “**4-NT**” call is **Blackwood**, and when a “**4C**” call is **Gerber**. Although, in the final analysis, Partnership agreement as to the meaning of both of these bids is necessary, and the use of these bids need be open for

discussion between Partners, one suggested method, so as not to confuse the meanings of both of these bids, is as follows:

- (1) “**4-NT** is always Blackwood except in the bidding sequence: (1-NT – “**4-NT**”) or (2-NT – “**4-NT**”). In both of these instances, the “**4-NT**” bid is quantitative, slam seeking, and is asking Opener to either “**pass**” if holding the minimum of the HCP range originally shown, else to bid **6-NT** if holding a maximum HCP range. Alternatively, in both of these circumstances, following an opening bid of **1-NT** or **2-NT**, a “**4C**” bid, Gerber, is used as the “**Ace-Asking**” alternative call, since the “**4-NT**” bid, as described herein, would be quantitative.
- (2) A “**4C**” bid is, **Gerber**, “**Ace-Asking**,” when a “**4-NT**” bid would have been quantitative, as shown above. Another way, so as to avoid confusion, is to have the agreement that a “**4C**” call is always **Gerber** following a bidding sequence where a No-Trump call is at the beginning or at the ending of the auction. In all other instances, the “**4C**” call is either natural and invitational to Game, if Clubs had been bid prior in the auction, a “**Splinter**” bid if used as a “**double jump-shift**,” a “**Mini-Splinter**” bid as a single jump re-bid by Opener following a 2/1 2-level first response by Opener’s responding Partner, else a cue-bid showing first-round control as an alternative Slam-exploration attempt in lieu of one of the Ace-asking Conventions.

Bridge Tip # 273

Bidding is the language of Bridge wherein each Player attempts to describe his or her holdings to Partner as to both strength and shape so as to, hopefully, arrive at the best final makeable contract as to both level and denomination. Oft times, however, one’s holdings is such that the number of HCP’s coupled with the hand’s particular distribution, makes a convenient re-bid impossible without, to some extent, lying to Partner, in some way. When this happens, one must then choose the best lie, avoiding a less-desired, applicable alternative.

One of the worst bidding lies in bridge is for Opener to make a “Reverse” when the hand falls short of the minimum HCP requirement for such a bid; i.e., a hand with fewer than 17 HCP’s. Under these circumstances, Opener must sometimes choose from distasteful options so as to avoid “**Reversing**” when the number of HCP’s does not warrant a “**Reverse**.”

Opener holds the following:	X	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	AQXX	1D	1S
	AQXXX	?????	
	QXX		

Opener must make a re-bid absent a competitive overcall by Opener's RHO ("A new suit by Responder is almost always forcing for 1-round.")

Potential re-bids by Opener in the above-referenced bidding scenario:

- (1) **1-NT** (This re-bid would show a balanced hand, 12-14 HCP's, and Responder might find it inviting, should Responder hold 6-Spades, believing that Opener holds no fewer than two or three Spades, to settle on a Spade contract, at some level, but with 7-pieces, absent a "**Golden Fit.**")
- (2) **2C** (This bid would show no fewer than 9-cards in the Minors, with no fewer than 4-Clubs. Once again, this is a distortion of Opener's actual distribution.)
- (3) **2H** (This would be a "**Reverse**" evidencing no fewer than 17 HCP's.)
- (4) **2D** (This would evidence a minimum opening holding but, with no fewer than 6 or more Diamonds.)
- (5) **Pass** (An unacceptable call since Responder's bid forces Opener to make a re-bid.)

Conventional wisdom is that the best lie, here, given Opener's actual holdings, would be, in this instance, a re-bid, by Opener, of **2D**. All other options, as shown above, are worse and are more likely to cause a potentially-failed final contract. As discussed herein, one must choose the best from a list of re-bids, but having avoided "**Reversing**," Opener has, here, avoided the worst lie possible.

Bridge Tip # 272

Responding to Partner's **Take-Out Double** seems fairly standard. Absent further bidding by the Opponents, the fewer the HCP's Responder holds, the more he/she must bid, and to "**pass**," is unacceptable, under these circumstances, absent Responder being volitionally desirous of converting Partner's Take-Out Double to a penalty scenario.. Alternatively, Responder can convert the Take-Out volitionally to penalties dependent upon HCP's held and the relative vulnerabilities of the two sides. Lastly, Responder

must jump the bidding with 9 or more HCP's to evidence the side's holding of the majority of the outstanding HCP's; i.e., the possibility of a game-level contract.

Absent a clear choice as to which suit to respond, however, some ambiguity does exist, however, as to when to respond in a Major suit held, and when to respond in a Minor. Statistically speaking, conventional wisdom suggests that with few HCP's and a 4-card Major and a 5-card Minor, Responder should respond in the Major suit. With a 4-card Major and a 6-card Minor, statistical preference is give to the 6-card Minor.

Example 1:

	<u>N</u>	
	Double	
<u>W</u>		<u>E</u>
1C		P
	<u>S</u>	
	?????	

South Holds: AXXX
 XX
 KXXXXX
 XX

In Example 1: South should respond 1S!

Example 2:

	<u>N</u>	
	Double	
<u>W</u>		<u>E</u>
1C		P
	<u>S</u>	
	?????	

South Holds: AXXX
 X
 KXXXXXX
 XX

In Example 2: South should respond 1D!

When responding to Partner's Tale-Out Double, give preference to a Major if its length is equal or within one card difference of an accompanying Minor, but if, alternatively, the Minor suit holding by Responder is two or more cards longer than his/her Major suit holding, Responder should respond in the Minor suit, preferentially!

Bridge Tip # 271

In the bidding sequence:

	N 1C/1S	
W P		E P
	S 1D	

It is clear that Opener holds 11-18 HCP's, fewer than 4-Hearts, and four or more Spades. It is also clear that South holds 6-18 HCP's and at least 4-Diamonds. What is not clear to South is whether Opener (North) is at the lower or upper HCP range of his/her holdings. South, holding at least Game values (13{+} HCP's), and 4-card or longer support for Opener's Spade suit, must have at his/her disposal two (2) ways to get to Game; (a), when South knows that irrespective of Opener's point count range that Game is most likely present, but Slam is not (Example 1), and (b), when South knows Game is assured and that Slam might be possible, if North is at the top of his/her point count range (Example 2).

Example 1:

	N 1C/1S/P	
W P/P		E P/P/P
	S 1D/4S	

Example 2:

	N 1C/1S/"X"/?	
W P/P		E P/P/P/P
	S 1D/"2H"/4S	

In Example (a) Responder's "quick" arrival at game shows Game values with no interest in Slam, irrespective as to whether or not Opener holds the bottom (11 HCP's), or the top (18 HCP's) of his/her opening count.

In Example (b), however, Responder's "slow" arrival to game: "2H" (a 4th suit forcing bid in this instance), followed by a jump to 4S shows Slam interest. A "quick" arrival to Game is weaker than a "slow" arrival.

In Example (a) Opener "passes" no matter what his/her point count since Partner has shown Game values with no interest in Slam irrespective of Opener's point count. In Example (b), however, Opener can now make an informed decision whether, informed of Responder's Spade support and Slam interest, by either "passing"

South's Game-level bid of 4S, else a bid of "4-NT" proceeding to explore for a potential Slam-level contract.

Bridge Tip # 270

Your RHO (Right-Hand Opponent), the Dealer, has opened with a pre-emptive **3C**, **3D**, **3H**, or **3S** call. You overcall **3-NT**. Conventional wisdom for your having done so is that you hold one of two possible hands; (1) a long self-sustaining 6- or 7-card Minor or better with at least one stopper in your Opponent's suit and eight or nine, running quick-tricks, else (2) an evenly-balanced hand, also with one or more stoppers and 18 or more HCP's. In either case, your bid is "*to play*."

Partner, who, as yet, has not had the opportunity to bid, can "*pass*", else can bid on, seeking a potentially better final contract, or even the possibly of "*Slam*." To accomplish this, several bids are available to Partner, including the following:

A. "**4C**" – which is "**Gerber**," Ace-asking

B. **4D**, **4H**, or **4S** – which could be either natural, to play, else "**Jacoby Transfers**," in the first two instances

C. "**4-NT**" – which could be either "**Blackwood**," or quantitative

(All of the above, by Partnership agreement)

Obviously since your bidding room has been consumed by the Opponent's pre-empt, you do not have the bidding room to do all of the above, and so the question comes down to which of the above six choices, if any, seem most useful and appropriate? Conventional wisdom seems to lean in the following direction:

A. "**4C**" is best utilized as a **Gerber**, Ace-Asking bid, seeking the possibility for Slam. The lack of bidding room seems to obviate the usefulness of the use of "**4C**" as Stayman.

B. "**4D**," "**4H**," – appear best as **Jacoby Transfers**, holding six or more pieces of the suit requested by the Transfer. Natural bids here would make the weaker hand the Declarer which is, oft times, disadvantageous.

C. "**4-NT**" seems useless for either of its potential meanings. **Blackwood** is no longer needed since we already have the "**4C**" **Gerber** election, and the use of "**4-NT**" as a quantitative bid seems inappropriate and ineffective since Partners **3-NT** call holds such a wide variable range possibility as to its high-card strength.

Bridge Tip # 269

Confusion sometimes exists as to whether or not to play top of a sequence or not during the course of the play of any hand. As is the case with most conventional understandings, the answer changes with the circumstances involved and Partnership understanding.

In the case of leading a suit, if you are a Defender, the usual play is to play “*top of any two-card or better sequence.*” With this understanding, for example, firstly, the lead of a Queen promises the Jack (unless one is leading from a doubleton in which case the lead is reversed), and secondly, the lead of the Queen, by inference, denies the King.

If you are Declarer, however, you can lead any card from any length sequence, if your intent is to fool the Opponents into not knowing who has any missing cards in the suit. In this instance, you are fooling two people, both of whom are your Opponents, and it does not matter that you have hidden your holdings.

In the case of following to a suit, already led by Partner or by Declarer, when you are a Defender, you play low from any sequence of two or more to that suit. For example, if you are playing from a **KQJ** sequence, while following suit, the play of the Jack, if taken by Declarer’s Ace leaves open the possibility that you still hold the missing, as-yet-unrevealed King and Queen, whereas if you had played the King, Partner will not have any reason to believe that you might yet hold either of the missing lower honors.

If you are Declarer, however, in this same instance in following to a suit led by one of the Defenders, your correct play is to take the trick with the highest card of any 2-card or longer sequence so as to hide the possibility that you held the missing, lower-ranking card or cards.

In summation, the correct play of a sequence of cards by a Defender is usually opposite that of the correct play by Declarer. In the case of a play by a Defender, it is important for Partner to know what possibilities exist for you to have any, or all, of the unrevealed cards, whereas, if you are Declarer, you can hide the existence of any unrevealed cards, and you are only fooling the enemy, not Partner.

Bridge Tip # 268

You (North), having dealt, holding the following hand, open the bidding with **1C**. Both Opponents “**pass**” with Partner having responded **1-NT**. What is your re-bid, if anything, when holding the following?

A962		
A		
J87		
A9863		
N		
1C/??		
W		E
Pass		Pass
S		
1-NT		

After opening **1C**, one usually needs 6 or more pieces to re-bid Clubs when holding minimum values. However, in the following bidding sequence, note the reasoning:

- (1) You cannot respond with a re-bid of **2S** – Partner has already denied 4-pieces of both Hearts and Spades with his/her response of **1-NT**, and a re-bid by North of **2S** would, here, be a “**Reverse**” by you, showing 17 or more HCP’s.
- (2) Partner holds fewer than 4-Diamonds, and no more than 3-pieces of both Major suits since Partner did not bid **1D**, **1H** or **1S**, all “**Up-the-Ladder**” normal responses.
- (3) Since Partner holds no more than 9-pices of Diamonds, Hearts, and Spades, collectively, Partner must hold at least 4-Clubs.
- (4) Since you, North, have only 1 Heart, chances are that a No-Trump contract is likely to fail with a Heart lead, especially if Partner holds the lesser of his/her 6-10 HCP’s evidenced by his/her **1-NT** response.

Therefore, given the above reasoning, a **2C** re-bid under these circumstances, is statistically the correct call; i.e., **not** to “**pass**” the **1-NT** response.

Bridge Tip # 267

Occasionally, when using **Roman Key-Card Blackwood** (0314 version), the invoking Partner, seeking affirmation of a suspected Slam will get a “**5D**” response to his/her “**4-NT**” call. Owing to the bidding, especially when the Partnership utilizes the so-called light “*Bergen*” or “*Rule of 20*” openings, it may be ambiguous to the invoking Partner as to whether the original Opener holds 1 or 3 controls. If the invoking Partner, hearing this call, abandons the pursuit to Slam, and the Responder actually does hold 3-controls instead of 1-control, Responder must proceed to the Slam-Level contract originally pursued.

1S / “**4-NT**” / 5S

Pass / Pass

Pass / Pass / Pass

3S / “**5D**” / “*Pass*” with 1-control or bid 6S with 3-controls

Bridge Tip # 266

Many Bridge Players utilize “*Texas Transfers*” in combination with “*Jacoby Transfers*.” Both are used over Partner’s **1-NT** opening call. The former utilizes an immediate jump to “**4D**” or “**4H**” which are transfers to **4H** and **4S** respectively. Obviously Responder needs no fewer than 10 HCP’s (or its equivalent), and no fewer than 6-pieces of the intended Major suit since Responder can count on Opener holding no fewer than 2-pieces of the intended suit, and the fact that the bid forces the Partnership to a Game-level contract. **Note:** In late 2017, this latter supposition became mute as **1-NT** opening bids were allowed to house a singleton **Q, K, or A**.

The value of the “*Texas Transfer*” is 2-fold. Firstly it acts preemptively in not allowing Responder’s **RHO** to easily enter the auction. Secondly it allows a variant meaning to the following scenarios:

(a) 1-NT / **2H** or **2S**

(b) 1-NT / **4H** or **4S**

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

“**2D**” or “**2H**” / **4H** or **4S**

“**4D**” or “**4H**”

The latter scenario (b), a direct “*Texas Transfer*,” shows Game intention without any interest in Slam, and the former (a), a “*Jacoby Transfer*” followed by a jump to

Game shows Game intention with an interest in Slam if Opener holds a maximum count of his/her original **1-NT** opening.

A second item of significance to understand when using these two transfer mechanisms is that when there is interference over Partner's **1-NT** opening by a **2C**, **2D**, **2H** or **2S** hindrance by Responder's RHO, "**Jacoby Transfers**," as in example (a) above, are off. "**Texas Transfers**," as in example (b), however, are still on. Therefore:

1-NT / 4H or 4S	
Pass	2C, 2D, 2H or 2S
"4D" or "4H" (are still transfers)	<u>Whereas:</u>
	1-NT
2C, 2D, 2H, or 2S	
	2D, 2H, or 2S
(natural – to play) (<u>Not Transfers</u>)	

Bridge Tip # 265

The "**Impossible 2S**" bid is a bridge convention which uses an alertable cue-bid of "**2S**" which shows invitational values by Responder during a specific bidding sequence as shown herein.

A "**1-NT Forcing**" response to a **1H** opening by Partner denies having four spades. If Responder then bids Spades later on, it can't possibly be a natural bid. But what does it mean?

After **1H – 1-NT**, whether Opener re-bids **2C**, **2D**, or **2H**, a bid of "**2S**" (alertable) by Responder shows a stronger hand than if Responder had bid at the 3-level at his/her second turn. Opener is now forced to bid "**2-NT**" (also alertable), and Responder will then announce which Minor suit he/she wants to show.

1H – 1-NT	2D –
????	
1. KJ 6 J86 QJ87542 (Bid 3C , directly, obviously! This asks Opener to " pass! ")	

2. **J2 64 QJ9 AK9753** (Bid “**2S**”. After Opener bids “**2-NT**”, a bid of **3C** shows a stronger holding than does the bidding sequence of example 1.)
3. **Q85 7 K9764 AJ52** (Bid **3D**, directly, to show good support and a modest hand.)
4. **A85 7 AQ976 J652** (Bid “**2S**”. Subsequent to Opener’s normal response of “**2-NT**”, you will follow up by bidding **3D**, showing invitational support for Opener’s Diamonds.)

Bridge Tip # 264

Most Partnerships employ a “*Front-of-Card*” system when Partner makes a **1-NT** overcall; i.e., **Stayman** and **Jacoby Transfer** bids are still in play as in Examples 1 & 2.

Example 1:

	<u>N</u> 1D	
<u>W</u> "2C" (Stayman)		<u>E</u> 1-NT
	<u>S</u> P	

Example 2:

	<u>N</u> 1D	
<u>W</u> "2D" (Transfer)		<u>E</u> 1-NT
	<u>S</u> P	

In a competitive scenario, however, when Opener’s Partner has responded other than a “**pass**”, bids by the Partner who has overcalled **1-NT** become natural as in Example 3, and “*Front-of-Card*” systems, **Stayman** and **Jacoby Transfers**, are “*off*.”

Example 3:

	<u>N</u> 1D	
<u>W</u> 2H (Natural)		<u>E</u> 1-NT
	<u>S</u> 2D	

Bridge Tip # 263

Defending against a No-Trump or a Suit contract, you, East in this example, hold the Ace in a suit in which, Dummy, on your right, comes down with the **KQ** and one or two other pieces of the suit referenced, as shown below. Declarer, South in this instance, on your left, plays a small piece of the suit and puts in the Queen subsequent to your Partner's following suit with a small card. What do you play, and why? Do you cover with the Ace, or play small, without hesitation? Does it matter, or is it inconsequential as to whether you capture the Queen or the King of the suit? What is the percentage play? Think this one out **before** looking further to the explanation below!

<u>NORTH (Dummy)</u>	
KQT4	
<u>WEST (Partner)</u>	<u>EAST (You)</u>
3	A72
<u>SOUTH (Declarer)</u>	
6	

Irrespective as to whether or not you assume Declarer holds at least one other piece of the suit, the percentage play is to play small without hesitation. Declarer will assume that your Partner, West, holds the Ace and will return to his/her hand and run a small card once again, hoping to finesse what he/she assumes is the placement of the Ace in West's hand. When Declarer plays the King, you, to Declarer's consternation, overtake with your Ace.

If Partner holds the Jack you have made two tricks in the suit in which Declarer would have otherwise made two, had you covered with the Ace initially, and Declarer were to have finessed West's Jack the second time the suit is played. If, on the other hand, Declarer holds the Jack, it becomes unimportant as to when you cover; your Ace entitles you to only one trick, whenever it is played. Even if Declarer holds but a Singleton, it matters not, most often, because if you cover the Queen, the first time the suit is played, Declarer will get a likely discard on the King when the suit is played a second time.

Bridge Tip # 262

If your RHO opens the bidding with one of a suit, and you hold, in the direct (2nd seat), an evenly-balanced hand **without** a suit of your own with which to bid, these are your options: With:

0-14 HCP's = "Pass," with 0-10 HCP's, or **"Double"** if holding fewer than 3-pieces of Opener's suit (a doubleton, singleton, or a void) and 11-14 HCP's. With 11-14 HCP's and 3 or more pieces of Opener's suit, **"Pass."** (*Shape and HCP's are both imperative for a proper Take-Out Double.*)

15-18 HCP's = Overcall **"1-NT"** if holding at least one stopper in the Opponent's suit, else **"Double"** for Take-Out.

19-20 HCP's = "Double" and then bid **"No Trump,"** if holding at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit, else jump in Partner's chosen suit, thereby inviting to Game should Partner hold 6 or more HCP's.

21-23 HCP's = "Double" and then **"Jump in No Trump,"** if holding at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit, else jump in Partner's chosen suit, once again inviting to a Game-level contract if Partner holds 6 or more HCP's.

24-26 HCP's = "Double" and then re-bid **"3-NT"** (or **"Double"** and then **cue-bid Opener's suit, thereby forcing to a Game-level contract.**)

Bridge Tip # 261

The **Blackwood** and **Gerber** conventions normally used to explore for Aces when a Slam is perceived feasible, is never employed when the Partner wishing information has **either a worthless doubleton or a void.** Alternatively, Cue-bidding first round controls is the substitute avenue of choice. The following example shows how such bidding works:

You, North, the Dealer, hold the following cards. (South, Partner's hand is shown below:

<u>North (You)</u>	<u>South (Partner)</u>
KT9X	QJXXXX
AJXX	KQ
KQX	AXX
AX	XX (a worthless
doubleton)	

<u>North Bids</u>	<u>South (Partner) Bids</u>
1- NT (Showing 15-17 HCP's)	"2H" (Transfer)
"3S" (A "Super-Acceptance") (Showing 17 HCP's <u>and</u> 4-Spades) interest) (Showing Diamond 1 st round control)	"4D" (Slam
"4H" (Showing Heart) (1 st round control) interest)	4S (Abandoning) (Slam
"5C" ("Wait Partner!" ("I hold a 1 st round control not yet shown you!"))	
	6S ("Thanks Partner, that's just what I needed to know!")

Cue-Bidding is an integral, potent, and irreplaceable aid to the achievement of Slam contracts under certain conditions, especially as described above!

Bridge Tip # 260

Some confusion oft times exists as to how to handle various point count ranges if a Player opts to bid with an evenly-balanced hand in the balancing position. Dependent upon one's HCP count, the following bidding sequences are generally recognized as best such that the Balancer's Responder (The "*Advancer*") can handle his/her responses with the greatest likelihood of success.

<u>LHO</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>
1C/1D/1H/1S	Pass	Pass	???

HCP's)	<u>Hand A:</u>	XX	(Bid 1-NT, showing 10-14
		KQX	(A "Balancing-NT") (A
		KJXX	stopper in the Opponent's bid suit is not required)
		KXX	
NT,	<u>Hand B:</u>	KX	("Double" and then Bid 1-
		KQX	showing 15-17 HCP's)
		AJXX	
		KXXX	
NT,	<u>Hand C:</u>	KX	("Double" and then Bid 2-
		KQX	showing 18-19 HCP's)
		AQXXX	
		KJX	

Hands B, and C, both evidence at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit. A similar requirement, although desirable, is not mandatory in Hand A.

Bridge Tip # 259

The usual practice is for a potential Opening Bidder to contemplate his/her first re-bid **before** making his/her opening (first) bid. Towards this end, if one holds 4-4 in the Minor suits, with a (2-3-4-4) distribution, as in the case of Example 1 below, the proper opening is to bid **1D** with intent to re-bid **1-NT** if the opportunity presents itself.

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>East Holds:</u>	98	A96	KQ76	KJ43
<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>		
	1D				

With a (1-4-4-4) or a (4-1-4-4) distribution, however, depending on the quality of the two Minor suits, and whether or not the singleton is in the Heart suit or the Spade suit, as seen below, it is sometimes better to open **1C** if the Club suit is substantially stronger than the Diamond suit so as to offer a better potential lead-direction to Partner should your team wind up defending instead of winning the contract.

Example 2: **East Holds:** 8 AJ96 KQ76 KJ43

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1D (Intending to re-bid 2C if Partner responds 1S)		

Example 3: **East Holds:** AJ98 6 Q976 AK43

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1C (Can re-bid 1S if Partner responds 1D or 1H, or 2S if Partner responds 1S. If you wind up defending, Partner is more likely to lead a Club if 1C had been your opening bid instead of 1D.)		

As you can see, the best opening is not rigidly determined with 4-cards in each of the Minor suits. Rather it becomes dependent upon both the relative strengths of the two Minor suits, and whether or not one holds 4-Hearts or 4-Spades as the third 4-card suit.

Bridge Tip # 258

A direct (2nd seat) or a balancing (4th seat) **2-NT** overcall by a **previously non-passed hand**, following an opening pre-emptive bid by an Opponent is, universally, a 15-18 HCP, evenly-balanced, **1-NT** holding, with at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit. This is evidenced in examples 1 & 2 below.

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>East Holds:</u>	KQ8	A96	KQ6	QJ43
<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>		
2D	2-NT				

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>West Holds:</u>	KJ8	A96	AQJ	Q843
<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>		
2D	Pass	Pass	2-NT		

Alternatively, a **2-NT** overcall by a **previously passed hand** following an opening pre-emptive bid by an Opponent is **not** a natural No-Trump holding. Rather, it is an “**Unusual-NT**” call, usually evidencing 5-5 in the two lower-un-bid suits, 5-11 HCP's, in this instance. This is evidenced in examples 3 & 4 below.

Example 3: East Holds: 8 AQ876 96 KJ432

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
Pass	Pass	2D	Pass
Pass	"2-NT"		

Example 4: West Holds: 98 6 AQ975 KQ843

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
Pass	Pass	2H	Pass
			"2-NT"

Bridge Tip # 257

When Responder to a **1-NT** (15-17 HCP) opening holds a **(4-3-3-3)** or a **(3-4-3-3)** distribution and Game values (Example 1), Responder should **NOT** invoke **Stayman** in an effort to seek an 8-card Major suit fit, ***even should it be present***. Holding no ruffing capability due to Responder's distribution (lack of any shortness), the Partnership is better off being in a final **3-NT** final contract, even should the possible 4-4 Major suit fit be found.

The reverse, however, is not true. When the opening **1-NT** player, holding 3-pieces of Responder's Major suit, is faced with an acceptance of a check-back following a **Jacoby Transfer** bid (Example 2), Opener ***should correct*** to 4 of the referenced Major suit, **even with** a **(4-3-3-3)** distribution, and should not let his/her lack of shortness deter him/her from accepting the four-of-the-Major suit, final contract preference.

Example 1:

<u>North</u> (Opener)	<u>East</u> (Responder)
1-NT	3-NT
KJXX	QXXX
QXX	AJX
AK	JXX
QJXX	KXX

Example 2:

<u>North</u> (Opener)		<u>East</u> (Responder)	
1-NT		"2H"	
2S	KJX	"3-NT"	QXXXX
4S	QXX		AJ
	AKX		JX
	QJXX		KXXX

The presence of a 4-3-3-3 distribution should defer Responder from playing the hand in four-of-a-Major, but not Opener, when Responder has found an 8-card Major suit fit!

Bridge Tip # 256

As Responder to Partner's opening bid of one of a suit, unless you hold Game values of better, conform to the "*Up-the-Ladder*" Principle by never by-passing any 4-card Major suit at the 1-Level. This is particularly important when playing the American Standard 5-card Major bidding system. To not do so is to risk the possibility of missing a Major suit Golden Fit, should it be present.

You Hold: Q976 A986 A9762 ----

You

Partner

1D

1H

Bid 1H, in order to search for a fit in your 4-card Major!

Since you hold only average values, you must limit your strength as soon as possible. You have enough HCP's to bid **2D** at the outset, but not enough to bid **2H** next should Opener re-bid **2C** or **1-NT**. To do so would be a "**Reverse**," and a "**Reverse**" by Responder forces to Game (shows opening count or better). Since you are lacking a few HCP's for opening count, let the Diamonds go and respond **1H** as your first response!

Exception: When holding minimum values with 5-Spades and 4-Hearts, or 5-Spades and 5-Hearts, respond **1S** intending to re-bid **2H** should Opener re-bid **1-NT**.

You Hold: KQ964 Q976 32 62

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	1D
1S	1-NT
2H (<u>not</u> forcing)	

Bid 1S, Should Opener re-bid 1-NT, your intent is to re-bid 2H. ***This bidding sequence is an example of the only one in which a new suit by Responder is not forcing.***

If Responder's hand is stronger when holding 5-Spades and 4- or 5-Hearts, Responder must jump to 3H after first responding 1S. A jump such as this would represent a sequence that, unlike the exception above, would be forcing.

You Hold: KQ964 AK76 32 Q2

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	1D
1S	1-NT
3H (forcing)	

Bridge Tip # 255

Some hands do just not fit the mold. In these instances the Bidder must pick from amongst several improbable and distasteful choices, since few, if any, good choices exist.

You Hold: 76 K10962 J K10852

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	1D
1H	1S
???	

A first impression "pass" though it assures, at worst, a minus score is presumptuous. A possible bid of 2C fails to limit your miserly strength and almost assuredly prompts Partner to carry the auction too high. A re-bid of 2H is likely to be a disaster, as well, as Partner has already shown preference for two other suits, and could have one or even no Hearts, at all. The best choice, from amongst multiple bad choices is 1-NT, even though you would prefer a

more balanced distribution. A **1-NT** response will assuredly put a termination to this already uncomfortable situation.

Alternatively, some hands offer several choices, with an argument for each plausible and reasonable. Several correct and acceptable choices exist.

<u>You Hold:</u>	82	AJ8	K1085	Q843
<u>West (You)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	
???	1H	"Double"	Pass	

Since Partner promises support for the un-bid suits, a bid of either **2C** or **2D**, both sound reasonable, and either, or both, could work. A bid of **1-NT**, however, is likely to be the winning call since it tells Partner that you hold 7-10 HCP's with Hearts stopped. Conceivable, either call of **2C** or **2D** could come from even as few as zero HCP's and, should Partner hold a stronger hand than his/her minimum Take-out requirement, Game might, ultimately, be feasible.

Bridge Tip # 254

Irrefutably, a preemptive bid by an Opponent complicates the bidding desired and contemplated between you and your Partner. Preemptive bids, by virtue of their elimination of one or more levels of the bidding, take away bidding space for natural bids and the availability of many desired conventional applications. A clear understanding must, therefore, exist within a Partnership's armor so as to best eliminate the difficulties that would otherwise exist resulting from an Opponent's preemptive call.

One such principle involves the use of a "**Take-Out Double**" following an opening weak 2-bid by an Opponent. The following guidelines seem best to eliminate a possible miss-communication:

1. If you hold a 1-suiter (Example 1), do not make a **Take-Out Double**, rather bid your suit the cheapest level available, or make a jump-overcall to show a stronger than average holding (One never pre-empts over a pre-empt).
2. If you hold a 3-suiter (Example 2), one each of the three remaining un-bid suits other than that employed by the Opponent, make a simple **Take-Out Double**,

prepared to accept whatever decision Partner makes as to his/her suit of choice of suits, or a No-Trump contract, should Partner hold strength in the same suit bid by the Opponent.

3. If you hold a 2-suiter (Example 3), also make a **Take-Out Double**. If Partner selects one of your two suits or a No-Trump call, do as in number (2) above. If, however, Partner selects the one suit you do not hold, bid the next higher suit of the two you do hold and Partner can either “*accept*” that option, else “*correct*” to the one remaining as-yet-un-bid suit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>
2D	????

<u>Example 1:</u>	AKJXX (Bid 2S)		AKQXXX (Bid 3S)
	AX		AX
	XXX (or)		XX
	QXX		AKX

<u>Example 2:</u>	AQXX (“Double” and Accept)
	AXXX
	X
	KJXX

Example 3:
 AQXXX (“Double” and (a) accept Clubs or Spades if Partner bids either suit, else)
 AX (b) alternatively, if Partner bids Hearts, in this instance, the suit you did not wish to hear, bidding Spades would confirm a Spade-Club 2-suiter (the other two suits) from which Partner must then choose)
 AJXXX

Bridge Tip # 253

Most bridge players utilize “*Fourth-Suit Forcing*” as one of their conventions. Whether such bids are forcing for 1-round or forcing to Game is strictly based upon Partnership agreement, but in either circumstance, Partner must continue the bidding as agreed-upon. What is not open for dispute, however, is the need for Partnerships to clarify for themselves the fact that 4th-suit forcing does not kick into effect at the 1-level

of bidding, rather at the 2-level and beyond (Example 2), for at the 1-level there is a need for the “*Up-the-Ladder*” principle to be in place for the presentation of suits by each Partner (as seen in Example 1).

Example 1: (“Up-the Ladder” = standard bidding)

<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	
1C	1D	AQXX
1H	1S	KX
		KQXX
		XXX

Here, the Spade bid by South is natural (At least 4-pieces) and, because it is a new suit by Responder, it is forcing for 1-round. The Spade bid shows 6-18 HCP's.

Example 2: (“4th Suit-Forcing” = “Conventional” bidding)

<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	
1C	1D	XXX
1H	“2S”	KX
		KQXX
		AQXX

Here, the Spade bid by South is conventional, artificial, and is not natural. In this instance, most Partnerships use such bids as an asking bid, “*Partner I am looking for a Spade stopper for a 3-NT final contract.*”

Bridge Tip # 252

Most bridge players, today, utilize **Jacoby Transfers** over Partner’s **1-NT** and **2-NT** opening bids, and the point count used by most teams today for their opening No-Trump bids are 15-17 for the **1-NT** opening, and 20-21 for the **2-NT** opening calls. Both of these ranges, of course, especially the 2-NT opening bid, can vary slightly based upon Partnership agreement.

The standard responses to Major suit transfers over **1-NT**, under most all circumstances, are **2H** and **2S** over Responder’s “**2D**” and “**2H**” transfer requests, respectively. There are, however, two (3) “**Super-Acceptance**” responses in addition to these aforementioned standard responses to Partner’s transfer request.

They are all “*super-*”

acceptances” and are as follows:

- a) “**3H**” or “**3S**” respectively = **4-pieces** of the suit sought by Responder along with a minimum of **15 or a weak 16 HCP’s**.
 - b) “**2-NT**” = **4-pieces** of the suit requested by Responder along with a **strong 16 or 17 HCP’s** (the top of Opener’s NT range), with a **4-3-3-3** distribution.
 - c) “**3 of any alternate suit other than the one referenced by the Transfer** = **4-pieces** of the suit requested by Responder along with a **strong 16 or 17 HCP’s** (the top of Opener’s NT range), with a doubleton in the new suit bid.
-
-

Bridge Tip # 251

The “**Cappelletti**” (“**Hamilton**”) Convention is an alternative to the “**DONT**” Convention used to bid over an Opponent’s opening **1-NT** call. Some Partnerships use it under all cases, and some use it in combination with the “**DONT**” Convention. In the latter instance, a team will prefer to use “**Cappelletti**” over weak NT (12-14 HCP) openings, and the “**DONT**” Convention over strong (15-17 HCP) openings.

The **Cappelletti** conventional calls are as follows:

“**2C**” = a one-suited hand (6-cards or longer) asking Partner to “*puppet*”
“**2D**,” after which the Overcaller will bid his/her 6 (+) bagger, else “*pass*” if his/her one-suited hand is in Diamonds.

“**2D**” = 5-5 or better in the Major suits

“**2H**” = 5-5 or better in Hearts and an unspecified Minor

“**2S**” = 5-5 or better in Spades and an unspecified Minor

“**2-NT**” = 5-5 or better in both Minor suits

“*Double*” = An equivalent or better holding

When the Overcaller bids “**2D**,” asking for a Major suit preference, a “**2-NT**” call by the “**Advancer**” (Partner to the Overcaller) is 3-3 or better in both Major suits and is invitational to a Game-level contract in either Major suit.

When the Overcaller bids either “**2H**” or “**2S**” evidencing the Major suit and an unspecified Minor, the Responder either “*passes*,” thereby accepting the Major suit, else bids “**2-NT**” asking the Overcaller to bid his/her Minor suit.

Bridge Tip # 250

A “**4-NT**” overcall subsequent to the Opponents having reached a freely-bid **4S** suit contract under normal bidding sequences as in Example 1 below, is a Take-Out (A form of the “*Unusual-NT*” Convention) for the Minor suits, and is regarded as an attempt to reach a favorable match-point score by sacrificing at the **5C** or **5D** level.

	<u>N</u>	
	1S/4S/P	
<u>W</u>		<u>E</u>
P/”4-NT”		P/P/5C or 5D
	<u>S</u>	
	”2-NT”/P	

It is common understanding that when the Opponents open the bidding, however, with a pre-emptive **4H** call, a “**4-NT**” overcall is similarly for the Minor suits and a “*Double*” is a Take-Out, usually, but not necessarily restricted to the Spade suit.

Over a pre-emptive **4S** call, however, a “*Double*” by an Opponent is for penalties and a “**4-NT**” call is a “**Take-Out Double**.” In this latter instance, however, the Responder to the Take-Out is not limited to the Minor suits alone, rather is free to bid either, **5C**, **5D**, or **5H**, depending upon his-her holdings, else “*Passing*,” and volitionally converting the “*Double*” into a penalty scenario.

	<u>N</u>	
	4S	
<u>W</u>		<u>E</u>
5C, 5D, or 5H		”4-NT” (A Take-Out Double)
	<u>S</u>	
	P	

Bridge Tip # 249

Most Partnerships have the understanding that a **Michaels Cue-bid** is invoked to show a 2-suited overcall with either a very weak hand (5-10 HCP's), or a very strong hand (16 or more HCP's) with a 5-5 or better distribution in the two referenced suits. Furthermore, in order to show 16-18 HCP's the Michaels Cue-Bidder raises Partner's choice of suits in order to show the stronger holding (Example 1), as opposed to "*passing*" on his/her next turn to bid (Example 2). With 19 (+) HCP's the Cue-Bidder cue-bids a second time (Example 3).

	<u>N (Opener)</u>	
	1D	
<u>W</u>		<u>E</u>
2H		"2D"/?
	<u>S</u>	
	<u>P</u>	
<u>East Holds</u>		<u>East's Re-Bid</u>
(1) AKXXX KQXXX XX A		3H
(2) AXXXX KXXXX XX X		"Pass"
(3) AKJXX AQJXX XX A		"3D"

A third alternative does exist, however, if the Cue-Bidder holds a radically distributional holding such as seen in (Example 3). In such instances a leap to the 4-level in the agreed-upon suit, selected by the responding Partner, is appropriate. The contract either makes, else is likely to produce a good match point score as a sacrifice, pre-emptive call.

(4) AQXXX KQXXXX --- XX	4H/4S
-------------------------	-------

Notice that in Examples 1, 2 and 3, Partner, the Responder, becomes the "**Captain**" in deciding the level of the final contract once the point count of the Cue-Bidder has been evidenced by the re-bid of a "*pass*" by the Player who invokes the cue-bid (Example 2), else the raise of Partner's choice of suits or a repeat cue-bid which shows the stronger holdings (Examples 1 & 3). In the fourth instance, however, the Player who invokes the original cue-bid becomes the "**Captain**," leaping to the game level. The Responder must realize that this is a distributional bid and not mistakenly assume a 16+ HCP holding as if the bidding went as seen in (Example 1).

Bridge Tip # 248

On occasion, a Responder is confronted with the following scenario.

North (Partner)

1C

East

Pass

South (You)

??? (XX AXXX QXXXX XX)

The question arises as to what should be the best response under these circumstances. Should South bid “*Up-the-ladder*” and bid Diamonds, first, or should South’s first response be to mention the 4-card Heart suit.

Had South held Game-level HCP’s (opening count or better) it would be clear that the sequence of bidding would have South first respond **1D** and then, on South’s re-bid, a call of **2H** which, because it would represent a “*Reverse*,” would be “*Game-forcing*,” and would evidence the fact that Responder’s Diamonds were longer than his/her Hearts. .

In this instance, however, with so few HCP’s, the better tact would be to bypass the 5-card Diamond suit and make a first response of **1H**. This is for two reasons:

- 1) With so few HCP’s, the likelihood is that South would get only one chance to make a call, and to mention the 4-card Major takes precedent over the weak 5-card Minor.
- 2) More importantly, the likelihood that West will make a call of **1S** is high and if it were to happen, North’s ability to bid “Hearts,” should North have a 4-card Heart suit, might be impaired. As a result, the Partnership, under these circumstances, might miss their “*Golden Fit*” in Hearts, should it be present.

When making a first response to Partner’s opening bid of 1C, when holding a weak 6-9 HCP’s, it is usually best to bypass a 5-card Diamond suit in preference to a 4-card Heart or Spade suit. If, however, the Minor suit held is two or more cards longer in length than the Major suit held, the Responder should select to bid the Minor suit.

Bridge Tip # 247

Controversy exists today in the bridge world with respect to whether or not one should open **1-NT** when holding a 5-card Major suit. Although there is no right answer to this question, the biggest reason for opening **1-NT** with a 5-card Major suit holding, is that if you don't open **1-NT**, you will have a major (pardon the pun) headache when it comes time to re-bid.

For example, say you hold: **QT AQTXX KXX KJX**

If you open **1H**, what will you re-bid when Partner makes a response? Suppose Partner answers with **1S**. How do you show this hand? If you re-bid **1-NT**, you are showing fewer than 15 HCP's. If you re-bid **2H**, you are showing a 6-card suit. If you re-bid **2-NT**, you are showing 18-19 HCP's. *All are somewhat distorting of the truth!* That is why opening **1-NT** under these circumstances has its advantages.

You have a balanced 15 HCP's, and if you open **1H** you will never be able to convey that information to Partner, whatever Partner's response is.

Is there a downside? Of course! By opening with **1-NT**, you will sometimes miss out on a proper contract in your Major suit. You will miss some 5-3 major-suit fits (and occasionally, even a 5-4 fit). There are conventions (such as "*Puppet Stayman*") to get out of this mess, but those are outside the scope of this presentation.

All having been said, in the long run, the money goes to the **1-NT** opening. Even if one misses a 5-3 Major-suit fit, No-Trump plays just as well (and even if it is the same, it is worth a fortune at match-points to get the 10 extra points for your contract). Some judgment is sensible, however, on this issue. To blindly open **1-NT** on every balanced 15-17 HCP hand does not make any sense, either.

Say you hold: **XX AKQJT AJT XXX**

This is obviously a "*loaded*" hand, but even I wouldn't open **1-NT**. I'd start with **1H**, and try to cope later. The stoppers are bad for No-Trump, and it just doesn't look like a No-Trump hand.

On the other hand, if you hold this flawed collection: **AJX KQXXX KQ XXX**

I would start here with **1-NT**. There are many factors, but one is that you have three spades, so if Partner happens to transfer to Spades, you'd be content. (If it is close, and you have only a doubleton in one Major, one might lean towards opening in the other

Major). If you have 2 suits totally unstopped, you also should tend to open the Major. In general, though, opening almost all balanced 15-17 hands with **1-NT** has its one big payoff when your LHO leads 4th best against your No-Trump contract into your undisclosed five-card Major!

Bridge Tip # 246

When playing “*1-No-Trump Forcing*,” Responder’s re-bids are specific and are as follows:

1. A new suit at the cheapest level (2-level or 3-level): Non-forcing – Usually a 6-card or longer suit and fewer than 12 HCP’s.

<u>OPENER</u>		<u>RESPONDER</u>
1S		1-NT
2C		2D
	(or)	
1S		1-NT
2S		3C

2. A preference to Opener's Major: Typically weak, usually 2-card support or a 10-loser 6-8 HCP holding with three or more support pieces.

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>
1S	1-NT
2C	2S

3. A raise of Opener's second suit: Invitational (10-12 HCP’s, (8-Losers), Natural)

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>
1S	1-NT
2D	3D

4. A raise to **2-NT**: Invitational (11-12 HCP’s), Natural

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>
1S	1-NT
2H	2-NT

5. A jump raise of Opener's Major: 3-card support with a limit-raise (10-12 HCP's, (8-Losers), natural)

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>
1S	1-NT
2D	3S

Bridge Tip # 245

The top four (4) questions which arise when considering opening a weak 2-bid are:

1. Can you open a weak two-bid with a side suit void?
2. Can you concurrently hold an outside 4-card Major suit?
3. Can you open a weak two-bid when holding two Aces?
3. Do you need 2 of the top 3 honors?

Nothing you do in bridge works all the time, but in general I feel that one should err on the side of opening up weak 2-bids as frequently as possible! Why? It drives the Opponents crazy and makes it very difficult for them to communicate easily. Table position and vulnerability do come into consideration, and in general, I would tend to be more structured in 1st seat than on 2nd or 3rd.

1. Side suit voids Absolutely possible! I wouldn't pre-empt if the void made the hand too good, but, if the hand is in range, why not have a void? I can't imagine not opening **2S** with, say:

KJT9XX --- QJX XXXX

2. Outside 4-card Major One can, and should, pre-empt with a side weak 4-card major. But, I wouldn't open **2S** with, say a strong outside Major as seen below: We could easily belong in hearts, and I'd be afraid of preempting our side out of that suit.

QJXXXX
AQXX
XX
X

However, I'd proudly open **2S** with, say: Who cares about the Hearts when my Spades are so good and my Hearts are so bad?

KQJTX
XXXX
XX
X

3. Holding Two Aces One should never pre-empt an opening weak two-bid when holding two Aces! The hand has too strong of a defensive value!

4. Top honors I do not feel it necessarily important to hold two of the top three honors, or three of the top five. Structured or disciplined weak two-bids which guarantee these top honors are, in my opinion, too rigid, and too restrictive. Rather than focus on the top honors, I care more about the intermediate spots. I'd much rather have **QJT987** than **AK5432**. The cards in the middle are what make the suit of "*good quality*" for pre-empting, not the presence or absence of top honors.

Bridge Tip # 244

When defending against a Suit contract, where both you and your Partner are confident that you are leading a suit for your Partner to trump, a "*suit-preference signal*" can be given reflected by the numerical value of the card led for Partner to trump. Obviously in this scenario there is always the suit led for Partner to trump and the Trump suit itself, which always leaves two remaining suits, one that is higher-ranking and one that is lower-ranking. If the card led for Partner to trump is,

- a) a **low card**, it asks for the Partner who then trumps to lead the **lower-ranking** of the two remaining suits back to Partner,
- b) a **high card**, it asks for the Partner who then trumps to lead the **higher-ranking** of the two remaining suits back to Partner,
- c) a **middle card**, it asks Partner, who then trumps, to lead a Trump back to his/her Partner.

This procedure is called a "*Suit Preference Signal*." Obviously for it to take effect, both Partners must be aware of the cards already played in the suit that is to be trumped in order for the signal to be properly given and received.

Bridge Tip # 243a

In a competitive auction, when the Opponent's compete to the 3-level, and you hold the 9th piece of the suit that you and your Partner are attempting to name as Trump, you should be willing to compete further without having Partner presume that you are inviting to Game. A raise to the 3-level in this type of contested bidding is not invitational, it is simply competitive.

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>
1S 3S	2H	2S	3H

AQJXXX Because your side has 9 Trumps, the "**LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**" indicates that you can and should compete to the 3-level. However, Partner should not
KXX interpret you call as an invitation to Game. Opener's re-bid, here of three
of the agreed-upon Spade suit is simply competitive — to play. Had one of the Partner's,
XXX Opener, in this instance, not hold the 9th piece of their desired Trump suit, they
must stop their attempt to take the contract.
X

Bridge Tip # 243

One, little used, often misunderstood, but very important "**Double**", is the "**Game-Try**", "**Maximal Double**." When Partner has raised the bidding to the 2-level in your agreed-upon Major and the Opponents compete further to the 3-level **in a suit ranking below your Major**, a "***double***" by you is a Game-try; it is ***not*** for penalty. This Game-try, "**Maximal Double**" is a valuable tool in this bidding scenario in order to differentiate the bidding sequence from a mere 3-level competitive attempt.

AQJXXX Here, holding extra values, Opener wishes to invite to Game. The
"**Double**," here, is ***not*** for penalties. Had Opener bid to the 3-level himself/herself, it would
X have been competitive, not invitational.
KQX

XXX

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>
1S “Double” (Invitational)	2H	2S	3H
<u>(or)</u>			
1H 3H (competitive)	2D	2H	3D

Bridge Tip # 242

No-Trump overcalls, as most other bids in bridge, can and do mean different things when made in different positions, at various bidding levels, and following different bidding sequences. Some of the more common examples are as follows:

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>
1C, 1D, 1H, 1S	1-NT		
(15-18 HCP's, balanced and at least one stopper in the Opponent's suit)			
1C, 1D, 1H, 1S	PASS	PASS	1-NT
(10-14 HCP's, in the balancing (4 th) seat, balanced distribution) (Does not necessarily require a stopper in the Opponent's suit)			
1C, 1D, 1H	PASS	1D, 1H, 1S	1-NT
(A “ <i>Sandwich No-Trump</i> ” – Showing 5-5 or better in the two, as-yet, un-bid suits) (A Take-Out in the two, as-yet, un-bid suits with fewer HCP's than opening count)			
1C, 1D, 1H, 1S	2-NT		
(The “ <i>Unusual No-Trump</i> ”) (5-5 or better in the <i>two lower</i> , as-yet, un-bid suits) (Either very weak {5-10 HCP's} or very strong {16 or more HCP's})			
1C, 1D, 1H, 1S	3-NT		
(Natural - to Play, Distributional, with a stopper in the Opponent's suit) (Eight quick tricks with a likely self-sufficient Minor suit holding)			
2D, 2H, 2S	2-NT		
(15-18 HCP's, balanced and at least one stopper in the Opponent's suit) (The same shape and HCP's as an opening 1-NT)			

3-NT

HCP's with no long Major suit holding)

PASS

“4-NT”

Pre-emptive in nature)

Bridge Tip # 241

Following Partner's simple overcall (East, in this example), Responder to the overcall (West, in this example), the "**Advancer**," has five (5) choices given support for what is, by the Overcaller (East), minimally, a 5-card suit with 8-15 HCP's.

$\frac{\mathbf{W}}{1\mathbf{D}}$
 $\frac{\mathbf{N}}{1\mathbf{D}}$
 $\frac{\mathbf{E}}{1\mathbf{H}}$

West Holds

- (1) AX KXX XXX QXXXX - A Simple raise: 2H
(6-10 HCP's)
- (2) XX KXXX XXX QXXX - A Pre-emptive jump raise: 3H
(0-5 HCP's – In sync with the Losing Trick Count {LTC})
- (3) AX AXXX XX QXXXX - A “Cue-Bid” of the Opponent’s Suit - Invitational to Game “2D”
- (4) AX QJXX XX XXXXX - A Jump-Cue-Bid of the Opponent’s Suit – A so-called “Mixed Raise”
(Shows 4-card support & a bit too strong to make a pre-emptive raise
This hand is too good to make a pre-emptive jump to 3H, but
is not strong enough for a “2D” Cue-Bid) “3D”

- (5) AX KQXX X AKXXXX - A Jump-Cue-Bid to the 4-level
 A "Splinter" Bid = "Game-Forcing"
 Shows a singleton or void in the Opponent's bid suit, and support for
 Partner with Game values: "4D"
-
-

Bridge Tip # 240

Most bids in the Game of bridge have multiple meanings dependent upon both Partnership understanding and the bidding environment in which they are used. An overcall of "**2-NT**" is no exception. The following are two typical bidding scenarios where a bid of "**2-NT**" by an Overcaller has two distinctly different meanings, and their application matters not, whether they are presented in the direct (2nd) seat, or in the balancing (4th) seat, with respect to the previous bid made by the opposing team.

Examples 1:

(a)		(or)		(b)	
	<u>North</u>				<u>North</u>
	1C, 1D, 1H, or 1S				1C, 1D, 1H, or 1S
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
		"2-NT"	2-NT		P
	<u>South</u>				<u>South</u>
	P				P

The overcall of "**2-NT**" in (a) is an example of the "Unusual 2-NT" made in the direct (2nd) seat. In (b), the same bid made in the balancing (4th) seat, it shows an 18-19 HCP balanced hand. The "Unusual 2-NT" does not exist in the balancing (4th) seat.

Examples 2:

(c)		(or)		(d)	
	<u>North</u>				<u>North</u>
	2D, 2H or 2S				2D, 2H or 2S
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
		2-NT	2-NT		P
	<u>South</u>				<u>South</u>
					P

These overcalls of **2-NT**, in both the direct (2nd) and balancing (4th) seats (c & d) are examples of a hand exhibiting a holding equivalent to a strong “**1-NT opening**” bid; i.e., 15-17 HCP’s, an evenly balanced hand, and, in these instances, at least one stopper in the Opponent’s bid suit.

Bridge Tip # 239

The “**DONT**” Convention is, today, one of the most popular and widely used conventions used to interfere over an Opponent’s opening **1-NT** bid. Oft times, however, subsequent to an Opponent (the **Intervenor**) having invoked a suit overcall (showing that suit and at least one higher-ranking suit), the Responder to the opening **1-NT** call may or may not make a call. The “**Advancer**,” Partner to the Intervenor, has several bidding options himself/herself.

	<u>N</u>	
	1-NT	
<u>W</u>		<u>E</u>
???	2 of any Suit (“DONT”)	
	<u>S</u>	
	Pass or “Double”	

“Advancer’s” Bidding Options

- **Pass** = Content to play in the current contract and/or no desire to compete further
 - **Re-double** (over the Opponent's “*double*”) = Prefers to play in Partner’s second suit and wants him/her to bid it
 - **Any suit bid** = Natural, showing his/her own long suit with which he/she desires to compete
-
-

Bridge Tip # 238

“**Flannery**” is a convention which customarily uses an artificial “**2D**” opening bid to evidence 5-Hearts and 4-Spades along with a minimum opening count of 11-15 HCP’s. A standard conventional **defense against an opening Flannery bid** exists, as follows:

“2H” = a “Takeout Double” shows opening count and at least tolerance for Clubs, Diamonds, and Spades.

“2-NT” = shows an overcall for the minors (The “Unusual 2-NT”)

“Double” is a strong opening 1-NT with at least one “Stopper” in both Hearts and Spades.

3C or 3D is a natural overcall – to play

Bridge Tip # 237

A 1-NT overcall in the balancing (4th) seat evidences 10-14 HCP’s (Example 1). Holding 15-17 HCP’s in the balancing 4th seat, one must first make a “Take-Out Double,” and then follow it up with a No-Trump re-bid (Example 2).

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>You Hold:</u>	K98	A96	K86	QJ43
<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>		
1D	P	P	1-NT		

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>You Hold:</u>	K98	A96	K86	AQ43
<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>		
1D	P	P	“Double”		
P	1H/1S	P	1-NT		

Bridge Tip # 236

A. Most bridge Players have the understanding that a “double” by Responder to an opening bid of one-of-a-suit by Partner, after Responder’s RHO has overcalled is “Negative” showing values, usually the two, as-yet, un-bid suits, a hand without either

the 5-card or longer suit required, else a deficiency of HCP's needed to bid at the 2-level, or both.

1-of-a-suit ----- overcall of a suit ----- “double” (Negative)

B. Also common to most Player understandings is that a “*double*” by a Responder to an opening bid of one-of-a-suit by Partner after Responder's RHO has overcalled **1-NT** is a “**Penalty Double**,” not a “**Negative Double**.”

1-of-a-suit ----- overcall of “1-NT” ----- “double” (Penalty)

Bridge Tip # 235

Many bidding sequences in bridge sound somewhat similar, but can be significantly different in the holding they are attempting to describe. Two such, similarly-sounding sequences are as follows:

(1)	<u>You</u> 1D 1-NT	<u>Partner</u> 1S “2C”
(2)	<u>You</u> 1C 1-NT	<u>Partner</u> 1S 3D

In the first sequence, Partner is using a bidding convention termed “**New Minor Forcing**”. It is represented by a bidding sequence of **Minor-Major - No Trump - Second Minor**. Partner, here, with his/her artificial, and alertable bid of “2C”, is evidencing 11 or more HCP's, and, in most circumstances, a 5-card holding in his/her Major suit with invitational values or better. Such sequences are forcing for 1-round. (See Example 1)

1. Partner's Hand

AJxxx
Kxx
QJxx
x

In the second sequence, Partner is holding a very weak hand with a 4-card Major and a 6-card or longer Minor and, initially, needs to use this “**Up-The-Ladder**” bidding sequence, with his/her first bid, so as **NOT** to potentially miss an 8-card Major suit fit,

if it, potentially, is present. Partner's second bid of a jump into Opener's Minor is natural, and is **NOT** forcing. It is weak and asks Opener to "*Pass*" with minimum values. This sequence is represented by a sequence of **Minor-Major-No Trump-Jump into Opener's Minor** and, although similar to example 1, conveys a vastly different message. (See Example 2)

2. Partner's Hand

Jxxx
Kx
QJxxxx
x

Bridge Tip # 234

Two standard responses, in addition to "**5C**", "**5D**", "**5H**", and "**5S**", are available when Partner invokes regular Blackwood ("**4-NT**") bid asking for Aces. Yet, to many Players, these two additional responses remain unavailable, simply by virtue of their being unknown and not within the realm of their expertise. They include: (1), a response of "**5-NT**" which signifies two Aces plus an unspecified void, and (2), a "**6-level**" suit bid showing a specific void in the suit bid when holding only one Ace, or a "**6-level bid of the agreed-upon suit**" showing one Ace and a void is in a suit that is higher-ranking than the agreed-upon suit.

When using "**Roman Keycard Blackwood**" (**RKC**), however, discussions need take place between Partners so as to plan appropriate responses under similar conditions, where the Responder to the "**4-NT**" inquiry similarly holds a void, and what which, of the various additional available responses wind up being most effective, and whether or not to tie these additional responses around the presence, or absence, of the Queen of Trumps. Although many different modifications in the **RKC (0314) Blackwood Convention** are often discussed in the literature, most experts, today, use the following additional responses as add-ons to the regular "**5C**" showing none or 3 controls of the Four Aces plus the King of the Trump suit, "**5D**" showing 1 or 4, "**5H**" showing two (2) controls without the Queen of the Trump suit, and "**5S**" showing two (2) controls with the Queen of the Trump suit:

- (1)– "**5-NT**" showing 2 controls, and the Queen of the Trump suit, plus an unspecified void.

(2) – “6C” or “6D” or “6H”, each showing a void and a comparable number of controls that that suit mentioned would have identified had it been bid at the 5-Level. (“6C” would show 0 or 3 controls plus a void, “6D” would show 1 or 4 controls plus a void, and “6H” would show 2 controls plus a void, all three responses at the 6-Level, without the Queen of the Trump suit.

Bridge Tip # 233

Opening Bidder has four ways to show a minimum count following a change of suit at the 1-Level by his/her Responder. Once Opener has limited his/her holding in one of these ways, Responder must then take control of the bidding process to a reasonable level based upon the combined HCP strength held within the Partnership as well as their cumulative distributions.

- a) A Re-bid 1-NT
- b) A Re-bid of his/her first-bid suit at the cheapest level
- c) A Raise of Partner’s bid suit at the cheapest level
- d) A “pass,” assuming Opener’s RHO has made an overcall

<u>You Hold:</u>	KT7	AK84	KQ5	974
	<u>You</u>		<u>Partner</u>	
			1C	
	1H		2C	
	????			

Bid 3-NT! Since Opener has limited his/her hand, you must place the contract or take some forcing action. Here, since you hold controls in the un-bid suits, hold opening count yourself, and do not have excessive length in any of your suits, a final Game contract in No-Trump should be the optimum contract. **Responder, whose Partner, the Opener who has limited his/her holdings, becomes the “Captain,” and must quarterback the Partnership to its final contract. “He who knows goes”!**

Bridge Tip # 232

Responder, holding invitational values (11-12 HCP's), should take a second bid, even if Opener has shown minimum values. Opener may hold a maximum (14-15 HCP's) of his/her "minimum" (12-15 HCP's), and Game might still be feasible.

<u>You Hold:</u>	A76	K962	J73	A86
	<u>You</u>		<u>Partner</u>	
			1C	
	1H		2C	
	???			

You **must** bid again with your 12 HCP's. Game is possible should Opener hold the top of his/her minimum opening count. **Bid 3C!** Partner may " " with a bare minimum opening, but will be encouraged to bid on, perhaps to **3-NT**, with a maximum of 14-15 HCP's.

Always show your HCP's and bring Partner into the decision-making process in so far as the final contract is concerned!

Bridge Tip # 231

Do not punish Partner for attempting to save you from your "Take-Out Double" which has been "re-doubled" by your LHO (left-hand Opponent).

<u>You Hold:</u>	AQ95	K1083	K10963	---
<u>West (You)</u>		<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>
"Double"		"Re-Double"	1D	1C
???				Pass

Partner's bid of **1D** is a guarantee of no points whatever. Rather it suggests a safe harbor in the storm. South's opening count, when added to North's 10 HCP's, or more, (evidenced by his/her "**re-double**"), and your 12, leave very few for Partner's bid of **1D**. Partner, most likely holds a hand similar to the following, and is attempting to, at the very least, escape the trap set by North's "**re-double**", or at best, help North should they find themselves in the likely position of defending North-South's eventual contract.

Partner's likely holding: 1083 97 QJ872 873

Remember, there are no more, or nor fewer, than 40 HCP's in any one deck of cards on any hand.

Bridge Tip # 230

When both Opener and Responder hold invitational values, Game-level contracts should be avoided.

<u>You Hold:</u>	A7	AQ9642	3	Q1086
<u>You</u>		<u>Partner</u>		
1H		1S		
2H		2-NT		
????				

Bid **3C**, suggesting a minimum opening count with 6-Hearts and 4-Clubs (with most other Heart-Club distributions, or with extra values, you would have bid Clubs at your second turn). Partner's knows you have opening count, and his/her invitational bid of **2-NT** shows no more than 11-12 HCP's itself. Your bid of **3C** is a rejection of a Game-level contract. Partner can either "**pass**," or bid "**3H**", but a contract of **3-NT** should probably be avoided.

Bridge Tip # 229

When Responder holds the top of his/her limited first response, and is invited to Game by Opener, Responder must accept the invitation and proceed to Game.

<u>You Hold:</u>	106	A85	Q943	KJ106
<u>You</u>		<u>Partner</u>		
		1C		

2C
????

2-NT

Your Partner must be interested in Game else he/she would have passed your **2C** limited response (no matter what the possible flimsy Club suit he/she may have opened). Since you are at the top of your limited response and could hardly have a better holding for your single raise, accept the invitation. **Bid 3-NT!**

Bridge Tip # 228

When Partner responds cheaply to your "Take-Out Double," you need substantial extra values to bid again.

1. You Hold: K1086 A963 4 KQJ10

<u>West (You)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>
"Double"	Pass	2C	1D
???			Pass

Don't be seduced by your magnificent Clubs. Partner, opposite your **Take-Out Double**, did not jump the bidding; i.e. selected his/her best suit at the cheapest bidding level. By East's **2C** bid, he/she not only denied holding 4-cards in either Major suit, but also limited his/her hand to 8 HCP's, at most. East would have jumped the bidding if he/she held 9 HCP's or more. You, holding nothing in excess of your original opening count "**Double**", already showed your values, and should, therefore, "**Pass**".

Never bid your values twice!

When Partner jumps in responding to your Take-Out Double, evidencing at least 9 HCP's or more, and you hold extra values for your original take-out, bid Game.

2. You Hold: AQ105 K1083 AQ7 95

<u>West (You)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>
"Double"	Pass	2S	1D
???			Pass

Partner's jump-response to your **Take-Out Double** promises no fewer than 9 HCP's. His/her bid is not forcing, but does invite Game. Since your hand is worth 16 points, and especially since any finesses your Partner must try figure to succeed, **bid 4S!**

Bridge Tip # 227

When holding minimum HCP values, Responder to a Partner's opening bid of one of a suit, must, when Opener limits his/her hand, bid conservatively so as not to encourage Opener beyond the trick-taking capacity of the Partnership's holding.

1. You Hold: K106 Q76 J9754 97

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	1C
1D	1S
????	

"Pass!" After you respond at the 1-Level in a new suit, a non-jump change by Opener is not forcing. With you showing as few as 6 HCP's with your first response, In order for there to be Game values within the Partnership's combined holdings, Opener would have had to make a jump-shift evidencing 19 or more HCP's. Here, with Opener limited to no more than 18 HCP's, and your hand hardly worth your first response, don't give Opener another opportunity to bid, possibly exceeding the Partnership's trick-taking capacity. Yes, you might be in a **"Moysian"** (7-card) Spade fit, but you, holding only the very barest of minimum values, need to discourage any further bidding by Opener.

2. You Hold: A932 K9543 54 84

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	1D
1H	2C
????	

With Partner holding, at most, 18 HCP's, and, more likely, fewer, your best bet is to halt the bidding as quickly as possible with these minimum responding values. A re-bid of **2H** risks playing

there opposite a singleton or void, and a bid of **2S**, reflecting a "**Reverse**" would be unthinkable, absent Responder holding opening values, since a "**Reverse**" by Responder is forcing to Game. Since Opener holds, in all but one circumstance, at least five Diamonds, a "**false preference**" of two Diamonds is the least evil.

Bridge Tip # 226

In some instances, when responding to Partner's Take-out Double, one must plan one's second response before making one's first.

1, You Hold: KT85 K876 54 Q97

<u>West (You)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>
???	1C	"Double"	Pass

Plan ahead and bid **1S**! The Opponents are likely to further compete in a Minor suit. Having done so, you can later further compete by bidding Hearts and Partner can have the option in whichever Major suit he/she prefers. If, alternatively, you were to have bid Hearts first and Spades next, a contract of **2H** would be out of reach.

Although, when responding to Partner's Take-out Double, one usually jumps the bidding when holding 9 HCP's or more, one must also consider the potential likely usefulness of the honors held.

2. You Hold: 75 Q9843 KJ6 QJ7

<u>West (You)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>
???	1D	"Double"	Pass

If your Opponent had opened **1S**, all, or most, of your high cards would be useful, and you would, therefore, jump to **2H** with this holding in order to invite to game. As it is, however, your Diamond honors sit in front of the Opening Bidder and are probably worthless. A response, therefore, of **1H** is enough in this instance.

Bridge Tip # 225

In the Standard 5-card Major American System of bidding, it is imperative that Responder, when holding one or two 4-card Major suit(s), bid “Up the Ladder,” at the 1-Level, never by-passing any 4-card Major suit, even if said Responder holds support for the opening Partner’s Minor. To negate this important obligation, is to necessarily create the likelihood that, since Opener is restricted from mentioning a 4-card Major on his/her opening bid, that any available 8-card Major suit Golden Fit is likely to be missed.

You Hold: J1085 Q76 KQJ54 9

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
????	1D

Bid **1S**! Here, you, as Responder, must initially, and temporarily, suppress your Diamond support in order to first search for a potential fit in the Spade suit. If a Major suit fit is present, Opener will acknowledge same by supporting the Spade suit at the appropriate level. If not, say if Opener were to, hypothetically, re-bid **2C**, you can then proudly unveil your Diamond support.

Bridge Tip # 224

Every bid in bridge carries a message concerning either point count, distribution, or both. However, each bid must carry a new and different message than any previous bid; i.e., **one must never bid the same message twice**. Every successive bid must impart alternate and new information not yet disclosed by any previous bid(s).

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>You Hold:</u>	J85	KQT96	AK7	97
------------	----------------	------------------	-----	-------	-----	----

1H	1S
----	----

????

Bid 1-NT! This bid promises a balanced distribution with minimum (12-14 HCP) opening values. Avoid a re-bid of **2H** since this would suggest a 6-card Heart suit. Having opened **1H**, Partner will expect a 5-card suit no matter what you re-bid. Also, fear not the lack of a Club stopper. A "**Good Partner**" will have what you need him/her to have; i.e., that which you do not have, and even if not, the Opponents still have to find the crack in your HCP armour.

Never bid your values twice!

Bridge Tip # 223

It is important to realize that on many occasions 10's and 9's, so-called "**intermediaries**", have a trick-taking capacity when coupled with higher honor cards held within the same suit. By themselves they carry little trick-taking capacity, but in combination with higher-ranking cards, they become powerful and add to the value of one's holding. Under these circumstances, one can count each intermediary 10 as ½ point and each 9 as ¼ point.

<u>You Hold:</u>	JT8	QT5	KT7	QT84
	<u>You</u>		<u>Partner</u>	
	???		1-NT	

Answer: Bid three (Yes, I suggested 3-NT) No Trump! Even though Partner may have as few as 15 HCP's, and thus the Partnership only 24 high-card points in all, your hand is worth much more than 8 points, especially in a No-Trump contract. All four tens will, most likely, be valuable, and even the eight of Spades may be significant.

Bridge Tip # 222

The **Exclusion Blackwood** Convention is an extension of regular Blackwood. It permits the one Partner seeking Slam to **exclude** an Ace from the responses to Blackwood because that Player (the askee) holds a void in the named suit. The

normal responses are those used with **Roman Keycard Blackwood**. Typically it is used in the following two (2) scenarios.

1: **After Texas Transfers following an opening of -1NT or 2-NT: - Here the transfer suit is trump and the second suit bid is taken as the excluded suit.**

Thus:

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1-NT	"4H" (Texas Transfer to
4S	"5D" (Roman Keycard
Exclusion Blackwood for Spades, with the	Diamond suit excluded.)

Responses here, using the "0314" set of responses, would be "5H" showing 0 or 3 keycards, "5S" showing 1 or 4 keycards, "5-NT" showing 2 keycards without the Queen of Trump, and "6C" showing 2 keycards with the Queen of Trump.

Similarly:

2. **After unusual jumps in situations in which a lower bid would have been a Splinter Bid:**

Thus:

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
2H	1S (Natural)
Hearts with Clubs excluded; since	"5C" (Exclusion Blackwood for
"Mini-Splinter" in support of Hearts.)	"4C" would have been a

(or)

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1S	"5C" (Exclusion Blackwood for
Spades with Clubs excluded; since	"4C" would have been a
"splinter" in support of Spades.)	

Bridge Tip # 221

One series of bids, often misused, misinterpreted, and little discussed, are the No-Trump responses by Partner to a 1-level Overcall. Since the number of HCP's evidenced by the Overcaller lies within a eight (8) HCP range (8-15), allowances must be made by Responder to protect the Partnership should the Overcaller's point count fall to the lower end of his/her HCP spread. **No Trump responses to Partner's 1-Level overcall evidence; (a) probable lack pf support for Partner's overcall suit (fewer than 3 pieces), (b) absence of his/her own 5-card suit worth mentioning, (c) at least one (hopefully several) stopper(s) in the Opponent's bid suit, and (d) the following HCP count:**

<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
1C	1H	Pass	???

- a) 1-NT = 8-11 HCP's
- b) 2-NT = 12-15 HCP's
- c) 3-NT = 16 (+) HCP's

Bridge Tip # 220

When playing in Team-of-Four Tournaments, the scoring is so unlike that of Match-Point Games, that a different set of bidding tactics is required. The specific situations requiring differences in approach include stretching for vulnerable Game-level contracts, ignoring tiny swings, competing or selling out on part-score hands, sacrificing, and "**doubling.**" In these Team-of-Four tournaments, "**IMP**" (**International Match Point**) scoring requires the following changes so as to elicit a statistically-winning strategy:

1. **Questionable (Un-certain) Non-Vulnerable Game contract should be avoided, whereas, uncertain, but close, Vulnerable Game contracts should be attempted.** (Example: After two "**passes,**" you open **1C,** and Partner then jumps to **2-NT.** Push on to **3-NT** if vulnerable, but "**pass**" if you are not.)
2. **If you are comfortably ahead in a match, or playing against a team you are rated to beat, hold back in bidding a touch-and-go Small Slam; but if you are the underdog, play for the swing, and bid the Slam.** (Small Slams are even-money bets at IMPS - you stand to gain or lose the same amount if made or lost)

3. Avoid bidding Grand-Slams unless you can count thirteen tricks for certain.
(Your Opponents, at the alternate table, may not even bid a Small Slam. To fail at a Grand-Slam attempt loses more than you would gain by bidding and making the Small Slam.)

4. Ignore tiny differentials at IMPS.

- b. Do not stretch for overtricks if, in doing so, it jeopardizes the Contract.
- c. Do not worry about bidding No-Trump versus a Major suit contract, if the latter is more secure. The extra 10 points is meaningless.
- d. Be willing to play in a Minor suit Game-level contract if it is safer. Never strain to play a No-trump or Major suit contracts simply for the few extra points. Never sweat swings of 1 or 2 IMPS, for the tiny swings almost always even out in any match.

5. Competition over part-score hands, characteristic in Match-Point play, should be carried over into IMP matches, but be careful, if vulnerable.

6. Sacrifice bidding against a Game Contract bid by the Opponents is not statistically likely to be a winning strategy as much as it is oft times in match point play.

7. In almost all penalty “*doubling*” situations at IMPS, the odds favor the coward, not the hero.

In summary, at **IMPS** in Team-of-Four Tournament play, you are only up against one other team, so the winning style is **not** trying to beat par as it is in match point play, rather to play “*par-bridge*”; i.e., to take everything which is yours without trying to steal what belongs to the enemy. Use a cautiously cowardly style, leaving the heroics to your Opponents.

Bridge Tip # 219

The use of the “**Support Double**” (or “**Support Re-Double**”) allowing Opener to show 3-piece support for Responder’s Major suit; a suit in which Responder could hold as few as 4-pieces, is a valuable and sometimes misunderstood principle. The following are two examples of its correct usage:

West

Auction

East

	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	
1. ♠ Axx	1♦	P	1♠	2♣	♠ Qxxxxx
♥ Axx	Dbl	3♣	4♠		♥ Kxx
♦ Axxxx					♦ Kx
♣ xx					♣ Ax

2. ♠ x	1♦	P	1♥	Dbl	♠ Qxxx
♥ AQx	Rdbl	1♠	P	2♠	♥ Jxxx
♦ KQJxxx	3♦	P	P	P	♦ xx
♣ AJx					♣ Kxx

Bridge Tip # 218

The bid of “5-NT” (“*Grand-Slam Force*”), whether that bid is a jump or not, is a misnomer, in that it does not always force Partner to bid a Grand Slam. With two exceptions, as noted below, it asks Partner to bid a Grand Slam only if he/she holds two of the top three Trump honors. The following principals apply when using this Convention:

1. Normally the Partnership must have an agreed-upon Trump suit.
2. If a Trump suit has not been agreed upon, the 5-NT bid signifies that Partner’s last-bid suit is the referenced suit.
3. When Partner bids 5-NT, you are required to jump to seven of your agreed-upon suit with any of the two top three Trump honors (AK, AQ, or KQ); and to bid six of your agreed-upon suit with anything less.
4. You cannot use the Grand Slam Force when: (a) after using the Blackwood Convention (where “5-NT” would ask for Kings); or (b) after Partner’s opening bid of 1-NT (“5-NT”) here would be quantitative asking Partner to bid 6-NT with a minimum 15 HCP’s, and 7-NT with a maximum of 16 or 17 HCP’s).

You Hold: AJ864 AK AKQJ6 A

	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	“2C”	“2D”
(“Waiting”)	2S	3S
	“5-NT” (Grand-Slam Force)	6S <u>or</u> 7S

Bridge Tip # 217

It is widely known that Partnerships should never employ either the **Blackwood** or the **Gerber Conventions** if the Partner exploring for Slam holds either a void or a worthless doubleton. Under these circumstances, the response one would, hypothetically, receive to either “***Ace-Asking***” bid, might not tell one the information required to bid the Slam, else to bale out and stop short of a Slam-Level contract. Alternatively, when holding either of these afore-mentioned holdings, Partnerships should use “***Control-Showing Cue-bids***” to secure the information as to whether Slam is feasible, or not. When employing control-showing cue-bids, the following principles apply:

1. Before commencing control-showing cue-bids, a Partnership must explicitly agree upon a Trump suit. There may not be any ambiguity on this matter.
2. Cue-bidding, under these conditions, expressly shows Slam interest.
3. When a Major suit is agreed upon, bids of a new suit above the 3-Level of the agreed Major are cue-bids, whereas, bids below this level are “Help-Suit Game Tries.”
4. If a Minor suit is agreed upon, bids of a new suit above 3-NT are cue-bids, below 3-NT they are either telling bids, showing one or more stoppers in the bid suit, looking for a 3-NT contract as an alternative to the 5-level of the referenced Minor suit, else asking bids if the Opponents have bid that suit.
5. Cue-bid your lowest first-round control (Ace or Void) at each opportunity.
6. One can never cue-bid in the Trump suit.
7. A cue-bid in any suit you have already by-passed (a suit in which you have already denied a first-round control) shows a second-round control (the King or a Singleton).
8. Once the Partner who has initiated the cue-bid sequence returns to the agreed-upon suit, the cue-bidding ceases and bidding ends, unless Partner has yet another first-round control, not yet shown.

Bridge Tip # 216

On some occasions, a Game-level contract in a Major suit can be bid and made when the Partnership holds fewer than 26 HCP's. Opener may wish to make a "***Game-Try***" under certain set conditions, especially if Opener holds a second long suit, a so-called "**Long Suit Game Try**, (**Help-Suit Game Try**)". To simply invite to Game by bidding directly to the 3-Level may be too risky or involve a significant degree of guesswork by Responder. The following principals apply:

1. After you, as Responder, to an opening bid of one of either Major, make a simply raise of Opener's suit to the 2-Level, and Opener then bids a new suit, it is a Game-try asking for help in the second suit bid. The Game-try suit will be one in which Opener has at least 2-Losers (See Example).

<u>Partner</u>	<u>You</u>
1H	2H
3D (A "Help-Suit Game Try")	

2. Facing a "Help-Suit Game Try," Responder should bid Game with either, (1), a concentration of honors in the help suit, or (2), shortness in the help-suit when Responder holds at least 4-card Trump support (shortness in Opener's '*help-wanted*' suit is far less useful when holding only 3 Trumps, since the defense can often limit Declarer to one ruff by leading Trumps).
3. Without help of either kind, Responder bids three of the agreed-upon Major, which Opener must then "*pass.*"
4. If one plays "Help-Suit Game Tries" then Partnerships are free to ascribe an alternate meaning to a 1-2-3 Major suit bidding sequence (See Example).

<u>Partner</u>	<u>You</u>
1H	2H
3H (" <u>Bar-Bid</u> ")	Pass

Most Partnerships utilize this type of bidding sequence to be a "Bar-Bid"; i.e., an attempt to make it hard for the Opponents to compete by making it difficult, if not impossible, for them to enter the auction. Responder is, under these conditions, absolutely not allowed to bid further in such auctions, whatever his/her holdings.

Balancing bids; i.e., bids made in the “*pass-out*,” 4th seat, are important.

Balancing means re-opening the bidding with a bid or with a “**Double**” after the bidding has stopped at a low level. The purpose of such bids are to protect one’s Partner who may have been kept out of the auction by the Opponent’s bidding, or to disallow the Opponents from stealing the bidding at a low, unreasonable level. The concept of balancing causes many inexperienced players a great deal of trouble.

Balancing is not, strictly speaking, a convention, but rather a question of judgment and fortitude. The following principals and concepts apply:

1. It is seldom, many Players would say, correct to allow one’s Opponents to play in a Suit contract at the 1-Level, and some say even at the 2-Level, especially if the Opponents are happy.
2. One should, alternatively, attempt to push the Opponents higher, where, either they will go down; you will make your contract; or will, having gone down yourself, given up fewer match points than the Opponents would have gleaned if they had taken the contract without you having balanced.
3. If the Opponents stop at a low level having found a fit, feel free to overcall or to make a Take-Out Double with the right distribution with fewer HCP’s than normally needed for similar actions.
4. When Partner makes a balancing bid, remember that he/she can have fewer HCP’s than would normally be the case for such actions, and, therefore, be cautious, as Responder to the balancing call, not to punish the balancing Partner by over-bidding.

Bridge Tip # 214

Cue-bids are an integral part of all bidding systems in the Game of Bridge. Cue-bids are never alertable, and their meaning evolves from the bidding circumstances under which they are employed. In the presence of competition by the Opponents, a cue-bid by a Responder to an Opener’s one-of-a-suit opening bid, or by a Responder to an Overcaller, are one of the more important cue-bids. They signify the following:

1. When Partner opens one of any suit, and the would-be Responder’s RHO overcalls in a suit, a cue-bid, by Responder, using Overcaller’s suit, shows a

limit raise or better, 10-12 HCP's or more, in support of Opener's suit (See Example below).

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1H	1S	"2S" (A Limit raise, or better in support of Opener's Hearts)

2. Alternatively, absent the cue-bid, assuming one's RHO overcalls with a suit bid, a direct raise of Opener's suit shows support, but with fewer HCP's than a limit raise (6-9 HCP's or fewer), and a jump-raise is pre-emptive (See Examples below).

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1H	1S	2H (A constructive raise showing support of Opener's Hearts with 6-9 HCP's) (9-losers)

<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1H	1S	3H or 4H (pre-emptive support for Opener's suit with fewer than 6 HCP's)

3. A cue-bid by a Responder (the "Advancer") to an Overcaller, shows support for Overcaller's suit, and an interest in Game (11-12 HCP's or more) (See Example below).

<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
1H	1S	Pass	"2H" (Support for East's Spades with an interest in Game)

4. Absent the cue-bid, a direct support for Partner who has overcalled shows no interest in Game (fewer than 11 HCP's).

<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
1H	1S	Pass	2S (Support for East's Spades, but with <u>no</u> interest in Game)

Bridge Tip # 213

The "Negative Double" (the so-called "**Responder's Double**") is an important and useful tool in any Bridge Partnership's bidding armamentarium. Like any other

“*double*” call in Bridge, however, certain conditions and circumstances must be met for such bids to be properly presented, and thus interpreted, as a “*Negative Double*”. They are as follows:

1. A “**Negative Double**” can only be presented by a Responder, never by an Opener, an Overcaller, or a Responder to an Overcaller (“**Advancer**”).
2. A “*double*” is “**Negative**” when Partner has opened one of any suit, and Responder’s RHO (right-hand Opponent) has overcalled in a suit. Then, and only then, is a “*double*”, by Responder, “**Negative**.” If Opener, alternatively, were to have opened 1-NT, or if Responder’s RHO were to have overcalled 1-NT over Opener’s one of a suit, a “*Double*” by Responder is a Penalty Double, not a “**Negative**” one.
3. To make a “**Negative Double**” at the 1-Level, Responder must hold 6 or more HCP’s; i.e., that which would have been needed to respond had Responder’s RHO “*passed*.”
4. The higher the overcall; i.e., at the 2-Level and beyond, the more high-card strength Responder needs to make a “**Negative Double**.”
5. A “**Negative Double**” always implies, and guarantees, support for any un-bid Major or Minor suit, or, absent one of these, support for Opener’s bid suit or the ability to bid No-Trump (“*fall-back positions*”).
6. To make a “**Negative Double**” when there are two un-bid Major suits, Responder must hold at least 4-cards in both Majors, or, at the very least, 3-cards in the second Major (so-called “**Tolerance**”).
7. When Partner opens 1C or 1D, and the RHO overcalls “1H,” a “**Negative Double**” shows exactly 4-Spades, and a 1-Spade response evidences five or more Spades.
8. A new suit, by Responder, at the 2-Level, shows at least 11 HCP’s (12 or more, if the Partnership plays 2-over-1 Game-forcing), and, additionally, a 5-card or longer suit. With only 4-pieces, or fewer than 11 HCP’s, or both, Responder uses the “**Negative Double**.”

Bridge Tip # 212

The word “**Reverse**” means: “*opposite or contrary in character or order*”. “**Reverse**” bidding sequences, in the Game of Bridge, are often confusing and, therefore, misunderstood. All of the following, below-referenced, bidding conditions

must be met in order for any bidding sequence to be correctly presented and, therefore, correctly interpreted as having been a legitimate, and properly presented, “*Reverse*.”

1. The bidding must be beyond the 1-Level, i.e., at the 2D-Level, or higher. At the 1-Level all higher-ranking bids are “Up-the-Ladder” bids.
2. Opener’s or Responder’s second bid suit, must be of higher rank than his/her first bid suit.
3. A “*Reverse*” by an Opener is forcing for 1-round, and a “*Reverse*” by Responder is forcing to Game. Partner may not “Pass.” To make these factors valid, Opener must hold no fewer than 17 HCP’s in order to legitimately “*Reverse*,” and Responder must hold no fewer than 13 HCP’s.
4. When Opener “*Reverses*”, his/her first-bid suit is always longer in the number of cards, than is his/her second bid suit.
5. Opener can never “*Reverse*” when holding a balanced hand.
6. When Responder holds a weak hand (6-8 HCP’s) opposite a “*Reverse*” by Opener, Responder’s second call of “2-NT” is the so-called “Ingberman 2-NT,” and denotes lack of Game values should Opener hold the minimum 17-18 HCP’s for his/her “*Reverse*” call. Any other bid by Responder other than “2-NT” is forcing to Game. This latter concept requires Partnership understanding and agreement.
7. If the Partnership is playing 2/1, then a “*Reverse*” by Opener on his/her first re-bid, following a 2-Level, new suit response from Responder, does not exist.

Bridge Tip # 211

That an artificial, strong, and forcing opening “2C” is forcing, is never in question. What is in question, however, is how forcing is it?

Some Partnerships present an opening “2C” bid as “Forcing to Game,” while others play that it is forcing to one-bidding-level below Game; i.e., any one of either 2-NT, 3 of either Major suit (Hearts or Spades), or 4 of either Minor suit (Clubs or Diamonds).

It is imperative, and, therefore, a must, that all Partnerships discuss and resolve this issue, thereby eliminating the possibility that this matter remains ambiguous. To not resolve this issue leaves open the possibility for a bidding disaster, and the concomitant insecurity, by either Partner, or both, that the bidding will cease short of beyond that which is intended and achievable.

Bridge Tip # 210

A double-jump in a new suit by a Responder to Partner's opening call of one of either Major suit is called a "Splinter Bid" (Examples 1 & 2). A single jump shift would have evidenced either a very strong 19 (+) HCP's, else a weak pre-emptive call (Two mutually exclusive concepts dependent upon Partnership understanding as to which one is used).

	<u>Partner</u>	<u>You</u>
<u>Example 1:</u>	1S	"4C", "4D", "4H" (Splinter Bids)
<u>Example 2:</u>	1H	"3S", "4C", "4D" (Splinter Bids)

Splinter Bids by a responding Partner of an Opening Bidder show a Game raise in Partner's Major and a singleton (never a singleton Ace) or void in the suit in which Responder has splintered. Thus, "Splinter Bids" evidence the following:

1. 4-Card or better support for Opener's Major suit
2. 13-15 Points or more (including distribution); i.e., the equivalent of a 7-Loser (or fewer) hand
3. The presence of either a singleton (Never a singleton Ace) or a void in the "Splinter" suit

Typical hand on which to respond "4D" when Partner has opened 1H:

You Hold: KQ6 A8642 5 Q962

A Splinter Bid is a particularly useful bidding Convention because it assists the Partnership in achieving some Slam contracts with fewer HCP's than normal, based upon precise knowledge of distribution. Splinter Bids differ from "Jacoby 2-NT" bids, in that Jacoby 2-NT bids show as few as 13 HCP's, but are unlimited,

and do **NOT** contain an outside singleton or void. If a singleton or void is present, “Splinter Bids” take precedent over the use of the “Jacoby 2-NT” convention.

Opener, in response to Partner’s “Splinter Bid,” with a minimum hand, or one with wasted values in the suit in which Responder has splintered, signs off at the 4-Level in the agreed-upon Major. Responder, who has already bid his/her hand completely then “*passes*.” If Opener holds Slam interest; i.e., holding a hand with extra values and no wastage in the “Splinter” suit – bids anything else other than a sign-off in the agreed-upon Major.

Opener can, likewise, Splinter (Example 3)

<u>Example 3:</u>	<u>Partner</u> 1D “4C” (“Splinter” Bid)	<u>You</u> 1H
<u>Partner Holds:</u>	KQ73 AK743 AQ6 6	

Partnerships are entitled to draw negative inferences when support for Partner’s suit is shown and **Splinter Bids** are **NOT** utilized.

From a Responder’s point of view, making a “Splinter” bid in support of Opener’s bid suit, takes precedence, if applicable, over Responder having, alternatively, utilized a “Jacoby 2-NT” response. Therefore, if Responder were to utilize a “Jacoby 2-NT” response, Opener can assume, by default, that Responder does **not** hold a singleton or a void.

Bridge Tip # 209

Responding to Partner’s opening pre-emptive, 3-Level, bid can be tricky, and is oft times misunderstood. There need be the realization that although Partner’s intent was to take several levels of bidding away from the Opponents in the belief that it was there hand, the reality exists that, especially when the pre-emptive bid occurs in the first or second position (before Partner has had the opportunity to show his/her HCP strength, that in effect, Partner’s well-meaning pre-empt has stolen several levels of bidding from his/her own team. The following include a summary of things to remember opposite Partner’s pre-emptive, 3-Level, opening call:

1. Never seek to bid a new suit, opposite Partner's opening 3-Level pre-empt, unless you can see some prospect of Game (15 or more HCP's). (See Ron Colchamiro's "Rule of 17.")
2. A response in a new suit by Partner to an opening, 3-Level, pre-empt, is natural and forcing when it is one of a Major suit over a 3-level Minor pre-empt, and shows at least 15 or more HCP's and at least 5-cards in the new suit.

3C/3D - Pass - 3H/3S (Forcing)

3. A 4-Level response in a Minor suit, over a 3-level Major suit Pre-empt is a Cue-bid. It shows a control in the suit bid, and suggests a Slam in Opener's Major suit.

3H/3S - Pass - "4C"/"4D" (Cue-bid with support for Opener)

4. The Pre-emptor should raise Partner's Major suit response (after an opening of 3C or 3D) on any 3-cards or a doubleton honor.
5. Responder may raise a pre-empt in the same suit bid, in two situations: (a) when you are strong and hope to make Game, and (b) when you are weak, and hope to make life even more difficult for the Opponents.

Bridge Tip # 208

Most bridge Partnerships recognize that certain bids invite, and still others, force Partner to take bidding action. Several such bidding sequences are: (1) a "***Take-out Double***," (2) a "***Support Double***," (3) a "***Responsive Double***," (4) a **new suit bid by Responder**, (5) a "***Reverse***" by either Opener or Responder, (6) a ***Blackwood*** "***4-NT***" or a ***Gerber*** "***4C***" ***Ace-Asking bid***, (7) a "***4-NT***" or a "***5-NT***" Quantitative bid over Partner's opening 1-NT, (8) a "***5-NT- Grand Slam Force***", and (9) a "***Forth-Suit-Forcing***" bidding sequence, to name a few of the more popular and most commonly known examples.

One additional forcing bidding scenario, not frequently written about, but extremely important and necessary is the “*Forcing Pass*”. A “*Forcing Pass*” is defined as a “pass” by either Partner which forces the other Partner to take action, either by bidding further or by “doubling.” Partnerships must agree upon the definition of the “*Forcing Pass*” and recognize the circumstances under which the “*Forcing Pass*” comes into play.

The “*Forcing Pass*” is alertable when it is invoked. Some of the more common scenarios are as follows:

A. One team has volitionally reached a Game-level contract, and the Opponents put in an obvious sacrifice bid in their own suit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1H	Pass	3H	Pass
4H	“4-NT” – (Unusual)	Pass	5D
Pass (Forcing)	Pass	????	

B. After the auction has begun, and it becomes clear to both sides that a safety level has been reached, such that to proceed further means that one side may decide to bid higher knowing that the contract will be defeated with the expectation of a better score.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1H	1S	2H	2S
3H	3S	Pass (Forcing)	Pass
????			

C. Under the scenario where Partner has opened the bidding, your RHO (Right-hand Opponent) has made a Take-Out Double and you have “Re-Doubled,” evidencing 10 or more HCP’s. Your LHO (the Partner of the Doubler) makes an overcall bid, and Opener then “passes” (“Forcing”) showing no extra values over his/her original opening count. It is obvious that your Partnership has the majority of the HCP count, and you, the Re-Doubler, must act.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
1H	Double	Re-Double	2D
Pass (Forcing)	Pass	????	

After pre-empting, you must remain silent unless Partner asks you to bid. If, unsolicited, you bid once again, either your hand was too strong for you to have pre-empted in the first instance, else, you are too weak to bid in the second instance. You have erred either way.

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	86	3H	3S	Double	
Pass					
	QJT8642	????			
	5				
	K73				

“Pass!” You told your story already; now trust your Partner. For all you know Partner has the Opponents over a barrel, and you might even contribute a Diamond ruff, a Club trick, or both. **Once a Player pre-empts, whether as an Opening Bidder or as an Overcaller, he/she is automatically out of any further bidding, unless invited to bid again by his/her responding Partner.**

Bridge Tip # 206

When you, as Responder to Partner’s opening bid have support for Partner’s suit, a substantial holding in the suit overcalled by your RHO, but, otherwise, a weak HCP count, tend not to “*double*” the Opponent’s for penalties, rather support Partner instead.

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	Q86			1S	2D
	84	????			
	A8753				
	863				

Bid 2S! Do not “Double” for penalties! Firstly, in this instance, it would be construed as a “**Negative Double**,” anyhow. A **Penalty Double**, here, suffers from two flaws, even if it were possible to do so: (1) your undisclosed support for Partner’s Spade suit, and (2) the weakness of your hand. If, hypothetically, an Opponent ran from two Diamonds doubled to two Hearts, your Partner might “*double*” that contract unsuccessfully, expecting you to hold more strength. The better tact is to support

Partner immediately, and if necessary, “*double*” them if they attempt to compete further to **3D**.

Bridge Tip # 205

Be aware of not punishing Partner for competing. He/she may have stuck their neck out in the first place, so don’t hang him/her for having done so.

<u>West</u>	<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	
	A6				1S
	JT95	Double	2S	3H	
Pass	A85	????			
	KJ83				

Pass! Your Partner is not trying for Game. He/she is only competing for a part-score. Responder knows you have opening count based upon your previous **Take-Out Double**, and if he/she had opening count, as well, he/she would have gone directly to Game without prodding initially. Your hand is minimum count for your Take-Out, so just “*Pass.*” **Never bid your hand’s values twice!**

Bridge Tip # 204

Some occasions force one to support Partner’s suit without the knowledge that there be an 8-card “Golden Fit.” Sometimes you must pick the best from amongst the several poor bids that are available.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
AKJ		1C
84	1D	1S
J9862	????	
J32		

Bid 2S! You, as Responder, must take yet another bid since Opener can have as many as 18 HCP’s, and you hold 10. Because Opener can have as many as 18 HCP’s

in these types of bidding sequences, Responder must normally think of making a second call when holding 9 or more HCP's.

Here, to potentially bid **1-NT** with two low Hearts, or to re-bid your ragged Diamond suit is hideous. A preference for Clubs is potentially equally disastrous since Opener can hold as few as three pieces if the Partnership is using "*preferred Minor*" openings, or potentially only two pieces if using "*short Club*" openings. A bid of **2S** is your best call. **Bidding choices in bridge are not always perfect!**

Bridge Tip # 203

When you know there is Game in a hand, but you are not certain where the Game contract lies, temporize and bring Partner into the decision-making process.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
K92		1D
A9752	1H	3D
AT3	????	
73		

Bid 3S! You know that a Game contract is certainly probable. Partner has shown 16-18 HCP's, and that coupled with your 11 HCP's should certainly suffice to make a Game-level contract somewhere; but where? Partner has shown six Diamonds but has denied four Hearts. By bidding **3S** you are aiming for the nine-trick **3-NT** contract. If Partner has a Club stopper, as you do not, he/she will bid **3-NT**. Partner has denied four Spades by his/her first re-bid of **3D** and so there is little likelihood that he/she will raise to **4S**. If he/she holds three Hearts he/she will try a **4H** contract which you will accept by "*passing*." If he/she re-bids **4D**, absent either a Club stopper or three Hearts, you will raise to **5D**. **Cooperation in achieving the right contract is paramount.**

Bridge Tip # 202

You must never use Stayman in response to Partner's opening 1-NT bid unless you are able to sensibly handle all three possible responses ("2D", 2H, or 2S) that Opener might make once Stayman is initiated by your "2C" Stayman initiation.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
Q982		1-NT
A853	????	
854		
73		

You must "Pass"! Although it is certainly tempting to bid "2C", invoking **Stayman**, looking for an 8-card Major suit fit in either Hearts or Spades. If Partner were to respond **2H** or **2S** you would "*pass*," and become a hero. But, alternatively, if Partner were lacking a 4-card Major and were to respond "**2D**," you would then be stuck. If you then try **2-NT**, Partner, with a maximum 16 or 17 HCP's, may bid a hopeless **3-NT**. You must, therefore, in this instance, "*pass*" Opener's **1-NT** call.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
QJ92		1-NT
A8	????	
854		
7632		

Here, again, **you must "pass"!** Although it is certainly tempting to bid "2C", invoking **Stayman**, hoping to find an 8-card Major suit fit in Spades, you must avoid the temptation. If Partner were to respond "**2D**" or **2H** you would, again, be stuck. If you then try **2-NT**, Partner, with a maximum 16 or 17 HCP's, may bid a hopeless **3-NT**. You must, therefore, "*Pass*," once again.

Responder to Partner's opening 1-NT needs the capability of dealing with any of the three bids Opener might respond, "2D". 2H, or 2S, otherwise a Stayman attempt is off limits.

Bridge Tip # 201

A 2-level, new suit response by a "*previously-passed*" Partner (Example 2) is not forcing as is the case with a similar bid which has been made by a Partner who had not "*previously passed*" (Example 1).

Example 1:

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
T9	1D	2C
AJ	????	
KT854		
A973		

Bid 3C! Responding Partner has shown 11-18 HCP's and, therefore, the bidding must not be passed out since Game is feasible and Responder must be given another opportunity to bid.

Example 2:

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
T9		P
AJ	1D	2C
KT854	????	
A973		

Pass! Responding Partner has previously "*Passed*" and therefore cannot hold more than 12 HCP's and certainly might have even fewer. If you bid again you might get too high! You certainly like the Club suit, so just "*pass.*"

Bridge Tip # 200

There are several requirements for a Take-Out Double in the direct (2nd) seat. Opening count (13 HCP's or its equivalent) is certainly one of them, but another, perhaps less often understood, is the appropriate shape. Support (four pieces) or, at the very least, tolerance (three pieces), for the as-yet, un-bid Major(s) is essential. Absent either requirement, or alternatively, not holding a 5-card suit of one's own with which to overcall, one must simply "*pass.*"

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
<u>West</u>			
A6			1H
KT7	????		
AQ85			
T983			

Pass! Your support for the un-bid Major, here, Spades, is lacking. You hold enough HCP's to make a **Take-Out Double**, but you lack the obligatory shape to do so, and, in addition, you do not have a 5-card suit of your own to bid. You must, therefore be willing to wait and listen, to "*pass*," and, if necessary, to defend rather than to bid and wind up in a 6-card Spade fit. **In order to hold the right shape for any Take-Out Double, one must hold fewer than 3-cards in the suit bid by the opening Opponent.**

Bridge Tip # 199

Be careful to remember that a balancing 1-NT, a bid in the so-called "*Pass-out Seat*" or "*Balancing Position*", or "*4th Seat*" shows very different strength than does an overcall of 1-NT made in the direct or 2nd seat. The direct seat 1-NT overcall exhibits 15-18 HCP's, whereas the balancing seat 1-NT exhibits 10-14 HCP's. A further differentiation is that a direct seat 1-NT guarantees at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit, whereas a balancing seat 1-NT, although of similar balanced distribution, need not have a stopper in the Opponent's bid suit.

<u>West</u>	<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	K8			
1H	KT8	Pass	Pass	1-NT
Pass	J862	??		
	KT83			

Pass! Had Partner opened the bidding in first seat, or overcalled the same 1-NT in the direct position, both showing 15-17 HCP's, you would certainly, here, take action by bidding 3-NT, but in this instance, with Partner calling a balancing No-Trump (10-14 HCP's), your hand does not warrant any further bidding.

Bridge Tip # 198

So-called “*Intermediaries*” (9’s and 10’s), are noteworthy cards when held in combination with honors in their same suits. Give them significant status when bidding marginal hands, especially when considering No-Trump contracts.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
QT9		1-NT (15-17)
QT4	????	
KT8		
QT73		

Bid 3-NT! Even though you side may have only 24-25 HCP’s, your hand is worth much more than 9 HCP’s, especially in a No-Trump contract. All four tens may be significant, and even the nine of Spades may be, as well. **Go for it!**

Bridge Tip # 197

As Opener, when holding minimum opening count values and an evenly-balanced hand, do not let the absence of apparent stoppers prevent you from re-bidding 1-NT on your first re-bid.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
87	1D	1H
AQ8	????	
K9874		
A53		

Bid 1-NT! You cannot “*pass*” a new suit bid by Responder. You must not re-bid this poor-quality 5-card Diamond suit, and you cannot support Partner’s Hearts, holding only 3-pieces. Disregard the lack of a Spade stopper and re-bid **1-NT**. If No-Trump is the final contract, trust that Partner will have a Spade stopper, and if not, then the Opponents still have to find that fact out.

Bridge Tip # 196

When playing the Standard American system of bridge (5-card Majors), it is imperative that both Opener and Responder bid “*Up-the-Ladder*,” i.e., never by-passing a 4-card Major holding. To not do so is to invite the possibility of missing a Major suit “*Golden (8-card) Fit*.” This holds true even if there exists a “*Golden-Fit*” in one of the Minor suits.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
JT73		1D
98	????	
AQJ74		
Q7		

Bid 1S! It is imperative that you temporarily suppress you Diamond support, here, in favor of attempting to find a fit for your 4-card Major, Spades, in this instance. If Partner denies Spade support, say, by next bidding **2C** or **1-NT**, you can then support the Diamond suit at your next bidding opportunity.

Bridge Tip # 195

When it is clear that you and Partner, together, hold approximately ½ the deck in high-cards, do not be reluctant to compete in the bidding process.

<u>West</u>	<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	A863		1H	Double
	963	??????		
	863			
	K83			2H

Bid 2S! Partner promises at least opening count, or its equivalent, and is almost sure to hold a 4-card Spade suit. You and Partner hold as many of the high-cards as do the Opponents. If you do not compete, the Opponents will be stealing you blind. Think of it this way: Your Partner “*bid*” Spades when he/she “*doubled*,” and you are merely supporting him/her by raising his/her presumed suit.

Bridge Tip # 194

There are many common sense approaches to winning at the bridge table over the long haul, and most are centered around taking a middle-of-the-road approach by seeking a metaphorical “*single*,” rather than swinging for the elusive, oft times, out of the reach, “*home-run*.” Eight of these which aim for 60% (better than average) approaches are as follows:

1. If you see that setting a contract one trick will be a great result, **do not** risk a good board by attempting to set the contract two, and similarly, **do not** jeopardize your own contract by seeking a doubtful overtrick. Both are poor risk-reward decisions.
2. When in a Small Slam contract, be satisfied with making 6 rather than greedily “*shooting*” for 7, if the latter approach will jeopardize the Small Slam – remember, much of the field will not even be in Slam and in making 6 you are destined to get an above-average match-point score anyway.
3. Psychic bids create exhilaration and potential tops or bottoms, but in the long run they cause Partner grief and uncertainty as to when next you are repeating the feat such that he/she cannot rely upon your bidding action. Remain consistently true to your agreed-upon bidding and playing actions. **Trust** and **Consistency** are the two keys to a good Partnership.
4. Do **not** use a “*re-double*” as a business re-double of any final, “*doubled*” contract. If you make the “*doubled*” contract you are getting a top board in any event **without** the contract having been “*re-doubled*.” Save the “*re-double*” as (a), **for rescue** (“*SOS*”) of a “*doubled*,” un-makeable contract; (b), **for use by Opener as a “Support Re-Double”** (showing 3-piece support) following Partner’s response of a 4-card suit following a **Take-Out Double** by Opener’s LHO; and (c), **for announcing strength** (9 or more HCP’s) when Partner’s opening bid has been followed by a **Take-Out Double** by the would-be Responder’s right-hand Opponent.
5. In low-level competitive auctions, attempt to push the Opponents from two to three. Do not allow the Opponents to play at the 2-level in an agreed-upon suit in which they are happy!
6. Do not pre-empt with Queen-empty-sixth type holdings – you will produce at least as many bottoms as tops.
7. When playing in tournaments and IMP scoring, do **not** “*double*” an Opponent’s part-score contract for penalties.
 1. When Partner balances (takes an action based upon the total values of the Partnership rather than those in his/her own hand), in an effort to stop the

Opponents from securing a low-level contract, be satisfied that he/she has aided the team's effort and **do not** punish Partner by bidding on. Remember, Partner's balancing bid has already taken into account your perceived, high-card points.

Summation: In making decisions, try to choose a course of action that leads to a middle-of-the-road result or one that preserves an obtained advantage, rather than taking a high-risk tactic or strategy that reaches for the sky, but oft times ends up in the dirt.

Bridge Tip # 193

Even holding support for Partner's opening suit, some very weak hands (5-7 HCP's), especially with a 4-3-3-3 distribution are too weak to support Opener directly. Better to bid 1-NT and, if given the opportunity to bid again, then support Partner at the 2-Level.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
Q86		1H
K84	????	
Q987		
864		

Bid 1-NT! With this rag of a hand (10 Losers, or more, for those who play LTC – "Losing Trick Count"), you need to discourage Partner by first bidding 1-NT. Even opposite most 19 HCP hands held by Opener, this holding will, most often, **not** produce Game.

Bridge Tip # 192

It is often wise to consider your second bid **before** making your first. This generally holds true whether you are an Opening Bidder, an Overcaller, or a Responder to an Opening Bidder.

a) <u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
AK863				1H

6 ??????
 AQ9642
 7

Bid 2D! Avoid a Take-Out double with wild distributions. Since it is likely that the Opponents may compete vigorously in Clubs and Hearts, you must start to bid your two suits. Bid **2D** first. If East jumps to **4H**, for example, you can bid **4S** at your next turn to bid. You hold a willingness to have Partner choose between a **4S** and a **5D** contract.

b) <u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
K863		1C	Double	
Pass				
K873	??????			
84				
QT7				

Bid 1S! Plan ahead! The Opponents are likely to compete in the Minor suits. By bidding **1S** first, you can then bid Hearts and hope to play in whichever of the two Major suits that Partner likes best. If you respond **1H** first, and then bid Spades next, a contract of **2H** will be out of reach.

Bridge Tip # 191

When it can be determined that you and your Partner have a double fit, (both you and your Partner hold a combined total of at least eight cards in each of two suits), re-evaluate your holding upwards. The double fit increases the trick-taking capacity held by the Partnership.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
KT83				1C
AJ8	Pass	1H	Double	2H
QT865	??????			
6				

Jump to 4S! Partner (South), holds opening count or its equivalent, and has asked you to bid either Diamonds or Spades. You (North) have both. Partner holds opening

count in order to enter the auction between two bidding Opponents, and is surely short in Hearts given your Heart holding. You are short in Clubs. Given your HCP count and the double fit that is surely present, Game should easily be achievable.

Bridge Tip # 190

With a weak hand and support for Partner's opening bid, be prepared to preempt after your RHO (Right-hand Opponent) makes a Take-Out Double.

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	T853			1S	Double
	6	????			
	T9752				
	K72				

Bid 3S! This may stop the Opponents from finding their probable fit in Hearts. If they do find their fit in Hearts, your bid may prompt Partner to take a good sacrifice at 4S. If you had had a stronger hand, you would have otherwise bid; 2S (a constructive raise), a "*re-double*," showing 9 or more HCP's absent support for Partner, "2-NT" ("*Jordan*" – a Limit raise or stronger in support of Partner), or some other bid recognized by the Partnership other than this, a pre-emptive, supportive bid shown above.

Bridge Tip # 189

Be reluctant to re-bid any unsupported 5-card suit. Alternatively, look for something better.

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	K3		1D
	AJ864	1H	1S
	9754	????	
	K3		

Bid 2D! To re-bid the Hearts is risky; it usually suggests a 6-card suit with minimum values, and demands that Opener “*pass*” under all but the most exceptional of circumstances. Opener holds at least four Diamonds (rarely is a Diamond opening a 3-piece suit) and a final contract of **2D** is surely better than the likelihood of **2H** being the preferred spot.

Bridge Tip # 188

A jump re-bid, by a Responder, into Responder’s first bid suit, is invitational and shows a 6-card suit with invitational (11-12 HCP’s) values.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
KJT753		1H
K4	1S	2D
T84	????	
A7		

Bid 3S! Partner knows you now have invited to Game holding 11-12 HCP’s and a 6-card or longer Spade suit. He/she can now “*pass*,” bid **4S**, or even **3-NT**. You have, here, limited your hand, and, thus, Opener becomes the “**Captain**” of any further bidding advancement.

Bridge Tip # 187

When you, as Responder to Partner’s Take-Out Double have already jumped the bidding to evidence 9 or more HCP’s, and Partner invites to Game, if you hold nothing more than your original point count, do not accept!

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
QT85		1H	Double	Pass
J84	2S	Pass	3S	Pass
K84	????			
KT7				

Pass! Your previous jump-response already invited Game and promised at least 9 HCP's. Since you have no extra values, the Jack of Hearts is probably worthless, and you are as flat as a pancake, do not accept Partner's bid for Game – Just “*pass*.”

Bridge Tip # 186

When pre-empting, bid quickly and immediately to the highest reasonable level driven by a commitment to the number of tricks equivalent to the number of pieces of Trump held by the Partnership (“THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS”). “The fewer HCP's you hold, and, thus, the weaker your holdings, the more you need to pre-empt!”

	<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
<u>West</u>				
	5			1H
Double	J87432	????		
	96			
	9642			

Bid 5H! The best strategy is to immediately bid as high as you reasonably dare. Partner holds 5 or more Hearts, and you hold 6 for a total of 11. Bidding **5H** commits the Partnership to 11 tricks, and, by the way, stops your Opponents from bidding **4S** which they surely can almost easily make. Remember, you are “*pre-empting*”, not “*post-empting*”. Do not creep up on the desired appropriate level, do so immediately to the level wherein the number of tricks to which one commits is equal to the cumulative number of Trumps held by the Partnership (“THE LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS”).

Bridge Tip # 185

With nine or more cards distributed between two suits, you, as the Opening Bidder, should be reluctant to wind up in a No-Trump contract.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
------------------	------------	----------------

AK753	1S	1-NT
95	????	
K8		
KT85		

Bid 2C! Because your pattern is unbalanced, try once again for a Suit contract. Partner can “*pass*,” raise Clubs, return to Spades, or, holding six or more pieces of either red suit, bid two of either one, which you must then “*pass*.”

Bridge Tip # 184

When you make a Take-Out Double, do not bid again unless you have extra values. You have already shown opening count and a willingness to play in any of the as-yet, un-bid suits, so if you hold nothing more than your first bid evidences, “*pass*” on any subsequent turn to bid. *In Bridge, when bidding, one need never, nor should they, make a bid that shows the same thing twice.*

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
QT95				1D
A752	Double	Pass	2C	Pass
6	????			
AQJ4				

“Pass!” Don’t be seduced by your magnificent Clubs. Partner made a minimum response, (0-8 HCP’s) and even eight tricks might, under these conditions, is hard to achieve. **If Partner responds cheaply to your Take-Out Double, you need extra strength to bid again.**

If you make a Take-Out Double and then bid your own new suit at your first re-bid opportunity, you evidence 16 or more HCP’s; i.e., a hand with extra values beyond that which you evidenced with your original Take-Out Double.

Bridge Tip # 183

There are circumstances where it is critical to over-rule Partner's good intentions. These circumstances occur when you hold additional information not yet disseminated to Partner by virtue of the bidding that has occurred thus far. One such circumstance occurs under the following scenario:

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
A7	1H	1S
AQT742	2H	2-NT
5	????	
QT95		

Bid 3C! This suggests a minimum opening bid with six Hearts and four Clubs (With most other Heart/Club distributions or with extra strength, you would have bid Clubs on your second round of bidding).

Bridge Tip # 182

There are some circumstances when it is appropriate to bid, even without any HCP's. One of them occurs when Partner has made a "Take-Out Double" and you are forced to take a suit preference since your RHO has "*passed*" and you cannot afford to "*pass*" which would then convert the Partner's "*double*" to penalties.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
642		1C	Double	Pass
J9743	????			
53				
863				

Bid 1H! This bid promises, usually 4 or more of the suit bid, and 0-8 HCP's. If you had held 9 (+) HCP's, you, opposite Partner's **Take-Out Double**, would have jumped the bidding to evidence that your side holds the majority of the available HCP's. Unless you, opposite Partner's **Take-Out Double**, wish, volitionally, to convert Partner's **Take-Out Double** to a penalty scenario, absent a call from your RHO, you must make a call, even with as few as zero HCP's.

Another circumstance is as follows:

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	642		1C	Double	Re-
Double	97	????			
	J7532				
	863				

Bid 1D! This bid, here, promises no HCP's what-so-ever! East and South have each shown opening count, and West, your RHO, by virtue of his/her "**Re-Double**," has shown 9 or more HCP's. That leaves no more than 0-5 HCP's in the deck. You, recognizing that you team is in trouble, and holding a 5-card suit, should bid **1D**. This does not seek to show any particular point count, but rather to suggest an escape from the horrific circumstance that has befallen your team. It is assumed that Partner will recognize your attempt to save him/her and will not punish you by bidding any further. Yes, you could have "**passed**," in that West's "**Re-Double**" affords Partner a second chance to bid, but holding a 5-card suit allows you to, hopefully, save Partner, from certain disaster. Not all bids in bridge work out, but at least, here, you tried!

"Points Schmoints!"

Bridge Tip # 181

A direct (2nd) seat overcall at the 1-Level shows a 5-card suit or better and a HCP's range between 8 and 15 points. With 16 or more HCP's you first make a Take-Out Double, and then bid your desired suit.

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	AK9642				1H
	7	????			
	KJ6				
	QJ7				

Bid 1S! Some Players are of the misconception that with opening count you must first make a **Take-Out Double** and then bid your suit. They fail to understand that a simple, direct, 2nd seat overcall can hold HCP's up to, and including, 15 HCP's. **An overcall in the direct seat does not deny the strength of a Take-Out Double.** If East, in this instance, were to bid **2H**, and Partner were to then "**pass**," you hold the strength and distribution such that you can then re-open the bidding with a **Take-Out Double**.

Bridge Tip # 180

Be careful to devalue some HCP honors when the bidding makes it likely that they are likely to be of less value than would, at first glance, be presupposed.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
64		1D	Double	Pass
Q8674	????			
KJ6				
KJ7				

Bid 1H! If your LHO (Left-hand Opponent) had opened 1S, all of your high cards would, most likely, be useful; and in that instance the correct bid would have been to jump to 2H in order to invite to Game. As it is, however, your Diamond values that sit in front of the Opening Bidder are probably worthless. A response, therefore, of 1H is prudent.

Bridge Tip # 179

When you, as Responder to Partner's limited opening holding, sense a misfit, and hold fewer than Game values, seek to end the bidding as soon as possible.

(a) <u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
K864		1D
A9753	1H	2C
63	????	
75		

Bid 2D! A bid of 2H would have shown 6-pieces (one rarely re-bids an unsupported 5-card suit), and risks playing there opposite a singleton or a void held by Opener. A bid of 2S would be considered a "**Reverse**" (A "**Reverse**" by a Responder forces to Game showing no fewer than 13 HCP's), and that bid is sure to drag the Partnership beyond a level that could conceivably be reasonably made. Since Opener is likely to hold at least 5-Diamonds (had Opener held only 4-Diamonds and

4-Clubs he/she would have either supported the Hearts with 4-pieces, bid **1S** with 4-pieces, else **1-NT**). Therefore, a “*false preference*” to **2D** is the best of all evils.

(b) <u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
A		1S
9753	1-NT	2D
964	????	
Q9962		

Pass! This has the makings of a troublesome hand. Partner holds, at most, 18 HCP’s and, statistically, most likely fewer. With 19 HCP’s or more, he/she would have made a jump-shift. Your side lacks a good fit and a combined HCP total fewer than 26 HCP’s! Get out while you still have a chance for a positive score.

(c) <u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
J865		1H
5	1S	3H
A973	????	
J642		

Pass! Partner promises 16-18 HCP’s with a good 6- or 7-card Heart suit, and fewer than 4-Spades. Although Partner’s bid is a strong Game invitation, you could have hardly had less for your first response, and your Heart support is non-existent. Prudence is golden!

Bridge Tip # 178

When Partner makes a Take-Out Double, and you hold a significant holding in the Opponent’s suit, your response to the Partner’s “double” varies with the length of your holding in the Opponent’s suit, coupled with the quality of your accompanying HCP’s.

The Bidding has Proceeded:

<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	1H	Double	Pass
?????			

You Hold:

(a) **8643** **Bid 1S!** Your hand is too weak to convert the Take-Out to a **Penalty Double** by "**passing.**"

AT84
95
963

(b) **AQ43** **Bid 2S!** A Jump-response to Partner's **Take-Out Double** evidences 9 or more HCP's and at least

AT8 4-cards in the suit bid.
954
963

(c) **A74** **Bid 1-NT!** A **1-NT** response to Partner's **Take-Out Double** evidences 8-10 HCP's, and at least one

AT84 stopper in the Opponent's suit, and denies 4-cards in any un-bid Major suit. A **2-NT**
954 response would have shown a similar distribution with 11-12 HCP's, and a **3-NT** bid would
963 have shown opening count with at least one Heart stopper.

(d) **A7** **Pass!** Your Heart suit is long and strong enough to convert the Partner's Take-Out to a penalty scenario.

AT964
85
8642

(e) **864** **Take your pick from any of the deplorable choices available!** You cannot bid **1-NT** for your hand is

9632 too weak and you do not hold a stopper in the Opponent's bid suit, you cannot "**pass**" which
T83 would convert the "**double**" to a penalty scenario. Therefore, **bid 1S, 2C, or 2D**, and then go make a
943 phone call if you have a weak stomach and the Opponents do not save your team by bidding further.

Most hands that make 5 of either Clubs or Diamonds also make 3- or 4-NT.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
K74		1C
863	1D	1-NT
AKQT72	????	
J		

Bid 3-NT! Firstly, you recognize that with opening values opposite Partner's opening bid, Game is likely. Secondly, you should resist the obvious temptation to re-bid your Diamond suit. When you table your Dummy hand, and Partner gets first glimpse of your probable 6 tricks in the Diamond suit, he/she will be charmed. Except in extreme cases, a nine-trick **3-NT** Game-level contract is preferable to an 11 trick Minor suit, Game-level contract.

Bridge Tip # 176

The use of "4th-suit Forcing" is a valuable bidding tool. It is alertable, artificial, and requires discussion and acceptance by both members of any Partnership. It forces the bidding for either at least one more round, or until a Game-level contract has been reached, again dependent upon Partnership understanding.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
A7		1C
AK74		1C
863	1H	1S
Q874	????	

Bid "2D"! You, holding Game values opposite an opening bid by Partner, desire to bid a Game-level contract, but its denomination remains unclear. A leap to **3-NT** might be correct, but absent a Diamond stopper in Opener's holding, such a contract might be a disaster. Mark time with a "**4th suit forcing to Game**" bid of "**2D**," sometimes called a "**Western Cue-Bid**". It forces to Game, in most Partnerships, and asks Partner for a stopper in the specific 4th-suit bid. Absent this requirement the Partnership can avoid the wrong spot of **3-NT**. If Opener bids anything other than **3-NT**, thereby denying a Diamond stopper in this instance, the Partnership can seek an alternative **5C** final contract.

Bridge Tip # 175

When Partner shows minimum values by making a simple choice of two suits suggested by you as Opener, and you, the Opening Bidder, hold extra values; i.e., are at the top of your original re-bid, bid again to show the possibility of a Game-level contract.

(a) <u>You Hold:</u>	975	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	A	1D	1H
	AQJ85	2C	2D
	K864	????	

(b) <u>You Hold:</u>	K7	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	A5	1D	1H
	AQJ85	2C	2D
	K864	????	

In (a) “*Pass*,” or in (b), **Bid 2-NT or 3D!** If you bid, in (b), as opposed to simply “*passing*” as you should in (a), you, as Opener, evidence about 17 + HCP’s and signify that Game might be possible. If you do bid, once again, you show the top of your opening call values, and Responder, at this point, should be able to assist in finding the appropriate, Game-level, final contract.

Bridge Tip # 174

When Partner makes a Take-Out Double and you hold both, absence of support for any un-bid Major suit, 6-9 HCP’s, and at least one stopper in the Opponent’s bid suit, a response of 1-NT is usually better than a Minor suit choice of bids.

<u>You Hold:</u>	74	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	AJ5		1H	Double	Pass
	K962	?????			
	9863				

Bid 1-NT! Since Partner promises support for the as-yet, un-bid suits, a bid of either **2C** or **2D** might easily be a winning choice. However, a bid of **1-NT** is better because it tells Partner that you have 6-9 HCP's with Hearts, in this instance, stopped. You might have had as few as 0 HCP's to have, alternatively, responded **2C** or **2D**.

Bridge Tip # 173

When Partner has opened a strong, artificial, and forcing “2C,” a quick arrival (Example 1) shows weaker HCP values than does a slow arrival (Example 2).

Example 1:

<u>Partner</u>	<u>You Hold:</u>	KT874	<u>You</u>	
		85		“2C”
		9742	“2D” (0-7)	2S
		76	4S (Weak)	

Example 2:

<u>You Hold:</u>	KT874	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	Q5		“2C”
	Q642	“2D” (0-7)	2S
	76	3S (The top of your original 0-7, suggesting the likelihood of Game and the possibility for a Slam)	

Bridge Tip # 172

Although Partner's opening bid of one of a suit, followed by his/her re-bid at the 2-Level of a new suit of lower rank than his/her first suit, evidences as much as 18 HCP's, you, as Responder, should not take a second bid unless you hold at least 9 HCP's.

<u>You Hold:</u>	KT74	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	Q5		1H
	QT72	1S	2D
	JT8	????	

“Pass!” Absent a jump-shift by Opener, he/she holds anywhere from 11 to 18 HCP’s. The chances, therefore, of getting too high, should you, as Responder, bid again, are significantly greater than the likelihood of your missing Game. If you bid once again, Partner might easily proceed to **3-NT** with as few as 16 HCP’s and you do not want to be in Game with your measly 8 HCP’s.

Bridge Tip # 171

Many bridge Players are under the false assumption that the only requirement for a **Take-Out Double** is opening count, or better. This is ***not*** true! A **Take-Out Doubler** requires, **not only opening count or better, but also the appropriate shape; i.e., fewer than 3-cards in Opener’s bid suit.**

<u>You Hold:</u>	AQ64	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	K985				1S
	864	?????			
	A6				

“Pass!” You would double a **1C** opening bid with glee, and a **1D** opening with somewhat less enthusiasm. Here, however, since you only have support for only one of the as-yet, un-bid suits, a **“double”** has little chance for success. Stay out of the auction, unless prodded by Partner, and hope for a plus score by defending rather than by bidding offensively. In general, if you hold three or more pieces in the Opponent’s bid suit, you do ***not*** have the proper shape for a **Take-Out Double**.

Bridge Tip # 170

When you make a **Take-Out Double**, and Partner shows fewer than 9 HCP’s by responding ***without*** jumping the bidding, you, the **Take-Out Doubler**, require 17

HCP's or more to bid again. Remember, Partner, who responded to your request to have him/her bid, could have as few as 0 HCP's

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	KQ73				
	AJ85				1C
	AK74	Double	Pass	1S	Pass
	6	???			

Bid 2S! A Take-Out Doubler requires 16 or more HCP's to bid again after Partner bids cheaply in response. Had you, as the Doubler,, had just 12-13 HCP's, the minimum required to have made the Take-Out Double, your re-bid would have been a “*pass*.” Remember, Responder might be broke!

Bridge Tip # 169

When Partner, who has opened the bidding, shows, by virtue of his/her re-bid, a jump to Game, a holding, therefore, of 20 HCP's or more opposite your thus-far presumed minimum of 6 HCP's, and you, Responder to his/her opening bid hold opening count; take control of the bidding and explore for a Slam-level contract. Partner's jump to Game is not a “sign-off”. Since the values for Slam are likely present, do not get cold feet – Go for it, and at least try!

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	K7		
	AQ843		1C
	KJ75	1H	4H
	65	????	

Opener's jump to **4H** shows at least 20 HCP's or its equivalent, since your first response of **1H** could evidence as few as 6 HCP's. Opener's jump to a Game-level contract is not, therefore, as some Partnerships misconstrue as a “*sign-off*.” You should either jump directly to **6H**, start showing controls, else bid “**4-NT**,” if you desire to go through the motions of Blackwood; but holding opening count yourself, do not lose sight of the fact that at the point where Opener, here, shows the 20 HCP's or its equivalent, you then become the “**Captain**” of the bidding process since, at that juncture, Opener has ended his/her descriptive part of the auction. At that point you singularly know that Slam is probable, Opener only knows you could hold as few as 6 HCP's. .

Bridge Tip # 168

When Partner overcalls and the Opponents have opened and supported their own suit, a “*Double*” by you, the Partner of the Overcaller (The “*Advancer*”), is called a “*Responsive Double*”. It signifies some HCP’s, a willingness to compete further, lack of support for Partner’s overcalled suit, and, specifically, support for the two, as-yet,-un-bid suits. It is alertable and must be agreed-upon by Partnerships who desire to use it for this purpose.

<u>You Hold:</u>	K863	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	753		1H	2C	2H
	KT62	?????			
	QT				

Bid “*Double*” (“*Responsive*”) – Partner, South, promises a good suit and, at least, a fair hand. Your “*double*,” in this instance, signifies lack of support for Partner’s overcall suit (Clubs) and both Diamonds and Spades, with a willingness to compete further.

Bridge Tip # 167

Never bid your values twice! Each subsequent bid must show, to Partner, something new about your hand not already disclosed, new in distribution, points, or both!

<u>You Hold:</u>	J753	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
	A85				1D
	Q4	“Double”	Pass	2S	Pass
	AQ62	????			

“*Pass!*” Partner’s jump to 2S is invitational, not forcing, and evidences 9-11 HCP’s. With fewer HCP’s, even as few as 0, he/she would have bid his/her best suit at the cheapest level, and with Game-going values, Partner would have either cue-bid the Opponent’s suit (Diamonds, in this instance), else jump immediately to Game. Since

you have only the HCP's you first evidenced with your **Take-Out Double**; i.e., nothing extra, stop at the part-score contract by simply "*passing*."

**Never, under any circumstances, bid your values twice! Read this Tip Again
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Bridge Tip # 166

When Opener limits his/her hand by virtue of a clearly evident re-bid, and you, as Responder, do not hold any extra values, take control of the bidding sequence and, acting as "Captain" (being the Partner who knows that a game-level contract is not present), make certain that the bidding terminates.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>T753</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	AQ5		1D
	853	1S	3D
	932	????	

"*Pass!*" Partner's jump to **3D**, a jump in his/her opening suit, evidences 16-18 HCP's and at least a 6-card Diamond suit. If it had been a jump in a new suit, it would have been a jump-shift, and opposite your minimum of 6 HCP's, would have been forcing to Game. This jump, however, is limited to no more than 18 HCP's, and with your minimum holding, you must "*pass*."

Bridge Tip # 165

One indispensable bid in bridge is the so-called "*4th-Suit Forcing*." It is artificial, alertable, and is forcing to Game by most Partnerships. When the bidding reflects clearly that the Partnership is in a Game-forcing auction, there is no need to rush to Game unless the final contract is self-evident. If you are not certain, temporize until the right final contract does become self-evident. Develop a Partnership understanding that when the 4th, as-yet, un-bid suit is bid; (1) it is Game-forcing, (2) it is artificial and does not necessarily reflect a stopper or holding in that

suit, (3) it is alertable, and (4) it is seeking more information so that the appropriate, Game-level contract can be determined.

<u>You Hold:</u>	KJ974	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	8		1D
	K752	1S	3C
	Q75	????	

Bid “3H”! (“4th-Suit Forcing”)

With Partner showing 19 or more HCP’s, by virtue of his/her jump shift to **3C**, opposite your 9 HCP’s, the Partnership, from your perspective, is clearly in a Game-forcing auction. Partner knows you have no fewer than 6 HCP’s and is also aware that the Partnership holds Game values.

Partner, however, does not know yet that you have 5-Spades requiring only three Spades for a Spade “*Golden Fit*,” and you do not know if a Heart stopper is present within the Partnership’s combined holdings which would be required for a tenable **3-NT** final contract. Partner may hold one or the other, both, or alternatively, neither. ***You can, therefore, afford to mark time with a 4th Suit Forcing bid of “3H.”*** Partner may **not** “pass!” ***By Partnership agreement this bid is Game-forcing.***

You will then bid **4S** if Partner, holding 3-Spades, bids **3S**. Absent holding 3-Spades, Partner’s next alternative is to bid **3-NT** if he/she holds at least one Heart stopper. Remember, the 4th suit forcing “**3H**” bid by you, is artificial, alertable, and does ***not necessarily*** promise a Heart stopper. Absent either of these two aforementioned responses, Partner will then bid either **4C** or **4D**. You can then raise the bidding to Game in the Minor suit of your choice, Diamonds in this instance. Having exhausted each of these alternatives in sequence, the proper and most likely-makeable contract can be found.

Bridge Tip # 164

When Partner opens 1-NT and you, as Responder, hold Game values (11+ HCP’s), and both a 5-card **and** a 4-card Major, **never** use Jacoby Transfers, **always only bid Stayman**. A 4-4 Major suit “Golden Fit” is preferable to a 5-3 Major suit “Golden Fit,” should both be present.

<u>You Hold:</u>	KT62	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	KQT84		1-NT
	95	"2C"	
	A7		

Bid "2C" (Stayman) looking for a 4-card Major by Opener. If Opener bids either **2H** or **2S**, raise to Game (**4H** or **4S**). If Opener bids "**2D**", denying a 4-card Major suit, jump to the alternate 5-card Major (Hearts in this instance) (**3H**), promising Game values and 5 Hearts. Opener will either raise to **4H** with 3-card Heart support, else bid **3-NT**. "**Jacoby Transfers**" are never used in this instance!

Bridge Tip # 163

As Responder, holding minimum values and equal or near equal, fewer than 4-piece support for both of Opener's two suits bid, go back to Opener's first bid suit, even with as few as 2-pieces.

<u>You Hold:</u>	AQT83	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	J5		1H
	964	1S	2C
	QT7	????	

Bid 2H, giving Opener another opportunity should he/she hold extra values. This "*false preference*" is your only safe bid. You must not raise Clubs, which promises at least 4-pieces and 11 HCP's, or re-bid your Spades with only a 5-card suit. If you held 6-pieces of Spades with minimum values (see below), then a re-bid of Spades (demanding that Opener accept your suit as Trumps) would be in order.

<u>You Hold:</u>	AQT832	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	J5		1H
	96	1S	2C
	QT7	2S	Pass

Bridge Tip # 162

When you, as Responder, support Partner's opening suit at the cheapest level, and Opener then bids a new suit, it is a "Help-Suit" Game-Try. Opener is evidencing extra values and a second outside suit in which he/she is looking for ancillary support in order to reach a possible Game-Level contract. If you hold some honors and support for Opener's second suit go to Game (Example 2), if not, re-bid the agreed-upon suit at the cheapest level and the bidding will then cease (Example 1). Values held outside Opener's second suit are wasted and will not usually produce Game.

Example 1:

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
A85			1S
95			3C
KQ732		2S	
963		<u>3S</u>	Pass

Example 2:

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
A852			1S
95			3C
732		2S	
AJ63		<u>4S</u>	Pass

Bridge Tip # 161

Remember the "Negative Double," the so-called "Responder's Double." It is a very useful bidding tool when Responder holds enough HCP's to respond, too few pieces in any desired suit to bid on his/her own, and, usually, both, as-yet, un-bid suits.

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
Q6				1C	1S
J853					
QJ854		????			
K8					

Bid "Double" ("Negative")! You have enough HCP's to respond, but too few to bid at the 2-Level; nor can you try 1-NT for the Queen of Spades is of doubtful value as a stopper. The "Negative Double" is the only avenue to show, (a) lack of support for Opener's Clubs, enough HCP's (at least 6) to respond, and tolerance for both as-yet, un-bid suits (Diamonds and Hearts in this instance).

Bridge Tip # 160

When you, as Responder, hold minimum values, you must strive to end the bidding at the earliest opportunity, unless Opener shows extra values.

a) <u>You Hold:</u>	6	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	J85		1S
	QJ852	1-NT	2S
	K863	????	

“Pass” and hope for a plus score! Opener holds 6 or more Spades with minimum values. If you stretch by bidding **2-NT**, you may be defeated in that contract if Partner is weak in Clubs and/or Hearts. Worse yet, Opener may bid again and wind up in a hopeless Game. Only if you were to hold 6 or more cards in a side suit, would you be justified in bidding once again, as in the following holding, in an attempt to seek a better contract.

b) <u>You Hold:</u>	6	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	J85		1S
	QJ8542	1-NT	2S
	K86	3D	Pass

When Responder bids **1-NT**, and then a suit bid, at the cheapest level, after Opener shows minimum values, it shows that Responder holds a weak hand with at least 6-Cards or more in the bid suit, and demands that Opener **“pass.”**

c) <u>You Hold:</u>	KT6	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	J85		1C
	QJ854	1D	1S
	86	????	

“Pass!” After Responder bids a new suit at the 1-Level, a non-jump change of suit by Opener (being limited to no more than 18 HCP's) is not forcing. Your Partner, here, would have bid **2S** by making a jump-shift, if he/she had enough HCP's to insist on a Game contract opposite your bid which showed as few as 6 HCP's.

Since you were barely worth your first response, don't give Partner another chance – simply “*Pass!*”

Bridge Tip # 159

When you, as **Responder** to Partner's opening bid of one of a suit, hold only moderate values (an average hand of 8-10 HCP's), you must attempt to limit your strength quickly.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	AJ84		1D
	84	????	
	KJ852		

Bid 1-Heart! You have enough HCP's to bid **2C**, but not enough HCP's to then bid Hearts next (Forcing, since a “*Reverse*” by Responder is forcing to Game), if Opener were to bid **2D** or **2-NT** over **2C**. Thus, do not mention the Clubs and immediately respond **1H** in an attempt to search for a fit in the Major suit. If you did otherwise, there stands a good chance that if Opener were to hold minimum values, you might get too high in the bidding and/or miss the possible Major suit “*Golden-Fit.*”

Bridge Tip # 158

When Opener of one-of-any-suit has, by virtue of his/her second bid, limited his/her holding, Responder automatically becomes the “Captain” and must take control and place the contract as to its denomination and its level.

<u>You Hold:</u>	<u>KT85</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	AK8		1C
	KJ6	1S	2C
	864	???	

Bid 3-NT! Since Opener has limited his/her hand showing fewer than 4-Spades, 6 or more Clubs, and a minimum of 11-15 HCP's, Responder must take control and place the contract. Since Responder holds stoppers in the two, as-yet, un-bid suits (Diamonds and

Hearts in this instance), a No-Trump contract is likely to be best! The Partnership holds a combined total evidencing Game values. Go for it!

Bridge Tip # 157

When holding an unbalanced pattern, show your second suit after Partner responds 1-NT to your first bid. This holds true whether you are playing “Forcing No-Trump” or not.

<u>You Hold:</u>		<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
AK743		1S	1-NT
K9		????	
95			
QT85			

Bid 2C! Since you hold an unbalanced hand, try once again for a Suit contract. Responder can “*pass*”, raise Clubs, return to Spades, or bid two of either red suit (which you will then “*Pass*”). You must ***not*** re-bid you Spades; if Partner holds one Spade and four Clubs, or if Partner holds 6 or more Diamonds, or 6 or more Hearts, you would be to blame if you were to wind up in a terrible **1-NT** contract.

Bridge Tip # 156

Many **Doubles** exist within the armamentarium of most bridge Players; the **Penalty Double**, the **Take-Out Double**, the **Negative Double**, the **Maximal Double**, the **Lightner Double**, the **Penalty Double**, and the **Support Double**, to name just a few. Each is instituted by a Player simply saying, “*double*”; but the meaning of its use is always directly and specifically related to the conditions existing in the bidding process at the time in which it is used. Each has a different use under a very specific set of conditions. Most need not be alerted, some, however, do require one. Some are used more than others.

Two, very useful, little-used, and often confused **Doubles**, are the “**Responsive Double**,” and the “**Rosenkranz Double**.”

1. Both require an “*alert*”
2. Both are utilized by the Partner of a Player who has previously overcalled
3. Both occur after both of the Opponents have bid
4. Each carries a totally different message

A. The **Responsive Double** is utilized by the Partner of an Overcaller (the “**Advancer**”), either (a) when only two suits have previously been bid, one by the Opponents, and one by one’s Partner (Example 1), or when Partner has made a **Take-out Double**, and the Opponent’s bid, likewise, a single supported suit (Example 2).

Example 1: The Responsive Double is used to show points, a lack of support for Partner’s overcalled suit, but the presence of at least 4 or more cards in the two, as-yet, un-bid suits.

<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1D	1H	2D	“Double”

(**Responsive**)

Here South shows fewer than 3 Hearts, at least 8 or more HCP’s, Clubs and Spades (The two un-bid suits), and a desire to further compete.

Example 2:

	<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>
<u>South (You)</u>	1D	“Double”	2D

“Double” (**Responsive**)

Here South shows a desire to compete; i.e., some HCP values, but with no specific suit preference for the remaining, three, as-yet, un-bid suits.

B. The **Rosenkranz Double** is also utilized by the Partner of an Overcaller (the “**Advancer**”), when three suits have previously been bid, two by the Opponents, and one by one’s Partner (Example 3).

Example 3: The Rosenkranz Double is used to show at least 6 or more HCP’s, at least 2-card support for Partner’s overcalled suit, **and** specifically a holding of the Ace or the King of Partner’s bid suit. When used, and because it shows the holding of either the Ace or the King of Partner’s overcall suit, it allows the Partnership, if on defense, to lead either the Ace or the King without giving up a trick.

<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
-------------	------------------------	-------------	--------------------

1D

1H

1S

"Double" (Rosenkranz)

Here, in the Example 3 shown above, South shows support for North's Hearts, a holding which includes either the Ace or the King of Hearts and competitive values. As opposed to Example 4:

Example 4:

	<u>West</u>	<u>North (Partner)</u>	<u>East</u>	
<u>South (You)</u>	1D	1H	1S	2H

Here, in Example 4 shown above, South shows support for North's Hearts, competitive values, but without the presence of either the Ace or the King of Hearts. If a Partnership uses the Rosenkranz Double, then under the circumstances of South's 2H bid, as shown above, the 2H bid is alertable by North; i.e. South has shown support for Hearts but without either the Ace or King. Now, having shown support, but without the Ace or King, a disastrous lead of the suit at trick #1 can be avoided.

Summation: The Value of the Rosenkranz Double is that it offers assistance for Partner, should he/she be on lead following the completion of the bidding, as to whether or not it is safe to lead the overcalled suit say, for example, away from an AQXXX, or, conversely, to avoid leading the suit, even though it was supported by Partner. It can, thusly, save an, otherwise, lost defensive trick, at trick one.

Bridge Tip # 155

In standard bidding practice, opposite any 2-Level response by Responder in a new suit (Weak Jump-Responses excluded), a "Reverse" by Opener (Example 1), is always forcing to Game. This is to be distinguished from a "Reverse" by Opener after a 1-level response from Responder (Example 2), which is forcing for only 1-round.

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
	1H	2C (10+ HCP's)
	2S (17+ HCP's) = "Game forcing"	

Since the combined totality of high-card points referenced by a new-suit, 2-Level response by Responder, added to that of the "***Reverse***" bid by Opener, the Partnership

has evidenced no fewer than Game-level high cards and the Partnership need be committed to, at least, a Game-level contract. North's bid here, therefore, is forcing to Game.

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>North</u> 1C 2D (17+ HCP's)	<u>South</u> 1S (6+ HCP's) = "Forcing for 1-Round"
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Since the combined total here could be as few as 23 HCP's, Opener's Reverse, here, if forcing for only one-round.

When Partnerships are utilizing a "two-over-one," Game-forcing, bidding system, however, a "Reverse" by the Opener is non-existent, since the 2-level response by the Responder, is of itself a Game-forcing sequence anyhow (Example 3).

<u>Example 3:</u>	<u>North</u> 1H 2S (<u>Not</u> a "Reverse")	<u>South</u> 2C (12 [+] HCP's) = "Game-Forcing." The Partnership is in a Game-Forcing mode, anyhow
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Bridge Tip # 154

Many different systems are used in response to Partner's opening bid of a strong, artificial, and forcing "2C". Some, as with "The Standard Method" and "Jacoby Steps" are utilized in describing the number of high-card points held by Responder, while "The '2D'-Waiting" Convention seeks to have the Responder wait until Opener shows his/her suit before the Responder evidences his/her point count, and/or suit preferences.

Many Players feel that, although the point count of Responder's holdings are of value, that the presence of Kings and/or Aces held by Responder is, by far, much more important information for Responder to disseminate to Opener than, say, the presence of either Queens or Jacks. After all, four Queens certainly do not hold the trick-taking capacity, under most circumstances, as do two Aces. Both contain 8 high-card points, but the former holding, one of Aces and Kings, is usually of far greater import to Opener.

The showing of “**Controls**”, by Responder, is, therefore, a much-preferred system by many players, over any of the three other Conventions described above, and is their Convention of choice in response to Opener’s opening bid of a strong, artificial, and forcing “2C”. **This method evidences the presence, or absence, of either Kings or Aces, or both, held by Responder.** Any Ace is considered valued as 2-Controls, while any King is considered valued as 1-Control. Responses to Opener’s “2C” are thus as follows: **(All bids are artificial and require an alert.)**

“2D” = 0 or 1 Control (No Aces and either none, or, at most, one King)

“2H” = 2 Controls (Either one Ace **or** two Kings)

“2S” = 3 Controls (One Ace **and** one King)

“2-NT” = 3 Controls (Specifically, three Kings)

“3C” = 4 Controls (Either two Aces, **or** One Ace and two Kings)

“3D” = 5 Controls (Either two Aces and one King, **or** one Ace and three Kings)

In any of the above-referenced systems of response, the initial bid of “2C” is forcing to a bidding level until at least 1-trick short of Game: i.e., 2-NT, 3 of either Major suit, or 4 of either Minor suit.

Bridge Tip # 153

Today, modern bridge techniques call for “*a new suit by Responder*” and “*a Reverse by Opener*”, both, as forcing for one-round. Responder has shown at least 6 or more HCP’s and Opener 17 or more. Both Partners usually recognize each of these “*forcing-for-one-round*” bids, but some do **NOT** know how to put on the skids if each holds the minimum of their respective high-card point count. When they do hold minimums, the Partnership holds about 23 HCP’s, Game is seldom present; yet, there is strong tendency, if they not be careful, for most Partnerships to wander into an unsound Game-level contract under these conditions when **both** Players have minimum holdings. The “**Ingberman 2-NT**” bid enables Partnerships, under these conditions, to put on the brakes, and to avoid this pitfall, should it become necessary.

Following a 1-Level suit response by Responder, and a Reverse by Opener, a “2-NT” bid, by Responder (The “Ingberman 2-NT” Convention), shows a minimum holding of 5-7 HCP’s by Responder, and seeks to extract whether or not Opener, likewise, holds the minimum of 17-18 HCP’s, thereby allowing the

Partnership to stop itself from overbidding. If Opener holds the minimum, he/she must “puppet” a conventional “3C” response to Responder’s “2-NT” thus requiring the Partnership to stop at the 3-level in whatever suit best applies.

In summary, following a call of one of a suit by Opener, a new suit bid by Responder, and then a “**Reverse**” by Opener, if either Responder does NOT bid “2-NT”, or if Opener does not bid “3C” after the “**Ingberman 2-NT**” is invoked by the Responder, then the Partnership is committed to Game. With a departure from the two Ingberman bids by either Partner, the Partnership is automatically committed to a Game-level contract.

All of the bids under this

Convention require an alert.

<u>Example :</u>	<u>West</u> XX QX AKXX AKJXX 1C 2D (A “ Reverse ”) “3C” (showing a Minimum) <u>Pass</u>	<u>East</u> KQXX XXX JXXX XX 1S <u>“2NT”</u> 3D (To play)
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(“**Ingberman**”)

In this example, had East not bid “2-NT”, or if having done so, if West had not bid “3C” in response, then the Partnership would be committed to an unmakeable, Game-forcing auction.

The situation is different, however, when Responder’s first response is a new suit at the 2-Level, if the Partnership is playing a 2/1 Game-Forcing bidding system. Since a sequence such as 1H, 2D, 2S is Game forcing, a continuation of 2-NT by Responder is not Ingberman. It is natural and shows at least one stopper in Clubs, the un-bid suit.

Playing Bridge Tips

1. Defenders take tricks with their lower or lowest equal. If you, as a Defender, can take a trick with a Jack or a Queen, take it with the Jack. Taking it with the Queen denies the Jack and can screw Partner's thinking. In contract to this, Declarers should take tricks with their higher-ranking of highest equals.

1. After Partner has described his/her hand and you know what the final contract should be, bid it! *The one who knows, goes!* Say Partner opens 1-NT showing 15-17, and you have 18 HCP's (or 12-14, a weak 1-NT opening, and you have 21), reasonably balanced. There are 33 points between the two hands so bid 6-NT! If leaping so high scares you, go to a mirror and say "6-NT" out loud. Do it!

2. Play the cards you are known to hold from the lead and third-hand's play. Say the Queen is led and Dummy holds the X-X-X-X. You, the Declarer, hold the KJ doubleton. When the third hand plays the Ace, your King and Jack are equals; however, third hand knows you have the King from the lead of the Queen, but doesn't know you have the Jack. If you play the King under the Ace, the Jack remains a mystery card. The Opening Leader also knows you have the King from the play of the Ace. Get rid of the King!

3. When fortunate enough to hold a powerful Trump suit and being forced to ruff, tend *not* to ruff with your lowest Trump. That tiny Trump may be your only way to get to the Dummy's hand. Similarly, when drawing Trumps try to keep a flexible entry position using the same technique of not always throwing your lowest possible card as you draw the Trump suit.

Bridge Tip # 151

More Playing Bridge Tips

1. When giving Partner a ruff, the card you lead is suit preference telling Partner which suit to return after the ruff. The return of a relatively high card asks for a return in the higher-ranking of the two remaining suits. A return of your lowest card asks for a return in the lower-ranking of the two remaining

suits. The return of a middle card means you have no preference, or you are asking for a Trump return.

2. **As Declarer, whenever possible, withhold any spot card lower than the one that has been led or lower than the one played to your right.** If the Opponents are using standard card signals, this tip is sure to confuse them. Say the 3 is led against a No-Trump contract and Dummy has the **A-K-5** and you (South) have the **Q-6-2**. You play the King from Dummy and third hand plays the 4. If you play the 6, concealing the deuce, consider the confusion you have caused! Fourth hand will not know if Partner has led from a 4- or 5-card suit (can't see the deuce), and the Opening Leader will not know if Partner is signaling with encouragement or discouragement with something like the **Q-4-2** (can't see the deuce). If you play the deuce at trick one, East knows that West has led from a 4-card suit, and West knows that Partner's 4 is discouraging.
3. **When leading from Dummy to take finesse with a number of equal honors in your hand, finesse with the higher or highest equal.** Say you have the **A-Q-J-10** in your hand and **X-X** in the Dummy. When you lead low from the Dummy and second hand plays low, play the **Queen**, not the **10**. You give away too much information if you play the **10**. If the **10** were to lose to the **King**, second hand will not know you have either the **J** or the **Q**. If the **10** wins, and second hand has the **King**, second hand knows you still have the **Q-J**. However, if the **Queen** were to win, second hand can't be sure you have the **J-10**.
4. **At a Suit contract holding A-X-X facing X-X-X and the suit is led, it is usually right to hold-up and then win the second round of the suit, not the first.** If one of the Opponents has a doubleton, and you have held-up by taking the second trick, not the first, you have effectively cut the communication between the two Opponents. **Take the second trick with the Ace, not the first. This, of course, assumes that you have no place to put these losers, or an even greater threat to making your contract exists and you have concern for a possible even more dangerous switch of suits by the Defenders..**

The best lead against a 6-NT contract is often very different than against a 3-NT contract. Against a 6-NT contract one should avoid leading away from an honor unless you hold a sequence.

You hold: KT763
 JT8
 85
 Q92

Example 1: Against 3-NT: Lead the 6 of Spades - 4th best from your longest and strongest.

Example 2: Against 6-NT: Lead the J of Hearts. If the Opponents have about 33 HCP's, guess how many Partner has? Lead the safest card possible! Avoid giving Declarer an almost assuredly free finesse by leading aggressively against a 6-NT contract.

Bridge Tip # 149

More Playing Bridge Tips

1. When returning the suit Partner has led, with two cards remaining return the higher; with three cards remaining, return the lowest. Say, for example, Partner leads low and Dummy has all low cards. If you hold A-10-6, play the Ace and return the 10. If you hold A-10-6-3, play the Ace and return the 3.

2. When leading a suit, one usually leads low from an honor; i.e., an Ace, King, or Queen, and suggests that a continuation of that suit at a later time is likely to be advantageous to the defense. If Partner leads a low card in one suit, gets in and then shifts to a low card (showing strength) in another suit, Partner desires a return in the second suit. If Partner, alternatively, shifts to a high card in a second suit (top of nothing, perhaps), he/she is asking for a return in the first suit. Got it?

3. When there is a short side suit in Dummy and Declarer draws all of Dummy's Trumps the inference is that Declarer does not have any losers in that suit to ruff. Translation: *It is safe to discard that suit!*

4. When discarding, keep length parity with the Dummy. If Dummy holds A-K-Q-8 in a suit, and you hold four pieces, one of which is higher than Dummy's lowest, and, therefore, could take a trick, be careful about discarding from that suit. **Be very careful!! Don't!!!**

5. When playing in a Suit contract, Declarer uses two main techniques to garner extra tricks: (1), setting up a long suit in Dummy, and (2), trumping losers in the short hand (usually the Dummy).

- a. If Dummy comes down with a long and a short suit and you have the long suit bottled up, lead Trumps because the long suit is not useable.
 - b. If it appears that the long suit is useable, play an attacking defense going for outside tricks as soon as possible.
 - c. If the Dummy comes down balanced, Declarer has no place to get rid of losers and will, therefore, potentially lose them. In this instance both you and Partner should adopt a passive defense. Avoid breaking new suits if possible. Let Declarer have the tricks to which he/she is entitled, and just sit back and wait for your tricks – Your day will come!
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Bridge Tip # 148

A “*Double*” by you, when your RHO bids either a Stayman “2C” (Example 1), or a Jacoby transfer bid (Example 2), or a response to Blackwood (Example 3), are **all**, lead-directing “*doubles*.” **A “double” of any artificial bid is a Lead Directing Double. An absence of a “double” over any artificial bid by the Opponents, therefore, carries a negative inference that you, necessarily, have no particular interest in that suit being led.**

Example 1:

	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>
	1-NT	Pass	“2C”	Double
<u>hold:</u>	XXX			<u>You</u>
XX				

XXX

AKJXX

Example 2:

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>
1-NT	Pass	"2H"	Double

You

hold: XXX

AQTXX

XXX

XX

Example 3:

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>
1S	Pass	2H	Pass
3S	Pass	4S	Pass
4-NT	Pass	"5D"	Double

You

hold: XX

XXX

KQTX

XXXX

Bridge Tip # 147

After Partner opens the bidding with one of a suit, and your RHO overcalls 1-NT (showing 15-17 HCP's), you should "*double*" for penalty if you hold 8 or more HCP's (See Example 1). Bidding any new suit denies the strength to "*double*;" i.e., fewer than 8 HCP's, usually with a 5-card or longer suit (Example 2), shows five or more cards in the suit bid, and is not forcing.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
1S	1-NT	????	

Example 1 **You hold:** TX
 KJXX
 AJXXX ("Double!" You have them
 outgunned)
 JT

Example 2 **You hold:** XX
 XXXX
 AJXXX (Respond 2D - not forcing - to
 play)
 XX

Bridge Tip # 146

A 2-NT response to Partner's Take-Out Double shows 10-12 HCP's (Example 2), and is not forcing, it is invitational. A 1-NT response to a Take-out Double shows 6-9 HCP's (Example 1), and is similar to a 1-NT response to any opening bid of one of a suit. No Trump responses to any Take-Out Double guarantee at least one stopper (hopefully two), in the Opponent's bid suit. You do not need stoppers in the other suits. Partner is likely to have them for his/her Take-Out Double. A 3-NT response evidences 13 (+) HCP's (Example 3) with at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit.

	<u>West</u> 1S	<u>North</u> Double	<u>East</u> Pass	<u>South (You)</u> ???
<u>Example 1:</u>			<u>You hold:</u>	KJXX XX QTX (Respond 1- NT) JXXX
<u>Example 2:</u>			<u>You hold:</u>	KJXX XX QTX (Respond 2- NT) AJXX

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>You hold:</u>	KJXX	
		QX	
		QTX	(Respond 3-
NT)			
		AJXX	

Bridge Tip # 145

When responding to Partner's "Take-Out Double" with 12 or more HCP's, and no specific preference of suits to bid, cue-bid the Opponent's suit to show a strong hand, and then bid your suit(s) later. After this cue-bid, any new suit by you is forcing.

You (South) hold: KQXX
 AJXX
 QXX
 XX

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1C	Double	Pass	???

Bid **"2C"** to show a big hand (12 or more HCP's). You and Partner then bid 4-card suits up the line until you connect in a 4-4 Major suit fit. If Partner bids **2D**, bid **2H**; if Partner bids **2H**, raise to **4H**; and if Partner bids **2S**, raise to **4S**.

The one who knows, goes!

Bridge Tip # 144

The requirements for overcalling in the Direct (2nd) Seat, relative to an Opening bid by the opposition is standard (Example 1); any reasonable 5-card suit and at least 8 or more HCP's if the overcall can be made at the 1-Level (your suit is higher-ranking than

Opener's call), and 10, or more, HCP's if it is needed to be made at the 2-Level (your suit is lower-ranking than Opener's call).

Example 1:

	<u>East</u> 1S	<u>South (You)</u> 2H	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
<u>South Holds:</u>	XX	(Overcall 2H - Here, in the 2 nd Seat with your RHO having opened 1S,		
	AQXXX	You make a reasonable overcall with a 5-Card suit and at least 10 HCP's or more)		
	KX			
	QXXX			

In the Balancing (4th) Seat, relative to an Opening bid by the opposition, the requirements for coming into the bidding are more relaxed (Example 2). One can overcall with fewer HCP's and/or even a 4-Card suit.

Example 2:

	<u>East</u> 1S	<u>South</u> Pass	<u>West</u> Pass	<u>North</u> 2H
				(Here North, is in the Balancing Seat, and this bid can be made with fewer HCP's, with even a 4-card Suit, or both if necessary so as to keep the bidding Open. (XX AQXX KXX XXX)

In a contested auction, however, where both Opponents have bid, one must be careful in the 4th Seat (Example 3). Here, Partner has not yet chosen to bid, the Opponents show at least 20 or more HCP's, and Opener to your left, if strong, can "**double**" you for penalties, if so desired. Under these conditions, in order to safely overcall, one should have at least a 6-Card suit and/or at least opening count.

Example 3:

	<u>East</u> 1S	<u>South</u> Pass	<u>West</u> 2C	<u>North</u> ????
				(Here North, is in the direct Seat, relative to West's response to Opener's 1S, and if North chooses to overcall in this ongoing auction, East is in position to " double " for penalties.)

North, with the following, should "**Pass**," for now, and possibly come into the auction later, if the opportunity arises, should E-W abandon the auction at a reasonably low level.

XX
AQXXX

Bridge Tip # 143

Confusion often exists when using “*Jacoby Transfer*” bids as to whether Opener should call out the word “*Alert*” or “*Transfer*” when hearing Responder's choice of bids. When Responder is transferring to Hearts (a “2D” call by Responder), or to Spades (a “2H” call by Responder), there is little misunderstanding that the appropriate word, under these circumstances, used by the 1-NT Opener, when hearing such transfer bids by his/her Partner, is indeed the word “*Transfer*.” This is universally correct and infrequently misused.

The confusion and error arises, however, when a “2S” bid is called by Responder. In this instance, the two possible verbalizations, “*Alert*,” or “*Transfer*,” are not interchangeable, in that one, or the other, is singularly correct, depending upon what the Responder is telegraphing to Opener by his/her bid of “2S,” based upon their Partnership agreement.

Some insist that, in this instance, they should always say “*Transfer*.” Others feel that they should always say “*Alert*,” and some think it does not matter at all; i.e., that the two words can be used interchangeably. **This is absolutely not correct**, and is far from the truth. It **does indeed matter**, depending upon the Partnership understanding as to what exactly the Responder is signaling when he/she bids “2S” in response to Partner's opening bid of 1-No-Trump.

1. **If the Partnership agreement is that a “2S” response to a 1-No-Trump opening bid directs the Opening Bidder to say 3C, (a “Puppet” Bid), without advanced knowledge as to whether the Responder (a) really wants Clubs (Responder will then “pass”), or (b) really wants Diamonds (Responder will “correct” the “puppet” bid of “3C” to 3D, if that is the desired spot by Responder), then the correct verbalization, by Opener, to the Opponents, is “Alert”** In effect, Opener is saying to the Opponents: “I am supposed to bid ‘3C,’ and I do not know at this point whether Responder really wants Clubs or Diamonds – Responder will “pass” if he/she likes Clubs, else “correct” to 3D if that is Responder's choice.”) Under these circumstances, the singularly correct call from Opener is “*Alert*,” - saying the word “*Transfer*,” under these conditions, is absolutely incorrect.

2. **Alternatively, if the Partnership is playing 4-way Transfers, and their agreement is that a “2S” response, by Responder, to Partner's opening bid of 1-No-Trump, absolutely signifies a Club desire by Responder, then the proper verbalization by Opener is, here, to say “Transfer.”** Under these conditions, Opener is sure, without further clarification, that the Responder's intent is to have the Partnership play in Clubs. Under these latter circumstances, the singularly correct call from Opener is "***Transfer***," - saying the word "***Alert***," under these conditions, is absolutely incorrect.

3. **A third possibility of Partnership agreement might be that a “2S” response by Responder to Partner’s opening bid of 1-No-Trump signifies a convention called “Minor Suit Stayman.” In this instance, Opener, in order to be accurate must say the word “Alert.”** In this instance Responder is looking to have Opener inform Responder as to which of the two Minor suits Opener has greater length. Opener bids “3C” if he/she has equal or greater length in Clubs, and an artificial “2-NT,” if Opener has greater length in Diamonds. Responder can then use this information to proceed to a possible Minor suit Slam, if that be Responder’s intent, else “*pass*” or “*correct*” to “3C” or “3D,” if no Slam interest is present.

Summary: The use of signaling to the Opponents the meaning of Partner's call to one's opening 1-NT bid varies with the Partnership agreement as to the meaning of Responder's intent. If Opener (as in 1. above), knows that he/she is obligated to simply "***puppet***" "3C," without advanced knowledge as to whether Responder will either "***pass***" or "***correct***" to 3D, then the appropriate verbalization to the Opponents is "***Alert***." Alternatively, (as in 2. above), if Opener knows that Responder's intended suit is Clubs, then the correct informing-signal to the Opponents is "***Transfer***." The Opponents are entitled to know the difference, and to accomplish this, the correct choice of the two possible words used is imperative! Finally, (as in 3, above), if Opener knows that Responder might be seeking Opener’s preference as to which Minor suit carries greater length, and/or is uncertain if Responder is just attempting to end the auction in “3C” or “3D,” the correct verbalization to the Opponent’s is with the use of the word, “***Alert***.”

The correct and appropriate verbalization by Opener, either the words “***Alert***,” or “***Transfer***,” is **not** interchangeable. **The correct one is based upon the Partnership meaning, as to what Responder is asking Opener to do, and why.**

Bridge Tip # 142

When responding to Partner's Take-Out Double, one should jump the bidding in one's long suit, with 9-11 *revalued* points. Any un-bid 5-card suit is worth 1 extra point, and an un-bid 6-card suit is worth 3 extra points. Do not count points for Jacks or Queens in suits the Opponents have bid.

You (South) hold: AQTXX
 QXX
 XX
 TXX

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1D	Double	Pass	???

Jump to **2S**, count one extra point for the 5th Spade. If you were to bid **1S** it would have shown 0-8 revalued points. Also, a jump bid by Responder to a Take-Out Double by Partner is not forcing.

With 12 or more HCP's, Responder should either jump to Game, else cue-bid the suit bid by the Opponent, both to exhibit Game values when coupled with the Doubler's opening count.

Bridge Tip # 141

Many Partnerships have an understanding that an opening bid of "3-NT" is a "Gambling 3-NT" attempt. It shows 9-11 HCP's and a 7-card self-sufficient Minor suit holding, (Clubs or Diamonds), headed by the AKQ (Example 1) Note that any more than an outside Queen would be sufficient to satisfy the Rule of 20, thereby increasing the hand's strength to a normal opening bid of "1" of the Minor" opening bid – (Example 2).

Example 1: X
 QXX (Open "3-NT" – A "Gambling NT" Game attempt)
 XX
 AKQXXXX

Example 2: X
 KXX (Open 1D – Not "3-NT")
 AKQXXXX

XX

In this system, if Partner feels he/she does not have the ability to run nine quick tricks by holding stoppers in the other three suits and an ability to get to Opener's hand by virtue of having at least one piece of Opener's presumed long Minor suit, then the Partner exits the attempt by bidding "4C" which allows the Partnership to escape, by Opener either "*passing*" or "*converting*" to 4D, whichever is Opener's long Minor suit. The presumption here is that the Opponents have Game, and that either the 3-NT contract will make, or that the 4C or 4D sacrifice will yield a better Duplicate result.

What is seldom discussed, however, is that this Convention is only utilized in positions one, two, or three. In these positions, the logical presumption holds that if the Opponents can make Game, a sacrifice contract makes logical sense. In position four, however, such a presumption makes no sense. If one truly believed that the Opponent's could make a positive score, than "*passing*" would be the best solution, since the bidding would end and neither team would make a plus score. Therefore, a 3-NT opening bid in fourth position, after three consecutive passes, is not a "Gambling 3-NT" attempt, rather a perceived attempt to truly make 3-NT and does not request the normal 4C or 4D exit bids by Partner (Example 3). Such 4th seat openings of 3-NT usually represent the holding of a long self-sufficient Minor suit, as seen below.

Example 3:

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>
Pass	Pass	Pass	?????
			AXX (Open "3-NT")
			KX
			X
			AKQXXXX

Bridge Tip # 140

A Take-Out Double by a "*previously-passed*" hand shows 9-11 HCP's with shortness in the Opener's suit. If the Opponents have bid two suits, the "*double*" promises at least 4-card support for both of the un-bid suits.

You (South) hold: AJXX

XX
KJTXX
XX

<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
Pass	1C	Pass	1H
"Double"			

Your Double, here, shows both un-bid suits. A 2D overcall might lose a Spade fit, should it be present. Note: A "Sandwich-NT," (a distributional Take-Out) call would also show the same 5-5 or 5-4 in the two, as-yet, un-bid suits, assuming it is played by the Partnership

Bridge Tip # 139

It is common today for Bridge Players to interfere over a 1-NT opening bid by the Opponents. The number of Conventions available to accomplish this abound. They include, but are not necessarily limited to, *Natural Bids*, "TWERB," "Cappelletti," "Brozel," and "DONT," among others. Normally, the Partner to the opening No-Trump Bidder becomes the Captain as to whether or not the Partnership continues in the bidding process. The question may arise, however, if the Opponents do interfere, followed by a "double" from Opener, what is the significance of Opener's "Double;" is it for Take-Out or is it for Penalties, and under what conditions is Opener likely to make such a call? The answers are as follows:

The meaning of a "double" by a 1-NT Opener subsequent to interference bids by the Opponents depends upon the relative table position of Opener in relation to the interfering bid. If the interference is on Opener's left, his/her "Double" is for Take-Out (Example 1). If the interference is on Opener's right, his/her "double" is for penalties (Example 2).

(In each Example below, the bidding begins with North opening with a 1-NT call.)

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<u>EAST</u>	<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>WEST</u>
Pass		2H
	<u>SOUTH</u>	
	Pass	

Bridge Tip # 138

When the bid to your right is strong, a jump by you is weak (Example 1); and when the bid to your right is weak, a jump by you is strong (Example 2).

Example 1:

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>	<u>North</u>
1C	Dbl (Strong)	2S (Weak)	

Example 2:

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>	<u>North</u>
1C	2D (Weak)	3S (Strong)	

Bridge Tip # 137

With few exceptions, with two 5-card suits, open with the higher ranking-suit, respond in the higher-ranking suit, and overcall in the higher-ranking suit. Never worry about which suit is the stronger.

You hold: X
JTXXX Open 1H, not 1D, respond 1H to an
opening 1C by Partner, or overcall
AKQXX 1H if the opening bid were 1C by
your RHO (Right-hand Opponent).
KX (Note: If played by the opposition,
an "Unusual-NT" call of "2-NT" would
also work here to show this 2-suited
Diamond and Heart holding.)

Exception: If the two suits are Clubs and Spades and the hand holds a weak opening count, opening 1C and then re-bidding Spades twice is preferred, as if the Club suit holding were 6-pieces, and the Spades, 5. This is used to avoid a so-called "high-reverse," if the bidding had alternatively gone 1S, (2D, 2H), 3C, which would show 17 (+) HCP's.

Bridge Tip # 136

Conventional wisdom dictates that other than a pre-emptive jump-response showing fewer than 6 HCP's (Some Partnerships play this shows 19 (+), any bid by a Responder to a one-of-a-suit opening by Partner shows 6 or more HCP's. The question then arises, are there any conditions, other than when Partnerships use Preemptive weak jump-responses, when Responder should bid with fewer than 6 HCP's? **Answer: Yes, there are two!**

1. **When Responder has 4-5 HCP's and one or none of Opener's Minor suit opening.** When using either a "Short Club" or "Preferred Minor" system, oft times, Opener can have as few as two or three in his or her Minor suit opening. So as to eliminate the potential that the Partnership is playing in a 4-5 piece Trump Suit contract, should the Opponents "**pass**" the bidding out, Responder should try to bid something when holding 4-5 HCP's and a void, singleton, or doubleton in Opener's Minor suit.

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
1C	Pass	?????

XXX (Respond 1H and hope you
do not find Opener with 20 HCP's such that Opener bids Game.)

KJXX
XXXX
XX

-
2. **When Responder has specifically any Ace or Ace/Jack as his/her 4 or 5 HCP holding.** An Ace has an assured (with few exceptions) one trick-taking capacity. This card is indisputably helpful to Opener and, as a result, entitles Responder to take a minimum response of some sort. Respond to Opener's one-of-a-suit opening call with any 6 or more HCP's as well as with any Ace or Ace-Jack holding.

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
1D	Pass	?????

again.)

AXXX (Respond **1S**! Then do not bid

XXX
X
(J) XXXX

Bridge Tip # 135

Since the object of bidding in the Game of bridge is to describe your hand to Partner, and he or she to you, as concisely and efficiently as possible, there is usually one bid from all others that achieves this purpose on any particular hand. Oft times, however, although two or more bids are feasible with any specific holding, one bid usually stands out, for one or any number of reasons, as the best alternative.

Such is the case when holding a hand as seen here (assuming the Partnership does not employ a weak or "**Precision**," 12-14 HCP, opening **1-NT**).

XXX An opening of **1D** is, with this holding, universal. As "**Murphy's Law**" will usually dictate a response by Responder **KX** of **1H** is likely. Two re-bids, upon reflection, seem feasible: either a re-bid of **2C**, else **1-NT**.

AXXX Many Players seem to automatically defer to a **2C** response due to a lack of a Spade stopper, and as a result are

AQXX naturally deterred from an alternate **1-NT** call. Do not fall into this trap! Although a **2C** re-bid may work out in some instances, statistically, a **1-NT** call is preferred. A **2C** re-bid would show at least 9-cards in the two Minor suits.

With an evenly balanced hand, and 12-14 HCP's, do not re-bid **2C** after opening **1D** unless you hold at least nine (9) cards in the Minor suits. Re-bid **1-NT** even without a stopper in the as-yet-un-bid Major when holding only eight (8) (See examples below).

(a) **AXX**

XX Open **1D** and re-bid **1-NT** over a response of **1H** or **1S**.

KQXX

KJXX

(b) **KX**

XX

Open **1D** and re-bid **2C** over a response of **1H** or **1S**.

AQXXX
KJXX

(c) KX

XX

Open 1D and re-bid 2C. Note, Opener should not use the "**length before strength**" edict here because to open AQXX 1C and then re-bid 2D would Signify a "**Reverse**" evidencing 17 or more HCP's.

KJXXX

(d) AX

X

Open 1D and re-bid 2C.

AQXXX

KXXXX

Bridge Tip # 134

When responding to Partner's **Take-Out Double**, a No-Trump response promises at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit, preferable two. You do not need stoppers in all of the other suits, however, in order to bid No-Trump. In response to Partner's **Take-Out Double**, a 1-NT response shows, 7-9 HCP's, a 2-NT response evidences 10-12 HCP's, and a 3-NT response shows 13 or more HCP's.

	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>
	1S	"Double"	Pass	?????
(1)	KXXX	XXX	XXXX	XX
(Bid 2D - Your hand is too weak to bid No-Trump, notwithstanding the stopper in Spades)				
(2)	KQX	QJX	JXXX	XXX
(Bid 1-NT)				
(3)	AQXX	KX	XXX	QXXX
(Bid 2-NT)				
(4)	AQX	KXX	JXX	KXXX
(Bid 3-NT)				

Bridge Tip # 133

When Partner bids two suits and you have an equal number of cards in each suit, take Partner back to the first suit, if you have no other bid.

<u>South (Partner)</u>		<u>North (You)</u>
1H		1S
2D		???
<u>You hold:</u>	AXXX	
	KT	(Bid 2H)
	JX	
	XXXX	

A direct raise by Responder of a second suit bid by Opener promises 4-card support.

<u>South (Partner)</u>		<u>North (You)</u>
1D		1S
2H		???
<u>You hold:</u>	AXXXX	
	KTXX	(Bid 3H)
	JX	
	XX	

Bridge Tip # 132

There is often confusion as to which suit to bid in response to Partner's **Take-Out Double**, especially if holding a weak hand and both a 4-card Major suit in addition to a 5-card, or longer Minor suit.

- (1) **With a 4-card Major suit and a 5-card Minor suit, plus a hand too weak to jump or cue-bid, answer in the Major.** (Example 1)
- (2) **If the Minor suit length is equal or 1-card longer, bid the Major; if the Minor suit is two or more cards longer, bid the Minor.** (Example 2)

<u>(You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
	1H	"Double"	Pass	?????
1S)	(1) KXXX	XX XX	QXXXX	(Respond
	(2) KXXX	XX X	QXXXXX	(Respond 2C
- You can bid Spades later if given the opportunity.)				

Bridge Tip # 131

When responding to Partner's Take-Out Double in a suit, make a non-jump response with 0-8 HCP's (implying Game is unlikely unless the Doubler has substantially more HCP's than a minimum opening count); make a non-forcing jump-response with 9-11 HCP's (implying Doubler's side has the majority of HCP's and is invitational to Game); and make a cue-bid or bid Game with 12 or more HCP's (insuring a Game contract).

	<u>East</u>		<u>South</u>		<u>West</u>		<u>North (You)</u>
	1H		"Double"		Pass		?????
(a)	AJXXX	QXX	QXX	XX	(Bid 1S - Do not count the "Q" of Hearts. If the Queen of Hearts were the Queen of Clubs, then bid 2S.)		
(b)	AQXX	XXX	KXX	XXX	(Bid 2S - even on a 4-card suit.)		
(c)	AXX	XX	AJXX	KJXX	(Bid "2H" - Too strong for merely a jump-response.)		
(d)	AXX	AX	KXXX	QJXX	(Bid 3-NT)		
(e)	AJXX	X	AXXX	KJXX	(Bid 4S)		

Bridge Tip # 130

Jump Cue-bids as overcall bids mean different things dependent upon whether they are in Minor or Major suits.

A direct jump-overcall in the Opponent's Minor suit is natural. It shows an excellent 6-card or any 7-card suit with less than opening count and is essentially a Minor suit, natural overcall. If one were, alternatively, bid the Minor suit at the 2-level, it would represent a Michaels Cue-Bid.

<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>
1D	? AX X KQXXXXX XXX - (Bid 3D and let the

Opponent's sort out what to do. They may not know that a "double" by the Responder in this sequence is for Take-Out. (*"Shhh! Don't tell them!"*)

(Remember, had East overcalled "2D", it would have been a Michael's Cue-bid showing either a very weak or a very strong 5-5 or better in the Majors.)

A direct jump-overcall in the Opponent's Major suit, however, is not natural. It shows 8 or 9 winners in your own hand, and asks Partner to bid 3-NT with a stopper in the Opener's Major suit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>
1H	? AX XX KX AKQJXXX - (Bid "3H". With a Heart

stopper, Partner bids 3-NT. If Partner fails to bid 3-NT, East (the Overcaller) can bid his/her Clubs, in this instance, later.)

Bridge Tip # 129

When, and when not, to make a **Take-Out Double** is important and sometimes confusing. In general, the ideal distribution for a takeout Double is (4-4-4-1) or (5-4-4-0) when you hold either a singleton or void in the Opponent's bid suit. Under these ideal circumstances, one can have as few as 9-11 HCP's. As one's distribution becomes less ideal, however, greater HCP strength is needed, and, at times, a *Takeout Double* is even ill advised.

With 12-15 HCP's, and 4-4 in the Major suits and 3-2 in the Minor suits, "double" if the Opponent opens with a Minor.

KXXX AQXX XXX AX ("Double" over 1C or 1D; "Pass" over 1H or 1S)

With 16-18 HCP's, and 4-4 in the Major suits, "double" if the Opponent opens your short suit; otherwise overcall "1-NT."

AJXX QJXX AQX KX ("Double" over 1C; Bid "1-NT" over 1D)

With a (4-4-3-2) distribution that does not included two 4-card Major suits, and subsequent to the Opponent opening one of your 4-card suits:

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u> (You)	
1H	?	a) XX KJXX AKXX KXX ("Pass" with 14 or fewer HCP's)
		b) KX AQXX AJXX JXX (Bid "1-NT" with exactly 15 HCP's) (If you have two stoppers in their suit; otherwise "Pass")
		c) KX AXXX AKXX QJX (Bid "1-NT" with 16-18 HCP's) (Plus a stopper in their suit)
		d) KX QXXX AJX AKQJ ("Double" with 19+ HCP's)

It is too risky to make a Take-Out Double with a small doubleton in an un-bid Major suit. In order to successfully do so, one should hold 19 or more HCP's.

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u> (You)	
1C	?	a) XX AQXX AJXX AJX (Overcall 1-NT Directly) (You are not strong enough to "double" and then bid 1-NT over an anticipated Spade response)
		b) XX AQXX AKJX AJX ("Double"! If Partner bids 1S, then re-bid 1-NT, showing 18 or more HCP's)

A Take-Out Double followed by a 1-NT re-bid is stronger than overcalling 1-NT directly.

Bridge Tip # 128

Most Partnerships today utilize the "DONT" Convention over an Opponent's 1-NT opening bid. Often, however, subsequent to Partner's "DONT" bid (either a one-suited "double", else the lower-ranking suit of a "Two-Suited Hand"), the Partner of the opening 1-NT will either bid his/her own 5-card suit, else "double" for penalties. The Partner of the one who invokes the "DONT" bid should never have to guess what the unnamed suit is. **The only way to get the "DONT" Bidder to show his/her unnamed suit is to either "double", else "re-double."**

After one's "DONT" two-suited overcall and then a subsequent bid by the Opponent (Responder to Opener), the meaning of the "Advancer's" (Partner to the Overcaller) possible bids are as follows:

- **Pass** = He/she is content to play the current contract.
- **Re-double (Over the Opponent's Double)** = He/she prefers to play in your second suit and wants you to bid it.
- **Double (of any natural or artificial bid)** = He/she wants you to bid your second suit (This bid shows tolerance for all un-bid suits).
- **Any Suit bid** = Natural, showing his/her own, long, 6-card or longer suit

Bridge Tip # 127

Under most circumstances, against a No Trump contract, when Partner has bid a suit, and/or no other lead looks more promising, the Partner on lead will lead from his/her Partner's bid suit. A singleton or the top of a doubleton, in Partner's bid suit if held, low from three or more to any **Q**, **K**, or **A**, top of a sequence, or "*the second highest*," from three or more without a high honor. Alternatively, if Partner has not bid any suit, the Partner on lead will lead forth from his/her longest and strongest suit, assuming that he/she has at least one outside entry to access his/her hand once the suit is, hopefully, established.

Other than these instances denoted above, certain specific leads ask Partner for a specific action. They include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. The lead of an Ace against a No Trump contract of a suit bid by the Partner on lead, asks Partner to dump his/her highest card.
2. The lead of a King against a No Trump contract asks Partner for an attitude signal – a high card denotes encouragement, a low card discouragement.
3. The lead of a Queen against a No Trump contract asks Partner to play the Jack or the Ace, if Partner holds same, so as to encourage a continuance by the leading Partner should the leading Partner hold, specifically, either the KQT9 or KQTX.

Bridge Tip # 126

It is customarily accepted that when Partner opens with a weak 2-Bid, any new suit by Partner is forcing, and that a **2-NT** call by Responder is conventional (also forcing) asking for whatever description Opener has to relate to Partner based upon their mutual understanding of the several available conventional responses which deal with this scenario. **Any Raise in Opener's suit is, thus, not forcing.** (“**RONF**”) = A **R**aise is the **O**nly **N**on-**F**orce!

Responder's actions to the two above-mentioned, forcing bids are thus based upon previous agreement. There is, however, notwithstanding these conventional responses, one further important response for Opener to take in response to a “**2-NT**” forcing response from Responder in one specific instance.

In response to a forcing “2-NT” conventional call from Responder, an Opener who has opened a weak 2-Bid and who holds AKQXXX or longer in his/her opening suit, must respond 3-NT to Responder's forcing “2-NT” call. Such a response specifically relates a 6-Card or longer suit by Opener headed by all three (3) top honors.

You hold: XX
 AKQXXX
 XX
 XXX

North (You)
 2H
 “3-NT”

South (Partner)
 “2-NT” (Forcing)

Bridge Tip # 125

When you have overcalled and Partner changes suits, (especially when changing it from your Major suit overcall to one of the Minor suits), thereby denying support for your suit, do not re-bid your suit unless you have a strong 6-card holding.

<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
1H	1S	Pass	2D
Pass	????		

You Hold: (a) AQXXX XXX X AXXX

(b) AQTXXX XXX X AXX

With (a) **Pass!** Partner has denied Spade support and you do not have Diamonds. Get out of the bidding while you can. Partner's 2D bid is not forcing. The only forcing bid Responder to any Overcaller can make is a cue-bid of the Opponent's suit. This shows support for your overcall suit and an interest in Game if you hold more than minimum overcall values. All others are not forcing.

With (b) **Bid 2S!** You have a strong 6-card suit. Go for it!

Be aware, however, that if Partner changes suits to a Major suit from your Minor suit overcall, as in Example (c), he/she might still have support for your Minor suit overcall but is first testing the waters for a possible 30 points-per-trick contract rather than your 20 points-per-trick attempt.

<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
1C	1D	Pass	1S
2C	Pass	Pass	2D

North Holds: (c) AQXXX XXX QXXX X

Bridge Tip # 124

When holding strong primary Trump support for Partner's suit, make a jump-raise in Partner's suit regardless of how weak you are on the outside. This holds true whether Partner has overcalled, or is Opening Bidder. Do not make a single raise.

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
	1H	1S	P/2C/2D/2H	???

You Hold: AQTXX XX XXX
XXX (Bid 3S, preemptive, regardless of what East does)

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
--------------	-------------	--------------------	-------------

<u>Example 2:</u>	1H 3D	1S Pass	Pass ???	2S
XXXX (Bid 5D, <u>NOT</u> 4D!)	<u>You Hold:</u>		XXX X AQTXX	

Bridge Tip # 123

All bridge Players use some form of **Blackwood**, whether it be the standard form, or **Key Card**, or **Roman Key Card**. There are few occasions, and some confusion, however, as to where and when a bid of **4-NT** is other than asking for Aces. In these exceptional instances, the bid of **4-NT** is quantitative, and asks the Opener to either “*pass*” with a minimum (15 HCP count in **Standard American** and 10 HCP’s in the **ACOL System**), else to proceed to **6-NT** when holding a maximum (16-17 HCP count in **Standard American** and 11-12 HCP’s in the **ACOL System**). **The two occasions when a bid of “4-NT” is quantitative; i.e., does not ask for Aces, are as follows:**

<u>Example 1:</u> (After “1-NT” Opening)	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
	1-NT	“4-NT” (<u>Quantitative</u>)

<u>Example 2:</u> (After Stayman)	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
	1-NT 2D, 2H, 2S	“2C” (Stayman) “4-NT” (<u>Quantitative</u>)

The confusing instances where a bid of “4-NT” is qualitative, i.e. asking for Aces, not quantitative, as above, are as follows:

<u>Example 1:</u> (After Jacoby) Transfers to Hearts or Spades, respectively)	<u>North</u> 1-NT 2H or 2S (Respectively)	<u>South</u> “2D” or “2H” (Jacoby) “4NT” (<u>Qualitative</u> - Asking for Aces)
--	--	--

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
(After Jacoby Transfers to Hearts or Spades, respectively) (and " Check-Back ")	1-NT	"2D" or "2H" (Jacoby
	2H or 2S	"3-NT" (Check-Back)
(Holding only 5 Pieces)	(Respectively)	
Asking for Aces)	4H or 4S	"4-NT" (<u>Qualitative</u> -
	(Respectively)	
	(Holding 3 or 4 Pieces	

<u>Example 3:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
(After a Texas Transfer Transfers)	1-NT	"4D" or "4H" (Texas
Asking for Aces)	4H/4S	"4-NT" (<u>Quantitative</u> -

Bridge Tip # 122

It is important for Partnerships to understand, and have a clear idea as to the HCP ranges shown by a No-Trump response following Partner's 1-Level, suit overcall, subsequent to an opening bid of one-of-a-suit by the Opponents.

In addition to at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit, a No Trump response to Partner's overcall of one of a suit shows the following:

- (a) A 1-NT response to Partner's 1-level overcall shows 8-11 HCP's
- (b) A 2-NT response shows 12-15 HCP's
- (c) A 3-NT response shows 16-18 HCP's.

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1C	1S	P	???

You Hold: a) **XX AQX KXXX JXXX** (Bid 1-NT) - Competitive
 b) **XX AJX AXXX AXXX** (Bid 2-NT) - Invitational,
 Not Forcing
 c) **JX AJX KQJX KXXX** (Bid 3-NT) - Game values

Bridge Tip # 121

In response to Partner's overcall, a change of suit by Responder to the Overcaller is not forcing. Furthermore, a change to a Minor over Partner's Major suit overcall tends to deny support for Partner's Major (Example 1), whereas a change from Partner's Minor suit overcall to a Major does not necessarily deny support for Partner's Minor suit (Example 2). In the latter instance, Responder might, first, be attempting to find a fit for his/her 5-card Major suit before supporting Partner's Minor suit.

Example 1: **You Hold:** **XX JXX AKXXX KXX**

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1H	1S	P	???

Bid **2D**! A change of suit here is not forcing. Furthermore since it was in a Minor suit, it tends to deny support for Partner's Major suit overcall.

Example 2: **You Hold:** **XX AQJXX KXXX KX**

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1C	1D	P	???

Bid **1H**! A change of suit, here again, is not forcing. Furthermore, since it was in a Major suit as opposed to Partner's Minor, it does not necessarily deny support for Partner's Minor suit. It merely offers a constructive alternative, 30 point-per-trick, contract as opposed to Partner's 20 points per trick. If given the opportunity, you, South, can support North's Diamonds if North does not support your Hearts, or if East and West compete further.

Bridge Tip # 120

When Partner has overcalled, jump-raises in Partner's overcalled suit (Example 1) are pre-emptive. They show primary support for Partner's overcalled suit and, usually, 3-6 HCP's.

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1H	1S	2H	???

Example 1: You Hold: AXXX X JXXXX XXX - **Bid 3S!** Don't be a sissy and attempt to bid 2S for there is no way the Opponents will allow you to buy this hand for 2S, the Opponents will surely bid 3H. You might as well attempt to pre-empt them out of their likely makeable contract. Whenever appropriate and possible, always "pre-empt," - there is no such technique as a "post-empt."

Example 2: You Hold: AXXX XX KXX QXXX - **Bid 2S!** A single raise of an overcall is equal to the single raise of an opening bid; i.e., 7-10 HCP's with support for Partner's suit.

Example 3: You Hold: KJXX XX AQXX JXX - **Bid "3H"!** A cue-bid of the Opponent's suit shows support for Partner's overcall and a hand too strong for a single raise. It is of invitational strength (10-12 HCP's) (an 8-loser or fewer holding).

Bridge Tip # 119

Responder should never bid a new suit at the 2-Level with fewer than 11 HCP's unless Opener re-bids 1-NT.

You (South) hold:

(a) XX

AJXXX

QXXXX

X

(b) AX

AKXXX

QXXXX

X

North

South (You)

1C 1S	1H ????	With a): Re-bid 1-NT , not 2D for the hand is too weak With b): Re-bid 2D , shows 12 or more HCP's and is Game-forcing.
------------------------	--------------------------	---

<u>North</u> 1C 1-NT	<u>South (You)</u> 1H ????	With a): Re-bid 2D - This is not forcing over a 1-NT re-bid by Opener. If Responder had opening count and wished to force Opener he/she must re-bid 3D , not 2D . With b): Re-bid 3D , forcing
---	---	---

Bridge Tip # 118

When a Responder wishes to be in Game, but is not certain as to which Game, he/she bids any new, as-yet unmentioned, suit so as to continue a force upon the auction. If this new suit be the fourth suit, the bid may be completely artificial. This is the so-called “*Fourth Suit Forcing*” Convention. Most bridge Partnerships play that “*Fourth Suit Forcing*” is forcing to Game, a few play it forcing but for one round, but, either way, it forces the bidding and cannot be passed. “*Fourth Suit Forcing*” can be used by either Opener or Responder, but if it is agreed-upon that it forces to Game, as most do, then the Partner who initiates the “*fourth suit*”, must have Game values; i.e., a HCP count which added to that opposite the minimum that Partner could hold, based upon the bidding sequence thus far, adds up to no fewer than 26 HCP's.

<u>You hold:</u>	(a) AX AKJXX JXXX XX	(b) AXX AKXXX KX XXX
-------------------------	---	---

<u>South</u> 1D 1S	<u>North (You)</u> 1H ????
---	---

With (a) or (b): Bid “**2C**”! You are not sure whether the hand belongs in **4H**, **5D**, or **3-NT**. Bidding Clubs, the fourth and newly, as-yet, un-bid suit, forces Opener to bid again. Opener has already shown fewer than 4-Hearts but, being forced, can now show

3-Hearts if held. Absent that possibility, Opener can re-bid No-Trump with a Club stopper, else re-bid his/her Diamonds absent three Hearts and a Club Stopper. If Responder had, alternatively, jumped to either **3H** or **3D**, either bid would be invitational, not forcing.

When Responder bids the "fourth suit", it forces Opener to re-bid, thereby allowing Responder to find out more about Opener's hand. Opener must try to bid something intelligent so as to further describe his/her holding.

Bridge Tip # 117

The "**DONT**" Convention is, today, frequently the Convention of choice when attempting to compete or to "*disturb*" the opening bid of **1-NT** by an Opponent. One rarely sees anything written, however, with regards to a defense against such disturbance. Standard bridge dictates that a "*double*" by Partner to the Opening No-Trump Bidder, following a "**DONT**" overcall, is routinely for penalties; i.e., an attempt to punish the opposition for daring to compete over Partner's opening **1-NT** call. Such "*doubles*" never represent a Negative Double, rather they are always punitive.

One good holding to justify such a Penalty Double is as follows: Oft times, the Overcaller will bid with a 5-4 distribution and Partner to the Overcaller is supposed to "*pass*," under most circumstances, with as little as any 3-card support or more to Partner's overcall. Note, Opener has no fewer than two of this suit since he/she has an evenly balanced hand, and if you, Partner to Opener, have four or more cards in that suit, your four plus Opener's two means that the Opponents are in a 7-card fit. Not pretty! **With 8 or more HCP's and any four pieces in the suit used to overcall over Partner's 1-NT opening bid, Partner to the opening 1-NT should "double" for penalties.** The Opponents are not likely to make their contract.

Bridge Tip # 116

Under most circumstances, a Responder to Partner's opening bid of one-of-a-suit is entitled to make at least 2-responses with invitational (11-12 HCP's) strength. Following Opener's re-bid of a third, as-yet, un-bid suit, Responder has several choices

from which to choose. These invitational re-bids include either **2-NT**, a bid at the 3-Level of either suit that has already been bid by Opener (both of these showing invitational strength and can be "*passed*"), else the use of "**New Minor Forcing**," which is artificial and is forcing for one-round.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1C	1H
1S	2-NT (This shows 11-12 HCP's, with at least one stopper in the 4 th as-yet, un-bid suit. This is <u>not</u> forcing, and could be " <i>passed</i> .")

1D	1H
1S	3H (This shows 11-12 HCP's, plus a 6-card Heart suit, is invitational, and could be " <i>passed</i> .")

1D	1H
1S	3D (This shows 11-12 HCP's, support for Opener's first bid suit, is invitational, and could be " <i>passed</i> .")

-

1C	1H
1S	3S (This shows 11-12 HCP's, support for Opener's second bid suit, is invitational, and could be " <i>passed</i> .")

1C	1H
1-NT	"2D" (This shows 11 or more HCP's, is artificial and alertable (" <i>New Minor Forcing</i> ," is forcing, and asks Partner to (1) support Responder's Major suit if Opener holds 3-pieces at the 2-level with 12 HCP's or (2) at the 3-level with 13-14 HCP's, (3) to bid 2-NT with 12 HCP's, or (4) 3-NT with 13-14 HCP's, each without 3-card support for Responder's Major suit)

Bridge Tip # 115

Specifically with a (5-4-4-0) distribution and opening count, open 1S. If Partner responds 2C, your void, re-bid 2H, not 2D. If you were to re-bid 2D, you would be denying four Hearts.

<u>You hold:</u>	AJXXX	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>North</u>
	KXXX	1S	2C
	AJXX	????	
	-----	<u>Re-bid 2H!</u>	

Bridge Tip # 114

When the Opponents bid and support the same suit, and you hold either the Queen and/or the Jack of their suit, do not count either of these honors in your consideration of the HCP value of your hand's holding. Under most circumstances, such honors usually have no likely trick-taking value, and are, thus, worthless!

Bridge Tip # 113

In addition to the standard accepted responses to the **Blackwood** convention, responding with a an outside void other than in the Partnership's agreed-upon suit, do not count the void as an Ace. Alternatively:

- With one or three Aces and a void, jump to the **6-level of the void suit**. If the void is in a suit of higher-rank than the agreed-upon suit, jump to **six of the agreed-upon suit**.
- With two Aces and a void, respond "**5-NT**."

- c. If you hold no Aces and a void, respond as if you did not hold an Ace.
-
-

Bridge Tip # 112

Much confusion and erroneous notification arises from Partnerships utilizing 3-way Jacoby Transfers over an original **1-NT** opening bid. In all, the response of "**2D**" is a transfer to Hearts, and that of "**2H**" is a transfer to Spades. The response of "**2S**," however, signifies any one of three different things, depending upon which of the three, below-listed, systems the Partnership is using. Each way implies a different understanding, and in each instance, the opening **1-NT** Bidder is obligated to notify the Opponent's as to his/her perception as to what their Partnership understanding holds. All are correct because it is simply a matter of Partnership agreement as to how to use the "**2S**" call over the **1-NT** opening bid. The 3-ways of utilizing the "**2S**" call when using 3-way Transfers are as follows:

1. If the Partnership understanding is that the Opener (the **1-NT** Bidder) knows, unequivocally, that the Responder has a long Club suit, and that the purpose of the "**2S**" bid is, singularly, to make the original **1-NT** Bidder the Declarer in a final **3C** contract, then the opening **1-NT** Bidder announces "**TRANSFER**", bids **3C**, the Responder then "*passes*," and the bidding ends. In effect, the Responder is **transferring** the bid to make the opening Bidder the Declarer, and Opener knows this from the outset, based upon their Partnership understanding.
2. If the Partnership understanding is that the Opening (the **1-NT** Bidder) does not know whether the Responder has Clubs *or* Diamonds, and that the Responder simply wants the opening Bidder to just say "**3C**" so that the Responder can then either "*pass*," or "*correct*" to a final **3D** contract, then the opening **1-NT** Bidder announces "**ALERT**", The Opener then bids "**3C**" as a "*puppet*" response, allowing the Responder to then either "*pass*," making the final contract **3C**, else "*correcting*" the call by bidding **3D** as his/her preferred exit from the original **1-NT** call, after which the Opener then "*passes*." Here Opener is totally unaware as to which of the two possible final contracts (**3C** or **3D**) will be the final contract, and is merely facilitating the Responder's efforts, and will only find out *after* the Responder either "*passes*" or "*corrects*" to **3D**.

3. If the Partnership understanding is that the bid of "2S" over a 1-NT original call is a "Minor Suit Stayman" call, then Opener says "**ALERT**". In this instance their agreement is that the opening 1-NT Bidder must relate a *preference* for either Clubs *or* Diamonds. If the Opening Bidder (the original 1-NT Bidder) has equal or longer Clubs, he/she bids "3C." If the Opening Bidder has longer Diamonds he/she signifies this by bidding "2-NT." The Responder then knows which Minor suit Opener prefers, and the Responder can utilize this information to guide the Partnership to its final destination with this additional input from Opener. This Convention is particularly helpful when Responder has two long Minor Suit holdings and is caught not knowing which of two possible choices, (3C or 3D), (5C or 5D), (6C or 6D), or (7C or 7D) should be the final contract.

In Summation, in two of the three techniques, Opener says "Alert" and in one instance Opener says "Transfer." Discuss this with your Partner and clarify as to which meaning your Partnership wishes to imply; then use the correct "alert" or "transfer" call.

Bridge Tip # 111

Using the **Blackwood** convention when attempting to verify the efficacy of attempting a Slam-level contract when you hold, for example, two Aces, and either an outside void or worthless doubleton. it is not only dangerous, but potentially eliciting information which is totally worthless. If Partner, in response to your "4-NT" call, were to respond showing only one Ace, you would not know which Ace it was and the information received could not, with efficacy, be used to validate the likelihood of the Slam you are seeking. **With Partnership agreement, cue-bidding first-round controls is the alternate key to either Ace-asking convention under the circumstances where the Player seeking the information, validating or denying the likelihood of a Slam contract, holds either a void or a worthless doubleton.**

Bridge Tip # 110

Validation for the assessment of the counting of distributional points for either long or short suits is dependent upon the bidding in the particular situation in question.

You hold: --- K984 9642 K8752 (How do you value this holding?)

- a. If Partner were to open **1S**, your hand is worth fewer than the 6 HCP's since Partner has bid your short suit, thereby reducing your hand's value.
- b. If Partner were to open **1H**, your hand has an increased value since you hold great support for Partner's bid suit and an outside void. Your hand has now increased to one worth 11 HCP's.
- c. If your LHO (left-hand Opponent) has opened **1C**, and Partner overcalls **1S**, your King of Clubs has lost its value, and the void in Partner's bid suit has reduced the value of this holding to fewer than 3-HCP's

When there is an uncovered "Golden Fit" of 8-cards or more, extra distributional points for either outside long or short suits are of value. Until a fit has been disclosed, however, adding points for distributional circumstances are of little or no value. Hands that are misfits should be subtracting not adding distributional values!

Bridge Tip # 109

As Partner to an opening bid of one-of-a suit, the question arises as to what bid is appropriate when your RHO (right-hand Opponent) has overcalled a natural **1-NT**, showing 15-18 HCP's.

<u>Example:</u>	<u>You (East) hold:</u>	K73 64 AJ63 Q84
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
1H	1-NT	????

"Double!" (With 9 or more HCP's and no fit for Partner's suit you have the Opponent outgunned and the likelihood of defeating the contract.)

Example: You (East) hold: 73 64 AJ9842 Q84

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
1H	1-NT	????

Bid 2D! (With fewer than 9 HCP's and typically your own 6-card or very good 5-card suit, bid your own suit, to play!)

Example: You (East) hold: 73 9864 A842 984

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
1H	1-NT	????

Bid 3H! (A jump-response in Partner's suit is weak, pre-emptive, and shows the corollary number of pieces of Partner's suit to guarantee the Partnership holds 9-pieces, the same number equivalent to the number of tricks to which your bid commits!)

Bridge Tip # 108

Oft times, when Partner makes a **Take-Out Double**, you have no suit of your own but at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit. The appropriate response is, therefore, a No-Trump response consistent with the number of HCP's that Responder holds. Point count and intermediaries are the keys to the correct response, and stoppers in all of the other un-bid suits are not needed as Partner is likely to hold them.

Examples: You (South) hold: J73 Q64 AJ63 Q84

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1D	Double	Pass	???

Bid 1-NT (Shows 6-10 HCP's and at least one stopper, here, in the Opponent's Diamond suit)

You (South) hold: J73 Q64 AQ63 Q84

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1D	Double	Pass	???

Bid 2-NT (Shows 11-12 HCP's and at least one stopper in Opener's bid suit)

You (South) hold: 973 KJ4 AQ63 A84

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1D	Double	Pass	???

Bid 3-NT (Shows 13 (+) HCP's and at least one stopper in Opener's bid suit)

Bridge Tip # 107

The question always arises as to which suit should be chosen by a Responder in response to Partner's **Take-Out Double**. Should Responder bid at all, should he/she always select a Major suit over any Minor, and if not, what criteria should dictate any such decision-making process?

Obviously, if the Opponent to a would-be Responder's right not make a call, Responder to the **Take-Out Double** must bid, even with as few as zero HCP's, unless, of course, he/she volitionally desires to convert the **Take-Out Double** to a penalty scenario, by "*passing*."

Choosing to bid, however, with or without a call by would-be Responder's RHO, the Responder to the **Take-Out Double** is usually encouraged to select a Major suit over any Minor of equal length because of the higher trick-taking score any Major suit contract that is successfully made will produce.

The question arises, however, as to which suit should be chosen, a Minor or a Major, if there be *unequal lengths* in the possible choices. Conventional wisdom suggests that as long as the Minor suit is either of equal length or even one card longer, the Responder should choose the Major suit over any Minor, regardless of the suit's relative strengths. If, however, the Minor suit length exceeds that of the Major's by two pieces or more, then the Minor suit should be chosen, again, without regards to the strengths of the two individual suits.

Although not always guaranteed to produce the best result, such decisions made as discussed here, are statistically likely to produce the best results over the long haul.

Bridge Tip # 106

After a single level raise of Opener's suit by Responder, a new suit then bid by Opener is forcing. Bidding on after a single raise evidences 16+ HCP's or its equivalent. It does not mean that you are running away from a Minor suit contract.

<u>North</u> (You)	<u>South</u>
1C	2C
????	

You Hold: AQX XX AX AKXXXX

Bid **2S**, forcing. If Responder re-bids **3C**, bid **3D**, this is, again, forcing. What you are hoping for is that Responder, with a Heart stopper, will bid **3-NT**. If Responder then bid **4C** you will "**pass**." You, at least, tried.

Bridge Tip # 105

Anytime Opener skips over two suits, including No-Trump, in order to re-bid his/her original suit, he/she is evidencing a 6-card suit.

<u>South</u> (You)	<u>North</u>
1C	1D

South has shown six Clubs because he/she has skipped over **1H**, **1S**,
2C and **1-NT** in order to re-bid his/her Clubs.
South, therefore, holds fewer than four pieces of either Major suit.

Bridge Tip # 104

The ability for any Partnership to accurately communicate becomes, many times, more difficult subsequent to a preemptive, 3-level, opening bid by one of the Opponents. Indeed, that is exactly why they have preempted in the first place. Take-Out Doubles often work, but remember, your team has lost at least two, and perhaps three, levels of bidding room, and so, the need to be risk-taking, within reasonable limits, becomes paramount.

Overcalling **3-NT** over a 3-level opening bid by one's right-hand Opponent (RHO) is particularly appealing with a trick source of your own – a good five- or six-card suit and 18 or more HCP's. Put the Opening Bidder with an average of 8 HCP's. If you have 18, then the remaining 14 are divided amongst the two remaining Players. Give one-half of them to your Partner and you have the approximate 25-26 HCP's needed for Game. Bidding a Take-Out Double may work at times, but a **3-NT** call often becomes the most likely game contract and, therefore, the winning call.

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
3S	????		
XX			
KJXX	Here, if South had chosen to " double ," it		
	would most likely have produced an un-makeable 4H contract.		
XXX	Alternatively, to have overcalled 4D would		
	also have committed North-South to a doomed scenario.		
AXXX	The most likely Game is surely 3-NT which		
	would have been impossible to reach unless bid outright.		
	Overcalling 4C or 4D over a three-		
	opener is also seldom best.		
XX	KQJXXXX		
AXXX	XX		
XX	XXX		
KXXXX	Q		
AX			
QXX			
AKQJX			
JXX			

Overcall 3-NT over a three-level opening bid by the Opponents when holding 17+ HCP's and at least one stopper in the Opponent's suit. It is the percentage call.

Bridge Tip # 103

Something to Consider: Many Bridge Players today use various criteria to determine the minimum strength of their hands in order to qualify for a 2-Level response in a new suit in response to Partner's opening of one-of-a-suit. Some use a minimum requirement of 10 HCP's. Others, who play "*Two-Over-One Game-Forcing*," require at least 12 HCP's.

The reality is that the minimum requirement should be a combination of the overall strength of one's hand combined with the length of the suit in which one wishes to respond.

The "Rule of 14" states that: Respond to Partner's one-of-a-suit opening call in a new suit at the 2-Level *only* if the number of HCP's in your hand, when added to the number of cards in the suit in which you are thinking of responding, reaches 14! Alternatively, respond 1-NT.

<u>Partner open 1S and you hold:</u>	QX	(You hold 9 HCP's
with a 5-card Club suit: Respond 2C)		
	AXXX	
	XX	
	QJ10XX	

Do *not* make a two-over-one response when you fail The "Rule of 14!"

<u>Partner open 1S and you hold:</u>	X	(You hold 6 HCP's
with a 6-card Diamond suit: Respond 1-NT)		
	QXX	
	KJXXXX	
	XXX	

Here, even though you hold a 6-card suit, because you fail the "**Rule of 14**," you need to respond but, notwithstanding the unbalanced distribution of this holding, you must respond **1-NT**.

A response of 1-NT by a Responder to an opening bid by Partner of one of any suit does not guarantee an evenly-balanced hand (a genuine No-Trump distribution). The hand may easily be unbalanced. Rather it is a default bid showing 6-9 HCP's and is an expression of weakness; i.e., a slowing-down maneuver.

Bridge Tip # 102

The utilization of both “*Jacoby Transfers*” and “*Texas Transfers*” is highly advantageous. **Jacoby Transfers** operate at the 2-Level (Examples 1 & 2), and **Texas transfers** at the 4-Level. (Examples 3 & 4)

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
Transfer to 2H)	1-NT	Pass	"2D" (A <i>Jacoby</i>
	2H		

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
Transfer to 2S)	1-NT	Pass	"2H" (A <i>Jacoby</i>
	2S		

<u>Example 3:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
to 4H)	1-NT	Pass	"4D" (A <i>Texas Transfer</i>
	4H		

<u>Example 4:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
to 4S)	1-NT	Pass	"4H" (A <i>Texas Transfer</i>
	4S		

Obviously, the “*Jacoby Transfer*” can be utilized when the Responder to the **1-NT** desires to remain at the 2-Level, invite to Game, or any of the other machination which **Jacoby Transfers** facilitate; and **Texas Transfers** can only be used when the Responder wishes to have the final contract be at Game-Level. However, two advantages result from a Partnership’s utilization of both of these Conventions as a part of their regular armamentarium, and they are as follows:

1. When **Texas Transfers** are used, this quick arrival at the 4-Level to desired Game in the Majors, as opposed to utilizing **Jacoby Transfers** at the 2-Level and then jumping to Game, impedes the Opponents from interfering at the 2-Level since the 2-Level is by-passed.
2. When both Conventions are available for use by any Partnership one can ascribe the following second, and very important, meaning to the dual utilization of these similar, but varied Conventions:

<u>Example a:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1-NT	Pass	"2D"
	2H	Pass	4H

<u>Example b:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1-NT	Pass	"4D"
	4H		

Both methods get the Partnership to Game, and both benefit the team in having the stronger hand become the concealed hand. But there can be a different meaning implied by Responder when a team has both methods to accomplish the same final Game-Level contract. The latter, the use of **Texas Transfers**, as in Example b, implies "No Slam Interest," and the use of **Jacoby Transfers** as in Example a, and then jumping to Game implies Responder holding a 6-Loser hand "With Slam Interest" should Opener be at the top of his/her opening 1-NT HCP count.

Bridge Tip # 101

The basic Principle of bidding "*Up-the-Ladder*," sometimes called "*Up-the-Line*," is an important concept that both Opener and Responder need to follow so as not to ever miss a suit fit that might be present, particularly a possible Major suit fit. With several 4-card suits available, both Opener and Responder must each bid up the line of the bidding ladder so that, at no time, will a "*Golden 8-card fit*" ever be missed.

	<u>North</u>	
	86	
	3	
	AQ75	
	AK8742	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
753		KJT9
AKT974		QJ8
J9		T63
J5		QT6
	<u>South</u>	
	AQ42	
	652	
	K842	
	93	

<u>1ST Bidding Scenario:</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
(Incorrect)	-	-	1C	Pass
	1S (1)	2H	3C	3H
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) A Bidding Error - No reason to by-pass a 4-card Diamond suit. Results of final contract = Down 1 for a 1-Trick set for North-South instead of a makeable Diamond contract.

-

<u>2nd Bidding Scenario:</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
(Correct)	-	-	1C	Pass
	1D (1)	1H	4D (2)	Pass
	5D (3)	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) A correct bid "**Up the Ladder.**" (2) A very powerful hand in support of Diamonds. (3) The **DK** and **SA** are two huge cards. Results of final contract = Making 5 Diamonds for a Game score for North-South.

Bridge Tip # 100

Shape is important when it comes to making any Take-Out Double. In general, the more pieces you have in the Opponent's bid suit(s), the fewer you will have in at least one of the as-yet un-bid suits, and, therefore, your hand does not have the appropriate shape for a Take-Out call. Your hand may have the necessary HCP count, but if it does not also have the necessary shape, one should not be asking Partner to bid. Rather one should be anticipating defending under said circumstances. Such considerations are particularly important when one's left-hand Opponent (LHO) has opened one-of-any-suit, Partner has "**passed**," and your RHO has bid **1-NT** (evidencing 7-10 HCP's).

The Bidding has proceeded as follows:

	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1C	Pass	1-NT	????
		<u>You (South) Hold:</u>	1. QJXX	AJXX KXXX
X			2. AKX	KX JXX
AKJXX				

JXX

What should South bid with each holding listed above?

1. **Make a Take-out Double.** You have the perfect combination of HCP's and shape. Even if Partner were to have as few as 3-5 HCP's, assuming he/she has a 4- or 5-card suit in any of the un-bid suits, you will be in good position to bring home seven or eight tricks in any of the remaining Suit contracts.
2. **Pass.** This is a hand that will only bring misery. There is no suit that you would be happy to have Partner bid. Learning to "**Pass**" is just as important as learning to bid. This hand has points but not safety in its shape.
3. **Pass.** You are missing Spade support and if Partner were to bid Spades you will be in a horrific contract.

Bridge Tip: Not all hands containing opening count are worth a bid when your Opponents have opened the bidding, especially a bid of a Take-Out Double. Discretion is, oft times, wiser than to bid with imperfect shape.

Bridge Tip # 99

After a simple raise of Opener's suit by Responder, a new suit then bid by Opener is forcing. Bidding a new suit by Opener after a single level raise by Responder evidences 16+ HCP's, or its equivalent, in Opener's hand. It is forcing and does not mean that Opener is running away from the previously supported Suit contract. Such a bidding sequence is similar to a "Reverse" by Opener, which shows 17 or more HCP's, and which is also forcing for one round.

<u>North (You)</u>	<u>South</u>
1C	2C
????	

You Hold: AQX XX AX AKXXXX

Bid **2S**, forcing. If Responder re-bids **3C**, you, then, bid **3D**. This is, again, forcing. What you are hoping for is that Responder, with a Heart stopper, will bid **3-NT**. If Responder then bids **4C** you will "**Pass**." You, at least, tried!

Bridge Tip # 98

A direct 1-NT response to Opener's call of one of any suit may, by chance, contain a singleton, or even a void! Any conventional response, "Jacoby 2-NT," for example, obviously with Partnership agreement, can also be bid without regard for any distribution, including singletons and/or voids, but any direct natural response of 2-NT or 3-NT denies a singleton or void.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u> (You)	<u>West</u>
1S	Pass	????	

You Hold: (a) --- KJXX JXXXX QXXX
 (b) X AQXX KJXX KQXX

With (a): Respond **1-NT**! You must try and bid something with at least 6 HCP's and here you have 7 HCP's. You cannot support Opener's Spades and cannot go to the 2-Level, absent a sufficient HCP count. Therefore, you must bid a default **1-NT** without regard for distribution.

With (b): Respond **2C**! Do not bid **2-NT** which, if natural in your Partnership agreement would have shown an evenly-balanced hand with opening count. You can bid No-Trump later if you so choose.

Bridge Tip # 97

Under most circumstances, a (4-3-3-3) distribution has less trick-taking capacity in a Suit contract than most other distributions, mainly as a result of the absence of any shortness. Therefore, **with 3-card support for Partner's Major suit opening and only 6-7 HCP's (more than 9 Losers) (Example 1), bid 1-NT. With the same distribution and 8-10 HCP's (specifically 9 Losers) (Example 2), raise Opener to**

the 2-Level. However, if all of the high-card points are in Opener's suit (Example 3), raise Opener, regardless of your point count.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
1S	Pass	????	

<u>You Hold:</u>	(a)	KXX	XXXX	QXX	JXX
	(b)	XXX	KQX	XXX	AXXX
	(c)	AKX	XXXX	XXX	XXX

With (a): Respond **1-NT**! You need to slow the auction down with this 11 Loser hand which is not worth the paper used to print the cards.

With (b): Raise Opener to **2S**! You have a 9-Loser hand worthy of the 9 HCP's it holds. An immediate raise is more encouraging than is a **1-NT** call.

With (c): Raise Opener to **2S**! All of your HCP's are within the suit and under these conditions one should raise Opener 1-Level regardless of whether Responder holds 6-7 or 8-10 HCP's.

Bridge Tip # 96

In the "*Two-over-One*" bidding system, a re-bid by Responder, of his/her first Minor suit bid, after an initial "*Two-over-One*" response is not considered forcing. This sequence shows a minimum 12 HCP's and, by Partnership agreement, is one of the rare times when Responder can initially venture to the 2-Level in a new suit without ultimately forcing to a Game-level contract.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
1S	Pass	????	

<u>You Hold:</u>	(a)	X	KXX	AKJXXX	XXX
	(b)	XX	XXX	AQJXX	XXX

With (a): Respond **2D** and then re-bid **3D**. This is not forcing and is invitational to **3-NT**. It is not game-forcing.

With (b): Respond **1-NT** with your 7 count. Your hand is not strong enough to respond at the 2-Level.

Bridge Tip # 95

With a 5-card Minor and a 4-card Major, respond in the Minor with 11 or more HCP's. (Example a) With fewer HCP's respond in the Major suit. (Example b)

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
1C	Pass	????	
<u>You Hold:</u>	(a) AQXX	XX JXXXX	XX - Respond 1S
	(b) AKXX	XX AJXXX	XX - Respond 1D

With Game going values, 13 (+) HCP's, respond in your longer suit first, no matter which suit it is.

Bridge Tip # 94

Normally, we have become accustomed to the requirement of needing at least 6 or more HCP's in order to respond anything, other than a "*pass*," when Partner opens one-of-a-suit. However, **with a 5-card Major and 5 HCP's (Example a), or with a 6-card Major and 4 HCP's (Example b), or with any distribution holding 4 HCP's as an Ace (Example c), or with any distribution holding 5 HCP's as with an AJ (Example D), do not "*pass*" a Minor suit opening if second hand "*passes*."** **Bid Proudly!** Partner will thank you!

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
1C	Pass	????	
<u>You Hold:</u>	(a) K8642	Q74 54	863 - Respond 1S
	(b) 75	KJ9743 74	862 - Respond 1H
	(c) 986	975 A762	982 - Respond 1D
	(d) J85	T62 9872	A32 - Respond 1D

instances! Audibly in all three

Bridge Tip # 93

With minimum values (6-11 HCP's), and when responding to a Minor suit opening bid by Partner, respond 1H when holding 4-4 in the Majors (Example a), or with five Hearts and four Spades (Example b); but respond 1S if holding either 5-5 in the Majors (Example c), or with five Spades and four Hearts (Example d).

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>West</u>
1C	Pass	????	
<u>You Hold:</u>	(a)	AJ84 Q732	74 J84 - Respond 1H
	(b)	AJ74 K7642	6 Q73 - Respond 1H
	(c)	J8732 KJ853	7 K3 - Respond 1S
	(d)	AJ985 KQ86	86 84 - Respond 1S

Bridge Tip # 92

In the **Standard American** bidding system, we have become accustomed to limiting our opening 1-NT to distributions having not more than one doubleton. However, when holding 15 HCP's and a 6-card broken Minor suit with stoppers in the other three suits, open 1-NT. Live a little! As of late in 2017, opening 1-NT with two doubletons has been deemed acceptable, and as a matter of fact, even with a singleton Q, K, or A, as long as the hand with the singleton does not also hold an outside doubleton, as well.

<u>You Hold:</u>	K6	K8	KJ7	AJ8642	<u>Open 1-NT</u>
	K	K87	KJ75	AQ864	<u>Open 1-NT</u>

Bridge Tip # 91

In the **Standard American** system it is customary not to open **1-NT** when holding a 5-card Major. However, many better Players, today, have made slight modifications to this principle:

1. **When holding a balanced hand containing 5 Hearts and 15-16 HCP's, open 1-NT (Example a); but with 17 HCP's, open 1H (Example b).**

You Hold: (a) **AX KJ532 AJ6 Q98**

Open **1-NT**. If you were, alternatively, to open **1H** and Partner responded **1S**, you have a tough re-bid problem.

(b) **A6 KJ985 AQ7 K98**

Open **1H**. If Partner were to respond **1-NT**, raise to **2-NT**. If Partner were to respond either **2C** or **2D**, jump to **3-NT**.

2. **When holding a balanced hand containing 5 Spades and 15-16 HCP's. Open 1S unless the Spades are emaciated. If they are, open 1-NT.**

You Hold: (a) **J8654 AQ5 KJ9 AJ**

Open **1-NT**. Your Spade suit is horrible and you would want the lead to come up to this hand.

(b) **KQ954 A4 AJ8 Q97**

Open **1S**. Your Spade suit is certainly decent.

Bridge Tip # 90

Normally, it is permissible and customary to open **1-NT** with a small doubleton. Notwithstanding this, however, **with four Clubs and four Spades, and a hand strong enough to open 1-NT, but no stopper in either red suit (Example 1), or with four Diamonds and four Spades, but no stopper in Clubs and Hearts (Example 2), open the 4-card Minor, not 1-NT. With 2-suits without stoppers, defer to open with one-of-your Minor, not 1-NT.**

You Hold: Example 1: AKJ6 65 974 AKJ5

Open **1C**, not **1-NT**. If Partner responds **1D** or **1H**, re-bid **1S**.
If Partner responds **2C**, re-bid **2S**.

Example 2: AKQ7 862 AQJ2 73

Open **1D**, not **1-NT**. If Partner responds **1H**, re-bid **1S**. If
Partner responds **2C**, re-bid **2S**.)

Bridge Tip # 89

In the 5-card Major **Standard American** system of bidding, unless the Partnership has agreed to a “**Short Club**,” it follows that with opening count and absent a 5-card Major suit, one is expected to open with the discernibly longer Minor, and if equal in length, to open with **1D** if 6-6, 5-5, or 4-4 in the Minors, else **1C** if the Minor suit distribution is 3-3. However, **with 4-4 in the Minor suits, open the stronger suit, not necessarily a Diamond when one Minor is discernibly stronger**. Remember, if Partner is on lead, he/she is better off leading towards your better holding. **If the Minor suits are of near equal strength, then always make an opening bid of a Diamond.**

<u>You Hold:</u>	(a) AX	J65	KQJ8	Q654
	(b) AX	J32	Q732	KQJ6
	(c) AX	J84	QJT4	AJ83

With (a): Open **1D**, your Diamond suit is discernibly stronger
With (b): Open **1C**, your Club suit is discernibly stronger
With (c): Open **1D**, your Minor suits are of near equal strength

Bridge Tip # 88

With opening count or better, and with two 5-card suits, open the bidding in the higher-ranking suit regardless of relative suit strength and/or the strength of the hand. However, with specifically five Clubs and five Spades, open with “**1C**”

rather than with “1S,” if (1), the hand is strong enough to jump shift; or (2), the hand is of minimum strength and the Spades are weak.

<u>You Hold:</u>	(a)	AX	87654	AKJ87	2
	(b)	AKJ94	43	2	AKQJ4
	(c)	J8732	A2	S	AK987
	(d)	AQ987	32	2	AQ943

With (a): Open **1H**, the higher-ranking suit
With (b): Open **1S**, you are strong enough to jump-shift
With (c): Open **1C**, then re-bid Spades, twice, the hand has a minimum count and the Spades are weak.
With (d): Open **1S**, the hand has minimum count, but the Spades are strong

Bridge Tip # 87

For an opening lead, some Partnerships, agree to lead Ace from Ace/King; and some lead King from Ace/King. Either is correct. Whatever alternative the Partners have determined is their choice, it is never a right/wrong, but rather a matter of Partnership understanding. Whatever the Partnership understands on this issue, however, it is important to note that this agreement, namely Ace or King from any Ace/King combination applies only to the opening lead.

Whatever order the Partnership decides on for their Ace/King combo, if, at the start of the hand, they have only an Ace/King doubleton this order should be reversed. This signals the presence of a doubleton Ace/King.

At any other time, subsequent to that of the opening lead, however, namely in the middle of the play of the hand, a lead of an Ace does **not** necessarily signal the presence of the King. Rather it is looking for Partner’s high-card, “***come-on***” signal to indicate that Partner has the King. In the middle of the play of the hand, namely, on any lead other than an opening lead, one must lead the King from any Ace/King combination, except from a doubleton. Having this understanding lets Partner know that if an Ace is led, at any time other than on the opening lead, the Player leading the Ace does not have the King, but is hoping that Partner holds the King.

Bridge Tip # 86

Partner is normally expected to lead your bid suit against any contact by the Opponent's, except if you were to have made a "***Lightner Double***" (See Tip #82). If Partner doesn't lead your suit, it is presumed that Partner must have had some specific reason not to do so, and it must be assumed, therefore, that Partner:

- (1) is void in your suit.
- (2) is leading a singleton instead.
- (3) is leading from a sequence instead.
- (4) has the Ace in the suit not led, and fears that Declarer has the King.
- (5) presumes that his/her suit led is superior to that of leading your bid suit.
- (6) is not paying attention, and has forgotten the bidding.

Bridge Tip # 85

The lead of the Ace or the King from any AK combination of three or more cards ***on the opening lead*** against a suit contract is purely conventional and needs to be discussed and agreed-to by any Partnership. Whichever the Partnership's decision, however, the Ace from AK, or the K from AK, one should lead the opposite from any AK doubleton. In this manner Partner can easily discern that you are, or are not, indeed, leading from a doubleton.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned circumstances, however, if you and your Partner have decided to lead the Ace from any Ace-King combination, be advised that the King is still led, ***on the opening lead, at trick one***, from an AK combination, under the following conditions:

- (1) When you have bid the suit and Partner has supported it – unless the Partnership is playing "**Rosenkranz Doubles**" in which case if Partner has

“*doubled*” it means that he/she holds the Ace or the King and the suit can be led without potentially giving up a trick.

- (2) When Partner has bid the suit, whether or not you have supported it
- (3) When the contract is at the 5-level or higher
- (4) When you have AK doubleton, as mentioned before

Take note, however, that this Partnership decision relates only to opening leads against a Suit contract, and is, usually, with the exceptions noted above, singularly, *trick one conventions only*. During the rest of the hand, the King is always led from any AKx(x) combination. The reason is that after trick one either Defender is, at times, likely to want to lead an Ace, and having done so, does not want Partner to think he/she necessarily holds the King, as well.

Bridge Tip # 84

Be on the alert for a “*double*,” made by Partner, over *any* artificial bid by the Opponents, (a **Stayman** Bid of “2C”, any **Jacoby Transfer** Bid, Cue-bid, and **Blackwood & Gerber** responses, to name just a few). These doubles are called “*Lead-Directing Doubles*”. Any “*double*” made over an Opponent’s artificial bid of any kind is a “*Lead-Directing Double*.” Such “*Doubles*” are never for Take-Out, nor are they for Penalty.

To make a “*Lead Directing Double*” at a low level, particularly at the 2-level, one needs five or six cards in the suit headed by at least two or three honor cards. Absent that type of a holding, the Opponents might “*re-double*” if they feel they might affect a better score.

<u>Example:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
	1-NT	Pass	“2C”	“Double”
			<u>You Hold:</u>	KX
				XXX
				XXX
				AQJXX

To “*double*” an artificial bid made at the 4-level or higher, all you need is strength in the suit, not length, **KQX**, for example. A “**Lead-Directing Double**,” oft times, can set a hand, whereas, without such a directed lead, the hand might, otherwise, make.

Bridge Tip # 83

Many Players use an opening bid of “**3-NT**” to show a long solid self-sustaining Minor suit (7-cards or longer headed by the **AKQ**) with little or no outside strength (no greater than one outside Queen. (See Example 1) This is called a “*Gambling 3-No Trump*.” If one chooses to play this convention, it should be agreed-upon by the Partnership so as not to be misconstrued as evidencing a stronger hand than the example shown below.

<p>Example 1:</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>(Note: If more HCP's were held than an outside Jack or Queen, the</p>
	<p>QXX</p>	<p>hand would evidence opening count</p>
		<p>and would qualify for a standard opening of 1D.)</p>
	<p>AKQXXXX</p>	
	<p>XX</p>	

A “*Gambling Three No Trump*” opening bid is used in 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, position; and evidences a long self-sufficient Minor suit, Clubs or Diamonds, headed by the **AKQ**, at least 7-cards or longer, with little or no outside strength (9-11 HCP's). Partner can “*pass*” if he/she desires to leave the **3-NT** attempt, else bid “**4C**” to show extreme weakness and a desire to play at the 4-level in Opener's Minor suit. All the responses by Partner to the opening bid of “**3-NT**” are shown below.

1. “**Pass**” = A desire to accept the **3-NT** attempt.
2. “**4C**” = Extreme weakness, no stoppers in at least one of the other three presumed suits, and a desire to play at the 4-level in Opener's Minor suit.
3. “**4D**” = Slam interest with a request for Opener to show an outside void or singleton.
 Absent one, Opener then bids “**4-NT**” or bids his/her Minor suit with a singleton or void in the other Minor.
4. **4H** or **4S** = Natural with a self sufficient 6-card or longer suit.
5. “**5C**” = A desire to play at the 5-level in Opener's suit, possibly as a Game bid, else for preemptive reasons.

6. **5D** = Natural to play, implying that Responder has a Club honor and has, therefore, deduced that Opener's suit is Diamonds.
7. **"6C"** = A desire to play at the Small-Slam Level in Opener's Minor suit.

A 3-NT opening bid in the 4th seat, however, is strong, not a "Gambling 3-NT," and is to play! A "Gambling 3-NT" does not exist in 4th seat.

Bridge Tip # 82

When Partner "**doubles**" a Slam contract, even after having bid a suit of his/her own, a "**double**," by him/her, forbids the lead of his/her suit, or that of a Trump. Alternatively, it specifically asks for an **unusual lead**. This kind of a double, a so-called "**Lightner Double**", is a **Lead-Directing Double of a Slam Contract**.

Partner usually has a void (or an outside **AK**), and it is your job to figure out which, and to make the killing lead! Without said "**double**", one would, naturally, usually lead Partner's bid suit or any presumed safe lead. If competent Opponents bid a voluntary Slam, it is likely that they will either fulfill their contract, else fail by one trick. If they make their contract the "**double**" will only better the score to which they are otherwise entitled, and if they fail to make their Slam contract, the Defenders will score a top, or near top, even without the "**double**" having been made. Thus, a normal Penalty Double has little, or no, value on its own other than to direct the defense to the possible killing lead under these specific circumstances.

Thus, a "Lightner Double", by a hand that is not on lead, is conventional. Partner on lead is expected to choose an **unusual lead** which may result in the defeat of the Slam contract. A Conventional "**double**" of this kind excludes the lead of a Trump or that of a suit bid by either Defender. The Player who "**doubles**" expects to ruff the lead of a side suit mentioned by the Opponents, or else to win two top tricks in that side suit at tricks 1 & 2. Some experts treat this "**double**" quite rigidly so as to demand a lead of the **"first suit bid by Dummy"**. In any event, the Partner on lead is expected to deduce the appropriate lead from the context of the bidding, and to lead that suit presumed, specifically requested by the "**doubling**" Partner.

North
North. A final contract of

South opens **1C** and gets a response of **1H** from

AJ98 6S is reached after which East “*doubles*” for an unusual
 lead. West leads a Heart.
 AKJ74 East ruffs, and then cashes the Ace of Diamonds for the
 setting trick! .

Q7
 97

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
T7	432
T8653	-----
JT98	AK5432
T8	5432

South Without a Heart lead, East’s efforts would be
 limited to winning the only trick that the
 KQ65 Defenders could muster, the Ace of Diamonds, and the
 contract would, otherwise, make!

Q92
 6
 AKQJ6

Bridge Tip # 81

Never lead the same against a 3-NT contract that you would have led against a 6-NT contract. Against a 3-NT contract, an aggressive lead, fourth best from one’s longest and strongest suit, is likely to produce some winning tricks for the Defense, assuming the Partner on lead holds at least one outside entry into his/her hand. Alternatively, when leading against a 6-NT contract, leading aggressively is, almost assuredly, likely to give Declarer a free finesse. **Against a 6-NT contract, lead passively!**

For example, say you have the following holding:

KT764
 Q84
 Q76
 83

If the bidding goes “1-NT”- “Pass”- “3-NT”- all “Pass”. You have an automatic Spade lead. However if the bidding goes “1-NT”-“Pass”-“6-NT”- all “pass”. A Spade lead is horrible. Why? The Opponents presumably have about 33 HCP’s to contract for 6-NT which means your Partner is busted. There is no point in leading away from any honor. Lead a Club and hope to make two tricks if Declarer finesses into you. **There are times when leading aggressively is important, and other times when to do so is suicidal.**

Bridge Tip # 80

Never lead a singleton vs. a voluntarily bid Small Slam if you have an outside Ace, unless Partner has previously bid that suit. Partner can't have the Ace in the suit in which you have the singleton, otherwise the Opponent's, missing two Aces, would not be in a Slam in the first place, and you will almost assuredly be helping Declarer out no end by placing the missing honors, should there be any, in Partner's hand. It may just be that Declarer needs to finesse in the suit in which you have the singleton, and without your leading the suit, Declarer would, otherwise, have a 50% chance of finessing the wrong way. Find some other passive lead which is not likely to assist Declarer's play.

On the other hand, a singleton lead against a Small Slam when you don't have an Ace has a much better chance of succeeding. With a little luck Partner will have the Ace of your singleton suit or the Ace of Trump. In either, hoped-for instance, you will set the contract.

Bridge Tip # 79

When Partner leads a suit against the Opponent's No Trump contract, and then discards several cards from the suit that he/she first led, he/she does not want that suit returned; look elsewhere for a better play.

<u>North</u>		<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
S. AKT32		1S	Pass	2D	Pass
H. A762					

D. 3	2H	Pass	3-NT	Pass
C. J54	Pass	Pass		

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
S. Q76	S. J984
H. KJ93	H. T84
D. 5	D. QT87
C. AT762	C. 83

South
S. 5
H. Q5
D. AKJ9642
C. KQ9

Opening Lead: C.6

Dummy wins the first trick with Dummy's Jack. South takes a winning Diamond finesse. When South then cashes the AK of diamonds, West discards clubs. When East wins the 4th Diamond he/she should shift to a Heart, and not continue a Club. Had West wanted a Club continuation he/she would not have discarded Clubs. **Always watch Partner's discards!**

Bridge Tip # 78

The meaning of any No-Trump overcall varies considerably based upon three (3) possible variables; (1) the bidding level at which it is presented, (2) the position at the table of the No-Trump Overcaller relative to the bid or bids by the opposition, and (3) any Partnership understanding as to whether such bid is **Natural or Conventional**. The following situations are the most prevalent amongst many which need be understood and discussed by any successful Partnership so as to avoid a potential bidding misunderstanding.

<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>
1H	1-NT

A **1-NT** Overcall in the direct (2nd Seat) subsequent to any opening 1-Level bid by the Opponents is a standard strong **1-NT** overcall; i.e., 15-17 HCP's, an evenly balanced hand with at least one stopper in Opener's bid suit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
--------------	-------------	--------------	-------------------

1D **Pass** **Pass** **1-NT** A **1-NT** Overcall
 in the balancing (4th Seat) subsequent to any opening 1-Level bid by
 the Opponents is a "**Balancing NT**"; i.e., 10-14 HCP's, an evenly
 balanced hand, but not necessarily any stopper(s) in the Opponent's
 bid suit.

North **East (You)**
1H "**2-NT**" A "**2-NT**" Overcall in the direct
 (2nd Seat) subsequent to any opening 1-Level bid by the Opponents is
 the "**Unusual 2-NT**", usually signifying 5-5 or better in the two
 lower u-bid suits (Clubs and Diamonds in this instance) with either
 a very weak (6-10 HCP's) or very strong (16 or more HCP) Count. In
 the balancing (4th seat), an overcall of "**2-NT**" is not the "**Unusual**
2-NT," it is a strong 18-19 HCP hand, evenly balanced, with at least
 1-stopper in Opener's bid suit.

North **East (You)**
2S **2-NT** A **2-NT** Overcall in either the
 direct (2nd Seat) OR balancing (4th Seat) subsequent to any 2-Level
 weak opening bid by the Opponents signifies an Opening 15-17 HCP,
 strong NT, evenly balanced hand, with at least one stopper in the
 Opponent's bid suit.

North **East** **South** **West (You)**
3C **Pass** **Pass** **3-NT** A **3-NT** Overcall
 in either the direct (2nd Seat) OR balancing (4th Seat) subsequent to
 any opening 3-Level pre-emptive bid by the Opponents signifies a
 very strong 19 or more HCP hand with one or more stoppers in the
 Opponents bid-suit, is natural, and is to play.

North **East (You)**
4S "**4-NT**" A "**4-NT**" Overcall subsequent to a
 pre-emptive **4S** opening bid by the Opponents is conventionally a
 "**Take-Out Double**", since a "**Double**" at that level would be for
 penalties. It obviously shows a very strong, one trick shy of Game
 in hand, or better.

North **East** **South** **West (You)**
1H **Pass** **4H** "**4-NT**" A "**4-NT**"
 Overcall subsequent to a game-level **4H** or **4S** contract by the
 Opponent's is an "**Unusual NT**" call for the Minor suits, a "**double**"
 here would be a very strong "**Take-Out Double**".

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>	
<u>1H</u>	<u>Double</u>	<u>Pass</u>	<u>1-NT</u>	A 1-NT Response

to Partner's "**Take-Out Double**" shows 8-10 HCP's, at least one stopper in Opener's bid suit and no particular long suit held by Responder. A **2-NT** bid by Responder here would have shown 11-12 HCP's and with 13 or more HCP's, Responder would have bid **3-NT**.

Bridge Tip # 77

When the Dummy has more Trump than you do, usually after a transfer sequence, treat your hand as the Dummy and try to trump Partner's losers in your hand, the shorter Trump hand. Some Players have to stand on their head to see this.

<u>North (Dummy)</u>					
KQT654					
732		<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
2		<u>1-NT</u>	<u>Pass</u>	<u>"4H" (1)</u>	<u>Pass</u>
Texas Transfer					(1) A
K54		4S	Pass	Pass	Pass

South (You)

Opening lead: DQ

AJ3
QJ
A876
A863

You have six Spade tricks, two Clubs and one Diamond for nine. The easiest road to 10 tricks is to ruff a heart in your hand, the short Trump hand. Win the DA and lead a Heart. When you regain the lead, you should lead a second Heart, eventually trumping a Heart in your hand for your 10th trick. If you draw Trump first and Trumps are 3-1, you will wind up losing three Hearts and a Club. **When playing in a Suit contract, trumping in the short hand gains tricks, trumping in the hand holding the longer Trump holding does not.**

Bridge Tip # 76

The “**DONT**” Convention (“**D**isturb the **O**pponent’s **N**o-**T**rump”) is one of the most popular conventions used today in order to maximize the number of hands on which to compete over the opponent’s **1-NT** opening bid, while preserving a moderate amount of safety by describing one-suited or two-suited hands at a cheap level of bidding. For those who utilize this Convention, one little-used-addendum to the most frequently used bidding sequences occurs after a “**DONT**” bidder’s **2C** or **2D** call showing either Clubs or Diamonds, respectively, plus a second, higher-ranking suit. Subsequent to a continuation of bidding by the opposition (Here with a **2H** call by South):

(a) Any new suit bid by the Partner of the “**DONT**” bidder (**2S** in this example) is natural, to play, and

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	“2C”	2H	2S (To Play)

(b) A “*double*” by the Partner of the “**DONT**” Bidder is a Take-Out, asking the “**DONT**” Bidder to name his/her other suit at the cheapest level so as to compete and not let the opposition play the hand (in 2 Hearts in this example).

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1-NT	“2C”	2H	“Double” (A Take-Out

for both Diamonds or Spades, whichever suit is the second suit of the “**DONT**” Bidder.

Bridge Tip # 75

In the direct seat, (2nd Seat), subsequent to an opening weak 2-bid by the Opponent’s, it is generally accepted that an overcall of “2-NT” exhibits an opening 1-NT hand; i.e., an evenly balanced hand with 15-17 HCP’s, including at least one stopper in Opener’s bid suit (Example 1).

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	<u>You (East) Hold:</u>
	2D, 2H or 2S	???	15-17 HCP’s, with an

evenly balanced hand, and at least one stopper in Opener’s Bid suit:
Bid “2-NT”

In a similar vein, in the direct (2nd) seat, an overcall of a Take-Out Double exhibits at least opening count over a 2D or 2H opening bid, and at least a few HCP's more over a weak 2S bid which necessarily forces responding Partner to the 3-Level (Example 2).

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	<u>You (East) Hold:</u>
	2D, 2H or 2S	???	With no biddable suit of one's
	own, and at least 13 (+)HCP's over	2D or 2H, or 15 or more	
			HCP's, over 2S: " double. "

Bridge Tip # 74

Whether or not to lead a Trump is one of the major questions which one should consider when on lead against a Suit contract. The following concepts are central in making this decision and in determining whether or not doing so is likely to bring about success for the defense.

1. Don't even think of leading a Trump when the Opponents are in the throes of a misfit.
2. Holding a balanced hand with broken strength in each suit, a Trump lead from two or three small when Dummy has given a single raise is usually best. This will cut down on Dummy's trumping capability and will, most likely promote a later trick for the defense after Dummy's Trumps have been eliminated.
3. Avoid leading a singleton Trump unless Partner has "***passed***" a one level Take-Out Double announcing a strong Trump holding. Normally, when you have a singleton Trump, Partner will hold three or four pieces, and you will be finessing Partner on your opening Trump lead, so do not lead a Trump when you hold only one piece. If he/she has converted your Take-Out Double to penalties by "***passing***," however, a Trump lead is mandatory.
4. Avoid Leading a Trump when holding any of the following holdings: **JX, JXX, QX, or QXX**. If you held such a holding and Partner were to hold, **QXX, QX, JXX, or JX**, respectively, you would be giving up a natural Trump Trick, whereas if Declarer were to lead Trumps with you team holding these combinations, the defense would always score a Trump trick.

Bridge Tip # 73

The card that you select, as your opening lead, is probably the most important card you are going to play during the entire defense. More often than not, it is the determining factor in whether or not Declarer makes his/her contract, or whether or not the defense is able to defeat the contract or, at the very least, hold Declarer to a minimum number of tricks. You should, therefore, give more than a little thought before leading a card to trick one. Your focus should be on the likely distribution around the table (easier when there is plenty of bidding), Declarer's likely strength, and the degree of Trump fit that the bidding seems to indicate. Of major concern is whether you should be making an **aggressive** or a **passive** opening lead. Again you must go back to the bidding to help you out.

1. Does the Dummy figure to have a long side suit?
2. If there is a long side suit, how is it breaking?
3. Should I be looking to ruff?
4. Should I be looking to give Partner a ruff?
5. Should I be trying to shorten the Declarer of his/her Trumps?
6. Should I just be sitting back and waiting for tricks rather than attacking here, there, and everywhere?
7. Was there a very strong bid by Declarer sitting to my right (tends to imply that a passive lead is best)?
8. Should I be leading a Trump in order to cut down on the ruffing power in the Dummy?
9. Did Partner make either an opening bid or an overcall, either of which might indicate the suit of choice to lead?
10. Did Partner make a “*Lightner*” Double?

These are some of the questions you should be asking yourself before you make your opening lead.

Bridge Tip # 72

When you are on lead and Partner has bid a suit, unless you have a better lead of your own, it is customarily best to lead his/her suit as opposed to any other. Certainly to not do so risks the likelihood of the alienation of Partner. Which card within that suit to pick, however; is dependent upon both the conditions present, and the particular cards you hold in Partner's suit.

1. With a weak hand and **Qxxx(x)** or **Kxxx(x)**, lead the honor in case you win the trick and need to switch to another suit at trick two, for reason that Partner has given a low card signal for you not to continue, else there be only a singleton in Dummy. If you lead low, and Partner must take the trick, you may never get in again.
2. With the Ace and any length **Axx(x)**, lead the Ace unless you feel you must get Partner in at once, either to: (a) give you a ruff; or (b) lead a suit through Declarer before another suit can be established.
3. With **Kxx(x)**, or **Qxx(x)**, lead low; one usually leads low from an honor. However, if Dummy has bid No-Trump, lead the honor in order to trap Dummy's likely honor in Partner's bid-suit.
4. With three or four small, lead low if you have NOT supported; high if you have.

Leading a suit Partner has overcalled is USUALLY safer than leading a suit Partner has opened. However, if the bidding has indicated that Partner has made a light third-hand opening, tend to lead Partner's suit. One reason for opening light is third seat is to attract the lead.

Bridge Tip # 71

Oft times one must lead against a Slam contract when Partner has **not** doubled (A "**Lightner**" Double) or bid a suit, both of which might have indicated a starting point from which to determine the most likely best lead.

Additionally, there is the probability that if the Opponent's have reached a Slam contract absent manipulating through either the "**Blackwood**" or the "**Gerber**"

conventions, then they, most likely, are not concerned about Aces (Controls), and are likely to be void in one, or more, suits. The lead of any Ace, under these circumstances is, thus, when Gerber or Blackwood is not used, contra-indicated.

If Dummy makes a wild leap to Slam (using neither Gerber or Blackwood), assume a void, strong Trumps, a long powerful side suit, and a likely control in the shorter side suit. It is usually right to lead that shorter side suit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>	
1H	Pass	1S	2C	
6S				
			<u>You hold:</u>	AXX
				QX
				QXX
				AQJXX

Dummy almost certainly has a Club void with a long heart suit. Lead a **Diamond** and hope to build up a trick in that suit before your Spade Ace is removed.

Bridge Tip # 70

Whenever the opposition reaches a Slam contract and fails to make their trick commitment, your side will make sufficient match points such that to “***double***” them so as to make an even better score is usually unnecessary. Since this is true, conventional wisdom has, therefore, placed a special significance to the “***double***” of any Slam contract bid by the Opponents. This is the so-called “**Lightner Double**” which asks for the following:

If Partner has bid and later “*doubles*” a VOLUNTARILY bid Slam, do NOT lead Partner's suit (the normal lead) and do NOT lead a Trump.

Partner's “**double**” shows either:

- (1) A void (the most common reason).
- (2) A desire for a lead of Dummy's first bid suit.
- (3) The AK of one of the Declarer's bid suits.

If Partner has NOT bid and later “*doubles*” a VOLUNTARILY bid Slam, do not lead the un-bid suit. (That would have been the normal lead).

“***double***” shows either:

Partner's

- (1) A side suit void
 - (2) A desire for the lead in Dummy's first bid suit.
-
-

Bridge Tip # 69

Opening a (4-3-3-3) distributional hand can be counter-productive when one's HCP count is minimal. Since there is no shortness in any one suit, the trick-taking capacity of this type of distributional holding is minimized should the final contract be in a Suit contract as opposed to a No-Trump contract. To avoid this pitfall, follow the following precept.

With any 4-3-3-3 distribution, open with 13 or more HCP's; "pass" with 11 HCP's or less; and with exactly 12 HCP's, open only if the hand has good intermediates (10's and 9's), otherwise, "pass."

You Hold: a) **KJ6 A542 K63 Q54**
 b) **KJ72 A84 Q65 Q84**
 c) **KJT AT65 K84 JT6**

With (a), Open **1C** (13 HCP's)

With (b), **"pass"** (12 HCP's and no intermediates)

With (c), Open **1C** (12 HCP's but with good intermediates)

Bridge Tip # 68

Before opening the bidding, always prepare your second bid before making your first. When doing so, always assume Partner will respond in your shortest suit, he/she almost always does. To not do so may inadvertently cause a misinterpretation of the strength of Opener's holdings by Responder. The classic two examples are shown below. You, as would-be Opener, hold the following:

Example 1: **X** Normally, one opens "**length, before strength**".
If one were to open **1C** here,
 XXX surely Responder would likely make a **1S** call.
Because a new suit by

AQXX Responder is forcing, it cannot be "*passed.*"
 Opener would, therefore,
AQJXX have to either forget his/her second suit, and
 re-bid Clubs, which would
 show 6 pieces, else re-bid **2D** which would be a "**Reverse**" showing 17+
 HCP's since Opener's second suit (Diamonds) is higher ranking than
 the first one presented (Clubs). **Neither of these alternatives is correct and
 can only be prevented by Opener opening 1D, then re-bidding 2C.**

Example 2: **AQJXX** Normally, holding two 5-card biddable suits,
 one would initially think to
XX open the higher ranking suit (Spades) first,
 here, then re-bid the lower
X ranking (Clubs). Almost assuredly, if one
 were to open **1S**, here,
AQXXX Partner is likely to respond **2D** or **2H**. Not
 being able to "*pass,*" Opener would then be obligated to re-bid **3C**. A
1S-2D-3C bidding sequence is called a "**high-reverse**" and evidences a 17
 or more HCP count by Opener. **Since Opener's hand is weaker he/she cannot
 afford this misrepresentation and must, therefore, open 1C planning to re-bid Spades
 twice as if the Clubs were six pieces and the Spades, five.**

Bridge Tip # 67

After a 4H opening by one's Right-Hand Opponent (RHO), a "4-NT" overcall
 by 2nd hand is for the Minors (Example 1). After a 4S opening by one's RHO, a "4-
 NT" bid is a Take-Out Double (Example 2). After a 4S opening by one's RHO, a
 "double" is for penalties (Example 3).

Your RHO opens with a preemptive bid as follows:

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>North</u> 4H (Preemptive)	<u>East (You)</u> "4-NT" (For The Minors)	AX X AKXXX AKQXX
--------------------------	---	---	---

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>North</u> 4S (Preemptive)		X
--------------------------	---	--	----------

<u>East (You)</u>	AXXX
<u>"4-NT"</u>	AKXX
(A Take-Out Db1.)	AKQX

Example 3:

North
4S (Preemptive)

<u>East (You)</u>	QJX
<u>"Double"</u>	AX
(For Penalties)	AKXX
	KQXX

Bridge Tip # 66

A "4-NT" call by Partner, after your opening bid of 1-NT, is not Blackwood. Rather it is a quantitative bid asking you to either "*pass*" with a minimum opening of 15 HCP's, or, alternatively, to go on to "6-NT" when holding a maximum of 16-17 HCP's. It is a Slam-try and can be "*passed*" if Opener holds the bottom of his original 1-NT call. Responder holds, specifically, 16-17 HCP's and is seeking Slam if the opening No-Trump Bidder holds a maximum of 16 or 17 HCP's. To ask for Aces, a leap to "4C" (Gerber), is, alternatively, used, not the "4-NT" bid, herein discussed.

<u>North</u>	<u>South (You)</u>	<u>You (South) Hold:</u>
1-NT	"4-NT"	AJX
		AXXX (Opener is expected to
" <i>pass</i> " with 15 HCP's and to bid	"6-NT" with 16 or 17)	
		KXX
		KQXX

Similarly, a "5-NT" call by Partner, after you open the bidding with 1-NT, is also quantitative asking Opener to bid "6-NT" with 15 HCP' (a minimum), and to bid "7-NT" with 16-17 HCP's (a maximum). Partner must have 20-21 HCP's to make this request of Opener.

Bridge Tip # 65

When the Opponents Preempt the bidding with an opening bid at the 3-Level, you must take aggressive action since three levels of bidding have, effectively, been erased. A passive stance under these circumstances will, statistically, yield a poor result. It may not always work out, but to act aggressively is, most often, the winning posture.

If one's RHO opens **3C** or **3D**, you should overcall "**4C**" or "**4D**" showing a two-suited Major hand with at least 5-5, and opening HCP values (Example 1).

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	<u>You (East) Hold:</u>
	3C	???	AXXXX KQXXX (Bid "4C" -
Showing Both Major suits and game-going values)			
			AX X

If your RHO opens **3H** you should overcall "**4H**" showing a Spade-Minor two suited hand, with at least a 5-5 distribution and opening HCP values (Example 2). Partner bids "**4-NT**" to ask for your Minor. This series of bids is similar to a Michael's bid of "**2H**" over an opening of **1H** by the Opponents.

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	<u>You (East) Hold:</u>
	3H	???	AJXXX A (Bid "4H" - Showing
Spades and an Unspecified Minor Suit, Clubs or Diamonds)			
			X KQXXXX

Bridge Tip # 64

You must make a jump-response (Example b) when you holds 9 or more HCP's in response to Partner's Take-Out Double over an opening preempt by an Opponent, and jump to Game (Example c) or make a cue-bid in Opener's suit (Example d) when holding opening count. **When you make a non-jump response (Example a) to Partner's Take-Out Double of an opening preempt by the Opponents, Partner will assume you to hold 4-5 HCP.** Your actual range is 0-8, so he/she will be taking a middle of the road assumption.

<u>West</u> 2H	<u>North</u> Double	<u>East</u> Pass	<u>South</u> ????
<u>South Holds:</u>			
(a) AXXX	(b) AXXX	(c) AXXXX	
(d) AXX XX (Bid 2S) (Bid "3H") JXXX AKXX XXX KXXX	XX (Bid 3S) KXXX KXX	XX (Bid 4S) AQXX KX	XX

Note: All of the above-referenced bids become moot if the Partnership is playing The “*Lebensohl*” Convention, because, under these same circumstances, a set of “*sign-off*”, invitational, and Game-forcing bids are available, replacing the standard bids shown above.

Bridge Tip # 63

Be aggressive with your Overcalls when you hold a singleton in the Opponent's suit, and especially when holding a void in the Opponent's bid suit. You can make a Take-Out Double with as few as 10-12 HCP if you have the magic 4-4-4-1 distribution (Example 1), and with even slightly fewer HCP's (9-10) with a 5-4-4-0 distribution (Example 2).

You (South) Hold:

<u>Example 1:</u>		<u>Example 2:</u>	
AXXX		AXXX	
KXXX		KXXX	
X		-----	
AXXX		QXXXX	
<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u> 1D	<u>South (You)</u> "Double"

Bridge Tip # 62

When Partner opens **1-NT** (15-17 HCP's) and you, as Responder, have 0-8 HCP's with any 5-card Major, the customary preference is to use a **Jacoby Transfer** bid, then drop the final contract at the 2-Level in the specific Major held by Responder (Example 1)

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Responder's Holding:</u>
	1-NT	"2D"	XXX
	2H	Pass	KXXXX
			KXX
			XX

When Opener opens with one of a Minor and re-bids **1-NT** (12-14 HCP's), Responder with the same minimum response and five pieces of either Minor suit should, likewise, re-bid two of the 5-card Major as a "**Drop-Dead**" scenario (Example 2).

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Responder's Holding:</u>
	1D	1H	XXX
	1-NT	2H	KXXXX
	Pass		KXX
			XX

If the generally preferential contract is 2 of either Major suit when Opener holds 15-17 HCP's and Responder holds a minimum HCP count, then surely a similar contract is preferentially better if Opener holds even fewer HCP's (12-14) as in Example 2.

When Responder holds any 5-Card Major and few HCP's, a final contract of two of the Major is generally a better contract than 1-NT, even when Opener holds 15-17 HCP's, but especially if Opener has a weaker 12-14 which has the capacity to produce even fewer tricks on offense.

Bridge Tip # 61

PREEMPTIVE BIDDING TIPS

1. **Do not open with a preempt holding two Aces, or an Ace and two Kings.** You are too strong defensively.
2. After you preempt, and Partner bids a new suit beneath the Game level, you cannot “*pass*.” That response is forcing! Don't get cold feet. **Following a pre-emptive bid by you, a new suit by Partner is forcing. Any Raise in your suit by Partner is Non-Forcing (RONF); i.e., a Raise in your suit is the Only Non-Forcing bid.**
3. **After opening with 3C if Partner responds 3D, show a Major suit stopper if you have one.**

After opening 3C, Partner bids 3D. You hold:

KJX (Bid **3S** to show a Spade stopper. This does not evidence a real suit. A **3C** or **3D**
X opening bid does not usually contain a side, 4-card, Major suit.)
XX
AJTXXXX

4. **Although most 3-bids show 7 card suits, if you have 7-4 distribution, with a long Major, think about opening four.**

You hold: **AQJTXXX** (This hand should open **4S**, not **3S**.
The fourth card in the 4-card suit is usually worth an extra
X trick.)
QXXX
X

5. **If Partner responds 3-NT to your 3-level preempt, that bid ends the auction. It's not an option for you to take it out. Partner may have a solid suit over that he is planning to run. Do not cross his intentions!**
6. **Preempt as often as possible consistent with the vulnerability. It drives the Opponents mad.**
7. **After you preempt, Partner is in charge and must take any and ALL sacrifices and/or advance the bidding. You must not bid again unless asked to do so! Reread this one.**
8. **When Partner, a preemptive Bidder, “*doubles*” an eventual contract (usually a Slam contract), he/she is trying to tell you of a side suit void. Try to find it on the opening lead. It is likely to be the only way to set the contract. The Partner who has preempted is drawing a roadmap for the only possible way to set the contract.**

Bridge Tip # 60

When Partner makes a “**Take-Out Double**,” Responder must bid, even with as few as 0 HCP’s. The only exceptions to this would be if (1), Responder volitionally wished to convert Partner’s “**double**” to penalties, or if (2), Responder’s RHO (Right-Hand Opponent) were to make a bid other than “**pass**,” then Responder to the “**double**” would be relieved of the responsibility to bid, since the Doubler would now have another opportunity to make a call, if he/she chose to do so.

With 9 or more "revalued HCP's", however, Responder to a Take-Out Double must make a jump-response in order to show that the Partnership has the majority of the HCP's and that the Partnership might even have Game. By the term “revalued”, the following principles apply:

(a) Unless you are responding in No-Trump, do not count Jacks or Queens in Opener's suit.

(b) Add 1 extra point if you have a 5-card Major and a second extra point if the hand has a side 4-card suit as well.

If Partner “Doubles” a 1H Opening Bid and you hold:

AKXXX (The proper response here is a jump to “**2S**”. Do not count anything for the **HQ**,
QXX but give your self one extra point for the 5-card Spade suit plus one extra point
XXXX for the 4-card side suit bringing your Total to 9, the same response as you would
X make even without the **HQ**.)

(c) In the same vein, count three extra points for a 6-card suit and one more if the hand has a side 4-card suit.

If Partner “Doubles” a 1H Opening Bid and you hold:

AJXXXXX (Here again, Respond “**2S**”. You hold 6 HCP’s plus three extra for the 6-card suit.)
XXX
JXX
X

With more than 11 “revalued” points, cue-bid Opener’s suit, and then bid your suit.

If Partner “Doubles” a 1C Opening Bid and you hold:

KQXX (You hold 11 HCP’s plus one extra for the fifth Heart and one more for the fourth

AXXXX Spade bringing your total to 13. Start with a cue-bid of “**2C**”. If Partner bids

QX **2D**, bid **2H**. If Partner bids **2H** or **2S**, Raise to Game.)

XX

Bridge Tip # 59

Oft times, one misunderstood bidding sequence within a Partnership takes place between the Take-out “**Doubler**,” and his/her Partner. Each has a distinct pattern of bidding to which he/she must adhere in order that the other can correctly handle the resulting bidding sequences which evolve. The Responder to the “***double***,” for example, is obligated to bid, unless relieved of that responsibility by an intervening bid by the would-be Responder’s RHO. Once relieved, however, if Responder still bids, then he/she shows either a hand with some HCP’s (at least 6), and/or a distributional holding. Without an intervening bid, however, Responder, unless choosing to volitionally “***pass***” thereby convert the Take-Out Double to penalties, is obligated to bid his/her preferred suit, even with as few as 0 HCP’s, and to make a jump-response if holding 9 or more HCP’s. Most, if not all, of these are standard bidding practices.

One of the most misunderstood patterns of bidding, however, is that concerned with the potential re-bids by the Doubler. Unless strictly adhered to, Responder to the Doubler is incapable of understanding the holding of his/her Partner, and is effectively disenfranchised from correctly coping with the bidding that might ensue. The following sequences summarize the most frequently occurring re-bids by a Doubler following his/her Take-Out Double:

In each of the following examples, the bidding has begun with 1D by West.

- a. **“Double”/Pass**
- | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1D/Pass | | Pass |
| | 1H | |

Here, North has already shown opening count with probable willingness to accept any suit chosen by South, and North's subsequent "**pass**" shows no additional values. South can now Captain any future bidding, if necessary.)

b. "**Double**" / **2H**
 1D/Pass **Pass**
 1H

(Here, North shows additional Values (16-18 HCP's) again leaving South to Captain any further bidding. Remember, South, in this sequence, could have 0-8 HCP's.)

c. "**Double**" / "**2D**"
 1D/Pass **Pass**
 1H

(Here, North shows even more Values (19+ HCP's) by cue-bidding the Opponent's suit at his/her first re-bid. North, realizing that South could hold as few as 0 HCP's, is inviting South to bid **4H** with 6-8 HCP's, else to bid **2H** with 0-5 HCP's.)

Bridge Tip # 58

A "Take-Out Double" followed by a suit bid is stronger than overcalling in the suit directly.

Your RHO (Right-hand Opponent) opens 1D and You hold the following hands:

AJ2 (Overcall **1H** - A **Simple Overcall** at the 1-level shows a 5-card suit or longer, and

KQ976 8-15 HCP's. If your suit had been Clubs, you would have said **2C**. In that instance,

KQ3 you would have shown 10-15 HCP's to have overcalled at the 2-level.

64 Both of these bids would be simple overcalls.)

AJ4 (Make a **Take-Out Double**, and then bid Hearts at your next opportunity. 16 or more

KQ986 HCP's is the dividing line between your making a simple overcall, capping your overcall at 15 HCP's, else "***doubling***"

AQJ2 and then bidding your suit. Responder can then ascertain your overcall strength as

7 limited to 15 or fewer in the first instance; else 16 or more in the second.)

Bridge Tip # 57

It is risky to "double" an opening bid holding a small doubleton in an un-bid Major. To pull this off, you should have 18 (+) H.C.P; i.e., a "fall-back" position.

Your RHO (Right-hand Opponent) opens 1C and You hold the following hands:

(a) **XX** (**Pass** - You have sufficient strength to make a Take-Out Double, but an inability to handle a Spade response from Partner.)
AQXX
AKXX
J9X

(b) **XX** (**Double**. If Partner bids the expected **1S**, re-bid **1-NT** showing 18-19 HCP.
AQXX If Responder bids **1H** you can cue-bid "**2C**" to show both support for Responder's
AKXX Hearts and greater than the values needed for your original Take-Out Double.)
AJ9

(c) **XX** (Overcall **1-NT** directly. You do not need stoppers in all four suits to
QT42 overcall **1-NT**, but you do need a stopper or two in the suit in which the Opponent has opened.
AK75
AJ9

Bridge Tip # 56

All bridge Players know the standard requirements for a Take-Out Double; i.e., 13 or more HCP's or its equivalent. Many Players, however, fail to recognize that certain distributions alter this basic requirement, either lowering the required HCP count required, or, even precluding a Take-Out Double dependent upon one's holding in the Opponent's bid suit(s).

The ideal distribution for a Take-Out Double is 4-4-4-1 with a singleton in the Opening Bidder's suit. With this distribution, 11 HCP is enough to “double” an opening bid. “Doubling” with 10 HCP, even with the perfect distribution, is pushing the envelope, although with a void in the Opening Bidder's suit, it is, oft times, a very successful bid.

Your RHO (Right Hand Opponent) opens 1H and you hold:

Example 1: K T X X (Make a Take-Out Double - Although your distribution is not ideal, you have 13 HCP's and only two of Opener's suit.)

XX
KXX
AKXX

Example 2: K J X X (Make a Take-Out Double - You only have 11 HCP's, but you have an almost perfect distribution; (4-1-4-4).)

X (GO FOR IT!)
KXXX
AXXX

Example 3: K X X X (Make a Take-Out Double - You only have 10 HCP's, but you have a perfect distribution; i.e., a void in the

--- Opponent's bid suit. (LIVE A LITTLE!)
KXXXX
AXXX

With a 4-4-4-1 pattern, it is normal to “pass” if the Opponent's open in one of your four card suits, and then “double” if they find a fit in your singleton suit.

Example 4: You as South hold: A J X X

X
K Q X X

			AXXX
<u>East</u>	<u>South (you)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2H	?		

At first, "**Pass**" - You have too many of Opener's suit. On your second opportunity to bid, however, "**double**." The bidding has come up just the way you were hoping. Your "**double**" shows at least an opening bid with short hearts, Diamond length plus support for the two un-bid suits.

Bridge Tip # 55

Playing the regular **Blackwood** Convention, almost all Players know the customary responses showing 0/4, 1, 2, or 3, Aces. However, **when Partner bids "4-NT" (Blackwood), and you have 1 or 3 Aces along with a void, jump to the six level of your void suit. If your void suit is higher ranking than the agreed-upon Trump suit, jump to the six level of the Trump suit.** Say you hold either of these hands: What is the appropriate response to a "4-NT" bid by Partner after a Heart suit agreement earlier in the auction?

Example 1: ---
AJXXXX (Respond "6H" showing 1 or 3 Aces and a
Spade void)
XXX
JXXX

Example 2: JXX
AJXXXX (Respond "6D" showing 1 or 3 Aces and a
Diamond void)

XXXX

When Partner bids "4-NT" (Blackwood), and you have 2 Aces along with a void little-known conventional response is "5-NT" showing two (2) Aces and an unspecified void (Example 3).

Example 3: JXX
AJXXXX (Respond "5-NT" showing 2 Aces and an
unspecified void)

Axxx

Bridge Tip # 54

After Partner opens 1H or 1S and there is an intervening overcall, a jump cue-bid of the Opponent's suit by Responder shows a singleton in the Opponent's suit, at least 4-card support for Opener's suit, and a minimum of 14-15 support points. It should be considered a mild Slam-try. Say, for example, Partner were to open 1H, the next hand bids 2C, and you, Responder to the Opener, hold:

AJXX
KQXX (This hand, with 16 Support Points,
should jump to "4C")
QJXX
X

A jump cue-bid after a Minor suit opening by Partner also shows a singleton in the jump suit, but promises five or six card support and denies a side four card major. Say Partner opens 1C and the next hand bids 1D and you hold:

AJX
KXX (Here Responder has a perfect "3D"
response. Try it!)
X
KJXXXX

Bridge Tip # 53

In standard bidding sequences, support by Responder for Opener's first-bid suit on Responder's re-bid shows two pieces, not three; and/or a hand with 10 or more losing tricks (See Example).

<u>Example:</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
	1H	1-NT

2C
shows two Hearts, not three.

2H (Responder's preference)

Responder Holds:

AJXXX
XX
QXXX
XX

For Partnerships that use the “*Losing Trick Count*” method of hand evaluation (LTC), such sequences could hold three pieces or two, but evidence a very weak hand with 10 or more losers (usually 5-7 HCP's). In the **Standard American** bidding system, when raising Opener's suit immediately to the 2-level it should signify a 9-Loser hand. If Responder's hand is weaker; i.e., 10 Losers or more, and or, with only a 6-7 point count, one should not raise Opener as it often leads to Partnership overbidding.

Responder Holds:

KXX
XXX
JXXX
QXX

Here, Responder should
Not make an immediate raise to
2H; rather should first respond **1-NT**
and then raise to **2H**, in theory showing
just two pieces. Not to worry! Partner will not complain
when he/she sees what a “*dog*” Responder puts down with this meager
holding.

Bridge Tip # 52

When considering whether or not to open **1-NT**, treat a 5-card suit headed by three of the top five honors as worth one extra point. In other words, with 17 HCP's (Example 1) and a 5-card suit, treat the hand as an 18 HC point hand. If you play a range of 15-17, do not open **1-NT**. Rather open the bidding in the five card suit and jump in No-Trump on the re-bid. In a similar vein, if the hand counts 14 HCP's (Example 2) open **1-NT**.

Example 1: You pick up: KTX (Open 1C prepared to jump to 2-
NT if Responder bids 1D, 1H, or 1S).
QXX

KX
AKQXX

This hand has the trick-taking capacity of a hand stronger than what its HCP count would, at first blush, represent and, here, a **1-NT** opening would be an underbid.

Example 2: You pick up: QTX (Open 1-NT - Live a little!)

 XXX

 KX

 AKQXX

Bridge Tip # 51

After a single raise of Opener's suit by Responder, a new suit bid by Opener is forcing. Think of it as having the strength of a "*Reverse*" which means 17 (+) HCP minimum.

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
	1C	2C
	2D (Forcing)	

Opener is **NOT** running away from a short club. Opener is trying to get to Game with a big hand. Opener may have a holding such as with the following:

<u>Opener's Hand:</u>	AX	(A Re-Bid by Opener here of 2D
shows about 18 HCP's and invites to	XX	3-NT if Responder has a maximum
8-10 of the 6-10 he/she	AKXX	originally exhibited by his/her
single raise of Opener's Club suit,	AKXXX	and help with the Diamond
a "Help-Suit Game-Try."		suit.) This is an example of

Bridge Tip # 50

After a 2-level response by Responder to an opening bid, a new suit by the Opener is forcing (Example 1); after a 1-level response by Responder it is not (Example 2), unless Opener's re-bid is a "*Reverse*" (Example 3). A "*Reverse*" by Opener is forcing for 1 round, and exhibits 17 (+) HCP's! A "*Reverse*" by Opener does not exist following a 2/1 response from Opener's responding Partner (Example 4).

Example 1:

Opener

Responder

1H
2D (Forcing)

2C

Example 2:

Opener

(or)

bid)

1D

Responder

Opener

1C

1H

1S (Not Forcing - An "*Up-The-Ladder*")

2C (Not Forcing)

Responder

1H

Example 3:

Opener

Responder

1C

2D (Forcing - A "*Reverse*")

1H

Example 4:

Opener

Responder

1H

2S (Forcing, but not a "*Reverse*")

2D

Bridge Tip # 49

As Opener, keep in mind that a 1-NT response by Responder to your opening suit bid oft times contains a singleton (perhaps even in your suit), or, on some occasions, even a void. It does not promise a balanced hand, nor does it promise stoppers in all of the remaining as-yet, un-bid suits. It is one of the few No-Trump bids that does not

promise a balanced hand and says nothing about distribution, only a succinct limit to the Responder's HCP count. It is a "**default**" bid absent any other potentially available bid, showing 6-10 HCP's.

Example - You Open 1H:

<u>Responder Holds:</u>	JXX	(Responder, here, must respond 1-NT .
The hand has too few		
	---	HCP's to respond at the 2-Level,
too strong to " pass ," so,		here, a default bid of
	AQXXXX	1-NT is therefore appropriate.)
	XXXX	

Some bridge Partnerships play that a **1-NT** response by Responder to Opener's Major suit bid is forcing for one round. Others do not. Whichever of the two systems your Partnership employs, however, Responder's bid of **1-NT**, in either instance, says nothing about his/her distribution.

Rather, in standard bidding, a first response of **1-NT** by Responder evidences 6-10 or 6-9 HCP's (subject to Partnership agreement), and if the Partnership employs a "**Forcing NT**" or a "**Semi-Forcing NT**" bidding system, a **1-NT** response usually evidences 5-11 HCP's, although, in some circumstances, it can be even unlimited, as to the number of HCP's held. (For those who utilize the "**Forcing 1-NT**" bid, it is common knowledge that such a bid does not even imply lack of support for Opener's suit, rather, if support is present, it represents a hand too weak to support Opener directly at the 2-Level.)

Do not consider Responder, who responds 1-NT to your opening call of one of a suit, as having an evenly-balanced hand and/or stoppers in any specific suit or suits. Responder's call is simply a mandatory "**default**" bid evidencing no fewer than 5-6 HCP's.

Bridge Tip # 48

As a Responder to Partner's opening bid of one-of-a-suit, with five cards in either Minor suit and four cards in either Major suit **plus opening-count strength**, respond in the Minor and then bid the Major (Example 1). If Partner opens **1D** and you hold the following hand (Example 1):

Example 1: **AJXX** (Respond **2C** and then re-bid **2S**. This sends two messages to Opener.
 QX Firstly, that your Clubs are longer than your Spades, and secondly,
 XX because you, as Responder, have "**Reversed**," {your second bid Suit, Spades,
 AKXXX being higher-ranking than your first bid suit, Clubs, you guarantee opening count which forces the Partnership to Game.

(A "Reverse" by Opener forces for one round, but a "Reverse" by Responder always forces to Game!)

Do ***not*** first respond **1S** in the above-referenced hand! That is what one does with weaker hands such as with the following holding (Example 2):

Example 2: **KQXX** (Respond **1S** over Opener's **1D**, not **2C**!)
 XX
 XX
 AXXXX

Bridge Tip # 47

As a general rule, **with 4-4 in the Majors, respond 1H to an opening bid of 1C or 1D** (Example 1). The "**Up-the-Ladder**" Principle will allow the Partnership to avoid missing an 8-card Major suit fit, should a fit in either Major suit be present.

Example 1: **XX** (Respond **1H** to Partner's Opening **1C** or **1D**.)
 Opener with either support your
 AQXX Hearts, bid **1S** ["**Up-the-Ladder**"], else go
 elsewhere, in which case neither Major suit fit exists.)
 KXXX
 XXX

However, **with 5-5 or 5-4 in the Majors, respond 1S first, regardless of relative strength** (Example 2), **prepared to re-bid the Heart suit second.**

Example 2: **AQXXX** (Respond **1S** to Partner's Opening **1C** or **1D**.)
 Responder, by having bid

KXXX (X) Spades first followed by a Hearts bid afterwards guarantees 5 Spades with 4 or 5 Hearts.)

XX

X (X)

Bridge Tip # 46

Most bridge Players open **1-NT** with a balanced hand holding a HCP count of 15-17 without regard for specificity with regards to where the HCP are situated. They even open **1-NT** holding a small, unguarded doubleton (Example 1), as well. However, if your nerves are shot, better have stoppers in the other three suits.

Example 1: **XX** (Open **1-NT**, even without a Spade Stopper)
 AQX
 AKXX
 KXXX

However, with four clubs and four spades, a balanced hand strong enough to open **1-NT**, but no stopper in either red suit, open **1C** (Example 2). Similarly, with four Diamonds and four Spades, but with no stopper in both Clubs and Hearts, open **1D** (Example 3).

Example 2: **AKJX** (Open **1C!** If Partner responds **1H**, re-bid **1S**. If Partner then re-bids **XX** **2C** you have the option to "**Reverse**" and then bid **2S**. To seek a Suit contract **XXX** with no stoppers in two suits is often far better than a No-Trump contract.
 AKQX

Example 3: **AKJX** (Open **1D!**)
 XX
 AKJX
 XXX

Bridge Tip # 45

Most bridge Players have numerous “*doubles*” in their armamentarium of potential bids. Some, like “*Take-Out Doubles*,” “*Negative Doubles*,” or “*Penalty Doubles*,” are used all of the time and are universally, easily recognized. Few “*Doubles*” are alertable since the conditions under which they are exercised are so specific and their usage, so common. One “*Double*” that is not routinely used, however, is the so-called “*Snapdragon Double*.” It, like all Doubles, has a specific instance in which it is employed, and is a very useful “*Double*” when used correctly in the appropriate bidding sequence. “*Snapdragon Doubles*” are alertable.

A “*Snapdragon Double*” is a “double” by the 4th hand when the first three Players have each bid a different suit, Partner having overcalled the Opponent’s opening bid (See Example). It shows 5 or more cards in the fourth, as-yet, un-bid, suit, moderate values, and support for Partner’s overcall suit, as well. Such bids are highly competitive and suggest either lead direction, else sacrificing if a “double” fit exists.

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1C	1H	2D	“Double”

This “*Double*” (“*Snapdragon*”) shows a 5-card suit (Spades in this instance), and support (at least two pieces to an honor or any three or more (Hearts in this case), with 6-10 HCP’s. North can either support South’s Spades else return to his/her Hearts. **Note:** “*Snapdragon Doubles*” and “*Rosenkranz Doubles*,” (the latter is not defined herein), are mutually exclusive, and must be discussed as to which one, if either, will be used by the Partnership.

Bridge Tip # 44

Most bridge Players use “*Michaels Cue-bids*.” An immediate cue-bid of the Opponent’s suit shows a two suited hand, usually 5-5, in length, or longer. Although the strength of such bids is a matter of Partnership agreement and vulnerability, most play it either very weak (5-10 HCP’s), or very strong (16 or more HCP’s). With 11-15 HCP’s, Michaels cue-bids are usually not used, and the would-be Overcaller bids both suits himself/herself, the higher-ranking suit first, followed by the lower-ranking suit, second.

A special type of Michaels bid, however, made after an Opponent’s opening weak 2-bid in Hearts or Spades (Examples 1, 2, & 3), or following 1 of a Major, 2 of that Major by the

Bridge Players recognize the “*Up-the-Ladder*” principle; i.e., neither Partner is allowed to by-pass any 4-card suit as the bidding proceeds through the 1-level. This principle is

imperative in any **Standard American** 5-card Major bidding system so that an 8-card golden fit never remains undiscovered. Therefore, in the following sequence, neither West, nor East, has shown any extra values, at least thus far in the bidding. Opener, West in this instance, cannot, however, “*pass*” since East’s **1S** bid is not limited, and represents a new suit bid by Responder.

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1C	P	1D	P
	1H	P	1S	

At the 1-level, the “Up-The-Ladder” principle always applies, and neither “Reverses”, nor “*4th-Suit Forcing*” principles apply. In Example 1, all bids are natural; i.e., West has both Clubs and Hearts, and East holds both Diamonds and Spades, each with at least a 4-card suit in their respective voiced suits. West, the Opening Bidder, holds 11-18 HCP’s; and East, the Responder, holds 6-18 HCP’s; i.e., neither Partner has limited his/her holdings and the bidding must continue, but, not necessarily, to Game.

If East wished, alternatively, to force the bidding with an artificial “*4th Suit Forcing*” call, then he/she must jump to “**2S**” which forces the Partnership to Game (Example 2).

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1C	P	1D	P
	1H	P	“2S”	

Here, In Example 2, East’s “**2S**” bid is **artificial**; i.e., says nothing about Spades, and is, as are most 4th suit forcing calls, based upon Partnership understanding, forcing to game. Here, East, looking for a **3-NT** contract, is seeking a Spade stopper from Opener in order to legitimize a makeable No-Trump contract on behalf of the team.

East Holds: XX
 AXX
 AKXX
 KXXX

Bridge Tip # 42

Most Players utilize the universal understanding that the only forcing bid by a Responder to Partner’s overcall, is a cue-bid of the Opponent’s suit. Such a cue-bid evidences support

for Partner's overcall suit, a limit raise or better (11+ HCP's), and an interest in Game if the overcalling Partner has more than just a simple minimum overcall (See Example 1).

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1D	1H	P	"2D"

	<u>South Holds:</u>	KXX	
		AQXX	Here, South,
holding support for Partner's Heart overcall, and opening		XX	count, is
interested in game if North also holds opening count; i.e.,		AXXX	greater than
the minimum values needed for a simple overcall. The			
			overcalling
Partner can sign-off at 2H if he/she holds only minimum values,			else invite or
proceed to Game if holding additional values.			

If a cue-bid in the Opponent's suit, following Partner's overcall, exhibits an interest in Game, as shown above, then to what purpose could a jump-cue-bid be ascribed? A **jump cue-bid** (Example 2) in the Opponent's suit in response to an overcall by Partner shows **four (4) or more pieces in support of Partner's suit and an outside singleton or void, usually, but not necessarily, in the Opponent's suit, and 6-10 HCP's**. This type of signal to Partner is very helpful in either getting to an otherwise-unreachable Game, else the flexibility to better compete due to the distributional quality of Responder's holdings.

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1D	1H	P	"3D"

	<u>South Holds:</u>	KXX	Here,
South, holding 4-card support for Partner's Heart overcall,		AQXX	9 HCP's,
and a singleton Diamond, makes a <u>jump cue-bid</u> response.		X	
		XXXXX	

Bridge Tip # 41

Most Players, when defending against a Suit contract, show count with any suit led by Declarer; i.e., an even (2, 4, or 6 count, a so-called "**High-Low Signal**"), when holding an even number of pieces in that suit; and an odd (1, 3, or 5 count, a so-called "**Low-High**

Signal”), when holding an odd number of pieces in that suit. This seems to be the universally standard play. When Declarer is drawing Trumps, however, most Players alter this count-showing mechanism to the following; i.e., a count signal, when playing high-low, of 3-pieces of the Trump suit.

When Trumps are being played in a Suit contract, a Defender who plays high-low has three pieces of Trump, and may, therefore, if given the opportunity, have the capacity to trump an outside suit. At the very least, showing at least one extra Trump may give Partner a better read on the defense of the hand and the count on Declarer’s distribution. **Playing low-high when Declarer draws Trumps evidences just two pieces of Trump held by a Defender.**

Bridge Tip # 40

Responder, oft times, must make a decision to terminate the bidding at the 2-level in Responder’s own suit following a limiting bid by Opener (See the Examples below). **Opener must learn to recognize that Responder has become the “Captain” of the team following Opener’s limiting bid(s), and that the Responder has the right to signal an end to the auction – a decision to which Opener must accept.**

<u>Example 1:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1D	P	1H	P
	2C	P	2H	

	<u>East Holds:</u>	XXX	
minimum HCP count, makes the correct decision	AQXXXX		Here, East, holding a
his/her 6-card suit.	XX		to end the auction in
	XX		

<u>Example 2:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1-NT	P	"2D" (Transfer)	P
	2H	P	P	

	<u>East Holds:</u>	XXX	
a minimum HCP count, makes the correct decision			Here, East, holding

AQXXX to transfer the bidding
(**Jacoby Transfer**), and then to drop the bidding in a final
XXX 2H contract.
XX

<u>Example 3:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1D	P	1H	P
	1-NT	P	2H	

East Holds: XXX
AQXXX
XXX
XX

Note that here, too, even with as few as 5 Hearts, East's correct decision with this minimum HCP holding is to finalize the contract in **2H**, not-with-standing the fact that East holds only 5 Hearts and the Opener could hold as few as 2.

Partnerships must get comfortable with relinquishing the Captain's role to either member who, at any time during an auction process, has the legitimate right to assume Captaincy, by virtue of having received a completed description of Partner's hand.

Bridge Tip # 39

A pre-emptive jump to Game as an overcall is, occasionally, made on a better hand than might be expected for a pre-emptive action. If so, the pre-emptive Bidder is entitled to bid again, despite the generally accepted axiom that a pre-emptive Bidder should bid once and only once.

Dealer is West: Both sides are vulnerable

	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
—	1H	P	2C	4S (Pre-emptive)
	5C	P	P	????

What action should South take with the following holding?

AKQT742
XX

With only 4-Losers, South has a very strong playing hand. Give North with as little as the Queen of Diamonds, and **5S** might be just one down while **5C** is easily made by the Opponents. On the other-hand, North, who might just have a few defensive cards in Hearts and Clubs, may be reluctant to double the **5C** contract, anticipating little from South, who just pre-empted. In these situations, a Partnership might well adopt the principle that: **A “double” by a pre-empting player says, “Partner, please do more!”**

With this holding, South should **“double.”** North, holding good defensive prospects, should leave the **“double”** in for penalties; whereas, alternatively, holding little or no defensive strength, North should then go on to **5S**. The conditions herein discussed are, perhaps, the one circumstance when a pre-emptive Bidder can, and should, bid again. **A “double” by a pre-empting Bidder is forcing, and shows the desire to either punish the Opponents, else to bid on in the Preemptor’s suit.**

Bridge Tip # 38

Any new suit bid by a Responder to Partner’s Opening weak 2-Bid is forcing for at least one round (Example 1). For Responder to make such a forcing bid, he/she is required to hold at least 15 or more HCP’s, since Opener’s weak 2-Bid evidences, at most, 11 HCP’s. Responder, with 15 or more HCP’s, can then, legitimately, seek the possibilities of Game for the Partnership with any new suit or a **2-NT** bid both forcing, based upon Partnership agreement. Some systems, in response to a **“2-NT”** forcing response, ask for a **“Feature”**; i.e., any outside Ace or King. Other conventions (**“Ogust”** and **“Klinger Ogust”**), used under these circumstances, ask for the quality of Opener’s hand and/or the number of honors in Opener’s bid suit, or the number of pieces held in Responder’s newly-bid suit. Again, there are many such forcing systems, but all, without exception, evidence at least 15 or more HCP’s and are Game-seeking by the Responder.

If there be a “double,” however, by Opener’s LHO (Left-hand Opponent), a new suit bid by Responder to the Opening 2-Bid is NOT forcing and just evidences an alternative Weak bid as the best interference contract for the Partnership (Example 2).

Example 1:

North
2D (Weak)

East (Opponent)
Pass

South
2S (Natural) or "2-NT" (Artificial) (Both are
absolutely Forcing, based upon Partnership Understanding)

Example 2:

North
 2D (Weak)

East (Opponent)
 "Double" (Takeout)

South
2S or 3C (Natural and Non-Forcing with holdings such
 as)

AKQXXXX		XX
XX	(or)	XXX
X		X
XXX		AQJXXXX

Bridge Tip # 37

When counting HCP's, it is customary to single out Aces, Kings, Queens and Jacks seeking a 15-17 High Card Point Count with an even distribution in order to qualify for an opening bid of **1-NT**. It is important to realize, however, that on many occasions 10's and 9's, so-called "*intermediaries*", have trick-taking capacity when coupled with higher honor cards held within the same suit. By themselves they carry little trick-taking capacity, but in combination with higher ranking cards, they become powerful and add to the value of one's holding. Under these circumstances, one can count each intermediary 10 as 1/2 point and each 9 as 1/4 point.

Consider counting 10's and 9's towards total HCP count when considering a No-Trump opening bid if these so-called "*intermediaries*" are coupled with one or more higher honor card within the same suit.

<u>Example (1)</u>	AX KQTX AJT9 XXX	In this example, the 10's and 9's present are coupled with higher-ranking honors and have implicit trick-taking capacity. HCP count here is, therefore, 15¼. Open 1-NT without hesitation!
--------------------	---	---

Example (2) **AT** Here, the 10's and 9's, intermediaries,
are not coupled with higher
 KQXX honor cards and, therefore, should not be
considered within the HCP
 AJXX count. Open **1D** here, not **1-NT**!
 T9X .

Bridge Tip # 36

Cue-bids are never alertable since they are very specific as to their meaning which is fixed by the circumstances under which they are utilized. Most bridge Players use Michaels Cue-bids (A conventional cue-bid system) to evidence a 2-suited overcall, usually 5-5 or better in length, with either a very weak hand holding, 0-10 HCP's, or a very strong hand with 16 or more HCP's. Thus, an overcall of "**2H**" following an Opponent's opening call of **1H** would evidence 5 or more Spades and an 5-card or longer unspecified Minor suit, as well (Example 1), very weak or very strong, as defined above.

When the Opponents open a weak 2-bid, however, so much of the bidding room has been usurped by the Opponent's pre-emptive bid such that bid of greater import is now assigned to a cue-bid of the Opponent's weak 2 opening call. **A Cue-bid at the 3-level after an Opponent's opening pre-emptive call of 2D, 2H or 2S evidences a very strong holding, 17 or more HCP's, and is seeking a 3-NT Game if one's responding Partner has a stopper in the Opener's bid suit.**

Example 1: **North (Opponent)**
 1H
 East (You)
 "**2H**" (Michaels Cue-bid evidencing 5-5 or
better; in Spades, and, Clubs or Diamonds)

Example 2: **North (Opponent)**
 2S
 East (You)
 "**3S**" (A very strong hand, 17 or more
HCP's asking responding Partner to bid **3-NT** if holding a stopper
 in Opener's Spade suit. Responder cannot "**pass**" the cue-
bid, and if not holding the stopper, he/she must find another bid.)

Bridge Tip # 35

In the “*Two-Over-One*” bidding system, Opener’s appropriate first re-bid is summarized in the following examples:

1♠ -- 2♣ -- ?

a. AKJ53

K876

AKQ – 2♥ – (Natural) (Do not jump to 3H which would be a “Splinter” bid in support of Clubs.

7

You will reveal your strength later after conserving bidding room in order to first determine the appropriate Trump suit.)

b. J7653

KQJ

7 – “3♦” – (A Perfect “Splinter” bid)

AQ63

c. AK653

AK7

A84 – 2-NT – (Shows 12-14 or 18-19 balanced, If Partner raises to 3-NT, you will bid

84

4-NT, quantitative, to show 18-19)

1♠ -- 2♦ -- ?

d. KJ532

95 – 3♣ – (Going to the 3-Level does not show extra values as the Partnership is already in a Game-force.

Just

7

show your shape)

AQJ83

1♠ -- 2♥ -- ?

e. AKJ32

54 – “2-NT” – (To show your 5-2-3-3 hand, 12-14 HCP’s)

Bridge Tip # 34

Many Opponents utilize The **Flannery Convention** (an artificial opening bid of “2D”) evidencing 11-15 HCP’s with 5 Hearts and 4 Spades. Since 1-level of bidding has already been eliminated, it behooves the Opponents, who find themselves in such a situation, to have a system of overcalls at their disposal which are pre-planned and cover most of the possible circumstances in which they might find themselves when wishing to enter the bidding. Although the bids herein listed are, to some extent, artificial, and therefore require Partnership knowledge and agreement, they represent the standard defense for Opponents against an artificial **Flannery** opening. **The standard overcalls for Opponents faced with a “2D” (Flannery) opening bid by the opposition are as follows:**

<u>North (Opponent)</u>	
“2D” (Flannery)	
<u>East (You)</u>	
more with 11 or more HCP’s	1. 2S = Natural showing 6 Spades or
HCP’s	2. “2H” = A Take-Out Double with 13+
Minors	3. “2-NT” = “Unusual-NT” for the
Hand (15-17 HCP’s) with Both Hearts and Spades Stopped.	4. “Double” = A 1-NT Opening
penalties by “passing,” else bid on as desired.	Partner may convert to
	5. 3C or 3D = Natural suit overcalls

Bridge Tip # 33

A **2-NT** bid in response to Partner’s opening bid of **1H** or **1S** is customarily of special meaning; i.e., a **“Jacoby 2-NT”** Conventional bid, subject to Partnership

agreement, and usually denotes opening count or better, with support for Partner's Major suit. Little is said, however, regarding a similar **2-NT** response by a "previously passed" Partner opposite a 3rd-hand or 4th-hand opening of **1H** or **1S** by Partner.

The 1st or 2nd position Partner cannot have opening count by virtue of his/her previous "*pass*." With support for Opener, Responder can either bid 2 or 3 of Opener's suit (Examples 1 and 2). Without support for Opener, Responder has optional bids like **1-NT**, or a new Suit bid at the 2-Level with 11 or 12 HCP's (Examples 3 and 4). With an overcall by would-be Responder's RHO (right-hand Opponent), a **2-NT** bid generally shows 11-12 HCP's and a stopper in the Opponent's suit, and is invitational to Game.

Without interference by the Opponents, however, there is little or no use for a **2-NT** bid by the "*previously-passed*" Responder. Conventional wisdom, therefore, has given a special meaning to a **2-NT** response by a "*previously-passed*" Partner to an opening bid of **1H** or **1S**. **Such a bid evidences a weak hand (a maximum of 10 HCP's), and 5-5 or better in the Minor suits** (Example 5). With such a Partnership understanding, such a bid is alertable.

North Deals:

	<u>North (You)</u>	
	P /??	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
P		P
	<u>South (Partner)</u>	
	1H	

Example (1)

AX
KXXX (2H)
XXXX
XXX

Example (2)

AX
KJXX (3H)
QJXX
XXX

Example (3)

AXX
XX (1-NT)
KJXX
QXXX

Example (4)

AXX
XX (2D)
KQXXX
QXX

Example (5)

XX
X ("2-NT") - Showing 5-5 in the Minor suits)
AQXXX
KXXXX

Bridge Tip # 32

Think twice about raising Partner's suit if you are strong in the enemy suit and might prefer to defend rather than to sacrifice. With length in Partner's bid suit, it is, often, attractive to show support. It is usually wise, however, to temper this desire when you are also strong in the suit bid by the opposition. Raising Partner may tempt him/her to venture forward during the pressures of competitive bidding, into an ill-timed sacrifice. Additionally in many instances your disclosure to the Opponent's that you have support for Partner may indicate their team's shortness in your suit, thereby emboldening them into an otherwise un-biddable Game in their chosen suit.

Bridge Tip # 31

The old adage that Opener should consider his/her second bid before making the first could never be more true than in conditions with the following holding.

Dealer (You) Opener usually bids length before strength. With this hand, however, holding
AJXXX a "Bergen" or "Rule of 20" light-opening count, one should not open **1H**
AKXXXX (the longer suit), intending to re-bid **2S** over any bid by either the
XX Opponents or Partner. The justification for not doing so is that this would
X be a "Reverse," should Partner have responded **1-NT**, and would evidence 17 or more HCP's. With a hand this weak,
Opener would better describe his/her HCP holding by lying about the distribution, opening **1S**, and planning to re-bid

2H. This is the far better preferred sequence when holding such a light opening count as shown here.

Bridge Tip # 30

The correct way to play a suit combination depends upon how many tricks you need.

In the example shown, your goal is to win three (3) tricks. How do you play the suit in order to achieve this goal?

<u>North (Dummy)</u>	
QJ6	
<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>
(??)	(??)
<u>South (Declarer)</u>	
A742	

The correct play is to lead low from your hand **towards** the Queen-Jack. If you are allowed to win the first trick with the Queen, return to your hand with a different suit and lead another card toward the Jack. If West has the King you will win three tricks no matter how the suit divides. If East captures your Queen or Jack with the King, you will need a 3-3 split in order to win three tricks, but you have given yourself two mechanisms to achieve your stated goal. This is a far better play than to leading the Queen or Jack towards the Ace. East can cover if he/she holds the King, or the finesse will lose if West holds the King; either way you will win only 2-tricks, and your only chance to win three would lie solely upon whether or not the suit were to divide 3-3; i.e., you will not have given yourself the alternate opportunity as described above.

When you are contemplating leading an honor card in order to take a finesse, ask yourself the following question: What will I have left if the honor card is covered or if the finesse fails. If you do not like the answer, don't lead the honor card, lead towards it instead.

Bridge Tip # 29

Opener should not hesitate to re-bid 1-NT even without a stopper in one or more suits as opposed to any other less-appealing re-bid, as long as the basic requirements of 12-14 HCP's and an evenly-balanced hand is present.

<u>West (You)</u> <u>(Partner)</u>	<u>West (You)</u>	<u>East</u>
JX	1D	1H
AXX	?????	
AXXXX		
KXX		

Here, 1-NT is the appropriate re-bid. West cannot “*pass*” East’s response of **1H**, since a new suit is bid by Responder, should not re-bid his/her 5-card, poor, Diamond suit, cannot support East’s Heart suit, holding only 3-pieces, and must, therefore, re-bid **1-NT** even without a Spade stopper. Whether or not No-Trump remains the final contract or not withstanding whether or not the contract makes, **1-NT** is the appropriate re-bid by Opener holding a balanced hand and 12 HCP's in this instance. All other re-bids are unacceptable.

Bridge Tip #28

A “*Splinter*” bid (a *Double Jump-Shift*) is an extremely useful way to show Trump support for Partner and, at the same time, shortness in the suit used to “*Splinter*.” Such bids show Game values and either a singleton (not an Ace) or a void in the suit used to “*Splinter*.” Since “*Splinter*” bids promise Game values, a “*Splinter*” Bid by a Responder (Example 1) evidences 13 or more HCP's, and a “*Splinter*” Bid by an Opener (Example 2) evidences 20 or more HCP's.

All “Splinter” Bids are alertable.

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

Bridge Tip #26

When responding to Partner's **Take-Out Double** with 12 or more HCP's, cue-bid the Opponent's suit to show a likely Game-level contract, and then bid your suit(s) later. After you cue-bid, any new suit bid by you is forcing to suit agreement and to Game.

Example: You (South) hold: AJ73 KQ64 63 Q84

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1D	Double	Pass	???

You should respond "2D" in order to reveal this big holding! You and Partner can now bid 4-card suits up-the-line hoping to connect with a 4-4 Major suit fit. If Partner bids 2C, bid 2H. If Partner bids 2H or 2S, raise to game. *The Player who knows goes!*

Bridge Tip #25

In almost all circumstances, a new suit bid by a responding Partner to Partner's pre-emptive opening bid is forcing. Indeed, Partnerships utilize the "**RONF**" principle; namely, that a **R**aise in Opener's suit is the **O**nly **N**on-**F**orce, and that any new suit bid by Responder is forcing for one round. Such forcing bids normally evidence at least 15+ HCP's and are usually seeking the best spot for a possible Game-Level contract on behalf of the Partnership. There is, however, one exception to this principle.

A new suit bid by Responder to an opening pre-empt, when there has been an intervening Take-Out Double by Responder's RHO (right-hand Opponent), is not forcing. Such bids are constructive and issued both as an alternative spot for the pre-empting team, and as a lead-directing indicator, should the Partnership need to defend against a final contract secured by the Opponents.

<u>West (Partner)</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
<u>South</u> XX	AKXXXXX	2D	Db1 .	2S

XX	XXX	(Not
Forcing)		
AQXXXX	X	
KXX	XX	

Bridge Tip #24

When responding to Partner's **Take-Out Double** in a suit, make a jump-response with 9 or more "*revalued*" points. A 5-card suit is worth one extra point, a 6-card suit is worth three extra points, and an additional, side, un-bid, 4-card suit is also worth one extra point. Jacks and Queens in the suits the Opponents are bidding are worthless.

Example: You (South) hold: K96 AQ43 T832 54

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1C	Double	Pass	???

You should bid 2H! You hold 10 revalued points, including one extra for the 4-card Diamond suit. Your jump response is not forcing, but a Game-level contract could easily be missed if you simply respond, 1H.

Bridge Tip #23

When you hold support for Partner's suit, and either, make a Penalty Double, or "*pass*" a Take-Out Double for penalties, you had best be right. Most of the time, such a decision will be wrong even when you have an excellent holding in the enemy suit.

Generally speaking, the best Penalty Doubles at a low level occur when you are strong in their suit (4 [+] of their Trumps containing 2 [+] Trump tricks as the almost irreducible minimum), short in Partner's suit, and with your side owning at least half the high card points. Remove any one of these above-listed factors and your Penalty Double or conversion of Partner's Take-Out Double to a penalty remains very speculative.

Bridge Tip #22

A high card from Partner playing third-hand high denies the card immediately below it. A general principal for any defending team is to win a trick as cheaply as possible. A corollary of the same rule is that when playing third-hand high, you play the cheapest of equally-high cards. Following this principal makes it easier for one's Partner to calculate the cards held by you and by the Declarer. If third-hand high is committed to playing the cheapest of equally high cards, it automatically follows, thusly, that the card played by third hand denies the card immediately below it (as that would then be an equal and cheaper card).

(North) West leads the 4. If East plays the Jack taken by South's (Declarer's) Ace,
(Dummy) West knows that East does **not** have the 10, as playing the Jack denies the 10,
75 and that East holds the Queen. When next leading, West can confidently lead the suit
(West) again to East's Queen, allowing East to then later lead the suit, once more, through South's ten.
K9642

Bridge Tip #21

Defensive signaling is central to a proper defense by any team. Different signaling techniques for any defending team are often used (a) when Partner first leads a suit as opposed to (b) when Declarer first leads a suit. When utilizing these methods, a defending team can accomplish their utmost in defending against any final contract by a Declarer. Since the Defenders cannot see each other's cards, this type of information to each other allows them to communicate thereby increasing their chances of maximizing their defensive efforts. When this form of Partnership signaling through discarding, as described below, is employed, and each Defender watches and takes note of the signal(s) that Partner is sending, the following results become possible.

At the start of the play of any hand, using "Standard" signaling, when Partner leads a suit at trick one, his/her Partner should give an "attitude" signal as to whether or not

he/she likes Partner's choice of the suit which Partner has led – a high card signaling acceptance, and a low card signifying dislike. Through such a signaling process, the Partner of the one who has led to the first trick can lend some additional input, from his/her singular perspective, whether he/she desires either a continuance of that suit first selected, else a possible desire to have a switch to an alternate, as-yet, un-led suit.

Alternatively, however, when Declarer leads a suit, a good defensive Partnership gives “count” to each other, not “attitude”. They do this by noting the order in which both Partners play his/her cards in that suit first led by the Declarer (a “high/low” order signaling an even number of cards) (a “low/high” order signaling an odd number of cards). This information, together with the number of cards clearly visible in the Dummy and those left in one's own hand will culminate in a Defender's ability to get a clear picture as to exactly what is happening in that suit.

Stop and count the cards in any suit led by Declarer after two rounds of that suit have been played. By this technique, a Defender can frequently get an exact count as to the number of cards in each of the suits held within the unseen hands. *Try it! You'll see that it works well!*

Bridge Tip #20

Never take a Trump finesse if there is a threat for a ruff by the Opponent's should the Trump finesse lose.

Suppose the bidding has been as follows:

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1H	Double	2H	Pass
4H	Pass	Pass	Pass

North leads the King of Diamonds – Plan Declarer play by West before peaking at the solution below!

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
KJ5		T643	
QJT94		A632	
A		93	
AQ93			

Solution: Remember, in a Suit contract count your losers, as opposed to a No-Trump contract where Declarer should count his/her winners. In this hand it is clear that North, having doubled, most likely, holds 4 Spades. West has 2 potential Spade losers, the Ace and the Queen, (since the Spade finesse is most likely a losing probability) and a Heart loser, should the Heart finesse fail. as well). There are no Diamond losers and no Club losers, so the hand will make four if the Heart finesse fails, and five if the Heart finesse works.

But wait!!!!!! - Remember we counted upon North to have 4 Spades. That gives South just 2 Spades. What if we take the previously-mentioned Heart finesse and it were to lose to South. Suppose the Hearts split 2-2 and South were then to shift to a Spade. West takes the Spade finesse with the Jack or King, and North then cashes the **A(Q) and Q(A)** of Spades. South plays high-low signaling a doubleton, North continues with a third round of Spades which is ruffed by South who utilizes his/her second Trump. West has now lost 2 Spade tricks, a Heart finesse which has lost, and a final ruff of the third round of Spades for **DOWN ONE!**

The correct move after winning the Ace of Diamonds is to lead the Queen of Hearts, tempting North to cover if holding the King. (**Lead the top of a sequence if you want the Opponent to cover your honor**) However, in this instance, do not let the Queen run – you never really intended to finesse. Rise with the Ace of Hearts and play a second Heart. This will draw the Trumps if they are 2-2 and avoid the Spade ruff. If South started with **K-X-X** in Hearts, you have no way of escaping the Spade ruff, but it would have been a shame to have the contract fail if South were to hold just **K-X**.

Bridge Tip #19

When Playing K-Q-T in your hand opposite low cards in the Dummy, play low to the King first, not the Queen, - in order to tempt the Defender with the Ace sitting over you to take the Ace and spare you the guess on the next round.

(1)	843	(2)	843
A95	J762	J762	A95
	KQT		KQT

If one knows the location of the Ace and Jack, as in Examples (1) and (2) above, the **K-Q-T** holding can always be played for two tricks (unless the **A-J-x** be offside as in Example (3) below).

(3)

AJ5

843

9762

KQT

The problem is that one usually plays low to the Queen, which holds, cross back to the Dummy and lead low once again. When the second Player plays low, you must decide whether to finesse the 10 (wins in layout 1, loses in 2) or whether to rise with the King (loses in 1, wins in 2).

Bridge Tip #18

Almost always lead Partner's bid suit, even though the Opponents have bid No-Trump afterwards. One must have a very good reason not to do so. It is usually normal to lead Partner's suit on most occasions, but many Players are reluctant to do so when Partner's overcall is followed by a No-Trump bid, since the Opponent's have indicated that one or both have at least one stopper in Partner's suit. Not to lead Partner's bid suit is, however, short-sighted. While it is usually true that the Opponents have at least one stopper, your function is to eliminate the one or two that they do hold. Your expectation and hope is that even though your lead will allow the Declarer to win a trick in the bid suit, to which he/she is probably entitled anyhow, you hope Partner will later get in and be able to run several established tricks holding Declarer to a minimum trick count, or even possibly defeating the contract.

When should one decline to lead Partner's bid suit in such an auction?

Answer: If you have your own worthy 5-card, or better, suit, ***and entries***. Under these circumstances, leading your own suit, as an alternative to Partner's, may be the better defensive opening. Remember, though, **even if your suit is good, it will be to no avail if you manage to eventually set it up but lack the ability to return to your hand absent a subsequent entry or two. *Absent entries, always lead Partner's suit!***

Bridge Tip #17

Never “*double*” an Opponent’s suit Slam contract when holding just two Aces, or with just strong Trumps.

Suppose the bidding has been as follows:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1H	Pass	3C	Pass
3H	Pass	6H	Pass
Pass	?????		

You, as East, hold:

(a) **AJ73** Unless the Opponents are the rawest of beginners, they surely have heard of **Blackwood**.

72 They would never jump to Slam missing two Aces. South must, therefore, be staring at a void as with:

A8762

62

<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
KQ	---
KJ8643	AQT5
QJ4	K93
83	AK9754

The moral here is that the South, in not using Blackwood, was never worried about missing two Aces. **DO NOT “DOUBLE!”** You do not have the tricks to defeat the contract that you thought you had.

(b) **Q53** With this holding you are certainly defeating a **6H** contract. It would be foolish to “*double*” and then find them **QJT9** running to **6-NT** which you cannot defeat such as in the following N/S holding.

8762

93

<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
A5	7
K86532	A74
KQJ	A953
72	AKQJ5

The moral here is that if the Opponents have reached a Slam which is due to fail, you do not need to “*double*” them to achieve a good score. **DO NOT “DOUBLE!”** You might just inadvertently push them into a contract they might make.

Bridge Tip #16

Do not compete for a part-score at the 4-level. In order to make **4H** or **4S**, a Partnership usually requires at least 25-26 HCP's. It follows, therefore, that in order to make **4C** or **4D** one needs the same number of HCP's. In a competitive auction where both sides are bidding and you know that you do not have the values for Game, it is usually unwise to venture beyond the 3-level. **When the points are roughly even and both sides have a Trump fit, both Partnerships can usually make 8 tricks, occasionally one side can make 9 tricks, but it is rare for either side to make 10 tricks.**

The Bidding has proceeded:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1C	Pass	1H	Pass
2H	Pass	Pass	3D
Pass	Pass	3H	Pass
Pass	????		

You, East, hold: **AX XX QXXX KXXXX - Pass!!** Partner's delayed overcall has already pushed them one level higher. West's goal to push North-South one level higher has worked. Be grateful Partner has bid at all and do not punish him/her for competing.

The success rate for a 4-level part-score is very small. As a result, East-West may receive a minus score when, in fact, North-South were going minus if left to play at the 3-level. Secondly, there is a far higher incidence of Penalty Doubles at the 4-level since the Opponents recognize you were bidding beyond your means.

Do not compete for a part-score at the 4-level.

Bridge Tip #15

Reopen the bidding with a delayed overcall, a delayed Take-Out Double, or a delayed "2-NT" ("Unusual-NT" for the two lower, as-yet, un-bid suits), if the

Opponents support a suit to the 2-level and then “pass.” It is usually wrong to “*pass*” the bidding out in circumstances like this because the Opponents have found a Trump fit but have not pushed towards a Game contract. The HCP’s are, therefore, roughly equally distributed between both sides, and it is usually wrong, as a result, to sell out without pushing the Opponents one level higher. As the balancing (“*Pass-Out*,” 4th seat, hand), think in terms of your bidding 26 cards, both that which you have, as well as that which you perceive Partner is likely to have. Partner must realize you are acting in the “*Balancing*” position and not punish you by getting excited by your bid and bidding onward. Your job is just to push them to the 3-level, if possible.

<u>WEST</u>	<u>NORTH</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH (You)</u>
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2H	Pass	Pass	?????

You have the following hands in the pass-out seat (4th seat) in each of the following circumstances:

1. **The Delayed Overcall:** Promises a 5-card suit or longer with the suit poor in quality else you could have overcalled at the 1-level.

J87643 873 A8 K7 (South should bid 2S)

2. **The Delayed Take-Out Double:** Promises support or tolerance for the missing suits.

K864 7 A842 J972 (South, here, should “Double”)

3. **The Delayed (“2-NT”) Unusual No Trump:** Promises support for the two lower, as-yet, un-bid suits.

K862 53 74 AJ954 (South should bid “2-NT” - Here, for Clubs and Spades)

Bridge Tip #14

Do not allow your Opponents to play a part-score contract at the two-level unless you have length and strength in their suit. Rarely sell-out at the 2-level, especially if they appear content with an apparent “fit.”

Suppose you, sitting North, hold the following and the bidding has proceeded as listed in examples (1), (2), and (3):

	AJXXX	KJX	X	KQXX
	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
(1)	1S ????	2D	Pass	Pass
(2)	1S ????	2C	Pass	Pass
(3)	1S ????	2H	2S	1H 3H

- (1) **“Double”**, asking Partner to bid Spades, Hearts or Clubs.
- (2) **“Pass”**. You have both length and strength in their suit.
- (3) **Compete by bidding 3 Spades**. When both sides have a Trump fit and the HCP’s are roughly evenly distributed, both sides can usually make eight tricks in their respective Trump suit contracts, while occasionally one side makes seven and the other nine. It pays you to be consistent and **always push to the 3-level** in auctions such as this. The possible results, in these instances, are as follows:
 - (a) You make your 3-level contract and are obviously better off than letting them play their contract.
 - (b) You are only one trick off in your 3-level contract, again better than if the Opponents make their contract.
 - (c) The Opponents push to the 3-level and fail. Again you are better off than if you did not push them beyond their makeable contract level.
 - (d) They push to the 3-level and make the contract.
 - (e) You fail at the 3-level and it costs you more than their contract was worth. Feasible, but rare! Remember, at bridge, sometimes ***“crap happens”***.

Do not commit yourself to a 3-NT contract until you have made sure that a Major suit Game contract is not a more feasible endeavor.

Suppose Partner has opened 1S. What is your best response holding the following?

QX AKXX AJX JXXX

It could be an error to bid **3-NT** immediately. Better to initially bid **2C** and, if Opener re-bids **2S**, showing 6 pieces (you can bid **4S**), or, if Opener re-bids **2H** showing 4 or 5 pieces (you can bid **4H**), alternatively then settle on **3-NT** if neither of the former possibilities occur.

Opener could hold the following hand, wherein **4H** appears to be an attractive contract, while **3-NT** might fail.

KJXXX QXXX X AQX

Bridge Tip #12

A “Reverse” is a standard part of all natural bridge bidding systems. Opener makes a “Reverse” bid by bidding a new suit at the 2-level which is higher-ranking than the suit he/she first opened, such as **1C** (Opener): **1S** (Responder): **2H** (Opener). Such a “Reverse” bid promises a better-than-minimum opening, normally around 17 HCP’s or better; *two suits of unequal length* with the first bid suit being longer than the second; and is forcing for one-round.

In each of the following three instances, the bidding has begun **1C** by you as Opener, followed by **1S** from responding Partner. What is your re-bid?

Hand A

32
AJ54
32
AKJ42

Hand B

3
AJ54
A32
AKJ42

Hand C

32
AJ54
AQ3
AKJ4

With A, the shape is correct for a “Reverse,” but the hand is too weak to reverse to **2H**. Opener should re-bid **2C**.

With B, re-bid **2H** – the shape and strength is right for the “Reverse.”
Note: With this hand, if the Partnership were playing the “Ingberman 2-NT” Convention, had the Responder bid “2-NT” subsequent to Opener’s “Reverse,” Opener, with this minimum holding, would respond an artificial “3C,” denoting a minimum number of HCP’s for his/her “Reverse,” requesting that the Partnership stop short of a Game-level contract; i.e. a contract, at the 3-level, of Responder’s choosing, assuming Responder also held a minimum 5-7 HCP’s.

With C, re-bid with a jump to 2-NT – *Do not “Reverse” with a balanced hand where the two best suits are of equal length.*

Bridge Tip #11

When the bidding has revealed that the Opponents clearly have enough high card strength for Game, or even Slam, and you find you have an excellent Trump fit, be quick to make a sacrifice, pre-emptive bid in order to mislead the Opponents as to the location of strength and perhaps cause them to miss their Game or Slam.

<u>WEST (Partner)</u>	<u>NORTH</u>	<u>EAST (You)</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>
2H	Pass	????	

Suppose Partner opens **2H** (evidencing a 6-card suit with 5-11 HCP’s), your RHO “*passes*.” The Opponents are vulnerable and your side is not. What action should you, (East), take holding the following?

EAST (You)
 XX
 KXXXX
 X
 JXXXX

Answer: The Opponents have at least 25 HCP’s and probably more. They, most likely, have at least an 8-card Spade suit and at probably eight or more Diamonds as well. You must put this knowledge to your side’s advantage

before the Opponents locate their fit and strength. Any of the following options will likely score you a top on the board!!!

- a) Bid **5H**, as a sacrifice.
- b) Bid **4-NT** as if you were asking for Aces and sign-off at **5H**. At this favorable vulnerability, **5H “doubled”** should be a cheaper result than their presumed Game or Slam.
- c) Try a subtle approach as bidding **2-NT** which is used to initiate a Game-try of your own, and then bid **4H** or **5H** no matter what Partner’s response.
- d) Lastly, the biggest coup of all, Bid **4S**, a natural sign-off. If everybody “*passes*,” you can afford to get set ten tricks “*undoubled*” (if non-vulnerable) and still show a profit. If “*doubled*,” you can always high-tail it back to **5H**. They may still find their Game but miss their Slam.

“Bridge can be

fun!”

Bridge Tip #10

When you have the choice of two Trump suits, it is preferable to play in the Trump suit of the weaker hand and have the stronger hand as Dummy. Under normal circumstances, it is more attractive to have the stronger hand as Declarer, and the weaker hand as Dummy, but the overriding consideration is to be in the correct; i.e., best final contract.

<u>West (You)</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
AQXXXX	X	1S	1-NT
X	QJT9XX	2C	2H
QX	XXXXX	????	
KQXX	A		

West should “*Pass!*” If Spades were, hypothetically, Trump, the East hand is likely to produce one sure trick (the Ace of Clubs) and a likely second trick via a

Club ruff. If Hearts were to be Trump, however, the East hand is now worth five tricks, four in Hearts and the Ace of Clubs. **In instances like this, it is best to play in the Trump suit of the weaker hand.**

Bridge Tip #9

Repeat a 5-card suit only as a last resort, whether you are the Opener or the Responder. More bidding sins are committed under the excuse "*I had to show you I had a 5-bagger, Partner!*" than in any other single area of bidding. There are two distinct situations here:

- (1) **If your re-bid is not forcing, be extremely reluctant to re-bid a 5-card suit. Re-bid it only as a last resort first making sure that you have no other option.**

As Responder, You Hold
respond 1H. Then:

Suppose Partner has opened 1C and you

XX (a) If Opener re-bids **1S** ("*Up-the-Ladder*") - Re-bid **1-NT**.

AXXXX (b) If Opener re-bids **2D** (A "*Reverse*") - Re-bid **3C** giving a simple preference. As Opener has reversed,

KXX and his/her Clubs are surely longer than his/her Diamonds.

XXX (In this second [Example b] instance, see "*Ingberman 2-NT*" which deals with this latter scenario)

Suppose Partner has opened 1D and you
respond 1H. Then:

(c) If Opener re-bids **2C** - Re-bid **2D** giving preference to Opener's first bid suit.

(d) If Opener re-bids **1S** - Re-bid **1-NT** or **2D** rather than **2H**.

- (2) **If you are in a Game-forcing situation, you may re-bid your 5-card suit freely below Game so as to best determine the correct Trump suit.**

Suppose Partner has opened 1D and you
respond 1H. Then:

(e) If Opener re-bids **2-NT** - By all means re-bid **3H** to check out the best contract. **Note:** In this instance those who utilize "**New Minor Forcing**" could use the artificial bid of "**3C**" ("**Second Minor**") to ask the same question: "**Partner I know you denied 4 pieces of my suit by not bidding Hearts in your re-bid, but I am now asking, do you have 3 pieces to match my 5-card Heart suit?**"

Bridge Tip #8

Never refrain from bidding a weak Major suit ("Up-the-Ladder") at the 1-Level either as Opener, or as Responder to Opener. In the Standard American, 5-card Major suit bidding system, the "Up-the-Ladder" Principle is critical for one or more of several potential reasons:

1. The correct contract may be in that weak 4-card suit. In the hand seen below, if East, in trepidation, responds **1-NT**, fearing that his/her Spade suit is too weak, West might "**pass**" or, alternatively, run to a **2H** contract, both significantly inferior to a **2S** contract which makes 8 or 9 tricks.

<u>West (Partner)</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
A876	9542	1H	1S
AK763	54	2S	Pass
Q3	K62		
92	A865		

2. If No-Trump is the correct spot, it is often better for Opener, holding the better hand with a greater number of high card points to be the Declarer rather than the Responder since the lead will be coming into, not through, Opener's honors. In general, if possible, *the weaker hand should never snatch a possible No-Trump contract from the stronger hand.*

<u>East</u>	<u>West (Partner)</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	<u>West</u>	
	A3	J542	1D	
1S	AQ3	854	2-NT	3-
NT	KQJ8	973		

QJ63

AK5

3. If No-Trump were to be the final contract, mentioning the weak 4-card suit might be just enough to dissuade the Opponents from leading what might turn out to be the weak-link in Declarer's and Responder's combined high-card strength.

Bridge Tip #7

A 6-card lower-ranking suit, is evidenced by Responder when he/she first bids 1-NT in response to Partner's opening bid of one of a suit, and then later follows with a re-bid of a lower-ranking suit at the 3-level.

<u>WEST</u> (Partner)	<u>NORTH (Responder)</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>
Pass	1-NT	Pass	1H
Pass	3D	Pass	2H
Pass			Pass

Such bidding by Responder obviously exhibits distaste for Opener's suit; i.e., fewer than two pieces. A good guide as to when to do the above is as follows:

(It is called the "Rule of 6")

When Opener re-bids 2-of-the-suit opened after your 1-NT response, Responder subtracts the number of cards held by Responder in Opener's suit from the number of cards in Responder's long suit. If the answer is below 6, "*pass*" Opener's re-bid. If the answer is 6 or more, Responder should bid 3 of his/her long suit.

<u>WEST</u>	<u>NORTH (You)</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH (Partner)</u>
Pass	1-NT	Pass	1H
Pass	???		2H

(1)	KX X AXXXXX	(2)	KXX --- AXXXXX	(3)	XX X KQXXXXX
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XXXX

XXXX

JXX

(1) Pass - The difference is 5 (6 Diamonds minus 1 Heart)

(2) Bid 3D - The difference is 6 (6 Diamonds minus 0 Hearts)

(3) Bid 3D - The difference is 6 (7 Diamonds minus 1 Heart)

Bridge Tip #6

A 4-4 Major suit Trump fit *almost always* plays at least one trick better than a 5-3 Major suit Trump fit.

<u>West (Partner)</u>	<u>East (You)</u>
AQJ4	K876
AQT54	KJ9
A2	543
A2	543

When Partner opens the hand with “**1H**”, you, East, should not be so quick to support Partner’s opening Heart suit. Rather, you should bid “**1S**,” prepared to support Hearts at a later time. West, finding the 8-card Spade fit, makes Spades the final Trump suit rather than the 9-card Heart suit.

Note: In a contract of **6S**, all you require is a 3-2 Trump division allowing you to discard two of Dummy’s Diamonds (or Clubs) on your Hearts, eventually trumping a Diamond (or Club). In a contract of **6H**, however, you cannot help but lose one Club and one Diamond, going down one trick. This same principal applies to a 26-HCP 4-level contract being better in a 4-4 Major suit fit as opposed to a 5-3 or 5-4 other Major suit fit present in the same hand. In this instance, playing in the 4-4 Major suit fit allows Declarer, once Trumps are drawn, to discard 2-losers on the dissimilarly matched 5-3 Heart suit. This would not be possible if Hearts were Trumps leaving a 4-4 Spade side suit which would not allow for any side-suit discards.

Bridge Tip #5

When only one winning piece of outstanding Trump is held by the Opponents, it is normally best to leave it outstanding (The so-called “Rule of 1”). To eliminate the Opponents top Trump while costing the offense two Trumps in the process, is oft times counter-productive as well as creating a loss of initiative for the Declarer.

<u>WEST</u>	<u>EAST</u>
AKQ64	3
8	J932
AK	8643
AK753	J642

West, in a contract of 5 Clubs, ruffs the second Heart trick led by the Opponents. Declarer’s attempt to then draw Trumps by playing the Ace-King of Clubs finds North-South with a statistically likely 3-1 Club holding instead of a hoped for 2-2 unlikely split. Failure to capture the Queen of Trump should not, however, dishearten Declarer. West must abandon playing Trumps and start on the Spade suit, planning to ruff two Spades in East in order to ensure the contract in case of the unlikely event that one of the Opponents holds five Spades. In so doing, West need not fear being over-ruffed for, indeed, the Queen of Clubs will score for the Opponents sooner or later in any event. **There is no need to cause the Opponents to claim their winning Trump trick early, especially in this case where it would cost Declarer a possible needed Trump from Dummy in the process.**

Bridge Tip #4

After a suit opening by an Opponent, a **Take-Out Double** by the 2nd seat Player and a raise of by Opener’s Partner, a second “*double*” by the 4th seat Player, Overcaller’s Partner, is also a **Take-Out Double**. It is a form of a “*Responsive Double*.” It shows, 8 or more HCP’s, a desire to compete, no particular preference for any one of the three

remaining, as-yet, un-bid suits, but with support (4-pieces) or, at the very least, tolerance (3-pieces) for all of the remaining, as-yet, un-bid suits

<u>South</u>	<u>Example:</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
		1H	Double	2H
<u>"Double"</u>				
			<u>You (South) hold:</u>	A64 94
Q732 Q954				

Bridge Tip #3

Dealer South: (You)

South
JX
XX
KQJX
AJXXX

Normally, one bids length ***before*** strength. However, when holding ***minimum opening values*** (as in the hand above) specifically housing 4-Diamonds and 5-Clubs, Opener should be very careful to ***always*** open **1D**, prepared to re-bid **2C**, even though the Club suit is longer than the Diamond suit. If the Opening Bidder were, mistakenly, to open **1C**, Partner is statistically likely to respond **1H** or **1S**, just what Opener did not want to hear. Since Opener would not be able to "***pass***," since "***A new suit by Responder is almost always forcing for one round.***" Opener would then be stuck for a re-bid. If Opener were, hypothetically, to respond **2D**, this would offer erroneous information to the Responder since it would evidence a "**Reverse**" bid (the second suit, Diamonds, being higher-ranking than the first, Clubs), and would mislead the Responder in that a "**Reverse**" bid by Opener shows a hand equal to 17, or more, HCP's. If, alternatively, Opener were to respond **2C**, this, too, would be almost equally as bad in that it would erroneously promise a 6-card Club suit, or, at the very least, a good 5-card suit, neither of which is present in the above-referenced hand. **The only solution: Opener should open 1D, prepared to re-bid 2C, the best bidding alternative, under these conditions.**

Remember:

Opener should always consider his/her second bid, before making a first bid.

Bridge Tip #2

Bridge hands holding a 6-5 pattern; i.e., especially when holding a 6-card Minor suit and a 5-card Major suit oft times present the Partnership with difficulty in reaching the correct contract. In today's **Standard American** 5-card Major bidding systems, Players often forget the adage to, most times, bid length before strength, and are too eager to erroneously show their 5-card Major suit first.

Dealer South: Both Teams Vulnerable

	<u>NORTH</u>	
	K5	
	8763	
	J84	
	AJ92	
<u>WEST</u>		<u>EAST</u>
9643		87
K954		AJT2
A6		75
QT3		K8764
	<u>SOUTH</u>	
	AQJT2	
	Q	
	KQT932	
	5	

<u>WEST</u>	<u>NORTH</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>
			1D
Pass	1H	Pass	4S
Pass	5D	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Jumping to Game in a new suit promises five cards in that suit along with Game values. By bidding Diamonds first, as seen above, South evidenced Diamonds, the first

suit bid, as being longer (since with two 5-card suits, normally starting with the higher ranking is preferred). North properly corrected to 5-Diamonds. Notice that if played in Four Spades, the contract in the hand above is un-makeable as South would be forced to trump Hearts in his/her hand thus defeating the contract, whereas, in Diamonds, the contract proves to be easily made by drawing Trumps and merely losing the two red Aces.

Alternatively, with a 6-5 distribution of lesser quality than seen above, prefer to start with your 6-card suit and then bid your 5-card suit at the ***cheapest level***, followed by a repeat of the 5-card suit, again at the next cheapest level. This sequence, unlike the above-referenced bidding, is not forcing and could allow the Partnership to bail out at a low level.

Bridge Tip #1

We have all heard the Bridge axiom, “*third hand plays high.*” Do **NOT play third hand high, however, if it will benefit only the Declarer.**

In a Suit contract, Partner will usually not lead a low card when holding the Ace in the suit he/she has led. Therefore, knowing that the Declarer holds the Ace may enable you, as third Player, to deduce that playing high in third seat cannot win the trick and will only establish winners for either the Declarer or the Dummy. In such instances, withhold your honor card - there is no merit in playing a high card if it benefits only the Declarer.

	<u>North (Dummy)</u>		<u>East (You)</u>
(1)	KJT98		Q7632
	<u>West</u> Leads the 5		

In this instance, South (the Declarer) holds either the **A4** or a singleton **A**. Dummy plays the Jack. If you, as East, play high and cover with the Queen, Declarer will have five tricks. Declarer can only score four tricks in the suit, however, if you play low.

	<u>North (Dummy)</u>		<u>East (You)</u>
(2)	KT963		J542
	<u>West</u> Leads the 8		

In this instance, if Declarer holds **AQ** and Partner has led from the **87** doubleton, Declarer is entitled to only four tricks if East plays low but will roll five tricks in the suit if East wrongly covers with the Jack.

