

## SUMMARY OF THE BASIC ACOL SYSTEM

### POINTS REQUIREMENTS

Part Score Contract	= 21-24 points
Game in Major suit or NT	= 25-26 "
Game in Minor suit	= 28-29 "
Small slam in any suit	= 31-33 "
Small slam in NT	= 33-34 "
Grand slam	= 37 "

### A. OPENING BIDS

#### 1. BALANCED HANDS

12 - 14 points - Open 1NT

15 - 19 points - Open one of a suit and re-bid as follows:

(a) If partner responds at the one level:

1NT shows 15-16

2NT shows 17-18

3NT shows 19

(b) If partner responds at the two level

2NT shows 15-17

3NT shows 18-19

20 - 22 points - Open 2NT

#### 2. UNBALANCED HANDS

12 - 20 points - Open one of a suit. Choice of suit:-

(a) Open longest suit first.

(b) With two five card suits open higher ranking first, except with spades and clubs, when you open clubs.

- (c) With two four card touching suits open higher ranking suit (except spades and clubs as (b) above).
- (d) With two four card non-touching suits open suit below the doubleton.
- (e) With 4-4-4-1 distribution open suit below the singleton except where the singleton is clubs when you open 1H.

### LIGHT OPENING HANDS

Hands containing a minimum of 10 points may be opened provided they contain either:-

- (a) a good six card suit.
- (b) two reasonably good five card suits.

### OPENING TWO OF A SUIT

Minimum of five cards in suit opened:-

- (a) Where opener has 8 playing tricks in his own hand.
- (b) Powerful two-suited hands where game is near if opener can find a fit with one of his suits.
- (c) Strong distributional hands.

### 3. PRE-EMPTIVE OPENING BIDS

Open three of a suit on weak hands containing a seven card suit or longer (maximum points = 9).

### 4. TWO CLUB OPENING

This is the strongest bid available and does not necessarily denote a club suit.

**(a) Balanced Hands****23 - 24 points - open 2C and re-bid 2NT****25 - 26 points - open 2C and re-bid 3NT****(b) Unbalanced hands****23+ points - open 2C and re-bid in your longest suit.**

**The bid may also be made on hands of less than 23 points where there is exceptionally good distribution and game is certain in opener's hand.**

**B. RESPONSES****1. RESPONSES TO 1NT OPENING****(a) With Balanced Hand****0 - 10 points - No bid****11 - 12 points - 2NT****13 - 18 points - 3NT****(b) With Unbalanced Hand****0 - 10 points - Weak take-out into two of your longest suit (at least five cards) except clubs.****13+ points - Bid three of your longest suit (at least five cards). Forcing to game.****(c) Stayman Convention**

**If you wish to know whether opener has a four card major suit bid 2C. If partner has a four card major he will bid it, either 2H or 2S (with both bid 2H first) as appropriate. Having no four card major opener will bid 2D.**

**Holding 11-12 points and a five card major you may use Stayman. If partner denies four of your suit bid your five card suit at the three level.**

**2. RESPONSE TO A 2NT OPENING**

- (a) 4+ points and balanced bid 3NT
- (b) With a five card suit (not clubs) bid three of your suit which is forcing to game.
- (c) Use 3C as either:
  - (i) Stayman - similar to 2C over 1NT
  - (ii) Baron - bid all suits in ascending order until a fit has been found or 3NT is reached. If opener has only a four card club suit he will bid 3NT over 3C.

**3. RESPONSES TO ONE OF A SUIT OPENING**

**(a) With balanced hand**

**6 - 9 points - 1NT** (also used as a keep open bid where responder is not strong enough to bid at the two level-could be unbalanced)

**11 - 12 points - 2NT**

**13 - 15 points - 3NT**

**(b) With four card trump support for partner.**

**6 - 9 points - raise to the two level.**

**10 - 12 points - raise to the three level.**

**13 - 15 points - make waiting bid in another suit then jump to game. (known as Delayed Game Raise).**

**Low point count, exceptional trump support and very unbalanced hand - raise direct to game.**

**(c) Other than (a) or (b)**

**6+ points - bid your longest suit at the one level if possible  
If it is necessary to respond at the two level you should hold  
8+ points. A response of 2H over 1S guarantees five hearts.**

**When you have a choice of suits, respond as follows:**

- (i) Two five card suits, bid the higher ranking.**
- (ii) Two four card suits, bid suit which can be shown most cheaply.**

**(d) Holding 17 points or more**

**Make a bid of one more than is necessary in your longest suit.  
This is forcing to game.**

**4. RESPONSES TO TWO OF A SUIT OPENING BIDS**

- (a) 0 - 7 points - 2NT (any distribution).**
- (b) 8+ points with trump support (i.e three cards or more).**
  - (i) Holding an ace or a void raise partner's suit to the three level.**
  - (ii) Holding no ace or void raise partner's suit to the four level.**
- (c) 8+ points - bid your own suit.**
- (d) 10 - 12 points - bid 3NT**

**5. RESPONSES TO PRE-EMPTIVE BIDS**

**Always remember that partner has a minimum of seven cards in his bid suit and you should not disturb the bid because of your shortage. Remember also that partner has a low point count. These two factors should help you determine whether to pass the bid or not.**

**6. RESPONSES TO TWO CLUB OPENING BIDS**

- (a) **0 - 7 points - bid 2D. This is a forced negative response, unrelated to diamonds.**
- (b) **8 - 9 points and balanced bid 2NT**
- (c) **10 - 12 points and balanced bid 3NT**
- (d) **8+ points and unbalanced bid your longest suit.**

**C. OPENER'S RE-BIDS (other than NT re-bids covered in section A1)****1. WITH MINIMUM HAND (12-15)**

- (a) **Re-bid a five card or longer suit or bid a lower ranking four card suit if held.**
- (b) **Raise partner's suit to the next level.**

**2. WITH MEDIUM STRENGTH (16-18)**

- (a) **Re-bid your own suit at the three level if at least six cards long.**
- (b) **Bid a higher ranking four card suit holding five cards in first suit bid. This is known as a reverse.**
- (c) **Give double raise in partner's suit.**

**3. WITH STRONG HAND (18-20)**

- (a) **Re-bid in your second suit at one level higher than is necessary. This is forcing to game.**
- (b) **Raise your partner's suit to game.**

**D. OVERCALLS****(a) Suit overcall**

**At the one level 9 - 15 points. At the two level 11 - 15 points**  
**These are based on distribution rather than honour point count.**  
**The hand should contain five cards or longer in the suit over-**  
**called.**

**(b) 1NT overcall**

**An overcall of 1NT shows 15-18 points and a certain stop in the**  
**suit (preferably two) overcalled.**

**E. TAKE-OUT DOUBLE****1. WITH A MINIMUM OF THIRTEEN POINTS - SHOWS:**

- (a) Support for all three unbid suits.**
- (b) Two biddable suits of your own.**
- (c) Long single suit of your own too strong to overcall.**

**The double of a weak NT is for penalties showing a minimum**  
**of 14 points. Partner should take out into his longest**  
**suit if he holds 5 points or less and a five card suit.**  
**Holding more points he should happily accept the double.**

**F. RESPONSES TO TAKE-OUT DOUBLES**

**0 - 8 points - bid in your longest suit at the one level.**

**6 - 10 points - balanced hand and stop in opponent's suit,**  
**bid 1NT**

**11 - 12 points - balanced hand and double stop in opponent's**  
**suit bid 2NT**

**9 - 12 points - give jump response in your longest suit.**

**13+ points - bid opponent's suit (forcing to game).**

**You must only pass the double if you hold length in the opponent's suit and sufficient high card suit to defeat the contract.**

## **G. SOME SPECIAL BIDS**

### **1. BLACKWOOD CONVENTION**

**In hands where slam is possible the bid of 4NT asks partner how many aces he holds and the responses are as follows:**

**5 clubs - no aces or 4 aces  
5 diamonds - 1 ace  
5 hearts - 2 aces  
5 spades - 3 aces**

**The subsequent bid of 5NT asks for Kings in the same way.**

### **2. GERBER CONVENTION**

**The immediate response of 4C to a 1NT or 2NT opening bid asks for aces as follows:**

**4 diamonds - no aces or 4 aces  
4 hearts - 1 ace  
4 spades - 2 aces  
4 NT - 3 aces**

**The bid of 5C asks for Kings in the same way.**

**It follows that the response of 4NT to an opening bid of 1NT or 2NT is not ace asking. It is quantitative or natural and asks partner to bid 6NT if maximum or pass 4NT if minimum.**

**Similarly a response of 5NT asks partner to bid 7NT if maximum or 6NT if minimum.**

**Both the above bids are just a matter of simple arithmetic and the range depends on your opening NT ranges.**



### 3. DEFENCE TO OPPONENT'S THREE LEVEL PRE-EMPT

- (a) Double - for penalties (partner should normally pass).
- (b) 3NT - for take-out.
- (c) Bid your own suit to play.

There are many alternatives to this defence.

### H. BENJAMISED ACOL

This version of Acol allows one to play their opening two bids as weak (6-10) and the basic structure is outlined below:

#### OPENING BIDS

- 2C - Any 8 playing trick hand in a suit yet undefined or a balanced 20-22 points
- 2D - The strongest bid in the system, similar to Acol 2C
- 2H - Weak, 6 - 10 points
- 2S - As 2H

#### RESPONSES

- 2C - 2D = 0-7 points, forced negative. Any other bid is positive. Opener now bids his suit or bids 2NT if 20-22 balanced.  
The 2NT opening bid is now released for any other purpose you may wish to put it to.
- 2D - 2H = 0-7 points, forced negative. Any other bid is positive. Opener now bids his suit or bids NT if balanced.
  - (i) 2NT = 23-24 points
  - (ii) 3NT = 25-26 points

**CONVENTIONAL RESPONSE TO WEAK TWO OPENING BID**

**A response of 2NT to an opening 2H or 2S is conventional and asks partner to describe his hand. One method is outlined below**

**After 2H or 2S - 2NT opener's re-bids are as follows:**

**3C = 6-8 points and not two of the top three honours**

**3D = 6-8 points and holding two of the top three honours**

**3H = 9-10 points and not two of the top three honours**

**3S = 9-10 points and holding two of the top three honours**

**3NT = holding the top three honours**