

Bridge Over Troubled Waters

A PLAYFUL NEWSLETTER FOR BRIDGE PLAYERS

The objective of this “newsletter” is to be a source of entertainment and education for members of the Cambridge Bridge Club

QUOTES OF THE DAY

“It is not the handling of difficult hands that makes the winning player. There aren't enough of them. It is the ability to avoid messing up the easy ones.”

Alan Sontag



CONVENTIONS

Whether you use them or not, bridge conventions are agreements about an artificial call or a set of related artificial calls. They can be a cunning and legal way of offering more information about your hand, or a way to be a thorn on the opposition's side. Some conventions are used so ubiquitously that some players don't even know they are conventions...anyhow...in this section we will look at some (un)conventions.

ASTRO

Astro is a convention for use after the opponents open 1NT.

Overcall	Meaning
Double	For penalty. (See also: Gates Double)
2♣	Hearts and a minor (at least 5-4 or 4-5). 10+ points.
2♦	Spades and another suit (at least 5-4 or 4-5). 10+ points.
2♥	Natural, 5+ hearts. 10+ points.
2♠	Natural, 5+ spades. 10+ points.
2NT	Clubs and diamonds (at least 5-4, usually 5-5 or better). 10+ points. Partner should take his preference by replying 3♣ or 3♦.

Responses to the 2♣ Overcall

- 2♦ is artificial and denies 3+ hearts. Indicates a preference for partner's minor suit. If partner has diamonds, he can simply pass. With clubs, he can correct to 3♣.
- 2♥ is a signoff.
- 2♠ is natural with 6+ spades. It tends to deny 3+ hearts. Non-forcing.
- 2NT is artificial, showing 12+ points and asking partner to bid his minor suit. This is the only forcing response.
- Any 3-level bid is natural and non-forcing.

Responses to the 2♦ Overcall

- 2♥ is artificial and denies 3+ spades. Non-forcing, but partner may choose to bid his second suit at the 3-level.
- 2♠ is a signoff.
- 2NT is artificial, showing 12+ points and asking partner to bid his minor suit. This is the only forcing response.
- Any 3-level bid is natural and non-forcing.

SYSTEMS

You sit at the bridge table ready to start your first tournament, a well-rehearsed bidding system under your belt (and hopefully your partner's tool). ACOL, as most players at your home club. Opposition sits down, you greet them, and offer with a kind smile:

“We are playing ACOL, 12 to 14 NT”

When the opponents announce, with a smile in return, that they are playing Precision, your heart skips a beat.... you nod and wait for the barrage of artificial bids that will ensue. How you wish you had prepared for this! Fret no more! In this session, we will offer a (VERY) brief overview of bidding systems so you can at least understand what is going on during the bidding.

Precision – Core and Opening Bids

The $1\clubsuit$ opening encompasses all 16+ HCP hands, except for the balanced 22-23 HCP hands, 4441 hands, and strong minors hands. The system includes weak 1NT opening (13-15 HCP), five-card majors, natural $2\clubsuit$, and multi- $2\heartsuit$. All bids marked * are forcing

Opening Bids

Here is a brief overview of the Precision System's opening bid structure:

$1\clubsuit^*$ - Artificial, 16+ HCP, any distribution except for 22-23 HCP balanced hands, 4441 (any singleton) hands, and strong minors (at least 5-5) hands.

$1\heartsuit^*$ - 11-15 HCP, 3+ diamonds, no 5-card majors.

$1\spadesuit/1\heartsuit$ - 11-15 HCP, 5+ card suit.

1NT - 13-15 HCP, no 5-card majors.

$2\clubsuit$ - 11-15 HCP, either 6+ club suit or 5 club suit plus a 4-card major suit.

$2\heartsuit^*$ - multi- $2\heartsuit$: either weak-2 in a major suit, or 22-23 balanced, or maxi-Roman (4441 shape, any singleton, 16+HCP).

$2\heartsuit$ - 0-11 HCP, \heartsuit and another suit (any suit), at least 5-5.

$2\spadesuit$ - 0-11 HCP, \spadesuit and a minor suit, at least 5-5.

2NT – minors, at least 5-5, either weak (0-11 HCP) or strong (less than 5 losers).

$3\clubsuit/3\heartsuit$ - 8+ HCP, 7+ semi-solid suit.

3NT - Gambling, one 7+ solid minor suit.

PRACTICE HANDS

What is the best contract for the hands dealt below? How would you play the hand (E) with the D9 led? And if H3 was the lead?

Board: 1	Vul: None	Dealer: North
North		
♠ 7		
♥ A J 10 4		
♦ Q 10 7 3		
♣ K 10 5 2		
West		East
♠ K Q 10 9		♠ A J 8 6 3
♥ Q 9 7 2		♥ K 8 6 5
♦ 6 2		♦ A
♣ 9 8 7		♣ A Q 3
South		
♠ 5 4 2		
♥ 3		
♦ K J 9 8 5 4		
♣ J 6 4		

Answer: You can make 4S