

***Bidding And Play Definitions***

***for***

***BRIDGECLUES.COM***

***28 September 2003***

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This document provides the bidding and play definitions used in BridgeClues.com. Exceptions to what is used on this web site exist. However, the BridgeClues.com definitions do define a modern and powerful system based on Standard American bidding. The play definitions presented in this document are limited to the opening leads and signals that are used on the BridgeClues.com web site. BridgeClues.com intends to illustrate the definitions defined in this document with the daily Bidding and Play hands furnished on the BridgeClues.com web site. Even if the system you use gives a different result in the bidding or play of hand, BridgeClues.com hopes you will obtain some benefit and entertainment from comparing the two results.

## **2. POINT COUNT**

### **2.1 High Card Points (HCP)**

A=4; K=3; Q=2; J=1

### **2.2 Long Suit Distribution Points**

One point for every card over four in a suit. You can count more than one suit (e.g. two five-card suits equals two distribution points).

### **2.3 Short Suit Distribution Points**

If you have four card support for partner's major suit and you plan on it being the trump suit, you can count distribution points as follows: doubleton =1; singleton = 3; void = 5. With three card support, you can count distribution points as follows: doubleton =1; singleton = 2; void = 4. Note: These short suit distribution points apply when you expect a partner to gain tricks by ruffing, using your small trumps. For example, if you had the AKQ in support of partner's bid suit, you would not expect them to be used for ruffing and would adjust the count of short suit distribution points accordingly.

### **2.4 Points**

When it is stated that a hand is worth a certain amount of points, this means the sum of the HCP's and the distribution points.

## **3. SUIT BIDS**

### **3.1 Five Card Majors**

Almost all hands containing a five card or longer major should be opened with the major suit bid first. The exception to this approach would be when the opening hand contains a five card major, a six card or longer minor and has sufficient values to be opened in the minor, with the intention of bidding the major twice. However, a minimum opening hand with this six-five shape should be opened in the major and then the minor bid twice. This indicates five-five distribution, which isn't accurate, but keeps the bidding at a lower level. Another exception occurs when opener has a balanced hand, enough points for a 1NT bid (15-16 HCP's), and five hearts. This hand should usually be opened 1NT (see discussion on 1NT openings).

### **3.2 Forcing 1NT over a Major by an Unpassed Hand**

1NT in response to 1H or 1S is forcing one round and shows six to fourteen high card points. This convention is most helpful when responder has a weak hand with a long minor and no fit with opener's major suit. However, it is also used to later show a limit raise with only three card support. For example, 1H 1NT, 2C 3H. When responder uses the forcing 1NT, opener must bid unless his right-hand opponent overcalls. After the forcing 1NT, opener then further describes his hand. Occasionally opener may have to bid 2C with only a doubleton club (with 4522 shape) and fewer than sixteen points. Responder understands this and should never pass a 2C rebid with fewer than five clubs.

### **3.3 Convenient Minor Openings**

When opener does not have a five card major and lacks the values for an opening bid of one or two no-trump, he must open the bidding in his longest minor. With three-three in the minors, opener should always open 1C. Opener should never start the bidding in a two card or shorter minor, unless there is partnership agreement and the opponents are alerted.

### **3.4 Limit Raises**

Responder shows a hand worth 10 to 12 points, including distribution, when he jump raises opener's suit to three. An immediate limit raise in opener's major suit promises four card or longer trump support. A jump raise in a minor shows a limit raise, promises five card support or longer and denies a four card major suit.

### **3.5 Preemptive Minor Suit Raises:**

When responder jumps opener's minor from one to four or five, he shows a weak hand (4 to 8 HCP's) with at least six card or longer support and an outside singleton or void. This jump limits responder to fewer than ten points including distribution, denies a four card major and warns opener that slam is unlikely.

### **3.6 Preemptive Jump to Game in Partner's Major Opening**

Raising partner's opening bid of 1H or 1S to the four level is preemptive. Responder shows five card or longer support for opener's major suit, a hand with fewer than ten points (including distribution) and, ideally, a singleton or void outside the trump suit. This jump by responder warns partner that slam is unlikely.

### **3.7 Opening Four in a Major**

A major suit opening at the four level, in first or second seat, shows a good major suit and denies an ace outside the bid suit. Traditionally the opening four bid shows about eight cards in the suit. However, with a very good suit, seven cards might be sufficient. In third or fourth seat and fewer than twenty two HCP's, the opening could be based on strength as well as length. Since partner is a passed hand, opener realizes that no slam is possible opposite his holdings.

### **3.8 Preemptive Three Bids**

For openings at the three level, it is assumed most of the high card strength is in opener's suit. A three level bid usually shows a seven card suit with four to ten HCP's. The opening three-bid should show no more than one defensive trick, especially in first or second seat.

### **3.9 Weak Jump Overcalls**

A jump overcall at the two, three, four or five level is weak and preemptive in nature and shows the same suit length and values as an opening weak two bid, or opening at the three, four or five level. Any new suit by responder is forcing one round.

### **3.10 Weak Jump Responses**

Occasionally responder will have a six card or longer major suit but fewer than six points. In order to show this suit but to discourage opener from bidding further, the weak jump shift may be used. This jump shift not only shows three to five HCP's, but a bad suit as well. The bid says that the contract must be in responder's suit because responder lacks entries to make his hand valuable to opener. Over partner's 1C opening bid, a jump to 2D may also be considered weak. If opener has a very strong hand, he may bid 2NT, Ogust, to ask partner to further describe his weak hand. Ogust responses are:

- 3C = bad hand, bad suit
- 3D = bad hand, good suit
- 3H = good hand, bad suit
- 3S = good hand, good suit

### **3.11 Weak Two Bids**

Opening a weak two bid usually shows a six card suit headed by at least two out of five top honors. When vulnerable, the hand could have up to a poor eleven HCP's. The weak two bid can be a valuable weapon, having both offensive and defensive potential.

Since the standard HCP range is five to ten, and the suit could have two out of the three top honors, a response of 2NT asks opener to further describe his hand. With a feature in an outside suit and the top end of his weak bid, opener names his feature. With a feature and the bottom end of his bid, opener simply rebids his suit, warning partner that game is unlikely. With no feature but a very good suit, opener may bid 3NT.

### **3.12 Balancing in a Suit**

When the bidding has gone one of a suit followed by two passes, the point range for balancing in a suit is four to fifteen. With sixteen or more you can double and then bid your suit, jump to the two level with a good suit or jump to the three level with a very good suit. Any five card suit is appropriate for re-opening at the one level. Occasionally balancing with a four card major at the one level is necessary if you don't have support for both unbid majors. When balancing, the weaker your hand the better your suit. When holding a weak hand and a weak five card major plus a strong four card major, balance in the

strong four card major suit rather than double or bid the weak five card major. (See: “The Complete Book on Balancing in Contract Bridge” by Mike Lawrence). The benefit to bidding the better suit over the longer suit is that this bid will get partner off to a good lead if the opponents compete.

### **3.13 Opening in Third Seat**

A hand may be opened light (as few as ten HCP's) in third seat. The reasons for opening light are as follows:

- a) Obtain a favorable opening lead from partner.
- b) Interfere with opponents bidding.
- c) Protect partner if he passed a twelve-point hand.

Note: The structured requirements for a weak two bid can also be relaxed in third seat for the same reasons.

When you open light in third seat, you have to be prepared to pass any bid made by partner. Therefore, you should not open light in a minor if you do not have at least three cards in each major.

### **3.14 Opening in Fourth Seat**

You usually would not open light in fourth seat unless you had control of the spade suit. Adequate control can be determined by using Pierson points. (Add your HCP's to the number of spades you have. If the total is 15 or more, open).

## **4.0 NOTRUMP BIDS**

### **4.1 Bid of 1NT – 15 to 17**

Opening 1NT promises a balanced hand. Opener may occasionally choose to open 1NT with a balanced hand and a five hearts. The reason for this is the lack of a rebid that accurately describes opener's hand if he chooses to open 1H and partner responds with a forcing 1NT bid. See our Flash cards that discuss this situation.

### **4.2 Bid of 2NT – 20 to 21**

Shows a balanced hand and does not deny a five card major. Stayman, Jacoby and Texas are “on”.

### **4.3 Opening Bid of 2C with a Rebid of 2NT – 22 to 24**

Indicates a balanced hand and does not deny a five card major. Stayman, Jacoby and Texas are “on”.

### **4.4 Bid of 2C with a Rebid of 3NT – 25 to 27**

Implies a balanced hand with no five card major. Four clubs by responder is Stayman. Jacoby and Texas are “on”. Ace asking by responder would be 5C (see super Gerber).

#### 4.5 3H or 3S Response to a 1NT Opening

After one partner opens the bidding 1NT, a jump response of 3H or 3S establishes the trump suit and says that responder's hand has slam going values and asks opener to bid his aces, up-the-line. This allows slam to be explored at below game level. If opener has an aceless hand with seventeen HCP's, he would respond 3NT. If opener has an aceless hand with fifteen to sixteen HCP's, he would bid four of responder's major. After that, responder is in control.

#### 4.6 Balancing in Notrump

It is theorized that when the bidding is opened, one of a suit, followed by two passes, the points are likely to be evenly divided between the two partnerships. A bid of 1NT in the balancing seat promises 11-14 points over 1C or 1D and denies good support for the unbid major or majors. Over 1H or 1S the balancing 1NT shows about 14-15 HCP's, a stopper in the opponent's suit and denies four card support for the unbid major (1NT may be bid without a stopper when the balancing player holds 16 HCP's and less than four cards in the unbid major or majors and at least three small cards in the major opened). The theory being that to double and then bid 2NT might get the partnership too high. Discuss this with your partner. Stayman, Jacoby and Texas may be used over a balancing notrump. See our flash cards that cover balancing.

#### 4.7 Stayman for the Majors

Stayman is a bid that asks partner to name his four card major, "up the line". Responder usually promises a four card major and sufficient values to at least invite to game in the major or notrump.

- In response to 1NT: 2C is Stayman and promises at least nine HCP's or a weak hand that intends his bid to be Drop Dead Stayman.
- In response to 2NT: 3C is Stayman and promises at least five HCP's and promises at least one four-card major.
- In response to 2C followed by a 2NT rebid: Stayman is 3C and promises at least three HCP's and at least one four-card major.
- In response to 2C followed by a 3NT rebid: Stayman is 4C and promises at least one four card major.

#### 4.8 Stayman with "Garbage"

Drop Dead Stayman may be used, with fewer than nine points, to locate a seven or eight card major suit fit after partner starts the bidding 1NT. If opener responds 2D (no major) to partner's 2C Stayman bid and responder then bids 2H, this is not forcing and asks opener to pass with three hearts or to bid 2S with three spades in his hand. Responder is looking for a seven card fit. If, on the other hand, opener responds 2H or 2S on his second bid, showing a four card major, a pass by responder indicates he started with too few points to invite to game and was just hoping to find a four-four fit with partner.



## 4.9 Gerber

Gerber is a bid of 4C, which is an ace asking convention, used after notrump has been opened, responded or rebid. Further, only the partner of the notrump bidder should use Gerber. The reason being that the player who has shown a balanced hand and declared his points by bidding notrump is almost never the partner who should ask about aces. Gerber responses: 4D = 0 or 4; 4H = 1; 4S = 2; 4NT = 3. After the number of aces has been shown, 5C asks for the number of kings and guarantees that the partnership has all four aces. Over 5C; 5D = 0; 5H = 1; 5S = 2; 5NT = 3; 6C = 4. Over 3NT rebids (after opener starts the bidding at the one level) the 4C bid is sometimes needed as a natural bid. A Gerber bid must then be a jump to four clubs or to five clubs (Super Gerber). The exception to this jump is when opener starts the bidding 2C; responder makes a waiting bid of 2D; opener rebids 2NT. If responder has a long club suit, he has difficulty showing it. So, in only this auction, a jump to 4C over 2NT shows a long club suit and enough values for game or possibly slam. On the other hand, if responder wants to ask for aces, he must first bid 3C, Stayman (with or without a four card major), and then bid 4C, Gerber.

## 4.10 Super Gerber

A jump bid to 5C, by responder, is used most commonly after opener has started the bidding 2C and then jumps to 3NT. Since 4C in this auction is Stayman, responder must jump to 5C to ask for aces. The responses are, 5D = 0 or 4; 5H = 1; 5S = 2; 5NT = 3; 6C = 4. If responder wants to inquire about kings, he would bid 6C (unless opener's response had been 6C). In that case, responder's bid of 6D would ask for kings.

## 4.11 Quantitative 4NT

A bid of 4NT, which is a size asking convention, is used, after notrump has been opened, responded or rebid. Quantitative may be used even if there has been a Stayman bid or Jacoby transfer by responder. Note that quantitative is never used after a Texas Transfer. The quantitative bid of 4NT invites to a small slam if opener is on the upper end of his points. If opener is on the bottom end of his points, he should pass or correct to five of responder's transferred suit with three trumps and a ruffing value. If he is in the middle, he has to judge the quality of his points or add value for a good five card suit.

## 4.12 Jacoby Transfers

The Jacoby transfer convention is used when one partner has initially bid 1NT, 2NT or 2C with a 2NT or 3NT rebid. Jacoby is also used when partner overcalls 1NT. This convention is structured to allow the notrump hand to play more of the contracts, keeping the strong hand hidden and resulting in the opening lead coming up to the strong hand. Responder bids the suit directly below his five card or longer major. Then partner, who originally bid the notrump, bids the suit actually held by responder. Responder may pass, with a weak hand, or continue bidding with sufficient HCP's in his hand.

## 4.13 Texas Transfers

Texas Transfers are designed to show at least a six card major suit in responder's hand and, at minimum, values for game. The Texas transfer is used just like the Jacoby transfer but at the four level. Some partnerships agree to use Texas Transfers over interference by an opponent through 3S. If an opponent bids at the four level, Texas Transfers are cancelled and a four bid by responder is natural. After making a transfer at the four level, we prefer to use 1430 Key Card, asking for key cards around the transferred suit. (Blackwood or 3014 Key Card are also popular methods)

#### 4.14 Relay in competition

When partner opens 1NT, and responder's RHO overcalls, responder may want to compete without forcing to game. A 2NT bid by responder is forcing and tells opener to bid 3C. If clubs is responder's long suit, he will pass. Otherwise responder will name his suit. This bid is competitive and not forcing.

#### 4.15 ACOL 3NT

The ACOL 3NT convention is an opening bid of 3NT. This bid does not show points but shows a long solid minor suit and some scattered values outside the long minor. The trick taking potential of the ACOL 3NT bid is seven to eight.

### 5. CONVENTIONS (alphabetical order)

#### 5.1 Cue bids to Show Limit Raises in Competition

When partner opens the bidding in a major suit and there is an overcall, a cue bid (by responder) of the suit overcalled implies a limit raise or better, with three trumps, in support of partner's opened suit. A jump cue bid shows a limit raise or better with four trumps.

#### 5.2 DEPO

After partner has asked for controls, (1430 Key Card, 3014 Key Card or Blackwood), and right-hand opponent interferes by bidding a suit or a double, DEPO is useful. Double by responder shows an even number of controls; pass shows an odd number of controls.

#### 5.3 Disturb Opponent's Notrump

Referred to as DONT. This convention is used to show at least five cards in the suit overcalled plus a five card higher-ranking suit and is bid over a 1NT opening by RHO or in the pass out seat when 1NT was opened. The bid is based upon shape rather than HCP's. However, good suits are needed to use DONT when vulnerable or when in the pass out seat. The advantage of using this convention is that the bidding can stay at a lower level if responder needs to look for a fit in partner's higher-ranking suit. Responder would do this by bidding the next suit up from the suit partner initially bid. If that is his other suit, the DONT bidder would pass responder's artificial bid. If that is not the DONT bidder's suit, he would then name his other suit. A double (in direct seat or the pass out seat) of the 1NT opening bid shows a one-suited hand and tells partner to bid 2C. If clubs is the DONT bidder's suit, he will pass, if not, he will then name his suit.

#### 5.4 Exclusion Keycard

Exclusion Keycard is used, after a fit has been found or implied, when one of the partners holds a void and wants to ask about the number of controls his partner holds *outside* that void suit. A jump to a new suit at the five level is considered Exclusion. Responder would then reply at the cheapest level with one or four controls, the next suit up with zero or three controls, the next suit (or 5NT, if that's the cheapest bid) to show two controls without the queen of trump and the next suit up to show two controls with the queen of trump. For example; 1H – 3H; 5C. The jump to 5C by opener asks for the number of controls that responder holds, outside opener's club void. In this example, 5D = 1 or 4; 5H = 0 or 3; 5S = 2 without the queen of trump; 5NT = 2 with the queen of trump.

## 5.5 Help Suit Game Try

A “help suit bid” is a bid of a new suit by opener as a game try after responder has raised an opening major suit bid from one to two. After responder’s simple raise, a new suit bid by opener shows at least three cards and at least two losers in the suit. If responder has strength (ace or king or better) or shortness in the suit of the help suit bid, he should accept the game invitation by jumping to four of opener’s first bid suit. If he has three or four cards in the “help suit”, without the needed help, he should reject the invitation by bidding three of opener’s suit. If responder holds a doubleton, singleton or void in the help suit, it would be best if he also has four card trump support. However, if responder is on the upper end of his simple raise, he may decide to push to game with a doubleton in the help suit and only three trumps.

## 5.6 Jacoby 2NT

This conventional bid, by responder (who is not a passed hand), is used to show a balanced opening hand or better with four cards or more in opener’s major and asks opener to further describe his hand.

- a) With a singleton, opener would bid his singleton at the cheapest level.
- b) With a void, opener would jump to four in his void suit (unless his void is spades and would force the partnership to the five level).
- c) With a minimum balanced hand, opener bids his major at the four level.
- d) With 15-17 HCP’s, opener bids 3NT.
- e) With eighteen or more HCP’s, opener bids three of the major.

The idea is that these bids will help partner decide whether to bid game or investigate slam.

## 5.7 Jordan

Jordan applies when opener starts the bidding in a suit and responder’s RHO doubles. A bid of 2NT by responder is conventional and shows a limit raise or better (with four trumps) in support of opener’s suit. Opener is then expected to bid his hand naturally. With a limit raise or better and only three trumps, responder redoubles and then raises partner’s major.

## 5.8 Michaels Cue Bid

The Michaels Cue Bid is a two suited takeout bid. With a weak hand, the Michaels bidder doesn’t bid again, unless forced by his partner. With sixteen or more HCP’s, the Michaels bidder raises partner’s bid suit one level, or to game if partner jumped the bidding (showing ten points).

- a) Over an opponent’s minor suit opening, 1D – 2D or 1C – 2C, the Michaels Cue Bid shows both majors.

- b) Over an opponent's major suit opening, 1H – 2H or 1S – 2S, the cue bid shows the unbid major and an undisclosed minor. If partner wants to inquire which minor, he bids 2NT, which asks partner to name his minor suit.

## 5.9 New Minor Force

When the bidding has been opened with one of a minor suit, responder replies one of a major and the opener rebids 1NT, responder can find out if opener has three card support for responder's major by next bidding two of the unbid minor. This implies five cards in responder's major and promises at least eleven points and is forcing. If opener next bids two of responder's major, showing three card support, he shows a minimum hand. With 14 HCP's and three card support, opener should jump a level in responder's major. See our flash cards on New Minor Force.

## 5.10 Ogust

Once partner has responded with a weak jump shift, opener might have a good enough hand to inquire about the quality of responder's suit as well as the range of his HCP's. The Ogust convention of 2NT asks for that information. The opener generally has a strong hand with some fit for the responder's suit. The opener's bid of 2NT does not imply a hand suitable for notrump but asks responder to further describe his hand. 2NT Ogust responses are the following:

- a) 3C – Bad hand, bad suit (2-3 HCP's)
- b) 3D – Bad hand, good suit (a K or QJ and 3 HCP's)
- c) 3H – Good hand (4-5 HCP's), bad suit
- d) 3S – Good hand (4-5 HCP's), good suit (A or KQ)

## 5.11 Reverse Drury

The modified Drury convention allows responder, who is a passed hand but holds a limit raise in support of partner's major suit opening bid, to inquire if partner has a full opener by bidding 2C. This bid is artificial and forcing one round. If responder doesn't have a limit raise but has a club suit, he must jump to 3C at his first opportunity to bid so that he doesn't mislead partner. If opener holds less than an opening hand he simply rebids his major suit. A 2D rebid by opener is artificial and shows either a poor opening hand with 12-13 points and doubts about game in the major suit or a very good hand that wants to hear how strong a limit raise responder has. A rebid by responder of two in opener's major indicates around ten support points and a jump raise (after first bidding 2C) shows a poor twelve support points.

## 5.12 Smolen

After partner has opened the bidding in notrump, Smolen is a convention that is designed to allow the notrump bidder to play all game going hands when responder holds a five card major plus a four card major. When responder bids Stayman and opener responds 2D, denying a four card major, a jump in one of the majors, by responder, tells opener that responder holds four cards in the major that he jumped and five cards in the unbid major. If opener has three card support for the unbid major suit, he bids it at game level. With only a doubleton in that suit, opener bids 3NT. Smolen may be used over 1NT, 2NT or

2C with a 2NT or 3NT rebid. Responder's points are necessarily fewer as opener's hand is stronger. An example of Smolen would be, 1NT 2C; 2D 3H. Responder's 3H bid shows five spades and four hearts and at least nine HCP's.

### **5.13 Splinter**

A splinter bid allows partner to show a singleton or void in a side suit while raising his partner's major suit. A splinter raise is any unusual jump, usually skipping two levels of bidding, into a singleton or void. It shows a strong raise in support of partner's suit.

A splinter by responder promises at least an opening hand (including distribution) and at least four card support for partner's major. Responder could delay splintering in order to show a good suit of his own. For example: 1S - 2D; 2S - 4H (A delayed splinter in support of opener's spades). It is also feasible for responder to use a splinter bid to show support for opener's second suit plus a singleton or void in the splintered suit. 1S - 2C; 2H - 4D (Splinter in support of hearts).

Opener could also splinter in support of responder's major suit. For example: 1D - 1S; 4H. This would show a hand worth 19 to 21 points, including distribution, a singleton or void in the suit bid and four card support for responder's suit.

### **5.14 Strong 2C Opening**

Open 2C if you have 22 or more HCP's or a nine trick hand. The opening 2C bid is forcing to game unless the opener rebids 2NT or rebids the same suit twice. After making the initial waiting bid of 2D, and responder has a complete bust (0-3 HCP's with no king), he should bid the cheaper minor on his second bid.

If responder has at least eight HCP's and a five card or longer suit headed by two of the top three honors he could bid his suit in response to 2C. However, this is not a requirement and responder could still bid 2D to hear more about opener's hand.

### **5.15 Unusual Notrump**

Unusual notrump is used to show the two lowest unbid suits of five cards or longer each. This distributional hand is described by jumping a level in notrump. As in the Michaels Cue Bid, the unusual notrump bid is used to show a two-suited hand and shows the suits the Michaels bid does not.

### **5.16 Western Cue Bid**

Western cue bid is a delayed cue bid of a suit bid by an opponent. This cue bid asks about stoppers for play in notrump. Example: 1D - 1S (overcall) - 2H; 3D - P - 3S? In this example the 3S bid asks opener to bid 3NT with a spade stopper. Ideally, but not always, responder will have a partial stopper in the overcalled suit when he asks if partner has a stopper.

### **5.17 1430 Keycard**

When there is suit agreement in a major and one partner wants to inquire about the number of key cards (five available including the king of trump) by bidding 4NT, 1430 Keycard is a popular system. The responses are as follows:

- 5C = 1 or 4 controls
- 5D = 0 or 3 controls
- 5H = 2 controls without the queen
- 5S = 2 controls with the queen

If partner, who initiated 1430, wants to inquire about the queen of trumps, he makes the cheapest rebid other than trump. For example, after a 5C response, a bid of 5D asks if partner holds the queen of trumps. Five in the trump suit by partner denies the queen. Any suit bid other than trump shows the queen plus responder's lowest ranking king. A jump to six in the agreed trump suit shows the queen and denies an outside king.

See our flash cards on 1430 Key Card for further clarification.

### **5.18 1430 Minor Suit Keycard**

When there is a suit agreement in a minor and one partner wants to inquire about the number of controls, (five available including the king of trump), 1430 Minor Suit Keycard is a helpful system. A jump bid of four in the agreed minor is 1430 Keycard around that minor. Or the third bid of the minor at the four level is 1430. The responses are as follows:

4C – Asks for key cards around the club suit:

- 4D = 1 or 4
- 4H = 0 or 3
- 4S = 2 without the queen
- 4NT = 2 with the queen

4D – Asks for key cards around the diamond suit:

- 4H = 1 or 4
- 4S = 0 or 3
- 4NT = 2 without the queen
- 5C = 2 with the queen

A bid of 4NT by the Keycard initiator is to play. Due to the possibility of confusion, there is no queen asking sequence.

## 6. DOUBLES

### 6.1 Doubles of 3NT

All doubles of 3NT are for penalty.

- a) If partner has bid a suit, the double tells partner to lead that suit.
- b) If the doubling partner has bid a suit, the double tells partner to lead that suit.
- c) If both defenders have bid a suit there is a problem. This one calls for judgment.
- d) If no suit has been bid, the double asks partner to lead dummy's first bid suit. If dummy has bid and rebid the suit, the double indicates a **stopper** in dummy's suit but calls for **another unbid suit to be lead**.

### 6.2 Lead Directing Doubles

A double of an opponent's artificial bid indicates a lead for partner. The double is used when the opponents are on the way to game or slam and they may make a transfer bid or choose to cue-bid suits in which they have some controls but not complete control, or cue-bid short suits, or make asking bids in suits in which they have neither top cards nor prompt ruffing values. This double is not intended as a penalty double since the opponents are not expected to play the hand in their artificial bid or cue bid. Consequently the doubler should take care that the suit he doubles is one that the opponents cannot safely play in.

### 6.3 Lightner Slam Double

The Lightner slam double is designed to ask partner for a lead that is likely to set a slam. The Lightner double asks partner to make an aggressive but unusual lead. If a side suit or suits has been bid by dummy, the double calls for dummy's first bid suit. If dummy hasn't bid a suit, the lead should be in declarer's first bid side suit. If neither declarer nor dummy has bid a side suit, the opening lead should be in an unbid suit. Usually the opening leader's longest unbid suit is preferable, since the doubler generally has a void and wants a ruff. The double never calls for a trump lead.

### 6.4 Negative Double

When partner opens the bidding in a suit and responder's RHO overcalls, a double by responder is negative for the unbid suits or at least for the unbid major suit. The higher the level at which the double is made, the stronger the doubler's hand must be, since opener is more likely to pass for penalties. When responder makes a negative double, the opening bidder has an option to pass for penalties if he has a suitable hand. After the negative double, the opener is expected to bid the major suit shown by responder if he has four card support. With a minimum hand, opener should just make a minimum bid in responder's suit. With a king better than a minimum hand, he should jump in responder's suit, assuming the bid doesn't go beyond game. After a negative double by responder, the only forcing bid by opener is a cue bid.

When the partnership uses negative doubles, responder must pass when he wants to double for penalty. The opener should make every reasonable effort to keep the bidding open (usually with a double) if his LHO overcall is passed around to him, especially if opener is short in the suit overcalled.

## 6.5 Penalty Double

Any double made by a defender that is intended to punish the opponents for bidding too high. The penalty double is most commonly used when one defender has four or more trumps and several defensive tricks, a long suit against notrump, or when a sacrifice bid has been made by the opponents.

## 6.6 Responsive Double

If partner makes a takeout double and the opponents are bidding and raising a MINOR suit, a double by you shows both majors.

If partner makes a takeout double and the opponents are bidding and raising a MAJOR suit, a double by you shows both MINORS.

I suggest you use the responsive double up to 3S.

A responsive double may also be used if partner overcalls and the opponents are bidding and raising the same suit. A double by the partner of the over caller is responsive for the other two suits.

For example; 1H 1S (overcall) 2H X (responsive double for the minor suits);

1S 2C (overcall) 2S X (responsive double for hearts and diamonds).

## 6.7 Takeout Double

A takeout double is used when an opponent opens the bidding in a suit. If you double the opening bid, say 1S, you are showing at least an opening bid, usually only one or two cards in their suit, and at least three cards in support of each of the unbid suits. The minimum HCP's recommended for a takeout double is eleven and perfect shape.

It is **very** important that you double **only with proper hands** but equally important, your partner has to know how to respond to your double. See our flash cards covering Takeout Doubles for further information.



## 7. PLAY DEFINITIONS

### 7.1 Opening Leads Against Notrump Contracts

The following table defines opening leads against notrump contracts that are used in BridgeClues:

Opening Lead Against Notrump	Definition	Partner's Action
A	Four honors (through the ten; AKJ10XX, AKQJXX, AKQ10XX)	Play the missing honor or give count if he does not have it
K	Top of a three (or longer) card sequence (KQJ or KQ10)	Give attitude signal
Q	Top of a three (or longer) card sequence (QJ10 or QJ9) or from KQ109	Play the J if he has it or give attitude (usually) if he does not.
J	Top of a three card (or longer) sequence (J109 or J108). The lead of the J denies a higher honor.	Depends on holding and dummy
10	Zero or two higher.	Depends on holding and dummy
9	Zero or two higher.	Depends on holding and dummy
Middle value card	Usually indicates nothing of value.	Depends on holding and dummy
Small card	Usually indicates fourth best or three cards with an honor.	Depends on holding and dummy

### 7.2 Opening Leads Against Suit Contracts

The following table defines opening leads against suit contracts that are used in BridgeClues:

Opening Lead Against Suit Contracts	Definition	Partner's Action
A	Could usually indicate a lead from an AK holding.	Give attitude signal unless the situation requires suit preference.
K	Top of a two (or longer) card sequence	Give attitude signal unless the situation requires suit preference.
Q	Top of a two(or longer) card sequence or from KQ109	Depends on holding and dummy, but initially asks to drop J or for attitude lacking the J.
J	Top of a sequence. The lead of the J denies a higher honor.	Depends on holding and dummy
10	Top of a sequence promising zero or two higher in the suit. Eg; KJ1064 or 109842.	Depends on holding and dummy
9	Promises zero or two higher in the suit. Eg; K10942 or 98743.	Depends on holding and dummy
Middle value card	Usually indicates no interest in the suit or a doubleton	Depends on holding and dummy
Small card	Usually indicates fourth best or three cards with an honor. Shows three cards or a singleton in partner's bid suit.	Depends on holding and dummy

### **7.3 Odd/Even Discard Signals**

When a defender can no longer follow suit, the discard of any odd numbered card shows preference for that suit. The discard of an even card is discouraging for *that* suit but is suit preference for the remaining two suits. A low even card shows preference for the lower ranking of the remaining suits and a high even card shows preference for the higher of the remaining suits. The advantage of the odd/even system is the flexibility of discards for the defenders.

### **7.4 Standard Count and Suit Preference Signals**

Standard count is high-low to show an even number of cards in the suit and low-up to show an odd number of cards in the suit. When it is clear that partner should no longer lead the suit (providing a sluff and ruff for declarer or by setting up the long suit in dummy), the numerical value of the card played by partner is suit preference for the remaining two suits outside of the trump suit (a low card would ask for the lower of the remaining two suits and a high card would ask for the higher of the remaining two suits).