

Create action but make sure it is opponents' blood on the table. Get all the accuracy that relay permits, but use the simple system frame-work with only the relay continuations that suit you choose.

When you know the exact shape of partner's hand and his point count within a narrow range, how can anyone bid better than you? This simple system enables you to do just that and to use the bidding space quickly and effectively, often forcing your opponents, into "difficult" situations. You do that by opening all 10 point hands, and four card suits from the top. The opening two bids and jump responses utilise space effectively too. Make the first two levels of bidding your own whenever you can. Often opponents will miss their best spot or fail, doubled, in an "unlucky" two-level overcall. It is not dangerous to open light but it is dangerous to take partner too high. Get in and get out. The complexities of some relay systems tend to give the concept a bad name. This system is not one of those and it thrives on intervention. It is system on all the time.

Preliminaries.

Distributional points are added, only for length. One point is added for each card over four in a suit headed by an A or a K.

Suits of five cards or longer are treated as of equal length and the higher ranking is bid first, both by opener and by responder.

There is a strong artificial, relay response to each of the opening bids. New suits are not forcing.

A 1NT rebid after one over one response shows 15-17 points. A 2NT rebid after a (non-forcing) two over one is game forcing.

Over intervention, double or redouble becomes the relay response to all opening bids except the 20+ point 1NT, where it is "pass." With no values, responder **must** show his shape when opponents intervene over 1NT. To pass promises three controls.

In forcing situations, over intervention, pass shows the first step and double or redouble the second. When responder is expected to show denominations, pass shows the denomination below the last bid and double or redouble, the last bid. Pass by the captain is relay, double or redouble is penalty.

Table of opening bids.

- One of a suit shows a hand in the 10-19 point range. A bid in any suit shows 4+ cards in it. Open the higher ranking of two 5+card suits. Without one, open the highest ranking four-card suit, but with both majors open 1H.
- 1NT is the system strong bid. It shows 20+points, any shape.
- 2C shows 10-14 points with 6+clubs, no 4+card suit
- 2D shows 10-14 points with four diamonds and 5+clubs.

- 2H or 2S shows 10-14 points with four cards in the suit bid and a long minor. 2H may contain, the 4405, 4450, 0445 and 0454 shapes. 2S may contain the 4045 and 4054 shapes.
- Other three-suiters. All the 10-14 point 4441 shapes are opened 1H or 1S, 1H with both majors. The 10-14 point 5440 shapes with a five-card major and all the 15-19 pointers are opened one of the long suit.
- 2NT shows 10-14 point two-suiter, 5+5+ in diamonds and a major, or both majors.
- 3C shows 10-14 points with 5+5+cards in clubs and a major.
- 3D and 3H are transfer pre-empts.
- 3S shows any solid suit, with at most one Q outside. 4C asks for shortage, 4D for suit.
- 3NT is a pre-empt in either minor.
- 4C and 4D Texas
- 4H and 4S aggressive pre-empts.

More detail is available on the QBA articles page, but here is an example of the system at work.

♠KQ875	♠AJ6
♥A64	♥K7
♦43	♦AK752
♣J83	♣KQ4

1S	2C (1)
2D (2)	2H (3)
2NT (4)	3C (3)
3D (5)	3H (3)
3S (6)	6S (7)

1. Range-ask (relay)
2. All minimums, 10-14 points
3. Relay
4. Balanced minimum.
5. 10-12 points. 3H shows 13-14 points with five spades, 3S shows 13-14 points, four spades.
6. Five spades, so some 5332.
7. The doubleton heart and the establishable diamond suit make 6S a better proposition than 6NT. Facing only four spades, the 3NT reply, despite holding 20 hcp, East should pass.

Auctions beginning with 1C.

1D is the artificial strong, relay, response made on all hands of 12+points.

Opener's 1H, 1S and 1NT rebids show 10-12, 13-14 and 15-17 points, balanced, respectively with no four-card suit outside clubs. The bidding can die in 1NT or two of a suit after the 1H rebid. The

cheapest bid over these three rebids, asks opener for his shape in four steps, 3325, 3235, 2335 and 3334.

Opener's rebids of 2C to 2NT are "natural" and strong. The next three steps show the club-based three-suiter.

- 2C shows 6+clubs with 15-19 points
- 2D/H/S shows four cards in the suit and 5+clubs with 15-19 points.
- 2NT shows 18-19 points balanced with no suit but clubs.
- 3C, 3D and 3H show 15-19 point 4405 shapes with low, middle and high void, respectively.

When there is intervention over 1C, double or redouble replaces 1D as relay. When there is intervention over 1D or the relay double, the first three steps show the balanced hand, the next five denominations are strong and natural, the next three steps show the strong three-suiter.

Other replies

- 1H/S 4+cards, 6-11 points, no longer suit in the hand.
- 1NT 6-9 points, balanced no major, no five-card suit.
- 2C 10-12 points, balanced no major, no five card suit.
- 2D 6-11 points, 5+ cards, no four-card major
- 2H, 2S 6-11 points, four-card suit, 4+clubs or 5+diamonds.
- 2NT 10-12 points, balanced 5+card club raise.
- 3C preemptive raise with 5+clubs.

Auctions beginning with 1D.

2C is the strong, 12+ points, relay. Other responses are limited to 11 points and are not forcing. This scheme is followed after a 1H and 1S opener as well.

Over 2C, opener rebids.

The first bid is a step, the next five bids are denominations, followed by three steps.

- 2D all 10-14 points. All other rebids show 15-19 points and create a game-force
- 2H shows a four-card suit, and thus 5+diamonds
- 2S four-card suit, 5+diamonds.
- 2NT balanced diamonds only.
- 3C 4+card suit
- 3D single-suiter, 6+diamonds
- 3H, 3S and 3NT show a 4450 etc, with low, middle and high void, respectively

Following opener's 2D reply, 3D shows a sound three-card raise. 2H is relay, other bids are natural and forcing. Since 2H is used as relay, 2NT is used to show 5+hearts.

Over opener's 2NT rebid, 15-19 points when made directly or 10-14 points when made via 2D, 3C is a range-ask. 3D shows all minimums, 15-17 points or 10-12 points, 3H shows five diamonds so some 3352, 3S shows four diamonds only, so 3343.

Other replies

- 1H or 1S 6-11 points 4+cards, not forcing. There is no longer suit in the hand.
- 1NT, 6-11 points,
- 2D, 6-9 point three-card raise.
- 2H/S, 6-11 points, four-card suit with 4+diamonds or 5+clubs.
- 2NT 10-12 point, 4+card balanced raise, may contain a four-card major.
- 3D balanced pre-emptive 4+card raise.
- A scheme of splinter raises of 1D, 1H and 1S applies, not described here.

Auctions beginning with 1H.

2C is the strong, 12+ points, relay. Other responses are limited to 11 points and are not forcing.

Over 2C, opener rebids.

- 2D all 10-14 points. All other rebids show 15-19 points and create a game-force
- 2H shows 6+hearts, no other suit.
- 2S four-card suit with 5+hearts.
- 2NT balanced, 3532, 44 or 34 in the majors.
- 3C 4+card suit, with 5+hearts.
- 3D 4+diamonds with 5+hearts.
- 3H, 3S, 3NT three-suiter, 4441 or 4540 with low, middle, high shortage respectively.

Over 2D, 2H shows the 10-12 point three-card raise and is not forcing. The other major, 2S, is the relay continuation. New suits are natural and forcing. Since 2S is the relay, 2NT by responder shows 5+spades.

When opener shows balanced with a 2NT rebid and responder bids 3C, 3D is all minimums, 3H shows five-cards, so some 3532, 3S shows 4-4 majors, maximum, 3NT 2/3-4 majors maximum. The 2S response to 1H shows a four-card suit and long diamonds or clubs.

Auctions beginning with 1S

2C is the strong, 12+ points, relay. Other responses are limited to 11 points and are not forcing

Over 2C opener rebids.

- 2D all 10-14 points. All other rebids show 15-19 points and create a game-force
- 2H shows four hearts with 5+spades
- 2S shows 6+ spades
- 2NT balanced.
- 3C 4+card suit, with 5+spades
- 3D 4+diamonds with 5+spades
- 3H, 3S three-suiter, 4144 and 5044 respectively.

Over 2D, 2S shows the 10-12 point three-card raise and is not forcing. The other major, 2H, is the relay continuation. New suits are natural and forcing. Since 2H is the relay, 2NT by responder shows 5+hearts.

When opener shows balanced with a 2NT rebid and responder bids 3C, 3D shows all minimums, 3H shows some 5332, 3S four spades and a minor, 3NT - 4333.

Auctions beginning with 1NT, all 20+

Bids of 2H and up are shape showing. When bid directly over 1NT they show 5+points with 0-2 controls. When bid by opener over responder's 2D positive they are of unlimited strength. When bid by responder after 1NT-2C; 2D they contain 0-4 points.

- 2C Negative all 0-4, no ace
- 2D Full positive, 3+controls, AK or KKK.
- 2H 5+hearts.
- 2S 5+spades.
- 2NT Balanced.
- 3C 5+clubs, not balanced.
- 3D 5+ diamonds, not balanced.
- 3H Three-suiter with both majors.
- 3S Three-suiter with hearts, not spades.
- 3NT Three-suiter with spades, not hearts.

Over 2C negative, a very strong opener can continue with 2D, shape-demand with replies identical to 2H and up, or bid any suit natural, not forcing. 2NT is a minor oriented rescue. Over responder's 2D, full positive, opener describes his hand in the same way.

We adopt the simple philosophy after our opening 1NT, we play the hand or the opponents play doubled. A double from either partner shows 5+cards in the opponent's suit, a cue-bid shows a three-suiter with the suit (double is an option), the next highest bid shows the three-suiter without the suit.

After a 2C opening, 2NT is the game force, new suits are not forcing.

After a 2D opening, opener is known to be 45+ in the minors. Over 2NT he shows residual shape.

After an opening 2H or 2S, 2NT is the game-force, other replies are correctable. The steps are.

- 3C Long clubs.
- 3D Long diamonds
- 3H After 2H, 4405 or 0445. After 2S 4045 (clubs)
- 3S After 2H, 4450. After 2S, 4054 (diamonds)
- 3NT After 2H, 0454.

Example

♠KQ875	♠AJ6
♥A64	♥K7
♦43	♦AK752
♣J83	♣KQ4
1S	2C (1)
2D (2)	2H (3)
2NT (4)	3C (3)
3D (5)	3H (3)
3S (6)	6S (7)

1. Range-ask (relay)
2. All minimums, 10-14 points
3. Relay
4. Balanced minimum.
5. 10-12 points. 3H shows 13-14 points with five spades, 3S - 13-14 points with four spades.
6. Five spades.
7. The doubleton heart and the establishable diamond suit make 6S a better proposition than 6NT. Facing only four spades, the 3NT reply, despite holding 20 hcp, East should pass.

There is one hand shape with no suit longer than five cards which is not well catered for. When you have worked out what it is, you are ready to play the system. If you can tell me a good way to show this shape, please do.