

It is such a simple concept, use the cheapest action of all to show a good hand. Give your side as much room as possible to find the ideal spot. You can play it at world championship level but you must practice it in a vacuum as many sponsoring organizations worldwide have, effectively, banned it. Strange! It has so many, self-evident advantages. Here are some.

- Pass, unlike a strong 1C or 2C, does not supplant a natural bid, so those vital bids of one, in each of the suits is free to use in its natural sense.
- Presently pass shows say 0-9 (I state my own preference but by all means substitute your own.) Why not take the opportunity, and the bidding space, to announce the same point range but your longest suit as well?
- Fit is important, sometimes it is all important. Knowing that you are facing length in a particular suit can often allow instant re-evaluation upwards. Sometimes, simply by showing a suit you will bid a game that other pairs never even thought about.
- When the longest suit in a weak hand is made trumps, value is added to that hand.
- Often, this will be the only chance that opening bidder gets to describe his hand.
- There is no need at all to alter your preemptive bidding structure, usually the bids from 2D upwards, these bids, too, traditionally show a hand of 9 points or weaker. Keep the stronger ones as well.
- Clearly 1NT, and 2C, will now come under the umbrella of strong pass, so these bids become free.
- So now, pass means any 10+, except those hands which you traditionally show with a high level bid, see below.
- Assuming you, very reasonably, use 1C as your negative reply to “pass,” you have the extremely powerful situation that both partners know that a game force has been created at the level of 1D! You have a lot of room to play around with.
- Bidding opposite a weak one-bid is akin to bidding opposite a passed-hand response, you don't disturb it unless game is at least a reasonable possibility.
- It is an easy concept to grasp, that an opening one-bidder does not rebid, unless forced, when his hand is in the 0-5 range.
- Your opponents can, and will, try to make a nuisance of themselves, but they have their own agenda to deal with. If they will change their system, just because you pass, good luck to them. As long as you have the means of announcing to partner that you know the hand, point-wise, belongs to you, let them. That number is 12 points. Your side will always know what is going on, theirs will be guessing. When partner makes a 10+ pass, and there is intervention, your first move on all 12+ hands is double. New suits are natural and not forcing and pass will often be for penalty, awaiting a re-opening double.

Table of opening bids in first or second position.

- 1C/D/H/S 0-9 points, the longest suit, with these provisos, higher ranking of two-five card or longer suits, the better, or lower ranking of four-card suits, 1C on 4333 with a poor four-card suit.
- 1NT 6-9 points, diamonds and a major or both majors, five or more in each. 2C is game forcing. Opener bids 2D with both or shows his major. Other bids are correctable.
- 2C 6-9 points, clubs and a major, 5+5+. 2D is the strong reply.
- 2D/H/S 6-9 points, weak two.
- 2NT/3C/D/H Transfer preempts.
- 3S Any solid suit, nothing outside
- 3NT A four-level preempt in either minor.
- 4C/D Good major preempts.
- 4H/S Regular preempts.
- 4NT Specific ace ask

Replying to a strong pass. (Third and fourth seat "opening bids.")

- 1C 0-5 no ace.
- 1D All 12+. Over rho action, you double with 12+, pass 0-5 or penalty pass, bid 6-11.
- 1H/S 6-11 points, a five-card or longer suit. 1H denies five spades.
- 1NT 6-11 points, balanced.
- 2C/D 6-11 points, five-card or longer suit, not 5332, no higher ranking five-card suit.
- 2H 6-11 points, three-suiter, both majors.
- 2S 6-11 points, three-suiter, with hearts, 1444 etc.
- 2NT 6-11 points, 4144
- 3C 6-11 points, 4045
- 3D 6-11 points, 4054 etc.

After 1C, negative, opener can bid 1D, creating a near game force, responder shows his hand using the bids of 1H and upwards in the same way. Other rebids by strong passer are natural, not forcing.

After 1D, full positive, strong passer describes his hand, again using the same meanings for 1H and upwards.

(For relay enthusiasts only.)

The article can be read and considered without becoming involved in this section. This section demonstrates just how comprehensive and powerful, yet still relatively simple, you can make this system if you wish. This is how the exact shape and point range of the hand which is being described can be found and then the number and placement of aces, kings and queens.

It is more space efficient to reserve the first descriptive step to show the balanced hand. With that proviso, minimum bids in each of the five denominations have their natural meanings. They retain these same meanings over intervention.

- 1H (first step) Balanced
- 1S (denomination) Spades
- 1NT (denomination) Hearts (minimum NT replaces the suit used to show the balanced hand.)
- 2C (denomination) Clubs
- 2D (denomination) Diamonds

When there is intervention, suppose there is a 2H bid immediately over a strong pass, and responder doubles, he is showing 12+. He has made himself captain and seeks full description from the strong passer. The strong passer's first step is 2S, which shows balanced. 2NT replaces 2S and shows spades, 3C and 3D are natural and show the main feature of the hand, the long suit or the higher ranking of two five-card or longer suits. 3H shows the least described three-suiter, the three-suiter with hearts. 3S shows the three-suiter with a singleton or void in hearts, 10-14 points, 3NT the same three-suiter, 15+ points. With four cards in the opponent's bid suit, strong passer must exercise his judgment carefully before making a penalty pass. Holding five cards in it, he is obliged to make a penalty pass. Note how the strong passer makes his most shape-descriptive bid first then limits his range at his next turn.

When there has been a game-forcing reply of 1D to the strong pass and the next hand intervenes with, say, 2S the strong passer's first step is to pass, which shows all balanced. Following this "pass" the captain can double for penalty, seek further description by making the cheapest bid, or make any other bid, natural, not forcing.

- Pass Balanced
- Double Shows five cards in the bid suit.
- 2NT Replaces the suit below the intervention suit, hearts.
- 3C Clubs
- 3D Diamonds
- 3H Three-suiter with spades. With good spades, double is an option.
- 3S Three-suiter without spades, 10-14 points.
- 3NT Three-suiter without spades, 1444, 15+ points.
- 4C Three- suiter without spades, 0445, 15+ points.
- 4D 0454, 15+ points.
- 4H 0544, 15+ points, 0-3 controls, etc.

This is the more comprehensive scheme, without intervention.

After Pass-1D; 1H (balanced)-1S (range?)

1NT	10-12
2C	13-14
2D	15-17
2H	18-19
2S	20-22
2NT	23-25
3C	26+

After Pass-1H (6-11balanced); 1S (range?)

6-9
10-11, clubs only, 3334 or any 2335
10-11, diamonds only. 3343 or any 2353
10-11, four hearts
10-11, four spades, not four hearts.
10-11, 4-4 minors, low doubleton
10-11, 4-4 minors, high doubleton, 0-2 controls.

In both cases, the partnership can stop in 1NT, 2D, 2H or 2S. The same treatment is available after Pass-1C (0-5); 1D-1H; 1S. Now 1NT shows 0-3 points, higher bids show 4-5 points and actual shape.

KQJ7	8654
AK43	Q7
A6	K753
AKQ	982

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

- (1) 0-5 points, no ace
- (2) Forcing
- (3) Balanced
- (4) 4-5 points, four spades, not four hearts.
- (5) Four diamonds.
- (6) High doubleton, 1Q and 1K, neither or both in spades. The steps are low doubleton, high doubleton with 0Q,1Q, 2Q, K, KQ with neither or both in spades, KQ, one in spades none in diamonds etc. We know partner must hold the DK. If it were important, we could locate the queen.
- (7) No matter where the queen is, it will be working, but we will need a ruff for twelve tricks and there is no room for a jack. Without both the king and the queen, we would play in 4S or 4NT.

When the strong passer shows, say, hearts, over the captain's next relay the first step shows all hands in the minimum, 10-14 point, range, higher bids describe, naturally, the 15+ hands with hearts. So after a 1NT, bid showing hearts, and a 2C relay.

- 2D All 10-14
- 2H Long, 6+, hearts.
- 2S Four spades.
- 2NT Balanced, 5332
- 3C Four or more clubs.
- 3D Four or more diamonds, low shortage or 5+5+ in hearts and diamonds.
- 3H 2542
- 3S 1543
- 3NT 1642 or more extreme. In obvious situations, responder will roll on.

Replying to a weak one bid.

Most commonly opener will be in his upper range and for part-score purposes, assume he is. A raise to two of 1D, 1H or 1S will show three card or better support and 14-16 points, a fourth club is needed for a raise of 1C. 1NT shows 15-17 points, balanced, and denies four-card support. After a 1NT response, minimum rebids by opener promise shape only. 2NT shows the same point range, balanced, but with four-card or better support. With a big fit, a shortage and nothing else, it is rarely wrong to jump to game in a major. Holding 18+ points, responder will not want to launch into game without being sure that opener does have some values. The cheapest bid, 2C over 1S, asks partner to describe further. He makes the cheapest rebid with all 0-5 and makes a natural, descriptive bid when in the 6-9 range. The usual understanding, that to show a second suit shows five or more in the first and to rebid a suit shows six, is followed. When opener makes the minimum rebid, any but the cheapest bid by responder is sign-off. A new suit at the one-level is natural, shows four or more cards in the suit, 14-17 points. Opener replies only when 6-9 and he rebids along natural lines. Because it is not forcing, responder should avoid responding one over one, holding just four-cards in the suit and very good support for partner. He should prefer a raise. Opener, with a good hand and four-cards in a higher ranking suit can show it. Responder shows a four-card suit only when he does not hold five cards in partner's suit or in an unbid suit. To bid two over one is natural, shows a good suit, denies primary support for partner, is limited to 17 points and is not forcing. It does not deny four cards in an unbid major. With 6-9 points opener raises with three-card support, rebids 2NT with a tolerance, usually honour doubleton, can show a four-card major, and passes with no fit except with extreme shape. With 0-5 he passes.

Double or redouble of intervention shows all 18+, other actions are unchanged except that the cheapest bid is now natural and not forcing.

Auctions following a weak one-bid are remarkably accurate. To most people it is an unfamiliar area of bidding. Set a hand generator to deal 0-9 opposite random, or 14+ random and do some bidding practice. Practice here does indeed make perfect. It will not take long to notice that 25 points combined, with both hands balanced, rarely offers a good play for game. Do not worry about the dangers of opening a one-bid with a Yarborough, opponents, who must also follow their own bidding agenda will only rarely be able to double, effectively, for penalty. The only statistics I can give to support this proposition is the fact that I played a similar system throughout a Gold Coast Congress with my then partner Simon Andrew and we did not suffer a penalty, doubled at the one-level, even once. That version had a 12+ strong pass and natural one bids 0-11 points with five-card majors (an easy alternative to adopt here). It was pre-system regulation days.