

The Revision Club System
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PART I - Major Suit Openings

The One Heart Opening

ONE HEART: 11-15 HCP; always a five-card suit, regardless of position. Can be slightly light in third and fourth seat, but not by much, since Revision major openings are relatively light anyway. The hearts will usually be the longest suit, although with a minimum in high cards and a major-minor 5-6, practice has shown that it generally works better to open the major and treat the hand as a 5-5. This can also apply to 5-6 spades/hearts.

That the opening bid of one of a major shows five is an inviolate principle for us. We do not open four-card majors in third seat. This is because our 1NT response is *always* forcing, even by a passed hand. This is contrary to the treatment played by most who use five-card majors and forcing notrump, who allow the 1NT response to be passed when the 1NT responder is a passed hand. Their reasoning is that if opener has the kind of hand that would consider passing (i.e. up to a bad 13 points, balanced), game is impossible and 1NT should be a reasonable contract. This works best if responder will always, or at least usually, raise directly with three-card support. Since we do not, we would be playing 1NT when 2M was the correct contract. This would not always work badly, but often it would.

Four-card majors in third and fourth seat are a questionable idea anyway. My experience with them has been that the next opponent often overcalls when responder has an invitational-strength hand with three-card support. This usually leads to a three-level contract in a 4-3 fit, with opener having shaded values. To me, this is reason enough to avoid opening four-card majors under any circumstances.

Several people have conducted statistical studies to try to determine what happens when the 1NT response is passed, as opposed to when opener makes his normal rebid in a three-card minor suit. The conclusion has been that rebidding usually improves the contract. In our style, responder will frequently be passing with a doubleton in opener's major and up to as many as 8-9 points, so if we get to 2M on a 5-2 fit, it will usually have adequate high cards (and the 5-2 fit is superior to 1NT surprisingly often). The rest of the time, we will get to an eight-card major fit (when responder has support) or a seven-card, and usually eight-card, fit in some other suit when he does not. While it would be nice to play 1NT when it is the best contract, Al

Roth determined a long time ago that it is impossible to know when that is true, and that your long-term results are better when you keep on bidding to the two level. I believe he was right, and have preserved his principle in Revision.

1H- 1S: Natural, 4+ spades. Forcing by UPH. But do not (usually) respond 1S with only a four-card suit and three hearts. If you have less than game values with four spades and three hearts, bid either 2H or 1NT, depending on strength. It is OK to respond 1S with a five- or six-card spade suit and heart support, *if* you are confident you can control the subsequent auction and will not at some point be left in doubt as to how many hearts to bid. If in doubt, don't bid the spades. In practice, this tends to mean that you will only respond 1S with heart support when you expect to jump to game in hearts next (if partner does not show extras, and does not raise spades), or when you expect to give a minimum preference to hearts next (again, if partner does not show extras and does not raise spades). The in-between hands are the ones with which to avoid bidding the spades; raise to 2H, invitational. It is also possible to respond 1S with a four-card suit and, say, 4=3=(4-2) shape and game values, to find a possible 4-4 spade fit instead of a 5-3 heart fit. When you do this, you are intending to bid 4H next, unless partner raises spades in such a way that he guarantees four-card support.

However, please note that there is a certain hand type with a four-card spade suit that does *not* respond 1S, as it would in almost any natural system. These are the hands that have exactly four spades, fewer than three hearts, and invitational values (10-12 HCP). With these hands, you respond 1NT, not 1S. The idea is that you are going to bid 2S next on most auctions, invitational and not forcing, to show this exact hand type. This has nothing to do with the so-called Kaplan Inversion, or with having a 1S response guarantee a five-card suit (in Revision, it does not). It is a treatment that was invented to solve a particular bidding problem. For further details, look at the auctions 1H-1NT, 2C-2S; 1H-1NT, 2D-2S; and 1H-1NT, 2H-2S. For now, all you need to know is that if you pick up a hand like KQxx/x/A10xx/Qxxx or Axxx/Jx/QJx/Kxxx, you respond 1NT, not 1S. (This also applies when you are a passed hand.)

Another feature of Revision that differs from other systems is that in the auction 1H-1S (and any other one-over-one auction), *responder does not promise any values at all; he can have a zero count*. For us, there is no systemic principle that you are supposed to have "six points" to respond to an opening one-bid. Instead, we respond whenever it seems like a good idea. Responding to a Precision-style one-bid with a zero count is a good idea. You know that partner has a maximum of a 15 count. The opponents have at least 25. The best thing is to try to get in

their way. Even if one of them overcalls or doubles, the other may not know just how strong his partner's hand is, and they may miss game.

Of course, true zero counts are rare. But the same principle applies to hands with one, or two, or three HCP. Depending on the vulnerability, when you think the hand belongs to the opponents, you should try to make it hard for them to get together. (Use a bit more discretion when vulnerable, especially vulnerable against not. But even then, a light response can pay. Suppose you respond 1S with a zero count. If the opponents cannot bid, the auction may go 1H-1S, 1NT for us. If the opponents can take nine tricks at notrump regardless of which side declares the hand, we are down three, minus 300. But the opponents could have made 400. They have to double us to win the board, and this is very difficult to do at the one level, since typically each opponent will have some of the high cards and will have no idea what his partner holds.) This does mean that all one-over-one responses must be alerted.

It is one of the beauties of the Precision style that you can practice such thievery. In standard, it is usual to enforce some version of the "don't respond with fewer than six points" rule, since opener is going to be driving to game with 19- and 20-point hands, and you need to have something. Or he rebids 2NT with a big balanced hand, which is also not what you want to hear when you have a near-worthless hand yourself. In Precision, opener rarely jumps on his rebid, and if he does, he has good shape. This style is a big winner. Rodwell and Meckstroth have been doing it for years. I do not understand why more people don't use it, but we certainly are not going to miss out on it.

Opener rebids:

1H-1S, Pass: Only if responder is PH.

1H-1S, 1NT: Omnibus 1NT bid. 12 to 15 HCP, frequently a singleton spade. Avoid opening 1H with an 11 count, or a bad 12, if you are going to have to rebid 1NT over a 1S response. The possible shapes are 5332 with any doubleton, 1=5=4=3, 1=5=3=4, 2=5=4=2, and 2=5=2=4.

The omnibus 1NT rebid is used in every situation where it is possible, which is to say, the auctions 1D-1H, 1NT; 1D-1S, 1NT; and this one. An explanation of why is appropriate. I have been using this method for many years with great success. Frankly, I can't understand why more players do not adopt it, since it works. The standard objection seems to be

based on the following reasoning: 1NT is 15-17; one of a suit followed by 2NT is 18-19; 2NT is 20-21; and so on. So, to fit into the notrump “ladder,” a 1NT rebid by opener should both be balanced, and show exactly 12-14 HCP. This is wrong. A 1NT rebid should mean nothing more than that opener thinks 1NT is likely to be the correct contract if responder does not have enough to bid a second time. In our methods, the point range should be anything openable up to 15, or just under a strong club opening. There is no reason to demand that it cover only a three-point range. The auctions 1D-1H, 1S; 1H-1S, 2m; 1D-1M, 2D; and others, all show any hand that can open and is not strong enough for a 1C opening. There is no reason for the 1NT rebid, specifically, to show a narrower range than the other common low-level rebids. In fact, there is *less* trouble in having the 1NT rebid show the wider range, since there are so many ways to get out low after it. It is equally true that there is no reason to avoid rebidding 1NT with a singleton in partner’s suit. It often gets you to the right spot. A 1NT rebid does not exist for the purpose of telling partner you opened a balanced hand, any more than it exists for the purpose of telling partner that your hand falls within a specific three-point range. It exists for the purpose of proposing a possible final contract. If partner wants to keep going, he has ways of checking on your spade support later on.

It should be noted that rebidding 1NT with a singleton is more or less standard these days, at least in expert circles. In Problem B, July 2004 Master Solver’s Club (*The Bridge World*), 22 out of 35 panelists voted for a 1NT rebid with x/Axxx/A10xxx/K9x after 1D-1S. (It is open to question whether you should open 1D with this hand or not, but if you do, 1NT is surely the best rebid.)

None of this is to say that you *must* rebid 1NT with every hand that meets the above description. Sometimes it will be better to rebid two of a minor suit. If you hold, for example, x/AQ10xx/xxx/AKJx, you can bid 1H-1S, 2C. The reason for this is not that 1NT rates to be a bad contract if partner passes (it will probably be a good one), but because of game considerations. If partner has enough to drive to game, 3NT is the most likely destination. 3NT will probably play better from partner’s side, given the likely diamond lead. This principle applies with even greater force with xx/AQ10xx/xx/AKJx, where you want partner to be declarer at notrump against either a spade or a diamond lead. However, if you hold as little in diamonds as Jx, it is perfectly OK to rebid 1NT. Doubleton

lower honors do quite well when the lead comes up to them in notrump. If you hold Jx in your hand facing Kxx in dummy, your left-hand opponent may innocently lead low from AQxxx. Then he has to watch the lead swing around to your jack, while the king in dummy is good for another trick later.

To me, the notion of rebidding 2m with a 2=5=4=2 or 2=5=2=4 shape, and a doubleton honor in the shorter minor, is sickening. I see people do this all the time with hands like Kx/AJxxx/Kx/Qxxx. It is easy to work out as a matter of logic that this *must* be wrong. Example deals are not necessary, just *a priori* reasoning. Consider what partner's major suit holdings might be. If he has as many as six spades, he is going to rebid spades no matter what, so it doesn't make much difference what your second bid is. Similarly, if he holds as many as three hearts, he is going to go back to hearts no matter what you do. So let's give him five spades and a doubleton heart. That leaves six cards in the minors. These are usually distributed 4=2, 3=3, or 2=4, and only in the last of these cases will he have the four clubs you need to find a fit. (And of course, he is more likely to have four cards in the minor where you are short than the one in which you are long.) Rebidding 2m with these hands is just asking to get to the two level on a misfit when 1NT was the best contract all along. True, partner can have some other shapes, like 4=1=4=4, where the 2m rebid finds a fit, but even then there is no guarantee that the minor-suit contract will play better than 1NT; declarer's advantage is greater in 1NT than in just about any other contract. (There is also the consideration that if partner is not going to pass, further bidding after a 1NT rebid is much easier than after a 2m rebid; after 2m, responder often has to resort to fourth-suit-forcing, which tends to lead to messy auctions. This remains true even though our 4SF methods are better than almost anyone else's.) I will allow that there is a better case for rebidding 2C when you have opened 1D and your shape is 2=2=5=4 or 2=2=4=5, because then you guarantee real diamonds to go with your clubs and you have a chance of finding a fit in either minor, but even in these cases I prefer to rebid 1NT as long as there is a high card in the other major-suit doubleton.

I suppose I should say a few words here about the "Kaplan Inversion" of the 1S and 1NT responses to 1H, lest anyone think that the reason I do not use the treatment is that I do not know about it. I know what it is all right, and I don't like it. If you haven't heard of it (from what I know, it is a treatment played almost exclusively in North America, so many

international readers may be unfamiliar with it), KI is a method where you respond 1NT, forcing, to show spades, and respond 1S, *denying* spades, on most of the hands with which you would otherwise have made a forcing notrump response. The idea is that after a 1S response, denying spades, opener can rebid 1NT with all of the 5332 shapes with which he has to rebid a three-card minor after a “normal” forcing notrump response. This often reaches 1NT as a final contract. The other side of the coin is that when responder *does* have spades and responds 1NT to show them, opener has to rebid a three-card minor with all 2=5=3=3 hands, and with all 3=5=(3-2) hands that are unsuitable for a raise to 2S. So you end up rebidding short minor suits anyway, and you do so on deals where partner is less likely to have a fit for your minor (playing KI, responder’s 1NT bid will have four or five spades, leaving less room in his hand for minor-suit cards). Playing KI also makes it impossible for opener to use the omnibus 1NT rebid when he has 1=5=(4-3) shape. I am not willing to accept that. KI is not currently allowed under the ACBL’s General Convention Chart, but even if it were, I wouldn’t want to play it.

After 1H-1S, 1NT, responder can pass, or bid:

1H-1S, 1NT- 2C: 100% puppet to 2D. Opener is only allowed to bid 2D over this, never anything higher. Responder will frequently use this maneuver to get out in 2D. He can be 4-5 or 4-6 in the pointeds for the 1S response. Also do this with 5-5 pointeds, weak; opener will usually have three diamonds (doubleton only with 2=5=2=4), and may have a singleton spade, so forget spades and play diamonds.

If responder is not intending to pass 2D, the 2C bid always initiates an invitational sequence.

1H-1S, 1NT-2C, 2D- 2H: A special bid that shows a doubleton heart and invitational values, not forcing. (Please note also that it *guarantees a five-card spade suit*. This is true because with only four spades, a doubleton heart, and invitational values, you would have responded 1NT, intending to continue with a 2S rebid.) The purpose of reaching 2H via this maneuver is to allow opener to pass in the known 5-2 heart fit rather than have the partnership get to 2NT. Responder would bid this way with AQxxx/Qx/Kxx/xxx. He can also be unbalanced, like AQxxx/Qx/x/Kxxxx; it looks better to offer

the chance of getting out in 2H than to invite in NT or clubs, which are the alternatives (2NT could be ridiculous if opener is weak in diamonds; 3C could be ridiculous opposite a doubleton club, which opener could have if he is 2=5=4=2). Opener will of course go back to spades at the appropriate level if he has suppressed three-card support there (he can bid 2S with a truly minimum hand, or can bid 4S to play in game; if genuinely unsure whether to bid game, 3S is available). He can also pass with decent hearts and a rejection of the invitation, or go back to 2S with a doubleton spade and weak hearts (if he does this, the idea is that he thinks a 5-2 in spades will play better than a 5-2 in hearts). He can also bid 2NT to play if his hearts look too weak to be trumps and he also doesn't want to play spades (a 2NT or 3NT bid here usually means a singleton spade). If he wants to look for game, opener can bid naturally at the three-level (3H now would be game forcing, but expressing doubt about notrump; 3C or 3D would also be GF; 3NT would be to play; and only 3S is not forcing). Finally, since opener knows of a 5-3 fit in spades if he has three-card support and a good hand, he can jump to game in spades if he likes.

1H-1S, 1NT-2C, 2D-

2S: Invitational, exactly five spades. Probably not a hand with a doubleton honor in hearts (with that, a 2H rebid over 2D would provide more options). Responder has a hand that wants to look for game opposite three-card support, so opener *must* raise if he has three. (As a general principle. This is not true if partner is a passed hand and you have opened a bit light, or if your hand is truly unappetizing.) He can (normally) pass only with a doubleton. Responder's hand can be 5-5 (very likely the reason he is so eager to find three-card support for his spades; a lot of 5-5 responding hands are worth a shot at game if partner has support for the major, but not otherwise), so he may run out to another suit if opener has a singleton spade and bids 2NT now. If opener has three-card spade support, he raises to three with a minimum (this is nonforcing), or to four with anything extra.

1H-1S, 1NT-2C, 2D-

2NT: Natural, weak invitational, exactly ten HCP. Also, the hand must contain a five-card spade suit, for reasons noted

above, *and* the hand must, for some reason, appear unsuitable for a 2S contract on a 5-2 fit if opener is going to reject the game invitation. A typical hand might be Jxxxx/x/AJ10x/AJ9; with this, you don't really want to play in a spade contract at any level facing Hx in opener's hand, and your minor-suit cards seem to make the hand quite well suited to a notrump contract (the opponents may try a spade lead, but there is no guarantee that this will work well for them). Natural continuations. This auction is distinguished from a direct bid of 2NT over 1NT, which is a stronger invitation. The reasoning is that the puppet-first sequence will be used less often (although both are rare), and since this auction gives the opponents the chance to double 2C for the lead, it is assigned to the less common sequence. (But you can pass 1NT with a bad ten, especially if you are not vulnerable.) In any event, this auction is not going to come up terribly often; if you have a four-card spade suit, you will respond 1NT and follow with 2S, and if you have a decent five-card spade suit, you will rebid 2S after the 2C puppet (or rebid 2H, if you have a doubleton heart and it seems as though you might want to play hearts).

1H-1S, 1NT-2C, 2D- 3C: Natural, invitational, five-card or longer club suit (usually six). Continuations natural if opener does not pass.

1H-1S, 1NT-2C, 2D- 3D: Natural, invitational, five-card or longer diamonds. Continuations natural if opener does not pass.

Responder does not bid higher than 3D after going through the 2C puppet.

The 2C puppet is still on by a PH.

1H-1S, 1NT- 2D: Artificial, creates a game force (by UPH), asks for further description from opener. We do not have strictly defined meanings for further bidding, since there are too many sequences from this point forward to define them all. Opener just rebids more or less naturally from this point on. So does responder. However, there are a few general principles. Opener should, of course, immediately show three-card spade support if he has not shown it already. But jumping to 3S is not allowed, even with a

relative maximum; the auction is GF already, and jumping uses up too much bidding room. Instead, just bid 2S, and partner may then bid 3S, setting the suit and creating a Fred/Serious 3NT situation (described later in this chapter; see pp. 53-54). Bidding a new suit at the three level would of course be natural, but should show a decent suit (otherwise bid 2NT over 2D).

One principle that we use here will be seen later, in the section on 2/1 responses. Here, opener should rebid 2H over 2D with any minimum (except with three spades, when he bids 2S), to tell responder that he is minimum. Higher bids, such as 2NT or anything at the three level, show extras. This should help responder if he is thinking about slam.

But if made by a passed hand, 2D cannot be a high-card force to game, since such a hand would have opened the bidding. Now 2D is natural and invitational, showing a hand with 4-5 or 5-5 in spades and diamonds. Opener can pass with three or four diamonds, or give preference to 2S with three there, or bid 2H with good hearts (offering to play a possible 5-2), or bid 2NT with 2=5=2=4 shape (although he can pass with a doubleton diamond, since he knows that he is in no worse than a 5-2 fit; consequently, the 2NT bid shows some hope for game). With an acceptance, opener goes to the three level, bidding naturally.

1H-1S, 1NT- 2H: Natural, nonforcing, three-card support, weak hand (meaning not strong enough for an immediate invitational raise of 1H to 2H). This sequence can be employed with a hand that is 5-3 or 6-3 in the majors. (With three hearts and only four spades, you would always suppress the spades unless the hand was of GF strength originally.) Responder bids 1S just in case opener has a big fit for spades and raises. If this does not happen, he goes back to hearts. Here, responder is saying that if opener had rebid 2C or 2D, he would have gone back to 2H also. This method works because the alternative is to respond a forcing 1NT and then go back to hearts; this way, responder enjoys the chance of finding a double fit in a major, perhaps even reaching game if opener has a magic hand.

1H-1S, 1NT- 2S: Natural, invitational, six-card suit. This is a basic principle for us. When responder bids one of a major and then rebids two of that major, it is *invitational*. This allows responder to show this very common hand type without getting past the two level; he does not have to jump to three to invite, which too often results in a minus score when opener can do

nothing except pass. Playing our way, the auction ends in two of the major when opener is not interested. This is a *huge* gain in the long run. Responder is always going to jump to two of his major as his initial response when he has a six-card suit and less than game-invitational values. He does not have to have any high cards at all to do this. 1H-2S can show anything from xxxxxx/x/xxx/xxx up to a hand just short of inviting, such as QJ10xxx/x/Kxx/Qxx. Experience shows that it is very dangerous *not* to show a six-card major. We always do. Opener will not move without a fit, or with fine shape of his own. Do not worry about the possibility of opener's being short in your suit. If he has a singleton, the 6-1 fit is probably the best spot, since responder's long suit will take no tricks unless it is trumps. There is the possibility of a void, but the risk is worth it. There are far too many hands where opener has a good fit for responder's major, and we can either preempt the opponents out of something, or bid for a make, or find a good save.

After the invitational 2S rebid here, opener simply continues naturally. Opener will not often do anything except pass, raise invitational, or raise to game. He can also bid 2NT with 14-15 and no spade fit; responder may have enough points to raise to 3NT. On this auction, opener does not want responder to have much in spades. The spades will serve only as a stopper.

1H-1S, 1NT- 2NT: Natural, nonforcing, strong invitation. 11 or 12 HCP. As with the same bid after the 2C relay, this shows a weakish five-card spade suit and lack of desire or ability to offer a 5-2 fit in hearts or spades. The only difference between this bid and the same bid after the 2C rebid is the high-card strength shown.

1H-1S, 1NT- 3C: Signoff in clubs. Shape is usually 4-6 or 4-7, and possibly 5-6.

1H-1S, 1NT- 3D: Natural, game-forcing, at least 6-5; with less shape than this, bid 2D first over 1NT. Slam interest is likely. If this bid is made by a passed hand, it is invitational and showing good shape, stronger than a 2D bid would have been. This auction by a PH also implies 6-5 shape; alternatively, a PH can bid 1H-1S, 1NT-2C, 2D-3D, which implies 4-6 shape and invitational values. (With 5-5 shape, it would be normal to rebid 2C and follow up with 2S, as stated above. You could also bid 2D over 1NT, which is invitational also; choose which path to take based on suit quality. The system does allow you to use judgment when two or

more sequences are available to show a given hand.) The 3D bid is restricted to rare hand types, 6-5 or better, because to jump and use up bidding room with less distribution seems unwise. You can always bid 2D to establish a game force with 5-5 or less shapely hands.

1H-1S, 1NT- 3H: Artificial, game-forcing. This shows solid spades, AKQJxx or better. It may be directed only toward selecting the best game (3NT can be very right opposite a solid suit), and it may also be looking for slam in spades. The idea here is that opener will sign off in 4S or 3NT without slam interest, and control-bid or make a forward-going bid of 3S if he likes spades. DNEBAPH (does not exist by a passed hand). The bid is not needed to show natural hearts, because it is assumed that responder would have raised hearts the first time with heart support (or will bid 4H now, if he has the game-only hand type).

1H-1S, 1NT- 3S: Natural, game-forcing, slam-invitational. DNEBAPH. If only interested in the best game, responder should bid 2D. Opener is invited to reject by bidding 3NT, accept spades but deny slam interest by raising to 4S, or advance control-bid something if good for spades. Opener is not expected to have more than a doubleton in spades to accept; he does not have to have three-card support to do so. All of opener's four-level bids other than spades here are control-bids. The 3S bid denies solid spades, which are shown by a 3H bid here. But it does show a good suit; opener should be able to assume that Ax, Kx, or Qx is enough to fill in the suit. With a broken suit like KJ9xxx, just bid 2D now and then rebid the spades, to extract doubleton support without implying a strong suit.

1H-1S, 1NT- 3NT: To play, of course, and could be based on as many as 17 points.

1H-1S, 1NT- 4C: Self-splinter, long spades. Control-bids or RKC 1430 can follow.

1H-1S, 1NT- 4D: Self-splinter, long spades. Control-bids or RKC 1430 can follow.

1H-1S, 1NT- 4H: To play. A typical hand might be AKxx/Kxx/Kxxx/xx. Responder bid spades first because spades might have been better than hearts if opener raised. When opener doesn't do that, responder chooses the heart game.

1H-1S, 1NT- 4S: To play. Responder was interested in slam if opener raised spades, or showed extra values; the 1NT rebid was discouraging, so now he is signing off.

1H-1S, 1NT- 4NT: Does not exist. If responder has a slam invitation, he should bid 2D first to get more information. Jumping to 4NT with a balanced hand is unwise when opener may actually be unbalanced, which he can be in our style.

1H-1S, 1NT- 5C, 5D, or 5H: Exclusion Blackwood with spades set. It should not be hard to remember that 5H is not natural here, because we play that hands that are suitable for big raises in opener's major raise immediately rather than respond 1S.

1H-1S, 2C: Natural, nonforcing. Often a five-card club suit. With 1=5=3=4 or 2=5=2=4 shape, opener's usual rebid is 1NT. He can also rebid 2C with shapes similar to 3=5=1=4 and extra values; research has shown that it is best to give delayed support for spades with such hands, so that partner will get a better idea of the overall strength and shape (when he does not pass 2C, that is). Consequently, the direct raise to 2S with three-card support tends to show a lesser hand, although it can be with as many as 15 HCP when the shape is balanced.

1H-1S, 2C- 2D: Fourth-suit forcing. We do not play 4SF as a game force (in this particular auction anyhow), as some people do. The bid shows an invitational-strength hand at least, but the bidding can end at 2H, 2S, or 2NT. The rule for when the auction has become game-forcing is very simple here: If either partner makes a bid at the three level, a game force exists. Any bid at the two level does not create a game force (except a preference to 2S by opener over 2D, which shows three-card support with extra values; opener would either raise to 1S immediately, or rebid 1NT, if he had a minimum.)

This 2D bid will most often be made with hands that wish to create a game-forcing auction, but sometimes the hand will be an invitation only. The most common example of this type is the hand without a fit in either hearts or clubs, but also without enough in diamonds to bid notrump. A typical such hand is AQxxx/Jx/xxx/Axx.

1H-1S, 2C-2D, 2H: This is another example of our practice of using the rebid of two of opener's major as showing a minimum hand, and not promising anything extra in the suit. 2H shows a minimum opener with, usually, only five hearts and at least four clubs (but not 0=5=4=4 minimum, which bids 2NT now); with 6-4 shape, opener normally would rebid 2H over 1S unless he had extra strength. (There may be an exception if opener has a minimum with, say, Jxxxxx of hearts and AQ10x of clubs.) Not forcing; responder can pass here with an invitational-strength hand and a doubleton heart.

Remember the rule that any bid at the two level here (except 2S by opener over 2D) is nonforcing, and any at the three level is a game force. Here, responder can raise to 3H, which is forcing, if he has a doubleton honor in hearts and wants to suggest that 4H may be the best game. If the hand is not strong enough for that, he passes; opener has already shown a minimum. Similarly, responder can bid 2S now, which is not forcing and suggests a five-card suit that is "on the way" to a contract of, probably, 2NT, unless opener wants to pass now and let responder play a 5-2 fit.

1H-1S, 2C-2D, 2S: Shows three-card support, and therefore extras (with three and a minimum, raise 1S to 2S or rebid 1NT). Game forcing.

1H-1S, 2C-2D, 2NT: This is a special artificial bid to show exactly 0=5=4=4 shape and a minimum opening. It is not forcing, but if responder does not pass now, a game force is created.

1H-1S, 2C-2D, 3C: 5-5 distribution, enough to accept a game invitation (bid 2H now with a minimum 5-5). The bid does not say anything about possession of a diamond stopper. If responder is still looking for that stopper, he bids 3H or 3S now, forcing. (A 3D bid now is GF, showing 5-5 spades/diamonds.) As opener, be aware that these bids do not set suits as trump. They can be gropes for the best game.

1H-1S, 2C-2D, 3D: "Fifth-suit forcing." Typically 1=5=3=4 or 2=5=2=4 with diamonds not good enough to bid notrump yet. Extra values, hence a game force. In fact, the bid tends to show heavy concentration in hearts and clubs, since otherwise, the rebid would have been 1NT,

not 2C. Note that this is not a 0=5=4=4 hand type, as it might well be in standard, since we rebid either 2NT or 3NT with that shape.

1H-1S, 2C-2D, 3H: 6-4 or 6-5 shape, extra values. (The 6-5 hand can be handled here either by bidding 3C, which does not show the sixth heart, or by bidding 3H, which does show the sixth heart but does not necessarily show the fifth club. Make your decision based on relative suit strength.)

1H-1S, 2C-2D, 3S: 2=5=1=5 shape, acceptance values. This is a picture bid; the jump is justified because it defines the hand so specifically. Note that it does not show three-card support and extra values, as it would in standard; we can bid 2S with that hand type.

1H-1S, 2C-2D, 3NT: 0=5=4=4 shape, acceptance values. Responder can of course set a minor suit for slam purposes by bidding 4m now.

If the 2D bid is made by a passed hand, it is still forcing, and now it is highly likely to be the hand that is searching for a diamond stopper (since there are so few other hand types that would want to bid 2D here). An example might be AQxxx/xx/xxx/A10x. Opener's rebids have the same meanings as opposite an unpassed hand.

1H-1S, 2C- 2H: Natural, and not showing more than a doubleton in hearts. Just as in standard, this is a simple preference auction, and does not guarantee real support. Nonforcing, not even invitational. Responder hoped for a spade raise and is getting out in hearts now that opener did not raise him. Opener will usually pass now, but can keep going with a good 6-4 or 5-5 type.

1H-1S, 2C- 2S: 6+ spades and an invitational hand, 9-12 HCP; with 0-8, respond 2S to 1H. If opener rebids 3C now, he is trying to get to one of his own suits at the three level if responder has a minimum invite; responder needs very good spades to bid them again, since he is quite likely to be facing a void on this auction. However, the 3C bid is somewhat invitational, since opener could just pass 2S with a minimum. A 3D bid over 2S by opener would be groping for the best game, and denying good enough diamonds to bid notrump now.

- 1H-1S, 2C- 2NT: Natural invitation. This bid essentially guarantees a five-card spade suit (an invitational hand with four spades and lacking three-card support for hearts would have responded 1NT; with six spades, you would bid 2S now). Opener does not have three-card spade support unless he has extra values, and with that, he will bid 4S now. If opener does not have three-card spade support, he will usually pass or raise to 3NT now, but he can also rebid 3C, NF, with a weak 5-5 type; rebid 3H, forcing, with a good 6-4 type; bid 3S (forcing) to show a doubleton spade honor and diamond weakness, suggesting game in a 5-2 spade fit; or bid out his shape with 3D, showing 0=5=4=4 or 0=5=3=5 (this requires extra values also).
- 1H-1S, 2C- 3C: Natural, invitational. Opener now passes or makes another natural bid to accept. Please note that this auction does *not* guarantee a five-card spade suit, as the 2NT rebid above does; here, responder might have something like Axxx/x/Kx/Qxxxxx, a hand which is certainly worth a 3C bid now, but which did not become of invitational strength until opener showed clubs. The 2NT bid, by way of contrast, must always be based on full high-card values. So, after the 3C bid, opener will go back to 3S to show delayed three-card support; he can't bid 4S in this auction.
- 1H-1S, 2C- 3D: This is nonforcing, and shows long diamonds. The shape can be 5-6, 4-6, or 4-7. Responder expects opener to pass, as the hand seems to be a misfit on the evidence so far. This is not a great auction, but responder has to be able to do something if he has singletons in both of opener's suits, which does happen sometimes. (With these shapes, responder also has the option of responding 1NT to 1H initially, hoping to get out with a nonforcing bid of 2D at his next turn, over opener's hoped-for 2C rebid.)
- 1H-1S, 2C- 3H: This is a special quasi-game-forcing bid. It shows a doubleton heart to at least one honor, and a good (at least five, probably six) club fit. The purpose is to get to a good 5-2 game in hearts if opener has a strong suit, and otherwise to get to 3NT or 5C as appropriate (slam in clubs is possible too). Of course, opener may have six hearts anyway, in which case the 6-2 heart fit is highly likely to be right. This treatment is available because 3H here as a natural invitation with three-card support is not needed; if responder has three hearts here, he either has so little that he can bid only 2H, or enough to jump to 4H. It does exist by a PH; typically it would show a 4=2=1=6 ten count, not quite good enough to open 2C.

Although this 3H bid will normally lead to game, it shows a hand that is a bit light in high cards (which is why it didn't respond 2C in the first place). A typical example is AJxx/Qx/x/K10xxxx, where the club fit makes the hand worth game now opposite the vast majority of opener's possible hands. It is not completely game-forcing, though, because opener may have something like x/Kxxxxx/KQ/QJ10xx, when you want to get out at 4C. So opener tries to sign off directly in 4C over 3H when he has a hopeless hand, and anything else will lead to game at least.

- 1H-1S, 2C- 3S: Natural, forcing, 6+ spades. DNEBAPH. A good hand is required as opener could be, for example, 0=5=3=5 minimum.
- 1H-1S, 2C- 3NT: 12+ to 17 HCP, good diamond stops. Opener must almost always pass. Perhaps with 6-6 he would keep going, assuming there is such a thing as a 6-6 that rebids only 2C instead of 3C.
- 1H-1S, 2C- 4C: This is forcing and sets clubs as trumps for slam purposes. Note that it is also forcing by a passed hand. In that case, it means that responder's hand has reevaluated to a full opening bid (or better) based on a big club fit. Perhaps he has AKxxx/x/x/Qxxxxx. In any case, the bid must be forcing, since 3C shows invitational values and is not forcing.
- 1H-1S, 2C- 4D: Splinter raise of clubs. Note that there is no way to make a splinter raise of clubs that shows short hearts. With that, just give a forcing raise in clubs.
- 1H-1S, 2C- 4H: To play. Responder was either interested in playing in spades instead of hearts, or he has a good hand and was going to try for slam if opener showed extra values on his rebid. Either way, he is only interested in game now.
- 1H-1S, 2C- 4S: To play. Responder's hand was too strong for a 4S response. He may have been interested in slam if opener had raised spades, but he wants to play only in game now.
- 1H-1S, 2C- 4NT: Does not exist. Any hand that would want to make a quantitative 4NT bid here should bid 2D instead to get more information. Nor is there any need for this bid to be RKC in clubs (in any event, we play Redwood when minor suits are agreed as trumps). With that, raise to 4C now and

keep the bidding lower. Perhaps partner will come back with a 4D RKC bid of his own.

- 1H-1S, 2D: Natural, nonforcing. The possible shapes are analogous to those in the 2C rebid, except that 0=5=4=4 is not possible, because we always rebid 2C with that.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 2H: Natural and nonforcing, not even invitational. As in the auction 1H-1S, 2C-2H, this is a preference auction that does not guarantee three-card support (although responder may have three, when he has a hand that would have made a standard raise of 1H-2H). Responder hoped for a spade raise and is getting out in hearts now that opener did not raise him. Opener will usually pass now, but can keep going with a good 6-4 or 5-5 type.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 2S: 6+ spades and an invitational hand, 9-12 HCP; with 0-8, respond 2S to 1H. If opener rebids 3D (showing 5+ diamonds, and probably 6-5 shape) now, this is NF, although it does show enough values so that opener is still hopeful of game. A 3C bid here would be a grope, looking for a club stopper for notrump, or perhaps to back into a 5-2 heart fit.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 2NT: Natural invitation. As in the auction 1H-1S, 2C-2NT, this guarantees a five-card spade suit, so opener can bid 4S now without further ado if he has a delayed three-card spade raise. Opener will usually pass or raise to 3NT, but can rebid 3D, NF, with a weak 5-5 type; rebid 3H, forcing, with a good 6-4 type and short spades; or bid 3S to show a doubleton honor in spades and doubt about notrump. What 3C should show is a good question. I say let it show a semi-three-suiter, typically 0=5=5=3, but forcing and with sufficient values to accept.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 3C: Fourth-suit forcing. By a UPH, it is of course forcing to game because of the level (opener may have no better bid than 3NT, even with a dead minimum). Opener just bids as naturally as he can here. No special definitions.

What responder should have here as a passed hand is an interesting question. The answer can be worked out by elimination. Not six spades, since then the bid is 2S. Not three hearts, since responder would support hearts now. Not big support for diamonds, since that hand can raise to 3D or 4D here. All that is left is a hand like AKxxx/Qx/Qxx/xxx. No number

of spades, hearts, or diamonds is the right bid, and to bid 2NT now would wrongside a 3NT contract. Accordingly, the best bid now is 3C as a sort of grope, hoping that opener has extra values and will be able to take control. It is an overbid, but the best course seems to be to hope for something extra in opener's hand, rather than to choose a strain now and risk being very wrong. A 3D rebid by opener would be nonforcing, showing a weakish 5-5, but anything else would be forcing. (With 5-5 reds and extras, opener can bid 4D; 3NT is out).

You may wonder what responder would do here with a hand like Qxxx/x/Qx/KJ109xx or, even worse, Qxxx/x/x/KJ109xxx. The best answer seems to be that with these hands, responder should bid 1NT the first time, anticipating opener's 2D rebid, and making it possible for responder to bid 3C, nonforcing, at his second turn. It would be rare for this strategy to result in missing a 4S game, since if opener has 4-6 in the majors with extra values, he will rebid 2S, natural. It is true that with something like 4=5=3=1 shape, opener will rebid 2D and the spade fit will be missed, but this will be costly only when 4S is a make, which it usually will not be.

- 1H-1S, 2D- 3D: Natural, invitational. Opener now passes or makes another natural bid to accept. But note that this auction does not guarantee a five-card spade suit, as a 2NT rebid would.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 3H: Natural, quasi-game-forcing with a doubleton heart and five or more diamonds. Analogous to the same bid after opener rebids 2C. Opener can try to sign off in 4D.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 3S: Natural, forcing, 6+ spades. A good hand is required, since opener could be 0=5=5=3 minimum. DNEBAPH.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 3NT: 12+ to 17 HCP, good club stops, either only four spades or not interested in a 5-3 fit. Opener will almost always pass.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 4C or 4D: Same as after opener's 2C rebid, except switched around. 4C is a splinter, 4D is a shapely forcing raise.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 4H or 4S: Same as after 2C rebid.
- 1H-1S, 2D- 4NT: Does not exist. When you have a slam-invitational hand with no known fit as yet, bid 3C first to get more information. Possible things that

can happen after the 3C bid are: opener rebids 3D, showing 5-5 (you may have three-card support for diamonds, in which case you can raise to 4D, setting the suit); opener rebids 3H, showing six (you may be able to raise with a doubleton; 5H is the bid to invite slam in hearts and ask for general values, while 4NT over 3H would be RKC for hearts); opener rebids 3S, showing a doubleton at least; opener rebids 3NT, which allows you to make your quantitative bid of 4NT anyhow, but a round later.

1H-1S, 2H: Normal, natural. Always 6+ hearts. Could be three spades if the hearts look strong enough to play opposite a singleton. Now, responder's bids of 3C and 3D are quasi-natural and game-forcing (but NF canapé by passed hand, showing something like Axxx/x/QJ9xxx/xx); 4C and 4D are side-suit values in support of hearts. 2S now is invitational (showing 6 or more), a raise to 3H is invitational and natural (usually a doubleton, but could be three-card support and just short of an initial 2H raise, like Axxx/Qxx/Kxx/xxx), 3S forcing, 4H to play, 4S to play. 4NT would be RKC 1430 for hearts.

Please note here that because of our use of the artificial treatment where responder bids 1NT and follows with 2S with an invitational hand and exactly four spades, and because of the possibility of passing the 1H bid with certain hands, opener faces different considerations than a standard player would when he has three spades and six hearts, and must decide whether to rebid 2H or 2S. In our style, opener usually raises to 2S. He rebids 2H instead only when the heart suit is good enough to play well opposite a small singleton. Opener does not have to worry that if he raises to 2S, his partner will pass and be trapped in a 4-3 spade fit when a 6-2 heart fit could have been reached instead. Responder won't have four spades, a doubleton heart, and 6-9 HCP, because with that hand type, he usually passes the 1H bid. (Some nine-counts might respond 1S, in hope that opener will be able to raise to 3S, but this is relatively rare and not something you should worry about.) Nor will he have four spades and 10-12 HCP, since he responds 1NT with that hand. He will usually have five or more spades, in which case a raise obviously works well. When responder has exactly four spades, he will have game-forcing values (so that it doesn't matter what you rebid as opener, since the auction will continue anyway), or he has a singleton or void heart, so that a 4-3 fit in spades will usually be at least as good as a heart contract. (When opener's hearts are good enough so that he wants to play in his suit even facing a

weak response and shortness, he ignores his spade support and rebids hearts.)

1H-1S, 2S: Natural raise, not forcing. Differs from standard practice in that we do not promise or even imply four-card support, as many do. We strive to raise with three, *if* opener has 5431-type distribution (in fact, with this shape or with 5530, he is *required* to raise spades now if he has a minimum, rather than bid his second suit; bidding the second suit and freely going back to spades on the third round of bidding shows extras). But if opener has a 5332 type, he can rebid 1NT instead of the direct raise.

1H-1S, 2S- 2NT: Game-forcing (by UPH), asking for a further description of opener's hand (a treatment invented by Marty Bergen). Usually looking for the best game, but can be looking for slam. Although a lot of experts have adopted some version of this treatment, formerly there was always some uneasiness about it. Sure, defining 2NT as forcing helps on a lot of hands, but what about the hands where you really wanted to rebid 2NT, natural and invitational? What are you supposed to do with those? As of now, this is a problem for other people, not us. It is just about impossible for us to have a hand that would even want to bid a natural, invitational 2NT on this auction. If responder has exactly four spades, invitational values, fewer than three hearts, and relatively normal shape otherwise (meaning not a six-card minor suit on the side), he responds 1NT, not 1S, and the auction follows a different path. And if he has five or more spades, there is no harm in bidding more spades, since a fit has been found.

However, I will allow that if responder is a passed hand, the 2NT bid can be natural and NF. There is no other use for it, and responder might hold something like Jxxxx/10x/AJ10/KQ10, where he wants to emphasize his minor-suit stoppers and let opener know that despite the known spade fit, the deal might play better in notrump anyhow. But this is a rare exception.

Opener bids:

1H-1S, 2S-2NT, 3C: Club fragment, diamond shortness, and only three spades. The idea is that responder will now judge whether the hand might belong in 3NT, if he has good stoppers facing opener's shortness. If he does, he can bid 3NT now. If he does not like his diamond holding for notrump purposes, he can look for some other contract, such as a 5-2 fit in hearts (responder bids 3H now), or game or slam

in clubs (responder bids 4C now, showing four-card support; opener will cooperate if he has four as well, and if he doesn't, his shape must be something like 3=6=1=3, in which case he bids a natural 4H now). If responder doesn't have any clear direction in mind over 3C, he bids 3D now, asking opener to describe his hand further (this may lead to a 4-3 fit in spades, if nobody wants to bid 3NT). Finally, if responder has five or more spades and is interested in slam, he can rebid 3S, confirming an eight-card fit and asking for control-bids, etc. This creates a Fred situation, so 3NT next by opener would be serious.

Responder can also have a hand at this point that looks something like AKxx/Kx/AKQx/xxx. With this, he wants to get to slam if opener has something like Qxx/AQxxxx/x/Kxx (6H seems best). However, he does not want to get to slam facing QJx/AQJxx/x/QJxx. The bid for this hand here is 4D. It shows no known eight-card fit (and also not four clubs; raise clubs with that), values too strong for 3NT, and wanting opener to make the next move. Opener should bid above the four level if he is interested in slam. A 4NT bid by either player after this would be to play.

If this 3C bid is made by an opener who is facing a passed hand, the 3C bid is natural and forcing (responder in this situation has guaranteed five spades for his 2NT bid, so opener will either pass or go back to 3S with any hand that is rejecting the invitation).

1H-1S, 2S-2NT, 3D: Short clubs, diamond fragment. Continuations analogous to the above. But note that a 4C bid directly over 3D shows the directionless slammish hand described above.

If responder is a PH, the 3D bid is natural and forcing, like 3C above.

1H-1S, 2S-2NT, 3H: 3=6=2=2 shape. This bid allows responder to find a 6-2 heart fit when he has something like 4=2=(4-3) shape. At this point, responder can bid 3S to confirm a 5-3 or better spade fit and set spades as trump (this is a Fred situation), bid 3NT naturally, raise to 4H naturally, bid 4S naturally, or bid 4m to indicate a doubleton heart and interest in a heart slam. A 4NT bid over 3H would be natural and invitational, probably with 4=1=4=4 shape.

The meaning is the same if responder is a PH; 3H is forcing and shows an acceptance of responder's game invitation. (Opener passes or goes back to 3S if he is rejecting.)

1H-1S, 2S-2NT, 3S: Minimum, exactly four spades. Hence the shape must be 4=5=2=2. (We play that any hand with a side singleton and four-card support must drive to 4S after responder invites with 2NT.) The hand is committed to spades (if opener had wanted to suggest 3NT as a final contract when opener has this shape, he could have bid 3NT directly over 2S), so this is a Fred situation if responder does not sign off in 4S; if responder bids 3NT here, that is serious, and 4m or even 4H would be control-bids.

1H-1S, 2S-2NT, 3NT: Natural, 5332 shape. Does not say anything about minimum or maximum. Responder can pass now, or sign off in 4S, but if he bids 4m or 4H, those are control-bids for spades. A raise to 4NT would be natural; control-bid first if desiring to use RKC for spades.

If responder is a PH, this 3NT bid does show extra values.

1H-1S, 2S-2NT, 4C: Splinter, four-card spade support. The point range will be 11-13, since with 14-15 and a side stiff (or void) and four-card support, we would have jump-raised 1S to 3S. However, once partner invites, we do not stop short of game with a singleton or void and four-card support. DNEFAPH (just bid 4S here if facing a PH).

1H-1S, 2S-2NT, 4D: Splinter, four-card spade support. Same point range (11-13) as 4C above. DNEFAPH.

1H-1S, 2S-2NT, 4H: Picture raise of spades. Something like KQxx/AKJ10x/xx/xx. DNEFAPH.

1H-1S, 2S-2NT, 4S: Same shape (4=5=2=2) as 3S above, but with 14-15 HCP. The difference between this and the 4H bid is that 4H shows a greater concentration of values in two suits. For 4S, you might have KQxx/AQxxx/Qx/Qx.

Facing a PH, though, the 4S bid can be made on literally any hand that wants to play in a final contract of 4S. Opener knows responder's hand quite exactly, so he will often simply jump to game without describing his own hand any further.

- 1H-1S, 2S- 3C: Another Bergen invention, invitational and not forcing, typically showing 4-6 in the blacks. Opener can pass, but should bid 4S if he has four-card support and any decent values for suit play. Returning to 3S is a signoff. 3H would be a sixth heart, only three spades, nonforcing. Opener can also look for 3NT if he has acceptance values and only three spades. Game in clubs is conceivable also.

This auction, and the one following where responder continues with 3D, are an exception to our usual practice of responding 1NT and continuing with 2S when holding exactly four spades and invitational values. If your hand is KJxx/x/xx/AQ109xx, you don't want to leave the clubs unmentioned forever. If you respond 1NT and follow with 2S, partner might pass you there holding some routine hand like Axx/AJxxx/xxx/Kx (he thinks his good controls make 2S a desirable partscore, so he won't continue to 2NT here to give you another chance). Obviously this is not best. The right way to handle such a responding hand is to respond 1S, and then if partner raises you, bid 3C. This gives you the best chance of playing spades, clubs, or notrump, as appropriate.

- 1H-1S, 2S- 3D: Nonforcing game try, like 3C above.

- 1H-1S, 2S- 3H: This is a special artificial bid. It is not needed to show hearts. Responder will only bid 1S with three-card heart support when he either is dead minimum (here he would pass 2S), or is looking for the best game (bid four of a major now). Accordingly, 3H here can be used to show five or more spades and interest in slam. DNEBAPH.

While this bid shows that responder is interested in a spade slam, and has at least five of them, the converse is not true. That is to say, responder will not necessarily bid 3H here when he has five or more spades and is interested in slam. He might bid 2NT instead. The 2NT bid is more appropriate when responder is keenly interested in finding the location of opener's singleton (if he has one), regardless of whether opener has three- or four-card support. If responder does not particularly care about a

singleton, and is more interested in things like overall strength, quality of trump support, or control-biddable features, he bids 3H.

Opener will now continue as follows:

- 1H-1S, 2S-3H, 3S: Minimum, only three-card support, not particularly interested in a spade slam. Responder can now sign off in 4S, or continue looking for slam. Spades are agreed, so all bids at the four level, including 4H, are control-bids. A 3NT bid by responder here would be Fred, demanding a responsive control-bid by opener if possible.
- 1H-1S, 2S-3H, 3NT: Maximum, three-card support. The next move is up to responder.
- 1H-1S, 2S-3H, 4m, 4H: Four-card support, control-bid.
- 1H-1S, 2S-3H, 4S: Four-card support, but a minimum, not very interested in slam.
- 1H-1S, 2S- 3S: Generalized game invitation, but promises a fifth spade. Opener simply decides whether to go or not based on general values. Opener is allowed to bid 3NT here to suggest backing into a notrump game instead of 4S.
- 1H-1S, 2S- 3NT: Suggests alternative game. Opener can pull to 4S, of course.
- 1H-1S, 2S- 4C: Self-splinter, trying for spade slam. General principles from here.
- 1H-1S, 2S- 4D: Self-splinter.
- 1H-1S, 2S- 4H: Allows opener choice of games. This would be a rare auction. Probably responder was hoping for a stronger raise of spades, so that he could look for a double-fit slam. Now that opener has shown a minimum, responder goes back to hearts at game level, just in case opener has only three-card support for spades and hearts plays better. Opener must always either pass or return to 4S (but he will not return to spades unless he has four of them). Responder cannot be interested in slam, because he could have bid 2NT or 3H, both artificial and forcing, if he were.
- 1H-1S, 2S- 4S: To play.

1H-1S, 2S- 4NT: RKC 1430 for spades.

Responder could also bid 5NT as the GSF, or 5m or 5H as Voidwood.

1H-1S, 2NT: Exactly three spades, long hearts (AQJ10xx at least, and more often seven hearts), maximum non-1C opener. Opener has a hand that is worth 3H, but with three-card spade support. Responder continues:

1H-1S, 2NT- 3C: Game-forcing. Something in clubs; the initial meaning is a stopper, looking for 3NT, but if responder then goes back to 4S over 3NT, he shows a slam try in spades with club values on the side, too strong to just sign off in 4S. (If responder bids 4S in other auctions, as for example over a raise to 4C, he is just saying that 4S looks like the best game.) Responder can also do this and go back to 4H over (say) a 3NT continuation, to show a slam try in hearts. Continuations natural.

1H-1S, 2NT- 3D: Like 3C above.

1H-1S, 2NT- 3H: Signoff; responder is not interested in game opposite a maximum of 15. Can be a doubleton, or even, conceivably, a singleton heart (perhaps Kxxx/J/Qxxx/xxxx). This is a strange-looking bid on those cards, but it makes sense in our methods. The real meaning of 2NT is "I have a 3H rebid, but I also have three-card support for spades, so I am showing those on the way." Opener could easily have 3=7=(2-1) shape. Opener was willing to get to 3H without knowing what responder's hand was, so responder can bid 3H if he so chooses with any hand that is not going to game.

1H-1S, 2NT- 3S: A fifth spade (probably), but not enough to bid game. Signoff. Remember that responder does not necessarily have any high-card values to bid 1S, so opener should respect the signoff here.

1H-1S, 2NT- 3NT: To play.

1H-1S, 2NT- 4C: Self-splinter for spades. Responder has 5+ spades and is slamming.

1H-1S, 2NT- 4D: Like 4C above.

1H-1S, 2NT- 4H: To play.

1H-1S, 2NT- 4S: Signoff.

1H-1S, 2NT- 4NT: RKC 1430 for spades.

1H-1S, 3C: Natural, maximum opening, 6-5 or better in hearts/clubs.

Our requirement that opener have 6-5 to jump to 3C differs from “regular” Precision, where the bid can be made on 5-5 types. Experience shows that making this bid with 5-5 hands often results in an uncomfortable 5-2 fit in the major, with the long hand getting tapped early. However, this is not the main advantage, since we will probably be getting to the three-level anyway on some auctions that begin, for us, 1H-1S, 2C (via a 3C rebid after a heart preference). The real advantage is that responder, after hearing 3C, always knows of a place to play whenever he holds a doubleton heart; in the 5-5 style, responder does not always know whether to bid the heart game, and a 3H preference doesn’t help, since it is nonforcing. Playing our way, responder always knows immediately whether or not a 6-2 heart fit exists. I consider this to be one of Revision’s major advances over ordinary Precision. All that is lost is that you cannot show extra values immediately with a maximum 5-5, but do you really need to? If partner goes back to (say) 2H over a 2C rebid, you can bid 3C next if your hand is good enough, and you are in the same place you would have been had you made the “regular Precision” rebid of 3C over 1S.

1H-1S, 3C- 3D: Fourth-suit forcing, of course. Although the bid may be asking for help in diamonds for notrump purposes, its main function is to lend additional meaning to responder’s next bid. Consequently, opener will normally just rebid 3H in order to hear what responder says next (but opener can rebid 4H to show seven good ones, or 4C to show a 6-6 hand type). Over opener’s 3H rebid, responder can now bid 4H to show a slam try in hearts, or he can bid 3NT to show a hand that is too strong to bid 3NT over 3C. Similarly, if opener bids 3NT over 3D, showing something in diamonds, responder can raise to 4NT, invitational, or go back to 4H, a slam try. As a practical matter, responder is not likely to try for slam in any strain other than hearts or clubs. A raise of 3C to 4C is forcing, of course. 4D by responder over 3C is a special bid, showing an immediate slam try in hearts (a hand too strong to bid 4H).

1H-1S, 3C- 3S: Forcing, at least six spades. This is forcing because opener has shown extra values, and responder has a hand that was worth an invitation

initially, because otherwise (with 0-9 HCP and 6+ spades) he would have responded 2S. Granted, you won't always have a makable game here, because the hands may not fit very well, but responder needs to be able to make a forcing bid here when he has a good hand with six or more spades, as he very well might.

1H-1S, 3D: Natural, similar to 3C above (max with 6+ hearts and 5+ diamonds). Follow-ups are similar, with one exception: Since responder cannot bid the fourth suit other than by going to the four-level, a 4C bid here shows a slam try in hearts (raise to 4D, forcing, to set diamonds). Responder will have to make up his own mind whether to bid 3NT over 3D, without being able to ask opener for club help. Sometimes, though, he can bid a forcing 3S here, hoping opener calls 3NT with something in clubs (but this risks being raised to 4S with a singleton honor or a small doubleton, so don't do it unless you can stand to hear that).

1H-1S, 3H: Natural invitation, but denying three spades. Responder will usually pass or place the contract in game. His forcing bids are 3S and four of a minor. What the minor-suit bids should mean is a fair question. Belladonna and Garozzo, in *Superprecision*, say that they are control-bids for hearts, so let's play that. Too bad if you are 6-5 or 6-6 in spades and a minor. You will just have to bid 3S, forcing, and guess your way out from there; presumably, if opener bids 3NT over 3S, bids of 4m by responder would now be natural. If opener bids 4m himself over 3S, that is a control-bid for spades. I suppose that a jump to five of a minor over 3H would be Voidwood for hearts with a void in the bid minor.

1H-1S, 3S: Normal (well, normal for a Precision style anyway) invitational raise. It could be a semibalanced hand with a lot of playing strength, such as AKxx/AKxxx/xx/xx, or it could be a hand with a singleton (AKxx/AQxxx/x/xxx) or void (AKxx/AJ10xx/-/Qxxx) and too much playing strength to risk raising to two and being passed. Judgment is required.

There is an exception here to our usual methods. 3NT by responder now is forcing, not a choice of games. This is because for responder to bid spades in the first place, he must be willing to play the suit when four-card support is found. Opener usually has a singleton, and if not, his strength is usually concentrated into hearts and spades, so he should have good spade support; KQxx/AKQJx/xx/xx would be typical. (Opener might also have

xxxx/AKxxx/Ax/Ax or the like, but in that case, his hand is also well suited to playing in spades, with all the controls; if you get this hand, go ahead and bid 3S, and hope that partner does not also have weak spades.) Accordingly, we assume that he will not want to play 3NT on this auction, and use 3NT here as a shortness ask. (If responder has the sort of hand that might want to bid 3NT natural here, such as 10xxx/xx/AQJ/AQJx, he should respond 2C the first time, not 1S; a spade fit can be found later on, if such is desirable).

This is a good place to explain our general theory of responding to distributional asking bids (DABs) like this one (or relays, if you prefer that term). As a general principle, when one partner makes a totally artificial bid to ask the other about the location of a shortness (or of an as-yet-unidentified second long suit), we usually adopt the general pattern of showing by making *ascending numeric responses*. In the case of a shortness, this is done by assuming the most typical number of cards in the suits in which the shortness is known *not* to be, and then arranging the residues. Here, opener is presumed to have four spades and five hearts. Therefore, his hands can be 4=5=1=3, 4=5=2=2, and 4=5=3=1, in ascending order (because 4,522 is a higher number than 4,513, and 4,531 is higher than 4,522). So, the responses to the DAB (or relay) are, in order: 4C, singleton diamond; 4D, no singleton; 4H, 4=5=3=1. (Hands with voids are assumed to be “similar” to the more common pattern that has a singleton instead of a void, so here, a 4=5=0=4 hand would be treated like 4=5=1=3. In the same way, if the residue is only two cards instead of three, 4=6=1=2 is treated the same as 4=5=1=3. The important thing is to get the shortness in the right place.)

Also note that this invitational raise is somewhat lighter than in standard, where it can be a balanced 18 count (for those playing 15-17 notrumps). We have no problem raising to three with Axxx/AKxxx/x/Kxx.

1H-1S, 3NT: Splinter raise of spades with a singleton (usually 6421 type, since 5431 probably would have too many losers to force to game). Responder can relay with 4C to ask which; then, the responses are ascending numeric, as usual: 4D is singleton diamond, 4H is singleton club. (There is no need for more than two responses here, since opener has already guaranteed a singleton.)

- 1H-1S, 4C, 4D: Void-showing splinters (VSS) for spades. (We do not play VSS in many auctions; our policy is not to use them unless there is another way to show singleton splinters in the same auction. Here, there is.)
- 1H-1S, 4H: To play. Very long hearts, hand too strong to open 4H. (A 4H opener would typically be something like KQJTxxxx and out. See Part VIII. Add some high cards on the side to that hand, and it becomes a 1H opening and a 4H rebid.)
- 1H-1S, 4S: To play, probably 5-6 in the majors, or four-card support with extreme shape on the side, including heart length. Perhaps a 4-7 hand could do this.
- 1H- 2H: This auction is described out of sequence to clarify our approach to raises. This is *not* a normal, weak 6-9 point raise. We respond 1NT, forcing, with such hands. This is a Roth-style raise, showing invitational values and (usually) exactly three-card support. What it is, in fact, is a *Drury raise*. That's right, we play "Drury" regardless of whether responder is a passed hand or not, and we do it via a single raise! Roth plays that this single raise, although not game-forcing, is forcing for one round. This style is playable for him because he uses very sound opening bids, and he also requires ten high-card points for the raise. He is not likely to go down in three if he stops there. (Roth says he gets to game anyway 95% of the time on this auction. We will *frequently* pass the 1-2 raise.) We, on the other hand, are playing fairly light opening bids. Also, we are going to use this raise whenever responder's hand evaluates to 10 to 12 support points, counting side shortness. It is fairly common to use the bid with a nine count. Eight-count single raises exist, but I will say that eight is the lower limit for the bid. (E.g., x/Axx/Axxxx/Txxx; 8 losers, 10-11 support points.)

Note that these are the same hands, for the most part, that are nowadays handled by responding 1NT, forcing, and then jumping to three of the major. When opener cannot accept the game try (quite common for us with our light openers), we are getting out at the two level. Others get to three and, sometimes, go minus. When the bid is used by a PH, many opponents will play some form of Drury and get out at the two level; but in order to be able to do this, they must give up a natural bid in at least one of the minor suits. We get to keep that bid. Drury does permit a "return game try" at the two level without getting past two of the agreed suit, but this is not very important. Opener, once he knows of invitational values and a fit, usually just makes the decision himself rather than passing it back to

responder. Of course, after our start of 1M-2M, opener in our system *can* make a game try if he genuinely does not know whether to bid game or not.

Opener continues:

1H-2H, 2S: Artificial, puppet to set up long-suit game try. Responder now usually bids 2NT, after which opener names his long suit. As usual, we use the ascending numeric principle. Opener is assumed to have 5-4 distribution between his two suits, and 2-2 in the other suits (since otherwise he would have a shortness, and would probably prefer to make his game try by showing the shortness). Hence, opener is assumed to have 2=5=2=4, 2=5=4=2, or 4=5=2=2 shape, and his ascending responses to the 2NT ask are 3C to show long clubs, 3D to show long diamonds, and 3H to show long spades. (Opener will sometimes actually have a 5-5 or 6-4 type for his game invitation, but the rebids to show length are the same.) It can be seen here that ascending numeric usually leads to bidding the suits naturally, as here, when long suits are to be shown. (When shortness is to be shown, the shortnesses are usually shown in *descending* order of suit rank.)

Responder here can also ignore the puppet and bid three of something instead of 2NT, if most of his values are concentrated in one side suit. He does this when he thinks it will be more useful for opener to be told about responder's side suit than for responder to hear about opener's side suit. (This will also have the advantage of not revealing declarer's shape to the defense.)

Opener can also use the 2S puppet as a way to get responder to bid notrump first, after which opener "raises" to 3NT. Opener would do this with a hand like xx/AKQxxx/Axx/x; he wants responder to be declarer in 3NT.

1H-2H, 2NT, 3C, 3D: Short-suit tries by opener, in spades, clubs, and diamonds respectively. 2NT is a substitute for spades here. (Note that the ascending-numeric principle applies only when one partner is responding to another's asking bid. Here, responder has not asked opener to show a shortness; opener has taken it upon himself to show it. So, he does this by making "natural" shortness bids, as far as is possible [although the spade shortness must be shown through a substitute bid]. We do the same thing in certain direct-splinter auctions by responder; here, opener's bids are a variety of "splinter.")

- 1H-2H, 3H: Game try by opener without shortness or (usually) a second four-card suit to show. We reject the popular “1-2-3 stop” treatment. There is no need for it when the single raise shows extra values. Using it would be contrary to the purpose of the strong-but-nonforcing single raise, which is to allow the partnership to get out at the two level when opener is minimum.
- 1H-2H, 3S, 4C, 4D: Forcing. Natural slam tries showing a second five-card suit. AKJxx/KQJxxx/x/x is a hand that would bid 3S here. You want partner to use RKC next if he can, and get to slam if he has two aces. (Note that 4S is RKC for hearts here; hearts are agreed, and cannot be un-agreed.)
- 1H-2H, 3NT: 5332 or 6322 type with a maximum. NF. Note that this bid tends to show spread-out values, since if you wanted responder to be declarer, you would use the 2S puppet trick to (try to) get him to bid notrump first.
- 1H-2H, 4H: Any game-only hand. Common to bid this to conceal the shape of both hands before the opening lead. This is a big IMP-winning auction for us. The defenders know nothing about opener’s hand except that he wants to play in game. Others begin with a forcing notrump response, which often makes opener reveal his side suit in an auction like 1H-1NT, 2C-3H, 4H. In our auction, opener could be either long or short in *any* side suit. This is a huge advantage in the play, so you should bid 4H here as often as possible, even at the risk of missing an unlikely slam. Of course, other big club systems use this auction this way too, but we use it more often, because our 2H raise is stronger, and so is more likely to lead to a game contract.
- 1H-2H, 4S: RKC 1430. Kickback.
- 1H-2H, 4NT: Does not exist.
- 1H- 1NT: Forcing, as in standard five-card major methods. But this often conceals a standard single-raise hand. It also can conceal a hand with exactly four spades and invitational values. Unlike most people who nominally play “forcing notrump,” we play the 1NT response as 100% forcing, even by a passed hand.

The above are not the only unusual things about our 1NT response. Ours can be made with a *zero* count. Our practice is to (usually) not pass the opening bid with a fit. With something like xxxx/xxx/xx/xxxx, it is perfectly acceptable to respond 1NT to 1H, intending to go back to hearts. This is fairly safe, and it makes it

difficult for the opponents to judge their combined values in a situation where they may well have game. It does mean that the 1NT response is always alertable (not just announced). The explanation is “forcing, but does not promise any values, and may be a hand that would have raised to 2H in standard methods; also may be an invitational hand with a four-card spade suit.”

A corollary to this treatment is that, with exactly a doubleton in the major, you are allowed to pass the opening bid with 6-9 high card points. In standard, this is a mandatory response. With Qx/Jxx/Axxx/Jxxx, we pass without a problem when partner opens 1S. Computer simulations and reviews of world championship books show that in the Precision style, it is very rare to miss anything by doing this. (On the rare occasions when we are on for game, it is because opener is very shapely; and when he is, fourth hand is likely to have shape too, and to keep the auction alive by balancing. It is also true that when opener is shapely, this auction doesn't often come up in the first place, because the opponents will tend to bid something at their first opportunity.) Our combination of this “strong pass” without a fit and “weak response” with one makes it more difficult for opponents to judge their combined values, regardless of whether there is a response to the opening bid or not. However, it should be noted that responder does not always pass with a doubleton in the major and this strength. He might respond 1NT to 1H to keep the opponents out of spades, or he might respond to 1S when holding four or five hearts, in case opener is about to rebid hearts. (Rodwell and Meckstroth always, or almost always, respond with these hands, while I have noticed that Cohen and Berkowitz do not; it seems that a difference of opinion exists here.) One advantage to responding is that the opponents cannot balance into 1NT, a contract that is difficult to defend (declarer's advantage) and which, if the opponents are NV, goes down only fifty a trick. (The best time to pass is when they are vulnerable (they go down more) and so are we; we want to avoid getting above the one-level when we might be going down in hundreds).

It is also possible, although dangerous, to respond to partner's 1M opening *without* three-card support for partner and a worthless hand. You might respond 1NT to 1H with xxx/xx/xxxx/xxxx, intending to pass partner's rebid in most auctions. Obviously, this is a pure steal, but it seems worth a try (especially nonvulnerable), since the opponents are almost certainly cold for game.

Opener rebids:

1H-1NT, 2C: Could be only a three-card suit, as in common practice. Also could be 4=5=2=2 shape. (Note that we require at least 4-6 shape and maximum values to reverse into 2S here.) Responder continues:

1H-1NT, 2C-Pass: Any hand where it seems unlikely there is a better contract in sight. Up to nine HCP, perhaps ten with a stiff heart. Usually five-card support for clubs. With 3=1=5=4 shape, you will have to guess whether to pass or to bid 2D (I usually pass).

1H-1NT, 2C-2D: Six or more diamonds (occasionally five good ones), suggesting a contract. This holds true regardless of whether responder is a PH or not. It has become popular for this 2D bid to be artificial, asking opener to describe his hand further and giving extra meanings to responder's further bids, but this is a convention that is not needed in a Precision style. It works much better when opener may have considerable extra values. Rodwell has said that life is just fine with a natural 2D bid here, and I agree. You have to be able to do something when your hand is diamonds and out.

1H-1NT, 2C-2H: Nonforcing preference, as in standard. But we will often have three- or four-card support, a hand that would have bid 1H-2H in standard methods. Although 2C could be only a two- or three-card suit, it is usually a real suit, and responder assumes that it is for reevaluation purposes. Opener continues as in standard, bidding out his shape with a game try. If opener bids 2S now, a final contract in spades instead of hearts is possible. 2S could be only a three-card suit (3=5=1=4 or 3=5=0=5 game try). It is OK for opener to bid out his shape when he holds these hands plus 14 or 15 HCP, since responder will usually have decent values whenever he has only a doubleton in opener's major; with a doubleton and up to nine HCP, he could have passed the opening bid. And if responder was stealing with a worthless hand and a doubleton heart, he probably would have passed 2C.

Many players violently resist the concept of going through 1NT first when they have a "normal" single raise. Mike Lawrence goes out of his way to reject this treatment in his book on major-suit raises. So does Hardy, in his book on the same subject. We Revisionists believe that there is nothing wrong with doing something that looks strange, as long as it works. This does. One advantage is that it gives opponents a lot of trouble in balancing auctions, since they do not know whether we have a

real fit or not. Responder might have real support with little in high cards, or he might have a nine or ten count with a doubleton heart. (With a ten count and poor spots, not vulnerable, it is OK to bid this way with something like Qxx/xx/KJxx/Axxx, since this hand is very unlikely to make 3NT; partner would need a 15 count and some luck in the play. This is a case where it is not all that bad to miss 3NT with a combined 25 count. 3NT with 24-25 points usually makes when one partner has a decent fit for the other's long suit. Here, opener's long suit is hearts. If you have only small cards in his suit, the hand tends to play relatively poorly. You might want to be more aggressive when you have something like Qx in hearts.) If the opponents balance and find responder with the second hand type, they could be in big trouble.

Our approach also works well for straightforward constructive bidding. I have reviewed old world championship books, looking for hands where a five-card major was opened with 11-15 HCP and the bidding started 1H-2H or 1S-2S. I found that in almost every case, the auction would have gone just as efficiently, or more so, if responder had begun by bidding 1NT (in our style). Regardless of the fact that responder is supposed to be able to raise to two with a bare six count in normal systems, it is still true that the raise sounds encouraging. I found numerous hands where opener made a game try that failed (either because his partner rejected and they went down in three, or because his partner accepted and they went down in four) where we would have stopped in two. I also found numerous hands where opener blasted into 4H and went down opposite an unsuitable dummy.

In standard, there is some value in opener's learning immediately whether he is facing real support, as opposed to a doubleton, since he can have a very good hand. This is the rationale behind always raising to two with three-card support. In a Precision style, though, if the bidding is going to end at two of the major anyway, opener does not need to know this. He will find out how many trumps partner has when the dummy comes down. (If opener has extra values, he can show them at his third turn, and game will not be missed.)

The only way the delayed raise can really get into trouble is if the opponents overcall at a sufficiently high level to prevent responder from finishing his two-step by returning to two of opener's suit. The most troublesome of these auctions is 1H-(P), 1NT-(2S). Even here, we do well

enough. Responder can bid 3H if allowed to do so at his next turn, if he feels like it. Opener will know that responder is not really inviting strongly, since he would have raised to two right away with a decent hand. Also, since opener is on a top of 15 points anyway, he can take a free bid over the 2S overcall without having to have the same values that a standard player would need. Opener can bid on here with hands that others would have to pass, and responder can jump to game if the hands fit well. In fact, since this is a good/bad situation, opener does not even need extra high cards to take a second bid; he just needs adequate shape. We also play that double of a 2S bid here by opener is takeout, so opener will never be shut out when he has a good hand and spade shortness.

1H-1NT, 2C-2S: Once upon a time, this 2S bid was thought to show some kind of club raise, a hand too strong for a mere 3C bid, but which for some reason couldn't respond 2C to 1H in the first place. This is probably the way most people still use it. After all, the bid isn't needed to show spades. If you had real spades, you would have responded 1S, right?

Wrong. Effective immediately, this bid shows spades, and a very specific hand type. As mentioned already in previous sections of this chapter, the hand type is one with exactly four spades, less than three-card support for hearts, and invitational values (10-12 HCP). These hands have always been a problem – until now, that is. Suppose you hold something like KJ9x/xx/AJxx/Qxx. If the auction starts 1H-1S, 2S, you pretty much have to bid 2NT here. This is true regardless of whether or not you and your partner play 2NT as forcing in this situation. If it is forcing, you are getting to the three level when partner holds Qxx/AJxxx/x/AJxx. 3C, 3H, and 3S are all unappetizing contracts on these two hands (and it is not even clear which of these contracts you can stop in). 3NT has very poor play. If you play the 2NT bid as nonforcing, you can stop in 2NT. This does have the advantage of being a contract that might possibly make, but no one would call it desirable. What you would really like to do on these two hands is stop in a contract of *two spades*. Formerly, it wasn't possible to do this. Now, you can. In this auction, 2S is not forcing. Opener can pass if he likes, which is exactly what he will do with the above example, and many other minimum hands that contain three spades. Mission accomplished, plus score achieved. I suggest that you pay close attention here, and give serious consideration to adopting this treatment even if you don't play Revision or any other big club method. It works in standard too. You will find that this auction comes up *much* more frequently than

the club-raise treatment, and that it vastly improves your bidding accuracy on the hands where it does come up. It really isn't close. This is one of the most important advances in bidding theory to be presented in Revision, one that is such a great improvement on what existed previously that I am amazed no one thought of it before now. (It took me almost thirty years as a bridge player, and fifteen years of working on my own system, to think of it myself, so I don't think I can be accused of bragging about how clever I am. If I were really all that clever, I would have thought of this a long time ago, especially since I have been aware of the problems in the standard approach for many years.) Some of the ideas presented in this book will be no great loss if you don't use them, because they are merely my choice from among two or more reasonable alternatives. That is not the case here. There *is* no reasonable alternative. Get out your convention card right now and find some blank space at the bottom. (If there is no blank space, fill out a new card.) Write this down: "1H-1NT, 2x-2S = 4S, NAT INV, NF". You'll thank me for it later.

Of course, opener will have to continue the bidding if he does not have three spades, or if he has extra values, or if his hand seems poorly suited to spades even though he does have three of them. Continuations are as follows:

1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 2NT: This bid is nonforcing, and will in fact usually end the auction. Opener says that facing responder's invitational values, there is no game, and that 2NT will be a better partscore than 2S. Opener will do this routinely with minimum hands that have a singleton or doubleton spade. He could hold x/AKxxx/Kxx/Qxxx, or Jx/KQxxx/Kx/Axxx, or almost any minimum with 2=5=3=3 shape. He can also have three-card support for spades in some instances, and prefer to play 2NT anyway. With xxx/KQJ10x/Kx/Kxx, it is obvious that the course of the play in any contract will be to set up opener's hearts and cash them. This will be much easier to do if it is not necessary to draw trumps first. Imagine responder holding K9xx/xx/Qxx/AQxx. This is not the time to name spades as trumps.

Responder is not often going to have a hand that wants to run out of 2NT into a suit contract. He will have, at most, a five-card minor on the side (with 4-6 between spades and a minor, it would be normal to respond 1S, anticipating the auction 1H-1S, 2S-3m). If

he does have five clubs, as for example in a hand like KQxx/x/Axx/J10xxx, he can run out to 3C now, knowing that opener has at least three clubs. Or he could bid 3D with a similar hand and a five-card diamond suit (although he risks finding a 5-2 fit if he does that). But that is the only further bidding that is possible in this auction.

1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 3C: Nonforcing, showing at least 5-5. Opener is not interested in spades or notrump, and wants to play in one of his suits at the three level if responder has nothing special. Responder will usually pass or give preference to 3H, but can bid more if he has the right cards. For example, if responder holds A10xx/Qx/xxxx/KQx here, he will realize he has the magic hand. Opener could hold x/AKJxx/xx/Axxxx, in which case 4H is best and 5C is also good, or opener could hold x/AJ10xxx/x/AJxxx, which also should play in 4H. Or opener could hold x/KJxxx/K/AJxxxx, which belongs in 5C. The important point is to make a strong bid when you hold this responding hand; I recommend 4D over 3C, which should demand a choice between hearts and clubs.

1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 3D: This is game-forcing, and shows a hand that does not have a spade fit, is not able to rebid 3H, and for some reason does not want to bid 3NT. The hand might be of 1=5=2=5 or 2=5=1=5 shape with extra values, but unwilling to commit to notrump because of diamond weakness. In that case, opener is waiting to hear whether responder is willing to bid 3NT next; if responder doesn't, the auction will continue until a playable trump suit is found. Opener might also hold 0=5=4=4 shape, and want to find a fit in a minor (he knows there must be one, since responder has exactly four spades and no more than two hearts, hence at worst 4-3 in the minors); in this case he will pull 3NT to 4C at his next turn.

1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 3H: Forcing, and showing a sixth heart (or perhaps a very strong five-card heart suit, and distaste for notrump). The idea is that opener is looking for a 6-2 fit in hearts. If responder does not want to raise to 4H, he can either bid 3NT, or bid 3S to indicate doubt about notrump (probably meaning not a lot of help in diamonds), or can bid 4C if he has club support. But bear in mind that opener might have 1=6=3=3 shape and bid this way.

- 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 3S: This is game-forcing, and shows a hand with *three*-card spade support, typically 3=5=1=4. It does not show four-card support. If opener has four spades, he either passes 2S (he can do this with a dead minimum and 4=5=2=2 shape; you would pass here with Axxx/Kxxxx/Ax/Jx), or he raises to 4S, or he splinters out with 4D (if he has a very good hand). The idea is that 2S was an invitational bid already, and we do not like to counter-invite over an invitation. We reject or accept. So 3S here is available to show a hand with 3=5=1=4 or similar. The idea is that you emphasize the diamond weakness, so that partner will know whether or not to carry on to 3NT. If he doesn't, a 4-3 spade fit may well be the best spot, and opener has pointed responder in that direction by showing his three-card support.
- 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 3NT: Anything with which opener thinks 3NT is likely to be the best contract, given what he knows about responder's hand.
- 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 4C: I'm not sure this bid even exists here, but if it does, it shows something like a 6-6 hand that didn't want to rebid 3C earlier.
- 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 4D: Opener does have four-card spade support, with a maximum and a diamond void, hence 4=5=0=4 shape exactly. He might hold AKxx/Axxxx/-/Axxx. Facing QJxx/Kx/Qxxx/KJx, 6S is a worthwhile contract, so you might as well let partner know. But slam is actually relatively unlikely in this auction, so don't bother bidding 4D unless you really do have the perfect hand.
- 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 4H: DNE. I can't think of a hand that would want or need to bid 4H here.
- 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 4S: Opener's bid with almost any hand that contains four-card spade support, and which is not so utterly hopeless as to need to pass 2S.
- 1H-1NT, 2C-2NT: Natural, normal invite.
- 1H-1NT, 2C-3C: 8-11 HCP. Five or more clubs. Natural raise, but weaker than bidding 3D or 3S here. 5C could be on if opener is shapely.

1H-1NT, 2C-3D: Strong club raise, not quite enough to respond 2C originally, but with good clubs and something in diamonds. A typical hand would be Jx/xx/AJx/KJxxxx; you don't want to respond 3C to 1H with this broken suit, but when partner rebids 2C, your hand improves enough so that 3NT looks like a make if partner has a spade stopper. Q10x/AJxxx/10x/AQx is enough for 3NT to be almost cold, and opener could have more.

Please note here that the availability of this bid (and 3S here as well) illustrates why the 2S bid over 2C is not needed to show a club raise. You have 3C, 3D, and 3S for that purpose. 2S is needed to show specialized hands with spades, and nothing is lost when you do hold club support.

1H-1NT, 2C-3H: This is the Roth invitational bid, showing a hand improved by the club rebid, real heart support, and something like 8 HCP (but not four-card support, since responder raises 1H to 3H directly with that). Perhaps something like xx/Qxx/xx/AQ109xx would bid this way. Obviously, it won't come up very often. Natural continuations.

1H-1NT, 2C-3S: Similar to 3D above; club support, hand seems too good to raise to 3C, and showing spade values.

1H-1NT, 2C-3NT: To play. Responder has game values, but chose not to respond in a minor because they are weak. AKQ/xx/Q10xx/Qxxx might do this. A rare bid, in any event.

1H-1NT, 2C-4C: Forcing. Hard to imagine how you could do this and not have an initial 2C response, or a hand that would splinter now. Perhaps it does not exist. If it does, responder's shortness is in hearts; perhaps xx/x/KQJ/Axxxxxx. DNEBAPH, for sure.

1H-1NT, 2C-4D: Giant club support, void-showing splinter (VSS). Kxx/xx/-/AJxxxxxx. Another one that won't come up any time soon.

1H-1NT, 2C-4H: Does not exist, until we can think of a suitable hand. I can't. Anything that might want to bid 4H now wouldn't have responded 1NT in the first place. We favor direct raises whenever possible.

1H-1NT, 2C-4S: Also a giant VSS for clubs. 4NT over this would be Exclusion RKC for clubs.

1H-1NT, 2C-4NT: Does not exist, nor do any higher bids in this auction.

1H-1NT, 2D: Natural, could be three-card suit. Responder continues:

1H-1NT, 2D-2H: Nonforcing preference, as in standard. But we will often have three- or four-card support, a hand that would have bid 1H-2H in standard methods, or it could be a 9-10 HCP hand with a doubleton heart.

1H-1NT, 2D-2S: As in the auction 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, this shows exactly four spades, invitational values, no more than a doubleton heart, and minor suits that are probably 5-3 or 4-3 either way, or 4-4. Not forcing.

1H-1NT, 2D-2S, 2NT: Nonforcing, and will usually end the auction. It is possible that responder might carry on to 3D here with some hands, such as 4=2=5=2 distribution.

1H-1NT, 2D-2S, 3C: This is game-forcing, and shows a hand that does not have a spade fit, is not able to rebid 3H, and for some reason does not want to bid 3NT. It is analogous to opener's third bid in the auction 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 3D, and the continuations are analogous also. Here it is possible that opener holds 0=5=5=3 shape and is planning to pull 3NT (he can't have 0=5=4=4, which always rebids 2C).

1H-1NT, 2D-2S, 3D: Nonforcing, showing at least 5-5. Continuations are similar to those after 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 3C.

1H-1NT, 2D-2S, 3H: Forcing, and showing a sixth heart.

1H-1NT, 2D-2S, 3S: This is game-forcing, and shows a hand with *three*-card spade support, typically 3=5=4=1. Analogous to the 3S bid in the auction 1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 3S.

1H-1NT, 2D-2S, 3NT: To play.

1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 4C: Splinter for spades, 4=5=4=0 shape exactly.

1H-1NT, 2D-2S, 4D: If this exists, it shows something like a 6-6 hand that didn't want to rebid 3D earlier.

1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 4H: DNE.

1H-1NT, 2C-2S, 4S: Natural, to play.

1H-1NT, 2D-2NT: Natural, normal invite. Often a stiff heart.

1H-1NT, 2D-3C: Natural, to play.

1H-1NT, 2D-3D: Natural raise, 8-11 HCP.

1H-1NT, 2D-3H: Analogous to the same bid over a 2C rebid by opener, i.e., a hand that was just short of a Roth 2H raise, but which has now improved because of the 2D bid. Typically three-card support and eight or nine working HCP, with a double fit.

1H-1NT, 2D-3S: Diamond raise, too strong for a 3D bid here. There is not room to distinguish between hands with values in the other minor and ones with spade values, as there was in the auctions 1H-1NT, 2C-3D and 1H-1NT, 2C-3S, so here, the 3S bid has to cover both types. It is not a bid that will come up very often anyway.

1H-1NT, 2D-3NT: To play. Rare.

1H-1NT, 2D-4C: Splinter for diamonds. Rare.

1H-1NT, 2D-4D: Probably does not exist. Natural and forcing if it does.

1H-1NT, 2D-4H: Does not exist.

1H-1NT, 2D-4S: Void-showing splinter for diamonds. Very rare.

1H-1NT, 2D-4NT: Does not exist, nor do higher bids.

1H-1NT, 2H: Natural, minimum opener, 6+ hearts, as in standard. The auction continues:

1H-1NT, 2H-2S: As in other auctions, this shows exactly four spades, invitational values, and is nonforcing. There is an implication here that responder almost certainly has a singleton or void in hearts. If he had a doubleton, it would be normal to stay in the known 6-2 heart fit, probably by raising to

3H. Bidding 2S and possibly playing a 4-3 fit instead of a 6-2 would be a bad idea. Opener can use this information about heart shortness in responder's hand to help him reevaluate.

If opener does not pass here, the bidding continues:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1H-1NT, 2H-2S, | 2NT: To play, typically something like 1=6=3=3 shape. Also possible are 1=6=(4=2) and 2=6=(3=2). It is even allowable for opener to bid 2NT (or 3N) here with a singleton in a minor, if he judges it best. Opener does not need to worry very much about the quality of his stoppers in the minors. Responder is known to have exactly four spades, and probably one heart, so he has eight cards in the minors, which will be distributed 4-4 or 5-3 either way (responder won't have six in a minor, for reasons discussed earlier). Responder has plenty of minor-suit cards, so opener can assume both minors are stopped. |
| 1H-1NT, 2H-2S, | 3C, 3D: Natural, forcing. Opener bids out his shape. Over the 3m bid, responder will most often simply bid 3NT, but if he doesn't, the bidding continues naturally until a playable trump suit is found. |
| 1H-1NT, 2H-2S, | 3H: Nonforcing, and responder is expected to pass. Opener is not interested in anything but hearts. It is possible that responder could raise to game with a singleton heart honor in support, and suitable maximum values elsewhere. |
| 1H-1NT, 2H-2S, | 3S: DNE. Opener does not need to bid spades here unless he has four of them, and if he does, he would normally bid at the four level. (I don't think there is any hand with four spades and six hearts that would want to pass 2S here; an invitational raise to 3S seems inefficient, and is in any case contrary to the system principle of not counterinviting when facing an invitation.) |
| 1H-1NT, 2H-2S, | 3NT: To play. |
| 1H-1NT, 2H-2S, | 4m: Splinter. For 4D here, opener might have AQxx/Axxxxx/-/Kxx. |
| 1H-1NT, 2H-2S, | 4H: To play. Self-sufficient hearts, just short of a 3H rebid last time. |

1H-1NT, 2H-2S, 4S: To play. Almost any hand with four-card spade support, except those few where a splinter seems desirable.

1H-1NT, 2H-2NT: Invitational, as in standard, but strongly implying a singleton heart. Bergen says this sort of 2NT bid should be forcing, but I can't agree. With something like Kxx/x/KJ10xx/A10xx, you need to invite but can't drive to game, and have no guarantee of finding a home in a suit at the three-level. If opener rebids a new suit over 2NT, that is not forcing, typically showing a weak 6-4 (good 6-4 hands tend to rebid 2m over 1NT). 3H over 2NT is also not forcing.

1H-1NT, 2H-3C or 3D: Natural, to play.

1H-1NT, 2H-3H: A normal invite. There is no other bid available to invite in hearts. Crude, but we should get it right most of the time. Opener should be aware that responder usually has only a doubleton heart here; with three and invitational values, he responds 2H, and with four, he responds 2NT or 3H. However, responder can have three-card support and a hand that was not quite strong enough to raise 1H to 2H, but which is now making a last-minute decision to invite game because of the known nine-card fit. Holding Axx/Qxx/Kxxx/xxx, you would raise to 3H now in case opener holds Kxx/AKxxxx/Ax/xx or the like. (You can make a similar decision sometimes when the bidding starts 1H-1S, 2H.)

Note that in this particular auction, opener can have 4-6 in the majors with insufficient strength to reverse into 2S, and responder can raise to 3H with 4-2 in the majors. It is possible, therefore, for a 4-4 spade fit to exist at this point. For this reason, a 3S bid now by opener indicates a four-card spade suit and a desire to play in spades if responder has four of them also (opener might have relatively weak hearts, for example).

1H-1NT, 2H-3S: Does not exist, at least not until we think of some useful meaning for it.

1H-1NT, 2H-3NT: Again, this is the AKQ/xx/QTxx/Qxxx hand type. Opener chooses between 4H and 3NT.

1H-1NT, 2H-4H: Shot at game.

1H-1NT, 2S: Normal Precision reverse, sort of. I do not believe that any hand with 4-5 in the majors can be strong enough to do this (with 4=5=4=0 or 4=5=0=4, always rebid 2m), so we play that it shows at least 4-6 in the majors. Continuations:

1H-1NT, 2S- Pass: Possible with three spades and a weak hand.

1H-1NT, 2S- 2NT: Game-forcing, asking opener for a further description of his distribution. Normally we play 2NT bids in situations like this as natural and invitational, but this is unnecessary here as responder should already know whether or not he is going to game (opener has defined his strength as being at the top of his range for a Precision-style 1H opening, so there is no need to ask opener whether he has a good hand or not). Nor is there any great loss in rendering it impossible to play 2NT after this start, since 2NT is a very unlikely contract when opener shows 6-4 or better. After 2NT, opener can bid out his shape with 6430 or 6421 types by bidding his minor-suit fragment, or he can rebid 3H with a seventh heart (or six self-sufficient ones). He can also rebid 3S to show five spades and suggest a 5-3 game, or bid 3NT himself with a runnable heart suit. Usually responder will be trying to decide whether 4H or 3NT is the best game. He can also have a slam try in hearts, based on a doubleton honor and 10-11 HCP; he shows this hand type by bidding 3H over opener's third bid of 3m, or by control-bidding a minor (or a 3S control-bid over 3H) if opener's third bid is 3H or higher.

1H-1NT, 2S- 3m: To play. Responder can have xxx/x/xx/KQ109xxx and need to bid this way.

1H-1NT, 2S- 3H: Signoff in hearts.

1H-1NT, 2S- 3S: Natural and forcing, showing a spade fit. Presumably responder has a hand with which he would have bid 2S if opener had rebid 2C, 2D, or 2H instead of reversing into spades himself. Here, the forcing raise to 3S is a useful bid, since opener has extra values and a slam may be possible. This is also a Fred situation (3NT cannot be natural, since opener must be very unbalanced to bid 2S), although a specialized one: Opener does not need to distinguish serious from nonserious slam tries, since his strength is narrowly limited, so a 3NT bid here by opener indicates inability to control-bid 4C, and asks responder to bid 4C if he can.

1H-1NT, 2S- 3NT: To play.

1H-1NT, 2S- 4m: Undefined.

1H-1NT, 2S- 4M: To play.

1H-1NT, 2NT: Semi-natural. Opener has a hand worth a 3H bid, but with a solid heart suit. Perhaps Ax/AKQJxx/xxx/xx. He is informing responder that it is more than usually likely that the hand will play better in 3NT than in 4H, even if an eight- or nine-card major fit is present. The bid is presumably forcing, since 3H would usually be a better contract than 2NT if responder does not have enough to go to game. Responder will sign off at 3H, or bid stoppers at the three level to determine whether all suits are stopped, or simply jump to 4H.

1H-1NT, 3C or 3D: Nonforcing, 6-5 and a maximum. Our requirement that opener must have 6-5 to jump reduces the probability that responder will have a good hand and not have a low-level bid available to get more information. Responder can sign off by passing, returning to 3H, bidding 4H, or bidding 3NT. If he bids three of a higher-ranking suit (3D or 3S over 3C; 3S only over 3D), that is a 3NT probe at first, but can be converted to a heart slam try if responder returns to hearts. A bid of four of the other minor over opener's 3m is a slam try in hearts too. A raise to 4m is, of course, forcing.

1H-1NT, 3H: Invitational with hearts. Typically a seven-card suit, but may be a very good, but not solid, six-card suit, such as AQJ10xx with 15 HCP. Responder must either pass now, or decide between 3NT and 4H on his own (unless he can show spade values by bidding 3S now). Bids of new suits are slam tries in hearts, showing a source of tricks (except 3S, which cannot be a long suit, and may be a stopper, probing for 3NT). Responder might bid 4C over 3H with Kxx/Kx/xx/KQxxx, getting to slam opposite Ax/AQJxxxx/x/Axx. Obviously, this is a very specific hand type for opener, so the slam try is a very mild one. Opener should move only if he clearly has the magic hand.

1H-1NT, 3S: At least 5-6 in the majors, not forcing. This will be a very rare bid, showing heavy concentration in the majors, yet not enough in high cards to open 1C. Something like KQJ10x/AQJxxx/x/x would qualify. Responder can now pass (rare, obviously), place the contract, or try for

slam by bidding 4m, with the minor suit corresponding to the major (4C means hearts, 4D means spades).

3S shows a good hand. If you have 5-6 in the majors but don't want to drive to the three level, you can open 1H and rebid 2H, or you can open 1S and rebid 2H, or you can open 1H and rebid 2S, nonforcing, intending to continue with 3S; this is a matter of judgment.

1H-1NT, 3NT: A substitute bid, showing a 7-5 type as with the 4C and 4D bids below, but now the five-card suit is spades. KQ10xx/AKJxxxx/-/x is a possible example. It seems to be generally agreed that in Precision, opener cannot rebid 3NT naturally, as he would have opened 1C holding a hand of 6322 or 7222 type good enough to force to game opposite a possible six count (not to mention a possible zero count, which it could be in Revision). After the 3NT bid, responder can bid the corresponding minor (4C = hearts, 4D = spades) to suggest slam in a major. Over these slam-try bids, opener should show his void, using the methods described below after a 4m rebid. Responder can also bid 4NT directly over 3NT, asking for aces as described below.

1H-1NT, 4C, 4D: 7-5 types, with the second bid showing the second suit. (Of course, if you have this type and don't consider the hand strength suitable for the four level, you can rebid at the three level instead.) After any of these bids, the cheapest bid in a suit other than one of opener's suits asks for opener's void, *if* he has only one ace. If opener has such a hand, he shows his void, via ascending numeric. Thus, opener with -/AQJxxxx/x/KQJxx bids 1H-1NT, 4C-4D, 4H, and responder then places the contract. If opener has two aces, he drives to slam, bidding 5NT to show the upper void, six of his lower-ranking suit to show the lower void. With -/AQJxxxx/x/AQJxx, the bidding could go 1H-1NT, 4C-4D, 5NT. If opener has two voids, hence 7-6, a bid of 5S shows that, and now a 5NT bid by responder asks for aces (!); opener bids 6C, 6D, or 6H to show 0, 1, or 2. If opener has three aces (A/A1098xxx/-/AJ10xx), he should pretend he has only two and show his void; he will have three aces only when his suits have less quality than responder is hoping for, so opener can hope that it will all cancel out and the correct level will be reached.

A 4NT bid by responder directly over the 3NT or 4m rebid by opener says that responder has both of the short-suit aces, and so doesn't care about voids. Over this, opener shows his aces (0, 1, 2).

- 1H-1NT, 4H: Very long hearts (usually eight; possibly seven good ones with shape outside), hand too strong to open 4H, willing to take a shot at game now. One might ask how it can be safe for opener to bid this, given that responder could have a zero count. The answer is that responder will usually have some high cards here, unless he has a very weak hand with heart support. Since the 4H bid shows long hearts (the hand is similar to a 4H opening, except for having too many high cards), if partner has a weak hand with support, the opponents are missing out on something. In the real world, partner's 1NT response here will turn out to have some high cards, and probably no more than a doubleton in hearts. The opponents would have bid something otherwise.
- 1H- 2S: Weak jump shift, 0-9 and a six-card or longer suit. This 2S WJS is a very important part of the structure and lends clarity to many other auctions where responder bids 2S over opener's rebid. Opener will usually pass if he has no fit. He can bid 3m or 3H, NF, with extreme shape, and can invite game in spades via a simple raise. 2NT over 2S shows a solid heart suit and asks responder to raise to 3NT with something in the minors, otherwise go back to 3H. He is to ignore values in spades except for the ace; the spades are needed only as stoppers. A hand like x/AKQJxxx/Kx/Qxx would do this.

TWO-OVER-ONE GAME FORCING

A great deal of nonsense has been written, and is believed, about this treatment. All over North America (and in other parts of the world too), players happily boast that they use the "two-over-one system." Most seem to think that by playing two-over-one as a game force, they are adopting a "system" that puts them on a par with the top players. Some of them even know whether their 2/1 is an absolute game force, or whether the game force can be canceled by responder's rebid of three of his suit. A few others even know whether the game force is still on when the auction starts 1D-2C. And those who know that much think that because they do, they have a "system." What a load of crap. Two-over-one game force is not a system. It is a treatment that forms only a relatively small part of a true bidding system, and it is not even a very important part of any system. You can do just about as well by playing other methods.

There are actually three different ways of playing a response of two of a lower-ranking suit to a major-suit opening (1D-2C is different), although the vast majority of players know of the existence of only two of them. For a long time I considered playing that 2/1 is nonforcing. There are actually people who play this way; I know some of

them, and I have read material on the Internet written by others. (There is also the Breakthrough system, invented by Robert Sundby and played by Dick Katz and Larry Cohen [not the same Larry Cohen who wrote the Total Tricks books]; Breakthrough was using nonforcing two-over-one in the 1970s.) Those who use it seem to think they do pretty well with it. The general idea is that in response to, say, a 1S opening, you respond 2C with xx/xxx/xx/KQ109xx, and partner can pass. This gives you the chance of getting out lower than a WJR of 3C would allow, and of telling partner to put on the brakes (if, for example, he was thinking of rebidding 3S over a 1NT response). It works even better in a big club context, because responder need not have any high cards at all to bid his suit. Game-forcing hands respond 1NT, forcing, and then bid their suit (most of the time) on the second round of the auction. I actually developed a complete set of nonforcing 2/1 responses, along with auctions to show the strong hands, as a possible method for Revision.

One of the principles of Revision is that we freely adopt methods that are different from standard, but only when we think there is a clear gain. We are not different just for the sake of being different. My research indicates that it is impossible to prove whether 2/1 NF or 2/1 GF is a better method. It is easy enough to construct deals where either method works better than the other. But surprisingly, when you attempt to compare the two methods by using real hands, they turn out to produce very similar results. I reviewed 734 deals from six years' worth of World Championship final matches (1999-2004). There were 33 deals (one out of every 22, approximately) in which either a game-forcing or a non-forcing 2/1 response could have been made, a much smaller number than I expected. 28 of these were of the GF variety, only five of the NF variety. On 30 of them, either method would have led to the same final contract, or it was unclear which one might do better. Of the remaining three, I saw two where it appeared that a nonforcing response would be clearly better, and one where the game-forcing response seemed clearly better.

If nothing else, this proves that the NF philosophy is at the very least playable. It does not prove, or even strongly suggest, that it is actually better. There is not enough evidence, as far as I can tell, to justify adopting something so far away from standard. In fact, I suspect that a much larger trial might allow the GF treatment to show some gains (the GF hands are, by definition, in the game zone and possibly in the slam zone, something that is rarely true of the NF ones, so it might turn out that in the very long run, you gain by describing the strong hands immediately). But there is no need to go to the trouble of finding out. If 2/1 NF actually *is* better, it is not very much better; our loss by not playing it, if there is any such loss, appears to be so small that it can barely be measured. 2/1 GF is good enough for us, so we will play it. Moreover, we are going to

play it better than almost anyone else does, so there is a reasonable expectation that we will be outbidding most of our opponents on the deals where it comes up.

A word or two should be said here about the third possible approach, that being the old-fashioned one where a two-over-one response shows at least ten points (invitational or better), but does not force to game. (We will call this 2/1 OF, for “old-fashioned.”) I do not think there is any need to analyze hands to attempt to determine the merits of this approach. If there is no discernible difference in effectiveness between 2/1 GF and the radically different 2/1 NF approach, there is hardly likely to be one between 2/1 GF and 2/1 OF, where the same bid is often made. GF is easier to use because there is no need to worry about when the auction is game-forcing and when it is not.

The main problem with 2/1 GF, as played by most, is that there are not enough ways for opener (and responder too, but especially opener) to say whether or not he has extra values. This makes slam bidding difficult. Many players just show their shape, not worrying about high-card strength. But when both hands have, say, an ace or a king above minimum, which one is supposed to make a move toward slam? It is not a good idea to get to some contract like 4NT when opener is on a minimum 11 and responder has 16. But if opener has 15, and there is a fit, slam could be there. The solution is, first of all, to play a Precision style – that way you always know opener has no more than 15, and you do not need to suffer the headaches standard players do, when they open 1M with 16 or 17 or 18 points and then have to wonder how to show their considerable extra values when partner forces to game. And second of all, play that opener always has a bid available that shows a possible minimum hand, with other bids showing extras. This way, opener can limit his hand to a narrow range fairly early on, and responder should have a good idea of whether to look for slam. For us, that minimum bid is going to be a rebid of two of the major. Bids higher than 2M will show extra values. This does mean that 2M does not show a sixth card in the suit, but as will be seen in the specific auctions below, this is much less important than defining the range.

1H- 2C: Game-forcing. Usually a five-card club suit. Denies any 4333 shape, and also denies 4432 types with three, or four, hearts; with those, always use the 2NT forcing raise. The only hand type that is at all likely to have a four-card suit is 3=2=4=4.

1H-2C, 2D: A second four-card (or longer) suit, any strength. Does not deny four spades (4=5=4=0 shape is possible). Can also have a sixth heart, for reasons that will be made clear.

1H-2C, 2D- 2H: This bid usually shows a doubleton heart, and denies four spades. The reason for this is that 3H is available here to confirm three-card or longer support, with five or more clubs and interest in slam (with no such interest, just raise 1H to 4H). Showing the doubleton at a low level immediately lets opener know whether or not he has a 6-2 fit; if he does not, he can start probing for notrump, or bid notrump himself, or show delayed support for clubs. I expect this auction to work out very well for us. (Responder will not bid 2H here with four spades; he bids 2S instead to look for a 4-4 fit, so opener can bid 2S over 2H to show a stopper.) The auction will continue according to general principles.

It should be noted that it is possible to bid 2H here with three-card support. When responder does this, he has a hand with which he considers it possible that 3NT is the correct contract, and not much in the way of slam interest. So, if responder bids 2H here and then follows with 3H, he tends to show weak three-card support.

An important point to bear in mind here (and in the similar auctions 1S-2C, 2D-2S; 1S-2C, 2H-2S; and 1S-2D, 2H-2S) is that if, after receiving preference at the two level, opener next bids three of his suit, he is confirming the major suit as trump, saying that he is interested in slam, and creating a Fred/Serious 3NT situation. If you have six of the major you opened but are *not* interested in slam, you bid four of the major, or perhaps 2NT with something like AQ/Kxxxxx/K10xx/x.

1H-2C, 2D- 2S: Natural, four-card suit. At least five clubs as well, else respond 1S the first time. (There can be an exception with some 4=2=3=4 types with very weak spades and good clubs.) The auction continues naturally and according to general principles. Opener will of course raise spades with four. Since the only shape opener can have that contains four spades is exactly 4=5=4=0, he raises only to 3S here (never four) to keep the bidding low, in case responder wants to look for slam. This is a Fred auction (see following text for explanation of Fred and Serious 3NT).

1H-2C, 2D- 2NT: Natural, forcing, stopper in spades. May have a doubleton heart; a good heart contract will not be missed, because opener can rebid 3H if he thinks 4H might be a better contract than 3NT. The range for 2NT is minimum game forcing (12+ to 16 HCP), or 20 plus. (17-19 HCP bids 3NT now.) The latter will take another bid over 3NT, if that is what opener bids next.

- 1H-2C, 2D- 3C: Forcing, a sixth club at least (in principle anyway).
- 1H-2C, 2D- 3D: Natural raise, forcing. The hand is sufficiently oriented towards diamonds that opener does not need to fear getting past 3NT, if he wants to pursue slam in diamonds.
- 1H-2C, 2D- 3H: Three-card support (occasionally four) for hearts. Responder wanted to show his clubs first, in case of a double fit that makes slam possible. Continuations are general principles. However, bear in mind that this is a Fred auction.
- 1H-2C, 2D- 3S: Splinter for diamonds (with 6-5 clubs/spades, bid 2S and then more spades).
- 1H-2C, 2D- 3NT: Natural, 17-19 HCP, stoppers in spades. With less or more than this range, bid 2NT first.
- 1H-2C, 2D- 4C: Solid suit, forces to 5C.
- 1H-2C, 2D- 4D: There is no obvious need for this bid, so let's say it shows 1=1=5=6 shape. Jump bids like this one should show specific hand types.
- 1H-2C, 2D- 4H: Picture bid, 2=4=2=5 shape, concentrated in hearts and clubs (no ace or king in the pointed suits). Nonforcing, but with mild interest in slam.
- 1H-2C, 2D- 4S: VSS in support of clubs.

There is no obvious need for any bids higher than 4S in this auction, and accordingly they are left undefined.

- 1H-2C, 2H: This is the bid for any hand that does not fit into the definition of some other rebid. You can rebid 2H with only five of them, although you may have more. The bid does not guarantee a minimum (Kx/Q109xxx/AQx/Ax rebids 2H). It does not guarantee balanced distribution, or unbalanced distribution either. It may contain a second suit (except diamonds, since you would "always" rebid 2D with four or more of them, rather than rebid 2H; if the disparity between your hearts and your diamonds is so great that a 2D rebid looks disgusting, go ahead and rebid 2H, but if you do, you are effectively treating the diamonds as

being only a three-card suit). It is a catchall, or a waiting bid. You can call it whatever you like, as long as you understand that it does not promise any of the things that some people believe it should promise, like a sixth heart or a minimum hand. There has to be some bid for hands that do not fit anywhere else, and this is ours.

The reason we play this way is that it allows us to have a number of other bids show extra values. A reverse to 2S, or a high reverse to 3C, shows extras. So does a raise to 3D (the extras may, however, be distributional rather than in HCP in this case). So does 2NT. Contrary to popular belief, it is important for opener to be able to show extras when he hears a two over one response, even if those extras are only in the 14-15 range. Slam bidding becomes too difficult otherwise. The “shape first” school holds that a 2H rebid should show at least six hearts, and other bids also show shape only. This is a playable method, but I am convinced it is inferior. Our way, we get to show extra values most of the time that we have them, and the nonspecific 2H rebid does not at all get in the way of appropriate bidding. There is plenty of time to sort out whether opener has a sixth heart, or to find a fit in another suit.

1H-2C, 2H- 2S: Natural, a four-card suit. There can still be a spade fit, since opener would not reverse into 2S without extras. Further bidding is natural, although a 3D bid now by opener would not be considered an effort to find a fit (opener has already denied holding four diamonds). There are a few things that need to be borne in mind. First, if opener has a sixth heart and a hand that would prefer a 4H contract on a 6-2 fit to 3NT, he should avoid bidding 3H and try to make a low-level third bid, such as 2NT, 3C, or 3D (3D is a catchall, denying the ability to bid 2NT), in case responder wants to show doubleton support at his third turn. Second, if opener bids 3C now, he shows either three- or four-card support for clubs, and a hand that was not strong enough to raise to 3C the first time; he can have a sixth heart for this. Third, all bids below 3NT are directed toward the best game, and are not advance slam tries unless the subsequent bidding shows them to be so. And fourth, a raise to 3S here by opener tends to show scattered values, while a 4S raise is a picture bid (KQxx/AQJxx/xx/xx). Otherwise, bidding proceeds according to general principles. Whatever you have learned through playing 2/1 GF in other systems can be put into effect here. For example, a jump to 4D now by responder would be a splinter in support of spades, perhaps with 4=2=1=6 shape, following the general principle that unusual jumps that are not needed for anything else

are splinters in support of the most logical suit, which usually is the one most recently named.

Some might object to the 2S bid's guaranteeing four, on the grounds that responder needs to be able to show his spade stopper with KQx/xx/xxx/AKQxx. I don't buy this. The hand is a rare one; usually responder would have enough in diamonds to bid 2NT, or would have a sixth club. Even with the actual example, there is no harm in rebidding 3C; opener is very unlikely to raise without at least three of them, and if he does raise, you know his hand is suit-oriented, because he did not try to get to 3NT. (I suppose it is possible that someday, you might hold KQx/AQ/xxx/K10xxx on this auction. If you do, try 2NT now; the system leaves you with no other bid. Sorry about that.)

- 1H-2C, 2H- 2NT: Natural, forcing. Responder has something in spades and diamonds, as well as his clubs. Opener rebids naturally. The 2NT bid does deny a fourth spade.
- 1H-2C, 2H- 3C: Natural, forcing, at least a sixth club (usually). Opener is allowed to raise now, but will normally bid something designed to get to 3NT or a 6-2 heart fit (if he does have a sixth heart).
- 1H-2C, 2H- 3D: Forcing, not necessarily natural, but implying something in diamonds. Since a 4-4 diamond fit is impossible, responder cannot be trying to get to diamonds unless he later bids 4D, showing 5-6 in the minors.
- 1H-2C, 2H- 3H: Forcing, shows three-card support. If you have a doubleton and want to get to a 6-2 heart fit (if one exists), you make some other forcing bid and hope to have a chance to bid 3H next, showing two. This will not always happen, but the worst that is likely to happen is that you will play 3NT when you have the 6-2 fit, and when that happens, 3NT is very likely to be your best contract anyway (if, say, you bid 2NT now and partner raises to three, his hand is well-suited to notrump; if he does have a sixth heart, he is saying that he does not care whether you have a doubleton for him or not).

The raise of 2H to 3H is at least a mild slam try (hands with three-card heart support and no realistic hope for slam bid 1H-4H in our system; if you make a 2/1 response when holding support for the major, it means you

have at least some hope for slam). The signoff spot is now 4H, and we cannot play 3NT. Further bidding is according to the principles explained by Fred Gitelman in his series of Internet articles titled *Improving 2/1 Game Force*: a bid of 3S now is a control-bid; 3NT (by either player) is the “serious 3NT” slam try for the major; a 4D bid is a control-bid. Consult the Gitelman articles for details. See also the discussion of “Serious 3NT Meckwell Style” in part X. This method will lose once in a great while when 3NT is the only makable game, but this will not happen very often, and meanwhile the Fred methods look like they make slam bidding a great deal easier on lots of hands.

- 1H-2C, 2H- 3S: The first of the “delayed splinter” auctions. Typically you would have 1=3=3=6 or 1=3=4=5 shape for this. If you are 6-5 clubs/spades, you must bid 2S and then more spades if you want to show the complete shape. Further bidding is Fred style, with a 3NT move now showing “serious” slam interest (we give up on the unlikely possibility that 3NT is the best spot, in order to better explore for slam in hearts).
- 1H-2C, 2H- 3NT: As usual, showing 17-19.
- 1H-2C, 2H- 4C: Solid suit.
- 1H-2C, 2H- 4D: Delayed splinter (3=3=1=6 is typical) in support of hearts.
- 1H-2C, 2H- 4H: Picture raise. Some hope of slam, if opener likes the five-card club suit, e.g. xx/AJxx/xx/AKJxx; else just raise 1H to 4H.
- 1H-2C, 2S- 2S: Natural reverse, showing four or more spades, and extra values (14-15 HCP, or a bit less with good shape and high-card location). But not 4=5=4=0; with that, bid 2D. Responder has ways of uncovering the 4-4 spade fit if there is one.
- 1H-2C, 2S- 2NT: Natural, forcing. Responder has something in diamonds, as well as his clubs. Opener rebids naturally.
- 1H-2C, 2S- 3C: Natural, forcing, at least a sixth club (usually).
- 1H-2C, 2S- 3D: Forcing, not necessarily natural, but implying something in diamonds. Since a 4-4 diamond fit is impossible (opener always rebids 2D with 4=5=4=0 shape), responder cannot be trying to get to diamonds unless he next bids 4D, showing 5-6 in the minors.

- 1H-2C, 2S- 3H: Forcing, shows three-card support. Fred auction. 3NT is serious now.
- 1H-2C, 2S- 3S: Nonspecific spade raise, showing four, and denying only the ability to make a 4S picture raise, either because Responder has outside controls, or his suits are not good enough. This is a Fred auction, so 3NT is serious now.
- 1H-2C, 2S- 3NT: As usual, showing 17-19.
- 1H-2C, 2S- 4C: Solid suit.
- 1H-2C, 2S- 4D: Delayed splinter in support of spades.
- 1H-2C, 2S- 4H: Picture raise of hearts.
- 1H-2C, 2S- 4S: Picture raise of spades.
- 1H-2C, 2NT: Balanced hand, 14-15 HCP. Denies four spades. Denies the desire to raise clubs (although opener can have three clubs, if his shape is 5332 type). Opener shows something in both spades and diamonds; if he has one of those suits totally unstopped, he just rebids 2H instead. Bidding continues similarly to the auctions discussed above, except that responder can raise to 4NT naturally now with sufficient high-card points. (Also 5NT to invite seven, but that one won't come up very often.) 3H by responder shows three- card support and slam interest, which initiates a Fred auction. Without slam interest, just bid 4H now.
- 1H-2C, 3C: Natural raise, and showing extra values (but these values may be distributional, rather than high cards). The hand could be a 5332 maximum with three-card support, or a 2=5=2=4 maximum, or a 5431 type with maximum high cards and three-card support, or a 5431 type with four-card support, but not enough in high cards to want to splinter, or a 5-5 with minimum high cards. The direct raise shows the middle of three ranges. With minimal supporting hands, just rebid 2H and support clubs later, if appropriate. With the highest range, splinter or raise to 4C.

Further bidding at the three level is directed toward 3NT; such bids are not advance control-bids for clubs, unless the player who makes them voluntarily goes past 3NT himself later. This is *not* a Fred auction; bids of

3NT by either player are natural. Fred auctions exist only when the fit is in a major.

1H-2C, 3D: Splinter raise of clubs. Good high-card values (14-15, or a good 13). With a second suit of diamonds, even with a 6-5 type that would have rebid 3D over a 1NT response, just bid 2D first. You can rebid diamonds or hearts later, and keeping the auction lower gets more information.

1H-2C, 3H: Natural, maximum, good heart suit. We will define that as one loser at the most (KQJ10xx qualifies, but nothing weaker). If you do not have the suit for the bid, just rebid 2H. After this bid, the hand must play in hearts, clubs, or notrump. Accordingly, a 4D bid by responder now is a control-bid for hearts. A 3S bid could be trying to get to 3NT, or it could also be an advance control-bid for hearts.

1H-2C, 3S: Splinter raise of clubs.

1H-2C, 3NT: Natural, solid hearts, a singleton club, something in the other two suits. Jxx/AKQJxx/Qxx/x would be typical.

1H-2C, 4C: 1=6=1=5, good high cards.

1H-2C, 4D: Void-showing splinter.

1H-2C, 4H: Very long hearts, suit not good enough for 3H, no club fit.

1H-2C, 4S: VSS. 4NT over this by opener would be last-chance RKC; see Part X.

1H- 2D: Game-forcing. Almost always five cards.

1H-2D, 2H: The nonspecific rebid, denying the ability to make any higher bid.

1H-2D, 2H- 2S: Natural, a four-card suit. Similar to the same auction with an initial 2C response. 3D shows 3+ diamonds, in a minimum hand. 2NT is natural with something in clubs. 3C is a kind of grope denying the ability to bid 2NT. 3S shows four spades in a nonspecific hand. None of these bids deny a sixth heart, so responder can show a doubleton heart next by bidding 3H if possible, if he thinks 4H on a 6-2 fit might be the best contract.

- 1H-2D, 2H- 2NT: Natural. Responder has something in spades and clubs, as well as his diamonds. Opener rebids naturally. The 2NT bid does deny a fourth spade.
- 1H-2D, 2H- 3C: Natural, forcing, usually five clubs. Responder would bid 2NT if possible, if he had only four clubs.
- 1H-2D, 2H- 3D: Natural, almost always a sixth diamond.
- 1H-2D, 2H- 3H: Forcing, shows three-card support. Fred auction.
- 1H-2D, 2H- 3S: Delayed splinter raise of hearts. Only promises three-card support.
- 1H-2D, 2H- 3NT: As usual, showing 17-19.
- 1H-2D, 2H- 4C: Delayed splinter.
- 1H-2D, 2H- 4D: Solid suit.
- 1H-2D, 2H- 4H: Picture raise.
- 1H-2D, 2S- 2S: Natural reverse, showing four or more spades, and extra values (14-15 HCP, or a bit less with good shape and high-card location).
- 1H-2D, 2S- 2NT: Natural, forcing. Similar to 1H-2C, 2S-2NT.
- 1H-2D, 2S- 3C: Natural, forcing, usually five clubs.
- 1H-2D, 2S- 3D: Natural, a sixth diamond.
- 1H-2D, 2S- 3H: Forcing, shows three-card support. Fred auction.
- 1H-2D, 2S- 3S: Nonspecific spade raise, showing four, and denying only the ability to make a 4S picture raise; either responder has outside controls, or his suits are not good enough. This is a Fred auction, so 3NT is serious now.
- 1H-2D, 2S- 3NT: As usual, showing 17-19.
- 1H-2D, 2S- 4C: Splinter raise of spades.

1H-2D, 2S- 4D: Solid suit.

1H-2D, 2S- 4H: Picture raise of hearts.

1H-2D, 2S- 4S: Picture raise of spades.

1H-2D, 2NT: Usually a balanced hand, 14-15 HCP. Like 1H-2C, 2NT. But here, you can have a hand with 3=5=1=4 shape and poor hearts which wants to show the side stoppers, so you can rebid 2NT instead of 2H with that. When you do, you should have a singleton honor in diamonds, in case partner decides to insist on that suit (he will play you for a balanced hand, and he expects support of at least xx; he won't expect a small singleton in his suit). 2=5=2=4 shape is also possible, if you have something like AQ or AJ in spades.

1H-2D, 3C: We play this as a genuine high reverse. It shows at least five clubs, and extra values. With only four clubs, rebid 2H and wait to show the clubs later (or raise if partner bids them). With five clubs and a minimum, do the same. Opener distinguishes between four and five clubs by not bidding the suit with four until he has to. With, say, 2=5=2=4 shape, opener rebids 2H first. If responder then bids 2S, opener bids 2NT if he can, waiting to see if responder bids 3C over that. The general rule is that bids of three of a minor by either partner tend to show five, if there was another bid that could have been made instead.

Further bidding is general principles.

1H-2D, 3D: Natural raise, and showing extra values. Similar to a raise of a 2C response to 3C.

1H-2D, 3H: Natural, maximum, good (KQJ10xx or better) heart suit. Otherwise similar to a 3H rebid over a 2C response.

1H-2D, 3S: Splinter raise of diamonds.

1H-2D, 3NT: Natural, solid hearts, a singleton diamond, something in the other two suits. Jxx/AKQJxx/x/Qxx would be typical.

1H-2D, 4C: Splinter for diamonds.

1H-2D, 4D: 1=6=5=1.

1H-2D, 4H: Very long hearts, suit not good enough for 3H, no diamond fit.

1H-2D, 4S: VSS for diamonds.

WEAK JUMP SHIFTS

1H- 2S: As stated previously, this bid shows almost any hand without a heart fit, six or more spades, and playing strength equivalent to 0-9 HCP. If the hand is not strong enough to respond 1S and then rebid 2S, invitational, it must respond 2S. Possession of a long second suit in a minor does not matter, unless it makes the playing strength of the hand sufficient to go the 1S/2S route.

1H-2S, 2NT: A rare bid. Something like x/AKQJxxx/Ax/xxx. Responder is asked to raise if he has some high cards in the minors (not in spades, except the ace; opener does not need responder's spades, except as a stopper). If responder cannot bid 3NT, he goes back to 3H.

1H-2S, 3m: Long, strong hearts, and at least five in the minor. The shape will be at least 6-5, perhaps more. Opener has no interest in spades, and strongly prefers to play in one of his suits. NF.

1H-2S, 3H: Natural, NF. "My hearts are better than your spades."

1H-2S, 3S: Invitational.

1H-2S, 3NT: Undefined.

1H-2S, 4m: Splinter. Looking for a miracle slam with something like Kxxx/AKxxxx/x/Ax facing AJxxxx/xx/xxx/xxx.

1H-2S, 4H: A rare bid. NF.

1H-2S, 4S: To play.

LIMIT JUMP SHIFTS

The limit jump shift is an important part of the system, because it allows the two-over-one responses to be unconditionally game-forcing, without needing to take account of the exception that some people play when responder rebids his suit. It shows a six-card or longer suit, is invitational (10-12 or equivalent), and denies support for the major. It is not, however, a mandatory bid for every hand that fits the above definitions. You are allowed to consider going another route if your suit is weak. For example, with AQ/x/Kxxx/Qxxxxx, a response of 3C to 1H looks ridiculous. It seems much better to respond 1NT, forcing, and then rebid 2NT, invitational (unless opener rebids clubs, in which case you would bid 3D or 3S, showing a good club raise.).

The key to evaluating whether your hand is strong enough to bid three instead of two is to be aware that opener will always be considering whether he can make three notrump. The less of a fit you need in your own suit to run it, the fewer high card points you can get away with holding. With Jxx/x/Jx/AKT9xxx, you can see that as little as the Qx of clubs plus some stoppers will produce 3NT, and even a small doubleton club in opener's hand will offer a fair shot at running the clubs. Bid 3C, not 1NT, despite having only nine HCP. On a good day, you might do without one of the jacks.

Another problem to be aware of is the solid suit. Technically, six solid and out is not enough for a game force, as opposite a minimum opening bid game is assured only if opener has three aces. If opener has one or no aces (both distinct possibilities; the opponents have some high cards), 3NT is unlikely to make if the opponents have a decent suit to lead. However, vulnerable at IMPs, be more aggressive with the solid suit; partner will tend to reject the invitational jump because he has no fitting high card for you, even on hands where he has the necessary three tricks on the side. With seven solid, I would always drive to game.

I suppose some people will dislike the LJS because it takes away whatever they are accustomed to having their three-level responses mean. For many, this will be Bergen raises.¹ If you are one of these people, allow me to set you straight. I am doing you a favor by taking away your Bergen raises. They are a bad method, and you shouldn't be playing them. I do not say this because I have anything against Marty Bergen. I like a lot of his ideas about bidding, and I have used some of them in Revision. But Bergen raises don't work. When they were first proposed in the early

¹ If you don't know what Bergen raises are (they are not commonly played outside of North America), they are responses of 3m to opening bids of 1M that show four-card support for the major. Of the two possible responses of 3C and 3D, one of them is used to show a classic limit raise, and the other is used to show 6-9 support points. (It doesn't really matter which bid shows which hand type.) They are usually played in conjunction with a truly weak jump raise to 3M, which shows 0-5 HCP.

1980s, they seemed like a good idea. The LJS response had hardly been heard of then (although I believe a few West Coast players, like Martel-Stansby, had started using them around that time), so Bergen raises only displaced the strong and weak jump shift responses, neither of which was (or is) very useful. But practice over the decades since showed that the Bergen raise bids also weren't very useful. The Bergen limit raise didn't accomplish much that the standard limit raise of 1M-3M didn't, and indeed we now know that it is better to put the limit raise hands into the 2NT response, which leaves opener more room to try for game. As for the weaker (6-9) Bergen raise, Eric Rodwell and others later discovered that it was best to use the direct raise to 3M to show this hand type, discarding the 0-5 preemptive raise. (It turned out that the very weak double raise in unobstructed auctions came up rarely, because the opponents would usually bid something first even when you had the hand for it. Also, the "mixed raise" hand is more important to show, because game is highly possible facing it.) The Bergen raises did take away some bidding room from the opponents, but as against that, they allowed the opponents a cheap way to enter the auction (by doubling the artificial 3m response).

So far, all of this is theory. The real problem with Bergen raises is that over the years, people who played them (including me) noticed that they simply didn't lead to very many good results, as compared to the results of opponents who didn't use them. The reasons why don't matter anymore. If something doesn't work, it doesn't work. Bergen raises don't work, and the LJS responses do.

There is another hand type for the LJS response that you should be aware of. For many years, Jeff Rubens of *The Bridge World* has been asking what you are supposed to do (in standard bidding) if you hold a hand like x/x/xxx/KQJ10xxxx and the auction goes 1H-1NT, 3H. Or let opener rebid 4H. Or let the auction start 1S-1NT, 3H. Most people play minor-suit bids in such auctions as control-bids in support of opener's last-bid major (as do we). The answer is to respond three of the minor in the first place, not 1NT. If partner passes, fine. If he doesn't, simply repeat the minor. Partner will get the message, especially if he bids 3NT next and you don't pass. Of course, you don't have to make the fake LJS response on every hand you hold with a long minor; only do it when you are truly desperate to play in your suit, and don't care if you have to get to the four- or five-level to do it. With xxx/x/xx/QJ109xxx, you can pass 1H and bid clubs later, if it seems appropriate. (Don't worry about partner being left in 1H; if that happens, the opponents very likely have a game.)

Bidding is mostly natural and fairly simple after the three-over-one. The contract will nearly always be opener's suit, responder's suit, or three notrump.

- 1H-3C, 3D: Stopper, not a natural suit necessarily. Opener could have a hand like xxx/AJxxx/AQ/Axx and want to hear responder bid 3NT with any spade stopper.
- 1H-3C, 3H: Natural, long suit. Not forcing, but invitational; do not bid this just because you have some extra heart length. You must have reason to think you can make a game if responder is suitable (he can raise with Hx in your suit). We do not try to improve the partscore from three clubs to three hearts to get the extra thirty points. The system is designed for IMP scoring.
- 1H-3C, 3S: Stopper. But if opener pulls a 3NT bid to 4H, he is showing 5-6 or 5-7 in the majors, and then responder could go to 4S on three-card support.
- 1H-3C, 3NT: What responder wanted to hear. This reveals one of the best features of the LJS treatment. 2/1 GF players have to respond 1NT with their invitational one-suiters (unless they play that rebidding responder's suit cancels the game force, which leads to other difficulties), wrongsiding the notrump for an eventual game. We let opener, the stronger hand, bid the notrump and protect his stoppers.
- 1H-3C, 4C: Slam try, forcing. Opener wants to hear a control-bid if possible. Opener would not go past 3NT unless certain he could make at least 5C.
- 1H-3C, 4D: Redwood RKC 1430 for clubs.
- 1H-3C, 4H: To play.
- 1H-3C, 4S: Splinter for clubs.
- 1H-3C, 4NT: Substitute splinter, shortness in diamonds. You should have two aces to do this, since responder has no way to use RKC.
- 1H- 3D: Auctions analogous to those after 1H-3C. The only question is what it means for opener to rebid 4C over 3D. I would say it is Redwood RKC 1430 (4NT is the club splinter here).

RAISES AND NONRAISES AT HIGHER LEVELS

The first convention that will be set out here is the 2NT forcing raise, which we play as showing invitational values (a traditional limit raise) or better. It has become popular in the past few years to incorporate limit raises into the 2NT bid, thus freeing up the raise to three to show some other hand type. We do this too, but we do a lot more. Without embarrassment or feeling that I am bragging, I can say that this is the hottest 2NT treatment on the market. At least, I have heard of no other that can show so many hand types. It was a pretty good method in the earlier editions of this book, but practice bidding sessions showed that opener was not clarifying certain hand types sufficiently when responder had a slam try. So I sat down to figure out how many distinct hand types needed to be shown by opener after a 1H opening and a 2NT response by an unpassed hand, without getting past the signoff spot of 4H (it is easier when the opening bid is 1S, because the signoff spot of 4S is a step higher). I came up with exactly eighteen of them. When I set out to fit these hand types into the available bids, it turned out that there was room for all eighteen, with no undefined bids left over. The available space was exactly enough to describe all of the necessary hand types, and no more. (This is something that I have noticed happening again and again in designing bidding methods. In my experience, whenever there is a problem hand type that seems “unbiddable,” there is *always* a reasonable way to fit it into the system, if only you think about it long enough and work at it hard enough. It is truly eerie that when Harold Vanderbilt and friends laid down the rules of modern contract bridge, they made the size of the universe of available bids just about as large as it needed to be to reward skillful bidding, neither more nor less. I am sure this happened by accident, but what a happy accident.)

The eighteen hand types are as follows: 1. Minimum and balanced or semibalanced, unable to accept facing a four-card limit raise. With this hand type, opener will sign off in 3H unless responder shows extras. 2. Minimum unbalanced with a singleton spade, typically 1=5=(4=3) shape. With this hand type, we supply methods for opener to get to game if responder has no great wastage facing the singleton spade, but to sign off at 3H if the spade singleton fits responder’s hand poorly. We also allow for the possibility of stopping in 3NT if responder’s spade holding is suitable for that contract. 3. Similar to (2), but with a singleton diamond. 4. Similar to (2), but with a singleton club. 5. Shape similar to (2), but with extra values. Opener is willing to drive to game regardless of what responder has; he wants to be in game even opposite a minimum limit raise with wasted spade cards. Usually this means 14-15 HCP. Opener defines his hand type on the way to game because responder may be interested in slam. 6. Same with a singleton diamond. 7. Same with a singleton club. 8. Maximum balanced or semibalanced, with 14-15 HCP and willingness to drive to game. Opener

will usually be 5332 or 6322 here. With this hand type, opener wants to allow for the possibility of playing 3NT, which can be very right if responder has 4333 shape, or 4432 with a strong doubleton. 9. A semibalanced hand similar in playing strength to (8), but not willing to stop in 3NT. Opener will typically be 5422 or 7222 for this (fearing a lead in one of the doubleton suits). 10. Minimum strength opener, but with a void in spades; 0=5=4=4 or 0=6=(4-3) shape, but not much in high cards. Our practice is to always drive to game when opener holds a void; the void adds so much playing strength when an eight-card fit is found that you should always shoot it out in game at least, even facing wasted values in the void suit. It is also important to show the location of the void and the hand strength, so that responder will know what to do if he is considering looking for slam. (It is easy to get to a disastrous contract at the five or six level if opener drives to game because of his void and responder, thinking he is facing extra high cards, pushes on with an inappropriate holding facing the void suit.) 11. Same as previous, with a diamond void. 12. Same as previous, with a club void. 13. Spade void, but this time with extra values, a hand that has suitable values for slam if partner is interested. This will of course include all of the hands with 14-15 HCP, and can include some with less if the controls are good. 14. Same as previous, with diamond void. 15. Same, with club void. 16. Two-suiter, 5-5 or better shape, good suits and extra values, with the second suit being clubs. The idea is that opener identifies his sources of tricks and responder practices in-and-out valuation of his holdings in the other two suits when considering slam. It also creates the possibility of playing in opener's second suit instead of hearts. If your hand is not strong enough for this bid, you can always show the location of a singleton or void by characterizing the hand as being one of the other types. 17. Same as previous, with the second suit being diamonds. 18. Extra values with a second suit of spades; the prototypical shape is 5=6=1=1, with 4=7=1=1 also being possible. The idea is to tell responder to ignore minor-suit cards below the ace.

As stated earlier, I promise that there are ways to show all 18 hand types without getting past 4H. Here is how it is done.

1H- 2NT: Forcing raise. We play this somewhat differently from the standard "Jacoby 2NT" treatment. Many authorities say that an immediate forcing raise should always guarantee four-card support. The reason for this is that in standard, opener can have a very good hand and may want to take control at some point. For him to be able to do this, it is useful to know of at least a 5-4 fit, since it is often important in slam contracts to be able to draw trump and still have a trump in dummy to ruff something. For this reason, when you have game values and only three-card support, you are supposed to start with a 2/1 response and support later. We can do this too, and in fact we do, by responding 2/1 when responder has a five-card suit, three-card support, and slam interest. But we

don't do it with 4333-type or 4432-type hands. Experience has shown that *in a big club system*, these hands should show support for partner immediately, even if the support is only three cards. The distinction between standard and a limited-opening system is that in the latter, opener will not often have a good enough hand to want to take command immediately, the way he will when he has a 20 count, as he might in standard.

The 2NT response is not a game force. It also comprises hands that would have made a direct four-card limit raise in standard. The purpose of this is to allow opener to show his singleton if he has one, after which the auction can die at 3H if responder misfits opener's shortness. Responder will clear up whether he has only an invitational hand or not on the next round.

Our basic approach after the 2NT response is for opener to describe his hand and let responder be the captain. Opener shows shortness at the three level, and when opener has a 5431-type hand, responder can sometimes elect to play 3NT when he has solid stoppers opposite the singleton. Responder can also sign off in three of the major, if he has only an invitational hand. Opener is allowed to drive past 3NT when he has enough shape to make it unlikely that 3NT is a better spot than four of the major. Opener also allows for a 3NT contract when he has 5332 or 6332 shape.

A subtlety of Revision (and other forms of Precision) is that the 2NT raise is best used by hands that are either only invitational, or have some slam interest. Game-forcing hands that see no prospect of slam, even opposite a 15 count with the best possible singleton, should just bid game. An aceless 13 count would be one such hand. Something like KQx/QJx/Kxxx/QJx would do this. Rodwell and Meckstroth seem willing to do this with a lot of hands, even some that would make a miracle slam facing a maximum with a useful void; evidently they think that getting to game fast, and making it more often, compensates for the rare missed slam.

1H-2NT, 3C: A multiple-meaning bid. Because it is opener's cheapest rebid, we pack several different meanings into it. The meanings are: 1. Minimum balanced or semibalanced, no shortness (5332, 6322, 5422, 7222). These are hands with which opener is willing to stop short of game. 2. Minimum with short spades (here meaning a singleton; with a void, you always drive to game). 3. Maximum with no shortness, but not 5332 or 6322 with strength in the side suits, meaning opener has some 5422, a 6322 with concentrated strength (at least one suit wide open), or 7222. 4.

Any hand with a void (there are ways to identify the void, of course, and to show whether opener is minimum or maximum).

1H-2NT, 3C-3D: Responder relays, so as to let opener tell him which hand type he has. In order to do this, responder does not have a hand that would attempt to sign off opposite all opening hands that were not driving to game anyway (with that, he bids 3H now). If responder is only invitational he should have nothing wasted in spades, because if opener has short spades, the auction cannot now die below game even if opener is minimum.

1H-2NT, 3C-3D, 3H: Opener has a minimum 5332, 5422, or 6322. Responder can pass now if he wishes. He can also bid 3NT to play, or control-bid another suit to indicate slam interest, or bid 4H to play.

1H-2NT, 3C-3D, 3S: Opener has short spades. He either has a singleton spade and a relative minimum, or any strength with a spade void. Because opener will go beyond 3H with a minimum when he has this hand type, responder should not bid 3D unless he is prepared to get to game opposite a minimum with short spades; he should bid 3H over 3C if he is not.

1H-2NT, 3C-3D, 3S- 3NT: Responder wants to know which hand type opener has (this implies slam interest on responder's part). Opener continues by bidding 4C now to show a spade void with a maximum, something like -/AKxxx/Axxx/Kxxx; 4D to show a spade void with a minimum, perhaps -/AKxxx/Axxx/Jxxx; or 4H to show a minimum with a spade singleton, something like x/AKxxx/Axxx/Jxx.

1H-2NT, 3C-3D, 3S- 4C, 4D: Responder does not care whether opener has a singleton or void in spades (almost certainly, this is because responder has the ace of spades himself). He wants to initiate control-bidding. He is likely to be interested in hearing whether opener controls the other minor.

1H-2NT, 3C-3D, 3S- 4H: Responder is not interested in slam facing short spades.

1H-2NT, 3C-3D, 3NT: Opener has a void in a minor, and minimum high-card values. Responder can now relay with 4C, and opener

shows his shortness via ascending numeric (4D = short diamonds, 4H = short clubs).

1H-2NT, 3C-3D,	4C: Opener has a club void, with maximum high cards.
1H-2NT, 3C-3D,	4D: Opener has a diamond void, with maximum high cards.
1H-2NT, 3C-3D,	4H: Opener has a balanced or semibalanced maximum, but not suitable for playing 3NT (with that he would have bid 3NT over 2NT).
1H-2NT, 3C-	3H: Responder is not interested in game if opener has any minimum. This means responder does not have a spade holding that is suitable for game facing a minimum with a singleton spade (responder may have something like QJxx in spades). Opener will now pass if he has the balanced or semibalanced minimum, or if he has the singleton spade minimum. If his hand is one of the types that contains a void in a minor, he should bid 3NT, 4C, or 4D as in the above auctions, allowing responder to change his mind and look for slam if he wishes. For example, responder might hold KJxx/Axxx/xxx/Qx. With this, he wants to reject game if opener holds x/KQxxx/Kxxx/KJx, so he bids only 3H. But if opener's hand is actually AQxx/KQxxx/-/Kxxx, the partnership belongs in slam. So, with the second example hand as opener, you should show the diamond void (the hand is good enough for a direct 4D over 3H; with a bit less, you would bid 3NT and let responder ask).

If opener has some other hand type that wants to drive to game, he should just bid 4H now. Please note that this will include certain hands with a singleton spade. Previously I have suggested that there are two ranges opener can hold with a singleton spade, minimum and maximum. Actually there are three: minimum (willing to stop below game), maximum (suitable for slam if responder is interested), and minimum-game (poor for slam, but enough shape to drive to game). An example of the first type, a dead minimum, is x/KQxxx/Kxxx/KJx, as given above. The second type, one that cooperates in a slam hunt, is something like x/KQxxx/Axxx/KQx. But what if you hold something like x/KQxxxx/Qxxx/Ax or x/KQxxx/Kxxxx/Kx? These hands do not want to suggest slam to partner, yet they are good enough to drive

to game facing a limit raise with four-card support, which is the weakest hand responder can have for his 2NT response. (As a general rule, any opening hand with ten cards in two suits should bid game facing a limit raise). What to do? The answer is to start by showing a minimum with a singleton, but then drive to game anyway if responder attempts to sign off in three. What this means is that if you hold one of the minimum-game hands shown above, and the auction goes 1H-2NT, 3C-3H, you bid 4H now.

- 1H-2NT, 3D: A one-way bid. The only hand type it shows is a minimum with a singleton diamond. (Since there is no room to relay below 3H, the bid can show only one hand type.) Responder can attempt to sign off in 3H (he has a minimum with wasted values in diamonds), bid 3NT naturally (he has game values, with stoppers like KQJx in diamonds), sign off in 4H, or control-bid. But note that if opener attempts to sign off in 3H, responder may bid 4H anyway, if he has the minimum-game hand type.
- 1H-2NT, 3H: Another one-way bid. This one shows a minimum with a singleton club. However, this bid does *not* include the minimum-game hand type; it is a true minimum, with willingness to be passed in 3H. Continuations are as in the above auction, when a singleton diamond is shown.
- 1H-2NT, 3S: This shows a maximum with an unknown singleton. However, in the specific case where the singleton is clubs, opener does not necessarily have a slam-suitable maximum; he may have only a minimum-game hand, with which he refused to bid 3H and take the chance of being passed.
- 1H-2NT, 3S- 3NT: Responder will almost always bid this with slam interest, to ask for opener's shortness. (The alternatives are to sign off in 4H with no slam interest, or 4S Kickback RKC 1430.)
- 1H-2NT, 3S-3NT, 4C: Opener shows a singleton club. In this situation, we do not use ascending numeric, as we normally would after an asking bid. The reason is that opener has a wider range when he is short in clubs than when he is short in diamonds or spades. The 3S bid might have been based on AQxx/KQxxx/Axx/x (slam-suitable maximum), or Kx/KJxxx/Axxxx/x (minimum-game hand type). So opener saves space by bidding 4C here with both. Now, responder has a cheap 4D bid to ask which hand type opener has. Of course, opener will bid past 4H if he has the first hand, and sign off in 4H

with the second. If he does go past 4H, he should show keycards with bids of 4S and higher; thus, the 4D bid over 4C serves as a sort of conditional keycard ask. (I can think of no better way for opener to continue than to show keycards if he is going past 4H.)

1H-2NT, 3S-3NT, 4D, 4H: Opener shows a maximum with, respectively, a singleton diamond and a singleton spade.

1H-2NT, 3NT: This shows any maximum 5332, or a 6322 maximum with no unstopped suit. Responder can pass, sign off at 4H, ask for keycards via 4S, or control-bid.

1H-2NT, 4C, 4D, 4H: These bids show maximum hands with 5-5 shape or better. 4H is a substitute bid, showing that the side suit is spades; in this case, the hand must be of 5-6 shape, since with 5-5, 1S would have been the opening bid. There is an exception: With 7411 shape, opener can also show his second suit. The basic message of these bids is that responder should disregard cards below the ace in the suits opener has not shown.

1H-2NT, 4S: Kickback RKC 1430.

1H-2NT, 4NT, 5C, 5D: Voidwood. 4NT is substitute Voidwood showing a void in spades. Very rare, obviously, but opener could hold Ax/AKxxxxx/Kxxx/- and want to know about cards outside of clubs. If you don't think you have the perfect hand for this and aren't sure of what to do opposite any response, don't do it.

1H- 3H: Mixed raise of hearts. The idea is that responder is showing 7-9 support points for the major, with four (occasionally five) card support. The hand is like a limit raise, but weaker. It may or may not contain a singleton. (Not a void; with four-card support and a void, always drive to four of the major.) The bid is not forcing. Opener simply decides whether he wants to play game or not. This treatment is currently used by Meckwell, which is where I got it from. It seems to come up much more often than a purely preemptive raise. Opener will usually either pass or bid game in his major. A bid of a new suit by him would be a slam try, showing an extreme two-suiter. Please note that research indicates that it is almost always wrong for opener to bid game here with 5332 or 5422, even holding a 15 count.

- 1H- 3S: Unspecified singleton splinter. We play two-tiered splinters; this is the bid to show the lower tier (10-13 HCP). Opener can refuse to ask by bidding 4H; however, he does this only when he is minimum and cannot see a slam even if facing the best possible singleton. Opener asks for the shortness by bidding 3NT. Responder shows via the ascending numeric scheme; his shape is assumed to be of 4441 type, so he bids 4C here to show (the equivalent of) 1=4=4=4, 4D to show 4=4=1=4, and 4H to show 4=4=4=1.

Slam bidding in splinter auctions is not an exact science, but some general principles can be laid down. First, the splinter responder promises at least three cover cards outside of his shortness (“CCOS”). A typical 3S response to 1H is Kxxx/Axxx/x/Axxx, in which the three CCOS are the king of spades and the two aces. Opener asks for the shortness, and then counts his losers outside the shortness (“LOS”). If opener has six or more LOS, he attempts to sign off. So, with Jxx/KQxxx/KQJ/Qx facing the above example responder, the bidding goes 1H-3S, 3NT-4D, 4H-P. Research indicates that the most difficult problems come up when opener has exactly five LOS. With that, he can make a slam try, expecting responder to move with four CCOS, or perhaps with a void.

All of this is predicated on the assumption that responder has either three or four CCOS. With five or more, responder always makes at least one more slam move. (However, he will “never” have five CCOS for a lower-tier splinter. While 5 CCs is just about possible, if responder has something like KQxx/KQxx/x/Kxxx, it is too likely that one of the kings or queens is not working, so responder should not bid again unless opener encourages). When responder does this, opener knows that slam can still exist, even if he has six LOS.

Note that the above rules about CCOS and LOS do not make all auctions automatic. Judgment is still required in many auctions. A typical problem is, for example, trying to figure out whether a queen of a side suit is a cover card or not. The CCOS/LOS rules are good general guidelines, but they do not solve all problems.

- 1H- 3NT: Upper-tier splinter (usually 13-16 HCP, 4½-plus CCOS) showing short *spades*; notrump is a substitute for spades on this auction. Bidding proceeds similarly to when a lower-tier splinter is made. There are a few exceptional cases to be borne in mind. First, responder can actually have more than 16 HCP and select the splinter, if he thinks there is no better way to show his hand (he can also respond 2/1 or 2NT if he judges those actions to be the most likely way to get the information he needs). Obviously, in that case he will be driving to the

five level at least. And second, responder will sometimes have a void rather than a singleton, and will have to decide whether this additional feature warrants greater aggression. If he does, he should try to control-bid his known shortness, in order to tell partner of the void and let him evaluate his holding opposite it.

One might well ask why we do not play void-showing splinters (directly over a 1M opening; we do play them in some auctions). For a long time I wanted to play them, perhaps influenced by the fact that Rodwell and Meckstroth use them, and they ought to know what they are doing. I eventually changed my mind when I realized that I was not seeing any deals where void-showing splinters worked well, or indeed, any deals where they were used at all. It is a treatment that just does not seem to come up. Part of the reason for this is undoubtedly that singletons are roughly five times as common as voids. Another is probably that when you have a void suit, someone is likely to bid it in front of you, and thereby turn the auction into a contested one. Whatever the reason may be, VSS does not seem to be a treatment that comes up often enough to justify devoting bids to it that can be used for other purposes. I have seen plenty of deals where defining the range of a splinter would be useful.

- 1H- 4C: Top-tier splinter, short clubs. If this is doubled by the next opponent, a redouble by opener shows the ace, as is standard practice. A pass shows a hand with some interest in hearing responder control-bid at his next turn (opener denies having a convenient control-bid of his own, as for example, in the next higher suit). A return to 4H shows lack of interest in slam, either a dead minimum or wasted values in clubs. Other bids would have the same meanings as if there had been no double. However, when the splinter is doubled, opener should bear in mind that the next opponent is likely to bid 5C. Accordingly, opener should bid 4S, Kickback, immediately if that seems like a good idea, since he may not get a chance to do it later. And if the bidding in this or similar auctions goes keycard-ask by us, 5C or 6C interference by the opponents, we play DIPO/DEPO (see Part X).
- 1H- 4D: Top-tier splinter, short diamonds.
- 1H- 4H: Wide-range preempt. Could be a classic, five-trump, weak preempt; could be some other hand type that just wants to get to 4H as fast as possible. Responder may be having a shot at game with a hand that, he thinks, is not likely to produce slam, but with which he wants to give the enemy no information. A possible hand is Kxxx/Axx/K/Qxxxx. (Meckwell frequently raise to four with hands like these.) All responder needs is some kind of hand that thinks slam is

unlikely and that taking away bidding room from the opponents is desirable. We bear in mind the general principle, first enunciated by George Rosenkranz (who confirmed it via computer simulations), that *any* hand with four-card support and a side void should drive to four opposite a known five-card-major opening.

- 1H- 4S: Normal preempt. DNEBAPH, presumably.
- 1H- 4NT: Regular Blackwood; hearts are not agreed. After opener shows aces (0-3, 1-4, 2; we play that in responding to regular Blackwood, the first step shows zero, in case the BW bidder needs to get out in 5C facing no aces), responder may bid his own suit at the five, six or seven level, to play. Raise to 2NT first if desiring to employ Kickback in hearts.

PASSED-HAND RESPONSES

A single raise is still invitational. A 1NT response is forcing, and that means 100% forcing. This is because it is responder's normal action with hands that would, in standard, raise to 2H. 1S is natural, but with 2S as a 0-8 WJS on appropriate hands. Jumps to 3C and 3D are still LJS.

Our special passed-hand responses are:

- 1H- 2C, 2D: Five-card suit (maybe six), 10-12 HCP. Opener can pass. Otherwise, his rebids are as normal, with a couple of exceptions. A 2H rebid is not forcing, just showing a five- or six-card suit and no fit for the minor. With a maximum in high cards, like AJx/K10xxxx/Ax/Kx, you can rebid a forcing 3H; there is no need for this bid to show the one-loser suit here, since as a passed hand, responder won't be very strong, and therefore doesn't really need to know opener's suit quality in what is almost certainly a game-only auction. Opener's second bid, whatever it is, creates a game force if it is higher than 2H, so don't respond at the two level unless you are ready to respect this.
- 1H- 2NT: Invitational in hearts. Usually four-card support, but occasionally could be three with a side singleton. Opener rebids according to the normal schedule, with one exception. If opener has a hand that wants to play game and does not see significant hope of a slam opposite a passed hand, he can jump to 4H. This replaces the normal meaning of the 4H bid, which is 5-6 or 4-7 in hearts/spades. With that hand, if you want to continue to explore slam possibilities, start by showing your singleton or void (if you are 1-1 in the side suits, pick one of the singletons to show).

- 1H- 3H: As usual, a mixed raise.
- 1H- 3S: Shows an unspecified splinter, as usual, but the point range is lower since responder did not open the bidding.
- 1H- 3NT, 4C, 4D: Obviously, these cannot be upper-tier splinters, since such hands would have opened the bidding. We play them as fit-showing jumps (3NT substituting for long spades). These FSJs show some slam interest (otherwise just raise to 4H).

Competitive Auctions After A 1H Opening

- 1H-(X): Explained more fully below in the section describing the auction 1S-(X). For now, simply note that redouble shows exactly a doubleton heart. A 1S response is forcing (by a UPH) and indicates a desire to ignore the double and have a normal auction. But a 1NT response after the double shows clubs, and so on, as after 1S-(X).

Here is a point to bear in mind in this and in all similar auctions: If the opposition's only intervention is a direct-seat takeout double, and advancer does not bid anything, we ignore the double on the second round of bidding, and proceed with "system on." For example, if the bidding goes 1H-(X), 1S-(P), 1NT-(P), responder's bid of 2C now is a puppet to 2D, and so on.

- 1H-(1S): After a 1S overcall, responder bids 1NT, natural, with appropriate values (7-10 HCP), more or less balanced, spade stopper. Further bidding is general principles, *except* that if the next hand raises to 2S, opener's second bid is good/bad, with 2NT being the bad. (Actually, good/bad is on if fourth hand bids anything at the two level, except 2C. We do not play good/bad after a 2C overcall because there is no need to show different hand strengths at the three level in that case; if opener has a minimum, he bids at the two level, and if he is strong enough to jump to three, he does that.) Responder can make a negative double of 1S, which we play as being *either* a normal, takeout-type negative double with length in the minors, *or* a game-forcing type that expects to bid a suit next. We would double 1S with Jxx/Kx/AKJxx/Qxx, expecting to bid diamonds next (forcing) in most auctions.

Note here that when opener rebids 1NT after a negative double of a 1S overcall, he does not have to have a real spade stopper. After the 1NT rebid, responder can check back for a real stopper by cuebidding in spades.

Free bids of 2C and 2D are negative free bids, showing 0-10 HCP. This is a nice auction for us. We can make NFBs with very weak hands, because opener will not get excited unless he has a fit. In standard, responder needs to have six points, because opener may have a twenty count and be driving to game opposite any noise.

There is some controversy over what jumps to 3C and 3D should mean here, in the negative-free-bid environment. Some suggest that they should be natural limit bids, as they would be if the overcall had not been made. The alternative to that is to play them as forcing, showing too much shape to start out with a negative double. I favor forcing (by UPH). There is a much wider range for forcing bids (effectively, anything from a decent 12 count to infinity) than there is for a limit jump shift (effectively, just about an 11 count, not much more or less). Truly invitational one-suited hands here must take a position. Either make a two-level NFB, and hope partner will bid again if there is a game, or overbid a little and make the game-forcing jump. (Overbidding a little in competitive auctions frequently works well; the important things are not to miss a game, and not to miss a fit if the opponents are going to keep bidding.)

Double jumps in their suit are splinters (here, that means a bid of 3S), and we play fit-showing jumps to the four level in unbid suits (here, 4C and 4D). When an opponent has made a natural overcall, we do not play splinters except in their suit.

1H-(1NT): After a 1NT overcall, a double is penalties, of course, and a raise to 2H is natural. Unlike standard players, we attempt to provide responder with ways of showing both two-suited and one-suited hands. Over 1NT, 2C shows an unspecified one-suiter (not hearts); opener will normally bid 2D, and responder will show his suit (he may pass if it is diamonds). If responder bids 2D over 1NT, he shows diamonds and spades; 2S is spades and clubs; 3C is clubs and diamonds. 2NT is a “notrump cue-bid,” showing a good hand too shapely to double. Over this, opener normally relays with 3C now, to see what responder has in mind; responder’s next

bid, if it is in a new suit, is forcing. Further bidding is common sense after all of these starts.

1H-(2C): As usual, 2D and 2S now are NFBs. 3C, the cuebid, is invitational or better in hearts. Jumps to 3D and 3S are game-forcing, strong hands with at least six cards in the bid suit (but by a PH, 3D is invitational and natural, and 3S is a FSJ). 2H and 2NT are normal, not special raises. 3H is a mixed raise.

1H-(2D): Now, the only NFB available is 2S, the only new suit biddable at the two level. 2NT is natural and invitational. 3C is forcing by a UPH (when a suit can only be shown for the first time at the three level, we play that it is forcing by a UPH), 3D is the strong heart raise, 3H is a mixed heart raise, and 3S is GF with long, strong spades (but it is a FSJ by a PH). As usual, double first and then bid spades with a strong hand that does not have a great spade suit.

1H-(2H): Presumably most opponents will play this as a Michaels cuebid. Against Michaels, we play that a raise to three of our major is NF; cuebid of their major is limit raise or better; double creates a force (except by PH) and leads either to a double of them or a forcing bid in a new suit; and a new minor is natural, NF. A bid of 2NT over the Mike is a natural invitation. Jumps to 3S or 4m are splinters, and a bid of 3NT over 2H is natural. Bids of a minor at the three level are nonforcing but invitational, and show that the cuebidder presumably has the other minor.

If 2H shows spades and a known minor suit, we play the same as above, except that a bid of three of their known minor shows a forcing bid in the other minor. When the opponents' minor suit is known, a jump to four of that minor is a splinter, and four of the other minor is fit-showing.

1H-(2S): Presumably everyone plays this as weak. We will play negative doubles and new suits forcing by UPH at the three level. A 2NT bid here is natural and invitational. But if the 2S bid is defined as intermediate or, God forbid, strong, the 2NT bid shows an invitational heart raise.

1H-(2NT): Assuming that the 2NT bid shows minor suits, X shows a desire to penalize at least one of them, and creates a FP (by UPH). All doubles are penalty after that. (The other way to double for penalties is to pass and then double after they settle in 3m. This shows no more than a doubleton

in partner's suit, defensive values, but not a great holding in their suit. Opener may pull.) Opener's rebid of 3S, either immediately or later, is forcing, but a 3H bid is not. Both here and after an unusual 2NT overcall of a 1S opening, we play that 3C always equals the other major, invitational or better, with a direct three of the other major weaker, and 3D is invitational or better in opener's suit, with a direct raise weaker. 3NT over 2NT is to play. Jumps to the four level are to play *if* they are in a major, and by an unpassed hand. But a jump to 4H on the auction 1S-(2NT), 4H, when the 4H bidder is a PH, is a fit-showing jump. Jumps to four of a minor are splinters in support of the opener's major.

1H-(3C and higher): General principles. Doubles of suits are negative, new suits are forcing by UPH, 3NT is always natural. However, if the jump to three is Copenhagen (that suit and another known suit), a cuebid above the three-heart level is GF in hearts, a cue-bid below the 3H level, if available, is invitational in hearts, and a bid of the suit not shown by the opponents is natural. Double is penalties. If the opponents bid 3C, Ghestem, showing the pointed suits, a 3D bid is invitational or better in hearts, and a cuebid of 3S is a stopper (4D is GF in hearts here). If 3C shows the minors, a 3D cuebid is invitational in hearts (no forcing pass created), 3S is forcing, and 4C is game forcing in hearts (forcing pass is on).

Later Intervention

If the opponent directly over the 1H bidder passes, most responses, other than the wide-ranging 1NT, will lead to few problems when the fourth hand intervenes. After a 1H opening and a 1NT response, followed by an overcall, our basic method is good/bad by opener, or a takeout double, up to the level of 3S. If the 1NT response is doubled, redouble by opener is a special bid: good hand, six good hearts, but not shapely enough to jump to 3H. It invites partner to lead hearts, or raise to three in a competitive auction if he feels like it. The bid does not show massive extra strength as it would in standard. If the response is 1S, doubled, support XX is on. Otherwise, ignore the double. (But you can pass the double with specifically a doubleton spade and nothing good to bid.) If there is a two-level overcall in a suit other than clubs, good/bad is on by opener. If opener doubles a two-level overcall after a 1NT response, that is *takeout* (x/AKxxx/Axxx/Qxx doubles a 2S overcall). A double of a three-level overcall is also takeout, but showing a good hand.

If a 1NT response is followed by an overcall by fourth hand, as for example 1H-(P), 1NT-(2D), and this is passed around to responder, a 2S bid by responder at his second turn shows the same thing it would have shown in an uninterrupted auction, which is to say, exactly four spades and invitational values, not forcing. If the opponents go to the three level and responder bids 3S, the same hand type is shown, although here responder is obviously gambling a bit that opener will fit his hand well enough to produce a playable contract.

A few things should be noted here about auctions where responder passes the opening bid, and the fourth hand reopens. Again, if the opponent doubles and opener redoubles, he is showing a sixth heart. If opener bids 1NT over the double, he is showing a four-card minor (unspecified) “on the way” to two hearts, something like xx/KQJ10xx/AQJx/x. A direct bid in a minor would tend to be a five-card suit. (If his second suit is spades, he just rebids 1S over the double.)

If a reopened auction comes back around to the responder, who originally passed the 1H bid, at the *two* level, and he doubles, that is takeout, short in their suit and unwilling to sell out. E.g., in the auction 1H-(P), P-(2C), P-(P), X, responder has something like Jxxx/Qx/Jxxxx/xx. (It would be the same if fourth hand had reopened with a double, and the other opponent had bid 2C). If responder wants to defend at the two level, he just passes. If the opponents bid *three* of something, and responder doubles that, it is penalty.

The One Spade Opening

1S: Always a five-card suit, regardless of position. Can be slightly light in third and fourth seat.

1S- 2S: This auction is described out of sequence to clarify our approach to raises. This is not a normal, 6-9 HCP raise, nonforcing. We respond 1NT, forcing, with most such hands. This is a Roth raise, invitational or better.

Opener continues:

1S-2S, 2NT: Artificial, relay to show long suit. Responder is asked to bid 3C, over which opener shows his long suit in ascending-numeric order (3D shows clubs, 3H shows diamonds, 3S shows hearts).

1S-2S, 3C: This is a special two-way bid. Its primary meaning is to try for game with short clubs. Responder will normally bid 3D now, and if opener then bids 3S, that is nonforcing, showing the game-try with short clubs. But if opener bids 3H over 3D, he is showing a hand that wants responder to bid 3NT if he is balanced; opener could have AK10xxx/AQJ/xx/xx. The 3H bid asks responder to choose between 3NT and 4S.

Of course, if responder is not interested in 3NT regardless of which hand opener holds, and has enough to accept a game try, he can bid 4S directly over 3C.

1S-2S, 3D, 3H: Short-suit game try.

1S-2S; 3S: General game try with no shortness and (usually) no second four-card suit. Your shape tends to be 5332 or 6322.

1S-2S, 4C, 4D, 4H: Natural slam tries showing a second five-card suit. Maximum hand (14-15 HCP) with good quality suits.

1S-2S, 3NT: 5332 or 6322 type with a maximum. NF. (But opener will have spread-out values; otherwise, he would try to make responder the declarer in notrump via the 3C sequence described above.)

1S-2S, 4S: Any game-only hand. Common to bid this to conceal the shape of both hands before the opening lead.

1S-2S, 4NT: RKC 1430. This could happen, as opener might hold something like AKxxxx/AKxxx/x/x.

1S- 1NT: Forcing, as in standard five-card major methods. But this often conceals a standard single-raise hand. It can also conceal a hand that would respond in a new suit if playing a standard 2/1 GF style.

The hand that responds 1NT to 1S with GF values is the one with specifically 1=4=4=4 shape. We do this to reduce the frequency with which we respond 2/1 with only a four-card suit. Responder will show later on that he has this hand type. Note that there is no equivalent treatment when the opening bid is 1H; with 4=1=4=4 shape, responder simply bids 1S.

After the 1S opening, if your 1=4=4=4 hand is so strong that you do not think you will be able to describe it adequately after a 1NT response and opener's normal rebid, you can make a 2/1 response anyway. 17+ points would do this. With less, you are willing to let it go at 3NT if opener does not show signs of life.

Opener rebids:

1S-1NT, 2C: Could be only a three-card suit, as in common practice. Responder continues:

1S-1NT, 2C- Pass: Any hand where it seems unlikely there is a better contract in sight. Up to nine HCP, perhaps ten with a stiff spade. Usually five-card support, but could be 1=4=4=4. On a bad day, it could be 1=4=5=3.

1S-1NT, 2C- 2D, 2H: Natural, not forcing, usually a six-card suit, could be five very good ones.

1S-1NT, 2C- 2S: Nonforcing preference, as in standard. But we will often have three- or four-card support, a hand that would have bid 1S-2S in standard methods. A hand with 10-12 HCP and 1-2 spades would bid 2NT now (a hand with 10-12 support points and three or more spades would have made some sort of raise already.) Although 2C could be only a three-card suit, it is usually a real suit, and responder assumes it is for reevaluation purposes. Opener continues as in standard, bidding out his shape with a game try.

1S-1NT, 2C- 2NT: Natural, normal invite.

1S-1NT, 2C- 3C: Natural raise, 8-11 support points or the equivalent, at least five-card support, not forcing. Natural continuations.

1S-1NT, 2C- 3D: This is the first of the special bids to show the GF 1=4=4=4 shape. Here, responder is suggesting that his diamonds are stronger than his hearts (he bids 3H when the opposite is true). Of course, you can also bid 3NT with this shape if you believe it is unlikely to be right to play clubs.

1S-1NT, 2C- 3H: 1=4=4=4 GF, hearts better than diamonds. By a PH, both the 3D and 3H bids here are splinters for clubs.

1S-1NT, 2C- 3S: This is the Roth invitational bid, showing three-card support and a hand improved by the club rebid. Natural continuations.

1S-1NT, 2C- 3NT: To play. Any hand that thinks it is highly likely 3NT is the best game and does not want to divulge further information about either hand.

1S-1NT, 2C- 4C: Forcing, sets clubs as trumps. Since responder did not bid 2C over 1S, he must have a freak shape. Perhaps he is 1=1=5=6, with x/x/Axxxx/KQxxxx.

1S-1NT, 2C- 4D: Giant club support, VSS.

1S-1NT, 2C- 4H: Also a giant splinter for clubs. VSS.

1S-1NT, 2C- 4S: DNE.

1S-1NT, 2C- 4NT: DNE.

1S-1NT, 2D: Natural, could be three-card suit. Responder continues:

1S-1NT, 2D- Pass: Any hand that sees no better contract. Usually five-card support, but 1=4=4=4 or even 1=4=3=5 hands are possible.

1S-1NT, 2D- 2H: Natural, NF. Usually six hearts, but could be five very good ones.

1S-1NT, 2D- 2S: Nonforcing preference, as in standard. But we will often have three- or four-card support, a hand that would have bid 1S-2S in standard methods.

1S-1NT, 2D- 2NT: Natural, normal invite.

1S-1NT, 2D- 3C: Natural, NF.

1S-1NT, 2D- 3D: Normal raise, 10-12 or equivalent, NF.

1S-1NT, 2D- 3H: Again, this shows the strong 1=4=4=4 type. However, here there is no way to distinguish the relative suit quality.

1S-1NT, 2D- 3S: Roth raise, invitational in spades, hand improved by diamond bid.

1S-1NT, 2D- 3NT: Shot at game.

1S-1NT, 2D- 4C: Splinter raise of diamonds.

1S-1NT, 2D- 4D: Forcing raise, freak shape.

1S-1NT, 2D- 4H: Splinter for diamonds.

1S-1NT, 2D- 4S: DNE.

1S-1NT, 2D- 4NT: DNE.

1S-1NT, 2H: Natural, 5-4 or better shape. This includes 5=4=4=0 and 5=4=0=4; we always rebid hearts first with those. The auction continues:

1S-1NT, 2H- 2S: Normal nonforcing preference.

1S-1NT, 2H- 2NT: Natural and invitational. Opener's rebid of 3m over this would be forcing.

1S-1NT, 2H- 3m: Natural, NF.

1S-1NT, 2H- 3H: Natural heart raise, invitational.

1S-1NT, 2H- 3S: Natural and invitational. This specific bid shows a double fit in the majors (responder's hand must have been improved by the 2H bid). Accordingly, if opener decides to bid game, he can choose between 4H and 4S.

1S-1NT, 2H- 3NT: To play.

1S-1NT, 2H- 4C, 4D: Heart raises showing concentration of values, usually including the ace. They are not splinters because if responder has a shortness, it will usually be in spades. Slam try, too strong for 4H. Usually, the hand will be the strong 1=4=4=4 type. By a PH, these are long suits with a heart fit, since that is the only hand type strong enough to force to game here.

1S-1NT, 2H- 4H: Shot at game.

1S-1NT, 2H- 4S: DNE.

1S-1NT, 2H- 4NT: DNE.

1S-1NT, 2S: Normal 2S rebid. Guarantees 6+ spades. Further bidding is analogous to the auctions described above that began 1H-1N, 2H.

1S-1NT, 2NT: Similar to the same bid after a 1H opening and 2NT rebid.

1S-1NT, 3C or 3D: 6-5 and a max. Continuations are analogous to those after 1H-1NT, 3m. But there is also the possibility here that responder could bid 3H now. We will play that as being natural, a six-card suit, and forcing.

1S-1NT, 3H: Invitational with hearts, at least 6-5. If responder bids 4m now, that is a control-bid, a slam try for hearts.

1S-1NT, 3S: Natural, invitational. Analogous to 1H-1NT, 3H. However, note that if responder bids 4H over 3S, that is natural (4m would be a control-bid for spades).

1S-1NT, 3NT: Does not exist.

1S-1NT, 4C, 4D, 4H: Showing second suits in a 7-5 type. (Of course, if you have this type and don't consider the hand strength suitable for the four level, you can rebid at the three level instead.) After any of these bids, the cheapest bid in a suit other than one of opener's suits asks for opener's void, *if* he has only one ace. If opener has such a hand, he shows his void, via ascending numeric. Thus, opener with AQJxxxx/-x/KQJxx bids 1S-1NT, 4C-4D, 4H, and responder then places the contract. If opener has two aces, he drives to slam, bidding 5NT to show the upper void, six of his lower-ranking suit to show the lower void. With AQJxxxx/-x/AQJxx, the bidding could go 1S-1NT, 4C-4D, 5NT. If opener has two voids, hence 7-6, a bid of 5S shows that, and now a 5NT bid by responder asks for aces (!); opener bids 6C, 6D, or 6H to show 0, 1, or 2. If opener has three aces (A1098xx/-A/AJ10xx), he should pretend he has only two and show his void; he will have three aces only when his suits have less quality than responder is hoping for, so opener can hope that it will all cancel out and the correct level will be reached.

A 4NT bid by responder directly over the 4x rebid by opener says that responder has both of the short-suit aces, and so doesn't care about voids. Over this, opener shows his aces (0, 1, 2).

- 1S- 2C: Game-forcing. Usually a five-card club suit. Denies 4333 shape; with that, always bid the 2NT forcing spade raise. The only hand types that are at all likely to have a four-card suit are 2=3=4=4 and 2=4=3=4. With 1=4=4=4, start with 1NT. Even 2=3=4=4 with weak minors and strong hearts might start with 1NT, then bid 3NT.
- 1S-2C, 2D: A second four-card suit, any strength. Does not deny four hearts, as it would after a 1NT response; with 5=4=4=0 shape, we rebid 2D, because responder can then bid 2H (which is natural) to check on a heart fit.
- 1S-2C, 2D- 2H: Natural, guarantees four hearts. Opener will of course raise hearts with four. He will always raise to 3H only, since his specific shape is known (5=4=4=0); it is not necessary to use up bidding room by bidding four.
- One might ask why this 2H bid is not “fourth-suit forcing,” perhaps showing something like xxx in hearts, probing for a stopper. The answer is that responder will always have something else to bid. If he has a doubleton spade, he can bid 2S. If he has four diamonds, he can raise diamonds. If he has neither of those things, his shape must be something like 1=3=3=6. With x/xxx/Axx/AKJxxx, he can rebid 3C in comfort. And of course a forcing 2NT rebid is also available.
- 1S-2C, 2D- 2S: This bid usually shows a doubleton spade. You can bid 3S with three. Continuations are analogous to those after 1H-2C, 2D-2H. This means that a 3S bid by opener at his third turn initiates Fred/Serious.
- 1S-2C, 2D- 2NT: Natural, forcing, stopper in hearts. May have a doubleton spade; a good spade contract will not be missed, because opener can rebid 3S if he thinks 4S might be a better contract than 3NT. The range for 2NT is minimum game forcing (12+ to 16), or 20 plus. The latter will take another bid over 3NT, if that is what opener bids next.
- 1S-2C, 2D- 3C: Forcing, a sixth club at least (in principle).
- 1S-2C, 2D- 3D: Natural raise, forcing. The hand is sufficiently oriented towards diamonds that opener does not need to fear getting past 3NT, if he wants to pursue slam in diamonds.

- 1S-2C, 2D- 3H: Singleton splinter for diamonds (with 6-5 clubs/hearts, bid 2H and then more hearts).
- 1S-2C, 2D- 3S: Three-card support (occasionally four) for spades. Responder wanted to show his clubs first, in case of a good double fit that makes slam possible. Fred auction.
- 1S-2C, 2D- 3NT: Natural, 17-19 HCP, stoppers in hearts. With less or more than this range, bid 2NT first.
- 1S-2C, 2D- 4C: Solid suit, forces to 5C.
- 1S-2C, 2D- 4D: There is no obvious need for this bid, so let's say it shows 1=1=5=6 shape and invites partner to bid 4H, Redwood for diamonds. Jump bids like this one should show specific hand types.
- 1S-2C, 2D- 4H: VSS for diamonds.
- 1S-2C, 2D- 4S: Picture bid, 4=2=2=5 shape, concentrated in spades and clubs (no ace or king in the red suits). Nonforcing, but with mild interest in slam.

There is no obvious need for any bids higher than 4S in this auction, and accordingly they are left undefined.

- 1S-2C, 2H- 2H: Natural, showing four or more hearts. Opener will always show his hearts here if he has them, unless the disparity between his spade quality and his hearts is so great that he intends to play spades regardless; in that case, with 6-4 or 7-4 in the majors, he can rebid spades and ignore the hearts. He will also rebid 2D with 5=4=4=0. Another exception might be a 5=4=0=4 hand with weak hearts and great club support; it might be better to raise the clubs immediately (via a 4D splinter bid).
- 1S-2C, 2H- 2S: Natural, forcing, but not necessarily showing more than a doubleton. As usual, a bid of 3S over this by opener confirms spades and initiates a Fred auction.
- 1S-2C, 2H- 2NT: Natural, forcing. Responder has something in diamonds, as well as his clubs. Opener rebids naturally.
- 1S-2C, 2H- 3C: Natural, forcing, at least a sixth club (usually).

- 1S-2C, 2H- 3D: Forcing, not necessarily natural, but implying something in diamonds. Since a 4-4 diamond fit is impossible (opener always rebids 2D with 5=4=4=0 shape), responder cannot be trying to get to diamonds unless he next bids 4D, showing 5-6 in the minors.
- 1S-2C, 2H- 3S: Forcing, shows three-card support. Denies holding four hearts as well. Fred auction.
- 1S-2C, 2H- 3H: Nonspecific heart raise, showing four, and denying only the ability to make a 4H picture raise. This is a Fred auction, so 3NT is serious now.
- 1S-2C, 2H- 3NT: As usual, showing 17-19.
- 1S-2C, 2H- 4C: Solid suit.
- 1S-2C, 2H- 4D: Delayed splinter in support of hearts.
- 1S-2C, 2H- 4H: Picture raise of hearts. 2=4=2=5 with no A or K in the doubletons.
- 1S-2C, 2H- 4S: Picture raise of spades. 4=2=2=5 with no A or K in the doubletons.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 2S: This is the bid for any hand that does not fit into the definition of some other rebid. Denies four cards in diamonds or hearts, but does not promise a sixth spade, or deny a maximum.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 2NT: Natural, forcing. Responder has something in hearts and diamonds, as well as his clubs. Opener rebids naturally.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 3C: Natural, forcing, at least a sixth club. Opener is allowed to raise now, but will normally bid something designed to get to 3NT or a 6-2 spade fit (if he does have a sixth spade). Hence 3D and 3H are temporizing, not real suits.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 3D: Quasi-natural, shape-showing. Responder is likely to be 1=2=4=6, or perhaps 1=3=3=6 with diamonds much better than hearts. Not a 6-5 type unless responder bids diamonds again.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 3H: Quasi-natural, shape-showing. Responder is likely to be 1=4=2=6, or perhaps 1=3=3=6 with hearts much better than diamonds. Not a 6-5 type unless responder bids hearts again.

- 1S-2C, 2S- 3S: Forcing, shows three-card support. This is a Fred auction.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 3NT: As usual, showing 17-19.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 4C: Solid suit.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 4D: Delayed splinter in support of spades.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 4H: Delayed splinter.
- 1S-2C, 2S- 4S: Picture raise.
- 1S-2C, 2NT: Balanced hand, 14-15 HCP. Opener shows something in both hearts and diamonds; if he has one of those suits totally unstopped, he just rebids 2S instead. Bidding continues similarly to the auctions discussed above, except that responder can raise to 4NT naturally now with sufficient high-card points. (Also 5NT to invite seven, but that one won't come up very often.)
- 1S-2C, 3C: Natural raise, and showing extra values. With club support and nothing extra, just rebid 2S.
- 1S-2C, 3D: Splinter raise of clubs. Shows extra values. With a second suit of diamonds, even with a 6-5 type that would have rebid 3D over a 1NT response, just bid 2D first. You can rebid diamonds or spades later, and keeping the auction lower gets more information.
- 1S-2C, 3H: Splinter raise of clubs. Shows extra values.
- 1S-2C, 3S: Natural, maximum, good spade suit. We will define that as one loser at the most (KQJ10xx qualifies, but nothing weaker).
- 1S-2C, 3NT: Natural, solid spades, a singleton club, something in the other two suits. AKQJxx/Jxx/Qxx/x would be typical.
- 1S-2C, 4C: 6=1=1=5.
- 1S-2C, 4D: Void-showing splinter.
- 1S-2C, 4H: VSS.

- 1S-2C, 4S: Very long spades, suit not good enough for 3S, no club fit.
- 1S- 2D: Game-forcing. Usually five cards. Could be 2=4=4=3.
- 1S-2D, 2H: Natural. Further bidding is analogous to 1S-2C, 2H. If responder now gives preference to 2S, 3S by opener is Fred/Serious.
- 1S-2D, 2S: The nonspecific rebid, denying the ability to make any higher bid.
- 1S-2D, 2S- 2NT: Natural. Responder has something in hearts and clubs, as well as his diamonds. Opener rebids naturally.
- 1S-2D, 2S- 3C: Natural, forcing, usually five clubs. Responder would bid 2NT if possible, if he had only four clubs.
- 1S-2D, 2S- 3D: Natural, almost always a sixth diamond.
- 1S-2D, 2S- 3H: Quasi-natural. Analogous to 1S-2C, 2S-3H.
- 1S-2D, 2S- 3S: Forcing, shows three-card support. Fred auction.
- 1S-2D, 2S- 3NT: As usual, showing 17-19.
- 1S-2D, 2S- 4C: Delayed splinter for spades.
- 1S-2D, 2S- 4D: Solid suit.
- 1S-2D, 2S- 4H: Delayed splinter for spades
- 1S-2D, 2S- 4S: Picture raise (4=2=5=2).
- 1S-2D, 2NT: Usually a balanced hand, 14-15 HCP. Like 1S-2C, 2NT. This can be 5=3=1=4 shape.
- 1S-2D, 3C: We play this as a genuine high reverse. It shows at least five clubs, and extra values. Further bidding is general principles.
- 1S-2D, 3D: Natural raise, and showing extra values. Similar to a raise of a 2C response to 3C.

- 1S-2D, 3H: Splinter raise of diamonds.
- 1S-2D, 3S: Natural, maximum, good spade suit. Similar to a 3S rebid over a 2C response.
- 1S-2D, 3NT: Natural, solid spades, a singleton diamond, something in the other two suits. AKQJxx/Jxx/x/Qxx would be typical.
- 1S-2D, 4C: Splinter for diamonds.
- 1S-2D, 4D: 6=1=5=1.
- 1S-2D, 4H: VSS for diamonds.
- 1S-2D, 4S: Very long spades, suit not good enough for 3S, no diamond fit.
- 1S- 2H: Game-forcing (by UPH). Always five cards at least.
- 1S-2H, 2S: The nonspecific rebid, denying the ability to make any higher bid. However, it tends to deny holding as many as three hearts (opener is allowed to raise to 3H with a minimum).
- 1S-2H, 2S- 2NT: Natural. Responder has something in diamonds and clubs, as well as his hearts. Opener rebids naturally.
- 1S-2H, 2S- 3C: Natural, usually five clubs. Responder would bid 2NT if possible, if he had only four clubs.
- 1S-2H, 2S- 3D: Natural, usually five diamonds.
- 1S-2H, 2S- 3H: Natural, forcing, a sixth heart (at least).
- 1S-2H, 2S- 3S: Forcing, shows three-card support. Fred auction.
- 1S-2H, 2S- 3NT: As usual, showing 17-19.
- 1S-2H, 2S- 4C: Delayed splinter.
- 1S-2H, 2S- 4D: Delayed splinter.

- 1S-2H, 2S- 4H: Signoff. Responder is not interested in slam, even if opener has Hx or xxx in hearts. His hand is just barely too strong to respond 4H to 1S.
- 1S-2H, 2S- 4S: Picture raise.
- 1S-2H, 2NT: Balanced hand, 14-15 HCP.
- 1S-2H, 3C: We play this as a genuine high reverse. It shows at least five clubs, and extra values. Further bidding is general principles.
- 1S-2H, 3D: Similar to 3C, above.
- 1S-2H, 3H: Nonspecific raise. May or may not have extra values. This is a Fred auction, so we cannot play 3NT anymore.
- A 3S bid by responder now confirms a double fit in the majors. It is not a control-bid. Since 3S is used to confirm the double fit, 3NT directly over 3H here is serious, but does not deny a spade card. 4m is non-serious and likewise does not deny a spade card. Responder might have Ax, Kx, or Qx in spades and not be able to show it yet.
- 1S-2H, 3S: Natural, maximum, good spade suit.
- 1S-2H, 3NT: Natural, solid spades, a singleton heart, something in the other two suits. AKQJxx/x/Jxx/Qxx would be typical.
- 1S-2H, 4C: Splinter for hearts.
- 1S-2H, 4D: Splinter for hearts.
- 1S-2H, 4H: 5=4=2=2 with good controls, concentrated in spades and hearts. Picture bid.
- 1S-2H, 4S: Very long spades, suit not good enough for 3S, no heart fit.
- 1S-3x, Any: LJS auctions are analogous to those found above after the 1H opening. If opener, having opened 1S, rebids 3H over three of a minor, it does not necessarily show a real suit; but responder can raise if he lacks a stopper in the fourth suit, and has three- or four-card support for hearts. When this happens, opener may have five hearts, and if not, he will be

prepared to bid five of the minor. In any case, it cannot be right to bid 3NT on this auction without a stopper in the other minor.

Bear in mind that the 3H LJS response does not have to have quite the same suit quality as the 3m bids do. This is because the 3H response is directed much more toward a heart game. The 3m bids have to have the right suit quality for notrump.

RAISES AND NONRAISES AT HIGHER LEVELS

1S- 2NT: Forcing raise. The general principle here is that most bids have the same meanings as in the auction 1H-2NT, with majors exchanged. There are a few differences, but not many.

1S-2NT, 3C: A multi-way bid. Opener has all the same hand types that he would have had in the auction 1H-2NT, 3C, except that he can have shortness in hearts rather than in spades.

1S-2NT, 3C- 3D: Responder relays, so as to let opener tell him which hand type he has. In order to do this, responder does not have a hand that would attempt to sign off opposite all opening hands that were not driving to game anyway (with that, he bids 3S now).

1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3H: Opener has shortness in hearts. Responder can now attempt to sign off in 3S, indicating that he is not interested in game facing a minimum with a singleton heart; over 3S, opener will either pass or bid 4S (slam is out of the question once responder has tried to sign off in 3S).

1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3H- 3NT: Responder wants to know more about opener's hand. This implies slam interest.

1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3H-3NT, 4C: Opener has a maximum with a heart void.

1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3H-3NT, 4D: Opener has a minimum with a heart void.

1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3H-3NT, 4H: Opener has a minimum with a heart singleton, but with some shape (a minimum game acceptance hand).

- 1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3H-3NT, 4S: Opener has a dead minimum with a heart singleton, a hand that would have signed off at 3S had responder allowed it.
- 1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3H- 4C, 4D: Responder does not care whether opener has a singleton or void in hearts (almost certainly, this is because responder has the ace of hearts himself). He wants to initiate control-bidding. He is likely to be interested in hearing whether opener controls the other minor.
- 1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3H- 4S: Responder is not interested in slam facing short hearts.
- 1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3S: Opener has a minimum 5332, 5422, 6322, or 7222. (The 7222 hands perhaps should always bid game here; use your judgment.) Responder can pass now if he wishes. He can also bid 3NT to play, or control-bid another suit to indicate slam interest, or bid 4S to play.
- 1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 3NT: Opener has a void in a minor, and minimum high-card values. Responder can now relay with 4C, and opener shows his shortness via ascending numeric (4D = short diamonds, 4H = short clubs).
- 1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 4C: Opener has a club void, with maximum high cards.
- 1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 4D: Opener has a diamond void, with maximum high cards.
- 1S-2NT, 3C-3D, 4S: Opener has a balanced or semibalanced maximum, but not suitable for playing 3NT (with that he would have bid 3NT over 2NT).
- 1S-2NT, 3C- 3S: Responder is not interested in game if opener has any minimum. This means responder does not have a heart holding that is suitable for game facing a minimum with a singleton heart (responder may have something like QJxx in hearts). Opener will now pass if he has the balanced or semibalanced minimum, or if he has the singleton heart minimum. If his hand is one of the types that contains a void in a minor, he should bid 3NT, 4C, or 4D as in the above auctions, allowing responder to change his mind and look for slam if he wishes.

If opener has some other hand type that wants to drive to game, he should just bid 4S now. Please note that this will include certain hands with a singleton heart (the minimum-game type).

- 1S-2NT, 3D: A one-way bid. The only hand type it shows is a minimum with a singleton diamond. Responder can attempt to sign off in 3S (he has a minimum with wasted values in diamonds), bid 3NT naturally (he has game values, with stoppers like KQJx in diamonds), sign off in 4S, or control-bid (3H is a control-bid here). But note that if opener attempts to sign off in 3S, responder may bid 4S anyway, if he has the minimum-game hand type.
- 1S-2NT, 3H: Another one-way bid. This one shows a minimum with a singleton club. Continuations are as in the above auction, when a singleton diamond is shown.
- 1S-2NT, 3S: This shows a maximum with an unknown singleton.
- 1S-2NT, 3S- 3NT: Responder will almost always bid this with slam interest, to ask for opener's shortness. (The alternatives are to sign off in 4S with no slam interest, or 4NT Kickback RKC 1430.)
- 1S-2NT, 3S-3NT, 4C, 4D, 4H: Opener shows a maximum with, respectively, a singleton club, a singleton diamond, and a singleton heart. We use descending numeric here by analogy to the similar auction after a 1H opening.
- 1S-2NT, 3NT: This shows any maximum 5332, or a 6322 maximum with no unstopped suit. Responder can pass, sign off at 4S, ask for keycards via 4NT, or control-bid.
- 1S-2NT, 4C, 4D, 4H: These bids show maximum hands with 5-5 shape or better. There is an exception: with 7411 shape, opener can also show his second suit. The basic message of these bids is that responder should disregard cards below the ace in the suits opener has not shown.
- 1S-2NT, 4S: This bid is not used, except when responder is a PH.
- 1S-2NT, 4NT: Kickback RKC 1430.

1S-2NT, 5C, 5D, 5H: Voidwood.

1S- 3S: Mixed raise of spades (7-9 support points including distribution, four-card or better support).

1S- 3NT: Unspecified singleton splinter. We play two-tiered splinters; this is the bid to show the lower tier (10-13 HCP). Opener can refuse to ask by bidding 4S; however, he does this only when minimum and cannot see a slam even if facing the best possible singleton. Opener asks for the shortness by bidding 4C. Responder shows via the ascending numeric scheme; his shape is assumed to be of 4441 type, so he bids 4D here to show (the equivalent of) 4=1=4=4, 4H to show 4=4=1=4, and 4S to show 4=4=4=1.

1S- 4C: Maximum splinter, and the shortness will be in either clubs or hearts. Opener now can bid 4D to ask which, and to that 4H = hearts, 4S = clubs (ascending numeric order based on residue). Zooming beyond 4S also shows clubs. (We play that when zooming, you show keycards, starting with the first step beyond the normal last step. So here, 4NT would be 1 or 4, etc.)

1S- 4D: Maximum splinter, short in diamonds.

1S- 4H: To play, always. If by a PH, it shows some kind of spade fit too (Kxxxx/QJ10xxx/x/x, perhaps).

1S- 4S: To play. But alertable in our style.

1S- 4NT: Regular Blackwood; spades are not agreed. After opener shows aces, responder may bid his own suit at the five, six or seven level, to play. (He can also pass a 5C or 5D response if opener doesn't have enough aces and that is responder's suit.) Raise to 2NT first if desiring to employ RKC in spades.

PASSED-HAND RESPONSES

1S- 2 any: Five-card suit, 10-12 HCP. Opener can pass. Otherwise, his rebids are as normal, except that a 2S rebid is not forcing, and a 3S rebid does not have the usual suit-quality requirements. Opener's second bid creates a game force if it is higher than 2S, so don't respond at the two level unless you are ready to respect this.

1S- 2NT: Invitational in spades. Usually four-card support, but occasionally could be three with a side singleton. Opener rebids according to the normal schedule, except that he can jump to 4S with a hand that just wants to sign off in game and does not consider it worthwhile to hope for slam.

1S- 3S: Mixed raise.

The 3NT response is as described above, but obviously responder is more limited in high cards to splinter. The bids that are defined as upper-tier splinters are now FSJ.

Competitive Auctions After A 1S Opening

Competitive bidding after a 1S opening is analogous to that described after a 1H opening. One special treatment that applies to both auctions (invented by Eric Rodwell) is that after a double of a major opening, redouble by responder shows exactly a doubleton and some values (six or more points) and invites opener to rebid a six-card suit later on if he wishes. This means that if responder *passes* over the double, and then doubles something by them later, he is showing a singleton or void in our suit (at the three level – at the two level, it is takeout). We also play the CAPP/IMX treatment. 1M-(X), 1NT=clubs, 2C=diamonds, 2D=hearts (if the opening bid was 1H, this is an invitational raise; if it was 1S, it is trying to get to a 2H contract). A raise of one to two after the double is approximately five to nine support points (with less, pass and then support later if appropriate); bid the one-under transfer with invitational values (this is the equivalent of a single raise in an uninterrupted auction). If the opening bid was 1S, then 2H over the double is an invitational raise of spades. A jump to three of a new suit over the double is fit-showing. Four of a new suit lower than opener's, or a jump to 3S over a double of a 1H opening, is fit-showing. 2NT is a Jordan raise, invitational or better in the major, but with four-card support (the usual schedule of rebids to a 2NT raise in an uninterrupted auction applies here). 3NT over the double would, I suppose, be to play.

After a strong 1NT overcall of 1S, X = business, 2C= one-suiter, 2D = reds, 2H = hearts and clubs, 2NT = notrump cue-bid, 3C = minors, NF. If the 1NT bid is Raptor (four hearts, and an unknown minor suit at least five cards long), double shows interest in penalizing (but does not create a FP); two of a minor is an NFB, presumably in the suit the 1NT bidder does not hold; 2H is an invitational or better raise of spades, probably with only three-card support; 2S is normal; 2NT is invitational; 3m is an LJS; 3H is like 2H, but with four-card support; 3S is weak; 3NT is to play; 4m is a FSJ; 4H is a splinter; and 4S is normal. (The same ideas apply to a Raptor overcall of 1NT over a 1H opening, except that a cuebid of 2S is the only strong raise of hearts below game.)

After a 2C overcall, new suits at the two level are NF. Cuebid of 3C = limit raise or better; 3D and 3H are GF with long, strong suits (but 3D by a PH is natural, invitational, and 3H by a PH is FSJ; the reason for the difference here is that it is presumed that most hands that might want to make a LJS response to 1S would have opened 2H already, while this is not true of hands with diamonds, since we do not have a weak two in diamonds); 3S = mixed raise. Similarly, after a 2D overcall, 3D = limit or better, 3H = long, strong suit, GF (by UPH; FSJ by PH); 3S is a mixed raise. A 2NT response in either of these auctions is natural and invitational.

After a 2H overcall, new suits at the three level are forcing by UPH. Double is negative, 2S is a normal raise, 2NT is natural and invitational, 3S is a mixed raise.

Continuations after a 2S cuebid, or higher intervention, are analogous to similar auctions after a 1H opening.

If it goes 1S-(P), P-(X), opener can redouble to show six spades. A 1NT rebid shows a good hand with at least six spades and a side four-card suit. Responder should then bid the lowest suit he can stand to play in. He can give preference to spades with a doubleton. This technique is primarily used to allow opener to make a delayed rebid of 2H, showing only four, which he anticipates being able to do after the opponents settle in two of a minor, so responder should not bid higher than 2H if he has four there.

Negative doubles can lead to high-power auctions if responder bids a new suit later (as a UPH). Double followed by a new suit by a PH just shows a desire to compete, with extra shape for the double.

Here is a rule for rebidding in hearts after a 1S opening, when partner has made a negative double: Don't jump to 4H without five of them, if a jump to three is also available. An example auction is 1S-(2C), X-(P). If you bid 4H now, you show five. To show four hearts and extras, jump to three only (although the jump to three may also show five hearts and not enough strength to bid four). This makes it easier on partner, who may have a high-power double with something like 5332-type distribution and a five-card diamond suit. This way, he knows whether a real heart fit exists or not. But if you have four hearts and the auction is sufficiently jammed that you must decide whether to bid them at the four-level or not (imagine that in the previous example auction, advancer had raised to 4C), it is OK to bid 4H. Responder, with the high-power double and lacking a real heart fit, is responsible for finding something intelligent to do. Fortunately, this is not likely to be a common situation.

In fact, when the opponents overcall 2m over a 1S opening, and responder makes a negative double, opener is *expected* to jump if he can, when he has five hearts. If he rebids only 2H, that usually shows a four-card suit, and possibly only three.

Here is a rule that applies to all competitive auctions after a 1H or 1S opening (it also applies after other limited openings, such as 1D, 2C, or 2D): We are in a forcing pass situation over opponent's interference *only* if responder has shown game values with power (this excludes preemptive raises to game), or if responder has invited game and opener has accepted. In other words, if responder has merely invited and opener has not shown anything special, no forcing pass exists.