

## Constructive Agreements

This document collects all our agreements that occur in more than one place in non-competitive auctions. Specifically our opening bids and immediate responses, for example to one-major or 1NT, are elsewhere. 'Non-competitive' includes opportunistic doubles of our bids but not when the opponents open, overcall or balance.

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## General Agreements

- 4NT is always RKCB unless the sequence is specifically excluded.
- 3NT is always natural even with agreed major fits (it means poor trumps etc.) unless part of a raise sequence.
- We do not play fast arrival unless the sequence is specifically described.
- Raise freely and early; prefer 3CR raise to weak no-trump rebid, 'courtesy' raises in competition
- Light actions first and third non-vulnerable.
- Same system over natural NT overcalls as openings, same system over 3NT as over 1NT.
- When we have a game force established, we cannot play in a merely doubled part score.
- Jumps in forcing situations are splinters.

## Check-backs

- [Transfer Check-Back \(TCB\)](#)
- [Natural Check-Back \(NCB\)](#)
- [Club-Heart Check-Back \(CHCB\)](#)
- [Club-Spade Check-Back \(CSCB\)](#)
- [Club-Diamond Check-Back \(CDCB\)](#)

### **Transfer Check-Back (TCB)**

Occurs after:

- 1♣ - 1♦; 1NT
- 1♣ - 1♥; 1NT

### **Overview**

#### **Weak hands**

To respond light we must be able to get out when opener shows the big NT hand. It's not possible to declare both 2♣ and 2♦ without losing too many ways to develop stronger hands. So the classes of hand that make a light response worthwhile are:

- 1) both majors: out at 2-level: 5-5 with either suit bid first, 4=5 and 5=4 (longer first!)
- 2) 4M-6m: play 2♦ or 3♣
- 3) 4M-5♦: play 2♦ or with INV values, show the suit and play 2N/3♦
- 4) 4M-5♣: INV values, show the suit and play 2N/3♣

The triggers for these weak get-outs are 2♣ and 2♠ (also via 2♣).

#### **Invitational Majors**

If game is touch and go then ensuring opener declares has greater value. Therefore there is artifice to avoid responder naming either suit. (Though the damage is already done in 1♣ - 1♥; 1NT - 2♣; 2♦ - 2NT; the sequences are kept in line to ease memory.)

- 1) 4-4 respond 1♦, rebid 2♥. Opener's 2♠ forcing with fit, else 2N/3N (with some specials)
- 2) 5-4 show longer first, then 2♣->2NT
- 3) 5-3-3-2 transfer back to major, 2NT

#### **Invitational 5-5s**

Able to play 3-level in either suit; all via 2♣

#### **Strong hands**

Bid - in the main - as one would over a no-trump opener, transferring to show 5+M and bidding a second suit FG. The exception is that immediate jumps are 5-5 FG.

#### **4-4-4-1s**

Some gaps for these but easy does it...

**Over either of responder's major**

1♣ 1Red

1N

2♣ puppet to 2♦.

Two-suited, invitational unless responder passes or bids 2♥ (distributional both majors) and only a game force opposite no extra values if responder has a good diamond canapé.

Pass diamonds

2♥ 4(+) = 5 (responder has ♥) / 5 = 5 (♠) majors NF

2♠ minor canapé: to play clubs (4-6) or INV+ diamonds

2N min no ♦ fit

3♣ max or ♦ fit

Responder continues with 3m NF or shortage NGF  
(3M = ♣, 3OM = OM)

2N 5-4 Majors, INV

3m 5-5 INV

3M ??

3OM 5=6 (♥) / 5(6) - 5 (♠) INV

3N ??

2♠ 4♠ club canapé INV+

2N min no ♣ fit

3♣ min clubs – over this and 2NT above, responder continues with shortage

3NT max

3L stops

2N INV, 4M no extra lengths

3m 5♠/5m F1

3M ??

3OM 5=6 (♥) / 5(6) - 5 (♠) F1

3NT To play

4♣ Gerber

**Responder shows hearts**

1♣ 1♦

1N

2♦ TRF 5+ hearts, any strength

Pass weak

2♠ 4=5 FG

2N 5-3-3-2 INV

3m FG

3M ??

3N 5-3-3-2 game choice

2♥ 4=4 majors, also carrying 4=4-4-1/4=4-5-0 short minor; now:

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- 2♠ fit F1; responder continues naturally, if has a strong three suiter he should splinter (4m) otherwise 2NT is min 4-4-3-2, 3L is game try, 3♠ NF.
- 2NT min no fit; responder bids naturally: 3m = 4 cards, 4-4-4-1, 3M = 5 minor NGF [also linked]
- 3♣ min nat; nothing special and responder may pass, with 4+ clubs responder should raise, 3M are stoppers concerned for diamonds with club support (3 cards).
- 3♦ max no fit; possible minor interest opposite 3-suiter. Responder's 3M is NGF [link] for minors.
- 3♠ super fit; now 3NT slam try, 4m splinter, 4♥ good hand no first round controls.
- 3NT max, no real interest opposite 3-suiter (too many/wrong minor cards).

### Responder shows spades

1♣ 1♦

1N

2♦ 4+ hearts, FIT TRANSFER: opener bids 2♥ with fit (responder may pass) else 2♠. Continuations establish a game force.

2♥ TRF 5+ spades:

Pass weak

2N 5-3-3-2 INV (possibly 4m)

3m FG

3M ??

3N 5-3-3-2 game choice

### Natural Check-Back (NCB)

Occurs after:

- 1♦ - 1♥; 1NT
- 1♦ - 1♠; 1NT
- 1♥ - 1♠; 1NT

### Overview

2♣ is a puppet to 2♦ either to play there or with invitational values

2♦ is game forcing by an un-passed hand

2♦ by a passed hand is natural not forcing, constructive opposite diamonds

Immediate 2M are NF

Immediate 3 new-suit, 5-5 FG

Because of the majors-first style, there are some gaps

Where sequences are logically equivalent, going via 2♣ 'adds a card'

1X 1Y

1NT

2♣ Most invitations

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2♦	ART FG
2M	NF, to be passed
2♥	NF 5-4 if a new suit (1♦ – 1♠), 3-card support prepared to play 4-3 (1♥ – 1♠)
2♠	?? in 1♦ – 1♥. Club canapé? (This would be 4=4 majors but that's of no interest.)
2N	INV no extra length
3L	FG Distributional – includes 3M and 3♦ after 1♦ start

### After 2♣

Opener bids 2♦ unless he has all of:

A maximum

Good diamonds

Extra cards in hearts (2♥) or hearts and spades (2♠)

Responder may correct a break to 3♦ to play, pass or bid 2♠ with the same meaning as below otherwise select a game.

Over the usual 2♦ response:

1X 1Y

1NT 2♣

2♦

Pass diamonds

2M 5 cards, NF INV

2♥ NF INV; if a new suit, 5-4, if opener's 5-3

2♠ NF INV; if a new suit, 5-4, if opener's 5-3

2NT NF INV with 5M

3L NF INV

### After 2♦

We'll bid the best we can. Opener can start by naming any extra length he has.

### ***Club-Heart Check-Back (CHCB)***

Occurs only after:

- 1♣ – 1♦; 1♥

Here responder's 1♠ announces a fifth heart and initially searches for the best partial but is unlimited. Because responder can simply pass 1♥, it suggest some values.

### Overview

1♣ 1♦

1♥

1♠ 5+ hearts, at least some small aspiration

1NT To play

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2♣	To play
2♦	Natural, to play
2♥	NF, to be passed, designed to prevent easy competition
2♠	??
2N	INV no extra length
3L	FG Distributional – includes 3♥ and 3♣

### Responder's artificial 1♠ rebid

1♣	1♦
1♥	1♠
1NT	doubleton heart, normal hand
2♣	good/long clubs, prefer 2♣ to 1NT
2♦	Good hand with 3♥
2♥	Normal hand with 3♥

### ***Club-Spade Check-Back (CSCB)***

Occurs only after:

- 1♣ – 1♥; 1♠

Here responder's 2♦ sets up a game force usually based on high-card strength. Otherwise bids are much the same as CHCB. Note we can not play 2♦ here and (currently) haven't got a path to play in 3♦.

### Overview

1♣	1♥
1♠	
1NT	To play
2♣	To play
2♦	Artificial game force, opener rebids: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2♥ natural, 4♥ not 3♠</li><li>2♠ 3 card spade support</li><li>2NT no distributional feature</li></ul>
2♥	Natural, NF (opener may be 1=4=3=5 or 2=4=2=5)
2♠	NF, to be passed, designed to prevent easy competition
2N	INV may have extra length
3L	FG Distributional – includes 3♥ and 3♣

### ***Club-Diamond Check-Back (CDCB)***

Occurs only after:

- 1♣ – 1♠; 1NT

Currently 2♣ and 2♦ are to play, 2NT is INV and everything else is natural and FG

## Fourth Suit Forcing (FSF)

Nearly all hands which are either too strong to make a non-forcing bid (other than those which can simply bid game) or unsure of the best denomination should bid the fourth suit. A bid of the fourth suit followed by 3NT does not promise extra values – this simply shows doubt about the right strain.

### **Requirements:**

If the fourth suit is 2♦ or below, responder is invitational or better and FSF is F1. If the fourth suit is 2♥ and above, it is FG.

Most auctions starting 1♣ are excluded as TRF complete, strong NT rebid or reverse situations prevail. The only FSF auction is 1♣ – 1♦; 1♣ – 2♦; and therefore treated as per the worked example.

### **Developments following FSF:**

In short, FSF auctions are always FG when the fourth suit is 2♥ and above. When it is 2m, bids at the two level by opener in response to the fourth suit of his first suit and responder's suit are NF (all continuations by responder are now FG except a raise of the suit bid by opener); all other bids by opener are FG.

### **Example auction 1♥ – 1♠; 2♣ – 2♦.**

Opener rebids as follows:

2♥ (NF) – This is what opener bids when he is stuck (the default action); although he may well have a sixth heart, this is not guaranteed; there is no alternative with, for example:

♠ 97  
♥ KJ1097  
♦ Q3  
♣ AQ72

Since opener can have a hand like this, and responder could have a balanced 11-count, this sequence should be non-forcing. Since the non game-forcing types for responder will have heart tolerance, anything other than 3♥ by responder now should be forcing to game. 3♦ is repeat fourth suit forcing, asking for more information.

2♠ (NF) – In principle, this shows spade support (doubleton honour) and a minimum, and is non-forcing, something like:

♠ K7  
♥ KJ1032  
♦ 75  
♣ AJ72

Again, responder is assumed to be relatively well prepared for this, and all bids other than 3♠ are game-forcing.

2NT (NF) – This shows a diamond stop and a relatively minimum hand. All continuations are FG.

3♣ (FG) – This shows the extra club, and is game-forcing. It may or may not contain a diamond guard; although that is what partner is usually most interested in, other features of your hand may be more important, or your hand may be unsuitable for no-trump play:



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♠ 72  
♥ KQJ108  
♦ A  
♣ AQJ107

This has a diamond guard, but 3NT does not express the character of the hand very well. You can always bid no-trumps later. Note that weaker 5/5 shapes (without enough to force to game) will have to bid 2♥.

3♦ (FG) – Artificial, 'fifth suit forcing', catering for hands like:

♠ K7  
♥ AQJ107  
♦ Q8  
♣ KQ62

A raise of the fourth suit is always 'fifth suit forcing' (including 1♣-1♦-1♥-1♠-2♠). To find a 4-4 fit in the fourth suit, opener rebids in NTs with his 4-card holding. Responder's (the FSF bidder) bids in the fourth suit are now natural, at the minimum level showing (at least) four. For example, in the auction 1♦-1♠-2♣-2♥-2NT, where opener has shown a heart stop (though not necessarily a minimum hand – the auction is game forcing), 3♥ by responder is natural and forcing, showing a 4-card holding or better (4♥ would show at least 5/5 in the majors and is NF).

3♥ (FG) – Strong heart suit and extra values, e.g.

♠ 72  
♥ AQJ1097  
♦ 6  
♣ AKJ2

Clubs or spades may still become trumps.

3♠ (FG) – Since 2♠ would be non-forcing, and show only two spades, bid 3♠ on hands with 3-card support originally too strong to raise 1M to 2M, such as:

♠ AQ2  
♥ AJ1076  
♦ 2  
♣ KQ42

Spades will not necessarily be trumps.

3NT (NF) – This shows a sound stop and should be restricted to about the 14-17 HCP range.

### ***Rebids, raises, and jump shifts in the fourth suit:***

Responder's jump in the fourth suit is a splinter in support of opener's last bid suit. By general agreement, a double jump would be XKCB.

Over opener's NT responses to FSF, all responder's rebids in the fourth suit are natural. Over other bids by opener, responder's rebid of the fourth suit at the minimum level is repeat fourth suit forcing (artificial, asking responder to continue describing his hand); a jump rebid of the fourth suit is also natural, showing a marked two-suiter.

Opener's raise of the fourth suit is 'fifth suit forcing'; a double raise is natural, showing a powerful hand.