

The Methods

This document includes all treatments after our side opens where there is not sufficient generality for it to appear in *Constructive Agreements* or *Competitive Agreements* (at times an arbitrary distinction).

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Overview

Four card majors, strongish no-trump. Balanced hands open naturally and major-first if weak, 1NT if mid-range (14-16/15-17 [3rd/4th]) and 1♣ with 17-19 any balanced, no 5M but including some 5♦-3-3-2.

With 4-4-4-1s, minimums open one-major if sensible (in weak no-trump range) otherwise one minor.

Opening bids

- 1♣ 17-19 HCP otherwise natural ('good' 17s with 15-17 NT)
- 1♦/M Natural, 4+; majors first on weak no-trump hands
- 1NT 14-16 1st/2nd, 15-17 3rd/4th [2]
- 2♣ Artificial: 23+ Bal (NF 2NT rebid over negative) or FG any
- 2♦/M Weak, 3-11 according to vulnerability and position
- 2NT 20-22 Balanced [1]
- 3L Natural, pre-emptive; by modern standards, 'undisciplined' rather than 'wild' 'random'.
- 3NT 1st and 2nd positions only, ART, solid major, no ace or king outside [1]
- 4L Natural, pre-emptive; more frequent (in a minor especially) than prevailing practice.
- 4NT Asks for specific aces (5♣ = none)

Documentation

Some treatments are sufficiently simple to warrant no further coverage than that which appears on the system card and these are superscripted 'sc' above. This file is completed by four others:

1. *System Card*
2. *1NT Complete*
3. *Constructive Agreements*
4. *Competitive Agreements*

One Club

Transfers responses. These are 'complete with weak no-trump' – not 'complete with fit' (Gold/Townsend use this approach, mainly at TT's insistence).

At the moment all 11-13 with 4M are opened with 1M however nasty. Therefore we promise clubs with 1♣ – 1Red; 2M.

After 1♣:

1♦/♥ ♥/♠ 4+ may have longer minor

1♥/♠ 2/3 11-13 BAL or possibly 14-15 with 3♥/♠ 5+clubs

1♠ 4+clubs 4+♠

1NT 17-19 Bal

2♣ clubs single suited

2♦/♥ Extra values, 4+ & 5+clubs

2♥/♠ 4 card support with 4+ clubs, minimum

2♠ FG

2NT 16+ long clubs, 3M 'Nightmare Hand'

3♣ Weak

3Red TRF FG

3NT Poor major, game suggestion

Err, that's it

3♣ 16+ 6+clubs etc.

3L Unbalanced shortage

1♠ Diamonds, 4+, usually 5+ if with 4M then FG.

1NT 17-19

2♣ Clubs

2♦ All minimum hands

2M Extra values, 4+ & 5+clubs

2NT Extra values, 4+♦ & 5+♣

3♣ Clubs

3♦ Nat INV

1NT No major, 7-11 Bal

Natural

2♣ Clubs, FG any shape with clubs longest

2♦/♥ Transfer: 4M possibly on 4♣ in 4-4-4-1

2♠ Weak NT, no major, no shortage (perhaps 5-4 minors)

2NT 17-19

3♣ Single suited (6+♣), no shortage

3L SPL in single suited (perhaps 6-4 minors)

2♦/♥ TRF, 6+ 8-11

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- 2NT ask, same as opening two
- 2♠ Balanced INV no major
Opener sets contract or bids naturally FG
- 2NT Two way;
(1) Balanced, FG 4+clubs, 13-17
(2) 0-4 weak long clubs, not suitable for 3NT opposite 17-19
- 3♣ Obligatory
- 3♦ 16-17 no major
 - 3M 13-15 4M
 - 3NT 13-15 No major
 - 4♣ RKCB clubs
 - 4L Exclusion KC
- 3♣ clubs 5-8, pre-emptive opposite weak no-trump with clubs but having play for 3NT opposite 17-19
Natural continuations looking towards 3NT

Opponents Overcall

We retain 'system on' after an opponent's double and simple red-suit overcall. However, responder shows some values and crucially, when 4th hand passes, we complete 'free transfers' with three card support and rebid 1NT with a weak no-trump. In addition, opener may rebid 1NT with weak-no-trump values, even after RHO's positive action (e.g. 1♣ (X) 1♦* (1♠); 1NT – presumably with good suitability).

Responder's introduction of a major is always ambiguous as to length. That is, there are no sequences that show exactly four spades or promise at least five. Therefore support doubles obtain.

Double of 4th hand's bid is equivalent to raise to 2M with three trumps if all these occur:

1. We have laid claim to exactly one major
2. The level of 2-major is still open (and will show 4+ trumps)
3. Whether the major, was introduced naturally, via a transfer or a negative double

Where we have a choice of redoubling or completing for support, completion is usual and shows a weak no-trump, redouble shows support and 17-19.

- 1♣ (X) XX Values, quite strong (responder must cater to unattractive 11-counts that will have nowhere to go), say 11+. Passes of non-jump bids are forcing and doubles are penalty.
- 1♦/♥ 4+ ♥/♠ (usually at most 5), **opener's completion is 3CR**, 1NT is weak, with 17-19 opener rebids 2NT
 - 1♠ 4+ diamonds; opener's 1NT is weak, with 17-19 opener rebids 2NT, 2♦ shows more support, say Hxx or better
 - 1NT Natural, 7-11
 - 2♣ Weak raise, say 5-8
 - 2♦/♥ 6+ ♥/♠, wide range
 - 2♠ Balanced, INV+, anti-positional no-trump, some club fit
 - 2NT Sound raise
 - 3♣ Pre-emptive

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		3♦/M	Fit – 6M-4♣
		3NT	Natural?!
1♣	(1♦)	X	4+ hearts (usually at most 5), opener's completion is 3CR , 1NT is weak, with 17-19 opener rebids 2NT.
		1♥	4+ spades (usually at most 5), opener's completion is 3CR , 1NT is weak, with 17-19 opener rebids 2NT.
		1♠	4+ diamonds; potentially no alternative with values, no major and no stop.
		1NT	Natural, 7-11
		2♣	Weak raise, say 5-8
		2♦/♥	6+ ♥/♠, wide range
		2♠	'Cue-bid' – constructive club raise
		2NT	Natural, limit
		3♣	Pre-emptive
		3♦/M	Fit – 6M-4♣
		3NT	Natural?!
1♣	(1♥)	X	4+ spades (usually at most 5), opener's completion is 3CR , 1NT is weak, with 17-19 opener rebids 2NT.
		1♠	Values, at most three spades, most likely minors, no alternative with no major and no stop.
		1NT	Natural
		2♣	Weak raise, say 5-8
		2♦	Natural, F1
		2♥	6+♠, wide range
		2♠	'Cue-bid' – constructive club raise
		2NT	Natural
		3♣	Pre-emptive
		3♦	Fit
		3♥	Shortage
		3♠	Fit – 6♠-4♣
		3NT	Natural

Simple transfers stop here and after overcalls of 1♠ and higher sequences are standard and similar to 1♦. For example:

1♣	(1♠)	X	Almost always 4+ hearts. If advancer doubles or bids below 2♥, opener's (re)double is support
		1NT...	Treatments are same as a heart overcall with obvious adjustments (2♥ = F1 etc.)
1♣	(1NT)	X	Values, penalty seeking. Doubles of all non-jump bids are penalty (whether natural or artificial).
		2L	NAT, NF

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- 1♣ (2M) X Negative; because opener can have a 3=3=4=3 weak no-trump, 2NT is just that, an embarrassed scramble without 4OM, 4 diamonds or a decent club suit.
- 1♣ (2♦) X Majors, at least 4-3. Opener's 2NT may lack a full stop. Responder shouldn't bid 3NT without one himself or checking via 3♦.

But there are more transfers after jump-overcalls. These are in *Competitive Agreements* (and on the system-card).

- 1♣ (2M) 2♠ NF
 2NT Clubs, INV+
 3♣ Clubs, NF, courtesy raise
 3♦ Diamonds, F1
 (2♥) 3♥ Spades, INV+
 (2♠) 3♥ Natural, F1
 3♠ SPL raise of clubs (with respect to M)
 3NT Nat
 4♣ Key card for clubs
 4♦ Fit jump
 4M Void SPL raise of diamonds
 4OM Natural
- 1♣ (2♦) 2M NAT NF
 2NT Clubs, INV+
 3♣ Clubs, NF, courtesy raise
 3♦ Hearts, INV
 3♥ Spades, INV+
 3♠... As above; 4M = NAT, 4♦ = void raise

One Diamond

Pretty much standard; 1♦ could be longest-highest-ranking suit in a weak no-trump. Without the desire to preserve siding options after a transfer, we are relatively unburdened by artificiality.

- 1♥/♠ ♥/♠ 4+ may have longer minor
- 1NT 11-13, Natural Check-Back
 - 2M May be 3CR in suitable weak-no-trump
 - 2♥ (Over 1♠) reverse, Blackout etc.
 - 2NT BAL 17-19, usually 6 (occ. 5 good) diamonds. Responder's 3♣ is simple Woolf
 - 2♠/3♣ FG jump-shift
 - 3M Limit
 - 3OM SPL raise of responder's major
 - 3NT Solid diamonds, good hand
- 1NT Natural, 6-12
- 2♣ Natural, FG
- 2♦ Inverted but forcing only to 2NT or 3♦, does not deny 4-major. Few special agreements; only these sequences may be passed below game:
- 1♦ - 2♦; 2NT
 - 1♦ - 2♦; 3♦
 - 1♦ - 2♦; Any - 2NT
 - 1♦ - 2♦; Any - 3♦
- 2M Strong jump-shift. Spades followed by hearts is natural, 5-5, major followed by diamonds (or clubs) is primary diamond support (with club fragment/control?). Major followed by no-trump is 6-3-2-2, 15-18.
- 2NT Balanced game force, may have diamond support
- 3♣ No major limit raise in diamonds
- 3♦ Pre-emptive
- 3M SPL, FG

Opponents Overcall

In tune with the simplicity of constructive sequences, standard agreements obtain in competitive auctions. Negative doubles strongly imply the other major (or majors) and bids of an implied suit 'support' responder. That doesn't extend to the fourth suit and that strain is opener bidding cards in front of him (and jumps therefore are FG).

- 1♦ (X) XX Values, quite strong (responder must cater to unattractive 11-counts that will have nowhere to go), say 11+. Passes of non-jump bids are forcing and doubles are penalty.
- 1M Natural, F1 (by UPH)
 - 1NT Natural
 - 2♣ Lead-directing some diamond tolerance; expects a raise or retreat to 2♦

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		2♦	May be shaded
		2M	Fit, 5M with 4+D, NF opposite 3 rd seat opener
		2NT	Sound raise
		3♣	Fit
		3♦	Pre-emptive
		3M	More of a fit – 6M-4♦
		3NT	Natural?!
1♦	(1♥)	X	4 spades. If advancer raises, doubles or bids below 2♠, opener's (re)double is take-out/values <i>not support</i> .
		1♠	5+ spades. If advancer raises, doubles or bids below 2♠, opener's (re)double is support.
		1NT	Natural
		2♣	Natural, F1 only
		2♦	Natural
		2♥	LROB
		2♠/3♣	Fit
		2NT	Natural
		3♦	Pre-emptive
		3♥	Shortage
		3♠	More of a fit – 6♠-4♦
		3NT	Natural?!
1♦	(1♠)	X	Almost always 4+ hearts. If advancer doubles or bids below 2♥, opener's (re)double is support
			Other treatments are same as a heart overcall
1♦	(1NT)	X	Values, penalty seeking. Doubles of all non-jump bids are penalty (whether natural or artificial).
		2L	NAT, NF
1♦	(2♣)	X	Majors, at least 4-3
1♦	(2M)	X	Negative; because opener can have a 3=3=4=3 weak no-trump, 2NT is just that, an embarrassed scramble without 4OM, 4 clubs or a decent diamond suit.

There are transfers after jump-overcalls. These are in *Competitive Agreements* (and on the system-card).

1♦	(2M)	2♠	NF
		2NT	Clubs, INV+
		3♣	Diamonds, INV+
		3♦	Diamonds, courtesy raise
	(2♥)	3♥	Spades, INV+
	(2♠)	3♥	Natural, F1
		3♠	SPL raise of diamonds

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3NT	Nat
4♣	Fit jump
4♦	Key card for diamonds
4M	Void SPL raise of diamonds
4OM	Natural

One Major

Artificial responses in the 'Ambra' scheme. These include FG responses alongside 9-11 6-card length (weaker still with hearts over 1♠). That still leaves some gaps and there is a wide-ranging, but non-forcing, 1NT response, say 6-12. 2NT is limit raise or better, jumps are limited 'fit-invites' with three card support.

Responses

After either major:

- 2M, 3M, 4M are all natural raises
- 2NT is a limit raise or better
- 3M+1 is a 5-trump splinter
- 4m is a void
- 3m is NF, 9-11, 6-card suit (occasionally 5) exactly 3M
- Jump in other-major is similar to 3m
- 1NT is wide range on fit-less hands without length
- 2♣ may be a relay with at most 4OM

After 1♥

- 1♠ 4+ spades. Hands with 5+ spades and game values have to start with 1♠. With game values and exactly 4♠, respond 2♣
- 1NT NF, wide range, 6-12. It's not necessary to bid 1NT with a decent suit and values (9+) but some hands but, for example ♠AQx ♥Jx ♦Kxxxx ♣Qxx is 1NT.
- 2♣ Either:
- a) FG clubs
 - b) 6+ clubs, 9-11
 - c) FG Balanced
- 2♦ Natural:
- a) FG diamonds
 - b) 6+ diamonds, 9-11
- 2♥ NF, 3-card raise not unusual (classic honour-third and small doubleton)
- 2♠ NF, 9-11, 5+ cards, exactly 3♥
- 2NT 4CR, Limit-raise-or-better
- 3m NF, 9-11, 6-card suit (occasionally 5) exactly 3M
- 3♥ 4CR, 8-loser hand, semi-pre-emptive
- 3♠ FG 5-trump splinter in undisclosed suit
- 3NT Void spade
- 4m Void in named minor
- 4♥ 4+ card raise, 7-loser hand, semi-pre-emptive

After 1♠

- 1NT NF, wide range, 6-12, as over 1♥.
- 2♣ Either:
 - a) FG clubs
 - b) 6+ clubs, 9-11
 - c) FG Balanced
- 2♦ Hearts (transfer):
 - a) 5+ hearts, 10+
 - b) 6+ hearts, 8-10
- 2♥ Diamonds:
 - a) FG diamonds
 - b) 6+ diamonds, 9-11
- 2♠ NF, 3-card raise not unusual (classic honour-third and small doubleton)
- 2NT 4CR, Limit-raise-or-better
- 3m NF, 9-11, 6-card suit (occasionally 5) exactly 3M
- 3M 4CR, 8-loser hand, semi-pre-emptive
- 3NT FG 5-trump splinter in undisclosed suit
- 4m Void in named minor
- 4♥ Void heart
- 4♠ 4+ card raise, 7-loser hand, semi-pre-emptive

Scanian 2NT – Limit Raise or Better

1M – 2NT is a limit-raise-or-better. The Scanian idea is to disclose as little information as possible in borderline game and slam decisions. That means some of the sequences are codified (though leaning on natural response) and we play a version that opts for simple choices where proffered.

Note that a 4CM will always bid 3♦ or 3M – everything else shows 5+ major.

- 1M 2NT
- 3♣ FG not suitable for descriptive game-going actions below
 - 3♦ serious slam-try, now:
 - 3♥ waiting, not 5-4-3-1
 - 3♠ asks for shortage, takes control
 - 3NT no shortage, minimum
 - 4m/M shortage NGF
 - 3♠ Short OM in 5-4-3-1
 - 3NT relay
 - 4m natural length
 - 3NT 4OM in 5-4-3-1, minor shortage
 - 4♣ relay
 - 4♦ short diamond
 - 4M short club

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- 4m shortage in 5-4-3-1, 4-other-minor, 3OM
- 3♥ non-serious slam-try – based on honours or shortage
- 3♠ asks for shortage, 3NT = no, then NGF
- 3♣ hate the slam thing altogether
- 3NT 10 cards in majors (5-5/6-4)
- 4m Nat 5-5 good suits
- 3♦ Two way: (a) good minimum (possibly Weak NT) or (b) void. Responder:
 - declines with 3M (opener's 3NT to play)
 - accepts with 3NT allowing void showing
 - tries for slam with 3OM asking for shortage (cheapest = no, others NGF)
 - tries for slam with 4minor natural
- 3M Bad minimum, responder:
 - passes or bids game (inc. 3NT) to play
 - initiates control-bidding (opener's 3NT encourages)
- 3OM 17-19 5-3-3-2 responder:
 - bids 4M with no slam interest
 - shows shortage (cheapest = no, others NGF)
- 3NT/4m 5-5 (M/♣/♦) or 4-6 (4-card OM), responder:
 - control-bids
 - 4NT RKC

Scanian Game Try

After 1M – 2M, the cheapest bid (2♠/NT) is an invite to make a game try. Unusually other bids are directed towards slam (after 1♥ – 2♥; 2NT shows spades).

Opener's 2♣ rebid – Häxan

Opener's 2C rebid is artificial and covered elsewhere

Symmetric Relays after 2♣

Responder may continue to relay for exact shape, slam disposition and key-cards or alternatively revert to natural bidding, based on these hand-types.

1M – 2♣

- a) FG clubs
- b) 6+ clubs, 9-11
- c) FG Balanced, responder may continue to relay

In the relay response, opener shows the second longest suit, then the fragment (if relevant) and finally the pattern. After that the Deadwood principle sets a trump suit but allows opener to indicate minimum/lack of suitability. Responder can continue to relay on denial cue-bidding / spiral-scan principle.

To relay or not to relay?

It is a good idea to start with 2♣ instead of showing diamonds when you have only five. Certainly much easier over 1♠ where the alternative is 2♥. However, it may need some experience to develop the preferred course on say 3=4=5=1 or 2=4=5=2.

It is possible to relay with any shape and it is possible to set any suit where opener has at least 3-card support as trumps. However I suggest until we build up experience with the method we avoid using 2♣ as "any game force". Consequently we still reply naturally with a 5CM to 1M (1♠ – 2♦ with 5+ hearts and 1♥ – 1♠ with 5+ spades).

Imperfect relays:

The method is not complete in that it is not possible to show all patterns. If you hold an unlisted shape you will have to do the best you can. Most of these will be single-suited and using 2NT (after showing range) and jumping is a useful 'out'.

Exiting early:

Failure to relay denies the strength to do but relaying doesn't promise strength. In general where it is safe to let opener bid out his shape, responder should normally allow it. Breaking the chain to 2/3NT or 3M generally shows a minimum.

Suit-setting and sign-offs:

If responder relays to discover opener's pattern he may set trumps and continue a key-card/suitability investigation or alternatively, arrange the final contract. There are two schemes to do this.

Because responder indicates a fit for 5-4 majors, in this case only the mechanism for suit-setting is different. In that special case only, 3NT and 4♦ are not part of the sign-off mechanism. This difference is important as well as a corollary of the responder's choice of discovery relay. When opener has both majors he has no range definition available. Thus being able to set trumps earlier provides valuable space for opener to be able to indicate his slam suitability (or lack of it).

General principle: responder cannot set as opener's doubleton or fewer holding as trumps.

Deadwood

Opener replies with key-cards in step fashion:

- Step-1: bad hand for slam (denies 3 key-cards)
- Step-2: 0 or 3 key-cards
- Step-3: 1 or 4 key-cards
- Step-4: 2 key-cards no trump-queen
- Step-5: 2 key-cards plus trump-queen

After step-1: responder may enforce a key-card response with the cheapest bid that isn't in the agreed trump suit. Bids between that ask and agreed suit seek ace/king in the named suit.

After a positive step (or the answer to a repeat ask) all bids not in the agreed trump suit are spiral-scans.

Opener is at least 5-4 majors, responder indicated a fit (2♠ second relay)

1. Cheapest bid is Deadwood for hearts

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2. Next-cheapest is Deadwood for spades
3. 4♥ is a sign-off unless opener is 16+
4. 4♠ is a sign-off unless opener is 16+
5. Bids between 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 are undefined

All other routes

1. 3NT is always natural
2. 4♦ is an end-signal, requiring 4♥ after which responder sets final contract
3. Cheapest bid is Deadwood for longest suit
4. Next-cheapest is Deadwood for next-longest suit
5. Next-cheapest is Deadwood for next-longest suit, etc.

Natural no-trumps:

Where 2NT or 3NT is natural (unlimited / 12-15 resp.):

- 1) 1M – 2♣; 2♦ – 2NT
- 2) 1M – 2♣; 2♥ – 2NT
- 3) 1M – 2♣; 2♥ – 3NT
- 4) 1M – 2♣; 2♠ – 3NT
- 5) 1M – 2♣; 3♣ – 3NT

The basic rule is that opener shows shortages but there is no coding so bids of known suits are extra length. Opener shows no extras at the 3-level and is not obliged to bid a bad 5-card suit in (1) with 5-3-3-2. Bids of known suits at the 4-level are contract improvements (6-card major, 5-5) but shortage bids show higher-range. Raising 3NT to 4NT is invitational, suitable but not necessarily balanced.

One-Major – Two Clubs

General principle: the shape description is symmetric. In relay jargon that means the path to certain information-points – or 'flags' – defines the hand. The flag always means the same thing.

Because responder may simply have clubs, higher responses show that suit. That is, the early 'outs' show other suits or a club shortage. There are two principle schemes, major-minor and

Symmetric flags; initial responses and major-minor

- 2♦ – 11-15, additional signal, 5+ major, not 4OM
- 2♥ – 11+, second suit = OM or any weak NT (4/5M 11-13)
- 2♠ – second suit = diamonds
- 2NT – single-suited
- 3♣ – short other minor (clubs or if no diamond or OM length, short diamond)
- 3♦ – 5-4-2-2
- 3♥ – 5-4-3-1
- 3♠ – 6-4-2-1
- 3N – 5-5-2-1

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- 4♣ – 5-5-3-0

Thus opener's immediate rebid of 2♠ or higher shows 16+. Similarly, failure to bid 2♠ denies diamonds and, having skipped 2♥, other major too. Thus opener's second length must be in clubs.

Responder has real clubs

When responder has clubs there is always a way of showing a distributional club hand.

- Over 2♦ (11-15):
 - 2♠ ART, all club hands not suitable for 3♦
 - 3♦ clubs and diamonds
- Over 2♥ (both majors or weak NT):
 - 3♥/♠ **splinters!**
 - 3♦ clubs and diamonds
- Over 2NT (not via 2♦, so 16+, possibly 17-19 5-3-3-2)
 - 3♣ slam try with short major
 - 3♦ slam try with doubleton major (this may also be strong BAL)

Opener shows a minimum

1M	2♣
2♦	11-15, 5+ major, not 4OM
2♥	Relay
	2♠... Flags as above
2♠	Clubs; natural continuations
2NT	FG Balanced min or 18+; natural continuations
3♣	NF clubs 9-11
3♦	Minimum game force with min fit (i.e. 5-3 or 4-4)
3M	3-card raise
3OM	Shortage
3NT	Balanced 15-17, no major fit opposite 5-4
4M	3-card raise, sign-off

Opener shows both majors or WNT

1M	2♣
2♥	11+ majors 5-4 or better or WNT.
2♠	Relay, either, <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Major fit opposite minimum length (5-4)2. Slam try opposite weak no-trump (and so possible 4-4 minor fit), say 18+ Note that in (1) responder cannot continue relaying then bid 3NT to play because 3NT is part of suit-setting. There is an 'out' to show (2) via 3♦ after opener's minimum with shape (2NT rebid).
2NT	FG Balanced, no major fit opposite 5-4, limited to 12/13-17 as above

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- 3♣ Maximum; 3♦ relays for distributional surprises:
 - 3M Natural, 6+
 - 3♥ Natural, 5-5
 - 3♠ Natural, 5=6
 - 3NT Natural, 5-4-2-2
 - 4m Natural, 4m in 5-4-4-0
 - 4L Pure, as 3-level
 - 4NT Better than 3NT
- 3♦ 11-15, no extra major length but not 5-4-2-2 or 4M (3NT). If responder is worried about a minor shortages he can ask with 3♥;
 - 3♠ Short club (5-4=3=1)
 - 3NT Short diamond (5-4=1=3)
- 3♥ Extra heart (5=5/4=6)
- 3♠ Extra spade (6=4/5=6)
- 3NT Minimum, 4M or 5-4-2-2 or otherwise suitable for 3NT
- 3♣ NF clubs 9-11
- 3M Clubs, shortage!
- 3NT Balanced 15-17, no major fit opposite 5-4, slam unsuitable

Symmetric flags; both majors after responder's 2♠ (major fit or 18+ BAL)

The symmetric responses are one step higher but on the same plan as the major-minor flags as before. If responder has a suit it is more likely to be clubs (than diamonds) so under the principle of "bad news arrives first", the first shape-showing step is again short clubs, thereafter logically equivalent.

The idea is that the step lost in having to insert the 2♥ reply is regained by having 2♠ promise a fit, in turn allowing 3NT to be used as suit-setting as well as being less worried that opener's more exotic responses will carry the auction too high.

Later relay breaks are natural, e.g. 3♠/4M over 3♦ (short club) would tend to indicate club values and no slam aspirations.

- 1M 2♣
- 2♥ 2♠
- 2NT Minimum, 11-15, at least 5-4 majors. Responder breaks with 3♦ (strong BAL), 3M NAT minimum, 3NT (strong BAL, slam unsuitable), 4M to play. Otherwise 3♣ relay then as below from 3♦.
- 3♣ WNT. Responder's 3M NAT searching for fit, 3♦ is CONFI (3♥ = 0-3, 3♠ = 4 etc.)
- 3♦ Short club
- 3♥ 5-4-2-2
- 3♠ 5-4-3-1
- 3NT 6-4-2-1
- 4♣ 5-5-2-1 (if rank of suits excludes this, 5-4-4-0)
- 4♦ 5-5-3-0 (if rank of suits excludes this, 6-4-3-0)

Opener is single-suited

There are two paths to 2NT showing a single-suiter:

The Methods

- A. 1M 2♣
2♦ 2♥
2NT
- B. 1M 2♣
2NT

(A) shows 11-15 and cannot be 5-3-3-2, (B) shows 16+ and can be 17-19, 5-3-3-2.

- 1M 2♣
[2♦ 2♥]
2NT

- 3♣ Slam try, clubs, short M could be 9-11 opposite 16+
- 3♦ Slam try, 2M; opener continues with shortage, NGF
- 3♥ No shortage
3♠/N/4♣ for hearts is ♠/♦/♣, for spades, ♦/♥/♣
- 4♦ 7-2-2-2
- 4M No shortage, no interest
- 3♥ 3-card raise, as above, opener continues with shortage, NGF
- 3♠ No shortage
3N/4♣/♦ for hearts is ♠/♣/♦, for spades, ♥/♣/♦
- 4M No shortage, no interest
- 3♠ 3-card raise, club side suit;
- 3NT NF, singleton/void M, worst holding, could be bad 9-11
- 4♣ Deadwood for clubs [only really sensible when 2NT = strong]
- 4♦ Deadwood for major

The Ambra Adjuncts

1♥ - 2♦

- a) FG diamonds
b) 6+ diamonds, 9-11

1♠ - 2♦

- a) 5+ hearts, 10+
b) 6+ hearts, 8-10

1♠ - 2♥

- a) FG diamonds
b) 6+ diamonds, 9-11

These are not relays

Sequences not starting with 2♣ are not relays. They do however use suit substitutions, and transfers. After initial and occasionally secondary exchanges, bidding is natural. Note however, again range information is paramount [this may be because Ambra used suit-under-major as a constructive raise].

Where 3M is possible, 3NT shows a minimum game-force with no fit but able to stand correction when opener has a 6-card major. Thus a hand short in opener's main suit should relay, allowing opener to disclose (completely or partially) and then bid 3NT.

Lastly where another bid might agree the minor it does so without promising a main-suit-shortage.

Memory Guides

- Step-1 is always a weak hand. Usually 11-15, even weaker over 1♠ – 2♦ where it shows a minimum hand with 2+ hearts and can be passed.
- Approach with a 4CM:
 - 1♥ – 2♦ bid step-1, then NT or raise natural 2♠
 - 1♠ – 2♦ bid step-1 or (rare) 3♥, then NT or support hearts
 - 1♠ – 2♥ bid step-1, then NT or raise diamonds
- Where opener can still have a 4-card major (and has bid step-1), responder's 3M rebid is not natural:
 - When responder has a minor, 3M is a shortage
 - When responder has hearts, 3M shows 5H and 5-minor
- Responder's 3-bid-minor at second turn is always 9-11 6+ cards NF.
- In sequences after 1♠ – 2♥; 3♣ shows hearts from either side
- After a natural 2NT by either side, new suits are shortages
- NGF resolves all shortage-showing and, though less common, length-showing too

One Heart – Two Diamonds

1♥	2♦
2♥	All 11-15
2♠	FG, 4+ spades
2NT	BAL 11-13 or 14-15 with clubs
3♣	11-15 'FSF' maybe 4M without club stop
3♦	honour-third or better diamonds, maybe 4M
3♥	6♥
3♠	4♠
3NT	great hearts
4♣	4♠ club SPL
4♦	4♠ diamond SPL!
	Responder's subsequent 3♥ is FG 3CR (limited)
2NT	FG, Relay without 4♠
3♣	5♥/4+♣
3♦	honour-third or better diamonds, maybe 4M
3♥	6♥
3♠	11-15 'FSF' maybe 4M without spade stop
3NT	NAT
4♣	SPL 4♦ support
	Responder's 3♥ is 3CR (4♥ is to play over 3♣)
3♣	6♦/4+♣ FG
3♦	6♦ 9-11

The Methods

- 3M FG diamonds, shortage!
- 3NT To play opposite 11-15
- 2♠ 5+♥/4♠, 16+
- 2NT BAL 17-19, 5M
- 3♣ 16+ 5+♥/4♣
- 3♦ 16+ 5+♥/4♦
- 3♥ 16+ 6+♥
- 3♠ 4-5 losers, 6♥/5♠
- 3NT 17-19 5-3-3-2♦

One Spade – Two Hearts

After the 2♥ response, 3♣ always shows hearts

- 1♠ 2♥
- 2♠ All 11-15
 - 2NT FG, Relay, not 4♥, usually balanced
 - 3♣ 5♠/4+♥
 - 3♦ honour-third or better diamonds, maybe 4M
 - 3♥ 'FSF' maybe 4M without heart stop
 - 3♠ 6♠
 - 3NT NAT most 4M
 - 4♣ SPL 4-card diamond support 14-15
 - Responder's 3♠ is 3CR, 4♠ is to play over 3♣
 - 3♣ 5+♦/4+♥ FG
 - 3♦ 6♦ 9-11
 - 3M FG diamonds, shortage!
 - 3NT To play opposite 11-15
- 2NT BAL 17-19, 5M
- 3♣ 16+ 5+♠/4+♥
- 3♦ 16+ 5+♠/4+♦
- 3♥ 16+ 5+♠/4+♣
- 3♠ 16+ 6+♠
- 3NT 17-19, 5-3-3-2♦

One Spade – Two Diamonds

The lower limit for showing hearts is lower; 10+ with five cards, 8+ with six. Therefore the structure is different as it allows responder to make invitational approaches and pass the simple 2♥ accept.

However, because of this, it doesn't seem that our 4CM structure influences matters unduly. So we can pretty much play Ambra 'out of the box'.

- 1♠ 2♦
- 2♥ NF, 10-13 HCP with 2-4 hearts not seeing game opp. MIN

The Methods

- 2♠ NF, 5+♠ MIN and short ♥
- 2NT GF, 15+ HCP 2+♥
- 3♣ 5+♠/4+♣ 16+ HCP without 2♥
- 3♦ 5+♠/4+♦ 16+ HCP without 2♥
- 3♥ 3/4♥ 13-15 HCP if 4♥ then 5-4-2-2
- 3♠ 6+♠ 16-20 HCP without 2♥ GF+
- 3NT 5♠/4+♥ 11-13 HCP SGL D
- 4♣ 5♠/4+♥ 11-13 HCP SGL C
- 4♦ 5♠/5♥ 11-14 HCP SGL D
- 4♥ 5♠/5♥ 11-14 HCP SGL C

Opener is weak with heart tolerance

- 1♠ 2♦
- 2♥ NF, 11-15 at least doubleton heart
 - 2♠ FG, 5♥/4♣ **OR** 5♥/3♠
 - 2NT NF, INV 5+♥
 - 3♣ FG, 5♥/4♦
 - 3♦ Game or slam INV
 - 3♥ 5♥/5♣
 - 3♠ 5♥/5♦
 - 3NT NAT (2=5=3=3 13-15)
 - 4m SPL 6+♥
 - 4♥ To play

Opener is strong with heart tolerance

- 1♠ 2♦
- 2NT 15+ but not completely forcing to game opposite the worst responses with six hearts.
 - 3♣ 5+♥ 10+ UNBAL **OR** BAL, 2=5=3=3 14+.
 - 3♦ Relays
 - 3♥ clubs
 - 3♠ diamonds
 - 3NT BAL 14+
 - 4♣ 5-5 Clubs
 - 4♦ 5-5 diamonds
 - 3♥ 5♠ 3♥, MIN
 - 3♠ 6+♠ 17-21
 - 4m SPL 4♥
- 3♦ 6+♥ 7-8 **OR** 12+
 - 3♥ expected...
 - Pass possible it seems

The Methods

	4♥	4♥ = 7-8
	3♠	14+ or short ♠
	3NT	12-13 BAL or short ♠
	4m	12+ SPL
3♥	6+♥	9-11
3♠	FG,	3CR
3NT	NAT	

Opener is limited with heart fit

1♠	2♦
3♥	3/4♥ 13-15 HCP. If 4♥ then 5-4-2-2
3♠	Spade control, 5+♥ inc. two top honours, slam INV
3NT	Spade control, 5+♥ denying two top honours, slam INV
4♣	club control or suit, fixes hearts
4♦	diamond control or suit (more likely), fixes hearts

Opener has heart shortage

1♠	2♦
2♠	NF, 11-15
2NT	NF, INV 5+♥
3♣	FG, 5♥/4♣ or no good bid (e.g. with doubleton spade support). Opener has:
	3♦ Nat, 4+♦
	3♥ 4+♣
	3♠ Nat, 6+♠
	3NT NAT
3♦	FG, 5♥/4♦
3♥	FG, 6+♥
3♠	FG, 3CR
3NT	NAT
1♠	2♦
3♣	16+ Natural
	3♦ 5+♥ 8+ HCP GF+, possibly red 5-5
	3♥ Sign-off
	3♠ 5+♥ 3♠ GF
	3NT 5+♥ 10/14 HCP D stop
	4♣ 5+♥ 4+♣ GF+
1♠	2♦
3♦	16+ Natural
	3♥ Sign-off
	3♠ 5+♥ 3♠ GF

The Methods

- 3NT 5+♥ 10/14 HCP C stop
- 4♣ 5+♥ 4♣
- 4♦ 5+♥ 4+♦
- 1♠ 2♦
- 3♠ 16+ 6+spades
- 3NT Natural
- 4m Control-bid with spade FIT

Passed Hand Two-over-ones

It is assumed that we would open any 6-card red suit worth bidding rather than pass. This is not true of clubs and 2♣ by a passed-hand is natural. Otherwise, two-red is a transfer.

We retain the limited jump-shifts (less than opening bid, exactly three cards in major, 5/6 decent suit) and 'Scanian Lite',

Pass – 1♥

- 1♠ Natural, not forcing, opener passes with 3-card support and weak no-trump, 2♠ shows four or shortage and three.
- 1NT Natural, still wide range but limited in that 9+ and 3CR bids 2♦
- 2♣ NF, Natural
- 2♦ Constructive heart raise, usually 3CR (four possible with low ODR) and 9-11 HCP
- 2♥ NF, Natural, limited by 2♦ above and still possibly 3CR
- 2NT 4CR,
- 2♠/3m Fit, NF, 3CR
- 3♥ 8-loser, distributional

Pass – 1♠

- 1NT Natural, still wide range but limited in that 9+ and 3CR bids 2♥
- 2♣ NF, Natural
- 2♦ Hearts, opener rebids as opposite UPH
- 2♥ Constructive spade raise, usually 3CR (four possible with low ODR) and 9-11 HCP
- 2♠ NF, Natural, limited by 2♦ above and still possibly 3CR
- 2NT 4CR,
- 3m/♥ Fit, NF, 3CR
- 3♠ 8-loser, distributional

Scanian Lite

- Pass 1M
- 2NT Limit raise
- 3♣ Unchanged; strongest move, continuations as UPH – responder bids 3♦/♥/♠ depending on whether he likes his hand or not (3♦ warranted by

The Methods

controls and useful distribution, e.g. ♠109xx ♥AKxx ♦Kx ♣xxx or ♠xx ♥Axxx ♦AQxxx ♣xx).

3♦ Unchanged: void or borderline game acceptance; 3NT "I accept" etc.

3M Unchanged: to play

3OM CHANGED: Suggests 3NT (unlikely two balanced hands can produce slam)

3NT/4m Unchanged, 5-5 (6-4OM) concentrated values