

Transfer-Oriented Symmetric Relay

(Version August 1999)

This description lacks a structure for its weak 1NT opener, and has no two-level opening bid structures. These bids can be anything so long as they include the 10-14 6+C and 10-14 6+D hands. Natural is admissible (sic).

Hard-core TOSR uses a non-forcing version of Myxomatosis Twos (characterised by being weak in the next suit, or weak in the next two suits, or something strong) so that:

2C = 10-14 6+C, or 6-9 6+D, or 6-9 5+H & 5+S

2D = 10-14 6+D, or 6-9 6+H, or 6-9 5+S & 5+C

2H = Acol Two in H, or 6-9 6+S, or 6-9 5+C & 5+D

2S = Acol Two in S, or 6-9 6-7C, or 6-9 5+D & 5+H

2NT = 6-9 5+C & 5+H or 6-9 5+D & 5+H

3C = transfer preempt

3D = transfer preempt

3H = transfer preempt

3S = some stupid hand

3NT = Four-level minor preempt

The optimal system includes all of the above, all of the below, plus The Overall Structure & Mark's Good/Bad 2NT agreements. Bidding pad circles 'r' us!!!

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*After 2C-2H: **

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1. Description of Opening Bids

1C	15+ HCP, any shape. Might be light on a strong playing hand, especially in third and fourth positions.
1D	10-14 HCP, 4+H, may have a longer suit, may be three-suited with both majors. In 3rd and 4th positions , this opening shows 10-14 HCP 4+/4+ in the minors, either two- or three-suited with both minors.
1H	10-14 HCP, 4+S, 0-3H, may have a longer minor suit. In 3rd and 4th positions , this opening shows 10-14 HCP 4+H, may have a longer suit, may be three-suited with both majors.
1S	10-14 HCP, 4+/4+ in minors, either two- or three-suited with both minors. In 3rd and 4th positions , this opening shows 10-14 HCP 4+S, 0-3H, may have a longer minor suit; however with both majors and better/longer spades, 1S may be opened in these positions.
1NT	11-14 HCP, balanced, 4333,4432, or 5332 with 5 card minor.
2C	10-14 HCP 6+D; or 6-9 HCP 6S.
2D	10-14 HCP 6+C; or 6-9 HCP 6H.
2H	6-9 HCP 5+H and either 5+D or 5+C.
2S	6-9 HCP 5+S and either 5+D or 5+C.
2NT	6-9 HCP, 5+D and 5+C.
3C	6-9 HCP, 7+C.
3D	6-9 HCP, 7+D.
3H	6-9 HCP, 7+H.
3S	6-9 HCP, 7+S.
3NT	Four-level minor preempt.
4C	Good 4H preempt.
4D	Good 4S preempt.
4H	Bad 4H preempt.
4S	Bad 4S preempt.
4NT	Extreme minors
5C,5D	Preemptive in suit bid
5H,5S	11 playing trick hands missing A & K of trumps

2. 1C OPENING (15+ HCP any shape)

RESPONSES SUMMARY

1D	Negative: either 0-7 HCP any shape, or less than 2 controls (A=2, K=1), or both.
1H	4+ S, 8+ HCP, 2+ controls.
1S	Any 4333 or 4432, or any red two-suited hand, 8+ HCP, 2+ controls.
1NT	4+ H, 8+ HCP, 2+ controls, 0-3S, 0-3D.
2C	4+ D, 8+ HCP, 2+ controls, may be three-suited with both minors.
2D	5+ C, 8+ HCP, 2+ controls and no other suit longer than 3.
2H+	both MINORS, 8+ HCP, 2+ controls and no other suit.

The transfer-oriented responses are designed to accommodate the desire, wherever possible, to have the unrevealed strong 1C hand declare the contract. The 1H response permits the unrevealed hand to declare a spade contract. The 1S response permits the unrevealed hand to declare a notrump contract in either case, and a diamond contract in the case of any red two-suiter, and when responder holds more than four hearts, the unrevealed hand may still be able to declare a heart contract. The 1NT response may enable the unrevealed hand to declare a heart contract, but not if responder holds four hearts and longer clubs. The 2C and 2D responses and rebids allow the unrevealed hand to declare both club and diamond contracts when appropriate.

Continuations After Positive Responses To 1C

2.1 Introduction

The 1C opener will almost always (Exceptions) make the cheapest call which is a **relay** whose only meaning is "tell me more". Eventually the 1C opener will break the relay sequence to name the final contract. *NOTE*: 3NT is never a relay. When 3NT is the cheapest call, 4C is the relay.

2.2 Single-suited relay structure (5+ suit)

STEP 1: Give positive response in the single suit (1H, 1NT, 2C, 2D).

STEP 2: After relay by 1C opener, rebid 2S or higher as indicated below.

Rebids after relay with single-suited positive:

- 2S **High shortage** - at most 2 cards in highest ranking outside suit, i.e. after 1C-1NT-2C-2S shows a spade shortage and a hand with 5+ heart suit.
- 2NT **Middle shortage** - at most 2 cards in middle ranking outside suit; diamond shortage if a major is the long suit, heart shortage if a minor is the long suit. e.g. 1C-1H-1S-2NT shows spades and a diamond shortage; and 1C-2D-2H-2NT shows clubs and a heart shortage.
- 3C **Even shortage** - showing two or three doubletons. If 3C is bid directly (1C-1H-1S-3C) this shows either 6322 (i.e. two low doubletons) or 7222. If 3C is bid indirectly (via 2S - high shortage, i.e. 1C-1H-1S-2S-2NT-3C), this shows a high doubleton and one other doubleton, i.e. either 6232 or 6223. *See continuations below.*
- 3D **5332** type shape. If 3D is reached directly (i.e. not via 2S or 2NT) then this implies low shortage.
- 3H **6331** type shape. If 3H is reached directly (i.e. not via 2S or 2NT) then this implies low shortage.
- 3S **7330** type shape, etc.
- 3NT **7321** or **7231** type shape (only identity of 7 card suit and singleton known - low shortage), minimum (8-11 HCP)
- 4C **7321** or **7231** type shape (only identity of 7 card suit and singleton known - low shortage), maximum (12+ HCP), 0-2 controls; etc.

Continuations after 3C direct/indirect responses

A. Indirect 3C (Even shortage).

After the 3D relay,

- 3H 1 High and 1 Middle doubleton (i.e. 223 residue).
- 3S 1 High and 1 Low doubleton (i.e. 232 residue), minimum
- 3NT 1 High and 1 Low doubleton (i.e. 232 residue), maximum, and 2 controls; etc.

B. Direct 3C (Even shortage).

After the 3D relay,

- 3H Seven carder (i.e. 222 residue).
- 3S Six carder (i.e. 322 residue), minimum
- 3NT Six carder (i.e. 322 residue), maximum and 2 controls; etc.

2.3 Two-Suited Relay Structure

STEP 1 Give positive response in cheaper major suit (*for both minors or reds see later*)

STEP 2 After relay by 1C opener, rebid from 1NT to 2H:

- 1NT **Hearts**
- 2C **Diamonds**
- 2D **Clubs** (and 5+ card major)
- 2H **Reverser** (if bid directly after showing a major, shows a 4 card major and 5+ clubs)

STEP 3 After both suits have been shown, re-rebid 2H or higher:

- 2H **Reverser**, the higher-ranking suit is exactly 4 cards and other 5+ cards.
2S 5/5+ shape (*See below*).
2NT **High shortage** (if bid directly, shows lower ranking suit is exactly 4 cards).
3C **Even shortage**, 5422 or 7411
 3D *Relay* 3H 7411
 3S 5422, minimum
 3NT 5422, maximum, 2 controls; etc.
- 3D **5431** type shape.
3H **6421** type shape.
3S **7420** type shape.
3NT **6430** type shape, minimum
4C **6430** type shape, maximum, 2 controls; etc.
Note: Any bid of 3C upwards bid directly, shows the lower ranking suit is four cards exactly, the higher ranking suit is longer and a **LOW** shortage.

Continuations after 2S re-rebid (showing 5/5)

After the 2NT relay,

- 3C **High shortage**.
3D **Even shortage** (6511, 5611 shape).
 3H *Relay* 3S High shortage (**5611**).
 3NT Low shortage (**6511**), minimum
 4C Low shortage (**6511**), maximum, 2 controls; etc.
- 3H **5521** type shape.
3S **5530** type shape.
3NT **5620** type shape (high shortage).
4C **6520** type shape, minimum
4D **6520** type shape, maximum, 2 controls; etc.
Note: Any bid of 3H upwards bid directly (i.e. not via 3C/3D) shows a LOW shortage.

Rebids when holding both minors

Initial positive response to 1C is 2H or higher as follows:

- 2H **Reverser** (i.e. 4 diamonds and 5+ clubs).
2S **5/5** type hand (i.e. 5+ diamonds and 5+ clubs)
2NT **High shortage** (if bid directly shows 4 clubs, 5+ diamonds and a spade shortage. If bid indirectly via 2H, shows 4 diamonds, 5+ clubs and a spade shortage).
3C **Even shortage**, 5422 or 7411 with longer diamonds. With longer clubs, bid 2H first then 3C over the relay, etc.)
 3D *Relay* 3H **7411** (note, the cheapest bid here is not the most common shape)
 3S **5422**, minimum
 3NT **5422**, maximum, 2 controls; etc.
- 3D **5431** type shape.
3H **6421** type shape.
3S **7420** type shape.
3NT **6430** type shape, minimum
4C **6430** type shape, maximum, 2 controls; etc.
Note: To show longer clubs, bid 2H first. To show longer diamonds make a bid from 2NT upwards directly. With a spade shortage bid via 2NT, with a heart shortage bid directly from 3D upwards depending on hand shape.

Rebids when holding both red suits

Initial positive response to 1C is 1S, and after the 1NT relay, bid 2C showing the red two-suiter. Then rebid 2H or higher as follows:

- 2H **Reverser** (i.e. 4 hearts and 5+ diamonds).

2S **5/5** type hand (i.e. 5+ hearts and 5+ diamonds).
 2NT **High shortage** (if bid directly shows 4 diamonds, 5+ hearts and a spade shortage. If bid indirectly via 2H, shows 4 hearts, 5+ diamonds and a spade shortage); etc.
Note: To show longer diamonds, bid 2H first. To show longer hearts make a bid from 2NT upwards directly. With a spade shortage bid via 2NT; with a club shortage bid directly from 3D upwards depending on hand shape.

2.4 Three-Suited Relay Structure

A three-suited hand will use either of the following structures when responding to a 1C opening:

(a) *Three-suited with both majors:*

1C	1H	(Positive with spades)
1S	1NT	(and hearts)
2C	2D	(and a minor)

(b) *Three-suited with both minors:*

1C	2C	(Positive with diamonds)
2D	2H	(and clubs and a major - NB: this is not a reverser since minor two-suiters start at 2H)

After three-suiter has been established, step responses follow:

1st Step	High shortage.
2nd Step	4441 (i.e. low shortage)
3rd Step	4450 (i.e. low shortage)
4th Step	4540 (i.e. low shortage)
5th Step	5440 , minimum
6th Step	5440 , maximum, 2 controls, etc.

2.5 Balanced Relay Structure

With any 4333 or 4432, or a red two-suiter, with 8+ HCP and 2+ controls, respond 1S to an opening 1C. After the 1NT relay, a **CRASH** (Colour, **R**ank, **S**hape) relay structure is used.

2C	Red two-suiter (<i>for continuations see Section 2.3</i>)			
2D	Two four card suits of the same Colour or 4333 with a four card major			
	2H Relay	2S	4333 or 3433	
			2NT Relay	3C 3433
				3D 4333 , minimum
				3H 4333 , maximum, 2 controls, etc.
		2NT	2443	
		3C	3442	
		3D	4324	
		3H	4234 , minimum	
		3S	4234 , maximum, 2 controls, etc.	
		Note : Bid the doubleton		
2H	Two four card suits of the same Rank .			
	2S Relay	2NT	2344	
		3C	4432	
		3D	4423	
		3H	3244 , minimum	
		3S	3244 , maximum, 2 controls, etc.	
		Note : Bid the doubleton		
2S	4333 (bid directly shows a four card minor, bid via 2D shows 4 card major)			
	2NT Relay	3C	3334	
		3D	3343 , minimum	
		3H	3343 , maximum, 2 controls, etc.	
2NT	Doubleton spade (C/H), 2434			
3C	Doubleton club (D/S), 4342			
3D	Doubleton diamond (C/H), 3424			
3H	Doubleton heart (D/S), 4243 , minimum			

- 3S Doubleton heart (D/S), **4243**, maximum, 2 controls, etc.
Note : Bid the doubleton
Note : Two 4 card suits of the same shape are shown with an immediate response of 2NT or higher.

Reverse relay - not used with transfer responses to 1C opening

In auctions beginning 1C-1NT (i.e. balanced), if opener rebids 2C as a relay then this denies 15-17 HCP and 4333 or 4432 type shapes. When holding these two hand types (and only these two), opener is required to rebid a reverse relay of 2D or higher on the same basis as the CRASH structure employed by responder after the normal 2C relay. Responder now takes charge of the relays and the 1C opener is required to show controls starting with a minimum of 2.

2.6 Controls and minimum/maximum

In most relay auctions, after exact shape has been shown, next relay asks for hand strength, with a run-on to the number of controls held if the hand is maximum. Controls are counted as ace = 2 and king = 1, and singleton aces and kings are counted.

After positive responses to 1C by an unpassed hand

A minimum hand is any hand with 8-11 HCP and 2-4 controls. A maximum hand is any hand with either 12+ HCP (and 2+ controls) or with 5+ controls. Thus a hand with two aces and a king is a maximum hand.

The response structure is:

- 1st step minimum
- 2nd step maximum
- 3rd step maximum

After a 1st step minimum response the next relay asks for controls. The maximum number of controls in a minimum hand is four (by the above definition of a minimum hand). Therefore the responses are:

- 1st step 2 controls
- 2nd step 3 controls
- 3rd step 4 controls

After controls are shown, denial cue bidding begins (see Section 2.7)

Note: when a Game Probe Relay (see Section 2.9) has been used, minimum/maximum is not shown as 10+ HCP is known.

After positive responses to 1C by a passed hand

A passed hand giving a positive response to a 1C opening is limited to 8-9 HCP unless it is either 4333, 4432, or 5332 with a 5-card minor, in which case it is 8-10 HCP. In either case, no minimum or maximum is ever shown, and thus the relays run directly into the number of controls held (2,3 or 4). With 4 controls, there is an automatic run into denial cue bidding as normal.

After semi-positive responses to 1C

Semi-positive hands (5-7 HCP, or 8+ HCP with 0-1 controls) may give level-adjusted relay responses after the sequence 1C-1D-1H, or after 1-level interference to the 1C opening. In both cases, the response structure applicable after an ask that would normally ask for minimum/maximum (or in the case of a run-on) is:

- 1st step 8+ points, 0-1 controls
- 2nd step 5-7, 0 control
- 3rd step 5-7, 1 control
- 4th step 5-7, 2 controls
- 5th step 5-7, 3 controls

After the 1st step response & next relay, the responses are:

- 1st step 8-11, 0 control
- 2nd step 8-11, 1 control
- 3rd step 12-15, 0 control
- 4th step 12-15, 1 control

2.7 Denial Cue-bidding

After controls have been shown, next relay starts denial cue bidding. Responder looks at their longest suit, then next longest suit. When ties in suit length occur, look at highest-ranking suit first. Singletons (including singleton honours) are not looked at in denial cue bidding and are shown by inference only. Doubletons are looked at once. Tripletons are looked at twice (on the second time round queens are investigated). Longer suits are looked at three times. On the first look at a suit, it is inspected for an ace or king. On the second look, it is inspected for an additional top honour (usually a queen) and on the third look, jacks are checked. If the first suit looked at does not have the required honour, the responder denies it by making the cheapest bid. If the responder holds a required honour in the longest suit but not in the second longest suit, then he/she bids the second cheapest bid. Future relays continue asking from where you left off in the cycle of suits. The highest relay ask is 5NT.

- 1st step No ace or king in longest suit.
- 2nd step Ace or king in longest suit and no ace or king in second longest suit.
- 3rd step Ace or king in longest suit and ace or king in second longest suit and no ace or king in third longest suit; etc.

Solid-suit Exceptions

When holding a solid suit of at least six cards, responder denies that suit on the first scan if the suit is not headed by at least two of the A, K or Q. Having initially shown at least two of the top three honours, on the second scan, responder shows that suit only if it is AKQxxx or better. Having initially denied at least two of the top three honours, a second denial is made if none of the top three honours is held.

When holding a three-card to five-card suit headed by at least AKQ then on the first scan, responder will deny holding the suit, and on the second scan show the suit. Relayer should be able to recognise the three control difference apparent in such circumstances.

Short-suit Cue-bidding

Occasions arise when the relayer is unconcerned about the controls in the responder's suit(s) (either because they are held by relayer, or must be held by responder, or are opposite relayer's singletons or voids). In such circumstances, after the number of controls has been shown, if the previous response was 4H or below, then 4NT is a short suit ask, and responder must begin denial cue bidding, but ignoring any suit of four or more cards. In the remaining suit(s) denial cue-bidding begins as normal. Singletons and voids are never scanned, and singleton kings are still not shown. For this cue-bidding to apply, 4NT must have been Step 2 or higher, and the exact number of controls must have been shown. After the response to 4NT, normal step 1 relays continue the short suit denial cue-bidding.

2.8 The 3NT Weak Relay

There are a number of situations where the relayer fears that an auction is getting too high where responder might only have 3 or 4 controls. In these situations, the relayer bids 3NT as a weak relay. Responder is usually required to pass with fewer than 5 controls (except - see 4NT bid below) but with more bids as follows:

- 4C 5 controls
- 4D 6 controls
- 4H 7 controls
- 4S 8 controls
- 4NT only 4 controls but lots of queens and jacks.

Exception: if 3NT weak relay has been made when the responder has shown 5422 or 7411, then:

- 4C 7411, 2+ controls
- 4D 5422, 5 controls
- 4H 5422, 6 controls
- 4S 5422, 7 controls
- 4NT 5422, only 4 controls but lots of queens and jacks.

Relayer can resume relaying by making the cheapest bid. Any other bid is a signoff.

2.9 Game Probe Relay

When using the natural relay responses (i.e. not this system), a positive balanced hand responds 1NT to an opening 1C. This requires opener to bid a reverse relay with a 15-17 balanced hand, which allows responder to choose to play in a low-level suit or notrump contract with a poorly fitting minimal balanced hand of 8-9 HCP. It is clearly an inferior position to play in 3NT with a balanced 15 HCP hand opposite a balanced 8 HCP hand with poor fits

and/or wasted values. Playing in 2H, 2S, 2NT or even in three-level contracts is likely to be superior if 3NT is uncertain.

When using the transfer relay responses, after responder makes a positive suit response to 1C, if relayer has a balanced 15-16 HCP hand with no primary fit, or even a better hand with expectation of significant duplication of values, relayer may show this by bidding Step 2 for relay, rather than the normal Step 1. The Step 2 bid is known as a Game Probe Relay, and asks responder if that hand can sustain game opposite relayer's announced hand. It denies slam interest. If responder shows a one-, two- or three-suited hand at or below 2D, then the Game Probe Relay is available to opener to show a balanced 15-16 HCP hand with no fits (the 2D limit ensures the bidding can stop at 2NT)

Negative response

Responder replies Step 1 with a balanced (5332) or poor semi-balanced (5422, 6322) 8 HCP hand (up to a 10 HCP hand, with poor values in the hand's suits, or other wasted values). Opener then makes the appropriate signoff (which may include a pass)

Game Force response

With an appropriately unbalanced minimal hand, or nearly all 10+ HCP hands, responder makes a Game Force relay response at Step 2 or higher. The response given is that which would have been made over a normal Step 1 relay, but shifted up two steps. Normal relays then continue, but responder no longer gives the minimum/maximum responses. Specifically, over a control ask, responder makes a Step 1 response with 2 controls, with other steps showing more controls as normal. If relayer gives the highest shape-showing relay response (which normally requires min or max with controls to be shown) then relayer shows first the 2 control hand, etc. Over a 3NT signoff (as in 2.8 3NT Weak Relay) responder bids on with 5+ controls only if responder's hand makes slam likely opposite relayer's announced hand (this usually means holding 15+ HCP also, as opener knows relayer's shape). The 4NT short suit ask applies subject to the usual Step 2 criterion.

After interference

When the opponents intervene, opener is better placed to judge the potential of the hand, in particular the ability to stop the opponents' suit(s). The Game Probe Relay is not available after any interference, including those that cause steps to be gained. Penalty doubles and passes may prove adequate compensation subject to vulnerability concerns.

2.10 Continuations after 1D negative response to 1C

After 1C-1D:

- 1H 19+ HCP any shape (could be less on a strong playing hand).
- 1S-2H natural 15-18 HCP.
- 2S+ natural 15-18 HCP, good suit and playing strength; *except*
- 2NT 5/5 minors, 15-18 HCP.
- 3NT to play, based on long running suit with side stoppers, 15-18 HCP.

After 1C-1D-1H:

The full relay structure is used as normal but shifted up 2 steps.

- 1S Second negative, 0-4 HCP
- 1NT 5+ HCP and 4+ spades
- 2C 5+ HCP, balanced, or a red two-suiter
- 2D 5+ HCP and 4+ hearts and denies spades and diamonds
- 2H 5+ HCP and 4+ diamonds
- 2S 5+ HCP and 5+ clubs and denies other suit.
- 2NT 5+ HCP, reverser, 4 diamonds, 5+ clubs.
- 3C 5+ HCP 5/5 in the minors.
- 3D 5+ HCP, spade shortage, both minors with longer diamonds if bid directly.
- 3H 5+ HCP, even shortage, both minors with longer diamonds if bid directly.
- 3S 5+ HCP, 5431 shape with low shortage, and longer diamonds if bid directly.
- 3NT 5+ HCP, 6421 shape with low shortage, and longer diamonds if bid directly.
- 4C 5+ HCP, 7420 shape with low shortage, and longer diamonds if bid directly.
- 4D 5+ HCP, 6430 shape with 8+ points

4H 5+ HCP, 6430 shape with 0 controls; etc. (*NB maximum controls = 3*)

After 1C-1D-1H-1S:

1NT 19-22 balanced.

2C 23+ any shape.

2D, 2H, 2S, 3C, Natural, non-forcing, 19-22 HCP.

2NT 19-22 at least 5/5 in minors.

3NT to play, based on long running suit with side stoppers.

After 1C-1D-1H-1S-2C:

2D balanced (and now 2NT response = 23-24 balanced).

2H 4+ H

2S relay 2NT = spades

3C = clubs

3D = diamonds

3H = reverser

3S = 5H, single-suiter

3NT = 6H, single-suiter

4C = 7+S, single-suiter

2S 4+ spades and denies H

2NT relay 3C = clubs

3D = diamonds

3H = reverser

3S = 5 spades, single-suiter

3NT = 6 spades, single-suiter

4C = 7+ spades, single-suiter

2NT NOT BID

3C 4+ clubs

3D relay 3H = three-suiter

3S = 5 clubs

3NT= 6 clubs etc.

3D 5+ diamonds.

3H relay 3S = 5 diamonds

3NT= 6 diamonds etc.

3H minors, longer clubs

3S minors, 5-5 or longer

3NT minors, longer diamonds

Opener may relay again to find shortages, then 0-2 controls then showing the feature with 1 or 2 controls. With no controls the opener now make the final decision.

After two suits have been shown with the relative lengths the next relay is to identify the length of the longer suit as in the example below.

e.g.: 1C 1D

1H 1S

2C 2H hearts

2S* 2NT & spades.

3C* 3H reverser i.e. 4 spades and 5+ hearts.

3S* 3NT 4 spades and 5 hearts.

4C 4 spades and 6 hearts.

4D 4 spades and 7 hearts.

After 1C-1D-1H-1S-2C-2D:

After 2H-2S relay 2NT (showing spades)

3C (relay) 3D shows three-suiter, with the majors

3H shows reverser

3S shows 5-5

After 2 S-2NT (relay) 3C clubs

3D relay 3H shows reverser
3S shows 5-5
After 2 S-2NT (relay) 3D diamonds (longer spades)
3H relay 3S shows 5-5
After 3 C-3D (relay) 3H three-suiter
3S shows 5-5

After 1C-1D-1H-1S-2C-2D-2NT (23-24 balanced)

3C 5 card Stayman.
3D 1 or 2 four card majors
After 3C-3D:
3H Four H, may have 4S
3S Four S, denies 4H
3NT No major
3H 5 H
3S 5 spades
3NT No 4 or 5 card major

3. 1D OPENING

REQUIREMENT: 10-14 HCP, 4+H, may have longer suit, may be three-suited with both majors

The relay structure retains the essential symmetric nature of the 1C relay structure, but uses one step to give a first-round minimum/maximum indication. Opposite a minimum, a minimal invitational relay will consider signing off or making a further invitational natural bid. The appropriate definitions are:

Minimum hand: any 10-12 HCP hand that does not have a 7-card suit, or at least 10 cards in its two longest suits (i.e. the hand is 5332, 6322, 6331, 5422, 5431, 4441 or 5440 shape).

Maximum hand: any 13-14 HCP hand or any hand with a 7-card suit, or any hand with at least 10 cards in its two longest suits (i.e. including all 55, 64 and higher shapes).

After the minimum response the relay structure is adapted to reflect the reduced number of shapes available to the hand. Thus it is important not to judge to downgrade one of the "maximum" hand shapes. There is no subsequent minimum/maximum response in the relay structure.

With maximum hands a game-force is established and the relay structure is identical to the 1C relay structure. The minimum/maximum response is still given for "maximum shapes" (55, 64, 7-card) because their HCP range is still 10-14, however for the less shapely hands, there is no later minimum/maximum response since the hand is constrained to 13-14 HCP already.

RESPONSES SUMMARY

Pass	To play in diamonds
1H	RELAY - at least invitational to game, does not imply support
1S	Natural 4+ spades, non-forcing, 0-11
1NT	Balanced or semi-balanced, forcing, 0-11
2C	Natural, 5+ clubs, non-forcing, 0-11
2D	Natural, 5+ diamonds, non-forcing, 0-11
2H	8 - 10 HCP, 3 or 4 hearts
2S	Fit showing jump with spades, invitational in hearts
2NT	At least 5-5 minors, 0-11
3C	Fit showing jump with clubs, invitational in hearts
3D	Fit showing jumps with diamonds, invitational in hearts
3H	Pre-emptive
3S	Pre-emptive with at least nine cards in H + S
3NT	To play
4C	Pre-emptive with at least nine cards in H + C
4D	Pre-emptive with at least nine cards in H + D

After 1D-1H

1S	Any minimum hand.
1NT	Maximum, 4+ S, may be three-suited with both majors
2C	Maximum, 4+ D
2D	Maximum, 4+ C, 5+ H
2H	Maximum, reverser, 5+ C, 4 H
2S	Maximum, high shortage (S), 5+H, etc.

Note: The normal relay structure continues, subject to the constraints on minimum/maximum responses as discussed above, and that the lowest control-showing response is 0-2 controls with a subsequent ask for 0,1 or 2.

After 1D-1H-1S-1NT (R)

1NT is a natural, but forcing bid in view of a minimum hand with opener. Opener is expected to correct to any 5 or 6-card suit, which responder is likely to pass. Further bidding is not constructive.

After 1D-1H-1S-2C (R)

2C is a forcing relay, but does not quite force to game, since opener's shape is still nebulous. The relay structure is roughly symmetric but shifted up two steps. The single-suited (and three-suited) relay structures are simply shifted up two steps and truncated at 6331 shape. In the two-suited structures, some steps are omitted because 55, 64 and 74 hands are impossible. These structures do not make "symmetric" bids, but use the same order of shape-showing as the normal two-suited structures.

Any subsequent non-relay bid by responder is invitational in the context of the auction.

2D	4+S, may be three-suited with both majors
2H	4+D
2S	4C, 5H
2NT	Reverser, 5C, 4H
3C	High (S) shortage, 5-6H
3D	Middle (D) shortage, 5-6H
3H	Even shortage, 3622 shape
3S	Low shortage, 3532 shape
3N	Low shortage, 3631 shape, 0-2 controls, etc.

After 1D-1H-1S-2C-2D-2H (R)

2S	Three-suiter, both majors (see 1C relay structure section 2.4 for three-suited continuations)
2NT	Reverser, 4S, 5H
3C	High shortage (D) 5413
3D	Even shortage, 5422
3H	Low shortage (C), 5413 , 0-2 controls, etc.

After 1D-1H-1S-2C-2D-2H-2N-3C (R)

3D	High shortage (D) 4513
3H	Even shortage, 4522
3S	Low shortage (C), 4513 , 0-2 controls, etc.

After 1D-1H-1S-2C-2H-2S (R)

2N	Reverser, 5D, 4H
3C	High shortage (S), 1543
3D	Even shortage, 2542
3H	Low shortage (C), 3541 , 0-2 controls, etc.

After 1D-1H-1NT-2C (R)

2D	Three-suited, both majors (see 1C relay structure section 2.4 for three-suited continuations)
2H	Reverser, 5+ H, 4S
2S	5/5, H + S
2NT	5+S, 4H, high shortage, etc.

After 1D-1H-2C-2D(R)

2H	Reverser, 5+D, 4H
2S	5/5, H +D
2NT	5+H, 4D, high shortage, etc.

After 1D-1NT (R)

1NT is a natural forcing bid made by a balanced or semi-balanced hand with no clear fit for hearts and no clear suit to bid. Opener is expected to correct to any 5 or 6-card suit, which responder is likely to pass.

In particular limited balanced hands with potential Moysian heart fits should respond 1NT rather than 2H as any eight card fit will always be found after the 1NT response. For example with 5431 with opener and 3334 with responder, the auction 1D-1N-2S is clearly superior to 1D-2H. Responding hands such as 2326 with a weak suit are often best treated with 1NT also.

Further bidding is not constructive.

After 1D-2H

2NT		Inquiry (not used by ces and mabraham)
	3C	minimum with clubs, 3 hearts
	3D	minimum with diamonds, 3 hearts
	3H	minimum with 4 hearts
	3S	maximum with spades, 3 hearts
	3NT	maximum with 3 hearts
	4H	maximum (9 or 10) with 4 hearts
2S, 3C, 3D		Long suit trials
3H, 4H		Preemptive re-raises, not constructive

3. 1H OPENING

REQUIREMENT: 10-14 HCP, 4+ S, 0-3 H, may have longer minor suit

The relay structure retains the essential symmetric nature of the 1C relay structure, but uses one step to give a first-round minimum/maximum indication. Opposite a minimum, a minimal invitational relay hand will consider signing off or making a further invitational natural bid. The appropriate definitions are:

Minimum hand: any 10-12 HCP hand that does not have a 7-card suit, or at least 10 cards in its two longest suits (i.e. the hand is 5332, 6322, 6331, 5422, 5431, 4441 or 5440 shape).

Maximum hand: any 13-14 HCP hand or any hand with a 7-card suit, or any hand with at least 10 cards in its two longest suits (i.e. including all 55, 64 and higher shapes).

After the minimum response the relay structure is adapted to reflect the reduced number of shapes available to the hand. Thus it is important not to judge to downgrade one of the "maximum" hand shapes. There is no subsequent minimum/maximum response in the relay structure.

With maximum hands a game-force is established and the relay structure is identical to the 1C relay structure. The minimum/maximum response is still given for maximum shapes (55, 64, 7-card) because their HCP range is still 10-14, however for the less shapely hands, there is no later minimum/maximum response since the hand is constrained to 13-14 HCP already.

RESPONSES SUMMARY

Pass	To play in hearts
1S	RELAY - at least invitational to game
1NT	Balanced or semi-balanced, forcing, 0-11
2C	Natural, 5+ C, non-forcing, 0-11
2D	Natural, 5+ D, non-forcing, 0-11
2H	Natural 5+ H, non-forcing, 0-11
2S	6-10 HCP, 3 or 4 S
2NT	At least 5-5 minors, 0-11
3C	Fit showing jump with clubs, invitational in spades
3D	Fit showing jumps with diamonds, invitational in spades
3H	Fit showing jump with hearts, invitational in spades
3S	Pre-emptive

3NT	To play
4C	Pre-emptive with at least nine cards in S + C
4D	Pre-emptive with at least nine cards in S + D
4H	Pre-emptive with at least nine cards in S + H

After 1H-1S (R)

1N	Any minimum hand.
2C	Maximum, 4+ D
2D	Maximum, 4+ C, 5+ S
2H	Maximum, reverser, 5+ C, 4 S
2S	Maximum, high shortage (S), 5+ S, etc.

Note: The normal relay structure continues, subject to the constraints on minimum/maximum responses as discussed above.

After 1H-1S-1N

Responder will pass, or may make a signoff attempt (2D+) which opener may pass or correct to a better alternative (e.g. decent 6-card suit). Further bidding is not constructive.

After 1H-1S-1N-2C (R)

2C is a forcing relay, but does not quite force to game, since opener's shape is still nebulous. The relay structure is roughly symmetric but shifted up two steps. The single-suited (and three-suited) relay structures are simply shifted up two steps and truncated at 6331 shape. In the two-suited structures, some steps are omitted because 55, 64 and 74 hands are impossible. These structures do not make "symmetric" bids, but use the same order of shape-showing as the normal two-suited structures.

Any subsequent non-relay bid by responder is invitational in the context of the auction.

2D	4+ D
2H	4 C, 5 S
2S	Reverser, 5 C, 4 S
2NT	High shortage (H), 5-6 S
3C	Middle shortage (D), 5-6 S
3D	Even shortage, 6322 shape
3H	Low shortage (C), 5332 shape
3S	Low shortage (C), 6331 shape, 0-2 controls, etc.

After 1H-1S-1NT-2C-2D-2H (R)

2S	Reverser, 5 D, 4 S
2NT	High shortage (H), 5143
3C	Even shortage, 5242
3D	Low shortage (C), 5341 , 0-2 controls, etc.

After 1H-1S-1NT-2C-2D-2H-2S-2NT (R)

3C	High shortage (H), 4153
3D	Even shortage, 4252
3D	Low shortage (C), 4351 , 0-2 controls, etc.

After 1H-1S-1NT-2C-2H-2S (R)

2NT	High shortage (H), 5134
3C	Even shortage, 5224
3D	Low shortage (D), 5314 , 0-2 controls, etc.

After 1H-1S-1NT-2C-2S-2NT (R)

3C	High shortage (H), 4135
3C	Even shortage, 4225
3D	Low shortage (D), 4315 , 0-2 controls, etc.

After 1H-1S-2C-2D (R)

2H Reverser, 5+ D, 4 S
 2S 5+ S, 5+ D
 2NT 5+ S, 4 D, high shortage, etc.

After 1H-1S-2D-2H(R)

2S 5+ S, 5+ C
 2NT 5+ S, 4 C, high shortage, etc.

After 1H-1NT (R)

1NT is a natural, but forcing bid made by a balanced or semi-balanced hand with no clear fit for spades and no clear suit to bid. Opener is expected to correct to any 5 or 6-card suit, which responder is likely to pass.

In particular limited balanced hands with potential Moysian spade fits should respond 1NT rather than 2S as any eight card fit will always be found after the 1NT response. For example with 4351 with opener and 3334 with responder, the auction 1H-1N-2D is superior at IMPs to 1H-2S. Responding hands such as 3226 with a weak suit are often best treated with 1NT also.

Further bidding is not constructive.

After 1H-2S

2NT		Inquiry (not used by ces and mabraham)
	3C	minimum with clubs, 3 spades
	3D	minimum with diamonds, 3 spades
	3H	minimum with hearts, 3 spades
	3S	minimum with 4 spades
	3NT	maximum with 3 spades
	4S	maximum (9 or 10) with 4 spades
3C, 3D, 3H		Long suit trials
3S, 4S		Preemptive re-raises, not constructive

5. 1S OPENING**REQUIREMENT: 10-14 HCP, 4+/4+ minors, may be three-suited**

The 1S relay structure is truly symmetric, and also uses a forcing 1NT response similar to the 1D and 1H openings.

RESPONSES SUMMARY

Pass	To play with spades
1NT	Balanced or semi-balanced hand, 0-11, forcing.
2C	GAME FORCE RELAY
2D	Signoff
2H	Fit showing jump for a minor - 2NT inquires
2S	Fit showing jump for a minor - 2NT inquires
2NT	Pre-emptive with both minors
3C	Pre-emptive
3D	Pre-emptive
3H	Pre-emptive with 9 cards in hearts and a minor
3S	Pre-emptive with 9 cards in spades and a minor
3NT	To play
4C	Preemptive
4D	Preemptive

After 1S-1N

Opener is expected to bid a 5-card suit. Exceptionally this might be 2H or 2S in a 0544 or 5044 hand. Only 1444 or 4144 hands are to be passed.

Further bidding is not constructive.

After 1S-2C

2D Three-suiter with both minors (see 1C opening structure section 2.4 for three-suited continuations)

2H	Reverser: 5+ C, 4D
2S	5/5
2NT	High shortage, 5+D, 4C, etc.

12. COMPETITIVE BIDDING SITUATIONS

12.1 Interference in relay Auctions

3D Criterion

Once interference occurs it is vital that responder and relay know if relays are still available. If the hand shape that would have been shown with 3D can be shown at the level of 3NT or below then relays will continue (the 3D Criterion). This is equivalent to a loss of not more than three steps, taking account of various passes, doubles and redoubles that are available as relay asks and steps. Note that it is quite possible to gain up to two steps after interference. If relays are broken, then takeout doubles and Rubensohl apply over two level interference (see part of section 12.2), and takeout doubles and natural bidding apply over three level interference.

There are two situations that arise which will be covered separately, using the following definitions which apply only after relays have begun :

Relayer	Bids the asking relays
Responder	Answers the relays
2 nd hand	Bids after relayer and before responder
4 th hand	Bids after responder and before relayer

Interference before relays have begun is covered in sections 12.2, 12.3, 12.4 and 12.5.

Interference by 2nd hand

Responder has two additional steps available with which to describe his hand, namely pass and double (or redouble if appropriate), and must determine by the 3D Criterion whether relays continue. The following relay structure will apply:

Call	Meaning
Pass	Step 1 from the original relay
Double/Redouble	Step 2 from the original relay
Step 1	Step 3 from the original relay, etc.

After a relay step pass, double by relayer without further interference is for relay. After a relay step double/redouble, Step 1 by relayer without further interference is for relay. If further interference by 4th hand occurs, see immediately below.

If relays are broken, then the provisions of 12.2 apply for two- and three-level interference.

Interference by 4th hand

If relays are not broken (3D Criterion), then relayer may pass for relay.

In all cases double by relayer is for penalty of the suit shown, and redouble is to play in the redoubled contract.

If further interference by 2nd hand occurs, see immediately above.

If relays are broken, then the provisions of 12.2 apply for two- and three-level interference.

12.2 Interference after 1C opening

One level interference - Transfer Archimedes

Transfer Archimedes applies over any one-level interference including 1NT and a double.

Pass	0-4 with Archimedes continuations
Double	Any semi-positive hand, transfer relays are available
1st step	Full positive in spades, then transfer relays
2nd step	Full positive, balanced or both red suits, then transfer relays
3rd step	Full positive, hearts or hearts and clubs, then transfer relays
4th step	Full positive in diamonds, denies majors unless three-suited, then transfer relays
5th step	Full positive in clubs, denies other suits, then transfer relays

* *Semi positive* = 5-7 HCP or 8+ HCP with 0-1 controls. (see below)

ARCHIMEDES CONTINUATIONS

After Pass (0-4)

Non jump suit bid	15-18
1NT	15 - 22

2NT both minors 15 - 22
 Jump suit bid 19 - 22
 Cue bid 23+, game force

After semi-positive double (begins relays, see 3D Criterion)

With no further interference, opener bids Step 1 for relay, showing 19+. Other bids are natural in the context of the auction, and limited to 15-18 HCP.

1C	1H	X	P	
1S				relay
1NT				15-18, balanced
2C				15-18, clubs
2D				15-18, diamonds
2H				15-18, hearts
2S				15-18, looking for a S stop

After further interference, the 3D Criterion applies. Specifically, if advancer bids at or below 2C then opener's pass is for relay and responder responds appropriately.

Examples

The meanings of the opponents' actions are not relevant in that they do not affect the relay responses. In the next two examples, the opponents are using a transfer-style overcall (e.g. TWERB), and we assess the subsequent interference with the 3D Criterion:

1C	1H	X(semipos)	1S	
P(relay)	P	X		Spades
		1NT		Balanced or reds, etc.
1C	1D	1S(pos,S)	2C	
P(relay)	P	X		Hearts
		2D		5+/4+ Spades & Diamonds, etc.
1C	X	1H(bal or red)	1S	
P(relay)	P	X		Reds
		2D		Balanced, 44 Colour or 4333 with 4-card major, etc.

Two level interference - Rubinsohl

Pass 0 - 9 HCP or penalty pass
 X Shortage in the bid suit, prepared to penalise
 2 bid 5 - 7 HCP, natural and non-forcing.
 2NT transfer to clubs, *see below*.
 3C transfer to diamonds, *see below*
 3D transfer to hearts, *see below*
 3H transfer to spades, *see below*
 3S **HELP** - balanced game force, no stopper, no 4 card major
 3NT Balanced game force, stopper(s), no 4 card major
 Notes: Transfer into the opponents' suit = balanced game force with at least one 4 card major (implies unable or unwilling to double)
 Cue of overcall by either opener or responder (except initial transfer) is stopper ask
 Transfer to a suit at 3 level which could be bid at 2 level is invitational. Opener must break the transfer with a maximum.
 Reopening double by opener is usually mandatory with very few exceptions.

Three level interference

Bid by responder is game forcing.
 Double by responder is takeout.
 Bid by opener is non-forcing.
 Double by opener is for takeout.

12.3 Interference after 1D opening

Suited overcalls

Pass If responder is an unpassed hand, and the 3D Criterion is satisfied (overcall <=2C),

	strongly encouraging a reopening double if suitable.
X	If responder is an unpassed hand, and the 3D Criterion is satisfied (overcall $\leq 2C$), double is for GF RELAY ; else double is takeout (negative) up to 3S; else double is for penalty
2Y	Natural non-forcing, or cue raises of hearts
2NT+	Rubinsohl
4C,4D	Splinters for H

Notrump overcalls

X	Penalty
2Y	Natural non-forcing, or cue raises of hearts
2NT+	Rubinsohl
4C,4D	Splinters for H

After a double:

Pass	Poor hand or poor in hearts but with diamonds
XX	Shortage in partner's suit and looking for blood.
1H	GF RELAY
1S, 2Y	Natural non-forcing, or cue raises of hearts
Suit jump	Fit-showing
2NT	Natural and invitational
2H	Usual meaning
3H	Preemptive

After 1H takeout

Pass	Poor hand or poor in hearts
X	GF RELAY
New suit	non forcing, may be invitational
2NT	Natural and invitational.
Suit jump	Fit showing
2H	Usual meaning
3H	Preemptive

12.4 Interference after 1H opening

Suited overcalls

Pass	If responder is an unpassed hand, and the 3D Criterion is satisfied (overcall $\leq 2D$), strongly encouraging a reopening double if suitable
X	If responder is an unpassed hand, and the 3D Criterion is satisfied (overcall $\leq 2D$), double is for GF RELAY ; else double is takeout (negative) up to 3H; else double is for penalty
2Y	Natural, non-forcing, or cue raises of spades
2NT+	Rubinsohl
4C,4D,4H	Splinters for S

Notrump overcalls

X	Penalty
2Y	Natural, non-forcing, or cue raises of spades
2NT+	Rubinsohl
4C,4D,4H	Splinters for S

After a double:

Pass	Poor hand or poor in spades but with hearts
XX	Shortage in partner's suit and looking for blood.
1S	GF RELAY
2Y	Natural, non-forcing, or cue raises of spades
Suit jump	Fit showing

2NT	Natural and invitational
2S	Usual meaning
3S	Preemptive

After 1S takeout

Pass	Poor hand or poor in spades
X	GF RELAY
Suit	Non-forcing, may be invitational
2NT	Natural and invitational.
Suit jump	Fit showing
2S	Usual meaning
3S	Preemptive

12.5 Interference after 1S opening

After a double:

Pass	Poor hand, or poor minors but with spades
XX	Preference for C
1NT	Natural
2C	GF RELAY
2D	Natural
2H/2S	Fit showing jump for a minor, 2NT inquires
2NT	Preemptive with both minors
3C	Preemptive
3D	Preemptive
3H	Hearts and a minor, at least 9 cards
3S	Spades and a minor, at least 9 cards

After an takeout cue (i.e. probably 2C or 2D)

Pass	Poor hand or poor in other minor
X	GF RELAY
2H/2S	Fit showing jump for a minor, 2NT inquires
2NT+	RUBINSOHL

After an suit overcall (i.e. 2H or 2S)

Double	PENALTY
2NT+	RUBINSOHL

12.6 Interference after 1NT opening

Rubinsohl: penalty doubles (at the 2 level) and SWINE. Over 3 level interference X = penalty, suits = forcing for 1 round.

12.7 Interference after 2C/2D/2H/2S/2NT openings

Double/redouble is correctable except where noted below.

After responder chooses to pass the opening 2C or 2D bids and fourth seat reopens with a double, both opener and responder need to take care not to play assuming the other holds a C suit, for neither need do so! If responder holds a club suit, he has announced preference to play there rather than in a contract suggested by responder's two possible hands. Opener needs to respect this preference unless his hand is gilt-edged or has extra shape, or extreme club shortage. Continuations by opener are:

2C P P X

P Non-committal, may or may not have club suit.

P P Holding club suit over the penalty passer.

XX Not holding club suit, no clear escape, opener bids playable denominations up-the-line.

2D,2H,2S Own suit, not correctable.

XX Good hand with semi-solid clubs.

P 2D,2H,2S Needs very good reason and a club void.

2D,2H Show systemic hand shapes with extra values or extreme club shortage.

2H,2S To play, shows own suit or a correction.
Continuations after the analogous 2D sequence are analogous.

12.8 Interference over Blackwood

DOPI and ROPI:

Double (or redouble) = zero

Pass = one

1st step = two, etc.