

HexagonBridge | Useful conventions

Signals

Reverse count: low-high = even, high-low = odd

Low encourage for attitude

Odd/even for discard (odd = like that suit), Even = McKenny

1NT opening 15-17hcp and no 5 card major

Simple and natural, covering following cases:

- Allows bidding games with 18hcp opposite 7hcp
- Allows 4M game bid when 15-17hcp & 5 card major opposite 4 card support and 6-7hcp
- Allows a good escape when partner is very weak, shortage in C and coverage of all the other suits
- Allows finding best fit in major contract when partner is very weak and has both majors (5/5 or 5/4)
- Allows bidding 3NT when responder has length in minor and good fit between partners
- Allows precise bidding when 5/5 in majors
- Allows precise bidding when 5/4 in majors
- Allows super accept in majors while pre-emptive nature makes it difficult for opponents to enter the competition
- Most bidding sequences are very simple & natural leaving less room for error

Stayman

Opener responses after 2C are very simply and consist of the following:

- 2H 4H not denying S
 - § With 8-9 points and H, responder bids 3H
 - § With 10+ points and H, responder bids 4H
 - § With 8-9 points and S (or no 4 card major), responder bids 2NT
 - § With 10+ points and S (or no 4 card major), responder bids 3NT
- 2S 4S and no H
 - § With 8-9 points and S, responder bids 3S
 - § With 10+ points and S, responder bids 4S
 - § With 8-9 points and H (or no 4 card major), responder bids 2NT
 - § With 10+ points and H (or no 4 card major), responder bids 3NT
- 2D No 4 card major
 - § With 8-9 points responder bids 2NT
 - § With 10+ points responder bids 3NT

In addition to normal Stayman above, responder can use Stayman for the following situations:

- Responder has very weak hand with shortage in C and all other suits → Responder bids 2C and will pass any bid by the opener
- Responder is very weak and 5/5 or 5/4 in majors, start with 2C Stayman and:
 - o Responder with pass 2H or 2S bid by the opener
 - o If opener bids 2D (denying 4 card major), responder will bid 2H, allowing opener to pass or correct to 2S (opener recognizes that this is drop dead bid)

Handling invitational or game force hands with 5-5 or 5-4 in major

With 5-5 in majors after 1NT opening, responder bids as follows (very natural):

- 3H 5-5 in majors and 8-9hcp
- 3S 5-5 in majors and 10+hcp

With 5-4 in H-S after 1NT opening, responder starts with 2D transfer to 2H after which:

- 2S 5-4 in H/S and 8-9hcp
- 3S 5-4 in H/S and 10+hcp

With 5-4 in S-H after 1NT opening, responder starts with 2H transfer to 2S after which:

- 3H 5-4 in S/H and 8-9hcp

- 3S 5-4 in S/H and 10+hcp

Transfer to Major and super accepts

2D transfer to H, unless super accepts as follows:

- 2NT 4H (or good 3H), 17hcp

2H transfer to S, unless super accepts as follows:

- 2NT 4S (or good 3S), 17hcp

Finding 3NT with good minors and transfer/super accept to minors

2S transfer to C, unless super accepts as follows:

- 2NT (by opener) Good C support, responder can decide 3NT or 3C contract (with scattered suit)

2NT transfer to D, unless super accepts as follows:

- 3C (by opener) Good D support, responder can select 3NT or 3D contract

Immediate 3C by responder = 6 cards with 2 top honors (AK, KQ, AQ) and nil else, opener can pass or bid 3NT with one top honor (6 tricks can be made in C) or Jxxx (5 or 6 tricks in C).

Immediate 3D by responder = 6 cards with 2 top honors (AK, KQ, AQ) and nil else, opener can pass or bid 3NT with one top honor (knowing 6 tricks can be made in D) or Jxxx (knowing 5 or 6 tricks can be made in D).

SWINE - they double our 1NT for penalty

If opponents X for penalty we use SWINE defense as follows

- With 2 touching suits and at least 4-4 we bid:
 - o 2C = C/D
 - o 2D = D/H
 - o 2H = H/S
- With a long suit we redouble, 1NT opener will bid 2C
 - o We pass with C being our long suit
 - o We correct to our long suit
- We pass, requiring opener to redouble after which:
 - o We pass if we are happy to play 1NT redouble contract
 - o 2C shows C and a Major. Partner pass with Club support or bid 2H asking for the major
 - o 2D shows D and S. Partner selects
 - o We bid 2H/2S this shows 5+H/S with good values. This shows a better hand than redouble and then bidding 2H/2S

Bergen Raises

When your partner opens major and you have fit at 3 level or 4+ level, Bergen raise is a method of communicating your point range (in a modular form) and number of trump support (3 or 4+).

Dummy points when you have support

Sum off:

- High card points
- Long suit points (1 for 5 card suit, 2 for a 6 card suit etc)
- Short suit points
 - § 1 point for each doubleton
 - § For singleton add 2 points with 3 trumps and 3 points for 4+ trumps hand
 - § For void value is the same as dummy's # of trumps

Bergen Responses

Partner opens major (say 1H), you will respond as follows:

- 2H with 7-10 dummy points and 3 H support (business as usual)
- 3C with 7-10 dummy points and 4+ H support
- 3D with 10-12 dummy points and 4+ H support
- 2S with 10-12 dummy points and 3 H support (if partner opens **1S, 3H** response)
- 3H with 2-7 dummy points and 4+ H support
- 3NT with 13-15 **hcp**, 3 H and 4-3-3-3 shape (non forcing)
- 2NT with 13+ dummy points and 4+ H support or 16+ & 3 H support

Notice overlap points. This is to apply judgment for good and bad points and to upgrade or downgrade.

Reasons to upgrade: Aces, honors in long suits, quality suits with 4+ cards and 3+ honors

Reasons to Downgrade: Queens and Jacks specially in suits with no honor, singleton K,Q,J, honor in short suits

Opener points revaluation after Bergen Raise (Bergen Points)

Sum off:

- Initial high card and length points (1 point for 5 card, 2 points for 6 card etc)
- Extra points if trump suit is 6+ cards (1 for 6 card, 2 for 7 card etc)
- One point for any side suit with 4+ cards
- Short suit points
 - § 4 points for void
 - § 2 points for singleton
 - § No point for 1 doubleton, but 1 point (in total) if more than 1 doubleton

Total points and final contract

Total opener's Bergen points and responder points and aim for where contract belongs:

- § If definitely 26 total points, bid game
- § If may have 26 points, make a game try
- § If you may have 33 total points, investigate slam

Subsequent responses

After 1H – 2NT response (support & 13+ dummy points, 4+ trump), opener will use Jacoby responses as follows:

With singleton or void in C/D/S will bid 3C/3D/3S

With no singleton or void, opener describes his strength so partner can decide if look for slam or not.

4H with 12-14 Bergen points

3NT with 15-16 Bergen points

3H with 17+ Bergen points

Game tries after 3C & 3D responses.

After 3D response, opener will usually know what to do. With 3C response opener sometimes needs help from partner & needs to bid a suit at economical level. Following are game tries:

- § 1H-3C opener invites by 3D
- § 1H-3D no room to invite
- § 1S-3C opener invites with 3D or 3H
- § 1S-3D opener invites with 3H

After invite, responder goes to game with maximum or signs off at 3 level with minimum.

Bergen Raises after interference or partner overcall

After RHO Doubles: Yes, we ignore X and use Bergen Raises as usual

After RHO Overcalls

If overcall is at 1 level such as; 1H-1S or 1H/1S/1NT: Yes we use Bergen Raises

If overcall is at 2 level: No, we bid naturally including use of Cue bids

Partner Overcalls: No, if possible we use Drury or Cue bid (refer to competitive bidding)

Short suit game tries after 1H-2H or 1S-2S sequences

Opener bids 2NT – asks responder to show any short suit (void, singleton, doubleton), otherwise go to 3H/3S.

Opener bid a suit – shows a short suit and asks responder to make a judgment for game or sign off at 3H/3S (if maximum and values in other suits).

Defence to Gambling 3NT opening

- 4C = both majors with preference for H or neutral
- 4D = both majors with preference for S

Lead ace against 3NT (if you have one), watch for dummy, partner to give signal if possible and look for continuation to defeat the contract.

Defence to artificial strong 1C opening such as Precision

After opponents 1C artificial bid we can immediately overcall with a single suited or double suited hands as follows:

- Pass = Weak or balanced 13+
- 1H/1S Natural, good suit 9+ points
- 2C/2D Natural, good suit 9+ points
- **X** = **Color – 2 suited**
- **1 ..** = **Rank – 2 suited**
- **1NT** = **Odd - 2 suited**
- 3NT = Gambling 3NT (Pre-empt in a minor)
- Other jump O'Call = pre-emptive

If partner bids X, 1D or 1NT indicating a 2 suited hand, we will bid the lowest rank suit that we have 3+ of that suit. Partner can pass if there is a match or bid his suit at lowest possible level. We can then pass or correct to the other suit.

Lionel Defence to any 1NT opening

Lionel convention can be used for overcalls over weak or strong 1 NT. It is very useful for competing when we have 4-4 fit and points are distributed.

Following bids are natural and can be made with less than opening hands.

- 2H/2S/3C/3D = Natural, 5+ and good suit
- 2NT = Minors, 5-5

With 11+ points and 4+-4+ in major and another suit

- X = S-another
- 2C C-H
- 2D D-H

Responses after X

- Pass = 10+ hcp for penalty. Any double after that is for penalty.
- 2S Weak raise
- 3S Pre-emptive
- 2NT S support, invitational
- 3C/3D/3H S support, invitational with singleton/void in bid suit
- 2C Pass or correct to 2nd suit
- 2D Natural non forcing, Doubler can bid H with H and less than 2D
- 2H Natural non forcing

Responses after 2C/2D

- Pass to play
- 2H Weak raise
- 3H Pre-emptive
- 2NT H support, invitational
- 3C/3D Pre-emptive
- 2S to play
- 2D/3C to play

1430 RKCB by bidding 4C or 4D (Minorwood)

This is used for exploring slam in minors in situation when a minor suit fit is established (explicit or implicit) such as:

1C à 3C, 1H à 2C à 4C, 2C à 2D à 3C, 2H à 2NT à 3D

1D à 3D, 2H à 2NT à 4D

2NT opening (minors) à partner having good minor support and slam interest

A bid of 4C or 4D in these situations is a 1430 RKCB with agreement on C or D as trump. Responses are step up.

For example after 2NT à 4D or 1H à 2D à 4D, responses will be (for diamond trump):

4H à 1 or 4 key cards

4S à 0 or 3 key cards

4NT à 2 key cards but no Queen of diamond

5C à 2 key cards and Queen of diamonds

After above responses, partner can stop by bidding 5D, (4S or 4NT) (over 4H, 4S) to ask for Q of trump **or bid 5H** asking for kings. If we responded 4H or 4S with 3 or 4 key cards and partner stops (assuming 0 or 1), we should take it to slam.

Similarly after 1C à 2C or 1S à 2C, a bid of 4C is also RKCB (not CRO Gerber) with following responses:

4D à 1 or 4 key cards

4H à 0 or 3 key cards

4S à 2 key cards but no Queen of clubs

4NT à 2 key cards and Queen of clubs

After above responses, partner can stop by bidding 5C, (4H, 5S) (over 4D, 4H) asking for Q of trump **or bid 5D** asking for kings. If we responded 4D or 4H with 3 or 4 key cards and partner stops (assuming 0 or 1), we should take it to slam.

Inverted Minors

When partner opens 1C or 1D (better minor) and responder **has no 4 card major**, you know that there is no chance of game in major. Possibility for game is either in NT or minor. In such cases "Inverted Minor" is a good convention.

This is how it works, if your partner opens minor, you don't have 4-card major, **with 5+ card support for partner's minor**, you respond as follows:

- 1C à 2C with 11+ points and 5+ club support
- 1C à 2D with 6-10 points and 5+ club support (jump shift other minor)
- 1C à 3C with =<5 points and 5+ club support
- 1D à 2D with 11+ points and 5+ diamond support
- 1D à 3C with 6-10 points and 5+ diamond support (jump shift other minor)
- 1D à 3D with =<5 points and 5+ diamond support

Opener then has a good picture of partner's hand (strength & distribution) and decides further course of action. Priority should be for NT game by **asking bid for stoppers**. Alternative options are:

- May decide on game in minor
- May push & compete in minor
- May look for slam in minor (using various conventions including Minorwood).

Checkback Stayman

Main purpose of Checkback is to find fit in major and to distinguish between responder (with invitational hand) bidding a major with four cards or with five cards (remember that rebidding a suit promises six, rebidding with five is considered poor bridge).

Checkback is a bid by responder, similar to Stayman to determine if opener is holding a 4-card major or 3-cards in responder's bid suit. It is used in a bidding sequence such as:

1 Minor - 1 Major;

1 NT - **2 Clubs** (Checkback Stayman)

Responder bids 2C when he/she:

oHas interest in game

oHas 5 card major or 4 card in the other major

Opener replies:

2D = No 3 card in the bid major or 4 in the unbid major

2H = 4 hearts (or 3 if responder suit is hearts)

2S = 4 spades (or 3 if responder suit is spade)

Reverse Drury

If partner overcalls a major or opens at 3rd or 4th seat, he may be weak. When we have an invitational hand and support for partner, to find out if partner was weak or has a genuine opening strength hand we use Drury by bidding **2C**. Opener/Overcaller responses are as follows:

Opener replies:

2D = Opening hand

2 of suit = Less than opening hand

Any other suit = Opening hand and 2nd suit

For Slam – 1430 RKCB asking for key cards

1430 RKCB asks for key cards

·5C = 1 or 4 key cards

·5D= 0 or 3 key cards

·5H = 2 key cards without Q of trump

·5S = 2 key cards and Q of trump.

After 5C or 5D, next suit up asks for Q of trump. Responses are:

·Return to trump suit = No Q of trump

·Any other suit, yes I have Q of trump and this particular King.

In response to 5NT, we either show kings or bid grand slam with a source of tricks.

1430 CRO Gerber asking for aces

By forfeiting 4C splinter bid, a bid of 4C (anytime except when it is obviously RKCB for C) ask for aces

Responses are:

· 4D = 1 or 4 aces

· 4H= 0 or 3 aces

· 4S = 2 aces of the same **C**olor

· 4NT = 2 aces of the same **R**ank

· 5C= 2 **O**dd aces

After above response, bid of the next unbid suit (or NT) asks for number of kings.

Other slam asking tools – Jump to 5NT or raise to 5 level

Jump to 5NT after trump is established (grand slam interest, asking for number of top 3 trumps honors responses 6C, 6D, 6H, 6S for 0, 1, 2 or 3 top 3 trump honors)à

Raise to 5 of the agreed major (small slam interest, asking partner to bid 6 with 2 of the top 3 trump honors, otherwise pass)

DOPI – If interference over ace asking bids

Response after partner's 1NT opening is interfered - Lebensohl

This is a great convention. After a 2 level bid by opponents, responder's 2NT bid simply ask opener to bid 3C. With Lebensohl, you simply need to understand a few principals:

- Any immediate 2 level bid is weak, natural and sign off
- Any immediate 3 level bid is strong, natural and game force
- Any cue bid of opponents suit is Stayman
- Any immediate bid (Cue bid or NT bid) shows no stopper in opponents suit (fast arrival)
- Any delayed Cue bid or NT bid (after 2NT-3C Lebensohl sequence) shows stopper in opponent's suit (slow arrival)

When partner's 1NT is interfered with a bid, following bids by us are Lebensohl convention:

- X Penalty
- 2 level bid Natural, weak to play
- 3 level bid Natural, forcing to game
- Cue Bid opponents Stayman, ***no stopper*** in opponents suit
- 3NT Game force, ***no stopper*** in opponents suit
- 2NT Lebensohl – Forcing opener to bid 3C

In above sequences where Cue Bid or 3NT indicating no stopper, it is up to opener to change to appropriate suit or bid NT or leave it at 3NT with stoppers.

Purpose of the 2NT Lebensohl is to describe other situations not covered above such as:

- To sign off at 3 level (when it wasn't possible at 2 level) with a weak suit
- To bid Stayman and tell partner that we also ***have stopper*** at opponents suit
- To bid 3NT game force and tell partner we also ***have stopper*** for opponents suit
- To show a natural suit with invitational values

Responder's rebid after 3C by opener to describe above situations are as follows:

- Any bid below 3 level of opponents suit = sign off (if C is our suit, responder will simply pass)
- Any bid at 3 level above opponents suit = natural & invitational
- Cue bid opponents = Stayman with stopper
- 3NT = Game force with stopper

Notice difference between Cue Bid and 3NT bids when is done immediately after interference or after 2NT Lebensohl (slow bid). An immediate bid shows no stopper and a slow bid shows stopper.

Bids over opponent's weak 2s – including Lebensohl in response to partner X over opponents weak 2

When opponents open a Weak 2 (if 2D indicates long major, we should usually wait until they reveal their major suit. However we can use "double" to show a weak D hand, or bid 3D with opening and good D suit). Before looking at Lebensohl, with following hands we bid:

- With 15-17hcp, stoppers, we bid 2NT
- With Good 5 or 6 cards in a suit (in particular majors), 11-15 points we bid it
- With very strong hand or opening hand with shortage in their suit we use take out double.
- If 2D is weak major, we can double with weak hand and long D
- If 2D is weak major, 3D is opening hand and good D
- All jumps are constructive and show strong hands. Over 2H, 3S bid shows 6 cards suit, for example S AQJ1087 H 3 D K2 C AJ108
- Leaping Michael – Shows 5 cards in bid suit and 5 cards in other major. For example a bid of 4D over 2H, shows 5 Diamonds and 5 Spades
- Cue Bidding – asks partner to bid 3NT with stopper in the opponent's suit.

Over opponent's weak 2 in major when partner use take out double, Lebensohl convention enable us to find the optimum bid and communicate stoppers, fit, strength, and even try for slam with single suited or two-suited hands. Similar to Lebensohl with 1NT, a bid of 2NT in response to partner's take out X, asks doubler to bid 3C. Unlike 1NT variation, doubler is not forced to bid 3C after our 2NT bid. If doubler has **very strong hand**, she can refuse 3C bid and bid her own suit. In this case we should not pass (even with 0 point). After partner doubles a weak 2 bid, following are our choices:

If we have very weak hand (0-6 points):

- A bid at 2 level if possible is sign off (e.g. 2H-X-P-2S is weak and sign off)
- 2NT forces partner to bid 3C (Lebensohl). We pass with C as suit or bid of another suit at 3 level (that wasn't possible at 2 level above) is also weak and sign off
- If doubler decline to bid 3C after our 2NT and bids another suit, it is natural and indicates a very strong hand. This is forcing and we must bid again, even if we are very weak. Doubler with just a little help from us probably has game.

With medium strength 7-10 points, responding to partner's double:

- Our bid at 3 level is natural but not necessarily forcing. Doubler can pass with minimum or bid on with extra values.
- If our suit is higher than opener's suit we can show exactly 4 card or 5+ as follows:
 - o If we bid at 3 level it shows 5+ card and medium strength (e.g. 2H-X-P-3S shows 5+S and 7-10 points)
 - o If we bid 2NT and after 3C by partner, bid the suit at 3 level. This shows exactly 4 card suit and medium strength hand (e.g. 2H-X-P-2NT-3C-P-3S shows 7-10 points and 4 spades)

With 11+ points

- We can simply jump to game or bid at 4 level (standard bidding) to show our strength.
- Immediate 3NT bid (e.g. 2H-X-P-3NT) shows good stoppers in the opponent's suit. Direct jump to 3NT usually denies 4 card in the other major.
- Looking for 3NT or slam try with single suited hand:
 - o Immediate Cuebid (2H-X-P-3H) Asks doubler to bid 3NT with a stopper.
 - o If after cuebid, we bid a suit at 4 level, we have one-suited hand with interest in slam (2H-X-P-3H-P-3NT-P-4S/or4Cor4D shows slam try values with one long suit)

- 2 suited majors or minors. Immediate jump cuebid:
 - If weak 2 is a major (2H-X-P-4H) = both minors
 - If weak 2 is weak D (2D-X-P-4D) = both majors
- Showing 4 cards in the other major, with & without stoppers:
 - 2NT and then cuebid (2H-X-P-2NT-P-3C-P-3H) = 4 cards in the other major but no stopper in the opponent's suit (partner's choice to play NT or suit)
 - 2NT and then 3NT (2H-X-P-2NT-P-3C-P-3NT) = 4 cards in the other major with one stopper in the opponent's suit (partner can select to play suit or NT)
- Use of Lebensohl for slam try with 2 suited hands
 - 2NT and then jump to 4C or 4D (2H-X-P-2NT-P-3C-P-4C or 4D) shows 2 suited hand in the other major (in this example S) and bid suit (with C or D) and slam interest
 - 2NT and then Cuebid opponent's major at 4 level (2H-X-P-2NT-P-3C-P-4H) shows both minors and slam interest

Points to remember:

Cue bid of opponent's suit always indicate 11+ hcp

- Immediate cue bid, asks for NT contract
- Jump cue bid indicates both majors or both minors
- Cue bid and then suit at 4 level, single suited slam interest
- 2NT and then cue bid, 4 card in other major & no stopper

Summary of bids to show other major

- 2 level = very weak suit
- 2NT and then 3 level below opponent's suit, very weak
- Immediate 3 level = 5 card and 7-10 points
- 2NT & then 3 level above opponent's = 4 card, 7-10 hcp
- 4 level bid = 5 card, 11+ hcp
- 2NT followed by cue bid = 4 card, 11+hcp, no stopper
- 2NT followed by 3NT = 4 card, 11+hcp, stopper

Special bids over 3 & 4 level pre-empts

Over opponents 3-level pre-empts:

- 4NT over 3H or 3S shows minor suits
- Cue bid over major shows 5 cards in the other major and 5 cards in a minor
- Cue bid over C or D shows 5/5 in majors

Over 4 S pre-empt:

- X = 3 suited take out with shortage in S
- 4NT shows any 2 suited hand (5/5 at least) Partner will assume suits are minors and give preference. However if you convert 5C to 5D, partner knows that your suits are D & H.

Voidwood

After trump is established for major, a jump to 5 level (or 4S if trump is Heart) shows void in that suit and at the same time asks for key cards. In response **The Ace of the void suit is not counted.** Example follows:

Opener	Responder	Meaning
1S	3 NT	Bergen (Spade support and 13-15 hcp)
4NT		1430 RKCB
4C/D/H		Control show
5C		Voidwood – void in Clubs
5D		Voidwood – void in Diamonds
5H		Voidwood – void in Hearts
5NT		Asks for top 3 trump honors

Competitive bidding

Level of contract to compete to be strictly based on "Total Tricks".

If partner overcalls H (e.g. LHO opens 1D, partner overcalls 1H and RHO passes), our bids in support of H are:

- 2H, bad raise with only 3 trumps
- 2D, good raise with 3 trumps
- 3H, bad raise with 4 trumps
- 3D, good raise with 4 trumps
- 4H, weak raise with 5 trumps or a hand that expect partner making

Doubles / Redoubles

Reopening Double

Reopen with double with a shortage in the opponents' suit and pass with length

Bid 2nd suit with 2 suited hands

Over pre-emptive jump overcall, your strong opening bid and shortage, double

Over 1 level overcall, double but bid 1NT with 1NT values and stoppers in overcaller's suit,

Snap-Dragon Double

Partner overcalls and RHO bids. Our double shows 2 cards in partners' suit and 5 cards in the unbid suit

Redouble by overcalling team

Partner overcalls and RHO doubles. A redouble by you shows a 2 card holding in partner suits with one honor and values such as 7-10hcp.

Support Double

You open the bidding & partner respond and RHO overcalls. Your X shows exactly 3 card support for partner's suit.

Similarly if you open the bidding & partner responds & RHO doubles, a redouble by you shows 3 card support for partner's suit.

Game Try Doubles

In competitive bidding, if we feel there is potential for game:

- If there is no room at all to make a game invitation bid, then a X is "Game Try"
- If we have an available bid, then bid is "Game Try" and X is for penalty

Rescue Redouble

If partner's 1NT bid is doubled for penalty and we have very few points but a 5+ card suit:

- Transfer with 5 card major
- Redouble with 5 card minor. Partner to bid 2C. We pass with C or correct to 2D with D.

Modified Michaels

If opponents play short C, 1C – 2C is natural and 1C – 2D is Michaels

Unusual NT – As overcall shows 2 lowest unbid suit. – if opponents agree on a major contract, a Sudden bid of 2NT, 3NT or 4NT is indicating 2 suited minor hand and asks partner to bid best minor fit.