

MY BRIDGE PRIMER

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INTRODUCTION

I have written this document partly as a reference for my wife and myself, and partly to assist other members of our family and a few friends, who are also trying to learn just enough about Bridge to enjoy it. Essentially the document provides a short summary of our way of bidding and playing Bridge.

My wife and I enjoy a game of Bridge as a way of socialising with others. To us Bridge is different from most sports, because you do not necessarily have to participate in any kind of competition. To us Bridge is just mental gymnastics – a way of keeping our brains functioning - exercised in the comfort of our home and those of our friends. In time to come, when physical activities prove too much, we hope Bridge will provide us with enough mental activity to still have a good time.

This document needs to be read in conjunction with a small set of colourful and informative tables published and maintained on the Internet. For this reason you may like to visit my website at <http://members.optushome.com.au/svencsh/bridge.htm> and print the following tables:

- [About Opening Bids](#)
- [About Overcalls](#)
- [About Takeout Doubles](#)
- [What happens after 1 of a Suit Opening](#)
- [What happens after 1 No Trump Opening](#)
- [What happens after Weak Two Opening](#)
- [What happens after Pre-Emptive Opening](#)
- [What happens after 2 No Trump Opening](#)
- [What happens after 3 No Trump Opening](#)
- [What happens after Strong Two Opening](#)
- [What happens after Takeout Double](#)

The tables form a kind of logical flow chart (actually a set of decision tables) leading from the opening bid to the final declaration of a suitable contract. The tables are based on what used to be called Standard American 5-Card Major bidding system conventions, but point ranges used in my tables may vary slightly from what you have been taught. Furthermore, the tables only cover a selected set of common situations.

If you are already somewhat familiar with Bridge, you may already know most of what is contained in this document. What may be new is the way it is presented and explained, in particular the logical progression proposed in the companion tables listed above.

BRIDGE BASICS

Bridge is considered to be the world's finest and most satisfying card game. It is played by four players teaming up two and two to form partnerships. When the 52 cards have been dealt into four hands with 13 cards in each, these hands are first used (during the **Bidding** Phase) as a basis for predicting how many so-called tricks each partnership will be able to take, and subsequently they are used again (during the **Playing** Phase) when the thirteen tricks are actually played out.

If you are interested, the outcomes of bidding and then playing out a series of 4-hand games can be recorded on a score sheet, so that a final point score for each of the partnerships can be determined.

The rest of this document attempts to present a number of basic concepts to do with the bidding and playing processes. A number of important terms will be introduced, defined and explained. They form the all-important Bridge jargon you will have to become familiar with. Learning about bidding may seem daunting at first, but as you put your knowledge into practice by playing lots of Bridge, you will become more and more at home with the concepts involved. Learning about playing is equally important though, because brilliant bidding is not much use if you can't follow it up.

BIDDING BASICS

What is a Bid?

A **bid** is a verbal or written indication by one of the players designed to communicate some piece of information to all three of the other players. If a bid is not opposed, it becomes the contract, in which your partnership will attempt to make a certain number of tricks (over and above the average of 6 tricks). For example, an unopposed bid of 1S (One Spade) is an undertaking to make $1 + 6 = 7$ tricks (with Spades as trumps). An unopposed bid of 3NT (three No Trump) is an undertaking to make $3 + 6 = 9$ tricks (with none of the suits being able to trump a trick).

There are a few ways you can make your bid known to the other players. You can simply say the bid out loud, or you can write it down on a **bidding pad** (my preferred method), or you can show it by means of special **bidding cards** (used mainly by professionals and in clubs).

Some bids are slightly artificial and as such intended merely to communicate something to the partner, who will then use that information to determine an appropriate response in pursuit of a contract. However, each and every bid follows a certain **convention**, which is an agreement between you and your partner as to what a particular bid is supposed to mean. Unless you know the convention you may have a hard time understanding what is going on. For example, if at some stage during the bidding you make a bid of 4 No Trump (4NT) you may have an agreement with your partner that this particular bid is not supposed to be interpreted as a genuine No Trump bid but rather as an enquiry into to how many aces are on partner's hand. Obviously your partner cannot provide a literal answer to that question, but instead will respond by making a higher bid that actually provides the answer to the question, albeit in a round about way.

The set of conventions you have agreed with your partner constitutes your **bidding system**. Over the years a number of "standard" bidding systems have become accepted amongst Bridge players all over the world, but they do vary on certain issues. It does not matter a lot, however, which system you use as long as it allows you and your partner to have a meaningful "conversation" leading to a successful outcome. Upon request you are obliged to explain your system of bidding to the opponents, so they know what to expect.

Ranking of the Bids

The bids (and the suits) are ranked as follows: Clubs ♣ (lowest), Diamonds ♦, Hearts ♥, Spades ♠, No Trump (highest).

How does the Bidding go?

The bidding goes in a **clockwise** direction starting with the **Dealer**. Each new bid must be higher than the previous bid, either at the same level in a suit of higher rank or in No Trumps (e.g. 1S beats 1H, 1NT beats any other bid at the 1-level), or at a higher level (i.e. a bid at the 2-level beats any bid at the 1-level). You don't have to make a competitive bid, you can **Pass** (this is sometimes, a little misleading, also called a **No Bid**). The bidding is finished when a competitive bid is followed by 3 Passes (*going, going, gone*), whereby a **Contract** has been established for the **Declarer** (and his/her **Dummy** partner) to attempt. During the actual playing of the hands, the **Opponents** (also known as **Defenders**) will attempt to prevent the Declarer from winning the contract.

The Opening Bid

The very first bid (other than Pass) is known as the **Opening Bid**. The player making this bid is known as the **Opener** and his/her partner is known as the **Responder**. There is only one opening bid in each **auction**. In response to the Opening Bid the other partnership may make what is known as an **Overcall**, i.e. a bid that is designed to cancel out the opening bid, and that may in turn lead to a contract for that partnership. Or, alternatively, the other partnership may make what is known as a **Takeout Double**, i.e. a bid that is designed to be cancelled out later by the opposition or partner, and that may in turn lead to a contract for that partnership.

Subsequent Bids

After a player has made an opening bid, a series of other bids follow in which a kind of “conversation” takes place. In each of these subsequent bids the players attempt to provide information usually on the strength and shape of their respective hands, so that their partners can make good decisions on the kind of contract they wish to pursue. The process of bidding follows logical rules most of which are perfectly simple while others are slightly more complex. It is these rules I have attempted to make available by means of the tables listed in the Introduction.

Finding a Fit

The aim of the initial rounds of bidding in most cases, is to find out if the partnership has a **fit**, i.e. a suit in which the partnership holds **8 or more of the 13 cards** in that suit. If no fit can be found, the initial rounds of bidding may instead determine that the partnership holds No Trump hands.

Choosing a Contract

The aim of subsequent bidding is to determine a **contract**, preferably one that can be won (or, better still, one that wins the partnership **game** points, i.e. 100 or more points on the scoring pad).

How does the Playing go?

Once the bidding has ended and a contract has been determined, the playing of the cards begins in the clockwise direction starting with the player following the **Dealer**. That player will lead a card to the first trick (four cards) and at that point in time the cards that are in Dummy’s hand are put down on the table face up for everyone to see. For every trick the card being played by each player is placed in front of the player face up for everyone to see. Whenever it is Dummy’s turn a card will be played from Dummy’s hand at the request of the Declarer. The player (and the partnership) who puts out the highest card wins the trick. At that point each of the four cards making up the trick are turned over but not collected. Instead, to eliminate disagreements later as to which partnership won the trick, they are orientated in such a manner so as to indicate this. The player from whose hand the trick was won will then lead to the following trick. Players must follow suit if they can. If the bidding resulted in a suit being named as trump suit, then a card from that suit may be used for trumping a trick, if a player is not able to follow suit. In that case the player who puts out the highest trump card takes the trick and that player will therefore lead to the following trick. This process now continues until all 13 tricks have been played and the score is recorded on the scoring sheet. If the Declarer won the contract bonus points are awarded, otherwise penalty points are recorded in favour of the Defenders.

WAYS OF EVALUATING YOUR HAND

Counting High Card Points (HCPs)

Initial evaluation of a hand for purposes of bidding involves the counting of **High Card Points (HCPs)**. The HCPs are counted for each of the so-called **Honour** cards as follows:

- **Ace** = 4 HCPs,
- **King** = 3 HCPs,
- **Queen** = 2 HCPs,
- **Jack** = 1 HCPs

Consequently, there are 40 HCPs in the pack, which means that the average hand contains 10 HCPs. The number of HCPs on a hand may be as low as 0 and as high as 37 (4 Aces, 4 Kings, 4 Queens and 1 Jack).

Counting Distribution Points (DPs) and Calculating Total Points (TPs)

As soon as the initial round(s) of bidding have uncovered that you and your partner have a fit in a particular suit you may re-evaluate your hand in terms of what is known as **Distribution Points (DPs)**. The DPs are counted as follows:

- **Void** = 5.
- **Singleton** = 3,
- **Doubleton** = 1,

Should the suit in which you have a fit become trump suit, the strength of your hand is more accurately measured by what is known as your **Total Points (TPs)**, which you can calculate by adding your HCPs to your DPs, i.e. **TPs = HCPs + DPs**.

Counting Quick Tricks (QTs)

In preparation for (as well as after) what is known as a pre-emptive opening bid (3 or more in a suit), your hand needs to be evaluated in terms of what is known as **Quick Tricks (QTs)**. The pre-emptive opening usually requires 7 QTs in Opener's hand who is hoping for 2-3 QTs in Responder's hand. The QTs in each suit are counted as follows (x = some card less 10):

- Ace/King/Queen = 3 QTs;
- Ace/King/Jack or Ace/Queen/Jack = 2.5 QTs;
- Ace/King or Ace/Queen/Ten or King/Queen/Jack = 2 QTs;
- Ace/Queen or Ace/Jack/x or King/Queen/x or King/Jack/Ten = 1.5 QTs;
- Ace or King/Jack or King/Ten/x or Queen/Jack/x = 1 QTs;
- King/x or Queen/xx or Jack/Ten/x = 0.5 QTs.

Counting Suit Quality Points (SQPs)

Occasionally, in preparation for making what is known as an **Overcall**, the quality of your hand needs to be evaluated by counting what is known as **Suit Quality Points (SQPs)**. An Overcall usually requires 11 SQPs.

The SQPs in a potential Overcaller's hand are counted (in a manner similar to counting HCPs) as follows:

- **Ace** = 4 SQPs,
- **King** = 3 SQPs,
- **Queen** = 2 SQPs,
- **Jack** = 1 SQPs
- **Ten** = 1 SQPs
- **Length** = Number of cards in suit

Example:

If your hand contains a 5-card suit including Ace, King, Ten and two small cards (x), the quality of that suit would be calculated as follows:

$$\text{SQPs of a 5-card suit containing AKTxx} = 4 + 3 + 1 + 5 = 12 \text{ SQPs}$$

Therefore this hand is probably good enough for an Overcall to challenge the Opening bid.

How Many TPs for Game?

It makes a difference on the scoring sheet when you bid and make a **game contract** (100+ trick points). The chance of winning a game contract is there, when you have uncovered a fit. Short suits, singletons or even voids may significantly increase the chances of making a game contract. All of these things contribute to your Total Point score.

- Game in a **major** suit contract (Spades or Hearts) or in a No Trump contract is **possible**, if partnership holds 26 TPs.
- Game in a **minor** suit contract (Diamonds or Clubs) is **possible**, if partnership holds 29 TPs.

How Many TPs for Slam?

There is a large bonus for bidding and making a **slam contract** (12 or 13 tricks).

- **Small Slam** (12 tricks) is **possible** if partnership holds 33 TPs.
- **Grand Slam** (13 tricks) is **possible** if partnership holds 37 TPs.

OPENING THE BIDDING

Please refer to the [About Opening Bids](#) table. If you haven't yet printed this table, please do so before you read on. The table can be found on the Internet at <http://members.optushome.com.au/svencsh/bridge.htm>.

This table is my attempt to provide an overview of the most common types of opening bids, with a reference to what might happen later when one of these are acted out (Go to Type x).

You will notice that the table is divided into three coloured zones each covering one or more ranges of High Card Points (HCPs). The red zone to the left is the "Low Range" representing the weak hands in which you can count only 0-11 HCPs. The yellow zone in the middle is the "Middle Range" representing the medium-to-strong hands in which you can count 12-19 HCPs. The green zone to the right is the "High Range" representing the very strong hands in which you can count 20-37 HCPs.

Your very first task, therefore, after sorting the cards on your hand into suits (I recommend sequencing them Black/Red/Black/Red) is to determine your HCP count, so that you know in which column of the table to look for a good opening bid.

Week Hands

With 0-5 HCPs your hand is too weak for anything other than Pass. In other words, you cannot make an opening bid if you only have 0-5 HCPs. Even with 6-11 HCPs you will often have to Pass, except under two circumstances in which you can still make an opening bid as explained below.

- **With 6-11 HCPs and a good 6-card suit** (other than Clubs), open at the 2-level. Even though you only have 6-11 HCPs the shape of your hand is unusual, enabling you to make a so-called "Weak Two" opening. This opening bid, which I have called a Type 3 opening, is designed to annoy the opposition. It is harder for the opposition to make an opposing bid because it now has to be at the 2 level or higher. When you make this bid your partner recognises that your hand is weak, but together with your partner's hand it is entirely possible that you can win a suit contract. Subsequent bidding is governed by the [What happens after a Weak Two Opening](#) table. By the way, the reason you can't do this with a 6-card Club suit is that the 2C opening bid is reserved for another purpose, namely to convey to your partner that you have a very strong hand.
- **With 6-11 HCPs and a good 7-card suit**, open at the 3-level to pre-empt opposition. Even though you only have 6-11 HCPs the shape of your hand is even more unusual, enabling you to make a so-called "Pre-Emptive" opening. This opening bid, which I have called a Type 4 opening, is designed to make it really hard for the opposition to make any opposing bid. You may find, however, that you are not the only one having a hand with a 7-card suit, in which case someone else may also bid at the 3 level. Subsequent bidding is governed by the [What happens after a Pre-Emptive Opening](#) table.
- **With 6-11 HCPs and a good 8-card suit**, open at the 4-level pre-empting opposition. Even though you only have 6-11 HCPs the shape of your hand is unusual and quite strong, enabling you to make an even stronger "Pre-Emptive" opening. This opening bid, which I still count as a Type 4 opening, is designed to make it almost impossible for the opposition to make any opposing bid. Subsequent bidding is still covered reasonably well by the [What happens after a Pre-Emptive Opening](#) table.

Medium-to-Strong Hands

With 12-19 HCPs your hand is sufficiently strong for you to be able to make an opening bid. But which one?

- With 15-17 HCPs and no 5-card major and a balanced hand (i.e. at the most one doubleton), open 1 NT. This opening bid, which I have called a Type 2 opening, is designed to tell your partner the precise shape and strength of your hand. Subsequent bidding is governed by the [What happens after 1 No Trump Opening](#) table.
- With 12-14 HCPs, or 15-17 HCPs in a balanced hand containing a 5-card major suit, or 18-19 HCPs you will open a suit at level 1. But which suit? If you have two 5-card major suits (Hearts and Spades) you will open 1S, because this is the higher ranked suit and because this makes the subsequent bidding a little easier for your partner. If you only have one 5-card major suit (Hearts or Spades) you will open that suit. If you do not have a 5-card major suit at all, you will open the longest of your minor suits (Diamonds or Clubs). If you have the same number of cards in Clubs and Diamonds, you will open 1C if there are 3 of each, 1D if there are 4 of each. Subsequent bidding is aimed at finding a Fit (i.e. a suit in which you and your partner hold at least 8 of the 13 cards in that suit) and is governed by the [What happens after 1 of a Suit Opening](#) table.

Very Strong Hands

With 20-37 HCPs you have a very strong hand offering real possibilities, even if your partner only has a weak hand. You have a few possibilities for your strong opening bid.

- With 20-21 HCPs and a balanced hand (i.e. at the most one doubleton), open 2 NT. This opening bid, which I have called a Type 5 opening, tells your partner the precise shape and strength of your hand (as did a 1NT opening). With this opening you have a strong possibility of reaching a Game contract. Subsequent bidding is governed by the [What happens after 2 No Trump Opening](#) table.
- With 24-25 HCPs and a balanced hand (i.e. at the most one doubleton), open 3 NT. This opening bid, which I have called a Type 6 opening, tells your partner the precise shape and strength of your hand (as did a 1NT opening). Subsequent bidding is governed by the [What happens after 3 No Trump Opening](#) table.
- With an unbalanced hand and 20+ HCPs you will open 2C indicating real strength. With this opening bid you are looking for a Fit, or planning a 2NT or a 3NT contract. With this opening you may even have a possibility of reaching a Slam contract. Subsequent bidding is governed by the [What happens after Strong Two Opening](#) table.

OVERCALLING AFTER SUIT OPENING

Even though a partnership may have made an Opening bid it is by no means certain that they hold the stronger hands. For this reason, the opponents may challenge the opening bid by making what is known as an **Overcall**.

Please refer to the [About Overcalls](#) table. If you haven't yet printed this table, please do so before you read on. The table can be found at <http://members.optushome.com.au/svencsh/bridge.htm>.

This table is my attempt to provide an overview of the most common types of overcalls, with a reference to what might happen later when one of these is acted out.

Overcalling at the 1 Level

If you have 8-16 HCPs on your hand with a good 5-card suit that can still be bid at the 1 level and the quality of that suit is at least 10 SQPs, your hand is sufficiently strong for you to challenge the opening bid.

- With your suit worth 11 SQPs and your hand worth 8-11 HCPs, bid 1 of your good 5-card suit. Subsequent bidding is aimed at finding a Fit and is governed by the [What happens after 1 of a Suit Opening](#) table.
- With your suit only worth 10 SQPs but your hand worth 12-16 HCPs, bid 1 of your good 5-card suit. Subsequent bidding is aimed at finding a Fit and is governed by the [What happens after 1 of a Suit Opening](#) table.

Overcalling at the 2 Level

If you have 10-16 HCPs on your hand with a good 5-card suit that cannot be bid at the 1 level and the quality of that suit is at least 12 SQPs, your hand is sufficiently strong for you to challenge the opening bid.

- With your suit worth 12 SQPs and your hand worth 10-16 HCPs, bid 2 of your good 5-card suit. Subsequent bidding is aimed at finding a Fit and is governed by the [What happens after 1 of a Suit Opening](#) table.

TAKEOUT DOUBLING

Even though a partnership may have made an Opening bid it is by no means certain that they hold the stronger hands. For this reason, the opponents may challenge the opening bid by making what is known as a **Takeout Double**.

Please refer to the [About Takeout Doubles](#) table. If you haven't yet printed this table, please do so before you read on. The table can be found at <http://members.optushome.com.au/svencsh/bridge.htm>.

This table is my attempt to provide an overview of the most common types of Takeout Double bids, with a reference to what might happen later when one of these is acted out.

Good Support for Unbid Suits

If you have a medium strength hand with a shortage in the suit opened by the opponents and good 3-card support for all three of the remaining suits, you may challenge the opening bid.

- With 12+ HCPs, make a Takeout Double, i.e. bid Double. The subsequent bidding is governed by the [What happens after Takeout Double](#) table.

Good 5+ Card Suit

If you have a medium-to-strong hand with a good 5+ card suit, you may challenge the opening bid.

- With 17+ HCPs, make a Takeout Double, i.e. bid Double. The subsequent bidding is governed by the [What happens after Takeout Double](#) table.

Strong Balanced hand

If you have very strong balanced hand, you may challenge the opening bid.

- With 19+ HCPs, make a Takeout Double, i.e. bid Double. The subsequent bidding is governed by the [What happens after Takeout Double](#) table.

DECLARER PURSUING A STRATEGY OF PLAY

Declarer's first task, after establishing a contract, is to choose a **strategy of play**. In conjunction with doing this you might consider the following:

Counting your Likely Winners and Losers

As Declarer, with Dummy's hand exposed, you should take stock of your **winners** and **potential losers**. That way you determine if and where you may try to win an extra trick, e.g. by finessing or by promotion.

Dummy Play for First Trick

Decide what to play on the first trick from Dummy's hand by using the same reasoning as the defenders to draw conclusions from the opening lead. Apply the Rule of Eleven. Try to place the missing honour cards in the suit lead by Opener. This is likely to be the suit in which the defenders will try to make their attack. Try to gain the lead at the first trick, if you can. Then try to prevent Declarer's strategy from succeeding.

Trumping Losers

If your trump suit is shortish (e.g. through less than perfect bidding) or you have a void or a singleton in Dummy's hand, you may wish to cash a trump trick **before** drawing trumps

Drawing Trumps

In a correctly bid suit contract it is usually a good idea to start your attack by **drawing trumps**, i.e. playing trump tricks until your opponents have none left. Make very sure you **count the number of outstanding trumps**, so you don't waste your own trumps by inadvertently playing too many trump tricks. Miscalculating the trumps often loses the contract.

Establishing Long Suit

Even weak cards may make tricks if they are still around when opponents have run out. Therefore, establish a long suit before cashing winners in other suits. When honour cards have been played, remaining cards in a suit may be winners, if you can get to lead them.

Leading Honour Cards from Shorter Hand First

As Declarer, start a suit by playing honour(s) from shorter hand first, otherwise you might win less tricks.

Winning Tricks by Finessing

Plan to place the lead in the weak holding before you try your finessing. Finessing is done by leading towards the strong holding.

Making Tricks by Promotion

Even if you don't hold the Ace or the Ace-King you may still make tricks from a long suit. If you plan to do this, lead honour cards to force out opponent's honours, whereby your remaining cards will be **promoted**.

DEFENDERS PURSUING A STRATEGY OF PLAY

Listening to the Bidding

In choosing a strategy of play you may get some clues from **how the bidding went**. This is the reason why I prefer the bidding pad method of showing the bids, because it allows you to see the entire sequence of the bidding. Partner may have shown a good suit, perhaps in an overcall. Opponents may have shown the types and limits of their hands. From thinking about the limits communicated through the bidding you can often determine where the honours in a given suit are placed.

Leading for First Trick (The “Opening Lead”)

The player leading to the first trick should first decide which suit to lead, and then choose the card to lead. In a trump contract, it would be very unusual for the opening lead to be a trump, unless you wish to reduce Declarer’s ability to trump. In 85% of hands you will lead from a long suit choosing **the fourth highest** card to tell your partner about the length of your long suit. However, if you have a suit headed by a **sequence** of honour cards, you may prefer to lead the **highest of the honour** cards in that suit, because this shows partner that you also have the honour below it, but definitely not the honour above it. You may not always have a suitable long suit or a sequence to lead from, since there are several other possible holdings.

In general, **analyse the holding** you are leading from, **recall any clues from the bidding**, **decide on the suit** to lead, and then **choose the card**:

1. If you lead from **a sequence** of honours (e.g. KQT, AKJ, JT8), lead highest honour.
2. If you lead from **an interior sequence** (e.g. AJT95, KJT98), lead top of interior sequence.
3. If you lead from **a broken suit** (e.g. KJ832, AT64), lead 4th highest.
4. If you lead from **an honour and two lower** cards (e.g. K95, J84), lead lowest.
5. If you lead from **three small** cards (e.g. 862), lead middle card (862) first (lead higher then lower card later). These leads are sometimes called MUD (Middle, Up, Down)
6. If you lead from **a doubleton** (e.g. K4, 73), lead highest.
7. If you lead from **4 or 5 small cards** (xxxx or xxxxx) **and some honours** in other suits, lead 4th highest.
8. If you lead from **4 or 5 small cards** (xxxx or xxxxx) **and general rubbish all round**, lead highest).

The Rule of Eleven

To assist in determining what type of holding leader has in the suit led, try applying the **Rule of Eleven**. If the opening lead is a 4th highest card, the **Rule of Eleven** will be successful: To ally the Rule of Eleven you subtract the value of the lead from 11 to calculate the **number of higher cards outside leader’s hand** (including your own). Now see if this number makes sense. Since you can see your own hand and dummy’s hand, you can count how many cards **higher** than the lead are in the other hands. Using clues from the bidding, it is often possible to determine the actual placement of some of these higher cards. **If the Rule of Eleven doesn’t appear to apply**, because you can place more **higher** cards than the number calculated from the Rule of Eleven, you will know that the lead was not a 4th highest (the lead signals some other holding in leader’s hand).

Third Hand Play to First Trick, in General

The suit chosen by leader, Dummy's holding and the card played from Dummy determines 3rd hand play for Trick 1. If **you like the suit**, signal this by playing the highest card you can afford; if **you dislike the suit**, signal this by playing the lowest card you have in the suit:

- With **no honours in Dummy** (e.g. xxx), play the highest necessary (e.g. Jxx, AQx, QJx, JT9x).
- With an **honour remaining in Dummy** (e.g. Qxx), try to trap Dummy's honour (e.g. Jxx, KT9, ATx, K9x).
- With a **higher honour remaining in Dummy** (e.g. Kxx), play the highest necessary (e.g. QJx, QTx).
- With a **higher honour played from Dummy** (e.g. Kxx), signal attitude to this suit (e.g. Q92 signalling "come back", 962 signalling "don't come back").

Third Hand Signalling by Unblocking in First Trick of No Trump Contract

The suit chosen by leader may not be one that you can support, in which case you should tell partner about it. You will do this by doing what is known as "unblocking" (refer also terms "**High Spot**" and "**Low Spot**" in Glossary).

- If **Ace is led**, from what you perceive to be a **strong holding** in leader's hand, unblock by playing your high honour (J or better) if you have one, otherwise play a **high spot** to signal even number or a **low spot** to signal uneven number of cards in the suit.
- If **King is led**, from a perceived **sequence** in leader's hand (e.g. KQJ, KQT, AKJ or AKT), unblock if you only have Jx, otherwise play a **high spot** to signal that you have an honour yourself (A, Q or J) or a **low spot** to discourage continuation of this suit.
- If **Queen is led**, from a perceived **sequence** in leader's hand (e.g. QJT, QJ9 or AQJ), unblock if you only have Tx, otherwise play a **high spot** to signal that you have an honour yourself (A, K or T) or a **low spot** to discourage continuation of this suit.
- If **Jack is led**, from a perceived **sequence** in leader's hand (e.g. JT9, JT8, AJT or KJT), play a **high spot** to signal that you have an honour yourself (Q) or a **low spot** to discourage continuation of this suit.
- If **Ten is led**, from a perceived **sequence** in leader's hand (e.g. T98, T97, AJT, KT9 or QT9), play an **honour** or a **high spot** if no honour in Dummy's hand, and play a **low spot** if honour in Dummy's hand can be trapped by your honour.

Third Hand Returning Partner's Opening Lead

When returning partner's opening lead, at second or later trick:

- With **original holding of 3 cards**, return higher remaining card.
- With **original holding of 4 or more cards**, return original 4th highest card.

Leading for Later Tricks

Lead suit previously led by partner, or in which partner is known to have strength.

Third Hand Signalling by Overtaking in First Trick of Suit Contract

The suit chosen by leader may not be one that you can support, in which case you should tell partner about it. You will do this by what is known as “overtaking”.

- If **Ace is led**, from what you perceive to be a **sequence** in leader's hand (e.g. AK, AKQ), throw Queen if you hold QJ, play a **high spot** to signal that you have Queen or doubleton and otherwise play a **low spot** to discourage continuation of this suit.
- If **King is led**, from a perceived **sequence** in leader's hand (e.g. KQ or AK), overtake if you have Ax, otherwise play a **high spot** to signal that you have an honour yourself (A or J) or a **low spot** to discourage continuation of this suit.
- If **Queen is led**, from a perceived **sequence** in leader's hand (e.g. QJ), overtake if you have Ace, otherwise play a **high spot** to signal that you have an honour yourself (K) or a **low spot** to discourage continuation of this suit.
- If **Jack is led**, from a perceived **sequence** in leader's hand (e.g. JT or KJT), overtake if you have Ace, otherwise play a **high spot** to signal that you have an honour yourself (K or Q) or a **low spot** to discourage continuation of this suit.
- If **Ten is led**, from a perceived **sequence** in leader's hand (e.g. T9, KT9 or QT9), overtake if you have Ace, otherwise play a **high spot** if honour in Dummy's hand can be trapped by your honour (K, Q or J) or a **low spot** to discourage continuation of this suit.

Second Hand Play to a Trick

When, in the early stages of the game, Declarer has led a card either from own hand or from Dummy's hand, the 2nd hand player i.e. the first Defender to play a card to that trick is faced with a problem: which card? If the lead comes from Dummy's hand, it is easier for everyone to see what's going on, but if the lead comes from Declarer's hand, it is quite a bit harder. If a low card is led, an often repeated rule of thumb says “2nd hand plays low”, but what if an honour card is led?

- If a **low card is led from Declarer's or Dummy's hand**, 2nd hand almost always plays a low card (to preserve honours), except (a) if taking this trick very likely will defeat the contract either now or a little later, (b) if 2nd hand has two equal honours of which one seems guaranteed to win a trick, or (c) if 2nd hand has three equal honours, in which case the highest is played.
- If an **unsupported honour is led from Dummy's hand** (e.g. Qxx), 2nd hand covers with a higher honour, if available, but only if that is known to promote a lower card in either of the Defender's hands.
- If the **first of equal honours is led from Dummy's hand** (e.g. QJx), 2nd hand plays a low card, saving honours for later, but only if that is known to promote a lower card in either of the Defender's hands.
- When the **last of equal honours is led from Dummy's hand** (e.g. Jx), 2nd hand covers with a higher honour, if available.
- If **Declarer leads the first of equal honours believed to be in Declarer's hand** (e.g. QJx), 2nd hand plays a low card.
- When **Declarer leads the second of equal honours believed to have been in Declarer's hand** (e.g. now Jx), 2nd hand covers with a higher honour, if available.

SCORING FOR RUBBER BRIDGE

Trick Scores

When you make a contract you score points for all tricks over six. In a **No Trump Contract** the first trick counts 40 points and each subsequent trick counts 30 points. In a **Major Suit Contract** each trick earns 30 points. In a **Minor Suit Contract** each trick earns 20 points. Only tricks bid count towards **Game** (trick score of 100+ points).

Vulnerability (higher risk)

A partnership becomes **vulnerable** after winning a game.

Rubber Bonus

When you bid and make two games before the opponents make a game, you score a rubber bonus of **700** points.

When you bid and make your second game after the opponents have also made a game, you score a rubber bonus of **500** points.

SCORING FOR DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Trick Scores

When you make a contract you score points for all tricks over six. In a **No Trump Contract** the first trick counts 40 points and each subsequent trick counts 30 points. In a **Major Suit Contract** each trick earns 30 points. In a **Minor Suit Contract** each trick earns 20 points. Only tricks bid count towards **Game** (trick score of 100+ points).

Part-Score Bonus

When you make a contract you get a **part-score bonus** of 50 points, unless you bid and made game (see below).

Vulnerability (higher risk)

Vulnerability is determined in **4-hand cycles**. Neither partnership is vulnerable on Hand 1. North-South are vulnerable on Hand 2, East-West are vulnerable on Hand 3 and both partnerships are vulnerable on Hand 4.

Game Bonus

When you bid and make game and your partnership is not vulnerable, you score a **game bonus** of **300** points.

When you bid and make game and your partnership is vulnerable, you score a **game bonus** of **500** points.

In both cases the game bonus **replaces** the part-score bonus of 50 points.

GLOSSARY

Auction	The bidding as a whole.
Balanced hand	A hand with no voids, no singletons and at the most one doubleton. The shape of a balanced hand would be 5-3-3-2, 4-4-3-2 or 4-3-3-3.
Bid	An undertaking to win a certain number of tricks in a specified suit or No Trumps
Blackwood	A bidding convention designed to investigate the likelihood of winning a slam contract. The bidding goes as follows: A bid of 4NT is presented after a fit has been established asking partner to indicate the number of Aces held (5C = no or 4 Aces held, 5D = 1 Ace held, 5H = 2 Aces held, 5S = 3 Aces held). Depending on partner's response, the 4NT bid may be followed by a bid of 5NT asking partner to indicate the number of Kings held (6C = no or 4 Kings held, 6D = 1 King held, 6H = 2 Kings held, 6S = 3 Kings held). Subsequent to this conversation the optimum contract can be decided upon.
Cash	To play out a winning card.
Contract	The final bid in an auction.
Declarer	The player who first bid the declared contract.
Defenders	The partnership opposing the contract.
Distribution Points	The shortage points added to the HCPs after a fit has been established, calculated as follows: Doubleton = 1, Singleton = 3 and Void = 5.
Double	A bid which increases the score for the winning side if the other three players pass.
DPs	Short for Distribution Points.
Drawing trumps	The process of leading trumps until the opponents run out.
Duplicate Bridge	A way of playing and scoring Bridge used predominantly in Bridge clubs, whereby the same set of hands is played by a succession of players so that the scores can be compared.
Entry	A card used to transfer the lead from one hand to another.
Exit	A losing card that is used to pass on the lead.
Finesse	An attempt to make a trick with a lower-ranking card by playing after the higher-ranking card(s).
Fit	A partnership holding of 8 or more cards in an identified suit.
Forcing bid	A bid to which the partner is obliged to respond rather than passing.
Game	A contract with a trick score of 100 or more points.
HCPs	Short for High Card Points
High Card Points	A measure of the strength of a hand in terms of honour cards, calculated as follows: Ace = 4, King = 3, Queen = 2, Jack = 1.
High Spot	A relatively high non-honour card used to signal partner to continue leading the suit (now or later). Also used to signal that an even number of cards in the suit is held.
Honour card	An Ace, King, Queen or Jack.

Jump	A bid that is one level higher than necessary.
Jump shift	A bid that is one level higher than necessary for a different contract.
Lead	The first card played to a trick.
Limit bid	A bid that shows a specific range of points.
Long hand	The hand holding more cards in a given suit than partner does.
Loser	A card which, if led, would lose the trick.
Low Spot	A relatively low non-honour card used to signal partner to discontinue leading the suit. Also used to signal that an odd number of cards in the suit is held.
Major suit	Spade or Heart suit.
Minor suit	Diamond or Club suit.
No Bid	Synonymous with Pass.
No Trump	A type of contract in which there are no trumps.
Opening bid	The first bid other than Pass.
Overcall	The first bid made by the opposition after the opening bid.
Partscore	A contract won below game value (i.e. less than 100 points).
Pass	A bid made instead of a competing bid. Synonymous with No Bid.
Penalty	The score awarded to the opponents when Declarer fails to make the contract.
Penalty Double	A bid of Double, usually made after first round of bidding, stating that bidder wants to double the stakes in the belief that Declarer can't win the contract as it currently stands.
Promote	To establish lower honours by forcing out the opponents higher honours.
Quick Tricks	A measure of the number of tricks your hand can take merely by virtue of the honour cards.
QTs	Short for Quick Tricks.
Rebid	The second bid a player makes.
Rebiddable suit	Second bid of a suit, promising 6 cards or more in the suit.
Reneg	The failure of a player to follow suit where he/she should have. The penalty for this "crime" is 1 trick less counted towards winning the contract.

Responder	The Opener's partner.
Rubber Bridge	The original type of bridge scoring (different from scoring for Duplicate Bridge).
Ruffing	Another word for trumping.
Sequence	Two or more consecutive honour cards.
Short hand	The hand holding less cards in a given suit than partner does.
Sign off	A bid which partner is expected to pass.
Slam	A contract of six (Small Slam) or seven (Grand Slam)
Stayman	A bidding convention designed to investigate if partnership holds a 4-4 major suit fit. The bidding goes as follows: After a 1NT opening, Responder bids 2C, which Opener interprets to be a request to show any 4-card major (Opener may Pass if no 4-card major is available).
Stopper	A holding that will win a trick in a suit.
Suit	One of four groups of cards in the pack: Spades ♠, Hearts ♥, Diamonds ♦ or Clubs ♣.
Takeout Double	A bid of Double, usually made in the first round of bidding, stating that bidder is able to support any non-bid suit and forcing partner to "take out" the contract into something else.
Total Points	Total Points. This is the sum of HCPs and DPs calculated after a fit has been established.
TPs	Short for Total Points.
Trick	Four cards, one from each player.
Trump	The suit named in the contract (if any). Also used as a verb to mean playing a trump on a trick rather than the mandatory following suit.
Unlimited	A bid which does not show a specific point range.
Vulnerable	A partnership status that increases the bonuses and penalties for subsequent contracts.

