

The “Kennedy” Bidding Method

One of the most awkward bidding sequences in bridge occurs following an opening bid of **1C**, a “*Pass*” by the would-be Responder’s right-hand Opponent (RHO), and a **1H** or a **1S** response by Opener’s responding Partner, especially if Opener holds 3-card support for the Major suit bid by the Responder. To avoid this difficulty the “**Kennedy**” Method can, by Partnership agreement, be used. “**Kennedy**” is not a bidding system, nor is it strictly a defined convention; rather it is an approach, a method, a style of bidding. Although the original bidding system dealt with either a **1H** response or a **1S** response by Responder, many Partnerships, by agreement, oft times just use this bidding method singularly for a **1C – P – 1S** sequence.

Definition: An “*alertable*” conventional type response where Responder's Major suit bid of (**1H** or) **1S** promises a 5-card or longer (Heart or) Spade holding, as opposed to the normal method where Responder's Major suit first response promises a 4-card or longer suit. Opener and Responder then make the appropriate, standard, customary responses and re-bids.

Opener

Responder

1. **1C** **1H/1S** (Alertable) = 6-18 HCP’s

When utilizing this system, the Responder's first obligation is to bid a **5-card (Heart or) Spade suit** holding, assuming normal high-card point values. Thus, Opener is immediately aware of a 8-card “**Golden Fit**” when holding 3-cards in Responder’s Major suit. Alternatively, Opener standard re-bids apply, absent 3-card support.

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2. **1C** “**1D**” (Alertable) = 6-18 HCP’s

Bidding **1D** implies Responder is lacking a 5-card (Heart or) Spade suit. Responder may or may not have a Diamond suit holding, and might, on occasion, even have a void in the Diamond suit. Opener must, therefore, alert Responder’s **1D** response, since it could be artificial. Opener and Responder then bid together, normally, “**Up-the-Ladder.**” The “**1D**” response by the Responder, however, does not deny 4-cards of either or both Major suits.

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3. **1C** **1- 2- or 3-No-Trump**

When the Responder does not possess a 4-card Diamond suit or a 5-card or a 4-card Major, Responder by-passes suit bids by responding the appropriate No-Trump bid. A **1-NT** first response evidences 6-10 HCP’s; a **2-NT** evidences an invitational 11-12 HCP’s; and a **3-NT** response evidences 13-15 HCP’s.