

The “Meckwell” Convention

The “**Meckwell Convention**” is a method for competing against an opposing, strong, **1-NT** opening bid. The recommended high-card point count range is suggested to be 14-18 high-card points. It can be used in both the direct (2nd) and the pass-out (4th) (“Balancing”) seats. It utilizes the following bids:

1. A “*double*” = Shows either a single Minor suit or both Major suits. The Advancer bids “**2C**,” which is a completely artificial bid, a “*puppet*” bid. The Intervenor then “*passes*,” if his/her suit is Clubs, “*corrects*” to **2D** if Diamonds is the Minor suit, or bids **2H** to show both Major suits from which the Advancer, then chooses.
2. **2C** = Clubs and one of the Majors. The Advancer either “*passes*,” else bids **2H** which the Intervenor then either accepts, else “*corrects*” to **2S**.
3. **2D** = Diamonds and one of the Majors. The Advancer either “*passes*,” else bids **2H** which the Intervenor then either accepts, else “*corrects*” to **2S**.
4. **2H** = Natural bid in Hearts. The accepted length is 5-cards with about 3 winning tricks, else a 6-card or longer holding. The Advancer “*passes*.”
5. **2S** = Natural bid in Spades. The accepted length is 5-cards with about 3 winning tricks, else a 6-card or longer holding. The Advancer “*passes*.”
6. **2-NT** = Both Minor suits. The Advancer then selects his/her preferred Minor by bidding either **3C** or **3D**.

(Responding to Partner’s Balancing 1-No-Trump)

A balancing (4th seat) **1-NT** overcall shows fewer HCP’s than does a direct (2nd seat) **1-NT** overcall. By Partnership agreement, a Balancing **1-NT** shows a HCP range of 10-14 high-card points. The question arises as to how should the 2nd-seat Partner, the so called “**Advancer**”, who then becomes the bidding “**Captain**”, bid in response to Partner’s balancing **1-NT** call.

The benefit of the Meckwell Convention is that the Partnership can remain at the 2-level on occasion where the balancing Partner holds the lower limit (10-12) of his/her originally-shown 10-14 HCP’s. The Meckwell Convention utilizes **Jacoby Transfers** and a modification of the standard “**2C**” **Stayman** response, and here is how it works:

(1) - If the Responder, "Advancer", HAS NO NEED TO KNOW where within Balancer's range of 10-14 HCP's, he/she falls:

<u>LHO</u>	<u>Pard</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>
1B	Pass	Pass	1-NT
Pass	????		

With fewer than 12 HCP's the Advancer can "*pass*", else with a long suit, bid "**2D**", "**2H**", or "**2S**" as a **Jacoby Transfer**, and then drop the bidding. With 12-13 high-card points, the Advancer can invite to Game in No-Trump or in either Major suit utilizing **Jacoby Transfers**, if needed. And finally, on rare occasions, if the Advancer holds 14 high-card points, or more, he/she can bid any Game-Level, final contract.

(2a) - If the Responder, "Advancer", holds 11-12 HCP's and HAS A NEED TO KNOW Balancer's Point Count so as to determine if Game is present and/or what the best final contract denomination is: The Advancer bids a non-Stayman, artificial, alertable "2C":

<u>LHO</u>	<u>Pard</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>
1B	Pass	Pass	1-NT
Pass	"2C"	Pass	("2D", 2H or 2S)

After the "**2C**" non-Stayman bid, responses by the Balancer of "**2D**", or **2H**, and **2S** all have their usual meaning *except* that they also show a hand having a point count at the *lower end* of the HCP range (10-12 HCP's). Finding Balancer with only 10-12 HCP's, the Advancer can then "*pass*," invite to Game in a favoured Major, or go to Game in that Major, else invite to **3-NT**, or even go directly to **3-NT**.

(2b)

<u>LHO</u>	<u>Pard</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>
1B	Pass	Pass	1-NT
Pass	"2C"	Pass	"2-NT"

After the "**2C**" non-Stayman bid, a response by the Balancer of "**2-NT**" irrespective of Balancer's Major suit holdings, shows a hand having a point count at the *higher end* of the HCP range (13-14 HCP's). Finding Balancer at the top of his/her range, the Advancer can go directly to **3-NT**, else (2c):

(2c)

<u>LHO</u>	<u>Pard</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>
1B	Pass	Pass	1-NT
Pass	"2C"	Pass	"2-NT"
Pass	"3C", "3D" or "3H"		

("Re-Stayman" - either *Standard* or *Puppet*), or use **Jacoby Transfers** on the way to a final, Game-level contract.)