

TIPS FOR TOPS

1. When a hand is strong enough to open 1-NT (15-17 HCP's in S.A. or 12-14 HCP's in ACOL) and ***two of the suits are without stoppers***, open one of the suits, ***not*** 1-NT.

Ex: (a) AKJX XX XXX AKJX (Open 1C in S.A.)
 (b) XX AJXX XXX AKJX (Open 1H in ACOL)

2. Normally, Responder needs 6 HCP's to respond to Partner's opening of one-of-a-Minor. **With a 5-card Major suit and 5 HCP's, or a 6-card Major suit and 4 HCP's, or any hand containing either an Ace or an Ace-Jack, do *not* pass a Minor suit opening bid by Partner if your right-hand Opponent in the 2nd seat (RHO) passes.**

Examples: (a) QXXXX KXX XXX XX (Partner opens 1C, Respond 1S (*Audibly!*)
 (b) JXX KXXXXX XX XX (Partner opens 1D, Respond 1H)
 (c) AXXX XXX JXXX XX (Partner opens 1C, Respond 1S)
 (d) XX AXXX XXX XXXX (Partner opens 1D, Respond 1H)

3. A direct ***natural*** response by a Responder of either 2-NT or 3-NT ***denies*** a singleton or a void. **A direct 1-NT response, however, *may contain* a singleton - yes, even a void.** Over Partner's opening of 1C or 1D, such responses deny a 4-card Major holding.

Ex: (a) X AKX KJX AXXXXX (Partner opens 1S, Respond 2C)
 Do not even think about bidding 2-NT, you can always bid No-Trump later if it becomes necessary.
 (b) AXX AJX XXX QXXX (Partner opens 1D, Respond 2-NT)
 (c) AKX AXX KXX XXXX (Partner opens 1C, Respond 3-NT)
 (d) --- KXXX QXXXXX QXX (Partner opens 1S, Respond 1-NT)

4. After Partner raises Opener's first bid suit, any new suit bid by the Opener is **forcing**. Bidding on with a secondary suit, after Partner raises you, does not mean that you are running from the agreed-upon suit. It simply means that you are seeking a No Trump contract with a holding of 16 or more HCP's. Hands which make 5C or 5D will, most often, also produce 3-NT, yes, even 4-NT.

Ex: XX AQX AX AKXXXX (You open 1C. Partner raises you to 2C. Bid 2H!
 If Partner bids 2S evidencing a Spade stopper, you can bid 3-NT. If Partner alternatively rebids 3C, you can "Pass.")

5. When responding to Partner's Take-Out Double, if holding a 4-card Major suit and a 5-card Minor suit, respond in the **Major** suit. Alternatively, if holding a 4-card Major suit and a 6-card Minor suit, respond in the **Minor** suit.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u> (You)
1H	Dbl.	Pass	???

- (a) KXXX XX QXXXX XX (Respond 1S)
 (b) KXXX XX QXXXXX X (Respond 2D, you will bid Spades later if Afforded the opportunity.)

6. Guidelines and Requirements for a Take-Out Double:

- a. The "double" is made by either member of the opposing team subsequent to an opening bid by the alternate team.
- b. The "double" is made at a bidding level of 4H or below. (Beyond this bidding level any "double" becomes a penalty double.
- c. The partner of the one who doubles must **not** have previously bid (not including a previous "Pass") else the double is for penalties.
- d. The Take-Out Doubler should ideally have support (or tolerance) for the un-bid suits, especially for the other Major suit if over an Opponent's Major suit opening, and for both Major suits if the Opponents have opened a Minor suit. In effect, the "Doubler" must have proper shape, defined as fewer than 3-cards in the Opponent's bid suit; namely any pattern which holds at least 3-cards in each of the other 3-suits as-yet un-bid, and no more than a doubleton or shorter in the suit bid by the Opponent.
- e. The Take-Out double *guarantees* an equivalent or better hand to that which the Opponent evidenced by his/her opening bid; i.e., 13-21 HCP's. It is like opening the bidding for your side after the Opponents have already opened.
- f. Later bids by the Doubler identify the high-card count as 13-15, 16-18, or 19-21.

7. In response to Partner's opening bid of 1-NT:

a) Following an interfering competitive Opponent's overcall of a "Double," both Stayman and Jacoby Transfers, by Partnership understanding, may still be employed by Opener's responding Partner.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1-NT	Dbl.	"2C"/"2D"/"2H"

b) Following an interfering competitive Opponent's overcall of a suit bid at the 2-level, Stayman, as a cue-bid of the same suit bid by the Opponent may be employed, but **Jacoby Transfers are off, as all other suit responses are all natural!**

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1-NT	2C/2D/2H/2S	"3C"/"3D"/"3H"/"3S" (Stayman) (Jacoby bids <u>cannot</u> be used here)

8. When holding a "Golden-Fit," eight cards or more, in both a Major suit and a Minor suit, one would naturally pick the Major suit as the trump suit for that hand since the final contract produces 30 points per trick as opposed to the Minor suit's 20 points per trick scoring potential. When holding two Major suit fits, however, ones of 8 or more cards in each player's hand, pick, as the trump suit, the one where the number of cards of the Major in each hand is closest to equality, leaving the most dissimilar holding as the side suit upon which Declarer can discard potential losers in either of the Minor suit holdings.

Examples: With a 4-4 holding in one Major and 5-4 in the other, pick the 4-4 Major fit as the trump suit.
 With a 6-2 holding in one Major and 5-3 in the other, pick the 5-3 Major fit as the trump suit.
 With a 6-3 holding in one Major and 5-4 in the other, pick the 5-4 Major fit as the trump suit.
 With a 5-4 holding in one Major and 5-3 in the other, pick the 5-4 Major fit as the trump suit.

9. When holding 4-cards in either Major suit and responding to Partner's opening of 1-NT, Responder should not invoke a Stayman "2C" call seeking an 8-card "Golden Fit" if:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (You)</u>
1-NT	Pass	???

- a. Responder cannot manage **all three (3)** potential responses ("2D", 2H or 2S) that might be made by Opener.
 - (1) KXXX XX QXXXX JX (Pass - Cannot handle a possible 2H response from Opener.)
 - (2) X KXXX QXXXX JXX (Pass - Cannot handle a possible 2S response from Opener.)

 - b. **Responder holds a 4-3-3-3 distribution.** There is no shortness here and, therefore, there is an inability to ruff in Dummy's hand. This is a hand where a 3-NT contract will most likely succeed but a 4H or 4S contract will potentially fail, even if an 8-card Major suit "Golden Fit" were to be found.
 - (1) KXXX AXX KXX KXX (Respond 3-NT - Do not invoke Stayman seeking a Spade "Golden Fit.")
 - (2) KXX AXXX KXX KXX (Respond 3-NT - Do not invoke Stayman seeking a Heart "Golden Fit.")

 - c. **The combined HCP total of the Partnership exceeds 28 HCP's.** Under this circumstance, the same number of tricks will be achievable in a 3-NT, 4H or 4S contract, and the scoring of the extra 10 points in the No-Trump contract can produce a "top" match-point score over those teams in 4H or 4S contracts.
 - (1) When playing in the ACOL System (Opener's 1-NT = 12-14 HCP's). If Responder holds 17 HCP's or more, the combined total will be 29 HCP's or more.
 - (2) When playing in the Standard American System (Opener's 1-NT = 15-17 HCP's). If Responder holds 14 HCP's or more, the combined total will be 29 HCP's or more.
10. With both a 5-card and a 4-card Major suit holding, and game values, Responder to Partner's opening 1-NT call must first use Stayman (looking for the potential 4-4 Major suit) and, then and only then, if failing to do so (Opener has responded "2D" denying the presence of either 4-card Major or 2H or 2S, the alternate Major that Responder is seeking, then proceed to look for the possible 5-3 Major suit fit by bidding the 5-card Major at the 3-level. **Jacoby Transfers looking for a 5-3 Golden Fit are never used by Responder in the accompanying presence of a 4-card Major suit. The use of Stayman usurps the use of Jacoby Transfers in the presence of a 5-4 Major suit holding.**