

Good bidding is the result of clear partnership agreements and bidding according to your agreements. Trust your partner and listen to them.

THE BONES OF BIDDING

1NT, 2NT, and bigger NT, with Stayman and Jacoby Transfers

YOUR PARTNERSHIP IS ON A QUEST TO FIND A MAJOR SUIT FIT.

1. We learn early in bridge lessons to open 1NT with 15 to 17 HCP and no 5-card major. Not long after, we learn to open 2NT with 20 to 21 HCP. When our HCP values are 18 or 19, we open 1 of a suit and then jump to 2 NT (or we raise partner's 1NT response to 2NT).
2. Sometimes we are lucky enough to be dealt hands with HCP totals exceeding 20 to 21. We show these higher point count NT hands by opening 2 clubs, and then, over partner's anticipated 2 diamond response, we rebid in NT

Our 2NT rebid shows 22 to 24
Our 3NT rebid shows 25 to 26
and so forth.

3. Over partner's 1NT opening, responder evaluates his HCP as follows:

0 to 7 HCP	Pass
8 to 9 HCP	Invite (bid 2NT)
10 to 15 HCP	Jump to game (bid 3NT)
16 to 17 HCP	Jump to 4NT (opener bids 6NT with good values)
18 to 19 HCP	Jump to 6NT
20 to 21 HCP	Jump to 5 NT (opener must bid 6NT or 7NT)

If responder wants to ask about Aces, he uses Gerber (4 clubs)

Few players memorize these value levels. They simply use arithmetic and their knowledge that game requires 26 HCP, small slam 33 HCP, and grand slams 37 HCP.

- 4 Over the 1NT opening, instead of bidding her point count outright, responder may elect to bid Stayman or a Jacoby Transfer first, followed by her point count bid.
5. STAYMAN. When responder has a 4-card major, she should check to see if opener has the same 4-card major. Responder bids 2 clubs to ASK opener if opener has a 4-card major. This 2 club bid initiates the Stayman Convention.

If opener has none, opener bids 2 diamonds, and then responder bids her point count, that is, she bids 2NT with 8 or 9 points, and she bids 3NT with 10 to 15 points.

If opener has both majors, then she bids up the line, which is to say, she bids hearts. If responder matches the heart suit, then she raises it to 3 or 4 depending on her point count range (8 to 9 or 10 to 15). If, instead, responder has spades, she bids 2 spades (and NOT 2NT), which allows the partnership to stop at the two level if opener has spades and a minimum NT opening.

If opener has only one 4-card major, then she bids it. If responder matches it, responder raises to 3 or 4 depending on whether her point count is 8 to 9 or 10 to 15. If opener's bid is 2 spades, she denies having 4 hearts, so if responder does not have 4 spades, she simply bids her point count in NT (2NT is 8 to 9, 3NT is 10 to 12).

6. JACOBY TRANSFER. When opener has bid 1NT and responder has a 5-card suit, she should TELL opener about this suit by bidding a Jacoby Transfer. That means that if her suit is hearts, she should bid 2 diamonds. By bidding diamonds, she allows opener to bid hearts. This allows opener to be the declarer if a heart contract is the result of the auction, and his strong hand remains concealed. Likewise, if responder's suit is spades, responder should bid 2 hearts, transferring opener to the spade suit.

After transferring opener to the appropriate suit, responder bids her point count – with 8 to 9 she bids 2NT, with 10 to 12 she bids 3 NT.

Opener then sets the final contract. She will settle for game or partscore, depending on combined strength. She will settle for NT if she has only 2 of partner's suit, but she will return to partner's suit with 3 or more in that suit.

7. MORE JACOBY TRANSFER. Jacoby transfers can be bid even when responder has no points at all. In fact, responder should definitely use the Jacoby Transfer with a weak hand.

J8642 9 654 j 632 Over a 1NT opening, bid 2 hearts.

In a NT contract, declarer will not likely be able to get to your hand. But if spades are trump, then eventually your long spades will be good, and your hand will actually be worth 1 or 2 tricks.

So when you have a weak hand and a 5 card major, transfer opener into your suit and then pass.

8. Jacoby transfers also apply when responder's suit is longer than 5 cards. Responder knows that the NT opener cannot have a singleton or void, so she must have at least 2 cards in every suit. So when responder has a six-card major, he immediately knows that they have at least an 8-card major suit fit.

In this case, after responder accepts the transfer, responder does not return to NT, but shows her point count in the trump suit. For example, if responder has a 6-card heart suit, she bids 2 diamonds. Then when opener bids 2 hearts, responder raises to 3 hearts with 8 to 9 points and jumps to 4 hearts with 10 to 12 points.

9. Stayman and Jacoby Transfers apply not only when the opening bid has been 1NT, but also when the opening bid was 2NT. Both conventions apply when opener has started the auction with 2 clubs and then rebid in NT.

When opener begins with 2NT, responder needs only 5 points to reach game. With less, she can pass 2 NT. To use Stayman, she bids 3 clubs. To transfer, she uses 3 diamonds or 3 hearts.

When opener opens 2 clubs followed by 2NT, showing 22 to 24 HCP, responder must reach game with as few as 3 points. Again, 3 clubs is Stayman, and 3 diamonds and 3 hearts are transfers.