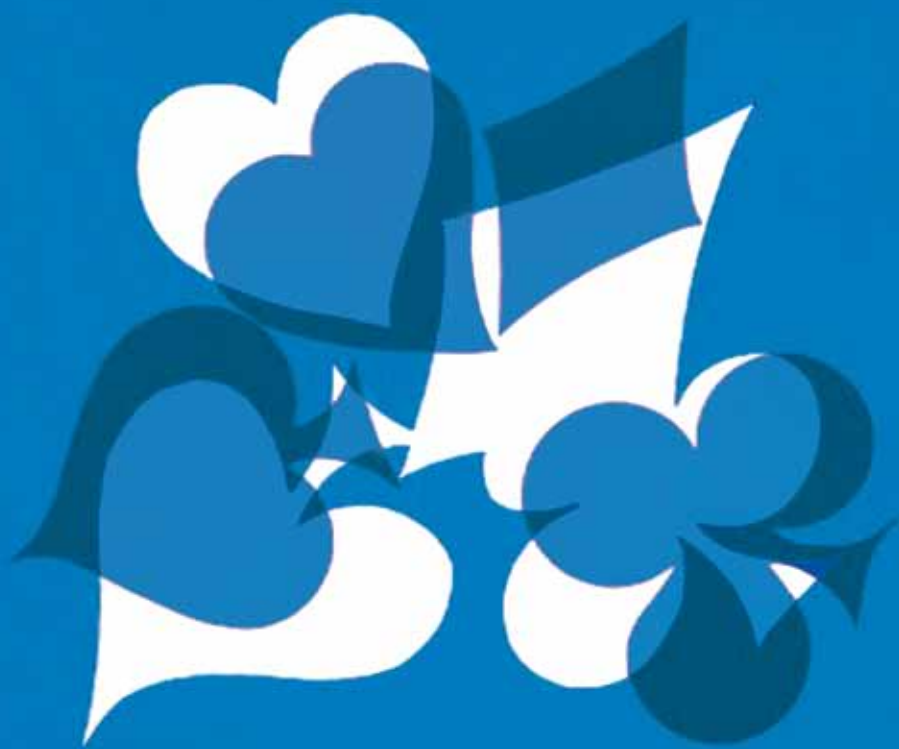


WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

GERBER AND BLACKWOOD

Patty Tucker



An Honors eBooklet from Master Point Press

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eBooklets on Conventions Useful with Strong Hands

2NT Rebid by Opener

Jump Shift

Reverses

Strong 2♣ Convention and 2♦ Waiting

Cuebidding Controls

Gerber and Blackwood

These booklets may be purchased as a single volume in digital or paper format under the title *Conventions Useful with Strong Hands*, one of eight books in Patty Tucker's Winning Bridge Conventions Series.

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Strong Hands

Strong Hands

Introduction

One of the most common difficulties new players face is in bidding strong hands. 17+ HCP hands occur less than 10% of the time, so new players don't have the opportunity to bid and practice them very often.

In these pages we will be considering not only the technical aspects of the bids but which bid should be chosen to achieve the best result.

An Overview

Standard American bidding uses an opening bid of 2♣ to show one of three hands:

- A balanced hand with 22+ points;
- A suited hand with 21+ points; or
- A one-suited or two-suited hand with 8 ½ to 9 (or more) “playing tricks”.

Other hands opener might have are reasonably strong hands which are not strong enough to open 2♣, but which can be shown by a different opening bid or at opener's rebid:

- A balanced hand with 20-21 HCPs in which case opener will open 2NT; or
- A balanced hand with 18-19 HCPs in which case opener will *rebid* 2NT; or
- A five-card or longer suit and 19 HCPs, in which case opener will *rebid* 3NT; or
- A two-suited (or three suited hand) of 17+ HCPs in which opener's long suit is of lower rank in than his second suit in which case opener will make a "Reverse" at his first rebid; or
- A two-suited (or three suited hand) or 18+ HCPs in which opener's higher ranking suit is longer or equal in length to his second suit in which case opener will make a "Jump Shift" at his first rebid.

In every case opener must think carefully about how the auction might develop, before he makes his opening bid. When you open 2♣ you start your auction a full level higher. Sometimes you run into difficulty describing your hand to your partner or eliciting the information you need in order to make an informed decision as to where you might want to play the contract.

The balanced hands are very straightforward. With Stayman and Jacoby Transfers available you almost never have difficulty getting to the optimum contract

when you open 2NT or when you open 2♣ and rebid 2NT. Also the jump to 2NT showing the 18-19 point hand holds few traps.

Distributional hands are another matter. Two-suited hands are generally easier to describe if you can start at the one level. Three-suited hands are almost impossible to describe if you start the bidding with 2♣.

As we look at each of these strong bids in the following chapters keep these thoughts in mind and think not only of what the opening bid might be, but also what the rebid will be; how you think the auction will develop. These are the questions you should ask yourself:

- What do I need from responder in order to make game?
- Is it likely that an opponent will overcall or double if I open at the one level?
- Am I the first person to bid or is partner a passed hand?
- If I open 2♣ will I be able to easily describe my hand to partner?

Gerber

Gerber

Gerber is a convention invented by John Gerber as an alternative to Blackwood. It is used when you are in a No Trump contract and believe that your hand and partner's hand are strong enough (32+ points) or fit well enough (have enough tricks) to make a Small Slam (6 level) or Grand Slam (7 level). Gerber is a way to ask partner how many Aces and how many Kings they have in their hand through a series of "step" responses.

The rules for Gerber are simple:

1. Gerber is used when you and your partner have agreed to play a NT contract or if the last bid was NT;
2. Don't use Gerber if you have two or more quick losers (i.e. you don't have the Ace or King or a singleton) in any suit;
3. Don't use Gerber if you have a void;
4. You must ask for Aces before you can ask for Kings; and
5. Never ask for Kings unless you have all the Aces.

After a bid of 4♣:

4♦ = 0 or 4 Aces;

4♥ = 1 Ace;

4♠ = 2 Aces; and

4N = 3 Aces

To ask for Kings you bid 5♣ and the responses are at the five-level in the same steps.

After a bid of 5♣:

5♦ = 0 or 4 Kings;

5♥ = 1 King;

5♠ = 2 Kings; and

5N = 3 Kings

One common misconception is that if you don't have all the Aces you cannot play a slam. Wrong! Even if you are missing one Ace you might still be able to take twelve tricks.

One final note: If partner asks for kings (guaranteeing all the aces) and you can count 13 tricks, you are allowed to simply bid the Grand Slam and not answer your number of kings.

The *'Winning Bridge Conventions'* Series

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Gerber and Blackwood

Bridge students quickly discover that ‘basic’ bidding’ will only get them so far. If they really want to improve, it is necessary to master a certain number of bidding conventions, and be prepared both to play them and play against them. This ebooklet covers the Gerber and Blackwood conventions.



PATTY TUCKER (Dunwoody, Georgia) is an ABTA Master Bridge Teacher and cofounder of Whirlwind Bridge and Atlanta Junior Bridge. Her success at the bridge table culminated in her victory in the 2000 Baldwin Flight A North American Open Pairs with long-time bridge partner Kevin Collins. Patty and Kevin were married in 2006.