

RON BEALL

ENHANCED PRECISION

FOURTH EDITION



WITH TOM DEVINE

AN HONORS EBOOK FROM MASTER POINT PRESS

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FOREWORD

Enhanced Precision incorporates ideas from many sources as well as the fecund imagination of the author. I will outline some areas that represent a particular concept that would be a valuable tool

The limited strength of Precision openings allows a partnership to assign useful meanings to bids that would normally be needed to show very strong hands. For example,

1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥ shows 4 card support for spades, 11-15 HCP, and shortness in clubs or hearts. Asking bids allow responder to pinpoint strength and shortness.

1♥ - 1♠ - 3♦ shows a maximum opening (14-15 HCP) with exactly 3 spades and a good 6+ diamond suit. This treatment alone is worth the price of admission.

1♦ - 1♠ - 2N shows a maximum (13-15 HCP) with a good 6 card suit and either 4 or fewer than 3 cards in support. Responder can then ask for more details.

Using 1♥ over partner's 1♦ negative response to the strong artificial forcing 1♣ opening allows you to "compress" notrump ranges into very narrow ranges. For example, 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠ - 1NT = 19-20. If responder has a bust hand, you might be the only pair in the room to have succeeded in stopping at the one level!

Transfer positive responses to 1♣ and transfer responses when opponents interfere offer many advantages, especially allowing the stronger hand to be declarer, allowing partner to respond with minimum values, and forcing the stronger defender to be on lead. This transfer theory, is clearly better than standard methods by a wide margin. Several strong partnerships employ similar methods

The extended section on interference of our 1♣ opening is the product of a long and painful evolution. We think it is worthwhile study for any Precision partnership.

Ron and I hope you enjoy this book and e-mail or blog any suggestions or comments to us. We love to hear from you! ron.beall@gmail.com or thedevines.apwu@gmail.com.

Tom Devine

PREFACE

Many bridge experts and professionals consider big club systems to be superior to standard systems because systems such as Precision allow both partners to limit their hands in their first bid or two, thereby allowing both partners to bid more accurately as the bidding progresses.

I totally agree with this point, but there are many additional, more subtle points than are immediately obvious. For example, when one partner opens one of a major (limited to 15 high card points), responder frequently knows immediately that game is unlikely. This allows responder to bid a forcing NT and then take opener back to the original major. No one (except responder, of course) knows whether responder has real support or merely tolerance. When responder has 3 card or longer support, (but not enough to invite game) the opponents should almost certainly compete. But if responder has only two card support, the opponents could be in trouble if they do compete. Opener doesn't know whether responder has a weak raise or is possibly giving a weak preference with only 2 card support, but it doesn't matter to opener. The beauty is that it doesn't make any difference to opener while the distinction is critical to the opponents and they have no idea which type hand (real support or merely tolerance) responder has.

Continuing with major openings, a single raise is based on 10-12 points in support, and shows exactly 3 card support (with 4 card support, a different raise structure is used).

This initial response is so precise that it permits the opener to make three different types of game tries (short suit, trump quality, and where is your stuff?). And for opener to penalize opponents if they dare to intervene, knowing that partner has 10-12 support points, most in HCP!! (see hand 4 in the Preview for a typical example.)

The system described in this book is not one which can be mastered in a day. Many ways of describing hands and asking partner about their hand are utilized, some with step responses which need to be learned. It is my belief that relatively little actual memory work needs to be done assuming that you understand the basic reasoning behind the bidding. Once you understand the reasoning, the steps are reasonably logical and easy to recreate from basic logic. As the author of this system, this is perhaps easier for me to say than for others to do (as Hal Gloff says, "This might be easy if you grew up in the same soup, harder if you didn't!").

Some persons absorb the system readily. For example, Kevin Bolan read this book, and played with the author with no discussion, and came in 4th in a sectional A/X

event. More impressively, we won Flight A (3000+MPs) in a tough Vancouver sectional the next week still without discussion. Even better, we came in 10th overall in the six-session NABC+ 2000-5000 Bruce Young Life Masters at the 2010 New Orleans Nationals.

Tom Devine and I came in 4th overall in this same event in the 2011 Seattle Nationals. After four sessions Tom and I were leading the field, but this was the year the ACBL expanded it to six sessions and our opponents on the final day were far too lucky for us to hang onto our lead. Sigh..

Unfortunately, this book is not extensive enough to explain the advantages and reasoning for all the recommended structures. For example, some Precision systems use a 1NT response to 1♣ to show 8-13 HCP, an extremely wide range which they have to be able to describe later along with their distribution.

In Enhanced Precision, a 1NT response to 1♣ indicates 11-13 (or rarely 17-19, the distinction easily shown later) HCP which simplifies bidding. Limiting the 1NT response to 11-13 HCP makes it easy to determine quickly whether we should be aiming at slam or merely game. This allows both partners to describe only as much of their hands as necessary to get to the correct game or slam without divulging too much information to the defense. Other Precision variants have to exchange even more information to determine whether slam is possible thereby making it easier for opponents to make good opening leads and later

defense. The 11-13 1NT response also minimizes the chance of wrong-siding the contract.

Most big club systems take pride in accurate game/slam bidding, more so than partials. Note that half of the hands in the Preview show the power of Enhanced Precision to get to low level partials better than standard systems in addition to excellent slam and game bidding. Note hands 2-4; these hands are fairly common and difficult to handle in standard bidding. In Hand 2, Enhanced Precision arrives at a good 2♠ contract and opponents may be tempted to enter the auction, much to their peril. Hands 3 and 4 allow us to get to good low level partials with the ability to double the opponents if they unwisely come into the auction.

Not only is Enhanced Precision an accurate system to get to your own best contracts, but it is also a fun system to play. Once you get into it, I guarantee that you will enjoy playing Enhanced Precision.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I won my first regional, the 1971 Mid-Atlantic Open Pairs playing Precision with Ed Simmons before either of us was even a Life Master. I quit playing until the late 70's when I started playing with Bob Thomson, not only new to Precision, but almost as new to bridge. Our partnership flourished and we won many sectional and regional events, and more notably the six session 1981 North American Open Swiss Teams.

I stopped playing for nearly a quarter century, except for two brief periods. In 1990, I won the Pasadena Regional Open Pairs with Bob Kent and in 2002, the Sacramento Regional Open Pairs with Chuck Grant. Neither had won a regional before and each had just learned Precision.

I retired to Bellingham, Washington and in 2006 began playing Precision with John Moffat and Hal Gloff. In October, Hal and I won Flight A of the Yakima Regional Compact Open Teams and Flight A/X of the Stratified Pairs. Hal and I won the top flight of the 2006 Reno Regional Compact Swiss Teams in Reno. An excellent year, especially since I was playing with new partners who had never played Precision.

Sandy Robson, Gene Fomin, Hal Gloff, and I formed the Bellingham Precision Team in Fall 2006. In 8 straight tournaments (4 regionals and 4 sectionals), the Bellingham Precision Team won multi-session top flight Swiss, K/O,

or pairs events, culminating in a sectional in which we swept the entire tournament!! In the last six years, the Bellingham Precision Team has won the Unit 433 Round Robin Swiss teams event five times and came in second the other time. This is particularly remarkable since this is a handicapped league in which weaker teams have an appreciable chance of beating stronger teams due to a significant handicap.

I have borrowed ideas from other Precision writers, including Wei, Jannersten, Garozzo, Belladonna, Sontag, Rigal, Miller, Manley, and Berkowitz. Rubens provided insight for transfers in many auctions. Ron Woodard, Phyllis Rakevich, and Mike Dodson fine-tuned some auctions. Jerry Albom helped edit the 4th edition. Bob Wilkin suggested and created the initial index. Many of the balancing suggestions come from Mike Lawrence's book on balancing. Mike Brennan suggested Puppet Stayman over our 1N opening. Transfer lebensohl came from Larry Cohen.

Hal Gloff and John Moffat were extremely helpful in writing the **1st Edition**. Tom Devine's wisdom, assistance, and ideas were invaluable in fine tuning the **2nd**, **3rd**, and most especially the **4th Edition**. Thanks for all the great work, Tom!!

NEW IN ENHANCED PRECISION IV

- See page 196 for many of the changes from the third edition of *Enhanced Precision*.
- The 1♣ structure has been much improved especially for
 - game forcing balanced responders
 - being able to show 1-loser and solid suits (via transfers), extremely important for slam bidding
 - dealing with interference bidding
 - responding with 4441 hands
- Competitive bidding samples are included
- End of chapter “in-action” samples to help master material and demonstrate the power of Enhanced Precision compared to other systems
- Glossary Index makes it easy to determine what acronyms mean and where to find them discussed in the book
- Editable convention card provided on Master Point Press website.
- Blog to ask questions and make suggestions

The Improbable Positives



The Hamsters
(Ron Beall, Hal Gloff, Sandy Robson, Gene Fomin)



The BellingHamsters
(Tom Devine, Gene Fomin, Sandy Robson, Ron Beall)

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WHAT IS ENHANCED PRECISION?

Enhanced Precision is a bidding system designed to arrive at the best possible contract. The old saw is that good bidders beat good players, meaning that arriving at appropriate contracts is more important than finding some rare squeeze. There may be more momentary satisfaction and more “bragging points” in esoteric declarer play, but the bulk of Master Points at bridge are won by good bidding.

Once, almost all bridge players opened 4-card majors. Now those who play 4-card majors are in a decided minority. Once, a 2♣ response to 1NT meant that long clubs were held. That original meaning has disappeared among tournament players. Enhanced Precision is an evolved system compared to standard systems, even standard Precision. Enhanced Precision integrates the best ideas from Wei, Jannersten, Berkowitz, Manley, Rigal, and many others, along with numerous original enhancements.

Enhanced Precision is for the determined tournament player, not the casual player. And while conventional, alertable calls are common in Enhanced Precision, they are relatively easy to learn despite being somewhat awkward at first. Many calls have transfer aspects which seem strange until you learn them. Remember how strange Jacoby transfers were to you in the beginning!

1♣ in Enhanced Precision shows 16+ HCP. In Standard American and 2/1 Game Force, when one of a major is opened, the upper limit is 21 HCP or even greater. One of a major in Enhanced Precision shows at least 5 of the bid major, with 11-15 HCP (rather than 12-21 in standard systems). But these are features of other Precision systems as well. Enhanced Precision has evolved to do yet more: to even more precisely pinpoint the extent of “fit,” number of controls held, and number of HCP and support points held. And it usually manages to have the more powerful hand declare the contract, to a greater extent than other bidding systems, even other Precision systems.

If you want to be as good a bidder as possible, learn Enhanced Precision and you will be richly rewarded.

PREVIEW OF ENHANCED PRECISION IV

Compare to Your Favorite System

1.

♠AQJ74

♥AQ95

♦A

♣A76

♠53

♥KJ8763

♦9752

♣8

1♣

2♠

6♥

1♦

4♣

P

The 2♠ rebid by opener shows 19+ HCP with at least 5 spades 3 and at least 4 hearts (spades being equal to or longer than hearts). 4♣ shows a big fit with one of the majors and a singleton (or void) ♣, all that opener needed to hear to bid the excellent slam. Note that many pairs will play 1♠ when 6♥ is cold and 7♥ is on a finesse.

2.

♠A9874	♠Q103
♥AJ5	♥874
♦Q	♦K1097
♣KJ42	♣Q107

1♠	1NT
2♣	2♠

This is a very common auction both by Precision players and most other modern systems. In most other systems, responder would raise immediately to 2♠ and the auction could go in many directions from there. Many persons, the authors included, are highly reluctant to let the opponents play two of a major when the suit has been voluntarily supported and thus someone (either opener or one of the opponents) is likely to bid and our side is likely to take the push to 3♠. In the example above, the opponents (and also opener) do not know whether or not we actually have a fit and are likely to allow us play 2♠ which is quite likely to make, but higher contracts are in jeopardy.

One prominent bridge player feels this style is illegal and has called the director on more than one occasion to complain about it. The director naturally rules that there is nothing wrong with this style, although the possibility of responder having three card support and up to nine HCP does have to be alerted.

Compare this to hand 4 in which responder makes a simple raise to two of opener's major. Now it is very dangerous for the opponents to come in and we are well positioned to make a penalty double.

3.

♠AK8
♥KQ6
♦AQ105
♣Q85

♠J762
♥9874
♦76
♣J93

1♣

1♦

1♥

1♠

1NT

P

This sequence shows 19-20 HCP balanced. In most other systems, opener would open 2NT or possibly bid 1♦ expecting to jump rebid 3NT but would be passed out instead (in a very inferior contract). Were you able to stop in 1NT? Thank goodness EPIV was!

4.

♠AQ872

♥Q10

♦Q103

♣J65

♠J94

♥KJ6

♦J82

♣AQ83

1♠

P

2♠

The single raise of one of a major opening shows three card support (possibly 4 card support with 4333 distribution) and 10-12 support points. Note that we are unlikely to make 4♠. On a bad day we could even go down in 3♠. And if the opponents choose to compete, we will double them for a top.

5.

♠KQ87

♥6

♦AJ874

♣K107

♠A9652

♥J105

♦KQ3

♣A6

1♦

2♥

3♥

5♠

1♠

2NT

4NT

6♠

The 2♥ rebid shows an unbalanced hand (with 4+ diamonds) with four card spade support (and thus shortness in either hearts or clubs; with 5422, opener would rebid 2♠ [minimum] or 3♠ [maximum]). Responder asks for key cards and opener shows two with the queen which allows responder to bid the excellent slam.

In above auction, 2NT asks for strength and shortness. 3♥ shows maximum 1♦ opener with singleton ♥.

6.

♠K102
♥3
♦AKJ872
♣K92

♠AQJ7
♥982
♦Q9
♣A74

1♦
3♦
3♠
5♥

1♠
3♥
4NT
6♠

Opener's 3♦ rebid shows a maximum opening with long strong diamonds and exactly three card spade support. Responder relays with 3♥ and opener shows his singleton heart. Responder asks for key cards and opener shows two without the queen and responder bids the near laydown slam on a 43 fit. Note that many pairs, reluctant to play in a 43 fit, will probably go down in 3NT.

7.

♠AKQ84

♥97

♦AQ1072

♣A

♠10973

♥

♦K543

♣87642

1♣

1♠

4♦

5♣

7♠

1♦

3♥

4♥

5♦

P

The sequence 1♣ 1♦ 1♠ shows 4+ spades in an unbalanced hand and is forcing one round. 3♥ shows less than six HCP with 4+ trumps and a singleton or void in hearts. 4♦ is a cue bid, emphasizing diamonds. Responder's re-cue bid of 4♥ shows a heart void. Opener now cue bids 4♣ and responder can cue bid 4♦ showing the K of Diamonds. Opener knows that responder has 4+ spades, a void in H, and the K of diamonds making the grand slam nearly laydown.

8.

♠AQ6
♥A97
♦KQ5
♣AJ106

♠K873
♥6
♦A642
♣KQ72

1♣
3♣
3♥
4♥
7♣

2NT
3♦
4♣
5♦
P

The 2NT response to 1♣ shows any 4441 hand with 11-13 HCP. 3♣ asks for the singleton and 3♦ says it is in hearts. 3♥ asks for controls (A=2, K=1), 4♣ shows 4. Four hearts asks about club honors; five diamonds shows two of top three. Opener knows that responder holds the king of spades, ace of diamonds, and KQxx of clubs, and bids the near cold grand slam. Note that many pairs won't even get to a small slam, much less be able to bid a confident grand.

9.

♠5	♠A9732
♥KQJ4	♥J1075
♦A762	♦83
♣KQ106	♣J5

1♦	2♥
4♥	P

1♦ is 11-13 HCP with 2+ diamonds. The 2♥ response shows 5-9 HCP with 5+ spades and 4+ hearts. Opener sees the excellent fit and bids the game which isn't cold, but is likely to make in practice.

Note that many pairs are likely to play 1♦ in their 42 fit or in 2♣, also in a 42 fit.

10.

♠KJ32

♥

♦KJ102

♣AQ954

♠A

♥953

♦AQ984

♣KJ72

1♦

3♥

P

2♦

7♦

The 2♦ response to the 1♦ opening is a near game force asking opener to describe their hand. 3♦ shows an unbalanced hand, maximum values (13+ to 15 HCP) with a heart void. Responder knows that opener must have the key cards needed for the grand (Ace of clubs, King of diamonds) and probably has either the Queen of clubs, or the KQx of spades to take care of the two low clubs.

ENHANCED PRECISION

Summary of Opening Bids

(Parentheses show probability of occurrence)

- 1♣=16+ (17+ if balanced) HCP, strong, artificial, forcing (17%)
- 1♦=11-15 (10-15 NV) HCP, 2+Diamonds, NF (32%)
- 1♥/1♠=11-15 (10-15 NV) HCP, 5+ suit, NF (26%)
- 1NT=14-16 HCP, no biddable 5 card major (13%)
- 2♣=11-15 HCP, 5+ Clubs, non-forcing (3%)
- 2♦=11-15, 3-suiter with singleton/void Diamond (1%)
- 2♥/2♠=7-10 weak 2 bid (3%)
- 2NT=5+5+ or better in minors, weak (1%)
- 3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠=standard preempts (3%)
- 3NT=8+minor suit, not headed by AK (<1%)
- 4♣/4♦=8 to 9 tricks in H/S (1%)
- 4♥/4♠=7 to 7-1/2 trick in H/S (1%)

OPENING 1♦

1♦ is the most common opening bid (roughly twice as often as 1♣, 1♥, 1♠, and 1NT openings) in the system and should be studied carefully. There is great versatility in allowing the 1♦ opener to reveal the degree of fit for responder's hand, along with HCP and support points. For example, if partner responds 1M (one of a Major; see the list of abbreviations in the appendixes since this book depends heavily on them), the 1♦ opener can describe all of the following types of hands:

- Balanced minimum (11-13) without four card support
- Balanced minimum (11-13) with 4 card support
- Balanced Three Card Support minimum (11-13) with either a weak doubleton or an unstopped suit and 3 card support
- Moderately unbalanced (4441 or 5431) hand with 3 card support or 4 card support
- Highly unbalanced (e.g. 6430 or 6421) with 4 card support
- Unbalanced hands (e.g. 5431 or 6331) with 3 card support, 11-15 HCP
- Strong hands (but not good enough for 1♣ opening) with 6+Diamonds and exactly three card support
- Strong hands (13-15) with 6+Diamonds and fewer than three card support

Not only can opener show many of these types of hands with the first rebid, but can then show where the singleton is (in the unbalanced hands) or can even more closely show the number of HCP held.

Even if the 1♦ opener denies much of a fit with responder by rebidding 1NT, responder has a wide variety of tools to ever more closely define opener's hand in an effort to get to the right partial, game, or slam. The next few pages show how all this is done.

Requirements to Open 1♦

- 11-15 HCP, no 5 card major
 - Balanced hands with 2+ diamonds, non-forcing
 - 11-13 NV
 - 12-13 V
 - Use Rule of 15 (HCP plus number of Spades) to decide whether or not to open in 4th seat
 - 11-15 HCP, unbalanced, 4+ diamonds

Responses and rebid structure

- Determining whether to P or respond 1 of a major is partly judgment
 - With 4+Diamonds, lean toward P with minimum hands (0-5)

ABOUT THE FOURTH EDITION

When I completed the third edition of *Enhanced Precision*, I believed (or at least hoped!) that it would be the final version. But many people made suggestions for improvements and I finally succumbed to writing what I now believe (or at least hope!) will be the ultimate system (knowing full well that there is no ultimate system).

In addition to many improvements in the system itself, the fourth edition contains numerous examples of the system in action (in response to numerous requests for examples showing how the system works with real hands). Most of the concepts in this book can be applied to standard bidding systems. They are not confined to big club systems.

An editable convention card (already filled out for *Enhanced Precision*) is provided on the Master Point Press website. And there is now a blog where readers can ask questions and make suggestions.

Enjoy!



RON BEALL (Bellingham, WA) is a Gold Life Master who has won over 20 regional pair and team events and one major national championship (Six Session National Open Swiss Teams). He is the author of several articles on bidding in the *ACBL Bridge Bulletin* and in *The Bridge World*.

Ron lives with his wife Jennifer (Bronze Life Master) and Darth (Vader), his adorable toy poodle.