

Constructive Bidding 402



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INTRODUCTION

The focus of Constructive Bidding 401 and 402 is two fold:

- I. To provide advancing partnerships a complete and consistent framework in the form of a *bidding system* that will allow them to compete in stratified tournaments at the higher levels.
- II. Provide readers with a fully referenced basis.

Constructive Bidding 401 deals with opener and responders basic bids. This book follows up with difficult responder rebids, progresses through standard Two Over One bidding and then slam bidding. The presentation ends with the reasons why a detailed structure is required with a discussion on the different strategies required for Matchpoints and IMPs.

Constructive Bidding 401 and 402 deliver a convention-rich system that can be simplified to suit the requirements of individual partnerships and the level they play at. More than fifty conventions and treatments with extensive continuations for both invoker and responder have been provided. It is not necessary to use them all. Developing partnerships can start with a basic system and then add to it as needed.

Patterned after a college text book, the presence of a knowledgeable teacher will certainly speed the learning process. Concepts are first presented and then explained and expanded. A quiz following each major section is provided to develop the reader's understanding. The quizzes in both books contain more than 450 question and answers. Sections are also followed by a bullet-point summary of the topic in addition to an overall summary at the end of each chapter.

The bidding philosophy is to locate and bid game contracts aggressively. Bidding structures derived from that philosophy use shape and high-card points to differentiate between types of bids.

This leads to the following:

- i. The student is expected to learn and apply judgment to the bidding process.
- ii. The bidding structure presented is continuous with respect to highcard points and shape. This leads to the following key concepts:
 - A hand containing 12 HCP is always opened in first- and second-seat.
 - ~ A minimum rebid by opener is expected to be 11–14 HCP.
 - ~ A same suit rebid is expected to be 6+ cards long.
 - The shape defined by notrump openings is expected to be balanced and variations are strongly discouraged.
 Singletons or multiple doubletons are not allowed.
- iii. A Two Over One response to a first- or second-seat opening is a game force.
- iv. A 1NT response to a first- or second-seat major-suit opening is forcing.

Writing a book with a complete and consistent bidding system presented the challenge of distilling an exceptionally broad range of issues. As a result, the focus is on *constructive* rather than *competitive* bidding. Defence and play of the hand are excluded to reduce the size of the book to a manageable level.

The large scope of constructive bidding requires many topics to be condensed. To supplement this brevity, references from a number of significant experts have been provided. These highly accomplished authors provide a more adept and detailed presentation than space allows here. These references will direct a student of the game to the expert explanation of the subject in question. Any errors interpreting their work in this text are mine.

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In the forward of Ron Klinger's "The Modern Losing Trick Count", Hugh Kelsey voices this sentiment:

In my own writings I have tended to concentrate on the finer points of play and defence, aspects of the game that hold an endless fascination for me. But in my heart of hearts I have to acknowledge that the bidding is roughly three times as important as the play. In the upper reaches of the game standards are such that there is little to choose between the contestants in the matter of card play. At lower levels the picture is the same. It is accurate bidding that wins the matches, the tournaments and the rubbers. If you can consistently reach sensible contracts, you will have few problems in the play of the cards.

CHAPTER 1 DIFFICULT REBIDS

There are some situations that challenge a responder's ability to send a clear message. To generate consistent results it is necessary to have specific partnership understandings.

The following example demonstrates the issue. The opener has made a jump rebid of 2NT promising a balanced hand with 18–19 HCP:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	?	

With no partnership agreement a rebid of 3♦ can be made with either of the following hands:

With a natural system the partnership must choose a bid of $3 \blacklozenge$ to represent one of these hands and suffer the consequences when the other occurs.

There are seven groups of opener rebids that create problems. This chapter presents a conventional approach to each of these groups as follows:

- 1. **xyNT** Opener makes a limited rebid of 1NT promising 11–14 HCP. xyNT uses a bid of: 2♣ with an invitational hand, 2♦ with a game forcing hand or better, and a jump to the three level as a slam-going hand. It is also known as Two-Way New-Minor Forcing (or Two-Way Check-Back).
- 2. **XYZ** The opener makes an unlimited rebid at the one level, (three one-level bids). XYZ uses a bid of 2♣ with an invitational hand, 2♦ with a game forcing hand or better, and a jump to the three level as a slam-going hand.
- 3. **Wolff relay** The opener makes a limited rebid of 2NT promising 18–19 HCP. The Wolff relay allows responder to escape with a weak hand, search for an eight-card major suit game, or advance to a slam.
- 4. **Quality-Quantity** Used after opener raises a major suit to the two level, limiting the hand to 11–14 HCP. The Quality-Quantity convention allows an opener with a minimum hand to raise partner's

major with three-card support. A responder can query the opener to determine the length of support and the strength of opener's hand.

- 5. **Bourke Relay** When the opener rebids a minor suit at the two level limiting the hand to 11–14 HCP. The modified Bourke Relay allows the responder to invite or force to game.
- 6. **Fourth Suit Forcing** Introducing a lower-ranking suit at the two level limits opener's hand to 11–17 HCP. Fourth Suit Forcing allows responder to invite or force game.
- 7. **Lebensohl after a reverse** A relay to 3♣ is used to define responder's strength and saves the opener from guessing.

xyNT

The *XYZ* convention was published in Bridge Today by Joe Kivel in 1991¹. The *xyNT* convention² is part of that family and follows the same approach. It replaces *New Minor Forcing*, communicates a wider range of values and simplifies the location of partscore, game, and slam contracts. The procedure also provides an additional opportunity to locate a major suit fit.

The xyNT convention is invoked after any three bids at the one level including an opener rebid of 1NT. A rebid of 1NT limits opener's hand to 11–14 HCP (any other one-level rebid will be unlimited). These two situations will be discussed separately as xyNT for the 1NT rebid and XYZ following opener's one-level rebid.

An xyNT sequence can occur in one of the following four ways. After a 1♣ opening in first- or second-seat:

	ON	ΙE			TV	VO	
1♣	p	1♦	p	1.	p	1♥/♠	p
1NT	p	?		1NT	p	?	

After a 1♦ or 1♥ opening in first- or second-seat:

,	THR	REE			FOU	JR	
1 ♦ 1NT	1	1 ♥/♠ ?	р	1 ♥ 1NT	-		р

¹ (ACBL, 2011) Official Encyclopedia of Bridge, page 341.

² Also known as Two-Way New-Minor Forcing or Two-Way Check-Back.

The responder can define his hand in the following ways:

- 1. A pass of 1NT shows 5–9 HCP. In sequence **ONE** the initial 1◆ response denies a four-card major unless the responder holds an opening hand and a five-card diamond suit³. A pass by responder confirms no four-card major.
- 2. With a weak hand of 5–9 HCP and a six-card suit, the responder's **major** suit can be rebid:

\mathbf{W}	N	E	S	HCP	
1♣	p	1♠	p		
$1NT^1$	p	$2 \clubsuit^2$		11-14	¹ Minimum,
				5–9	² Weak, six spades

- 3. Rebid a conventional 2♣ with an invitational hand. This rebid promises an invitational hand of 10–12 HCP and requires the opener to rebid 2♠, (no other bids are allowed). Following the club to diamond relay the responder has four options:
 - a) Pass. This is the exception to an invitational holding. It occurs when the responder holds a weak hand (5–9 HCP) with length in opener's diamonds⁴:

\mathbf{W}	\mathbf{N}	\mathbf{E}	\mathbf{S}	HCP	
1♦	p	1♠	p		
1NT	p	2 ♣ ¹	p	10-12	¹ Relay to diamonds
2	p	p^2		5–9	² Four spades and five diamonds

b) Rebid responder's major suit (2♥ or 2♠) with a five-card suit. This approach requires better distribution (5422 or 5431) or a stronger hand of 11–12 HCP:

\mathbf{W}	N	\mathbf{E}	S	HCP	
1♣	p	1♥	p		
1NT	p	2 ♣ ¹	p	10-12	¹ Relay to diamonds
2	p	$2 \checkmark^2$		11-12	² Promises a five-card suit

³ See Walsh response

⁴ Can also be used with 1♣ or 1♥ openings when responder has long diamonds.

c) Jump rebid responder's major suit (3♥ or 3♠) with a six-card suit:

W N E S HCP

1 p 1 p p

1NT p
$$2 \stackrel{1}{•}^1$$
 p $10-12$ ¹Relay to diamonds

2 p $3 \stackrel{\checkmark}{•}^2$ $10-12$ ²Six hearts, invitational

d) Rebid 2NT (after the relay). This approach promises club support with a weak hand. The sequence will occur when responder has a four-card major with five-card support for the opener's club suit. The responder will have a distributional hand that is unsuitable for a notrump contract and will appear as follows:

\mathbf{W}	N	\mathbf{E}	\mathbf{S}	HCP	
1♣	p	1♠	p		
1NT	p	$2\clubsuit^1$	p	10-12	¹ Relay to diamonds
2 ♦	p	$2NT^2$	p		² Relay to clubs (weak
3♣	p	p^3		5+	³ Unsuitable for notrump

4. Rebid 2NT directly (no club to diamond relay). This is a natural invitation to 3NT that promises 11–12 HCP. The opener can raise to game when holding maximum values of 13 or 14 HCP. Bidding will be as follows:

\mathbf{W}	N	\mathbf{E}	S	HCP	
1♣	p	1♠	p		
1NT	р	$2NT^1$		11-12	¹ Invitational

- 5. Rebid a conventional 2• as a game force⁵ and *checkback* for the majors. Opener's holdings can then be defined the following ways:
 - a. With three-card support and 11–13 HCP, rebid responder's major at the two level.
 - b. With three-card support and 14 HCP, rebid responder's major at the three level.
 - c. With no support for partner's major, respond at the two level with four cards in the other major.

Page 9

⁵ Game force is loosely defined as stopping at 3NT or the four level.

d. With poor support rebid 2NT with 11–13 HCP and 3NT with 14 HCP.

Opener rebids will be as follows:

\mathbf{W}	N	\mathbf{E}	S	HCP	
1♣	p	1♥	p		
1NT	p	2 ♦¹	p	13+	¹ Game force, checkback
2♥				11-13	Three-card hearts
2♠					Note 1
2NT				11-13	Note 2
3♥				14	Three-card hearts
3NT				14	Note 2

- Note 1 This bid is not used. Opener with a four-card suit should rebid 1♠ not 1NT.
- Note 2 Opener denies three hearts and will have three spades or fewer.
- 6. All jumps following a 1NT rebid are slam invitational and include 3♣♦♥♠ or 3NT⁶. With the shape and values to bid game (but not slam) the responder can bid 3NT directly after opener's 1NT rebid. A jump rebid consumes bidding space that would otherwise be used for locating a fit and is generally discouraged. To compensate for the loss of bidding space the responder is expected to have a strong distributional hand or a very strong balanced hand.

The opener's rebid of 1NT does not promise stoppers in the unbid suits and could be as weak as 11 HCP. As a result the jump to 3NT should promise 20+ HCP. In response to a 3NT jump the opener is expected to cuebid the cheapest ace or king.

⁶ Fred Hamilton uses three level jumps (except 3♣ which is weak), as strong suits suggesting slam possibilities. The system presented here uses 2♣ then 2NT as a relay to clubs so all jumps to the three level are strong slam attempts. Max Hardy, *Advanced Bridge Bidding for the 21st Century*. Page 31

Responder's slam invitational rebids will appear as follows:

\mathbf{W}	N	\mathbf{E}	S	HCP	
1♣	p	1♥	p		
1NT	p	3♣		17+	Two suited
		3♦		17+	Two suited
		3♥		17+	Very good 6+ card heart suit
		3♠		17+	Two suited with more hearts than spades (45xx, 56xx etc.)
		3NT		20+	Slam invitational

When responder has the values to play in 3NT (but not slam), it is necessary to start with a game forcing 2• rebid followed by 3NT, rather than jumping immediately to 3NT. The following bidding illustrates this sequence:

What is the best rebid given the following hands?

QUIZ 1a continued

- 4. **♦**J 4 2 **♥**K Q 8 **♦**K Q 10 9 7 **♦**9 8
 - a) Pass b) 2♣ c) 2♦ d) 2NT
- 5. ♠K 4 ♥K Q 8 ♦K Q 10 9 7 ♣10 9 2 a) Pass b) 2♣ c) 2♦ d) 2NT
- 6. ◆A 4 ▼K Q 8 7 ◆K Q 10 9 7 ★ K 9 a) Pass b) 2★ c) 2◆ d) 2▼ e) 3▼

WestNorthEastSouth1♥Pass1♠Pass1NTPass?

What is the best rebid given the following hands?

- 7. ♠K 10 8 2 ♥10 9 ♦K Q 8 7 5 ♣A 2 a) Pass b) 2♣ c) 2♦ d) 2♠ e) 2NT
- 8. ♠K 10 8 5 2 ♥10 ♦K Q 8 7 ♣A 9 2 a) Pass b) 2♣ c) 2♦ d) 2♠ e) 2NT
- 9. ♠K Q 10 8 5 ♥10 9 ♦K Q 8 7 ♣A 2 a) Pass b) 2♣ c) 2♦ d) 2♠ e) 2NT

DISCUSSION 1a xyNT

- 1. You have an 8 HCP hand and should pass, A.
- 2. In this sequence opener's rebid of 1NT promises a balanced hand⁷. This hand will be safer in a suit contract and the only way to get there is with the club to diamond relay. Bid 2♣, **B**, and pass partner's 2♦ response.
- 3. This hand has some potential if opener can stop hearts and spades. Initiate the relay to diamonds with a bid of 2♣, **B**. The intention is to raise opener's 2♦ rebid to 3♦ promising a good six-card suit.
- 4. With 11–12 HCP, make an invitational bid of 2NT, **D**, avoiding the club to diamond relay.
- 5. Bid a game forcing 2♦, C, promising 13+ HCP. Your plan is to rebid 3NT at the next opportunity.
- 6. With an opening hand you have elected to show your five-card diamond suit before bidding the hearts. Rebid 2♥, **D**. Avoid jumping to 3♥ to promise slam invitational values with less than a solid suit.
- 7. This hand has 12 HCP and will may play well in a 3NT contract if opener is at the top of the range. Make an immediate jump to 2NT, E, which promises 11–12 HCP.
- 8. With an invitational hand of 11–12 HCP, rebid 2♣, **B**. Your plan is to rebid 2♠ after the diamond relay, a sequence that promises a good hand with a five-card suit.
- 9. Make a game forcing rebid of 2♦, C, promising 13+ HCP. Opener is expected to raise your spades with a three-card suit.
- 10. This hand has excellent slam potential allowing responder to jump directly to 3NT, E. With anything more than a bare minimum opener will start a cuebid control-sequence by responding with the lowest ranking, first- or second-round control.

⁷ See Walsh relay.

QUIZ 1b

xyNT

What is the best rebid given the following bidding sequence?

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	?	

QUIZ 1b continued

What is the best rebid given the following bidding sequence?

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	?	

DISCUSSION 1b xyNT

- 11. Pass, A, with this minimum 8 HCP hand.
- 12. Initiate the relay with a bid of 2♣, **B**. With a good hand of 11–12 HCP your plan is to rebid the five-card heart suit.
- 13. With a balanced hand and 10 HCP may have some difficulty when opener has two-card support for your hearts. Elect to play in a 1NT contract and pass, **A**, with this hand.
- 14. With a six-card suit and 10–12 HCP, initiate the relay with a bid of 2♣, **B**. After opener's forced response of 2♦ you will rebid 3♥.
- 15. Rebid 2♦, C, with this game forcing hand. Your plan is to rebid 2♥.
- 16. There are several ways to invite slam when holding a good six-card suit. An immediate jump to 3♥, E, promises a solid suit with slam invitational values. The jump sets hearts as trump and requires opener to cuebid controls. With less than a solid suit, make a game forcing bid of 2♦ and follow it with a jump to 3♥. A slam is still possible if opener can support hearts.

DISCUSSION 1b continued

- 17. A bid of 2♠, C, is a game-forcing checkback bid giving the opener four options:
 - i. Rebid 2♥ with three-card support and 11–13 HCP
 - ii. Rebid 3♥ with three-card support and 14 HCP
 - iii. Rebid 2NT with a minimum hand
 - iv. Rebid 3NT with a maximum hand of 14 HCP

After a 1 \checkmark response to an opening 1 \clubsuit/\spadesuit bid the opener is expected to rebid 1 \spadesuit with a four card spade suit. A rebid of 2 \spadesuit after the checkback bid would be undefined.

- 18. This hand has a better chance of success in 3♣ than in 1NT. Initiate the relay with a bid of 2♣ and follow with a rebid of 2NT requesting opener to rebid 3♣, which you will pass.
- 19. You have 10 HCP and a flat hand. A partnership total of 21 to 24 HCP suggests there is only a remote chance of making 3NT. The best option is to pass, **A**.
- 20. Make an invitational rebid of 2NT promising 11–12 HCP. The correct answer is **B**.
- 21. The weak hearts are a concern in a 1NT contract. Bid 2♣, **B**, showing 10–12 HCP. After the relay to diamonds, rebid 3♦ introducing a new five-card suit. With a heart stopper and a good hand opener can try 3NT and will otherwise pass.

The responder should avoid an initial 1 bid with fewer than 13 HCP (the systemic requirement for a Walsh response).

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

This book is a follow-up to *Constructive Bidding 401*, which introduced the teamwork and structure needed for a complete bidding system. Together, the two books provide advancing partnerships a complete and consistent framework in the form of a bidding system for competition in stratified tournaments at higher levels.

Book Two begins with opener's rebids and progresses to slam bidding. The book finishes a discussion on the strategy required for Matchpoints and IMPs. Two Over One bids and Forcing 1NT are a small component of this bidding system. Of greater importance is the need to define and manage a broad range of bidding situations in a predictable fashion. While discussion on Two Over One is complete, it is a small portion of the total content and the focus is on a complete system.

Patterned after a college text book, concepts are presented, explained and then detailed in a tabular format. A summary and quiz following each major section develops the reader's understanding. The quizzes in both books contain more than 450 question and answers.



STEPHEN PAUL (CALGARY) is an avid club player and long time student. Retirement from a successful engineering career afforded the time to pursue a fascination with competitive duplicate bridge. He is a firm believer that lasting success requires great teamwork, well defined partnership agreements, and the support of understanding friends and family.

