

STANDARD BIDDING WITH SAYC

Names _____ Pair # _____

ACBL STANDARD YELLOW CARD

Strong Forcing Opening: 2♣

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS

1 NT 15 to 17 HCP 2 NT 20 to 21 HCP
 2 NT 25 to 27 HCP

2♣ Non-Forcing Stayman
 Transfers: Jacoby for majors over 1, 2 and 3 NT (on over dbls.)
 2♠ forces 3♣ (for signoff in either minor)
 1 NT - 3♣/3♦ Is Game Invitational; 1 NT - 3♥/3♠ Is Slam Invitational

MAJOR OPENINGS
 Normally Five-Card Majors

RESPONSES:
 2 NT = Forcing Raise (Jacoby)
 Double Raise = Limit (10-12 pts.)
 Double Raise = Preemptive Over Double

MINOR OPENING
 Length Promised

1♣	4+	3+
1♦	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

RESPONSES:
 Double Raise = Limit (10-12 pts.)
 Double Raise = Preemptive Over Double

1 NT/1♣ or 1♦ 6 to 10 HCP
 2 NT/1♣ or 1♦ 13 to 15 HCP
 3 NT/1♣ or 1♦ 16 to 17 HCP

Be Courteous - Opponents May Just Be Friends We Haven't Met Yet!



Describe 22+ Balanced Points or 9+ Tricks
 2♣ STRONG Conventional Response 2♦ Artificial
May be waiting lacking a good suit
5 to 11 HCP Normally a good 6 card suit
 2♦ WEAK
 2♥ WEAK

Ned Downey • Ellen Pomer ("Gaitlin")

MASTER POINT PRESS • TORONTO

© 2005 Ned Downey & Ellen Pomer. All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

Master Point Press

331 Douglas Ave.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

M5M 1H2 (416) 781-0351

Email: info@masterpointpress.com

Websites: <http://www.masterpointpress.com>

<http://www.masteringbridge.com>

<http://www.ebooksbridge.com>

<http://www.bridgeblogging.com>

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Downey, Ned

Standard bidding with SAYC / written by Ned Downey & Ellen Pomer.

ISBN 978-1-55494-019-6

1. Contract bridge--Bidding. I. Pomer, Ellen II. Title.

GV1282.4.D69 2005

795.41'52

C2005-905199-X

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP) for our publishing activities.

Editor

Ray Lee

Cover and interior design

Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

Cover image:

Royalty-Free/Corbis

Interior format

Luise Lee

Copyediting

Suzanne Hocking

Printed in Canada by Webcom Ltd.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

09 08 07 06 05



Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Notrump Openings	1
The 1NT Opening Bid	1
Chapter 2: Responding to 1NT	5
2♣ — Simple (Non-Forcing) Stayman	6
2♦ and 2♥ — Basic Jacoby Transfer Bids	9
2♠ — Long Weak Minors	12
2NT — Invitational	12
3♣, 3♦, 3♥ and 3♠	13
4♣ — Gerber	14
4NT — Invitational	15
Responses to Higher-Level Notrump Openings	15
Handling Interference	15
Chapter 3: One-Level Opening Bids	25
First and Second-Seat Openers: The Rule of 20	25
Do I Open 1♣ or 1♦?	27
Third-Seat Openers	30
Fourth-Seat Openers: Rule of 15	31
Chapter 4: Responding to One of a Major	33
Responding with a Minimum	35
Responding with an Invitational Hand	37
Responding with Game-Forcing Values or Better	38
Responder's Rebids	41
Chapter 5: Responding to One of a Minor	45
Responding with a Minimum	45
Responding with an Invitational Hand	47
Responding with Game-Forcing Values	49
Slame Zone Bids by Responder	49
Chapter 6: Opener's Rebid	51
Minimum Rebids by Opener	51
Invitational Rebids	52
Game-Forcing Rebids by Opener	54
Rebidding After a Limit Raise	55
Chapter 7: Reverses	57
Opener's Reverse Bids	57
Responder's Rebids After the Reverse	62
Competitive Auctions	65
Reverses by Responder	65

Minor-Suit Openings (Revisited)	66
Chapter 8: Subsequent Bidding by Responder	69
Rebids with Weak Hands	69
Invitational Rebids	70
Forcing Rebids	71
Game-Forcing Rebids	71
Game Signoffs	72
Responder Rebids lin 2 over 1 Auctions	72
Chapter 9: Fourth Suit Forcing	75
Opener's Rebids After FSF	77
Chapter 10: Preemption	81
2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ — The Weak Two	83
Chapter 11: The Strong 2♣ Opening	91
Responding to a 2♣ Opener	92
Opener's Rebids	92
Chapter 12: Overcalls	97
One-level Overcalls	97
Two-level Overcalls	99
Responding to Overcalls	100
Preemptive Jump Overcalls	101
Chapter 13: Michaels and the Unusual Notrump	103
Direct Cuebids (Michaels)	103
The Unusual Notrump	106
Chapter 14: Overcalling Their 1NT Openings	109
Cappelletti	109
Chapter 15: Doubles and Redoubles	115
The Penalty Double	116
The Takeout Double	117
When the Opponents Make a Takeout Double	121
Jordan	123
Lead-Directing Doubles	123
Chapter 16: The Negative Double	127
What Do They Promise?	128
Responding to a Negative Double	131
Chapter 17: The Reopening Double	135
Chapter 18: Balancing	139
Responding to Partner's Balancing Seat Action	144
Chapter 19: Slam Bidding	149
The Slam Toolbox	150
Control Bids	158
Choosing the Best Method	160
Chapter 20: Leads and Carding	163
Leading Against a Notrump Contract	163
Leading Against a Suit Contract	167
Signals and Carding	172



INTRODUCTION

So, what is SAYC and why are we writing a book about it?

SAYC was developed during the mid-1980s to attract more players to duplicate bridge by providing simple bidding and basic conventions. Its creators felt the need for an easy-to-use system because the trends in Standard American toward five-card majors, limit bids, non-forcing jumps and weak twos had evolved into an array of other systems that the average player could not easily access. Among many, these systems included:

- Precision and other forcing club systems.
- Kaplan-Sheinwold with weak notrumps and other gadgets.
- Roth-Stone from the early fifties with the forcing notrump – a cornerstone of the Eastern and Western Scientific systems, which were both precursors to the Two Over One system.
- Some disruptive methods of bidding such as forcing passes. These were fondly called ‘Ferts,’ the short form for fertilizer, and utilized weak openings of 0-7 HCP (high card points) while passing with what we would consider to be a normal opening hand.

According to Charles MacCracken, Manager of the ACBL Tournament Department during the 1980s and now a National Tournament Director, SAYC came out of the WBF World Championships in Miami in 1986. At the time, the Board of Directors had been wrestling with conflicts between the convention experimenters and those who wanted to maintain the status quo. “The problem of too many conventions,” he said, “has been around since the 60s, and is probably still with us.”

In March 1987 at the St. Louis North American Bridge Championships, the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), in keeping with the European ‘No Fear’ games, where nothing much beyond Stayman and

Blackwood were used, introduced a standardized convention card printed on yellow stock. Thus, the Standard American Yellow Card.

But SAYC never really took hold and was approaching an early death by the 1990s. Then came the explosion of personal computers and with it, online bridge. SAYC was born again! The Bridge Pro Tour, a series of competitions with monetary prizes held at various locations in the United States, uses the Standard American Yellow Card exclusively. In this way, the organizers have brought the most widely used system online to a 'live event.'

So it's the new millennium. You've just logged onto one of many bridge sites and have found a table where there's an empty chair. With best bridge etiquette, you ask if you can join prior to taking a seat. You 'sit' and your partner, hailing from Afghanistan or Borneo or the Philippines, types into the chat box, 'Sayc, pard?' You have just been asked to commit yourself to the most popular online bidding system around – albeit a simplified version, as most of the folks in your shoes have only a vague idea of what SAYC truly entails.

While notes on SAYC are available from various sources, there has not been an authoritative book to guide you through this system. Our aim is to describe SAYC as it is today, your user-friendly system of choice. However, this proved not to be as straightforward as you might imagine. Even in areas where you would think the system would be well-defined, there is room for discussion: after all, there is a limit to how many of your agreements will fit on a two-page convention card. In putting the book together, we consulted a number of bridge authorities, including Ron Klinger and Marty Bergen, to come up with an expert consensus on what SAYC really is. We have also included a number of treatments and conventions that are either almost universally played with SAYC (like Roman Keycard and Capelletti), or that fit well with it if you so choose.

We hope that, after reading this book, the next time someone says to you, 'SAYC, pard?' you will have a much clearer idea of what you have just agreed to play.

Enjoy, and always remember that the fate of nations is not determined at the bridge table.

(Note: throughout this text, any bid that currently requires an alert to the opponents in an ACBL event will be indicated by appending an * to the bid. Different rules apply in different jurisdictions, and if you are playing online – where there is no chance of giving partner unauthorized information – it is best to alert if you are not sure.)



CHAPTER 1

NOTRUMP OPENINGS

Notrump is the most descriptive opening bid in the game. It provides partner with specific information in terms of HCP and distribution. Since notrump bids limit opener's hand to a specific point range, responder now becomes captain of the auction. This is a bridge dynamic we will see time and time again: once you limit your hand, partner is, at least for the moment, in charge.

THE 1NT OPENING BID

In SAYC, an opening bid of 1NT shows a balanced hand and a range of 15-17 HCP. In answer to any of you who also feel that an opening bid in notrump should guarantee stoppers in every suit, hogwash. If you wait for the perfect hand, you will not be opening notrump nearly as often as you should. Remember, you do have a partner. Where you have your weak doubleton, he may have you covered. Also remember that just because you have opened notrump does not mean your side will play in notrump. If you end up playing a suit contract, that so-called useless doubleton may come in very handy. Even if you do play in notrump without a suit covered – and it happens to all of us – your opponents may be kind enough not to lead the suit, or it may block or split 4-4. One final advantage: the 1NT opening makes it much more difficult for the opponents to overcall.

Finally, do not be afraid to open 1NT with a five-card major. This is a contentious area of bridge for many. Traditional views oppose opening 1NT when you have a five-card major.

The “no five-card major” approach developed from a rich literature, including the text *Bridge for Beginners*, written in the early 1950s by the British duo Victor Mollo and Nico Gardener. Their material was based on Acol, the predominant system used in England to this day. Mollo and Gardner wrote that “on balanced hands – no five-card major and no singleton – open no-trump.” This position was supported by Albert