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ACBL Convention Charts

Introduction

The four new convention charts are listed in order from least to most permissive: the Basic Chart, Basic+ Chart, Open Chart, and Open+ Chart. The Basic and Basic+ Charts are intended for limited master point events. These Charts are written in a manner similar to the old charts -- by listing permitted methods

The Open and Open+ Charts are intended for events without masterpoint limits or with high limits. In contrast to the Basic and Basic+ Charts, methods are generally allowed unless they are expressly prohibited within the Chart.

A comprehensive Definitions section is included In addition to the Charts. Any word that is capitalized on a Chart is included in the Definitions section.

An Examples section follows the Charts for cases where a rule might be ambiguous. Both the Definitions and the Examples should be included with the Charts. Any Definition or Chart Rule marked with three asterisks (***) has 1 or more examples in the Example section.

Chart Usage

Tournaments

Pair Events and Non-Bracketed Team Events

Basic Chart: Applies in any event where the upper limit per player is 300 or less.

Basic+ Chart: Applies in any event where the upper limit per player is 3000 or less.

Open Chart:

At a Sectional: Applies in any event with no masterpoint limit, and any event with a masterpoint limit above 3000.

At a Regional (including regional events at an NABC):

- applies in any 1-session event with no masterpoint limit (includes Side Series);
- applies in any restricted event with a masterpoint limit above 3000;
- applies in any 2-session event with no masterpoint limit if there is no 2-session event of the same type with a masterpoint limit on the same day.

Nationally Rated Events: Applies in any NABC event with an upper masterpoint limit between 3001 and 6000

Open+ Chart:

At a Regional (including regional events at an NABC):

- applies in any 3+-session event with no masterpoint limit;
- applies in any 2-session event with no masterpoint limit as long as there is a 2-session event of the same type with a masterpoint limit on the same day.

Nationally Rated Events: Applies in any NABC event with no masterpoint limit, and any NABC event with an upper masterpoint limit above 6000.

Exception: In any Fast Pairs event where the Open+ Chart would otherwise apply the Open Chart is used instead.

Bracketed Events

When a bracketed event has a masterpoint limit of 300 or less the Basic Chart applies. When it has a masterpoint limit of 3000 or less the Basic+ Chart applies. Otherwise it uses the same rules as an unlimited bracketed event.

A single bracket event always uses the Open Chart.

For bracketed events with more than one bracket, the Open Chart is used in most brackets with these exceptions:

Basic Chart: Any bracket where the highest team averages less than 300 masterpoints per player;

Basic+ Chart: Any bracket where the highest team averages 301 to 1500 masterpoints per player;

Open+ Chart: Top bracket (regardless of team masterpoint holdings), and any other bracket where the lowest team averages more than 3000 masterpoints per player.

In all events, when a team is allowed to play in a higher bracket than its masterpoint holding would qualify it for, that team's masterpoint total is ignored in determining which Chart applies.

Club Games

The Open Chart is recommended for most open club games. Particularly advanced clubs may prefer to use the Open+ Chart, while clubs that mainly cater to newer players may prefer the Basic+ Chart. The Basic and Basic+ Charts are recommended for masterpoint restricted games.

Pre-alerts and Written Defenses

Two classes of methods are particularly difficult to defend against, and these methods are allowed only in events governed by the Open or Open+ Chart, and then only in segments of six boards or longer. These methods, based on #3 of the Opening Bids section of the Open Chart and #3 or #7 of the Opening Bids section of the Open+ Chart, require both a pre-alert and a written defense, including a separate copy of that defense for each opponent.

Exception: At NABCs, written defenses for Multi 2D need not be provided and may not be referenced during the auction or play. (Multi 2D is only allowed in events governed by the Open+ Chart.)

Official ACBL defenses must be provided when possible. If a convention does not yet have an official ACBL defense, the pair must, *before* using it in an ACBL sanctioned game:

- Submit a full description of the convention and a proposed defense to the ACBL committee for approval. The defense must be provisionally approved. A method is "provisionally approved" if an acknowledgement receipt was sent by the ACBL upon submission and either: (a) the committee sends an email granting provisional approval;

or (b) it was submitted at least 30 days before the ACBL sanctioned event in which it is used and the committee has not rejected it; and

- Provide the submitted defense to any opponents.

It is recommended that any new convention and written defense be posted online for public comment.

Note: For any method for which a written defense is required, the opposing pair may use their own defense rather than the one provided. The defending pair may refer to a pre-written copy of their own defense.

CONVENTION CHARTS

Definitions

A group of four numbers separated by equal signs (=) denotes an exact suit distribution. For example: 5=4=3=1 denotes five spades, four hearts, three diamonds, and one club. A group of four numbers separated by hyphens (-) denotes any of the exact distributions matching that general pattern. For example: 4-3-3-3 represents: 4=3=3=3 or 3=4=3=3 or 3=3=4=3 or 3=3=3=4.

Definitions #1-4 below have specific meanings that may vary from commonly understood meanings or may not have previously been defined. Definitions #5 and higher likely match common understandings of the term, but are still defined here for specificity and clarity. Definitions #5 and higher appear alphabetically.

1. *** **Hand strength**:
 - a. **“Weak”**: A hand that contains less than Near Average Strength.
 - b. **“Near Average Strength”**: A hand that has at least 8 HCP or meets the “Rule of 17”.
 - c. **“Average Strength”**: A hand that has at least 10 HCP or meets the “Rule of 19”.
 - d. **“Strong”**: A hand that contains:
 - i. at least 15 HCP; or
 - ii. at least 14 HCP and meets the “Rule of 24”; or
 - iii. at least 5 Control Points and is within one trick of game assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.
 - e. **“Very Strong”**: A hand that contains:
 - i. at least 20 HCP; or
 - ii. at least 14 HCP and is within one trick of game assuming suits break evenly among the other hands; or
 - iii. at least 5 Control Points and is within one trick of game assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.
2. *** **“Natural”**:
 - a. Any opening bid, overcall or response in a suit at the one-level showing 4 or more cards in the suit, except as provided in 2(f) and 2(g).
 - b. Any opening bid at the two-level or higher showing 5 or more cards in the suit.
 - c. Any response or rebid in a minor at the two-level or higher showing 3 or more cards in the suit.

- d. Any response or rebid in a major at the two-level or higher showing 4 or more cards in the suit.
 - e. Any suit overcall at any level showing 4 or more cards in the suit.
 - f. A 1C opening bid showing 3 or more clubs. This opening may also include exactly 4=4=3=2 shape.
 - g. A 1D opening bid, overcall, or response showing 3 or more diamonds.
 - h. A NT opening bid that contains no voids, no more than one singleton, which must be an ace, king, or queen, and that does not contain 10 or more cards in two suits combined.
 - i. A NT response that shows a balanced or semi-balanced hand.
 - j. A call is still Natural if it also shows distribution in another suit.
 - k. A pass, double, or redouble is Natural if it suggests the current contract as the final contract.
 - l. After the opening bid any bid is Natural if it suggests playing the final contract in that denomination.
3. *** **“Quasi-Natural”**:
- a. A minor suit bid that is either Natural or shows a pattern that meets the definition of a Natural NT opening.
 - b. Any opening bid at the two-level or higher showing 4 or more cards in the suit.
4. *** **“Purely Destructive Initial Action”**: An opening bid or an overcall that satisfies none of the following:
- a. 4+ cards in a known suit.
 - b. 5+ cards in one of two possible suits.
 - c. 5+-4+ distribution in any two suits.
 - d. An either/or combination of any two of a, b, or c (which may be the same option twice).
 - e. A Three-suited hand.
 - f. At least Average strength.
 - g. Any Natural or Quasi-Natural opening bid.

- 5. **“Advancer”**: The partner of the first player to make a non-pass call after the other side opens the bidding. All regulations applying to responses also apply to calls made by Advancer.
- 6. **“Agreement”**: Partnership understandings of methods adopted by the partnership that are reached explicitly by discussion or implicitly through the mutual experience or awareness of the players. This applies to all calls, allowed and disallowed.
- 7. **“Artificial”**: Any call that is not Natural or Quasi-Natural.

8. **“Balancing Seat”**: After the bidding has been opened, the position where a pass would end the auction.
9. **“Bid”**: A call that names a level and a denomination (suit or notrump).
10. **“Call”**: Any bid, pass, double, or redouble.
11. **“Control Bid”**: A bid showing first or second round control of a suit.
12. **“Control Points”**: An alternate evaluation method where an Ace=2 and a King=1
13. **“Cuebid”**: A bid of a suit that an opponent has bid Naturally or Quasi-Naturally or a suit in which an opponent has shown 4 or more cards.
14. **“Direct Overcall”**: An immediate overcall by the left hand opponent of Opener.
15. *** **“Encrypted Signal”**: An encrypted signal is one where the ordering of the cards for the signal is dependent on information known only to the defenders. It is not an encrypted signal to have the type of signal (attitude, count, suit preference) dependent on information known only to the defenders.
16. **“Forcing”**: A call that, by partnership Agreement, may not be passed if the intervening opponent passes.
17. **“High Card Points (HCP)”**: The total number of points in a hand based on honors, counting 4 for an Ace, 3 for a King, 2 for a Queen, and 1 for a Jack.
18. **“Invitational”**: A hand sufficiently strong to indicate that partner should bid game unless partner has a minimum.
19. **“Length”**: Unless otherwise specified, “showing Length in a suit” or “showing a suit” means at least four cards in the suit.
20. **“Multi 2D”**: A 2D Opening Preempt that shows Length in either major. It may also include Very Strong hands.
21. **“Opener”**: The first player to make a bid in the auction.
22. **“Overcall”**: The first bid made by one of Opener’s opponents unless the opponents intervene first with a double.
23. **“Preempt”**: A jump bid by Opener or Overcaller that does not promise at least Average strength.
24. *** **“Psych”**: A call that intentionally and grossly misstates the strength and/or suit length of one’s hand.

25. **“Psychic Control”**: Any Bid that conveys that a prior Bid was a Psych.
26. *** **“Range”**: One more than the difference between the highest number of HCP a bid can be and the lowest.
27. **“Response”**: The first call made by Opener’s partner after the opening bid.
28. *** **“Rule of N”**: A method of determining hand strength computed by adding the High Card Points of the hand to the number of cards in the two longest suits. To meet the “Rule of N”, this total must be at least N. *
29. **“Takeout”**: A call that shows support for two or three suits and/or a strong hand.
30. **“Three-Suited”**: A hand with 4-4-4-1, 5-4-3-1, or 5-4-4-0 shape.

Basic Chart

Bidding Agreements are disallowed unless they are specifically allowed. If an Agreement would be disallowed unless it satisfies a specific High Card Point or shape requirement, a player may not use judgment to include hands with fewer High Card Points or a different shape.

The following are always disallowed:

1. Purely Destructive Initial Actions
2. Psyching an Artificial Opening Bid or an Artificial Overcall
3. Psyching an Artificial Response below 2NT to an Opening or Overcall

Allowed Bidding Agreements

Opening Bids

1. Any Natural opening bid in a suit, as long as it shows at least Average Strength.
2. A 1C or 1D opening bid that is Quasi-Natural, as long as it shows at least Average Strength.
3. An Artificial 1C opening bid that is Strong and Forcing.
4. A Natural NT opening bid, as long as it shows at least 10 HCP and the Range is not greater than 5 HCP.
5. An Artificial 2C or 2D opening bid that is Very Strong.
6. A 2D opening showing a Three-Suited hand with 0-1 diamonds, as long as it shows at least Average Strength.
7. A 2D opening showing a 4-4-4-1 or 5-4-4-0 pattern, as long as it shows at least Average Strength. The short suit may be known or unknown.
8. *** Any 2-level opening bid showing at least Average Strength with at least 5-4 shape and both suits known.
9. Any Natural opening bid in a suit at the 2-level showing at least 4 HCP and with a Range not greater than 7 HCP.
10. Any Natural opening at the 3-level or higher showing 6 or more cards in the suit.
11. A 3NT opening bid that shows a known or unknown long minor suit (the suit may be solid or broken).

12. An Artificial 4C opening showing hearts, and an Artificial 4D opening showing spades.
13. Any opening bid of 4NT or higher.

Responses

1. Any Natural response.
2. Any game forcing response at the 2 level or higher.
3. An Artificial 1D response to any 1C opening bid.
4. A Forcing 1NT response to an opening bid of 1H or 1S. 1NT cannot guarantee an Invitational or stronger hand.
5. Any response to a NT opening bid.
6. An Artificial jump response showing a raise (of any strength) of Opener's Natural opening bid.
7. An Artificial response of 2C and/or 2D by a passed hand showing a raise of Opener's Natural opening bid.
8. Any response to a 2-level or higher opening bid.

Overcalls and Competitive Bids

1. All Natural calls.
2. All doubles and redoubles, and all calls by both sides after a double or redouble.
3. All Artificial Cuebids (by either pair), except that a Cuebid that could be Weak must show at least one known suit. All responses to a Cuebid are allowed.
4. A 2NT overcall showing at least 5-4 distribution in the minors or in the two lowest unbid suits.
5. After partner's Natural 1NT overcall, any Artificial advance.
6. After an opponent's Natural NT opening bid or overcall:
 - a. An Artificial 2C bid with any meaning
 - b. An Artificial bid showing two known suits with 4-4 length or better
 - c. An Artificial bid showing a known 5+ card suit
 - d. A bid showing 4+ cards in the suit and another known or unknown suit of 4+ cards.

7. In response to partner's overcall showing an unknown suit or suits, any call asking for partner's longest or cheapest unknown suit (e.g., "pass or correct" calls).
8. An Artificial NT overcall at any level for 2-suited takeout. A 1NT bid in this category must show at least Near-Average Strength. Below the 4-level at least one suit must be known.
9. An artificial NT overcall at any level for 3-suited takeout. A 1NT bid in this category must show at least Near-Average Strength.
10. After an opponent's Artificial opening bid, any Artificial defense.

Beginning with the Opening Bidder's second call, all calls are allowed by both pairs.

Lead and Carding Agreements

Encrypted Signals are never allowed when leading, following suit or discarding. Otherwise:

1. Opening lead: Any method may be used on opening lead.
2. First discard: Any method may be used on the first discard.
3. *** Other Signals: Only high-to-low or low-to-high ordering strategies are allowed. Distinct meanings for middle cards (vs. highest and lowest) are allowed. Defining meanings for specific spots (2,4,6...), as opposed to relative high/low agreements, are not allowed.

In addition, a pair may be prohibited from playing any carding method when they are deemed to be playing it in a manner that does not maintain proper tempo. A decision that prohibits a pair from playing a particular carding method may be appealed to the tournament committee.

Basic+ Chart

Bidding Agreements are disallowed unless they are specifically allowed. If an Agreement would be disallowed unless it satisfies a specific High Card Point or shape requirement, a player may not use judgment to include hands with fewer High Card Points or a different shape.

The following are always disallowed:

1. Purely Destructive Initial Actions
2. Psyching an Artificial Opening Bid or an Artificial Overcall
3. Psyching an Artificial Response below 2NT to an Opening or Overcall

Allowed Bidding Agreements

Opening Bids

1. Any opening bid in a suit which is Natural, as long as it shows at least Near-Average Strength.
2. A 1C or 1D opening bid that is Quasi-Natural, as long as it shows at least Average Strength.
3. An Artificial 1C opening bid that is Strong and Forcing.
4. A Natural NT opening bid, as long as it shows at least 10 HCP and the Range is not greater than 5 HCP.
5. Any 1NT opening bid that is Strong and Forcing.
6. A 2-level opening bid showing a Three-Suited hand and at least Average Strength.
7. Any 2-level or higher opening bid that is Very Strong.
8. Any 2-level opening bid showing at least Average Strength with at least 5-4 shape and both suits known.
9. Any Natural opening bid in a suit at the 2-level showing at least 3 HCP and with a Range not greater than 8 HCP.
10. A NT opening bid at the 2-level or higher showing at least 5-4 distribution in the minors.
11. Any Natural opening at the 3-level or higher.

12. A 3NT opening bid showing a known or unknown solid suit.
13. A 3NT opening bid showing a known or unknown long minor suit.
14. A 4-level opening bid showing at least 6 cards in a different known suit.
15. Any opening bid of 4NT or higher.

Responses

1. Any Natural response.
2. Any game forcing response.
3. An Artificial 1D response to any 1C opening bid.
4. Any Artificial response to a Strong or Very Strong opening bid.
5. Any 1NT response to an opening bid of 1H or 1S.
6. Any response to a NT opening bid.
7. An Artificial jump response showing a raise (of any strength) of Opener's Natural opening bid.
8. An Artificial jump response that shows at least 5 cards in a known suit and at least 4 cards in another known suit.
9. An Artificial response of 2C and/or 2D by a passed hand that shows a raise of Opener's Natural opening bid.
10. Any response to a 2-level or higher opening bid.
11. Any response after an opposing double.

Overcalls and Competitive Bids

1. All Natural overcalls.
2. All doubles and redoubles, and all calls by both sides after a double or redouble.
3. All calls in Balancing Seat.
4. All Artificial Cuebids (by either pair), except that a Cuebid that could be Weak must show at least one known suit. All responses to a Cuebid are allowed.

5. A suit overcall showing at least 5-4 distribution in two known suits. If the overcall is not a jump, then it must show at least Average Strength.
6. An Artificial NT overcall at any level for 2-suited takeout. A 1NT bid in this category must show at least Near-Average Strength. Below the 4-level at least one suit must be known.
7. An artificial NT overcall at any level for 3-suited takeout. A 1NT bid in this category must show at least Near-Average Strength.
8. After partner's Natural 1NT overcall, any Artificial advance.
9. After an opponent's Natural NT opening bid or overcall:
 - a. An Artificial 2C bid having any meaning
 - b. An Artificial 2D bid showing a one-suited hand in hearts or spades
 - c. Any other call showing a known suit of at least 4 cards
10. In response to partner's overcall showing an unknown suit or suits, any call asking for partner's longest or cheapest suit (e.g., "pass or correct" calls).
11. After an Artificial opening bid, any Artificial defense.
12. After an opening bid of 2C or higher, any Artificial defense.
13. After an opening bid and an overcall or double, any call (by either side) showing Length in a known suit.
14. After an opening bid and an overcall, a bid of spades to show any of:
 - a. A desire to play No Trump
 - b. One minor
 - c. Both minors
 - d. Any combination of the above

Beginning with the Opening Bidder's second call, all calls are allowed by both pairs.

Lead and Carding Agreements

<Same as Basic Chart>

Open Chart

Bidding Agreements are allowed unless they are specifically disallowed. If an Agreement would be disallowed unless it satisfies a specific High Card Point or shape requirement, a player may not use judgment to include hands with fewer High Card Points or a different shape. If an agreement is disallowed, then adding an unlikely hand type to it does not make it allowed.

Disallowed Bidding Agreements

Passes Before an Opening

1. *** An opening pass that is Forcing.
2. *** An opening pass in first or second seat that could be a stronger hand than an opening 1-level bid with the same shape; i.e., if two hands are exactly the same except that an honor is replaced with a low card in the same suit, you cannot open the hand with the low card and pass the hand with an honor.

Opening Bids

Disallowed Opening Bids

1. *** A Natural or Quasi-Natural 1-level opening bid in first or second seat that could contain less than Near-Average Strength.
2. An Artificial 1-level opening bid in any seat that could contain less than Average Strength.
3. *** In segments of fewer than 6 boards, an Artificial 1-level opening bid showing length only in a known suit other than the one opened, unless that bid is also Strong and Forcing.
4. *** A Natural 1NT opening bid that could contain fewer than 10 HCP.
5. *** A Natural 1NT opening bid that has a Range greater than 5 HCP.
6. A non-Forcing 1NT opening that does not meet the definition of Natural.
7. An Artificial opening Preempt below 3NT; except, 2NT may be used to show two known suits.
8. An Artificial opening bid showing two suits, neither of which is known.
9. *** An Artificial Three-Suited opening bid (with or without known shortness) that does not show at least Average Strength.

10. *** A 2-level or higher opening bid that could contain less than Average Strength showing a known suit and an unknown suit, where the unknown suit could be the suit opened.
11. *** A non-Forcing 2-level opening bid in first or second seat that has a Range of greater than 9 HCP and could show less than Average Strength.
12. A Purely Destructive opening bid.
13. Psyching an Artificial opening bid.

Rule Exceptions

The following are exceptions to the rules listed under “Disallowed Opening Bids”:

1. Any opening bid that promises a Very Strong hand is allowed.
2. *** Any bid that requires Average Strength to be legal may be made with Near Average Strength in 3rd and 4th seats. High Card Point minimums do not change.

Overcalls

1. After a Natural suit opening bid, a new suit Direct Overcall below 2NT that does not show at least one known suit unless that bid is an offer to play in No Trump or takeout of the opening bid.
2. After a Natural suit opening bid an Artificial direct 1NT overcall that does not show one of the following:
 - a. A Strong hand; or
 - b. At least three cards in all of the unbid suits; or
 - c. At least 4-4 shape in two known suits; or
 - d. At least 5-4 shape in two suits, at least one of which is known.
3. A Purely Destructive overcall.
4. Psyching an Artificial overcall.

Responses and Rebids

1. Psyching an Artificial response below 2NT to an opening bid or an overcall.
2. Psychic Controls.

Lead and Carding Agreements

<Same as Basic Chart>

Open+ Chart

Bidding Agreements are allowed unless they are specifically disallowed. If an Agreement would be disallowed unless it satisfies a specific High Card Point or shape requirement, a player may not use judgment to include hands with fewer High Card Points or a different shape. If an agreement is disallowed, then adding an unlikely hand type to it does not make it allowed.

Disallowed Bidding Agreements

Passes Before an Opening

1. *** An opening pass that is Forcing.
2. *** An opening pass in first or second seat that could be a stronger hand than an opening 1-level bid with the same shape; i.e., if two hands are exactly the same except that an honor is replaced with a low card in the same suit, you cannot open the hand with the low card and pass the hand with an honor.

Opening Bids

Disallowed Opening Bids

1. *** A Natural or Quasi-Natural 1-level opening bid in first or second seat that could contain less than Near-Average Strength.
2. An Artificial 1-level opening bid in any seat that could contain less than Average Strength.
3. *** In segments of fewer than 6 boards, an Artificial 1-level opening bid showing Length only in a known suit other than the one opened, unless that bid is also Strong and Forcing.
4. *** A Natural 1NT opening bid that could contain fewer than 10 HCP.
5. *** A Natural 1NT opening bid that has a Range greater than 5 HCP.
6. *** In segments of fewer than 6 boards, a non-Forcing 1NT opening that does not meet the definition of Natural. In segments of 6 boards or more, a non-Forcing 1NT with a void or with 10 or more cards in 2 suits or with fewer than 10 HCP.
7. In segments of fewer than 6 boards, an Artificial opening Preempt below 3NT that does not show at least one known suit.
8. *** An Artificial opening Preempt below 3NT that may have Length only in the suit opened.

9. *** An Artificial opening Preempt below 3NT showing Length in an unknown suit when there are more than two possibilities for which suit is held.
10. *** An Artificial opening bid showing two suits, neither of which is known.
11. *** An Artificial Three-Suited opening bid (with or without known shortness) that does not show at least Average Strength.
12. *** A 2-level or higher opening bid that could contain less than Average Strength showing a known suit and an unknown suit, where the unknown suit could be the suit opened.
13. *** A non-Forcing 2-level opening bid in first or second seat that has a Range greater than 9 HCP and could show less than Average Strength.
14. A Purely Destructive opening bid.
15. Psyching an Artificial opening bid.

Rule Exceptions

The following are exceptions to the rules listed under “Disallowed Opening Bids”:

1. Any opening bid which promises a Very Strong hand is allowed.
2. Any bid that requires Average Strength to be legal may be made with Near Average Strength in 3rd and 4th seats. High Card Point minimums do not change.
3. In the Reisinger and Platinum Pairs a Multi 2D Opening is allowed.
4. Any Artificial Preempt which would be otherwise allowed under the rules above may also contain Very Strong hands. The Very Strong hands may be any hand type, regardless of the stated restrictions to the Preempt.

Overcalls

1. *** After a Natural suit opening bid, a new suit Direct Overcall below 2NT that does not show at least one known suit unless that bid is an offer to play in No Trump or takeout of the opening bid.
2. After a Natural suit opening bid, an Artificial direct 1NT overcall that does not show one of the following:
 - a. A Strong hand; or
 - b. At least three cards in all of the unbid suits; or

- c. At least 4-4 shape in two known suits; or
 - d. At least 5-4 shape in two suits, at least one of which is known.
3. A Purely Destructive overcall.
 4. Psyching an Artificial overcall.

Responses and Rebids

1. Psyching an Artificial response below 2NT to an opening bid or an overcall.
2. Psychic Controls.

Lead and Carding Agreements

< Same as Basic Chart >

Examples

Definitions

1. **“Strong” / “Very Strong”**: The hand AKQJxxx Axx xx x does not meet the definition of Strong or Very Strong. It is two tricks away from game in spades, and to be considered within one trick of making 3NT all suits must be stopped.
2. **“Natural”**: A 2H opening showing both hearts and a minor is still Natural as long as it shows a heart suit of 5 or more cards.
3. **“Quasi-Natural”**: Many, but not all “could be short” 1C or 1D catchall openings fall into this category. A “could be short” 1C or 1D that could contain a singleton below a queen in the opened minor is not Quasi-Natural.
4. **“Purely Destructive Initial Action”**: The intent here is to eliminate bids which have little or no redeeming constructive merit. Note that just because a call is not Purely Destructive does not mean that it is allowed; many calls are restricted that do not meet the definition of Purely Destructive.

An overcall showing hearts or both spades and diamonds is not a Purely Destructive Initial Action, regardless of High Card Points, because it meets condition “d”, using condition “a” twice. (It contains 4+ hearts or it contains 4+ spades.) Similarly an overcall showing both red suits or both black suits is not a Purely Destructive Initial Action because it meets condition “d”. A “Cappelletti/Hamilton” 2C overcall showing a 1 suited hand is not a PDIA, as it meets condition “d” by choosing option “b” twice.

An example of a PDIA overcall would be a 1S “fert” overcall, showing any 13 cards and Pass=spades. An example of a PDIA opening bid would be 1C showing 0-7 HCP any shape.

5. **“Encrypted Signal”**: Encrypted signals are ones in which the method of signaling can be given to declarer but requires a “key” to unlock the meaning that is hidden from declarer but available to the defense.

For example, it is an Encrypted Signal for the defender with the lowest remaining spot card in a suit to switch from standard to upside down carding when declarer shows out of that suit. It is an Encrypted Signal if after an auction where declarer shows an exact number of cards in a suit, the defender with more cards in that suit plays standard while the defender with fewer cards plays upside down.

There are many common bridge situations which occur which are not considered Encrypted, even if the situation may not be immediately apparent to Declarer. For instance, it is not an Encrypted Signal when dummy has a long suit with no entry for the defender without the ace to give a count signal while the defender with the ace gives a different kind of signal. It is also not an Encrypted Signal to play a suit preference card when you believe your partner has led a singleton even though you normally play an attitude signal on the opening lead.

Changes in methodology in a predetermined way are also not Encrypted. For example, playing standard carding at trick one and upside-down carding after trick one would not be considered Encrypted.

6. **“Psych”**: Generally, 2 cards fewer or an Ace weaker than the minimum expected for a bid would meet the definition of a Psych, as would an Ace stronger than the maximum expected.
7. **“Range”**: “15-17” is a range of three points (15, 16, and 17). “10-12 or 15-17” is a range of 8 points. (The difference between the extremes of 10 to 17 inclusive.) If a pair plays one NT range when Vul. or in certain seats (e.g., 15-17) and another NT range when Not Vul. or in other seats (e.g., 10-12), those are two distinct ranges of 3 points. It is only when a bid could be either 10-12 or 15-17 at the time making the bid that the range would be considered to be 8 points.
8. **“Rule of N”**: A hand with 11 High Card Points and 5-4-3-1 distribution would meet the “Rule of 20” ($11 + 5 + 4 = 20$), but not the “Rule of 21” or higher.

All Charts

Leads and Carding

1. High/Low and Low/High encoding allows for cards which are neither. For example, it is permissible to have a distinct meaning for each of the plays from 3 small spots so long as the cards have the same meaning based on their relative rank, not absolute. That is, the 2 from 234 and the 7 from 789 should mean the same. Likewise, the 3 and 8, or 4 and 9. It is not permitted to “pre-define” the spots as being high or low (such as 234 is always low, 567 always middle, etc.) except on the first-discard.

Basic Chart

1. [Opening 8] It is legal to open 2D showing 5 hearts, 4 spades, and 11-15 HCP. It would also be legal to open 2D showing 11-15 points with 5/4 either way in the majors.

Open/Open+ Charts

Passes Before Opening

1. [Restriction 1] An Agreement to open all hands in 3rd seat is not permitted, as it makes an opening pass Forcing.
2. [Restriction 2] An opening pass cannot have a split Range, such as 0-7 or 13-15 balanced.
3. [Restriction 2] You can pass hands with certain shapes even if you open other shapes with fewer High Card Points. For example, if you played an opening 2D showing any 4-4-4-1 with 15+ HCP, you could agree to pass all weaker 4-4-4-1 hands, even if your other 1-level openings could be much weaker than 15 HCPs, provided they could not be 4-4-4-1.

Openings

1. [Restriction 1] (Quasi-)Natural opening bids in first or second seat at the 1 level must, by Agreement, have at least 8 HCP or meet the Rule of 17. Artificial opening bids at the 1 level must, by Agreement, have at least 10 HCP or meet the Rule of 19.
2. [Restriction 3] Transfer openings, such as those found in the “Little Major” or “Moscito” systems, are not permitted in segments of fewer than six boards. Transfer openings at the 1 level are Artificial and therefore must show at least Average strength. An opening 1D bid showing “hearts or 10 or more spades” is also disallowed.
3. [Restriction 4] Hands with 9 or fewer HCPs cannot be upgraded into any NT range. This does not apply to a psych. To be considered a psych, the hand must contain at least 4 HCP less the minimum.
4. [Restriction 5] An Agreement to open 1NT showing 11-15 is permitted, but actually showing 10-15 is not. If your agreed NT range is 11-15, you cannot upgrade 10 HCP hands or downgrade 16 HCP hands. This does not apply to a psych. To be considered a psych, the hand must contain at least 4 HCP less the minimum.

5. [Open+ 8-10] A Multi 2D is permitted in segments of six boards or more. A 2H opening showing a weak 2-bid in either hearts or spades is not permitted in segments of any length.
6. [Open+ 8-10] Opening 3S to show a long solid minor is permitted, assuming it meets the Rule-of-17 because it is not considered a Preempt.
7. [Open+ 9] Opening 2NT to show a major-minor 2-suited hand is not permitted.
8. [Open 9/Open+ 11] In first and second seat Mini-Roman type openings must show at least 10 HCP. In third and fourth seat these openings can be two points lighter.
9. [Open 10/Open+ 12] A 2H opening bid showing spades and another suit that might have less than Average Strength is not permitted. A 2H opening bid showing spades and a minor is permitted on Open+ (since the unknown suit is not the suit opened). It is not permitted on Open since it meets Open Restriction 7.
10. [Open 11/Open+ 13] In first and second seat, you may not agree to open a Natural 2-bid with a Range of 10 HCP or more (unless the hand is always at least Average Strength).
11. [Rule Exception 2] It is legal to open a Quasi-natural 1D bid with xxxx KQxx Kx xxx in 3rd or fourth seat. It is not legal to open a natural 1NT with KQ109 KJ109 xxx xx in any seat.

Overcalls

1. [Restriction 1] Cuebids are not considered to be new suits. For example, if a 1H opening showed both hearts and spades, then a 1S overcall could have any meaning.