

Bidding and Play Definitions

for

BridgeClues2.Com

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides the bidding and play definitions used in BridgeClues2.com. Exceptions to what is used on this web site exist. However, the BridgeClues2.com definitions do define a modern and powerful system based on Standard American bidding. The play definitions presented in this document are limited to the opening leads and signals that are used on the BridgeClues2.com web site. BridgeClues2.com intends to illustrate the definitions defined in this document with the daily Bidding and Play hands furnished on the BridgeClues2.com web site. Even if the system you use gives a different result in the bidding, BridgeClues2.com hopes you will obtain some benefit and entertainment from comparing the two results.

2. POINT COUNT

2.1 High Card Points (HCP)

A=4; K=3; Q=2; J=1

2.2 Long Suit Distribution Points

One point for every card over four in a suit. You can count more than one suit (e.g. two five card suits equals two distribution points).

2.3 Short Suit Distribution Points

If you have four card support for partner's major suit and you plan on it being the trump suit, you can count distribution points as follows: doubleton = 1; singleton = 3; void = 5. With three card support, you can count distribution points as follows: doubleton = 1; singleton = 2; void = 4. Note: These short suit distribution points apply when you expect a partner to gain tricks by ruffing, using your small trumps. For example, if you had the AKQ in support of partner's bid suit, you would not expect them to be used for ruffing and would adjust the count of short suit distribution points accordingly.

2.4 Points

When it is stated that a hand is worth a certain number of points, this means the sum of the HCP's and the distribution points.

3. SUIT BIDS

3.1 Five Card Majors

An opening bid in a major suit shows five or more cards. With no five card major you open in your longest minor suit. If no four card minor, you open with a three card minor, bidding 1C if you have two three card minors and no five card major. Rarely, you may open in a six card minor with a five card major too.

3.2 Forcing 1NT over a Major by an Unpassed Hand (used in Level Two lessons)

1NT in response to 1H or 1S is forcing one round and shows six to fourteen high card points. Most of the time the forcing notrump bid will be in the 6-9 point range. It can include a limit raise with three trumps or an invitational notrump hand. Better hands are possible but very rare.

3.3 Convenient Minor Openings

When opener does not have a five card major and lacks the values for an opening bid of one or two no-trump, he must open the bidding in his longer minor. With three-three in the minors, opener should always open 1C. Opener should never start the bidding in a two card or shorter minor.

3.4 Limit Raises

Limit major suit raises: A jump raise to the three level promises 10-12 support points and guarantees at least four card support.

Limit minor suit raises: A jump raise to the three level promises 10-12 support points. You usually have five card support but four is OK in a pinch.

3.5 Preemptive Minor Suit Raises

When responder raises opener's minor from one to four or five, he shows a weak hand that is not interested in playing in 3NT. You promise five or more trumps and exceptional distribution.

3.6 Preemptive Jumps to Game in Partner's Major Opening

Raising partner's opening bid of 1H or 1S to the four level is preemptive. Responder shows five card or longer support for opener's major suit, a hand with fewer than nine points (including distribution) and, ideally, a singleton or void.

3.7 Opening Four in a Major

These bids show good suits and better than normal distribution. Be sure to look at the vulnerability when you open at the four level. In first and second seat these bids deny the values to open the bidding.

3.8 Preemptive Three Bids

You normally have a seven card suit although in third seat, six may be OK. Not vulnerable you show 5-9 HCP's, vulnerable, 8-10. If the suit is outstanding you might have a point less than normal.

3.9 Weak Jump Overcalls

A jump overcall to the two or three level after an opponent opens with one of a suit is a weak bid. Not vulnerable you can have less than a weak two bid at the two level and about the same as a three level opening preempt when you bid at the three level. Vulnerable a two level jump shows a nice weak two bid and a three level jump shows a hand that would have opened at the three level. Examples: 1C - 2H: 1H - 3D:

Higher Jump Overcalls:

Double jump overcalls to the three level or jumps to the four level are weak but show good suits and usually within three tricks of your contract not vulnerable and two tricks of your contract vulnerable.

3.10 Weak Jump Shifts

1C - 2D, 1D - 2S. A jump shift to the two level shows a six card suit and denies the values to bid at the one level. Not vulnerable you show 2-5 points, vulnerable about 3-5 points. Opener usually passes.

Weak Jump Shifts in Competition:

When your opponent overcalls at the one level a jump shift by you to the two level is weak, showing 2-5 points not vulnerable and 4-6 points vulnerable. A jump shift to the three level is also weak but shows 7-9 points. Example. 1C - 1H - 2S

3.11 Weak Two Bids

An opening bid of two of a suit (not clubs) in first or second seat shows a good six card suit, although not necessarily two of the top three honors. Not vulnerable you usually have 6-10 HCP's and vulnerable you show 8-11 HCP's. In third seat it is common to open with a five card suit.

3.12 Balancing in a Suit

There is a world of auctions where you may decide to enter the bidding after the opponents have finished their bidding. There are two main sequences that come up repeatedly. One is when opener on your left bids a suit and it is passed to you. The second sequence is when they bid and raise to the two level and that is passed back to you. When the bidding has gone one of a suit followed by two passes, the point range for balancing in a suit is roughly eight to fifteen HCP's. With sixteen or more you tend to double and then bid your suit. If you make a jump reopening bid it shows roughly 13-16 HCP's with a fine six card suit. Any five card suit is appropriate for re-opening at the one level. Occasionally balancing with a four card major at the one level is necessary if your shape is wrong for a takeout double. (See: "The Complete Book on Balancing in Contract Bridge" by Mike Lawrence). If your opponents bid a suit and raise and that is passed back to you, your approach should be to balance on almost any excuse if you can bid a suit at the two level or if you have the shape for a takeout double.

3.13 Opening in Third Seat

A hand may be opened light (as few as ten HCP's) in third seat. The reasons for opening light are as follows:

- a) Obtain a favorable opening lead from partner.
- b) Interfere with opponents' bidding.
- c) Protect partner if he passed a twelve-point hand.

Note: The structured requirements for a weak two bid can also be relaxed in third seat for the same reasons.

When you open light in third seat, you have to be prepared to pass any bid made by partner. Therefore, you should not open light in a minor if you do not have at least three cards in each major.

3.14 Opening in Fourth Seat

You usually would not open light in fourth seat unless you have control of the spade suit. Adequate control can be determined by using Pearson points. (Add your HCP's to the number of spades you have. If the total is 15 or more, open).

4.0 NOTRUMP BIDS

4.1 Opening Bid of 1NT – 15 to 17

Opening 1NT promises a balanced hand. Opener may occasionally choose to open 1NT with a balanced hand and five hearts. The reason for this is the lack of a rebid that accurately describes opener's hand if he chooses to open 1H and partner responds with a forcing 1NT bid. See our Flash cards that discuss this situation.

4.2 Opening Bid of 2NT – 20 to 21

Shows a balanced hand and does not deny a five card major. Stayman, Jacoby, Smolen, and Texas are "on".

4.3 Opening Bid of 2C followed by a Rebid of 2NT – 22 to 24

Indicates a balanced hand and does not deny a five card major. Stayman, Jacoby, Smolen and Texas are "on".

4.4 Bid of 2C followed by a Rebid of 3NT – 25 to 27

Implies a balanced hand with no five card major. Four clubs by responder is Stayman; 4D and 4H are Jacoby. If you wish to ask for aces, use 5C (see super Gerber).

4.5 3H or 3S Response to a 1NT Opening Bid (Level Two Lessons)

Since you have Jacoby and Texas to handle hands with a five card or longer major, there is no need to use a jump to three of a major as natural. An interesting alternative is to play that a jump to three of a major shows a singleton (or void) and denies four of the other major. You promise enough points for game and do not have any interest in slam. An example hand for a 3S response: 2, Q87, KJ874, KQ84

Opener can bid 3NT if the major is well stopped. If he is afraid of notrump, he bids four of his best minor suit and usually will be raised to game in that minor. Opener can, if he has a terrific four card holding in the unbid major, bid that major to offer a choice of games.

4.6 Balancing in Notrump

IF your LHO opens with a suit and it is passed to you in fourth seat, you may have a hand that feels like bidding but does not have a suit to bid or takeout double shape. A bid of 1NT in the balancing seat promises 12-14 points over 1C or 1D and denies takeout double shape. You might have one major but not both. After a 1H or 1S opening bid a balancing 1NT shows 12-15, maybe even 16. You may have the other major suit when you bid 1NT if your hand is unsuitable for a takeout double. Usually you have a stopper in their major but you can bid 1NT with Jxx or 10xxx if your hand is average or better. Stayman, Jacoby and Texas may be used over a balancing notrump. See our set of Flash Cards on balancing bids.

4.7 Stayman for the Majors

A 2C bid in response to 1NT asks opener to show a four card major. If opener has both majors, he bids 2H. Responder usually promises a four card major and sufficient values to at least invite to game in the major or notrump.

- In response to 1NT: 2C is Stayman and promises at least eight HCP's or a weak hand that intends his bid to be Drop Dead Stayman.
- In response to 2NT: 3C is Stayman and promises at least five HCP's and at least one four card major. Occasionally responder will bid Stayman with zero points if he is prepared to pass anything opener bids. (Drop Dead Stayman)
- In response to 2C followed by a 2NT rebid: 3C is Stayman and promises at least three HCP's and at least one four card major.
- In response to 2C followed by a 3NT rebid: 4C is Stayman and promises at least one four card major.

4.8 Drop Dead Stayman (Also known as Garbage Stayman or Crawling Stayman)

This is a version of Stayman that allows you to bid 2C with no points at all. The idea is to get out of 1NT as safely as possible.

4.9 Gerber

Gerber is a bid of 4C, which is an ace asking convention. It is always a jump bid and it requires that partner must have bid notrump at some time in the auction.

4.10 Super Gerber (Level Two Lessons)

If partner's last bid was 3NT and you do not have a way to ask for aces, you can use a 5C bid to do that. You can use key card responses here too. 5D = 1/4, 5H = 0/3, 5S = 2.

4.11 Quantitative 4NT

If your partner has bid notrump, a jump to 4NT asks opener if he is at the top of the range for his bid. This can be used directly or after bidding Stayman or Jacoby.

4.12 Jacoby Transfers

When partner opens 1NT or 2NT or if he bids 2C and then bids 2NT, the Jacoby Transfer convention can be used to request partner bid a specific major. 2D is a transfer to 2H and 2H is a transfer to 2S. Similarly if the bidding is at the three level. Once opener accepts the transfer responder can continue by showing additional features of his hand.

4.13 Texas Transfers

When partner opens 1NT or 2NT or if he bids 2C and then bids 2NT, you can use Texas Transfers at the four level. 4D shows six or more hearts and 4H shows six or more spades. You use this bid when you wish to be in game OR on hands where you intend to ask for aces next.

4.14 Lebensohl (Level Two Lessons)

When partner opens 1NT, and responder's RHO overcalls, responder may want to compete without forcing to game. A 2NT bid by responder is forcing and tells opener to bid 3C. If clubs is responder's long suit, he will pass. Otherwise responder will name his suit. This bid is competitive and not forcing.

4.15 Acol 3NT (Level Two Lessons)

An opening bid of 3NT is used to show a hand with a running minor suit and implies one or more stoppers on the side. The range for this bid is 15-17 (or so) HCP's. Opener expects to take seven or eight tricks in his own hand.

4.16 Gambling 3NT

An opening bid of 3NT is used to show a hand with a running minor suit and denies an ace or a king on the side. You might have some queens and jacks on the side.

5. CONVENTIONS (alphabetical order)

5.1 Cue Bids after an Opponent Overcalls – Two Treatments to Choose From

TREATMENT ONE: When partner opens with one of a suit and there is an overcall, a cue bid shows a limit raise or better for partner's suit. If opener's suit is a major, responder has four trumps with at least limit raise strength. If opener's suit is a minor, responder usually has five trumps and at least limit raise strength.

TREATMENT TWO: When partner opens with one of a suit and there is an overcall, a cue bid shows a game forcing raise with support for opener's suit. If opener's suit is a major, responder has four or more trumps and probably a balanced hand. If opener's suit is a minor, responder usually has five trumps and a balanced hand.

5.2 DEPO

After partner has asked for controls, (1430 Key Card, 3014 Key Card or Blackwood), and right-hand opponent interferes by bidding a suit, DEPO is useful. Double by responder shows an even number of controls; pass shows an odd number of controls.

5.3 DONT - Disturb Opponent's No Trump

DONT. Used to compete against an opposing strong one notrump opening bid. If you bid a suit you show this suit plus a higher ranking suit. If you double you show a one suited hand. Partner bids 2C to ask what your suit is.

5.4 Drury

When partner opens a major in third or fourth seat, a 2C response shows ten or more support points. If opener has a minimum hand with no game interest he bids two of the major and responder passes. If opener has game interest or better, he bids 2D or may make any other natural bid that seems appropriate.

5.5 Exclusion Key Card (Level Two Lessons)

Exclusion Key card is used, after a fit has been found or implied, when one of the partners holds a void and wants to ask about the number of key cards his partner holds *outside* that void suit. A jump to a new suit at the five level is considered Exclusion Blackwood. Responder would then reply at the cheapest level with one or four key cards, the next suit up with zero or three key cards, the next suit (or 5NT, if that's the cheapest bid) to show two key cards without the queen of trump and the next suit up to show two key cards with the queen of trump. This convention can also be used after a Texas Transfer.

5.6 Hamilton (also known as Cappelletti)

Used over weak or standard 1NT openers. Double is for penalty; 2C shows an unknown one suited hand; 2D shows both majors; 2H or 2S show that major and one of the minors; 2NT shows both minors.

5.7 Help Suit Game Try

A "help suit bid" is a bid of a new suit by opener as a game try after responder has raised an opening major suit bid from one to two.

5.8 Jacoby 2NT

A response of 2NT to one of a major suit shows a balanced game forcing raise with four or more trumps. This convention applies only when partner opens in first or second seat. Partner is expected to further describe his hand. If you use Splinter bids, a Jacoby 2NT response should show a balanced hand.

NOTE see our flash cards for further information

5.9 Jordan

When opener bids one of a major and the next player doubles, a jump to 2NT says you have at least a limit raise with four or more trumps. With three trumps and a limit raise or better, redouble and then raise.

5.10 Jump Cue bids After an Opponent's Overall

When partner opens the bidding in any suit and there is an overcall, a jump cue bid shows a game forcing raise of partner's suit and a singleton in the suit they bid.

5.11 Limit Raise or Better When Partner Bids a Minor and They Double (Jump in the other minor)

If partner bids 1C and RHO doubles, use 2D to show a limit raise or better. If partner bids 1D and RHO doubles, use 3C to show a limit raise or better. Do not use the Jordan 2NT bid after partner opens in a minor. Your side may wish to play in notrump and if so, it should be played from partner's side of the table.

5.12 Michaels Cue Bid

The Michaels Cue Bid is a two suited takeout bid. Over an opponent's minor suit opening, 1D – 2D or 1C – 2C, the Michaels Cue Bid shows both majors. Over an opponent's major suit opening, 1H – 2H or 1S – 2S, the cue bid shows the unbid major and an undisclosed minor. Not vulnerable you can do this with as few as eight points if your suits are OK. Vulnerable you need two or three points more.

5.13 New Minor Forcing After a 1NT Rebid

When the bidding has been opened with one of a minor suit, responder replies one of a major and the opener rebids 1NT, responder can find out if opener has three card support for responder's major by next bidding two of the unbid minor. This implies five cards in responder's major and promises at least eleven points and is forcing. (In the event that both minors have been bid, 2C is used as the NMF bid.)

5.14 Ogust (In response to a Weak Jump Shift)

When responder makes a weak jump shift, opener can try for game by using the Ogust convention. The Ogust convention of 2NT asks for that information. The opener generally has a strong hand with some fit for the responder's suit. The opener's bid of 2NT does not imply a hand suitable for notrump but asks responder to further describe his hand. 2NT Ogust responses are the following:

- a) 3C: Bad hand, bad suit (2-3 HCP's)
- b) 3D: Bad hand, good suit (a K or QJ and 3 HCP's)
- c) 3H: Good hand (4-5 HCP's), bad suit
- d) 3S: Good hand (4-5 HCP's), good suit (A or KQ or KJ or QJ9)

5.15 Ogust (In response to a Weak Two Bid; Level Two Lessons)

Once partner has opened with a weak two bid, responder might have a good enough hand to inquire about the quality of opener's suit as well as the range of his HCP's. The Ogust convention of 2NT asks for that information. The responder generally has a strong hand with some fit for the opener's suit. The responder's bid of 2NT does not imply a hand suitable for notrump but asks opener to further describe his hand. 2NT Ogust responses are the following:

- a) 3C: Bad hand, bad suit (5-7 HCP's)
- b) 3D: Bad hand, good suit (5-7 HCP's) good suit (two out of three top honors)
- c) 3H: Good hand (8-10 HCP's), bad suit
- d) 3S: Good hand (8-10 HCP's), good suit (two out of three top honors)

5.16 Smolen

When you have four of one major and five of the other in response to an opening one or two notrump opening (or 2C and then 2NT rebid) it can be hard to find your best fit. Smolen, invented by Mike Smolen, works to solve problems with this kind of hand. If you bid 2C, Stayman, and partner denies a major with 2D, you can jump to three of your four card major. Your partner will understand that you have game forcing points with four of this major and five of the other. Your partner will choose the proper game contract. If, for instance, he has three cards in responder's five card major, opener will choose to play in that major, knowing that responder has five of them. NOTE that if you are responding to 2NT, you will bid 3C and then three of your four card major if partner bids 3D. NOTE too that you can not use this convention when partner's rebid is 3NT.

5.17 Splinter Bids

A splinter bid can be used by opener or responder. They are usually used by the side that opens the bidding but it is possible that you can use a splinter bid even if their side opened the bidding. Splinters are usually double jumps, i.e., 1H – 4D. Some splinter bids may be only single jumps. This is a very useful convention that needs discussion. The definition for a splinter bid: You promise enough points that in light of what partner is showing you know there is a game and may be a slam.

5.18 Strong 2C Opening

Opening 2C shows 22 or more HCP's or a nine trick hand. The opening 2C bid is forcing to game unless the opener rebids 2NT or bids the same suit twice.

5.19 Unusual Notrump

A jump to 2NT over an opening one bid in any suit shows the lower two unbid suits. You promise five-five shape or better and eight HCP's if not vulnerable and 10 HCP's if vulnerable. There are many additional sequences where a notrump overcall can be unusual.

5.20 Western Cue Bid

The Western Cue Bid is a delayed cue bid of a suit bid by an opponent. This cue bid asks about stoppers for play in notrump. Usually, but not always, your side has shown game values and have found a minor suit fit. Cue-bidding the opponents' suit is a way to explore for 3NT.

5.21 1430 Keycard Blackwood

When there is suit agreement in a major and one partner wants to inquire about the number of key cards (these are the four aces and the king of trumps, five key cards in all) by bidding 4NT, 1430 Keycard is a popular system. The responses are as follows:

- 5C = 1 or 4 key cards
- 5D = 0 or 3 key cards
- 5H = 2 key cards without the queen
- 5S = 2 key cards with the queen

If partner, who initiated 1430, wants to inquire about the queen of trump, he makes the cheapest rebid other than trump. For example, after a 5C response, a bid of 5D asks if partner holds the queen of trump. Five in the trump suit by partner denies the queen. Any suit bid other than trump shows the queen plus responder's lowest ranking king. A jump to six in the agreed trump suit shows the queen and denies an outside king.

See our Flash Cards on 1430 Key Card for further clarification.

5.22 1430 Minor Suit Keycard Blackwood (Level Two Lessons)

A jump bid to four in the agreed minor is 1430 Keycard around that minor. Or, if the minor has been bid three times in succession, the third bid of the minor at the four level is also KC.

4C: Asks for key cards around the club suit:

- 4D = 1 or 4 key cards
- 4H = 0 or 3 key cards
- 4S = 2 key cards without the queen
- 4NT = 2 key cards with the queen

4D: Asks for key cards around the diamond suit:

- 4H = 1 or 4
- 4S = 0 or 3
- 4NT = 2 without the queen
- 5C = 2 with the queen

A bid of 4NT by the Keycard initiator is to play. Due to the possibility of confusion, there is no queen asking sequence.

6. DOUBLES

6.1 Doubles of 3NT

All doubles of 3NT by the opening leader are for penalty. If they arrive in 3NT and your side has not bid, a double by the player not on lead is lead directing.

6.2 Lead Directing Doubles

A double of an opponent's artificial bid indicates a lead for partner.

6.3 Lightner Slam Double

The Lightner double asks partner to make an unusual lead. If dummy has bid a suit on the way to slam it is likely that the double asks for this lead. If dummy hasn't bid a suit, it is possible that partner has a void somewhere. The opening leader considers the auction and his hand and tries to determine which suit partner is ruffing. Other considerations may creep into deciding what to lead but these are almost always the ones that you should follow.

NOTE that the Lightner double can be used against games and also against low level notrump contracts.

6.4 Maximal Double (Level Two Lessons)

If you open a major and partner raises to the two level and RHO bids three of the suit just below your suit, a double is not penalty, it is a game try. This allows you to bid three of your suit as a competitive bid, not a forward going bid.

6.5 Negative Double

When partner opens the bidding in a suit and responder's RHO overcalls, a double by responder is negative implying support for the unbid major or majors. It suggests but does not promise support for an unbid minor.

6.6 Penalty Double

Any double made by a defender that is intended to punish the opponents for bidding too high. The penalty double is most commonly used when one defender has four or more trumps and several defensive tricks, a long suit against notrump, or when a sacrifice bid has been made by the opponents.

6.7 Responsive Double

If your partner doubles one of a minor and your RHO raises the minor, a double by you shows both majors.

If your partner doubles one of a major and your RHO raises the major, a double by you shows both minors.

NOTE that you need to discuss if these doubles apply when RHO makes a jump raise. Also you need to discuss if you would like to use these doubles when your partner overcalls instead of doubling.

6.8 Support Doubles and Redoubles

If you open at the one level and your partner bids a new suit at the one level and your RHO makes a takeout double, a raise to two of partner's suit shows four card support and a redouble shows three card support. NOTE that if you redouble, you can have from twelve points upwards. No upper limit.

6.9 Takeout Double

A takeout double is used when an opponent opens the bidding in a suit. If you double the opening bid, you are showing at least an opening bid, usually only one or two cards in their suit, and at least three cards in support of each of the unbid suits. The minimum HCP's recommended for a takeout double is eleven, and perfect shape.

NOTE that takeout doubles can be used on a multitude of auctions other than doubling an opening bid. Be sure to learn as much as possible about this convention.

7. PLAY DEFINITIONS

7.1 Opening Leads against Notrump Contracts

The following table defines opening leads against notrump contracts that are used in BridgeClues:

Opening Lead Against Notrump	Definition	Partner's Action
A	A good suit that is missing the king or queen. AKJ104, AQJ973	Play the king or queen if you have it and give count otherwise.
K	Usually shows a sequence headed by the KQ. You may have additional cards in the sequence such as KQJ. KQ10 is possible if you do not wish to see partner play the jack. (see queen lead) The king is also led from the AKx (x)	Give attitude signal
Q	Top of a three (or longer) card sequence (QJ10 or QJ9) or from KQ109	Play the J if he has it or give attitude (usually) if he does not
J	Top of a three card (or longer) sequence (J109 or J108).	Depends on holding and dummy
Middle value card	Usually indicates nothing of value.	Depends on holding and dummy
Small card	Usually indicates fourth best or three cards with an honor.	Depends on holding and dummy

7.2 Opening Leads against Suit Contracts

The following table defines opening leads against suit contracts that are used in Bridge Clues:

Opening Lead Against Notrump	Definition	Partner's Action
A	Could usually indicate a lead from an AK holding.	Give attitude signal unless the situation requires suit preference
K	Top of a two (or longer) card sequence	Give attitude signal unless the situation requires suit preference
Q	Top of a three (or longer) card sequence (QJ10 or QJ9) or from KQ109	Play the J if he has it or give attitude (usually) if he does not
J	Top of a three card (or longer) sequence (J109 or J108).	Depends on holding and dummy
Middle value card	Usually indicates nothing of value.	Depends on holding and dummy
Small card	Usually indicates fourth best or three cards with an honor.	Depends on holding and dummy

7.3 Odd/Even Discard Signals

The Odd/Even system of discards is not used very much but if you do encounter opponents who use it you should be aware of what they are doing. When they discard an odd card, no matter what size, it says they like the suit they are discarding. When they discard an even card, it says they do not like this suit and at the same time it is suit preference. A low even card asks for a lower suit and a high even card asks for a higher suit. This system has some very embarrassing moments. There are times where a defender does not have an appropriate card to convey the desired message.

7.4 Standard Count and Suit Preference Signals (Level One and Level Two Lessons)

In situations where your signals are giving count, a high card followed by a low card shows an even number of cards in this suit. If you play a low card followed by a higher card, it shows an odd number of cards in the suit.

7.5 Suit Preference Signals

In some cases when count is no longer important, you can give a suit preference signal instead. An important rule to know about is that suit preference signals, while valuable, should take a back seat to attitude and count signals.