



ACOL bidding system

Courtesy of Neil Morgenstern

1NT opening is 12-14 balanced. Minimum rebid in NT after opening one of a suit is thus 15-17. Opening bid of 1 of a major can be a 4 card suit (but won't be made on 12-14 balanced hands which would be opened 1NT). All opening 2 bids are strong. 2Clb is forcing to game and says nothing about clubs. 2Spd, 2Hrt and 2Dmd show 4-loser hand with length in the suit opened, either single-suited or strong 1-suited. 2NT opening is 20-22. 3-level and higher opening bids are pre-emptive. Standard "English" incorporates negative doubles to 2Spd, (not after 1NT opening). Stayman is standard in Acol, transfers are not (but are optional addition).

BASIC ACOL - BRIEF SUMMARY

NO TRUMPS

Openers

1NT 12-14 (No singletons or voids and not more than one doubleton.)

2NT 20-22 (May be opened with a 5-card minor.)

Responses to 1NT

Two of a suit is weak and must be passed.

Three of a suit shows a good suit (preferably 6 cards) and is a game force.

A jump to game in a suit is a sign-off and should be passed.

2NT 11-12

3NT 13-15

4NT Quantitative. Bid 6 if maximum - otherwise pass.

5NT Quantitative. Must bid 6 Bid 7 if maximum.

4C Gerber asking for Aces

Responses to 2NT

3C is Baron. Bid 4-card suits in ascending order until fit is found or you reach 3NT.

3D is Flint. Used when responder wants to stop in 3 of a major.

Bid 3H and pass the next bid unless responder rebids another suit. If responder rebids 3 NT he is showing slam interest in Diamonds (see Lavings to replace the above two bids)

3 H/S show a five card or longer suit and slam interest.

A jump to game in a suit is a sign-off

4C is Ace asking followed by 5C for Kings.

4C followed by 4NT after response is a sign off

4NT and 5NT are again quantitative

SUIT BIDS

One of a suit opener

12+ points - four or more cards in the suit

Responses

Any change of suit response is forcing for one round.

A raise shows at least 4 cards in the suit Single raise shows 5-9 points.

Jump raise is 10-11. With 12-15 bid another suit followed by a jump to game in opening suit (delayed game raise)

A jump to game is, once more, a sign-off.

With 16+ jump in a new suit. This is a game force with slam interest.

A 1NT response shows less than 4 cards in opener's suit and 5-9 points.

As above, 2NT shows a flat 11-12 and 3NT shows 13-15.

A response at the two level shows a good 9 points.

Opener's suit rebids

A rebid of two of the opening suit shows a minimum hand and five cards in the suit.

A rebid of a suit of lower rank than the opening shows at least 4 cards and not less than five cards in the opening suit.

(An exception is a 4-4-4-1 distribution when the opening should be the the suit below the singleton but if singleton is Clubs open 1H - it avoids rebid problems)

If you open 1D with a singleton Club you are fixed if partner responds 2 Clubs.

Opener's No-trump rebids

A minimum No-trumps rebid (depending on level of response) shows 15-16 points

A jump in No-trumps shows 17-18

A 3NT rebid after a 1-level response shows 19 points

Other suit openings

2D-H-S shows 8 playing tricks and is forcing for 1 round. Negative response

2NT

3 of a suit is at least 7 cards - pre-emptive and weak

4 in a major shows an 8 card suit but still weakish.

OTHER OPENING BIDS

3NT This is the 'gambling 3NT' with a solid (AKQ) seven-card minor and one or two bits and pieces outside. If partner hates it, he bids 4C to play in the minor.

4NT This is an enquiry about specific Aces. With no Aces, bid 5 Clubs.

With one Ace, bid the suit (at the six level if Clubs) and with two Aces, bid 5NT

2C A game force. Negative response is 2D. After a suit rebid by opener the second negative is 2NT

The only rebid (following a 2C opening) which may be passed is 2NT showing 23-24 points.

GENERAL

A reverse bid by opener (1H-2D-2S) shows at least 17 points and more H than S.

A reverse bid by responder is a game force.

A jump to 5NT after suit agreement is asking about the three top honours in the trump suit. Responses are as in Blackwood. 6C=0 6D=1 6H=2 and 6S=3

Ace asking bids

4NT is Blackwood. 5C=0 or 4, 5D=1, 5H=2, 5S=3.

5NT following 4NT confirms holding of all four Aces and asks for Kings

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Use 4C (Gerber) for Ace asking but ONLY if it is a jump bid.

e.g. 1H-2H-4C asks for Aces but 1H-3H-4C is a cue-bid

If you play negative doubles:- Your opening bid is overcalled by second player and followed by a pass from partner. If you wish to reopen the bidding do so with a double if holding less than two of the opponent's suit. Partner may have passed because he had a good holding in the opponent's suit but couldn't double because it would have been negative.

CONVENTION CARD - REG.

System ACOL

NT 12-14

Majors Spades: 5-cards Hearts: 4-cards;

Minors 4+ 1C=3 if precisely 4-3-3-3 (I play a 5-card Spade suit)

Strong 2C=8 P.Tricks any suit or 19-20 flattish. 2D - game force

(mandatory response of 2D) 2 of suit = 8PT 2NT=19-20

Weak 2H/2S - 6-10 6-cards

Overcalls 8+

NT-Over 16+ Hate using it. You'll never get a big penalty later.

Doubles Immediate or reopening for takeout. Points depending on shape negative doubles to 2S responsive doubles to 3S

Preempts 2 major 6 cards. 3 any suit 7 cards

Vs.Preempts take out - double 2's next suit up over 3's

(3X for penalty)

Cuebids after suit agreement - directly or by implication

Slam-Bids 5-Ace Blackwood 4C asking ONLY if a jump

Suit-leads 4th, top of sequence or interior sequence

NT-leads as above

Carding count overridden by desire to signal

Misc Lavings: Drury: 5-Ace Blackwood: Lebensohl: Ogust and many more

Transfers 4 suits. superaccept (with A or K in the minors)

System ACOL - 4 card suits, 12-14 NT, intermediate/strong 2's

NT 12-14 2c=stayman, 2d/2h/transfers, 3 level responses forcing, 3 level after stayman

invitational, 2N=20-21, 2c (bid) 2N=22-24

Majors 4 card -both majors -open hearts, limit raises,

splinters, 2N=11-12 3N=13-15

Minors 4 card, resp. as majors

Strong 2c=game forcing w 2d=neg, 2d/2h/2s = 8 tricks 2n=neg

Overcalls Michaels, NT-Over= 15-17--> all systems on

NT overcall 15-18 direct, 11-14 protective, all systems on, jump to no trump=unusual

Doubles Negative-thru 2S, bid is not forcing

Vs.Doubles XX=10+

Preempts 3,2,1 losers

Vs.Preempts T.O X <4s

Cuebids Michaels,

Slam-Bids Blackwood, Gerber over NT

Suit-leads 4th best

NT-leads 4th best

Carding high-low=even numbers, low lead= encouraging

Misc Standard