

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.

1. **“By Agreement”**: Partnership understandings as to the methods adopted by a 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.
2. **“Natural”**:
 - a. Any opening bid, response, or overcall at the one-level that shows 4 or more cards in the suit bid.
 - b. Any opening bid at the two-level or higher that shows 5 or more cards in the suit bid.
 - c. Any response at the two-level or higher that shows 4 or more cards in the suit bid.
 - d. Any suit overcall at any level that shows 4 or more cards in the suit bid.
 - e. A 1C opening bid that shows 3 or more clubs. This opening may also include exactly 4=4=3=2 shape.
 - f. A 1D opening bid, overcall, or response that shows 3 or more diamonds.
 - g. A NT opening bid or overcall 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.
 - h. A call is still natural if it also shows distribution in another suit.
 - i. A pass, double, or redouble is natural if it suggests the current contract as the final contract.
 - j. Any bid is natural if it suggests the contract bid as the final contract.
3. **“Quasi-Natural”**:
 - a. A minor suit bid that is either natural or that shows a pattern meeting the definition of a natural NT opening.
 - b. Any opening bid at the two-level or higher that shows 4 or more cards in the suit bid.
4. **“Artificial”**: Any call that is not natural or quasi-natural.
5. **“Bid”**: A call that names a level and a denomination (suit or notrump).
6. **“Call”**: Any bid, pass, double, or redouble.

7. **“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.
8. **“Control Bid”**: A bid that shows first or second round control of a suit.
9. **“High Card Points (HCP)”**: The total number of points in a hand counting 4 for an Ace, 3 for a King, 2 for a Queen, and 1 for a Jack.
10. **“Rule of N”**: A method of determining hand strength computed by adding the High Card Points of the hand to the lengths of the two longest suits. To meet the “Rule of N”, this total must be at least N. For example, a hand with 11 High Card Points and 5-4-3-1 distribution would meet the “Rule of 20” or lower, but not the “Rule of 21” or some greater number of “N”.
11. **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. 14 HCP and meets the “Rule of 24”.
 - 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.
12. **“Range”**: One more than the difference between the highest number of HCP a bid can be and the lowest.
13. **“Psych”**: A call that intentionally and grossly misstates the strength and/or suit length of one’s hand. 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.
14. **“Psychic Control”**: Any Bid that conveys that a prior Bid was a psych.
15. **“Relay System”**: ~~tbd, is not relevant to level 3 & 4 charts.~~
16. **“Balancing Seat”**: A player who would end the auction if that player passed.
17. **“Forcing”**: A call that, by partnership agreement, may not be passed if the intervening opponent passes.
18. **“Purely Destructive Initial Action”**: An opening bid or an overcall other than the cheapest overcall that does not satisfy at least one 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.
19. **“Invitational”**: A hand sufficiently strong to indicate that partner should bid game unless partner has a minimum.

20. **“Preempt”**: A jump bid (by either pair) that includes hands in the Weak range.
21. **“Opener”**: The first player to make a bid in the auction.
22. **“Responder”**: Opener’s partner.
23. **“Overcall”**: The first bid made by the pair that does not consist of Opener and Responder.
24. **“Direct Overcall”**: An immediate overcall by the left hand opponent of Opener.
25. **“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.
26. **“Three-suited”**: A hand with 4-4-4-1, 5-4-3-1, or 5-4-4-0 shape.

Level 3 Chart

Bidding agreements are allowed unless they are specifically disallowed. If an agreement is allowed because a disallowed agreement includes 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.

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

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 5 or fewer boards, an Artificial 1-level opening bid that shows length only in a known suit other than the one opened, unless that bid is also Strong and Forcing.
3. A Natural 1NT opening bid that could contain fewer than 10 HCP.
4. A Natural 1NT opening bid that has a range greater than 5 HCP.
5. A non-forcing 1NT opening that does not meet the definition of Natural.
6. In matches of 5 or fewer boards, an Artificial opening Preempt below 3NT that does not show at least one known suit.
7. An Artificial opening Preempt that does not show at least one known suit and may have length only in the suit opened.
8. An Artificial opening Preempt that shows length in an unknown suit when there are more than two possibilities for which suit is held. However Artificial Preempts that are otherwise permitted may also contain one or more Strong meanings.
9. An Artificial opening bid that shows two suits, neither of which is known.
10. An Artificial three-suited opening bid (with or without known shortness) that does not show at least Average Strength.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. A Purely Destructive opening bid.

14. Psyching an Artificial opening bid.

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 1NT direct 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. Purely Destructive overcalls.
4. Psyching an Artificial overcall.

Responses and Later Calls

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

Note: Almost all agreements are allowed beginning with Responder's initial action.

Lead and Carding Agreements

Except for the first discard, only high-to-low or low-to-high ordering strategies are allowed when following suit or discarding.

- *Note: Distinct meanings for middle cards (vs. highest and lowest) are permissible.*
- *Note: Defining meanings to specific spots (2,4,6...) vs relative high/low is only permissible on the first discard.*

Encrypted signals are not allowed when leading, following suit or discarding.

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.

Examples

Definitions

1. Natural: A 2H opening showing hearts and a minor is Natural if it shows a heart suit of 5 or more cards.
2. Quasi-Natural: Many, but not all “could be short” 1C or 1D catchall openings fall into this category, as do many catchall 2C responses. A “could be short” 1D that could contain a singleton diamond below a queen is not Quasi-Natural.
3. Range: “15-17” is a range of three points ($1 + [17-15]$). “10-12 or 15-17” is a range of 8 points ($1 + [17-10]$).
4. Purely Destructive Initial Action: 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.
5. Encrypted Signal: It is an encrypted signal for the defender with the lowest remaining spot card to switch from standard to upside down carding when declarer shows out of a suit. It is an encrypted signal if after an auction where declarer shows an exact length in a suit, the defender with more cards in the suit plays standard and the defender with fewer cards plays upside down.

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 and the defender with the ace to give a Smith signal. It is 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. It is not an encrypted signal to change ordering during the hand in a predetermined way, for example by playing standard carding at trick one and upside down carding after trick one.

Level 3 Examples

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 openers could be much weaker than 15 HCPs, provided they could not be 4-4-4-1.

Openings

1. [Restriction 1] Natural opening bids 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 five boards. Transfer openings at the 1 level must show at least average strength regardless of the length of the segment.
3. [Restriction 5] Hands with 9 or fewer HCPs cannot be upgraded into any NT range.
4. [Restriction 6] 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
5. [Restrictions 8-10] A Multi 2D is permitted in segments longer than 5 boards. A 2H opening showing a weak 2-bid in either hearts or spades is not permitted in segments of any length.
6. [Restrictions 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. [Restriction 9] Opening 2NT to show a major-minor 2-suited hand is not permitted.
8. [Restriction 12] Mini-Roman type openings must show at least 10 HCP or meet the Rule of 19. These openings require a minimum of 10 HCP if 4-4-4-1, and 9 HCP if 5-4-3-1 or 5-4-4-0.
9. [Restriction 13] A 2H opening bid showing spades and a lower suit that might have less than Average Strength is not permitted. A 2H opening bid showing spades and a minor is permitted (since it does not contain hearts, the suit opened).
10. [Restriction 15] 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).

Overcalls

1. [Restriction 1] Cue bids 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.