

## NON-FORCING AUCTION SEQUENCES

Recognition as to the non-forcing nature of any sequence of bidding is vital in Partnership communication and understanding. Many bidding sequences exist which permit one or the other of the Partners to drop the bidding. Before passing in such a non-forcing auction sequence, however, a Player should be satisfied that a game contract is unlikely. He/she should also be sure that there not be a safer superior part-score. The following are examples of many such sequences which do not force the Partnership into further bidding:

**4S -- Dbl. -- P --?** Any double of a pre-emptive bid at a level of 4S or above is ***not*** a Take-Out double. It is for penalties and is, therefore, not forcing.

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**1H -- P -- 1S -- P** The opening Heart bidder has limited his hand to 13-15 HCP's and has shown  
**2H -- P -- 2S -- P** a holding of six Hearts. The Spade responder, knowing same, has opted to over-ride  
**?** the Hearts, speculating that his Spades are the better spot. The 2S bid is not forcing.

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**1S -- Dbl. -- 2S -- ?** Responder to the Take-Out double would normally have been forced to bid, even with as few as 0 HCP's, if the 2S bidder had not made a bid other than a Pass. In this situation, however, where subsequent to the Double there is an intervening bid, the doubler's Partner is no longer under a mandatory obligation to bid. If he/she does now bid freely, however, he/she is taking what is referred to as a "***Free-Bid***", and is showing at least 6HCP's.

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**1D -- P -- 1NT -- P** A "1-NT" response to an opening bid of one of any suit limits the  
**?** Responder to 6-10 HCP's. Under these circumstances the Opener, who would otherwise be under the obligation to make a re-bid, may pass if he/she holds minimum values.

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**1C -- P -- 1H -- 1S** An Opener is normally obligated to present a re-bid if the Responder bids  
**??** any bid evidencing 6-18 HCP's; i.e., anything other than a "1-NT" or a simple raise in Opener's suit, both of which would evidence a limited 6-10 HCP's. Here, however, since Player #4 has introduced an overcall, the Opener, if having only a minimum of 13-15 HCP's may elect to pass since Player #3 has an opportunity to re-bid should he/she so choose made possible by the 1S call by player #4. If, however, the Opener does elect to re-bid, under these circumstances, he/she is showing a "***Free-Bid***" which evidences either further clarification as to distribution, additional values, or both.

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**1NT -- P -- 4NT --P** Over a 1-NT opening, a "4-NT" response is a "***quantitative***" bid asking  
**?** Partner to pass with a minimum count, and to bid "6-NT" if holding a maximum HCP count.

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**2H -- P -- 3H -- P** A raise of a pre-emptive bid is not invitational. It is, rather, furtherance  
**?** of the pre-empt ("RONF"). It is the only non-forcing bid a Responder to a pre-emptive opening can make.

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**1C -- 1H -- 2C -- 2D** Any new suit bid by a Responder to an overcall is not forcing. It is  
**P ---- ?** merely a competitive bid showing a constructive alternative overcall. ***The only forcing bid that Responder to an overcall can make is a cue-bid of the first bid suit by the Opponents.***

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**1H -- P -- INT -- P**                    The Opener has shown a second suit with 11-18 HCP's. A lower-  
**2D -- P -- ?**                    ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> suit bid by an Opening bidder is not forcing and can be passed in  
either the "*Standard American*" or the "*Forcing-NT*" systems of bidding.

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**1NT - P -- "2C" -- P**            The 1-NT Opener, in response to the "2C" Stayman search has denied a  
**"2D" P -- 2H/2S - P**            4-card Major by virtue of the "2D" bid. The Responder is then placing a  
?    sign-off "drop dead" bid of 2H or 2S with what must be a maximum of 8 HCP's (No game  
feasible, and either a 4-card Spade/5-card Heart suit in the first instance, or a 4-card Heart/5-card Spade  
suit in the second instance). This is an example of the use of "*Garbage*" Stayman.

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**1NT - P -- "2D" - P**            Responder has a 5-card heart suit (By virtue of his Jacoby "2D" transfer)  
**2H ---P -- 2NT -- P**            and invitational strength by virtue of his 2-NT re-bid. Opener can either  
?    "Pass", bid 3-NT, bid 3H, or 4H, depending upon Opener's Heart holding and minimum or  
maximum opening NT values. This is an example of "*Check-Back*", part of the Jacoby Transfer system.

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**1H -- 1NT -- Dbl. - P**            Any Double over a direct 1-NT overcall is for penalties and seeks a  
?                    "Pass" from Opener. It is *never* a negative double and is, therefore, not forcing.

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**1H -- P -- 2H -- P**            A single level raise of Partner's opening suit bid guarantees both support  
?                    and a limited 6-10 HCP's. If the Opener has a minimum 13-15 HCP opening hand, game is not  
probable and so Opener is allowed to "Pass". A single level raise by Responder is not forcing.

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**1H -- P -- 2H -- P**            Responder initially evidenced 6-10 HCP's. He/she may pass this  
**3H -- P --- ?**                    invitation to game with only 6-7 HCP's but must accept the invitation and will  
correct to 4H if holding a maximum of 8-10 HCP's. Opener's 3H bid is invitational, and not forcing  
Some Partnerships play this as a "*Bar-Bid*" which is not invitational, rather pre-emptive.

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**1D -- P -- 1S -- P**            Opener has limited his/her hand to a 13-15 HCP minimum opening and if  
**2D -- P --- ?**                    Responder is willing to accept the suit, and if no game is probable, he/she may pass.

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**1C -- P -- 1H -- P**            Opener has limited his/her hand to a 13-15 HCP minimum opening  
**2H -- P --- ?**                    and has supported Responder's suit at the cheapest level. If Responder feels no game  
is likely, he/she may pass since Opener's minimum response is not forcing.

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**1NT -- P -- 2NT -- P**            Responder has invited Opener to bid 3-NT with an initial maximum HCP  
?                    count. If, however, Opener has a minimum holding, he/she may pass this invitation to game.

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**1NT -- P -- "2C" - P**            Responder has invoked Stayman and has found a favorable response of  
**2H --- P --- 3H --- P**            Hearts. The 3H bid is now an invitation to the 4-level. If the Opener has  
?                    the maximum of his/her original NT range then he/she bids 4H. If, alternatively, he/she holds  
the minimum, he/she passes. This is a non-forcing, invitational sequence of bidding.

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**1D -- P -- 1S -- P**            Responder, here has shown invitational strength (10-12 HCP's) and a 6-card  
**2D -- P -- 3S -- P**            Spade suit. This bid is not forcing and Opener without support and/or with  
?                    minimum opening values is permitted to pass.

**1H -- P -- 4H -- P**      The 4H response is a pre-emptive bid usually made with at least a 5-card  
**?**      support for Partner's opening suit along with about 5-7 HCP's. Opener must pass unless there is a potential slam, which is highly unlikely under these circumstances.

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**1H -- P -- 3NT -- P**      Responder shows lack of support for Opener's suit with either 13-15 or  
**?**      16-18 HCP by Partnership agreement. Unless Opener feels there is slam in the hand, or chooses to correct to 4H without counting upon any Heart support from Partner, Opener can pass.

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**1H -- P -- 1NT -- P**      Opener has evidenced a 16-18 HCP's with a 6-card Heart holding. If  
**3H -- P ---- ?**      Responder has the lower limit (6-7 HCP's) of his original 6-10 1-NT response, game is not likely, and so Responder, here, may pass.

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**P -- P -- 1H -- P**      The 1S bidder has previously passed showing less than an opening count.  
**1S - P --- ?**      The 1S responder has also denied support for Hearts. If the original 1H bidder has merely a minimum 13 Point or less opening hand, game is not likely and so he/she may simply pass.

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**P --- P -- 1C -- P**      The 2NT Responder, being a previously passed hand, shows no 4-card  
**2NT - P --- ?**      Major and 11-12 HCP's. The 1C Opener, possibly having a sub-minimum opening hand, and realizing game is, thus, not likely, may pass. If he/she has a full opening count he/she has the option to then proceed to 3-NT.

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**1D --- P -- 3NT -- P**      The "4C" bid immediately following a final NT bid is Gerber asking  
**"4C" - P -- "4H" - P**      for Aces. A 4-NT bid by the Gerber-invoking partner is a sign-off  
**4NT - P ---- ?**      No-Trump escape having determined that slam is not feasible.

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**"2C" --P -- "2D" -- P**      Opener has shown 22-23 HCP's and an evenly balanced hand.  
**2NT -- P ----- ?**      If Responder has 0-3 HCP's game is not likely and so Responder may pass.

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**1D -- P -- 1NT -- P**      The 1-NT Responder has already evidenced 6-10 HCP's. The Opener, by  
**2D -- P ---- 3C -- P**      virtue of the re-bid of Diamonds at the 2-level has shown a minimum  
**?**      opening (13-15 HCP) hand. Game is, therefore, not feasible. The NT bidder has no tolerance for the Diamond suit and is escaping to his/her 6-card or longer Club suit. Opener *must* pass.

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**1NT -- P -- "2H" -P**      In this bidding scenario, the Responder has game values and a 5-5  
**2S ----P --- 4H ---P**      distribution in the Majors along with game-going values. Knowing the 1-NT  
**??**      Opener to have at least three, if not four, of one of the Majors, the 1-NT bidder is given the choice of passing 4H or correcting to 4S if he/she so chooses as the preferred game contract.

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**1NT -- P -- "2C" -- P**      Responder has game values plus a 4-card and a 6-card or longer Major  
**"2D" -- P - 4H/4S -- P**      suit holding. Having failed to find a 4-card Major suit in Opener's hand,  
**?**      Responder bids four of the longer Major suit knowing that the Opener has at least two of them. The Partner who opened 1-NT must pass the 4H or 4S choice mandated by the Responder.

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**2H -- 2NT -- P -- ?**      A 2-NT overcall following an opening weak 2-bid by an Opponent is equivalent to a strong opening 1-NT showing 15-17 HCP's with a balanced hand and at least one stopper in the Opponent's suit. As is the case with an opening 1-NT, it, too, is not forcing.