

Bridge Club's Cheat Sheet

based on Standard American Yellow Card at <http://www.prairienet.org/bridge/basics.htm>, last rev 3/1/08

Opening:

with a balanced hand:

(1 doubleton max, no suit longer than 4)
 15 to 17 points..... 1NT
 20 to 22 points..... 2NT
 25 to 27 points..... 3NT
 Otherwise..... see below

with other hands:

< 13 points..... PASS
Note: with a 6+ card suit, see below section
 13 to 20 points
 Five card major..... 1 of major
 Otherwise..... 1 of better minor
Note: your rebid will show where in this broad point range you are.
 21+ points, 5+ card suit..... 2C*
Note: This the “strong 2” and it’s **forcing**.

with a long suit and low points:

(6+ cards in a suit, no opening strength)
 < 11 points, 6 clubs..... PASS
 < 11 points and ... (with 11+ consider 1-level)
 6-card suit topped by ≥KQ..... 2 of suit
 7-card suit topped by ≥KQ..... 3 of suit
 8-card suit topped by ≥KQ..... 4 of suit

Responding

to 1 no trump: (“Jacoby Transfers”)

8+ points, 4+ hearts and/or spades..... 2C*
 5+ hearts, <4 spades..... 2D*
 5+ spades, <4 hearts..... 2H*
 5+ of minor, no 4+ major..... 2S*
 7 to 9 points, balanced..... 2NT
 10 to 14 points, balanced..... 3NT

to 2 no trump:

< 3 points..... PASS
 3 to 9 points, balanced..... 3NT
 3 to 9 points, unbalanced
use Jacoby Transfers (above) at the 3-level
 10+ points..... explore slam

to 2 clubs: (“strong two”)

any hand..... 2D

to a weak bid: (a suit opening above 2C)

< 16 points..... PASS
 16+, support..... consider bidding game
 16+, no support..... consider new suit bid* or NT

Responding

to 1 of a major:

< 6 points..... PASS
With Support (3+ cards in bid suit)
 6 to 9 points..... Raise 1 level
 10 to 12 points..... Raise 2 levels
 13+ points..... jump or force to game
Without Support
 6 to 9 points
 4+ card suit..... 1 of suit*
Note: only if you can bid “1” of it!
 Otherwise..... 1NT
 10+ points..... bid best new suit*
 or with all other suits stopped:
 10 to 12 points..... 2NT
 13 to 15 points..... 3NT

to 1 of a minor:

< 6 points..... PASS
 5+ card major suit..... 1 of major*
Note: with a choice and low points, bid the cheaper one; with high points (-10+) bid the expensive one first and the cheap one later
 4-card major suit..... 1 of cheapest 4-card suit*
Without a four card or better major
 Over 1C open, 4+ diamonds with stopper..... 1D*
 6 to 9 points
 support (5+ cards in bid suit)..... Raise 1 level
 over 1C open, 4+ diamonds..... 1D*
 otherwise..... 1NT
 10+ points
 10 to 12 points, balanced strength 2NT
 13 to 17 points, all suits stopped..... 3NT
 support (5+ cards in bid suit)..... Raise 2 levels
 unbalanced..... bid new minor*
Note on NT bids above: Committing to a NT contract is a decision that requires extra care, and assessment of your hand in the context of *all* bidding. Balanced strength favors these bids, but it’s the shape of the *combined* hands that matters most. When space allows, you should determine that your weaknesses are covered by your partner’s strengths before bidding NT.

Counting points (HCPs):

Ace: 4 King: 3
 Queen: 2 Jack: 1

Game level: HCPs:

3NT 26
 4H, 4S 25
 5C, 5D 29
 6X (small slam) 33
 7X (grand slam) 37

Above values are HCPs in combined hands needed to make the contract.

*indicates bid is forcing

The goal of bidding is to discover your partnership’s shared strength. To do this, you have to *communicate* with each other using bidding—that’s why we use these rules.

The best place to play is in a major suit (H or S) with a *fit*, which means at least 8 cards in the suit between your partnership’s hands. Finding a fit is your first goal in bidding, that’s why we bid *length before strength*. If you don’t have a fit but your partner is long/strong in your weak suits (your hands balance each other), no trump might be a good place to play. Remember that, without a trump, suits you cannot *stop* can be run against you, so you need to have *balanced strength* to play NT or it could get ugly. A minor fit is your last resort—with game at the 5 level, they are rarely the right place to be.

Bidding is structured to favor finding a good suit as soon as possible and to prefer majors. Major suits make game at the 4-level, minors at the 5, so this makes sense. Remember that the idea is to *bid out your hand*—when you have more information to give *and* your team has *any chance* to be at game level, keep making informative bids. When you no longer have a chance at game, stop at the safest place you can.