

## A Precision Gap

In a standard version of the Precision Club, one is advised with a balanced 19 - 20 hcp to open 1C and over a 1D response to rebid 2NT. Over the response of 1H or 1S, however, the situation is often unexplored. I suggest therefore that such a rebid will show exactly a 2-card fit with the major, in an otherwise balanced hand. I introduce yet another form of modified Stayman:

after the sequence 1C - 1H/S - 2NT, 3C requests elaboration of opener's hand shape, assuming only two cards of the bid major. The responses are:

**3D:** 4 Diamonds and 4 of the other major;  
**3 other major:** 5 card suit;  
**3 of bid major:** 4 Clubs and 4 of other major;  
**3NT:** only ≤5 cards in majors, 8+ cards in minors.

If you wish Gerber in one form or another may be used for control seeking. Keycard Gerber if the trump suit is known, a simpler version if not.

Over the sequence 1C - 1H - 2NT, the bid 3C as primarily asks for a 5-card major, in this case it can only be Spades.

S K Q 10 x x	S A x x
H A x	H K x x x x
D A K x	D Q x
C A x x	C x x x

1C - 1H - 2NT - 3C? - 3S - 4S and onwards?

Without a 5-card Spade suit, opener may say 3D. Given that opener has already denied a 3-card fit in Hearts, one may give this 3D call a more specific meaning: exactly 4 Spades and 4 Diamonds.

S A Q x x	S K x x x
H K x	H A x x x x
D A Q x x	D K J x
C K Q x	C x

1C - 1H - 2NT - 3C? - 3D - 3S - 4NT - 5H - 6S

The 3S bid shows 4-card support plus a better than a minimum hand. With only game ambitions East would have simply bid 4S.

Some partnerships may prefer to use Gerber, or even Key-card Gerber after such a sequence. 4C could not be construed as a natural bid.

If responder has a Diamond fit instead of Spades, then using 4C as key-card Gerber agreeing diamonds works well. The responses go:

**4D:** 0 or 3 key cards;  
**4H:** 1 or 4 key cards;  
**4S:** 2 key cards, but not QD  
**4NT:** 2 key cards, plus QD  
**5C:** 5 key cards without QD  
**5D:** 5 key cards plus QD [= 21 HCP]

S A Q x x	S K J x
H K x	H A x x x x
D A Q x x	D K x x x
C K Q x	C x

1C - 1H - 2NT - 3C - 3D - 4C - 4NT - 6D

Without such a maximum, if responder still thinks Diamonds may be the best game contract a raise to 4D would leave open the option of 4H in a 5-2 fit if opener thinks 11 tricks a step too far.

After the 3C enquiry and the 3D rebid, responder may repeat Hearts. This should not be construed as any kind of fit. It emphasises only 5 Hearts, but by implication strength in Clubs and an interest in more than game.

S A x x x	S K Q x
H K 10	H Q J x x x
D A K x x	D x
C K Q x	C A 10 x x

1C - 1H - 2NT - 3C - 3D - 3H - 6NT

The above nuances are somewhat natural, by negative inference. To provide balance for the minor suits, one may introduce a conventional response to 3C of 3H. This would show a hand with 4 Spades and 4 Clubs. Again the bid of 3S shows a 4-card fit and encourages cue bidding. A leap to 4S would show a 4-card fit but no slam interest. The reply of 3NT just wants to play there, presumably with a 3-card Spade suit.

S K J x x	S Q 10 x
H A x	H K x x x x
D K Q x	D A x x x
C A K x x	C x

1C - 1H - 2NT - 3C? - 3H - 3NT

With an interest by responder in a minor suit slam, the Keycard Gerber conventional bid of 4C is still open. This time, however, the key-card suit would be assumed to be Clubs. Without such a maximum, if responder still thinks that Clubs could be the best Game contract, then the bid of 4D, this time being conventional as opposed to natural, leaves the option open of 4H in a 5-2 fit, if opener thinks 5C is too high.

S A K x x	S Q x x
H 10 9	H Q J x x x
D A K x	D x
C A Q x x	C K x x x

1C - 1H - 2NT - 3C? - 3H - 4D!? - 4H/5C

Finally, there will be occasions when opener has nothing to offer in the way of major suit holdings. The response to 3C will be simply 3NT.

This will invariably show 3-2 in the Majors, 8 cards in the Minors. If responder wishes to pursue a Minor suit contract with such hands as 3-5-4-1, 3-5-1-4, 3-5-5-0, or 3-5-0-5, then bidding the 4+-card Minor naturally at the four level will pass the message, still leaving the option of a 5-2 fit in a Heart game.

S A x x	S K x x
H K x	H A x x x x
D A K x x	D x
C A Q x x	C K x x x

1C - 1H - 2NT - 3C? - 3NT - 4C[not Gerber] - 6C

S A x x	S K x x
H K x	H A x x x x
D A K x x x	D x
C A Q x	C K x x x

1C - 1H - 2NT - 3C? - 3NT - 4C - 4H - pass

Much the same situation may arise after a response of 1S. With only two Spades opener's rebid becomes 2NT. As we saw over the 1H response this bid enables responder to extract more precise information by using the 3C query. This time the query is about the Heart situation. The 3C bid asks if opener holds 5 Hearts. The "yes" answer is simply 3H, whence dealer can raise to four, or cue bid if interested in a potential slam.

S A x	S K x x x x
H K Q x x x	H A 10 x x
D A K x	D x
C K x x	C A x x

1C - 1S - 2NT - 3C? - 3H - 4C - 4D - 4H - 4S - 6H [for cue bidders]

As before, with no interest in the major suits opener's response will be 3NT which will show 2 - 3 in the Majors, hence 8 cards in the Minors. Responders with 5431 or 5530 say, in some order, and slam prospects, may wish to explore further by bidding their minor suit at the 4 level, still leaving the option of a 5-2 fit in a Spade game.

S K x	S Q J 10 x x
H A Q x	H K x x
D A K x x	D Q J x x
C A x x x	C x

1C - 1S - 2NT - 3C? - 3NT - 4D - 6D/S?

The conventional replies 3D & 3S to the 3C enquiry, after the initial 1S response, follow similar lines to those expounded in the previous chapter. The lower bid, 3D, shows only 4 Hearts, but also 4 Diamonds. Responder may then agree Hearts at the 3 level, inviting cue bidding. A raise to 4H immediately would be a sign off.

If responder wishes to explore a slam in Diamonds then the Keycard Gerber 4C is available here too. To remind you, in this context, the responses are:

4D: 0 or 3 keycards  
 4H: 1 or 4 keycards  
 4S: 2 keycards, but NOT the QD  
 4NT: 2 keycards, plus the QD.  
 5C: 5 keycards  
 5D: 5 keycards, plus the QD (=21 hcp!)

With no slam prospects a bid of 4D merely offers a choice of game contracts: 4S with a 5-2 fit, or 5D with a 4-4 fit or better.

S A Q	S K x x x x
H A K J x	H Q x x
D Q x x x	D K J x x
C A x x	C x

1C - 1S - 2NT - 3C? - 3D - 4D - 4S

After the 3C enquiry and the 3D rebid, responder may rebid 3S. It also a promising, with only 5 Spades, but by implication strength in Clubs, because there is no fit in Hearts or Diamonds.

S K 10	S Q J x x x
H A x x x	H K x x
D A K x x	D x
C K Q J	C A x x x

1C - 1S - 2NT - 3C? - 3D - 3S - 6NT

The other conventional response to 3C after the initial 1S answer and 2NT rebid, is 3S, which shows 4 Hearts and 4 Clubs. The intention, however, would normally be to explore another game or slam. Because Spades are higher than Hearts, however, the Gerber that is available here cannot be key-card Gerber. There is no way of prior indicating the eventual trump suit. One could assume it is Clubs, or revert to a minimalist form of Gerber:

4D: 0 or 3 Aces  
 4H: 1 or 4 Aces  
 4S: 2 Aces

If the response is favourable then responder could then reveal the trump suit.

S A x	S K x x x x
H A x x x	H Q J 10
D A K x	D x
C K Q x x	C A x x x

1C - 1S - 2NT - 3C? - 3S! - 4C? - 4D - 6C!

As earlier, without a maximum, if responder still thinks that Clubs could be the best Game contract, then the bid of 4D, this time being conventional as opposed to natural, leaves the option open of 4S in a 5-2 fit, if opener thinks 5C is too high.

S K x	S Q J x x x
H A K x x	H Q x x
D A x x	D x
C A J x x	C K x x x

1C - 1S - 2NT - 3C? - 3S - 4D!? - 4S/5C

The response of 1H or 1S, to 1C, shows a 5+-card suits, but does not deny another lower 5-card suit. Responder may reveal a red 5-card suit by bidding it at the 3 level.

S K x	S A x x x x
H A x x x	H x
D K Q x	D A x x x x
C A K x x	C x x

1C - 1S - 2NT - 3D - 3NT/6D?

Responder may insist on a major-suit contract at the 4 level with only a 5-card solid suit, K Q J 10 x respectively, with no outside entries. This is just in case the defence has the Ace and can hold it up in a No Trump contract.

The above treatment is no doubt more complicated than some, but the knowledge that opener has only two cards in your 5+card major should be put to some use if possible. Players may recall a Bridge scandal many years ago when two British internationals were accused of cheating by indicating surreptitiously to each other how many hearts were held. The case was never proved, but it indicated how important it is considered to know precise major-suit holdings.