

# The Concept of Precision

Bidding systems can be classified into two broad categories: *natural* systems and *artificial* systems. In natural systems, most bids (especially in the early phase of the bidding) denote length in the suit bid. In artificial systems, the bids are more highly codified, so that for example a bid of 1♣ may not be related to a holding in the club suit.

Advocates of Precision say that it is generally more efficient (and precise, as the name would suggest) than systems such as Standard American. Because all opening bids except 1♣ are limited, the responder almost immediately knows the hand potential and the chances for a part score, game or slam

## Precision Opening Bids

All hands with 16+ HCP are opened 1C regardless of suit shape with one exception  
- 2NT shows 22-23 HCP balanced

All other hands with less than 16 HCP are opened

- 1H/1S shows a 5 card major and 11-15 HCP
- 1NT shows 13-15 HCP with a balanced hand
- 2C shows 6+ clubs, may also hold a 4 card major and 11-15 HCP
- 2D shows 11-15 HCP and covers the following shaped hands  
4414/4405/3415/4315
- 1D shows a minimum of 2 diamonds 11-15 HCP and is the bid used for all hands that don't fit into the above shapes etc
- 2H/2S are weak
- 2NT shows 22-23 HCP balanced

## 1C Opening

16+ HCP any shape

One advantage of Precision is that when partner opens 1C, you know that with a positive response (8+ HCP) you can bid game so you can bid slowly to find your fit etc.

You might be concerned that the partnership may have only 24 HCP and you are in game. Correct, but statistically, 24 HCP games make 75% of the time, so that's why most Precision systems use this formula.

### Responses

- 1D shows 0-7 HCP or the impossible negative
- 1H/1S shows 8+ HCP and 5+ in the suit
- 1NT shows 8-10 HCP balanced
- 2C/2D shows 8+ HCP and 5+ in the suit
- 2H/2S shows 4-7 HCP and a 6 card suit
- 2NT shows 11-12 balanced or 16+ balanced
- 3 of any suit shows 4-7 HCP and a seven card suit
- 3NT shows 13-14 HCP balanced

Note that all positive responses are entirely natural. NT bids always show balanced hands and suit bids always show at least 5 cards.

There can be a problem with 8+ HCP and any 4441 shape as all suit bids show 5+ cards and NT responses deny a singleton. The solution for this "impossible" hand is the "impossible negative". We bid 1D and jump in the singleton on the following round.

Some Precision systems use what are termed Alpha Beta Gamma asking bids etc, i.e. they respond artificially bidding say one heart when they hold 5 spades. This allows the one club opener to bid partners actual suit to find out the length and honours held ("trump ask"), and right side the contract. You can also initiate a trump ask by agreeing suit at the lowest level.

## Opener's rebid after partner responds 1D

- 1NT shows 16-18 HCP
- 2NT shows 19-21 HCP
- 3NT shows 24-26 HCP
- 1H/1S/2C/2D are natural and non-forcing.
- A jump rebid in any suit is strong and responder should bid game if holding a trick

## Opener's rebid after partner responds positively

Partner and you can now find your best game fit by bidding slowly. Should responder have responded 1NT, 2NT or 3NT then 2C, 3C or 4C respectively by opener are **Stayman** bids.

## 1H/1S Opening

11-15 HCP with 5+ Hearts or Spades

### Responses

You can tailor your responses how you see fit. There is no need to raise with 6 HCP and a fit as you know you can't have game, you can use Bergen raises, Jacoby, limit or pre-emptive raises etc. Further, you can raise partner to game with any hand and a fit where you don't think slam will be made.

## 1NT Opening

13-15 HCP and all balanced and semi balanced shapes i.e. 4333/4432/3235 shapes. Use any responding structure you are accustomed to.

## 1D Opening

11-15 HCP promises a minimum of 2 diamonds (sort of like playing a short club in Standard American). This bid caters for hands that are not covered by any other opening bids.

### Responses

Respond naturally except if you raise diamonds - remember on a bad day partner will hold only two.

Note if partner responds 1NT over your one level response then they are balanced or semi balanced and 11-12 HCP. Similarly, should you respond 2C then a 2NT rebid from them still shows 11-12 balanced.

## 2C Opening

2C shows 6+clubs, 11-15 HCP and may also hold a four card suit.

### Responses

2D asks for a further description.

### Replies

- 3C shows 6+clubs 11-13 no other suit
- 2NT shows 6+ clubs 14-15 no other suit
- 2H shows 6+ clubs 11-13 and 4 hearts
- 2S shows 6+ clubs 11-13 and 4 spades
- 3H shows 6+ clubs 14-15 and 4 hearts
- 3S shows 6+ clubs 14-15 and 4 spades

## 2D Opening

2 Diamonds shows 11-15 HCP with the following shaped hands

- 4414
- 4405
- 3415
- 4315

### Responses

Should you have a strong hand and wish to find the exact shape and strength of partners hand then your response is 2NT and opener responds as follows.

- 3C shows 11-15 and 3- 4- 1- 5 shape
- 3D shows 11-15 and 4-3- 1- 5 shape
- 3H shows 11-13 HCP and 4-4-1-4 shape
- 3S shows 14-15 HC and 4-4-1-4 shape
- 3NT shows 14-15 HCP and 4-4-1-4 shape with Diamond Ace or King
- 4C shows 11-13 HCP and 4-4-0-5 shape
- 4D shows 14-15 HCP and 4-4-0-5 shape

## 2H/2S Opening

Weak two in Hearts or Spades showing 6-10 HCP.

Use any responding structure you are accustomed to.

## 2NT Opening

Balanced hand 22-23 HCP. Use any responding structure you are accustomed to.

## Summary

Three books which I know of on the Precision system in our library are:

- The original Precision book by C.C. Wei called *Precision Bidding in Bridge*
- *Our Precision Style* by Jim and Norma Borin
- *Precision Bridge* by Eric Jannersten

Should you decide to play Precision then both you and your partners should learn together so that you are on the same page.

Should you play Precision then you need disciplined bidding or you will not be in the correct contracts.