

HOW TO USE SVEN'S DECISION TABLES

READ ME

I wrote this booklet for people who are not absolute beginners, people who may have played Bridge for a little while, perhaps even for quite some time, and yet are still looking for an assistant crutch. This happened to myself and I decided to do something about it. My decision tables aim to help beginning and intermediate Bridge players **quickly** find the best and most communicative bid in a given situation. Let's try it out.

A set of programmed decision tables guide you from making a carefully selected opening bid to declaring a contract. Start by counting your High Card Points (HCPs). If you can count 6 or more HCPs on your hand, you are in a position to consult the **OPENINGS** decision table (you can see a full-sized version of the **OPENINGS** decision table on page 3 of the booklet). Let's illustrate the process by way of an example. If you have been dealt one of the **WEAK HANDS** worth say 9 High Card Points, you have a choice of four opening bids as you can see in the left-most column. Let's pick one. If your hand contains a very strong 7+ card **♦** suit headed by the Ace, King and Queen, you may choose the seemingly outrageous **Open 3NT** bid:

5-CARD MAJOR		COMMON RECOMMENDATIONS		LOWER RANGES OPENING BIDS	
<p>An Opening Bid is the first non-Pass bid of the auction. In making an Opening Bid you are telling your partner something about the strength and shape of your hand. After counting your High Card Points (HCPs) you will know whether you hold a weak, average or strong hand and you are ready to make a decision. With an HCP count of less than 6 you will have to Pass. If the number of cards in your two longest suits plus your HCP count comes to 20, it is usually safe to open the bidding (the so-called "Rule of 20"). If you do open the bidding, your partner can look for an appropriate response by referring to a lower level decision table (see HCP/Winning).</p>					
WEAK HANDS		AVERAGE HANDS		18-19 HCPs	
<p>6-9 HCPs</p> <p>Weak Two: If you have a 6-card ♠, ♥ or ♣ suit with at least two of the top five honours, you may Open 2 of that suit <small>emphasizing the opposition</small> <i>To respond, partner goes to WEAK2 table</i></p> <p>Pre-emptive Three: If you have a 7 card suit with at least two of the top four honours, you may Open 3 of that suit making it hard for the opposition <i>To respond, partner goes to 3SUIT table</i></p> <p>Pre-emptive Four: If you have an 8+ card suit with at least two of the top four honours, you may Open 4 of that suit making it very hard for the opposition <i>To respond, partner goes to 4SUIT table</i></p> <p>Gambling 3NT: If you have a 7+ card Minor suit headed by the Ace, King and Queen, you may Open 3NT making the opposition sit up <i>To respond, partner goes to 3NT table</i></p>		<p>10-11 12-14 HCPs</p> <p>Balanced Hand with 16-17 HCPs: If you have 15-17 HCPs and a balanced hand (a hand in which there are no voids, no singletons and at most one Doubleton), you will Open 1NT <i>To respond, partner goes to 1NT table</i></p> <p>Unbalanced Hand with 10-19 HCPs or Balanced Hand with 10-14 or 18-19 HCPs: Start looking for a Fit (a suit in which your partnership has at least 8 cards). In Third or Fourth Seat the point range can be relaxed a bit (instead of 12+ HCPs, 10-11 HCPs might suffice):</p> <p>Major: If you have 12-19 HCPs and one or two 5+ card Major suits, you will Open 1 of Major suit (Open 1♠ if you have two)</p> <p>No Major: If you have 12-19 HCPs but no 5+ card Major suit, you will Open 1 of Longest Minor suit (Open 1♣ if distribution is 3-3, Open 1♦ if distribution is 4-4)</p> <p>Strong 6+: If you have 10 HCPs and a very strong 6+ card or a good 7+ card suit, you may Open 1 of that suit</p> <p>Good 6+: If you have 11 HCPs, a good 6+ card suit and partner has not bid yet, you may Open 1 of Good 6+ card suit</p>		<p>15-17 HCPs</p>	
<p>HCPs: Ace = 4, King = 3, Queen = 2, Jack = 1 Major Suits: ♠ ♥ Minor Suits: ♦ ♣ Ranking: NT ♣ ♥ ♦ ♠</p> <p>© Copyright Sven Eriksen (Page Revision 4.0) http://bridge.eriksen.com.au 3 OPENINGS</p>					

WHAT IS LIKELY TO HAPPEN AFTER 3NT OPENING		3NT A-B
<p>RESPONDER'S FIRST BID AFTER 3NT OPENING</p> <p>Your partner has opened 3NT on 6-9 HCPs only, but does have a very strong 7+ card ♠ or ♥ or ♣ suit and nothing much else. This opening bid is called "Gambling 3NT" for a reason, but if nothing else it may prevent the opposition from declaring and winning a Game contract. The gambling 3NT opening bid will have made it difficult for the opposition, but it may well succeed in its own right. If you go down it will be relatively cheap and probably well worth preventing the opposition from being able to match up their strong hands. Opener wants you to help decide whether the contract should remain at 3NT or be changed to a Minor suit contract at the 4-level.</p>		
Your Hand		You can now Advise Your Partner
<p>A Stoppers in Three Suits: If you have stoppers in three of the four suits, with the fourth hopefully covered by partner, chances are that the opposition will only be able to take three tricks before you are able to cash seven. The gamble then comes down to which cards the opposition have discarded in the process, whether you are able to take two or three more.</p>	<p>With stoppers in three suits: Pass closing off at 3NT</p>	
<p>B Stoppers in Two Suits Only: If you only have stoppers in two of the four suits, a 3NT contract is likely to fail, and a cheaper less risky Minor suit contract is then preferable. Only partner knows which Minor suit contract it should be, so bid the lowest and let partner change it, if necessary.</p>	<p>With stoppers in two suits only: Bid 4♣ Go to 3NT 1</p>	
<p>OPENER'S SECOND BID AFTER 3NT OPENING</p>		
Your Partner's Bid was		You can now Advise Your Partner
<p>1 4♣ Your partner has stoppers in only two of the four suits, making a 3NT contract too risky.</p>	<p>If you hold a 7+ card ♠ suit: Pass closing off at 4♣</p>	<p>If you hold a 7+ card ♥ suit: Bid 4♦ closing off at 4♦</p>
<p>© Copyright Sven Eriksen (Page Revision 4.0) http://bridge.eriksen.com.au 27 3NT</p>		

As a result of your gambling **3NT** opening, your partner follows the instruction **To respond, Partner goes to 3NT table** (you can see a full-sized version of the **3NT** table on page 27 of the booklet). In the **3NT** table your partner will compare cards held on hand with descriptions in the **Your Hand** column in order to find a match. In this case there are only two options to choose from and your partner is then able to select the most appropriate response from options listed in the **You can now Advise Your Partner** column. For example, if your partner holds a hand matching **Hand B (Stoppers in Two Suits Only)**, the advice is to **Bid 4♣** and as a result you, the Opener, is directed to **Go to 3NT 1** (next table) giving you a choice between two options for declaring the contract. In this case you will **Bid 4♦** closing off.

That's it, in a nutshell. You and your partner, if unimpeded, will quickly move forwards from table to table based upon decisions made earlier. In doing so, you and your partner will be exchanging specific information helping your partnership to arrive at the best possible outcome. Some people call this "cheating", but Hey, it works! Initially you may be doing this somewhat "parrot fashion", but you'll soon begin to follow the logic behind the bids, and eventually you won't need the tables any more.