

Pronto Strong Club System by *Pierre Dutoit*



Pronto, Governing Regulations, Blue System Category

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 System Classification

Systems are classified according to the characteristics of their opening and overcalling structures, and will be identified by colour coding. In determining the classification of a system, the green, blue, red and yellow criteria are to be applied in that sequence until the appropriate classification is determined. All entrants in ABF events shall display on their partnership's system cards a coloured dot indicating the classification of the system being played. In addition to these primary colour classifications, certain individual conventional calls and treatments are defined as, and require an additional, Brown Sticker.

1.2 Definitions

Average Hand= A hand containing 10 HCP with no distributional values. **Weak**= High card strength below that of an average hand. **Strong**= High card strength a king or greater than that of an average hand (i.e. 13+ HCP) **Natural**= A call or play that is not artificial or conventional (i.e. not a "special partnership understanding" as defined in Law 40B1). **Length**= Three cards or more. **Shortage**= Two cards or fewer **Artificial**= An artificial bid is one, which carries information concerning a denomination other than the one named or a bid concerned with values or controls without necessarily a preparedness to play in the named denomination. **Distributional Values**= A hand with distributional values contains one or more shortages. **Balanced**= For the purpose of classifying NT openings, balanced shall mean a hand with no more than one (1) shortage and that shortage shall be not fewer than two (2) cards in length. **Semi-Balanced**= A hand with no more than two (2) shortages where each shortage shall be not fewer than two (2) cards in length. **Published**= A System will be considered as published if it has been recorded in an accessible form and made available in that form to officials of the ABF and all registered players in an ABF event.

2. CLASSIFICATION OF SYSTEMS

2.1 Green (Natural) Systems

- a) All one-level opening bids are natural and non-forcing
- b) An opening bid of one of a suit guarantees length (3+ cards) in the denomination named (Exception: 4-4-3-2 and (4-3)-4-2 shaped hands may be opened 1 ♣)
- c) 1NT should be balanced or semi-balanced (Note: this does not preclude individual assessment of some hands, e.g. a hand with a singleton honour or a weak longer suit. The subsequent bidding methods however, should not be able to identify such hand types)
- d) All one-level opening bids, must by agreement, promise at least 8 HCP.

2.2 Blue (Strong Club/Strong Diamond) Systems This category includes systems that satisfy all of the following criteria:
Effective June 1st 2008; updated August 1st 2017

- a) One club/one diamond is artificial, forcing and always strong
- b) One of a major is natural and non-forcing
- c) 1NT is non-conventional
- d) The one-level opening in the other minor may be artificial with various possibilities not covered by the other opening bids
- e) All one-level opening bids, must by agreement, promise at least 8 HCP.

2.3 Red Systems This category includes:

- a) All systems employing one-level openings that do not fall under the definition of Yellow (HUM) systems [see below], other than Strong Club/Strong Diamond (Blue) systems.
- b) Any system in which the basic 1-level opening structure (other than the length of natural suit bids or the point range of openings) varies according to position and/or vulnerability.

2.4 Yellow (HUM) Systems For the purpose of these Regulations, a Highly Unusual Method (HUM) means any System that has, as a matter of partnership agreement, one or more of the following features:

- a) A Pass in the opening position that shows at least the values generally accepted for an opening bid of one, even if there are alternative weak possibilities.

- b) An opening bid at the one level that may be made on high card strength a king or more below that of an average hand (i.e., ~ 0-7 HCP and insufficient compensating distributional values).
- c) An opening bid of one of a major with alternative possible meanings that the hand may be long or short in a specified suit (i.e., the use of 'wonder' style bids).
- d) An opening bid of one of a major with alternative possibilities that show length in one specified suit or length in another specified suit.

2.5 Brown Sticker Conventions and Treatments Certain types of conventional calls or treatments are considered to place demands upon the opponents' defensive preparations. The conventions/treatments in question are categorized as 'Brown Sticker' (BS). Any one of the following characteristics qualifies a convention/treatment as BS if it is a matter of partnership agreement: a) Any opening bid of two clubs through three spades that: could be weak and does not promise at least four cards in a known suit. Exceptions: (i) Where all the weak meanings guarantee at least four cards in one known suit and only the strong ones do not.

ABF Regulations *There are NO set systems, there are only regulations that govern System Classification. Players are responsible for correct system classification of their biddings systems.*



Bidding Standards

Pre-alerts

"We are playing a **Strong Club System** in the ABF Blue classification"

1 ♣ openings are artificial, 17 Pts balanced or unbalanced (may have length Pts).

1 ♦, openings are also artificial and will have at least 2 diamonds, 12-16 Pts.

2 ♦ openings are also artificial will be short in diamonds, 12-16 Pts.

2 ♣, is an **omnibus FIVE-way multi-2 bid** containing either

a) for a weak 6-7 card major 7-10 Pts or

b) a 6+ card minor 12-16 Pts or

c) A STRONG 2NT, two suited hand 16+ Pts.

1 ♥, 1 ♠, and 2 ♥, 2 ♠ are natural 5+CM 12-14 Pts, and 15-16 not forcing.

Balanced hands are opened 14-16 and 17-19 with a 1NT or 20-23, a 2NT rebid.

We play a 2/1 style forcing system.

Openings and first Responses (Forcing or not Forcing)

Open Majors and Minors with 12. Be consistent with this.

Responses to this opening at level 1 ♦, 1 ♥, 1 ♠. Strictly **Walsh method** (not "up the Line") means we bid our limited 4CMs (hearts before spades unless one is very strong and the other is weak) before any other shape or **we bid 1NT, 7-11 Pts** with **any other** shape.

Non-forcing responses

1 ♥, 1 ♠. 6-10 Pts, at least 4 cards in hearts/spades are not Forcing, limited to 10 Pts, **alert not forcing**

1NT is limited to 7-11 and **not forcing**. **alert not forcing**

3 ♣, 3 ♦ are 5/6CM suits 10-11 Pts natural are invitational to 3NT if partner has other cover and 15 Pts otherwise not forcing.

2NT is 12/13 Pts and not forcing.

2/1 Forcing responses, F1 over 1 ♦, 12+ Pts

2 ♣ = a 4CM, **alert**, 2 ♦ = a 5CM, **alert** 2 ♥ = a 6CM, **alert(natural)** 2 ♠ = a 6CM, **alert(natural)** all F1 forcing for one round and indicate Game Interest.

2/1 Forcing bids, F1 over 1 ♥, 1 ♠.

2 ♣, No Fit 4+OM, artificial, **Alert "the Other Major at least 4"**

2 ♦, a Fit 4+ of bid suit (committed to game), **Alert "4 support and 11 Pts"**

2 ♠, (a 6CM in spades (only over 1 ♥, 1 ♠ over 1 ♥ is a non-forcing bid)

3 ♥, (a 6CM in Hearts (only over 1 ♠, 2 ♥ over 1 ♠ is a non-forcing bid)

Part-Score Bidding

Game Interest is encouraged by 2/1 and guided by the fact that 25 Pts are required for 3NT (6NT should check for controls and requires about 32 Pts). Game in a major has a probability of 75% with 24 Pts and a 4/4 trump fit. More than 8 trumps will reduce the risks involved.

With 3 major support bid 2M with 7-10 Pts (11 is 2/1).

With 4 support and 10 Pts you probably need some other feature to your hand to GTG (Go To Game). This may come in the form of shortage. Always take guidance from the LTT (Law of Total Trumps) and GTG when 10 Trumps and 0-10 Pts are evident in the combined hands.

1♥-2♥ is compulsory with 3 trumps and 6-10 Pts, 1♥-3♥ is shows 5+ trumps and RKC responses are required and 1♥-2♦-3♥ shows 4 Trumps and 11+ and also invokes these responses.

Slam or Game trials with 2/1

2♥, 2♠ requests **shortages** only after 2♦.

Following example over 2♥ after 2♦.

4♥ = no S/V to play

2♠, 3♣, 3♦, = singleton

3♠, 4♣, 4♦, = void

Following example over 2♠ after 2♦.

4♠ = no S/V to play

3♣, 3♦, 3♥ = singleton

4♣, 4♦, 4♥ = void

Roman Key Card with 3♥ after 2♦, (1430)

3♠ = 4 or 1 KCs, 3NT=3 or Zero KCs, 4♣, = 2 KCs without the Q of trumps, and 4♦, 2 KCs with the Q of trumps

Roman Key Card with 3♠ after 2♦, (1430)

3NT ♠ = 4 or 1 KCs, 4♣ = 3 or Zero KCs, 4♦ = 2 KCs without the Q of trumps, and, 4♥, 2 KCs with the Q of trumps

Alternate to RKC

3♥, Opener asks for Responder's Losing Trick Count after 2♦ over 1♥ opening

3♠ 8 losers in a Nine card fit, *Alert*

3NT 7 losers

4♣ 6 Losers

4 ♦ 5 losers

4 ♥, Opener signs off with > 12 Losers

4NT RKC for 1st round Control Check (Aces)

6 ♥, Opener signs off with 12 losers

7 ♥, Opener signs off = or < 11 losers

Use 1NT openings for balanced hands, 14-16 Pts (**no 5CM**), NF. Use Garbage Stayman and Jacoby transfers to find your best fit, or play in 1, 2, or 3+NT.

Use 2NT overcall for showing both minors 5/5, 15+ Pts.

Open 1 ♣, (artificial) and **rebid 1NT**, with 17-19 Pts (can contain a 5CM)

Open all 12(R20)-16 Pts hands, 1 ♦, (artificial) without a 5+CM/6Cm and **force** (F1) all 11 Pts responses 2 ♣, (a 4CM, undisclosed), 2 ♦ (a 5CM, undisclosed, 2 ♥, 2 ♠, (natural a 6CM) showing in full the shape of your major with **Game Interest**. Non-forcing responses over 1 ♦ are 1 ♥/1 ♠, a 4+CM, (6-10 Pts) and 1NT, 7-11 Pts, 2NT 12+ Pts, and 3NT=13-14 Pts. Bid your 5+ card majors, natural, with 11 to 13 Pts. partner or opener's rebid of 3M over the 2 ♦ response (signifying a 5/4 fit) to initiate RKC convention to check for slam viability without being forced into bidding past 4M.

Game Interest means that Game may be dependent on Min/Max invitational bids or Distributional Value means useful shortage points only after a fit has been established. Use **DV** (a separately maintained value in your head) to make the Go to Game (GTG) and other competitive decisions.

Overcalls are suits with at least 5 cards and at least 10 pts when vulnerable/or NV upgrade your 9 Pts hand for extra length. Concentrate on suit quality. When responding show a 4CM (Walsh) before a longer minor, always calling the forcing bids when in scope over 1 ♦, 1 ♥, 1 ♠. Do not overcall with poor suit quality as it will misinform your partner's lead decision.

4NT is always quantitative directly over any NT

4C is always Gerber directly over any NT

4C is always Gerber with a Jump Bid

4C is always a natural suit bid when it is in minimum increment from the previous bid.

4NT is always RKC asking if not over NT, and the opponents have not bid at the 4 level at some point

4NT is takeout if over 4 of a major by the opponents

4NT is to play if over 4 of a minor by the opponents

If the opponents have bid the 4 level, but you aren't the last person to make a non-pass, 4NT is natural

Overcalls should be 10-point hands with a FIVE card suit of reasonable quality trying to establish a fit.

By using these standards consistently, you and your partner setup and maintain your mutual expectations for success.

Hand Evaluation

This involves dismissing those shortages that cannot reduce declarer's losers. Most splinters actually do this because they are often in the suit of the opponents that may have bid. This is the one you should focus on. In addition to revaluation the other adjustments to be made are at opening time, namely upgrading or downgrading your hand. Remember that the key accretive value to both NT and suit hand evaluation is LENGTH and that shortness in a particular suit must be accompanied by trumps (on the short-side) to be fully exploited. To summarise what features are **plus features**, things that **might persuade you to upgrade your hand**.

Many intermediates (Like 2/3 tens)

Intermediates in the long suits

Having a five-card suit or two four card suits

Honours in the long suits

Touching honour cards in combination

Length in the major suits

Holding aces

Control positioning (like ace in a short suit)

Conversely, features which **might make you downgrade your hand**, i.e. **minus features**, would include:

Lack of intermediates

Suits headed by unsupported honours or two honours which are not touching

4-3-3-3 distribution. No 5-card suit.

Honours in short suits, particularly queens and jacks (Dead Ducks) such as Qx, Jx, K

Too many Jacks and Queens

Competing and Not Competing in the Auction

Take-Out Bidding

When you forced to bid with a take-out double, (especially after partner has passed prior to the rebid double) that it is important to respond (the weakness of your hand is irrelevant) and not **Pass** unless you are strong especially in the opponents' suit. By the second (protective round of bidding) your partner will have at least 4 of the unbid suits you should be aware that 2NT is generally not a viable option. **Bid the longest unbid suit that you hold. You may pass if right hand opponent bids.**



System Architecture

One of the main problems in traditional bidding systems is the flawed evaluation process of the point count system. The emphasis on "points" and the effect of distributional values skews the projected outcome. Shortages are sometimes overvalued and fail to reduce declarer's losers. The ranges in point values are far too large or require a second bid to clarify the initial attempt to describe the hand. (witness Reverse, witness TOM, witness Rebids) The Pronto system has been structured to reduce duplicity of strength and shape in hand description, providing (for instance in the 2/1 system, but also wherever else possible across the system) the simple capability to show both strength and shape in one bid. (witness 2/1) The system also copes with interference with many different pathways to game or part-score.

Abbreviations

A =	Alert	GTG =	Go to Game	LS =	Long Suit
F1 =	Forcing for 1 Round	4CM =	Four Card Major	GS =	Garbage Stayman
INF =	Interference	SSS =	Self-Supporting Suit	SI =	Slam Interest
Bal =	Balanced	Pts =	Points	5Cm =	Five Card Minor
UB =	Unbalanced	5Cs =	Five Card Suit	Om =	Other Minor
X =	Double	GI =	Game Interest	OM =	Other Major
GF =	Game Forcing	SV =	Singleton or Void	POC =	Pass or Correct
Pts =	Pts plus M suit Length	LTT =	Law of Total Trumps	KCB =	Kantor Cue Bid
123Bs =	123 Best suits	SO =	Sign off	GS =	Garbage Stayman
MW =	Minorwood	2S =	Two suiter	AL =	At Least
Nat =	Natural	O =	Opener	R =	Responder
E2 =	Equivalent two supporting Trumps (when your partner shows a strong suit) count your one honour as 2.				

The key attributes of the Pronto system as follows

1. The omnibus five-way multi-2 frees up bidding sequences for strong hands with 5/6 card majors.
2. Starting the bidding with 1 , extends the balanced hand **NT range** (14-23+)
3. Architecture that provides emphasis and clarity for **shape and strength**. (2/1 shows both)
4. Safe and secure processes for slam/game trials.
5. A proven simple forcing method for bidding over 1 level suit openings and also after the sequence 1 -P-
6. Specialised bidding methods over 1C to protect opener's tenaces. (Stronger hand declares)

7. The 5CM, limited range 1M (11-13) and 2M (14-16) improves clarity of hand types and shapes.
8. Specific functionality to overcome superficial interference.

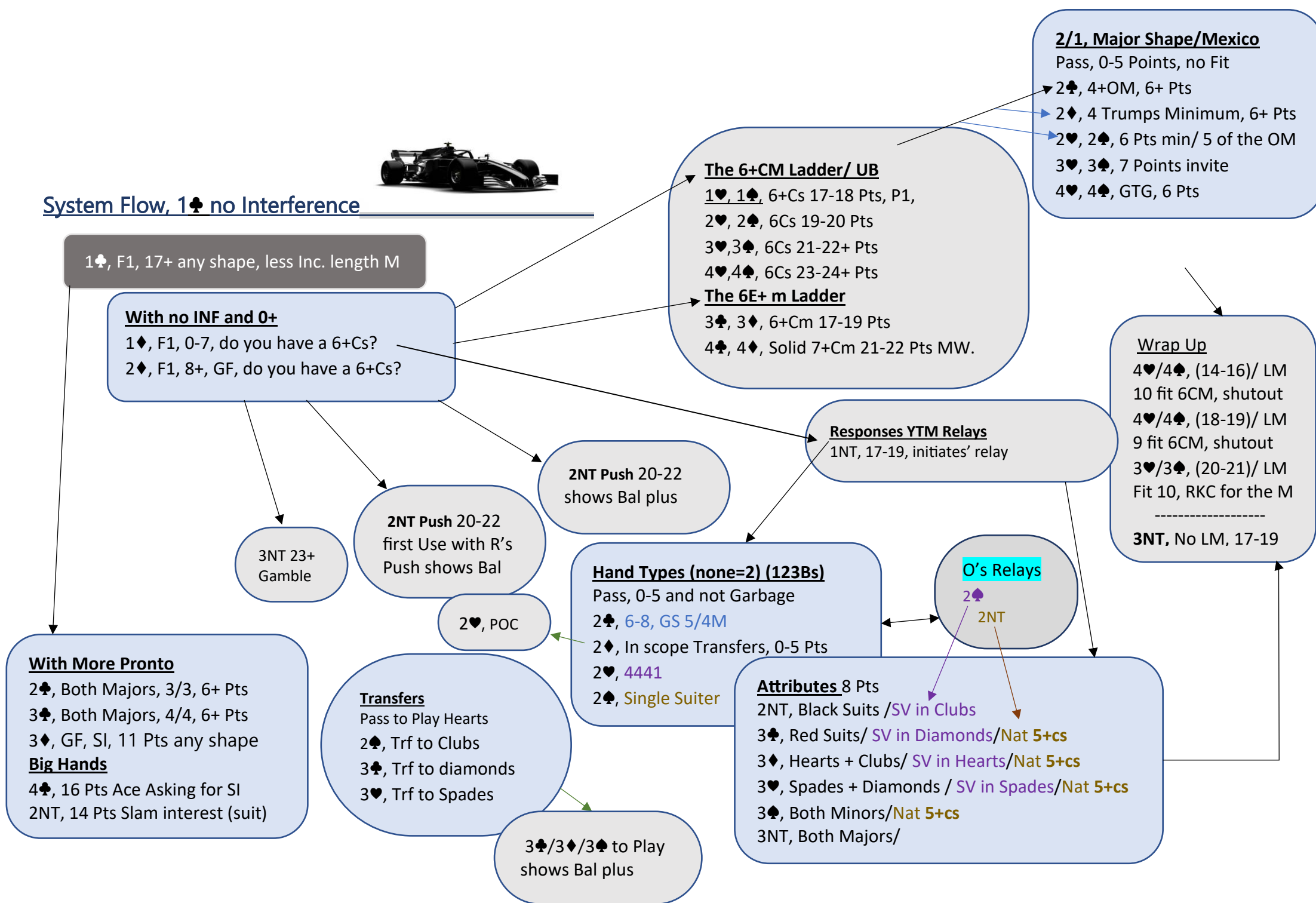
Notes: The 1 Club opening

Traditional methods tend deal with the situation where opener (with 11-15 or more) and responder (with 7-13 points) are not far apart in terms of hand strength as in the Strong Club System. This and other issues have necessitated a different bidding style to protect the tenaces of the stronger hand playing as declarer. After the 1 Club opening there are 7 pathways to game or contract. These are...

1. A 6+CM of excellent quality with at least 3 of the five top honours. Without these excellent hand features you are probably better in a NT contract via the 1 ♣ opening. The answer "no I don't have a 6CM" allows for immediate request for more detailed information. The yes answer allows for 4M or slam/game trial if considered viable (without exceeding the game level 4M bid)
 - a. shortages identification is initiated by 2M.
 - b. a low level RKC to be initiated by opener by 3M. (execute this process with extra value)
 - c. Opener with a basic hand can sign off in 4M.
2. The Push, 2NT with 20-22 Pts with Puppet Stayman for a 5 or 4CM.
3. The bigger Push, 3NT, a reasonable gambling commit with 23 Pts.
4. The (More Pronto) option which invites the quick finding of a 4/4 or a 5/3 major or better fit in a major or 3NT when more suitable to the shape.
5. Big responder hands. For checking for controls or slams.



System Flow, 1♣ no Interference





System Flow, 1♣ with Interference

1♣, F1, 17+ any shape, Inc. length M

The 6+CM Ladder/ UB

1♥, 1♠, 6+Cs 17-18 Pts, P1,

2♥, 2♠, 6Cs 19-20 Pts

3♥, 3♠, 6Cs 21-22+ Pts

4♥, 4♠, 6Cs 23-24+ Pts

The 6E+ m Ladder

3♣, 3♦, 6+Cm 17-19 Pts

4♣, 4♦, Solid 7+Cm 21-22 Pts MW.

2/1, Major Shape

Pass, 0-5 Points, no Fit

2♣, 4+OM, 6+ Pts

2♦, 4 Trumps Minimum, 6+ Pts

2♥, 2♠, 6 Pts minimal support

3♥, 3♠, 7 Points invite

4♥, 4♠, GTG, 6 Pts

3♦, F1, 0-8, Both 4CMs

With (INF) Pass, 0-5, but **F1 X, XX 6-7 Pts** or

L1, 2♦, F1, 6-7 Pts, shape enquiry Bal UB?

L2, 3♦, F1, shape enquiry Bal or UB? 8+ Pts

(KCB). (5+OM). F1. 5CM. 6-7 Pts

1NT 17-19 First
use of NT
(INF) (1♥, 1♠)

2NT 17-19 First
use of NT
(INF) (2♦)

2NT Push 20-22
shows Bal plus

19+
3NT 23+

Wrap Up

4♥/4♠, (14-16)/ LM

10 fit 6CM, shutout

4♥/4♠, (18-19)/ LM

9 fit 6CM, shutout

3♥/3♠, (20-21)/ LM

Fit 10, RKC for the M

3NT, No LM, 17-19



System Flow, 1♣ no Interference The (YTM process)

1♣, F1, 17+ any shape, Inc. length M

With no INF and 0-7

1♦, F1, 0-7, do you have a 6+Cs?

No, Responses YTM Relays

1NT, 17-19, initiates' relay

Hand Types identification (123Bs)

Pass, 0-5 and not garbage

2♣, 6+, Stayman for 5/4M

2♦, Transfers

2♥, 4441

2♠, Single Suiter

2♥, POC

Transfers

Pass to Play Hearts

2♠, Trf to Clubs

3♣, Trf to diamonds

3♥, Trf to Spades

3♣/3♦/3♠ to Play
shows Bal plus

O's Relays

2♠

2NT

Attributes 8 Pts-----B=2S-----S=3S-----N=SS

2NT, Black Suits /SV in Clubs

3♣, Red Suits/ SV in Diamonds/Nat 5+cs

3♦, Hearts + Clubs/ SV in Hearts/Nat 5+cs

3♥, Spades + Diamonds / SV in Spades/Nat 5+cs

3♠, Both Minors/Nat 5+cs

3NT, Both Majors/

Wrap Up

4♥/4♠, (14-16)/ LM

10 fit 6CM, shutout

4♥/4♠, (18-19)/ LM

9 fit 6CM, shutout

3♥/3♠, (20-21)/ LM

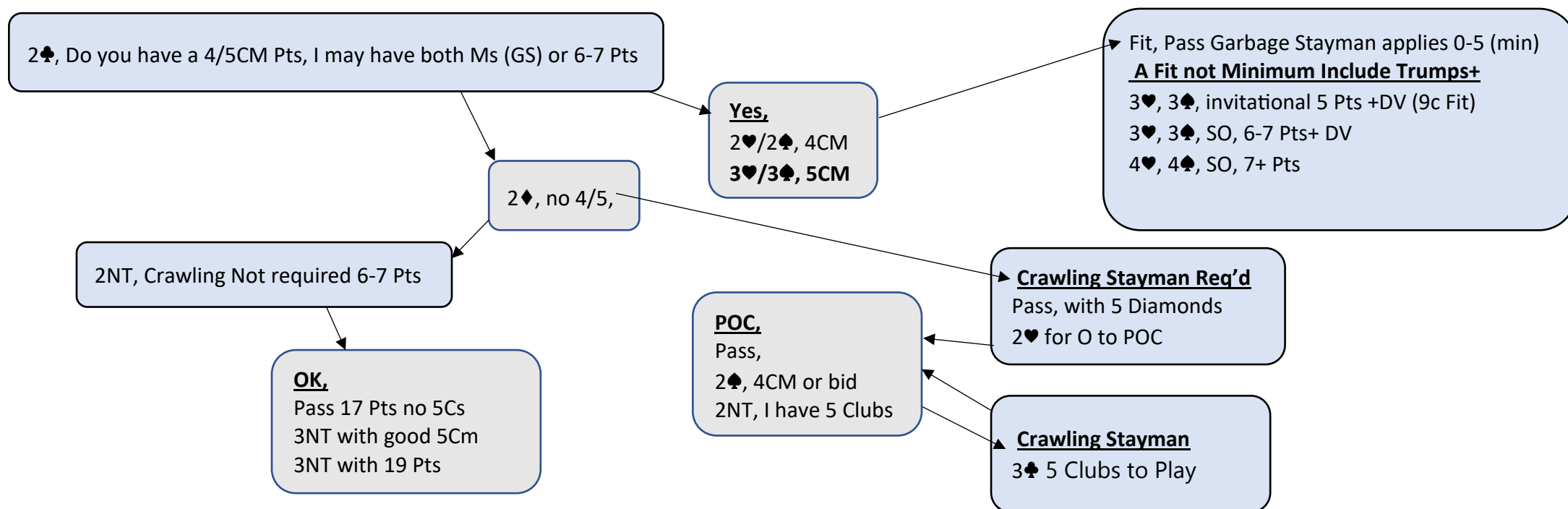
Fit 10, RKC for the M

3NT, No LM, 17-19

Open/Resp/Rebid	Pts (Bal)	TRFs	GS	Pass	2NT	GM	3NT	Quant	Gerb	Staym
1♣ -1♦ -1NT	17-19	5	yes	5	6+	7+	15	16	(7)4/5CM	

Risky Stayman (2♣), after re-bid 1NT, 17-19 balanced, could have a 5/4CM, systems "On"

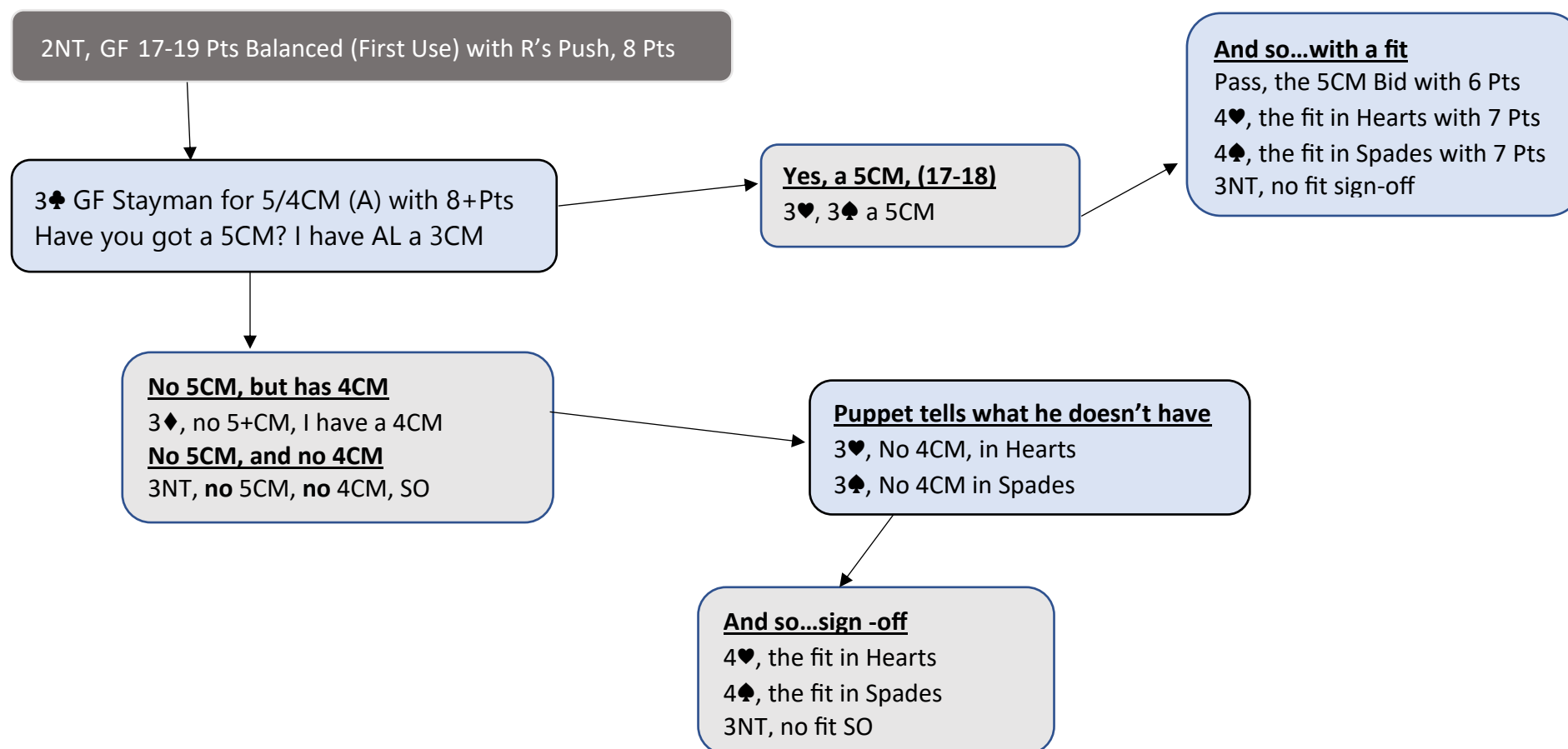
System Flow, Stayman



Open/Responder/Rebid	Pts (Bal)	TRFs	GS	Pass	2NT	GM	3NT	Quant	Gerb	Staym
1♣ -2♦, no INF (8 Pts-2NT)	17-19	0+2	No	2B	3	4+	5+	11	11	(3)4/5/6CM

GF Puppet Stayman (forcing to game), after re-bid 2NT, 20-22+, balanced, could have a 5/4CM, systems "On"

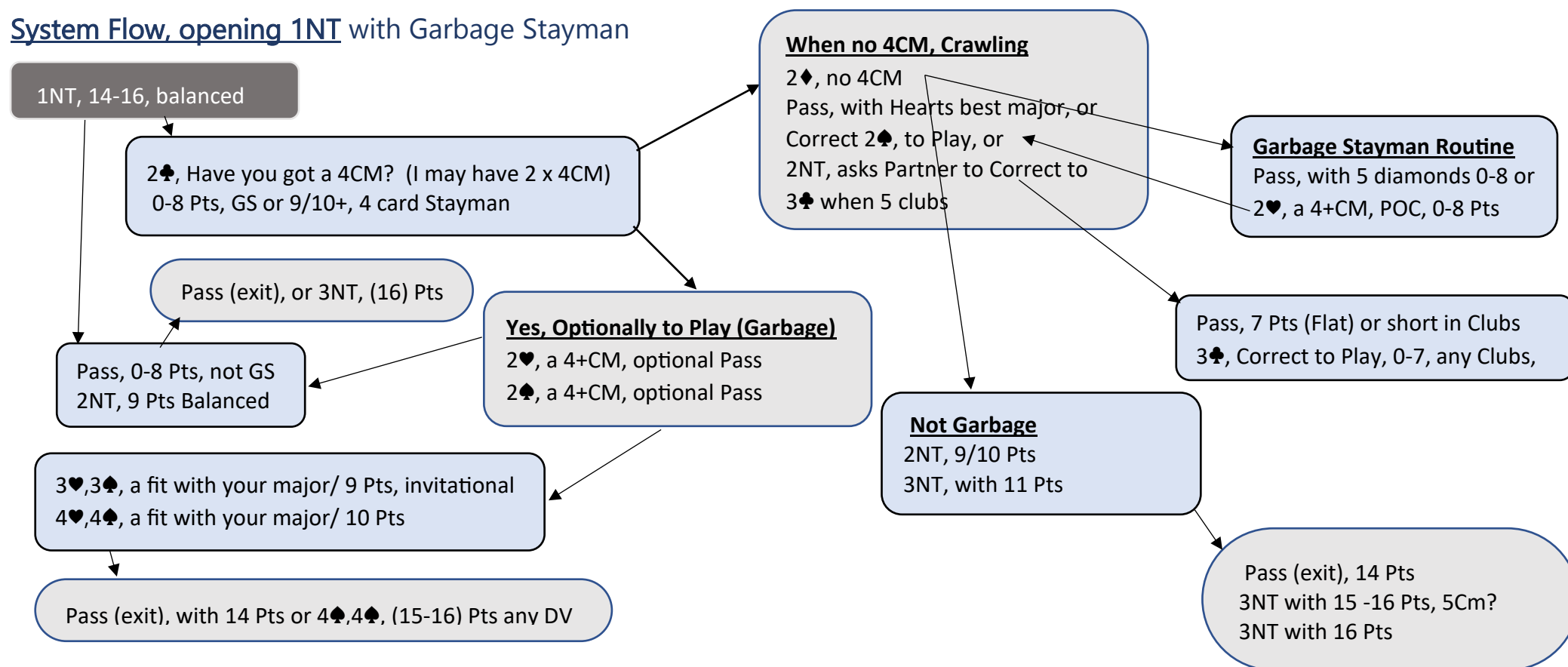
System Flow, First Use of NT, 17-19 Pts 2NT Rebids with Puppet Stayman



Name	Pts (Bal)	TRFs	Garb	Pass	2NT	GM	3NT	Quant	Gerb	Staym
Opening 1NT (789)	14-16	0-6	0-6	7SB	9	7+	11+	16	16	(9)4/5CM

Simple 4-Card Stayman, (2♣), after opening 1NT, 14-16 with Garbage Stayman, (No 5CM) (open the 5332 as 1M)

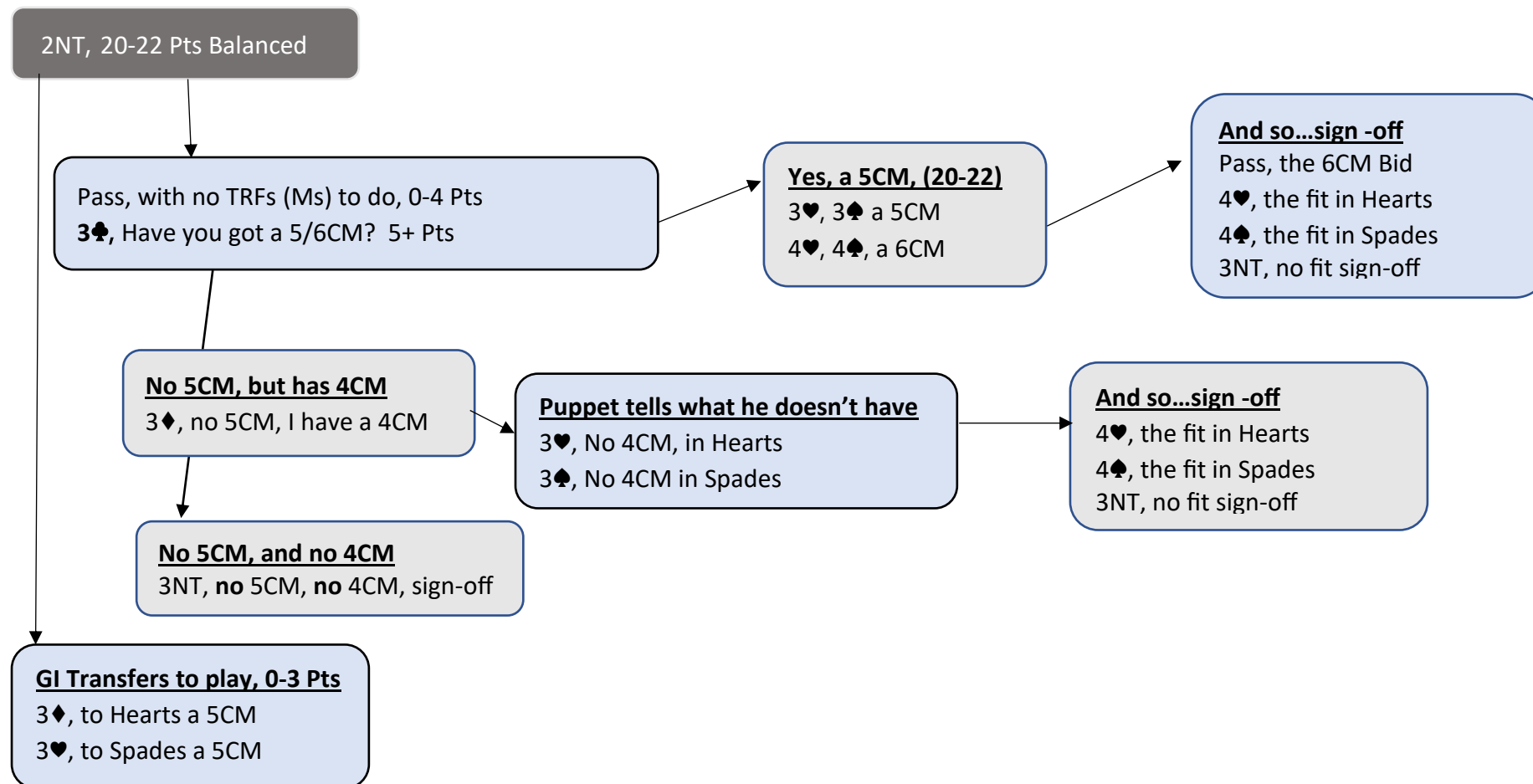
System Flow, opening 1NT with Garbage Stayman



Open/Responder/Rebid	Pts (Bal)	TRFs	GS	Pass	2NT	GM	3NT	Quant	Gerb	Staym
1♣ -1♦ -2NT O's Push	20-22+	0+2	No	2B	3	4+	5+	11	11	(3)5/5/6CM

Puppet Stayman (forcing to game), after re-bid 2NT, 20-22+, balanced, could have a 5/4CM, systems "On"

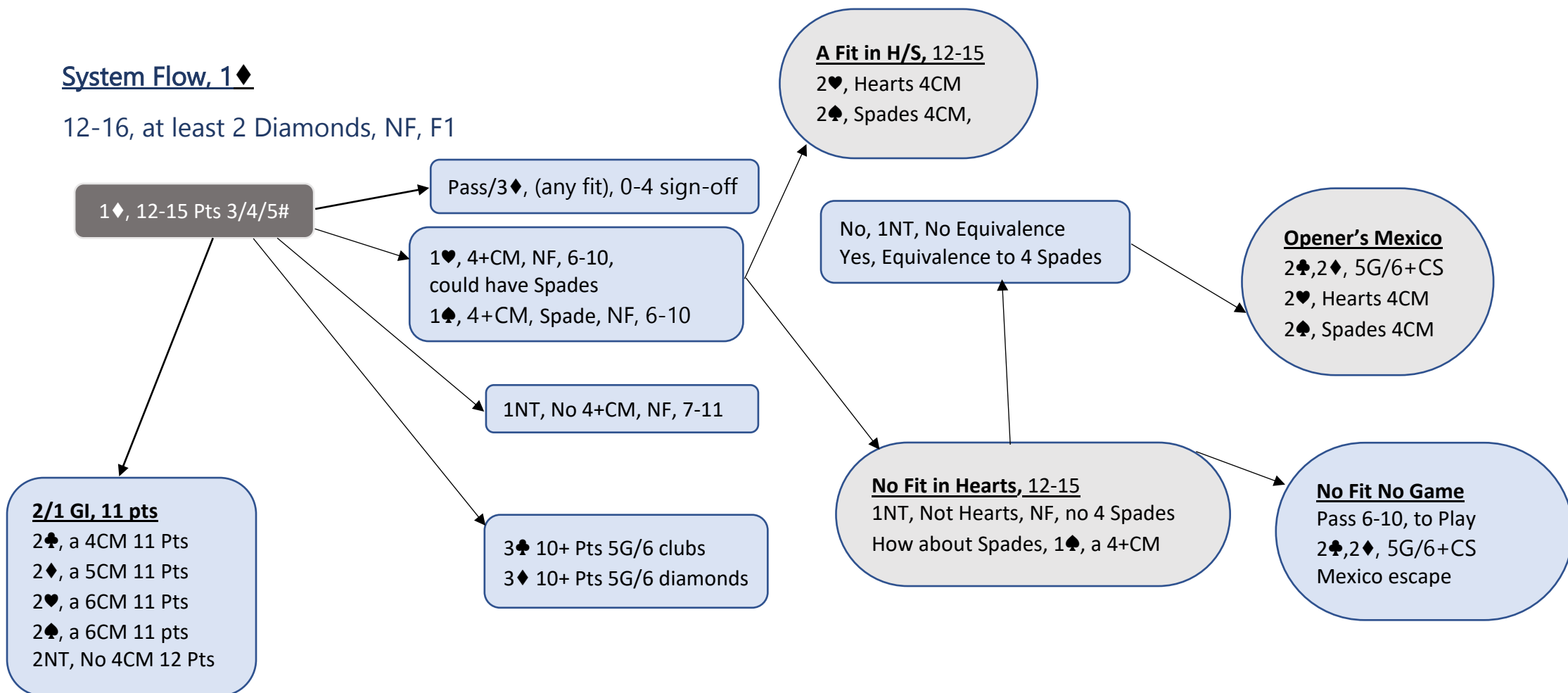
System Flow, 2NT Rebid with Puppet Stayman



Denies a 5CM, more than 5 LTC (assuming an 8 Card fit is found) or has 12 -16 HCP.

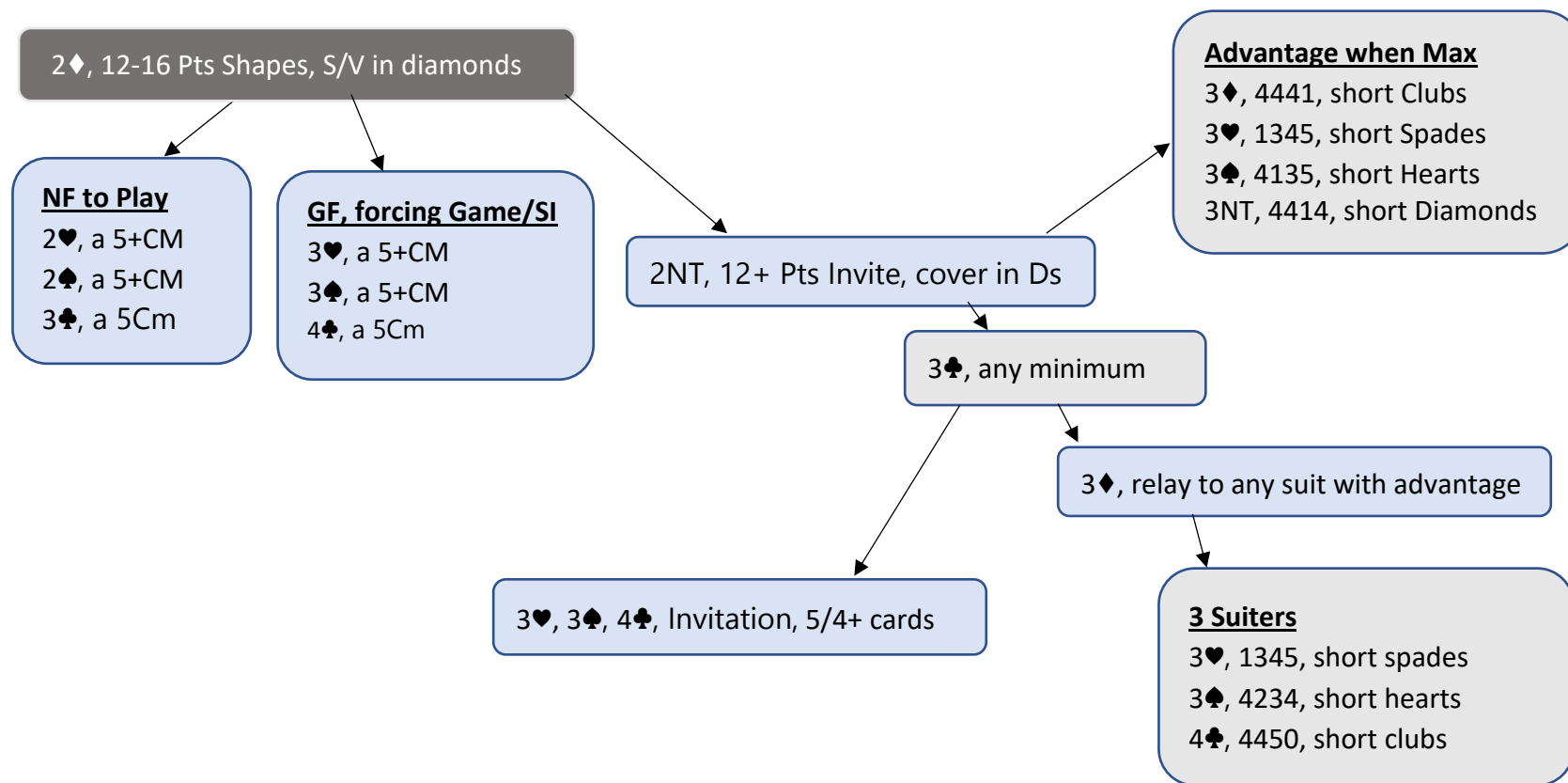
System Flow, 1♦

12-16, at least 2 Diamonds, NF, F1



Denies a 5CM, 12-16 Pts (assuming an 8 Card fit is found).

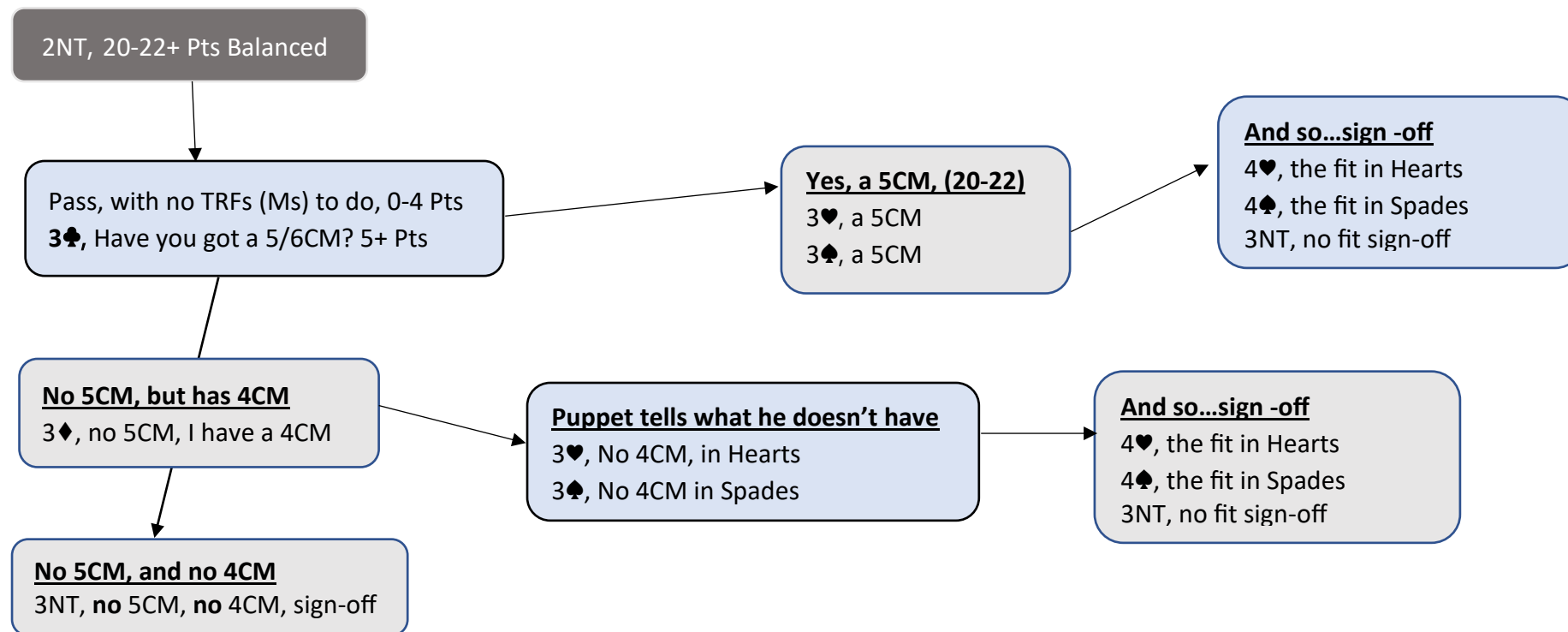
System Flow, 2♦



Name		Pts (Bal)	TRFs	Garb	Pass	2NT	GM	3NT	Quant	Gerb	Staym
Rebid 2NT (123)	20-22	0+2 No	2B	3	4+	5+	11	11	(3)5/5/6CM		

Puppet Stayman (forcing to game), after re-bid 2NT, 20-22+, balanced, could have a 4/5CM, systems "On"

System Flow, 2NT Rebid with Puppet Stayman

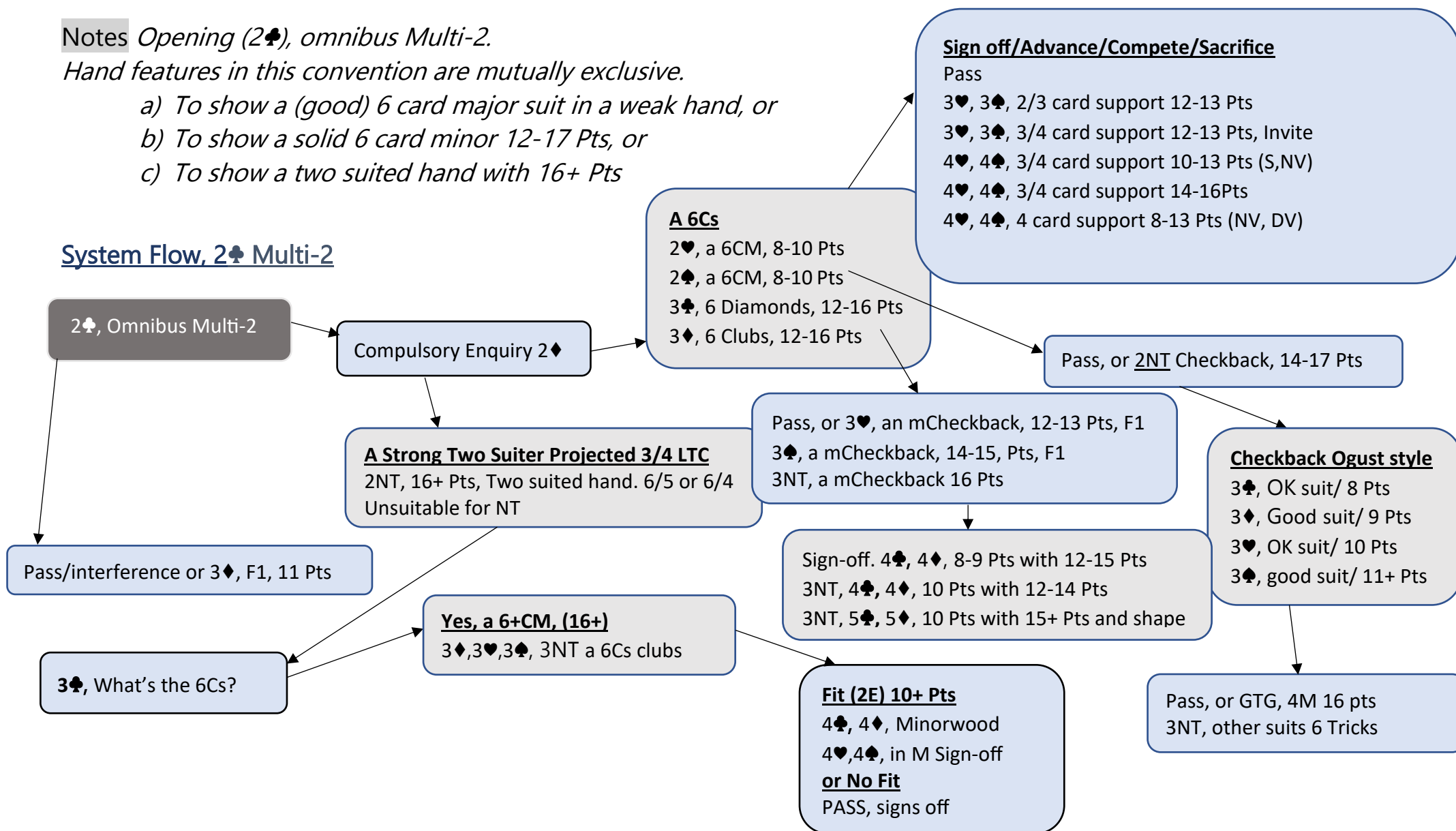


Notes Opening (2♣), omnibus Multi-2.

Hand features in this convention are mutually exclusive.

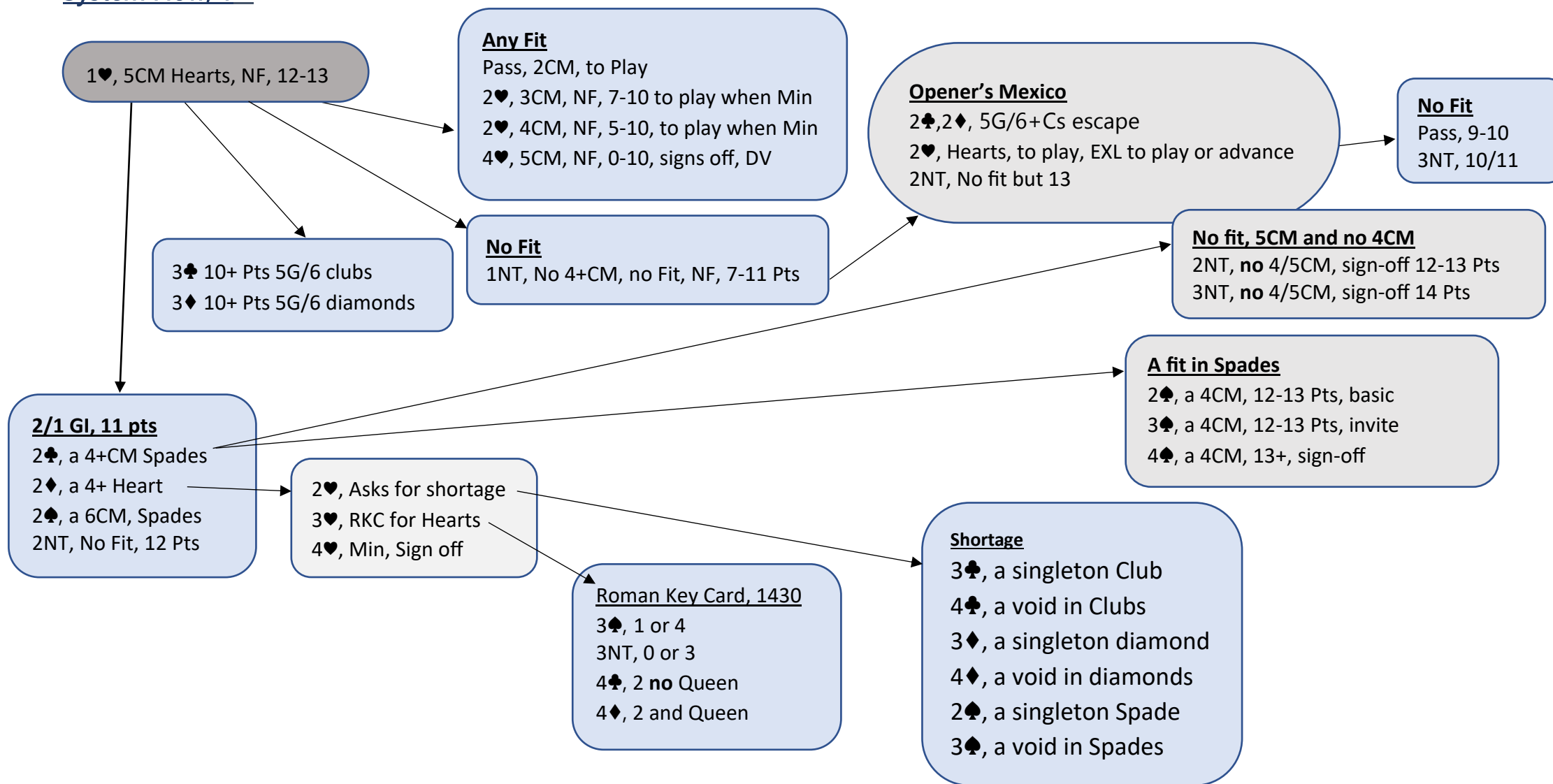
- a) To show a (good) 6 card major suit in a weak hand, or
- b) To show a solid 6 card minor 12-17 Pts, or
- c) To show a two suited hand with 16+ Pts

System Flow, 2♣ Multi-2



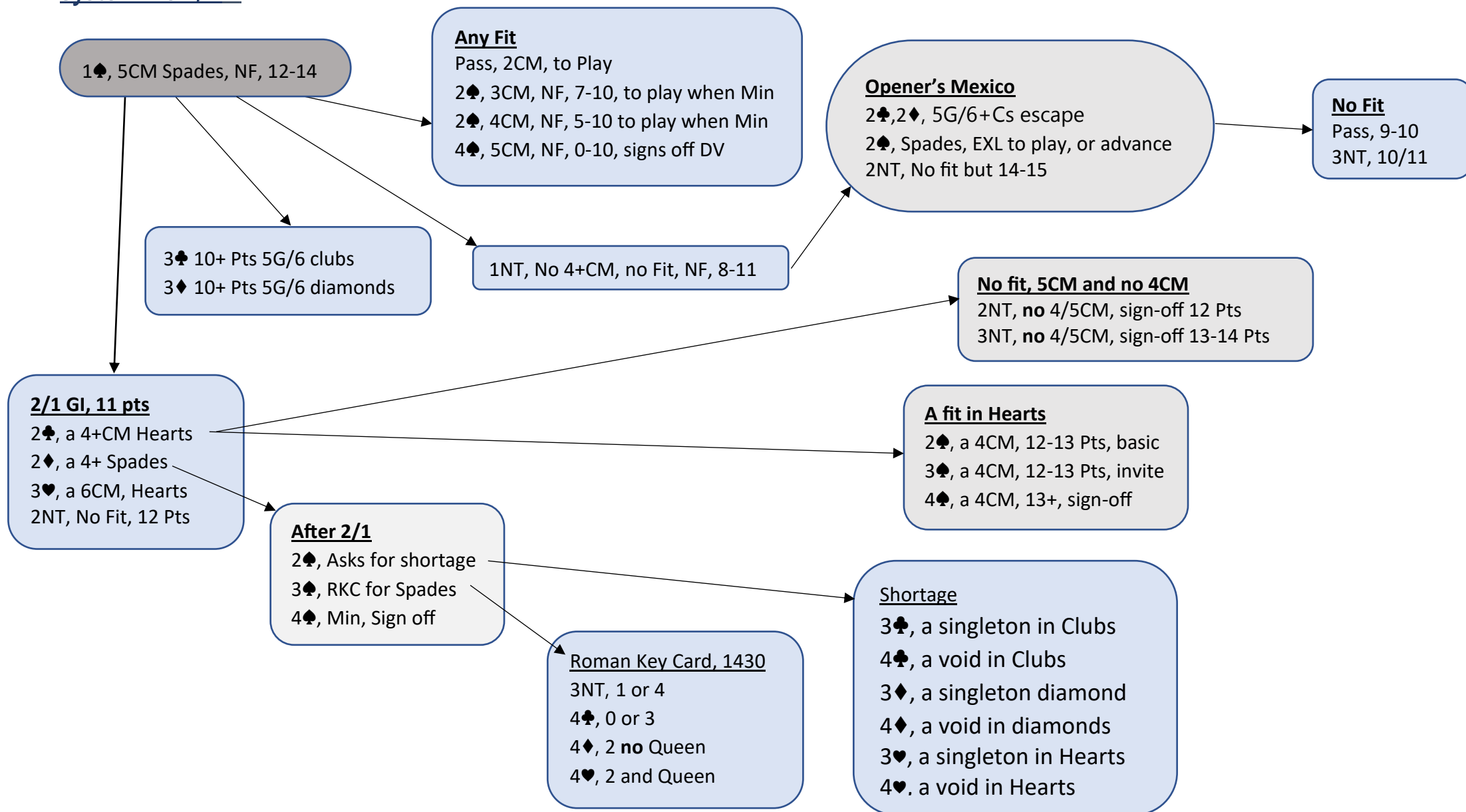
Majors 1♥ Opening a 5+CM 12-14 (open a 7CM with 16 Pts or a 6CM with 17 Pts 1♣ to differentiate these very strong hands from the others)

System Flow, 1♥



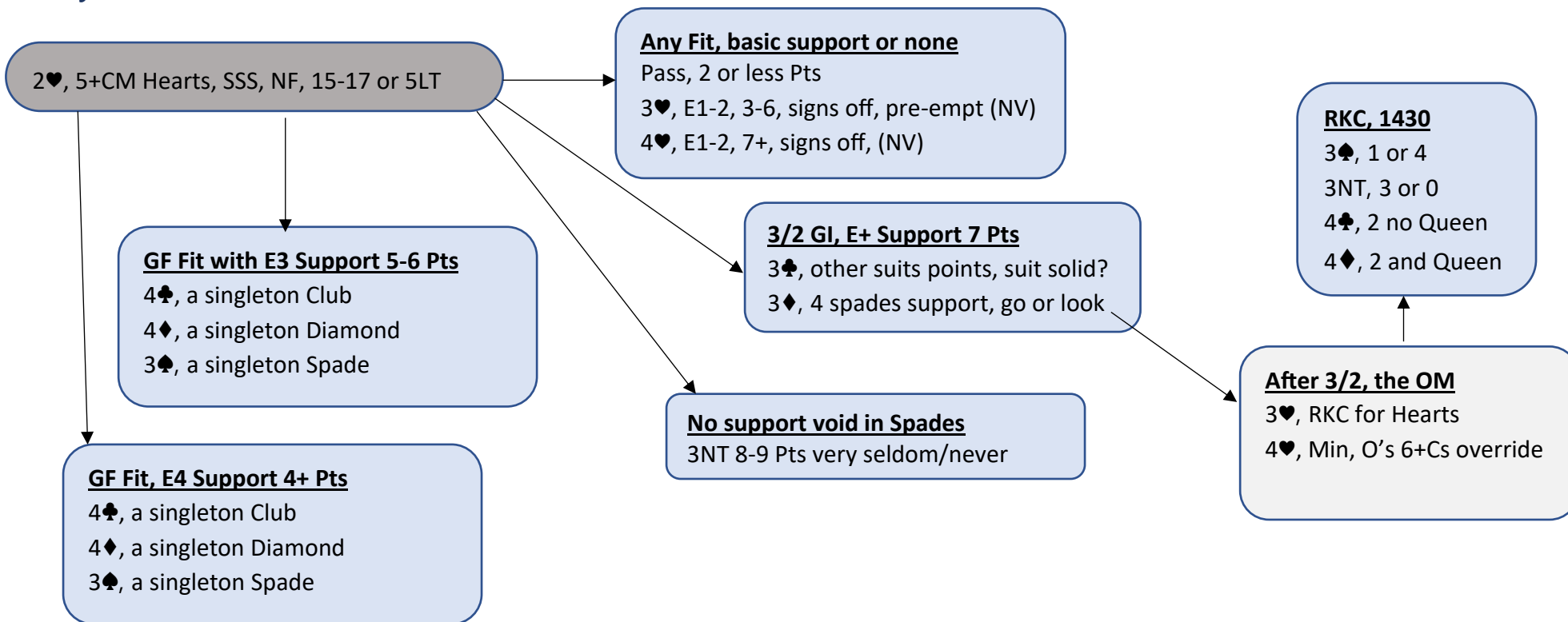
Majors 1♠ Opening a 5+CM 12-14

System Flow, 1♠



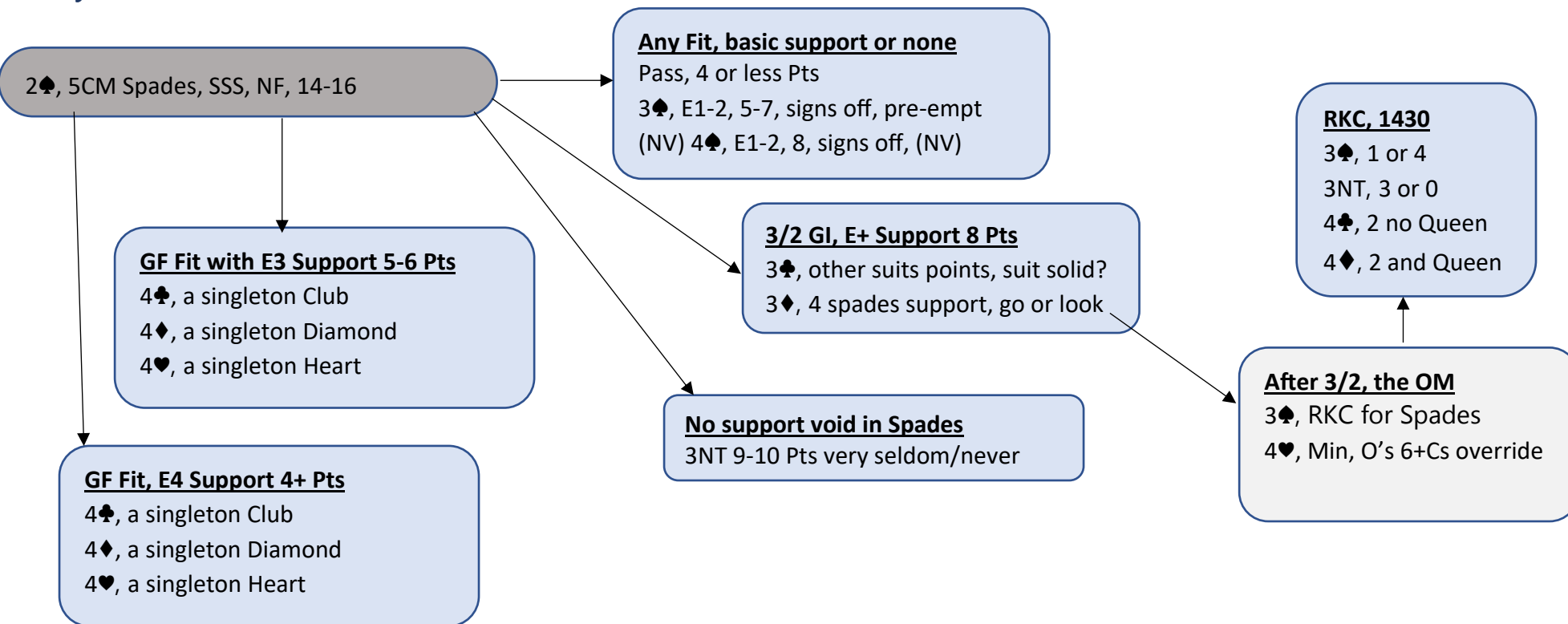
Majors 2♥ Opening a 5+CM 15-17 Pts

System Flow, 2♥



Majors 2♠ Opening a 6CM 15-17 Pts

System Flow, 2♠



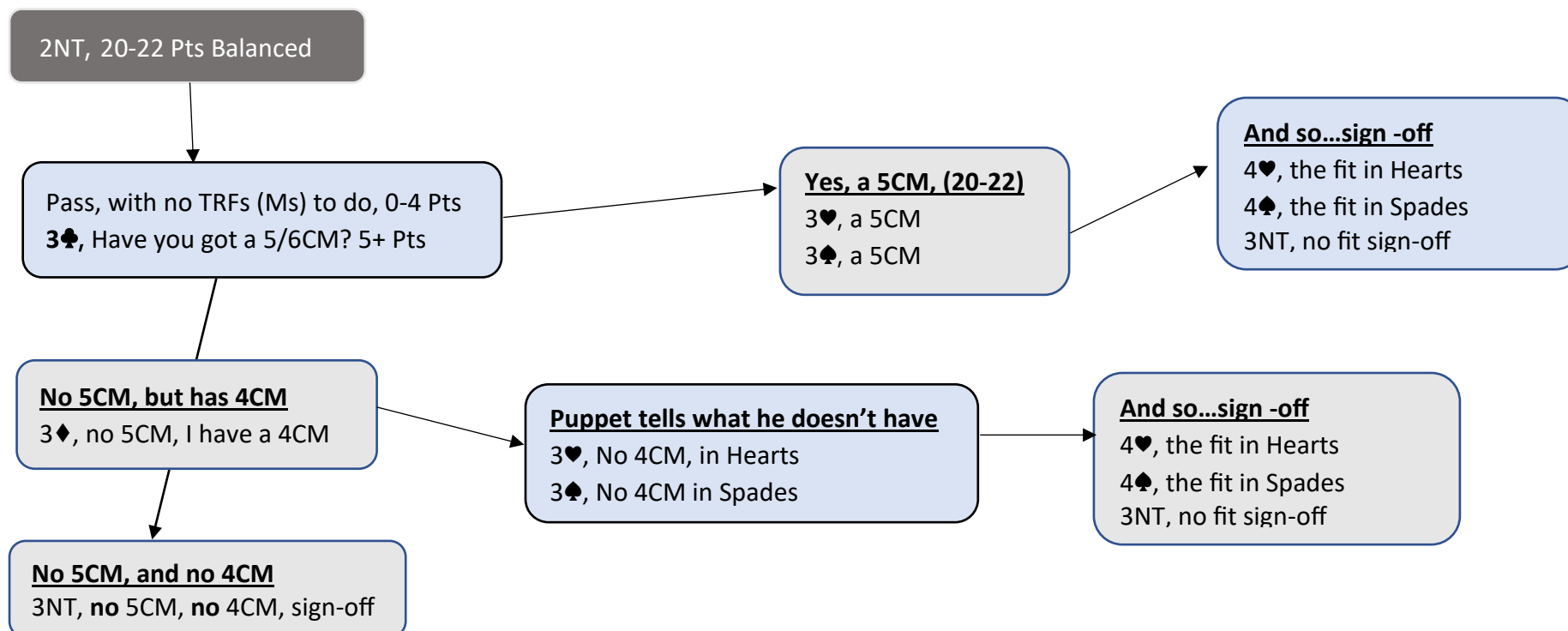
20-22 Strong and balanced.

System Flow, Opening 2NT 20-22

Name	Pts (Bal)	TRFs	Garb	Pass	2NT	GM	3NT	Quant	Gerb	Staym
Opening 2NT (123)	20-22	0+2	No	2B	3	4+	5+	11	11	(3)5/5/6CM

Puppet Stayman after opening 2NT, 20-22, balanced, could have a 4/5CM, systems "On"

System Flow, 2NT opening with Puppet Stayman

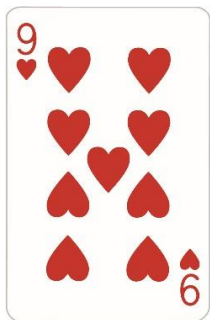


Defence

Signals

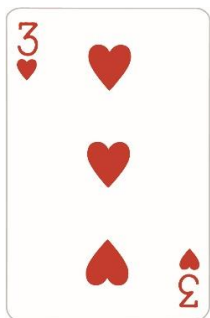
On Partners Lead we use **Low encourage** simply because it more logical to dispense with low cards than with intermediates. Suit preference requests (on first and sometimes on later discards use the REVOLVING methodology. This is best system as it cuts down on the reckoning logic required by systems such as McKenney.

Here the discard of the 9 of hearts asks for a spade because its high. The same request could be made with a low club.

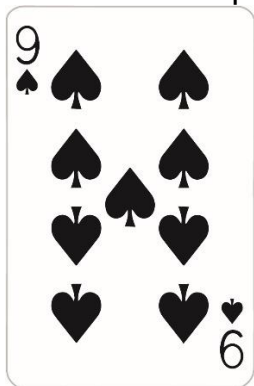


Whereas,

The 3 of hearts would ask for a diamond



and the 9 of spades would ask for a club.



And a low club would ask for a spade! REVOLVING!

The key advantage of the system is that the actual card played totally specifies the requirement. With McKenney you have to first work out what are the two suits in the trick, then say which is the higher or lower of the other two suits. Relatively laborious.

Meckwell defence over 1NT

Playing Meckwell, you have six choices for interfering with an opening one-no-trump bid:

1. X promises a long minor suit (at least six cards) or both majors (usually five cards in each major suit).
2. 2 ♣ tells partner you have clubs and a major suit (at least four cards in each suit).
3. 2 ♦ tells partner you have diamonds and a major suit (at least four cards in each suit).
4. 2 ♥ is a natural bid, promising a six-card heart suit.
5. 2 ♠ is a natural bid, promising a six-card spade suit.
6. 2NT promises both minors (usually five cards in each minor), or a big hand.

Following your X of one no trump (choice #1), your partner must bid two clubs (with a self-sustaining 6+ card suit, partner may alternatively bid his own suit). If clubs is your long minor suit, you will almost always pass. If your suit was diamonds, you will correct to diamonds and your partner will pass. If you have both majors, you will bid hearts and your partner will pass or correct to spades.

Following your 2 ♣ or 2 ♦ bid (choices #2 and #3), your partner can either pass, and let you play in the minor suit, or bid hearts. If hearts is your major suit, you will pass. Otherwise, correct to spades.

Following your natural 2 ♥ or 2 ♠ bid (choices #4 and #5), your partner can pass or, with support, compete.

Following your 2NT bid showing both minors or a big hand (choice #6), your partner should choose a minor and bid it. This is to play. If your 2NT bid was intended to show a big hand, simply bid your hand naturally and trust your partner to understand that you are strong.

Have a Plan to defeat the Contract

Sometimes it may be possible to plan declarers downfall. If there's a non-trump long suit out there lead it to get your partner a ruff.

Leads against NT contracts

Which Suit to Lead:

- a) Always lead the suit bid by your partner unless you have a much better option (most unlikely).
- b) Partner's Lead directional double or omission of a double of a Stayman or Transfer conventional bid by responder to 1NT, followed by a precedence to a NT contract.
- c) Choose a four-card suit with honours over a weakish 5 card minor.
- d) 1NT -3NT means at least NO 4CM, lead a major
- e) Lead the unbid major with suits of equal length

- f) If a long Suit has been indicated by the bidding, lead your short strong suit.
- g) After a 4th Suit Forcing process consider leading this suit if none bid by your partner
- h) Never lead a suit bid by opponents on their way to 3NT.

Which Card to Lead:

ACE	Shows the AKQ10, AKJ9, AQJ10 (PARTNER to unblock)
KING	Shows Top of Sequence KQJ, KQ10, maybe KQx
QUEEN	Shows Top of Sequence QJ10, QJ9, maybe QJx
JACK	Top of Sequence J109, maybe J10x
TEN	Combinations headed by AJ10, KJ10, or Top of Sequence 109x
NINE	Combinations headed by A109, K109, 2-8 Spot cards 4th Highest

Leads against Suit Contracts

Which Suit to Lead:

- a) If you have a strong sequence such as AK or KQJ lead this suit
- b) Partners bid suit or overcall
- c) Partner's lead directional double or omission of a double of a conventional bid by the opponents
- d) Lead a Trump when dummy rejects declarer's first suit and passes the second option, OR when partner passes your one-level take-out, or when you know that you have a large majority of the points (and declarer is counting on a significant x-ruff), OR when dummy has made a single raise of the opening suit and that becomes the contract.
- e) NEVER lead a Trump if the opponents are playing a misfit or if the dummy is known to have a long side suit plus trump support OR if you hold four trumps or if you have a short suit and a

suitable trump holding (one that cannot afford to trump)

f) Lead the missing suit if the opponents end up in 3 or 4 of the Minor instead of finding the cover for 3NT

Which Card to Lead:

ACE	Shows the AKQ10, AKJ9, AQJ10
KING	Shows Top of Sequence KQJ, KQ10, maybe KQx
QUEEN	Shows Top of Sequence QJ10, QJ9, maybe QJx
JACK	Top of Sequence J109, maybe J10x (Jack Denies)
TEN	Combinations headed by AJ10, KJ10, or Top of Sequence 109x
NINE	Combinations headed by A109, K109,

Response to partner's opening lead:

- a) Play attitude (high card discourages suit and low encourages) unless:
- b) If it's obvious that continuation of suit will establish tricks for the declarer, then change to suit preference signal (high card – higher non trump suit, low card – lower non trump suit).

My opening lead:

- a) Per the convention card for honours and/or series (i.e., top of series or internal series) against suit and NT contracts.
- b) If not honour or series lead (per above), 4th best against NT. This card should NOT be less than a 7 as this will inevitably end in a cheap trick for the declarer.

After opening lead:

a) If partner breaks new suit, then give attitude signal (low encourage, high discourage)

Count:

Occasionally it is convenient to provide count when on lead. High-Low means even number and Low-High means odd number in suit. However, attitude is primary signal to partner leads.

"Jack Denies and other opening lead signals":

The lead of a Jack implicitly denies holding any cards higher than that

BOSTON Leads:

During the play, leading a low dot card will imply that I have "something" in a suit. Leading a high card will imply that I have "nothing". Leading an initial 7,8 or 9 says to your partner "This is just a passive lead, no need to return"

Discards:

Use "Revolving" suit preference signals i.e. a low club asks for a spade lead, while a high Diamond asks for a heart etc. This system is the best for signalling as it gives most options for selecting a discard and needs no reference to any other card or the suit you are discarding on.

The things to NEVER or ALWAYS do in Defence

Don't lead unsupported honours, if you lead an honour you are signalling the top of a sequence (could be 2).

Don't lead a singleton opposition trump as opening lead

Don't lead any suit bid by declarer

Never give declarer a Ruff and Sluff

Never ruff in your hand (long side) when you can ruff in dummy (short side)

Look to your right, now lead to dummy weakness

Look to your left, now lead through dummy strength

Never lead **through** or **to** dummy's long unestablished suit (don't set it up)

The things to ALWAYS do in Defence

Lead to dummy weakness and **never** to a tenace, AQ KJ etc

Try, whenever possible to double the opponents conventional bid (such as a transfer initiation) to direct you partners lead.

Keep leading your top long suit when opponent's long side trumps are under pressure from your side 4 trump holding (especially with the 5/3 trump fit)

Always have it in mind whether declarer is under strain to make it or not.

Passive and Aggressive Opening Leads

Lead passively against MARGINAL (tight) contracts and let the tricks come to you. Don't buy tricks with High card sequences, e.g. leading a king to make a Queen. This is OK if you have an entry with an Ace so you can cash your queen after taking the Ace. Lead more aggressively against easy contracts.

Always grab your quick tricks if you and partner have agreed a suit fit.

Try not to lead an unguarded ACE. The exception to this is that if opponents are in a small or grand slam and the contract is considered makeable.

Card Play

When practical allow tricks initiated by opponents lead to flow to the tenaces or undercard of your suits.

Count your losers and winners. Check the security of your trump suit. If the draw is going to be interrupted try to dump sure losers early. Never draw the last boss trump unless a long sequence suit will be prevented from securing the contract.

In NT contract there is often ONE suit to be setup first. Make this discovery before proceeding. In a suit contract cash in your outside tricks BEFORE you embark on a long X-ruff.

Common Suit Combinations -- How to finesse

AQ5 (DUMMY)

432 (YOU)

With this combination, you have one winner and two losers unless your left-hand opponent (LHO) holds the king. Lead the 2 from your hand and, if LHO follows with a low card, play dummy's queen. This type of simple finesse will win 50% of the time.

K32

654

You can also finesse for an ace. Play LHO for that card by leading from your hand. If LHO follows low -- and he almost always will when he holds the ace -- play dummy's king. If your right-hand opponent (RHO) has the ace, you never had a chance to win a trick in this suit.

A432

QJ109

If LHO has the king, a finesse wins four tricks. Lead the queen and if LHO plays low, "let it ride" by playing low from dummy. If the queen wins, repeat the finesse by leading the jack.

AJ32

K654

In an 8-card fit, the queen will not usually fall if you cash ace-king, so plan to finesse LHO for the queen. Cash the king first (in case the queen is singleton), then lead toward the AJ3 left in dummy. If LHO plays low, play the jack. This line of play will win slightly more than 50% of the time.

AJ32

K1054

This suit offers a two-way finesse because you hold the jack and ten. Decide (or guess) which defender is more likely to hold the queen. If it's LHO, play the suit by cashing the king and then leading toward the AJ3, playing the jack if LHO follows low. If you think RHO has the queen, cash the ace, then lead toward the K105.

A432

J1098

You can try a double finesse if you're missing two honours. Here, you hope to lose only one trick by playing LHO for one or both honours. Lead the jack. If LHO plays low, play low from dummy and let RHO win his queen or king. You can now finesse LHO for the remaining honour by running the 10. This play will win three tricks 75% of the time.

AQ32

10987

This is a double finesse for the jack and king. Lead the 10 and let it ride, then repeat by leading the 9. If LHO holds both king and jack, you'll win four tricks. If he has either one of these honours, you'll win three tricks.

K432

J1098

This is another double finesse, but it offers an extra trick only if LHO has the queen. Lead the jack and let it ride. If this wins, or if RHO wins the ace, you'll know you've trapped LHO's queen. Repeat the finesse by leading the ten and letting it ride. This play will win three tricks 50% of the time.

A432

Q765

Since you don't have the jack to back up the queen, you can't trap the king if LHO has it. (If you lead the queen, LHO will "cover an honour with an honour" to force the ace and you'll lose three tricks to the J109.) Instead, you must hope RHO has the king and will win it as you play small cards. Cash dummy's ace, then lead the 2 towards your Q76. If RHO plays low, play the queen. (Note that RHO won't always "fly" with his king, especially if this is the trump suit).

A432

Q1065

This is similar to the combination above, but holding the 10 gives you another option. If you think RHO has the king (because of a clue from the bidding or previous tricks), play the suit as above -- cash the ace and lead the 2 toward your Q106, playing the queen if RHO follows low.

If you instead think that LHO has the king, you can finesse RHO for the jack. Cash the ace and lead toward your Q106, playing the ten. If in doubt, choose this option (ace, then low to the 10); this will succeed when RHO holds Jxx or KJxx.

A432

Q1098

You have the same honours as in the previous two examples, but the "solid" 1098 allows you to run another type of double finesse. The best way to play this suit for three winners is to lead the queen. If LHO covers with his king, you'll win the ace and lose only one trick to the jack. If LHO plays low on your queen, play low from dummy. If RHO wins the queen with the king, you'll take a second finesse -- play LHO for the jack by leading the 10 towards the A43 and letting it ride. Like other double finesses, this line of play will succeed 75% of the time.