

EHAA+

An unusually natural system, with additional gadgets suggested by Jari Böling.
Last updated January 21, 2003

1 Introduction

The original version of EHAA (=Every Hand An Adventure) is a very natural one: One level bids show 4+ suits and 13+ hcpts, two level bids show 5+ suits and 6–12 hcpts, and the notrump bids show 10–12 and 21–23 hcpts. More information about the original system can be found in the book "Every Hand An Adventure" by Eric Landau and Randall Baron and in http://www.blakjak.demon.co.uk/ehaa_faq.htm.

The most remarkable feature in the system is the "EHAA-twos", which seems to be very close to the modern undisciplined twos (despite the fact that EHAA is from the late 50's), while the natural weak 2♣ must be very rare. This, however, means that there is no forcing opening. This should not be any problem in a pairs tournament, as very strong hands are rare. If you have a strong unbalanced hand a 1-level opening rarely get passed out, and with a balanced 24–27 hcpts you can open 3NT. A strong 2♣-opening (21+hcpts, excluding 21–22 balanced) has a frequency below 0.5%, while the EHAA 2♣ has a frequency of above 7%. At teams, however, the strong 0.5% can be a quite important one, as the inability to describe 21+ hcpts will lead to some missed games and slams. This version is an attempt to fix this problem, utilizing a natural-or-strong-1♣.

I have also suggested different conventions which I believe to be suitable for the system. Most important of these are the weak-two conventions, as the range of hands which are opened with a weak two is large. I have in this case used Kent Feilers conventions (<http://www.enteract.com/~kfeiler/bridge/system/catofcX.htm>) almost directly. Here are my suggestions for opening bids, including frequencies obtained with Hans van Staveren's dealer program:

EHAA+ Opening Bids				
Opening	strength	description	conventional response	frequency
1♣	a) 12–18	4+ clubs	inverted raises	4.8%
	b) 19+	any shape (excluding 19-22 bal.)	1♦=0–5 hcpts, 2♦=2-over-1	1.3 %
1♦	12–18	4+ diamonds	inverted raises	5.7%
1♥	12–18	4+ hearts	2NT	8.1 %
1♠	12–18	4+ spades	2NT	7.3 %
1NT	10–13	balanced		15.6 %
2♣	5–11	5+ clubs	2♦	7.1 %
2♦	5–11	5+ diamonds	2NT	7.7 %
2♥	5–11	5+ hearts	2NT	8.2 %
2♠	5–11	5+ spades	2NT	8.7 %
2NT	20–22	balanced		0.65 %

The big difference compared with the standard EHAA is the 1♣ opening, which includes apart from the natural one also a strong version (about 1/5 of all 1♣ openings are strong). All other bids are natural and straight forward, and any conventions can be used.

Compared with standard natural systems with 2♣ as game forcing the one-level bids in EHAA+ are tighter limited. The upper limit is 18 (unbalanced) or 19 (balanced) hcpts, the frequency of strong 1♣ is actually about three times higher than game-forcing 2♣. I think that this lower upper limit allows passing on all openers natural rebids, for example 1♥-1♠-3♦ is passable (as well as the rebid 2♦). Also the lower limit of 12 hcpts is more sharp in EHAA than in other natural systems, as you may open with a 2-level opening if you have a 5-card suit, and open 1NT with 10-13 hcpts and a balanced hand. The strongest hand with which you have to pass in EHAA+ is a hand with a 4441-distribution and 11 hcpts.

As can be seen from the opening frequencies, 4 card suits are opened in the order ♥-♠-♦-♣ which makes the 1♣ opening most rare. This because there are some bids and rebids which are reserved after the 1♣

opening due to the strong alternative, and thus the bidding after 1♣ opening is slightly less accurate than after the other 1-level openings.

I am also more familiar with the 10–13 1NT opening and 5–11 weak twos, so I used these limits. I have included all 5332 hands in the 1NT opening frequency, in practice one might want to open with a 1- or 2-level suit bid with at least some of the 5-card major hands.

2 Responses to the 1♣ opening

The idea is to respond to the 1♣ opening as to a natural opening, except that you may not pass, you bid 1♦ showing 0–5 hcpts. This means also that the 2♦ response must be reserved to showing a 4+ (usually 5+) suit and 10+ hcpts. The opener shows in his first rebid if he has the strong or the limited hand. Unfortunately this cannot be done really simple, but I have tried to make it logical:

Responses to 1♣			
Response	Strength	Description	Openers 19+ rebid
1♦	0–5	any shape, replaces pass	2♥+
1♥	6+	4+ hearts	2♣
1♠	6+	4+ spades	2♣
1NT	6–9	balanced, or unbalanced with ♦	2♣
2♣	10+	4+ clubs	3♦+, excluding 3NT=18–19
2♦	10+	4+ diamonds	3♥+, excluding 3NT=18–19
2♥/♠	0–5	6 card suit	2NT (= inv+ raise) and 3♦+, excl. raises
2NT	10–11	balanced	3♥+, excluding 3NT = 15–19
3♣	6–9	5+ suit, unbalanced	4♣+, excluding 5♣
3NT	12–13	balanced	4♥+

Note that the 1NT response to 1 in a suit in EHAA definitely must be limited to really lousy 10 points. Never even consider bidding 1NT with 11 hcpts, as it should almost always be enough for a game. Some likelihoods for the responses (and responders hcpt-ranges), from both openers and responders viewpoint:

Likelihoods (%) for the responses to 1♣			
Response	Both	Natural	Strong
1♦	25.6	21.6	40.0
1♥	29.6	31.6	22.1
1♠	25.9	27.6	19.7
1NT	9.0	8.2	12.1
2♣	3.3	3.3	3.5
2♦	6.6	7.5	2.6
2♥/♠	1.2	1.1	1.6
2NT	?	?	?
3♣	2.0	1.3	4.5
3NT	?	?	?
6–9	40.5	40.0	42.2
10–11	16.0	17.5	11.1
12+	18.0	20.9	6.7

The responses 2NT and 3NT are not tested, as it would always be possible to bid 2♣ or 2♦ in these cases. The choice between these bids seemed too tedious to specify for a computer. Due to the same reason all 2♥ and 2♠ responses are also included in the 1♦ response, and all 3♣ responses are also included in the 1NT responses. That is, the sum of the likelihoods for the responses 1♦–2♦ is 100.

Note that responder should use quite disciplined style in his responses to 1♣, as opener can be strong (and the likelihood for this is higher the less hcpts responder has). Opener should not bid 3♣ with any hand, he should be ready for a game against a 19 points hand without club fit. And the weak jumps 2♥/♠ should

be really weak (with KQxxxx or AJxxxx, bid 1♥/♠), opener might pass with 19-20 hcpts. Furthermore, splinter bids should probably not be allowed on 1♣, you have to bid 2♣ in these cases.

As a help of memory, it can be mentioned that opener shows the strong hand after responders 1♥-1NT (all bids which show 6+hcpts) with 2♣. After all other responses opener uses higher bids (e.g. all jump-shifts) which does not make sense for the natural hand, or at least logically is best used for the strong hand. All other "normal" rebids show the natural version and are otherwise also natural. Borderline cases which I had problems deciding were the sequences 1♣-1♦-2♦, 1♣-2NT-3♦, and 1♣-3♣-4♣. As can be seen in the table above, the two first show natural reverse bids, and the last one is a 19+ (at least slam invitational) hand with clubs. With game-going values you start with a with a three-level bid, primarily asking for a stopper for 3NT.

And now some examples, first openers rebids after the 1♦ negative:

Responses to 1♣-1♦		
Response	Strength	Description
pass	12-15	4 diamonds (rarely used, prefer 1NT or 2♣, especially when vulnerable)
1♥	12-19	4 hearts
1♠	12-19	4 spades
1NT	14-19	balanced, denies 4 card majors !
2♣	12-18	5+ clubs
2♦	16-18	4 diamonds, unbalanced hand
2♥	19-22	5+ hearts
2♠	19-22	5+ spades
2NT	23-24	balanced
3♣	19-22	5+ clubs
3♦	19-22	5+ diamonds
3♥	23+	5+ hearts
3♠	23+	5+ spades
3NT	25-27	balanced
4♣	23+	6+ clubs, unsuitable or too strong for 3NT
4♦	23+	6+ diamonds, unsuitable or too strong for 3NT
4♥/♠	28-30	4 card suit, balanced hand
4NT	28-30	balanced hand, no 4 card major

An unbalanced opening hand with 12-15 hcpts and 5+ clubs is a bit problematic. On responders 1M or 1NT opener cannot make his natural call 2♣, as it shows a strong hand. On the 1M(=Major) response opener must rebid 1NT without support, showing either 14-17 balanced or 12-15 hcpts and 5+ clubs. On 1NT opener must pass or invite with 2NT or 3♣.

Responses to 1♣-1M		
Response	Strength	Description
1♠	12-19	4 spades
1NT	a) 14-17 b) 12-15	balanced 5+♣ and unbalanced
2♣	19+	see below
2♦	16-18	4 diamonds
2M	12-15	4 M
2OM	16-18	4 OM (=Other Major)
2NT	18-19	balanced
3♣	16-18	6+ clubs
3♦/OM	16-18	splinter
3M	16-18	4 M

Responses to 1♣-1NT		
Response	Strength	Description
2♣	19+	see below
2♦	15–18	4 diamonds
2♥	15–18	4 hearts
2♠	15–18	4 spades
2NT	16–17	balanced
3♣	15–18	6+ clubs
3NT	18–19	balanced

After the strong 2♣ rebid by opener responder is supposed to bid 2♦ with most hands.

Responses to 1♣-1M-2♣		
Response	Strength	Description
2♦	6+	standard response, not suitable for the other calls
2M	6–9	6+M, denies shortness
2OM/3♣/♦	6+	6+M, shortness in bid suit
2NT	6+	6+M, an unspecified void, 3♣ asks (M replaces ♣ in the responses)
3M	10+	6+M, denies shortness

I did not find any obvious usage for the 2NT bid, so I thought it could be used for showing voids. You can leave it undefined, if you wish. With all balanced hands you can (and should) bid 2♦. I did not find it necessary to define any higher bids, 3M being a borderline case. The current definition of 3M allows use of M-rebid after 2+♦ as showing exactly 5 card M. The idea with the current definition of 2M is to allow the following bidding sequences 1♣-1M-2♣-2M-4M (= to play) 1♣-1M-2♣-2M-3M (=cue-bid-forcing).

In the 1♣-1NT case responder can be unbalanced with ♦, as 1♦ is reserved as 0–5 negative. These hands are shown by bidding something else than 2♦, which might sound strange, but is in line with the bids after a major response.

Responses to 1♣-1NT-2♣		
Response	Strength	Description
2♦	6–9	balanced, standard 1NT response
2♥/♠/3♣	6–9	6+♦, shortness in bid suit
2NT	6–9	6+♦, an unspecified void, 3♣ asks (♦ replaces ♣ in the responses)
3♦	6–9	6+♦, denies shortness and 3-card majors

Here a more natural use of 2NT would be to show maximum and balanced, but I think it is better to bid 2♦ and let opener show his hand at a lower level instead.

Instead of showing/denying shortness, the responder could also show controls (A=2, K=1), something like 2♦=0–2, 2♥=3, 2♠=4, 2NT=5, and so on. The response scale could start one step lower also (2♦=0–1, 2♥=2, ...), especially after 1NT response as 4 controls (two Aces) is absolute maximum.

The inverted minor raises are discussed under a separate section.

The 2♦ response is quite special and must naturally be alerted. It must be treated as almost game-forcing. Openers 3♣ and 3♦ are passable, all other bids are game-forcing. So the 2M bids could primarily be stopper asks, while a rebid of the major shows a real suit, similarly as after the 2♦ opening.

Responses to 1♣-2♦		
Response	Strength	Description
2♥/♠	14-18	GF, suit/stopper
2NT	14-17	GF, both majors stopped, denies 4M, usually balanced
3♣	12-13	5+♣, non-forcing, 3♦= min, 3M = stopper ask
3♦	12-13	4♦, non-forcing
3♥/♠	19+	5+ suits
3NT	18-19	balanced
4♣	19+	5+ suit
4♦	19+	4+ suit
4♥/♠	23+	4 card suits, balanced
4NT	23+	4 card suit, balanced

The weak 2M responses are more or less preempts, opener passes, raises or corrects (rarely) to 3♣ with a natural hand. It should also be possible to raise to game with a minimum 19+ hand. All other bids show a 19+ hand and are round forcing, 2NT is a "standard" asking bid (responder guarantees a 6-card suit, contrary to the 2-level openings): With minimum you rebid your suit, with maximum you bid your shortness or 3NT without any shortness. Note that opener may bid 2NT both with a 19+ hand or a very good natural hand.

I did not find any better use of the response 2NT but the old-fashioned one: Invitation to 3NT, with something that looks like stoppers in the majors. But do you need any other responses than 3♣ and 3NT for the natural hand? 3♦ is better used for unbalanced slam invitation with 4 diamonds and 5+clubs.

Responses to 1♣-2NT		
Response	Strength	Description
3♣	12-13	long but poor suit, with a good suit consider 3NT
3♦	16-18	4 diamonds, 5+♣, 5 or 6 in a minor might be better than 3NT
3♥	19+	5+ hearts
3♠	19+	5+ spades
3NT	12-19	to play
4♣	19+	5+ clubs
4♦	19+	5+ diamonds
4NT	23+	Blackwood

The 3NT response is a bit problematic, you should probably avoid it after 1♣, use 2♣ or 2♦.

2.1 Interference over 1♣

As 1♣ is natural in about 4 of 5 cases, the opponents probably will (and should) use the same conventions as against a natural opening. Thus we do not need any odd conventions either (inverted raise probably best left off). Responder assumes that the 1♣ opening is the natural alternative, and he may now of course pass as he would have on a natural 1♣. If we assume that the opponent sitting between opener and responder has 9+ hcpts, the likelihood for opener to have the strong alternative is now only 13 %, thus making the assumption even more safe. A few of openers rebids now can show 19+:

1. Cue bid. Always strong after responders pass, after responders suit bids it may be a stopper ask. Stronger than jump shifts.
2. Jump shifts, as a new suit is always reverse. 2 or 3-level jump shifts show 19-22 unbalanced and responder may pass. Jumps to 2 or 3NT are trick-based (enough stoppers and a source of tricks).
3. New suit bids above 4♣ (after responders pass), also non-jumps. Opener rarely has another good 5+ suit, if he has a natural 1♣. And I do not see any reason to introduce a new four or a weak 5 card card suit at the 4- or 5-level.

4. Double. May be used with the right distribution, that is it should promise shortness in opponents suit and length (3+) in the other suits, including clubs. Double become more for penalties if opps are at a higher level, especially above 3NT.
5. Redouble or 2♣ (on 1♣ doubled). Redouble is standard SOS, that is asks for responders best suit. But if opener bids on, he is strong, and does not necessary have more than 3 cards in clubs. With 2 or less cards in clubs opener must bid 2♣, in order to avoid playing 1♣ redoubled with worse trumps than 4-3.

Examples, where responders bids after interference are on the 1-level round forcing, and on the 2-level they are non-forcing and show 7–11 hcpts (cue by responder = support, inv or better).

1♣-(1♠)-pass-?, double = takeout, natural or 19+, 2♠ is always 19+, 1NT, 2♣, 2♦ and 2♥ are natural, 2NT = eight tricks and a stopper, 3C+ = strong version but limited, responder may pass

1♣-(1♠)-2♥-?, 2♠ is GF (19+ or stopper ask), 3♠ and 4♦ are splinters and natural, 2NT, 3NT, 3♣, 3♦, 3♥, 4♥ are natural.

1♣-(1♠)-2♥-(2♠)-?, dbl is invitational, semi-penalty or takeout (whichever you prefer), 3♠ is GF (19+ or stopper ask), 4♦ is splinter, 2NT, 3NT, 3♣, 3♦, 3♥ and 4♥ are natural.

2.2 Inverted minor raises

Inverted minor raises are quite necessary after the multi-1♣, as bidding after 1♣-3♣ (3♣ showing 10+ hcpts) would be quite impossible if opener is strong. Furthermore, some of the openers rebids are reserved for showing the strong hand. Here is my first suggestion:

Responses to 1m-2m, alt 1		
Response	Strength	Description
3m	12-13(14)	minimum, responders bids below 3NT ask for a stopper
2♦/♥/♠/3♣	14-18	shortness in bid suit
2NT	(14)15-17	denies shortness, responders bids below 3NT show shortness
3NT	18-19	balanced
Others	19+	strong version, after 1♣

You can't check for stoppers in the above version, or find a 4-3 major fit when necessary. But the idea is to bash 3NT unless both hands are really minimum, or you see a shortness + no-stopper/no-wasted-values in a suit (which implies that 5 or 6m could be a better spot). A more standard version is also ok in EHAA+:

Responses to 1m-2m, alt 2		
Response	Strength	Description
3m	12-13	further bids below 3NT asks for stopper
2♦/♥/♠/3♣	14-18	stopper, responders support of a Major shows 3 cards
2NT	15-17	balanced, side suits more or less stopped
3NT	18-19	balanced
Others		strong after 1♣, splinter after 1♦

Note that splinter-responses to the 1♣ opening are prohibited (they can be used after 1♦), and in both versions (and especially in version 1) can responder bid his shortness after 1m-2m-2NT.

As mentioned earlier, the double raise of clubs should be quite disciplined, as opener with the 19+ alternative will a) push to game b) want to decide if there is any slam. Thus opener should really have 4+ clubs and 6-9 hcpts, unsuitable for a 1NT-response.

Responses to 1m-3m	
Response	Description
3♦/♥/♠	asks for stopper for 3NT, 3NT=stopper, 4m=min, others=cue, max
3NT	to play
Others	strong after 1♣, splinter after 1♦

3 The major openings

The EHAA+ major openings are quite well limited in strength. You will not be tempted to stretch the lower strength limit, as you can use the weak 1NT opening or the weak twos. And the upper strength limit is 18 unbalanced and 19 balanced.

Responses to 1M		
Response	Strength	Description
1♠	6+	natural
1NT	6–10	natural
2♣/♦	10+	4+ suit
2♥	10+	5+ suit (after 1♠)
2M	6–9	3+ support
2NT	10+	4+ support (bal. and semibal. 10–14 and all 15+)
3M		preemptive, 4+ support
4M		preemptive
2♠/3♣/♦/♥	7–10	mini-splinter
3♠/4♣♦/♥	11–14	splinter
3NT	13–15	balanced with three card support, or a void-splinter ??

I found that I rarely use jump-shifts (and when I would like to use them, I do not remember if they are strong or weak), why not use them as mini-splinters ? This forces use of 4♥ as 11–14 splinter after 1♠. This tends to push the auction to the five level, but it is generally good to have something in the remaining side suits when you splinter, which makes it easier for your partner to evaluate his hand. Anyway, mini-splinters should be common and useful, and result in accurate game-evaluations.

I prefer using 2NT (Stenberg) as a limit raise rather than as a GF-raise, as this makes the response almost twice as common, and it frees the double raise for other purposes. The 10+ hcpts raise occurs in 9.3% of the 1♥ openings, compared with 4.8% if you require 12+ hcpts (8.7% and 4.6% respectively, after 1♠).

Responses to 1M-2NT		
Response	Strength	Description
3♣	12–14	minimum
3♦/♥/♠	15–17	balanced, A or K in bid suit (M=♣)
3NT	18–19	balanced
4♣♦/♥	15–18	shortness, ♥replaces OM
4♠	15–18	Only after 1♠, 6+ suit but no side-suit controls

The 4♠-bid is a catch the rest bid, with hearts and no side controls you bid 3♣ (with up to 18 points !). The system uses 3♦/♥/♠ different from standard Stenberg, where these bids show a side-suit (of quite unspecified quality). In my version you show at least Kx in a suit and deny shortness. As a by-product, cue bidding starts at a low level.

Responses to 1M-2NT-3C		
Response	Strength	Description
3♦	15+	asks for shortness, 3NT = denies, 3M = ♦
3M	10–11	opener may pass
3OM/4♣/♦	15+	shortness
3NT	14–16	balanced, opener may pass (especially with 14 balanced)
4M		to play

Note that opener after the minimum response quite often has a shortness, as he has not opened 1NT. And again, responders shortness bids can of course be replaced with side-suit bids, if this is considered more important. The idea with shortness bids is to limit the splinters to 11–14 hcpts.

I have also thought about using a more complicated system, with bids showing a singleton, a void and a 5-card side-suit. I used Hans van Staverens dealer program for comparing likelihoods for the different features.

If the bidding goes 1M-2NT, and opener is non-minimum (15+ hcpts or 14+ unbalanced), the likelihoods for openers different features are:

After 1♥: singleton = 31%, 5+ side-suit = 5.3%, a void = 3.4%.

After 1♠: singleton = 32%, 5+ side-suit = 10.4%, a void = 5.4%.

Responses to 1M-2NT, more complicated version		
Response	Strength	Description
3♣	12-14	minimum
3♦	14-18	a singleton, 3♥ asks, 3♠=OM, 3NT=♦, 4♣=♣
3♥	14-18	a 5-card side suit, 3♠ asks, 3NT=OM, 4♣=♣, 4♦=♦
3♠	15-18	balanced or semi-balanced (5422, 6322 and 7222 are included)
3NT	18-19	balanced
4♣/♦/♥	14-18	void in bid suit, ♥ replaces OM

Voids are shown on the four level for a few reasons:

1. A void is the least common feature
2. With a void the urge to play 3NT is the smallest
3. With a void in a suit you will most likely have controls in the side-suits which are possibly jumped over. The danger of jumping over uncontrolled suits with splinters is illustrated below.

Here is an interesting bidding problem (from the rec.games.bridge newsgroup): You have ♠: xxx ♥: Axxx ♦: x ♣: AQJxx, and partner opens 1♥, what is your call ?

There are of course three alternatives, 2♣, 2NT and 4♦. 2♣ tells partner that the club King is a good card, but will you be able to convince pard about the four card support later on ? 2NT asks partner about his hand, and wouldn't you really want to tell about yours instead ? 4♦ tells partner about support and the diamond shortness, but it doesn't tell which suit of the other two is better. In rgb it was argued that a splinter should promise something better than two or three small in the other two suits. In the above example partner might push to the 5-level with Qxx, KQJx, Axxx, Kx. Lets try this one, using the three alternatives:

1♥-2♣-2NT-4♥-?. Partner did not support immediately, so his values are concentrated in clubs, and a pass is likely the best alternative. But what if partners shortness would have been in spades instead ?

1♥-2NT-3♦-4♣-4♥-pass (simple version). Now everyone knows that spades are uncontrolled. Responder knows that opener has wasted or bad values in diamonds (6♥ is laydown with AS instead of AD).

1♥-2NT-3♠-4♣-4♦-4♥-pass (complicated version). Again everyone knows that spades are uncontrolled. About the same information is exchanged

1♥-4♦-5♣-5♥-pass. Again, everyone knows that spades are uncontrolled, and you are even on the five level.

4 The 1NT opening

Further information about NT-conventions which are mentioned below can be found in http://www.abo.fi/~jboling/bridge/nt_sys.pdf. I have also discussed advantages and disadvantages of weak 1NT in this document.

As can be seen from the opening bid table, the 10-13 1NT opening is the most frequent EHAA opening, with an opening frequency of 15.6% (a 15-17 1NT has a frequency of 4.9%). The preempting factor of such an weak 1NT is quite high, without any significant losses in the constructive bidding. Actually, the weak NT acts as a lower limit to the other 1-level openings, and together with the weak two opening factors guarantee that opener has 12+ unbalanced points, with at least a singleton or two doubletons, or 14+ balanced points. In EHAA you only open 1NT with 4432 5332 and 4333 distributions, there is no need to open with 5422, 6322 or 7222 distributions, as all qualify for a one or two level opening depending on the strength. You are allowed to open 1NT with 5-card majors with 1NT, although you may with good suits open 2M with 10-11 points or 1M with 12-13 points. In the latter case you have to be prepared for rebidding your suit, or lie about your strength. A 1NT rebid after a suit opening promise 14-17 hcpts.

You may of course use any response system you like with the 1NT opening. My favourite is Joppe-NT, but I have also played two-way Stayman and (a version of) puppet-Stayman together with weak NT.

After interference I use the Rubensohl-convention. An escape system is also useful, opponents tend to double weak 1NT frequently. My favourite is DONT-escapes (similar to DONT-defense), which allows playing 1NT doubled when both hands are balanced (which is quite common, as openers hand is it for sure).

5 The weak twos

As mention earlier, the weak twos are really undisciplined, almost any distributions are allowed, 5332 as well as 7600 are ok. There are almost no suit quality restrictions, although you should keep in mind that partner tends to lead your suit. Due to the undisciplined nature of the openings, you need more conventions than for the traditional weak twos. I think that Kent Feilers conventions

<http://www.enteract.com/~kfeiler/bridge/system/catofcX.htm>, which are briefly summarized below, are very useful in EHAA. I have also adapted the system to the 2♣ opening, when 2♦ is used instead of 2NT as a asking bid, and also suggested an alternative meaning of the 3NT rebid after the 2NT response.

Responses to 2♦/♥/♠	
Response	Description
new suit	Stopper/length-asking bid
2NT	Invitational or better asking bid, 2+ support
jump shift	control asking bid
raises	preemptive
games	to play

5.1 New suit bids ask for stoppers and length

A new suit bid can be used both for finding support and checking stoppers. Opener responds:

Responses to 2any - new suit	
Response	Description
lowest NT	stopper
1st step	no stopper, 0 or 1 card
2nd step	no stopper, 2 cards
3rd step	no stopper, 3 cards
4th step	no stopper, 4 card
5th step	no stopper, 5 cards

You have to take into consideration that 3NT may be exceeded in some cases, in the worst case 2♠-3♥-4♣ = no stopper, two cards in hearts. This might be a problem if you have three small of your own, and find out that opener has three small also, making the already exceeded 3NT playable. If opener bids NT, responders rebid at the 3-level asks for suit length. You can't make an invitation, but as responder must have been prepared for a singleton or a void and instead finds a fitting honor, it should be enough for responder to always want be in game.

After a new-suit bid, responders bids in another new suit is also a length asking bid, but without the stopper bid. This is so also after a NT-response to the first suit. This is responders way to show a two-suiter.

5.2 Jump shifts are control asking bids

Jump shifts are control asking bids (CAB) in an undisturbed auction (support+side suit after interference, as in McCabe). Opener responds:

Responses to 2any - jump shift	
Response	Description
lowest NT	guarded king
1st step	no first or second round control
2nd step	singelton
3rd step	Ace
4th step	void

5.3 2NT is an invitational or better raise

2NT always promise at least 2-card support, and asks for openers suit length, suit quality, and general strength. Without support, responder should be more interested in the other suits or notrump.

Responses to 2♦/♥/♠-2NT			
Response	length	suit quality	strength
3♣	6	?	?
3♦	5	bad	? (5-9)
3♥	5	good	min
3♠	5	good	max

A good suit includes 2 of the top 3 honours. The borderline case for minimum and maximum is 8 hcpts, which can be shown as min or max depending on other factors. Additionally opener can respond:

3NT = Solid 6 card suit.

4 in a new suit = 5-card side suit, good hand

jump rebid = good 7-card suit (with a poor one, you have to start with 3♣).

Bids beyond 3NT are not allowed after a minor opening, while it should be fairly safe after a major opening, as responder promise 2+ support (and opener with his bid beyond 3NT an unbalanced hand). The auction 2♦-2NT-3♦ is a bit problematic, as responder cannot invite. Of course, the chances for 3NT are quite low when opener has a bad 5-card suit, but what if opener has 10-11 hcpts ! I thought about using 3NT for these hands, telling 10-11 hcpts and a bad 5 card suit instead of the traditional solid 6-card suit. It is actually only a problem after a 2♦ opening, as it is possible to invite after the other bids. Kent Feiler suggests to use of a more narrow point range, 8-11 for 5-card suits, which also remedies the problem to some extent. However, the following simulation illustrates that the suggested use of 3NT could be better. If the bidding goes 2♦-2NT, 2NT promising 2+♦ and 14+ hcpts, the likelihoods for the different responses are:

Responses to 2♦-2NT, frequencies		
Response	original	new
3♣	24.0 %	24.2 %
3♦	67.0 %	56.8 %
3♥	4.0 %	4.0 %
3♠	5.0 %	5.0 %
3NT	0.2 %	10.2 %

As can be seen, over 75% of all openings are with a 5-card suit, and the 3♦ response is very frequent, and a solid suit is very rare. In most cases with a solid suit you have enough strength for a one-level bid. Furthermore, in over 70% of the new 3NT responses responder has 14-16 hcpts. That is, if you pass all 3♦ bids with 14-16, in 15 % of all cases you will have 24-27 hcpts, and you will be going against the field (playing 3NT) in about 7% of all 2♦ openings. And also, the RKCB-convention can also be used for checking the solidness of the trump suit, when necessary. I am currently strongly for using 3NT in the suggested new way instead of the traditional way.

After the 3♣ response opener may GF and ask with the lowest non-raise. A 2NT followed by a raise is invitational.

Responses to 2♥/♠-2NT-3♣-3♦			
Response	length	suit quality	strength
3♥	6	bad	?
3♠	6	good	min
3NT	6	good	max

Responses to 2♦-2NT-3♣-3♥			
Response	length	suit quality	strength
3♠	6	bad	?
3NT	6	good	?

Similarly after the 3♦ response:

Responses to 2♦/♠-2NT-3♦-3♥			
Response	length	suit quality	strength
3♠	5	bad	min (5-7)
3NT	5	bad	max (8-9)

After 2♥ opening you have to relay with 3♠, as 3♥ is invitational.

Responses to 2♥-2NT-3♦-3♠			
Response	length	suit quality	strength
3NT	5	bad	min (5-7)
4♣	5	bad	max (8-9)

5.4 The 2♣ opening

After the 2♣ opening it is better to use 2♦ as asking bid, and 2NT is a natural invitation to 3NT. If you want to ask about diamond stoppers, you bid 3♦, and 4♦ is control asking bid in diamonds.

Responses to 2♣-2♦				
Response	length	suit quality	strength	major length
2♥	?	?	?	4 ♥
2♠	?	?	?	4 ♠
2NT	6	?	?	<4
3♣	5	bad	5-9	<4
3♦	5	good	min	<4
3♥	5	good	max	<4
3♠	6	solid	max	<4
3NT	5	bad	10-11	<4

Here there is enough space to both show a solid suit and a bad 5-card suit and 10-11 hcpts, with 3♠ and 3NT. With a solid suit it is quite essential that responder becomes declarer in the most likely contract 3NT, so the proposed meanings of 3♠ and 3NT should be better than the other way around.

After the 2M rebids, 2NT asks again about the club suit, responses as after other 2-openings. In the auction 2♣-2♦-2♥-2♠, 2♠ shows a 4-card suit, hoping for a 4-4-0-5 distribution. Three level bids are invitational in clubs and the shown major, and the other two are CAB:s, setting the major as trumps.

5.5 Competition

In most competitive auctions responder will pass or raise opener's suit. After a double, the McCabe convention (see below) can be used, as after all other preemptive openings.

Responses to 2♣/♦/♥/♠-(non-jump)-?	
Response	Description
double	penalty
2NT	usual asking bid, also after 2♣
Cue bid	good raise, not preemptive
Raises	preemptive
New suit	Natural and forcing
Jump shift	Raises showing a good side suit

The jump shift is supposed to let opener make a good decision when opps bid their game. A double by opener demands a lead in the shift suit.

The McCabe convention allows distinction between two handtypes after opponents double: a) A hand with a long good suit and no support to openers suit, and b) a hand with support and a good side suit, as a jump shift after suit bids by the opponents.

Responses to 2 or 3 any-(double)-?	
Response	Description
redouble	escape to responders suit, demands opener to keep the auction open
new suits	raises showing a good side suit, forcing

6 The 2NT opening

Further information about NT-conventions which are mentioned below can be found in http://www.abo.fi/~jboling/bridge/nt_sys.pdf.

Responses to 2NT		
Response	Strength	Description
3♣		Baron, asks for 4-card suits, 3NT=clubs
3♦/♥		transfers
3♠		minor/strength ask
3NT		to play
4♣/♦		5+ suit, slam invitational or better, 4NT only negative
4♥/♠		to play
4NT		Blackwood

In retrospective, it seems as 3♣ Puppet Stayman could fit best into the system, as minor explorations can be done with the bids 3♠, 4♣ and 4♦. And Puppet Stayman allows description of openers 5-card majors, which you can't with Baron.

7 Agreements for special situations

7.1 The 4441 distribution

As in most (all?) systems, 4441 distributions are difficult to handle. With an Ace in the singleton suit, you may bid it as a balanced hand, especially with 20–22 you open 2NT, while I think that you should never open 1NT with 4441. With less than 12 points you pass, remember that 4441 is an ideal distribution for a takeout double, and with 4-cards in the opponents suit you might as well stay silent. With 12+ you open with a one-level bid in ♥ or ♦ (avoid 1♠, 1♣ is better, 2-over-1 response in your short suit is problematic), with up to 20 points. With 21–22 you open 1♣, and hope that pard will bid something else but your short suit, and you may avoid showing a balanced 23–24 or describe a 4-card suit as a 5+suit.

7.2 Openers forcing rebids

As mentioned earlier, as the opening bids are more limited than in standard natural systems, responder may pass on all limited rebids with absolute minimum, especially if he also sees a misfit.

7.3 Responders forcing rebids

As a general rule, reverse and new suit on the three-level by responder is always forcing. There are also some other situations when responder need special conventions.

1. When three suits are bid, a bid in the fourth suit is forcing.
2. Opener rebids 1NT, when responders 2♣ (or 2♦ after 1♣ opening) is Checkback. I have discussed Checkback in my NT-document (nt_sys.pdf)
3. Opener rebids his suit. This is a problem if responders initial jumps are something else but strong, as they should be after the 1♣ opening (and for simplicity reasons also after 1♦), and as I suggested after the 1M openings. It is actually never a problem after the 1♣-opening, as opener with minimum and a long club suit must bid 1NT (the 2♣ rebid shows a 19+ hand), and you may checkback with 2♦. In the other situations (1♦-1M-2♦-? and 1♥-1♠-2♥-?) responder must always make up a forcing bid (e.g. 3♣), even without a 4-card side-suit. The 3M rebid is not forcing, although it is a quite strong invitation (11–12 hcpts).