

The Unbalanced Diamond System by Marshall Miles

My System: The Unbalanced Diamond by Marshall Miles (Masterpoint Press, ©2007)

Summary by [Pete Matthews Jr](http://3nt.xyz) – <http://3nt.xyz> – © December 22, 2010

Purpose of This Summary and Use of *Italics*

The Unbalanced Diamond bridge bidding system (“the system”) is well thought out and presented by Marshall Miles. However, the system differs in many ways from standard and two-over-one bidding. It’s too difficult to actually play an entire foreign system from text and examples, hence this summary.

Also, it turns out that Miles does not cover some important points. In some cases, such as the precise responses to the weak 1NT or to weak two bids, the omission is intentional: Miles offers key opinions (which I uniformly adopted as part of the summary), but leaves the reader to employ favorite tools.

In other cases, this summary exposes gaps in the system, especially in competition, where *I have supplied methods in italics*. As you start to play the system, I recommend that you play the system from this summary, but consider my suggestions as some of the first candidates for revision.

System Structure

1♣	Usually 15-19 HCP (judgment encouraged), 17-19 unbalanced minor(s), occasionally stronger, artificial and forcing opening bid. 1♦ waiting, <i>denies</i> : 6+ with a 4-card major (1♥/1♠), 10+ with a 5-card minor (2♣/2♦), 13+ balanced (1NT/2NT); 2♥/2♠ weak.
1♦	11-16 HCP (11-14 with a 4-card major), artificial, unbalanced (singleton, 6+ card suit, or 5-4-2-2), <i>denies</i> a 5-card major. 2♣/3♣/4♣ responses are “pass or correct to diamonds”; 1NT forcing (constructive to unlimited), likely with clubs; 2♦ natural game force; 2♥/2♠ invitational; 3♦ may be passed only with a singleton or void.
1♥	5+ hearts, ~10-15 HCP. May have a longer minor and be quite powerful. 1NT response constructive, non-forcing; 2♣ is artificial game force; 2♦ 3+ diamonds, invitational; 3♣ invitational; raise non-constructive or constructive with honor doubleton; raise to game strong or weak; 2NT 15+ raise (Jacoby); 2♠ weak.
1♠	5+ spades, ~10-14 HCP. 2♥ response invitational, non-forcing; otherwise the same as over a 1♥ opening.
1NT	12-14 balanced, no 5-card major; includes some 5-4-2-2 hands, especially with strength in the short suits or no 4-card major.
2♣	Strong hand containing a 5+ card major (usually 6): 17+ with a good 6+ card major, 19+ with one or two very strong 5-card majors, or game forcing when the major is not particularly strong.
2♦	20+ unbalanced without a 5-card major, or 22-23 balanced (may have a 5-card major). Opener bids 4-card majors. With one exception, responder bids 5-card majors. Either opener or responder may pass a bid below game, if game seems improbable.
2♥/2♠	Weak.
2NT	20-21 balanced. Responses based loosely on puppet Stayman methods.
3NT	NAMYATS: a pre-empt to four of an unspecified minor. Club responses are pass or correct.
4♣/4♦	NAMYATS: a strong pre-empt to 4♥/4♠.

System Summary

O1	R1	O2	R2	O3	R3	Description
1♣	Usually 15-19 HCP (judgment permitted), 17-19 unbalanced minor(s), occasionally stronger, artificial & forcing					
	1♦	Waiting, <u>denies</u> : 6+ with a 4-card major, 10+ with a 5-card minor, 13+ balanced. Responder may later jump with 8-9 or a good 7. <i>Competition: when 1♣ is doubled, 1♦ denies the usual responses, shows 6+ HCP and diamonds no worse than clubs. Redouble is the same, but with better clubs.</i>				
		1♥	Kokish relay: 18-19 balanced (NT rebid), or hearts (anything else). <i>Redouble = heartstopper.</i>			
			1♠	Expected relay. <i>Competition: opener's redouble= spades and hearts</i>		
				1NT	18-19 balanced, modified systems on	
					2♣	Garbage Stayman, subsequent minor suit is signoff
					2♦	Transfer to ♥
					2♥	Transfer to ♠
					2NT	Natural, invitational
					3♣/3♦	Natural, invitational
					2♣/2♦	Natural, promises 5+ hearts as well, non-forcing
					2♥	6+ hearts
					2♠	Forcing one round, 4 spades, 5+ mediocre hearts, 18+ HCP
					2NT	27-28 balanced, forcing
					3♣/3♦	natural, 5+ hearts, forcing
					3♥/3♠	GF with 5 cards in a mediocre suit, and 4 cards in the other major
				1NT	<i>Undefined</i>	
				2♣/2♦	Natural, 5+ cards, 6-7 HCP mostly in the suit	
				2♥	Artificial, 9-11 HCP not suitable for 2♠, forcing to game	
				2♠	Artificial, 10-12 HCP, slam-worthy cards	
				2NT	<i>Undefined</i>	
				3♣/3♦	Natural, 5+ cards, 8-9 HCP mostly in the suit	
				1♠	Natural, 5+cards, not forcing	
				1NT	15-17 balanced, may have 5 hearts, modified systems on:	
					2♣	Garbage Stayman, subsequent minor suit is signoff
					2♦	Transfer to ♥
					2♥	Transfer to ♠
					2NT	Natural, invitational
					3♣/3♦	Natural, invitational
					2♣/2♦	Natural, 5+cards (or 4-4-4-1), 17+ if no major
					2♥	4 spades, 5 hearts, 16-17 HCP
					2♠	4 hearts and longer spades, non-forcing but strong
					2NT	24-26 balanced, forcing
					3♣/3♦	Natural, forcing
					3♥	GF with 6 strong hearts and 4 spades
					3♠	GF with 6 strong spades and 4 hearts
				1♥/1♠	Natural, 4+ cards, 6HCP (5 HCP with a 5-card suit, or a 6-card suit headed by the Ace)	
				1NT	15-17. Responder's 2♣ is NMF.	
				2♣/2♦	Natural, 5+cards (or 4-4-4-1), forcing, 17+ if no major	
				2NT	18-19 balanced.	
				Jump shift	Natural, game forcing (probably a hand improved by the response)	
				1NT	13-15 HCP, balanced, forcing to game (<i>competition: 8-9 balanced, with stopper, non-forcing</i>)	
				2♣/2♦	Natural, 5+ cards, 10+ HCP, forcing to game	
				2♥/2♠	Natural, 6+ cards, fewer than 5 HCP with no Ace (<i>competition: jump is 6-8</i>)	
				2NT	16+ HCP, balanced, forcing to game (<i>competition: jump is 13-15, non-jump 8-9, always with stopper</i>)	
				3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠	4-4-4-1, 10+ HCP singleton in suit above: next suit asks controls: 4-, 5, 6, ... (exclude stiff K)	

O1	R1	O2	R2	O3	R3	Description
1♦	11-16 HCP (11-14 with a 4-card major), artificial, unbalanced (singleton, 6+ card suit, or 5-4-2-2), denies a 5-card major, not forcing					
	Rdbl	<i>Competition: redouble ~8-10, denies a 4-card major, shows diamonds much better than clubs</i>				
	1♥/1♠	Natural, 4+ card suit				
	1♠	[over 1♥] natural, 11-14 HCP, with 4 spades (non-raise rebids over 1♥ deny 4 spades)				
	2♣	pass or correct to 2♦ (as usual)				
	2♦	fourth suit forcing (artificial)				
	1NT	11-14 HCP, no 6-card suit; either a singleton in responder's major or 5-4-2-2				
	2♦	Forcing to game or 4 of a minor, and possibly artificial				
	2♥	[after 1♠ resp.] 4+ hearts, 5-3 minors				
	2♥/2♠	[raise] all hands with doubleton support (5-4-2-2)				
	2♠	[after 1♥ resp.] <i>undefined</i>				
	2NT	4-4-4-1				
	3♣/3♦	5 cards in the bid minor, 4 in the other minor, 3 in the other major				
	2♣/2♦	5+ card suit and a hand unsuitable for a 1NT rebid				
	2♥	[over 1♠] 0=4=5=4 or 0=4=4=5				
	2♥/2♠	[raise] 3-card support & singleton or 4-card support (5-4-2-2). 2NT game try				
	2♠	[over 1♥] splinter (maximum with 4-card support)				
	2NT	5-5 to 6-6 in the minors				
	3♣/3♦	6+ card suit, 15-16 HCP				
	3♥	[over 1♠] splinter (maximum with 4-card support)				
	3♥/3♠	[raise] 4-card support with any singleton				
	3♠	[over 1♥] super raise (singleton in minor)				
	4♣/4♦	7-card suit with 4-card support				
	1NT	Forcing, denies a major suit, likely has clubs: (1) a standard 1NT response, (2) a good hand with clubs, (3) a conditionally good hand, or (4) a hand good enough for game in diamonds or slam in clubs. (<i>competition: same.</i>)				
	pass	[opposite passed hand] 4-4-4-1, especially with two 4-card majors				
	2♣	Natural, longer minor (may be 4=4=1=4)				
	2♦	<i>Non-forcing, long diamonds, no club fit, too good to pass 1♦</i>				
	2♥/2♠	Forcing, implies clubs, shows a concentration of strength				
	3♥/3♠	splinter				
	4♣	good hand with clubs				
	2♦	Natural, longer minor (may be 4=4=4=1)				
	2♥/2♠	Forcing, implies clubs, shows a concentration of strength				
	3♣	good hand with clubs, game forcing				
		3NT	singleton club			
		splinter	with good club support			
	3♥/3♠	splinter				
	2♥/2♠	4-4-4-1 with a singleton in the other major				
	3♣/3♦	Very good suit and very good hand				
	2♣/3♣/4♣	Pass or correct to diamonds. This applies any time opener has not yet named a minor. <i>Responder may be broke for 2♣</i>				
	2♦	Forcing to 3NT or 4 of a minor, a strong hand with primary diamonds				
	2♥/2♠	Natural, 6+ card suit, invitational (jump is 6-8 in competition)				
	2NT	Natural and forcing to game, 13-15 or 18+ HCP (<i>competition: jump is same, non-jump ~11-12</i>)				
	3suit	Shortness (not K or Q), to select between 3NT or minor game/slam				
	3NT	no singleton, other than K or Q				
	3♦	Natural, forcing unless opener has a singleton or void in diamonds (do not correct to clubs)				
	3NT	Natural, 16-17 HCP, all suits well stopped. May be enough for slam opposite a long minor.				

O1	R1	O2	R2	O3	R3	Description
1♥/1♠	5+ hearts, ~10-15 HCP; or 5+ spades, ~10-14 HCP. May have a longer minor and be quite powerful. <i>Bergen rule of 19, with common sense (open one point lighter than standard Bergen).</i>					
	1♠	4+ spades, constructive				
	1NT	Non-forcing, constructive				
		2NT	[after 1♥ opening] 4=5 majors, 15 HCP			
	2♣	Artificial game force, assumed natural, but could have long hearts, slam interest, or choice of games				
		2♦	<i>Catch-all (nothing else to say)</i>			
		2♥	[new suit] natural, 4+ hearts			
		2♥/2♠	<i>[repeat] 6+ cards</i>			
		2♠	[new suit] natural, 4+ spades (<i>does not promise extra values</i>)			
		2NT	<i>Natural, non-minimum, stoppers, wants to declare NT</i>			
		3♣/3♦	5+ cards			
	2♦	3+ diamonds, may have longer clubs, invitational, forcing one round, guarantees a rebid unless opener raises diamonds or bids NT. Subsequent jump into new suit natural, forcing and distributional				
		2♥/2♠	Opener's rebid of his suit promises 6+ cards			
	2♥	[over 1♠] natural, at least a good 5-card suit, invitational, not forcing.				
		Pass	Weakish hand with 2 hearts and 5 spades			
		2♠	6+ spades and 2- hearts			
		2NT	Relatively balanced, with only 5 spades and 2- hearts			
		3♥/4♥	As appropriate			
		2♥/2♠	[raise] Not constructive; or a constructive honor-doubleton, e.g. 2♠ on ♠Qx ♥xx ♦Axxxx ♣Kxxx			
		2♠	[over 1♥] weak			
		2NT	Jacoby, a good 15+ HCP, usually without a singleton or void.			
		3suit	Singleton or void			
		4suit	5+ card side suit, no side suit with two quick losers. Asks Jacoby points in steps, of those available: A=2, and in our two suits, K=2, Q=1:			
			1st	4 or fewer		
			2nd	5, ..., skipping 4NT		
			4NT	RKC Blackwood (partnership method)		
		3♣	6+ clubs, invitational			
		3♦	weak			
		3♥/3♠	[raise] invitational with 3+ trumps			
		4♥/4♠	May be strong or weak			
1NT	12-14 balanced, no 5-card major; includes some 5-4-2-2 hands, especially with strength in the short suits or no 4-card major. No Texas.					
	Pass	Weak, balanced hands, even when doubled.				
	Redbl	Strong, 9+ HCP (systems OFF over double)				
	2♣	Stayman, possibly garbage				
	2♦	Transfer to ♥				
	2♥	Transfer to ♠				

O1	R1	O2	R2	O3	R3	Description
2♣	Strong hand containing a 5+ card major (usually 6): 17+ with a good 6+ card major, 19+ with one or two very strong 5-card majors, or game forcing when the major is not particularly strong.					
	2♦	Almost automatic, waiting				
		2♥/2♠	Strong suit, 18-21, non-forcing			
		2NT	Invitational inquiry			
			3♣	Bad hand, bad suit		
			3♦	Bad hand, good suit		
			3♥	Good hand, bad suit		
			3♠	Good hand, good suit		
		3♥/3♠	Raise shows slam interest, asks for singleton			
		2NT	5-5 to 6-6 in the majors, 18+ HCP, forcing one round			
			3♣	Preference for hearts, or no preference		
			3♥	Non-forcing		
			3♠	Opener has stronger spades, non-forcing (responder can bid 4♥/4♠)		
			4♣/4♦	<i>Cue bid, forcing</i>		
			3♦	Preference for spades		
			3♥	Opener has stronger hearts, non-forcing (responder can bid 3♠/4♥/4♠)		
			3♠	Non-forcing		
			4♣/4♦	<i>Cue bid, forcing</i>		
		3♣/3♦	Natural, unlimited, forcing, 4+ cards with a strong major, or 5+ cards with a 5+ card major. Opener rebids the major, if it is strong. Opener's 3NT rebid says the major is not strong; responder may pass with stoppers, raise the minor, or bid 4♥ (pass or correct).			
			3♦	No major suit preference		
			3♥	Preference for hearts (or no preference)		
			3♠	Preference for spades		
		3♥/3♠	Natural, unlimited, forcing			
			3NT	No aces, but at least one king		
			4♣	Asks for cheapest king		
			Bid	That ace, only		
				Cheapest non-trump asks for specific king		
			Jump	Lower of two aces, or that ace and the king of trumps		
			Raise	No aces or kings		
		2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦	Suit that will run opposite honor doubleton, <u>plus</u> a side A or K			

O1	R1	O2	R2	O3	R3	Description
2◇		20+ unbalanced without a 5-card major, or 22-23 balanced (may have a 5-card major). Opener bids 4-card majors. With one exception, responder bids 5-card majors. Either opener or responder may pass a bid below game, if game seems improbable.				
	2♥	Negative, denying 6 HCP or 5HCP including an ace				
	2♠	Every unbalanced hand with 4 spades; if not raised, must next bid 3♥ when holding 4 hearts				
		2NT	Avoid			
		3♣	4+ clubs; denies 4 spades or 5+ hearts			
		3◇	4+ diamonds; denies 4 spades, 5+ hearts, or 4+ clubs			
		3♥	5+ hearts, denies 4 spades			
		3♠	4+ spades			
		2NT	22-23 balanced, systems on			
		3♣/3◇	Natural, unbalanced, denies a 4-card major			
		3♥	Every unbalanced hand with four hearts, but not four spades			
		3NT	Suggests playing 3NT based on a running minor suit			
	2♠	Positive, promising 6 HCP or 5 HCP including an ace, denies a 5-card major or a moderate 5-card minor				
		2NT	22-23 balanced, systems on			
		3♣/3◇	Natural, unbalanced, denies a 4-card major			
		3♥	Every unbalanced hand with 4 hearts, may have 4 spades			
		3♠	4 spades (the exception to the 5-card rule for responder)			
		3♠	Every unbalanced hand with four spades, but not four hearts			
		3NT	Suggests playing 3NT based on a running minor suit			
	2NT	10+ HCP, <i>balanced</i> , forcing to 4NT, natural continuations				
	3♣/3◇	6+ HCP (5 with an ace), 5+ card suit, some values in the suit				
	3♥/3♠	6+ HCP (5 with an ace), 5+ card suit				
2♥/2♠	Weak two bid: 3-9 HCP, at least QJ9xxx in first or second seat. 2NT: Ogust rebids (3◇ = bad hand, good suit).					
2NT	20-21 balanced (may have a 5-card major). Don't try too hard for a major suit fit on balanced hands.					
	3♣	Shows exactly one four card major (at least 4-4-3-2, or three cards, with a singleton)				
		3◇	Denies a 5-card major (alert)			
		3♥	Shows four spades (alert). Over 3NT, responder's minor is natural, slamming.			
		3♠	Shows four hearts (alert). Over 3NT, responder's minor is natural, slamming.			
		3NT	To play (opener must pass)			
		4♣	5 hearts, four spades, and a singleton or void			
		4◇	5 spades, four hearts, and a singleton or void			
		3♥/3♠	5 card major			
	3◇/3♥	Transfer (3♥/3♠). Opener's 4♣ shows exceptionally good hand for responder; responder's 4◇ retransfers for signoff. Responder's new suit shows at least 5-4. 5-5 majors: Transfer to spades and then 4♥ gives choice of games; transfer to hearts and 3♠ shows slam interest.				
	3♠	Transfer to 3NT, either to play or with minor suit slam interest.				
		4♣/4◇	Natural one-suiter, forcing			
		4♥/4♠	Splinter with both minors			
	3NT	Both majors: 4-4, or 5-4-2-2 with a weak longer suit (alert), pass or correct.				
	4♣	Gerber				
	4◇/4♥	Texas transfer (4♥/4♠)				
	4NT	At least four cards in each major suit (alert), invites slam.				
	5NT	At least four cards in each major suit (alert), forcing.				
3NT	NAMYATS: a preempt to four of an unspecified minor. Club responses are pass or correct. 4◇ asks opener to bid a singleton, 4NT=minor.					
4♣/4◇	NAMYATS: a strong pre-empt to 4♥/4♠.					

Competition after a One Club Opening

- When $1\clubsuit$ is doubled, $1\spadesuit$ shows diamonds at least as good as clubs (possibly planning to bid clubs), and redouble shows clubs better than diamonds. Both show 6+ points and deny the other responses, which are unchanged.
- When $1\clubsuit$ is overcalled at the 1-level: pass denies (a) 6 points and a 4+ card major that could be bid at the one level, (b) 9+ points and any 5-card suit that could be bid at the 2-level, and (c) *values to bid 1NT* – but you could have a penalty pass! Responder's jump to $2\heartsuit/2\spadesuit$ is stronger than without an overcall, 6-8 HCP and a long suit.
- When $1\clubsuit$ is overcalled at the 2-level: any suit bid is forcing for one round, and should show 7+ points and a good 5+ card suit (need more points with only 5 cards).
- When the opponents are at the 3-level, a double by the $1\clubsuit$ opener shows more than one place to play. 3NT would be for minors (or two lower).
- A free bid of 1NT (or non-jump 2NT) is *invitational*: 8-9 balanced, with a stopper, and non-forcing. A jump response of 2NT in competition is 13-15 balanced, with a stopper (the normal 1NT pushed up a level).
- Negative doubles, nominally for unbid majors, but possibly strong with a long suit or balanced hand. Opener does not jump past 3NT (Q instead, to show strong values in support of a major).
- Support double and redouble.
- Presume opener has 15-17 balanced; opener's double is takeout with 2NT Lebensohl at the two level.

Competition after a One Diamond Opening

- When $1\spadesuit$ is doubled, redouble shows ~8-10 points with diamonds much better than clubs (making $2\clubsuit/3\clubsuit/4\clubsuit$ inappropriate), and denies the other responses, which are unchanged.
- When $1\spadesuit$ is overcalled: $2\clubsuit/3\clubsuit/4\clubsuit$ is still pass or correct, $2\spadesuit$ is still strong, and 1NT is still forcing. If applicable, 4NT for pick a minor. If the opponents bid diamonds, clubs is no longer pass or correct. Negative free bids.
- Negative doubles, nominally for unbid majors, but possibly strong with a long suit or balanced hand. Opener does not jump past 3NT (Q instead, to show strong values in support of a major).
- A non-jump free bid of 2NT is *invitational*: 11-12, balanced, with a stopper, non-forcing.
- Responder's jump to $2\heartsuit$ is weaker after an overcall, 6-8 HCP and a long suit.
- Support double and redouble.

Competition after a Major Suit Opening

- When both majors have been bid [$1\heartsuit$ -($2\spadesuit$)] or [$1\spadesuit$ -($2\heartsuit$)], double is optional penalty (alert), singleton in opener's suit, defensive values (4 trumps and 9+ HCP or 3 good trumps and 10+ HCP).
- When a major is available, double is negative, but be conservative. Opener does not jump past 3NT (Q instead).
- Free bids are non-forcing (negative), do not promise a rebid, 10+ HCP if only 5 cards.

Competition after a 1NT Opening

- Systems off, redouble strong (9+HCP), Lebensohl.

Competition after a Two Club or Two Diamond Opening

- When $2\clubsuit$ or $2\spadesuit$ is overcalled, double is for penalty, as it is over a weak two bid in a major.

Experience

Mark Throop and I have been playing the system occasionally for a few months, with some success.

Potential Modifications to Consider

Once you have some experience with the system, you might want to consider some modifications. Except as noted, Mark and I play the system as Miles wrote it.

Ranges for NT Responses to 1♣

The range for the 1♦ response to 1♣ is large, and the opponents like to jump in. Mark and I weakened the 1NT response to 10-13 (or a good 9), with no 4-card major. 2NT likewise denies a major and is used with 14+ HCP.

Responses to a 1♦ Opening

Miles himself, as evidenced in “Challenge the Champs”, *The Bridge World*, October, 2010, no longer plays a 2♣ as pass or correct. Mark and I have changed to natural, almost game-forcing responses of 2♣ and 2♦ that may include a four card major. If either partner raises or bids NT, or if responder fails to rebid his suit, the auction becomes forcing to 3NT or four of the minor. Opener’s rebid of a major suit promises four cards. A 3♣ response retains its preemptive pass or correct meaning, and 3♦ becomes weak. 2NT is still natural, no 4-card major, 13-15. 1NT is semi-forcing: opener may pass with 11-12 HCP and 4-4 in the majors.

Replace the 2♦ Opening

The real strengths of the system are the light, limited 1♥ and 1♠ openings, and the 1♦ opening coupled with the weak 1NT. I really like the 1♦ opening. These four bids come up lots; they are fun and effective to play. While there is much to learn here, each session actively reinforces that learning.

In contrast, the 2♣ and 2♦ openings seem less valuable and are harder to learn, because they don’t come up often. We have opened 2♦ about six times (making a mistake or having a bad board on the first five, and receiving only an average on the sixth having bid a lay-down club grand slam, since the 12-tops 7NT comes home), and 2♣ once. Furthermore, the 24+ HCP balanced hands are buried in the 1♣ opening, where they are a ticking time bomb.

One obvious approach would be to use a standard strong 2♣ opening, and extend the 1♣ opening to cover all hands in the gap. You could play weak 2♦, or use something else – especially if it would reduce the strain on the 1♣ opening. I recommend my high range **Triple Roman 2♦** opening, which I have demonstrated to improve the bidding of 4-4-4-1 hands with the system – see [Explorations of Roman 3-suited Openings at Bridge](#).

The three forcing openings in the system are intertwined as described, so you’d need to redesign the system after a 1♣ opening. The main changes I would propose: make opener’s jump 2♠ rebid strong and forcing, likely with a second 5-card or longer suit. 2NT after a 1♦ response would show both minors. Two-suiters including hearts would be bid using the Kokish 1♥ response and a jump, after a 1♦ response, or a forcing 2♣/2♦ after a 1♠ response. Of course, the strong balanced hands would be opened 2♣.

Precision Club

If you roll all the strong hands (except perhaps a 2NT opening) into the 1♣ opening, you can do whatever you want with the 2-level bids. This might be great at matchpoints, where frequency of good results, not the size, is what matters. In the old days, Precision used a 13-15 1NT opening, although modern Precision tends to use 14-16. Extending 13-15 down to a good 12 might make sense in the context of the Unbalanced Diamond, or just play 12-14. For the 1♣ opening, I recommend the 2010 edition of *Precision Today*, by David Berkowitz and Brent Manley. For the two-level, I recommend **Quad Roman 2♣** (see [Explorations of Roman 3-suited Openings at Bridge](#)) plus the **Big 2♦**:

O1	R1	O2	R2	O3	R3	Description
2♦	A strong, balanced hand with 22+ HCP or a big hand with a strong suit, at most one loser opposite a void.					
	2♥	Negative, denying a king or two queens				
		2♠	Game-forcing balanced hands			
			2NT	Wild, weak 2-suiter – bid playable suits up the line		
			3♣	Stayman		
			3♦	Transfer to hearts		
			3♥	Transfer to spades		
			3♠	Transfer to 3NT to right-side the hand		
		2NT	Strong, balanced, non-forcing, systems on			
		3suit	Natural, non-forcing			
		3NT	To play, based on a running minor suit			
		4suit	Natural, non-forcing			
		2♠	Positive, promising a king or two queens			
			2NT	balanced, game-forcing, systems on		
			3suit	Natural, forcing		
			suit	That ace		
			3NT	No ace, but a king		
			jump	Two aces or one and the trump K or Q		
			raise	None of the above		
			3NT	Suggests playing 3NT based on a running minor suit		
			4suit	Natural, non-forcing		
		3♣/3♦	Negative, natural, 6+ card suit			

This “Big 2♦ Opening” will further off-load the forcing 1♣ opening, especially for balanced hands. Howard Schenken chose this opening for his Big Club system, but my responses are better: I always have “systems on” for the balanced openings.