

Various Ways to Show Partner Your Extraordinary (More than Opening) High Card Point (HCP) Strength

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In randomly-dealt Hands the *most likely* HCP count for all 4 Hands in a given Board is, of course, **10** HCPs. But sometimes you will be dealt a Hand with *very few* of even *no* HCPs. And at other times you may be dealt a "*giant*" Hand.

As noted in the "Esther Bridge Lesson", "**A Comprehensive List of 8 Different Categories of Bridge Probabilities, and How These May Help Guide Your Bidding and Play**",¹

1. "Over half (**52.6%**) of all your Hands will contain **7-12 HCPs**."
2. About **20.6%** of all your Hands will contain **0-6 HCPs**."
3. About **10.1%** of all your Hands will contain **15-17 HCPs**, which many Partnerships play as 1 requirement for opening with a **1NT** bid."
4. About **1.0%** of all your Hands will contain **20-21 HCPs**, which many Partnerships play as 1 requirement for opening with a **2NT** bid."
5. About **0.4%** of all your Hands will contain **22-24 HCPs**, which many Partnerships play as 1 requirement for opening with an artificial, strong **2C** bid."

So, "*giant*" Hands are rare. But when a miracle HCP is dealt to you, you need to have ways to show Partner that a miracle has indeed occurred so that your Partnership can capitalize on the

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¹ See: https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/8_probs.pdf

miracle. Afterall, most of the Pairs sitting in your direction on this Board are likely to do so!

There are, of course, ways that an Opener can "show" Partner a "giant" Hand via his *initial* opening bid. For example, Opener can open 2C saying, "Partner, I hold **22-24** HCPs or I can take at least 8 Tricks." Or Opener can open 2NT saying, "Partner, I hold (1) **21-22** HCPs, (2) no void, (3) no singleton, (4) no more than 1 doubleton, but (5) I may hold a 5-card Suit including a Major."

You can also show a "big" Hand if you **DOUBLE** and then later bid again. There are 2 possible scenarios. If your **DOUBLE** is a "**Takeout/Demand**" **DOUBLE**, and you later bid again, you are showing Partner (and the Opponents) **17-18+** HCPs. Your Hand is "big", but not "giant", because Partner is allowed to PASS your 2nd bid. If instead your **DOUBLE** is a "negative **DOUBLE**", '[t]his is somewhat the opposite of #1 above. Why? Because if you had a good [H]and you would just bid the first time (no negative double)." ²

Also, as Responder you can show Partner extra strength by "super accepting" a Jacoby transfer bid. For example, **BH: 1NT, BT: 2D**, and **BH: 3H**, Opener **BH** tells Responder **BT** that **BH** has at least **4** (maybe **3** very good) **Hearts** and wants to play a Game contract if Responder **BT** has a little extra strength (such as more than **5 Hearts** or more than **8** or so HCPs and a favorable "side" Suit distribution.

There are also ways in which you as Opener can "show" "big" Hands by your second bid. Here 3 such conventions will be presented.

1. "Jump" But Non-Shift Bids

A "jump" bid is when a Partner makes a *higher bid than is necessary for the bid to be sufficient in a Suit already being bid by the Partnership*. A jump bid by Partner in a Suit originally bid by the Partnership shows that Partner has a stronger hand than what was originally promised. For example, if **BH: 1H, BT: 2D**, and **BH** says **3H**, **BH** is saying I have at least **6 Hearts** and also more than 13 points (e.g., **15-18 points**).

² On Larry Cohen's "Bridge With Larry Cohen" website, see his article, "Double and Bid": <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/double-and-bid>

2. "Reverse" But *Non-Jump* Bids by Opener ***ONLY*** in Partnerships Playing "Reverses"

A "reverse" bid is only when (1) both the Opener and the Partner **first bid at the one level**, and then (2) Opener bids a **new Suit HIGHER in rank** than the Suit Opener originally bid. A reverse typically shows about **16 to 18 points**. A "reverse" is "**forcing**" for one round. Jeff Tang has an excellent posting, "Reverse Bids", on his "Bridge Bum" website.³

These are the possible non-jump reverses by the Opener, **BH**, assuming no interfering bids:

BH	BT	BH
1. 1 C ,	1 H ,	2 D
2. 1 C ,	1 S or 2 D ,	2 H
3. 1 C ,	1 NT ,	2 D or 2 H or 2 S
4. 1 D ,	1 S ,	2 H
5. 1 D ,	1 NT ,	2 H or 2 S
6. 1 H ,	1 NT ,	2 S

Notice that each of the last bids is sufficient but also does **not** involve a "jump". A last bid such as 1**C**, 1**H**, 3**D**, on the other hand, involves BOTH a "jump" and a "shift".

3. "Jumpshift" (BOTH Jump & Shift) by Opener

A "jumpshift" by the Opener shows roughly **19 to 21 points**, including distributional points. A "jumpshift" involves **BOTH (1) a Suit shift to a Suit higher than the Opener's originally bid Suit, and (2) an unnecessary jump in contract level higher than necessary to make the bid "sufficient."** A "jumpshift" by the Opener is "Game Forcing" and thus is the strongest claim of extraordinary power.

Here are all the possible "jumpshift" bids by Opener, **BH**:

BH	BT	BH
1. 1 C ,	1 D ,	2 H
2. 1 C ,	1 D ,	2 S

³ See: https://www.bridgebum.com/reverse_bids.php

- 3. 1C, 1H, 2S
- 4. 1D, 1H, 2S
- 5. 1D, 1S, 3C
- 6. 1D, 1NT, 3C
- 7. 1H, 1S 3C or 3D
- 8. 1H, 1NT, 3C or 3D
- 9. 1S, 1NT, 3C or 3D or 3H

For example, if the bidding is **BH: 1C, BT: 1H, BH: 2S**, **BT** may have as few as **3 to 6 points**, so **BH** must have **19 to 21 points** to really think that a Game bid should be forced. Of course, if **BT** has only 3 to 6 points, **BT** may reject the force to Game by bidding **3H** or **3S**. Remember that DISTRIBUTION is a consideration in jump shift bids by the jump-shifter.