"The 'Landy Convention' Overcall of Opponent's 1NT Opening Bid, 'Landy' Responses Thereafter, and Some Variations Thereto"

Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen[1]

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Bruce: Today, we are honored to have with us Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, Quintuple Gold Emerald Life Master (*20 Million+* ACBL MasterPoints), who will discuss **"The 'Landy Convention' Overcall of Opponent's 1NT Opening Bid, 'Landy' Responses Thereafter, and Some Variations Thereto"**. Well, Esther, thank you for talking to us today!

Esther: D**n it, Bruce! How many times do I have to tell you to **NEVER**, ***ever*** call me Esther! Always, **ALWAYS**, ***ALWAYS*** instead call me, Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen!

Bruce: Errr, well, Est… err, I mean Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, sorry about that. Well, at the outset why don't you tell us a little bit first about by whom and second about why the "Landy Convention" was invented?

Esther: Well, Bruce, I will certainly try to help you. The "**Landy Convention**" was invented in the 1940's by Alvin Landy (1905 – 1967). The "**Landy Convention**" and "**Landy Responses**" initially involve you Overcalling an Opponent with an artificial bid of 2**C!** to "show" Partner a Hand that is 2-Suited in the Majors with *most of your HCPs* also being located in the Majors. By varying Partnership Agreements you must be 5-5, 5-4, 4-5, or 4-4 in the Majors. Because this 2**C!** bid is "artificial" and shows both Majors rather than Clubs this bid **must** be Alerted**!** to your Opponents!

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[1] As noted in an article in the Winter/Spring, 2024 article in The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Journal, https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf, Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So this article was really, really written by Bruce Thompson.

The "**Landy Convention**" is one of the earliest bridge conventions. The "**Landy Convention**" can be bid by you sitting LHO to the Opponent opening with a 1**NT** bid or by you after 2 PASSes to you sitting RHO the Opponent opening with a 1**NT** bid. Here is a little history about Alvin Landy:

About **Alvin Landy**

Alvin Landy (1905 – 1967) won **8** North American Bridge Championships and was runner-up **4** times. He was inducted into the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) "Hall of Fame" in 1998.

Bruce: Errr, well… Err, I mean… Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, ummm… Well, would you explain ***why*** it is important to have bridge conventions such as "**Unusual 2NT!**": **https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/unus_2NT.pdf** and the "**Flannery Convention**": **https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/flannery.pdf** and the "**Landy Convention**" to "show" Partner a 2-Suited Hand?

Esther: Well, Bruce, of course I will try to help you. As a predicate for this discussion I want to emphasize yet one more time that **NT** and Suit contracts differ very *fundamentally* about what Hand features are required for success.

NT contracts require HCPs and "stoppers" or "control cards" across all **4** Suits so that the Opponents cannot "run" a "long" Suit and kill your **NT** contract and potentially even do so "off the top".

Suit contracts, on the other hand, depend more on (1) Trump card counts and (2) distribution shapes than on HCPs. These realizations were promulgated in the award-winning 1992 bridge book by Larry Cohen, To Bid or Not to Bid: The LAW of Total Tricks, and by Marty Bergen's 1996 book, Points Schmoints!.

Favorable 1) Trump card counts and (2) distribution shapes (and not HCPs) were why ACBL LifeMaster James Bond, 007, was able to successfully set and "make" a 7**C DOUBLED REDOUBLED** contract when his Partnership *together* held only **8** HCPs!: **https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/moonraker.pdf**

Conversely, sometimes numerous HCPs are simply insufficient to enable a successful Suit contract. this is also why on the "**Mississippi Heart" Bridge Board** when as Dealer you hold a void in Diamonds, the "top" **6** Hearts, the "top" **4** Clubs, and the

"top" **3** Spades for a total of **29** HCPs and you might naturally open the bidding by setting a 7**H** contract:
https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0485_q.pdf
Regrettably, on this Board you will *inevitably* **make exactly 6 Tricks and get set -7!** To see other similar examples go to "**Esther's List of Some Fascinating Bridge Boards**":
https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/fascinate.pdf
All this means that "showing" Partner your unusual distribution shapes can be *critically* important!

Bruce: Errr, well, Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, is there a *second* reason why "showing" Partner that your Hand is 2-Suited is so *critically* important?

Esther: Well, Bruce, yes, indeed. When your Hand is 2-Suited the probability of you and Partner finding an 8+ card Suit "fit" goes up *massively*![2] For example, when you hold a Hand that is 4-4 in 2 Suits the probability of you finding an 8+ card "fit" with Partner is **60%**, but if you are 5-3 the probability of finding an 8+ card "fit" with Partner is **66%**. And you hold a Hand that is 5-4 in 2 Suits the probability of you finding an 8+ card "fit" with Partner is **74%**, but if you are 5-5 the probability of finding an 8+ card "fit" with Partner is **84%**!!!

Bruce: Errr, well… Err, I mean… Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, are there other 1**NT** Overcall conventions besides the "**Landy Convention**"?

Esther: Well, Bruce, of course! For example, there is the "**Cappelletti Convention**":
https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/cappellet.pdf
and the "**DONT Convention**":
https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/dont.pdf.

Bruce: Errr, well… Err, I mean… Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, ummm… Well, how many HCPs should you hold in order to make a "**Landy Convention**" 2**C!** Overcall?

Esther: Well, Bruce, again that is partly a matter of Partnership Agreement. Normally you should hold **10+** HCPs.

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[2] Within the "Esther Bridge Lessons" see: "**A *Comprehensive* List of 8 *Different Categories* of Bridge Probabilities, and How These May Help Guide Your Bidding and Play**":
https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/8_probs.pdf

But you and Partner may agree that the "**Landy Convention**" can be used if you hold as few as **8+** HCPs if:

1. The Opponents are Vulnerable but your Partnership is not Vulnerable;
2. Your Hand has extra "shape", such as a void or a singleton; and
3. You are sitting in the "balancing" seat (i.e., if you PASS then the contract will be set).

Bruce: Errr, well… Err, I mean… Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, if there is a *minimum* number of HCPs that you must hold (i.e., 8-10 HCPs) to make a "**Landy Convention**" 2**C!** Overcall, is there a *maximum* number of HCPs above which you should not make a "**Landy Convention**" 2**C!** Overcall?

Esther: Well, Bruce, yes indeed. Many players by Partnership Agreement bid **DOUBLE** of an Opponent's 1**NT** opening bid[3] says, "Partner, I hold **15-17** HCPs and my distribution exactly meets the requirements of a 1**NT** opening bid. Pretend from my **DOUBLE** that I had instead opened by bidding 1**NT**. All systems (e.g., Stayman and Jacoby transfers are 'on')".

Bruce: Errr, well… Err, I mean… Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, would you show us some example bridge Hands in which a "**Landy Convention**" 2**C!** Overcall might be appropriate?

Esther: Well, Bruce, I certainly want to help you. These examples are modified from some Hands presented by Jeff Tang in his excellent bridge web posting, "Landy":
https://www.bridgebum.com/landy.php
I have slightly modified some cards in these example Hands.

SOUTH (**11**)	SOUTH (**7**)	SOUTH (**11**)
S: K Q T 8 3	**S**: Q 9 8 4 2	**S**: A J 8 7 4
H: A 9 8 6 3	**H**: K Q 8 5 4 3	**H**: A Q T 4
D: Q 7 6	**D**: T	**D**: 6 4
C: --	**C**: 8	**C**: 8 3

Bruce: Errr, well… Err, I mean… Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, whoa! *WHOA!!* ***WHOA***!!!. Is that all there is to the "**Landy Convention**"?

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[3] Within the "Esther Bridge Lessons" see: "**7 Not-for-Penalty DOUBLEs**": **https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/double.pdf**

Esther: Well, Bruce, no, indeed! The "**Landy Convention**" also includes a series of *structured responses* to Partner's "**Landy Convention**" 2**C!** Overcall:

2**D!** Artificial. "Partner, I hold *equal* length in the 2 Majors. Please 'correct' to whichever Major you prefer."

2**H** Natural. "Partner, I would like us to play a 2**H** contract."

2**S** Natural. "Partner, I would like us to play a 2**S** contract."

3**H** 10-12 HCPs with **4** Heart cards. Invitational to Game.

3**S** 10-12 HCPs with **4** cards. Invitational to Game.

2**NT!** Artificial and "forcing" for **1** Round. Some Partners after the 2**NT!** response then use the 2**C!** Overcaller response system detailed by Matthew and Pamela Granovetter in their book, Bridge Conventions in Depth, as explained below.

Note. All "artificial" bids **must** be Alerted!

The Granovetters' 2C! Overcaller Response System if Responder bids 2NT!

Overcaller's Rebid	Meaning
3**C!**	"Partner, I hold "medium" strength (10-12 HCPs) and I am either 5-4 or 4-5 in the Majors.
3**D!**	"Partner, I hold "maximum" strength (12+ HCPs) and I am either 5-4 or 4-5 in the Majors.
3**H!**	"Partner, I hold "minimum" strength (6-10 HCPs) and I am 5-5 in the Majors.
3**NT**	"Partner, I hold "maximum" strength and I am 5-5 in the Majors.

Bruce: Errr, well… Err, I mean… Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, are there any variations on the "**Landy Convention**" 2**C!** Overcall?

Esther: Well, Bruce, there are *numerous* variations on the "**Landy Convention**" 2**C!** Overcall! One such variation is the "**Multi-Landy (Woolsey) Convention**": **https://www.bridgebum.com/multi_landy.php**
But I will leave you to your own devices to explore these variations further!