

Honeymoon Moscito

by Peter Buchen

(*Last Revised* : March 1991)

1 Moscito Opening Bids

Honeymoon Moscito is basically standard Moscito without the complications of learning all the relay responses. You still relay in Honeymoon, but all relay responses are natural descriptive bids. There is a lot of scope for initiative in these relay responses, as will be seen later.

The Moscito opening bids are:

<i>Moscito Opening Bids</i>		
1♣	15+	Any shape
1♦	10-14	No Major
1♥	10-14	4+Hearts (not 4-Spades)
1♠	10-14	4+Spades (not 4-Hearts)
1NT	10-14	Both Majors (at least 44)
2♣	6-9	Weak 2♥ or 2♠
2♦	6-9	55+ Both Majors
2♥	6-9	55+ Hearts + minor
2♠	6-9	55+ Spades + minor
2NT	6-9	55+ Both minors

Note: Add 2-points to all openings in 3rd and 4th seats.

2 Relays

The following is a list of rules which apply in all relay auctions:

1. Relayer initiates and continues relays by bidding the next step, except that 3NT is always to play and 1♣ initiates relays immediately.
2. Relayer may break-out of relays by bidding anything other than the next step. A break-out is a natural bid and tends to deny slam interest.
3. All relay auctions are GF (even after a break-out) with two exceptions:

- (a) After 1♣ Opening: Break-out after a negative response.
 - (b) Other Openings: Break-out after only one relay.
4. There are two types of relays: shape relays and control relays. The last shape relay allowed is 3♦ . All relays from 3♥ and up are control relays.

2.1 Shape Responses

This is the area of the system where ingenuity and imagination are required. The object is to get as much of your shape across to the relayer as possible, so that your last response finishes somewhere in the range 3♦ to 3NT.

1. Shape responses are mostly natural bids. In relay bidding, the motivating principle is *space-saving*. That is, responder should try to make the cheapest bid available which is consistent with the hand pattern. In fact, failing to make the cheapest bid, implies that this bid is incompatible with the hand pattern held.
2. Four-card suits are shown by bidding the cheapest available suit which responder has not yet denied. Five-card (or longer) suits can only be shown by bidding the suit (at least) twice somewhere in the auction. Three-card fragments can be shown when responder has denied length (4 or more) in the suit. The order of suit bidding is dictated only by space-saving, and not by suit length. Thus it is perfectly reasonable to bid a three-card fragment ahead of a four-card suit, if this order saves bidding space.
3. If the first shape response is the cheapest NT, then responder is showing a 4333 consistent with the opening (after 1♦ , 1♥ or 1♠ only).
4. There is one special space saving device. If 2NT-jump is the *first* shape response then it shows a 55+ two-suiter consistent with the responder's opening bid.
5. Try and be inventive in getting your shape across, but before you make your first response, think the whole auction through.

2.2 Control Responses

Shape responses will always finish somewhere in the range $3\heartsuit$ to $3NT$. Relay's further relays are control relays. There are two control relays based on what relayer feels he needs to know:

1. 1st step = AKQ-ask (using A=3,K=2,Q=1)
2. 2nd step = AK-ask (using A=2,K=1)

Responder replies according to the following table:

<i>Control Responses</i>				
HCPs	0-4	5-8	9+	15+
AKQ	2	4	6	-
AK	1	2	3	4

Thus, if responder is known to be 9+ hcpts and relayer asks for AKQ controls, the first step shows 6 (or less), the 2nd-step shows 7, the 3rd-step 8, etc.

Relayer often uses the AKQ ask just to check on responders hand strength. A good rule is that: Total HCPTs = 1.5 times AKQ count.

1. Having obtained the number of controls, later relays request their location by *denial cues*. That is, responder simply bids a suit to deny control in that suit. The control denied always matches relayer's control ask (ie AKQ or AK). Any suits skipped infer that a control is held in that suit.
2. As a further space-saving device, responder may reply the cheapest NT as a denial cue in the suit last bid by the relayer. The inference is then that responder holds a control in all other suits.
3. Relayer may continue requesting denial cues to locate second and third controls held in a given suit. If responder has denied a control in a suit, then that suit of course drops out of later cycles. The last possible denial cue relay is $6\spadesuit$. All bids from $6NT$ up are to play.

2.3 Zooming

Sometimes, after getting responder's shape, relayer will attempt to sign-off in game without checking for controls. Over all openings other than $1\clubsuit$ this will not present a problem, because relay-responder is limited to 10–14 hcpts. However, a positive response to a $1\clubsuit$ opening shows 9+ hcpts and is unlimited. Relayer's sign off in game (without checking for controls) is based on the assumption that responder is limited to 9–14 hcpts. If responder has in fact more than 14 hcpts, he must not Pass the sign-off. Responder must then *zoom*, ie bid on. His bids are based on the assumption that relayer's sign-off is an AK- control ask. Since responder has 15+ hcpts the first step shows 4 controls.

2.4 Interference over Relays

If the opponents interfere with the relays (and they often do) then: Doubles and Re-doubles are to play while Pass expresses the inability to make a descriptive bid at the level of interference. Other bids are natural. If the interference is in front of the relayer, then relayer's Pass is the next relay.

3 Responses to 1♣ Opening

Responses to 1♣ are either negative (0–8 hcpts), shapely semi-positive (5–8 hcpts) or positive (9+ hcpts). All positive reponses are GF.

<i>Negative and Positive Responses</i>		
1♦	0–8	1st Negative
1♥	9+	4+Hearts (not 4-Spades)
1♠	9+	4+Spades (not 4-Hearts)
1NT	9+	Both Majors (at least 44)
2♣	9+	4+Clubs (No Major)
2♦	9+	4+Diamonds (1-suiter)

<i>Semi-Positive Responses</i>		
2♥	5–8	55+ Hearts + other
2♠	5–8	55+ Spades + minor
2NT	5–8	55+ Both minors
3-Any	5–8	7-card suits

3.1 Continuations after Negative

After 1♣ : 1♦ relayer's bids are as follows:

1♥ = Strong relay 19+hcpts with 1♠ = 0–5 2nd negative

Other reponses are 6–8 natural GF

1NT = 15–18 Lavings NT

Other = 15–18 Natural non-forcing.

After 2nd Negative relayer's bids are:

1NT = 19–22 Lavings NT

2♣ = Strong relay 23+hcpts with 2♦ = 0–3 3rd negative

Other 19–23 Natural non-forcing.

After 3rd Negative, relayer may GF with super strong relay of 2♥ and responder is forced to describe his hand, even with a Yarborough. Other bids are natural and virtually GF.

3.2 Passed Hand Responses to 1♣

The 1♣ opening in 3rd seat now shows 17+ hcpts and responder has denied 10 or more hcpts. The responses are now:

1♦ = 0–6 1st negative (and corresp. HCP adjustment for later bids)

1♥ + = 7–9 GF.

3.3 Interference over 1♣

Over interference:

Pass = 0-4

Double = 5-8 (any shape)

Other = 9+ natural and GF.

4 Responses to 1♦ Opening

<i>Responses to 1♦</i>	
1♥	12+hcpts Game Interest Relay (GIR)
jump	9-11 hcpts with good 6+suit
2NT	Pre-emptive; at least 44-minors
Other	Natural NF

5 Responses to 1♥/1♠ Openings

<i>Responses to 1♥/♠</i>	
1♠	12+hcpts (or 11 with fit) GIR
1NT	Natural NF over 1♥, relay over 1♠
2♣/♦	Natural NF
3♣/♦	9-11 hcpts with good 6+suit. Invites 3NT with a fit.
1-raise	8-11 hcpts 3+ constructive raise
2-raise	Pre-emptive raise with 4+fit
2NT	8-10 hcpts 4+raise with shortage

Over the 2NT shortage bid showing a Major suit fit, opener bids the suit in which a shortage would help. Opener's sign-off at the 3-level denies any game interest regardless of responder's shortage. A direct bid to game implies that opener does not care where the shortage is.

6 Responses to 1NT

<i>Responses to 1NT</i>	
2♣	12+ hcpts (or 11 with fit) GIR
2♦	Help. Asks for opener's better Major.
2♥/♠	8-11 hcpts 3+ constructive raise
3♣/♦	9-11 hcpts with good 6+suit. Invites 3NT with a fit.
3♥/♠	Pre-emptive raise with 4+fit
2NT	8-10 hcpts 4+raise + minor shortage

Over the 2NT minor-shortage, opener bids as in the previous section.

7 Responses to 2♣ Opening

<i>Responses to 2♣</i>	
2♦	Relay with responses as follows: 2♥/♠ = min Hearts/Spades 2NT = suit headed by AKQ or AKJ 3♣/♦ = Max Hearts/Spades + shortage 3♥/♠ = Max Hearts/Spades ; no shortage
♥/♠-bid	Pass-or Correct
Other	Natural NF

After 2NT response showing a solid suit: 3♣ is a further relay with responses:

3♦ = Hearts + shortage (3♥ = relay for shortage)

3♥/♠ = Hearts/Spades; no shortage

3NT/4♣/♦ = Spades + ♥/♣/♦ shortage

After 3♣/♦ response showing a shortage next step is relay for the shortage.

8 Responses to 2♥/♠ Openings

<i>Responses to 2♥/♠</i>	
2NT	Asks for the minor but shows values
minor	Pass-or-Correct; pre-emptive
major raise	Invitational
Other	Natural NF
	You must bid your suit twice to play in it

9 Responses to 2NT Opening

<i>Responses to 2NT</i>	
3♣/♦	Sign off
4♣/♦	Invitational
3♥/♠	Natural and forcing
3NT	To play
4NT	Pick-a-minor

10 An Example Bidding Sequence

<i>A Honeymoon Auction</i>				
x	Axx	1♣	1♥	Heart suit; not 4-Spades; 9+ GF
QJxx	AKxx	1♠	2♦	Diamond suit
AKJxx	xxxxx	2♥	2♠	Spade fragment
Axx	x	2NT	3♦	Probably 3-4-5-1; end of shape relays
		3♠	4♦	5-controls (AK-ask; A=2,K=1)
		4♥	5♣	Spade control; no Club control
		5♦	5♠	Heart control; no 2nd Spade control
		7♦	Pass	Must have AK-Hearts; A-Spades