

Birth of a Classical Bidding System

A classical bidding system may be defined as an original system that is responsible for infusing altogether new and fresh concept in bidding, not thought of or tapped earlier. To the distinguished domain probably belong the following systems.

1. Vanderbilt System (1925) of Harold S. Vanderbilt, USA, based on artificial 1 \heartsuit opening. Vanderbilt, considered to be the originator of contract bridge, was first to introduce unified system of bidding with vulnerability and slam bonus concepts.
2. The Culbertson System (1930) of Ely Culbertson, USA based on natural bidding concept and Trick Count valuation method.
3. The Goren System (1944) of Charles Goren, USA, based on Point Count Method.
4. The Weak Opening/Forcing Pass System (1963) of Lukasz Slawinski and Stanislaw Ruminski, Poland, based on artificial opening 'Pass' on 13+ points.

The Orient Bidding System (1998) of S. Asghar Hassan, Pakistan, based on Artificial Point Showing Limit Opening Bids 1 \heartsuit , 1 \spadesuit , 1 \clubsuit , 1 \diamonds (minimum 10 HCP) and Combined Strength count criteria for playable contract arrival is perhaps the latest addition to the distinguished list (5th Classical system so far).

In essence, almost all the 1 \heartsuit artificial systems appear to closely resemble the original Vanderbilt System. Likewise, many of the natural systems, including Standard American and Acol Systems, more or less follow the original ideas projected by the Culbertson and or Goren Systems (Official Encyclopedia of Bridge, 5th Edition, ACBL). A comparison between the Classical (original) and other systems is shown below. The Forcing Pass System added a new dimension into the bidding technology with a '*pass*' on a normal opening hand. The Orient Bidding System, a product of scientific research, has an original individuality of its own that is not akin to any of the bidding concepts introduced since the inception of contract bridge (1925). In his Message (Foreword), Mr. Mazhar Jafri, Vice President World Bridge Federation and President Bridge Federation of Africa, Asia & Middle East has described the Orient Bidding System as "... *truly constructive and innovative bidding system*".

Bridge is a scientific game. Like all spheres of science, bridge must also keep pace with new technological developments. This is possible only through research and innovation, as aptly supported by Mr. Gabriel Chagas, WBF World Grand Master in his message - "... *give my endorsement to every possible attempt to innovate bridge*".

The Orient Bidding System also has the unique distinction of overcoming nearly five-decade old shortcomings associated with the most widely used Point Count method which works satisfactorily on balanced but not on distributional hand. With the Orient Hand Evaluation method, both the balanced as well the distributional hands can be evaluated on a uniform basis using the same yardstick. This is not possible with the Point Count method advocated by Goren in the late forties.

Comparison

Classical System vs Other Systems

Artificial Systems

| Opening Bids | Vanderbilt* (1925) | Schenken (1961) | Blue Team Club (1965) | Precision (1967) |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 \square Artificial | 16+ | 17+ | 17+ | 16+ |
| 1 Natural | 12 - 16 | 12 - 16 | 12 - 16 | 11 - 15 |
| 1 Natural | 12 - 16 | 12 - 16 | 12 - 16 | 11 - 15 |
| 1 Natural | 12 - 16 | 12 - 16 | 12 - 16 | 11 - 15 |
| 1NT (Balanced) | 16 - 18 | 16 - 18 | 13 - 15 | 13 - 15 |

Original Concept*

Vanderbilt: Artificial 1 \square + Natural 1 , 1 , and 1 \square + Limit Point Range (5 points)

Natural Systems

| Opening Bids | Culbertson* (1930) | Acol (1934) | Goren* (1944) | S. American (1980+) |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1 \square Natural | 13 - 22 | 12 - 21 | 13 - 22 | 12 - 21 |
| 1 Natural | 13 - 22 | 12 - 21 | 13 - 22 | 12 - 21 |
| 1 Natural | 13 - 22 | 12 - 21 | 13 - 22 | 12 - 21 |
| 1 Natural | 13 - 22 | 12 - 21 | 13 - 22 | 12 - 21 |
| 1NT (Balanced) | 16 - 19 | 12 - 14 | 16 - 18 | 15 - 17 |

Original Concepts*

Culbertson:

Honor Trick Count + Natural Bidding

Goren:

Point Count Hand Valuation Method

Orient Bidding System

| Opening Bids | Artificial 1 \square | Artificial 1 | Artificial 1 | Artificial 1 | Artificial 1NT |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Point Range | 12 - 13 | 14 - 15 | 16 - 17 | 18 - 19 | 20+ |

Original Concepts

**S. Asghar Hassan
(1998)**

- Point showing artificial limit suit opening bids, any shape
- 1NT = Any distribution, not necessarily balanced
- Combined Strength Count as mandatory basis for playable contract arrival
- Modified hand evaluation method: single yardstick for both balanced & distributional hands

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References:

- The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge, American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), 5th Edition, pp. 5, 177, 420, 760.
- Larsson, Jan Eric, Knowledge Systems Laboratory, Stanford University, California, USA (Bridge Systems Collection, Internet source, 1996).
- S. Asghar Hassan, Orient Bidding System, 1998

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If any 'original system' has been inadvertently omitted, please inform the author by e-mail supported by authentic literature reference. Such a system (s) must have a structure (opening bids) other than listed above. E-mail address: asgharsh1@yahoo.com.

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