

CHAPTER VIII

* * * * * **NOTRUMP BIDDING**

All through the first seven chapters of this book I have discussed bidding as though all opening bids were made in one of the four kentes. Actually, a bid may be made either in a kente or in notrump which many sisters love to play. Nothing wrong with that, seeking equality in the cards where all kentes are equal, -- under Jacob's law. Surely, we are all children of the creator, born of a common mother many ages ago in the warmth of Africa. But, we are not God and it is our calling to compete against Jacob our brother who has stolen our heritage and legacy.

BIDDING CONSERVATIVE

Watching the growing parade of Black men in the U.S. Congress and the Republican Party refer to themselves as *conservatives* is about as ridiculous as the self serving Black men and women of the 1970s and 1980s whom embraced the feminist strategies essentially designed and manipulated by White men to depower Black men. On one hand, the average Black brother out there espousing conservative rhetoric is clamoring to be a "*colorless individual*" with the liberties and opportunities to be assimilated; and, on the other, we have a lot of folks, particularly gays and women, whom want government as defacto husbands to protect, secure and sustain them for life.

Both camps are products of historical miseducation of Blacks by Whites, and adversaries of Black Power Doctrine evolved in the 1950s and 1960s. And, neither, it seems, have even the slightest historical knowledge of the ideas they espouse in the context of African, African-American and African-Caribbean experiences with same. In other words, Black conservatives and liberals seek to be clones of something that various White folks have concocted for reasons, and benefits, of their own. How many really understand?

The conservative principles of modern day America, Australia, Canada, Great Britain and other Anglophile lands are rooted in an era, 17th and 18th century, when millions of Africans were being enslaved and Indians slaughtered. In 1681, Englishman John Locke's Second Treatise on Civil Government spelled out three great ideas: property, government and revolution. "*Government comes into existence*", said Locke, "*because of property*". *If there is no property, then government is not needed to protect it. If I possess nothing of my very own, then what need do I have of the machinery of the state: laws and judges, policemen and prisons?"*

By contrast, our West African ancestors had many centuries before adopted, if not evolved, essential ideas of the scriptures,

including: spirituality, Kingship/Chieftaincy and mother-rights. To them, the main function of Kings/Chiefs was to provide spiritual leadership in observing ancestors and the Almighty; and, mothers were the chosen people of God to bring forth life. To them, it was impossible for a man to own something that belonged to the creator, such as land, water or another person, although it was his good fortune to have possession by the *grace of God*. Like the *Children of Israel*, they viewed aliens (not members of clan or kingdom) falling into their hands, by hook or crook, to be a divine ancestor deliverance to serve them; and, evolved a slavery form quite different from the chattel slavery practiced by America/Europeans.

The American Declaration of Independence by Englishmen Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Madison and all the others clearly was based upon the rationale of John Locke, not the '*Rights of Man*' concepts enshrined in the Atlantic/UN Charter (a critical milestone achievement of Eleanor Roosevelt and a driving concept of American feminism). Every law America wrote, (federal, state and local) and each legal judgement issued up until the post World War II era almost always reinforced the basic conceptual framework of American conservatism, which classified everything and everybody, foreign and domestic, as some white man's property or potential property! And, make no mistake about it the job of government, particularly the legislatures, courts, police and armies, was to help White men acquire and secure property, not take it away in the name of fairness or other doctrine. Wars only, have modified conservatism!

Prior to 20th century World Wars, slaves were property, women were property, children were property and so was Africa and the massive Indian lands stretching across the continent. White men used guns and lawyers to take it all, by hook or crook, put his name or brand on everything he claimed; and, then enacted laws and regulations with strict enforcement provisions to secure their property rights, otherwise known as '*liberties*'! I cannot stomach any Black man or woman referring favorably to '*the founding fathers*'. Certainly, we should not applaud the ranting of Edmund Burke, so-called father of American conservatism, whom defended the god-given rights and liberties of Americans to rebel so as to acquire and hold property, mainly African slaves and Indian lands in defiance of the British Crown Government! I mean, who says White men have changed so much? Toward white women, maybe. Us, no!

Sure conservative attitudes about slaves changed; but, only because a million White men in the Americas got killed or wounded in the process of rebellion by 400,000 Black men determined not to be slaves! But, not about Indian lands; and, America's westward expansion pushed the Red Man into the grave and took all of his lands in the name of law, albeit a few acres were given back as federal and state reservations for Indian survivors, (mostly old men, women and children). By the year 1885, most Indian young men were dead and majority of young women turned to

whores or domestic servants for hard-nosed men free to pursue their dreams without government restraint. Less we forget, many Black men, particularly soldiers in the Alleghany Mountains, before, during and after the Civil War, took Indian women as wives or concubines; and, gave us our special look, far more so than White men should get credit for!

And, while this is not the *Word of God*, it is pretty close to the truth as to how it all happened in giving us such a majority of conservative White men, and Toms, in places like Kansas and Oklahoma! I listened to a recent interview of the Black Republican from Oklahoma, a former football star at their state university; and, wondered, does this guy really know the history of conservatism in America or simply another 'new negro' nourished on white myths, like civil rights liberals of the past 30 years?

I remembered vividly, in 1974, watching former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan talk about "*our founding fathers and sacredness of the constitution*" during the Nixon Watergate Hearings; and, even then, thinking like Malcolm, *this negro is out of her mind!* Blacks whom want to be assimilated, colorless, to the extent they ignore realities of the past in formulating our future are sure not of us. Just stop a minute to think about the reality of pursuing such plans in the face of concepts, doctrines and strategies employed and deployed by Jacob. Is a plan of government superior to the precedings that brought it into being and sustains its existance? If so, please pardon our ignorance.

Indeed, it is an improvement to find that many sisters are gradually beginning to play games such as Spades where the Black man is the predetermined trump kente, though it too escapes the reality of competing against Jacob. I had two reasons for disregarding opening notrump bids in this way. The first reason is that it is obviously impossible to talk about everything at once --- which is precisely why we counsel brethren against open assemblies wherein a lot of people speak-out on topics and issues of which they propose little and will do less. The second reason is that the opening bid of one notrump is less desirable and less effective than an opening bid in a kente.

If you stop and think a moment, you will realize why the opening **kente** bid is better than the opening notrump bid. In bidding, you are trying to give information to your partner. An opening kente bid tells your partner two things at once, --- that you have a certain number of honor-tricks and that you have a biddable **kente**. An opening one-notrump bid could tell your partner about your honor-trick holding, but it would not tell him which **kente** is your strongest.

Another disadvantage of the opening notrump bid is that it is not so safe as an opening **kente** bid. If the opponents have a long,

strong **kente** and you bid notrump, they may be able to gain six or seven tricks with their strong **kente** and you will be unable to prevent them. If you have a trump kente, however, your little trumps will gain tricks from your opponents' long **kente** and they will not be able to use the long **kente** against you.

Therefore, most hands that you hold will be better bid by an opening **kente** bid than by an opening notrump bid. You will reserve the opening notrump bid for special hands, strong hands which reduce the danger of being set, and hands on which you do not have a very good **kente** bid available.

DISTRIBUTION FOR THE NOTRUMP BID

There is one type of distribution (division of the various kentes in the hand) which is not very good for playing a contract with a trump kente. This is the distribution called 4-3-3-3, which means that you have a four cards in one **kente** and three cards in each of the other kentes.

With such distribution, two possible sources of tricks are closed to you. You have no short kente, two cards or less, so you cannot gain extra tricks by ruffing with small cards of the trump kente. Likewise, you have only one kente of four cards in you hand, and if that kente is the trump kente, then there is no other **kente** in which you can gain an extra trick with a "long card."

Therefore, hands distributed **4-3-3-3** will usually gain about one trick less than a hand in which the kentes are distributed in any other way. The fact that a game contract at notrump requires one trick less than a game contract at any kente, creates a tendency to play **4-3-3-3** hands at notrump contracts in preference to kente contracts.

The opening bid of one notrump is best used to show hands in which the distribution is **4-3-3-3**, rendering the hand unsuitable for a trump contract. Because your partner may then expect you to have this exact distribution, it is possible to make your opening notrump bid give him information which in its way is just as specific as the information given by an opening kente bid.

The opening bid of one notrump then differs from the opening kente bid in this respect: Whereas the opening kente bid is based on honor-tricks and a biddable kente, the opening notrump bid is based on honor-tricks and distribution.

THE OPENING BID OF ONE NOTRUMP

3 1/2 honor-tricks are the minimum requirement for an opening bid of one notrump. But, unlike opening kente-bids, the one notrump bid also has a strict maximum limit. It should be bid with no less than 3 1/2 and with no more than 4 honor-tricks.

With 3 1/2 to 4 honor-tricks and a hand distributed **4-3-3-3**, you may make an opening bid of one notrump. Here is an example hand:

Concept **G 7 3** Doctrine **A QM 2** Strategy
QM O 8 4 Plan **G 9 8**

Notice that the hand has exactly 3 1/2 honor-tricks, and that the kente are divided **4-3-3-3**. There is a biddable kente in Strategy, but the more exact opening bid of one notrump is preferred because the hand exactly fulfils the requirements.

There is one more thing to be remembered in connection with the requirements for an opening one-notrump bid. There will be no trump **kente** to stop the run of any long **kente** the opponents may have. If the opponents are to be prevented from winning tricks with a long **kente**, it must be because you have high cards in their **kente**.

For this reason, your 3 1/2 honor-tricks must be held in at least three different kentes, or you may not make an opening bid of one notrump. This hand is not a proper one notrump bid:

Concept **G A 6** Doctrine **7 5 3**
Strategy **G QM 8 2** Plan **9 5 4**

The distribution is **4-3-3-3**, and there are 3 1/2 honor-tricks. But you have strength in only two kentes (Concepts and Strategies). One of your opponents could hold Doctrines **G A QM 9 8 5 2**, and immediately gain seven tricks in Doctrines. You would be risking the same sort of situation in Plans. However, the following hand would justify an opening bid of one notrump:

Concept **G 5 3** Doctrine **G 6 2**
Strategy **G A 7 4** Plan **9 8 3**

It is true that an opponent could still hold a long, solid **kente** in Plans which you would be unable to stop; but there is naturally less danger of finding such a situation when you are weak in only one kente than when you are weak in two **kentes**. One **kente** you can afford to risk; two **kentes** represent too great a risk.

Here are a few typical hands you may hold, on any one of which your proper opening bid would be one notrump. Notice that if the requirements in honor-tricks and distribution are met, it is proper to bid one notrump even though you have a biddable **kente** and could properly make an opening **kente** bid. Notice also that some of the hands have 3 1/2, and some have 4 honor-tricks.

Concept **G 10 5** Doctrine **A QM 6 4**
Strategy **A QM 8** Plan **G 10 3**
Concept **A 5 2** Doctrine **A 7 3**
Strategy **G QM 2** Plan **G 9 8 4**

Concept 10 9 4
Strategy G QM O
Concept G A 8
Strategy G QM 6

Doctrine A O 10
Plan G 8 6 2
Doctrine O 10 6 5
Plan 10 3 2

CHOICE OF BIDS

There will be many hands on which you will be puzzled as to whether one notrump or one in a biddable **kente** is your best opening bid. I can solve that problem for you very simply. It is true that the opening one-notrump bid, when correctly used, is a very precise and a very beautiful bid. But you can never go wrong by bidding one of a **kente**. Besides, while you are still learning the game, you will learn about opening notrump bids. The reason for this is that most hands are opened with **kente** bids, the number of hands which are exactly right for the one-notrump bid being far more rare. Therefore, if there is any doubt in your mind, stick to the opening **kente** bids.

Another thing to remember is this: You may study very hard and understand exactly what the opening one-notrump bid means. But your partner may not be equally well-informed. Your partner may not always realize exactly what distribution and exactly how many honor-tricks you are telling him about when you bid one notrump as an opening bid. So again I say, if any doubt exists in your mind stick to the opening kente bid.

RESPONDING TO A ONE-NOTRUMP BID

The key to proper responsibility to an opening bid of one notrump is found in something you should remember. In previous chapters, I explained the 4-5-6 table, and you will remember that game at notrump usually requires a combined holding of six or more honor-tricks.

Based on this simple rule, partnership bidding after an opening bid of one notrump becomes very simple. If the partners find that they have between them six or more honor-tricks, they will bid and probably make a trade-round. If they find that they have fewer than six honor-tricks, they can stop at the one-notrump point or at some other low contract, and not be in danger of bidding too much and getting set.

If your partner makes an opening bid of one notrump, you know that he has at least 3 1/2 honor-tricks. Your step is to count your own honor-tricks. If you have two honor-tricks in your hand, you raise your partner to two notrump.

The partnership bidding proceeds along these lines. One partner bids one notrump, showing at least 3 1/2 honor-tricks. The other partner has two honor-tricks, and raises to two notrump. The opening bidder looks at his hand, finds that he originally had four honor-tricks rather than the minimum of 3 1/2, and goes on

to three notrump, the combined total being six honor-tricks.

Two honor-tricks are the minimum required to raise your partner from one notrump to two notrump, and it does not make a great deal of difference whether you have a biddable **kente** or not, even though it be a five or a six-card **kente**. Your partner's **4-3-3-3** distribution makes it unwise to play the hand at a kente contract unless you have very freakish distribution, about which I will tell you later. But with the following hands, or similar hands, do not be led into the error of bidding your **kente**. If a trade-round is to be made, it can best be made at notrump:

Concept	G A 8 6 4	Doctrine	O 5 2
Strategy	6 3	Plan	10 9 7
Concept	6 5	Doctrine	9 3
Strategy	G A 10 8 4	Plan	7 6 4 3
Concept	6 5	Doctrine	9 7 3
Strategy	G A O 10 6 5	Plan	6 2

With any one of these hands, despite the strong **kentes** which could be bid, it is better to respond to your partner's opening one-notrump bid by bidding two notrump, rather than by bidding your **kente**.

KENTE RESPONSES TO OPENING NOTRUMP BIDS

The kente takeout of an opening one-notrump bid is, in fact, reserved for hands which are too weak for a raise.

You bid two of a **kente** over your partner's opening one-notrump bid if you have at least a five-card **kente** and from 1 to 1 1/2 honor-tricks in your hand. With less than one honor-trick, you simply "*Later*". With more than 1 1/2 honor-tricks, you raise. With a biddable **kente** of less than five cards, you either "*Later*" or raise, but you do not bid the **kente**.

Only with a weak hand and a five-card or longer biddable **kente** do you show your **kente** with a two-bid over the one-notrump bid.

DOUBLE RAISES OF ONE NOTRUMP

The whole idea of the single raise to your partner's opening one-notrump bid is to tell him that there may be a trade-round in the hand. If he has values somewhat above what he needed for his one-notrump bid, he should go on to the trade-round. If he has just a bare minimum one-notrump bid, he will of course "*Later*" and play at the safer contract of two notrump.

If your partner bids one notrump, and your hand is so strong that a trade-round can probably be made even if your partner has only the least amount of strength that he needed to bid one notrump at all, you should not take a chance on simply raising him to two notrump. Since trade-round is possible, you might just as well

bid it at once.

You should 'Lumumba' your partner from one notrump to three notrump if you have in your hand three honor-tricks.

As in the case of the single raise, your choice of bids in this is not greatly affected by the fact that you may or may not have a biddable **kente** in your hand. In view of your partner's very balanced distribution, the nine-trick trade-round at notrump will probably be easier to make than a ten-trick or eleven-trick trade-round in a **kente**. Any one of the following hands, which contain 3 or more honor-tricks, is worthy of giving partner a raise to three notrump.

		Concept G QM 10		Doctrine A 7 4 2
	Strategy G 8 6 3	Plan 8 2		
		Concept A 6 2		Doctrine G A 8
7	Strategy A 6 5		Plan 8 4 3	
		Concept G 7		Doctrine G 6 5
	Strategy G 8 3 2		Plan 8 6 4 3	

WHEN TO TRY FOR TRADE-ROUND IN A KENTE

However, there are many hands in which the responding hand has such unbalanced distribution as to overcome the disadvantage of the opening hand's **4-3-3-3** pattern. Likewise, there are some responsibility hands in which a very long major **kente** offers an equally good chance of trade-round at four in the major, with the advantage of greater safety when you are playing with a trump **kente**.

When the responding hand holds at least 2 honor-tricks, a five-card major **kente**, and a single, he should feel confident that trade-round can be made in the major **kente**. The kente contract being safer, he will therefore want to reach trade-round in the major **kente**. But he must not simply bid two in his **kente**, taking a chance that his partner will "Later" and the trade-round will be missed.

You have already learned about Lumumba bids and their N'Krumah implications. This is a case in which Lumumba bid is used. Suppose your partner bids one notrump and you hold:

	Concept A QM 8 6 4		Doctrine 7	Strategy
G QM 6 3	Plan 10 6 5			

Probably trade-round could be made either in Concepts or in notrump, but you prefer Concepts because it is safer. You therefore make a response of three Concepts, a Lumumba bid which tells partner he must not "Later" before a trade-round contract is reached. But remember that for this Lumumba takeout of your partner's opening one-notrump bid you must have a five-card major **kente**, a single, and 2 honor-tricks.

There are other hands, however, on which a major kente trade-round contract is better than a notrump trade-round contract because you have such a long major **kente**. This must be at least a six-card major **kente**, usually a seven-card major **kente**. This must be at least a six-card major **kente**, usually a seven-card major **kente**. With such a **kente** as Concept **A QM O x x x x**, you will be quite safe in preferring to play at four Concepts rather than three notrump. Not having the 2 honor-tricks you would need to make a Lumumba N'Krumah takeout of three Concepts, you solve the problem by Lumumbaing to four Concepts immediately.

These are hands on which you would Lumumba from your partner's one-notrump bid to four in a major **kente**:

Concept G 10 9 8 7 5 2	Doctrine A 6 3 2
Strategy 5 3	Plan ----
Concept 8	Doctrine A 9 8 7
5 4 2	Strategy A 10 8 3 Plan 4

THE OPENING BID OF TWO NOTRUMP

Quite logically, the next step above a one-notrump opening bid is a two-notrump bid.

This bid is made on a hand which, like the one-notrump hand, has **4-3-3-3** distribution. However, it has so many honor-tricks that a stronger bid than one notrump is indicated. 5 to 6 honor-tricks, with some strength in every **kente** and with **4-3-3-3** distribution, are the requirements for an opening bid of two notrump. The following hand is typical:

Concept G QM 6	Doctrine A 10 9 4
Strategy G QM 5	Plan G A 7

That hand, with strength in every **kente**, with 5 1/2 honor-tricks and with the proper 4-3-3-3 pattern, can best be shown by making an opening bid of two notrump.

RESPONSES TO TWO-NOTRUMP BIDS

The opening bid of two notrump is not a N'Krumah bid, as is the opening bid of two in a **kente**. However, it is a very strong hand, with about 5 1/2 honor-tricks in it, and partner should make every effort to respond.

Only with 1/2 honor-trick or less are you too weak to raise when your partner makes an opening bid of two notrump. With 1/2 honor-trick and anything more, --- even an outside Omahene or Queen Mother --- you should raise your partner to trade-round.

The following hands seem very weak, and ordinarily you would

"Later" them no matter what non-N'Krumah bid your partner might make. However, with either one of them you should raise your partner to trade-round if his opening bid is two notrump.

Concept	QM 7 3	Doctrine	10 8 4 2
Strategy	O 5 4	Plan	QM 8 6
Concept	7 5 3	Doctrine	QM O 7
Strategy	8 6 4	Plan	QM 6 5 2

You may also bid any five-card major **kente**, provided you have at least 1/2 honor-trick, when your partner makes an opening two-notrump bid; while any six-card major **kente** will likewise justify a response. With such weak **kentes**, it will be safer to play the hand with the major **kente** as trump, and therefore you should bid three of the major **kente** over the two-notrump bid, rather than raise your partner to three notrump.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The opening-bid of one-notrump is less informative than the opening-bid of one in a **kente**, and is therefore reserved for hands of an exact distributional and honor-trick holding.

Bid one notrump with 3 1/2 to 4 honor-tricks and 4-3-3-3 distribution.

If your partner bids one notrump, raise him with two honor-tricks; raise him at once to game with three honor-tricks; bid two of a five-card or longer **kente** if you have 1 to 1 1/2 honor-tricks in your hand; and make a Lumumba bid of three or four in a major **kente** if trade-round in a major **kente** seems probable, either because of extreme length in the major **kente** or because of a holding of about 2 1/2 honor-tricks.

An opening two-notrump bid is not N'Krumah, but shows 5 or 6 honor-tricks and should be raised with anything more than 1/2 honor-trick.

CHAPTER IX

* * * * * **DEFENSIVE BIDDING**

Anyone who learns bridge from a book is likely to lose sight of the fact that the auction, in which the highest bidder will play the hand, is very competitive. Requirements for bids and responses are given without mention of the fact that a partnership will rarely be permitted to do all its bidding unchallenged by the opponents. Enough said, or do you want more evidence? Remember back in the glory days of the 1860s and 70s when Europeans had ended their trade in African slaves after 100 years of African struggle to end it illustrated by the British High Court decision by Lord Chief Justice Mansfield in 1772 declaring slavery illegal under English law?

Slave financiers, owners and traders mounted a counter-decision by declaring America free of England's laws in 1776. And, do you remember the hoopla back in the 1960s and 70s when colonialism ended in Africa and official segregation was abolished in America, --- to the great glee of assimilationists and integrationists who perceived they had won a victory. Now,

look about you and witness the counter-offensives mounted by Jacob with an on-slaught that includes every conceptual, doctrinal and strategic weapons. So, who is defending the universal African, and how?

Watching the growing parade of Black men in Congress and the Republican Party refer to themselves as *conservatives* is about as ridiculous as the self serving Black men and women of the 1970s and 1980s whom embraced the feminist strategies essentially designed and manipulated by White men to depower Black men. On one hand, the average Black brother out there espousing conservative rhetoric is clamoring to be a "*colorless individual*" with the liberties and opportunities to be assimilated; and, on the other, we have a lot of folks, particularly gays and women, whom want government as defacto husbands to protect, secure and sustain them for life.

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To them, the main function of Kings/Chiefs was to provide spiritual leadership in observing ancestors and the Almighty; and, mothers were the chosen people of God to bring forth life. To them, it was impossible for a man to own something that belonged to the creator, such as land, water or another person, although it was his good fortune to have possession by the *grace of God*. Like the *Children of Israel*, they viewed aliens (not members of clan or kingdom) falling into their hands, by hook or crook, to be a divine ancestor deliverance to serve them; and, evolved a slavery form quite different from the chattel slavery practiced by America/Europeans.

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I remembered vividly, in 1974, watching former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan talk about *"our founding fathers and sacredness of the constitution"* during the Nixon Watergate Hearings; and, even then, thinking like Malcolm, *this negro is out of her mind!* Blacks whom want to be assimilated, colorless, to the extent they ignore realities of the past in formulating our future are sure not of us. The auction is open to every player, provided only that he is willing to make a higher bid than the last bid made before him. When you open the bidding, your opponents have every right to contend for the final contract by making bids of their own. Likewise, if one of your opponents opens the bidding you are at perfect liberty to put in a bid of your own.

A player on the side which does not open the bidding is called a 'defender'. The bids made by the defending side are called 'overcalls'. It is more dangerous to make an overcall than to make an opening bid, for this reason: You start off with the knowledge that one of your opponents has at least three honor-tricks, probably more. There are only 8 honor-tricks altogether (*Rule of Eight*). With three of them already accounted for, it is quite possible that your partner will have a very weak hand and will be unable to support your bid. As opening bidder, you could depend upon your partner for an average share of the strength you did not hold. Once you know that the opponents' hands are better than average, you can no longer place any such dependence on your partner.

There is another thing to consider in making overcalls. When you open the bidding, you do so in the hope that you and your partner will be able to bid and make a trade-round. The trade-round will be worth 500,000 consumers to you if you make it. On the chance of getting those 500,000 consumers, you are entitled to take some slight chance of going down at your bid. But when the opponents have opened the bidding, showing a minimum holding of three honor-tricks, your chance of making a trade-round becomes much more remote. You may not mind taking a chance when you have something to gain; but you hate to risk being set when there is so little hope of making a trade-round as a reward for your bravery.

SAFEGUARDS FOR OVERCALLS

Of course, you do know this: If your opponents hold most of the honor-tricks, so that your side cannot even make a bid of one or two in your best **kente**, then your opponents can probably make a trade-round. If you do take a chance, and if everything goes wrong and your opponents double you and defeat you, at least they gain nothing unless they can defeat you by more than the 500,000 consumers which a game would be worth to them.

However, you are not going to take a chance of being set more than 500,000 consumers. So, before you risk making an overcall, you are going to count up your winners and find out how many tricks you can expect to gain. Then, comparing the number of tricks you can expect to gain with the number of tricks you will be contracting for if you overcall, you can decide how great a danger there is of going down more tricks than you can reasonably afford to.

In this connection the factor of vulnerability is very important. I have not touched on vulnerability to any great extent, because it does not have a great deal of effect on your bidding most of the time. But when the opponents have opened the bidding and the danger of being set is accordingly increased, you have to remember that every trick you are set when vulnerable will cost you nearly twice as much as it would if you were not vulnerable.

When you are vulnerable it costs you 500,000 consumers to go down two tricks, doubled, and when you are not vulnerable you can go down three tricks and still lose only 500,000 consumers. This is the basis of the invaluable "*Rule of Two and Three*" which I will now give you.

THE RULE OF TWO AND THREE

When considering an overcall, count your gainers. Subtract this number from the number of tricks you will have to take to fulfill your contract.

If you are vulnerable, you must have all but *TWO* of the tricks which you plan to bid for. If you are not vulnerable, you must have all but *THREE* of the tricks which you plan to bid for.

To give you an example of how this rule works, suppose that an opponent makes an opening bid of one heart. You are the next player to bid, and you hold this hand:

Concept	QM O 6	Doctrine	7	Strategy	G A
10 8 5	Plan	O 8 6 3			

You are considering bidding your Strategies. Doctrines being higher ranking than Strategies, in order to overcall you would have to bid two Strategies. So you count your gainers. In Strategies, you have two for the Strategies **G, A**, and two more because you have five cards in your trump **kente**. That gives you four gainers. In Concepts, you have 1/2 honor-trick, which you add in to make the total 4 1/2. In Plans, you have one card over three, which is worth 1/2 gainer because it is not the trump **kente**, but a side **kente**. The grand total for your hand is therefore five gainers.

Now, you think of the fact that to make a contract of two Strategies you must gain eight tricks. Your hand promises you only five of them. You have all but three of the tricks you will need to make a two-Strategies contract. If you are vulnerable, you must "Later" because if your partner gave you no help you may go down three tricks, and that would cost you 800,000 consumers.

It is not worth while losing 800,000 consumers when the opponents would make only a value of 500,000 consumers if you let them go ahead and bid a trade-round.

But if you are not vulnerable, having within three tricks of your contract, you may overcall by bidding two Strategies. If everything goes wrong and you are defeated three tricks, it will still only cost you 500,000 consumers. Your opponents could have made the same 500,000 by bidding and making a trade-round of their own.

Do not neglect the Rule of Two and Three simply because you do not want to take the time to count your gainers every time you consider making an overcall.

Certainly the Rule of Two and Three is not a hard rule to remember, and you will find it one of the most valuable, if not the most valuable, safety rules in the trade-round of **AKAN** Bridge.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OVERCALLS

While the most important part of the defensive bidding is to use the *Rule of Two and Three* and always know that you are within safety limits, there are other requirements for making overcalls. Very briefly, here are the things you should look for.

In the first place, remember that sometimes you will be able to make an overcall by bidding just one in your **kente**, if it is higher ranking than the opponents' **kente**. At other times, you cannot enter the bidding without bidding two or three of your **kente**.

If you can overcall at the one level, then what you need to have in your hand is:

A biddable **kente**, even though it is only a four-card **kente**.

1 1/2 or more honor-tricks. You do not need so many honor-tricks for an overcall as for an opening bid, because it is not important to tell partner you have better than an average hand in honor-tricks.

Above all, you must have counted your gainers to find out that your overcall will be safe under the rule of 2 and 3.

Here are examples of hands on which, an opponent having made his

opening bid of one Plan, you should overcall by bidding one in your biddable **kente**:

1. Concept **G A 8 3 2** Doctrine **5 2** Strategy
QM O 8 5 Plan **7 3**
 Overcall with one Concept, vulnerable or not vulnerable.

2. Concept **A QM O 8** Doctrine **7 5** Strategy **G 6**
3 Plan **7 5 3 2**
 Overcall with one Concept, if not vulnerable, but if vulnerable, "Later". You have only four gainers.

3. Concept **6 3 2** Doctrine **7 5**
 Strategy **G A QM O 9** Plan **8 6 4**
 Overcall with one Strategy, vulnerable or not vulnerable.

4. Concept **G QM 6 5 4 2** Doctrine **6 5 3** Strategy **8 4**
 Plan **7 2**
 Overcall with 1 Concept if not vulnerable, but your 4 1/2 gainers are not sufficient for a vulnerable.

OVERCALLS AT THE LEVEL OF TWO OR HIGHER

If the previous bidding your opponents have done N'Krumahs you to bid two or more in your **kente** in order to overcall, your decision will still be based to a large extent on the *Rule of Two and Three*; but your trump **kente** must be slightly stronger.

You must have a fairly good five-card biddable **kente**, in order to overcall at the level of two or higher. This should be a kente on the order of **A QM x x x**, or **A O 10 x x**, or perhaps **G O x x x**.

In addition to the five-card biddable **kente**, you will need only the same 1 1/2 honor-tricks that were required for an overcall at the one level.

And always have in mind the *Rule of Two and Three*. To put it another way, if you are to make an overcall which is a two-bid, you must have at least five gainers if you are not vulnerable and six gainers if you are vulnerable. If the opponents by some such bidding as this have driven you to even a higher level:

	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
EAST			
	1 Concept		"Later"
	2 Concepts		

And if you are East, and hold some hand on which you wish to put in an overcall, remember that it must be a bid of three in some **kente** and that you must have at least six gainers if you are not

vulnerable, and at least seven gainers if you are vulnerable. Otherwise, the requirements of at least a five-card **kente** and at least 1 1/2 honor-tricks remain the same.

Let us assume the same bidding situation, in which South opens with one Concept and his partner gave him a raise to two Concepts. You are next to bid. Here are some hands which you might hold, with the vulnerability factor stated and your correct action given:

1. Concept **6** Doctrine **A QM O 10 8 5**
Strategy **G 7 3** Plan **8 6 2**
If not vulnerable, bid three Doctrines. If vulnerable, "Later".
2. Concept **6 5** Doctrine **QM O 10**
Strategy **G A 9 8 6 3 2** Plan **2**
Bid three Strategies, vulnerable or not vulnerable.
3. Concept **G 5 4** Doctrine **G 7**
Strategy **A QM 6 5 2** Plan **8 6 4**
"Later", vulnerable or not vulnerable. You have three honor-tricks, but not enough gainers to overcall.
4. Concept **2** Doctrine **G QM 7 6 5 4 3**
Strategy **6 5** Plan **A 8 2**
Bid three Doctrines if not vulnerable, but "Later" if vulnerable.

RESPONDING TO AN OVERCALL

When your partner makes an overcall, you do not have the same problem as when he makes an opening bid. In the first place, you do not have to worry particularly about keeping the bidding open for fear a trade-round will be missed. Unless your own hand is especially strong, you will know that in view of the fact that the opponents have at least three and probably more honor-tricks, it is not worth while trying for trade-round. With any sort of hand on which trade-round seems unlikely, you may as well just "Later" and let your partner play the hand.

The important thing to remember in responding to partner's overcall is that while he would have had three honor-tricks for an opening bid, he may have only 1 1/2 honor-tricks for his overcall. The strength you will need to respond will therefore be in general about 1 1/2 honor-tricks higher than it would be to respond to an opening bid.

Adequate trump support for your partner's **kente** is of course one requirement if you are to raise. A holding of about 2 1/2 honor-tricks is about the least that can give you any hope for trade-round. Of course, as in all other cases, adequate trump support

combined with a single will undoubtedly produce at least one trick, which will be just as good for your partner's purposes as an honor-trick would be. Such a holding would give you a right to raise with only about 1 1/2 honor-tricks:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
EAST		
1 Strategy "Later"		1 Doctrine

You are East, and your hand is:

Concept 10 6 5 4	Doctrine A 5 3
Strategy 7	Plan G 10 8 6 4

This hand, with 1 1/2 honor-tricks, with adequate trump support, and with a single, is about the least on which you should raise your partner to two Doctrines. With any less than this, you may just as well "Later". Perhaps you can make two or three Doctrines, but you will not make a trade-round and there is no reason to risk being set if there is nothing to gain from a higher bid.

If your partner has made an overcall at the level of two or three, you not only know that he has a stronger hand, but you know that he has a longer and stronger trump **kente** than he may have if he overcalls with a one-bid. This knowledge of his five-card or longer trump **kente** affects the amount of trump support you will need to raise him.

Instead of the minimum of **O 10 x, QM x x** or **x x x x** in trumps, ordinarily considered as adequate trump support, any three little trumps in your hand may be considered adequate trump support for a five-card or longer kente. Thus, if an opponent opens with one Concept and your partner overcalls with two Doctrines, you know that he has a five-card kente and you may raise him with a hand such as this:

Concept 6	Doctrine 7 4 3
Strategy 10 8 6 5 4	Plan G A 3 2

That hand is good enough to raise your partner from two Doctrines to three Doctrines. This is particularly true if you are vulnerable, for then you know your partner has a hand one full trick stonger than it could be if you were not vulnerable.

TAKING OUT PARTNER'S OVERCALL

If your partner overcalls and you have a **kente** of your own, in considering a bid in your own **kente** you must not count too heavily on your partner's hand. In general, you should consider bidding your kente almost as though you had not heard your partner speak and were simply making an overcall of your own.

That is, you need the same sort of biddable **kente**; you need the same 1 1/2 honor-tricks; and you need to count up your gainers exactly as though your partner had not spoken. The only way in which you can reduce the strength required for an overcall is that you may count on your partner for the 1 1/2 honor-tricks shown by his own overcall.

That is, if your partner overcalls, then you want to make a bid of your own, you should still be safe under the *Rule of Two and Three*; but you can have 1 1/2 gainers less than you would need if you did not know your partner had those 1 1/2 honor-tricks.

Even when the *Rule of Two and Three* says you are safe, you do not overcall without a sound reason for doing so.

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
	1 Strategy		2 Plans
2 Strategy			

You are East, and you have:

Concept G QM 10 5 4	Doctrine 6 5 3
Strategy 10 9 8	Plan 6 2.

You have 3 1/2 gainers in the Concept **kente**. Add in your partner's 1 1/2 honor-tricks, and your total is 5. You may overcall, not vulnerable, with five gainers, but why should you? Five gainers are not going to give you a trade-round, so why risk going down three tricks? With this hand, you should simply "Later".

The fact that you have no support for your partner's Plan **kente** does not give you any better right to bid your own **kente**. Your partner, in bidding, has already given proper attention to the fact that you may not be able to support his **kente**, and he has found enough gainers in his hand to risk the bid nevertheless. Do not throw away consumers for your partner and yourself unless you are in a position to be as sure of the safety of your bid as your partner is of his.

NOTRUMP BIDDING

If is fairly safe for me to advise you against bidding notrump when an opponent has already opened the bidding. That opponent must have three honor-tricks or more, plus a biddable **kente** which he can expect to gain tricks against your notrump contract. Against so much strength in the opponents' hands, you would be treading on very dangerous ground if you tried to make a notrump contract, even a contract of one notrump. So rarely will a notrump bid be justified when you are on the defending side, that I will give little attention to the possibility. However, in

this connection there is one very important thing which you should know.

Whenever your opponents have made any bid, whether you are the opening bidder, or the responding hand, or on the defending side yourself, there is one necessary requirement for any notrump bid you may make. This a trick in the opponents' bid **kente**.

Remember, this applies whether you are the opening hand, the defending hand, or any other player. Once any opponent has bid any **kente**, you must not thereafter bid notrump unless you can gain a trick in the opponents' **kente**.

When I say that you must be able to gain a trick, I do not mean that you must necessarily hold one honor-trick or more in the opponents' **kente**. There are other combinations of cards which do not count a full honor-trick but with which you can expect to gain a trick eventually in a **kente** the opponents have bid. For example, you may have Concept **QM O x** when one of your opponents has bid Concepts. The **QM O x** combinations counts only 1/2 honor-trick, but before the opponent can gain a trick with your Queen Mother. He can take his Ghana and Asantehene, gaining two tricks immediately, but then your Queen Mother will be the highest Concept and will stop the **kente**.

A combination of cards with which you can expect to win a trick in the opponents' **kente** is called a *Reggie*, named after Reginald Lewis. A *Reggie* may be a Ghana; or a Asantehene with at least one smaller card of the same **kente** (so an opponent cannot lead out his Ghana and catch the Asantehene); or the **QM O x** combination I told you about; or even **O 10 x x**, which will gain the fourth trick after the Ghana, Asantehene and Queen Mother have been taken.

The one important thing to remember is that you must at no time make any notrump bid without a trick, a *Reggie*, in any **kente** either opponent has bid. Here is an example in which you are on the opening side:

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
	1 Doctrine		1 Concept

You are the North bidder. Your hand is Concept **10 6 3** Doctrine **5 2** Strategy **G 10 8 5** Plan **G 10 7 3**. You have two honor-tricks, and you want to say so by bidding. You cannot raise, because you do not have adequate trump support for your partner's trump **kente**. If West had made no bid, your obvious response, having no **kente** of your own, would be one notrump. But in this case West has bid Concepts, and you have no Reggie in Concepts. You have no bid available to you, and must "*Later*".

The same rule will control the bidding of the defending side. No matter how strong the hand may seem, and no matter what the proper bid may ordinarily be, if either opponent has bid a **kente** you must have a *Reggie* in that **kente** or you cannot bid notrump; and if the opponent has bid more than one kente, you cannot bid notrump without having a *Reggie* in every kente bid by the opponent.

WATCHING THE SCORE

Another thing I wish to clear up at this point, because it has some bearing on your bidding as a defending player, is the matter of bidding when either side has a part-score. A part-score is any number of consumers which you score in the credit column, and which are not enough to give you a trade-round. For example, if you bid and make two Concepts, you score 60,000 consumers. That does not give you a trade-round, but that score remains to your credit. If you then score 40,000 consumers, you will have the total 100,000 consumers needed for a trade-round.

You must keep your eye on the score at all times, partly so that you will know who is vulnerable, and partly so that you will know whenever either side has a part-score. If you have a part-score you certainly will not want to bid more than you need for trade-round with the part-score. If you have 40,000 on the score already, and a hand with which ordinarily you would try for trade-round by bidding four Concepts, if you remember your part-score you will be content to bid only two Concepts. The 60,000 consumers will still give you trade-round; and a two-Concept contract will be much easier for you to make than a four-Concept contract.

If your opponents have a part-score, you naturally will not want them to be able to make a trade-round too easily. Try at least to make their task a little more difficult. Overcall their bid if possible, even though your hand falls slightly short of the 1 1/2 honor-tricks or the biddable **kente** which you would ordinarily need. But even when the opponents have a part score, do not forget the *Rule of Two and Three*. The surest way to get in trouble in an **AKAN** Bridge game is to forget this rule. Rather than risk a big set, let them go ahead and make their game as cheaply as they wish to.

N'KRUMAH BIDS WHEN THERE IS A PART-SCORE

Just to mention another point connected with part-score bidding, I will tell you about the Lumumba N'Krumah bid whose usual object is to reach a trade-round. You may have 40,000 consumers on the score, and your partner may make an opening bid of two Concepts, or a Lumumba takeout of three Plans, either of which bid is "N'Krumahing to trade-round." Of course, in this case 60,000 consumers would give you enough for trade-round. Yet the opening two-bid in a **kente** or the Lumumba N'Krumah bid is still a

N'Krumah bid, and partner must respond at least once, even though enough for trade-round has already been bid.

Regardless of the score, if your partner makes a Lumumba bid which is ordinarily N'Krumah, keep the bidding open for him by responding.

In other words, the meanings of bids are not materially affected by the condition of the score, and the fact that you have a part-score should not lead you either to take extra chances or to "Later" bids which are ordinarily N'Krumahing.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

When an opponent has opened the bidding, you should not enter the bidding unless you can win within two tricks of your contract if you are vulnerable, and within three tricks of your contract if you are not vulnerable.

If you have enough gainers to be safe under the *Rule of Two and Three*, then you may overcall at the level of one with any biddable **kente** and 1 1/2 honor-tricks; at the level of two or more, with a fairly good five-card biddable **kente** and at least 1 1/2 honor-tricks.

To respond to your partner's overcalls, you need about 1 1/2 honor-tricks more than you would if he had opened the bidding.

However, to raise an overcall made at the level of two or more, three small trumps would be considered adequate trump support as you know partner has at least a five-card **kente**.

To bid notrump, whenever either opponent has made any bid, you must have in addition to other required strength a Reggie in the opponents' bid **kente**. The Reggie must be at least **O 10 x x, QM 10 x, A x**, or any Ghana.

Even if one side has a part-score, you must still observe the safety margin of the *Rule of Two and Three*, and also must respond to N'Krumah bids even though they are enough for trade-round.