

Nicolae Sfetcu



Bridge Bidding

Standard American Yellow Card

MultiMedia Publishing

Bridge Bidding - Standard American Yellow Card

[Nicolae Sfetcu](#)

Published by Nicolae Sfetcu

Copyright 2014 Nicolae Sfetcu

BOOK PREVIEW

Contract Bridge

Game type: trick-taking game

Players: 4

Skills required: Memory, tactics, probability, communication

Cards: 52

Deck: French

Play: Clockwise

Card rank: (highest to lowest) A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Playing time: WBF tournament games = 7.5 minutes per deal

Random chance: Low to moderate depending on variant played

Related games: Whist, Auction bridge

Contract bridge, usually known simply as **bridge**, is a trick-taking card game using a standard deck of 52 playing cards played by four players in two competing partnerships with partners sitting opposite each other around a small table. For purposes of scoring and reference, each player is identified by one of the points of the compass and thus North and South play against East and West. The game consists of several deals each progressing through four phases: dealing the cards, the auction (also referred to as bidding), playing the hand, and scoring the results. Dealing the cards and scoring the results are procedural activities while the auction and playing the hand are the two actively competitive phases of the game.

Dealing: Partnerships are self-determined or by a cut of the cards, the two highest cut playing against the two lowest; the first dealer is the player cutting the highest card. Cards are dealt clockwise, one at a time and face down starting on the dealer's left so that each player receives thirteen cards. In duplicate bridge the dealer is predetermined by the board; the board also contains the four hands which have been dealt and placed in the board prior to commencement of the game.

Auction or Bidding: The bidding starts with the dealer and rotates around the table clockwise with each player making a call, the purpose being to determine which partnership will contract to take more tricks given a particular trump suit or with notrump, referred to as the strain. The partnership which makes the highest final bid is known as the declaring side and is said to have 'won' the contract. The player on the declaring side who, during the auction, first stated the strain ultimately becoming trumps or notrumps is referred to as the declarer.

Playing: The rules of play are similar to other trick-taking games with the additional feature that the hand of declarer's partner is displayed face up on the table after the opening lead has been made by the member of the defending side to the left of declarer; the displayed hand is referred to as the dummy and is played by declarer.

Scoring: After all thirteen tricks have been played, the hand's score is determined by comparing the actual number of tricks taken by the declaring partnership with that proposed in the contract and awarding points accordingly. The available scoring points for the declaring side are dependent upon both the level and strain of the contract and are awarded to them only when the contract is 'made', i.e. at least the contracted for number of tricks are won by them; failure to do so results in the defending side receiving points instead and they are said to have 'defeated' the contract. Individual scores of several hands are accumulated to determine the overall game score.

While the game involves skill and chance, it has many variants and event types designed to emphasize skill, vary the method of scoring, set limits on the nature of the bidding systems which may be used, set the pace and duration of play, define player eligibility, enable larger team composition, provide country representation in international play, and to group players of similar interests, skill levels, age, or gender, or combinations thereof. The most common game variants are rubber bridge and duplicate bridge. In rubber bridge, two partnerships participate in the game at one table and the objective is to score the most points in the play of several hands. In duplicate bridge, there are more tables and partnerships and the hands are dealt and played in such a manner that each partnership plays the same set of hands as their East-West or North-South counterparts and with the scoring based upon relative performance. Competitions in duplicate bridge range from small clubs with a handful of tables, to large tournaments such as the World Bridge Championships where hundreds of tables play the same hands. The game variant and associated method of scoring have significant influence on bidding and card play strategies.

Game play

A session of bridge consists of a number of **deals** (also called hands or boards). A hand is dealt (or may have been pre-dealt), the bidding (or auction) proceeds to a conclusion and then the hand is played. Finally, the hand's result is scored.

The goal of a single deal is to achieve a high score with the cards dealt. The score for the hand is affected by two principal factors: the contract (number of tricks bid in the auction,

the denomination, and which side has bid it) and the number of tricks taken during play. It may also be affected by the *vulnerability*. The **contract**, a feature which distinguishes contract bridge from its predecessors, is an undertaking made during the auction by one partnership that they will take at least the stated number of tricks, either with a specified suit as trumps, or without trumps (notrumps). The contract has two components: **level** and **strain** (also called *denomination*).

There are seven levels, numbered 1-7, and the number of tricks required is six plus the level number, so may be anywhere between 7 and 13. The five strains are ranked, from lowest to highest, as *clubs* (♣), *diamonds* (♦), *hearts* (♥), *spades* (♠), and *notrump* (NT). The two lower-ranked suits (♣ and ♦) are called the minor suits (or minors), and the higher-ranked suits (♥ and ♠) are called majors. Minor suit contracts score less, so are less frequently chosen.

For instance, the contract "3 hearts" is a promise that the partnership will take nine tricks (six plus three) with hearts as the trump suit. Thus, there are $7 \times 5 = 35$ possible basic contracts; 1♣ being the lowest, followed by 1♦ etc., up to 7NT.

In the bidding stage or *auction*, the pairs compete to determine who proposes the highest-ranked contract, and the side that wins the bidding must then strive in the play of the hand to fulfil that bargain by winning at least the contracted number of tricks if it is to obtain a score. Broadly speaking, there is an incentive to bid accurately to the optimum contract and then to play to make the contracted number of tricks (or more if good play or luck allows). If the side that wins the auction (*declaring side*) then takes the contracted number of tricks (or more), it is said to have *made the contract* and is awarded a score; otherwise, the contract is said to be *defeated* or *set* and points are awarded to the opponents (*defenders*).

It can sometimes be advantageous to bid a contract that one does not expect to make and to be defeated, thus losing some points, rather than allow the opposing side to bid and make a contract which would score them an even greater number of points. This is known as a *sacrifice*, and is quite common if both sides are contesting the final contract. This aspect is more common in duplicate bridge than in rubber bridge owing to the different scoring systems in effect.

Dealing

The game is played with a standard deck of 52 cards. In rubber bridge (or other non-duplicate games), the cards are shuffled before each deal, and the dealer deals the cards clockwise one at a time, starting with the left-hand opponent, so that each player receives a *hand* of 13 cards. The deal rotates clockwise each hand.

.....

Bidding Systems

A **bidding system** in contract bridge is the set of agreements and understandings assigned to calls and sequences of calls used by a partnership, and includes a full description of the meaning of each treatment and convention. The purpose of bidding is for each partnership to ascertain which contract, whether made or defeated and whether bid by them or by their opponents, would give the partnership their best scoring result.

Each bidding system ascribes a meaning to every possible call by each member of a partnership, and presents a codified language which allows the players to exchange information about their card holdings. The vocabulary of bidding is limited to 38 different calls - 35 level/denomination *bids* (A **bid** consists of two components — the level in range of 1-7, and one of five denominations: clubs (♣), diamonds (♦), hearts (♥), spades (♠) and notrump (NT)) plus *pass*, *double* and *redouble*. Any bid becomes a contract if followed by three successive passes, therefore every bridge bid is a potential contract.

By the rules of the game, the agreed meanings of all calls must be public and known to the opponents. In normal club or home play, the opponents are entitled, at their turn to make a call, to ask the partner of the bidder about the meaning of the call. In high-level tournaments, where screens are used, the procedure is to ask the screen-mate about their calls as well as their partner's calls. In serious online tournaments, the procedure is for the player making the call to self-alert it, but the explanation is visible only to the opponents.

Classification

Bidding systems can be classified into two broad categories: *natural* systems and *artificial* systems. In natural systems, most bids (especially in the early phase of the bidding) denote length in the suit bid. In artificial systems, the bids are more highly codified, so that for example a bid of 1♣ may not be related to a holding in the club suit.

Natural system(s) are the "lingua franca" of bridge players, with regional variations. Thus, a new partnership can agree to play a natural system and understand each other fairly well. Players sometimes alter certain aspects of a system, adding their specific agreements or preferred conventions.

Structure and meaning of opening bids are the common determining factor for system classification: in most modern natural systems, opening bids of 1♣ through 2♣ have the same or similar meaning, with level-one bids denoting length in a suit. Artificial systems typically reserve at least one one-level suit opening bid for special purposes, unrelated to the suit.

Natural systems

Natural systems generally use opening bids as follows:

- A bid of 1♥ or 1♠ shows at least 4 or 5 cards in the major suit, and 1♣ or 1♦ shows at least 3 or 4 cards in the minor suit. The complete hand usually contains about (11)12-20(22) high card points. As between two major suits or between two minor suits, the bidder opens in the longer suit; with equal lengths, the higher ranking suit is usually chosen. If the opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠ promises 5 cards, the system is referred to as a "five-card major" system; otherwise, it is referred to as a "four-card major" system. The term *five-card majors* implies that an opening bid in a minor suit bid might show three card length only (for example, the hand pattern might be 4=4=2=3, so neither major suit is long enough to show with an opening bid).
- A bid of 1NT shows a balanced hand in a narrow high card points range. The common ranges are 15-17 or 16-18 HCP ("strong notrump") and 12-14 ("weak notrump").
- A bid of 2♣ typically shows a very strong hand (22+ points).
- A bid of 2NT shows a strong balanced hand, usually 20-21 HCP.
- Opening bids of 3 of any suit are preemptive, showing a 7+ card suit and 6-10 points (mostly inside the bid suit).
- The meaning of 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ varies. One common usage is that the bid shows a weak two bid, similar to a preemptive bid. Another is that the strong two bid, which is natural and shows a very strong hand (too strong for a 1-level opening). Yet another usage, popular in otherwise natural systems, is to use weak two bids in the major suits, and 2♦ as Flannery: four spades and five hearts in a hand of minimum strength.

Specific systems

The most widespread natural systems are:

- Acol, featuring 4-card majors and weak notrump, originating in Great Britain
- Standard American, originally with 4-card majors but later adopting 5-card majors.
- Bridge Base Basic, based on Standard American and used in internet play
- 2/1 game forcing, based on Standard American and gradually superseding it. Some features of *2/1 game forcing* originated from the Roth-Stone and Kaplan-Sheinwold systems of the 1950s and 1960s.

Various developments in the area of natural systems have resulted in systems that are natural in essence, but contain special features. Examples are systems like Romex, Boring club, Fantunes, and EHAA (Every Hand An Adventure).

Artificial systems

Artificial systems can be further classified into:

- **Strong club systems** are the most popular artificial systems, where opening of 1♣ shows a strong hand (typically 16+ HCP). Other 1-level bids are typically natural, but limited to about 15 HCP. The most popular strong club systems are:
 - Vanderbilt club (the predecessor)
 - Precision club
 - Blue club
- In **Small club systems**, the opening bid of 1♣ is forcing but not necessarily strong. It typically includes some range of balanced hands, some hands with long club suit, and very strong hands. Examples are:
 - Vienna club (the predecessor)
 - Roman club, developed and used by famous Blue team
 - Polish club, originating (and standard) in Poland but also gained certain popularity worldwide
 - Dutch doubleton, an offspring of the Polish club system
- **Strong diamond systems** are similar to strong club systems, but the bid of 1♦ shows a strong opening, and the bid of 1♣ is typically ambiguous, as in small club systems. An example is Leghorn diamond, played by some top Italian pairs in 1970s.
- **Strong pass systems** are highly artificial and fairly rare. In those systems, an initial **pass** shows a hand of opening strength (13+ HCP); as result, weaker hands (8-12 must be opened with a bid instead (normally one low level bid is reserved to show 0-7 HCP, that bid is sometimes called a "fert", short for fertilizers). Strong pass systems are mostly banned by World Bridge Federation and other governing organizations from all competitions except the highest-level ones, because opponents cannot be reasonably expected to cope with such an unusual approach.
- **Relay systems** are based on relay bids – the artificial bids where one partner just bids the cheapest denomination (*relay bid*) and the other describes his distribution and high cards in detail (*relay response*) using a highly codified scheme. Such systems are out of the above classification (based on opening bid structure), as the relay feature takes place later in the auction. For example, relatively popular "Moscito system" has variants based on strong-club and strong-pass approaches. Symmetric relay is based on Precision club. Relay systems do not need to begin with an initial forcing pass or an initial forcing 1♣ opening. The ACBL typically disallows relay systems, on the grounds that they are too difficult to defend against without a lot of advance preparation.

.....

Standard American

Standard American is a common bidding system for the game of bridge in the United States, also widely used in the rest of the world. This system, or a slight variant, is learned first by most beginners in the U.S. and may be referred to as 'Goren'; a dominant version used in on-line computer bridge play is known as Standard American Yellow

Card, detailed below. Most advanced or expert players in the U.S. play a variant of 2/1 game forcing.

Role of bidding systems

The purpose of bidding is to exchange information with your partner so that you can arrive at an optimal contract, while preventing the opponents from finding their optimal contract. A bidding system is a set of agreements about the meanings of the different bids that the players can make during the auction phase of each hand. Bids are generally defined in terms of the hand's suit distribution and strength. In Standard American, strength is evaluated by the high card point method, with adjustments for distribution. Most beginners rigidly follow point count requirements, but experts will make adjustments based on their hand and the bidding so far.

History

"Standard American" was the label given to the bridge bidding system developed by Charles Goren in the 1940s. This system was the first to employ the point-count method to evaluate the strength of a bridge hand. Most bids had fairly specific requirements regarding hand strength and suit distribution. The Goren point-count system became so popular that nearly all bridge players in the United States, social and tournament players alike, used it. American bridge teams won world championships using Goren's Standard American.

Modifications began to appear from the 1960s forward. By the year 2000, some completely new bidding systems had evolved, including "Precision Club" and "2/1 Game Forcing" which, although still relying on point-count rules for hand evaluation, are otherwise substantial departures from the early Goren system. Most tournament pairs now assemble their own system from a variety of new treatments and conventions that have evolved. The nearest thing to a common system in tournament play is the "Standard American Yellow Card" (SAYC) promulgated by the American Contract Bridge League. SAYC is widely used in internet bridge play, but only rarely in on-site tournament play.

There is no longer a universally recognized standard for social/rubber bridge players. However generally they follow the rules described in *Standard American 21, The Rubber Bridge Players Guide for the Twenty-first Century* by John Sheridan Thomas.

The essential common elements of modern Standard American systems are:

.....

Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC)

"SAYC" is an acronym for Standard American Yellow Card, which is a specific set of partnership agreements and conventions, using Standard American as a base. Some of the specific agreements in SAYC that elaborate on basic Standard American are:

- A 2♣ response to a 1 NT opening is specified as the "non-forcing" version of the Stayman convention.
- A 2♠ response to a 1 NT opening forces the opener to bid 3♣, so that the responder may play there or bid 3♦, which the opener is expected to pass.
- Straight Blackwood is used, and not the "Roman Key-Card" or other variation.
- In response to a 2♣ opening, the 2♦ response is the "waiting" version of that response.
- In response to a weak-two opening, RONF ("Raise Only Non-Force") is used.
- Negative doubles are used through the level of 2♠.
- Fourth suit forcing is used.
- Michaels cuebid is used.
- Conventions are specified as being "off" in response to a 1NT overcall, except that 2♣ is still Stayman.

SAYC is a very specific collection of agreements, which can, of course, be modified and augmented by partnership agreement. In practical use, the term is often mis-used to refer to Standard American in general, or it could refer to a system that used SAYC as a base and made additional augmentations or changes to the base agreements.

Openings

1♣: 3–3 in the minors.

1♦: with 4–4 in the minors.

1♥/1♠: five-card majors in all seats.

1NT: 15–17, balanced hand, may be made with a five-card major suit or a five-card minor suit.

2♣: strong, conventional.

2♦/2♥/2♠: weak.

1 Club opening: Responses

A 1♣ opener is preferred on hands where a three-card minor suit must be opened. The exception is a hand with 4–4–3–2 shape: four spades, four hearts, three diamonds, and two clubs, which is opened 1♦.

Bidding at the one level is up-the-line in principle. Responder needs more support to raise (five to raise 1♣, though one fewer will do in a pinch in a competitive sequence). Responses of 2NT and 3NT are standard:

.....

The book includes texts from [American Contract Bridge League](#), and [Wikipedia](#) under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#), translated and adapted by [Nicolae Sfetcu](#).

The texts from this [book](#) are under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#).

Contents

Contract Bridge

- Game play
- - Dealing
- - Auction or bidding
- - Play of the hand
- - Scoring
- Laws of contract bridge
- - Laws of duplicate bridge
- - Laws of rubber bridge
- History
- Tournaments
- - Bidding boxes and bidding screens
- Game strategy
- - Bidding
- - - Bidding systems and conventions
- - - Basic natural systems
- - - Variations on the basic themes
- - - Advanced bidding techniques
- - Play techniques
- - Techniques by declarer
- - Advanced techniques by declarer
- - Techniques by defenders
- Example
- Playing on the Internet
- Computer bridge

Bidding Systems

- Classification
- - Natural systems
- - - Specific systems
- - Artificial systems
- 2/1 game forcing
- - Normal 2/1 game forcing auctions

- - Exceptions to 2/1 game force
- - 1NT response forcing or semi-forcing for one round
- - Other 2/1 features
- - Example sequences
- Acol
 - - Bidding system structure
 - - Variants
 - - Standard Acol
 - - - Opening bids
 - - - Responses to 1 of a suit
 - - - Responses to 1 NT
 - - - Responses to 2 NT
 - - - Responses to 2 clubs
 - - - Responses to 2 of a suit
 - - - Opener's suit rebid after one-level opening
 - - - Opener's NT rebid after one-level opening
 - - - Fourth suit forcing
 - Blue Club
 - - Advantages
 - - Disadvantages
 - Boring Club
 - - The 1 club opening
 - - The 1NT opening
- Bridge Base Basic
 - - Key points of BBO Basic Bidding
 - - Opener approximate hand strengths
 - - Responder approximate hand strengths
 - - - Responding with a minimum hand
 - - - Responding with a medium hand
 - - - Responding with a maximum hand
 - - - Responding with Balanced Hands
 - - Opener's response to partners search for a fit
- EHAA
 - - The EHAA two-bid
 - - The Mini Notrump
 - - Other Opening Bids
 - - Defensive Bidding
 - - Other Preempts
- Fantunes
- Little Major
- OK bridge 2/1
 - - 5-card majors
 - - The "two over one" game force
- Walsh
 - - Forcing One No-trump
 - - New Minor Forcing

- Polish Club
- 1 club opening
- 1 diamond response
- 1 heart/spade responses
- 1NT response
- 2 clubs/diamonds responses
- 2 hearts/spades responses
- 2NT response
- 3 clubs/diamonds response
- 3 hearts/spades responses
- 1 diamond opening
- 1heart/spade openings
- 1NT opening
- 2 clubs Opening
- 2 diamonds opening
- 2 hearts/spades openings
- 2NT opening
- 3NT opening
- Conventions in an uncontested auction
- Jump shift
- Fourth suit
- Third suit
- Forcing 2NT
- Odwrotka
- 2 clubs – check back
- En passant
- Slam bidding
- Roman Key Card Blackwood 1430
- Exclusion Key Card Blackwood (1430 responses)
- Hoyt
- 5NT
- Cue bids
- Splinter bids
- AutoSplinter
- Six in the Splinter suit
- Interference after Blackwood
- Competitive bidding
- Over opponent's takeout double
- Over opponent's overcall
- Support bidding after Partner's 1 heart/spade opening is overcalled
- After Partner's 1NT opening is overcalled
- After Partner's 2 diamonds/hearts/spades opening is overcalled
- Negative double
- When the second defender overcalls
- Defensive bidding
- No-trump hands

- - - After 2 diamonds artificial opening (Multi or Wilkosz)
- - - Direct cue bid
- - - Jump cue bid
- - - Versus strong 1 NT opening
- - - Versus weak 1NT opening
- - - Other
- - Leads and signals
- Precision Club
- - Main opening sequences
- - Precision today
- Roman Club
- - Overview
- - - Opening bids
- - - Other features
- Romex System
- - Dynamic one notrump
- - Mexican two diamonds
- - Other calls
- Saffle Spade
- Strong Club System
- - Explanation
- - Strengths
- - Sub-Types
- - History
- Standard American
- Role of bidding systems
- History
- Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC)
- Openings
- - 1 Club opening: Responses
- - 1 Diamond opening: Responses
- - 1 Heart/Spade opening: Responses and later bidding
- - - Opener's rebids are natural and standard
- - - Subsequent bidding by responder
- - 1NT opening: Responses and later bidding
- - - Interference after a 1NT opening bid
- - 2 Clubs opening: Responses and later bidding
- - 2 Diamonds/Hearts/Spades opening
- - 2NT opening: Responses
- - 3 Hearts/Spades or 4 Clubs/Diamonds opening preempts
- - 3NT opening: Responses
- - 4NT opening: Responses
- Jump to 5NT
- Competitive bidding
- Defensive bidding
- - Defensive leads and signals

Reference

About

- Nicolae Sfetcu

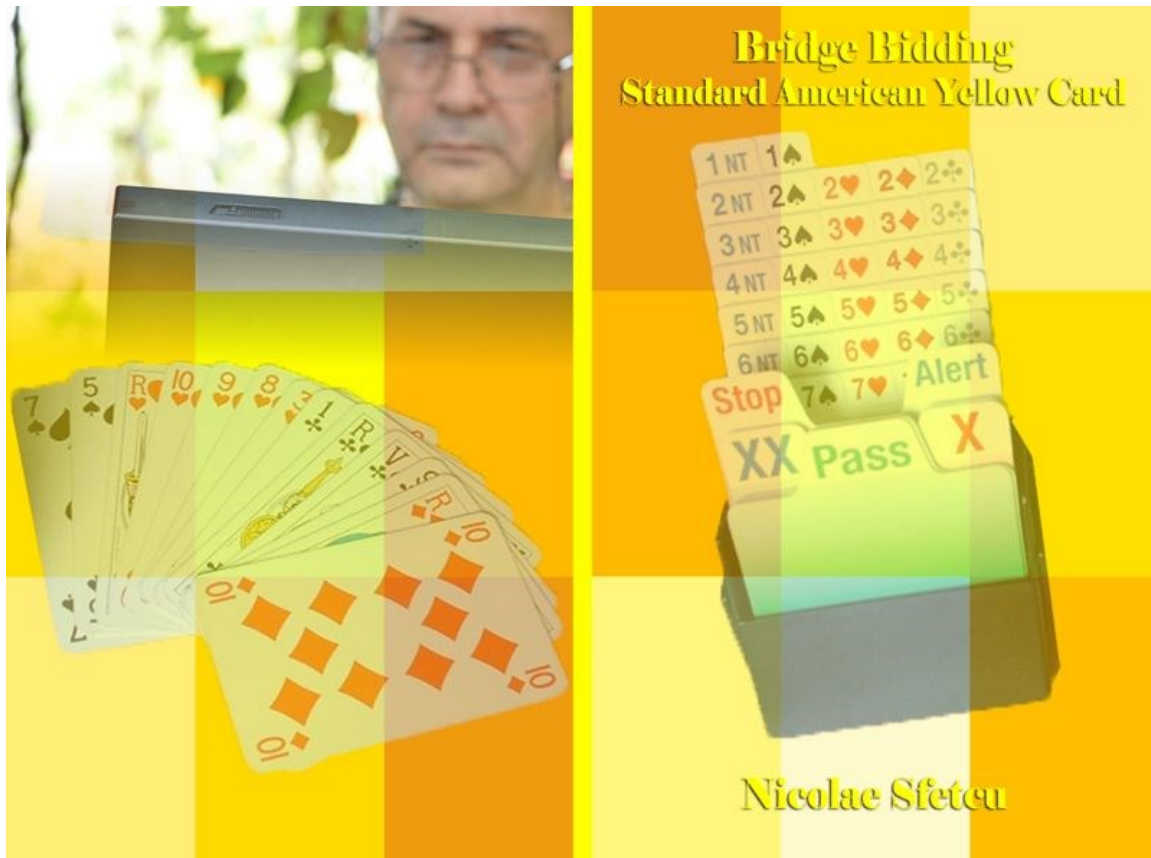
-- By the same author

-- Contact

Publishing House

- MultiMedia Publishing

Book



This book presents some of the most important bridge bidding systems used in duplicate bridge tournaments, detailing the most known bridge bidding system, Standard American Yellow Card, by using a logical sequential order for openings, answers, competitive bids and defensive play in order to help the players during the games.

Much of the complexity in bridge arises from the difficulty of arriving at a good final contract in the auction.

A bidding system in contract bridge is the set of agreements and understandings assigned to calls and sequences of calls used by a partnership, and includes a full description of the meaning of each treatment and convention.

Standard American Yellow Card is a specific set of partnership agreements and conventions, using Standard American as a base. Standard American Yellow Card is a very specific collection of agreements, which can, of course, be modified and augmented by partnership agreement. In practical use, the term is often mis-used to refer to Standard American in general, or it could refer to a system that used SAYC as a base and made additional augmentations or changes to the base agreements.

MultiMedia Publishing House: <https://www.telework.ro/en/e-books/bridge-bidding-standard-american-yellow-card/>

About the author

Nicolae Sfetcu

Owner and manager with MultiMedia SRL and MultiMedia Publishing House.

Project Coordinator for European Teleworking Development Romania (ETD)

Member of Rotary Club Bucuresti Atheneum

Cofounder and ex-president of the Mehedinti Branch of Romanian Association for Electronic Industry and Software

Initiator, cofounder and president of Romanian Association for Telework and Teleactivities

Member of Internet Society

Initiator, cofounder and ex-president of Romanian Teleworking Society

Cofounder and ex-president of the Mehedinti Branch of the General Association of Engineers in Romania

Physicist engineer - Bachelor of Physics, Major Nuclear Physics. Master of Philosophy.

Contact

Email: nicolae@sfetcu.com

Facebook/Messenger: <https://www.facebook.com/nicolae.sfetcu>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/nicolae>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/nicolaesfetcu>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/NicolaeSfetcu>

Publishing House

MultiMedia Publishing

*web design, e-commerce and other web applications * internet marketing, SEO, online advertising, branding * software localization, English - Romanian - French translation * articles, desktop publishing, secretarial services * powerpoint, word and pdf presentation, image, audio and video editing * book and e-book conversion, editing and publishing , isbn*

Email: office@multimedia.com.ro

MultiMedia: <http://www.multimedia.com.ro/>

Online Media: <https://www.telework.ro/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/multimedia.srl/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/multimedia>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/multimedia-srl/>