

Bidding good hands after a 1NT opening

Aug 2005

Suit bids after a 1NT opening

When partner opens 1NT it is useful to know that partner will have at least a doubleton in your long suit. If you have a six-card suit, the partnership must have at least an eight-card fit and game in the major is usually best, so just bid it!

♠ J 7	♠ K Q 9 5 3 2
♥ A 10 4	♥ J 3
♦ Q J 9 6	♦ K 5 3
♣ K Q 8 2	♣ A 3

1NT 4♠

With six spades, just bid 4♠. Even if partner only has two little spades you will have a play for the contract.

With a five-card suit, you need partner's help to decide the final contract.

♠ J 7	♠ K Q 9 5 3
♥ A 10 4	♥ J 3
♦ Q J 9 6	♦ K 5 3
♣ K Q 8 2	♣ A 4 3

1NT 3♠

3NT

3♠ asks partner to raise with three or more spades and bid 3NT otherwise.

♠ J 7	♠ Q 3
♥ A 10 4	♥ K Q 9 5 3
♦ Q J 9 6	♦ K 5 3
♣ K Q 8 2	♣ A 4 3

1NT 3♥

4♥

Stayman is useful after a 1NT opening for finding a 4-4 major suit fit. But there are some hands where responder has a five-card major and where Stayman might be used. I asked my students to think of some hands with a five-card major that would fit the auction I given.

♠ A 8 5	♠ J 9 4 3 2
♥ 7 4	♥ K Q 3
♦ Q J 9 6	♦ K 5 3
♣ K Q 8 2	♣ A J

1NT 2♣

2♦ 3NT

With game going values but a poor five-card suit, East bids as though the spades were only four cards long. East uses Stayman and raise spades if partner bids them, otherwise bids 3NT. Without the ♦K, East would use Stayman and bid just 2NT over 2♦ or 2♥.

♠ A 8 5	♠ K Q 4 2
♥ 7 4	♥ K J 10 5 3
♦ Q J 9 6	♦ 4 2
♣ K Q 8 2	♣ A 3

1NT 2♣

2♦ 3♥

3NT

Since 2♦ denies a four-card major, 3♥ must show five hearts. It is forcing and asks the 1NT bidder to choose

between 3NT and 4♥. To bid like this East must have four spades or the response would have been an immediate 3♥.

♠ A 8 5	♠ K Q 4 2
♥ Q 7 4	♥ K J 10 5 3
♦ Q 6 5	♦ 4 2
♣ K Q 8 2	♣ A 3

1NT 2♣

2♦ 3♥

4♥

3♥ asks partner a question. With three hearts, please bid 4♥, but with only two hearts bid 3NT. Partner will know

you have four spades to follow this sequence. Occasionally partner might use this information to make an unorthodox raise to 4♥ on a doubleton.

♠ A J 5	♠ K Q 4 2
♥ A Q	♥ K J 7 5 3
♦ J 6 5	♦ 4 2
♣ Q 8 6 5 2	♣ A 3

1NT 2♣
2♦ 3♥
4♥

Knowing East has spades and hearts, West will do best to raise to 4♥ on a strong doubleton. Bidding 3NT with such poor minor suit stoppers could be dangerous.

♠ A J	♠ K Q 9 4 2
♥ A Q 6	♥ K J 7 5 3
♦ 8 6 5 3	♦ 2
♣ Q 8 6 2	♣ A 3

1NT 3♠
3NT 4♥

With five cards in each major bid the spades first. If partner denies three or more spades by bidding 3NT, then bid 4♥. 1NT won't be opened with two doubletons, so if the 1NT bidder has only got two spades, they must have at least three hearts.

♠ J 5	♠ K Q 9 4 2
♥ A Q 3 2	♥ 5
♦ J 6 5	♦ 2
♣ K J 7 2	♣ A Q 9 6 5 3

1NT 3♠
3NT 4♣
5♣

The second long suit will sometimes be a minor. It would be a shame to go down in 3NT when 11 tricks can be made in clubs.

As we saw last time, much the same bidding can be used over a 2NT opening bid

♠ J 10 3	♠ K Q 9 4 2
♥ A 8 4	♥ J 9 7 5
♦ A K Q 5	♦ 6 2
♣ A K 2	♣ 6 3

2NT 3♣
3♦ 3♠
4♠

When the 2NT opener denies a four-card major, the 3♣ bid must show five spades and, since Stayman was used, four hearts as well. Note that 3NT might go down if the defence hold up their ♠A until the third round, as there is no entry to cash the long spade. But 4♠ should always make.

♠ 10 3	♠ K Q 9 4 2
♥ A 8 4	♥ Q J 10 5 3
♦ A K Q 5	♦ 3
♣ A K 2	♣ 9 8

2NT 3♠
3NT 4♥

With 5-5 in the majors it is correct to respond with 3♠ and continue with 4♥ to show the two long suits.

Of course if responder has lots of points the bidding might go

♠ 10 3	♠ A K 9 4 2
♥ A 8 4	♥ Q J 10 5 3
♦ A K Q 5	♦ 3
♣ A K 2	♣ J 8

2NT 3♠
3NT 6♥

This shows a strong hand with at least 5-5 in the two suits.