

The 1 No Trump Structure – Part V

E. Bidding After Interference:

Fifty years ago, few dared to enter an auction in the face of a strong 1 NT bid. This is because virtually all doubles were penalty, and the risk of being doubled and going for a large number seemed to outweigh the value of a small part score plus. Today, nearly everybody feels comfortable interfering in your strong NT auctions in great part because so few players have a penalty double option. If the opponents are unable to double you for penalties, you may as well tell partner the suit you want led, or possibly the strain in which you might compete or save. The wide acceptance of conventions such as D.O.N.T. and Cappelletti have made overcalls of 1NT commonplace, and 21st century methods are going to have to be able to deal with these annoyances to be successful.

Since one of the goals of sound bidding is *consistency*, we want our rules to be applicable to other common situations as well. Therefore, when partner opens 1NT and our RHO overcalls on the 2-level, we agree that:

1. Any new suit by responder on the 2 level is **NON-FORCING**.
2. Any new suit by responder on the 3 level is **GAME FORCING**.
3. A Double is *Penalty* for the suit(s) *shown*, not necessarily the suit *bid*.
4. A cue bid is Stayman.
5. If no suit has yet been shown, a Double is *conventional* (Often Stayman).
6. Our regular systems are **ON** over a double whether or not the double is conventional.

Suppose partner opens a strong 1NT, RHO bids 2D and you hold:

A.	♠ 964	♥ AQ852	♦ 83	♣ J72	or
B.	♠ AT4	♥ KQT85	♦ 54	♣ Q93	or
C.	♠ A92	♥ QT65	♦ 64	♣ KJ83	or
D.	♠ QJT74	♥ KQT85	♦ 4	♣ J9	or
E.	♠ QJT742	♥ KQT8	♦ 4	♣ J9	or
F.	♠ QJT742	♥ KQ8	♦ 4	♣ J95	or
G.	♠ J95	♥ 85	♦ AJ97	♣ Q762	

First of all, it is *extremely* important that we *ask the meaning* of 2D. Assume we are told that it is natural. In hand (A), we sign off in 2H. Partner with 4 card support and a maximum is allowed to raise to 3H, but no further. Hand (B) is stronger and starts with a game forcing 3H. Hand (C) is game forcing and starts with a Stayman cue bid of 3D. Hand (D) is distributional, and may take 2 bids to describe. Responder starts with a game forcing 3S, and if Opener bids 3NT, corrects to 4H. Hand (E) starts with a Stayman cue bid of 3D. If Opener bids a major, responder will raise to game, but if Opener bids 3NT, Responder will correct to 4S (natural). Hand (F) is our old friend, the Texas Transfer (4H). If you thought you could bid 3S forcing, and correct to 4S, you may get into trouble when partner correctly interprets this sequence as a slam try. Hand (G) is the most enjoyable. With no probable game, you make a penalty double of 2D and collect your just rewards.

Suppose we ask the meaning of 2D, and we are told that it is Cappelletti, (for the majors). With hands (A) - (C), we would start with a **Double**, promising a penalty double in *at least one* of the promised suits. When LHO selects a major, Opener's only responsibility is to double with four pieces, and pass with fewer. If I held either hand (D) or hand (E), I wouldn't expect 2D to be Cappelletti, and would suspect that the opponents have had a misunderstanding. I would *pass* and double two of a major later. When RHO runs to 3D, I would bid 4D, expecting partner to work it out. With hand (F), I would bid 3NT, knowing that the opponents were never going to stop in spades. With Hand (G) I'd either pass or bid 3NT, leaning strongly toward the former.

Finally, if we are told that the 2D bid is D.O.N.T., (Diamonds and a higher suit), the responses are identical to what we would bid if the 2D bid were natural. Note that on all the hands where we have a penalty double of RHO's major, we can't do it, since there is a strong possibility that the opponents will stop at 2Dx. On hand (G), it's unlikely the opponents will stay in 2Dx, and will probably run to a major, but there's always the chance that partner will be able to double it. If not, you can gamble with 2NT or 3NT, but *Pass* could be the winning option.

When RHO doubles or bids 2C, we follow a different set of rules:

1. All systems are *ON*, and a double of 2C is Stayman
2. When RHO makes a *penalty double*, 2C is Stayman, and *redouble* shows a 5 card minor.
3. When RHO makes a *penalty double*, *Pass* is forcing. Opener must re-open.
4. When RHO makes a *conventional* double, 2C is Stayman, and *redouble* shows strength.

A.	♠ Q753	♥ J964	♦ 962	♣ 64
B.	♠ Q8542	♥ T73	♦ 874	♣ J5
C.	♠ 74	♥ J85	♦ 964	♣ QT753
D.	♠ T62	♥ 84	♦ AT63	♣ QT75
E.	♠ T62	♥ 84	♦ Q863	♣ J975

We treat these differently, because with modern methods, the opponents will rarely play in 2C when they overcall it. Since 2C is nearly always conventional, for the sake of simplicity, we treat them all identically. Doubles, however, require special care. We need to find out the meaning of the double and act accordingly. On hand (A), over 2C or Double – regardless of meaning (which we ask to keep partner involved) – we are going to Stayman this hand: (bidding 2C over X, or doubling 2C). If partner bids 2D, we will sign off with 2H. With hand (B), whether RHO bids 2C or doubles, we will bid 2H – transfer. If this is bid over a penalty double, Opener will prudently decline to super-accept. Holding hand (C), we will pass if RHO bids 2C or doubles *conventionally* – (that’s why we ask). Over a *penalty double* however, we *redouble*, over which partner will *puppet* to 2C. On this hand we will pass 2C, but we might correct to 2D. Hands (D) and (E) are typical hands we might hold when RHO makes a penalty double. On the first, we make a forcing pass, and pass partner’s reopening double. Don’t expect LHO to sit for this. If LHO is alert, he will pull the double before you have the opportunity to let partner know that you aren’t broke. On the last hand, when partner reopens with a redouble, you will run to 2C and hope partner is able to play there. He will know you only have 4, (since you didn’t redouble immediately), and if 2C is unplayable, he will bid his first playable suit (hopefully 2D). Note that Opener does not reopen with a redouble if he holds a 5 card suit. In that situation, he will reopen in his suit.

LEBENSÖHL

Lebensöhl is a popular convention used by nearly all expert players after interference over 1NT. ALL of the rules we have already adopted are incorporated into the Lebensöhl convention – namely: (1) new suits on the two level are non-forcing, (2) new suits on the three level are game forcing, and (3) cue bids are Stayman. Most players have elected to use Lebensöhl for interference of 2D, 2H, or 2S, and play “*Systems On*” over 2C as I outlined above. The key component of Lebensöhl is the *conventional* use of 2NT. This bid is artificial and forcing, requiring Opener to *puppet* to 3C. The Lebensöhl 2NT bid allows the partnership to (1) compete in a suit on the 3-level in situations where bidding the suit naturally would otherwise be forcing, and (2) allow responder to show or deny a stopper in the suit overcalled. Responder will typically either hold a *weak* hand with a long suit, or a *strong* hand with a stopper in the overcalled suit. Suppose RHO overcalls 2H after a 1nt opening by Partner:

A.	♠ AQ7	♥ 64	♦ K962	♣ Q764
B.	♠ AQ7	♥ K73	♦ 874	♣ Q853
C.	♠ AQ75	♥ 85	♦ K64	♣ Q853
D.	♠ AQ75	♥ K85	♦ 64	♣ Q853
E.	♠ Q74	♥ 85	♦ QT8753	♣ J6
F.	♠ QJ542	♥ 73	♦ AJ94	♣ J5

With hand (A), Responder leaps to 3NT. This *denies* a stopper in hearts, and shows no interest in major - (Fast arrival). With hand (B), Responder starts with 2NT (Lebensöhl). Opener puppets to 3C and Responder bids 3NT which promises values for game along with a heart stopper. Holding hand (C), Responder bids 3H (Stayman) denying a heart stopper - (Fast arrival again). Hand (D) begins with 2NT (Lebensöhl). Opener puppets to 3C, and Responder bids 3H (Stayman), this time promising a heart stopper. With hand (E), Responder starts with 2NT (Lebensöhl) correcting 3C to 3D. An immediate 3D would have been game forcing. Finally, holding hand (F), Responder starts with 2NT (Lebensöhl), and corrects 3C to 3S. Since 2S was available over 2H, and 3S immediately would have been forcing, this is one of the few occasions when an invitational call can be made. Opener has the option of passing, or correcting to 3NT or 4S. Responder has not promised a heart stopper.