

# What is your agreement? A bridge Tip

By Neil H. Timm

Playing 2/1 the opponents make a one level bid (major or minor) and your partner overcalls 1NT (15-18 HCP) what is your agreement?

Are systems "On" or "Off"? Most club member play that systems are on!  
Crazy, Crazy, Crazy! Why?

1. It is a disadvantage to have the lead coming up to the 1NT over caller (as opposed to the 1NT opener) since opener's partner will lead opener's suit unless he finds a better lead. If one does lead opener's suit it will be through any cards that dummy may have in the suit, rather than the opener leading up to it or them if he is on lead (as in systems OFF). So it is clearly better to simply have the 1NT over caller's partner bid his suit naturally and to have the lead come from the opener rather than his partner. Also, if you transfer (with systems on) then the opener can double to show a second suit and/or suggest an alternate lead, which he can't do if you play systems OFF unless he is willing to risk bidding the suit at the three-level.
2. There is the bid of 2♣ as Stayman.
3. The 1NT over caller's partner is more likely to have less points than the 1NT opener's partner, so it is "more" likely that you will be doubled for penalty.
4. Your side is less likely to have game/slam-going values.

So play "Systems be OFF" and NEVER "ON"!

A great bidding sequence is to use a system developed by the bridge expert Granovetter. The idea is that it forces the original opener to lead away into both the 1NT over caller and you. On average you and opener's partner will have only 7HCP. If the opener even wins a trick, he is always being end played and is easily finessable. The only thing that is given up is a natural 2♣ bid. Bids are as follows:

2♣ is Stayman and the responses by the 1NT over caller are as follows:

2♦ show 4 hearts or 4-4 majors - responder in this case chooses the major to play in and becomes the declarer.

2♥ show 4♠ - responder then bids spades as if he has 4 spades

2♠ no major, and a minimum

2NT no major and a maximum

After his partner (the advancer of the 1NT over caller) accepts the transfer, the original 1NT over caller may pass or bid more if has a maximum.

Except for the bid of 2♣, any other bid 2♦/2♥/2♠ are drop-dead bids and 2NT shows a raise with 8-9 HCP. 3NT is to play.

Three levels bids in a new suit promise a 5-card suit and a hand that can play either 3NT or 4 of the suit with any help at all from the NT over caller are slamish.

A the cue-bid of the opener's suit promises at least 9 HCP, no 5-card suit worth showing, and no 4-card major. One should also play Lebensohl when the opponents bid over your partner's 1NT overcall bid.