



Winter Bridge Holiday. Hyatt Regency Sanctuary Cove. Mon 26th June

Web: joanbuttsbridge.com Email: joaneb@uq.net.au Ph 07 32544795 mob 0413772650

PO Box 1570 New Farm 4005 Qld

Opening 1NT with a Five-Card Major

You think you know how it is, and then everything changes! That's bridge for you! I'm talking about whether to open 1NT with a five-card major. It *used* to be a no-no, but, slowly but surely, a few years ago, players started to convert to opening these hands 1NT rather than 1♥/1♠. Ron Klinger offers good reasons for the change. Here are some:

- (1) Opening 1NT can keep the bidding lower. Eg
- | | |
|---------|--------|
| ♠ KQ | ♠ A73 |
| ♥ A9732 | ♥ 64 |
| ♦ AK4 | ♦ Q642 |
| ♣ J63 | ♣ 8752 |

(2) Opening 1NT gives less info to the opponents. If you open 1♥ or 1♠ and end up in no trumps, the opponents won't lead your suit. If the bidding goes 1NT p 3NT they will often make a friendly lead.

(3). If you open with your major, and no major fit exists, partner will often respond 1NT. Opening 1NT will allow the strong hand to be declarer.

(4). Opening 1NT allows partner to make a transfer bid. If you open 1♥ or 1♠, partner will pass if weak. If you open 1NT, partner is actually encouraged to bid with a weak hand and a long suit.

(5). When you open 1NT you reveal your strength, and may reach a game that is missed when you open in a major.

(6). Opening 1NT eliminates rebid problems and simplifies your system.

(7) Even if a major fit does exist, opening 1NT can keep you lower.

If the bidding starts 1♥: 2♥ and you have the same values as a strong 1NT, you'll invite game, and may get too high.

(8) If you do have enough for a strong 1NT, but you open with 1♥ or 1♠, you will rarely be allowed to play in 2 of a major.

(9) Even when a major suit fit exists, it can be safer to play in 3NT than 4 of a major by averting the risk of a ruff.

You do need a five-card Major Stayman to check back, but it's not hard to adapt your basic system to that.

Here's how it goes:

1NT p 2♣ (Stayman)

Answers:

2♦ = no 5 card major, minimum

2♥ = 5 hearts, minimum

2♠ = 5 spades, minimum

2NT = no 5-card major, maximum

3♥ = five hearts, maximum

3♠ = five spades, maximum

If opener denies a five-card major (2♦ or 2NT), and responder wants to know about a four card major, just bid 3♣, and opener will show them the normal way.

Use the 2♣ response only when you have at least enough points to invite game. If opener shows a max, the auction becomes game-forcing. The main purpose is to learn whether opener has a 5 card major so that you can play in your 5-3 fit, to locate a 4-card major fit, or to find out whether opener is minimum or maximum (whether or not a major suit fit is involved).

Use 2♣ when you have a 3 card holding in one or both majors, and at least one doubleton.

West	East	West	East
♠ AKJ75	♠ Q62	1NT	2♣
♥ J8	♥ 972	2♠ (min with 5 spades)	4♠
♦ K98	♦ A6		
♣ K32	♣ A9654		

Use 2♣ when you simply want to find out if partner is maximum or minimum.