

Learning Points – Competitive Bidding over 1NT

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by Steve Moese; edited by Mike Purcell

E Deals

NS Vul

Mike

♠ KQJ3

♥ 32

♦ 9865

♣ KQJ

Steve

♠ 1095

N

♠ A4

♥ J10965

W 2 E

♥ AQ2

♦ A72

S

♦ Q4

♣ 86

♣ A109753

♠ 8762

♥ K84

♦ KJ103

♣ 42

Duplicate:

EW: 1N, 2♣, 3♥

NS: 2♦, 2♠

Here's a hand from the 2 session Stratiflighted Open Pairs in a tough B flight at the January Cleveland Regional. How would you bid the East/West Hands?

The Bidding

Steve (East): While the 2326 shape is atypical, the presence of honor cards in all suits makes the texture right for a 1NT (15-17 HCP) opening bid. Yes, we open 11-15 HCP hands 2♣ with a 6 card ♣ suit, but this hand is too strong, and 1NT preserves better constructive bidding options (transfers).

Mike (West): I could transfer to 2♥ and we play there, but 1NT just might be safer. I'll pass.

North: I have 12 HCP, West and South share 11-13 HCP between them (my 12 plus opener's 15-17). No transfers. No Stayman bids, we might just own spades. 2♠ seems like a good bid. Besides I want a ♠ lead if we defend.

East	South	West	North
1NT	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East led the ♣A

Steve (East): 3♣ could be right, but seems too unilateral. Partner is captain here since my shape and strength is known.

Mike (West): I can't find a bid on this hand. I can't double (too weak) and I can't bid hearts now – perhaps I should have transferred.

The Play

East led the ♣A, hoping to find partner with a ♣ ruff either immediately or on the 3rd round. East's hand is not happy to be on lead – too many ways to give away a trick. An attacking lead seems right since we don't quite know the trump situation.

Defense managed only three aces and 2 ♣ ruffs for minus 110 and 1 out of 11 match points.

Postmortem

Here's another case where a 5 card major plays better - because we can compete over spades. Competitive bidding is one edge that should tip a close decision to bid, rather than pass when holding a weak hand opposite a strong NT opener. If West transfers to ♥ and North still bids Spades (!! – Would you??), East has an easy raise to 3♥. This will put pressure on North and South who do not have a good sacrifice given the vulnerability. In general it's better to have the opponents make the last decision when it's a tough one.