



Bridge- The Next Level

Week 2- Bidding when the opposition open 1NT

What can we do when the **opposition** open 1NT?

The weak 1NT opener is a useful bid, as it describes opener's hand to his/her partner in one bid, and has a good pre-emptive value.

When your opponents do it, it makes it quite difficult for you to enter the bidding. As you'll already have seen, this comes up a lot.

Before we get into that, let's explore some background.

What does this bid mean: 2  ?

How about in the sequence

N	E	S	W
1♣	Pass	2♣	Pass

N	E	S	W
1♣	Pass	2♣	Pass

Here 2♣ is a natural club bid, but a limit bid.

6-9 points, support for clubs, and denying a 4 card (or longer) major suit

Or in the sequence

N	E	S	W
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass

N	E	S	W
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass

Here 2♣ is a change of suit response at the 2 level. It shows a club suit, and **RULE of 14!!**

Or in the sequence

N E S W

Pass

1♥

2♣

N	E	S	W
Pass	1♥	2♣	

Here the 2♣ bid is an overcall at the 2 level.

It shows a club suit, and a **SQOT of at least 8.**

How about in the sequence

N	E	S	W
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass

N	E	S	W
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass

Here, the 2♣ bid is Stayman, NOTHING TO DO WITH CLUBS, saying “I have at least one EXACTLY 4-card major. I’m looking for a major suit fit”.

Or how about in the sequence

N	E	S	W
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦

N	E	S	W
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦

Here 2♣ is an opening bid. It says nothing about clubs, but shows a strong hand.

So we see that

CONTEXT is everything

and

Some bids are NATURAL, and some are
CONVENTIONAL

Conventional bids are great- the more you play bridge , the more you will want to add to your bidding system, and most of that involves conventions.

But the trouble is, they have to be

- Learned
- Agreed between you and partner



Today's topic is how to bid when opposition open 1NT.

You've guessed it – it involves a set of
CONVENTIONAL BIDS!

There are many possibilities to choose from as your SYSTEM when the opposition open 1NT.

The one I am proposing is called

CAPPELLETTI

And we'll start with

YET ANOTHER MEANING FOR 2♣

Here it is

N E S W

1NT

2♣

N	E	S	W
1NT	2♣		

You and your partner are EW, playing Cappelletti as your system when the opposition open 1NT.

N	E	S	W
1NT	2♣		

The 2♣ bid means “I want to compete. I have one good (at least 6 card) suit. It could be any of the 4 suits”

N	E	S	W
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♦

If opener's partner (south) passes, West **MUST** give partner the chance to bid again, and show what their suit is. It might well not be clubs.

The response is 2♦ – just a relay bid (nothing about diamonds)

N	E	S	W
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	??		

If East's suit was diamonds, she can pass. If not, she will now bid her suit.

We'll go on to explore other Cappelletti bids in a moment, for when you want to compete and have, say, a 2-suited hand.

But first, what about this?

N	E	S	W
1NT			

It doesn't matter what system you play, **DOUBLE** of 1NT always means the same thing.

It is for **penalties** – it's never meant as a take-out. To double, you'll need a strong hand: say 16+ HCP, and/or a good running suit.

Also, if the opponents retreat into a suit, and you **X** that, it's also for penalties: they've got themselves in a hole, and you're not going to let them escape lightly!

So, when opposition open 1NT, we now know

what to bid if we have 1 good suit: 2♣

what to bid if we're strong, 16+ points: X

But what if we have 2 good suits (5-5 or better)?

We have a SET of Cappelletti bids to call over the opposition's opening 1NT:

2♦ : I want to compete, and have a good holding in both majors

2♥ : I want to compete, and have a good holding in ♥ and an unspecified minor

2♠ : I want to compete, and have a good holding in ♠ and an unspecified minor

2NT: I want to compete, and have a good holding in both minors

I did say 2 good suits means at least 5-5.

You can stretch it and bid with 5-4, if the hand is very strong, but don't do that in the minors.

ie only overcall 2NT over their 1NT if you hold **at least 5-5** in the minors.

So, how strong do you need to be to make a Cappelletti overcall of 2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ or 2NT?

Generally fewer than 16, and can be as few as 7 or 8 depending on shape, and vulnerability.

Why bother with all this?

If you have a good suit, why don't you just bid it? The reasoning is that this system gives you a better chance of being able to find a bid over 1NT, and to **find a fit** with partner. OK, sometimes you'll have a decent 6 card suit, or a 5 card suit you can bid at the 2 level, but those hands crop up less often.

If you don't have an agreed system, you'll often be faced with either having to pass, or make a guess which could turn out badly.

How should we **respond** if partner makes a Cappelletti overcall of 2♣, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ or 2NT?

Let's look at these in turn

How to respond to partner's Cappelletti 2♣ overcall (which promises one (unspecified) good suit)

The normal response is 2♦. This is just a relay bid, saying nothing about your diamond holding, allowing partner to pass if his/her suit is diamonds, or bid their suit if it's something else.

Very occasionally, you'll have a good long suit of your own, and want to over-ride partner's choice of suit. In this case bid your suit – at the 2 level if it's ♥ or ♠, but it will need to be at the 3 level if it's ♣ or ♦ (because in clubs your partner has already bid 2, and because 2♦ is the conventional relay, saying nothing about diamonds.)

Rarely, you'll have a good balanced hand of at least 11HCP, and tolerance for whatever suit partner turns out to have. In this case bid 2NT, which invites partner to bid to game in his/her suit if he/she is a maximum.

How to respond to partner's Cappelletti 2♦ overcall (which promises a good holding in both majors)

- If you hate both majors, but have a very good (6+) diamond suit, pass
- If you hate both majors but have a very good (6+) club suit, bid 3♣
- If you hate both majors but have two good minor suits, bid 2NT. Partner will then bid the better of his/her minors.
- You are weak but prefer one major, bid it at the 2 level.
- If you have 4+ cards in a major, and some strength, invite to game by jumping to the 3-level in whichever major you hold. If partner is a maximum or near maximum, he/she will bid game

How to respond to partner's Cappelletti 2♥ or 2♠, overcall (which promises a good holding in the bid major and an unspecified minor)

- Having a weak hand (0-7HCP) and support for partner's major: pass
- Having ~8 or 9 HCP and support for partner's major: single raise in the major
- In response to 2♥, hating hearts, weak hand, long spades: 2♠: I have a long spade suit, am weak, and it might be best to play in 2♠.
- You don't like partner's major, haven't got a good spade suit, so the best option looks to be to play in whichever minor suit he/she has: bid 2NT. This is a relay, asking partner to bid his/her minor.

How to respond to partner's 2NT overcall (which promises both minor suits – at least 5-5)

- Hate both minors, but holding a good (6+) major suit: bid your major at lowest level, ie 3♥ or 3♠
- Weak hand, preference for clubs: bid 3♣. Can be an artificial preference if minor suit holdings are much the same
- Weak hand, preference for diamonds: bid 3♦
- Nice shapely hand with a good minor: bid the minor at 4 level, inviting partner to bid game if he/she is a maximum.

Don't worry if all this appears complicated – eventually, with practice, it will become much easier, and it is quite intuitive anyway.

By all means use a crib sheet beside you when you're playing (this is only disallowed in formal competitive bridge).

You will also come up against opposition who use Cappelletti, so it's helpful to understand what they're doing.

Any questions?

