

## §12. The 1NT Response to an Opening Bid.

**By the end of this chapter you should understand the following term:**

**1NT response:** The bid made by responder on many 6-9 point responding hands when there is no cheaper response. Also known as *the dustbin bid*.

We start this chapter by reminding you about opening suit-bids at the one-level and simple suit responses. (From §8).

### Opening bids.

1. Opening bids of 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ and 1♠ are very wide ranging (roughly 12-19 points).
2. All opening bids are made in the longest suit in the hand – and always show at least four cards.
3. Opening one-level bids are **not** limit bids so partner has only the vaguest clue of what you might have. This means that no-one is “boss of the auction” – yet.

### Responding to opening bids.

Since an opening bid at the one-level shows *about* 12 to *about* 19 points (and may, in practice, contain anywhere between 10 and 20 points) it follows that it is necessary for opener’s partner (the *responder*) to keep the bidding alive on fairly slender values. So we have the following guidance for responder:

**Rule 1:** Keep the bidding alive with a response whenever you have 6 points or more.

However, to bid a new suit that takes the bidding to the two-level you need a minimum of 10 points.

**Rule 2:** A response in a new suit at the two-level promises a *minimum* of 10 points.

Here are some example hands, first demonstrated in §8. In each case the responder would reply 1♠ to an opening bid of 1♥.

Ex 1.	Ex 2.	Ex 3.	Ex 4.	Ex 5.	Ex 6.
♠ K J 3 2	♠ A Q 10 9 6	♠ 8 7 5 4	♠ K 10 5 3	♠ J 7 4 2	♠ A Q 9 8 6
♥ 9 7	♥ K 10 4	♥ Q	♥ A K J	♥ Q 3	♥ None
♦ Q 7 2	♦ 10 6	♦ A 9 8 3	♦ K Q 5	♦ 10 4	♦ A J 9 6
♣ 9 6 4 2	♣ A Q 5	♣ K 10 7 3	♣ A 6 4	♣ Q J 10 8 5	♣ K 9 3 2
6 points	15 points	9 points	20 points	6 points	14 points

Note that a simple 1♠ response simply promises four (or more) Spades and 6 (or more) points. Essentially, though, such a bid is *unlimited* and opener is going to have to make at least one more bid to describe his hand.

Now, having revised what we already know, let’s proceed to the next stage. Consider example hands 7-12. In Examples 7-9 partner opens 1♥; in Examples 10-12 partner opens 1♠. What do you respond?

Ex 7.	Ex 8.	Ex 9.	Ex 10.	Ex 11.	Ex 12.
♠ Q J 2	♠ A 9 6	♠ 10 8 4	♠ J 8	♠ K 10	♠ Q 3
♥ 10 7	♥ 6 3	♥ 5 2	♥ 10 6 2	♥ Q 9 3	♥ K J 8 7 5
♦ A 7 5 3	♦ K 9 8	♦ J 10 6 4 2	♦ A K J	♦ 8 6 4 2	♦ 10 7 5 3
♣ 9 6 4 2	♣ Q 8 7 5 3	♣ A J 10	♣ 9 7 6 4 3	♣ Q J 10 8	♣ 5 2
7 points	9 points	6 points	9 points	8 points	6 points

In each example you want to respond (obeying Rule 1 – *Keep the bidding alive with 6 or more points*). However, you can’t bid your best suit on any of these hands as it would contradict Rule 2 – *To bid a new suit at the two-level you need a minimum of 10 points*. So what are you left with? The only bid you can make that allows you to satisfy Rules 1 and 2 is 1NT, and that is your correct reply in each case.

This gives us our third rule of responding to an opening suit-bid at the one-level.

**Rule 3:** A 1NT response shows 6-9 points and no four-card (or longer) suit to bid at the one-level.

This last proviso is important, a rule of thumb to use for responder is to *keep the bidding low* where possible and make the *cheapest bid*. It may appear that a 1NT response suggests a balanced hand; in practice, this requirement tends to be *more honoured in the breach than the observance*.

Whilst some responses to opening bids are *unlimited* (see Examples 1 to 6) some responses are *limit bids*. A response of 1NT to one-level opening bids fall into this category, as do raises of partner's suit. This means that opener is **boss of the auction** after a 1NT response as he is in a position to assess the partnership's worth and hence he may be in a position make a decision on the final contract.

Let's summarise our three rules for responding to an opening bid at the one-level. They are important:

**Rule 1:** Keep the bidding alive whenever you have 6 points or more and partner opens the bidding.

**Rule 2:** A response at the two-level (by changing the suit) promises a *minimum* of 10 points.

**Rule 3:** A 1NT response shows 6-9 points and no four-card (or longer) suit to bid at the one-level.

There is a fly in this particular ointment, however. If you try to apply all of these rules too rigidly you may come unstuck. How, for example, would you bid Example 13 after partner has opened 1♠?

**Ex 13.**

♠ 3

♥ K J 8 7 5

♦ Q 10 7 5 3

♣ 5 2

6 points

5-5-2-1 shape

You have to respond to 1♠ as you have 6 points (Rule 1). If, however, you were to respond 2♥ or 2♦ you'd be showing 10 points (Rule 2) and you don't have that.

A 1NT response (Rule 3) might suggest a balanced hand and you certainly don't have that. So, which of the Rules above are you going to bend (or break)?

Well, the answer is that you have to respond with 1NT. Unattractive, for sure, but it is Rule 3 that takes the strain when things start to buckle in this game. It would be quite wrong to let partner toil away in 1♠ by Passing and there are very many good reasons **not** to respond 2♦ or 2♥ with such a weak hand.

In practice 1NT becomes something of a catchall response (someone once described it as a *dustbin bid* as it's where you place all the rubbishy responding hands. Interesting).

Finally, we need to look at how the bidding might develop after a 1NT response. In Examples 14 and 15 you are the opening bidder whose partner has responded 1NT. In examples 16 and 17 how might you continue the auction after you have responded 1NT?

**Ex 14.**



♠ K Q 7 6 4

♥ K 6

♦ A 10 8

♣ Q J 3

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

**Pass.** As the 1NT response is a *limit bid* you can add up what partner has said he has to what you can see and come to a total. Here you have 21-24 points between you; not enough for game. With two balanced hands best is to leave this one in a low-level part-score. Quite wrong to insist on Spades.

**Ex 15.**



♠ A J 10 8 5

♥ A J 9 4

♦ Q 7 2

♣ 9

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

2♥. When you can do so, you should show your second suit. Here, you are offering partner the choice of Spades or Hearts. If he hates Hearts he must retreat back to 2♠ **giving preference** to your first bid suit. Sometimes partner will be well at home in Hearts and you will locate a good fit.

**Ex 16.**



♠ 3

♥ Q 8 7 5 2

♦ 9 4 3

♣ A 10 7 2

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

**Pass.** Partner is asking you to choose between Spades and Clubs. Well, you like the latter and detest the former. You can express this preference by Passing, leaving the contract in a simple, low-level part-score, confident that your side has found an all-important eight-card trump fit.

**Ex 17.**



♠ 9 2

♥ 10 3

♦ K J 6 5

♣ K 8 6 5 4

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

2♠. Repulsive, but you have little choice. Such **preference bids** are cries for help – they say, in effect, “*Stop the world, I want to get off*”. Partner has offered you a choice between Spades and Hearts and you dislike them both. However, it is your duty to put North back into his first-bid suit.

## §12. Quiz A on The 1NT Response to an Opening Bid

In each case you are **South**

In Quiz A you are the **Responder**.

What is your best bid on the following hands?

1.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	?

♠ Q 10 6 4  
♥ J 9 7 3  
♦ K 6 3  
♣ J 8

2.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	?

♠ Q 10 6  
♥ J 9 7  
♦ K 6 3  
♣ J 8 5 2

3.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	?

♠ Q 10 6  
♥ J 7  
♦ Q 6 3  
♣ A J 8 5 2

4.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	?

♠ 2  
♥ A 10 4 3  
♦ K 9 5 3  
♣ J 8 5 2

5.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	?

♠ 10  
♥ K 9 7 5 2  
♦ 4  
♣ K 8 6 5 3 2

6.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	?

♠ A 10 5  
♥ 3 2  
♦ Q 7 5 3  
♣ 10 8 7 2

7.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	?

♠ A 10 5  
♥ 3 2  
♦ Q 7 5 3  
♣ 10 8 7 2

8.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

♠ A 10 5  
♥ 3 2  
♦ Q 7 5 3  
♣ 10 8 7 2

9.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

♠ A 10 5  
♥ 3 2  
♦ Q 7 5 3  
♣ K 10 7 2

10.\*

N
W     E
S

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

♠ 3 2  
♥ A 10 5 4  
♦ Q 6  
♣ J 10 7 3 2

## §12. Quiz A on The 1NT Response to an Opening Bid Answers

1.

N		E
W		S

♠ Q 10 6 4  
♥ J 9 7 3  
♦ K 6 3  
♣ J 8

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	?

**1♥.** This is not a 1NT response to 1♦ for all that it is a balanced hand in the 6-9 point range. You should make the cheapest bid as responder, bidding four-card suits up-the-line. 1♥ is certainly cheaper than 1NT and this bid may help your side locate a vital trump fit.

2.

N		E
W		S

♠ Q 10 6  
♥ J 9 7  
♦ K 6 3  
♣ J 8 5 2

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	?

**1NT.** Dead centre for the bid. You can't respond 1♥ or 1♠ as you don't have four of them, and you lack the necessary 10 points to respond 2♣. 1NT is a nicely descriptive response as it is a *limit bid*, putting partner in control. North is now **boss of the auction**.

3.

N		E
W		S

♠ Q 10 6  
♥ J 7  
♦ Q 6 3  
♣ A J 8 5 2

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	?

**2♣.** Now, with 10 points, you are too strong to make the "dustbin response" of 1NT. You have the values (just) to respond at the two-level and are able to bid your suit. Partner only knows that you have a minimum of 10 points, you could be much stronger than this.

4.

N		E
W		S

♠ 2  
♥ A 10 4 3  
♦ K 9 5 3  
♣ J 8 5 2

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	?

**1NT.** It's an uneasy 1NT response with a 1-4-4-4 pattern but you have little choice. You can't Pass with 8 good points and you can't venture to the two-level with a poor suit and less than 10 points. With luck, partner will have another suit and will bid it after your reply.

5.

N		E
W		S

♠ 10  
♥ K 9 7 5 2  
♦ 4  
♣ K 8 6 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	?

**1NT.** Yes, really. True, partner will not be expecting a 1-5-1-6 freak but that's what happens sometimes. When we say that the 1NT response is a "dustbin bid", because it's where you put all the rubbishy hands in response, this is the type of hand we have in mind.

6.

N		E
W		S

♠ A 10 5  
♥ 3 2  
♦ Q 7 5 3  
♣ 10 8 7 2

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	?

**Pass.** Or **No Bid (!)** After hearing a 1NT response opener's rebid in the same suit (as 2♥ is here) is an unequivocal **sign-off**. You have no need to look at your cards again – partner has a six-card Heart suit in a moderate hand and is obliging you to Pass.

7.

N		E
W		S

♠ A 10 5  
♥ 3 2  
♦ Q 7 5 3  
♣ 10 8 7 2

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	?

**Pass.** Partner is offering you the choice between his two suits. Well, you have no liking for Hearts but you do have four Clubs, so you clearly prefer the latter suit. You can express that preference by Passing, leaving the contract in a modest, but sensible, part-score.

8.

N		E
W		S

♠ A 10 5  
♥ 3 2  
♦ Q 7 5 3  
♣ 10 8 7 2

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

**Pass.** North is passing the buck, asking you to bid 3NT with a maximum 1NT response. Thanks, partner, but no thanks. You have an abject minimum (a bare 6 points) and have no reason to accept the invitation. Pass, cross your fingers and hope 2NT succeeds.

9.

N		E
W		S

♠ A 10 5  
♥ 3 2  
♦ Q 7 5 3  
♣ K 10 7 2

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

**3NT.** Once again, North is passing the buck, asking you to bid 3NT with a maximum. This time you should grasp the opportunity with both hands. You have a maximum 9 points with two Tens. You should advance to the No-trump game with a song in your heart.

10.

N		E
W		S

♠ 3 2  
♥ A 10 5 4  
♦ Q 6  
♣ J 10 7 3 2

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

**2♣.** Repulsive, maybe, but what choice do you have? Partner is insisting you choose between Diamonds and Spades; he is not interested in your hand. You dislike Diamonds so are forced to *give preference* to partner's first-bid suit. It's not nice, but there is no alternative.

## §12. Quiz B on The 1NT Response to an Opening Bid

In each case you are **South**In Quiz B you are the **Opener**.

What is your best rebid on the following hands?

1.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ J 10  
♥ A 6 4  
♦ A Q 10 9 7  
♣ K J 8

2.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J  
♥ A 6 4  
♦ A Q 10 9 7  
♣ K J 8

3.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ K 10  
♥ A 6 4  
♦ A Q 10 9 7  
♣ K J 8

4.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ J 10  
♥ A Q 10 9 7  
♦ A J 9 5  
♣ J 9

5.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J 9 7  
♥ A Q 10 9 7  
♦ J 10  
♣ J 9

6.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J 10 9 6 3  
♥ 5  
♦ K 9 8  
♣ Q J 9

7.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A K J 10 9 6  
♥ 5  
♦ A K  
♣ Q J 9 7

8.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J 9 7 4  
♥ A J 9 7 4  
♦ Q 3  
♣ 2

9.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J 9 7  
♥ A J 9 7 4  
♦ Q J 3  
♣ 2

10.\*

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A 6 5  
♥ K 9  
♦ A K Q 10 9 7  
♣ J 10

## §12. Quiz B on The 1NT Response to an Opening Bid Answers

1.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ J 10  
♥ A 6 4  
♦ A Q 10 9 7  
♣ K J 8

**Pass.** You have a balanced hand (5-3-3-2), so No-trumps suits you just fine. With a maximum combined point-count of 24 (you have 15 facing 6-9 in partner's hand), you know 3NT is out of reach. With that information you should settle for a gentle part-score.

2.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J  
♥ A 6 4  
♦ A Q 10 9 7  
♣ K J 8

**3NT.** Now you know of a combined 25-28 points (you have 19 and partner has announced 6-9). So you, as *boss of the auction*, have enough information to justify bidding game. With a balanced hand facing a balanced hand, that game has to be played in No-trumps.

3.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ K 10  
♥ A 6 4  
♦ A Q 10 9 7  
♣ K J 8

**2NT.** In this case, with 17 points, you are betwixt and between. The combined point-count is 23-26, so you might have enough (as a partnership) to make game. Then again, you might not. Pass the buck with 2NT, allowing partner to advance to 3NT with a maximum.

4.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ J 10  
♥ A Q 10 9 7  
♦ A J 9 5  
♣ J 9

**2♦.** It is usually right to bid your second suit if you can do so conveniently. Here, as Diamonds rank below Hearts, you can offer North a choice between the red suits. If partner doesn't care for Diamonds he should *give preference to Hearts*, sticking you back into 2♥.

5.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J 9 7  
♥ A Q 10 9 7  
♦ J 10  
♣ J 9

**Pass.** It is not "convenient" to bid 2♠ here for two reasons (cf Q4). Firstly, North has denied four Spades when he bid 1NT. Secondly, if partner loathed Spades he'd have to bid all the way to 3♥ to *give preference*. The three-level would be too high with this hand.

6.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J 10 9 6 3  
♥ 5  
♦ K 9 8  
♣ Q J 9

**2♠.** You can't leave your partner in 1NT having opened this minimum 6-3-3-1 hand. The only reason for opening this 11-point hand was the long, strong Spade suit. You have to insist on Spades being trumps, and so must **sign-off** in 2♠; North is obliged to Pass this.

7.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A K J 10 9 6  
♥ 5  
♦ A K  
♣ Q J 9 7

**4♠.** You were hoping and praying that partner wouldn't Pass 1♠, leaving you high and dry. Now he has answered your prayers by showing *something* you have to take a pot at the most likely game. North doesn't have a lot, but then you don't need much.

8.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J 9 7 4  
♥ A J 9 7 4  
♦ Q 3  
♣ 2

**2♥.** Easy enough but the hand is included to show that we open the *higher of two five-card suits*. Now, by bidding 2♥, you can offer partner the choice of either major without going beyond the bounds of the two-level. North may well now *give preference* to 2♠.

9.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A J 9 7  
♥ A J 9 7 4  
♦ Q J 3  
♣ 2

**Pass.** Nasty, but *when in a hole, stop digging*. You can't afford to bid 2♠ (North doesn't have Spades and you don't want *preference* at the three-level). It's wrong to insist on Hearts with only five, so your options are limited. Perhaps 1NT will scrape home...

10.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A 6 5  
♥ K 9  
♦ A K Q 10 9 7  
♣ J 10

**3NT.** Yes, you "only" have 17 points, but you do have seven likely tricks in the guise of six Diamonds and the ♠A. Partner doesn't need much (maybe just the ♥A) to have nine on top. Long, running suits often allow 3NT to make with fewer than the normal 25 points.

## §12. Example hands 1 to 4.

**Hand 1** Dealer North

<p>♠ A 10 9 6 3 ♥ K J 8 ♦ A 9 ♣ Q J 4</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">W</td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">E</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>		N				W	E					S	<p>♠ J 7 5 2 ♥ A Q 5 ♦ 8 7 5 ♣ A 7 3</p>	
	N														
	W	E													
			S												
<p>♠ K Q 4 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ Q J 10 6 3 ♣ 8 6</p>		<p>♠ 8 ♥ 10 7 6 3 ♦ K 4 2 ♣ K 10 9 5 2</p>													

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	
1NT by South		Opening lead: ♦Q	

A simple auction to a safe part-score contract. North opens 1♠ and South has little option but to respond 1NT, despite having an unbalanced hand (a 5-4-3-1 pattern). North now knows that his side has just 21-24 points between the two hands – with no game available he simply Passes; rebidding 2♠ with a poor five-card suit would be quite wrong. West leads the top-of-a-sequence ♦Q and South has to **Count** and **Plan**, even in a modest 1NT. He must take the ♦A on table (to preserve the ♦K as a later entry) and then tackle Clubs. His **Count** of tricks should have shown him one Spade, two Diamonds and four (slow) Clubs. Nothing can prevent this, not even if East is mean enough to hold on to the ♣A for three rounds.

**Hand 2** Dealer East

<p>♠ 8 ♥ 10 7 6 3 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ J 8 5 4 2</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">W</td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">E</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>		N				W	E					S	<p>♠ 6 3 ♥ 5 4 ♦ J 10 9 8 2 ♣ A 7 6 3</p>	
	N														
	W	E													
			S												
<p>♠ K Q 10 7 5 ♥ K Q 9 8 ♦ 7 5 3 ♣ 9</p>		<p>♠ A J 9 4 2 ♥ A J 2 ♦ A 6 ♣ K Q 10</p>													

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	3NT
3NT by North		Opening lead: ♦J	

South opens 1♠ and North makes a miserable 1NT response with a hand similar to that of South's on the previous deal. This time, though, South has enough (19 points) to raise to game as he knows of at least 25 points between the North-South hands. East leads the top-of-a-sequence ♦J and North's **Count** and **Plan** shows just five on top (one Spade, one Heart and three Diamonds). The Clubs, though, are worth four tricks once the ♣A has gone. North must take the ♦A on table (preserving entries to his hand) and then lead the ♣K. Later he needs to *overtake* the ♣10 with the ♣J to reach his hand. Luckily, the fall of the ♣9 makes that a secure play.

**Hand 3** Dealer South

<p>♠ J 10 9 8 ♥ Q 8 7 4 2 ♦ K ♣ K 10 4</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">W</td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">E</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>		N				W	E					S	<p>♠ K 4 3 ♥ K 6 5 ♦ 7 5 2 ♣ Q 7 5 3</p>	
	N														
	W	E													
			S												
<p>♠ A 7 5 2 ♥ A J ♦ Q J 10 9 6 3 ♣ 8</p>		<p>♠ Q 6 ♥ 10 9 3 ♦ A 8 4 ♣ A J 9 6 2</p>													

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♦ by West		Opening lead: ♠J	

West opens 1♦ and sees his partner respond with a dispiriting 1NT. West can deduce immediately that the two hands are worth only a part-score – the maximum combined point-count would be 21. What's the safest strain to play in? Certainly not No-trumps as West has a 6-4-2-1 pattern. East is known not to have four Spades (he'd have responded 1♠ if he did have), so Spades is not the spot. With a robust six-card suit West rebids his Diamonds (a clear sign-off) and East Passes hurriedly. After the ♠J lead there are eight easy tricks (four Diamonds, two Spades and two Hearts). Nine are possible but the main point of technique is that West should play trumps early.

**Hand 4** Dealer West

<p>♠ 7 4 2 ♥ K 10 9 5 ♦ Q 10 8 3 ♣ 7 3</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">W</td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">E</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>		N				W	E					S	<p>♠ Q 5 ♥ 8 2 ♦ A 7 4 2 ♣ Q 10 9 8 5</p>	
	N														
	W	E													
			S												
<p>♠ A K J ♥ A J 7 4 3 ♦ J 9 5 ♣ K J</p>		<p>♠ 10 9 8 6 3 ♥ Q 6 ♦ K 6 ♣ A 6 4 2</p>													

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
3NT by East		Opening lead: ♠10	

West opens 1♥ and sees East respond 1NT. Where now? Well, the combined point-count is 18 + 6-9, not quite enough to justify a 3NT raise but too much to Pass. The middle-of-the-road action is to raise invitationally to 2NT, inviting East to bid on with a maximum 1NT response. Holding 8 points (and a decent five-card suit) East should be delighted to advance to game. South leads the top-of-a-sequence ♠10 and East must **Count** and **Plan**. He has five top tricks (three Spades, one Heart and one Diamond), so needs to set up two more. With entries limited to the closed hand East should take the ♠K and lead the ♣K. If this holds (and it might) East should overtake the ♣J and set up Clubs for four tricks.

## §12. Example hands 5 to 8.

**Hand 5** Dealer North

♠ A 6 5 2  
♥ A 10 6  
♦ 4 2  
♣ Q 10 6 5

♠ 3  
♥ J 9 5 2  
♦ Q 7 6 3  
♣ K 9 7 2

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q J 10 9 8  
♥ Q 7 3  
♦ A K 5  
♣ A

♠ 7 4  
♥ K 8 4  
♦ J 10 9 8  
♣ J 8 4 3

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	4♠	All Pass
4♠ by East		Opening lead: ♦J	

East has an excellent hand but can do little else but open 1♠, crossing his fingers that West can dredge up a response. With 6 points West has (just) enough to venture 1NT. Relieved that the bidding hasn't started and ended in 1♠ East, knowing of 25 points between the East-West hands, now leaps to 4♠. South leads the ♦J and East's **Count** and **Plan** shows him ten winners (five Spades, three Diamonds and two Clubs) and three losers (one Spade and two Hearts). The first order of the day is to draw trumps, so East takes the ♦K and plays a Spade. North takes the and plays a second Diamond but that's no good. East takes the ♦A, draws all of the trumps, unblocks the ♣A, crosses to the ♦Q and cashes the ♣K.

**Hand 6** Dealer East

♠ 2  
♥ K J 5 2  
♦ 10 8 7 5  
♣ A 9 6 3

♠ K J 9 4  
♥ 10 4  
♦ J 9 2  
♣ K Q J 10

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 5 3  
♥ 8 7  
♦ K Q 6 3  
♣ 8 7 5 4

♠ A Q 8 7 6  
♥ A Q 9 6 3  
♦ A 4  
♣ 2

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
4♥ by South		Opening lead: ♣K	

With 5-5 hands it is generally correct to open the higher-ranking suit, so here South opens 1♠. North responds with a dampening 1NT, leaving South with a small problem. He shows his Hearts now with 2♥, offering his partner a choice of suits. North might Pass that but with a near-maximum 8 points and a known fit the hand is worth a raise to 3♥, a bid which South happily converts to game. The sight of dummy reveals only one obvious loser (a Diamond) but that doesn't mean there are eleven tricks. Best play is to trump Spades in dummy as well as drawing trumps, eventually declarer can make eleven tricks. We will discuss these ruff-in-dummy hands in a later chapter.

**Hand 7** Dealer South

♠ A  
♥ A K 7 6 3  
♦ K 9 8 3  
♣ 10 7 3

♠ K 8 7 4  
♥ 10 9 4 2  
♦ J 5  
♣ K Q J

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ J 10 9 5 3  
♥ Q J 8  
♦ A Q 10  
♣ 8 5

♠ Q 6 2  
♥ 5  
♦ 7 6 4 2  
♣ A 9 6 4 2

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	All Pass	
2♦ by North		Opening lead: ♠J	

North opens 1♥ and South makes a 1NT response. With only 14 points North can see that the total for the partnership is only 20-23, so it's a case of finding the best part-score. North shows his second suit by bidding 2♦, seeing if South likes those. If not, his partner could always retreat to 2♥, *giving preference*. Well, South much prefers Diamonds to Hearts, so Passes 2♦ rapidly. Unlike Hand 6, these cards are not worth a raise to 3♦. East leads the ♠J and North has an awkward hand to negotiate. The best way to play it is to cash some winners and ruff everything you can – Hearts in the South hand and Spades in the North hand. This way you can scrape eight tricks.

**Hand 8** Dealer West

♠ Q J 10 9  
♥ Q 10 3  
♦ 9 8 2  
♣ K Q 3

♠ A K 6 4 3  
♥ A 8 4 2  
♦ K 4  
♣ 6 2

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ 8 2  
♥ 9 7  
♦ Q J 10 7 3  
♣ A 9 8 4

♠ 7 5  
♥ K J 6 5  
♦ A 6 5  
♣ J 10 7 5

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	All Pass
2♠ by West		Opening lead: ♠Q	

Another ungainly but all-too-common hand. West opens 1♠ and East puts a dampener on proceedings with a 1NT response. West might Pass that but it is usually best to show your second suit if you can. Quite often you find a good fit that way. Not today, though. After West rebids 2♥ East is looking at four low cards in his partner's two suits. Ugh! Well, the only solution is to *give preference* to 2♠. Such a bid is not encouraging in Spades, quite the reverse. West hurriedly Passes and hopes to scrape eight tricks. North leads a trump (why not?) and West does best to win that and lead the ♦K at trick two. This way, with Diamonds 3-3 he can scrape together the necessary eight tricks. An awkward hand.