

## Big Hand Bidding - Strong NT (20/21)

### Strong No Trump Opening Valuation



In the very beginning, before Charles Goren, before Vanderbilt, a "1 No Trump" opening bid was 12-14 hcps. Some bridge players choose to play that range today, it is called a "weak no trump". The most common No Trump range is 15-17 hcps.

The standard definition of a No Trump hand is "flat" or "balanced" with no singleton or void and at most 1 doubleton. Generally, there is not a 5 card major, but can have a 5 card minor when opening 1 No Trump.

It is important to understand that 15-17 is a range, NOT a minimum hcps. Therefore hands with 18+ hcps cannot be opened 1 No Trump.

*"Standard American" bidding is universally accepted with the YELLOW SAYC convention card.*

*Recommended Reading "Getting into the Bidding" with Bill Treble.*

A 2 No Trump Opening shows a hand with 20 or 21 hcps. Generally, the same "flat" or "balanced" principles apply to 2NT, just like 1NT.

Stayman and Transfers apply over 2NT. However, many players use "Puppet Stayman" over 2NT.

When dealt 20 or 21 hcps with a 5 card major it is hard to rebid when you open with 1♥ or 1♠. Therefore most advanced players use "Puppet Stayman over 2NT and open 2NT with a 5 card major, knowing partner will bid 3♣ (Puppet Stayman) with a 3 card major asking for a 5 card major. Puppet Stayman only applies to 2NT as an opening bid.

**Puppet Stayman...** over responder's 3♣  
Puppet Stayman bid the 2NT opener shows a 5 card major by bidding it at the 3 level.

If the 2NT opener does not have a 5 card major, but has a 4 card major, opener rebids 3♦. Responder, the puppet stayman bidder now has 4 bids.

- 3♥ to show 4♠
- 3♠ to show 4♥
- 3NT to show no 4 card major
- 4♦ to show both 4 card majors

## Big Hand Bidding 18/19 & 20/21 Tournament Series #18



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### Grafton Duplicate Bridge Club

Thursday Noon – Ameriprise Financial Bldg  
Stratified Pairs – Bridge lessons at 11am  
Director – Michael Leighton (701) 520-0753

### Grand Forks Duplicate Bridge Club

Monday 6:30pm – GF Senior Center  
Stratified Pairs – Bridge lessons at 5:45pm  
Friday 12:30pm – EGF Senior Center  
Director – Tom Rand (701) 742-3676

### Ambassador Bridge Club Winnipeg MB

Tuesday 12:15pm – MB Bridge Centre  
Stratified Pairs  
Wednesday 7pm – MB Bridge Centre  
Invitational Pairs and Swiss Teams  
Thursday 1pm – (0 – 200) Temple Shalom  
Play and learn  
Saturday 12:30pm – MB Bridge Centre  
Swiss Teams  
Director – Bill and Sue Treble (204) 669-1458

## Big Hand Bidding - (18/19) "in between" No Trump hands Bidding Options



18 or 19 hcps is not enough to bid 2NT and too much to bid 1NT.

Show 18 or 19 hcps by opening your 5 card major or convenient minor at the 1 level and then jump to 2NT over partner's 1 of a suit or jump to 3NT over partner's 1NT or 2 of a suit.

If playing 2/1 a bid of 2NT over a 2 level bid shows 12-14 or 18-19. You clarify the stronger hand by bidding something other than game on your next bid.

When rebidding 2NT it is imperative that you have a "flat" or "balanced hand".

With 5/4 distribution do a reverse or jump shift to show the nature of your hand.

To show 18/19 hcps hands, open one of major or convenient minor and jump to 2NT over a 1 level response by partner.

Stayman and Transfers do not apply in this situation; only when partner has opened 1NT or 2NT directly.

There is no reason to "upgrade 18/19 hcps to 20 or to downgrade to 17 when you have a perfectly good bid to show 18 or 19 hcps.

When responder bids a 5 card major and opener jumps to 2NT, beginning partnerships agree to rebid the 5 card major to show the hand.

Experienced partnerships use XYZ or check-back Stayman and Wolf Sign-off.

### Reverse

*Any bid by opener that forces partner to the 3 level to show preference to your first bid suit. Forcing for 1 round and shows 17 - 21 hcps.*

*Example Opener bids 1♥; responder bids 1NT; Opener re-bids 2♠; Responder must now bid 3♥ (the 3 level) to show preference for the first bid suit. Responder should consider bidding to game with 8+ hcps.*

*Responder may also reverse to show 13+ hcps, which is forcing to game.*

### Check Back Stayman

Some call it "XYZ", others refer to it as "Check Back Stayman".

Bid 3♦ to ask partner to raise your major with 3 card support. Opener has 3 bids.

1. 3 of your major with 3 card support
2. 3 of the other major with 4 of that major
3. 3NT with neither of the above

### Wolf Sign-off

Sometimes you have stretched with a 5 or 6 card suit at the 1 level and partner jumps to 2NT showing the 18/19 point hand.

Bid 3♣ to ask partner to raise your suit bid with 3 card support. Opener has 2 bids.

1. 3 of your major with 3 card support
2. 3♦ without 3 card support

The responder (3♣ bidder) then has 3 bids

1. PASS with a below minimum hand
2. Correct 3♦ to 3 of the major and opener must PASS
3. Bid something else which is slam invitational.

When Responder does something other than minimize or PASS to play at the 3 level, the Wolf Sign-off is no longer weak and becomes strong, looking for slam.