



# Adventures in Bridge

Leaders in Bridge Entertainment and Education

[www.advinbridge.com](http://www.advinbridge.com)

## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(318) Responding to 1NT with a 2-Suiter: Other Shapes**

© AiB

Level: 2

Robert S. Todd

[robert@advinbridge.com](mailto:robert@advinbridge.com)

#### **General**

When partner opens the bidding with 1NT and we have a 2-suited hand that does not contain a long Major suit (no 5+card Major) then we do not have a clear first call. With enough values to be interested in game (at least invitational values) we may explore a 4-4 Major suit fit (if we have a 4-card M). But with fewer values we simply place the contact in our longest suit – assuming we have methods to transfer to it. Let's take a look at how we handle these other distributional hands.

#### **Hands with a 4-card Major and a 5-card Minor**

With a distributional weak hand that is short in ♣ (4-4-5-0 or 4/3-5-1), we can use Stayman and just pass whatever partner answers ("Garbage Stayman"). This will allow us to improve our partscore. But with a hand that has invitational values, we want to explore for our Major suit fit first (using Stayman) and then invite game.

#### *Example 1*

♠ K43

♥ J943

♦ A9762

♣ 7

1NT    2♣

2♥    4♥

Here we bid Stayman and find a ♥ fit. We then re-evaluate our hand and drive to game.

#### *Example 2*

1NT    2♣

2♠    2NT

With the same hand, if Opener rebids 2♠ (or 2♦), we do not have a fit and we just invite game. We cannot show our ♦ suit by bidding 3♦ because that is game forcing. Instead, we must bid 2NT. (Over 2♠ we might choose to rebid 3♣, treating our 3-card ♠ support and a singleton like 4-card support.



When we have this shape and enough values for game, we use Stayman to search for a Major suit fit. If we find one, then we raise to game or make a splinter bid to try for slam (if we are strong enough).

*Example 3*

♠ KQ54

♥ 5

♦ AJ643

♣ 873

1NT 2♣

2♠ 4♠

Here our Stayman bid finds a fit, and with only 10 HCP we simply bid 4♠.

*Example 4*

♠ KQ54

♥ 5

♦ AJ643

♣ K73

1NT 2♣

2♠ 4♥

When we use Stayman and find a fit, with this hand we have enough values to express interest in slam. We jump to 4♥ as a splinter, showing a ♠ fit, enough values to be interested in slam, and shortness in ♥.

If the use of Stayman fails to locate a fit, we must decide whether or not to bother introducing our second suit. When that second suit is a minor, sometimes showing the suit only serves to help the opponents better defend the hand.

*Example 5*

♠ 92

♥ K763

♦ A6

♣ A9543

1NT 2♣

2♠ 3NT

After our use of Stayman fails to find a ♥ fit, bidding our ♣ suit is not likely to help our side. It is best to simply bid 3NT.



*Example 6*

♠ A92

♥ K763

♦ 6

♣ AK543

1NT    2♣

2♠    3♣

Here we bid 3♣, after our use of Stayman, to show partner our 5+card ♣ suit and imply that we hold a 4-card ♥ suit. Partner also knows that since we did not bid 3NT, we had some reason for introducing the ♣ suit – either extra strength or extreme shape. This 3♣ bid authorizes partner to take the auction beyond 3NT if they have a large ♣ fit and/or a problem in the unbid suit (♦ here). For example, if partner holds the following minimum 1NT opener we cannot make 3NT (on a ♦ lead), but are almost certain to make 6♣:

*1NT Opener*

♠ KQJ4

♥ AQ

♦ J43

♣ QJT9

**Even More Distributional Hands with a 4-card Major**

Hands with a 4-card Major and a 6-card or longer second suit are more likely to want to show as many of their suits as possible.

*Example 7*

♠ A763

♥ 9

♦ 53

♣ 875432

1NT    2♠\*

3♣    Pass

With this hand we would love to explore for a ♠ fit and if that fails find our way to play in 3♣, but we do not have a good way to do that. In fact, we do not have enough values to use Stayman and explore for our ♠ fit at all. Instead, we simply transfer to ♣ and place the contract in 3♣.

There are few hands of this extreme shape that we will treat as invitational. With such a long source of tricks, we will likely either sign off in a partscore or force to game. This is helpful in that allows us to avoid the dreaded Stayman followed by 2NT auction. With enough values for game, we start with Stayman and if this fails to find a Major suit fit, we create a game force by showing our long suit at the 3-level.



*Example 8*

♠ K954

♥ 43

♦ 6

♣ AKJ762

1NT    2♣

2♥    3♣

Now partner can support our ♠ (if they have 4-card ♠ as well), bid 3NT with good ♦ stoppers, or support ♣ (drive to 5♣ or 6♣) with a good ♣ fit (and likely a poor ♦ holding).

**Minor Suit Oriented 2-Suiters**

With an extremely weak hand that has length in both minor suits (no 6-card suit), we are likely to pass 1NT. It is possible to find our way to 3m in a fit if we are 5-5 in the minors and if we have a tool to be able to do so (using minor suit transfers in a sophisticated way). But the minor suit hands where we need to try to fully describe our hand to partner are the ones that are strong enough to force to game. Often, we need to do so while keeping the auction below 3NT. With minor suit distribution and enough values for game, depending on partner's hand, 3NT, 4M, 5m, or 6m could all be the best contract. Because of the large variety of places we may want to play the contract, many partnerships develop tools for describing these hands.

We will use jumps to the 3-level opposite partner's 1NT opener to describe these hands.

1NT    3M\*

This used as a variation of a "splinter" or "worry ask", showing a singleton in the Major bid, 3 cards in the other Major, and 5/4 in the minors.

*Example 9*

♠ A54

♥ 3

♦ A954

♣ KT762

1NT    3♥\*

This is a very descriptive bid and gives Opener the information they need to decide where it is best to play the contract.



*1NT Opener Hands and Rebids after 1NT – 3♥\**

♠ K43	♠ KQJ4	♠ KQJ5
♥ KQT8	♥ 543	♥ Q95
♦ K32	♦ K5	♦ J87
♣ A87	♣ AQ87	♣ AQ8
<i>Bid 3NT</i>	<i>Bid 6♣</i>	<i>Bid 4♠</i>

With hands that have even more minor suit distribution, at least 5-5 in the minors, many partnerships use 3♦\* as an artificial bid showing this shape and game forcing values.

*Example 10*

♠ 93  
♥ 4  
♦ AQ983  
♣ KQT84  
1NT    3♦\*

In addition to these 3-level conventional bids, we have a response of 4♠\* to a 1NT opening bid as minor suit Stayman with quantitative values. This is a hand with the playing strength to invite slam (like a 4NT bid) but with at least 4-4 in the minors. This tool allows us to invite slam but focus on 6-minor as well as 6NT.

<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>
♠ K43	♠ A6
♥ AJ6	♥ KQ3
♦ A93	♦ K754
♣ KQ73	♣ A983
1NT    4♠*	
6♣	

Here 6♣ is an excellent contract and 6NT needs some very good luck in the ♦ suit. Using 4♠, minor suit Stayman, to invite slam helps us reach a much better contract than using 4NT, purely quantitative.

**Conclusion**

As the Responder to a 1NT Opener, it can be challenging to describe a distributional hand while keeping the auction at a relatively low level. With length in a Major suit, this is our initial focus. But judging which of your other distribution (especially your second suit when it is a minor) to show is a challenge. Use your tools to describe your hand in a way that helps your side but gives as little information as possible to the opponents.