



Bidding Basics

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Opener's rebid after opening 1NT or 2NT

Opener's rebids after 1NT

When we open 1NT, whatever our partner responds, our rebid decisions are fairly routine. Usually, we will be responding to Stayman or a transfer.

If responder bids 2♣ (Stayman), opener has only three choices: 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠. (2NT, although some old-timers think it shows a maximum with no major, is never a possibility.) With no four-card major, opener must bid 2♦. With four (or five) hearts, the response is 2♥. With four (or five) spades, the response is 2♠. What if opener has four cards in both hearts and spades? Opener should bid 2♥ (regardless of suit quality). For example, after 1NT-2♣, bid 2♦ with:

♠K Q 10 ♥A K J ♦3 2 ♣K 10 7 6 5.

Bid 2♥ with:

♠A 7 6 5 ♥A J 4 3 ♦K 3 2 ♣K 2,

and 2♠ with:

♠8 7 6 5 ♥A K ♦A K Q ♣10 7 6 5.

If the 1NT opener's partner makes a Jacoby transfer (2♦ or 2♥), the 1NT bidder must accept (even without three-card or longer support). With a strong hand and four-card support, opener can jump, but most of the time, the auction will simply go 1NT-2♦; 2♥ or 1NT-2♥; 2♠.

If the response to 1NT is 2♠, the partnership must know the meaning. Is it natural? Is it for the minors? Is it a transfer to clubs? Is it asking minimum/maximum? Is it Alertable? Announceable? Only after all of these partnership-agreement determinations are made can opener decide what to bid. Recommendation: If your partnership hasn't discussed it, don't respond 2♠.

Similarly, if the response is on the three level, the partnership must know the meaning. I recommend learning, studying and focusing 99% of your attention on follow-ups after Stayman and Jacoby transfers. If you want to delve into fancy higher responses, your partnership must study the meanings of the follow-ups.

After 1NT-2NT (assuming it is invitational), opener passes with a minimum (15 or a so-so 16). With 17 (or a good 16), opener accepts the invitation. He can bid 3NT, or bid a five-card major on the way. For example, bid 3♠ with something like:

♠K Q 10 x x ♥K Q x ♦K x x ♣K x.

If 2NT has some other meaning (by partnership agreement), then that obviously supersedes the advice above.

After 1NT-3NT, opener will never bid again. 3NT is indeed a true "close-

out" bid. After a rare 4♣ response to 1NT (Gerber), opener answers 4♦ with zero or four aces, 4♥ with one, 4♠ with two, and 4NT with three. After 1NT-4NT (invitational), opener passes with a minimum, but bids on (either a five-card suit, or possibly a simple 6NT) with a maximum. If the partnership employs Texas transfers, then 1NT-4♦ is a command to transfer to 4♥ and 1NT-4♥ is a command to transfer to 4♠.

Opener's rebids after 2NT

Over a 2NT opening, if responder bids 3♣ (Stayman), opener has only three choices: 3♦, 3♥ or 3♠ (3NT is never a possibility). Follow the same rules as above (bid hearts first with 4-4 in the majors). After a Jacoby transfer, opener must (100%) accept it by bidding the suit transferred to. After 2NT-3NT, opener will never bid again. After 4♣, Gerber, opener answers as above. After 2NT-4NT (invitational), opener passes with a minimum, but bids on (either a five-card suit or possibly a simple 6NT) with a maximum.

Note: Do not confuse regular Stayman with a specialized convention called "puppet" Stayman which is used to locate a five-card major in opener's hand.

Bidding Basics Quiz ➤

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

1. What is opener's rebid after 1NT-
2♣ with:
♠A K Q J ♥J 8 7 6 ♦A J 3 ♣3 2
2. What is opener's rebid after 1NT-
2♦ with:
♠A K J 7 6 ♥Q 2 ♦Q J 2 ♣Q J 2
3. What is opener's rebid after 1NT-
2♥ with:
♠K J 10 8 ♥A 10 2 ♦A K J 10 ♣4 3
4. What is opener's rebid after 1NT-
2NT with:
♠Q J 2 ♥Q J 2 ♦Q J 3 2 ♣A Q J
5. What is opener's rebid after 1NT-
3NT with:
♠4 3 ♥A K 2 ♦A K Q 10 2 ♣4 3 2
6. What is opener's rebid after 1NT-
4♣ with:
♠A 3 2 ♥A 10 6 5 ♦A 10 2 ♣A 4 3
7. What is opener's rebid after 2NT-
3♣ with:
♠A Q 7 6 5 ♥K Q 2 ♦K Q J ♣K 2
8. What is opener's rebid after 2NT-
4NT with:
♠A 10 ♥A Q 10 ♦K Q 10 7 6 ♣A J 9

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Answers

1. 2♥. Bid hearts first with 4-4.
2. 2♥. Partner is not interested in your spades.
3. 3♠. A "super-accept" showing four spades and super support.
4. Pass. This is a lousy 16.
5. Pass. Your opinion is not sought.
6. 4♦. Zero or four aces. (Partner will figure out which!)
7. 3♠. Shows four or five spades.
8. 6♦. "Only" 20 HCP, but beautiful prime cards and playing strength for accepting an invitation to slam.