



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(270) Responder's Systems After a 1NT Overcall**

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Level: 5

Robert S. Todd

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

#### **General**

When partner opens the bidding in a suit at the 1-level and the next player overcalls 1NT, we want to have a system that allows us to deal with this interference effectively. With a good hand (which is somewhat rare in this auction), we make a penalty double. With a poor hand that is relatively balanced, we likely want to stay out of the auction and simply pass. It is the distributional hands with some values, but less than 10 HCP, where we are likely to want to compete in the bidding. One way to make it easier to bid with these distributional hands is to use a system similar to what we do when the opponents open 1NT. Let's look at what systems we should use in these auctions and how our system varies based on which suit partner opened.

#### **Meckwell vs. 1-Major, 1NT Overcall**

When partner opens the bidding with 1-Major and RHO overcalls 1NT, a good approach to showing our distributional hands is for Responder to use a modified version of Meckwell. Let's look at some examples to see how this works.

##### *Example 1*

1♥ 1NT \_\_\_?

- X Penalty, 10+ points
- 2♣\* ♣ + ♠, at least 9 cards in the 2 suits (usually 5-card ♣), 5-9 points, NF
- 2♦\* ♦ + ♠, at least 9 cards in the 2 suits (usually 5-card ♦), 5-9 points, NF
- 2♥ Natural, 3+♥, 5-9 points, NF
- 2♠ Natural, 5+♠, 5-9 points, NF

##### *Example 2*

1♠ 1NT \_\_\_?

- X Penalty, 10+ points
- 2♣\* ♣ + ♥, at least 9 cards in the 2 suits (usually 5-card ♣), 5-9 points, NF
- 2♦\* ♦ + ♥, at least 9 cards in the 2 suits (usually 5-card ♦), 5-9 points, NF
- 2♥ Natural, 5+♥, 5-9 points, NF
- 2♠ Natural, 3+♠, 5-9 points, NF



## Woolsey vs. 1-minor, 1NT Overcall

When partner opens the bidding with a minor suit, a slightly different situation for Responder is more effective because we are less likely to want to raise partner's suit when they open 1-minor.

### Example 3

- 1♣ 1NT \_\_\_?
- X Penalty
  - 2♣\* Both Majors (at least 4-4), 5-9 points
    - Opener can pass 2♣ with long ♣, or bid 2♦ with equal length in the Majors.
  - 2♦\* 1 Major (usually 6+cards in either ♥ or ♠)
    - Opener bids to a level in a Major to ask Responder to pass or correct to their suit.
  - 2♥\* ♥ + ♦, 5+cards ♥, 4+cards ♦, 5-9 points, NF
  - 2♠\* ♠ + ♦, 5+cards ♠, 4+cards ♦, 5-9 points, NF
  - 2NT 5-5 minors, 5-9 points

### Example 4

- 1♦ 1NT \_\_\_?
- X Penalty
  - 2♣\* Both Majors (at least 4-4), 5-9 points
    - Opener can pass 2♣ with long ♣, or bid 2♦ with equal length in the Majors.
  - 2♦\* 1 Major (usually 6+cards in either ♥ or ♠)
    - Opener bids to a level in a Major to ask Responder to pass or correct to their suit.
  - 2♥\* ♥ + ♣, 5+cards ♥, 4+cards ♣, 5-9 points, NF
  - 2♠\* ♠ + ♣, 5+cards ♠, 4+cards ♣, 5-9 points, NF
  - 2NT 5-5 minors, 5-9 points

These structures give Responder a good way to compete in the bidding with 2-suited hands against the opponent's 1NT overcalls.

## Conclusion

When partner opens the bidding and RHO overcalls 1NT we want to compete in the bidding (not defend 1NT) when we have minimum valued hands that are shapely. By adopting an artificial system, we arm ourselves with the tools to do this. By varying our system based on partner's opening bid, we optimize for different auctions. With your regular partner, this is a situation worth discussing the adoption of some competitive bidding tools.