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(160) Notrump: 19+ to 21 Point 2NT Opening Bids

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Level: 2

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General

Notrump opening bids are the best openings in all of bridge because these bids describe Opener's hand effectively, Responder has a precise set of tools for describing their hand, the opponents are often left with little information about declarer's hand, and the strong hand usually becomes the declarer. For all these reasons we strive to open notrump as often as possible.

1NT Opening Bids

A 1NT opening bid shows 15-17 points. This is total points: high-card points plus length points for a decent 5-card suit. Thus, some 14 HCP hands with decent 5-card suits are opened 1NT.

2NT Opening Bids

A 2NT opening bid traditionally shows 20-21 points. This is total points: high-card points plus length points for a decent 5-card suit. Thus, some 19 HCP hands with decent 5-card suits are opened 2NT.

Balanced 18-19 Point Hands

When we have a balanced hand with 18-19 points we often play the hand from the wrong side after we open our primary suit and partner responds with a major suit. We may play from the wrong side if we have a 4-4 or 5-3 major-suit fit.

Example

1♣	1♠	
4♠		Playing 4♠ from the weak side with a 4-4 ♠ fit.
1♣	1♠	
2NT	3♦*	New Minor Forcing
3♠	4♠	Playing 4♠ from the weak side with a 5-3 ♠ fit.



New Range for 2NT Opening: 19+ to 21 points

In order to avoid wrong siding these major-suit contracts, many modern partnerships open more and more 19 point hands with 2NT.

- 2NT is opened with almost all 19 HCP hands that have a 5-card suit.
- 2NT is opened with most 19 HCP hands that have two 4-card suits, 4432.
- We do not stretch to open 2NT with 4333 hands.

Conclusion

When Opener has 19 points, we are highly likely to bid at least a game. Starting the bidding by stretching to open 2NT may occasionally get us too high (playing in 2NT) when partner has nothing, but much more often stretching to open 2NT helps us play game from the strong hand and gives the opponents less information about declarer's hand. Give this aggressive 2NT opening bid a try.