

Bridge Lesson

An introduction to some common conventions and agreements used to respond to the bid of 1NT with examples

**The Ocala Bridge Club
December 2016**

**The Villages Duplicate Bridge Club
February 2 & 9, 2017**

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In this lesson we will learn how one may respond to the bid of 1NT playing the 2/1 Game Force System with the point range of 15-17 or “14+ to 18-” using Marty Bergen’s Adjust-3 Hand Evaluation Method.

While many ranges are used when bidding 1NT, any range that includes the value of 15 is considered strong. A range **without** the value of 15 is considered weak; for example, 10-12 and 12-14 are weak notrump ranges and 12/13-15 is strong.

What is the best range? Based upon a Computer Orientated Bridge Analysis (COBRA), the best lowest/safest strong range is 12-15 and the next best strong ranges are 15-17 and 15-18, respectively.

Any agreed notrump range used by a partnership must be announced since the designated notrump range is in blue on the Convention Card (CC).

When bidding 1NT, your distribution is **most often** balanced or semi-balanced!

What is a balanced/semi-balanced distribution?

Ideal notrump hands are balanced, flat hand patterns having 4-3-3-3 and 4-4-3-2 distributions. However, balanced 5-3-3-2 major/minor suit hands are also opened 1NT (yes, even if you are 5-3 in the majors – but there is not total agreement here on opening 1NT); however, **NEVER** open 1NT if you are 5-2 in the majors, for example: ♠Q2 ♥A10982 ♦AJ62 ♣AQ; open 1♥ not 1NT. Partner may transfer you into your 2-card major!

Semi-balanced minor suit hands with 2-2-4=5 or 2-2-5=4 and 2-2-3=6 or 2-2-6=3 shape are also opened 1NT. However, with a 6-card minor suit hand it is often better to open one of the minor and to rebid it.

Change ----To all ACBL Convention Charts

Effective Aug 1, 2016

Unbalanced 5-4-3-1, 6-3-3-1, and 4-4-4-1 hand patterns may be opened 1NT, provided the singleton is either an A, K, or Q with no more than one doubleton. So hands with an A/K/Q singleton and with two doubletons are not allowed. Also **Not allowed** are shapely 5-5-2-1 or 6-4-2-1 or 7-2-2-2 hands.

One may now open the following hands 1NT:

♠K ♥A1092 ♦J765 ♣AKJ2 or ♠AK109 ♥AQ92 ♦J765 ♣Q.

The hand ♠AQ107 ♥K1092 ♦7 ♣AQ105 must be opened 1♣ not 1NT.

The change does not impact the one allowable exception of a partnership agreement where 1NT is treated as a 100% forcing opening bid (and not considered “natural”) with any distribution. The use of such an unbalanced, non-natural 1NT opening must be alerted. **The same restrictions apply to the opening 2NT bid and to strong 1NT overcalls.**

Examples of Notrump Hands

Balanced Hands - Open 1NT (4333/4432/3442/5332)

- ♠ A542 ♥K82 ♦A65 ♣A74[15HCP + 1(for 3und – 0 ov hrs) =16 pts]
- ♠ KQ42 ♥AJ82 ♦KJ5 ♣K10[17HCP+ 0(for 2und - 3 ov hrs)]=17pts
- ♠ A102 ♥10876 ♦AK54 ♣K2[14HCP+1(for 4underrated hrs) = 15pts]
- ♠ AQ1092 ♥KJ7 ♦AJ5 ♣87[15HCP+1(for Length) +1Quality = 17pts]
- ♠ A92 ♥K72 ♦75 ♣ AK1097[14HCP+1(3ov – 0un) +1Ln +1Q = 17pts]

Semi-Balanced Hands - Open 1NT [224=5/223=6]

- ♠ K2 ♥AQ ♦AJ54 ♣Q10942[16HCP + 0(3un-2ov hrs)+1Ln =17 pts]
- ♠ K7 ♥KJ ♦KJ5 ♣ KJ10987 [15HCP -0(1un-3ov)-1(Dubious KJ Dbl) +2Ln+1Q=17pts]

Balanced HCP hands with Q's and J's – Do not Open 1NT (4333)

- ♠QJ2 ♥QJ8 ♦KJ4 ♣KQ72[15HCP-1(4over hrs) -1(flatness) =12 pts]

A balanced 4=2=3=4: ♠ AK42 ♥82 ♦A65 ♣KQ104 with 16 points and a worthless major doubleton should **not** be opened 1NT; open 1♣. Some never open hands 1NT if both majors are doubletons, even if stopped.

When partner opens 1NT - What do you know?

- (1) He has 15-17 points.
- (2) He usually does not have a 5-card major; however, many open 1NT when 5=3 in the majors (**must mark it** on your Convention Card).
- (3) If he has a singleton, it must be an A, K, Q and with no more than one doubleton; he does not have a shapely 5-5-2-1 or 6-4-2-1 or 7-2-2-2 hand.
- (4) He most often supports all of your suits with at least two cards. So, you can usually be sure of an 8-card fit, if you have any six card suit.

Not all 15-17 point hands with flat distribution are opened 1NT. Hands with 14+ points can sometimes be opened 1NT, and hands with 15+ points may be opened in a suit, especially to avoid rebidding problems. If hands are “suit-oriented” or have other flaws, they can be opened in a suit rather than NT. You should think about possible rebids after opening 1NT versus opening one of a suit. **DO NOT** open hands 1NT that contain a worthless major doubleton – your partner may transfer you into it and then bid game.

With the balanced 4=2=3=4 hand: ♠AK42 ♥82 ♦A65 ♣KQ104 with 16 points and a worthless major doubleton, open it 1♣ not 1NT.

You have bunched honors and not scattered honors or tenaces.

You have a natural 2♠ reverse (17+ points) rebid.

With the worthless doubleton, notrump is not attractive.

You would like to play in 2♥, if partner has a weak hand.

If the opponents bid you would be happy with a club raise.

You would like a club lead if the opponents gain the contact.

Let's change the hand: ♠ KJ42 ♥K2 ♦AQ10 ♣A987

Much better – a tenace rich hand and no worthless major doubleton, open 1NT!

What do you know about your combined points when your partner opens 1NT with 15-17 points?

By adding your points to your partners, you can tell if you should be in a part score below game, invite game, bid game, invite slam or bid slam!

<u>Responder</u>	<u>Point Count Guidelines</u>	<u>Total</u>
0-8	Weak Hand - part score	15-25
9	Invitational Hand – Invite game	24-26
10-14	Game Invitational/Force Hand	25-31
15-17	Game Force/Slam Invitational Hand	30-34
18-19	Slam Hand – Investigate slam	33+

Game=26 (notrump); Slam=33+; Grand Slam=37+. Some believe 24/25 is enough for game!

To bid a part-score, game, or slam requires conventions or agreements when responding to the strong 15-17 1NT bid. In this lesson we will discuss and illustrate the following.

Stayman Crawling Stayman (CS)

 Garbage Stayman (GS)

Smolen (5-4 in majors with Game Values majors) (S)

Quest Transfers (5-4 Invitational/Game Values) (Q)

Jacoby Transfers (Super-Accept (SA)/Bell Convention (BC) - 17pts)

Mini-Maxi Convention (when 5-5)

Texas Transfers (6-card major suit)

Extended Texas Transfers (6-4 in the majors)

Muppet Stayman (many use Puppet)

Gerber, 1430-style Gerber (Expert Gerber), and Super Gerber

1430 RKC Gerber (RKCG), 1430 RKCB, and 1430 DRKCB

4NT Quantitative

Grand Slam Force

NT Overcalls

What do you do when they interfere?

This is a two day lesson; a total of 4 hours -- 2 hrs per day.

In the first session, day one, I will review commonly used agreements and conventions used to respond to the bid of 1NT (15-17 points).

These will require some memorization! Your homework will be review them and to commit them to memory.

In the second session, day two, I will apply the agreements and conventions using more than 30 examples to illustrate the methods.

The examples will illustrate part score bidding with weak hands, invitational and game bidding sequences, and examples of methods used to investigate and bid slams like Gerber and Super Gerber, 1430 RKCG, and 1430 DRKCB.

Stayman (8+ points) - Overview

Stayman is a convention that uses the artificial bid of 2♣ to enquire about the 1NT opener's major suit holdings. **Note that responder's points are unlimited.** To use Stayman, responder must have at least one 4-card major and 8+ points. The goal of the convention is to find a 4-4 major suit fit. **It is used with Weak, Invitational, Game Force, and Slam Hands.**

Opener's responses to 2♣ are:

2♦	=	No 4+ card major
2♥	=	4+ card heart suit
2♠	=	4+ card spade suit

Many people will tell you that with 4-3-3-3 or 3-4-3-3 distributions to jump to 3NT with 15/16 points and ignore Stayman. This is bad advice! You almost always want to find a 4-4 major suit fit.

The decision to ignore Stayman depends on having point's (17), all the side suits stopped, and the quality of the major suit – **Not on your shape.**

Stayman Example 4=3-3-3 and 3=4-3-3

Responder bids 2♣ and the 1NT bidder holds one of the following hands.

Hand 1: ♠7654 ♥AK2 ♦AJ2 ♣AJ3

Or

Hand 2: ♠AK2 ♥KJ65 ♦QJ5 ♣K53

What do you bid after Stayman?

In the first hand you have 4=3-3-3 distribution, with 17 points, all the suits are stopped, but have a poor major spade suit; jump to 3NT.

In the second hand you have are balanced 3=4-3-3 hand, 17 points, all suits stopped, and a good major suits, bid 2♥ after Stayman. Try to find the major suit fit.

You hold this hand as responder: ♠AQ107 ♥Q1092 ♦7 ♣AQ105, a difficult 4-4-4-1 hand, and bid 2♣ (Stayman).

Over 2♣, if opener's bid is 2♥ - What do you do?

You are 4-4 in the majors with 14 HCP and a singleton. Some may splinter by bidding 4♦ (delayed splinter) to show a heart fit; however, that would ignore your spades.

While the bid of 2♠ is forcing (new suit by responder), it does not reflect the strength of your hand; bid 3♠ - strong hand and forcing.

More on bidding later in this lesson when we discuss responding with points.

What do you do as responder after Stayman?

Because you hand as responder is unlimited, there are many options.

1. Pass or correct by bidding 2♥/2♠.
2. Invite game in a major or notrump
3. Bid game in a major or notrump
4. Show your shape and/or points as responder
5. Enquire about opener's shape
6. Enquire about keycards or aces
7. Investigate slam in notrump or a suit.

The important thing to remember is that responder's hand is unlimited and that he is the **captain** of the auction. The opener's NT hand is well defined and limited!

Jacoby Transfers (0-8/9/10-14/15+) - Overview

After a bid of 1NT, regardless if you are a passed hand, the bids of 2♦ and 2♥ are transfers (announced bids as transfers since in blue on the CC) to the next higher suit.

1NT-2♦; 2♥ or P-1NT; 2♦-2♥ or 1NT-2♥; 2♠ or P-1NT; 2♥-2♠

With 0-8 points and five hearts, bid 2♦. With five spades, bid 2♥. In either case, pass opener's rebid, since game is likely impossible.

With 9 points and a five-card major, bid the transfer and then rebid 2NT. Opener will select between 2NT, 3 of the major, 3NT, or 4 of the major.

With 9 points and a six-card major, bid the transfer and then rebid the major at the three level to invite game.

Jacoby Transfers (0-8/9/10-14/15+) – Overview Continued

With 10-14 points and a five-card major, bid the transfer and then rebid 3NT as a game choice.

With 10-14 points and a six-card major (with no slam hopes), bid 4 of the major

With 15+ points and at least a five-card major, bid the transfer and then do something else.

When 5-4/5-5 in the majors we have special agreements (Smolen or Quest Transfers when 5-4/Mini-Maxi when 5-5).

When 6-4 in the majors we may use Extended Texas Transfers.

With a 6-card major Texas Transfers are used (and no slam interest).

More on Jacoby Transfers with 9 Points

If you are 4=5, you can transfer to hearts and bid spades; this allows you to play at the two level in spades or the 3-level in hearts.

If you are 5=4 you can transfer to spades and bid hearts; however now you are at the three level. If you are not vulnerable, it is a safe practice.

When transferring to a major and bidding the other major, some partnerships require that you are 5-5 in the majors.

Smolen with 10+ Points)

Used when responder is 5-4 in the majors and has 10+ HCP, game going values, one bids 2♣. After 2♦, a **3-level bid of the shorter major** shows 4-cards and responder is 5=4 in the majors. Smolen must be alerted.

Opener's suggested “fit” bids after Smolen (10+ points)

1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♥ (5=4)

3♠ 3 Spades and A♥ (forcing)

4♣ 3 Spades and A♣

4♦ 3 Spades and A♦

4♥ slam interest but no Aces

4♠ three spades - no slam interest – to play

1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♠ (4=5)

4♣ 3 Hearts and A♣

4♦ 3 Hearts and A♦

4♥ three hearts - no slam interest – to play

Quest Transfers (8-9/10+ HCP)

Used when responder is 5-4 in the majors and has and 8-9 HCP, some play “Mini - Smolen” a 2-level bid (5-4 invitational). However, this gives up Crawling Stayman. An alternative is to play Quest Transfers (Invitational or Game Values).

1NT - 2♣ (Responder) - 2♦ (Opener) –

3♦* = 8-9/10+ Points Transfer to Hearts (4=5) Opener bids 3♥ with 15

3♥* = 8-9/10+ Points Transfer to Spades (5=4) Opener bids 3♠ with 15

If the NT bidder does not accept the major suit game try, opener will bid three of responder's major (the next step). With a hand that can accept the invitation, opener can bid 3NT or 4 of the major. The convention does not give up much; you lose the useless 3♦ bid (some use it as Extended Stayman, do you have a 3-card major), others use 3♣ as Extended Stayman/SARS.

Transfer agreements must be discussed with your partner.

Opener's "fit" bids after Quest Transfers

1NT-2♣ -2♦- 3♦ (4=5) - (Opener bids 3♥ with 15 – minimum)

3♠ 3 Hearts and A♠

3NT Natural 3-2 in majors with 16-17 (Super-Accept)

4♣ 3 Hearts and A♣

4♦ 3 Hearts and A♦

4♥ 3 Hearts - no slam interest – to play

1NT-2♣ -2♦- 3♥ (5=4) - (Opener bids 3♠ with 15 – minimum)

3NT Natural 3-2 in majors with 16-17 (Super-Accept)

4♣ 3 Spades and A♣

4♦ 3 Spades and A♦

4♥ 3 Spades and A♥

4♠ 3 Spades - no slam interest – to play

Texas Transfers (10+ points) - Overview

Texas Transfer bids are an extension to Jacoby Transfer bids, enabling the notrump bidder to become declarer when the responder holds 6+cards in a major and wishes to be in game with no slam interest.

1NT-4♦; 4♥ or P-1NT; 4♦-4♥ or 1NT-4♥; 4♠ or P-1NT; 4♥-4♠

It allows the stronger hand to remain unexposed and minimizes interference from the opponents. These bids must also be announced as transfers (not alerted).

Extended Texas Transfers (10+ points) – Overview

Responder is 6-4 in the majors and bids 2♣ (Stayman); Over 2♦ by the NT opener, responder then bids of 4♦ and 4♥ which are re-transfers and announced as transfers.

1NT-2♣-2♦-4♦ (transfer to hearts) and 4♥ (transfer to spades)

When responding to 1NT, 3-level bids **when not natural** must be alerted, NEVER ANNOUNCED.

I have chosen to discuss the Mini-Maxi 5-5 convention which uses the bids of and 3♣*/3♦*/3♥*/3♠*;

3♣*	5=5 in clubs & diamonds 0-9 points
3♦*	5=5 in clubs & diamonds 10+ points
3♥*	5=5 in hearts & spades 0-9 points
3♠*	5=5 in spades & hearts 10+ points

With the Mini-Maxi, and Smolen/Quest, you are equipped to easily find suit and notrump fits when opening 1NT with 15-17 points.

Some partnerships use Puppet Stayman! – we will discuss this shortly and why you should give up Puppet and switch to Muppet when you open 1NT when 5=3 in the majors.

Instead of the Mini-Maxi convention, another option is to transfer to spades and bid hearts (5-5 and weak) or to transfer to hearts and bid spades (5-5 and strong). **An alternative agreement.**

There are other uses for 3-level bids.

For example there are Broken Suit Game Tries, splinter bids used to show a void/singleton, 1430 RKCB for the bid suit, Shape Asking Relay bids after Stayman (SARS), Stayman In Doubt (SID), and many, many more.

Discuss your 3-level agreements with your partner, there is no optimal set of bids – it depends more on your bidding style and experience!

When playing the 2/1 Game Force System, the bid of one of a major has a very large range 11/12 – 21 points; this is not the case with Precision. In Precision, a bid of 1M (major) is limited to only 11-15 HCP.

Adding the strong 1NT range of 15-17 and the 2NT range of 20-21 provided one includes the possibility of opening one or two notrump when 5=3 in the majors, helps to reduce the range. **Must be marked on CC - 5-card Major common.**

In the case of opening 2NT there is less room to explore for a major suit 5-3 fit when one opens with a 5-card major or to find a 4-4 fit in the other major. While this is not the case when opening 1NT, it may be difficult to find any 5-3 or 4-4 fit with only the Mini-Maxi and the Smolen/Quest conventions.

To fix this situation, many replace the Mini-Maxi bid of 3♣* with Muppet/Puppet Stayman.

Muppet Stayman - Overview (10+points)

Often the NT bidder will open with a 4/5-card major. Responder has a 3/4-card major and wants to find a 5-3 or 5-4 major suit fit. To find the fit, one may use 3♣* as Muppet Stayman (alert).

3NT* shows five hearts. Responder can either pass if he has spades, or if responder wants to play it in hearts, bids 4♦* as a transfer to hearts, which allows the strong hand to play the contract in four hearts.

3♠* shows 5-spades

3♦* has one or two 4-card majors (may have 3-card spades)

3♥* shows no 4/5-card major (may have 3 spades) - Responder will usually now bid 3♠ as a relay back to 3NT. But if responder has five spades and four/three hearts, he can **now bid 3NT to show five spades**. This allows opener to bid 4♠ with three to **right side** the contract. Note: some partnerships reverse these two-bids.

Muppet Stayman- Overview (10+points) – continued

If opener bids 3♦*, responder makes the following rebids:

3♥* Responder bids the major he does not have (like Smolen). This sequence shows four spades and denies four hearts. Opener either bids spades or 3NT.

3♠* Responder bids the major he does not have. This sequence shows four hearts and denies four spades. Opener either bids hearts or 3NT.

4♣* Responder has both majors; it asks partner to pick the major.

4♦* Most partnerships play the bid of 4♦ to show slam interest, pick a slam. (Note: some switch these bids by agreement).

4NT Quantitative

If you have five hearts and four spades, **you do not need Muppet**; bid 2♦ (transfer) and then bid 2♠; opener can bid major game or 3NT.

After 3♥* by opener (no 4-/5 card major), the bids are:

- 3♠* relay to 3NT
- 3NT* shows 5 spades (do you have 3?)
- 4♣/4♦ natural and forcing with 5+ cards in bid suit
- 4♥ 4=1=4=4 (shortness in hearts) with slam interest
- 4♠ 1=4=4=4 (shortness in spades with slam interest)
- 4NT Quantitative

After 3NT* by opener (5 hearts), the continuation bids are:

- 4♣/4♦ 5+ card suit, forcing
- 4♥ to play
- 4♠ 1430 RKCB kickback with hearts
- 4NT Quantitative
- 5♣ EKCB for hearts with void in bid suit, higher bids have the same meaning

Puppet Stayman- Overview (10+points)

In Puppet Stayman the the 3NT* and 3♥* bids are reversed so in Puppet the bids ARE: 3NT* = no 4/5-card major and 3♥*=5-hearts. Why use Muppet instead of Puppet?

The reasons are:

(1)It avoids the often disastrous use of a transfer bid when responder holds five cards in one major and three cards in the other major and allows responder to look for a 5/3 fit in either major. Holding 5=3-3-2 (♠♥♦♣), responder bids 3♣* to first look for a 5/3 heart fit. Opener will rebid 3♦ with a four-card major opener, and the auction proceeds as in standard Puppet. And opener will rebid 3♠ with a five spades. Now for the modifications of Puppet: opener will bid 3♥ rather than 3NT to deny a four- or five-card major. If responder holds five spades and three hearts, responder will rebid 3NT to show the five-card spade suit, enabling opener to declare in 4♠ with three spades and the right sort of hand. If responder does not hold fives spades, responder rebids 3♠, relaying opener back to 3NT.

(2) When holding five hearts and four spades, responder can transfer to 3♥, and to show four spades will rebid 3NT after opener accepts the transfer. This allows the strong hand to declare in 4♠ with a 4-4 spade fit. If responder does not have four spades, then after opener accepts the transfer, responder rebids 3♠, relaying opening to 3NT.

(3) Muppet also allows opener to bypass a transfer to 3♥ and rebidding 3♠ when holding five spades and two hearts. Using both Jacoby and Texas transfers, if responder holds a six-card heart suit and mild slam interest, responder will transfer to 3♥ at three-level and when opener bypasses the transfer to rebid 3♠, responder will have to rebid 4♦ to retransfer opener to 4♥ (showing mild slam interest and inviting opener to make a slam try).

(4) It more often allows the strong hand to declare major suit contracts.

We will review some of these points later in this LESSON.

The Gerber Convention (Modern Version) - Overview

After 1NT, the bid of 4♣ is known as the Gerber Convention.

When using Gerber, remember that you should not use the convention if (1) you have a void, (2) you have worthless doubletons (e.g. Qx, Jx, xx) in an unbid suit, and (3) if you need to know if partner has controls in a specific suit.

The responses to the 4♣ (Gerber) are:

4♦	0/4 aces
4♥	1 ace
4♠	2 aces
4NT	3 aces

Having all the aces, you may next ask for the number of kings by bidding

5♣ (number of kings asking bid). The responses are:

5♦	0/4 kings
5♥	1 king
5♠	2 kings
5NT	3 kings

In the July 2016 issue of the “**Bridge Bulletin**”, Marty Bergen in his article Gerber part 6, discusses “How experts view Gerber”. He states “Many players would be better off had they never heard of Gerber”.

He also discusses for example "Asking for Aces after 3NT", 1430-style Gerber (Expert Gerber), and jumps to 5♣ as Super Gerber (or Higher Gerber) to ask for aces after 3NT.

More on this later in the lesson.

1430 – Style Gerber Convention – (Overview)

After 1NT, the bid of 4♣ may be the 1430 Style Gerber (Expert Gerber) Convention - you must play Gerber or the Expert Gerber by agreement.

When using Expert Gerber, remember that you should also not use the convention if (1) you have a void, (2) you have worthless doubletons (e.g. Qx, Jx, xx) in an unbid suit, and (3) if you need to know if partner has controls in a specific suit.

The responses to the Expert Gerber bid of 4♣ are:

4♦	1/4 aces
4♥	0/3 ace
4♠	2 aces with minimum hand
4NT	2 aces with maximum hand

The king asking bid remains 5♣.

1430 Roman Keycard Gerber (RKCG) - Overview

When is 4♣ asking for aces (Gerber/Expert Gerber)? When is 4NT asking for aces or 1430 RKCB? When is 4♣ a cue bid, a splinter, or invitational to slam? When is 4NT quantitative? What is 4♣ after a transfer or Stayman or 3NT?

These are all questions partnerships must discuss. In general, many tend to agree to play Gerber over 1NT and 2NT. That means if one **opens** 1NT or 2NT, however; some even play it over any first and last NT bid (e.g. 3NT while others play Super Gerber or use it as a slam try, for example 1NT-2NT; 3NT – 4♣=slam try and 5♣=Super Gerber – Ace asking bid).

When is 4♣ 1430 Roman Keycard Gerber (RKCG)?

In general, RKCG is played when one has agreed upon a major suit follows bids of 1NT/2NT. With a minor, Minorwood is used.

The responses to the bid **4♣ 1430 RKCG Convention** are:

Responses to **4♣ RKCG**

- 4♦ 1/4 keycards
- 4♥ 0/3 keycards
- 4♠ 2/5 keycards without the queen
- 4NT 2/5 keycards with the queen

To show a void with two or four keycards, bid 5NT; with an odd number of keycards, bid the void at the six-level. Over voids – next step may be used as Specific King Ask (SKA) outside of trump suit.

Queen ask -- 4♥/4♠ - Next step over 4♦/4♥

4♠ = SSA (Specific Suit Ask) over 4♦/4♥

4NT = to play

5♣ = Number of Kings

The 1NT and 2NT Overcalls

The opponents bid a suit at the one level. With 15-17/18 points, you make the bid of 1NT as an over caller and **systems are played either ON/OFF**. Do you need a stopper in their suit? Yes, if they bid a major at least 1 - 1 ½ stoppers; however, this is not the case when they bid a minor.

Some always require at least one full stopper, partnership agreement.

Most play systems ON for strong 15-17/18 overcalls, but off is **Better**.

So what's wrong with playing "Systems On" over the 1NT overcall? If 2♣ is Stayman and 2♦ is a transfer, there is no way to play in a safe 2-level minor suit contract. With a long minor and a weak hand, the choice is now to pass the strong 1NT bid and pray, or to play at the 3-level (with a possible double). To me, this is unacceptable.

There's no need to make that choice. The advantage of the Jacoby transfer lies less in the fact that the lead comes into the strong hand or that the strong hand is hidden (everybody knows what's in that hand anyway; it is better have the unknown hand hidden), than that the transfer is utilized on strong and weak hands equally, on 5-3-3-2 hands as well as 6-5-1-1 hands, and that nobody knows what kind of hand responder holds until his second call. That advantage disappears when the opposition opens the bidding.

So play "Systems OFF". Two level new-suit responses are drop-dead bids. 2NT is a standard 9 HCP raise. 3NT is, of course, to play. 3-level bids in a new suit promise a 5-card suit and a hand that can play either 3NT or 4 of the suit with any help at all from the NT over caller. And a cue-bid of the opener's suit promises at least 8 HCP, no 5-card suit worth showing, and at least one (un bid) 4-card major. If I overcall 1NT and my partner cue-bids the opponents' suit, we will immediately look for a 4-4 major fit, knowing that we can play 2NT or 3NT otherwise.

If your NT **range is not** 15-17/18 in the direct seat, the 1NT* bid must be alerted. For example if you use it with 10-15 points, with at least 3-cards in the un-bid suits as a take-out bid; instead of a take-out double.

1NT followed by a bid **by you** of 2NT = 15-17/18, is NOT the unusual 2NT bid but equivalent to a strong 1NT opening bid and it is not alerted. Again systems may be played ON/OFF. However, now there is less bidding room – It is now better to Play “Systems **ON**” since responder can pass a transfer bid at the 3-level with a weak hand. If you play 2NT* as conventional, say for the minors, it **MUST** be alerted.

When they have bid and you are in the **balancing seat**, you may bid a 5-card suit with say 6+ HCP points, double with 10+ points, or with a stopper in their bid suit, bid 1NT with 10/12 -14/15 points range by partnership agreement. Systems are usually always **OFF** by agreement.

SUMMARY – 1NT opening and 1NT - 2NT bids --- systems ON.

1NT over calls & balancing seat 1NT bid -- systems OFF.

Quantitative Bids – (Overview)

When one opens 1NT (15-17) or 2NT (20-21), a jump bid to 4NT is quantitative (NOT ASKING for ACES); it is asking partner if he is at the top of his bid. If he is, he usually bids 6NT, otherwise, passes.

While it is most often played when opening notrump, it may also be used with other bidding sequences.

Examples:

1NT – 2♦/2♥ (Announced as a Transfer)

2♥/2♠ - 4NT (Quantitative)

1NT - 2♣

2♥/2♠ - 4NT (Quantitative)

1x- 1y

1NT - 4NT (Quantitative)

1M-2m

2NT – 4NT (Quantitative)

1NT - 2♣ (Stayman/Smolen/Forcing Stayman)

2♥/2♠ - 4NT (Quantitative)

1NT - 3♣ (Puppet/Muppet)

3♦ - 4NT (Quantitative)

Grand Slam Force after 1NT – Is the bid of 5NT. It is used after a notrump opening or after one has agreed upon a suit.

To use the bid after a 1NT opening requires 20+ HCP. If opener is at the top of his bid, 17 HCP, he bids 7NT; otherwise he bids 6NT.

Crawling Stayman (0 - 8 Points)

Crawling Stayman (CS) is a convention that uses the artificial bid of 2♣ to enquire about the 1NT opener's major suit holding. To use Crawling Stayman, responder must be 4-4 in the majors with 0-7 points or 4-3 in the majors with at least 4 diamonds and 0-7 points. A weak hand.

The goal of the convention is to find a 4-4 or 4-3 major suit fit at the 2-level or to play in 2♦ with little risk. Opener's responses to 2♣ are:

2♦	=	No 4+ card major
2♥	=	4+ card heart suit
2♠	=	4+ card spade suit

Responder will pass 2♥/2♠ with a 4-4 fit in a major or pass 2♦ with four. Over 2♦s without 4, responder bids 2♥* (alert) which asks opener to pass or correct to 2♠, the best 2-level suit contract and a 4-3 fit at the 2-level.

Garbage Stayman (0 - 8 Points)

Garbage Stayman (GS) is also a convention that uses the artificial bid of 2♣ to enquire about the 1NT opener's major suit holding.

To use Garbage Stayman, responder must be 4=4=4=1, 4-4 in the majors with exactly 4 diamonds and 0-7 points. Again a weak hand.

Responder will pass all 2/3-level bids made by the 1NT Opener.

**What if they interfere with a X or make the natural bids of 2♣/2♦/
2♥/2♠ and you have 0-7 points?**

Ignore the X and bid 2♣ (CS or GS), over 2♣ - X* = Stayman (stolen bid) and over the natural bids of 2♦/2♥/2♠ make card showing Negative Double - bid 4-card suits up the line (don't let them play at the 2-level). Responder with five of any major makes the Negative Free Bid (NFB) of 2♥*/2♠* (must alert as non-forcing/to play).

Jacoby (Simple) Transfers with 0 - 8 Points

With a 5+card heart or spade suit and 0 - 7 points, responder bids 2♦/2♥. These bids are announced as a transfer bid to Hearts/Spades, respectively. Opener is expected to bid 2♥/2♠.

(a) With 4-card support and 17 points, opener may make the 3-level **supper accept (SA)** bid of 3♥/3♠ (The Law!- bid to level of total trumps).

(b) With only 3-card support and 17 points, opener bids 2NT* (called the Bell Convention **(BC)**).

Responder, in both cases re-evaluates, his hand. He may pass or bid game in the major since responder now has dummy points. This is also the case with responder makes a NFB over interference.

If responder is 5-5 in the minors or has a single 5-card minor he bids 2♠*(alert). Opener is expected to bid 3♣ (however, some notrump bidders use the bid of 2NT* (alert) to say they prefer diamonds to clubs, responder next bids 3♦).

Over **interference** Jacoby is on only over a X and the natural bid of 2♣

Overview of Responder's Options (0 - 8 Points) Weak Hands

Options	Explanation
2♣	Crawling/ Garbage Stayman
2♦/2♥	5-card suit – Announced as transfer to Hearts/Spades Pass the expected bids of 2♥/2♠. Over
interference	Jacoby is on only over a X and the Natural bid of 2♣.
2♠*(alert) the bid clubs).	5-5 in the minors or a single 5-card minor, pass or correct. The expected bid is 3♣ (some use of 2NT* by opener to say they prefer diamonds to
Pass	With none of the above options

In this lesson we are using Jacoby Transfers; an alternative is to use 4-way transfers. Then 2♠*(alert) is a transfer to clubs and 2NT*(alert) is a transfer to diamonds.

Examples (Balanced Weak Hand) – Responder bids

O1: ♠A542 ♥K82 ♦A65 ♣A74

R1: ♠Q763 ♥J763 ♦432 ♣32

You are 4-4 in the majors and do not want to play in notrump

Your bid is 2♣ (Crawling Stayman), partner bids 2♠ and you pass. If they X, ignore it, bid 2♣ and over 2♣ - X=Stayman=stolen bid. Over 2♦/2♥/2♠ then X (double) is card showing Negative (bid you best 4-card suit – don't let them play at the 2-level).

O2: ♠A92 ♥K72 ♦75 ♣AK1097

R2: ♠Q643 ♥J863 ♦432 ♣32

You again bid 2♣ (Crawling Stayman), but now partner bids 2♦ with no 4-card major. You next bid 2♥* (alert) partner passes; you found your 4-3 major suit fit. **Crawling Stayman works well when the NT bidder has a balanced hand.**

Example (Semi-balanced Weak Hand): Responder bids

O3: ♠ K2 ♥AQ ♦AJ54 ♣ Q10942

R3: ♠ Q643 ♥J763 ♦632 ♣76

You are 4-4 in the majors and do not want to play in Notrump
Your bid is 2♣ (Crawling Stayman); partner bids 2♦. You next bid 2♥*
(alert) and partner passes and you are in a bad contract; a 4-2 fit at the
two level. Over 2♣, X=Stayman). Over 2♦/2♥/2♠ - X= Negative.

No convention is perfect! With Semi-balanced hands, Garbage Stayman
works better than Crawling Stayman since you can pass 2♦. Because of
this, some **never** bid 1NT when 2-2 in the majors EVER!

Can one fix Crawling Stayman if semi-balanced and 2-2 in the majors?
Yes, over 2♥ the **NT bidder bids 3♣**; this asks responder to pick his
longest minor for the best minor suit fit. In our example, responder
would next bid 3♦; finding a 4-3 fit at the 3-level.

Examples: Responder bids Weak Hand

O4: ♠K2 ♥AQ ♦AJ54 ♣Q10942

R4: ♠Q6543 ♥J76 ♦632 ♣73

You are 5-3 in the majors and do not want to play in Notrump, bid 2♥. Partner will announce the bid as a transfer to spades and bid 2♠ and you will pass. If they bid 2♦ bid 2♠* (NFB - alerted as NF).

O5: ♠ A542 ♥K872 ♦A65 ♣A7

R5: ♠ Q7643 ♥J963 ♦432 ♣3

You are too weak to play 1NT, but you have a singleton and are 5-4 in the majors. Do you bid 2♥ (transfer to spades) or bid 2♣? If you transfer you may be in a 5-2/5-3/5-4/5-5 spade fit, but may miss a 4-4 heart fit. It would be best to bid 2♣ (Crawling Stayman). You would pass a 2♥ bid by the opener; if the NT bidder were to bid 2♦, you must bid 2♥* which asks the the NT bidder to pass or correct to 2♠.

Examples: Responder bids Weak Hand

O6: ♠Q1094 ♥AQ2 ♦AJ54 ♣K2

R6: ♠A8765 ♥J76 ♦7 ♣J643

You are 5-3 in the majors and do not want to play in notrump, bid 2♥ with 7 points. Partner will announce the bid as a transfer to spades. Many will simply bid 2♠ and you would pass (and you may miss game). Over 2♦ or 2♥ make the NFB of 2♠* (alert).

Opener has a 4-card major and 17 points. With a fit in spades, opener bids 3♠ (super-accept) over 2♥ or the NFB of 2♠* (non-forcing). Responder has an Ace and 9 Dummy Points (now adds 2 shortness point) and bids 4♠ in both cases.

O7: ♠Q109 ♥AQ32 ♦AJ5 ♣K2

R7: ♠K8765 ♥K76 ♦7 ♣7643

What do you bid here? Clearly 2♥! But playing the Bell Convention – bid 2NT* (3-card support). With 9 dummy points, responder bids 4♠.

Examples: Responder bids Weak Hand

O8: ♠Q1094 ♥AQ2 ♦AJ54 ♣K2

R8: ♠65 ♥J7 ♦K762 ♣J7643

You are 5-4 in the minors and do not want to play in notrump, bid 2♠* with 5 points. Partner will alert the bid and say partner has a long minor or both minors. Preferring diamonds to clubs, the NT bidder bids 2NT* (alerted by responder). Responder bids 3♦.

O9: ♠Q109 ♥AQ ♦AJ53 ♣KJ32

R9: ♠6 ♥J7 ♦109764 ♣Q10976

You are 5-5 in the minors with a weak hand, and again bid 2♠*. Partner is 4-4 in the minors and bids 3♣ and you pass.

What if They Interfere – What do you bid?

There are many options Stolen Bids, Lebensohl, Rubinsohl/Rubensohl also called Transfer Lebensohl, and Rumpelsohl, to name a few.

Because Lebensohl is similar to the “stolen bid” method used by many of our members, we will use it; systems are on over X & **2♣** (mark cc).

Over a 1NT – X* = penalty If Responder Passes* (alert) = escape sequence is initiated: 1NT – X – pass* (responder). Partner must **alert the pass** and XX (re-double) if the opponents pass or bid a 5-card suit! If the opponent bids, the 1NT opener may pass or X for penalty. If Responder does not Pass* – responder are bids their best 5+ card suit or 4-card suits up-the-line.

These bids are not part of Lebebsohl and some use the XX (re-double) to start the escape bidding sequence (discussion with partner is necessary).

If the X is artificial - ignore it and even if the bid is **an unknown one-suited or natural** then X=Stayman (stolen bid).

BRIEFLY Lebensohl (Leb) BIDS over NT interference are:

Double is penalty

or (**Card showing “Negative Double” by agreement not part of Leb**)

Two-level bids are to play.

Three-level bids are forcing to game.

2NT is artificial, forcing opener to bid three clubs.

An immediate cue-bid by responder of a NATURAL BID is **Stayman**
(1NT - 2♣ - X = Stayman; 1NT - 2♦ - 3♦ = Stayman, etc.).

A direct jump to 3NT denies a stopper.

2NT followed by a cue-bid of the enemy suit after opener's forced club relay bid is **Stayman**.

2NT followed by three notrump, after a relay to three clubs, shows a stopper and asks opener to play in three notrump.

Responder has 9 Points

With one/two 4-card majors responder bids $2\clubsuit$ (Stayman) and **with no 4-card major bid 2NT**, invite game in notrump (no alert is required, even though the line is red on the convention card, why? Because it is not a conventional bid. An alert is not required even though the line is in red on the CC; however, an alert is required if you are playing 4-way transfers.

If opener bids $2\diamond$ (no 4-card major) you may bid your major suit at the 2-level ($2\heartsuit/2\spadesuit$) to invite game in the major since opener may have a 3-card major suit.

If responder is 5-4 in the majors with 9 points, responder again bids $2\clubsuit$. After the bid of $2\diamond$ by the 1NT bidder, if responder bids $3\heartsuit^*/3\spadesuit^*$, his 4-card suit, to his show 5-4 distribution. This is the Smolen convention and red on the CC and must be alerted (asterisk). 2-level bids are not Smolen and only invite game. Smolen establishes a game force auction and requires 10+ points NOT 9! Thus, one should only bid $2\heartsuit/2\spadesuit$ with 9 points and NOT USE SMOLEN. – Use Quest Transfers/Jacoby!

Jacoby/Simple Transfers with 0-8 Points

With a 5+card heart or spade suit and 0-8 points, responder bids 2♦/2♥. These are announced as a transfer bid to Hearts/Spades. Opener is expected to bid 2♥/2♠, respectively.

(a) With 4-card support and 17 points, opener may make the 3-level **super-accept (SA)** bid of 3♥/3♠.

(b) With only 3-card support and 17 points, opener bids 2NT* (called the Bell Convention (BC)). In both cases responder will usually pass.

If responder is 5-5 in the minors or has a single 5-card minor he bids 2♠*(alert). Opener is expected bid of 3♣ (however, some use the bid of 2NT* (alert) to say they prefer diamonds to clubs, responder next bids 3♦).

Over **interference** Jacoby is on only over a X and the Natural bid of 2♣.

Notrump Opener Bids over 1NT - 2♦ or 1NT-2M

Bidding	Hand description (responder)
1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - Pass	0-8, 5+♥s, sign-off
1NT - 2♦ - X - Pass	Negative X= 4♥s undefined limit
1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT	9, 5332, Game invitation
1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♥	9, 6-card ♥ suit. Game invitation

Similar bids hold for 1NT-2♦-2♠.

Over 1NT-2M-X= Negative to show 4-card major (some use it for penalty)!

Overview of Responder's Options (9 Points) Invitational Hands

Options	Explanation
2♣	Stayman – at least one 4-card major
2♣ Over 2♦ next 3♦	Quest Transfers 5-4 in the Majors
2♦/2♥	5-card suit – Announced as transfer to Hearts/Spades raise the expected bids of 2♥/2♠.
2♦/2♥ and 2NT/3M next	Shows max 17 point hand with 3-card/4-card support for the major – pass with 8 bid 3NT/4M with 9.
2NT	No 4-card major and 9HCP
2♠*(alert) bid of 3♥*	5-5 in the minors or a single 5-card minor, pass or correct the expected bid of 3♣ (some use the 2NT* by opener to say they prefer diamonds to clubs). Mini- Max 5-5 with hearts and spades (must be alerted)

Responder has 9 Points

In general 26 points are needed for game, 33 points are needed for a small slam and 36 points are needed for a grand slam. Playing 15-17 notrump --- **INVITE with 9 HCP Not 8**. Your partner opens 1NT and you have the following hand:

♠54 ♥A32 ♦Q6543 ♣ Q52 a hand with 8 HCP and 1 length point!

Do you bid 2NT invitational with this hand? **NO**

Opener will accept with a bad $16+8=24$! The fifth diamond is certainly a plus but having only a queen is a minus; only third round control! You need at King to invite and with an Ace just bid 3NT!

Partner opens 1NT and you hold: ♠7 ♥109872 ♦AJ954 ♣ K5. You again have 8 points and bid 2♦ (transfer to hearts). After 2♥, bid 3♦; you have great distribution! If partner next bids 3NT, pass and raise 3♥ to 4♥.

Bidding requires intelligent judgment --- not just points.

Can you ever invite with 8 HCP?

Yes – Use the rule of 88! What is that?

You may invite with the bid of 2NT with 8 HCP provided you have 8 or more cards in your hand that are **higher than the 8**. Hence the rule!

Partner opens 1NT and you hold: ♠7 ♥10987 ♦AJ1095 ♣ K10.

You have only 8 HCP. But, have 8 cards higher than the 8, bid 2NT.

The tens are worth $\frac{1}{2}$ point each; hence, you have 9.5 points so make an invitational bid! The intermediate 10s and 9s help with notrump contracts.

Examples: Responder Invitational Hands

O10: ♠K2 ♥AQ ♦AJ54 ♣ Q10942

R10: ♠Q6543 ♥Q76 ♦32 ♣A73

You are 5-3 in the majors with 8 points, bid 2♥ as a transfer to spades. Partner will announce the bid as a transfer to spades and bid 2♠. You have 9 dummy points, bid 3♠. Partner will bid 4♠.

O11: ♠A54 ♥K87 ♦AJ62 ♣A72

R11: ♠Q7632 ♥A953 ♦K32 ♣3

You are 5-4 in the majors, bid 2♣. Partner bids 2♦. You have 9 points and bid 2♥*. Partner bids 3♠ and you bid 4♠.

You are 5-5 in the majors with 9 points and partner opens 1NT

R: ♠ J7643 ♥A9532 ♦Q3 ♣3 (7HCP+2Length-1Dub doubleton) = 9 points

Bid 3♥* (alert). Partner has 15-17, will pass, bid 3NT or 4M.

Examples: Responder Invitational 2NT Hands

(A) R: ♠A62 ♥J76 ♦K987 ♣J73 (B) R: ♠ A962 ♥J95 ♦K732 ♣32

(A) No 4-card major bid 2NT. (B) Bid 2♣, after 2♦ by Opener, bid 2NT.

(C) R: ♠76 ♥7 ♦K9832 ♣A9873

You are 5-5 in the minors with 9 points, simply bid 2NT bid 2♣.

In general, with invitational values and 5-5 in the minor or with a 6-card minor raise 1NT to 2NT. No need for Stayman.

How does the 1NT bidder respond to 2NT? He usually bids 3NT or passes.

Mixing Stayman and 2NT R: ♠K976 ♥1075 ♦Q2 ♣A873

After 1NT, bid 2♣. If partner bids 2♦, bid 2NT. Over 2♠, invite with 3♠; but over 2♥, bid 2NT. The notrump bidder knows you have 4 spades, you bid Stayman. Over 2NT he will correct to 3♠/4♠.

The dreaded 5=4 hand (5 Spades and 4 Hearts)

O: ♠76 ♥A75 ♦AK92 ♣AQ73 R: ♠KQ854 ♥K1087 ♦82 ♣73

Opener has 17 points and responder has 8 points (25 points).

1NT-2♥-2♠-3♥

Jacoby Method (4-3 fit)

1NT-2♣-2♦-3♥-3♠

Quest Transfer (6-2 fit) – Best!

1NT-2♥-2NT (BC)-3♥

Bell Convention (4-3 fit)

1NT-2♣-2NT-3NT

No Convention (worst)

Fact, *on average*, the greater the trump disparity the more successful a 7-card fit; i.e., a 6-1 fit is better than a 5-2 fit, which is better than a 4-3 fit. See the site <http://www.rpbridge.net/8z21.htm>.

Overview of Responder's Options (10-14 Points) Game Invite Hand

Options	Explanation
2♣	Stayman. With 4-card major or 5-4 (Smolen) in the
2♣ Over 2♦ Next 3♥	Quest Transfers 5=4 in the Major
2♦/2♥ also SA or	5-card suit – transfer to Hearts/Spades and then make a game forcing bid. Bid 4M to show 6 or 3NT to show 5. A new 4-card minor suit is GF. Note NT bidder can use the BC.
2♠*(alert)	5-5 in the minors or a single 5-card minor, pass or correct. The expected bid is 3♣ (the bid of 2NT* by opener says he prefers diamonds)
3NT	no-4-card major – to play

Options	Explanation
3♣*	Muppet Stayman (as used over 2NT opening bids)
3♠*	Mini- Max 5-5 with hearts and spades (must be alerted
4♦/4♥	Texas transfers to hearts/spades - these are weaker than Jacoby Transfers (and also announced).

Jacoby/Simple Transfers with 10-14 Points

With a 5+card heart or spade suit and 1-14 points, responder bids 2♦/2♥. These are announced as a transfer bid to Hearts/Spades. Opener is expected to bid 2♥/2♠, respectively.

(a) With 4-card support and 17 points, opener may make the 3-level **super-accept SA**) bid of 3♥/3♠.

(b) With only 3-card support and 17 points, opener bids 2NT* (called the Bell Convention). In both cases responder will usually pass.

If responder is 5-5 in the minors or has a single 5-card minor he bids 2♠*(alert). Opener is expected bid of 3♣ (however, some use the bid of 2NT* (alert) to say they prefer diamonds to clubs, responder next bids 3♦).

Over **interference** Jacoby is on only over a X and the Natural bid of 2♣.

Responders Second Bid after the Transfer is Complete over 2♦

Bidding

Hand description

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - Pass

0-8, 5+♥s, sign-off

1NT - 2♦ - X - Pass

Negative X= 4♥s undefined limit

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT

9, 5332, Game invitation

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3NT

10-14, 5332. Opener : Pass or 4♥

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♥

9, 6-card ♥ suit. Game invitation

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♥

10-14, 6+ ♥s.

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠

10+, 5+ ♥s and 4+♠s. Game force

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♣

14+, 5+ ♥s and 4+♣s. Slam interest

Similar bids hold for 1NT - 2♦ - 2♠.

Over 1NT-2M-X= Negative to show 4-card major (some use it for penalty)!

Responders Second Bid after Transfer/Bell and 10-14

Bidding

Hand description

1NT - 3NT

To Play

1NT - 2♠* - 2NT - 3NT

Responder needed help in Clubs

1NT - 2♠* - 3♣ - 3NT

Mild Slam try

1NT - 2NT - 3♣ - 3NT

Responder needed help in Diamonds

1NT - 2NT - 3♦ - 3NT

Mild Slam try

Responders Second Bid after the Transfer is Complete over 2♦

Bidding

Hand description

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - Pass

0-8, 5+♥s, sign-off

1NT - 2♦ - X - Pass

Negative X= 4♥s undefined limit

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT

9, 5332, Game invitation

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3NT

10-14, 5332. Opener : Pass or 4♥

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♥

9, 6-card ♥ suit. Game invitation

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♥

10-14, 6+ ♥s.

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠

10+, 5+ ♥s and 4+♠s. Game force

1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♣

14+, 5+ ♥s and 4+♣s. Slam interest

Similar bids hold for 1NT - 2♦ - 2♠.

Over 1NT-2M-X= Negative to show 4-card major (some use it for penalty)!

Examples: Responder Game Invitational Hands

R ♠KQ65 ♥A76 ♦J9 ♣K873

After 1NT bid 2♣. A bid of 2♠ is raised to 4♠ while after 2♦ you would bid 3NT. If opener were to bid 2♥ responder would also bid 3NT.

Opener knows you have 4-spades – you bid Stayman, because without 4-spades responder would not use Stayman but bid 3NT immediately. He would convert the NT bid to 4♠ with four.

O12: ♠A54 ♥K87 ♦AJ62 ♣A72

R12: ♠ Q7632 ♥AK53 ♦K32 ♣Q

You are 5-4 in the majors, bid 2♣. Partner bids 2♦. You have 14 points, bid 3♥* (Smolen). Partner bids 4♠.

Examples: Responder Game Invitational Hands

O13: ♠54 ♥AQJ7 ♦AQ6 ♣KJ72

R13: ♠KQ32 ♥K53 ♦J432 ♣Q8

Opener bids 1NT, with 10 points responder bids 2♣. With 4 hearts the NT bidder bids 2♥; however with spades and not hearts, responder bids 2NT. With only 3 hearts (DO NOT BID 3♥ – a Moysian fit at the 3-level (the bid would show 5-hearts). Bid 3NT.

If responder is 5-4 in the majors with 10+ points, responder again bids 2♣. After the bid of 2♦ by the 1NT bidder, responder bids 3♥*/3♠*, his 4-card suit, to show 5-4 distribution. This is the Smolen convention and red on the cc and must be alerted (asterisk). Note that 2-level bids are not Smolen and only invite game. Smolen establishes a game force auction with 10+ points.

Examples: Responder Game Invitational Hands

Partner opens 1NT and you hold

(1) ♠109 ♥A75 ♦AJ1043 ♣K5

Responder bids 3♣* (Muppet Stayman) if opener next shows his 5-card heart suit by bidding 3NT, bid 4♦ to re-transfer to hearts – you found your 5-3 fit.

If opener bids bid 3♦, he has one or two 4-card majors (and may have 3 spades); without 5-spades or 4 hearts bid 3♠ bid 3NT.

If opener bids 3♠, responder bids 3NT.

Examples: Responder Game Invitational Hands

Partner opens 1NT and you hold

(2) ♠KQJ109 ♥75 ♦AJ1043 ♣7

Bid 2♥ as a transfer to 2♠. Responder next bids 4♣ (delayed splinter). Without club length, opener next bids 4♠. With club shortness, opener may bid 4NT 1430 RKCB for spades.

(3) ♠Q109 ♥K75 ♦J10 ♣KQJ72

Simple - simply bid 3NT. However, if the hand were:

(4) ♠QJ109 ♥K75 ♦J108 ♣KQJ

Bid 2♣ as Stayman – do not jump to 3NT!

Examples: Responder Game Invitational Hands

(5) ♠A5QJ4 ♥754 ♦J43 ♣K10 (5=3-3-2 Example)

Do you transfer or bid 3♣*. If you transfer you may not find your 5-3 heart fit.

Best to bid Muppet Stayman. If partner bids 3NT=5-card heart suit you found your 5-3 heart fit.

If partner bids 3♥* (no 4/5-card major), he may have a 3-card spade suit. With 5 spades bid 3NT. Partner will bid 4♠ with three or pass. With 4 only 4 spades, bid 3♠. Partner will bid 3NT.

If the NT bidder bids 3♦=no 5-card but a 4-card major. Responder does not have 4 spades **so do no bid 3♥**. You must bid 3NT to show spades, opener with 3spades will bid 4♠ or pass without 3 spades.

Examples: Responder Game Invitational Hands

O14: ♠AKQJ5 ♥75 ♦J43 ♣A32

R14 ♠873 ♥AKQJ9 ♦7 ♣QJ57

Do you transfer or bid 3♣*. If you transfer you may not find your 5-3 spade fit. Best to bid Muppet Stayman. Partner bids 3♠*=5 spades and you then bid 4♠.

If opener were to bid 3♥*=(no 4/5card major), you would bid 3♠* as a relay back to 3NT. However, if you had 5♠ and opener were to bid 3♥*, you would bid 3NT*=(do you have 3 spades?).

O15: ♠A53 ♥K75 ♦AQ43 ♣K32

R15: ♠KJ9532 ♥AJ92 ♦107 ♣7

Open 1NT - 2♣ (Stayman) - 2♦ - 4♥ (announced as transfer). With 6 hearts, responder would have bid 4♥ over 1NT. Please do not leave you partner in hearts!

Examples: Responder Game Invitational Hands

O16: ♠954 ♥AQJ7 ♦AQ6 ♣KJ7

R16: ♠KQJ1032 ♥K53 ♦J ♣Q8

Opener bids 1NT, with 6 spades and no slam interest bid 4♥ (announced as a transfer). Opener bids 4♠.

O17: ♠A54 ♥KQ65 ♦J6 ♣A1076

R17: ♠7 ♥A ♦AQ975 ♣KJ932

Opener bids 1NT, you are 5-5 in the minors, bid 3♦. With only 14 HCP, Bid 3NT.

Partner opens 1NT and you hold: ♠J4 ♥K7 ♦AQ642 ♣KQ754

You bid is 3♦. Partner will bid 2NT invitational and you bid 3NT. Or partner with a maximum will bid 3NT.

Overview of Responder's Options (15-17) Slam Invitational Hand

Options	Explanation
2♣	Stayman. With 4-card major or 5-4 in the majors
2♦/2♥	5-card suit – transfer to Hearts/Spades
2♠*(alert) the bid clubs).	5-5 in the minors or a single 5-card minor, pass or correct. The expected bid is 3♣ (some use of 2NT* by opener to say they prefer diamonds to clubs).
3♣*	Muppet Stayman
3♦*/3♥*/3♠*	3-level 5-5 Mini-Maxi bids
4♣/5♣	Gerber/1430 Style Gerber or Super Gerber
4♦/4♥	Texas transfers to hearts/spades – these are weaker than Jacoby Transfers (announced) with 6-card major.
4NT	RKCG/Quantitative (depends on bidding no 4-card major)

Examples: Responder GF - Slam Invitational Hands

O18: ♠J54 ♥K3 ♦AQ76 ♣AK76

R18: ♠AK32 ♥AJ987 ♦K4 ♣J2

Opener bids 1NT with 17 points and responder bids 2♣ (Stayman).

Opener bid 2♦ and responder bids 3♥ (Smolen) with 5 hearts and 4 spades. Without a major fit, opener bids 3NT. Without a fit, responder should not bid 4NT (Quantitative).

What if responder bids 4NT (Quantitative). Even though opener has 17 points, without a major suit fit opener should PASS.

Responder cannot bid 4NT (Blackwood), Gerber or Super Gerber with a worthless club doubleton.

Examples: Responder GF -Slam Invitational Hands

O19: ♠AQ102 ♥AQJ3 ♦Q76 ♣76

R19: ♠K3 ♥K5 ♦K10954 ♣KQJ2

Opener bids 1NT with 15 points and responder bids 2♠ (announced as both minors or long minor); preferring diamonds to clubs, opener bids 2NT* (prefers diamonds). Responder bids 4♦ (1430 Minorwood). With 2 keycards and the Q, opener bids 5♦. Off 2 keycards responder bids 5NT.

Some may be tempted to jump to 6NT – down one!

If you do not play Minorwood and bid 4NT instead, opener would bid 5♠ (2 keycards with the Q) and you would again bid 5NT.

Notrump works for the balanced hands; however, if the responder's hand was distributional you would have by-passed 5♦ using 4NT for the 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood.

Examples: Responder GF - Slam Invitational Hands

O20: ♠AQJ10 ♥K63 ♦765 ♣KQ7

R20: ♠K97 ♥AQ105 ♦AQ ♣10982

Opener bids 1NT with 15 points and responder bids 2♣ (Stayman).

With 4-spades opener bids 2♠. With no agreement responder bids 4NT (blackwood). And opener bids 5♥ = One. Responder bids 6NT.

O21: ♠KQ10 ♥AJ3 ♦K65 ♣QJ97

R21: ♠A94 ♥KQ7 ♦A86 ♣A1054

Open 1NT with 16. Responder with no 4-card major bids 4NT (with a maximum 17) Quantitative. With 16 opener bids 6NT.

Examples: Responder GF - Slam Invitational Hands

O22: ♠AQJ10 ♥K63 ♦765 ♣KQ7

R22: ♠K97 ♥AQ105 ♦AQ ♣10982

Opener bids 1NT with 15 points and responder bids 2♣ (Stayman).

With 4-spades opener bids 2♠. With no agreement responder bids 4NT (blackwood). And opener bids 5♥ = One. Responder bids 6NT.

O23: ♠KQ10 ♥AJ3 ♦K65 ♣QJ97

R23: ♠A94 ♥KQ7 ♦A86 ♣A1054

Open 1NT with 16. Responder with no 4-card major bids 4NT (with a maximum 17) Quantitative. With 16 opener bids 6NT.

Examples: Responder GF - Slam Invitational Hands

O24: ♠AQJ10 ♥K63 ♦Q65 ♣KQ7

R24: ♠K9 ♥AQ1052 ♦A ♣A10982

Opener bids 1NT with 17 points and responder bids 2♥ (Jacoby Transfer). With 17 points and 3-card support opener bid 2NT* (BC). Responder next bids 4♣ (RKCG). Opener with one keycard responds 4♥. Having the heart queen and the singleton ace, responder bids 6♥.

O25: ♠A107 ♥863 ♦AKQ6 ♣K107

R25: ♠K95 ♥A ♦J109 ♣AQ9842

Opener bid 1NT with 16 points. Responder bids 2♠* (long minor or both). Opener prefers diamonds and bids 2NT*; however, responder next bids 3♣. With clubs agreed, opener bids 4♣ (minorwood). With 2 keycards and the queen, responder bids 4NT. Having 3 small hearts, opener bids 6♣.

Examples: Responder GF - Slam Invitational Hands

O26: ♠J102 ♥K3 ♦AQ65 ♣AK73

R26: ♠AK93 ♥AJ1072 ♦K9 ♣J2

Opener bids 1NT with 17 HCP. As responder, you are 5-4 in the majors.

Playing Smolen	Opener	Responder
	1NT	2♣
	2♦	3♠* (Smolen 4=5 in majors)
	3NT	4NT (quantitative)
	6♥	Pass

Playing Quest	Opener	Responder
	1NT	2♣
	2♦	3♦* (Quest 4=5 in majors)
	3NT (Max)	4NT (quantitative)
	Pass (No X's)	

There is no guessing with Quest - 3NT shows a max. In bad slam using Smolen. Some may argue that using Smolen opener would also pass without a heart fit; even though he has a max of 17HCP (34 total)!

Examples: Responder GF - Slam Invitational Hands

O27: ♠QJ ♥KQ2 ♦AJ1065 ♣A73

R27: ♠AK93 ♥AJ1073 ♦K9 ♣J2

Opener bids 1NT with 17 HCP. As responder, you are 5-4 in the majors.

Playing Smolen	Opener	Responder
	1NT	2♣
	2♦	3♠* (Smolen 4=5 in majors)
	4♣ (Ace w fit)	4♦ (control)
	5♦ (control)	6♥

Playing Quest	Opener	Responder
	1NT	2♣
	2♦	3♦* (Quest 4=5 in majors)
	4♣ (Ace w fit)	4♦ (control)
	5♦ (control)	6♥

Either agreement (Smolen/ Quest Transfers) results in the slam.

Overview of Responder's Options (18+) Slam Hand

Options	Explanation
2♣	Stayman. With 4-card major or 5-4 in the majors
2♦/2♥	5-card suit – transfer to Hearts/Spades
2♠*(alert) the bid clubs).	5-5 in the minors or a single 5-card minor, pass or correct. The expected bid is 3♣ (some use of 2NT* by opener to say they prefer diamonds to clubs).
3♣*	Muppet Stayman
3♦*/3♥*/3♠*	3-level 5-5 Mini-Maxi bid
4♣/5♣	Gerber/Super Gerber
4NT	RKCG or Quantitative (depends on bidding) – no 4-card
5/6/7NT	5NT invites 6NT/7NT (Pick a slam)

Examples: Responder Slam Hand (Gerber)

O28: ♠KQ2 ♥K63 ♦A1076 ♣Q76

R28: ♠AJ5 ♥A105 ♦K954 ♣AK2

Opener bids 1NT with 14 points and responder bids 4♣ (Gerber).

Opener bids 5♦-one Ace. Responder bids 6NT.

If responder bid 4NT (Quantitative) opener would pass. Responder is too strong for 4NT bid. Gerber or Expert Gerber only works when responder has a strong balanced hand and all suits stopped. He can take charge since opener's hand is limited!

Examples: Responder Slam Hand (Gerber)

O29: ♠KQ74 ♥AK ♦K97 ♣9843

R29: ♠A5 ♥10987 ♦A8 ♣AKQJ2

Opener bids 1NT with 15 points and responder bids 4♣ (Gerber).

Opener	Responder
1NT	4♣ (Gerber)
4♥ (one Ace)	5♣ (king ask)
5NT (3 kings)	7NT

Down one! What went wrong? All suits not stopped and hand semi-balanced – Do not use Gerber! Bid as follows:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♠* (long minor or both)
3♣	4♣ [RKCG not Minorwood (no jump bid) over NT]
4♦ (1/4)	5♣ (Number of Kings)
5NT (3 Kings)	7♣

Examples: Responder Slam Hand (1430 RKCG)

O30: ♠A4 ♥Q95 ♦AQ5 ♣A9843

R30: ♠K85 ♥AK10987 ♦K98 ♣2

Opener bids 1NT with 16 points and responder bids 2♦(Transfer).

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♦ (Transfer)
2♥	4♣ (1430 RKCG)
4♥ (Three Keycards)	5♥ (Do you have the Q of hearts?)
6NT (Yes, no kings)	7♥
Pass	

Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) Convention – 1430

When using the RKCB Convention, there are now five keycards, the four aces, and the king of trump. Another keycard is the queen of trump. If you do not use kickback (to be explained later), the 1430 RKCB ask is again 4NT. The responses are:

- 5♣ 1 or 4 keycards (the 14 step)
- 5♦ 3 or 0 keycards (the 03 step)
- 5♥ 2 (or 5) keycards w/o the queen of trump in the agreed upon suit
- 5♠ 2 (or 5) keycards with the queen of trump in the agreed upon suit

When one responds five clubs or five diamonds, the queen ask may be needed. After the response of five clubs, the bid of 5♦ is the queen ask (**when hearts or spades are the agreed** upon trump suit). After the bid of five diamonds, the bid of 5♥ is the queen asks.

Queen Ask

After five clubs and five diamonds, the queen asks are: 5♦ and 5♥ (the next step bids).

Responding to the 5♦ Queen ask – (next step)

- (1) If you do not hold the queen, responder returns to the agreed upon suit at the five- level (5♥/5♠).**
- (2) 5NT shows the queen, but no outside king!**
- (3) With both (Q of trump and one or two kings), bid at the six-level of the lowest ranking king.**

.

Responses are:

(1) Return to the agreed upon trump suit at the six-level denies any kings.

(2) With two kings, bid the cheapest at the six-level (below agreed upon trump suit); if the second king is of higher rank, bid 6NT.

(3) With three kings, bid 7NT.

To find a second king below the trump suit, bid the suit. Without the second king, responder bids the trump suit at the six-level. With the king, jump to 7 in the agreed suit.

King Ask

Knowing you hold all the aces and king-queen of trump,
5NT is the specific king's ask!

The specific kings ask is needed for a grand slam try in the
agreed upon suit or notrump; it tells partner that we
have all the key cards.

(Note that the king ask is not used if you used the Queen
ask)

In addition, some partnerships do not require all the Key
cards with the Queen when making the bid of 5NT --- this
practice is not recommended.

Responding to the 5♥ Queen ask (next step)

- (1) If you do not hold the queen, pass.
- (2) With the queen, bid 5NT.
- (3) With the queen and a king in the lower ranking suit, bid the suit at the sixth level (e.g. 6♣/6♦/6♥).
- (4) If you have the Queen and a higher ranking king, return to the six-level of the agreed upon suit, 6♥/6♠.

(Note how high your responses get --- for this reason many only play Queen Asks for the majors --- for the minors one may use kickback or minorwood)

Playing 1430 RKCB, the standard is to use the specific king ask; however, some still may play the number of kings from “Blackwood” excluding the trump suit

YOU BETTER ASK your partner.

Examples: Responder Slam Hand (1430 RKCB)

O31: ♠54 ♥K952 ♦AQ54 ♣AQJ

R31: ♠AQ975 ♥AQ1087 ♦7 ♣K2

Opener bids 1NT with 16 points.

Opener	Responder
1NT	3♠* (10+ and 5-5 in majors – Mini-Maxi)
4♥	4NT (1430 RKCB)
4♦ (Three Keycards)	6♥
Pass	

If you play Kickback, it is not safe to use it here.

Double Agreement Roman Keycard Blackwood (DRKCB)

With a double agreement, there are now six keycards (four aces and two kings), NOT FIVE (and two Queens), so we have what is called Double 1430 Roman Keycard Blackwood (DRKCB).

We consider DRKCB responses for the common major-major agreement, **there are no void-showing responses and the ASKER MUST HAVE 2 Keycards!**

The first two responses ($5\clubsuit=1/4$ and $5\diamonds=0/3$) of DRKCB are the same as 1430 RKCB; however, there are now three queens showing responses:

$5\heartsuit$	2 with neither queen
$5\spadesuit$	2 with lower ranking queen
5NT	2 with higher ranking queen
$6\clubsuit$	2 with both queens

Examples: Responder Slam Hand

O32: ♠Q5 ♥Q85 ♦AJ63 ♣AQ86

R32: ♠AKJ1087 ♥AKJ7 ♦K4 ♣7

Opener bids 1NT (15HCP) – playing Quest and DRKCB!

Opener

1NT

2♦

3♠ (min)

4♠ (complete re-transfer)

6♣ (2 keycards with both Q's)

Pass

Responder

2♣

3♥* (5=4 Spades and Hearts)

4♥ (re-transfer)

4NT (DRKCB)

7NT

With more points slam bidding becomes more complicated. See lessons (1) Introduction to Slam Bidding Techniques and (2) Intermediate Slam Bidding on: www.bridgewebs.com/ocala.

Pick A Slam – Example

O33: ♠Q5 ♥Q85 ♦AK6 ♣A9876

R33: ♠AK1087 ♥AK J ♦543 ♣Q3

Opener bids 1NT and responder bids 2♥ (transfer). After opener's bid of 2♠, responder bids 5NT (pick a slam). Opener bids 6♣ and responder bids 6NT.

O34: ♠A542 ♥AQ3 ♦106 ♣AJ76

R34: ♠K8 ♥65 ♦AKQ54 ♣KQ53

With 18-19, bid 6NT directly: 1NT - 6 NT.

20-21 **Forcing**. With a balanced hand, you may respond 5NT. If opener has 15 points he bids 6NT. If he has 17 points he declares 7NT. If he has 16 points he decides to bid 7NT with extra values; like intermediate cards (10's and 9's).

22+ **Grand Slam** with a balanced strong hand. 1NT – 5NT - 7NT.

Much of the material presented in this lesson is in my book:

Neil H. Timm (2016) “Two-Over-One Game Force System - For Beginners and Intermediate Players, The Final Word with Chapters on Precision”, Fifth Edition. Trafford Publishing. Available on Amazon.com – search on neil timm under books

You may also want to review the books:

(1) Terrence Quested, B.Sc. (2006) “No Trump Bidding Stayman and Transfers”, Trafford Publishing. For a free pdf copy go to pattaybridge.com – click on Conventions and then Puppet Stayman – click on No Trump bidding book.

(2) Bob Mc Connell (2012) “No Trump A Complete Bidding Guide” found on the web (38 pages): http://obsbridgeclub.com/Products/NoTrump_Book/NotrumpBook_PDF.pdf

(3) Ron Anderson (1987) “THE LEBENSOHL CONVENTION IN CONTRACT BRIDGE”, Devyn Press.

(4) Danny Kleinman (2004) “The No Trump Zone”, Master Point Press.

(5) For more on slam bidding go to: www.bridgewebs.com/ocala and click on Lessons. You may also want to review Timm’s Bridge Bits, also on the site!