

NO TRUMP STRUCTURES

Opening bids and rebids of 1 NT and 2 NT promise balanced hands and a specific number of points. Ideally, that range should be no more than 3 points.

Opening NT bids should also be in keeping with one's style...if your opening bids are strong...13 to 14 and you play a "Standard" Strong-2" style...your NT opening bids should also be strong...16 to 18. However, if you are playing a competitive, lighter opening style...then your 1 NT bids should compliment that style...with *a rebid of 1 NT showing no more than 14 HCP.*

An opening bid of 1 NT does not deny a 5-card Major suit...

Standard American NT Structure

13...15	Open 1 of a suit...rebid 1 NT
16...18	Open 1 NT
19...21	Open 1 of a suit...JUMP in NT
22...24	Open 2 NT
25+	Open 3 NT

Today's Modern Competitive NT Structure

11...14	Open 1 of a suit...rebid 1 NT
15...17	Open 1 NT
18...19	Open 1 of a suit...JUMP in NT
20...21	Open 2 NT
22...23	Open 2 C Rebid 2 NT
24...25	Open 2 C . Rebid 3 NT
26+	Open 3 NT

On opening 1NT with a five-card major..

Most new players are being taught to open 1 NT with a five-card major. Goren era and earlier players rarely open 1NT with a five-card major. **Standard** seems to be a mix of both approaches. Consider first, the quality of the suit...if is truly terrible...treat it as a four-card major. **Conventional wisdom advises not opening 1 NT with a five-card major ...unless you also hold 3 cards in the other major...**For if partner should transfer you to the other major and then pass...the final contract will not be an inferior one.

Rebids by NT opener...

Since the Responder is the "**CAPTAIN**" of the hand...The NT opener will usually have no problem following directions...only a few "choices" are open...

1. Does the contract belong in the major or NT...? (Opener checks for the 8-card fit...)
2. After the 2 NT invitation... Stop there or go to 3 NT...?..Does the opener have 15 or 17.
3. Stayman.(2 Clubs)...Modern style is to bid "up the line" ...2H with 4 H and 4 S...

Rebids by Responder...Since Responder's main job is to determine LEVEL & DENOMINATION...

1. After a negative 2 D response to Stayman...responder can bid "Quantitatively" ..i.e. 2NT...3NT...4NT... depends on the HCPs....**1ST BID SHOWS DISTRIBUTION...2ND BID SHOW POINTS!**....
2. With 8-9 pts and a 5 card suit..responder can use Stayman as 1 Rd force..then rebid their 5 card suit as a game invitation...

NO TRUMP OVERCALLS....

AT THE 1 LEVEL... show the same point count and shape as opening 1 NT bids. If the opponent opens the bidding with 1 H...and your overcall is 1 NT....partner will know your hand contains NT shape and point count....and....of course, 1 or more stoppers in hearts. No Trump overcalls at the one level do not promise stoppers in all the unbid suits. **IF YOU CANNOT MEET ALL OF THE ABOVE REQUIREMENTS...DO NOT OVERCALL IN NT!**

THE "BALANCING" 1 NT OVERCALL...Experts disagree about the meaning of the 1 NT balancing call. Some suggest the call shows about 8-12 HCPs, others...10-14 HCPs, and still others 12-15 HCPs. No sources that I know of recommend a normal 15-17 or 16-18 1 NT opening point count. With a normal 1 NT opener ...in the pass out seat...I recommend a double...followed by a bid of some number of NT. Partner will usually pass or take out into a long suit with up to 9-10 pts. With enough points for a "Free bid" 11+ partner will invite game or cue bid. Mike Lawrence., one of *my* favorite authors, in his Complete Book of Balancing in Contract Bridge, expects 1-2 stoppers in the opponents bid suit and about 11-14 HCPs.

A JUMP OVERCALL TO 2NT OR 4NT OR HIGHER...(but not to 3NT)....

"UNUSUAL NT OVERCALLS" show 5-5 or more extreme distribution in the two lower unbid suits. (Some pairs play that it always shows the minor suits...but playing it as the two lower unbid suits it a much more common practice...also much safer!) When this bid is made BUPH...the point range is bi-level. The bidder either shows a weak, obstructive hand (8-11 HCP) or a strong, offensive hand 16+HCPs up.

A JUMP OVERCALL TO 3NT...(GAMBLING 3 NT)...shows an 8 card or longer minor suit and a hand that would qualify for a preemptive opening of 4C or 4D. Unless responder has a stopper in the openers suit and thinks 3 NT will "play"...If responder has no stopper...they will bid 4C as a stop bid...if the "Gambling NT overcaller's" suit is in fact diamonds... they will "correct" to 3

STAYMAN CONVENTION

The Stayman Convention is an artificial response of 2 C to an opening bid of 1NT. It is used to ask if opener has a four-card major suit. With a four-card or longer major suit, opener bids it at the 2 level. Without a four-card major suit, opener artificially rebids 2 D .

In yesterday's **Standard** bidding...when responder uses **Stayman** after opener's notrump bid...he usually had 8-9 HCPs and at least one four-card major...*except when he holds a specific hand*. That exceptional, *specific* hand is one which contains a 5 card major and only 8-9 pts. **Standard** bidding does not allow responder to show a 5 card major and invitational points immediately...(1NT...2H shows 0-7 pts) and (1 NT...3H shows 10+ pts) Therefore responder must invite game by showing the 8-9 points with the Stayman bid...then show possession of a five-card major suit by freely bidding the suit himself at the 2 level.

The ACBL Convention card offers Modern bidders a choice of **Forcing or Non-forcing Stayman...**

FORCING STAYMAN...bidders promise 8+pts and also promise to keep the bidding open to 2NT or 3 of a suit...even if at the minimum point level.

NON-FORCING STAYMAN... bidders do *not* promise any HCPs...The non-forcing Stayman bidder can pass any rebid opener may make...if, in their estimation, the final contract will be improved.

If, on the other hand, responder does continue with a second bid, he then promises 8+ pts. and also promises to keep the bidding open to 2 NT or 3 of a suit... If responder chooses to pass...this pass infers that a 7 card or longer fit has been found and that the new contract has more promise than 1 NT. Magic Stayman or Drop-Dead Stayman are colorful names given to this variation of the convention...*When responder intends to pass any rebid made by opener...the use of Stayman may be done with no values at all*. The classic hand pattern this action is 4-4-5-0 distribution. If opener does show a major suit, a much better contract will have been reached. If on the other hand, opener rebids 2 diamonds... responder can pass knowing that a diamond fit is likely...If opener's shape happens to be 3-3-2-5...the gamble may or may not pay off. However, remember that Standard bidders with five diamonds and 0 pts will still be placing the contract in 2 diamonds...and the strong 1NT hand will even be exposed! If responder chooses to stretch the envelope and make this bid with a 4-4-4-1 or even a 4-3 (3-4) 5-1 hand pattern...he takes a much greater risk, but may well improve the contract... *"Do you feel lucky?"*

One of my very favorite bridge quotes is ... "There are no great bridge players, only great partnerships." Whenever a new (or old) partnership begins to grow and adds more tools...it is imperative to have clear understandings about not only the meanings of conventions...but also about the continuations of the bidding... Partners must discuss their understandings to ensure that the same continuations are played. They should also discuss if these continuations are still in effect if the opponents should intervene in the bidding. Following are some Stayman questions that partnerships should answer and then settle upon their own agreements.

CONTINUATIONS...PARTNERSHIPS MUST DISCUSS

Does the 2C response promise possession of a four card major?

How does opener respond if they hold both major suits? Stayman, wrote the convention at a time when four card majors were the style..therefore he recommended that Spades be bid first. Dorothy Truscott in Bid Better, Play Better, advises that opener bid the better quality suit...The modern trend is to

bid four-card suit “Up the line”... therefore a 2 S response denies a heart suit, but a 2 H response does not deny a spade suit. You and your partner must decide...

What does opener rebid when they do not hold a four card major suit? Stayman...40 years ago, had opener rebid 2D with a minimum hand and 2 NT with a maximum hand. *Almost no modern players follow this practice today!* Today, it is almost universal to rebid 2D on all hands which lack a four card major. ***It is mandatory to rebid 2D if “Non-Forcing Stayman” is played by the partnership...***

THE JACOBY TRANSFER (JT) COMPLEX

is based on a bridge truism that most contracts generally play at least one trick better when the the strong hand declares, because the opening lead might be made up to a "TENACE".

In order to achieve this end, the responder, by agreement, bids the suit directly beneath his major, asking the opener to bid the major.

1NT..2D (asks opener to bid 2 Hearts) 1NT...2H (opener to bid 2 Spades)

1NT..4D (asks opener to bid 4 Hearts) 1NT...4H (opener to bid 4 Spades)

Yes, the responder can transfer at either the 2 or 4 level after opening 1 NT and at the 3/4 level after opener of 2 NT...

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE RESPONDER HOLDING A SIX (6) CARD SUIT:

- A. SIGNING OFF...This one is easy 1NT..2D..2H..PASS!
- B. INVITING GAME...rebid your "real suit" 1NT..2D..2H..3H?
- C. INVITING SLAM...1NT..2D..2H..4H..(Opener might look for slam via BW)
- D. PLAYING IN GAME (NO MORE)...1NT..4D..4H..PASS
- E. SETTING UP "TRUMP", THEN ASKING FOR ACES....1NT..4D..4H..4NT

Once it is understood how to respond to 1 NT w/6 card major, the same bids are in effect if partner opens 2 NT or uses a 2/3 NT rebid after a 2C opener followed by a response of 2 D ...

** (This is why many people prefer 2D as a waiting bid in response to a Strong 2 Club Opener.

JACOBY TRANSFERS WITH A FIVE (5) CARD SUIT

When partner opens with some number of NT, there is a world of difference between holding a 5 card or a 6 card major suit. With a 6 card suit you are assured of an 8 card fit, w/5 card suit your partner may have a doubleton!

A. **SIGNING-OFF**...Transfer and then PASS...* With a 5-3-3-2 hand and a very weak suit sometimes you could opt to pass! Partner may have a xx and you may not be improving the contract.

B. **TRANSFERRING AND REBIDDING 2NT**...Before JT AN 8-9 point bid would have been 2NT, now you have the valuable addition of being able to describe your distribution first...and your points on your rebid.

C. **TRANSFERRING AND REBIDDING 3 NT**...Same as above but 10-14 points!
Opener must decide what to do with 4-3-3-3 or 3-4-4-2 (Ask yourself if all side suits stopped?) This is the key to your decision to stick it out in 3 NT? or convert to 4 of major?

D. **TRANSFERRING AND REBIDDING 4 NT**...THIS IS QUANTITATIVE..NOT BLACKWOOD

As always, JT let's us show our distribution...then our points..This is an "invitation" not a force. It is similar to a direct raise to 4 NT, opener bids slam w/max...passes w/min. If the responder had wanted to ask for Aces, he could leap directly to 4 clubs (Gerber) or transfer at the 4 level to set the suit, then bid 4 NT.

E. **TRANSFERRING AND THEN BIDDING A NEW SUIT** ...This is a game force and slam invitation. Generally the responder will be showing 5-5 distribution.

F. WHEN THE OPPONENTS OVERCALL... TRANSFERS ARE OFF... At the 2 Level or the 3 Level...But do apply at the 4 Level...IF...the overcall was 3 Clubs or lower...Sorry about that!

1NT...(2D)...2H is natural

1NT...(2D)...4H is transfer to 4 Spades

Had the overcall been (3D)...the responder would have to bid 4 Spades himself...4H would be "natural". This is one area of bidding where you and your partner **must** be on the same wavelength or you will have a disaster the likes of which you have never seen before!

G. WHEN YOUR TRANSFER BID GETS DOUBLED (THE NERVE!) 1NT...P...2H...X...?

Partner has transferred you to spades and the opponent has doubled to indicate a lead to their partner...What should you do?

1)...Pass 2)...2 Spades 3)...3 Spades 4)...Redouble

Conventional wisdom is that after a double, you should pass with a doubleton spade, bid 2 spades with 3 trump, jump to 3 spades with a maximum, and either bids 4 spades or re-double with four (or more) **strong hearts**.

233 Peanut Butter & Jelly sandwiches + 1=Game...Re-double with 4 Top Trump

Magic Formula.. 2P...3B...3J+....4BG
(XX-4TT)

H. HANDLING 5-5 IN THE MAJORS...It is important for the responder to be able to show hands of various strengths that have 5-5 in the majors. Basically, we are talking about weak sign-offish hands, invitational hands and game-forcing hands.

1. **WEAK 5-5...**(0-5 hcp) responder transfers into their strongest major and then passes. This does not always work but then you can always blame the system! Opener will find out your distribution soon enough..don't take another bid!
2. **INVITATIONAL 5-5...**(6-8 hcp) responder transfers into hearts and then bids spades...this is non- forcing. Opener must now bid the full limit of his hand.
3. **FORCING 5-5...** (At least 9 or more hcp) Responder transfers into Spades and then simply bids Hearts themselves...This promises 5 of each because with 5-4 responder would have bid Stayman. (This is one of the rare times the responder may end up as the declarer.)

I. THE 2 SPADE RESPONSE...When playing JT, a response of 2 or 3 Spades no longer has a natural meaning so most players use this response as some way to bid the minors...there are many "Conventional" bids on the market.."..Yer pays yer money and takes yer choice!" We will cover these in another class, did I hear a sigh of relief?

THE BOTTOM LINE

1. When responder has a 5 card major suit and partner opens 1 NT or 2 NT, it is normal to transfer and then either pass, bid NT, or show a 2nd suit. Transferring and then rebidding the same major promises a six (6) card suit.
2. Transfers exist at the two and four level after a 1 NT opening at the three and four level after a 2 NT opening.
3. Transferring at the lowest level possible and then bidding 4NT is natural, "QUANTITATIVE", **NOT** Blackwood.
4. Transferring at the 4 level and then bidding 4 NT **IS** Blackwood.
5. Transferring and raising to game is a slam try ***without*** a singleton. (Requires a 6-card suit)
6. Transferring and jumping in a new suit is a slam try showing a singleton in the jump suit. Both (5) and (6) require six card suits, minimum!
7. After interference, JT are off at the 2 and 3 level, but are still on at the 4 level...if the interference was 3 Clubs or lower. If the interference is higher than 3 Clubs, JT are off completely,...(as it interferes with Stayman, which is the cue bid of the opponent's suit at the 4 level.)
8. When the opener has a super good "fit" (4 trumps), he so indicates by either....jumping in partner's major... following the principle of "Fast arrival" this shows a minimum hand or by rebidding NT showing a maximum hand... using the principle of "Slow arrival"....
9. Responses in 2 & 3 Spades tend to be used to show the minors, usually with some slam interest...otherwise 3 NT is the place to be...
10. JT can handle 5 card majors, 6 card majors and 5-5 in the majors...if your hand is 6-4 or 5-4 do not use JT...USE STAYMAN INSTEAD!!

RULES ABOUT TRANSFERS:

1. Transfers are used for 5 or 6 card suits only...
2. With 4/4...5/4...even...6/4..."JT" are not advised...
STAYMAN IS THE PREFERRED METHOD
3. Transfers followed by NT rebids are "Quantitative" 2/3/4
4. Transfers followed by bids in a new suit are "GF"/Slam Inviting
5. Transfers followed by a jump in a new suit promise 6-7 cd major and a 0 or x in 2nd bid suit...(a do-it-yourself Splinter!)
6. With 5-5 Weak.....Transfer to your choice and Pass!
5-5 Invitational...Transfer to Hearts and bid Spades
5-5 Forcing.....Transfer to Spades and bid Hearts

"Take an active attitude to show a "fit"

