

Bidding over the opponent's 1NT opening

When your opponents open a strong 1NT it is unlikely your side will be able to make game. This is because the 1NT opener has around 40% of the HCP.

Your aim in bidding over a strong NT is disrupting the opponent's auction.

If left to their own devices, most pairs can find the right contract using transfers and stayman. However, most players find it difficult to find the right contract after interference.

Which system should you adopt for bidding over a 1NT opening?

There are many conventions for bidding over a 1NT opening and the one you adopt is subject to partnership agreement.

One of the most popular is DONT.

What is DONT?

DONT stands for **D**isturbing **O**pponent's **N**o **T**rump and was invented by Marty Bergen.

It is used over a **strong** 1NT opening and uses the following bids:

| | |
|------|---|
| Dble | shows a single suited hand in any suit |
| 2C | shows clubs and a higher suit |
| 2D | shows diamonds and a higher suit |
| 2H | shows hearts and spades |
| 2S | shows a 6-card spade suit (weaker than the 2C 6-carder) |
| 2NT | shows 5/5 in the minors |

How many points do you need?

Because your aim is to dislodge the opposition from 1NT, you don't need many points to use one of the DONT bids. Go out of your way to intervene!

With the right hand you may have as few as 7 HCP. Your partner will not get carried away knowing that game your way is most unlikely.

But vulnerability is important. When vulnerable you must have decent suits (not Jxxx and Qxxxx).

What shape do you need?

The bids showing two suits (2C, 2D, 2H) should be 5/4.

For example:

| | |
|--------|--|
| xx | <i>Double intending to bid 2H on your next bid</i> |
| KQJxxx | |
| Jxx | |
| xx | |

AJxxx *Bid 2C showing clubs and a higher suit*
xx
Xxx
QJxx

xx *Bid 2D showing diamonds and a higher suit*
KQxx
QJ10xx
xx

Responding to your partner's DONT bid

After partner doubles

If the 1NT bidder's partner passes, bid 2C, which is pass or correct (the DON'T bidder passes with clubs or corrects to their 6-card suit). A suit bid other than 2C shows a 6-card suit of your own.

If the 1NT bidder's partner bids over the double, you can double to ask for your partner's long suit. For example,

(1NT) x (2S) x *Double here asks for partner's suit*

After partner bids 2C or 2D

If you have 3-card support for partner's known suit, pass.

Without 3-card support, you are on a bit of a guess. You can:

- Pass with a doubleton and play in a possible 6-card fit
- If your partner bid 2C, bid 2D to play in their second suit
- If your partner bid 2D, bid 2H to play in their second suit
- If strong (15+HCP), bid 2NT, asking partner to bid their second suit.

If the 1NT bidder's partner doubles the 2C/2D bid:

- Pass if willing to play in partner's suit
- Redouble to ask for partner's second suit
- Bid a new suit, which is natural and not forcing.

If the 1NT bidder's partner bids a suit, double asks for partner's second suit. For example:

(1NT) 2D (3C) x *Asks for partner's second suit*

After partner bids 2H

After partner bids 2H, showing both majors simply choose one of the major suits.

With a doubleton in both majors, pass 2H (because if you are doubled in 2H you can run to 2S).

With a strong hand and game interest bid 2NT. Your partner can rebid hearts to show 5 hearts and 4 spades or clubs to show 5/5. Bid at the 3 level if weak and 4 level to play in game.

After partner bids 2S

When partner shows a weak hand with 6 spades you can:

- Bid 2NT to ask partner to bid game if maximum
- Bid game with good spade support
- Bid 3S which is competitive.

Can I use DONT over a weak NT opening?

The general view is that DONT should only be used over a strong 1NT opening because you lose the ability to double the 1NT for penalties.

When your opponents open a strong 1NT you rarely have enough HCP to double for penalties.

When your opponent's NT opening is weak, you often want to penalise them by doubling.

It is recommended that you only use DONT over a strong NT and play a natural system over a weak NT or use a convention that contains a penalty double (Capelletti).