

Responding to 1-No-Trump

1. Conditions for a 1-NT Opening Bid:

A. **Size:** - 15-17 HCP's (Standard American) or 12-14 HCP's (ACOL) – It is especially important to note that when contemplating a No Trump contract, only High-Card Points (HCP's) are, therefore, considered. Distributional points are **not** counted because it is never advantageous to hold shortness in any suit when playing the hand in a No-Trump contract.

B. **Shape:** - An evenly balanced hand - (4-3-3-3), (4-4-3-2), or (5-3-3-2)

C. **Stoppers:** - In at least three suits. A **Stopper** is an honor with enough protecting spot-cards (e.g., K2, Q32, or J432) to prevent the Opponents from winning all the tricks in that suit simply by cashing their top cards.

D. **Problem Case:** - A 5-3-3-2 shape with a 5-card Major, e.g.,

<u>(S.A)</u>		<u>(ACOL)</u>	
xx		xx	In either case, if you were to open 1H and Partner were to respond 1S there is no “correct” rebid. You must lie on your second turn.
AJxxx	(or)	Axxxx	
KQx		KJx	
AQx		KQx	

If you open **1-NT** you might miss a 5-3 Heart fit. Is there a solution? Not really, but most experts would choose to open **1-NT** as a more convenient bid.

2. Role of the Responder:

A. Because a 1-NT opening finished the description of the Opener's hand, the Responder **always** becomes the “Captain” under these conditions, and steers the Partnership into the best contract as to both **level** and **denomination**.

B. In choosing a final contract, the Responder adopts the usual priorities, Major suits first, NT second, and Minor suits last.

3. Responder's No-Trump Responses:

A. **0-8 HCP's in Standard American - (0-11 HCP's in ACOL) = “PASS,”** unless Responder holds long Minor suit with which to **“Rescue”** Partner (See Below).

B. **9-10 HCP's in Standard American - (12-13 HCP's in ACOL) = Raise to 2-NT -** inviting Partner to game. (**Exception:** with 9 HCP's in S.A. or 11 HCP's in ACOL, and a good 5-card or longer Minor suit bid directly to 3-NT.) Opener is expected to “Pass” the invitation of 2-NT with a minimum point count, else accept the invitation and bid 3-NT if holding maximum values.

C. **11-15 HCP's in Standard American - (14-18 HCP's in ACOL) = Raise to 3-NT -** a **“shut-out”** bid.

D. **16-17 HCP's in Standard American – (19-20 HCP's in ACOL) = Bid "4-NT"** – An invitation for Partner to bid **6-NT** with a maximum point count, else to "Pass" with a minimum count. (Note: This is not "**Blackwood**," it is "quantitative." Alternatively, "**Gerber**" ("**4C**") is used to ask for Aces when seeking a Slam contract.)

E. **18-19 HCP's in Standard American – (21-22 HCP's in ACOL) = Raise to 6-NT.**

F. **20-21 HCP's in Standard American – (23-24 HCP's in ACOL) = Raise to "5-NT"** as a type of "Grand Slam Force." The Opener is expected to bid **6-NT** with a minimum count, else to bid **7-NT** with a maximum count.

G. **22 or more HCP's in Standard American – (25 or more HCP's in ACOL) = Raise to 7-NT.**

4. Responder's Suit Responses:

A. 2-Level Responses are "Shut-Out" Bids – With a 5-card or longer Major or a 6-card or longer Minor and (0-8 HCP's in Standard American) - or (0-11 HCP's in ACOL) = Responder chooses a "Rescue" bid of **2D, 2H, or 2S**. The purpose of these bids is to save Partner from playing **1-NT** opposite a very weak Dummy, knowing, of course, that the suit contract will be based on a 5-2 trump fit, at the very worst. Opener is expected to "Pass."

Note: ("**2C**" is reserved for the "Stayman" Convention) and ("Jacoby" Transfer Bids) are also used here)

B. 3-Level Responses are strong and forcing -

(1) In a Major Suit, (11 – 14 HCP's in Standard American) - (14 -17 HCP's in ACOL) = **3H or 3S** promises 5 or more cards in the suit. Opener is expected to raise the Major with 3 or more pieces, else correct and return to **3-NT** with only two.

(2) In a Minor Suit, (15 or more HCP's in Standard American) - (18 or more HCP's in ACOL) = **3C or 3D** promises 5 or more cards in the suit, Slam interest, but at the very least, is forcing to a **3-NT** Game.

C. Game Bids are "Shut-Out" Bids -

(1) In a Major suit, (11 or more HCP's in Standard American) - (14 or more HCP's in ACOL) = **4H or 4S** promises 6 or more cards in the suit. Opposite the **1-NT** opening, there is a guaranteed "Golden Fit" of at least 8-pieces.

(2) In a Minor suit, (14 or more HCP's in Standard American) - (17 or more HCP's in ACOL) = **5C or 5D** promises 6 or more cards in the suit and a very distributional hand. Opener is expected to "Pass."

5. The “2C” Stayman Convention:

A. The Objects of this convention are:

- (1) to explore for a 4-4 fit in a Major suit
- (2) to help Responder in describing and differentiating a hand housing a 5-card Major suit

B. The Use of this Convention Promises:

- (1) 9 or more HCP's in S.A. or 12 or more in ACOL; i.e., at least invitational values or better

(**Exception:** “*Garbage*” Stayman – Not discussed, herein)

- (2) Nothing at all about the Club suit (*is artificial*)

C. Opener’s Response: - Since the “2C” bid by Responder is artificial it is, therefore, forcing and thus *cannot* be passed by the Opener.

- (1) “2D” shows no 4-card Major
- (2) 2H shows 4-Hearts but not 4-Spades
- (3) 2S shows 4-Spades and possibly 4-Hearts *to be shown later if necessary.*

D. Subsequent Bids By the Responder Usually Invite or Insist On Game:

- (1) If the Auction Begins: 1-NT - “2C”
“2D”
2-NT with Invitational values
3-NT with Game values
2H (2S) with 5-Hearts (5-Spades) +
Invitational values
3H (3S) with 5-Hearts (5-Spades) +
4-Spades (4-Hearts) + Game values
4H (4S) with 6-Hearts (6-Spades) +
4-Spades (4-Hearts) + Game values
- (2) If the Auction Begins: 1-NT - “2C”
2S (2H)
3S (3H) with 4-S (4-H) + Inv. values
4S (4H) with 4-S (4-H) + Game values
2-NT with other Major + Inv. values
3-NT with other Major + Game values
- (3) If the Auction Begins: 1-NT - “2C”
“2D” (2H) (2S)
3C (This announces a “*Club-Bust*”

hand with six or more clubs and values below invitational levels. The Opener is required to “Pass.”