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**)
    Recently Allowed: - (**5-4-2-2), (4-4-4-1**), or (**5-4-3-1**) **[Singleton Q, K, or A]**

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.,

(S.A)		(ACOL)	
xx		xx	In either case, if you were to open **1H** and
AJxxx	(or)	Axxxx	Partner were to respond **1S** there is no "**_correct_**"
KQx		KJx	rebid. You must lie on your second turn.
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, No-Trump 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 **Standard American** 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, "**Gerbe**r" ("**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**.

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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 **Standard Ameican** 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-Hea**rt**s 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***."