

FORCING NO-TRUMP

Whenever a Partnership is utilizing the **Standard American** 5-card Major, “**2/1 (Two-Over-One) Game Forcing**” bidding system, it is useful to also use a “**Forcing 1-NT**” response to Partner’s opening bid of either **1H** or **1S**. This bidding sequence assists in narrowing the ranges of other bids by the Responder, and thus helps in otherwise difficult situations. In general, the **1-NT** response to an opening of **1H** or **1S** by Partner is *forcing*, and *alertable*, and usually exhibits a range of between 5-11 HCP’s. (Note: In some situations, the Responder’s HCP range may exceed 11; that is, may be unlimited.) The “*Forcing No-Trump*” bidding method is denoted in “*blue*” on the convention card and, thus, require a verbalization of the word “*forcing*” by the Opener, rather than an “*alert*” call when the Responder voices a “**1-NT**” response following Opener’s **1H** or **1S** opening bid in the 1st or 2nd seat. Similarly, a verbalization of the word “*semi-forcing*” is used if the Responder had “*previously-passed*,” and the **1H** or **1S** call was made by Opener in the 3rd or 4th seat. In this latter instance, however, Opener has the option of “*passing*” Responder’s “**1-NT**” call which is, now, no longer forcing.

Opener must make a re-bid, even if it be, minimally, a 3-card Minor or a 4-card Heart suit, had Opener, in this latter instance, opened with 1S. Opener’s re-bid then shows both distribution and point count, and, in most instances, the Responder then becomes the team Captain, and can then place the final contract, invite to Game, or even to Slam.

Opener’s Re-bid following Responder’s “1-NT Force”

Opener makes the same re-bid as that after a non-forcing 1-NT response except when holding a minimum balanced hand of 12-14 points. Under the latter condition, instead of “*passing*,” Opener bids either the longer Minor suit or 2C with equal length in both Minors.

<u>Opener:</u>	AKXXX	AXX	KXX	XX	1S	“1-NT” 2D (Minimum Opening)
	AQXXX	KXXX	XX	AX	1S	“1-NT” 2H (Minimum Opening)
	AQXX	KQXXX	AQ	KX	1H	“1-NT” 2S (Hand is strong enough to “ <u>Reverse</u> ”)
	AQXX	KQXXXX	XX	X	1H	“1-NT” 2H (Minimum Opening + 6-Hearts)
	AXXXX	AKXX	AK	QX	1S	“1-NT” 3H (Jump shift, Game Forcing)
	JXX	AXXXXX	AKX	A	1H	“1-NT” 3H (One Trick Better than Minimum + 6 or more Hearts)
	AJXXX	AQX	AX	KXX	1S	“1-NT” 2-NT (A 16-18 HCP Hand inviting 3-NT)

When “1-NT Forcing” Does NOT Apply, and the Opener May “Pass”

1. After an opening bid of **1C** or **1D**
2. If Responder’s right-hand Opponent (RHO) Overcalls or “*doubles*”
3. If Responder is a “*previously-passed*” hand (The **1-NT** response by the Responder is then, “*semi-forcing*,” and can be “*passed*.”)

Thus, since the **1-NT** force usually exhibits 5-11 HCP's, then any 2-level response of a new suit by Responder shows 12 (+) high-card points and is forcing to Game in all but the following sequences where both Opener and Responder repeat their suits evidencing a misfit:

- (a) **1H/1S 2C** (b) **1H/1S 2D**
2H/2S 3C (Not Forcing) **1H/2S 3D** (Not Forcing)
- (c) **1H/1S 2D**
2H/2S 3C (Game Force)

Normally, under conditions where a "**Forcing 1-NT**" is not employed, the following response shows Major suit support, and a range of between 8-10 HCP's, and 9-losers.

1H/1S 2H/2S (Support, 9-Losers, and 8-10 HCP's)

With the use of the "**Forcing 1-NT**," however, one can differentiate the following responses:

- (a) **1H/1S 1-NT**
2C 2H/2S (Support with 5-7 HCP's and 10 or more Losing Tricks; i.e., a hand weaker than (b) below, else a hand holding only 2-Trump support pieces)
- (b) **1H/1S 2H/2S** (Support with 8-10 HCP's) (9-Losing Tricks)
- (c) **1H/1S 1-NT**
2D 3H/3S (A Limit Raise with just 3 support pieces)

NOTE: Responder would have jumped to 3 Spades directly with the same values, if holding 4-Pieces in support of the Spade suit instead.

- (d) **1H/1S 3H/3S** (A Limit-Raise (8-Losers) with 4 or more support pieces and 10-12 HCP's)
- (e) **1H/1S "2-NT"** ("**Jacoby 2-NT**" = evidences support for Hearts or Spades with opening values + four or more support pieces. This bid forces the Partnership to Game or higher if Opener has extra values.)

NOTE: Some Partnerships have a non-standard "Multi-Purpose - 2-NT Response" = A Conventional bid which Requires Partnership agreement as an alternate "**2-NT**" response, with accompanying, different responses.)

- Responder Holds: **JXX XX KQXXXX XX**
- (f) **1H 1-NT** (Forcing)
2H 3D (A "**Sing-off**" bid = weak values + a 6-card or longer suit.)

 Responder Holds: **X AJXXXX JXX XXX**

1S 1-NT (Forcing)
2D 2H (A "**sign-off, "Drop Dead"** bid evidencing lack of support for Opener's suits, and a 6-card or longer suit with between 5 and 9 HCP's.)

- Responder Holds: **AXX KQX KQXX AXX**
- (g) **1H/1S 1-NT** (Forcing - with intent to either jump to **3-NT** or **4H/4S** should Opener show a minimum hand with a re-bid of **2H/2S, 2C, or 2D**; else proceed onward to a possible Slam should Opener evidence better than minimum opening values with a re-bid of **3H/3S, 3-NT, 3C, 3D, 4H/4S**)