

LTB: Responder's 1NT and Balancing 1NT

by Steve Moese, Tues Eve 12/3/13

Question 1: What's the difference between the 1NT bids in the following sequences:

1♥ - P - 1NT and P - P - 1♥ - P - 1NT?

The answer is the most frequent to any bidding question: "It depends." If you play Standard American a 1NT response is 6-9 (or a bad 10) HCP. For SA bidders, there's no difference. 1NT is natural and non-forcing in either sequence. In 2/1 Game Force, we play forcing or semi-forcing 1NT. See how the Forcing NT hands break down. Fit is for the bid Major. The range

HCP	Strength	No Fit	Fit
5-7	Weak	Yes	Yes (3 Card)
7-9	Constructive	Yes	No
9-12	Invitational	Yes	Yes

for Forcing 1NT is larger than 1NT in Standard.

When we make the 2/1 responses game forces (opening hands), we put 2 invitational hand types in 1NT Forcing.

Once partner passes it is fine to play 1N as forcing with no changes. However many will "open light" in 3rd seat, perhaps with only a 4-card suit. Raising to the 3-level with a 3-card limit raise is now risky.

What does P-P-1H-P-2♣ mean? "It depends." 2♣ by passed hand says either:

- 1) 10-11 HCP and 5+ ♣s – a natural hand inviting game. Might or might fit (3-cards only please) not fit partner.
- 2) Drury – an artificial invitational raise with 3 or more trumps.

There are many ways to play Drury – you can find them by searching the web. Natural or artificial: which is better? "It depends" on what you and your partner want. The argument in favor of Drury is that you can explore Major suit game while keeping the auction one level lower than a normal 3-level invitational raise. This is helpful when partner did open light or short in 3rd seat. The argument in favor of the natural approach is you can play in a safe partial when partner is protecting, and get to game naturally when partner has full values.

Drury/Forcing NT proponents accept they will not play in responder's minor as often, countering that NT or Partner's major is worth more than making 8-9 minor

12/3 - 99er Future Master Leaders

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by Steve & Mike
Tues Eve
6:30 PM Sharp!

suit tricks.

1N semi-forcing defines the hands that opener passes with as balanced (5332, 4522) minimums (11-13 HCP) that would NOT accept a 3-card limit raise to game. Opener must not pass with extra values or extra shape. Game might be available in the 2nd suit and NT might not be safe (opponents might own 2 suits).

Question 2: How should we play a balancing 1NT? Consider these two auctions: 1♣-P-P-1N and 1♠-P-P-1N. RHO's pass shows 4 HCP or less. Partner's pass means different things. Over 1♣ partner either has ♣s and an opening hand or is too weak to act (and did not make a weak jump shift). Over 1♠, partner might have anywhere from 6-12 HCP and no good call (poo shape for a double, no suit biddable at the 2-level). In general the balancing 1NT plays as 11-14 over a minor suit and 11-16 over a major suit. With a balanced 15-16 we can double their minor and likely rebid 1N. Over their Major a 1N rebid is nigh unto impossible, so putting 15-16 point hands there just makes sense. Notice that 1N in the balancing seat is a balanced hand that cannot make

a balancing double. The bid does NOT promise a stopper in LHO's suit. How should one respond to a balancing 1NT? Simplest is to play 1N systems on – it's easy to remember. Just be sure to adjust your bidding for the different NT range. Some choose to play natural bids only. Over a Major this makes sense as balancer is prone to double with four cards in the other major and bid a 5-card suit instead of 1NT. Over a minor this is less clear, though balancer is very likely to reopen with a double holding both 4-card majors. so you see, "It depends."

Newcomer News – by "Give me a plan, any plan" Steve Moese

Saturday (12/7) Kay Mulford and Phyllis Bishop will run our Informal Supervised Play session from 10-Noon. Take a well-deserved sanity break from family and marathon shopping to join us next Saturday. We have several copies of "Bridge for Dummies" by Eddie Kantar available for people to borrow (or purchase for \$7). This is a great book for learning the basics of bridge.

Board 4 ♠ A
 West Deals ♥ Q 3
 Both Vul ♦ J 9 6
 ♣ A K J 9 6 5 2

♠ Q		♠ 10 5 4 2
♥ A 8 7 2		♥ K 10 4
♦ A K 8 4 3		♦ Q 10 7 2
♣ Q 10 7		♣ 8 3

NS 3♠; 2♣;
 EW 3♦; 1♥;
 W 1N

♠ K J 9 8 7 6 3	
♥ J 9 6 5	
♦ 5	
♣ 4	

This week's hand looks at bidding and playing misfits at Match Point Pairs.

The bidding: West will open this 15 HCP hand 1♦. North will overcall 1♣ with 15 HCP and a 7-card suit. North passes with 5 HCP – this hand is too weak for a negative double even at the 1 level! South will do well to call 2♠. What do you call a 7-card major suit? TRUMP! West will now pass – 3♦ would show a 6th card and 2-3 more HCP than West holds. North will insist on 3♣ and South will insist on 3♠. Now a disciplined partner will reason: We have values for game at the 4-level but not at the 5-level. Passing 3♠ might be right, but raising with the ♠A can't be all bad.

Opening Lead: ♦A (A from AK). West sees 3 tricks and hopes partner can provide the setting trick.

The Play: Declarer can count 4 tricks – and needs to find 6 more. There are only 3 top losers (2♥ and 1♦) ← a good thing! West wins the ♦A and continues with the ♦K. Declarer ruffs. A ♠ to the ♠A drops the ♠Q from West (South notes East

started with ♠10542). A 2nd ♦ ruff returns the lead to hand for a ♣ finesse. When the finesse works, declarer hopes to pitch 2 losing ♥s on ♣s. Unfortunately East ruffs the 3rd ♣. Declarer over ruffs (East now has ♠105 left). Declarer can draw 2 more rounds of trump and lead a ♥ toward dummy. If West ducks (best) NS are down 1. Here, West ran up the ♥A, allowing South to develop a winner in the suit. West returned a 4th ♦ but South could ruff and lead a 3rd ♥, end-playing East to give the 10th tick. Making 4♠ was worth all the Match Points.

Post Mortem: The Bidding. Developing good discipline to know when partner repeats a suit 3 times, 2 things are true: Partner has 7+ cards in the suit and 2) Partner cannot tolerate your suit. It is often better for the long suit in the weak hand to be trumps. That way the long suit in the strong hand becomes a source of tricks (or loser pitches) and entries exist so those tricks can be used. The danger is often that length tricks in the weak hand lack entries to enjoy them. North did well here to support ♠ with the singleton A. Yes the ♣ are beautiful, but 10 tricks are easier to make than 11. Besides, at Match Points ♠s are worth a lot more than ♣s.

Post Mortem: The Defense. West made an "error" that allowed the game to score. Did you see it? Was West in too great a hurry to play the ♥A on the lead toward dummy? Usually that's the play we write about. However because ♥s were started so late in the hand, East will be endplayed in the ♥ suit. South can guess the ♥10. It takes an impossible ♥ lead to score 2♥s, 1♦, and a ♥ ruff by East to defeat this game. Try it!

Bd 4	Scores		MPs	
	NS	EW	NS	EW
4 ♠ S	620		5	0
5 ♦ x W	500		4	1
3 ♠ S	140		2.5	2.5
3 ♠ S	140		2.5	2.5
3 ♠ S		100	0.5	4.5
4 ♠ S		100	0.5	4.5
4 ♣ N		100	2.83	1.17
4 ♣ N		100	2.83	1.17
4 ♠ S		200	0.33	3.67

Looking to improve your game? If you have an Intel Computer we highly recommend the free software offered by the ACBL and developed by Mr. Fred Gitelman. Check it out at: <https://web.acbl.org/LearnToPlayBridge/>