

## MANY FACES of 1NT

### The Balancing 1NT

Your left- hand opponent opens 1 Diamond, which is passes around to you. Your hand is:  
A5 K32 KJ9 J10753

If you double, partner will surely bid spades. If you bid 2 Clubs, it may not be your best fit and may cause partner to mis defend if they bid again. If you pass, you may be giving up when your side can make a part score.

The solution? Bid 1NT. Most partners have an agreement that 1NT in the balancing seat is a weaker range. Some prefer 10-13 HCP. If your LHO takes no further action, you and partner can play “systems on” using Stayman and transfers. Partner can determine how high you want to be. WARNING: if you hold a strong NT hand, you must reopen with a double and then bid NT to describe your strength.

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### The Reopening 1NT

Suppose you pick up the following: AK3 AQ5 K972 K86

Your plan is to open 1 Diamond and rebid 2NT over partner’s one-level response to show a balanced hand with 18-19 points. After you open 1 Diamond, your LHO bids 1 Heart, which is passed around to you. What next?

With the same cards, you open 1 Diamond, pass on your left, pass by partner and 1 Heart on your right. How can you describe your hand to partner? The answer to both cases is to rebid 1NT. Because you would have opened 1NT with 15-17, the 1NT rebid in this case promises the bigger hand that would have jumped to 2NT. Once again, partner is the one who can do the math as to the final contract.

When your partner is dealt: 876 9876 854 752, you will think you are high enough.

If partner is dealt: Q32 763 A65 Q1052, partner will bid 3NT

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It helps to develop a routine before you get to the game. If you’ve played with this partner before, get out your convention card and review it. Slow play is a bane of the game.

Say you hold Q-J-9 of a suit and the A-10-7-3 are in the dummy to your left. Decide what you plan to play before declarer leads the suit from her hand. Your goal is to play smoothly without a telling hesitation.

There’s a proverb that “who lives may learn.” We keep coming back to bridge for the challenges it presents, and we’re doing something good for our brains and psyches in the process. Lose at bridge? It’s still a winning strategy just to attend.

LOCATING STOPPERS

AQJ106 1 Spade  
 VOID  
 97653  
 654

732  
 A10862 DEALER – 1 Heart  
 AK 3 Clubs  
 K109

K954  
 QJ 2 Clubs  
 J2 3NT (Tells)  
 AQJ73

8  
 K97543 Pass  
 Q1084  
 82

South should lead the 8 of spades, the suit partner overcalled.  
 East's bid of 3NT tells, shows a spade stopper, 3 spades would ask.

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A4 DEALER – 1 Heart  
 KQ10984 2 Hearts  
 Q63 3 Diamonds (Asks)  
 K7 Pass

K6  
 A53 2 Diamonds  
 K10982 Pass  
 Q104 Pass

9872 Pass  
 J76 Pass  
 J75 Pass  
 653 Pass

QJ1053  
 2 1 Spade  
 A4 3 Clubs  
 AJ982 3 NT

West leads the 10 of diamonds. Win Ace of diamonds. Lead a heart to the King.  
 Cash the Ace of spades, lead a small spade to the Q. 4 spade tricks, 1 heart trick,  
 2 club tricks, can't be prevented from taking 2 diamond tricks.  
 South's 3 clubs is forcing, asks how many spades. North denies 3 spades, bids  
 3 diamonds, asking for a diamond stopper for 3NT.

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