

ONE NOTRUMP FORCING – WHY?

THE ‘SPACE THEORY’

Choices in many bidding sequences are affected by the number of options available. On the four that follow, note the available ‘space’ between the opening bid and the 1NT response:



S	W	N	E
1♣	P	1NT	

S	W	N	E
1♦	P	1NT	

S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1NT	

S	W	N	E
1♠	P	1NT	

The standard options available to North, if holding 6–10 points,* diminish on each successive auction from five to four to three to two. Let me explain:



Notice the 'space' between a minor suit opening bid and a 1NT response.



S	W	N	E
1♣	P	1NT	

After the 1♣ opening bid, if North holds 6–10 points, there are five options: he could bid a four card or longer diamond, heart or spade suit or raise clubs with five or more. The election to respond 1NT describes a balanced hand 100% of the time, never with a singleton, and although a doubleton is possible, if holding one, there would have been another bid available.

S	W	N	E
1♦	P	1NT	



After the 1♦ opening bid, if North holds 6–10 points, there are four options: He could bid a four card or longer major suit, or raise diamonds with four or more. The election to respond 1NT describes a balanced hand most but not all of the time. The exception would always involve a long club suit, for example:

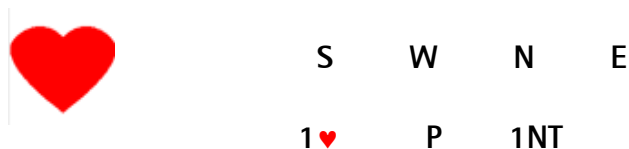
NORTH

♠ xxx
 ♥ xxx
 ♦ A
 ♣ QJxxxx

Too many points to pass but not enough to introduce a new suit at the two level. Despite the singleton, 1NT is the only option for responder.

THE BEST BID IS OFTEN THE LEAST BAD OPTION

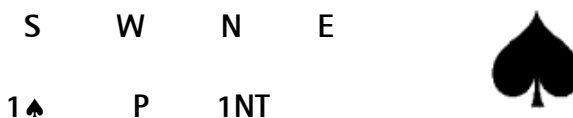
Notice how the space is shrinking after the major suit opening bid:



After the 1♥ opening bid, if North holds 6–10 points, there are three options: He could bid a four card or longer spade suit, or raise hearts with three or more. The election to bid 1NT could be based on a balanced hand, however, it frequently could be based on less than perfect notrump shape. Examples:

<u>NORTH</u>	<u>NORTH</u>	<u>NORTH</u>
♠ Ax	♠ xx	♠ Kx
♥ x	♥ x	♥ —
♦ Jxxxx	♦ Kxxxx	♦ xxxxx
♣ Qxxx	♣ Kxxxx	♣ QJxxxx

Once again, with too many points to pass, and not enough to mention a new suit at the two level, 1NT is the default option.



After the 1♠ opening bid, if North holds 6–10 points, there are only two options: He could raise spades with three or more, otherwise must bid 1NT. The election to bid 1NT is often based on less than perfect notrump shape.

Examples:

<u>NORTH</u>	<u>NORTH</u>	<u>NORTH</u>
♠ xx	♠ —	♠ x
♥ x	♥ AKx	Kxxxxx
♦ AJxxxx	♦ xxxxx	♦ xxx
♣ Jxxx	xxxxx	Kxx

It should be evident this gradual but constant reduction in space means that notrump replies to major suit openings are often based on unbalanced distribution where a suit contract might be superior to playing 1NT.

ONE NOTRUMP FORCING — HOW?

Playing Five Card Majors, opener should almost always bid again after a 1NT standard response (passing only with a 5-3-3-2 hand shape). Because of the 'space theory' implications, many experts play a noncompetitive response of 1NT to a first or second seat major opening bid as forcing for one round, showing 6-12 points. You may choose to add this to Standard American, but you must add this if playing 2/1 as a game force. By doing so, you can cover the 11-12 point responding hands not worthy of forcing game.

S	W	N	E		S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1NT ^a			1♠	P	1NT ^a	
♠ KJx					♠ xx			
♥ x					♥ Ax			
♦ Qxxxx					♦ KJxx			
♣ xxxx					♣ QJxxx			

A minimum 1NT response
in any system

A maximum 1NT response, if forcing.

REBIDS BY OPENER AFTER 1NT FORCING

Opener rebids as he would have playing standard, differing only on those hands where a standard 1NT response would have been passed.

REBID PRIORITIES

1. Rebid a 6+ card suit at appropriate level.
2. Bid a new 4+ card suit at appropriate level.
3. Raise the 1NT response.
4. With a 5-2-3-3 hand that would have passed a standard 1NT, opener **must** bid a three card minor. With a choice of three card minors, always choose the club suit.
5. With a minimum 4-5-2-2 shape, opener must either rebid a strong five card heart suit, or **GASP!** bid a two card club suit.

REBIDS BY OPENER

	S	W	N	E
	1♥	P ?	1NT ^a	P
♠ Ax ♥ Kxxxx ♦ KQx ♣ Jx	♠ Axx ♥ AKJTxx ♦ Ax ♣ xx	♠ x ♥ AKJxx ♦ xxxx ♣ AJx	♠ x ♥ Qxxxx ♦ AKQJx ♣ Qx	
2♥	3♥	2♦	2♦	
♠ x ♥ AKTxxx ♦ AKJx ♣ Ax	♠ AQ ♥ Axxxx ♦ KQx ♣ Kx	♠ Qx ♥ KQJxx ♦ AQx ♣ KQx	♠ Kx ♥ AKQxxxx ♦ Qx ♣ Ax	
3♦	2NT	3NT	3NT	
♠ Jx ♥ KJxxx ♦ AKJ ♣ xxx	♠ KJx ♥ Jxxxx ♦ — ♣ AKJxx	♠ Jxxx ♥ AKQxx ♦ Qx ♣ xx	♠ AQxx ♥ Jxxxx ♦ xx ♣ AQ	
2♣ Choose clubs when 3-3 in minors	2♣	2♥ Almost a six card suit	2♣ Almost a three card suit	

Playing a 1NT response as 100% forcing may occasionally force opener into an awkward rebid, which usually involves choosing three card minor. By always bidding clubs with three of each, a diamond rebid is generally a four card or longer suit.

A 1NT response is not forcing if an opponent bids or doubles nor is it forcing by a passed hand.

MINIMUM REBIDS BY RESPONDER (6-10 POINTS)

TWO OF OPENER'S MAJOR

S	W	N	E
1♠	P	1NT ^a	P
2♣	P	2♠	

♠ xx
♥ KJxx
♦ Qxx
♣ QTxx

S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1NT ^a	P
2♦	P	2♥	

♠ Jx
♥ xxx
♦ QJxx
♣ Qxxx

Non-forcing. Usually doubleton support.

NEW SUIT

S	W	N	E
1♠	P	1NT ^a	P
2♦	P	2♥	

♠ x
♥ KJTxx
♦ xxx
♣ Axxx

S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1NT ^a	P
2♦	P	3♣	

♠ xxx
♥ x
♦ Jx
♣ AJTxxxx

Five more cards at the two level, at least six cards at the three level.

PASS

S	W	N	E
1♠	P	1NT ^a	P
2♣	P	P	

♠ x
♥ KJxx
♦ Kxxx
♣ xxxx

S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1NT ^a	P
2♥	P	P	

♠ Qx
♥ x
♦ KJxxx
♣ JTxxx

IN A MISFIT AUCTION, THE FIRST PERSON WHO CAN PASS, SHOULD PASS

MAXIMUM REBIDS BY RESPONDER (10⁺-12 POINTS)

THREE OF OPENER'S MAJOR

S	W	N	E	S	W	N	E
1♠	P	1NT ^a	P	1♠	P	1NT ^a	P
2♣	P	3♠		2♠	P	3♠	
	♠ Kxx				♠ Jx		
	♥ AJxx				♥ Kxxx		
	♦ Kxx				♦ xxxxx		
	♣ xxx				♣ AK		

Invitational. Shows exactly three card support as a jump response. Could be two card support if opener has rebid his suit.

THREE OF OPENER'S SECOND SUIT

S	W	N	E	S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1NT ^a	P	1♠	P	1NT ^a	P
2♦	P	3♦		2♥	P	3♥	
	♠ Kxx				♠ xx		
	♥ x				♥ KJxx		
	♦ AQTxx				♦ AQTxx		
	♣ xxxx				♣ xxx		

Invitational. 5+ support if raising a minor suit.

2NT

S	W	N	E	S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1NT ^a	P	1♠	P	1NT ^a	P
2♣	P	2NT		2♦	P	2NT	
	♠ KJx				♠ x		
	♥ xx				♥ KTxx		
	♦ KQxx				♦ KQTx		
	♣ QTxx				♣ KTxx		

Invitational. Usually balanced, could have a singleton in partner's suit.

JUMPS TO GAME

S	W	N	E		S	W	N	E
1♠	P	1NT ^a	P		1♠	P	1NT ^a	P
2♥	P	4♥			2♠	P	4♠	
	♠ Q					♠ AQ		
	♥ Kxxxx					♥ x		
	♦ Axxxx					♦ Axxxx		
	♣ xx					♣ xxxxx		

A hand with values the bidding has improved.

JUMP SHIFTS

S	W	N	E		S	W	N	E
1♠	P	1NT ^a	P		1♥	P	1NT ^a	P
2♦	P	3♥			2♣	P	3♦	
	♠ x					♠ xx		
	♥ AQJxxx					♥ J		
	♦ QJx					♦ KQJTxx		
	♣ xxx					♣ Kxxx		

A good six card or longer suit. The type of hand Standard players would bid at the two level immediately, but not an option playing 2/1.

MISCELLANEOUS: 1NT FORCING

- ⊗ Applies only to a major suit by an unpassed hand. No competition.
- ⊗ Denies game forcing values. Implies 5–12 points (both 5 and 12 are infrequent).
- ⊗ Best applied playing 2/1 as a game force.
- ⊗ Denies four card support for opener's major.