



Ask Jerry

Jerry Helms
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Dear Jerry,

This auction came up at the club recently:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT		

I believe this sequence shows around 19–20 high-card points. Partner, holding 7 HCP, passed and we missed a cold game. She later insisted that I must jump to 2NT to show a hand this strong. Help!

Bill P.

Dear Bill,

Your analysis is 100% correct. Any time you make a takeout double and follow with an action you could have taken originally, extra values are guaranteed. An immediate notrump overall of 1♣ shows a good 15 to 18 points, therefore double followed by 1NT shows 19–20, and a jump to 2NT would suggest even more. Perhaps your partner was confused, thinking perhaps you held something like:

♠J7 ♥KJ62 ♦AQ92 ♣QJ4,

and after doubling and finding spades in her hand, that you felt comfortable bidding notrump. In reality, despite holding opening values, after RHO bid 1♣, you have a clear-cut pass. An original pass in competition shows either nothing to say, or nothing you can say describes what you have.

Dear Jerry,

This hand came around at our bridge group. I think it came from a newspaper without an answer given.

The dealer, South, held:

♠962 ♥A102 ♦KQ63 ♣KJ3.

South opens 1♦, North responds 1♥. The opponents are silent. What should South's second bid be?

Some players say South should bid 1NT, others 2♥. What do you say?

Victor R.

Hi Victor,

Let's start with this Jerry-ism:

Before you make your first bid, always plan a rebid.

My guess is that the votes for a 2♥ raise were prompted by the lack of a spade stopper. It is important to understand that notrump opening bids and notrump rebids in non-competitive auctions describe values and shape. They neither promise nor imply stoppers in all suits.

Change your hand slightly to this:

♠962 ♥A102 ♦AKQ6 ♣KJ3

or this

♠962 ♥AK2 ♦KQ63 ♣KJ3

or even this

♠962 ♥A102 ♦KQ63 ♣AKJ,

and 1NT would be the routine choice for an opening bid. The only reason you opened 1♦, despite balanced distribution, was insufficient values to open 1NT. With the hand you presented, which clearly is a member of the notrump family, I would anticipate a major-suit response, and be prepared to rebid 1NT. Responder should picture my hand as a balanced minimum with four or five diamonds, two or three cards in both hearts and spades along with at least two clubs! From this point, he should be well placed to make further decisions. From my perspective, you will have fulfilled a bidder's most important obligation by adhering to this Jerry-ism:

A good bid is one that most resembles the cards held.