

BIDDING WHEN THE OPPONENTS OPEN ONE NO TRUMP

By Maritha Pottenger

There are a number of different approaches to entering the bidding when the opponents open 1NT (weak or strong). Each system has advantages and disadvantages. Choose the system that you and your partner prefer and **are most likely to remember!!** (Hamilton and DONT are both popular in San Diego.)

Common Options

- 1) All bids are **natural**. This allows you to show one-suited hands very well, but is poor in terms of showing 2-suiters. With 2-suiters, you have to bid your higher-ranking and “run” to the lower-ranking suit if you get doubled, or just pick which of your 5-card suits you prefer and hope partner has some support.
- 2) **Transfers**. This system is placed in DIRECT SEAT ONLY. If you bid right after the NT opener, you show the next-higher suit. Your partner must accept your transfer (even if void in the suit). The idea is that the NT bidder is put on opening lead and may have to finesse him/herself. In the balancing (pass-out) seat, all bids are natural. Disadvantage: must play 3C if clubs is your suit and same problem as above with 2 suiters.
- 3) **Cappelletti** (also called **Hamilton**). 2C is a transfer to 2D—showing a one-suited hand. After partner bids 2D, you will pass (if your suit is diamonds) or correct to whatever your suit is. 2D shows 5-5 in the majors; 2H shows 5 hearts and 5 cards in an unspecified minor; 2S shows 5 spades and 5 cards in an unspecified minor. 2NT shows 5-5 in the minors. Double is penalty oriented. Over 2H or 2S, 2NT by partner asks you to bid your minor suit. Again, if clubs is your suit, you must play at the 3 level and if you prefer a minor to your partner’s major when s/he is 5-5, you will play at the 3 level. Playing against Weak NT openings, Hamilton (or any system including the penalty double) is advisable.
- 4) **DONT system**—stands for **D**isturbing **O**pponents’ **N**o **T**rump. 2C is clubs and a higher suit. 2D is diamonds and a higher suit. 2H is hearts and spades. 2S is spades. Double is a one-suited hand (other than spades), so transfers to 2D and then you pass or bid your suit. 2NT shows minors. You give up the penalty double, but penalty doubles over strong NT seldom come up. One of my partners plays DONT with me over strong NT and Cappelletti over weak NT’s. Advantage: except when you have both minors, you and your partner can usually get out at the 2 level.
- 5) **Hardy System**. 2C=relay to 2D (EITHER diamonds OR a major and a minor—2NT would ask what your minor is). 2D=transfer to hearts; 2H=hearts & spades; 2S=spades; 2NT=minors; 3C=clubs. Double=penalty-oriented (You have the upper range of their point count). Again, when you have clubs, both minors, or a major and a minor and partner does not like your major, you will have to play at the 3 level.
- 6) **CRASH system**. (This was originally developed to be played over the Strong—Artificial—One Club Openings such as the Precision bidding system, but has been modified to be used over 1NT openings as well.) The name stands for: **C**olor, **R**ank, and **S**hape. Double is penalty-oriented. 2H is natural (one-suited). 2S is natural (one-suited). 2C shows a 2-suited hand with your two suits of the same COLOR (both red OR both black, hence diamonds and hearts OR clubs and spades). 2D shows two suits of the same RANK (majors—hearts and spades OR minors—clubs and diamonds). NT shows 2 suits of the same SHAPE (both rounded—hearts and clubs OR both pointed—spades and diamonds).
- 7) **LANDY**. 2C=hearts and spades. All other bids are natural. Advantage: can usually play at 2 level.
- 8) **BROZEL**. Double is one-suited hand (partner bids 2D). 2C=clubs & hearts; 2D=diamonds & hearts; 2H=majors; 2S=spades & a minor; 2NT=minors.
- 9) **PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT**. 2C=diamonds & hearts OR just hearts; 2D=hearts & spades OR just spades; 2H=spades & clubs OR just clubs; 2S=3 suits (4-4-4-1 or 4-4-5-0) with spades; 2NT=3 suits with a singleton or void in spades; Double=clubs & diamonds OR just diamonds OR clubs & hearts OR diamonds & spades. Advantages: usually get out at the 2 level and opponents are often not sure what you have, so it is difficult for Responder to bid right away.

Please note: when your partner shows two suits, your first bid must be pessimistic. Assume partner has the worst possible fit with you and keep the bidding as low as possible. If you bid cheaply, and your partner corrects, once you know you have a good fit, you can bid more strongly.

Two suits—for most people—means 5-5. However, some people will bid with 5-4 (or 4-5) in the 2 suits and some people will bid with only 4-4. The less distribution you have, the more dangerous stepping into the bidding is & the more HCP you need to compensate.

If you open NT, partner bids 2C (Stayman) and RHO doubles (for the lead), you should

- 1) Bid 4-card major if you have one.
- 2) Pass with no major and a club stopper.
- 3) Bid 2D with no major and no club stopper.
- 4) Redouble with 4 or 5 good clubs and no major.