

No Trump Bidding System

Balanced Opening Ranges:

11-13 1m-1x-1NT

14-17- 1NT

17-19 1m-1x-2NT

20-21 2NT

22-23 2♣-2♦-2NT

24-26 2♦-2♥-2♠(Kokish)-2♠(Forced)-2NT

3NT Gambling solid minor 8+ tricks, no outside A,K 1st or 2nd

After 1NT 14 to 17-

2♣ = Stayman

2♦ = Jacoby transfer to ♥, 2NT super accept, 3H optional min with 4

2♥ = Jacoby transfer to ♠, 2NT super accept, 3H optional min with 4

2♠ = Balanced invitation or ♣

- 2NT = declining a balanced invitation to 3NT

- 3♣ = accepting a balanced invitation to 3NT

2NT = transfer to ♦

- 3♦ = positive, shows ♦Hxx or better and interest in 3NT

- 3♣ = negative (way to get to ♣ with weak minor two suiter)

3♣ = Modified Puppet Stayman, game forcing

3♦ = game forcing, 5-5 in the minors

3♥ = splinter, game forcing, 3-1-(5-4)

3♠ = splinter, game forcing, 1-3-(5-4)

3NT = To play, 10-16 points typically

4♣ = Mini-Max Gerber

4♦ = Texas transfer to 4♥

4♥ = Texas transfer to 4♠

4♠ = Heavy invitation to 6NT (can be used for 7NT decision as well)

4NT = Quantitative, lighter invitation to 6NT

5♣ = To play

5♦ = To play

5NT = Quantitative, 6 or 7NT (could make this pick a slam...)

6NT = To play

Responses to modified Puppet Stayman (1NT-3♣):

3♦ = no 5 card major

3♥ = 5♥

3♠ = 5♠

After 1NT-3♣-3♦:

3♥ - game forcing, showing 4♠, denying 4♥

3♠ - game forcing, showing 4♥, denying 4♠

Note: With 4-4 in the majors, responder will use Stayman (2♣)

The motivation for playing 3♣ as modified Puppet Stayman is to conceal the shape of opener's hand when partner has a game forcing hand and one four card major.

After 1NT-3♣; 3♦ (no 5 card major):

4m = 5332 slam try with a 5 card m

- 4NT = to play
- otherwise, RKC steps for m skipping 4NT

Continuations after Regular Stayman (1NT-2♣)

2♦-2♥ = garbage stayman.

- Pass
- or correct to 2♠

2♦-2♠ = 4 hearts, 5 spades with invitational values

2♥-2♠ = Game forcing hand showing ♥ and ♠ (intended to Smolen), leaves plenty of room to explore best game or slam

2x-2NT = invitational, 8-9 points, 4 card M guaranteed

2♥-2NT = invitation to 3nt, shows 4♠

2x-3♣/♦ = game forcing showing a 4 card major and typically a longer minor

1NT-2♣; 2♥-2NT; 3♠ = decent 3 card support and game values

1NT-2♣; 2♥-2NT; 3♥ and

1NT-2♣; 2♠-2NT; 3♠ = a decent 5 card suit, choice of games

2M - 3OM: Slam interest in M with shortness (Baze)

- next step asks the splinter suit
 - step response by rank of suit: ♣/♦/OM
- Cue bids and kickback apply

2M - 4♣ = balanced slam try in the Major

Balanced Slam Try Continuations

After 1NT-2♣; 2♥-4♣ (balanced slam try in ♥):

Opener now has room to show slam interest without committing to the 5 level.

4♦ = (artificial) - I can cooperate with your slam try but my hand is not quite good enough to push passed game. You can proceed if you have extras.

4♥ = to play (insufficient values/shape to cooperate with slam try)

4♠ = RKC (kickback)

4NT, 5♣/♦ = cue bids

After 4♦/4♥ by opener, responder can RKC (Kickback) or cue bid, or place the contract.

After 1NT-2♣; 2♠-4♣(balanced slam try in ♠):

Opener now has room to show slam interest without committing to the 5 level.

The same approach is used except 4♥ is a cue bid and 4NT is RKC, and responder can cue bid 4♥ if opener bids 4♦(artificial, willing to cooperate).

2M - 4♦ = key card Gerber for the Major

2x-4NT = Quantitative

Smolen

After 1NT-2♣-2♦:

3♥ game forcing showing 5♠ and 4♥

3♠ game forcing showing 5♥ and 4♠

Invitational sequences with 5-4 in the majors:

1NT-2♣; 2♦-2♠ showing invitational values with 5♠ and 4♥

1NT-2♦; 2♥-2♠ showing invitational values with 5♥ and 4♠

Other implications:

1NT-2♦; 2♥-3♠ = game forcing 5-5 in the majors

1NT-2♥; 2♠-3♥ = invitational with 5-5 in the majors

Continuations after a Jacoby Transfer:

Continuations after 1NT-2♦-2♥:

2♠ = invitational 5+♥ and 4♠

2NT = invitational and semi-balanced.

3♣ = 2-suited, natural, game forcing

3♦ = 2-suited holding, natural, game forcing

3♥ = 6+♥ invitational

3♠ = 5+/5+ distribution in both Major suits, game forcing

3NT = a semi-balanced holding, choice of games

4♣ = key card Gerber for ♥

4♦ = (no meaning)

4♥ = a 6-card suit and is a sign-off

4♠ = (no meaning given that 4♣ is key card Gerber)

4NT = a quantitative slam invitation to 6NT or 6♥

Continuations after 1NT-2♥-2♠:

2NT = invitational and semi-balanced.

3♣ = 2-suited, natural bid, game forcing

3♦ = 2-suited, natural bid, game forcing

3♥ = 5+♥ and 5+♠, invitational
3♠ = 6+♠, invitational
3NT = a semi-balanced holding, choice of games
4♣ = key card Gerber for ♠
4♦ (no meaning)
4♥ = 6+♠ and 5+♥, choice of games, no slam interest
4♠ = a 6-card suit and is a sign-off
4NT = quantitative slam invitation to 6NT or 6♠

After 1NT-2♦/♥; 2♥/♠:

4♣ = RKC for Major
4NT = quantitative invite to 6NT or 6M

Consider after 1NT-2R; 2♥/♠:

Now:

4♣ = Balanced slam try, leaves 4♦ available as a last train bid.
4♦ = RKC for suit

Texas then 4NT is RKC (although not necessary if 4♣ is RKC)

After 1NT-2R; 2R+1-3x:

Now:

3NT = no interest in responder's suits and good stoppers
3R+1 = fit for responder's major, now 3NT is non-serious
Anything else shows a fit for responder's new suit
Now 3NT = COG
Game in X is to play
Anything else is a slam try in X
Consider Kickback is now 6 card RKC here...

Interference:

If the transfer bid is doubled:
completing the transfer = 3+ trumps.

If there is an overcall:
completing the transfer at the 3 level = 4 trump, or 3 trump with a doubleton.

Super Accepts:

After 1NT-2♦/♥:
2NT = super accept with good hand and 4+ card support
3M = bad hand with 4+ card support

After a super accept, responder can re-transfer.

Continuations after 2♠ (Size Asking Bid or ♣)

After 1NT-2♠ = balanced invitational or ♣:

2NT = would decline balanced invite

3♣ = would accept balanced invite

After 1NT-2♠(balanced invitation or ♣)-2NT/3♣:

Responder's continuations:

Pass/3♣ = to play

3♦/♥/♠ = shows ♣ and shortness in the suit bid, game forcing

3NT = to play, shows ♣ after a 2NT rebid with some slam interest

4♣ = forcing with ♣, asking for a cue bid, tends to deny shortness

4♦ = RKC for ♣

4M = a big two suiter with longer ♣

4NT = quantitative

5♣ = to play

5NT = pick a slam (6♣/6NT)

6♣ = to play

6NT = to play

Continuations after 1NT-2NT(showing ♦):

3♣ = does not like ♦

3♦ = likes ♦

fit for ♦ including an honor, interest in 3NT opposite an invitational hand with ♦

Continuations after 1NT-2NT(showing ♦)-3♣(likes ♦)/3♦(does not like ♦):

Pass/3♦ = to play

3♥/♠ = game forcing, showing shortness

3NT = choice of games, tends to show some slam interest

4♣ = RKC for ♦

4♦ = forcing asking for a cue bid, tends to deny shortness

4♥/♠ is a big two suiter with longer ♦ and slam interest

4NT = quantitative

5♣ = a splinter

5♦ = to play

5NT = pick a slam (6♦/6NT)

6♦ = to play

6NT = to play

Shortness Bid

1NT-3♥/3♠ = shortness showing 3 of other major and 5,4 in minors

(game force)

4♣ /4♦ at least a 4 card suit and no stopper in the short major

- o Responder responds key card with slam interest, skipping 5m.
- o 5♣/♦ with no slam interest.
- o 5♣ /5♦ no slam interest. This should be a very bad slam hand since responder is unlimited.

After Interference

Over a Double:

1NT-(X), Now Systems are on

1NT-(penalty X)-pass = starts a runout, forces 2♣.

Responder next bids:

Pass with 5♣

2♦ with 5♦

2♥ with 4+♥ and 4+♠

1NT-(X)-XX is natural

Subsequent direct doubles are penalty

Balancing doubles tend to be optional depending on position

The opponents cannot play in an undoubled contract below 2♠. So passes of an opponent's bid below 2♠ are forcing.

Over an Overcall:

System on over a 2♣ overcall. Double of 2♣ = Stayman.

Transfer Lebensohl over 2♦+ overcall

- Double = negative, takeout oriented with values to suitable for 2NT
- 2NT = transfer to 3♣ (lebensohl)
- Cue bid = Stayman
If can transfer and cue bid, a direct cue bid is stayman without a stopper.
Transfer and a cue bid is stayman with a stopper.
Note: We do not recommend going through the 2NT relay in the process of cue-bidding to show forcing Stayman with a stopper. Too many opponents are happy to raise their partners' overcalls, leaving you unable to describe your hand. Cuebid immediately with or without a stopper.
- 3NT = game values without a stopper.
- Transfer and then 3NT shows a stopper.
- If a suit can be bid at the 2 level:

- 2 level = signoff.
- Transfer followed by suit bid = ??????
- 3 level is a transfer showing INV+
- If suit cannot be bid at the 2 level.
 - Transfer followed by suit bid = competitive.
 - 3 level suit bid = inv+ transfer

BIDDING A SUIT (on the 4-level) = all jumps to 4, are "Front of Card" -- Texas, Gerber -- whatever you use.

Exception: If you bid one of their KNOWN suits (a suit they have promised) on the 2-level, you might choose not to treat it as natural -- your choice.

We open 1NT, and they overcall. Remember, if they bid 2♣, you just ignore it (so if you bid 2NT after their 2♣ overcall, you should treat the auction as if it went 1NT PASS 2NT -- however you play it).

If they bid 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ we use TRANSFER lebensohl. Recall that if we bid a suit on the 2-level, it is natural, NF.

Using Transfer lebensohl, if we bid a suit on the 3-level, starting with 3♣, it is a transfer to the "next" suit. (I'll explain the quote marks in a moment). By transferring, we are showing the suit (5) transferred to with invitational or better values.

With less than an invitation, we either sign-off on the 2-level, or bid 2NT to relay to 3♣ to sign-off -- the old fashioned-lebensohl way.

When we show invitational or better, partner can sign-off (just bid the suit transferred to), or he can accept the game try (by doing many things, including 3NT if he wishes). If partner "signs off" and you have the "or better," of course you just bid again (naturally). Some examples:

1NT-(2♥)-3♣ = ♦, invitational or better (to sign off in ♦, responder would have bid 2NT to relay to 3♣, then bid 3♦)

1NT-(2♠)-3♦ = ♥, invitational or better. (If opener bids 3♥, he rejects your invitation, but you bid again with a GF.)

Remember, to sign off, you either bid on the 2-level, or use 2NT to relay to sign off on the 3-level. Using the transfer promises at least a game invite.

Now, what about the "quote marks?" When transferring to your suit on the 3-level, you have to take their suit into account. For example, if 2♥

showed ♥ and a minor, it wouldn't make much sense for you to transfer (via 3♦) into ♥.

Accordingly, this is what we do : Transferring into "their suit" (such as 3♦ into their ♥) shows the next higher suit -- i.e., ♠. Are you ready to kill me by now? Sorry, but if you want to be prepared, there is no shortcut. You simply must devote a little time to study and practice this. So, transferring "into their suit," is like transferring "through" their suit.

What if you actually bid their suit? (Example, they bid 2♦ to show ♦ whatever, and you bid 3♦). Cue-bidding their suit means what it means with regular lebensohl, typically "Stayman, no stopper." This assumes "FADS--Fast Always Denies Stopper." If you want to Stayman with a stopper, you go through the 2NT relay, then cue-bid 3♦. OK, no doubt you are ready to just scrap this and wing it, but maybe some examples will help:

1NT (2♠ = ♠ whatever, or just ♠):

2NT = Relay to 3♣ (either to play 3♣, or as a prelude to sign-off in 3♦ or 3♥, or to follow with 3♠ to show Stayman and a ♠ stopper, or to follow with 3NT to just show a ♠ stopper-no Stayman)

3♣ = ♦ Invitational (Opener rejects by bidding 3♦, but responder bids on naturally with a GF. Opener accepts by bidding above 3♦)

3♦ = ♥ Invitational (Opener rejects by bidding 3♦, but responder bids on naturally with a GF. Opener accepts by bidding above 3♥)

3♥ = ♣ Invitational -- This was tricky, but remember: Transfer to "their" suit is "through" their suit to the next highest suit, ♣ in this case.

3♠ = Cue-bid showing "Stayman, no stopper"

3NT = To play, but no ♠ stopper (Fast Denies)

If the transfer lebensohl lost you, you can try plain lebensohl. If that also loses you, I doubt you've read this far. If you've read this far and wish you hadn't, you might consider viewing the "simple version". (At least I didn't call it the "version for dummies.")

What about Doubling their Overcall?

I was afraid you'd ask. Again, I like to separate it into 2 classes, and not get overly complicated. First, let's say they promise BOTH MAJORS. I

like to use DOUBLE as penalty-oriented. It says you can double at least one of their suits, and give partner a chance to double as well. It sets up a force. If you pass and then DOUBLE, that should be a lightish takeout. For example:

1NT (2♣=MAJORS) X = penalty oriented (says nothing about)Passing and then doubling their 2MAJ = takeout of that MAJOR

If their interference is anything else (on any level), use X as cards/negative. It doesn't "promise" the other major(s), but you try your best. Think of double as just saying, "partner, I have values to act, but no suit to bid and nothing else fits." For example, let's say partner opens 1NT and they bid 2 to show and either MAJOR. I would DOUBLE with each of these hands:

♠A Q 5 2 ♥10 9 7 ♦6 2 ♣J 6 5 3
♠A 5 2 ♥A 9 7 ♦6 2 ♣6 5 4 3 2
♠J 5 2 ♥K 10 9 7 ♦2 ♣Q 6 5 3 2

Again, pass and then double is just a lightish takeout, competing. I'd use these "negative doubles" over NATURAL overcalls as well as CONVENTIONAL overcalls. If you have a true penalty pass of their known suit, you can pass and hope partner reopens with a double.

Now you know why people like to use conventions to interfere with your notrump. If you aren't prepared, expect some major accidents. If you study this and adopt it, but your partner doesn't, you can also expect some big disasters, but at least you were warned. Expect some growing pains, some memory pains, but eventually you'll be better for studying this area of the game.

2NT Opening bid (also 2♣ sequences to 2NT)

3♣ is puppet stayman ([consider Muppet?](#))

3♦ = No 5 card major, one or more 4 card major

3♥ = 4♠, game forcing

3♠ = 4♥, game forcing

3NT = to play

4♣ = Gerber ([consider both majors with slam interest](#))

4♦ = both majors ([consider both majors with no slam interest](#))

4♥ = to play

4♠ = to play

4NT = Quantitative

3♦/♥ are transfers

3♠ is a transfer to 3NT to start minor or minor/minor slam

investigations
3NT is to play
4 ♣ is mini-max Gerber
4 ♦/♥ are transfers
4 ♠ no meaning
4NT invite to 6NT
5 ♣/♦ are to play
5NT invite to 7NT

2NT-2♠-3NT Relays for Single Minor or Both Minors Slam Tries

3♠ is relay to 3NT to initiate a minor suit slam try

After 2NT-3♠(relay); 3NT(forced):

4♣/♦ = one suited minor slam try

4NT by opener is signoff.

If opener likes his hand for the minor, he responds 1430 for the minor, skipping 4NT

4NT = 4,4 in minors and slam invitational

4♥/♠ = short suit with both minors

If opener likes his hand for either minor he responds 6 card key card, skipping 4NT.

Responder will bid the slam in clubs so opener can correct to diamonds.

5♣ = both minors and no slam interest.

Pass or bid 5♦

Wolff Transfers

After the bidding of 1x-1y-2NT, Wolff signoffs were established to allow one to sign off with a weak hand and a long suit. The original treatment was for responder to bid 3♣ requiring opener to bid 3D, and then pass the responders rebid of his suit, as for example, in 1♣-1♥; 2NT-3♣; 3♦-3♥; Pass!

Various treatments were devised to handle other types of hands. Perhaps the most common was to treat responders rebid of 3♦ over 1x-1y; 2NT as asking for major suit length, and using other treatments to show slam interest in a second suit. All of such treatments are playable, but suffered from complexity. I suggest “Wolff Transfers” as a simple way to handle most hands after the sequence 1x-1y; 2NT.

The bids are simple. After 1x-1y; 2NT:

3♣ = transfer to 3♦

3♦ = transfer to 3♥

3♥ = transfer to 3♠

3♠ = transfer to 4♣

The 3/♣/♦/♥ are mandatory on opener. Opener must accept the transfer responder may be planning to sign-off.

The 3♠ transfer to 4♣ is optional. Without interest in ♣, opener can choose to bid 3NT.

Here are some examples:

1♣/♦ -1♥; 2NT-3♦(transfer); 3♥-Pass = a long ♥ suit and a very weak hand

1♣/♦ -1♥; 2NT-3♦(transfer); 3♥-3NT = 5♥ giving opener a choice of games

1♣/♦/♥-1♠; 2NT-3♥; 3♠-Pass or 3NT = Similar to above, but for spades.

1♣/♦/♥-1♠; 2NT-3♦(transfer to ♥) = 5+ ♠; 4+ ♥.

Opener bids as follows: With 4 hearts, bids 3♥ (or 4♥ or cue); without 4♥, bids 3♠ with 3♠, bids 3♥ with 2♠ and 3♥; or bids 3NT with 2-2 in the majors.

1♣ /♦-1♥; 2NT-3♦; 3♥-3♠ =shows 4♠, and 5+♥

1♣ /♦-1♥; 2NT-3♥ = 4♠ and 4♥ (check back for ♠)

Many other sequences are simple and obvious. For example, a Texas variation is possible.
Example:

1♣ -1♥; 2NT-3♦; 3♥-4♥ can show a stronger hand than a jump to 4♥ over 2NT.

It has surprised me by how often this sequence 1x,1y,2NT occurs, and this treatment so far has handled all hands that have come up.

Re: 1♦-1♥; 2NT To show hand with 4♥ and 6♣, bid 3♠ which is a transfer to ♣. For this transfer sequence, opener has an option - he (she) can bid 4♣ which shows an interest in slam or bid 3NT showing no interest in clubs. I suppose he also can cue bid. He cannot take a preference to hearts. If responder had 5 or more hearts plus clubs, he would bid 3♦ first, and then bid clubs.

If opener rejects the transfer, responder's 4♣ should end the auction. If responder has a slammish hand, he can cue bid.

If opener responds 4♣, a raise by responder ends the auction. No slam interest. Any other bid is a cue bid, or if you agree, 4♦ is RKC.

Notrump Overcall System on.

A jump notrump overcall (direct)

Unusual notrump.

Balancing 1 Notrump

per Billy Miller in April, 2011 Bulletin

Over 1♣/♦:

11-14 1NT

15-17 double and then bid NT

18-19 2NT

20-21 double and rebid 2/3NT

Over 1♥/♠:

11-16 1NT

17-18 double and bid NT

19-21 balance with 2NT

Re-Stayman (Not Stayman per Meckwell)

Billy Miller Jan 2011

If a minor is opened, it is common to limit the balancing notrump to 11-14 HCP.

If a major is opened, however, a wider range is needed because there is less

room to operate. Playing 11-16 HCP works very well, especially if you are playing "Range Stayman."

When LHO opens 1♣ or 1♦, you should double first and then rebid 1NT with a hand in the 15 to 17 range if you play that a balancing 1NT bid shows 11-14. With 18-19 HCP, a balancing 2NT is used. (With 20-21, double and rebid 2NT.) Note that this balancing 2NT bid is not "unusual"!

After LHO opens 1♥ or 1♠ and it is passed around to you in the balancing seat, it is necessary to stretch the upper limit of the 1NT bid to 16 HCP to accommodate all the likely hands without getting too high. When this occurs, using Range Stayman helps.

Here is how it works. A bid of 2♣ by your partner is not only Stayman, but asks you (the balancer) to define which high-card range your hand falls into. With 11-14 HCP, just make your normal response, either 2♦ with no major or two of a major if you have one. If, however, you have 15-16 HCP (the upper range of your bid), simply rebid 2NT, delaying your normal Stayman response. At that point, partner can continue with 3♣ ("re-Stayman") if he wants to know if you have a major. Frequently, partner (with, say, a semi-balanced 10-count) may not

have any interest in whether or not you have a major, just simply whether you are at the top of your range, making game possible.

Holding 17-18 HCP in the balancing seat after a major-suit opening, double and bid notrump as cheaply as possible. With 19-21, balance with 2NT.

Over balancing NT and partners 2♣ (per Miller: should be used only over 1♥/♠-pass-pass-1NT because of the wider range of the balancing notrump)

2♦ shows minimum and no 4 card major

2♥ shows minimum and 4♥

2♠ shows minimum with 4♥, denies 4♠

2NT shows maximum, 3♣ is then re-stayman

One of the many benefits to playing Range Stayman is when the 1NT bidder makes a two-level response showing a minimum-range hand. Now responder will know not to invite game, since partner is limited to 11-14.

Sandwich 1 Notrump by Passed Hand

After both opponents have bid a suit at the one level, a 1NT bid by an unpassed hand shows 15+ to 18. Systems are on

By a passed hand, a sandwich notrump shows length in the unbid suits, at least 5-4 since a double was not used.