

AntiDont: Defense against DONT Zealots

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If you play against pairs who love to interfere over 1NT with nothing, this article tells you what they do, and how you can maintain an advantage. This is not something to fear, but if you follow these recommended methods, you should welcome the challenge.

DONT is an acronym to “Disrupting Opponents’ NT”.

Suppose you open 1NT. Their interference is automatic, regardless of point count.

- (a) If they double, it shows a one suited hand (5+) nearly always C,D, or H.
- (b) If they bid 2C, they show at least 4-4 in C and another suit.
- (c) If they bid 2D, they have at least 4-4 in D and a major.
- (d) If they bid 2H, they have at least 4-4 in the majors
- (e) If they bid 2S, they have 5+ S.
- (f) If they pass, they have 4-3-3-3 shape, extremely potent information when you declare.

Suppose you are in 3NT after 1NT(P). Your D are Dummy D-K1065 you D-AJ932 and thanks to the pass, you are certain to make 5 tricks in D, by playing the A and finessing left hand opponent (the passer) for the Q if it has not fallen. After the first D, whether righty followed or not to the first, righty is now void in D. Lefty is 4-3-3-3.

Defending against 1NT(X): Remember RHO must pull to 2C if you pass, so you are going to get another bid. (1) You should play most of your NT system, including Stayman and Transfers. Redouble is the most useful tool. It simply announces (a) 8+ HCP with nothing useful to add and (b) the opponents cannot play an undoubled contract. That is, either you play it somewhere or the opponents play a doubled contract. For hands that would have invited, 1NT(P)2NT, I advise the redouble especially, when they are vulnerable.

Defending against two suiters: Stolen bids are recommended.

1NT(2C): Double is Stayman, and 2D, 2H, 2S are whatever you use with no competition. Texas transfers are also in play.

1NT(2D): Double is a transfer to H, 2H 2S, and 2NT are what you always play. Texas transfers are also in play.

1NT(2H) : Double shows 5+ Spades. If you belong in Spades at whatever level, the DONT bid is of tremendous value to your play of any S contract. “DONT” let the opponent’s spade indication deter you. Texas transfers are also in play.

If you play Lebensohl, this is an added valuable tool, especially over 1NT(2D), 1NT(2H), and 1NT(2S).

The coup de grace is the pass over the two suited bid. It shows 7 or fewer points, so this is a part-score hand for your side. If it goes 1NT(2?)P(P), double by the opener is takeout with decent support for the three unbid suits, nearly always a doubleton in the DONT player's suit. It cannot logically be for penalties, since the partner of the 1NT opener promises zero defensive tricks.

Finally: Ask questions for all competitive passes by these DONT zealots as their systems likely extend the disruptive approach to other arenas. Even 1S(P) might be conventional! Politely ask DONT zealots in this situation: "Can you tell me what you understand from your partner's pass?" If they have **any** understanding they are obligated to tell you.