

STAMFORD BRIDGE CLUB
Wednesday 19th November 2014

NO TRUMP BIDDING

STAYMAN

QUANTITATIVE RAISES

The opening bid of 1NT shows a **balanced hand** with **12-14 points** (in some bidding systems the strength will be in a different range (e.g 14-16, 15-17); here we shall use what is often referred to in books as the “weak no-trump” opening.

We define balanced as:

- No singleton or void
- No more than one doubleton
- No 5-card (or longer) major suit (*this is a matter of style – opening 1NT with a 5-card major may be the better option on some hands*)
- **The key point here is to consider your rebid**

♠ K 10
♥ A J 8
♦ Q 7 6 5 2
♣ Q J 6

In an ideal world, we would hold an honour or two in each of the suits. However, in practice, some hands would be unbiddable if we applied that rule to them, e.g.

♠ 4 3 2
♥ A Q 10
♦ 8 5 3 2
♣ A K 8

So, if the hand fits our definition (balanced, 12-14 points) the correct opening is almost certainly 1NT.

Responses to 1 No Trump

(a) Responding with a balanced hand

(assuming no interest in finding a 4-4 major suit fit; and not holding 5major332 shape)

This is really a case of simple arithmetic. The “magic numbers” to remember are 25 (when a game is a good bet) and 33 (when you should be thinking of a small slam).

With up to 10 points, you can pass – after all, even if opener has his maximum 14 points you do not have the 25 needed for 3NT.

If you hold 11 or 12 points then the 25 may be there if opener is maximum. You therefore raise to 2NT which says “pass if you are minimum and go to 3NT if you are maximum”.
(Quantitative or Invitational)

With 13 points up to about 18 you simply raise to 3NT – the combined values are enough for game but not enough for slam. **Do not bid 2NT (which partner can pass) when you know that you have 25 or more points between you. 2NT is a ‘LIMIT BID’.**

♠ K 10 3	♠ 5 3 2	♠ 8 7 6	♠ J 10 3 2
♥ A 9 3	♥ K Q 10	♥ A 8 2	♥ J 9
♦ Q 6 3 2	♦ A J 7 4 2	♦ K Q J 2	♦ A K Q
♣ 10 8 6	♣ J 10	♣ K Q 3	♣ K J 7 5

If you are lucky enough to hold more than 18 points you may raise to 4NT (**inviting** partner to bid 6NT with a maximum) on about 19-20 points; or go straight to 6NT with 21-23 points. You would need an exceptional 24+ points to think in terms of a grand slam!

Important Note: if you have the strength to bid 2NT or more, do not forget to use Stayman if you hold four cards in one or both major suits so that a 4-4 fit may come to light. ***BUT as a long-term strategy it's better not to try for a major suit fit with a sterile 4major333 distribution.***

More on Stayman later.

(b) responding with an unbalanced hand

With an unbalanced hand, responder should prefer to guide the bidding to play in a suit contract. The main question then is: at what level should we play?

Since the opening bid is so well-defined, it is often possible for responder to make a decision straight away about the eventual contract. For example:

♠ K J 10 9 7 6
 ♥ 4
 ♦ 8 6 4 2
 ♣ J 2

1NT	2♥	or	1NT	2♠
2♠	P		PASS	

♠ K Q 10 9 7 6
 ♥ 4
 ♦ A 10 8 2
 ♣ K 2

1NT	2♥	or	1NT	4♠
2♠	4♠			

With a 5-card major suit, the responder knows that there may well be a trump fit: opener has to have at least 2 cards in the suit, but may well have 3- or even 4-card support. If responder has enough strength to guarantee game values (12 points or more) he can explore. Best via a **transfer**. After obligatory reply responder bids 2 or 3NT. Opener passes, raises 2NT to 3 or raises the major.

♠ K 7	♠ A 6
♥ K J 9 4	♥ Q 10 5 3 2
♦ A 6 5	♦ 8 2
♣ Q 9 3 2	♣ A K 8 4

1NT	2♦
2♥	3NT
4♥	P

More on transfers in a later workshop.

Stayman

The way to locate a 4-4 fit in a major suit is to introduce an artificial/conventional response of 2♣ to the opening 1NT. This is known as the **Stayman Convention**. It says nothing about Clubs as a suit, but instead asks a question:

“Do you have a 4-card major suit?”. **For us, bidding 2♣ always promises at least one four card major if the hand is invitational to game or better.**

The opener replies to the question as follows:

- 2♠ I have a 4-card spade suit
- 2♥ I have a 4-card heart suit (or both majors)
- 2♦ I have no 4-card major suit (it says nothing about the diamonds!)

The standard response to a Stayman 2♣ with both majors is 2♥, so that a response of 2♠ denies a 4-card heart suit (while a response of 2♥ does NOT deny 4 spades).

How strong do you need to be to use Stayman?



Since the Stayman 2♣ bid is a question, and in itself promises nothing specific, the only requirement is that the responder should not be **embarrassed** by any response that opener may make (and there are only three: 2♦, 2♥, and 2♠).

♠ K 8	♠ A J 4 3
♥ K 6 4	♥ A 8 2
♦ 6 4 3 2	♦ 10 9 8
♣ A K 7 8	♣ 10 7 5
1NT	2♣ (is there a spade fit?)
2♦	????????

EMBARRASSED –East should have passed.

Usually this means that responder will hold enough strength to continue with a bid of at least 2NT (i.e 11+ HCPs) if the response does not reveal a fit.

However, responder can bid 2♣ on three types of weak hand:

(1) a hand with four cards in one major and five in the other. He will pass a 2♥ or 2♠ response from opener and bid 2 of his long major suit over a 2♦ response

♠ AQ2	♠ 96543
♥ K62	♥ AQ43
♦ A763	♦ 92
♣ 952	♣ 87

1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠

(2) a hand with four in each major and five diamonds. He will pass **whatever** opener bids in response to his Stayman 2♣.

♠ KQ3	♠ 9765
♥ A75	♥ K432
♦ KJ32	♦ Q8765
♣ J97	♣ - void -

1NT	2♣
2♦	PASS

(3) a hand with six or more cards in a minor. Whatever opener says over his 2♣ bid he will now bid 3♣/3♦.

- this means "forget about Stayman, I had clubs (or diamonds) all the time!" Opener should pass.

(You may also have a weak hand with a 4-card major and a 6-card minor. Now you'll pass opener's major suit response if you've found a fit, else bid 3 of the minor.)

QUANTITATIVE RAISES

These are used where responder, knowing the strength of opener's hand, knows there **may** be enough for game or slam, but needs to know whether opener is minimum or maximum.

♠ K87	♠ A43
♥ K64	♥ A82
♦ 6432	♦ J1098
♣ AK8	♣ Q1075
1NT	2NT
?	

Over a 1NT or 2NT opening a raise to 4NT is usually used as **QUANTITATIVE** – **NOT** Blackwood (use Gerber instead).

“If you are maximum bid 6NT – if minimum Pass”

♠ A Q J 10	♠ K 8 7
♥ A 9 3	♥ K 6 4
♦ K Q J	♦ 6 4 3 2
♣ Q 6 4	♣ A K 8
-	1NT
4NT	?

Similarly, a bid of 5NT over 1NT is looking for the grand slam:

“If you are maximum bid 7NT, if minimum bid 6NT”

♠ A Q J 10	♠ K 9 8
♥ A Q 3	♥ K J 4
♦ A K Q	♦ 6 4 3 2
♣ Q 6 4	♣ A K 8
-	1NT
5NT	?

These bids (4NT and 5NT) can also be used over a 2NT opening.

Let's play some bridge.