



Acol Weak 1NT Opening – A Reminder

Point Range: 12 or 13 or 14 High Card Points

BALANCED i.e. 4:3:3:3; or 4:4:3:2 or 5:3:3:2 (BUT NOT A FIVE CARD MAJOR); Put it another way....

No voids; No singletons; No more than one doubleton; Five cards in a minor, but not five cards in a major.

Under English regulations the opener's partner must announce the agreed strength, so typically they would say "Twelve to Fourteen".

An opening 1NT is assumed to be balanced, though some players may use it with a five-card major. If the partners have agreed that the hand may not be balanced they should use the Alert card to warn you.

Opponents open 1NT to force you to go to the 2 level if you come into the auction. This can be daunting. But sometimes you will have something to say...



Competing with a Shapely (Unbalanced) Hand

A suit overcall at the two level normally promises at least 10 high card points, at least five cards in the suit bid, and "quality" in the suit bid.

Here's an example where you could overcall, especially with favourable vulnerability. This hand is not strong, with only 11 HCPs; but it has good "shape" (a singleton and a doubleton). There are 6 cards in the suit and three out of the top six in the suit.

♠	K Q J 10
♥	K Q 9 5 4 3
♦	3
♣	7 4

There are various "rules" to define suit quality.

One rule is to add the number of honours in the overcalled suit to the number of cards in the suit. The result gives the maximum level to overcall. On this example the HCP count is 11, and the heart suit has two honours and six cards, total eight, suggesting 2♥ is a sensible overcall.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1NT	2♥

Another approach is to judge whether you would have opened the bidding with the hand. Using the "Rule of 20" may help. The example hand has 11HCPs and six hearts and four spades giving 21 in total. You would have opened the bidding, so overcall.



The 1NT Opener's partner

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1NT	2♥
		(Estimate 13HCPs)	(Estimate 13HCPs)

If the opening 1NT is estimated at 13HCPs, and the overcall is estimated at 12HCPs, there can be up to 15HCPs unaccounted for. A long suit has been shown by the overcall.

If 1NT opener's partner has 12HCP+ then there is a probable

game for the partnership. If partner has a good holding in the overcalled suit No Trumps may be the contract. With another long suit, a raise in that suit may be right. If unsure, especially needing cover in the overcalled suit, a cue bid of the enemy suit asks partner to bid again; No Trumps suggests they can stop the overcalled suit.

North

♠ K 10 8
♥ A J 9
♦ A 10 3
♣ Q J 7 4

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1NT	2♥
3NT	P	P	P



Advancing the overcall

N E S W

 1NT 2♥

P ?

If the 1NT opener's partner is weak, it's best to drop out of the auction.

If overcaller's partner has 12HCP+ then there is a probable game for the partnership.

Partner's overcall suggests an opening quality hand with a fine long suit. With the majority of the remaining HCPs, the overcall may be advanced with a raise in

N E S W

 1NT 2♥

P 4♥

the overcalled suit, with three+, or a switch may be needed with a different and probably better suit.

East

♠ K 10 8 2

♥ A 10 9

♦ A 3

♣ Q J 7 4

Remaining HCPs evenly split

Both other players may pass. This is very common.



Competing with a Strong, Balanced hand

With a strong (16-18 high card point), balanced hand, you double your opponents opening 1NT.

♠ K Q 10 8

♥ K Q 10 8

♦ A 9

♣ A 8 7

If your opponent had opened 1♠, you would have overcalled 1NT.

This double is NOT a take out double.

You are not asking your partner for their best suit.

You are telling partner that your hand is strong and balanced. Your hand is likely to ensure that the opponents cannot make their contract. You are quite happy to defend the contract and take the extra points when the contract fails. This double is informative and non-forcing.



1NT X for business; 1Suit X for Take Out

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♠	X		

This double is a take out double.
If South passes, West must bid
his best suit other than Spades.

This double is a "for business".
West is not forced to bid, but
may do so.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1NT	X		

If you and partner agree to play the double for take-out (not recommended), the double must be alerted.



Responding to partner's double of 1NT

West has points and shape for game

For example, with 9 HCPs and a balanced hand, West bids 3NT.

♠ K 10 9 8
♥ Q 10 8 7
♦ Q 9
♣ Q 8 7

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1NT	X	P	3NT

West is very weak with a long suit, and believes that the E/W cannot beat 1NT. West then bids 2 of his suit, a weak take out. East should pass at his turn.

♠ 10 9 8
♥ Q 10 8 7 6 5
♦ 9
♣ Q 8 7

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1NT	X	P	2♥