

02/11/2021 Hand of the Week 78: To open or not to open?

Sitting 4<sup>th</sup> seat, all vulnerable the bidding is passed round to you. Should you open and if so how should you bid?

W	med029
♠	AQ4
♥	107
♦	J10986
♣	AJ10

You have a 12 count with a 5-card diamond suit- options are:

1/ 1NT

2/ 1♦

3/ Pass

The remaining points will be fairly evenly distributed, so partner will probably have 8-10, possibly 11 with a balanced hand.

Although the standard open with 12 and a balanced hand is 1NT you can err on the side of caution when vulnerable in case there is a big hand sat over you. In this situation we know this is not the case. If you are left in 1NT then the diamond suit may be difficult to establish and the issue is if 1NT goes 1 down you will get a worse score than passing, plus the hearts would be a reasonable suit for the defence to attack.

Another concern here would be that partner may transfer to hearts, so you will be playing in a 5-2 fit.

The advantage of 1NT is it is harder for the opponents to overcall. The fact that both opponents have passed makes it a bit less likely they have a strong heart suit to play, as with 11 points and a 5 card suit they may open, and neither has a weak 2 opening.

What about 1♦? The problem here is that you are stuck for a rebid. The opponents may now have a chance to overcall, or partner is likely to bid 1♥, to which you would be obliged to respond 2♦, and you may well end up in a tricky contract.

I think I would be 50:50 on 1NT or passing- on the night I passed

The full hand:

<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">D</span>  <span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">13</span> </div>	<b>N</b> Able 7 ♠ K865 ♥ KJ932 ♦ K75 ♣ 8	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">W</th> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">N</th> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">E</th> <th style="background-color: red; color: white;">S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: left; padding-left: 10px;">P</td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S		P	P	P	P			
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<b>W</b> med029 ♠ AQ4 ♥ 107 ♦ J10986 ♣ AJ10	<b>E</b> Erika Pick ♠ J93 ♥ A86 ♦ AQ32 ♣ 762													
	<b>S</b> hxlizb ♠ 1072 ♥ Q54 ♦ 4 ♣ KQ9543													

If you open 1NT, North may overcall and NS will probably end up in 2♥, or possibly 3♥. What happens next will depend on the defence and declarer play, but North will probably lose a club, 2 spades a heart and a diamond, making 7 tricks.

If North passes East will invite game and EW will end up in 2NT- as it happens we have a good diamond fit and the K♦ is onside. After winning a heart in East, you have to get back to hand with an Ace and take the diamond finesse, making 5 diamonds and 3 Aces, so it's a 50:50 score.

What about the 1♦ open? North will overcall hearts, East will support diamonds and then it will depend on who gets the contract at the 3 level. 3♦ has good chances and will make as the cards lie.

On night the board was only played 4 times, 2 Wests opened 1NT- one played in 2NT going one off, the other had the overcall from North and ended up defending 3♥, taking it one off.

One West opened 1♦ and got to play in their diamond contract for a top.