

09/11/2021 Hand of the Week 79: Defence to 1NT doubled

Partner open 1NT and South doubles, oh dear!

W	med029
♠	975
♥	987
♦	J93
♣	9765

What to do?

We can be fairly confident that 1NT is going off as we only have a combined maximum of 15 points. With no obvious suit to establish it could go heavily down so we need a get out.

You should have some agreement with your partner about what to do in this situation. I would play all system bids after 1NTx, so Stayman and red suit transfers are available- this would cover situations where you hold a 5 card major.

There are 2 additional bids which would not normally have access to, redouble and a 'forcing pass'

Redouble would be used with a 5 card minor- it tells partner you don't have a 5 card major and forces them to bid 2♣. After this you can either pass if you have good clubs or bid 2♦. You should end up in no worse than a 5-2 fit.

What about if you have no 5 card suit? In this situation use the 'forcing pass'- The pass needs to be alerted as it is a system bid and in response partner should redouble. Now you bid your lowest 4 card suit. If partner has a doubleton they bid their next lowest 4 card suit, which you can now pass and you should end up in, at worst, a 4-3 fit. If this gets doubled then so be it.

The other use of the forcing pass is if you have a reasonable hand- you could potentially have a 9-11 count after the double and think that 1NT might make- pass, partner redoubles and then you pass. The other opponent may well take out at this point but if not you should have a reasonable chance of making a big plus score.

So what to do on this night? You can use the forcing pass here, and bid 2♣ after partner's redouble, as it happens partner could pass this or bid 2♦

The full hand:

D 21	N Helperby ♠ Q86 ♥ J10643 ♦ 82 ♣ A83	W N E S P 1NT X 2♣ P 2♠ P P P
W med029 ♠ 975 ♥ 987 ♦ J93 ♣ 9765		E Erika Pick ♠ K1032 ♥ A2 ♦ Q764 ♣ KQ10
	S beechhedge ♠ AJ4 ♥ KQ5 ♦ AK105 ♣ J42	2♠ E NS: 0 EW: 0

As it happens I don't play this system with Erika, but needed to do something so bid Stayman on the basis that we would either find a 4-3 major fit end up in 2♦, possibly in a 3-3 fit- Erika took out to 2♠ which went 2 off.

3 pairs were left in 1NTx, all going 1 off for the same score. The best defence is to lead A♦ and then switch to hearts after partner plays 2♦ - the defence should then make 4 hearts, 2 diamonds, 2 spades and a club for 3 off.