

Responding to 1NT Openings – Practice Session with Josée Hammill

Let's practice responding to 1NT openings and focus on responder's decisions. West (*Josée*) will always open 1NT, showing 15-17 HCP points and a balanced hand (HCP are shown in parentheses for each hand).

You'll then look at the East hand (the responder's hand), and decide what to bid. From there we will discuss opener's rebids and, if necessary, responder's rebid.

This format will help us concentrate on the key decisions a responder faces after a 1NT opening.

Remember the basic guidelines:

- With 0-7 points, we generally pass
- With 8-9 points, we can invite
- With 10+ points, we must bid game

Good luck, and let's get started!

#	Opener (Josée)	Responder (You)	#	Opener (Josée)	Responder (You)	#	Opener (Josée)	Responder (You)
1	♠J106 ♥A76 ♦KQ3 ♣AK65 (17)	♠543 ♥J43 ♦AJ65 ♣732 (6)	6	♠654 ♥AK42 ♦AK73 ♣K8 (17)	♠KQ9872 ♥53 ♦654 ♣Q2 (7)	11	♠AK82 ♥KQ3 ♦K72 ♣J65 (16)	♠QJ6 ♥A42 ♦A753 ♣KQ8 (16)
2	♠Q432 ♥AJ9 ♦QJ6 ♣AQ4 (16)	♠K5 ♥32 ♦AK10432 ♣732 (10)	7	♠KJ98 ♥A32 ♦AK5 ♣1087 (15)	♠1063 ♥KJ954 ♦873 ♣A4 (8)	12	♠A10982 ♥KQ3 ♦K72 ♣A5 (16)	♠QJ6 ♥A42 ♦A753 ♣KQ8 (16)
3	♠K9 ♥AK73 ♦A932 ♣Q43 (16)	♠J42 ♥Q98 ♦Q76 ♣K765 (8)	8	♠A103 ♥A54 ♦AK54 ♣543 (15)	♠7 ♥KQJ9872 ♦3 ♣KQJ10 (12)	13	♠AKJ ♥AQ7 ♦654 ♣K106 (17)	♠9873 ♥643 ♦K9873 ♣8 (3)
4	♠AK4 ♥J752 ♦AJ4 ♣A52 (17)	♠J873 ♥AKQ ♦10975 ♣43 (10)	9	♠A9 ♥A1093 ♦KJ87 ♣A96 (16)	♠QJ842 ♥KQJ4 ♦Q32 ♣9 (11)	14	♠AKJ2 ♥AQ7 ♦65 ♣K106 (17)	♠9873 ♥6943 ♦K987 ♣8 (3)
5	♠A1074 ♥A543 ♦K8 ♣AJ5 (16)	♠KQ32 ♥87 ♦A932 ♣Q32 (11)	10	♠A62 ♥KJ10 ♦KQ763 ♣Q6 (15)	♠Q10543 ♥98765 ♦42 ♣7 (2)			



Responding to 1NT Openings – Answers

Opener (HCP)	Responder (HCP)	Commentary
♠J106 ♥A76 ♦KQ3 ♣AK65 (17)	♠543 ♥J43 ♦AJ65 ♣732 (6)	Deal 1: Bidding: 1NT – Pass Explanation: With only 6 HCP and a completely flat hand (4-3-3-3 shape), responder has no reason to disturb 1NT.
♠Q432 ♥AJ9 ♦QJ6 ♣AQ4 (16)	♠K5 ♥32 ♦AK10432 ♣732 (10)	Deal 2: Bidding: 1NT – 3NT, Pass Explanation: With 10 HCP and game-forcing values, responder jumps directly to 3NT. While responder has a six-card diamond suit, we don't use minor suit transfers with game-going hands unless we have slam interest. The long diamonds will provide tricks in NT, and there's no need to complicate the auction.
♠K9 ♥AK73 ♦A932 ♣Q43 (16)	♠J42 ♥Q98 ♦Q76 ♣K765 (8)	Deal 3: Bidding: 1NT – Pass Explanation: Despite having 8 HCP, which might tempt some to invite with 2NT, the 4-3-3-3 shape is a significant negative. This shape provides no ruffing potential and no source of tricks. Most of the time, even if partner accepts the invitation with a maximum, 3NT will fail due to the lack of tricks from shape.
♠AK4 ♥J752 ♦AJ4 ♣A52 (17)	♠J873 ♥AKQ ♦10975 ♣43 (10)	Deal 4: Bidding: 1NT – 2♣, 2♥ – 3NT, Pass Explanation: An excellent example of when not to play in a 4-3 fit. Responder tries Stayman with game-forcing values, hoping to find a 4-4 major fit. When opener shows hearts, responder must recognize that an 8-card fit isn't guaranteed. So 3NT is the right spot. Had opener bid 2♠, responder would have raised to 4♠, showing the power of 4-4 fits.
♠A1074 ♥A543 ♦K8 ♣AJ5 (16)	♠KQ32 ♥87 ♦A932 ♣Q32 (11)	Deal 5: Bidding: 1NT – 2♣, 2♥ – 3NT, 4♠ – Pass Explanation: A nice auction where responder uses Stayman with game-forcing values. When opener shows hearts, responder bids 3NT denying heart fit. (see 4 above). Opener can deduce that responder must have four spades (otherwise why use Stayman?) and with four spades themselves, converts to 4♠.
♠654 ♥AK42 ♦AK73 ♣K8 (17)	♠KQ9872 ♥53 ♦654 ♣Q2 (7)	Deal 6: Bidding: 1NT – 2♥, 2♠ – 3♠, 4♠ – Pass Explanation: Perfect example of invitational bidding with a six-card major. Responder first transfers to spades (2♥), then invites with 3♠ (showing 8-9 pts). The good six-card suit provides extra playing strength. Opener, with a maximum 17 HCP and three-card support, happily accepts the invitation. Common Mistake: Some responders might pass 2♠ but the good six-card suit is worth an invitation since Responder adds 2 distribution points.
♠KJ98 ♥A32 ♦AK5 ♣1087 (15)	♠1063 ♥KJ954 ♦873 ♣A4 (8)	Deal 7: Bidding: 1NT – 2♦, 2♥ – 2NT, 3♥ – Pass Explanation: This sequence shows responder's invite with a 5-card heart suit. After the transfer, 2NT asks opener to choose between 2NT and 3♥ with a minimum, or 3NT and 4♥ with a maximum. Opener's 3♥ shows both minimum values and three-card support. Responder, with only invitational values, must pass.

<p>♠A103 ♠7 ♥A54 ♥KQJ9872 ♦AK54 ♦3 ♣543 (15) ♣KQJ10 (12)</p>	<p>Deal 8: Bidding: 1NT – 4♦, 4♥ – 4NT, 5♠ – 6♥, Pass Explanation: A powerful hand with slam potential. The 4♦ bid transfers directly to hearts, allowing responder to show their strength with 4NT (Blackwood), asking for aces. After opener shows three aces with 5♠, responder confidently bids 6♥, knowing the slam is good. The seven-card heart suit provides plenty of tricks once trumps are drawn. If not playing Texas Transfers: 1NT – 4♣, 4NT – 6♥, Pass. Here, 4♣ (Gerber) asks for aces before committing to hearts. When opener shows three aces (4NT), responder knows slam is good. Combined HCP: 27, but playing strength is much higher due to the long hearts.</p>
<p>♠A9 ♠QJ842 ♥A1093 ♥KQJ4 ♦KJ87 ♦Q32 ♣A96 (16) ♣9 (11)</p>	<p>Deal 9: Bidding: 1NT – 2♣, 2♥ – 4♥, Pass Explanation: Critical decision point with both majors. Using Stayman first is correct – finding the 4-4 heart fit takes priority over showing the five spades. The 4-4 fit often plays better than a 5-3 fit because both hands can ruff losers. Key Point: The 5-card spade suit becomes an asset in the heart contract, providing discards after trumps are drawn.</p>
<p>♠A62 ♠Q10543 ♥KJ10 ♥98765 ♦KQ763 ♦42 ♣Q6 (15) ♣7 (2)</p>	<p>Deal 10: Bidding: 1NT – 2♥, 2♠ – Pass Explanation: With both majors and very weak values, responder chooses to transfer to the better major (spades) and pass. This gives the partnership the best chance to play in a safe spot at the two level. Key Points: - With weak two-suiters, choose the better suit to transfer to - Don't try to show both suits when very weak</p>
<p>♠AK82 ♠QJ6 ♥KQ3 ♥A42 ♦K72 ♦A753 ♣J65 (16) ♣KQ8 (16)</p>	<p>Deal 11: Bidding: 1NT – 4NT, Pass Explanation: A balanced 16 HCP facing 1NT calls for a quantitative 4NT bid. This invites opener to bid 6NT with a maximum (17 HCP) and pass with a minimum (15- or a bad 16 HCP). Key Points: - 4NT is not Blackwood in this sequence - With a poor 16 HCP opener, passing 4NT is correct Common Mistake: Some might confuse this with Blackwood which only applies when a trump suit has been agreed upon.</p>
<p>♠A10982 ♠QJ6 ♥KQ3 ♥A42 ♦K72 ♦A753 ♣A5 (16) ♣KQ8 (16)</p>	<p>Deal 12: Bidding: 1NT – 4NT, 6NT – Pass Explanation: Here, as compared to #11 above, Opener's 16 HCP is a good 16 HCP as Opener can add one distribution point for the good (headed by an Ace or King) 5 card spade suit.</p>
<p>♠AKJ ♠9873 ♥AQ7 ♥643 ♦654 ♦K9873 ♣K106 (17) ♣8 (3)</p>	<p>Deal 13: Bidding: 1NT – 2♣, 2♦ – Pass Explanation: This sequence is commonly called Garbage Stayman. Responder with very weak values and shortness in clubs, uses what looks like Stayman (8+ HCP, looking for a major). Whatever Opener rebids, will be the right landing place for this doomed 1NT contract.</p>
<p>♠AKJ2 ♠9873 ♥AQ7 ♥6943 ♦65 ♦K987 ♣K106 (17) ♣8 (3)</p>	<p>Deal 14: Bidding: 1NT – 2♣, 2♠ – Pass Explanation: Responder has both four-card majors, and opener happens to have spades. They find their 4-4 fit at the two level. Key Points: - Both hands #13 & #14 have the same HCP, but shape is what matters - The success of Garbage Stayman depends on having the right shape, not just being weak.</p>