



Cappelletti over 1NT — part 1

In first seat you hold
 ♠Q8♥AJ8♦AK105♣K986.
 You open 1NT and your left-hand opponent intervenes with 2♦ showing the majors. Don't you just hate that?

Bridge players have learned that it pays to compete over opening strong 1NT bids when they hold shapely hands. Generally, it's best to compete with hands containing a long suit or with two-suited hands — usually with 5-5 or even 5-4 distribution — and appropriate values.

The object of the interference is not to get to game, but rather trying to obstruct the opponents and to do so safely. You hate it when they bid over your 1NT — turn the tables and do it to them!

For this to be effective, however, you need a system to define your bids. One of the most popular of these methods is called Cappelletti, a treatment that is also commonly known as Hamilton.

How it works

Double shows a good hand, either a very strong balanced hand or (better) a hand with a running suit that can be used to defeat 1NT.

2♣ shows any one suit.

2♦ shows both majors.

2♥ shows hearts and a minor suit.

2♠ shows spades and a minor suit.

2NT shows both minors.

Three-level bids are natural and preemptive (weak).

Examples

Say your RHO opens 1NT (15-17) and you hold the following hands:

♠AQ952♥KJ1043♦86♣3

Bid 2♦, showing both majors.

Yes, you only have 10 high-card points, but the shapeliness of this hand makes it more valuable.

♠KJ943♥6♦K7♣QJ1042

Bid 2♠, showing spades and a minor suit.

♠A74♥KJ10732♦8♣653

Bid 2♣ showing a one suiter.

This hand has only 8 HCP and may not be worth much on defense, but it should be quite good on offense. Remember, your aim is to interfere with the opponents' bidding.

♠74♥KQJ10742♦AQ3♣A

Double. Do not bid 2♣ to show a one-suited hand. You are too strong.

If you end up defending 1NT doubled, you can lead a heart and expect to take at least six hearts and two aces. If the opponents scramble to safety, you can next bid your hearts and partner will know you have a good hand and a good suit.

♠J107653♥K92♦84♣62

Pass. True, you have a six-card spade suit, but this hand is too weak to compete. Do not bid 2♣ to show a one-suited hand.

Full disclosure

When you fill out your convention card, don't simply write "Cappelletti" or (worse) "Capp" on the convention card. Fill in what suits each bid shows on the appropriate line.

For example:

DEFENSE VS NOTRUMP

vs: Strong _____

2♣ one suit _____

2♦ ♥ & ♠ _____

2♥ ♥ & minor _____

2♠ ♠ & minor _____

Dbl: strong or running suit _____

Other 2NT = minors _____

Notice that this defense (Cappelletti) against the opponents' 1NT openings is listed under the heading "vs. Strong," meaning that you play it only when the opponents use a 15-17 (or 16-18) 1NT range. If you play a different system against weak 1NT openings (such as 11-14 or 13-15 HCPs), write it in the adjacent column, and write the word "Weak" on the "vs" line. □

Next month: How to respond when partner interferes over the opponents' 1NT opening.

Get 'em while they're hot

Phyllis Prager, of Sarasota FL, was at a large Florida regional, playing in the Senior Pairs. Wilson Day was directing and made some jovial and charming announcements as the session was getting under way. One of those announcements was that the playing area was "a cell free zone." Will Martzloff of Rochester NY showed his quick wit, calling out, "I'll take two."



Cappelletti over 1NT — part 2

Bridge players like to compete over an opponent's opening strong 1NT bid when they hold a shapely hand. Last month we explored a method to do this called Cappelletti (also called Hamilton). How do we act as responder after partner interferes?

Review of how Cappelletti works

Here is a review of what partner's bids mean when she intervenes. Double shows a good hand, either a very strong balanced hand or (better) a hand with a running suit that can be used to defeat 1NT; 2♣ shows any one suit; 2♦ shows both majors; 2♥ shows hearts and a minor suit; 2♠ shows spades and a minor suit, and 2NT shows both minors.

Responding after partner bids

If partner bids 2♣ showing a one-suited hand, you normally bid 2♦ so partner can name her suit or pass (if she has diamonds). An exception is that you may name your own decent six-card major. If your opponent doubles the 2♣ bid, a redouble by you shows 7 or more high-card points and support for any suit partner wants to name.

If partner bids 2♦ showing hearts and spades, you should bid your longer major suit. If you have a good fit and distribution you may jump in the major. If you bid 2NT, you show the minors and partner should name her longer minor, even

if it is a two-card suit. If you have a fit for one major and 11 or more HCP, bid a forcing 2NT, ostensibly for the minors, but follow up by supporting the major suit.

If partner bids 2♥ or 2♠ showing that major and either minor suit, you should raise the major with a good fit and 8 to 11 points. If you don't like the major but fit both minors, bid 2NT to ask partner which minor suit she holds. When partner names it, you may then pass.

If you have a strong raise for the major, bid 2NT first asking for partner's minor. Over her response, support the major. This shows a stronger hand than a direct raise. Even though the idea is to obstruct the opponents, sometimes you can make game and this allows you to find out. If partner has a minimum 5-5 type hand, she may pass your invitation.

Examples

Take a look at these hands. All start with your left-hand opponent opening a strong 1NT.

Partner bids 2♣. What would you call with

♠K83♥Q742♦Q106♣K54?

This one is easy. Bid 2♦, which allows partner to pass or name her suit.

Partner bids 2♣ and you have

♠862♥AQ10743♦4♣J104.

Bid 2♥. You have a good suit and are willing to play opposite shortness. You've also helped partner if she is on opening lead.

Partner bids 2♣ and you have

♠862♥J87432♦4♣J104.

Bid 2♦. Do not bid 2♥ with a bad suit and a bad hand.

Partner bids 2♣ and your right-hand opponent doubles. What do you call with

♠K83♥Q742♦Q106♣K54?

Redouble. This says you have at least 7 HCP and support for your partner's suit. She is invited to compete.

Partner bids 2♠. What would you call with

♠84♥63♦KJ842♣KJ42?

Bid 2NT, which asks partner to name her better minor. You don't like spades, but you are happy to play in clubs or diamonds.

Partner bids 2♠. What would you call with

♠94♥KQJ74♦J86♣K92?

Pass. Partner has at least five spades. It's not advisable to bid 2NT to ask for her minor. Your fit might not be much better and you are raising the bidding to the three level. In any event, you have some help for partner, so pass and hope for the best.

Know what you're playing

If you and your partner agree to play Cappelletti, you may wish to discuss it in more detail.

We are trying to interfere with the opponents. What do we do if they turn the tables and they interfere with us?

Here's an example. Partner bids 2♣ over 1NT and your right-hand opponent bids 2♦. What is a double by you? Does that mean you can set them, or does it ask partner to name her suit? What is 2♥ by you? Is that pass or correct or does it show hearts?

If partner doubles 1NT and I have a weak hand, what should I do?

These are some examples of situations that merit further discussion. □

Next month: DONT — another popular way to interfere.