



THE BIDDING TOOLKIT

DONT over 1NT

The Cappelletti convention (also called Hamilton) has been discussed as a method to compete over the opponents' opening 1NT. Another popular method, created by Marty Bergen, is called DONT. It's an acronym for Disturb the Opponents' No Trump.

The purpose of DONT is to be able to compete over the opponents' opening 1NT with many hands, yet with some safety. The object of interfering is not necessarily to get to game, but to try and find a fit and, at the same time, make it difficult for the opponents to find their own fit. Two-suited hands are the most common ones that players compete with and at least 5-4 distribution is necessary.

What is the DONT structure?

- Double shows any one-suited hand.
- 2♣ shows clubs and a higher suit.
- 2♦ shows diamonds and a major.
- 2♥ shows hearts and spades.
- 2♠ shows spades.

Since you can get to 2♠ by bidding it directly or by doubling first, most pairs play doubling first is stronger than bidding 2♠ directly.

Responding after partner bids

If partner doubles, you should bid 2♣ with most hands to let partner pass or name her suit. Bids other than 2♣ show a long suit and suggest a playable contract.

Over 2♣ or 2♦, you can pass with three-card support. If you don't have support, bid the next higher

suit to ask partner to pass (if that's the other suit) or to show the second suit by bidding it.

Over 2♥ (majors) you can pass or correct to 2♠ if you prefer that suit.

A raise of partner's suit is only mildly invitational and usually passed.

With a good hand, you can bid 2NT asking the DONT bidder to describe his shape and range. You should discuss this with partner.

If the opponents bid over your partner's conventional DONT call, double or redouble asks partner to name their unknown suit.

Examples

What would you call after a strong 1NT by your opponent holding ♠J7 ♥AK86 ♦K7432 ♣43? 2♦, showing diamonds and a major.

What would you call with ♠J4 ♥KQJ632 ♦A86 ♣107?

Double, which shows a one-suited hand. Do not bid 2♥, since that shows the majors. Over double, partner can bid 2♣ and you can name your suit.

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

Partner bids 2♣. What would you call with

♠1083 ♥J3 ♦K10753 ♣Q104?

Pass. You have found a fit. If you had a fourth club, you could raise. You cannot raise with this hand, however, since partner may have only four clubs. Your side has interfered and found a landing spot.

Don't try to improve the contract.

Partner bids 2♦: diamonds and a major. What is your call with

♠Q1042 ♥A964 ♦K32 ♣84?

2♥, asking partner to pass or bid 2♠ if that is her second suit. You are sure to have at least a 4-4 fit or even a 5-4 fit in a major, so don't pass 2♦.

Partner doubles, showing a one-suited hand. What would you call with ♠KJ32 ♥Q863 ♦KJ97 ♣5?

2♣, allowing partner to pass or name her suit. While it is true you only have one club and that is likely partner's suit, you have no attractive alternative and the hands could be a misfit. If partner surprises you and bids 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠, you may raise.

Partner bids 2♥ showing the majors. What would you do with ♠AJ10 ♥K1074 ♦A732 ♣86?

Bid 2NT, asking partner to further describe her hand. You may have game, but you're not strong enough to bid 4♥ yourself. On the other hand, you are too strong to simply raise to 3♥. You should discuss what rebids by the DONT bidder mean in this situation. One method is for partner to bid 3♣ with a minimum and all other actions are natural with more than a minimum. Obviously, more elaborate agreements are possible.

Partner doubles, showing one suit, and the next hand bids 2♣, Stayman. What do you call with ♠KJ4 ♥A532 ♦Q85 ♣J104?

You have support for whatever suit your partner has. Double asking her to bid her suit. It is safe for partner to compete further, so you should invite her to do so.

Other issues

Which is better, Cappelletti or DONT? There are advantages to both. For example, DONT allows you to play 2♣ with either a one-suited or a two-suited hand. On the other hand, when you play DONT, you give up the double showing values since it is used for the one-suited overcall. Some partnerships compromise by playing DONT only over strong 1NT bids and playing Cappelletti over the weak 1NT (11-14 HCP). □