

When They Open 1NT

When and Why Bidding is Almost
Always Right
(How is up to you!)



Declaring 1NT

- Larry Cohen “One Million Deals”
 - 1NT – All Pass is declarer’s most successful contract
58% @ MP and ½ IMP per board!!
- Taking 7 Tricks on Defense is hard!
- Interfering
 - Takes away opponent’s constructive bidding tools.
 - Guides our defense
 - Gets them out of their “best” spot

Consider...

- **Vulnerability** – safer **NV** than **V**; More to gain when they are **V**.
- **Position** – **2nd seat** & **balancing seat** are different!
- **Shape** – Think **Tricks** (not HCP)!
- **Opener's Strength** – 15-17 (very different from 12-14 or 10-12)
- When They open 1NT (15-17), their **expected combined strength** is **20.9 HCP**. Expect opener to have **15.7** and responder about **5.2** on average.
- When **responder invites**, expect 8+ HCP and 23.5+ minimum for their side. **They can play safely at 2N or higher with 23+ HCP.**

Defending 15-17 1NT

2nd Seat, NV, Do you act?

① ♠KQ1064 ♥Q102 ♦953 ♣64

YES NO

② ♠KQ1064 ♥Q102 ♦A53 ♣Q4

YES NO

③ ♠KJ1042 ♥QJ104 ♦53 ♣62

YES NO

④ ♠KJ1042 ♥QJ1054 ♦53 ♣6

YES NO

⑤ ♠KQ10642 ♥Q102 ♦953 ♣6

YES NO

Hand Types vs 15-17 1NT

Mel's (Colchamiro) Rule of 6+2:

- [] Minimum 6 HCP
- [] Number of Cards in 2 longest suits, minus
- [] Number of Losers
- [] Is greater than or equal to 2

Where Losers are missing A, K or Q in a Suit.

Modern Losing Trick Count assigns A=1.5, K=1 and Q=0.5 winners.

Mel's Rule depends on Losing Trick Count. LTC works when we have an 8 card fit. The chances of an 8-card fit are much greater with 55+ and 6-card suits. 54 shapes and 44 shapes not so much). 5332/4333 are very bad.

	Hands	HCP≥6	# Cards (2 suits)	Losers	#C - L	Bid?
GOOD	⑤ ♠KQ10642 ♥Q102 ♦953 ♣6	7	9	7	2	YES
	④ ♠KJ1042 ♥QJ1042 ♦53 ♣6	7	10	7	3	YES
	♠QJ10862 ♥QJ1042 ♦5 ♣6	6	11	6	5	YES
	♠KJ1042 ♥QJ1042 ♦53 ♣6	7	10	7	3	YES
BAD	① ♠KQ1064 ♥Q102 ♦953 ♣64	7	8	8	0	NO
	② ♠KQ1064 ♥Q102 ♦A53 ♣Q4	13	8	7	1	NO
	③ ♠KJ1042 ♥QJ104 ♦53 ♣62	7	9	8	1	NO
	♠J10542 ♥QJ1042 ♦53 ♣6	4	10	9	2	Maybe

Balancing Seat

- Power to your LEFT (Not good).
- 1N – P – P means they have a max of $17 + 7 = 24$. If you have **ZERO**, Partner has **16!!! Well located points.**
- **Double** - treat as Balancing Takeout Double, **not conventional**. Partner can pass for penalty!
- Act on **WEAKNESS** and **any singleton or void** – **DO NOT ACT ON HCP**. LHO has HCP OVER you.
- Respect **Vulnerability** – need 9 trumps to play safely at 3-level. **Cannot afford down 1 doubled.**

Defending a Strong NT, penalty doubles are ineffective. Use the double to show shape. Balancing Doubles compete. 2nd seat converts if/when appropriate.

Vs Their Weak NT ($\leq 13-15$)

- Need for an Opening Hand
- Need a Strong Double (Max+1 HCP or better)
 - 10-12 1N? Need 13 (any shape) to double TOP+1
 - 12-14 1N? Need 15 (any shape) to double TOP+1
- More Caution – Mel's Rule 6+2 \rightarrow 10 + 2 !!
 - Suit bids deny Double strength! But are more sound.
- Collaborative bidding required...

NT Range	Invites	Opener	3 rd Seat Pass	Sum
15-17	8	15.7	5.2	20.9
12-14	11	12.9	7.6	20.5
10-12	13	10.9	8.1	19.0

Taming The Weak NT

Bridge Winners, Steve Weinstein and Adam Kaplan Feb. 7, 2013

<http://bridgewinners.com/article/view/taming-the-weak-notrump-part-1/>

Weak NT:

- More **volatile** auctions
- Preemption
- Game our way more probable than when they open Strong NT

Competing dangers:

- Opponents have narrowly defined 1 of their hands,
- Partner's strength and distribution is unknown.
- If they misstep, it is much harder for us to penalize them;
- If we misstep, it's easy for them to penalize (they already know so much more about their side's values and shape). **They can have MORE than after 1SNT**
- More Strength unaccounted for means variance in their holdings is bigger (than over SNT).

Propose a weak NT opening has a **minimum of a good 13 or less** (13-15 or less)

Doubling the Weak 1NT

We need a way to show strength ranges: 0-8, 10-Top, \geq Top+1.

Objectives for a Double of 1-WNT:

1. Establish that it's our hand.
2. Penalize the opponents.
3. Compete for part-scores.
4. Judge game/part-score accurately.
5. Avoid going for a number.

2nd seat HCP:

0-8 HCP – Pass

10-Top – Bid if Length-Losers \geq 2

\geq Top+1 – Double

Where Top = HCP at top of their WNT range

Choose a method that allows PENALTY DOUBLE of 1NT when defending 10-12 or 12-14

When bidding in 4th seat, all of the above applies. RHO has described their hand-type. Though we sometimes have less bidding space, we have more information to work with.

More range / options to cover than when they open 1 Strong NT.

(1 WeakNT) – Double, then what?

Responder Passes or Redoubles

- Double = 15+ HCP/12-14 (13+ over 10-12 NT) Any Shape. 3rd hand **pass or XX**

Balance of Power / Low Offense/Defense Ratio

- **PASS** = no clear direction, 5+ HCP (7+ over 10-12), **sets up forcing pass through 2♥. NOT GF Hand/Penalties**
 - first double of natural bid becomes takeout

Weak/Run out

- **2♣** = ART, 0-4 HCP, no 5-card ♠ / ♥ / ♦ suit
 - With 0-3 ♣s, doubler should pull to a 5-card suit, or their cheapest 4-card suit.
- **2♦** = natural, 5+ ♦s, 0-4 HCP (6)
- **2♥** = natural, 5+ ♥s, 0-4 HCP (6)
- **2♠** = natural, 5+ ♠s, 0-4 HCP (6)

GF / High Offense / Defense

- **2NT** = ARTIFICIAL, GF 2-suiter (5-5 or better)
 - Doubler bids 3-card suits up the line, or 3♠ to show long spades
- **3 any** = natural, GF one-suiter

- NOTE: The first Double by our side after the **Penalty Double** is **TAKEOUT or CARDS**. All others are **PENALTY**

When 3rd hand redoubles: Keep it simple – treat the XX like Pass. Not matter if the redouble shows values or start s a runout. When in doubt, if the redouble shows values, prefer running out to sitting 1NTXX.

Advancing Partner's Penalty Double

South			
♠ K1083			
♥ Q95			
♦ 42			
♣ Q843			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	P	P
XX	P	2♦	X

Since this would be the first double by our side after the penalty double, and their bid is natural, our Double is takeout. If 2♦ were artificial (say, the majors), then Double shows cards.

South			
♠ K54			
♥ 108			
♦ K1052			
♣ 9852			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	P	P
2♣	X	2♦	X

Our side has already used our takeout double, now all our doubles are penalty. Doubling 2♦ here shows 4+ cards in their suit.

South			
♠ 9843			
♥ J854			
♦ 83			
♣ Q102			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	P	2♣

With below our suggested minimum to pass and no 5-card suit, we hope to find a safe playing spot by bidding 2♣ -general weakness. This bid does not promise clubs, it just shows the lack of a biddable 5-card suit.

South			
♠ K9853			
♥ 4			
♦ KJ8742			
♣ 4			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	P	2N
P	2♣	P	3♦
P	3♥	P	3♠

3♦ showed ♦s and a major (if we had ♣s and ♦s, we'd have raised). Reaching a major-suit fit takes priority over a minor-suit fit. Partner's 3♥ shows 3+ ♥s and doesn't deny 3+ ♦s (raise ♦ later). Now, we can show ♠ with 3♠.

South			
♠ 4			
♥ K9853			
♦ 4			
♣ KJ8742			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	P	2N
P	3♣	P	3♥

When we hold ♣s and a major and partner bids 3♣, we bid our major - important to find our major-suit fit. Unlike the previous hand, this 3♥ bid does not deny a ♣ fit. We would bid the same way with both majors or with ♥s + ♣s.

South			
♠ KQJ1098			
♥ 82			
♦ 4			
♣ KQ62			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	P	3♠

At unfavorable vulnerability, this is a clear 3♠ bid. It's possible 1NT-X may not be enough to make up for your practically certain game.

When RHO Bids over Partner's X

Responder bids 2♣ or higher...

- 3rd hand bids 2♣, 2♦, or 2♥ **conventionally**
 - If 3rd hand's bid promises length in the suit bid and could be passed
 - **DOUBLE** = takeout and sets up a force through 2♥ (subsequent doubles penalty)
 - **PASS** = no clear direction, sets up force through 2♥, first double is takeout
 - **Bids** = natural, non-forcing
 - If 3rd hand's bid does not promise length
 - **DOUBLE** = values and sets up a force through 2♥ (subsequent doubles penalty)
 - **PASS** = failure to show cards, implied weakness, we are NOT in a force
 - **DOUBLE and DOUBLE of a transfer** = 3-card penalty double
 - **PASS then DOUBLE of a transfer** = 4-card penalty double
- 3rd hand bids 2♠ or higher
 - We are not in a force
 - **PASS** = weak hand, no clear direction
 - **DOUBLE** = values/cards
 - **2NT** = artificial (lebensohl) relay to 3♣ (as above)
 - **new suit at 3-level** = natural (5+), forcing [even if there is no room to lebensohl]

1-Weak NT Defense: Example Hands

South			
♠ 983			
♥ KJ10			
♦ J983			
♣ 542			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	2♥	P
P	X	P	2N

Passes set up a force through 2♥ (they cannot play 2♥ or lower undoubled), our 1st double is takeout. We avoid doubling with a void in their suit. After we make 1 TO double, later doubles are penalty: Direct penalty doubles show 4+ trump; balancing penalty doubles show 3+ trumps. A forcing pass shows a hand without clear direction or a penalty pass. If the strong hand reopens with double, once advancer fails to pass, they must have a hand without clear direction: 2NT is natural, non-jumps are non-forcing, and a cuebid is a general force.

South			
♠ AK943			
♥ 52			
♦ 843			
♣ 982			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	2♦	2N
P	3♣	P	3♠

Direct bids at the 2-level are NF and natural. At the 3-level, there are 3 important hand-types: GF, INV, and competitive. When we have a natural bid available on the 2-level, we can accomplish all 3: Compete on the 2-level, invite by bidding 2NT followed by 3 of our suit, and force by making a direct 3-level bid. When we do not have a 2-level bid available, even with Lebensohl, we only have 2 ways to bid on the 3-level. In favor of showing GF and competitive hands, we choose to give up showing the INV hand; when we have the INV hand, we overbid or underbid slightly. Facing 15+ HCP, this hand isn't enough to game-force, but is more than a competitive 2♣.

A direct cue-bid shows a forcing offensive hand short in the opponent's suit unsuitable for a TO double. Bidding 2NT then cue-bid shows a forcing hand with a stopper and 5+ cards in a major. This is a textbook hand for a direct cue-bid: We have a 3-suited hand, enough to GF, and cannot double because of the ♥ void.

South			
♠ KJ54			
♥			
♦ Q9754			
♣ K1053			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	2♥	3♥

When they play "Systems On" or 2-Suit Runouts After Stayman by 3rd hand, double shows values & creates a penalty double situation. Other bids are natural. Lebensohl applies. After a transfer by 3rd hand, Pass is forcing, and 2NT and higher are the same. We use the 2-level "cue-bid" to replace a takeout double, so a double shows values. Double followed by double shows a 3-card penalty, while pass then double shows a 4-card penalty in the target suit

South			
♠ A83			
♥ K985			
♦ 54			
♣ 10832			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	2♦	P
2♥	P	P	X

South			
♠ 9			
♥ K954			
♦ A8752			
♣ 1084			
W	N	E	S
1N	X	2♥	2♠

After a 2-suited bid by 3rd hand, if they are bidding one of their suits, double is takeout of that suit, and other bids are natural. If they are not bidding one of their suits, double creates a penalty double situation, and other bids are natural.

Acting in 4th Seat

Partner Passes...

(1NT) – P – (P) - Dbl

- Same as direct except DOUBLE only promises 13+ HCP (11+ HCP)
 - Advancer still passes with 5+ HCP (7+) and runs with 0-4 (6) HCP.
 - **first double** = takeout
 - Only a penalty pass of 1NT-X or a double sets up a forcing pass through 2♥

(1NT) – P – (bid) - Dbl

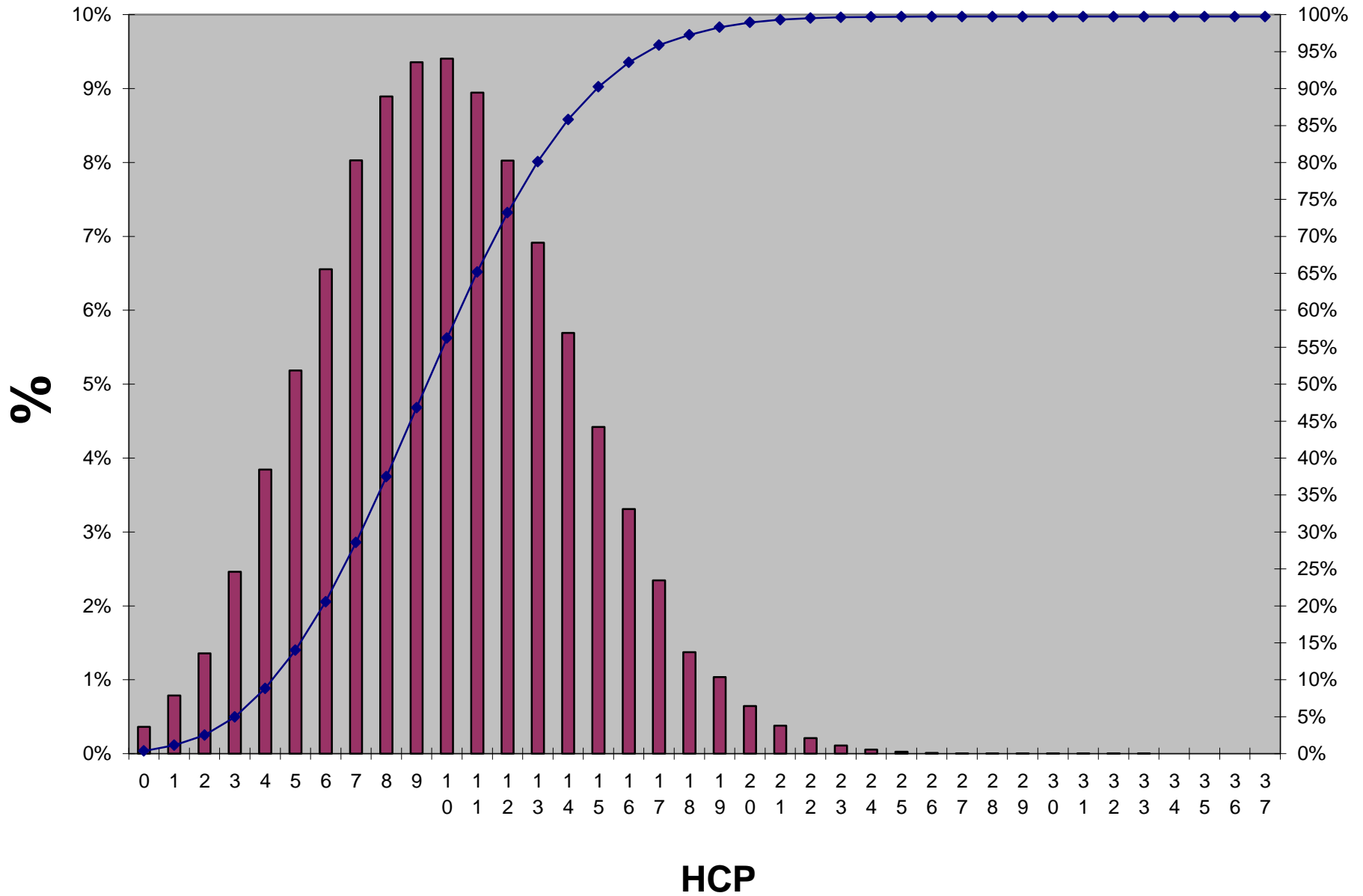
- **DOUBLE** = values (15+) if **bid** is **ARTIFICIAL**, takeout (13+ support points) if **bid** is **NATURAL**
 - **2NT** = artificial (lebensohl), relay to 3♣ (as above)
 - **new suit at 2-level** = to play
 - **new suit at 3-level** = natural (5+), forcing
 - **first double** = card-showing
 - Only a penalty pass or card-showing double by 2nd hand sets up a forcing pass through 2♥

Further Reading

- Mel Colchamiro, *How You Can Play Like an Expert*, Magnus Books (2007). ISBN-10: 0963753347
- Steve Weinstein and Adam Kaplan "Taming the Weak Notrump, Part 1", Feb. 7, 2013, Bridge Winners, <http://bridgewinners.com/article/view/taming-the-weak-notrump-part-1>
- Steve Weinstein and Adam Kaplan, "Taming the Weak Notrump, Part 2" Feb. 14, 2013, Bridge Winners <http://bridgewinners.com/article/view/taming-the-weak-notrump-part-2>
- Defenses against 1NT: Wikipedia - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_defenses_to_1NT

Rule	About	Bridge By the Numbers
2-3-4- (5)	Bid	How high should I preempt? Count losers and subtract from 13. Add 2-3-or 4 to that number and bid that number of tricks. Choose 2/3/4 based on vulnerability (Unfav/VV or NN/Fav). Use 2/3/4/5 when making a jump overcall (Unfav/VV/NN/Fav)
4	Bid	4-4- fits are often better than 5-3 fits when choosing trumps.
5	Bid	5-Level belongs to the opponents.
6+2	Bid	When to interfere over their strong NT? With ≥ 6 HCP and Length – Losers ≥ 2 , BID!!
7	Play	How many round do you hold up your ace playing NT? 7 minus the number of cards you hold!
9	Bid	When to convert partner's takeout double for penalties at a low levels? Add the # of trumps + # of Trump Honors (A-10) + Level of doubled contract ≥ 9 , should result in defeat. Beware missing game bonuses when V vs NV.
10	Bid	When we own 20+HCP and no fit, if # trump winners + the # tricks contracted ≥ 10 , double for penalties.
10-12	Lead	The version of Rule of 11 used when leading or decoding "3 rd or 5 th " leads!
11	Lead	When they lead 4 th best, subtract the number of pips on the card from 11 to determine # cards outstanding higher than the card led. Then subtract all higher cards in your hand and dummy to get # higher cards in the hidden hand. Everyone at the table should do this!!!
15	Bid	Do you open in 4 th seat? Add the # of \spadesuit to your HCP and if ≥ 15 , OPEN! Pearson Points. <i>(Corrollary: Open in 4th seat on marginal hands only if you do not fear your opponents).</i>
17	Bid	When partner opens a Weak 2, add your HCP to the # of trumps (partner's suit) and bid game if ≥ 17 . BETTER: Use Rule of 2-3-4 and count how many cover cards you have. Determine if an asking bid can give you what you need to know.
20 (22)	Bid	Open 1 suit when the # Cards in your 2 longest suits + HCP =20. BETTER: Open 1 Suit when the # Cards in your 2 longest suits + HCP in those suits + 3 Quick Tricks ≥ 22 . $\spadesuit Q8764 \heartsuit Q8764 \diamondsuit QJ \clubsuit A = 21$ by the rule of 20, but only 15 by the rule of 22. PASS. $\spadesuit KQ8764 \heartsuit AQ8764 \diamondsuit 43 \clubsuit 2$ is 21 and 22.5 OPEN!
23/32	Bid	When we own >20 HCP and have no fit, make an OPTIONAL PENALTY DOUBLE with at least 3 trumps at the 2 level and 2 trumps at the 3 level.
26	Bid	If you or partner has a singleton or void, and you can count 26 HCP in the 3 remaining suits, consider bidding slam if not off 2 control cards in one suit.

Point Count Odds



Mel's (Colchamiro) Rule of 6+2:

- [] Minimum 6 HCP
- [] Number of Cards in 2 longest suits, minus
- [] Number of Losers
- [] Is greater than or equal to 2

Where Losers are missing A, K or Q in a Suit.



Penalty Double of 1NT

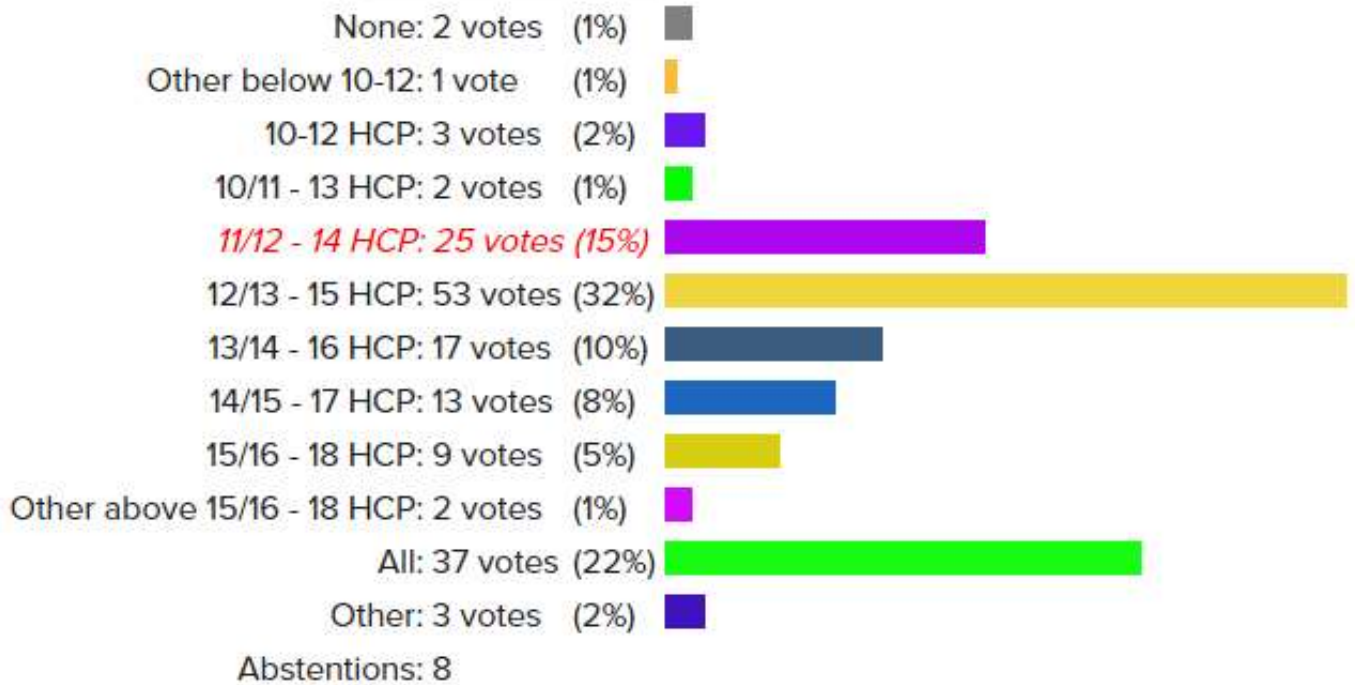
by [Steve Moese](#) June 24



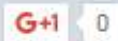
What is the HIGHEST range for which you would choose to play a penalty double over an opponents 1NT opening bid? Choose a range so that that range and all below would have a penalty double by you.

Current Poll Results:

[SEE ALL PUBLIC VOTES](#)



Like



26 Comments

See: <http://bridgewinners.com/article/view/penalty-double-of-1nt/>

Votes for *Penalty Double of 1NT*

None	Ken Rhodes	Martin Dickau	
Other below 10-12	Larry Youell		
10-12 HCP	Mike Bennett	Chen Long	James Newman
10/11 - 13 HCP	Michael Shuster	Josef Blass	
11/12 - 14 HCP	Steve Moese	Matthew Weingar...	David Loeb
	Chris Miller	Ryan Schultz	Joshua Parks
	Darin Campo	Stephen McDevitt	David Libchaber
	Luka Dondovic	Owen Byer	Linda Marshall
	Nicholas France	Thibault Wolf	Mark Moss
	Clyde Kruskal	Cheryl Schneider	Joyjit Sensarma
	Donald Lurie	John Montgomery	Cor Lof
	Dick Lort	Steve Myerson	Luca Marotta
	Sven Neiryndck		

12/13 - 15 HCP

Kit Woolsey	John Diamond	Barry Rigal
Adam Parrish	Bob Heitzman	Martin Wuest
Alan Frank	François "Dellache"	Mike Gill
Frank Lin	Dan Israeli	Ray Yuenger
John Miller	Floyd McWilliams	Bill Shutts
Alex Dezieck	Niko Roemer	Ned Kohler
Ping Hu	Aleksis Zalitis	Steve Chen
Martin Henneber...	Sam Marks	Jim Olson
Daniel Delestre	Eric Sieg	Rosalind Hengev...
Richard Brown	David Kent	Howard Sandler
Hamish Brown	Rasmus Maide	Daniel Lieb
Gene Owens	Jack Donaghue	Collins Williams
Kerry Kappell	David MacRae	Art Korth
Mark Bartusek	Richard Whitehead	John O'Brien
Nick Warren	David Taylor	Julien Christen
Ola Stavas	Rich Rothwarf	Bob Okker
Andrew Sinclair	Bryan Morgan	Martin Bootsma
Andrew Collins	2 private	

13/14 - 16 HCP	Jeff Ford Jeff Lehman W J Sund Nigel Kearney Bob Sebesfi Kevin O'Dea	Greg Herman Neil Silverman Ant Edwards Reid Barton Fiske Warren Patrick Shields	Adam Meyerson Randy Thompson David Cole Bill Kent Christoph F. Eick 1 private
14/15 - 17 HCP	Yehudit Hasin Paul Weinstock Bill March Barry Spector Richard Smith	Phil Clayton Louis Dekker Brad Craig Viorel Nan	Abraham Fisher Dennis Dewit Gregory Gauthier Luke Robison
15/16 - 18 HCP	Michael Rosenbe... Gregory Nowak Mark Lehto	Mark Raphaelson Randy Pearson Stephen Henry	Ian Grant Peter Swensson Tim Mann

Other above 15/16 - 18 HCP	Nikos Stamatiou	Andrew Horton	
All	Yuan Shen Oren Kriegel Aviv Shahaf Andrew Rosenthal Victor Chubukov Gábor Szóts Tracy Brines Ronald Kalf James Lawrence Petter Bengtsson Okan Cakmak John Gillespie 1 private	Steve Bloom Jim Munday Ben Kristensen Kieran Dyke Richard Fleet Tom O'Reilly-Pol John Moschella Jeroen Wieland Jerry Goldberg Paul Huggins Michael Hopkins Robin Barker	Phillip Martin Frances Hinden Zachary Madden Harald Berre Skj... Michael Askgaard Leonard Helfgott Brian Weikle Mark Kaptein Alexander Cook Clive Owen Brian Davies Steve Tyer
Other	Mike Summers-S...	Ig Nieuwenhuis	Alain Jacquet
Abstain	Vicki Gregory Larry Kahn Ross Driedger	Franck Guerrero Ken Cohen Tom Peters	Tanya Rodich Sriram Narasimh...