

The Dead Notrump Defense

By Neil H. Timm

Bidding sequences at the bridge table require specific agreements. Two common sequences one encounters are as follows.

Sequence (1)

Opponent	You	Other Opponent	Your Partner
1x	Pass	1y	pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	X

You have passed and the opponents have bid two suits where the y suit is of higher rank and now your partner Doubles, is the X for Takeout or Penalty?

A common sequence is when x=minor suit and y=major suit.

Bidding sequence (1) was addressed by Billy Miller in his column: The Coolest Gizmos and Gadgets in the April 2011 issue of the “Bridge Bulletin”, Page 59 which he called the Dead Notrump Defense (DND). David Loeb reviewed the defense on the bridge winners’ site on November 3, 2013. Finally, in the March 2023 issue of the “Bridge Bulletin”, Billy again addressed the bidding sequence when asked by a resent reader of the Bridge Bulletin.

Observe that your partner failed to make a negative X or bid another suit after Y’s bid. This suggests that partner has strength in suit Y (with 1/2 controls) and a strong hand with perhaps another side A/K and 14-16HCP.

So, the X is not for takeout but for PENALTY as suggested by Billy Miller. Partner has values in the two bid suits. Partner is to bid (remove the penalty X) only if holding weak hand less than 6HCP and another 6/7-card suit, a hand with low ODR – Offense Defense Ratio.

DND Bid Summary

Pass Penalty X showing strong values in the Opponents bid major with 14-16HCP with 1 or 2 controls in the opponents did major with an outside control and to lead the opponents bid major

2z Bid at the 2-level with a weak hand and a 6/7-card suit

Another common situation is when partner opens 1NT=15-17HCP, the opponent passes, and you hold 10-14HCP with a worthless doubleton major and no 4-card major, what is your bid when you may have the same worthless doubleton major as your partner, the opening 1NT bidder?

Sequence (2)

Partner	Opponent	You	Other Opponent
1NT=15-17	Pass	??	

I addressed bidding Sequence (2) previously when you have a worthless major suit doubleton.

Follow the link:

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/ocala/Vacant%20doubleton%20convention.pdf>

It examines the Vacant (Worthless) Doubleton Convention following the bid of 1NT.