The System for Interfering over the Opponents Strong 1NT Bid?

By Neil H. Timm

Many local club and tournament players use either DONT, Cappelletti, or Meckwell to interfere over the strong 1NT opening bid in the direct seat.

Observe that the DONT system keeps the bidding auction low with no penalty double, Cappelletti includes a penalty double, and Meckwell stresses the importance of the major suits with no penalty double.

When does one interfere? A good guideline (called the Rule of 2) is:with at least 6HCP the sum of the two longest suits – the number of losers should be at least two.

For example: ♠KQ42 ♥7 ♦AJ10543 ♣72; HCP=10>6 and 10length-6losers=4.

What about the hand with the 6-card suit: ♠6542 ♥7 ♦AJ10543 ♣72? NO, it does not have 6HCP although we have that 10-8=2.

Robert Todd in the October and November 2024 issues of the "Bridge Bulletin" discusses the Woolsey system and proposes a modified Landy system for interfering over the opponents strong 1NT bid.

Why? He states that Woolsey allows one to show hands with four, five-, and six-card (or longer) major suits in a manner that allows partner to best determine if the defense has a fit; while Woolsey includes Landy it does not allow one to play a major suit contract by partner.

For this reason, he suggests a Modified Woolsey/Landy system with major suit transfers or two-suited major-minor hands which also includes the penalty double.

Is there a better approach? Yes! It is the **Modified Blooman system** which allows partner to play the contract, shows two-suit hands, and hands with any long 6+card suit; but gives up the penalty double (like DONT) which only works when the opponents have a misfit, and a penalty double allows the opponents to run to a minor suit 2-level contract which they may not have found!

Before I discuss the "Blooman" approach – Let me just review the other common approaches.

DONT (Marty Bergen)

- Double – shows any single suit (6 or more cards); partner bids 2♣*, after which overcaller corrects to his actual suit
- 2♣*, 2♦*, 2♥* – shows the bid suit and any higher-ranking suit (usually 5-5); advancer bids 2NT to find higher ranking suit
- 2♠ – shows spades (6 or more cards)

***=ALERT** (Note that natural bids are not alerted)

There is disagreement as to the use of the 2♠ bids. Some treat it as weaker than the sequence of a double followed by 2♠; others play it as showing a solid spade suit, and there are other agreements possible. Finally, many have added to the original convention that 2NT* is for the minors.

Cappelletti (Mike Cappelletti) also called Hamilton (Fred Hamilton)

- Double – PENALTY
- 2 ♣* shows a one-suited hand (usually 6 or more cards). Partner is expected to:
    - bid 2♦*with a weak hand, which the overcaller can correct to his long suit, or
    - bid 2 of a Major if he has a good 5 or 6 card suits, or
    - bid 2NT* with a strong hand, (overcaller bids the suit)
- 2♦* shows both majors (usually 5-5 – some play it 5-4)
- 2♥*shows hearts and a minor (usually 5-5 – some play it 5-4), 2NT*=asking bid
- 2♠* shows spades and a minor (usually 5-5 – some play it 5-4), 2NT*=asking bid
- 2NT* shows both minor at least 5-5

Modified **Cappelletti** (Origin unknown)

Bid	**Meaning**
Double*	Penalty- some play double as takeout
2♣*	Shows a single long minor or a Major and a Minor; partner bids 2♦*, after which the overcaller bids his major; the advancer can next bid 2NT for the minor
2♦*	Shows both majors as Cappelletti
2♥/ 2♠	Shows the bid suit
2NT*	Shows the minors

Modified DONT (**Meckwell**) **- Jeffrey (*Jeff*) John Meckstroth** and **Eric Rodwell**

Bid	**Meaning**
Double*	Shows a single minor or both majors; partner bids 2♣*, after which the overcaller corrects to his actual suit if a minor, or hearts if holding both majors
2♣/2♦*	Shows the bid suit and a major, as in **DON'T**
2♥/2♠	Shows the bid suit
2NT*	Shows the minors

Woolsey (Kit Woolsey)

- Double – shows a two-suit hand with 4-card major and longer minor partner bids 2♣* to ask for the minor (pass/correct), 2♦* ask for major, or bid 2M to play

- 2♣* - both majors, then 2♦* ask which is better
- 2♥* - hearts and a minor (usually 5-5 – some play it 5-4), 2NT*=asking bid
- 2♥* - spades and a minor (usually 5-5 – some play it 5-4), 2NT*=asking bid
- 2NT* – shows both minors
- 3m/3M - natural

Landy with Transfers (Robert Todd)

Bid	Meaning
Double*	Penalty
2♣*	Both majors (5-5) (Landy)
2♦*	Transfer to 6-card heart suit or 5 hearts with 5-card minor
2♥*	Transfer to 6-card spade suit or 5 spades with 5-card minor
2♠*	Four spades and longer minor
2NT*	Four hearts and longer minor

Looking at hand and suit patterns, two-suited 5-5 hands occur far less frequently than one-suited hands and cards with SIX cards are 3.5 times more frequent. The 5-5 patterns occur about 4% of the time, while a 6-card pattern occurs more that 15% of the time. Thus, we need a convention that shows SIX cards and has the notrump bidder (opener) on lead.

One such convention is what I have called Modified Blooman. It is a modification of BLOOMAN devised by Robert (*Bob*) Hoffman of Boynton Beach, Florida, United States, and Irv Bloom of West Palm Beach Florida. And published in the "Bridge Bulletin", March 2006, page 28.

Modified Blooman (Direct Seat)

Bid	Meaning
Double*	Relay to 2♣ pass with a weak hand 5/6+clubs and PASS or 5-5 in two unknown suits apply Cappelletti rules where 2♦* is majors and 2M* is major-minor (2NT*=ask)
2♣*	Transfer to 6-card diamond suit
2♦*	Transfer to 6-card heart suit
2♥*	Transfer to 6-card spade suit
2♠*	Transfer to 6-card club suit - strong hand
2NT*	Shows the minors (usually 5-5)

If you win the contract, the notrump bidder is usually on lead; you accept the transfer with as few as two cards or partner with a void in the transfer suit may bid his own 5/6-card suit with a strong hand.

What if you have a distributional 6-4 minor-major suit hand, say 6♦ and 4♠? Bid 2♣* to show your 6-card diamond suit and after partner bids 2♦, you may still bid 2♠ to show your 4-card

suit so as not to miss a 4-4 major suit fit at the 2-level (playing Landy with Transfers as illustrated by Todd). However, without a fit you may be forced to play in your minor suit at the 3-level.

In the balancing seat what are your bids for Modified Blooman?

Bid your 6-card suit and use the double as cappelletti with both majors (4-4) or a 5-4 major-minor hand which asks partner to bid 2♣ so you may now show your distribution.

In the balance seat after the opponents open 1NT=15-17 and all have passed, on may interfere if one has a singleton (2 shortness points) but not two doubletons and at least 2 controls (A=2 and K=1 control) or again a "Rule of 2" for both shortness and controls..

Observe that you may use 1-level Modified Blooman bids to interfere over the Strong Precision Club which shows 16+HCP

Double**	Relay to 2♣ 6+ clubs or 5-5 in two unknown suits
1♦*	Transfer to 6-card heart suit
1♥*	Transfer to 6-card spade
1♠*	Transfer to 6-card diamonds suit
1NT*	Shows the minors usually 5-5
2X	A natural 5-card suit with a control