

Lesson Summary for U3ABDa07: Responding to 1NT

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Welcome!

To help clarify some points in this week's lessons, we're giving you this Lesson Summary. It describes the same topics from a slightly different angle to the online lessons, with additional detail where it seems needed.

I hope it helps!

-Ed

Advanced topics

Anything in green is background information or more advanced than you need right now. But if you're keen, it's worth knowing.

Lesson Summary: Responding to 1NT

Last week's lesson and practice introduced you to ACOL bidding by showing how to open a balanced hand with 1NT and respond with a balanced hand, depending on your High Card Points.

This week's lesson builds on last week's it to show how to respond to 1NT when you have a long suit and would prefer to play in a Suit Contract (Trump Contract). You don't have to play in a NT contract just because partner opened 1NT - although you often do. You can persuade partner to play in your suit instead of NT by using a **convention** called **Red Suit Transfers**. Here we go...

Bridge bidding isn't always a cosy chat with your partner, sometimes it's a **negotiation**. But it's still a civilised process, not an argument. You can suggest a suit contract to your partner, but you might not get your way all the time.

Opening 1NT (recap)

If you have a balanced hand and 12-14 High Card Points, you open 1NT.

Responding to 1NT with no long suit (recap)

If you don't have a long suit (5 or more cards) you should probably play in NT, so respond as follows:

- With **0-10** points: **PASS**
- With **11-12** points: bid **2NT**; a **Game Invitation**
- With **13+** points: bid **3NT**

In a later lesson we will show how to respond with a 4-card major suit, by using a convention called Stayman.

Responding to 1NT with a long minor suit

If you have a long **MINOR** suit (5 or more cards) you may want to play in your minor suit, but you should still play in NT, **because minor contracts score quite badly**. Ignore your suit and respond with PASS, 2NT, or 3NT based on your point count.

If you have a **GOOD** minor suit (like AKQxxx) it may be worth extra points in NT, but this can be hard to judge. You saw some examples in last week's practice hands.

Responding to 1NT with a long major suit - Transfers

At last, the meat of today's lesson!

If you have a long **MAJOR** suit (of 5 or more cards) you probably ought to play in that suit, but you don't just bid your suit, because partner (usually) has more points than you, so you don't want their hand to be Dummy, as that would help your opponents by showing them where your high cards are!

To hide the 1NT hand, we get partner to bid the suit we want - making them Declarer - by using a **convention**. When partner opens 1NT, you respond:

- 2D to tell partner to bid 2H
- 2H to tell partner to bid 2S

These bids are called **TRANSFERS**. 2D and 2H are red suits, so these are **RED SUIT TRANSFERS**. Yes, it's a bit daft.

Opener's second bid

What happens next? The 1NT opener **MUST** - and I do mean **MUST** - bid the suit you have requested, so the bidding goes:

- 1NT 2D 2H
or
- 1NT 2H 2S

Hurrah! The transfer has been made, to the suit you asked for (or else).

Responder's second bid - after the Transfer

As responder, you can bid again after the transfer. That's one of the advantages of using a transfer: you have the chance to negotiate! So what do you bid next? It depends on how many points and how many trumps you have.

Note: All these examples show a 2D transfer to 2H, but a 2H transfer to 2S works just the same.

There's a summary on the last page, but read this bit first so you understand the reason for the bidding sequences.

With a weak hand (0-10 points) and a 5-card major

You aren't strong enough for game (10+14 at best), so **PASS**

For example: **1NT 2D 2H PASS**

With a fairly strong hand (11-12 points) and a 5-card major

You aren't strong enough to be sure of game, but if partner has 14 points, game is likely. However, you're not sure whether to play in NT or your suit; partner may only have 2-card support, and a 5:2 fit isn't good. So you bid **2NT**.

For example: **1NT 2D 2H 2NT**

This is a really useful bid, describing your hand very accurately. Partner (the 1NT opener) knows you have 11-12 points and a 5-card major. They can pass, bid 3H or 3NT or 4H depending on their points and fit with your suit. (See **Opener's third bid**.)

With a strong hand (13+ points) and a 5-card major...

You're strong enough to be sure of game, but you're not sure whether to play in NT or your suit; partner may only have 2-card support, and a 5:2 fit isn't good. So you bid **3NT**.

For example: **1NT 2D 2H 3NT**

This is a really useful bid, describing your hand quite accurately. Partner (the 1NT opener) knows you have 13+ points and a 5-card major. They can pass (play in 3NT) or bid 4H if they have at least 3 Hearts. (See **Opener's third bid**.)

With a weak hand (0-9 points) and a 6-card major...

You can give your hand an extra point for your sixth trump, but you still aren't strong enough for game (9+1+14 at best), so **PASS**

For example: **1NT 2D 2H PASS**

With a fairly strong hand (10-11 points) and a 6-card major

You can give your hand an extra point for your sixth trump but you still aren't strong enough to be sure of game. If partner has 14 points, game is likely. This time you are sure of an 8-card trump suit (6:2 or better) so you want to play in your suit. So you bid **3H**.

For example: **1NT 2D 2H 3H**

This is a really useful bid, describing your hand very accurately. Partner (the 1NT opener) knows you have 10-11 points and a 6-card major. They can pass or bid 4H or even bid 3NT (if they have just two little Hearts) - depending on their points and fit with your suit. (See **Opener's third bid**.)

With a strong hand (12+ points) and a 6-card major

You're strong enough to be sure of game, and you are sure of an 8-card trump suit (6:2 or better) so you want to play in your suit. So you bid **4H**.

For example: 1NT 2D 2H 4H

This is the least useful transfer bid. If you have 12+ points your hand is as strong as partner's, so it usually doesn't matter which is on show as Dummy. And you aren't giving partner the choice of playing in 3NT; 4H is a done deal. There's nothing wrong with this bidding sequence, it just doesn't have many benefits.

With a hand like this, there's an argument for going straight to 4H over 1NT, as this gives your opponents less chance to intervene.

Opener's third bid

After opening 1NT and bidding the transfer (e.g. 1NT 2D 2H), opener MAY get a second rebid - if partner didn't pass. There are three sequences to consider:

Sequence	Partner has...	Advice
1NT 2D 2H 2NT	5 Hearts and 11-12 points	With 12-13 points you can pass (to play in 2NT); or, with at least 3 Hearts you can bid 3H (partner will pass). With 14 points, bid 3NT; or, with 3 or more Hearts, bid 4H. 4H usually scores slightly better than 3NT and is a bit safer - especially with a weakness like a doubleton XX. With a GOOD fit in Hearts (4 or 5), you can bid 4H with 12-13 points and some luck...
1NT 2D 2H 3H	6 Hearts and 10-11 points	With 12-13 points you can pass (to play in 3H), even if you only have 2 Hearts. With a GOOD fit in Hearts (4 or 5), you can bid 4H with 12-13 points and some luck... With 14 points, you can bid 3NT or 4H. 4H usually scores slightly better than 3NT and is a bit safer - especially with a weakness like a doubleton XX.
1NT 2D 2H 3NT	5 Hearts and 13+ points	You can pass (to play in 3NT); or, with 3 or more Hearts, bid 4H. 4H usually scores better than 3NT and is a bit safer - especially with a weakness like a doubleton XX

Natural Bids and Conventions

Most bids are **NATURAL** - their meaning is clear and obvious. A **1C** opening bid is natural, it means I've got 4+ Clubs and 12+ points; a **1NT** opening bid is natural, it means I've got a balanced hand and 12-14 points; and so on.

A **CONVENTION** is an agreement to use a specific bid to mean something other than its obvious, natural meaning. A **conventional bid's** meaning is NOT clear or obvious; it needs to be explained. In this lesson you're going to learn about and use the **Red Suit Transfer** convention, which changes the meaning of the 2D and 2H responses to 1NT from the natural, obvious meaning (I've got several Diamonds or Hearts) to this:

- 1NT **2D** means please bid 2H
- 1NT **2H** means please bid 2S

A convention is not a secret, not an attempt to mislead anyone, it's simply re-purposing a bid to make it more useful.

Alerting and Announcing

When you use a conventional bid, your partner must warn your opponents by displaying the **ALERT CARD** - and explain the bid if asked. (In RealBridge, click the **Alert** button near the bottom of your screen.)

Some conventions are used so often that you **ANNOUNCE** them rather than alerting them, and Red Suit Transfers fall into this category. So if partner responds to your 1NT opening bid with 2D, you must announce "Transfer to Hearts"; if they respond with 2H, you must announce "Transfer to Spades".

Why use Transfers?

You might wonder, why not just bid 2H if you want to play in Hearts, or 2S if you want to play in Spades? Good question! Some people do use 2H and 2S like that for a **Weakness Takeout**; partner then passes. We want you to use Red Suit Transfers instead because they offer two big advantages:

- Partner will be Declarer and you will be Dummy. That means partner's hand, which usually has more points, is hidden from the Defence - making their job harder. If you use a Weakness Takeout, the stronger hand is Dummy, so the Defence can see most of your points.
- If you have a decent hand, you can easily carry on bidding after the transfer to negotiate a better contract. If you use Weakness Takeouts, you have to jump to 3H or 3S to show a decent hand, and you've much less room to negotiate.

I love Red Suit Transfers! I think you will too, once you get over the weirdness of it all.

Finding a Major Fit

To make game in a MAJOR (Hearts or Spades), you need at least 25 points and at least EIGHT trumps i.e. eight cards in your trump suit, Hearts or Spades. These might be split evenly (4 in each hand) or not (5-3, 6-2 or even 7-1). When you have this magic number of trumps, we call it a **Fit**.

If you don't have a fit, you may have to play in No Trumps, or a minor suit (Clubs or Diamonds). If you don't have 25 points, you will probably have to settle for a part score.

When your partner opens 1NT, you know they have a **Balanced Hand** and 12-14 **High Card Points**, but a balanced hand can include two, three, four, or even five Hearts or Spades. You know what's in your hand, the purpose of the bidding is to tell partner what you've got and/or find out what they've got – so one of you is in a good position to choose the right contract.

But why are we ignoring the minor suits? To make game in NT (3NT) you need to make nine tricks; to make game in a major (4H or 4S) you need to make ten tricks; to make game in a minor (5C or 5D) you need to make eleven tricks. 11 tricks are a lot harder to make than 10 – and a major game scores a bit more too!

So most of the time we try to play in No Trumps or a MAJOR, because they score more points, more easily!

Shortage Points - and Length Points

When you start bidding, you evaluate your hand by adding up its High Card Points (HCPs): 4 for an Ace, 3 for a King, etc. You need 12-14 HCPs to open 1NT, for example. When you're in a suit contract with a fit (a total of at least 8 trumps) you can add Shortage Points (SPs) because you can make extra tricks by ruffing short suits. Add:

- 3 Shortage Points for a void
- 2 Shortage Points for a singleton
- 1 Shortage Point for a doubleton

(Some people value shortages more than this, but for now, please use these values.)

But you only add Shortage Points to one hand, the one with fewer trumps (called the Short Hand); the other hand will lead its trumps to draw trumps, they won't earn extra tricks by ruffing.

So, in a suit contract, you may have more points than in No Trumps! But remember, to add SPs to your hand:

- You need a trump fit
- You need to play in the suit with a fit
- You need to be the Short Hand

In No Trumps, those SPs disappear and your shortages become a liability not an asset!

The Long Hand (the one with more trumps) can add ONE Length Point for each trump it has over 5; so a 6-card suit earns one Length Point; a 7-card suit earns two - and so on. Unlike shortage points, these do not disappear in a NT contract.

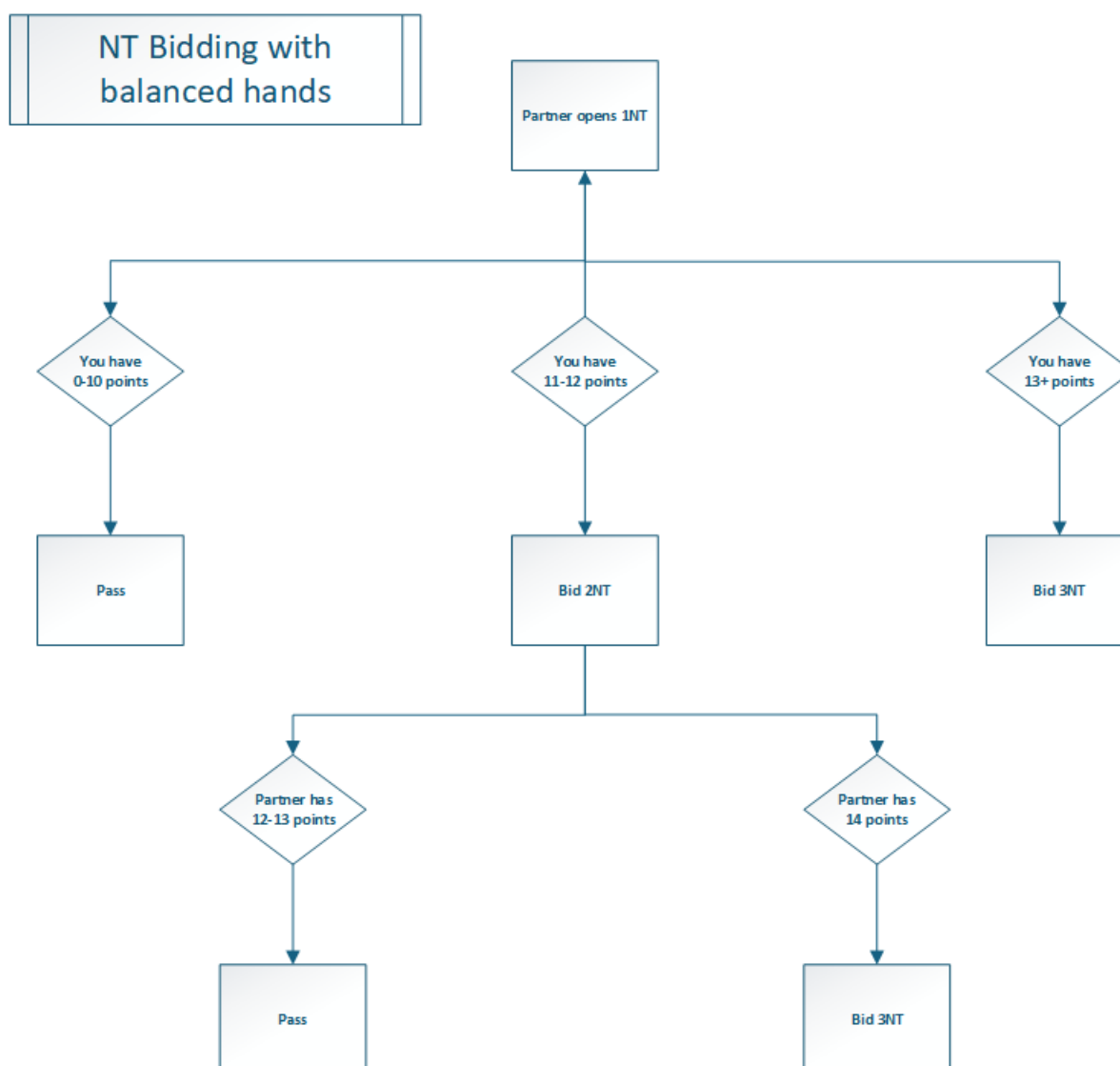
Red Suit Transfers - Summary

Table: Responder's second bid after a transfer

After the transfer has been made, your second bid shows how many trumps you have, and how many points. With a 6-card major, add ONE Length Point to your High Card Points; with a 7-card major, can add TWO.

High Card Points + Length Points	5-card major second bid	6-card major second bid
0-10	pass	pass
11-12	2NT	3H/3S
13+	3NT	4H/4S

Flowchart: Responding to 1NT with a balanced hand



Flowchart: Responding to 1NT with an unbalanced hand

