



## LESSON 8 – Student Notes

# Opening 1NT: 12-14 HCP and a Balanced Hand with transfer responses

Before you open 1 of a suit ... **You must check that you do not have a 1NT opener!**

**Open 1NT on all balanced 12-14 HCP hands no matter where your honours are placed.**

So first, a little revision:

**remember A balanced hand contains:**

- no void
- no singleton
- no more than one doubleton
- may have one 5-card suit but no 'good' 5 card major

**Therefore, there are only 3 shapes of card holdings in balanced hands:**

4333

♠KT93

♥AJ3

♦J96

♣K82

12 HCP

4432

♠KT93

♥AJT3

♦J96

♣K2

12 HCP

3325\*

♠K93

♥AT3

♦T9

♣KQ872\*

12 HCP

\*A balanced hand **may include a 5-card suit** – either a **poor\*** 5 card **MAJOR** or any quality of a 5 card **MINOR** suit.

(\* A **poor 5 card major** is one you would not want to rebid since it holds

fewer than TWO of the FOUR honour cards, - A, K, Q, J, in that suit.)

## A 1NT opening bid is known as a limit bid

What does this mean? What is a limit bid?

All **limit bids** show HCP within a narrow range as in the case of a 1NT opening bid – everyone knows Opener has 12-14 HCP! Everyone also knows opener has a balanced hand!

**So, a 1NT opening bid is a very good example of a limit bid**

It's shape and strength are known!

**A limit bid is not forcing. Responder can pass!**

This means that the responder is **ALWAYS** in charge. **Responder is the BOSS!** Opener only bids again if told or invited to do so by Responder!

## Responses to 1NT Opening

(when Responder holds no 4+ card major)

0 – 10 HCP	<b>PASS</b> .....No GAME possible
11 – 12 HCP.	<b>Bid 2NT</b> .....GAME maybe possible so <b>Invite</b>
13+ HCP	<b>Bid 3NT</b> ..... <b>GAME</b> - your partnership 25 HCP

**Responder adds his HCP to partner's KNOWN 12-14 HCP**  
**Responder does the maths!**

## Conventional BID Responses after a NT Opening Bid

You have already learned about the 2♣ **Stayman Convention**. A bid made by responder holding a **4-card major** PLUS 11+ HCP after partner makes a NT opening bid.

## Now another conventional bid

What if Responder holds a **5+ card major** suit?

Here Responder can use a second **Conventional bid** called **Transfers**.

It is used by Responder when looking for a major suit fit. Unlike the Stayman Convention where Responder needs 11+ HCP to use it, the **Transfer Convention should be used on weak hands as well as strong hands!**

Both **Stayman** and **Transfers** are excellent **Conventional Bids** which are widely used but **ONLY after a NT opener by partner**. You and your partner must agree to use the Stayman and Transfer Conventions.

Responder uses these conventions to explore if the partnership has a major suit fit.

- Normally, playing in a major is preferable to NT, as you have ruffing potential to win extra tricks
- Since NT Opening Bids are **Limit Bids**, you, Responder become the BOSS in your sides bidding within the auction. Your partner, Opener has described his hand quite accurately but you Responder, can hold up to 28 HCPs so you **MUST** take charge.

### REMEMBER:

- **Conventional bids carry specific meanings**
- They are not natural bids in that they **do not show the suit bid**.
- Because of this, **Conventional** bids **MUST** be **alerted**.
- The **Alert card** is shown by the bidder's partner, who is obliged to explain, if asked, what the partnership agreement is for the **Conventional** bid.
- Opponents may ask the player showing the **Alert card** what it means, but **only** when it is their turn to bid
- **Conventional** bids are useful tools enabling a partnership to find the best contract economically

### The Transfer Convention

- Transfers are **ONLY** used by Responder after **Opener bids NT** and **Responder holds a 5+ card major suit**.
- When Responder has a 5 card major he **TELLS** Opener **by bidding the suit below the major in which he holds 5+ cards**.
- **The clue is in the name 'Transfer'** e.g.

### When Responder holds 5+ Hearts:

- Responder bids 2♦ (**Telling** opener he has a 5+ heart suit)
- Opener **MUST alert** this bid – it's a **Conventional Bid** – it doesn't say anything about diamonds!
- Opener **MUST** bid 2♥ - This is a command by Responder! Opener don't think about it – just do it!

e.g. Responder's hand below

♠93  
♥AJ932  
♦J9  
♣K832  
9 HCP

Partner opens 1NT

With this hand Responder bids 2♦ - telling partner he holds a 5 card heart suit

Opener **MUST alert** the 2♦ bid - it says nothing about diamonds!  
It is a **conventional bid!**

Opener **MUST** complete the transfer by bidding 2♥  
Responder knows the partnership have not enough HCP for game and prefers to play in a major suit (14+9 = 24) so will Pass

### When Responder holds 5+ Spades:

- Responder bids 2♥ (**Telling** opener he has a 5+ spade suit)
- Opener **MUST alert** this bid – it's a **Conventional Bid** – it doesn't say anything about hearts!
- Opener **MUST** bid 2♠ - command by Responder!  
Opener don't think about it – just do it!

e.g. Responder's hand below

♠AK983  
♥AJ9  
♦J2  
♣K83

Partner opens 1NT

With this hand Responder bids 2♥ - telling partner he holds a 5 card spade suit

Opener **MUST alert** the 2♥ - it says nothing about hearts!  
It is a **conventional bid!**

Opener **MUST** complete the transfer by bidding 2♠  
Responder knows the partnership have 25+ HCP for game (12+16= 28) so bids 3NT  
Opener can pass with only 2 cards in spades, but with 3+ cards can convert to 4♠

After a 1NT opening bid, Opener **MUST** always **alert** the 2♦ and 2♥ bids made by Responder as **Transfers**.

**Opener MUST always complete the transfer without question! It is a command! No need to think about it – just do it!**

The Transfer Convention:

- Ensures the stronger hand plays the contract and is therefore hidden from opponents!
- Gives two pieces of information about responder's hand in one bid i.e. 5 card major and hand strength

**As mentioned earlier, to use Transfers, Responder to a NT opening bid needs to hold a 5+ card major suit.**

Responder can use Transfers with **any number of points**

♠KJT93

♥AJ3

♦J

♣KT82

13 HCP

With 11+ points, Responder is looking for a **game** contract – either in NT or with a suit fit in the partnership, in a major suit contract – especially if Responder has an unbalanced hand featuring a weak suit as here in diamonds!

but with fewer HCP (0-10), Responder is looking to **'escape'** from a NT contract.

♠JT983

♥J3

♦Q9

♣J982

5 HCP

With only 5 HCP, and an unbalanced hand holding a 5 card major, Responder thinks the partnership will play better in a major than in NT. After the transfer bidding sequence has been completed, Responder would Pass as in this example where 2♠ would be the final contract

**Continuation options for Responder after Opener completes the Transfer sequence:**

e.g. After 1NT – 2♦ or 1NT – 2♥  
2♥ - ? 2♠ - ?

What does Responder do next?

Responder can **Pass with a weak hand** where no game possible

Responder **with more strength can rebid NT** i.e. with

- 11-12 HCP rebid 2NT
- 13+ HCP rebid 3NT

In both these cases Responder is giving Opener a choice – to Pass, or with a major suit fit, convert the contract into a part game or game in the major.

For example, after a 2NT rebid by Responder, Opener can convert it to 3 of the major when holding 3+ cards in the major (5+3=8 a fit) and a minimum opening 1NT bid, or convert to 4 of the major with maximum HCP for his 1NT opening bid (14+11=25)

- Opener will choose to play in NT when only holding only 2 cards in the major.
- Opener can bid 3NT over a 2NT bid with the maximum (14 HCP) or Pass with less than 14 HCP.
- **Do the Maths!**

### **IF THE OPPONENTS INTERFERE....**

Sometimes you will find your opponents will make a bid after you have opened 1NT!



When this happens...as Responder, all bids are now Natural. Do not use Conventional Bids. **This applies to Stayman as well as Transfers**  
Both Responder and Opener need to remember this rule!

### **RESPONDER'S ACTION WHEN PARTNER'S 1NT BID IS DOUBLED (X) OR OVERCALLED BY THE OPPONENTS!**

When the opponents **X** or make a **suit overcall** of your partner, the Opener's INT bid, **all conventional bids are cancelled!**  
Any bid that responder makes after this will be natural

and show the suit bid.

A **X** of a NT contract is almost always for penalties! Your opponents are declaring your 1NT contract will go down and they want to maximise their score by doubling the value of the tricks you lose!

If Responder is very weak and holds a 5 card suit he should bid it to escape the penalty **X**

### **AFTER OPENER BIDS 1NT WHAT DOES RESPONDER DO WITH THIS HAND?**

♠ **T83**  
♥ **QT8**  
♦ **KT872**  
♣ **86**

Pass – not enough for GAME

But if opponents **X** (for penalties!) responder should bid bid 2♦.... to escape 1NTX cobut Opener remember – now 2♦ is to play!

*Test your understanding of The Transfer Convention in the quiz for this lesson, then keep practising it until you feel comfortable with it! Play and practice is the way to master this game!*

### **summary**

- A **balanced hand** has:
  - no voids
  - no singleton
  - no more than one doubleton
  - i.e. is one of these three shapes 4333, 5332, 4432
- **With 12-14 points and a balanced hand, opener bids 1NT**
- Responder's options – Pass, invite to game, or bid game – **Responder - Do the maths!**
- The use of **Conventional** bids after NT opening bids have to be agreed by your partnership
- **Transfer Convention** is **ONLY** used by Responder after **Opener bids NT** and **Responder holds a 5+ card major suit**.
- When Responder has a 5 card major he **TELLS** Opener **by bidding the suit below the major in which he holds 5+ cards**.
- The clue is in the name **'Transfer'** Bidding the suit below your 5 card major suit tells opener to bid the suit above it!
- The need for and how to **alert** conventional bids
- If your opponents make a positive bid i.e. other than passing,

before responder has a chance to bid, Transfers are **NOT** used.  
Responder bids his suits naturally.