



Lesson 8: 1NT Openers & Transfers Hands 1 - 8

Hand 1 Played by North

Lessons from this hand

1. Opening 1NT balanced 12-14 HCP
2. Transfer to hearts holding a weak hand as an 'escape'
i.e. 2♦ promising 5+ cards in hearts
3. Playing honours from the short hand first

None Vul	♠ K 5 ♥ K 9 8 3 ♦ K Q T 2 ♣ Q J 5	Dealer N
♠ A 7 3 2 ♥ 7 5 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ A K T 6	N W E S	♠ Q J T 6 ♥ A 2 ♦ A 9 6 5 ♣ 9 8 7
	♠ 9 8 4 ♥ Q J T 6 4 ♦ J 4 ♣ 4 3 2	

North	East	South	West
1NT(1)	Pass	2♦ (2)	Pass
2♥ (3)	All Pass		

Bidding

- (1) Balanced hand & 14 HCP, opens 1 NT.
- (2) Only 4 HCP, no chance of game. NT would be a disaster BUT with a 5 card heart suit bids 2♦ a transfer to Hearts.

(3) North MUST alert the 2♦ bid (remember it says nothing about diamonds) & completes the transfer by bidding and 2♥ which South is happy to pass! Sometimes limiting the damage is the only option!

Defender Choose Your Opening Lead – East's best lead is top of a sequence, ♠Q

Declarer MUST make a PLAN – needing 8 tricks

In a suit contract declarer counts losers first: 1 spade (on this lead), 1 heart, 1 diamond, 2 clubs = 5 Looks Good!

Declarer plans the play: Win the lead (or its continuation) and start taking out trumps playing ♥K from North (honours from the short hand first.) Continue until ♥A is forced out. Defenders will return to play spades. Declarer will ruff the spade then finish drawing trumps. Now play diamonds from South (honours from the short hand first!), starting with ♦J to force out ♦A. Making your 8 tricks and 2♥ contract.

Score 2♥ by NS = +110 (30 x 2 = 60 + 50 Part game bonus)

In 1NT contract, declarer would have a negative score of -50, but making 8 tricks if in a heart contract which gives a positive score of +110.

Try doing the maths for both these scores. The more you score through calculation rather than by looking at the bidding box, the better you will be able to assess where your bids should end up! Mastering scoring, is an important factor in deciding whether to bid on or not.

For example, both sides are not vulnerable in this hand but were declarer to be vulnerable a shortfall of two tricks would be -200 points!

Hand 2

Played by West

Lessons from this hand

Transfer with a weak hand as an 'escape' from 1NT
Finesse in trump suit & diamonds

Vul NS	<p>♠ K 8</p> <p>♥ K 7 4</p> <p>♦ K J 8 6</p> <p>♣ A 8 5 4</p>	Dealer E
<p>♠ Q 9 3</p> <p>♥ Q T 9 6</p> <p>♦ A T</p> <p>♣ K J 9 2</p>	<p>N</p> <p>W E</p> <p>S</p>	<p>♠ A T 7 5 4</p> <p>♥ J 5 2</p> <p>♦ 7 5 3</p> <p>♣ Q 7</p>
	<p>♠ J 6 2</p> <p>♥ A 8 3</p> <p>♦ Q 9 4 2</p> <p>♣ T 6 3</p>	

East	South	West	North
Pass	Pass	1NT (1)	Pass
2♥ (2)	Pass	2♠ (3)	Pass
Pass (4)	All Pass		

Bidding

(1) Opener bids 1NT balanced 12-14 HCP

(2) Responder knows 1NT will not be a good contract. This is a poor hand for NT with only 5 HCP BUT he does have a 5 card spade suit so Responder bids 2♥ a transfer to spades

(3) **The Transfer bid MUST be alerted by Opener.**

Opener duly bids 2♠. **This is a command by Responder.**

Opener does NOT need to think about it. Just do it!

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(3) East passes thinking Phew! 1NT will only make 6 tricks with best defence and 2♠ makes 8 tricks. Often with East's hand a 1NT contract would be a disaster so East decided to rescue the contract by 'escaping' into 2♠.

Opening Lead: North chooses ♦6- low from an honour.

Defenders should work together to defeat the contract.

Consider the led suit. Observe dummy for weakness.

Declarer MUST make a PLAN

In a suit contract declarer should count his losers first

Possibly, 2 spades ♠KJ, 2 hearts -AK, 1 diamond on this lead, 1 club – the Ace = 5 or 6 losers

Sure Winners: 1 spade, 1 diamond

Work suit: Clubs – you hope will give 3 tricks once ♣A is forced out.

Card Play: Win the ♦ lead on the second round aiming to ruff your losing diamond in dummy before drawing trumps by playing a low club towards the ♣Q. (If defenders take their ♣A and return a diamond you can still ruff it in the short hand.) Now draw trumps. It's better to play 2 finesses when missing 2 honours, So run the ♠Q, which is covered by the ♠K so you win the ♠A and continue playing spades losing only one spade to the ♠J. South may switch to hearts so defenders take their ♥A and ♥K. Win whatever is returned and take out the remaining trump then play your established club and heart winners.

Defenders will take 1 spade, 2 hearts, 1 diamond & 1 club.

Score: 2♠ by EW =+ 110 (2 x 30 = 60) +50 part game bonus

Hand 3

Played by South

Responder bids Transfer first then Invites with 2NT

Opener upgrades and bid game in the major

EW Vul	♠ A Q T 3 2 ♥ Q 5 2 ♦ K 5 2 ♣ 4 2	Dealer S
♠ 9 7 6 5 ♥ A 9 7 4 ♦ Q 9 4 ♣ J T	N W E S	♠ 8 ♥ 8 6 3 ♦ A J T 8 7 ♣ K 9 8 5
	♠ K J 4 ♥ K J T ♦ 6 3 ♣ A Q 7 6 3	

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥ (1)	Pass
2♠ (2)	Pass	2NT (3)	Pass
4♠(4) All pass			

Bidding

1. Transfer to spades
2. Opener duly completes transfer
3. Balanced with 11-12 HCP invites game
4. Opener chooses game in 4♠ with a 5-3 fit, upgrades his hand with ruffing values and potential length winners in clubs.

Opening lead: ♦4 – low from an honour

Declarer **MUST** make a **PLAN**

Count losers: 1 spade possible but only if 5:0 split, 1 heart, 2 diamonds on this lead (♦A must be with East – you know in a suit contract that you never lead away from an Ace!), 0 clubs – if finesse for ♣K succeeds (i.e. if ♣K is with East) works. May be too many! How can you reduce these? Yes, you can ruff a third diamond in the short hand so do that first BEFORE drawing trumps!

Work suit – Hearts – 2 winners once Ace forced out!

Defenders Think about partners lead – low promises an honour. Which honour can it be? Must be the ♦Q as you can see all the others so if declarer doesn't play the ♦K no need to play your ♦A – the ♦J will still win!

Card Play

Ruff the third diamond then draw trumps. After 2 rounds East shows out. Stop and think. You need to keep trumps for any diamond return by the opponents. So, next tackle your work suit hearts. West wins the Ace but luckily for you has no diamonds left to return! Having established heart winners go back to finishing drawing trumps then play your winning hearts. Last of all try the club finesse. Great it works! To give you 2 club tricks! Game made!

Score: 4♠ made 10 tricks for +420 (30x4 = 120 + 300 non-vulnerable game bonus)

Hand 4

Played by West

Transfer, then rebid 3NT, Opener can pass or convert to 4♠

All Vul	♠ Q 8 6 ♥ K Q J 3 ♦ J 7 5 ♣ K 8 5	Dealer W
♠ A K ♥ T 9 5 2 ♦ K T 3 2 ♣ Q T 7	N W E S	♠ T 9 7 3 2 ♥ A 8 ♦ A 8 4 ♣ A J 6
	♠ J 5 4 ♥ 7 6 4 ♦ Q 9 6 ♣ 9 4 3 2	

West	North	East	South
1NT(1)	Pass	2♥(2)	Pass
2♠(3)	Pass	3NT(4)	Pass
Pass(5)			

Bidding

- (1) West opens 1NT balanced 12-14 HCP
- (2) Responder, East shows 5 Spades by bidding a transfer 2♥ **This must be alerted by West.**
- (3) West duly bids 2♠
- (4) East now bids 3NT showing game values
- (5) Opener with only 2 spades knows there is no suit fit so prefers to play in 3NT so passes.

(As it happens East can make 4H or 4S but on best play but 3NT + 1 overtrick gives a better score & is the sensible contract.)

Opening lead: K♥ – top of a sequence of 3 in NT

Declarer MUST make a PLAN

Count Sure Winners: 2 spades, 2 hearts given lead, 2 diamonds, 1 club = 7, need 2 more. Where from?

Work Suit: Spades and clubs (look at the club suit).

Defenders should work together to defeat the contract.

Consider the lead suit, partner promises Q♥ and J♥ – you should continue playing this suit! Also, Observe dummy for weakness

Card play

Declarer, do NOT jump up with your A♥ on the first round – hold up play in NT. You will have to play it on the second round. Now tackle your work suits - Play spades AK and a third spade hoping for a 3:3 split; North wins ♠Q and returns to hearts but now your 4th heart is a winner! Next play clubs, leading small from West playing ♣J from East - hoping ♣K is with North. If it succeeds, return to West with the ♦K and play the ♣Q letting it run unless covered with ♣K by North to make all 3 club tricks.

Score: 3NT+ 1 overtrick = +630 (40 + 3 x 30 = 130 + Vulnerable game bonus of 500)

Hand 5 **Played by South**
Transfer as an 'escape' from 1NT

Vul NS	♠ 8 7 5 ♥ T 9 8 6 2 ♦ 5 ♣ K J T 5	Dealer N
♠ 9 6 2 ♥ A K Q ♦ K Q 6 2 ♣ 7 4 2	N W E S	♠ A Q T 4 ♥ 7 5 ♦ A 8 7 4 ♣ 9 8 3
	♠ K J 3 ♥ J 4 3 ♦ J T 9 3 ♣ A Q 6	

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1NT(1)	Pass
2♦(2)	Pass	2♥(3)	Pass
Pass (4)	All pass		

Bidding

1. South has a straight forward 1NT opening bid
2. North has only 4 points but with a singleton diamond and a 5 card heart suit wants to 'escape' from 1NT so bids a Transfer. **This must be alerted by Opener**
3. Opener, partner, duly obliges by completing the transfer.
4. Responder is happy to pass!

Note: after partner opens 1NT he is not going to bid again – he has described his hand in one bid - unless responder forces it. This is a situation where responder does not need 6+ points to bid! By bidding then passing a transfer, responder is telling partner of his 5-card suit; that he is weak; and that 2♥ is a safer contract than 1NT given North's weakness! (South can make 2♥ but if left to play in 1NT will go 2 down!)

Defenders When a partnership 'escape' a 1NT contract it's due to weakness so it's a good strategy for defenders to lead the trump suit to reduce declarer's ruffing potential?

Declarer MUST make a PLAN

In a suit contract declarer should count his losers first:

3 spades if the top spades are held by West, 3 hearts – AKQ if all in one hand, 1 diamond, 0 clubs – phew- but that's only 4 winning tricks!

Work suit: spades taking a finesse twice (hoping the AQ are both in East's hand) If it succeeds you will win 2 tricks

Card play: Declarer will be at the mercy of defenders here! Defenders should win the first 3 hearts and while observing the singleton diamond in dummy, will continue to play diamonds forcing declarer to use up another of his trumps! Play clubs as soon as you get in (honours from the short hand first) Then try the spade finesse – phew it succeeds! You make your contract winning 4 clubs, 2 spades and 2 trumps!

Score: 2♥ = +110 for N/S (2x30=60+50 for part game score)

Hand 6

Played by East

As an escape!

Vul EW	♠ 7 3 ♥ A 9 5 3 2 ♦ K Q J 9 ♣ A 5	Dealer E
♠ K 9 8 6 4 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ 7 5 ♣ 9 4 3	N W E S	♠ A Q 5 ♥ J T 8 ♦ A T 2 ♣ Q J 7 2
	♠ J T 2 ♥ Q 6 ♦ 8 6 4 3 ♣ K T 8 6	

East	South	West	North
1NT(1)	Pass	2♥ (2)	Pass
2♠ (3)	Pass	Pass (4)	All Pass

Bidding

- 1) East balanced with 12-14 HCP opens 1NT
- 2) West has a weak, unbalanced hand and decides to transfer into Spades so bids 2♥ (alerted by East)
- 3) East duly completes the transfer
- 4) West with only 6 HCP passes, knowing that a suit contract will play better than 1NT.

Opening lead: ♦8 – top of rubbish

Declarer **MUST** make a **PLAN**

In a suit contract declarer should count his losers first:

0 spades, 1 or 2 hearts, 1 diamond, 2 clubs – looks good!

Work suit: After trumps drawn – hearts looks best bet.

Card Play: Win the diamond lead and draw trumps in three rounds and tackle your work suit - hearts

Declarer makes 5 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond and 1 or 2 clubs = 8 possibly 9 tricks

Score: E/W make 2♠ = 110 (30 x 2= 60 +50 part game bonus). + 1 overtrick = +140

Hand 7

Played by West

Opening 1NT

Bidding a transfer then bidding a second suit

Opener bids game in major suit spades with a fit

All Vul	<p>♠ 9 6</p> <p>♥ 9 6 4</p> <p>♦ Q T 6 5</p> <p>♣ K Q 5 2</p>	Dealer S
<p>♠ Q 7 4 3</p> <p>♥ K Q 8</p> <p>♦ J 9 8</p> <p>♣ A J 6</p>	<p>N</p> <p>W E</p> <p>S</p>	<p>♠ A K 8 5 2</p> <p>♥ A J 5 3</p> <p>♦ 7 2</p> <p>♣ T 3</p>
	<p>♠ J T</p> <p>♥ T 7 2</p> <p>♦ A K 4 3</p> <p>♣ 9 8 7 4</p>	

South	West	North	East
Pass	1NT (1)	Pass	2♥ (2)
Pass	2♠ (3)	Pass	3♥ (4)
Pass	4♠ (5)		

(1) West bids 1NT 12-14 HCP balanced

(2) East with opening HCP and 5:4 in the majors should make a transfer bid first then rebid his 4-card major. Opener should work this out! East bids 2♥ - a transfer to show his 5-card spade suit

(3) West **must alert the transfer** – it's a command for Opener to bid 2♠

(4) East now shows his second suit by bidding 3H

(5) West now knows the partnership has a suit fit in spades and good cards in hearts as well so bids game in spades

(As it happens EW can make 3NT and 4H or 4S!)

Opening lead: ♣K top of an honour sequence of two

Declarer MUST make a PLAN

In a suit contract declarer should count his losers first:

0 spades (unless a 4:0 split with all missing spade cards in South), 0 hearts, 2 diamonds, and 1 club = 3 looks good!

Work suit: hearts

Card Play:

Win the lead, draw trumps in two rounds and tackle hearts playing honours from the short holding first!

Score: E/W make 4♠ = +620 (4x 30 = 120 + 500 **vulnerable** game bonus)

Hand 8 Played by North

Opening with a balanced 12-14 HCP

Responding with 2x 5 card majors: transfer to spades, first then rebidding game in hearts

Opener has choice - pass 4♥ or convert to 4♠

None Vul	♠ A K 2 ♥ A 9 ♦ Q 9 7 4 ♣ J 6 5 4	Dealer W
♠ 6 3 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ T 3 2 ♣ Q 9 8 7 3	N W E S	♠ T 9 8 ♥ T 6 2 ♦ A 8 6 5 ♣ A T 2
	♠ Q J 7 5 4 ♥ Q J 8 5 3 ♦ K J ♣ K	

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT (1)	Pass	2♥ (2)
Pass	2♠ (3)	Pass	4♥ (4)
Pass	4♠ (5)	All Pass	

Bidding

(1) Opener bids 1NT balanced 12-14 HCP

(2) Responder has 13HCP so knows game is on but wants to tell opener he has 2 x 5 card majors so initiates a transfer to spades by bidding 2♥

(3) The Transfer bid **MUST** be alerted by Opener. Opener duly bids 2♠ This is a command by Responder. Opener does NOT need to think about it. Just do it!

(4) Responder makes a jump rebid 4♥ giving Opener a choice of game contracts between 4♥ & 4♠ (To open 1NT opener has at least 3 in one of the majors so a suit fit) Responder's rebid shows at least 13 points, thus saying 'partner we hold 25 HCPs between us' so must be in game. (4) Opener, holding 3 cards in spades chooses 4♠

Opening Lead: a trump ♠T – yes, a trump - top of a sequence is a safe lead Note: Cannot lead diamonds nor clubs. NEVER lead away from an Ace in a suit contract! And hearts aren't good either given the bidding!

Defenders should work together to defeat the contract.

Try to communicate; observe dummy for guidance on play.

Declarer MUST make a PLAN

In a suit contract declarer should count his losers first: 0 spades, possibly 1 heart if finesse fails, 1 diamond - ♦A, 1 club = 3. Looks good!

Winners: 5 spades, 1 heart, 0 diamonds & 0 clubs = 6 need 4 more. Where from? Hearts will give 4 tricks

Work suit: Hearts – once ♥A forced out = 4 winners

Plan. Win the lead, draw trumps then work on hearts to set up extra winners

Card Play: Draw trumps and implement your plan letting ♥Q run unless the ♥K played by West. Continue playing hearts till ♥K forced out. Defenders should win 1 diamond and 1 club and 1 heart.

Score: NS make 4♠ = +420 (4 x 30 = 120 + 300 non-vulnerable game bonus)