



Limit Responses in NT

There are three possible responses in no-trump to an opening bid of one of a suit.

1NT is a **weak response**. It shows 6-9HCP

2NT is a **limit bid**. It shows 10-12HCP and invites partner to bid game unless he is minimum

3NT is also a **limit bid**, but partner should pass unless he is **very strong** or **extremely distributional**

As responder your duty is to help the partnership in its search for the best contract.

You should try to find a 4-4 major suit fit if that is a possibility. (This is why we use Stayman over 1NT)

When partner opens 1♣/♦/♥/♠ a response in no-trump **denies** 4 cards in a major you can bid at the 1-level.

West East
1♥ 1NT

East denies a 4-card spade suit

West East
1♦ 1NT

East has no 4-card major

West East
1♠ 1NT

East may have 4 hearts

(Similarly, when partner opens one of a minor and you raise the minor you **deny** a biddable four-card major)

Further Bidding after a Weak Response of 1NT

If opener has a **balanced hand** he should choose to play in no-trump.

After eg 1♥ - 1NT

Pass with 15-16HCP and a balanced hand

Bid 2NT (game invitational) with 17-18HCP balanced

Bid 3NT with 19HCP balanced

If opener has an **unbalanced hand** he may investigate the possibility of playing in a suit contract instead.

He can look for a fit in a second suit **provided partner can have support for it**.

West East
1♥ 1NT

2♣/♦

West shows a second 4-card suit, **therefore longer hearts**.

(East has already denied four spades, so with 4-5 in the majors generally pass 1NT.)

East can pass the new suit, or raise it with 4-card support.

With 3 hearts East bids 2♥, giving **preference** to the known 8+card fit.

With a doubleton heart and 2/3♣/♦ he can give **false preference** to 2♥

(his side has at least 7 hearts, the same number of trump as the 4-3 fit, and the false preference gives partner the chance to bid again if he has something more to say.)

3♣/♦

these are very strong bids, **forcing to game**. A hand very nearly worth an Acol 2

Responder **must** bid again. He can raise the second suit with 4-card support

Or bid 3NT with a maximum 1NT bid and good stoppers in both unbid suits

Or return to the first suit as a **waiting bid** to see what partner does next

2♥

rebidding your own suit normally promises 6-cards.

(with 5-3-3-2 you simply pass, with 5-4-3-1 bid your second suit)

Responder should not argue with this bid: pass, even with a singleton

3♥

the jump rebid is a **limit bid**, showing about 16-18HCP and **inviting** game in your suit.

It **promises** at least a 6-card suit

Responder can pass with a minimum, even if he has a singleton in your suit

If he is maximum he can raise to game with a doubleton or bid 3NT.



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The Invitational Response of 2NT

The 2NT response also denies a 4-card major you could bid at the 1-level.

It strongly suggests that you see no prospect of a 4-4 fit in a major.

When there is any possibility of finding a major suit fit prefer to respond in a suit.

West East

1♠ 2NT East will normally be completely balanced (4-3-3-3); he should not have four hearts
With 4-4-3-2 including four hearts bid a 4-card minor: that gives partner the chance to bid
2♥ if he has four hearts also
(NB, because it takes the bidding so high a 2♥ response to 1♠ promises a 5+-card suit)