



## Lesson 7 - Teacher Notes

### Balanced Hands & Stayman

#### At the end of lesson 7 students will be able to

- State the requirements to open the bidding 1NT.
- Identify Responder's bidding options following a 1NT opening bid.
- Describe and use the Stayman Conventional Bid made by Responder ONLY after partner's NT opening bid.
- Explain why and by whom Conventional Bids are Alerted.

#### Lesson Content

##### What is a balanced hand?

12 - 14 HCP and a Balanced Hand i.e.

No voids

No singleton

Only 1 doubleton

In general no 5 card major suit

All 1NT hands are balanced the suits being 4333, 4432, 5332.

The 5 card suit in a 1NT hand can be a major suit but only if it is has fewer than 2 honour cards from (A, K, Q, J.)

A 1NT hand cannot have a 5 card and a 4 card suit.

A 1NT opening bid is called a **Limit Bid**. Opening 1NT is a special case.

Limited to 12-14 HCP and for the first time, opener's bid shows defined shape and strength. Therefore, it is called a "limit bid"

#### Main Points to Emphasise

1NT is limited in HCP range and the shape is known, therefore the responder is usually in charge. **Responder is the Boss!**

Stress that opener's first priority is to open 1NT if possible.

It's the cornerstone of the bridge system being taught and 1NT is the most common 1-level opening bid.

Explain that the 1NT opening hand though "weak" has POWERFUL pre-emptive value.

## Responding to NT Opening Bids

Natural Responder's bids	0-10 HCP - Pass, 11-12 HCP - Invitational and 13+ HCP - Game
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### But if responder holds 11+ hcp + a 4 card major

#### Responder's actions - 2 decisions to consider

1. Are you happy to play in NT or do you want to play in a suit?
2. Have you enough HCP to bid or invite game?

#### Introduce the Stayman Conventional Bid

This is a very useful tool in looking for a major suit fit – the preferred game contract.

Stress this convention is ONLY used after an NT opening bid by your partner.

#### Explain the concepts underpinning the Conventional Bids: Stayman

Stress that since Opener has made a **limit bid** Responder takes control of the Auction when using these Conventions

Encourage students to do the maths!

Declarer play - refer students back to lessons on declarer play strategies in NT contracts.

Cover both responder's actions and opener's rebid options.

Use examples of where the Stayman Convention is aimed at game ambitions.

Draw the student's attention to the fact that the Stayman Convention ensures that opener's hand, usually the stronger hand, is kept off the table.

Emphasise that the 2♦ denial from Opener to Responder's 2♣ Stayman enquiry is also a conventional response so requires alerting

**Alerting Conventional bids** – covered in the relevant slide tutor to determine exact use.

### Something to mention for later in the course...

Bidding auctions are not contested by your opponents this term, but in real life at the bridge table this is not the norm! So, if Opener bids 1NT and his left-hand opponent who is next to bid makes any positive bid (i.e. does not Pass), Responder should NOT use Stayman but instead bid his suits naturally! All systems are off!

## Defence Card Play in a NT contract

### Opening lead - The Rule of 11

Explain why the lead of the **4<sup>th</sup> highest or 4<sup>th</sup> best of your longest suit** is a great lead in NT. Defenders' work suit!

Partner should return this suit whenever he can. Your side hope to win tricks in this suit!

## 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 HCP and a balanced hand, opener bids 1NT**
- Responder's options – Pass, invite to game, or bid game – **Responder - Do the maths!**
- Natural vs **Conventional** bidding after NT opening bids
- **Stayman**: The 2♣ Stayman Bid **Asks** partner 'Do you have a 4-card major?'
- Opener bids 2♦ with no 4-card major
- The need for and how to **alert** conventional bids
- A good opening lead in a NT contract by defenders is the **4<sup>th</sup> best from your longest & strongest suit**
- Everyone at the table should use the **Rule of 11** to work out the 'best' card to play!
- If your opponents make a positive bid i.e. other than passing, before responder has a chance to bid, Stayman is **NOT** used. Responder bids his suits naturally.