

1NT Overcall Strategy

Strong vs Weak Notrump Ranges

If your partnership decides to play two different systems ~ one against a Strong Notrump and a Weak Notrump, then make sure to define which a 1NT opener is Strong or Weak.

- Strong Notrump: If your opponents are playing a strong notrump which is defined as any range including 16 HCP, then it is not necessary for a double to be for penalties.
- Weak Notrump: if your opponents are playing a weak notrump defined as any range with a top range of 15, then you may want to consider modifying your system or playing a different system which allows for a double to be for penalties.

Suit Length vs Strong or Weak Notrump Ranges

Suit length is very important when competing against a 1NT opening bid in the Direct Seat. The theory is that Direct Seat is the most vulnerable seat in which to bid because Responder is unlimited. It is too easy to double for penalties and collect a big score! Be sure to overcall with the following shaped hands:

- Single Suited Hands ~ Defined as at least a 6-card suit or longer.
- Two Suited Hands ~ Defined as at least 5-5 in two suits.
 - Exception ~ a minimum 5-4 with a side-suit singleton or void.
 - Example Shapes ~ 5-4-3-1 or 5-4-4-0 with any combination of suit order.

If the 1NT opener is vulnerable, then pass close hand shapes and points.

If the 1NT opener is non vulnerable, then bid like crazy!

Hand Strength for Penalty Doubles

If your partnership decides that a double is for penalty, then follow these HCP guidelines:

- Against a Strong Notrump Opener
 - Penalty Double with 14+ HCP.
 - Overcall with 6-13 HCP or less.
- Against a Weak Notrump Opener
 - Penalty Double with 15+ HCP.
 - Overcall with 5-14 HCP.

Popular Conventions vs 1NT Opening Bids with Responses

Landy 2♣

Landy 2♣ is the oldest defense against a 1NT opening bid. The suggested use is against Strong or Weak 1NT opening bids.

1NT

Double = Penalty

2♣ = Majors

Pass = 6+ Clubs and less than three hearts or spades.

2♦ = 6+ Diamonds and less than three hearts or spades.

2♥ or 2♠ = Preference with 0-10 total points or 3-card support.

2NT, 3♣, 3♦ = Natural with 11-12 total points.

3♥ or 3♠ = Preference with 11-12 total points or 4-card support.

3NT = To Play.

4♥/4♠ Preference with 13+ total points or 5-card support.

2♦ = 6+ Diamonds.

2NT = Both Minors.

3♣/3♦ = Preferences with 0-10 total points or 2-3-card support.

3NT = To Play based on tricks.

4♣/4♦ = Preference with 11-12 total points or 4-card support.

5♣/5♦ = Preference with 13+ total points or 5-card support.

Hello ~ Popular in the South Eastern States and is used against Strong and Weak 1NT Opening Bids. It allows for all one and two-suited hands to be shown and allows for one-suit hands to be shown as a transfer bid retaining the strong hand as declarer.

1NT

Double = Penalties

2♣ = Diamonds OR a Major/Minor Two Suiter

2♦ = To Play or bid major to show two-suited hand with unspecified minor.

2♦ = Transfer to Hearts

2♥ = Both Majors

Pass = Heart preference with 0-10 total points.

2♠ = Spade preference with 0-10 total points.

2♠ = 6+-card spade suit.

2NT = Transfer to Clubs

3♣ = Both Minors

Pass = Club preference with 0-10 total points.

3♦ = Diamond preference with 0-10 total points.

3♦ = Both Majors

3♥ or 3♠ = Preference with 11-12 total points or 4-card support.

3NT = To Play.

4♥/4♠ Preference with 13+ total points or 5-card support.

Cappelletti (East Coast) or Hamilton (West Coast)

Cappelletti is a very popular convention created by two top players who lived on different coasts (before internet). The names are used interchangeably ~ especially in the middle of the country! Partnerships often choose this system against Strong and Weak 1NT opening bids and especially against the Weak 1NT opening bid because Double is for penalties!

1NT

Double = Penalties

2♣ = Undefined 6+-card suit.

Pass = 6+ clubs

2♦ = Asking for Partner's long suit.

2♥/2♠ = 6+-cards in bid suit.

2NT = Natural with 11-12 total points.

3NT = To Play with chances at taking 9 tricks.

2♦ = Both Majors

2♥ or 2♠ = Preference with 0-10 total points or 2-3 trumps.

3♣/3♦ = 6+-cards in bid suit with 11-12 total points.

3♥ or 3♠ = Preference with 11-12 total points or 4-card support.

3NT = To Play with 13+ total points or chances for 9 tricks.

4♥ or 4♠ = Preference with 13+ total points or 5+-card support.

2♥ = Hearts and an Unknown minor with 5+-5+ shape.

Pass = Heart Preference with 0-10 total points.

2♠ = 6+-card suit with less than 3 hearts and no interest in either minor.

2NT = Artificial asking for partner's minor suit.

3♥ = Heart preference with 11-12 total points or 4-card support.

3NT = To Play with 13+ total points or chances for 9 tricks.

4♥ = Preference with 13+ total points or 5+-card support.

2♠ = Spades and an Unknown minor with 5+-5+ shape.

Pass = Spade Preference with 0-10 total points.

2NT = Artificial asking for partner's minor suit.

3♠ = Spade preference with 11-12 total points or 4-card support.

3NT = To Play with 13+ total points or chances for 9 tricks.

4♠ = Preference with 13+ total points or 5+-card support.

2NT = Both Minors

3♣/3♦ = Preferences with 0-10 total points or 2-3-card support.

3NT = To Play based on tricks.

4♣/4♦ = Preference with 11-12 total points or 4-card support.

5♣/5♦ = Preference with 13+ total points or 5-card support.

DON'T ~ Disturb Opponents' Notrump

This is a modern defense to a 1NT opening bid used often against Strong and Weak 1NT opening bids.

1NT

Double = Undefined 6+-card suit.

2♦ = Artificial asking partner's long suit.

2♥/2♠ = 6+-cards in bid suit.

2NT = Natural with 11-12 total points.

3NT = To Play with chances at taking 9 tricks.

2♣ = Clubs and a higher suit.

Pass = Club preference with 0-10 total points.

2♦ = Asking for partner's major suit.

2NT = Natural with 11-12 total points.

3NT = To Play with chances at taking 9 tricks.

2♦ = Diamonds and an unknown major.

Pass = Diamond preference with 0-10 total points.

2♥ = Asking for partner's major suit.

2NT = Natural with 11-12 total points.

3NT = To Play with chances at taking 9 tricks.

2♥ = Hearts and Spades

Pass = Heart preference with 0-10 total points.

2♠ = Spade preference with 0-10 total points.

2♠ = 6+-card Spade Suit

2NT = Both Minors

3♣/3♦ = Preferences with 0-10 total points or 2-3-card support.

3NT = To Play based on tricks.

4♣/4♦ = Preference with 11-12 total points or 4-card support.

5♣/5♦ = Preference with 13+ total points or 5-card support.

Meckwell vs Strong 1NT Opening Bid – Most Popular Amongst Expert Players

Meckwell allows your partnership to enter with more combinations of suits, and more total hands than any other system. DON'T is similar, but not the same. If your partnership decides to play Meckwell, make sure to understand the Advancers bids...those are tricky!

Strong vs Weak 1NT Bids

If the opponent's 1NT contains 16 HCP, then it is a strong 1NT opening bid. Examples of Weak 1NT opening bids: 10-12, 11-14, 13-15. You would like to have a penalty double available against a Weak 1NT opening bid. Therefore, consider playing a Modified Meckwell System Below against a Weak 1NT.

1NT

Double = Single-Suited Clubs or Diamond OR Both Majors OR Good Spades.

2♣ = Artificial ~ Which hand do you hold?

Pass = Single-Suited Clubs.

2♦ = Single-Suited Diamonds.

2♥ = Both Majors.

2♠ = 13+ total points with 6+ spades.

2NT = 18+ total points, usually with a 6+-card minor suit.

3♣ = Strong club overcall with 7+-card suit and shortness.

3♦ = Strong diamond overcall with 7+-card suit and shortness.

3♥ = 6+-card heart suit asking partner to bid game with one honor.

3♠ = 6+-card spade suit asking partner to bid game with one honor.

3NT = Solid 7+-card minor plus stoppers in the side suits.

4♥ = Two-Suit Majors 6-5 shape or better.

East ♠ J92 ♥ 432 ♦ A ♣ KQJ975 X, Then Pass	East ♠ 4 ♥ AJ2 ♦ AKJ9432 ♣ 874 X, Then 2♦	East ♠ AQ843 ♥ AJ743 ♦ 84 ♣ 9 X, 2♥	East ♠ AKJ753 ♥ KJ ♦ A92 ♣ 76 X, Then 2♠	East ♠ AQ ♥ K4 ♦ Q98 ♣ AQJ976 X, Then 2NT
East ♠ K9 ♥ 8 ♦ K76 ♣ AQ87432 X, Then 3♣	East ♠ K9 ♥ KQJ8743 ♦ A ♣ Q42 X, Then 3♥	East ♠ A8 ♥ K7 ♦ Q10 ♣ AKJ6432 X, Then 3NT	East ♠ AKJ875 ♥ KQJ643 ♦ 8 ♣ ---- X, Then 4♥	

1NT

2♣/2♦ = Two-suited hand with the minor bid plus one of the two majors. Either suit may be longer. Learning what hands to overcall with take practice and here are the guidelines:

- 5-5 Shape ~ Overcall with as little as 8 total points if the HCPs are in your suit.
- 5-4 Shape or 4-5 Shape ~ Overcall with 11+ total points.
- 4-4 Shape ~ 13+ total points.
- In the Balancing Seat ~ All bets are off. Find a reason to bid, especially if you hold a singleton or void. If you do not bid in the balancing seat, your partner will always lead your singleton!

North East

1NT 2♣ = Clubs and a Major
 2♦ = Asks for the major.
 2♥/2♠ = 6+-cards in suit bid.
 2NT = Asks for 5-card major. 11+ TPS

East	
♠ 8	
♥ KJ75	
♦ J109	
♣ AQ642	
	2♣

East	
♠ 5	
♥ KJ987	
♦ Q7	
♣ K10982	
	2♣

North East South West
 1NT 2♣ Pass ?

West	
♠ KJ8	
♥ 10974	
♦ Q874	
♣ 98	
	2♦ =
	Asks for Major

West	
♠ 86	
♥ 10984	
♦ QJ987	
♣ 53	
	Pass!

West	
♠ K86543	
♥ K4	
♦ 1098	
♣ 53	
	2♠ = NAT

West	
♠ AQ5	
♥ KJ4	
♦ A53	
♣ 10985	
	2NT = Asks for
	5-card major

North East

1NT 2♦ = Diamonds and a Major
 2♥ = Pass or Correct
 2♠ = 6+ Spades
 2NT = Asks for 5-card major. 11+ TPS

East	
♠ 64	
♥ KQ854	
♦ K10872	
♣ 7	
	2♦

East	
♠ AQ42	
♥ 8	
♦ KQ854	
♣ 654	
	2♦

North East South West
 1NT 2♦ Pass ?

West	
♠ 102	
♥ J854	
♦ K10983	
♣ 64	
	Pass

West	
♠ K95	
♥ K954	
♦ 104	
♣ 97432	
	2♥

1NT

2♥/2♠ = Natural with a 6+-card suit and at least 11+ total points in Direct Seat. The fewer the points, the more the distribution. In the Balancing Seat, bid, bid, bid!

North East
1NT 2♥/2♠

East	
♠ Q10	
♥ AKJ864	
♦ 10987	
♣ 3	
	2♥

East	
♠ KQ8654	
♥ 5	
♦ A987	
♣ 75	
	2♠

Interference by Responder (After Partner's Overcall or Double)

This is all great, but what if that rude Responder ACTs (instead of passes) over my partner's overcall of 1NT? How do I find out which hand types my partner holds?

North East South West
1NT X XX ?

- Pass = Noncommittal ~ Partner will bid his hand.
- All suit bids are natural. The opponents are trying to scalp us, it's every person for themselves!

West	
♠ 643	
♥ 8543	
♦ Q76	
♣ 965	
	Pass

West	
♠ 53	
♥ 10987542	
♦ 75	
♣ 53	
	2♥

North East South West
1NT X 2♥ ?

- Pass = I'm ok if we stay out of the bidding!
- Double = Asks Partner to describe their hand. This shows 10+ total points and acts as a Responsive Double.

West	
♠ 943	
♥ K643	
♦ 865	
♣ 752	
	Pass

West	
♠ A75	
♥ Q109	
♦ J86	
♣ K843	
	X

Interference over 2♣ or 2♦ ~ The “Gay” Double!

North East South West

1NT 2♣/2♦ Bid ?

- Pass = I’m ok if we stay out of the bidding!
- Double = Asks Partner to bid their major. This is not a Penalty Double!
 - If East passes, it means they are ok with defending.

North East South West

1NT 2♣/2♦ X ?

- Pass = To Play.
- XX ~ Let’s try your other suit.
- 2♦, 2♥, 2♠ = 6+-cards in the bid suit.

West	
♠	Q75
♥	J10
♦	87543
♣	754
Pass	

West	
♠	K76
♥	543
♦	109864
♣	J4
XX	

West	
♠	1054
♥	KJ6542
♦	754
♣	8
2♥	

Major Note: After a Natural 2♥ or 2♠, X = penalty doubles of non-forcing bids by opponents. We do not need a Gay Double because partner’s 2Major overcall only has one natural meaning.

Modified Meckwell Over Weak Notrump

1NT (Weak ~ Less than 16 HCP) If the range includes 16 HCP, then it is a Strong 1NT. The problem with Meckwell vs a Weak 1NT opening bid is that we need double to be for penalty.

North East

1NT ?

- X = Penalty
- 2♣ = Both Majors
- 2♦ = Diamonds and a Major
- 2♥ = 6+ Hearts
- 2♠ = 6+ Spades
- 2NT = Both Minors

Club Note: You must give up showing Clubs and a Major