

The Revision Club System
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PART III - The One Notrump Opening

What is the “correct” range for a 1NT opening? I have already said, elsewhere in this book, that there is no one range that can be shown to be clearly better than any other. By that I mean that if you were to sit down to fill out a blank convention card and start with the 1NT opening, you wouldn’t gain or lose much by writing down anything within reason. The preemptive notrump, 10-12 being the lowest range playable in the ACBL, works well enough (at certain vulnerabilities and in certain positions). Various weak notrumps, like the 11+ to 14 of Kaplan-Sheinwold, are playable. So is the “medium” notrump of 14-16 or thereabouts, used most of the time by Meckwell. Then there are various varieties of strong notrumps, and even “super-strong” ones.

Determining your “correct” notrump range can only be done with reference to the other methods you are going to play. K-S uses weak because the rest of the system is built to take it into account. K-S without the weak notrump doesn’t exist. It is therefore the correct range — *for that system*. I say that the only correct range for Revision is 16-18. This is because after a 1D or 1H opening, opener can rebid 1NT with up to 15 points if he has appropriate shape, and some of these shapes are unbalanced (and therefore cannot be included in the 1NT opening). Holding Q/A9xx/Jxx/AKJxx in a world championship match, Alan Sontag, playing Precision with Peter Weichsel, opened 1D and rebid 1NT after a 1S response. We would do the same. Since we are going to be rebidding 1NT with some 15 counts anyway, it would be redundant to define the 1NT opening in such a way as to overlap that range. The next range up from the 12 to 15 covered by the one-of-a-suit openings is 16-18, so that is available for the 1NT opening. And it so happens that this is a problem hand for big club systems, if that range is *not* assigned to the 1NT opening. When you open 1C, the opponents often interfere. Partner may be under pressure to force to game with slightly less than the usual values when the auction gets competitive. He is hoping you have something extra. We always do, because when our 1C opening is minimum in high cards, it has some distribution. It is not a 4333 16 count. This helps a great deal.

Opening 1NT with 16-18 doesn’t just take a lot of the pressure off of the 1C opening. It also works better on the hands where you actually do open 1NT (as opposed to 1C followed by a 1NT rebid, the way people who play Precision with weak notrump openers bid them). If you open 1C with minimum balanced hands and the opponents interfere, bad things start to happen. Partner does not know, at least right

away, that your hand is as bad as it could be for a strong club. It is all very well to say that he should assume this until it is proven otherwise, but he still doesn't know, and assuming is not the same as knowing. And don't think opener can always clear things up by rebidding a minimum number of notrump at his next turn. For one thing, what is he supposed to do if he doesn't have a stopper in the suit they overcalled, which partner has doubled for takeout? Bid a suit instead? Great, now he's bidding a four-card suit when partner will expect five, and he is doing it with a minimum 1C opener. Trust me, it is better to get these hands off your chest right away by opening 1NT (or even 2NT, with the 19-20 point ones).

Here is an example of what can happen when you don't play my way. In the 2000 World Championship, a deal came up where North (the dealer) held AKJx/Axx/Qx/A8xx. Hmm, not too bad, you say. An 18 count instead of only a 16, nice spades. What bad thing can happen if your system says you are supposed to open 1C and rebid 1NT with this hand? Well, partner's hand was Q9/Qxxx/K9xx/109x. In the England-Italy match, Burn opened 1C, strong. The auction went: 1C-(2C), X-(P), 2NT-(P), 3C-(X), 3S-(P), 3NT. Down two when the hearts proved foul. Now, you may say that Burn and Callaghan were not the strongest partnership in the world. Better players using a strong club system wouldn't have done that. Well, it so happens that the North-South players at the other table of this match were Dano De Falco and Guido Ferraro, who were also using a strong club system. Do you consider them a better partnership? Here is how they bid the same hands: 1C-(2C), P-(P), X-(P), 3C-(P), 3S-(P), 4D-(all pass). No, I am not joking. You can find the deal on page 172 of the Maastricht 2000 world championship book. Of course, we would open the North hand 1NT and play it right there, making, and if East cared to overcall 2C, he would play it right there for down three or four. Never a problem for us.

I realize that both N-S pairs in the actual match could have been playing better methods for coping with interference over a 1C opening, or they could have done a better job of using their actual methods, but the fact is that when it counted, they didn't. (In case you are thinking that Burn and Callaghan didn't do so badly, since it is normal to get to 3NT with a combined 25 count, my reply is that neither one of them knew that the other wasn't a point or two lighter. In their system, 1C could have been only a balanced 16. They would have bid the same way if opener had had a 16 or 17 count, giving them a combined 23 or 24. Similarly, responder's double of 2C showed "some values," presumably meaning something like 5-7, so that he could also have been a point or two lighter, while they still would have gotten to at least 2NT. And of course, regardless of point count, they did not get anywhere near defending 2C, which is the right decision for them to make.) While this is the most dramatic example I have seen of how things can go wrong when you open 1C with a minimum balanced hand, it

is far from being the only one. Take my word for it, you save yourself a lot of trouble by getting these 16-18 point balanced hands (and the 19-20 pointers too) out of the 1C bid and into the notrump openings where they belong.

Playing 1NT as 16-18 also frees up the 1NT rebid in the auction 1C-1D. Big clubbers who (misguidedly, in my opinion) use weak notrumps have to rebid 1NT with a standard strong notrump. They don't get to use 1NT as a transfer, as we do. Later on you will see the artificial uses for the 1NT, 2C, and 2D rebids that get rid of a lot of problems characteristic of the usual varieties of Precision.

The standard objection to 16-18 is that "it doesn't come up often enough." Sure it does. I see boatloads of hands that get the chance to open 1NT with 16-18. It is *slightly* less common than 15-17, and a bit more less common (you know what I mean) than 14-16, and so on. But against that there is the fact that the more points you have in a balanced hand, the less likely it is that someone else will bid in front of you and thereby prevent you from opening 1NT. I have no doubt that opening 1NT a bit less often *on hands that otherwise would present a problem* is much better than opening 1NT slightly more often on hands that can easily be bid in other ways. To me, this fact, along with the way 16-18 slots right in on top of the 15-point maximum for a 1NT rebid, and the way it slots in under a 19-20 2NT opening, which in turn allows us to guarantee 21+ points for a balanced 1C opening, means that this is the perfect range for the system. And I have confirmed this by examining a great many actual deals. Revision's treatment of balanced hands works quite well.

The only other range that it makes a lot of sense to play is the weakest one, 10-12. That, at least, is an offensive weapon. It does cause trouble for the opponents. It also more or less fits in *under* the range for the 1NT rebid (9-11 would be even better for this purpose, but it is effectively illegal in the ACBL). I actually considered using 10-12 not vulnerable in first and second seat, as Meckwell used to do. I found that it screws up the rest of the system too much. I am not willing to have to rewrite a large part of the constructive bidding system just to have a preemptive 1NT some of the time. Meckwell seem to agree, as they have stopped playing 10-12 in recent years.

A few other things need to be considered. 1NT with a five-card major, yes or no? Yes. It avoids the problem of having to open 1C with a minimum balanced hand (the closest we come to that is 5422 with a five-card major; always open 1C with such hands). But any 5332 with a major and 16-18 opens 1NT. Don't worry about it, it works. So does opening 1NT with 5422 types where the five-card suit is a minor. You can also open 1NT with 6322 shape and a six-card minor, a treatment that seems to be popular with good players nowadays, and which seems to work pretty well most of the

time. Of course, you also have the option of opening 1C and showing the long minor next if for any reason you don't want to open 1NT.

So much for when to open 1NT, and why. Here is what to do afterward. A large part of our approach is adapted from Al Roth's methods in *Picture Bidding*, with some hypermodern twists thrown in.

ONE NOTRUMP: 16-18 HCP in principle. A good 15 can be promoted to a 1NT opener, and a good 18 can be promoted to a 2NT opener. Our philosophy is that, to avoid missing games, hands can be promoted upward in value, but a given point count in a balanced or semibalanced hand is never downgraded. A 16 count is always counted as 16, and will open 1NT if the shape is appropriate. Shape is usually classically balanced; 4333, 4432, or 5332. It is also OK to do it with a 5422 type in which the five-card suit is not a major (prefer 1C followed by 1M if it is). We also routinely open 1NT with all 5332 shapes in which the five-card suit is a major, and some 6322 hands in which the six-card suit is a minor. In this style, all balanced hands, and some semibalanced hands, with 16 to 20 points start by bidding notrump.

1NT- 2C: Forcing Stayman. With 5-4 either way or 5-5 in the majors, and a hand that just wants to sign off at the two level, pick a major and transfer to it. Never Stayman with a weak balanced hand and 4-4 in the majors. Our auction 1NT-2C, 2D-2H is not choice of majors at the two level; it is Smolen, and forcing. We do not play "garbage Stayman." I have been monitoring occurrences of this treatment for a long time, and do not see it accomplishing much. I see GS players responding 2C with 5-4 either way in the majors, and ending in 4-3 fits (when opener is 3-2 the wrong way in the majors) that play much worse than the 5-2 fit that could have been reached by a simple transfer. And what is opener supposed to do when he is 2-2 in the majors, which our 1NT openings can be? Whatever merits there may be in playing GS (I am convinced there are not many), it has no place in Revision. We prefer to concentrate on bidding games and slams. If you have a five-card major (or two) and a weak hand, transfer out and be done with it.

However, it is acceptable to bid 2C on less than normal strength, with hands that are planning to pass partner's response at the two level. The usual holdings for these would be 4=4=4=1, (4-3)=5=1, and 4=4=5=0. A hand like Kxx/Qxxx/xxxxx/x would bid 2C. These hands do not pose a problem as long as at least one four-card major is held; if partner rebids 2NT, showing both majors, the worst that can happen is to play three of a major in a known fit.

When responder holds a 4333 type with game values and a four-card major, he has a choice of raising to 3NT directly, or of going through Stayman. As far as I am concerned, this traditional dilemma has been conclusively answered. Recent studies have shown that bidding notrump is correct. Frankly, I'm glad it turned out that way, since it fits in well with the rest of our notrump system. Auctions that go 1NT-3NT or 2NT-3NT tend to work well. Give the enemy as little information as possible and make them guess on opening lead and later defense. This is our philosophy for auctions of 1M-4M and 1M-2M, 4M, which we have as often as possible. It works for notrump too.

Another problem, less often recognized, is responder's 5332 hand with a five-card major. Normal practice is to transfer to the major, then bid 3NT. Our practice is different. Some of the time, we bid Stayman, then go to four of our long major only if opener shows *four* in the suit. If a 5-3 major fit exists, we ignore it and play 3NT. Review of world championship hands where a 5-3 major fit was suppressed in favor of 3NT when both hands were balanced shows that 3NT goes down less often. The same thing was found when a collection of computer-generated deals that contained 5332 types with a five-card major facing a 1NT opening was examined. Four of the major is likely to have four inescapable losers, or go down on a bad trump break. 3NT almost always makes when the 5-3 major game would have, unless the opponents can set up a long suit on the lead. This seems to happen less often than losing four tricks at both contracts. The normal practice of always looking for a 5-3 fit seems to come from matchpoints, where it is disastrous to score only 400 or 600 when game in a major is makable for a score of 420 or 620. At IMPs, we are only concerned with getting to a game that makes. As a corollary to this style, when you do transfer and bid 3NT, opener is commanded to return to the major whenever he has three-card support; responder is unlikely to have 5332 shape, and is most likely to be 5422. Experience shows that the 5422 shape plays better in the major fit if there is one, because there is more time to set up the side suit, and it might benefit from a ruff in dummy.

Of course, you are not always forbidden to show a five-card major with 5332 shape. With xx/Axxxx/Kxx/Qxx, it is better to respond 2C. If opener rebids 2D, he denies having four spades, and it is likely that spades are a weak spot for notrump; continue with 2S, forcing (Smolen, showing hearts). But if opener bids 2S (denying four hearts) over 2C, you are unlikely to have to worry about a spade lead, and you have help in both minors, so bid 3NT next. You can also choose to show your five-card suit when you have concentrated values; if your 5332 hand includes a worthless doubleton and a worthless tripleton, with all of your values

concentrated in two suits, you might want to look for a 5-3 fit, figuring that the opponents are likely to have an effective lead in one of your two weak suits. But with spread-out values, like Qxxxx/Jxx/Qx/A10x, it looks right to Stayman and bid 3NT if partner does not show four spades.

After 1NT-2C, opener rebids:

1NT-2C, 2D: No four-card major. Responder can now pass if he holds the weak hand with short clubs, or now bids:

1NT-2C, 2D- 2H: Smolen; forcing, invitational values at least, and showing a fifth *spade*. We play two-level Smolen because if a 5-3 major fit is present, we want opener, the strong hand, to play it. Since 2H and 2S are both going to be forcing bids anyway, it costs nothing to reverse their meanings. Responder may have four hearts and five or six spades, or he may have five spades and a hand type which is shown in some other way than an immediate transfer (e.g., 5S and 5m with GF values).

This Smolen treatment is part of a general scheme that gives responder a way to show a five-card or longer major in each of the four basic hand types he might have, which is to say, balanced or semibalanced (show the major via Stayman or a transfer, then bid notrump or Smolen); one-suited (transfer and then reach the appropriate level in the major suit, or make a slam try); three-suited (transfer with artificial follow-ups, or Stayman followed by a Roth shortness bid with some 5440 and 5431 types); and two-suited (Stayman or transfer, with artificial or natural follow-ups).

When responder makes this Smolen bid to show five spades, he will not have five hearts also. All good 5-5 major hands either start with a transfer to spades, then a 3H bid (slam try), or jump to 3C over 1NT (game invitation, or a game hand that has no slam ambitions unless opener makes an advance control-bid).

1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 2S: Spade fit, three cards. This is not forcing. One of responder's hand types for this auction is a 5332 invitational hand with spades (the same hand that in standard methods transfers to spades and then bids 2NT). Playing our way, opener's 2S bid shows a hand

that would reject the invitation, and so we get to play 2S instead of 2NT or 3S.

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| 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 2S- | 2NT: Forcing. Shows a 5332 type with enough values to go to game. Responder is unsure of whether 3NT or 4S is the correct spot. Opener can place the contract himself, or bid stoppers at the three level to help responder reach a decision. |
| 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 2S- | 3C, 3D: Showing five cards in clubs and diamonds, respectively. These bids are slam tries (responder can't have an invitational 5-5, because he would have transferred to spades and then bid 3m, invitational), and he also can't have a hand that would have wanted to play game (but not slam) facing a three-card fit, because he would have jumped to 4S over 2S with that. So, the slam tries are all that is left. Further bidding follows general Fred principles; 3NT by either partner is serious (3NT is not a possible contract on this auction), bids that sound like control-bids are control-bids, and it is possible for slam to be played in the minor suit. After responder shows his minor suit, a direct raise to four of that minor by opener is natural, showing that he prefers the minor suit (because he has four or five cards there, as opposed to three in spades), and we now have a six-ace RKC situation, as described in Part X. |
| 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 2S- | 3S: Natural, invitational. Responder has 6-4 in the majors and was looking for a heart fit before inviting in spades. |
| 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 2S- | 4S: Natural, to play. Responder has a hand similar to the one above that invited by bidding 3S, but has decided that the existence of a 6-3 spade fit makes his hand worth game. |
| 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, | 2NT: Doubleton spade, minimum hand, not forcing. The kind of hand that, in standard bidding, would have passed in the auction 1NT-2H, 2S-2NT. We use that 2NT bid for a different purpose (see below), so this auction is the way we get to 2NT when responder has, e.g., 5=3=3=2 facing 2=3=4=4, with neither player able to bid game. |

- 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 2NT- 3m: Forcing, 5-5 shape. The minor suit is natural. Note that this time, responder does not necessarily have to have a slam try, since he does not know of a possible contract of 4S. He could just be looking for the best game. Further bidding is general principles.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 2NT- 3H: Retransfer to spades with a 6-4 major hand. Responder is either going to pass or bid 4S next. Actually he will probably pass, because with a 6-4 hand that was worth game facing a minimum, he would have bid at the four level at his second turn.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 3m: Doubleton spade, game-acceptance values. The idea here is to cater to responder's 5-5 types. The 3m bid shows the lowest minor suit for which opener has a fit. The fit will be at least four cards (because on the bidding, opener has a doubleton spade and no more than three hearts, so he must have two four-card minors, or one of five or six cards). Opener does this when he is willing to play four or five in the minor rather than 3NT. If the bid is 3C, responder continues with 3D to show that his minor is really diamonds, anything else (except a 4H bid now, which is a retransfer to spades with the 6-4 invitational hand, or 3NT, which is to play and shows that responder was only interested in finding a 5-3 spade fit for game) to show that he has clubs. If the bid is 3D, responder bids 4D next when he wants to play diamonds, anything else (again, except a 4H bid now, which is a retransfer to spades with the 6-4 invitational hand) to show that he has clubs.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 3H: 2=3=4=4 shape, acceptance strength, but a lot of values in hearts. Warning responder that it might be best to get out in 3NT if opener's heart values are wasted opposite responder's hand. As usual, a 4H bid by responder now would be a retransfer to spades.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 3S: Three-card support for spades, acceptance values. Now responder can just bid 4S if he wants, or he can show his minor suit at the four-level to try for slam (the two-suiter is the only hand type he can have here that is interested in slam).
- 1NT-2C, 2D- 2S: Forcing, invitational values at least, showing five or more *hearts*. Responder will often have four spades also.

- 1NT-2C, 2D-2S, 2NT: Nonforcing, only a doubleton heart. This allows responder to pass if he has 4-5 in the majors and invitational values only.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2S, 2NT- 3m: Natural, forcing. The only hand type responder can have to want to bid this is a forcing 5-5 with hearts and a minor. Further bidding is analogous to the similar auctions above where Smolen was used to show spades.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2S, 2NT- 3H: Natural, nonforcing. Responder has 4-6 in the majors and invitational values. You can't transfer to hearts in this auction (sorry about that), so responder has to play it.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2S, 2NT- 3NT: Natural, to play. Responder is probably 4-5 in the majors with game values.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2S, 3m: Doubleton heart, game-acceptance values. The idea here is to cater to responder's 5-5 types. The 3m bid shows the lowest minor suit for which opener has a fit. Analogous to the auction 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 3m above.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2S, 3H: Nonforcing, three-card heart support. Responder can pass or bid 4H now, or if he has a 5-5 slam try, he can show his five-card minor.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2S, 3S: Forcing, three-card heart support. Continuations are analogous to the auction 1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 3S above. This one may lead to hearts being played from responder's side, which we do not consider to be a big deal.
- 1NT-2C, 2D-2NT: This is not a balanced invitation, as it would be in almost all systems. As responder, we do not bid 2NT as a notrump invitation after a 1NT opening, either directly or after a 2C response, nor do we raise a 2M rebid after Stayman to three, invitational. For us, all of these bids are forcing. One of the recent discoveries of bidding theorists and researchers is that these invitational auctions have almost no value. There is too much danger of going down in 2NT or 3M when opener passes, and sometimes game would have made anyway. It is just not a good idea to hang a trick short of game voluntarily. Our practice with balanced "invitational" hands (for us, this means eight balanced facing 1NT) is for responder to make

up his mind right away whether he is going to bid game. 1NT facing a balanced seven count plays 1NT. 1NT facing a balanced eight count gets to game regardless. This frees up normally invitational bids for other uses. It also gives the opponents less information for the opening lead, because when responder drives to game, they do not know whether his hand is barely worth a game or has full values. It also makes it more difficult for them to double. All of these little pluses add up to be worth more than the occasions when we could stop a trick short of game and make exactly. This is postmodern bidding to be sure, but it seems to work.

2NT here means (usually) that responder has a certain problem hand that bothered me for years, something like Qxxx/x/xx/Axxxxx. You can very likely make 4S if partner has opened 1NT with four (or five) spades, but if he doesn't have spades, you would rather play a partscore in clubs. Standard responding methods to 1NT provide no bid for these hands. (You can play that 2C followed by 3m is nonforcing, but that takes away whatever other meanings you might have assigned to 3m in this auction.) With the recent discovery that 2NT natural after 2C is not necessary, we now have a bid for these hands. We define the 2NT followup to mean (initially) that responder has the 4-6 major/minor canapé hand, and mildly invitational values (6-7 HCP) if opener fits responder's minor. With these hands, responder is really hoping to find a fit for the major as his main chance for game, but if he doesn't, there may still be some chance of getting to 3NT and making it. (With the same shape and no hope for game, you simply transfer out to the minor, ignoring the four-card major.)

Since the 2NT bid is forcing, it can also be used to show hand types other than the one described above. The other hand type, in our methods, is a balanced or semibalanced slam try with a five-card minor suit. The hand might be 5332 in shape, or it might be 5422 with a five-card minor and a four-card major; in the latter case, responder intended to try for slam in the major if he found a fit there, and now wants to show the minor suit to see if there is a fit for that. Typically, the hand will have a bit less in high cards than are needed for an invitational bid of 4NT. The idea is that responder is saying that if opener has a good fit for the minor, plus good controls, slam could make with only 30-32 combined HCP. Responder is primarily interested in finding four- (or five-) card

support for his minor; a big fit is needed, and a 5-3 fit will not usually be enough. An example hand for responder might be Ax/Kxxx/xx/AQxxx. After the bidding goes 1NT-2C, 2D, responder knows that there will be no slam in hearts, but there might be one in clubs if opener has Kxx/Axx/AKx/Kxxx (and if you rearrange the cards slightly so that opener has a doubleton heart, there could be a play for seven). It is important to find the big minor suit fit for slam on deals like this one.

1NT-2C, 2D-2NT, 3C: Opener does not have sufficient strength in clubs to go higher. Responder passes now if he has clubs, and bids 3D if he has diamonds (assuming, of course, that he has the weak hand type; if he has a slam try, he does something else).

1NT-2C, 2D-2NT, 3C- 3D: Responder has now shown diamonds. Opener passes if he does not have enough in diamonds to go on, which he usually will not. In order to go on, opener needs three-card support for diamonds to the AK, AQ, or KQ, or possibly Axxx or Kxxx. If he does have this, he can continue with bids of 3H, 3S, or 3NT. (He should also have some quick tricks on the side. If in doubt, you should probably just pass.) Opener is presumed to stop clubs (he does not have four cards in a major, so he will usually have some club length), and therefore he concentrates on major-suit stoppers when accepting. He bids the one he has, or bids 3NT with both.

1NT-2C, 2D-2NT, 3C- 4C, 4D: Responder has the slam-try hand type, and shows his five-card minor suit. Opener must now do one of two things. First, if he wishes to reject, he bids 4NT, which will end the auction unless responder has extra values (responder might, for example, have a hand worth a force to 6NT that wanted to check for a big minor-suit fit for seven). And second, if opener does have a good fit for responder's minor, he shows keycards, as if the 4m bid had been auto-Redwood. His responses skip around the 4NT bid, which is not part of the keycard response structure in this auction. So for example, if responder bids 4D here, a 4H bid by opener is 1 or 4 keycards, 4S is 0 or 3, 5C is two without, and 5D is two with (or five-card support without the queen, in a known ten-card fit).

1NT-2C, 2D-2NT, 3D: Opener can accept clubs, but not diamonds. If responder has clubs, he can bid his major suit stopper (the suit in which he has four), so that opener can reevaluate the stopper situation. This auction can end in 4C if responder does not think 3NT will make.

If responder has the slam-try hand, he bids 4m now, as described above. Please note that even though opener is known to have good clubs in this auction, responder still wants to know whether or not opener has four-card support. Accordingly, after a 4C bid here, it is still possible for opener to bid 4NT, to show that his club support was only three cards. Responder will know that opener has good controls (opener needs quick tricks on the side, not just a decent fit, to accept over the 2NT bid), and if responder thinks that a 5-3 minor fit is enough for slam, he can bid it over 4NT.

1NT-2C, 2D-2NT, 3H, 3S, 3NT: Opener can accept both minors. He bids a major suit stopper, or bids 3NT with both (AJx/AJx/Kxxx/KQx).

If opener shows acceptance for both minors, it is presumed that either 3NT or 5m will be playable; accordingly, 4m shows the slam-try hand type, and continuations are as above, bearing in mind that opener is not known to have four-card support, necessarily, for responder's minor.

1NT-2C, 2D-3C, 3D, 3H, 3S: Roth shortness bids. Responder is showing shortness in the bid suit (classically a 4441 type, but other shapes are possible, as we will see), and is asking opener to consider his holding in that suit for notrump purposes. Opener will bid 3NT with a double stopper, and can go to the four level with no stop, or bid three of a suit (if available) with one stopper and doubt about notrump. Further bidding is natural. A game-force exists, since if opener has nothing in the short suit, he has enough elsewhere to go to game in a suit where there is a fit, even five of a minor. Bidding continues naturally if opener rejects notrump. Opener has the right to try for slam if partner bids a suit in which he has a big fit. E.g., with Axx/Qx/A10xx/AKxx facing x/Kxxx/KQJxx/Qxx, the auction could go 1NT-2C, 2D-3S, 4C-4D, 4S-5C, 6D. Without the club queen, responder would have a hand that looks too thin for slam and would just bid 5D over 4S. If opener had bid 4D himself over 3S, responder would have enough to Redwood into slam, via a 4H RKC bid. Standard methods get to 3NT.

Note that with a singleton or void, it is normal for responder to bid 2C even when he does not have a four-card major, just so that he can show the singleton on the next round. 3-1 or 1-3 in the majors, 5-4 or 4-5 in the minors, and a good hand, can be bid this way. This may lead to a 5-3 major fit if opener has a five-card major, or a good 4-3 game. But note that this depends on the inference that responder has at least three cards in every suit except his shortness; responder should rarely bid this way with 6421-type distribution. (If he does, he has a six-card minor to go with his four-card major, and insists on playing in the minor if opener rejects notrump.)

Also note that when the auction goes 1NT-2C, 2D-3m, opener is allowed (and encouraged) to bid a three-card major if he does not want to bid 3NT immediately. This is because responder is allowed (and encouraged) to bid this way sometimes with a five-card major. Lots of 5440 and 5431 types (with 5-4 either way in the majors) bid this way, to show the shortness and emphasize the three-suited nature of the hand, and it is important to be able to back into a 5-3 major fit when it exists, and opener does not have solid stoppers in responder's shortness.

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| 1NT-2C, 2D- | 3NT: Normal; responder was just checking for a major. |
| 1NT-2C, 2D- | 4m: South African Texas, showing six of the corresponding major, four of the other, and game or slam values. Opener normally bids four of the longer major, but can make the in-between bid if he wants to cooperate in a slam venture. This may lead to game being played from the "wrong" side, but this should not be a problem when opener has extra values. |
| 1NT-2C, 2D- | 4H, 4S: Natural. Responder is 6-4 in the majors, and after failing to find a fit in the other major, he decides to play the hand himself. He probably has Kx in a side suit that he wants to protect on the lead. |
| 1NT-2C, 2D- | 4NT: Balanced or semibalanced slam try. There is still a possibility of a 4-4 or better fit in a minor. Responder can be (4-2)-(5-2) to bid this way. If accepting, opener bids four-card minors up the line at the five level to look for a fit, or can bid 5NT (forcing) to |

ask responder to bid a five-card minor if he has one, or can just bid 6NT.

1NT-2C, 2D- 5NT: Forcing to 6NT and trying for seven. As a general principle, in any situation where it is possible to bid 4NT quantitative, this is what 5NT means.

1NT-2C, 2H: Four or five hearts, not four spades also. Responder can pass if he has the weak hand short in clubs, or bid:

1NT-2C, 2H- 2S: Forcing with 5+ spades. Invitational values at least. Sorry, there is no Smolen unless opener rebids 2D over 2C. Natural continuations. This is our normal auction with spades and an invitational hand, since 1NT-2H, 2S-2NT is forcing, not invitational. In the present auction, the bidding can die at 2NT.

1NT-2C, 2H-2S, 2NT: Doubleton spade, minimum values, nonforcing. Responder can pass, or can bid a minor now to show 5-5, forcing.

1NT-2C, 2H-2S, 3m: Doubleton spade, acceptance values. As in other auctions above, opener is showing the lowest suit for which he has a good fit for responder's possible second suit. But note that here, opener does not have to have at least three cards in each minor (he can be 2=4=2=5 or 2=4=5=2, as well as 6322 hands that have six of one minor and two of the other). Continuations are analogous to auctions previously described.

1NT-2C, 2H-2S, 3H: Acceptance values, 2=5=3=3 shape exactly. Responder can still show his minor suit (if he has one) at the four level if he wishes, and can of course raise hearts if he has just discovered a 5-3 fit.

1NT-2C, 2H-2S, 3S: Three-card support for spades, minimum, nonforcing. Responder can still show his minor if he has one.

1NT-2C, 2H-2S, 3NT: Three-card support for spades, acceptance values. Responder can now bid 4S, of course, or show his minor at the four level.

1NT-2C, 2H- 2NT: Similar to 1NT-2C, 2D-2NT. 6-7 HCP, 4S and 6m (usually). Responder is still showing a minor, but here, it is known that he has

four spades, so spades are presumed to be stopped if the auction continues in such a way that either player shows or cuebids stoppers at the three level.

As described above in the auction 1NT-2C, 2D-2NT, if responder bids 4m at his third turn, he is showing the slam-try hand, and opener's further bidding is analogous.

1NT-2C, 2H- 3C, 3D, 3S: Roth shortness bids. 3C is a special artificial one. It forces opener to bid 3D. Now, 3H shows short hearts, and anything else shows short clubs and fewer than four hearts, hence something like 4=3=5=1, 4=3=6=0, 3=3=6=1, or 4=2=6=1. With four-card heart support and shortness in clubs (or anything else), the normal procedure is to raise the 2H bid to four, or to make a direct splinter jump (if the hand is too strong to just bid game).

Showing shortness at the three level, and then bidding something at the four level other than four of the suit opener has shown, suggests holding only three-card support for the major. E.g., 1NT-2C, 2H-3D, 3NT-4C suggests a shape like 4=3=1=5, and a slam try (pass 3NT if your hand is only worth game). The exception is when responder bids 3S over 2H, which is the only way to show shortness in spades below game. Then, responder may have either three- or four-card heart support if he follows with a bid in another suit (of course, if he has four, he will insist on hearts later).

1NT-2C, 2H- 3H: Natural, forcing. This is a balanced slam try in hearts. DNEBAPH. There is no need for 3H to be invitational to game in hearts here. Responder has at least 8 HCP if he is balanced, and he also has a doubleton on the side (recall that we do not Stayman with 4333 hands). That is enough to bid game when a fit is found. So, we play that 3H is slamming. Also, it initiates a Fred auction.

Please note that our style of Stayman means that you pass a 1NT opening with something like x/Axxx/Kxxx/xxxx. Won't you miss some 4H games when you do this, and opener has four (or five) hearts? It is theoretically possible, but in real life, partner has spades and not hearts when you hold this hand. And if he does have hearts, maybe the opponents will bid spades, and you can come back in with a delayed negative double. The auction 1NT-

	(P), P-(2S), P-(P), X-(P), 3H-(P), 4H making four should be good for some wailing and gnashing of teeth on the opponents' part.
1NT-2C, 2H-3H,	3NT: Serious counter-slam-try (but denying ability to control-bid 3S, after which 3NT by responder would be serious). Opener has a really good hand.
1NT-2C, 2H-3H,	3S, 4C, 4D: Control-bids. 4C and 4D are "non-serious" and deny a spade control.
1NT-2C, 2H-3H,	4H: Bad hand for slam.
1NT-2C, 2H-	3S: Shortness in spades, as stated above. The auction is repeated here because for the moment, it is ambiguous whether responder has four-card support for hearts or not (this is not true when responder's shortness is in a minor; he always jumps to 4m to show four-card support in those cases, or shows shortness at the three level if he has only three-card support). Opener bids 3NT with good spade stops now, even though he has four hearts; he knows responder will go back to hearts with four of them (showing a slam try, since otherwise just raise 2H to four). Opener can of course bid 4H now if he has five of them, or four good ones. He can also bid 4m to show that his spades are not good enough for 3NT, a lack of desire to play 4H in a 4-3 fit, and a second suit.
1NT-2C, 2H-	3NT: Normal game bid, may or may not have four spades. But usually does; the exception would be something like xxx/Q/Axxx/Kxxxx (you were going to bid 3H over 2D or 2S, but now that you know opener has hearts, 3NT looks like the best shot at game; it seems like a poor idea to use the 3C relay to identify the short hearts when 3NT is probably the best spot anyway – prefer to shoot 3NT and hope the bidding has discouraged a heart lead, if that lead would have been bad for us).
1NT-2C, 2H-	4C, 4D: Splinters for hearts.
1NT-2C, 2H-	4S, 5C, 5D: Voidwood in the bid suit.
1NT-2C, 2H-	4H: Normal game bid.

1NT-2C, 2H- 4NT: Natural, invitational, balanced or semibalanced, promises four spades. There can still be fit in a minor. If you want to use RKC for hearts, raise to 3H now and continue with 4S at your next turn.

1NT-2C, 2S: Four or five spades, but not four hearts. (With 4-4 majors, reply 2NT. With (5-4) majors and 16+ HCP, open 1C.) Continuations are similar to when opener rebids 2H, with shortness shown at the three- or four-level (here, a bid of 4H directly over 2S is a splinter for spades).

1NT-2C, 2S- 2NT: Shows (usually) four hearts and a long minor, similar to the auction 1NT-2C, 2H-2NT above. Continuations are analogous.

As described above in the auction 1NT-2C, 2D-2NT, if responder bids 4m at his third turn, he is showing the slam-try hand, and opener's further bidding is analogous.

1NT-2C, 2S- 3C: Puppet to 3D. Black shortness, or a 5-5 hand with hearts and a minor.

1NT-2C, 2S-3C, 3D- 3H: Natural, forcing, shows five hearts. Responder was hoping opener would bid 2D over 2C, allowing responder to continue with a Smolen bid of 2S. But opener bid 2S first, so now responder needs another way to show his heart hands. Some of the hands that responder needs to bid in this way are the ones with 5-5 shape. Others are 5332 types with which responder has decided to look for a 5-3 fit if it exists. Opener now indicates whether he has a three-card fit for hearts by bidding 3S if he does, 3NT if he does not. Either way, responder can show his minor suit now if he has one.

1NT-2C, 2S-3C, 3D- 3S: Short spades.

1NT-2C, 2S-3C, 3D- 3NT or higher: Short clubs.

1NT-2C, 2S- 3D, 3H: Shortness.

1NT-2C, 2S- 3S: Slam try in spades. DNEBAPH. Analogous to 1NT-2C, 2H-3H.

1NT-2C, 2S- 3NT: To play.

1NT-2C, 2S- 4C, 4D, 4H: Splinter raises of spades.

1NT-2C, 2S- 4S: To play.

1NT-2C, 2S- 4NT: Natural, with four-card heart suit. To use RKC, set trumps with 3S.

1NT-2C, 2S- 5C, 5D, 5H: Voidwood for spades.

1NT-2C, 2NT: 4-4 in the majors. This is forcing, since responder cannot bid 2C unless he either has at least one major, or has a shape of something like 5431 with (3-1) in the majors and is intending to follow up with a Roth shortness bid. Either way, he will bid again.

1NT-2C, 2NT- 3C, 3S: Roth shortness bids. 3S means short spades; 3C means shortness in one of the other three suits. After 3C, opener relays with 3D. Then, responder shows his shortness using the ascending numeric principle; 3H is short hearts, 3S is short diamonds, 3NT is short clubs (zoom past 3NT if your hand is too strong to risk having opener pass 3NT). These bids deny holding a four-card major, since with such a hand, responder would transfer into the major first over the 2NT bid. So, if responder shows shortness in a major, he has three in the other one. And if he shows shortness in a minor, his shape is probably a 6331 type with six in the other minor.

1NT-2C, 2NT- 3D, 3H: Transfers to the major in the suit above. Opener always makes a simple acceptance, since responder may be getting out with a bust hand short in clubs.

1NT-2C, 2NT-3D, 3H- 3S: Four-card heart support, short spades.

1NT-2C, 2NT-3D, 3H- 3NT: Forcing. Four-card heart support, always balanced or semibalanced, slam try; in other words, a hand that would have raised a 2H rebid to 3H. Hearts are presumed to be trumps for now, but responder may sign off in 6S or 7S later (if his shape is 4=5=2=2). If responder does this, he is choosing the known 4-4 fit in an effort to get a useful discard on the 5-4 side suit. This 3NT bid is forcing, since responder may have a huge hand and be heading

toward a later decision of whether to play six or seven.

1NT-2C, 2NT-3D, 3H-

4C, 4D: Shortness in the bid minor.

1NT-2C, 2NT-3D, 3H-

4H: To play.

1NT-2C, 2NT-3D, 3H-

4S: Kickback for hearts.

1NT-2C, 2NT-3H, 3S-

3NT: Four-card spade support, always balanced or semibalanced, forcing slam try. Spades are presumed to be trumps for now, but responder may sign off in 6H or 7H later (if his shape is 5=4=2=2). 3NT is forcing.

1NT-2C, 2NT-3H, 3S-

4C, 4D, 4H: Shortness in the bid suit.

1NT-2C, 2NT-3H, 3S-

4S: To play.

1NT-2C, 2NT-3H, 3S-

4NT: RKC for spades.

1NT-2C, 2NT-

3S: Short spades, as stated above.

1NT-2C, 2NT-

3NT: To play. Perhaps xxx/Q/Axxx/Kxxxx.

1NT-2C, 2NT-

4m: Responder shows a slam try with a five-card minor, balanced or semibalanced (he planned to rebid 2NT himself if opener bid 2D, 2H, or 2S over 2C). Opener is now known to have no more than three-card support for responder's minor, since he is 4-4 in the majors; responder doesn't bid 4m here unless he is interested in playing slam in a 5-3 fit. So, over the 4m bid, opener bids 4NT if not interested (usually meaning that he has a doubleton in the minor suit), and shows keycards, with responses skipping around the 4NT bid, if he likes responder's suit.

1NT- 2D: Normal transfer to hearts. Opener can and should superaccept with four.

Opener rebids:

1NT-2D, 2H: Two or three hearts. Responder now bids:

- 1NT-2D, 2H- 2S: Another Roth treatment. Says nothing about spades, but shows game-forcing values. Opener is now required to bid 2NT, in order to hear what responder says next. Responder's next bid will usually show a three-suited hand with a five-card heart suit as the anchor suit. He can also have a 6-5 slam try with six hearts and five of a minor, or a slam try with specifically 2=5=4=2 or 2=5=2=4 shape.
- 1NT-2D, 2H-2S, 2NT- 3C: Shows short spades (ascending numeric). Opener continues naturally, returning to 3H with three-card support, bidding one of the other suits to show a possible fit there, bidding 3NT with good spades, or if stuck, bidding 3S as a sort of choice-of-games bid to show that he does not know what to do.
- 1NT-2D, 2H-2S, 2NT- 3D: Shows short diamonds. Continuations are similar to above where responder has shown short spades, but opener should not bid 3S now unless he has five of them, or four good ones.
- 1NT-2D, 2H-2S, 2NT- 3H: Shows short clubs. Normally the shape shown by this bid would be something like 3=5=4=1, which opens up the possibility of backing into a 5-3 or 4-3 spade fit. However, responder can also bid this way with a 2=6=4=1 hand or similar. In that case, he is looking for a diamond fit for slam. If the hand is not strong enough for a possible slam, just play it in hearts.
- 1NT-2D, 2H-2S, 2NT- 3S: Shows the 2=5=2=4 slam try. Opener can reject by bidding 3NT or 4H, show slam suitability for hearts by bidding 4D, or show slam suitability for clubs by bidding 4C.
- 1NT-2D, 2H-2S, 2NT- 3NT: Shows the 2=5=4=2 slam try. Opener can reject by passing 3NT or bidding 4H, show slam suitability for hearts by bidding 4C, or show slam suitability for diamonds by bidding 4D.
- 1NT-2D, 2H-2S, 2NT- 4C, 4D: Second suit, natural, slam try. The shape will be at least 6-5, and the major suit will be at least six. We use this

auction to distinguish from the Stayman follow-ups that show strong 5-5 hands. With a six-card major and a second five-bagger, you can afford to ignore any possibility of stopping in 3NT. In these auctions, and in the related ones that start 1NT-2H, 2S-2NT, 3C, opener continues by bidding four of responder's major or five of his minor naturally, showing lack of interest in slam; by bidding 4D over 4C or 5C over 4D to show slam suitability in the minor; by bidding four of the other major to show slam suitability in the major; or by bidding 4NT over 4m as six-ace Keycard.

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| 1NT-2D, 2H- | 2NT: Normal semibalanced (probably) invite. Please note that here, we do allow a nonforcing 2NT rebid. With 4333 types, we do not use Stayman to look for a fit in the four-card major, but we do not ignore five-card majors. Responder's usual shape for this auction is 5422 with the second suit being a minor. He can have various 5431 types here also, if the second suit is a minor. He can also have a 5332 type, although with that, Stayman is an option. |
| 1NT-2D, 2H- | 3C, 3D: Nonforcing second suit. Invitational with 5-5 shape. Roth. |
| 1NT-2D, 2H- | 3H: Normal one-suited game invitation. |
| 1NT-2D, 2H- | 3S: Self-splinter for hearts. |
| 1NT-2D, 2H- | 3NT: Choice of games. Suggests 5422 type, as with game values and 5332, Stayman is the more common start. Here, the four-card side suit will be a minor, since 4=5=2=2 hands would start with Stayman also. |
| 1NT-2D, 2H- | 4C, 4D: Self-splinters for hearts. |
| 1NT-2D, 2H- | 4H: Normal slam invitation, probably 6322 or 7222 type. |
| 1NT-2D, 2H- | 4NT: Normal slam invitation, 5332 type. |
| 1NT-2D, | 2S: Superaccept. The only superaccept bid we play is 2S; this keeps the bidding lower so responder can finish describing his hand. |

- 1NT-2D, 2S- 2NT: Unspecified shortness. Opener relays with 3C, and responder shows his shortness in ascending numeric order (3D = short spades, 3H = short diamonds, 3S = short clubs). Should the 3C bid be doubled, responder shows his shortness anyway, and pass and redouble are the first two steps. This 2NT bid creates a game force.
- 1NT-2D, 2S- 3C: Natural, second suit, forcing, slam try. At least 6-5. (Once we have found a major suit fit, just bid game in the major with no slam interest.)
- 1NT-2D, 2S- 3D: Retransfer, either to get out in 3H or with a raise to game coming. Responder would always do something else with a slam try. Responder can also bid 3NT, natural, to suggest an alternative game contract; 3NT can sometimes be right even when there is a 5-4 major fit. Opener needs lots of aces (fast side suit tricks) to pass.
- 1NT-2D, 2S- 3H: Forcing, and showing the 2=5=2=4 slam try.
- 1NT-2D, 2S- 3S: Forcing, and showing the 2=5=4=2 slam try.
- 1NT-2D, 2S- 3NT: Natural. It may seem odd to offer 3NT as a contract when a big heart fit is known to exist, but responder may have a hand with something like Axxxxx of hearts and one high card on the side, the sort of hand with which he was going to raise to 3H, invitational, if opener had simply bid 2H. Now he wants to take a chance on running the heart suit for six tricks in notrump. There are some hands where 3NT is the only game that makes. Of course, opener can run out to 4H if he wishes. He will pass 3NT when he has something like Ax/Kxxx/Axxx/AJx; the hearts should run, and the fast tricks on the side will add up to nine.
- 1NT-2D, 2S- 4D: Second suit of diamonds, slam try. At least 6-5 shape. It would be possible to use an artificial bid of 4C here to show diamonds, saving room, but this would allow the next opponent to tell his partner whether he wants a club lead or not, by doubling or not doubling the 4C bid. So we bid the natural 4D instead.
- It is possible for opener to hold a 5332 type with five of the major to which responder has transferred. With these, just superaccept;

the fifth trump, while it looks impressive, does not usually add an extra trick compared to having a 5-4 fit.

1NT- 2H: Normal transfer to spades. Opener can and should superaccept by bidding 2NT with four. Opener rebids:

1NT-2H, 2S: Two or three spades. Responder now bids:

1NT-2H, 2S- 2NT: Another Roth treatment. Artificial and game-forcing. Like the 2S bid in the auction 1NT-2D, 2H-2S, it operates as a puppet to the next step. Opener must bid 3C now. Responder can follow by showing shortness, in ascending numeric order. He can also show a 6-5 slam try with six spades and five of a minor, or a slam try with 5=2=4=2 or 5=2=2=4 shape.

It is true that by using 2NT forcing here, we do not have a nonforcing and natural 2NT followup to the transfer to spades, as we do in the heart-transfer auction of 1NT-2D, 2H-2NT. The reason is that we accomplish the same thing differently with spades by using Stayman first. 1NT-2C, 2D-2H or 1NT-2C, 2H-2S do not force past 2NT (in the case of opener's 2D rebid, the auction can die at 2S, because of the 2H Smolen bid). In this way, we achieve the same effect; responder always finds a spade fit if there is one, and can get out in 2NT (or 2S) if the combined values are insufficient for game.

1NT-2H, 2S-2NT, 3C- 3D: Short hearts (ascending numeric).

1NT-2H, 2S-2NT, 3C- 3H: Short diamonds.

1NT-2H, 2S-2NT, 3C- 3S: Short clubs.

1NT-2H, 2S-2NT, 3C- 3NT: This is artificial, and puppets opener to 4C. After this, responder continues with 4D to show a slam try with 5=2=2=4 shape, or 4H to show 5=2=4=2 shape. Over either of these further bids, opener can bid 4S to show a spade fit without slam interest, 4NT to show no interest in either suit, five of responder's minor showing a fit but not great interest in slam, five of the other minor to show that he likes

responder's minor for slam, or anything higher to show that he likes spades for slam.

1NT-2H, 2S-2NT, 3C- 4C, 4D: Second suit. Slam try. At least 6-5 shape. As in the auctions discussed above, starting 1NT-2D, 2H-2S, 2NT-4m.

1NT-2H, 2S- 3C, 3D: Natural, nonforcing, invitational.

1NT-2H, 2S- 3H: Slam try with at least 5-5 in the majors. Over this, opener bids 3NT to show 2-2 in the majors, bids 4C or 4D as a control-bid for hearts, or can bid 4H or 4S to show no particular interest. If opener is interested in slam in spades with a three-card fit, he bids 3S now, inviting responder to initiate control-bidding. Now, responder can control-bid a minor, or bid 3NT, serious (once opener bids 3S, this is a Fred situation).

Over opener's 3NT bid here, showing 2-2 in the majors, responder can bid 4M to play, or can bid four of the corresponding minor to show continuing slam interest and (probably) six in the corresponding major.

1NT-2H, 2S- 3S: Normal one-suited game invitation.

1NT-2H, 2S- 3NT: Choice of games. Suggests 5422 type, as with 5332 Stayman is the normal start.

1NT-2H, 2S- 4C, 4D, 4H: Self-splinters for spades. Don't forget that the 4H bid here is not natural.

1NT-2H, 2S- 4S: Normal slam invitation. 6322 or 7222 type.

1NT-2H, 2S- 4NT: Normal, natural slam invitation with 5332 type.

1NT-2H, 2NT: Superaccept.

1NT-2H, 2NT- 3C: Unspecified shortness. Opener relays with 3D, and responder shows his shortness in ascending numeric order (3H = short hearts, 3S = short diamonds, 3NT = short clubs (3NT is forcing on this

auction)). Should the 3D bid be doubled, pass and redouble are the first two steps in the shortness-showing scheme.

- 1NT-2H, 2NT- 3D: Natural, second suit, forcing, slam try. At least 6-5.
- 1NT-2H, 2NT- 3H: Retransfer, either to get out in 3S or with a raise to game coming. Responder would always do something else with a slam try. He can also bid 3NT, natural, now.
- 1NT-2H, 2NT- 3S: 5=2=2=4 slam try.
- 1NT-2H, 2NT- 3NT: Natural, as in the auction 1NT-2D, 2H-3NT.
- 1NT-2H, 2NT- 4C: Second suit of clubs, forcing, slam try.
- 1NT-2H, 2NT- 4D: 5=2=4=2 slam try.
- 1NT-2H, 2NT- 4H: Second suit of hearts, forcing, slam try.
- 1NT- 2S: Transfer to clubs.

Opener rebids:

- 1NT-2S, 2NT: Rejection of clubs. Responder now can bid 3C to play, or:
- 1NT-2S, 2NT- 3D, 3H, 3S: Shortness, interested in getting to 5C or 6C if opener does not have strong stoppers in the short suit. Also could be a slam try regardless; responder will bid above 3NT if so.
- 1NT-2S, 2NT- 3NT: Normal game bid. Responder's hand was presumably invitational to a slam, and he is settling for game now that opener has shown that he does not like clubs.
- 1NT-2S, 2NT- 4C: Big one-suiter in clubs, and showing a problem distribution: a 7411 canapé type, with seven clubs and four in the major. Responder does not want to show shortness at the three level, because he has two singletons. We will also say that by definition, he has to have at least two of the top three clubs and at least one of the top two in his major, along with another high card there. A typical hand would be x/KJxx/x/AQxxxxx, so that opener will

know (once responder identifies his major) that a good fit for either clubs or the major, plus enough key cards, will produce a good slam. Opener can relay with 4D, over which responder would show his major, not forcing, with a relatively minimum hand like the example above. Opener takes control from there, bidding clubs or the major at an appropriate level (five of the major would be invitational), or, just possibly, bidding 4NT to play. If responder's hand is too strong to bid 4M over 4D (say he has AKQ instead of AQ in clubs), he bids 4NT over 4D to show hearts, 5C to show spades. These bids are nonforcing but strongly invitational to slam. (If responder's hand is any stronger than this, he would have asked for keycards himself, by setting his minor suit and bidding 4S next.)

1NT-2S, 2NT- 4D, 4H: Transfer to major; five of that major, 6+ clubs. Opener will bid either four of the major transferred to, or 5C, if he has a minimum hand in context. If he bids the next step above the suit shown, that is Kickback or RKC for the major. (I realize that sometimes it would be better to play it as agreeing the minor, or as a six-ace situation, but there are not enough bids available to play every possibility, and the thing most likely to get opener excited is a good fit for the major. Accordingly, when opener has *rejected* responder's minor, as here, it is RKC/Kickback for the major. However, if opener has already *accepted* responder's minor, as when he has bid 3C in this auction, it is six-ace with two queens of trump.) A control-bid here would also indicate acceptance of the major. Responder is forcing to 5C if opener does not like the major, so opener is authorized to bid slam himself with a suitable hand. Note that with 5-5 only in the two suits, responder would bid Stayman, then show his major, and then his minor. If responder has four of a major and six of a minor, he starts with Stayman, then a Roth shortness bid if opener does not show responder's major, then bids his minor if not wanting to play 3NT. Because these auctions take care of the hands that have only ten cards in the two suits, this one guarantees 6-5. The purpose of transferring to the major here is twofold: Responder makes opener declarer in the major, and he allows himself to bid again after showing the major, if his hand is strong enough. Don't forget this one.

1NT-2S, 2NT- 4S: Keycard for clubs. Don't do this unless you are willing to get to slam facing two keycards.

1NT-2S, 2NT- 4NT: Big one-suiter in clubs, no shortness, likely 2=2=2=7, could be a 6322 type. Responder probably needs a club card to fill in his suit for slam. Responder is still trying for slam even though opener has initially rejected. Not forcing.

1NT-2S, 2NT- 5C: Big one-suiter in clubs, no shortness, likely 2=2=2=7, could be a 6322 type. The same hand type as the 4NT bid here, but even stronger, and therefore forcing. Responder is going to six anyway, and so is trying for seven. Over this, opener should show keycards (1430), and if responder does not sign off, opener is either being asked for the queen (if he has not shown it already, the cheapest bid other than 6C asks) or is being asked for a source of tricks (e.g. if the bidding goes 1NT-2S, 2NT-5C, 5H-5NT, 5NT is a try for seven clubs; 5S over 5H would have been a queen-ask).

1NT-2S, 3C: Accepts clubs. Responder passes now with signoff hands, continues as above (showing second suits etc.) if stronger. But after a 4D or 4H transfer, the next step above the shown major is now six-ace RKC (clubs and the major), not simple RKC for the major. Replies are 1-4, 3-0, 2-5 with no Q, 2-5 with one Q, 2-5 with two Q.

1NT- 2NT: Transfer to diamonds. Auctions are analogous to the club transfers that start with 2S. If responder transfers to diamonds and then bids 4C, that is a strong hand with 7411 shape. This way, responder can use 4D as a transfer to hearts at the four level, and so on; the structure is exactly the same as if responder's minor were clubs (except of course that later bids in diamonds are signoffs). 4NT is still a nonforcing slam try in diamonds, and 5C a forcing one, asking for keycards.

But note that after transferring to diamonds, responder does not have a bid below 3NT to show shortness in clubs. He handles shapes like 3=3=6=1 by bidding Stayman, then showing club shortness, then bidding diamonds again (assuming he does not decide to get out in 3NT).

1NT- 3C: Invitational or game force (but not clear slam interest), 5-5 or better in the majors. (With 5-5 or better and slam interest, the bidding goes 1NT-2H; 2S-3H.) Opener now bids:

- 1NT-3C, 3D: 2-2 in the majors and rejection values; over this, responder bids three of his better major to play, or 4C to ask opener to pick one, or 4D or 4H as transfers.
- 1NT-3C, 3M: To play (rejects game if responder is invitational only). Responder can force to game anyway by bidding 3NT with ordinary hands that are willing to play there, or by bidding the longer major if he is 6-5, or by bidding his minor fragment with a 5=5=(3-0) type (a mild slam try).
- 1NT-3C, 3NT: 2-2 in the majors and good values (4C now asks opener to bid his best major; 4D and 4H are transfers, probably with a 6-5 type).
- 1NT-3C, 4C: Heart transfer showing a maximum, just in case responder becomes interested in slam (4D is a retransfer now).
- 1NT-3C, 4D: Transfer to spades (4H is a retransfer).
- 1NT-3C, 4M: Acceptance values but no particular slam interest.
- 1NT- 3D: 5-5 invitational in the minors. Opener can pass, or sign off in 4C, or bid a major-suit stopper, or bid 3NT natural. He can also, of course, bid 5m. With a super giant for one or both minors, opener bids four of the corresponding major for whichever suit he intends to play in (hearts to show clubs, spades to show diamonds). This operates as Redwood.

Some people like to have a bid to show 5-5 weak in the minors. We reject this approach because it is rare for it to come up, and even if it does, you can pass 1NT and follow with 2NT, unusual, to demand a minor if the opponents balance into two of a major. One of the advantages of playing 16-18 notrumps is that responder does not need to run out of 1NT with a weak hand. He can always just pass, not fearing disaster.

- 1NT- 3H: 5-5 or better, GF, possible slam try, minors. Opener can bid 3NT to show big major suit stoppers, or bid 3S to show diamonds, 4C to show clubs, with hands that fit well. There is no need for opener to be able to show stoppers at the three level, since if he does not fit either minor particularly well, he will have plenty in the majors. After opener shows a fit in a minor, general principles apply.

1NT- 3S: Shows both minors, with slam interest. The shape is not 5-5 or better, since that hand bids 3H. It is also not three-suited or quasi-three-suited, since those hands start with 2C. Hence, it can only be 2=2=5=4 or 2=2=4=5. Opener bids 3NT whenever he does not have an acceptance for one or both minors and has both majors stopped. Responder can then bid his longer minor to keep trying for a fit. If opener likes a minor (meaning he has a four-card or greater fit), he bids it at the four level if interested in slam, at the five level if not.

There are two problem hand types opener can have on this auction. With AKQxx/xx/Kxx/Kxx, opener is afraid of a heart lead if he bids 3NT, so with this hand type, he bids four of his major (NF). And with KJxxx/xx/AQx/AQx, his spades are not good enough to bid 4S. He would rather play in a minor, but cannot bid one directly because he does not have four cards in either of them. So he bids 4NT, asking responder to bid five of his longer minor.

1NT- 3NT: To play.

1NT- 4C: Gerber. Responses are 4D, 1 or 4 aces; 4H, 0 or 3 aces; 4S, 2 aces. 4NT now is to play, but with 3+ aces, opener goes on. 5C is king ask, same responses. Don't use direct Gerber if you want to play in 5C opposite the wrong response; you can't do it. Transfer to clubs first, then invite slam. We do not play "sliding Gerber." After the response to the 4C bid, anything except 5C is natural.

1NT- 4D, 4H: Texas transfers. Can follow with 4NT, RKC (or 4S, Kickback, in the case of a transfer to hearts).

1NT- 4S: To play. Responder wants to protect his kings or AQ tenaces on lead. Sorry, but you only have the option of bidding this way when you have spades, not hearts.

1NT- 4NT: Normal quantitative slam try. However, the shape is restricted. Not anything with a four card major (unless 4333 type), and not 5422 with both minors, and not 5332 with a major. So, all that is left here is 4=3=3=3, 3=4=3=3, 4432 with both minors, or 5332 with a minor.

1NT-5C, 5D: These are direct slam tries showing 1=1=4=7 or 1=1=7=4 shapes.

Direct Intervention Over The 1NT Opening

1NT-(X): If the double is for penalty (always ask or look at the CC), the basic method is DONT runouts. Redouble asks opener to bid 2C, after which responder passes or bids two of a red suit (he does not show spades this way). 2C, 2D, and 2H are all natural and show that suit plus a higher-ranking suit. A direct runout to 2S is a weak one-suiter. The runouts are usually made with weakish hands. If you think you have enough to make 1NTX, you can pass here (but bear in mind that good opponents who double a strong notrump for penalties usually have a long suit to lead, so if you are in any doubt, it is probably better to run). Strong hands are shown by *passing* the double, and then coming back in later. If you have a weak hand, you *must* use the DONT structure on the first round of bidding to run out. Otherwise, you are committed to passing through the rest of the auction (unless opener invites you back in somehow, or unless you are able to make a delayed negative double to compete for the partscore). This, of course, would be your normal course of action with a weak balanced hand. But if you pass and then bid a suit voluntarily (after opener passes at his second turn), that's invitational at least. Such a bid is forcing for one round, but not to game, at the two level. At the three level it is a game force in a major, forcing one round in a minor. It is necessary to play this way because if the penalty double is based on a long suit, we can still have a game our own way. If your hand is so strong offensively that you want to force immediately (without waiting to see whether they pull the double or not), you can jump to three of a suit, which is forcing. You can also bid 2NT, forcing and asking for suits up the line (this can be used as a Stayman equivalent, and is common with three-suiters).

If you have 4-4 in two suits and cannot stand 1NTX, you should show them as a two-suiter. Research indicates that opener has a four-card or better fit for one of the suits over 50% of the time, and good things can happen even if a 4-3 is reached. (Actually, the main good thing that happens is that the opponents bid on, and we *don't* reach our 4-3 fit.) This also applies to 4441 types; pick two suits and show them.

With a relatively good hand, you usually pass the double and wait to see what happens. This may lead to a final contract of 1NT doubled. It would be rare for this to be a bad score if we make it. So you pass and see what happens. Example: With AKxxx/xx/J10x/xxx, you pass first, then bid 2S if the opponents settle in clubs, diamonds, or hearts. (This will happen

frequently, since advancer obviously has a weak hand, and will often pull his partner's penalty double. It does not matter whether the opponents are bidding correctly when they do this. What matters is that it happens a lot, and when it does, it is important for us to be able to get to our own best contract, which may even be a game.) You can get to a reasonable contract our way when there is no obvious penalty, but if the opponents happen to bid spades, you have the option of deciding there is no game and letting them play. A delayed cuebid would be a stopper ask. A delayed 2NT bid would be natural. A delayed double is negative, the same as if it had been made over a direct natural overcall.

(Passing and then bidding 2NT is natural and invitational when they have intervened in direct seat; after 1NT-(P), P, a 2NT bid after they balance is minors.)

When the opponents double and then run to a suit, opener can also double. We define this as also being for takeout, always. It does not matter whether the bid opener doubles is natural or artificial (e.g. in the auction 1NT-(X), P-(2C), double shows takeout of clubs, even though the 2C bid is an artificial response to DONT; here, if opener is short in some other suit, he waits for them to bid it and doubles later, if appropriate). Similarly, if double shows both majors and RHO bids one, opener also can double for takeout (probably showing 5-4 either way in the minors). This will not happen often, but a unilateral penalty double is also uncommon. With a hand that really wants to make a penalty double, opener passes and hopes that partner balances with a negative double.

Of course, most people don't play penalty doubles of strong notrump openings anymore. Most doubles will be takeout of some sort (DONT is the most popular right now, but there are others, and it doesn't really matter which one they play). When they double for takeout, we play that redouble is an unspecified game force, suggesting a penalty double of their contract. This removes all doubt about whether further passes are forcing (they always are). And if we don't redouble, we simply ignore the opposing double and use our regular system. Pass is willingness to play 1NTX (if advancer converts), and willingness to see what happens otherwise (further doubles are takeout at the two level, penalty at the three level). A bid of 2C or higher asks opener to continue as if the enemy double didn't exist. You will have to use your judgment sometimes to decide whether it is better to redouble first when you have game-forcing

values, or to give up the possibility of a penalty and press on toward our own contract.

1NT-(2C): The standard treatment, which I see no reason to deviate from, is to play “system on” when the overcall is specifically 2C, regardless of what the defined meaning of the 2C bid may be. Double shows majors and operates as Stayman. 2D would be a transfer to hearts, and so on.

Even if 2C shows majors, many players will have only four in one or both majors, so responder can still want to transfer or use Stayman. If the 2C bid was Landy, showing both majors, the double still shows majors by responder, but now the idea is that we may want to double them in a 2M contract.

1NT-(2D, 2H, 2S): The meaning of various actions now depends on what their bid means. We use a modified version of the old Hamman-Soloway methods here. If they have shown the bid suit only, i.e. it is natural, double is negative, implying probably a doubleton there. New suits at the two level are nonforcing, and 2NT initiates transfer lebensohl, transferring around the suit they have bid. A direct cuebid of the suit they have bid is Stayman with shortness in their suit, akin to a Roth shortness bid in an uninterrupted auction; the Stayman equivalent with a doubleton or better in their suit is normally a negative double (since you don't mind if partner passes). A jump to 3NT suggests (but does not guarantee) a stopper. A direct bid of 4D or 4H is Texas. (If we Texas to a suit they have shown, it is still natural, presumably meaning they have misbid – or that we have!)

In the transfer lebensohl style, there is always an “impossible” bid at the three level that has no obvious defined meaning. For example, against a 2H overcall, you bid 2NT to show clubs, 3C to show diamonds, and 3D to show spades. A 3H cuebid shows shortness in hearts and (usually) four or more spades, and 3NT could either contain a stopper or be taking a shot on a hand with game values and no stopper that sees no possible game other than 3NT, and which is willing to gamble that either opener has a stopper, the suit blocks, or that they won't lead the suit. This leaves the 3S bid. We use this bid (and a 3H bid when the overcall has been 2S) to show minor suits. With xx/xx/AQxx/Kxxxx, you

would respond 3S if they overcall 2H, or 3H if they overcall 2S. You want to tell partner that you have no interest in actually playing in the other major (which is the reason you can't start with a negative double), and that he can bid 3NT himself if he has their suit well stopped, but that game in either minor is possible if partner doesn't want to play in 3NT. (It is also possible, although unlikely, that you are going to pull 3NT anyhow.) After this MSS-style response, 4m by opener is NF (could be the last spot to go plus).

If the opponents start with a natural 2D overcall, the impossible bid is 3S (since you would show spades with a 3H response). This bid can't logically show both minors when the overcaller has a long diamond suit. The bid is left undefined (and, one hopes, unused) until further notice.

If they show the bid suit and an unknown other suit, double is still negative, and other bids are as if they had shown a one-suiter.

If they show the bid suit and a known other suit, double is negative for the other two suits. A cuebid of their known other suit is Stayman, asking for the other major, if there is a major they have not shown; if they have bid 2H, showing hearts and spades, a 2S bid is to play. Any suit they have not shown, at the two level, is to play. A 2NT response initiates transfer lebensohl, showing the lowest suit they have not shown, and transferring *around* the suits they have shown; a bid of that suit is a transfer to the other, more expensive, suit they have not shown. Example: They overcall 2D, Brozel, showing diamonds and hearts. A 2H bid now is Stayman for spades; 2S is to play. 2NT shows clubs, invitational at least, and 3C shows spades, invitational at least. (The notion of having three-level transfers always show at least invitational strength is borrowed from Hamman-Soloway; they say that with a weak one-suiter, you just pass and hope to get to bid your suit later, if appropriate.) When they have shown two known suits, responder's bid of 3S always shows 5-5 or better in the other two suits, regardless of whether one of those suits is spades or not. This treatment is available because if spades is not one of their suits, there is always a transfer bid available to show spades. (Hamman-

Soloway again.) Bids of 3D and 3H show stoppers, asking for a stopper in the other suit.

If the bid is a transfer overcall to the next higher suit, double is negative of the suit they have actually shown, and a cuebid of the suit they have shown is singleton Stayman, Roth style (not GF if we are still below 2NT; cue their suit at the three level to establish a GF). 2NT is, again, transfer lebensohl, transferring around their known suit.

If the bid shows two suits other than the one they have bid (example: 2D to show both majors), double is negative for the other two suits, and 2NT initiates transfer lebensohl. The question is what the various cuebids should mean. If it is possible for the intervener to have only four cards in either or both of the suits he has shown (ask), a bid of two of that suit is natural, NF. A lot of people will show both majors with a hand like Jxxx/AK10xx/xx/xx. When they do this, it is foolish for us not to be able to get to 2S when we have an eight-card fit there (and it could be nine). In these auctions, you have to cue-bid at the three level to show stoppers.

1NT-(2NT): This will not happen very often. Presumably, if it does, it shows both minors, and then double shows any game force and asks for cooperation in doubling them; three of a major directly is nonforcing; and three of a minor (assuming that the 2NT bid shows minors) is forcing in the corresponding major. 4D and 4H are Texas (Texas is on unless they bid 3H or higher). A pass of the 2NT overcall followed by a delayed double of 3m shows both majors and a competitive hand, asking opener to pick a major. A direct double followed by three of a major is forcing, and shows four cards only.

1NT-(3 suit): Experience shows that opponents who make preemptive jump bids against notrump openings have good suits. Accordingly, we define double here as negative. New suits are forcing, if below game.

Against any overcall up to and including 3D, responder has the option of bidding Texas transfers at the four level to get to a major. If the overcall is 3H or higher, we use natural bidding (but

remember that a double of a natural three-level overcall by them is negative).

Intervention By RHO After The 1NT Opening

When the auction goes 1NT-(P), P, the opponents will frequently balance. Now, responder is limited. Any delayed doubles by him are for *takeout*, trying to get to a partscore of our own, at the two level. If the opponents bid to the three level and responder doubles, though, that is penalty.

When the auction goes 1NT-(P), P-(2 of a suit), opener can bid a five-card major if he feels like it. He can also double. We define this as takeout, if their bid is natural (this includes when it also says the bidder has another suit). E.g., if the balancing bid is 2D, showing diamonds and a major, double is takeout of diamonds. If 2D shows both majors, though, double is for both minors. If 2D is a transfer overcall to hearts, opener doubles 2D to show diamonds; with short hearts, like 4=2=3=4, he passes and waits to double 2H if the opponents stop there.

1NT-(P), P-(X): If the opponents balance with a double, opener must pass, unless he wants to bid a five-card major. If the double goes back around to responder, DONT runouts are on.

1NT-(P), 2C-(X): When the opponents double a Stayman response, opener has four choices. 1. He can redouble to indicate desire to play there. After this redouble, responder can continue with his normal bid, or he can bid 2D with a three-suiter short in clubs (responder was going to pass opener's rebid) or bid 3D with a hand with long diamonds and a side major (the hand that normally would have bid 1NT-2C, 2D-2NT). 2. Opener can pass with tolerance for clubs, inviting responder to redouble for business; in this case, responder also continues with his normal bid, or 2D (short clubs) or 3D (six diamonds and a four-card major) as above. 3. Opener can bid 2D over the double to show no major, but also no desire to play 2C redoubled. 4. Or he can make his normal bid to show one or both major suits. When he does this, the bidding proceeds as if the double didn't exist (assuming the opponents don't bid anything further).

1NT-(P), 2C-(2D): Double is penalties; pass is neutral; bid a major if you have one (or bid 2NT with both). The auction continues as if the 2D bid did not

exist. When opener passes or doubles (and the opponents do not bid higher than 2D), responder makes the same bids he would have in the uninterrupted auction 1NT-2C, 2D. Here, the opponent's 2D bid is considered to "substitute" for the 2D bid opener did not make. So, if responder has a hand that needs to get out in 3C, he can still do it. Opener can jump to three of a major to show five if he has a good hand (this may be useful if LHO is about to raise diamonds to a high level). General principles apply to overcalls at higher levels.

1NT-(P), 2C-(2M): Double is penalties; pass is neutral; you can bid the other major if you have four or five cards there. Certainly, in this situation, if the enemy bid is 2H and you are not going to double this, you should always bid 2S with spades. If the overcall is 2S, there is a question whether you should bid 3H now with hearts and a minimum. I would say yes, since in our style, if partner was looking for a heart fit, he will always have a good enough hand to bid game now, and if he actually has spades, he can bid 3NT. So the only question is what happens if opener passes at his second turn. Double by responder should be penalties, e.g. in the auction 1NT-(P), 2C-(2S), P-(P), X. They have to be wrong sometimes when they choose to overcall, and this is the only way for responder to punish them. If responder does not double here, he can bid 3m, forcing and natural, or 2NT, showing a desire to play in a minor suit, the same as if the opponents had not intervened. (We do not use most of our artificial methods when the opponents intervene; the decision now revolves around our holdings in their suit. We need to be able to decide whether to double them, or press on in notrump, or look for another place to play if our holdings in their suit are weak.) A cuebid of 3S here would express doubt about whether to play 3NT.

1NT-(P), 2C-(3 any): Double is penalties; pass is neutral. You can bid a major if you have one that you can bid at the three level, but you should have five of your major to bid it at the four level (this would presumably only happen in the auction 1NT-(P), 2C-(3S), 4H).

1NT-(P), 2D-(X): When the opponents double a transfer response, opener can redouble to say he wants to play there. Pass simply shows a doubleton in the suit responder is transferring to, and if responder

redoubles next, that asks opener to complete the transfer anyway. Responder only does this with at least invitational values; if he just wants to play 2H, he bids it. (This treatment was suggested in the second edition of *Washington Standard* by Steve Robinson.) Otherwise, he makes whatever bid he would have made anyway at his second turn. (Of course, this applies to a 2H transfer, showing spades, as well.) Opener can also complete the transfer, which he would always do holding three in the suit responder has shown, and he can also superaccept, ignoring the double.

If the opponents double any of the higher responses to 1NT, opener simply makes his normal bid, as if the double had not happened, unless he wants to suggest playing the hand in the suit that has just been doubled. (If the opponents double a 2NT response, redouble shows a desire to penalize them in whatever they bid, and pass is neutral. But both show lack of fit for diamonds.)

1NT-(P), 2D-(2H): When the opponents overcall a transfer response by “cue-bidding” responder’s suit, opener passes to show a doubleton, doubles to show three-card support, or superaccepts in the normal way by bidding 2S, etc. The auction continues normally from here, although it is likely that there will be more bidding from the opponents, depending on what the cuebid showed.

1NT-(P), 2D-(2S): When the opponents overcall a transfer response, opener can double naturally, accept the transfer at the next higher level (if his hand is good enough), or bid a new suit to show a fit plus a side suit and presumably a good hand. If opener passes, as he will most of the time, the only important thing to remember is that a new lower-ranking suit by responder is not forcing at the three level. (At the four level, it would be natural and forcing.) It shows the same invitational hand that it would have shown if the opponents had stayed out. An example auction is 1NT-(P), 2D-(2S), P-(P), 3C. 3C is not forcing. If responder wants to force, he starts by doubling their bid, which is takeout, and following up with a forcing bid in another suit if appropriate. Or responder can cuebid 3S in our example auction, showing shortness in spades and a good hand. The double typically shows a doubleton in their suit, in case opener wants to pass. These same principles apply if their overcall is at the three level (assume fourth hand overcalled 3C instead of 2S),

except that a reopening double by responder can be on a singleton, since there is not room to cuebid without getting past 3NT.