



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(513) 1m – 1NT Auctions and Follow-ups**

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Level: 4 of 10 (1 of 6)

Robert S. Todd

[robert@advinbridge.com](mailto:robert@advinbridge.com)

#### **General**

When our side opens the bidding with 1-minor. Responder starts the auction looking for a Major suit fit if they have a 4+card Major. If they do not have a 4-card Major, then a Major suit fit is unlikely and thus Responder usually starts by bidding NT. With a minimum hand, a 1NT response is the most common action. This often makes it difficult for the opponents to get into the auction as well as sometimes letting us play one of our favorite contracts. Just because we bid 1NT does not mean that the auction is going to end there. Partner and/or the opponents may want to continue the bidding. Let's take a look at these auctions in more detail.

#### **Responding 1NT to a 1-minor Opening Bid**

When our partner opens the bidding with 1♦ our first priority is to respond with a 4+card Major. If we do not have one of those and we have a minimum hand, about 6 to a bad 10 points, then we can look to raise partner's minor suit with a fit if we have a way to do so. If we play inverted minors, we often will not have a bid to show these values, even if we have a ♦ fit. But raising partner's minor suit is not a desirable action, especially with such a minimum hand. Instead, we usually simply bid 1NT with these hands.

This 1NT response can be made with a variety of different hand shapes and strengths.

#### *Example 1*

1♦      \_\_?

♠ Q93

♥ J83

♦ K932

♣ A83

With this scattered 10 HCP hand it is best to respond 1NT to partner's 1♦ opening bid.



*Example 2*

1♦     \_\_\_?

♠ A

♥ T83

♦ 932

♣ K98532

With 7 HCP and a long ♣ suit, we still must respond 1NT to partner's 1♦ opening bid.

When partner opens the bidding with 1♣, we take a similar approach to responding. The primary difference is that we also have ♦ responses available. The most commonly used ♦ response is a 1♦ bid instead of a 1NT response.

*Example 3*

1♣     \_\_\_?

♠ 93

♥ 843

♦ KQ92

♣ K982

With this hand we have the right shape and strength to bid 1NT, but a better option is to respond 1♦ and let partner rebid NT if that is the right place to play.

### Follow-up Bidding after 1-minor – 1NT Auctions

When the auction begins with 1-minor – 1NT, Opener has a variety of options.

1♣     1NT

\_\_\_?

- 2♣     6+card ♣ or 5-card ♣ and unbalanced hand, minimum values
- 2♦     *Reverse*, 4+card ♦ suit, longer ♣, and good 16+ points (1F)
- 2♥     *Reverse*, 4+card ♥ suit, longer ♣, and good 16+ points (1F)
- 2♠     *Reverse*, 4+card ♠ suit, longer ♣, and good 16+ points (1F)
- 2NT     Balanced 18-19 points (occasionally 17 points and a semi-balanced hand)
- 3♣     6+card ♣ suit, 15-17 points
- 3♦\*     *Worry Ask*, short ♦ (singleton or void), 18+ points (GF)
- 3♥\*     *Worry Ask*, short ♥ (singleton or void), 18+ points (GF)
- 3♠\*     *Worry Ask*, short ♠ (singleton or void), 18+ points (GF)
- 3NT     "I hope this makes" – usually a source of tricks or a great 19 points.



1♦ 1NT

\_\_\_?

- 2♣ 4+card ♣, unbalanced hand, 12-17 points
- 2♦ 6+card ♦, unbalanced hand, minimum values
- 2♥ *Reverse*, 4+card ♥, longer ♦, and good 16+ points (1F)
- 2♠ *Reverse*, 4+card ♠, longer ♦, and good 16+ points (1F)
- 2NT Balanced 18-19 points (occasionally 17 points and a semi-balanced hand)
- 3♣ *Jump Shift*, 4+card ♣, 4+card ♦, unbalanced or semi-balanced hand, 18+ points (GF)
- 3♦ 6+card ♦, 15-17 points
- 3♥\* *Worry Ask*, short ♥ (singleton or void), 18+ points (GF)
- 3♠\* *Worry Ask*, short ♠ (singleton or void), 18+ points (GF)
- 3NT “I hope this makes” – usually a source of tricks or a great 19 points.

When Responder makes a bid like 1NT they have closely defined their hand. This puts Opener in the driver’s seat for knowing where the likely contract is going to end. Opener should attempt to describe their hand, but also try to cooperate with partner to find out if game is possible.

### Follow-up Bidding

There are some classic auctions that begin 1-minor – 1NT that we should be aware of.

#### Example 4

1♦ 1NT

2♣ \_\_\_?

♠ AJ3

♥ 65

♦ QT8

♣ QT943

Here Opener could have as many as 17 HCP for bidding 2♣. Responder now raises to 3♣ to show a good ♣ fit and the top of their 1NT response range.

#### Example 5

1♣ P 1NT 2♥

P P \_\_\_?

♠ A53

♥ 65

♦ QT8

♣ QT943

Here Responder should bid 3♣. They initially bid 1NT, trying to play in a better contract, but now they need to come back in.



*Example 6*

1♦ P 1NT 2♥  
X P \_\_\_?

♠ T52

♥ A4

♦ AQT8

♣ KJ94

Here Opener competes in the bidding by using a takeout double. They know that Responder has a 4+card minor somewhere, but they do not want to simply go to the 3-level all on their own.

*Example 7*

1♦ P 1NT 2♥  
P P X

♠ J83

♥ A4

♦ J92

♣ A9542

As Responder we should try to compete in the bidding, but instead of just guessing what to bid, here we make a card-showing double – implying a maximum for our 1NT response and wanting help from partner about what to do next.

When Responder bids 1NT our side will often have about half of the HCP, or just a bit more. That means that the opponents will frequently compete in the bidding. We need to have good agreements with partner about how to compete in the bidding.

## Conclusion

When partner opens the bidding with 1-minor and we have a minimum hand with no 4-card Major suit, then our most common action is going to be to respond 1NT. This denies a 4-card Major and implies at least one 4+card minor suit. Yes, this 1NT response may wrong side a potential 3NT contract, if partner has a balanced hand, but that we cannot help (especially after a 1♦ opening bid). After this 1NT response Opener can continue the auction in a corrective fashion, trying to find the best minor suit partscore to play, or in a constructive fashion using a variety of bidding tools like jumps, reverses, and worry asks. These are common auctions so make sure that you and partner feel comfortable about how the auction should progress so that you can land in a reasonable final contract.