

Rationale

In old-style bridge, 1H – 3H was a forcing raise in hearts. This allowed the suit to be set below the level of game and permitted some slam investigations below 4H. In the modern style, 1H – 3H is a *limit* raise and is non-forcing. 1H – 4H is the “*weak freak*” hand – 5 trumps and little else.

1H – 2C We go to game as responder by 2NT – 4H making a *delayed-game-raise*.

This is an example. It leaves a lot unsaid.

Jacoby 2NT is a popular alternative. Under Jacoby, 1H – 2NT shows a *flattish game-forcing raise* in opener’s major. i.e. Responder has an opening hand, at least 3 trumps and no singleton or void. Purists insist on 4 trumps.

FAQ: What have we given up?

ANS: Every convention takes the place of a bid with another meaning. Whenever someone suggests a convention to you, consider the alternative meaning which is lost. In old style, 1H – 2NT was an opening hand without support. It is more common now for 1H – 2NT to be a limit NT bid showing 10 – 11 HCP and no support. Both styles are rarely used by experienced players because responder is refusing to show suits and it takes up space. As such, we are giving up little by assigning a new meaning to 2NT. The limit NT meaning is retained when responding to a minor or bidding by a passed hand or in a contested auction.

FAQ: Is there a meaning for 1H – 3NT?

ANS: It means whatever you and partner agree that it means. It occupies a lot of space and, as such, needs to be highly specific. 4-3-3-3 shape with a four card minor, side suits stopped and 12 – 14 HCP is one suggestion. It is suggesting 3NT as an alternative contract.

FAQ: What are opener’s rebids after 1H – 2NT!?

ANS: These are the important bits!

- 3C!, 3D! and 3S! are splinters showing a singleton or void in the bid suit and strength unknown.
- 3H! shows 16 – 18 HCP and no shortage
- 3NT! shows good 14 – 15 HCP and no shortage
- 4C, 4D and 4S are all 5 card suits
- 4H shows a minimum and no shortage
- 4NT is RKC Blackwood in hearts

Notes

- Principle of Fast Arrival applies. We have managed to set the suit below level of game. See Lesson 11. “*The faster we go to game, the weaker the hand.*”
- After the splinter, responder can hopefully decide whether to proceed further. x opposite xxx or Axxx is good news! See Lesson 17. Of course, opener is unlimited and does not have to respect a sign off from responder.
- Having a second 5 card suit is considered more important and a splinter. Show the suit as a first priority.
- 4C by opener is NOT gerber. Gerber applies only after a *natural* NT bid.
- If responder returns immediately to 4H after any of opener’s rebids, it shows no interest in going further. If responder bids another suit, it may not be natural. It shows Ace or King of that suit and a better hand.

• Responder is *permitted* to pass the 3NT rebid as an alternative contract. A rare action.

Try bidding each of these hands. West is dealer

♠6	♠QJ7	1H	2NT!
♥AQ873	♥JT4	3S!	4H ¹
♦KQ63	♦A7	all pass	
♣Q43	♣A7652	¹ QJ7 opp x is poor	

♠KQ74	♠JT82	1H	1S ¹
♥AQ873	♥JT2	2S	4S
♦K6	♦A4	Go for a 4-4 fit	
♣32	♣AQ54	before a 5-3 every time. It will frequently provide an extra trick. If opener can’t support spades, responder returns to 4H.	

♠6	♠743	1H	3NT! ¹
♥AQ876	♥K93	4H ²	
♦KQ63	♦A42	¹ 3NT shows just this type of hand.	
♣Q43	♣AJ76	2NT may well drive us too high on this hand.	

²With the obvious spade problem, opener simply returns to 4H.

♠6	♠743	1H	2NT! ¹
♥AQ876	♥K93	3S! ²	4C ³
♦KQ63	♦A2	4D ³	4NT
♣Q43	♣AK765	5D	6H ⁴

¹Much better hand and not so flat.

²Splinter. This is music to responder. He knows that only 30HCP in the pack are working.

³These are called cue bids covered in Lesson 34. For now, let’s say they show some control in the suit and encourage slam consideration.

⁴We would like to know about HQ. However asking by bidding 5S would drive us to slam anyway. There are fair chances that opener has it or a 6th trump.

♠62	♠743	1H	2NT!
♥AQ876	♥K93	4H ¹	P ²
♦KQ43	♦A2	¹ Minimum	
♣Q4	♣AK765	² Not good enough	

♠A2	♠743	1H	2NT!
♥AQ876	♥K93	3H ¹	4NT
♦KQ43	♦A2	5S	6H
♣Q4	♣AK765	¹ 16-18 HCP	

♠AJ984	♠753	1H	2NT!
♥AQ8762	♥K93	4S ¹	4NT
♦3	♦A2	5S	6H
♣4	♣AK765	¹ 5 card spade suit and consequently 6 hearts. This is not a good slam, requiring south to hold two spade honours. Oh well.	

♠A2	♠743	1H	2NT!
♥AQ876	♥K93	3NT ¹	4NT
♦KQ43	♦A2	5S	6H
♣84	♣AK765	¹ Good 14-15	

Couldn’t blame east if he didn’t chase this slam.