

DONT & Capp

Rationale

Defending against 1NT is often a hit and miss affair. A lucky or unlucky lead can make all the difference – declarer only needs just over half the tricks. Even one off not vul will be a good score for declarer. Evidently, we can make a part score – often 1NT. Sitting on the fence with a long solid heart suit to lead can also work out badly. You pass with a warm glow but the auction comes back to you with them in 2S. What are you going to do now?

Having been burnt with single-suited hands where there is no fit, many pairs prefer to compete with two suited hands unless they have a six carder. Rest assured that many, many gadgets have been tried. If there was a “right” answer, we’d all be playing it! Here are two reasonably common conventions.

• DONT

- In either seat, double of their 1NT shows an opening hand and an unknown six card suit. Partner’s options are
 - bid 2C which is pass or correct to play.
 - bid own suit which is six carder without tolerance
 - pass for penalties showing balance of points
- In either seat, suit bids are SPLASH - Suit Plus A Suit Higher. May be 5-4 either way.
- After (1NT) – X – (2B), our double is penalties
- After (1NT) – X – (XX) – 2C
2C is own suit, otherwise pass.
- Notice that we have given up on a double as *strictly* penalties. Defending 1NT with a big balanced hand isn’t much fun anyway. You are forever on lead and keep conceding tricks. To catch them, *both* defenders need values. Then, they haven’t got a prayer.
- If 1NT never gets doubled, pairs will start making it with less and less HCP

In each of the following south has dealt and opened 1NT. Complete the auctions.

♠K3	♠8742	(1NT)	X ¹	(P)	2C! ²
♥85	♥QJ84	(P)	2D	(P)	P
♦AKT643	♦7	¹ one suiter, suit unknown			
♣K62	♣Q743				

²forced. Not enough HCP to pass. 2D is predictable!

♠AK432	♠876	(1NT)	2C! ¹	(P)	2D! ²
♥6	♥T9432	(P)	2S ³	all pass	
♦32	♦9875	¹ Clubs and suit higher			
♣AKT54	♣2				

²Nothing could be worse than clubs!

³Notice that when the 2nd suit is spades, it should be a decent suit. There will be nowhere to go if they double. They have 26 HCP. In the absence of anything better, trump leads continue to be suitable against two suited hands.

♠AK943	♠J6	(1NT)	P ¹	(P)	P
♥K86	♥T943				
♦A8	♦J432				
♣A43	♣T75				

¹Sure, you have the best hand at the table. No reason to bid. Lead a low spade and defend.

♠A43	♠T96	(1NT)	X	(P)	2D! ¹
♥K6	♥J75	all pass			
♦93	♦KQT5432				
♣AQT876	♣2				

¹You’re allowed to use judgment. East deduces that west will pass his forced 2C bid. No thanks. 2D from such a weak hand must be better. They’ve missed a heart part score.

• Cappeletti aka Pottage, Hamilton

- Double is penalties.
- 2C! shows a one suited hand (6+). Strength is not discussed but penalty doubles are never far away. So, vul must be considered. Partner is expect to bid 2D which is then pass or correct. If partner bids something other than 2D it is own suit & is “to play”.
- 2D! shows both majors. Because the exact suits are known, 5-4 either way is OK. If 2D is doubled, partner passes to show equal length in majors.
- 2H! shows hearts and a minor, 5-5. To find the minor, partner bids 2NT!
- 2S! shows spades and a minor. As above
- 2NT! shows both minors

In each of the following south has dealt and opened 1NT. Complete the auctions.

♠K3	♠8742	(1NT)	2C! ¹	(P)	2D! ²
♥85	♥QJ84	(P)	P	(P)	P
♦AKT643	♦7	¹ one suiter, suit unknown			
♣K62	♣Q743	² forced.			

♠AK432	♠87	(1NT)	2S! ¹	(P)	P ²
♥6	♥T9432	¹ spades and minor			
♦32	♦9875				
♣AKT54	♣J3				

²not prepared to risk that 2nd suit is clubs at 3 level

♠AK943	♠J6	(1NT)	P ¹	(P)	P
♥K86	♥T943				
♦A8	♦J432				
♣A43	♣T75				

¹Sure, I have the best hand at the table. Although double is penalties, the defence could go poorly. See how hard it is to get the axe on the 1NT alone?

No reason to bid. Lead a low spade.

♠A432	♠T96	(1NT)	P ¹	(P)	2C! ²
♥K6	♥J75	(P)	P ³	(P)	
♦9	♦KQT5432				
♣AQT876	♣2				

¹This time west can’t bid his suit without finishing in 3C which seems to high for a six card suit.

²East is well-placed to transfer to 2D

³You’re allowed to use judgment. West decided that East will pass his forced 2D bid. No thanks. 2C looks attractive. However, it doesn’t work well here as 2D is a better spot. They’ve missed a heart part score.

♠KQ942	♠753	(1NT)	2D! ¹	(X) ²	P! ³
♥AKJ2	♥Q63	(P)	2S	all pass	
♦T6	♦J94	¹ Majors give clear choice			
♣73	♣T942	² shows D’s			

³pass here shows equal length in west’s suits.