

## NO TRUMP RESPONSES TO 1 OF A SUIT

The 1NT response to an opening bid is different from other No Trump bids in that it doesn't promise a balanced hand. The hand could be balanced or unbalanced.

It simply shows a point count. It says:

1. I have 6-9 points; and
2. 'I don't have 4 cards in my partner's suit'; and
3. 'I don't have a suit that I can bid at the 1 level'; and
4. 'I don't have enough points to bid a new suit at the 2 level'

We call it the 'Dustbin Bid' as it catches all those rubbish hands with 6-9 points where there is nothing else you we bid. Remember, we always bid with 6+ points. 1NT is your last resort if you can't bid anything else.

After partner opens 1♠ we must respond with 6 points. A response of 2♥ would promise 10+ points or Rule of 14 (see next page). So we bid 1NT.

WEST	EAST	EAST
1♥	1NT	♠ 9 8 2
		♥ 7
	Notice East doesn't have a balanced hand	♦ K J 8 6 3 2
		♣ Q 8 4

### Exception

The exception is after a 1♣ opening. After an opening of 1♣ responder with 6+ points can always show a new suit at the 1 level or support clubs, so it's better to reserve the 1NT response for slightly stronger hands with no 4 card major, i.e. 8-10 points.

**THE 2NT AND 3NT RESPONSES** We rarely use these responses to an opening bid of 1 of suit. With stronger balanced hands (11+) we avoid responding with 2NT or 3NT when we can make a change of suit forcing bid. We will almost always be able to bid a new suit at the two level which gives more bidding space to explore the best contract. The only 11+ hand when there is no change of suit bid available is when the opening bid is 1♠ and we have a 3433 hand (4 hearts). In this case we can bid 2NT (11-12) or 3NT (13+). With exactly 10 points and 3433 shape (4 hearts) after an opening 1♠ we can bid 2NT if we have good intermediate cards (i.e. 9s and 10s) or otherwise bid 1NT.

### THE 2NT AND 3NT RESPONSES

We rarely use these responses to an opening bid of 1 of suit. With stronger balanced hands (11+) we avoid responding with 2NT or 3NT when we can make a change of suit forcing bid. We will almost always be able to bid a new suit at the two level which gives more bidding space to explore the best contract. The only 11+ hand when there is no change of suit bid available is when the opening bid is 1♠ and we have a 3433 hand (4 hearts). In this case we can bid 2NT (11-12) or 3NT (13+). With exactly 10 points and 3433 shape (4 hearts) after an opening 1♠ we can bid 2NT if we have good intermediate cards (i.e. 9s and 10s) or otherwise bid 1NT.

## THE RULE OF 14

We are responding to partner's opening bid and don't have any suit that we can bid at the one level. How do we decide whether we're strong enough to respond with a change of suit at the 2 level? Typically, we need 10 or more high card points but we can sometimes change suit at the 2 level with less than 10 high card points if our hand satisfies the 'Rule of 14' test.

*The Rule of 14* is used by Responder. We count our high card points and add the number of cards in our longest suit. If the total is 14 or more, we're strong enough to respond at the 2 level. If not, we should bid 1NT.

In practice this means we can make a (non-jump) change of suit at the 2 level with:

- Any hand of 10+ HCP
- 9 HCP and a 5 card suit
- 8 HCP and a 6 card suit
- 7 HCP and a 7 card suit.

Here are some examples (assuming pass from opponents):

Opener's Bid	Responder's Hand	Responder's Bid	
1♠	♠ 4 3 ♥ 9 5 2 ♣ K J 3 ♦ A J 9 4 3 2	2♣	9 HCP and a 5-card suit so passes the Rule of 14.
1♠	♠ 4 ♥ 9 5 2 ♣ K 8 3 ♦ A J 9 5 4 3 2	2♣	8 HCP and a 6-card suit so passes the Rule of 14.
1♠	4 ♠ ♥ 9 5 ♣ Q 8 3 ♦ A J 9 8 7 4 3 2	2♣	7 HCP and a 7-card suit so passes the Rule of 14.
1♠	♠ 4 3 ♥ K 5 2 ♣ J 8 3 2 ♦ A J 9 4	1NT	9 HCP but no 5-card suit so we must bid 1NT showing 6-9 points.
1♠	♠ 4 3 ♥ K 5 2 ♣ Q 8 3 2 ♦ A J 9 4 2	2♣	Any hand with at least 10 card points can make a change of suit bid at the 2 level.