

# Learning Points –3-Bid Responses to 1NT Opening (Modern Approaches)

December 8, 2011

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Bidding Level: Intermediate

Let's assume a modern scientific approach to bidding after partner opens 1NT (15-17):

- Frequent 5-card majors when 5332
- Systems on after Double and 2♣ interference,
- Stayman, Smolen, and (Delayed) Texas Transfers
- Lebensohl (Fast Denies) and Negative Doubles over 3-bid interference.

How should we play 3-bids in our constructive auction? Here's a look at the evolution you might have seen:

Style	3♣	3♦	3♥	3♠
<b>Std v1.0</b>	Weak	GF, 6+ cards	GF, 5+ cards	GF, 5+ cards
<b>Std v2.0</b>	GF, 6+ cards	GF, 6+ cards	GF, 5+ cards	GF, 5+ cards
<b>Std v3.0</b>	Inv. 6+ Cards	Inv. 6+ Cards	GF, 5+ cards	GF, 5+ cards
<b>Bergen</b>	5/5 minors Inv	5/5 minors GF	5/5 Majors Inv	5/5 Majors GF
<b>W. Johnson</b>	Puppet Stayman	5/5 Maj Inv+	GF, 6+ cards	GF, 6+ cards
<b>Truscott</b>	Puppet Stayman	5/5 Maj Inv+	3♠, 44+ Minors GF	3♥, 44+ Minors GF
<b>Min. Splinters</b>	Puppet Stayman	5/5 minor Inv+	0/1 ♥, 3145/54 GF+	0/1 ♠, 1345/54GF+

3-bids must payoff for the bidding space they take. Here are two different approaches that **integrate 2, 3 and 4-level responses** to 1NT to accomplish important bidding priorities.

Partner opens 1N	<a href="#">Walsh Relay</a>	Complex
2♣	Stayman	Stayman
2♦	Transfer to ♥s (not 4 ♠s), or Broken Minor Suit Slam Try	Transfer to ♥s
2♥	Transfer to ♠s (Not 4 ♥s) 2♠→2N triggers relay sequence. <i>See link.</i>	Transfers to ♠s
2♠	Minor Suit Stayman. Opener responds 2N with no preference. Responders 3m is to play.	Opener bids 2N with min. and 3♣ with max. - (Semi)bal. inv. to 3N w/o 4-card major - ♣ sign-off –or– GF+ ♣&♦
2N	Transfer to 3♣. Rebids show 1444 (N=♣)	♦ sign-off –or– Weak ♣&♦ –or– 6+ Card Slam Try (either ♣ or ♦). Opener Gap Negative.
3♣	Invitational 6+ Cards	Puppet Stayman
3♦	Invitational 6+ Cards	5/5 minors GF +
3♥	GF	55 Majors Invitational
3♠	GF	55 Majors GF+
3N	To Play. No Major Interest	To Play. No Major Interest
4♣	Gerber	Gerber
4♦	Texas Transfer	Texas Transfer
4♥	Texas Transfer	Texas Transfer
4♠	23/32=4=4 Quantitative Invite	23/32=4=4 Quantitative Invite
4N	Quantitative, not 4 card Maj nor 44 minors.	Quantitative, not 4 card major nor 44 minors.

When opponents interfere, high level doubles are cooperative (Not require trump stack show general strength with no clear direction). Forcing Pass is on.

### 3♣ Puppet Stayman

This convention assumes you open 1NT with 5-card majors often. If you never or rarely open 1NT with a 5-card major, then use 3♣ for another purpose. You need: 1) a Game forcing hand, and 2) a 3-card major to make this bid. With 4-4, 4-2 major shapes prefer using Invitational Stayman (2♣) instead. Do not use 3♣ to look for a 4-4 major suit fit. The major shapes you should use 3♣ for are: 32, 33, 34. Some use Puppet with a 35 major pattern also. (Holding 3 cards in one major and 5 cards you could use Jacoby Transfers to play in your major or NT. Using Puppet Stayman allows you to find a 5-3 fit in partner's major or 3N when no fit exists. You also land on your feet when partner has 4 cards in your major. The contract will be right-sided).

#### Responses to 3♣ Puppet Stayman

3♦ = Opener has one or both 4 card major(s) but no 5-card major (Never open NT with 54/4522).

Responder rebids the major they don't have with 1, 4♦ with both majors, and 3N w/no 4-card major.

3♥, ♠ = Opener's 5-card major

3N = No 4-card or 5-card major

**3♥, ♠ Anti Lemming** – developed by Alan Truscott this useful bid avoids the trap of many balanced 3NT raises. 1N-3N auctions usually depend on opener to stop the Majors. Truscott's insight was to have the 3 of a Major bid to show Game values with only 5 cards in the majors. Unlike Truscott we advocate bidding the shorter Major while guaranteeing 3 of the other major. This right-sides 4 of the major where responder holds 3 cards. This allows pairs to avoid NT when opponents can run a major suit. With no stopper in the bid major, opener can bid 4 of the other major wanting to play in a 4-3 Moysian fit or bid 4 or 5 of their minor confident in 4-card support. Responder's hand should have 9-11+ HCP. With more, bid 3N with game ambitions as partner will likely stop the majors. With slam ambitions, bid beyond responder's rebid.

**3♥, ♠ minor Suit Splinter** – shows game values and a 0/1 holding in the bid major with 45/54 in the minors.

(Optional: Opener can show 5-cards in other major at 2<sup>nd</sup> turn).

Opener's rebid of

- 3N is to play, showing no interest in a minor slam or weakness for NT.
- 4♣/♦ is slam positive. You can play this as Minorwood if you like, otherwise it should initiate control bidding (opener might have a useless doubleton and not want to start Minorwood).
- 4♥/♠ is forcing, showing
  - a 5 card Major (in case you play 1345 shapes for this bid) or
  - a control bid in the named Major (if requiring 5/5 minors) or
  - a surrogate raise (♥=♣ and ♠=♦) interested in slam (4♣/♦ bids are to play)
  - *You must choose one approach*
- 4N is open to agreement. Play this as RKB (6 Key Cards if willing) or a slam hand with a 5 card minor demanding cue bidding.

The most important principle is to choose an approach that is:

- Proven
- Easy to remember for you and your partners
- Does not conflict with other methods you've chosen
- Occurs frequently enough and adds enough value to carry on your card

Avoid adding conventions without checking how they affect decisions and inference from the rest of your bidding scheme. Sometime fewer things done well lead to more consistent results over time and less confusion.