

ALEX & BARBARA'S BRIDGE TIP

Sometimes the opponents interfere with your No Trump auction. This is unreasonable of them and they are being a complete nuisance. But this is the real world and it happens more and more now with the advent of many conventions such as DONT, Cappelletti and Meckwell. These are designed to make your life difficult and to show two-suited hands.

Lebensohl is a good convention which helps sometimes but the following tips assume you are not playing Lebensohl, since most of our readers out there are not playing this.

What will you bid with this hand if partner opens 1NT and your RHO (Right Hand Opponent) overcalls 2D?

S KJ76
H AJ82
D 6
C J942

If RHO had stayed out of your auction, you could have used Stayman and bid 2C. That option has gone. 3C by you now is NOT Stayman. 3C would show 10+ HCP and a long Club suit and would be forcing.

In order to use Stayman now, you must bid 3D. You do not have to have both majors but you do need to have one of them and you also need 10 or more HCP. Here's why.

S A92
H KQJ5
D 76
C 8432

With the above hand: 1NT by partner, 2D by RHO, bid 3D. If partner responds 3S, you must now bid 3NT, as Opener does not have four Hearts with you. This will not promise a Diamond stopper. Just pray that partner has one.

You do need to take into account what the opponent's bid means, if it is alerted. e.g. If 2D shows the majors, then just say Double with both of the above hands. This will show 7 or more HCP. This should NOT be a "stolen bid." Get that out of your tool box. It is not good bridge.

This time, partner opens 1NT and your RHO bids 2D. You have:

S KJ963
H 87
D K965
C 76

If your RHO had bid 2C, your ability to use all transfers has NOT been interfered with. You can bid 2H and it will be a transfer.

BUT when RHO has bid 2D, the whole system of transfers has been interfered with and compromised. Thus you must bid 2S. This just shows a decent quality five-card Spade suit and less than 10 HCP.

So what will you bid if partner opens 1NT and RHO bids 2D. You have

S AK842
H 8
D 982
C QJ98

Now you must bid 3S. This shows 10 or more HCP and a five-card Spade suit. This is forcing. Partner will either bid 4S or 3NT with only two cards in Spades.

Now let's look at this from the opening 1NT bidder's point of view.

This time, YOU have opened 1NT. LHO passed. Partner has bid 2C and your RHO has bid 2H. What will you bid with the following hands?

a)	b)	c)
S K87	S AQ93	S A9
H Q6	H 87	H KJ108
D AJ98	D KQ98	D Q109
C KQJ8	C AQ8	C AQ98

ANSWERS:

a) Pass. RHO has bid so you are now not obligated to respond to her Stayman bid. You do not have the other major (Spades) so just pass.

b) 2S. Now you do have the other major so bid 2S. The bid of 2H did not interfere with your ability to bid that.

c) Double. You are happy to defend against 2H. The opponents cannot make 2H. Your Heart honours are well-situated. Defend and collect a nice big penalty from the opponents. 99% of the time, your partner will have 8 or more HCP in order to have used Stayman.

SOME TIPS FROM EDDIE KANTAR

1. The bidding is the key to defensive strategy and to a great extent influences the play of the hand. Treat the bidding as you would a best friend.
2. When signaling encouragement with equal spot cards, signal with the higher equal. With A987, signal with the 9. If you signal with the 8, you deny the nine!

Take your time before playing third hand to the first trick. It is often times the most important play you will make in the entire hand.

IT'S YOUR LEAD

by Alex Kornel

The bidding has gone 1D by LHO and 1NT by RHO. 2NT by LHO and 3NT by RHO. You and partner are silent throughout.

You have this hand.

S 10973

H KJ7

D 87

C QJ84

a) How many HCP does your LHO have for her raise to 2NT?

b) What will you lead against 3NT with the hand above?

a) If Opener had a minimum of 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand, he/she would have passed the 1NT response which promised only 6-10 HCP.

If Opener had 15-17 HCP balanced, Opener would have opened 1NT.

Thus, the raise to 2NT shows 18-19 HCP.

b) Responder did not bid Spades so odds are that partner has something in Spades. It is often right to lead a major versus a NT contract when Stayman has not been used (not here but in straight NT auctions) or when opponents wind up in NT, having not mentioned a major. We would recommend leading the

Spade 10. NOT the Club 4. It will not always work but it often will.