

## 1 NT Opening

When you have a balanced hand with 15- 17 points it is better to open 1NT.

A Balanced hand has no singletons, no voids and no more than 1 doubleton.

There are only three hand shapes that meet this criteria; 4333, 4432 and 5432 but they are the most commonly occurring. You will get one of these three hands almost 50% of the time.

Notice that of all the 1 level bids this bid limits the point range to within 3 points and the shape to one of these three. It is very descriptive. Opening 1NT is very powerful, because it stops the other side from bidding at the one-level, and partner knows a lot about your hand from the first bid. If they assume you have 16 points, they can't be wrong by more than one point.

You should be bidding 1NT as often as possible because it is so descriptive. Do not be put off by a useless doubleton. You may not stay in NT anyway. With a 5332 shape with a 5 card major bid NT unless the suit is really weak

This means that you partner becomes the “*Captain*” of the hand whenever you bid 1 NT.

After you've opened 1NT, responder will decide how high and where to play the hand. If responder's hand is also balanced, stay in no trumps. If not, try to find a fit, and make that trumps. After all, partner will have at least two cards in that suit.

### Balanced Responses to 1NT

**0 – 7 points, pass.** No point in going higher as you have no chance of game ( $7+17<25$ )

**8 – 9 points, raise to 2NT**, invitational, (1NT / 2NT) asking partner if they are maximum. If partner has 16 or 17 then we have the magic 25 and can bid game

**10+ points, raise to 3NT** (1NT / 3NT) even if partner has the bare 15 we still have enough for game ( $10+15=25$ ).

### Declarer Play Tip

Both the defenders and the declarer are in a race to establish their long suits. The defenders has an advantage as they get to lead the suit first but the declarer can see all their assets in dummy and hand. To establish you suit you need to flush out any missing honours that the defenders may have you might need to sacrifice an honour to do this.

Declarer	Dummy
Q2	KJT4

Play the Q (honours from the short hand) hopefully this will drag out the A but in any case you should still make 3 tricks from this suit. This will mean losing the lead but you have to in order to get the trick to which you are entitled. It is best to do this early in the hand while you have control in the other suits.

### Defenders Tip

Opening Leads against no trumps. You also are trying to establish your longest suit so it is usually a good idea to start off leading it. Leading the 4<sup>th</sup> highest from an honour is a good plan. It tells partner you have an honour in it and often tells them how many cards in that suit you have. By leading the 6 and later playing the 2 partner knows you started with 5 cards in that suit. A lead of the 2 will promise 4 cards in that suit. Partner can now start to build a picture of your hand and hence declarer's hand.

- Q8763      lead 6
- KJ82      lead 2
- AKQ5      lead A top of a sequence in NT sequence must be three
- KQT32      Lead K top of an incomplete sequence.
- KJT3      lead J top of broken sequence.
- 6532      lead 6 top of nothing partner should be able to distinguish between the first example by looking at his and dummy's hand.