

30. Opening Notrump with a five-card major

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<p>♠ 1092 ♥ A98 ♦ Q1072 ♣ 1098</p>	<p>♠ AJ7 ♥ Q7432 ♦ J4 ♣ AQJ</p>		<p>♠ 43 ♥ 106 ♦ AK865 ♣ K643</p>
<p>♠ KQ865 ♥ KJ5 ♦ 93 ♣ 752</p>			
<p>W</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>E</p>	<p>S</p>
	1NT	P	2♥
P	2♠	P	2NT
P	3♠	P	4♠
All Pass			

--East-West Vulnerable--

This ends the series on notrump openings. It is quite fitting that a player becomes predictable to his partner through the consistent use of descriptive bids. 1 NT is one such very descriptive bid as long as it is not mistreated.

One should have 15-17 and a balanced hand.

Could this contain a five-card major?

Yes, but rarely. With 15-17 points and a five-card major, there is often a rebid problem especially with 15 points. A distribution such as a 5-3-3-2 hand is one such example. The problem has a solution if the partner can show when they hold 10 points by bidding a new suit at the two-level or by bidding 2NT for his second response after partner opens a suit instead of notrump.

However, notrump cannot be used on a regular basis with a five-card major unless your partnership can ask for a five-card major. This convention is called Puppet Stayman. I am assuming one is using regular Stayman so a player must treat the five-card major as a four-card one when partner bids Stayman.

One should rarely open 1 NT with a five-card major unless the suit has one honour or less. Also the hand should have three cards in the other major, in case partner transfers there and passes.

Can 1 NT have two doubletons?

Yes, but also in rare occasions. The doubletons must be strong with one and a half stopper at least.

The bidding:

With 15 points and a balanced hand, North opens 1NT hiding his five hearts. He does have three spades, and his hearts have only one honour. South transfers to spades and invites through 2NT showing a five-card suit and 8 or 9 HCP's. North, with three spades and a minimum, bids three spades to sign off. However, South's doubleton may be working and he bids game.

The contract: Four spades

The play:

East leads the Ace of diamonds and cashes the king before switching to a trump. He can't lead a club and setting up declarer's side suit, hearts, is also a poor choice. Declarer draws trump and attacks hearts. West leads a club. North refuses the finesse and pitches two clubs on the hearts.

The result: Four spades making for +420