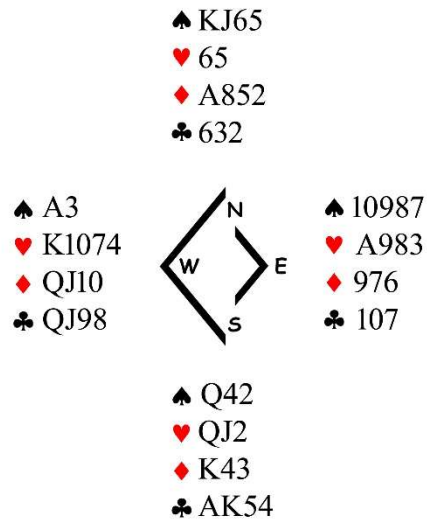


314. Back to Basics: Opening 1NT

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E	S	W	N
P	1N	P	2♣
P	2♦	P	2N
P	P	P	

--East West Vulnerable--

The 4321 point system gives an Ace four points, a King three, a Queen two and a Jack one. With 12 points, one can open the bidding with a suit, however, if the point total comes between 15 and 17, one opens a balanced hand with 1NT. Balanced means no void, no singleton and no two unstopped doubletons.

When partner opens 1NT, the responder's hand falls in to the following pigeon holes. With zero to seven, the safest partscore is desired. Eight to Nine is invitational. 10-15 is game going and 16+ is the slam zone.

The bidding:

South, with a balanced 15 points opens 1NT. West has an opening hand, but does

not have a six-card suit to make a two-level overcall. Therefore he passes and North, with 8+ points, uses an artificial convention, called Stayman, asking partner for a four-card major. South has none and bids Two Diamonds. North invites and South declines.

Opening Lead:

West leads fourth best from his longest and strongest suit, the Heart Four.

The Play:

East wins the Heart Ace and returns a Heart. South gets in with the Heart Jack and plays a small spade to North. The King wins and declarer returns to his hand with a Club and leads another Spade towards dummy. West wins the Ace, cashes his Hearts and exits the Club Queen, top of a broken sequence.

The Result:

Declarer wins three Spades, one Heart, two Diamonds and two Clubs for +120.