

Chapter 5: 1NT – Two Meanings

In Key Lime Precision, the 1NT opening is a two way bid, with ranges depending on vulnerability. Non-vulnerable it's 10-12 (a good 9 is OK), and vulnerable it's 14-16 (if it's a good 16, strive to open 1♣. Being able to open a micro NT is like telling partner "Hey, I got a limit raise over here, what do you want to do with it?" However, the general requirements of opening 1NT remain consistent between the two ranges:

1. The hands should strive to be balanced, with no two doubletons. Singleton kings are acceptable IF desired (I personally do not do this often).
2. 5 card suits are permitted, including majors. However the major must be of poor quality with the other three suits showing the true nature of the hand, otherwise open 1M.
3. A 6 card minor shouldn't be opened the micro NT. However, when strong, it is OK.
4. This following point is of the most critical importance: if you decide to use the micro NT, you absolutely **MUST DISCUSS A RUNOUT SEQUENCE IF DOUBLED.**

RESPONDING TO A MICRO NT OPENING

Since your partner has opened a most minimum hand, there is no reason to play transfers opposite a micro NT opening. However there is a critical importance in determining if your partnership has game. Hence we use 2 way Stayman:

2♣ - non-forcing Stayman (doesn't promise a major)

2♦ - GF Stayman (doesn't promise a major)

2♥/♠ - to play

2NT - inviting 3NT

3♣/♦ - to play

3♥/♠ - inviting, showing 6+ in suit

3NT - to play

Once responder has answered 2♦, opener is required to show either a 4 card major or a 5 card minor. When holding a 4 card major, you bid the **OPPOSITE**

major (along the lines of Puppet Stayman) to allow the strong hand to be concealed. If they do not hold either of these items, a 2NT rebid is used. At this juncture, any bid by either responder OR opener that is short of 3NT is a bid that shows a **LACK OF CONTROL IN THE BID SUIT**. This is referred to as **Exclusion over weak NT**. This treatment is designed to prohibit the partnership from playing 3NT wide open in a suit, and allows for a 4 of the minor run out if needed. So far in my experiences, I've had to run out only a couple of times, but it prevented a bad score from being posted. I see a lot of merit in this treatment, and I hope you do as well.

DEALING WITH INTERFERENCE OF THE MICRO NT

The micro NT from experience really exposes how a pair handles different circumstances from the norm. Many good players when confronted with the micro NT either freeze up, or overbid their way into an unmakeable game. I can not begin to recount the number of times my partners have lied waited patiently with the red penalty double card to take a free 300 and up when no game was remotely possible. As you improve and move up the ranks of the ACBL (or your NBO for our international friends), discussing how to overcall a micro/weak NT should become one of the more important areas of discussion (accurate slam bidding, defending, and dealing with competitive bidding I feel are the other important areas of bidding). Also, defining the strength of the double (which I feel should promise a strong NT) and defining a system of responses should be discussed and reviewed often (I use the same system as if my partner had opened a strong NT, so transfers and Stayman and the like are on).

If you use the micro NT, and your LHO doubles, responder can use the schedule of responses as listed above from 2♥ and up, or he/she may pass. This pass is forcing AND alertable, because either partner desires to penalize or to run out of 1NT quickly. If however, partner redoubles immediately, this as well is alertable, because partner wants you to bid 2♣ to play there. A bid of 2♣ immediately here is NOT Stayman - it's a transfer into diamonds (remember if you have strength enough to bid non-forcing Stayman, you own the hand, and should strive to make a penalty double after you initially pass your first turn - remember, a pass is FORCING partner to redouble).

After 1NT - X - P - P - XX, responder's first duty if seeking to run out is to bid their closest 4 card suit, along the lines of DONT. Sometimes you're in a 4-3, but that's better than playing 1NT when partner is a bust hand!

The micro NT when used appropriately is a wonderful tool of preemption and definition. I used to absolutely hate dealing or playing the weak NT, but after integrating it into KLP, I have found that it solves some problems with the 1♦ opening. If you use the micro NT, a 1♦ opening followed by a 1NT rebid is now 13-15 HCP, unless you couldn't open the micro NT due to two flaws in the hand. All I can say is try it out for a while, and you'll find that its benefits outweigh its

hindrances - after all, bridge is a bidder's game, and being able to open those 10 and 11 point hands that you used to pass on should entice some of you to bring this treatment into your system.

If you elect to not use the Bergen style runouts, there is another option afforded to you, courtesy of my friend Alan Lee (sardine on BBO). His runout scheme is slightly different, but I also feel it has significant merit. Listed below is his gifted creation:

Sardine Runouts

Suit = at least 4-4

2 \square = \square & **ALERT**
2 = & **ALERT**
2 = & **ALERT**
2 = & \square **ALERT**

Pass = relay to redouble **ALERT**

Responses:

Pass = to play

2 \square = \square & **ALERT**
2 = & **ALERT**
2 = 0-4-(4-5 or 5-4) **ALERT**
2 = 4-0-(4-5 or 5-4) **ALERT**

2NT = Relay to 3 \square (forcing 3 suiter) **ALERT**

Responses After 3 \square :

3 = short **ALERT**
3 = short **ALERT**
3 = short **ALERT**
3NT = short \square **ALERT**

Redouble = Relay to 2 \square (single suit) **ALERT**

Responses after 2 \square :

Pass = \square

2 /2 /2 = natural

2NT = relay to 3 \square (forcing single suit) **ALERT**

Responses after 3 \square :

3 /3 /3 = natural
3NT = \square **ALERT**

2NT = Relay to 3 \square (forcing 2 suiter) **ALERT**

Responses after 3 \square :

3 = & **ALERT**

3 = & **ALERT**
3 = & □ or **ALERT**
3NT = □ & or **ALERT**

3 level = 3 suiter invitational bid short suit **ALERT**

When the opponents double after 3rd seat opening

Same as after 1st & 2nd seat opening EXCEPT

Forcing sequences are IMPOSSIBLE

2 = & ♠ or at least 4-4 preferably 5 card minor

2NT asks which minor

2NT = ♠ & at least 4-4

When the opponents double after 4th seat opening

Same as after 1st & 2nd seat opening EXCEPT

2 = & ♠ or at least 4-4 preferably 5 card minor

2NT asks which minor

2NT = ♠ & at least 4-4

When the NT is STRONG

In Key Lime Precision, we use a 14-16 NT when we are vulnerable. There are really two reasons for this. One, it offers field protection with everyone else opening 1NT with you. Secondly, this helps to prescribe certain bids and following sequences with balanced hands:

1NT (VUL) = 14-16

1♣ - 1X - 1NT = 16-18

1♣ - 1X - 2NT = 19-22

1♣ - 1X - 3NT = 23-27

After opening 1NT, responder uses 4 way transfers to get partner into a suit, similar to 2/1 approaches. Thus, to invite partner, you must bid 2♣, then 2NT (remember this requires an alert because you don't promise a major here). Also responding at the 3 level are specialized bids.

3♣ - Puppet Stayman

3♦ - 5-5 minors, GF

3♥ - 5-5 majors, inv.

3♠ - 5-5 majors, GF

4♣ - 6-6 minors

Also, Smolen, negative doubles after opponent's interference, and Lebensohl (or transfer Lebensohl if you like) are used at well.

In reality, this is probably the area of KLP that will seem the most familiar to you, thus I think these minor items of difference will be easy to integrate. More and more experts and better players are using a dual range no-trump with some form of a weak NT nonvulnerable (I don't recommend using the micro NT all the time because when vulnerable the chances of going for a big number raises dramatically).