

Being Difficult: Defenses to 1NT opening bids

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7 January, 2022

The Problem

The Issue

Competent opponents who open 1NT will almost always get to their best contract if left to their own devices

The Concept

To score well, we must find ways to make these “easy” auctions more difficult for the opponents

Our Goals

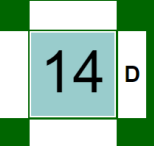
Many methods of interfering have been developed. We will discuss several of them, their pluses and minuses, and the conditions where they are most effective

Our Objectives when Opponents Open 1NT

- Steal bidding space
- Make it difficult for them to determine their best strain or level
- Identify a profitable sacrifice, or even a making contract our way
- In some cases, punish their weak NT opening

Cautions!

- There is a difference between IMP and Matchpoint bidding!
- Vulnerable means be careful!
- Always consider the level
- The most immediate interference is always the *most effective* and the *least dangerous*

		N North	W N E S				
		♠ KJ10932 ♥ A5 ♦ 53 ♣ A62	1♠ P 3♦ P	P P	1♥ P 2♦ P X P	P P	
W West		E East					
♠ Q854 ♥ 93 ♦ K742 ♣ Q93		♠ A ♥ KQJ62 ♦ AQ98 ♣ 1084					
		S South					
		♠ 76 ♥ 10874 ♦ J106 ♣ KJ75					
				3♠x N NS: 0 EW: 0			

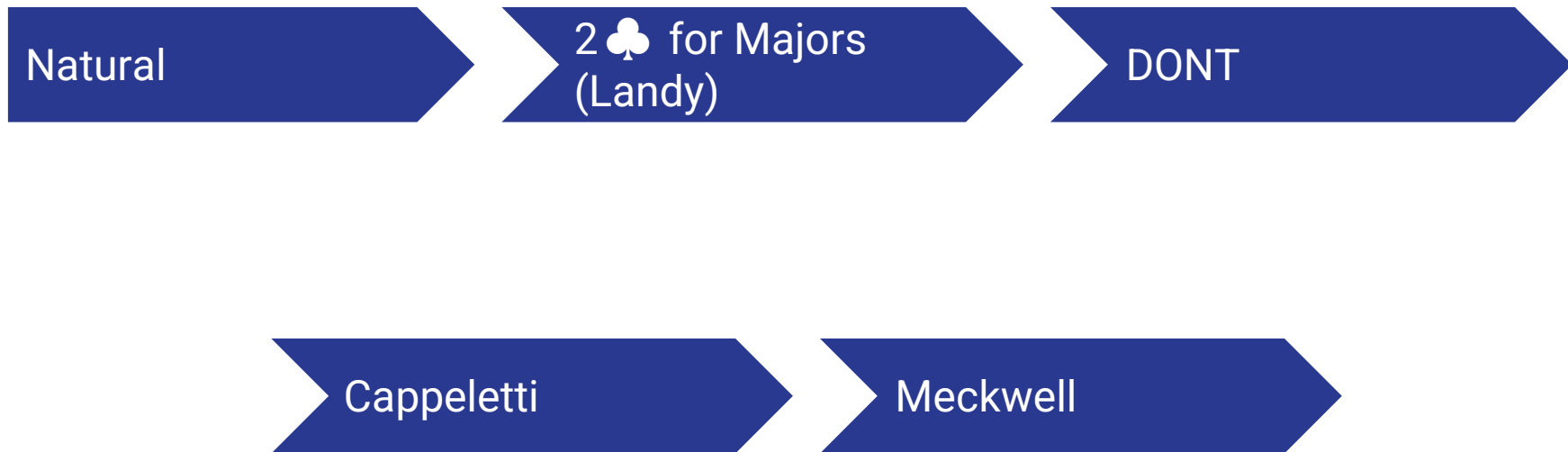
Rewind Previous Next Options GIB Play

Bridge Base

Considerations when interfering in 1NT auctions

- Safety
 - Six-card or longer suit, or two-suited hand
 - Two level vs. 3-level
 - Weak vs. Strong NT opener
 - Direct vs. Balancing Seat
 - Colchamiro's "Rule of 2"
- Preemptive (space-stealing) value

Evolution of NT Defenses



- Many other defenses exist; we will be discussing these five

Systems of Defense: Natural

In a natural NT defense, a bid shows that suit, and nothing more

Examples of Natural Defensive bids

- Ax, AJTxxx, Kxx, xx: 1N - 2♥
- x, xx, KQJxxxx, xxx: 1N - 3♦
- KQxxx, x, QJ9xx, xx: 1N - ?
- Natural bidding gives us no way to show two-suited hands with a single bid. A two-suited overcall is much more safe than a 1-suited overcall (two places to play).

Systems of Defense:

Landy

A bid of 2♣ shows both majors;
other bids are natural

Examples of Landy Defensive bids

- QJ9xx, KQxxx, x, xx: 1N - 2♣
- QJ9xx, x, xx, KQxxx: 1N - ?
- Xx, QJ9xx, KQxxx, x: 1N - ?

Landy gives us no way to show hand 2 or 3 in a single bid!

Systems of Defense: Cappeletti

Retains the penalty double




Allows showing both 1- and 2-
suited hands

Major/minor hands force the minor
to the 3-level

Meanings of Cappeletti Defensive bids

- Double Penalty with roughly 15+ points.
- 2♣ A one-suited hand (any suit, normally 6+ cards)
- 2♦ At least 5-4 or 4-5 in hearts and spades, “bid your best major”
- 2♥ At least 5-5 in hearts and a minor
- 2♠ At least 5-5 in spades and a minor
- 2NT At least 5-5 in clubs and diamonds

Examples of Cappeletti Defensive bids

- QJ9xx, KQxxx, x, xx: 1N - 2 
- QJ9xx, x, xx, KQxxx: 1N - 2 
- Xx, QJ9xx, KQxxx, x: 1N - 2 
- QJ9xx, x, xxx, KQxx: 1N - ?

Issues with Cappeletti Defensive bids

- Penalty double happens rarely (esp. versus strong NT)
- Major/Minor hands can force you to the 3-level half the time
- Single-suited Major hands give up preemption value
- No way to show clubs at the 2-level

Systems of Defense:

DONT

(Disturb Opponents' NT)

No Penalty double; Double is used for one-suited hands

Two-level suit bids show that suit and a higher suit – except for 2♠, which is just spades

Meanings of DONT Defensive bids

- Double Single-suited hand; advancer typically bids 2♣
- 2♣ Clubs and (diamonds or hearts or spades)
- 2♦ Diamonds and (hearts or spades)
- 2♥ Hearts and spades
- 2♠ Spades, usually 6+; by agreement stronger or weaker than X
followed by 2♠
- 2NT At least 5-5 in clubs and diamonds

Further info on DONT

- May be 5-4 or 4-5 non-vulnerable, since we're only at the 2-level
- X followed by 2 ♠ is by agreement either stronger or weaker than a direct 2 ♠
- Pro: Any 1- or 2-suited hand can be shown at the 2-level
- Con: Gives up the penalty double

Systems of Defense: Meckwell

Any 1- or 2-suited hand can be shown at the 2-level

Gives up the penalty double

2♥ and 2♠ can both be bid directly

“Overloads” Double, which can be a memory burden

Meanings of Meckwell Defensive bids

- Double Relay to 2♣; may be clubs or diamonds or (both majors)
- 2♣ Clubs and a major suit
- 2♦ Diamonds and a major suit
- 2♥ Hearts
- 2♠ Spades
- 2NT At least 5-5 in clubs and diamonds

Further info on Meckwell

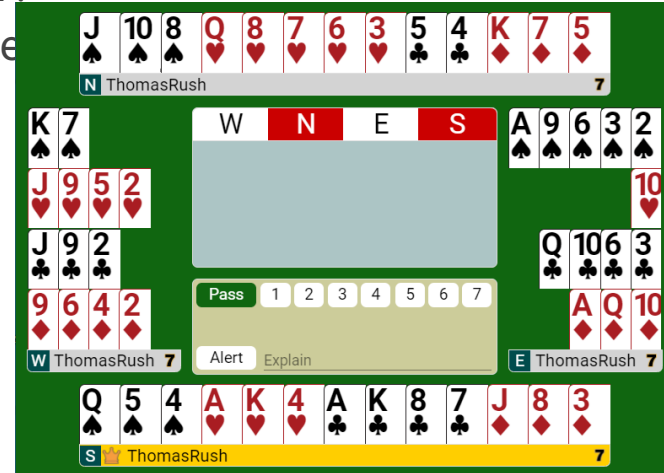
- 2-suited bids may be 5-4 or 4-5 non-vulnerable, since we're only at the 2-level
- Major suits can be shown directly – preemption!
- The “overloaded” double may confuse opponents’ auction more than other systems’ calls
- Pro: Any 1- or 2-suited hand can be shown at the 2-level
- Con: Gives up the penalty double

Other Situations

Transfers

When they transfer

- After a Stayman or Jacoby Transfer, 4th hand can suggest a lead or sacrifice by doubling their bid
 - 1NT - P - 2♥ - X: "I have hearts. Lead them, consider bidding them"
 - 1NT - P - 2♣: "I have clubs; lead them, consider bidding them"
- How do we make a takeout double of a Jacoby Transfer?
 - We bid the suit they showed as a 2- or 3-suited takeout
 - 1NT - P - 2♥ - 2♠ : Takeout!
 - 1NT - P - 2♦ - 2♥ : Takeout!



Conclusions

Recommendations

- If you're only going to use one defense, DONT is easy and useful
- As your tolerance for complexity improves, switch to Meckwell
- If you can handle using a different defense vs. weak and strong, then Cappeletti is important vs weak NTs, since it allows an often profitable penalty double
- If playing Capp vs. weak NT, agree on what is weak! For instance, "if their max is 15, we consider it weak"

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N 6+

♠ QJ
♥ KQJ983
♦ Q1043
♣ Q

W Oldstick 6

♠ 97652
♥ 76
♦ 95
♣ A1064

W	N	E	S
Pass	1♥	Dbl	3♣
Pass	4♥	Dbl	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

E ThomasRush 7

♠ AK83
♥ 5
♦ AJ76
♣ K732

S 6

♠ 104
♥ A1042
♦ K82
♣ J985

4♠ West
0 0

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Because bridge can be fun!