

# Competitive bidding over 1NT – the Landy convention

## WHEN TO COMPETE

1NT is often a good contract for the declaring side, but you should not be afraid to overcall it when you have a long suit, preferably one with six cards, and a hand with better playing potential than defence. Compare these two hands when right hand opponent opens 1NT.

### Example A

♠ K J 10 8 6 5  
♥ 4  
♦ A Q 10 7  
♣ 9 8

### Example B

♠ A K Q 10 8  
♥ A 4  
♦ Q 10 7  
♣ 9 8 3

Both hands are worth about six tricks in a spade contract so, if partner can provide a little help, 2♠ should be a reasonable contract. But Example B has far better defence to 1NT than Example A; you might even be tempted to double with Example B. With hand A, it would be much harder to set up your tricks if you are defending no trumps, so it is far more attractive to overcall in spades.

#### REMEMBER

Consider whether the hand will be better defending 1NT or playing in a suit contract.

## HANDS WITH MORE THAN ONE SUIT

Although hand A has two suits, it is better to overcall the major. But sometimes you have two suits and want partner to choose the best one. Many methods have been devised to show two suits. The **Landy** convention combines safety with simplicity by using 2♣ as a takeout bid to show at least 5-4 in the majors and around 9-15 points.

♠ A Q 7 3      You want to compete when right hand  
♥ K Q 9 8 5      opponent opens 1NT. But which  
♦ A 2            major to choose? Let partner decide.  
♣ 7 6            Bid 2♣ and you allow partner to  
                     choose the best contract.

♠ Q J 10 9 7      This hand has only eight points but  
♥ K Q 9 8 5      with 5-5 in the majors you would  
♦ 9 3 2            like to bid over the opponents 1NT.  
♣ -                2♣ is absolutely right, don't count  
                     points, go by your instincts.

#### REMEMBER

You need at least nine cards in the majors to overcall 2♣. The longer the majors the fewer points need.

Playing 2♣ to show the majors means you lose a natural 2♣ overcall, but this is no great loss. If you have clubs it is quite likely that the opponents can outbid you in another suit. So overcall 3♣ with ♠3 ♥Q 8 5 ♦A 2 ♣Q J 10 9 7 6 3.

## Responding to partner's 2♣ bid

Most of the time you will simply choose to play in your longer major suit. With four or more cards in support for one of the majors you can raise to the same level as you would an opening bid. The bidding goes:

West	North	East	South
you	dealer	partner	
	1NT	2♣	pass
?			

When partner bids 2♣, you know he has about 9-15 points and at least nine cards in the majors, so with:

♠ 3	Bid 2♥.	♠ A 10 8 7	Bid 3♠.
♥ Q 8 5	No game ambitions.	♥ 9 8	Good spade support.
♦ A 6 3 2	Limited support in	♦ A 9 7 5 3	Inviting partner to bid
♣ Q J 10 9 7	the majors.	♣ Q 4	game in spades.

If you have at least six clubs you can pass 2♣.

If you have equal length in the majors, say three spades and three hearts, you can respond 2♦ to partner's Landy 2♣ overcall. Partner will bid his longer suit.

To bid no trumps you need to be a little stronger than over an opening bid. Remember that your partner is bidding on shape rather than high cards and so may be weaker in high card points. 2NT shows about 12-13 points and 3NT 14 or more. Obviously you will need to have stops in both minors.

Playing in 1NT often results in a good score for the declaring side, so it is essential to compete if we have a suitable hand. The Landy convention is easy to understand and it is not difficult to decide on the best contract.

We only use one bid in an artificial sense, all other two level overcalls are natural. You must have at least five cards in a suit to overcall it and ideally you will have more. The better and longer suits will produce more tricks.

## The Landy defence to a one no trump contract – example hands

♠ 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ K 8 7 ♣ QJ 8 6 5 4 3	<div style="background-color: #f4a460; width: 100px; height: 100px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="text-align: center;">                     N                      W     E                      S                 </div> </div>	♠ A Q 8 6 4 ♥ Q 10 7 6 5 ♦ A 3 ♣ 10
---	--	--

East is good for 2♣ with five cards in both majors. With long clubs, West can pass, rather than bid his doubleton heart and it is still best to play in 2♣. If a diamond is led, declarer can even get a diamond ruff with the singleton club!

♠ Q 5 ♥ J 10 ♦ A 10 6 5 ♣ Q 7 6 4 2	<div style="background-color: #f4a460; width: 100px; height: 100px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="text-align: center;">                     N                      W     E                      S                 </div> </div>	♠ K J 4 2 ♥ A Q 8 7 6 ♦ 3 2 ♣ J 3
--	--	--

On this hand West is not keen on either major. He is not strong enough to bid 2NT, which shows 12-13 points. The bid is 2♦ which gets partner to bid the longer major, in this case it is hearts. With equal length partner will have to bid 2♥.

♠ A 5 ♥ K J ♦ A J 10 6 ♣ Q 10 6 4 2	<div style="background-color: #f4a460; width: 100px; height: 100px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="text-align: center;">                     N                      W     E                      S                 </div> </div>	♠ K J 4 2 ♥ A Q 8 7 6 ♦ 3 2 ♣ J 3
--	--	--

With 15 points but no desire to play in a major, West assumes partner has about 11 points and bids 3NT. The minor suit stoppers look good enough and the high cards in the majors should help build tricks.

♠ A Q 5 ♥ K J 10 ♦ A J 10 9 ♣ 7 6 4	<div style="background-color: #f4a460; width: 100px; height: 100px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="text-align: center;">                     N                      W     E                      S                 </div> </div>	♠ K J 4 2 ♥ A Q 8 7 6 ♦ 3 2 ♣ J 3
--	--	--

This time the 15 points are not so well suited to no trumps, since you don't have a club stop and partner probably won't have one either. Bid 2♦ asking for the longer major and raise partner's suit to game. This should be a 5-3 fit.

♠ 3 ♥ 4 2 ♦ J 10 9 8 7 ♣ 9 8 7 6 4	<div style="background-color: #f4a460; width: 100px; height: 100px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="text-align: center;">                     N                      W     E                      S                 </div> </div>	♠ K J 4 2 ♥ A Q 8 7 6 ♦ 3 2 ♣ J 3
---	--	--

Sometimes you hold a hand where everything looks awful. Don't make a drama out of your bid or everyone will know you have a problem. Bid 2♥ or just pass quietly and keep your fingers crossed!

## The Landy defence to a one no trump contract - practice hands

<p>♠ A1054 ♥ KJ32 ♦ Q94 ♣ QJ</p> <p>♠ 9 ♥ 76 ♦ A108 ♣ K987652</p> <p>♠ KQ832 ♥ AQ104 ♦ J53 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ J76 ♥ 985 ♦ K762 ♣ A104</p>	<p><b>Board 1: Dealer North – Love All</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>all pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>East has a normal overcall but West does not fancy a major suit contract at all. 2♣ is a sensible place to play and should make eight or nine tricks with the cards lying well. South may wonder what to lead. A low trump could work well, stopping the hand that is short in clubs getting any ruffs. Not here, but a useful thought.</p>	West	North	East	South		1NT	2♣	all pass								
West	North	East	South														
	1NT	2♣	all pass														
<p>♠ 9 ♥ Q87 ♦ A654 ♣ J10832</p> <p>♠ Q842 ♥ J943 ♦ K2 ♣ Q94</p> <p>♠ K106 ♥ 65 ♦ QJ98 ♣ AK76</p> <p>♠ AJ753 ♥ AK102 ♦ 1073 ♣ 5</p>	<p><b>Board 2 : Dealer East – N/S Vulnerable</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>all pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>With reasonable support for hearts, North should not be tempted to pass 2♣ just because he has five clubs. A trump is often the best lead on these auctions when your partner is likely to have some length in the opponents' other known suit. In this case the lead doesn't cost a trick and a second trump lead prevents declarer from making his trumps separately.</p>	West	North	East	South			1NT	2♣	pass	2♥	all pass					
West	North	East	South														
		1NT	2♣														
pass	2♥	all pass															
<p>♠ 75 ♥ K64 ♦ J1053 ♣ 10832</p> <p>♠ KJ984 ♥ AJ52 ♦ 876 ♣ A</p> <p>♠ Q3 ♥ Q3 ♦ A942 ♣ Q9764</p> <p>♠ A1062 ♥ 10987 ♦ KQ ♣ KJ5</p>	<p><b>Board 3: Dealer South – E/W Vulnerable</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>all pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>East has ten points but not enough support for the majors to warrant a try for game, 2♦ asks for partner's longer major. North might lead the ♦J, won by the ♦A. Best is to play for heart ruffs in dummy; so lead the ♥Q and finesse. If North leads trumps, it stops the ruff but loses the second trump trick.</p>	West	North	East	South				1NT	2♣	pass	2♦	pass	2♠	all pass		
West	North	East	South														
			1NT														
2♣	pass	2♦	pass														
2♠	all pass																
<p>♠ KJ963 ♥ A10954 ♦ K2 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ A5 ♥ KJ87 ♦ AJ76 ♣ 1093</p> <p>♠ 87 ♥ 62 ♦ Q543 ♣ K8754</p> <p>♠ Q1042 ♥ Q3 ♦ 1098 ♣ AQJ2</p>	<p><b>Board 4 : Dealer West – Game All</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>pass</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>all pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>North is well worth 4♠ over South's 3♠ bid, which is invitational. The 5-5 shape more than compensates for the relatively low point count.</p> <p>West has a difficult lead. Ace and another trump probably holds declarer to ten tricks. An apparently safe club lead may let through an overtrick.</p>	West	North	East	South	1NT	2♣	pass	3♠	pass	4♠	all pass					
West	North	East	South														
1NT	2♣	pass	3♠														
pass	4♠	all pass															