



# Adventures in Bridge

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## ***This Week in Bridge***

### **(12) 1NT Forcing and 3/1 Invitational**

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Level: 1, 2

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#### **Non-Game Forcing Responses**

When your partner opens the bidding with 1-Major and you do not have a game forcing hand (fewer than 12 pts), you cannot make a 2/1 GF bid. You then must find another bid to describe your hand. You can bid a new suit naturally at the 1-level with any hand that has enough values to respond (6+ pts.) If you do not have a suit that you can bid at the 1-level, then you need another option: that bid is 1NT and is called *1NT Forcing*.

Responding to 1♦ or 1♣ with 1NT shows only 6-9 pts (or maybe a bad 10 pts), since we have a natural 2NT response available for invitational hands (good 10 to bad 12 pts.)

1♦ 2NT 10-11 pts, Invitational

*Note: 1♥-1♠ auctions are mostly unchanged between Standard American and 2/1 Game Forcing. When we respond 1♠ to a 1♥ opening bid we have 6+ pts and could have only a 4-card ♠ suit (but often have a 5-card ♠ suit.)*

#### **1NT Forcing**

Level: 1

There are two hand strengths that respond to 1-Major with 1NT Forcing:

- 6-9 pts - Minimum
- 10-11 pts - Invitational

Hands with 12+ pts either make an artificial raise (*Jacoby, Splinter, etc.*) or make a 2/1 Game Forcing bid.

The hands that respond 1NT Forcing do not contain 4-card support for Opener's Major, but they could contain 3-card support (with 4-card support we would have shown our support directly.)

## Responder's Rebids After 1NT Forcing

Level: 1

The key to 1NT Forcing is to be able to effectively describe your hand on your second bid. Since 1NT Forcing could have hands of two different ranges (minimum or invitational) we need to communicate which of these strengths we have with our second call. Additionally, we want to show our shape if possible. The general rules are the following:

- Cheap new suits and preferences are minimum (6-9 pts)
- Raises, jumps, and 2NT are invitational (10-11 pts)

### Complete ♠ Auction List

1♠ 1NT

2♣ \_\_\_?

- 2♦ 5+c♦ (often 6c♦), usually 0-1♠, 6-9 pts
- 2♥ 5+c♥ (often 6c♥), usually 0-1♠, 6-9 pts
- 2♠ 2+c♠, 6-9 pts (most frequent minimum hand)
- 2NT natural, 10-11 pts, general invite
- 3♣ 4+c♣, 9-11 pts, invitational raise
- 3♦ natural and invitational, 6+c♦, 9-11 pts (usually 2c♠)
- 3♥ natural and invitational, 6+c♥, 9-11 pts (usually 2c♠)
- 3♠ *3-card limit raise*, 3c♠, 10-11 pts

1♠ 1NT

2♦ \_\_\_?

- 2♥ 5+c♥ (often 6c♥), usually 0-1♠, 6-9 pts
- 2♠ 2+c♠, 6-9 pts (most frequent minimum hand)
- 2NT natural, 10-11 pts, general invite
- 3♣ 6+c♣, 5-9 pts, generally to play (usually 0-1c♠)
- 3♦ 4+c♦, 9-11 pts, invitational raise
- 3♥ natural and invitational, 6+c♥, 9-11 pts (usually 2c♠)
- 3♠ *3-card limit raise*, 3c♠, 10-11 pts

1♠ 1NT

2♥ \_\_\_?

- 2♠ 2+c♠, 6-9 pts (most frequent minimum hand)
- 2NT natural, 10-11 pts, general invite
- 3♣ 6+c♣, 5-9 pts, generally to play (usually 0-1c♠)
- 3♦ 6+c♦, 5-9 pts, generally to play (usually 0-1c♠)
- 3♥ 4+c♥, 9-11 pts, invitational raise

- 3♠ 3-card limit raise, 3c♠, 10-11 pts

1♠ 1NT

2♠ \_\_\_?

- 2NT Invitational, usually 0-1c♠, 10-12 pts, *general invite*
- 3♣ 6+c♣, 5-9 pts, generally to play (usually 0-1c♠)
- 3♦ 6+c♦, 5-9 pts, generally to play (usually 0-1c♠)
- 3♥ 6+c♥, 5-9 pts, generally to play (usually 0-1c♠)
- 3♠ 2+c♠, 10-11 pts
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*Responding to 1♥ is similar!*

## 1NT Forcing Hands with Support for Opener

*Level: 1*

When we have 7+ to 10 pts and 3-card support for partner's opener we raise it directly (1M to 2M.) When we have 3-card support and more (10-11 pts) or less (5-7 pts) we make a "delayed raise."

*Examples*

1♠ 1NT

2♣ 2♠ 6-9 pts with 2-card support (or 5-7 pts with 3-card support.)

This could be a hand that has support but not enough strength to make a "constructive raise."

1♠ 1NT

2♣ 3♠ 10-11 pts with 3-card support (3-card limit raise)

## 3/1 Invitational Bids

*Level: 2*

There are a few other hands that you would like to be able describe in one call when your partner opens the bidding. These are hands that have a long suit of their own and do not have much interest in playing in another suit. These are 3-over-1 bids as invitational.

### List of 3/1 Invitational Bids

- 1♠ - 3♣ 6+c♣, 9-11 pts, invitational (usually short ♠)
- 1♠ - 3♦ 6+c♦, 9-11 pts, invitational (usually short ♠)
- 1♠ - 3♥ 6+c♥, 9-11 pts, invitational (usually short ♠)
- 1♥ - 3♣ 6+c♣, 9-11 pts, invitational (usually short ♥)
- 1♥ - 3♦ 6+c♦, 9-11 pts, invitational (usually short ♥)

- 1♦ - 3♣ 6+♣, 9-11 pts, invitational

With hands that have a doubleton in partner's suit, a long suit of their own, and invitational values, we start with 1NT Forcing and find out more about partner's hand. If partner rebids his suit then we can find a 6-2 fit; if he does not, then we will look for a fit in our own long suit.

*Note: Some players choose to play Bergen Raises for their responses at the 3-level. These raises interfere with the 3/1 Invitational structure and we must choose between Bergen and 3/1 Invitational bids. The approach we present here does not include Bergen raises, but if you choose to adopt them then you will need to modify your invitational bid sequences.*

### **Conclusion**

One of the complexities that arises from playing 2/1 GF is that a 1NT Forcing (or Semi-Forcing) response to a Major suit opening becomes more complicated. On the second round of the bidding Responder must strive to describe both their shape (long suit) and strength (minimum vs. invitational values) to Opener. Describing the hand while keep in the auction at a low level can lead to some interesting and difficult bidding decisions. Although some complexity is introduced in the bidding, generally these auctions allow Responder to describe their hand well and get our side to a good final contract.