

Defense Against a Weak 1NT Structure (Part 1)

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1 The nature of a weak 1NT structure (most commonly played):

1.1 1NT bid is 12-14 (or fewer) high-card points with no singletons, at most one doubleton, and no five-card majors. Strong 1NT players would open 1♣ or 1♦ with these hands. The problem is that you cannot overcall the 1NT bid at the one level if you have a five-card major.

1.2 With a strong 1NT hand they start with 1 of a suit and rebid 1NT if possible.

2 How to interfere with a weak 1NT opening:

2.1 There are many choices of defense conventions. Wikipedia lists about fifty. These nine are somewhat common in this area:

	Penalty Double	Maximum Disruption	Maximum Construction	10=Easy; 1=Hard	Mnemonic
Natural	Yes			10	
Cappelletti	Yes			8	
DONT		Yes		9	... and a higher suit
Meckwell		Yes		8	
Hello	Yes		Yes	3	
Brozel				8	... and hearts
Woolsey			Yes	2	
Landy	Yes			10	
Blooman		Yes		7	Double for Cappelletti

2.2 A penalty double is a must.

2.2.1 Experts agree that it must show **at least 14 hcp**.

2.2.2 Many play that “systems are on.”

2.3 Since a major suit game or 3NT is very possible, constructive elements (especially for the major suits) are emphasized.

2.4 Useful defenses against weak 1NT (see chart on next page):

2.4.1 The strong double:

2.4.1.1 How many high-card-points: 14 or more?

2.4.1.2 What distribution is specified?

2.4.1.3 Double and correct?

2.4.1.4 Systems on?

2.4.2 Make sure that your partnership agrees on what “both” means: 4-4, 5-4, or 5-5.

2.4.3 Don't just use this chart. Research the convention that you choose and learn all the continuations.

Convention chart for weak 1NT:

	Cappelletti	Woolsey	Mohan	Colchamiro	
Double	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Systems on?
2♣	6 diamonds, hearts, or spades; relay to 2♦	Both majors	Both majors	Both majors	
2♦	Both majors	6-card major	Transfer to hearts	5+ diamonds	
2♥	Hearts and a minor	5 hearts + minor	Transfer to spades	5+ hearts	
2♠	Spades and a minor	5 spades + minor	5 spades + minor	5+ spades	
2NT	Both minors	Both minors	Both minors	Both minors	5-5 with 10+ hcp
3♣	7+ clubs	7+ clubs	6+ good clubs	6+ good clubs	
3♦	7+ diamonds	7+ diamonds	6+ good diamonds	6+ good diamonds	
3♥	7+ hearts	7+ hearts	7+ hearts	6+ good hearts	
3♠	7+ spades	7+ spades	7+ spades	6+ good spades	

3 When to interfere:

3.1 Whereas strong 1NT teams are annoyed by interference, weak 1NT teams will often be relieved to be out of the auction.

3.2 Direct seat:

3.2.1 Pay close attention to the vulnerability.

3.2.2 Don't bid a suit that you would be reluctant to overcall at the two-level.

3.3 Balancing seat (1NT)-P-(P)-?:

3.3.1 Should you borrow a king?

3.3.2 Check out transfers and "Forcing Stayman" on the convention card.