

Continuations After Partner's Double of a Weak 1NT

Suggested Guidelines presented by Mike Savage

A double of a weak 1NT is typically made with a balanced hand with at least full opening values (I suggest 14/15 HCP or more) but also might have a long, good suit and some entries. Partner will convert (by passing) with around 8/9 or more balanced or semi-balanced HCP. But what if partner isn't balanced and has one long suit or a two-suiter and doesn't want to sit for 1NT doubled?

Some partnerships play Cappelletti/Hamilton and some play "Systems On" (as if partner had opened 1NT). Here's a more natural, perhaps better approach that is hopefully *simple-to-remember*. Two of any suit is to play, three of any suit is natural and *invitational* and 2NT is artificial, showing an *invitational* or better 2-suiter (a few pairs play a jump to three of a suit and 2NT as *game forcing*) with advances over the semi-forced 3C relay being the same as when you use Cappelletti/Hamilton. This natural approach allows you to play 2C and 2D while other more artificial methods do not.

2C, 2D, 2H & 2S = To play.

3C, 3D, 3H & 3S = Invitational. Raise to 4H/4S w/good support or good values & the trump A or K.

2NT = Shows a two-suited invitational or better hand and asks partner to bid 3C.

3C = Semi-automatic. Denies a one-suited hand with a long, very good major and could have a long club suit—or a good, long diamond suit with at least one three-card major.

Responses: (same structure as Cappelletti/Hamilton at the two-level)

3D = Five-five or better in the majors with invitational or better values.

3H = Five-card or longer heart suit, an undisclosed minor & is invitational.

3S = Five-card or longer spade suit, an undisclosed minor & is invitational.

3NT = Five-five or better in the minors with invitational or better values.

3D = Usually a six-card diamond suit and tends to deny a three-card major.

3H = A very good, usually six-card or longer heart suit.

3S = A very good, usually six-card or longer spade suit.

3NT = Usually a very good six-card club suit with no more than 2-2 in the majors.

Don't be too concerned about finding 4-4 major fits, because if your side has balanced or even semi-balanced hands and the balance of power, you'll usually prefer to defend 1NT doubled. If opener or responder runs (and most weak notrump partnerships have run-outs in place) that's different. If a pass after partner's double is forcing and demands redouble or if a redouble is for take-out, you can simply ignore their interference with shapely hands and still use the same structure shown above.

With a balanced hand and values to defeat 1NT doubled, pass an alerted *forcing pass* or *redouble* and if they run to a suit, play *double them or buy it* thru **2H**. Then, if partner can't double that suit and doesn't bid his own long suit, he will pass—forcing you to either bid your lowest suit or double them.

If they immediately run to a one or two-suited bid at the two-level, my suggestion is to still play *double them or buy it* thru **2H**, but with an immediate double by advancer being *Negative* (mostly take-out), showing cards and usually a doubleton in their suit. The doubler can convert by passing or bidding a suit with expectations of having a fit. Later doubles by either defender will be for penalty in the immediate seat but would be reopening/card-showing doubles in the pass-out seat. So if it goes 1NT-Double 2-of-a-suit pass pass, doubling again by the original doubler (instead of bidding a suit) is mostly for take-out, and could have just a doubleton in their suit. Advancer could leave the double in with honor 3rd or longer in their suit and enough values—or decide to bid a suit of his own instead.