

System On

Over 1NT and 2NT opening bids we have a number of very useful conventions to help us find the best contract: Stayman, Red Suit Transfers.

System On

System On is where those conventions are in operation in a similar situation, but where the NT bid is not an opening one.

Strong NT

Obvious examples are strong NT hands, so 2C – 2D – 2NT (balanced, 21-22 points), 2D – 2H – 2NT (balanced, 23-24 points). Playing “System On” with these, 3C would be Stayman (whatever you play over a 2NT opener), 3D and 3H transfers.

Doubled opening 1NT

After a double of partner’s opening 1NT, most people play that 2C is still Stayman, and 2D and 2H still transfers. Since you have the wriggle to allow you to do a weak take out into a minor suit, there is no reason not to do this. Note: this does NOT apply after opponents overcall a suit over our 1NT.

Partner opens 1NT, opponent doubles, and you hold:

- ♠ QT32
- ♥ Q9534
- ♦ 72
- ♣ Q3

Your hand is weak and 1NT is unlikely to play well. Bid 2♣ Stayman. If partner bids either major then you have at least an 8 card fit. If he bids 2♦, just bid 2♥ as a weak takeout and he will pass. This way you have a chance of finding a 4-4 spade fit if it is there.

1NT Overcall

If opponents open (say) 1D, 1NT by us shows a balanced hand, 16-19 points and a stop in their suit. This is very similar to an opening (strong) NT, and playing Stayman and RST over it makes sense.

Even if they open a major it’s still a good idea, and eliminates the problem of what to do if you have a strong hand with 4 of the other major and 4+ of their suit. Bid 1NT – partner can always use Stayman to ask about your four card major.

Opponents open 1S, partner overcalls 1NT (16+ points, spade control). You hold:

- ♠ QT
- ♥ Q9534
- ♦ T2
- ♣ KQ3

Bid 2♦ (transfer to hearts), and after partner’s 2H bid 3NT, showing your 9+ points and (exactly) 5 card heart suit.