

## A RANDOM COLLECTION

First of all, what does this auction mean to you?

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♠	Pass	Pass
Double	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT ?			

What range do you play for a balancing 1NT bid?

A lot of people play it as 11-14 HCP. I think that range is ideal after a 1-minor opening bid, but it's very difficult after a major opening bid, especially 1♠. Do you really want to double then rebid 2NT with 15-17 HCP hands?

I actually vary my balancing 1NT range, depending on whether there has been a major or minor opening bid! Over 1-minor, my balancing 1NT shows 11-14 HCP. However, after a major opening bid, it increases, being approximately 13-16 HCP. This eases the pressure, particularly after a 1♠ opening bid.

Furthermore, a balancing 2NT bid is not a two-suited hand. It is used for big balanced hands, being approximately 19-20 HCP. (So many hands fall into balancing bids, you need to remove a few bids, such as the strong balanced hand!)

Therefore, the auction given shows a hand with about 17-18 HCP.  
(East held a 3-3-4-3 9 HCP hand, so 3NT was easy.)

The second hand is a demonstration of a trump coup.

After some overbidding, you end up in 4♠, with the auction shown below:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1♦	Double
1♠	2♣ (1)	Pass	Pass
2♠	3♣	3♠ (2)	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

Your hands:

♠ A Q 10 5 3 2	♠ 9 7
♥ 7 6 5	♥ A Q J 2
♦ 10 9 7	♦ K Q 5 3
♣ J	♣ 9 6 3

Dummy was a little disappointing – more from my expectation that there may be a third trump. Personally, I would have passed 2♠ with that hand. My other comment is that North should have bid 3♣ immediately, giving us less space to exchange information.

This contact was going to need some good fortune! North led the ♣K and continued with the ♣Q, ruffed. Needing to get to dummy, a heart was led to the Jack and King. Now it seemed that I needed the ♦A onside, and both the ♠K and ♠J onside – perfectly reasonable for the auction.

However, given South's double, it was starting to feel like South held four spades too!

Fortunately, South returned a diamond to North's Ace – a card which I needed onside anyway. North gave me one more piece of assistance, switching to the ♠8 – 9 – King – Ace. I crossed to dummy with a heart to lead the ♠7, finessing, and North showed out.

Now I simply needed to time the entries to shorten my trumps once more, then executing a trump coup! I needed to be in dummy with two tricks remaining, so then whatever I led would capture South's ♠J-6 with my ♠Q-10.

Since I was already in dummy, I trumped a club. Then I could return to dummy with a red suit, cashing all the red suit winners, while South followed suit. At the end, a red card from dummy couped South's trumps, just as required:

	♠ 8	
	♥ 9 8 3	
	♦ A 8 4	
	♣ K Q 8 5 4 2	
♠ A Q 10 5 3 2		♠ 9 7
♥ 7 6 5		♥ A Q J 2
♦ 10 9 7		♦ K Q 5 3
♣ J		♣ 9 6 3
	♠ K J 6 4	
	♥ K 10 4	
	♦ J 6 2	
	♣ A 10 7	

*A couple of comments:*

I would not double with South's hand when opposite a passed partner. It tells the opponents too much. And secondly, the defence was a little 'too busy' leading different suits (and trumps), although I would have, in fact, got the trump suit right.

And, finally, a defensive hand (next page):

	♠ 10 8 3		
	♥ Q 2		
	♦ A 9 7 6 4 2		
	♣ Q 8		
♠ J 4		♠ A 2	
♥ 10 5		♥ A 8 7 6 3	
♦ Q J 10 8		♦ K 5 3	
♣ A J 10 6 5		♣ K 7 3	
	♠ K Q 9 7 6 5		
	♥ K J 9 4		
	♦ void		
	♣ 9 4 2		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♥	1♠
Double (1)	2♠	Double (2)	Pass
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♠
Double (3)	All Pass		

- (1) Negative double, showing both minors
- (2) Since East should bid another suit if they have one, this double should be takeout, promising 'extra' values and 3-3 in the minors
- (3) A pairs double, hoping to regain some compensation for the lost part-score

West led the ♥10, won with the Ace. East's plan was to promote a trump trick for partner but, at the same time, you must cash your club tricks first. Otherwise, while West trumps a heart, dummy can discard one of the club losers. Either immediately (which I prefer), you lead the ♣3 to partner's King and they lead a club to your Ace, then you return a heart.

When a trump is then led from dummy, East flies with the Ace, leading another heart to promote West's ♠J into the setting trick.

In particular, if North-South are vulnerable, this is a valuable tool. You score +200, suitable compensation for your part-score (3♣ making). +100 is inadequate if you are able to score +110 for your side.

Of course, you have to remain cool and calm in these situations. One false step and declarer makes – e.g. not cashing the two club winners first (and dummy discarding one of those club losers as West ruffs the heart). Whoops – then 3♠ X makes.

**Barbara Travis**

[www.bridgewithbarbara.com](http://www.bridgewithbarbara.com)