

The "Rule of 8" When Bidding Against a 1NT Opening, and the "Disturbing Opponent's No Trump" ("DONT") Convention

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The "Disturbing Opponent's No Trump" ("DONT/DON'T") convention was developed in 1989 by Marty Bergen (Bridge Today, pp. 23-29), who developed many bridge conventions emphasizing card counts in long suits over points, including the "Rule of 20" for Openers, and Bergen Limit Raises. Not surprisingly, the primary feature of DONT is an emphasis on your Partnership's card distributions, and *not your Partnership's High Card Points*.

Also, DONT is not intended to reach Game contracts in the face of the Opener having 15-17 points. *Instead*, the purpose of DONT is to (1) find a part score contract, usually at the 2 level, that prevents Opponents from making an easy 1NT contract, even if a sacrifice is being made, and (2) to mess up opponents' NT bidding sequences, such as Stayman and Jacoby transfers.

DONT emphasizes bids that show *unusual distributions*, such as a 6 card suit, or a two-suited hand (5-5 or 5-4). *Partners playing DONT do not use a DOUBLE of the 1NT Opener as showing No Trump points and distribution.*

When to Bid DONT

Some players use the "**Rule of 8**" to decide whether to bid over a 1NT opening, assuming you have at least 6 (preferably 7) HCPs. The "Rule of 8" involves adding together (1) the number of cards in your longest 2 suits, *minus* your number of A,K,Q losers across all 4 suits. If this sum is 2 or more, you should bid over the 1NT open, and DONT is one option for doing so.

For example, when counting Spade losers, and you hold the top 3 Spades (A,K,Q), count 0 losers for Spades. When counting losers in a suit, **only count** the number of losing cards you hold in a short suit. For example, if you hold only the 9 of Clubs, count only 1 loser for Clubs. If you hold K,x in Hearts, count only 1 loser for Hearts.

If as a 1NT Overcaller you hold **S**: Qxxx, **H**: Axxxx, **D**: -, and **C**: xxxx, you hold 6 HCPs. You also hold 7 A,K,Q losers: 2 Spades, 2 Hearts, 0 Diamonds, and 3 Clubs. 5+4 = 9 cards in your longest 2 suits minus 7 losers = **2**. Therefore, according to the "Rule of 8", you should bid.

Simplified Version of DONT

Here a somewhat simplified version of DONT is summarized. The DONT Overcall bids against Opponent's 1NT Opening are:

1. DOUBLE: "I have 6 or more **C**lubs."
2. 2 **C**!: "I have 5 (or at least 4) Clubs, and an unspecified other long suit."
3. 2 **D**!: "I have 5 (or at least 4) **D**iamonds, and an unspecified higher long suit."
4. 2 **H**!: "I am 2 suited in the 2 Majors."
5. 2 **S**: "I have at least 6 **S**pades."

Other Considerations

1. If the Partners are not vulnerable, the DONT bidder should have **7-9** points. If the Partners are vulnerable, the DONT bidder should have **10-12**

points, and most of the points should be in the long suit(s).

2. Either the Direct Partner bidder over Opponent's **1NT** opening, or the Balancing Partner, may open a DONT bid.
3. DONT bids may be especially useful when Partners are not vulnerable.