




Rebidding No-trumps when outside the range for opening 1NT. SA version. Part 1 of 2. Updated summer 2015.

Y1 VBlue #13 Y1 Limit rebids in No-trumps Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

North		East	
♠ QJT9		♠ 7653	South
♥ A92		♥ 54	
♦ 543		♦ J86	
♣ 876		♣ KQJT	
West			
♠ A82			
♥ QJT83			
♦ T972			
♣ 9			
South			
♠ K4			
♥ K76			
♦ AKQ			
♣ A5432			

This series (and another elsewhere in this edition) is all about rebidding balanced hands unsuitable to be opened with 1NT.

There is a perfect No-trump bid for every balanced hand, even when you can't open 1NT to show 15 to 17 points.

This series gives you practice in bidding those balanced hands that are the wrong strength to be opened with 1NT. Here's how it goes:

- With 12 to 14 points open one of a suit and rebid No-trumps at the lowest level unless you can support partner's suit
- With 15 to 17 points open 1NT
- With 18 to 19 points open one of a suit and rebid No-trumps at the lowest level plus one (i.e. jump a level).

Hand 1 shows you how to cope with a hand too strong to start with 1NT.

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1♣
P	1♠	P	2NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ Q

Bidding.

We have a powerful No-trump hand with a 5-3-3-2 shape, stoppers everywhere and no major. But we've got far too many points to open 1NT (and not enough to open 2NT – a topic for another day).

So, after two Passes, we open 1♣ as that is our longest suit, preparing to rebid No-trumps as and when we get a second chance. When partner responds 1♠ we rebid 2NT to show 18 to 19 points.

Partner easily has enough to raise us to 3NT and there the matter rests.

Play.

West leads the ♥Q, which is almost certainly the top of a sequence. We can count six *top tricks* (two Hearts, three Diamonds, and a Club) plus three *slow tricks* from the Spade suit provided we are able to reach them.

That is the crux of this hand: it is vital that we win the first trick in hand with the ♥K, preserving the ♥A as an entry to dummy, otherwise we may be unable to reach our third Spade trick. This is because our opponents ought to defend well and hold up the ♠A until at least the second round.

So we win trick one with the ♥K in the closed hand. Now we start the process of knocking out the ♠A to set up the three Spade tricks we need.

We must first play the ♠K from hand (a low Spade would *block* the suit), and when the ♠A doesn't appear, we follow-up with a small Spade to dummy's ♠10. The ♠A still hasn't appeared – and we still need one more Spade trick – so we continue with the ♠J which at last brings forth the ♠A from West.

West now leads the ♥J and we reap the reward of our foresight at trick one by winning the table with the ♥A then cashing the ♠Q. Had we thoughtlessly played the ♥A at trick one we'd have no way of reaching the ♠Q and it would

have remained high, dry, and unreachable for the rest of the hand.

All that remains is to cash the top three Diamonds and the ♣A which we duly do, thus making our contract. Nine tricks come from three Spades, two Hearts, three Diamonds and a Club.

Note (for the umpteenth time) the need for accurate **Counting** and **Planning** before playing to trick one. If we carelessly played the ♥A on the first round of Hearts (or if we failed to lead the ♠K on the first round of that suit) we'd get no second chance to secure an entry to dummy's Spades.

A good thought to keep tucked in the back of our minds. When one hand is chock-full of entries (like this lovely South hand), try hard to preserve entries in the other, weaker, hand.



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Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

North		East	
♠ J83		♠ KT97	
♥ A65		♥ 92	
♦ J9		♦ 8542	
♣ KQJ75		♣ A94	
West		South	
♠ Q42		♠ A65	
♥ QJT84		♥ K73	
♦ QT7		♦ AK63	
♣ T8		♣ 632	

Here you have another balanced hand that just isn't suitable to open 1NT.

Remember that your goal is to describe your hand as accurately as possible, both in terms of strength and shape.

Once you *limit* your hand you shift responsibility for placing the contract to partner... make *your* problem his. There's nothing like a No-trump bid to tell your story.

Bidding isn't everything, of course. You still have to make the resulting contract.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1♦
P	2♣	P	2NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ Q

Bidding.

We open 1♦, after East has Passed as dealer, with a balanced hand (4-3-3-3) too weak to open 1NT. When partner responds 2♣ (showing at least 10 points, remember), we rebid 2NT showing 12 to 14 points. All minimum No-trump rebids show 12 to 14 points.

Once again, we've limited our hand and dumped the decision in partner's lap. North, holding 12 points, has sufficient to raise 2NT to game.

Play.

West leads the ♥Q, telling the world where the ♥J and probably the ♥10 are (don't forget to **Read the Lead**) and we count five *top tricks*, namely: one Spade, two Hearts, and two Diamonds.

It looks like we need to get our extra tricks from Clubs and we will be able to do this if Clubs break 3-2. The odds are hugely in our favor (68% for the statistically minded) that they will.

There is one key proviso though, we will have to be able to reach the Club tricks we set up on the table and that means we must preserve the ♥A as a vital, later, entry.

This need to preserve the entry gives us the line of play; we win trick one in the closed hand with the ♥K. We then set about the job of knocking out the ♣A by playing a small Club to the ♣J in dummy. When that holds we continue with the ♣K and finally another Club until a stubborn opponent (East in this case) finally releases the ♣A. Crucially, as both defenders follow to the first two rounds of Clubs, we know the ♣Q 7 in dummy are now winners. Yes, the Clubs have broken in our favor.

East now produces a dutiful Heart return and we are able to win this in dummy with the ♥A, which we carefully left there expressly for the purpose of gaining access to the long Clubs.

The rest is good housekeeping. We cash the


♣Q 7 on table (if we don't take them now we never will) then cross to the closed hand to cash the ♦A K and the ♠A to complete the job of bringing our contract home.

Nine tricks come from one Spade, two Hearts, two Diamonds and four Clubs.



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Y1 VBlue #13 Y1 Limit rebids in No-trumps Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ A84	
	♥ 752	
	♦ A3	
	♣ KQ843	
West		East
♠ 9732		♠ KJT
♥ QJT6		♥ K98
♦ T865		♦ 974
♣ A		♣ T975
	South	
	♠ Q65	
	♥ A43	
	♦ KQJ2	
	♣ J62	

Deception and sneakiness are not only part of bridge, but great fun.

On this deal, you should give an opponent the chance to do something foolish.

If you don't give them the chance to sin they can only be saints, no?

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♦
P	2♣	P	2NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ Q

Bidding.

As dealer we open 1♦ as South with a balanced hand too weak to open 1NT. When partner responds 2♣ (promising 10+ points) we rebid 2NT showing 12-14 points... a perfect way to limit our hand.

With a balanced shape (5-3-3-2), 13 points, and a decent Club suit partner is happy to raise us to 3NT.

Play.

West leads the ♥Q from his sequence and we can count six top tricks: one Spade, one Heart and four Diamonds. We've got the rest of our tricks waiting in Clubs after we get the enemy to play their ♣A.

Let's talk about the Clubs. Look carefully at the layout of the full deal as it stands. If we started by playing the ♣J, we would drop the ♣A, but East's ♣10 would grow up.

If we had only ♣J ×, we'd have to start with the ♣J to unblock the suit. But we have ♣J × ×, and that third card gives us the luxury of protecting ourselves from precisely what we are faced with. By leading a low card on the first round of Clubs,

a) we give them a chance to do something dumb like play the ♣A "on thin air" or...

b) we protect ourselves from the actual split that exists.

When West plays the ♣A immediately we suppress a smile as we think he has defended like an idiot. Why play Aces on low cards? However, we have to acknowledge later in the hand that he had no choice with a singleton Ace and that it must have broken his Heart to play a high card on our ♣2 and capture precisely nothing.

After that start the rest of the hand is easy-peasy. West cashes out his Hearts (we are relieved that the suit breaks 4-3 and not

anything worse) and shifts to a Spade. We take the ♠A and have the rest.


We seem to have ten tricks (one Spade, one Heart, four Diamonds and four Clubs) but the opposition make four tricks first.

No matter – nine tricks will do nicely, thank you.



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Y1 VBlue #13 Y1 Limit rebids in No-trumps Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ AKT6	
	♥ 93	
	♦ KJ98	
	♣ Q43	
West		East
♠ 98		♠ 75432
♥ JT765		♥ Q
♦ A64		♦ T53
♣ AT2		♣ K986
	South	
	♠ QJ	
	♥ AK842	
	♦ Q72	
	♣ J75	

On this deal your left-hand opponent makes a strange opening lead, which ought to make you ask, "Why?"

Before that conundrum there is the bidding.

Routine stuff by now, we think.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♥
P	1♠	P	1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ 9

Bidding.

We open 1♥ as dealer and see partner respond with 1♠. We have a nice easy rebid of 1NT now to show a balanced hand of 12 to 14 points and that is precisely what we have.

North, holding 13 points, has an easy raise to game.

Play.

West leads the ♠9 and we ought to take a moment or two to discuss why he'd do that. His natural, normal lead is a low Heart against 3NT but the bidding ruined Plan A for him. Knowing we had five Hearts there is little prospect of getting his Hearts set up for winners and every prospect of giving us a cheap trick in the suit should he lead one.

As the cards lie, a low Heart lead would not have given us anything (as East has the ♥Q) but it is poor strategy to lead *into* an opponent's suit. Although the suit was mentioned on his left, West hoped to catch his partner with some Spade goodies sitting over the top of North. Alas (for the defenders), it was not to be.

Right, back to the show. After the ♠9 lead we are obliged to **Count** and **Plan**. We begin with six *top tricks*: four Spades and two Hearts. We can see a possibility of three more tricks available in Diamonds, after making them play their ♦A. However, we need Diamonds to break 3-3 or for the ♦10 to fall early in the piece.

We remember all the way back to Hand 3, where we had a similar holding. When deciding which Diamond to lead, since we hold ♦Q × ×, we have the luxury of starting with a low card; we don't have to unblock at the first trick. So we lead low to the ♦J, hoping that the ♦A will appear. When it doesn't we are forced to play another Diamond to the ♦Q.

This forces the ♦A and West returns a second Spade. Were we to take that trick in our hand with the ♠Q, we'd be in the wrong hand at the wrong time. Since all the Spades are equals, we take it on the table with the ♠K.

We could play off our Diamonds now but we try to force a mistake on their part by playing Spades first. It costs nothing, and maybe they'll make a mistake with their discards? They're too smart for that, but...

When we get back to our Diamonds, we get a lucky break, in that the suit splits 3-3. A bad split would have cost us the contract. A 4-2 split with somebody holding ♦10 × × × would have sunk our boat.


As it is we can cash the ♦9, follow that with the ♥A K and claim the game bonus. The rest are scraps for the dogs.

Nine tricks come from four Spades, two Hearts and three Diamonds.



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Y1 VBlue #13 Y1 Limit rebids in No-trumps Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

North	
♠ KQJ4	
♥ T42	
♦ J93	
♣ A96	
West	East
♠ A5	♠ T983
♥ K963	♥ A85
♦ 865	♦ 742
♣ J843	♣ KT5
	
South	
♠ 762	
♥ QJ7	
♦ AKQT	
♣ Q72	

The bidding on this deal is the easy part; the play is more interesting.

Can you untangle your tricks?

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1♦
P	1♠	P	1NT
P	2NT	P	3NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ 3

Bidding.

We are in third seat and open 1♦ after two Passes. Partner responds 1♠ and we have an easy 1NT rebid to limit our hand and show 12 to 14 points.

We think our job is over, with the ball in North's court, but partner lobs it back over the net. His 2NT bid in essence said, "Yeah, yeah. I know you've got 12 to 14, but which is it? I've got 11 to 12, and it matters." Given that North is a Passed hand it is highly likely that he has an 11 count.

Anyway, we have a maximum for 1NT (14 points) so we accept the invitation to dance.

Play.

West leads his fourth-highest Heart (the ♥3) and we settle down to **Count** and **Plan**.

Our count of *top tricks* shows only five: four Diamonds and the ♠A. Fortunately, our third-round Heart stopper gives us number six, and we've got the Spades to (hopefully) produce the other three we need.

We need a fortunate break, though. Look at the Spades and mentally put the ♠A in East. Can you see how we might only get two tricks from the suit?

We lose the first two tricks to their ♥A and ♥K, but trick three is ours with our Heart stopper. We immediately turn our attention to Spades and use the useful technique of playing low cards up to high cards. Why? The aim is to provoke a defender into playing his honour (the Ace in this case) on air.

We play a Spade to the Jack and it wins. If we now led the ♠K at trick six we'd be relying on a 3-3 split. Instead, we return to the closed hand with a Diamond and lead another low Spade. Should the Queen hold we'd repeat the process. No – with a gesture of irritation West plays his ♠A on our Six and we have three Spade tricks in dummy.

Note that we save the Diamonds for entries. We could take the Diamond winners anytime we want but we have too much work to do before we cash them. Essentially they provide us with a way of getting to-and-fro between dummy and the closed hand while we attack the Spades.

Resist the temptation to grab low-hanging fruit; they aren't going to drop off the tree.

Nine tricks come from three Spades, one Heart, four Diamonds and one Club.



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Y1 VBlue #13 Y1 Limit rebids in No-trumps Part 1 SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

North	
♠ A93	
♥ A875	
♦ Q53	
♣ K94	
West	East
♠ Q5	♠ JT842
♥ QT63	♥ J9
♦ 97	♦ AK62
♣ QT763	♣ 82
South	
♠ K76	
♥ K42	
♦ JT84	
♣ AJ5	

The bidding here has a little icing on the cake – although it isn't that difficult.

The play needs you to take care and watch the cards.

Not exactly ground-breaking material, we realize.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1♦
P	1♥	P	1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♣ 6

Bidding.

East Passes as dealer and we open 1♦. Partner responds 1♥ to show his four-card major and, with 12 points, we limit our hand with a 1NT rebid.

Partner, with a balanced 13 points, has no problem putting us into game.

Play.

West leads the ♣6 we pause to **Count** our tricks and to make our **Plan**.

We have seven winners off the top: two Spades, two Hearts and, on the opening lead, three Clubs.

Let's hit the "pause" button for a second, and look at West's hand. A Heart lead would be better for the defense on this deal than a Club. However, why on Earth should West find that? He has a five-card suit to lead in preference and, in any case, North has bid Hearts.

He chooses a low Club (as would everyone here at VuBridge and most of the rest of the bridge playing world), and isn't that a lucky day for us? If we had to play the suit ourselves we'd lose a trick in it. By leading into the tenace holding West has presented us with three tricks.

Be clear here – West is just unlucky with his opening shot. It is usually right to prefer a five-card suit over a four-card suit.

Now, back to the play. Looking at the suits, the only place we can get the other two tricks is Diamonds. We have to knock out two top winners to establish the suit. We must tackle our Diamonds each time we're on lead.

We need the suit to split for us to generate two tricks but that might happen in a variety of ways. An obliging opponent may fly in with an honor "on air", making our task of driving out the other honor easy. Or the suit may break 3-3 or the critical ♦9 may fall.

Notice we get the more likely 4-2 split rather

than the desired 3-3. We've got lots of entries to our hand, but we carefully preserve them so we have access to our Diamond winners. While we didn't get the 3-3 break the ♦9 falls and that crucially allows us to make use of the ♦8 to set up our ninth trick.

Lucky? Oh, for sure. It also goes to show that two 4-3-3-3 hands facing each other are hard work in 3NT.