

REVIEW OF NO TRUMP PRINCIPLES by Maritha Pottenger

Ranges (with a BALANCED hand—no singletons or voids, at least 3/2 or longer in majors)

15-17 HCP: Open 1 NT

18-19 HCP: Open a suit and jump to 2NT

20-21: Open 2NT

22-24: Open 2C and rebid 2NT

25-27: Open 3NT After any of these bids, 4C is GERBER—asking for Aces.

Responding to 1 NT opening*

0-7 points, no 5-card or longer major: Pass

EXCEPTION, with 4-4-5-0 or 4-4-4-1, bid 2C and pass whatever partner says.

8-9 HCP & no 4-card or 5-card major: Bid 2NT (inviting game)

8-9 HCP & a 4-card major: Bid 2C (Stayman). If partner bids your major, raise to 3 (inviting game). If partner bids the other major, bid 2NT (inviting game).

8-9 HCP & a 5-card major: Make Jacoby Transfer (2D to make partner bid hearts or 2H to make partner bid spades) and bid 2NT after partner accepts your transfer.

8-9 HCP & a 4-card AND 5-card major: Bid 2C (Stayman). If partner bids either major, raise. If partner bids 2D, bid your 5-card major at 2 level to invite game; at 3 level to force to game.

8-9 HCP & a 6-card major: Make Jacoby Transfer and bid 3 of major (inviting game)

8-9 HCP & six-card minor with 2 top honors: Bid 3NT (semi-gambling) or 3C/3D to invite 3NT

10-15 HCP & no 4-card or 5-card major: Bid 3NT

10-15 HCP & 4-card major: Bid 2C (Stayman). If partner denies your major, bid 3NT.

10-15 HCP & 5-card major: Make Jacoby Transfer and then bid 3NT (giving partner choice between 4 of major or 3NT)

10-15 HCP & 6-card major: Make Jacoby Transfer & bid 4 of major.

16-17 HCP & no 4 or 5-card major: Bid 4NT (quantitative)

18-19 HCP & no 4 or 5-card major: Bid 6NT

20-21 HCP & no 4 or 5-card major: Bid 5NT (quantitative)

22 or more HCP: Bid 7NT

*Kantar suggests that responder add 2 points for a 5-card suit with two of top 3 honors, or 3 of top 5 honors, and one extra point for 5 card suit with Ace, King, Queen or J10.

Playing the Hand in NT

- 1) *Count your tricks first!* Figure out how to make enough for your contract!
- 2) Keep stoppers in short suits as long as possible! (DO NOT CASH THEM!)
- 3) With only one stopper in the suit opponents lead, consider HOLDING UP (if you can) to exhaust RHO of that suit. (If you have Axx opposite xx, duck until the 3rd round of the suit.)
- 4) When given a choice of finesses, choose the one that could lose into the NON-dangerous hand.
- 5) It is usually best to try to set up your LONGEST suit.
- 6) If it would take too long to set up your longest suit, go after the suit(s) that will give you enough tricks to make your contract BEFORE the opponents can get enough tricks to set you.
- 7) Sometimes it is vital to lose a trick EARLY in a long suit in order to get 3, 4, or 5 tricks later (e.g., when 6-card suit to the AK is in dummy with no outside entries and you have xx in the suit).
- 8) Listen to the bidding. Sometimes it will tell you that a finesse cannot possibly work.
- 9) Look for end plays. Be prepared to throw in an opponent to make a favorable lead to you.
- 10) When the opponents have knocked out your stopper(s) & can cash their long suit, and you have to choose between a finesse and playing a King to knock out their ace, take the finesse.
- 11) When you have two finesses for a queen to choose between, cash the AK in the suit in which you have the most cards (in case the queen drops) and—if it doesn't—finesse for queen in other suit.