

D.O.N.T. (Disturbing Opponents' No Trump)

Kai Liu, 14 September 2003

One of my favorite conventions is the relatively-new DONT convention. When someone opens bidding with 1NT, that person is showing a fairly strong hand, and more often than not, if someone in a partnership opens with 1NT, that partnership will be the one to set the contract. As the name would imply, DONT is a defensive convention used to disrupt the enemy's bidding. The idea is for DONT to eat up precious bidding space so that the opponents will be more likely to end up in a less-than-optimal contract and also to give to your partner some information about your own card distribution.

When is DONT used? Use this convention only when your RHO (right-hand opponent) opens bidding with 1NT. Don't use DONT (pun intended) if you are not the person who immediately follows the 1NT bidder.

Pass – Pass – 1NT – Pass – Pass – Do not bid DONT here

Pass – 1NT – You can bid DONT here

What do I need in order to bid DONT? DONT is purely a distribution-based convention. No HCP (high card points) are needed, though they are nice to have if it turns out that your partner is excited about your distribution and would like to try to come to a contract.

What does a DONT bid signify? There are many variations on the DONT rule. The one that I found to be most common online is as follows:

After the opponent opens with 1NT, a bid of...

- Double: shows a one-suited hand with at least a 6-card suit or longer
- 2C: shows Clubs (4-5 cards) and an unknown higher-ranking suit (4-5 cards)
- 2D: shows Diamonds (4-5 cards) and an unknown higher-ranking suit (4-5 cards)
- 2H: shows both Major suits, neither suit preferable (4-5 cards in each suit)
- 2S: a natural bid showing at least a 6-card Spade suit or longer; shows a weaker holding than a Double or a 2 Spades rebid.

Variations on DONT: I personally don't like the version of DONT presented above. For one, the looser definition doesn't give partner very specific information regarding what cards you have. Second, I personally think that DONT gets overused if the more lax conditions above are used. A tighter version of DONT will result in being used less, but at least each use will prove to be more useful. The version of DONT that I personally prefer is this (it's a bit simpler to remember, too):

2X: shows 5 cards in the suit X and 4 cards in a suit higher than X.