

1NT Complete

This document includes all treatments after a 1NT opening or overcall, in competitive and non-competitive auctions.

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Modified Sheldon over 1NT

Approach

Modified Sheldon was invented by Edward Lockhart and responder (advancer) shows holdings rather than asks.

The name itself is something of an insider's joke; the then Ed Sheldon created an alternative to Stayman when he developed *The Way Forward* at Cambridge in the eighties though this version is quite different. Ed has changed name since, so calling this 'Modified Sheldon' has a certain charm.

There are a number of options available to anyone deploying the convention. In original form all major suit hand types were catered for by 2♣ through 2♠ and it is left to the adherent's ingenuity to either design their own or select off-the-peg conventions to cover minor suit hands. Though 4-major and longer minor are in MS, there remain outside single suited minors of all strengths and minor two-suiters. The variation below puts all 5S invitational hands via 2C in order to use 2S response for minor hands.

General observations

Note that it is not possible to respond 2♣ (or 2♦) without promising major length; there is no equivalent of 'Stayman and 2NT' to show an invitational raise without a four card major and also no way of getting to a major with a weak hand with both majors. You can, however, stage an escape from 1NT with four (three?) spades and long diamonds.

Structure

2♣	4+ Spades, may have longer hearts; weak (5♠), INV (any) or FG (any)
2♦	4+ Hearts, ordinarily denies 4 spades; weak, Bal INV (4♥) or FG
2♥	5+ Hearts, NF, INV (balanced/unbalanced)
2♠	Weak with a minor or both minors any strength

Memory Guides

- 4-4-4-1 hands:
 - jump to a major to name shortage (looks like a splinter...)
 - bid a minor 'naturally' after showing both majors (looks natural...)
- When responder shows two suits (a major and a minor) only when the minor is diamonds is 3M a stopper showing bid.
- In the same position, opener always uses the other minor to show support for the major with the jump to game in the major (most expensive call) showing support for both suits.

Over 2♣

Opener's responses are just:

2♦	Denies 4 spades
2♥	4(+) spades and a maximum
2♠	4(+) spades and a minimum

Over opener's 2♥/♠ rebid

There are *no game tries* over the 2♥/♠ response to 2♣ - all continuations look towards game choice or slam except 3♥ over 2♥ which is a retransfer (for right-siding considerations only). Whilst 3NT offers choice of game, 2NT shows 4 major and allows opener to assess the trick taking capabilities. Jumps are splinter; immediately showing

1NT Complete

five trumps, via 2NT, four. To start control bidding, opener bids 3M or retransfers. A delayed 3NT by either side is poor trumps. There is no serious slam try in these auctions. There is no 4♣ keycard after one these responses – you'll have to use 4N RKCB – and no 4♦ balanced raise either.

Over opener's 2♦ rebid

Over 2♦, responder can continue:

2♥ Transfer, opener almost always bids 2♠, FG except pass/2NT:

2NT INV NF, might be unbalanced - no equivalent heart sequence
3m Natural FG, 5♠+4+minor
3♥ 5-5
3♠ 6+ spades
3NT 5332 game choice
4L SPL

2♠ Both majors, INV+. Opener bids with respect to hearts:

2N Min, no fit, NF:
3♣ ART INV, 3♦ looks for fifth heart (3♥ = yes)
3♦ ART, 4=4=4=1 or 4=4=1=4, opener relays with 3♥
3♠ Diamond splinter, 4=4=1=4
3NT Club splinter, 4=4=4=1 – pass possible
4♣ Club splinter, 4=4=4=1 – Max
3♥ Smolen, therefore 4♥ and 5♠
3♠ Smolen, therefore 4♠ and 5♥
3N Nat, most likely 4-4 majors
4♣ 6KC RKCB for majors?
4♦ Choose major

3♣ Max, no fit, ART, all s above (no 'last chance' for majors)
3♦ As above, i.e. 4=4=1=4 / 4=4=4=1
3♥ etc. As above Smolen etc.

3♦ Max, heart fit
3♥ Min, heart fit

2N Four spades natural, INV, NF

3minor Natural, 5+ minor only four spades, FG

3♥ Splinter, FG, 4=1=4=4

3♠ 6+ spades, INV, NF

3NT Natural

4♣ RKCB for spades

4♦ Balanced INV to slam, only four spades.

Over 2♦

Opener almost always bids 2♥ as invitational heart hands are excluded. However this does mean that four card support may still be present. There is considerable symmetry with 2♣. After 2♥ responder can pass or continue:

2♠ Five hearts, FG, all others show only 4 hearts (except 3♥ or taking control):

2N Normal, no four card fit
3minor Natural, no four card fit

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3♥	Four card support
3♠	Natural 5♠
3NT	Best contract
4minor	Control bid
4♥	Good trumps (4+), minimum
2N	INV, NF, only four hearts
3minor	Natural, 5+ minor only four hearts, FG
3♥	6+ hearts, INV, NF
3♠	Splinter, FG, 1=4=4=4
3NT	Natural
4♣	RKCB for hearts
4♦	Balanced INV to slam, only four hearts.

Over 2♥

Natural rebids; with only two hearts but support for both minors opener can try 2NT. With 4=2=(34) 2♠ is a possibility if happy to play some 4-3 spade fits. With many hands that would pass a classic transfer then 2NT auction, opener should probably pass.

Over 2♠

Either minor weak, that is one where a single honour fit will be insufficient for 3NT, or both minors, weak or FG.

Opener indicates better minor by transfer:

2NT	Prefer clubs or equal-preference
3♣	Prefer diamonds

Responder passes or converts to 3♣/♦ to play (with either a weak minor or both minors weak) or continues with 3M (shortage and 5-5) or 3NT (5-4-2-2 no major stops).

After Responder Shows Two Suits

It is natural to indicate which of the unbid suits opener stops when responder shows two suits (whichever is the longer) and many situations require no special agreements:

1NT	2♦	
2♥	3♣	4♥ 5+♣
3♦		Diamond stop, no spade stop
3♥		Heart support, 3-cards when responder has shown five, min 4CR
3♠		Spade stop, no diamond stop
3NT		Both spades and diamonds stopped
4♣		Club support
4♦		4 card (or good) heart support
4♥		Support both hearts and clubs

However, if responder has diamonds, there is not enough room to bid naturally and a bid in responder's major must be sacrificed for stop-showing.

1NT	2♦	
2♥	3♦	4♥ 5+♦
3♥		Club stop, no spade stop
3♠		Spade stop, no club stop
3NT		Both spades and clubs stopped
4♣		Heart support

- 4♦ Diamond support
- 4♥ Support both hearts and diamond

2NT Responses and Higher

Structure

- 2NT Clubs, weak or FG; shortage next or balanced (...3NT)
- 3♣ Diamonds, weak or FG; shortage next or balanced (...3NT)
- 3♦ Diamonds; FG with short or long clubs
- 3♥ Splinter; exactly 3♠, 4-5 in minors, either way round
- 3♠ Splinter; exactly 3♥, 4-5 in minors, either way round
- 3NT Natural
- 4♣ CONFI: [0-3, 4, 5,...], suits Qxxx or better, 4/5NT sign-off
- 4♦/♥ Transfer; either game only or taking control
- 4♠ Super CONFI: [0-3, 4, 5,...], any suits, F6NT
- 4NT Invitational, acceptance looks for fits – possibly redundant?

2NT- clubs weak or FG; shortage at 3-level

3♣ is more or less mandated. Very special hands can bid 3NT if that looks right. After the relay responder describes with shortage, shows an extreme minor two-suiter or takes control:

- 3♦/M Shortage; opener's 3M is a suggestion lacking a suitable stop or fit.
- 3NT Balanced and hence quite strong (4NT values); fitting club card and controls might make a slam.
- 4♣ RKCB for clubs.
- 4♦/M Voidwood for clubs with respect to ♦/♥/♠
- 4NT 5♣-3-3-2 4NT values.
- 5♣ To play

3♣ - diamonds weak or FG; shortage at 3-level (major only)

Similar to 1NT – 2NT. 3♦ is more or less mandated. Very special hands can bid 3NT if that looks right. Responder describes with shortage, shows an extreme minor two-suiter or takes control:

- 3M Shortage; opener's 3♠ is a suggestion lacking a suitable stop or fit.
- 3NT Balanced and hence quite strong; fitting diamond card and controls might make a slam.
- 4♦ RKCB for diamonds.
- 4♣/M Voidwood for diamonds with respect to ♣/♥/♠
- 4NT 5♦-3-2-2 4NT values
- 5♣ NF; To play either minor at 5-level
- 5♦ To play

Over 3♦ - diamonds; short clubs or minor two-suiter slam try

Opener's 3M is natural. But 3♠ is more definitely spades and 3♥ can be more of a probe. If opener has no worries about clubs and no enthusiasm for diamonds above 3NT he can simply bid 3NT. Because 3♥ allows responder to express some inclination for hearts below game, it can be a little less definitive than 3♠.

1NT 3♦
3♥

- 3♠ Heart fit, club shortage
- 3NT Club shortage, no heart fit
- 4♣ Both minors, no major void
- 4♦ Club shortage, no heart fit, maximum

1NT 3♦
3♠

- 3NT Club shortage, no spade fit
- 4♣ Both minors, no major void
- 4♦ Club shortage, more than game-choice or spade fit (4♥? 4♠ spade fit NF, others are max [maybe with fit])

1NT 3♦
3NT

- 4♣ Club support, no major void
- 4♦ Great hand with club shortage even opposite potential wastage.

The other bids are the same irrespective of relay choice:

1NT 3♦
3L

- 4M Void, both minors: 4NT by opener to play
- 4NT 1=1=6=5 or 1=1=5=6 without major ace
- 5♣ Majors controlled, minor cards required NF

Over 3♥ - 3=1=4=5 or 3=1=5=4

Opener places final contract (inc. 4♠), 3♠ is an invitation to a 4-3 fit. 4♥ is a 'wastage cue bid', slam enthusiasm opposite suitable game-choice responding hands.

Over 3♠ - 1=3=4=5 or 1=3=5=4

As 3♥. Obviously opener must sometimes guess with 4♥.

4♣ and 4♠ - CONFI and Super CONFI

Super CONFI was developed from CONFI to search for grand slams by two balanced hands. (reference: Bridge World Magazine, February 1975).

The derivation of the acronym is that controls sufficiency is satisfied first and fits found second. So the first question is responses then we bid suits as space allows.

If there are enough controls for a grand slam (i.e. at most one control is missing), responder can rebid in any suit. NOTE that in CONFI the suit must be at least Qxxx, but in SUPER CONFI the suit can be any quality since we can't be missing more than the king of it. In CONFI either player can stop in 4NT, whereas Super CONFI guarantees 6NT.

1NT Complete

I would like to think that without interference we would have bid the Abbeygate deal:

♠ K109	♠ AQ84
♥ AKJ4	♥ 109
♦ 96	♦ AK3
♣ QJ75	♣ AK109
1NT	4♠
5♣ [4 controls]	5♠
6♣	7♣

However, that might have been without the club queen. Perhaps there's more to it – an impossible suit to ask for trump honours?

4♦/♥ - Transfer; either game only or taking control

Simple stuff; after 4M, 4NT is RKCB, 4♠ (after 4♦) is voidwood as is 5♣/♦

1NT is an Overcall

This is potentially awkward without agreements. When the opponents have claimed a suit many of the Modified Sheldon sequences lose meaning.

I suggest we use whatever the bid would have meant anyway if that makes sense, otherwise slot in a missing meaning. Having an invite seems sensible; once the opponents are in the action it makes less sense to be cavalier about bidding game and we might have a wider range. We have two bids for the majors so we may as well use the higher as a no-major invitation and the lower as natural.

When they have diamonds, our 3♣ and 3♦ are potentially superfluous. Let's leave them as diamonds for the time being – that at least will give us something to do against the loose (3+) diamond merchants.

(1m*) 1NT When their minor is potentially two or fewer – weak no-trump or less

2♣... All systems on

(1♣) 1NT

2♣ Spades as before

2♦ Hearts as before

2♥ Heart invite as before

2♠ Weak minor or weak/strong minors as before

2N No-major invitation

3♣... Diamonds, as before

(1♦) 1NT

2♣ Spades as before

2♦ Hearts as before

2♥ Heart invite as before

2♠ Weak minor or weak/strong minors as before

2N Clubs, as before

3♣... Diamonds

(1♥) 1NT

2♣ Spades as before

2♦ Natural NF

2♥ No-major invitation

2♠ Weak minor or weak/strong minors as before

	2N...	Clubs, as before
(1♠)	1NT	
	2♣	Natural NF
	2♦	Hearts as before
	2♥	Heart invite as before
	2♠	No-major invitation
	2N...	Clubs, as before

Opponents Intervene

With 2♣

Over opponents' 2♣ we play double = 4+ spades ("I would have bid 2♣...") and full system on – 2♦ = hearts etc., no matter what their 2♣ means. If 2♣ implies spades (either single suited or one of two or more), then X can be the start of a penalty taking auction.

If there is no anchor suit, e.g. 'any single suiter' or three suited (whether it includes clubs or not, from experience this can be a three card suit) then all our sequences are intact.

When 2♣ promises an anchor suit –likely to be clubs or hearts, possibly diamonds – the same scheme should apply as when 1N is an overcall. So, over a typical "2♣ is hearts and another":

1NT	(2♣)	X	Four+ spades, system on
		2♦	Natural NF
		2♥	No-major invitation
		2♠...	Weak minor or weak/strong minors then same

Where 2♣ is clubs(!)

1N	(2♣)	X	Four+ spades, system on
		2♦	Hearts as before
		2♥	Heart invite as before
		2♠	Weak minor or weak/strong minors as before
		2N	No-major invitation
		3♣...	Diamonds then same

And when 2♣ is a transfer (diamonds):

1N	(2♣)	X	Four+ spades, system on
		2♦	Hearts as before
		2♥	Heart invite as before
		2♠	Weak minor or weak/strong minors
		2N	No-major invitation
		3♣...	Same

Higher Overcalls

When opponents Intervene with 2♦ or more we're in transfer territory:

Natural 2-level overcall:

1N	(2L)	X	Negative
		2M	Non-forcing
		2N	Clubs
		3♣*	Diamonds
		3♦*	Hearts
		3♥*	Spades
		3♠	3-suiter, typically 5-4-4-0
		3N	To play

* = transfer to opponents suit shows a stopper and four cards in the other major (both majors if they bid diamonds?). When they are a long suit, these bids (and 2N=clubs) are invitational or better.

Artificial 2-level overcall (e.g. 2♦ = spades, or 2♦ = hearts):

1N	(2L)	X	Take out of anchor suit
		2M	Non-forcing
		2Anc	No-major invitation
		2N	Clubs
		3♣*	Diamonds
		3♦*	Hearts
		3♥*	Spades
		3♠	3-suiter, typically 5-4-4-0
		3N	To play

* = transfer to opponents suit shows a stopper and four cards in the other major

They interfere over our 2♣ response:

We behave as if 2♣ was a transfer to spades: double is three cards, bidding the suit showing four (but 2♦ is three). Thus it would be reasonable for opener to bid above 2♣ with fit and good cards. Over X and 2♦ however (which take up no space), we may as well retain our agreements for 2M.

1NT	(Pass) 2♣	(X);	Pass	Neutral with 2♠
			XX	Good clubs
			2♦	Three spades
			2♥/♠	Four spades as before
		(2♦);	Pass	Denies 3+ spades
			X	3♠
			2♥/♠	Four spades as before
		(2♥);	Pass	Denies 3+ spades
			X	3♠
			2♠	Four (min – 'transfer' breaks possible)
		(2♠!);	Pass	denies 3+ spades

1NT Complete

X 3+♠
3L Four spades - non min

(2N+); Bidding at 3L shows four spades, X = 3♠ and values

If opener passes and this goes back to responder, then if 2♥ (or a X of 2♥) is available all systemic continuations are intact (2♥/X-of-2♥ is a transfer, 2♠ both majors, immediate 3L bids show 4-5 etc.). If 2♦ is available it is natural (consistent with responder running with 4♠ and longer diamonds). A double of 2♦ is take out and consistent with 4-4 majors.

They interfere over our 2♦ response:

And we'll do the same over 2♦, treating it as a regular transfer despite the promise of a heart fewer than normal.

1NT (Pass) 2♦ (X); Pass Normally 2 hearts
XX Something good in diamonds
2♥ 3+ hearts
(2♥!); Pass Denies 3+ hearts
X 3+♥
2N/3L Four hearts
(2♠+); 2N/3L Four hearts
X 3♥ and values

When they have two or more suits

Options:

- (a) ignore minors
- (b) ignore responder's 1-level major
- (c) ignore everything
- (d) ignore minors only if they are alerted and can be two or fewer in a weak hand

We have adopted a combination of (b) and (d). This gives:

We have all the two level

(1♣*) P (1♥) 1NT
(P)

Here all systems are on - including looking for a heart fit with all our kit.

(1♣) P (1♥) 1NT
(P)

But here, clubs would be live for them, not hearts, so like the second example (in this section).

Note that when they have both majors, we can locate a fit in responder's unsupported suit but not opener's:

(1♥) P (1♠) 1NT
(P)

So here, 2♣ would show 4+ spades and 2♠ be natural but 2♥ would be a no-major invite and 2♦ NF showing diamonds.

Analogous situations to single suit interventions

(1♣*) P (1♥) 1NT
(2♣)

This I would say was the same as 1NT (2♣ Nat)

(1♣*) P (1♥) 1NT
(2♥)

And here, like 1NT (2♥ Nat)

They get to the two level with two suits

If they do have two real suits against us, they are very likely to be a minor and a major. I suggest we use 2N naturally (INV raise, no major), leaving three bids to play with: 3♣ is other minor (whether natural or transfer) and 3♦/♥ being the other major by transfer or (cue-transfer) the stopper+4OM hand. 3♠ is always a distributional 2-suiter.

For example:

(1♦) 1NT (2♥) X Takeout of hearts
2♠ Spades, NF
2N No-major invitation
3♣ *Natural*, clubs, NF
3♦ 4♠ and heart stopper
3♥ Spades, forcing
3♠ 2-suiter, typically 5-5/5-6
3N To play

But note the difference compared to...

(1♣) 1NT (2♥) X Takeout of hearts
2♠ Spades, NF
2N No-major invitation
3♣ *Transfer*, diamonds, invitational or better
3♦ 4♠ and heart stopper
3♥ Spades, forcing
3♠ 2-suiter, typically 5-5/5-6
3N To play

When they have both majors, we have to worry less about finding a fit

(1♠) 1NT (2♥) X Takeout of hearts
2♠ No-major invitation
2N Clubs
3♣ Diamonds
3M Shortage
3N To play
(1♥) 1NT (2♠) X Takeout of spades
2N Clubs

1NT Complete

3♣ Diamonds
3M Shortage
3N To play

Lastly, when they have both minors, if they've bid 2♣ we can just play system on, if they've bid 2♦ we can double for the majors and use 2M as NF, with 2NT = INV.

They have three suits

(1♥) P (1♠) 1NT
(2♦)

Double take-out and cue-bids stopper asks? 2NT = clubs if sensible