

1NT Forcing or Semi-Forcing

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When playing the popular [2/1 GF](#) system, the 1NT response needs to be addressed. In the old days, 1NT was 6-10. But, when a 2-level response shows about 13, the responder needs to cope with 11- and 12-point hands. Those are lumped into the 1NT response.

If partner opens 1♠, and responder holds, say: ♠5♥Q 4 2♦K Q 10 8 7♣A 6 5 2, he has to respond 1NT (he doesn't have enough to respond 2♦, [GF](#)).

As to what you call this 1NT response, that's an overrated topic.

Mr preference is to play 1NT as Semi-forcing--that is the box I check for a 1NT response (on the convention card). I don't think it is a big deal as to what you label the 1NT response. Really, it is just a catch-all bid to show 6-12.

If "semi-forcing," the opening bidder doesn't have to bid again. If forcing, he does.

Here is a quick view of the good and bad of **playing 1NT as 100% forcing**.

BAD: If 1NT is truly forcing, then opener must bid again. If opener has a flat minimum, he has to rebid in a 3-card minor (he can't repeat a 5-card major). Though possibly the last making contract, it is impossible to play in 1NT.

GOOD: If 1NT is 100% forcing, it allows responder to later show a 3-card limit raise (by jumping to 3-of-the-major) or to bid a new suit on the 2 level to show a weakish 1-suiter.

I prefer "semi-forcing." This means that opener can (and will) pass with a flat minimum. Accordingly, if opener does bid a new suit, he is not flat (he is at least 5-4).

Here is a quick view of the good and bad of playing **1NT as semi-forcing**.

BAD: If responder has a weak 1-suiter, he will end up unable to show it if 1NT gets passed. Also, responder might play 1NT when he actually holds a 3-card limit raise. In my experience, that's not so bad (often 1NT makes when 3-of-the-major would have failed).

GOOD: Because opener's rebid is now "real," bidding is more accurate (opener's new suit is not one of those improvised 3-carders). Also, 1NT is often the correct contract and can now be played.

So, "Semi-Forcing" is what I recommend. I've had 30 years observing that it is slightly better (and much simpler) than the alternative of 100% completely forcing. If you and your partner want to play it completely Forcing, then mark the card accordingly.

Notes: The bottom range for any 1NT response is assumed to be 6 points, but, especially at favorable vulnerability, it could be a very weak tactical action. By a passed-hand, 1NT is never forcing.