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NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS -- PART 2 of 3

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NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS	
1NT	
15 to 17	3♣ Puppet Stayman
to	3♦ Splinter (0-1♦)
5-card Major common <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3♥ Splinter (0-1♥)
System on over	3♠ Splinter (0-1♠)
2♣ Stayman <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Puppet <input type="checkbox"/>	
2♦ Transfer to ♥ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4♦, 4♥ Transfer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Forcing Stayman <input type="checkbox"/>	Smolen <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2♥ Transfer to ♠ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lebensohl <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Fast denies)
2♠ Transfer to ♣	Neg. Double <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> : Through Infinity
2NT Transfer to ♦	Other:

In this 2nd part of the most-difficult-to-fill-out section in **LC Standard**, we examine interference. If you can just make it through this notrump section, it will be smooth sailing thereafter. I'm sorry to have to start out with such a heavy dose of "system."

The items marked in the box in the illustration will be discussed this month.

Warning: There is no easy way to dish out this medicine. If you want to enjoy life more, just skip this article and don't worry about your opponents interfering against 1NT. If you want to torture yourself and be prepared for interference, be willing to have to memorize. I know--it is painful.

INTERFERENCE AGAINST 1NT We'll get to the "**lebensohl**" convention in a moment. First...

If the opponents make an **artificial** double of 1NT : ignore it completely--system is on 100%. Whatever you play after 1NT (Pass), play it after 1NT (**artificial** double). Redouble shows a good hand (typically balanced) and sets up penalty doubles.

Example: 1NT (artif. X) 2♦=transfer to hearts

If the opponents make a penalty double of 1NT : Pass= to play. Redouble=S.O.S./takeout. Two-of-any-suit = natural, non-forcing (NF). There are more spectacular and better scientific options here, but for the few times it ever comes up, this is easiest to remember. In effect, this is all natural, with an S.O.S. redouble for rescue.

Example: 1NT (pen. X) 2♦=to play

If the opponents overcall 1NT with 2♣: Double=Stayman. Everything else has the same meaning as if they had passed. (Exception: If the 2♣ overcall shows majors, then use the system of responses at the end of this article.)

Example: 1NT (2♣=♦ or a major-minor 2-suiter or whatever...) 2♦=transfer to hearts (ignoring the opponents)

If the opponents overcall 1NT with 2♦ or higher, and they promise one or two suits (including the suit bid):

X=takeout/negative (Use **negative doubles** "through infinity" -- no penalty doubles, no "stolen bid" or "mirror" doubles)

2-level bids=Natural, NF

2NT=Natural, Invitational (but see the recommendation to use **lebensohl** below).

3-level bids=Natural, Game Forcing (**GF**) (but see the recommendation to use transfer **lebensohl** below).

Cue-bidding their suit=Forcing to game (but see the recommendation to use transfer **lebensohl** below).

Example: 1NT (2♦=♦+ a major) 2♥ = To play

If you've been playing less than 5 years (or play like you've been playing less than 5 years) or have a tough time with memory, I suggest calling it quits here. Wait for the next article to continue **LC Standard**. However, the **lebensohl** convention is a good one (on my **top 16 list**) and worth learning if you can cope with the memory.

lebensohl

For high intermediate or advanced players, I suggest some form of **lebensohl** (as marked on the convention card above).

X=takeout/negative (Use **negative doubles** "through infinity" -- no penalty doubles)

2-level bids=Natural, NF (so far, no change from the simpler approach shown above)

2NT and higher: **lebensohl** or **Transfer lebensohl**, with Fast Always Denies Stopper (click the link to read the details).

Note: The basic system shown here uses "plain **lebensohl**." Expert/experienced/scientific players can choose to use "Transfer **lebensohl**."

Versus Conventional Interference If the opponents promise two exact suits, bids in any of their promised suits are never natural; so if they bid, say, 2♥=majors, our responder's bid of 2♠ would just be some good forcing hand--not specifically defined.

The above outline will handle common interference such as **DONT** or **CAPPELLETTI**. Use their shown/known suit as the "**lebensohl**" suit for purposes of stoppers. If the opponents are using a heavily **artificial** system of overcalls, discuss it at the table in advance or just "wing it." It is near impossible to memorize different defenses to every system.

If the overcall of 1NT is 2♣ showing specifically both majors, then use: X=Sets up penalty doubles; Pass then Double=takeout; 2♦=Natural, NF; 2♥=**GF** in clubs, 2♠=**GF** in diamonds, 2N=**lebensohl** (followed by three-of-a-major (3M)=stopper there). 3♣/3♦=Invitational. Direct 3M jump=shortness. Of course, this requires tons of practice and memory.

The concept of "mirror doubles" or "stolen bid" might be easier to remember, but it isn't a good idea. It is much more important to have double available as cards/takeout/negative.

Additional Reading: **Versus Notrump Interference (Intermediate level article by Larry Cohen)** **Versus Notrump Interference (Advanced level article by Larry Cohen)**