

# Defences to one no trump

*Note: in these articles, if there is not a full bidding diagram, then calls in brackets, like (1NT), are made by the opponents.*

There are far more than 57 varieties of defence when your opponent opens one no trump and it is just the matter of choosing one that you like.

I have two ground rules:

- Double of a weak no trump should be penalty (15+ points)
- There should be a bid that shows both majors

The defence I use with Helen is **Landy**: this is just a bid of 2♣ showing both majors. Essentially Stayman over their 1NT and shows at least nine cards in the majors (5/4, 4/5, 5/5 etc). The more distributional your hand is, the weaker it can be: but normally the Landy bidder will have fewer values than a penalty double.

The forcing response is 2♦ which asks for the overcaller's longer major: then you can pass or raise to invite. For example:

North	East	South	West
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♦
	2♠		3♥

This shows West has an invitational hand in hearts, since an immediate 3♥ would have been more pre-emptive.

A 2NT response to Landy is a natural invite, typically showing 12-14 points without a fit. With fewer points it is best to find your best major fit, even if it is not very good.

In Landy the other two-level overcalls are natural.

It is important to discuss what to do if opponents double your artificial bids:

(1NT) 2♣ (Dbl)

Obviously with preference for one major, you can bid that major immediately at the appropriate level, but if their double is showing values and interest in doubling you, then you might want to play in clubs or diamonds. How do you do that?

- Passing the double shows a preference for playing in clubs: normally 6+ clubs with no major fit.
- Similarly, bidding 2♦ shows a preference for playing in diamonds: normally 6+ diamonds with no major fit.
- **Redouble** asks for your partner's longer major! I think hell will have frozen over before you can find a hand where you want to play 2♣ redoubled, given that your partner has shown the majors and the opponents have the balance of points.

A popular defence at the club is **Pottage**, which is also known as **Hamilton** or **Cappelletti** and is played by the GIB robot on BBO. Over the opponent's opening 1NT:

- Double is penalties
- 2♣ shows any single-suited hand, typically with 10-14 points
- 2♦ shows both majors (5/4, 4/5, 5/5 etc)
- 2♥ shows 5+ hearts and a 4+ minor
- 2♠ shows 5+ spades and a 4+ minor

The advantage of Pottage is the 2♥ and 2♠ overcalls, in that it is intrinsically safer to compete with a two-suited hand as it increases the chances of finding a fit.

The disadvantages include hiding all your single-suit overcalls on the first round. The opponents may compete and you may never get to show your suit. The other disadvantage of any defence that uses 2♦ to show the majors, rather than 2♣, is that you might not find your best fit and you need to use 2NT as the strong, forcing, response.

I've known Julian **Pottage** since we were at university together, when he was in the A team and I was in the B team: at the last European Championships in Madeira he was playing the **Landy** defence to 1NT!

Very few defences actually cover what the higher bids mean, so here are my suggestions:

(1NT) 2NT shows 5-5 or better in the minors with concentrated values in the minors

(1NT) 3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ shows a pre-emptive or distributional hand that knows it might get doubled!

### **Double of a strong no trump**

The expert world is split on what a double of a strong no trump should be.

One group thinks it should be a penalty double, typically showing 17+ points with a good lead.

Another group thinks it should be artificial, often showing a hand with a four-card major and longer minor, combined with a defence like Multi-Landy.

Club players will find it easier to play it as a penalty double.

### **Expert defence**

The most popular expert defence is **Multi-Landy**, also known as **Woolsey**. Over the opponent's opening 1NT:

- Double is penalties
- 2♣ shows both majors (5/4, 4/5, 5/5 etc)
- 2♦ shows a single major, either hearts or spades (a bit like the Multi 2♦)
- 2♥ shows 5+ hearts and a 4+ minor
- 2♠ shows 5+ spades and a 4+ minor

My notes for playing **Multi-Landy** with my brother cover four pages!

There is a lot more to discuss when you play something more complicated than **simple Landy**.

If you want to see a summary of almost every defence invented, check out [David Stevenson's website \(https://blakjak.org/def\\_1nt01.htm\)](https://blakjak.org/def_1nt01.htm).