

A CONVENTION FOR 1NT OPENINGS

You deal as South:

N	North
♠	K10932
♥	A752
♦	A4
♣	J7
S	South
♠	76
♥	K109
♦	QJ3
♣	AKQ64

You open 1NT with a minimum 15 point hand. North holds 12 HCP so he knows you are going to game. He also holds a special shape: 5-4 in the majors. North can use a convention called the Smolen Transfer which is designed for just this distribution when you also hold 10 or more points. It's purpose is to right-side the contract. That is, have the strong opener declare the contract.

North starts with 2♣ - Stayman. If South has a 4-card major, North will raise to 4 of the major. If South doesn't, he makes the normal rebid of 2♦. At this point, North raises to 3 of the major in which he holds 4 cards. For this hand, he would rebid 3♥.

This jump into one of the major is the Smolen Transfer. South now knows his partner has exactly 4 hearts and 5 spades and the bid is forcing to game. If South holds 3 spades himself, he rebids 4♠. If he only holds 2 spades, as he does in this hand, he bids 3NT and partner passes.

The Smolen Transfer can also be used when the responder has 6-4 in the majors. The difference is when the opener denies 3 cards in the longer major and rebids 3NT, the responder bids 4 of the suit just below his 6-card major. This is a transfer and the hand is again rightsided.

West leads the ♣10. The planning in a notrump contract starts with counting the top tricks – the tricks you can take without giving up the lead. You count 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 5 clubs assuming they break no worse than 4-2. That's 8 tricks and you only need 1

more trick to make your contract. The diamond suit will provide 1 more trick once the **♦K** is driven out.

You should play the diamonds by coming to your hand and leading the **♦Q** up the **♦A**. If the **♦K** is in East he will win and will be unable to lead a spade without the **♠K** taking a trick. If West puts up the **♦K**, you will cover it with the **♦A** so West cannot lead a spade through your **♠K**.

This hand can easily make 10 tricks. This is the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">11</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div>	N North ♠ K10932 ♥ A752 ♦ A4 ♣ J7	W N E S P 2♣ P 1NT P 3♥ P 2♦ P P P 3NT	
	W West ♠ AJ5 ♥ QJ ♦ 10862 ♣ 10982	E East ♠ Q84 ♥ 8643 ♦ K975 ♣ 53	
	S South ♠ 76 ♥ K109 ♦ QJ3 ♣ AKQ64		
			3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/zjwy4zr> , or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on “Play” you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own. If you click on GIB, the software will analyze the hand and show the result for each opening lead.