

Hand of the Week 10/8/19

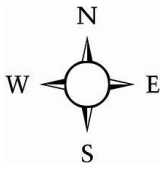
By Susan and Michael Smith

Balancing over 1NT

1NT auctions are becoming more prevalent in today's environment, where the requirements have been relaxed from days of yore. 14+ or 15 to 17 HCP's, 5 card majors, 6 card minors, weak doubletons, and singleton honors have come into vogue. Mel Colchamiro, a NYC expert, estimates from 2 to 8 hands in a bridge session will begin with 1NT.

Many of the auctions will proceed INT-Pass-Pass to you. Susan and I follow Mel's rule of 2: with any two distributional points, you must bid. If you have a void or singleton, or two doubletons, get in the auction. This is because partner of the 1NT bidder will have anywhere from 0-8 HCP, or about 4 HCPs on average. If the 1NT bidder has 16 HCPs on average, your side has about half the high card points at the table. Even better, the weaker you are in the pass-out seat, the stronger your partner will be with position over the 1NT opener.

On hand 35 from the Tuesday morning game on September 17th, this was the deal:

Dlr: S	♠ K5	
Vul: EW	♥ A65	
	♦ A86	
	♣ KQ974	
♠ AJ108		♠ 972
♥ J1072		♥ KQ43
♦ K743		♦ QJ95
♣ 10		♣ A8
	♠ Q643	
	♥ 98	
	♦ 102	
	♣ J6532	

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass
?			

Whatever convention you play to intercede over 1NT, you should bid with the West hand. Bid 2♥ playing DONT showing the majors, 2♦ playing Cappelletti, etc. Even if you do not play a convention, double should be takeout by a passed hand, so get in the auction. This hand was played 18 times, 14 times in 1NT. If you set 1NT, you would get 13 out of 17 match-points. If

you let it make, you would get 6 out of 17 match-points. If you get in the auction and play 2♥ or 3♥, making three, you would have scored a cold top!

This hand shows how powerful getting in the auction is – you have no five-card suit and are vulnerable versus not, yet the hand belongs to East – West. Get in there.

Here are some similar hands:

- #16, 10/02/19, morning game.
- #30, 09/18/19, morning game.
- #22, 09/25/19, morning game.