

Responding to a 15-17 1NT Opening with a 5 or 6 Card Major

With a 5 card major:

0-8 points:

Eg ♠ K9876 ♥ 532 ♦ 952 ♣ 32

1NT 2♥

2♠ P

It's almost always right to transfer to your major and then pass. The weaker you are, the more likely your suit is to get stranded in dummy if you are playing in no trumps. However, if the suit is trumps it cannot get stranded.

9 points (Invite):

Eg ♠ AK1076 ♥ J106 ♦ 952 ♣ 32

1NT 2♥

2♠ 2NT

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Always remember to add one point for a good 5 card suit, that is, a suit headed by the ace or king, or otherwise of good quality (eg QJ1092) such that the suit is likely to run and give you some tricks.

With exactly a 5 card suit, you cannot insist on making the suit trumps as partner might have only 2 card support and it might only be a 7 card fit. So you transfer to your major and bid 2NT invite. Opener will go to game with 16-17 and decide between 3NT and 4 of your major depending on their support. With only 15, opener will pass or bid 3 of the major, again depending on support.

10 or more points (Game Force):

Eg ♠ 92 ♥ AK765 ♦ Q109 ♣ 43

1NT 2♦

2♥ 3NT

This time we must bid 3NT saying to opener that we have enough for game and exactly 5 of the major. Partner will now pass with only 2 card support and bid 4 of the major with support.

With a 6 card or longer major:

The difference with these bids is that you can insist on your major as trumps as the 1NT opener must have 2 or more cards in the suit to add to your 6+ suit.

0-8 points:

Eg ♠ K87654 ♥ 1098 ♦ 64 ♣ 32

1NT 2♥

2♠ P

You should definitely transfer and pass as you know there is an 8+ major fit.

9 points (Invite):

Eg ♠ AK10762 ♥ 1096 ♦ 95 ♣ 32

1NT 2♥

2♠ 3♠

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As you know there is a suit fit you can add distribution points. You can add 2 points for the 2 doubletons to go with the 7 high card points for a total of 9. The 3 of a major bid invites game and opener will go to game with 16-17 and pass with 15.

10 or more points (Game Force):

Eg ♠ 92 ♥ AKJ765 ♦ Q109 ♣ 4

1NT 2♦

2♥ 4♥

Simply transfer to your major and bid game. You know you have an 8+ trump fit and enough points for game.

As you know, some authorities suggest you should make an invite bid with 8-9 opposite a 15-17 1NT opening. In pairs/duplicate scoring, it pays to be a little conservative in game bidding. Not bidding a thin game is usually not a disaster but bidding a thin game that goes down usually is. With 8 point invites, you will get into thin 24 point games. Hence, I suggest 9 point invites in pairs.