

No Trump bids in the balancing seat

- ♠ K8 You hold this hand. LHO opens 1♣ and this is passes round to you.
♥ Q102 What do you bid? Partner did not bid over 1♦ but he must have some values
♦ KJ976 but probably not a five card major. If you double then he will probably
♣ KJ5 bid a 4 card major. But 1NT is likely to be the best spot and if you bid 1NT having first
 doubled partner will take you for a stronger hand.

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D
♠ K8	♠ K8	♠ AQ	♠ AQ
♥ Q102	♥ Q102	♥ Q102	♥ AQ2
♦ KJ976	♦ AQ976	♦ AQ976	♦ AQ976
♣ K95	♣ K95	♣ KJ5	♣ KJ5

With all of hands A-D you would like to bid no trumps. The problem is that we need to be able to show a balanced hand (with a stop) in the balancing seat with a wider range of points than in the direct seat and there simply are not enough bids available to do it very accurately. The treatment I use is: -

Hand A:	1NT	10-13	
Hand B:	dbl followed by 1NT	14-17	(a)
Hand C:	dbl followed by 2NT	18-19	(b)
Hand D:	2NT	20-23	

(a) and (b) assume that partner has made a minimum response at the one-level. If partner makes a non-jump response at the two level then it's even more problematic! Note that a pre-emptive Unusual 2NT is not needed in the balancing seat and so the 2NT overcall can be used to help to fill in the large point spread. It really is not a good idea to have a four point spread for any No Trump bid, but there really is no alternative unless you want to use Crowhurst.

Incidentally, the 10-13 1NT bid can be used in other bidding sequences. This example comes from news-sheet 224.

Dealer:	♠ KJ4				
East	♥ Q76		West	North	East
N-S vul	♦ K76		-	-	pass
	♣ KJ63		1♦ (1)	pass (2)	1♥
			pass	1NT (3)	all pass
♠ AQ7	N	♠ 986			
♥ 1053	W E	♥ K984			
♦ AJ103	S	♦ 52			
♣ 874		♣ A1092			
	♠ 10532				
	♥ AKJ				
	♦ Q984				
	♣ Q5				

- (1) A disruptive 3rd seat opener.
- (2) North has nothing to say at the moment.
- (3) And now it's safe to come in with a natural 1NT in the pass-out seat.

Note that the 1NT at (3) is not a Sandwich NoTrump, the sandwich seat bidding no longer applies when both opponents have limited their hands.