

HALMIC DEFENCE TO 1NT DOUBLED

Your partner opens 1NT (12–14) and the RHO doubles.

You will not usually have sufficient points for game, although with a long major and reasonable values you may have to decide whether it is better to pass, assuming partner will make 1NT doubled, or to bid 4H/S. With 8+ points you can pass and partner may well make 7 tricks or you may be able to double if they take out into a suit.

With a weak hand it is better to try to play in a suit; firstly because the contract will probably be more successful and secondly it is more difficult for the opponents to double if they think you have found a fit. This is when the Halmic convention is used.

1) Holding a 5+ card suit in which you wish to play you inform partner by re-doubling. Partner does not know which is your suit so is obliged (unless the opposition bid before him) to reply 2C. The weak hand now passes or corrects to his suit.

2) Holding two 4 card suits you know partner has at least a 3 cards in one of these (the 1NT bidder will not have two doubletons) and you bid the lower of your two suits. If the 1NT bidder has 3 cards in that suit he passes but holding only a doubleton he *bids the next suit up*. This does not mean he is suggesting you play in that suit, he is telling you he wants to play in whichever is your higher 4 card suit.

E.g:

♠ Q872		♠ 94
♥ A94	□	♥ J1065
♦ K7		♦ 10864
♣ A103		♣ 975

West
1NT (doubled by North)
2H (I only hold 2 diamonds
please bid other suit)

East
2D (I am too weak to pass and have
a 4 card diamond suit and a higher 4 card suit).
Pass (that is my other suit)

If you are the partner of the person who doubled consider whether to take any action.

If you hold 6+ points opposite the double there is a fair chance the 1NT contract will be beaten and if RHO passes so can you. However you must consider whether you will score better by defending or bidding. The vulnerability has to be considered.

If you hold enough points (9+) to mean that game can be made your way and you are vulnerable then it will often be better to bid game assuming that +600 or +620 will be a better score than passing and getting +500. With a balanced hand bid 3NT; with a 6+ major bid 4S or 4H and with a 5 card major force with 3S or 3H.

If you decide to defend rather than bid when your side holds the balance of points and RHO bids a suit (Halmic) you should double if you have a reasonable holding in the suit bid. Partner now knows your side has more points than them and this will probably allow him to double if they bid another suit.

If you have a weak hand then 1NT doubled might be made. If RHO opponent bids you can pass with a sigh of relief but if RHO passes you would like to take out the double. If you hold a 5+ suit then bid it (which tells partner you are weak and cannot stand the double) but with a flat hand you have to pass and hope for the best.