

## Interference Countering

Interference has always been Achilles' Heel for many systems, but more so for the artificial ones. In this respect, the Orient Bidding System is no exception either. However, the Orient Partnership is likely to enjoy more comfort and greater command over interference than most of the other systems. The Orient Bidding System, it may be recalled, is product of research rather than individual's playing experience. Accordingly, the development took into consideration a large number of interference-marred hands played in top international competitions and the difficulties they presented in dealing with them under various situations.

Let us examine one common situation. Suppose you are vulnerable and hold the following hand:

97  
Q65  
KJ32  
□ Q865

Your partner opens natural 1 over which your unkindly RHO leaps to 3. What action would you take? Pass, bid 4 or double for everything. 1 can be anything from 10 to 21 points. If partner has minimum hand, the combined strength may not be sufficient for even 1-level contract. If on the other hand, partner has maximum, your 'pass' can miss a game or perhaps even a slam with shortness in a side suit. This is a very common situation which almost every player faces every now and then and no amount of pondering, twisting and turning can take us out of the highly speculative and explosive situation.

In contrast, observe the calmness of the Orient Partnership under identical condition. If the Orient opening bid is 1□ (12-13 points), 1 (14-15 points) or 1 (16-17 points) the responder would 'pass' without even blinking simply because the combined strength do not add up to 25-26 points, the standard requirement for a game bid. A game is likely to be missed only if the opener has shortness, in addition to points shown by 1 opening bid. A positive action by responder would be taken with full confidence only if the opening is 1 (18-19 points).

Bidding and playing contract bridge has never been so easy and enthralling as with the Orient Bidding System. The System has fully defined, documented and numerically arranged bids both for the opener and responder for most common situations, including interferences. These bids have been developed after years of research on actual played hands that had both the good and the bad points.

As a starting point, you don't even need a playing partner. All you have to do is deal in the normal manner, assuming the roles of an opener and responder at the same time. It does not matter whether you see all four hands or not. In the Orient Bidding System, there are documented bids for both the opener and the responder. You have to use these bids. Cooking or manufacturing bids is not permitted. Let take us an illustration.

First assume the role of an opener and bid according to the System using hand evaluation method (Section 1.01 of Orient booklet) and point showing opening bids (Section 3.01). Suppose there are sixteen points. The only available bid to show the points is artificial 1 (16-17 points).

Now take the responder's seat. Count the HCP and add to the minimum points shown by the opening bid. For

combined strength count of 25+ points positive 1NT applies and anything less than that, the cheapest suit bid (Section 3.02 and 3.03). Suppose you hold 10 HCP. The combined strength would work out to 26-27 points. (16+10 = 26). This is within the game zone and hence a positive response is mandatory. The bidding sequence would proceed as under:

1 1NT

After positive 1NT, opener can bid 5+ card suit, with a balanced hand bid 2NT or with 4-4-4-1 hand jump at 3-level in the singleton (Section 3.04). Suppose the opening hand has a 5-card diamond suit. The natural bid would be 2 and the bidding sequence would enter the second round.

1 1NT  
2

After the opener first rebid, responder has three choices: a) show support with 3-card, b) with no support bid own 5+card and c) with neither use the Waiting Bid 3. (Section 3.05). Suppose you do not have support in opener's and no 5-card, instead you have a 4-card spade suit. (You cannot bid spades as it will be taken as a 5+ card suit). The only available bid is Waiting 3, asking opener to bid a second 4+card suit, if any:

1 1NT  
2 3

Over 3 opener can rebid 4+card second (example-A) and with no 4-card suit rebid the first natural suit even if 5-card (example-B). Holding 4+card club suit opener's bid would be 3NT (example-C). The bidding thereafter would follow an usual course.

[A]

[B]

[C]

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1	1NT	1	1NT	1	1NT
2	3	2	3	2	3
3	4	3	3NT / Pass	3NT	Pass

The same principle applies to all the suit opening bids. Once the combined strength is ascertained it is usually no problem in locating a fit or otherwise, including after common interferences. The Orient Bidding System has a wide range of interference countering bids for various combined strength holdings, including fit exploring bid at 3 or 4-level.

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