

The Raptor 1NT overall

<http://gerben.homepage.t-online.de/homepage/systems/raptornt.html>

Some hands are just hard to bid. Consider for example that you hold

♠KQJ2 ♥A43 ♦7 ♣QJT85

RHO opens 1♥. You have a good hand, but you feel that your club suit is insufficient for an overcall. 1♠ is also less than ideal. A double is out of the question, as you have no tolerance for ♦. The solution: A Raptor 1NT overcall!

Raptor 1NT: Exactly 4-card major + 5/6-card minor

These are exactly the problem hands in competitive bidding. It is a legal convention because one suit is known. Either there is only one unbid major or only one unbid minor:

1♣ - 1NT	5/6♦ + 4-card major
1♦ - 1NT	5/6♣ + 4-card major
1♥ - 1NT	4♠ + 5/6-card minor
1♠ - 1NT	4♥ + 5/6-card minor

There are some very interesting inferences of this bid as well. If partner overcalls 2♣/♦, he almost never has 4-card major! Another advantage is that you do not have to make take-out doubles on off-shape hands that require Equal Level Conversion. Partner is much more free to bid on after a take-out double because of the implied fit.

There is one drawback, and it is the obvious one. You cannot make a natural 1NT overcall. With a balanced hand and 15-18 HCP you have to pass, double, or make some creative bid. I feel that this is a small loss. If you don't get to play the hand (which is not that unlikely) opponents know so much about your hand that you are at a disadvantage. To add insult to injury, when you make a trick you have to lead towards the other strong hand and declarer can play accordingly.

Responses to a Raptor 1NT

(1♦) 1NT

- 2♣ To play
- 2♦ Asks for major
- 2♥/♠ Natural constructive
- 2NT Good♦ raise
- 3♣ Unbalanced constructive raise with 4-card support
- 3♦ Preemptive

(1♥) 1NT

- 2♣ Pass or bid 2♦
- 2♦ Pass or bid 3♣
- 2♥ Asks for minor and min/max
- 2♠ To play
- 2NT Good♠ raise

One more situation:

If 1NT after a minor gets doubled, passing it back to overcaller shows interest to hear overcaller's major:

Rdbl	I have ♥
2 of known minor	I have ♠

Another situation where Raptor 1NT applies is in the sandwich. After (1 suit) - pass - (1 suit) a natural 1NT is very dangerous. Partner does not have more than 5 HCP, and may have nothing at all! Aga in you are telling opponents how to play the hand. Rather you could show some kind of 2-suited hand. It shows the same type of hand as a double, with the nuance that the lowest unbid suit is longer than the highest one.

For example: (1♦) pass (1♥) 1NT shows 4♠+ 5/6♣.

Finally, if you play a penalty double of 1NT, you can employ this convention in some way if you have a passed hand. If a passed hand doubles 1NT, it shows 4♠+ 5/6♣♦♥. It may be possible to play it without known suit, but then you will have a hard time finding the best fit.