

Board 12		♠ KJ		
Dealer W		♥ 1065		
NS Vul		♦ A94		
		♣ K6543		
	♠ 1097		♠ 8643	
	♥ KQ973		♥ 8	
	♦ J73		♦ KQ652	
	♣ AQ		♣ 1072	
		♠ AQ52		
		♥ AJ42		
		♦ 108		
		♣ J98		
				NT ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
				N 8 7 8 6 9
				S 8 8 8 6 9
				E 3 5 5 6 3
				W 4 5 5 7 4
Par +120	2NT= NS			

At 6 of the 11 tables today the first 3 bids were 1♥ – Pass – Pass.

All 6 South players who faced that auction passed the hand out in 1♥.

That could never match the 120 N/S could score playing the hand themselves.

In fact the defence to 1♥ is quite tricky and nobody managed to score +100.

One off for +50 was common and 1♥ was even allowed to make at one table.

My methods are more conservative than the general expert view here.

My balancing 1NT is 12-15, whereas a common expert treatment is 11-14.

There is even a view that a balancing 1NT does not promise a heart stop.

Obviously your hand would not be short in hearts as you would double.

But the theory is that Jxx or even 10xx is an acceptable holding.

The argument is that balancing is keeping the bidding open for partner.

And that partner probably couldn't bid because they have something in hearts.

Not a theory I believe in, but I am aware of it and can't prove it to be a bad idea.

People who play that method have a trick to check on a stop in the suit opened.

The responder uses transfers to transfer into that suit.

If you accept the transfer you promise a stop, otherwise you bid your best suit.

Even my more conservative method would have allowed me to bid 1NT here.

Do you know how strong a balancing 1NT is in your partnership?

Do you play Stayman and Transfers over it?

What does it mean if you 'transfer' into their suit?

If you are unsure about whether to balance have a look at their vulnerability.

When they are vulnerable you might be able to score +200 by defending.

That could sway the decision against balancing if you have a close decision.