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Response to 1NT with majors 5-4 and competitive, inviting or forcing hand.

We define a hand as **competitive** , when its strength is based mainly on its shape. We are therefore talking about an unbalanced hand with 0-6 HCP.

A hand is defined as **inviting** when, having found a fit , it has a limit strength that could justify game if partner is maximum for his bid.

We finally define a hand as **forcing** when due to fit and/or HCP , the hand can reasonably bid at least at game level.

The following hand can certainly be labelled as **competitive** :

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♠K 9 6 5 Over North 1NT opening , South can bring a scarce contribution to a
♥Q 10 9 7 3 NT contract , above all if North has a bare ♦ doubleton. Instead of
♦5 passing , South could bid 2♦ as transfer to ♥. Such bid would
♣763 certainly be better than passing but is far from being the best choice.

In fact the NS side could end up in a 2♥ contract with a 5-2 fit , while , perhaps, there is a 4-4 fit in♠ .

The best way to handle this hand is for South to bid the ambiguous 2♣ : in case North would re-bid 2♥ or 2♠ , South would be more than happy to pass , playing at 2 level with a 4-4 or 5-4 fit. If instead North re-bid would be 2♦ , then South shall bid his 5 cards major , that is ♥ , thus showing to partner 5♥ and 4♠+ with 0-6 HCP.

Let us now see how to handle an **inviting** hand :

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♠K Q 6 5 3 Here it is quite intuitive that a contract in either major would be better.
♥Q 10 9 7 than a NT contract. South could bid 2♥ as a transfer to 2♠ but , as
♦5 seen in the previous example he might miss a 4-4 fit in ♥ . South will
♣763 then bid , once again, the ambiguous 2♣ In case North re-bid would be

2♥ o 2♠ , South should “*invite*” partner to game by bidding 3♥ or 3♠ , over which North would go to game or pass , depending on his hand strength.

Example of a **forcing** hand :

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♠K Q J 6 5 With such a hand , South wants no doubt to go at least to game. He
♥Q 10 9 7 bids first the ambiguous 2♣ and over North 2♥ or 2♠ , South either
♦5 concludes the bidding at 4 in the fitted major or , better, bids 4♣ as a
♣A63 relay asking for controls (see later) If instead North bids 2♦ , showing

no 4 cards major, South would use the modified **Smolen** convention that works as follows :

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1NT	2♣
2♦	3♦ = 5♥ and 4+♠ G.F..
	3♥ = 5♠ and 4+♥ G.F.

In other words , over North 2♦ , South makes a transfer bid at 3 level for his 5 cards major , thus showing 5-4 in majors and G.F. The transfer technique used in the modified Smolen convention presents 2 advantages when compared with the original Smolen . In the first place opener will become declarer in 100% of cases . Moreover with the transfer technique opener can choose between the 2 majors at 3 level : this is very important because it allows responder to use the 4♣ relay to ask for controls. The 4♣ relay is by far more economical than RKCB 4NT , as far as bidding space is concerned , allowing responder to comfortably stop in game in case of unsatisfying response. The 4♣ relay gives also more information than RKCB 4NT , because it relates the possession of Aces **as well as** Kings. (*for details on 4♣ relay see specific chapter*).

It is clear that if in all the 3 above mentioned cases , the 1NT opener, over responder 2♣, would re-bid 2NT = *I have both majors* , bidding developments shone above could not be used.