

# Kaplan Interchange over One Heart

Pete Matthews Jr - <https://3nt.xyz> - © June 13, 2026

This article was removed from the Appendix of the first edition of EZ-Expert Bidding Tools. It should have been posted here before the second edition came out in February 2025 – and referenced in the book.

Edgar Kaplan proposed the interchange or inversion of 1 ♠ and 1 NT. With exactly four spades in a game-forcing hand, we still make a 2/1 response. The interchange is off in competition or by a passed hand.

## 1997 Version Updated – Flannery Replacement

These responses may hit the sweet spot for 4=5 majors, providing useful value for far less complexity than Tucker or Flannery.

The 1 ♠ “forcing notrump” response works well. Opener gets to show the spade suit, play in 1 NT on a misfit, and otherwise bid the same as after a forcing 1 NT response. Responder, having a limited hand, has no need to force. A 4-4 spade fit might get lost in competition, so opener’s double of a minor-suit overcall shows four spades.

The 1 NT “spade” response also works well. If responder needs a way to force when opener shows a small hand, bid the fourth suit (a minor), or a natural minor over 2 ♣ or 2 ♠. There is no need for a suit-quality requirement with this version.

This could be a serious improvement over our default methods, but I have not played it in over 25 years.

R1	O2	R2	Kaplan Interchange over 1 ♥
1 ♠	Forcing, usually 0-4 spades, 5-12 HCP (alert).		
	1 NT	Exactly 4 spades, denies values to reverse.	
		Pass	To play.
		Other	Natural.
	Other	As over a forcing 1 NT response.	
1 NT	Forcing, 5+ spades (alert), 0-2 hearts unless GF.		
	2 ♣/2 ♦	Natural (4+ cards); 0-1, maybe 2 spades.	
	2 ♥	Natural, 6+ hearts, 0-2 spades, small hand.	
	2 ♠	Natural, 2+ spades, small hand.	
	Other	As over a 5-card 1 ♠ bid.	
2 ♠	Fit-showing (FSJ), secondary spade values, invitational.		

With less than opening values, we respond 1 ♠ when holding three hearts and five spades, unless the hand is suitable for a FSJ. After responding 1 NT, supporting hearts (e.g., 3 ♥) is forcing to game.

## Modern Version – 1 NT Semi-Forcing Replacement

For some, the goal has changed from handling opener's 4=5 majors to allowing opener to pre-refuse an invitation at 1 NT.

The 1 NT response shows five spades or a good four (♠ Q-10-x-x or better, for compatibility with our default method). We may still miss a 4-4 fit when responder has bad spades. Opener has no 1 NT rebid over this “one spade” response, so may need to bid a 3-card minor.

After a 1 ♠ “forcing notrump” response, opener bids 1 NT with an invitation-refusing, balanced hand (4=5=2=2 as well as 5-3-3-2). This would make 1 NT semi-forcing redundant for hearts. Responder can pass, when appropriate, or bid any suit. Opener may rebid a minor with a non-minimum or a 4-card suit. Responder's conversion of 1 NT to 2 ♥ says “fit” clearly – a slow-down or 3-card limit raise.

## Backstory

The *Bulletin* published an article by Marshall Miles on the Kaplan interchange in the 1990s, with no mention that it was not legal in events governed by the General Convention Chart (GCC). Jim Negro and I played this for about a year, with success. Then it came up on the last board of a round against a seeded pair in the Flight A pairs event at a regional in Saratoga, NY. Upon being called, the director offered them the choice of playing the hand or average plus. They took their score and departed, as we revised our convention cards.

Miles wrote the ACBL annually, to request that the interchange be added to the GCC, but he did not live to see it happen. The GCC is gone, and since 2018, the Kaplan interchange has been legal in all ACBL events governed by the Open or Open+ charts.

For more information, be sure to see “Spades after a Heart Opening” in *EZ-Expert Bidding Tools*. The “References” at the end of the book include these sources:

- *Modern Constructive Bidding*, pages 81–82, where Miles recommends the modern Kaplan Interchange and Flannery.
- *Encyclopedia*, page 294, notes the modern method in two sentences.
- Articles started by Fedrick, Friedman, and March on Bridge Winners.
- Article by Denis Lesage on *The Bridge World* site.
- My 2011 article, “Flannery and Major Nightmare Solutions.”

Of particular interest, Martin Lindfors explains common Swedish methods, as the fourth main response to the Fedrick reference, on Bridge Winners.