

## 7. Responding to a 1NT opener when you should simply pass

The six-point rule is ingrained. "You must respond with six or more points."

Yes — but this applies when partner opens One-of-a-Suit, not 1NT (you respond with six points in case partner has 19). When partner opens 1NT, they have at most 14 points — the values for game will not be present, unless you have 11 or more points. By all means upgrade a shapely hand with slightly fewer points but a balanced ten-point hand should pass partner's 1NT opener.

### What Happened

After North raised to 2NT, South thought he was being invited to game, so the near-hopeless game was reached. Trick one proceeded ♠4, ♠J, ♠K, ♠6, declarer correctly trying dummy's ♠J in case West had underled ♠KQ, then ducking East's ♠K. He ducked the ♠9 return too, winning ♠A on the third round, East now exhausted of spades (the point of the ducking plays). Dummy had thrown ♥3 on the third spade.

There was no chance of making nine tricks but declarer demonstrated the best way to play diamonds. He led ♦3 to ♦J on the first round, without cashing ♦K first. This he did to retain his ♦K9 finesse position in case of the actual split (also catering to West holding a singleton ♦Q).

Dummy's ♦J lost to East's ♦Q, East returning ♣Q. Winning ♣A, declarer next led ♦4 to ♦A. When West discarded, he was able to lead back ♦2, holding ♦K9 over East's

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither

♠ Q10842	♠ J3	♠ K95
♥ Q1062	♥ A73	♥ J94
♦ 6	♦ AJ52	♦ Q1087
♣ K87	♣ 9532	♣ QJ10
	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	
	♠ A76	
	♥ K85	
	♦ K943	
	♣ A64	

### What Happened

S	W	N	E
1NT(1)	Pass	2NT(2)	Pass
3NT(3)	end		

(1) Weak — 12-14 points.

(2) Mistake. There cannot be the values for game. Bear in mind that 2NT does not say, "Let's try for eight tricks." It is invitational, saying, "Let's try for nine tricks and game if you are upper range."

(3) South thinks he is being invited — and is maximum.

Contract: 3NT, Opening Lead: ♠4

### What Should Have Happened

S	W	N	E
1NT	Pass	Pass(1)	Pass

(1) Yes — game values are not present so North should pass.

Contract: 1NT, Opening Lead: ♠4

♦108. He could cover ♦8 with ♦9 and cash ♦K. He then cashed ♥AK and conceded the remainder — down two.

### What Should Have Happened

Declarer's play was perfect. After the recommended pass of 1NT, he makes his contract exactly.

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