

2 Not opening 1NT when you should

What Happened

North looked no further than a 1♦ opener, creating his rebid problem. Should he rebid 2♦, usually six cards? Or 2♥, showing his shape but (for many) implying extra values? He chose to show his shape but, expecting more strength, South advanced with 2NT and there matters uneasily rested.

Declarer ducked West's ♦K lead and ♦Q, which followed, then won ♦J with ♦A, throwing clubs from hand. At trick four, he led dummy's ♠Q, East covering with ♠K, winning the trick. East switched to ♣Q. Winning dummy's ♣A, he led ♠2 to ♠J. West won ♠A, cashed ♦9 and led ♣5 to ♣10, ♣J and ♣K. Declarer cashed ♠10, hoping for a 3-3 split then, the 4-2 split revealed, led to ♥Q. East won ♥A, cashed ♣98 and gave declarer the last trick with ♥K. An ungainly two down — nothing declarer could have done.

What Should Have Happened

When you open One-of-a-Suit, you have to find a rebid over partner's change-of-suit. When you open 1NT, you do not have to find a rebid. So consider opening 1NT even with a "semi-balanced" hand such as North's (note, those doubletons do include an honour). The superior contract of 2♠ is reached.

Win the ♦K lead with ♦A, cash ♣A, lead ♣10 to ♣K, ruff ♣6, ruff ♦2 and ruff ♣7 with ♠Q (as West throws ♥9). Ruff ♦3 and lead to ♥K. East wins ♥A but you must win one more trick with ♠J106. Eight tricks made.

Dealer: North, Vulnerability: Neither

	♠ Q2		♠ K4									
	♥ Q632		♥ AJ54									
	♦ A8432		♦ 1075									
	♣ A10		♣ QJ98									
♠ A987	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S			
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 109												
♦ KQJ9												
♣ 543												
	♠ J10653											
	♥ K87											
	♦ 6											
	♣ K762											

What Happened

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

(1) But what will he rebid over 1♠/2♣?

(2) Opts to show his 5♦-4♥ shape, although this takes the bidding uncomfortably high; if partner wants to give a preference to diamonds, he'll have to do so at the Three-level.

(3) Expects partner to have a stronger hand for his sequence.

Contract: 2NT, Opening Lead: ♦K

What Should Have Happened

S	W	N	E
		1NT (1)	Pass
2♠ (2)	end		

(1) Strictly speaking, North's hand is unbalanced (two doubletons). However, because he envisages bidding problems if he opens 1♦, he sensibly opens 1NT to avoid having to find a rebid.

(2) Weakness take-out into the five-card suit. Note, playing Transfers (recommended) South would bid 2♥ and North would bid 2♠ (same contract, different declarer).

Contract: 2♠, Opening Lead: ♦K