

29. Failing to accept an invitation

Partner has opened (say) 1♠ and you have raised to 2♠. Partner has now moved with, say, either 2NT or 3♠, inviting you to game.

Players often turn down such an invitation, “Because I held only eight points”. However, partner *knows* you have a bad hand when you raised to 2♠ — 6-9 points. When partner invites game, they are in effect saying, “I know you have a bad hand but I am still interested in game. Do you have a good bad hand, or a bad, bad hand?” If you have eight points, you are nearer the top of your range and should accept the game invitation.

Partner opens 1♥; you raise to 2♥; partner now moves with 2NT. What now with these?

♠ J7	♠ 87	♠ J73
♥ A42	♥ AJ42	♥ AJ75
♦ K1086	♦ K86	♦ 4
♣ 9852	♣ 10952	♣ 109542

Note, partner is inviting game facing 6-9 points, so their 2NT bid shows a properly strong hand — in practice 17-18 points (not 15 or a barren 16). You should accept partner's game invitation with all three.

With the first, you should raise to 3NT. With the second, you should jump to 4♥ — as usual preferring a 4-4 major-suit fit to Notrumps (even though you have to win one more trick for game). Also bid 4♥ with the third — that singleton is huge and worth about three extra points.

What Happened

South played 2NT well (as below) and made plus two. Game missed.

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither

♠ A87	♠ J2	♠ 9653
♥ 107	♥ K53	♥ QJ84
♦ QJ1073	♦ A942	♦ 65
♣ 975	♣ 10832	♣ AJ6

N	E
W	S

♠ KQ104
♥ A962
♦ K8
♣ KQ4

What Happened

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

(1) Showing 6-9 pts and preferable to 1NT with three cards headed by a picture.

(2) Inviting game facing 6-9, so 17-18 (not 15-16) and implying only four hearts.

(3) Oops. Nearer maximum so should accept.

Contract: 2NT, Opening Lead: ♦ Q

What Should Have Happened

S	W	N	E
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	end

Contract: 3NT, Opening Lead: ♦ 8

What Should Have Happened

In 3NT, you win the ♦ Q lead with ♦ K and, loving your spade sequence, lead ♠ 4 to ♠ J. In dummy, you now lead ♣ 2 to ♣ Q, winning. You revert to ♠ K, West winning ♠ A and leading ♦ J. Winning ♦ A, you lead ♣ 3 towards ♣ K, East rising with ♣ A and switching to ♥ 4. You rise with ♥ A, enjoy ♠ Q10, throwing red cards, then cash ♠ K. When ♣ J falls, you can cross to ♥ K and cash ♠ 10, the overtrick.

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