

## 52. Failing to double a 1NT opener

The double of a INT contract is not for take-out (you can't be short in notrumps). It shows a strong hand — it is for “penalties”.

Some years ago, partner Zia Mahmood and I declared 1NT doubled. We didn't make a single trick — vulnerable to boot. The opponents scored 2,000 points.

Declaring the contract of INT doubled is every bridge player's nightmare. Which means you should be happy to double INT whenever you have a good hand — “good” meaning about 16 or more points. Note, I'm talking about all hands of 16 or more points, whether balanced or unbalanced. The corollary is if you don't double but bid, say, 2♠, you are showing fewer than 16 points.

### What Happened

Declaring the quiet 2♠, declarer won ♦J lead with ♦K and led ♠3 to ♠Q. South won ♠A and led a second diamond. Winning ♦A, declarer cashed ♠K9, drawing trumps, then crossed to ♣K and finessed ♣J. North won ♣Q and South had to come to ♥AK. Nine tricks made and nobody thought much about it.

### What Should Have Happened

West doubles 1NT as he holds 16 points — and nobody has any reason to disturb it. Disaster.

West leads ♠5 to East's ♠Q. Declarer wins ♠A and leads ♦5. West wins ♦K, cashes ♠J to tell partner the suit is running, then switches to ♣J (key play), hoping

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: North-South

♠ KJ953	♦ A10
♥ 98	♥ AK4
♦ AK	♦ Q965
♣ AJ95	♣ 1083
	♠ Q7
	♥ Q1072
	♦ 8743
	♣ K74

### What Happened

S	W	N	E
1NT	2♠ (1)	end	

(1) Is there a better call?

Contract: 2♠ (by W), Opening Lead: ♦J

### What Should Have Happened

S	W	N	E
1NT	Dbl(1)	end	

(1) Yes. All hands with 16 or more points should double an opposing 1NT opening bid. Defending 1NT doubled can be a very lucrative affair ...

Contract: 1NT Dbl (by S), Opening Lead: ♠5

for the actual layout (where only by leading ♣J does the suit run for the defence). Declarer covers with ♣Q (or ♣J wins) but East wins ♣K and returns ♣7. Declarer forlornly tries ♣8 but West wins ♣9 and cashes ♣A, then ♣5, then ♠K93, then ♦A. Declarer wins only three tricks — that's a 1,100 penalty to East-West (because North-South are vulnerable). That's rather better than a dreary 2♠ plus one.

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