

48. Mistakenly bidding INT as an overcall with 12-14 points

There is a good reason that bidding INT as an overcall shows a strong hand. After right-hand opponent opens the bidding, bidding INT is dangerous — you may easily be sandwiched between two strong opposing hands and things can go pear-shaped.

Bidding INT as an overcall shows 15-18 (even 19) points. If you were going to open INT to show 12-14, you'd usually have to make a disciplined pass if right-hand opponent opens the bidding.

Exercise: Right-hand opponent has opened 1♥. What would you do with these?

♠K4	♠Q2	♠A982
♥A32	♥Q97	♥K7
♦Q8542	♦K92	♦K92
♣KJ4	♣AJ742	♣QJ74

With the first and second, pass. Do not bid 2♦ or 2♣ (respectively) on those many five-card suits in those trickless hands. With the third, however, there is a call: double — showing an opening hand with short hearts and support for the other suits.

What Happened

South's INT doubled was unenjoyable — to say the least. Fun for East-West though. West sensibly preferred to lead partner's suit than his own, East overtaking his ♥J with ♥Q (in case ♥J was singleton), declarer ducking. Declarer won ♥K with ♥A and led ♣Q.

West ducked and East won ♣A. He cashed ♥1093 and switched to ♠3. West won ♠10, cashed ♠K, then bagged ♣K and led ♠5, East winning ♠A (felling ♠Q) then ♠J.

Dealer: East, Vulnerability: North-South

		♠742									
		♥842									
		♦J642									
		♣752									
♠K105	<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		♠AJ63
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥J7	♥KQ1093										
♦A83	♦Q105										
♣K9643	♣A										
		♠Q98									
		♥A65									
		♦K97									
		♣QJ108									

What Happened

S	W	N	E
			1♥
1NT(1)	Db(2)	end	

(1) Mistake — not enough points.

(2) "I think you're going down."

Contract: 1NT Doubled (by S), Opening Lead: ♥J

What Should Have Happened

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

Contract: 3NT (by W), Opening Lead: ♦2

On this trick, declarer had to throw from ♦K9 and ♣J, West holding ♦A8 and ♣9. If he threw ♦9, West would let go of ♣9 and the defence would win the last two tricks with ♦A and East's promoted ♦Q. When declarer instead let go of ♣J, West threw ♦8 and won the last two tricks with ♦A and the promoted ♣9. That was six down — vulnerable — and 1,700 points to East-West.

What Should Have Happened

East-West peacefully bid and make 3NT. No big deal.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk