

*In our new Friday series, we look at common mistakes: what actually happened at the table — and what should have happened.*

## 1. Not opening 1NT when you should

### What Happened

South opening 1♠, not 1NT, meant he had to find a rebid over partner's change of suit. His 2♠ rebid showed six cards, because if he'd had a 5332 shape, he should have opened 1NT, while if he'd had a 5-4 shape, he would have been able cheaply to introduce his second suit. The inferior game was reached.

West led ♦7, rather than from a lone honour in another suit. East played ♦9 and declarer ducked (best). East continued with ♦K, declarer winning ♦A. At trick three, declarer led ♠2 towards ♠J (best). West rose with ♠Q and switched to ♥2 (also best). Declarer ducked in dummy, East winning ♥K, cashing ♦Q and leading ♦10. Declarer ruffed with ♠K but West's ♠10 was promoted — down two and nothing declarer could have done.

### What Should Have Happened

After the unrevealing auction — another benefit of opening 1NT — West naturally leads ♠3, fourth highest of their longest and strongest. This gives declarer the help she needs.

Rising with ♠J from dummy, at trick two declarer leads ♥5 towards ♥Q, hoping East holds ♥K, East (say) choosing to play low (♥9). Declarer's ♥Q wins and now she can count eight winners.

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Neither

♠ J4		♠ 97
♥ A65		♥ K109
♦ J843		♦ KQ109
♣ AK43		♣ J1095
♠ Q1083	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">           N W   E S         </div>	
♥ J732		
♦ 72		
♣ Q82		
		♠ AK652
		♥ Q84
		♦ A65
		♣ 76

### What Happened

S	W	N	E
1♠ (1)	Pass	2♣ (2)	Pass
2♠ (3)	Pass	4♠ (3)	end

- (1) Wrong — what is his rebid?
- (2) Correctly responding the cheaper of fours.
- (3) In a non-cramped auction (as here), a repeat shows six cards. So North thinks there's an eight-card spade fit.

Contract: 4♠, Opening Lead: ♦7

### What Should Have Happened

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

- (1) To avoid the rebid.

Contract: 3NT, Opening Lead: ♠3

Her ninth will come from a long spade — she knows West began with four spades rather than five because West led their lowest spade.

Declarer cashes ♠AK and gives West their ♠Q. She wins West's heart return with dummy's ♥A, crosses to ♦A and cashes the fifth spade. A club to ♣AK gives her the requisite nine tricks — game made. [andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk](mailto:andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk)