

## Is <1nt-p-p-2s / X > Penalty or Double?

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Gary Bernstein, Mr.

**To:** 'bobbywolff@mindspring.com'

**Sent:** Monday, May 31, 2010 10:13 AM

**Subject:** After we open 1NT...

Hi Bobby,

Do you recommend playing the following sequence as penalty or TO (1NT=strong):

1nt-p-p-2s

X

As opposed to

1nt-2s-p-p

X

which most play as TO, showing a max and a small doubleton spade.

In the first case, it seems like potential suicide to demand that responder bids to the 3-level when about 50% of the time he will have 5-6 HCP and no guarantee of a fit. Yet, most of the players in my back yard insist that both sequences are TO.

Would it make any difference if the opponents balanced in hearts, rather than spades?

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Gary

This is the second letter this week on this precise point. Here was my answer:

Lets get the most important issue out first. There is NO right or wrong just partnership agreement. I play take-out doubles at the first turn after they overcall our 1NT bid by both sides.....BUT

In some partnerships I've made an exception for the auction you bring up [RW: doubles OVER the 2S bidder]. Frankly take-out doubles are better (ie when you hold

KQ9x/xxx/AQx/AQx and it goes 1NT pass pass 2S if you double you hope to beat them --but sometimes you dont.)

Meanwhile if you pass and partner has

xx/AJ9x/xxx/xxxx he will re-open for you and you still get your penalty!

So I'm on your side -- but any agreement is fine here.

Bobby