

Our Forcing 1 NT Overcalled -- Problem

**Board 26**  
 South Deals  
 Both Vul



♠ K Q J 8 6  
 ♥ —  
 ♦ Q 10 9 8 4  
 ♣ K J 9

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	1 NT <sup>1</sup>	2 ♥	?
	1. Forcing.		

Playing in a club matchpoint pairs game, what would you do?

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♠ 10 5 3 ♥ A 6 2 ♦ J 3 ♣ A 10 8 3 2		♠ 4 ♥ K 10 9 4 ♦ A 6 5 2 ♣ Q 7 5 4	♠ A 9 7 2 ♥ Q J 8 7 5 3 ♦ K 7 ♣ 6
♠ K Q J 8 6 ♥ — ♦ Q 10 9 8 4 ♣ K J 9			

NS 4♦; EW 2♥; NS 1♠; NS 1♣; Par +130; NS 3♦+1

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 NT <sup>1</sup>	2♥	1♠
			All pass

1. Forcing.  
 2♥ by East  
 Made 2 — EW +110

Partner and I had no understandings about this situation, which could turn a double by opener into a disaster. Even if a double is takeout, partner may decide to leave it in -- and we have no trump to lead. This is not easy.

As expected, partner has too many hearts to reopen -- it's amazing that West did not raise, as it is.

The winning action is to bid 3♦ over 2♥. The result could be a disaster, but our second 5-card suit beckons. As it turns out, we have a fine fit. Partner should not raise with a misfit for spades and an effective 6-count - cut pard some slack.

This deal prompted me to ask Gary Schwartz about this situation; he and I have agreed to play as he wrote:

*Opener's double should be for takeout with a good hand, and if opener passes, responder's double is for takeout with the unbid suits, which opener can convert.*

*No matter how many of overcaller's suit are held by responder, they are unfavorably located, which to my mind makes the second part of the above paragraph an excellent plan. With that as a given, there is a fair chance that opener will be able to convert a takeout double, and does not have to make a penalty double to get the penalty. Thus by making opener's double for takeout, you gain on all the hands where takeout is what was needed, and also gain on some of the hands where a penalty double would have been ideal.*

*Even so, it is not clear to me what opener should do. Lots of offensive potential and should be competing for a partial, but clubs are short, diamonds are weak, and no aces, so any action risks responder bidding too much. Or playing in 3 clubs.*

I also asked Grand Life Master Steve Gladyszak, who said, penalty, for both doubles. I take that as the default, without agreement to the contrary.