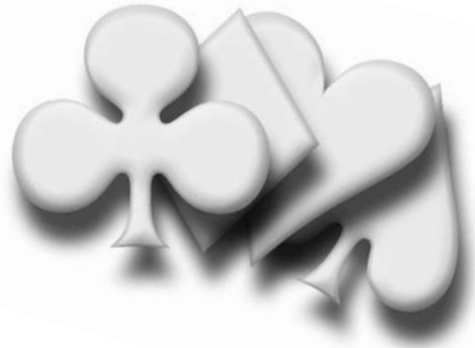


LESSON 1

The Negative Double

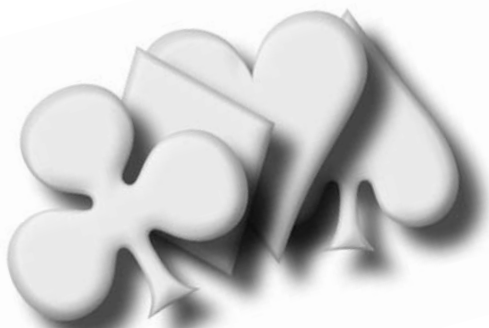


General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

The Negative Double

Negative doubles are an integral part of an effective five-card major system. Competitive duplicate students are probably playing them to some extent. It is doubtful whether social players are using the convention or have even heard of it. This course material is written based on 13-point opening bids with 25 points required for game. If you are advocating 12-point opening bids, please make the necessary adjustments to the response ranges, making sure the players bid game with 25 points.

This lesson covers the use of the negative double by responder when there is an overcall of partner's one-of-a-suit bid. The students should already be familiar with the takeout double, so the concept of responder's takeout double should come fairly easily. Most students are much less familiar with the penalty double.

This is the first of two lessons about doubles. Some of the concepts introduced in this lesson, such as a reopening double by opener, will be discussed further in the next lesson. Doubles are a complex subject, so it's important to leave the students with a confident feeling about this particular convention.

Bidding

The original negative double — introduced as the “Sputnik” double by Al Roth and Tobias Stone — applied in only one situation: after a 1 ♠ overcall of partner's minor-suit opening bid. The concept has been expanded over time until it has become one of the most commonly used and misused conventions.

During the lesson, it's important to emphasize the flexibility of the double and the necessity for firm partnership agreements to avoid confusion in the many situations that can arise.

Here are the topics covered:

The Negative Double

This introduces the concept of the negative double as showing support for the *two* unbid suits when partner opens one of a suit and there is an overcall in a suit by the next opponent. The double is used when responder can't (or doesn't wish to) make a suitable natural bid.

It should be stressed that the double should always promise four-card support for an unbid major. Support for an unbid minor isn't necessary, provided responder has another bid available if opener rebids the unbid minor suit.

When negative doubles are used, there is an impact on the meaning of responder's other bids. A suit bid tends to show a five-card or longer suit, since the negative double is basically used to look for 4–4 fits. This subtle point doesn't need to be emphasized with less experienced students while introducing the negative double.

Although the negative double is initially introduced as showing only enough strength to compete, there is no real upper limit to the strength. Examples of this are given, but the students may struggle a little with understanding why the negative double should be used when responder does have enough strength to bid a suit. The distinction between four-card suits and longer suits is a subtle one, since responder often bids a four-card suit when there is no interference.

It's important to discuss the level through which negative doubles apply. The assumed *standard* these days is through 2♠, although many players use it through much higher levels. Ultimately, it's a matter of partnership agreement.

It's also important to make sure the students understand that the negative double applies only after a one-level, suit, opening bid and an overcall in a suit. There are other possible agreements, but they aren't standard.

Opener's Rebid after a Negative Double

The basic concept for opener's rebid is fairly straightforward. Opener assumes responder has support for both unbid suits and enough strength to compete. With a minimum-opening bid, opener makes a rebid at the cheapest available level. With a medium-strength hand, opener jumps a level. With a maximum-strength hand, opener gets the partnership to game.

The examples are kept quite straightforward. Complex situations in which opener must bid a three-card suit or make a cuebid are avoided.

Responder's Rebid after Making a Negative Double

Responder's continuation after using a negative double is kept fairly simple. With a minimum hand, responder usually passes opener's rebid, unless responder has made an off-center negative double without support for a minor suit. With a medium-strength hand, responder takes a second bid to invite opener to game. With an opening bid, responder gets the partnership to game.

Doubling for Penalty when Playing Negative Doubles

The students may find the concepts involved in making a penalty double quite challenging. It requires cooperation from both partners. The idea of a reopening double by opener — especially on minimum values — may be new. There is more discussion of this type of call in the following lesson, if the students are having difficulty distinguishing between takeout and penalty doubles.

Play & Defense

The deals are all examples of the negative double in action. Since the bidding concepts may be new, the emphasis is on the auction and getting to the appropriate contract. It will be difficult to control the actual final contract when the students find themselves in a competitive situation. Be sure to review the bidding carefully and to discuss the play and defense, only after everyone is assumed to be in the appropriate final contract.

The deals in this lesson do include some challenging play concepts, although these can be sidestepped with an inexperienced group:

- Handling suit combinations.
- Trump management.
- Uppercut.

The first deal contains a challenging suit combination. The basic principle involved for declarer is to “only lead a high card if you can afford to have it covered.” The same combination also includes some scope for the defense. Unless the class is quite experienced in card play, it is recommended that you avoid this part of the discussion.

The second deal gives the defense some scope in trying to get an overruff. This gives declarer a challenging play problem. The deal looks a little easier than it is, and declarer can easily fall into communication problems. You might need to emphasize that the concept of “high card from the short side first” applies only when taking *sure* tricks or promoting winners. When the tricks aren’t so sure, declarer may have to be very careful about entries.

The third deal won’t require much discussion about the play, if the auction goes as intended. The defenders should be able to get a penalty of at least 800 points, even though perfect defense might net them 1400. More likely, North–South will simply get to 3NT, missing the opportunity to collect a larger score.

On the fourth deal, it will probably be challenging enough for North–South to reach the correct contract. If they do, there is an opportunity for the defense to get an uppercut and defeat the contract. It isn’t easy to do, however, so any discussion of this should be reserved for more experienced students who claim the opponents always get all of the cards.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This is the first lesson that focuses on competitive bidding. It is also the first of two lessons on doubles. While all of the students will be familiar with competition, they also are likely to be uncomfortable with it. The objective here is to provide some additional tools for them to use.

You might start the lesson like this:

“In the next few lessons, the focus will be on tools that can be used in competitive situations. When one side makes a takeout double or an overcall, the auction becomes more complex. Some options are taken away while new options become available.

“For the next two lessons, we’ll look at doubles. The double was originally introduced to increase the penalty for overbidding — in effect, to cut down on competition. Students soon realized, however, that the double is a very versatile call, since it doesn’t take up any bidding room. In today’s game, the double is used in many situations by both sides. There are all sorts of conventional applications of the double, and we’ll look at one of the most useful.”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Negative Double

Introduction

“The takeout double is one of the earliest conventions introduced to the game of bridge. The use of the takeout double, when the opponents open the bidding in a suit, is so common that most of today’s players don’t even think of it as a convention.

“The concept of the takeout double is so useful that it can be applied in situations other than when the opponents open the bidding. We’ll look at one way it can be used when your side opens the bidding.

“First let’s look at deals where your side opens a minor suit.”

Instructions

“Sort the cards into suits. Give each player one suit and construct the following hand in front of North.

“In spades: three low cards.

“In hearts: the king, the queen and two low cards.

“In diamonds: two low cards.

“In clubs: the queen, the jack and two low cards.”

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">♠ x x x</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Double</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">♥ K Q x x</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">♦ x x</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">♣ Q J x x</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	♠ x x x	1 ♠	Double	1 ♦	♥ K Q x x				♦ x x				♣ Q J x x			
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♦ x x																					
♣ Q J x x																					

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up dummy style in front of North.

“**Suppose your partner, South, opens the bidding 1 ♦. What is North planning to respond?** (1 ♥.) With 8 high-card points you plan to respond 1 ♥, looking for a major-suit fit.

“**Instead of passing, however, West overcalls 1 ♠. What are the possible choices for responder?** (Pass/1NT/Double.) The 1 ♠ overcall has created a challenge, since you can no longer respond 1 ♥.

- With only 8 high-card points, you don’t have enough to bid a new suit at the two level, 2 ♣ or 2 ♥. A new suit at the two level promises 10 or more points and is forcing. If South holds a minimum-opening bid, the partnership is likely to get too high if you respond 2 ♣ or 2 ♥.

- A response of 1NT would show 6 to 10 points, but isn't a good choice with three low spades. If you are declarer in notrump, East will probably lead a spade (partner's suit), and West is likely to have a five-card or longer suit for the overcall. Even if South holds some strength in spades, such as the ♠K or ♠Q, South's high card will be trapped immediately. If South does have strength in spades, it would be better to play notrump with South as declarer, protecting the high cards.
- North could pass. North isn't forced to bid with 6 or more points once West intervenes. South will get another chance to bid with a strong opening hand. The disadvantage of passing, however, is that North–South might have difficulty competing in the auction. If East were to raise to 2♠, for example, South might not have enough to compete at the three level. When the auction comes back to North, it would be even more dangerous to say something at the three level.

“North would like to compete for the auction, since North–South must have at least half of the high-card strength — $12 + 8 = 20$. However, North doesn't have a convenient bid to describe the hand using standard methods. It was for this type of situation that the negative double was invented. West's overcall has taken away some bidding room, but it does give North another option, the double.

“A number of years ago, standard methods stated that the double of an opponent's overcall was for penalty. However, there were drawbacks to making a penalty double of a low-level overcall. What were the disadvantages? (Infrequent/Warns the opponents.) There were several disadvantages:

- It's not too often that you have the right type of hand to make a penalty double of a low-level overcall. To defeat a contract of 1♠, for example, your side would need to take seven tricks — effectively making a 1♠ contract yourself.
- Even if your side can defeat the contract, it might not be enough to compensate for the score you would get for bidding and making a contract of your own.
- If you were to double 1♠ for penalty, the opponents would have an opportunity to find a better spot. You might chase them out of a contract they can't make into one that they can make.

“It makes practical sense to use responder's double of a low-level overcall as a form of takeout double rather than as a penalty double. In fact, today, the use of a double in this position is alertable. If the partnership agrees to use negative doubles, responder's double of an opponent's low-level overcall is for takeout, showing:

- Support for the unbid suits, and
- Enough strength to compete.

“On this hand, the negative double is ideal. North has support for both of the unbid suits, clubs and hearts. North also has enough strength to want to compete for the contract. Even if South has a minimum-opening bid, North–South should be able to make a partscore, if they can find a fit in one of the suits.

“The negative double gives you a useful tool in competitive situations. You’ll still have to judge whether it’s the best tool for the situation.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add the queen.

“In clubs: take away the queen.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♠ Q x x x	1 ♦	Double		1 ♣
♥ K Q x x				
♦ x x				
♣ J x x				

“**Suppose your partner, South, opens 1 ♣ and West overcalls 1 ♦ . What does North respond?** (Double/1 ♥ .) Had West passed, you would have responded 1 ♥ , bidding your four-card suits up the line. West’s overcall doesn’t prevent you from responding 1 ♥ , but it gives you another option. You can make a negative double to show support for both of the unbid suits, hearts and spades.

“**What is the advantage of making a negative double instead of responding 1 ♥ ?** (Show two suits.) If you respond 1 ♥ , South will know about your heart suit, but won’t know about the spade suit. That won’t be a problem if East passes. South can show a four-card spade suit and the fit will be found. If East raises to 2 ♦ — or 3 ♦ — a possible spade fit may get lost. South might not be strong enough to introduce spades at the two or three level, and you don’t have enough strength to ‘reverse’ into spades at a high level. By making a negative double, you show both of your suits at the same time. If the partnership has a fit in either hearts or spades, South will know immediately. If there is no fit, South will have a description of your hand and can bid accordingly.

“**Suppose South opens 1 ♣ and West overcalls 1 ♠ . What would North respond?** (1NT.) Although it would be nice to double to show support for hearts, you can’t afford to make a negative double with this hand. You don’t have support for diamonds. South will assume you have support for both hearts and diamonds and may choose to bid 2 ♦ . That leaves you in an awkward position. A subsequent bid of 2NT would be invitational,

showing about 11 or 12 points. Since you have only 8 points, you may get the partnership too high.

“You have a reasonable alternative. 1NT lets South know you have 6 to 10 points and some strength in spades. The partnership still may find a heart fit if there is one, although there’s no guarantee.

“**If South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♥, what is North’s call?** (1♠/1NT.) The negative double isn’t a good choice, since you don’t have support for diamonds. You do have a couple of other options, however. You still can bid 1♠, showing a four-card or longer spade suit. That way, you won’t miss an eight-card spade fit. You could bid 1NT, putting the emphasis on the heart stoppers and limiting your hand to 6 to 10 points. That’s a good description of your hand, but you might miss an eight-card spade fit. There’s no right answer. You have to use your judgment.

“**If South opens 1♦ and West overcalls 2♣, what is North’s call?** (Double.) You don’t have enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level, but the negative double works well. You can show support for both of the unbid suits and enough strength to want to compete for the contract.”

Support for the Unbid Minors

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the queen and a low card.

“In diamonds: add the king and a low card.

NORTH	WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH			
♠ x x				1♣
♥ K Q x x	1♠	Double		
♦ K x x x				
♣ J x x				

“**South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (Double.) A perfect hand for the negative double — support for both unbid suits and enough strength to compete for the contract.

“**If South opens 1♦ and West overcalls 1♠, what does North call?** (Double.) Ideally, responder should have support for both unbid suits. However, responder can occasionally get away with not having support for a minor suit. Responder also must be prepared to bid something else if opener bids clubs.

“**If North makes a negative double and South bids clubs, what can North do?** (Bid diamonds.) If South bids hearts over the negative double, everything is fine. It won’t matter that responder doesn’t have support for clubs. If South bids clubs, responder can give preference back to opener’s first bid suit, diamonds, at the same level. The partnership won’t get into any trouble.

“One caution. While it’s okay to occasionally make a negative double without support for an unbid minor, it’s never a good idea to do it without support for an unbid major. Opener could bid the major — perhaps even jump to game — and responder would not be able to correct the situation without getting the partnership too high.”

Five-Card or Longer Suits

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add the king and two low cards.

“In hearts: take away the king and the queen.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

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“**Suppose South opens 1 ♣ and West overcalls 1 ♥. What does North call? (1 ♠.)** Although you have support for both of the unbid suits, with a five-card or longer suit you should make your natural response, if you can. You have enough strength to bid a new suit at the one level, so you show your five-card suit by bidding 1 ♠.

“There are a couple of advantages to bidding 1 ♠ instead of making a negative double:

- If you double, partner will assume you have four spades and will only bid spades when holding a four-card suit. If partner has a three-card spade suit, the partnership will miss its eight-card fit.
- When you bid 1 ♠, partner will expect you to have at least a five-card suit because you didn’t make a negative double. That’s not a 100% certainty. You might not be able to make a negative double when holding four spades, because you don’t have support for the unbid minor. That’s usually the case.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In diamonds: add the ace and a low card.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

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♣ J																					

“South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♥. What does North call? (2♦.)

With enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level, there’s no need to use the negative double. You can show your suits naturally, bidding the longest suit first. If you start with a negative double, you’ll tell partner about the four-card spade suit, but you will have a difficult time letting partner know about your excellent six-card diamond suit.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In hearts: add the queen, the jack and a low card.

“In diamonds: take away the king and a low card.

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♠ K x x									
♥ Q J x x x									
♦ A x x x									
♣ J									

“South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call? (2♥.)

You have enough strength to bid your five-card suit at the two level, so make your natural response. You’ll find your heart fit if partner has three-card or longer support.

“There are times, however, when you do have to make a negative double with a five-card or longer suit.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In diamonds: take away the ace and a low card.

“In clubs: add a low card.

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♥ Q J x x x x									
♦ x x									
♣ J x									

“South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?

(Double.) You would certainly like to show your heart suit, but West’s overcall has made that difficult. You don’t have enough strength to bid 2♥. That bid would be forcing and could easily get the partnership too high, especially if partner doesn’t have much of a fit for hearts.

“You could pass and hope to show your hearts later, but you may not get a suitable opportunity. East might raise spades, and the level of bidding will start to get uncomfortable. The best solution is to make a negative double. South will assume that you have a four-card heart suit and support for diamonds as well.

“**Suppose you double and South bids 2♦. What does North call? (2♥.)** If South does bid diamonds, or rebids clubs, you can now bid 2♥. This tells South that you have a weak hand with a good five-card or longer heart suit. If you held enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level, you would have bid 2♥ right away.

“It’s important that both partners understand what is going on in this type of sequence. It will allow you to get around some awkward bidding situations when the opponents interfere.”

Strength Shown by a Negative Double

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king.

“In hearts: take away two low cards.

“In diamonds: add the queen and two low cards.

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♥ Q J x x									
♦ Q x x x x									
♣ J x									

“**South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♠. Does North make a negative double? (Yes/No.)** You do have support for both of the unbid suits, but the hand is of borderline strength. If you double, you are committing the partnership to the two level, if South chooses one of your suits or rebids clubs. If South rebids 1NT, you’ll be at the one level, but you don’t have a very good hand.

“You don’t have to make a negative double when there is a danger of getting the partnership too high, but most players would take the risk with this hand. You would have responded 1♦ or 1♥ if West had passed. That action would be forcing, and partner might raise your suit to the two level. You’d be in the same position. In fact, there’s an advantage to making a negative double. You get to show both of your suits at once. If West hadn’t overcalled, you could have shown only one of your suits.

“**If South opened 1♠ and West overcalled 2♣, what does North call? (Double/Pass.)** Again, it’s a close decision, but it’s now or never. You have support for both of the unbid suits without enough to bid one of them at the two level. A negative double would be reasonable. It’s an available tool, and you have to use judgment about when to use it.

“The negative double can be made with much stronger hands when it is the most convenient bid available. Partner will assume you have only enough strength to compete at the current level, but you can bid again after hearing opener’s rebid.

“A general guideline is that a negative double of a one-level overcall promises at least 6 total points, while a negative double of a two-level overcall promises at least 8 total points.

“Change the North hand.

“In diamonds: take away two low cards and add the king.

“In clubs: add the queen.

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“**South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (Double.) You have enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level. If you bid one of your suits, however, partner will assume you have a five-card or longer suit, and you also might miss a fit in the other suit. It’s best to start with a negative double.

“**Suppose you make a negative double and South rebids 2♥. What does North call?** (3♥.) Now that you’ve found a fit, you can show your extra strength by raising to the three level, inviting game. This shows 10 to 12 points.

“**What if South rebids 2♦?** (3♦.) You can raise to the three level, showing an invitational strength hand.

“**What if South rebids 2♣?** (3♣.) Raise partner’s suit to show extra strength.

“**What if South rebids 1NT?** (2NT.) You can raise to 2NT, inviting partner to game. Partner doesn’t have a fit for either of your suits.

“You can handle the auction, whatever partner rebids. You’ll just take another bid to show that you have more than a minimum hand.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away the queen and add the ace.

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“South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call? (Double.) With 13 HCPs, you know the partnership is headed for game, but the first priority is to find a suitable fit. Start with a negative double.

“If North doubles and South bids 2♥, what does North call? (Bid 4♥.) Once you have found the heart fit, you can put the partnership in game.

“What if South rebids 1NT? (3NT.) Now you know that you don’t have a heart fit. You can simply raise to 3NT.

“Similarly, if South bids diamonds or rebids clubs, you can get the partnership to the game level. As in any situation where a minor suit is involved, you might explore the possibility of playing in 3NT. If you want to make a forcing bid after hearing South’s rebid, you can always cuebid the opponent’s suit. That’s the equivalent of saying, “I need more information before I can determine the best contract.”

“If South opens 1♦ and West overcalls 1♠, what does North call? (Double.) The negative double is the best way to start. If you bid 2♥, you show a five-card or longer suit. By doubling, you bring hearts into the picture and will find a 4–4 fit, if there is one. If partner rebids something other than hearts, you’ll drive the partnership to the game level in diamonds or notrump.

“If South opens 1♠ and West overcalls 2♣, what does North call? (Double.) The negative double works well again. You get to show both of your suits. If you have a fit, you can play game in that suit. If you don’t have a fit, you can play in 3NT.”

The Level through Which the Negative Double Applies

“Suppose South opens the bidding 1♣ and West jumps to 2♠. What does North call? (Double.) Originally, the negative double was used only after a 1♠ overcall. As you have seen, it’s a versatile bid. The standard agreement is that the negative double is used after any overcall up to and including 2♠ — *through* 2♠. Most partners would assume that limit if they simply agreed to play negative doubles.

“With that agreement, you are in a good position to double with this hand. You should be able to find a suitable fit, if there is one, and play in the appropriate game.

“If South opens 1♣ and West jumps to 3♠, what does North call? (Double.) With 13 HCPs, you have to do something, and you don’t want to bid 3NT with nothing in spades. Double is the practical choice. Here, however, the double is for penalty, not for takeout, unless the partnership has some other agreement. If you play negative doubles through 2♠, the double of any overcall higher than 2♠ is for penalty.

“Making a penalty double isn’t unreasonable. Opposite partner’s opening bid, you should have more than enough combined strength to defeat the 3♠ contract. However, it feels a little uncomfortable. You might finish with a small penalty, when you could make game or slam in one of your suits.

“For this reason, some partnerships prefer to extend the level through which negative doubles apply. Some partnerships play negative doubles through 3♠, some through 4♦ and some even higher. If your partnership adopts the negative double convention, you’ll have to decide on exactly when it applies. The standard agreement is after suit overcalls up to and including 2♠.

“Change the North hand.

“In diamonds: take away the king and add a low card.

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“**South opens the bidding 1♣, and West jumps to 2♠. What does North call?** (Double.) This is perfect for a negative double. With 10 HCPs you have enough to compete to the three level, and you can show support for both unbid suits.

“**Suppose South rebids 3♥ over your negative double. What does North call?** (Pass.) You’ve shown enough to compete at the three level, and if partner doesn’t want to bid to the game level, the partnership is high enough.

“**Suppose South opens 1♣ and West jumps to 3♠. What does North call?** (Pass.) Unless you have an agreement to the contrary, a double of 3♠ would be for penalty. You could try that, but it’s a little risky with nothing in spades. West might be able to make nine tricks. Bidding anything else is also risky. Your best option is to pass. West’s preemptive overcall has been successful in making things difficult for you. Passing isn’t the end of the world. Partner will still have another opportunity to say something with more than a minimum hand, so you may get another opportunity to bid.

“Even if your partnership agreement is that a double of 3♠ would be negative, you have a tough decision. It does give you a little better chance of landing on your feet, since you’ll probably find an appropriate fit if there is one. However, you might get too high. Some players would risk a negative double. They’d reason, that if West has length and strength in spades, partner’s high cards are likely to be in the other suits, and the hand should play well for your side. Still, it’s taking a big chance. The conservative action would be to pass.”

Negative or Penalty?

“One additional point. Even if you agree to play negative doubles through some level such as 3♠, they only apply if partner opens one of a suit and the next player makes a natural overcall in a suit.

“**Suppose South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♠. What does North call?** (3♠.) Double would not be negative. It would be for penalty. There are three unbid suits, not two. A penalty double could work out, but a better choice is to cuebid 3♠. That takes the place of the Stayman convention in this situation.”

Some partnerships do play a variation of negative doubles in this situation, but that is not the standard agreement.

“**Suppose South opens 1♠ and West overcalls 1NT. What does North call?** (Double.) A double would be for penalty, not for takeout. There are three unbid suits, not two. A penalty double, however, would probably be the best choice. Your side has the majority of the strength.

“**Suppose South opens with a weak 2♠ bid and West overcalls 3♣. What does North call?** (Pass.) A double would be for penalty, not for takeout. Negative doubles apply only after suit opening bids at the one level. The weak two-bid has already limited and described partner’s hand, so a negative double wouldn’t be very practical. Since partner has shown a weak hand, you should pass and defend.”

Summary

“If the partnership agrees to play negative doubles after an opening bid of one of a suit, responder’s double of an opponent’s natural suit overcall up to and including 2♠ — or higher if agreed — is for takeout. The double shows:

- Four-card or longer support for any unbid major and support for any unbid minor, unless responder has something else to bid if opener bids the unbid minor.
- Enough strength to compete at the given level. With extra strength, responder bids again after opener’s rebid.

“With a five-card or longer suit, responder usually bids the suit with enough strength to introduce the suit at the required level.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise One — The Negative Double

What would East respond with each of the following hands after the auction starts?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣	1♠	?	
1) ♠ 9 8 2 ♥ Q J 6 5 ♦ K Q 10 6 ♣ 10 5	2) ♠ J 8 ♥ K 10 8 4 ♦ 7 3 ♣ K J 8 5 2	3) ♠ K J 2 ♥ 10 4 2 ♦ A J 6 5 ♣ 9 6 3	
4) ♠ 9 5 ♥ A Q J 8 3 ♦ A Q 6 2 ♣ 10 4	5) ♠ 7 4 ♥ K J 10 8 7 6 ♦ Q J 2 ♣ 7 5	6) ♠ K J 10 8 7 3 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A 8 2 ♣ 9 4	

Exercise One Answer — The Negative Double

- 1) Double. With support for both unbid suits and enough strength to compete, this is an ideal hand for a negative double.
- 2) Double. Although East doesn't have support for diamonds, East can support clubs if West picks diamonds and not hearts.
- 3) 1NT. East doesn't have four-card support for hearts, but East does have another bid available to compete for the contract.
- 4) 2♥. There's no need for a negative double, since East has enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level.
- 5) Double. East doesn't have enough strength to bid 2♥ directly, but East would like to compete in that suit. West will assume that East's double shows support for both hearts and diamonds. If West doesn't bid hearts, East can bid them later to describe this type of hand — a competitive hand with a five-card or longer heart suit.
- 6) Pass. A double would be for takeout. East's best chance to get a good score is to pass and hope that West can reopen the bidding with a double. East will then pass for penalty.

Opener's Rebid after a Negative Double

Introduction

“When partner makes a negative double, opener treats it at face value — enough strength to compete and support for the unbid suits, especially an unbid major.”

Instructions

“Change the North hand.

“In clubs: take away the queen and add a low card.

“Construct the following hand in front of South.

“In spades: the ace and two low cards.

“In hearts: the king and three low cards.

“In diamonds: the jack and a low card.

“In clubs: the king, the queen and two low cards.

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“**What is South’s opening bid?** (1 ♣.)

“**West overcalls 1 ♠. What would North do?** (Double.) North has enough to compete and has support for both unbid suits.

“**East passes. What does South call?** (2 ♥.) North’s double is for takeout and shows hearts and diamonds. With four-card support for hearts, South puts the partnership in its eight-card fit. With a minimum-opening bid, South bids hearts at the cheapest available level.

“It may sound as though South has reversed — has bid a higher-ranking suit at the two level — but that isn’t the case. It’s really as though responder bid 1 ♥ over opener’s 1 ♣ bid, and opener then raised to the two level with a minimum hand.

“**What would North do over 2 ♥?** (Pass.) Since South has shown a minimum, North would leave the partnership in its best partscore.

“Suppose South opens 1♣, West overcalls 1♠, North doubles and East raises to 2♠. What does South call? (Pass.) If East had passed, South would have to say something to take out the double — unless South wanted to defend for penalties. Once East bids, South is under no obligation to bid with a minimum opening and may pass. North has promised only enough to compete at the two level. If North has something extra, North still has another chance to bid.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away two low cards.

“In clubs: add two low cards.

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1♠	Double	Pass	1♣											
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“What is South’s opening bid? (1♣.)

“West overcalls 1♠. What does North call? (Double.)

“East passes. What is South’s rebid? (2♣.) South knows North has hearts and diamonds, but doesn’t have a fit for either suit. With an unbalanced hand, South rebids the club suit at the cheapest available level.

“If West passes, what does North call? (Pass.) North has described the hand with the negative double and has no reason to disturb partner’s choice of contract.

“The final contract is the same one that would be reached without West’s interference. South would open 1♣, North would respond 1♦ or 1♥, South would rebid 2♣ and North would pass.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In diamonds: add two low cards.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

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1♠	Double	Pass	1♣											
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“What is South’s opening bid? (1♣.)

“West overcalls 1♠. What is North’s call? (Double.)

“East passes. What is South’s rebid? (2♦.) North has shown support for both unbid suits, so South chooses diamonds. North won’t always have support for the unbid minor but, if not, North will have something else to say. For now, South assumes that the partnership belongs in diamonds. 2♦ is the perfect spot for North–South.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the queen and a low card.

“In diamonds: take away the jack.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

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“What is South’s opening bid? (1♣.)

“West overcalls 1♠. What is North’s call? (Double.)

“East passes. What is South’s rebid? (1NT.) Without a fit for either of partner’s suits but with a balanced hand, South can rebid 1NT. Even with a reasonably strong holding in spades, South shouldn’t pass and convert the takeout double into a penalty double when holding a minimum hand. It’s unlikely that the partnership can defeat 1♠, if North has only enough strength to compete.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the ace and a low card.

“In hearts: add the queen and a low card.

“In diamonds: take away a low card.

“In clubs: add the ace.

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“**What is South’s opening call?** (1♣.) With an unbalanced hand, South opens in the longest suit.

“**West overcalls 1♠. What is North’s call?** (Double.)

“**East passes. What is South’s rebid?** (3♥.) From North’s negative double, South knows the partnership has a fit in hearts. With a medium-strength hand — 16 HCP plus 1 for the five-card suit — South should bid more than 2♥. South jumps to 3♥ as an invitational bid.

“The auction is similar to the way it would have gone if South opened 1♣ and North responded 1♥. South would jump to 3♥ to show a medium-strength opening bid. The only difference is that South will be the declarer instead of North.

“**What does North do after South’s jump to 3♥?** (Pass/4♥.) Without much extra strength for the negative double, North should probably pass. It’s a borderline decision. North might push on to 4♥. North would have the same decision to make if there hadn’t been any interference and the auction had gone 1♣–1♥–3♥. On the actual combined hands, 3♥ is high enough.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the queen and add the ace.

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“**What is South’s opening bid?** (1♣.)

“**West overcalls 1♠, North doubles and East passes. What does South rebid?** (4♥.) With a maximum-strength hand — 18 HCPs plus 1 for the five-card suit — South should take the partnership right to game in the known eight-card heart fit. That’s the same rebid South would have made if West hadn’t interfered and North had responded 1♥.

“Change the North hand.
 “In hearts: take away the jack, add a low card.
 “In diamonds: take away a low card.
 “In clubs: add the king.
 “Change the South hand.
 “In diamonds: add the king and a low card.
 “In clubs: take away the ace and the king.

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“**What is South’s opening bid?** (1♦.)

“**West jumps to 2♠. What call does North make?** (Double.) With 10 HCPs, North has enough to compete at the three level. If the partnership is playing negative doubles through at least 2♠, North can double for takeout.

“**East passes. What is South’s rebid?** (3♥.) With a minimum-opening bid, South puts the partnership in its eight-card fit at the cheapest available level. That’s the three level.

“**After West passes, what does North do?** (Pass.) North has shown enough to compete at the three level, but South has bid only 3♥. South has a minimum-opening bid, so the partnership should be high enough. North passes. Unless there is a lucky lie of the cards, North–South should lose one spade, two diamonds and one club — taking exactly nine tricks.

“Change the North hand.
 “In hearts: take away a low card, add the jack.
 “Change the South hand.
 “In diamonds: add the ace.
 “In clubs: take away the queen.

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WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH																			
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♣ K J x x																						
			♠ A x																			
			♥ K Q x x																			
			♦ A K x x x																			
			♣ x x																			

“**What is South’s opening bid?** (1 ♦.) With an unbalanced hand, South opens the longest suit.

“**West jumps to 2 ♠. What is North’s call?** (Double.)

“**East passes. What is South’s rebid?** (4 ♥.) South has a medium-strength hand —16 HCPs plus 1 for the five-card suit. With more than a minimum, South should jump to show the extra strength. A bid of 3 ♥ would show a minimum-opening bid. The jump actually takes the partnership to game, 4 ♥. That should be fine. North has shown enough to compete at the three level, and South has something extra. The partnership belongs in game.

“Let’s try a slightly different scenario.

“**Suppose South opens 1 ♦ and West overcalls 1 ♠. What is North’s call?** (Double.) North has more than enough to compete at the two level, but a negative double is the best way to start to describe the hand. North can show the extra strength later.

“**Over North’s double, East raises to 2 ♠. What is South’s call?** (3 ♥.) East’s bid means that South is no longer forced to bid. However, North has shown enough to compete at the two level, and South has something extra for the opening bid. South can afford to compete to 3 ♥. South is still assuming North has only enough to compete at the two level — 6 to 10 points.

“**West passes South’s 3 ♥ bid. What call does North make?** (4 ♥.) Now North gets a chance to show extra strength. North promised only enough to compete at the two level. South has shown something extra by going to the three level. North has more strength than promised so far, so North can take the partnership to 4 ♥.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the king and the jack.

“In hearts: take away the king and the queen.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">WEST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 25%;">EAST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 ♠</td> <td>Double</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH				1 ♦	2 ♠	Double	Pass	Pass	Pass				SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH																		
			1 ♦																		
2 ♠	Double	Pass	Pass																		
Pass																					
♠ x x				♠ A K J x																	
♥ A J x x				♥ x x																	
♦ Q x x				♦ A K x x x																	
♣ K J x x				♣ x x																	

“**What is South’s opening bid?** (1 ♦.)

“**West jumps to 2 ♠. What is North’s call?** (Double.) North makes a negative double, willing to compete to the three level.

“East passes. What is South’s rebid? (Pass/2NT/3 ♦.) South has several choices and will have to exercise some judgment:

- South could rebid diamonds, but North hasn’t promised any support in that suit.
- Since North has promised something in hearts and clubs, South might bid notrump. It’s a bit of a toss-up whether to make a slight underbid of 2NT, showing a minimum-strength opening bid, or a slight overbid of 3NT.
- Although North’s double is for takeout, South may pass and convert it into a penalty double. That isn’t a common occurrence, but it would be reasonable on this hand. South is looking at three likely spade tricks and one or two diamond tricks. North must have some strength to be willing to compete at the three level. The vulnerability may play a part in South’s decision as to whether there is more to be gained by passing than bidding.”

Summary

“When partner makes a negative double:

- With a minimum-strength hand, choose a rebid at the cheapest available level. If the opponent on your right competes after the negative double, you may pass.
- With a medium-strength hand, jump a level. If the opponent on your right competes after the negative double, you should do something other than pass.
- With a maximum-strength hand, make sure the partnership gets to game.

“Opener rarely passes to convert responder’s takeout double into a penalty double unless holding considerable strength in the opponent’s suit.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Two — Opener's Rebid after a Negative Double

What does West call with each of the following hands after the auction begins?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♠ ?	2 ♦	Double	Pass
1) ♠ A Q J 8 5 ♥ 10 8 4 3 ♦ A J 5 ♣ 3	2) ♠ A 10 8 6 3 ♥ A 7 ♦ 6 4 ♣ K Q 8 3	3) ♠ A K 10 9 8 6 ♥ Q 4 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ 10 5	
4) ♠ K Q 9 7 5 ♥ J 5 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ Q 9 3	5) ♠ A K 7 5 4 ♥ K Q 9 6 ♦ J 3 ♣ K 5	6) ♠ A K 8 6 2 ♥ 4 ♦ K Q J 9 7 ♣ 6 3	

Exercise Two Answer — Opener's Rebid after a Negative Double

- 1) 2♥. East has indicated support for hearts and clubs. With a minimum-strength opening, West puts the partnership in its eight-card heart fit at the cheapest available level.
- 2) 3♣. East has indicated support for hearts and clubs. West puts the partnership in its club fit.
- 3) 2♠. With no fit for either hearts or clubs, West rebids the six-card major suit.
- 4) 2NT. West doesn't have a fit for either hearts or clubs, but does have a balanced hand with strength in the opponent's suit. Bidding notrump at the cheapest available level shows a minimum-strength balanced hand.
- 5) 3♥. East's negative double promises four hearts, so East–West have a fit. With a medium-strength hand, West jumps a level to invite East to bid game with a little extra. A rebid of 2♥ would show a minimum-strength hand.
- 6) Pass. West wouldn't usually convert East's takeout (negative) double into a penalty double, but this would be the exception.

Responder's Rebid after a Negative Double

Introduction

“We’ve already seen some examples of responder’s rebid after making a negative double. Let’s go through a few more examples.”

Instructions

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add a low card.

“In hearts: take away the ace and add the queen.

“In diamonds: take away the queen.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the king and the jack.

“In clubs: add the queen and a low card.

NORTH ♠ x x x ♥ Q J x x ♦ x x ♣ K J x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="padding: 5px;">WEST</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">NORTH</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">EAST</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Double</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">2 ♣</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	Double	Pass	1 ♦	Pass	Pass	Pass	2 ♣	SOUTH ♠ A x ♥ x x ♦ A K x x x ♣ Q x x x
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
1 ♠	Double	Pass	1 ♦											
Pass	Pass	Pass	2 ♣											

“**What is South’s opening bid?** (1 ♦.)

“**West overcalls 1 ♠. What is North’s call?** (Double.) North has just enough to compete, and a negative double allows North to describe the hand nicely.

“**After East passes, what is South’s rebid?** (2 ♣.) With a minimum-strength opening, South bids clubs at the cheapest available level.

“**After West passes, what is North’s call?** (Pass.) With a minimum for the negative double, North passes opener’s minimum rebid. The partnership stops in partscore in its best fit.

“Change the North hand.

“In clubs: take away a low card and add the ace.

NORTH ♠ x x x ♥ Q J x x ♦ x x ♣ A K J x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="padding: 5px;">WEST</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">NORTH</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">EAST</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Double</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3 ♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">2 ♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	Double	Pass	1 ♦	Pass	3 ♣	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	SOUTH ♠ A x ♥ x x ♦ A K x x x ♣ Q x x x
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1 ♠	Double	Pass	1 ♦															
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	2 ♣															
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass															

“**South opens 1 ♦ , and West overcalls 1 ♠ . What is North’s call?** (Double.) With 11 HCPs, North has enough to bid a new suit at the two level, but the negative double tells partner about both the clubs and the hearts. It is preferable for North to double than to bid 2 ♣ . If East were to raise spades, the heart suit might get lost.

“**After East passes, what is South’s rebid?** (2 ♣ .) South shows the second suit.

“**After West passes, what does North do next?** (3 ♣ .) With more than a minimum response, North takes another bid by raising to 3 ♣ , inviting partner to game.

“**After East passes, what does South do?** (Pass.) South doesn’t have much extra and settles for partscore by passing the invitation.

“Change the North hand.

“In diamonds: add two low cards.

“In clubs: take away the king and the jack.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Double</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2 ♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2 ♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	Double	Pass	1 ♦	Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♣	Pass			Pass	SOUTH
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Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♣															
Pass			Pass															
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♥ Q J x x			♥ x x															
♦ x x x x			♦ A K x x x															
♣ A x			♣ Q x x x															

“**South opens 1 ♦ , and West overcalls 1 ♠ . What is North’s call?** (Double.) North has enough to compete, but not enough to bid a new suit at the two level. North could raise to 2 ♦ , but that would make it difficult to find a heart fit if South holds four hearts. South may not have enough strength to introduce the heart suit after North’s minimum raise. The best way to avoid missing a heart fit is to start with a negative double.

“**After North’s double, East passes. What is South’s rebid?** (2 ♣ .) South assumes partner has support for both hearts and clubs and chooses to put the partnership in its club fit.

“**After West passes, what does North do?** (2 ♦ .) Since North doesn’t have the promised club support, North gives preference back to partner’s first-bid suit, diamonds.

“**After East passes, what does South say?** (Pass.) North’s simple preference back to opener’s first suit doesn’t promise anything extra, so South passes, leaving the partnership in partscore.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away a low card and add the ace.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ x x x</p> <p>♥ A Q J x</p> <p>♦ x x x x</p> <p>♣ A x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</th> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</th> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</th> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Double</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">3 ♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2 ♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">P/3N</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	Double	Pass	1 ♦	Pass	3 ♦	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	Pass	Pass	P/3N	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A x</p> <p>♥ x x</p> <p>♦ A K x x x</p> <p>♣ Q x x x</p>
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1 ♠	Double	Pass	1 ♦															
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Pass	Pass	Pass	P/3N															

“**South opens 1 ♦, and West overcalls 1 ♠. What is North’s call?** (Double.)

A negative double is North’s best choice. With 11 HCPs, North could make a limit raise to 3 ♦, but that would risk missing a heart fit. North has enough to bid a new suit at the two level, but a response of 2 ♥ would promise a five-card suit. Partner might raise with three-card support, and the partnership would be in a seven-card fit. North can start with a double to show four-card support for hearts, planning to show the extra strength on the rebid.

“**East passes. What is South’s rebid?** (2 ♣.) South assumes partner has support for hearts and clubs, but only enough to compete at the two level.

“**West passes. What does North do now?** (3 ♦.) The partnership doesn’t have a fit in hearts, and North can’t leave partner to play in clubs without the promised support. North can put South back in diamonds, but a bid of 2 ♦ would be simple preference, showing a minimum hand. With an invitational-strength hand, North can give a *jump preference* to 3 ♦, showing diamond support and inviting partner to game.

“**After East passes, what does South do now?** (Pass/3NT/4 ♦.) South has several options. With a minimum-opening bid, the conservative choice is to pass, declining the invitation. South could try 4 ♦, throwing the ball back into North’s court, but it is unlikely that the partnership can make an 11-trick game. The aggressive choice is to bid 3NT, hoping to take nine tricks.

“Looking at the combined hands, 3 ♦ is certainly a reasonable contract. 3NT might make if the missing diamonds divide 2–2 and the heart finesse works, but that requires a lot of luck.

“Change the North hand.

“In diamonds: take away two low cards and add the queen.

“In clubs: add the jack.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ x x x</p> <p>♥ A Q J x</p> <p>♦ Q x x</p> <p>♣ A J x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</th> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</th> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</th> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Double</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">3NT</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	Double	Pass	1 ♦	Pass	2 ♠	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass				<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A x</p> <p>♥ x x</p> <p>♦ A K x x x</p> <p>♣ Q x x x</p>
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1 ♠	Double	Pass	1 ♦																			
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	2NT																			
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass																			
Pass																						

“**South opens 1 ♦, and West overcalls 1 ♠. What is North’s call?** (Double.) North has 14 HCPs and knows the partnership belongs in game. The first priority, however, is to find a fit. Since a response of 2 ♥ would promise a five-card suit, North starts with a negative double, planning to show the extra strength later.

“**South rebids 2 ♣, after East passes. West passes, and the bidding comes back to North. Now what?** (2 ♠.) North has discovered that the partnership doesn’t have an eight-card heart fit, but still isn’t certain what the best game contract would be. With no strength in spades, North doesn’t want to bid notrump, but North needs to find a forcing bid. A jump to 3 ♦ would be invitational, so the only choice left is to cuebid the opponent’s suit, 2 ♠. Cuebidding the opponent’s suit is forcing to game and gives North a chance to hear another bid from South before deciding what to do.

“**If North cuebids 2 ♠ and East passes, what does South do next?** (2NT.) South has already shown diamonds and clubs. With a semi-balanced hand and some strength in spades, South can bid 2NT.

“**After West passes, what does North say?** (3NT.) North now knows that partner has something in spades and can put the partnership in game in notrump. That’s the best contract on the combined hands.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away the ace and add three low cards.

“In diamonds: take away the queen.

“In clubs: take away the jack.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ x x x				1 ♦	♠ A x
♥ Q J x x x x	1 ♠	Double	Pass	2 ♣	♥ x x
♦ x x	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	Pass	♦ A K x x x
♣ A x	Pass				♣ Q x x x

“**South opens 1 ♦, and West overcalls 1 ♠. What is North’s call?** (Double.) North doesn’t have enough to bid 2 ♥. North could pass and hope to get an opportunity to show the hearts later, but might not get an opportunity. Instead, North can start with a negative double.

“**East passes. What does South do?** (2 ♣.) South assumes that North has hearts and clubs and gives preference to clubs.

“**West passes. What does North do now?** (2 ♥.) North can bid hearts. This shows a five-card or longer heart suit without enough strength to bid 2 ♥ directly over 1 ♠.

“**After East passes, what does South do?** (Pass.) Since North has shown five or more hearts but only enough strength to compete, South should pass and leave the partnership in partscore. North could have only five hearts, but South doesn’t have a better contract to suggest. On the actual hands, 2 ♥ is the best spot.”

Summary

“If opener makes a minimum rebid in response to your negative double:

- With nothing extra for the negative double:
 - Pass if the partnership has found a fit.
 - Give simple preference to opener’s first suit with support for that suit.
 - Bid a new suit to show a five-card or longer suit with 10 or fewer points.
- With an invitational-strength hand of 11 or 12 points:
 - Raise opener’s second suit with a fit.
 - Give jump preference to opener’s first suit.
 - Bid 2NT.
- With 13 or more points, get the partnership to game. If uncertain about the best contract, cuebid the opponent’s suit to get a further description of opener’s hand.”

➔ “Let’s do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Three — Responder's Rebid after a Negative Double

What does East call with each of the following hands after the auction has started?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣	1♠	Double	Pass
2♥	Pass	?	

1) ♠ 8 4
♥ K J 8 3
♦ Q 10 7 5
♣ Q 9 2

2) ♠ A 4
♥ K 10 7 5
♦ K 10 8 6
♣ J 4 2

3) ♠ 10 6 2
♥ Q 10 8 4
♦ A Q 7 5
♣ A J

Exercise Three Answer — Responder's Rebid after a Negative Double

- 1) Pass. East has already described this hand with the double. West's minimum rebid doesn't show interest in reaching a game contract.
- 2) 3♥. Although West is showing a minimum opening with the non-jump rebid, East has enough to invite partner to bid game. If the opponents didn't interfere, the auction might have started 1♣–1♥; 2♥–3♥.
- 3) 4♥. East has enough strength to put the partnership in game now that the heart fit has been uncovered.

Doubling for Penalty when Playing Negative Doubles

Introduction

“Occasionally there will be hands where responder would like to make a penalty double of an opponent’s overcall. There is a way to handle that, but it takes cooperation from both partners. Let’s see how it works.”

Instructions

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add the king, the queen and the jack.

“In hearts: take away the queen and the jack.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the ace and add a low card.

“In hearts: add the ace.

“In diamonds: take away a low card.

NORTH

♠ K Q J x x x

♥ x x x x

♦ x x

♣ A

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♠	Pass	Pass	1 ♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	Double

SOUTH

♠ x x

♥ A x x

♦ A K x x

♣ Q x x x

“**What is South’s opening bid?** (1 ♦.) With no five-card major, South opens a minor suit. With four cards in both minors, standard practice is to open 1 ♦.

“**West overcalls 1 ♠. What is North’s call?** (Pass.) North would like to double the overcall for penalty, but a double would be negative — for takeout. A bid of 2 ♠ would be a cuebid, not a natural bid, and would commit the partnership to game. A notrump bid wouldn’t describe the hand very well.

“North’s best option is to pass for now. First, the auction isn’t over. North may get another opportunity to make a call. Second, if the auction were to end in 1 ♠, North wouldn’t be too unhappy defending that contract.

“**North passes and East passes. The auction comes back to South. What is South’s call?** (Double.) If South passes, the auction is over. In this position, *opener should double with shortness in the opponent’s suit*, even with nothing extra for the opening bid. This is a very important principle when playing negative doubles. Opener’s reopening double is for takeout, not for penalty. If opener wants to defend against 1 ♠, opener can simply pass.

“The reopening double is important for several reasons:

- Since responder cannot make a direct penalty double when the partnership is using negative doubles, the reopening double allows the partnership to penalize an opponent’s overcall.
- With both North and East passing, there is an inference that North–South hold at least half the combined strength. West made only a simple overcall, and East didn’t have enough to raise.
- East’s failure to raise West’s overcall indicates that East probably doesn’t have a fit for West’s suit, increasing the odds that North has length and strength in West’s suit.
- With shortness in the opponent’s suit, a reopening double is fairly safe. If responder has length and strength in the opponent’s suit, responder may choose to defend for penalty. If responder doesn’t have length and strength in the opponent’s suit, responder can take the double out, and the partnership should land in a reasonable fit.

“If South does reopen with a double and West passes, what call does North make? (Pass.) North gets an opportunity to show the true nature of the hand. North passes South’s takeout double to convert it into a penalty double.

“By cooperating in this manner, the partnership is able to make a penalty double of an opponent’s overcall when playing negative doubles. Responder passes; opener reopens with a takeout double; responder passes to convert the double into a penalty double.

“There’s actually an advantage in making a penalty double in this manner. If North–South were playing penalty doubles and not negative doubles, North would make an immediate double of the 1 ♠ overcall. This would warn the opponents that they are in trouble. Either East or West could take some action, perhaps running to a better contract. In this auction, West doesn’t know that 1 ♠ is a poor contract when South doubles, since South’s double is for takeout, not penalty. It isn’t until North passes that West knows the 1 ♠ bid is in trouble, but it’s too late for West to act. If West has a two-suited hand, for example, it’s too late to run to the second suit. East still has a chance to act, but may have nowhere to go.

“Let’s see what happens, if North doesn’t have a penalty double when South reopens with a double.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king and the queen.

“In hearts: take way two low cards.

“In diamonds: add a low card.

“In clubs: take away the ace and add the king, the jack and two low cards.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2 ♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Double</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	Pass	Pass	1 ♦	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	Double	Pass			Pass	SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH															
1 ♠	Pass	Pass	1 ♦															
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	Double															
Pass			Pass															
♠ J x x x			♠ x x															
♥ x x			♥ A x x															
♦ x x x			♦ A K x x															
♣ K J x x			♣ Q x x x															

“**South opens 1 ♦, and West overcalls 1 ♠. What does North call?** (Pass.) With only 5 HCPs, North has nothing to say after West’s overcall.

“**Assuming East passes, what call does South make?** (Double.) With shortness in the overcalled suit, South makes a reopening takeout double.

“**If West passes, what does North call?** (2 ♣/2 ♦/1NT.) With nothing much in the opponent’s suit, North certainly doesn’t want to convert the takeout double into a penalty double. Since South has made a takeout double, North should probably bid 2 ♣. The partnership should have a fit in that suit. North also could simply return to opener’s suit by bidding 2 ♦. 1NT is another possible choice, but North should be careful about bidding notrump when South has shown shortness in spades.

“So, the partnership should find a comfortable resting place in 2 ♣ after the reopening takeout double. 2 ♣ may or may not make, but it’s a reasonable contract. North–South will probably not be allowed to play in 2 ♣, since East–West have the majority of strength. They will compete to at least the two level, and North–South can sit back and defend.

“**Suppose South opens 1 ♦, West overcalls 1 ♠, North passes and East raises to 2 ♠. What does South call?** (Pass.) South is no longer in the reopening seat if East bids. If South passes, the auction isn’t over. North will get another chance to bid. In this situation, South would only make a takeout double with extra strength, since it’s quite likely North doesn’t have much when both East and West are bidding. We’ll talk more about that in the next lesson.

“Suppose South opens 1♦ and West jumps to 2♠. North and East both pass. What does South call? (Double.) If the partnership is using negative doubles through 2♠ or higher, South still should reopen with a double when short in the opponent’s suit. North could easily have a penalty double of 2♠, especially when East passes West’s overcall.

“It may feel uncomfortable to reopen with a double at a high level with a minimum-opening bid, but that’s the way negative doubles work. North–South will probably reach 3♣, which is a little high, but reasonable. As mentioned earlier, since East–West actually hold the majority of strength on this hand, it’s unlikely that East will pass West’s overcall. If East bids, North–South will be off the hook.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the queen.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In clubs: take away the queen and a low card.

NORTH ♠ J x x x ♥ x x ♦ x x x ♣ K J x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">WEST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 25%;">EAST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♦ Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1♠	Pass	Pass	1♦ Pass	SOUTH ♠ Q x x ♥ A x x x ♦ A K x x ♣ x x
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH							
1♠	Pass	Pass	1♦ Pass							

“What is South’s opening bid? (1♦.) South opens the longer minor suit.

“West overcalls 1♠. What is North’s call? (Pass.) North doesn’t have enough to bid after East’s overcall.

“East passes. What is South’s call? (Pass.) When South isn’t short in the opponent’s suit, there is no reason to reopen with a double. Unless South holds a very strong hand, South should pass and choose to defend. There are a couple of reasons for this:

- With length in the opponent’s suit, opener’s hand is unsuitable for a takeout double, since opener won’t have support for all of the unbid suits.
- When opener holds length and/or strength in the overcalled suit, it becomes highly unlikely that responder has a penalty double. There aren’t enough spades left in the deck.

“Is South worried about missing a heart fit by passing? (No.) If North held hearts, North would have made a negative double — unless North was too weak to compete.

“One additional point. South shouldn’t bid a reopening 1NT. That would show a much stronger hand — a hand too strong for an opening bid of 1NT. Since responder is most likely to have a weak hand when opener has length in the opponent’s suit, and since responder couldn’t act directly over the overcall, opener should only bid again with extra strength — not with a minimum hand. The deal probably belongs to the opponents, and North–South will do best by defending.

“When short in the opponent’s suit, opener doesn’t always reopen with a double.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the queen and a low card.

“In hearts: add the jack and a low card.

“In diamonds: add a low card.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1 ♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2 ♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	Pass	Pass	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♦	Pass			Pass	SOUTH
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1 ♠	Pass	Pass	1 ♥															
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♦															
Pass			Pass															
♠ J x x x			♠ x															
♥ x x			♥ A J x x x x															
♦ x x x			♦ A K x x x															
♣ K J x x			♣ x															

“**What is South’s opening bid?** (1 ♥.) South opens in the longest suit.

“**West overcalls 1 ♠. North and East both pass. What is South’s call?** (2 ♦.) Although South is short in spades, South should avoid a reopening double with a very unbalanced hand. Even if North does have a penalty double of spades, South’s hand is unsuitable for defending. If North doesn’t have a penalty double of spades, South doesn’t want to hear North bid clubs. South doesn’t want to sell out to 1 ♠, but wants to give partner a good description of the hand. South can do this by reopening with 2 ♦.

“**If South reopens with 2 ♦, what is North’s call?** (2 ♥/Pass.) South’s choice of a reopening bid warns North that South has a distributional hand. A notrump contract is unlikely to fare very well, so North should give preference to one of South’s suits. North could pass 2 ♦ or give preference to partner’s original suit, hearts. North knows the hearts will be as long as or longer than the diamonds.”

Summary

“When you open the bidding at the one level in a suit and there is an overcall on your left followed by two passes, you should reopen the bidding with shortness in the opponent’s suit when playing negative doubles. Except with a very distributional hand, you should reopen with a double. This is a takeout double, but partner can now pass with length and strength in the opponent’s suit to convert it into a penalty double.

“With length in the opponent’s suit, opener should not reopen except with considerable extra strength or distribution.”

➡ Let’s do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.

Exercise Four — More about Negative Doubles

What does East call with each of the hands after these auctions?

1)	WEST 1 ♠ 2 ♦	NORTH 2 ♣ Pass	EAST Double ?	SOUTH Pass	♠ 9 6 ♥ A J 10 8 7 3 ♦ 9 5 ♣ Q 4 3
2)	WEST 1 ♣ 2 ♦	NORTH 1 ♠ Pass	EAST Double ?	SOUTH Pass	♠ 9 4 3 ♥ K J 8 3 ♦ 10 5 ♣ A J 6 5
3)	WEST Double	NORTH Pass	EAST 1 ♥ ?	SOUTH 3 ♣	♠ Q 6 2 ♥ A Q 9 8 4 ♦ A J 8 5 ♣ 5
4)	WEST Pass	NORTH Pass	EAST 1 ♠ ?	SOUTH 2 ♦	♠ K Q 10 8 2 ♥ A J 7 4 ♦ 5 ♣ K 8 3
5)	WEST Double 3 ♥	NORTH Pass Pass Pass	EAST 1 ♦ 3 ♣ ?	SOUTH 2 ♠ Pass	♠ Q 3 ♥ 8 6 ♦ K Q 8 6 3 ♣ A Q 9 7
6)	WEST Double	NORTH Pass	EAST 1NT ?	SOUTH 2 ♥	♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ 10 4 ♦ K Q 9 4 ♣ K J 5
7)	WEST Double	NORTH Pass	EAST 1 ♠ ?	SOUTH 1NT	♠ K Q 8 6 3 ♥ A J 8 4 ♦ 9 5 ♣ K 4
8)	WEST Double	NORTH Pass	EAST 2 ♥ ?	SOUTH 2 ♠	♠ 4 ♥ K Q 10 8 7 6 ♦ K 9 5 ♣ 8 7 5

Exercise Four Answer — More about Negative Doubles

- 1) 2♥. East made a negative double in order to compete, but wasn't strong enough to bid a new suit at the two level. Now East can finish describing this hand to partner (West).
- 2) 3♣. East's negative double showed support for both hearts and diamonds. Now that West has bid diamonds, rather than hearts, East needs to give preference to West's original suit.
- 3) Pass. Assuming the partnership has agreed to play negative doubles through the 2♠ level, West's double of the 3♣ overcall is for penalty. East has no reason to disturb the contract.
- 4) Double. With shortness in the opponent's suit, East should reopen with a double, even with a minimum-strength opening bid. It's quite possible West has length and strength in diamonds and wants to penalize the overcall. If that's the case, West will pass the reopening double. If not, West will bid something.
- 5) Pass. West's negative double presumably showed support for both hearts and clubs. Now that East has picked clubs, West's correction to 3♥ shows a hand with a long heart suit that was too weak to bid 3♥ directly over the overcall. If that's the case, East shouldn't bid any more.
- 6) Pass. The standard agreement is that responder's double is for penalty after a 1NT opening bid. Negative doubles apply only after an opening bid of one of a suit.
- 7) Pass. The double of a notrump overcall is for penalty. It's not a negative double.
- 8) Pass. Negative doubles are only used after opening suit bids at the one level. West's double is for penalty. East has already described this hand with the weak two-bid.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 1****Bid and Play*** – Deal 1: Support for the Unbid Suits

Guidelines for Teachers: This first deal contains a challenging suit combination. The basic principle involved for declarer is to “only lead a high card if you can afford to have it covered.” The same combination also includes some scope for the defense. Unless the class is quite experienced in card play, it is recommended that you avoid this part of the discussion.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal that demonstrates the classic use of the negative double. Responder is happy to have that tool available on this hand. Let’s see what happens.”

Instructions

“North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E–Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)

Dealer: North	♠ A 9 3					
Vul: None	♥ Q 6 4 2					
	♦ J 5					
	♣ A Q 10 7					
♠ 7 4		<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ K Q J 6 2
N						
W E						
S						
♥ 10 9 7			♥ K 5			
♦ A Q 8 4			♦ 10 7 2			
♣ 6 5 4 2			♣ K 9 3			
	♠ 10 8 5					
	♥ A J 8 3					
	♦ K 9 6 3					
	♣ J 8					

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♣	1 ♠	Double
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

“North opens the bidding 1 ♣. With a good five-card suit, East overcalls 1 ♠. South has enough to compete over 1 ♠, but isn’t strong enough to bid a new suit at the two level. A response of 1NT is unappealing with no strength in spades. South solves the dilemma by making a negative double.

“With two low cards in partner’s suit, West can’t raise partner’s overcall, and 1NT is unattractive with only 6 points and no strength in clubs or hearts. West passes. Based on South’s negative double, North now bids 2 ♥ to put the partnership in its eight-card fit and to show a minimum-strength hand at the same time. East has nothing more to say, and South doesn’t have an invitational-strength hand, so the auction finishes in a contract of 2 ♥.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the play and defense.

“East is on lead and starts with the ♠K, top of a sequence.”

Suggested Play

“Declarer, North, has two spade losers, a potential heart loser even if trumps divide 3–2, two diamond losers and one club loser. There are several possibilities for eliminating one or more of the losers.

“If West has the ♣K, North can hope to avoid a club loser by taking a successful finesse. North also can try to eliminate one of the diamond losers by leading toward dummy’s ♦K, hoping East holds the ♦A. If both of these finesses lose — as they do on the actual lie of the cards — declarer will have to try to avoid losing a trump trick.

“The play in the heart suit is interesting, because declarer is missing the ♥K, the ♥10 and the ♥9. Declarer can hope that East holds the ♥K, but if declarer leads the ♥Q from dummy, East will *cover* with the ♥K — covering an honor with an honor. Declarer can win this trick with the ♥A and a second trick with the ♥J, but unless West started with exactly the doubleton ♥10 and ♥9, the defenders still will have a heart winner.

“Declarer’s best play, after winning a trick with the ♠A, is to play a *low* heart and finesse dummy’s ♥J. When this wins, declarer plays dummy’s ♥A, hoping East started with a doubleton ♥K. On the actual deal, East’s ♥K falls under the ♥A, and declarer can draw West’s remaining trump with the ♥Q. Even though both the diamond and club finesses lose, North

still makes the contract — losing two spades, two diamonds and one club, but no hearts.”

Suggested Defense

“It appears that the defenders can do little to defeat the contract if declarer handles the trump suit correctly. They will get two spade tricks, two diamond tricks and one club trick. If declarer leads the ♥Q from dummy, East should cover with the ♥K to promote a winner in West’s hand.

“West actually has an opportunity to defeat the contract by giving declarer a losing option. If North correctly leads a low heart to dummy’s ♥J, West should play the ♥9 (or ♥10). This is likely to create the illusion in declarer’s mind that West started with a doubleton ♥10 and ♥9. Declarer might decide to come back to the North hand to lead the ♥Q, expecting that, after East covers with the king and the ace is played from dummy, the remaining high heart will appear from West’s hand. Then declarer would be able to draw the remaining trump with dummy’s ♥8 and avoid the loss of a heart trick in that manner.

“If West finds this clever play and declarer falls into the trap, this will become a memorable deal for the defenders.”

Bid and Play — Deal 2: Looking for a Four-Card Major

Guidelines for Teachers: This second deal gives the defense some scope in trying to get an overruff. This gives declarer a challenging play problem. The deal looks a little easier than it is, and declarer can easily fall into communication problems. You might need to emphasize that the concept of “high card from the short side first” applies only when taking *sure* tricks or promoting winners. When the tricks aren’t so sure, declarer may have to be very careful about entries.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal that demonstrates the use of the negative double to find the proper game contract.”

Instructions

“East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E–Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)

Dealer: East	♠ 10 8 4 2											
Vul: N–S	♥ 9 8 3											
	♦ Q 9 6 2											
	♣ 10 6											
♠ K J 7 5		<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		♠ A Q 9 3
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ A Q J 6			♥ K 5									
♦ J 8 4			♦ A 10 7 3									
♣ Q 7			♣ 8 4 3									
	♠ 6											
	♥ 10 7 4 2											
	♦ K 5											
	♣ A K J 9 5 2											

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	2♣
Double	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

“East opens the bidding, 1♦, and South overcalls 2♣. West has enough strength to put the partnership at the game level, but doesn’t yet know where the partnership belongs. West can use a negative double to discover whether opener has a four-card major suit. When East shows the spade suit, West puts the partnership in the appropriate game contract.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the play and defense.

“South is on lead and could start with the ♣A, top of a broken sequence — or the ♣K, if the partnership leads the king from ace-king.”

Suggested Play

“Declarer, East, starts with three diamond losers and three club losers. Two of the diamond losers can be discarded on the extra heart winners in dummy, and one of the club losers can be ruffed in the dummy.

“Declarer must be careful to avoid losing a trump trick. Although the trump suit appears to be solid, North’s four-card trump holding can prove dangerous. Suppose South takes the ♣A, the ♣K and leads a third round of clubs. Since South overcalled in clubs, East must be careful to ruff this trick with a high trump, rather than a low trump. Otherwise, North will overruff.

“Having overcome this hurdle, declarer should now start drawing trumps by playing a spade to the ♠A and then a low spade back to dummy’s remaining high trump. If the trumps divided 3–2, declarer could then draw the last trump and take the remaining winners to make the contract. When North turns up with four trumps, declarer must lead dummy’s remaining low trump and take a finesse against North’s ♠10. Declarer can then draw the last trump and take the winners.

“If declarer ruffs the third round of clubs with the ♠J and then plays the ♠K and a spade to the ♠Q, the contract is in trouble. Declarer can’t immediately get back to dummy to take a spade finesse without blocking the heart suit. If declarer tries to take the heart winners before drawing the last trump, North will ruff the fourth round, and declarer will be left with two diamond losers. Declarer needs to play the spade suit carefully to avoid these complications.”

Suggested Defense

“The defenders can make things difficult for declarer by starting with three rounds of clubs. North should encourage partner to continue leading clubs by making a high-low signal in the suit, the ♣10 followed by the ♣6. South should recognize that North has no clubs left after the first two rounds and lead another club, hoping that partner can overruff the dummy. If North held the ♠9 rather than the ♠2, this defense would be successful even if declarer ruffed with a high trump, since it would promote a trump trick in the North hand. Even on the actual lie of the cards, the third round of clubs creates a potential problem for declarer.

“It won’t do South any good to switch to another suit after playing the two top clubs. Declarer can win in the East hand and ruff a club anyway. If South switches after the first round of clubs, the play gets more complicated, but declarer still can make the hand after discovering the bad trump break.”

Bid and Play — Deal 3: Penalty Doubles and Negative Doubles

Guidelines for Teachers: This third deal won't require much discussion about the play if the auction goes as intended. The defenders should be able to get a penalty of at least 800 points, even though perfect defense might net them 1400. More likely, North-South will simply get to 3NT, missing the opportunity to collect a larger score.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal that demonstrates how to use the penalty double when your partnership has agreed to play negative doubles. Let’s see what happens.”

Instructions

“South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E–Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)

Dealer: South		♠ A 9 2												
Vul: E–W		♥ 6												
		♦ K J 10 6 4												
		♣ K 8 4 2												
♠ 6		<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <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			♠ J 10 8 4 3	
	N													
W		E												
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♥ J 5 2				♥ Q 10 7 4										
♦ A Q 9 8 5 3				♦ 7										
♣ A Q 3				♣ 10 7 5										
		♠ K Q 7 5												
		♥ A K 9 8 3												
		♦ 2												
		♣ J 9 6												

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
2♦	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

“After South opens the bidding 1♥, West overcalls 2♦. North would like to double this for penalty, but a double at this point would be negative, for takeout. North has to pass. When East passes, the bidding comes back to

South. With shortness in diamonds, South should reopen with a double despite holding a minimum-strength hand. This allows for the possibility that North wants to penalize the opponent's contract, as in the actual layout. Otherwise, North can return to hearts or pick another contract. On this hand, North is happy to pass and convert the reopening double into a penalty double.

“East–West can't get out of trouble by playing S.O.S. redoubles (next lesson). Even if East redoubles, the partnership doesn't have a safe landing spot. East–West would probably wind up in worse trouble.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 2♥ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

“North should lead the singleton in South's suit, hoping to establish tricks in hearts, or to get ruffs or both.”

Suggested Play

“This isn't a good deal for West, the declarer. West has one spade loser, two heart losers, four trump losers — due to the unfavorable split — and two club losers. There's not much declarer can do except hope to collect an extra trick or two.

“The defenders are likely to start by winning two high hearts and playing a third round for North to ruff. North may then lead the ♠A and another spade, which declarer can ruff. West should be aware from the auction that North has most of the missing trumps, so playing the ♦A and another diamond is unlikely to do much good. West should play a low diamond, letting North win the trick and putting North back on lead. If North leads another spade, declarer can ruff this and lead another low diamond. North wins but now has to lead a diamond or a club, which will help declarer. West may be able to take five or six tricks, not enough to make the contract.”

Suggested Defense

“The defenders should have an easy time defeating the doubled contract of 2♦. It's mostly a question of whether they collect 500, 800 or 1100 points.

“After winning the first two tricks with the ♥A and the ♥K, South should lead the ♥9, a high heart, for partner to ruff. This is a suit preference signal for the higher-ranking of the two logical suits, spade and clubs. After ruffing this trick, North should switch to spades, rather than clubs. With complete confidence in partner, North could lead a low spade. Now South can win the trick and lead a diamond or a club through declarer’s strength. In practice, North will probably lead the ♠A and another spade, which declarer will ruff. The defenders should get three more trump tricks and at least one club trick, for a penalty of 800 points. That’s much more than the value of any game contract in their direction.”

Bid and Play — Deal 4: Make the Best Bid Possible

Guidelines for Teachers: On this fourth deal, it probably will be challenging enough for North-South to reach the correct contract. If they do, there is an opportunity for the defense to get an uppercut and defeat the contract. It isn't easy to do, however, so any discussion of this should be reserved for more experienced students who claim the opponents always get all of the cards.

Introduction

“Let's play a deal that demonstrates the classic use of the negative double. Responder is happy to have that tool available on this hand. Let's see what happens.”

Instructions

“West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 4 — Dealer, South)

Dealer: West	♠ 9 7 3											
Vul: Both	♥ 6 3											
	♦ A K J 9											
	♣ A Q 5 4											
♠ Q 6		<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		♠ A K 10 8 5
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ K 9 7			♥ A 2									
♦ 10 8 6 5			♦ Q 7 3									
♣ J 7 6 2			♣ 10 9 8									
	♠ J 4 2											
	♥ Q J 10 8 5 4											
	♦ 4 2											
	♣ K 3											

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♦	1♠	Double
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

“With two four-card minors, North opens the higher-ranking, diamonds. East overcalls 1♠. That creates a challenge for South, who doesn't have enough to

bid a new suit at the two level. An immediate 2♥ would be forcing, and the partnership would likely get too high. Instead, South starts with a negative double, planning to bid hearts at the next opportunity.

“West might venture 1NT, but is more likely to pass opposite a one-level overcall. North, expecting partner to have support for both unbid suits, bids 2♣. Being vulnerable and not hearing any support from partner, East has done enough.

“South now bids 2♥. This shows a five-card or longer heart suit with too little strength to freely bid 2♥ on the previous round. North can pass, leaving the partnership in its best contract.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 2♥ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the play and defense.

“West is on lead and would start with the ♠Q, top of the doubleton in partner’s suit.”

Suggested Play

“South has three immediate spade losers and two top heart losers. With no losers in diamonds or clubs, South’s only concern is avoiding a third trump loser. To minimize that possibility, South should plan to lead trumps from dummy at every opportunity after gaining the lead. As discussed below, even that might not be good enough.”

Suggested Defense

“Excellent defense will defeat the 2♥ contract. When West leads the ♠Q, East can play an encouraging ♠10. West leads another spade, and East takes the ♠K and the ♠A. West will discard a low club or a low diamond.

“If East leads a fourth round of spades, declarer could discard a loser from one hand and ruff in the other — a *ruff and a sluff*. On this deal, however, East doesn’t have anything to lose by leading another spade. Looking at dummy, East can see that the defenders are unlikely to get any tricks in diamonds or clubs, so the only hope is the trump suit. By leading another spade, East might be able to *promote* an extra trump winner for the defense.

“If East leads a fourth round of spades, the defense isn’t over. Declarer is aware that West is out of spades and will ruff with the ♥10 (or the ♥J or the ♥Q) to prevent West from ruffing with the ♥9. If West *overruffs* with the ♥K, declarer will win the race. Whatever suit West returns, declarer can win in dummy and lead a trump. If East wins the ♥A and leads another spade, declarer can ruff high with the ♥J and draw the defender’s remaining

trump with the ♥Q.

“Instead, West must *discard* a club or a diamond when declarer ruffs with the ♥10, resisting the temptation to overruff with the ♥K. There’s no harm in discarding, since the ♥K will always take a trick later. Declarer can cross to dummy and lead a heart, but East could win the ♥A and lead a fifth round of spades. Again, if declarer ruffs high with the ♥J, West must discard again and resist the temptation to overruff. Now West’s ♥K and the ♥9 will take two tricks, since the only high heart declarer has left is the ♥Q.

“Even if East ducks the first heart led from dummy, declarer will have to play the ♥J to force out West’s ♥K. Declarer wins West’s return in dummy and leads a second round of hearts, which East wins with the ♥A. Again, East leads the last spade. With only the ♥Q left, declarer doesn’t have a winning option. If declarer ruffs low, West overruffs with the ♥9. If declarer ruffs with the ♥Q, West’s ♥9 is promoted into a trick.”

