



Adventures in Bridge

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Doubles – All Around the Table

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General Overview of Doubles

Double is probably the most useful call in all of bridge, other than pass. The modern way to think about a double is very different than it was years ago. The modern way to think about doubles is flexible: “I have enough values to take some action, but I’m not sure what other action to take!”

The Basic Types of Doubles

Each of the players can make a basic type of double.

- *Takeout Double (Interferer – The first opponent to enter the auction.)*
 - Values to get into the auction (about 12+ points – depending on level of double and shape of the hand), but still looking for a fit (or the best fit).
 - Compare a takeout double to an overcall that may not promise as many values but suggests a place to play – a primary suit.
- *Negative Double (Responder)*
 - Values to compete in the bidding (6+ points – more values depending on level of double), but still looking for a fit OR a “better fit” – Major suit fit over a minor suit fit.
 - Usually two places to play – Responder has a plan for how to handle the auction.
- *Responsive Double (Advancer – Partner of the Interferer.)*
 - Values to compete in the bidding (6+ points – more values depending on level of double), but still looking for a fit OR a “better fit” – Major suit fit over a minor suit fit.
 - Usually two places to play – Advancer has a plan for how to handle the auction.
 - Most players use Takeout, Negative, and Responsive Doubles through 4♥ interference.
- *Takeout Double or Support Double (Opener)*
 - Takeout Double by Opener
 - Extra Values (not a completely minimum opening bid) with shortness in the opponents’ suit. Opener wants to compete in the bidding, but does not know where. Not usually a highly distributional hand.
 - Support Double* by Opener
 - A conventional bid showing exactly 3-card support for Responder’s Major suit (if we had 4-card support we would raise directly). Helps find a 5-3 fit before the opponents take away our bidding space. Does not promise extra values at a low level.

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Doubles and Fits

Doubles mean different things in different situations. Here are two of the most important situations:

- *When we have not found a fit.*
 - A double is generally a takeout double (asking partner to bid) at low levels. It says, “I want to compete, but I need input from you as to where to play.”
- *When we have found a fit!*
 - After we have found a fit, we have the option of just bidding our suit to compete. Thus, a double becomes less “takeout” and more of a “card-showing” double. Cooperative.
 - Maximal Double when no space for game try.
 - When we have found a fit and the opponents bid our side suit, we do not double for penalty at a low level. Leave them there and hope partner reopens with a double.

General Competitive Bidding Philosophies – Get in to the Auction Early

- *In and Out of the Auction* -- With weak or distributional hands we want to get in to the auction and out of the auction as quickly as possible. Thus, if we bid slowly (i.e. make an overcall and then later reopen with a double) then we must have an extremely strong hand – since we are violating this idea by “going slow”. Even stronger hands are shown by suppressing a long suit and “doubling and bidding”.
- *Protect Partner* - Do not give partner a chance to make a mistake. With a highly distributional hand do not make a low-level double. Also, if you are too short in trump for it to be wise for partner to pass your double (if you know the opponents are protected by the LOTT) then do not make a low-level double.
- *Balancing* - When we are in the passout seat (balancing seat) and our side has not bid yet, then we generally bid three of partner’s points for him (and he subtracts those from his hand if he ends up bidding again). This is true for making a takeout double as well. With shortness in the opponent’s suit and about 10 HCP we strive to compete in the bidding (even with a good 9 HCP with the proper shape and a decent hand for both offense and defense).

High Level Doubles (Forcing Pass)

Another time where doubles are an extremely useful tool is when we need to make “high level” decisions. Specifically, when we have shown good hands (like in a 2/1 GF auction or when we have strongly bid a game) and the opponents are bidding over us. This sounds as if the opponents are sacrificing. In this situation, we are not going to “pass the hand out” – we will either double the opponents or bid one level higher.

Example

1♠ P 2NT* 5♥
___?

In this situation, we have the following options:

- Bid – Vote for Offense.
- Double – Vote for Defense (often 2 losers in opponents’ suit).
- Pass (“Forcing Pass”) – Let partner decide. Can be used for a slam try (“Pass and Pull”)



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DOUBLES

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BOARD 1

Dealer: N

Vul: None

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	P	2♠	3♣
P	P	X	All P

NORTH^D

♠ K8754

♥ A7

♦ A4

♣ KT95

EAST

♠ QJ2

♥ J865

♦ 9753

♣ 62

WEST

♠ 93

♥ K42

♦ KJT

♣ AQ843

SOUTH

♠ AT6

♥ QT93

♦ Q862

♣ J7

AUCTION

A direct seat double by the opening bidder would show a good hand and be card showing – but generally takeout. This double would not show good ♣; it would ask Responder to leave the double in if he has good defense and something in ♣, and it would also give Responder the option of bidding 3♠ or 4♠ based on the strength of his hand.

By passing with good clubs, Opener waits for partner to reopen with X. Responder's reopening double is cooperative, showing values and some defense – but not necessarily anything in ♣.

OPENING LEAD

North leads the ♠5, 4th best if that is our agreement against suit contracts.

PLAY and DEFENSE

This is going to be ugly for the declarer – and he knows it! 2♠, 3♣, and 2-4 red suit losers. That is down 2 to 4 tricks! This will be a big number!



BOARD 2

Dealer: E

Vul: N/S

<u>NORTH</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>	<u>WEST</u>
	1♦	P	1♠
2♥	X	4♥	4♠
All P			

NORTH

♠ A765
♥ AQJT5
♦ 2
♣ J54

WEST

♠ QJ842
♥ 86
♦ KT
♣ AT76

EAST^D

♠ KT3
♥ 7
♦ A8765
♣ KQ83

SOUTH

♠ 9
♥ K9432
♦ QJ943
♣ 92

AUCTION

If EW play a double here as takeout, then West will have some difficulty judging what to do over 4♥ -- though he will know that he must take some action (not pass.) If EW play support doubles, then East has an easy double and West an easy bid over 4♥.

Note: You can see that if you played only old-fashioned penalty doubles the EW pair would be guessing what to do over 4♥ -- with very little information.

OPENING LEAD

North probably leads the ♦2 against West's 4♠ contract, although the ♥A is also a reasonable attempt at a tapping defense.

PLAY and DEFENSE

11 tricks look relatively straightforward with only a ♠ and ♥ loser. If NS lead trump or a singleton then they will likely hold EW to 10 tricks.



BOARD 3

Dealer: S

Vul: E/W

<u>NORTH</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>	<u>WEST</u>
		1♥	2♣
2♥	X	P	3♦
All P			

NORTH

♠ 9753
♥ Q98
♦ QT3
♣ KJ5

WEST

♠ 8
♥ KT3
♦ K872
♣ AQT64

EAST

♠ KJT4
♥ 74
♦ A9654
♣ 73

SOUTH^D

♠ AQ62
♥ AJ652
♦ J
♣ 982

AUCTION

After the auction begins with ♥ being raised (and a ♣ bid in between), East has the perfect hand for making a Responsive Double. By doing so, EW reach the proper contract of 3♦.

Note: The higher East makes a responsive double (similar to a negative double), the more values he promises.

OPENING LEAD

North leads the ♥8 against West's 3♦ contract.

PLAY and DEFENSE

Even with a trump loser we can escape with 1♠, 1♥, 1♦, and 1♣ loser. The key is to start ruffing ♠ or to setup ♣ before drawing too many trumps.



BOARD 4

Dealer: W

Vul: All

<u>NORTH</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>	<u>WEST</u>
			1♠
P	2♠	P	P
X	XX	3♦	X
All P			

NORTH

♠ 2

♥ K643

♦ A87

♣ K8754

WEST^D

♠ A9853

♥ AJ

♦ KJT3

♣ AT

EAST

♠ K64

♥ Q9872

♦ 9

♣ QJ62

SOUTH

♠ QJT7

♥ T5

♦ Q6542

♣ 93

AUCTION

Responder's XX shows only 3-card trump support for the raise and a maximum (with defensive values.) This turns on penalty doubles by both Opener and Responder – changing the side's perspective from cooperative to penalty doubles!

Note: East should not redouble if he has a similar hand, but 4-card trump support. This would give West the impression he had a good hand and only an 8-card fit. With a 9-card fit we would be less likely to want to double the opponents at the 3-level. Also, North would be much safer making an aggressive direct double of 1♠ instead of waiting to balance at the 3-level. With such a weak hand he should strive to get into and out of the auction as quickly as possible.

OPENING LEAD

West has no great opening lead, but most anything will work. An Ace will likely be the opening lead.

PLAY and DEFENSE

This will be brutal for the Declarer. Counting losers gets out of control very fast - 1♠, 1♥, 3♦, 1♣. That is down 2! (and EW is unlikely to make a game.)



BOARD 5

Dealer: N

Vul: N/S

<u>NORTH</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>	<u>WEST</u>
1♣	1♥	2♣	X
3♣	3♦	All P	

NORTH^D

♠ A754

♥ A83

♦ 98

♣ AQT5

WEST

♠ T932

♥ QJ

♦ KQJ42

♣ 82

EAST

♠ Q6

♥ KT642

♦ A765

♣ 93

SOUTH

♠ KJ8

♥ 975

♦ T3

♣ KJ764

AUCTION

East overcalls 1♥, showing his primary suit and knowing that he might have trouble finding his other suit, ♦. West competes in the auction with a responsive double and now East can compete to 3♦ with this quality hand.

OPENING LEAD

South leads the ♣6, 4th best, against East's 3♦ contract.

PLAY and DEFENSE

NS would make 9 tricks easily in 3♣. In 3♦, West will likely go down one, if NS take their play tricks before the ♥A is dislodged – losing 2♠, 2♣, and 1♥ trick.



BOARD 6

Dealer: E

Vul: E/W

<u>NORTH</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>	<u>WEST</u>
	1♣	P	1♠
2♥	P	P	X
All P			

NORTH

♠ Q6
♥ AQ765
♦ K987
♣ KQ

WEST

♠ KJ987
♥ 4
♦ AT62
♣ JT2

EAST^D

♠ A2
♥ KJT3
♦ 54
♣ A9876

SOUTH

♠ T543
♥ 982
♦ QJ3
♣ 543

AUCTION

In the old days East could make a penalty double of 2♥ - but now that double is either takeout or support (depending on your agreements.) In order to handle this hand, we have to pass and wait to see what happens. If partner passes (with a minimum) then we are probably happy to just try to go plus vs. 2♥. If partner has any extra values he will reopen with a double – then we will leave that in, expecting to collect a good number! This is a *Trap Pass* after opening this bidding.

OPENING LEAD

West leads the ♠A against North's 2♥ contract.

PLAY and DEFENSE

The defense has lots of tricks here - 2♠, 3♥, 1♦, and 1♣. That's down 2, for 300 for EW.



BOARD 7

Dealer: S

Vul: All

<u>NORTH</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>	<u>WEST</u>
		P	1♣
1♦	1♠	2♦	2♠
3♦	3♥	P	4♠
All P			

NORTH

♠ 52
♥ KJ83
♦ K9764
♣ A2

WEST

♠ AQ98
♥ T6
♦ AT2
♣ KJ95

EAST

♠ KJ63
♥ A9
♦ 3
♣ QT8743

SOUTH^D

♠ T74
♥ Q7542
♦ QJ85
♣ 6

AUCTION

When the auction comes to East at 3♦, he wants to make a try for game. He has two ways to do this -- doubling or bidding a new suit. Bidding 3♠ is just competitive and does not invite game. East should not double since he has a big ♣ fit with partner (it is a double fit hand and Opener does not know it.) Doubling would give partner a chance to pass – that couldn't be right today.

OPENING LEAD

South leads the ♦Q against East's 4♠ contract.

PLAY and DEFENSE

4♠ has excellent play. The best the opponents can do is either get their ♣ ruff or establish their ♥ trick – they cannot do both.



BOARD 8

Dealer: W

Vul: None

NORTH

♠ KQ74
♥ J8
♦ A7652
♣ Q7

WEST^D

♠ JT8
♥ K2
♦ JT9
♣ K9654

SOUTH

♠ 9532
♥ 973
♦ KQ43
♣ J9

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
			P
1♦	1♥	X	P
1♠	X	P	3♣
P	3♥	P	4♥
All P			

EAST

♠ A6
♥ AQT654
♦ 8
♣ AT32

AUCTION

When partner makes a simple overcall he has a very large range -7 to 18 HCP. If he overcalls with 7-10 HCP he has a subminimum – we don't ever play him to have that little (though he occasionally does.) When he has 10-12 he has a minimum. With 12+ to 14 HCP he has a "sound overcall" and with 15 to 18 HCP he has "extra values." Hands with Extra Values start by overcalling a suit and later making a takeout double – to show a good hand!

OPENING LEAD

South leads the ♦K against East's 4♥ contract.

PLAY and DEFENSE

The play will be based on two suits breaking well. We have three losers - ♠, ♦, ♣ - if we have a ♣ loser – otherwise we'll make an overtrick.