

# CONVENTIONS & GUIDE DEFENCE



# Conventions & Guide : DEFENCE

## DEFENCE TO WEAK TWOS

Recommended is to adopt an approach similar to defending against their one-openings. There is no value in playing weak jump-overcalls or using an unusual NT bid to show a weak hand with both minors. Follow the principle 'Against weak actions, your actions are strong.' Thus-

Double is for takeout. The hand must be short in their major with four cards in the other major if it is a minimum doubling hand. The greater the strength, the less important is the need to be short in their suit.

2NT = 16-18 balanced with at least one stopper in their suit.

3NT = 21-22 balanced, at least one stopper in their suit.

4NT = Unusual for the minors but a strong hand. At least 5-5 in the minors and no more than 4 losers.

This would be enough :

♠76 ♥2 ♦KQJ107 ♣AKQJ3 or ♠7 ♥6 ♦AQJ754 ♣KQJ82.

Overcalls are natural and show a strong suit. 2♠ over their 2♥ might be a hand with 7 losers but overcalls at the three-level should be no worse than a 6-loser hand.

2♠ over 2♥ : 6-7 losers

3♠ over 2♥ : 5 losers. If better than this, double first.

3♣ / 3♦ : 5-6 losers. With 4 losers or better, double first.

3♥ over 2♠ : 6 losers. With 5 losers and a strong suit, bid 4♥. With 4 losers or better, double first.

Suit quality for a 3-level overcall should be 8 or better.\* It would be nice to have a suit quality of 9, but you cannot afford to wait for that before coming into the auction.

Bid their suit. Old style is to treat this a game-force hand, either 23 HCP or more or 3 losers or fewer. However, one can cope with this powerhouse quite comfortably by starting with a double and bidding their suit next whatever advancer replies to the double. If advancer happens to give a strong reply to the double, you would be looking for slam with such values.

A preferable approach is to treat the bid of the enemy suit as a Michaels Cue Bid but with a strong hand (strong actions over their weak actions). Michaels shows five cards in the other major and five or more cards in one of the minors. For example, (2♥) : 3♥ shows five spades and 5+ diamonds or clubs. The hand should be five losers or better. A reply of 3NT to this is to play.

A bid of 4♣ in reply would be corrected to 4♦ by partner if that is the minor suit held. A bid of 4NT in reply to the cue bid asks partner to bid the minor (it is not asking for aces).

After partner's 2NT overcall :

3♣ = Stayman

3♦ = Transfer to the other major  
Their-suit = 4-4-4-1 with a singleton in their suit, game force.  
3-other-major = at least 5-4 in the minors, game force.  
4♣ / 4♦ = Natural game force, slam interest.

If this artificial approach does not appeal, use 3♣ Stayman, 3♦ as diamonds, 3-their suit as short in their suit with both minors and 3-other major as 5+ in that suit and forcing.

*\*See Part 1 of Conventions section for Suit Quality Test.*

In reply to partner's takeout double :

The standard approach is to bid at the cheapest level with a poor hand and give a jump response with about 10 points or more. This leaves a very wide range for a reply of 3♣ or 3♦ to a double, perhaps next to nothing, perhaps a fair 7-9 points. There is a better method which gives up on the natural use of 2NT.

2NT can be used as the Lebensohl Convention, forcing partner to bid 3♣. Bid this on all poor hands (except if you can bid 2♠ after partner doubles 2♥). When partner bids 3♣, pass if that is your suit, else bid your suit over 3♣. For example, after (2♠):Double, if you hold ♠762 ♥87 ♦Q98543 ♣43, bid 2NT. When partner bids the 3♣ 'puppet', you convert to 3♦, indicating that your suit is diamonds and you are in the 0-6 point range.

3-level-bids in reply to the double are encouraging, 7-10 points.

For example after (2♠):Double you would bid 3♦, at once with ♠762 ♥87 ♦KQ8543 ♣K3, showing a respectable hand. Of course, the suit you bid need not be more than a 4-card suit.

(2♥): Double : 3♠ shows 7-10 points with five spades.

(2♥): Double : 2NT, 3♣ : 3♠ shows the same values but with only four spades. The NT bid shows the more no-trumpish hand.

Bidding their suit in reply to the double is forcing to game.

3NT in reply to the double indicates a double stopper in their suit. If you have the values for 3NT but only a single stopper, bid 2NT first and then rebid 3NT over the forced 3♣. This sequence expresses doubt about no-trumps and partner should remove it with a singleton in their suit unless a running suit is also held.

If the doubler is very strong (normally 19 HCP or better) or about a 4-loser hand, the doubler may decline the 3♣ puppet.

(2♠): Double : 2NT, 3♥ = too strong a hand to risk being left in 3♣. Partner should bid on to game with one trick or better.

With 19-20 balanced, double but if advancer uses 2NT, it is advisable to accept the 3♣ puppet. Over a stronger bid you would naturally rebid 3NT.

*Countermeasures by the weak-two side*

### 1. After 2♥ : (Double) or 2♠ : (Double)

All actions remain the same except for the following :

3♣ or 3♦ are natural but are to play, not forcing. This is more practical after a double when you are unlikely to be strong. If you are short in opener's suit, there is some risk that fourth player will pass the takeout double. As the weak two opener should not have a void suit, it makes sense to rescue opener into 3♣ or 3♦ with a good 6+ suit. For example, after 2♠ : (Double), bid 3♣ with ♠--- ♥ J732 ♦ 92 ♣ KQ108754. Your hand will surely play better in clubs than spades. In clubs, you may escape a double.

Likewise, 2♠ : (Double) : 3♥ is to play.

Redouble is for penalties. You should have a singleton or void in partner's suit and 13 or more HCP. Double any suit bids by them with a strong 4-card or longer holding in their suit.

### 2. After 2♥ : (2♠)

Double = Penalties. 2NT = Ogust Convention. This 2NT does not imply or suggest a stopper in their suit. It is purely an enquiry bid.

Other actions are the same as though second player had passed except for 3♠ which asks partner to bid 3NT with a stopper in their suit. For this action you would need something like ♠ 762 ♥ 4 ♦ AK2 ♣ AKQJ32.

### 3. After 2♥ : (2NT) or 2♠ : (2NT)

Double = penalties. Later doubles are also penalties.

New suit = Natural and forcing.

Bid of opener's suit is invitational (as you have lost the 2NT invitational sequence).

### 4. After suit bids at the 3-level or higher

Double = penalties.

Bid of opener's suit at the 3-level is invitational as their bid has taken away your 2NT invitational sequence).

Without interference, invite game via 2NT and use 3-Major or 4-Major in opener's suit pre-emptively. Once second player has bid, there is far less incentive to pre-empt and there is a genuine need for an invitational bid (3-opener's-major)

New suit = natural and forcing.

### 5. Interference over Ogust.

After 2♥ / 2♠ : (No) : 2NT, if fourth player bids 3♣, pass with a 3♣ bid (or double with club values). Other bids have normal meanings. If fourth player bids 3♦, pass with a 3♣ bid, double with a 3♦ bid. Over 3♥ / 3♠, pass if minimum, double if maximum.

## DEFENCE AGAINST NAMYATS

### Against 3NT showing a 4♣ or 4♦ pre-empt

Use the same defence as against the Gambling 3NT.

### Against 4♣ showing a strong pre-empt in hearts

Double = Takeout but not as strong as the 4♥ bid. Allows the partnership to play in 4♦ whereas 4♥ would commit the partnership to game. The double is also attractive in allowing either partner to double their run to 4♥ for penalties.

West	North	East	South
4♣	Dble	4♥	No
No	Dble		

North's second double for penalties and shows two or more cards in their suit. With enough strength to bid again despite South's pass, bid 4♥ initially if short in their suit.

West	North	East	South
4♣	Dble	4♥	Dble

South's double is for penalties. As North has already made a takeout double. South can bid a suit or use 4NT to ask partner to choose a minor. The double can therefore be used for penalties.

4♥ = Strong takeout with 0-1 cards in their suit.

4NT = Strong two-suiter in the minors.

### Against 4♦ showing a strong pre-empt in spades

**Double** = Takeout, but not as strong as the 4♠ bid. Double on most takeout hands since you wish to keep 4♥ available.

4♠ = Very strong takeout, suggesting slam since it commits partner to 5♥ if that is partner's suit.

4NT = Strong two-suiter in the minors.

*Countermeasures by the opening side*

### After 4♣ : (Double) or 4♦ : (Double)

Responder can indicate a desire to compete to the 5-level.

**Pass** = No interest in bidding beyond the 4-level.

**Opener's suit** = Desire to be declarer (K-x or A-Q in the suit doubled) and prepared to push to the 5-level.

**Redouble** = Prepared to push to the 5-level but no holding in the suit doubled which makes it attractive to be declarer.

**Other actions** = Usual asking bids for slam.

**After 4♣/4♦ : (Double) : No : (No)**

Opener bids the major held but may redouble to ask partner to bid the major in case partner has a holding such as K-x or A-Q in the suit doubled. Opener can also bid the in-between suit to ask partner to lead that suit if the opponents buy the contract.

**After 4♣/4♦ : (Double) : Redouble : (No)**

Bid the major or bid the in-between suit to ask for that lead. If the opponents bid, make a lead-directing bid en route to 5♥/5♠.

## DEFENCE AGAINST TRANSFERS

**Double** = Lead-directing, showing a strong holding in the suit doubled. As the transfer is artificial, it is convenient to double to tell partner what to lead. Just like doubling 1NT:2♣ Stayman for the lead, your suit should be at least five cards long and include three or more honours.

**Bid the suit shown by the transfer**

West	North	East	South
1NT	No	2♥	2♠

If 2♥ is a transfer, 2♠ by South is a strong takeout, with 0-1 spades.

West	North	East	South
1NT	No	2♥	No
2♠	No	No	Dble

With a weaker hand or with two or more cards in spades, wait for the transfer to be completed and then double for takeout.

**2NT** = Two-suiter in the minors.

*Countermeasures by the opening side*

**After a double**

**West North East South**

1NT No 2♥ Dble

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Opener uses the opportunity to indicate support for responder's suit and thus the desirability of competing at the three-level when responder has the weakness hand.

**Bid-the-major-shown** = Doubleton support only and no desire to compete at the three-level.

**Pass** = 3+ support and prepared to compete at the three-level.

West	North	East	South
1NT	No	2♥	Dble
No	No	Rdbl	

If this is passed back to responder, a redouble asks opener to accept the transfer anyway.

**Redouble** = 4-card support and maximum values. Certainly wants to compete at the three-level and is a strong invitation to game.

**Super-accept of responder's major**

West	North	East	South
1NT	No	2♥	Dble
3♠			

Opener's hand could not be better. The super-accept shows 4-card support, a maximum 1NT and a doubleton in the suit doubled (hearts in the example). Opener can make no stronger invitation to game than this.

**After they bid responder's major**

West	North	East	South
1NT	No	2♥	2♠

Opener passes to indicate only weak support for responder and no desire to compete at the three-level. Double by opener shows 3+ support, a maximum 1NT and a desire to compete at the three-level.

### DEFENCE AGAINST 2NT : 3♣

Given opener's strength, it will be rare for the defenders to enter the auction. Any suit bid would be based on exceptional playing strength (within two tricks of the bid made).

**Double** = Lead-directing. At least five clubs with 3+ honours.

**3NT** = Minor two-suiter, normally at least 6-5.

*Countermeasures by the opening side*

**After 2NT : (No) : 3♣ : (Double)**

**Redouble** = To play. Opener has a strong 4-card or better club holding and expects to make 3♣ doubled

if responder can stand to pass.

**Pass** = No stopper in clubs. This is conceivable although rare for a 2NT opener. If this is passed back to responder, redouble asks opener to make the normal reply. If responder has a decent club holding, responder may elect to pass out 3♣ doubled in anticipation of making the contract.

**Bids** = Normal meaning but promise a stopper in clubs as well.

**After 2NT : (No) : 3♣ : (Bid)**

**Double** = Penalties.

**Pass** = No stopper in their suit.

**Bids** = Natural meaning but promise a stopper in their suit.

## DEFENCE AGAINST 2NT : TRANSFER

**Double** = Lead-directing. At least five cards in the suit doubled with 3+ honours.

**3NT** = Freak two-suiter in the minors, normally at least 6-5 at this level.

**Bid their suit** = Freak two-suiter, normally at least 6-5, with one of the suits being the other major and the other being a minor.

West	North	East	South
2NT	No	3♦	3♥

South figures to have 5+ spades and 5+ in one of the minors in a 6-5 pattern. If advancer has no support for spades, advancer can bid 4♣. Partner will convert to diamonds if that is the minor.

*Countermeasures by the opening side*

**After 2NT : (No) : Transfer : (Double)**

Opener will usually accept the transfer and with good support, maximum values and a doubleton in the suit doubled, opener may super-accept by bidding 4-Major. Accepting the transfer also promises a stopper in the suit doubled.

**Pass** = No stopper in the suit doubled (a rare occurrence). When this comes back to responder, a redouble asks opener to accept the transfer anyway.

## DEFENCE TO BARON 2NT OR JACOBY 2NT

Given the high card strength contained in these responses, you will rarely have enough to enter the bidding. Bidding a suit is natural and your playing strength should be within two tricks of your bid. You might enter the auction with a freak two-suiter, short in their suit, typically at least a 6-5 pattern. With such a hand, you could adopt the following approach, assuming the opening bid was 1♥:

**Double** = 6 spades + 5-minor. Partner supports spades if possible. If not, partner may bid a minor. Pass if holding that minor, otherwise convert to the other minor.

**3-their-major** = 5 spades + 6-minor. Partner supports spades if possible or bids a minor on the 'pass or correct' principle.



4♥ = 6 spades + 6-minor.

3NT = Both minors, 6-5 (or great courage and a 5-5 hand).

4NT = Both minors, 6-6 at least.

Opposite any of these actions, the high card strength is not so important (you are not likely to have much) but the degree of fit should determine how high you take the bidding. Do not become too excited with just an 8-card fit. With a 9-card fit, you can afford to sacrifice at the 4-level and with a 10-card fit at the 5-level.

### When opener shows a singleton in reply to Jacoby 2NT

West	North	East	South
1♥	No	2NT	No
3♦	Dble		

As North will be on lead against a heart contract, there is no point in using double for lead-directing. Best is to double with a long suit suggesting a sacrifice against their eventual game or slam.

## DEFENCE AGAINST BLACKWOOD 4NT

If your side has been competing, a double of 4NT indicates a desire to defend against their contract and is designed to warn partner against sacrificing.

Bidding over 4NT may cause the opponents difficulty in deciding whether to push on to slam, compete at the 5-level or double for penalties.

You may also wish to double a reply to Blackwood to indicate a sound lead. You should hold at least A-K, A-Q or K-Q in the suit doubled.

### Countermeasures by the Blackwood side

#### They double 4NT

Bids show aces as usual. A redouble suggests that 4NT may well be the best spot despite their double. Another approach is to redouble with 0 aces, pass with 1 (R=0, P=1 leads to the acronym ROPI), bid 5♣ with 2, 5♦ with 3 and 5♥ with 4.

#### They bid over 4NT

There are various ways to combat interference.

(a) *Double = Penalties*. In this method, if you feel that you could obtain more by doubling the opponents than by bidding on, you double for penalties. Other than that, No Bid = no aces (and partner may then choose to double them rather than bid on), the cheapest bid shows one ace, the next bid two aces and so on.

(b) *DOPI*. This stands for D=0, P=1, meaning Double = 0 aces, Pass = 1 ace. The next cheapest bid shows 2 aces, the next 3 and so on. When partner doubles to show no aces, you may well choose to leave the

double in when slam is out of the question and the five-level may be in jeopardy. When partner passes to show one ace, you may again choose to double if slam is out of the question and the five-level is risky.

(c) *PODI*. This stands for P=0, D=1, meaning Pass = 0 aces and Double = 1 ace. There is no significant difference between this and DOPI and certainly no technical superiority. Most pairs prefer to use DOPI.

(d) *DEPO*. This is D = E, P = O, meaning Double = Even number of aces (0, 2 or 4) and Pass = Odd number of aces (1 or 3). This has the advantage of saving space but could lead to ambiguity. The theory is that partner should be able to tell from the earlier bidding and the cards held how many aces are shown. You and I know that in practice partner has every chance of getting it wrong. Some pairs use DOPI at the five-level and DEPO at the six-level where little bidding space is left.

## DEFENCE AGAINST STOPPER-SHOWING OR STOPPER-ASKING

As you probably are not in the auction and as the opponents are angling for 3NT, the only action you are likely to contemplate is to double their stopper bid.

West	North	East	South
1♦	No	2♣	No
3♣	No	3♥	Dble

Whether 3♥ was asking or showing, the double shows length and strength in hearts and asks partner to lead the suit.

West	North	East	South
1♦	No	2♣	No
3♣	No	3♥	No
3NT	No	No	No

If North has no obviously attractive lead, or has an equal choice between hearts and spades, there is a slight case in favour of spades. Partner's failure to double 3♥ indicates partner has no burning desire for hearts.

West	North	East	South
1♦	No	2♣	No
3♣	No	3♥	No
3NT	No	No	Dble

The double of 3NT in an uncontested auction normally asks for the lead of dummy's first bid suit. This does not make sense where the suit has been bid and raised. In this kind of auction partner is likely to choose a heart lead or a spade lead. You can demand a heart lead by doubling 3♥. It makes sense to use the double of 3NT in stopper auctions to demand the lead of the unbid stopper.

*Countermeasure by the stopper side*

After a stopper bid has been doubled, you can still bid 3NT to show a stopper in the critical suit. However, if you are using stopper showing, bidding 3NT has the disadvantage that the opening lead will go through the stopper doubled.

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	No	2 ♣	No
3 ♣	No	3 ♥	Dble
?			

One advantage of stopper asking is that if the stopper ask is doubled and you have a stopper, bidding 3NT will protect that stopper on opening lead. If 3 ♥ shows a stopper, there is an obvious disadvantage for West to bid 3NT and allow North to lead through the stopper.

**Using stopper showing:** Redouble = "I have the danger suit (the unbid suit) stopped. Please bid 3NT yourself to protect the stopper in the suit doubled." In the above auction, West redoubles with the diamonds stopped if West wants East to be declarer. West can still choose 3NT instead of redoubling.

**Using stopper asking:** Bid 3NT if you have a stopper that needs protection on lead. Redouble with a sure stopper (A-x-x or A-K-x) allowing partner to bid 3NT in case partner has a useful secondary card in the suit such as Q-x or J-x-x.