

Negative Doubles

Brown Bridge Archives: L 10A
 Level: Intermediate
 Umbrella: Competitive Bidding
 Seminar: 1-2 hours

The bidding: North East South West

 1♠ 2♦ ?

Sitting **S**, it is your bid and you hold:

♠87	<u>or</u>	♠54
♥KQ98654		♥AK94
♦73		♦72
♣93		♣108743

What would you bid with these two hands if you did not play **negative doubles**? A double by **S** in this auction used to be penalty in early standard methods. Because neither **S** hand is worth a penalty double, you are stuck

for an appropriate bid. An Alvin Roth brain storm, the **Negative Double** rescues you in both cases.

When partner's opening bid is overcalled (in a suit) by RHO you can double to show the other two suits. A close cousin to the **Takeout Double**, the **Negative Double** asks partner to bid again. With the **Takeout Double** the opponent has opened the bidding while with the **Negative Double**, your partner has opened the bidding.

Generally the **negative double** shows the other two suits. However, the emphasis is as follows:

1. North East South West

 1♦ 2♣ Dbl

In this auction **S** shows at least 4-4 in the majors. This may seem strict, and with bidding becoming so aggressive, some may double with only 4-3 in the majors. However, I think 4-4 in hearts and spades is the go. Hence, whenever *both minors* are bid, a double shows *both majors*.

2. North East South West

 1♥ 1♠ Dbl

In this auction **S** shows both clubs and diamonds with the **negative double**. A minimum of 4-4 is sufficient. Hence, whenever *both majors* are bid, a double shows *both minors*.

3. North East South West

 1♠ 2♣ Dbl

(You)

In this auction, your double shows 4+ hearts and maybe diamonds. If you do not have diamond tolerance, (partner may bid diamonds) you will need a place to run. Perhaps simple preference for opener's first suit, or extra length in hearts so you can bid hearts freely, or a stopper in clubs to bid NT. Hence, after *a major and a minor* are bid, a **negative double** by **S** emphasis's the *other major and maybe the minor*.

Responding to a Negative Double

(you)				
	North	East	South	West
	1♥	2♦	Dbl	
	?			

Responding to a **negative double** requires only knowledge of what the negative double means and a bit of common sense. Based on the above auction let us examine some hands and the responses.

1. ♠Q643 ♥AQ654 ♦73 ♣A3	2. ♠4 ♥AKJ1075 ♦982 ♣A742	3. ♠AK93 ♥AK1094 ♦92 ♣K2	4. ♠A3 ♥A8432 ♦72 ♣KQ82
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In the first hand you would respond 2♠. Note that this is not a reverse bid. You are only responding to a **negative double**.

Partner has promised spades and you are simply showing your support.

In the second hand, you have a choice between rebidding 2♥ with your 6 card suit or of bidding 3♣ to show your 4 card club suit. There are two reasons I prefer 2♥. First, partner has suggested clubs not promised clubs and you do after all have a 6 card major! Second, a club bid takes us to the three level where as 2♥ keeps us at the two level.

In the third hand you should bid 4♠. Perhaps 3♠ might suffice, but what a nice hand! Nothing but controls and the shortage in diamonds is a plus. With all your high cards 'working' I think fortunate will favour the brave on this one. Partner does promise 8ish type points.

In the fourth hand, you might feel uncomfortable going to the three level with such a minimum hand, but you do have to respond. 3♣ seems the go. Partner does not promise clubs but he has suggested them. Rebidding 2♥ with that shoddy suit, my get a few votes, but I don't like it.

By the Way

North	East	South	West
1♦	1♥	1♠	

The 1♠ bid promises 5+ spades. With only a 4 card spade suit **S** would **negative double**. Hence, when the opponents overcall partner's opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦ with 1♥, an immediate bid of 1♠ by **S**, shows 5+ spades. This a huge benefit of the **negative double** in that it can differentiate between a 4 and a 5+ card spade suit

"**Negative Doubles** used to be called the **Sputnik Double** after the first Russian space ship"

If you know why would you let me know?

Negative Doubler Makes a Second Bid

North	East	(you) South	West
1♠	2♣	Dbl	
2♦	Pass	?	

What do you bid with the following three hands?

1.	2.	3.
♠83	♠104	♠83
♥KQ98654	♥AKJ10	♥AK104
♦7	♦92	♦J72
♣973	♣87432	♣Q1092

In the first hand you should bid your hearts. When you make a **negative double** and then bid a new suit, you show a weak hand. The logic being, if you had a good hand and heart length you could overcall 2♥ immediately. Hand one lacks the

strength for an immediate overcall of 2♥ so you must **negative double** first and then bid the hearts. *This shows length without the strength.*

In the second hand, you are not happy to hear partner bid 2♦, as you have no tolerance. You should make simple preference for partner's first suit and back to 2♠. Simple preference after a **negative double** shows weakness and is running for cover.

In the third hand bid 2NT to show the club stopper and 10-12 pts. When you make a **negative double** and then bid NT you limit the value of your hand and show a stopper in the opponent's suit.

Hand Strength for a Negative Double

The higher the auction is the more points you should have for your **negative double**. (see info box below)

At the one level: 6+ pts At the two level: 8+ pts At the three level: 10+ pts

This is a high card point guide only. Allow shape to influence your decision to **negative double**.

How High?

When someone asks you how high do you play **Negative Doubles**. They are referring to the level that the over-caller bid at. Eg. 1♦ - 2♠ - X Here, the over-caller bid at the 2 level. I suggest you play **Negative Doubles** up to 2♠. Once you gain experience using the **Negative Double**, you might prefer to play it to a higher level. I play negative doubles up to 4♥.

Negative Double Quiz

Partner opened the bidding with 1♥ and RHO overcalled 2♣. What is your bid with the following hands?

♠9872
♥92
♦AQ65
♣K43

♠AK93
♥KJ54
♦74
♣K32

♠AQ832
♥42
♦AQ8
♣832

♠KJ3
♥93
♦KQ1098
♣Q62

Partner opened the bidding with 1♦ and RHO overcalled 1♥. What is your bid with the following hands?

♠K987
♥Q9
♦KQ74
♣987

♠987
♥Q873
♦AK9
♣752

♠Q9872
♥AQ
♦982
♣J103

♠AK98
♥A8
♦KQ109
♣K92

You opened 1♠, LHO overcalled 2♦ and partner doubled (negative). What is your rebid with the following hands?

♠AQ1096
♥K1094
♦92
♣AK

♠KQ983
♥96
♦K832
♣A3

♠K9863
♥9872
♦A3
♣AJ

♠A10983
♥KQ
♦9876
♣A2

Partner opened 1♣, RHO overcalled 1♠ and you doubled (negative). Partner now bids 2♦. What is your rebid with the following hands?

♠K87
♥QJ94
♦K74
♣987

♠987
♥Q973
♦K9
♣AJ72

♠KJ2
♥AJ43
♦KJ72
♣32

♠98
♥AK84
♦A109
♣Q832
