ONE NO TRUMP DOUBLED- THE HELVIC CONVENTION

This convention is used when your partner has opened a weak 1NT(12-14) and the opponents have doubled. You often have a weak hand and need to escape into a 2-level suit contract, rather than concede a possibly large penalty.

The strength of the one no trump opener is that it has a pre-emptive effect and also crops up so frequently(10% of hands).The weakness of the weak no trump opener is that sometimes it is doubled for a severe penalty

The advantages of running from 1NT doubled are

1) **You may be able to escape to a contract which makes, or only fails bv a trick, or so, giving the enemy an insufficient penalty. E.g you are two down non-vulnerable in 2 diamonds, and the opposition can make two hearts giving them +100 as opposed to +110**
2) **The enemy may not be able to extract a penalty from whatever suit you run to, either because they are unsure that they can penalise the new contract, or because they haven't discussed what doubles or other bids mean in the Helvic sequences.**
3) **The next player after you may bid, in which case all Helvic bids are off and you have been let off the hook and there is now no chance of your side being doubled for a large penalty.**

The Helvic system allows you to show your partner a) you are strong,b)allows you to escape to a 5 card suit or c) allows you to escape to two four card suits and lets him choose.
Let us say West opens 1NT and North doubles. This double in standard bidding generally shows 15+ points, but could be slightly weaker if that player had a long running suit e.g AKQJxx and an outside ace.
You are east and have three types of bid. If you have a poor hand that contains a five card suit then your bid is REDOUBLE. Your partner MUST then bid 2♣ and then if your five card suit was clubs you can safely pass. If your suit was one of the others then you just bid it.I.e. you bid 2♦, 2♥ or 2 ♠ and partner will pass.
Now what happens in the more common cases where you have a poor hand and only have two four card suits? In this instance, if the suits are touching you bid the lower of the two.
If the suits were clubs and diamonds you bid 2♣
If the suits were diamonds and hearts you bid 2♦
If the suits were hearts and spades you bid 2♥
If the suits were spades and clubs you bid 2♠
Partner will now choose which of these he likes. So if he likes the lower ranked of the two he will pass, otherwise he bids the next suit up.
If your shape is 4-3-3-3 then you must evaluate your hand and either upgrade your best suit to a 5 card suit, or one of the 3 card suits to a four card suit and then bid accordingly.
With 4-4-4-1 distribution pick your two favourite suits and bid accordingly.
If you have split four card suits e.g clubs and hearts you can locate them by first passing then partner is forced to REDOUBLE. This means that you can never play the contract in 1NT doubled. Once partner has redoubled your bid is
2♣ if you have four clubs and four hearts
2♦ if you have four diamonds and four spades.

SUMMARY

WITH WEAK HANDS

1. **With a 5 card suit you REDOUBLE. Your partner(1NT opener) bids 2♣ and you pass if clubs was your 5 card suit or correct to 2♦/♥or ♠.**
2. **With 4 card touching suits you bid the lower ranked suit leaving partner to choose between them.**
3. **With non-touching four card suits you PASS and partner then bids REDOUBLE. Then you bid 2 clubs with four clubs and four hearts or 2 diamonds with four diamonds and four spades and leave partner to choose his best of those two suits.**

   If you had a really good hand after 1NT –Double you should pass the double and when partner is forced to redouble you can pass and partner can expect to make his contract. If the opposition don't want to let you play there they may run for cover and give your side the chance to extract a juicy penalty. Let us look at a few examples. Partner has opened 1NT and the next player has doubled.

   a) **♠K2 ♥874 ♦97643 ♣J10**
   Here you have a 5 card suit to escape to so you redouble-partner bids 2♣ and you correct to 2♦

   b) **♠QJ109 ♥K432 ♦874 ♣65**
   Here you have two touching suits of four cards so bid the lower one 2♥.Partner either passes or converts to 2♠ if his spades are longer than his hearts.

   c) **♠832 ♥J943 ♦AJ ♣9852**
   Here you have non-touching four card suits so pass, partner will reopen with a redouble and you can bid 2♣ to show four clubs and four hearts. Partner will then pass or bid hearts if that suit looks better.

   d) **♠K8 ♥954 ♦J92 ♣KQJ6**
   Here you have 10 points and a decent hand, so pass and when partner reopens with the redouble you can pass that and play in 1NT redoubled with every chance of making. If opposition run now, be prepared to double them for penalties as you have the majority of the points.

If the bidding goes 1NT-PASS-PASS-DOUBLE then obviously the opener will pass and it is up to partner to redouble with a 5 card suit or bid lower of touching suit. You lose the ability to bid split suits, so must upgrade a good four card suit to a 5 card suit or upgrade a 3 card suit to make two touching 4 card suits. This situation is much less likely to occur than the double in second position. However if the partner of the opener has 7-9 points and the partner of the doubler decides to pass (He is likely to have 0-3 points hoping that the fourth bidder will use the Helvic sequences) then he can now pass and play in 1NT doubled with every likelihood of success.

The player who doubles in fourth position should have his full bid i.e 16 + points because he will have to play under the 1NT opener and if he were to double with say 14 points based on a solid suit headed by 6 to the AKQ with an outside ace then his partner will be on lead with no idea which suit to lead, and declarer may be able to garner 7 tricks before he can gain the lead.

When playing the Helvic sequences partner must alert all potentially artificial bids INCLUDING a pass after 1NT-double, as this could be a good hand or a poor split suit hand.

From the doubler's point of view any doubles of rescue bids by the opposition either by yourself or partner are always for penalties.

If you are the partner of the doubler and you have 9+ points you should consider bidding 3NT at unfavourable vulnerability i.e you are vulnerable and opposition is non-vulnerable because you will have 25+ points between you and if opposition end in 1NT doubled this would need to go down by four tricks to give you a better score than you could make for 3NT making.
This sequence is much more likely to occur after the sequence 1NT-pass-pass-double-pass because there is no need for the partner of the 1NT opener to run anywhere until he is doubled.