

Responsive Double

The responsive double is so named because it's a double in response to partner's takeout double after the opponents have bid and raised a suit.

Sounds complicated? Here it is in bidding format:

1♥ - X - 2♥ - X!

The responsive double is based on the principle that a penalty double here is usually unrewarding. Therefore double shows scattered values with at least 6 points and interest in locating a fit. If the opponents are bidding a minor suit, a responsive double asks partner to pick a major suit. If the opponents are bidding a major suit, a responsive double requests partner to choose a minor suit. For instance, advancer might hold

♠K 10 4 3

♥Q J 3 2

♦9 3

♣J 10 9

and hear:

1♦ - X - 2♦ - ?

With both majors of equal strength, he should make a responsive double to ask partner to bid a major.

Similarly:

♠K 4 3

♥6 2

♦Q 9 3 2

♣Q 10 6 5

1♥ - X - 2♥ - ?

Double here shows the minors. If advancer held four spades, he would have bid 2♠.

Note that a double by advancer is responsive only when the opponents have opened a one-bid and raised it. Some players also use the responsive double when partner has made a simple overcall in a suit. *Modern Bridge Conventions* by Bill Root and Richard Pavlicek gives an excellent list of bidding situations in which double is NOT responsive:

1♣ - X - 1♠ - X

RHO has bid a new suit. (Optional treatment)

1♣ - 2♠ - 3♣ - X

Partner has made a jump overcall.

2♥ - X - 3♥ - X

LHO has opened with a preempt

1♦ - 1NT - 2♦ - X

Partner has overcalled in no-trumps.

How high to play responsive doubles is a matter of partnership agreement.