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(52) More Doubles: Support Doubles in Depth

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Level: Intermediate / Advanced

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General

Most partnerships that play Support Doubles have had a conversation about when they apply and when they do not. But many players forget to discuss what Responder should do after the Opener makes a support double. We will focus on the detailed meaning of Responder's rebids both in terms of strength (*bucket*) and finding a fit.

Support Double and Support Redouble Auctions

Let's just take a moment and list all of the low-level double auctions and examine them. This might be a little tedious, but it should help us understand which auctions are simple and which are more complex:

1♣ Opening then Overcall Auctions

- 1♣ 1♦ (1♥)
 - We generally do not play support doubles when partner bids 1♦ - we just raise with 3-card support since we rarely have 4-card support when we open 1♣. A double here usually shows 18-19 balanced with no ♥ stopper.
- 1♣ 1♦ (1♠)
 - We generally do not play support doubles when partner bids 1♦ - we just raise with 3-card support since we rarely have 4-card support when we open 1♣. A double here usually shows 18-19 balanced with no ♠ stopper.
- 1♣ 1♦ (1NT)
 - Double of a natural Notrump overcall is penalty, showing extra values – either HCP or a long strong suit. If the 1NT overcall is conventional, then double is support.



- 1♣ 1♥ (1♠)
 - Support Double.
- 1♣ 1♥ (1NT)
 - Double of a natural Notrump overcall is penalty, showing extra values – either HCP or a long strong suit. If the 1NT overcall is conventional, then double is support.
- 1♣ 1♥ (2♣)
 - This is a support double, but it can be confused with showing extra ♣. This is a good auction to discuss with partner.
- 1♣ 1♥ (2♦)
 - Support Double.
- 1♣ 1♥ (2♥)
 - Support Double. If 2♥ is natural (as it should be), then it is also penalty.

- 1♣ 1♠ (1NT)
 - Double of a natural Notrump overcall is penalty, showing extra values – either HCP or a long strong suit. If the 1NT overcall is conventional, then double is support.
- 1♣ 1♠ (2♣)
 - Support Double, but it can be confused with showing extra ♣. This is a good auction to discuss with partner.
- 1♣ 1♠ (2♦)
 - Support Double.
- 1♣ 1♠ (2♥)
 - Support Double.
- 1♣ 1♠ (2♠)
 - Support Double. If 2♠ is natural (as it should be), then it is also penalty.

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- 1♦ 1♥ (1♠)
 - Support Double.
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- 1♦ 1♥ (2♣)
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- 1♦ 1♠ (2♣)
 - Support Double.
- 1♦ 1♠ (2♦)
 - This is a Support Double, but it can be confused with showing extra ♦. This is a good auction to discuss with partner.
- 1♦ 1♠ (2♥)
 - Support Double.
- 1♦ 1♠ (2♠)
 - This is a Support Double auction. If 2♠ is natural (as it should be), then it is also penalty.

1♥ Opening then Overcall Auctions

- 1♥ 1♠ (1NT)
 - Double of a natural Notrump overcall is penalty, showing extra values – either HCP or a long strong suit. If the 1NT overcall is conventional then double is support.
- 1♥ 1♠ (2♣)
 - Support Double.
- 1♥ 1♠ (2♦)
 - Support Double.
- 1♥ 1♠ (2♥)
 - This is a Support Double, but it can be confused with showing extra ♥. This is a good auction to discuss with partner.



- 1♥ 1♠ (2♠)
 - This is a Support Double auction. If 2♠ is natural (as it should be), then it is also penalty.

Redouble Auctions

- 1♣ 1♦ (X)
 - XX in this auction usually shows 18-19 balanced without a need to be declarer.
- 1♣ 1♥ (X)
 - XX is Support.
- 1♣ 1♠ (X)
 - XX is Support.
- 1♦ 1♥ (X)
 - XX is Support.
- 1♦ 1♠ (X)
 - XX is Support.
- 1♥ 1♠ (X)
 - XX is Support.

Note: If the interferer bids above 2-of-Responder's suit then it is not clear if Opener's double is a support double or not - we need a partnership agreement.

- Most players play this higher level double by Opener as takeout, showing some extra values.
- Some expert players play support double+: higher-level doubles by Opener show 3-card support and extra values.

Responder's Rebids after a Support Double

When Opener makes a support double and the opponent passes, then Responder is forced to describe their hand – bid something. It is good to have some detailed agreements about how Responder shows their strength and shape:

Minimum Hands

- Rebidding the "supported" suit (Responder's suit) at the 2-level shows a minimum hand (6-9 points) and could still be only a 4-card suit.
- Rebids below 2-of-Responder's suit show a minimum hand (6-9 points), and are non-forcing and natural.



- If Responder supports Opener's suit, that shows a better fit there than in the "supported suit." – implying only a 4-3 fit.
- If Responder bids a new suit this shows 5-cards in this suit and denies a real fit in the "supported suit" – only 4-3 fit.

Invitational Hands

- Rebids of a new suit above 2-of-Responder's suit show invitational values (10-11 points) and are natural.
 - If Responder supports Opener's suit that shows a better fit there than in the "supported suit." – implying only a 4-3 fit
 - If Responder bids a new suit this shows 5-cards in this suit and denies a real fit in the "supported suit" – only 4-3 fit.
- Rebids of 2NT are natural, invitational (10-11 points), show a stopper in the opponent's suit, and have only a 4-3 fit in the "supported suit."

Game-Forcing Hands

- Rebid 4M with a known 5-3 fit in the Major (if no slam interest.)
- Rebid 3NT with no fit (only 4-3) and a stopper in the opponent's suit.
- Cuebid the opponent's suit with a game-forcing hand that is not sure what to do (no stopper in the opponent's suit.) This is similar to a Western Cuebid, asking for a stopper.
- Cuebid the opponent's suit with a hand interested in slam.
- Pass with a game-forcing hand and length in the opponent's suit, waiting for partner to reopen with a double. Some partnerships might agree that this can be done with an invitational or better hand.

Other

- 4NT should be Keycard in the "supported suit."
- Double Jump Shifts (into unbid suits) are splinters showing at least a 5-3 fit in the "supported suit."

Responder's Rebid after a Support Redouble

After a support redouble, Responder's rebids are similar to after a support double. The major difference is that responder will pass more frequently, since we are XX in our "fit." This pass shows invitational or better values and usually only a 4-3 fit – it often will be interested in penalizing the opponents if they run to another suit.