

## SPECIAL DOUBLES AND REDOUBLES

### Slam Doubles

A double of a voluntarily bid slam (i.e., not a sacrifice bid against an opposing contract) asks partner to make an unusual lead. The doubler may have a void somewhere (usually in an opposing suit), or possibly a tenace--maybe just a king--over dummy's first bid suit. The doubler fears that a normal lead will allow the contract to be made.

The opening leader must sometimes guess which suit the doubler wants led. Certainly any suit bid by the defending side is not wanted. Also, an unbid suit is ruled out unless the opponents have not bid any suit other than trumps. If in doubt, lead dummy's first bid side suit. If dummy has not bid a side suit, the doubler may want the lead of a side suit bid by declarer. If there have been no side suits bid, lead from your longest holding in an unbid suit--partner may have a void there.

If the doubler has previously doubled a suit during the auction, the double calls for the lead of that suit--not for an "unusual" lead. Reason: sometimes a defender who has doubled an opposing suit is not particularly eager for the lead of that suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Dbl	6NT	Pass
Pass	Dbl		

West's double demands a diamond lead. If West had passed the 6NT bid, East could use judgment whether to lead a diamond or something else.

Against a notrump slam there is divided opinion about the meaning of a double when the doubler's side has bid. It would seem more useful to use the double to call for the lead of some suit other than one bid by the defending side, since that would be the normal lead.

When the opponents are in a notrump slam after dummy has shown a long suit, the double should not ask for the lead of that suit:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♥	Pass
5NT	Pass	6NT	Dbl

East has ♠QJ9876 ♥86 ♦KQ7 ♣A4. She could hardly be asking for a heart or club lead, since declarer no doubt needs those suits to bring in his contract. The double says, "Do not lead a spade," so the only thing left to lead is a diamond.

### The Surprise Double

Suppose you have ♠J5432 ♥AK64 ♦ void ♣8742. You're sitting East and the bidding goes:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
5♣	Pass	Pass	?

You should double. After this surprise double, coming after strong bidding in an auction that you have not entered, partner should figure you for a void. From his hand, he ought to be able to guess that the void is in diamonds. Another:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♠	2♥	2♠	4♥
Db!			

South could not open the bidding, is sitting opposite a hand that could only raise to the two level, and yet is doubling a strongly bid game. The probable reason for the double is a diamond void, and a diamond lead should be forthcoming.

Surprise doubles are dangerous at times. In some auctions the double may not strike partner as a "surprise," and he may miss the message. In such clear-cut situations as those above, however, there should be no problem.

### The Double of Three Notrump

-- Neither defender has bid a suit:

In this situation the doubler generally wants dummy's suit led. If dummy has rebid the suit, however, and declarer does not seem to have a long suit, the lead of dummy's suit is not advisable. The declarer will no doubt go after that suit to make the contract. While the doubler probably has the suit well stopped, the best line of attack will usually lie elsewhere.

If the opponents have not bid a suit, the opening leader should lead his shortest and weakest unbid suit, preferring a major if in doubt. The doubler probably has a long solid suit, or semi-solid suit with a fast entry outside. She figures that she may not get the suit led without the double. This means that if the bidding goes 1NT on your left, 3NT on your right, you can double with ♠A97 ♥83 ♦A62 ♣KQJ108, with fair assurance that partner will lead a club.

-- Doubler has bid a suit, opening leader has not:

Lead the doubler's suit unless partner's bid was an opening bid of one in that suit at matchpoint scoring. After opening 1♥ at matchpoints with ♠43 ♥QJ983 ♦KQJ102 ♣A, you can double 3NT to

tell partner *not* to lead a heart. Knowing that you open the higher of touching suits, she will probably be able to figure that the suit you want led is diamonds.

This is contrary to standard practice, which says that the doubler is asking for the suit he has bid. In a matchpoint game, however, where the frequency of gain is more important than the amount of gain, the double for *another* suit makes more sense. Just pass if the lead of your bid suit will defeat the contract. It won't happen often that partner will lead some other suit, and just beating 3NT should be a good enough score. If the suit has been bid as an overcall or opening weak bid, then the double of 3NT asks for the lead of the bid suit, as it always does at IMP or total point scoring.

-- Opening leader has bid a suit, doubler has not. This double calls for the lead of the bid suit. If, however, the bid was a three-level preemptive call, the double calls for the lead of an unbid suit. The reason for this policy is that a preemptive bidder will normally lead his suit, so doubling for that lead is unnecessary (and may cause a runout to some good suit contract). Accordingly, the double asks that the opening leader guess doubler's strong suit and lead it.

-- Both defenders have bid a suit. Use your judgment. If in doubt, lead partner's suit.

### Special Redoubles

-- When a notrump probe gets doubled, a redouble by the next hand does *not* show strength in the doubled suit--it asks that partner bid notrump:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Dbl	Rdbl	

North has ♠92 ♥A43 ♦AQ964 ♣A54. He redoubles to indicate that he would have bid 3NT if there had been no double. South should play the hand, so that her spade strength (Kxx?) won't be led through on the opening lead. With the major suit holdings reversed, North would pass over the double, despite the ace of spades, because he lacks a heart stopper. This redouble must be alerted.

-- When an opponent redoubles a takeout double (or a double that is primarily for takeout) of a suit contract, and the suit is one that *only that opponent* has bid, a pass over the redouble is for penalties. The passer wants to defend against the redoubled contract:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Rdbl	Pass	

  

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass		

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass		

In all three sequences, the pass over the redouble indicates a willingness to defend against the redoubled contract.

When the suit has been bid by both opponents, however, or the redouble is made by the opponent who did *not* bid the suit, a pass over a redouble is non-committal:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass

In both sequences, East's pass does not show a willingness to defend against the redoubled bid. It merely says that she has nothing worth showing at this time.

When the double is for business (or more optional than takeout), a pass over any redouble shows a willingness (or resignation) to defend:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
Dbl	Rdbl	Pass - willing to defend	

-- Immediate redoubles are not "S. O. S." They usually show a very strong hand, and tell partner not to be intimidated by the double:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	Dbl	Rdbl

If North's double is for business, East's redouble says that he expects 2♣ to make and does not want West to run. If it is a negative double, however, the redouble only shows the club ace or king in a (possibly weak) hand that cannot raise. A pass by South at this point is non-committal, since the redouble is made by the opponent who did not bid the suit.

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Rdbl			

South has a strong hand with good clubs; the redouble is not a rescue request, although it does encourage North to bid if he has anything worth showing.

*Reopening* redoubles (after two passes) ask for a rescue, but only at low levels, and only if partner has not participated in the auction:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Rdbl			

South wants to be rescued from 1♣ redoubled.

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	Pass
4♠	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Rdbl			

South is not asking to be rescued!

There is one situation when a redouble is S. O. S. even though both partners have participated in the auction: A responder to a takeout double may ask to be rescued after a minimum forced response:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Dbl	Pass	Pass	Rdbl

East no doubt has made a "weakness response" in clubs and wants to be rescued. She might have ♠72 ♥7632 ♦J873 ♣J76. If 2♣ had been a free bid (e.g., over a redouble by North), then the redouble would be to play.