

REDOUBLE IS A “MACHO” THING?

There is nothing like starting out with an inflammatory statement! Perhaps I ought to explain upfront. IMHO (that's in my humble opinion), REDOUBLE is one of the most overused and/or misused bids in bridge. Often it seems almost to be a “I dare you” type of bid..... or, “Take that”, or the equivalent.

Probably one of the first things you learned in bridge is that after partner opens the bidding at the one level and your RHO doubles a Redouble shows 10+ points. That's all...nothing else but 10+ points. Now I ask you how helpful is this?

Evidently way back when, Robert Jordan didn't think it was a very good idea to Redouble with a major suit fit. So he started playing what is today called the Jordan 2NT (also know as Truscott 2NT since he first published it in 1954). Thus the Jordan 2NT occurs after a double of a major suit opening and shows a limit raise in opener's suit. (Today it can be a limit raise or better.) Some partnerships have extended this convention to include the minor suits while other have reversed the meaning of 2NT and the jump raise for the minors, calling it appropriately enough, Flip-Flop. Jordan's style of Redouble would then show 10+ points but without four card support for opener's suit. Progress of sorts it seems. Thus playing Jordan over the Majors and Flip-Flop over the minors:

- (a) 1♥ X 2NT would show a limit raise or better in hearts.
- (b) 1♥ X XX would deny four card support in hearts, but show 10+ points
- (c) 1♣ X 2NT would show 5+ clubs with very few values thus preemptive
- (d) 1♣ X 3♣ would show a limit raise in clubs (but not better than limit)
- (e) 1♦ X XX would show 10+ without a limit raise in diamonds.

It's my suggestion that you agree with your partner that bidding instead of redoubling does not deny 10+ points. If, for example, you hold a two-suited hand, it's frequently better to start bidding those suits as cheaply as possible before you get shut out of the bidding and are unable to accurately describe your hand. For example after a 1♣ (by partner) X, I suggest you bid 1♠ when you hold something like ♠AQxxx, ♥x ♦KJxxx, ♣xx. Note that you have 10 points but, if you happen to Redouble, LHO is likely to jump in the heart suit and you will be left to wonder what to do at your next opportunity. It is, of course, necessary to play this new suit at the one level as 100% forcing. Later bidding will attempt to clarify the value

range.....thus bidding a new suit at the three level should show 10+ HCP's

On the other hand, if you have a relatively balanced hand with 10+ points, a Redouble may be best. This Redouble should be used to say to partner that unless you have some distributional hand and are definitely not interested in defending, please pass at your next opportunity. Give me a chance to bid or double the opponents as the case may be. For example:

	Pard	Opp	You	Opp
	1♠	X	XX	2♣
	Pass!	Pass	??	

Doubles in this position are penalty. A belated raise in partner's suit shows about exactly 10 points and three card support.....with more you must do something else. New suits should be forcing for one round and cuebids should be game forcing.

Please note, however, that if you do Redouble in this type of auction above, you are not allowed to pass when it comes back to you unless partner was a third hand opener or has rebid his suit before the bidding comes back to you. Partner's pass is forcing if he has opened in first or second position.

George Rosenkranz found another use for the Redouble. After RHO had made a negative double, Rosenkranz used it to show three card support with an honor for the suit that partner had overcalled. Notice that once again it shows support. An example is: 1♣ 1♠ X XX - where the XX shows a high spade honor with enough to raise spades.

As is with all conventions it seems, someone came along and decided that perhaps Reverse Rosenkranz Redoubles would work better. With this twist the meanings of the Redouble and raises are reversed. Thus, after an opponent's negative double, a Redouble denies the Ace or King, and a raise shows it.

Then there's the SOS Redouble. That's a Redouble requesting that partner make another bid or call, and is recognizable whenever there is no possibility of the Redouble having any other interpretation according to partnership agreements. This most likely occurs at a very low level. For example:

Opp	Pard	Opp	You
1♣	1♦	P	P
X	P	P	XX

Here you may hold as little as ♠xxxx ♥xxxx ♦x ♣xxxx but it's probably right

to Redouble and look for someplace other than 1♦ X/XX to play this hand.

An infrequent but valuable use of the Redouble occurs when opponents decide to double a conventional call as lead directing. The most common of those is the double of Stayman. Redouble here suggests playing 2♣ X/XX. Similarly, doubles of transfer bids can be converted with the use of the Redouble. Not long ago an opponent doubled my partner's 3♦ bid (transfer to hearts) after my opening 2NT bid and caught me with ♠A10xx ♥AK ♦AQ10xx ♣Kx. My Redouble was very profitably on this particular board; not so for the opponents though.

There's one other good use for a Redouble and that's to show first round control when you and partner have agreed on a suit in a very competitive auction. An example would be:

Pard	Opp	You	Opp
1♠	P	2NT*	P
3♣	X	XX - shows first round control of clubs and takes up absolutely no bidding room.	

*Forcing raise in spades.

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