



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(343) Opener's Rebids After a Negative Double**

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Level: 4 of 10 (1 of 6)

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#### **General**

When we open the bidding with a suit at the 1-level, left-hand opponent (LHO) makes an overcall (either a simple or jump), partner makes a negative double, and right-hand opponent (RHO) passes, then we are forced to take an action to describe our hand. We need to describe our hand to partner but we also need to take into account what partner has told us about their hand – both in terms of strength (level of their negative double) and shape. Let's look at a variety of situations and see how we communicate with partner.

#### **Vs. LHO's 1-Level Overcall**

When partner makes a negative double of a 1-level overcall, their double does not promise a large amount of values – they have only shown about 6+ points. In some of these auctions they have promised a specific distribution (a double of a 1♦ overcall shows exactly 4-4 in the Majors and a double of a 1♥ overcall shows exactly a 4-card ♠ suit). The higher the opponents overcall, the more possible hand types partner may have for making their negative double. Let's take a look at one specific auction where partner has asked us to describe our hand and we do not know exactly what partner holds.

#### *Example 1*

Notice that your rebids below are similar to when the auction goes 1♦ – P – 1♥ – P.

1♦    1♠    X    P

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- 1NT    Balanced, 12-14 pts, may not have a ♠ stopper
  - ♠ xxx
  - ♥ Jxx
  - ♦ AKQx
  - ♣ Kxx
- 2♣    4+card ♣, 12-14 pts
- 2♦    5+card ♦, 12-14 pts (often a 6-card suit)
- 2♥    4-card ♥, 12-14 pts
- 2♠    Game forcing cuebid, usually source of tricks without a ♠ stopper
- 2NT    Balanced, 18-19 pts, ♠ stopper



- 3♣ 4+card ♣, 15-17 pts
- 3♦ 6+card ♦, 15-17 pts
- 3♥ 4-card ♥, 15-17 pts, usually unbalanced
- 3♠ Western Cuebid, GF, asks partner to bid 3NT with a ♠ stopper (usually a long strong suit)
- 3NT Trick-oriented hand, ♠ stopper
- 4♥ 4-card ♥, about 18-19 points

In this auction, we have room to describe our hand for most any strength or distribution. The higher the opponent's overcall, the less bidding space we have available and the more pressure we will be under to describe our hand and keep the auction at a reasonable level.

### Vs. LHO's 2-Level Overcall

When partner makes a negative double of a 2-level overcall they promise more values than the 6+ pts they showed at the 1-level.

- Vs. 2♣ overcall a double shows about 7+ points
- Vs. 2♦ overcall a double shows a good 7+ points
- Vs. 2♥ overcall a double shows a good 8+ points
- Vs. 2♠ overcall a double shows a good 9+ points

#### Example 2

1♠ 2♥ X P  
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In this auction, we are under more pressure to make a rebid. Partner may have as few as 8 points, so with only 12-13 points we want to keep the auction as low as possible.

- 2♠ 6+card ♠, 12-14 pts (could be a good 5-card ♠ suit with only 12-13 pts)
- 2NT Usually balanced, 12-14 pts, though with only 12 pts we strive to rebid 2♠.
- 3m 4+card minor, 12-15 pts
- 3♠ 6+card ♠, good 14-16 pts, NF
- 3♥ Game forcing cuebid, usually no ♥ stopper
- 3NT Enough to play game (about 15-17 pts semi-balanced or 18-19 balanced)



If the opponent's overcall was at a lower level, then partner's double could be made with fewer values and thus we would need slightly more values to jump or create a game forcing auction.

*Example 3*

1♠    2♣    X    P

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Here partner's negative double could be made with only about 7 points (though unlimited in values).

- 2♦    4+card ♦, 12-14 pts (could be a 3-card suit when under pressure)
- 2♥    4+card ♥, 12-14 pts (could be a 3-card suit when under pressure)
- 2♠    5+card ♠, 12-14 pts (usually a 6+card suit)
- 2NT    14-16 pts, ♣ stopper (usually unbalanced or semi-balanced)
- 3♣    Game-forcing cuebid, many hand types possible
- 3♦    4+card ♦, 15-17 pts, NF
- 3♥    4+card ♥, 15-17 pts, NF
- 3♠    6+card ♠, 15-17 points
- 3NT    Offer to play, 17-19 pts, ♠ stopper

As you can see, most of these bids are natural, but their values are adjusted for partner only promising as few as 7 pts.

**Vs. LHO's 3+Level Overcall**

When partner makes a negative double of a 3-level overcall they promise more values (at least 10+ points vs. 3♣ overcall and game forcing values vs. 3♠ overcall). Thus, we need fewer values to jump or use the game forcing cuebid. One other thing to consider is if we are in a game forcing auction.

*Example 4*

1♦    3♠    X    P

—?

- 3NT    Stopper in ♠
- 4♥    4-card ♥ suit
- 4m    In a game forcing auction we can jump to 5-minor with a weak distributional hand.



## Pass as Opener

Another option we have in all of these auctions is to pass partner's negative double and convert it to penalty.

### Example 5

♠ K5

♥ 63

♦ A8742

♣ AQJ5

1♦    2♣    X    P

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Here we pass. Even if partner has very few values, we should defeat 2♣.

### Example 6

♠ 853

♥ A76

♦ K873

♣ AK5

1♦    3♠    X    P

\_\_\_?

Here we have no good rebid, but knowing that partner has about 12+ points (and usually not a lot of distribution) we simply pass and expect to defeat 3♠. Though we would like to have some trump tricks, we feel confident we can defeat 3♠ given that partner has points to accompany ours.

## Conclusion

In these negative double auctions, we must strike a balance between bidding out our distribution and keeping the auction at a reasonable level. First, we must take into account the minimum values that we expect partner to hold and use that in combination with our values to make certain we do not get the auction too high. Second, we must make sure to communicate any extra values that we have to partner (by jumping or cuebidding), and finally we strive to find a Major-suit fit or bid NT (showing a stopper in the opponent's suit). These goals should be familiar from non-competitive auctions. Sometimes we are forced to make awkward rebids when the auction is at a high level (and we must then find the "least lie"). As Opener, make sure that you select your rebid carefully, take into account all the information you have, and communicate as much as you can about your hand to partner.