

**Stamford Bridge Club**

**21st September 2016**

**Penalty Doubles Recap**

**“Doubles are generally for  
takeout until we’ve found a fit”**

**There are **exceptions** to this maxim and these  
exceptions are **penalty doubles**.**

**Corollary : When we have found a fit  
we can double for penalties**

The **exceptions** are:

1. The opponents overcall in no trumps.
2. The opponents bid game (but didn't open at the game level).
3. Partner has shown two suits already.
4. Partner has opened with a preemptive bid (weak2/weak3).
5. The opponents bid on over our game (even when we haven't confirmed a fit).
6. We double a suit bid having passed over a bid in the same suit on the previous round.

When the conditions are right for a penalty double:

1. If we hold roughly 23+ hcps we should double the opponents when we decide not to bid on ourselves.
2. When the high cards are reasonably split between the two sides the quality of our trump holding in the opponents' suit is important. Our holding "over" the expected strength is a great bonus ("under" the strength is more suspect).

## A few words of warning:

### When we make a penalty double

1. Declarer may be alerted to the danger of a bad break (“over” the strength works better than “under” it).
2. Penalising the opposition works better after a limited, tentative auction. Where the opponents bid very freely we cannot expect partner to provide much.
3. We must be careful that a double doesn’t allow the opponents to remove the contract to a better place.

**Not every penalty double you make is guaranteed to be successful. Expect the odd bad result.**

Not even the best players get these decisions right all the time. Witness the following deal from the semi-finals of the 2016 World Bridge Games.

At all tables the auction began (North dealer)

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
Pass	1♥	1♠	4♥
4♠	5♥	... back to South	

## Board 21. Dealer North. N-S Vulnerable.

		♠ K Q J 9 ♥ K ♦ J T 7 5 4 ♣ 7 6 4	
♠ 8 7 6 ♥ A J 7 4 2 ♦ 8 ♣ Q T 8 2	<div> <div>N</div> <div>W E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	♠ T ♥ Q T 9 8 6 5 3 ♦ A 9 3 ♣ A 5	
		♠ A 5 4 3 2 ♥ - ♦ K Q 6 2 ♣ K J 9 3	

The winning decision – to pass out 5♥ - was found at only one table:

Home Team	Visiting Team	Room	Cont.	Decl.	Lead	Tricks	NS	EW
SPAIN	MONACO	Open	5♥x	E	♦K	11		650
		Closed	5♥	E	♠A	11		450
POLAND	NETHERLANDS	Open	5♣x	S	♦8	8		800
		Closed	5♥x	E	♦K	11		650

The above may not show clearly but the contracts were 5♥x (E), 5♥ (E), 5♣x (S) and 5♥x. The scores were (relative to North South) minus 650, minus 450, minus 800 and minus 650.

**Next week**  
**(Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September)**

**A Selection of Problems**