



Doubling

18 August 2020

General

- ♥ In the Summer of 2019, Debbie Roberts, a very experienced player at Wallingford, gave a series of seminars at the Club.
- ♠ One of her subjects was “Doubling” and she described 9 different understandings that partnerships can use for Doubling.
- ♦ We will start by covering the two most common uses of Doubling:
 1. Take-out Double for competing after Opponents have bid
 2. Penalty Doubles
- ♣ Later in the lesson, we will mention three other common uses of Doubling:
 3. Negative Doubles
 4. Doubling initially to show strength (16+ HCPs)
 5. Doubling an unnatural bid for Lead Indication

Differences between the two main types of Doubling

Doubling type:	Take-out	Penalty
When used:	After Opponents have opened with a suit (including Weak 2s and Pre-emptive bids)	After Opponents have opened with 1 NT or, after Opponents have bid to a level of contract, probably Game, which you do not believe they can make.
Message to Partner:	<i>I do not like the suit bid. Please describe your hand.</i>	<i>I believe we can bring the Opponents down in the contract they have bid and this would be better than us bidding higher</i>
Criteria:	Opening strength (12+ HCPs), Shortage in bid suit, Tolerance (3+ cards) in other suits	16+ HCPs for doubling 1 NT, any shape For other situations, confidence that the Opponents' bid contract will not make

Response if your Partner doubles for take-out

What does the Opponent do to your right do?	If your hand is weak	If your hand is strong
<p>Opponent passes</p> <p>You are expected to bid, even with no points</p>	<p>How weak? < 9 HCPs</p> <p>Bid longest suit, except choose a Major suit with 4 cards in preference to a 5 card Minor</p> <p>Bid at the lowest level</p>	<p>How strong? 9+ HCPs</p> <p>Jump a level</p>
<p>Very occasionally, you will have a hand that gives you confidence you and your Partner, who you know has opening strength, can defeat the contract. Then you Pass to change the Take-out Double to a Penalty Double.</p>		
<p>Opponent bids</p> <p>You choose whether to bid; you have a “free bid”</p>	<p>How weak? < 6 HCPs</p> <p>Pass</p>	<p>How strong? 6+ HCPs</p> <p>Same criteria as above, but be more inclined to bid if both Opponents have bid the same suit.</p>

Doubling 1 NT for Penalty

- ♥ Doubling a NT contract bid is always for penalty
- ♠ Most partnerships view the 1 NT “dustbin” response bid as not being a contract bid – so a double after a 1 NT response would be for Take-out
- ♦ You would need at least one-half of the 40 HCPs to double bids of 2 NT or 3 NT - this would be very exceptional
- ♣ To double 1 NT, for Penalty, you need 16+ HCPs; any shape
- ♥ Because you double 1 NT with 16+ HCPs, any suit overcall of 1 NT shows a maximum of 15 HCPs.

What happens after 1 NT is doubled

- ♥ Partner of the Opener (who bid 1 NT) needs to “rescue” their partnership if she has less than 7 HCPs.
- ♠ **With 7+ HCPs, at least 19 HCPs combined, Partner should win a 1 NT contract with control of both hands**
- ♦ There are several different rescue conventions. Using Exit Transfers is probably the easiest and described on next page.
- ♣ **If Opener’s Partner does not rescue, the Partner of the Doubling Partner needs to rescue their partnership with less than 6 HCPs – starting by bidding her longest suit.**

Brief description of the Exit Transfer rescue

- ♥ Partner has opened the bidding with 1 NT and has been doubled
- ♠ You have < 7 HCPs and decide a “rescue” is needed
- ♦ It would be better for your Partner to be Declarer because she has the strongest hand (that would not be seen)
- ♣ You ask your Partner to bid your longest suit by sending a signal (which your Partner must alert)
- ♣ If you want your Partner to bid ♣ s, redouble **XX**; for ♦ s, bid 2 ♣; for ♥ s, bid 2 ♦; for ♠ s, bid 2 ♥.

Doubling for Penalty in other circumstances

- ♥ Most partnerships agree a maximum level for Take-out penalties to apply, usually 2 ♠ s to begin with.
- ♠ Irrespective of the agreed level above, a Double after a Pre-emptive bid is a Take-out Double.
- ♦ You will need to use all of the clues available from the bidding to help you decide whether to Double for penalty.
- ♣ Quite often, your Opponents have bid to Game and you are deciding whether to Double or bid higher.
- ♥ Take into account the vulnerabilities to work out relative scores.
- ♥ If you are unsure, it is usually better to bid at the same level than to double, and to double in preference to playing a contract at a higher level
 - e.g. bid 4 ♠ over 4 ♥, but double 4 ♠ rather than bid 5 ♥.

Negative Doubles

Very brief description:

- ♥ Negative doubles are used when the Opponent to your right has stolen your bid.
- ♠ **Example: Your partner opened 1 ♥; the Opponent to your right overcalled 2 ♣. Without the overcall you would have bid 1 ♠.**
- ♦ If you have 5 ♠ s and can satisfy “Rule of 14”, you can bid 2 ♠.
- ♣ **If not, you can double to promise your partner 4 ♠ s**
- ♥ A Negative Double promises your partner that you have 4 cards in the unbid Major suit. Bidding the suit at the 2 level promises 5+ cards.

Doubling initially to show strength

Very brief description:

- ♠ Many partnerships agree that doubling an Opponent's suit bid can have an additional meaning to the Take-out Double described earlier:
 - ♥ I have 16 – 17 HCPs and 6+ cards in a suit, or
 - ♥ I have 18+ HCPs and 5+ cards in a suit
- ♦ As with the Take-out double described earlier, more information about Partner's hand is requested, before using up bidding space and possibly preventing Partner from bidding
- ♣ The responding Partner will not know that her doubling Partner is strong and bids as set out previously

Doubling an unnatural bid for Lead Indication

Very brief description:

♠ When the Opponents use a convention bid, it is asking for information, not a “Natural” bid for a contract they wish to play in.

♥ Examples are:

2 ♣ (Stayman), 2 ♦ & 2 ♥ (Red Suit Transfer), 2 ♠ (Xr to Minor) after 1 NT

You will come across more as you learn more conventions

♦ If you double any of these unnatural bids, Opposition will not wish to play a contract in the doubled suit bid and will ignore the intervention for their next bid.

♣ By this means you can tell your Partner you have a strong suit in your hand – particularly helpful when Partner has the first lead

Example 1

Vulnerability: **North / South**
Dealer: **South, who opened 2 ♦**
Opponents only pass after this first bid

West's hand:

♠ A Q 9 5 2
♥ Q 8 6
♦ K 10
♣ Q 9 4

East's hand:

♠ 8 6 4 3
♥ K 5 2
♦ J 4 3
♣ A 6 5

Bidding:

South	West	North	East
2 ♦	X	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West has 13 HCPs, a SQOT of 7 in ♠ s, which is not enough for a 2 level suit overcall. She is short in ♦ s and has tolerance (3+ cards) in the other suits, so doubles.

There is no intervening bid and West will expect East to bid, whatever her strength. East bids 2 ♠ to show her longest suit.

West knows there is a fit of 9+ cards in ♠ s but has no idea about East's strength. The opening Opponent is weak and the other Opponent did not bid, so partner could be strong enough for Game. West bids 3 ♠ to find out.

East knows from West's bid that they have a fit in ♠ s. She has 8 points and 10 losers. She passes.

Example 2

Vulnerability: **East / West**
Dealer: **South, who opened 1 ♦**

Responder can raise this to 1 ♥, after which the Opponents pass

West's hand:

♠ K J 9
♥ A Q 5
♦ 9 6
♣ Q J 8 5 3

East's hand:

♠ A 10 8 5 3
♥ J 9 4
♦ Q 5 2
♣ A 4

Bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♦	X	1 ♥	2 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West has 13 HCPs; SQOT of 7 in ♣ s – not enough for a 2 ♣ overcall.

She is short in ♦ s and has tolerance (3+ cards in each of the other suits). She doubles.

North bids 1 ♥.

East has 11 HCPs. Her right-hand Opponent has bid and so she has a “free bid”. She bids her longest suit and shows strength of 9+ HCPs by jumping a level – bidding 2 ♠.

West knows they have a combined strength of 22+ HCP. From the bidding, Opponents have at least 15 points*. She decides they are unlikely to make a Game contract in ♠ s and passes.

*After the take-out double, next player will often “stretch” strength by adding a couple of points – so may respond at the 1 level with, say, 4 HCPs rather than 6 HCPs.

Example 3

Vulnerability: **East / West**

Dealer: **South, who opened 1 ♥**

Opponents only pass after this first bid

West's hand:

♠ K 8 6
♥ 10 7
♦ A Q 9 5 2
♣ J 9 7

East's hand:

♠ A J 7 2
♥ Q 3
♦ J 10 6
♣ 10 8 5 4

Bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♥	Pass	Pass	X
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West has 10 HCPs; SQOT of 7 in ♦ s – not enough for a 2 ♦ overcall.
She does not have opening strength to double.
She passes.

East has 8 HCPs; no 5 card suit; shortage in ♥ s and tolerance in the other suits. Being in the **Protective Seat**, she can “Borrow a King”, i.e. add 3 points. She can double.

West bids her longest suit, 2 ♦.

East is happy that West plays in 2 ♦.

Example 4

Vulnerability: **East / West**
Dealer: **South, who opened 1♠**
The Opponents pass after this initial bid

West's hand:

♠ Q J 10 6 3
♥ A 8 4
♦ Q 10
♣ K J 7

East's hand:

♠ 8 5
♥ K J 5 2
♦ A 9 4 3
♣ 10 9 6

Bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	Pass	X
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West has 13 HCPs and would have opened 1♠. All she can do is pass and hope the Opponents play in ♠s.

East has 8 HCPs. Because she is in the 4th **Protective Seat**, she can assume higher strength ("borrow a King"). She is short in ♠s and has tolerance (3+ cards) in the other suits. She doubles.

West knows East will expect her to bid. However, she thinks their partnership is better defending in ♠s and will bring down a 1♠ contract. She passes, effectively turning the take-out double into a penalty double.

If she is wrong, she might be looking for a new partner!

Example 5

Vulnerability: **None**
Dealer: **South**

North

♠	A	J	9	4
♥	Q	10	8	2
♦	A	J	7	
♣	5	2		

West

♠	10	5			
♥	J	7	3		
♦	9	8	5	3	2
♣	Q	J	9		

Bidding:				
South	West	North	East	
Pass	Pass	1 NT	X	
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	Pass	
Pass				

East

♠	K	8	3	
♥	A	K	6	
♦	Q	6	4	
♣	A	8	7	6

Neither South nor West have opening hands and both pass.

North has 12 HCPs, balanced. She bids 1 NT.

East has 16 HCPs and doubles.

South

♠	Q	7	6	2
♥	9	5	4	
♦	K	10		
♣	K	10	4	3

South has 8 HCPs, so she knows their partnership has 20 – 22 HCPs and should make a 1 NT contract. She passes

East has only 4 HCPs and knows that South think N / S can make the contract. Her partnership might only have 20 HCPs. She rescues by bidding her longest suit.



Thank you