



# 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  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>When used:</b>          | After Opponents have opened with a suit (including Weak 2s and Pre-emptive bids)             | After Opponents have opened with 1 NT<br><br>or, after Opponents have bid to a level of contract, probably Game, which you do not believe they can make. |
| <b>Message to Partner:</b> | <i>I do not like the suit bid.<br/>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>                           |
| <b>Criteria:</b>           | Opening strength (12+ HCPs),<br>Shortage in bid suit,<br>Tolerance (3+ cards) in other suits | 16+ HCPs for doubling 1 NT, any shape<br><br>For other situations, confidence that the Opponents' bid contract will not make                             |

# Response if your Partner doubles for take-out

| What does the Opponent to your right do?   | If your hand is weak  | If your hand is strong  |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Opponent passes</b></p> <p><b>You are expected to bid, even with no points</b></p>   | <p><b>How weak? &lt; 9 HCPs</b></p> <p><b>Bid longest suit, except choose a Major suit with 4 cards in preference to a 5 card Minor</b></p> <p><b>Bid at the lowest level</b></p> | <p><b>How strong? 9+ HCPs</b></p> <p><b>Jump a level</b></p>  |
| <p><b>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.</b></p> |   |   |
| <p><b>Opponent bids</b></p> <p><b>You choose whether to bid; you have a “free bid”</b></p>   | <p><b>How weak? &lt; 6 HCPs</b></p> <p><b>Pass</b></p>  | <p><b>How strong? 6+ HCPs</b></p> <p><b>Same criteria as above, but be more inclined to bid if both Opponents have bid the same suit.</b></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 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 ♦   | ?    |       |      |
|       |      |       |      |
|       |      |       |      |

# 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 ♦   | ?    |       |      |
|       |      |       |      |

# 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 ♥   | ?    |       |      |
|       |      |       |      |
|       |      |       |      |

# 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♠    |      |       |      |
|       |      |       |      |

# Example 5

**North**

♠ A J 9 4  
 ♥ Q 10 8 2  
 ♦ A J 7  
 ♣ 5 2

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

**West**

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

| Bidding: |      |       |      |
|----------|------|-------|------|
| South    | West | North | East |
| ?        |      |       |      |
|          |      |       |      |
|          |      |       |      |
|          |      |       |      |

**East**

♠ K 8 3  
 ♥ A K 6  
 ♦ Q 6 4  
 ♣ A 8 7 6

**South**

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