DOUBLES

Types of double

There are several types of doubles of which the following are amongst the most used:

Take out doubles where you are conveying information to your partner and want her/him to bid their best suit

Penalty doubles where you are challenging the contract bid by the opposition imposing a penalty score if they don't make it

Negative doubles when the opponents over call your partner's opening bid and you have the other suits

When doubles are used

All types of double occur ***after*** the opposition has bid. But the circumstances in which each type is used are different. This session will focus on ***take out doubles and penalty doubles of NT bids.***

TAKE OUT DOUBLE OF A SUIT

Hand type - a hand with opening values, no obvious suit call and usually a shortage in the opposition's suit. Ideally you need 3+ cards in each of the unbid suits.

Partner response- asking partner to bid his/her longest suit with the aim of finding the best fit

When used- usually initially in the first round of bidding but may be used at second or even third rounds.

Point counts 12-15 points with ideal shape 4441 or 4432. The short suit is the one bid by the opposition.

A stronger hand - 15/16 +points - is shown by a take out double *followed by a suit call.*

Partner responses

The general rule is make the same bid you would have made if partner had opened remembering that there has already been one bid by the opposition.

If there is **no intervening bid *you must reply***

Broadly your choices with a ***suit*** are

- 0-9 bid best suit as *low* as possible
- 10/11 *jump* in your best suit, inviting partner to go on. Remember your partner should have 3 cards in your suit
- 12+ bid on to *game*

With a balanced hand – and good stops - bid no trumps

- 1 NT 6 -10 points
- 2NT with 11/12 points

The one **exception to the '*must reply'*** rule is the rare times you have 5 or 6 good cards in the suit bid by the opposition. If you then judge the opposition are unlikely to make their contract you can leave the double in as a penalty. But be *very* cautious about doing this!

Further bidding by doubler

If your partner has a **strong 'doubling' hand** he/she will either bid a new suit over yours or go to game in the found fit.

If they **double a second time** they are usually saying ' *please, please partner bid something'*.....

PENALTY DOUBLE

There are two main situations in which you should use – or at least think about using – a penalty double

- when your **opponents open 1 NT a**nd you have a **16+** point hand
- when there is **competitive bidding to game level** and you know/think your opponents are sacrificing or overstretching themselves. If you are not going to bid on then double!

In both cases you will know something about the opponent's point strength and hand shape/trump holdings. As the auction continues you will also know about your partner's hand. All of this should give you a good basis on which to decide about doubling. The advice would be if you're dithering go for it!

Penalty doubles of 12-14 point NT bids

These occur when your **opponents open 1 NT a**nd you have a **16+ point hand.**
Further doubles may be made if the opener continues with NT bids at a higher level but this is very unlikely.
The shape of the doubling hand does not have to be balanced. But strong distributional hands are probably best bid in a different way.

Partner responses

The general rule is **not** to take your partner out of a penalty double he/she has made
Already at least 28 points have been declared so there are only 11/12 points between the other players.
The main exception to this are
- if you've got 9 + points or a very distributional hand then a game contract maybe on
- if you've got a very weak hand -4/5 points or less- and you think the opposition may make the doubled contract. You then bid your longest suit best if it holds 5 or more cards

<u>When ***not*** to do a penalty double</u>

- slams – the general advice is *never* to double a slam (unless of course you're holding the AK of trumps!)
- don't double if you think the opponents can find a better suit – for example when different suits are being bid by the two opposing partners
- avoid doubling the opposition into game

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