

# A Baker's Dozen: Bridge Agreements

Discuss Them With Partner



# Agreement 1: Over a No Trump Opening

- When you open 1 no trump and an opponent in the direct seat overcalls at the two level, and that bid is passed back to you, a double is for takeout.
  - Shows a doubleton in the opponent's suit.
  - A maximum no trump bid.

# Example 1

You	Opponent	Partner	Opponent
1nt	2♥	pass	pass
double			

♠ A K 4 2

♥ 3 2

♦ K J 10

♣ K Q J 4

# Agreement 2: Over a No Trump Opening

- When the partner of the no trump bidder doubles an opponent's overcall, it is for penalty, unless you have some other agreement.

# Example 2

You	Opponent	Partner	Opponent	
1nt	pass	2 ♦*	2 ♠	*transfer
pass	pass	double		

♠ K 10 9

♥ A Q

♦ A J 10 7

♣ K 7 5 4

Your pass shows two hearts and partner's double is for penalties.

# Agreement 3

- A double by a passed hand shows 10-12 hcps and shortness in the suit bid.
- Agreement 3 example:

You	Opponent	Partner	Opponent
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pass

pass

pass

1 ♠

double

♠ 9 2

♥ A J 10 4

♦ K 9 7

♣ K 7 5 4

# One More Example for Agreement 3

North	East	South	West
pass	pass	pass	1 ♠
pass	pass	double	

♠ 9 2

♥ A J 10 4

♦ K 9 7

♣ K 7 5 4

# Agreement 4: Leading Partner's Suit

When leading partner's suit from a 3 card holding:

- Lead the lowest card if you have not supported partner.
- Lead the highest if you have supported partner.
- Lead the lowest if your holding contains a Jack or higher.



# Agreement 4: Examples

- Partner has bid spades but the opponents take the bid:
  - You have not supported partner's bid.

♠ Lead the 3

9

7

3

You have supported partner's bid

♠ Lead the 9

9

7

3

♠ Lead the 3 whether or not you have supported partner's bid.

7

3

- With 4 cards, lead lowest whether or not you have an honor.

# Agreement 5: Use the Law

- The *law of total tricks* says that you can safely bid to the level of the total number of trump you and your partner hold.
- The law is in force when there is a total of between 12 and 23 points.
- The law expects the best possible play of the hand.
- The law should be applied with common sense regarding vulnerability.
  - When vulnerability is favorable or even, apply the law liberally.
  - When vulnerability is adverse, apply the law with caution.

# Agreement 5: Example

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	1 ♠	2 ♥	??

- South should bid 4 spades at any vulnerability.
- East-West surely have a heart game, maybe a slam.

South hand  
♠ Q 8 7 5 3  
♥ 6  
♦ A 7  
♣ 9 7 6 3 2

# Agreement 5: Example 2

West	North	East	South	West hand
1 ♥	2 ♣	2 ♥	3 ♣	♠ A Q 9
??				♥ 9 8 6 4 3 2
				♦ A 7
				♣ K 8

- West should bid 3+ hearts.
- Use the law. Partner has at least three hearts.

# Agreement 6: Showing Attitude

- When partner leads a high card or leads a low spot card, indicating some strength in the suit (4<sup>th</sup> best), and dummy wins the trick with a high card, your first responsibility is to give attitude, not count or suit preference.
- You show a positive attitude toward partner's lead by playing a higher than necessary card.

# Agreement 6: Example

- Partner leads a 3 (4<sup>th</sup> best), declarer wins the trick with the ace in dummy.
  - You hold K 8 7 2
  - Play the 8 to show a positive attitude. Partner can continue that suit safely.
  - You hold 8 7 4 2
  - Play the 2 to show no interest in continuing the suit.

# Agreement 7: Giving Count

- The most important time to give count is when declarer leads toward a long suit in dummy, particularly one missing an ace or king.
- Partner must know when to win the trick in that suit.

# Agreement 7: Example

dummy

♠ 9 2

♥ J 10 4

♦ K Q J 10 8 5

♣ 5 4

you

♠ 7 5 3

♥ A Q 8 6

♦ 9 7 2

♣ K 7 6

Partner

♦ A 4

declarer

♦ 3



# Agreement 8: A Bid of 4 No Trump

- A bid of 4 no trump (by partner) after you have bid a natural no trump at any level is not Blackwood. It is quantitative.
- If you have the top point count for the bid you have made, **bid 6 no trump**.
- If you have less than the top count for your bid, **pass**.

# Agreement 8: Examples

You	Partner	
1 ♥	1 ♠	your 1nt bid shows 12-14 hcps.
1 nt	4 nt	if you have 14, bid 6 nt.
1 ♦	1 ♠	your 2nt bid shows 18-19 hcps.
2 nt	4 nt	if you have 19, bid 6 nt.
1 nt	4 nt	if you have 17, bid 6 nt.

# Agreement 8: Responding to Key-Card Blackwood

- Never show a void as an ace when partner bids 4 no trump, Key card or regular Blackwood
- There are several methods of responding to blackwood with a void. Here's one:
  - With 1 key card and a void:
    - Bid 6 of the void suit, if the void is below the agreed trump suit.
    - Bid six of the agreed trump suit, if the void is above the trump suit.
  - With two key cards and a void, but 5 no trump.
- If the void is in a suit bid naturally by partner, just show your key-cards, but not the void.

# Agreement 9: Competitive Auctions

- Jacks and queens in the suit(s) naturally bid by opponents are worthless, unless no trump will be the final contract.

# Agreement 10: Competitive Auctions

- When partner opens the bidding, in a major suit, and the next player makes a takeout double:
- You have between 5 and 9 points.
  - Raise partner to the 2 level with 3 card support.
  - Raise partner to the 3 level with 4-card support.
  - Raise partner to the 4 level with 5-card support.
- With 10 + points redouble.

# Agreement 10: Examples

Partner      Opponent      You      Opponent  
1 ♥      double      ??

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

2 ♥

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

3 ♥

♠ 9  
♥ 9 8 5 4 2  
♦ A 9 7  
♣ K 7 5 4

4 ♥

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

Redouble  
with or  
without  
support

# Agreement 11: After Your Takeout Double

- When you make a takeout double and LHO redoubles, your side is in trouble. Be very cautious.

# Agreement 11: Example

North	East	South	West	East hand
1 ♦	dble	Redble	1 ♠	♠ A K 10 2
				♥ K Q 7 3
				♦ 7 3
				♣ K Q 7 4

- East has an excellent hand: 17 points.
- Before East bids he must count West's points.
- Opener has 12+ points, East has 17, South's redouble shows 10+ points. West has 0-2 points.
- East must pass and hope for the best.



# Agreement 12: Opponent's No Trump Overcall

- When partner opens the bidding and the next person overcalls 1 no trump, the only strong bid available is a double. All other bids are non-forcing.
- Imagine the bidding:

	Partner	Opponent	You
	1♥	1 nt	??
–	2♥		non-forcing
–	2♣, 2♦, 2♠		non-forcing
–	3♣, 3♦, 3♠		non-forcing
–	Double 10+ points – penalty oriented.		

# Agreement 13: Defending a Suit Contract

- When defending a suit contract, remember that three of declarer's ways of disposing of losers are:
  - Ruffing in dummy.
  - Setting up a long suit in dummy.
  - Setting up a long side suit in declarer's hand.
- If any of these options seem available, attack. Go all out to set up defensive tricks.
- If none of these options are available, defend passively. Lead suits where you know declarer has winners and don't break new suits.