

# The Trouble With the Double

*They Don't Always Mean  
What You Might Think*

# Doubles Have Many Meanings

- Even fairly experienced bridge players sometimes get confused.
- You and your partner should have a conversation about what a double in different auctions means.
- I will show you some common auctions in which a double appears. You tell me what the double means.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 1

LHO You RHO Partner  
1♠ pass 1nt dble

♠ 4 2

♥ K Q 3 2

♦ A J 7

♣ K 10 9 4

- This is a takeout double of 1♠.
- Same strength as if it were in the direct seat.
- Even if 1nt is forcing.
- Support for the unbid suits.
- Opening bid count.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 2

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1nt	double	pass	??

- Depends on the system you play
- Standard meaning is penalty, but many conventional meanings.
- Equal hand
- D.O.N.T. - long suit
- Cappelletti - Penalty.
- Talk it over with partner.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 3

LHO	You	RHO	Partner
1 ♣	pass	1 ♥	pass
2 ♥	pass	pass	dbl

♠ Q 10 4 2  
♥ 3 2  
♦ A Q J 7  
♣ 9 4 2

- Reopening or balancing double.
- 8 to 11 points.
- Support for the unbid suits.
- If it was a full value takeout double, partner would have doubled at the first opportunity.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 4

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1♥	pass	2♦	2♠
dble	pass	??	

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

- Usually a penalty double.
- If you play 2/1 partner shows 5 diamonds and opening count.
- Don't confuse this with a support double.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Support double

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1 ♦ dble	pass	1 ♠	2 ♣

♠ K J 8  
♥ Q 10  
♦ K Q 7 5  
♣ K 8 5 4

- Usually a support double
- Partner is showing 3-card support for your spade suit.
- This is a common convention, and does not need to be alerted.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 5

You RHO Partner LHO  
2♦<sup>1</sup> 2♥ dble  
<sup>1</sup>weak

♠ A 8 5  
♥ K Q 10 9 7  
♦ 8  
♣ A Q 7 5

- This is a penalty double.
- You have described your hand fully.
- Not a negative double.
- You make this double when you have length and strength in the opponent's suit.
- Plus other defensive tricks. .

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 6

RHO You LHO Partner  
1♦ 1♥ 1♠ dble

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

- Depends on your agreement. .
- Most commonly a support double
- One convention is the Rosenkranz support double.
- 6-10 points with one of the 3 top honors in the overcalled suit.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 7

RHO   You   LHO   Partner

1♥   pass   3♥   pass

4nt   pass   5♦   dble

♠ Q 8 5

♥ 7 5

♦ A J 8 7 5 2

♣ 9 7

- Lead directing double

- The double of an artificial suit bid is always lead directing.

- Here, partner is asking for a diamond lead.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 8

RHO You LHO Partner  
1nt pass 2♣ dble

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

- Lead directing double
- You make this double when you have some strength in the suit.
- You don't know where this auction is going.
- You expect to develop some defensive tricks.
- Don't make this double simply because you have the ace.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 9

RHO You LHO Partner  
1♣ dble 2♣ dble

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

- Responsive double.
- Says, “partner, pick a major suit”
- Responsive double is on only when opponents bid and raise the same suit.
- Point count?
  - 6+ at the 2-level
  - 8+ at the 3-level
  - 10+ at the 4 level

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 10

RHO You LHO Partner  
1♥ dble 2♥ dble

♠ 10 5 3  
♥ 9 4  
♦ Q10 5 2  
♣ A J 9 7

- Responsive double.
- Says, “partner, pick a minor suit.”
- Responsive double is on only when opponents bid and raise the same suit.
- Point count?
  - 6+ at the 2-level
  - 8+ at the 3-level
  - 10+ at the 4 level

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 11

RHO You LHO Partner  
3♠ pass 4♠ dble

♠ K 10  
♥ A J 10 9  
♦ K Q J 2  
♣ A J 9

- Depends on agreement.
- Most common meaning is penalty.
- Must be prepared for partner to bid.
- Good defensive values.
- 15+ points
- Don't take this double out unless you feel pretty sure of your contract.

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 12

RHO	Partner	LHO	You	
4♥	dble	pass		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depends on Agreement.</li><li>• Must be prepared for partner to bid.</li><li>• Good defensive values.</li><li>• 15+ points</li><li>• Don't take this double out unless you feel pretty sure of your contract.</li></ul>
♠	A 5 3			
♥	A 9			
♦	Q 10 5 2			
♣	A J 9 7			

# What Does Partner's Double Mean? Example 13

You LHO Partner RHO  
1nt 2♠ Dble

- Penalty double.
- You know partner's hand and you are in charge.
- Not a negative double.

♠ K J 5 3  
♥ A 9 4  
♦ Q 8 5 2  
♣ 10 7

# Final Thoughts

- Doubles come in many forms.
  - Natural
  - Conventional
- Their use or misuse is the cause of many disagreements at the bridge table.
- Discuss with partner the meaning of your use of doubles.