

Penalty Doubles

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Double is the Most Versatile Bid in Bridge

- Takeout Double
- Negative Double
- Support Double
- Rosenkranz Double
- Responsive Double
- Balancing Doubles
- Lead Directing Double
- Penalty Double

Aggressiveness In Bridge

- Winning bridge, according to expert Mike Lawrence, requires players to compete aggressively.
- If both sides compete aggressively, there will be times when alert players can pick up a top score with a penalty double.
- In a competitive auction, when to pass, when to bid on and when to double for penalty is a matter of judgment, not an exact science.

When Should You Make a Penalty Double

- Certainly, there are some obvious times.
 - When you find yourself with a strong trump stack.
 - When opponents make a 5-level sacrifice against your sure game.
- Other times you must look at your hand, listen carefully to the bidding, and make a judgment call.
- In this lesson I will offer some examples and some advice, but there are few hard fast rules.

Two Bidding Sequences

North

1 

pass

East

Dble

Dble

South

2 

pass

West

pass

??

North

1 

3 

East

Dble

Dble

South

2 

pass

West

2 

??

How Do You Play This Sequence?

North

1 

East



1 nt

South

Dble

West

Responsive Double

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| North | East | South | West |
| 1  | Dble | 2  | Dble |

Pick a major suit

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| North | East | South | West |
| 1  | Dble | 2  | Dble |

Pick minor suit

Maybe Responsive Double

North

1 

East

Dble

South

1 

West

Dble

North

1 

East

Dble

South

2 

West

Dble

When responder changes suits: Can be responsive by agreement, but usually penalty

You are South: North East South West
 1 ♥ 2 ♦ 2 ♥ 3 ♦
 pass pass ??

♠ K 10 7 6
 ♥ 10 9 4
 ♦ Q 10 5
 ♣ A 8 3

Example 1

Double

Only 8 trump

3-3-3-4 distribution

Diamond trick, club and spade

Partner open the bidding

You are South: North

1 

pass

East

2 

pass

South


2 


??

West

3 


 7 6

 Q 10 6 4

 J 9 7 5

 K 8 3

Example 2

Bid 3 

Your side has 9 trump

Partner has a singleton dia.

You may not have a heart

trick on defense

You are South: North

1 

pass

East

2 

pass

South


2 


??


West

3 

 7 6

 Q 10 4

 J 9 7 5

 K 9 8 3

Example 3

Pass

8 trump

Too weak to double or bid

You are South: North East South West
 1 ♥ pass 2 ♥ Pass
 pass 3 ♣ ??

♠ A J 6
 ♥ K 6 4
 ♦ 10 8 7 5
 ♣ Q 8 3

Example 4

Double

Very close choice

East is balancing

You have a stronger hand than you
 might have

East will be disappointed with
 dummy.




Which Auction Shows the Stronger Hand?





Auction 1 : North East South West
 1 ♥ pass 2 ♥ Pass
 pass 3 ♣ ??

Auction 2: North East South West
 1 ♥ pass 2 ♥ 3 ♣
 pass pass ??

Auction 2 is a stronger hand

With some hands you might choose not to double even though you are sure you can set them.

| North | East | South | West |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1  | pass | 2  | Pass |
| 2  | pass | pass | ?? |

 7 5 3
 6 4
 A Q 10 8 7
 K J 3

Imagine you are West with this hand.

You are South: North

1 

pass

East South

2nt 3 


pass ??


West

4 

Example 5

 A J 6 2

 Q 8 6 4

 10 8

 A 8 3

Double

Partner has passed

Unusual no trump is an

often abused bid

You might expect to get a

club, heart and a couple

spades.

Cooperative bid

You are South: North East South West

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-----|-----|
| | ---- | ---- | 1 ♠ | 2nt |
| | 3 ♠ | 5 ♦ | ?? | |

♠ A 9 7 6 2
 ♥ A K J
 ♦ 10 8
 ♣ A 8 3

Example 6

Double

Another close call.

You might make 5 ♠

They might make it, but you have
 good defensive values

You have an good opening lead

Surely East is sacrificing.

You are South: North

1 ♣
3 ♥

East South

1 ♠ dbl*
3 ♠ ??

West

2 ♠

Example 7

*negative

♠ Q J 4

♥ A Q 7 6

♦ K 10 9 8

♣ 9 3

Double

Part of the negative double system
You have more points than your
original negative double indicates.
Partner is free to bid 4 ♥

You are South: North

1 ♠
4 ♥

East

pass
5 ♦

South

2 ♥
??

West

3 ♦

Example 8

♠ 8 4
♥ Q 7 6 4 2
♦ K J
♣ K Q J 3

Double

Close call, again.

Partner has a good hand.

Your side can take a spade, maybe
a heart, a diamond and a couple
of clubs.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|------|-------|------|
| You are South: | North | East | South | West |
| | 1 ♣ | pass | 1 ♥ | pass |
| | 1nt | pass | 2 ♦ * | 2 ♠ |
| | pass | pass | ?? | |

Example 9

*NMF

♠ J 10 8






♥ A K 7 6 4

♦ Q 10 7





♣ 8 3

Double

Dangerous to double at the two level
 Partner's 1 nt, suggests he has 3 spades
 West will have difficulty with trump.
 Partner will lead a heart.
 Partner will have some club tricks.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| You are South: | North | East | South | West |
| | ---- | 1  | 2  | 2  |
| | 3  | 3  | ?? | |

Example 10

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
|  | K Q J |
|  | J 10 6 3 |
|  | A Q 10 6 |
|  | 3 |

Double

Your spade suit pushes you to double
 Plus you know that East is going to
 get a bad trump split



You are South: North East South West
 1 ♥ 1 nt ??





Example 11
Balance of
Power

♠ K 9 8 3
 ♥ 10 6
 ♦ Q J 9 5
 ♣ K J 3

Double

How many points does West have?
 East will be playing opposite a busted partner

You are South: North East South West
 ---- ---- 1 
 redbl 2  ??

 8 3
 A 8 4
 A Q 10 5
 Q J 8 3

Example 12
Balance of
Power