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# Bidding Basics

## Negative doubles continued

In previous months we discussed the high-card point requirements for a negative double and the distributional requirements when the overcall was 1♦ or 1♥. This month, we look at other overcalls.

If the overcall is in notrump, double is not “negative.”

Opener	Overcaller	Responder
1 any	(1NT)	Dbl = Penalty/ cards (about 9+ HCP)

And, in fact, a bid by responder on the two level would be natural and *not forcing* (with a good hand, double 1NT and then bid). Here are hands where you would double a 1NT overcall after partner’s 1♣ opening:

♠A Q J 2 ♥K 10 8 7 ♦J 6 4 ♣8 5

♠K Q J 10 9 ♥A 3 2 ♦J 10 7 6 ♣2.

Opener	Overcaller	Responder
1 any	2NT	Dbl = Penalty oriented

For example, after partner’s 1♠ is overcalled with an “unusual” 2NT, double with:

♠Q ♥Q 10 7 6 ♦K 10 7 6 ♣Q J 9 8

♠6 ♥A J 5 4 2 ♦K 3 2 ♣Q 10 8 7.

If the overcall is any natural suit bid starting with 1♠ or higher, then double is not penalty. It is “negative.” It says nothing about the suit overcalled. The focus is on the other major, but there are no guarantees. The auction where the double almost always shows the other major is:

Opener	Overcaller	Responder
1m	(1♠)	Dbl

If you think of this double as meaning that responder probably would have answered 1♥, you can’t go too wrong. Here are some examples of hands that would double such a 1♠ overcall:

♠4 2 ♥A Q 6 5 ♦A 3 2 ♣K 10 3 2

(not enough hearts to bid 2♥).

♠J 3 2 ♥K Q 10 4 2 ♦2 ♣Q 10 8 7

(not enough points to bid 2♥).

If the overcall is on the two level, responder still “tries” to have four-plus cards in the other major but can sometimes be stuck. It is a good idea for responder to have somewhere to go if opener doesn’t make a pleasing rebid. Examples:

Opener	Overcaller	Responder
1♠	(2♣)	?

♠Q 5 ♥K J 7 6 ♦A 10 7 6 ♣4 3 2

A “textbook” negative double.

♠K ♥K 8 7 6 5 ♦Q 7 6 5 4 ♣3 2

Double and hope partner picks a red suit.

♠J 10 2 ♥K 7 6 5 ♦A 7 6 5 ♣3 2

Raise to 2♠ (double might lead to complications).

♠4 ♥A 3 2 ♦K 4 3 2 ♣K J 9 8 7

Pass (and hope partner doubles – more on this in future months).

Opener	Overcaller	Responder
1♦	(2♥)	?

♠Q 10 8 7 ♥A 2 ♦K J 2 ♣J 10 8 7

Perfect negative double.

♠A 8 5 2 ♥6 5 4 ♦K Q 10 2 ♣3 2

Double. If partner picks clubs, you

can go back to diamonds.

When making a marginal (you have doubt) negative double, try to anticipate what opener might rebid. It is nice to have a place to play if opener disappoints you by not picking the other major.

Next month, things get really tough, because the opponents will overcall on the three level or higher. ▶▶

### East hands for the March Bidding Box

Bid these hands with a partner. The West hands are on page 55. The North–South players are silent unless otherwise noted. Scores on page 44–47.

**Problem 1.** North deals. None vul.

♠K J ♥6 5 ♦K J 4 3 ♣A K Q 9 4

**Problem 2.** East deals. N–S vul.

♠K 9 ♥A Q J 9 6 3 ♦5 ♣A 9 7 3

**Problem 3.** South deals. E–W vul.

North overcalls 2♣, South raises to 3♣.

♠K Q 9 6 ♥J ♦K 10 8 7 6 5 ♣J 9

**Problem 4.** West deals. Both vul.

♠A K ♥Q J 8 5 ♦J 9 ♣Q 10 7 3 2

**Problem 5.** North deals. N–S vul.

North opens 3♥.

♠A K 6 3 ♥A K ♦A K J 6 4 ♣A 10

**Problem 6.** East deals. E–W vul.

♠7 ♥Q J 10 7 3 ♦A K J 5 ♣A 5 2

**Problem 7.** South deals. Both vul.

South opens 2♦.

♠4 ♥K 8 7 3 ♦10 9 2 ♣K 9 6 3 2

**Problem 8.** West deals. None vul.

♠8 ♥K 10 7 3 2 ♦A K J 9 ♣Q J 3

## Newer Players

### QUIZ

What is your call after 1♦-(1NT) with:

① ♠Q1087 ♥KJ32 ♦432 ♣J2

② ♠KQ10876 ♥2 ♦J432 ♣32

What is your call after 1♣-(1♠) with:

③ ♠A2 ♥KQ87 ♦K2 ♣QJ1087

④ ♠KJ3 ♥J107 ♦Q1087 ♣Q76

What is your call after 1♥-(2♣) with:

⑤ ♠A1087 ♥K2 ♦KQJ3 ♣542

⑥ ♠QJ87 ♥2 ♦KQ10652 ♣32

What is your call after 1♦-(2♥) with:

⑦ ♠AJ32 ♥A2 ♦AJ76 ♣A32

⑧ ♠A2 ♥KJ987 ♦32 ♣10876

### Answers

① Pass. No negative doubles after notrump overcalls.

② 2♠. Double would show a strong hand, so this is not forcing (“weak-ish”).

③ Double. Negative.

④ 1NT. Don’t make a negative double just because that is the topic this month. This shows 6–10 balanced, and spades stopped.

⑤ Double. There is no upper limit on a negative double. You will later make sure your side reaches at least game.

⑥ Double. If partner doesn’t pick spades, you can bid diamonds next (that would be weak, since you’d bid a direct 2♦ with a strong hand).

⑦ Double. For now. Lots of fireworks later.

⑧ Pass. Partner is not a mind-reader. If you double, he won’t pass. With luck, after your pass, he will double for takeout, and you will leave it in. 🤖

### CHALLENGE OF THE MONTH

Dlr: South ♠ Q9542

Vul: None ♥ A32

IMPs ♦ A32

♣ K4

♠ AK1086

♥ KJ10

♦ KJ7

♣ AJ

As South, you arrive in 6♠ against silent opponents. West leads the ♣10. Plan the play.

*continued on page 63*