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# Bidding Basics

## Negative doubles (continued)

### Opener's rebid with a minimum

What do we do as the opener after our partner makes a negative double? This month, we will assume opener has a minimum (up to about 15 total points). If you are familiar with "opener's rebid" in general, this will be an easy topic. Opener bids naturally after partner's negative double. With a balanced hand (and the opponent's suit stopped), he rebids notrump. With at least 5-4 distribution, he rebids in his second suit. With a six-card or longer suit, he rebids his suit.

Here are some examples for opener:  
After 1♦-(1♥)-Dbl-(Pass)?

(Recall from February that partner's negative double guarantees exactly four spades.)

♠Q 10 8 7 ♥J 4 2 ♦K Q 8 7 ♣K Q:  
1♠ (four spades and a minimum).

♠Q 10 8 ♥Q J 2 ♦K J 8 7 ♣K J 2:  
1NT (balanced minimum with the opponent's suit stopped).

♠K 2 ♥J 2 ♦A Q 10 8 7 ♣K 8 7 6:  
2♣ (natural, minimum; no, the doubler didn't promise clubs).

♠A 5 ♥Q 3 2 ♦A J 10 8 7 6 ♣Q 2:  
2♦ (six-plus diamonds, minimum).

What if opener is balanced without the opponent's suit stopped? For example, on the auction above, opener holds:

♠9 6 2 ♥8 7 5 ♦A K 10 7 ♣A J 10.

There is no good answer here. Some authors say that a stopper is mandatory, others can live with rebidding notrump as a better lie than lying about shape. I have no strong feelings other than to try not to hold such a hand.

After 1♣-(1♠)-Dbl-(Pass)?

♠K 2 ♥Q 5 4 ♦Q 4 3 ♣A J 10 7 6:  
1NT (balanced minimum with their suit stopped).

♠8 7 6 2 ♥2 ♦K 2 ♣A K J 7 6 5:  
2♣ (minimum with 6+ clubs).

♠A 2 ♥A Q 10 7 ♦6 5 ♣Q 10 8 7 2:  
2♥ (minimum with four hearts; no, this is not considered a reverse – it is like raising a 1♥ response to 2♥).

After 1♥-(3♣)-Dbl-(Pass)?

♠Q 2 ♥Q 8 7 6 5 ♦A Q J 2 ♣Q 2:  
3♦ (natural minimum; no, the doubler didn't promise diamonds).

♠K 4 ♥A K Q J 2 ♦6 5 4 ♣7 3 2:  
3♥ (natural minimum, "promising" six hearts, but sometimes you have to find the best lie).

♠Q 10 7 6 ♥A Q 7 6 5 ♦K J 2 ♣2:  
3♠ (natural, minimum, not considered a reverse).

♠K J ♥J 7 6 5 4 ♦K Q 2 ♣K J 8:  
3NT (still not showing anything extra, and while not thrilled to bid this, it is the best description. Partner's negative double at this level will be a hand with decent values).

♠A 2 ♥A 6 5 4 3 ♦2 ♣Q J 9 8 7:  
Pass (partner will be surprised, but you know what you are doing).

After 1♥-(4♦)-Dbl-(Pass)?

♠4 3 ♥A Q 10 8 7 6 2 ♦A 2 ♣Q 2:  
4♥ (the double is not for penalty, so take it out to your seven-card suit).

♠8 2 ♥A K 7 6 5 ♦2 ♣A J 7 6 5:  
5♣ (no, partner didn't promise clubs, but he had to be prepared to hear such a call).

♠Q 5 4 ♥A 10 7 6 5 ♦4 3 ♣A K 2:  
Pass (it is OK to leave in a high-level negative double and hope to set the opponents – pull only with extra shape).

What if opener's RHO bids after the negative double? For example, the auction begins:

1♦-(2♣)-Dbl-(3♣)?

Opener's bids are still natural, and non-jumps are still minimums. The only difference is that opener no longer has to bid. He can pass. So, with lousy, flattish hands, opener usually will pass. Volunteering a bid means opener is anxious to compete. So, on the auction above, opener would be happy to pass with:

♠A 10 8 ♥K J 7 ♦K Q 3 2 ♣7 6 5,  
but would willingly volunteer 3♥ with:  
♠A 2 ♥A Q 8 7 ♦K 10 8 7 6 ♣3 2.

### QUIZ

What is your rebid as opener after 1♣-(1♥)-Dbl-(Pass)?

- 1) ♠K 10 ♥K 10 2 ♦6 5 4 ♣A Q 10 7 6
- 2) ♠5 4 3 2 ♥A Q ♦5 4 2 ♣A Q 10 3
- 3) ♠4 ♥8 7 6 ♦A 10 2 ♣A Q J 6 5 4

What is your rebid as opener after 1♦-(2♥)-Dbl-(Pass)?

- 4) ♠K 10 ♥K 10 2 ♦A Q 10 7 6 ♣6 5 4
- 5) ♠K ♥J 10 3 2 ♦K J 10 8 ♣K Q 3 2
- 6) ♠A 2 ♥3 ♦K J 8 7 6 ♣K 10 7 6 2

What is your rebid as opener after 1♠-(3♥)-Dbl-(Pass)?

- 7) ♠K 7 6 5 4 ♥A Q ♦K 10 2 ♣Q 4 3
- 8) ♠A 8 7 6 5 ♥4 ♦A 4 3 ♣A 10 4 3

## Newer Players

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### ANSWERS

1) 1NT. Balanced minimum with hearts stopped (don't worry about having everything stopped; this is more descriptive than rebidding 2♣).

2) 1♠. A known 4-4 major-suit fit is the priority.

3) 2♣. A minimum with (typically) 6+ clubs.

4) 2NT. Same explanation as No. 1.

5) 2NT. Balanced minimum with hearts stopped. Yes, you could conceivably pass for penalties or bid the clubs, but this is most practical.

6) 3♣. Natural minimum. No, the doubler didn't promise clubs, but should be prepared for this possibility.

7) 3NT. Balanced with hearts stopped. Partner will have decent values for a three-level negative double.

8) 4♣. Natural. Is the doubler promising four clubs? No, but that is his problem, not yours. ■