



Bidding Basics

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Responding after an opponent doubles

After 1NT–Dbl

If our partner opens 1NT and the opponents double, we need to know what the double means. If it is part of a convention (DONT, for example), the double is presumably not for penalty. If Alerted, we check their convention card or ask the partner of the doubler for the explanation. We can ignore a nonpenalty (artificial) double and play “systems on” (2♣ is still Stayman, 2♦/2♥ are Jacoby transfers, etc.). Redouble can be used as business – to say we have a good hand and interest in penalizing the opponents.

What if the double of 1NT is for penalty? There are many possible ways to play here, but simplest is that everything is natural. That way, responder can escape into 2♣ or 2♦ as natural bids. The problem with this is that if the partnership isn’t on the same page, an accident awaits. Don’t try redoubling unless you and your partner are sure you know what it means. There are several ways to play it.

After 2♣–Dbl

If the opponents double your strong 2♣ opening (in which they would be showing clubs), just ignore it and play systems on. This might not be the best gadget on the market, but it is simplest, and when something so rarely occurs, it is best to keep things basic.

After 2♦ or higher is doubled

If the opponents double a 2♦ or higher preempt, it is for takeout. There

are some possible conventions to use here, but in this series, we like to keep things simple. A bid in a new suit is natural, but not forcing. For example, after 2♥–(Dbl), you can bid 3♣ with:

♠8 6 2 ♥2 ♦8 4 ♣A Q J 10 7 6 3.

Raising the preempt is weak, not invitational. Such raises should be based on the “Law” of total tricks. Be willing to raise a two-level preempt to the three level with three-card support and to the four level with four-card support. Raise a three-level preempt to four with three-card support. In other words, with nine trumps for the partnership, go to the three level, and with 10, go to four. Be wary of flat hands and being vulnerable; don’t raise 2♥–(Dbl) to 3♥ with junk such as:

♠Q 8 5 ♥7 6 2 ♦Q 7 5 2 ♣Q 5 4,

especially vulnerable!

Do, however, raise 2♠–(Dbl) to 3♠ with:

♠K 6 5 ♥2 ♦K 8 6 5 4 ♣Q 6 5 2,

and raise 3♠–(Dbl) to 4♠ with:

♠A 10 2 ♥6 5 ♦K Q 10 8 7 5 ♣9 6.

Don’t try redoubling a takeout double. One of you might think it is business and the other for rescue. Avoid such accidents.

If the opponents double a 2NT opening, it would be the first time I’ve ever seen such a thing, so don’t prepare for it!

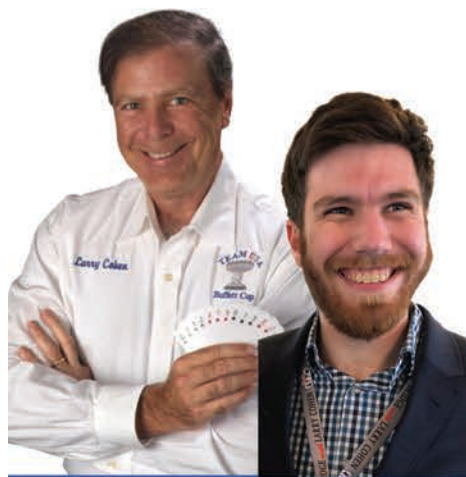
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BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

The opponents have doubled 1NT. What is your call if the double is (a) penalty or (b) artificial?

1. ♠54 ♥654 ♦32 ♣1087654

2. ♠A654 ♥Q765 ♦32 ♣J32

The opponents have doubled partner's 2♣ opening. What is your call with:

3. ♠765 ♥KQJ62 ♦542 ♣K6

4. ♠KJ65 ♥Q765 ♦J542 ♣2

What is your call after they have doubled your partner's 2♥ opening?

5. ♠654 ♥KJ2 ♦32 ♣K10763

6. ♠Q875 ♥— ♦A432 ♣J7652

What is your call after they have doubled your partner's 3♠ opening bid?

7. ♠K32 ♥4 ♦A87653 ♣765

8. ♠6 ♥KQ102 ♦KQ103 ♣Q1098

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1a. 2♣ and hope partner realizes this is natural (no conventions over a penalty double).
- 1b. Pass (or transfer to clubs if available). They are likely to take it out if it's artificial.
- 2a. Pass. We are content here.
- 2b. Pass. Don't use Stayman when you are unwilling to invite or unable to pass 2♦.
3. 2♥. Five-plus decent hearts and 8-plus points, just ignore the double.
4. 2♦. Waiting, just ignore the double.
5. 3♥. Raise to the nine-trick level with nine trumps. This is not invitational.
6. Pass. True, they might be leaving the double in, but don't run from the frying pan into the fire.
7. 4♠. Raise to the 10-trick level with 10 trumps.
8. Pass, the same as if *they* had passed. If you're tempted to bid 3NT, after you get doubled and go down five, you won't ever try it again.