

Other Kinds of Doubles

Players over the years have invented numerous uses for low-level Doubles that have nothing at all to do with Penalties. It takes a very strong hand and great Partnership defense to survive low-level Doubles consistently, so most players use these Doubles for special purposes. We have already seen the Take-Out, the Negative, the Re-Opening Double. There are many more but we want to show you two more since they are on your Convention Card. All low-level Doubles are Conventional since they really don't serve the purpose of what Doubles are suppose to mean, Penalty. Convention they are but the three we have seen are so common they are neither Alert-able or Announce-able. Of the following two, only Support Doubles are Alert-able. Responsive Doubles are not.

Responsive Double

The Responsive Double is the Advancer's counterpart to the Responders Negative Double. We are looking at bidding sequences that start like $1\spadesuit - X - 1\heartsuit - ?$; or $1\heartsuit - X - 2\heartsuit - ?$. In any such sequence if the Advancer doesn't have 5-Card suit to show Partner he might have two 4-Card suits and it would be nice if there was a way to show them. There is – the Responsive Double. There are three possibilities:

1. Opponents bid a Major and a Minor with Partner executing a TOD in-between. A double by the Advancer shows at least 4-4 in the two unbid suits.
2. Opponents Open and show support for a single suit:
 - If Opponents suit is a Minor – Responsive Double shows 4-4 in the Majors $1\spadesuit - X - 2\spadesuit - ?$
 - If Opponents suit is a Major – Responsive Double shows 4-4 in the Minors $1\heartsuit - X - 2\heartsuit - ?$

Note: There is no way to show 4-4 in a Major and a Minor in single suit response cases.

How can I remember this? A Negative Double is the tool for Opener/ Responder
The Responsive Double is the OverCall/Advancer's tool.
Both show similar type hands!! – 4-4 in unbid suits or Majors or

Minors

In effect the Responsive Double tells Partner: “You Choose between my two suits.”

Support Double

Consider this sequence $1\spadesuit - P - 1\heartsuit - 1\spadesuit; ?$. The Responder's $1\heartsuit$ bid only promises a 4-Card suit (he might indeed have 5 but who's to know?) The Opener $\spadesuit xx \heartsuit AQ9 \diamond AKxx \clubsuit Jxxx$ could have Rebid 1NT if he had a \spadesuit stopper, but without the stopper and not having 4 \heartsuit 's to support his Partners Response Opener is in a quandary. The almost ubiquitous bid, the Double, to the rescue. In this position, i.e. a rebid of *Double* by Opener shows exactly 3-Card support for Responder's suit. Of course, if Opener had held 4 \heartsuit 's the Magic-8 has been found but with 3 \heartsuit 's the Opener is only sure that there is a 7-Card fit. With the availability of the Support Double, if the Responder holds a 5-Card suit he now knows that the Partnership has the Magic-8 and continues appropriately else with 7-Card fit he has a decision to make. We can now note that the support Double can be used even if Opener has a (in this example) a \spadesuit stopper,

Maximal Double

Consider this situation. You have a good but minimum hand (14-15 PP) and open $1\spadesuit$, your LHO OverCalls $2\heartsuit$ then your partner shows support by bidding $2\spadesuit$ and RHO bids $3\heartsuit$. It appears that the HCPs are about evenly divided; your suit is solid but you can't see how you can defeat the $3\heartsuit$ contract to get a better score than you would for making $3\spadesuit$. You want to be competitive but if you bid $3\spadesuit$

Partner is likely to assume that your hand is better and take you on to Game; but you just want to be competitive without suggesting Game – you can't bid 3♠. How can you force Partner to bid 3♠? You **Double**, of course! It's a low-level Double (low-level usually means below 3♠) but it's not a negative Double – you're not responding to Partners Open; it's not a Takeout Double – you Opened; it's not a Support or Responsive Double – your Partner didn't bid a different suit; it's not a re-opening Double – Partner supported your suit. If LHO doesn't remove the double, by Passing, Partner is obligated to bid (the bidding is still below 3♠). You are telling, really forcing, Partner to bid 3♠. The Maximal Double asks Partner to bid what you wanted to bid yourself; you have said “*I have a minimum hand and not interested in Game, I just want to be competitive.*” Watch vulnerability, this bid is particular effective in favorable vulnerability conditions (you no, them yes). Another example: Opponents open 1♥ – and you OverCall 1♠: 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♥ – P; P – 2♠ – P – 3♥; P – X – P – ?.

In both examples if our intent was to invite Game, we would bid the 3-level ourselves. The fact that we exercised a low-level Double implies it is a maximal Double.