

WASHINGTON BRIDGE LEAGUE

We offer our thanks to Washington Bridge league as we, present a copy NLMaster Pointers from their 2014 Nov -Dec bulletin > Ron Zucker and Shawn Stringer. Read original - [Here](#)

Negative Doubles: Part 3

Two months ago, we began investigating Negative Doubles, which can be used on a wide variety of hands. As we mentioned last month, it would be difficult to find top players who do not use Negative Doubles in a number of situations. Advancing players should become familiar with the basics of the bid, so here we continue the series of questions and concepts to expand your knowledge.

7. What does a double after 1♦ - 2♣ promise?

This is one of the most difficult auctions in bridge. The negative double in this sequence promises only one four card major and enough values to compete. If Responder waits for both four card majors, he will get shut out of many auctions. Compare:

1♣ - 1♦ - X The negative double shows both majors.

1♦ - 2♣ - X The negative double promises only one major. Responder may have both, but only one is promised.

8. How does Responder show spade hands after his RHO overcalls 1♥?

It is important for advancing players to distinguish between making a negative double and bidding 1♠ in various one level auctions. If Responder has four spades, he should double and if he has five+ spades, he should bid 1♠. Knowing about the 5th spade is very important when Opener holds three spades. Note that after 1♣ - 1♦, Responder is allowed to bid 1♠ with only four because, in that auction, the negative double shows both majors. But in 1♣ - 1♥ auctions, Responder has the chance to distinguish his spade length by doubling vs bidding 1♠. It is worth remembering these spade showing sequences:

- 1♦ - 1♥ - X:> X shows exactly four spades
- 1♦ - 1♥ - 1♠:> 1♠ shows five or more spades
- 1♣ - 1♦ - X:> X shows four hearts and four spades
- 1♣ - 1♦ - 1♠:> 1♠ shows four or more spades.

9. How high should you play negative doubles?

Partners must discuss and agree how high to play negative doubles, and there is a place on the convention card to show this agreement. Most intermediate players play negative doubles up to and including overcalls of 3♠. New players are often unsure whether to bid if the opponents have preempted at the 3-level, but as long as Responder has sufficient strength, he must make sure that the opponent has not stolen the contract.

So think about these hands after the bidding goes 1♦ - 3♠ - ?

Ax/AQTx/Kxxx/Jxx: This is a clear negative double with game values.

xx/Axxx/KJxx/Jxx: Responder must pass. If partner is strong enough, he may reopen with a double and Responder can then bid 4♥

After gaining more experience and familiarity with negative doubles, players may want to discuss with regular partners playing these doubles through the four level.

10. What does Responder do with 8-10 HCP but without the other Major?

After 1♣ - 1♠, if Responder does not have four hearts, but does have four or more diamonds, then he can bid 2♦. While it is true that Opener may have only three diamonds, the vast majority of the time they have four or more. When partner opens 1♣, they have four or more clubs over 80% of the time.

Lacking four diamonds, then Responder has two choices: a) he can bid 1NT even without a spade stopper or b) he can raise diamonds on a 3-card suit. Both of these choices have obvious drawbacks but, since passing is not an option with this much strength, we recommend bidding 1NT even without a stopper.

Please note that some experts suggest a third option - namely making a negative double with just three hearts. We understand these are tough hands to describe but, since we believe strongly that the negative double promises four hearts, we recommend bidding 1NT as the lesser evil.

11. What does Responder bid with hands where he would like to penalty double?

Holding KQJ95/xxx/Jx/xxx, and playing negative doubles, Responder cannot double for penalties even though he would like to do so. So, Responder must pass and wait for partner to reopen the bidding with a double. Responder can then pass for penalty. Responder's initial pass is known as a penalty pass.

12. What does the double mean after opponent overcalls 1NT?

It is widely accepted that a double after a 1NT overcall is a penalty double, showing 9+ HCP. This is not a negative double.

13. What is a negative double followed by a new suit?

If Responder makes a negative double and then bids a suit, the suit bid is not forcing and usually shows a good five card suit or any six card suit.

This finishes our description of negative doubles. Next month, we'll give you a number of hands to bid and some ideas about how best to use the negative double. Until then, if you have questions, feel free to contact us at ron@motherzucker.com or ShStringer@aol.com.

Have fun, and we'll see you at the table!