

WASHINGTON BRIDGE LEAGUE

We offer our thanks to Washington Bridge league as we present a copy from their 2014 Sept - Oct bulletin on **NAGATIVE DOUBLE PART 2** by columnists > Ron Zucker and Shawn Stringer. Read original - [Here](#)

Last month, we began investigating Negative Doubles, which can be used on a wide variety of hands. Indeed, 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 are some further concepts to expand your knowledge.

1 Does a negative double promise exactly four of the unbid Major?

In our 1♠- 1♣- X auction, the Negative Doubler promises four hearts. Sometimes he has five hearts but not enough strength to bid at the two level. Holding ♠Jxx ♥KQxx ♦Qxxx ♣x, Responder has a clear negative double. Change the hand slightly to

♠ Jxx ♥KQxxx ♦Qxxx ♣x, and even though he now has five hearts, Responder should still double rather than bid 2♥. The minimum hand for Responder to bid 2♥ would be ♠xx ♥KQxxx ♦Kxx ♣Kxx.

In summary, the Negative Doubler will have no less than four hearts. If he has more than four, he makes a negative double when he does not have enough points to bid at the two level.

2. Does a negative double promise support for both unbid suits?

While Responder may hold both unbid suits, he is not required to have both of them in order to make the negative double. When there is exactly one unbid major, the Negative Double only promises 4+ cards in the unbid major, and says nothing specific about the other suits.

3. What strength is needed to make a Negative Double?

Responder's strength varies depending on the level at which he forces his partner to bid. Six HCP is sufficient if Opener can bid at the one level and this table indicates the relative strength needed for each level of bidding:

One level.....	6+ HCP
Two level	8+ HCP
Three level	10+ HCP
Four level.....	12+ HCP

4. How do you evaluate borderline strength hands?

Be aware that on borderline strength hands, the shorter Responder is in opponent's suit (and consequently the more support he has for the other suits) the more likely the negative double is the best bid. With a singleton (or void) in the opponent's suit, Responder can make a negative double with slightly fewer HCP. So, compare these hands after 1♦ - 1♠: ♠Qxx ♥xxxx ♦xxx ♣KJx - despite having four hearts, Responder is not obligated to double. This 6 HCP hand is flat and the ♠Q may be worthless.

♠ x ♥Kxxx ♦xxxx ♣QJxx - a negative double is perfectly acceptable with this 6 HCP. The singleton in opponent's suit is well placed and Responder can support all three other suits.

5. Does Responder deny a spade stopper by doubling instead of bidding NT?

No. Even though Responder may have spades well stopped, he should look for a heart fit first. Holding ♠AQT ♥Kxxx ♦QJxx ♣Jx, responder should make a negative double showing his four hearts. If his partner does not also have four hearts, then 3N is likely.

6. After 1♣- 1♦ auctions, leaving two unbid Majors, what does a double promise?

The vast majority of players agree that a double here promises 4+ cards in each major. If Responder has values but is, for example, 4-2 or 4-3 in the Majors, then he cannot double and he cannot pass. So he should bid 1♠. This is an unusual case where Responder is allowed to bid a new suit with only 4 cards (and both partners need to recognize this.) Note that Responder may have a very weak hand (such as ♠KTxxx ♥Kxxx ♦xx ♣Jx) and wants to get both suits shown in one bid.

Next month, we'll continue to investigate this crucial bidding concept. Until then, if you have questions, feel free to contact us at ron@motherzucker.com or ShStringer@aol.com.