

## WASHINGTON BRIDGE LEAGUE

We offer our thanks to Washington Bridge league as we, present a copy from their 2015 Mar -Apr bulletin on **The reopening double** by columnists > [Ron Zucker and Shawn Stringer](#). Read original - [Here](#)

Last time, we discussed what to do after partner has made a negative double of one spade. We knew what partner had shown and needed to decide what to do next.

This month, we want to talk about what to do after partner passes instead of making that negative double. When the auction goes 1♦ - 1♠ - P - P, responder may have passed because he has no points or because he has no appropriate bid. It is frequently right for Opener to reopen the bidding. Opener can reopen in various ways, and it is important to know when to rebid a suit or reopen with a double. The following concepts should be considered:

### 1. Opener is short in spades (opponent's suit:)

Logic (and basic math) tells us that the fewer spades opener has, the more support he has for the other suits. Even with a minimum hand, if opener has a singleton spade, he should reopen with a double.

### 2. Should you reopen with length in spades?

If Responder has passed and Opener is the one with length in opponent's suit, then Responder's pass was far more likely to have been due to lack of points than to length in spades. So it is unlikely that Opener will catch his partner with a penalty pass hand that we discussed in an earlier article where partner holds ♠KQJ9x. With a minimum flat hand, it is better to pass and stay out of trouble than reopen the bidding.

### 3. Should you reopen with shortness in the unbid major?

If Opener is short in the unbid major (hearts, in our example) then he should be cautious about reopening with a double. Opener may well drive the opponents from their 5-1 spade fit into a 4-4 or 5-4 heart fit!

With a 3154 shape, where Opener is very short in the unbid major, Opener should never reopen with a double. He is far more likely to hurt his side and help the opponents rather than the other way around.

### 4. What does Opener do with balanced hands?

When Opener has a balanced hand, he needs to pay attention to his spade length. With 12-14 HCP and 2 spades he should reopen with a double. With 3+ spades and 12-14 HCP, Opener just passes. Because of his own length in spades, Opener knows that partner cannot have a penalty pass. With 18-19 balanced, Opener reopens with 1NT which specifically shows 18-19 HCP after his partner has passed. Remember that with 15-17 balanced, opener would have opened 1NT.

**The bidding goes:** 1♦ - (1♠) - P - (P).

What should you do holding these hands?

1. ♠xxx ♥Qxx ♦AKJx ♣Kxx

Pass. You have a minimum hand and partner has shown weakness. You have too many spades to expect partner to have a penalty pass with strong spades. 2.

♠x ♥Kxxx ♦AJxx ♣KJxx

Double. You are short in spades and can support any of the other suits. Think about the implications of partner's pass: a) Partner may have heart length but insufficient points to make a negative double. When you reopen, you rate to find your 8 or 9 card heart fit. b) Partner may have some values but be short in hearts so could not make the negative double. Reopening gives you the best chance to find your minor suit fit. With your spade shortness, you should be safe at the two level even if partner is weak.

3. ♠xxx ♥x ♦AKxxx ♣AQJx

Bid 2♣. You cannot make a reopening double with shortness in an unbid major. If partner prefers diamonds, you should be safe with two good suits in the minors.

4. ♠AQx ♥Jxx ♦Jxx ♣Kxx

Pass. Do not be tempted to bid 1NT, because 1NT would show 18-19 balanced after partner's pass.

5. ♠xx ♥Axxx ♦AQTx ♣ATx

Double. You have a maximum hand for your 1<sup>st</sup> opening bid, and your aces are prime cards.

We hope this review helps you decide when to reopen the bidding and whether to do so with a double.

As always, if you have questions, feel free to contact us at [ron@motherzucker.com](mailto:ron@motherzucker.com) or [ShStringer@aol.com](mailto:ShStringer@aol.com).

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