



By: Don Rogers

## Types of Doubles

There is probably no bid more mysterious to average players than double. Experts use this bid a great deal under flexible circumstances and expect partner to tell by context what to do. When bridge was a social and often a money game, double allowed the non-declaring side to “double” the stakes; redouble allowed the declaring side to quadruple the stakes. In duplicate bridge, while it is sometimes advantageous to punish the opponents by doubling, the double call has taken on many new uses in addition to penalizing the opponents:

- Takeout
- Cooperative
- Responsive
- Support
- Negative
- High Level “Warning”

With all these possibilities, it is no surprise that confusion often reigns. (Even expert players are not immune to this.)

First, we’ll describe each of these in turn, and then try to lay some guidelines as to how to tell which one partner meant.

Takeout – This asks partner to bid a suit, or perhaps NT.

Cooperative – This asks partner to “do something intelligent”. Usually in a part score situation, you think it is wrong to sell out but don’t for sure what to do. Partner can bid something with a good suit, or pass for penalty if his hand is suitable. To make this kind of double you should have decent defensive values.

Responsive – When partner makes a takeout double, and RHO raises opener’s suit, a double by you says “I have values, but have no particular preference as to suit. Please pick your best suit.”

After 1D – X – 2D - ? with: S-AJxx H-Qxxx D – xxx C -Kx , you are happy with either major suit. Double and let your partner pick.

Support – After 1C – P - 1H – 1S –  
?

With: S -xx H -AJx D -Axx C -KQxxx, opener has a real problem. If responder has a 5 card heart suit, then 2 hearts is the best contract. If responder has some suit like Jxxx, a 2 club rebid is best. A support double allows opener to show this hand with a double, which shows exactly 3 card support after interference. (With four card support opener can just bid 2 hearts.) If opener does not double or raise, then responder knows that opener has at most 2 hearts.

Negative - After partner opens and RHO overcalls, a double shows some values, and support for the other two suits. See Note "When the Opponents Overcall".

High Level "Warning" – In a high-level competitive auction, it may be necessary to double to warn partner off of bidding higher. Typically, you will do this when you have two small in the enemy suit, indicating the likelihood of 2 fast losers. (If partner can control their suit, he may bid on.) This principle also comes into play when at the very low end of your previous bid, and you want to warn partner against proceeding.

"Warning" doubles apply only when it is clear that it is your hand and that the opponents are sacrificing.

Penalty – You expect to defeat the contract, and you believe that the penalty inflicted will be greater than the value of the contract your side can make. This is particularly attractive when the opponents are vulnerable, even more so when they are not.

Penalties for doubled undertricks are:

Down 1: Non-Vulnerable – 100: Vulnerable – 200  
Down 2: Non-Vulnerable – 300: Vulnerable – 500  
Down 3: Non-Vulnerable – 500: Vulnerable – 800  
Down 4: Non-Vulnerable – 800: Vulnerable – 1100

Beating a doubled, vulnerable contract by one trick is worth more than any part score.