



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(16) Dealing with an Opponent's Takeout Double

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Level: 2

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General

When partner opens the bidding and the opponent makes a takeout double, we need to know how to deal with this interference. We first want to consider what is likely to happen in the remainder of the auction. If we have just a few values (minimum hand, less than 10 HCP) then this will likely continue to be a competitive auction - with us having about half the values in the deck and the opponents having about half. In a competitive auction, it becomes important that we are able to show our suits (and find our fits) quickly so that we can effectively compete in the bidding. Thus, we want to construct a system that will allow us to do this!

Competitive Bidding Definitions

Now that we know we want to design our system to make competitive bidding easy, let's lay out the meaning of bids at the 1-level and 2-level.

Responder's bids at the 1-level are unchanged, that is, they have the same meaning as if the opponent had not doubled (new suits are forcing for 1-round and show 6+ pts.) This allows us to show our suit as Responder, even if we have a "minimum hand."

Example

1♣ X 1♠

This shows 6+ pts and 4+card ♠. It is forcing for 1-round.

If Responder bids a new suit at the 2-level, then this is no longer a 2/1 bid and its meaning changes. It shows a 5+card suit and a minimum hand, 5-9 pts.

Example

1♠ X 2♦

This shows 5-9 pts and 5+c ♦ suit. This is a non-forcing bid.

How to Show a Strong Hand - Redoubles

Now that we know how to show minimum hands (competitive hands) we need to know how to show a strong hand. The way that we show 10+ pts is to start with a redouble. This doesn't say anything about the shape of Responder's hand; it just says we have 10+ pts (invitational or better.) Responder will tell Opener about the shape of his hand on his second call.

Example

1♠ X XX P
P 2♣ 2♦

This shows 10+ pts and 5+ card ♦ suit. It is forcing for 1-round.

Example

1♣ X XX P
P 1♥ 1♠

This shows 10+ pts and 4+ card ♠ suit.

Other Options for Responding with a Strong Hand

If we can bid our suit at the 1-level (as in the first example), then we have a choice of ignoring the opponent's takeout double OR starting with a redouble. "Ignoring the opponent's double" means that we bid as if there had been no interference. This is by far the most common way to bid. If we know the opponents have a reasonably-sized fit, we are not interested in penalizing the opponents at a low level.

Note: Generally we do not make a redouble when we can bid naturally at the 1-level unless we are interested in penalizing the opponents.

How to Mark This on Your Convention Card

The way that you mark these methods on your convention card is on the left hand side of the card under the section *Vs. Opponent's T/O Double*. The first line asks "New Suits Forcing: __1 Level __2 Level"
Check that new suits are forcing at the 1-level (but not the 2-level.)

Conclusion

Just remember this, if the opponents make a takeout double, your bid of a new suit doesn't show many values. It is just competitive. *A 1-level bid is forcing and 2-level bid is non-forcing, but neither promises much!* With a good hand we can redouble.

