

## Competitive Auctions

Let's say partner opens the bidding with one of a suit and the next player overcalls in a suit. What are your options?

### If you have support for partner's suit

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ 7 2     |
| ♥ Q J 6   |
| ♦ J T 5 3 |
| ♣ A 6 5 2 |

Partner opens 1♥ and next player bids 1♠.

Raise partner to 2♥ just as you would have done if the opponent had not bid. A raise to the two level shows 6 to 9 points

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ 7 2     |
| ♥ Q J 6   |
| ♦ K J 5 3 |
| ♣ A 6 5 2 |

Partner opens 1♥ and next player bids 1♠.

The interference has provided another way of showing good support for partner. **Cue bid** the opposition suit, with 2♠. This shows 10 or more points in support of hearts.

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ 7       |
| ♥ Q J 6 4 |
| ♦ 9 8 5 3 |
| ♣ 7 6 5 2 |

Partner opens 1♥ and next player bids 1♠.

With the cue bid used to show strong hands, use direct raises of partner's suit to show weak hands. Bid 3♥ in this case.

|             |
|-------------|
| ♠ 7         |
| ♥ Q J 6 5 4 |
| ♦ 9 8 5     |
| ♣ 7 6 5 2   |

Partner opens 1♥ and next player bids 1♠.

With the cue bid used to show strong hands, use direct raises of partner's suit to show weak hands. Bid 4♥ with this hand.

### If you have a suit of your own

|             |
|-------------|
| ♠ K J 9 7 2 |
| ♥ 5 4       |
| ♦ 9 8 3     |
| ♣ K 6 2     |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♥.

Make the bid you would have bid if there had been no overcall. 1♠ promises at least 6 HCP.

|             |
|-------------|
| ♠ K 7 2     |
| ♥ 5 4       |
| ♦ A 8 3     |
| ♣ Q J 9 6 2 |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♥.

Make the bid you would have bid if there had been no overcall. Bid 2♣. A bid at the two level promises at least 10 HCP.

|             |
|-------------|
| ♠ K 7 2     |
| ♥ 5 4       |
| ♦ 9 8 3     |
| ♣ K J 9 6 2 |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♥.

Pass. The hand is not strong enough to bid at the two level.

Partner still has the opportunity to bid again.

### If you have a *stopper in the opponent's suit*

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ 9 7 2   |
| ♥ K J 5   |
| ♦ 9 8 3   |
| ♣ K 6 4 2 |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♥.

Bid 1NT showing 6 to 9 HCP and a stopper in the opponent's suit.

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ A 7 2   |
| ♥ K J 5   |
| ♦ 9 8 3   |
| ♣ K 6 4 2 |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♥.

Bid 2NT showing 10 to 12 HCP and a stopper in the opponent's suit.

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ A 7 2   |
| ♥ K J 5   |
| ♦ Q 8 3   |
| ♣ K 6 4 2 |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♥.

Bid 3NT showing 13 or more HCP and a stopper in the opponent's suit.

### What about this one?

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ 7 2     |
| ♥ K J 5 3 |
| ♦ 9 8 3   |
| ♣ A 6 4 2 |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♠.

With none of the options listed above fitting, it looks like a pass. But....

### Negative Doubles

Negative doubles were first used in the 1950s. They were originally called sputnik doubles – referring to the 1957 launch of the first Soviet satellite. Presumably, it was hoped that sputnik doubles would herald a new age of bridge.

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ 7 2     |
| ♥ K J 5 3 |
| ♦ 9 8 3   |
| ♣ A 6 4 2 |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♠.

... Double! In this situation, the double guarantees four hearts and at least 8 HCP.

### Suits Shown by Negative Doubles

Negative doubles are used in situations where:

- partner has opened one of a suit and
- next player overcalled with a different suit.

The suits shown by the negative double are:

#### Suits bid so far

Both minors

Both majors

A major and a minor

#### Suits shown by the double

At least 4-3 in the majors. (Some people prefer 4-4.)

At least four cards in each minor

At least four cards in the other major.

The double says nothing about the holding in the other minor.

## Points Needed to Make a Negative Double

Usually, you are hoping partner will be able to support your major. The points needed for a negative double reflect the level at which you are forcing partner to bid that major.

|                                       | Points Needed  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| After an overcall of 1♦ or 1♥         | 6 or more HCP  |
| After an overcall of 1♠, 2♣, 2♦ or 2♥ | 8 or more HCP  |
| After an overcall of 2♠, 3♣, 3♦ or 3♥ | 10 or more HCP |

## Special Case

There is one special situation. Suppose partner opens 1♣ or 1♦ and next player overcalls 1♥. Now, double shows **exactly** four spades. Bidding 1♠, shows five or more spades.

## Examples

|             |
|-------------|
| ♠ 5 2       |
| ♥ K J 8 3 2 |
| ♦ T 4 3     |
| ♣ A 3 2     |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♠. What do you do?

Double.

You have five hearts but 8 HCP is not sufficient to make a bid of 2♥.

|             |
|-------------|
| ♠ 5 2       |
| ♥ A Q 8 3 2 |
| ♦ J 4 3     |
| ♣ A 3 2     |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♠. What do you do?

With 11 HCP, you can make your normal 2♥ bid.

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ K T 5 2 |
| ♥ 8 2     |
| ♦ T 4 3   |
| ♣ A 9 3 2 |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♥. What do you do?

Double. You have four cards in the other major and 7 HCP.

|             |
|-------------|
| ♠ K T 8 5 2 |
| ♥ 8 2       |
| ♦ T 4 3     |
| ♣ A 3 2     |

Partner opens 1♦ and next player bids 1♥. What do you do?

Bid 1♠. You have five cards in the other major and 7 HCP.

|           |
|-----------|
| ♠ T 5 2   |
| ♥ 8 3     |
| ♦ Q J 4 3 |
| ♣ A J 3 2 |

Partner opens 1♥ and next player bids 1♠. What do you do?

Double. You have 8 HCP and four cards in both minors.

## Responding to a Negative Double

Most responses to a negative double are natural but first, you need to do some number crunching. The doubler has shown a minimum number of points (6, 8 or 10) as described earlier. Add that to your own points, not forgetting shortage points where you have a fit.

26 total points are required for a major suit game while 25 HCP are required for 3NT. With game values, bid game or make a game forcing bid. Within 3 HCP of game, invite to game. Otherwise make a minimum bid.

If the opponent on your right passed (or redoubled):

### Combined Points Action

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Minimum      | Make a minimum bid.  |
| Invitational | Make a jump bid.   |
| Game values  | If there is a clear-cut game, bid it. If not, bid the opponent's suit. |

If the opponent on your right bid something (maybe raised the overcall):

### Combined Points Action

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Minimum      | Make a minimum bid at the one or two level. If that is not possible, pass. |
| Invitational | Jump or bid at the three level.  |
| Game values  | If there is a clear-cut game, bid it. If not, bid the opponent's suit.     |

## Examples

♠ A 5  
♥ Q T 8 3  
♦ A Q 4 3  
♣ 7 3 2

You open 1♦ and next player bids 1♠. Partner doubles.  
What do you do?

Partner has shown four hearts and at least 8 HCP. You have 12 plus one for the doubleton. That is 21 in total, so make a minimum bid of 2♥.

♠ 5  
♥ K Q T 3  
♦ A K 8 4 3  
♣ A J T 2

You open 1♦ and next player bids 1♠. Partner doubles.  
What do you do?

Partner has shown four hearts and at least 8 HCP. You have 17 plus three for the singleton. That makes 28. Bid the clear-cut game of 4♥.

♠ 8 5 3  
♥ K 3  
♦ A Q 8 4  
♣ A J 7 2

You open 1♦ and next player bids 1♠. Partner doubles.  
What do you do?

Partner has shown four hearts and at least 8 HCP. You have 14, making 22 in total. With no heart support, make a natural, minimum bid of 2♣.

♠ T 5  
♥ A K 3  
♦ A Q J 8 6 3  
♣ A 2

You open 1♦ and next player bids 1♠. Partner doubles.  
What do you do?

Partner has shown four hearts and at least 8 HCP. You have 18, making 26 in total. That is enough for game but which game? Cue bid 2♠.

## After the Cue Bid

In all these examples, North has bid 1♠ after West's 1♦.

|               |             |                          |                             |
|---------------|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| West          | East        | West                     | East                        |
| ♠ T 5         | ♠ K 9 4     | 1♦                       | Double the 1♠ overcall      |
| ♥ A K 3       | ♥ Q T 8 6 3 | 2♠ (no clear-cut game)   | 3♥ (showing five hearts)    |
| ♦ A Q J 8 6 3 | ♦ 9 7       | 4♥                       |                             |
| ♣ A 2         | ♣ K 6 3     |                          |                             |
| West          | East        | West                     | East                        |
| ♠ T 5         | ♠ K 9 4 3   | 1♦                       | Double the 1♠ overcall      |
| ♥ A K 3       | ♥ Q T 8 6   | 2♠ (no clear-cut game)   | 2NT (shows a spade stopper) |
| ♦ A Q J 8 6 3 | ♦ 9 7       | 3NT                      |                             |
| ♣ A 2         | ♣ K 6 3     |                          |                             |
| West          | East        | West                     | East                        |
| ♠ T 5         | ♠ 9 4 3     | 1♦                       | Double the 1♠ overcall      |
| ♥ A K 3       | ♥ Q T 8 6   | 2♠ (no clear-cut game)   | 3♣ (four card suit)         |
| ♦ A Q J 8 6 3 | ♦ K 7       | 3♦ (at least 5 diamonds) | 4♦ (denies a spade stopper) |
| ♣ A 2         | ♣ K 8 6 3   | 5♦                       |                             |

## Deal 1

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | North                                      |  |
|  | ♠ 2<br>♥ A 9 8 5<br>♦ K J 7 3<br>♣ A Q 8 4 |  |
| West                                       |  | East                                       |
| ♠ J 8 4<br>♥ J 3 2<br>♦ Q T 6 2<br>♣ 7 3 2 |  | ♠ A K Q 7 6<br>♥ Q 7<br>♦ 9 5 4<br>♣ J 9 6 |
|  | South                                      |  |
|  | ♠ T 9 5 3<br>♥ K T 6 4<br>♦ A 8<br>♣ K T 5 |  |

| West | North             | East | South                 |
|------|-------------------|------|-----------------------|
|      | 1♦                | 1♠   | Double <sup>(1)</sup> |
| Pass | 3♥ <sup>(2)</sup> | Pass | 4♥ <sup>(3)</sup>     |
| Pass | Pass              | Pass |                       |

1. Negative double shows 8+ HCP and 4+ hearts. Better than 1NT.
2. 14 HCP and 3 for the singleton. Added to partner's 8, that is 25 HCP. Not quite enough to for game in a major.
3. 10 HCP and a point for the doubleton. Enough to accept the invitation.

By ruffing two spades and taking the diamond finesse, declarer can make 12 tricks.

## Deal 2

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | North                                      |  |
|  | ♠ 7 5<br>♥ Q 8 3<br>♦ Q 9 8 2<br>♣ K 9 4 2 |  |
| West                                       |  | East                                       |
| ♠ A Q J 8 4<br>♥ 9 6 5<br>♦ J 5<br>♣ A J 8 |  | ♠ K T 2<br>♥ T 7<br>♦ A K T 6 4<br>♣ Q 7 3 |
|  | South                                      |  |
|  | ♠ 9 6 3<br>♥ A K J 4 2<br>♦ 7 3<br>♣ T 6 5 |  |

| West              | North | East              | South |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
|                   |       | 1♦                | 1♥    |
| 1♠ <sup>(1)</sup> | 2♥    | 2♠ <sup>(2)</sup> | Pass  |
| 4♠ <sup>(3)</sup> | Pass  | Pass              | Pass  |

1. The bid of 1♠ promises five or more spades.
2. A minimum opening hand with support for partner's spades.
3. 13 HCP opposite partner's opening hand is enough for game.

There are eight top tricks and clubs will provide a ninth. The tenth trick will come from a heart ruff which must be taken before drawing trumps. If the defence lead clubs or diamonds there may well be eleven tricks.

## Deal 3

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | North                                      |  |  |
|  |  | ♠ A 9 7 6<br>♥ 6 2<br>♦ A K 9 5<br>♣ T 7 3 |  |  |
| West                                       |  |  | East                                       |  |
| ♠ 8 4 3<br>♥ K J<br>♦ 8 7<br>♣ A K J 8 6 5 |  |  | ♠ J 2<br>♥ T 9 7 5<br>♦ J 6 4 3<br>♣ Q 9 2 |  |
|  |  | South                                      |  |  |
|  |  | ♠ K Q T 5<br>♥ A Q 8 4 3<br>♦ Q T 2<br>♣ 4 |  |  |

| West | North               | East     | South             |
|------|---------------------|----------|-------------------|
|      |                     |          | 1♥                |
| 2♣   | Dble <sup>(1)</sup> | Pass     | 3♠ <sup>(2)</sup> |
| Pass | 4♠ <sup>(3)</sup>   | All Pass |                   |

- 11 HCP is more than enough for a two level negative double.
- 13 HCP plus three for the singleton. With 8 from partner, that makes 24 points. Invite to game.
- With spade support, there are twelve points.

Even though the heart finesse fails, there are still ten tricks. Ruff two clubs before drawing trumps.

## Deal 4

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | North                                      |  |  |
|  |  | ♠ K T 9 6 4 2<br>♥ Q 8 2<br>♦ K 6<br>♣ 7 5 |  |  |
| West                                       |  |  | East                                       |  |
| ♠ 5<br>♥ A 5 4<br>♦ A J 7 4 3<br>♣ A Q J 3 |  |  | ♠ A J 3<br>♥ K T 9 3<br>♦ 9 2<br>♣ K 9 6 4 |  |
|  |  | South                                      |  |  |
|  |  | ♠ Q 8 7<br>♥ J 7 6<br>♦ Q T 8 5<br>♣ T 8 2 |  |  |

| West              | North | East                | South    |
|-------------------|-------|---------------------|----------|
| 1♦                | 2♠    | Dble <sup>(1)</sup> | Pass     |
| 3♠ <sup>(2)</sup> | Pass  | 3NT <sup>(3)</sup>  | All Pass |

- The negative double at the three level requires 10 points and shows four hearts.
- No clear-cut game.
- Spade stopper

Undoubtedly, South will start with a spade. There are eight top tricks. The ninth trick will come from the heart suit with a double-finesse towards South. If South wins and plays another spade, the ♠J will come good for an extra trick.