



Lesson 52 Teacher's Notes

Negative Doubles and Penalty Passes

Aims

- To develop competitive bidding skills
- To introduce the Negative Double

Content

- 1) Revise Coping With Overcalls:
If you can still make the bid you would have made without the overcall – make it.
If the overcalls forces you to a higher level – eg 1♣- (1♠)-2♥ - you need a 5-card suit and 10+ HCP just as you would if partner opened 1♠ and you had to respond at that level.
If you bid 1NT or 2NT you promise stoppers in their suits.
When the overcall has interfered with your normal response you may have to pass.
- 2) Introduce the Negative Double, also known as a “Sputnik” Double because it became popular around the time of the first Russian space vehicles.
It is NOT a penalty double: it is a **takeout double** made after **partner has opened the bidding and RHO has overcalled in a new suit**.
(Some actually play negative doubles even over pre-emptive overcalls. Eg 1♥-(4♠)-Dbl: to start with we recommend that **doubles of game bids or higher are penalty**)
It allows you to compete in 4-card suits not strong enough to introduce voluntarily at the 2-level.
Look at hands where the Negative Double solves your bidding problems
Compare with a takeout double: like all takeout doubles, it emphasises support for any unbid majors. It is unlimited in strength, but shows at least the values to raise an opening bid of one of a major – 6+HCP. It denies **either** the values **or** the length for a forcing new suit response.
Emphasise the importance of showing four cards in any unbid majors in competition
- 3) Look at how Opener responds to the Negative Double.
A new suit at minimum level shows a minimum opener (even if it looks like a reverse)
Compare raising a suit partner has actually bid: a jump raise shows extra values
Bidding NT promises stoppers in opponent's suit
It may be the usual 15-17 – or it may be a weaker hand with 4-cards in their suit.
(Do not usually pass the double unless you have exceptional trump: your cards are **under** the bid)
- 4) Look at what happens when you have a Penalty Double.
You have to Pass.
Sometimes opener can re-open with a takeout double, which you can convert for penalties by passing. This is known as a Penalty Pass