

“Mirror” (“Shadow”) (“Stolen Bid”) Doubles

Mirror Doubles are sometimes used by Bridge Partnerships when a Player, poised to respond to Opener’s strong, (15-17 HCP) **1-NT** opening call, is confronted with a 2-level overcall by the would-be-Responder’s, right-hand Opponent (RHO). Using “**Mirror Doubles**,” Responder’s “*double*” under these circumstances, means, “*Partner, my right-hand Opponent (RHO) has just stolen the bid that I was about to make. Had my RHO not done so, I was about to make the same bid that he/she just made.*” For example, if a would-be Responder’s right-hand Opponent overcalls **2D**, and Responder “*doubles*,” it means that Responder was about to transfer to **2H**, and so on.

<u>Opponent’s Overcall</u>	<u>Meaning of the “Mirror Double”</u>
2♣	Stayman
2♦	A Transfer to Hearts
2♥	A Transfer to Spades
2♠	By Partnership Agreement

Today, although the use of “**Mirror Doubles**” remains as a staple of many recreational, local club Bridge Players, they tend *not* to be used by most of the better Players, with the exception of a “*double*,” following an interference call of “**2C**,” which is still, most often, used as a “**Stayman**” call; i.e., “**Systems Are On**,” and Opener is asked to respond as if Responder had invoked a **Stayman**, “**2C**,” initiating response. Other than this use of a “**Mirror Double**” over an interference call of “**2C**,” most of the better Players use a “*double*,” subsequent to 2-level, interference calls, above “**2C**,” as a far-more important, **Negative** or **Penalty Double**. The consensus seems to be that “**Mirror Doubles**” over interference calls at “**2D**” and above come at too high a cost, and that the loss of the ability to use a “*double*” as a **Penalty** or **Take-Out**, is too dear. More specifically, a 2-level “*double*” of an interference call of “**2D**,” “**2H**,” or “**2S**” is for **Penalty**, and a 3-level “*double*” of an interference call of “**3C**” and above is used as **Negative**; i.e., for **Take-Out**.

In Summation: When an Opponent interferes subsequent to Partner having opened with a strong **1-NT** call, acting passively is simply not an option when your side holds 23 or more HCP’s. Thus, Responder, holding 8 or more HCP’s, must either (1) bid on, or else (2) “*double*” for **Penalty**. Alternatively, if Responder were simply to “*pass*,” the Partnership would, effectively, be giving license to the Opponents to steal the bid.

Without option (2), shown above (i.e., “*doubling*” for **Penalty**), Responder, bidding on, exhibits two types of continuation bidding. All 2-level responses are natural, not forcing, and are to play; and all 3-level responses are also natural, but are Game-forcing. (See “**The Lebensohl Convention**” which offers additional responses following these and other interference calls by an Opponent subsequent to Partner’s strong **1-NT** opening call)

In summary, there are two serious difficulties with “**Mirror Doubles**” after a **1-NT** opening by Partner. (1) First, they deprive one of a **Penalty Double** which is a powerful deterrent to Opponents contemplating an overcall after a strong **1-NT** opening. Playing stolen bids is an open invitation to your Opponents to have a field day with obstructive interference at the 2-level and deprives you of the option to penalize them for their aggressive intervention. (2) Second, it is not always possible to make a “**Mirror Double**,” especially when the overcall is artificial, as in the “**Landy**,” “**DONT**,” and/or “**Cappelletti**” Conventions, to name just a few, where 2-suited interference calls are often used.

As in the case of most anything else, “Mirror Doubles” have both advantages and disadvantages, and their potential use or rejection needs to be discussed and agreed-to by each Partnership.