

USING “NEGATIVE DOUBLES”

1. Only the Responder to an opening bid by Partner can make a “Negative Double,” and it must be made at his/her first opportunity, made immediately subsequent to an intervening suit overcall (below 3S), and one other than an overcall of 1-NT, a Michaels Cue-Bid, or an Unusual-NT bid by the would-be Responder’s RHO.

	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	
a)	1C	1H	Dbl.		(A “Negative Double”) It usually evidences 4-pieces or more, or at least 3-pieces (tolerance) for Spades, as well as for Diamonds. North is <u>lacking either</u> the HCP’s to go to the 2-level, five or more Spade pieces, <u>or both.</u>)

b)	1B	1-NT	Dbl.		(This is a “Penalty Double,” <u>not</u> a “Negative Double,” since it follows a No-Trump overcall.)
----	----	------	------	--	---

c)	1H	1S	Pass	2S	
	3H	3S	Dbl.		(This is also a “Penalty Double” <u>not</u> a “Negative Double,” since it does not come immediately subsequent to the first overcall. It is a delayed “Double,” clearly for penalties!)

2. Bidding a “Negative Double” followed by a follow-up re-bid of a Minor suit evidences 6-pieces in addition to the 4-card implied Major.

You Hold: XXX AXXX KXXXXX --

	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	
	1C	1S	Dbl.	Pass	
	2C	Pass	2D		(The 2D bid shows Diamond length and a hand not strong enough to have responded 2D initially. It also evidences 4-Hearts. Think of a “Negative Double” followed by a suit as if Responder were trying to put the brakes on the bidding.)

3. “Negative Doubles” promise suits with a minimum of 4-pieces and as few as 6 HCP’s, but are unlimited as to their maximum high-card point value.

You Hold: XX AXXX AKXX QXX (Game values)

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1C	1S	Dbl.	

4. When both Minors have been bid at the 1-level, a “Negative Double” promises four cards in each of the un-bid Majors, or at the very least, 4-pieces of one Major, and 3-pieces (“Tolerance”) for the other.

You Hold: AJXX KQXX XX AXX

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1C	1D	????	

(Use, here, the “Negative Double.”)

5. When both Minors have been mentioned a “Negative Double” shows (a) either both, un-bid Majors, or (b) 4-card support for one of the Majors plus primary support for Opener’s Minor suit, or (c) the ability to bid No-Trump. Re-read this tip!!

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1C	1D	???	

You Hold:

a)	AQXX KXXX XX XXX	(Use the “Negative Double!”)
b)	JXXX XX XX AKXXX	(“Double!” If Partner bids Hearts, return to Clubs.)
c)	KXXX XX AQX XXXX	(A “fall-back” NT re-bid exists)

6. When counting points in preparation for a “Negative Double,” **do not include Jacks and Queens in the Opponent’s suit, unless you are intending to re-bid No-Trump, or are a masochist.**

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North(You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1D	1S	???	

You Hold: a) QX KXXX JXX XXXX (“Pass!” Your hand, devoid of consideration of the Spade Queen, is too weak to bid a “Negative Double.”)
 b) QX AXXX KXX XXXX (“Double!” The hand is strong enough.)
 c) AQX QXXX XX QXXX (“Double!” You can re-bid No-Trump later if Opener does not bid Hearts.)

7. A 5-card Major suit can be shown at the 2-level by bidding the suit outright with 10 (+) HCP’s, but necessitates the “Negative Double” with 7-9 HCP’s.

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North(You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1D	1S	???	

You Hold: a) XX AKXXX KXX XXX (Bid 2H, you are just strong enough.)
 b) XXX AQXXX QX XXX (“Double” and hope to bid Hearts at the 2-level, denying the strength for a direct 2H response.)

8. A “Negative Double” followed by a new suit is *not* forcing. If Responder is desirous of forcing, he/she must use a *cue-bid* of the Opponent’s suit.

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North(You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1C	1S	Dbl.	P
2C	Pass	???	

You Hold: a) XXX AXXX KXXXXX --- (Bid 2D, not forcing, shows a hand too weak to have responded a 2D bid initially.)
 b) XXX KQXX XX AKJX (Re-Bid “2S” to create a force to Game.)

9. A “Negative Double” followed by a raise of Partner’s second suit is not forcing, it is invitational.

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North(You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1C	1S	Dbl.	P
2H	Pass	???	

You Hold: a) AX AJXX KXXX XXX (Raise to 3H! You have invitational strength with 8-losers.)
 b) AX AJXX AKXX XXX (Raise to 4H.)
 (“He who knows, goes!”)

10. A “Negative Double” followed by a 2-NT re-bid is invitational showing 10-12 HCP’s.

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North(You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1C	1S	Dbl.	2S
Pass	Pass	???	

You Hold: a) AJX QJXX AX XXXX (Re-Bid 2-NT, invitational)
 b) AJX QJXX AQ XXXX (RE-Bid 3-NT, “He who knows, goes.”)

11. If, after you make a “Negative Double,” your LHO raises your RHO, and the bidding comes back to you, absent a response from Opener, a repeat “Double” is for Take-Out, showing extra values (10+ HCP’s).

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North(You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1C	1S	Dbl.	2S
Pass	Pass	???	

You Hold: AQXX XXX KJXX XX (“Double” again asking Opener to bid once more, showing Partner that you have extra values and it is your side’s hand with the majority of the HCP’s.)

12. When most of your strength is in the Opponent’s suit, avoid a “Negative Double.” It is very misleading, under these circumstances, if you use the “Negative Double.” Alternatively either bid No-Trump or “pass.” Reread this tip!!

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North(You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1C	1S	???	

You Hold: a) KXXX AXXX JX JXX (Respond 1-NT, showing 8-10 HCP’s with at least one stopper in the Opponent’s overcall suit.)

b) XXXX KQJX XX XXX (“Pass! It would be fool-hardy to “double” with this hand, even though you have four Spades. It would also be a blunder to bid 1-NT. Your hand is not strong enough. Patience is a great virtue, even in Bridge.)

13. If you “pass” a 1-level overcall and Partner re-opens the bidding with a “Take-out Double,” any bid you make shows less than it would have shown in the direct-action position had you used the “Negative Double” in the first place.

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North(You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1C	1H	Pass	Pass
Dbl.	Pass	???	

You Hold: a) XXX AJXX XXX XXX (Bid 1-NT. It shows 5-7 HCP’s with a stopper in the Opponent’s overcall suit.)

b) XXXX AJX XXX XXX (Bid 1S, Shows 4-Spades with fewer high-card points (HCP’s) than would have been necessary to have invoked a “Negative Double,” previously.)

c) XX XXXXX XXX XXX (Toss a coin and bid 2C or 2D. Your hand has no stoppers in Hearts, so you cannot bid 1-NT.)

14. When using “Negative Doubles,” you, of course, cannot make an immediate “Penalty Double.” Opener will not be capable of discerning the difference, and must legitimately presume your “double” to be “Negative.” With a strong 5- or 6-card holding in the Opponent’s overcall suit, do not gasp, just “pass” in tempo in order to be ethical.

<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North(You)</u>	<u>East</u>
1D	2C	???	

You Hold: XXX QXX XX AKXXX (“Pass.” Hopefully Partner will reopen the bidding with a re-opening “Take-out Double” which you will “pass” converting it to a “Penalty Double.” Notice that you, hee, satisfy the “Rules of 10 & 12.”)

Responding to Partner's "Negative Double"

A "Negative Double" is a "double" by an Opener's responding Partner, at his/her first opportunity, following an opening one-of-a-suit bid by Partner and subsequent to a suit overcall by the would-be Responder's Right Hand Opponent. Remember Partner's "Negative Double" is like a "Take-Out Double." It shows 6 or more HCP's at the 1-Level and 8 or more HCP's at the 2-Level, the inability to support Opener's suit, and an inability of bidding either, as-yet, un-bid, suits resulting from either a lack of HCP's, or the lack of the number of required pieces held in the desired suit (5 or more), or both. A "Negative Double" should never be made with a fit for Partner's Major suit, and usually not with a fit for Partner's Minor suit, at higher levels.

Responses, by Opener, to Partner's "Negative Double" Most responses by an Opener to Responder's "Negative Double" are not –forcing. Remember that if Opener's RHO also makes a call other than a "pass," Opener is not obliged to make any response, and, by virtue of not bidding, reflects no additional values and/or nothing of import to say, including the lack of support for Responder's presumed suit(s). Opener should pretend that Partner has bid any un-bid suit at the cheapest level possible, and respond reflecting his or her own high card point holding according to the prospects for a Game-level final contract as follows:

1. With four or more cards in Partner's presumed suit, especially any un-bid Major, support that suit at whatever level describes Opener's holdings.
2. With minimum values, bid **1-NT** with at least one stopper in the Opponent's suit. Doing so does not necessarily promise a balanced hand, but it does deny support for Responder's presumed Major. With 16-18 HCP's jump to **2-NT**.
3. Re-bid any 6-card suit, or a very good 5-card suit, at the appropriate level which describes Opener's HCP holdings.
4. Bid your second suit at the appropriate level. Responder is likely to have support, especially if Responder's "double" shows one or both Minor suits instead of a Major.
5. "Pass" if Opener's RHO has made a call other than a "pass," especially if no other call of import is appropriate for Opener to make.
6. "Pass," converting Responder's "Negative Double" to penalties, with enough strength in the Opponent's suit to set them: four or five Trumps with at least 2-honors at the 2-Level.
7. If none of the above is appropriate for your hand ... You still have to bid! **DO NOT "PASS," if you are not going to set the Opponents!**
 - a. With a chunky 3-card holding in Responder's presumed suit, such as **QJx** or better, raise Responder's suit.
 - b. With two or a bad three cards in Responder's presumed suit, you might have to bid No-Trump, even without a stopper in the Opponent's suit. ("**Crap happens!**")
8. Any Jump-Shift by Opener evidences 19 (+) high-card points, and is Game-forcing.
9. A "cue-bid" of the Opponent's overcall suit is also a Game-forcing bid by Opener, and usually denies support for Responder's presumed suit(s), especially any un-bid Major, and asks for a **3-NT** call by Responder if holding at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit, else any other call.