

Responding to Partner's "Negative Double"

The "**Negative Double**" is a "double" by an Opener's responding Partner, at his/her first opportunity, following an opening suit bid by Partner and subsequent to a suit overcall by would-be Responder's Right Hand Opponent. Remember Partner's Negative Double is like a Takeout Double. It shows 6 or more HCP's at the 1-Level and 8 or more HCP's at the 2-Level, and the inability to respond in Responder's own suit, either resulting from 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, and usually not with a fit for Partner's minor at higher levels.

Responses, by Opener, to Partner's Negative Double: Most responses by an Opener to Responder's Negative Double are non-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 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.
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.
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 unbid 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.