

## To edit

### DOUBLE TROUBLE

In the ?? previous months, (??) we studied Takeout and Negative Doubles. A Takeout Double is made *after the opponents open*. A Negative Double is made *by responder after an overcall*. This month, we move into a very important family of Doubles, starting with Responsive Doubles. Responsive Doubles are made by the Advancer. Who is that?

“Advancer” is a relatively new term in bridge bidding, but don’t let it scare you away. **The Advancer is the partner of the person who overcalled or doubled.** Another way to put it is that the Advancer is the fourth player to act after the Opening bid. Example:

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1D	1S	2D	Double

Or

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>DOUBLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1H	Double	1S	2C

In both cases, it is the partner of the overcaller/doubler who is taking action. To make it easier to follow the discussion, we call him the “Advancer.”

### RESPONSIVE DOUBLES

This cousin of the takeout double is used by the *takeout doubler’s partner*. The typical auction is:

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>DOUBLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1D	Double	2D	<b>Double</b>

As usual, it makes no sense to play this low-level double for penalties. It shows values and a desire to compete for the partscore. What values and what exactly does it show? The higher the level, the higher the requirements. On low levels (below the three-level), a responsive double can be made with as few as 7-8 HCP. There is no upper limit, though the doubler isn't likely to hold too much strength (there has already been an opening bid, a takeout double and a response). In general, a responsive doubler is saying: "I want to bid, but don't wish to choose a suit. Partner—you choose." The responsive doubler above might hold:

K987 A654 32 Q32.

He doesn't want to guess a major (possibly landing in a 4-3 fit), so he doubles to send the choice back to opener (who will bid his cheapest 4-card suit). Is the responsive doubler *guaranteeing* both majors? No. Advancer could hold, for example, KJ7 AJ4 543 J543. He has too much strength to pass, doesn't wish to barge into 3C (possibly an ugly 4-3 fit on the three-level), and he doesn't have a diamond stopper to bid 2NT. That leaves a responsive double. Here is a simple definition of what is shown by a Responsive Double: A desire to compete, but no clear action.

### Quiz:

What should Advancer do after this auction with each hand shown?

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>DOUBLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1H	Double	2H	??

- A) K987 876 65 10432
- B) K65 54 AJ32 Q1076
- C) AQJ8 32 J54 8765

Answers:

- A) Pass – Not enough strength to come in freely
- B) Double—Let the takeout doubler choose (be content to play a 4-3 spade fit on the two-level)
- C) 2S—No need for a responsive double here.

### WHAT IF THEIR RESPONDER CHANGES SUIT?

So far, their responder has always raised after the takeout double. What if he bids a new suit (or notrump), such as in this auction?

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>DOUBLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1D	Double	1S	Double

Is double still responsive? This is a matter to be decided by each partnership. There is no universal answer. If you wish to keep things consistent (not a bad idea), I recommend this: Play responsive doubles in all situations. In other words, if your partner makes a takeout double, and you double responder's bid (raise or not, notrump or not), you are showing "cards/values." On the auction above, for his double, advancer might hold: Axx QJx xxxx K10x. No other call fits this hand.

If Advancer happens to have Responder's suit, he can just bid it. So, in this auction, 2S by Advancer is natural:

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>DOUBLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1D	Double	1S	2S

Not everything in this series is 100% standard. The recommendations are the author's suggestions for maximum system gain combined with ease of memory. For Larry's complete system ideas, see LC STANDARD on [www.larryco.com](http://www.larryco.com)

## WHAT IF WE OVERCALL INSTEAD OF DOUBLING?

There is one last area of responsive doubles to examine. What if *we overcall and they raise*, such as:

<u>OPPONENT</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1D	1S	2D	Double

Should this be a responsive double? Sure, why not? Advancer is more likely to hold "not diamonds" than diamonds.

Qx Qxxx xx AJxxx is more likely than:

xx xxx QJ1098 Axx.

Here's a great general rule: "When the opponents bid and raise a suit, there is no such thing as a penalty double (at any level)." On the auction above, you wouldn't be likely to hold a penalty double of diamonds. Accordingly, double is responsive. The responsive doubler won't have three-card spade support (he would just raise). He is showing something like:

J2 AQ87 654 K653.

There are no exact parameters; the general idea is to try to have at least 4-4 in the unbid suits. The higher the level, the greater the number of HCP required for such a double.

### QUIZ:

With nobody vulnerable, the auction begins:

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>YOU</u>
2H	2S	3H	??

What do you bid with:

- D) QJ4 54 K765 K765
- E) 42 42 KQ653 AQ76
- F) 3 QJ109 A432 8765
- G) KJ AQ8 10872 J876

D) 3S. Support with support.

E) Double – to show something like this.

F) Pass. Your partner is not a mind-reader. Double is not penalty. Not enough for 3NT.

G) 3NT. If *you* don't bid it, who will? Don't make a responsive double.

### THROUGH WHAT LEVEL IS A DOUBLE RESPONSIVE?

As with all doubles in this series, there is no upper limit. If the opponents bid and raise to a high level, you can be sure they have lots of trump. It makes no sense to define double as "Penalty." If it goes

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>DOUBLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1S	Dbl	4S	Double

or

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1S	2H	4S	Double ,

advancer won't be sitting there with KQ109 in spades. The meaning of double, therefore, is "Partner—I have values, I'm willing to hear from you."

After

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1H	1S	4H	Double

the double would be responsive, but it couldn't be a hand as weak as:

Q4 32 Q8765 QJ76. A responsive double should be made, however, with:

A2 32 A10876 QJ42. As usual, with high-level, non-penalty doubles, the partner of the doubler will often leave it in. If the overcaller has nothing special, say: KQ765 J4 Q32 K87, he has nowhere to go. He'll just pass and hope to beat them in 4HX.

Review of all the doubles in this series so far: Whenever the double is on the four-plus level, the partner takes it out only with good reason (a good reason being surprising shape). On lower levels, the partner of non-penalty doubles will almost always take them out.

### QUIZ:

With nobody vulnerable, the auction begins:

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>DOUBLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>YOU</u>
1S	Double	4S	??

What do you bid with:

H) 54 AQ43 KQ54 642

I) 2 KQJ876 QJ43 32

J) QJ98 A32 654 432

H) Double. Showing values, but nothing to bid. Partner will leave it in if he has some flat, dull hand.

I) 5H. Not fun to get pushed around, but they don't allow you to bid 4H over 4S.

J) Pass. You aren't likely to get dealt a hand like this, but you just have to bite the bullet and pass (and blame me that double is not for penalty). With luck, partner, who is likely short in spades, will double again for takeout and you can convert it for penalties.

## SNAPDRAGON

One other auction to consider is:

<u>OPENER</u>	<u>OVERCALLER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>ADVANCER</u>
1D	1H	1S	Double

In this case, three suits were bid before the double. Partner has overcalled, but they haven't raised—they've changed suit. You don't think this double is for penalty (spades), do you? Not in modern bridge. It shows something like:

Axx Qx xxx KJxxx.

You want to compete, but nothing else fits. You don't have stoppers for notrump or enough trumps to raise. You don't want to trot out that so-so club suit on the two-level, so you double. Such a double typically delivers two-card support for partner and five cards in the unbid suit. This Double actually has a name (Snapdragon), but I'm getting way beyond the difficulty level I intended. Still, without knowing the name, if you stay with the motto of this series (no low-level doubles are for penalty), you'll survive such an animal (it is actually a flower).

Next month ...