

Responsive doubles



A responsive double is used after partner makes a takeout double. It is used when:

- Your left-hand opponent ("LHO") opens a suit
- Partner makes a takeout double
- Your right-hand opponent ("RHO") raises.

A double in this situation shows at least 4-4 shape in:

- the **major** suits if the opponents bid a **minor**
- the **minor** suits if the opponents bid a **major**.



What happens when your partner doubles for takeout and RHO raises opener's suit?

(1 ) x (2 ) ?

In this sequence, you know the doubler has the majors but you don't know the best place to play.

When the opponents have bid and raised a minor, and your partner has doubled for TO, a **responsive double** asks partner to bid their longest major.

When the opponents have bid and raised a major, a responsive double shows the minors.

(1 ) x (2 ) ?

Do **NOT** make a responsive double if you can bid a 4-card major instead. If you hold four spades bid spades rather than double.

How many points does a responsive double show?

A responsive double show sufficient values to compete (you can count shortage points as you are likely to have a fit with partner), at least 6+ at the two level and 9/10 TP at the three level.

Another responsive double situation

(1 ) 1  (2 ) x

The double here shows values to compete and the two unbid suits and probably tolerance for partners suit (a doubleton).

Negative doubles

A negative double is a takeout double by *responder* after partner has opened and RHO has overcalled.

1 ♣ (1 ♦) x

What does a negative double show?

Shows the two unbid suits, usually 4-4 but sometimes the doubler may only 3-cards in one of the unbid suits.

If both majors have been bid, a negative x shows **both minors**.

1 ♥ (1 ♠) x

If both minors have been bid, a negative x shows **both majors**.

1 ♣ (1 ♦) x

If a major and a minor have been bid, a negative x **promises 4 cards in the other major**.

1 ♦ (1 ♥) x

After 1 ♣ / ♦ (1 ♥), a bid of 1 ♠ shows 5 spades

After 1 ♣ / ♦ (1 ♥), a double shows exactly 4 spades*

*Similarly, if the overcall is spades, shows 5 and 4 hearts respectively

How many points does a negative double show?

The hand strength for a negative double depends on the level. There is no upper range.

At the 1 level, it shows 6+ HCP.

At the 2 level, it shows 9-10+ HCP.


You can play negative doubles through to the four level. However, the higher you are forcing your partner to bid, the better your hand needs to be. For example:

1 ♥ (4 ♣) x The x forces partner to bid at the 4 level so the doubler should have at least an opening hand.

Using a negative double when you can't bid your 5-card major

Sometimes you will have a hand where you are not strong enough to bid your suit because of the opposition's overcall:

1  (1 )

With 5 hearts and between 6-9 hcp you can't bid 2  but you can double to show hearts and tolerance for the unbid minor. If your partner bids hearts, they will be happy to see one extra!

Is a negative x forcing?

Yes, a negative x is 100% forcing, unless the overcaller's partner bids over the negative x in which case opener may pass.

What if you have the suit shown by the overcaller?

If you have length in the suit overcalled by your RHO, you should pass and hope your partner doubles for takeout, which you then can convert to a penalty double by passing.

Responding to a negative double - rebids by opener

If RHO opponent passes, you must bid.

Prefer to bid partner's major rather than a longer minor.

Reassess the strength of your hand, adding shortage points if you have a known fit with partner and bid to the appropriate level.

Prefer NT over a minor where you have no major suit fit and have a stopper in the opposition's suit.

Bidding level	Total points
Lowest available bid	Minimum hand: 12-14
Jump bid	Medium hand: 15-17
Bid game	Maximum hand: 18-19
Cuebid opponent's suit (GF)	Huge hand: 20-22 (just less than 2C opening)