

YOUR PARTNER OPENS AND RHO DOUBLES

Suggested Approach

If opener bids a major suit and you have a fit:

- Raise to 4 level (3-10 TP, 5 card support, singleton or void)
- Raise to 3 level (3-10 TP, 4 card support, singleton or void)¹
- Raise to 2 level (5-10 TP)²
- Bid 2NT (11+ TP)³

If you would have bid at the one level without the double:

- With a good 6+ card suit and 3-6 HCP, jump in your suit at 2 level
- Bid your suit at the 1 level⁴

If you have 10+ HCP:

- With a good 6 card suit, jump in the suit at the 3 level⁵
- Redouble⁶

If opener bids a minor suit and you have a 5+ card fit:

- Raise to 3 level with 3-10 TP, 6 card support and singleton or void
- Raise to 2 level with 5-10 TP⁷

Bid a 5+ card suit at the two level (no jump) with 6-9 HCP⁸

Pass

1 Opener passes or raises to game

2 Continue bidding as if there was no double

3 This is forcing. Opener bids three of the major with a minimum and anything else with about 14+ TP

4 This is forcing. Continue bidding as if there was no double

5 This is forcing

6 This is forcing

7 Continue bidding as if there was no double

8 This is not forcing

Examples

♠ K 4
♥ 4 3 2
♦ K 9 8 7
♣ J 7 4 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Dbl	?	

You have support for opener's major suit. Without the double, you would raise to 2♥. This is what you should do after the double.

♠ 4
♥ J 5 4 3 2
♦ K 9 8 7
♣ J 7 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Dbl	?	

You have support for opener's major suit with 5 card support and a singleton. Without the double, you would raise to 4♥. This is what you should do after the double. This is likely to be a good place to be and may make it more difficult for the opponents to bid again.

♠ 4
♥ J 5 4 2
♦ K 9 8 7
♣ J 7 4 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Dbl	?	

You have support for opener's major suit with 4 card support and a singleton. Without the double, you would raise to 2♥. However this is the type of hand you should raise to 3♥ when your opponent doubles. This is likely to be a good place to be and may make it more difficult for the opponents to bid again.

♠ 8 2
♥ K 8 4
♦ A Q J
♣ 9 8 7 6 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Dbl	?	

You have support for your partner's major. You have 11 TP and are too strong for a raise. You bid 2NT. Your partner will bid 3♥ with a minimum opening and you will pass.

♠ 6
♥ K J 6 4
♦ A Q 6 2
♣ Q 6 4 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Dbl	?	

You have 4 card support for your partner's major. You have 15 TP. You are too strong to raise hearts and you bid 2NT. If your partner bids 3♥ showing a minimum, you will raise to game. You have a good hand and will cooperate with any slam moves your partner makes.

♠ 4 3
♥ A Q 4 3 2
♦ J 3 2
♣ K Q 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Dbl	2 NT	Pass
?			

You have opened the bidding. Your partner has shown 3+ card heart support and 11+ TP. You have a minimum opening and bid 3♥. Your partner will pass with only 11-12 TP or raise to 4♥ with more.

♠ 4 3
♥ A Q 4 3 2
♦ 3 2
♣ A K J 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Dbl	2 NT	Pass
?			

You have opened the bidding. Your partner has shown 3+ card heart support and 11+ TP. You do not have a minimum opening and bid 4♥.

♠ K 10 9 5 4 2
♥ 4 2
♦ Q 6 4
♣ 9 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	Dbl	?	

Your partner has opened in a minor suit. Without the double, you would have a minimum bid of 1♠. Do the same after the takeout double. This bid is forcing and the continuation is the same as without the double.

♠ A K 8 6 5
♥ 3
♦ Q J 8 6
♣ 6 5 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	Dbl	?	

Your partner has opened in a minor suit. Without the double, you would have a bid 1♠. Do the same after the takeout double. This bid is forcing and the continuation is the same as without the double.

♠ 7 6 2
♥ 4 3
♦ Q 7 4 3
♣ K Q 6 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Dbl	?	

You do not have support for your partner's major suit. You do not have a suit to bid at the 1 level or a 5 card suit to bid at the 2 level. You have 7 HCP. Bid 1NT. The continuation is the same as without the double.

♠ 4 2
♥ 4 2
♦ 7 6 5
♣ A Q J 9 8 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Dbl	?	

You do not have support for your partner's major suit. You do not have a suit to bid at the 1 level but do have a 6 card suit that you can bid at the 2 level. You have 7 HCP. Without the double, you would have bid 1NT. After the double, bid 2♣ (6-9 HCP, non-forcing).

♠ 6
♥ K J 6 4
♦ A Q 6 2
♣ Q 6 4 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Dbl	?	

You do not have support for your partner's major suit. You do not have a suit to bid at the 1 level. You have 12 HCP. You should redouble., which shows 10+ HCP. You may be in a position to double your opponents' bid.

♠ Q 8
♥ A Q 8 2
♦ K 5 2
♣ 8 7 6 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Dbl	?	

You do not have support for your partner's major suit. You do not have a suit to bid at the 1 level. You have 11 HCP. You should redouble and later bid NT. You would have bid 2NT without the double, but with the double, 2NT has a different meaning.

♠ Q 9
♥ A Q J 9 4
♦ 6 2
♣ K 8 7 2

West North East
1 ♠ Dbl ?

South
You do not have support for your partner's major suit. You do not have a suit to bid at the 1 level. You do have a 5 card suit that you could bid at the 2 level, but you have 12 HCP, more than the 6-9 to bid 2♥. You should redouble and later bid your hearts.

♠ 5
♥ 5 3 2
♦ 4 3 2
♣ Q J 7 5 4 3

West North East
1 ♣ Dbl ?

South
You do not have a suit you can bid at the one level and have only 3 HCP. You have 6 card support for your partner's hand and a singleton. You should bid 3♣ which shows this hand. If your opponents are to bid again, they will have to bid at the 3 level.

♠ Q 9
♥ A Q J 9 5 4
♦ 6
♣ K 8 7 2

West North East
1 ♠ Dbl ?

South
You have a similar hand to the last one, but now have a good 6 card suit. Bid 3♥ (jump in a new suit at the 3 level) which shows 10+ HCP, a good 6 card suit and is forcing.

♠ 3
♥ 7 4
♦ K Q J 7 6 4 2
♣ A 6 3

West North East
1 ♣ Dbl ?

South
You have 10 HCP and a good 7 card diamond suit. You can bid this suit at the one level and should do so. The bidding will proceed just as if there was no double. You do not bid 2♦, a jump at the two level, because this is weak. Had your partner opened 1♠, you would have bid 3♦ to show your good 6+ card suit.

♠ Q J 10 9 8 5 3
♥ 8
♦ J 7 3
♣ 6 2

West North East
1 ♦ Dbl ?

South
You have 4 HCP and a 7 card suit that you could bid at the 1 level. However, it is better to bid 2♠, which shows 3-6 HCP, a 6 card suit and will cause the opponents to bid at the 3 level to find a likely heart fit.

Rationale

We are looking for a good way of responding to an opening bid when an opponent doubles for takeout. We are aiming to find the right denomination to play in and the correct level.

If the responder has a fit for opener's suit, we have found the right denomination and now need to find the right level. Let us assume for the moment that responder does not have adequate support.

Responder does not have support for opener's suit

- Without the takeout double, we can take our time to find any fit we might have as we don't have the threat of the opponents cooperating to find a fit and outbidding us before we find a fit. This idea is included in the thinking for our bidding system for uncontested auctions.
- With the takeout double, there is more urgency to find a fit and, to improve our chances of doing that, it is desirable for responder to be able to bid any good suit immediately even with minimal strength. Responder can do this at the one level using our normal bidding system, but to bid at the two level, we have set a requirement of 10+ HCP.
- So, when the opponent makes a takeout double, we want to relax the requirement for having 10+ HCP for a two level bid to having (say) 6+ HCP.
- There is a problem if the bid is forcing. The problem is that by the time opener rebids with no further opposition bidding, we will reasonably frequently be at the three level with perhaps no fit nor a good majority of HCP. This is almost always bad. No proper bidding system should allow this to happen in the normal course of events.
- The solution is to make the two level bid after the takeout double non-forcing, which means we must limit its strength or risk missing an obvious game if the opener passes. The upper limit is usually set at 10 HCP. We are then restricting a two level bid in a new suit after a takeout double to show 6-9 HCP.

We are then left with the problem of what to do with 10+ HCP when we don't have a suit to bid at the one level. We need to bid something or opener will have no idea that we have any values at all.

One solution is to take advantage of a new bid being available after the opponent's double, namely the redouble. We could redouble first with any 10+ HCP hand without a biddable suit at the one level. Either opener will play at the one level redoubled (which is hopefully OK because of our strength) or the opponents will bid. If that happens, we can choose to double them with some length/strength in their suit (combined with our known majority of HCP) or responder can show his/her real suit.

Now let us go back to the case where responder does have adequate support for opener's suit.

Responder does have support for opener's suit

With support, responder can immediately raise opener's suit as with the normal bidding system.

- With 5-9 TP we can raise to the two level
- With 10-11 TP we can raise to the three level
- With a weakish hand with better than minimum support and a singleton we can raise to game in a major suit.

We are left with the problem of what to do with 12+ TP and support. In our normal bidding system, we have to temporise by bidding a new suit at the two level (which we may not really have, but which is forcing) and then come clean by supporting opener's suit in our following bid. That won't

work after a takeout double if two level bids in a new suit are not forcing. Also, two level bids are now primarily to help find a fit and so should be real suits.

What about the redouble? Perhaps we redouble first and support opener's suit in our next bid to show this hand. This is a fair solution but has some drawbacks:

- The opponents will have a great opportunity to find their fit in the safety of a low level. Since we have less need of bidding space to find a fit, it would be useful to get the bidding up to a higher, less comfortable level for the opponents.
- If the opponents find good fit, they may push the level uncomfortably high despite not having the majority of HCP and responder could even be unable to safely show the fit.

A solution is to reserve a redouble for hands with 10+ HCP, no biddable suit at the one level and not adequate support for opener's suit. Instead use 2NT as a conventional, artificial, forcing bid to show a hand with adequate support for opener's suit that is too strong for a raise to the three level. The 2NT bid is not needed. Responder would redouble with a hand suitable for 2NT in the normal bidding system (i.e. without the takeout double).

An additional refinement is to change the meaning of a raise to the three level in opener's suit to one that is basically obstructive i.e. a weak hand that is somewhere between a fairly balanced raise to the two level and the very unbalanced raise to game. This is designed to bring the level up a bit higher when it is fairly safe to do so to make it more difficult for the opponents to find their possible fit at a safe level.

This means that 2NT by responder now requires 10 HCP. Opener will now bid 3 of the major as a sign-off with a minimum and do something else otherwise.

The final refinement is to decide on what we want a jump in a new suit to mean. Although we can decide it is a bid we don't make, it is useful to define a meaning for any sensible bid you might make, just to improve the precision of your bidding. However, if the bid and its meaning does not seem logical to you, there is every chance you will forget and there could be bidding misunderstandings.

The meaning for jumps in a new suit I propose is complicated and you may find it best to not use them. If you do want to use them, this is what I suggest:

- If the jump is to the three level, the bid shows a strong hand with a good 6+ card suit and is forcing. This is useful, because this is the sort of hand you don't want to redouble because you often would score better playing in your suit rather than opener's suit redoubled (where you may go down).
- If the jump is to the two level, the bid shows a weak hand with a good 6+ card suit. With a stronger hand, you are able to bid this suit at the one level (remember that is forcing and can be strong).