Micro Bridge Lesson 8

Negative Doubles

Rationale

Negative doubles are doubles made by *responder* after an opening bid by partner and an overcall by the next player. e.g. 1C – (1S) – X
Typically, the double shows both unbid suits. However, the emphasis is always on majors.

- **At the ONE level**

1C – (1D) – X shows both majors
1C – (1H) – X shows spades and diamonds. With just spades, we simply bid them.
1C – (1S) – X shows hearts. To expect diamonds as well is too restrictive
1D – (1H) – X shows both black suits
1D – (1S) – X shows hearts
1H – (1S) – X shows both minors
The opponents will frequently overcall at the one level on quite modest values. For this reason, we treat changes of suit by responder as natural and forcing. These are called **Positive Free Bids**. e.g. 1C – (1S) – 2H shows 10+ HCP, 5+hearts, forcing. With only 4 hearts or 6-9 HCP, make a neg. double.

- **At the TWO level**

The opponents will usually have a good hand when they make a simple overcall at the two level. For this reason, we can respond with a new suit and lesser values. Commonly, it is 8 – 11 HCP, 5 card suit and is not forcing. .e.g.
1D – (2C) – 2H! 8-11 HCP, 5 hearts, not forcing. These bids are called **Negative Free Bids**.
FAQ: What do I do with 12+HCP and 5 hearts?
ANS: Bid 3H not 2H. This is forcing.
FAQ: What if I only have 4 hearts?
ANS: You can double provided you have a plan. Opener will be expecting you to have both majors. If you have only one 4 card major, stopper and enough values, you will be able to revert to NT if opener has the wrong major. Sometimes, responder will have to pass initially for fear of an uncomfortable rebid from opener.
- It is a helpful plan to play that a new suit by responder at the three level is forcing

- **After pre-emptive overcalls**

Most pairs play negative doubles as high as 4H. e.g. 1C – (4H) – X is takeout. Obviously, responder needs a better hand to make the double. There will be lots of times when opener will pass, converting the doubles to penalties.

- **When can responder make a penalty double?**

1.. When they bid 4S or higher. 1C – (4S) – X
2.. When opener has preempted. 2H – (3C) – X
3.. When opener bid 1NT 1NT – (2H) – X
2 and 3 are highly descriptive opening bids. Responder is well-placed to decide how much bother the opponents are in!

- **Opener's Rebid**

Occasionally, negative doubles leave opener poorly placed with literally no "right" bid. Sometimes, opener will have to bid a *three* card suit or 1NT without a stopper (my preference).

Quiz

This is your hand as responder. Decide what you would bid for each of the auctions shown. Think about the bids which might follow from your partner, the opener.

♠64 (a) 1C – (1S) – .....
♥QJ973 (b) 1C – (1D) – .....
♦A72 (c) 1D – (2C) – .....
♣Q93 (d) 1C – (2S) – .....
(e) 1C – (1H) – .....
(f) 1C – (2H) – .....

(a) **Double**. Sure, opener won't know about your 5th heart. However, if you bid 2H immediately, partner will expect you to have 10+HCP and forcing.
(b) **1H.** Sure, opener won't know about your 5th heart. However, double would have shown both majors. Opener may still bid 1S with poor alternatives. Remember, 1H is forcing showing 6+HCP.
(c) **2H!** This is a negative free bid. 8 – 11 HCP and a five card suit. Not forcing.
(d) **double.** 3H, a new suit at the three level, would have been forcing. So, that bid is out. Sure, opener has to bid over 2SX. However, opener will bid more quietly.
(e) **1NT**. 6 – 9 HCP and their suit stopped.
(f) **Pass.** Smoothly. Opener, who is short of hearts, can hopefully reopen with a double. You will then pass, converting the double to penalties.

♠A642 (g) 1C – (1H) – .....
♥QJ97 (h) 1C – (1S) – .....
♦A72 (i) 1C – (1D) – .....
♣Q93 (j) 1C – (2S) – .....
(k) 1C – (3D) – .....
(l) 1D – (4S) – .....
(m) 1NT – (2H) – .....

(g) **Double.** If opener hasn't got spades, responder rebids 3NT.
(h) **Double.** If opener hasn't got hearts, responder rebids 3NT.
(i) **Double.** If opener hasn't got a major, responder rebids 3NT.
(j) **Double.** If opener hasn't got hearts, responder rebids 3NT.
(k) **Double.** This is tougher decision than it looks. If opener has a major. you'll be laughing. If he doesn't, you have to hope he has an unlikely diamond stopper and can rebid 3NT.
(l) **Double.** Penalties.
(m) **3H**. When they overcall our NT, cue bid is Stayman. Alternatively, **double** for penalties depending on vulnerability or **3NT**? Tough!
Here, you are opener. What is your rebid.

♠92 (n) 1C – (1S) – X – (P) – .....
♥AK64 (o) 1C – (1S) – X – (2S) – .....
♦53 (p) 1C – (1D) – P – (P) – .....
♣AQ74 (q) 1C – (2H) – X – (P) – .....

(n) **2H**. Clearcut since responder showed hearts.
(o) **Double.** This is called a responsive double. Most partnerships play an immediate 3H shows extras.
(p) **Double.** Make them bid higher. Over partner's 1S will rebid 1NT – scary.
(q) 2NT. They might make 2HX, but can I make 2NT?