

## Various “Doubles” in Bridge

The five most commonly used of the more than 2 dozen “Doubles” available in bridge are as follows:

1) The “Balancing” Double is one presented in the 4th (“Pass-Out”) seat following an opening bid by one’s LHO, and subsequent to two successive “Passes” by the 2nd and the 3rd seat players. It is a take-out double exhibiting no upper limit in strength, but with only moderate strength, it usually indicates a shortage in the Opponent’s suit and at least 3-card support for the three un-bid suits. Balancing Doubles may be slightly weaker (a minimum of 9 HCP’s with ideal distribution) as compared to direct (2nd) seat take-out doubles.

2) The “Negative” Double is a “double” by a Responder at his/her first opportunity, opposite a one-of-a-suit opening bid by Partner subsequent to an interference overcall by Responder’s RHO (Right-Hand Opponent). It is for take-out rather than a double for penalties. A Negative Double exhibits 6 (+) HCP’s at the 1-level, 8 (+) at the 2-level and 10 (+) at higher levels. There is no upper limit to the strength of Negative Doubles. Negative Doubles are not alertable! It usually shows the two-un-bid suits with either too few HCP’s or the absence of 5-cards in the desired suits, or both, such that a normal suit response is precluded.

3) The “Penalty” Double is a bid in bridge which seeks to increase the consequences should the Opponent’s fail to fulfill their designated contract. It expresses the opinion that the Opponents have bid too much, and that to penalize them is the way to get the best possible scoring results on the hand. A “Double” is presented as a “Penalty” Double when any of the following bidding conditions have been met:

- a. The bidding is at or above a pre-emptive 4S level.
- b. A double is presented by a Responder subsequent to a 1-NT overcall, immediately following Partner’s opening bid of one-of-a-suit.
- c. A “Double” is made in a competitive auction where the Doubler’s Partner has already bid.
- d. A “double” is presented subsequent to you or your Partner having made an earlier “Penalty” Double, or a “Penalty Pass” of any “Take-out” Double.
- e. If either you or your Partner has made a pre-emptive bid and the other “doubles”. IT IS NOT NEGATIVE!

4) The “Take-Out” Double is a “double” following an opening suit bid by an Opponent opposite a Partner who has not yet bid or has previously “Passed”. It shows either opening count, its equivalent, or better requesting Partner to bid his/her best suit; or else shows an overcall (Later shown by an introduction of a new suit at the time of the previous Doubler’s re-bid) with 16 (+) HCP’s and a 5-card or longer suit.

5) The “Stolen Bid” Double - Example: 1N - (2C) – X Double is "Stayman"