Maximal Double

A “Maximal Double” is a competitive conventional double used mainly in two specific competitive auctions by an Opener of the auction to differentiate between a competitive situation and a game try. It is a double used to invite to game when the auction is too crowded for any other approach.

West North East South
2H 2S 3H 1S

(In this bidding scenario, South may have one of two (2) choices.)

1. “Bid 3S” = A hand which he/she wished to compete further and to sign-off.
2. “Double” – A hand with which he/she wishes to invite to game. Note: In this instance, Responder has the option of (a) dropping the bidding at 3S, (b) continuing to game by bidding 4S, else, (c) converting the auction to a penalty scenario by “Passing.”

With the availability of the use of a “Maximal Double,” either hand can be described: i.e., 3S would be a competitive sign-off, and a “Maximal Double” would be used as a conventional bid inviting to game. To reiterate, a double invites to game, while a suit bid is merely competitive.

Prerequisites: For a Maximal Double to be in effect, the following conditions are, thus, necessary:

- The Opponents have competed and raised to the 3-level
- We have bid and raised to the 2-level in our agreed-upon suit
- Our suit outranks them by one (Spades over Hearts, or Hearts over Diamonds)
- We have not yet established a game-force.
- The doubling hand can logically be in a position to try for game

Important Note: The most apparent, obvious and evident disadvantage of the maximal double is the fact that the Partnership loses its ability to employ the call of a “double” as a penalty double.

If the competitive team’s suit is not in the maximum suit (as seen below), however, the maximal double is not needed and is never used.

West North East South
2D 2S 3D 1S

(In this bidding scenario, South may have one of three (3) choices):

1. “Bid 3S” – a competitive sign-off.
2. “Bid ‘3H’” – A conventional forcing bid showing a hand with which he/she wishes to invite to game.