

Support Doubles and Re-Doubles

A “Support Double” is any double or re-double used by Opener to show 3-card support for Responder’s presumed 4-card new suit response in a competitive auction scenario. The Support Double is usable as long as the Overcaller does *not* raise the bidding level above two of the suit introduced by the Responder’s call. A penalty double of a 1-level or a 2-level overcall is rarely successful, in any event; but, a double, of a jump-overcall over Partner’s response remains a penalty double, as before.

With 4-card or better support, standard bidding allows Opener to evidence primary support for his/her responding-Partner’s 4-card or longer suit. We are all accustomed to such bidding sequences such as:

| | | | | |
|-----|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| (a) | <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
| | 1D | Pass | 1H | 1S |
| | 2H | | | |

Here, North has shown 4 or more Hearts with a minimum 11-15 HCP count (a seven- or eight-loser hand) opening bid.

The ability for Opener to show 4-card support for any new suit bid by Responder is standard, as we have just seen. If there be bidding interference, however, by Opener’s RHO, it would be beneficial if Opener also had an additional bidding method to show 3-card support, as well, in case, by chance, Responder had responded with a 5-card suit. **“Support Doubles” and “Support Re-Doubles” serve this purpose and are both alertable.**

All of the following bidding sequences are examples of a support double or re-double:

| | <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
|-----|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| (1) | 1C | P | 1S | 2H |
| | <u>Double</u> | | | |
| (2) | 1D | P | 1H | 1S |
| | <u>Double</u> | | | |
| (3) | 1D | Pass | 1S | Double |
| | <u>Re-Double</u> | | | |

If, alternatively, Opener does not make a Support Double or Re-Double, and instead, either (1) passes, (2) re-bids his/her own suit, or (3) bids another suit or No-Trump, at his/her re-bid opportunity, the implication is that (1) Opener does not hold 3-card support, or (2) that Opener will show support later if it be present. Such negative inferences are also alertable.

In all of the following examples, the primary message is that Opener has fewer than 3-card support for Responder’s suit because, in the first, a new suit was bid, in the second, Opener has passed, and in the third, Opener has re-bid his/her own suit showing a 6th piece.

| | <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> |
|-----|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| (1) | 1D | Pass | 1H | 1S |
| | 2C | | | |
| (2) | 1D | Pass | 1S | 2H |
| | Pass | | | |
| (3) | 1H | Pass | 1S | 2C |
| | 2H | | | |
