

DOUBLES – RESPONSIVE – SESSION 6

By Baloney Bill

A **responsive double** comes in handy when partner has made a takeout double of an opponent's opening bid, and you aren't sure which suit to bid. Example:

LHO opens 1H, partner doubles, and RHO bids 2H. Your hand: Q 9 7 5 8 7 Q J 6 4 K 10 3

Most players would respond to partner's takeout double in the spade suit (2 spades). That's one level lower than bidding 3D, so seemingly a safer response.

Not quite sure what to do? Well, as hinted in the first paragraph, why not employ a responsive double instead of bidding a suit? The auction would then be: 1H – x – 2H – x –

Assume that opening bidder passes. Now it's up to partner, *who employed the original takeout double*, to select the suit. Here is partner's hand: K 10 4 5 4 A K 10 9 Q 9 6 2

Partner won't bid her 3-card spade suit. She will bid either diamonds or clubs; the experts suggest bidding the "cheapest" suit, that is, the lower ranking suit. So, partner bids 3 clubs, even though her diamonds are stronger.

OK, back to you. You realize that because partner did not bid spades, that she does not have four of them. And, because she employed a takeout double of opening bidder's hearts, your partner has fewer than ___ hearts. Let's assume two.

OK, doing a little detective work, you know that partner likely has 3 spades and 2 hearts, meaning that she has 8 cards in the minor suits. How many cards in each of her minor suits? Well, probably four of each, because if she had five of one of the minors, she might have bid that particular suit instead of doubling.

Therefore – YOU -- bid four diamonds, knowing that you have an 8-card fit. Your 4D bid is followed by three passes, and you won the contract. The whole room breaks out in applause.

So, when your opponents bid and raise the same suit, with partner making a takeout double of the first bid, your double is a responsive double, and it shows your desire to compete in the auction, but asks partner to make the decision.

Eight points is sufficient for a responsive double at the two-level, but 10 points would be better if you intend to employ a responsive double at the three-level.

We have talked about point requirements for thousands of bids, right? You know what I would suggest, so you don't go crazy trying to remember all of those point requirements? Ignore them for now, just bid. Sooner or later (sooner if you keep getting set), you will figure out how many points you will need.