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This Week in Bridge

(285) Second-Round Doubles

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Level: 2

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General

Doubles on the first round of the bidding (as well as support doubles to start the second round of the bidding) are frequently discussed and well understood calls. When the auction moves further along to the second round of the bidding is when it becomes more difficult for us to be in clear agreement with partner about the meaning of these our calls. Here we look at some of these second-round doubles in more detail.

Opener's Second-Round Doubles

In situations where support doubles do not apply, Opener can use a double on the second round of the bidding in a variety of different ways. This could be to show extra values, to get input from Responder about where best to play the contract, or even to penalize the opponents.

Example 1 - Takeout

1♦ 1♠ 1NT 2♠

X

In this auction, Opener uses a double as takeout, to show shortness in the opponent's suit and a desire to compete in the bidding.

Example 2 - Penalty

1♦ 1♠ 2♥ 2♠

X

When Responder has shown 10+ HCP and a 5-card suit, then our side has about 22+ points. A double by Opener in this situation is normally used to show a hand with good defensive values, length in the opponents' suit, and shortness in partner's suit.

Example 3 - Extra Values

1♦ 1♠ X 2♠

X

This double could be used for a variety of different types of hands. With a decent hand with 4-card ♥ suit, we simply compete by bidding 3♥. With extra values and a

4-card ♥ suit, we can start with a double and bid ♥ later in the bidding, in an effort to show a stronger hand than bidding 3♥ directly.

Interferer's Second-Round Doubles

The Interferer often uses a double on the second round of the bidding to show extra values or a desire to compete in the bidding, but no clear action for what to do next.

Example 4 - Overcall and then Double

1♦	1♠	2♦	P
P	X		

Here is an example of using a double after making an overcall to show extra values. This double usually shows only a 5-card suit and a good overcall, about 15+ points.

Example 5 - Double and Double Again

1♥	X	P	1♠
2♥	X		

This double says that interferer has extra values, about 14+ points, but has not found a fit yet. That means that Advancer bid one of Interferer's 3-card suits, because if they had 4-cards in the ♠ suit they would simply raise to 2♠.

Responder's Second-Round Doubles

Pass then Double

If partner opens the bidding and RHO overcalls, then Responder can double (negative double) to compete in the bidding. If Responder passes on their first call in this type of auction, then they cannot double later to compete in the auction. Later doubles show a trap pass of RHO's suit.

Example 6

1♦	1♠	P	2♠
P	P	X	

This double shows a trap pass of ♠ - Responder has a decent hand with good ♠! If Responder wants to compete in the bidding at this point in the auction, they just bid a new suit.

Double then Double Again

When we act (as Responder) on our first call and then double later, that is more "card-showing," not penalty (not a trap pass.) It shows a desire to compete, not sure what to do, but some defensive values.

Example 7

1♦	1♠	X	2♠
P	P	X	

This is a “card-showing” double. It shows something like 3-4-2-4 shape, with enough values to want to compete in the bidding (about 9+ points).

Freebid then Double

When the Responder makes a freebid in a suit, especially at the 2-level, they describe both their length and strength, in one call. When they have additional shape to describe they will do so by bidding again later. When Responder has additional strength to show, then they use a double on the second round of the bidding.

Example 8

1♦	1♠	2♥	2♣
P	P	X	

This is also a “card-showing” double. It shows 5+♥, 11+ points, no ♦ fit, some defense.

Conclusion

We have just scratched the surface on the large number of ways that a double can be used on the second round (or later in the bidding). These doubles require a little more discussion with partner and some additional thought at the table in order to be on the same page with partner about their intent. Work on making use of doubles more, especially on later rounds of the bidding, and you will find that you and partner do a better job of making collaborative decisions.