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This Week in Bridge

(365) Responder's Rebids After Making a Negative Double

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Level: 5 of 10 (2 of 6)

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General

Responder's rebids in competition are often more complicated (as it seems everything is in bridge). Before we make a negative double, we should have a plan of what we will do on the next round of the bidding. We can use a negative double with a large variety of different distributions and strengths, so we will need to use our rebid to better describe our hand. The rebid options we have and the one that we choose may depend on how the next round of the auction goes. Let's take a look at a variety of different auctions and rebids by Responder, so that we make sure we are on the same page with partner.

Responder's Rebid After Negative Double

Let's take a look at some auctions where partner opens with a suit at the 1-level, RHO makes a simple overcall, we make a negative double, Opener rebids, and then we must make a rebid.

Auction 1

1♦	1♠	X	P
2♥	P	__?	

Example 1

♠ 863
♥ KJ84
♦ 93
♣ A873

Here we simply pass when partner rebids 2♥.

Example 2

♠ 863
♥ KJ84
♦ K3
♣ A873

With invitational values we raise, inviting to game. In the above auction we raise to 3♥.



Example 3

♠ 863
♥ AQ84
♦ K3
♣ A873

With enough values for game we simply bid 4♥, since we have a ♥ fit.

Auction 2

1♦ 1♠ X P
2♣ P ___?

This time partner rebids the unbid minor, instead of the unbid Major. In this auction, if we held the hand in Ex 1 we would again pass. If we held the hand in Ex 2 we would give a simple raise to 3♣, showing a ♣ fit and invitational values.

But what if we held the strong hand from Ex 3? With that hand we need to make a forcing bid to ensure that our side reaches game. If we had a ♠ stopper we could simply rebid 3NT. But without a ♠ stopper, what do we do? We rebid 2♣, a *Western Cuebid*, showing a game forcing hand and asking partner for more information, specifically, if they have a ♠ stopper for playing in 3NT.

Example 4

♠ 863
♥ KJ84
♦ KT98
♣ 73

If we do not have support for the suit that partner rebids, then we “execute” our plan. Here we simply correct to 2♦.

Example 5

♠ 863
♥ KJ84
♦ KT98
♣ A3

Here we jump to 3♦ to show that we do not have interest in playing in ♣ but we do have invitational values. If we have the same distribution and values, but with good ♠ stoppers, we would rebid 2NT.

With a stronger hand, game forcing values, we simply rebid 3NT with a ♠ stopper or make a Western Cuebid without one.



Double and Bid a New Suit as Responder

As Responder in this type of auction (partner opens and RHO overcalls), if we have a good hand with a long suit of our own then we can make a forcing bid by simply bidding a new suit. Compare this to an overcall situation. When we make a simple overcall it is a limited hand (up to about 17 HCP) and if we have more than that with a long suit we “double and bid” our suit. As Responder this is different, since Responder’s new suit is forcing (6+ points at the 1-level, 10+ points at the 2-level, and 12+ points at the 3-level) if we “double and bid” a new suit, then we have length, but not strength (this is non-forcing).

Example 6

1♦ 1♠ X P
1NT P 2♥
♠ 943
♥ KQ9843
♦ 94
♣ QT9

With this hand we start with a negative double and then rebid 2♥. This 2♥ rebid shows a long suit and is non-forcing. If we had 10+ points with this shape we would have made a 2♥ freebid on the first round of the bidding.

Example 7

1♦ 1♠ X P
2♥ P 3♣
♠ 92
♥ 93
♦ A54
♣ KJT943

As Responder we have a difficult bidding decision on the first round. We start with a negative double, because we are not strong enough to make a freebid of 2♣. After Opener rebids 2♥, we then bid our new suit (even at the 3-level) to make a corrective bid – showing length without strength!

Conclusion

As Responder you usually make a “freebid” with a long suit and a good hand. The requirement of both length and strength for a freebid means that you will make a negative double with hands that don’t meet both of these requirements. That means that a negative double will contain a lot of possible shapes and strengths. As Responder you will need to use your second bid to let partner know more about your hand. The Western Cuebid is a valuable tool for forcing the bidding, if you do not have another good bid. Make sure that you feel comfortable with the follow-up bidding (and that partner agrees) so that you can avoid a mixup on the second round of the bidding.