

DEFENSE AGAINST UNDISCIPLINED WEAK TWO BIDS

An "undisciplined" weak two bid is defined as one that is quite likely to be based on a trashy suit, maybe only five long, or may well have fewer than 6 HCP.

This defense, aimed at penalizing the opponents, applies only when the vulnerability is favorable or equal. When the vulnerability is unfavorable use standard defensive bidding as described in section 12-8, Defense Against Standard Weak Two Bids. With this vulnerability a profitable penalty is unlikely if you have game your way.

While this defense is primarily for matchpoint contests (doubling the opponents into game is not uncommon, and slam is sometimes missed), it can also be used for short IMP matches, such as Swiss teams. For long IMP matches, it should be used only if the opponents are particularly wild bidders.

Here's the special defense, which is used only in the direct (i.e., not reopening) position by an unpassed hand:

-- A double is optional, showing 14 HCP or more, at least Jxx in the opposing suit, at least three defensive tricks, and a balanced hand. With a big hand a singleton in an unbid minor is all right, but you must have a place to go if partner bids that minor. With a marginal double it is good to have a fair holding in the opposing suit, and outside aces/kings rather than queens/jacks. You want to be ready with some good defense if partner takes the likely option of passing the double. It doesn't hurt to have a good lead against the doubled contract. After this double, the opponents usually cannot play the hand unless they play it doubled (an exception comes later), so advancer can make a forcing pass if her RHO bids.

-- A ranking suit (2♥ over 2♦, 2♠ over 2♥, 3♣ over 2♠) is for takeout, implying a three-suited hand with at least four cards in the unbid major and shortness in the opposing suit. It is not forcing, since a really big hand can cue bid. Advancer may pass with four cards in the suit. He should not jump to the four level in a suit without 10 HCP or so, since the ranking denomination bid is limited. A jump to 3♠ (i.e., 2♦-2♥-3♠) is okay with a little less. A jump to 4NT is regular Blackwood, as it is after a takeout double.

-- A 2NT bid shows an overcall in the ranking suit, and naturally must be a bit conservative. A plus for this bid is that it can begin the description of a two-suited hand. Advancer bids 3♣ to deny three-card support, but if the indicated suit is clubs advancer must bid 3♣ even without support. Such ranking-suit bids deny values for some forward-going bid, of course.

-- A cue bid is usually based on a good two-suited hand but (since a takeout bid is not forcing) sometimes a big three-suiter. A correction bid shows the two-suiter when partner perversely bids the fourth suit:

South	West	North	East
2♠	3♠	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥ - hearts and clubs		

A non-game advance of the cue bid is forcing, so jumping in a suit promises an independent suit, one that can play opposite a singleton.

-- Other actions are the same as when defending against standard weak two bids.

After a Direct Optional Double

South	West	North	East
2♦/2♥/2♠	Dbl	Pass	?

North can take the double out into a five-card or longer suit if he doesn't want to defend the doubled contract. The decision whether to pass or bid depends on 1) the holding in the opposing suit, 2) other defensive strength, and 3) length in the suit you are going to bid. Shortness/weakness in 1), weakness in 2), and length in 3) all point toward bidding instead of passing.

With a balanced hand containing no long suit, pass no matter how weak the hand. Bidding a four-card suit is unlikely to improve the situation, since the doubler may well have a doubleton in that suit. Besides, the doubler has an unlimited hand. Perhaps he doesn't need to be rescued from the double.

A 2NT response tends to show a good long minor and at least a partial stopper in the opposing suit:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	Pass	2NT

East might have ♠A3 ♥Q7 ♦K108732 ♣952. It's dangerous to leave the double in with such a long suit. Partner may have diamond strength that would be worth little in the defense against 2♥. Besides, you might have a game even if you can beat them a trick. The doubler passes 2NT with 14-15 HCP. With 16 HCP or more he should go on. A double stopper in opener's suit or a fit for both minors is a plus for bidding 3NT

After a 2NT response, doubler's new suit bid is forcing, showing at least a five-card suit, and denies the ability to bid 3NT.

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣/3♦/3♥	- forcing	
	3♠	- asks for a sure stopper	

West's 3♠ bid does not ask for a partial stopper, which the 2NT bid has already implied.

A cue bid response is game forcing, showing a strong hand that is unsuitable for defense against the doubled contract. It is usually based on a two-suited hand:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♦ - probably both minors in a strong hand

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥ - hearts plus a minor

When Third Seat Bids Over a Double

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	2♠	?

Unlike a (takeout) double of a standard weak two bid, the double of an undisciplined weak two bid in a major does not necessarily show anything in the other major. In this auction East cannot assume that North is psyching just because she holds five spades. She must therefore double with hands that might call for a 3♠ or 4♠ bid opposite a takeout sort of double that implies spade support.

Doubler's partner does not have to bid with a good hand that is short in the "rescue" suit, because a pass is forcing. This policy ensures that a big penalty is never missed because someone bids out of fear that partner will pass. When such a bid is passed around, a repeat double is a little more business-oriented:

	South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	3♣/3♦/3♥	Pass - forcing	
	Pass	Dbl - business, but still optional		

West has to do *something*, because East's pass is forcing, but he may have only three trumps. A double with two trumps is too dangerous, in view of East's pass.

A free bid in a new suit over the "rescue" is not constructive:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	3♣	3♦/3♥

With good values East would tend to pass and then pull a double if very short in clubs. That means "pass and pull" is the stronger action, just as it is at the five level in a competitive auction.

When the new suit is forcing over a double, it becomes possible for the opening side to play the hand undoubled:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	3♣ *	Pass
3♥	Pass - not forcing (double with extras)		
	* Forcing		

If 3♣ is not forcing, however, West's pass is forcing.

Responsive-type doubles are not used against undisciplined weak two bids:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	3♠	Dbl - business