

DEFENSE AGAINST PREEMPTIVE OPENINGS

Against Opening Three Bids

-- Doubles are primarily for takeout, but may be left in if the doubler's partner has no clear-cut bid. With a bad hand and no suit to bid, it is usually better to pass and hope the doubler can beat the contract rather than bid a three-card major or a very weak four-card minor.

Don't double a three-level opening with strength that is merely suitable for a takeout double at the one level. A takeout double made directly over an opening three bid shows more than three defensive tricks, perhaps 15 HCP minimum, even with 4-4-4-1 distribution. With less, just pass. If you're fixed, stay fixed. The requirements can be shaded, however, in the reopening position. Also, a double of 3♣ can be lighter than a double of 3♠, which asks partner to bid at a higher level.

-- A cue bid overcall implies a two-suited hand. If the cue bid is of a major suit, it implies the other major plus a minor. If the cue bid is of a minor, it implies both majors or spades and a minor. With hearts and a minor it is usually better to just bid the hearts, because a spade response could require you to bid at the five level:

North	East
3♦	4♦ with ♠AJ976 ♥K107654 ♦3 ♣A
	4♦ with ♠KQ974 ♥A3 ♦4 ♣AQ976
	3♥ with ♠A3 ♥KQ974 ♦4 ♣AQ976

A cue bid with the third hand is too risky, because you would have to bid 5♣ if partner says 4♠. The hand is not that strong. With an extremely strong hand, however, there is too much danger of the simple overcall's being passed. With ♠K4 ♥AKJ87 ♦6 ♣AKQ73, over a 3♦ preempt bid 4♦, then 5♣ (showing heart-clubs) if partner says 4♠.

-- Doubles of major suit responses to a preemptive three bid are for business, exposing a probable psych. The same principle applies for a "cue bid" of the major response:

South	West	North	East
3♦	Pass	3♠	Dbl shows a 3♠ overcall
			4♠ shows a 4♠ overcall

If you can bid 4♠, do so, because the double of 3♠ implies an inability to bid 4♠, although the double is unlimited with a two-suited hand. With a strong two-suiter in the unbid suits, East must cue bid 4♦.

The same principle applies when RHO bids a new major over partner's double:

South	West	North	East
3♥	Dbl	3♠	?

The 3♠ bid is psychic more often than not. If East was going to bid 3♠ willingly, he doubles. Except for doubling, both partners should bid as if the 3♠ bid had not occurred. This means that a double of 3♠ is a

limited call: "That's what I wanted to bid." If East was going to bid 4♠, he now bids 4♠, natural, not a cue bid, and not forcing. If he wants to make a forcing cue bid, he must bid 4♥.

Also see section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

Against Opening Four or Five Bids

-- If the opening is artificial, some sort of transfer bid (as with NAMYATS, wherein a 4♣ opening shows hearts, a 4♦ opening shows spades), use the defense described in section 12-5, Defense Against Transfer Bids.

-- If the opening is natural:

North East

4♠ Dbl shows a *good* opening bid. Mostly a business double, but East can stand a takeout if West thinks he can make five or six of a suit. East should *pass*, not double, with ♠KQ108 ♥4 ♦A763 ♣A853.

4♠ 4NT is for takeout, with emphasis on the minors. Does not deny heart support, however. The 4NT bidder could have hearts and diamonds, planning to bid 5♦ if partner says 5♣. The 4NT bid does not promise club length, but strongly implies diamond length, so West should not get too excited with a long club suit.

4♥ Dbl shows a *good* opening bid, probably with adequate trump support for spades (J10x or better). A marginal double should have at least four spades.

4♥ 4NT is for takeout with emphasis on the minors. Might have some spade support, but definitely shows length in both minors.

4♣/4♦ 4NT is a natural bid, not a takeout, probably based on a long solid holding in the unbid minor. At IMP scoring, however, this is Blackwood.

5♣/5♦ Dbl Primarily for takeout

See section 6-7, 4NT - Blackwood or Natural?

Advancing Partner's Game Overcalls

-- If the game bid was a jump, takeouts are cue bids, except that 5♥ or 5♠ over 5♣ or 5♦ is natural (but 6♣ over 5♦ is a cue bid, trying for a grand slam).

-- If the game bid was non-jump, all suit takeouts are natural.

MARVIN VS STRONG NOTRUMP OPENINGS

Yet another defense against notrump openings? Is there no end? Well, no apologies, because this one does it all. It provides for the description of all one-suited, two-suited, or three-suited hands.

"Marvin vs Notrump" applies against all opening notrump bids, with slight differences for weak and strong notrumps. A strong notrump is defined as having a minimum of 14 HCP. See the next section for the defense against non-strong notrumps.

Common sense dictates the strength required for all actions, taking into consideration both vulnerability and the high card point (HCP) range of the 1NT bid. The defense applies in both direct and reopening seats. It also applies against 1NT rebids that show a strong notrump opening (e.g., 1NT rebid by a Precision 1♣ opener), provided that the defending side has not bid or doubled prior to the 1NT bid.

Business Doubles

A double by an unpassed hand is a penalty double. In the direct seat it may be based on either superior high card strength or partly on the basis of a good lead. With seven spades AKQ you can double with no other points! When balancing it is dangerous to double with scattered high-card strength, since opener is sitting over you. Therefore this double indicates that a long strong suit is held and partner is expected to lead that suit. He will usually guess right by leading his shortest small-card suit, giving preference to a major if in doubt.

Simple Suit Overcalls

A 2♠ bid is natural by a passed hand only. Other simple suit overcalls at the two level are artificial, showing one of three types of hand:

- A three-suited hand, short in the bid suit
- A two-suited hand, with the two suits just below the bid suit
- A one-suited hand with the suit below the bid suit

For this purpose, clubs and spades are "touching," and clubs rank "above" spades. The three-suited takeout is especially valuable in the balancing position, when you know 1) partner has some strength and 2) that he is probably going to lead your short suit. Be conservative with a short major in this position, however, because partner is likely to have length in that suit only.

-- An overcall of 2♣ shows both majors plus diamonds, or both majors only, or a one-suited hand with spades (a 6-4 hand is considered "one-suited"). The best three-suited distribution is 5=4=4=0, but 4=4=4=1 is also good. Might be 4=5=4=0, 5=4=3=1, or 4=5=3=1. Sometimes I do it with 5=3=4=1 or 4=3=5=1, what the hell, but 2♣ promises at least four spades if the hand is not strong enough to bid a red suit after a 2♠ response (e.g., a strong hand with 3=4=5=1 or 3=5=4=1 distribution). This provides a second way of showing a one-suited hand with spades, a 2♠ overcall being the other. The latter is the weaker way to show spades.

Partner ("advancer") chooses one of the three suits. He bids a four-card or longer major, preferring spades to hearts. He may (holding some high cards) bid a three-card major in preference to a four-card diamond suit. Lacking three cards in a major, he might have to bid a three-card diamond suit. Finally, with 2=2=2=7 he bids 3♣ or passes.

If advancer bids 2♦ in response to 2♣, overcaller bids 2♥ with both majors only. Advancer picks a major, preferring spades with equal length. Accordingly, it is better to pass a doubtful hand rather than overcall with 4-5 in the majors. If overcaller has spades only, then of course he bids spades over either 2♦ or 2♥:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	Pass	4=4=4=1	
		2♥ - hearts and spades	
		2♠ - spades only	

With a good hand, advancer can bid 2NT to inquire. Answers:

- 3♣ - three-suited hand, 4=4=4=1
- 3♦ - three-suited hand, five diamonds
- 3♥ - both majors
- 3♠ - spades only

Advancer now passes or picks a contract. Since 2NT shows a good hand, overcaller should jump (4♦, 4♥ or 4♠) with a good hand himself. Since 3♣ is forcing, it is not necessary to jump with that sort of hand. Overcaller can defer the decision whether to bid game or not until he has heard what the 2NT bidder says next.

-- An overcall of 2♦ shows both majors plus clubs, or spades and clubs, or clubs only. The best three-suited distribution is 5=4=0=4, but 4=4=1=4 is also good. Might be 4=5=0=4.

Advancer generally bids a major, preferring spades to hearts with equal length. Avoid the 3♣ response when holding three cards in a major, unless the clubs are quite good. Bid 3♦ only as a last resort with 2=2=7=2 distribution. With a two-suiter or one-suiter, overcaller corrects as necessary if advancer bids a suit not held:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠ - spades and clubs		
	3♣ - clubs only		

Advancer's 2NT response inquires. Answers:

- 3♣ - clubs only
- 3♦ - three-suited hand, four hearts
- 3♥ - three-suited hand, five hearts
- 3♠ - spades and clubs

-- An overcall of 2♥ shows both minors plus spades, or minors only, or diamonds only. Advancer bids 2♠ with three or more, otherwise picks a minor, preferring diamonds with equal length. Overcaller corrects as necessary:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♥	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	- both minors	
	3♦	- diamonds only	
	3♥	- three-suited hand, four spades	
	3♠	- three-suited hand, five spades	

The Two Notrump Overcall

A 2NT overcall is a transfer to clubs, but may be based on a diamond suit. If the latter, the forced 3♣ bid will be converted to 3♦. The bid denies a good hand, with which one of the above methods would be used to get to three of a minor. This is not Alertable because it's a cue bid. If overcaller bids a major next, that is forcing and shows a powerful hand, possibly two-suited.

Jump Overcalls

A bid of 3♣ shows clubs and hearts (rounded suits) and 3♦ shows diamonds and spades (pointed suits). With a very strong hand that fears the jump will be passed, overcaller can start with 2NT and bid the major on the next round.

A jump in a major suit is strong and shows an independent suit. It implies a fear that advancer might pass a conventional overcall. Advancer can raise with a few high cards, even when short in the suit.

Overcaller's Rebid

When overcaller has a strong enough hand to try for game opposite a possible bust, he has a number of possible game tries:

-- A simple raise of advancer's response, showing at least five cards in the suit.

-- A bid in a suit that advancer has skipped over, showing a five-card suit and only three-card support for advancer's suit:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	- strong but not forcing, only three hearts (4=3=5=1)	

Holding five hearts and a few high cards, East should now bid 4♥, not 3♥.

When Third Seat Doubles

A common action for third seat is to double a suit overcall, showing length in that suit or, for some, merely showing "cards." Some doublers will suppose they are invoking Stayman (double of 2♣) or a transfer

(double of 2♦ or 2♥). If you ask what the double means, chances are good you'll get the wrong answer. Few partnerships will have a clear understanding about the double. It is therefore wise not to ask and to use the same tactics over any sort of double, a policy that has the virtue of simplicity. It goes like this:

-- A pass (which must be alerted) shows at least six-card length in the doubled suit and no sure fit with doubler's hand. The suit quality required for a pass depends on the likelihood of a fit with overcaller. You don't want to go down in a doubled contract when there is a better contract available. A passer is therefore probably very short in the doubler's known suit.

-- A suit bid by advancer is to play, showing at least a six-card suit (four, in overcaller's known suit), and the 2NT response has its normal meaning:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♦	Dbl	Pass - to play
			2♥/2♠ - long suit
			3♣ - four or more clubs
			2NT - strong inquiry

Jumps over the double are preemptive, since a good hand can bid 2NT. All calls other than a bid of the "anchor" suit (clubs, in this auction) must be alerted (and explained as showing a long suit).

-- A redouble (alertable) promises no strength whatsoever, but merely asks the doubler to clarify his hand. With both a pass and a bid showing a playable suit, the only call left when lacking a "to play" suit is a redouble. Must be alerted, of course, and must never be forgotten if advancer values her life.

When Third Seat Bids Freely

If opener's partner makes a free bid instead of doubling, common sense will usually guide advancer. Inferences can sometimes be drawn about overcaller's hand, depending on what third seat bids. Advancer's double of a suit bid is usually negative, for takeout, and suit bids by advancer (unless third seat bids notrump naturally) are always to play. If third seat bids the anchor suit, then a double is for penalties. The 2NT inquiry still applies, but 3NT is natural. If 2NT is available, a negative double denies the strength necessary for a 2NT bid (which always shows a strong hand). Sometimes third seat's suit bid will be conventional (e.g., a transfer bid), but (as with a double of an overcall) it is better to treat both natural and conventional bids in the same way.

-- When the overcall is a suit bid, there are four possibilities for a suit bid by third seat.

1) A bid in the same suit as the overcall:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	3♣	Dbl - negative
			3NT - natural
			3♦/3♥/3♠ - to play
			4♣ - cue bid, strong

In reply to the negative double West may want to jump with an extra good hand, since East promises some values. The "to play" suits must be quite good, and at least six cards long; overcaller is likely to pass, even with a singleton. Four cards are enough, of course, in overcaller's known suit (spades, in this case). With the negative double available, a cue bid must be based on a void and good trump support for either spades or spades and a red suit. If these calls seem unlikely after an opposing strong 1NT, remember that the opening bid could be a psych.

2) A bid in the next ranking suit:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♦	Dbl - negative
			2NT - inquiry
			2♥/2♠/3♣ - to play
			3♦ - cue bid, strong

In this auction the club suit had better be very strong, since West is likely to be short. If East has a few diamonds, West probably has both majors or spades only. East can therefore bid a three-card spade suit without much danger. Other "to play" bids require a good six-card suit. West can pass the negative double if he has good diamonds. Otherwise he can bid two (or three) of his better major, since this negative double implies support for both majors.

3) A bid in the second-higher suit:

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♥	Dbl - negative
			2♠/3♣/3♦ - to play
			2NT - inquiry
			3♥ - cue bid, strong

If East has some hearts, West probably has spades only. In that case East can bid 2♠ with just a tripleton and a modicum of strength. Again, West can pass the negative double if he has a heart suit.

4) A bid in the next lower ranking suit (which overcaller must hold):

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♠	Dbl - penalty
			2NT - inquiry
			3♣/3♦/3♥ - to play

In this situation West must pass the double, since he has at least four spades.

If opener raises responder's suit, overcaller's double is for takeout if there are two or three "unbid" suits and partner has not yet acted.

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2♦	Pass
3♦	Dbl - hearts and spades		

Had South raised a heart or spade bid, a double would be penalty.

-- When third seat bids notrump naturally, a double is for penalties and a suit bid is not "to play."

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	2NT/3NT	?

A double is for business. North could have a nice long string of clubs or diamonds, so East should be careful about doubling without minor suit stoppers. In this case a suit bid is not "to play," and West should correct if East bids a suit not held by him. East would bid 3♦ over 2NT, for instance, with ♠Q2 ♥A105 ♦J10973 ♣432, which West should correct to 3♥ or 3♠ if he doesn't have a three-suiter.

-- When third seat bids 2NT conventionally (e.g., Lebensohl, asking opener to bid 3♣), a double is negative and suit bids are "to play:"

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♦	2NT *	Dbl - negative
			3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - to play
		* Lebensohl	

When South bids 3♣ over East's double, as Lebensohl requires, a free bid by West shows good values. Whatever the nature of his hand, he should pass with a minimum 2♦ bid and let East compete further if she can (perhaps with a repeat of the negative double).

-- When third seat bids a suit over a 2NT overcall (showing clubs or diamonds)::

South	West	North	East
1NT	2NT	3 any	Dbl - penalty
			3NT - undefined

When Opener Bids

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♣	Pass	2♥
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♥

The heart "rebid" does not show five hearts. East could be 3-4 in the majors, so West must correct to 3♠ with a one-suited hand.

After a Voluntary Takeout

A "voluntary" takeout is one made over a pass:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	?

-- If the takeout is natural, then a double (either direct or balancing) is for takeout; a 2NT is unusual notrump for the minors, and jump overcalls are all strong:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♠	Dbl - takeout
			2NT - minors, or hearts-diamonds
			4♣/4♦ - invitational

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - takeout		
			2NT - minors, or hearts-diamonds

-- If the takeout is a forcing artificial bid, such as Stayman or a Jacoby transfer, the situation is different. A double of Stayman 2♣ shows clubs and denies the ability to bid 3♣ if the hand is single-suited. It is primarily a lead-directing double, as is the double of a 2♦ response to Stayman. Action over a transfer response is discussed in section 12-5, Defense vs Transfer Bids.

MARVIN VS WEAK NOTRUMP OPENINGS

Overcalls

Overcalls have the same meanings as against a strong notrump opening, except that 2♠ is no longer a natural bid. It replaces the conventional double, showing clubs-diamonds-hearts or diamonds-hearts or just hearts. See section 12-2, Marvin Vs Strong Notrump Openings.

The Business Double

The weak notrump opening is an overbid that should be penalized more often than it is. Anyone who contracts to take seven tricks at notrump with only 12-14 HCP (or even less) must be punished for impudence, lest it become a habit. The instrument for punishment is the penalty double.

To double a weak notrump for penalties you need a hand that figures to take more tricks than the opening hand. This is not just a matter of points, but also of playing tricks, stoppers/entries, and opening lead considerations. You can double with 9 HCP when holding seven spades to the AKQ! A weak notrump opener should be able to take about four tricks, so you need 4-1/2 or more to double. A good strong suit is especially desirable, to make the opening lead an advantage rather than a disadvantage.

This hand, with 14 HCP, is a pass over a 1NT opening that shows 12-14 HCP: ♠A32 ♥AK8 ♦K542 ♣764. Not enough playing tricks, few honor cards, no good lead. This hand, with 13 HCP, five playing tricks, many honors, and a good lead, is a minimum double: ♠QJ1097 ♥AJ9 ♦KJ8 ♣J10. If the notrump opening shows 13-15 HCP, you need a slightly stronger minimum.

If the hand contains a singleton, it is wise to have a little extra, especially if the singleton is higher ranking than any long suit you may have. Partner may bid the singleton, and you don't want to go to the three level with a doubtful hand. A simple (artificial) overcall may be a safer action with an unbalanced hand.

Reopening Doubles

A double in the reopening position must be stronger, considering that the notrump bidder is sitting over the doubler. Tenaces and isolated honors should be reduced in value, while sequences are desirable. A marginal double should have something in every suit, to support partner's opening lead (or runout bid). A singleton or void is particularly undesirable, since partner is sure to lead (or bid) the suit. If you do double with a very short suit, you should have a place to go if partner bids it.

An alternative sort of reopening double is the artificial double, always used by a passed hand, described in section 12-2, Marvin vs Strong Notrump Openings. Its use makes a 2♠ bid natural. There are two reasons for an alternative: 1) Penalty doubles with distributed strength are less frequent in this position, with the notrump bidder sitting over the doubler; 2) A third hand who passes a weak notrump opening will have some strength if their policy is to always bid with bad hands.

I recommend playing both ways, choosing the approach that is suited to the opponents' methods. Double for penalties with distributed strength if they tend to pass 1NT with bad hands; otherwise use the type of reopening double you employ against strong notrumps.

If a pass shows strength it is supposed to be Alerted, so in the absence of an Alert assume that a pass doesn't show strength. It doesn't hurt to ask when you intend to take some action.

Partner's Action After a Business Double

Although the double of 1NT is primarily for business, partner may bid for one of two reasons: 1) Fear that the opponents can make 1NT doubled when the doubling side has a satisfactory contract of its own or 2) fear that the penalty for beating 1NT will not compensate for the points that could have been made by playing the hand.

A bust hand is not sufficient reason in itself to run from the double. The doubler's hand is unlimited, after all. With a bad hand and no five-card suit, just pass and hope partner can beat 1NT. Bidding a four-card suit is unlikely to improve things. Minus 180 or 280 or 380 is better than minus 500 or 800. It is murder to have partner pull a double of 1NT with a suit like J432 (opposite your A5) when you could beat them in your own hand.

With a five-card or longer suit it is okay to bid if you're very weak or think that you can score more (or lose less) in your own contract. With a bad five-card suit and a balanced hand, a pass is probably better. With a singleton you can bet partner will lead that suit, so it may be better to bid in that case. With a six-card suit you can hope to make something your way, so go ahead and bid with a poor defensive hand.

A cue bid of 2NT in response to the double is a two-way bid, either 1) asking for a minor suit preference or 2) a general game force, usually based on a very distributional hand, often a two-suiter. The 2NT bidder shows the type 2) hand by bidding again (but a raise is only invitational):

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣/3♦	Pass	3♠ - game forcing
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣/4♦/4♥ - second suit

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣ - invitational

A jump in a new suit is invitational, and 3NT is natural:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	3 any - invitational
			3NT - solid minor, or equivalent

East is afraid that West will not lead East's suit against 1NT doubled, or that the penalty will not make up for a likely game.

When the Opponents Run

Weak notrumpers are very adroit at escaping from dangerous situations. Whether doubled or not, opener's partner will often run from 1NT with no long suit and a weak hand. He knows that defenders usually have

difficulty making a penalty double stick at the two level. A common ploy is to use a fake Stayman response with a bust hand:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2 any	Pass	Pass	?

North has ♠10843 ♥J87 ♦543 ♣Q32. For some reason defenders have a hard time penalizing this tactic. They are confused about the meaning of doubles (takeout? business? optional?) and often end up bidding or passing when they could have doubled for a big penalty. The proper defense against such conventional escape bids is discussed later.

When an Escape Bid is Natural

There are two methods for handling natural escape bids in an auction such as this:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♦	?

The first approach says that a double of 2♦ by either partner is a business double. Moreover, all passes are forcing; North-South cannot play the hand undoubled. If East passes the 2♦ bid, West must act. East must therefore double 2♦ with a hand like ♠3 ♥10832 ♦J973 ♣Q842. She dare not pass (forcing), because West is likely to bid 2♠. If a pass is not played as forcing, East would have to bid with a good hand and short diamonds. That would allow the opponents to escape too often, since West could be loaded in diamonds.

The second approach says that a double by East only shows general strength, 6 HCP or more. She does not promise more than a doubleton in the opposing suit. With just a doubleton, she should have an extra point, and with four cards she might double with just 5 HCP. A pass by East is not forcing, and a repeat double by West is for takeout, not business. If West is long in the opposing suit, he may just pass and accept an undoubled penalty. With this approach, neither partner can make a business double of the first escape bid. That is not too serious, since a double can be converted to business when partner chooses to pass a double with good defensive potential.

There are pros and cons to both approaches. The first approach never misses a good penalty double, but the opponents will make more doubled contracts. They will also penalize you more often. The risk is not great, since a partnership that is running from 1NT doubled is not likely to have much in high cards. There is a danger that some smart operator will "run" from 1NT doubled with a fairly good hand. You are then likely to double the opponents into game or be heavily penalized yourself.

The second approach is more conservative. You can judge the partnership's assets better on many hands, but you will miss some good penalty doubles. Alfred Sheinwold and Eddie Kantar favor this method, but they are experts. What is good for them may not be good for everyone. An expert figures he can win if he avoids disasters. Other players must not miss a chance for a good result, to make up for the inevitable disasters on other hands.

It might be sensible to play the conservative approach in IMP games or rubber bridge, and the aggressive one in matchpoint pair games. Or you could combine both approaches at IMP's or rubber bridge, playing doubles of 2♣ or 2♦ as business doubles (and passes forcing), but doubles of higher contracts (which

produce game if made) as optional. I recommend this compromise approach, along with the aggressive approach for matchpoint games.

Whether the runout bid is doubled optionally or for business, subsequent doubles are for business and subsequent passes are forcing:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♣	Dbl - optional/business
2♦		Dbl - business	
		Pass - forcing	

If the double has been passed around, the same principle holds. Doubles are for business and passes are forcing:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2♣		Dbl - business	
		Pass - forcing	

In all these situations, it is better not to pass a business double with only a singleton or void in the opposing suit. Also, one must not be bashful about doubling with just three good trumps.

Even when playing the "aggressive" defense, a defender who has had two chances in a row to act subsequent to the original double (passing a double counts as an "act"), and has failed to do so, can neither make a forcing pass nor be subjected to a forcing pass:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♠	Pass - forcing
Pass	3♥	3♠	Pass - not forcing

East must bid or double at his last turn if he has some stuff. When doubler's partner has shown some strength, however, all of his subsequent passes are forcing:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2♦	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♦	Pass - forcing

West has passed twice in a row, but East's pass is nevertheless forcing, in view of his pass of the double and the 2♠ bid.

A defender who has run from partner's double with a weakness takeout cannot be subjected to a forcing pass:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass	2♣
2♠		Pass - not forcing	

Simple competitive bids by the doubler's partner are not at all invitational. Jumps are not forcing, since you can cue bid with a game-going hand:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♣	2♦/2♥/2♠ - weak bids 3♦/3♥/3♠ - invitational 3♣ - game forcing cue bid

West can treat 3♣ as Stayman for the moment, although East might have something else in mind.

When There's a Natural Redouble

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Rdbl	?

If the redouble promises 9-10 HCP or more, you may have to scramble, but East should not bid immediately in the above auction unless he has a five-card or longer suit. Let West, who could have seven or more fast tricks (e.g., seven clubs headed by AKQ and nothing else!), do any running.

When the Escape Call is Conventional

Most players use some conventional escape mechanism after their 1NT opening has been doubled. In one version third hand redoubles with a one-suited hand other than spades, forcing opener to bid 2♣. The redoubler then passes (with clubs) or bids a red suit. With spades only, he bids 2♠ immediately over the double. With a two-suited hand, he bids 2♣ over the double with hearts and clubs, 2♦ with hearts and diamonds, 2♥ with hearts and spades (but better hearts). Or, he can pass the double around to partner, who must redouble. Assuming he doesn't want to play 1NT redoubled, third hand then bids 2♣ with clubs plus a pointed suit (diamonds or four spades), 2♦ with diamonds and four spades, 2♥ with hearts and spades (but better spades), 2♠ with five spades and a five-card minor.

When third hand makes such a forcing pass or redouble (which must be alerted), doubler's partner can safely pass with a good hand, knowing that opener must bid. This freedom enables fourth hand to describe his strength more accurately. Immediate action denies a strong hand, delayed action promises a good hand unless it comes under pressure (i.e., opener's redouble is passed around).

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Pass*	2♣/2♦/2♥/2♠ - weak 2NT - minors, weak 3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - weak, preemptive

* forcing

The "weak" actions are not too weak, however. With a hopeless hand it is better to pass until you are forced to rescue. Often the opponents will bid you out of trouble. With the unlikely good hand, just pass and await developments.

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	Rdbl*	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Dbl - business
			2♥/2♠/3♣ - invitational
			2NT - invitational
			3♦ - game force
			3♥/3♠ - forcing
			Pass - forcing

* artificial

In this auction the artificial redouble asked South to bid 2♣, whereupon North showed a one-suited hand with diamonds. East's second bids are all strong because he would have acted immediately, if at all, with a weaker hand. His pass is forcing for the same reason that a pass over an immediate "escape" bid is forcing when partner doubles 1NT: If you must bid with a good hand but short diamonds, the opponents may have evaded a serious penalty. Had North bid 2♥ or 2♠, the meaning of a double or pass would depend on whether East-West are playing the "conservative" or "aggressive" defense. That is, either action is the same as if North had bid 2♥ or 2♠ as a natural bid over the double.

When opener's partner makes a conventional bid that shows two suits, the standard defense against such conventions is used (see section 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions).

If the opponents use transfer bids over a double, next hand can use the same approach as against voluntarily bid transfers (see section 12-5, Defense Against Transfer Bids).

After a Voluntary Takeout

When the weak notrump's partner responds voluntarily (i.e., over a pass), her response may be natural or artificial:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2 any	?

-- If the takeout is natural, a non-forcing signoff, then a double by East is not a takeout double. Rather, a double shows a balanced hand, one with which he would have liked to double 1NT for business. It is an optional double, in that West needs a little something in the opposing suit, but not a lot, to pass the double. If this double is played strictly for takeout, as it is following a strong notrump opening, you will miss some good penalties.

But how do you make a takeout call? The answer is that a bid in the ranking suit is for takeout, and a 2NT bid shows an overcall in the ranking suit:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♠	3♣ - for takeout
			Dbl - optional
			2NT -clubs

In this auction East's 3♣ might be based on a hand like ♠3 ♥KJ32 ♦AJ4 ♣K10873 This may seem like a daring takeout, but West probably has some strength in view of North's 2♠ signoff. West should not go leaping to game because of a few high cards, with which she is marked by the bidding. She can bid game

if she has more in distribution or high cards than East could count on. Since 3♣ is not forcing, East can bid 3♠ with a monster takeout sort of hand, which might alternatively be based on a good two-suited hand. If East removes West's next bid to another suit (forcing), that tends to show a two-suiter without support for West's suit.

All jump overcalls by an unpassed hand are strong:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	3♠/4♣/4♦ - invitational

If the natural signoff is a jump to 3♣ or 3♦, which many play as weak bids, then the double still shows a balanced hand but the cheaper minor becomes the takeout call:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	3♣	Dbl - balanced hand
			3♦ - for takeout

If the jump is to 3♦, then 4♣ is for takeout. When the jump is invitational or strong, then a bid in the cheaper minor is a natural bid.

Reopening actions by the hand sitting over the notrump opener are as might be expected:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - for takeout		
			2NT - unusual notrump, both minors or hearts-diamonds

West's hand is limited by the initial pass, so the reopening 2NT bid must be unusual notrump.

-- If the takeout is a forcing artificial bid, such as Stayman or a Jacoby transfer, the situation is different. A double of Stayman 2♣ shows clubs, as in a strong notrump situation, and denies the ability to bid 3♣. It is primarily a lead directing double. For appropriate action over transfer bids, see section 12-5, Defense Against Transfer Bids. Jump overcalls by an unpassed hand are strong in a major, preemptive in a minor. The strong type is particularly invitational, since the standard defense against transfer bids says that immediate simple overcalls should be sound.

With a good notrump hand or a takeout sort of hand, just pass the artificial bid and act on the next round if the bidding stops:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♣/2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl - notrump hand
			3♣ - for takeout
			2NT - clubs

East's double or takeout bid is not merely a balancing action, since his hand is not limited by the first round pass. A double of 2♣ would only show a good club suit. He must pass a transfer bid with some strong hands because an immediate double, cue bid of a known suit, or 2NT bid shows two specific suits (per section 12-

5). West should therefore not be nervous about passing the delayed double with a little defense, and over 3♣ can jump to game in hearts with good values. Note that this policy nails the "fake Stayman" response and ultra-weak transfer responses, as West will pass the double with a hand that is suitable for defense against 2♠.

DEFENSE AGAINST BIG CLUB OPENINGS

The following defense applies against artificial 1♣ openings that promise 16 HCP or more:

Immediate actions over 1♣ tend to deny a good hand, but calls that show two suits may be based on either a weak hand or a strong hand. With an in-between hand, pass with a two-suiter and hope to show your suits later. If the two suits include a major, you can overcall 1♥ or 1♠ and perhaps bid the other suit on the next round. Two-suiters are shown immediately by a variation of the "CRASH" (Color-RANk-SHape) convention:

-- A double shows both black suits or both red suits ("Color"). Advancer bids his better red suit, preferring hearts with equal length. If overcaller then bids spades, showing the black suits (or if the bidding makes it obvious that he has the black suits), advancer prefers spades with equal length.

-- A 1♦ overcall shows both majors or both minors, 5-5 or better ("RANk"). Advancer bids his better major, preferring hearts with equal length. If overcaller then bids clubs, showing the minors (or if the bidding makes it obvious that he has the minors), advancer prefers clubs with equal length. Knowing that advancer will prefer hearts to spades, the overcaller might have only 4-5 in the majors, but not 5-4. Against a strong 1♣, two minor suits had better be at least 5-5. With 6-5 or 5-4 in the majors it is better to just overcall 1♠ and hope to bid the hearts later. Then advancer will prefer spades when holding equal length.

-- A 1NT overcall shows both round suits or both pointed suits ("SHape": hearts-clubs or spades-diamonds). Advancer bids clubs when preferring clubs to hearts, otherwise bids diamonds when preferring diamonds to spades, otherwise bids hearts.

-- A major suit overcall is natural, and may be rather speculative.

-- A 2♣ overcall is natural, and also may be speculative.

-- Jump overcalls are preemptive.

-- A 2NT overcall is natural, based on a long solid minor plus stoppers. Partner can raise with one quick trick.

With most good hands, including really sound one-suited hands, you can afford to pass and act on the next round:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♥	2♠/3♣/3♦	- strong jump overcall	
	2NT	- solid minor, heart stopper	
	Dbl	- normal takeout double	
	1NT	- normal 1NT overcall	
	1♠/2♣/2♦	- natural, good hand	
	2♥	- normal cue bid overcall	

When Opener Rebids 1NT

The strong notrump defense (section 12-2) applies after a 1NT rebid by opener, provided that the defenders have not bid or doubled prior to the 1NT bid. This is a good opportunity to show the "in-between" strength two-suiter (neither strong nor weak) that is not eligible for CRaSh.

If the response to 1♣ was a negative 1♦, a double of the 1NT rebid is a penalty double, not conventional.

If the 1♣ opening received a positive response, or the doubler is a passed hand, or the double is a balancing action, then a double of the 1NT rebid has the alternative meaning (clubs, diamonds, hearts; diamonds, hearts; or hearts only). Actually a one-suited or two-suited hand would probably have acted earlier, so the conventional double tends to be based on three suits.

Actions by Fourth Seat

The meaning of a cue bid over a suit response to 1♣ depends on whether the response is artificial or natural. If artificial, it is a natural overcall and a double just shows the suit (a weaker action than bidding the suit). A notrump overcall shows the minors:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥*	Dbl - shows hearts
			2♥ - better hearts
			1NT/2NT - minors

* artificial response

If the response to 1♣ is natural, all defensive actions are standard. Whether the response is artificial or natural, all jump overcalls are preemptive. With a good hand, pass and hope to act on the next round.

For defense against the Precision 1♦ opening, see section 12-10, Defense Against Five-Card Majors.

Over a Two Club Opening

CRaSh may also be used against a strong artificial 2♣ opening, but the strength distinction between immediate or delayed action does not apply.

DEFENSE AGAINST TRANSFER BIDS

The following defenses against transfer bids will allow you to show any two-suited hand with one call. They apply not only against Jacoby and Texas transfers, but against any bid that shows another specific suit (e.g., opening 3♥ to show a preemptive bid in spades). One disadvantage of transfer bids is that they give an opponent two opportunities for action: immediate or delayed. This aid to defensive bidding accuracy should be utilized.

When Your Side Has Been Silent

When the transfer bid occurs before your side has bid or doubled (e.g., vs Jacoby or Texas response to a 1NT opening, or vs an opening preemptive transfer bid), use the following defense:

-- A notrump bid asks for a preference between the lower two suits, excluding the one indicated by the transfer bid.

-- A double of the transfer bid shows the higher two suits.

-- A "cue bid" (in the suit indicated by the transfer bid) is top-and-bottom, asking for a preference between the top and bottom suits.

For instance, after a 2♦ Jacoby response to a 1NT opening:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♦	2NT - both minors
			Dbl - spades/diamonds
			2♥ - spades/clubs
			2♠/3♣/3♦ - one-suited hand

The double can be made with less strength than any of the other two-suited calls. One of the suits indicated by the double is the suit bid by the opponent, so partner can pass with an unsuitable hand. This sequence has an easy mnemonic: Dbl for Diamonds and the other major, Cue bid for Clubs and the other major. Bids over a 2♥ transfer to spades has the same mnemonic.

When given a choice of suits in which you have equal length, prefer a major to a minor, hearts to spades, and clubs to diamonds. Partner can keep this in mind when deciding whether to overcall or pass with a marginal hand.

The immediate overcall with a one-suited hand should be quite sound. With a doubtful hand, just pass and reopen the bidding if the transfer suit gets passed:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	2♠/3♣/3♦

These reopening bids can be made with moderate hands, since partner is marked with some high cards when the opponents stop at the two level.

The soundness of immediate natural overcalls applies at higher levels, too:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	4♦	4♠/5♣/5♦ - sound bids
			4NT - for the minors, may be speculative

It has to be remembered that a direct 4NT bid is for the minors and a balancing 4NT bid is natural. That is the general rule, and for the sake of consistency it must be followed even at this level.

With a doubtful hand, perhaps taking a deliberate save with many playing tricks but little defense, East can pass on this round and bid next time. This policy may help partner when he has to make a double/bid/pass decision.

You may sometimes have a three-suited hand with shortness in the suit indicated by the transfer bid. In that case just pass the transfer, then double for takeout on the next round. You can do this with a huge hand, since the transfer bid is forcing; there is no need to jump into the bidding immediately:

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl - takeout double if 1NT was strong

If 1NT was weak this double is optional, just showing a strong balanced hand. See section 12-3, Marvin Vs Weak Notrump Openings.

When the transfer is an opening bid that shows a preemptive bid in the next higher suit, the same principles apply. An immediate notrump overcall still shows the lower two "unbid" suits. A reopening notrump bid is therefore natural:

South	West	North	East
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl - normal takeout double		
		3♠ - competitive reopening bid	
		3NT - natural	

South's 3♦ shows a preemptive 3♥ type hand. The double is not a reopening action, since an immediate double would show a two-suited hand with spades and diamonds. It is true that passing 3♦ with a nine-trick notrump hand gives North a chance to make a preemptive raise in hearts, but that must be chanced. There are two advantages to this approach: (1) a two-suited hand in the minors can be easily shown by an immediate 3NT bid, and (2) the general principles of countering transfer bids remain the same, with no exceptions.

South	West	North	East
3♣	Pass	3♦	3♥/3♠/Dbl

Believe it or not, East is actually making a reopening call. North has indicated that he would have passed a normal 3♦ opening bid, so East pretends that is just what has happened. He is no worse off than he would be with a normal preemptive 3♦ opening. This is especially true if he is short in diamonds. The hand that is short in the opposing suit must be quick to act, since partner probably cannot.

Against Strong NAMYATS

The NAMYATS convention uses a 4♣ opening to show hearts and a 4♦ opening to show spades. In the "strong" version a 4♥ or 4♠ opening is weak in high cards, while a 4♣ or 4♦ opening shows a good hand that would welcome a slam contract. The fact that there is an intervening suit between the transfer bid and the indicated suit affects the usual defense against transfer bids:

-- Passing and then doubling opener's major on the next round retains the same meaning: a strong three-suited hand short in opener's suit.

-- Immediate overcalls in the ranking suit (i.e., the suit lying between opener the opening bid and opener's major) may be weaker than overcalls in the remaining two suits. If you don't bid now, you have to bid higher next time.

-- Immediate overcalls in the remaining two suits are very sound, because you can pass and bid on the next round with a sacrifice type hand, at the same level that an immediate bid would require.

-- Jump overcalls are extra strong.

-- The immediate double, "cue bid" of opener's suit, and notrump bids all retain the same meaning: major/diamonds, major/clubs, and both minors, respectively:

South	West
4♣	Dbl - diamonds and spades
	4♦ - diamonds, may be a stretch
	4♥ - clubs and spades
	4♠/5♣ - good hand, not a stretch
	4NT - minors
	5♦/5♠ - extra strong

With a sacrifice sort of 4♠ or 5♣ bid, West could pass and bid on the next round. The immediate overcall shows a good hand both offensively and defensively. The difference may be important if partner has to decide what to do when the opponents go to 5♥.

There are two ways to show spades and a minor: double/cue bid, or bid 4♠ and then bid the minor (if you get the chance). Choose the the natural bid when spades are strong and longer than the minor, the conventional call otherwise. You are not going to run if 4♠ gets doubled, so the spades had better be pretty good. When you show the suits conventionally, partner will not take a false preference in order to play the major suit.

There at least two ways of showing both minors: bid 4NT immediately or on the second round. Common sense says that an immediate 4NT bid is stronger than a delayed one. The immediate bid promises a good hand, both offensively and defensively, while a delayed bid implies poor defense.

When the opening is 4♣ you can also show diamonds and clubs by just bidding them instead of overcalling 4NT, which provides a third way of showing both minors. Show the minors this way when the clubs are not longer than the diamonds. Partner will then prefer diamonds with equal length. After a 4NT bid, he prefers clubs with equal length.

There are also three ways to get to 5♦ after a 4♣ opening: bid 5♦ immediately; bid 4♦, then 5♦, or pass and then bid 5♦. The jump is stronger, the delayed bid (passing first) is weaker. Bidding diamonds twice (a seemingly illogical action) gives room for partner to bid 4♠, so it could be based on a good hand with some spade support.

When the opening is 4♦ it is the immediate major suit bid that may be a stretch:

South	West
4♦	Dbl - diamonds and hearts
	4♥ - may be a stretch
	4♠ - clubs and hearts
	4NT - minors
	5♣/5♦ - sound bids
	5♥ - extra strong

West has three ways to get to 5♥: bid 5♥ immediately, obviously the strongest action; bid 5♥ on the next round (weakest); or bid 4♥, then 5♥, which is somewhere in-between.

There are two ways to show hearts and a minor: double/cue bid, or bid both suits. With hearts longer than the minor, bid 4♥ and then the minor. When the two suits are of equal length, or the minor longer, double or cue bid.

There is no way left to double opener's eventual game bid for business, unless you are able to overcall in the ranking suit and then double on the next round. That is not a big deal, because doubling a strong NAMYATS game bid is seldom profitable and often disastrous.

Against Weak NAMYATS

When the opening bid of 4♣ or 4♦ shows a weak major suit preempt, we must have a way of doubling the major for business. The delayed double therefore becomes a little more optional than takeout, not necessarily a three-suited hand. Otherwise the defense is the same as against the strong version of NAMYATS.

Action vs NAMYATS by Fourth Seat

When the opening has been passed by second seat, third seat will either bid four of partner's major or bid the next higher suit (as a query bid, or as a "retransfer" to let opener play the hand).

-- When third seat signs off in opener's suit, a double is for takeout and a 4NT bid shows both minors:

South	West	North	East
4♣	Pass	4♥	Dbl - takeout
			4NT - minors

Against the weak version of NAMYATS, the double of 4♠ is more optional than takeout, just as it would be over a normal preemptive 4♥ or 4♠ opening.

-- When third seat bids the ranking suit so that opener can play the hand, that is treated like a transfer bid:

South	West	North	East
4♣	Pass	4♦	Dbl - spades and diamonds
			4♥ - spades and clubs
			4NT - minors

South	West	North	East
4♦	Pass	4♥	Dbl - hearts and diamonds
			4♠ - hearts and clubs
			4NT - minors

Other defensive actions are similar in meaning to those employed by second seat.

When Your Side Has Previously Bid a Suit

When the transfer bid occurs after your side has bid a suit (e.g., opponent's transfer response to an overcall), a double is merely suit-showing. If both partners have bid, a cue bid in either the overcall suit or the suit indicated by the transfer bid is a "telling cue bid," showing that suit stopped and suggesting that partner bid notrump with the other suit stopped.

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♦	2♣	2♥ - transfer to spades
			Dbl - hearts
			2♠/3♦ - telling cue bid, showing a stopper

See section 10-14, Miscellaneous Cue Bids, for more on telling cue bids. If partner has not previously bid, it is difficult to come up with a meaning for a cue bid in either suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♣	Pass	2♦ - transfer to hearts
			Dbl - diamonds
			2♥ - takeout, spades and five diamonds
			3♦ - very strong two-suiter

When Your Side Has Bid Notrump

Suppose a 1NT opening is overcalled with a transfer bid:

South	West	North
1NT	2♥ *	?

* transfer to spades

A double is merely suit-showing, denying the strength for a bid at the three level. A 2NT response has the same meaning as if the overcall were natural. It is clear that a cue bid of the indicated suit (spades, in this case) is Stayman, asking for a major and showing at least a game-invitational hand. In the auction above,

South must bid 3NT or 4♥ in response to 2♠ with a maximum opening, since 2NT or 3♥ is likely to be passed.

MARVIN VS FLANNERY

As most people play this convention, a 2♦ opening shows 11-15 HCP, with five hearts and four spades. A 2NT response is conventional, asking opener to clarify her hand. Opener then shows a three-card minor, etc., etc. A 2♥ or 2♠ response to 2♦ is a signoff, of course. A 3♣ response is a signoff for some, invitational for others. A 3♦ response is at least invitational, since a weak hand with long diamonds and short majors could just pass the 2♦ opening. The defense:

-- A double of 2♦ is a two-way call, showing either a strong hand with both majors or a weak hand with both minors. You could have either ♠AJ96 ♥AQ1084 ♦63 ♣98 or ♠3 ♥84 ♦QJ1098 ♣KQ1097. Minors should be at least this good because third hand could well have both minors also. Partner should be able to tell which hand you have by looking at his own hand (and listening to the opponents).

South	West	North	East
2♦	Dbl	2♥/2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - business double,	had both majors	

- A 3♣ or 3♦ overcall is a preemptive sort of bid, no defense.

-- A 2♥ or 2♠ overcall is artificial, showing a good hand with a good minor suit. A 2♠ bid shows diamonds, and a 2♥ bid shows clubs. Overcall 2♦ with 2♠ holding a hand such as ♠A4 ♥63 ♦AK10873 ♣K94. Partner must bid the minor suit indicated by the overcall when he has a bad hand. Any other action is forward-going, although not always forcing:

South	West	North	East
2♦	2♠	Pass	3♦ - any sort of bad hand
			3♣ - natural, invitational
			2NT - invitational
			3♥/3♠ - stopper, forcing
			4♦ - invitational, too good for 3♦

The 3♥ or 3♠ bid shows that the suit named is stopped, and suggests that partner bid notrump if he has the other major suit stopped.

-- A 2NT overcall is unusual notrump, also showing a pretty good hand. With a weak minor two-suiter, you would double. Overcall 2♦ with 2NT holding ♠4 ♥82 ♦AK874 ♣AQJ42. With a real notrump hand, say 17-18 HCP, pass and hope to bid 2NT on the next round.

-- A 3NT overcall is natural, showing major suit stoppers and a long solid minor. The spade stopper may be sketchy or non-existent, since opener is known to have only four spades: ♠J32 ♥K4 ♦A4 ♣AKQJ872

-- A 3♥ overcall is a standard strong cue bid, since 2♥ is not available for that purpose.

-- A 3♠ overcall is natural, invitational: ♠AK109732 ♥4 ♦KJ4 ♣A2

With strength and length in just one major (unless the suit is spades and you are good enough to bid 3♠ or 4♠), just pass over a 2♦ opening and see what happens. Pass with ♠3 ♥AJ97 ♦AQ63 ♣K1043 or with

♠AQ97 ♥10 ♦AJ83 ♣K842. You will probably take action on the next round unless responder shows real strength (and perhaps even then). If a sharp-looking responder jumps to game in the short major, you will have to double for takeout--his bid could be a weak preemptive call. Knowing that you are sitting over the other major, partner may be able to pass the double (and lead a trump).

After passing 2♦, a reopening double of a 2♥ or 2♠ response is a two-way call, showing a good hand that has either a very strong or very short holding in the suit doubled, with support for both minors. "Very short" means a void or singleton.

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	- good hearts or very short hearts	
		2♠ - natural reopening bid, good spades	
		2NT/3♣/3♦ - natural reopening bid	

The 2NT reopening bid shows about 17-18 HCP, a hand such as ♠K42 ♥K4 ♦AK873 ♣A107. West could not bid 2NT on the first round with this hand, because that would be unusual notrump, showing both minors. The 3♣/3♦ reopening bids imply hands too good for an original (preemptive) 3♣/3♦ overcall, but not good enough for the (artificial) 2♥/2♠ overcall of 2♦.

When the response to 2♦ is 2♥ or 2♠, the next hand should be quick to act. These responses are signoffs that will be passed by opener, so this is really a balancing situation. Taking action may relieve pressure on partner when she has a good hand that is not suited to any reopening call.

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Dbl - ♠9832 ♥4 ♦AJ97 ♣KQ83
			2NT - ♠KJ6 ♥K4 ♦AQ1053 ♣A63
			3♣ - ♠92 ♥85 ♦QJ2 ♣AKJ987

A double of a 3♣ or 3♦ response can only be for business if that is a signoff bid:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	3♣/3♦	Dbl - business double

If the 3♣/3♦ bid is invitational or forcing, the double shows a two-suited hand in spades and the other minor.

A double of a 2♦ opening that has been passed around is also for business. As with the double of a signoff 3♣, it takes little more than good trumps since partner is marked with a lot of high cards:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl - ♠J863 ♥3 ♦AJ98 ♣K1087

DEFENSE AGAINST TWO-SUITED CONVENTIONS

Two-suited conventions covered in this section are of six general types:

- (1) A call that shows two specific suits without naming either.
- (2) A bid that shows the suit named, plus another specified suit
- (3) A bid that shows the suit named, plus an unspecified suit
- (4) A call that shows a specified suit other than the one named, plus an unspecified suit
- (5) A call that shows two unspecified suits
- (6) A call based on either two specific suits or one specific suit, none named

Type 1 Defense - Unusual Over Unusual

One of the most popular conventions for showing a two-suited hand is Unusual Notrump, wherein a notrump bid that could not be "usual" asks partner to choose between the minor suits (or two lower unbid suits). A conventional 1NT overcall showing the two unbid suits is known as Sandwich Notrump. The defense shown here may be used against other any artificial calls that shows two specific suits without naming either, such as:

- Michaels cue bid over a minor opening, showing both majors
- Top-and-bottom cue bid over any natural suit opening, showing the highest and lowest-ranking unbid suits
- 2♣ or 2♦ over a 1NT opening, showing both majors
- "Unusual" 2NT overcall, showing both minors

Unusual Over Unusual is applied a bit differently to the Flannery 2♦ opening, which shows five hearts and four spades. See section 12-6, Marvin vs Flannery. It also does not apply if one of the opposing suits is typified as a four-card suit (as many top-and-bottom bidders play). In such cases a bid in that suit is natural.

Definitions:

The "cheaper" suit is the closer of the two suits shown by the opponent going up the line from his bid. If his bid is 2♥ and the two suits shown are spades and clubs, then spades are the cheaper suit and clubs are the "dearer" suit, even though spades rank higher than clubs.

General Rules (examples will follow for all of them, but they are sufficient and there are no exceptions):

Natural new-suit bids are strong unless the bid is cheaper than either of the intervenor's suits (if cheaper, it's weak).

Rebids of the same suit and raises of partner's suit are merely competitive, not forward-going.

A bid in the dearer opposing suit is usually strength-showing and a bid in the cheaper suit usually is not.

If the partnership has bid just one suit, a bid in the dearer opposing suit shows a strong hand featuring that previously bid suit. If it is partner's suit this is called "Dear Partner." If it is one's own suit, it is called "Dear Me." Actually bidding the suit is a weaker action. In either case, bidding the cheaper opposing suit shows the suit not yet shown by either side, in a hand not good enough to make a strong bid in that suit.

If the partnership has bid two suits, then a bid in the cheaper opposing suit also shows strength. In this case the dearer suit is used for showing a strong raise for partner's suit ("Dear Partner"), and the cheaper suit is used for a strong rebid in one's own suit ("Dear Me"). This is the only case in which bidding the cheaper opposing suit shows strength. Just remember that a previously bid suit has to have a "dear" bid available. That means two "dear" bids if the partnership has bid two suits.

Note that a bid in the cheaper opposing suit allows partner a convenient bidding space for a "mark time" bid in the dearer opposing suit when he has no clear-cut action. Such bid has no significance regarding that suit. This convenient space isn't available after a bid in the dearer suit, so we apply the general rule that bidding the dearer opposing suit is a strong action.

If neither partner has bid a suit, the rule of "Cheap-Cheap" applies, which is that a bid in the dearer opposing suit shows a moderate bid in the dearer "unbid" suit, and a bid in the cheaper opposing suit shows a moderate bid in the cheaper "unbid" suit. Actually bidding those suits is a stronger action.

All notrump bids are natural.

A double of the opponent's conventional suit bid just says "I could have bid that." The hand may be limited to that degree of strength, but could be much stronger too (which can be revealed later). A double of a conventional notrump bid just shows "cards," enough HCP to suggest that the hand belongs to one's side. It does not guarantee further action, however.

Whenever a natural bid is labeled forcing, that of course applies only to an unpassed hand.

As usual, jumps in one of the opponent's suits is a splinter bid.

Unless indicated otherwise, conventional 2NT bids in the following auctions show the minors.

After a Direct Intervention Over One of a Suit

-- A bid of the "fourth suit" (not shown by either side) is forcing:

South	West	North
1♠	2NT	3♥ - forcing

South	West	North
1♣	2♣*	2♦ - a weak bid, because cheaper than the majors
		3♦ - strong, forcing

* majors

-- Jump raises are preemptive and jump rebids of the same suit deny good defensive values, while other jumps retain their normal meaning:

South	West	North
1♠	2NT	4♠ - standard preemptive raise
		4♣/4♦/4♥ - splinter bid in support of spades

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	2NT	4♥/4♠	- not strong defensively (if so, double)

South	West	North
1NT	2NT	4♣ - Gerber
		4♦/4♥ - Texas transfer bids

Seeking a 4-4 fit in the majors is unwise, as the suit is likely to break badly.

South	West	North
1♣	2♣*	4♣ - weak, preemptive
		3♥/3♠ - splinter bid in support of clubs
		3♦ - strong, forcing

* majors

-- A bid in the dearer (not the cheaper) of the two suits indicated by the opponent shows full values (or better) for a raise of partner's suit. Merely raising is a weaker action

South	West	North
1♠	2NT	3♦ - limit raise or better ("Dear Partner")
		3♠ - competitive spade raise
		3♥ - forcing
		3NT - natural

If South rebids 3♠ over 3♦, North may pass. If she voluntarily bids again, she shows more than a limit raise.

-- A bid in the cheaper (not the dearer) of the two suits indicated by the opponent shows the "fourth suit" but an unwillingness to force with a bid in that suit.

South	West	North
1♥	2NT	3♣ - heart suit, unwilling to force with 3♥

This agreement leaves room for opener to make a "mark-time" bid in the dearer suit when unable to raise hearts or bid something else, which permits responder to "rebid" a six-card suit and perhaps stop at the three level. The 3♣ bid ("unwilling to force with 3♥") does not necessarily show less than game-going strength. Responder might want to save bidding space for some reason, e.g., to let opener show heart support cheaply, with a 3NT bid in reserve..

South	West	North
1♣	2NT*	3♣ - good raise, not much of a stretch 3♥ - strong raise, values for the four level 3♦ - spades, unwilling to bid 3♠ 3♠ - forcing 4♣/5♣ - weak, preemptive

* hearts and diamonds

North's bid of the dearer suit, hearts, is equivalent to a strong club raise, necessarily a bit better than a normal limit raise. It is not game-forcing, however, so North may pass a 4♣ bid by South. Here a minimum raise implies good values for a three-level raise, since there is no other way to show such a hand. With less strength in support of clubs North can double to show values for a 2♣ raise. With five or more clubs, the weak jump raises are available.

South	West	North
1♦	2NT*	3♣ - spades, not enough to force with 3♠ 3♠ - forcing 3♦ - good values for a raise 3♥ - strong diamond raise, too good for 3♦

* hearts and clubs

It might seem logical to reverse the general rules for this situation, using 3♣ for a strong diamond raise and 3♥ to show spades. We don't do this for two reasons: (1) to avoid an exception to the general rules, and (2) reversing the meaning might crowd the bidding too much for opener, who can rebid diamonds (perhaps stopping there!) or bid a mark-time 3♥ when unable to support spades.

-- A double of an artificial notrump bid shows "cards" (9+ HCP?), enough strength to suggest that the hand belongs to the opening side, but with no suitable bid. The double does not promise another bid, however. If opener passes RHO's response to the conventional call, the doubler may also pass if she has no reasonable alternative. Similarly, a pass or later suit bid by the doubler is not forcing on opener:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Dbl	Pass
Pass	3♣	Pass/3♥/3♠	- not forcing

Neither the pass nor a three-level bid is forcing on South. A 3♥ bid by North implies a hand that wanted to double an opposing 3♦ bid, but is not interested in defending against 3♣. The heart suit is probably five long, so South may "correct" to 3♠ with short hearts and good spades. A 3♠ bid by North at this point implies three-card support and a good hand, but is not forcing.

-- If the conventional call is a double, then a redouble shows "cards."

-- A double of a conventional suit bid shows values for a bid of that suit at that level:

South	West	North
1♦	2♦*	Dbl - diamond raise, weak or maybe three diamonds
		2♥ - clubs, invitational strength
		2♠ - strong diamond raise ("Dear Partner")
		2NT - not forcing
		3♣ - forcing
		3♦ - good raise

*Michaels Cue Bid, both majors

North's double denies values for a 3♦ bid, which should be fairly sound (although not worth a limit raise).

-- A direct double by opener after partner passes is a takeout double:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Pass	3♣
			Dbl - takeout double, implying four hearts and five-plus spades

-- Balancing doubles by either partner are penalty doubles if either has acted previously:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl - penalty double	
		3♥ - weak balancing action	

With the double, North has enough to beat 3♣, but may not be able to support any further action by South. Bidding in a balancing position after passing is a competitive action:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Dbl	Pass
Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass
		Dbl - penalty double	
		3♥/3♠ - not forcing	

North's pass of 3♣ was not forcing.

-- When opener cannot support the suit responder indicates by bidding the cheaper suit, he has room to bid the dearer opposing suit as a mark-time bid, denying three-card support for responder's suit, sufficient assets to rebid his own suit, or the ability to bid notrump. It does not show values in the suit.

-- A bid in an opposing suit is conventional only when made directly over the opponent's conventional call. A later bid in one of the suits is natural, showing strength in the suit and implying none in the other:

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♦*	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	

* Michaels, both majors

North's 2♥ bid is Unusual Over Unusual, showing a club suit. If she had bid 3♣ instead, that would be forcing. Her 3♥ bid shows heart strength and implies spade weakness, suggesting that South bid 3NT with a spade stopper. South's 3♣ (a raise of North's known clubs) is not forcing, so 3♥ shows an unexpectedly good hand, perhaps fortified by the club raise.

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Dbl	Pass
3♣ /3♦ - stopper(s) in that suit, but not in the other			

South	West	North	East
1♠	2NT	Dbl	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♦ - diamond stopper(s), but none in clubs	

Here's how Unusual Over Unusual works against a top-and-bottom cue bid:

South	West	North
1♠	2♠*	Dbl - minimum spade raise
		2NT - not forcing
		3♣ - diamonds, invitational hand
		3♦ - forcing to game
		3♥ - strong spade raise, at least limit-raise strength
		3♠ - too good for a double
		3NT - natural
		4♣/4♦/4♥ - splinter bid in support of spades
		4♠ - preemptive spade raise

* hearts and clubs

In this case clubs are the cheaper suit, hearts the dearer.

South	West	North
1♦	2♦*	Dbl - minimum diamond raise
		2♥ - forcing to game
		2♠ - hearts, invitational hand
		3♣ - strong diamond raise, at least limit-raise strength
		3♦ - too good for a double

* spades and clubs

Now spades are the cheaper suit and clubs are the dearer. While it might be better to change one or more meanings in this case, the general rules work well enough and exceptions are to be avoided.

After a Direct Intervention Over 1NT

-- The rule of "Cheap-Cheap" applies in this case. A bid in the dearer (not the cheaper) of the two suits indicated by the opponent shows values for an invitational bid in the dearer of the two "unbid" suits, while

a bid in the cheaper of the two suits shows values for an invitational bid in the cheaper of the two unbid suits. Seeking a 4-4 fit in a major is not worthwhile, since bad breaks can be expected.

South	West	North
1NT	2NT*	3♣ - invitational heart bid (or better)
		3♥/3♠ - forcing to game
		3♦ - spades, invitational hand (or better)
		4♦/4♥ - Texas Transfer
		4♣ - Gerber
		Dbl - "cards," but not enough to bid 3NT

* minors

The "or better" bids may have a 3NT bid in reserve, wanting to know first if partner has support for responder's suit.

South	West	North
1NT	2♣*	Dbl - club length, weak hand
		2♥ - clubs, invitational hand
		3♣ - natural, forcing to game
		2♦ - natural, weak
		2♠ - diamonds, invitational hand
		3♦ - forcing to game
		2NT/3NT - natural

* major suits

With three ways to show a diamond hand, 2♦ can be used as a weak competitive bid.

South	West	North
1NT	2♦*	Dbl - diamond length, weak hand
		2♥ - clubs, invitational hand (no weak club bid available)
		3♣ - natural, forcing to game
		2♠ - diamonds, invitational hand
		3♦ - forcing to game
		2NT/3NT - natural

* major suits

With long clubs and no game interest, responder may be able to bid 3♣ on the next round.

When Neither Partner Has Bid

In this case the rule of "Cheap-Cheap" applies. A bid in the dearer opposing suit shows a strong bid in the dearer "unbid" suit, and a bid in the cheaper opposing suit shows a moderate holding in the cheaper "unbid" suit.

South West
 2NT* 3♣ - moderate heart overcall
 3♦ - moderate spade overcall, or better
 3♥/3♠ - strong overcall
 Dbl - strong hand, undefined
 3NT - natural

* opening bid showing the minors

The bid of 3♦ can be based on a strong hand with both majors. With moderate strength just show hearts (3♣) and then bid 3♠ (not forcing) if partner marks time with a 3♦ bid (denying heart support).

After an Intervention Over a Raise

South West North East
 1♠ Pass 2♠ 2NT
 Dbl - good hand, no suitable bid, probably four spades
 3♣ - hearts, not good enough for 3♥
 3♥ - forcing, game try
 3♦ - spade "rebid," good hand ("Dear Me")
 3♠ - merely competitive
 4♠ - denies good defensive values

After an Intervention Over a New Suit Response

South West North East
 1♣ Pass 1♠ 1NT - diamonds and hearts
 Dbl - good hand, no suitable call available
 2♣ - probably six clubs, near-minimum hand
 3♣ - a better hand
 2♦ - strong club hand ("Dear Me")
 2♥ - strong spade raise ("Dear Partner")
 2♠ - normal raise
 2NT - standard, 19-20 HCP, red suit stoppers
 3♠/4♠ - preemptive raises (expecting to make, but defensively weak)
 4♦/4♥ - splinter bid in support of spades

With three ways to describe a club hand, 2♣ can be used to deny a good hand. Note the exception in regard to the "cheaper" bid, which in this case shows a strong hand, not a moderate holding. A previously-bid suit has to have a "dear" bid available.

South West North East

1♠ Pass 2♣ 2NT - diamonds and hearts
 Dbl - good hand, no suitable call available
 3♣ - normal raise
 3♦ - strong spade rebid ("Dear Me")
 3♥ - strong club raise ("Dear Partner")
 3♠ - competitive bid
 4♦/4♥ splinter bid in support of clubs
 4♣/4♠ - offensively good, not much defensive strength

After an Intervention Over a 1NT Response

South West North East

1♠ Pass 1NT 2NT
 3♣ - moderate hand with hearts
 3♥ - forcing
 3♦ - strong spade rebid ("Dear Me")
 3♠ - merely competitive

South West North East

1♣ Pass 1NT 2NT*
 3♣ - not a strong hand
 3♥ - strong club rebid ("Dear Me")
 3♦ - moderate hand with spades
 3♠ - forcing, strong hand

*diamonds and hearts

Type 2 Defense

This defense applies to a bid that shows the suit named, plus another specified suit. Examples:

- A 2♥ opening that shows five hearts and four spades
- An overcall that shows the suit bid plus another specified suit

There are (at least) four cases of Type 2 conventions:

- (1) Partner has not acted.
- (2) Partner has opened in notrump.
- (3) Partner has doubled 1NT for business.
- (4) Partner has opened with one of a suit.

Case (1) applies when an opponent opens the bidding with a conventional bid that shows the suit bid, plus another specified suit. Here's the defense:

-- A double is for takeout, showing strength/length in three suits, including opener's *other* suit, and shortness in the suit opened.

-- A "cue bid" in opener's other suit, the one not bid, shows a moderate hand with length in both "unbid" suits.

-- A cue bid in the suit bid by opener shows a strong hand with length in both "unbid" suits, or perhaps a very strong one-suited hand with the dearer unbid suit.

-- All other bids are natural.

For instance, against a 2♥ opening that shows five hearts and four spades:

North	East
2♥	Dbl - takeout, a three-suited hand
	2♠ - both minors, moderate hand
	3♥ - both minors, big hand (or maybe just diamonds)
	2NT - natural, 16-18 HCP

With length and strength in opener's bid suit, and shortness in his second suit, a pass is usually best. If the opening is passed around to partner, perhaps she can make a takeout double (which you will pass). If third hand responds, you can make a takeout double yourself on the next round:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - takeout		

West usually has good hearts. East will often convert this takeout double into a penalty double by passing with spade strength/length. If East is short in hearts she knows the defense will go well after a trump lead, in view of West's probable heart strength.

Case (2), wherein partner's opening notrump bid is overcalled with a conventional bid that shows the suit named plus another specific suit, is frequently encountered. An example is the Brozel convention, in which a 2♣ or 2♦ overcall of 1NT shows the minor named and a heart suit too. A 2♥ overcall shows hearts and spades. The defense goes like this:

-- A double is for penalty.

-- A "cue bid" in the opponent's other suit is Stayman, asking opener to bid a four-card major. If the overcall shows both majors, then this is "minor suit Stayman," asking opener to bid a four-card minor.

-- A cue bid in the suit named by the opponent shows a singleton or void in that suit, and a game-going hand or better. This may be a prelude to a slam try. If opener has secondary strength in this suit, he should bid 3NT to warn of possible duplication. If not duplicated, as with a bare ace or no stopper at all, opener must not bid notrump.

-- A new suit response is not particularly invitational at matchpoint scoring. A jump is forcing at IMP scoring, invitational at matchpoints.

-- A notrump bid is natural.

Let's look at various auctions after a 1NT opening is overcalled with 2♦, showing diamonds and hearts:

South	West	North
1NT	2♦	Dbl - penalty

South	West	North	East
1NT	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl - takeout	

In general doubles after one's side has bid notrump are penalty, but low-level balancing doubles have to be an exception. South may be able to convert this into a penalty double when holding good hearts. By the way, a direct double of 2♥ by South would be for takeout (since hearts are held over him). This is analogous to the takeout meaning of 1NT-2x-P-P; Dbl. Once partner has passed in a competitive auction, the double of a suit known to be held over the doubler is for takeout.

South	West	North
1NT	2♦	2♥ - Stayman

North is asking South to show a four-card spade suit. North may pass if opener makes a minimum bid, so she should jump to 3♠, 4♠, or 3NT with a maximum opening. Both partners must keep in mind that spades may not be breaking well.

South	West	North
1NT	2♦	3♦ - strong hand, game force

South bids 3NT only when holding secondary diamond strength.

The case (3) situation, in which the conventional bid is made over partner's business double of a 1NT opening, is handled similarly to case (2).

South	West	North	East
1NT	Dbl	2♣*	2♦/2♠ - competitive bid
			2♥ - "Stayman," with four spades
			3♣ - strong cue bid

* clubs and hearts

After the 2♥ bid, East may pass West's minimum spade, notrump, or diamond bid.

The case (4) situation, in which an opposing overcall of a suit opening shows the suit bid plus another specified suit, has a similar defense:

South	West
1♦	2♥ - hearts and spades

-- A direct double is for penalties, a balancing double is for takeout:

South	West	North	East
1♣	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl - takeout	

West's jump overcall showed hearts and spades. East no doubt has five diamonds and some club support. she could bid 2NT to show such a hand, so the double implies some defensive strength in case South wants to defend.

- A "new suit" response in the fourth suit is forcing.
- Notrump bids are natural, non-forcing, even a jump to 2NT.
- A cue bid in the suit named by the opponent is a strong slam try, showing support for partner and at least second round control of the cue bid suit.
- A "cue bid" in the opponent's other suit shows a good hand that has no alternative call available.

Note the similarities among the four cases of Type 2 conventions:

- Direct doubles are penalty if partner has acted, otherwise takeout.
- Low-level balancing doubles are takeout
- Cue bids in the bid suit are very strong.
- Cue bids in the other suit show a good, but not powerful, hand.

Type 3 Defense

The Type 3 two-suit convention shows the suit named, plus an unspecified suit. The second suit may be described as being a major, a minor, or red, or black, etc., but is not specifically identified.

Examples:

- 2♠ overcall of a 1NT opening, showing spades and a minor suit

System off, 3♠ is Stayman, all other bids are natural and non-forcing.

- 2♠ opening showing spades plus a minor suit
- 2♥ opening showing hearts and a minor suit

No special defense is needed for this convention type when it is an opening bid. Just bid normally. If partner has opened with one of a suit, a double is penalty and a cue bid is strong.

Type 4 Defense

A Type 4 two-suit convention shows a specific suit other than the one named, plus an unspecified suit. That is, the conventional bid does not name one of the suits held, and only one suit is specifically identified. Examples:

- Michaels cue bid over a major opening, showing the other major plus a minor suit
- Astro overcalls of a 1NT opening (2♦ shows spades and another suit, 2♣ shows hearts plus a minor)
- Raptor 1NT overcall--see section 12-16

After a 1NT Opening

-- System off, because the opposing known suit is used for Stayman. A double is for business, and with a one-suited hand denies the ability to make a stronger bid. The double says, "He just bid my suit, and I don't have enough strength to do anything but double. The doubler will not bid again if one-suited, but if two-suited his hand is unlimited.

South	West	North
1NT	2♣	Dbl

West's bid shows hearts and a minor suit. North has ♠32 ♥876 ♦Q42 ♣KJ873. The double denies the ability to bid 2NT or 3♣, which would be invitational. She might bid something on the next round, however, which then shows a strong hand with clubs. For instance, doubling 2♣ and then bidding 3♣ is forcing, because an invitational hand would bid 3♣ immediately.

-- The forcing nature of a conventional call allows three degrees of strength for a new suit response (minimum bid, jump bid, pass and bid). All minimum suit bids other than the opponent's known suit are natural (no Jacoby transfers) and invitational, and jump bids are forcing. With a weak hand, responder can pass and hope to act on the next round. Texas applies as usual, but it has to be a jump bid. A bid in the opponent's known suit is used for Stayman:

In the following auction 2♣ shows hearts plus a minor:

South	West	North
1NT	2♣	2♦/2♠/2NT/3♣ - invitational
		2♥ - Stayman
		3♦/3♠ - forcing
		Dbl - club suit, not enough for 3♣

After Partner's Suit Opening

-- A direct double shows the suit, but denies the ability to bid the suit at the next level:

South	West	North
1♣	2♥*	Dbl - heart suit

3♥ - forcing

* spades and a minor

With a one-suited hand North has limited his strength by doubling and usually will not bid again. With a two-suited hand, good club support, or a strong notrump-type hand, the double is unlimited. Bidding notrump, or a second suit, or raising later will clarify North's hand if it is strong.

-- A bid in the opponent's known suit is a takeout bid that does not promise another bid. North would bid 2♠ over 2♥ with ♠432 ♥AK65 Jx ♣K872. In this auction it promises enough strength for probable safety at the three level, so don't bid 2♠ with a weaker hand.

-- A jump in the opponent's known suit is a splinter bid, showing first or second round control of the suit, good support for opener, and slam aspirations. Opener's notrump rebid then warns of duplication (secondary strength) in the suit.

-- A new suit bid is forcing.

-- When the opposing bid is in partner's suit, a raise of that suit must have full values for the level involved. You can double to show a light hand with support:

South	West	North
1♠	2♠	Dbl

West's 2♠ bid shows hearts and a minor. North's double limits his hand. She has a normal raise to 2♠, but not enough to bid 3♠ (which ought to be sound, close to a limit raise). A three-card spade holding is likely.

-- A 2NT response is not forcing.

Against an Opening Bid

-- A double shows the suit bid, and with a one-suited hand denies the ability to bid the suit at the next level. With a two-suited or strong notrump-type hand, the double is unlimited.

-- A bid of the known suit is for takeout.

Type 5 Defense

The Type 5 two-suit convention shows an unspecified two-suiter.

Examples:

-- Cansino double of 1NT, showing both minors or both majors

-- 2♣ overall of 1NT, showing an unspecified two-suiter.

-- 2♦ overall of 2♣, showing an unspecified two-suiter

In general, the defense against a Type 5 call over partner's 1NT opening is the general one that the double of a suit overcall shows the suit doubled, new suit bids are not particularly invitational, and a jump is forcing at IMP scoring, invitational at matchpoints. A double of 2♣ is Stayman, however, with "all systems on." A conventional double of 1NT is ignored completely, "all systems on," except that a redouble shows at least 6 HCP in a hand that may have passed 1NT. Opener may be able to double an opposing contract, knowing that partner has something to contribute. After a redouble, all doubles by either partner, direct or balancing, are for business.

When the call is a 2♦ bid made over an artificial 2♣ strong opening, however, a pass serves as a negative or waiting response and controls are not shown:

South	West	North
2♣	2♦	Pass - negative or waiting
		Dbl - diamond suit, positive response
		2♥/2♠/2NT/3♣ - natural positive responses

The double of an overcall higher than 2♦ shows the suit doubled, as usual, with enough strength for a positive response. If one-suited, the double is limited (i.e., the suit is probably not very strong). It is preferable to bid the suit when it is long/strong. With a two-suited hand the double is unlimited.

When the conventional call is a double of partner's natural opening bid in a suit, bid as you would over a takeout double.

Type 6 Defense

The type 6 two-suited convention shows either of two hands: two specific suits or one specific suit, none named. The simplest defense is to double to show the suit bid, but retain the usual meaning for all other calls. Passing and acting later is another option, necessary when holding a strong raise.

South	West	North
1♠	2♦*	2♥/3♦/3♣ - natural response, forcing
		Dbl - diamonds, not good enough for 3♦
		3♠ - limit raise
		4♠ - preemptive raise

* hearts or both minors

With no known suit to use as a cue bid when holding a strong raise, just pass and bid strongly later.

DEFENSE AGAINST DISCIPLINED WEAK TWO BIDS

A disciplined weak two bid is defined as promising a good six-card suit and at least 6 HCP. See section 12-9 for defense against "undisciplined" weak two bids.

A takeout double must be slightly stronger than a minimum for a one-level double. A double of one major practically guarantees at least four cards in the other major, unless the doubler is quite strong. Even then, three cards is a minimum holding for an unbid major. A double of 2♦ should have at least seven cards in the majors, at least four in each if the double is a little light.

A direct 2NT overcall shows 16-18 HCP. With a single stopper one might want more than 16 HCP, and 19 HCP would not be too much. Partner raises to 3NT with 9 HCP or so. If he passes with 8 HCP and you miss a game, that's life. You can't do everything.

A 2NT overcall in the reopening position can be a little lighter, but not much. Third hand could be loaded, just waiting to double something. Besides, partner won't know what to do with 9 HCP if you bid 2NT with anything from 14 to 19 HCP.

After a 2NT overcall, use the same conventions and treatments as for a 2NT opening. A 3♣ bid is always Stayman, while a transfer acts like a cue bid, implying first or second round control and slam interest. With conventions "on," the normal cue bid is not available.

With too big a hand for a 2NT overcall, double and then bid 3NT. A 2NT bid after doubling would not be interpreted as too big a hand for a 2NT overcall (although the range should be higher, say 17-19 HCP):

South	West	North	East
2♦	Dbl	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT		

This sequence implies a hand with 3-4 in the majors, maybe a single diamond stopper, and 17-19 HCP. Just pass 2♠ with less (or bid 2NT instead of doubling).

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT		

Here too, East implies three-card spade support and only a single heart stopper: ♠AQ3 ♥K4 ♦A876 ♣KJ54

Since you can double and then bid notrump with a big hand, a 3NT overcall tends to be based on a solid minor. Don't "gamble" with this bid in the direct position. Bid 3♦ with ♠K3 ♥J4 ♦AKQ873 ♣432, even over a weak 2♠ bid. You could bid 3NT in the balancing position, knowing partner probably has a couple of high cards (but not enough to hang you with a slam bid).

When making a suit overcall of a weak two bid, you assume partner has 7 HCP or so. The converse is that responder generally passes with 7 HCP or less and no good ruffing potential. It also follows that you must make a jump overcall if an ace and a queen, or two kings, in partner's hand will produce game.

A cue bid overcall of a weak two bid is a strong bid that is often based on a two-suited hand. Overcall 2♠ with 3♠ holding ♠4 ♥AK1087 ♦8 ♣AQJ873. If partner bids diamonds, you bid 4♥, implying a two suited hand with hearts/clubs. Don't cue bid with a hand weaker than this. Just overcall in one of the suits and hope to bid the other later. A cue bid can also be based on a very strong three-suited hand.

A jump cue bid shows a game-going hand in a major, too strong for a mere jump to game:

South	West	North	East
2♥	4♥	Pass	5♣ -cue bid in support of spades
Pass	6♠		

East has ♠J♥8732 ♦10843 ♣AJ92, West ♠AKQ10843 ♥void ♦A92 ♣KQ6. A jump to 4♠ over 2♥ would not do the hand justice. East would have passed and missed a slam. A jump to game in a major should usually have no more than nine playing tricks. This one has 9-1/2, with first or second round control of every suit.

A jump cue bid of 4♠ over a 2♠ opening would be very unlikely, since overcaller would need close to eleven tricks.

A jump cue bid of 4♦ over a 2♦ opening is ambiguous, since overcaller could have either hearts or spades. Advancer can bid 4NT (regular Blackwood) or cue bid a minor as a slam try only if ready to play in either major. A 4♠ bid is not a cue bid. It implies slam interest if overcaller's suit is hearts, but not otherwise.

When Third Hand Bids a New Suit

Partners of weak two bidders often psych a major suit response, so a double of such a takeout is for business if it is forcing::

South	West	North	East
2♥	Pass	2♠	Dbl - business if 2♠ is forcing
			3♥ - takeout if 2♠ is forcing

The double shows a 2♠ overcall. If East has a 3♠ overcall he should bid 3♠ rather than double, because the double is a limit call. The reason is shown by this auction:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Pass	2♠	Dbl
Pass	Pass	4♥	?

If East had values for a 3♠ bid, he can't show that now.

If the major suit response is not forcing (which must be Alerted), then a psych is much less likely to a double is takeout, showing both minors, and a cue bid in one of the opposing suits shows a stopper (Telling Cue Bid), implying that partner should bid 3NT with the other suit stopped.

A double of a minor suit response is for takeout:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Pass	3♣	Dbl - takeout

With 5-5 or better a 4♣ cue bid would be preferable if the hand is strong enough. A cue bid in opener's suit (3♠, in this case) is a Telling Cue Bid," showing a stopper and suggesting that partner bid 3NT with the other suit stopped (♠A4 ♥A9 ♦AKQ874 ♣972).

When Third Seat Bids Over a Double

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	2♠	?

If East has four or more spades, North's bid is almost certainly a psych. East should double if she was going to bid 2♠ willingly (i.e., possessing 6-8 HCP or so). If she was going to jump to 3♠, she now bids 3♣, following the policy of ignoring the opposing bid except for possibly doubling it. A double is therefore a limit call, denying the values for a 3♠ or 4♠ bid. If you double with a wide range of HCPs and suit length, you and partner may be doing some guessing if the bidding goes like this:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	2♠	Dbl
Pass	Pass	5♥!	

Similarly, a bid by the doubler in a new major that was bid over the double is natural, whether or not it has been doubled:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Dbl	2♥	Pass/Dbl
3♦	3♥ - natural, not forcing		

These considerations do not apply when the suit involved is a minor:

South	West	North	East
2♥	Dbl	3♣	4♣ - forcing cue bid

East has first round control of clubs and a strong hand. A double would be for business.

When third hand raises, a double should be played as a Responsive Double or a Positive Double (section 9-1).

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

The double should say, "This is our hand, but I'm not confident that I can make 4♥."

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

MARVIN VS FIVE-CARD MAJORS

An opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦ with a three-card suit is quite common in five-card major systems. Forcing club system bidders may even open 1♦ with a weak doubleton and a light hand. The following defense is aimed at punishing these practices. It may be applied selectively, e.g., against vulnerable opponents only. It applies only to direct action taken by an unpassed hand, and only against an opening that may be shorter than four cards. Some five-card majorites guarantee four diamonds with a 1♦ opening, so the defense does not apply against their 1♦ opening. Balancing and passed hand actions are standard. See section 11-1, Reopening the Bidding, and section 8-5, Defensive Bidding by a Passed Hand.

Defense Against a One Diamond Opening

-- A double of 1♦ shows a notrump hand of two possible ranges, 16-18 HCP or 21-22 HCP, including Qxx or better in diamonds. With 19-20 HCP, bid 1♥ and follow with an appropriate notrump bid, just as you would normally double and then bid notrump with such a hand (see section 9-1, Takeout Doubles). With diamonds weaker than Qxx, a 1♥ takeout is probably a good alternative.

The reason for (reluctantly) excluding 19-20 HCP hands is that the doubler will sometimes have to bid 2NT between two bidders later in the auction, a dangerous action with only 19-20 HCP. You can cheat a trifle on the 16 HCP requirement when the diamonds are extra good (e.g., KJ97). Be sure to count a little more for tenaces like AQ, AJx, KJx, etc. Sitting over the opening bidder makes such holdings more valuable than their normal point count (and makes opener's honors worth less).

The double of 1♦ puts opener in a bind right away if his diamond suit is short. The opponents may have no place to go, and even if they do, they may have difficulty finding it. (Try to devise a system for locating the best contract after a double--it's not easy.) The double has constructive as well as destructive purposes. A 4-4 major suit fit, or even a minor suit fit, can sometimes be found when a 1NT overcall would have been passed out.

-- A 1♥ overcall is artificial, forcing, a takeout bid. Partner ("advancer") responds as to a takeout double. An advance of 2♦ is a normal forcing cue bid, while an advance of 3♦ is natural, invitational. A 1NT advance would be unusual, but would be necessary with a very weak 3=3=4=3 hand. Is it dangerous for advancer to bid 1NT with a bust hand? Sure, but no more dangerous than having West overcall 1NT instead of doubling. You'll have lots of company.

-- A 1♠ overcall is natural, too good (or spades too weak) for a preemptive 2♠ overcall.

-- A 1NT overcall is forcing, showing a simple heart overcall, too good (or hearts too weak) for a preemptive 2♥ overcall. Partner bids 2♥ to sign off, an action that requires no strength at all. Other advances are the same as if the overcall had been a natural heart bid. For instance, a 2♦ bid is a standard cue bid response to the overcall, while 3♣ or 3♦ is natural (invitational).

South	West	North	East
1♦	1NT	Pass	2♦ - standard cue bid
			2♥ - signoff
			2♣/2♠ - not forcing
			2NT - natural, invitational
			3♣/3♦/3♥ - invitational

-- A 2♣ overcall is artificial and forcing, showing a strong (i.e., eight playing tricks) jump overcall in some suit, or an eight-trick notrump hand based on a solid six-card minor plus stoppers. With a standard club overcall, too good for a (preemptive) 2NT call, bid 3♣ if you are strong enough, otherwise pass. Partner bids 2♦ (forcing) over 2♣ to find out what you have, or may bid a very good suit (also forcing):

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	Pass	2♦?
Pass	2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦		- strong jump in this suit
	2NT		- natural, solid minor, stoppers

One quick trick is enough to raise the 2NT bid. If opener's partner sticks in a bid (e.g., 2♦), 2NT can be used for the query. The solid suit for an eight-trick notrump hand is probably clubs, but could be diamonds. See section 8-3, Strong Jump Overcalls, and section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

-- Bid 2NT with a preemptive jump overcall in clubs, 3♣ with an intermediate club overcall, pass with a minimum club overcall.

-- A 2♦ overcall has the same meaning as a cue bid over a normal (e.g., four-card) diamond opening. With a natural diamond overcall, just pass and hope to act later if you can't double (see below) or bid 3♦. You may find that opener has a real diamond suit, or that you can eventually double a notrump contract for a diamond lead, or that you can balance with a diamond bid later..

-- Jump overcalls in a major or in diamonds are preemptive (but not very weak at the two level--about the same as a weak two bid). After a 2♥ or 2♠ overcall, subsequent bidding follows the same rules as for weak two bids.

When advancing the weak preemptive overcalls, use the methods for responding to a preemptive opening. See Section 7-2, Weak Two Bids, and Section 7-3, Preemptive Three Bids.

Bidding After a Double

-- Unless advancer has indicated weakness by not doubling an opposing 1NT bid, his two-level bids have the same meaning as if doubler had overcalled 1NT naturally. All conventions are operative. See section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls. If doubler has a 21-22 HCP hand, he will have to use his ingenuity to disclose the extra strength somehow (e.g., jumping to 3♥ or 3♠ in response to Stayman, raising 3NT to 4NT, bidding 2NT in response to a Jacoby transfer).

-- With a weak hand (0-7 HCP) that would have passed a normal 1NT overcall, advancer can bid a four-card major at the one level (Use Jacoby with five, unless extremely weak). The doubler will pass with good

support (four cards, or three plus a ruffing value). A free bid of 1♠ (over RHO's 1♥) is also weak, 0-7 HCP. After a "weakness response," no subsequent pass by either partner is forcing:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1♥ - weak
2♦	Pass	- not forcing	
		Dbl - business, maybe 21-22 HCP	
		2♥ - 16-18 HCP, four hearts	
		2NT/3♥ - 21-22 HCP for sure	

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥	1♠ - weak
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣ - still weak!

East probably has four spades, five clubs, and a weak unbalanced hand that is unsuitable for notrump. West should pass unless he has more spades than clubs. Even though it is at the two level, the last bid is natural, not Stayman, because 1♠ showed weakness.

-- Passes of an opposing 1♥ or 1♠ bid by either partner are forcing unless advancer has indicated weakness (which would have to be via a 1♥ bid). Pass of 1NT bid over the double is not forcing. Passes at the two level are forcing only if advancer has previously indicated some strength (e.g., by passing the double of 1♦). Forcing passes will help prevent the opponents from getting out of trouble, as when the next hand to bid is strong but cannot double a runout bid.

-- Advancer can pass the double with a few high cards and a fair diamond holding, knowing that doubler has something in diamonds and lots of defense. Sometimes advancer will pass with a weak hand but long diamonds. If opener then runs to 1♠ and doubler passes (forcing), advancer can bid 2♦, not forcing, if the runout bid comes around:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	Pass	2♦ - weak, long diamonds
			1NT - up to 7 HCP

Other possible actions by East:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	Pass	1♠ - weak, four spades
			1NT - 7 HCP maximum
			Dbl - business

The 1♠ bid would be appropriate with ♠Q987 ♥7 ♦KQ32 ♣9643. It denies the strength required for a game try opposite 16-18 HCP, the same message given by the 1NT bid. Had North raised to 2♥, a 2♠ bid would have the same meaning as when the bidding goes 1♦-1NT-2♥-2♠ in standard bidding (five or more spades, not invitational).

-- Advancer's pass over a redouble is also to play. In fact, a redouble is completely ignored, whether it is "S. O. S." or not:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass - Business
			1♥/1♠/1NT - weak

Unlike the situation after a takeout double, East's pass says he is ready to defend 1♦ redoubled. This and any other action by East is the same as if the redouble had not occurred. East can't pass the redouble with short diamonds, even with a good hand, because a pass shows a desire to defend against 1♦ redoubled.

Is it dangerous for advancer to bid 1NT with a bust hand? Sure, but no more dangerous than having West overcall 1NT instead of doubling.

-- If third hand bids 1♥ or 1♠, a double is for business, as are all subsequent doubles by either partner. A one-level business doubler should have at least four cards in the opposing suit, and partner should have two or more to pass the double. (Defending a one-level contract with 3-3 trumps may not be profitable.) A pass by advancer is forcing.

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥	Dbl - business
			Pass - forcing
			1♠ - weak, four cards
			1NT - weak, both minors

Since doubler can't have a singleton, he will always pass a business double. Although the pass is forcing, it promises no strength whatsoever. West can double 1♥ with only 16 HCP, however, because East will pull the double to 1NT (or a forcing two-level bid) if he decides that his hand is not good enough to defend against 1♥. Pulling a double of 1♥ to 1♠ is a stronger action (but still weak, 6-7 HCP) than bidding 1♠ immediately. For the 1NT bid, a sort of advance rescue, the minors can be as short as 4-4. (A natural 1NT bid would be illogical in this situation, since West will bid 1NT if East passes).

Two-level bids have the same meaning as if doubler had overcalled 1NT naturally:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥/1♠	2♣ - Stayman
			2♦/2♥ - Jacoby transfer
			etc.

After advancer's forcing pass, doubler clarifies his hand if he can't double for business:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1♥	Pass - forcing
Pass	Dbl	♠104 ♥AJ98 ♦AQ108 ♣KQ2	
		1NT - ♠AJ8 ♥K10 ♦AQ108 ♣Q72	
		1♠ - ♠AJ98 ♥104 ♦AQ108 ♣KQ2	
		2NT - AK8 ♥K10 ♦AQ108 ♣AJ2	

2♥ - AK98 ♥102 ♦AQ108 ♣AKJ

After the 2♥ cue bid, a 2NT bid by advancer can be passed because overcaller has shown his hand pretty exactly: 21-22 HCP and no heart stopper. After the notrump rebids by doubler, the usual notrump conventions apply.

See section 8-4, Notrump Overcalls.

-- Third hand may sometimes bid 1NT over the double:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1NT	Pass - not forcing (weak)
			2 any - natural, weak
			2NT - artificial, forcing
			3 any - invitational
			Dbl - business

The 2NT bid and jumps to three of a suit are probably based on a distributionally strong hand that may not have much in high cards (in view of the failure to double 1NT). Doubler assumes that advancer's 2NT bid is offering a choice of the minors and bids 3♣ or 3♦, but it could be based on any two suits. If advancer then bids a new suit (forcing), opener raises or bids his next-best suit:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Dbl	1NT	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥ - forcing
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣ - second suit, not forcing

When Second Hand Passes or Overcalls Naturally

Fourth seat's defensive actions when partner passes or overcalls naturally are standard. The meaning of a 2♦ overcall of a third seat response to 1♦ depends on what the response was. For instance, 2♦ is natural over a new suit response:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	2♦ - natural bid
			Dbl - takeout

See section 10-4, Direct Cue Bid Overcalls. Reopening calls in the fourth seat (i.e., after 1♦-P-P) are also standard. See section 11-1, Reopening the Bidding.

Defense Against A One Club Opening

The defense against a 1♣ opening is similar, except that 1♦ is the takeout call, and the meanings of 2♣ and 2♦ are reversed:

South West

- 1♣ Dbl - 16-18 HCP or 21-22 HCP, at least Qxx in clubs.
 1♦ - takeout, forcing
 1♥/1♠ - natural overcall
 1NT - normal diamond overcall
 2♣ - normal cue bid
 2♦ - strong jump in some suit
 2♥/2♠/3♣ - preemptive, but 2♥/2♠ not very weak
 2NT - preemptive diamond overcall
 3♦ - intermediate diamond overcall

A double of 1♣ shows a notrump hand of two possible ranges, 16-18 HCP or 21-22 HCP, including Qxx or better in clubs. With 19-20 HCP, bid 1♦ and follow with an appropriate notrump bid, just as you would normally double and then bid notrump with such a hand (see section 9-1, Takeout Doubles). With clubs weaker than Qxx, a 1♦ takeout is preferable.

After a double of 1♣, advancer can bid 1♦ to ask for a major. This denies the strength required for a 2♣ Stayman bid, and may be based on a complete bust. Bid 2♣ (Stayman), not 1♦, if game is a possibility opposite 16-18 HCP. If you bid 1♦ and then raise partner's major suit bid, he will know that the raise is merely a competitive move and you are not interested in game. Similarly, if you bid 1♦ and then bid 1NT or two of any suit, doubler must pass unless he has both majors or a big hand:

South West North East

- 1♣ Dbl Pass 1♦ - asks for major
 Pass 1♠ Pass 1NT/2♣/2♦ - signoff
 Pass 2♥/Pass - 16-18 HCP
 2NT/3 any - 21-22 HCP

The 2♣ or 2♦ signoff implies four hearts and at least a five-card minor.

The 2♦ overcall of 1♣ is forcing, of course. Advancer bids 2♥ if he would pass a strong jump overcall in hearts, 2♠ if he would pass a spade jump but not a heart jump. Higher suit bids are natural, forcing. He can bid 2NT to inquire:

South West North East

- 1♣ 2♦ Pass 2NT?
 3 any suit - strong overcall in that suit
 3NT - solid minor plus stoppers

Reopening an Opposing Auction

One auction that is very poor for five-card majorities is a minor suit opening, a major suit response, and a 1NT rebid:

South West North East

- 1♣/1♦ Pass 1♥/1♠ Pass
 1NT Pass Pass ?

Since opener is reluctant to raise a major without four trumps, he can easily end up in a 1NT contract when there is a good 5-3 major suit fit. If East reopens in the auction above, South can show three-card support for North and possibly reach a better contract. East should therefore be slow to reopen the bidding unless North's pass denies five cards in his suit or he has North's suit well under control (which might call for a double of 1NT). See section 8-8, Reopening Doubles of 1NT Responses and Rebids.

When There's a 1NT Response to a Major Opening

Five-card majorites play a 1NT response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening as forcing. The subsequent bidding may be wildly inaccurate, given the wide range (6-11 HCP) and unrestricted distribution of the 1NT bidder, plus the restriction that opener must have a six-card suit to rebid it.

Overcalling the 1NT response, besides being somewhat dangerous and generally unnecessary (since 1NT is forcing), may relieve opener of a serious rebid problem. He can just pass (or double) instead of having to bid a three-card minor, for instance. One effective overcall is a 2♠ bid, which can really jam their bidding. It is a safer bid than 2♣ or 2♦, since neither opponent is likely to have four spades, especially if they are playing Flannery. (But some Flannery bidders play that a 1NT response to 1♥ may include four spades, so watch out for that.) If opener's rebid is 2♣ or 2♦ and everyone passes, a trump lead should be automatic. The dummy is sure to have a singleton or void in opener's major, and you don't want to sit back and watch a cross-ruff develop.

DEFENSE AGAINST GAMBLING 3NT OPENINGS

This defense is a variation of "Ripstra," a convention that was originally aimed at a 1NT opening: "Bid your better minor to ask for a major." That usage is obsolete now, but has been resurrected for use as a counter to the gambling type of 3NT opening (showing a solid seven-card minor and little outside).

-- A double is for business.

-- A major suit overcall is natural.

-- A minor suit overcall asks for partner's better major. The overcaller is showing his longer minor, Ripstra-fashion, so partner can pass (or raise) with extreme shortness in the majors and length in the minor. This call can also be made with spades and a minor when the spades are not good enough to bid at the four level. If partner bids 4♥, you bid 4♠ and she will know you have a two-suiter with spades plus a minor (4NT asks which minor).

-- A 4NT overcall shows hearts plus a minor; i.e., it is unusual notrump for the "lower two unbid suits." Lacking four or more hearts, partner bids 5♥ when not holding more cards in a minor; 5♣ with longer clubs than hearts (If overcaller then bids 5♦ over 5♣, he has hearts and diamonds); 5♦ if she prefers hearts to clubs and has more diamonds than hearts. A bid of 5♠ in response to 4NT is a signoff, showing a long spade suit that can play opposite a singleton.

South	West	North	East
3NT	4NT	Pass	5♥ - prefers hearts
			5♣ - prefers clubs
			5♦ - prefers diamonds
			5♠ - natural
			5NT - your minor?

If the opening could be based on a major suit, then 4NT is for the minors. Partner prefers clubs with equal length.

The Opening Lead

When leading against a gambling 3NT bid, the standard advice is to forget fourth best leads and lay down high cards in the hope of finding partner with solidifying cards in some long suit, or enough top cards in multiple suits to defeat the contract.

When not leading a winner, the opening lead should express attitude, not count. This is also true of continuations and switches. Lead low from strength, high from weakness.

DEFENSE AGAINST MULTI TWO DIAMONDS

A "multi-color" opening shows one of two specified suits, neither of which is named. The most popular is "Multi Two Diamonds," Multi for short, which shows a weak two bid in spades or hearts. Responder bids 2♥ if he would pass a weak two bid in hearts, 2♠ if he would pass a weak two bid in spades but would raise hearts, and so on. A 2NT response asks opener to clarify his hand, perhaps with a transfer to his suit. The ACBL requires Multi users to disclose it in advance ("Pre-Alert") and to offer opponents a choice of two ACBL-approved defenses to consult during the auction. Neither is of much value. The following is an alternative defense that may be used (but can't be offered to opponents by Multi users).

Multi may be based on some sort of very strong hand rather than a weak two bid. It is fairly safe to assume the opening is of the weak sort, which it usually is, until opener indicates otherwise. You can sometimes pass the opening, find out about opener's hand on the next round, and then act if he is weak.

If there is no strong adjunct, the convention is properly called Wagner. A defense against Wagner must take into account that, unlike Multi, the 2♦ opening may be passed around to fourth seat when responder has very long diamonds and is very short in the major suits (or, taking a chance, in just one major). With Multi's strong adjunct, the pass possibility is small enough to be ignored.

Both Multi and Wagner have weaknesses that should be exploited. They give defenders two opportunities for acting, immediate or delayed, providing more ways to describe their hands. They often let defenders into the bidding at a lower level than would have been possible after a natural weak two bid. Responder can seldom make a preemptive raise, not knowing opener's suit for sure. The same ignorance applies to his opening leads when opener has not been able to describe his hand.

As when facing standard weak two bids, you may get fixed when neither of you has enough to enter the bidding but the hand is your way. Accept it, because with this defense you will have many more advantages than disadvantages when comparing with those competing against standard weak twos. Be satisfied with that.

As against normal weak two bids, defenders must be reasonable in competing, even when balancing, if the Multi opening comes in first or second seat. They can compete more aggressively, of course, when responder is a passed hand.

Double for Diamonds

The following defense ("Double for Diamonds") may be modified for use against any multi-color type opening that has a strong adjunct. I am much indebted to Danny Kleinman for his great assistance in this effort, but any dumb actions recommended here are mine, not his.

Goals:

- To take advantage of Multi's drawbacks (e.g., second hand usually gets two chances to act)
- To be better off, never worse off, than those defending a standard weak two
- To show accurately as many types of hand as possible

M stands for a major suit, m for a minor suit, PH/UPH for passed hand/unpassed hand

2♦-

Dbl - diamonds and a major, typically 5-5

With a bad hand or a strong hand advancer usually passes the double. A later voluntary bid (e.g., not a forced preference) shows a strong hand.

With moderate values he bids a major of 3+ cards, 2♥ with both, or he can bid a non-forcing 3♣ or 3♦. Bid 3♥ or 4♥ with strength and 3+ in both majors.

2NT is forcing, natural, implying 2-2 majors (stopped) and a diamond fit, but is artificial over responder's 2♠ bid.

A redouble by responder is ignored.

If responder bids 2♥ advancer doubles with 3+ hearts (but not spades), and bids 2♠ with 3+ spades or 3+ in both majors.

If responder bids 2♠ advancer doubles with 3+ spades or 3+ in both majors and bids 2NT with 3+ hearts (but not spades) OR a strong hand.

When advancer has shown 3+ spades, opener passing, intervenor bids 2NT to deny spades, and advancer then chooses a contract.

With a minimum double, intervenor should not bid (his hand is known) over a rebid by opener, but he can double (penalty).

If intervenor's major is known (but not bid) by advancer, intervenor's bid of the major shows a six-card suit

Intervenor's 3♣ rebid (or double of 3♣) is artificial, showing a strong hand.

2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦ - natural

2NT/3NT - natural by UPH, minors by PH

3♥/3♠/4♥/4♠ - too good for a simple overcall

4♣ - clubs and a major, game strength (4♦ asks, 4♥/4♠ is to play)

4♦ - diamonds and a major, game strength (4♥ is pass-or-correct)

4NT - minors, game strength

With clubs and spades, pass and bid spades next round (over a likely 2♥ or 3♥)

With clubs and hearts, pass and bid clubs next round (over a likely 2♠)

With a takeout double of one major, pass, hoping to double that major next round

With a solid m, one major stopped, consider passing & cue bidding or bidding NT next round

With a hand too good for 3m, pass and bid strongly later (e.g., cue bid, notrump bid, jump bid)

2♦-P-2♥- (could be fairly strong with short hearts) -
 2♠ - natural, possibly a two-suited hand
 Dbl - shortness (takeout double) or length (possibly two-suited)*
 3♣ - natural
 3♦ - natural, maybe with clubs too
 3M/4M - natural
 4m - m and spades, game strength
 2NT/3NT natural by UPH, minors by PH
 4NT minors, game strength

*Opener's next call, pass or bid, will reveal the meaning of a double.

2♦-P-2♠- (a heart raise, but may have only three hearts and may be weak) -
 As above, but 4m is m and hearts

2♦-P-2♥/2♠-P; P or 2♦-P-2♥-P; 2♠ -
 Dbl is takeout, possibly 4=6 major-minor
 Cue bid of opener's suit asks for a stopper (solid minor)
 Over 2♥ a spade bid shows clubs too and 3m is natural and strong
 Over 2♠ a club bid shows hearts too and 3♦ is natural and strong
 2NT/3NT natural by UPH - needed to know opener's suit
 4m - natural, too strong for original 3m

2♦-P-2♠-P; 3♥-
 Dbl is takeout, possibly 4=6 spades-minor
 3♠ - spades and clubs
 3NT - natural by UPH, minors by PH
 4m - natural, too strong for original 3m

2♦-P-2NT (forcing inquiry, unlikely to be a bluff) -
 Dbl is extremely strong, enough to beat 2NT. Pass with less.
 3m/3M/4M natural
 3NT natural (long minor), minors by PH
 4♣ - clubs and a major, game strength, 4♦ asks (other advances natural)
 4♦ - diamonds and a major, game strength, 4♥/4♠ is pass-or-correct
 4NT - minors, game strength

Note: Responder would usually preempt with a 3♥/4♥ pass-or-correct response when holding support for both majors and a weak hand, so 2NT tends to show a good hand. Since 2NT is forcing, fourth seat can pass and act later if that seems wiser. If opener's response to 2NT is a transfer bid, a double shows that suit and a bid in the target suit asks for a stopper (solid minor). With a takeout double of the target suit, pass and double that suit next round. If opener's rebid is artificial a double shows the suit, and if the rebid is natural a double is takeout.

If 2♦ gets passed around (unlikely), use the Wagner defense shown below.

Defense Against Wagner

For the sake of simplicity, we do not change the meaning of direct actions against 2♦ in order to cater to the possibility of its being passed around. That happens too infrequently to justify compromising the Multi defense in the direct seat.

If 2♦ does get passed around it will be because responder is very short in both majors (but may not be weak) or is very short in just one major (a reasonable risk when weak). If the former, defenders likely have a good major suit fit. If the latter, they have the preponderance of strength and should be in the auction. It is also possible that a weak third seat will pass even with short diamonds as a sort of psych. Fourth seat actions:

Double - opening strength or better, balanced hand. Advances are all natural except for a diamond cue bid, which asks for a major or, secondarily, a diamond stopper.

2NT - stronger, natural, “systems on”

2♥/2♠ - natural overcall, 3♦ advance asks for diamond stopper

3♣ - natural, 3♦ advance asks for a diamond stopper, secondarily asks for a major

3♦ - takeout of diamonds, does not promise another bid

3♥/3♠/4♥/4♠ - too good for 2♥/2♠

3NT - natural, too strong for 2NT

4♣/4♦ - two-suited in that minor and a major, forcing by UPH. Over 4♣, 4♦ asks for the major and other advances are natural. Over 4♦ advancer can make a pass-or-correct major-suit bid, with other advances natural.

4NT - natural, too strong for 3NT

These bids do not cover all bases, and some are dangerous. Accept that you will be “fixed” occasionally.

DEFENSE AGAINST THREE-SUITED CONVENTIONS

This defense is designed for use against a 2♣ or 2♦ opening that shows a 4-4-4-1 or 5-4-4-0 hand with 12-15 HCP or so (e.g., Roman Two Clubs), a distinct overbid that should be punished regularly. The following assumes a 2♦ opening, but the defense against a 2♣ opening follows the same lines.

-- A double of 2♦ shows diamonds, and denies the ability to bid 3♦. It is the equivalent of a 2♦ overcall. If you have enough to bid 3♦, do so, but be a little conservative because the suit is likely to break badly.

-- A notrump overcall is natural, based on a long minor (which had better be pretty solid, because it might not break well).

-- Other overcalls are natural, but remember that no suit will be breaking evenly.

-- With other hands, even if strong, just pass. The 2♦ bid is practically forcing, so you can act on the next round. The opponents will often bid themselves into trouble if you don't let them off the hook by bidding with a good hand. Let them play the misfit hands instead of you. If the opening does get passed around, as when third seat has a weak hand and great length in the suit, fourth seat should prefer to balance with 2NT rather than a suit bid (because no suit will break well), or double for business when long in diamonds. This can't be a two-way double, long or short in diamonds, because diamonds could be one of opener's suits. If so, partner will be short also, will assume you have doubled on length, and will pass the double. Defending against a 6-4 fit in trumps is not likely to be profitable.

-- A double of a response to the opening is a two-way double: either strong and long in the suit, or very short:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Dbl

North's 2♥ bid is a signoff if South has hearts. Lacking hearts, North must bid the next higher denomination. West will be able to tell by South's action which sort of double East has, because South will bid if short in hearts. If East has strong hearts, the double doesn't require great strength, since North's minimum suit bid denies a good hand. All he needs is good hearts and some non-finessable outside strength (a finessable honor in one of opener's suits is worth less in this position).

If East has a singleton or void in hearts with support for the other suits, he must have a very good hand to double. If West must bid (as when South passes the double and West can't leave it in), no suit is going to break evenly.

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	3♣	Dbl - two-way double
3♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl - business

Any suit East-West might bid now would break very badly, so this second double is not optional.

-- If the opponents have found an immediate fit on the first round they probably have eight or more trumps (second round "fits" may be 4-3) so a double is for takeout, a notrump bid natural:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl - takeout		
	2NT - natural, not unusual		

Despite North's probable weakness, the takeout double requires a very good hand because no suit is going to break evenly. West's 2NT bid shows 16 HCP or more in a hand that probably lacks support for one of the other three suits.

After passing a good 4-4-4-1 hand yourself, you can pass and then double anything:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Dbl - two-way double		

West is either very long or very short in spades. This is a very bad sequence for the opponents, since South is probably bidding a four-card suit for which North may have no support. It is very likely that they have no fit and will go down a bundle. Be sure to lead trumps against a contract in one of opener's suits, to reduce any cross-ruff potential.

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Dbl - business		

South is short in spades. West probably is sitting over all three of South's suits, with spade shortness himself. He hopes East has a spade stack, as is probable.

Reopening doubles of opener's takeout of a signoff response are also two-way: either very short or very long in the suit:

South	West	North	East
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl - two-way double

East could have ♠QJ98 ♥KJ4 ♦A2 ♣KQJ3 or ♠2 ♥KQ83 ♦AK32 ♣QJ103. West will know which by looking at his own spades. With a singleton or doubleton spade, he will usually pass and lead spades. With three or more spades he can pass or bid, as he thinks best, playing East for a hand of the second type.

When the response to the opening bid shows a good hand (e.g., 2NT or jump in a suit), it is very unwise to enter the bidding.

DEFENSE AGAINST SPLINTER BIDS

Doubling a splinter bid to show strength in the splinter suit is seldom of much value, since there is little to be gained from the opening lead of that suit. A better idea is to use the double to show strength in the highest unbid suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	4♣	Dbl - heart strength

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	4♥	Dbl - diamond strength

These doubles show strength only, not length necessarily.

The same principle applies when partner has bid a suit:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♦	4♥	Dbl - diamond strength

East has ♠10 ♥A76 ♦K3 ♣1076532.

The double may enable West to bid 5♦ as a good save against a spade game. At least it will tell West that it is safe to lead diamonds.

If the doubler later makes a Lightner double of a slam bid, he asks that the indicated suit *not* be led; he wants a different lead, perhaps a suit in which he is void.

DEFENSE AGAINST DRURY

The Drury convention uses a 2♣ (or 2♦) response to a major suit opening to ask whether the opening is full strength or not. Here's the defense:

A double of 2♣ (or 2♦) is takeout, with four-cards in the unbid major, and either support for both minors or six diamonds. This is an exception to the general rule that the double of an artificial bid is suit-showing.

A cue bid of opener's suit is a top-and-bottom cue bid, four cards in the unbid major, with six clubs (maybe five).

A 2NT bid is unusual notrump, showing both minors.

A double of an artificial response to Drury by opener is suit-showing, denying the ability to bid at the next-higher level.

DEFENSE AGAINST RAPTOR

The Raptor convention is a simple one:

A direct 1NT overcall of a minor opening shows the other minor and an unspecified four-card major. Advancer cue bids opener's suit to ask which major.

A direct 1NT overcall of a major opening shows four cards in the other major and an unspecified minor. Advancer cue bids opener's suit to ask which minor.

With a standard 1NT overcall, an off-shape takeout double must be made.

The defense:

Double 1NT to show a 1NT response with at least Qxx in RHO's known suit if it is a minor. Don't worry about a stopper if the known suit is a four-card major.

A cue bid of the known minor suit (partner opened the other minor) is equivalent to a negative double, implying four cards in the "unbid" major.

A cue bid of the known major suit (partner opened the other major) is a strong cue bid.

2NT is natural, not forcing, so 3NT shows only 13 or more HCP.

Raises are standard, but the 3NT artificial raise of a major is not available. With a jump raise to game still weak, preemptive, a game-going hand must find another route to game, probably by starting with a cue bid.

All other actions are standard, but jump takeouts are weak ("in competition").

The 1NT overcall is probably not forcing, so a trap pass is unwise. Partner cannot be expected to balance with a minimum opening when his RHO may hold a fairly good hand and length in his suit.

DEFENSE AGAINST BIVALENT ONE CLUB OPENING

A bivalent 1♣ opening shows a notrump-type hand that has two possible ranges, one fairly weak and one fairly strong, e.g., 12-14 HCP or 19+ HCP.

The defense is simple:

A double shows 13-15 HCP, balanced, or 19+

A 1♦ overcall shows both majors.

Other simple overcalls are standard, including 1NT.

Jump overcalls are weak, except for 2♦ which is artificial, and 3♦, which is natural..

A 2♦ overcall shows a strong jump overcall in some suit. Partner bids 2♥ if she would pass a strong jump overcall in hearts, 2♠ if she would pass a strong jump in spades but not in hearts, 3♣ if she would pass a strong jump overcall in clubs but not one in a major, and 3♦ if she would pass a strong jump overcall in diamonds, but not one in another suit. If too good for any of those actions, partner bids 2NT to ask for overcaller's suit.

A 3♦ overcall is not weak, since it is the only way to show a long diamond suit.

GENERIC COUNTER TO ONE NOTRUMP COUNTERS

Countermeasures to our 1NT opening bid can vary widely, so we need a generic countermeasure against them. Those that show two suits have already been covered in 12-7, Defense Against Two-Suited Conventions.

General rules:

- An artificial double of 1NT is ignored except to redouble with 5-7 HCP. Otherwise, all systems are on.
- Responder's bid of a known opposing suit is Stayman.
- Double of a conventional 2♣ bid is Stayman unless the bid shows clubs as well as some other suit. If it shows clubs, a double is for penalty and all systems are off except Texas Transfers. When the double is Stayman, all systems are on.
- This rule can be extended to say that doubles are business if the suit doubled is a natural bid even if it's conventional, and all systems are off except Texas Transfers.
- When systems are off, simple natural takeouts are competitive only and jump takeouts are invitational only.
- Other than 2♣, the double of an artificial bid by responder shows at least five cards in the suit and may not be particularly strong. Opener assumes it's a competitive action only until he knows differently. Rather than double the artificial bid it is better to actually bid the suit if strong enough to do so. The double does not deny strength, however, because the doubler could have a strong two-suited hand.
- Opener's double of an artificial bid or forced bid shows the suit, maybe four cards only.
- Direct doubles of a natural bid are for penalty.
- Balancing doubles are for takeout only if partner has not acted. Otherwise, penalty.
- It may pay responder to pass an artificial forcing bid and act on the next round, when an immediate action isn't clear. For instance, you can wait until a natural bid is available for use as Stayman if an artificial overcall doesn't have an anchor suit to use for that purpose. After passing, all jumps are forcing.