

Improve how we compete when opponents interfere.

**Competitive bidding** is the most important and hardest part of the game. Larry Cohen's Million Deals articles (<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-learning-center/one-million-deals>) show that 50.8% of the hands we play are in partials. Games are 43% and slams are the balance (Grands are only 0.5%). Knowing when and how high to compete (and doing so accurately and efficiently) separates winning from losing.

The **Law of Total Tricks** says that for hands having 16 total tricks, bid to the 2 level w/ an 8 card fit is right. On hands with 18 total tricks, bid to the 3 level with 9 trumps. Bidding 3♣ over 3♥ and 4♠ over 4♥ with 9 trump at favorable vulnerability is common practice. **Modern bidding focuses on clearly showing the length of our best trump fit. Support Doubles help do that.**

### Setting the stage –

- 1) We open the bidding at the 1-level; (RHO P/X/1-Bid)
- 2) Responder bids at the 1-level
- 3) RHO advances or interferes below 2♥ or 2♠

### Examples:

- 1♣ - (X) - 1♥ - (2♦) -X YES  
1♣ - (1♦) - 1♠ - (3♦) -X NO RHO bid at the 3-level  
1♣ - (2♦) - 2♠ - (3♦) -X NO responder bid at the 2 level and RHO at 3-level  
(1♣) - 1♦ - (2♣) - X NO We did not open the bidding. Responsive Double.  
1♣ - (1♦) - 1♠ - (2♥) -X YES – but be sure you agree with partner.  
1♣ - (1) - 1♠ - (1N) -X YES – LHO is limited and weak.  
1♣ - (P) - 1♠ - (1N) -X MAYBE – if sandwich YES; If strong, NO – Penalty!  
If we agree to ♦play through 2♠, doubling 2♠ requires extra strength or shape.

### At 1-level. RESPONDER's 2<sup>nd</sup> Bid:

- 1N, 2m, 2M all nonforcing (1N rebid does not require a stop)
- 2N, 3m, 3M all invitational
- New Suit Jumps – INV+ or GF
- 2♠ after 1♥ Forces 1 Round.

### 1♣ - (P) – 1♥ - 1♠ - X – (P) Responder rebids:

- ♠ 943 ♥J865 ♦K8 ♣A764 1N; 2♣ would show 5 cards and 4♥s  
♠ AJ8 ♥Q9654 ♦Q5 ♣J83 2♥  
♠ 97 ♥J1075 ♦KQ97 ♣AJ8 3♦ INV (shows 4♥s)  
♠ 965 ♥A1085 ♦KJ8 ♣AQ4 2♠ seeking a stop for NT

### At 2 level, 1♦ - (P) – 1♥ - 2♣ - X – (P) Responder rebids:

- 2♦ At least 3♦, only 4♥, not forcing  
2♥ Much more likely only 4♥ than after a 1♠ o'call. "I'd pass 2♥"  
2♠ natural 4-4 Majors; INV+, Forcing 1 Round  
2N, 3♣, 3♥: Invite game  
3♦ GF cuebid.

### Example: 1♦ - (P) – 1♥ - (2♣) – X – (P) - ?:

- ♠ KQ76 ♥Q1087 ♦865 ♣76 – Bid 2♥ not 2♠ - too weak for 2♠  
♠ A4 ♥J763 ♦J865 ♣976 – Bid 2♦, not 2♥ - Try for the better fit NF

## SUPPORT DOUBLES

Who – Eric Rodwell

When – 1974

What – a way to show the difference between 3 and 4-card support for responder's major suit. Includes Support XX (Redouble)

Why - Avoid 3-3 Major fits when playing Precision! **Law abiding competitive bidding**

How - A Double (X) or Redouble (XX) by opener shows 3-card support for opener's major/suit.

Gives Up – Takeout double of Their suit(s). Penalty Double when they bid 2 different suits. Showing a strong NT hand (when playing weak NT opening bids). Showing the other 4-card major cheaply.

Where – by opener only.

How High – 2♥. ER recommends 2♠ but this is anti-LoTT.

Decisions – On/ off for 1♦ response? Meaning of doubles above cut-off. When responder shows 5 card Major. When both opponents have bid.

Exceptions – When they overcall a natural (strong) 1NT, X is penalty. When opener holds a sub-minimum opening bid and no shape (4333).

Helps to Know – The Theory of Total Tricks (aka Law / LoTT).

Check out this article online at:

<http://www.cincybridge.com/Lessons/20180904-Support-Doubles.pdf>

And more from Steve at:

[http://www.cincybridge.com/Lessons/online\\_learning\\_points.htm](http://www.cincybridge.com/Lessons/online_learning_points.htm)

**Converting opener's support Double to Penalty.** Requires real defense, not just a balanced hand. Use Mel's Rule of "9" to guide your choice when to defend. If the decision is close, better to choose declaring. Defense is hard and doubling a partial might give them an undeserved bonus.

Mel Colchamiro's Rule of "9": Opposite partner's takeout double or opening bid or better, with no 8 / 9 card fit of our own, decide when to pass for penalty:

# Card in their trump suit + # Honors (A-10) in their trump suit + Level # of the contract  $\geq 9$ , Pass for penalties. Add clear winners in other suits to your total.

So after 1♣ - (P) - 1♥ - (2♦) - X - (P) - ?, responder will:

♠ K4 ♥J763 ♦KJ865 ♣97 5 Cards + 2 Honors + 2 Level = 9 Pass - No Game

♠ K4 ♥J763 ♦KJ86 ♣976 4+2+2=8. Better to bid 2♥ Your ♦KJ is in the slot.

♠ A4 ♥KQJ63 ♦KJ65 ♣K6 4+2+2=8 w/extras. Slam possible! 3♦ GF.

**When Responder has to bid at the 3-**

**level:** 1♣ - (P) - 1♠ - (2♥) - X - (P) - ? The main question needing agreement is whether 3♣ is to play or invitational. Since 2♣ is available, I slightly prefer 3♣ as invitational (albeit with 5 ♣ cards and only 4 ♠ cards - my major). If say, responder's RHO raise to 3♥ and responder passes, opener's subsequent 3♠ bid would show Hx - a good doubleton raise. Likewise 1♣ - (P) - 1♠ - (2♥) - X - (XX) - P - (P) - 2♠ shows 2 card support.

**When Responder's RHO takes a bid:** 1♦ - (P) - 1♥ - (2♣) - X - (3♣) - ? Responder's 3♦ or 3♥ is simply competing - not invitational. JUMP Raises/rebids and 2N are invitational if available, and 3 of a new suit is forcing. DOUBLE is Cooperative Penalty - Balanced strength, no stopper for NT, and we own the balance of power ( $\geq 23$  HCP). Some play the Cue-bid double at the 3-level. E.g. 1♦ - (P) - 1♥ - (2♠) - X - (3♠) - X suggests 3N if opener has a stop (or penalty).

**Opener's 3<sup>rd</sup> bid:** Opener will always pass responder's second bid with any "weak NT" hand - 12-14 balanced HCP. A new suit at the 3-level shows extra strength and is natural, but not game forcing. A 3-level rebid of opener's first suit shows 6+ cards and extra values. Opener is interested in 3NT if responder has the right hand. HCP unclear, but 14-17 is a likely range - implies a very good suit. Any GF hand opposite a minimum response opener makes a cuebid of opponent's suit. With 18-19 Balanced (normally a jump to 2N), opener can rebid 2N - Promises a good stop or two in their suit. Responder can now place the contract. Note that even with 18-19 HCP, start with the fit showing support double. (When you rebid 2N immediately, responder will expect exactly 2 cards in their suit).

**Additional Twist:**

How can opener handle an 18-19 balanced hand with no stop in RHO's suit and only 2 cards in responder's suit? Sometimes a support double is best. 1♣ - (P) - 1♠ - (2♥) - ? Holding ♠K10 ♥942 ♦AKJ3 ♣AQJ4, opener can choose to make a support double, then over 2♠ rebid 3♥ seeking a ♥ stop.

**Auto-Splinters and Minor Suit Raises:**

1♣ - (P) - 1♠ - (2♥) - X - (P) - ? Here Responder rebids 4♣ Invitational and Natural (4♣ Cards) and 4♦ GF Autosplinter (5 ♠ Cards). So jumping in opener's minor is INV+ natural and in the other minor is shortness agreeing responder's Major. With 4=6+, rebidding 3 om (the other minor) is INV. GF start with a cuebid.

**Is opener's support double MANDATORY? NO.**

After 1♣ - (P) - 1♦ - 1M, play X shows 4 cards in OM and a desire to compete. Bidding 1OM or 2OM shows 5-cards. When open is 3M and 7m, rebidding m is likely better. The raise can come later. (Be sure to discuss this).

When responder shows a 5-card M, support doubles offer useful information about trump length, but are not required. Opener will pass with a hand that wants to penalize RHO's bid (think "negative doubles")

Opener may pass sub-minimum openings that cannot possibly score trump tricks in the short trump hand (4333).

Opener will not make a support double over a strong 1NT overcall, but will over a "sandwich NT" showing 2 suits.

If you play Support Doubles through 2♠, a double forces partner to the 3-level. So you need "Balance of Power" hands or extra distribution: 1♣ - (P) - 1♥ - (2♠) - ?

♠ A65 ♥KJ85 ♦KQ8 ♣9864	Pass;
♠KQ10 ♥96 ♦J54 ♣AKJ104	Double - Power
♠ K105 ♥7 ♦A765 ♣AKJ54	Double - + shape