

Play & Learn

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Redouble trouble

For many players, responder's standard procedure after opener's one-level suit bid is doubled for takeout is to redouble with any hand of 10 or more high-card points. Recent articles have discussed what happens after responder redoubles, but redouble isn't always the best way to go. On some deals, redouble can make later bidding awkward.

♠ 9 8 ♥ A K 6 5 ♦ J 10 4 ♣ K 4 3 2

Do you agree that this hand has enough strength to redouble after partner's 1♦ opener is doubled for takeout? Would you redouble? If you redouble with a hand such as this, the auction could get uncomfortable. Consider the following:

Dlr: North ♠ A J
 Vul: None ♥ Q 7 4 3
 ♦ A Q 3 2
 ♣ 9 8 6

♠ Q 10 7 4 3 ♥ 8 2 ♦ 9 8 7 6 ♣ 7 5		♠ K 6 5 2 ♥ J 10 9 ♦ K 5 ♣ A Q J 10	♠ 9 8 ♥ A K 6 5 ♦ J 10 4 ♣ K 4 3 2
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West	North	East	South
	1♦	Dbl	Redbl
2♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	Pass	?

(1) The auction makes it clear that advancer is weak. Responder bids

with a clear preference for trump but doesn't show any strength by bidding. Advancer can try to jam the opponents' bidding by jumping to a level equal to size of the partnership's fit. With five spades, West is sure of an eight-card fit and bids for eight tricks.

What can South do? Bidding a suit on the three level has two issues: It shows a five-card suit and it's forcing. South doesn't want to insist on game, but a forcing bid on the three level is likely to do that, and South can't bid notrump without a spade stopper.

So South has to lie by bidding 3♥, which will end up with his side in an unmakeable game (North will certainly raise to 4♥), or double 2♠, which makes. Neither option is good. So what should South do?

Rather than redoubling, South should bid 1♥, which is forcing. This should be the auction:

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Dbl	1♥
Pass ⁽¹⁾	2♥	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

(1) It's not clear which side has more strength, so West can no longer preempt. Bidding 1♠ shows more points than West has and bidding 2♠ shows even more.

Talk this agreement over with your partner: Redouble can be used on all responding hands having 10 or more points. There are some good hands

where it's better to bid than redouble. Unless you want to penalize any unbid suit, it's better to bid a four-card suit on the one level when possible. Do not apply this thinking to suits that must be bid on the two level. After an opponent's takeout double, it's more common to treat responder's new suit on the two level as a non-forcing bid showing 6–9 points and a good six-card suit (or a very good five-card suit).

We've spent six articles on redouble when it's not that common, but takeout doubles of one-level suit opening bids are routine. Knowing how the ability to redouble affects the subsequent auction is important for good partnership communication. To avoid misunderstandings, talk with your regular partners about how responder bids after your one-level suit opening bid is doubled.

Do not reflexively redouble just because you have the high-card points to do so. Consider how the bidding might go if you give an opponent more room to preempt your auction. ■