

REDOUBLES

By Maritha Pottenger

There are three major situations in which a redouble is appropriate:

- 1) On a misfit hand when your partner opens, RHO doubles, and you have 10 or more HCP (and no fit with partner)—especially when partner opens a major & you have the other major.
- 2) When you open, LHO doubles, partner passes and RHO passes. If you have only a 3 card suit (a minor) or a very bad 4-card suit, consider a redouble. This is an “SOS Redouble” and asks your partner to bid something else (hoping that you won’t have as bad breaks in that suit as you obviously have in your first suit).
- 3) If you are playing Support Doubles and you open, LHO passes, partner bids a suit, RHO doubles. A redouble by you is a Support Redouble and promises exactly three cards in your partner’s suit.

In the first case, your redouble is warning partner that this is a misfit hand. With misfit hands, you can often get a better score by defending than by declaring. **Your redouble promises another bid**, so partner can pass the auction around to you—especially if s/he has no good rebid. Particularly when you have only 10, 11 or a bad 12 HCP, consider doubling the opponents—even in low-level contracts. You will often get a better score for setting them than for playing the hand yourselves. One exception would be when you are reasonably sure you have game. In that case, you must consider the vulnerability and decide whether you will get more points bidding and making game or setting the opponents. Another exception is when you have an opportunity to bid a 4-card (or even 5-card!) major at the 1-level. **You don't want to pass up the chance to find an 8-card major fit!**

An example would be: xx KQxx Kxxx Qxx when your partner opens one spade and RHO doubles. **You should redouble.** Since game is uncertain, you should be happy to double 2D or 2H. Doubling 2C is a bit riskier, but your partner might be able to make that double with more confidence.

At low level contracts, you must have trumps as well as top tricks to expect to set them, so you should have at least 4 trumps at the 2 level & two trump tricks to consider doubling for penalty.

The redouble by Responder is penalty-oriented, strongly suggests a misfit; encourages partner to double any contract s/he can, and promises another bid if partner passes the auction back to you. After a redouble, ALL doubles by either of you are 100% penalty.

In the second case Opener is making the redouble in the balancing seat. Example: Opener bids, double on left; pass by partner; pass by RHO. You know (when RHO passes) that one suit is breaking horribly for your side, so—if you have a flat hand—you should SOS redouble asking partner to run to another suit—particularly when your first suit is a minor and partner can run to a different suit at the same level.

An example would be Kxxx Kxxx AK xxx You open 1C and LHO doubles. Partner passes and RHO passes—which should show a huge club stack on your right. A redouble by you is “SOS” asking partner to try another suit. If partner tries diamonds, you should probably pass unless that is also doubled. If 1D is also doubled, try one heart. Partner will pass if s/he has 3 hearts.

In the third case, Opener is letting Responder know that Opener has 3 card support for Responder's (major) suit. An example would be: Kxx xx AKxx Axxx You open one diamond. LHO passes and partner bids 1S. RHO doubles (presumably showing at least 4-4 in hearts and clubs). *If you are playing support doubles, you should redouble here—indicating 3-card spade support.*

Almost no one plays the old-fashioned meaning of a redouble: “I am going to make this contract despite what you think and I want double the rewards.” (Generally, at matchpoints you are getting a great board anyway if you make a doubled contract, so why risk double the penalty if you happen to go down 1!) An old-fashioned “to play” redouble would be something like: 1H by you; Pass by LHO; pass by partner; double by RHO. A redouble here shows a very good hand and guarantees you’ll take at least 7 tricks in hearts. I call this the “**World's Fair Redouble**” meaning you have a GREAT hand. (An immediate redouble by Opener is to play. A redouble in the pass-out seat is usually SOS—asking partner to pick a suit into which s/he can run out.)