

Special Doubles

There are so many types of doubles in bridge:

Take Out	Negative	Support (X & XX)	Belated Take Out	Competitive
Cooperative or Optional		Responsive	Penalty	Fisher
Lead Directing		Lightner	Maximal	Maximum Overcall
Parking Lot (X & XX)		Snap Dragon	Stripe Tailed Ape	
Incredible	Negative Slam	Thrupp	Rosenkranz (X & XX)	
Double of Artificial Bids	Don't Lead My Suit		Double of Transfers	
DSIP (Do Something Intelligent Partner)			Double of Strong No Trump	

And more...

Today, we'll talk about those doubles called Special as in the top left section of the convention card. And a few more...

1. After Overcall: This is typically negative, unless you have an agreement with partner otherwise (Penalty).
1 C – 2S – X.
A penalty double shows strength in S (and enough to set 2S, maybe 8-10 hcp)
QJxx, xxx, Axx, Qxx
Note that this is very different from negative.
2. Negative: This is when partner has opened and there is an overcall. This should show at least 4 in unbid suits (especially majors), but not enough to bid them directly. It specifically denies a fit with partner or a stopper in opponents suit.
1 C – 1S – X.
Xx, QJxxx, KQxx, xx

Or
1 C – 1 H – X
QJxx, xx, KQxx, xx
Note that over 1H, a bid of 1 S shows 5 or more
3. Responsive: This is similar to a negative double. It comes into play when partner has made a takeout double and the opponents have made a bid and raised.
1 H – X – 2H – X
Q 10xx, xx, QJx, K 10xx
If you had a 5 card suit, you should bid that

4. Maximal: This is a cooperative double used when your side has a major suit fit in a competitive auction.

1 S – 2 H – 2 S – 3 H - ?

KQJxxx, xx, Axx, Qx

You want to compete to 3S as a total trick bid, but not invite game. Make a maximal double. This says partner with a minimum hand bid 3S. With a maximum hand, partner can still bid game.

Or

AKxxx, xx, AJ 10x, KJ

You do want to invite game. Bid 3S invitational.

When to Use a Maximal Double

The maximal double applies to two specific auctions:

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1♥	2♦	2♥	3♦
Dbl			

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
Dbl			

In both auctions, your side has bid and raised 1 Major - 2 Major. Meanwhile, the opponents have bid and raised the suit **directly below yours** to the 3-level.

If the opponents bid and raise any other suit, then your other agreements apply (e.g. [Help Suit Game Tries](#) or [Short Suit Game Tries](#)).

Maximal Doubles with Overcalls

To add a twist.... You can also use maximal doubles if your side **OVERCALLS** 1 Major - 2 Major. Examples:

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1♦	1♥	2♦	2♥
3♦	Dbl		

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♥	Dbl		

The conditions are basically the same as when your side opens the bidding. You may want to bid your 3-level suit competitively, or make a game try. The maximal double gives you both options.

When NOT to Use a Maximal Double

Lastly, here are auctions where the maximal double doesn't apply:

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1♥	2♦	2♠	3♦
Dbl			

You and your partner haven't agreed on a major suit. Therefore double is penalty, or a **support double** if you play it.

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1♠	2♣	2♠	3♣
Dbl			

The opponents have bid and raised a suit that is not directly below yours. Double is penalty. (Note: Some partnerships prefer to play this as a maximal double too. It's up to you.)

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
Dbl			

The opponents have bid and raised a suit above yours. Double is penalty. (Again, some partnerships treat this as a maximal double as well.)

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
1 ♥	2 ♦	2 ♥	3 ♣
Dbl			

The opponents have not agreed to a suit. Double is penalty.

- Support (X & XX): This is for when you have opened the bidding, partner responds in a new suit, and then there is interference from the opponents. You can show 3 card support with a double or redouble. A direct raise of partner's suit would indicate 4 card support.

1 C – pass – 1 H – 1 S – X (shows 3 cards in H)
 Q 10 XX, Q 10 x, KJx, AJx

Or
 1 C – pass – 1 H – X – XX
 Same hand

- Card-Showing: This is also known as a Do Something Intelligent Partner. Usually indicates a more or less balanced hand and does not promise a stopper in opponents suit.

1 NT – 2S – X
 Jxx, QJx, K 10xx, Q 10x

Can be converted to penalty with a pass or can support a 5 card suit, and does not preclude game (but doesn't promise either).

- Minimum Offshape T/O: A minimum off-shape takeout double in bridge is a double of an opponent's opening bid that uses a relatively weak hand (around 12-14 points) with a less-than-ideal distribution, often a balanced 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2, to show length in two unbid suits and a desire to compete. Unlike a standard takeout double which typically has a shortage in the doubled suit and support for the other three, this specific type of double is used when a player's distribution is slightly unbalanced, and they are comfortable bidding if their partner chooses one of the other unbid suits. This type of double can be a risk, as it doesn't have the "perfect" shape, but it allows for competition when a player doesn't have a good overcall.

8. Rosenkrantz (X & XX): This is used to support partner when they make an overcall and indicates a high honor in partners suit.

Opp 1	Partner	Opp2	You
1D	1H	1 S	X

Qxxx, Kxx, Jx,K 10xx

OR

Opp 1	Partner	Opp2	You
1D	1H	1 S	2H

Kxxx, Jxx,Qx,K 10xx

OR

Opp 1	Partner	Opp2	You
1D	1H	X	XX

Qxxx, Kxx, Jx,K 10xx

9. Lightner: This is a lead-directing double of an enemy slam contract. It frequently implies a void, and asks partner for a ruff. Generally speaking, partner is asked to:

1. Lead dummy's side suit, if one has been bid
2. Lead declarer's side suit, if one has been bid
3. Make any other unusual lead - usually partner's longest suit to get a ruff

Additionally, the double asks partner to NOT lead any suit that your side has bid.

Examples

	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
♠5432	1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
♥653	3♥	Pass	6♥	Dbl ¹

♦
AT9876

♣void

¹ A Lightner double. This requests a club lead because your right-hand opponent bid clubs.

♠762	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
♥void	1♠	3♣	3♠	5♣
♦AT987	6♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl ¹
♣K9842				

¹ A Lightner double. This asks your partner to NOT lead a club (your side's suit) and to find an unusual lead (in this case, a heart).

♠A762	LHO	Partner	RHO	You
♥void	1♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
♦76	4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
♣T876532	6♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl ¹

¹ A Lightner double. Hopefully partner can find a heart lead.

Other Considerations

- The Lightner double is not in effect if the opponents are sacrificing at the 6- or 7-level. In those situations, it's more practical to use regular penalty doubles.

Playing Lightner doubles, the opening leader can also infer what to lead if his partner did NOT double. For example, if the opponents bid a side suit en route to a slam contract and partner does not double, the inference is that partner does NOT want a lead of the enemy side suit.