

Why I Double a Lot

By Nancy Joe (BBO: Ibdalot)

It's profitable.

It's satisfying.

It's not rude or disrespectful.

I'm not afraid of a bad result. If the opponents never make a contract that you have doubled, then you aren't doubling enough.

It directs the defense.

It will make you and your partner better defenders.

You will become a feared opponent.

Double of 1NT

Requirements:

You need to have an equal or better hand than the 1NT bidder. If RHO opened a 15-17 NT, you should have at least 15 HCP and 3 of the 4 suits stopped, and hopefully a good suit to lead.

The double of 1NT is intended as primarily a penalty double and partner is usually expected to leave it. It cannot be a take-out double because the opener has not bid a suit.

When RHO opens a weak 12-14 NT, it is common for players to double with 13+ and partner will bid his best suit and hopefully they stumble their way to a fit, perhaps a game without either of them knowing how strong partner's hand is. The weak NT bidder is almost never punished for a penalty even when opener's partner has nothing. You should also have 15+ HCP to double a weak NT of 12-14 and a mini NT of 10-12. These are the requirements when you have a balanced hand.

Examples when RHO opens 1N:

S K J 2

H Q T 4

D A Q J T 7

C K 5

Double with 16 points and a good diamond suit to lead.

S K J 3

H A Q 4

D K J 9

C Q J T 8

Double with 17 points and a good club suit to lead.

S Q 8 6 5

H A J 6

D K Q 8

C A 7 4

If RHO opens 1NT showing 12-14 points. With a 16-count you should double, but don't be surprised if the contract makes easily. Suppose opener has 13 points, the middle of his range. That leaves 11 HCP to be shared between LHO and your partner. If your partner has 8+ of those, you will collect a nice penalty from 1NT doubled (or some doubled two-level contract). If LHO is the one with the 8+ points, you may run into a redouble. Now it will be your side that has a choice of ways in which to concede a large minus score. If the points are split fairly evenly between LHO and partner, 1NT probably will go down because your honors are well placed over declarer. However, much will depend on your opening lead.

S 8 5 3

H A

D A 4

C K Q J T 9 6 4

Double with this 14-HCP hand. There are two reasons why doubling is best. You can lead the king of clubs. Declarer will be able to cash some spade tricks, but when he leads a red suit, you will be able to win and cash the rest of your clubs. Second, doubling shows a strong hand. It is entirely possible that your opponents can make game in a major here. They are less likely to bid it, though, when they have been doubled for penalties at the one level.

S K Q J 9 8 7 4

H A Q J

D 4

C K Q

Do NOT double. If you lead the K of spades, declarer may have five top diamonds and two Aces to make his contract. Bid 4S and hope that partner has a useful card or two.

Escapes over 1NT Doubled

Regular partnerships should agree on an escape when their 1NT is doubled, especially if they are playing a weak NT.

Rather than staying in 1N doubled, I recommend the partnership "wriggle" their way out it.

After the direct Penalty double of Partner's 1N opening:

XX = I have a 5+ card suit, asking partner to bid 2C. I will pass 2C or correct to my 5+ suit

Examples:

S 8 6 4

H J 7

D J 8 2

C T 9 7 4 2

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1N	X	XX!	P
2C!	P	P	

The exclamation point indicates an alertable bid as XX is a relay or puppet to 2C. Partner obediently bids 2C! completing the relay.

S 9 7 6 2

H K 4

D Q 8 6 4 2

C 7 3

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1N	X	XX!	P
2C!	P	2D	

The exclamation point indicates an alertable bid as the XX is a relay or puppet to 2C. Partner obediently bids 2C! completing the relay. You correct to 2D to play.

With 2 four card suits, bid the cheapest suit first:

S K 7 4 3

H T 6

D Q 8 6 4

C T 5 2

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1N	X	2D!	P

Your immediate bid of 2D tells partner you have 4 diamonds and 4 of a Major. Partner will pass 2D with 3+ diamonds or scramble to 2H if he/she prefers to play in a Major. You will correct to 2S over 2H.

PASS forces a REDOUBLE:

S K T 5 3

H A 7 4

D T 6

C Q 9 7 3

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
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1N	X	P!	P
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XX!

You want to punish the opponents when the deal belongs to your side. PASS (showing 8+ points) forces a Redouble so your side can play 1NXX. Note: This does not give Partner the option of reopening with a 5 card suit. If the opponents decide to bid, any X by you are partner is Penalty.

Double of Opponent's NT Overcall

Partner opens the bidding with one of a suit. RHO bids 1N showing 15-18 with a stopper in Partner's suit. It is unlikely that your side will make a game contract unless it's extremely distributional. A double by Responder is Penalty oriented showing 8+ points and is the only strong bid Responder has. It is NOT for takeout. Any raise or bid of a new suit is weak and to play.

Examples:

S T 5

H A J 7 4

D T 6

C K 9 7 3

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1S	1N	X	

Double for Penalty. This is not a Negative Double showing 4 hearts, although you do have 4 hearts.

S J 3

H K 8 5 4

D A J 7 4

C 9 7 3

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
1S	1N	X	2D
P	P	X	

Your double of RHO's 1N overcall is Penalty and if the opponents bid another suit, a X is for Penalty. If LHO 2D bid is alerted as showing hearts, you would still double 2D for penalty and be happy to double 2H for penalty.

S 5 3

H J 6 4

D Q J T 6 5 4 2

C 8 5

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
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1S	1N	2D	
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2D is natural, weak and non forcing.

Doubles of Opponents' 3N Bid

When you are on opening lead vs. 3NT and Partner has doubled, he is sending the message: Do not make your normal lead. Here is the order of priority of what you should lead:

1. If you (the opening leader has bid a suit), lead that suit.
2. If Partner (the doubler) has bid a suit, do NOT lead that suit.
3. If neither you, nor Partner has bid a suit, lead Dummy's first bid suit.
4. If there have been no suits bid (1N-3N), lead your shorter Major suit that has no honors.

Examples:

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
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1H	1N	2D	3N
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X	All Pass		
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Lead a diamond. Do not lead a heart.

Partner	RHO	You	LHO
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1D	1S	P	2C
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P	2N	P	3N
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X	All Pass		
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Do not lead a diamond. Lead a club.

Double of this 3N bid demands the lead of dummy's first bid suit.

S Q 3
 H K 7 6 3 2
 D A K Q J
 C Q T

S K 9 8 5 4
 H 9
 D T 9 8 4
 C 7 4 2

S 7 6 2
 H A Q J T 8
 D 3 2
 C A 6 3

S A J T
 H 5 4
 D 7 6 5
 C K J 9 8 5

West	North	East	South
	1H	P	1N
P	2N	P	3N
P	P	X	All Pass

East directs the defense by doubling the 3N contract. Doubling the 3N contract requests the lead of dummy's first bid suit. West leads the 9 of Hearts. Declarer plays low. East must overtake and continue leading hearts till declarer wins the K. East should expect to win 4 heart tricks and 1 club trick. Without the double, West will probably lead a spade or a diamond and South scores 9-10 tricks.

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
2N	P	3C	P
3S	P	3N	X

Partner is asking for the lead of Dummy's known suit. Lead a Heart. LHO 3C bid is Stayman, showing 4 hearts.

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
1N	P	3N	X

Lead your shorter major with no honors. Partner is saying he has a solid Major suit or near solid with an entry.