

ALEX'S BRIDGE TIPS COMMON ERRORS TO AVOID



1. You have this hand

S x
H AQxx
D KJxx
C Kxxx

What will you open the bidding with? Answer: 1D

Because when you are opening the bidding and have no 5 card major, you open your longest minor.

If you have two three card minors, you open with 1C. If you have two four card minors, you open with 1D.

This always sets you up with the best possible choice of rebid.

So you open with 1D and partner now bids 1S. Now what do you do?

You must NOT now bid 1NT. That guarantees a balanced hand and no singletons or voids.

Your next bid should be 2C.

Note that you cannot bid 2H now as that would be a reverse, promising more of the first bid suit than the second and it would also promise 17 or more points.

A reverse is when the opening bidder bids a new suit at the 2 level on his rebid that is higher in rank than the suit with which he opened. This is forbidden for an opener with a minimum hand.

For all these reasons, you must now bid 2C.

2. Another situation:

Partner opens with 1D and you have

S Qxxxx
H xx
D Axx
C xxx

So you respond 1S. Opening bidder now bids 1NT. Your bid. What do you say?

If you pass, how many tricks are you providing for partner in 1NT? You KNOW that opener has at least two spades. NOT four, for sure but maybe even three.

You must now bid 2S. These spades will win tricks as trumps, but likely give you no tricks in NT.

You know that opener has at least two spades so you have 7 cards in combined hands (minimum) as trumps.

To the non-believers out there. Remember that if partner had opened 1NT and you held that same hand:

S Qxxxx
H xx
D Axx
C xxx

You would have transferred and bid 2H. When she now bids 2S, you would pass.
Reason: You have a 7 card trump fit at least and it is easier to play the hand in a trump suit contract. It is a more optimum contract. You are seeking to improve the contract.

3.

The player on your right (South) preempts: He opens with 3S. You are West and you bid 4H with the following hand.

S 3
H AJxxxx
D Axx
C KJx

Your partner's hand comes down with

S xxx
H K10x
D xxxx
C AQx

S W N E
3S 4H P P
P

You have two D losers, one S loser and a potential H loser. How will you play the H suit. Who do you think has the missing Q of Hearts?

Or do you simply use the nursery rhyme? "Eight ever, nine never?" and play for the Q to fall when you play the Ace and King.

You have what we call a two way finesse in Hearts. Who rates to have the Queen?

Answer: South has SEVEN cards in the Spade suit. He has only SIX "empty spots" to be occupied by other cards.
He has had fewer chances to be dealt the Queen Hearts. In other words, he has fewer Hearts. North has more.

If South has only one Heart and N has three Hearts, then north has had THREE chances to be dealt the Q Hearts and S only had ONE chance to be dealt the Q Hearts. Thus the odds are with NORTH having the Q Hearts.

You lead the Ace Hearts (in case a singleton Q drops) and now lead towards the Heart 10, finessing N for the Q Hearts.

SUMMARY: When missing the Queen in a long suit, it is usually right to play the partner of the preempter to hold the missing Queen.

Larry's Bridge Quizzes
Larry Cohen www.larryco.com

Partner opens with 1C or 1D. The opponents overcall with 1H.
 Here are responder's options:

- 1NT = 6-10 balanced, hearts stopped, denies 4 spades.
- 2NT = 11-12 balanced, hearts stopped, denies 4 spades. (invitational)
- 3NT = 13-15 balanced, hearts stopped, denies 4 spades.

- 1S = 5+ spades (6 + HCP)

- Double is Negative = 6+ points and guarantees exactly (only) 4 Spades

- Raise to 2 of a minor = 6-10 and support (usually 5-card support for clubs, 4-card support for diamonds) and denies 4 Spades

- 2 of the other minor = 10+ HCP and 5+ card suit (not GF) --
(Barbara & Alex say could be four cards in minor)

- 2 H = Limit Raise or better (usually 5-card support for clubs, 4-card support for diamonds) and denies 4 Spades

- Other bids: Don't make them without partnership discussion/agreement (a jump raise should be weak--since you can cuebid to show the limit raise)

Question 1: With neither side vulnerable, what is your call as South?

West	North	East	South
	1C	1 H	??

S QJ82
H K3
D KJ2
C AJ52

Choose One:

Pass / Double / 1S / 1NT / 2C / 2H

Question 2: With neither side vulnerable, what is your call as South?

West	North	East	South
	1D	1 H	??

S 108742

H AK72

D AKJ3

C --

Choose One:

Pass / Double / 1S / 2H / 3D / 3NT

Question 3: With neither side vulnerable, what is your call as South?

West	North	East	South
	1D	1 H	??

S Q76

H KQJ2

D 1062

C J76

Choose One:

Pass / Double / 1NT / 2D / 2NT

Question 4: With neither side vulnerable, what is your call as South?

West	North	East	South
	1 C	1 H	??

S Q54

H KJ2

D AKJ7

C 76

Choose One:

Pass / Double / 1NT / 2D / 2NT / 3NT

Question 5: Not vul against vul, what is your call as South?

West	North	East	South
	1D	1 H	??

S K32

H AQ10872

D 5

C 987

Choose One:

Pass / Double / 1NT / 2H / 2NT / 3NT

ANSWER COMMENTARY BY BARBARA

1.**DOUBLE** You have 15 HCP and a Heart stopper but you have not yet uncovered a fit in a major suit and that is priority # 1. So your first bid must be a negative double. This is an unlimited bid and shows anywhere from 6 to many more points and precisely FOUR spades because if you had a five-card spade suit, you would have bid 1S.

2.**1S**. This is unlimited and forcing, You promise 6 or more points and at least five spades because with only four, you would have made a negative double.

3.**Bid 1NT**. This shows 6-10 HCP and at least one stopper in Hearts. If you had a slightly better hand with a few more points, you would consider passing. This would be called a Trap Pass.

4.**3NT**. You have a balanced hand and 13-15 HCP along with a stopper in the opponent's suit (Hearts). This is a perfect description of your hand. This bid also denies ownership of a four card (or longer) spade suit.

5.**Pass**. This time you have to pass as you would love to defend 1H and beat them. It is the one contract you know you can beat. The auction will never die. Partner has to re-open the bidding and will strain to re-open with a double which is for takeout. You will then pass partner's takeout double, converting it to a penalty double.

So when you find yourself holding 5 or 6 GOOD cards in the opponent's suit and partner has opened the bidding and there has been an overcall of a suit in your right ear, pass and hope to defend and collect a nice big juicy number like 800.

L.S.D. by Marti Ronemus

This week's theme comes directly from the G.O.A.T. (Greatest Of All Time) of bridge, Eddie Kantar. He is one of my very few heroes in the bridge world. He was kind, smart, and accessible! Once he called me because he saw I was "somewhat confused" about handling Redoubles. He straightened me right out!

Anyway, Faithful Readers have heard me say (**way** too many times!) "Look at the dummy, Dummy!". This week, we're going to look at Eddie's way of looking at it.

The main point is to ask ourselves, "If I were the declarer, how would I be using that dummy?" and planning a strategy around that. His acronym for remembering the types of dummy is **L.S.D.**

L. A dummy with a **LONG side suit**. We know when we declare that we use those long dummy suits to **dump** those losers, or if in Notrump develop that suit or extra tricks.

The **strategy** when dealing with a **LONG** dummy is to be very aggressive. None of this lying in the bushes with the loaded shotgun. We need to come out quickly to either take our tricks before the mice get at them, or set up our suits. With the dummy below (Heart contract), if we don't attack quickly, those Diamonds will be the town dump for every loser in this hand and the next.

S 75 **H** KQ4 **D** AKQT7 C 752

S. A dummy with **SHORTNESS** and the ability to ruff. When we see that, our **strategy** is to pull declarer's teeth by leading trump, shortening the dummy's ability to take tricks separately with his trump. Again we are defending a Heart contract. The shortness in Diamonds in the following Dummy should encourage us to lead trump so Declarer cannot ruff in Dummy.

S K753 **H** QT9 **D** 8 C 76542

D. This is the **DEAD dummy**. Scattered honors, no real long suits or special shortness. No long suits on which Declarer can make discards. This is highly risky for us and we should not be aggressive. Our **strategy** is to be very **passive**. If we break (start) a new suit, we can easily be giving the declarer the free finesse he was praying for. We want to give them a trick they already have, or lead trump. This is where we hide in the bushes, waiting for our opportunity. Looking at the hand below, (The opponents are in 6D this time). Breaking any suit could easily set up a free finesse for Declarer. Odds are partner has nothing. With this flat, balanced hand, no threatening suits, no shortness, we do best to lead a trump : A Diamond.

SA75 **H** K74 **D** 864 C Q752

Garbage Stayman by Tony Jackson



This is not common, but occasionally your partner opens 1NT and you have garbage. OK, that's actually fairly common. But what is less common is if you have garbage *and* you have club shortness and support for the other 3 suits. You would rather play in 2D, 2H, or 2S than play it in 1NT. Consider this hand:

S: J742
H: T973
D: 9864
C: 7

Your partner opens 1NT. Instead of passing, you can bid 2C, Stayman! You intend to pass any response.

If opener bids 2D denying a 4 card major suit, then opener almost certainly has at least 3 diamonds, and could very well have 4, so you are probably safe playing in 2D.

If opener bids 2H or 2S showing a 4 card major suit, then you will be happy to play it there. Now you pass.

Even though you are pushing it up a level, any of those contracts is probably better for your side than if you pass and play it in 1NT. A contract of 1NT doesn't look good.

This is called "Garbage Stayman" because you bid it when you have garbage.

By the way, in case you are wondering "wouldn't it be better to just pass and play it in 1 notrump?" The answer is an unequivocal NO! In a notrump contract, your hand is completely worthless. It may not take a single trick. But if you have an 8 card fit in one of the suits, then your hand has two big assets: It has trump (useful for pulling the opponents' trump) and it has shortness which might give you one, two, or maybe even three ruffs.

Negative Doubles: The Unappreciated Convention by Tony Jackson (Bridge teacher in Santa Rosa, California)

This is one of the most important conventions to learn and understand, even though it's not as sexy or fun as many other conventions. How often do you get to use Jacoby 2NT? Not very often. But contested auctions happen all the time, so learning how to better deal with contested auctions will go a long way toward improving your results. That's where negative doubles can help.

The basic idea behind negative doubles is simple, but the variations and inferences add some complexity. Let's consider these auctions. We'll use these to discuss different aspects of negative doubles.

Nine Different Auctions that Include a Negative Double

I will go through each one and describe what is relevant. Did you know there was so much nuance in this convention? X = Negative Double

1. 1D - (1H) - X
2. 1D - (1S) - X
3. 1H - (2D) - X
4. 1C - (2H) - X
5. 1C - (4H) - X
6. 1C - (1D) - X
7. 1D - (2C) - X
8. 1H - (1S) - X
9. 1S - (2H) - X

Common attributes

All these auctions have some things in common:

- An opening bid of 1 of a suit.
- An overcall in the direct seat.
- A double by responder.

But despite the similarities, there are some differences and it's important to understand them.

Example 1: Opponents overcall 1 Heart (Note: At the 1-level)

1D - (1H) - X

Your partner has said: "I have exactly 4 spades and at least 6 high card points."

Key points about this auction:

1a: Responder denies having 5 spades since they could have bid 1 Spade with 5 or more spades.

1b: Responder says absolutely nothing about clubs. Responder might have clubs, and might not have clubs. All this says is "I have 4 spades".

1c: Opener should NOT bid spades unless they also have 4 of them. If opener now bids spades, they promise they have 4 spades.

1d: Responder may or may not have diamonds. Responder is looking for a major suit fit, not a minor suit fit.

1e: Responder could be quite strong. Six points is a minimum, but the sky is the limit.

Example 2: Opponent overcalls Spades, not Hearts

1D - (1S) - X

Now Responder has said "I have 4 OR more hearts and at least 6 high card points."

Key points:

2a: This is really important: Responder might have more than 4 hearts. If responder has 5+ hearts but less than 10 points, they aren't strong enough to bid 2H. After all, bidding a new suit at the 2-level shows 10+ points. Therefore this negative double has a slightly different meaning than the one in example 1.

Responder might have exactly 4 hearts and 6 or more HCP.

OR

Responder might have more than 4 hearts and 6-9 points. If responder had 5 hearts or more and 10+ points, they would bid 2H instead of making the negative double.

2b: What if responder has less than 10 HCP and a long heart suit? How does responder show that? This way:

1D - (1S) - X - (P)

2C - (P) - 2H

The double, followed by a 2H bid, is weak, not strong. Responder is saying "Partner, I have long hearts and between 6 and 9 points. I didn't have enough points to bid 2H." Most of the time, opener will pass and leave it there.

Example 3: Overcaller made a 2-level Overcall

1H - (2D) - X

3a: This negative double requires a better hand than after a 1-level overcall. This negative double shows 4+ spades and at least 8 HCP. Why 8? Because no matter what, you are forcing the auction to the 2-level. You might even end up in 2NT.

3b: There is some risk with this negative double. If opener has 12 hcp and responder has 8, and you end up in 2NT, you are too high. This is a risk worth taking (for the sake of finding the 4-4 spade fit) but it is a real risk to be aware of.

3c: Responder guarantees 8+ points and four Spades

Example 4: Overcaller made a weak jump overcall

1C - (2H) - X

The fact that the opponents made a preemptive bid (weak jump overcall) doesn't change too much. The double is still a negative double.

4a: You are showing 4 spades here. With 5 spades, you should bid 2 Spades.

4b: You are bidding at the 2-level, so you need 8 or more HCP to make this bid.

Example 5: Overcaller made a preemptive jump to the 4-level

1C - (4H) - X

Now the opponents have made quite a big preemptive bid! Are negative doubles still on?

5a: You and your partner need to decide how high to play negative doubles. The most common level (from what I can tell) is 3S but we recommend that you play the negative double up to and including 4H. That way, if the responder holds 4 spades, you can still find a spade game.

5b: By the way, no matter how high you play them, at the upper levels they are known more or less as "do what you think best". In other words, consider this auction: 1C - (4H) - X

Responder is saying: We have the points for game and I have 4 spades. So now opener needs to decide what's going to give their side the best shot at a good score: Should they let the opponents play 4 Hearts doubled, or should they play the contract themselves? How do you decide? You look at your hand and base it on whether your hand looks better for defense or offense. Sadly, sometimes it's just a guess. That's why preempts are so powerful.

Example 6: Opener and Overcaller both bid minor suits (1 level overcall)

1C - (1D) - X

6a: This negative double promises 4 hearts AND 4 spades.

6b: It requires 6 HCP. Your partner can easily get out at the 1-level.

Example 7: Opener and Overcaller both bid minor suits (2 level overcall)

1D - (2C) - X

7a: This is quite different from the previous example. This one has a 2-level overcall.

7b: This requires 8 HCP since partner has to bid at the 2-level.

7c: Also, and this may be confusing: responder does not necessarily have both major suits. But if responder has only 1 major suit, they must have someplace they can safely retreat to.

So for example, if responder had 4 spades and also some diamonds, then responder could think "Oh, if my partner bids hearts, then I'll take a preference back to my partner's diamond suit."

Example 8: Opener and Overcaller both bid major suits (1 level overcall)

1H - (1S) - X

8a: I do not see this come up often, but this shows both minor suits. you are 4-4 or longer in the 2 minors and you want partner to pick one.

8b: You may not have a spade stopper because if you did, you might bid notrump.

Example 9: Opener and Overcaller both bid major suits (2 level overcall)

1S - (2H) - X

This time, the overcall is at the two level. This is similar to example 8, but since you are pushing your partner to the 3-level, you should have 10 HCP.

How Many Points

If your negative double requires partner to bid at the 1-level, then it requires 6 HCP.

2-level is 8 HCP.

3-level is 10 HCP.

4-level is 12 HCP.