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Bidding Matters

Troubles with Redoubles — part 14

Conventional redoubles

In previous articles, we've discussed three common types of redoubles — those that show general defensive strength, those that show great confidence (business redoubles) and those that show great fear (SOS redoubles). The recommendations presented so far conform to what might be called "expert standard." They are the meanings you could assume if these redoubles came up in a new partnership with an experienced player.

Redoubles take on more specialized meanings in many conventions and bidding treatments. Some of these are quite common, even standard. Others require prior agreement, and a few are so complex that they're best suited only for serious, practiced partnerships. Here's an overview of "expert standard" for some of the most popular treatments.

Cuebidding auctions. A standard use of the redouble is in a cuebid sequence such as

<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Dbl	Rdbl	

Over a lead-directing double, your redouble shows second-round control of that suit. Partner's 4♣ showed the ace or a void, so your redouble promises the king or a

singleton. In the Italian style, pass denies second-round control and a further cuebid (4♦) guarantees controls in both suits (clubs and diamonds).

You can also use a control-showing redouble before either of you has cuebid. If you haven't yet shown the ace of the doubled suit, a redouble promises first-round control. After 1♠ by you, 4♣ (splinter) by partner, double by RHO, your redouble shows the ♣A and interest in continuing on toward slam.

Replies to ace-asking bids

"DOP1-R0P1" is noted on just about every pair's convention card, but the R0P1 part is used rarely because it applies only after your ace-asking bid is doubled. Responder uses R0P1 — short for "Redouble=0, Pass=1" — to answer his number of aces. If partner bids 4NT Blackwood and your RHO doubles, you redouble with no aces, pass with one, and bid up the line with more (5♣ shows two).

Conventional escapes from 1NT

Redouble is a key bid in conventional rescues after your 1NT opening or overcall is doubled for penalty. In one common agreement, redouble forces opener to bid 2♣, which allows responder to sign off in clubs or diamonds. Direct bids by responder are "system on."

After strong 2♣ openers

If partner opens 2♣ and your RHO doubles, it's often helpful to send partner an early warning if you're very weak. Redouble can be used here to show an immediate double-negative hand (worse than two queens). A pass is then semi-positive (two queens or better).

Support redoubles

These are part of the popular support double convention.

<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♦	Pass	1♥	Dbl
Rdbl			

Your redouble here shows exactly three-card heart support. If RHO

had instead made a suit overcall, you would double to show this holding. In either case, a direct raise shows four-card support, and any other call shows two or fewer cards in partner's major.

Rosenkranz redoubles

This convention is used to show support after partner overcalls and your RHO makes a negative double. After 1♣-1♠-Dbl, for example, your redouble shows a spade raise with a high honor (ace, king or queen), while a direct 2♠ bid denies the honor.

This can be helpful if your partner becomes the opening leader, but it gives up the preemptive value of the direct raise. Even the lead-directing message can backfire. If you hold the queen and LHO the king, you really don't want to encourage partner to lead from his ace. For this reason, some pairs modify the convention so the redouble promises only the ace or king.

Defensive bidding over 1NT

A redouble can send an "SOS-type" message in auctions where an opponent opens 1NT and your partner makes a conventional overcall showing an unknown suit. If your RHO doubles partner's overcall — whether it's a penalty, negative or artificial double — redouble asks partner to bid his unknown suit. Pass shows a preference for the current contract, and a suit bid shows long suit.

<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>	<i>You</i>
1NT	2♣	Dbl	Rdbl

In this auction, if partner's 2♣ was Cappelletti (one unknown suit), your redouble allows him to bid his suit. Pass says you have a long club suit, and any suit bid (even 2♦, which would be the proper runout over RHO's pass) shows a long suit.

Similarly, if partner's 2♣ was the DONT convention (clubs and another suit), your redouble tells him to bid his second suit. Pass says you prefer to play 2♣, and any other bid is natural. □