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# Our Readers Ask

♠A7 ♥1076 ♦AK964 ♣1082.

My partner bid 2NT over my double. We were down two, but fortunately the opponents can make 2♠. Obviously, 2NT instead of double would have been best. Everyone I talk to says they would make a responsive double. What do you recommend?

David Balsmeyer

You seem to have done a workman-like job of analyzing the scenario,

but ran into a hand that was not a real 2♦ overcall. You might try this for the key criterion: To overcall two of a minor, you should have a hand strong enough to raise 2NT to 3NT (or look for a different game) or a suit long enough to retreat to 3♦.

In fact, I would recommend playing 2NT as forcing one round in keeping with that approach. I'd rather double 1♠ than overcall 2♦ with that hand, but pass is still an acceptable action in the 21st century. Opposite a like-minded overcaller, you should be safe whether you double or bid a forcing 2NT, but opposite this style of overcall, pass has a lot to recommend it.

Dear Eric,

I need help on a hand, but even more important, with a concept. Both vulnerable:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♦	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	?

My hand:

♠Q62 ♥J1094 ♦1096532 ♣—.

Do I pass or bid 2♠? Why? I chose to defend and led a spade. Which spade should I lead? Why? I led the ♠2. Dummy had K-9-7 and played low. My partner thought I had a singleton and

played the ace and tried to give me a ruff.

Any comments about the reopening double? North:

♠AJ10853 ♥KQ7 ♦J ♣KQ8.

Gene Solomon

I strongly recommend a raise to 2♠ the first time. I would consider your pass/pass parlay very dangerous. If not directly, then certainly over the double.

For partner to play for a singleton spade rather than honor-third in light of the bidding was reasonable, though with no fast entry it might have been better to finesse and wait for two natural spade tricks (assuming dummy had no likely discards for spades).

The reopening double was the normal action, providing maximum flexibility with all strains in the picture and a chance for a big penalty.

Leading the ♠Q would rarely cost and could be important to hold the lead and force declarer on a layout like the actual one. I would recommend it.

The main point is to exhaust your own offensive potential before looking for a low-level penalty, and raising to 2♠ would do that. □

Duck duck gose!

Dear Eric,

At a recent club duplicate game, I picked up this West hand as dealer with no one vulnerable:

♠Q94 ♥QJ82 ♦105 ♣AJ65.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♦	2♠
?			

Well this certainly looks like the time to make a responsive double. My partner is a responsible bidder and I can stand 3♦. But as I consider further, I realize that: (a) each side has close to 20 points; (b) to play at the three level, we need an eight-card fit; (c) partner would be likely to double with four hearts and 11 points; (d) I may have only one or two tricks to contribute when the contract is from partner's side. Leads through my hand diminish its value.

How likely is it that the spade bidders will bid 3♠ and take us off the hook if we bid more? What do you think of 2NT to protect my hand on opening lead? Isn't this bid most likely to end the bidding?

Furthermore, if I pass, perhaps my partner will reopen with a double or freely bid again.

East's hand was:

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