

Mike's Advice



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Continuations after partner makes a one-level takeout double, and RHO bids 1NT

When your partner makes a takeout double, it is common for there to be some competitive bidding.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♣	Dbl	1♥	?

You can bid a suit, you can bid notrump, you can make a penalty double of 1♥, and you can make a cuebid of 2♣ if you have a hand that qualifies.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♣	Dbl	2♣	?

You can bid a suit or make a responsive double on some hands. It is fairly easy for you to describe your hand if you wish.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♣	Dbl	1NT	?

It's less easy here. If you have one suit to bid, you can do that if the hand is strong enough. But what if you have a hand like one of these?

♠Q873 ♥KJ72 ♦Q83 ♣83

You have enough to compete to two of a major. How can you do that and at the same time find the right major suit?

♠74 ♥J763 ♦AK109 ♣762

You want to play in two of a red suit, but only in the right red suit. At the same time, you don't want partner to bid spades.

♠Q874 ♥84 ♦KJ873 ♣87

You would like partner to choose between spades and diamonds.

Can you do all the things you want to do on these hands? The answer is that there *is* a sane way to do some of them.

Say LHO opens 1♦ and partner doubles. RHO bids 1NT showing

around 7–9 high-card points. When is the last time you doubled 1NT? When is the last time you cuebid 2♦? I can't remember this happening at my table lately, and I suspect that the reason is that there are not many hands that meet the "standard" requirements for these bids.

So here's a suggestion. If partner doubles 1♣, 1♦ or 1♥, and your RHO bids a natural 1NT, play the following:

A cuebid shows the two higher unbid suits and a double shows the two lower unbid suits.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♣	Dbl	1NT	?

- Double shows the lower suits, diamonds and hearts.
- 2♣, a cuebid, shows the higher suits, spades and hearts.

If you have spades and diamonds, pick a suit and bid it.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♦	Dbl	1NT	?

- Double shows the lower suits, clubs and hearts.
- 2♦, a cuebid, shows the higher suits, spades and hearts.

If you have spades and clubs, pick a suit and bid it.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♥	Dbl	1NT	?

- Double shows the lower suits, clubs and diamonds.
- 2♥, a cuebid, shows the higher suits, spades and diamonds. Use this one with care. You need a nice enough hand to protect partner if he chooses diamonds, which will be on the three level.

If you have hearts and clubs, pick a suit and bid it.

For the record, a cuebid does not show a good hand. It says you have the two suits you are showing but are not sure which suit you should bid. A few examples:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♣	Dbl	1NT	?
♠63	♥A763	♦QJ83	♣J104

Double. This says you have enough to bid one of the lower suits but are not sure which one you should bid. If you bid hearts, partner might have three hearts and four diamonds, where diamonds will probably play better. If you had five hearts you should just bid them since you do not need more than three-card support. If you have enough points to continue bidding, double and then bid again. If you have a hand with competitive values only (you will almost never have a really good hand), you will pass partner's bid.

♠AK53 ♥10873 ♦3 ♣7653

Bid 2♣, a cuebid. You promise the two higher unbid suits, in this case the majors. Even though your spades are far better than your hearts, a 4–4 heart fit rates to be better for you than a 4–3 spade fit. 2♣ will get you to the right major suit all of the time.

♠A873 ♥87 ♦8763 ♣A62

You do not have a way to show spades and diamonds, so you have to guess whether to bid and then which suit to bid. Since this is the same problem you would have without this convention, it's fair to say that you are not worse off in any way. □