

Newsletter

Ask Dwight for September 15, 2019

Dear Dwight

On hand #23, Tuesday evening September 3, sitting West in second seat, the bidding went:

- P – P – 1D – P
- 1H – X – 2H – X
- P – P – P

I thought my double was offering a clear choice of 2 suits and when neither was supported, I thought the double from my partner was for penalty.

My partner (East) intended her double to ask me to choose which of my 2 suits I preferred. Is this what the second double (by East) in our auction means?

Thanks,
Just Learning

Hand diagram for Tuesday evening, Sept. 23, 2019, BD #23. The diagram shows the cards for North, West, East, and South, along with HCPs.

North	West	East	South
♠ 10 7 ♥ K J 5 3 ♦ A Q J 10 7 5 ♣ 8	♠ K Q 9 5 2 ♥ 8 ♦ 9 2 ♣ A 10 7 6 5	♠ A 4 3 ♥ Q 7 4 ♦ K 8 6 4 ♣ K Q 9	♠ J 8 6 ♥ A 10 9 6 2 ♦ 3 ♣ J 4 3 2

HCPs: 11, 9, 14, 6

[Tuesday eve, Sept. 23, 2019 BD #23](#)

Hello Just Learning,

These situations are always a bit tricky. The short answer to your question is that your partner's double of 2 hearts is not penalty.

To explain, it is easiest to accept the (modern) philosophy that all doubles at all levels are NOT penalty. That of course is extreme. However, I highly recommend that whenever the opponents have found a fit at a low level, meaning not past the 2 level, for sure, and frequently the 3 level, that you adopt that principle. I recommend that until at least past the 2 level that all doubles simply say, ***"Think of something intelligent to do since I have no clear-cut action to take."***

Of course, the question then becomes, ***"How does one ever double for penalty?"*** The answer is that you do not! The double made by partner can be converted to penalty when it is the correct action, but the double is still designed for telling partner to act.

On hand 23, you correctly made a ***take out double*** showing the black suits. When North raised to 2 hearts, East knows that your side should be competing but has no particular preference for either black suit and so the double now says, ***"I think we should be bidding a black suit but I have no preference, pick the one you think is better."***

Just to continue the discussion, assuming south passes the double, you should seriously consider throwing the ball back in your partner's court by cue bidding 3 hearts to say that your hand is close to an opener and that you think there is some chance of a game in spades or clubs (Remember that your partner 'supported' you when they made the double of 2 hearts.) Since East has a good hand with the diamond king favourably located, they should bid 4 spades.

I hope this answers your question. Let me know if you have any further comments or questions.

db