

A "Support Double" is Both an Offensive and a Defensive Weapon

Bruce Thompson

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A "Support Double" is one of 5 *Not-for-Penalty* Doubles. Doubles below a Partnership-agreed level (e.g., below 3NT) serve many purposes. A "Support Double" shows Partner that you have cards supporting Partner's one-level bid. Many Partners play "Support Doubles" **only** when Partner/Responder bids a **Major**. Obviously, such a Double is only possible when Opponents overcall Responder's opening bid in a different suit than Responder bid.

Classical/Traditional "Support Double"

A classical/traditional "Support Double" is always made **only by Opener**, **only** when Opener has bid a Minor, **only** when Responder/Partner bids a Major, **only** when RHO sitting 4th bids a different suit, and **only** by Opener as Opener's bid at Call 5 in the auction.

Example "Support Double" by NORTH

NORTH: 1C EAST: PASS SOUTH: 1H WEST: 1S
NORTH: DOUBLE

Example "Support Double" by EAST

EAST: 1D SOUTH: PASS WEST: 1S NORTH: 2C
EAST: DOUBLE

A classical/traditional "Support Double" always shows exactly 3-card support for Responder's bid Major. If Opener instead had 4 of Responder's bid Major, Opener would instead bid

Responder's Major at the next level required to make the bid sufficient, and in this manner when Opener makes a "Support Double" Responder then knows that Opener only has exactly 3-card support in the Responder's Major.

The advantage of Opener bidding a "Support Double" is that Responder knows Opener's exact card support. If Responder has 5+ of the bid Major, Responder then knows that the Partnership has 5+3 = 8+ trump, and at Responder's discretion Responder can then bid a game contract. On the other hand, if Responder holds only 4 of the bid Major, Responder can then re-bid the Major to set the contract at a part score level that is nevertheless makeable with only 4+3 = 7 trump cards, or as a "sacrifice" contract.

Another Example: "Support Doubles" Also Allow Winning on Defense

Board #10
 Shark Tank
 Friday P.M. 10/23/20
 Dealer: **EAST**
 Vul: **BOTH**

	NORTH (14)	
	S: T 6 4	
	H: A 9 4	
	D: A J 6 4 2	
	C: K Q	
WEST (7)		EAST (12)
S: J 9 3		S: K 8 7 5
H: Q J 8 2		H: K 7 6
D: K T 8 5 3		D: Q 9
C: 6		C: A 5 4 2
	SOUTH (7)	
	S: A Q 2	
	H: T 5 3	
	D: 7	
	C: J T 9 8 7 3	

Bidding

EAST: 1C	SOUTH: PASS	WEST: 1H	NORTH: 2D
EAST: DOUBLE	SOUTH: PASS	WEST: PASS	NORTH: PASS

When EAST Doubled, EAST is showing WEST exactly 3 Hearts. On this Board WEST now knows that E/W hold exactly 7 Hearts,

which may be enough to make a 2-level contract. After the Double, EAST has "limited" her hand, and probably will not bid again unless WEST demands another bid. After the Double, WEST is the "Captain" of the E/W pair.

SOUTH's Pseudo-Thinking When Deciding What to Bid after EAST Doubled

I am very, very familiar with SOUTH. So I know **exactly** what SOUTH was thinking when it was his turn to make his second bid. SOUTH thought, "E/W have a fit in Hearts. EAST has an opening hand. EAST supported WEST's Heart bid, and so has exactly 3 Hearts. Therefore, WEST will surely make a Heart bid, so I can safely Pass."

WEST's Thinking When Deciding What to Bid after EAST Doubled

WEST thought, "We have 7 Hearts. NORTH has either 5 or 6 Diamonds. N/S is Vulnerable, just as we are Vulnerable. *You can score points on Defense, just as you can on Offense.* Given my Trump Stack, and my singleton Club, and the fact EAST has an opening hand, and I have 7 HCPs, we can play for a part score in a 2H contract, or I can leave the Double in. If I leave the Double in, if we set E/W by 1, our score will be +300, and if we set E/W by 2, our score will be +500, both of which are greater than the 110 we will get if we exactly make 2H. This is a 'no brainer.'"

"Support Doubles" are Both an Offensive and a Defensive Weapon

This hand and the result (N/S down 3: +800 for E/W) illustrate that "Support Doubles" are an **Offensive** weapon, because (1) you can communicate information without eating up bidding space, and (2) using the "Support Double" you can communicate to Partner exactly how many of her trump cards you hold. At the same time, "Support Doubles" are a **Defensive** weapon, because Partner has the opportunity to leave the Double in, if that will result in a more favorable outcome. In other words, "Support Doubles" are very useful because they are such a **flexible** weapon!

What SOUTH Should Have Been Thinking When Deciding What to Bid after EAST Doubled

"NORTH probably has either 5 or 6 Diamonds. I have a singleton Diamond. There are either 6 or 7 Diamonds out in E/W's

hands. That is not good if WEST leaves this Double in. "Support Doubles" are not only an Offensive weapon, but also sometimes a Defensive weapon. My hand is very distributional, so other hands are probably distributional also. What if WEST has a Diamond trump stack against us? We will be screwed!

"I hold 6 Clubs, including a sequence of 5 cards in a row. Sequences are very, very important! I better bid 3C. If NORTH rebids her Diamonds after I deny them, it's on her."

"And, Now, the Rest of the Story..."

For many decades a man named Paul Harvey had a noon-time radio show called "The Rest of the Story," on which he told a story each day. The show was carried by 1,000+ radio stations and was listened to by a couple of dozen million people each week. He would start the story, take a commercial break, and then after the commercial, religiously say, "And, now, the rest of the story." So, here is the rest of the story of Board #10:

I actually was the real SOUTH on this Board, and I did not bid 2C. And the real NORTH was my real wife, Kelly. Later that day I found most of my clothes piled up in the front yard. Long story short, I am now looking for a place to live. By the way, I am somewhat sure I am COVID-free, in case you are seriously considering it.