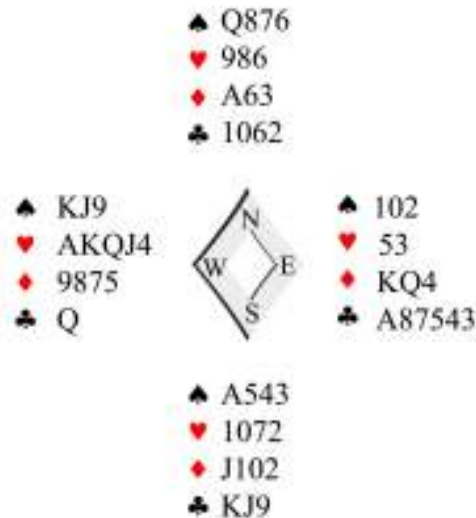


87. Penalty Double With A Balance of Power Revisited

Published on Page 2 of the Trail Daily Times, May 8, 2012



W	N	E	S
			P
1♥	P	1NT	P
2♦	P	P	Dbl
P	2♠	P	P
Dbl	All Pass		

--East West Vulnerable--

Penalty Doubles

Takeout doubles are usually doubles at the one or two-level, higher if opponents pre-empt, while the following doubles are for penalty:

1. Doubles made by doubling over and not doubling under;
2. A double made by your partner when you have already told him your hand (1NT or a pre-empt does this);
3. A double after one's partner has already answered (by a bid not a pass) a takeout double;
4. A double made when the partnership knows they have the balance of power;
5. A double made after the partnership has agreed on a suit;
6. Any takeout double may be passed not for lack of a better bid but for penalty (conversion).

7. Any double made after a takeout double has been converted to penalty (passed); and
8. any double after the partnership makes a redouble.

This week's column is an example of 4.

The bidding:

West, with an unbalanced 16 points, opens one heart. East has six to nine points and replies one notrump. West rebids diamonds. West would like to invite with 2NT but the stiff club prevents this. North and South are not vulnerable and South hates to pass out two diamonds. South doubles and they find their spade fit which West doubles because he has sixteen points. East could pull the double to three diamonds if he is weak or has adequate fits with partner. However, he leaves it in because of his strength and the misfits.

The contract: Two spades doubled by North. Yes, usually South plays all the contracts in bridge columns, but this is an example of when not to balance. North really should not be playing.

The opening lead: The five of hearts

It is often better to choose partner's suit in which one has a shorter holding. King from king queen is sometimes not a good lead in low level contracts because the ace and jack could be positioned as they are in this case.

The play:

West wins three hearts and East discards an encouraging high club. West doesn't want a ruff quite yet and plays a top diamond. Declarer ducks. East wins the queen of diamonds. If East had won with the king, he would have denied having the queen. East then exits a low club playing low from his ace.

Declarer ducks and West wins his queen and plays another diamond. Dummy wins the ace and plays a small trump to the ace and then a small one back to the queen. West wins the king and exits a diamond. East cashes the ace of clubs and gives West a club ruff. The defense gets nine tricks.

The result: Two spades doubled down four for -800.

Notes:

- With misfits and points, it is better to lure the opponents into the auction and double them.
- With two of partner's major, it is almost always best to bid 1NT and then return to the major. Here East decided to leave partner in diamonds with his diamond strength.