

THE MAXIMAL DOUBLE OR MAXIMUM OVERCALL DOUBLE



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The underlying concept of this bid revolves around a competitive bidding scenario where opener usually bids one of a major. The Left Hand Opponent (LHO) makes a direct overcall without jumping. Responder can no longer show the difference between a bad raise with support holding perhaps 4-7 HCP or a constructive raise with support showing 8-10 Evaluation Points (EP). Responder does however raise the opener.

In the following example, South is the dealer.

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♦	2♥	3♦

If North had a limit raise in Hearts, he would cuebid 3♦. This type of bidding decision falls in line with the idea that raises in competition are NOT forward going; some say, raises in competition are weak. Therefore, if South rebids 3♥ it should not be perceived as game going. This is where the Maximal Double comes into play. When the bidding space runs out in a competitive auction, the Maximal Double allows you to keep bidding with clarity so that you do not have to concede the auction to the opponents.

3♥ indicates a desire to sign off in a partial

Double is an invitation to game showing 16+ HCP

The bidding would look like this:

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♦	2♥	3♦

3♥ (Minimum values)

or

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♦	2♥	3♦

X (Extra values inviting game with a constructive raise)

North might choose to convert the Maximum Double to a penalty double, but this is RARE.

Consider the following example:

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
3♠			

In this example South has no interest in game.

If, however the bidding proceeds as follows, South has 16+ EP and would like partner to bid game with 8-10 HCP. It should be clear that if North had a limit raise, they would cuebid 3♥ immediately.

South	West	North	East
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥
X			

The South hand in this example should look something like this:

♠KQ876 ♥6 ♦AQ43 ♣KJ8

The advantages of the Maximal Double as opposed to some other game try:

Partner can pass with a good hand and 2 tricks in the opponents suit thereby converting the double to penalty

Responder understands that opener shows extra values (at least a king extra) and should bid game with a constructive raise

Failure to make a Maximal Double is perceived as a signoff

Most often the bidding space does not allow for any other kind of invitation to game

Example: South is the dealer and opens the bidding with 1♥.

	♠KJ86		
	♥1073		
	♦1085		
	♣KQ5		
♠A72		♠Q1094	
♥Q86		♥52	
♦KQ632		♦AJ74	
♣64		♣1032	
	♠53		
	♥AKJ94		
	♦9		
	♣AJ987		

South	West	North	East
1♥	2♦	2♥	3♦
X			

South has made Maximal Double showing extra values. South's hand grows to 18 EP counting length and a singleton. North should bid 4♥. ♣