

WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

MAXIMAL DOUBLES

Patty Tucker



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Maximal Doubles

Maximal Doubles

A Maximal Double is a bid made after you and partner have bid and raised a major suit and your right hand opponent (RHO) has overcalled the suit directly in rank below your major suit. Two examples:

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

In each case the opponents have bid the suit directly in rank below your major suit. A “double” by North would be a Maximal Double indicating that he is considering game, but does not have a hand strong enough to make game if South is on the low end (6-7 points) of his minimum response.

Why should you play this? What advantage does it give you? ***Why should North not just bid 3♥ or 3♠?***

Suppose North had the hand below, he and partner (South) have bid and raised spades and his opponent competed to 3♥.

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

♠AKJ542 ♥2 ♦1098 ♣K32 wouldn't North want to compete to 3♠? North would not want to invite game, but he would certainly want to compete for the part-score opportunity.

But suppose North had this hand:

♠AQJ54 ♥76 ♦AQ75 ♣K8 now North would want to bid 3♠, asking South to bid game with a good hand.

How would South know which type of hand North holds? These hands are why Maximal Doubles were created. You can't do both...not unless you play Maximal Doubles.

Once you add Maximal Doubles, a bid of 3♠ becomes a competitive bid saying, "I don't want the opponents to take the bid from us" and double says, "I'm interested in playing game but I need to know what you think partner? Are you at the top or bottom of your 2♠ bid?"

If the opponents compete in a suit more than one rank below your suit, you can use a Help Suit Game Try to show interest in game. It's only when they bid the suit directly below your major suit that a Maximal Double is used.

Responder's (South's) Bid

What does responder bid after opener's (North's) bid?

If North bids 3♥ or 3♠, South will pass. North did not make a try for game. North was simply competing for the part-score.

If North bids “double” (a Maximal Double), then South will evaluate his hand for game.

If South has:

- 6-7 points, he will return to the major suit at the three level;
- 8-9 points, he will bid game in their major suit;
or
- A hand that he feels has a good chance for game due to his distribution or trick taking ability, he will bid game in their major suit.

What type of hand, without maximum points, would South feel he has the ability to make game? In the following auction:

North	East	South	West
1♠	2♥	2♠	3♥

Dbl (Maximal)

If South held the hand below, he would bid game.

♠Q542 ♥32 ♦108 ♣A10932

The *'Winning Bridge Conventions'* Series

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Maximal Doubles

Bridge students quickly discover that ‘basic’ bidding’ will only get them so far. If they really want to improve, it is necessary to master a certain number of bidding conventions, and be prepared both to play them and play against them. This ebooklet covers Maximal Doubles.



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is an ABTA Master Bridge Teacher and cofounder of Whirlwind Bridge and Atlanta Junior Bridge. Her success at the bridge table culminated in her victory in the 2000 Baldwin Flight A North American Open Pairs with long-time bridge partner Kevin Collins. Patty and Kevin were married in 2006.