

Dealer: W  
Vul: All

♠ 64  
♥ J764  
♦ A6  
♣ AK754

W	N	E	S
P	P	1D	?

What should South bid?

## BIDDING 9 – PENALTY DOUBLES AT THE 2 LEVEL

Dealer: W

Vul: All

	♠ KJ102		
	♥ K52		
	♦ 10973		
	♣ J6		
♠ A85		♠ Q973	
♥ Q10		♥ A983	
♦ J82		♦ KQ54	
♣ Q10832		♣ 9	
	♠ 64		
	♥ J764		
	♦ A6		
	♣ AK754		

W	N	E	S
P	P	1D	?

What should South bid?

Two level overcalls generally should be much stronger than 1 level overcalls because it's too easy to double them. You should be particularly wary when vulnerable. The basic requirements are:

1. The suit should have 2 honours to 6 cards or 3 honours to 5 cards,
2. The hand should be very close to an opening hand or better, and
3. Stronger and more experienced players tell me that calling a hand which is effectively a weak 1NT opening (ie flattish with 12-14 HCPs) isn't a good idea.

The bidding on this hand went:

W	N	E	S
P	P	1D	2C
P	P	X	P
P	P		

South has to lose 6 tricks (2 clubs, 1 diamond, 2 hearts and a spade) for 1 down and -200 which will be an absolute top as it is better than any part score EW have. On the actual hand, South misguessed spades for 2 losers and lost an additional club for 3 down and -800.

It is very tempting to overcall 2C on the South hand. The hand is an opening hand and the suit is reasonable quality. The 2C bid also makes it more difficult for the opposition to find a major fit. However, the suit quality doesn't quite reach the basic test, the hand approximates to a weak 1NT opening and South is vulnerable.

West realised South was in trouble as West has what looks like at least 2 club tricks (possibly 3) and the SA. You can usually ascribe at least 2 tricks to partner's hand when they open.

West must initially pass as a double is negative (ie shows the majors) and hope their partner reopens with a double.

Dealer: N  
 Vul: All

	♠ J5		
	♥ Q832		
	♦ 94		
	♣ K10983		
♠ 42		♠ A10863	
♥ J65		♥ AK4	
♦ J10753		♦ 2	
♣ A72		♣ Q654	
	♠ KQ97		
	♥ 1097		
	♦ AKQ86		
	♣ J		

N	E	S	W
P	1S	2D	P
P	X	P	P
P			

South was 1 down for -200 (a bottom in pairs) losing CA, 2 diamonds, HAK and SA. It's hard to crime South for their bid – their hand is clearly stronger than a weak 1NT opening and the suit quality is good enough. However, this hand shows what can still happen. West, with what looks like 3 clear tricks and a partner who has opened and thus usually has 2 defensive tricks, knows South is likely to be in trouble.

Dealer: W  
Vul: EW

	♠ K10865	
	♥ AJ1076	
	♦ K8	
	♣ 7	
♠ 943		♠ AJ7
♥ 8		♥ KQ543
♦ 653		♦ A10
♣ AQJ942		♣ 63
	♠ Q2	
	♥ 92	
	♦ QJ972	
	♣ K1085	

W	N	E	S
P	1S	2H	X (1)
P	P	P	

(1) Negative double showing both minors and 8+ points

West eventually went 3 down for -800. Again, the suit quality was not quite good enough and the hand was approximately a weak 1NT opening.