

## BALANCING DOUBLE VERSUS A BALANCING NO TRUMP

by Maritha Pottenger

In duplicate, you rarely want to pass out a hand at the one level. Thus, if an auction goes (for example) 1 Heart on your left, Pass by partner, and Pass by Right Hand Opponent, it is usually right to compete.

A **balancing double** is similar to a Take-Out Double. It promises support for all the unbid suits, particularly for the unbid major(s). You can double with less than an opening hand when you are in the pass-out seat. Partnership style will determine whether you make a balancing double with 8+ or 10+ points. (Some partners will do it with even less!) Partner should bear in mind that you may be bidding a few of his/her points because you are in the balancing position. If partner passed with a really good hand, s/he will have to cue-bid or take some very strong action to show it.

Here would be some example hands with which you should make a balancing double if the auction goes: 1H-P-P- to you:

KQxx	xxx	Kxx	Qxx
AKxx	xx	Axx	xxxx
xxxx	xxx	AKx	QJx
xxxx	x	KQxx	Kxxx

With these hands, you should make a balancing double over 1D, P, P to you:

Kxxx	QJxx	xx	KJx
KJ10x	KQJx	x	xxxx
QJxx	KJx	xx	Axxx
Axxx	Kxxx	x	J10xx

A **balancing No Trump** is a call of one no trump, in the pass-out seat. Most people play that it shows 10-14 or even 15 HCP. (Some will play it 8-12.) A balancing no trump suggests length in the opener's suit (although it does NOT guarantee a stopper unless a major suit was opened), and tends to deny 4 cards in the unbid major(s).

Over 1 H-P-P to you, a balancing 1 NT is probably the superior call with these hands:

Kx	10 9 x x	AQx	Kxxx
Qx	J 10 x x	KQJx	Axx
Ax	Q 10 xx	Kxx	Kxxx