

When the Opponents Interfere in Slam Bidding

Occasionally when you and your partner are in the midst of doing some fine tuned slam bidding, venturesome opponents decide to interfere. Usually they are attempting to find a sacrifice that will prove profitable versus your likely slam, but, in addition, they are making your bidding more difficult. These types of actions occur at high levels and at favorable (for them) vulnerability. While their attempts may prove fatal for them (bridgewise that is), it's also a very real imposition to your positive slam bidding. All players at the table need to attempt to calculate possible damages and assess the advantages and disadvantages of continuing to bid and/or of deciding to defend. Example:

Dealer: North

Vul: None

	North	
	♠ 9	
	♥ A863	
	♦ AK83	
	♣ QJ109	
East		West
♠ QJ742		♠ AK108653
♥ 9754		♥ J
♦ 9652		♦ 1074
♣ -		♣ 62
	South	
	♠	
	♥ KQ102	
	♦ QJ	
	♣ AK87543	

Bidding:	North	East	South	West
	1♣	3♠	4NT	5♠

Here West has decided that a sacrifice is in order so bids 5♠'s. Now North has a dilemma. He can double and find out later that E-W were down only two for a paltry score of 300 points. Or he can bid on to slam in clubs for a hopeful score of 920. Before North decides to double in situations similar to this, he would like to be certain that the result of this double is best that N-S can do on the board. In the example above, the double would serve no purpose as North is anything but certain

and South would have to assume that the double by his partner is a penalty double and thus would subsequently pass.

On the other hand, if North would like to continue to explore for a slam in clubs, the problem is how to show his Aces....with the traditional method being to pass with no Aces or bid the cheapest suit possible that contains an Ace, and so on up the line. This method is quite obvious lacking so bridge players have devised their own conventional means for showing Aces. These conventions and/or methods are explained below. They are not complicated or involved with a lot of memorization, but bridge players do need to choose one convention for such situations.

DEPO stands for **Double Even-Pass Odd**. Using this convention, a double shows an even number of Aceszero, two or four. Pass shows an odd number of Aces... one or three. Using DEPO in the above example North would double to show an Even Number of Aces.

DOPE stands for **Double Odd-Pass Even**. It is just the opposite of DEPO as described above. A Double shows an odd number of Aces, and a Pass shows an even number of Aces. Using DOPE in the above example North would pass showing an even number of Aces.

DOPI stands for **Double Zero-Pass 1**. A Double would show zero Aces and Pass would show only one Ace. To show more than one Ace you would continue bidding up the line with each new bid showing an Ace. Thus, in the example above, since North has two Aces so he would bid 5NT. If North had three Aces, North would bypass 5NT (which shows two Aces) and bid 6♣ to show three. As you can **DOPI** should really be **D0P1**.

Some bridge players play Roman Keycard Blackwood where the King of trumps is considered an Ace so there are five Aces (called Keycards) in the deck. If you play RKC and there is interference after a 4NT bid, the responses change again.

With **DEPO**, a double shows an even number of keycards and pass shows an odd number. With **DOPI** a double usually shows 0 (zero) or 3 keycards while pass shows 1(one) or 4 keycards. The next higher suit would then shows two keycards without the Queen while skipping a suit would show two keycards with the Queen. And with **DOPE**, double would show an odd number of keycards while pass shows an even number of keycards.

Listed below are a few others dealing with doubles and redoubles. These meanings are associated with regular Blackwood but they, too, can be adjusted for use with Roman Keycard Blackwood.

PODI stands for **Pass Zero-Double 1**. A Pass shows zero Aces and a Double shows one Ace. PODI is just the opposite of DOPI in showing zero or one Ace, but otherwise the convention remains the same. Actually **PODI** is really **P0D1**

ROPI (R0P1) - There have been bridge experiences in the past, where the Blackwood convention has been initiated, and the Left Hand Opponent of the Blackwood bidder has doubled. Some bridge players have agreed to use ROPI if this call has been made. ROPI stands for **Redouble shows zero** Aces and a **Pass** shows **1** Ace. Otherwise, the partner of the Blackwood bidder simply answers according to the Blackwood convention with two or more Aces.

RIPO (R1P0) is just the opposite of ROPI.....**Redouble** shows **1** Ace, and **Pass** shows **zero** Aces.

Now decide what you could bid in the following auction: (a), playing regular Blackwood and DOPE, (b) playing regular Blackwood and DOPI, (c) playing regular Blackwood and DEPO, (d) playing RKC and DEPO, (e) playing RKC and DOPI.

♠ xx	1♥	3♦	4NT	5♦
♥ KJxxx				
♦ Axx				
♣ KQx				

Answers: (a) Double, (b) Pass, (c) Pass, (d) Double, (e) 5♥

Marilyn Hemenway, 2006