

Takeout Doubles

Doubling the opponents' last bid "raises the stakes" in that you will collect a big penalty if they fail to make their contract but they will be richly rewarded if they are successful. Since it is very, very rare that we *know* they cannot make their contract at the one level, we would never use double at this level. Over the years, a special meaning has been developed when we double an opponents' opening bid.

Takeout Double - Shortage in the opponent's suit. 3+ cards in all the unbid suits. Around an opening hand

We will use a double of an opening bid as takeout. We are not expecting to defend this contract, rather we expect our partner to take the double out by bidding their best suit. Consider the following hands when your Right Hand Opponent opens One Heart:

♠ AT93	♠ 9872	♠ KQ983	♠ A96
♥ 9	♥ T	♥ Q2	♥ AQ
♦ KQ75	♦ AK83	♦ AK98	♦ KJT3
♣ K432	♣ KQJ4	♣ 8	♣ K982
Double	Double	Overcall One Spade	Overcall One No Trump

Remember that you need to meet **all three criteria**. Shortage in the opponent's suit, tolerance (3+) for every unbid suit and around about an opening hand (Eleven or more HCPs, possibly 10 with a 4441 shape)

Major Oriented

Sometimes you will need to make a slightly off-shape takeout double. Perhaps you don't have three cards in *every* suit, and yet double feels like the best expression of the hand. This is acceptable, but you should always be focussed on finding fits in the major suits Hearts and Spades. If you are doubling a major, you should have four cards in the other major. If you are doubling a minor, you should always be 43 or better in the two major suits.

Imagine you hold the following and your Right Hand Opponent opens One Club:

♠ AQ92	♠ KT6	♠ 4	♠ AJT3
♥ K643	♥ K63	♥ KQJ3	♥ AQ8
♦ K3	♦ AJ4	♦ J763	♦ T942
♣ T96	♣ QJ543	♣ AKJ4	♣ KT
Double	Pass	Pass	Double

If you do make an off-shape takeout double and your partner bids a suit you don't like (which is most likely!) It is important to pass. You can't make them bid and then try to rescue them. If you're not comfortable with any reply they might make, you should pass.

Responding to a takeout double

This will be covered in more detail in next week's lesson. However, the basic principle is that if your partner doubles and the next opponent passes then you *have to bid*. Especially with a very weak hand! Passing is a strong choice as it will leave the opponents playing at the one level in a doubled contract which can potentially cost you a significant score.

With 0-6 HCPs you should bid your best suit as cheaply as possible. With 7-10/11 HCPs you should jump in your best suit. With 11/12+ HCPs you should ensure your side continues bidding until you get to game. Either by bidding game yourself or perhaps by bidding the opponents' suit! A surefire way to make sure you partner bids again.