

THE TAKEOUT DOUBLE

A takeout double is made when your opponent has bid and your partner has not. Like with the penalty double, you just say, "Double". If your double is followed by three passes, the opponent's bid becomes the contract, and, because it was doubled, will give a higher score to either the offense or the defense, depending on whether or not the contract was made. Also, as in the penalty double, a takeout double can be redoubled by the side that made the bid which was doubled.

However, unlike the penalty double, the purpose of the takeout double is not to communicate, "I don't think you can make this contract." The message of the takeout double is to say, "I have an opening hand, but can't overcall, as I don't have 5 in a suit." Please describe your hand, partner.

These are the elements of a hand that can be used to make a takeout double:

1. Opening points – 13 points (H.C.P + distribution)
2. 3-4 cards in each of the unbid suits.
3. Shortness (void, singleton, doubleton) in the suit bid by the opposition.
Since you can support your partner's suit, you can add distribution points for your shortness in the opponent's suit.

A takeout double can be made right after your right hand opponent has bid, or after both opponents have bid, and you are the 4th hand to bid.

If your partner has made a takeout double, and the next person passes, you are generally required to bid, as it is likely that the opponents will make their contract. Remember, your partner has very few (at most 2) cards in that suit. Here's what to do if your partner makes a takeout double:

1. With 0-9 HCP, bid your longest unbid suit (or bid 1 NT, if your only 4 card suit is the one bid by the opponents).
2. With 10-12 HCP, bid your longest unbid suit, but jump one level. By jumping one level, your partner knows that you're not just bidding because you have to.

3. With 13 or more HCP, you can jump right to game, either in no trump or in a suit. Remember, your partner must have at least 3 cards in your suit to have made a takeout double.

Can you ever pass if your partner has made a takeout double? Generally, this double is forcing, meaning that you must bid, even if you don't have any points. There are 2 exceptions:

1. If the opponents make an intervening bid after your partner doubles, you don't have to bid.
2. If you have 5 cards in the opponent's suit topped by 4 honors, or 6 cards in that suit, topped by 3 honors. By not doubling, you're hoping that this suit ends up being the trump suit, making it very difficult for the opponents to make their contract.

When your partner doubles, how do you know if it's a penalty double or a takeout double, which forces you to bid?

1. If an opening bid of a suit is doubled, it's almost always a takeout double. This includes preempt bids at the 2 and 3 level. Of course, your partner would need more points to double an opening bid at the 2 or 3 level, since he's forcing you to bid at a higher level.
2. A double made at a player's first opportunity to bid is a takeout double.
3. A double made after the opponents have agreed on a suit at the 2 or 3 level is a takeout double.
4. If your partner doubles a game level contract, or a slam level contract, it's always a penalty double.
5. If your partner doubles a 1 NT opening bid, it's a penalty double.

For each hand, what would you do if your RHO opens 1 club?

S-A,J,10,6,3

S-A,J,5,3

S-Q,J,10

H-4,3

H-Q,10,8,6

H-A,J,4,3

D-K,9,3

D-K,J,4,2

D-K,10,2

C-K,Q,6

C-9

C-A,Q,6

S-A,3	S-10,8,7,4	S-Q,7,5
H-A,Q,8,6,3	H-A,K,8,2	H-A,J
D-K,J,8,5,2	D-A,Q,3	D-Q,9,7,4
C-4	C-8,5	C-K,Q,8,3

Your LHO has opened the bidding at 1 spade, and your partner doubles. Your RHO passes (usually the smartest move). How do you respond with each of the following hands?

S-8,9,2	S-J,10	S-A,J,9,3
H-J,8,7,5	H-K,3	H-K,10,5
D-Q,5,4	D-Q,J,10,8,4	D-J,4,2
C-8,7,2	C-8,6,5,3	C-10,8,6

Your LHO has opened the bidding at 1 heart, and your partner doubles. Your RHO passes. What do you bid with each of the following hands?

S-J,10,7,6,3	S-Q,10,3	S-A,8,2
H-9,4,2	H-K,J,10,8	H-10,9
D-A,Q,6	D-A,9,2	D-K,Q,J,10,8
C-K,3	C-Q,7,3	C-8,6,2

Your LHO has opened the bidding at 1 diamond, and your partner doubles. Your RHO passes. What do you bid with each of the following hands?

S-8,6	S-A,6,3	S-Q,10,7,6,4,3
H-A,K,8,4,2	H-K,4,2	H-9
D-A,9,3	D-Q,J,9,8	D-J,8
C-J,5,4	C-A,10,3	C-A,K,J,6