

Trouble with Doubles

1. Takeout

If your opponent opens with a suit bid, a **double** by you promises:

- At least opening-bid strength (12+ pts.)
- Shortness in the suit the opponent opened.
- Support for all unbid suits.

Your double forces partner to bid, so you must have at least **3-card length in any suit** he will choose. Typical hands for a takeout double of an opponent's 1C opening would be:

♠KJ76 ♥AQ92 ♦KJ4 ♣65
♠Q104 ♥AK84 ♦K10432 ♣8

You can also use the takeout double to start the description of a hand with one long suit and great strength (17+ pts.) -- the type of hand where you don't want to risk having partner pass a suit overcall. Your hand and your suit should be strong enough that you could make game if partner has as little as 4-6 pts. and a fit. If your opponent opens 1C, 1D or 1S, double with:

♠KJ5 ♥AQJ1084 ♦AK5 ♣7

Then bid hearts over partner's response.

Responding to Partner's Takeout Double

If partner doubles an opponent's suit bid, you **must respond** unless:

- The opponent on your right has also entered the bidding, OR
- You have a long, strong holding in the opponent's suit and want to "convert" partner's takeout double to a penalty double.

Respond your **longest unbid suit, but usually a major over a minor** at the level that shows your point-count:

- 0-8 pts. -- Bid your longest suit at the **lowest level possible** (1H - DBL - Pass - 1S, 2C or 2D).
- 9-11 pts. -- Jump a level of bidding in your longest suit to show strength (1H - DBL - Pass - 2S, 3C or 3D).
- 7-10 pts. -- Bid 1NT if you have good stoppers in the opponent's suit.
- 11-12 pts. -- Jump to 2NT if you have stoppers in the opponent's suit, but do not have length in an unbid major.
- 12+ pts. -- Cuebid opponent's suit or jump to game in your suit or notrump (with stoppers in opponent's suit).

Minimum Offshape Takeout (not recommended)

Check the box on the convention card if, by agreement, you make Takeout Doubles with minimum hands which do not show support for the unbid suits. For example, if your T/O of an opening of 1C would not be unexpected to partner with this hand:

S: K J x

H: x x

D: A Q x x

C: K x x x

2. Negative

To use this convention, you and partner agree that if you open the bidding and the opponent makes a direct suit overcall, a double by responder shows:

- At least a fair response (7+ pts.) AND
- 4-card length in at least one of the unbid suits -- usually the unbid major suit. Most pairs agree that if the two unbid suits are majors -- for example, after 1C by partner, 1D by RHO -- a negative double promises 4 cards in both suits.

It is up to you and your partner to decide how high the overcall must be for the double to be negative. You will find partnerships agreeing to 2S, 3D, 3S, and 4D for a negative double. Points needed for doubles over higher level bids should be higher than the 7+ points for a 1-level overcall. Any double over the agreed level is penalty and does not need to be alerted.

3. Reopening double

Reopening double is a form of takeout double bid by the opener himself, after his left-hand opponent has overcalled and partner has passed. As normal takeout double, it shows support for unbid suits:

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl			

West's double denotes shortness in spades, and invites partner to bid his best suit. A suitable hand would be e.g. ♠7 ♥AJ85 ♦K63 ♣AQ1052. The partner should bid his longest suit on the lowest level with approximately 0-6 points, 1NT with 5-7 points and stopper in spades, (as he would bid 1NT immediately with 8-10 points), and jump in a suit with 7+ points. Finally, he can pass for penalties with 5 or more cards in spades.

4. Responsive

A responsive double is used when LHO opens a natural suit, partner neither passes nor bids notrump, RHO makes a suit bid, and you wish to make a takeout call and get further description from partner. It is up to you and your partner to decide how high the bid must be for the double to be responsive. Here are three common situations that could be viewed as responsive:

Example 1

N	E	S	W
1C	X	2C	X

West says, "I have all three of the suits you have indicated, and I'm 4-4 in the majors."

Example 2

N	E	S	W
1C	1S	2C	X

West says, "I have hearts and diamonds."

Example 3

N	E	S	W
1C	X	1S	X

West says, "I have hearts and diamonds."

Many partners play responsive doubles ONLY if opponents have bid and raised the same suit (Example 1 above). Be sure to discuss this with your partner.

5. Maximal

This type of double is used in a competitive auction when the auction has become too crowded for any alternative approach to exchange information.

S	W	N	E
1S	2H	2S	3H
?			

South finds himself in a predicament and would prefer an approach to this bidding sequence to show:

1. the desire to sign-off in 3 Spades.
2. the desire to invite game in Spades.

This approach has been solved by the partnership agreeing to use the **Maximal Double**:

1. By bidding 3S, South shows the desire to sign-off.
2. With the employment of the **Maximal Double**, South employs the conventional bid to invite game.

6. Support Double

A double used by opener to show exactly 3 trump support for responder's suit, whereas a direct raise shows 4 trump support. It is up to you and your partner to decide how high the bid must be for the double to be support. This bid must be alerted.

S	W	N	E
1C	P	1H	1S
X			

South says, "I have 3 hearts."

Support Redouble

A redouble used by opener to show exactly 3 trump support for responder's suit, whereas a direct raise shows 4 trump support. This bid must be alerted.

S	W	N	E
1C	P	1H	X
XX			

South says, "I have 3 hearts."