

Bidding Basics

Other takeout doubles



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To wrap up the year, let's look at a few other takeout doubles that haven't yet been specifically addressed.

Passed-hand doubles

Just because you already passed, doesn't mean you can't make a takeout double. On the auctions shown below, West's double is for takeout. What is the strength? Well, certainly not the big double. Not even the normal "12-17" double, because West already passed. West is showing a maximum passed hand (roughly 9-11) and the other suits:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
Dbl			
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♦
Dbl			
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Dbl			

When responding to such a double, be aware that game is out of the picture (neither of you could open the bidding). To respond to a passed-hand double in notrump, make sure you have plenty of values. A jump still shows extras, but the doubler isn't likely to bid a second time.

Doubles after the opponent's overcall

Because responder can't make penalty doubles (negative doubles are part of standard bidding), it is up to opener to double to cater to responder's penalty pass. That's a mouthful. Look at this situation:

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ 2	♠ A Q 10 8 7
♥ K Q 10 4	♥ A 2
♦ A Q 10 8 7	♦ 6 5
♣ K 9 2	♣ 7 6 5 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♦	1♠	Pass	Pass
?			

After North overcalled 1♠, East wanted to double for penalties, but couldn't. He could have bid notrump, but best is to pass, expecting that opener will reopen with a double. In fact, West should double 1♠. This is for takeout and East leaves the double in. Must opener always double on such auctions? Not always, but the general guideline for opener when an overcall comes back to him is:

- 1 With shortness (singleton or void), "always" double – even with a dead minimum.
- 2 With a doubleton, try to double – but not with a dead minimum.
- 3 With at least three cards in the overcaller's suit, don't double (unless opener has a very strong hand).

These guidelines hold even after a preempt. So, after 1♣-3♥-Pass-Pass, opener would double with:

♠A 10 7 6 ♥2 ♦A 10 8 ♣K Q 10 6 5,

but pass with:

♠A 10 7 6 ♥Q 3 2 ♦A 10 8 ♣K J 2.

Delayed double when opponents have bid two or more suits

Suppose West has:

♠Q 8 7 3 ♥2 ♦A Q 8 7 ♣A J 6 5,

and hears 1♦ on her right. That's disappointing; West would have preferred a 1♥ opening bid, which would make for an easy takeout double. West shouldn't double (she knows that if she does, partner will never stop bidding hearts). West should pass and hope to double later. In fact, suppose the auction continues:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♦
?			2♥

Now West can double. Does this mean West wants to penalize 2♥ – maybe she found an ace on the floor that she didn't have on the first round of bidding? No. Such doubles show shortness in the suit the opponents have settled in (something like the example hand above).

Opener doubles when both opponents have bid

Suppose opener has:

♠A K 10 2 ♥2 ♦A 10 7 ♣A J 7 3 2.

She opens 1♣ and hears a 1♥ overcall, pass by partner and then 2♥ on her right. Double here is perfect. It shows shortness in their suit and a desire to hear from partner (of course, partner might leave in the double with a penalty-oriented hand with good hearts).

There are many other auctions (too many to list here) where double is for takeout. A good general guideline is: "Doubles on the one and two level are not for penalty unless the partnership has specifically agreed otherwise."

Newer Players

QUIZ

What is your call after Pass-1♥-
Pass-1NT with:

① ♠J1092 ♥2 ♦AQ102 ♣K1082

② ♠A2 ♥QJ1098 ♦K432 ♣32

What is your call after 1♦-2♠-
Pass-Pass with:

③ ♠K1098 ♥AQJ2 ♦K1032 ♣2

④ ♠2 ♥K1087 ♦AQ765 ♣A32

What is your call after 1♦-1♥-
Pass-2♥ with:

⑤ ♠AQ2 ♥2 ♦AQ1076 ♣AK102

⑥ ♠3 ♥82 ♦AKQ8763 ♣K102

What is your call after 1♠-2♥-
Pass-Pass with:

⑦ ♠KJ876 ♥QJ2 ♦KQ32 ♣2

⑧ ♠KQJ9876 ♥2 ♦QJ8 ♣K2

Answers:

① Double. Not completely safe, but you have the perfect shape to get into the auction.

② Pass. Don't even dream of anything else.

③ Pass. If your black suits were reversed, you could double.

④ Double. When short in their suit, you don't need extras to make a reopening double.

⑤ Double. Shows something like this (although you don't have to be this strong).

⑥ 3♦. Straightforward – not the hand for a double.

⑦ Pass. Swap the hearts and clubs and you could double.

⑧ 2♠. True, you are short in hearts, but if partner leaves it in, would you be happy?