



BY LARRY COHEN
larryco.com

Bidding Basics

Takeout doubler's next action

Usually, if you make a takeout double, you won't bid again. Partner will assume the 12–17 HCP range (see earlier articles). If partner takes out your double to a suit (without jumping), it shows 0–8 HCP. Combined, your side won't have enough for game.

There are two situations where the doubler can take a second action:

- With the “big” double — 18 or more HCP and a five-card or longer suit (if you rebid a suit)
- Partner has shown values

The big double

Doubling and voluntarily bidding again shows 18 or more points, counting distribution. Let's say you double their 1♣ opening with:

♠A Q 10 8 7 ♥A K 2 ♦A Q J ♣3 2.

Partner takes out your double to 1♥ (0–8 HCP). You should bid 1♠. Because partner might have 8, and you have 20, you shouldn't pass. Maybe partner has:

♠K 5 2 ♥Q J 8 5 ♦10 2 ♣9 7 6 5.

You belong in 4♠. When you double and bid again (showing a big hand),

three club tricks, regardless of who holds the queen. This elimination endplay is a very difficult play to find, but the key idea is that when you have a guess, you want to see if you can make your opponents lead a suit for you.

You might even have found this without trying diamonds first (that's pretty good!). It would work to make your contract.

However far you get in your plan, enjoy it. Then try and get more of it next time! 🎯

partner will realize that 6 HCP (the hand above) is good. As to what partner should do, we'll get to that down the road.

For this month we are focusing on what the doubler shows by doubling and bidding again. Doubling and bidding a suit shows 18+ and a five-card (or longer) suit, however that “+” is a bit misleading. Technically doubling and bidding again has an upper limit. Doubling then bidding notrump is about 18–20. Doubling then bidding a suit can be a little more. But neither action is forcing. So, these are possible auctions:

West	Partner	East	You
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass

West	Partner	East	You
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass

If the doubler has a really big hand, he can double and then jump (or double and then cuebid the opponent's suit). These hands are quite rare, so let's leave things for now with our slightly inexact/incomplete point range.

What should the partner of the doubler (the “advancer”) do after the double? Tune in next month.

Advancer has shown values

When the advancer chooses a suit without jumping, it is 0–8 HCP. But sometimes the advancer will show more. Consider these auctions:

A

West	North	East	Advancer
1♦	Dbl	Pass	1NT (6–10 HCP)

B

West	North	East	Advancer
1♥	Dbl	Pass	2♠ (9–12 HCP)

C

West	North	East	Advancer
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2NT (11–12 HCP)

In each case, the advancer has shown the values in the parentheses. Accordingly, the doubler need not have 18 (the big double) to bid again.

In A, suppose the doubler has:

♠A J 7 6 ♥K 10 9 8 ♦3 2 ♣A K Q.

That's 17 opposite 6–10, which means the partnership has 23–27. There could easily be a game, so the doubler shouldn't pass. Should he raise to 3NT? That wouldn't be good opposite a 6-count. What should doubler do? 2NT would be invitation. It says, “Partner, if you are near the bottom, like 6 or 7 or a bad 8, then pass; but if you are at the top, like 10, 9 or a good 8, then go to 3NT.”

Advanced (confusing?) note: Double followed by bidding a suit after partner's takeout to notrump, is natural and strong (we don't use Stayman and transfers on this auction). For example, 1♦–Dbl–Pass–1NT; Pass–2♥ shows a big hand by logic. (It is a five-card suit, so why didn't the doubler just overcall 1♥? Because he was too strong for an overcall.)

In B maybe doubler has:

♠A 10 7 6 ♥2 ♦A Q 7 6 ♣A 10 8 6.

This isn't the big double, but after the 2♠ jump, the doubler wants to get higher. He can bid 3♠ to invite, but I'd recommend 4♠ with this beautiful control-rich hand.

In C, doubler doesn't need the "big" double to bid again. He could easily go to 3NT with, say, a 15-count.

Make sure you understand why opener can double and bid again in A, B and C above – even without the big 18-plus double. Of course, if the advancer makes a (rare) cuebid, then the doubler will have to bid again, even with a dead minimum. For example:

1♦-Dbl-Pass-2♦ shows a strong hand (defined in June) and demands that the doubler take another call.

QUIZ

What is the takeout doubler's second call on this auction: 1♦-Dbl-Pass-1♥; Pass-?

- ① ♠A Q 6 5 ♥A 3 2 ♦3 2 ♣A J 8 7
- ② ♠K 2 ♥A Q J 7 ♦6 5 4 ♣A K J 5
- ③ ♠A K ♥A K Q 2 ♦A 3 2 ♣J 10 7 6
- ④ ♠A K 3 2 ♥A 4 3 ♦A J 3 ♣K 10 8

What is the takeout doubler's second call on this auction: 1♥-Dbl-Pass-1NT; Pass-?

- ⑤ ♠A 10 8 7 ♥3 ♦A Q 7 ♣Q 6 5 4 3
- ⑥ ♠Q J 10 9 ♥4 3 ♦A Q J 7 ♣A K J
- ⑦ ♠A 10 8 7 2 ♥2 ♦A Q 4 ♣J 10 7 6
- ⑧ ♠A Q J 10 8 ♥A 3 2 ♦2 ♣A Q J 2

Answers

- ① Pass. Not enough to bid again facing 0–8.
- ② 2♥. Showing the big double (extras) – inviting partner to go further. Be careful not to bid 3♥ (or more); partner could have nothing.
- ③ 3♥. Even stronger than No. 2, begging partner to go to game with even a little bit (like a king).
- ④ 1NT. Showing more than a 1NT overcall (roughly 18–20). Not forcing. Don't make the common error of jumping to 2NT with this hand (which would show about 21–23).
- ⑤ Pass. You showed yours and partner showed theirs.
- ⑥ 2NT. Invitational facing 6–10.
- ⑦ No answer, as this is a trick question. You should have overcalled 1♠ instead of doubling. 2♠ here would show the big double (18 or more).
- ⑧ 2♠. Showing more than a 1♠ overcall (18 or more) and forcing facing 6–10 HCP. ♠