

Competitive Bidding II—Takeout Double
(September 20, 2021)

Your left hand opponent (LHO) has opened the bidding. Your partner makes a takeout double. His takeout double promises a minimum of 12 high card points (HCP) and at least three-card support for the three unbid suits. The responder passes.

Below is a summary of the responses which you can make. **Recall that the less points you have, the more imperative it is that you make a bid.** Don't be afraid to bid even with a “bust” hand. Your partner has assumed full responsibility. If you suffer a huge loss, blame it on him. Better yet—**KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT!!**

*Pass, converting the takeout double into a penalty double **IF YOU HOLD LENGTH IN THE ENEMY'S SUIT.**

*With 0-8 HCP, bid your longest suit as cheaply as you can.

*With 9-11 HCP, jump bid your longest suit.

*With 12+ HCP, cuebid the enemy suit. Your side has game.

*With 7-10 HCP and a stopper(s) in the enemy suit, bid 1NT.

*With 11-12 HCP and a stopper(s) in the enemy suit, bid 2NT.

*With 6-8 HCP and a six-card suit, jump to the three level in your suit.

Handling Intervening Bids

When your partner has doubled the opening bid and the responder (opener's partner) takes action by either redoubling or bidding a suit, you are **NO LONGER OBLIGATED TO RESPOND**. A bid by you at this point is voluntarily made. It denotes some measure of strength. It is called a **FREE BID**.

Example 1a. Your partner has doubled one heart. His partner bids two hearts.

(1H) Dbl (2H) Dbl

The double by the **advancer** (you) is a **responsive double**. (See Convention Card—Special Doubles.) Because there is only one unbid major suit (spades), the **responsive double** becomes a minor-suit takeout. You would have bid spades if you had four of them. Your hand might be as follows:

xx Axx QJxx 1098x

You are asking your partner to choose his better minor.

Example 1b. Your partner has doubled 1C. His partner bids 2C.

(1C) Dbl (2C) Dbl

A double by the **responder** (you) is a **responsive double** suggesting that you hold equal length in the majors. If you had had a clear preference, you would have bid it. You might hold the following hand:

Kxxx Jxxx Qxx xx

You are asking your partner to choose his better major.

NOTE: I will be doing more in-depth coverage of the responsive double in a subsequent lesson. For now, the strength required for a responsive double varies according to the level at which it is made. A reasonable minimum might be 6 HCP at the 2-level; 8 HCP at the 3-level; and 10 HCP at the 4-level.

Example 2a. Your partner has doubled one heart. The responder bids 2H.

(1H) Dbl (2H) ???

You hold the following hand:

AQxxx xx xxx xxx

With 6 HCP and a five-card spade suit, you should make a **free bid** of 2S.

Example 2b. Your partner has doubled one spade. The responder bids 2C.

(1S) Dbl (2C) ???

You hold the following hand:

xxx Kxx AQxx xxx

With 9 HCP, you should make a **free bid** of 2D. You don't want to let the hand pass out at 2C.

NOTE: If your partner makes a takeout double and the responder redoubles, you are relieved of any obligation to make a bid. A pass by you indicates that you have nothing to say at this point. Your pass implies that you are more or less willing to have your partner select any of the other suits. Further action reverts to your partner. **BUT**, if you can afford to bid your best suit, then you probably should bid it.

Example 3. Your partner has doubled one club. The responder redoubles.

(1C) Dbl (Redbl) ???

You hold the following hand;

xxx KJxx Qxx xxx

You should bid 1H which does not consume any bidding space.

If instead, you held the following hand:

xxx xxxx Qxx xxx

You should PASS even though you hold 4 hearts.

Rebids by Takeout Doubler

When you make a takeout double, you have forced your partner to bid. He might have **ZERO** points. If you are thinking about making another bid, **PROCEED CAREFULLY!**

In making your rebid decision, you can now add distributional points to your high card points. Below is a guide to making a rebid:

- *With 12-15 Total Points—PASS
- *With 16 Total Points—raise to the two level, if possible
- *With 19 Total Points—raise to the three level, if possible
- *With 22 Total Points—raise to the four level, if possible

Caution: Pass with a minimum takeout double. When your partner's response has been forced, never jump to any contract which you cannot reasonably make in your own hand. Also, should you be on lead, be cautious of **LEADING** the suit your partner was forced to make.

Let's finish by looking at some examples of rebids by the doubler. **SOUND ADVICE:** You, as the takeout doubler, have already advertised the minimum strength of your hand when you make a takeout double. You should **UNDERBID** on subsequent rounds. The advancer (partner of the takeout doubler) should adopt an **AGGRESSIVE** attitude on subsequent rounds.

Example 1. (1H) X (P) 2C

AK10 xx K10x AKJ10x

Holding the above hand, you make a takeout double of 1H by your RHO. Your partner responds with a bid of 2C. In this situation, you need to resist the impulse of making a jump raise in clubs, although you do hold the necessary HCP and an excellent club suit.

Keep in mind that your RHO has opened and you have **FORCED** your partner to bid by making a takeout double. Your partner may be extremely weak; thus, an eleven-trick five club contract seems unlikely. But, if your partner has a heart stopper, a game contract in 3NT may be possible.

The proper bid by you is to raise partner's clubs by bidding only 3C. This bid indicates excellent club support and a strong hand. By implication, the takeout doubler does not have a heart stopper. (If he did, he would rebid 2NT with the above hand.)

If you hold a heart stopper, you should rebid 3NT over your partner's 3C raise of your initial 2C bid. You might hold the following hand:

J KJx Jxx Qxxxxx

Sometimes, the takeout doubler can tell from his partner's response that the chances for a game are remote.

Example 2. (1H) X (P) 2D

AQxx xx A10x KJxx

Your RHO has opened with 1H. You make a takeout double to which your partner responds 2D. What should you do? Unlike the hand you held in example 1, your takeout double was made on moderate values. Partner was unable to jump in diamonds. Therefore, you can assume that he has made his response holding between 0-8 HCP. He was unable to bid 1S or 1NT. Since game is out of the question, you should PASS your partner's 2D bid.

Example 3. (1C) X (P) 1S

AKQxx Kxx AJx xx

Your RHO opens with 1C. You make a takeout double. Your partner responds 1S. What should you do? Partner was forced to bid and may be trickless. In that case, a contract of 3S will not be safe. The above hand in support of your partner's one spade bid is worth 18 HCP. A 2S raise is all that is warranted. Should your partner hold the hand below, your side may be unable to make even 2S.

J10xx Qxx xxx Qxx

****When partner's response has been forced, never jump to any contract which you cannot reasonably make in your own hand.****

With a weak hand, the doubler's partner should PASS after his partner raises his suit. But, if he holds a good hand, then he **needs** to make another bid. By his partner's takeout double and subsequent raise of your bid suit, he is showing good trump support and about 18 Total Points (counting distribution). Remember you could have made your original bid on zero points. Recall the advice that the doubler should **UNDERBID** and the advancer should bid **AGGRESSIVELY**.

In the hands below, your partner has made a takeout double of 1D.

(1D) Dbl (P) ???

Example 4a. Jxxxx xxx Kx Jxxx

Your original response of 1S is raised to 2S by your partner. You should PASS. Your problem comes when your partner bids 3S over your 1S response. By his bid, he is showing 19+ points (counting distribution) in support of 1S. You have 5 HCP counting distribution and an extra spade. Most players would raise to 4S holding your hand. You must bid 4S if playing in a team game.

Example 4b. KJxx xxx xxx KJx

Your original response of 1S was raised to 2S by your partner. Holding 8 HCP, you have a good hand and need to make one more bid, i.e., raising to 3S. The final contract is now in your partner's hands.

Example 4c. Jxxx KQx xx QJxx

Your bid of 2S is raised to 3S. You hold a hand worth 10 HCP (counting distribution). By his single raise, your partner is promising about 16/17 HCP. You should raise to 4S because you know your side has the necessary 25/26 HCP necessary for game.

Recall the hand from last week in which you were the declarer in a contract of 4H. Your partner made a takeout double of the opener's 1S bid. You bid 3H and partner raised you to 4H. I asked you to consider the following three questions.

973		Neither side is vulnerable
85		Dealer: South
Q85		
J8643		
10	J842	Bidding: (1S) X (P) 3H
AKJ2	Q10963	(P) 4H All Pass
AJ74	K10	
Q1052	K7	Contract: 4H in East
		Opening Lead: Ace of spades
AKQ65		
74		
9632		
A9		

- 1) What if South shifted to a trump at trick two after winning the ace of spades? Does this affect the declarer's original plan of action to trump 3 losing spade tricks in the dummy's hand?

No effect. You will still be able to trump the three losing spades using the AKJ of trumps in the dummy.

- 2) What if South leads a heart at trick one instead of the ace of spades?

You will still be able to make 4H. It will be more difficult to make five unless you can locate the queen of diamonds. Or, perhaps you can lead a small club from your hand toward the Q-10 in the dummy. South may make a defensive error by playing his ace of clubs which will set up a club for a spade pitch.

- 3) What if N/S bids four spades? Do you bid five hearts or double (penalty)?

N/S doubled down 4 or 5 tricks for either -800 or -1100; 5H making 5 = 450

Losers: Spades = 1 Hearts = 2 Diamonds = 4 Clubs = 1

Next Week: Negative doubles and Subsequent Bids/Rebids

