

DOUBLING FOR TAKE OUT:

When we first learn bridge we are introduced to the concept of doubling, normally it is explained as a method of extracting more points (double) from the opposition, as we are quite sure that their proposed contract will fail. This double is referred to as the penalty double. Originally I suppose that was the sole use of the double, however in the modern game we are now confronted by many different uses of the double, I think the most popular use these days is the Take out double. I will try to give a few pointers on how to use this type of double to good effect in the modern game.

Just to get back to the penalty double quickly, is common that a double of 1NT is for penalties; I would suggest that you always double 1NT when you can. If the opposition are playing a 12-14pt NT you should have 15 or more points to double. The rule of thumb is that you should always have one more point than the maximum NT range used by the opposition. (e.g. if the opposition play 14 –16 NT you should have 17+pts to double etc) remember to check your opponents NT range before play, as it is not their responsibility to tell you prior to the hand.

So this is a straightforward penalty double and most players realise this , however when you introduce take out doubles things can become slightly more complicated. You need to work out guidelines with your partner when doubles are for penalties and when they are for take out. A nice rule to use is **ALL doubles are for take out up to 3♠ unless the opposition or yourselves have bid No Trump's.**

Some examples being

N	E	S	W
1) 1♣	P	1♥	X ?
2) 1♦	X?		
3) 1♥	X?	1NT	X?
4) 1♦	1NT	2♥	X?
5) 1♥	P	1NT	X?
6) 1♠	X?	P	P?

- 1) In example 1 your double is clearly for the unbid suits you should have at a minimum of 4/4 in ♦/♠'s and probably 12+pts (incidentally with 5/5 in the unbid suits you can bid 2NT Michaels style)
- 2) In example 2 you should have 11+ pts and shortage in ♦'s (no more than 2!) You should also try to have at least 4/4 in the majors
- 3) As you can see the double has been used twice in this example, the first double by E is the same as example 2 and should be 11+pts and at least 4 spades – after the south hand bids 1NT west's double is now for penalties showing a nice hand with points but they have no fit for your suits so would prefer to try and take a penalty.
- 4) In example 4 partner has bid 1NT showing 15 – 18 pts balanced (a limit bid) south has then bid 2♥ - your double should therefore be for penalties as No Trumps have been bid (even by your side)

- 5) In this example, double should show a penalty double (however some pairs play this as a take out double of 1♥) sorry but this is the rule being broken – that's bridge!
- 6) In the final example partner has shown 11+pts and length in the other suits – you have left it in – therefore you have converted the double to penalties – so you must have a trump stack and no fit for partner... possibly this type of hand. ♠KQJ983 ♥8 ♦J65 ♣654

All take out doubles can be converted if you hold a very good suit of the opponents proposed trumps

Lets look at the concept a little further then. Take-out suggests that you would like partner to bid a suit, **and** that you don't have more than 2 cards in the suit(s) bid by the opposition.

Lets say RHO (right hand opposition) opens 1♠ and you hold:

♠3 ♥KQ43 ♦AK32 ♣QJ43 - this is a perfect hand to make a takeout double. Whatever suit partner bids you will have a fit for and you can compete & maybe push the opposition too high, or even bid a game yourself.

At this point its worth mentioning that some partnerships use a double of an opened suit by the opposition to show opening values or even opening values and interest in the opened suit. I would recommend that this system should be scrapped, as double for take out gives you much more scope to land in the correct contract.

If RHO opens 1♥ and you hold: ♠A3 ♥KQ3 ♦J1098 ♣QJ32 I would suggest that you PASS – you do not have enough points to bid 1NT (15 – 18) and you don't have a good enough suit to bid at the two level, you just have to hope that partner bids and then you can support them or that you may take the opposition off in their contract. If you double to show opening values your partner will bid ♠'s most of the time and you may get into all sorts of trouble. The hardest bid to make in bridge is PASS...

The majority of pairs use takeout doubles these days however there is some confusion as to what to do next ...here is a useful guide about how far to compete after partner has made a takeout double.

Lets say LHO bids 1♣ and your partner doubles for take out:

You can trust that partner has 11+pts and probably 0/1 ♣'s (2 on a bad day) And that they have at least 4/4 in ♥/♠'s and at least 3 ♦'s.

So RHO passes and the ball is in your court. Now firstly partner could have any number of points maybe 11 or maybe 20! So its up to you to tell partner about your hand.

I would suggest you always jump with 8+ pts and an 8 card fit. (or extreme shape)

So if you have ♠KQ45 ♥A32 ♦9876 ♣43 you should jump to 2♠ (your partner will have 4 ♠'s) if you are sticking to the rules. If partner does not have 4 ♠'s then they should have 16+pts and very good suit of their own.

Just to clarify this point, if you hold ♠AKQJ54 ♥AQ ♦J98 ♣87 and RHO opens the bidding 1♦ , you should double in the first instance and then bid ♠'s – this shows a hand with 16+ and a really good suit , that was too strong to just overcall 1♠ on the first round in fear of missing game. Some of you will play strong jump overcalls and a bid of 2♠'s will also show this hand type.

However far more common is a hand with distribution and 11 – 15pts.

If you have less than 8pts – you can just bid your best fit at the lowest level

e.g. ♠Q945 ♥A32 ♦9876 ♣43 – you should just bid 1♠. If partner does have a big hand 18+ then they can bid 2♠ as a game try, at this point you could have a zero count and partner should try not to jump to 3 or 4♠'s – remember you have forced your partner to bid, they are not obliged to hold any points.

So using these rules try this test and see how you do? Write down your bids for the ten examples and see if you can score 110 points:

Love all - RHO opens 1♠ ? what would you bid or call next

- | | | | |
|----------|---------|--------|-------|
| a) ♠J92 | ♥KQJ3 | ♦QJ2 | ♣KJ5 |
| b) ♠J | ♥KQJ2 | ♦K876 | ♣AJ32 |
| c) ♠KQ93 | ♥AJ65 | ♦J76 | ♣AJ |
| d) ♠A | ♥KQJ543 | ♦KQ2 | ♣Q32 |
| e) ♠32 | ♥AQ3 | ♦KQJ93 | ♣J109 |

Your Partner doubles LHO's opening bid of 1♣ - RHO passes what do you bid?
(W: 1♣ - X - P - ?)

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|--------|---------|
| f) ♠QJ8 | ♥KQ3 | ♦QJ765 | ♣43 |
| g) ♠A7654 | ♥KQ32 | ♦3 | ♣543 |
| h) ♠K102 | ♥Q10 | ♦J652 | ♣K1098 |
| i) ♠J9876 | ♥A653 | ♦543 | ♣4 |
| j) ♠4 | ♥J54 | ♦J72 | ♣KQJ987 |
| k) ♠- | ♥QJ98765 | ♦J8765 | ♣8 |

DON'T LOOK UNTIL YOU HAVE WRITTEN YOUR ANSWERS DOWN

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| a) 2♥ = 6 | Pass = 10 | 1NT = 7 | Double = 3 | others = 0 |
| b) 2♣ = 6 | 2♥ = 6 | Double = 10 | 2♦ = 6 | others = 0 |
| c) 2♥ = 6 | Pass = 4 | 1NT = 10 | Double = 1 | others = 0 |
| d) 3♥ (strong) = 10 | | 2♥ = 6 | Double = 10 | 4♥ = 5 |

e) pass = 9	double = 6	2♦ = 10	3♦ = 3	others = 0
f) 1NT = 4	2♦ = 7	3♦ = 10	2♣ (forcing) = 10	
g) 2♠ = 10	3/4♠ = 8	2♥ = 7	1♠/♥ = 5	
h) pass = 8	1NT = 10	2♦ = 2	2NT = 3	
i) 1♥ = 6	1♠ = 10	2♠ = 3	others = 0	
j) 1NT = 5	2♣ = 2	1♥ = 2	pass = 10	
k) 3♥ = 10	4♥ = 9.5	2♥ = 5	pass = 0	

In k) your extreme shape and length in hearts + spade void , should make game or a sacrifice a good option, so you should jump, in hearts.

Well I hope you all scored 110 anything over 95 is very good
This may shed some light on the take out double – the main thing to have is
partnership understanding, good luck all.

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