



B2 L05 Weak Unbalanced Hands NOTES

The Double – a “messaging” opportunity

It is rare to use the Double to try to extract penalties when opponents are bidding a suit at the one, the two, or even the three, level. The competing pair are unlikely to be sure that they have enough strength to defeat such a contract. It means winning six or seven tricks.



So most bridge partners use the double of one or two of a suit to mean something different – the “Take Out Double”.

It’s so common you don’t have to announce or alert it

The Take Out Double (Any suit but that!)

North East South West

1♦ X

East

♠ K Q 10 8

♥ K Q 10 8

♦ -

♣ A 8 7 6 5

For a take out double, the hand should:

1. have opening points (11+)
2. be short (Void, Singleton, maybe Doubleton) in the suit bid
3. Be able to support the choice of any other suit by partner
4. Ideally, have four cards in unbid majors.

You are asking partner to bid their best suit from the three that have not been bid by the opener.



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If your partner uses a take out double

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	
1♦	X	Pass	<u>Bid!</u>	They are short in the bid suit; Want to know what your best suit is from the other three;

if the “intervening opponent” has passed, you must bid
(if the “intervening” opponent bids, and you are very weak, then
you may pass).

Replying to partner’s take out double

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♦	X	Pass	2♠

Use the level of your bid to show your strength. If you have more than 9 HCP reply as though partner has opened your best suit. Often that means a jump bid.

West

♠ A 9 7 6 2
♥ 3 2
♦ 10 4 3
♣ A Q J

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♦	X	Pass	1♠

A one level up reply indicates you have only bid because you were forced to, it should warn partner that you are weak.

West

♠ J 9 7 6
♥ 3 2
♦ Q 4 3 2
♣ 10 9 2



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No trumps if you're balanced and have 9-12 HCP.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	X	Pass	1NT

West

♠ A 3 2
♥ 10 9 2
♦ 10 8 7
♣ K Q J 4

Do you ever pass your partner's Take Out Double?

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♦	X	Pass	Pass

West

♠ A 2
♥ A 5
♦ A K 10 9 8 4
♣ 10 9 2

Usually you must respond to a take out double.

If you don't respond, you are "converting" the take out double into a penalty double. You must then be able to defeat the contract, so you need a very strong trump holding AND outside strength.

What if your best suit is the suit that opponents opened (but you can't Pass)?

If you are very weak, bid a three card suit:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	X	Pass	1♥

West

♠ 4 3 2
♥ 10 9 2
♦ 10 8 7
♣ K 6 5 4



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Double of 1NT Opening

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1NT	X		

Double of 1NT opening is quite different. It shows a strong balanced hand of 16 to 18 high card points. It is a double for penalties.

East

♠ A K 8
♥ Q J 5
♦ A 10 9 8
♣ K 9 7

Normal Penalty double is still available!

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	X
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The usual agreement is double of a suit bid up to and including 3♠ is for take out. When partner doubles a game bid like 4♠ it's for penalties and you pass.

West

♠ A K
♥ 10 9 8 2
♦ A K 5
♣ 8 4 3 2

Keeping Opponents Informed

Under English Bridge Regulations double of a suit bid up to 3♠ is assumed to be for takeout. Double of a higher suit bid is assumed to be for penalties. Double of a No Trump bid is assumed to be for penalties. You do not have to Alert such doubles.

It is legal to agree something different, e.g. that double of suit bids at the three level is for penalties, BUT, your partner must Alert such a call to tell the opponents you have an unusual agreement.