

§27. The Contested Auction. Take-out Doubles.

By the end of this chapter you should understand the following term:

A Take-out Double: A Double made early in the auction showing a desire to compete. It shows **shortage** in the opponents' suit and support for the other suits.

This bid sometimes goes under the name of an **informatory Double** (an outdated term these days) or a **negative Double**.

Other Doubles, made at other times in the auction, are aimed at securing large penalties. These, unsurprisingly, are known as **penalty Doubles**.

In this section we look at the **take-out Double**. Previously we have looked at overcalls and at the dangers posed by them, especially when they get Doubled for penalties. Now, there are many hands where you want to find a safe way to enter the auction. Suppose, for example, that you held the following collection (Ex 1) after your right-hand opponent has opened 1♦:

Ex 1.

♠ A 10 6 5
♥ K J 9 5
♦ 6
♣ A Q 5 3

It would be a considerable shame to Pass this hand with its 14 points, but overcalling (1♥ or 1♠) without a five-card suit is a real no-no. The solution is to **Double** the opening bid. This shows that you have **shortage** in the opponent's suit and, by implication, that you have support for the other three suits. You want partner to join the party and a take-out Double is a clear invitation to do so. Now, it is essential that there is a clear understanding about which Doubles are for penalties and which, like this one, are for **take-out**. This may need deep and long partnership discussion, but the basic rule is that a Double **of a suit bid** at a low level is a request for partner to bid. A Double of 1NT is a very different beast and is not discussed here.

Let us lay down some rules for take-out Doubles. All Doubles of opening bids (yes, at the one-, two- or three-level) demand that the Doubler's partner bid his best suit. On the example above, you would want your partner to offer his best suit, and you don't mind which suit that is.

So, the following guidelines need to be followed. To make a take-out Double of a suit bid:

1. You should have the values for an opening bid (more or less).
2. You should be prepared for any response; you should be happy for partner to bid *any* unbid suit.
3. The weaker you are, the more *shape-specific* you should be.

Some examples might make this clear.

The opponent on your right (aka your *Right-Hand Opponent* or RHO) opens the bidding. The following hands are all suitable to make take-out Doubles, *assuming the opening bid is in your shortage*.

Ex 2. ♠ 9 3 ♥ A Q 10 7 ♦ K 9 3 ♣ K 10 7 2 If RHO opens 1♠, Double	Ex 3. ♠ K J 7 4 ♥ 6 ♦ A Q J ♣ J 9 8 6 4 If RHO opens 1♥, Double	Ex 4. ♠ K Q J ♥ A Q 6 4 ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ K 10 9 If RHO opens 1♦, Double	Ex 5. ♠ A 9 6 5 ♥ K 10 5 3 ♦ Q J 10 2 ♣ 7 If RHO opens 1♣, Double
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You may notice a guiding principle here – the better the *shape*, the weaker you can be. So, Example 5 above, although it has only 10 points, is a better take-out Double of 1♣ than Example 4, which has 15 points but poor shape. The reason is simple – you are aiming to find your best *fit*; with a good fit you can make lots of tricks. For contrast, the following examples would **not** Double certain opening bids.

Ex 6. ♠ 4 2 ♥ J 9 7 ♦ A K 9 7 ♣ A Q 8 6 If RHO opens 1♣, Pass .	Ex 7. ♠ A Q J 7 4 ♥ K 10 9 ♦ J 9 8 6 ♣ A If RHO opens 1♠, Pass .	Ex 8. ♠ 9 ♥ A Q J ♦ 7 5 4 3 2 ♣ K Q 9 7 If RHO opens 1♠, Pass	Ex 9. ♠ K 10 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A K Q 10 ♣ J 8 6 3 2 If RHO opens 1♦, Pass .
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Take-out Doubles are flexible ways of entering the auction and are relatively safe *if* you are short in the opponents' suit. After all, by asking partner for any of the three remaining suits you are not putting all your eggs in one fragile basket (as would be the case with an overcall). If, on the other hand, you have length in the opponents' suit then the evidence is that the deal is a misfit, and on such occasions you should keep shtum!

Responding to take-out Doubles.

Surely this is easy? All the responder has to do is to bid his best suit? Oh, were life so simple! Remember, if partner makes a take-out Double he is pointing a gun at your head. Even if you have nothing you are forced to say something. Look at the following, repulsive, example (Ex 10):

Ex 10.

♠ 7 6 5 4
♥ J 8 7
♦ 6 4 2
♣ 10 9 7

Now, this may be an extreme case, but such hands do occur, albeit mercifully rarely. Your *Left-hand Opponent* (aka your LHO) opens 1♥ and partner Doubles. Your *Right-Hand Opponent* Passes and you...? Well, you can't Pass! If you do, the opponents would play the hand in 1♥ Doubled, making loads of Doubled overtricks. Not good – at least, not good for your side. Partner has demanded that you bid your best suit and you shouldn't let him down. You just have to bid 1♠ and pray the sun shines. Remember this example the next time you point an AK47 at partner's head and demand that he bids.

Now, if you follow the logic of this argument, you will see that a minimum response to a take-out Double actually *promises nothing*. So, **if you don't have nothing you have to show it**. If you see what we mean. Try these examples, by way of comparison.

Ex 11.

♠ J 9 2
♥ A Q 10 6 2
♦ J 10
♣ A K 2

If partner Doubles 1♠, you should bid 4♥, not 2♥.

Ex 12.

♠ A Q 8 3
♥ 9 4
♦ K 9 8 7
♣ 6 4 3

If partner Doubles 1♠, you should bid 2♠, not 1♠.

Ex 13.

♠ K 10
♥ K 5 3
♦ A Q 5 3
♣ Q J 8 5

If partner Doubles 1♦, you should jump to 3NT.

Ex 14.

♠ A J 9 6 4 2
♥ A 9 6 4
♦ K 10
♣ 3

If partner Doubles 1♥, you should jump to 4♠.

Note that in Example 11 if you were to bid 2♥, partner would place you with muck and would almost certainly Pass. **You** know of game values for your side, **you** know you have a Heart fit, so it is **your** responsibility to bid game.

In practice, most hands fall somewhere between Example 10 and Example 11. Generally speaking, a minimum response shows anywhere between zero and about 8 points. With more than that you should jump the bidding to show your strength. So, with Example 12 you would bid 2♠ as a response to a Double of 1♠, not 1♠ (and not 1♦, either). Partner is free to Pass this jump response, the bid is by no means forcing. However, as he knows you have *something* (8-11 points being about par for the course) he is in a position to bid game should it suit him. Note also that you are focused on Spades rather than on Diamonds. Minors? Who needs 'em?

With Example 13 you know of game values between you and you have a secure stopper in the opponents' suit. Therefore, you should be prepared to take a shot at 3NT. If you bid anything less than that you run the risk of partner Passing. By Doubling, your partner has said his piece.

With Example 14 you have an opening bid yourself. By Doubling 1♥ your partner is saying that he has Spade support and an opening bid (more or less, anyway). So, you are fully worth a shot at game.

There are some powerful and important points to be made here. You must never forget that you are forcing partner to speak when you make a take-out Double. Therefore, you cannot assume partner has anything in his hand if he makes a minimum response. As a Doubler, having made your pitch, as it were, it is often best to Pass on the next round.

A couple of examples may help to clarify this.

Ex 15.

N
W E
S

♠ K J 7 4
♥ 6
♦ A Q J
♣ J 9 8 6 4

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Dble
Pass	1♠	Pass	?

Pass. You have made your pitch with a take-out Double and partner has indicated he may have total rubbish. What is the future of this hand? 2♠ would be a slight overbid, anything more a gross overbid. You mustn't assume partner wanted to bid 1♠.

Ex 16.

N
W E
S

♠ A 9 6 5
♥ K 10 5 3
♦ Q J 10 2
♣ 7

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Dble
Pass	2♥	Pass	?

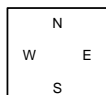
Pass. Partner has *something* over there (as distinct from nothing) but that doesn't mean you have to bid on. You have the most minimum of minimum take-out Doubles (10 points, but lovely shape). Partner has 8-11 (give or take), so where are you going?

§27. Quiz A on The Contested Auction. Take-out Doubles

In each case you are **South**

In Quiz A your right-hand opponent (East) opens the bidding.
Do you enter the auction? If so, with what?

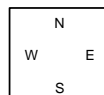
1.



West	North	East	South
		1♥	?

♠ A Q 10 7
♥ 9
♦ A 10 9 7
♣ Q J 7 6

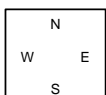
2.



West	North	East	South
		1♠	?

♠ A Q 10 7
♥ 9
♦ A 10 9 7
♣ Q J 7 6

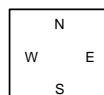
3.



West	North	East	South
		1♣	?

♠ A 9 8 7
♥ A 10 6 4
♦ A 6 3
♣ 7 4

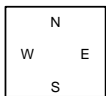
4.



West	North	East	South
		1♥	?

♠ A 9 8 7
♥ A 10 6 4
♦ A 6 3
♣ 7 4

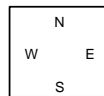
5.



West	North	East	South
		1♥	?

♠ 6 5
♥ K J 8 6
♦ A Q 10
♣ K J 7 2

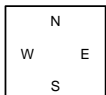
6.



West	North	East	South
		1♠	?

♠ 6 5
♥ K J 8 6
♦ A Q 10
♣ K J 7 2

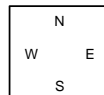
7.



West	North	East	South
		1♣	?

♠ A 10 3
♥ K 9 5
♦ Q 10 6 4
♣ K 9 5

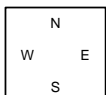
8.



West	North	East	South
		1♣	?

♠ A Q 3
♥ A K 9
♦ Q 10 6 4
♣ 9 5 2

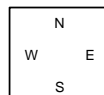
9.



West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

♠ A Q 10 6 5
♥ Q 9 3
♦ 4
♣ K Q 6 2

10.*



West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♦	?

♠ A Q 10 7
♥ A 6 5 3 2
♦ K 6
♣ 7 2

§27. Quiz A on The Contested Auction. Take-out Doubles

Answers

1.



♠ A Q 10 7
♥ 9
♦ A 10 9 7
♣ Q J 7 6

West	North	East	South
		1♥	?

Double. A classic, textbook example of a take-out Double. You have the values for an opening bid (13 points) and support for the other three suits. You don't mind which suit partner selects; you would be very unlucky if your side didn't have a decent trump fit.

2.



♠ A Q 10 7
♥ 9
♦ A 10 9 7
♣ Q J 7 6

West	North	East	South
		1♠	?

Pass. You can't make a take-out Double, as that would show support for the other three suits and invite partner to choose any of them. He's bound to choose Hearts, and then you'd be up the creek with no paddle. Let East-West play in Spades if that's what they want.

3.



♠ A 9 8 7
♥ A 10 6 4
♦ A 6 3
♣ 7 4

West	North	East	South
		1♣	?

Double. Minimum, but acceptable. You have an opening bid (just) and support for the other three suits. Crucially, you can support both majors, and this may prove useful in contesting the part-score. If you don't bid at this point you may not get another chance.

4.

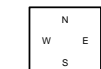


♠ A 9 8 7
♥ A 10 6 4
♦ A 6 3
♣ 7 4

West	North	East	South
		1♥	?

Pass. Now, with length in East's suit, it would be quite wrong to bid. True, you do have support for the other major, but have no liking for Clubs. If partner bids that suit you could be looking at a sizeable negative score. Let the opponents play in Hearts if they want to.

5.



♠ 6 5
♥ K J 8 6
♦ A Q 10
♣ K J 7 2

West	North	East	South
		1♥	?

Pass. Yes, you have 14 points. However, with a minimal holding in Spades you have nothing to offer partner in that strain. When the enemy bid your long suit it is best to *lie low and say nothing*. The hand is unsuitable for 1NT, which would show a better hand.

6.



♠ 6 5
♥ K J 8 6
♦ A Q 10
♣ K J 7 2

West	North	East	South
		1♠	?

Double. Now (in contrast to Q5), with short Spades and support for Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs, you are quite in order to compete for the part-score by making a take-out Double. North will not be disappointed with this hand as dummy, should he become declarer.

7.



♠ A 10 3
♥ K 9 5
♦ Q 10 6 4
♣ K 9 5

West	North	East	South
		1♣	?

Pass. With a minimum opening bid (a bare 12 points) and an unattractive shape (4-3-3-3) there is no reason to compete the auction. Your hand contains *defensive* values rather than *offensive* values (you won't make much, but you may be a thorn in East-West's side).

8.

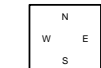


♠ A Q 3
♥ A K 9
♦ Q 10 6 4
♣ 9 5 2

West	North	East	South
		1♣	?

Double. Reluctantly, but you do have 15 points and are a tad too strong to Pass. Also, all of your values are outside of East's suit, so it increases the chances of your honours matching partner's values. Note that this is a less attractive Double than Q1, for example.

9.



♠ A Q 10 6 5
♥ Q 9 3
♦ 4
♣ K Q 6 2

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

1♠. Yes, you do have short Diamonds and an attractive 5-4-3-1 pattern, so a take-out Double may seem the right option at first glance. However, with a decent five-card suit (and a major to boot) it is much better to bid your suit than to invite partner to mention his.

10.



♠ A Q 10 7
♥ A 6 5 3 2
♦ K 6
♣ 7 2

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♦	?

Double. You want to compete for the part-score; what is the best way to do so? Double is still for take-out even though both opponents have bid; now it shows length in the two unbid suits. You wouldn't mind if partner preferred Spades to Hearts, would you?

§27. Quiz B on The Contested Auction. Take-out Doubles

In each case you are **South**

In Quiz B your partner (North) makes a take-out Double after the opponents have opened the bidding.
What is your best bid in response?

1.

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dble	Pass	?

♠ J 9 7 6 3
♥ K 7 5
♦ 10 8
♣ 8 6 4

2.

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dble	Pass	?

♠ 7 5
♥ A Q 9 6 2
♦ K 7 5 2
♣ 10 8

3.

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	?

♠ 4 2
♥ 7 6 5 3
♦ J 8 6
♣ 10 8 7 5

4.

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	?

♠ 4 2
♥ A Q 5 3
♦ Q 8 6
♣ 10 8 7 5

5.

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♠	Dble	Pass	?

♠ 4 2
♥ A 9 5 3
♦ J 8 6
♣ Q 10 8 7

6.

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dble	Pass	?

♠ A J 10 9 6
♥ A K 9
♦ 8
♣ J 10 8 5

7.

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♠	Dble	Pass	?

♠ 8 7 6 4
♥ K 10 9 7 6
♦ A Q 3
♣ 4

8.

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	?

♠ Q 9 7
♥ 8 6 5 3 2
♦ 10 7 4
♣ J 9

9.

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	?

♠ K 9
♥ Q J 10 9 7 4
♦ 8 6
♣ J 10 5

10.*

N		
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dble	1♣	Pass

♠ 7 6 4 2
♥ K 8
♦ 10 5
♣ J 9 7 6 2

§27. Quiz B on The Contested Auction. Take-out Doubles

Answers

1.



♠ J 9 7 6 3
♥ K 7 5
♦ 10 8
♣ 8 6 4

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dble	Pass	?

1♣. Partner has forced you to bid with his take-out Double and you have to comply. Spades is your longest suit, so you have to respond 1♣. Be grateful you have a five-card suit and 4 points – things could be a whole lot worse for you. Don't Pass out of fright.

2.

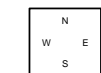


♠ 7 5
♥ A Q 9 6 2
♦ K 7 5 2
♣ 10 8

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dble	Pass	?

2♥. You have to bid in response to partner's Double, but 1♥ would show next to nothing (cf Q1). *When you don't have nothing, you have to show it.* A jump to 2♥ shows a fair-to-middling hand (about 8 to 11 points) and allows partner to bid on should he wish to do so.

3.



♠ 4 2
♥ 7 6 5 3
♦ J 8 6
♣ 10 8 7 5

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	?

2♣. *Oh, frabjous joy!* Still, you have no choice. Partner has demanded that you bid something so, dutifully, you do exactly that. Also, it is important not to squirm uncomfortably in your seat – bid 2♣ without writhing in agony, while praying the roof doesn't fall in.

4.



♠ 4 2
♥ A Q 5 3
♦ Q 8 6
♣ 10 8 7 5

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	?

1NT. Yes, 2♣ wouldn't be that bad a mistake, but 1NT is a superior call with secure stoppers in Hearts, a feeble Club suit and a decent 8 points. A 1NT response to a take-out Double shows about 7-10 points and a secure holding in the opponents' suit.

5.



♠ 4 2
♥ A 9 5 3
♦ J 8 6
♣ Q 10 8 7

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dble	Pass	?

2♥. Often, we bid suits up-the-line in bridge but we tend to be major-suit focused when responding to a take-out Double. 2♣ wouldn't be a poor response here, but partner is more likely to be interested in Hearts than Clubs. Not quite good enough for a jump response.

6.



♠ A J 10 9 6
♥ A K 9
♦ 8
♣ J 10 8 5

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dble	Pass	?

4♠. A case of getting straight to the point. With a robust opening bid yourself you know that your partnership has game values. Partner has promised Spade support with his take-out Double, so what are you waiting for? Anything less than 4♠ could result in a missed game.

7.



♠ 8 7 6 4
♥ K 10 9 7 6
♦ A Q 3
♣ 4

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dble	Pass	?

3♥. Were you to bid a mere 2♥, North may place you with a hand similar to Q3 above. Here, with a good five-card suit, 9 points and a singleton, you have to show some muscle. Remember, partner has shown Heart support. A jump to 4♥ would not be a mistake.

8.



♠ Q 9 7
♥ 8 6 5 3 2
♦ 10 7 4
♣ J 9

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	?

1♠. An utterly repulsive problem. Thank you, partner! Well, you can't Pass (1♥ would make with overtricks), you can't bid 1NT (North is sure to place you with some points). So, what is left? Only this (1♠). Remember this hand the next time you force your partner to bid.

9.



♠ K 9
♥ Q J 10 9 7 4
♦ 8 6
♣ J 10 5

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Pass	?

Pass. Having said that you can't Pass a take-out Double... well, on this sort of hand you can. Here you are said to be making a **penalty Pass**. To do this you need length and a great deal of strength in the enemy's suit. Further, you are asking partner to lead trumps.

10.



♠ 7 6 4 2
♥ K 8
♦ 10 5
♣ J 9 7 6 2

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dble	1♣	Pass
			?

1♠. Your Spades may be feeble, but at least you have four cards in the suit. Partner's Double is for take-out and shows length (probably 5-4 or 5-5) in the majors (the two unbid suits). You should be grateful you don't have to choose between two three-card suits...!

§27. Example hands 1 to 4.

Hand 1 Love all, dealer North

♠ 10 9
 ♥ K Q J 10
 ♦ A Q 8 7 5
 ♣ Q J
 ♠ J 5
 ♥ 8 6 2
 ♦ J 9 3
 ♣ K 9 6 5 3
 N
 W E
 S
 ♠ A K 7 3
 ♥ A 9 5 3
 ♦ 10 4
 ♣ A 7 2
 ♠ Q 8 6 4 2
 ♥ 7 4
 ♦ K 6 2
 ♣ 10 8 4

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Dble	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♣ by West		Opening lead: ♥K	

North opens 1♦ (obvious enough) and East has a near textbook take-out Double. He has shortage in North's Diamonds and a good 15 points – all he wants is for his partner to nominate trumps. South, has nothing to say, so Passes leaving West to find a bid. 2♣ is the only thing that fits the bill; what else could he do? North should probably Pass now and East should certainly Pass. A minimum response to a take-out Double promises nothing; West could have less than his actual 5 points and five-card suit. 2♣ can scrape home after a Heart lead but only if declarer patiently plays on Diamonds, aiming to ruff one in the *short trump hand* (dummy). This way, he loses just two Hearts, two Diamonds and a trump.

Hand 2 North-South game, dealer East

♠ K J 6 3 2
 ♥ 4 2
 ♦ J 5 3 2
 ♣ K 6
 ♠ A 10 7
 ♥ 10 9 7
 ♦ 8 4
 ♣ Q 9 5 4 3
 N
 W E
 S
 ♠ 8
 ♥ A Q 5 3
 ♦ A K 10 7 6
 ♣ 10 8 7
 ♠ Q 9 5 4
 ♥ K J 8 6
 ♦ Q 9
 ♣ A J 2

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Dble
Pass	2♣	All Pass	
2♣ by North		Opening lead: ♦A	

Contrast this deal with Hand 1. Here, East opens 1♦ and South, holding an opening bid and support for the other three suits, Doubles. Although this is a perfectly acceptable bid, South should realise that he is minimum for the action. West, relieved of the obligation to respond, Passes and North has to find a bid. Many players would try 1♠ here, but this hand is far better than the West cards of Hand 1. There, West had to bid 2♣ on muck; here, North has decent responding hand (8 points and a five-card suit is not to be sneezed at). This he can show by bidding 2♣, inviting South to bid on with a good hand. However, South (remembering that he is minimum for a take-out Double) should not be tempted to bid again.

Hand 3 East-West game, dealer South

♠ 7
 ♥ Q 9 3 2
 ♦ J 8 3
 ♣ 8 6 5 4 2
 ♠ A 5 4 3
 ♥ J 5
 ♦ K Q 6 5
 ♣ Q J 10
 N
 W E
 S
 ♠ K Q J 6 2
 ♥ K 6
 ♦ 9 4 2
 ♣ K 7 3
 ♠ 10 9 8
 ♥ A 10 8 7 4
 ♦ A 10 7
 ♣ A 9

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Dble	2♥?	4♣	All Pass
4♣ by East		Opening lead: ♠10	

South chooses to open 1♥ and West has a respectable, if minimum, take-out Double. North may raise to 2♥ (after the opponents intervene with a Double it is good tactics to try to mess them about if you have a trump fit). Here, North's 2♥ call is brushed aside by East. Knowing that he has an opening bid facing an opening bid and a decent Spade fit East simply blasts game. After South leads a trump East realises he isn't in the healthiest of contracts. Declarer has to play up to dummy's ♦K Q twice, taking advantage of the favourable location of the ♦A. That, and the lucky 3-3 Diamond break, means that East is able to make five Spades, **three** Diamonds and two Clubs for ten in all. Lucky.

Hand 4 Game all, dealer West

♠ A 5 4 3
 ♥ J 5
 ♦ K Q 6
 ♣ Q J 10 7
 ♠ 10 9
 ♥ A 10 8 7 4
 ♦ A J 10 2
 ♣ A 9
 N
 W E
 S
 ♠ J 7
 ♥ Q 9 2
 ♦ 9 8 3
 ♣ K 6 5 4 2
 ♠ K Q 8 6 2
 ♥ K 6 3
 ♦ 7 5 4
 ♣ 8 3

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	2♥	2♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	
2♣ by South		Opening lead: ♣A	

West opens 1♥ and North, holding a very similar collection to the West cards of Hand 3, has enough to make a take-out Double. East has just enough to raise to 2♥, more in an attempt to make life awkward for South than any conviction that 2♥ might make. As in Hand 3, you should strain to support your partner after your RHO has Doubled, just to raise the level of the auction. Alas for East, South has a clear-cut 2♣ bid, and no one has anything more to say (West is not advised to clamber to the three-level). After the aggressive lead of the ♣A and another Club East-West are in danger of taking six defensive tricks. However, after a third round of Clubs South can discard (any red card) and still make his contract.

§27. Example hands 5 to 8.

Hand 5 North-South game, dealer North

♠ 7 5 3
 ♥ K Q 10 6 2
 ♦ 5 3
 ♣ K Q 2

♠ Q 8
 ♥ 7 4
 ♦ 9 8 4 2
 ♣ 9 7 6 5 3

N
 W E
 S

♠ K 9 6 4
 ♥ A 5
 ♦ K Q J 10 7
 ♣ J 10

♠ A J 10 2
 ♥ J 9 8 3
 ♦ A 6
 ♣ A 8 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	Dble
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	
4♥ by North		Opening lead: ♦K	

North Passes as dealer, East opens 1♦ and South has a clear take-out Double. West Passes mournfully and North has to reply. 1♥ would not do the hand justice – South would expect his partner to hold peanuts. So North jumps to 2♥ to show 8-11 points or thereabouts (cf Hand 2). Now what, South? With 14 points he is a tad too good to Pass, but too weak to bid 4♥ directly. The middle-of-the-road action is to raise to 3♥, allowing North (with 10 points) to go on to game. After the ♦K lead declarer can see a Heart and a Diamond loser, so has to avoid two Spade losers. To that end, North must take two finesses in Spades. The first one loses, the second one wins.

Hand 6 East-West game, dealer East

♠ 10 5
 ♥ 8 6 5 3
 ♦ J 9 7 6
 ♣ 10 4 3

♠ 8 4
 ♥ A Q 10
 ♦ A 5 3 2
 ♣ A K 6 2

N
 W E
 S

♠ 7 6 3
 ♥ K J 2
 ♦ K Q 10 8 4
 ♣ 7 5

♠ A K Q J 9 2
 ♥ 9 7 4
 ♦ None
 ♣ Q J 9 8

West	North	East	South
Dble	Pass	3♦	3♣
5♦	Pass	Pass	Pass
5♦ by East		Opening lead: ♠A	

East Passes and South opens 1♣. West has plenty (17 points) to Double and East has to find the best response. 2♦ would show nothing (think of the West cards, Hand 1). With 9 points and a good five-card suit the right call is 3♦, showing West that the East hand is far from worthless. South may well bid 3♠ now (low in point-count, high in *playing tricks*). Still, West has enough to bid 5♦. This contract is no cake-walk, especially after the start of three top Spades. Realising North has no more Spades, declarer must ruff the third Spade with the Ace. A Diamond to the ♦K reveals the break and now there are two *marked finesses* in trumps to pick the suit up. A tricky hand.

Hand 7 Game all, dealer South

♠ A 10 8
 ♥ A K Q 6 3
 ♦ 10 9 8 5
 ♣ 9

♠ 9 7 6 4
 ♥ J 4
 ♦ A Q 3
 ♣ 8 7 4 2

N
 W E
 S

♠ K Q 3 2
 ♥ 9 5
 ♦ K J 6
 ♣ A K Q J

♠ J 5
 ♥ 10 8 7 2
 ♦ 7 4 2
 ♣ 10 6 5 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Dble	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
4♠ by West		Opening lead: ♥A	

North opens 1♥ after two Passes and East has an easy take-out Double. West can do little but respond 1♠ and now East has to re-evaluate his hand. 4♠ would be too much – West could have zero points. 3♠ is about right, allowing West to get out of the auction with peanuts. As 1♠ shows about 0-8 points, West should go on to 4♠ as he has a whole 7 points. Sure, his Spades are trashy, but East should have good ones. 4♠ isn't too great as a contract, but can make if declarer avoids two Spade losers. To do that West has to lead up to the ♠K Q × × twice, hoping that North has the ♠A and that trumps are 3-2.

Hand 8 Love all, dealer West

♠ 7
 ♥ A 10 8 6
 ♦ A 7 5 3
 ♣ K 8 4 2

♠ A K Q 10 8
 ♥ 9
 ♦ J 8 4 2
 ♣ Q J 10

N
 W E
 S

♠ 9 6 5 2
 ♥ 7 4 3
 ♦ 10 9
 ♣ A 9 7 6

♠ J 4 3
 ♥ K Q J 5 2
 ♦ K Q 6
 ♣ 5 3

West	North	East	South
1♠	Dble	2♠?	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	
4♥ by South		Opening lead: ♠A	

West opens 1♠ as dealer and North has a thin, but perfectly acceptable take-out Double. You wouldn't open the bidding with that North hand with just 11 points and an awkward 1-4-4-4 pattern but Doubling 1♠ is fine as you are likely to find a trump fit quickly. East may raise to 2♠ (we would!) just to be awkward but South, holding an opening bid himself, should ignore that and simply blast 4♥. After the ♠A lead and the ♣Q switch South can see three quick losers. To avoid any more he must make sure he ruffs his Spade losers on table before pulling all the trumps. So, ruff the third Club, ruff a Spade, play a Heart to hand, ruff a Spade, draw trumps. This way he makes **seven** Heart tricks and three Diamond winners.