

Doubles

During the bidding stage of the game you also have another option besides bidding a suit, no trump, or passing. That choice is to double. There are two types of doubles, depending on the context in which they are used. One is a penalty double and the other is a takeout double.

Penalty Double- When you believe that the opponents have bid too much and are not going to make their bid, you may increase the score you get for setting them by doubling. A “double” of an opponent’s bid indicates that you think that they will not make their bid. If you set them your side will get more points if you double. If they make it, however, the opponent’s score will be increased. A double constitutes a bid. That means that before it becomes the final contract it must be followed by 3 consecutive passes, just like any other bid. So, an opponent or your partner may wish to change to another suit. If that happens you have the option of doubling the new bid or not as it suits you. For example: Say the opponents bid 6C and you have the KQJ of Clubs. Obviously, they cannot make this bid. You will get more points if you double and set them. However, they could change to 6 of another suit or no trump.

Takeout Double- A double of a low level bid by the opponents when your partner has not yet bid a suit is called a takeout double. It is basically just the opposite of a penalty double. Whereas a penalty double says you want the opponents to play in whatever they bid, a takeout double says you have the suits

that the opponents have **NOT** bid and you want your partner to “takeout” the double by bidding another suit.

When you can make a takeout Double- When the opponents have bid 1 or 2 suits but partner has not bid a suit. Usually it occurs at a low level of bidding (usually one or two level) at your first turn to bid.

Requirements to make a takeout Double-

- a) strength close to a minimum opening bid (about 12 or more HCP)
- b) support for any unbid suit (usually at least 3 cards especially in an unbid major suit)
- c) shortness in the suit(s) bid by the opponents (usually at most 2 cards)

Responses to partner’s takeout Double-

- a) 0-9 HCP bid your longest suit other than one that the opponents have already bid
- b) 10+ HCP jump in your longest suit (preferably a major)
- c) 6-10 HCP bid 1NT without a four card suit that partner has asked you to bid and a stopper in the opponent’s suit(s)

When an opponent opens the bidding you have 2 choices if you also want to bid:

- a) Overcall- Tell your partner you have a long (5+ cards) suit that is strong
- b) Double for takeout- Ask your partner to select a suit because you have support for all the unbid suits, but not one yourself that is very long.