

Doubles for Takeout: Beyond the Basics

A Quick Review of the Basics

- A double of a 1-level suit bid (1♣, 1♦, 1♥, 1♠) shows a hand with about 12 to 17 points.
- You can still double with 18+ points, but we will deal with that situation later.
- The double guarantees at least 3-card support for any of the unbid suits.
- Count distribution- when you double, you ask partner to select the suit, thus your hand will be dummy.

Counting Distribution

- When you double you ask partner to select the suit, your hand will be dummy.
- You can count dummy points.
- If you have 4-card support for partner's choice:
 - Count 1 point for a doubleton.
 - Count 3 points for a singleton.
 - Count 4 points for a void.
- If you have 3-card support, be a little cautious.

RHO Opens 1

Hand 1

♠ K Q 10

♥ A 10 5 4

♦ 7 5

♣ K 10 8 7

Hand 2

♠ A Q 10 3

♥ K J 7 4

♦ 7 5

♣ K 9 7

Hand 3

♠ K 10 6 4

♥ Q 7 6 3

♦ 5

♣ A K 4 2

You would double with any of these hands.

RHO Opens 1

Hand 4

♠ K 2

♥ Q J 5 4

♦ A 7 5

♣ K 10 8 7

Hand 5

♠ A Q 3

♥ A 4

♦ K 7 5

♣ K 10 9 7 4

Hand 6

♠ K

♥ Q J 10 3

♦ A 8 4 3

♣ A 9 4 2

- You should not double with any of these hands.
- You do not have the correct distribution.
- Sometimes, even with opening-bid count, you have to pass.
- With hand 5, you might make a 1 no trump overcall. .

RHO Opens 1

Hand 7

♠ K 10 7 5 2

♥ Q J 5 4

♦ A

♣ K 10 8

Hand 8

♠ A Q 3 2

♥ A 9 4

♦ 7

♣ K 10 9 7 4

- When you have a 5-card major suit, it is usually best to make an overcall rather than double.
- However, with a 5-card minor, make a takeout double.

When the Opening Bid is Above 1 ♠

- A double of 1 no trump is not takeout.
 - Penalty
 - Conventional
- A double of 2 ♣ cannot be takeout.
 - What suit are you doubling?
 - It means I have clubs or
 - Lead directing.
- A double of any artificial bid is lead directing.

Double 2 ♣ With:

Hand 9

♠ 3 2

♥ J 9 4

♦ 7 6 3

♣ K Q J 10 6

When Opponents Open a 2-Level Preempt

- If opponents open 2 ♦, 12-17 points is adequate, with the right distribution.
- If they open 2 ♠, you need a little better hand.
 - Partner's response will have to come at the 3-level.
 - Don't double 2 ♠ with a bad 12 points, unless you have perfect distribution.

Here Are Some Examples of a Good Takeout Double of 2 ♠

Hand 10

♠ 4

♥ A 10 5 4

♦ K Q J 7

♣ K 10 8 7

16 dummy
points –
good
distribution

Hand 11

♠ 4 2

♥ A Q 5 4

♦ A K 8 7

♣ K 10 3

16 hcps.
Enough for a
no trump
overcall, but
no stopper.

Hand 12

♠ 4

♥ K Q 4

♦ K Q 9 7 5

♣ A J 10 8 7

Double, not
2 no trump.
- No unusual
no trump
over a weak
two.

Don't Make a Takeout Double of 2 ♠, with Hands Like These

Hand 13

♠ K Q 10 8 7

♥ A 5 4

♦ A 7

♣ 8 6 4

Hand 14

♠ A 2

♥ Q 4

♦ K J 8 7 5

♣ K 10 9 4

Hand 15

♠ K Q 10

♥ A Q

♦ A 10 7 5

♣ Q 10 8 7

If you double,
partner will take it
out. You must pass
and hope for
partner's reopening
double.

Pass. The
diamond suit is
not good
enough for a 3-
level overcall.

Bid 2 no
trump.
Show 15-18
points and a
solid
stopper.

If They Open at the 3-Level

- Same principles apply.
- Partner may have to respond at the 10 trick level.
- Try not to double with a bad 12 points.
- Opener has a weak hand, except in her suit.
- Partner is likely to have some strength.

If They Open at the 4-Level

- Up to 4 ♥, a double tends to be for take out.
 - You expect partner to bid.
 - Partner may pass, if she thinks that best.
- A double of 4 ♠ tends to be for penalties.
 - Partner may bid.
 - You should expect him to pass.

You Might Double 4 ♥ with:

Hand 16

♠ A Q 7

♥ 4

♦ A K J 7 6

♣ A 10 6 4

Hand 17

♠ K Q J 7

♥ 4

♦ A 10 9 8

♣ A 8 6 4

Hand 18

♠ J 7

♥ A Q 10

♦ A 7 5 3

♣ A J 4 3

Don't double
with this hand,
best to pass and
play defense.

What Do We Do With Hands Stronger Than 12 to 17 Points?

- With hands of 12 to 17 points, we had support for the unbid suits.
- Our plan was to be silent after the double.
- It would be up to partner to set the contract.
- When we have 18 or more points, we must let partner know it.
 - We are willing to take a second bid.
 - Raising partner's suit
 - Introducing a new suit.

Here Are Some Examples: RHO Opens

1 ♥

Hand 19

♠ A K J 8 7

♥

♦ A K 7 6

♣ K J 6 4

19 points:
double, then bid
spades at the
minimum
available level.

Hand 20

♠ A 7

♥ A

♦ A Q 9 8 7 3 2

♣ A J 4

20 points:
double, then bid
diamonds at the
minimum
available level

Hand 21

♠ K J 7

♥ A K J

♦ A 10 5 3

♣ K 10 4

19 points:
double then bid
no trump at the
minimum
available Level.

To Cement the Concept: RHO Opens 1

Hand 22

♠ A K J 8 7

♥ 2

♦ A K 7

♣ K J 6 4

19 points:

double, then bid
spades at the
minimum
available level.

Hand 23


♠ A K J 8 7

♥ 7 3

♦ A 7

♣ K 8 6 4

15 points:

overcall 1 .
An overcall is
7-17 points.

Hand 24


♠ A J 7 2

♥ 2

♦ A J 7 3

♣ K J 6 4

14 points: Pass!

Do not think
you can
double then
bid no trump
when partner
bids 

To Cement the Concept: RHO Opens 1

Hand 25

♠ A K 8 7

♥ K 7 5 2

♦ 9 7

♣ K J 6

14 points:
Double, then
pass, unless
partner makes a
forcing bid.

Hand 26

♠ A Q 9 7

♥ J 10 7 3

♦ A 6

♣ A K 6

18 points:
Double, then
raise partner's
heart bid.

Final Points

- Same concepts apply when RHO opens a weak-two bid.
- Do remember the lesson on how to respond when partner doubles a weak two.
- As advancer: is it forcing when partner doubles then bid again?
 - No, it is not forcing!
 - It is strongly encouraging.