November 18th - Take out double

A takeout double is one where partner is obliged to bid no matter how weak their hand. The “take-out” means that it isn’t for penalties and partner must *take it out*. The only exception is if the opponent who is next in turn bids - this removes the requirement for partner to bid. A further suit or no-trump bid by anyone cancels the double. Normally doubles of any suit contract of 3♠ or less is for takeout.

The classic takeout double

North	East	South	West
1♠	Double		

The double by East shows an opening hand, a **shortage** in spades (2 or fewer) and tolerance for the other three suits - they have at least three cards in each. They have support for whichever one partner bids.

The East hand could be something like this:

♠ 5

♥ K J 6 3

♦ A 10 9 8 6

♣ K Q J

If South passes West must bid. If they have more than 8 points they should jump bid - for example bid 3♥ not 2♥.

If West has good spades they may choose to bid no-trumps but do bear in mind that you are most likely to get a spade lead.

East could have bid 2♦ but preferred a bid that allows their partner to show where their strength is. It is also a way of showing four hearts which you can’t do with an overcall. (Doubling a major always shows four in the other major.) If East doubles and then bids a different suit to partner this shows a very strong hand - 18+ points.

With the same sort of hand West could double in fourth seat, for example

North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	Pass or 2♠	Double

A takeout double showing two suits

An example auction:

North	East	South	West
1♦	Pass	1♥	Double

West is showing they have clubs and spades, ideally 5-5 but could be 5-4.

Finally, a reminder: a double of 1NT is always for penalties not for takeout.