Practice Session for U3ABC15: NT Overcalls and Doubles

Welcome!

Here is a description of all the hands that you could play in today's Practice Session. It includes details like the cards in each hand, how to evaluate each hand (High Card Points, Shortage Points, shape), the "correct" bidding, and lead.

This week we've given you hands to try out more types of overcall. Competitive bidding; busy, busy!

Don't feel bad if you bid the hands a bit differently, or ended up in a slightly different contract. Each week there's something new, it will take you a while to get the hang of all of it. Hopefully it will make a bit more sense with the detailed explanations given here. Yes, it's getting trickier.

We're here to help, share our enthusiasm for this great game. You will make mistakes, but we're always happy to explain or answer questions. Remember, you're playing with people who are just starting out, too. Let's have fun together!

-Ed

Recap and Intro

In the previous module, you learned how to compete when an opponent opens the bidding with one of a suit, and you have a long suit and 5- 15 HCP; by bidding your suit at the 1, 2, 3 or 4-level. In this week's module you learned to compete with other types of hand. Oversimplifying hugely:

- With 5-15 HCP and a long suit, overcall with your suit
- With 16+ HCP and a stop in the opponent suit, overcall in NT
- With 11+ HCP and a shortage in the opponent's suit, Double
- With 16+ HCP and a long suit, Double

Advanced topics

Advanced topics are in green. These are included for completeness; you can ignore them for now.

This Week's Lessons – NT Overcalls and Doubles

Lesson Summary: NT Overcalls

If you have a strong hand, no long (5+) suit you can bid, and not enough support for the other three suits to Double for Takeout, you can overcall with NT as long as you have a stopper in the opponent's suit. You need 16+ HCP to overcall with 1NT. For example:

1S 1NT shows 16-18 HCP and a stopper in Spades

If you have the other requirements but are too strong to overcall with 1NT, you do NOT overcall with 1NT or 2NT or 3NT to show your strength, you **Double** first (which forces partner to bid) and then rebid NT:

- With 19-20 HCP and a stopper: Double then bid NT without a jump (1NT or 2NT)
- With 21-23 HCP and a stopper: Double then bid NT with a jump (2NT or 3NT)
- With 24+ HCP and TWO stoppers: Double then bid 3NT

If you have 11-14 HCP you can overcall with 1NT after 2 passes (in fourth seat). For example:

1C pass pass 1NT shows 11-14 HCP and a stopper in Clubs

Lesson Summary: The Takeout Double

Doubles can be used to increase the penalties when contracts go down; upping the stakes. But Doubles of one-of-a-suit opening bids are used for something else. In this lesson you learned about using a **Double** to encourage your partner to bid, usually called a **Takeout Double**.

We will look at Penalty Doubles in the next module of the course.

If the opposition opens with one of a suit and you want to compete but don't have a 5+ suit to overcall with and can't overcall with 1NT, you can make a Takeout Double if you have:

- Shortage (0-2 cards) in the opponent suit
- Opening points (12+)
- Support (at least 3 cards) in the other three suits

These requirements have the helpful acronym **S.O.S.**

If your hand includes a 5-card minor, you would usually make a Takeout Double rather than an overcall, as you're hoping for a fit in a major. If you have a 5-card major, however, you would usually overcall with your major rather than double, unless it's very weak (no Honours).

A Takeout Double is a forcing bid. It forces partner to bid their longest suit, even if they have ZERO points and a 3-card suit (they could have four in the doubled suit) they must not pass. If you make a normal (12-15 HCP) Takeout Double, you must be prepared to play in any suit your partner chooses; you won't bid again unless you're strong and their response shows they are strong.

You can use a Takeout Double immediately after an opponent opens, or after two passes. You can even use it if both opponents have bid different suits, to ask partner to choose between the two unbid suits.

You cannot use a Takeout Double over a 1NT opening because a double of 1NT has a very different meaning (described in the next module of this course).

You can also double an opponent's opening bid to show you have a strong hand that is too strong for a simple overcall. This Double Then Bid is described in the next section. Partner will treat this other type of double as a Takeout Double until you show them otherwise!

Anyway, back to the Takeout Double...

Lesson Summary: Responding to a Takeout Double

If partner doubles the opponent's suit, you must consider this a Takeout Double and must respond by bidding your longest suit – with two exceptions, described below. You cannot pass just because you've got a terrible hand!

In general, bid your longest suit, but bid a shorter major in preference to a longer minor. If your longest suit is the doubled suit, you may even have to bid a 3-card suit. **No excuses, you have to bid**.

- With 0-8 HCP, bid your longest suit at the lowest level
- With 9-12 HCP, jump in your longest suit
- With 11+ HCP and a 5-card major or 6-card minor, jump to game
- With 13+ HCP if you are unsure of the best contract, bid the doubled suit! This **CUE BID** asks partner to give you more information. It's a Game Force, so bidding will continue until game is reached.

Partner will probably pass if you don't jump, as you've shown them less than nine points, potentially ZERO! All the other bids suggest game is either likely or certain – although minor games are less likely than major games. If partner is strong enough to carry on, they will bid.

However, if you have a balanced hand, no unbid 4-card major, and a stopper in the doubled suit, you can bid NT:

- With 6-9 HCP bid 1NT
- With 10-12 HCP bid 2NT (a Game Invitation)
- With 13-15 bid 3NT

Partner may pass these bids, depending on their point count – no point raising further if Game isn't on.

Exceptions: When can you pass a Takeout Double?

- You can pass if an opponent overcalls the Double, taking it out, and you have less than 6 points and a poor shape (no long suit to excite partner).
- You can pass if you have enough length in the doubled suit to be SURE it will go down, converting the Takeout Double into a Penalty Double. This is a very rare hand, as you must also be reasonably sure that you're not missing a better contract. So, for example, if you have stops in the opponent's suit, you could perhaps bid 1NT; if you have a biddable suit and points outside the doubled suit, you might even miss game by passing.

There is a bit of a trap there. If you pass, converting the Takeout Double into a Penalty Double, but partner's bid was actually Double Then Bid with lots of points, they probably won't get a chance to bid again and you will miss out on Game or even Slam bonuses. Still, in that situation, the doubled contract should go down by several tricks, and the penalty points soon mount up.

Lesson Summary: Doubler's Rebid

If you have a normal Takeout Double (12-15 HCP) you will typically pass your partner's response UNLESS they jump, as they have shown 0-8 points. If they jump, you should have enough information to choose the final contract.

If you have a strong Takeout Double (more than 15 points), you can raise their suit as a Game Invitation (for them to raise to Game if maximum). Or you might have a strong overcall hand – as described in *Double Then Bid*, next.

Lesson Summary: Double Then Bid

Not all doubles of an opponent's opening suit are Takeout Doubles. Yep, there is a potentially confusing second use of the Double, to tell partner you have a strong overcall, but they only learn that it isn't a Takeout Double with your SECOND bid, when you bid your suit. This is usually called **Double Then Bid**.

We have included this bid here because it looks like a Takeout Double, but it's really a form of suit overcall. Yep, confusing.

So, Double Then Bid. If you have a long suit and want to overcall, but have good points too, you don't want partner to think you have a typical, weak-kneed overcall. So instead of overcalling with your suit, you make TWO bids. You start by doubling, which looks like a Takeout Double, but once partner has bid their suit (fingers crossed) you bid YOUR suit. Partner then realises (fingers still crossed) that it wasn't a Takeout Double after all, surprise! It's a strong overcall. For example:

1H – opponent opens
DOUBLE - your partner doubles for takeout
PASS - opponent passes
2C - you bid your longest suit, as required
PASS - opponent passes
2S – surprise! Your partner did NOT make a Takeout Double; that was **Double Then Bid**

Double Then Bid shows one of three types of hand:

- 16+ HCP and a 6+ card suit
- 18+ HCP and a 5+ card suit
- 19+ HCP and any shape

Balanced But Strong? You've already met the NT version of Double Then Bid, where you are too strong to overcall with 1NT, so double and then rebid NT. What, you've forgotten already? It's on the first page, tsk.

Change of Plan? While your plan is to Double Then Bid your suit or NT, your partner responds to your Takeout Double That Wasn't. That response might be helpful enough for you to change your plan:

- If partner made a weak response (showing 0-8 HCP) your plan is unchanged, as you need more information to decide if game is possible
- If partner made a positive response (showing 9+ HCP) then you are in a Game Forcing situation, as you have at least 25 HCP – you just need to find the right game. Partner will realise that when your rebid your suit, but you might already know enough to bid game or slam, if partner has found a fit or shown a crucial stopper by bidding NT.

Lesson Summary: Responding to Double Then Bid

Once you have revealed your secret, your partner has to forget the very idea that you had a Takeout Double hand and re-evaluate! Your second bid isn't forcing, but partner now knows quite a lot about your hand, and is in a good position to choose the final contract: pass if really weak, make a Game Invitation or bid game in your suit.

If you made a positive response to the Takeout Double (that wasn't) then you are definitely in a Game Forcing situation, as you have 9+ HCP and partner has 16+ HCP – you just need to find the right game.

Lesson Summary: Overcalls Table

Now that we've covered all the overcalls you can make when the opposition opens with one of a suit, it's time for a recap:

Points	**Length**	**Bid**
8-15 [1]	5+ cards	1-level overcall
11-15 [1]	5+cards	2-level overcall (not a jump)

Points	**Length**	**Bid**
5-10	6+ good cards	Jump overcall
6-9	7 cards	Double jump overcall (pre-empt)
6-9	8+cards	Triple jump overcall (pre-empt)
16-18	Balanced with stopper	1NT immediate overcall (2nd seat)
11-14	Balanced with stopper	1NT overcall after two passes (4th seat)
12+	0-2 in doubled suit, 3+ in other suits, no 5-card major	Double (Takeout Double)
16+	6+ cards	Double then bid suit (Double Then Bid)
18+	5+ cards	Double then bid suit (Double Then Bid)
19-20	Balanced with stopper	Double then 1NT (no jump)
21-23	Balanced with stopper	Double then 2NT (jump)
24+	Balanced with stopper	Double then 3NT

Notes:

[1] May have up to 17 points with a 5-card suit, as they need a 6-card suit to Double Then Bid

The Hands

North	East	South	West
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

	♠ KQJT7 ♥ K862 ♦ 94 ♣ A9	
♠ A983 ♥ 743 ♦ KJ8 ♣ QJT		♠ 5 ♥ AQJT ♦ AQ52 ♣ K872
	♠ 642 ♥ 95 ♦ T763 ♣ 6543	

Board: 1 Dealer: North #146

East has 16 HCP, a single Spade, and no 5-card suit - an ideal hand to double the 1S opening for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits;a Takeout Double. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion below.

The double is forcing.

West has 11 HCP and no 4-card suit other than Spades, so they can't respond with a suit. With a stop in Spades, they can bid NT. A response of 1NT would show 6-9 HCP, so they respond with 2NT, showing 10-12 HCP, a balanced hand, and a stop in the doubled suit.

East can see they have 26-28 HCP and one stop in the opponents' suit. They're strong enough to raise to 3NT, although the single stop in Spades plus their Singleton is a worry.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If East had a 6-card suit, they could double and then bid their suit on the next round. They're far too strong for a simple overcall.

A double may not be for takeout; if on the second round, partner bids their own suit rather than raising or passing, then they have 16+ HCP and a good 6-card suit, or 18+ HCP and a good 5-card suit. This is called **Double Then Bid**. The doubler's partner doesn't know which type of double has been made until that second bid.

East	South	West	North
1♥	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

	♠ 863 ♥ QT72 ♦ Q6 ♣ J653	
♠ J4 ♥ 63 ♦ 98532 ♣ K872		♠ A972 ♥ AK984 ♦ 7 ♣ T94
	♠ KQT5 ♥ J5 ♦ AKJT4 ♣ AQ	

Board: 2 Dealer: East #2586

South has 21 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and a strong 5-card suit. They're strong enough to double and then bid then suit on the next round.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

The double is forcing.

North only has 5 HCP but is forced to bid. They have a balanced hand and a stop in the opponents' suit, but they're not quite strong enough to bid 1NT (requires 6-9 HCP). So they bid their longest suit; they have a choice between Clubs and Hearts. Normally they would bid the major, but that's been bid by the opponents, so they bid Clubs.

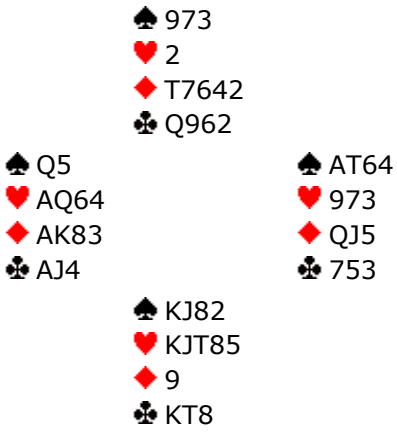
The 2C response promises very little; at least 3 Clubs and 0-8 HCP!

South responds with their long suit, 2D, showing either 16+ HCP and a good 6-card suit, or 18+ HCP and a good 5-card suit.

North can't support Diamonds with just 2 trumps, but does have a stop in the opponent suit and 5 HCP, so bids 2NT, showing 6-9 HCP and a stop; a slight overbid.

South can see at least 27 HCP so raises to 3NT, even though a single stop in the opponents' suit might not be enough.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	



Board: 3 Dealer: South #2726

West has 20 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and no 5-card suit - an ideal hand to double for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

The double is forcing.

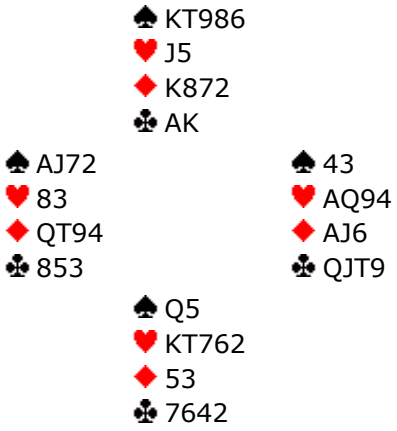
East has 7 HCP and a balanced hand, but no stop in the opponents' suit, so they can't bid 1NT but must show their longest suit by bidding 1S.

This 1S response promises very little; at least 3 Spades and 0-8 HCP.

West only has 2 Spades, so can't support their partner's suit. With a stop in the opponents' suit they can bid 1NT. The 1NT bid shows a stop and 16+ HCP.

East decides to be a bit optimistic and bid 3NT, even though they can only see 23+ HCP. (They actually have 27 HCP. But they don't know that.)

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Dbl	Pass
1NT	Pass	Pass	Pass



Board: 4 Dealer: West #2734

East has 14 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and no 5-card suit - an ideal hand to double for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

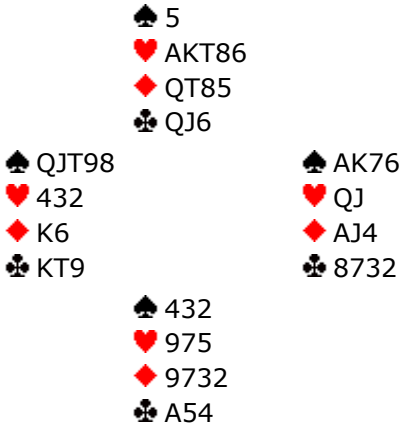
This double is forcing.

West has 7 HCP, a balanced hand with a 4-card Diamond suit and a stop in Spades – so they bid 1NT. 1NT is a better bid than showing a 4-card minor.

This 1NT response promises 6-9 HCP, a stop in the doubled suit, and no un-bid 4-card major.

East can see 20-23 HCP and knows West has at most 3 Hearts, so can only pass.

North	East	South	West
1♥	Dbl	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	



Board: 5 Dealer: North #913

East has 15 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and no 5-card suit - an ideal hand to double for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

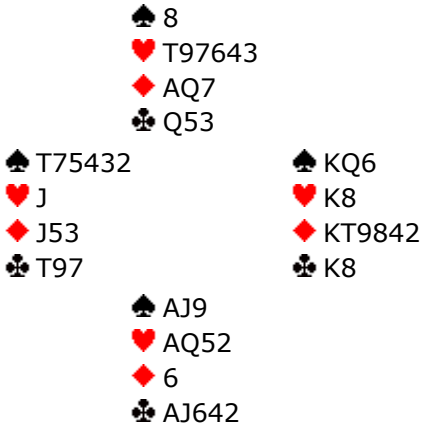
This double is forcing.

West has 9 HCP, a balanced hand and a 5-card Spade suit, so they bid their 5-card major. They jump to show their point count.

This jump response promises 9-12 HCP, no stop in the doubled suit, and at least 3 trumps (although usually 4+).

East can see 24-27 HCP and probably 8+ Spades, so bids 4S with reasonable confidence – although their QJ in Hearts is likely to be worthless.

East	South	West	North
1♦	Dbl	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			



Board: 6 Dealer: East #2403

South has 16 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and a 5-card suit. While they could overcall with 2C, there is a much better chance of game if there's a fit in Hearts or Spades, so they double for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

North has 8 HCP, an unbalanced hand with a weak 6-card Heart suit. They exaggerate their strength slightly (in light of their 6-card suit) by jumping to 2H.

This jump response promises 9-12 HCP, no stop in the doubled suit, and at least 3 trumps (although usually 4+).

South can see 25-28 HCP and probably 8+ Hearts, so bids 4H with reasonable confidence.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

South's Singleton Diamond and finessing chances in the other three suits enhance their strength considerably (East opened, so is very likely to hold most of the missing Honours).

North's gamble on overvaluing their hand should pay off!

South	West	North	East
1♠	Dbl	2♠	3♥
4♠	5♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

♠ A93
♥ 876
♦ 4
♣ T75432

♠ Q
♥ AKJ54
♦ A83
♣ KQ86

♠ T64
♥ QT932
♦ KJ95
♣ J

♠ KJ8752
♥
♦ QT762
♣ A9

Board: 7 Dealer: South #2563

West has 19 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and a good 5-major suit. While they could overcall with 2H, that would undervalue their hand; they double with the intention of bidding their suit on the second round, to show their strength.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

East has 7 HCP and a 5-card major, so bids 3H over the 2S intervention.

A suit response over an intervention promises 6-9 HCP and a 4-card suit.

West can see 25-28 HCP and probably 9+ Hearts, so bids 5H over the 4S intervention with reasonable confidence.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

West might be tempted to double 4S for penalties. After all, N-S can only have 15 (or less) HCP! However, their length in Hearts and the Singleton Q in Spades suggest the opponents probably have enough trumps and shortages to make 4S by cross-ruffing.

West	North	East	South
1♦	Dbl	1♠	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

♠ KT5
♥ KJ93
♦ K3
♣ AT42

♠ A74
♥ T65
♦ AQJ854
♣ 6

♠ J986
♥ 2
♦ T762
♣ K853

♠ Q32
♥ AQ874
♦ 9
♣ QJ97

Board: 8 Dealer: West #2628

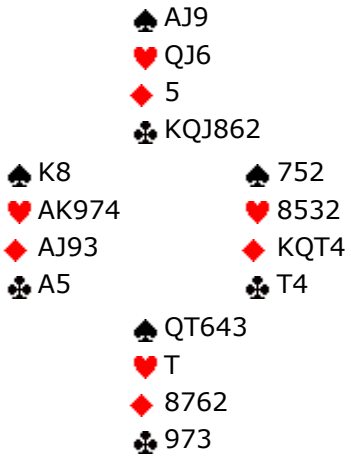
North has 14 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and no 5-card suit, so doubles for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

South has 11 HCP and a 5-card major, so bids a slightly optimistic 4H over the 1S intervention.

North	East	South	West
1♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	



Board: 9 Dealer: North #2823

West has 19 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and a good 5-card suit, so they double intending to bid their suit on the second round; **Double Then Bid**, to show their strength. They're much too strong for a simple overcall.

This 1-level double fourth in hand (after 2 passes) promises just 9 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit as here – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

North is strong enough to rebid their long Club suit (they are almost certain to make 6 tricks without help from partner) so they bid 2C. This is a natural bid, but also helps make it harder for the opponents to find a fit.

North's 2C bid has taken out the Takeout Double, so East is no longer forced to bid. With just 5 HCP they pass rather than bid 2D or 2H. (A bid in this situation, when you're not forced to bid, is called a "free" bid and promises 6-9 points and a 4-card suit.)

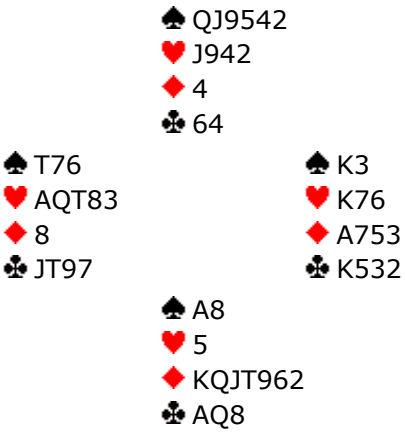
West is happy enough that East didn't respond, as they had doubled to show strength; they continue by bidding their long suit as planned: 2H.

Phew. This bid by the doubler of their own suit indicates they had doubled to show a strong hand (Double Then Bid) and promises 16+ HCP and a 6-card suit, or 18+ HCP and a 5-card suit, or 19+ HCP with any shape. West's hand is in the third category.

East can now see at least a 4-4 fit in Hearts and 16+5 HCP; they can even add a Shortage Point for their Hearts, making 22 points. Partner knows they have less than 6 HCP, so their 5+1 points is worth a 3H bid, a Game Invitation.

West has 19 HCP and can rely on partner to have 4-5 HCP from their bid, making 23-24. With a good fit in Hearts, 4H seems a good bet.

East	South	West	North
1NT	Dbl	2♥	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			



Board: 10 Dealer: East #488

South has 16 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and a good 7-card suit, so they double intending to bid their suit on the second round; **Double Then Bid**, to show their strength. They're much too strong for a simple overcall.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit as here – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

North has just 4 HCP and a decent 6-card major. They're not forced to bid as West has intervened, so their "free" bid of 2S promises 6-9 HCP and a 4-card suit – exaggerating their points because they have a 6-card major. Hmm.

South can see 22-25 HCP and can't support partner's suit with just two Spades, so they bid their Diamond suit as planned. No need to jump, Double Then Bid promises 16 HCP and a 6-card suit or 18 HCP and a 5-card suit. South is not quite strong enough to bid game as a minor game requires around 27 HCP - although their shape and fit with partner might be enough.

North can see only see 20-22 HCP and hasn't found a fit with partner, so they pass.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If I were South I would bid 5D rather than 3D, especially if non-vulnerable. North has shown 6-9 HCP (liar) and a useful Spade suit - and most of the remaining points should be in East's hand, increasing

the probability of finesses in Spades and Clubs working. (Although with good defence, you can't make 5D.)

Then again, if I were North I'd bid 3S over 3D to show length.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Dbl	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

	♠ 863 ♥ T63 ♦ 94 ♣ AT954	
♠ AQT5 ♥ 9 ♦ KQJ72 ♣ Q82		♠ KJ97 ♥ A752 ♦ 63 ♣ K76
	♠ 42 ♥ KQJ84 ♦ AT85 ♣ J3	

Board: 11 Dealer: South #2725

West has 14 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and no 5-card suit, so doubles for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

North has just 4 HCP and a decent 6-card major. They're not forced to bid as West has intervened, so their "free" bid of 2S promises 6-9 HCP and a 4-card suit – exaggerating their points because they have a 6-card major. Hmm.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Dbl	Pass
1♥	2♣	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

	♠ QJ6 ♥ 5 ♦ AQ4 ♣ KQ9763	
♠ 85 ♥ J873 ♦ 63 ♣ AT842		♠ AK42 ♥ AKT94 ♦ K97 ♣ J
	♠ T973 ♥ Q62 ♦ JT852 ♣ 5	

Board: 12 Dealer: West #2733

East has 18 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and a good 5-card suit, so they double intending to bid their suit on the second round; **Double Then Bid**, to show their strength. They're much too strong for a simple overcall.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

West has just 5 HCP and a poor 4-card major. They're forced to bid by partner's double. They can't bid 1NT despite their stop in Clubs, as they don't have 6 HCP, so they bid their 4-card suit, 2H.

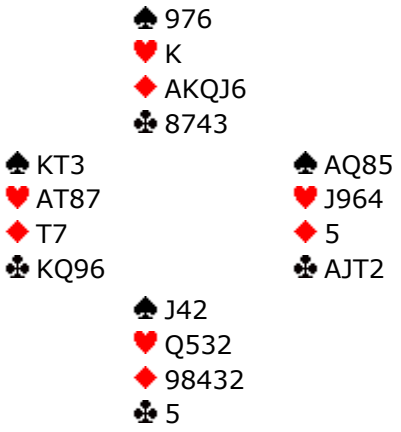
This minimum level suit bid promises very little; a 3-card suit (usually 4+) and 0-8 HCP.

East has a great fit with West's Hearts – it's the suit they were going to bid! They can see at least 8 Hearts and 18-26 HCP. With so much uncertainty on the point count, they can't bid game straight away, so bid 3H as a game invitation.

This jump raise of Hearts shows s strong hand (4 card support and 16+ HCP); as opener has intervened a raise to 2H would be taken as weak (competitive only).

West has 5 HCP plus 2 pints for their doubletons, making at least 23 points. More importantly, they're significantly stronger than the minimum and partner has bid strongly, so they bid a slightly optimistic game, 4H.

North	East	South	West
1♦	Dbl	3♦	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	



Board: 13 Dealer: North #2740

East has 12 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and no 5-card suit, so doubles for takeout.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

West has 12 HCP and a moderate 4-card major, with no stop in Diamonds so they can't bid NT. With 24+ HCP and assumed Heart support, they jump to game over South's 3D raise.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

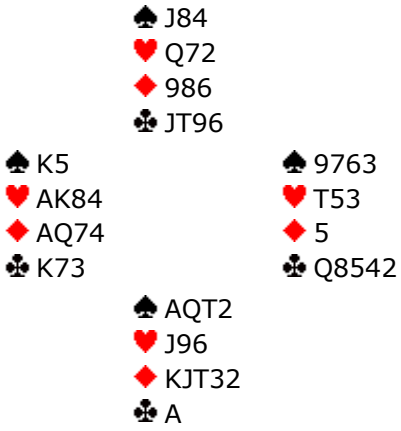
That 3D bid really messed up the bidding for E-W. Well done South!

West's 4H bid is rather questionable. What if partner has a Double Then Bid hand, with a long suit in Clubs or Spades and no support for Hearts? You just have to hope they overrule your 4H and bid their suit; you've got good support for the other suits too!

I think West should bid 3H, not 4H. Their suit isn't long but they do have points; the fact that they've made a free bid shows that they've got points, so they should bid game.

Tricky!

East	South	West	North
Pass	1♦	Dbl	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	Pass



Board: 14 Dealer: East #2812

West has 19 HCP, a balanced hand, and two stops in the opponents' suit. They double intending to bid NT on the second round; Double Then Bid, to show their strength and stop. They're a bit too strong for a 1NT overcall (which is 16-18 HCP).

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

East has just 2 HCP, a poor 5-card minor and a poor 4-card major. They're forced to bid by partner's double. They bid their horrible 4-card major, 1S, a majors are preferred to minors and is more economical of bidding space than 2C

This minimum level suit bid promises very little; a 3-card suit (usually 4+) and 0-8 HCP.

West rebids 1NT as planned, to show their shape and point count (19+).

East bids their second suit, 2C, as a weakness takeout (no liking for NT and less than 6 HCP). No, it isn't Stayman, as they have already bid Spades!

West passes as there's no chance of game with less than 25 HCP.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

I think East should pass rather than bid 2C; West has promised at least one stop in Diamonds, and it's much better to have the weak hand as Dummy.

Even if East bids 2C, West should bid 2NT. This will make the weaker hand Dummy, encourage a Diamond lead for a free finesse, and NT contracts score better. If they make!

What do you think?

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

	♠T953 ♥962 ♦872 ♣532	
♠J742 ♥KT5 ♦A64 ♣874		♠AKQ ♥AQJ83 ♦T93 ♣QT
	♠86 ♥74 ♦KQJ5 ♣AKJ96	

Board: 15 Dealer: South H1328

East has 18 HCP, a shortage in the opponents' suit, and a good 5-card Heart suit, so they double intending to bid their suit on the second round; Double Then Bid, to show their strength. They're much too strong for a simple overcall.

This 1-level double fourth in hand (after 2 passes) promises just 9 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a Takeout Double. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit as here – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

West is forced to bid. They have a balanced hand and 8 HCP, strong enough to bid 1NT (which promises 6-9 HCP) but they haven't got a stop in the doubled suit, so they bid their longest suit, 1S.

This 1S response promises very little; at least 3 Spades and 0-8 HCP!

But East had doubled to show strength, so they continue by bidding their long suit as planned: 2H.

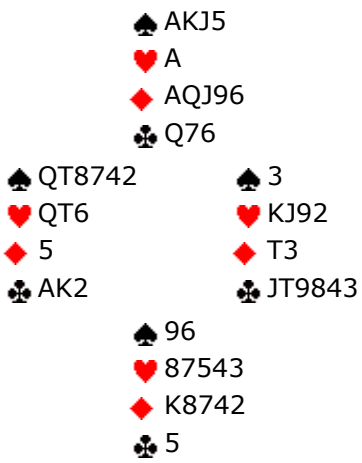
Phew. This bid by the doubler of their own suit indicates they had doubled to show a strong hand (Double Then Bid) and promises 16+ HCP and a 6-card suit, or 18+ HCP and a 5-card suit, or 19+ HCP with any shape. East's hand is in the second category.

West can now see at least a 4-3 fit in Hearts and 16+8 HCP, making 24+ points. So they probably have enough points for game, but in Hearts or in NT? They don't have four Hearts, but KTx is good support, so they decide to invite game in Hearts rather than NT.

This 3H Game Invitation promises support for Hearts and around 6 HCP; it asks partner to bid game with more than the minimum 16 HCP.

East has 18 HCP, so is happy to bid game, 4H.

West	North	East	South
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	



Board: 16 Dealer: West H2724

North has 21 HCP, NO shortage in the opponent's suit, and a good 5-card Diamond suit, so they double intending to bid their suit on the second round; Double Then Bid, to show their strength. They're much too strong for a simple overcall.

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a Takeout Double. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit as here – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

South has just 3 HCP and two 5-card suits. Partner's double forces them to bid their longest suit, but which one? Even though the Diamond suit is better (with an Honour) you should always bid a major rather than a minor – so they bid 2H.

But North had doubled to show strength, so they continue by bidding their long suit as planned: 3D.

This bid by the doubler of their own suit indicates they had doubled to show a strong hand (Double Then Bid) and promises 16+ HCP and a 6-card suit, or 18+ HCP and a 5-card suit, or 19+ HCP with any shape. North's hand is in the third category, but South doesn't know that.

So South can see a minimum of 16+3 HCP i.e. 19+. The better news is that they have at least a 5-5 fit with partner's Diamonds, as well as a singleton and a doubleton – so they can add 3 Shortage Points to that rather unimpressive HCP total, making 22+.

So... is that enough for South to bid 5D, bearing in mind you usually need 27+ points for a minor game? South thought so and bid it.

Did you?

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If you look at the hands, you can see that Declarer can make 5D easily. Indeed, they can make 6D by drawing trumps and cross-ruffing the losing Hearts, Spades, and Clubs – just losing one Club trick as you can throw one away on the fifth Heart. Indeed, if you take the Spade finesse (which is likely to succeed, West ought to have an Honour in their suit), you make 7D.

So is South's 5D bid a good bid? **Not really**. North is a lot stronger than promised by their bids AND they got lucky. North could have a much weaker hand like this:

♠ QJ
♥ AT6
♦ AQJT96
♣ Q6

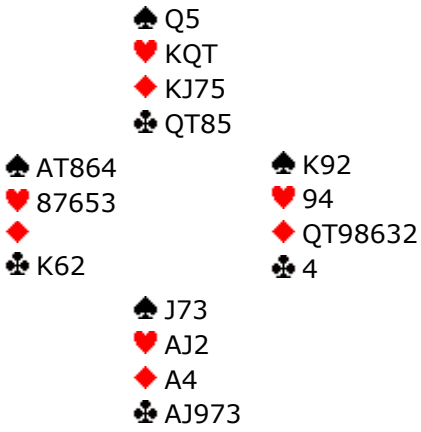
Now North has 16 HCP, a shortage in Spades, and a 6-card Diamond suit as promised – but they would lose two Spades, two Hearts and two Clubs!

So I'd say South's 5D bid was quite bad, they should have bid 4D – and even that is fairly optimistic! Of course North would raise to 5D in a heartbeat with 21 HCP, but there is no way that South could know they were that strong.

North	East	South	West
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Board: 17 Dealer: North #1449

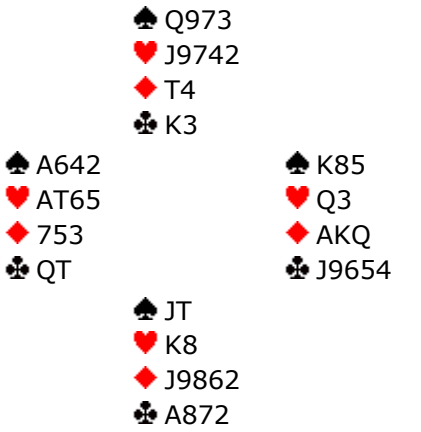
No commentary.



East	South	West	North
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Board: 18 Dealer: East #2718

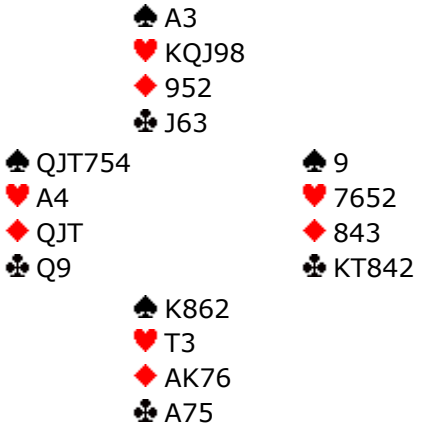
No commentary.



South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	

Board: 19 Dealer: South #97

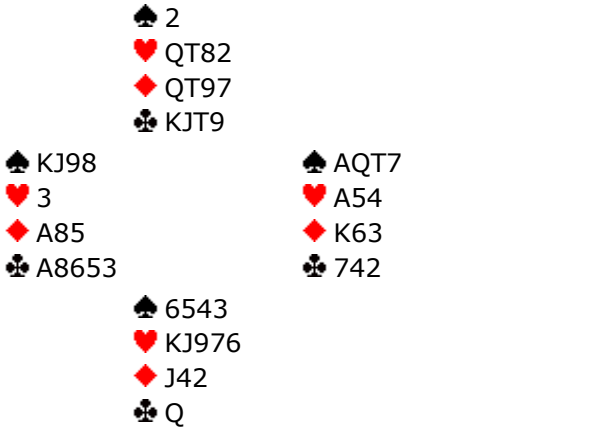
No commentary.



West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Board: 20 Dealer: West #2691

No commentary



Summary

Commentary Synopsis				
	U3ABC15			
	Subject: Doubles		Hand #	Declarer / Defender
1	N	1S, X, 2NT, 3NT	146	Dec
2	E	1H, X, 2C, 2D, 3NT	2586	Dec
3	S	1H, X, 1S, 1NT, 3NT	2726	Dec
4	W	1S, X, 1NT	2734	Dec
5	N	1H, X, 2S, 3A, 4S	913	Dec
6	E	1D, X, 2H, 4H	2403	Dec
7	S	1S, X, 2S, 3H. 4S, 5H	2563	Dec
8	W	1D, X, 1S, 4H	2628	Dec
9	N	1C, X, 2C, 2H, 3H, 4H	2823	Dec.
10	E	1NT, X, 2H, 2S, 3D	488	Dec
11	S	1H, X, 2S, 3S, 4S	2725	Dec
12	W	1C, X, 1H, 2C, 3H, 4H	2733	Dec.
13	N	1D, X, 3D, 4H	2740	Dec.
14	E	1D, X, 1S, 1NT, 2C	2812	Dec
15	S	1C, X, 1S, 2H, 3H, 4H	1328	Dec
16	W	1S, X, 2H, 3D, 5D	2724	Dec
	Subject: Random Hands			
17	N	1NT, 3NT	1449	Dec
18	E	1C, 1H, 1NT, 3NT	2718	Dec
19	S	1NT, 3H, 3NT	97	Dec.
20	W	1C, 1S, 2S, 4S	2691	Dec