

# What is your agreement? A bridge Tip

By Neil H. Timm

You are both **Vulnerable** and your left-hand opponent opens 1♥; your partner makes a takeout double with the opponents passing.

You hold the following hand:

♠1064 ♥72 ♦J765 ♣J432 and using the Rule of 9 (Level of the bid = 1 + number of trump = 4 + number of trumps 10 or >= +1 for a total of 6 < 9) you must bid and bid 2♣.

Your opponent's double and your partner tables the following hand:

♠A987 ♥K54 ♦K102 ♣Q96

In the play of the hand you go down 5 doubled vulnerable.

In defending the takeout double, partner says, "I had 12 HCPs and four spades. That's a standard takeout double."

## What is your agreement and was partner correct in making the double?

Playing takeout doubles, most agree that you must have 10-15 HCPs and at least three cards in the un-bid suits.

Partner has 12 HCPs and a flat 4=3=3=3 hand or 11 points after subtracting one point for "flatness". Yes, a minimal opening hand!

However, given the range and the vulnerability, one must use better judgment:

When Non-vulnerable – one usually needs 10-13 starting points and when Vulnerable 14-15 starting points is required.

Give partner a better distribution by changing his hand to something like:

♠A10987 ♥void ♦KQ10 ♣K965

Because all his 12 HCP "values" are OUTSIDE the opponents' suit, for offense, not defense. And using for example Bergen's ADJUST-3 Method has 12HCP+ 1 Length point + 1 for the quality diamond suit = 14 starting points. Kaplan and Rubens evaluates

this hand as 15 points, and partner original hand with only 11 points because of the flat distribution and stranded honor; even though both hands have 12 HCP.

For more on the Kaplan and Rubens methods go to (1) [www.jeff-goldsmith.org/knr.txt](http://www.jeff-goldsmith.org/knr.txt) or (2) [www.rpbridge.net/8j19.htm](http://www.rpbridge.net/8j19.htm) **for an evaluation of the method.**

Note: A takeout double is technically a convention and was suggested in the early history of bridge, as a natural bidding convention and therefore an alert is never required.

A double is for takeout, in the narrow sense, if it is the initial as an overcall at or below 4♦/4♥ shows (some even suggest “infinity”).

- a **strong**, typically **open able hand**
- **length** (3+ cards) **in all un-bid suits** (or at least the majors)
- **shortage** (2- cards) in the bid suit if only one suit has been bid
- **no appropriate overcall**

With 17/18+ HCP hands, regardless of shape, an overcall should not occur and one should double for take out. With 16HCP one usually needs a 6-card suit.

The classic bridge source for Takeout Doubles is the revised and updated book by Mike Lawrence (2012) “The Complete Book on Takeout Doubles”, Master Point Press.