

The Takeout Double

Suppose you hold K1072/AJ94/3/KQ98 and your RHO opens the bidding 1♦. Although you have 13 hcp, you have no 5-card suit to overcall. However, there is a bid available which describes your hand perfectly. That bid is a “takeout double”. When an opponent has bid (and your partner has not), a double by you is “takeout”. It tells partner that you have support for the unbid suits (at least 3 cards in each suit, preferably four) and at least 13 points (high card and dummy points). Since you are asking partner to bid, your hand would become the dummy. Therefore, you count dummy points (void=5; singleton=3; doubleton=1) rather than length points.

Examples:

A. RHO opens 1♣. ♠98 ♥KJ107 ♦A543 ♣KQ3	B. RHO opens 1♦. ♠AQ4 ♥KJ107 ♦4 ♣109876	C. RHO opens 1♥. ♠AQ5 ♥AQ ♦J1076 ♣Q1098	D. RHO opens 1♠. ♠96 ♥AQ109 ♦AQ1098 ♣102
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- A. Pass. What would you do if you double and partner jumps to 2♠? You need at least 3 cards in the unbid suits, particularly in the majors
- B. X. Counting 3 dummy points for the singleton, you have 13 points. Bidding 2♣ makes it harder to find a major fit.
- C. Bid 1N. A double would imply 4 spades.
- D. X. The double is the best chance of finding a heart fit. If partner bids 2♣, you can bid 2♦.

Partner (called the advancer) responds as shown below:

- 0-8 pts. Bid at the cheapest level
- 9-11 pts. Make an invitational bid by jumping one level
- 12+ pts. Get to game (either by bidding game directly or cue-bidding the opponent’s suit)

Examples [the bidding has gone (1♦)-X-(P)] to you.

E. ♠Q864 ♥K52 ♦854 ♣J54	F. ♠Q864 ♥K5 ♦54 ♣A7654	G. ♠Q864 ♥KQ52 ♦854 ♣AJ	H. ♠86 ♥652 ♦J9642 ♣J74	I. ♠QJ986 ♥K5 ♦10964 ♣AJ
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- E. Bid 1♠.
- F. Bid 2♠. You should jump one level to show 10 pts. Since the priority in bidding to locate 8-card major suit fits, you should bid spades rather than clubs.
- G. Bid 2♦ (a cue-bid showing a good hand with uncertainty about which suit to bid). Suppose partner doubled with 4 cards in one major and 3 in the other. After your cue bid, partner can bid her 4-card major and you can raise to game. If you had initially jumped to game in one of your majors, you may be playing in a 4-3 fit rather than a 4-4 fit.
- H. Bid 1♥. Sometimes you have to bid a 3-card suit. You can’t pass unless you’re certain that you can set their doubled 1-bid. You also can’t bid 1N on this weak hand (see below for NT

responses).

- I. Bid 4♠. Partner has to have at least 3, so you have an 8+ card fit. You have the 12 points to bid game.

Sometimes you have stops in their suit and no 4-card major, so a NT response makes sense. The ranges are:

6-10 pts.	Bid 1N
11-12 pts.	Bid 2N
13+ pts.	Bid 3N

Examples (same bidding as E-L)

J. ♠A98 ♥1052 ♦KJ102 ♣1072	K. ♠Q98 ♥KQ5 ♦AJ102 ♣1076	L. ♠A96 ♥K52 ♦KQ2 ♣J1076	M. ♠98 ♥102 ♦KQ1042 ♣A764	N. ♠98 ♥102 ♦KQJ1054 ♣1054
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J. Bid 1N.

K. Bid 2N.

L. Bid 3N.

M. Bid 1N. Game is much more likely in NT than 5♣.

N Pass. You are likely to win 5 diamond tricks. Partner should have at least 2 winners.

If you bid 1N, you may never get a diamond trick. You have no entries.

More examples:

O. RHO opens 3♣. ♠AK32 ♥A86 ♦KQ853 ♣5	P. RHO opens 3♦. ♠AQJ87 ♥AKQ54 ♦5 ♣A3	Q. RHO opens 4♦. ♠AQJ87 ♥AKQ54 ♦5 ♣A3	R. RHO opens 1♣. ♠98 ♥KJ107 ♦A543 ♣KQ3
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O. X. Doubling is a better way to find a major fit than bidding 3♦.

P. Bid 4♦. This says “pick a major. If I wanted you to bid clubs, I would have made a takeout double to give you room to bid 4♣”.

Q. X. If partner bids 5♣, I’ll bid 5♥, saying “I wanted you to bid a major, so let’s play in the one you like best”.

R. This is the same as Example A. Suppose the bidding goes (1♣)-P-(1♠)-P-(1N) to you. While you couldn’t double initially, now you can double showing support for the two remaining unbid suits.

In all the preceding examples, responder passed after the double. If responder bids, advancer is no longer under any obligation to bid and should pass with weak hands. If advancer has values, she can bid at the two level with 6-8 points or at the 3 level with 9-11. With 12+, advancer can bid game or cue bid.

After advancer takes action, the doubler subsequently bids based on the strength of her hand:

13-16 points	Minimum
17-18 points	Medium
19-21 points	Maximum

Thus, if advancer makes a minimum response (showing 0-8), doubler would pass with a minimum, invite with a medium hand, or show a maximum by cue bidding or making a jump raise. If advancer shows a medium hand (9-11 points), doubler would pass with 13, invite with 14-15, and bid game with 16+.

All of the examples presented so far involve situations in which the doubler has support for all the unbid suits and generally intends to play in the strain bid by advancer. However, there is another totally different situation in which the doubler has his own suit. Normally, after an opponent has opened the bidding, a player with a long suit may make an overcall. The strength required to make an overcall is 7-17 points at the one level or 13-17 points at the two level or higher. What is a player to do if she has a long suit and more than 17 points? The answer is to start with a “takeout double” and then bid her own suit at her second turn.