

*2nd Edition*  
*Revised and updated for the first time in 20 years*



THE COMPLETE BOOK ON  
TAKEOUT DOUBLES

A MIKE LAWRENCE  
BRIDGE CLASSIC



THE COMPLETE BOOK ON  
TAKEOUT DOUBLES

A MIKE LAWRENCE  
BRIDGE CLASSIC

MASTER POINT PRESS · TORONTO

Text © 1994, 2012 Mike Lawrence

All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

Master Point Press  
331 Douglas Ave.  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M5M 1H2 (416)781-0351

Email: [info@masterpointpress.com](mailto:info@masterpointpress.com)

Websites: [www.masterpointpress.com](http://www.masterpointpress.com)  
[www.teachbridge.com](http://www.teachbridge.com)  
[www.bridgeblogging.com](http://www.bridgeblogging.com)  
[www.ebooksbridge.com](http://www.ebooksbridge.com)

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Lawrence, Mike

The complete book on takeout doubles / Mike Lawrence.  
-- 2nd ed.

Issued also in electronic formats.  
ISBN 978-1-897106-87-7

1. Contract bridge--Bidding. I. Title.

GV1282.43.L38 2012	795.41'52	C2012-906100-X
Editor	Ray Lee, Karen Lawrence	
Copyeditor	Sally Sparrow	
Cover and interior design	Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix	

# CONTENTS

Introduction	11
Defining the Takeout Double – Its History	11
How to Use This Book	11
<i>How this book is organized</i>	12
Chapter One: Four Conventions to Help You with Your Takeout Doubles	13
1. The Michaels Cuebid	13
2. The Responsive Double	14
<i>The responsive double when partner doubles and they raise</i>	14
<i>The responsive double when partner overcalls</i>	16
3. Equal Level Conversion (ELC)	17
4. Lebensohl	18
Chapter Two: The Takeout Double	19
Introduction to the Takeout Double in General	19
RHO Opens with a One-bid: What Variations Are Allowed in the Takeout Doubler's Strength?	20
What Variations Are Allowed in the Takeout Doubler's Shape?	21
<i>Can you make a takeout double with only three cards in an unbid major?</i>	21
<i>Can you make a takeout double with five cards in a minor suit?</i>	26
<i>Can you make a takeout double with five cards in a major suit?</i>	27
<i>Deviant shapes that may have to make takeout doubles</i>	31
Chapter Three: How Strong Do You Have to Be to Double and Bid Again?	37
How Strong Do You Have to Be to Double and Then Bid a Suit?	37
<i>You double, intending to bid a suit next. Are the requirements the same for all suits?</i>	38
<i>Two extra concerns</i>	39

<i>Don't fall in love with your hand. Is it really worth doubling and bidding a suit?</i>	40
<i>Expert trick – equal level conversion</i>	43
<i>If you double and bid a new suit, is it forcing?</i>	45
How Strong Do You Have to Be to Double and then Bid Notrump?	46
You Double and then Double Again without Hearing a Bid from Partner	48

## Chapter Four: The Takeout Double when Both Opponents Have Bid 51

LHO Opens and RHO Bids a Suit at the One-level	51
LHO Opens and RHO Bids 1NT	52
LHO Opens and RHO Raises	54
LHO Opens and RHO Makes a Two-over-one Response	58
<i>Life is not always perfect when you double a two-over-one</i>	60
<i>Responding to partner's double of a two-over-one response</i>	61
When LHO Opens in Third or Fourth Seat and His Partner Uses Drury	63
<i>What should it mean if you double 2♣?</i>	64
<i>Bidding when their side uses Drury and opener rebids his major</i>	65

## Chapter Five: Delayed Doubles – Takeout or Penalty? 67

Your RHO Opens and Rebids His Suit after a One-level Response by His Partner. You Double. What Does It Mean?	67
What Does It Mean if You Pass and Double when RHO Raises His Partner?	70
What Does It Mean if You Pass and Double when RHO Rebids 1NT?	71
What Does It Mean if You Pass and Double when RHO Rebids a New Suit?	72
What Does It Mean if You Pass and Double when RHO Reverses or Jump Shifts?	72
You Open, the Opponents Bid, and You Double	74
Your Opponent Opens and You Overcall. If You Double Later, Is It For Penalty or Takeout?	80

## Chapter Six: Responding when Partner Doubles a One-bid 83

How Should You Respond to Partner's Overcall?	83
<i>More differences between responding to a takeout double and to an overcall</i>	84
Responding to the Takeout Double when RHO Passes	84

<i>Minimum responses to a takeout double</i>	85
<i>The 1NT response</i>	89
<i>The penalty pass</i>	92
<i>Jumps to 2NT or 3NT</i>	94
<i>The jump in a new suit to the two-level</i>	95
<i>The single jump in a new suit to the three-level</i>	98
<i>The double jump in a new suit to the three-level</i>	98
<i>The cuebid</i>	100
<b>Chapter Seven: Responding to a Takeout Double when RHO Raises</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Bidding when RHO Raises Opener</b>	<b>109</b>
<i>They raise to the two-level</i>	109
<i>They raise to the three-level</i>	111
<b>The Responsive Double: A Tool You Can Use after Partner Makes a Takeout Double</b>	<b>113</b>
<i>When partner doubles a minor suit and they raise to the two-level</i>	113
<i>When partner doubles a major suit and they raise to the two-level</i>	115
<i>Further thoughts on the responsive double</i>	116
<b>RHO Raises Over Your Partner's Takeout Double – Some Difficult Hands</b>	<b>120</b>
<i>When they raise to the two-level</i>	120
<i>When they raise to the three-level</i>	123
<i>When they raise to the four-level</i>	124
<b>Bidding When Your Opponents Use the Jordan 2NT Raise</b>	<b>125</b>
<i>What can you do when partner doubles a major and RHO uses the Jordan 2NT bid?</i>	126
<b>The Jump in a New Suit after RHO Raises</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>The 2NT and 3NT Bids after RHO Raises</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Chapter Eight: Responding to a Takeout Double when RHO Bids but Does Not Raise</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>RHO Bids a New Suit at the One-level</b>	<b>133</b>
<i>What do you need to bid a suit?</i>	133
<i>What do you need to jump in a new suit?</i>	134
<i>The weak jump in a new suit – optional treatment</i>	135
<i>What do you need to bid 1NT?</i>	135
<i>What does it mean if you double?</i>	136
<i>What does it mean if you bid RHO's suit?</i>	137
<i>Cuebidding opener's suit</i>	138

RHO Bids a New Suit at the Two-level	138
RHO Bids 1NT over Your Partner's Double	140
<i>What tricks can you use when RHO bids 1NT over your partner's double?</i>	141
<i>Summing up this method</i>	143
RHO Redoubles over Your Partner's Takeout Double	144
<i>When you have a boring hand</i>	144
<i>What does it mean if you pass the redouble?</i>	146
<i>Three expert tricks that you can use when RHO redoubles</i>	147

## Chapter Nine: RHO Opens and LHO Bids Something, Partner Doubles for Takeout 155

RHO Bids a Suit and LHO Bids a Suit. Partner Doubles	155
RHO Bids a Suit and LHO Bids 1NT. Partner Doubles	157
RHO Bids a Suit and LHO Raises. Partner Doubles	158
RHO Bids a Suit and LHO Makes a Two-over-one Bid. Partner Doubles or Bids a Suit	159

## Chapter Ten: A Number of Situations Involving Delayed Doubles and Some Judgment 161

What Is Partner Doing?	161
------------------------	-----

## Chapter Eleven: Doubler's Continuations: Common Bidding Situations 169

Partner Passes the Double for Penalty	169
LHO Bids and Your Partner Passes	170
You Double, LHO Passes	173
<i>Your partner makes a simple response, RHO passes</i>	173
<i>Partner jumps in a new suit, RHO passes</i>	177
<i>Partner makes a double jump in a new suit, RHO passes</i>	183
<i>Partner makes a cuebid</i>	183
<i>Partner bids 1NT</i>	184
<i>Partner makes a simple response. RHO bids something</i>	186
You Double and LHO Redoubles	187
<i>Your partner passes</i>	187
<i>Your partner bids something</i>	189
<i>Your partner makes an impossible bid</i>	192

You Double, LHO Bids, and Partner Does Something	193
<i>You double, LHO bids a new suit, and your partner bids a new suit</i>	193
<i>You double, LHO bids a new suit, and your partner jumps in a suit</i>	196
<i>You double, LHO bids a new suit, and your partner cuebids one of their suits</i>	197
<i>You double, LHO bids a new suit, and your partner doubles</i>	198
<i>You double, LHO bids 1NT, and your partner bids a suit</i>	199
<i>You double, LHO raises, and your partner bids a suit</i>	200
<i>You double, LHO raises, and your partner makes a responsive double</i>	204
<i>You double, LHO bids something, and your partner bids 1NT</i>	206
<i>You double, LHO passes, and your partner makes a cuebid</i>	206
<i>You double, LHO raises, and your partner makes a cuebid</i>	207

## Chapter Twelve: Continuing with 18 or More Points but Only Three-card Support for Partner 209

How Do You Show 18 or More Support Points with Three-card Support?	209
<i>Case One: Your partner responds at the one-level to your takeout double and opener passes</i>	209
<i>Case Two: Your partner responds to your takeout double and opener rebids his suit</i>	212
<i>Case Three: Your partner responds to your takeout double and opener bids a new suit</i>	214
<i>How do you continue when your partner makes a free bid at the one-level?</i>	216

## Chapter Thirteen: Irsome Auctions and Agreements to Help With Them 221

Auctions Where Your Side Doubles an Opponent and Someone Redoubles	221
<i>Your partner makes a balancing double and opener redoubles</i>	221
They Bid and Raise. Your Partner Doubles. Opener Redoubles	222
<i>How do you find your best contract?</i>	222
RHO Opens with a Preempt and You Double for Takeout. LHO Redoubles, Announcing a Big Hand. This Is Passed to You	224
<i>What's going on?</i>	224
You Use Michaels or the Unusual Notrump and Then Make a Double	225
You Preempt, they Bid, and Your Partner Passes. Can You Bid Again?	227



Chapter Fourteen: Responder's Second Bid after Partner's Takeout Double	229
Responder Makes a Simple Response to a Takeout Double	229
Responder Makes a Jump Response to a Takeout Double	233
Responder Makes a Cuebid in Response to a Takeout Double	235
Chapter Fifteen: The Opponents Open with a Preempt	237
The Rule of 7	237
When RHO Opens with a Weak Two-bid	238
When LHO Opens with a Weak Two-bid and RHO Bids	239
<i>When RHO raises to the three-level</i>	239
<i>When RHO responds 2NT</i>	240
<i>When RHO bids a new suit in response to a weak two</i>	241
<i>When RHO raises to game</i>	242
When RHO Opens with a Three-bid	243
When They Open with 4♣ or 4♦	243
When They Open with 4♥ or 4♠	244
<i>Bidding over a 4♥ opening bid</i>	244
<i>Bidding when they open 4♣</i>	245
<i>When you double 4♣</i>	245
<i>The 4NT bid over 4♣</i>	247
Chapter Sixteen: LHO Opens with a Weak Two-bid and Partner Doubles	249
Standard Bidding vs. Lebensohl	249
The Lebensohl Convention	250
<i>How does Lebensohl work?</i>	251
<i>Three optional Lebensohl bidding tricks</i>	253
Examples	257
<i>When they open with a weak two-bid and partner doubles in the balancing seat</i>	263
Chapter Seventeen: LHO Opens with a Weak Three-bid and Partner Doubles	264
When They Open with a Weak Three-bid and Partner Doubles	264
<i>Responding to partner's double of a three-bid</i>	264

Chapter Eighteen: Some New Science Versus Preempts	268
Leaping Michaels against Weak Two-bids in a Major	268
Leaping Michaels against Weak Three-bids in a Major	269
Leaping Michaels when They Respond 2NT to a Major-suit	
Weak Two-bid	270
Chapter Nineteen: Balancing Doubles	272
Introduction to Balancing Doubles	272
The Balancing Double when LHO Opens and RHO Passes	273
The Balancing Double when the Opponents Bid and Raise	273
The Balancing Double when the Opponents Bid and Do Not Find a Fit	274
The Reopening Penalty Double when the Opponents End Up in 1NT	275
The Balancing Takeout Double when LHO Opens with a Preempt	
and RHO Passes	276
<i>The Rule of 7 and the Rule of 8 or 9</i>	276
Review Hands	279



# INTRODUCTION

## DEFINING THE TAKEOUT DOUBLE — ITS HISTORY

In the infancy of bridge, the meaning of ‘double’ was that an opponent couldn’t make what he bid. It was common for someone to double an opening 1♠ bid with:

♠ A K J 8 5   ♥ A 7   ♦ 3 2   ♣ Q 8 7 2

After this kind of double failed to be effective, something called an informatory double was devised. This double tended to mean that the doubler had a hand just as good as the opener. After a 1♠ opening, the next player would double with:

♠ K 5 3   ♥ K 2   ♦ A Q 7 3 2   ♣ K 10 4

By the 1930s, the bridge world had been converted to true takeout doubles such as are used today. Since then there have been some new ideas regarding doubles, but in general, they didn’t fly. Sooner or later the experiments failed and their creators returned to takeout doubles while they licked their wounds.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is rather extensive and it goes into details beyond what you will find in a typical book that has one chapter on the takeout double. Be aware that the takeout double is actually a convention and is probably the most important one in the world of bidding. Can you imagine bidding without takeout doubles?

I would much rather give up any of the other popular conventions.

Jacoby transfers

Blackwood

Bergen raises

Drury

Michaels cuebids

Gerber

Stayman

Inverted minors

Negative doubles

Strong jump shifts

Unusual notrumps

Any of these can be sacrificed without serious loss. Give up the takeout double?

Never.

## HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

You will find in this book a complete discussion on the takeout double and many of its ramifications. I suggest you do not try cramming this into one read. Better would be to take a chapter and read it and then, if the topic interests you, read it again.

If you run into a takeout double problem, you can probably find some thoughts on it in this book. Say your bidding went this way:

West	North	East	South
1♣	pass	1NT	?

Say you have some hand worth bidding and you are wondering if double is a good idea. Look in the Contents and you will find a section called: *LHO opens and RHO bids 1NT*. You can go to the appropriate pages and you will find a discussion of this auction.

In the same way, you can find what you should bid when your partner doubles on the auction.

West	North	East	South
1NT	dbl	1♦ pass	pass ?

You can look up this auction and go to the appropriate page to find a discussion called: *RHO bids and LHO bids 1NT. Your partner doubles. RHO passes*. You will find examples of what you should do with various hands.

There is a huge amount of information and judgment in this book.

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

## THE OLDEST AND MOST USEFUL BIDDING CONVENTION

This is the definitive book on the takeout double, a convention that gains usefulness and complexity with every advance in bridge theory. Originally published in 1994, this book quickly became recognized as a ‘must-read’ for any would-be bridge expert, and has never been out of print. Now, almost twenty years later, the author has revised and updated the text to take into account modern developments in competitive bidding, one of the most rapidly changing parts of the game, not least in the new and varied uses of doubles. Anyone who is at all serious about improving their game needs to read this book.

Ron Andersen’s comment on the original edition: *‘Everything you need to know about takeout doubles is in this book. My only criticism is that it is long overdue.’*

**MIKE LAWRENCE** (Tennessee) has Hall of Fame credentials both as a player and a writer. An original member of the Dallas Aces, he has won three world titles and eighteen national titles. Several of his books are widely regarded as classics of the game.



MASTER POINT PRESS