

WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

# COMPETITIVE DOUBLES

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# Competitive Doubles

Types of takeout doubles are the most common doubles used in competitive situations and account for the majority of all doubles. They are simply doubles designed to show a desire for partner to bid one of the suits not yet bid. The point range varies depending on:

- Position you are in – opener, responder, overcaller, or responder to overcaller (sometimes called Advancer); and
- Level at which partner's response is forced to be made.

The suits the double shows depend on how the auction has proceeded.

There are two additional doubles, Maximal Doubles and Support Doubles, used to indicate raises in competitive auctions that you will find equally useful.

A brief description of each of these competitive doubles and which player might bid the double is provided in the following table.

<b>Name of Double</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Description</b>
Takeout	Overcaller	Opening hand, shortness in opener's suit and at least three cards in the remaining three suits (if two suits have been bid, double shows at least four cards in the remaining two suits).
Negative	Responder	6+ points, shows the two unbid suits or if only one major has been bid, it shows 4+ cards in the other major.
Responsive	Advancer	6+ points, shows the two unbid suits, 4+/4+.
Snapdragon	Advancer	6+ points, after three suits have been bid it shows the unbid suit 5+ cards and usually a tolerance (2+ cards) for the suit partner bid.
Balancing	Overcaller	Doubling when the auction has ended at a low level showing shortness (0-1-2) in the opponents' suits.
Re-opening	Any position but most often associated with the opening bidder.	In any auction, this bid shows a hand that desires for the auction to continue but has no clear bid. Generally it is expected that partner will bid but they may pass for penalty.
Support	Opener	In a competitive auction when opener's right hand opponent overcalled a suit below the two-level of responder's suit.
Maximal	Opener (occasionally Advancer)	In a competitive auction when opener's right hand opponent bid the suit, at the three level, directly in rank below the major suit opener and responder have bid and raised.

In the following pages let's look in detail at the requirements for each of these doubles and how partner will respond.





## **Takeout Doubles**

## Takeout Doubles

***A Takeout Double is a double made by an overcaller.*** An opponent opens the bidding and overcaller says the word “double”. This bid shows:

- Shortness (0-1-2) in the suit opened;
- 11+ points (unless partner is doubling a pre-emptive bid. In that case, the double should show a better hand in either high card points or distribution to compensate for forcing partner to respond at the three or four level); and
- At least three cards in each of the remaining three suits.

***Note: If two suits have been bid, double promises four cards in each of the remaining two suits and does not promise specific shortness in any other suit.***

If your partner doubles and your right hand opponent (RHO) passes, you must bid. If your RHO bids, you may still bid, but are not required to bid.

Generally, partner to the doubler will bid his longest suit. His high card points (HCPs) determine the level at which he will bid. With:

- 0 to 9 points bid at the cheapest level;

- 9+ to 12 points skip one level; or
- 12+ points consider game somewhere.

One exception is that after your partner has made a Takeout double of a minor suit and partner of the doubler has **10+ points and at least four cards in both majors**; he may cuebid (bid opener's suit) and ask the doubler to bid his longest major. With equal length in the majors and 11-15 points, the doubler would bid hearts.

Occasionally, if your choice is between a major or a minor suit, you might choose to bid your major suit (even if it is shorter) because of the advantage in either scoring or being able to bid at a lower level. An example:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♥	DBL	Pass	?

Since South passed, regardless of his points, West must bid. West holds:

♠Q765 ♥73 ♦A8543 ♣54

West has longer diamonds, but he can bid spades at the one level and if he is successful in his contract, he will get more points for playing spades than diamonds. West will bid 1♠.

Responder should never choose to bid the suit the opponents have opened. ***Remember, the doubler has shortness in the suit the opponent opened. Doubler will not have support in the opponents' suit.***

Very seldom is it right to play No Trump after a Takeout Double has been bid, especially if the opening bid was one of a major suit since you know the opponents will have a long suit they can lead to establish tricks. Only consider NT when you have:

- A stopper (a high card in the opponents' suit);
- No long suit that you would like to bid; and
- Constructive values (8+ HCP).

After his partner bids, doubler will have another opportunity to bid. The doubler should always keep in mind what his first bid (double) told his partner about his hand and what responder's bid indicated to him.

Doubler needs to consider:

- How many points does responder have?;
- How many cards in the suit did responder promise?; and
- Have the opponent's bid again?

All of these factors will come into play when the doubler is deciding whether to pass or bid at his next opportunity. In general, unless responder has promised some values and/or length in his suit, doubler will pass at his next opportunity to bid.

The only exceptions where the doubler would bid with minimum values, would be in the following types of auction:

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	Dbl	1♠	2♥
2♠	?		

West did not have to bid, but chose to. West should have some values (6-8 pts). If East passes 2♠, West will be unsure whether East has four hearts or only three. Therefore, with four hearts East should bid again. This would not show extra values.

---

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥
2♣	?		

West did not jump, did not show any extra values, nor did he show any specific amount of hearts (though we expect he has four). However, if East passes, the opponents may play in 2♣. East may bid 2♥ with four

hearts and a solid (12+ points) take out double. This bid would not invite game.

---

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥
Pass	?		

West was forced to bid, since South passed. East/West have the contract at this point. If East raises in this situation it is a “free” raise. He does not have to bid in order for he and partner to play the hand, but would be choosing to bid anyway, that is a free raise. Raising hearts in this auction, shows that East has four hearts and invites his partner to bid game with 6-8 points (since he knows that partner has less than 9 points based on his failure to jump to 2♥).

***The difference in these auctions is what both East and West had promised with their initial bids and the action(s) taken by the opponents.***

One last comment about Takeout doubles must be made. It is the exception to the rules governing a Takeout Double. This occurs when overcaller has 18+ points (or the equivalent in length and/or high-cards) and wants to tell his partner that his hand is much better than advancer would expect if they simply overcalled.

With this type of hand, overcaller doubles and then bids a suit (or NT) of his own. This “sounds” like a Takeout Double but his subsequent bid identifies the double as a “value showing double”. It is not until overcaller’s second bid that advancer realizes the difference.

The auction would proceed:


<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥
Pass	?		

If East, after doubling at his first opportunity to bid, chooses to bid a new suit or NT, he is showing 18+ points and inviting game. If West (advancer) has “a trick and a fit”, he should raise East to game. A trick is an ace, a king or, if you have a fit for East’s suit, a singleton or void in another suit. A fit is 3+ cards or A, K or Q and one or more cards in East’s suit. If East had the suit responder bid (hearts) he would bid 3♥ or 4♥ depending on how many tricks he thinks he can take, knowing that partner has four hearts.

## Takeout Double

### Board 1

North Deals  
None Vul

<p>♠ A 9 3 ♥ A 10 9 8 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ 9 8 4</p>	<p>♠ Q J 8 6 4 2 ♥ J 5 3 ♦ K 3 ♣ K Q</p>	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <p>♠ 5 ♥ K Q 7 2 ♦ A Q 10 8 ♣ A J 7 3</p>	<p>♠ K 10 7 ♥ 6 4 ♦ J 9 5 4 ♣ 10 6 5 2</p>
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<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♠	Dbl	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

East's Double is a Takeout Double showing shortness in spades, 11+ points and at least three cards in the remaining three suits.

Since South passed, West must bid and chooses hearts.

With a hand that evaluates to 18 points in support of hearts, East freely raises hearts suggesting to East that they might play game in hearts.

With 8 points, West accepts the invitation to game and bids 4♥.



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## Competitive Doubles

Bridge students quickly discover that ‘basic bidding’ will only get them so far. To improve it is necessary to master a certain number of bidding conventions, and be prepared both to play them and to play against them. Each of the books in this series covers a number of useful conventions, explaining them carefully along with numerous examples and quizzes to help the reader understand what is being learned.

Included in this book: Takeout Doubles, Negative Doubles, Responsive Doubles, Snapdragon Doubles, Balancing Doubles, Re-opening Doubles, Support Doubles, Maximal Doubles, Common Misconceptions and Practice Hands.



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