

BRIDGE – INTERMEDIATE LESSONS I – 07

Competitive Bidding - Take-Out Doubles

A “**Take-Out Double**” (“**Informative Double**”) is a vehicle for entering the auction after the Opponents have opened the bidding. It implies, under most circumstances, support for all of the un-bid suits and requests Partner to choose from amongst them. Typically, a Take-Out Double promises the values of a one-level opening bid, shortness in the Opener’s suit (fewer than 3-pieces), and length (three or more cards) in the other three, as-yet, un-bid suits.

Guidelines and Requirements for a Take-Out Double

1. The “*double*” is a call made by either Opponent, subsequent to an opening bid by the alternate team. **Note:** A “*Double*” of a 1-NT opening is not discussed in this presentation as it may hold alternate meanings by Partnership agreement.
2. The “*double*” is made at a bidding level of 4H or below. (Beyond this bidding level any “*double*” becomes a penalty double, and is ***not*** for take-out.
3. The Partner of the one who “*doubles*” must ***not*** have previously bid (exclusive of a previous “*Pass*”), else the “*double*” is for penalties.
4. The Take-Out Doubler should ideally have support (or tolerance) for the un-bid suits, especially for the other Major suit if over an Opponent’s Major suit opening, and for both Major suits if the Opponents have opened with either Minor suit. In effect, the “*Doubler*” must have proper shape, defined as fewer than 3-cards in the Opponent’s bid suit; namely any pattern which holds at least 3-cards in each of the other three, as-yet un-bid suits, and no more than a doubleton or shorter in the suit bid by the Opponent.
5. With respect to the strength of a Take-Out Double:
 - a. The Take-Out double ***guarantees*** an equivalent or better hand to that which the Opponent evidenced by his/her opening bid; i.e., 13-21 HCP’s. It is like opening the bidding for your side after the Opponents have already opened, or
 - b. It evidences a strong (16{+} HCP count) shown by the Player who makes the Take-Out Double who then bids his/her own suit after hearing the suit chosen by the Responder to the Take-Out Double.
6. Later bids by the “*Doubler*” identify the high-card count as 13-15, 16-18, or 19-21. Remember: “***Never bid the same values twice!***”

Bids by Responder to the Take-Out Double

If the Partner to the Take-Out double were to hypothetically “*Pass*,” this would convert the intended Take-Out double to penalties. If Responder does not wish this to happen, he/she ***must*** bid, even with as few as zero HCP's. Responder's first choice is usually a Major suit since it will produce a higher trick score than would a Minor suit, but the highest priority, generally, is to pick the longest suit such that the Partnership is playing in the best Golden fit possible, assuming one is available. The quality of the suit chosen is never an issue, rather its length.

A. With 0-8 high-card points the Responder bids any new suit, without jumping (if the Opponents make an intervening bid, however, any response from the Responder is considered to be a “*free-bid*” and shows 6-8 high-card points).

(1) Bid a 4-card or longer un-bid Major suit at the cheapest level

(2) Absent that, bid a 4-card or longer un-bid Minor suit at the cheapest level

(3) Bid a 3-card un-bid suit if necessary, but under no conditions “*Pass*” unless,

(a) The Responder is volitionally desirous of converting the “*double*” to a “*Penalty double*,” or,

(b) If the would-be-Responder’s right-hand Opponent (RHO) makes a bid other than a “*Pass*,” relieving the Responder of his/her obligation to bid. The Responder only bids, then, if he/she volitionally desires to do so, showing some few points if he/she does bid.

(4) When selecting a choice of suits to bid, if Responder has both a Major and/or a Minor suit from which to choose, and they are equal in length or the Minor suit is just 1-card longer, the Major suit should be chosen. If, however, the Minor suit differs by two or more cards, then the Minor suit should be chosen.

B. With 9-11 high-card points the Responder makes a jump into one of the un-bid suits, whether or not the would-be Responder’s right-hand Opponent (RHO) makes an intervening bid, and the following bids are non-forcing!

(1) Jump in a 4-card or longer un-bid Major suit or a 6-card, or longer Minor suit

(2) Absent that, Jump in a 4-card or longer un-bid Minor suit

(3) Jump to **2-NT** with 11-12 HCP’s. (Guarantees at least one stopper in the Opponent’s bid suit)

C. With 12 or more high-card points the Responder starts with a cue-bid in the Opponent’s suit, which is forcing to game, or,

(1) Jump to game in a 4-card or longer Major suit

(2) Jump to **3-NT** with 13 (+) HCP’s. (Guarantees at least one stopper in the Opponent’s bid suit)

D. With no better choice the Responder can answer in No-Trump to show a balanced hand, stoppers in the Opponent’s suit, and no 4-card un-bid Major. A **1-NT** response would show 8-10 high-card points.

Impact of Take-Out Doubles

For all practical purposes a Take-Out double is a forcing bid. The weaker the Responder’s hand, the more important it is for the Responder to bid. Obviously, if the Opponent who follows the Take-Out double decides to make a bid, the force of the double is removed. The Responder is no longer obligated, since the double has been effectively removed and the Doubler has yet another chance to bid. If the Responder does “*Pass*,” the “*double*” automatically becomes converted to a penalty double.