

# 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, or at least “*tolerance*,” for all of the as-yet, 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 Player, 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*” usually 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. (**Exception Noted:** Some Partnerships play “**Card-Showing Doubles**,” in competitive auctions at the one- or two-level, notwithstanding Partner having already bid. (This would exclude “*doubles*” made at these lower levels from being for penalty, and would exclude them, under these lower-level, bidding circumstances, as being for Take-Out.)
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. If the relative lengths of Responder’s possible choice of suits in

response to Partner's **Take-Out Double** is that the length of the Minor suit is equal or even one card longer, the Major suit should be chosen; but if the Minor suit is two or more cards longer, the Minor suit should be chosen.

**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.

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**. In a competitive auction Responder to a **Take-Out Double** always retains the option to "**pass**" thereby volitionally converting Partner's "**double**" to a Penalty scenario.

**(Mel Colchamiro's "Rule of 9" "In response to Partner's Take-Out Double, if the number of cards you hold in the Opponent's suit, added to the number of honors you hold in that suit (including the 10), plus the level of the contract equals 9 or more, "pass," and convert for penalties," if fewer than 9, bid something.")**