

# Mini-Lesson: Basic Doubles

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# Objective for Mini-Lesson

- Main objectives:
  - Learn how to use a takeout double
  - Hand requirements for a takeout double
  - Responses and rebids after a takeout double
- Secondary objectives:
  - Learn how to distinguish a takeout double from a penalty double
  - Learn how to determine when to use a takeout double vs an overcall

# What Is a Double?

- A double (the player states “double”) is a special type of call.
- A double must be made after an opponent’s bid (with no intervening bids other than “pass”).
- Doubles traditionally double the penalties and rewards.
  - However, the penalties are often larger than a factor of two.

# Takeout Doubles vs Penalty Doubles

- In modern bridge, most doubles of lower-level contracts are for **takeout**.
  - A **takeout double** is an attempt to find a contract.
  - A **takeout double** demands that partner show their longest unbid suit.
  - Give preference to hearts/spades when multiple, equal options.
- **Penalty doubles** are made in very special circumstances only.
  - A **penalty double** is to punish the opponents for over-bidding.

# Requirements for a Takeout Double

- You have not previously bid. Your partner has not previously bid.
- The opponents have bid only one or two suits.
- You have an opening hand (13+). You may count extra for short suits.
- Also, you must have shortness in the bid suit(s) and 3+ cards in all of the other suits.
  - You must have 4-card support for at least one major suit.
  - If you double 1H or 1S, you must have 4+ cards in the other major.

# When Is a Double for Takeout?

- A double is always for takeout after:
  - An opening one-level suit bid
  - A weak two opening suit bid
  - A 3-level preemptive opening suit bid (4-level with partnership agreement)
  - Opponents raise the opening suit bid to the two-level

# Takeout Double Bidding Examples

- 1H – Double → takeout double of a 1-level bid
- 2S – Double → takeout double of a weak two opening bid
- 3D – Double → takeout double of a preemptive opening bid
- 1H – pass – 2H – Double → takeout double of a single raise

# Responding to a Takeout Double

- First, you absolutely must respond unless:
  - The opponent after the double makes a bid. In that case, you may pass.
  - Rarely, if you want to convert to a penalty double by passing.
- Bid your **longest unbid suit**.
  - With < 10 points, bid at the lowest level possible: 1D – Double – pass – 1S.
  - With 10+ points, make a jump bid: 1H – Double – pass – 2S.
  - With 6 – 9 high card points and a stopper in the bid suit(s), bid the lowest NT.
  - With 10+ high card points and a stopper in the bid suit(s), jump in NT.
- Thereafter, rebid naturally.

# Takeout Double vs Overcall

- **Overcalls** are (usually) made when you have only one good suit.
  - 10+ points
- **Takeout doubles** are (usually) made when you have:
  - Support for all unbid suits.
  - Shortness in the bid suits.
  - An opening hand (13+ points).
- **Exception:**
  - Very strong hand with a long, strong suit: double first, then bid your suit.

# When to Make a Penalty Double?

- Whenever a takeout double doesn't make sense.
- Specifically, double for penalties when the final contract has been reached and you have a very good chance of setting the contract.
- Example: 1H – pass – 2H – pass – 4H – pass – pass – Double – all pass
  - Sample hand: **♠A2 ♥QJT9 ♦A63 ♣8742**

# Summary

- Takeout double requirements
  - 13+ points, 3+ cards in each unbid suit, shortness in bid suits
- When is a double a takeout double?
  - After any opening suit bid at the one-, two-, or three-level or a single raise of opener's suit.
- Responses to takeout doubles
  - < 10 points: Longest unbid suit (or NT with a stopper) at the lowest level possible.
  - 10+ points: Jump in longest unbid suit (or in NT with a stopper).
- Rebids
  - Natural bidding just as if doubling partner had opened the bidding.